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"This is on the house, my lady."

"Oh my.  
Thank you."



Once the knights with their large shields  
have lured the monster toward them,  
I open with my first attack.

**"Ra'se Mea Persepho Ilda."**

**“Princess,  
what’s with  
her axe?!”**

**“I’m not sure.  
I didn’t expect  
it to come  
with a special  
gimmick...”**





# FreeLife Santasy

IMMORTAL PRINCESS

Online



WRITTEN BY

AKISUZU NENOHI

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SHERRY



*Seven Seas Entertainment*

Free Life Fantasy Online ~Immortal Princess, Hajimemashita ~ Vol. 8  
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**PUBLISHER:** Lianne Sentar  
**VICE PRESIDENT:** Adam Arnold  
**PRESIDENT:** Jason DeAngelis

ISBN: 979-8-88843-981-4  
Printed in Canada  
First Printing: January 2025  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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# CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

## Anastasia:

The main character. Her real name is Tsukishiro Kotone, but she's known as "the Princess." Anastasia wields an athame and a book, while her dress serves as her armor. Since she generally attacks with spells from her book, her athame is merely for parrying. The blade of light from her athame only adds to the impression that she's come out of the *Star Wars* universe. She plays as a magic attacker and parry tank.

## Alfred:

Alfred is a Dullahan, otherwise known as a headless knight. Alfred fights with a bastard sword, great shield, and a full suit of armor intrinsic to his race. He's the main tank in his party. His headless horse allows for extra mobility.

## Honehone:

AKA Mr. Skelly. Honehone is an inhuman player who appears in the game as a skeleton. His race is a lich. He fights with a long wooden staff. In his party, Honehone exclusively attacks with spells.

## Ame:

Ame is Trine's twin brother. His name comes from the "amethyst" part of the gem "ametrine." He belongs to the wraith race and appears as a transparent human with light purple hair and eyes. Ame is a lively young boy who refers to himself by his own first name. He fights with a giant scythe like a grim reaper.

## Trine:

Trine is Ame's twin sister. Her name comes from the "citrine" part of the gem "ametrine." She belongs to the wraith race and appears as a transparent human with light yellow hair and eyes. Trine is a lively young girl who refers to herself by her own first name. She fights with a pole—like one used to steer a boat carrying souls across a river.

## Akirina:

Anastasia's little sister. Her real name is Tsukishiro Akina, and she plays as a human. Akirina is equipped with a halberd and military-style uniform. She adores her big sister, although that doesn't mean they play in the same party. Instead, Akirina parties up with her two friends from real life along with her internet friends, in which she plays as a hit-and-run attacker.

## Tomo:

Anastasia's childhood friend. He plays as a human and has books and cloth armor equipped. Tomo serves as a magic attacker for his party.

## Sugu:

Anastasia's other childhood friend. He plays as a giant and has a two-handed hammer and leather armor equipped. Sugu plays as a muscle-headed attacker.

## Lapis:

Class president and Anastasia's classmate. She has hair the color of milk tea, blue eyes, and fights with a war hammer. She is a member of Tomo's party.

## Eliza:

The daughter of a CEO and a childhood friend of Anastasia's. Her nickname is "Eli." She plays as a human with a whip and dress for equipment. To sum up her appearance, she looks like a villainess with blonde hair drills. That means she has a nice body too. Her personality, on the other hand, is perfectly normal. She is known to harshly judge others.

## Letty:

Eli's personal attendant. She plays as a human with a dagger and cloth armor equipped.

## Abby:

The daughter of a CEO and Akirina's childhood friend. She plays as an angel with a Harry Potter-like wand and cloth armor. To sum up her appearance, she looks like the heroine of an otome game. She has hair drills like Eli's. Her dolls function like marionettes. Eli, Abby, and their attendants play in a party.

## Dory:

Abby's personal attendant. She plays as an angel with martial arts weapons and a maid uniform equipped.

## Cecil:

The guildmaster of The Knights of Dawn. Cecil plays as a human with dual blades and leather armor. He's a handsome man who looks like he emerged straight from an otome game.

## Musasabi:

Guildmaster of NINJA. As a monster slayer, he doesn't quite play as a ninja. No one could ever accuse Musasabi of not enjoying the game to the fullest.

**Lucebarm:**

Guildmaster of Furry Army. He's simply a talking, anthropomorphic bear. He fights with his paws.

**Kotatsu:**

Guildmaster of the Critter Empire. A cat girl beastman who fights with throwables, using whatever she can get her hands on.

**Mead:**

A young elf woman. She fights with a longbow and wears leather armor. Mead plays as a huntress and looks exactly how you would expect an elf to look.

**Fairellen:**

A fairy who loves to fly. She fights with lightning spells, which are combinations of different attributes, and her race is an Eclesith.

**Clementia:**

A plant player with a race almost as rare as Anastasia's. She's a human-shaped root and rides around on a mysterious creature.

**Cupid:**

The very picture of an angel. She's the physical embodiment of Cupid, and she'll even pierce your heart with an arrow. In other words, she fights with a bow. Cupid was the first person to discover the angel evolution.

**Mohawk:**

An apocalyptic-themed character who cackles loudly and seems like he's playing a different game than everyone else. He's an extreme roleplayer. He fights with a dagger, wears leather armor, and uses fire spells to sanitize dirty things. According to Mead, he's a loud but nice person.

**Vincent:**

Wondering who the hell this is? He's a mutt of a dog—a masochist pup. Please direct any and all criticism you might have of him his way, as he'll be more than happy to hear it.

**Studylover:**

Leader of the testing team. He plays as an elf. Studylover focuses on research skills, of course, and he gathers information about all aspects of the game's world.

**Ertz:**

A top player when it comes to Smithing skills. He plays as a dwarf and roleplays as a hearty man. Ertz = ore.

**Dentelle:**

A top player when it comes to Needlework skills. He plays as a human and will give you a discount in exchange for screenshots. Dentelle = lace.

**Primura:**

A top player when it comes to Woodworking skills. She plays as a bunny beastman. In real life, Primura is in eighth grade. Primura = primula flower.

**Salute:**

A top player when it comes to Compounding skills. She plays as a human and wears a white coat and glasses to look like a scientist. Salute = health.

**Nephrite:**

A top player when it comes to Handcrafting. She plays as living machinery. Nephrite = jade.

**Magirus**

A top player when it comes to Cooking. He plays as an elf. Magirus has short graying blond hair, dark green eyes, and wears a chef's uniform. He was once the head chef of a restaurant Eli and Abby frequented. Anastasia hasn't asked what happened in real life that made him start playing this game.

**Steiner:**

Guildmaster of Farmers' Uprising. He wears a straw hat and overalls as his uniform and, of course, fights with farming tools.

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RESIDENTS (NETHER)

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**Prime Minister:**

The prime minister of the Evernight Castle located in the Nether. He's something of a manager for the undead of that world.

**Svetlana:**

AKA Pup Lord. Despite the nickname, this lord isn't cute whatsoever. He's not even a dog; he just sort of seems like one. The boss of the Hounds of Tindalos.

**Eleanora:**

Anastasia's personal attendant at her royal villa. She's the head lady-in-waiting who works on all sorts of things when Anastasia isn't around.

**The arch-lord of Tindalos, Mh'ithrha:**

AKA Pup Lord. Despite the nickname, this lord isn't cute whatsoever. He's not even a dog; he just sort of seems like one. The boss of the Hounds of Tindalos.

**Nyarlathotep:**

Lord Nyar. He's a sort of prime minister of the Medium. He has many forms and many names.

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RESIDENTS (ABOVE GROUND)

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**Meghan:**

Anastasia's Alchemy teacher. She teaches her about things like cores and recipes. Meghan is quite old.

## Chapter 1: Weekdays—Monday-Friday

MY CAPACITY DOESN'T INCREASE while I'm logged out. One hour of time spent in game (IRL time, of course) seems to increase my capacity by 17—so I take it the increase is proportional to my skill level. Well, I suppose every little bit helps. It's better than nothing, but clearly it won't make a huge difference.

For as grandiose as Ars Magna sounds, it really is nothing more than a skill to strengthen Secret Art of Necromancy. I suppose I ought to be grateful it increases automatically, though.

Honestly, when I consider how I currently lose capacity when I die, it seems even less valuable, but I doubt it's the kind of skill that will evolve into a second tier—in other words, it should level up quickly from this state. I imagine the fastest way to get it off to the races is to start summoning lots of skeletons and smaller types of undead instead of fortified ones when I'm in need of servants.

Like the way Ars Magna strengthens Secret Art of Necromancy, are there other methods of efficient leveling in the same vein I could try?

Oh, there's that Doll Magic book too. I wonder if I can borrow books from Evernight Castle—I'd just give them to Abby if I could, though.

Hmm, why is my Instinct activating now? Not that I'm *not* going to read it, of course.

***You have learned the special recipe “Doll Core.”***

**[Material] Doll Core**

**Rarity: EP**

*The heart or core that powers an automaton.*

*This crystallized intelligence was a combined development based on Summoning Magic, Doll Magic, and Golem Fusion.*

I can't even make this yet! Ignoring the ingredients, the minimum conditions require the third-tier Alchemy Mastery skill.

Hmm... I can obtain the gems and magic stones necessary for the recipe, but the third-tier skill is a bottleneck. Well, it's not like I could do anything with doll cores in the first place—I'd probably only end up selling them to the people who make dolls.

Speaking of special recipes, I think I'll make some simple holy water now.

I add pure dirt to a container, wash it in the river to clean it, and pour in water of reminiscence, collecting the water that emerges from the bottom. I'll make a large batch, as it seems there's no limit on the amount of water you can use at a time. Then I pray to the water and bestow it with power. It looks like there's an established prayer to use.

“May the breath of the gods disperse the evil from this water and bless it with holy powers.”

A gentle breeze picks up, light pours down from the heavens, and the water sparkles, indicating the simple holy water is complete. As a material resulting from the special prayers of clergy members, it isn't particularly used for skills and the like.

**[Material] Simple Holy Water**

**Rarity: NO Quality: S+**

***Water formed from the prayer of a clergy member, containing the power of***

*the gods.*

***Possesses a strong holy magic attribute.***

This is my very first S+, isn't it? I have somewhat mixed feelings about that. All I did was wash some dirt, wait for water to filter through it, and say a simple prayer. It's hard to call this an item I "produced" at all.

The revival medicine I made had various unforeseen effects, like the title it granted me, so maybe I can obtain similar results from what I do with this. Not that I can test it on my own—you need to be clergy to get very far with materials like this.

Well, I have no intention of using it either way, so I'll leave it with the church. I doubt holy water will have any use in cooking. Oh, I could give it to Mr. Ertz too. Or I could distribute it to the other production players and take whatever's left to the church. The rest of them will find uses for it. The producers should be pleased to have more materials to choose from.

"Delivery!"

"Huh? Oh, it's Princess," Mr. Ertz replies to me.

"I have holy water for you."

"Oh yeah? Guess I'll need to think of a way to use it."

"I'm going to hand a few out to Mr. Dentelle and some others, then I'll be back."

"Sure. I'll try to come up with some ideas quickly here."

I proceed to give more holy water to Mr. Dentelle, Ms. Primura, Ms. Salute, and Ms. Nephrite. The rest I take to the church.

"Are you looking for Ms. Luciana?" I'm asked.

"I brought some holy water I made as an experiment. Is there a place here where I can store it?"

“Please follow me.”

Call it inventory management or what have you, but I decide to leave my holy water here for free. Of course, I would still take money for it if they officially commissioned me.

“It’s so high quality! You never cease to impress. We will use it ourselves if you’d be kind enough to leave it in our hands.”

I place the holy water in an open space in the back of the room as instructed. I’ll leave the rest to them—they don’t seem to want me in charge of the details when it comes to holy water.

It’s nice how most games’ characters play their parts without being intimidated by the player; NPCs in most games are basically gutsy enough to treat the heroes like their errand boys. It could cause a problem if it limited your actions, but the concept itself is the norm in games—you engage the system on its own terms.

“Oh my. Princess Nemeseia?”

“Hello, Ms. Luciana. I’ve left you some holy water I made as an experiment, so please use it however you like.”

“Goodness! I’ll use it with utmost care.”

I’ve run into Ms. Luciana, the archbishop who acts as something of an intermediary for those in Starting Town.

“You don’t seem to have your spheres today,” she remarks.

“I removed them since they’re a bit of an eyesore. Would it be better to have them out?” I respond.

“I believe so. It should be less trouble for you to have the spheres out when you visit the church.”

In other words, my choices are either to have the color of my outfit scrutinized by followers of the gods or to have the color go completely unnoticed because of how scary I look. She’s telling me to pick whichever

outcome I prefer.

“After all, it’s also good manners for royalty and nobles to dress in their appropriate attire. It’s a way of preventing unneeded commotion. Dressing in a way that announces your status as nobility will demand you’re treated appropriately from the very first encounter.”

Knights act as knights, and clergy act as clergy—that means wearing the appropriate uniform or work attire. As a world ruled by a monarchy, social status is very important here, so I suppose it really is more convenient to dress in clothes that display your role if you want things to run smoothly.

Yeah, I agree with her explanation. It would be a nuisance to strike up a conversation with a commoner, only to find out they’re actually a noble who you’ve now enraged. The crime of disrespect to authority can come with deadly consequences, after all.

“Those who prefer to travel incognito usually take on the appearance of a wealthy trader. It’s difficult for problems to arise this way.”

Right, doing things half-heartedly results in the biggest mess in the end. The easiest way to determine someone’s position and occupation is to look at their clothes, isn’t it? A uniform is such a powerful thing. It’s hard to think of anything else that says so much with so little.

I have no plans to change my current equipment—I’d hardly want to discard what are most likely the strongest possible items available. The problem, then, is that my clergy robes are extremely modified clothing that unabashedly feature the colors of a main god and a supporting god. Clergy members would normally reserve these colors for things like important ceremonies. On the other hand, I look like a perfectly normal human when I turn off the special effects, so my status becomes completely unintelligible when I do.

Ultimately, I decide I can avoid the most headaches by switching the effects on whenever I’m dressed in this outfit.

*“I don’t recognize your face. Are you a newcomer? What’s a newcomer doing*

*wearing a modified robe with those colors?"*

I would feel so bad revealing I was actually an outer one if anyone said that to me—to that end, I think putting my true status on full display is a form of kindness.

However, that special effect shows when Sphere Clemas Waver is active. It's an automatic counterattack spell, so I'm a little curious if that means it will knock out anyone who simply bumps into me in town. If it does, I'll have no choice but to turn it off...but for the time being, it's a pain to switch back and forth, so I'll leave it on unless I find out it is, in fact, not safe.

"All right, I'll activate the spheres, but I'm getting rid of them again if I make any children cry," I tell Ms. Luciana.

"Heh heh! So the smiles of children are more important than a bit of a hassle."

"Correct. I'm sure people will understand that I don't want to frighten the kids. If anyone complains, I won't hesitate to knock them out."

The outer ones are separated from the rest of their world because of factors like their abilities or their size. For some, it's due to their frightening appearance. It's surely not hard to imagine how any of those issues would drive a wedge between them and other people—in that regard, I was fortunate to be blessed with one of the more palatable appearances.

"The children should be able to handle it. They'll get used to it in no time at all, don't you think?" I ask.

"Certainly. I can't deny that."

"Children are frank about their feelings, after all." They're able to adapt to almost anything.

After Ms. Luciana and I chat a bit more, it's time for me to exit the church.

The last event just recently ended, so I currently spend my weekdays

wandering around.

“Ah, Miss!”

“Princess!”

“It’s Big Sis!”

A few resident children have shuffled up to me. They’re so adorable. I’ll give them a pat on their heads.

“Guess what! There’s a fight going on over there!”

“A fight? Between who?” I ask the child.

“Outsider adventurers!”

It sounds like there’s some sort of scuffle underway. The children lead me in that direction until the scene of the fight reaches my 3D mental map radius. The parties involved are only having a verbal argument, it seems, and I can ignore them since they’re both players. It’s safest to ignore a dispute between players, although I wouldn’t have minded intervening if any residents had been involved. A GM can always step in if they cross the line.



I should probably lead the children away from here. I'll get more out of interacting with kids than those players, and stepping into a fight that's none of my business will just open me up to backlash. I don't want to do anything pointless.

"Let's leave them to work it out amongst themselves, okay? Don't get too close, as you don't know what might happen."

"Okay!" the children respond in unison.

I chat with the children as we walk away. After we play together a little, I find the right time to leave before I end up accidentally spending all day on fun and games with them.

I head to the Merchant Association and hand over my bless potions and food I cooked. I can craft bless potions with an S quality now that my title has been upgraded to Stellura's Protection. Fortunately, my revival cooldown time has gone down from ten to eight minutes now too.

However, one problem on my hands is how my Alchemist skill level won't budge at all anymore. I'll probably have to use more difficult recipes if I want to level up any further.

That's probably intended. Crafters will fail without a bit of that masochistic urge, after all. I'll keep making progress little by little, just like I always have.

Now, what shall I do next?

Oh, look at that. It's a fox with five tails. And is that one a lion? There's a slime and an ogre of sorts too. I'm surprised by the amount of inhuman players around, although perhaps they just stand out because they look so different. Even the sky is full of bird, fairy, angel, and demon characters. This is a fantasy game, all right—although my character embodies the "fantasy" genre more than any of theirs.

"Oh! Princess!"

That voice sounds like Ms. Fairellen. She swoops down from the sky above.

“Good day, Ms. Fairellen.”

“Good day! This is perfect timing. I’ve been looking for someone to help me with something.”

“What would that be?”

“We have ‘rare’ races and ‘extra’ races right now. There are rare skills too, right?”

“Correct.”

“Well, I want to understand those skills better.”

“I see. Let me think...”

The unusual races in this world are referred to as “rare.” Anything particularly unique receives the label of “extra.” These races are treated appropriately for their rarity in the world as well, making them a great option for anyone who wants to dive into roleplaying.

Anyone in the game can become a rare race if they meet the right conditions for it. Mr. Alf’s Dullahan race would be one example of that among my group of friends—all he had to do was get on a horse as a living armor race.

However, it’s almost impossible to become an extra race deliberately, as the players don’t know what conditions they have to meet, and only one person on the server can be each one. Actually, from what I’ve gathered, those who do end up as the extra races receive the opportunity rather naturally. People are more likely to become unique characters when they choose specific races while following specific limitations on how they play the game. Of course, I can’t deny that players with strange playstyles are often weird people themselves.

People like Mr. Alf, who were the first in the game to become a rare race, are actually considered extra races too, resulting in subtle changes like parts of their character design being different.

Rare skills are unlocked differently from regular skills. They don’t appear to

rely on skill level, but rather, they arise from some sort of different trigger instead. Even those who unlock rare skills usually don't know the exact requirements they met to get them—therefore, they can't provide accurate information to the rest of us players. Furthermore, it takes a menacing 16 SP to unlock rare skills, but many of them have unique effects.

"That's my read on rare skills and races, anyway," I explain to Ms. Fairellen.

"Good! That's how I see it too. So, there can only be one of each extra race on the server, right?" she asks me.

"That's correct. I also think some extra equipment or treasures are limited to one per server."

"It sounds like extra races can get some higher skills in advance, depending on the route they take. Plus, they have limitations placed on their stats too."

"The rest varies based on the player themselves. A lot of the details are nothing more than fluff, unless you're interested in roleplaying."

"You can't even show off your villa, Princess!"

"Right, since it exists in a special area. Oh well. It's really just my environment for crafting and collecting materials, so I suppose it doesn't matter too much."

"You get most materials from hunting and exploring, don't you?"

"That's right. It would be a waste to open up a store there, so I'm currently figuring out what to do with my items. Perhaps I'm being stingy. Oh, I just remembered something. Did you ever make it to the land of the fairies?"

"I did! It was chock-full of fairies, even ones I'd never seen before."

"I thought there might be some brand-new kinds there."

"There were leannán sídhe, brownies, and even tomte. I haven't seen any players using those races yet."

"Could you tell what branches they came from based on their appearances?"

"The leannán sídhe were bards, and the tomte were probably farmers, but I

don't know what branch skill the brownies could be using, to be honest."

"Hmm. They're house spirits, so maybe cleaning skills?" I suggest.

"Are there even cleaning skills? I feel like it could be an exclusive race for residents only. I mean, can house spirits leave their home?" Ms. Fairellen asks me.

"Ah, now that you mention it, I could see that being a possibility."

"Leprechauns come from gathering skills, and I think some players have already unlocked that race. There were daoine sìth in the fairy land too, but I heard players who are tanks become cavalier sídhe, so I think only residents can be that race as well."

"Daoine Sìth? Aren't they a race of gods?"

"I think it's from the Cthulhu Mythos. They were the ones guarding Oberon and Titania."

"That's quite a mix of source materials. Oh well, I suppose that's to be expected."

"It's a video game, you know. If anything, the outer ones feel a lot more like heresy to me."

"You're right about that..."

All they've really done is make the game more enjoyable if you're familiar with the source material. Some people will run into these elements and say "Wait, is this what I think it is?" But those who don't recognize them won't have their game experience hurt either. Everything put into this game is still part of the game's own setting and backstory.

"That reminds me. How did you manage to expand the Identify skill?" I ask Ms. Fairellen.

"Oh yeah! That happened when I talked to a resident in the fairy land."

She explains that knowledge obtained from residents is sometimes

announced to all players. My own announcement came from a book I read in the library. Identify doesn't have skill levels, so its uses are a bit unique.

"Ah, did you ever find out what was going on with those weird agility grades?" Ms. Fairellen asks me.

"Yes, I did. I even learned how to fly myself."

"For real?! What's the difficulty like?"

"The first thing I learned is that there's two methods of flying. That's why the grade says 'E(A).'"

"Oh yeah?"

"I believe the Coordinate Float skill is the 'E' and the grade is 'A' when I use Coordinate Float and Space Magic at the same time."

"I wonder if that's a derivative of Float or Float Ability. If Space Magic is involved, does that mean you're controlling gravity?"

"My race has a hidden modifier that takes the form of a spell to reduce consumption. Even Ms. Sophie said she rarely uses that flight method, since it's not efficient. I can't think of any other methods, so I think it comes down to your race."

"Yep, only some races can fly, after all."

Ms. Fairellen and I chat about flying for a bit. I tell her about how I learned to use Space Magic's Gravitas Maneuver to fly, since I see no need to keep that information secret. Anyone can learn it if they simply level up Space Magic.

"Aw man... That sounds so hard. Our agility stats are both 'A,' but they mean totally different things," Ms. Fairellen complains.

"Those grades must be referring to speed more than anything else. I don't think they take the method of controlling flight into consideration."

"So you're like a rocket then, Princess?"

"I could be, if I prioritized speed. But I'll stick to Coordinate Float if speed isn't

a concern.”

“That’s for races with some connection to space magic, huh?”

“I think it would be more specific to say it’s for those of us devoted to Stellura.”

“Ah, so it’s about her.”

Ms. Fairellen explains that suicide bombing is essentially, well, suicidal—the damage you receive is based on the enemy’s defense ability and your respective speeds, as well as the way in which you impact each other. On that note, since fairies have no stamina, it’s hard for her to measure the exact effects of midair impacts when the real outcome is instant death.

“It’d be a miracle to survive,” she remarks.

“Really? It’s that bad?” I ask her.

“Seriously, we’re dead in the blink of an eye. We’re basically moths to a flame. Ha ha ha ha!”

“You’re really comparing yourself to a bug?”

“Wait, are fairies not bugs?”

“I suppose some races have bug-like wings, but it just sounds like self-deprecating humor. The other fairies might beat you up if they heard that.”

“Yeah, I’m not brave enough to say it to anyone’s face. Have you noticed that inhuman residents are really high level?”

“It’s probably because they have such long life spans. Mr. Studylover wrote that he suspected residents’ levels were directly linked to their ages.”

“Let’s see. For anthropomorphic races, if you exclude the ones like witches, beast races live longer than humans, with dwarves and elves having even longer life spans. Then machinery races trump them all.”

The races with longer life spans tend to be the rarer ones. That’s why the races you see most often in towns are actually the ones with the shortest life

spans.

Humans are said to be surprisingly more likely to live exceptional lives than the other races. Lana is one example of that. I don't know if it's because their numbers are so great, their short life spans mean they have to work much harder in life, or a little of both, but it seems to be common knowledge in this world, so I probably just need to ask her about it to get an answer.

"I see. Anyway, going back to the topic of skills, how are your race skills looking? Did you get any exclusive ones?" she asks me.

"It doesn't look that way right now. I have some tough limitations on my race right now, but I should be able to gain new skills automatically once I get the hang of it all. Some of my skills also seem like other races would be able to have them, only with different names."

Skills like Larva of the Other God and Active Cells could probably be given new names and reused for slime races.

"That makes sense. So, the only exclusive things you got were your extra race, some extra equipment, and religious items?"

"Indeed. From a roleplaying perspective, it was probably first come, first served, and I imagine it'll be taken away if I don't log in for a while."

"I bet you're right. It's an MMO, after all."

"Exactly. You don't feel appreciative if every aspect of the game is exclusive. Giving rare things to everyone just makes them the status quo."

"The price goes down that way too. Rare means rare because it's harder to find, which goes for drop items also. You put in all that effort because of the small chance you'll get the drop you really want."

"Who would want to play a game that brings you no sense of accomplishment?"

"Not me..."

I love how the time you put into video games is directly reflected by your skill

levels and items. I think that component is usually what gets people so hooked on games.

“What is your extra equipment doing for you?” Ms. Fairellen asks next.

“Hmm. If I had to describe them in terms of other games, they’re equipment that give you lots of options and enchantments, but their base attack power is quite low. To be honest, the biggest benefit is that they don’t break.”

“I see...”

“I never have to spend anything on repairs. It’s surprisingly helpful. Some people would love that they don’t have to gather materials for this equipment, but other people might actually see that as a negative.”

“Right, there are people who *want* the fun of switching out equipment.”

“Exactly. Although, inhumans also have evolutions they can go through, so maybe it evens out in the end,” I reply.

“You’ve gotta use your head if you’re playing as an inhuman race. Even moving around takes a lot of time to get used to.”

In our current state, evolving as an inhuman race is a total gamble due to the lack of solid information available. The ability to rebuild your character is a saving grace, but I can imagine players crying once they evolve and find out that their new race doesn’t align with the way they want to play the game. That sort of disconnect hurts even more in a full-dive game like this one—inhuman race players have to be able to learn new methods of movement, and they also have to come up with a build where they can fight appropriately depending on their race and their own personality.

“You can’t simply turn your brain off and play the game,” I remark.

“Wolves and horses and stuff probably don’t have to think about much. Their bodies even come with physical limitations.”

“I’m sure they’re easy characters to build but difficult to fight with.”

“Slimes and goblins definitely have it the hardest.”

“And inhuman races can do just about anything, but they’re something of a headache to play. The same goes for undead.”

“Oh, I’m sure. Fairies have to put a lot of focus into leveling up their skills too.”

“Right, because your evolution changes depending on those skills.”

“You can either focus on your race’s unique traits, or you can choose a build that eliminates whatever your weakness is. It gives fairies a lot more personality than the human races.”

“My character’s build is highly specialized,” I add.

“So is mine. When you’re a jack of all trades but a master of none in an MMO...”

“It’s a hellish experience.”

“Well, it’s not a bad idea to have at least one player like that if you have an established party.”

Characters who can do it all tend to end up lacking in firepower. It takes more time for them to defeat enemies that way—and they might not be able to clear dungeons at all. In other words, you end up in a sad situation where no one wants to invite you to their party.

“That reminds me, Ms. Fairellen. Do you have any passive skills for your base stats?”

“I took Intelligence Enhancement and Spirit Enhancement. I think that’s about it.”

“Are those better than having nothing at all?”

“Well, you know. They’re passives. They should make it easier to finish off enemies. You can combine strength and stamina, dexterity and agility, or intelligence and spirit to get a second-tier skill.”

Oh, what’s this?

Strength Enhancement and Stamina Enhancement together become Physical Enhancement. Dexterity Enhancement and Agility Enhancement together become Limb Enhancement. Intelligence Enhancement and Spirit Enhancement together become Soul Enhancement. So, that's how it goes? I bet combining Physical Enhancement, Limb Enhancement, and Soul Enhancement grants you some sort of third-tier skill.

"I wonder if it's worth taking them all. They cost three SP each, so it will take eighteen to unlock them all," I calculate.

"Aren't there some branches of Stamina Enhancement and Spirit Enhancement too?"

"Let me think. I believe those would be Max HP Boost and Max MP Boost."

"What I'm trying to figure out is if I should take Stamina Enhancement and Max HP Boost. I just hate dying so quickly."

"You want those skills to make up for that weakness?" I ask her.

"Well, I'll probably take all of them at some point."

"Sure. Nothing is better than having high base stats."

"I have to say, leveling up those skills is a pain, though. I hardly use strength at all, and even with more stamina, I'll probably still find ways to get myself killed."

"Yes, I can picture such accidents. Personally, I should be able to level most of my stats pretty easily, aside from stamina and agility. I think I'll take these passive skills then."

"I'll take them too," Ms. Fairellen agrees.

Farewell, eighteen SP. Nice to meet you, passive skills.

"I don't know anything about defensive skills either," I remark.

"They don't matter if you don't get damaged in the first place—so long as you're willing to do no-hit runs."

“That sounds exciting.”

“It’s not so fun when the enemies are shooting back with long-range attacks.”

“Say, did you ever make it to a dungeon?”

“I sure did! I gave up on the one in the north! It was cramped in there!”

“I figured it might be.”

“Those traps were serious business too!”

“Our party ignored all of the traps when we went.”

“It must be nice, not having to worry about status ailments like us. The western dungeon hits you with status ailments too. The ones in the west hurt a lot, but at least it’s a large area, so that makes it easier for me personally.”

“I haven’t been to the west yet. Is that where you harvest medicinal herbs?”

“Uh-huh. You can also get lumber and other stuff there. I think Steiner mentioned that’s where fertilizer comes from too.”

I see. I’d imagine you could harvest high-quality fertilizer there, since the west is covered in forests. However, the fields I own grow in special soil, so I don’t need fertilizer.

I have yet to investigate the Medium, and I haven’t even been to the Abyss yet. Heavens, the world is such a big place.

“All right. I think I’ll go do some hunting,” she tells me.

“Sure. Until next time,” I reply.

“See ya!”

I watch Ms. Fairellen fly away. As for me, I think I’ll farm some more capacity while I level up my Rope skill.

I see. There’s the fortified city of Castreyu and Fort Dinselve.

These are the seventh and eighth areas respectively, found past Nearence’s

royal capital. In other words, the kingdom of Nearence exists outside of the Grand Duchy of MalCallant—the territory where Starting Town is located. Fort Dinselve is the easternmost point where the people of Nearence live, with Castreyu just before it.

The color of the buildings in Castreyu is the same as the rest of the game, but the atmosphere is much more imposing. Even the people walking around town are armed. There are knights, adventurers, and the people who do business with them—merchants.

I've teleported to Fort Dinselve from a statue. The name is certainly accurate. It's just a fort, with no town to speak of.

"What's this?! An intruder?!"

"How did you get in here?!"

Oh, I see. Now I'm surrounded by knights. I forgot to expect that at a fort.

"What's all this commotion about?"

"Ah, Captain! She's..."

"I'm an outsider, therefore I was able to teleport here via statue," I explain.

"I see. I meant to give these orders at the next assembly, but it looks like I was too late. Lower your weapons, men," the captain commands them.

"Yes, sir!" they cry.

"Sorry for the poor reception. This fort stands at the front lines of our war against monsters, so we welcome any adventurers willing to join the fight. The rest of you can return to your posts."

These are true knights. They march right off as ordered.

I chat with the captain for a little while to gather information. He tells me the enemies around the fort are typically level 55 or thereabouts, which means outsiders won't be able to help them very much—at least for the time being.

However, I hear you can receive requests to transport goods at this fort, so

outsiders definitely have one way to be of great use. Jobs involving guarding shipments, however, might still be a bit difficult.

We start to hear a commotion while the two of us are speaking. A quiet stirring grows into something louder.

“Hm? What’s going on...?” the captain asks.

“Oh dear. What could it be?” I add.

“Captain! Captain!”

“What is it?!”

“A genocide viper and grappler bear are fighting each other, and they’re coming this way!”

“I see...”

The knights seem quite rattled. Even the captain’s face is all scrunched up. These must be troublesome monsters.

“All units, get yourself geared up and wake up anyone who’s not up already. I’m coming with you too.”

“Yes, sir!”

“Allow me to help you as well. I’m an outsider, so you don’t need to worry about me,” I offer the captain.

“I appreciate your assistance.”

The knights need time to get equipped, but I’ll head straight to the battleground.

“This is a genocide viper and grappler bear we’re dealing with! Don’t leave your shields behind!”

“Right!”

Goodness. It’s like we’re really heading off to war.

The ground is shaking, alerting us that the two enemies are engaged in a

ferocious battle. These must be extremely large monsters.

“Why *them*, of all beasts...?”

“Even one of them would make for a massive struggle...”

The captain and the recently awoken knights met up with us. They were impressively quick. Before us appears to be a plume of smoke and collapsing trees now. The captain starts to give orders and the knights take their formation.

In addition to swords and shields, some of them even have staffs. This must be a magic division of knights. I’ll join the ones with staffs at their position toward the back.

“Don’t let it get past us. I’m sure you’re aware, but if you do, we’ll be sleeping outdoors for a while,” the captain warns his knights.

“Anything but that!” the men cry.

Having the residential area of their fort destroyed would leave them no other option. It probably takes a lot of work to rebuild something like that.

The ground keeps shaking, and it’s starting to get irritating. I think I’ll float instead.

This seems like a good time to summon Unit One—he shouldn’t run off toward the fortress. I need something with long-range attacks too, so I’ll summon a spirit body this time.

“These are strong enemies, Unit One, so protect the knights and try not to get targeted.”

I’ll stick with spell attacks, seeing as how there are already plenty of tanks around me. I join the magic division and wait for the enemies to appear, as the captain has ordered us.

I watch the trees getting mowed down and plumes of smoke erupting until the culprits finally come into view. They appear to be a four-meter-tall bear and a ten-meter-long snake. Both of their levels are in the upper fifties.

I receive a quest to defeat the enemies alongside the knights—a sudden defense quest. Since these occur randomly, they're ordinary quests, and probably everyday events for the knights themselves, the poor guys.

We watch over the enemies for a bit of time. The best outcome would be for them to destroy each other. But as soon as they get too close, the captain orders us to begin fighting.

Watching their battle makes me think of *Invasion of Astro-Monster*.

Once the knights with their large shields have lured the monster toward them, I open with my first attack.

“Ra’se Mea Persepho Ilda.”

My servants and I cast spell after spell at the grappler bear, while I hammer it on the head with my tentacles. It would appear that raw strength isn’t going to do much. Although, that’s probably due to the difference in our levels.

Actually, could this be a bonus quest? These are knights being sent to the front lines to defend the area. They’re very strong men. This would definitely be a bonus quest for long-range attack players, although it might be a bit risky for close-range players.

I made it past level 15! I’m making good progress with Rope! This is also a valuable opportunity to level up Holy Magic too. I’ll heal any of the men with scratches or minor injuries.

The knights are all too used to this sort of battle, so we finish the job quite quickly.

***Your race level has increased.***

***Rope has reached level 10. You have gained 1 skill point.***

***You have acquired Leg Capture through Rope.***

***Rope has reached level 15.***

**You have acquired Whole Capture through Rope.**

**Darkness Magic has reached level 45.**

**You have acquired Dark Enchant through Darkness Magic.**

**Holy Magic has reached level 5.**

**You have acquired Cure through Holy Magic.**

**Your servants' levels have increased.**

How delicious!

“Thank you for your help,” the captain says to me.

“No, I should be the one thanking you. It was a valuable experience,” I reply.

“We don’t have much to give you as compensation, but we can grant you some support if you ever need to enter the forest.”

“That would be a big help.”

The knights may not have anything to offer me, but the game itself will reward me for completing the quest, even if only in gold and EXP.

I’ve probably also raised my favorability with the order of knights. Judging by the way the captain phrased it, I’m guessing the knights will help you with different things depending on how favorable your relationship is.

That makes this quest extremely rewarding, in fact. I’ll have to come back here from time to time.

Now that the quest is over and I’ve gotten a look at the area, I’ll be taking my leave.

It’s time to look over my new arts.

**Leg Capture**

***Wrap around a single leg. What happens next is up to you.***

***Whole Capture***

***Bind a target's entire body. What happens next is up to you.***

***Cure***

***Reduce a random status ailment affecting the player by two degrees of strength.***

I don't really use Rope arts at the moment. Meanwhile, Cure doesn't seem very helpful due to its randomized nature—although it *is* still much better than having nothing at all. It doesn't help someone like me, whose race doesn't receive status ailments, but it will probably be of use when I'm fighting alongside people other than Mr. Alf and Mr. Skelly.

My base stat passive buffs are leveling up too. I hope to raise them and Rope up to second-tier skills.

All right, it's time for some hunting. I can gain capacity that way too. There's no time to waste!

## Official BBS 1

### [Another day] Comprehensive Production Chat Thread 97 [Of productive work]

#### 1. Nameless Crafter

This is a thread to discuss production.

Please talk about production here.

Also check the boards for each skill.

Previous thread: [http://\\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\*](http://* * * * * * * *)

Smithing: [http://\\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\*](http://* * * * * * * *)

Carpentry: [http://\\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\*](http://* * * * * * * *)

Needlework: [http://\\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\*](http://* * * * * * * *)

...etc.

**>>980 Next thread's in your hands!**

#### 726. Ertz

I'm sharing some info now that I have Princess's permission. That said, I get these elemental metals from Princess herself, so I don't know much more than what's here.

I've got magic red iron, magic blue iron, magic green iron, magic gold iron, magic sky iron, and magic dusk iron.

Take a look at the screenshot for more details.

#### 727. Nameless Crafter

Oho! Magic red iron is almandine magi iron, isn't it?

#### 728. Nameless Crafter

Huh? Almandine? Like the gemstone?!

### **729. Nameless Crafter**

So you add “magi iron” to the name of a gem?

### **730. Nameless Crafter**

I wonder if you can just combine a gem and ore. I know that magi iron has already started to make its way around the market... I see, I see...

### **731. Ertz**

Calm down. I didn’t say I’ve been making it.

### **732. Nameless Crafter**

His supplier is Princess... That means...

### **733. Nameless Crafter**

The old man can’t make it himself? So it’s Alchemy?!

### **734. Nameless Crafter**

She’s using Synthesize?!

### **735. Nameless Crafter**

Who the hell was the person that said Alchemy was garbage?!

### **736. Nameless Crafter**

That would be us!

### **737. Nameless Crafter**

Of course.

### **738. Nameless Crafter**

We’re not *always* wrong.

### **739. Nameless Crafter**

I feel like a shop for Alchemy materials could rake in a lot of cash.

## **740. Ertz**

You're probably right. I sure pay her a pretty penny, though it's worth it with the quality she can make.

## **741. Nameless Crafter**

But it's hard to make in the first place, right?

## **742. Nameless Crafter**

It hurts that it requires different stats.

## **743. Nameless Crafter**

Well, I'm sure someone will do it for us.

