



Free Life? Fantasy

★ IMMORTAL PRINCESS ★ Online

WRITTEN BY AKISUZU NENOHI
ILLUSTRATED BY SHERRY

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“Good day, me.
Good afternoon, me.”

Oh...it looks like they pitched my
voice up since I'm smaller here.
That's very cute.

I know I'm talking about myself,
but this miniaturized, cartoonish
version of me is *adorable*.





"Zex Ra'se Persepho Ilda."

Hexispell causes six Dark Lances to appear in a half circle around me, their power amplified by Overspell.



"Ah! I'm a fan! Would you please shake my hand?"

"Yes, of course."

"Ohh... I'm so emotional..."

"Ah, I'm Yura. I'm a second-wave livestreamer."



FreeLifeFantasy

— IMMORTAL PRINCESS — Online



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Seven Seas Entertainment



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CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Anastasia:

The main character. Her real name is Tsukishiro Kotone, but she's known as "the Princess." Her race is Aversa Princess, the princess of the afterlife, and she blesses other undead players. 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.

Alfred:

Alfred is a Dullahan, otherwise known as a headless knight. He evolved into a Nether Dullahan after reaching the Nether for the first time. Alfred fights with a bastard sword, a great shield, and a full suit of armor intrinsic to his race. He's the main tank in his party.

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 synchronized playstyle.

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 synchronized playstyle.

Akirina:

Anastasia's little sister. Her real name is Tsukishiro Akina, and she plays as a human. Akirina is equipped with a halberd and leather armor. 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 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.

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 cloth armor 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.

Dory:

Abby's personal attendant. She plays as an angel with martial arts weapons and cloth armor 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.

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. Once she turned anthropomorphic, she gained a mysterious creature to ride around on.

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.

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.

Steiner:

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

RESIDENTS (NETHER)

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 Lana. Svetlana is the general commander of the army. Once hailed as the hero of the Dinait Empire to the south, she now teaches fencing to Anastasia.

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.

RESIDENTS (ABOVE GROUND)

Meghan:

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

Luciana:

Archbishop of the church in Starting Town. Roughly the same age as Meghan.

Sophie Lilywhite Sorciere:

A prodigy who became the youngest Sorciere—an unaging witch—in history.

Chapter 1:

Saturday—Dungeon

I IGNORE THE EYES THAT GATHER on us as we enter the building and make a beeline for the receptionist.

“Please tell me anything you know about dungeons,” I say to her.

“Um, you appear to be Undead...”

“Don’t worry. We’re merely tourists. It won’t be a problem.”

“I see. You must be interested in the cave dungeon. There are ten stories in total. Normally, you’d have to be rank C or above to challenge the dungeon, but there are no restrictions on outsiders.”

Local Production Items:

Magi iron and laichium

Traps:

Arrows (poison, fainting, paralysis, sleep, curse, darkness, bleeding)

Gas (poison, paralysis, sleep, silence, curse) Slip floors, pitfalls (slime, spear), rooms (magic blocker, monster house) Treasure chests (mimic, deadly poison, confusion, explosion, monster house) Monsters:

Level 40–49. Bosses: Level 53

Aquatic type, magical organisms

“You’ll need a light source and protection from status ailments,” the woman suggests.

“We’re Undead, so neither apply to us,” I reply.

“In that case, please watch out for the dungeon’s unique pitfalls, monster houses, magic blockers, and slip floors.”

“What are magic blockers?”

“Those are traps that prevent your magical energies from working efficiently—a spell taking longer to chant, for example. The traps aren’t usually very strong, though. You should be able to put up a fight against those.”

So they’re traps that reduce chant speed? Well, it’s the first dungeon, so it sounds like the traps aren’t going to be too difficult. A pitfall with spears, however, does sound like it would mean instant death.

“You have to be careful of the pitfalls and monster houses. The magic blockers and slip floors are second to those. I probably don’t have to explain what the spears do, but the slime pitfalls will greatly damage your equipment. Not only does it cost a lot to replace, but without equipment, it will be much more difficult to make it back alive,” the receptionist explains.

It sounds like the spear traps really *do* kill you instantly. I choose to ignore the whisper I hear behind me of, “So the slimes do naughty stuff...? Sounds like a man’s dream.” Those slimes won’t be able to break down *my* equipment.

The woman explains that pitfalls and slip floors have slightly different colors. “Ah, that’s right,” she adds. “This is your first time exploring a dungeon. The greatest difference between the hunting grounds and a dungeon is the increase in the number of enemies. They’ll also chase you around so long as you’re not near the stairs. I recommend slaying them as soon as possible. Please also be aware of how much sound you make.”

It sounds like we’ll be overrun without a certain amount of firepower, which only means that *with* firepower, we’ll be able to rack up EXP and drops. The more enemies spawning, the better. Dungeons are definitely the places to go for leveling up.

As for making noise, maybe it has something to do with how enemies link up? That’s a little annoying.

“You’ll encounter golems, gargoyles, tortoises, doll enemies, and more. They attack with magic and long-range hits, so keep that in mind.”

“I see... Oh, will they use Light or Holy magic?”

“No, only second-tier versions of the main four elements.”

“Then it sounds like we won’t have any issues, right?”

“Right,” Mr. Skelly and Mr. Alf answer in unison.

Although if the enemies don’t use Dark magic, then I won’t get a chance to finally use my Absorption.

I ask the receptionist other details before having her explain how to get to the dungeon and what enemies we’ll encounter. Then I thank her and check the sign board. There aren’t any hunting quests, but I see some delivery quests offering nice rewards. Well, I can ignore those for now. I’ll take them when I have something to deliver.

The three of us leave the adventurers’ union.

“All right, what shall we do?” I ask the other two.

“We’ve gotta check out the dungeon!” Mr. Skelly cheers.

“That’s what I’m thinking too,” Mr. Alf responds.

“Is that right? Then let’s get going.”

Our destination was guaranteed the moment two out of three of us voted to go to the dungeon. I have no reason to refuse either, so I won’t complain. We head straight out through the southern gates and summon horses.

Enemies in the east are levels 45 to 49, which is pretty high, so we head south to reach the dungeon.

After climbing the mountain for a while, we spot a safe area with a tunnel about halfway up. Outside the tunnel are statues of Stellura and Creall, marking the entrance to the dungeon.

“What servants should we use, Princess?” Mr. Skelly asks.

“Isn’t there a bonus for summoning a lich?” I answer.

“I think so.”

“Why don’t you summon three servants, and I summon two? I’ll make one of mine a worker.”

“Sounds good!”

Mr. Skelly summons the servants in parties where I’m the leader. Even without considering skill EXP and capacity, it seems like the strongest approach. But of course, it is a bonus.

I summon Unit One and a worker as skeletons.

“Hmm... Since it sounds like a lot of enemies spawn here, why don’t you keep it to one living armor? Three tanks should be plenty,” says Mr. Alf.

“...You’re including me in that count, aren’t you?” I respond.

“Ha ha ha! If it looks like smooth sailing, we can focus on attack power instead,” Mr. Skelly adds.

“Yep. C’mon, let’s get a move on.”

We finish summoning servants and checking over their equipment. With that, we step forward to the statues.

Set respawn point? Yes/No

Enter cave dungeon? Yes/No

***Anastasia's party "Farewell Humanity" has reached a dungeon.
Dungeons have been added to the help menu.***

***By fulfilling special requirements, you have acquired the title
"Dungeon Finder."***

Dungeon Finder:

***A commemorative title given to the first outsiders to reach a
dungeon.***

"Hmm. That's a little boring," I comment.

"Agreed," the other two reply.

It looks like you can set the dungeon entrance as our respawn point.

"We don't have to save here, do we?"

"Doubt it," Mr. Skelly responds.

"If it looks too hard, we can always head east," states Mr. Alf.

The confirmation window is still asking me if I want to enter the dungeon. I press the "yes" button and am instantly sent to a different location.

"Yeah, it sure looks like a cave," Mr. Alf says first.

"That's a cave, all right..." Mr. Skelly adds.

"Certainly a cave..." I follow up.

The walls look like dirt, or maybe rocks. Either way, it's just a big hole. I'd say it's roughly as wide as a standard road, which seems like plenty for a single party to fight in.

It's pretty dark inside, though not pitch black, so I see why you'd need a light

source if you weren't fortunate enough to have Night Vision. If you really want to create an atmosphere, you can bring torches.

My mini-map doesn't seem to be working either. This must be the same type of dungeon as the one added for second-wavers to practice in. For the first stages, we'll only have the UI indicator and nothing else. The areas within my sight are illuminated slightly, showing that they haven't been properly explored yet, while the areas around me that I've explored have colors like normal. That makes three different stages for the map.

"Looks like this is a safe area. Wanna head in?" Mr. Alf asks.

"They must not want us to fight anything right after entering," I reply.

"Yeah, who wants to get beat up as soon as they teleport somewhere?" Mr. Skelly remarks.

That's a common occurrence in games. It's all the more unbearable when you're playing in VR.

Ah, I forgot something.

"That's right. Here, take these, you two."

"Hmm? Did you cook this? Ah, we get to eat it?!" Mr. Skelly cries.

"Whoa, for real?" asks Mr. Alf.

I gave Mr. Alf's food a strength buff and Mr. Skelly's food an intelligence buff. They both dig in.

"Damn! This is good stuff!" Mr. Skelly cheers.

"So even we're able to eat this stuff now?" asks Mr. Alf.

"I gained the art for it after reaching level 30 for Chef and Alchemist. I found it by reading a book."

"Wow... Why was it so difficult?" the pair wonder aloud simultaneously.

The buffs last long enough that there's no need to eat the food right before battle like this. I simply forgot about it until just now.

"Hey, Princess. You've had your eyes closed all this time. Can you see stuff?" Mr. Alf asks me.

“I can. I’ve started to try out a rare skill I gained when I first equipped the Silver Key. It just takes a lot of getting used to.”

“Is that part of Perception?”



“Well, it’s more of a mind’s eye sort of thing. The skill is part of Space Recognition.”

“Ah, I think I get it.”

“You’re turning into a Jedi!” Mr. Skelly cheers.

“Technically a Sith because of my Dark magic, but that’s not how I feel in my heart. Anyway, it’s a rare skill, so I’ll keep the rest a secret.”

“Kay!” they both cry.

Now that they’ve finished eating, we turn our backs to the two statues marking the dead end and begin to head forward. By the way, Mr. Alf has dismounted from his horse. It wouldn’t be much help in a cave, after all.

We fire some attacks at the walls, but they don’t seem to change, so we probably don’t have to be worried about being buried alive in a cave collapse. I imagine we’ll be able to use explosion spells just fine. This game’s devs can implement strangely realistic features sometimes, so I wouldn’t have felt safe unless we checked. Actually, I wonder if using torches in here burns away the oxygen.

We clutch our respective weapons, and after a bit of walking, the first enemy comes into view up ahead.

“Is that a steel tortoise?” Mr. Alf wonders.

“It sure looks like one. I’ll go first,” I tell them.

“Go for it!”

I step out in front of Mr. Alf. Turtle enemies usually attack with magic in this game, much like my own fighting style. Once you approach them, they fire off all sorts of spells to demonstrate their defenses. The only difference between us is that turtles have defensive magic, and I have my parrying. They’re all just regular little turtles to me so long as they can’t reflect or absorb attacks. I reflect all the spells coming my way and shoot back spells of my own.

From what I’ve observed, defensive magic increases in power from Opposition to Resistance, then Invulnerability, Reflection, and finally Absorption. However, for physical attacks, it supposedly only goes from

Resistance to Invulnerability, then to Reflection. Reflection and Absorption come at higher levels. That won't be a problem for me, since these turtles probably only have Resistance. There would be no point in reflecting their attacks if they had Invulnerability, but "Resistance" means they can still be hurt a little, so I send the spells back to hit them.

The turtle spots us and lumbers in our direction. Not that it slows us down, of course.

As soon as the turtle comes within our range, Mr. Skelly and I fire off spells, surrounding the enemy with floating spears of dirt. Then Mr. Alf swoops in from the side to deal a direct blow.

That's the end of it, since there was only one of them.

"Hmm, these things are tough. Guess that makes sense, since they're made of steel," Mr. Skelly notes.

"Perhaps this entire dungeon will have tough close-range battles," I wonder aloud.

"I probably should have brought a blunt weapon..." Mr. Alf ponders.

"Well, we've got the princess to counter magic attacks, so it'll be a breeze!"

"That's true."

The drops contain the usual items.

We continue a bit farther until we see an enemy sitting at a fork in the road. It looks like a red golem, roughly the size of a slender human.

"An 'elemental goleman...' What's a goleman?" asks Mr. Alf.

"Probably a golem man, right? It's pretty human-shaped for a golem," Mr. Skelly speculates.

"So the 'man' means 'human,' huh...?"

Well, the normal-sized golems are a bit large, so they'd be a nuisance in a place like this. Since this one is red and called an "elemental," its attribute must be Fire. Instead of being some sort of fire ghost, it's just a regular golem made of infernal metal.

“This way, everyone.”

“Whoa, here it comes!”

The goleman charges at us as soon as it spots us. It’s surprisingly fast.

Mr. Alf gets its attention and ends up on the receiving end of a shoulder tackle. The sound of metal slamming against metal echoes loudly through the cave.

Unit One is using magic red iron, which probably isn’t suited for a goleman like this. Maybe I should prepare elemental equipment of all types for my servant. I could also bite the bullet and take Assignment Magic, which seems like it would be smart. For now, I won’t be able to use the goleman’s opposite element as a weakness, but I still want to attack it.

“This thing doesn’t have weapons. It must be using Hand-to-Hand Combat. Its attacks come really fast,” Mr. Alf notes.

“It sure isn’t using spells, huh?” Mr. Skelly responds.

“Doesn’t seem like the type to use ’em, but I’m not sure.”

“Mr. Skelly, a wolf has come as a reinforcement,” I interject.

“Hmph. I’ll draw it away,” he replies.

I used my 3D mental map to confirm a steel golem wolf coming our way. It must have heard us fighting over here.

Mr. Skelly uses his living armor servant to draw the wolf’s attention and strikes the goleman that Mr. Alf is currently battling.

“I bet these enemies deal continuous damage if you get too close,” Mr. Alf speculates.

“You think they’re like that, huh? Not that it matters for us!” says Mr. Skelly.

I think I’ll have to keep using my eyes for now. The goleman is a dark gray color like unrefined iron ore, with red cracks in its body. There seems to be a haze coming off of it, as if its body is burning hot. That must be part of the “elemental” aspect. Fire shoots out of the cracks in its surface each time it loses health. That means it probably deals environmental damage, “burn” status

ailments, and maybe scalding damage too. Mr. Alf, a Dullahan, is dealing with it right now, so we can pretty much ignore it. But these elemental golemen are probably dangerous to other players.

I use Overspell and Hexispell to destroy the golem, then turn my attention to the steel golem wolf. This one's just a normal wolf-shaped golem, so it's easy enough to defeat.

"Oh, Mr. Alf. A golem is running toward us," I warn him.

"Dungeons sure are busy, huh?"

"But we've got plenty of firepower as long as all the enemies are at this level," Mr. Skelly adds.

"I think our first concern is running out of MP at this rate."

"Yeah, for sure. But you can't exactly conserve it either."

My automatic MP regeneration skills are leveling up, but I'm using a lot more than I can regenerate. If I sit around and wait for it to regenerate, more enemies will show up and I'll have to fight them.

It would probably be a bit easier if we had Mr. Ame and Ms. Trine with us, both for EXP and firepower, but I'd imagine this dungeon would be tough on them at their level.

The next golem to arrive is blue. I confirm this by opening my eyes. This must be a Water golem. It doesn't really matter either way, though.

The steel golem wolves speed up to a dash and even jump off the cave walls. They're very aggressive.

"Oh, and there's a turtle coming from behind us," I announce.

"Did it spawn back there?" Mr. Skelly wonders.

The two of us trade spots. The best arrangement in a dungeon is to have Mr. Alf and the living armor in front, me in the back, and Mr. Skelly right in the middle.

The turtle arrives just as we finish killing the wolf, so I get in place, reflect its spells, and then cast my own spells at the golem.

My reflected spells chip away at its health as I draw its aggro. In no time at all, I manage to defeat the goleman. These things sure are noisy. Well, actually, most of the enemies here are noisy. The turtles are the quietest, I would say. Since the enemies are made of metal, just blocking their attacks with a great shield makes a lot of noise. The golemen are empty-handed, so they just attack by pounding things with their fists. It's incredibly aggravating.

We take a little break after defeating the goleman and turtle.

"This isn't an instanced dungeon, right?" Mr. Alf asks.

"No, since it sounds like we'll be able to meet other parties inside," I respond.

"The things you defeated somewhere else respawn nearby, then they link up based on sound... Talk about a real pain."

"I'm sure it's very difficult for solo players. I could see parties of total strangers being formed."

I could also see it as an efficient place to level up. You could stand in one place and the enemies would come to you, which makes it nice and easy. Of course, that's assuming that you can defeat such enemies without too much effort in the first place. If you can't, you'll just be overwhelmed until you're eventually killed.

Adventurers say that there are minimum requirements for those who want to take on a dungeon. You have to be strong enough to not be overwhelmed, or at least able to come up with a defense against oncoming enemies. You probably also have to be able to spot and disarm traps. They recommend you be at a rank of C or higher to enter a dungeon, which makes you a full-fledged adventurer. Dungeons are just that dangerous. Anyone who can't deal with the unexpected will wind up dead before they can make any progress.

A lot of people glorify the idea of being an adventurer, but to be frank, it's a job I'd prefer to avoid in real life. Unlike in a video game, there's no guarantee that going on adventures will make you stronger—or that you'll make it out alive. It's a cruel world out there.

"Let's keep an eye on your MP as we continue," Mr. Alf suggests.

"I'd also like to acquire an item that allows us to escape, if possible. But I

suppose that's up to luck."

"Yeah, since they come as drops."

The receptionist had told us that dungeon enemies sometimes drop items that can teleport your party out of the dungeon. These come in two varieties. The first is dungeon-exclusive and disappears once you exit. The second type remains with you even when taken outside. Naturally, the latter is bought and sold in the adventurers' union as protective equipment. They keep the price stable that way, but it also eliminates counterfeits.

From what I've heard, groups of adventurers always give these emergency escape items to their leaders. They cost a pretty penny, but it's nothing compared to the lives of their party members. These items have no expiration date, even if they're single-use only. In other words, if you have to use an escape item every single time, dungeons are probably too hard for you, and you should forget about them unless you want to die.

We outsiders, who can easily find these in drops, will use the former and sell the latter to the union for a nice profit if we find any. Of course, we haven't actually found either kind yet.

"With enemies this strong, we'll probably die if we set foot in a monster house," Mr. Skelly muses.

"The drops are great when you kill 'em, but if you can't do that, there's no way out but death," Mr. Alf responds.

"I wanna keep some distance so I don't have to use up all my MP in one go."

A monster house is a room full of enemies. It's a pretty common form of trap in dungeon crawling games. Sometimes you'll be in a room with a treasure chest that, once opened, seals the exit and fills the room with monsters. Other times the monsters are already waiting behind the door.

I'm sure this is the worst kind of trap for residents, who die permanently, but we see them as an enticing opportunity. These lovely traps mean we don't have to expend too much effort searching for enemies. Although, they will be at a higher level than us, which isn't very efficient for farming. Dying comes with the death penalties along with teleporting you elsewhere, so staying alive is the

most important part. If you die without taking out a large number, it might not be worth it to even try.

“Whoa...!”

I deflect an arrow that comes zipping up from the ground beneath me.

“It looks like Perception isn’t going to work on all traps,” I conclude.

“Well, what can you do?” responds Mr. Skelly.

“It’s not like you can see them all in the first place,” Mr. Alf adds.

“There must be some sort of skill that works on these traps,” I suggest.

“I’m sure it’ll pop up if we keep hunting,” says Mr. Skelly.

Could there really be skills meant for use in dungeons?

“Whoa!”

“Oof!”

“So that would be the slip floor,” I conclude.

“Imagine if we were in a battle just then. That’d be a major pain in the ass...” says Mr. Alf.

I have to move my servants so that they don’t step on the traps either. It’s actually a bit of a handful. It’s best to have a lot of servants when you’re hunting monsters, but that increases the likelihood of them stepping on traps. But since traps are merely a nuisance to us, we still prioritize maximizing our number of servants.

“A goleman and murder gargoyle?” I say, observing the enemies.

“Yellow this time, huh? Does that mean Earth type?” asks Mr. Skelly.

“Not sure... Was Earth yellow?” says Mr. Alf.

“Well, I’m just gonna get them to target me,” he replies.

“Sure thing.”

The gargoyle flaps its wings, then glides over to swoop down at us. Mr. Skelly’s living armor blocks the oncoming attack with a loud *bang*. That sound is probably going to attract reinforcements.

As for the goleman...

“Oh?”

“What’s it doing?” Mr. Alf asks.

It squats down low before jumping up in the air and slamming back down, causing ripples to shoot out all around it.

“It’s a stomp move!” cries Mr. Skelly.

“Damn, this is gonna be annoying!”

“This seems like it will be the most annoying of them all, in fact,” I speculate.

“Agreed,” the two men reply in perfect unison.

Now we have to keep hopping while we battle the other enemies.

“That just means we have to stop it from jumping,” I remind them. “Once its movements are slowed, we’ll hit it with a bind spell.”

“Oh, I see,” Mr. Alf replies.

I use Shadow Bind, which is slow to constrict but strong and long-lasting. Now we can ignore the gargoyle and destroy the goleman first.

Space Reinforcement from Space Magic strengthens the bind, while my Silver Key strengthens Space Magic itself. That leaves me in charge of binding enemies.

The enemies deliver a common type of status ailment that increases their Resistance with each use. It also makes them more resistant to status ailments and reduces the effect time of bind spells. That’s why it’s important to finish them off quickly.

“Ah, another goleman is here,” I announce.

“This one is green! Is that a Wind type?”

We defeat the yellow goleman before the bind can wear off. It sure does last a while.

Then we set the gargoyle aside and observe this new green goleman.

“What status ailment do Wind spells cause again?” Mr. Alf tries to remember.

“I dunno.”

“Uh...I think it’s fainting, right?”

“So we can ignore both Wind and Water, I suppose,” I conclude.

The Wind goleman is certainly quick on its feet. I also feel some sort of breeze against my skin.

“Hang on a sec. It deals a knockback just by getting close?! Damn, how irritating!” cries Mr. Skelly.

“It doesn’t work on me,” replies Mr. Alf.

“I do wish it would stop this, as it’s messing up my hair. But it’s not causing me too much trouble. Weight must be the deciding factor in the knockback effect,” I speculate.

Mr. Alf turns to Mr. Skelly “Get some meat on those bones!”

“Then I wouldn’t be a skeleton anymore!”

He has a point.

The wind sends Mr. Skelly skidding backward, though he continues to shoot spells. He should probably make his equipment heavier, like mine. Not that I *want* heavier equipment.

The real problem is that my servants are skidding backward too. If a yellow enemy came and they had to jump to dodge the ripples, they’d probably be completely blown away.

The order, from least annoying element to most annoying, seems to be Water, Wind, Fire, and then Earth. Although for us in particular, it’s more like Water, Fire, Wind, then Earth.

“These dungeon enemies sure are suited to gamers,” I comment.

“Yeah, if they’re really into combat,” replies Mr. Alf.

“Well, fighting’s the whole point of a dungeon,” says Mr. Skelly.

“That’s true as well. The surface world has felt sort of lacking in that area,” I add.

“The surface world seems more focused on world-building, don’t you think? These dungeons are the typical ‘alternate dimension’ areas like you see in similar games, where you really have to come up with a plan unless you want to die,” explains Mr. Alf.

The exact conditions haven’t been discovered yet, but for unknown reasons the dungeons appear in this world naturally, and the residents place two statues in front of the entrance to pacify those areas. If the risks are too high without the proper rewards, they remove the statues and have the army or adventurers watch over the dungeon until nature overtakes it.

That’s why the procedure upon discovering a dungeon is to first contact your nearest adventurers’ union instead of entering unprepared. The union will bring statues and carry out an internal investigation. If they succeed in putting the statues down, they’re even allowed to keep whatever they find during the investigation.

Without this process, greed might lead people to enter the dungeons before placing the statues down and end up getting killed. The entrance itself isn’t fixed until the statues are placed, so it’s unknown what would happen if the entrance disappeared. It’s a very risky venture, so if something looks wrong, it’s best to sprint to the nearest union.

Investigations of new dungeons are assigned to high-ranking adventurers for quite a good price, I hear. That payment comes in part from the kingdom itself, after all. Dungeons can produce valuable items in more ways than one. If there’s a dungeon in their land, the kingdom wants a part of it.

Dungeons themselves are said to be very different depending on what’s found inside, so specific countermeasures will vary from dungeon to dungeon.

“All right, don’t think we forgot about you, gargoyle!” Mr. Alf says menacingly.

“The wind finally stopped!” cries Mr. Skelly.

“And here come some more,” I announce.

“Not again... This one’s yellow too!” they cry simultaneously.

It looks like there’s a blue goleman alongside the yellow one as well. Along

with those two, there's also the gargoyle who's been with us since this fight started. We can ignore the gargoyle as we've been doing, bind the yellow golem, and let Mr. Alf handle the blue one.

"Bind! Nox Pillar!" I call out, casting my spells.

A dark pillar swallows up the bound yellow golem. You don't want to approach enemies who are bound to a place on the ground, but since the enemy's been entirely engulfed by the column, it's being dealt maximum damage anyway. They can't break free, so long as you bind them first.

I can also hit it with Nox Mine if I parry. Fighting while conserving my MP will always be my best bet.

Mr. Skelly and I use spells to chip away at its health. Once our servants get some hits in too, the golem is quickly defeated.

"Which one should we tackle next?"

"The gargoyle is getting louder, don't you think?" I respond to him.

We ignore the blue golem Mr. Alf is working on and attack the gargoyle. Mr. Skelly's living armor has been handling it for a while now, gradually draining its HP.

I'll avoid using Space Magic, since our gargoyle definitely uses magic to fly. Though it's not as bad as before thanks to the Silver Key, I'm still losing a lot of MP when I fight.

"It's real hard to hit these gargoyles, huh?"

"Yes, they are a little annoying. Perhaps a missile attack would be best."

"That'll probably use up less of our MP in the end too..."

We decide to try magic missile attacks against the gargoyle. These spells don't pack much of a punch, but they lock onto the enemy and rarely miss.

It's easy to aim when the enemies move in straight lines, but gargoyles flap their wings to maneuver in every direction with big swoops.

"Ah, I have an idea. We should try to fire while they're too close to dodge," I suggest.

“Sure, sounds good.”

We have to compensate more for our missile drift the farther away we stand from the enemies, but that means it’s easier to fire up close. It’s perfectly safe for me to stand on the front lines, even if the same can’t be said for Mr. Skelly, so I move forward. I can use my shot spells based on the range between me and the enemy.

We finish off the gargoyle first, then the one remaining goleman.

Your race level has increased.

“Oh, my level went up. That was some nice EXP.”

“It’d have been even better if we’d invited the twins, but I doubt they can keep up with us yet,” Mr. Alf replies.

“Probably not. I bet they’ll catch up soon, though,” Mr. Skelly adds.

We require more EXP as time goes by, so gaining levels slows down a bit, but the constant EXP the twins receive is increasing over time. Well, the dungeons provide plenty of EXP as it is, so maybe it doesn’t matter as much after all.

Musasabi’s party “A Pirate’s Life is Not For Me!” has reached the southern continent. All encounters during seaward travel to the southern continent will now be weakened.

“Whoa!” the three of us cry in unison.

“So Mr. Musasabi made it there first?” I conclude.

“Makes sense. That party is a big fan of throwing weapons,” Mr. Alf responds.

“That’s not very sneaky for a group of ninjas,” I reply.

“Yeah, they’re clearly straight-up monster slayers more than they are ninjas.”

“True—argh!” cries Mr. Skelly suddenly.

He was walking in front of me when he fell straight through the ground.

“Eeeek! It’s all slimy!” he cried from below.

“A slime bath? That’s new,” remarks Mr. Alf.

Instead of a doctor fish, it’s like a doctor slime! Except instead of nibbling away at dead skin, it’ll nibble away at pretty much anything else! Hmm...it’s only occurring to me now, but how come he can yell with no tongue?

As for me...

“Ha ha ha ha! Time to return to your grave already?”

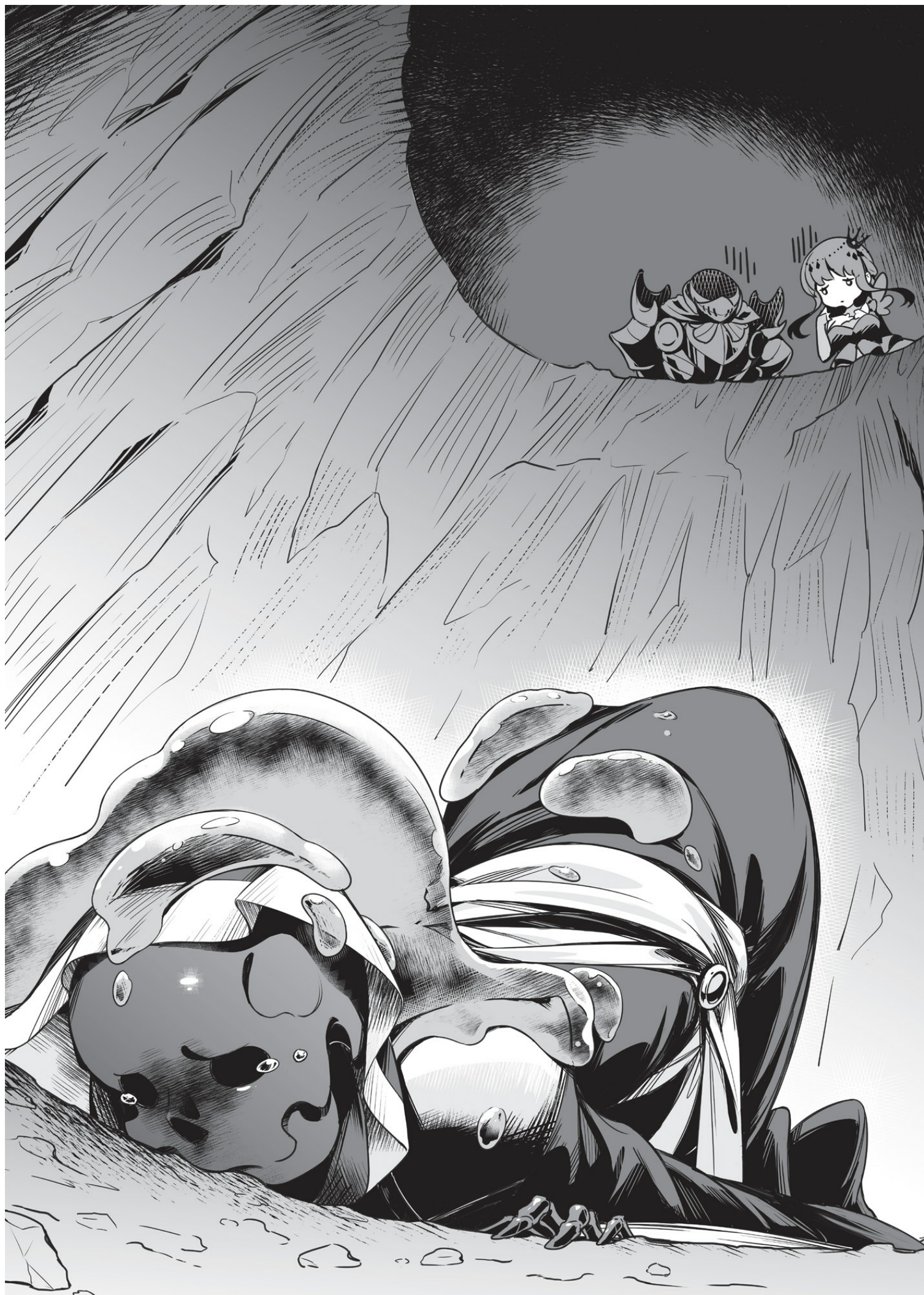
“Unfortunately for you, that’s not the plan!” Mr. Skelly retorts.

“So you’re saying you don’t have a spare character sheet?” I chime in.

“Oof, it hurts.”

No one is particularly worried about a skeleton falling into a pitfall—especially when it’s Mr. Skelly.

We continue forward while we wait for him to crawl back up. As far as equipment goes, Mr. Alf is the only one heavy enough that he might struggle to get out.



“Hmm... Should I just take Fall Resistance while I’m at it?” asks Mr. Skelly.

“There aren’t many ways to fall in the first place, though,” Mr. Alf responds.

“Are there any skills that let you detect traps?” Mr. Skelly muses.

“Whoa... Oh?”

“Oooh?”

***By fulfilling special requirements, you have unlocked Map
Production.***

Map Production

Improves mapping function while in dungeons.

Hidden doors and traps you've discovered will be shared on all party members' maps.

"I got Map Production, Trap Perception, and Trap Cancellation," Mr. Alf informs us.

"I only got Map Production!"

"I only got Map Production too," I chime in.

"Looks like Trap Perception and Trap Cancellation are exactly what you'd think."

"How do you unlock them? Just gotta man up and cancel 'em?"

"That's what it looks like."

Man up and go for it... In other words, you either succeed or you die. I have a feeling this "canceling" involves activating the traps. Of course, since status ailments don't affect us, we don't have to take the traps very seriously.

Map Creation unlocks based on time spent in a dungeon, so we all got it at the same time.

"I guess you just need one person in your party who can cancel traps. Now I'm not sure if I should take it..." Mr. Skelly wonders aloud.

"Shall I take it, then?" I ask. "I would guess that the cancellation is based on your Dexterity, and I'd bet Trap Perception is linked to my other perception skills too."

"You want to switch and be our vanguard then, Princess?"

"Yes, I would. I'd like to unlock the skills."

"Then let's change positions for now."

I swap positions with Mr. Alf in order to unlock Trap Detection and Trap Cancellation. In other words, it's time to go activate some traps!

I deflect the arrows and walk through gas unaffected. It's the slip floors and pitfalls that cause me grief.

"Ow! Damn you, Yamamoto!" cries Mr. Skelly.

"Why curse him? That's not fair," Mr. Alf replies.

"You never know when someone out in the world is cursing you."

"It's a harsh world out there," I conclude.

"Like you'd know!" they shout back simultaneously.

We cut down enemies as we go, and once I'm sure it's safe, I activate traps.

By fulfilling special requirements, you have unlocked Trap Perception.

By fulfilling special requirements, you have unlocked Trap Cancellation.

"Ah, I got them."

"What, no pitfalls?" Mr. Skelly asks.

"How come a skeleton falls into them but not a princess?"

"Because skeletons belong in the ground," I reply.

"Should I unlock them too, now...?" Mr. Skelly wonders aloud.

With that, we proceed with Mr. Skelly and his living armor in the front, then Mr. Alf, and finally me in the rear.

"Take that, tra—I mean spears!"

"You're still falling?" Mr. Alf asks incredulously.

"He's actually getting stabbed quite a lot," I note.

"That's all you got? I can take a few dozen spears!"

"That's his stabbing resistance," Mr. Alf and I realize at the same time.

"If anything, it's more of a mental attack to fall in a hole and get hit with a

bunch of spears.”

Ah, that makes sense. It does seem scary. He actually still lost quite a bit of HP, though. It looks like the fall and the spears took 30 percent of his health, even with his light weight and stabbing resistance. A human would surely be killed by that.

“Damn you, Yamamoto!”

“He hasn’t done anything to be hated like that,” I reply.

“You just don’t get it!” Mr. Alf and Mr. Skelly unanimously retort.

I ignore them, claim my three dungeon skills, and wait for Mr. Skelly to crawl back out. Each skill costs 3 Skill Points for a total of 9 SP. That will just have to do.

We continue forward again.

Two golemen stand before us.

Space Magic has reached level 40. You have gained 2 Skill Points.

You have acquired Gravitas Umkehren and Bind Barrier through Space Magic.

Oh, what timing! Space Recognition Expansion must be providing me with EXP.

“Ugh! Yellow and green this time.”

“We can’t allow any yellow ones to live.”

I’ll have to look at my new arts later.

Mr. Skelly’s living armor gets the yellow goleman’s attention, then hits it with a bind, a pillar, a mine, and finally attacks from the servants. We have Mr. Alf deal with the Wind-type.

“Now a wolf is joining us. Ah, and another goleman,” I inform them.

“Not another yellow one!” Mr. Skelly cries.

“Quick Change! Unit One, take on the wolf. I’ll handle the goleman,” I order my servant.

I change my worker to a living armor and have it focus on the steel golem wolf. We can defeat the first yellow goleman before the second one reaches us. Then Unit One can have some fun with the wolf.

“Ah, it looks like there’s more reinforcements,” I warn the others.

“For real?”

“Red and blue this time! Is this some sort of squadron?”

“Mr. Skelly, please prepare a pillar with maximum firepower. We’re going to gather them together.”

“For real?”

“Mr. Alf, please use War Cry once they’re within range, so we won’t have to jump.”

“Sure thing.”

“Where do I put my pillar?” Mr. Skelly asks me.

“Right underneath the black orb.”

“Got it!”

Time to show them what happens when we draw them in.

The wolf arrives first and clashes with Unit One, but I can ignore them for now. We have to wait for the golemen to reach us.

And we’ll wait until a bit after Mr. Alf makes his move, to get the timing right when accounting for the goleman’s speed.

“Now’s my chance. War Cry!”

“Magia Amp! Overspell!”

The enemies instantly turn toward Mr. Alf, while the quick-footed wolf sprints forward and begins to attack. The golemen are headed straight for him as well.

Mr. Skelly prepares his spell. “Gravitas Sphere!” he shouts.

A Gravitas Sphere appears in the air near Mr. Alf. It’s something like a

miniature black hole—a spell that gathers up all nearby enemies.

I also use Overspell to buff my next spell, even though it means using even more MP. It's a spell you use when you want a lot of firepower, and you want it fast.

“Oh ho! I get it! Nox Pillar!” Mr. Skelly casts his spell.

“Nox Pillar!” I shout at the same time.

The normally heavy golemen and wolf float up into the air like they weigh nothing. The Gravitas Sphere is drawing all enemies toward it. Mr. Skelly and I combine our Nox Pillars, while I throw in a Lumen Pillar as well.

“It looks like we managed to defeat them all,” I conclude after the battle.

“That was some good EXP, but Princess, your MP is just about wiped out,” Mr. Alf notices.

“That would be thanks to my Space Magic.”

“The sucking orb was great, but was it really worth all that MP?” Mr. Skelly wonders.

“Well, it's inevitable in some situations. It's too early to log off for dinner, after all.”

Despite my Silver Key, Gravitas Sphere takes about 30 percent of my MP. It would help if I could use MP potions, but that's not a possibility for me at the moment.

Now to take a look at what I learned through Space Magic.

Gravitas Umkehren:

Using this art after a gravity spell will cause gravity to reverse.

Bind Barrier:

Apply a barrier that imprisons your target. MP consumption will increase depending on strength and range of barrier.

Dimensional Crystal:

Instantly teleports the user out of a dungeon. Cannot be taken outside of dungeons.

“Oh, it’s a dimensional crystal,” says Mr. Alf.

“So we finally have an escape item? The crystal is only usable for one person, right?” I recall.

“Uh-huh,” Mr. Skelly agrees.

This won’t be much help unless we find enough crystals for each of us.

“Whoa, a mining spot!”

“I certainly would like some magi iron.”

“What’s that other thing? Let me check the log...”

“It sounds like a fruit, right?” says Mr. Skelly.

“I believe it’s laichium,” I answer.

“Yeah, that’s it. I’m curious about that one.”

I wonder what unique traits laichium holds? Mr. Alf and I both mine the spot, since Mr. Skelly doesn’t have Mine. We’re a party of three with only a few servants, so I don’t feel safe changing one back to a worker.

“This laichium seems pretty good,” Mr. Alf tells us.

“It’s a lightweight, solid iron? It seems to be even lighter than halchium. The problem is what level it requires to use for equipment.”

“I hope it’s not an issue. This dungeon is already in the fourth area.”

It does seem like a strong material, since it’s one step higher than halchium. Not that we’ll know for sure until we try building weapons out of it.

We continue down the cave, defeating enemies along the way, when we

come across a staircase leading downward.

“What should we do? We can try the stairs or fill in our map,” Mr. Alf asks us.

“I’m fine either way,” I reply.

“Why don’t we take care of the map first? It’ll be boring to save that for last,” Mr. Skelly suggests.

“I guess so. Let’s fill in the map then.”

Most players who visit dungeons either want to increase their level or conquer a new area. Both goals force you to head deeper and deeper into the dungeon, leaving the easier parts closer to the entrance without any purpose. That’s why, without filling in the entire map first, you’ll end up doing it much later when the benefits are long gone. Better that we fill in our map now.

“Looks like there’re more wolves,” Mr. Skelly tells us.

“They’re the easiest for us right now,” Mr. Alf replies.

We appreciate these easy enemies. The sounds of battle seem to attract reinforcements when it lasts too long.

“It’s normal to spot enemies based on sounds when you’re playing a game, but then when it happens to you, it’s actually pretty annoying,” Mr. Alf remarks.

“Yeah, they made it really hard to avoid attracting enemies,” Mr. Skelly replies.

Say there are two enemies next to each other. If you shoot one with a long-range attack, that one will come chasing after you. So long as the two don’t appear to be a set—meaning they’re not “linked”—this is their normal behavior. But enemies in this dungeon seem to detect players based on sound, so that method is impossible here.

“Do you think it’s possible that cave dungeons are on the more difficult side?” I ponder.

“Yeah, since the sounds echo!” Mr. Skelly agrees.

“The enemies here are golem types too, so it’s basically impossible to go without making noise,” Mr. Alf adds.

The fact that they come to us is fine, since we can gain a lot of EXP that way, but it's impossible to increase our pace like this. You can't make much progress when you lure in enemies stronger than you and have to then defeat them one at a time.

"Dimensional crystals aren't as hard to get as I thought, but we haven't seen the other kind at all!" complains Mr. Alf.

"The escape items you can take out of dungeons are definitely rare drops," Mr. Skelly speculates.

"There isn't much magi iron or laichium on this level either..." I add. Well, we're only on the first layer, so there's not much we can do about that.

"Let's head to layer two!" Mr. Alf suggests.

"There was no treasure chest on this level!" Mr. Skelly complains.

"No trap treasure chests either, were there?" I add.

"Maybe they're in dead ends?"

"I bet there're whole rooms for them, since they say some monster houses are triggered by treasure chests."

"Treasure chests that sit right in the middle of rooms sure are scary."

"Totally!" they reply to me simultaneously.

There's only one way to interpret rooms like that: It's *definitely* a trap.

The enemies on the first layer range from levels 40 to 42. Then they go from 41 to 43 on the second layer. We're on the third layer down now, where they appear to range from 42 to 44.

"The enemies are all pretty close in level, so I don't think we'll run into any unexpected disasters," I say.

"I think it depends on those Earth-type stomps..." Mr. Alf replies.

"It'll be real bad if they stagger their stomps at different intervals."

Yes, that would definitely mean trouble for us. Being hit with a stomp at close

range will knock you back and can cause petrification even from a distance. That's not a situation you want to be in when there are other enemies around you. Failing to evade a stomp could easily result in instant death.

"This dungeon isn't suited for inhuman players with specific attributes," I remark.

"For real! Almost all the enemies have their own attributes too," Mr. Skelly laments.

"We're safe, since Light magic is our weakness, but I'm sure others would have to fight against their weakest element in here," Mr. Alf adds.

"It certainly is a mix. Human players and those without attributes might be all right, however."

"Can slimes even jump at all? How do they handle those stomps?" Mr. Skelly asks.

"Gotta have fighting spirit."

Now that I think about it, stomps count as spells, right? That makes them a matter of life or death for slime players. Perhaps the battle against the Triffid during its event was hell for them too.

"All right, we've got this map filled in, but are we gonna be able to get much further?"

"The next enemies must be levels 43 to 45. I do see it getting more difficult from here on out."

"But it's not quite dinnertime yet! Let's go get 'em!" Mr. Skelly cheers.

"That sounds fine," I agree. "We'll head down, wipe them out, and then log off."

With that, we head to the fourth layer. It sounds like the plan is to get as deep as we can before I have to go eat dinner, at which point we'll dissolve our party. We might end up with death penalties, but you can't play a full-dive game while you're eating, so there's no real downside either way. The best strategy is to take your bath, get ready for bed, and log in when all you have left to do for the night is go to sleep.

“Oh, looks like we’ve got a yellow goleman coming.”

“Can’t they leave us alone?”

It’s so much work having to jump each time they attack with a stomp. We could have at least ignored flying types, although that’s difficult to do in a cave.

“We’re sendin’ you out of here!”

Our standard procedure is to have me bind any yellow elemental golemen while Mr. Skelly and I wipe them out with our pillars. Allowing those things to move around just makes more work for us. When there’re two yellow golemen, Mr. Skelly and I both bind them, leaving Mr. Skelly to cast the pillars. I’m the one with the more efficient binds, after all. We have to be sure to kill at least one, as it’s nearly impossible to dodge multiple stomps at once.

“I think we’ll be able to make it through this layer, since our pillars can defeat them all easily,” I share.

“Good for us!” says Mr. Skelly.

“I don’t know how much longer my sword can hold out. Ironcutter has been saving me in this dungeon,” says Mr. Alf.

Durability is definitely a problem, since the enemies here have tough bodies. It must be hard to cut through them with a sword. Mr. Alf’s Power Arm covers his two-handed sword and large shield, so he still has enough durability to get by.

“They’re still the same enemies as before,” Mr. Skelly notices.

“And the princess was right about their levels.”

“If the enemies *do* change, it must start at the fifth layer,” I ponder.

“Five seems like a good number to do that at,” Mr. Skelly replies.

“Maybe. But are they gonna change, or will there just be more of them?”

I share Mr. Alf’s concern. Will the enemies simply increase in number, or will we start seeing new enemies in this dungeon? There’s no way to know until we get there. Our only information comes from the earlier layers of the dungeon.

Oh, would you look at that? There’s a red goleman—level 45, which should be

the highest on this layer.

“Red, huh? It’s a high level but shouldn’t be a problem... Hm?”

“What’s it doing now?”

Once it spots us, the red golem does some sort of movement we’ve never seen before. The red parts of its body are glowing brighter...

“Aaaaaaaaah!”

Mr. Alf is engulfed in light.

“Ah, Alf!”

“Whoa...”

Mr. Skelly and I dodge the light, only grazing it, but it hits Mr. Alf harder than he can recover from. Farewell, Mr. Alf. How cruel!



I take on the red goleman while Mr. Skelly revives Mr. Alf.

“...I didn’t expect a goleman beam.”

“It must be a resident of Arianrhod,” Mr. Skelly says.

“That wouldn’t be so strange, since some things here come from the Lovecraft mythos,” I reply.

The goleman beam is like a horizontal pillar attack. It has a wide range and deals continuous damage. It’s also very hard to dodge inside this cave. You would expect the goleman to breathe fire from its mouth, although the beam is quite a headache too, so it’s hard to say which one we’d prefer to fight.

We manage to defeat the goleman, since aside from the beam, it’s just like all the others.

“So golemen start shooting beams at level 45?” asks Mr. Alf.

“That’s possible,” I reply.

“It all depends on if Alf can escape or not. Try to make it to the walls, got it?”

“Only if I’m able to. Hey, Princess, don’t you have to go eat now?”

“Yes, I suppose it’s time for dinner.”

“Oh ho! Isn’t that a treasure chest?!”

Mr. Skelly is right. There’s a treasure chest right in front of us, sitting inside a room with only one door. Since this is a cave dungeon, it’s been nothing but passageways up to this point. But now we have a slightly dome-shaped space that’s bigger and more illuminated than any path we’ve seen yet. I think we can safely call this a “room.”

“Looks suspicious!” cry Mr. Alf and Mr. Skelly simultaneously.

“And yet, sadly, we can’t go without opening it. This is definitely where most adventurers die,” I tell them.

“What do we do?” they respond together again.

That’s a good question. I’m not sure if Trap Perception and Trap Cancellation will work on this.

“Although, it doesn’t really matter if there’re traps, right?” Mr. Alf asks me.

“No. I would guess that a treasure box’s trap would be extra effective.”

“Not even we can survive a mimic, explosions, or monster houses!” Mr. Skelly cries.

“Ah, that’s right. The entire room can become a trap, can’t it?”

“Those would be the monster house or the magical energy blockages. We just entered the room without thinking, but I don’t think it’s either one of those kinds,” I comment.

It’s necessary to pay close attention when you enter a room in a dungeon. No one would enter a room if they could tell it was a monster house from the outside, and that wouldn’t exactly count as a “trap” anymore.

“My skills aren’t reacting to it. What do we wanna do?” asks Mr. Alf.

“How about we simply shoot at it with long-range attacks like normal?” I suggest.

“That’ll work on a mimic! I like it!” replies Mr. Skelly.

“If it’s a bomb, it should explode too... Wait, but wouldn’t that destroy what’s inside it?”

“I’m not certain how powerful the explosion will be. Why don’t we simply try opening it?”

“Yeah!”

Different games give their mimics vastly different levels of strength. Poison and confusion won’t work on us, so we can ignore those threats. We don’t know how strong an exploding chest might be either, and if it turns into a monster house, we’ll just die.

I also don’t know if my skill levels are too low to detect a trap or if the room’s just not a trap in the first place.

“Okay, I’m opening it,” Mr. Alf informs us.

“All right.”

“Yep. Let’s recall our servants just in case it’s a monster house.”

Mr. Skelly makes a good point. I'll recall Unit One and the others too, since I don't want to waste the cost.

"Dun-dun-dun-duuun!"

Mr. Alf sings the famous jingle as he opens the treasure chest. That's when we hear the door slam behind us. Instantly, the room fills with enemies.

"GGWP!" we all cry.

There's not enough space to move much in here. I recall Unit One and try my best to fight, but it's not looking good at all.

"Oof!"

Mr. Skelly, who's super fragile when it comes to blunt attacks, instantly dies from a golem's punch. Mr. Alf and I both end up surrounded. There's nothing we can do. Goodbye, cruel world!

Your HP has been depleted. You can no longer move.

Wait for revival / Return to set spawn point

The monster house enemies despawn from the room once we're defeated, and the door reopens. I see that the treasure chest has disappeared too. It will probably respawn after a certain amount of time.

"I hate those damn yellow golemen!"

"Their stomps are hellish inside a monster house," I reply.

"I died instantly! What, you've got something to say about it?!"

"Well, you're a skeleton..."

"Shall we head back?" I suggest.

"Yep," they reply.

My set spawn point takes me to the mini-portal in front of my villa. The other two have their own spawn points, so we end up separated.

"Guess that's that for today," says Mr. Alf.

“Yep!”

“Indeed. Let’s break for dinner. Good work today, everyone.”

“You too!” they reply simultaneously.

We disband the party, and then I log out from my villa’s bedroom.

Official BBS 1

[The key to conquering] Comprehensive Thread 91 [lies with residents]

1. Passing Conqueror

This thread is a comprehensive thread regarding conquering new areas.
Put down any information you can.

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

>> 940 Continue this discussion in the next thread

432. Passing Conqueror

Let's see how far I can level up before the sports festival.

433. Passing Conqueror

Aren't there any good places to hunt?

434. Passing Conqueror

What about dungeons?

435. Passing Conqueror

They probably exist, since this is a fantasy game, but the residents won't tell us where they are.

436. Passing Conqueror

I wonder why?

437. Passing Conqueror

Princesssssssss!

438. Passing Conqueror

So there *are* dungeons!

439. Passing Conqueror

Farewell Humanity? Does she want us to give up on our humanity?

440 Passing Conqueror If we’re giving it to anyone, we should give it to the princess.

441 Passing Conqueror So where’s this dungeon?

442. Honehone

The princess says two separate dungeons have been confirmed on this continent.

443. Passing Conqueror.

Where the hell did she learn that? Residents don’t tell us anything.

444. Honehone

She said Ms. Sophie told her.

445. Passing Conqueror

...Who?

446. Passing Conqueror

Sophie? The wiiiiiiitch!

447. Passing Conqueror

The Sorciere? We can't just go up to her and get information!

448. Passing Conqueror

She's too much of a big shot to help us.

449. Honehone

You should check out the unions in the fourth area, either northeast or west!

450. Passing Conqueror

Really? The fourth area...?

451. Passing Conqueror

Wait, you guys never knew where the dungeons were? I just asked and got an answer.

452. Passing Conqueror

From who?

453. Passing Conqueror

A veteran adventurer.

454. Passing Conqueror

For real?

455. Passing Conqueror

He told me dungeons require different skills than the hunting grounds, and adventurers who go to the dungeons usually don't leave the nearest city. Pretty much only veterans even know where these dungeons are since they're so difficult to clear.

456. Passing Conqueror

Is that right?