## **744. Anastasia**

I've been profiting a lot off of my elemental metals and jerky lately. They go for a good price.

By the way, is there anyone who can craft compression shorts? I wouldn't mind overshorts either. I'd like to buy them from a shop specializing in women's undergarments. Now that I'm able to fly, I've been wondering what the angel and demon players wear.

## **745. Ertz**

Howdy. You know, I haven't heard anything about that.

## **746. Nameless Crafter**

I'm looking for compression shorts too!

## **747. Dentelle**

My shop really only has gym shorts and leggings.

## **748. Nameless Crafter**

The best ones!

## **749. Nameless Crafter**

What, no tights?!

## 750 Dentelle

Got those too.

### 751. Nameless Crafter

Of course you do.

### 752. Nameless Crafter

What denier are those tights?!

### 753. Nameless Crafter

You need that much detail?! You sound way too obsessed.

### 754. Dentelle

I have all different kinds, but you ought to actually find someone who wants to wear them first.

### 755. Nameless Crafter

Oof...

### 756. Nameless Crafter

Critical hit.

### 757. Nameless Crafter

Depressing hit.

### 758. Nameless Crafter

Heh heh... You're looking at it wrong. You can just wear them yourself...

### 759. Nameless Crafter

How did it come to this?

### 760. Nameless Crafter

Heavens me! That sounds like a feast for the eyes...

## **761. Nameless Crafter**

Ugh... See you guys later.

## **762. Anastasia**

With so many people here, one or two of them would naturally interested in that sort of thing.

## **763. Ertz**

Yep, for sure.

## **764. Dentelle**

Don't worry. I'll never reveal who's purchased what.

## **765. Nameless Crafter**

Your kindness hurts me. So put on those tights.

## **766. Nameless Crafter**

Lololol.

## **767. Dentelle**

...How did it come to that?

## **768. Nameless Crafter**

They're tights! It all looks the same, so long as you cover up the top half of your body!

## **769. Management**

Please try to calm down a bit...

## **770. Nameless Crafter**

Eek!

## **771. Ertz**

Take care...

**772. Anastasia**

Oh dear.

**773. Lanju**

Hello, hello! I just logged in! I'll post my shop's map location, so come and give us a visit!

**774. Nameless Crafter**

Oh? Oooh! I'm going there.

**775. Anastasia**

I knew there had to be someone. I'll head there too.

**776. Ertz**

I see. I wondered what gender-restricted doors were for, but they make sense at a place like that.

**777. Anastasia**

Do you mind if I spread the word about your shop?

**778. Lanju**

Please do!

**779. Anastasia**

I'll go inform my personal thread. I hear a lot of women post there.

**780. Lanju**

Thank you!

**781. Nameless Crafter**

The women are gonna start wearing compression shorts instead of panties!  
This is bad!

**782. Nameless Crafter**

What, are you new to this? Compression shorts are just as good...

### **783. Nameless Crafter**

They let their guard down if they feel safe!

### **784. Nameless Crafter**

I... I see...? Sure...

### **785. Nameless Crafter**

Wow, they convinced him.

### **786. Nameless Crafter**

We want open-crotch underwear! Don't we?!

### **787. Management**

*Absolutely not.*

### **788. Nameless Crafter**

Yes, ma'am!

### **789. Nameless Crafter**

He got shot down quick.

### **790. Nameless Crafter**

Obviously...

### **791. Nameless Crafter**

They'd never allow open-crotch panties...

### **792. Nameless Crafter**

Open-crotch? Why would you wear underwear like that?

### **793. Nameless Crafter**

Please don't lose that pure mind of yours.

### **794. Nameless Crafter**

I'll tell you when you're older...

## **795. Ertz**

Let's get back on topic before all the underwear talk gets worse. No one wants to see all your kinks on display.

## **796. Nameless Crafter**

'Kay.

## **797. Nameless Crafter**

Got it.

## **798. Nameless Crafter**

By the way, girls get way more graphic about this stuff at sleepovers.

## **799. Nameless Crafter**

Ha ha ha ha! Ignorance is bliss.

## **800. Nameless Crafter**

Lmao, that's terrifying.

## Chapter 2: Cressism—Saturday, September Week 4

“WELCOME HOME,” my staff greets me.

“Are there any issues here?” I ask.

“I have nothing to report at this time.”

“Very well.”

I always ask that question when I return—I can only wonder what sorts of “issues” would arise in the Nether in the first place, but, well, it can’t hurt to ask.

My first priority is to acquire housing items. After that, I’ll craft revival medicine and elemental metals. I’ll think of something else to cook when I’m finished making jerky too.

Then I log out, take care of breakfast and such, and log back in again.

It’s time to start today’s activities before the main event. The list I made earlier was just a template for my usual schedule—my ways of bringing in money.

I feel like I should pour all my money into housing, since my main equipment doesn’t cost me anything. Shall I buy a fully automated still? I can use it to make distilled water, of course, but I can also make whiskey and other things too. No, wait, doesn’t whiskey take three years to age at a minimum? I don’t know how much the game will reduce that time period. I can’t drink the stuff myself, so I don’t feel like going to so much effort for it. That said, maybe it’s worth it to stock up and just forget about it if I can’t use it.

Speaking of whiskey, I wonder how my wine is doing. I left a barrel of it in one of my rooms. Oh, it looks like the fermentation is progressing smoothly. I

wonder what causes the wine to ferment faster? It must be my environment or my skills. I doubt my ladies-in-waiting would interfere with my items without permission.

I'll have to check the cooking thread on the forums.

They're saying it really *does* come down to your skills. The Reduction art I learned at level 25 affects how food pickles, ferments, and ripens. They believe the time is reduced by your skill level divided by ten. My Chef skill is at level 34 right now, so time advances a bit faster than three times the normal speed. What a helpful art to have.

That must mean I can speed up time even faster now when I make jerky. Will that help me save some MP? Well, I always make it in town, so MP is never much of a problem in the first place. If anything, the speed increase means I'll have to watch out for overcooking or making things spoil.

### **[Drink] Mead of Recollection**

**Rarity: LE** **Quality: A**

*This alcohol is packed full of magical energy, made from water of recollection and military magic battle bee honey.*

*While it may not be a very strong drink, it's digested quickly and easily leads to intoxication.*

*MP will steadily regenerate for a short time.*

**Bonus effects: Increases luck by 5%**

**Effect period: Six hours**

**Maker: Anastasia**

I've made yet another exceptional item. The MP regeneration sounds great, but it intoxicates you? I doubt that will have any effect on Mr. Skelly and me, so

these items will be a big help. Mr. Skelly will need Enchantment to drink it, however.

It's also "A" quality and lasts for six hours. It allowed me to select what buff I wanted, but luck was the only option. Actually, is luck a hidden stat? I've never seen it in the usual base stat descriptions. I'm not sure what it does, but I bet it affects rare drops.

Oh, wait. Wouldn't it be very simple to make honey lemonade? I only need to combine water of reminiscence and military magic battle bee honey. It's a base of honey, lemon, and salt that I'll dilute with water.

### ***[Drink] Lemonade of Recollection***

**Rarity: LE** **Quality: A**

***This beverage is made with ingredients packed full of magical energy, making it easy to digest.***

***MP will steadily regenerate for a short time.***

***Status ailment: Heals dehydration***

***Bonus effects: Increases luck by 5%***

***Effect period: Six hours***

***Maker: Anastasia***

I see! So it's similar to a rehydration solution. I didn't even know that dehydration was a status ailment you can receive. Let's check the forums. Oh, that was discovered pretty early on.

This drink also let me select a buff, but again, luck was the only option.

The biggest question I have is whether or not the regeneration effects, which don't give an exact number, are equal. Surely they couldn't be, right? One of them comes with a drawback, and one doesn't. The honey mead would be

pretty sad if it granted the same regeneration rate of the lemonade. Or maybe it's already special in being considered a luxury item.

Anyway, I wonder if food containing magical energy always grants the player some sort of regeneration. Grapes, the main ingredient of wine, have no magical energy, so I doubt using water of recollection alone would grant the wine regenerative effects.

I'll keep the honey mead in a large container and store it away. It's nice that it ages on its own without any work, but it definitely requires more time to complete than the lemonade. I hope to sell it to Ms. Mead.

I imagine the lemonade will become the top product I sell on consignment. Naturally, I'll be testing each of these items before I sell them. I also need to think about obtaining more military magic battle bee honey since it's so powerful. It can only be collected from the bees themselves.

I move to the kitchen and place fully automatic connected stills down for 1.5 million gold. They appear as pots with a tray tower. They're certainly large apparatuses. I only need to add glass for them to automatically begin producing potion bottles too.

It will take a while to make up for that 1.5 million gold by making distilled water alone, but alcohol might speed up that process quite a bit. Unlike real life, handcrafted items in games are cheaper and higher in quality.

Time for a test run of my stills. A UI appears for me to add ingredients. It looks like you can put water into the central spout, glass at the bottom spigot, and magic stones in the bottom fuel slot. I can use the still without magic stones too, but the process is more efficient with them—probably referring to the time reduction that occurs before completing the finished product.

There's also an "auto" option that refines the materials automatically once you've added ingredients. The "manual" option requires you to press the actual button. Auto should be fine for me. Magic automation really makes machines operate quieter—that said, it also makes them light up quite a bit.

All right. I tried using Drinking Water and adding water of reminiscence, and it looks like the quality of distilled water I receive is higher than what I get from my production kit. However, distilling water of reminiscence only results in distilled water without any remaining magical energy.

It pains me to realize I can make higher-quality distilled water by distilling A-quality water of reminiscence instead of the B-quality water I collected in the west. In so doing, however, it strips the water of all impurities (including magical energy). Couldn't it show a little restraint? In any case, this level of purity would definitely have the strongest effects on the undead of the Nether. Master or Ms. Sophie would be dumbfounded if I told them about this.

Anyway, while I'm here in the kitchen, I may as well make some sausages.

My gardener left the honey he collected, which I'll add to the stills for honey mead. I'll also make more honey and lemon base to turn into lemonade.

Oh, you can select your buff each time you make lemonade. Will this be applied to every glass of it? A-quality lemonades definitely all come with buffs, which I select using Chef's Magical Select art. It might actually be worth it to raise the quality of my ingredients.

I would need to buy grapes to make wine, and I only have the one barrel I had made for me right now, which isn't enough. I think Mr. Dentelle said he wanted to be my drink taste-tester, so I'll go bring him some once he logs in.

As for my miso, I'll put it back in my kit so that time stops for it and it doesn't ferment for too long. Actually, I also have a magic seasoning set, so maybe I could sell it instead. I'm sure the other chefs will turn it into lovely meals.

All right. I'll wrap up my production now. I teleport to Starting Town, put my items up for sale at the Merchant Association, and head to Mr. Dentelle's shop.

"Good day," I greet the shopkeeper.

"Welcome," he replies.

I give him my name and ask him to bring Mr. Dentelle out.

“Hey there. What’s up?” Mr. Dentelle greets me.

“I thought you might want to try the wine I crafted.”

“Oh! It’s finally ready?”

I quickly pour him a cup from my storage barrel.

“Let’s see, let’s see... Yeah, that’s wine, all right. I think it should rest a little longer if you want a stronger flavor.”

“I only wanted to see if I could make it. Wine lovers can figure out the flavor themselves. By the way, I ended up buying the fully automatic connected still.”

“You did? That one’s really expensive.”

“It was 1.5 million gold, yes. I thought it might be nice to have, since I need distilled water and cooking brandy and the like.”

“I remember Ms. Salute saying she loves that still, and that it’s so nice that it’s fully automatic.”

“It gets rid of all the bottling work.”

It’s more of a hassle to bottle the distilled water with potion bottles than the actual process of making the water itself. My current housing environment allows me to distill and bottle the water automatically when I add it to the device, so I have a lot of distilled water in potion bottles now.

“Oh, that’s right! Look at what I made,” I say, showing him.

“Hmm? Whoa! How much regeneration does it give you?”

“I haven’t tested it yet, since I only just made it.”

“Military magic battle bees, huh? I don’t have them yet.”

“What about honeybees?”

“No bees at all,” he replies.

“Remind me, do you have flower fields?”

“Nope. You need them to unlock it?”

“I believe so. Honeybees live in flower fields. It might also depend on the magical energy density.”

Flower fields probably have some sort of unlock conditions. You’d also need to either prepare a room to place them down or add one on to your home if you don’t have one available. The entire process would probably cost a lot of money—you might even have to buy land in more extreme cases. It’s all necessary if you want your bees to produce any honey.

“Hmm. I don’t think I need any of that stuff, personally,” Mr. Dentelle concludes.

“I might make more depending on the regeneration rate they give me. Magical energy regeneration is very valuable... Wait...”

“What’s wrong?”

“I’m an outer one, now that I think about it. Can I not use potions?”

“Ah, I see. It might be worth testing that.”

“Oh, but I don’t have any potions on hand.”

“What, you don’t walk around with things you don’t use? Here.”

Mr. Dentelle hands me a potion to try. Surprisingly, I’m able to use it! Be that as it may, I’ll still have to determine how to test my other regeneration drinks so that I don’t waste them—they’re not quite the same as potions.

I give Mr. Dentelle some honey mead to return the favor. He chose the alcohol over the lemonade.

“I’m glad I can use potions now, but that does mean I really need to get to stocking up on them,” I remark.

“Can’t you make them yourself?”

“It’s possible, although I’ll need quite a few materials.”

“It’ll be cheaper if you do. Potions are in high demand.”

“Yes, since this game has so many players.”

“Exactly.”

Underpopulation is the archnemesis of all MMOs. Having a lot of players is an excellent thing.

***A set amount of time has passed since public access became available. A new chronicle quest has been unlocked. See the help menu for more details.***

“What’s this, now?” Mr. Dentelle asks.

“Oh? The help menu was just updated... It’s so long!” I cry.

***What is a chronicle quest?***

***Chronicle quests are activated through different conditions than world quests, but make no mistake, they will still have a big influence on this world.***

***Chronicle quests aren’t too unlike story quests, and they will come with a large amount of quest information.***

***You may receive the quest yourself or be invited to join another party.***

***Anyone can obtain these quests once they’re uncovered, but only the player who clears the quest with the “optimal outcome” will have their results applied to the world. A video of this player’s gameplay will automatically be uploaded to the “chronicle” on our official website and in the game itself for everyone to view.***

***The quest will no longer be obtainable once it has been cleared with the optimal outcome. So long as those conditions aren’t met, players can replay the quest as many times as they please.***

***Names of the quests’ discoverers and those who have completed them will be listed in the chronicle, along with the video showcasing the optimal***

*outcome. You'll have the opportunity to join the ranks of the most famous players.*

*Chronicle quests will vary greatly in difficulty. Village, town, territory, kingdom—while the scale of the quest may be either large or small, the outcome will always result in a change to the world.*

*The quests may relate to hunting, production, surveying, race, and even position. Conditions for uncovering and receiving the quests will vary. Will your name be the next one written in the chronicle?*

*Take in the world through these chronicle quests.*

***Example 1: Hunt: Exterminate the pack of XX posing a threat to XX!***

***Example 2: Produce: XX has been destroyed by monsters! Carry out emergency repairs as quickly as possible!***

***Example 3: Survey: Find evidence of the landowner's wrongdoing!***

***Example 4: Escort: A nobleman's carriage is under attack!***

“I see. So we’re nearing new stories,” Mr. Dentelle remarks.

“A chronicle? So it’ll be a record of history?” I ask.

“I bet the conqueror players will be focusing on these quests.”

“But it looks like these are going to consist of more than just fighting enemies.”

“Yeah, I’m sure. The solo player or parties who discover these quests are probably going to be the ones to clear them. But if they can’t do it, they might post information about the quest on the forums. They’ll get their names in the chronicle just for being the ones to discover it, after all.”

“Well, it’s a good thing that all kinds of people will get a chance to clear the quests.”

***A contract has been breached. Deliver their punishment.***

***“Punish the Transgressor”***

***Deliver punishment to the person on your minimap who has broken a vow to the goddess.***

***Quest conditions: Outer one***

***Reward: ???***

“Oh? Oooh! It’s...not a chronicle quest...” I tell Mr. Dentelle.

“What is it?”

“I suddenly received a race quest.”

“A race quest? Something that isn’t about evolving?”

“They want me to strike down someone who violated a contract.”

“Ah. Got it. You’re an outer one. Is this a player who did something stupid?”

“I think so, judging by their location on my map. It looks like they’re already in this town.”

I press the button to start the quest. I see, so I can teleport directly to the offender, and it will send me back to my starting point once the job is done.

“All right. I’ll be right back.”

“I kinda want to see this. Can I tag along?” Mr. Dentelle asks me.

“I assume you’re allowed, but it’s going to teleport me there.”

“Oh, that’s too much of a bother. See ya!”

Mr. Dentelle says goodbye to me before I begin the quest.

I wonder what the animation is going to look like?

## ***Beginning punishment. Stat restrictions have been lifted.***

What's this?! I get to fight at full power? Judging by the flavor text, this might turn out to be quite the performance.

First thing's first, I'll pass through the black oval that materialized in the air directly in front of me. This must be my teleportation portal.

“Huh?!”

Two male players cry out in surprise when I exit the portal, but only one of them has a marker over their head. Their level of equipment makes me think they must be third-wavers. Did they do this out of curiosity after reading about the outer ones on the BBS? Well, I don't particularly care. The man wearing the collar is my only target!

“Good day!” I greet him. “It would appear you've reached the limit of your humanity.”

“What?! AAAH!”

I bind him with my tentacles after that greeting and skewer him with my athame. I made sure to pierce his heart, of course. The blade's penetration and the critical hit deliver continuous damage until he perishes in the blink of an eye.



My tentacles unwrap from him once he's dead, letting the body drop face-first onto the ground.

"Wh-wh-why'd you do that?!"

Now that I think of it, every outer one I've seen is good at rubbing salt in the wound. This is something I'd never be able to do as a normal player, but it should be allowed in the present situation.

"What a chatty corpse you are," I reply.

"Oof!"

"She kicked his dead body?!" the other men cry.

The athame is still sticking out of his body. It must function a lot differently during this quest since it turns into polygons and fades away when I pull on it.

"Thank you for your repeated contributions to the Nether."

I say that, but the man is long gone.

***You've done well.***

The quest ended with some words of praise. Well, all right then.

"I-I thought the towns were safe zones..." the man cries.

"You did? Didn't you read about outer ones on the forums?" I ask.

"But aren't you a player?"

"I see. I'm both an outer one and a player, which doesn't seem to make a difference when I punish someone."

I wasn't quite able to see what my unrestricted stats were like since I was fighting a third-waver. However, if restrictions on the other outer ones were lifted, no one would ever beat them.

I think I'll head back now. I press the button on the UI and return to Mr. Dentelle's shop.

"Finished the job?" he asks me.

"I did. He looked like he was a third-waver."

I've already wrapped up my business with Mr. Dentelle, so I'll be taking my leave.

Now, what should I do next?

I could go exploring to find a chronicle quest, or I could go hunting to level up my skills like I always do. Another option is to reach the capital cities outside of the eastern one.

"Ah, there you are, Ms. Anastasia!"

"Oh, you're from the church. How can I help you?"

"Ms. Luciana has asked you to come speak with her when you have some time."

"I'll head over right now. I just finished up my business, in fact."

I head to the church with the nun who came looking for me.

This church is open to the public, and the chapel is its largest room. When you think of a church, you usually think of the chapel—the place where you pray—since no one but the clergy ever has any need to use the rest of the rooms. Actually, more than that, I expect the average person is simply barred from entering the other rooms. Since the front door enters directly into the chapel, that wouldn't normally come up, in any case.

"Oh, Ms. Luciana. She's arrived," the nun informs her.

"You managed to catch her? Well done," Ms. Luciana tells her. "I must apologize for calling you here so suddenly," she then says to me.

"That's all right. What seems to be the problem?"

“There’s a letter here addressed to Ms. Anastasia—or rather, Princess Nemeseia—from the church headquarters.”

Oh, so it’s finally time? I expected I’d be contacted now that I was a Nemeseia. The sender is Jasmine Foster, the Church of Cress’s pope. Now that I think of it, I’d never learned her name until this moment. As I recall, the church headquarters were located in Nearence’s royal capital...

I’ll go ahead and read the letter now. My athame will have to do in place of a letter opener.

“I see,” I finally speak up when I’m finished.

“What did she have to say?” Ms. Luciana asks curiously.

I’m sure she wouldn’t read a letter before handing it over to me, but does she really not know what they want with me? In any case, it won’t cause any harm to show her, so I hand it over.

As an aside, the letter began with an extremely formal greeting. I suppose that makes sense, considering our respective positions, but it was still a bit jarring to see.

“I see. They want you to deliver crystal lotuses and holy punicas to the churches in all major cities, and they’ll pay you accordingly based on the item quality.”

“That’s right. I’m sure the other churches would like to get their hands on them too.”

“I understand the position headquarters is in, but it will require quite a bit of effort on your part. Will you be able to do as they ask?”

“I can do it. The delivery part, however, will be a bit of a hassle,” I reply.

It’s a lot of effort to deliver to each church in each town. That alone would be hours of work, so I’d like to avoid it if possible, but—oh, look at that. I’ve got a new quest.

## ***“Notify the Nether’s Outsiders”***

***Tell the prime minister in Evernight Castle about the church’s request.***

***The prime minister will notify outsiders who have reached the Nether.***

***Quest conditions: Reached the Nether***

***Reward: Next quest***

The quest details show a list of steps to follow to obtain a meeting with the prime minister, but the gist of it is to go tell him what the church asked of me.

Well, a member of royalty wouldn’t need to follow all those steps in the first place.

“Sure, let’s get the other outsiders involved too. Could you wait here for a moment while I go inform the prime minister? The outsiders who complete the deliveries can receive the compensation.”

Doing the deliveries myself would be too much work, but it’s a good arrangement if I get the help of other players who have reached the Nether.

“All right. I’ll be sure to inform them,” Ms. Luciana replies.

“The church headquarters, right? I could talk to them myself, but the pope is the highest authority in the church, I believe. I’m sure her schedule is full.”

“Yes, the pope is our highest authority. Her name is Pope Jasmine Foster, and her influence is on par with even the greatest kings.”

A pope with the same level of influence as a king?

I ask Ms. Luciana why that is. She explains that Cressism is the only religion in this world, and it has many devotees—so many that they’re impossible to ignore. The king himself is probably one of them.

There are four gods that members of the religion worship: Creall, Stellura, Haventhys, and Sigandrifa. As I’ve seen from the clothes the clergy members

wear, everyone is free to worship one or all of the gods and must respect the faith of fellow members.

So, while Cressism exists as a single religion, different devotees worship different gods. Ms. Luciana, an archbishop, worships the gods, but none in particular over another.

It's very easy to tell which clergy members worship who. It all comes down to the color of their garment and the color of its embroidery. The fabric color indicates which god they worship, and the embroidery reveals their position within the church.

That leaves ordinary people who aren't clergy themselves. Ms. Luciana explains that most of them worship Haventhys, with adventurers or knights worshipping Sigrdrifa and artisans worshipping Creall. Many merchants worship Stellura.

"I understand the adventurers, knights, and artisans, but why do merchants choose Stellura? And why do most others choose Haventhys?"

"Merchants must protect their contracts and follow them closely. Haventhys is the favorite of the general public as a goddess of abundance. Love, growth, nature, and rest are popular things, no? Her elements are water and earth, making her beloved by farmers as well."

So merchants devote themselves to Stellura for her rule over contracts and punishment? That makes sense. It's a business that relies on both parties' trustworthiness.

Haventhys is usually referred to as the goddess of love, but the harvest aspect comes from her domain over the elements and nature.

"It goes without saying that no one can live without crops, of course," Ms. Luciana adds.

"I see. That's true."

"We pray to Haventhys at our harvest festivals as well."

They generally pray “to the gods” instead of anyone in particular, but they get more specific if there is a specific reason for the prayer.

Prayers regarding harvest festivals or crops are said to Haventhys. Prayers before going into battle or anything related to fighting are said to Sigdrifa. New Year’s and birthday prayers are said to Stellura. Daily prayers are said to Creall, the origin of all things.

“Stellura rules over space-time and fate, right?” I ask Ms. Luciana.

“That is correct. We also pray to Stellura regarding those who have passed on.”

“Because she’s the goddess of reincarnation.”

So, you pray to whichever god has authority over the aspect relevant to your issue.

“The gods have not told us directly to pray, nor have they demanded worship. We choose do it ourselves and have to yet to be scolded for it.”

Ms. Luciana explains that the church was founded with the protection of a person who’d been granted a divine revelation. Their objective was to spread the revelation they’d received. Holy knights were created to protect this medium, and worshippers were sought to help spread the church’s word. However, they still needed enough authority so that the kingdom couldn’t put a stop to them—the force of the holy knights wasn’t enough to ward the kingdom’s army off. The more followers they gained, the more a mediator of sorts was required. They went through a process of trial and error until the current global religion came to be Cressism.

“They say that, after the religious war, there were two whole generations that did not receive divine revelations.”

“So, the gods made their anger evident. By the way, what do the divine revelations consist of?”

“I don’t know the precise details, but they warned of coming calamities like

droughts, famine, and plagues.”

“I see. That would be a big help.”

“Certainly. You’re able to take action when you know of something beforehand. It is our role to spread those revelations to the world, and the kingdom can decide what to do with that information.”

Cressism never uses its power to influence politics. Their main role is to protect its children from monsters and criminals, and should a divine revelation be handed down, it’s to be spread across the world as delivered. Their work primarily manifests in the chapels where people pray to the gods, but they also distribute food to orphanages and slums. This comes on top of the festivals they hold throughout the lands as well—they seem like quite a busy bunch.

Ms. Luciana was explaining all this to me from her seat on a pew in the chapel—we’d gotten on this tangent all the way back at the topic of the pope’s influence. Now, however, it’s about time I get back to my quest to speak to the prime minister.

“I’m going to go see the prime minister now.”

“Of course. Thank you for your efforts.”

I’ll start by teleporting to my villa.

I use the mini statue at my home to teleport to the castle.

The people I meet inside direct me to his location, and I head straight for him.

“Prime Minister,” I greet him.

“How can I help you?”

“The church has asked for lotuses and punicas. Here, please read this.”

“Mhm. I see. Outsiders are able to move in places we are not. May I inform them?”

“Yes, please do.”

“As you wish.”

The two of us speak for a bit before I’m ready to go inform Ms. Luciana. The prime minister calls someone in and hands them the notes he was writing during our meeting.

It’s time for me to return to the surface. My destination, of course, is the chapel from earlier.

“Welcome back,” Ms. Luciana greets me.

“Thank you. I just finished my discussion with the prime minister.”

The plan consists of giving directions to outsiders when they arrive in the Nether and making them carry the items with them. The money can be paid directly to those outsiders who make deliveries. Notably, it’s possible that some churches may end up receiving few deliveries, since it’s unknown where the outsiders will travel to. Still, since the church is asking for items C-quality and higher, this system should satisfy their demands.

“I’ll contact headquarters and ask them to inform the churches of your plans.”

“Thank you, Ms. Luciana.”

She’d had stationery brought to her while I was away, and she was scribbling down a message as we spoke. Just when I expected her to hand it to someone...

“*Contrail.*”

“Hm? Oh!”

“You aren’t familiar with this spell?”

“I’ve never seen it before.”

The letter transforms into the shape of a bird and begins to physically flap its wings. It’s like something right out of a fantasy movie.

She teaches me the spell. It’s the kind of thing useful for assisting with daily life, but Ms. Luciana tells me few people actually use it, since the speed of delivery can be hampered by the weather. She even says I can make a little

money if I use it. However, I can always just teleport instead of sending letters this way.

Another letter flies in while the two of us are still speaking. That was shockingly quick.

“Will this be enough?” Ms. Luciana asks me.

The letter details a payment number for the quality of each item delivered, a number to be lent to royalty and nobility, and the use for this money once it’s lent. It looks like it will mostly go to orphanages and feeding the hungry.

This will certainly be a good way to make money. I do wonder if putting the resident AI in charge of everything is the only option available to us. Frankly, though, this is a quest, so this outcome might have already been decided.

The trade-in price looks pretty good, and from what I’ve seen of the money lending system, it should be a positive for the church. The clergy still need money to live, after all.

“It seems cheap when you take the rarity into consideration, but we can consider the implications of that another time,” Ms. Luciana notes.

“There are plenty of lotuses and punicas in the Nether, you see. This is a continuous deal, so it’s plenty of money for us,” I explain.

Ms. Luciana had written and sent out another letter, with a response arriving as we spoke. Hmm, I thought the royal capital of Nearence was quite far from here... Either way, I don’t want to waste game time, so I appreciate the promptness.

“They say they’re going to deliver instructions to the churches. There’s also a contact included,” Ms. Luciana informs me of the letter’s contents.

“All right, then. I’m going to return to the Nether for a bit.”

I teleport there, reach the prime minister, and have him look over the contract. It’s better to have his confirmation as well. Then I sign the contract with my name.

“I’ll inform the outsiders of the instructions,” the prime minister says.

“Yes, please do.”

### ***“Request from the Church”***

***Deliver the Nether’s crystal lotuses and holy punicas to the churches.***

***Item quality must be C or higher.***

***You may harvest the items yourself or receive them from Evernight Castle.***

***Quest requirements: Reached the Nether***

***Reward: Dependent on quality of deliverables***

***Continuous chronicle quest***

Oh! What a fruitful quest I’ve unlo... No, I’ve already completed it. It’s a continuous chronicle quest? So, I’m the first one to find a chronicle quest! It must be counted as “continuous” because it’s an ongoing service.

It also appears that race quests and delivery quests are categories of chronicle quests, although they didn’t appear in the help menu. Oh, there’s a video. I didn’t even clear anything. What could the video be of? It’ll be faster just to watch it and see, so I return to my villa and take a look.

I see. The video starts with Ms. Luciana first giving me the quest and ends at my current point. I wonder if any extra portions would have been cut if I’d gotten sidetracked in the middle of the quest. I’ll have to be careful...

The UI only shows boxes, my voice and sightline are visible, and there’s a first-person view in the bottom left. It looks like the normal template setting for videos.

Oh, look at that. Another chronicle quest has been completed. They must have nearly finished right before the chronicle quest was activated, just like I did.

That was fun. Now it's time to level up and gain some capacity. I also need to learn more about the drinks I made. I'll put them up for sale if they're powerful enough.

## Official BBS 2

### [101] Comprehensive Thread 101 [Dalmatians]

#### 1. Passing Conqueror

This is a comprehensive thread regarding conquering new areas.

Put down any information you can.

Past threads: [http://\\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\*](http://* * * * * * * *)

**>> 940 Continue this discussion in the next thread**

#### 222. Passing Conqueror

Hmm. There's a whole lot of chronicle quests.

#### 223. Passing Conqueror

I'm surprised so many of them are just running errands.

#### 224. Passing Conqueror

Me too. Well, at least there's a lot of 'em.

#### 225. Passing Conqueror

Many have already been cleared.

#### 226. Passing Conqueror

The one about Princess and the church seems extra unique.

#### 227. Passing Conqueror

That one's really out there. I'm glad we got to know about it.

#### 228. Passing Conqueror

It's fun just watching these videos. The only problem is how much time it eats up.

## **229. Passing Conqueror**

I know what you mean. It gets bad unless you set a limit on how many to watch each day.

## **230. Passing Conqueror**

I'm kinda looking forward to quests involving the nobles—has no one found any yet?

## **231. Passing Conqueror**

Not yet.

## **232. Passing Conqueror**

Maybe we'll get to rescue noblewomen from monsters attacking their carriage!

## **233. Passing Conqueror**

Yeah, that's the standard.

## **234. Passing Conqueror**

That kinda scenario would turn into a sudden chronicle quest if you came across it. It's really just a game of luck.

## **235. Passing Conqueror**

You also need connections for the other kinds of quests, which makes it more difficult.

## **236. Passing Conqueror**

Players who do nothing but fight have no relationships with the residents, so it'll be hard for them to find chronicle quests. Sad stuff.

## **237. Passing Conqueror**

You know how it goes: People don't trust you if you refuse to participate in society.

## **238. Passing Conqueror**

Shut up! That hurts to hear!

## **239. Passing Conqueror**

It hurts me too.

## **240. Passing Conqueror**

Putting the depressing stuff aside, is there any new info about the southern region yet?

## **241. Passing Conqueror**

We know it's more fantasy-themed than the continent Starting Town's on.

## **242. Passing Conqueror**

Looking at the screenshots makes me think the northern continent has been nothing more than a tutorial.

## **243. Passing Conqueror**

I know what you mean.

## **244. Passing Conqueror**

Machinery players ought to hurry south.

## **245. Passing Conqueror**

Oh yeah?

## **246. Passing Conqueror**

Supposedly, there's dungeons with living armor that drop parts.

## **247. Passing Conqueror**

Is that an ingredient for something?

## **248. Passing Conqueror**

If you're lucky, you can get enhanced parts.

## **249. Passing Conqueror**

For real?!

## **250. Passing Conqueror**

That's what a resident machinery adventurer told me. He even said there are parts that increase EP.

## **251. Passing Conqueror**

Seriously? I want them so bad... I gotta get down there!

## **252. Passing Conqueror**

I'll be there soon!

## **253. Passing Conqueror**

Time to farm for rare drops?

## **254. Passing Conqueror**

Time to turn into a hamster?

## **255. Passing Conqueror**

Time for our hamster era.

## **256. Passing Conqueror**

Why hamsters?

## **257. Passing Conqueror**

Because running around dungeons for rare drops feels like you're on a hamster wheel.

## **258. Passing Conqueror**

Dashing endlessly in the hunting grounds or in dungeons.

## **259. Passing Conqueror**

And we're the Ham-Hams.

## **260. Passing Conqueror**

I'm a hamster!

**261. Passing Conqueror**

We're the hamsters!

**262. Passing Conqueror**

You guys are okay with that?

**263. Passing Conqueror**

Little hamsters, big what?

**264. Passing Conqueror**

Violence!

**265. Passing Conqueror**

Money!

**266. Passing Conqueror**

Women!

**267. Passing Conqueror**

You guys are terrible...

**268. Mohawk**

Hyah ha ha ha! Purify the filth!

**269. Passing Conqueror**

You're filth too!

**270. Passing Conqueror**

Rude.

**271. Passing Conqueror**

Speaking of machinery, I saw one with a vernier on his back.

**272. Passing Conqueror**

Huh? For real? He could fly?

### **273. Passing Conqueror**

He was a resident, but I didn't ever see him fly. Hang on, I swear I took a screenshot.

### **274. Passing Conqueror**

Hurry up.

### **275. Passing Conqueror**

Hurryyyyy!

### **276. Passing Conqueror**

Here it is. He had this too.

### **277. Passing Conqueror**

Whoa! It does look like he could fly.

### **278. Passing Conqueror**

Is that a triple-mounted cannon...?

### **279. Passing Conqueror**

Now here's something to look forward to!

### **280. Passing Conqueror**

A triple-mounted cannon. Reminds me of a certain other game...

### **281. Passing Conqueror**

Yep. I know *exactly* what you're talking about. Like you could glide across the ocean.

### **282. Passing Conqueror**

I wonder how that even works.

### **283. Passing Conqueror**

Yeah, what do you use for ammo?

## **284. Passing Conqueror**

The verniers and guns are probably EP too, don't you think? Energy management is going to become a real thing now.

## **285. Passing Conqueror**

Now that I think of it, wasn't there an enemy in the hunting contest that shot energy bullets?

## **286. Passing Conqueror**

Ah... That would be Princess's opponent.

## **287. Passing Conqueror**

I bet it's fun to play as machinery.

## **288. Passing Conqueror**

Waiting to learn about how their equipment works. C'mon, someone post the info.

## **289. Passing Conqueror**

But we have to unlock the empire in the south first.

## **290. Passing Conqueror**

I wonder if they have parry blades or anything like that.

## **291. Passing Conqueror**

Oh yeah, pile bunkers. They've already got magic guns, so I wouldn't be surprised.

## **292. Passing Conqueror**

I want these magic guns.

## **293. Passing Conqueror**

Maybe we'll be able to craft them.

## **294. Passing Conqueror**

Steal 'em from living armor.

## **295. Passing Conqueror**

That actually might be possible.

## **296. Passing Conqueror**

You can steal it, but what if only machinery races can use them?

## **297. Passing Conqueror**

Well, it's a video game, after all.

## **298. Passing Conqueror**

Ah.

## **299. Passing Conqueror**

Most games do it that way.

## **300. Passing Conqueror**

Most, games, do it that way! Boing, boing!

## **301. Passing Conqueror**

Come on, Folgore, you can't just stop at the boing boing part...

## **302. Passing Conqueror**

Thanks, now it's stuck in my head! I think you owe me an apology.

## **303. Passing Conqueror**

Boogie!

## **304. Passing Conqueror**

Boogie! Boogie!

## **305. Passing Conqueror**

The lyrics instantly corrupted my mind... You'll pay for this.

## 306. Passing Conqueror

How're you gonna derail the thread like that!

## Chapter 3:

### Sunday

I WANT TO GET ROPE up to a second-tier skill today. My passive skills will level up on their own, so I don't need to focus on them.

It seems some chronicle quests were cleared while I slept. Fishing tackle improvement? They say that lures are now available for purchase in resident shops. Surprisingly, quite a few small items like these exist. I'm sure it's the same for Cooking items, but I'll leave that to the chefs.

"Welcome home," a lady-in-waiting greets me.

"Are there any issues here?"

"No, but the prime minister has asked that you visit him. We also brought you some lotuses and punicas for outsiders to deliver."

I take a look at the chronicle quest logs and see that a few deliveries have been made. There's still a lot more to go, but that's to be expected based on current progress in the game. I wonder how many people have made it to the royal capital so far? At least they've provided a convenient map that shows where deliveries have already been completed.

I think I'll bring a delivery to Nearence's royal capital—where the main church is located. I may as well go introduce myself since I wanted to get a look at the place anyway.

"I'd like to make a delivery to the church headquarters. Can you prepare the items for me?"

"As you wish."

I'll take a look at the undead race thread while I'm waiting. I do a search for chronicle quests.

Hmm, I see. You can ask the palace maids to bring you high-quality items if

you don't want to harvest them yourself. However, the game counts these as "event items," so you can't do anything with them other than deliver them to a church. Items you harvest yourself can be used for production or for delivery just like any other item.

My lady-in-waiting returns, but the lotuses and punicas still aren't counted as event items for me. It's not as if they wouldn't know I'm looking to deliver them to a church. It must be because I'm in a different position than the people posting on the thread. I can't come up with any other explanation.

The lady-in-waiting bids me farewell before I head to Evernight Castle to see the prime minister.

"You asked to see me, Prime Minister?"

"Ah, you're here, Madame. Have you been informed about the festival?"

"The what? This is the first I'm hearing of it."

"It comes from 'Nemeseia,' the name of the royal family. To put it simply, the festival is for invigorating departed souls, revitalizing the Nether, and leading lost souls on their way...and it's also an opportunity for us undead to celebrate. Since ancient times, it's been customary to perform a song there."

"A song?"

"What good would a festival be without singing? Here, you should memorize this."

***Music has been added. Listening mode and karaoke mode are now available.***

Karaoke mode? Are they asking me to practice?