457. Passing Conqueror

I heard residents are banned from going to dungeons unless they're at least rank C. Otherwise, they'd die.

458. Passing Conqueror

But outsiders can go, right? They just respawn if they die.

459. Passing Conqueror

That's what I was told.

460. Passing Conqueror

I guess it's obvious, but you've gotta ask people who seem like they'd have that info if you want to get any answers.

461. Passing Conqueror

That and receptionists who look like they've got loose lips!

462. Passing Conqueror

How can you tell just by looking at them?

463. Passing Conqueror

Veteran adventurers are easier to spot...

464. Passing Conqueror

Yeah, the equipment they use is totally different.

465. Passing Conqueror

Exactly. They're also older and use better materials for their stuff.

466. Passing Conqueror

I'm headin' for that dungeon.

573. Passing Conqueror

Whaaaaat?! The ninjas?! How'd they do it?!

574. Passing Conqueror

They made it through the south!

575. Passing Conqueror

What, they don't wanna be pirates?

576. Musasabi

I fear that it is not a life of honor.

577. Passing Conqueror

You'd have to build a ship first, right?

578. Musasabi

But of course.

579. Cecil

What's the south like?

580. Musasabi

From what I've seen, it is not so unlike Imbamunte.

581. Passing Conqueror

I guess that makes sense, since they're both port towns.

582. Cecil

Hmm. Where should I go? Maybe I'll stick with the dungeon for now.

583. Musasabi

If I may be so frank, it is the dungeon that I wish to visit, my liege.

584. Cecil

Yeah, that figures.

585. Passing Conqueror

From what I hear, it's golem types in the northeast, while the west has plants, bugs, and animals.

586. Cecil

So with my members, I should head west?

587. Musasabi

Without fail.

Chapter 2:

Sunday—The Outer Ones

IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME to get used to fighting while I use my 3D mental map, but walking around town is best for grinding its levels.

Starting Town, with all its inhabitants, is where I go to level up Space Recognition Expansion. I'll pose like I'm praying in front of the statue of Stellura in the town square while I try to gain some skill levels.

I don't plan on spending my entire Sunday like this, so I need to think of something else to do too. I should probably spend some time on Mythical Languages since it's looking like I'll reach the bare minimum level sooner than I expected. The language skill is the one I might just be able to finish before the next event.

I'll spend the first half of my morning working on Space Recognition Expansion, then move on to Mythical Languages for the second half. Then I'll find something else to do in the afternoon. That sounds like a good plan.

I log back in that afternoon.

I exit my villa and head toward the north, where I start climbing the hill. My plan is to make some progress with this particular questline.

I've arrived at the first Gate once again. A voice, almost like a man and a woman speaking at the same time, echoes directly into my mind.

"So you are here? What lies ahead is the Medium. It is a place where common knowledge will not help you. You still wish to go?"

"I do."

"Even though you may lose the place where you belong, despite having given up on living?"

"I might lose the place where I belong, but that's not the end of everything."

“Very well. You may pass. May the Silver Key guide you to the Ultimate Gate.”

’Umr at-Tawil points toward the massive gate opposite of where I entered.

It seems like I now meet the conditions, so I slip past the hexagonal pedestal in the center and head for the gate.

The gate’s heavy doors open on their own as I approach, but I can’t make out what’s on the other side.

He—if that’s even the right pronoun—falls back asleep on his pedestal.

Should I really go...? Let me see what’s up ahead... Oh, it looks like the game is taking control of me.

Ah, I knew it! I’m falling now. As soon as I took one step forward, I went plunging down. It looks like neither my eyes nor my 3D mental map are working. I can’t regain control over my body either, so this must be a scripted falling event. I just keep going and going. I bet this would be traumatic for anyone who hates bungee jumping.

I don’t know how long it’s been, but it just keeps going...and now I’ve just hit water!

I can float when I’m this heavy? Actually, now I’m noticing the lovely aroma coming from this ocean. Wow, the whole ocean smells like roses.

I regained control after floating to the surface, but looking around, it’s nothing but ocean. Neither my eyes nor my 3D mental map can spot anything else in range.

The Silver Key at my hip starts to glow faintly, pointing its light in one direction. ’Umr at-Tawil mentioned that the Silver Key would guide me, so I probably just need to follow this light.

I consider taking Swim, but Undead races don’t need to breathe in the first place, so it wouldn’t do much good. I can probably forget about that skill, since I don’t predict running into enemies here. Of course, I might need it if I ever run into any underwater dungeons or something of the sort.

Oh, right, I can summon Unit One as a wyvern... Huh. It didn’t work. I see how

it is.

Space Recognition Expansion has reached level 30. You have gained 2 Skill Points.

Oh! Space Recognition Expansion is finally at level 30, and now I can see colors and textures with my 3D mental map. This lessens the need to use my eyes at all.

It looks like I should have been using this ability in town, rather than at my villa or occasionally in battles. It was much more efficient that way. All I need to do now is raise the skill level and expand its range, but I doubt it will get much higher than it is now. I feel like, until this point, it's been something of a tutorial all this time.

I swim for almost a whole hour, looking for land while guided by the Silver Key. Since this is clearly a special map, I doubt I can come back if I leave.

I finally spot some giant rocks, like those at Stonehenge, forming an arch. It looks like I've found the Ultimate Gate.

I quickly climb out of the water and walk to the center of the gate. I think I remember the original story having some sort of spell to chant, but I haven't heard anything about that in this world. It must not be a requirement in the game.

Once I'm standing in the center, the Silver Key begins to float and point inside. It lights up, rotates, and causes the stone arch around it to glow with light. Some very small mythical language text floats up from the light too.

The light starts getting brighter, and—oh, I've been teleported. The 3D map in my brain instantly switched locations too. The Silver Key has returned to my belt.

Oh, would you look at that? I've been surrounded by the Hounds of Tindalos. What an intense welcome party. Their tails seem to be buzzing. They're not

exactly “dogs” in the first place, though.

“You are here. The rest of you... There is something she must do first, no? Everything else can wait.”

Oh, it’s the Pup Lord. I appreciate the help, but doesn’t that just mean they’re going to hone in on me again later on?

“Follow me, Qualified One.”

Wow, he’s acting a lot more serious than usual. I’ll follow him and keep the chatting to a minimum.

The only thing I see in my 3D mental map are fields of flowers surrounding us. I suppose I’ll give my eyes a try. The flowers appear to be new, undiscovered items in this game, but I’ll have to think about picking them later.

Now I see why common knowledge won’t help me here. It’s very strange indeed. It feels like we’re both here in the same place, but somehow, we’re also not.

We’re moving so fast that I can only make out glimpses of silhouettes on the ground. I see something spiky in the distance—that must be Tindalos.

There’s also an absolutely gigantic ship floating in another direction. If I remember correctly, that belongs to the moon-beasts.

This place certainly is flourishing. I see buildings that look more developed than the ones in real life, much less those in Starting Town. I’m so curious what race lives there.

I can tell that the Medium is a place where various races live in different biomes.

Oh, there’s an ocean too? That thing floating in it must be Cthulhu. And are those buildings part of R’lyeh?

“You cannot trust your own eyes here. The distances are not accurate.”

Does that mean space and dimensions are adjusted for each race? Perhaps the things I see aren’t there, while other things exist that I can’t see. It’s quite

the fantasy setting, all right, but at least it's interesting.

I walk the single path through the flowers, following the Lord of Tindalos. Our destination is probably that gigantic old castle up ahead.

Would you look at that? There are some moon-beasts. The way they look, though...hmm...

"Are they Mi-go and Yith?"

"They are. Both races are experts in transformation. It is generally prohibited to set foot on another race's land, and I would stay away from those two in particular. You never know what they might be."

The Lord of Tindalos then pointed at a building reminiscent of a sci-fi setting. That must be the work of the Mi-go and Yith. The moon-beasts seem to be enjoying their chat with each other, so their races must be friendly enough to develop such buildings together.

"By the way, they are the ones who created those known as 'living machinery' on the surface."

"...Huh? That's an incredible reveal."

"Well, to be more accurate, I should say that they created their progenitors, the armor races. It was a part of their cultural development long ago."

So the great Mi-go and Yith races were the ones to build armor races? Their goal was probably to create helpers and factory workers, sort of like cleaning robots in real life. But to think those became the living machinery in-game today, who have souls and everything...

Maybe they even built the cores on Ms. Sophie's broom. But they also spawn naturally in dungeons... Hmm...

Well, I don't think it matters much. It's not like this has anything to do with me.

Before I know it, the giant old castle is right in front of us—even though I don't feel like we walked very far.

The castle is built in a gothic style with black, white, and gray materials. I sure love the atmosphere of this place! I'll definitely need to snag a screenshot. It's much bigger and feels even older than the Evernight Castle.

Whoops, I need to keep up with the Lord of Tindalos.

The interior is nice and calming too. Despite its great size, there are very few people inside, which makes it feel a little lonely.

The Nether could be compared to a royal capital. Its castle is surrounded by a big city.

The Medium, however, consists of nothing but this castle and the flower fields surrounding it. There also exist lands for each race scattered around, which is perhaps why the castle itself is so unused.

I spot a group consisting of an old woman, a young woman, and a little girl.

"Mh'ithrha, is this the girl?"

"That's right. She may become our brethren."

"My name is Tenebrarum. This is Suspiriorum and Lachrymarum."

Ah, so they're the Ladies of Sorrow?

The little girl with black hair and gold eyes who first spoke to me is Tenebrarum. The adult woman with gray hair and gold eyes is Suspiriorum, and the witch-like gray-haired, heavily wrinkled woman with gold eyes is Lachrymarum.

"My name is Anastasia Atropos Nemeseia."

"We're glad you came. Are your eyes the same as mine, Nemeseia?"

As I remember it, Mater Tenebrarum is blind, Mater Lachrymarum is deaf, and Mater Suspiriorum is mute.

"No. I'm still training, so my eyes work for the time being."

"Is that so? If you're going to give something up, it ought to be the eyes. That is, unless you have something that can take the others' places, like we do."

With that, the Ladies of Sorrow continue away from us on their walk.

“Do I have to give up my eyes?” I ask the Pup Lord.

“It is one form of devotion. However, that is only for the races with eyes in the first place.”

I suppose that makes sense. Plenty of races don’t have eyes, after all.

After a lot more walking, we reach a spot deep within the lower floor of the castle.

“I never expected an outsider to actually show up.”

A person suddenly appears next to us. He looks to be in his late twenties, with delicate, androgynous features. Wearing a clergyman’s robes, this man is yet another inhumanly beautiful character.

Well, I highly doubt this person is human at all, so “inhuman” is probably the natural word to describe him.

“Take care of this girl,” the Lord of Tindalos orders him.

“Very well.”

“And please do things by the book, Nyarlathotep.”

“We haven’t had a visitor come to us through the proper channels in so long. I know what to do.”

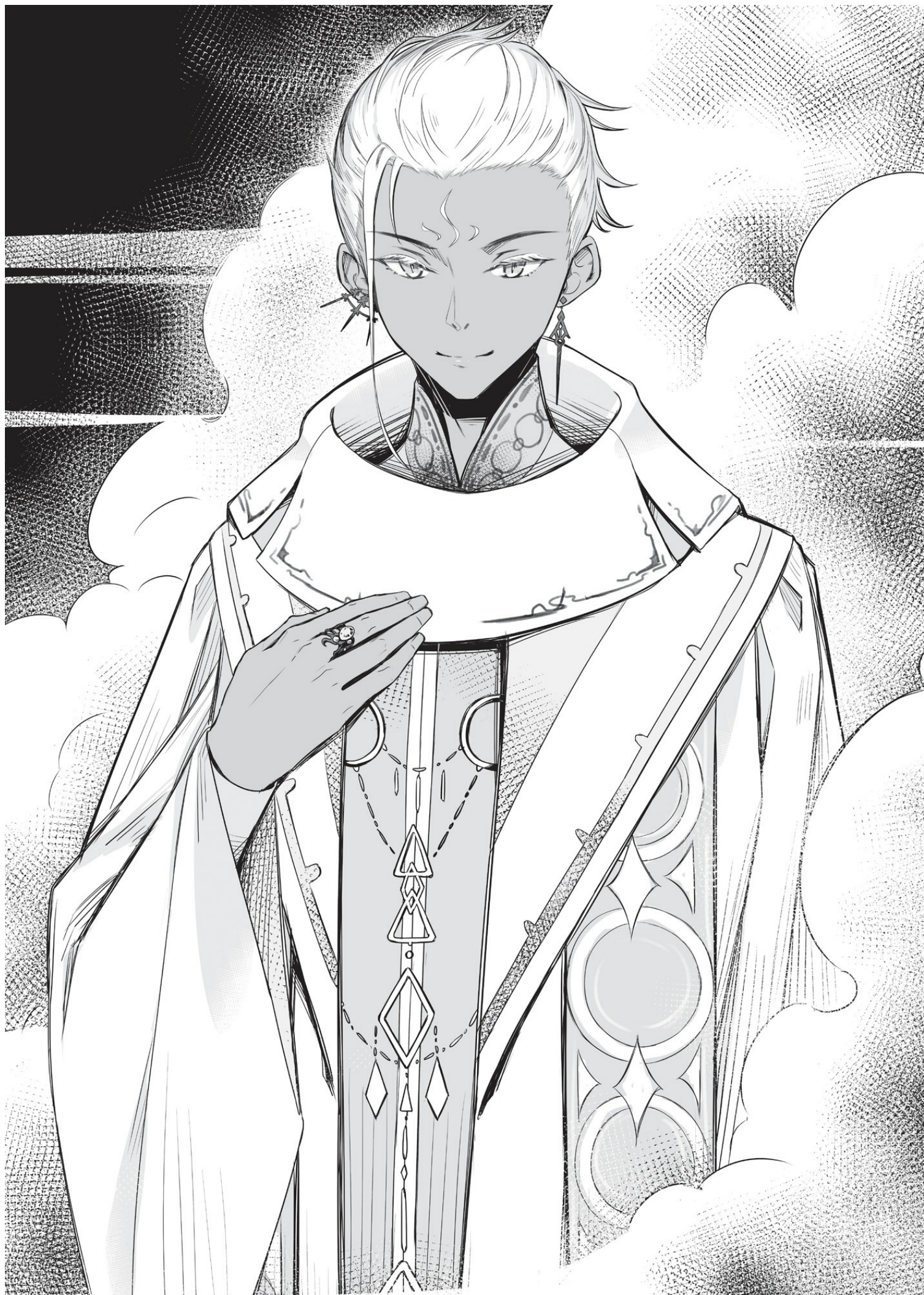
“If you let her escape, I am sure that even you will not be able to tune out the others’ complaints.”

Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos, has officially entered the story.

The Lord of Tindalos then leaves me here alone with the Crawling Chaos. Eek! I’m really scared. However, the game isn’t making me feel like I need to be too wary of him.

“I am Nyarlathotep. I am an agent of the gods and a warden of this castle.”

“I’m Anastasia Atropos Nemeseia.”



“Very well. Now follow me.”

We arrive in front of another large door with nothing particularly noteworthy around.

Nyarlatotep stands before the door and chants some sort of prayer—or perhaps a “call” would be more accurate. What I *do* know is that he’s using a mythical language which seems to make the heavy doors creak open.

“Since you’ve made it this far, you’ll probably be all right in here. Just try not to be discourteous.”

Despite not being able to see anything inside, I have no choice but to cautiously enter.

Once I pass through the door, my body’s movements are taken over again. An event is playing out.

Instead of solid ground, I feel something pliable under my feet. I still can’t see anything with my mental map, even after walking a bit forward, so I press onward in total darkness.

Suddenly, a sight instantly appears before my eyes. I probably teleported... Wait, could it really be...?

A countless number of iridescent spheres are stuck to the wall. Actually, it’s more accurate to say that all those spheres are the wall itself. I’m completely surrounded by them. The spheres pull apart and reattach over and over, expanding and then contracting. This is true Lovecraftian mythology—an unnameable, abstract monster.

The air in front of me seems to go blurry for a moment before another iridescent sphere appears, giving off an intense light. It looks to be changing its shape more than any of the other spheres around me.

It then ceases its irregular motions and begins to take a meaningful shape.

The form that appears is of a young woman, about eighteen years old, with gray hair and iridescent eyes. I remember these exact traits from a book I read.

Oh, it looks like I can move my body again.

“You’ve come a long way, Qualified Outsider.”

“It’s an honor to meet you, Stellura.”

I bow my head, then lift it up to see a table and chairs have been prepared for us. The people in this realm seem to use teleportation quite frequently, so I often find myself surprised by this sort of thing.

I sit down quickly, as instructed by Stellura.

“If you’ve come this far, it must mean you’re prepared for what comes next. Isn’t that right?”

“Yes, although I’m just concerned about the Nether.”

“I see... I don’t wish to abandon them either, but that all depends on your next evolution.”

She gives her hand a small wave and a UI appears before me.

“There are no wrong answers here, but they will affect the outcome of your evolution. You may think until you run out of time.”

Who will you worship?

The three pillars are listed here, but not Creall. Well, I’ll go with Stellura for this one.

Choose which concept you value most:

Life, death, space-time, fate, contracts, punishment.

These are the “faces” of Stellura, aren’t they?

Hm, this is pretty difficult. I need to think about it for a bit. When Stellura said I would run out of time, she must have meant that I needed to make up my mind before I evolve at level 40. At least, I hope that’s what she meant.

I try choosing the other gods and am given a list of their respective “faces” as well. Then I select Stellura again and leave it there for now.

“Despite how the gods look, they are all good people,” Stellura says. “May you treat them kindly should you choose to work with them. It will be a long-lasting relationship, after all.”

“I’m sure I can get used to their looks after a while. I think it will be fine,” I reply.

In fact, I’m a little excited now. These are the embodied beings from the Cthulhu Mythos. Their stories and roles may be changed, but their looks are very faithful to the original books.

“However, your equipment is insufficient for this place. Sit so that you do not touch the ground.”

I don’t really understand, but I’ll do as I’m instructed. I bring my knees up to my chest and hug them.

Stellura then turns her hand toward me. All of my Gold rarity equipment is removed, turning to a ball of light that floats toward her palm.

“Don’t let your bare feet touch anything or else your cells will die off.”

“Oh, okay.”

I guess I see? Now that I think back, touching the spheres results in rotting, atrophy, blisters, and exposed bones of your body parts, right? My protective equipment must have been what allowed me to walk around here at all.

For humans, this would become a game about seeing how far you can run before you die. Taking any damage basically kills you. Most would avoid the spheres like they’re the plague, but where’s the fun in that?

After some time, the ball of light returns to me, and my equipment is restored.

“Is that all for now?” Stellura asks. “I’ll be expecting great things from you.”

She stands up, so I stand too and bow to her.

I then find myself outside of the doors. She must have teleported me herself.

“Title: Stellura’s Blessings” has been upgraded to “Title: Stellura’s Protection.”

By fulfilling special conditions, you have received “Title: Chance Encounter with a Goddess.”

You have unlocked teleportation to the Medium via the Silver Key.

I don’t see Nyar around at first. Just then, he teleports himself right to me.

“Oh? It looks like Stellura took a liking to you. But you’re still an outsider. We will welcome you if you are able to become one of us, but you’ll have to get stronger.”

He said what he needed to say and began to walk, so I follow from behind. I’ll definitely get lost without him. Unfortunately, Nyarlathotep seems like the kind of person to leave you behind if you can’t keep up with him. His usual nature is to drive humans to madness and laugh at them instead of outright killing people, after all.

“At the very least, you must get strong enough to defend yourself. I’m speaking about defending yourself in here, not out there, of course.”

With that, he kicks *something* away that had teleported right next to me.

But the blowback from his kick alone almost wipes out all my health. At least I made it out alive. Time to do your job, automatic health regeneration!

“It’s nice that you’re so curious, but there’s no need to rush,” said Nyarlathotep.

Now that I think of it, I remember Nyar also being something of a guardian of the Dreamlands. If I have a reason to come back here, I’ll have to call for the Pup Lord right away.

I don’t think I’ll be killed, but I could see myself ending up surrounded by creatures, just like with the hounds. I assume the most fatal outcome for me here would be getting roped into a fight.

We ignore the thing he kicked away and proceed forward. After a while, I see the Pup Lord waiting for us.

“You are back? It seems you have made it out safely.”

“I leave the rest to you, Lord of Tindalos,” Nyar says to him.

“I understand.”

Now it’s time to follow the Lord of Tindalos, just like when I first arrived. Farewell, Nyar.

It strikes me how no one here exactly “walks.” I hardly see any other people around—although “people” might be the wrong word for them. When I do spot them, they’re standing and conversing with each other, but I never see anyone moving about in a hurry. They must be teleporting directly or possibly even flying. I’m starting to feel like the Ladies of Sorrow I met earlier are in the minority here.

However, Stellura’s question for me still weighs on my mind. I don’t know how I can pick just one subject from that list. Should I order them in a list based on which are likely to have the strongest effects? But I feel like that might be the trap they want me to fall in. I should probably think of a reason to choose any of the subjects, since I don’t know what the game’s developers might have in store for me.

“What is troubling you?” asks the Lord of Tindalos.

“I was asked who I want to worship and what subject I want to focus on.”

“I see. But the answer is Stellura, no?”

“That’s right. I can get that far, but...”

“Ah, the ‘face’ to worship. I see. That is the one thing you must decide for yourself, or else there is no purpose. It is best to find the subject that is important to you.”

Hmm... To be honest, though, I feel like they’re all important. They were “life, death, space-time, fate, contracts, and punishment,” after all.

Perhaps I should treat it like a question on a language test in school, making a sentence that uses all of the words together.

I think about this as we walk until we finally make it outside the castle. That's when the other pups come and surround me. Since they're called "hounds," I believe they should act a little more dignified. Right now, they're basically just a group of ugly mutts.

Good doggies, good doggies. Oh, they feel a bit strange to pet. I suppose that makes sense for the residents of "angles." They seem to poke at me randomly.

...Why are you all lining up in front of me? The hound I was petting quickly steps aside for the next one to step forward. Are they each waiting their turn to be pet?

"Oh dear. We are not even comrades yet."

The Pup Lord is now acting like a concerned grandpa. Well, at least there aren't very many of them, so it's not a big deal.

I give them all a good petting. These hounds have a strange texture, almost like they're made of slime. But they seem satisfied and disperse.

Oh, and now what's this strange thing that's come up behind me?

"Tekeli-li. Li-li..."

The sphere has a much darker "iridescence" than Stellura. I want to call it a slime, but that would probably bring the wrong image to mind. The surface bubbles and is covered in countless blinking eyes. If this thing is a slime, it's certainly of the grotesque sort.

A single tentacle stretches out and stops in front of my waist.

I reach out and grab it. It shakes lightly before retreating into the mass. In other words, it was a handshake.

"Tekeli-li!"

It practically sings its words to me, and then it leaves.

"...Is that a Shoggoth?"

"It is. Do not mind them."

They actually seem sort of cute, despite how they look. The one I saw was about five meters tall—considerably large.

These things certainly can't go to the surface. They're sure to make both adults and children cry.

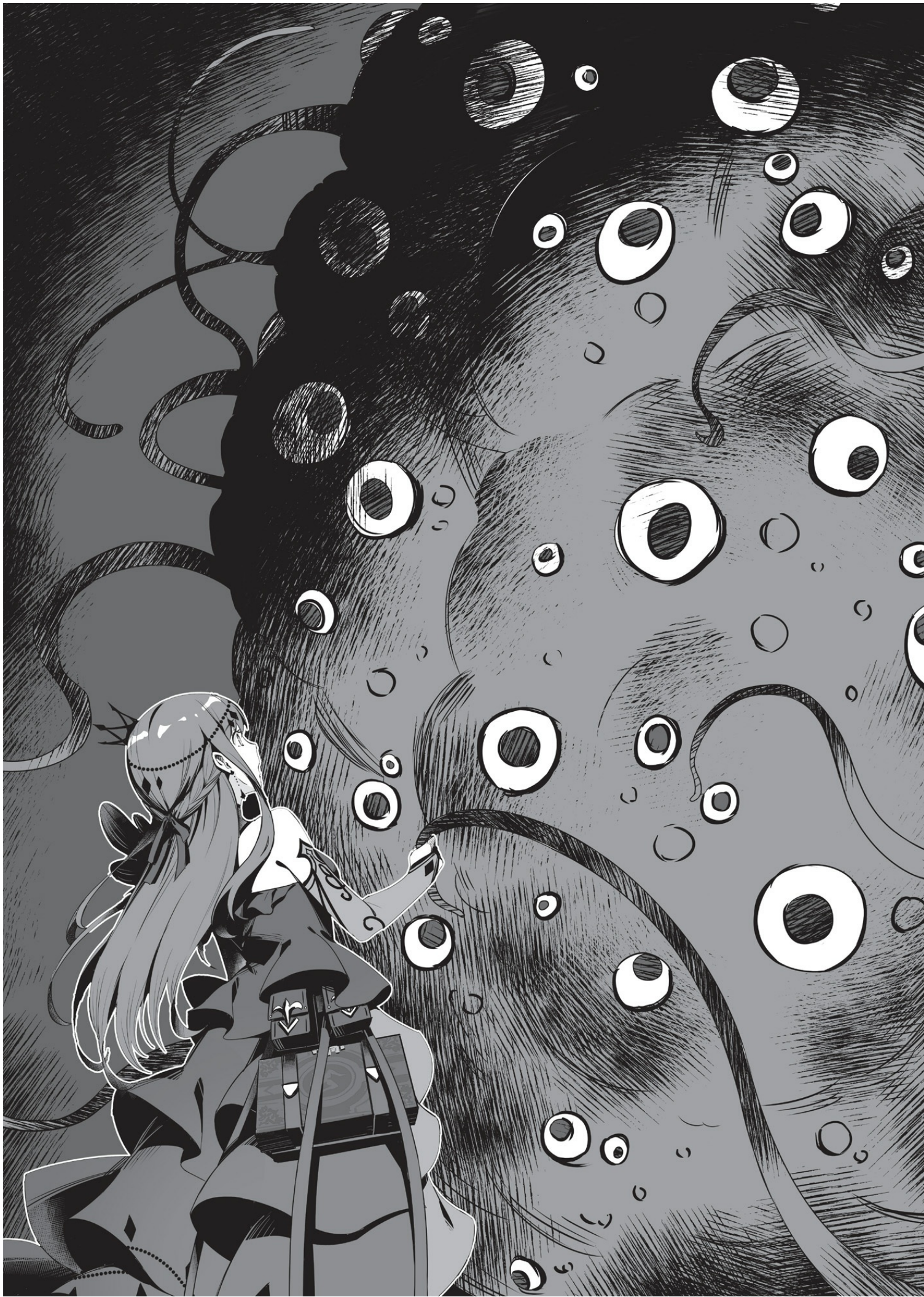
"All right, Lord. I'm going to go my own way now. Please teach me Mythical Languages again sometime."

"Very well. Do not forget that we look forward to seeing your progress."

"I hope to live up to your expectations."

"Then let us meet again, Qualified One."

I use the Silver Key to teleport back to Starting Town.



I arrive at the statue in the town square. After spending all that time in the Medium, it's surprising to see crowds of people walking about, even though that's perfectly normal up here.

Now it's time to check on some things.

First up, my equipment. Nothing seems to have changed there. All I see is that I can now teleport to the Medium with the Silver Key. Now that Stellura's Blessing has turned to Stellura's Protection, I assume that it wants me to evolve before I get any other upgrades.

I should look at my titles too.

"Chance Encounter with a Goddess"

A commemorative title for those who have met with a goddess.

A commemorative title? It may say that, but I won't let my guard down, just in case it comes with hidden effects.

"Stellura's Protection"

Increases resistance to Light and Dark magic. Reduces cost of Light and Dark magic.

Increases effectiveness of Space Magic. Grants bonus to EXP earned through Space Magic. Reduces cost of Space Magic.

Increases effects of restoration. Increases resistance to instant death.

That's quite the big leap. Blessing only came with the cost reductions. I don't know the exact numbers, which are the important part, but it seems like a boost to all the powers that correspond with Stellura's "faces." There's light and darkness, then space-time and fate. The last part must be life and death. As for contracts and punishment... Well, I don't think those can be incorporated into stats.

Anyway, now I just need to raise my base level by four before I can evolve, but I feel like I won't end up reaching that point until after the next official event. Right now, I want to spend my time on my language studies.

"Whoa, check out the cute chick over there!"

"You're right! Go ask her to hang with us!"

Oh, I should also have Mr. Ertz process my magi iron for me now that I'm here in Starting Town.

"Hey there, m'lady. Wanna chill with us?"

I'll sell that light steel, or "laichium," that we found in the dungeon. I'm sure Mr. Skelly and Mr. Alf picked up plenty yesterday. I'll come up with a way to turn magi iron into elemental metal during its processing and sell the laichium while I'm picking up the magi iron from Mr. Ertz.

I can only summon one servant during the official event, but I won't have enough capacity to summon a wyvern or lizardine with multipliers. Besides, their size will probably just make them targets more than anything else.

I think a wolf is the best option if I'm going to summon anything. I have plenty of capacity for that.

"She's totally ignoring you."

"That's not gonna fly, señorita!"

In the end, I'm the one who needs to get stronger. It's not like my servants are my main weapon, after all.

I need Space Recognition Expansion for my regular day-to-day as well as the upcoming Free-For-All. I'm also pretty certain that the Book of Eibon will have some sort of effect with Mythical Languages. I'll have the latter maxed out before the event starts, so I'd like to raise the former as much as I can.

"Hey, it's kinda impressive how good this chick is at ignoring people!"

I'll have to go hunting once I sell my elemental metal and pick up magi iron. I'll probably be spending my weekdays on Mythical Languages and production, so the best use of my weekend time will be to hunt. That means I should go sell off my metal as soon as possible.

“My liege, are you aware you are currently being hit on?”

“Good day, Mr. Musasabi. What do you mean?”

“...What the hell?”

Mr. Musasabi is looking pitifully at a crying man. I wonder what brought that on? I was just standing here, thinking about my plans from here on out.

“That reminds me. Congratulations on reaching the southern continent. What was it like?”

“I have yet to leave the town we arrived at.”

“Oh, you haven’t explored yet?”

“The town itself was nothing special, my liege. Was your dungeon experience enjoyable, Princess?”

“Yes, but it was pretty difficult. We ended up dying in a monster house.”

“Hmm. I am unsure if I shall focus on the southern continent or on a dungeon.”

“Personally, I’ve already finalized most of my plans leading up to the official event.”

“Most precise of you! With that, I will step out of your way.”

Mr. Musasabi and I then go our separate ways. I head to Mr. Ertz’s shop, sell my laichium for 500 gold apiece, pick up my magi iron, and teleport home.

Then I prepare eleven pieces each of every elemental metal and return to Mr. Ertz’s shop. As always, he purchases my weapons at half price before replenishing my magic stones at the trade association.

It looks like I have nine million gold saved up now. Well done, me.

Now I’ll go hunting, eat dinner, craft, and then go to bed.

I also need to think about Stellura’s question, but I can use my time in real life for that. I believe I might be able to get all of the benefits simply by using all of the answers in a single sentence.

All right. My work is done, so now it’s time to go level up.

A message from the development team arrived while I was preparing for the event.

Dear Princess,

Hello, this is the FLFO official event team.

This message is being sent to qualifying players only.

We would like your permission to use a “mini-character” based on your likeness within the playing field of the third official event.

The most famous players, as ranked by both fellow players and residents, have been selected for this opportunity. Therefore, it is not exclusive to veterans.

This mini-character will be powered by an AI that has read through your gameplay logs. This may result in slight inconsistencies in its words and actions.

Our team is currently working on plans for a game titled “Capture the Mini-Character” to take place during the event. The game will allow all players to participate. When a team captures a mini-character, we plan to award them with special prizes—a figurine and plushie based on the character they caught. These will come in the form of in-game furniture items.

Therefore, we would like to request your permission to use your likeness for a mini-character, distribute figurines based on your mini-character, and distribute plushies based on your mini-character.

You will, of course, receive an exclusive figurine and plushie based on your likeness before they are distributed to other players. We’ve attached images of these items to this message, so please base your decision on the finished designs. We’ve also attached a sample video of the mini-character for reference.

These mini-characters will appear randomly during the third official event itself, so we’d like to ask you to keep it a secret from other players. We’re sorry to spoil you on the surprise.

Finally, everyone who receives this message will be granted special seats to view the “Capture the Mini-Character” minigame. Please reply to this message

to have the seats prepared for you.

We ask that you only display the attached items in private map areas before the event itself takes place.

Examples: your personal house, small production environments, rooms rented at inns, etc.

Permissions:

Use of mini-character: Yes/No

Figurine award distribution: Yes/No

Plushie award distribution: Yes/No

Capture the Mini-Character event: Play/Spectate

Accept all/Reject all

We look forward to hearing from you.

P.S. We've also sent this message to your little sister, AKA "Akirina."

...I see. In other words, I can talk about this with my sister without spoiling the surprise.

I'm sure Mr. Cecil and Rina, as the winner and runner-up in the martial arts tournament, as well as famous guildmasters like Ms. Kotatsu and Mr. Musasabi are all going to receive this offer—maybe even Mr. Lucebarm too. Mr. Ertz, as a producer, might receive an invitation as well.

Mr. Mohawk seems within the realm of possibility too, for better or worse. I suppose that commitment to playing a character is important for the "fame" metric. If anything, it might make him stronger than any of us.

Other candidates might be the people who post information to the forums. They would have to be the posters who use their names, of course, so Mr. Studylover might be included. But since it sounds like the opinions of residents

are being counted too, that could eliminate him from consideration. The testing team might be known to residents, but I'm sure they just look at them and think, "*What on earth are they up to now?*" It's a group that always looks like they're up to shady business.

Setting that aside, I should take a look at the video attachment.

"Good day, me. Good afternoon, me."

Oh...it looks like they pitched my voice up since I'm smaller here. That's very cute. I know I'm talking about myself, but this miniaturized, cartoonish version of me is *adorable*.

The figurines and plushies are based on my mini-character, which is in turn based on me. It's like the cartoonish version of me has been even more cartoonized.

Let me just take a look down there... I'm wearing black underwear too. I see... Well, I think I can go ahead and approve all of this. I'll mark that I'm spectating this part of the event.

All right. I've got my plan, and it's time to get to it.

I'll call the Pup Lord, have him teach me Mythical Languages for a set amount of time, and use whatever remains to mine from my ore vein or work on crafting elemental metals.

This will be my routine until it's time for the event.

Chapter 3:

Before the Third Official Event

IT'S SATURDAY, the starting date for the official event.

I wake up, eat breakfast, and finish my morning routine as quickly as possible before logging in. I don't have any time to spare at all. If I spend all morning on it, I should be able to max out my language studies, since the event starts at 1 p.m. Once I finish studying, I'll eat lunch, then be sure everything else is ready for the event.

Lunch will have to be instant noodles, of course.

You have reached the maximum level for Mythical Languages.

***By fulfilling special requirements, you have acquired the title
"Mythical Language Scholar."***

"I see. So this is as far as we go," says the Pup Lord.

"Yes. Thank you for everything."

It actually went a bit faster than I planned, although I only have a few minutes to spare. I could have easily run out of time.

"You have learned all you can with these languages. Now it is time to focus on leveling up."

"I'll do my best in today's event."

"Yes, I hear the outsiders are doing some activities. I wish you well. Now I must go."

"Goodbye then," I reply.

I bid the Pup Lord farewell, log out on time, and eat my lunch.

The special playing field for the event is already open, but I won't go there

yet. I still have something to do at my villa.

It's finally time to decode the Book of Eibon. Ah! The game just took control of my body. Ooh, I've found a special cutscene.

You begin to decipher the ancient grimoire known as the Book of Eibon...

Magical energy drifts through the air... You are being granted a more efficient method than mana extraction.

They Who Peer into the Magic Abyss has turned into Ultimate Sorcery.

"Title: Keeper of the Book of Eibon" has turned into "Title: Book of Eibon Codebreaker."

You have unlocked new abilities from the Book of Eibon, the ancient grimoire.

I've been holding the book open, and its pages begin to flutter out of the binding. They circle me, return to the book, and close again.

That seems to be the end of the cutscene, since I can move my body again. It's the data that's most important in all this, so I need to look over my new title, skill, and equipment.

The Book of Eibon's modifiers have all been upgraded to "maximum," although I'm sure those still come with limitations.

Mythical Language Scholar:

A commemorative title bestowed to those who master a forgotten language once spoken on the surface world.

Book of Eibon Codebreaker:

You have fully deciphered the ancient grimoire. The Book of Eibon will now activate its true power.

Ultimate Sorcery

You have deciphered the ancient grimoire full of forbidden knowledge.

You now know a more primitive form of magic—a way to handle sorcery more efficiently.

Your maximum MP and MP recovery rate have been upgraded to “great” modifiers.

All spells will be cast based on your Intelligence and Spirit stats.

The equipment and titles seem fine, but that skill... An Intelligence and Spirit combination seems extremely overpowered, although it's still too early to know for sure. I want the devs to share what mathematical formula they're using. What percentage of Intelligence and what percentage of Spirit affect my spells? The in-game description is nothing more than flavor text.

It seems fantastic, but that might not actually be the case.

For now, I'll go see Lana at the training grounds. I don't know how this skill will affect my range, but they'll have targets I can practice on there.

“Oh? Good day, madame.”

“Good day, Lana. I'd like to borrow a target.”

“Go ahead and use that one over there.”

I walk toward the one she pointed at, stand in front of it, and start testing things out before the event begins.

It's called Ultimate Sorcery, but it allows spells based on mythical languages

to be used, and spells cast in a mythical language are called sorcery.

Do I have to memorize these? Should I write them down and keep them to the side where I can glance at them? It looks like there're options for it in the menu. I'll go ahead and turn the assistance function on.

"Mea Persepho Arte."

I see. This activates Dark Arrow. The first word specifies your target, the second specifies the element, and the third specifies its shape, so the chanted spell changes based on your words. Reciting the words rapidly doesn't change anything, since chant speed is a game mechanic that depends on your other stats.

In fact, this grants me less freedom than I imagined. The third word is already decided to some extent by the time you finish the first one. Plus, the first word "Mea" is used for anything that involves bolts, arrows, lances, or shots, so that makes things simpler.

What I can see is that using spells while Ultimate Sorcery is active reduces their power. Damn you, devs. Now I'm certain that Spirit is the bigger modifier at play here. My Intelligence is higher than my Spirit, so this actually makes me weaker in the end. I do love the increase in MP and the MP restoration speed, but the reduction in power is going to be a big problem.

I ask a nearby spirit body character to tell me about sorcery.

Basically, instead of using only your own magical energy to cast a spell, sorcery involves you capturing what they refer to as the "base substance" that makes up that magical energy and lets you use it as is. Theoretically, this should increase my magic's power and efficiency.

This is a variation of the Meditation art, allowing you to draw in mana from your surroundings to increase your MP recovery rate. It sounds simple enough, but the concept of gathering external energy makes it nothing more than an armchair theory, to be frank.

"The prime minister said that the outer ones use sorcery, a fundamentally different type of spellcraft than what we use."

Now that I think about it, Lovecraft also used the word “sorcery” instead of “magic.” Perhaps that’s what the game is drawing from.

Putting that aside, the gist is that I use less MP and gain an increase in power. The downside is that I have to activate sorcery using a mythical language, which I’ll probably have to memorize.

It’s possible that I’ll still reach a point where I can cast spells without chanting at all, but it seems questionable that a system based on mythical languages would ever get rid of that part. I’ll just have to cross that bridge when I get to it.

To sum it all up, the most unique trait of Ultimate Sorcery is that it allows you to use sorcery, which results in a decrease in MP consumption and increase in power. My options are as follows:

I ignore Ultimate Sorcery and use magic. This is the same as what I’ve already been doing.

I activate Ultimate Sorcery and use magic. This would make my spells less powerful.

I activate Ultimate Sorcery and use sorcery. I would maintain roughly the same level of power as I already have.

Ultimate Sorcery says that it’s calculated based on Spirit and Intelligence, but if I have 25 percent Intelligence and 100 percent Spirit, that would be a huge decrease in spell power. Until now, it’s been based entirely on 100 percent Intelligence.

To be frank, Spirit (100 percent) + Intelligence (100 percent) is unthinkable. A skill could hardly be more broken. I’m certain that the developers would never allow that. It would ruin the game’s balance.

I try removing the accessories that raise my Intelligence and Spirit, only to see that lowering my Spirit causes a clear loss in spell strength, while lower Intelligence only differs slightly from the norm.

I think Spirit modifiers will be much more important to me from here on out.

Hmm...the Book of Eibon is an artifact from the Cthulhu Mythos. The Cthulhu

TTRPG relies on Spirit to use sorcery, not Intelligence.

If I become an outer one in my next evolution, my base Spirit stats should rise, not my Intelligence. At least, I assume they will. I should probably search for Spirit-boosting accessories to wear next, even though I only just purchased a whole batch of accessories.

For now, I'll head over to the event's special playing field.

My current problem is that Space Recognition Expansion isn't quite where I want it to be. But I'm sure the playing field will be full of people, so I can work on leveling it up while I wait.

I teleport to the playing field from the mini-statue at my villa.

Wow, it's so crowded! Underpopulation is the greatest foe of any MMO, so I'm glad to see so many people here. This should help me level my skill.

The playing field appears to be a massive schoolyard. That makes sense, since this is a sports festival. I actually like that they went with that theme.

"I'll say it again, since we're about to start—you can read the competition descriptions from the UI, or you can listen to the explanations given before we begin!"

"You can teleport to the event from your UI once the games start, or you can walk there directly using your mini-map."

That sounds like Mr. Yatsuzuka and Ms. Mitake. They're the usual GMs who show up at these things. They must be in charge of events specifically.

"Oh, hey there, Princess. You showed up late to this one."

"Good day, Mr. Cecil. I had some things I wanted to take care of before the event."

"Tieing up loose ends, were you? What competitions are you going to join, Princess?"

"The two hunts and the Free-For-All."

"Is that right?"

“You’ve gotta be kidding me! It’s too late to change now!”

“So you’re finally going to participate in PvP?” Mr. Cecil asks me.

“That’s correct. The other games probably depend on your Agility stat, so it feels like the Free-For-All is the only place where I can use my abilities.”

“Please don’t end up in the princess’s match... Please don’t end up in the princess’s match...”

“The three people remaining at the end get to move on, right? I don’t really want to fight you if I don’t have to,” he says.

“I’ll be evolving soon either way, so I’d like to display my maximum power while I can. May we both do our best.”

“S-sure. I’ll just pray that we don’t cross paths.”

“Eeeeeek!”

The people around us sure are noisy.

The event is just about to begin. I spent so long preparing that I almost didn’t get here before it started.

“It’s time for the third official event! Let’s see those teams!” Mr. Yatsuzuka cheers.

“Check and see what color you’ve been given, everyone. Players with the same color as you are your teammates, so be sure to remember that during the competitions,” Ms. Mitake informs us.

The colors look to be RGB—red, green, and blue. The three teams each have tens of thousands of players on them.

I’ve ended up on the red team.

“Oh, we’re on the same team, Princess,” Mr. Cecil says. “I was sure we’d end up separated, but I guess that’s less likely when there’re only three teams.”

“Are you going to play as a solo competitor in this one, Mr. Cecil?”

“Yep, I’m flying solo this time. I’ll be competing in the two hunts, Magic Volleyball, Free-For-All, and Conquest.”

“So we’re both participating in the hunts and Free-For-All... Of course, we might end up on different battlefields.”

“All that matters is aiming for first place in the end. I doubt we’ll play much differently either way.”

“That’s true.”

Management suddenly calls for Mr. Cecil in the middle of our chat.

“We don’t always want the princess to be the star. Cecil, leader of the Knights of Dawn! Lead us in an oath of fair play!”

“What the hell? This is the first I’m hearing of this...”

“It’s the first we’ve said of it!”

“For real? Let me see a template.”

“One moment, please... Here you go.”

“Hmm...”

The oath of fair play template is displayed in the air. It’s basically a cheat sheet for him.

I decide to give Mr. Cecil a bit of advice.

“Mr. Cecil.”

“Yeah?”

“I think you should swear the oath to Sigdrifa. She’s the goddess of fire, wind, war, and victory.”

“I see. I like the sound of that.”

“Let’s hear it already!” Management cheers.

With a reluctant smile, Mr. Cecil walks toward the stage with a microphone that’s just appeared.

“Fine, I’ll start this thing. I’m sure you’re recording me, right?”

“Sure are!”

“Thus, we make a pledge as adventurers! We shall cast aside sportsmanship

and crush our enemies in accordance with the rules handed down from Management! We make this vow to Sigdrifa, goddess of war and victory!”

“Why’d you have to make it so scary?!”

“The third official event, Fantasy Sports Festival, commences now!”

“Hyah ha!”

“It’s starting right now, so get your butts to the venue!”

“Right!”

It looks like you can spectate any of the games from the UI. I could also kill time by taking a stroll around the stalls that the production group have set up. I believe the first event is Target Shooting.

However, I’ll be working on leveling Space Recognition Expansion until I can “see” a radius of one hundred meters.

Official BBS 2

[The sports festival] Fantasy Sports Festival [is like a party]

1. Management

This is a thread to post about the third official event.

Please use this as a comprehensive place to chat about the sports festival.

243. Student on the Sidelines

Students on the Sidelines...

244. Student on the Sidelines

Welcome to the National Academy of R'lyeh!

245. Student on the Sidelines

Nooooo!

246. Student on the Sidelines

Wait, why “national?” That sounds like a really crazy country...

247. Student on the Sidelines

Why not make it a private, nameless academy?

248. Student on the Sidelines

Because anything nameless in the Lovecraftian universe sounds really scary.

249. Student on the Sidelines

Do they use R'lyeh editions for textbooks or nameless ritual texts...?

250. Student on the Sidelines

The school crest is the Elder Sign!

251. Student on the Sidelines

Why?!

252. Student on the Sidelines

Wouldn't class be canceled if any Outer Gods showed up?

253. Student on the Sidelines

Well...I guess so?

254. Student on the Sidelines

I prefer the pronunciation "K-Lütl-Lütl."

255. Student on the Sidelines

Same.

256. Student on the Sidelines

Would class be canceled due to overwhelming madness? Or overwhelming

joy?

257. Student on the Sidelines

To be honest, I think it might be the latter.

1234. Student on the Sidelines

[Breaking] The princess is joining the Free-For-All [Tragic]

1235. Student on the Sidelines

You’ve gotta be kidding me.

1236. Student on the Sidelines

Ah, I’ll be playing Conquest.

1237. Student on the Sidelines

Noooo, I already picked Free-For-All!

1238. Student on the Sidelines

Please don’t put me in her round, please don’t put me in her round...

1239. Student on the Sidelines

She’ll tear up anyone unfortunate enough to wander into her sight.

1240. Student on the Sidelines

Why did you even tell us that?! Explain yourself!

1241. Student on the Sidelines

Is the princess strong?

1242. Student on the Sidelines

Are you new here? Actually, I guess there are a lot more newbies here lately.

1243. Student on the Sidelines

That’s true.

1244. Student on the Sidelines

You can do it, everyone!

1245. Student on the Sidelines

You can do it! You can do it! Put a little power to it!

1246. Student on the Sidelines

Calm down!

1247. Student on the Sidelines

She’s called “Princess” because it’s part of her race. She’s not roleplaying as a princess or anything.

1248. Student on the Sidelines

I’m sure that will be obvious once we see her in the Free-For-All...

1249. Student on the Sidelines

I wonder what other games she'll join.

1250. Student on the Sidelines

Who knows?

1251. Student on the Sidelines

She said she'd be in the two hunts and the Free-For-All.

1252. Student on the Sidelines

Are you serious...?

1253. Student on the Sidelines

Lmao, the oath of fair play is really scary.

1254. Student on the Sidelines

I hear no lies, though.

1255. Student on the Sidelines

I guess you *do* have to follow Management's rules.

Chapter 4:

Third Official Event: Magical Volleyball

MY SKILL LEVEL ACTUALLY INCREASED faster than I expected. I can see past a hundred meters now. Since that was the bare minimum I wanted, I'll spectate the competition now as I continue leveling it up.

At the moment, they're doing Magical Volleyball. The court is smaller than a normal field of play. The net in the center is lower to the ground too, although it looks taller than a tennis net.

Hitting the ball with a spell sends it upward, then you spike it. The other side angles their weapons or shields to receive the spiked balls, while they're also battling on the ground. There's quite a lot going on.

The spikers are close-range attackers. Tanks focus on blocking, while off-tanks work on receiving the spiked balls, since they can move a bit faster. Then magic users hit those balls again with spells, while the melee attackers use arts to stop them. That appears to be the basic gist of things. Tanks block their opponents' spikes and defend against direct attacks from the enemies.

The matches get so brutal that it can be difficult to watch.

It seems natural to aim at the magic users doing the spiking... Yikes, one of them went flying! He went into a tailspin and hit the ground headfirst. Rest in peace.

Oh, Ms. Mead is playing on a different court. And she's using her bow?

She steps back, almost outside the court itself, then holds up her bow. But...

When the ball comes their way, Ms. Mead's team hits it with a spell, sending it flying way up in the air.

"Meteor Shoot."

"Huh? Ooof!"

"She's not human..."

“Well done, Big Sister Mead!”

I-I see... She used her single-shot, high-powered bow art “Meteor Shoot” at the ball as it came back down from the sky, sending it slamming back to their opponent’s court. She doesn’t seem very human to me either right now. She even shot her art at a diagonal angle, making it almost impossible to hit the ball when it came back down.

The poor person struck by it doesn’t tailspin this time. He just gets blown straight into the air.

It’s funny to see that Ms. Mead’s team is just as shocked. She stretches her arm up in the air, looking the very picture of a cool big-sister type character.

Oh, Rina’s playing over here too.

She jumps up when a ball comes her way, raises her halberd with one hand, spins around to gain centrifugal force, and after two rotations, she hits the ball with one of her arts.

“Bore through, Demon Cutter!”

“Argh!”

I know she’s my sister, but is she not human either? I suppose she’s always been the athletic type. Once again, she spins twice to gain centrifugal force, making sure not to hit the ball during this part.

It looks like she landed on her feet. I feel like any athlete would be envious of her skills, though of course she’s only able to do this thanks to her in-game stats.

But, Rina, where did you even get those gym shorts? They look great on you, but this is a fantasy game.

By the way, once she hit the ball, it went boring into the receiver themselves, drilling them into the ground. May they rest in peace.

“Spikes from top-tier first-wavers are insane!”

“Tanks! Hang in there!”

Oh, Tomo and Sugu are playing volleyball as well. They’re on opposing teams,

though.

“Die!”

“I’m not goin’ down without a fight! And stop targeting me!”

“Why shouldn’t I take out the magic user first?!”

I suppose I would aim for Tomo too. He’s a first-waver who only uses spells, so you can assume that he’ll be in charge of the team’s firepower. Sugu knows that since they’re usually in parties together.



“Behold my caltrops!”

“Hey! What the hell?!”

And it looks like Mr. Musasabi and his party members are playing on that court over there. They’re scattering caltrops on the opponent’s side. That’s surprisingly vicious.

“You ninjas play dirty!”

“Victory above all else!”

I can tell that group is enjoying themselves.

“H-hey, hang on. Golems are really overpowered in this competition, no?”

Golems are just under three meters tall and as wide as two adult men on their sides together. They’re even heavier than giants.

“Can we defeat the golem before it takes out our entire team?”

“When we finish this battle, I think I’ll go home and visit my family.”

“Hey, don’t say that! You’ll jinx it!”

Hmph. Volleyball looks like it would have been a lot of fun.

Official BBS 3

[The sports festival] Fantasy Sports Festival [is like a party]

1. Management

This is a thread to post about the third official event.

Please use this as a comprehensive place to chat about the sports festival.

2412. Student on the Sidelines

Volleyball...looks fun...

2413. Student on the Sidelines

Yep. Target Shooting reminded me how incredible Big Sister Mead's accuracy is.

2414. Student on the Sidelines

I know, right? I thought she was an AI for a second.

2415. Student on the Sidelines

That elf lady was nuts! So that's Ms. Mead?

2416. Student on the Sidelines

She's just so cool.

2417. Student on the Sidelines

By the way, how about that little sister wearing gym shorts? Nice...

2418. Student on the Sidelines

Oh yeah, that was great.

2419. Student on the Sidelines

Uh-huh. I loved that.

2420. Student on the Sidelines

A gentleman knows when to stop talking.

2421. Student on the Sidelines

Lmao.

2422. Student on the Sidelines

I spat out my food! Gimme a break!

2423. Student on the Sidelines

I choked.

Chapter 5:

Third Official Event: Hunting Contest

“N_{EXT UP IS} the hunting competition!” Mr. Yatsuzuka announces.

“We will teleport you to a special playing field, so if you’ve already entered, please be sure to check your notifications,” says Ms. Mitake.

Oh, this is one I entered. I check the notification and teleport to the playing field.