I wonder if this is the UI added when you acquire music skills.

"Please sing it in the ancient language now that you've taken the time to learn

it."

"Are you out of your mind?"

"Ha ha ha ha!"

The song has options for both ancient and modern languages. The ancient language is fictional, so its pronunciation is really difficult. But if I have to remember it, that means it will probably be more effective.

The problem is that the ancient language changes depending on the situation. I use it for sorcery—singing in the language will change what I say.

I'll have to listen to it while I'm crafting and working on things. The festival appears to take place in December in real life. Is it celebrating the winter solstice?

"I'll inform the other outsiders who've made it here as well."

He *definitely* forgot to spread the word. His age is taking a toll on him.

"Is something wrong?" he asks me.

"No, nothing. Is that all you needed to tell me?"

He doesn't have anything else for me, so I return to the villa, complete my daily Unparalleled Style stance practice, and log out for a while.

I log back in after I have breakfast and prepare for the day.

It's time to teleport to the kingdom of Nearence's royal capital in the east.

Compared to the church in Starting Town, which was the size of a large house, the church in Nearence is as big as a castle. I feel like it's too large, even if it *is* their headquarters, but maybe real-life temples are just as big. The Parthenon is quite big too.

Anyway, I'll head on in now. I march straight through the front door, of course—special animation playing and everything.

I see that the construction is the same as what I've already seen. No, I suppose that's obvious.

Chapels in this world consist of statues to pray to, just like cathedrals in real life. I don't know if the statues could be called relics, but they certainly do possess "powers."

The statues of the four gods loom over the many rows of pews. It's a very large space—exactly what you would picture when imagining "a space where you pray."

The chapel is open to the public, meaning the church needs this much space for its worshippers—and naturally, then, the most striking feature of the building is its front entrance.

Management of the church has nothing to do with the gods, meaning the workers here will be in the back. Funding and human affairs are the business side of things, after all.

As a religion that puts the gods first, Cessian chapels have a power to them much like the statues, and as is typical of churches, their front door leads directly into that chapel. As a consequence of that, everyone must first enter the chapel if they have business at the church, regardless of if that business is with the gods or with the church itself.

Of course, it also means the chapel is rather full of people at all hours of the day... I really stand out among them with my spheres wriggling around. The color of my outfit is also significant to Cessim, even though it's rather a unique design.

Anyway, it's become clear to me that the subtle approach will take a lot of time. Fortunately, I have a method to speed things along.

"Good day. I'm Nemeseia, and I have a delivery."

That's right—it's my greeting. No, that's not some sort of metaphor. It's a simple greeting with exceptional effects.

Everyone who works here has already been informed of the delivery system. The uniformed clergy members stiffen up. Even the ones sitting and speaking with the visitors quickly rise to their feet.

The workers' eyes dart around until they land on a single person—definitely the one ranked highest amongst them. His smile twitches when he realizes he's been assigned to deal with me.

Poor guy. Well, maybe my sympathies ring hollow when I'm the cause of his distress, but anyway...

He must have a title since his robe is embroidered. Both the robe and embroidery he wears are green.

"Both green. That must make you a priest of Haventhys."

"Y-yes. I never expected to see you here, Princess Nemeseia," the priest trails off.

"I thought I should come say hello. You can't exactly come visit me yourself—unless you die, but I'd prefer you didn't."

It's not normal for royalty to appear at the church so casually, but I had no other option. A member of the Nemeseia family, who rule over the realm of the afterlife, would essentially be demanding one's death by extending an invitation to visit. I can't abide anyone here taking ghost form and coming to see me in the Nether.

The priest appears to be informed about the delivery systems, so we complete our exchange of goods.

The only problem with the process is...me. I only came here just so we could see each other in person—I would feel uncomfortable if they went out of their way to try to offer me hospitality. Unfortunately, I just saw someone run into the back hallway, so now I can't be on my way home.

I decide to say a prayer while I wait, and then I hear the people start to stir. I maintain my praying pose—I've no need to physically turn around—and I

spot a girl and holy knights.

People are calling her “medium.” Wait a minute—I see some info that we don’t usually get unless we’re properly introduced to someone. That must mean Stellura herself is providing me the information.

**Name: Hannah Addinsell**

**Age: 15**

**Stellura’s Protection**

**Blind medium**

“Oh, welcome, Miss Hannah,” the priest greets her.

“Hello, Priest Arune. I came right here when Stellura told me I could meet another with her divine protection. Wow, how bright...”

She came to see me? I’m bright? How intriguing.

“I’m the one with Stellura’s divine protection. Good day, Miss Hannah Addinsell. Did she give you my name?” I introduce myself.

“No, she only informed me you were here at church.”

Is Stellura something of a prankster? Or are names simply not important to the gods? It could definitely be either of those.

“I’m Anastasia Atropos Nemeseia. It’s nice to meet you.”

“Huh? N-Nemeseia?”

“I’m an outsider, an outer one, and a Nemeseia. I suppose I’m also a medium since I have Stellura’s divine protection too.”



Her head may as well have been surrounded by floating question marks.

Now that I've heard it all said out loud, I suppose I *am* a bit intimidating.

Incidentally, it must be said that outer ones and undead don't always receive protection equivalent to that which the living are granted.

"I-It's nice to meet you too."

"I'm an outsider, so there's no need to be so formal. That said, I understand you have to answer the demand given to you."

She could ignore me if she pleased—the problem is that it's worse to ignore someone when you're being introduced in our positions. If I were *just* an outsider, she could ignore me, but not when I'm a Nemeseia and an outer one.

However, I highly doubt there are any residents willing to pick a fight with an outer one Nemeseia in the first place. I certainly haven't heard of anyone like that from all the information I've read. There *can't* be a character like that, right?

"I notice that you don't have any trouble getting around," I remark.

"Receiving Stellura's protection allows me to see the outlines of things."

Oh, I wonder if that's from Space Recognition Expansion?

I get confirmation and learn that it's like a weaker version of the skill. She can see within her normal range of vision and only outlines of what's in front of her. Since her cone of vision is fan-shaped, she can probably see further than I can.

"You said I was bright. What does that mean?"

"Well, um..."

Just as I think she doesn't want to tell me, she quietly whispers an explanation. It's a secret between the two of us.

"From what I've experienced, good people look bright and bad people look dark," she tells me.

“Hmm. Do you think you’re seeing the color of their souls?”

“Souls?”

“Most people are gray, right? And children are more white.”

“That’s right, actually.”

The color of the soul grows darker with age. If you only do bad things or lie as a child, your soul eventually settles into a gray color instead of white.

I can tell from her answers that she probably is seeing people’s souls. That means this blind medium has a weaker, combined version of Darkness and Light Vision and Space Recognition Expansion.

I can’t see the color of my own soul, but considering we both have Stellura’s divine protection, Ms. Hannah and I seem to have souls that are very white.

Ms. Hannah cried out at first because she’d never seen a soul so white before. She explains that she’s only met a few people before who she could recognize based on their soul color.

We return to a less secretive conversation. I may as well obtain some information about mediums while I’m here.

“I’ve heard you receive divine revelations, but what do mediums do on a day-to-day basis?” I ask her.

“Well, I guess it depends on the person. We don’t do anything special. The church just gives us guards, but we’re not actually clergy.”

It sounds as if there are two paths a medium can walk down. They can either continue the life they’ve known or move into the church. The choice comes down to their family in the event that the medium isn’t an adult yet. If they enter the church, they’re provided with holy knights for protection and personal caretakers.

Many mediums of Sigrdrifa choose to maintain their normal lives since they tend to work as adventurers or knights. Mediums of Haventhys or Stellura often choose to live in the church. Mediums of Stellura are particularly likely to

receive divine revelations, which is part of why they make that choice.

“Some were just village girls like I was, until one day, they have people to give orders to, they have power, and their entire lives change overnight.”

“Do mediums have a lot of influence?”

“We have some. The mediums of the past have built up a lot of trust.”

“That’s... No, now that you mention it, I think I remember hearing how your blessings countered curses and such.”

“Exactly. The power we gain as mediums would be lost if we were anything else. What happens to us after we’re no longer mediums depends on our own actions. I suppose you could call it its own kind of curse.”

“You reap what you sow.”

In other words, you can do what you want during the time that you have power, but you better expect consequences once that power is gone. That’s why mediums must be careful in their day to day lives.

Actually, she ended her explanation with “That’s what I was taught.” It seems the person who taught her that is Father Arune at her side.

“Did you know? Mediums are people who receive divine protection, but there are certain titles depending on which god granted you mediumship,” Ms. Hannah explains.

“Is that right?”

“People with Sigrdrifa’s divine protection are called warriors, and people with Haventhys’s divine protection are called holy men or holy women.”

“What about us?”

“Those of us with Stellura’s divine protection were the very first of the mediums, which means we don’t have any special name. Some might call us ‘honest folk.’” She chuckles after making her little joke. Father Arune confirms she’s correct.

“‘Medium’ used to only refer to anyone who’d received a divine revelation,” Ms. Hannah explained. “It was usually those with Stellura’s protection or blessing who received the revelations, so there was no need to make a distinction.”

“So the definition has expanded?”

“Exactly, which naturally brings about new names for them. But those with Stellura’s divine protection are usually whom people think of when they think of a medium.”

The word “medium” usually describes someone who has received divine protection from the gods. The other option is to have received divine protection from Stellura herself.

Anyone referred to as a “warrior,” “holy man,” or “holy woman” must have received protection from the other gods—specifically Sigdrifa or Haventhys, depending on the title.

“There are three degrees of divine protection: blessing, protection, and love. It’s rare to receive a god’s blessing on its own, yet some go even further and receive protection or love. It’s especially rare to receive such grace from Stellura.”

“I’ve heard the same,” I reply.

“It’s certainly true...” Father Arune adds.

“Everyone who receives Stellura’s protection is the same way,” Ms. Hannah declares. “Even they themselves don’t realize what a difficult ordeal they’re going through. However, they’re wonderful just the way they are and shouldn’t change.”

Most of Stellura’s mediums lose their status by the time they reach adulthood. That’s probably because their souls turn darker with age—people can’t remain innocent forever, after all.

As I speak with Father Arune and Ms. Hannah, people come forward from the

back of the chapel and begin to stir.

A woman in her thirties, dressed in rather fancy clothing, is standing in the center. She starts to approach us.

Father Arune informs me of her identity as soon as he spots her. It appears the very top of the church has joined us.

“I’m so grateful for your visit, Princess Nemeseia. My name is Jasmine Foster.”

“I’m Anastasia Atropos Nemeseia. While I’m still just a novice outer one, I continue to rule over the afterlife as well. I’m also an outsider. It’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance.”

Nice to meet you! You probably have no idea how to handle my presence here, do you?

She joins my conversation with Miss Hannah.

“Is Luciana doing well?”

“She is. I’ve seen her speaking with Ms. Sophie lately.”

“Sophie... The Sorciere, yes? They’ve both been a great help to me in life.”

The current pope is in her thirties, meaning Ms. Sophie and Ms. Luciana are older than her. The two of them must have been her higher-ups at one point. I even heard that Ms. Luciana was the one to give Pope Jasmine encouragement to move forward, so I’m sure she’s very grateful to her.

Ms. Sophie is very powerful and definitely would have been a help to Pope Jasmine, even though she doesn’t directly work for the church. Meanwhile, Ms. Luciana is supposedly the high archbishop of all churches, meaning she has authority over the other archbishops too. In terms of power, the pope is on top, with the cardinals beneath her and the high archbishop under them.

I wondered why someone like her would be working in Starting Town, but it *is* the center of the region, despite the ocean to the south. It’s easiest for the high archbishop to handle the other archbishops from a central location.

“What might I call you, I wonder. Is ‘Princess Nemeseia’ acceptable?”

“I suppose that’s fine. Although, the people of the Nether call me Madame.”

“Madame? I feel like I’ve seen that before. It must be...” She asks a holy knight to go retrieve a book for her.

“How do people address the pope?” I ask.

“I’m called Her Holiness, or Pope Foster, if you prefer.”

“What about you, Ms. Hannah?”

“Most people call me Her Mediumship, as I was Stellura’s only medium until now.”

“I see. I may have her divine protection too now, but my being an outer one and a Nemeseia are what most people tend to focus on. Furthermore, I don’t need the protection of holy knights as an outsider, and my body is an avatar, so it doesn’t matter what happens to it.”

“An avatar?”

Oh my. If Pope Foster doesn’t know about that, then Miss Hannah shouldn’t be aware either.

“How familiar with outer ones are you?”

“To be frank, I only know them as contract enforcers who live in another dimension. Have you heard of the book called *Stellura and the Darklight Races*?”

“Yes, I’ve read it.”

“There really aren’t any opportunities to learn about outer ones aside from that book.”

That’s true. When they arrive to deliver punishment, they simply mow you down and leave. Non-outer ones go to the Nether or the Abyss when they die too, so they’ll never reach the Medium.

Honestly, Pup Lord would probably tell anyone who asked—but if an outer

one is summoned for punishment, well, your questions would merely be interrupting their work. It's too risky to even try asking, not to mention how terrifying outer ones look.

"I see. I suppose this is the perfect opportunity," I say. "Please wait here for a moment."

I'm merely a novice too, so I can't offer any detailed explanations, frankly. In that case, what other option is there than to ask *him* directly? Ha ha ha!

I approach the statue of Stellura and call out to the Lord of Tindalos. Just like always, he wriggles out of the corner of the statue's base.

"What is it?" he asks.

"I'd like to know more about outer ones now that I'm one of you."

"Mm. A noble goal. Very well. What do you wish to know?"

This pup is always so helpful. That's a lord I can rely on!

It's noteworthy that he's able to come here when I summon him. Our relationship may play a part in that, but I'll ignore that for now.

I'll have the others ask him questions as well.

"Let's see. What is your relationship with the undead?"

"There is no direct relationship. Perhaps, if I had to answer, I would say we share the same goddess."

"Is that so? You have your different territories as well."

"We are granted different roles and have no interactions. They manage souls. We deliver punishment because we are strong."

A fixed entrance to the Medium exists inside the Nether, but aside from that, they have no real links to undead.

"There are outer one clergy, independents, and rulers. Do they have their own individual lower and higher ranks?"

“Yes. There are six classes.”

So, there are no mid-level outer ones.

“Do all outer ones have avatars?”

“No, only some. Most with avatars are the ruler races from the upper class. You are a rare case, but I anticipate you’ll join their ranks someday. I expect great things from you.”

“I’ll do my best to live up to your expectations. I’d like to know more about avatars.”

“To put it simply, they are bodies created through various methods. I believe you’ve performed one, have you not?”

“My avatar comes from severing part of my body.”

“There are many variations of this depending on one’s race. What they have in common is that they can create another avatar even when killed—a very tricky tactic. However, the avatar is generally weaker than their true form. The avatar merely exists to carry out tasks, after all.”

“Tasks...”

“For outer ones such as yourself whose bodies are too large, and for those whose bodies are immobile, their avatars change based on use, variety, or their role. Some have avatars that can think independently, but that is very rare.”

Those must be the upper-class ruling races. Even Mh’ithrha, a lord of Tindalos with his own name, is a lower-class ruling race—though, if you ask me, Mh’ithrha should definitely be considered higher rank.

Avatars that can think independently? That wouldn’t apply to me as a player, but perhaps it refers to someone like Lord Nyar.

“The goddess Stellura you met was also an avatar.”

“Ah, now that I think of it, I learned that from a book in the Nether.”

“Umr at-Tawil, the Gatekeeper, is an avatar too.”

So I was right about that. I assumed that was the case, since 'Umr at-Tawil is supposed to be an avatar of Yog-Sothoth. I wonder if the goddess checks on him directly.

"Now that I think of it, are all outer ones devoted to Stellura?"

"Hm? No, they are not. Those in the Medium worship Stellura. Sigrdrifa's followers are called divine beasts. I believe that Haventhys's followers are called sacred trees."

"Divine beasts and sacred trees, you say? I've seen sacred beasts before. What are they?"

"They are candidates to become divine beasts. You could think of them as apprentices."

I remember meeting a sacred beast in the official survival event—now I know why it seemed so intelligent. That one was a character made for the event, but it appears others exist outside of events too.

Essentially, people who live on the surface live in absolute terror of the visages of Stellura's followers who have come to deliver punishment—so much so that her enforcers' appearances now totally dominate the public's image of outer ones. The book *Stellura and the Darklight Races* has surely had a big impact too. Of course, the name for anyone who has escaped the cycle of reincarnation is "outer one."

So outer ones are called different things depending on which god they follow or what their face is, with Stellura's being called enforcers, Sigrdrifa's being called divine beasts, and Haventhys's being called divine trees. I wasn't quite sure if divine trees was a fitting moniker, but I couldn't think of anything better.

Undead are candidates to become enforcers. Sacred beasts are candidates to become divine beasts. What sort of being becomes a sacred tree?

Come to think of it, this must be why Identify reveals people to be outer ones instead of who they worship specifically.

“You will rarely cross paths with divine trees or divine beasts. It is acceptable to think of us simply as outer ones,” says Pup Lord.

“It’s all about how people recognize you?”

“That is also acceptable. We come when a contract with a god is violated. That is all.”

“I guess that’s true.”

I’m sure Her Holiness is busy, so let’s wrap up the conversation there. “I’ll return if I have any other questions,” I say.

“Very well. Until we meet again.” Pup Lord disappears through the corner he came from.

The holy knight arrives with the book Pope Foster asked for, which she takes from him.

“Let’s see. ‘Madame’... Ah, here it is. It was a title used long ago to refer to kings or rulers.”

“That makes sense. Everyone in Evernight Castle is very old. They must have come from that time period.”

“That’s very possible, since they’re undead.”

“How long ago was the word used?”

“Roughly seven hundred years in the past.”

“Lana is about six hundred years old. The prime minister is probably even older. The math does add up.”

I don’t particularly mind what they call me, but considering my position, wouldn’t Princess Nemeseia or Lady Nemeseia be the norm? It doesn’t quite feel right to have people who aren’t undead call me Madame either.

“So, may I call you Lady Nemeseia?” Pope Foster asks me.

“That’s all right with me.”

After a bit more chatting, it seems Pope Foster needs to leave now. I'm sure her important job keeps her busy. Personally, I have the prime minister to take care of things, so I don't have to worry about work.

I watch her return to the back of the church, then I say goodbye to Ms. Hannah and Father Arune and teleport to Starting Town.

Sunday afternoon is such a busy time. There are a whole lot of people in Starting Town today—probably because so few are able to reach the royal capital yet. Well, the majority of them are third-wavers, so they'll disperse into the world eventually.

Hmm. Now that I have some free time, I think I'll log out for an early lunch.

I finish up lunch and other business before logging back in.

“Oh, it’s Princess,” I hear someone say.

“Hmm? Ah, if it isn’t Mr. Studylover. Good day.”

“Perfect timing. Do you have a minute to talk?”

“I do, although I was planning on leveling my skills soon.”

“Please exchange information with me! You play this game a lot, right?”

“Yes, I’ve spent quite a bit of time on it...”

“What I’m after is information about the church. Specifically, stuff to write on the wiki.”

“Ah, so you’re interested in Cressism.”

“Yes, ma’am. The Testing Team all agreed that you would know the most.”

“Me, and not anyone playing as a priest?”

“Well, we do want to learn about the inner workings of the church, but we’re not paparazzi. Did you see the post about the update?”

“Wait, it’s out now? I haven’t read it yet.”

“They’re adding guild websites and personal blogs—all in-game, of course. That’s why our Testing Team guild decided to make a wiki for the game.”

“So you’d like information to add to the page for the church?”

“We sure do!”

I like the idea of searching on a wiki for information instead of hunting it down on various threads. He probably only wants a broad outline for the church’s page. I rely on the Testing Team’s posts quite a lot, so I’m happy to be of service.

“I can help with that. Would you like information on the Nether or the Medium as well?”

“That’d be great! I’ll definitely take you up on that.”

He informs me that there are new cafés made by players, so we head that way to chat.

“Would you like a peaceful, secluded place run by a quiet old man, or a fairy-tale-like café that mainly caters to female customers?” Mr. Studylover asks me.

“Is the food good at both of them?” I reply.

“To be honest, I think you’d prefer the first one. I know that people from your group go there sometimes.”

“Oh, are you talking about Eli and Abby?”

“The food’s super expensive, but it’s really, really good. I think the guy must truly be a chef in real life. The other place is more famous, though.”

“Do you know the name of the player who runs the secluded café?”

“Let me see. His name is Magirus.”

“Is that right? Let’s go to that one.”

I had a feeling it might be Mr. Magirus. I couldn’t choose any other café over his.

It turns out to be off of a main street, but not exactly in an alleyway either. Its modest look is what you would expect of a beloved hole in the wall.

“Welcome... Oh, look who’s here.”

“Hello, Mr. Magirus. I didn’t know you had a shop of your own.”

“I just got the place recently. Are you two here for a date?”

“We plan to have a long talk about very unromantic things.”

“Ha ha ha! Have a seat wherever you like.”

We sit down and order black tea and cake, then the two of us dive right into the information sharing.

“The churches in this world are part of Cressism, which revolves around the fictional main god of Creall. The church doesn’t use a cross as its symbol for this reason. I’ll skip the explanation of the four gods that make up the religion.”

“Sounds good. We don’t really need info about the gods right now.”

“Pope Jasmine Foster is the highest authority of the church. She’s a woman in her thirties, and supposedly, she had this title handed down to her recently. I met her for the first time just this morning.”

“I see. It seems like this world’s religion doesn’t restrict things by gender.”

“Indeed. Perhaps it’s because they worship goddesses? Ms. Luciana in Starting Town is the high archbishop, which I’m told is the third-highest position in the church.”

“Really? Tell me more about church titles.”

“The ones I know of are popes, cardinals, high archbishops, archbishops, bishops, priests, deacons, monks, and nuns.”

“So, they’re using the terms from Catholicism?”

“I believe that was the origin. Monks and nuns, by the way, are considered apprentice clergy. There are also abbots who work at the orphanages. They’re more like managers than clergy, but they’re still highly respected, putting them

somewhere around a bishop or a priest.”

“I see...”

“Any clergy wearing a robe without embroidery is a monk or a nun. Red embroidery is for deacons, green embroidery is for priests, and gray embroidery is for bishops. The archbishops, cardinals, and pope all use yellow embroidery, though their robes have different designs. The color of their robe itself represents which god they personally follow.”

“Wow, that’s so intricate. What colors are the robes?”

“They use the colors of the gods’ hair, so the robes are white with red, green, gray, or yellow as a secondary color. They use navy blue and white if there is no god in particular they worship. Ms. Luciana is the only person I’ve seen in Starting Town wearing navy with yellow embroidery.”

Well, the people I usually meet when I enter the church are the equivalent of Catholic priests. Ms. Luciana is usually doing paperwork in the back. She probably comes to the chapel when she has some free time, which means I’m not very likely to meet her by chance.

“What else? There are also mediums, said to be the gods’ beloved children. These are people who’ve received a god’s blessing and the title that accompanies it.”

“Don’t you have that title too, Princess?”

“I do. Anyone with a blessing is called a medium. Sigdrifa’s mediums are called warriors, and Haventhys’s mediums are called holy men or holy women.”

“What about Creall and Stellura?”

“I’m not sure about Creall, but Stellura’s chosen ones are where the name originally came from, so they’re still just ‘mediums.’”

“Wow...”

“Mediums also have ranks of their own. A god’s blessing is the lowest tier, with protection above that, and love at the very top.”

“Social status is everything in some societies. Sounds tough. Which one are you, Princess?”

“I’ve received Stellura’s protection, so I’m in the middle tier of mediums. I happened to meet a blind medium of Stellura’s earlier today at the church. She was also the second tier, and she told me that it’s a pretty rare thing.”

“So receiving a god’s love is almost impossible, protection is rare, and even blessings are hard to get.”

“They’re not all clergy either, but they do have the church backing them. The church has their holy knights in terms of actual fighting power. Mediums supposedly get holy knights to protect them and attendants to serve them.”

I don’t personally know much about the Nether or the Medium, so I’ll simply provide him with the races I’ve witnessed for myself.

“I see! The prime minister is an aversa elder lich.”

“You may already know the hero who appeared during the sports festival. Her name is Svetlana Granin Einherjar, and she was a great hero from the southern Dinait Empire roughly six hundred years ago. Now she commands the Nether’s army. She also trains me in swordsmanship.”

“Ah, I wondered about that. People were saying you guys used similar stances. I didn’t know she was six hundred years old, though.”

I also provide the races I’ve seen in the Abyss.

“We’ve already confirmed there are moon-beasts, Hounds of Tindalos, Lords of Tindalos, and shoggoths. Management hinted that Our Ladies of Sorrow are in the game too,” Mr. Studylover shares.

“There’s an old castle in the Medium like Evernight Castle in the Nether. Its prime minister is actually Lord Nyar.”

“Nyarlathotep!”

“He was even dressed like a priest.”

“Reverend Nye?!”

“Most likely. I haven’t spotted anything yellow and slimy yet.”

“I think that’s his true form, yeah?”

“There are also Mi-Go and Yith. R’lyth was in there too, which makes it related to Cthulhu. I assume Hastur is around, and Lord Nyar already mentioned Cthugha too.”

“The Medium sounds packed full of Cthulhu stuff.”

“It does feel like an area they made to fill with Cthulhu mythos. The Mi-Go and Yith are craftsmen with a friendly relationship, and they’re said to have created the model for living armor races.”

“Seriously?”

“Seriously. I heard that from Mh’ithrha, the Arch-Lord of Tindalos himself. They may be considered lost technology from ancient ruins in modern times, but they came from the era of the Mi-Go and Yith.”

“What a scoop! What about machinery?”

“I’m not sure if they evolve into machinery or something else.”

“Somewhere along the way, maybe they developed a sense of self. Well, I think I’ve got plenty of information from that. Thanks a bunch,” Mr. Studylover concludes.

“And thank you for the food.”

We gobbled our cakes down as we conversed. It’s no surprise that Mr. Magirus makes delicious sweets.

“This is on the house, my lady.”

“Oh my. Thank you.”

“And here, for your friend.”

“Thanks!”

We're happy to accept.

"This place gives out free stuff? Whoa, this is really good!" Mr. Studylover says after a taste.

"He's a three-star chef, after all."

"Actually? You mean from that famous company?"

"Yes, the ones you're thinking of."

"Then that's why his cooking's so good..."

"I don't want to pry and ask why he's playing a video game, but as long as I can eat his delicious food, I don't mind at all."

"Yeah, good point."

We also discuss the information on witches I've recently gathered, not that I know very much in the first place. I can only list their ranks and names.

It's time to leave now that we've eaten our food and concluded our conversation.

"Thanks for all the help, Princess," says Mr. Studylover.

"And thank you for the food," I reply.

"See you later."

I leave the café, say goodbye to Mr. Studylover, and decide to go level my skills. I want to improve Rope and increase my capacity.

## Chapter 4: October Update

“**A**NY ISSUES HERE?” I ask the lady-in-waiting.

“None to speak of.”

“Okay. I’m going to go level up now.”

“Have a good trip.”

I teleport to Fort Dinselve—the eighth area to the east—from my villa in the Nether.

It looks like a quest is active! Does the enemy still have any health left? I quickly leave the fort and rush to the battlefield.

The knights appear to have just started fighting a brutal tiger. Good, I’m glad I made it in time!

I join with the magic squadron in the back and summon my servants as spirit bodies.

“Allow me to help,” I tell them.

“Ah, we appreciate it!”

The knights can handle the front lines. I’ll stay in the back, delivering spells and hits with my tentacles. Unit One is attacking from the sky too. What a tantalizing battle.

***Rope has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.***

***You have acquired Bind Cyclone through Rope.***

***By reaching the maximum level of Rope, you have unlocked Whip.***

***By fulfilling special conditions, you have unlocked Snake Sword.***

“Thanks for all your help.”

The captain gives me the usual thanks. With that, the quest is complete.

### ***Bind Cyclone***

***When a target is bound, use this art to swing them around.***

I remember someone using this in the free-for-all. They needed space to execute it, but it added a lot of power to their attack.

I’m also curious about Snake Sword. It apparently unlocked with Sword, Whip, and Superior Magic Assist. Few people ever take Rope and Sword together, which is why no one has discovered it. It’s such a strange combination, after all. Rope is so unique in the first place.

I’ll pass this along to the BBS. Frankly, I’m not certain it can be used to make weapons at all. I’m sure it has some purpose, though.

I’m guessing my athame will change somehow if I take Snake Sword, but aren’t my tentacles plenty already? I’m curious if my tentacles can use Snake Sword arts. I’d definitely take it if they can, as it can only increase my attack power.

It costs six SP, meaning it must be considered a second-tier weapon skill. Let’s see. It must involve magic if it requires Superior Magic Assist. Does that mean I can use it on my athame? That would make it worth getting, even if it doesn’t apply to my tentacles.

Sphere Clemas Waver mentioned that Rope and its derivatives will modify the skill. These modifiers will increase my attack power, but they never specified that I’ll be able to use the arts. This is a tough one.

I currently have 117 SP. Some skills are starting to reach as high as level 50. If

they're like Language, third-tier skills will require ten SP.

I have more than thirty skills that seem like they could become third-tier skills eventually, excluding anything that looks unique. I would have to spend more than three hundred SP to claim them all. This one may cost six, but I can't go wasting these points either.

Should I pray for a god's help? No, they probably can't do much about the way the game is programmed. Still, people can't go without praying.

***You have acquired Snake Sword.***

***Athame of Grace has adapted to suit its owner.***

All right! Let's take a look at my equipment now.

***Superior Magic Assist***

***Makes everything from daggers to two-handed swords elastic.***

***Snake Sword Superior Magic Assist***

***Allows your sword to extend like a whip. Also allows for the use of Rope arts.***

It's gone from the singular Superior Magic Assist to a combined Snake Sword and Superior Magic Assist.

The one bad thing is that I can't change the sword size anymore, but I never used that feature anyway, so I don't mind.

***Quick Return***

***Hastily bring back anything you've reached for.***

This one is the same as Whip. That's very useful. I'd be lost without it.

Now for the important part—I have to see how my tentacles work. At least taking the skill wasn't a waste, now that I know it works on my athame, but Rope and derivative skills are mainly for use with my tentacles.

Using Quick Return simply draws things in and goes away, so I wonder if I'll have much use for it, even if it's the same art from Rope.



I'm just relieved that Snake Sword is usable at all. I can use my tentacles to level it up, which is plenty handy.

There's still more to do. I'll borrow a target from the knights, turn my athame into a whip, and record how many times I can hit the target. I'll post the video and a screenshot of the skill to the BBS.

This is probably plenty of information for them. Oh, I'll also include the spell I learned when Space Magic hit level 50.

### ***Create Raum Safety***

***Forms a temporary safe area. Can not be used while in combat. Safe area disappears when exited.***

This will be helpful to recover health—wait, no it won't. The cooldown is thirty minutes of real time, and only party members can join you inside. It must be for emergency AFK situations or bathroom breaks.

While I'm here, I may as well see what's in the woods.

Sometimes it's fun to use all of your abilities to fight a very powerful enemy. Leveling skills is one thing, but even with the extra EXP you get from some opponents, it's not very efficient pay for your work. The actual goal of taking on such fights is to raise your skill as a player.

Well, regardless of any overarching rationales, at the moment, I simply want to fight with everything I've got. This is an action game. It's what you're supposed to do. It's no different than soloing a boss that you would usually fight with your party. Currently, there are no bosses in the game you can fight twice, so I'll search for an enemy that's much stronger than me.

I inform the knights of my goal and head south, where I land in front of a

single high ogre guard. There's no point in raining blows down on him from above.

The high ogre guard is above level 50, and he's equipped with a one-handed sword and shield. I'm thinking there must be rules to the enemies' names when you take their level and equipment into account. If I remember correctly, the early ones that had swords were called soldiers, and the ones with lances were lancers. I think the ones with shields were called defenders.

I'll change my athame's element to space like I always do for fights. The athame improves the stats of my weapon when I'm defending. I definitely can't unequip it when fighting such a strong enemy as this.

The enemy AI also gets smarter once they hit level 50. More importantly, however, I wonder if the AI is reused from elsewhere. Does this high ogre guard behave like a knight? I'm standing in front of it, but all it does is look at me. It raises its sword the moment I raise my athame.

High ogre guards use the typical one-handed sword and shield, and sure enough, this muscular, two-meter-tall brute is carrying his sword and kite shield the standard way.

Time for the usual routine!

I start by smacking it with my tentacles.

Ah, um, I'm sorry about this. I'm no sword master. But I won't hold back, since you're a lot stronger than me.

I use the Mirror Stance Lana taught me to reflect a hit. I'll hit it with shot spells to whittle away at its health, little by little, adding in as many tentacle hits as I can in the process. Then I'll pray that my counterattacks activate when I block the ogre's sword attacks.

I use my athame to block his sword when he swings it toward me. Then, when he can't defend himself, I jump in the air and hit him for as much HP as I can

before he regains his balance.

The problem is that his HP bar isn't going down at all. I'm also taking a little bit of damage when I block hits.

This ogre fights exclusively with its strength, so he keeps swinging even when he knows I'm going to block it. I'm glad it's so easy to read what move he'll do next, but honestly, it feels like I'm being overwhelmed. Well, maybe that's natural for a higher-level enemy.

Hm...? Hmm?!

"Ngh!"

You can bash with your shield too?! I managed to guard, but there was heavy knockback! What a brute. I know you have no brains, but I wish you didn't make up for it with pure muscle.

I was blown back and into the air, so I use Coordinate Float to channel my momentum, rotating around until I land in a tree. He'll probably take a lot of damage if I attack him from behind...

Despite my attempts to guard myself, that shield bash did a lot of damage. I'll use Holy Magic to heal myself. I also lash out with my tentacles to prevent a follow-up attack, dropping to the ground as I heal myself.

Okay, let's try this again. The ogre has roughly 60 percent of its HP left. I have 70 percent MP. This is going to be close. I certainly could run out of MP depending on how many times I'm hit. I also have to watch closely to see if the ogre drops his stance and starts charging at me.

Binding him with my tentacles didn't seem to last very long. It's silly to try to restrain a brute with pure force, I suppose—if I'm going to bind him, I ought to stick to Shadow Bind.

Bringer of Madness isn't working either. Honestly, I feel like the deadly poison and curse attacks I had before I evolved would have been better for this. Should I take a different status ailment skill? I already took Magic Particle

Encroachment—maybe that'll be better.

I keep a close eye out for shield bashes, avoid the ogre's sword, and focus on nothing but depleting his HP with spells.

...Am I imagining things? It feels like... Hmm? Is this thing getting stronger? My ability to heal increases the longer I'm in a fight—could he have access to something similar?

This ogre isn't a berserker. I don't feel like his ability to defend himself is getting worse. He must be a different type of enemy than the bear boss in the east. Perhaps that means he's actually a slow starter. Active Cells is based on the time a fight takes too. Well, I'm sure there's plenty of skills I still know nothing about, so I couldn't tell you which ones he might be using.

No, I think this is something else. Considering his HP, does he get stronger the more damage he takes? After all, there's no denying that his strength is indeed increasing. I should have asked the knights for more information before I came here.

The high ogre's sword just turned red. It must be using an attack art! The blade just suddenly turned blurry to my eyes. This is very bad. Why, of all the arts, did it have to be Hazy Moon?!

I block the attack like usual, when suddenly, Danger Sense activates and shows me six different lines. I block the six follow-up attacks—nope, that's thoroughly impossible. Unlike Delay Slash, the follow-up attack from Hazy Moon is fast and aims for a random body part.

In the end, my right arm is completely severed. This is *not* good. I've always been weak against slashing attacks! At least I already had the Book of Eibon floating next to me.

“Mixa Pers=eh Pogn.”

I stop the high ogre in his tracks with Shadow Bind. A tentacle emerges from my right arm and transforms to look like the original body part. Since my

athame went flying away with my arm, I use Telekinetic Fit to bring it back. I also use this moment to heal.

Here we go. Time to—*now* what?!

The high ogre's blade glows red again once the bind spell is removed. Suddenly, he's right in front of my face. Now he's using Assault Blade?! That's the art that allows you to instantly close the distance and slash your enemy. It's usually paired with a ground-shrinking move.



I managed to stop the blow! But now another shield bash?! I jump in the air and guard against it.

The shield sends me flying backward, but I don't take as much damage as before. I could probably create some sort of safety net if I had more tentacles. Or I could grab myself and brake to a halt. I wish I had macros for that sort of thing.

Still, I'm enjoying this fight. It's a whole lot of fun. I like making a nice, clean sweep of enemies weaker than me, but I also enjoy slaying giants from time to time too. Strong enemies are what make action games really shine!

***Book has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.***

***You have acquired Mirror Cast through Book.***

***Snake Sword has reached level 5.***

***You have acquired Ground Thrust through Snake Sword.***

***Superior Magic Assist has reached level 55.***

***Magic Assist arts Psychokinesis and Delay Spell have been strengthened.***

***Holy Magic has reached level 15.***

***You have acquired Area Heal through Holy Magic.***

The high ogre guard that severed my arm is now face down on the ground.

Let's take a look at the damage. My HP is all right, but my MP meter is empty. I have just over 10 percent remaining. It seems like I *can* defeat stronger enemies, but it wouldn't be efficient to use them to grind levels.

Well, the point was to enjoy the action, not to farm EXP. It's a win in my book.

Oh, another ogre is nearby. Facing it would be certain death without any MP to use, so I cast Return instead.

“Oh, Your Highness. You’re back?”

“I am. I managed to defeat a high ogre guard, but I’ve run out of MP, so I used Return before another one could find me.”

“You safely defeated a high ogre guard, you say? That’s wonderful. I look forward to seeing your progress, as I hear outsiders are quick to grow.”

“Thank you. I’ll be on my way for now.”

“All right. We’ll be waiting for your return, even if we have little to offer you.”

I say goodbye to the knights at the fort before teleporting to my villa.

It appears someone informed those knights about who I am. Their attitude around me has changed ever so slightly—or rather, the atmosphere at the fort feels different. They seem to be running a tighter ship instead of the more casual approach they took so as not to intimidate the general public.

Putting the knights and their changes aside, it’s time to take a look at my skills.

My skill EXP is looking all right, I suppose. It’s not so bad when you account for how much time it took to fight such a strong enemy. The problems are that it’s hard to stay focused for so long. You’re also probably dead if enemy reinforcements show up.

### ***Mirror Cast***

***Duplicate a spell you’ve already cast.***

### ***Ground Thrust***

***Cut down those that stand before you. Grants a bonus against enemies on the ground.***

## ***Area Heal***

***Release a circle of light around you that heals anyone inside.***

A damage bonus to enemies on the ground and an AOE healing spell, huh? There's not much to say about those. The Book art is the one that gives me pause. I don't understand it based on the description alone. I'll have to take a look at the BBS.

Let's see... Oh, the art I'm seeing is different because it's a different skill. I learned this one at level 25.

## ***Mirage Cast***

***Cast a visual imitation of any spell you know. Deals no damage to enemies.***

By using a bit of MP, this art allows you to recreate the visual effects of spells. Currently, it's used in PvP.

The name is similar, but this isn't the art I'm interested in right now. What's the lowdown on the one I have?