Huh? Is this a prison? It’s made of stone, and I can see lots of iron cages. I’ll just continue down this path for now, since there’s no other way to go. Soon, I see some other players.

There’s some sort of information desk in front of a big door up ahead. A GM is seated there.

“Welcome, challengers! Once you’ve all gathered, I’ll be explaining the rules.”

It looks like there’s another large gate here. After a bit more time, we receive a description of this competition.

Here at this desk, we’ll be drawing random cards. Then we walk through the big door into a coliseum. Five seconds later, the enemy designated by our random cards will spawn in the coliseum.

Our assigned enemies will show a marker on them. We must kill or capture the enemy and make it back to the starting area within the time limit. If we kill the enemy with ranged attacks, we have to touch its body before heading back to the starting area. The timer stops when we’ve touched the door to the coliseum.

The enemies on the cards are completely random. And there are some enemies that will be nearly impossible to beat, though they’re not assigned very often. If the enemy is a higher level than you, all you have to do is survive until time is up.

Even though dying disqualifies you from the competition, you still receive EXP based on how long you manage to stay alive. That means that even if you fail to defeat a higher-level enemy within the given time, just surviving until the end means you walk away with an EXP reward. You'll be granted victory and return bonuses if you manage to defeat the enemy and make it back to the door. The conditions you're playing under might change how EXP is calculated, so in the end, you'll be fine as long as you do your best.

Players can't damage each other, but they're allowed to get the monsters to attack players. Enemies can also inflict damage on each other.

"That's about it. Any questions?"

"Yes, I have one," I respond to the GM.

"Go ahead, Princess."

"What level are the most powerful enemies we might face?"

"It goes all the way up to max level."

"C'mon, give us a break!"

"Um, does that refer to anyone 'outer'...?"

"It's not impossible," says the GM.

"Ah, I see..."

"Still, the chances are less than a hundredth of a percent or so."

"But when there's so many people playing..."

"Yep, sounds like a good time. I hope someone pulls at least one of 'em. C'mon, it's a party! Ah ha ha! Management's all looking forward to watching you guys battle!"

"D-damn these devs..."

The thought of someone *other* than me drawing an outer one is much scarier. Having a marker over the enemy's head means you know where that terrifying being is at all times.

Hmm...if the outer ones are potential enemies, then doesn't that mean the residents of the Nether could make an appearance too? I suppose I'll find out

once we start.

“Any other questions?”

“Yes. Is the time limit for individuals or for all players?”

“You have your own individual time limit. Once someone completes the battle or gives up, more players will be added to the arena.”

“Ah, understood.”

That means that the coliseum can only fit a certain number of players at once.

“When a player throws in the towel, what happens to the enemy they’re fighting?”

“It turns into the next player’s enemy.”

“When the enemies spawn, who do they target?”

“They’re invulnerable and immobile for five seconds after they appear, then they’ll target the player who drew their card.”

So we get five seconds to take in the situation before the enemies come after us. I’ll use that time to take note of our respective positions and maybe even prepare my spells. Of course, it all comes down to luck. I might draw an enemy whose attribute I don’t know.

“All right, let’s get started! Draw your card of destiny, challengers, and touch this door to begin!”

The line of players take turns moving forward, drawing cards, and touching the door. I draw a card too, but I can’t see what’s on it yet. I touch the door to teleport into the arena.

“It’s a lot smaller than I expected!”

“This isn’t going to be any fun if a giant enemy shows up.”

I see. It’s the Colosseo. The starting area must have been where they kept the prisoner gladiators.

PK—player killing—is impossible, but enemy-induced PK is allowed. I remember the GM saying that enemies can damage each other too.

Just like in a normal sports festival, we're competing in teams. I hope my opposing teams die off quickly. In other words, the best strategy is to have others inflict damage against your enemy, while you try to make your enemy's attacks hit the other players.

The playing field is smaller than I expected, so it should be easy to kite enemies around, as well as make the enemies fight each other to lower their health. Of course, that will help the other players too, but that's not a problem as long as you're helping players on your own team.

Hmm, this is a complicated game. I feel like sports festivals don't usually require so much thought. Frankly, they're just about winning or losing and not much more.

As I'm thinking about this, enemies start to spawn in the center of the coliseum.

"I barely recognize any of those things!"

Me neither. Some of them are even flying. In fact, why is there a fish swimming through the air? Is that a special variant, or is it always like that? Either way, I'll unsheathe my athame for now.

It looks like my 3D mental map doesn't display my prey. I'll have to open my eyes and look for it.

"Oh, living ar—whoa!"

I just barely deflected the projectile it shot at me. It looks like my enemy is a type of armor.

Support Turret MK. II:

A multi-legged support machine with equipment specializing in backup fire.

Among the support turrets built for interference, this model places emphasis on firepower.

Defined by the two massive cannons on its back, this unit can fire with both range and power.

Attribute: —

Weakness: —

Resistance: —

Genus: Living armor

Family: Quadruped Status: Normal

Facing an enemy that fights with long-ranged attacks makes things convenient, but the problem is that its firing range is farther than I can see with my 3D mental map. I'll have to move within range.

I feel like I should just deflect its shots toward the opposing teams... Well, I'll work on parrying as I move closer for now.

"I can't do long-range attacks at all!" yells a player.

"Hey! Stay the hell away from me!" another player yells back at him.

"Who the hell pulled *that* card?!"

"It's soooo gross!"

I wonder what they're talking about. I can't see it from here, so I just keep deflecting the magical energy being shot at me. This living armor appears to fire with magic bullets, not physical ones.

It resembles a spider with its multiple legs, a round torso on top, and two big cannons facing me at the very top of its body.

It appears to be holding guns with the arms sprouting from its torso too, but I'd imagine I must be too far away to hit anything with those, since they're not moving at all.

I wonder if it will run out of energy soon, like how a real turret would run out of ammunition. I don't see any cartridges being expelled, and it will be quite a nuisance if it's using mana to shoot. If those moon-beasts made this thing too, I doubt it will ever run out of ammo.

The two cannons on the top can't fire very rapidly. I wonder if the Support Turret's multiple legs are meant to counteract recoil. The real problem here is

going to be the two guns its arms are carrying, especially if they're machine guns. I want to believe that's not likely, however.

Anyone who uses a bow would be very sad to see assault rifles brought out here.

"Hyah ha! Get outta the way!"

"Knock it off, you!"

"Watch out!"

It's turning into a real brawl in here.

Once I'm a hundred meters away from the Support Turret, it turns the guns toward me. I switch from my eyes to my mental map and start using Reflection instead of Parry.

Surviving is my priority over focusing on anything complex. I'll be lucky to defeat this thing at all. Level 56 is pretty high, so merely making it out alive would be a feat.

I would probably be able to survive my ten-minute time limit if the Support Turret was all I had to think about, but I'm also worried about all the players around me.

The two guns it carries seem to be semi-automatic. I'm glad they're not fully automatic, but they do shoot much faster than its cannons on top. Those shoot at the same rate as bolt-action rifles. It alternates between the guns in its arms and its cannons.

I reflect the bullets as best as I can. Its efficiency should drop if I manage to destroy any of the gun portions.

The cannons look to have a range of 120 meters, while the guns are about a hundred meters, as far as I can tell. Magic guns have quite a long range, though it's pretty clear that they lose power the further the bullets travel.

That loss of power means I can destroy shots by parrying. Reflecting shots is treated as creating a new attack altogether, so the bullets regain their full health. How strange! Of course, without such a process, my counterattacks would never land.

“Whoa! Some sort of pretty lady spawned!”

“Huh? You’re right!”

A pretty lady? If she “spawned,” that must mean she’s an enemy.

“Oh my! What a splendid battle you have here.”

Hm? I recognize that voice... Ah! That’s the last person I expected to see. Who invited Lana to the party?

“She speaks... Heeey! Who the hell summoned this chick?!”

“That would be me!”

“Damn it! Hurry up and die already!”

If the person who drew the enemy’s card dies, their enemy is replaced with that of the next person. Lana is at max level, after all. They must have caught a glimpse of that by using Identify.

It seems like enemies immediately target the person who summoned them, but I wonder if that’s the same for someone like Lana, who has humanlike AI. I can’t picture her following the game’s mechanics mindlessly.

“I see. I think I’ll put up a good fight, doing my best not to kill the one who summoned me,” Lana says.

“This has to be a joke!”

“Ahh, the air up here in the living world is simply delicious.”

“The ‘living world’?!”

Well, sure. She’s a resident of the Nether. I guess you could call this the living world in comparison.

Now that Lana’s an enemy combatant, it seems I can use Inspect on her.

Svetlana Granin Einherjar:

Duchess Granin, also known as the Sword Princess, was a beloved hero to the people of the Dinait Empire.

She may be a duchess, but Svetlana is also a warrior who fought and

made it back from the front lines during a massive stampede.

She now takes a form from her youth when her performance as the Sword Princess was at its peak.

Attribute: Holy

Weakness: —

Resistance: Physical

Genus: Einherjar

Family: Spirit body

Status: Normal

Huh. I never knew Lana was a duchess.

However, this Turret isn't running out of ammo like I expected. It's also hard to damage, and its high level tells me this might take a while. Should I try reflecting a shot at Lana, or should I try not to catch her attention at all? I certainly hope she would destroy this Turret for me.

"Oh dear! Hup!"

A very large enemy charges at her, and she destroys it with one hit.

I see a player who seems very happy to have Lana's help, but when they try to sneak over and touch the enemy's body, Lana lands a kick on the player and sends them slamming into the wall.

"You want to claim my prey? Over my dead body."

"This competition is impossible!"

...I think I'll avoid Lana as much as possible.

I continue to reflect shots back at the Turret as I inch closer to it, since I won't be able to land any spells until I'm within range.

"Look at that lady's stances. Don't they remind you of the princess?"

Someone here sure is sharp. Lana uses different stances, but I'm surprised they recognized them at all. I don't know what kind Lana is using, but I'm using

Mirror Style.

I finally get within range of the Turret.

“Lia Persepho Oura.”

Since the turret is essentially in a fixed position, I hit it with Nox Pillar...or try to, at least. It dodges my attack.

Oh, so it *can* move. What a tricky little turret.

“Why, if it isn’t Madame!” Lana exclaims as she finally catches sight of me.
“Good day to you.”

“So you found me, did you? I’m currently battling a much stronger opponent than me, so I’d appreciate it if you could leave me be.”

“I wouldn’t be so rude as to steal someone else’s prey. I see you’re dealing with a long-range type of living armor. What a perfect opponent for you, Madame.”

“Feel free to defeat it for me, if you’d like.”

“No. I’d rather see what you’re capable of.”

“I thought you might say that...”

I suppose I don’t usually get the opportunity to show Lana how I fight in an actual battle. Very well. I’m just fortunate that she didn’t decide to come kill me!

My Reflection accuracy drops a lot when I’m talking while fighting. I want to be sure not to attract attention from any other enemies.

“Zex Ra’sse Persepho Ilda.”

Hexispell causes six Dark Lances to appear in a half circle around me, their power amplified by Overspell. Two sit at my shoulder height, two are at the height of my head, and the last two sit at the very top.

My athame is busy reflecting shots, but I’ve been using the Book of Eibon for spells ever since I acquired it, so I won’t have any problem there. I return the Turret’s projectiles along with my spells, resulting in pretty significant DPS.

“I see. You’re successfully reflecting with Mirror Style about 60 percent of the

time. That's more than enough. Now if you switched to Water's Surface Style and improved even further... Heh heh heh!"

It sounds like Lana is enjoying the show.

I see another enemy is trying to attack my living armor. I just hope it manages to do a bit of damage.

I parry the occasional stray shot that comes from around me, though I'm never sure where they end up.

I feel like I'm leveling up Space Recognition Expansion, Danger Sense, and Instinct quite a lot. I'm really excited to see how high they've grown once this battle is over. Wild Intuition and Law of the Jungle should be leveled up by then as well.

"Oof!"

"Madame, did you have something else on your mind just now?"

I really need to concentrate on the fight. That hit took quite a bit of my HP.

"Zex Dey Persepho Ask."

I recover with Dark Heal, which is amplified by Overspell.

"Hyah ha! Time to cleanse the filth!"

Oh, it's Mr. Mohawk.

"Outsiders are so amusing," Lana remarks.

"Don't get the wrong impression. That man is one of a kind," I inform her.

"Is that so?"

Why does she sound so disappointed...? Oops, I almost got hit again.

I should be able to finish off the Turret soon. I just hope nothing unexpected happens... Ah! Did I just jinx it?

Hello there, dark, iridescent sphere! Which one of you players summoned this one here? I can just imagine how hard the devs must be laughing right now.

"Tekeli-li!"

"Huh?"

“Tekeli-li! Tekeli-li!”

“No way!”

“Time for a sanity check!”

“I’m gonna have nightmares tonight!”

...I’m going to finish off this Turret and get out of here.

That thing may not be as big as a dragon, but five meters is still very big inside this coliseum.

The main problem is that I have no idea how a Shoggoth fights. All I remember from the original story is that they lean on things. I’m sure I’d be killed as soon as I get its attention, so I’m going to need to be very careful here.

“An outer one? I’d certainly like to try fighting it.”

“Have you lost your mind, Lana?”

“But if I let this opportunity slip, I may never get the chance to fight a fellow servant of the gods.”

“Please wait until after I’ve defeated my living armor, as you should be able to speak to it properly. It’s actually sort of a cute creature. Just recently, it shook my hand, although I’m not sure this is the same one now that I think about it.”

“That seems like a crucial thing to know.”

“How can I tell them apart just based on appearances?”

“Well...”

Lana breaks eye contact and looks away from me.

I wonder if I’ll be able to tell them apart if I become an outer one too.

“I’ve seen what you’re capable of, Madame. You have a time limit, no? Do allow me to step in.”

“Oh, by all means.”

Lana moves behind the living armor I’ve been fighting and sends it flying over my head. The Turret collapses into a pile of scrap metal. Rest in peace...

I’ll quickly grab a piece and head over to touch the door. Lana aimed the

Turret so it would land next to the door, making it easier for me to leave quickly.

I really don't want to be around for the Shoggoth fight after this. I'll end up dead merely from the collateral. I'd much prefer to watch from a safe distance!

"Outer one," Lana addresses the Shoggoth. "May I have a moment to speak with you?"

"Teke?"

"I am Svetlana Granin Einherjar, and I command the army of the Nether. I would be honored to spar with you."

"Tekeli-li!"

"It sounds like it agreed to fight you," I say to Lana. "I'll be heading back now, so I'll see you again in the Nether."

"You understand this creature, Madame?"

"Not exactly. I just sense what it's trying to say."

"Is that so...?"

"Tekli-li!"

I wave at the Shoggoth, who is waving its tentacles at me, before I touch the door. It really *must* be the one I met before unless they're all just naturally friendly.

Shoggoth Lords are supposed to be the intelligent kind of Shoggoth, with ordinary Shoggoths not being particularly smart. That must be why they act a bit like children.

All right, time to make my escape before I witness hell on earth.

Once I'm out, I watch the ongoing battle through a video. Rina watches next to me.

"It's too much!"

"I'm so scared!"

"Yamamotoooooo!"

“I don’t wanna go over there!”

I understand how the players feel, but they’ll have to go over there if they want it to go away. Well, if they’re lucky, maybe Lana and the Shoggoth will defeat each other. Of course, we all know what happens if they’re unlucky.

The developers are pounding their desk as they howl with laughter. The players who have already finished the competition, or who never entered at all, are cracking up too. Either that or they’re trembling at the sight of the Shoggoth. They must have failed their sanity checks.

“I see...” I mutter. “Maybe you have to have the right compatibility with a Shoggoth. They sure are incredible. Or is it all about how your base stats differ from theirs? I should keep a close watch on Lana.”

“You sure are calm, Sis,” says Rina.

“Well, I’ve seen a Shoggoth before. By the way, why are you wearing gym clothes?” I ask Rina.

“Mr. Dentelle gave them to me.”

“Him again, huh? I bet they’re helpful in competitions.”

“Yep!”

Even if they look like gym clothes, I suppose the fabric can affect player stats, since this is a video game. That makes sense to me. In fact, she basically received high-performance equipment for free—short shorts, at that.

Ah, Lana just did a curtsy before vanishing. She looked disappointed. The person who summoned her must have died. But the Shoggoth is still in there...

Out of nowhere, it stretches out its tentacles and tears apart the person who summoned it. The creature must have been satisfied by its battle with Lana. It disappears once the next player enters the arena.

Finally, peace is restored, although who knows what future awaits the remaining players in there.

It looks like I really did walk away with a wonderful amount of EXP.

I look forward to the next three competitions.

Official BBS 4

[The sports festival] Fantasy Sports Festival [is like a party]

1. Management

This is a thread to post about the third official event.

Please use this as a comprehensive place to chat about the sports festival.

3698. Student on the Sidelines

Hyah ha! Time to hunt!

3699. Student on the Sidelines

I thought I'd be the hunter, not the prey!

3700. Student on the Sidelines

Srsly...?

3701. Student on the Sidelines

Ha ha ha ha! Funny joke, dude.

3702. Student on the Sidelines

“The enemies are random. Though you have a low chance of drawing them, you may even face enemies that are clearly unbeatable.”

Q: What level are those unbeatable enemies at?

A: Max level.

3703. Student on the Sidelines

Tell me you’re kidding!

3704. Student on the Sidelines

That was the conversation between Management and the princess.

3705. Student on the Sidelines

Managemeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeennnt!

3706. Student on the Sidelines

Yamamotooooooooooo!

3707. Student on the Sidelines

Shhh! Don’t say his name!

3708. Higher-up

You rang?

3709. Student on the Sidelines

Oof, there he is.

3710. Student on the Sidelines

He really showed up.

3711. Student on the Sidelines

He's light on his feet.

3712. Higher-up

They have really low spawn rates, so stop worrying about it!

3713. Student on the Sidelines

But there're so many people playing! It's impossible not to worry!

3714. Higher-up

I hope we get at least one of the scary ones!

3715. Student on the Sidelines

Do you already know what it'll be?

3716. Higher-up

Nope, that's not fixed. You could even get a Magisa or a Sorciere!

3717. Student on the Sidelines

Huh? Real ones?

3718. Higher-up

You bet. They'll also remember the competition once they return from the event.

They see it like being guests at a festival held by outsiders and their foreign gods. Call it a summoning, or a waking dream, but you're allowed to kill them here without causing any problems. That is, if you *can* kill them, of course.

3719. Student on the Sidelines

So that means we can run into *anyone* in the game world?!

3720. Student on the Sidelines

I guess so, if they want to join. Can we even end up matched against high-level monsters?

3721. Higher-up

Of course, although I can't deny the possibility that they'll still be holding a grudge the next time you cross paths.

3722. Student on the Sidelines

Gimme a break!

3723. Student on the Sidelines

It sounds like it depends on the traits of each AI.

3724. Student on the Sidelines

I don't mind if I get a big guy, so long as it's not very smart.

3725. Student on the Sidelines

The crazed fighter types?

3726. Student on the Sidelines

Oh, it's the princess!

3727. Student on the Sidelines

Kyaaaah! Princess!

3728. Student on the Sidelines

Do you cheer with a girly shriek or a masculine roar?

3729. Student on the Sidelines

Remix.

3730. Student on the Sidelines

Does that mean both...?

3731. Student on the Sidelines

Of course, duh.

3732. Student on the Sidelines

Keep your eyes on her, newbies! Depending on which enemies show up, you might get to witness a real Jedi!

3733. Student on the Sidelines

How come I haven't seen any of these enemies before?

3734. Higher-up

Well, the only qualification we considered was an enemy's level bracket.

Everything that can be killed by a single person, at the proper level, was

included in the contest.

...With a few exceptions.

3735. Student on the Sidelines

The exceptions are what're scaring us!

3736. Higher-up

I'm really looking forward to it.

3737. Student on the Sidelines

I bet he's got a big grin on his face right now.

3738. Student on the Sidelines

You guys should watch the princess. What do you think?

3739. Student on the Sidelines

She's quite the Jedi, all right...

3740. Student on the Sidelines

Now I know what you guys meant by that.

3741. Student on the Sidelines

How can she even deflect stray bullets that come from the side?

3742. Student on the Sidelines

It's really strange.

3743. Student on the Sidelines

Whoa, who's this?

3744. Higher-up

Oh? I can hardly believe it, but it looks like a person was summoned. Rest in peace...

3745. Student on the Sidelines

Some lady just showed up!

3746. Student on the Sidelines

Uh, that lady is at max level...

3747. Student on the Sidelines

She really is. I loled at "Einherjar."

3748. Student on the Sidelines

Did Hideo show up?!

3749. Student on the Sidelines

The Sword Princess of Dinait! A duchess and a hero?!

3750. Student on the Sidelines

She knocked that thing out with one hit?!

3751. Student on the Sidelines

Nice kick!

3752. Student on the Sidelines

Ah, it looks like she knows the princess.

3753. Higher-up

Of course. She's a resident of the Nether.

3754. Student on the Sidelines

I see!

3755. Student on the Sidelines

It's Mohawk!

3756. Student on the Sidelines

Not the kind of guy you'd ever see OOC.

3757. Student on the Sidelines

You recognize him as soon as you lay eyes on him.

3758. Student on the Sidelines

He's strong too.

3759. Student on the Sidelines

Ah...?

3760. Student on the Sidelines

Wha...?

3761. Management

Wonderful! Fantastic! Excellent! Woo-hooooooooo!

3762. Student on the Sidelines

Calm down.

3763. Student on the Sidelines

Something crazy just showed up!

3764. Student on the Sidelines

“Crazy” in more ways than one!

3765. Student on the Sidelines

It’s so creepy!

3766. Student on the Sidelines

I’m gonna have nightmares.

3767. Student on the Sidelines

It's a Shoggoooooooooth!

3768. Student on the Sidelines

Tekeli-li!

3769. Student on the Sidelines

Tekeli-li!

3770. Student on the Sidelines

It's huuuuuge!

3771. Student on the Sidelines

It's groooooooss!

3772. Student on the Sidelines

So creepy. That's an outer one, all right. I love it. I want more.

3773. Student on the Sidelines

Hey, Management? Do outer ones have a filter applied to them like Undead?

3774. Management

They do. It should just look like a dark, iridescent sphere.

3775. Student on the Sidelines

I see. How simple.

3776. Student on the Sidelines

Omg! Two level 100 residents just started fighting, lmao.

3777. Student on the Sidelines

Everyone's gonna get wiped out.

3778. Student on the Sidelines

Is this a horror movie?

3779. Student on the Sidelines

Management is cracking up.

3780. Student on the Sidelines

All the developers are loving this.

3781. Student on the Sidelines

Well, it's fun to watch.

3782. Student on the Sidelines

Seeing a Shoggoth move is kind of making me emotional!

3783. Student on the Sidelines

How's your sanity doing, dude?

3784. Student on the Sidelines

I don't know if it's good or bad.

3785. Student on the Sidelines

That scene from hell ended when the Shoggoth tore up the person who summoned them.

3786. Student on the Sidelines

Seems like a fitting end to someone who summoned a mythical being.

Chapter 6:

Third Official Event: Panjan Roll

“ALL RIGHT, GUYS! Looks like you’re all in position! Here we go! Let’s see some Panjan rolling!”

Bang!

“Roll it, roll it!”

“Aaaaaah!”

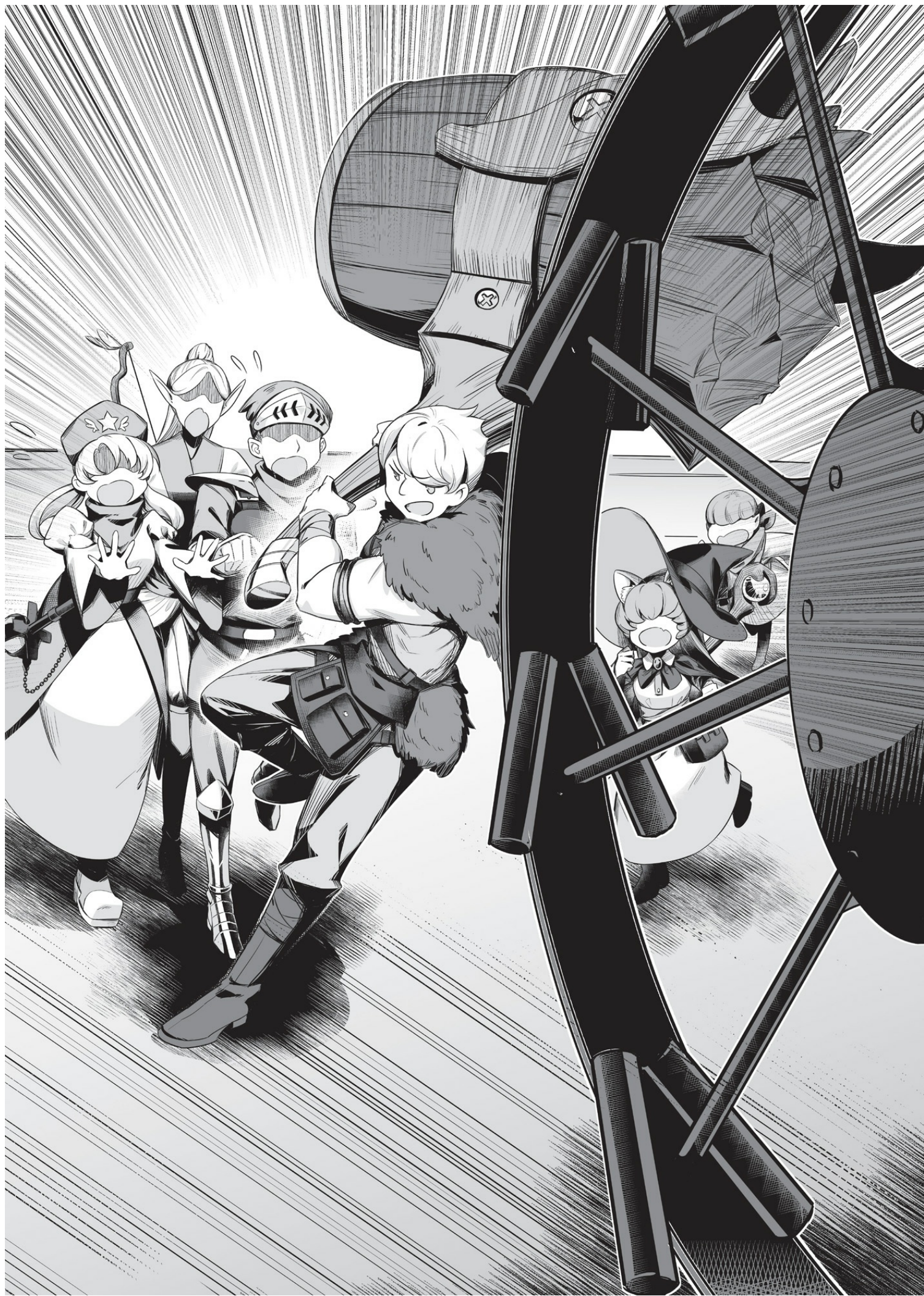
There’s a row of Panjandrums and parties of six in their respective positions. It’s all very surreal.