Apparently, Mirror Cast is a way of recasting the last spell you used. This is very handy, as it consumes less MP than it would to cast a spell twice. However, the cooldown time is a whopping 180 seconds—three minutes.

I suppose this is a good art to have if the opportunity presents itself. From what I've seen so far as I've leveled up Snake Sword, my tentacles should benefit from it.

I step outside to test the arts out. They activated, so there shouldn't be any issues. All I need to do is swipe my tentacles to get it to work, and the range is quite large too. I can also change how high they go, so the enemy's size shouldn't make much of a difference to me.

I also tested it with my athame, but all it did was uncoil outward like a whip I could use to mow things down.

Now what shall I work on? I like to change things up from time to time. I could have Lana teach me stances, or I could ask the prime minister or Lana to teach me about proper etiquette for royalty—something I would need for RP. From what I've seen of their AI, I think they would help me out.

I also want to make progress on the quest relating to Unparalleled Style. Considering she was a duchess in her lifetime, I think Lana would be the person to help me. I'll train with her before I go to bed. Ah, I also need to adjust my Alchemy circle. That will have to wait for another day.

We'll be receiving a game update soon too. I wonder what the October event will entail?

Classes are done for the day, and it's time to go home. Tomohiro and Suguru rush over to me—Eli and Abby were already right next to me.

"They posted the patch notes," he tells us.

"Oh, I'll have to read them when I get home."

"Definitely."

After that, we join Eli and Abby in the car that takes them home. How convenient.

There's still a bit of time before the maintenance is over, so we gather in my living room to relax and have some drinks. We also put the patch notes on the TV screen so that everyone can read them.

"Hmm. I'm most interested in the macros and 'expansion of original equipment,'" says Rina.

"Those are the big ones. There's also the 'movement replays,' 'personal diary page,' and 'production commission system,'" Tomohiro adds.

Macros and original equipment are definitely the best additions for Rina. The other three thing Tomohiro mentioned make up the main additions to the game with this update.

“You can freely combine whatever you want for macros, including arts, but they say to be careful because the cooldown times won’t change. Well yeah, we expected that part. Going off what they wrote, it looks like it’s pretty customizable.”

“We won’t be able to tell until the update’s out and we can test it ourselves.”

“Yep.”

Tomohiro and Suguru are right. There’s no way to know how the system works until we get our hands on it. I’ll be sure to test it out once I log in, since I’m eager to use it if it’ll be helpful for my tentacles.

“The movement replay system will allow you to recreate so-called transformation scenes, but it will not leave you invincible for any amount of time,’ they say,” Yanase-san explains.

“Well, yeah, of course not,” Matsukane-san chimes in.

“People would use it to escape enemies’ biggest moves.”

“Yeah, I sure would,” my sister asserts.

“We know.” They weren’t at all surprised by that. As people who play the game during our free time, it would be a system we couldn’t resist.

“Imagine you’re getting hit with a dragon’s breath, but you get the timing of your motion just right. Wouldn’t that be perfect?”

“You mean, you emerge from the breath completely unharmed and striking a cool pose?”

“A dragon would probably be a raid battle, so the whole group would be synchronizing poses.”

“I would crack up if I saw that.”

“I can picture the dragon getting a stats buff from how badly you piss it off.”

That sounds like a surreal battlefield if I’ve ever heard one. Would my sides survive all that laughter?

“As for the diary page, the Testing Team mentioned how they’re creating an in-game wiki, but I doubt they’ll use it for themselves,” I explained.

“Whoa, for real?”

“Mr. Studylover told me that. We met recently, and I shared what I know about the church with him.”

“Now that you mention it, Magirus informed me that you visited his shop,” Eli remarks.

“Yes, Mr. Studylover treated me in exchange for information.”

I imagine most players are going to rely on this wiki if it means they no longer have to go hunting through the different threads. That said, some hunting will still be necessary until the wiki is all organized.

“But the biggest addition is that they’re improving our original equipment.”

“They’re even adding bones! Wowie!”

This is familiar... That Western game...equipment mod... Urk! My head hurts.

It’s hard not to think back on that incident when they’re doing the exact same thing.

“Sounds like you can get the bones through drops or in-game purchases.”

“It’s just amazing that they’re drops at all. I guess I don’t know the drop rate yet, though.”

According to the patch notes, the drop rates depend on the level of the enemy. They also go straight to the player’s inventory instead of being split, and the bones drop as soon as the enemy is defeated, so “certain players don’t need to worry.” I see. Mr. Skelly and I are definitely among these certain players, seeing as how we absorb enemy corpses.

There are different varieties of bones, but the best kind must be purchased or obtained through extremely difficult events or raids.

“By the way, what do you mean by ‘bones’?” asks Eli.

“I don’t get it!” Abby cries.

Well, I suppose it’s not something most people who aren’t developers pay attention to. My sister and I explain it to Eli and Abby.

“You can think of them as literal ‘bones.’ In games, they’re the framework that allows for your character to do motions,” I tell them.

“To move something in a game, you just move its bones. There’s no point worrying about muscles—it’s not like they move one at a time in real life anyway,” Rina adds.

“Ah, I see.”

If you want to raise a character’s leg, all you need to do is raise the bone in their thigh—although, depending on how a game’s graphics are handled, it’s not uncommon to raise a character’s thighs only to have their feet remain stuck to the ground and their shins stretch creepily to stay attached to the knee.

“But what does that have to do with equipment?” asks Abby.

“I think cloaks would be the easiest example to understand.”

“Probably. They move around more than anything.”

“To make a cloak flutter around in the breeze more smoothly and realistically, you give it bones.”

“The more bones a cloak has, the more places its fabric can flap about.”

“Oh! I see now!”

Come to think of it, my cloak must have quite a lot of bones. The resident adventurers’ cloaks and clergy members’ robes have never looked unnatural to me either—I figure the equipment they’ve already released up to this point must have quite the bone count. Considering that, more bones probably aren’t

something you really need unless you're extra picky. Of course, plenty of players *are* picky about that sort of thing.

"The more bones, the harder it is on their servers—figures they aren't beating around the bush about asking you to pay up for them."

"The worst part is they've put right at a truly evil price where you can actually see yourself buying them..."

"Well, it may be just a game to us, but for them, it's about trying to run a business."

To sum everything up: Bones are consumables used when crafting equipment. You start crafting by selecting the number of bones you wish to include in your item. Once you've established how many bones you want to expend, production continues like normal. Then, when production finishes, the item that was produced is considered "incomplete" until you commit to spending bones on it—and once you do, your item is complete. Whether the bones came from in-game purchases or were drops isn't a factor.

In other words, if you end up with something that doesn't work the way you want it to, you can scrap it without using any of your bones. The other items you used will still be lost, but you never have to commit your bones until you're satisfied.

"Yeah, that's super kind of them."

"Now, what's with this production commission system?"

Hmm. To put it simply, you have someone else craft things for you without giving them the materials. Then the completed item directly enters your inventory. For each instance of this, you have to pay the producer fees for their labor.

If you use this process, you set the bones and texture of an item, have a producer craft it, and once it comes back to you, you can add the bones yourself.

“So, you’ll need commission applications and blueprints?”

“Probably. The system centers on having people create something you’ve designed.”

“I think I’ll have Dad design a military uniform for me to wear,” my sister declared.

“You don’t think that’s taking it a little too far?” I chide her. Being able to employ a professional for free because you’re their daughter is the ultimate strategy. Dad would definitely do it for her.

“Oh yeah. Did you guys see the screenshot of the southern continent?”

“Yeah! I’m still trying to decide if I wanna go!”

What’s this? I haven’t seen it yet. Now I’m curious. Suguru and Rina’s parties must have all seen it already, judging by their reactions. Eli and the rest of us haven’t seen it yet? Well, let’s take a look.

“So, this is the Dinait Empire?”

“Is that the Colosseum?”

“That’s where we had the martial arts tournament when the game was still in beta!”

“So it was in the empire all along.”

“Anyway, forget about the cities in the empire. Look at this crazy screenshot!” The image that comes up is basically the epitome of the fantasy genre.

“A floating continent?!”

“Something’s definitely floating.”

“Is that a crystal forest on the land as well? And I think I can see ancient ruins.”

“Steampunk—no, maybe cyberpunk?” asks Eli.

“It’s like something from a fantasy land!” Abby cries.

The northern continent that's home to Starting Town is modeled after medieval Europe, meaning you don't feel much like you're adventuring through a fantasy world. The Dinait Empire is no different in that respect. Well, I suppose it can't be *too* wild, as they're residential areas.

However, the outer section shown in the screenshot is much more "fantasy-like."

"They also say the enemies in the south are really strong."

"They are?"

"Not only do they have high stats, but they fight in groups and hit you with status ailments too."

"I see. It's probably time I unlock areas other than just the eastern side."

"What, you've never been anywhere else?"

"I haven't needed anything outside of what's in the east. Ah, but now that I can use potions, I think I want to unlock the northwest."

"That's where the elves are, I think. It's called the Enchanted Tiaren Kingdom. They live alongside nature, work on their spells and magic medicine, and the water there also tastes really good."

I didn't know all that. It sounds like they also produce magic plants used in those magic medicines. Frankly, I should bring those materials to Ms. Salute instead of making them myself, but doing the crafting is what gets my skills leveled up.

"Ah, speaking of Alchemy, I obtained a recipe for doll cores, Abby," I inform her.

"Doll cores? Tell me more!"

"They're supposedly called automaton cores, but you can't craft them unless you have the third-tier skill."

"Automata! But it's going to be hard to level up Alchemy too..."

“It will have to become group work, most likely. Just let me know, and I’ll help you with the Alchemy part.”

“Yay!”

It’s hard to level up two different production skills—hence why my levels are even lower than players like Mr. Skelly. It’s not all bad news, though, since I do get more stat modifiers thanks to those production skills.

Alchemy pairs pretty nicely with most other production skills, but I went and chose Cooking. Chemical cooking? That sounds scary.

“Hey, I think maintenance should be over soon.”

“Probably. All right, let’s get home and download that patch.”

I say goodbye to everyone, then I head to my room to start the patch myself. It’s my first time logging in after the maintenance.

I head straight to the training grounds to test out macros.

The UI, of course, uses your customization and targets to confirm your course of action. I don’t need to combine anything for close-range attacks, so I’ll focus on the options that make use of my tentacles. Number of tentacles to use, where to spawn the tentacles, attack method—yes, I see. Using macros will probably make this all much quicker.

I’ll need a macro to strike a single enemy over and over again, macros for two varieties of binds, and a net macro just to be safe.

Others on the BBS are looking into different uses, so I’ll join them and do some trial and error of my own.

“Why hello, Madame. Trying to master something new, are you?”

“Hello, Lana. I’m working on the most efficient use of my tentacles now that they’re an option for me.”

“That’s wonderful. There’s no point in having power if you refuse to use it.”

I agree with her wholeheartedly.

While the macros make things easier than casting spells manually, the semi-auto fire rate is still a pain to use for each individual shot. In fact, firing automatically with a macro also makes it come out randomly, which just defeats the point. It affects the spawn point of the tentacle, the attack method, the angle of attack, and more. Sometimes a tentacle emerges right in front of my eyes and starts to hit the enemy, and other times, it emerges at the enemy's side and does a sideswipe, hitting me in the process.

Unfortunately, that means I'm not going to be able to use macros for automatic attacks. Doing it manually is also near impossible due to how hard it is. Semi-auto seems like the best fit for this method.

"Madame, you've learned the second phase stances Ex2 Unsheathed Style and Ex2 Mirror Style. That means I can now teach you Ex3 Carnage Style and Ex3 Water's Surface Style whenever you have some time."

"I'd like to learn Ex3 Water's Surface Style sooner rather than later. But for now, my focus is my tentacles. Once I master this, I won't have to spend time thinking about them while I'm fighting."

"As you wish. I'll be waiting whenever you're ready."

What a good subordinate. Subordinate? Well, I guess that's what she is. It's a wonderful thing to have masterful subordinates. I better work hard so that the AI doesn't give up on me—I'd be depressed for days if she abandoned me.

After Lana helps me with my tests, I've learned a bit more about two of my skills. Maybe she wanted to teach me more than just stances.

Using my tentacles levels up both the skill Sphere Clemas Waver as well as the skill Relentless Savage Ones—however, the two skills are otherwise independent, so the number of tentacles I use for one doesn't affect the other.

My Sphere Clemas Waver skill level improves the rate of automatic counterattacks. To be more specific, the higher my level, the more spheres that

wriggle out of my body thanks to the skill's effect. I take it that more spheres means more triggers. Also, it looks like I'll get one every ten levels instead of five.

Relentless Savage Ones, on the other hand, simply increases the amount of tentacles I can spawn from thin air. It also improves every ten levels—since I didn't see a change at level 15, it'll likely come when the skill hits level 20. If my math is right, I should have eleven tentacles by the time I've maxed the skill. I probably won't be able to use them well without a macro, and even then, managing all eleven tentacles at once seems like no easy task.

Since the skills are independent, I can use my current maximum of two spawned tentacles to bind an enemy and still trigger counterattacks if I'm hit. I believe it's my avatar that's doing the counterattack while my real body possesses the tentacles—well, whatever logic it uses, I don't really mind. All that matters is that the tentacles aren't shared, which means my DPS won't go down even if I'm attacking with a macro and the enemy triggers my counterattack. I also don't need to consider whether one skill takes priority over the other: I can simply attack with my two spawned tentacles without fear of leaving myself with no sphere tentacles. That makes things so much easier.

I'll spawn a tentacle behind my target at an angle that won't get in my way, and I'll have it attack until the target dies or the fight concludes. Positioning it at an angle of 180 degrees—no, of 120 degrees relative to me and the target would be best. It would also be better to split my bind macros between binds for four limbs and those for two. Then I'll differentiate between coiling and biting binds, and that leaves me with a total of four macros. As for a safety net, I only need a macro to make a mesh shape for me, and I'll be good.

Let's see. That looks good for now. All that's left is to activate and adjust them at the hunting grounds.

Now it's time to have Lana teach me Water's Surface Style.

"Water's Surface Style is a combination of the defensive styles I've taught you

before. Everything will return to its original state, like the calming of the surface of water. You will block impacts and reflect long-range attacks. This will be even more daunting to use in a true battle, but I have faith in you, Madame. Let us begin."

All right. I'll work hard to learn this.

Once I have Water's Surface down, it's time to go hunting.

**[Indulge in desires] Comprehensive Thread 108 [You online gamers!]**

**1. Passing Conqueror**

This is a comprehensive thread regarding conquering new areas.

Put down any information you can.

Past threads: [http://\\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\*](http://* * * * * * * *)

**>> 940 Continue this discussion in the next thread**

**183. Passing Conqueror**

The Testing Team's wiki is slowly starting to take shape.

**184. Passing Conqueror**

You're right. It's really helpful.

**185. Passing Conqueror**

Do they get off on gathering data or something? Buncha weirdos...

**186. Passing Conqueror**

They're definitely weirdos, all right.

**187. Passing Conqueror**

You can always rely on those kinds of guys to get the job done right.

**188. Passing Conqueror**

Exactly!

**189. Passing Conqueror**

Now that some time has passed since the update, what do you guys think of macros and the changes to original items?

## **190. Passing Conqueror**

Producers and RPers are having the time of their lives.

## **191. Passing Conqueror**

It's a lot easier now that we can make consumables by using macros.

## **192. Passing Conqueror**

What about for combat? I tested it out and wasn't super impressed.

## **193. Passing Conqueror**

Ummm, I guess it depends on when and how you use it?

## **194. Passing Conqueror**

Macros are for automatic combat, not manual combat, so you can use your arts to attack even when it should be physically impossible from your position.

## **195. Passing Conqueror**

So macros are really valuable when you want to move automatically, instead of messing with all the different options?

## **196. Passing Conqueror**

That's it. Even if you activate them in midair, the game takes over for you.

## **197. Passing Conqueror**

All they're doing is attacking with arts, so it's up to the person playing to control what comes after that.

## **198. Passing Conqueror**

So you might be able to attack with your macros in midair, but you'll still fall flat on your face if you can't stick the landing.

## **199. Passing Conqueror**

Forget going from macro to manual—if you go from manual to macro, you can actually pull off a certain degree of animation canceling. I'm not so sure

how well it'd work on players though.

## **200. Passing Conqueror**

Do you mean even if it allows you to do unique behavior, it won't really be enough to faze a player and they'll just attack you once it's over?

## **201. Passing Conqueror**

It's like a unique way of activating your arts, but unlike the manual method, it's not at all versatile.

## **202. Passing Conqueror**

Exactly. It's kind of a dilemma.

## **203. Passing Conqueror**

But it's also fun to test that stuff out and decide which method you prefer.

## **204. Passing Conqueror**

I know what you mean!

## **205. Passing Conqueror**

I love playing with these bones too.

## **206. Passing Conqueror**

It's getting overshadowed, but production commissions are also handy.

## **207. Passing Conqueror**

I like that the process of asking for help is streamlined.

## **208. Passing Conqueror**

What is the motion replay function for? Just for messing around?

## **209. Passing Conqueror**

Yeah, I'd say so.

## **210. Passing Conqueror**

Probably. All it does is let you replay something you recorded in advance.

## **211. Passing Conqueror**

Guys. I think I just discovered something amazing.

## **212. Passing Conqueror**

Oh? Do tell.

## **213. Passing Conqueror**

We'll be mad if it sucks.

## **214. Passing Conqueror**

You can record yourself using arts during manual combat, right? Then make it a macro...

## **215. Passing Conqueror**

Wait, you can do that?

## **216. Passing Conqueror**

It sure seems like you can.

## **217. Passing Conqueror**

Let's test it out.

## **218. Passing Conqueror**

Agreed.

## **342. Passing Conqueror**

It sounds like it's confirmed that you can add manual arts inputs to macros.

## **343. Passing Conqueror**

Yeah, so I've heard.

## **344. Passing Conqueror**

I'm sure it's a great strategy if you can use it well. But it's pretty tricky to actually get working.

### **345. Passing Conqueror**

You record your actions in advance, then register them as macros. That way, when you're actually fighting, you activate whichever one will get the job done.

### **346. Passing Conqueror**

I'm not bothering with that. I don't want the game to get repetitive!

### **347. Passing Conqueror**

I could definitely see that happening.

### **348. Passing Conqueror**

It seems really versatile. Isn't it worth it to just have a few ready to use?

### **349. Passing Conqueror**

By the way, what happens when you use an art when it's in cooldown?

### **350. Passing Conqueror**

You merely strike a cool pose.

### **351. Passing Conqueror**

Amazing, isn't it? It stops both friend and foe in their tracks!

### **352. Passing Conqueror**

It makes you go through the movements, but the art has no effect!

### **353. Passing Conqueror**

So it just turns into a normal attack?

### **354. Passing Conqueror**

Frankly, if the art worked like it usually did, that would probably just be a bug, no?

### **355. Passing Conqueror**

Yeah, I think.

### **356. Passing Conqueror**

Yeah, you stink.

### **357. Passing Conqueror**

We're ignoring you.

### **358. Passing Conqueror**

Pretty please don't?

### **359. Passing Conqueror**

Shut up!

## **360 Passing Conqueror**

Oh?

### **361. Passing Conqueror**

Oooooh?

### **362. Passing Conqueror**

Look at all of those!

### **363. Passing Conqueror**

There's so many "new" markers, I can't tell what's *actually* new.

### **364. Passing Conqueror**

You never look at what's changed, do you? I'm the same way.

### **365. Passing Conqueror**

Exactly! Then in moments like these, you have no clue what's actually new.

### **366. Passing Conqueror**

Ah, status ailments have been updated.

### **367. Passing Conqueror**

Yeah, it's status ailments.

### **368. Passing Conqueror**

Seriously? What did they add?

### **369. Passing Conqueror**

Rust, decay, wither/contract, no recovery.

### **370. Passing Conqueror**

I don't like the sounds of those.

### **371. Passing Conqueror**

Could our culprit be Princess?

### **372. Passing Conqueror**

I feel bad, but I had the same thought.

### **373. Passing Conqueror**

Me too. Especially the withering one...

### **374. Passing Conqueror**

Uh-huh. Agreed.

### **375. Passing Conqueror**

Yeah. Touching something and getting inflamed, decaying, and withering...

### **376. Passing Conqueror**

That's how Cthulhu is depicted.

### **377. Passing Conqueror**

Ah, Princess has been captured by Studylover.

### **378. Passing Conqueror**

Seriously?

### **379. Passing Conqueror**

Well, you can usually check her personal thread if you want to know where she's at.

### **380. Passing Conqueror**

And if *they* don't know?

### **381. Passing Conqueror**

She's either at her home in the Nether or a less populated area that her fans haven't reached yet. Or she's just not logged in.

### **382. Passing Conqueror**

I see.

### **383. Passing Conqueror**

In other words, we'll find out if we wait?

### **384. Passing Conqueror**

Almost certainly.

### **659. Passing Conqueror**

Princess doesn't hesitate to strip down for testing.

### **660. Passing Conqueror**

A model first-waver.

### **661. Studylover**

I'll be summarizing her info on the wiki!

### **662. Passing Conqueror**

Thanks!

### **831. Cecil**

I come bearing interesting information.

### **832. Passing Conqueror**

Oh yeah? Do tell.

### **833. Passing Conqueror**

Tell us, tell us!

### **834. Cecil**

Lately they've been doing a story, I mean, a chronicle over in the empire. The chronicle quest has branched into a chronicle guild quest.

### **835. Passing Conqueror**

A what...?

### **836. Passing Conqueror**

Hmm? Chronicle quests are usually exclusive to a single party. But now they cover a whole guild?

### **837. Cecil**

Exactly. Our available guild members are currently on patrol.

### **838. Passing Conqueror**

It's hard to unlock portals in the empire. We'll need help with the boat quest, right?

### **839. Passing Conqueror**

The boat quest got a lot easier ever since the ninjas cleared it.

### **840. Passing Conqueror**

Are you serious?

### **841. Passing Conqueror**

Completely.

### **842. Cecil**

It's a lot easier now.

### **843. Passing Conqueror**

You guys caught me! I haven't tried it again since then. Are there nobleman escort missions for entire guilds too?

### **844. Cecil**

It's more like quests to defend their entire territory, not just their families. It's a very large-scale quest.

### **845. Passing Conqueror**

Territory? These guys have their own territory?

### **846. Cecil**

Apparently, they do in the empire. There's a lot of villages too, unlike the northern continent.

### **847. Passing Conqueror**

You guys caught me! I haven't been there yet.

### **848. Anastasia**

The empire is very big. From what I've seen, their major cities have teleportation portals, and villages exist in between the towns.

### **849. Passing Conqueror**

Princess is here. Sounds like the empire is a proper country in its own right.

### **850. Passing Conqueror**

It's pretty much a straight line to all four countries in the north.

### **851. Passing Conqueror**

So we should head south if we want to do chronicle quests for the nobles?

### **852. Cecil**

That seems like your best shot. There's a lot of nobles there because of how

the territory is split up.

Also, hey, Princess. Perfect timing. I might ask your help for something later on, so thanks in advance.

### **853. Passing Conqueror**

Guess I'll visit the empire and see what's up.

### **854. Passing Conqueror**

It's so much more like a fantasy land!

### **855. Anastasia**

What could this be? I don't mind helping if I have nothing else on my schedule.

### **856. Cecil**

Before that, could you tell me about your character's backstory?

### **857. Anastasia**

All right guys, say hi to my OC! No, all joking aside, my backstory comes from my character's race in this world.

### **858. Cecil**

Right, you don't really roleplay in the first place.

You'll probably be the best person to call to get this over with, depending on how this goes.

### **859. Anastasia**

Will you be inviting me to help on a quest? I see. There are many details to my character, so allow me to summarize them.

### **860. Cecil**

Thanks!

### **861. Passing Conqueror**

Maybe we'll call her too if we need her.

## **862. Passing Conqueror**

Yep. It's helpful to know this stuff.

## **863. Anastasia**

Church relationship

Outer one. Nemeseia. Medium of Stellura: Second tier

Outer ones: Those who have escaped the cycle of reincarnation. Punishers of those who break a contract with Stellura.

Nemeseia: Royalty of the afterlife. Handles "those who lay their hand on souls."

Supreme Arbitrator: Essentially, Enma. This is my job title, while Nemeseia is the name of the royal family. This one has the most potential, as detailed below.

Medium: A child beloved by a god—someone who has one of the "blessing" titles given by the gods. They receive divine revelations and such. Humans have ranked the mediums as follows, going off their titles: the "blessed" are third highest, the "protected" are second, and the "loved" are the top level.

To be frank, being an outer one or a Nemeseia has a massive effect on the residents. Outer ones work at the direction of the gods, so when they appear, people assume it's time for divine punishment. Nemeseias are royalty in the afterlife, so you're in for a hard time once you die if you upset them. That's why I prefer to be treated as a medium or an arbitrator if someone calls for my help.

## **864. Passing Conqueror**

That's a lot...

## **865. Passing Conqueror**

Seeing Enma, who also delivers divine punishment for wrongdoing, strutting around your town would give anyone pause.

## **866. Passing Conqueror**

It's a good thing when people don't know who you are. Life is sometimes better for the ignorant!

## **867. Anastasia**

**>>863**

As for my arbitrator role, it would appear I can be "summoned" in this world, depending on the occasion.

The main job of an arbitrator is to look at souls and decide if they should be sent to the Nether or the Abyss, which is why there are multiple people with the role. As royalty, I sit at the top of the hierarchy of arbitrators.

I've actually heard that residents call arbitrators as witnesses for important trials taking place amongst humanity.

## **868. Cecil**

Witnesses, huh? That's to have a third party watch over and make sure everything's legitimate?

## **869. Anastasia**

Exactly. With gods regularly influencing this world directly, it's very effective to call an arbitrator from the afterlife as a witness to trials. It's usually someone from the government or the judicial branch who directs the royal court's sorcerer to do the summoning.

If the culprit has acted illegitimately, meaning they've told a lie, the arbitrator will use their Blade of Arbitration skill to cut them down. This attack is one inflicted on the soul, not the body, so it actually hurts a lot more.

Problems arise if the summoning side has conducted falsehoods or cover-ups on a "national" scale. If it's bad enough, Stellura herself might send the undead to storm them—it's essentially the purpose of the Nether's army. Bearing that in mind, summoning an afterlife arbitrator for a trial is, for all intents and purposes, the same as declaring, "Our trial is legitimate, and we'll stake the

whole country on that claim."

### **870. Passing Conqueror**

So if the culprit (or "the accused" at this point, I guess) declares they've been falsely charged, they should push to have an arbitrator summoned?

### **871. Anastasia**

That's correct. Anyone connected to Stellura will deliver a fair and impartial judgment. After all, the arbitrator has no personal stake in what happens to countries on the surface.

### **872. Passing Conqueror**

Sounds like a summoning is an instant win if you don't have anything to hide.

### **873. Passing Conqueror**

But it's also possible for things to backfire really bad.

### **874. Cecil**

Right, so I should call for you if I'm on the verge of a messy situation, Princess?

### **875. Anastasia**

Calling an outer one, a medium of Stellura, and a supreme arbitrator as a witness sure seems like an entertaining situation. Ha ha ha ha! I love it.

### **876. Passing Conqueror**

Talk about hiding an ace up your sleeve.

### **877. Passing Conqueror**

Princess is the ultimate weapon.

### **878. Passing Conqueror**

You all have to be capable of knowing more than whether a human ought to live or die, right? Would it be too much to ask?

## **879. Anastasia**

We're usually only called for one single purpose, so we can ignore whatever comes next. What happens while you're alive is your responsibility.

Undead have jurisdiction over souls because of our relation to the afterlife. We don't mind helping a bit when summoned, though, and it's also nice for the arbitrator to experience something new—souls are usually gray from the combined good things and bad things a person has done, after all.

## **880. Passing Conqueror**

Other games refer to that soul color as "karma," right?

## **881. Anastasia**

I personally believe that's about the size of what this game does as well.

## **882. Passing Conqueror**

So it's another hidden gauge like affinity? But you don't really experience the effects of this one.

## **883. Anastasia**

Only the undead of the afterlife can see souls, so your own soul's color shouldn't make much of a difference to you personally. I have a skill that affects damage dealt based on the enemy's karma, but that's essentially meant for so-called red players, so there's generally no need to worry about it.

## **884. Passing Conqueror**

In other words, if you *do* need to worry about it, it's probably already too late.

## **885. Passing Conqueror**

Yeah, I'd imagine so.

## **886. Anastasia**

There are also skills like Disguise, Conceal, Conceal Presence, and Conceal Energy, but if someone with a black soul uses these, I'll be on high alert as soon

as I lay eyes on them.

### **887. Passing Conqueror**

I get it. That hidden gauge is what makes your soul black or white.

### **888. Passing Conqueror**

I feel like karma will make a bigger difference than reputation when trying to win over undead...

### **889. Anastasia**

Undead look at a person's soul, or that is to say, their true essence. They'll definitely treat you differently depending on the state of that soul. A good reputation doesn't guarantee you're not doing bad things behind the scenes, so if your soul is black, you're definitely guilty of something severe.

### **890. Cecil**

Okay, I think I understand! I'll ask for your help if the situation calls for it.

## Chapter 5: Saturday Week 1

AS ALWAYS, I START my morning by stretching, practicing stances, and getting a bit of production done.

I think I should finish up the expansion work before I log out again. I'll upgrade Evernight Castle and the town around it to level II and improve the outsiders' respawn point by one degree.

I head to the respawn point and mess with the UI a bit.

“Oh?”

“Look at that. It’s gone from a shabby little shack to a rather nice house.”

I explore the house with a person who happened to have just respawned. Excluding the donation box at the front door, the rest of it is a perfectly normal house.

“It’s so normal, I don’t even know what to say. I’m going to take a look at the next spot now,” I tell them.

I part with the person who died and head to town.

A tower stands in the main plaza—a tower with a very important job. Perhaps its function is even more important than Evernight Castle itself.

Undead gatekeepers stand at the entrance to guard it. I wonder what’s inside? Not even the prime minister knows. It’s a mystery to me, a Nemeseia, as well.

“Hmm...”

“What’s wrong? Don’t tell me...”

“Ah, it looks like it’s time.”

“I see. I’ll miss you. Until next time!”

“See you next time.”

One of two young men begins to walk toward the tower.

“My time has come.”

“You may pass.”

The entrance is a four-meter-tall door made of materials I can’t identify. Only those whose “time has come” are able to get the door open.

It slowly opens when the young man touches it. All I can make out inside is the staircase to the upper floors.

“May your slumber be peaceful and your journey safe.”

“Thanks.”

The young man turns around, waves, and enters the tower. The door closes as soon as he’s inside.

People whose time has come can’t open this door again, meaning the undead gatekeepers watch over the process to ensure its functioning. They also explain the tower to anyone interested.

No one tries to enter the tower alongside another person whose time has come. They simply don’t know what will happen to them.

You see, this tower is what controls the cycle of reincarnation—a gate to the Astral.

The danger isn’t to one’s life but to their soul. It isn’t something to put on the line just out of curiosity. Revival medicine does exist in this world, but matters of the soul are a different story.

True death comes when the soul is erased. This is a divine punishment bestowed to those who commit the gravest sins and are unworthy of reincarnating—a total destruction. It’s carried out by using the divine Aforgomon skill, though it’s impossible without Stellura’s permission. The skill is only available through events.

In other words, the time has come for that man to reincarnate. It's a somewhat common sight here. Sometimes families even go together.

A new soul will arrive soon after, so the population never really changes.

Anyway, I'd like to upgrade the town now. Perhaps "repair" would be the better word. I click the button and watch light envelope cracked walls and worn-down roads, restoring them to a healthy state.

The civilian spirits bid me farewell as I head to the Evernight Castle gates. There, I click a few more buttons for repairs. The construction itself hasn't quite changed, but the structures have gone from "crumbling" to simply "showing their age."

Now that I have nothing else to improve, I'll be done with this feature for a while longer.

I log out for a while, have breakfast, and log back in.

"Madame, your tea trees have finished growing," a lady-in-waiting tells me.

"Oh! I'll go have a look right now."

I head to the field behind my villa where I planted the trees.

"Welcome, Madame."

"Can the leaves be harvested yet?"

"Yes, however, they've been altered as we expected."

I take a look for myself. Yes, these all grew differently from each other. I suppose that's to be expected, since different varieties have evolved to grow in different environments. At least they grew at all.

I planted Darjeeling, Uva, Keemun, and Assam tea trees. However, the flavor text mentioned that these are nothing more than "similar" leaves. "Tea trees" are actually called *Camellia sinensis*. The Darjeeling and Uva are named after the areas they come from. Green tea, oolong, and black tea all come from different

levels of fermentation.

That said, this is a video game—a fantasy one at that. Things won't be the same as they are in real life. I won't be able to figure anything out unless I try a cup for myself.

Oh, these leaves haven't been treated yet. That simply won't do. Rina managed to obtain tea leaves that were already treated before. Was that because it was a survival event? Or does it come from a certain skill? I'm sure my sister has Gather and its derivatives too. A production skill that seems related that she doesn't have would be Cooking.

It looks like I have an option to choose. I'll go with black tea over green tea. Now I'm able to retrieve treated tea leaves, so I'll pick them off all the trees, looking to build up my supply instead of focusing only on the teas I prefer. I can give the extra to Eli and Abby or use them to make sweets.

I hand the leaves over to my personal lady-in-waiting, Eleanora, as she's an expert at brewing black tea. I trust her since she's already brewed many batches of the leaves I bought with my event points.

Once she returns to the villa, I exchange words with the gardener.

"Do you know what quality the leaves are?"

"I want to say that they're high quality, but they've only just changed, so there are still discrepancies in the leaves. These wouldn't be served under normal circumstances."

"So we're able to harvest them, they just need more time to settle?"

"Exactly. The magical energy should stabilize with a bit more time."

I take another look and spot the current of magical energy in the tree. It's definitely unstable. Once it settles, the flow of energy should become consistent, resulting in higher-quality leaves.

"Still, these have quite a lot of energy. Did they transform into spirit trees? I'll have to report it to the prime minister," the gardener remarks.

“Spirit trees?”

“They’re trees that contain a lot more energy than average. Their wood is very valuable for making staffs. The treant is the most famous example.”

All plants and animals possess a considerable amount of magical energy. Trees are convenient in that they can be used for many things, but spirit trees, which are saturated with energy, are usually processed and turned into staffs.

“Spirit tree staffs are luxury items, seeing as how treants attack anyone that tries to harvest them.”

“It must be difficult for the lumberjacks. Well, I won’t try to cut any of them down, since I only want the leaves. Please continue to take good care of them.”

“Leave it to me.”

Now it’s time to taste the black tea that’s been brought out for me.

“The soil is very rich in mana, which is hard to disperse. I’ll have to prepare the proper tools,” Eleanora tells me.

“A spirit tree is going to have both leaves and magical energy, isn’t that right? Perhaps I can make the tools with magic clay. Ah, but let’s see how these taste first.”

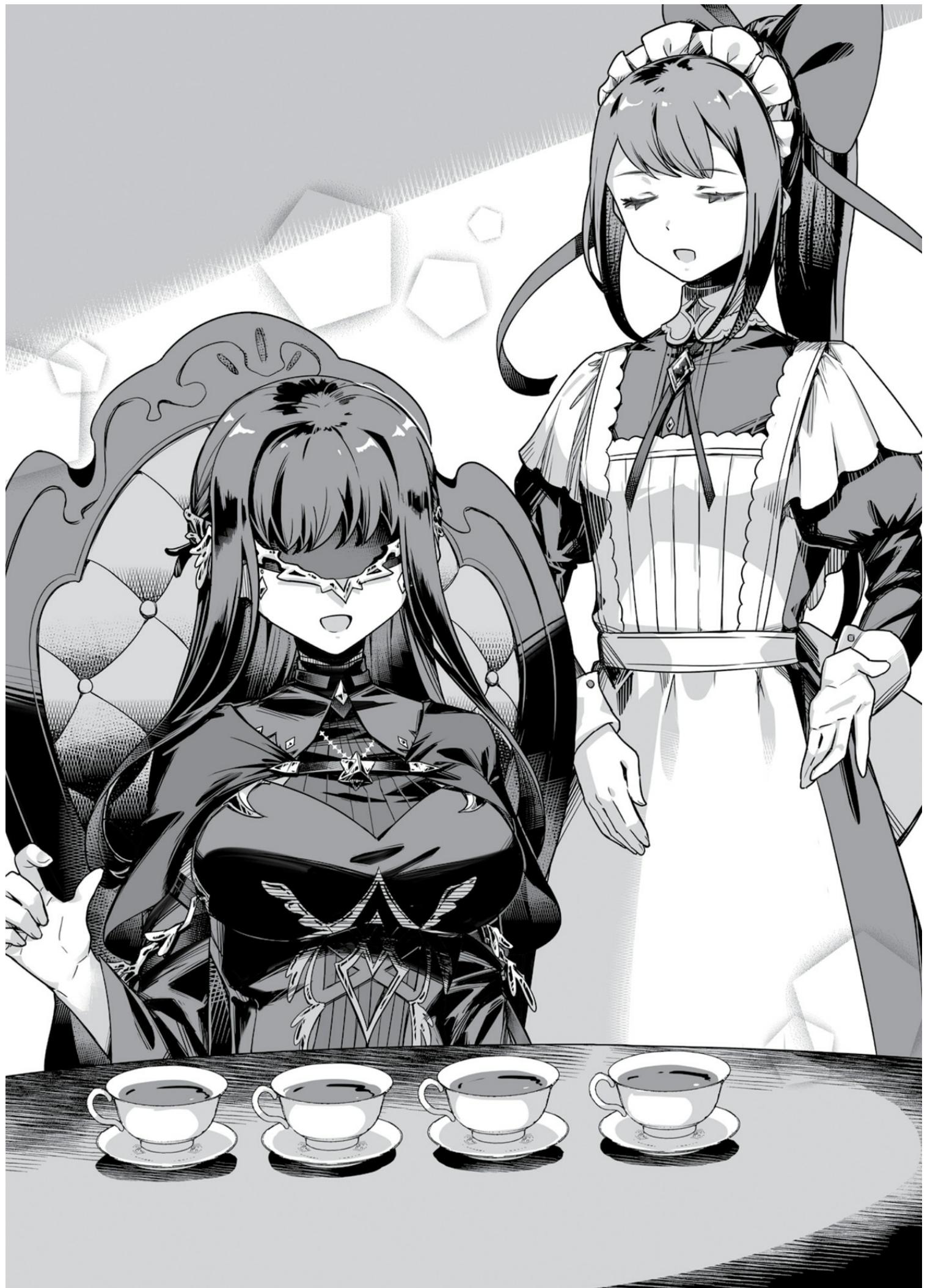
“From right to left you have Darjeeling, Uva, Keemun, and Assam.”

“Let’s see, let’s see. Hmm?”

I start with the Darjeeling and move through them all. But nothing tastes like what I’m used to.

“I believe that would be due to a lack of sunlight in this land,” Eleanora suggests.

“Ah. The moon is always out here, right. That’s why the magic plants used in healing medicine grow so well here, but now I see the downside. At least they don’t taste unpleasant. It’s just nice to have a new variety of items.”



The tea has a nice aroma, weak coloring, and a refreshing flavor.

“I believe the strong aromas have taken away from the flavor. The Assam is missing its signature rich taste. However, I think the Uva made it out alive. The Darjeeling and Keemun aren’t so bad either.”

Rest in peace, Assam. The Uva’s unique scent has been intensified. The Darjeeling and Keemun are acceptable—they just taste a bit watered down.

“Next time, try brewing them a little longer. None of them taste bitter to me, so they can get by with a longer time to bring out that flavor. I think the other kinds may taste better that way,” I tell Eleanora.

“As you wish.”

There’s no risk of getting bloated in a video game. I can try as much tea as I want.

At the very least, I can create a blend for a better flavor so long as the aroma remains this strong. I also have the option of using the tea to make sweets. I’ll resort to that if the tea itself can’t be improved.

Next, I try the new round of black tea served to me. It looks like I had the right idea. I’ll have my ladies-in-waiting brew these teas for longer amounts of time.

“Yes, this will do, excluding the Assam.”

“It’s still not satisfactory?” Eleanora asks.

“It tastes too weak. I can’t drink it when I’m expecting such a rich flavor.”

The Uva made the biggest improvement. After that is the Darjeeling, then the Keemun. The Assam still sits at the bottom. I wonder what they’ll taste like when the magical energy stabilizes.

This is a good time to invite the others. I’ll set up an area for us to sit where the trees are visible too.

***Eli has arrived for a visit.***

***Abby has arrived for a visit.***

***Letty has arrived for a visit.***

***Dory has arrived for a visit.***

The maids lead them outside to me.

“We’re here,” Eli greets me.

“Good morning!” says Abby.

“Welcome to my castle!”

“The trees are the stars of this party?”

“Correct. They’re tea trees. Actually, no, they’re just normal trees.”

Though I set up for their visit, there’s nothing particularly interesting for them to look at. The servants are merely plucking the leaves and processing them. The trees themselves look like normal trees.

More importantly, it’s time to taste the tea.

“The Assam is really disappointing,” says Abby.

“This Uva tea is better than the one I bought with my event points,” Eli remarks.

Seems we’re all in agreement.

“I want some Keemun!”

“I’d prefer Darjeeling. I’d also like a little more Uva to take home.”

But the teas they want for themselves are different. It all comes down to personal taste, after all. I give them the remainder of the sample batches to take home and tell them to ask my maids for brewing tips.

We say goodbye once they have their tea leaves.

All right. I'm going to go see Lana now.

I learned Water's Surface Style over the weekdays. Now it all comes down to how well I can apply it.

"Welcome, Madame. Are you here to train?" she greets me.

"I'd like to master Water's Surface Style."

"It would be a pleasure to help you. Do you wish to practice close-range or long-range?"

"I'll do long-range today."

"As you wish."

A long-range fighter at the training grounds agrees to assist me. Lana has told me that such assistance is still a good method of training for the other party, so I don't hesitate to ask for help. Well, they're all NPCs in the first place, but I won't point that out.

Supposedly, the name "Water's Surface Style" comes from how you stop a blow, reflect it, and return to your original state just like the calming of a water's surface.

These fighting styles seem to become more vague the higher the "Ex" number goes. You could say they're becoming more relaxed. It's all about optimizing your stances and movements, making sure to never waste a single second. Or so I think, at least—Unparalleled Style is the only skill I know at the moment.

To reflect something, you simply hit it with your blade when it flies toward you. In other words, all I have to do is hold my blade up to the red line Danger Sense shows me and wait.

This is all under the assumption that you *only* want to reflect it. Aiming the reflected shot is a different story. I feel like there must be a secret modifier that decides the accuracy of reflected shots.

You can only take on enemies one-on-one if you're reflecting one shot at a time. Even worse, it lacks elegance.

Since I've come this far, I should be aiming to become a Jedi—at least, that's what I picture for close-range attacks and reflecting hits. As always, my main sources of damage will be my spells and tentacles.

I only have to practice to reach the point I want to be at! I'm going to work really hard!

"Your combat style revolves around Perception and Detect more than Unparalleled Style, doesn't it, Madame? You'll feel more solid once you've leveled them up more."

"That might be true. I use my grasp of space to look at all enemies while relying on Danger Sense and Instinct."

"They become Premonition and Sixth Sense at their third tier. Considering your divine protection... Heh heh! I can't wait to see it."

What's this? They become Premonition and Sixth Sense? Stellura's divine protection might even influence the skills? If so, those would be Stellura's domains of space-time and destiny.

Well, that can wait for the moment. It's time to have some fun training.

I finish my afternoon tasks and log back in. What should come first? Whenever I can't make up my mind, I take strolls around town. To Starting Town it is.

Oh, there's a carriage parked out here. This game is realistic in these sorts of details, with traders traveling through town in carriages or parked in front of shops. Sometimes, they even run out of stock like they would in real life. After all, they can simply replenish their stock with a little time.

It looks like they're busy cleaning. I commend the effort.

The statue of Stellura in the center of town is washed by nuns using Clean every single day. Church chores are said to be volunteer work as well.

The church statues and the one in the town square are actually different, as a matter of fact. The four statues in the chapel are made of some sort of white stone, while the one in the center of Starting Town resembles dark gray clay.

I can confidently guess that the different materials must mean something in this world. It's strange that Stellura's statue is the odd one out. When I visited the abandoned temple, I also learned that their singular Stellura statue was a cause of trouble. Why isn't the center of town affected?

Since it functions as a portal and only shows her aspects of space-time and destiny, I assume that's why it doesn't attract enemy undead.

Perhaps a difference in the color, material, or something to do with the method of creation is the real difference maker. I'm sure Ms. Luciana would tell me. Well, that's all right. It's a very random topic to ask about.

“Ow! Damn you, turtle!”

It looks like a man walking by just stubbed his pinkie toe on a turtle player trudging along at his feet.

“I’m sorry. Forgive me.”

“Why was I so consumed by the void?!”

“Make it obvious if you’re Exdeath or Golbez!”

“Oh, you got my joke.”

“But I prefer *Dragon Quest*.”

“Y-you what?”

“Whatever...”

“No, you’re mixing them up too much.”

“Shall I give you despair?”

“I turned myself into a tiny splinter!”

They sure are having fun.

Ah, they added each other as friends and left to go hunt. It looks like they hit it off.

A turtle player, was it? I see them around sometimes. Turtle races are, as you'd expect, suited for tank players. I believe they can't equip shields, but they can use Defense arts. They've already got a shield on their backs, after all.

Oh, look at that. An angel with two pairs of wings. You must get those when you reach level 40.

It's fun to just watch people in the town square like this. Surprisingly, everyone looks so different and unique. There are so many races too. It's truly like I'm in a different world. The people excitedly plan their hunting locations together.

Okay, I think it's time I figure out what to do. I'm thinking of going hunting to hopefully get a third-tier skill. I've heard the people who do nothing but fight have already gotten some.

Personally, I'll probably get Superior Magic Assist there before anything else. SP is definitely going to pose an issue, though, and Radiant Magic and Darkness Magic are going to need more focus since I use them so much. The same goes for Danger Sense and Instinct. Meanwhile, Holy Magic and Shadow Magic will probably take some more time. Also, I have six passive skills at their second tier too.

I suddenly wonder if there are any good race skills I should take. Bringer of Madness is so hard to use. All it does is create a general situation of terror.

Oh, instead of my shared inhuman skills, my race skills are now all for "outer ones" instead of "undead." These specialized skills cost fewer SP than shared skills, so I'd prefer one if possible.

I think this will do just fine.

***Unknown Structure***

***Inflict a target you touch with a random status ailment depending on race.***

***Status ailments available: Inflammation, decay, wither/contract, no recovery.***

Inflammation is a status ailment that comes from acid attacks. It's the others that I'm not certain about. I feel like they weren't in the help menu. No, maybe on the official update page?

***The help menu's status ailments page will update for all players in accordance with global progress.***

***This will change by getting hit with a new status ailment or acquiring a skill that utilizes it.***

That's what the post says. Well, it's just a help menu, so I suppose it won't have too many details. I'm sure I'll be reading the testing team's wiki a lot more.

Anyway, I won't know what they entail unless I take the skill. This one should allow me to ignore my surroundings while also leveling up Magic Particle Encroachment, which increases my rate of status ailment infliction.

This is the better option than taking each individual skill from the ones inhumans share.

***The help menu has been updated.***

***Inflammation***

***Your skin becomes inflamed from contact with acid.***

***Deals continuous damage while in contact with the source. Inflamed area will become difficult to move.***

## **Decay**

**Something has caused you to erode. You are in the dangerous situation of losing your skin or metal.**

**Deals continuous damage while in contact with the source. Maximum HP will decrease.**

**Also grants “bleeding” if target is an organic being. Grants “rust” if target is metal.**

## **Wither**

**Only organic matter will decay. The body’s cells shrink, and affected areas are penalized.**

## **Contract**

**The inorganic equivalent of wither.**

## **No recovery**

**Something has neutralized your every method of healing.**

## **Rust**

**Rusted body parts see a reduction in defense.**

## **Bleeding**

**A state where your body loses blood.**

## **Fear**

**Terrorize your opponent. Targets experiencing fear will deal less damage.**

## **Madness**

**Your sanity is gone. Automatically begin to attack anyone nearby.**

We already had inflammation and bleeding. I remember inflammation being the acid version of poison, or something of the sort.

Fear and madness are two status ailments I can inflict with Bringer of Madness.

Unknown Structure seems good judging by the description, but what really matters is how it works. They never write the important stuff on these things, so I can't say. They don't even mention how long it lasts or how much damage it deals!

I'll need to do some testing.

"Hey, Princess! Was this your work? It was, wasn't it?! Let's test it."

A wild Studylover appeared!

"How did you know?" I ask.

"Huh? You're the queen of status ailments, you know. You're also the easiest to search for when it's about inhuman stuff. You stand out in a crowd, and your thread in the forums tells me where you are."

"Ah. Of course. I hadn't noticed it in my race skills before, so I just took it. I was actually just going to test it now. You have good timing."

"Hell yeah!"

It's hard to test these things in town since you heal automatically there, so the two of us head farther out. A lot of people are following us for some reason. I can't imagine watching the testing process will be very fun.

"Bring it on!"

We're doing our investigation through the duel function that allows PvP. Otherwise, we'd be counted as red players.

First, let's figure out the conditions for Unknown Structure to activate. I strike Mr. Studylover to see what happens.

"Looks like inflammation is the same. Swords don't trigger the skill either. I have to actually touch your body to activate it. It's easiest to inflict the inflammation when you touch skin, harder when you touch clothing, and

hardest when touching armor. In other words, this is an adhesive type of status ailment?"

There are multiple varieties of skills that inflict status ailments. Aura types affect the target by going through items like weapons, armor, and anything else on their bodies. Adhesive types need direct contact to work. Organ types only apply the effects through a certain part of the body, like a snake's fangs.

Unknown Structure seems to work like a slime's attack—you can't inflict it on an opponent using a weapon like with Dark Aura. So parrying won't inflict status ailments.

However, that's not the problem at the moment. I'm eager to find out if I can inflict status ailments with my tentacles.

"Whoa, tentacles?! Hubba hubba!"

"Tentacle play with a male elf?! Is this supposed to turn us on?!" the crowd murmurs.

"Wait, I can't feel anything all of a sudden. What's going on?" Mr. Studylover cries.

A new icon I've never seen before has appeared over him.

"I see. This must be withering," he observes. "It feels like I'm going under anesthesia. It also does damage when it activates, but no continuous damage. Maybe it drops your stats? Whoa, whoa! Hang on a second! I'm getting hammered with your status ailments now!" cries Mr. Studylover.

Oh. I inflicted inflammation, decay, and withering. The decay also makes him start bleeding. Meanwhile, the inflammation and wither increase in ailment level.

"There's nothing sexy about these tentacles! They'll really mess you up!" Mr. Studylover cries.

"Of course. They come from the Cthulhu Mythos, after all," I reply.

"My HP's getting drained! Actually, I can't tell which ailment is doing what. All

I know is that your enemy will die if you inflict all of these and let them stew in them like this."

"I see. Your max HP is going down too. For now, I'll release you... Oh?"

"No recovery?! It lasts ten seconds... Huh? I'm going to die, aren't I? It's too intense. Since it's an adhesive type, I'll use Clean to stop it from getting worse."

Organ types have the lowest probability of successfully contacting the target, with adhesive types and aura types being increasingly more likely to actually reach potential victims. The rate of successful status ailment infliction upon being affected, however, is the stark inverse. I've heard that being bitten by a snake is almost guaranteed to inflict you with a status ailment, and a high-level status ailment at that. As for adhesive types, the status ailments will continue to intensify unless the victim uses something like Clean to remove the substance adhering to them. In other words, this world's slimes are very strong. Lastly, one may be less susceptible to status ailments from aura types.

It's harder to have aura types inflicted on you compared to the other two, but these attacks occur at a much higher frequency, so they're very strong too. That said, aura types are usually only used by high-tier races, making them high-level skills.

I wonder if cumulative status ailments, like in other games, will be possible here too.

Mr. Studylover uses Clean to prevent the status ailments' levels from increasing. It looks like Clean is still available even when inflicted with no recovery, seeing as how he's simply washing himself. Washing with Drinking Water supposedly has a similar effect, but Clean is much quicker.

"That really took a lot out of me. I can use Cure to undo decay, which stops my max HP from decreasing, but I guess my HP's already shrunk a lot at that point."

"It would be hellish if I'd touched your head or torso," I realize.

I'm starting to catch glimpses of dark fantasy elements in this game.

We do a bit more testing after this.

Inflammation is the most commonly inflicted ailment of them all, followed by decay, wither, and no recovery at the very bottom of the list.

"Hm? I feel like it's counting three separate times. How else would that rate be possible?"

"It's that severe?" I ask.

"It depends on if the status ailment succeeds in the first place. If it succeeds, you get one ailment. Since it's an adhesive type, it's counted as another chance for an infliction when it adheres to you. I think, anyway. Maybe this is how combined poisons work. If you only account for status ailments themselves, adhesive types should be the strongest."

"Continuously inflicting you from the moment of adhesion—how very deadly."

"Slime can be removed with a spell, but it's way more dangerous if something's grabbed hold of you. Stone Throw arts are the only way to knock away that adhesive type, but people say it's hard because the projectiles are slow and just fall to the ground sometimes."

"Oh, you can knock them away?"

"Uh-huh. Basically, my conclusion is that your tentacles are pure insanity."

"I've been a little underwhelmed with their direct attack strength, but I think I'll focus on these status ailments instead. They'll be the ultimate means of infecting people, no?"

"Yep. They're best if you use them to inflict ailments. People were saying how feeler karkinions would be true monsters if they could hit you with status ailments too."

"Ah, the tentacle crabs, right? They're tricky ones. Are their tentacles adhesive types?"

“Uh-huh. But theirs don’t appear from midair like yours, Princess.”

“I believe those ones come from my true form. It’s such a thrill to split apart.”

“That’s crazy talk.”

Adhesives can be removed with Clean or Cure. Cure removes one of the status ailments as well as the source of the ailment itself, making it a smart choice. In fact, without Cure’s ability to remove the source, it’s crucial to use Clean first, which is a bit annoying.

I’ll attack with spells, parry or reflect with my athame, and use macros with my tentacles to block enemies and inflict them with status ailments.

Magic Particle Encroachment and Unknown Structure are worth leveling up since they raise my status ailment infliction rate.

Oh. Another two members of the Testing Team have joined us.

“Putting bleeding aside, burn, freeze, and inflammation all cause the same amount of damage. It’s decay that looks extra strong.”

“Max HP decreases depending on how much damage decay deals to you. It’s removed when you heal the decay with Cure, but if you just wait it out instead, you don’t regain your HP.”

“No recovery disables all healing spells and potions. Clean or Drinking Water washes it away. We can essentially consider it a high-tier curse, just shorter and more effective.”

They’re so immersed in the conversation. The testing is going well now that more of their kind are here.

“I see. So wither’s stat reductions are related to the body part that was contacted.”

“That’s why the rate of decline is so high. Wither’s rate on its own looks pretty low, but it’s an adhesive type, so you can’t let your guard down.”

Wither lowers all stats, but very slowly. Other ailments that only lower stats

for the part of the body they hit result in much bigger drops.

As an inflictor of status ailments, I never actually knew very much about them. I'm glad to have learned all this.

"Can we call decay a physical ailment? And wither and no recovery would be 'other'?" Mr. Studylover asks.

"No objections," the other two reply.

Ah, now that I think of it, Active Cells mentioned something about unique status ailments, didn't it?

"Mr. Studylover."

"Yes?" he answers me.

"There's actually a category called 'unique' status ailments."

"Tell us more!" all three of them cry.

"I don't know any details either, but the skill called Active Cells says it 'halves the effects of unique status ailments inflicted on you.'"

"This calls for some testing!"

He has a big grin on his face. I'm fine to indulge him—I was curious about it too.

"How about you start by stripping? Here's a robe."

"Oh. Okay."

It's normal to test out skill effects on a player who's naked with none of their own skills activated. However, I can skip that second part since it's status ailments we're researching.

We test things out while I activate and deactivate Active Cells.

"I see. I guess 'unique' might be the right word for it after all."

"To summarize, it seems to restrict your actions."

"Wait, I thought my Low Independent Race canceled out all status ailments,

but it seems unique ones still work on me,” I ponder.

“This is most intriguing,” the three of them say in unison.

“Do you have plans today, Princess?”

“Not really. I only want to get some hunting in like I usually do.”

“Doesn’t more testing sound like fun?”

“Sure, I’ll join you. I’d like to know what to watch out for.”

“All right. Let’s invite the others,” Mr. Studylover suggests.

“Sounds good!” his team members reply.

More Testing Team members arrive. They certainly got here quickly.

“We heard Princess needs our help!” they cry.

“Go ahead and hit her with anything that inflicts status ailments. If it works on her, it’s probably from the ‘unique’ class.”

“Sounds fun!”

This is leveling up my defense skills a little.

“Don’t tell me, Princess. Do you have High Physical Immunity?”

“I have the magic version too, although they’re low level.”

“The special effects between ‘reduction’ and ‘immunity’ are a little different too.”

“It also feels different when you land a close-range attack.”

“How fascinating!”

Sometimes you can tell what skills an enemy has based on special effects. It’s obvious that I have immunity from the way my gauge doesn’t go down.

“Ah, that reminds me. Why don’t you try inflicting yourself with wither?” Mr. Studylover suggests.

“Can I do that?”

“Can you secrete an adhesive? If so, we can bottle it, turning it into an item that we can proceed to chuck at you. That should work.”

It sounds like inhuman races have been using this method to make a bit of money. You can simply produce the item without doing any measuring, which is why inhumans are the ones putting up most status ailment items for sale.

I'll give it a try. I know I can change the state of my body, so I make it nice and sticky. Should I drip it into a bottle? Or can I just touch it like that? I'll just see if it turns into an item.

I put the sticky, dark red, bubbling substance into a bottle.

### **[Poison] Catastrophic Essence**

**Rarity: LE Quality: C**

***A viscous liquid with a chance of inflicting inflammation, decay, wither/contract, or no recovery.***

***This poison is made within the outer ones' organization with substances unknown to the surface world.***

***Eats away at organic flesh, guiding one's very life toward catastrophe.***

***Status ailments granted (thrown): Inflammation, decay, wither/contract, no recovery Lv 1, lasts 5s***

***Status ailments granted (consumed): Inflammation, decay, wither/contract, no recovery Lv 3***

***Liquid viscosity: Great***

“What a crazy poison. It seems like it should be used for some sort of assassination cutscene.”

“Are you kidding me? This thing is nuts, ha ha!”

“Yeah, that would fit right in as a quest item.”

“I’ve never seen the ‘poison’ category before either.”

So the effects are different depending on if the poison is thrown or consumed. The viscosity also seems to range from small to great.

It appears that a substance is called a “toxic drug” if it applies status ailments lower than level 3. “Poison drug” is for substances level 3 and higher. Meanwhile, it’s unclear what factors determine whether a substance bears the “poison” tag.

“Did you know governments usually classify substances’ toxicity in terms of levels?”

“Based on how functional they are as medicine or how deadly they are, I suppose?”

“The general standard is something called the LD 50—it’s a number that tells you how much of a substance would be a lethal dose to half of a sample group. Some poisons are so powerful their LD 50 is measured in nanograms per kilogram of body weight.”

“That’s some nice random trivia to have,” I reply.

“We don’t know how the game’s classification system works yet, I suppose.”

The catastrophic essence is stronger when consumed as a drink, but of course, you have to get it in someone’s mouth. If you can, though, the lethality skyrockets compared to splashing the target with it—Clean becomes unusable, and you have to either cast Cure or drink an antidote to survive.

Since we’re so close to Starting Town’s gates, the Testing Team members lure in a wolf and force poison down its throat.

“Whoa, all level 3s!”

The catastrophic essence causes the wolf to writhe in pain until its body practically dissolves, turning to polygons and disappearing.

"Whoa, even its body is gone. I guess that's what the description said."

"Well, no one can withstand level 3 status ailments that do damage like that. Wither lowers its stats too. Still, it seems this poison functions somewhat differently than others."

I understand that the Testing Team have tried various experiments on slime players and plant races like Ms. Clementia too. It seems they've just learned that there's a difference between inhuman races inflicting enemies with their status ailments to defeat them and defeating enemies by using items to inflict status ailments.

There's a quality reduction in drops when you kill an enemy with a status ailment item. For example, meat might still hold the same status ailment you used on whatever dropped it. However, it seems that inhuman races don't run into this issue—the drops only degrade if you use a status ailment item that you don't already have. The Testing Team infers that since the poison came from me and I can remove it, that's why the drops don't deteriorate.

So, all of that reflects current knowledge of status ailment items. The question is how that knowledge will apply to catastrophic essence.

It seems Dismantle becomes unusable on organisms destroyed by the stuff, and their drops deteriorate as well, but the remains are viable as a deadly poison—it's apparently that quality itself that explains why the drops degrade so thoroughly. That's how I understand it, anyway.

I try using my tentacles to fight a wolf on my own. It goes exactly like it normally would, which is a relief. Bringer of Madness and I were about to become residents on the sidelines.

"I think your system will work well if you only want EXP, Princess."

"You're the only producer we know a lot about, and it seems like you could sell such a strong poison for a lot of money."

"Or it could help during an event that's difficult to clear yet has trash drops."

“Sounds like a good idea. But we haven’t received information of an event like that yet.”

“The newbies still have the four bosses in each direction to beat. It could help them a little, don’t you think?”

Yes, this is certainly the Testing Team, all right.

As for whether the poison works on me, the answer to that question is apparently “yes.” The wither ailment is “unique” and the no recovery is “other.” Be that as it may, if I use my invulnerability to status ailments, I can easily be rid of either.

“This data is unique to Princess, so let’s give it to her and be done with it.”

“We’ll summarize the rest and post it on the wiki later.”

“What an excellent way to spend our time!” all of them cheer together.

We’ve been working on this for a while, so let’s bring the testing to a close.

Active Cells halves the duration of restrict ailments that come from bind spells and wet/freeze ailments that come from water. We’ve also learned that it affects the rate of my defense reduction when I trip and fall.

Now we know that restrict, wet, freeze, and trip are unique status ailments that don’t fall under the domain of “immunity to all status ailments.”

“Would losing a body part be classified as unique?”

“That only happens to some races in the first place.”

“I lose body parts too,” I inform them.

“So that doesn’t fall under the domain of ‘all status ailments,’ in that case. I guess they do physically separate from the body.”

“Unique status ailments appear to refer to a lot of physical things.”

“Knockback and unbalance seem to work on you, but Active Cells cancels them out, so we can just think of them as ‘other.’”

“No objections,” the rest say in unison.

“We’ll just have to do more testing if we find anything else related to Active Cells.”

“Yep!”

“Thanks for all the help, Princess!” Mr. Studylover says to me.

“And the same to you,” I respond.

“Until next time!” the other members cheer.

I put my equipment back on and return the robe. With that, we go our separate ways. I learned a lot with their help.

I’ll have to be careful of restrict. If this game has freeze, it probably has petrify too. It’s hard to imagine one without the other.

I can try all I like, but I doubt I’ll be able to dodge bind spells effectively. I’ll just have to use Active Cells to reduce the time by half, then reduce it even further with the Book of Eibon’s Antispell. That should take me down to less than half of the usual effect duration.

If I really want to be safe, I have no other choice but to pick a resistance skill, though I don’t know how to unlock them.

Okay, it’s time to go hunting. Wait, no, it’s actually very late.

Hmm. I think I’ll log off to give my real-life body some exercise until dinner. That sounds like a plan.

## Official BBS 4

### [Muscle madness] Comprehensive Brawler Thread 94 [The time has come!]

#### 1. Nameless Master

This thread is for general discussion of brawling.

Anything about close-range combat goes here.

Each skill has its own separate thread, so go read those too.

Previous thread: [http://\\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\*](http://* * * * * * * *)

Comprehensive magic chat: [http://\\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\*](http://* * * * * * * *)

Comprehensive production chat: [http://\\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\*](http://* * * * * * *)

**>>940 Take care of the next thread!**

#### 831. Nameless Master

Muscles! Muscles!

#### 832. Nameless Master

You're ripped!

#### 833. Nameless Master

Pipe down, you two!

#### 834. Nameless Master

Ignoring the muscleheads, how is progress going on the fighting schools?

#### 835. Nameless Master

It looks like a few different schools have been discovered. I went to one myself and it was pretty fun.

#### 836. Nameless Master

It adds a lot of action to the game. I recommend it.

### **837. Nameless Master**

Although, learning the styles is pretty hard.

### **838. Nameless Master**

This. It's tough until you get the hang of it.

### **839. Nameless Master**

I'm certain now that Princess uses one of these schools' styles.

### **840. Nameless Master**

I agree!

### **841. Nameless Master**

Her blocking and reflection cooldown times should be a lot longer if she's not using a special style.

### **842. Nameless Master**

Yep. Also, binds are her weakness, but she broke out of them really fast in the free-for-all.

### **843. Nameless Master**

Don't forget you temporarily gain resistance if a bind spell is continuously reapplied.

### **844. Nameless Master**

Players don't want to get permanently held in place, after all.

### **845. Nameless Master**

I'm sure she knows binds are her weakness. She's probably prepared for them.

### **846. Nameless Master**

We just don't know what precautions she's taken.

## **847. Studylover**

Apparently, Princess's teacher is the sword woman from the hunting contest!

## **848. Nameless Master**

Seriously, you pervert?

## **849. Studylover**

She told me herself.

## **850. Nameless Master**

Does that mean you have to go to the Nether?

## **851. Nameless Master**

That's not fair if she's Nether-exclusive.

## **852. Nameless Master**

It's so limiting that way...

## **853. Studylover**

I don't know for sure. I didn't ask!

## **854. Nameless Master**

Isn't that your job?!

## **855. Studylover**

We were just chatting while I collected info about other stuff.

## **856. Nameless Master**

I think Princess uses Unparalleled Style.

## **857. Nameless Master**

Can you tell us more?!

## **858. Nameless Master**

I heard it's a really famous style in the empire. No one's given me much info,

just that it's some great hero's school.

### **859. Nameless Master**

Well, that definitely sounds right.

### **860. Nameless Master**

Let's see. Checking the Identify screenshot from the hunting contest...

### **861. Nameless Master**

"Known as the Sword Princess in the Dinait Empire, Duchess Granin was beloved by the people as a great hero."

### **862. Nameless Master**

Yep. That settles it.

### **863. Nameless Master**

The empire too?!

### **864. Nameless Master**

Honestly, I doubt I'd be any good at that style, so I'm gonna ignore it.

### **865. Nameless Master**

Same!

### **866. Nameless Master**

Same...

### **867. Nameless Master**

It's sad, but everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses...

### **868. Nameless Master**

I feel like Princess and Sword Princess moved a little differently. I don't think the two use exactly the same moves.

### **869. Nameless Master**

Ah...imagine how hard it must be to get her to take you as a student.

### **870. Nameless Master**

I can picture it now.

### **871. Nameless Master**

We still don't know the conditions to join a school?

### **872. Nameless Master**

Nope. It's a mystery.

### **873. Nameless Master**

I assume it has to do with what skills you have, their level, and your stats.

### **874. Nameless Master**

Reputation might even come into play in certain situations.

### **875. Nameless Master**

That wouldn't surprise me at all.

### **876. Anastasia**

My fighting school is Unparalleled Style, as you have already worked out.

It was hinted to me that the surface schools might be deteriorating with time, but it also seems like there may be quests attached the more you progress in a school? I wouldn't know, considering I didn't have a hand in creating all that.

More importantly, I wanted to inform you all of the new skill I just discovered.

### **877. Nameless Master**

Oh! Princess, this is...

### **878. Nameless Master**

Snake Sword?!

### **879. Nameless Master**

A non-traditional weapon! I want it!

### **880. Nameless Master**

Those unlock conditions are evil.

### **881. Nameless Master**

There can't be too many freaks who would take Sword and Rope simultaneously.

### **882. Nameless Master**

But Princess must have them?

### **883. Nameless Master**

That's even more freakish, considering her race.

### **884. Anastasia**

How rude!

### **885. Nameless Master**

Yeah, I get it. By the way, can you make a Snake Sword weapon if you unlock it?

### **886. Nameless Master**

Can you even craft a snake sword?

### **887. Nameless Master**

What good is the skill without the weapon for it?

### **888. Nameless Master**

Princess must be swinging around her athame for this one. It's made of magical energy, after all.

### **889. Nameless Master**

I've gotta go see the old man.

### **890. Nameless Master**

Same here.

### **891. Nameless Master**

Thank you, Gramps. My dream came true. Now I share this skill with you!

### **892. Nameless Master**

Magic Equipment...?

### **893. Nameless Master**

Is this for magic swords?! Another non-traditional weapon skill!

### **894. Nameless Master**

This one has some pretty rough unlock conditions too.

### **895. Nameless Master**

But I think it's better than Snake Sword at least.

### **896. Nameless Master**

You need the second-tier skill Elemental Magic to be higher than level 30 + Assignment Magic + Superior Magic Assist over level 30 + enchant something 100 times.

### **897. Nameless Master**

It looks like no close-range skills trigger it.

### **898. Nameless Master**

Enchanting your sword with magic is a completely different expertise from being good at swordplay, after all. Looks like this one's for the mages!

### **899. Nameless Master**

Sounds about right, now that you mention it.

### **900. Nameless Master**

The biggest problem with Snake Sword is that you might not actually manage to get it on a sword. That makes Magic Equipment a safer bet, but there's still

testing to be done, I guess.

### **901. Nameless Master**

I only just took it, but I already did a little experimenting.

You can choose one of your attributes and transfer it to a weapon. The weapon deals its magic damage and then immediately deals the normal weapon damage, as you might expect. The magic damage is about as much as a ball spell...

Using Magical Equipment drains MP. There's a gauge that shows duration and a counter for remaining hits.

Obviously, I don't know what stats rely on what yet.

### **902. Nameless Master**

Ball spells, you say...?

### **903. Nameless Master**

Based on what I've seen, it's just a skill that looks cool until you actually level it up.

### **904. Nameless Master**

It probably relies on your magic stats too, which makes it a little harder to use well.

### **905. Nameless Master**

That all depends on what the skill modifiers look like.

### **906. Nameless Master**

Yeah, since your max MP is low unless you get your spirit stat up (or at least intelligence).

### **907. Nameless Master**

Ah, and be careful about the weapon's material too if you wanna use this skill.

### **908. Nameless Master**

Really? The material?

### **909. Nameless Master**

The weapon uses more MP unless it's made of magi iron. You'll also have a slower chant speed and a shorter active duration too.

### **910. Nameless Master**

Ah, it's that magical energy aptitude issue.

### **911. Nameless Master**

What happens when you use a weapon with elemental metal?

### **912. Nameless Master**

You seriously don't know? It's not like I know either, of course.

### **913. Nameless Master**

Screw you! Or so I'd say if those metals weren't so expensive.

### **914. Nameless Master**

It's probably like your enchantment is stronger or weaker depending on whether the metal's element is compatible with the magic's element?

### **915. Nameless Master**

Sounds like a safe assumption.

### **916. Nameless Master**

We'll probably know all about Magical Equipment before long. Snake Sword is the real problem.

### **917. Nameless Master**

You'll just have to rely on a master blacksmith for that one.

### **918. Nameless Master**

What're you supposed to do about that gimmick?

### **919. Nameless Master**

It's all up to our blacksmiths.

## **920. Nameless Master**

You've got this, blacksmiths!

## Chapter 6:

### Sunday

**A** FEW DAYS AGO, I saw it mentioned on the forums that the goblins have been moving about in the south. It sounds like we're on the verge of another defensive war.

Oh, I've found the optimal ratio. Now I'm finished improving all of my different Alchemy circles. The problem is what to do with the large Alchemy circle in my Alchemy room—it's so big, it's hard work to even draw it out on paper.

Perhaps I can ask Mr. Dentelle for a cloth with a circle on it like the one in my Alchemy kit. If I'm the only one using it, I can make it with Magical Energy Circle, but it will surely be easier to have it drawn up on a cloth, considering how much time I spend crafting.

Actually, if I'm going to make a new circle, I should take this to Master first and have her do that for me.

My optimized Alchemy circle is made of Combine, Refine, Extract/Insert, and Disassemble. Those are the four that come in my Alchemy kit. They actually use arts I learned with second-tier skills, like Core Processing and Element Control, thanks to Magical Energy Circle. I'm sure I can adjust these ones too.

Magical Energy Circle allows you to pick a placement point for your Alchemy circle after selecting an item. That's where I'll then place magic stones and such. I can even place it in the air. The items I place float in place, very mysteriously.

I'll try filling the circle with letters, leaving no items placed in the circle this time. Hmm, it's actually possible, but I don't know how to preserve it. I'll change one part and close it—oh, the options are to save changes or start a new Alchemy circle. I'll save it for now. I don't need magic energy paper this way.

This should be easy if I can alter all four arts at once. I flick away the letters

that don't work, using magical energy to replace them with different letters from the available candidates.

It's sort of like a fun puzzle, since there are rules to how I put the words in. My Alchemy circle will be more efficient and require less magical energy once I'm finished. It should also increase the quality of my items. I've even heard that the fun little minigame where I control my flow of energy as I craft should become easier. This is well worth the effort.

The biggest problem is that it's very difficult to get Ancient Languages. Would anyone who isn't an outer one even try to do that? I doubt there are any humans with the skill, at the very least.

Okay, I'll head to Ms. Meghan's shop now. Wait, but first, I need four of *those*.

My first stop is the church.

"Good morning," a clergy member greets me.

"Good day. Is Ms. Sophie around?"

"Shall I call for her?"

"Yes, please. I'm heading to Ms. Meghan's shop after this."

"Wait here one moment."

Ms. Sophie emerges shortly after that.

I've lured her in with something that will definitely pique her interest. The two of us head to Master's shop.

"Master!"

"Oh, it's you. And you even brought Sophie."

"She said she had something great for me..." Ms. Sophie tells her.

"Lured in by material goods, were you?"

Well, witches are akin to scientists in this world, after all.

“Anyway, please take a look at this, Master.”

“This is an Alchemy circle?”

“I believe I’ve optimized the four arts in my Alchemy kit. I’m currently working on Magical Energy Circle next.”

“You actually improved it? Well, if you use it without any problems, then it’s worth sharing with others.”

“Please give me a cloth version too when it’s complete.”

Ms. Sophie also sounds interested, but witches won’t be able to use it, since they rely on Compounding.

My main goal is complete now that I know I’ll be able to get a cloth version.

“Anyway, this is what I wanted to give to the two of you today,” I say.

“What’s this?” they ask in unison.

“It’s from my mucilage. I don’t mind if you use it for research, just be very careful in dealing with it.”

I hand them each two bottles of dark red slime. I trust them not to abuse it.

“You’ve brought me something horrifying once again...” Ms. Meghan trails off.

“I’d expect nothing less of an outer one and follower of Stellura... How fascinating...” Ms. Sophie remarks.

Yes, it looks like they’re as pleased as I expected. That concludes our business, so we go our separate ways.

Is the Alchemy circle improvement not part of a chronicle quest? I’m quite certain it will have an influence on this world, but I haven’t received any quest notifications.

Oh well. Even if I did get one, I would still take the circle to Ms. Meghan just like I did. Perhaps I’ll be told I cleared the quest once she’s finished.

Anyway, it’s time for lunch.

I log back in and try to decide what to do. I can get ores in the north, magic plants in the northwest, black tea in the west, or I can head south to see Lana's hometown.

The north and northwest are the places to go for Alchemy. The west is for luxury goods. The south is for my own curiosity.

Okay, I'm going to try to reach the Dinait Empire in the south.

I start by teleporting to Imbamunte, then I walk to the harbor. I hear there's a quest to travel by boat, but I'm going to ignore that. Initiating takeoff!

I fly about three meters above the ocean's surface, heading south in a straight line. Naturally, I ignore any and all enemies. I'm making sure to fly fast since I've heard the empire is a good distance away.



Despite my safe flying, other flying enemies start to swarm me. I've been told that slamming into them would be suicide and also that it's hard to fly past them. Let's see how it goes.

It feels so nice to sail through the air over the sea. I could never experience this feeling of bodily flight in real life. These little details reveal the benefits of being inhuman.

Ha ha ha, you'll never catch up to me at that speed!

Wait, why are you in front of me?! Oh... Talk about a deadly explosion...

Maybe I'll do better in the next life.

Ah, I just respawned without even being given options to select. I really went *flying* in more ways than one. Well, it's not the end of the world. Eat up, monsters. No, I guess my body dissolved and disappeared. I have Unknown Structure activated, so they'd probably die if they ate me anyway.

I split apart into balls of flesh and create my avatar.

All right, time for round two. Now I know I can't break through at that speed. If I can't avoid them, I'll have to make them avoid me.

I adjust my macros and remove Dismantle before taking off from the harbor again. I fly a lot higher up this time—I'd simply repeat the previous tragedy if I'm low enough to be spotted from the ground.

Once I'm far enough along, I activate Bringer of Madness.

It suddenly becomes a lot more pleasant of a trip. First of all, enemies will be inflicted with status ailments if they see me. Silence won't work on them, but it's the other ailments that matter most. They'll fall out of the sky if they're inflicted with faint. Fear will make them run away. Madness will make them attack each other. Instant death turns them into polygons.

Next, I use my tentacle macro to slap away anything that enters my field of vision. I swing my tentacles down on enemies that can be attacked. I'll have them stay away from me if I can't stay away from them. The ocean enemies are already lower or equal level than me. Status ailments are very effective.

According to the BBS, you get to Dinait by traveling south from Starting Town until you reach Imbamunte. Then you travel across three areas' worth of ocean to reach Posmunte at the entrance to the southern continent. Then you travel further south past three more towns until you reach the imperial capital.

I'll do some sightseeing after I unlock the portal. The forums said enemy levels are lower once you're past the ocean.

I keep an eye on my map as I continue forward toward the imperial capital.

Also, it would appear I can't see the floating continent with my current method of vision, can I? How depressing.

Aah, I've arrived safely. I turn off Bringer of Madness and descend to the ground. I'm in front of the northern gates, as I don't want to land directly in the town without warning. Next time I visit, I'll be able to teleport here.