By the way, it’s played like panzer vor—an advancing of tanks. But since Panjans are being used in this event, it’s all about pushing the drum forward.

“What’re you all sittin’ around and waiting for?! Hit it with an art and send it flying!”

“What?! Hey, wait!”

The other members are unable to stop him in time. The player uses Heavy Mash, swinging his two-handed hammer with all his might, causing the Panjan to erupt.



It moved forward, all right...before exploding and scattering in all directions. Fiery shrapnel rains from above. The cart runs rampant, engulfed in flames.

The smarter players protect their own Panjans from the raining, fiery debris. Perhaps they planned this strategy beforehand. Anyone who doesn't think that far ahead ends up having their Panjans ignited by the shrapnel, causing them to explode around all the players. Once again, debris rains over the fiery carts.

It's a natural outcome.

"Damn, sucks to be them! Gyah ha ha ha!"

The spectators erupt with laughter.

"What idiot thought it was a good idea to smack a bomb?!"

"This idiot over here did!"

"Hey! I'm gonna kill you!"

"Anyone who got blown up is disqualified! You'll receive points and EXP depending on how far you managed to get!"

Naturally, it's dangerous at the starting line, where everyone is gathered so closely. But this event also includes dangers throughout the race. When one of the bombs explodes behind you, that team's flaming cart goes shooting at you from the impact of the blast.

Panjans can't come to a stop very quickly, as they're not equipped with any high-grade brakes. Enveloping the battlefield in terror, the Panjandrum rolls on and on without end.

Of course, when talking about a battlefield enveloped in terror, you'd generally be referring to your own teammates feeling that terror. However, by propelling a Panjandrum, you can just leave it to its own devices as it rolls on into the enemy base.

But sadly, as we all know, much like how bikes and cars don't drive in a straight line without someone manning the controls, these don't either. Especially without any paved roads.

Things aren't looking good for the players. You'd normally make progress by

pushing your cart forward at the front lines, but of course, that's not going to be possible for anyone. Their teammates would be trembling with fear until they reach enemy lines.

It's impossible to predict what direction the cart will roll in and impossible to know when it might explode. The prospect of charging that into another team at high speed must be terrifying.

However, it's incredibly fun to watch it being recreated in a video game.

The Panjandrum is a unique weapon made by stacking bombs on a round apparatus like a wheel with a propeller that rotates and sends it rolling forward.

This event is a competition to see who can roll their own Panjan, without a propeller attached, to the finish line. You can simply push it with your hands, but you can also use an art—a gentle one—to push the cart. But if you get unlucky, it will hit something and explode, or you might accidentally strike it too hard and get the same result.

“Ah, this is bad.”

“Aaaaaaaaah! Stay away from us!”

“Sorry, we can't stop it now.”

“Nooooooooo!”

“Gyaaah!”

I just watched a team grin, salute, and send their own Panjan into another team's Panjan.

How cruel. But that's perfect. I want to see more of it.

“Ah ha ha ha! Absolutely delightful. It's exactly what we expected you to do!”

The developers are starting to sound like villains. I wonder if they should reel it in a little.

After my many laughs at Panjan Roll, the Tug-of-War and Obstacle Course events were carried out next. There were many deaths during Tug-of-War, but you have to expect that sort of thing in a fantasy game. Those aquatic enemies can be pretty deadly.

Official BBS 5

[The sports festival] Fantasy Sports Festival [is like a party]

1. Management

This is a thread to post about the third official event.

Please use this as a comprehensive place to chat about the sports festival.

5427. Student on the Sidelines

Panjan heals the soul.

5428. Student on the Sidelines

Yep. It's nice and peaceful.

5429. Student on the Sidelines

Of course, the Panjan itself is a weapon...

5430. Student on the Sidelines

No, the Panjan is the Panjan.

5431. Student on the Sidelines

S-sure, let's go with that.

5432. Student on the Sidelines

Panjanpanjanpanjanpanjanpanjanpanjanpanjanpanjanpanjan.

5433. Student on the Sidelines

Can someone serve this guy some tea to calm him down?

5434. Student on the Sidelines

He’s losing it.

5435. Student on the Sidelines

It cracks me up how the Panjan has a mood of its own.

5436. Student on the Sidelines

Why is this so funny?

5437. Student on the Sidelines

The Panjan is a mysterious thing.

5438. Student on the Sidelines

It’s fun to observe everyone’s approach.

5439. Student on the Sidelines

It’s a Panjan, so you know you can look forward to seeing it explode.

5440. Student on the Sidelines

It wouldn’t be Panjan without an explosion or a runaway cart!

5441. Student on the Sidelines

Exactly!

5442. Management

Absolutely delightful.

5443. Student on the Sidelines

Lmao, they've turned into villains.

8461. Student on the Sidelines

How do you feel right now? How does it feel to reel in a fish and have it stab you?

8462. Student on the Sidelines

The fish stabs you, then goes straight back in the water.

8463. Student on the Sidelines

What a well-behaved fish.

8464. Student on the Sidelines

Are you sure that thing's a fish?

8465. Student on the Sidelines

It's better than having it drag you into the water with its tentacles.

8466. Student on the Sidelines

Are you sure you guys are fishing?

8467. Student on the Sidelines

From the fish's perspective, we're the bait.

8468. Student on the Sidelines

If you're fishing for them, then they're fishing for *you*...

8469. Student on the Sidelines

This has turned into a horror game. Thanks, but I'm out.

Chapter 7:

Third Official Event: Scavenger Hunt

“ALL RIGHT! This one’s a scavenger hunt but for people! The playing field is the entire venue this time!” Mr. Yatsuzuka announces.

“Whenever a player either runs out of time, completes the challenge, or dies, a new player will receive their first subject to hunt for. These are randomized and displayed on your UI. Please do your best, everyone,” adds Ms. Mitake.

“PvP will be activated for anyone who’s entered! Try to slow down the other teams while your team focuses on hunting! You’ve got this, guys! Ready, set, go!”

“Bring out two or more people who are very close friends. They must either spend more than 40 percent of play time together or be family members in real life.”

...Hang on. That’s really difficult!

Rina is on an enemy team. I’ll dismiss her as an option, since I’m sure she’d be happy to work against me. As for login time, I could probably count Mr. Skelly and Mr. Alf for that. I think I can overpower Mr. Skelly, since he only uses Dark magic. Mr. Alf, on the other hand, I can scorch with Holy Magic.

However, I have another two people in mind that I’d rather target. They’re IRL family, and I’m certain they play together all the time! I also know that they’re both lower level than me.

The problem is how to find them. I think it’s time for Unit One to make his debut. I summon him as a wyvern and take to the skies. Meanwhile, a wolf version of Unit Two searches the ground.

It looks like Unit One found them. Flying these things on autopilot makes it much easier.

I land in front of Mr. Ame and Ms. Trine.

“Good day, you two. Please come with me.”

“Where to?!” they cry out together.

“To the finish line, of course. I pulled a surprisingly brutal card. I have to find two people who spend more than 40 percent of in-game time together or who are family in real life.”

“But you’re our enemy, Princess!”

“Oh? Shall we fight to the death, then?”

“But we’ll never beat you!” they cry simultaneously.

“Should we run?” asks Mr. Trine.

“Let’s run?” Ms. Trine repeats.

“Ah, in that case, I’ll have Unit One chase you down.”

“...”

Heh heh heh! I won’t let you escape so easily. I absorb Dark magic, which means it’s easier for me to target my fellow Dark users.

Just then, a player charges at me. “I won’t let you kidnap them!” he shouts. “Leave them alone and go somewhere else!”

What a heroic line. I can tell they’ve been dying to say that.

But this simply won’t do. It was also rude to call it a “kidnapping.”

“There’s no need for such theatrics,” I respond.

The player who charged at me is a melee attacker, so I jump up as I parry and aim for his weak spot with Taftóchrono as he stumbles. Each hit has reduced damage, but striking his weak spot nine times is enough to kill the player, since he takes more damage while he’s in a state of unbalance.

“Gimme a br—oof!”

“Okay, let’s just give up,” the twins say together.

We head to the finish line.

“Will you evolve soon, Princess?”

“Yes, I will. I’m not sure I’ll be able to reach that point during this event, however. What about you?”

“We’ll definitely evolve during the event!” they inform me.

“You’ll be at level thirty, won’t you? Did you manage to visit the Nether?”

“We did! It unlocked our next evolution.”

“That must be a relief.”

It’s been a while since we last spoke, so we take our time getting back.

I receive a lot of EXP once I reach the finish line, since I managed to complete the challenge pretty quickly. It looks like the twins get some too. We’re supposed to be on opposing teams, but since this is a festival, I suppose it doesn’t have to be so cutthroat.

I say goodbye to the twins and wander over toward the vendors’ stalls.

It might be a good idea to purchase materials I can use for Alchemy. It’s been a while since I last went shopping. I wonder if I’ll find any hidden treasures—of course, unless they’re *very* hidden, someone else would have already snatched them up.

“Ah! Princess?!”

“Hmm?”

“Wow! I’m a fan! Would you please shake my hand?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Ohh... I’m tearing up...”

The young girl looks to be my age or a bit older. Well, it’s not like you can tell anyone’s real age in a video game. In fact, most people make sure that you *can’t* tell their real age.

“Ah, I’m Yura. I’m a second-wave livestreamer.”

“My name is Anastasia Atropos Nemeseia, but most people call me ‘Princess.’ I’m a first-wave zombie player.”

“I’m never going to wash this hand again!”

“But we’re in a video game...”

Another person shows up while the two of us are chatting.

“Excuse me, Princess...? Would you come with me to the finish line?”

“Of course, we’re on the same team. What were the requirements?”

“I’m supposed to find a top-tier, first-wave player at level 35 or higher.”

“I see. That shouldn’t be a problem then. Until next time, Ms. Yura.”

“Okay! Thank you so much!” Ms. Yura cheers.

Helping others provides me with EXP, so I head back to the finish line.

I think one of this event’s goals is to get more players interacting with each other. The arrival of the third wave has sharply increased the population.

We arrive at the finish line and shake hands, which counts as completing the task.

“Thank you so much for your help.”

“I received EXP too, so it wasn’t any trouble.”

If I refused the handshake at the finish line, the task wouldn’t technically be completed. Of course, I had no reason to reject it, but if you want your team to take first place, you can put up a fight at this point to reduce the amount of points your opponents get.

Not that there’s any reason to go to such extremes in a sports festival. I’m not even sure what the point distribution is looking like in the first place.

Official BBS 6

[The sports festival] Fantasy Sports Festival [is like a party]

1. Management

This is a thread to post about the third official event.

Please use this as a comprehensive place to chat about the sports festival.

9542. Student on the Sidelines

[Tragic News] The princess took the spirit body twins.

9543. Student on the Sidelines

She killed someone right in front of me. Well done, Princess.

9544. Student on the Sidelines

That guy died right in the blink of an eye.

9545. Student on the Sidelines

The twins just left with her, chatting up a storm.

9546. Student on the Sidelines

Well, you still get EXP, even if you go with the enemy team!

9547. Student on the Sidelines

Yep!

9548. Student on the Sidelines

My daughter has started imitating Mr. Mohawk. I don't know what the hell to do...

9549. Student on the Sidelines

Uh... Can't help but laugh.

9550. Student on the Sidelines

Yeah, you just have to laugh at that.

9551. Student on the Sidelines

Why Mohawk of all people?

9552. Student on the Sidelines

Yeah, why not the princess?

9553. Student on the Sidelines

She's still little, so I guess Mohawk really left an impression on her...

9554. Mohawk

Hyah ha ha! Sorry, my man!

9555. Student on the Sidelines

Mohawk is a complex man.

9556. Mohawk

Hee hee hee! Why not show her the princess or the rich girls?

9557. Student on the Sidelines

That might work if she’s a fan of Cinderella.

9558. Student on the Sidelines

You think a little girl pretending to be Mohawk likes Cinderella?!

9559. Student on the Sidelines

Sad, but probably accurate.

9560. Student on the Sidelines

My wife’s gonna be pissed at me!

9561. Student on the Sidelines

Yeah, can you blame her?

9562. Student on the Sidelines

That’s an inescapable rage right there.

9563. Student on the Sidelines

Actually, won’t it be pretty weird if she starts imitating any of those rich girls

IRL?

9564. Student on the Sidelines

...I think you're right.

9565 Mohawk

Gyah ha ha! I guess you're right! How about the little sister then? She streams sometimes, yeah?

9566. Student on the Sidelines

That might work. But how do I get her to take an interest?

9567. Student on the Sidelines

Why not have her watch a stream? She has archives you can look through.

9568. Mohawk

Hee hee hee! Maybe she'll wanna watch if she sees you watchin' her!

There's also that famous streamer Yura too!

9569. Student on the Sidelines

I see. Good idea. I'll give it a try.

9570. Student on the Sidelines

See, everyone? This is the pride of the first-wavers. The loud, crazy RPer is actually a nice guy.

9571. Student on the Sidelines

I laughed at how he was trying to give that guy genuine advice.

9572. Student on the Sidelines

He even suggested ways to resolve the issue. He's very thorough.

9573. Student on the Sidelines

Yeah, seriously.

9574. Student on the Sidelines

Gya ha ha! You can do this, my man!

9575. Student on the Sidelines

You got this, bro!

9576. Student on the Sidelines

What good is talking like him going to do?!

Chapter 8:

Third Official Event: Soul Gathering

SOUL GATHERING is next up after the Scavenger Hunt.

“Time to explain the rules!” announces Mr. Yatsuzuka.

“To put it simply, your goal is to defeat all enemies or opposing team members on the playing field,” explains Ms. Mitake.

“Ground types grant +1 point, flying types are +2, and players are +3! Defeat enemies faster than the other teams. The more you kill, the more the torch in the center of the playing field will turn to your team’s color!”

“Unlike a normal tamaire ball gathering contest, there’s only one container in the center, as you can see. This allows for teams to steal from each other.”

“Instead of being eliminated, players who are killed will have ten seconds to sit and stew before respawning!”

“The game ends either when time is up or when the torch reaches a certain level of brightness.”

Considering how many players there are, it looks like there will be multiple competitions going on simultaneously in different places.

I’m not scheduled to play first, so I can spectate the battle and learn the rules.

The team that slays either a monster or another player has their color go into the torch. This color joins the existing fire, causing all three colors to mix together.

Since the team colors are RGB, I imagine the flame will turn white. But that would only be the case if everyone scores equal points, which is unlikely, so the flame should eventually take on the hue of one of the team colors. The players are expected to fight as hard as they can while keeping an eye on that flame color.

Aside from that, it’s just a good old-fashioned brawl. You can simply slay

whatever's in front of you. With this many players, it's basically impossible to use any other strategy.

All right, my time has come. I warp to the venue from my UI.

The playing field consists of the torch in the middle with the three teams—red, green, and blue—positioned around it to form a triangle. Above the torch a countdown is on display.

“Howdy, Princess!”

“Ah, Ms. Kotatsu. It looks like we're teammates.”

“I'm hoping to take out as many weak enemies as I can.”

“That makes sense. They say the enemies will be at random levels, from the 10s to the 40s, so it's unwise to waste time on the stronger ones. You could also round them up and wipe them out all at once with spells.”

“But if you're not careful with your positioning, the enemies might see their chance to strike,” she replies.

“Right. You don't want to have a group of enemies that you've failed to finish off after you.”

“Still, it's not a bad idea to leave some of the stronger ones.”

It shouldn't be a problem to kill lots of enemies and have someone else kill the rest.

Should I use Space Magic to gather them up and roast them with a pillar? I don't need to conserve my MP here compared to how I normally hunt. If I want to go with that strategy, I should probably do it at the very beginning before this turns into a full-on skirmish.

Oh, the enemies have started to spawn. Time to get down to business.

“*Chaaaarge!*”

“*Hyah ha!*”

The enemies spawn with five seconds left on the countdown. The game begins at zero.

“I'm gonna go fight!” Ms. Kotatsu tells me.

“All right. Until next time.”

I say goodbye to Ms. Kotatsu, summon Unit One as a wyvern, and take to the skies.

I use Gravitass Sphere to gather enemies a bit behind the front lines, then cast Nox Pillar with Overspell, burning all the enemies together.

With this many monsters, I can probably drop mines all over the playing field and hit something.

“Guh! Princess!”

“How rude! I’m not ‘Guh!’ anybody. Ah, good day, Mr. Skelly.”

“Good day! Okay, see ya later!”

“You must be joking.”

“I’m serious! Aaaah, stay away from me! Eeeek! You stalker!”

“Ra’sse Mea Hyperic Ilda.”

“Aaaargh! Oof!”

“Ha ha ha ha! Abandon your humanity.”

“Holy crap.”

Mr. Skelly was struck by six of my Light Lances. This seems much more effective when you target inhuman players, who are weak against Light.

In my case, I’m strongest against angels, demons, and fellow Undead.

When a Light Lance comes flying at me from underneath, I have Unit One spin around so that I can deflect the shot. Space Recognition Expansion functions as a sphere surrounding me, so fortunately, I can see when attacks are coming from below me.

However, I’m on the receiving end of targeted fire while I’m in the sky, so I’ll head back down to the ground.

I end up near a group of enemies, so I take them out before touching down. Then I recall Unit One.

I scatter six Nox Mines around me, waiting for someone to try to attack me in

a ground battle. Fighting in the air is just too difficult.

Weaker enemies seem to be spawning further away from the lantern. Those areas are probably meant for third-wavers. Of course, the level distribution isn't uniform. There are still enemies level 40 and higher on the outer perimeter too.

This means that anyone aiming for a team victory should be fighting on the outskirts. If you want EXP, you should fight in the middle. If you want to fight flying enemies, you have to get pretty close to the torch.

One thing that interests me is how high-level enemies seem to start spawning if you're only killing things on the outskirts. Perhaps that's just how it goes.

Actually, there're quite a few enemies I've never seen before. There are still lots of things in this world yet to be discovered. That, or they're just event-only enemies.

I deflect and dodge long-range attacks from the center of the concentrated enemies before firing back with spells.

"Is the princess even human?"

"She sure doesn't fight like one."

"She's Undead, so I guess that's inhuman, no?"

"Yeah, but that's not what I mean."

"Zex Mey Persepho Herja," I chant.

"I don't get what she's using to activate her spells. What language is that?"

"Who knows?! Everything about the princess is a secret unless she talks about it on the forums! Maybe she's just turning into a cringelord."

"Not the princess too! I see why she's muttering weird languages now!"

"That's not it!" I cry at my nosey spectators.

I swear I'm not just being cringe!

It's turned into a real rumble out there. The teams are completely jumbled on the playing field at this point. I need to start keeping my eye out for player attacks too—not that I won't just reflect any of their projectiles like always.

“Charge!” cries Mr. Skelly.

“Hm? Whoa!”

“Heh heh heh. Ha ha ha ha! Mwa ha ha ha! No one can stop me!”

“Shut up already!”

Mr. Skelly charges forward while riding a lizardine. He’s really getting in the way. I think my teammates are going to have a problem with this.

“Take that!”

“Owie!”

Ms. Kotatsu landed a direct hit on Mr. Skelly with her projectile. Merciless attacks continue to fly in his direction—not that it isn’t his own fault. I’ll just ignore him for now. He seems to be having fun at the very least.

I think I’ll go after the melee attackers while I have this opportunity. Naturally, my spells will hit them first. My aura arts also don’t level up unless I fight at close range.

This event is really providing me with a lot of EXP. The fighting itself is difficult, but at least I’m reaping proportionate rewards. It’s nonstop combat with lots of enemies in a concentrated area, resulting in all this earned EXP. I heard that third-wavers get a bonus to their EXP and receive more than first-wavers, but I don’t foresee any delay in evolving at this rate.

I’m looking forward to my next evolution.

“Ow! Who just struck my buttocks with an arrow?” I cry out.

“Behead them!”

“The princess is hit! They hit her big tushy!”

“Can’t you say it nicer than that? Say they hit her nice curves!”

“Behead anyone who dares speak about a girl’s butt too.”

“Huh...?! Aaaah!”

A man took out the person who shot me, only to be taken out himself by a woman. Judging by the materials her weapons are made of, she must be a first-

waver. She's carrying a bastard sword and a buckler, the latter being used to protect herself. I don't think an off-tank would ever use a shield like that.

"Hi-yah!"

"Hiiii-yah!"

Ah, those two are members of Mr. Musasabi's party. I haven't seen them in a while. It's good to see they're as energetic as ever.

"Argh!"

"Farewell!"

One of them just died! Well, I don't care since they're on an opposing team.

As I battle at close range, I occasionally see a skull marker appear on enemies, confirming that I've activated instant death. The game plays an animation of their soul floating up to the heavens.

I wonder if their souls are going to the Nether. That makes me a bit curious. It's usually only people that I see in there. Perhaps they each go to different dimensions.

I continuously cut down enemies and players who approach me, and before long, the competition comes to an end.

Hmm. Judging by the color of the flame, I think we must have come in second place.

"First place goes to blue! Second place goes to red, and green comes in third!"

"All right, it's time for the next batch of players to come in."

I leave the venue to spectate the next matches.

Official BBS 7

[The sports festival] Fantasy Sports Festival [is like a party]

1. Management

This is a thread to post about the third official event.

Please use this as a comprehensive place to chat about the sports festival.

11000. Student on the Sidelines

[Tragic News] The princess just slaughtered Mr. Skelly.

11001. Student on the Sidelines

Rest in peace.

11002. Student on the Sidelines

I blinked and then he was dead.

11003. Student on the Sidelines

I'm really curious about that language the princess is using to cast spells.

11004. Student on the Sidelines

It's not English, right?

11005. Student on the Sidelines

I don't think so.

11006. Student on the Sidelines

If she's not just being cringe, it must relate to one of her skills.

11007. Student on the Sidelines

Maybe something with Magic Assist?

11008. Student on the Sidelines

I haven't heard any info about that yet.

11009. Student on the Sidelines

It must be a rare skill if the princess hasn't said anything about it.

11010. Student on the Sidelines

That's possible.

11011. Student on the Sidelines

Damn you, skeleton!

11012. Student on the Sidelines

Mr. Skelly's evil cackling is really annoying!

11013. Student on the Sidelines

Lmao, he keeps getting in the way.

11014. Student on the Sidelines

Oh, there he goes.

11015. Student on the Sidelines

Ms. Kotatsu sniped him and knocked him off his servant.

11016. Student on the Sidelines

I hate golem stomps. They're so annoying.

11017. Student on the Sidelines

Enemy golems? Or friendly ones?

11018. Student on the Sidelines

Both.

11019. Student on the Sidelines

Yeah, that makes sense.

11020. Student on the Sidelines

AoE attacks are awesome, except when they hit everyone!

11021. Student on the Sidelines

Being on the same team doesn't mean you're in the same party...

11022. Student on the Sidelines

Yep, you'll get hit either way.

11023. Student on the Sidelines

Can we talk about how scary-looking slimes are?

11024. Student on the Sidelines

You mean the one swallowing an enemy whole? Yep, I know what you mean.

11025. Student on the Sidelines

Solution: Take it out along with the slime.

11026. Student on the Sidelines

If an enemy team's slime is around monsters, hit 'em both with a pillar.

11027. Student on the Sidelines

No mercy, lmao.

11028. Student on the Sidelines

Don't be so mean to the slimes!

Chapter 9:

Third Official Event:

Catch the Mini-Characters & Treasure Hunt

THE NEXT GAME IS Treasure Hunt. I'll be watching this one, not playing.

"Okay, everyone. The next competition is—"

"Hyah ha! I can't wait any longer, my liege!"

"Oh? Fine, then let's switch things up."

A tiny Mr. Musasabi appears next to Mr. Yatsuzuka.

"All right! Come on out, everyone!"

The group of mini-characters emerges.

I see Mr. Musasabi, Mr. Lucebarm, and Ms. Kotatsu. Oh, there's Ms. Mead and Ms. Fairellen. They also have Mr. Cecil and even Ms. Clementia! Let's see... Is that Mr. Studylover? Oh, and Mr. Mohawk showed up too. That one over there looks like Ms. Yura, whom I just met earlier.

"Holy crap!"

"Oh my gosh! So cute!"

Would you look at that? They even have Eli, Abby, Ms. Letty, and Ms. Dory. I think that one is Mr. Steiner, and over there is the wyvern tamer. Ms. Cupid, the first person who discovered how to evolve into an angel, is also among them. I see Mr. Ertz, Ms. Primura, Mr. Dentelle, Ms. Salute, and Ms. Nephrite too.

Essentially, they added the captains from the previous event as well as other players famous in their respective fields.

Mr. Skelly and Mr. Alf appear, followed by my own mini-character. I guess I'm the last one out. Ah! My mini-character's speaking!

"Good day, everyone. Those of us you see here are mini-characters, created with permission from our likenesses. We run on AI that has read through our players' logs, so please ignore any discrepancies in how we speak or act.

“This next game is a surprise competition called ‘Capture the Mini-Character.’ We mini-characters will be scattered throughout the event area, so your job is to catch us if you can. Should anyone capture one of us, all members of that player’s team will receive a figurine and plushie that can be used as furniture items.”

“What did she just say?!”

“Question! Can we get figurines and plushies of the princess too?!”

“Yes, since she gave her permission to make them. The players behind all mini-characters here have also given their permission to distribute said rewards, so you can win any of them if your team catches the character.”

“Woowow!”

“Thanks so much, Princess!”

“Behead them.”

“I give you permission.” My character instantly allowed it.

“Wha...?!”

“The time limit is ten minutes. Once you catch a mini-character, they’ll escape again after a minute passes, allowing for others to catch them. Of course, we have the powers of the original players we’re based on, so we’ll be putting up a fight. Do your best, everyone! Original players, please teleport to the spectators’ seats from your UI.”

I click the button to teleport to the spectators’ seats.

“Ah, Tasha!”

“You four are spectating as well, Abby?”

“It’s tiring to run around all the time. We want to relax for a while,” says Eli.

Ms. Letty and Ms. Dory begin to rearrange the spectators’ seats. We sit around a table where three other chairs had been set out for us.

I let the two maids prepare our tea, remembering the cookies I made to test out the cooking UI. I think I’ll serve them now.

“Are these just normal cookies?” asks Abby.

“That’s right. I made them as a test.”

“Now that I think of it, is there not anyone who specializes as a pastry chef in this game?” asks Eli.

“I’m sure you could find one out there somewhere, but I don’t know any myself,” I reply.

It seems like there would be people who only want to focus on baked goods, considering how many people play this game.

“By the way, is Rina joining this one?” Abby asks me.

“Knowing her, she’d probably prefer to play instead of watch.”

“She was really fired up about capturing her sister’s character!”

“Oh, hello, Ms. Primura. How are things going at your shop?”

“Not bad!”

It looks like all the main crafters are spectating too. This competition must be hard for them, with their low Agility stats.

“It’s starting!”

We players with our own mini-characters relax in the spectators’ VIP room, able to view whatever area we like from our UI.

“All right! Let’s close in on ‘em!”

“Oh really? Eh heh heh!”

“Are you kidding me?! She can use the Silver Key?!”

“Go find her!”

I see she teleported with the Silver Key. It worked exactly as mine did, but I’m sure it’s not *exactly* the same in every aspect. I can only teleport from town to town with the key in the first place, just like others do with the statues. If they didn’t change the Silver Key at all, my character would be impossible to catch.

“There’s Princess, Lady Eli, Lady Abby, Ms. Letty, and Ms. Dory. Everyone’s going crazy trying to catch the ‘pretty lady’ combination.”

“Should I make some furniture of my own to go with my figurine?” asks Ms.

Primura.

“Huh, not a bad idea. Should I make a tablecloth too?” Mr. Dentelle ponders.

“We could make a full furniture set while we’re at it.”

“Yeah, I like the sound of that. But can anyone even catch the princess in this game?”

Ms. Primura and Mr. Dentelle have true commercial spirits. I bet they want to make little dollhouses to go with the figurines, which is probably possible for them to do.

It looks like all the people trying to catch me on their own are getting killed. I’m surprised by how merciless my AI is.

“Scary!”

“Caught her—oof!”

“Wow, she used an aura! That’s too much, Sis!”

Rina, your real “Sis” is watching from a separate location.

Since a player has to touch me when they catch me, that touch has a chance to activate my aura’s instant death effects. That player just got unlucky. It’s not like instant death has a very high activation rate.

“Woo-hooooo!” Rina cheers.

“Nice job, little sister!”

“Oh, look at that. Rina sacrificed that other player to catch me. She really means business.”

“She’s always like that whenever it comes to her big sister!” says Abby.

“Rina, stop petting her hair!”

Honestly, I feel like she’s the most fired up of anyone right now. She was pretty enthusiastic during the Hunting Competition too, but this is on a different level.

Mr. Skelly is using his servants as meat shields, Mr. Alf is on his horse, and Mr. Cecil is cutting down players with his twin blades—he’s the scariest of them all.

“Hyah ha ha ha! Time to purify the filth!”

“Aaargh!” screams a player.

“You fell for it, my liege! That was merely an illusion!”

“Hey, what even is that move?!” cries another player.

Mr. Lucebarm attacks with bear punches, while Ms. Kotatsu throws projectiles.

This is like watching PvP. It’s surprisingly difficult for the players.

“Oh! Time’s up.”

“It’s over!”

“Damn it!”

Some people seem very upset.

“Management! We really can’t get the prizes anymore?!”

“Huh? Well, who knows? We might do this again at another official event. It’s based on who’s most famous, so there might even be new mini-characters next time, or the ones you saw here might get redesigned based on how they evolve in the future.” says Mr. Yatsuzuka.

“The honest truth is that the mini-characters were a side project the developers worked on as a break from the rest of the event. I suspect they’ll organize this again if they feel like it, so long as they have the players’ permission,” Ms. Mitake adds.

“We can still get the prizes, but they might be different versions... Does that mean the past versions will start selling at a premium?!”

“Ha ha! I’ll leave that up to you players! Next up is Treasure Hunt!”

Whoa, they chased us out of the VIP spectators’ room. I really enjoyed my time there. Oh well, I’ll just find a new spot with Eli, Abby, and the maids.

“I’m gonna choose this red door! Mwa ha ha ha ha! ...Huh? What’s going on?”

“What’s that sound?”

“Aaaaaah! Gah!”

“Not the Panjandrum again! We just did that, LOL!”

It looks like a Panjandrum gets activated when you open that particular door, flying into the player. Was that sound a jet engine? The devs made sure no one was escaping that trap.

“The Obstacle Race was bad enough, but now this one has traps too?” I wonder aloud.

“For a treasure hunt, you’d expect it to be a giant boulder that rolls down at you!” Abby suggests.

“Well, it’s a game, after all. Instant death traps aren’t unusual.”

“That player just jumped over a hole and fell straight into a pitfall. Surely, that must be meant as a joke,” Eli remarks.

“I’d bet it is. That player sunk like a rock,” I reply.

“Just watching them is so much fun!” cheers Abby.

“I can hardly drink my tea like this,” Eli complains.

I know what she means. There’re too many spit-take moments. I try my best to keep my face expressionless, tensing my abdomen to stop myself from laughing.

Official BBS 8

[The sports festival] Fantasy Sports Festival [is like a party]

1. Management

This is a thread to post about the third official event.
Please use this as a comprehensive place to chat about the sports festival.

13230. Student on the Sidelines

Awwwwwwwwwwww!

13231. Student on the Sidelines

Mini-characters?!

13232. Student on the Sidelines

What the hell?! They're so cute! I want one!

13233. Student on the Sidelines

Me too!

13234. Student on the Sidelines

Some of these characters really stand out.

13235. Student on the Sidelines

Mohawk, right? I know what you mean.

13236. Student on the Sidelines

Of course he stands out. That’s one killer design.

13237. Student on the Sidelines

He’s truly dedicated to the roleplay.

13238. Student on the Sidelines

Exactly.

13239. Student on the Sidelines

I want the figurines and plushies of the two fancy girls! C’mon, teammates, put your lives on the line to get ’em!

13240. Student on the Sidelines

You might *actually* lose your life if you go after the princess.

13241. Student on the Sidelines

The princess can inflict instant death, can’t she? I noticed that while I watched her.

13242. Student on the Sidelines

I saw that too.

13911. Student on the Sidelines

She can use the Silver Key?!

13912. Student on the Sidelines

That makes it way more difficult.

13913. Student on the Sidelines

Management clearly knows how popular she is.

13914. Student on the Sidelines

Bind spells don't work on any of these guys.

13915. Student on the Sidelines

I guess we shouldn't have expected otherwise.

13916. Student on the Sidelines

Actually, Standing Bind seems to have a bit of an effect on them.

13917. Student on the Sidelines

Is that a stationary type of bind? Yeah, those are hard to land.

14529. Student on the Sidelines

I feel like I got a glimpse at the little sister's obsession with the princess. Nice work!

14530. Student on the Sidelines

Good job, little sister!

14531. Student on the Sidelines

I bet she caught the hardest one! Now they’ve just gotta catch the rich girls!

14532. Student on the Sidelines

But they all seem pretty strong.

14533. Student on the Sidelines

Especially Mini-Cecil.

14534. Student on the Sidelines

That one doesn’t run away—he chases *you*.

14535. Student on the Sidelines

Same for Bear Bro.

14536. Student on the Sidelines

I kinda want the Mr. Lucebarm prizes.

14537. Student on the Sidelines

Makes sense, since he’s a bear.

14538. Student on the Sidelines

He’s basically already a walking teddy bear.

14539. Student on the Sidelines

Where is Big Sister Mead shooting from?!

14540. Student on the Sidelines

Lmao, she does so much damage.

14541. Student on the Sidelines

Yeah, seriously.

14542. Student on the Sidelines

Mr. Alf's horse is really overpowering...

14543. Student on the Sidelines

A full set of armor at that speed? Yeah, that's scary.

14544. Student on the Sidelines

Mr. Skelly's playing dirty!

14545. Student on the Sidelines

Lmao, the skeleton's building a wall so no one can get close.

14546. Student on the Sidelines

Did he get his servant restrictions removed?!

14547. Student on the Sidelines

Hey, what's that bunch of bones doing?

14548. Student on the Sidelines

It's a lizardiiiiine!

14549. Student on the Sidelines

Not those things again! Aaaaah!

16421. Student on the Sidelines

It's over... It's all over...

16422. Student on the Sidelines

Why...isn't the princess here...?

16423. Student on the Sidelines

Where is my princess?

16424. Student on the Sidelines

These figurines are surprisingly well-made.

16425. Student on the Sidelines

You can move them and everything.

16426. Student on the Sidelines

I see! We can pose them however we want...

16427. Management?

What's this, now?

16428. Student on the Sidelines

Eek!

16429. Student on the Sidelines

Of course that's not allowed.

16430. Student on the Sidelines

The princess's figurine... She's wearing black down there...

16431. Student on the Sidelines

Yep, but is that based on what she actually wears? That's the big question.

16432. Management

We've changed the color, obviously.

16433. Student on the Sidelines

Damn!

16434. Student on the Sidelines

Go figure!

Chapter 10:

Third Official Event: Free-For-All

“LAST UP IS THE PvP challenge! It’s Free-For-All time!”

I look over the rules of this event. We’ll be placed in a ring, just like during the martial arts competition, for an all-out battle for survival against everyone. The last three people to survive will regroup, then fight each other one by one.

Players are considered defeated when they either run out of health or leave the area of play.

The survivors will then battle each other one final time. The last person standing will be crowned the winner.

That’s about it. It’s a simple free-for-all where everyone is your enemy. The last three remaining don’t progress to another bracket or anything of the sort.

“Okay, I’ll be on my way.”

“Good luck!” cheers Abby.

“Try your best to win,” adds Eli.

“With it being a survival game, luck is the biggest factor. I’ll see you soon.”

I teleport to the venue from the UI.

“Ack! Princess!”

“That’s quite a greeting!” I reply.

“Oh crap, the princess is here. But I guess I don’t have to fight her. I just have to reach the top three!”

“Hello, Mr. Cecil. Funny seeing you here.”

“Please fight each other!”

“Surely you jest,” Mr. Cecil and I respond to the player at the same time.

“Nooooo!”

Mr. Cecil and I are on the same team. If we do end up fighting, it will be a bit later.

I leave Mr. Cecil. It's time to get serious.

I want to stay near the center as much as possible in order to make the most of my field of vision. It's worse for me to get pushed to the outskirts than being surrounded. Since I have such low Agility, it would be hard for me to get back to the middle.

If I end up summoning Unit One, I'll wait until the number of players has dwindled. I can't move very freely right now and will probably die as soon as I'm hit with any Light spells. One option is to start off by summoning a lizardine, but to be honest, I'm eager to do the fighting myself.

"Let's go! The countdown's starting!" Mr. Yatsuzuka informs us.

Some sort of traffic lights appear on all four sides of the ring, beeping as they light up.

I'll give my athame the Space attribute. Naturally, I turn Clad in Death on to activate my aura.

"Begin!"

With a final beep, the traffic lights disappear and everyone leaps into motion.

I start by casting Raum Sphere to protect myself from physical ranged attacks. It costs a lot of MP, but I'll just have to live with it. I don't expect this to be a very long battle.

My priorities are to avoid and reflect attacks. Any spell I fire off is sure to hit someone, so I reflect everything coming my way to hit other players around me. I'll place some mines to keep people from coming after me too.

I manage to kill more and more players as I continue with this strategy, making space for all of us to move in the ring.

Hmm...? Oh ho! There's another colorful character in here.

"Bwah! Come on, Bennett! Throw away those chicken-shit spells."

"I...I can beat you! I don't need no spells!"

“Waaaaah!”

Wow, he really charged him with a knife and everything.

People are starting to come my way now. Others are targeting Mr. Cecil.

“You’re a funny guy. I like you. That’s why I’m going to kill you last.”

Ah, so he’s going to go after others first. Mr. Cecil changed his target.

“I can’t land any hits on the princess!”

“Zes Mey Persepho Herja,” I chant.

“Eyaaaaah!”

I use Overspell to strengthen Dark Burst and strike everyone in my immediate surroundings.

“Aaaaaah!”

Farewell, Bennett. I wonder if that’s his in-game name too.

That was really funny. What a good way to roleplay.

“The princess’s Dark spells are too good, lol... Lol...”

“For real. She can send you flying.”

“How does she always know when to parry? It’s like she has eyes in the back of her head.”

“But she’s got her eyes closed!”

“Leave it to me! Weapon Capture!”

I grimace. “Oh dear!”

Weapon Capture is bad news! It takes my athame and sends it flying in a random direction.

“Nice job, pervert!” I yell back at him.

“Who the hell’re you calling a pervert?! Whole Capture! Bind Cyclone!”

“Aaaaaaaaah! So scary!”

“Stop it!”

His whip wraps around my body, allowing him to control me with his evil Whip art. Sparkling rainbow effects go flying out whenever he pulls me.

“Get her!”

“I’m sorry, but...” I start.

“Now what?!”

I have Telekinetic Fit, so my weapon can never be truly stolen away from me. Once my athame flies back to my hand, I cut away the whip.

“She really is a Jedi!”

“Zex Ra’sé Mexo Persepho Ilda.”

“Whoa!”

I shoot six Dark Lances powered up with Overspell at multiple targets using the multi-lock system.

“Quick Bind, Light Lance!”

Ah! Someone finally hit me. Well, it’s only just the beginning, so that’s not an issue yet. The bind around me quickly cracks until it breaks apart.

“You’re kiddin’ me! Why don’t you ever lose health?! You even got that bind off in no time at all!”

“Howdy, Bob! Don’t you know? I’m a zombie!”

“Damn you and your auto-regen!”

“Stop helping the boss get her health back!”

“Who are you calling a boss?”

“Ha ha ha ha! I’m only kidding.”

Attacks are flying at me one after another. This is a lot of fun!

We’re down to four people now, including me. Two people I don’t recognize are confronting each other. Mr. Cecil is watching them, so I guess I’ll watch too.

“This Free-For-All sure is fun, huh?” says Mr. Cecil.

“Indeed. I’m excited to see how much my skills have climbed once this is

over.”

“Did you see Bennett?”

“I did. That whole thing made me chuckle.”

“Same here. I wonder what his character name was? A lot of people probably saw the whole thing, so someone might post about him online.”

“That seems likely. I’m sure everyone’s curious about him. Oh, please don’t worry,” I say to the other players. “We won’t get in your way.”

“Yep, we’re staying out of it!” Mr. Cecil adds.

It seems like they’re on different teams, so I don’t care which of them wins. I believe they’re both second-wavers.

They’ll fight each other until one is gone, and then our surviving three members will be in the finals. After that, we’ll wait for the others to wrap up before playing the next round.

It looks like Mr. Cecil, Rina, Mr. Lucebarm, Mr. Alf, and Ms. Mead are still up. I even see Ms. Clementia and Mr. Mohawk.

I had so much fun that I completely forgot about Unit One. I doubt I’ll need him in the next round either, but that’s fine. He’ll probably be taken out as soon as he spawns, anyway.

I’ve managed to work out a good fighting style for this competition. I’ll continue with what’s been working already.

“Wow, it’s like I’m in a bullet hell game!”

“How come they’re barely getting through to you?!”

“It’s hard to reflect all of them. I don’t have enough athames or arms.”

“Of course you can’t get them all!”

“Dey Persepho Ask.”

“I thought I said not to let the boss heal!”

“Who are you calling a boss?! Zex Ra’s Lia Persepho Ate.”

“Gasp!”

I set off six boosted Nox Explosions all around me.

It looks like a lot of players have been knocked out already. I think it's about time the first-wavers start fighting each other.

"Ugh, it's the princess!"

"You people should learn some manners!" I reply.

"Ugh! It's Sis!"

"Hello, Brutus."

"The princess will win if we don't do something about it. But honestly, I don't wanna be the one to fight her..." says Mr. Cecil.

"Her 'instant death' aura fills me with terror," Mr. Musasabi cries.

"Could you please stop complaining about me as you creep closer and closer?"

"Now what do we do?"

"If you wanna take out Sis, surround her and use melee attacks! Don't shoot from far away!"

"I see!"

"Hey... Et tu, Rina?!"

"Farewell, Caesar!"

"Chaaarge!" cries Mr. Lucebarm.

"Hyah ha ha! It's my first time fightin' with the princess!" says Mr. Mohawk.

"I think it's everyone's first time, my liege!" Mr. Musasabi replies.

"Damn you, Rina!" I curse at her.

I'm in a very bad situation. Rina, Mr. Lucebarm, Mr. Musasabi, and Mr. Mohawk are all coming at me.

"Zex Mey Perspho Herja."

"Scary!"

"Hang on! Her spells are really powerful!"

“Oh, that reminds me. Zex Lia Persepho Oura.”

“Whoa! So that makes a pillar?!”

“Dey Persepho Ask.”

“Egad! She healed herself!” cries Mr. Musasabi.

I place strengthened Nox Pillars all around me to ward off close-range attacks, then heal myself with Overspell and Dark Heal.

Dark Heal and Nox Pillar also grant me small amounts of health too. I gain much more when I absorb it from my opponent, but that drains a lot of MP, so using healing spells is the best option for me.

Of *course* this is the moment when instant death chooses not to activate.

“Hmph, I’m taking more damage than I can heal from!” I complain.

“Of course you are!”

“In that case, it’s time for plan B. Hey, everybody! This is your chance to take out a group of first-wavers!” I call out.

“That’s true!”

“Whoa!”

Since the top players in this game are surrounding me, I figure the others’ AoE spells will be able to damage all of them at once. “If I go down, I’m taking you with me,” I taunt them.

“No fair, Sis!” Rina whines.

“You started it.”

“Alas, my HP is dwindling! This is not good!” cries Mr. Musasabi.

“Ha ha ha ha! Now *this* is a survival game!”

“Hyah ha ha ha! We’re a mess!”

Mr. Lucebarm, a brawler, will probably be my biggest obstacle now. He can hit fast and has a lot of stamina.

“Sanitize the Filth!”

That must be Mr. Mohawk's keyword to activate Ignisplode. He's doing that to counter the other players' spells.

As always, they target me with their melee attacks.

"She'll hit you with status ailments other than instant death too! These suck!"

"Gyaaaah! I have been badly poisoned!" cries Mr. Musasabi.

"I don't mind being cursed, but weakening is too much!"

Clad in Death inflicts deadly poison, curse, weakness, and instant death. Mr. Lucebarm and Mr. Musasabi in particular come in for hit after hit, which means my aura is the perfect countermeasure.

"Zes Ra'se Lisa Persepho Ker."

"Look out!"

"Mines! Argh! Farewell, everyone!"

"I have been hit! She's a monster!"

"Like you're one to talk!"

"Let me join the fun!"

"Not Mr. Cecil too!" I cry.

Mr. Musasabi, who has less HP in exchange for higher evasion, was killed in the explosion. The mine finished him off after all the other players' spells and my status ailments chipped away at his health.

But this is when Mr. Cecil, who'd been fighting in a different spot, joins up with us.

"Ah! Ah! Ah...!"

"Sis, that's so hot!"

"Be quiet! Aaah! Oof..."

"Ah, I bested Princess! Now the rest of you are next! Time to die!"

"Aaaaah!"

"Once a friend is now a foe!"

“Gyah ha ha ha! He’s turned into a villain!”

I watch Mr. Cecil turn to Mr. Lucebarm as soon as I’m defeated. But my HP is depleted, so I’m expelled from the ring and returned to the place where Eli and Abby and I were beforehand.

Your race level has increased.

Book has reached level 15.

You have acquired Enlargement through Book.

“Damn that Rina...”

“Heh heh. You did your best. Is that not enough?” asks Eli.

“You were so cool out there, Tasha!” Abby cheers.

Ms. Letty swiftly serves me a cup of tea, so I decide to relax here for a while. I won’t be participating in any more parts of this event.



I managed to level up Magic Resistance and Unparalleled Style a bit, which I rarely get a chance to do, so I'm not terribly disappointed.

Enlargement:

A passive art that expands the maximum effective range of AoE spells.

From what I've seen on the BBS, this expands the range of AoE attacks a bit but also expands the range in which your AoE spells deal maximum damage.

I'm sure it's much more useful than this art, which I learned at level 10:

Corner Smite:

Smack enemies with the corners of books.

Corner Smite was obviously put into the game as a joke.

I don't remember Magic Catalyst having anything relating to melee attacks, but this feels like a second-tier art you would learn at level 10. It already has Magical Smite—an attack with knockback that relies on your own attributes.

"Well? Did you level up nicely?" asks Eli.

"Not too bad. I should be able to evolve if my team gets second place," I reply.

Once the event is over, the first-place team receives enough EXP to boost their base level and all skill levels by three. Second place gets enough EXP for two levels, and third place gets enough for one level.

The Free-For-All put me at level 38, so second or first place should be enough to secure my next evolution.

"Oh, hello there, my lady. Here, I have a gift for you."

"Oh my, Magirus. Thank you for the scones," Eli replies.

The man named Magirus is an old man dressed in a chef's uniform. They seem very close for in-game friends. Do they know each other in real life? I don't recognize him, myself.

"Allow me to introduce you, Tasha. This is Magirus. He's my former head chef and a favorite cook of mine. The two of you have actually met in real life before. Do you remember him?"

"The head chef I met? Oh, that was on my birthday, wasn't it?"

"You sure have grown," Magirus notes. "Tell me, how is that sister of yours doing?"

"She's currently fighting for her life in the Free-For-All."

"Ah, so she's that girl, is she?"

How luxurious, getting to eat food made by a three-star chef in a video game. I don't feel the need to ask him why he's playing this game, since that's his personal business. I'm more concerned with tasting this delicious food.

I sip my tea and watch the PvP until the event finally reaches a close.

"The third official event, Fantasy Sports Festival, is now concluded!" calls Mr. Yatsuzuka.

"I know some of you are having tea parties and banquets, so it's a bit chaotic right now, but we managed to finish our last competition. Rewards will be distributed once we announce the team rankings. The event will be over after that," says Ms. Mitake.

"All righty then! Third place goes to green! Your team members get enough EXP to bump you up one level and a gift of 50,000 gold."

"In second place, we have red! All members will receive the EXP to take them up two levels, as well as 100,000 gold."

"That means our winning team is blue! You all get three levels' worth of EXP and 150,000 gold!"

Wow, my log is really filling up. All my skills went up two levels. What a lovely

reward! I reached level 40 too, but the evolution option hasn't shown up yet. That's fine, though. I still haven't answered Stellura's question yet.

High Magic Assist is over level 50 now, which means it isn't capped at 50 like I thought. The first tier came at level 30, so the second tier must be at level 60.

"All right, you're all dismissed! Take your time and check out your leveled-up skills once you get back!" suggests Mr. Yatsuzuka.

"Don't forget to deposit your money too, or else it might get taken by the Nether."

No, by all means, feel free to die with your money still on you. I'd be delighted.

"I'm heading back to evolve now," I tell everyone.

"See you!" Abby says.

"Until next time," Eli replies.

I say goodbye to the maids as well before teleporting back to my pre-event location: my royal villa.

All right. Now back to Stellura's question.

Choose which concept you value most:

Life, death, space-time, fate, contracts, punishment

I've thought about this throughout the week.

"Within the bounds of space-time, from the creation of their life till death's unavoidable fate, all living beings who break a contract shall face a punishment." The "contracts and punishment" part does feel like it was tacked on as an afterthought, but oh well. With that specific wording, I'll effectively be selecting all of the options.

What's this? Each word displays a number based on the order I've selected. Does that mean the order has some sort of relevance too?

Hmm. I don't understand this part, but I deliberately used them that way in my sentence, so it's probably safe to follow that same order. The results are displayed next.

Space-time, life, death, fate, contracts, punishment.

Your evolution will commence in another location.

Oh, it wants me to go to the Medium to evolve. I'll get going right away!

Official BBS 9

[The sports festival] Fantasy Sports Festival [is like a party]

1. Management

This is a thread to post about the third official event.

Please use this as a comprehensive place to chat about the sports festival.

18172. Student on the Sidelines

FFO time!

18173. Student on the Sidelines

Aaaaaah! The princess is heeeeere!

18174. Student on the Sidelines

Take care, buddy.

18175. Student on the Sidelines

Farewell.

18176. Student on the Sidelines

Hang on, hang on, hang on. The princess has fully turned into a Jedi.

18177. Student on the Sidelines

She's a true tank.

18178. Student on the Sidelines

The princess is being attacked, yet the people around her are getting hurt. Something's not right here.

18179. Student on the Sidelines

Hey, is the princess absorbing darkness?

18180. Student on the Sidelines

Seriously?

18181. Student on the Sidelines

That's what the animation kinda looks like.

18182. Student on the Sidelines

I see. It's like she's reflecting everything but Dark spells.

18183. Student on the Sidelines

She can tell which is which in the middle of all this?

18184. Student on the Sidelines

I mean, the color tells you which is which. But still, she's just a Jedi.

18185. Student on the Sidelines

Her lightsaber is soooooo cool!

18186. Student on the Sidelines

Hmm? Pfffffft!

18187. Student on the Sidelines

We’ve got another dedicated roleplayer out there!

18188. Student on the Sidelines

Is he going after Mr. Cecil like some sort of hero?

18189. Student on the Sidelines

How could you not, after what Mr. Cecil said to him?

18190. Student on the Sidelines

They’re actually pretty similar...

18191. Student on the Sidelines

He was doing the “Sully” line at the end!

18192. Student on the Sidelines

It’s dangerous to mix those up.

18193. Student on the Sidelines

That player’s in-game name was Bennett.

18194. Student on the Sidelines

For real? Lmao.

19921. Student on the Sidelines

Et tu, little sister?!

19922. Student on the Sidelines

The princess is always prepared for any situation.

19923. Student on the Sidelines

She can fight any of the first-wavers.

19924. Student on the Sidelines

She really *is* a tank, isn't she?

19925. Student on the Sidelines

Being a tank who parries would be nice and balanced, or so I'd like to say to her.

19926. Student on the Sidelines

That might work, considering how she reflects attacks.

19927. Student on the Sidelines

The drawback is that she has no tank skills, right?

19928. Student on the Sidelines

Ah, is she weak against knockbacks?

19929. Student on the Sidelines

I doubt she'd be much good against big opponents. Parrying doesn't help a lot against them.

19930. Student on the Sidelines

Yeah, I'm curious about that.

19931. Student on the Sidelines

Me too, but it's hard to tell since we still won't see those enemies for a while.

19932. Student on the Sidelines

Ah! RIP...

19933. Student on the Sidelines

Cause of defeat: the little sister's betrayal.

19934. Student on the Sidelines

She's merciless when it comes to competitions.

19935. Student on the Sidelines

Yeah, she's a gamer all right. No mercy!