"Wha?! Whoa!"

"Good day. I'm an outsider."

"Y-you certainly are. Welcome to the imperial capital of the Dinait Empire."

I show them my adventurer's card and am allowed to pass.

The imperial capital is larger than Starting Town and occupied by more residents, but since few players have reached this place yet, the population is much less dense.

The Colosseum is really the best comparison to the imperial capital. It's not as new-looking as Nearence, but with knights patrolling the streets, it has its own distinct atmosphere. The streets are also wide enough for large carriages to safely pass each other.

As an empire, this country is said to be a military nation, but the town itself is quite pleasing on the eyes. I feel like there's a higher ratio of residents who work as adventurers or other combat-heavy occupations here compared to Starting Town—at the very least, I see a lot of people equipped with weapons. That said, a lot of these people appear to be inexperienced, if their equipment is anything to go by. I imagine it's because the enemies around the capital are weak, just like the enemies outside Starting Town.

Anyway, I'll start by unlocking the portal.

***The portal to the imperial capital of Dinait has been opened.***

***Portals to all major cities throughout Dinait have been opened.***

***Set as your respawn point? Yes/No***

That will be a no, of course. But wow, look how many there are!

I suppose it's a normal size when you take the local territories into account. The northern continent's countries seem small in comparison, although most video game worlds aren't much bigger.

Well, bigger is likely better. What should I see first? I'm most curious about the enemies here, so I think I'll visit a town somewhere on the edge of the map.

"You there. Do you have a minute?"

Oh, just as I'm thinking about where I should teleport from the central portal, a group of three patrolling knights come up to question me.

I quickly show them my adventurer's card.

"I see. Everything looks to be in order. Sorry for the disturbance and have a nice visit."

They go right back into patrol mode.

I'll lose a lot of time if I'm stopped by every knight patrolling this city. It'll probably take some time for all of them to be informed of my identity.

That reminds me. Wasn't there a handy new function added in the update?

### ***Automatic deactivation in safe areas***

***This feature causes any skills you select to automatically deactivate when you enter a safe area.***

That's the one. I should probably add some skills to this setting.

I'll include Unknown Structure, but I'm not sure about Sphere Clemas Waver. It's annoying to be stopped for questioning every time. My appearance is quite shocking too, in truth.

Oh, and now I'm being stopped again. I show them my card and they let me go.

It might be easier to turn the skills on strictly when I'm going to a church. I'll go ahead and save these settings. Now my special effect has vanished. I'll keep it this way until the knights throughout the city have learned who I am.

It's very safe here in the Dinait Empire, as they clearly have enough manpower to patrol the capital city at all times. Those knights would serve no purpose inside the city walls if it was unsafe outside.

For now, I think I'll teleport to the town on the edge of the map and visit the adventurer's union.

I've reached the border town. Being on the border means that nature is abundant here, or in other words, a hunting spot is nearby. It's the front line of the war against monsters!

The town itself isn't particularly unique, as far as I can tell. There are a lot of

residents with better equipment than the ones in the imperial capital, but that's about it. This place isn't as safe as the capital, considering its surroundings.

Now, where's that union? Found it. I'll head inside and check what jobs they offer.

***You have entered an event area.***

***Quest: "Unwavering Will and the End of Evil" is now active.***

What?! What does that mean?

"Hey, where has Ms. Lieselotte been?" someone asks.

"Hm? I haven't seen her, now that you mention it," someone else replies.

I'm not familiar with this Ms. Lieselotte.

Considering these two male adventurers' conversation is the only one in the room entering my log, it must be something important related to the quest.

One of the men is close to level 60. He has the typical loadout of a one-handed sword and shield. He's tall and well-built—though his face is a bit frightening.

"Well, she's probably on the verge of S rank by now. She should be fine."

"You think so?"

"I'm sure she's out there helping people like usual."

It looks like the key conversation is over.

Lieselotte is an adventurer almost at S rank who likes to help people? I haven't seen anyone like that recently.

That seems to be all the information I'll get from their conversation.

Why did the quest activate so suddenly like that? Did I clear some sort of requirement without knowing it or was it meant to come up suddenly like that?

I've never been here before, so it was probably the latter rather than the former.

***"Unwavering Will and the End of Evil"***

***Quest conditions: Owner of Dream Casket***

***It seems that a powerful adventurer has gone missing.***

***Completion requirements: Settle things without harming the corpse***

***Failure conditions: Harm the corpse***

***Reward: ???***

***: ???***

***: ???***

The quest comes from having Dream Casket? So it was the latter after all! Also, talk about a major spoiler! Ms. Lieselotte must already be dead. Well, right, it's a casket, after all. It's a spell that involves putting a body and equipment in coffins.

I've only used Ephemeral Brilliance to provide the equipment I sealed away with Dream Casket until now, but if I had access to a corpse, I could start using Ephemeral Doll too.

There are three reward slots! I'm sure one is the corpse, but I wonder what the others could be?

Now where should I head first?

"Th-this is bad!"

"What's wrong?!"

Oh, this might be the development I needed.

"Mr. Azureto! I-It's Ms. Lieselotte! She's going berserk at the western gate!"

There's going to be casualties if she keeps going like this!"

"What?! That can't be! Not her of all people!"

"It's true! Hurry and come to the gate!"

"It'll be faster to see for myself. Let's go!"

The resident named Azureto has a level in the late 50s.

All the adventurers in the union run outside. I thought they were going to find a corpse at the gate, so the phrase "going berserk" wasn't what I expected to hear at all. I doubt I could beat a nearly S rank adventurer, but I certainly can't just hang back and ignore the situation... I decide to follow the other adventurers since I want to see what's going on.

I can hear the fierce sounds of battle close by.

"What's going on?! Why are you doing this?!"

"....."

Ms. Lieselotte is a lot different than I expected. She has a violet side ponytail, sleepy-looking red eyes, and a mole under her left eye—a lot more charming than I would have assumed she'd be. The singular thing that might prevent one from unreservedly calling her cute is that she's completely stone-faced. Perhaps what's most shocking about her, however, is that while she appears to be about ten years old, she's swinging a two-handed axe that looks to be as long as I am tall. She's presently using it to fight Mr. Azureto, a man about 180 centimeters tall.

I can't tell what her axe is made of based on the coloring alone, but it's very beautiful. Her armor, on the other hand, is a mess. Its white fabric is stained with blood.

"Damn it! She's clearly lost her mind, but maybe we can still do something..."

"Big Sister Liese! I thought you became an adventurer to help people!"

I'm not sure if it comes down to my race, occupation, or both, but I'm sure

seeing a lot of information about the condition of Ms. Lieselotte. It seems she's already lost her sanity.

What should I do about this? I need to think of a plan while the adventurers try to slow her down.

Mr. Azureto and the two gatekeeper knights challenge her head-on. The rest of the adventurers are busy thinking up plans too.

“.....”

“Damn it! Her swings are bigger than usual, but they're still really, really strong!”

“This is no joke. I'm not surprised Lady Lieselotte is so strong... Whoa!”

“Don't get close to her if you're not even C rank yet! Where are the nuns?!”

“I'll go to the church!”



Unfortunately, her flesh is already dead. But her soul hasn't separated from her body yet—or rather, it seems like it can't for some reason.

"Lady Lieselotte... Are we too late?"

I think a curse is doing this to her. But not the curse status ailment—it's some sort of black magic, and a very strong kind at that. Did it possess her body? Well, this is just part of the backstory. I can rescue her soul and hear the rest of that story in the Nether.

The biggest problem is discerning how to separate the curse from her soul in the first place. Since this is a casket quest, I don't want to harm her body or her equipment.

What troubles me is that she's a lot stronger than I am. There's a difference of almost 26 levels between us.

**Lieselotte?**

**Lv 68**

***Nearly sacrificed in a ritual at a young age, she was rescued by knights before her life could be taken...and yet, the ritual was a success.***

***The girl wanted to be like those knights who saved her despite the curse eating away at her. However...***

**Attribute: ?**

**Weakness: ?**

**Resistance: ?**

***Status: Undead friend or foe? Soul bound by curse***

Her soul is white but very dim. Something black is there with it—the curse, judging by the current situation.

Her status doesn't specify if she's friend or foe. The answer to that should lie in whether she still has a will of her own or not. If the curse is controlling her, she's surely an enemy, but I believe she's still battling it judging by the appearance of her soul. It's possible she's just a regular undead and her soul can still be saved.

Meddling with souls is supposed to be forbidden, but that doesn't mean it absolutely never happens. If Ms. Lieselotte was rescued by knights, the culprits were probably dealt with accordingly. They're surely experiencing hell in the form of the Abyss right about now.

The problem is what to do with Ms. Lieselotte in her current state.

"Shit! What the hell happened to you?! You've always been a kind person!"

"I brought a nun!"

"I know she's lost her sanity and it's driven her mad, but how could she..."

The nun won't be of any help now. Actually, I hope the nun doesn't try to purify her. Her body will disappear before her soul in this current situation. Besides, I don't think that curse will respond to a superficial purification.

Purification could be an option if all I wanted to do was clear the quest, but I really don't want to fail anything related to the Dream Casket.

For now, I'll have to cut the curse away from her soul. A normal person couldn't interact with her soul like this, but fortunately, I'm allowed to because of my race and occupation—it's my main job, in fact.

It looks like it's finally time for me to debut Blade of Arbitration, Soul Hunt, and Soul Chaser. This is an awfully practical way to use skills like these, but I think they fit the bill.

The issue is that my target is very strong. Will I be able to find a solution here? Well, I did come up with a plan, so I'll have to try my best while the adventurers are still here.

"Now you're using arts?! Damn it! *Shield Bash!*"

“.....”

“You were going to become the kind of person who saves people like the knights!”

All she could reply with was a groan.

“Lady Lieselotte! Please come to your senses!”

Oh, look at that. She’s started to clutch her head and moan. Maybe this is a scene that happens once enough time has passed.

“Miss Lieselotte! This isn’t like you! Tell us what’s going on!”

“*Urgh!* I won’t...turn out...like how the people who destroyed my village... wanted me to turn out! I’ve lived my life to save people! I won’t allow my body to go berserk! Even if it means losing my soul, I’ll...!”

Oh! This is definitely the scene’s climax!

I activate Sphere Clemas Waver because we’re on the verge of combat. Unknown Structure can stay off for now.

“No, your soul must be saved after death,” I interject. “That is why we—why the Nether—exists. I will do whatever it takes to bring you there with me.”

“Wh-what’s this?”

“I’m not strong enough to fight her one-on-one. Please put a stop to her, and I’ll take care of the rest,” I request of the residents.

“A blindfolded woman with black hair and a black-and-white robe... Princess Nemeseia?!”

It seems the nun knows who I am. Word of my identity must have spread to the southern continent already.

“I will remove her soul from her body and excise the curse.”

“Remove her soul?! But if you do that...!” one of the knights cries out.

“Her body is already dead. Her soul hangs in the balance as well. If I leave her

be, the curse will eat away at her soul,” I respond calmly.

“You’re a Nemeseia? Can you save Lady Liese?”

“Yes, if I can touch her body.”

“All right then. We’ll help you. Please just save her.”

“I’m sorry... I’ll try my best to stop her.”

Oh, did she regain her consciousness earlier to show she was weakening now? Or are we going down another route? Well, either way, this is good for me.

“Sister, can you please call others from the church to help purify the curse?”

“Y-yes! Right away!”

Ms. Azureto, the two knights, and I charge at Ms. Lieselotte—who’s now clearly moving with less ease than before. Her white soul is diffuse with black splotches, like it were a dab of white on a painter’s palette that had black pigment dribbled atop it. The curse is clouding her soul over—we’re clearly out of time, so I’ll wrap this up quickly.

“There’s no time. We have to stop her and carve out the curse now.”

“Yes, ma’am!” the knights respond.

“Got it!” Mr. Azureto answers.

They pin her two-handed axe to the ground with their shields and weapons while I bind her body with my tentacles. Then, with Blade of Arbitration, which doesn’t harm her body, I swing the blade from side to side against her.

The soul is easily caught by my blade, as her body is already dead.

However, a black substance has started oozing out alongside it—the power of the curse. I’m sure it’s not safe to touch in normal circumstances, but I think I’ll be fine. I grab hold of the black fog emerging from her body, which is still trying to cling to her soul.

“Heh heh heh. Souls are the territory of the gods. Try all you like, but we

won't allow anyone else to touch them."

Ms. Lieselotte's soul tries to get away from the curse, which is still seeking its prey as it leaks from her body. I can't leave this curse alone with her, so I mercilessly yank on it.

"What is that thing? It's sickening!"

"This is the power of the curse itself."

"Hey, your hand!"

"It may be a curse, but fear not, as I am an outer one."

My left hand holding the curse is burned and raw. Its strength isn't surprising considering the effect it had on her soul—what a difficult quest to appear out of nowhere.

Ms. Lieselotte's empty body collapses when the curse is separated from it. It seems I've safely acquired a corpse. What a great outcome to my casket quest. The rest of the job, saving Ms. Lieselotte's soul, is for a Nemeseia to handle. I'm sure that's what will count as an S clear! In fact, how can anyone other than the undead of the Nether complete this event with an S clear?

I won't give up on her soul even now that it's separated from her body.

"You don't know when to give up, do you, curse?" I ask it.

"It might actually be scarier if it did," remarks one of the men. Well, fair enough.

"I brought clergy members and holy knights!" says the nun when she returns.

Oh, what good timing. I have Ms. Lieselotte moved upward while I tug on the curse, eventually getting it to gather down at her feet.

"I'm going to remove it now."

I wait for them to nod, then I use my blade to cut off Ms. Lieselotte's feet where the curse has gathered.

"Urgh!" she cries.

I don't see any ugly impurities in her soul, so the curse doesn't seem to have left any remnants behind.

Now that the curse has nowhere left to go since it's been wholly separated from Ms. Lieselotte's soul, I toss it away in a direction where no one is standing. The black substance twists and turns as it pools in midair.

"We'll need to destroy that thing as well, but..."

"But?" the others ask.

"It will be dangerous for you all, judging by what it did to my hand."

There's no changing what needs to be done here, even though the adventurers who know Ms. Lieselotte are upset by the outcome. The undead of the Nether are entrusted by the goddess to manage souls. As a guardian of those souls, in a way, I can't let the others be exposed to the same danger as Ms. Lieselotte.

"I don't think it will be a smooth purification, so please buy as much time as you can."

This is a border town, meaning it's located near the habitat of monsters. I expect the clergy will therefore be very skilled at their jobs if they already have to do lots of healing. However, there aren't actually that many of them. Will the clergy be able to carry out the purification in the end? It partially absorbed a high-level soul, so I doubt it's the sort of thing that will disappear so easily.

"If there's nothing else we can do, we're fallin' back so you can do your jobs!"

"Tsk! Very well."

I stand at the front, with the holy knights a bit of distance behind me, the adventurers behind them, and the clergy behind them.

I wondered what to do next, but it's actually quite simple. When an enemy is powerful, the solution is to call for the help of someone even more powerful.

The black mass floating in the air lashes out at me like a whip, which I block with my athame. The others behind me are shooting it with attack spells,

though they don't seem to do much.

The black haze plays an animation of being torn apart when it's hit by a spell. However, this doesn't result in any real change. I can't tell whether it's going to get gradually dispersed the longer we do it or not.

"This is impossible," the crowd murmurs.

"Yes, it's going to be quite tricky."

The enemy isn't getting any less persistent. However, it will be over for the rest of us if we're hit even once. The situation is getting worse and worse. The holy knights are receiving buffs and blocking hits with their shields, but I don't think they'll be able to last much longer.

I need to call for help after all. That means it's time for me to use the Silver Key. It's a piece of equipment that is very dependent on the situation, meaning I have to be careful about relying on it during events and quests. Whether or not I can use it will make a big difference in how I play.

And now, its time has come. I open the gate nearby and call out to it. Naturally, it connects me to Evernight Castle's training grounds.

"Is Lana around?"

"Oh, Madame. The supreme commander isn't here right now. Are you, perhaps, in the middle of combat?"

I continue to deflect attacks from the curse as I explain the situation to Vice Commander Martinez.

"Oh, dear. That's no good. I'll gather some people right away."

Three others approach after a moment. They gather quickly since the Nether army is rarely busy.

"I see. It seems like you have a lot on your shoulders right now, Madame."

"No matter the era, people simply never learn their lesson."

"I despise how there are always good people that meet with misfortune."

Vice Commander Martinez, a Dullahan royal guard, emerges from the Silver Key's gate. Next is an elf woman with light green hair, a black robe, and a pointy hat—a former witch. The final woman to emerge was once a saint—a gentle human woman with fluffy light pink hair and eye-catching clothing.

The saint is more like an elite healer than a nun or a clergy member. These things have nuance. I feel like I've seen her wearing more normal clothes, but this must be her combat outfit.

The vice commander charges in with the saint and witch's buffs. He and the witch attack the haze, splitting it up into tiny parts. Then the saint delivers the final blow to dispel the remnants.

"Phew. That was child's play."

"It didn't put up much of a fight."

In other words, the curse met with an instant death. I feel like this was the quickest route for the optimal conclusion. It's not wrong to deploy undead from the Nether if you need a soul-eating curse removed.

"Do you know who cast this spell, Princess Nemeseia?"

"This was a sudden occurrence for me too, so I don't know any details."

This should be enough to clear the casket quest. Although, you can never let your guard down in this game, so I intend to get Ms. Lieselotte's permission to use her body. Her soul is already guaranteed to go to the Nether. I'd like to hear her story on the other side.

"Um, thank you very much," I hear her soul say.

"You're welcome. It's my role, after all."

"Right."

"I'd like to hear your story sometime."

"Very well."

With that, I ask the other three to return to the Nether, call for Lana, and wait

for her. We can all talk to Ms. Lieselotte together. I'm sure they're interested since they're involved in the situation too now.

I acquired Ms. Lieselotte's body while the other three were beating up the curse. That was my main objective, after all!

*"Thank you for everything. But I have nothing to repay you with anymore."*

"Don't worry about that. May I receive your corpse?"

"My body?"

"I can use Secret Art of Necromancy on it by keeping it in a casket."

*"A casket? Ah, I've heard of that. Talented sorcerers preserve a corpse in a casket where they can summon its materialized form, is that right?"*

"Yes, that's the spell I use."

*"I spent my life trying to save anyone that I could. Will you promise not to use my body for evil?"*

"Yes. I swear it on the goddess Stellura."

*"Then please make good use of it. That reminds me. That weapon of mine was my favorite."*

"Ah, I understand."

I summon the Dream Casket, use Clean on her corpse, and put her to rest in the large coffin. Her outfit changes to burial clothes. It seems there's no need for me to change her outfit myself. The damaged clothes she was wearing before are transferred to her avatar slot.

Her body wasn't wounded at all either. Did the curse heal her? Well, at least she's in one piece.

I also place the two-handed axe she was using in the weapon slot, which registers it as her burial goods. Burial goods and possessions are, essentially, either items that make the corpse stronger or equipment. Burial goods are the items loved by the person before their passing, and burial possessions are the

equipment I prepare for them. The large casket is exclusively for Ephemeral Doll, and the small casket is for Ephemeral Brilliance, which allows me to summon the other items.

The burial goods and corpse appear to come in a set. I'm sure some players will put a lot of thought into this aspect. Ms. Lieselotte is a close-range attacker, which is perfect for me. I already have a floating fortress for a tank while I carry out the role of magic attacker. I'll have to look over the details later.

"All right, Ms. Lieselotte. May we meet again in the Nether. I'd like to hear about this incident some other time. I'm sure you're curious about the others, but ordinary people aren't able to see pure souls alone."

"Very well."

The quest is completed when I send her soul away. I managed to end up with an S score. It was the ultimate outcome for her soul, the curse, and the residents too? That's certainly good to hear.

My rewards are Lieselotte's body, Lieselotte's favorite axe, and an avatar with her favorite equipment during her life. I feel like other casket quests will have rewards like these too, although perhaps excluding the third one, if the conditions aren't right.

"I'm going to go speak with Ms. Lieselotte. If anyone is curious, please wait at the adventurer's union."

"Understood. Thank you for what you've done."

"The thanks should go to the clergy as well," I add.

"But we did so little..."

"That isn't your fault. You did a great job buying time, so please don't let it upset you."

I use the Silver Key to teleport to the Nether.

Ms. Lieselotte is currently... Ah, I don't know how long it takes to cross the river. If she can't come here right away, I'll have to wait for a later date. I feel

like I remember being told that the river ferry duration changes from person to person.

My quest is officially cleared now, but there's no guarantee she'll be here anytime soon. I suppose I'll just wait at the harbor for a little while.

Ah, she's finally arrived.

"Welcome to the world of the dead. It's a realm ruled by Stellura," I greet her.

"Thank you for looking after me," she replies.

"Please come with me."

I'm able to pass through the gate as an arbitrator. I inform the other arbitrator at the gate of our situation.

Evernight Castle's training grounds are on the opposite side. Lana and the other three should be waiting for us there.

"I see some people are transparent, but for others, I can't really tell," Ms. Lieselotte says.

"I hear it takes some getting used to. Although, I used to be a zombie myself, so I don't really know for sure."

"Getting used to?"

"Spirit bodies make up the majority of the afterlife. That's because they leave behind their bodies in the real world when they become inactive and come here. It means it's rare to see living armor, skeletons, or zombies."

Spirit bodies can turn to material forms and back with a race skill, so it really is something that takes getting used to. However, there's no need to switch back and forth outside of combat, so most spirit bodies in the Nether stay in one form or the other. I feel like each resident has their own reasons for choosing their form.

"Thank you for waiting," I greet the others.

“Of course. Who is this?”

“I was very curious about this girl’s story, so I thought we’d hear her out.”

“It’s nice to meet you. I’m Lieselotte, and I’m from the Dinait Empire.”

“As am I. My name is Svetlana Granin.”

“Of the Granin Dukedom? Svetlana?!”

“Does that mean my family is still doing well? What a long time it’s been.”

Lana originally came from the Granin Dukedom of the Dinait Empire. Master told me that the family appears in picture books, but I’ve never been to their territory myself.

It’s incredible to think of a family having six hundred years of history. It really is impressive. Although, depending on the starting point you choose, the Japanese emperor’s family line has lasted from 2,500 to 1,500 years. So while I’m truly impressed, I wouldn’t say it comes as a shock to me.

Now it’s time to hear about what happened to Ms. Lieselotte.

“Right. It will be a long story,” she begins.

When Ms. Lieselotte was the age she appears as now, her village on the border was attacked. The culprits kidnapped her to be used as a sacrifice in their ritual. She was saved when knights burst in midway, but the ritual was activated all the same. The ritual’s curse ate into her, and as her consciousness gradually grew weaker, she still tried to continue her job as an adventurer so that she could help others.

The sheer power of her spirit—the drive to save people like how the knights saved her—was enough to keep the curse in check. However, that spirit was worn away. One day, when she was feeling particularly weak, she ended up overpowered and killed by a monster.

That was when the curse activated fully. Her wounded body was healed, but she began to attack anyone she laid eyes on, transforming into a massacring doll.

That's a general summary of everything she told us.

She'd tried to break the curse, of course, but she failed. It was connected to her very soul, after all.

She also told us that the curse stopped her growth, so she's significantly older than she looks.

"It's hard to imagine such a thing. You must have incredible strength of spirit," Lana tells her. It seems Lana has taken a liking to her.

"I have a proposal for you as someone who has reached level 68, Ms. Lieselotte."

"What could that be?" she answers me.

"We have our own army here in the Nether. Does that interest you at all?"

"An army?"

"Well, Stellura is the one who makes the final decisions, so I can merely offer you up as a candidate. Lana here is the supreme commander and Martinez is the vice commander. The other two women are also members of the army."

"Is this the army that comes when someone lays their hands on another's soul?"

"That's right. Although, their main jobs are training to improve their skills and maintaining peace."

She seems interested. It's looking like I really *can* leave her in the army's care.

"I know I could count on you. I'll go inform the adventurers," I tell her.

"Um, thank you very much. You're the reason why no one was killed because of me."

"It's our job to rescue souls, after all. That's your job now too."

"Right!"

"Ah, that reminds me. I'll give you your first job. Lana or Martinez, please visit the Abyss with Ms. Lieselotte and find out how many people were involved in her curse. Don't do anything further for now."

"As you wish," the two reply in unison.

"Please share your findings with the prime minister or one of my ladies-in-waiting."

Now that she's my subordinate, I suppose I can drop the "Ms." from Lieselotte's name.

Lana took Lieselotte to the Abyss, so it's time for me to return to the surface. My destination is the adventurer's union.

"Thank you for waiting. I'll get right to an explanation."

"Please do."

I repeat everything I've learned to the adventurers.

"I see. I didn't know..."

"I'm going to have her work in the Nether army as a keeper of the peace."

"I'm just glad to hear she's doing fine! I wonder if we'll see her again?"

"I believe you will, unless one of you does something evil and ends up in the Abyss."

Generally, you can't go back and forth from the Abyss to the Nether.

Now that I've finished up my business, all that's left is to check on Dream Casket. I take a seat in an empty chair and start to look over the details.

***Corpse level: (Past life level)***

***Beginner (Heroic)***

***Burial goods level: (Past life level)***

***Beginner (Legendary)***

## ***Burial possessions level: (Past life level)***

### ***Damaged (Heroic)***

The corpse level, burial goods level, and burial possessions level look like they use the same ratings as items are given. It's easier to understand them that way. Well, I'll find out as I raise them.

I'm able to improve the corpse, burial goods, or burial possessions. The burial goods and possessions have been separated intentionally, so the goods are probably the more important ones. I'll prioritize the corpse, goods, and possessions in that order.

It looks like improving them requires magical energy. I'll have to use a magic stone or hunt a magic creature. Can I not just pour my own magical energy into them? It recovers extremely quickly in towns, so anything else will be quite a chore.

For now, I'll repair her broken, worn-out armor.

Lieselotte was equipped with both a dress and corset coat that exposed her shoulders. They're fixed with a belt wrapped around her torso, underneath her chest. It must be a pain to fight with a two-handed weapon and have your clothes flying around too much. On the other hand, I understand why she'd want to look fashionable.

Her skirt is knee-length, and the coat she wears is on the longer side. Such a bulky coat is probably registered as light armor.

Lieselotte's outfit is navy and white. The stains really stand out, but fortunately, Clean exists in this world. You can't forget about a thing like that with such obvious stains.

Let's get right to leveling her up. I'll try using an orb.

All right. I'll take out the casket and place a magic stone on top. Sorry about this. The casket actually takes up quite a bit of space.

I use my orb and watch it split apart as the liquid magical energy is absorbed by the casket. On a visual level, it doesn't look very efficient.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm checking on the spell I can use now thanks to Lieselotte. This isn't very efficient. I guess I'll have to kill a magic creature."

I think it would be better to use orbs for leveling up the AI that comes with Secret Art of Necromancy.

I use my magical energy to repair the burial possessions and see they're now labeled as "beginner." I repeat the process for each category and see they've all gone up one degree to "average."

Since Lieselotte was considered a "heroic" class during her life, I see it was worth all the work I put into the quest. Her burial goods are labeled "legendary" too? That must be higher than heroic. But without any more information, it's hard to know how grateful I should be.

It looks like the rankings go from "damaged" to "beginner" and then to "average."

Oh! A message from Rina.

*"Sis! There's gonna be a defensive war!"*

Seriously?

Those goblins are probably weaker than me now. This will be a great opportunity to test my new spell.

I leave the adventurer's union and teleport to Starting Town.

## Chapter 7: Return of the Defensive War

***World Quest: The Defense of the Starting Town preparations are underway.***

Yes, we're certainly almost there.

It looks like they're gathering to the south. I'll head that direction while I look over Lieselotte's skills.

Lieselotte has the third-tier skills Two-Handed Axe Mastery and Projectile Mastery, as well as the first-tier skill Dark Magic. Was she trying to get Night Vision and Dark Heal? The rest are passive skills.

But Projectile Mastery? That means she can do long-range physical attacks too. Now that I think of it, did Lieselotte solo her enemies? It's hard to play on your own when there's so many things you can't do. Long-range attacks aren't a bad thing to have in that situation. At the very worst, you can always just throw rocks.

I'll shut her projectile weapons away in the small coffin so I can materialize them with Ephemeral Brilliance later. It uses a bit of MP, but they can be thrown as much as the situation calls for. I'm sure it will help her be a better fighter. I'll also buy something from Mr. Ertz when the war is over. Ms. Kotatsu is probably selling projectiles too since she uses them herself.

Lieselotte has a two-handed axe from close-range, projectiles for long-range, a bit of healing, and temporary night vision. The rest of her skills are passives. She's a very simple close-range attacker.

Her skills from her lifetime are unchanged, and she can also equip Secret Art of Necromancy and its derivative skills at half of my skill level. That means I can give her up to fifty skills at most.

My servants can only have twenty skills, as it's calculated based on my skill

level divided by five, but I have a race skill that grants an additional twenty for a total of forty skills. Dream Casket goes up to fifty without the race skill. It must be based on the corpse's base level. I wonder what would happen if I put an inhuman corpse in the casket?

Well, I can also ignore Lieselotte's skills from her lifetime and customize them for myself. It would be hard to change her burial goods to weapons, in that case, so I suppose it does have a drawback.

Regardless, I feel like something bad might happen if I ignore the skills she used while alive. For now, I simply won't change them.

Oh, there's Rina. She's with Mr. Cecil too.

"Ah, Sis!"

"Howdy, Princess."

"Good day. Were you already in town, Mr. Cecil?"

"I was. But I never received a request, so you probably don't get priority if you've already done it."

"I see."

I was wondering why the supreme commander and commanding officers were all different people, but it sounds like you can't do the job more than once. That means I can gladly take my place on the front lines!

"Wanna join our party, Sis? Mr. Skelly and Mr. Alf should be around here somewhere, though."

"Well, with so much prey to hunt, I'd like to work on leveling up my servants."

Party members will just take up the places of my servants. Rina plays in a party of five, meaning I would only be able to summon one servant.

"Mr. Skelly is here! Your favorite idol has arrived!" Mr. Skelly cheers.

"Ah, would you care to sign my contract, Mr. Skelly?"

"What the heck? What a scary question!"

“What party are you playing in, Princess?”

“I’m going to use two servants to level them up.”

“Sounds nice. Can you lend me your buffs for the war? Pretty please?”

“Ah. Okay.” It sounds like I’ll be joining my usual party.

“Princess!” cry two voices at once.

“If it isn’t Mr. Ame and Ms. Trine?”

“What’s your party like?” they ask me.

“I’m going to summon two servants. Does that sound all right?”

“Okay!”

“Any objections, Mr. Skelly?”

“Nope!”

The ametrine twins have joined us. That’s a gem made of amethyst and citrine combined. The twins probably thought that up themselves. At least they’re getting along nicely.

Target player count has been reached. The servers will now be separated. If you wish to play alongside someone in another party, please form a raid or union with them.

“Oooh!” the crowd cheers.

Look at that! The GMs are here.

“Ha ha ha! It’s me, everyone! We’re splitting the servers up because there’s so dang many of you guys!”

“The same quest will proceed at the same time throughout all servers, so if you want to play with someone, please add them to your raid or union before the end of the countdown.”

“Even if you get split up, only the best results among all the groups will be reflected in the game afterward, so don’t you worry!”

With that, they’re gone.

Indeed, the area is so packed that it seems hard to move properly. We won’t be able to play the game unless we’re split into different servers.

For now, we can form parties to make sure we go to the same server and disband once we’ve arrived. In other words, parties who summon servants can disband during the war and summon all their servants separately.

“What should we do? Stick together or split up?”

“He said only the best results will remain in the game, so why not stick together?”

“We’ve got experience in this war and might get separated from the third-wavers, after all.”

“I hope we can just play as we please without worrying about that sort of thing. The numbers are going to be so unbalanced!”

“Right, since the majority of players are third-wavers. Let’s just set up our union for now.”

Mr. Cecil and Rina seem to have a good plan, judging by their conversation.

The supreme commander should be chosen once we’re split up, and I doubt I need to register as a union leader. I join Mr. Cecil’s group.

It seems we’ll be divided up ten minutes before the start of the quest.

I see Mr. Cecil, Ms. Kotatsu, Mr. Lucebarm, Mr. Musasabi, Ms. Fairellen, Tomo, Rina, Eli, and my own party.

“Hey!”

“Yo!”

“Pardon my intrusion...”

“Oh, if it isn’t Ms. Lapis.”

“We had an empty spot and told her to join us. You’re playing with your undead friends, right?”

It sounds like Ms. Lapis has joined Tomo and Sugu’s party.

“Howdy!”

“Hyah ha ha ha! Long time no see!”

This would be Ms. Fairellen’s party. Joining our union allows us to see each other’s locations. Everyone starts to gather around us.

Ms. Fairellen is playing with Mr. Mohawk, Ms. Mead, Ms. Cupid, Ms. Clementia, and the sad dog.

“It’s Princess! You can pet me if you want!”

He certainly is a large dog. Is he a hellhound? He *looks* cool—it’s just how he conducts himself...

I give him a petting.

“Ah...”

“Oooh! Princess’s body fluids! Lick, lick! ...Urk! I’m gonna die! Ah, I’m gonna die!”

“What the hell is he doing?”

“He’s just a sad dog.”

“Let’s ignore him.”

No one says a word about the hellhound writhing around in agony. Apparently, his name is Vincent. It’s a very cool name. You just have to ignore everything else about him.

“Good day, everyone. You seem to be enjoying yourselves.”

“Good morning!”

Eli and Abby have joined us.

“Hey, it’s almost time for the separation.”

Once the timer reaches zero, we’re all teleported away.

However, the map is recreated perfectly, so things don’t look any different. I suppose the population density is a bit lower. It looks like each server is home to 20 percent of the player base now.

“Look at that!”

“Quite the reduction, my liege!”

“It was hard to even find your friends in that crowd.”

Mr. Lucebarm, Mr. Musasabi, and Ms. Kotatsu’s party have joined us. It looks like our union has assembled.

“This must be twenty percent of the player base, no?”

“That’s what it looks like”

“Yes, my liege.”

***Searching for players with optimal occupations required for the current world quest...***

None of us end up receiving the special positions, so I assume they can only be taken once.

“All right! We get to go to the front lines!”

“Ten more minutes? It’s about time we get ready.”

I think I’ll summon servants now. I check the skills and summon a floating fortress.

“When did you learn to summon that thing, Sis...?”

“Whoa! What’s that, Princess?”

“It’s a floating fortress made of flesh.”

“A tank, then?”

“I thought about having it ram the goblins, so I gave it High Physical Immunity and Unknown Structure to inflict status ailments.”

“Run for your lives, goblins!”

“All right, Unit One. Focus on leveling up your skills.”

His tentacles are fluttering like usual. I leave that work in his hands. Goblins probably can’t get past High Physical Immunity. As for me, I’ll stand still and level up my tentacle skills.

Lieselotte can be the one to kill the goblins. Actually, wait—does every character have a different activation key?

“Scattered dreams, empty doll. May this moment bring you those dreams. Awaken, Lieselotte.”

I set the summoning point next to me and watch the magical energy gather and form the shape of a person. Color starts to fill in from her toes and fingertips. Within a few seconds, I’m staring at the expressionless face of Lieselotte.

She reaches her right hand over the ground. A large two-handed axe emerges from the shadows and into her grasp. She rests its head by her feet, holding it parallel to her as she stands at attention.

Now that I get another look at it, I see how the two-handed axe design seems to come from the Mi-Go and Yith. Well, it certainly looks cool. I’m surprised someone as small as her can swing that thing around.

“Who’s this, Princess?!”

“This is the result of Ephemeral Doll from Dream Casket. I acquired her body earlier, but this is my first time summoning her. She took quite a lot of my MP. It’s one of the more draining servant spells.”

“Wow... I want that too!”

“I got it through a casket quest. I cleared it by leaving the corpse as unchanged as possible.”

“I see...”

“Grrrr! She’s stealing my role as the little sister...” Rina complains.

“No, I already sent her soul to the Nether,” I inform her.

“Oh, you did?”

There’s still a bit of time before the war starts, so I’ll discuss the quest details and Lieselotte’s story with the others.

“Wow, I didn’t know there were such heavy quests.”

“It took a fair bit of work to come up with a solution. Thank goodness I’m a Nemeseia.”

“I don’t think I’d ever be able to clear that quest.”

“Lieselotte is already here with me. Wouldn’t your quest be different?”

“Oh, I guess so. I see...”

“You’ll have to work alongside them, so I think it’s worth selecting the servant based on their burial goods and appearances.”

“Looks are important. It’s gotta be someone who you *want* to summon in the first place!”

Lieselotte was satisfactory for me, considering the quest conditions. I couldn’t complain that she’s a close-range attacker either.

“That reminds me. Eli, Abby, what nickname should I give Lieselotte?”

“Lieselotte... Isn’t that German?” Eli asks.

“It’s a mashup of Elizabeth and Charlotte!” Abby informs us.

“Liese or Lotte aren’t creative. Perhaps Lotty or Lily?”

“Should it be something adorable? She uses a two-handed axe, so I think Lisa or Lizzy sound better.”

“Good ideas. I’m going to go with Lizzy. Actually, wait—isn’t she technically just Unit One?” I ask.

I run my suspicion by the flesh ball Unit One. Apparently, however, I’m mistaken, so I can still call her Lizzy.

Lizzy herself doesn’t react. She doesn’t speak, and her expression never changes.

“That reminds me, Ms. Kotatsu.”

“Oh? What is it?”

“What kind of projectile weapons exist?”

“Really? Projectiles?”

“She came with that skill.”

“Wow! Let’s see. First, there’s rocks. But you get better modifiers if you use stones that’ve been altered a bit instead of the kind you’d find on the ground. There’s also throwing knives and tomahawks.”

“So knives are essentially the standard weapon?”

“Uh-huh. You can use a tomahawk if you want a lot of punch with a single hit. The problem is that they cost a lot and are hard to aim.”

Altering a rock with Handicraft grants it modifiers. Projectile is usually centered around throwing knives, which cost little and deal little damage, making using it a question of how many you can throw. You can go with tomahawks if you want more power—they’re strong weapons, but they cost more than knives to produce, and it’s also harder to land clean hits on enemies using them.

“Actually, Mr. Mohawk’s atlatl is more efficient to use as a throwing weapon instead of a tomahawk.”

“Ah, that’s right, the one he used during the camping event.”

“Yeah, that’s the one. It’s way easier to use, maybe even easier than knives. That said, tomahawks are still better if you want to pack a punch. The downside of an atlatl is that all you can really do is toss it. It’s kinda hard to control.”

“Lizzy’s main weapon is her two-handed axe, so she can’t use an atlatl.”

“There’s also franciscas, kunai, shuriken, chakrams, and stuff like that.”

It sounds like there’s a wide variety of options. The biggest issue with projectiles is how many of them you need, but that doesn’t apply to Ephemeral Brilliance. You still lose MP, but Lizzy’s build should be fine in that regard.

“What else? There’s also sickles and chains, as well as morning stars,” Ms. Kotatsu added.

“Those count as Projectile weapons?”

“You can use them with Whip too.”

Ms. Kotatsu and Eli explain how you can throw them with Projectile and control them with Whip.

Does Lizzy have some sort of secondary weapon? I’ll have to check her burial goods.

Lizzy, who had been standing silently next to me, suddenly turns her eyes toward the forest. The goblins have begun to emerge from the trees.

“Ah, it’s about to start.”

“C’mon, let’s get a move on!”

Once you see one goblin, you know there’s many more lurking in the shadows. They’re like the cockroaches of fantasy worlds.

We form a line and watch them as they approach.

***World Quest: The Defense of the Starting Town has begun.***

“Woo-hooo!” the crowd cheers.

We’re finally starting!

“Go ahead and charge them, Unit One. Lizzy, show me how you fight.”

Unit One steps forward slightly, allowing himself to be surrounded by goblins. He deflects each strike with his tentacles for a chance to inflict status ailments. I’ll have him fire his offspring at the long-distance enemy fighters.

As for Lizzy... Ah, I thought it was just a gigantic two-handed axe, but it actually splits apart?

“Wait, Lizzy, you’re not going for the cooler move?”

“Princess, what’s with her axe!?”

“I’m not sure. I didn’t expect it to come with a special gimmick...” It’s not like I was the one who prepared her burial goods, after all.

In any case, now I see why she has the skills that she does. Lizzy’s double-sided two-handed axe is more like a labrys than a halberd, albeit one side of the blade is smaller than the other. When she splits it, the small side pops into her left hand, and she immediately hurls it like a tomahawk boomerang. She then charges toward it, swinging the remaining half of her axe at the goblins while chasing after its companion. Once the smaller blade, now having successfully split numerous goblins in two, is once again within Lizzy’s reach, she uses a swing of the larger blade to reform her weapon while never once ceasing her attacks.

“Goblins are too weak for me to discern Lizzy’s specific attack power...but she’s certainly very strong. I could use her as my main way of attacking like this. Considering how varied burial goods and fighting style can be, luck must be a big factor in how well my skill works. However, I can still train whatever undead I end up with as I please, so maybe it doesn’t make much difference in the end. I suppose looks and burial goods actually are the things most worth

considering.”

Despite his appearance, Unit One is engaging in a very boring fighting style. Each time that floating ball of flesh is hit, he simply lashes back with his tentacles. Well, his role is to be our tank, so it’s not the end of the world.

The other players take care of any goblin who’s been inflicted with one of the status ailments, which proves Unit One is being useful.

Lizzy’s style of combat is simply eye-catching. Suddenly, she jumps straight up high into the air, doing a spin before slamming her axe down. I can tell this is an attack art by the way she’s enveloped in a red light.

When she strikes the ground, the earth surges up to envelop the enemies, dealing damage at the same time. She wastes no time in swinging the axe when her feet hit the ground—all her targets were swallowed up, though, so no one is actually close to her...

Oh, I see what she’s doing. She strikes a rock that was unearthed and kills another goblin off in the distance with it.

“Wow. What an inspiring move.”

“I wanna try that too, Sis!”

“Sure. Give it your best shot.”

“The first part was probably a third-tier two-handed axe art. But how does she send it flying?” Rina becomes lost in thought as she battles the goblins.

I dodge the attacks of the goblins approaching me and mow them down with my own strikes. Mere goblins are no match for my High Physical Immunity.

“All right, Alf, next one to say ‘the’ loses.”

“Fine. But you have to talk like a princess.”

“Very well! And good day to you!”

“Excuse me. Could you please not copy my character?”

“Ah, sure.”

“How about you talk in Gen Z slang instead?”

“This is legit hype! Actually, no, I don’t know what to say.”

“Yeah, I didn’t think so.”

Wait a minute. I don’t think I’ve seen that person in the Chinese dress before.

“Oh?”

“Wow, you have such incredible legs.”

“They’re amazing!”

Yes, those are beautiful legs, all right.

That is certainly a man wearing a Chinese dress. What a long slit it has too! It goes all the way up to his hips, not his thighs—it’s impossible not to notice! The dress is bright blue, and he’s wearing a pair of high heels. His silver hairpin is painted yellow. Is that the moon? He’s also using a pole to fight.

“Hya ha ha ha! Well, if it ain’t Mizuki!”

“Oh my heavens. Funny seeing you here, Mohawk. Tell me, are you going to do more burning today?”

“Gya ha ha ha! You bet your ass I am!”

“You two know each other?!” I interrupt.

“Absolutely we do. I feel so full!”

“Hya ha ha ha! I’m hard as a rock!”

“P-please stop!”

They’re still in the middle of combat, of course. This is too much to take in.

The man in the Chinese dress appears to be named Mr. Mizuki—a name that means “beautiful moon.” Uh-huh. That’s perfectly fine.

Seeing him fight alongside Mr. Mohawk is such a shocking sight. Mr. Mizuki is skinny too, but he has well-defined muscles. I’d say he’s a little over 170 centimeters tall—well, closer to 175 with the high heels. Also, I believe he has

what people call “sanpaku eyes.”

“The internet is a big place!”

“You’ve got that right.”

Yes, it’s a big world out there. Here we have a half-naked man with a mohawk and spiky shoulder pads fighting next to a man in a women’s Chinese dress. In any case, I hardly have the right to speak on others’ appearances...

I’m noticing that there are many more hobgoblins than goblins this time. It must change based on the level of the players fighting in the war.

However, there isn’t much of a difference between the two varieties. I’m sure we’ll see more elite enemies later on too.

Now that I think of it, this might be my first time watching Doll Magic in action.

Abby has an attacker doll holding a two-handed hammer, a defensive doll holding a large shield, and a support doll with a one-handed sword and round shield. They’re all roughly one meter tall. Once the defensive doll blocks an attack, the support doll emerges from behind and finishes the enemy with Backstab. When the support doll sweeps the legs of another foe, the attacker doll kills them with Heavy Stomp. The attacker doll can also instantly take out enemies on its own with its movement arts.

I see. That looks like good fun, though it’s probably hard to control all three dolls at once.

Ms. Dory stands guard while Abby is undefended. She knocks down any goblin that makes it through. Ms. Dory is using Hand-to-Hand and dressed in a steampunk-style maid uniform.

Eli uses Whip to stop the goblins in their tracks, while Ms. Letty finishes them off with her daggers.

There are still a lot of these enemies, so even though they’re weak, I hope it’s enough to level my skills up. I’m sure my first-tier passives will see some

progress, at least.

I use Snake Sword's Ground Thrust to clean up the enemies around Unit One. It's easy work, since the status ailments have already drained a lot of their HP. They'll surely gather around him again right away too. My Snake Sword's level is still low at the moment, so it's a good way to farm EXP.

I reflect long-distance shots that come my way and strike other enemies with them. Long-range enemies are nothing more than opportunities for damage to me.

I wonder if a chief will show up on a ride bug like last time. I'll have to fly up if he does. Well, maybe we'd be fine then since we have Ms. Fairellen. Players using bows should have antiair skills at this point in time too.

"I just realized something. It's actually better that I'm not the supreme commander."

"Why's that?" Mr. Skelly asks.

"Ever since I've evolved, I haven't been able to see as far in the distance. Not having a full view of the battlefield would be a fatal flaw for a military leader."

"Ah, so that blindfold's not just for decoration?"

I never expected it'd cause me problems like this. I've gained a wider range of vision as the skill levels up, but anything outside of that is too blurry to see. That said, I can see things *within* my range from whatever angle I please.

"Wait, actually, I can dispatch Unit One as a spirit body and see the field with Visionship—ah, but there are restrictions on summoning. Hmm... Anyway, I can only come to the front lines like this because I'm not the supreme commander, so I think I'll give up on that role in the future."

"I'm sad that I don't get your buffs, Sis."

"Yeah, it would be a good role for leveling up leadership skills." But you could also say that it's the *only* benefit to leading the army. That's why it's a better job to leave to a volunteer. I can level up my leadership skills using my servants

anyway.

“Gya ha ha ha! Purify the filth!”

“Ooh ha ha ha ha! So that’s your power?! You’re not strong enough! Muscles, muscles, muscles! What you lack more than anything is muscles!”

“Nothing to show for it, have you?!”

Mr. Mizuki speaks in such a menacing tone as he mows down goblins. Also, was it my imagination, or did I hear yet another wacky character make an appearance just now? Eh, whatever.

Anyway, I’d like to level up some of my lower skills during what’s essentially a bonus level for everyone here. That includes Snake Sword, my passive skills, and my status ailment skills. I’ll also focus on Holy Magic and Shadow Magic. Sphere Clemas Waver, my counterattacking skill, is something I want to work on as well.

I’ll also be leveling up Secret Art of Necromancy, Undead Unifier, and Ars Magna by summoning Unit One and Lizzy, although those skills aren’t low in the first place.

Ah, I could remove High Physical Immunity from Unit One on purpose so that I can use Holy Magic. I’ll swap out his skills and re-summon him.

I can handle this much. It’ll be my new strategy from here on out.

“Oh, a ride bug just arrived!”

“Are they doing all right at HQ, now that I think of it?”

“We’d receive a plea for help if they weren’t.”

I guess that’s true. I’m sure they wouldn’t die instantly, at least.

There are more elite enemies than the first war, but with the first-wavers’ inhuman air squadrons and antiair weapons on the ground, the goblins keep raining down from the sky.

“Ow! Damn you, gobby!”

“It’s dangerous to have them raining down on us like this.” Frankly, we all need to watch our heads.

I smack away any nearby falling goblins with my tentacles. Once they hit the ground, I spawn tentacles around them to skewer my prey.

“Hee hee! Poor things. They’re like moths to a flame,” I remark.

“Why’re you talking like that? Did you become a villain?”

“Would you like to try some of my freshly caught goblin meat?”

“I’ll definitely pass on that one.”

“That’s too bad. Ah, it dissolved because I inflicted it with a status ailment.”

“You’d die if you ate it now!”

Well, I’ve heard you can’t even consume goblin meat in the first place. There’s so many goblins, but the only thing they’re good for is dropping magic stones. Even their equipment is nothing to speak of—their iron equipment at least has value as a raw material, but it’s altogether nothing too impressive.

I ignore the goblins trying to attack me when I pass Unit One. Hitting them with my tentacle counterattacks time after time frightens them, and they’re sadly also stricken with status ailments. The goblin AI has no concept of running away, unfortunately for them. They have my gratitude for helping me level my skills.

The elite goblins have finally started to move. In a way, the real battle is starting now. The others are beating up any elite goblins that’ve landed near them.

“It would appear they have missed a few, my liege.”

“Well, it’s not like there’s a lot for them to do.”

“Right?”

As Mr. Lucebarm said, the leaders of this event have nothing to do but sit back and watch. I’m sure it’s a good way to kill time.

How is Lizzy doing? Looking good. I'll have to start taking out the enemies swarming Unit One when there's a good number of them. This will be a good way to level up Holy Magic.

As for how I'm doing? Well, only the general class of goblins is any match for me here. There's no getting past High Physical Immunity, after all.

"Hm? Whoa!"

"Ah, you're unharmed?"

"I have High Magical Immunity too, so I'm just barely protected from Explosion."

I hope they keep firing at me. I'd like to level up my magic defense skills too.

Some other time, I should go stand at the port of Imbamunte. The spells from carabine poisson and tentacles from feeler karkinion would be perfect to practice defense skills, no? I may not take damage because of my immunity skills, but I'll gain EXP because the hits on me are still registered.

I use Ground Thrust to mow down all the goblins around Unit One. The last ones still clinging to life go back toward him, but I can ignore that, since his counterattacks will get the job done. This is turning out to be a more fruitful quest than I'd imagined with all the elite enemies constantly raining down on us. It's a mystery whether I'll reach any third-tier skills from this war, though.

"It seems like world quests should be starting in other areas sometime soon."

"Oh yeah. Is this the only location so far?" Mr. Skelly asks me.

"We have the chronicle quests now too," Mr. Cecil points out. "Maybe some of them will end up coinciding."

His suggestion seems likely. I've only done the church quest until now, so it might be fun to search for others.

"Maybe for the rest, we have to unlock some sort of key like with these goblins."

“The goblins were an extermination quest, right?”

“They could be waiting for third-wavers to get stronger. The quests will be found one way or another if people start spreading out a little more.”

That’s true too. I’m curious about what Imbamunte’s world quest would look like, honestly. Perhaps it would be a battle on the high seas? I’m really looking forward to it.

It looks like things are wrapping up. Is the general going to make his move now?

“It is nearly time, my liege.”

“I wonder if our supreme commander will be able to handle the final rush?”

“It is most uncertain.”

“But our tanks have been getting stronger. We should be fine.”

“Oh, that’s true too. First-wave tanks should be stronger than the general now.”

This time, the general is level 37. That’s only one level higher than the previous war. He probably has a small range of levels he can spawn as like the other goblins. However, first-wavers have passed level 40 now. This shouldn’t be a problem for us.

My skills are coming along nicely. It looks like I got Air Thrust when Snake Sword hit level 10. It appears to be the midair version of Ground Thrust. Unfortunately, the time to use it has already passed.

“Here he comes!”

“Come on, let’s go!”

How shall I approach this? Let’s see. I’ll strike the general with my tentacles while I enjoy myself with the others. I could send Lizzy to attack him too. However, most players will be drawn to the boss fight, meaning this is the best time to level up my skills!

I'll strike the general with my tentacles whenever it suits me to inflict him with status ailment.

Unfortunately, along the way, the general is simply finished off by first-wave tanks. There's no glory in it like there used to be.

May he rest in peace.

"We won!" someone cheers.

***World Quest: The Defense of the Starting Town has been completed.***

***Confirming Quest Evaluation...***

***Supreme Commander Casualties: 0***

***Commanding Officer Casualties: 0***

***Outsider Casualties: 2,528***

***Damage to the target: 0%***

***Resident Casualties: 0***

***Final Rank: S clear!***

***For a perfect clear, a bonus has been added to the reward.***

***As the residents are unharmed, their impression of outsiders has improved.***

It seems like players' victory messages are personalized. I suppose it depends on their character's position or gender. The starting message was different too. Not that it matters much.

My base level increased by one, I raised my skills, and I raked in 150,000 gold. Looks like this event was still very much worth it.

All right, now I'll return to town and review my skills. I want to deposit my money and rid myself of all this garbage—all the drops from dead goblins—that I've picked up.

## Official BBS 5

### [Goblin Army!] Starting Town World Quest [They're back]

#### 1. Management

This is a thread to discuss the world quest currently ongoing in Starting Town.

Please use it as a place for all event discussion.

#### 562. Warring Adventurer

The gobblies are here!

#### 563. Warring Adventurer

Is this the event I saw on that commercial?!

#### 564. Warring Adventurer

Aren't there too many people? Is this gonna work?

#### 565. Warring Adventurer

I was thinking the same. Surely they'll split us up.

#### 566. Warring Adventurer

Second-wavers probably won't even break a sweat beating the goblins—and don't even get me started on first-wavers.

#### 567. Warring Adventurer

Maybe they'll split us up based on level or when we started playing.

#### 568. Warring Adventurer

Yeah, I want everyone to feel the rush when you see it for the first time.

#### 569. Warring Adventurer

Same.

## **570. Management**

Please form unions amongst yourself, as we'll be splitting up players. GMs will be there shortly.

## **571. Warring Adventurer**

Okay, so we get groups? Got it.

## **572. Warring Adventurer**

Sounds good.

## **573. Warring Adventurer**

What about the BBS, Management?

## **574. Management**

We'll be splitting up the forums once you're divided into groups. When the event is finished, all forum logs will be published for anyone to read.

## **575. Warring Adventurer**

Roger that!

## **[Goblin Army!] Server One [They're back]**

### **1. Management**

This is a thread for players who have been sent to Server One.

Please use it as a place for all event discussion.

## **134. Warring Adventurer**

So who've we got here?

## **135. Warring Adventurer**

Seems like a bunch of first-wave and second-wave fighting groups. Not that I really know.

## **136. Warring Adventurer**

You won't know everyone, so there's no point in trying, obviously.

## **137. Warring Adventurer**

But I do see a lot of familiar people.

## **138. Warring Adventurer**

Anyway, the previous commanding officers are at the front lines.

## **139. Warring Adventurer**

Didn't they already have their turn?

## **140. Warring Adventurer**

I'm sure they just want to fight.

## **141. Warring Adventurer**

To be honest, one time is probably enough for me.

## **142. Warring Adventurer**

I'm with you there.

## **143. Warring Adventurer**

It just occurred to me—if they team up with the residents, the guildmasters will become our supreme commanders, yeah?

## **144. Warring Adventurer**

Ah, that's true. But then elite thieves and ride bugs will come our way.

## **145. Warring Adventurer**

I see. They'll target the adventurers. That might result in some casualties.

## **146. Warring Adventurer**

It'd be best not to involve them if we want to get an S-clear. For this quest, at least.

## **147. Warring Adventurer**

There could be characters who come to help us, though.

## **148. Warring Adventurer**

So it's better to work together after all?

## **149. Warring Adventurer**

Exactly.

## **150. Warring Adventurer**

We also need to find the other world quests.

## **1037. Warring Adventurer**

Were there this many gobblies last time too?

## **1038. Warring Adventurer**

It was a long time ago. I don't remember anymore.

## **1039. Warring Adventurer**

It shouldn't be an issue since they're so much weaker than us.

## **1040. Warring Adventurer**

Yeah, I guess so.

## **1041. Warring Adventurer**

Not that it's an issue, but...has anyone else noticed how many hobgoblins there are?

## **1042. Warring Adventurer**

I thought the same! It's like the hobgoblin ratio is a little higher than the goblins.

## **1043. Warring Adventurer**

Well, they're still just hobgobbies.

#### **1044. Warring Adventurer**

True!

#### **1045. Warring Adventurer**

I couldn't even begin to tell you what Princess just summoned.

#### **1046. Warring Adventurer**

What the hell is that thing? It's huge!

#### **1047. Warring Adventurer**

It's just flyin' around.

#### **1048. Warring Adventurer**

Since it's Princess, I'm sure she used Secret Art of Necromancy, but this must be a unique body.

#### **1049. Warring Adventurer**

Oh! A cute girl!

#### **1050. Warring Adventurer**

She said some kind of curse. Was it a unique skill?

#### **1051. Warring Adventurer**

It must be Dream Casket!

#### **1052. Warring Adventurer**

What's that?

#### **1053. Warring Adventurer**

It's a unique spell from Secret Art of Necromancy—I'm not sure if it's part of Necromantic Magic too. It lets you seal a corpse away and summon it later. People think it's going to become the main use of Secret Art of Necromancy.

#### **1054. Warring Adventurer**

Sounds like Necromantic Magic to me!

### **1055. Warring Adventurer**

That girl's facial expression never changes.

### **1056. Warring Adventurer**

That violet ponytail hanging over her left shoulder. Those eyes as red as rubies. That dollish face. Those straight eyebrows. Those sleepy eyes. That mole under her eye. Those tiny lips. That loli body holding a giant axe! My heart can't take it!

### **1057. Warring Adventurer**

>>1056 This guy right here, Management.

### **1058. Warring Adventurer**

Wait a minute! I didn't do anything yet!

### **1059. Warring Adventurer**

"Yet."

## **1060 Management**

You're off the hook for now.

### **1061. Warring Adventurer**

They let him live.

### **1062. Warring Adventurer**

I'll forgive you, but will *she*?

### **1063. Warring Adventurer**

You guys are making me laugh.

### **1064. Warring Adventurer**

Forget the girl. I'm interested in her axe.

## **1065. Warring Adventurer**

It's really cool. I'm interested too.

## **1066. Warring Adventurer**

I also want to know how the famous players are going to be fighting. Has anything changed for this event?

## **1067. Warring Adventurer**

The inhumans have evolved now. I wonder how it'll go.

## **1068. Warring Adventurer**

Oh, it's about to start!

## **4502. Warring Adventurer**

What a mess!

## **4503. Warring Adventurer**

This is surprisingly easy.

## **4504. Warring Adventurer**

Do we even need to try?

## **4505. Warring Adventurer**

Maybe by doing the same event twice, we're supposed to feel how much stronger we've become in comparison.

## **4506. Warring Adventurer**

That makes sense.

## **4507. Warring Adventurer**

True. We've really grown up.

## **4508. Warring Adventurer**

Mommy, I'm such a big boy now.

#### **4509. Warring Adventurer**

I feel like I haven't seen Takashi-kun in forever.

#### **4510. Warring Adventurer**

I think it'd be weirder to see him all the time.

#### **4511. Warring Adventurer**

You're not wrong.

#### **4512. Warring Adventurer**

So those are the tentacles people claimed to see when she was testing out status ailments?

#### **4513. Warring Adventurer**

She's an inhuman, all right.

#### **4514. Warring Adventurer**

Like a creature out of mythology.

#### **4515. Warring Adventurer**

She slaps away the goblins' attacks without even dodging them. This is no ordinary princess.

#### **4516. Warring Adventurer**

She's got her tentacles, some weird creature, and now a girl.

#### **4517. Warring Adventurer**

Her elemental attributes are absolutely insane.

#### **4518. Warring Adventurer**

But you don't hate her for that, do you?

#### **4519. Warring Adventurer**

I guess not.

## **4520. Warring Adventurer**

The darkness of mankind knows no bounds.

## **4521. Warring Adventurer**

Grab your tissues: Mohawk and Mizuki just teamed up. /cry

## **4522. Warring Adventurer**

A union of demons?

## **4523. Warring Adventurer**

They were the last two people who should ever meet...

## **4524. Warring Adventurer**

It sounds like they already knew each other, though.

## **4525. Warring Adventurer**

Why are there no normal roleplayers? These guys come up with the craziest characters.

## **4526. Warring Adventurer**

Well, there's Bennett.

## **4527. Warring Adventurer**

Princess's group is normal too.

## **4528. Warring Adventurer**

The weirder the character, the more strongly it sticks in people's heads. What can you do?

## **4529. Warring Adventurer**

Princess plays a respectable character. There's just, like, something off about the other ones. You guys know what I mean, right? Tell me I'm not alone here.

## **4530. Warring Adventurer**

Oh, yeah, I do get it. They've all got, like, an aura that permeates everything. Like a stench.

#### **4531. Warring Adventurer**

Exactly! They ruin the mood!

#### **4532. Warring Adventurer**

I'm also scared of those two maids. It's terrifying how they can smile while glaring daggers at you. They'd make little kids cry!

#### **4533. Warring Adventurer**

Don't worry. They don't smile like that at little kids. Just at big kids like you.

#### **4534. Warring Adventurer**

Now I'm sad.

#### **8531. Warring Adventurer**

How do I put this? It feels like a dream that we ever struggled to defeat that general.

#### **8532. Warring Adventurer**

It's a lot different when your tanks can actually be tanks.

#### **8533. Warring Adventurer**

I laughed at how Princess occasionally brought out her tentacles to smack the general and hit him with status ailments.

#### **8534. Warring Adventurer**

It's her special move.

#### **8535. Warring Adventurer**

This is all just a means to level up her skills. Thanks for everything, Princess.

#### **8536. Warring Adventurer**

They might be weaker than us, but with so many goblins, I'm raking in the EXP!

### **8537. Warring Adventurer**

Me too.

### **8538. Warring Adventurer**

But I don't know how good it will be next time. We should search other places and see if we can trigger their event quests.

### **8539. Warring Adventurer**

If only people scattered about a little more.

### **8540. Warring Adventurer**

It's also hard to find the requirements.

### **8541. Warring Adventurer**

Honestly, I don't think we'll find new quests if we're *trying* to look for them.

### **8542. Warring Adventurer**

It depends on how later players will disperse.

### **8543. Warring Adventurer**

Ah...

### **8544. Warring Adventurer**

Farewell, General. You were a good man.

### **8545. Warring Adventurer**

I'll forget about you until the next war.

### **8546. Warring Adventurer**

You guys are so mean!

### **8547. Warring Adventurer**

Shut up! You're gonna forget him too!

### **8548. Warring Adventurer**

Of course I am. It's his fault for not being in the hunting grounds.

### **8549. Warring Adventurer**

Oh yeah. I haven't seen him in the normal hunting grounds.

### **8550. Warring Adventurer**

Isn't he a ruling class? They don't appear out there.

### **8551. Warring Adventurer**

...I forgot about that.

### **8552. Warring Adventurer**

Generals do rule armies, technically.

### **8553. Warring Adventurer**

Imagine that guy ruling anything lmao.

### **8554. Warring Adventurer**

If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.

### **8555. Warring Adventurer**

He's trying his best to get by in life too!

### **8556. Warring Adventurer**

All so that we can hunt him.

### **8557. Warring Adventurer**

True that.

### **8558. Warring Adventurer**

How sad. But this is a game, after all.

### **8559. Warring Adventurer**

Enemies are born so that players can kill them, Takashi.

### **8560. Warring Adventurer**

Then I've gotta kill him!

### **8561. Warring Adventurer**

No, Takashi!

### **8562. Warring Adventure**

A fatal misstep in Takashi's education.

### **8563. Warring Adventurer**

A fatal misstep with lethal consequences.

### **8564. Warring Adventurer**

I'm dying over you guys killing me with this nonsense.

### **8565. Warring Adventurer**

It's high time we call time on this.

### **8566. Warring Adventurer**

It's unthinkable how thoughtless these posts are.

### **8567. Warring Adventurer**

Okay, I'm out. I'm gonna go withdraw some money from an ATM machine.

### **8568. Warring Adventurer**

Yeah, forget this. I'm gonna go study IT technology.

### **8569. Warring Adventurer**

Don't you guys think these double posts are getting repetitive??

### **8570. Warring Adventurer**

You're doing it too.

### **8571. Warring Adventurer**

“IT technology” didn’t click for a second...

## **8572. Warring Adventurer**

Information technology technology.

## **8573. Warring Adventurer**

Can we pause for a second? Is information technology technology a thing people actually say?

## **8574. Warring Adventurer**

Well, no, it’s just called IT when you’re talking about IT technology.

## **8575. Warring Adventurer**

English is hard.

## **8576. Warring Adventurer**

Yep. I honestly couldn’t tell if they were fully in on the joke or not.

## **8577. Warring Adventurer**

I hate how foreign words just look cooler.

## **8578. Warring Adventurer**

For sure. It’d definitely add some pizzazz to the highways if all the exit signs were in German.

## **8579. Warring Adventurer**

Ha ha, come on, don’t bring that up!

## **8580. Warring Adventurer**

That’d be... “Ausfahrt”? Oh. I see.

## **8581. Warring Adventurer**

Now, for a cool translation, I recommend Nasenschleim!

## **8582. Warring Adventurer**

Oh, that sounds so cool!

**8583. Warring Adventurer**

Now tell them what it means.

**8584. Warring Adventurer**

Nasal mucus!

**8585. Warring Adventurer**

That's German for you, all right!

**8586. Warring Adventurer**

LOL.

**8587. Warring Adventurer**

Ah, the war's over.

**8588. Warring Adventurer**

Ew, look at that death log.

**8589. Warring Adventurer**

You can really see how easy it was.

## Chapter 8:

### Library

“Did you get anything good, Sis?”

“Just garbage.”

“Nice!”

“No, not really.”

“Yeah, I hope another quest breaks out in a different location.”

“It’s possible that Management haven’t added any yet,” I point out.

“I’m sure there’s more than one world quest out there. But who knows?”

We return to town as we chat and enter Mr. Ertz’s store.

“Let me guess. You’ve got iron weapons?” he greets us.

“Yep!” we both answer.

“Thought so.”

I use the list function to sell off all the weapons at once. I’ll sell the rest of the goblin materials to the Adventurers’ Union next. Actually, those already don’t bring in much money, and I guess everyone will be selling them now. They’ll be cheaper than usual, but I don’t want them taking up all that space in my inventory, so I’ll still get rid of them.

Finally, I head to the Merchant’s Association. I check on my consignment sales and deposit my gold. It’s so crowded today—most of the players are probably going through the same process as us.

My sister and I evacuate the Merchant Association.

“Phew! There’s so many players around these days,” she comments.

“There truly are. That’s a good thing. I’m going to head home and look over

my skill changes."

"I'll come too!"

The two of us head to my villa.

We sit out in the garden, completely ignoring the lovely flowers around us to stare at our UI. Data is more important than flowers. We're true video game diehards.

### ***Holy Magic***

#### ***Relaxation***

***Quickly heal a target's stamina.***

### ***Shadow Magic***

#### ***Shadow Fake***

***A substanceless shadow body that appears as the user at the time of casting. Shadow body cannot attack and will disappear when successfully attacked.***

#### ***Shadow Pocket***

***Turns shadows into inventory shortcuts.***

#### ***Secret Art of Necromancy***

#### ***Nightglow Circle***

***Place a circle on the ground that strengthens all servants.***

#### ***Ars Magna***

***Number of skills available to servants: 3 each***

***Capacity used in summoning: Evolution level × 9***

***Capacity loss in case of servant death: 30%***

**Capacity loss in case of servant purification: 60%**

**Sphere Clemas Waver**

**Five spheres now available.**

**Relentless Savage Ones**

**Three tentacles now available.**

Relaxation is for use on players of other races. We don't have a concept of stamina in the first place.

Shadow Pocket is, well, exactly what it says. I already have my belt pouches, so I don't need this one.

Ars Magna is starting to look better the more I level it up. The death penalties are still worse than Secret Art of Necromancy on their own, but using less capacity is always a good thing.

My spheres and tentacles are just what they say. I've gained a tentacle, so I might have to adjust my macros now.

What really needs some testing is Shadow Fake and Night Glow Circle.

Let's get right to it. I'll start with Shadow Fake.

"I see. I suppose it's exactly what it says it is," I remark.

"I don't know how you'd use a spell like this," says Rina.

"*At the time of casting*," huh? In other words, it's a spell that creates an illusion of yourself at an exact point in time. I don't think I'll be using it for fake-outs or anything of the sort.

"I guess you could use it to lure out enemies."

"And swap places with it once it's spotted? It might be useful for peeking around corners in dungeons and such."

Next up is Nightglow Circle. "Nightglow" refers to a natural, faint light in the

nighttime that exists even without things like the moon and planets, I believe. Well, that doesn't matter so much—I'm only interested in how it works in the game.

I'll waste no time in trying it. Oh, I can set the coordinates? I'm not sure I understand... A circle forms around the coordinates you select, allowing you to set the range it covers. There are also four lines coming from the initial coordinate.

"Hm? Hmm?"

"Trouble understanding one of your arts?" Rina asks me.

"Ah, I see..."

I cast it for the first time. An effect like a magic circle appears for a moment before vanishing.

"It's gone?"

"Oh, I see it with Magia Trace."

I can faintly make out the magic circle and its area of effect, the latter being a spherical dome centered around the circle. This must be what I saw when I was previewing the spell.

Okay, I'll follow the lines and set Nightglow Circle again at a distant spot. Once more, the magic circle shows up visibly before disappearing again. But when I turn on Magia Trace, I can see that this circle is connected to the previous one I cast by a line. This means there are two spheres displaying the area of effect now.

I place yet another one a short distance away to create a triangle connected by three lines. This condenses the AOE spheres inside the middle of the triangle.

I'll keep following the lines to place more circles.

"I see. I can place a maximum of seven," I conclude.

"Is it the type of spell that gets stronger the more you place?" Rina asks me.

“The area of effect changes, and I believe the numbers go higher with each circle you place. One sphere alone has a large area, but if it gives the same numerical effects no matter what, there would be no point in spending time linking them all.”

Judging by my experiments, it seems like one or two circles create a sphere, three create a triangle, four create a square, six create a hexagram, and seven create a unicursal hexagram (by placing a circle in the center of a hexagram).

I’ll have to visit Lana later to get a detailed look at how the art works.

I don’t have anything else to check at the moment.

“I can get some third-tier skills now!” Rina cries.

“Oh, are they at level 60?”

“Yep. They cost ten SP. I really need to think about which ones to choose.”

“I should be there with Superior Magic Assist soon too.”

“It sounds like we’re really going to be getting into the major stuff.”

“It might be a bit easier for me, since the majority of my main skills are race skills.”

“I’m jealous.”

Well, it sounds like a lot of skills can go up to level 100 in the first place.

“That reminds me, Sis. Did you see Ultimate Magic Assist already?”

“No, I didn’t.”

“I hear it triggers a lot of new stuff. Like, depending on which spells you have, you’ll get a bunch of new ones that are really convenient to have in this game.”

That certainly piques my curiosity. I’ll have to take a look.

## ***Fall Down***

***Decreases fall speed and reduces fall damage.***

## ***Ice Sneak***

***Allows you to walk across ice like normal terrain.***

I remember Ms. Sophie mentioning Fall Down. It looks like you unlock it with Wind Magic level 30 and Ultimate Magic Assist, so I can't even get it in the first place. I suppose I don't need it, though.

Ice Sneak comes from Light Magic and Ultimate Magic Assist? I probably don't need it if I can put studs on my shoes, but it must be nice to get by with a single spell alone. At least there are lots of options to choose from.

However...

“I can't even learn the majority of these since I can't take the main four elements.”

“Given your race, do you need them, Sis?”

“Um, I guess not.”

“I didn't think so.”

“Ah, but I want the ones like Silence and Deodorant. Stain-Proofing looks good too.”

“I should be able to use them in my party, so I think I'll be fine.”

“Mr. Alf doesn't have the right elements for it. Mr. Skelly uses Dark magic too! I wonder if the twins have anything other than Dark.”

“I don't know, considering their races.”

So this is the downside of being inhuman... It's not the end of the world, I suppose. Your magic will end up skewed if you party up with the same types of players, after all. Inhuman races tend to run into dead ends a lot, so this is to be expected.

Space magic's unlock conditions haven't been released yet. I have high hopes for the other players.

"By the way, you can make potions, right, Sis?"

"Yes, if they can be crafted with Alchemy."

"Can I buy some from you?"

"Well, I really only make them for myself."

"I don't mind paying extra if the quality is good! Ms. Salute is so popular that she runs out of stock all the time. I wouldn't have to run around searching for them if I could just buy them from you!"

"I see. I'm growing MP recovery items in my field because I use magic for work, but I don't really have anything for HP. I have ingredients for automatic restoration and magic potions, but I don't really take damage from hits in the first place."

"That's fine. I don't use HP potions much either. I just use a lot of MP potions because it's how I deal damage."

"That makes sense."

MP potions usually sell for more than HP potions. If one generally only uses spells to recover HP and then has to consume potions for MP, it's possible HP potions might be the more economical option for them. Of course, the best strategy is to simply avoid taking damage in the first place. HP potions may be relatively cheap, but they do still cost money.

Being in a skilled party means taking less damage, taking less damage means using fewer HP potions, and using fewer potions means more time to collect EXP. Naturally, even with strong allies, it's probably best to keep at least a few potions on hand in case you need them—unless you're going to a hunting area where you're likely to be overpowered.

Personally, I have automatic restoration and can survive a few hits. Different races have HP, defense, and restoration as factors that can be of use.

“I grow ingredients for MP potions in my field, so I probably have quite a bit of stock on hand.”

“Ex? Mega?”

“They’re mega potions.”

### **[Recovery] Mega MP Potion**

**Rarity: NO Quality: B+**

***A magic medicine that restores MP, generally used by those level 40 and above.***

***It has been made with precision and provides slightly more MP than an average potion.***

***Not usable by undead.***

“I can buy these from you, Sis!”

“That reminds me. I have lemonades that restore MP too.”

“Lemonades?”

“It puts you in a state of MP regeneration. They’re slower than the more concentrated potions, but it gives a decent amount of MP. They also cure dehydration.”

“Wow! Sounds like I should drink one before I go hunting. These sound great if you want to avoid overdosing on potions!”

The lemonade’s effects are similar to using Meditation. I’ll sell them to her since she already has potions.

I hear that potion overdoses will lower your stats if you drink too many. The effects aren’t very strong when you’re a low level, but the higher your level, the more pronounced overdoses become—stronger potions are easier to have too

much of, after all.

“That reminds me. I heard you can also make liqueurs too, instead of just concentrated drinks.”

“As in alcoholic drinks?”

“Uh-huh. Liqueur potions, they’re called. They’re supposed to restore more than normal potions, but you’ll get intoxicated if you drink too many.”

“So the larger the downside, the bigger the benefit. Liqueur seems like it would be an alternative to avoid potion overdoses.”

“There’s a rare skill called Drunken Boxing. I’m sure people with that one will go for the liqueur.”

Drunken Boxing grants an increase to power when in a state of intoxication, and it also reduces the side effects of said intoxication. You’ll be dizzy, but you’ll still be able to fight.

I haven’t seen the conditions for it since it’s a rare skill, but I assume it must be something like consuming alcohol during a fight.

My sister and I relax in the garden and chat some more.

“I wonder what this month’s event will be!” Rina ponders.

“I’m sure it’ll be Halloween-related.”

“But what could they have in store for Halloween? Maybe they’ll let us come to the Nether.”

“There’s not really much there to speak of in the first place. There aren’t even shops.”

“That’s so sad.”

To be honest, I feel like you could walk around the Nether a single time and already be bored of it.

“Actually, I think the fairy land is a more likely Halloween setting than the Nether in this world,” I realize.

“Ah! Right, they have sweets and mischief and all that.”

“This world also has witches as its form of doctors. Come to think of it, wasn’t Halloween originally celebrated as a harvest festival?”

“After the rest of their official events, don’t you think they might totally ignore any sense of world building?”

“Ah. Well, yes, maybe.”

You can never let your guard down when it comes to this game’s devs. It’s already October now, so the announcement could come any day.

Oh, look at that. Lana and Lieselotte are here. They must be done with their mission.

“Have you finished the job?”

“Yes. It appears that one person is missing.”

“Is it possible they’ve already paid for their misdeeds?”

“Not when they’ve surely interfered with a person’s soul.”

“So they fled from the knights?”

I’m sure they’ll end up in the Abyss one way or another, but I’ll make a mental note of it.

“Does the prime minister know?”

“Yes, we’ve informed him.”

“Very well. I’ll keep this in mind while I’m on the surface. I already check people’s souls while I’m up there.”

“Please call for us with your key if you find them and can’t handle them on your own.”

“I will.”

“We’ll be on our way now.”

Lana returns to the training grounds with Lieselotte in tow. It seems like she’ll

be testing what Lieselotte is capable of. I hope she does her very best.

I also made a note of the culprit's distinctive features before I saw them off, of course.

"What was that about?" Rina asks me.

"Lizzy—no, I'll call her soul Liza. Liza and Lana went to the Abyss to see if the people who cursed her were all there."

"And one's missing?"

"So it seems. I haven't received a quest to hunt them down. If they do something bad again, that could become the premise for a quest. Actually, I wonder if they've done this before."

Liza would have been cursed before us players came along. If not, that ritual would have definitely become the plot of a world quest, judging by how she explained that her entire village was destroyed.

Maybe this is all just character backstory if it's not turning into a search quest. Or I'll discover them at some point and instantly be given a quest to apprehend them. It could even be connected to a future world quest for the Dinait Empire.

"Ah, I forgot. I should have asked what the ritual was for."

"Uh, that seems pretty important," Rina says.

"Of course. I want to ask about her skills too. I'll go ask her directly."

A ritual that uses a soul as a sacrifice definitely couldn't have been for anything good. Anything requiring a sacrifice in general is shady business in the first place.

"Kay, I'm going hunting!" says Rina.

"Have fun."

I watch Rina leave through the mini-portal and head to the training grounds.

Lana and Liza are really going at it. Well, Lana isn't having any trouble keeping up with an opponent like Liza, of course. Lana has been alive a lot longer, and

she's a much higher level too. Liza is said to be a near hero-level adventurer on the surface too, but everyone in the Nether is at maximum level.

I'm going to start with some tests.

I summon Unit One as a level 40 full-armor skeleton. Skeleton servants include normal skeletons, red skeletons, metal skeletons, armored skeletons, and full-armored skeletons. They actually come with their own armor. It's a little worn-down, but it still looks somewhat strong. Mr. Skelly told me it's not bad for defense.

I make Unit One shoot at a target with a detailed HP display—it's not unlike Ms. Primura's shooting range. I'm going to compare the magic circles to Unit One's normal attacks.

It looks like I was right. Casting Nightglow Circles leads to an increase in strength. One circle alone has a wide range but doesn't pack much more of a punch at all. I suppose it's not a bad idea to cast one while I fight. Any improvement is a good thing, after all. Casting seven circles seems to increase his attack power by 1.5 times.

Now then...

"Lana, did you ever ask them what the ritual was for?"

"They said it was a summoning ceremony."

"I wonder if they're part of some heretical religion. There's no need for a sacrifice if someone wants to summon us, right?"

"Of course not. Summoning is usually done by sorcerers of the royal court, as it requires a lot of magical energy. I'm not knowledgeable when it comes to specifics, since I'm a swordswoman, but these are usually nobles or members of the royal family."

I see. I can't imagine why they'd want to summon *them*—or rather, *us*. Unlike the source material, we're not the kind of beings that get violent or anything when summoned.

“We *may* get violent depending on the circumstances of the summoning,”  
Lana informs me.

“What?!” I cry.

“Or, more accurately, it depends on who’s summoned. If they’re summoned, given a task, and offered a reward for it, that makes it a contract.”

Ah, so it’s something like a Faustian bargain, as we would call it in real life. Naturally, plenty of idioms surrounding these concepts aren’t used in the game because demons here are merely the opposite of angels.

So depending on the personality of the summoned being and how they feel about the summoner’s demand, they may still agree to the contract regardless of the reward.

As a matter of fact, that doesn’t sound like a good thing at all.

“It should be impossible to summon something like an outer one with a half-hearted ritual. Stellura has placed them in a separate realm,” Lana adds.

“I wonder what those people could have been trying to summon.”

“If it wasn’t us or the outer ones... Ah, could it be a devil?”

“A devil? What kind of creature are they?”

“They’re said to be wicked, dreadful beings. I believe they existed during the prime minister’s era. I only know that before my time, they attempted such a large invasion that the gods had to respond. They fought a massive war against the devils that trampled upon the earth.”

That sounds like something I could learn more about in a history book.

I’ll make a note that these devils will probably be related to the game’s main story. It sounds like real-life demons are called devils in this world. They must be ruled by a devil god instead of a devil king if they’re powerful enough to make the gods take action.

“Madame,” Liza says to me.

“Yes?”

“Those people were all wearing this symbol.”

Liza shows me a mark of three curved swords like shuriken centered around a dot in the middle. Wait. This looks familiar. Is this the Yellow Sign?! It’s Hastur!

I haven’t met Hastur here yet. I wonder what kind of character he’ll be. That’s the problem—depending on the situation, it would probably be best to destroy this cult, or whatever they actually are. Should I head to the Medium? It sounds like the devils have no relation to this particular case.

Still, Hastur is a great old one in the Cthulhu mythos. That should make him a follower of Stellura. I can’t imagine he would demand a soul if that’s the case. He shouldn’t demand *anything* that falls under Stellura’s domain.

I see...

“Beings typically aren’t summoned unless they’re well known, which you most certainly are as a Nemeseia. You may also be summoned as an arbitrator. Outer ones attract the interest of strange people too. Though, I haven’t heard of any arbitrators being summoned recently. I don’t know if that’s because the world is at peace or if the people on the surface have simply forgotten.”

“Did that used to happen a lot in the past?”

“Absolutely, it did. Countries would summon an arbitrator for important trials. You’ve spoken to the prime minister, no? I’m sure he would report any information to you.”

“I’ll go check with the prime minister. Then I’ll head to the Medium to ask about Hastur.”

I leave the training grounds and head to the castle.

“Prime Minister!”

“What is it?”

“Have any arbitrators been summoned lately?”

“Hmm? I believe they have. Let’s take a look. The last was forty-seven years ago in Chrichston.” I believe Chrichston is the western kingdom on the northern continent.

“There haven’t been any changes in the frequency of summonings?”

“Well, one thing *has* piqued my interest. Does Dinait still exist out there?”

“It does,” I reply.

“They used to summon arbitrators more than anyone. It troubles me to see they no longer do so.” The prime minister sounds troubled by the lack of summonings from the Dinait Empire.

“How often did they summon?”

“Once every year. The more land you own, the more fools you must deal with. Arbitrators are called to attend trials to make sure these fools are properly dealt with in a timely manner.”

“That way the legal process can proceed fairly without anyone doing something unreasonable.”

“Exactly. If they cry and try to stop progress, the arbitrators will strike them down with Blade of Arbitration. The punishment for lying to an arbitrator is even more severe.”

The arbitrators exist only to ensure a country’s laws are functioning fairly. They can’t simply be virtuous people either, so there aren’t too many of them among the undead. It’s a very rare job!

More importantly, I ask the prime minister to talk to me about the summoning method and make a note of it. I can probably share this with other residents.

“Do you know how to summon an outer one, Prime Minister?”

“Ha ha! You ought to go to them with that question.”

“All right. I’ll be on my way to the Medium then.”

I head to the public area of the Medium next. It's a beautiful map as always. Not that I can say the same for the people here.

Now, what am I here for? I want to learn more about what makes Hastur tick and find out how to summon outer ones.

Even if I *do* get summoned, I think I can overpower the summoners with my Book of Eibon and Mr. Skelly's Necronomicon.

"What are you doing just standing there?"

Ah, it's Pup Lord. Perfect timing. I can ask him for help.

"I heard it's possible to summon outer ones. Do you know how that's done?"

"Mm? I do know, but you already have your key."

Oh, so I can call for outer ones with my key. I can't travel to the future or past, but I can summon others or return to an area by opening gates. However, I'm not asking because I want to summon them myself.

"It's helpful to know that I can use my key, but I wanted to ask you if it's necessary to sacrifice a soul in order to summon an outer one."

"Sacrifice a soul? We do not need such things. We would rather not invite wrath upon ourselves by doing so."

"I thought that would be the case. It sounds like false information has been spreading out there."

"Explain."

I'll tell him about Liza's past.

"I see. Indeed. It is possible they believed they could harness a soul's energy, not as an offering to Hastur but as a means of powering their ritual."

"Ah, I see. So it wasn't just a sacrifice."

"Hundreds of humans would be required to summon beings like us, but that cost is greatly reduced when a soul is used. Such action is taboo, of course."

“Stellura doesn’t allow that, does she?”

“Absolutely not. You may be able to use Aforgomon if another incident occurs. I have no sympathy, as they bring these consequences upon themselves.”

Now I know that Hastur didn’t demand a soul...but I also know he has some sort of cult out there, so it’s worth learning more about him in advance.

“By the way, how many beings are there who would cause trouble to the surface world if they’re summoned?”

“Fear not. They would never destroy anything more than a single country, lest they upset the gods.”

“But losing a single country is a huge loss from humanity’s perspective.”

“I see. That is a trivial detail. If they want to stop such beings, they must become stronger. They may even be granted a role for it. The rules state that those with titles must follow their roles.”

Is he saying that we should hit max level for that? That would be years away. Do outer ones perceive years as mere seconds?

His words could also be interpreted as a recommendation to take preparations before conducting a summoning if you value your country.

The outer ones dwell in the Medium and don’t see any of the fallout if a country is destroyed. Of course, it’s a much different story for those of us in the Nether! We’d be swarmed with a sudden influx of souls.

“It sounds like we’re at a real disadvantage.”

“We are able to go to the surface as we please. Is that not optimal for our roles? The best position to be in is one of strength. You must work hard to become a ruling race.”

Well, I’d still be leveling up even without that advice. I look forward to seeing what role I receive.

I don't think there's any need to meet with Hastur directly. I should probably only summon outer ones if I'm prepared for them to destroy at least one country.

"You are very eager to learn, I can tell."

"I am? I don't think I'm any more eager than the average person."

"Have you already been to the library?"

"There's a library in the Medium too? I'd like to see that."

"You can reach it from the castle. I suggest you visit."

"I still have some time before dinner. I think I'll head over now."

A mark for the library appears on my mini-map after Pup Lord gives me direction. There's no time to waste.

My first stop is the castle.

I turn here, then head straight. Another turn... Oh. What a lovely garden. Are there gardeners in the Medium? I imagine they would look nothing like the gardeners I'm used to, but the same goes for everyone here.

Hey, what's that?

"A kitty?"

The kitty turns around—revealing it has three eyes. A normal cat would never be in a palace like this. With its distinctive fiery red eyes and black fur—wait, three fiery eyes?

"Nyar..."

"Tsk!"

It looks like he's having fun. That was close—he almost tricked me. I'm heading to the library, and since he isn't stopping me, he must just be here having some fun on his own.

There's the door to the library. I'll head in and—huh?! I've been teleported!

Wow, I already see bookshelves, so this must be a real library. But the map makes it look so much bigger. Wait, the area name appears underneath the mini-map. It says “Celaeno Library.” I suppose the Cthulhu Mythos does have the Great Library of Celaeno. There’s also the Miskatonic University library as well.

I must have teleported to Celaeno the second I touched the door. This is the largest library of them all, so I’ll have to rely on Instinct for help. Well, I was already doing that in all libraries. It’s very hard to search for the books I want, after all.

There’s some sort of cone-shaped creature at the reception desk. What is the name of that creature that managed Celaeno Library? The character here feels a lot more like a normal NPC.

“Welcome to Celaeno Library. Books must remain within the library at all times. Note-taking is permitted. Please be tidy with them.”

“Understood,” I reply.

Time to get searching now that I have permission to read.

Oh, Instinct is already waking up? It’s definitely showing me things. I open up a book next to me to see what happens, but the inside is blank. I must not be able to see information that I don’t need! That makes things simple.

Instinct is reacting to this shelf. I wonder why some books are glowing.

I’ll read these two books later and start with this one.

***Your language skill Ancient Languages allows you to begin deciphering the Celaeno Fragment.***

***You have learned the special recipe “Elder Sign.”***

***You have learned the special recipe “Interstellar Flute.”***

***You have learned the special recipe “Golden Mead.”***

**You have learned the special spell “Summon Byakhee.”**

Hmm. If one fragment gives me these, what will the other two books do?

This is the version of the Book of Eibon from Hyperborea, isn't it? Abdul Alhazred was the one who made *Kitab al-Azif*. It's a very dangerous grimoire. It's never even used in the TRPG because it would destroy scenarios and characters.

The Hyperborea edition, said to not even exist in the TRPG, is a completed Book of Eibon that has yet to be turned into book form. *Kitab al-Azif*, the original version of the Necronomicon, shouldn't exist at this point either.

But this is all for the TRPG. Here in the game, it's right in front of me. There's no sanity meter in this game, meaning I can read as much of it as I want!

I take the Book of Eibon from the shelf—oh, I've lost control of my body. Is this some sort of cutscene?

The Book of Eibon hanging from my belt and the Hyperborea version of the Book of Eibon float into the air to face each other.

They begin to flip through their pages, all while sending magical energy flying all over the place, until a special effect shows text from the Hyperborea version flowing into my Book of Eibon. Is the text being copied? The Hyperborea version won't be erased, will it? I'll definitely be yelled at if that happens.

The Celaeno librarian has come to see what all the magical energy is about, and I still can't move yet.

“I see. Whatever the goddess desires.”

Ah, they went back to their desk. Now that I think of it, my Book of Eibon is “God” rarity and the Hyperborea version is “EX.” The librarian must be ignoring me because it's a sacred item.

The animation ends, and I regain control of my body. My book is much thicker now. Did it gain pages?

**[Equipment-Weapon] Book of Eibon**

**Rarity: GO Quality: S+ Durability: –**

**An ancient grimoire full of forbidden knowledge.**

**A perfect copy of its Hyperborea version.**

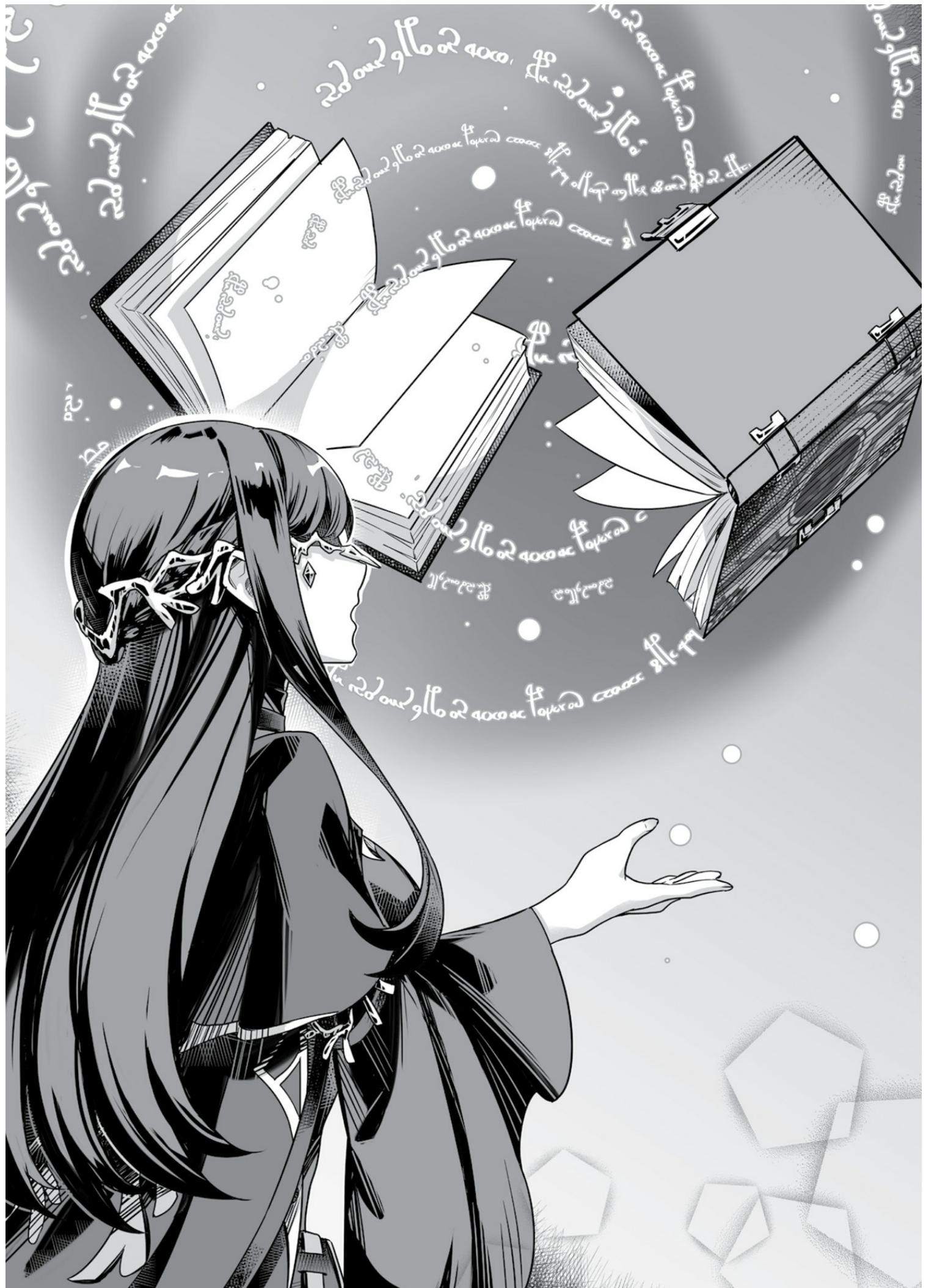
**Grants its owner knowledge of the Medium.**

**Resonance: Focusing on a spell will cause objects within the owner to float and stay close to you.**

**Auto-Spell: There is no need to hold anything with your hands.**

**Anti-Spell II: Automatically resist enemy spells directed at owner.**

**Affected by skills: Book, Superior Magic Assist**



Evidently, it's changed slightly. The description was updated, and Anti-Spell was improved. Everything else appears the same.

I'm relieved to see that the Hyperborea version has just been copied. I have no need to memorize it in the first place. Unlike other weapons, this equipment can't be strengthened with better materials, which must be why there was an upgrade event for it.

Next up is *Kitab al-Azif*.

I touch the book and lose control of my body again as *Kitab al-Azif* and my Book of Eibon rise into the air. I get to absorb that too? It's not really going to be the Book of Eibon anymore.

Ah, my book is getting even thicker. These two volumes alone are over 1,300 pages—The Book of Eibon is 500 pages, and the Necronomicon is over 800. It's really quite dense. Even reading this is an inconvenience at this point. Fortunately, I don't think the game will allow my arms to tremble when I carry it. Not that I can read it in the first place, since it counts as equipment, not a book.

You know, I really don't want something so thick hanging from my belt.

It looks like the copying is finished. The book floats away, and I begin to follow it automatically. I haven't regained control over my body yet. This animation is a little long.

Where is this book going? I don't need to touch the books anymore—information is automatically absorbed as I walk along.

I descend a staircase that seems to lead to a basement, passing more bookcases as we head deeper.

The book stops and spins in front of a strong-looking door that opens up. The other side reveals a new cave-like environment. We proceed further down until I spot a shapeless, twisting being with many tentacles.

Some amoeba-shaped thing separates from it, but the shapeless being grabs

the amoeba with its tentacles and absorbs it again. This process repeats again and again.

A tentacle comes toward me as if to grab me too, but I manage to dodge it. This is all part of a special cutscene, since the game is still the one controlling my actions.

This being looks a bit like a shoggoth.

My equipment flies overhead toward the depths of the cave. But the tentacles start to put up even more of a fight when I follow. I can't get any further like this. I'll have to fall back and wait for the book to return.

Hmm? A shapeless being with lots of tentacles in a damp cave. Something separates from its body that it repeatedly reabsorbs. Ah! Is this Ubbo-Sathla and its brood?! I forgot what they're called, but there are supposed to be some sort of crazy stone tablets where Ubbo-Sathla resides.

I'm too far away to tell what the book is doing.

Oh, it's back. It's a bookmark now? But I quite liked the book's appearance when it looked like a grimoire.

I ignore this and chase down the bookmark until we're back at the library. The bookmark shimmers when I exit through the door and transforms into the thick book from earlier. The book spins, the door closes, and the tome returns to my belt—this time in bookmark form again.

***“Title: Book of Eibon Codebreaker” has been upgraded to “Title: Adrift in a Sea of Knowledge.”***

Look at that. I can finally control my body again. I was hoping to avoid carrying around such a thick book, and now I know it simply becomes a bookmark when it's being stored. That sounds like a good deal.

I look over the details as I head back.

**[Equipment-Weapon] Book of the Elder Keys Rarity: GO Quality: S+ Durability: –**

***A grimoire filled with knowledge from throughout the world. Grants its owner the knowledge they seek.***

***Resonance: Focusing on a spell will cause objects within the owner to float and stay close to you.***

***Auto-Spell: There is no need to hold anything with your hands.***

***Anti-Spell III: Automatically resist enemy spells directed at owner.***

***Mirror Spell: Every spell you cast is fired twice.***

***Affected by skills: Book, Superior Magic Assist***

Ah, I see. So those stone tablets with Ubbo-Sathla were the Elder Keys.

Anti-Spell has gone from II to III without me even having to use it.

I also have the new art Mirror Spell. It goes without saying that it's powerful. It's strong, but the ability is currently locked since I haven't cleared the criteria to use it yet. How sad. I have to have a base level higher than 50 and own Ultimate Magic Assist. Both are still a ways off.

Let's look at my new title.

***"Adrift in a Sea of Knowledge"***

***The abundance of knowledge was simply too vast.***

That makes sense. It's the Elder Keys, after all.

Now where can I find the arts I learned from the Celaeno Fragments? Let's

see. Oh, they're in Ancient Languages!

### ***Summon Byakhee***

***Summons a byakhee to carry you.***

***Channel your magical energy in worship of Hastur. If you fail, start again from the beginning!***

***Iä! Iä! Hastur!***

***Hastur cf'ayak 'vulgumm***

***Vuglagln, vulgtmm!***

***Ai! Ai! Hastur!***

Wow, you can even chant the spell? I'd love to try this.

I also have some recipes. I see.

### ***[Tool] Elder Sign***

***A symbol that allows one to escape devils.***

***Devils are unable to pass any door or pathway that displays this mark.***

***Engraving the sign on armor will have an effect, but anything else will not prevent damage.***

***This means that making a pendant with the Elder Sign has next to no effect.***

***If you feel uneasy without the sign on you, try keeping it on your shield.***

### ***[Tool] Interstellar Flute***

***A flute needed to summon a byakhee.***

***Use Handicraft to whittle stone. This stone flute has low durability and cannot be repaired.***

***Use Smithing to create an alloy to craft your flute. This makes it durable, but the materials are hard to gather.***

***Channel your magical energy into a stone flute, play it, and recite the chant.***

***This will take much magical energy, but there's no need to do it in one sitting. Channel your energy in different increments while you wait for it to regenerate.***

***Saying the chant is only required once. However, the byakhee will probably carry you a bit more carefully if you say it every time.***

**[Drink] Golden Mead**

***Grants you the proper resistance to temporarily pass through vacuums and changes in space.***

***This drink is exceptionally powerful but very hard to make.***

The flute comes with the chant too, so I can probably summon a byakhee either by learning Summon Byakhee or acquiring a flute.

Then there's the Elder Sign. It seems it's been changed to protect against devils, not mythical beings. Devils really *are* this game's villains, aren't they?

I say goodbye to the Celaeno librarian and take my leave.

Touching the entry door allowed me to safely return to the castle in the Medium.

I'd like to get crafting right away, but I don't have the materials for it. Nor do I have the Handicraft or Smithing skills required to make the flute. If you use Smithing, you need silver and meteorite to create an alloy to make the flute with. Meteorite hasn't been discovered yet.

I only need to recreate the shape of the Elder Sign for it to take effect, which gives me a lot of options to work with, but I don't have a use for it yet. You don't currently hear about devils showing up anywhere in this game.

I also don't think I have a need for Golden Mead, considering my race. I can go without breathing, just like when I was a zombie, and my race makes me invulnerable to the only other forms of environmental damage, extreme heat and cold.

All things told, this visit resulted in an upgrade to my equipment, with the highlight being the Book of the Elder Keys. I suppose it was one of those lucky days.

Anyway, it's just about time for dinner.

After dinner, it's time to test how the Book of the Elder Keys works.

I'll be relying on the rabbits around Starting Town for help.

I focus on combat, and the bookmark at my hip automatically floats up, transforming into the very thick book. It follows behind me in midair when I walk forward, and once I stop, it circles me like a satellite. This is all what the Book of Eibon did too.

Now I'll shoot a spell. Oh, this part looks different!

The state just before I use MP and say the activation keyword, otherwise known as standby mode, used to consist of the book opening up, the pages starting to flip, and the book rotating around to me when an enemy approached.

The new standby mode consists of the previous motions, but now the pages start to fly out and dance around the book. When I hold my hand out, the book floats to the top of my palm. It seems like I have some freedom in how I add my own style.

Next up is the summoning spell. The first part of the description doesn't

matter so much—the problem is the “vuglagln, vulgtmm.” Vuglagln, vutlagln. Vuglatgln, vulgtmm. All right, got it.

Let's give this a try.

I select Summon Byakhee.

The Book of the Elder Keys stops in front of me and opens its pages toward the sky. They flip for a while until it stops on a page and a magic circle forms. This one is different from the others. The Yellow Sign appears around the book.

Now I just have to chant the spell.

“Iä! Iä! Hastur! Hastur cf’ayak ’vulgumm vuglagln, vulgtmm, ai! Ai! Hastur!”

My MP is depleted as I chant, and when I finish, the Yellow Sign sparkles before fading away into nothing. Chanting it very slowly didn't seem to hinder the process.

A byakhee emerges from the sky with flapping wings.

How would I describe a byakhee? It has human-like skin and eyes, bat-like wings, and a body like an ant. At the same time, it also has a tail and a lizard-like mouth. Byakhees generally have a height ranging from two to three meters.

By the way, I've heard that they can fly up to seventy kilometers an hour on the surface, and the lower the atmospheric pressure, the faster they get. Any normal creature using them for transport will have to take measures against the cold because of this. Though I doubt they'll be able to fly anyone to space in this game.



“Who’s this? Ah, the newcomer? I’ve heard of you.”

“I wanted to try out the summoning spell I learned earlier. You may have other outsiders asking you to transport them in the future as well. Thank you in advance for helping us.”

“Fine, so long as you obey the right steps. Where are you going today? Or did you just want to meet me?”

“I was just saying hello.”

“Mm. Then until next time. May you spread the word of King Hastur!”

Should I really spread that word? Perhaps I’ll have no choice, considering I’ll have to do the lä lä chant every time if I want to travel by byakhee instead of horse.

I’ll spread the word on the forums and go to bed.

Come, join the cult of Hastur! Be sure to chant lä lä to him as much as you like.

## Official BBS 6

### [What will] Chatting Thread 112 [The next event be?]

#### 1. Resting Adventurer

This thread is for general chatting. Please write whatever you want, but keep the rules in mind, or you'll have Management breathing down your neck. Seriously. The entire thread might be deleted. Please cut me some slack.

Past threads: [http://\\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\* \\*](http://* * * * * * * *)

>>940 Open a new thread, please.

#### 653. Resting Adventurer

Princess is doing the lä lä thing!

#### 654. Resting Adventurer

Huh?

#### 655. Resting Adventurer

She's doing! The lä lä! Thing!

#### 656. Resting Adventurer

Hasn't she always been doing that?

#### 657. Resting Adventurer

No, not that! Whoa... It's a byakhee.

#### 658. Resting Adventurer

Ew, I see something creepy!

#### 659. Resting Adventurer

A byakhee?!

**660. Resting Adventurer**

She was chanting “lä! lä!”

**661. Resting Adventurer**

You mean you can summon those things?

**662. Resting Adventurer**

You sure can.

**663. Resting Adventure**

It’s almost time for bed. I’m sure we’ll get the information by morning at the latest.

**664. Resting Adventurer**

She already posted it on the conquering thread.

**665. Resting Adventurer**

She’s usually on that one or the production thread.

**666. Resting Adventurer**

Are byakhees mounts? It seems like a better deal than buying a horse.

**667. Resting Adventurer**

If you ignore how it looks.

**668. Resting Adventurer**

No one with a fear of heights is going near those things.

**669. Resting Adventurer**

Oh, Old Man Ertz posted on the production thread... Hmm...

**670. Resting Adventurer**

He needs items? Silver and meteorite alloy. I see. Where the hell are

meteorites in this game?

### **671. Resting Adventurer**

I haven't seen any yet.

### **672. Resting Adventurer**

Meteorites are small pieces of meteors that survive impact, right? I heard the empire has a lake on a hill where stars fall.

### **673. Resting Adventurer**

They physically fall?

### **674. Resting Adventurer**

I was told not to get too close because it's dangerous if you're not prepared.

### **675. Resting Adventurer**

So they literally fall!

### **676. Resting Adventurer**

The lake on the hill where stars fall. How very "fantasy"...

### **677. Resting Adventurer**

I wonder if the meteorites fall into the lake.

### **678. Resting Adventurer**

Wouldn't real meteorites leave craters?

### **679. Resting Adventurer**

True.

### **680. Resting Adventurer**

A lake on the hill where stars fall, eh? We'll have to look into this.

### **681. Resting Adventurer**

I'm back from the floating continent!

## **682. Resting Adventurer**

Actually? How was it?

## **683. Resting Adventurer**

It was Heaven!

## **684. Resting Adventurer**

Can you expand on that a little...?

## **685. Resting Adventurer**

I demand screenshots.

## **686. Resting Adventurer**

This is what I mean when I call it Heaven!

[http://\\* \\* \\* \\* \\*](http://* * * * *)

## **687. Resting Adventure**

Lmao, it's literally where the angels live.

## **688. Resting Adventurer**

Ah... Yeah, sure. Par for the course in this world.

## **689. Resting Adventure**

It's only natural that Heaven would be something else here.

## **690. Resting Adventurer**

Yeah, the afterlife here is the Nether or the realm of the dead.

## **691. Resting Adventurer**

There's a Hell too!

## **692. Resting Adventurer**

I'm guessing that's where the demons live?

## **693. Resting Adventurer**

I hear the flying races are making their own countries on the floating continent. The royal capital of Heaven is Gladsheim, and the palace is Valhalla. The royal capital of Hell is Helheim, and the palace is Pandemonium. Would that be where harpies live, I wonder?

#### **694. Resting Adventurer**

Gladsheim, Helheim, Valhalla, and...Pandemonium?

#### **695. Resting Adventurer**

Well, they have giants in northern Europe, not demons, so maybe nothing fits it specifically.

#### **696. Resting Adventurer**

Pandemonium is a city in Hell in *Paradise Lost*, and I think it means “all demons” in Greek?

#### **697. Resting Adventurer**

They made it the palace name instead of the royal capital, so maybe it's the one from *Water Margin*?

#### **698. Resting Adventurer**

It has that building where demons live.

#### **699. Resting Adventurer**

Sounds right.

#### **700. Resting Adventurer**

The fairy land is Tír na nÓg, so it comes from Celtic mythology. The angels and demons come from Northern European mythology and Pandemonium. The aquatic starting point is the sunken city of Atlantis. The Medium is Cthulhu Mythos.

#### **701. Resting Adventurer**

So chaotic.

## **702. Resting Adventurer**

Games usually aren't like this.

## **703. Resting Adventurer**

Oh yeah. I found a book that says mythical dragons are called da'at.

## **704. Resting Adventurer**

Did you just say...da'at?

## **705. Resting Adventurer**

For ancient dragons, red are geburah, blue are chesed, green are netzach, yellow are tiphereth, white is kether, and black is binah, Those are the six elements.

## **706. Resting Adventurer**

Those come from the tree of life. I get it!

## **707. Resting Adventurer**

Um, what else is missing?

## **708. Resting Adventurer**

Gray is chochma and purple is yesod. What's the last ones again?

## **709. Resting Adventurer**

Orange for hod, maybe?

## **710. Resting Adventurer**

If it comes from the tree of life, there could also be ein, ein sof, and ohr ein sof.

## **711. Resting Adventurer**

This excludes any of them that can't be included in the elements.

## **712. Resting Adventurer**

Stellura is gray too, after all.

## **713. Resting Adventurer**

Orange and purple don't work. The ein ones would be nothingness, infinity, and infinite light.

## **714. Resting Adventurer**

Could mythical dragon and ancient dragon be titles that are inherited?

## **715. Resting Adventurer**

That's possible. Or maybe they've just never died...

## **716. Resting Adventurer**

Do they rise again like phoenixes?

## **717. Resting Adventurer**

Talk about expanding your horizons!

## **718. Resting Adventurer**

That reminds me. Golems in this world shoot beams, you know.

## **719. Resting Adventurer**

Huh? Golems shooting beams?

## **720. Resting Adventurer**

What, your golems don't?

## **721. Resting Adventurer**

Yours *do*?

## **722. Resting Adventurer**

Golem beeeeeaaam! It really hurts when it hits you.

## **723. Resting Adventurer**

I know that scene.

## **724. Resting Adventurer**

What ghost of fate is that supposed to be?

### **725. Resting Adventurer**

This game has Cthulhu. It wouldn't be so strange to have things from other series too.

### **726. Resting Adventurer**

What are the golems like in this game?

### **727. Resting Adventurer**

They're pretty strong, but I hear they can't move if they lose all their MP.

### **728. Resting Adventurer**

They'll keep shooting pillar spells at you until they run out of MP. They can mow you down while they're firing, and they pack quite a punch.

### **729. Resting Adventurer**

Seriously, golems...?

### **730. Resting Adventurer**

I read that they unlock beams as part of their race skills at level 40.

### **731. Resting Adventurer**

So enemies will start blowing us to smithereens at level 40?

### **732. Resting Adventurer**

Can we survive magic creatures blowing us away with magical energy?

### **733. Resting Adventurer**

Yep, it's no problem.

### **734. Resting Adventurer**

Nope, it's a big problem.

### **735. Resting Adventurer**

Which is it?!

### **736. Resting Adventurer**

Dunno!

### **737. Resting Adventurer**

At the very least, the upper floors of the cave dungeon in the northeast don't have enemies that blow you away.

### **738. Resting Adventurer**

What about the lower floors?

### **739. Resting Adventurer**

Dungeon enemies start blowing you away at level 45.

### **740. Resting Adventurer**

For real?

### **741. Resting Adventurer**

Golems are always shooting beams, so cave areas are hellish.

### **742. Resting Adventurer**

Lol, I can imagine.

### **743. Resting Adventurer**

I'm just glad fewer of them seem to spawn on the lower floors.

### **744. Resting Adventurer**

At what floor do golems start spawning?

### **745. Resting Adventurer**

They're rare on the fourth floor. Things get serious on the fifth floor.

### **746. Resting Adventurer**

I see. Thanks!

## 747. Resting Adventurer

No problem.

## Bonus Story: A Day in the Life of the Twins

OH DEAR. STARTING TOWN is as crowded as ever. I suppose it's a good thing it's so lively. Oh, look, it's the twins—and they've spotted me too.

"Good day, Princess!" they cry in unison.

"Good day. What are you two up to?"

"We were playing with the resident kids!"

"Hee hee! Is that right? Did you have fun?"

"Yeah!"

Of course they did. Even the children's AI is very impressive.

I wonder if the twins have any friends in the game that are close to them in age. I don't really know anything about their relationships. They're the youngest players on my friends list—Ms. Primura, as a junior high student, is slightly older.

I hear that most elementary schoolers play the game with a guardian, and I do sometimes see parties of adults and children around the game world. However, I have yet to meet the twins' guardian, so it would seem that they're an exception to the norm. Having to buy three sets of full-dive hardware for the twins and a guardian *would* come with quite the price tag...but it's also possible that their guardian is using a TV or computer monitor to view them as they play.

Well, all that matters is that they're having fun. The rest is none of my business.

"How do children in this world play?" I ask.

"The same as us!" they reply.

It sounds like tag and hide and seek are the usual routines. Apparently, this

world's magic is too dangerous for children to use alone, so they're barred from using it within the town—makes perfect sense to me. That said, there does seem to be magic tools made just for children to play with.

"We're really good at ball games," they reveal.

"Is that right?"

"We use barriers to stop the ball from flying away!"

"That really would give you a leg up..."

"Right?"

"But don't those magic tools cost a lot of gold?"

"They're already in the park!"

I see. They must be talking about a playground in the park. That means the landowner had to have put them there, regardless of that character's circumstances.

Starting Town is very large and has multiple parks, although I've never been to them myself. I don't want the children or their guardians to be bothered by my presence, even if they *are* NPCs.

"We played baseball too!" Mr. Ame recalls.

"Yeah, with the other players!" Ms. Trine adds.

"Baseball, you say? Are the parks that big?"

"It was in the northwest side of Starting Town!" they chime in unison.

"That side isn't a safe area..."

"We snuck in!"

What was so great about that baseball game that they went to such lengths?

"They're probably still playing now," the twins add.

"Shall we go take a look?" I suggest. It'll be fine if the three of us head there together—I'm very curious about this now.

Well, that's a game of baseball, all right. Or more accurately, *fantasy* baseball.

"Come on, come on! The pitcher's shaking in his boots!" the batter taunted.

"Go to hell." The pitcher threw a fiery fastball at the batter who mocked him.

"Whoa! That beanball came baked!"

"It's fun just watching," the twins remark.

"This reminds me of a certain fantasy sports festival," I recall. In other words, it's total tomfoolery.

"Bring it on!"

He hit it...

"Ack!"

...Oh? Wait, is that allowed?

"Phew... How do you like that!"

"You know... It kind of stinks hitting a fly ball only to have it caught in the sky."

"Having to hit pitches from the sky sucks too."

The force of gravity really gives the ball some speed. It's also a struggle to reach any of the bases.

It looks like they count it as a home run if the ball is returned from out of bounds. If I were playing, I could stop the balls from reaching the outfield with my tentacles, assuming I reacted quick enough.

Baseball is tough in that it's very reliant on certain stats. Pitch speed and batting rely on strength, pitch accuracy relies on dexterity, and running speed depends on agility. Fairies seem like great base runners, but the rest are struggling. Angel and demon pairs seem like balanced combinations, though.

So they don't attack each other directly, but debuffs are allowed? Oh, I see—they change the rules depending on the day. They're certainly having a good

time.

“Out of my way, you beast!” A wolf wandered onto the field to fight them.

“It’s no one’s fault but ours for being out here.”

“Well, you’re not wrong.”

They give it a good beating.

This is probably the best place to play when you consider the strength of the enemies outside of town. The nearby beginner’s dungeon means the enemies aren’t much of a nuisance here.

The twins and I return to town after spectating the dramatic game of baseball.

“Floating probably isn’t good enough in a game like that,” they say together.

“I agree. You don’t get much speed or stability. But if you’d like to play, shall I gather a group to form a game?”

“No, that’s fine,” they both answer me.

“So you’re not interested in playing after all?”

“Nope!”

“Even though you made bats and gloves?”

“We just had some leather and wood lying around.”

It does seem like it would be easy with the finished product to reference and the right skills for it. Bats are particularly simple items. They would be quick to make if all you have to do is whittle down wood, but maybe you have to turn it into plywood first? I don’t really know the details, naturally.

“Do you two play any sports?” I ask.

“Not really,” reply the twins.

“Do you do anything for exercise?”

“Huh? Noooope.”

I see. It’s unlikely that they hate being active, considering they play as fighters. The twins just must not go out of their way to do what they consider exercise. Judging by their personalities and the fact that they’re still in elementary school, I would imagine they normally get a lot of exercise.

I question them a bit more and confirm that hunch. They just “play,” not exercise. My little sister is the same way.

“Ah, it’s Sis! The twins are here too!”

Speak of the devil.

“Hiya!” the twins respond.

“Are you free today?” Rina asks me.

“Yes, I am.”

“Then let’s go hunting, all four of us.”

“All right!” the twins and I all reply.

Now where shall the four of us go?

## Afterword

**G**OOD DAY! This is Akisuzu Nenohi.

This has been Volume 8. We had quests involving residents as well as another goblin army attack on Starting Town this time. It's been a while since the first defensive war, so now most players in the game were experiencing it for the very first time.

The players are usually the goofy ones in this story, with residents handling the serious sides of things. The AI must really be putting on an all-out performance.

Lizzy made her debut in this volume. I plan to continue featuring her in the books to come.

I actually don't have a lot of space leftover this time. You see, the bonus chapter took up six of my seven available pages. I'd like to write a bit more about Lizzy, but I'll keep it to myself for the time being.

I hope you found some enjoyment in Volume 8.

May we meet again in Volume 9!

October, 2022



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