Chapter 11: Evolution

I USE MY SILVER KEY to teleport from my villa in the Nether to the Medium.

It looks like simply arriving here doesn't activate my evolution. There must be a specific place I have to reach. Just as I'm wondering where the Pup Lord is, he appears in front of me.

"You have arrived. Know that there is no going back from this point," he warns me.

"I'm an outsider, so that won't be a problem."

"I see. Then come with me."

I follow the Lord of Tindalos, presumably to the old castle. We go through the castle's front entrance and onto the main floor.

"Here we are. Now touch this." The Pup Lord commands me to touch the statue of Stellura in the middle of the room.

Player Fairellen has fulfilled special conditions, resulting in an update and expansion of the Identify skill.

Oh, Ms. Fairellen learned Identify? That notice came out of left field. Well, I can worry about that later.

I'm extremely eager to evolve already.

You are able to evolve out of the zombie race and become an outer one.

This may result in major changes to your base stats and race skills. Are you sure you wish to proceed?

Yep!

Suddenly I'm falling again, just like when I went splashing into the ocean. Won't I hit rocks if I'm on the main floor of the castle?

Oh, I landed in water, but I still can't move or see anything yet.

Preparing to evolve from zombie to outer one.

Devotion: Stellura. Selection: space-time, life, death, fate, contracts, punishment.

Confirming past actions...

Confirming reputation with residents...

Confirming gameplay log...

Discipline is now possible. Choose one: vision, hearing, touch, taste, smell.

The system log is all I can see in this total darkness. What does it mean by "discipline?" Like a specific talent?

Hmm...didn't Mater Tenebrarum say something about this? She recommended I choose vision. I can't cook if I lose my sense of smell, and I can't pick any of these options without something to replace them. Vision is the only option for me right now.

Discipline: You have selected vision.

Searching for similar existing Medium race...not found.

Selecting race from list of sole beings...confirming goddess's intervention...complete.

An independent outer one race...evolution to the sole being known as "The Drifting, Expanding One" is now possible.

What could that be? I'll check its description and stats.

The Drifting, Expanding One:

You will evolve from a zombie into a being with astonishing regenerative abilities.

Your form is something dark red, endlessly increasing and growing.

Just like your brethren, your ability to travel to the living world is controlled by Stellura.

Your true power will only activate in dominions ruled by Stellura.

Despite this, the living world will still find your powers breathtaking.

Base stats:

HP: S

MP: S

Strength: A

Dexterity: E

Stamina: S

Agility: F/C (S)

Intelligence: C

Spirit: A

Resistance: SSS

Unique: SSS

Physique: Max

What does it mean by "something dark red?" Either way, this looks like a very strong evolution. The Resistance and Unique stats are as high as they can go.

Huh? I'm hanging in the air...

Incarnation: Monk of the Medium

A human avatar you embody when you're above ground.

A blind nun who exists close to the gods as she prays.

For what does she pray? For what does she ask?

Base stats:

HP: S

MP: S

Strength: B

Dexterity: D

Stamina: A

Agility: D/E (A)

Intelligence: C

Spirit: A

Resistance: SSS

Unique: SSS

Physique: Sma

“Avatar”? Well, I won't think too much about that right now.

In other words, my true form—a drifting, expanding thing—will wait in the Medium while I'm in this body.

So I'd be playing as the Monk of the Medium, making those stats the most important ones. Let's see how that would work...

I compare my current race and incarnation stats, finding that my HP and MP have been boosted by one grade. Strength is boosted by three grades, Dexterity is reduced by one grade, and Stamina is increased by one grade. My ground

Agility stat is increased two grades, and I'm not sure about my midair Agility. My Intelligence is lowered one grade, Spirit is boosted two grades, while Resistance and Unique are increased three grades. Physique hasn't changed at all.

I'm glad I've gained Agility on par with that of other people on the surface, but this midair Agility is a mystery. What are the parentheses for? I assume I have to meet some sort of requirement, but I'll have to look into that later.

For now, it seems like my stats aren't below those of a human anymore.

I might have less Dexterity and Agility, as far as numbers go, but I'd like to know why my Dexterity decreased in the first place.

Outer ones have the same stats as humans. How humble of them!

Since I have no other options available, I select the evolution.

Now evolving from Aversa Princess to The Drifting, Expanding One...

Updating race skills...

Highest Undead of the Underworld has become Low Independent Race.

Underworld Royalty and Royal Privilege have become Outer One.

Super HP Regen and Super MP Regen have become Larva of the Other God.

Clad in Death has become Bringer of Madness.

Physical Immunity has become High Physical Immunity.

Special Regen has become Special Resuscitation.

Flinch Resistance has become Active Cells.

Arbitrator has become Soul Harvest.

Adding new race skills...

High Magic Immunity...acquired.

Coordinate Float...acquired.

Ars Magna...acquired.

Sphere Clemas Waver...acquired

Relentless Savage Ones...acquired.

Incarnation Form...acquired.

True Form...acquired.

Confirming the goddess Stellura's intervention... You have been granted the works of the gods.

Aforgomon...granted.

Your occupations have been updated.

Your attributes have been updated.

...Evolution complete.

You may now rebuild your character due to your updated race tree.

Due to your low race level, you cannot use all of your powers. You will be partially restricted.

By fulfilling special requirements, you have achieved "Title: Outer One."

Your equipment has been optimized.

The Medium has been added to your domain. You will respawn in your domain.

Wow, the log filled up my whole screen. It sure looks like I've become a squirming, dark red "something," all right. Thank you so much, Management.

Should I call myself a floating ball of flesh? I have no real defined shape. I would believe you if you told me this was a slime's evolved form. Perhaps I appear to be made of flesh because I used to be a zombie? I feel like they could have done away with that part entirely. Who wants to see a monster like this? At least I'm not bright pink or something, I suppose.

The Drifting, Expanding One... Does that mean I'm going to keep getting

bigger? Is that also why it feels like my “domain” has become an isolated part of outer space? There’s nothing around me whatsoever.

I wonder where my equipment went. I’m not wearing any of it now that I’m just a big ball. My physique stat is “Max,” meaning I’m over three meters tall, and I don’t have any limbs either. I don’t even know how to move. Ah, now I see. Moving on the ground creates some sort of trail, one even more disgusting than what slimes leave, but I do move pretty quickly while I’m floating in the air.

Now I need to check my stats and skills, find where my equipment went, and then maybe do a rebuild after that.

Name: Anastasia Atropos Nemeseia

Race: The Drifting, Expanding One Lv. 40

Incarnation: Monk of the Medium, Female

Occupations: Agent of the Goddess, Ruler of the Underworld Official titles: Clergy, Supreme Arbitrator

Class: Outer One

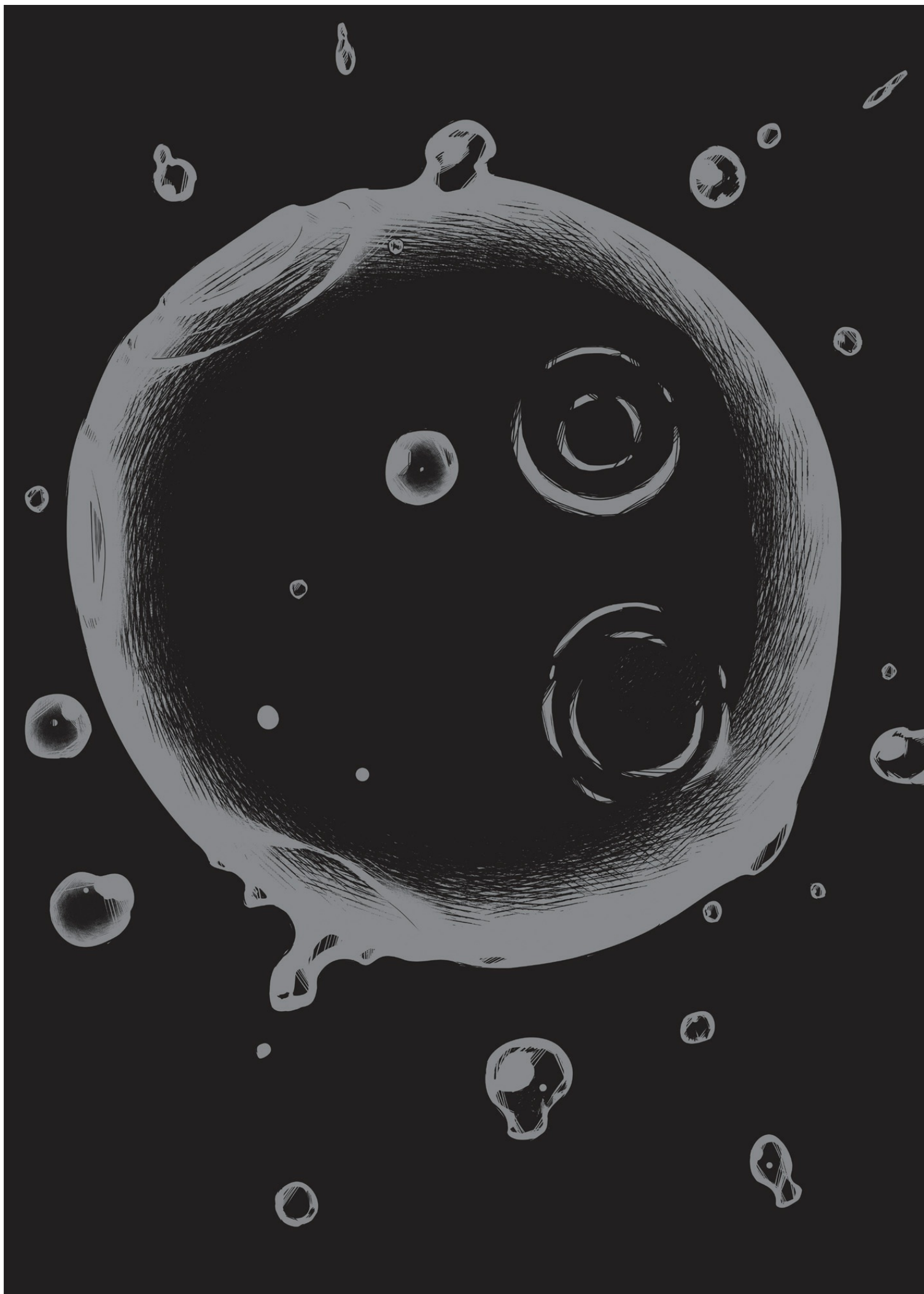
Order: Low Independent Race

Family: Stellura

Genus: Sole Being

Species: The Drifting, Expanding One

Let’s see. There’s a lot more information about incarnations now that my race has changed. Agent of the Goddess and Clergy are new too, and since I don’t have an attribute listed, I must have lost mine.



It looks like there're more classifications to describe my race now. I wonder if that's how it's used in taxonomy. It goes "class, order, family, genus, species" now. I bet that has to do with the message about Ms. Fairellen I just received.

S-Stellura is my family...? I'm sure they mean that I worship her. I should be able to figure that out once I go back and use Identify on the Pup Lord. Right now, I don't have time to get flustered.

Outer one:

The name of the goddess's agents, just as it is the name of a race of monsters.

Your powers will affect residents more than anyone else, but the effects depend on your personal faith.

I can sort of guess where this is going, since I worship Stellura, but I don't have any accurate information on what the effects will be.

It's hard to understand my skills like this. I should change the way they're displayed. Let's see... The effects are separated now, it seems.

There's lots to read about, but moments like these are what makes video games so fun.

From Highest Undead of the Underworld to Low Independent Race

You may no longer acquire elemental magic outside of Light and Dark attributes and their branches.

Damage received from four main elements: 1.2×

Damage received from Light and Dark magic: 0.5×

Light and Dark Magic Boost: Maximum

Increased effectiveness of HP Regen skills: Maximum

Invulnerable to critical hits.

Invulnerable to environmental damage.

Nullifies physical and mental status ailments.

Does not require food or sleep.

Hang on. Isn't this kind of a downgrade? Well, I went from "highest" to "low," so maybe this was unavoidable. My base stats did get better, and I look forward to my next evolution too.

Let's see... I can no longer learn Fire, Water, Air, or Earth spells. They've been grayed out in the UI, meaning I can no longer unlock their derivations either. My weakest elements do less damage to me now, but the number of elements I'm weak against have increased. Dark absorption decreases to half, but so does Light. I see both Dark and Light magic are stronger now too.

It seems I can use Holy Magic on myself now that my race tree has changed.

From Underworld Royalty and Royal Privilege to Outer One

***Party members receive a boost to all stats when you are their leader.
The rate of increase changes based on skill level and party size.***

Light-and Dark-attribute users in the party receive a further boost to all stats.

All party members receive less Light and Dark damage in accordance with skill level.

This skill is for leading parties, and it looks like it's a combination of Underworld Royalty and Royal Privilege. I can probably think of this as a simple upgrade. It's improved to affect both Light and Dark now. I'm not sure how big the buff to the other party members' stats is, but I never knew that before either, so it's not a big deal.

From Super HP Regen and Super MP Regen to Larva of the Other God

Restores HP and MP in accordance with skill level.

Losing a body part will instantly start a regeneration animation. Five seconds after injury, the body part will be fully restored.

This is a combination of Super HP Regen and Super MP Regen. I can still lose body parts like immortals and Undead, but it sounds like I'll be able to instantly recover them now. This is definitely a big improvement.

I'll have to give my dark parts to Mr. Skelly and Mr. Alf.

From Clad in Death to Bringer of Madness

Activates when you enter an enemy's line of sight or attack another party.

Their instincts will evoke feelings of terror in them.

Grants status ailments: fainting, silence, fear, madness, instant death.

Status ailment infliction rate increase, in accordance with skill level: fainting, silence, fear, madness, instant death.

A status ailment strength boost is activated every 10 levels. Current: 1, Maximum: 6.

So it's gone from "fatal poison, curse, weakness, instant death" to "fainting, silence, fear, madness, instant death."

It's a skill that unleashes indiscriminate terror. Honestly, it sounds impossible to use. Touch activation would be one thing, but as soon as someone sees you? Walking around in town with this skill turned on sounds like a fun time. Not that I plan on doing that.

This must be the Pup Lord's aura, or whatever it was he told me about at the church.

From Physical Immunity to High Physical Immunity

If a target's attack skill level is lower than your High Physical Immunity skill level, all physical damage is negated.

Physical Immunity used to do the same thing when the attacker's skill level was half or less of my own, so this is another clear upgrade. High Physical Immunity's skill level is halved from what it was before, but that doesn't mean I can't use it in the same way.

From Special Regen to Special Resuscitation

Provides a significant boost to all restoration.

This is probably just a higher-tier skill. I don't have much to say about it.

From Flinch Resistance to Active Cells

Halves the effects of unique status ailments inflicted on you.

Restoration rate increases the longer you've been engaged in battle.

Automatic restoration and friendly restoration effects will be increased steadily during all combat.

My zombie race skill has been completely replaced.

I like the sound of this new one, but I don't really understand the first half. What's a unique status ailment? I'll check the help menu. There are physical, mental, and "other" status ailments, but I have no idea what "other" could be or what effects it has. That will have to go unanswered for now.

From Arbitrator to Soul Harvest

Ten percent of HP damage is also inflicted as MP damage.

However, only a maximum of 0.1 percent of the target's maximum MP can be taken per hit.

Damage changes in accordance with soul color as seen through Darkness and Light Vision.

Brighter souls result in a damage reduction, while darker souls get a damage increase.

You are one of the few allowed to interfere with souls by forcibly sending them to the Nether.

A maximum of 0.1 percent? That's not much at all, but I suppose it's better than nothing. Okay, what's next? High Magic Immunity is just the magic version of High Physical Immunity, so I'll skip that one.

Coordinate Float

Manipulating space allows you to float.

To a human, this should be impossible. But to the outer ones devoted to Stellura, floating is as normal as breathing.

Unlike with Suspension Ability or Float, you can tread through the air just as you would on land.

So is this skill why I'm currently floating?

I don't really know how to use this one yet, since I'm not taking a human form. I'll have to test it later.

Ars Magna

Summoned servants will be granted your skills in accordance with your skill level.

Capacity for Secret Art of Necromancy will increase with time.

Capacity used in Secret Art of Necromancy is reduced. Capacity lost when a servant dies is reduced.

This has separate effects from Underworld Royalty. It's even stronger too.

Automatic capacity regeneration is a big plus, but does it use my own body to regenerate? No, I won't think about that. I reject such an idea!

Sphere Clemas Waver

Produces up to thirteen spheres of various sizes around your body.

These spheres will automatically initiate counterattacks when fighting at close range.

Though they attack, they will not defend you. However, hitting them yourself will cause you damage.

Initiates a special effect when activated.

The tentacles that come with this skill are modified by Rope and its branch skills.

Ah, this skill must cause that animation where parts of Stellura's body separate and reattach.

I seem to have...three spheres? I can only count three right now, at least. Instead of revolving around me, they're constantly separating and reattaching, making them hard to track. They're each a different size too, though they're dark red in color just like my body.

I don't know how often they'll counterattack on their own, nor how durable they are. I'll investigate this later too.

Relentless Savage Ones

You are able to make parts of your body emerge from space at random.

These body parts will take various forms.

Potential uses:

Bind (coiling around), bind (biting), stabbing, blunt attacks, any arts through Rope.

It looks like I can stick my tentacles anywhere within the range of Space Recognition Expansion—essentially, my field of vision. I'm not sure how much damage they deal, but I doubt it's very much. I bet they're very versatile, though, which makes them a powerful weapon.

The problem is that they're difficult to control. It's not something I can practice in real life, obviously, so this skill requires further practice rather than further investigation.

Incarnation Form

This skill allows you to create an avatar so you can move with ease above ground.

You cannot exist in both forms at the same time, so when controlling your incarnation, your true form is left undefended.

Three types of creation are possible.

Create Incarnation:

Create and control a body made for use above ground.

Restrictions prevent you from using your true powers.

Your incarnation will wear nothing more than undergarments in this character creator.

Create Dishabille Incarnation:

Create and control a lightly dressed body for use above ground.

Restrictions prevent you from using your true powers.

Your incarnation will be partially equipped in this character creator, excluding weapons and accessories.

Extract Fatigues Tear Incarnation:

Create and control a fully armed body for use above ground.

Restrictions prevent you from using your true powers.

Your incarnation will be fully equipped in this character creator, including weapons and accessories.

I see...I think?

Ah, it looks like my equipment is still equipped to the proper slots. Is this skill meant to be a shortcut so there's no need to make all those adjustments? I assume I'll be using the fully armed version much more than anything else.

True Form

Summon your true body to the location of your incarnation.

You cannot use this skill without the goddess's permission.

This certainly seems scary. I bet this skill is for some sort of quest. There wouldn't be much meaning to having an incarnation if I could use this all the time.

So the skill remains locked unless I've received Stellura's permission. It's currently in a grayed-out state.

Now the biggest question remaining are these "works of the gods."

Aforgomon

These chains imprison those who incur the wrath of the goddess.

They perish after enduring a painful, endless torture, only to remain imprisoned even after death.

This skill's success rate depends on the difference between you and your target's level and stats, as well as their karma.

Should you use this skill successfully, you will bind your target and deal constant Fire damage, regardless of the target's defensive abilities.

This is a death sentence. The target is completely prevented from moving, and should they fail to escape within three minutes, their death is guaranteed.

You cannot use this skill without the goddess's permission.

Aforgomon is the name of one incarnation of Yog-Sothoth. Supposedly, he's the ruler of time.

Putting that aside, this seems like a flavor skill to be used in some quest. I hope I never have to use it, though. Naturally, this one is grayed out too.

That's the extent of my new skills. I'm really looking forward to using Sphere Clemas Waver and Relentless Savage Ones. There appears to be ways to combine the two.

I'll look over my equipment now that I've located it. The icons alone make me think it's changed quite a bit too. The names have gone from "guardianship" to "grace."

I think I'll make a fully armed incarnation now.

A piece of my body detaches and takes a humanoid shape. As it's forming, my Space Recognition Expansion switches to center around the incarnation.

I see... The body's base form is certainly a human. Its equipment is also quite different.

To put it bluntly, it's clad in the robes of a fictional friar. The outfits worn by clergy in works of fiction always really accentuate the body's shape, which would be unthinkable in real life, of course. The clergy in this game don't wear tight clothing either.

Then again, female adventurers have armor made to fit their bodies, so it's not as if there're no formfitting outfits at all. The clothes come out that way when you prioritize ease of movement and making them avoid catching on things, like when traveling through the woods. It's a matter of life and death, after all.

Regardless, I accept that this clergy outfit is different from real life, but I do wonder why it doesn't look like the other clergy members' robes in this game. I suppose we *do* have very different roles, though.

[Equipment-Armor] Friar's Robes of Grace

Rarity: GO Quality: S+ Durability: — These robes, heavily affected by Stellura's powers, are granted to her devoted followers.

They may appear thin, but they are surprisingly protective.

Having received divine protection of life, these robes protect the wearer from outside invaders and relieve the wearer's fatigue.

Due to them being created by a god, their material is unknown to mortals.

Appraisal Lv. 10

DEF: △ MDEF: △

Affected by skills: Cloth

Appraisal Lv. 20

HP Recovery Boost: Great

MP Recovery Boost: Great

It looks like my armor type has changed from Light Armor to Cloth. The outfit

seems to consist of layers. There's a light gray dress with a short skirt, then a black, monk-like robe over the top. The inner layer fits my body, while everything below my waist is a bit looser. The robe itself is a sleeveless design with exposed shoulders. My chest is bursting at the seams.

The robe drapes down in the front around my waist, but I have my miniskirt underneath, so you can't catch a glimpse of anything you shouldn't. Only my thighs are visible. The black part hangs down to my ankles, but the front draping part only reaches my shins.

My thighs end up being exposed here and there. This was definitely intentional. I feel like they went out of their way to design it this way. I'm also still in my knee-high socks since my undergarments didn't change at all.

The inner dress is a light gray, almost white, while the outer robe is black, embroidered with green and gold. When you think of clergy robes, you usually think of nuns dressed in black and white. This outfit is much fancier in comparison.

[Equipment-Armor] Blindfold of Grace

Rarity: GO Quality: S+ Durability: — This blindfold, heavily affected by Stellura's powers, is granted to friars undergoing training.

While the blindfold locks the wearer's sight away, it sharpens their remaining senses in exchange.

Due to it being created by a god, its material is unknown to mortals.

Appraisal Lv. 10

DEF: △ MDEF: △

Affected by skills: Cloth

Appraisal Lv. 20

Chant Speed Increase: Great

Space Recognition Expansion Boost: Great

Sense of Balance Boost: Great

Four Senses Boost: Great

My crown has transformed into a blindfold. Does that mean I should have a wimple? I think that's what those are called. I don't have anything covering my head.

So this blindfold strengthens my Space Recognition along with my other four senses? I can't take it off, though... Quite frankly, this is basically a curse.

The blindfold consists of fabric wrapped around my eyes, though I have no idea how it's staying up there. It just disappears before it even reaches the back of my head. How mysterious. That's a fantasy game for you.

[Equipment-Armor] Arm Stockings of Grace

Rarity: GO Quality: S+ Durability: — These detached sleeves, part of the friar's robe set, are heavily affected by Stellura's powers.

They allow the wearer to move their arms with more power and dexterity.

Due to them being created by a god, their material is unknown to mortals.

Appraisal Lv. 10

DEF: △ MDEF: △

Affected by skills: Cloth

Appraisal Lv. 20

Strength Boost: Great

Dexterity Boost: Great

Oh my. I get a strength increase too. My stats keep improving little by little.

These sleeves are something you see on anime characters a lot. They stretch from my upper arms down to my wrists but are entirely separated from the

robes. They're the same color as my robes and a bit flared at the ends.

[Equipment-Armor] Half Boots of Grace

Rarity: GO Quality: S+ Durability: — These half boots are heavily affected by Stellura's powers.

Blessed with divine protection of fate, these boots support the wearer when they walk.

Due to them being created by a god, their material is unknown to mortals.

Appraisal Lv. 10

DEF: △ MDEF: △

Affected by Skills: Cloth

Appraisal Lv. 20

Agility Boost: Great

Way of Walking: Great

Wow, I even get an Agility upgrade too? This means all my stats have been improved, so long as my other equipment buffs haven't been erased, of course.

The black boots reach up to my shins. I can tell they were made for functionality, since they're so easy to walk in.

I feel like all shoes in this world were made for ease of walking, judging by what I've seen the residents wear. That must be because of all the monsters around.

[Equipment-Armor] Cloak of Grace

Rarity: GO Quality: S+ Durability: — This clergy member's cape is heavily affected by Stellura's powers.

Blessed with divine protection of space-time, this cloak defends the

wearer from the dangers of the natural world.

Due to it being created by a god, its material is unknown to mortals.

Appraisal Lv. 10

DEF: △ MDEF: △

Appraisal Lv. 20

Waterproofing: Great

Binding Resistance: Great

Airflow: Great

This is my brand-new cloak, which could also be called a cape. It's equipped in my back slot.

It fastens above my chest, drapes over my shoulders slightly, and then hangs against my back. You can't even tell that my dress is sleeveless with this cloak on, as long as I don't move.

The cloak is black with green and gold accents, hanging all the way down to my ankles. The stitching is gold as well.

[Equipment-Storage] Belt Pouch of Grace

Rarity: GO Quality: S+ Durability: — This belt and waist pouch are heavily affected by Stellura's powers.

Blessed with the divine protection of time, this pouch can store a large quantity of items.

Due to it being created by a god, its material is unknown to mortals.

Appraisal Lv. 10

DEF: △ MDEF: △

Appraisal Lv. 20

Storage Expansion: Great (30)

Storage Capacity: 8

Storage Volume: Great

What incredible storage! That's lovely. Not that I've been running out of room lately.

I'm especially pleased that the storage expansion went from four to eight. I'll just ignore the fact that a belt pouch could never realistically contain that much.

The belt cinches around my waist, emphasizing my figure even more. I'd definitely be lost without it. It also functions as my sword belt.

[Equipment-Accessory] Armlets of Grace

Rarity: GO Quality: S+ Durability: — These simple armlets are heavily affected by Stellura's powers.

They protect the wearer from malicious acts.

Due to them being created by a god, their material is unknown to mortals.

Appraisal Lv. 10

DEF: △ MDEF: △

Appraisal Lv. 20

Spirit Boost: Great

[Equipment-Accessory] Anklets of Grace

Rarity: GO Quality: S+ Durability: — These simple anklets are heavily affected by Stellura's powers.

Blessed with the divine protection of space-time, these anklets allow the wearer to move through the air with ease.

Due to them being created by a god, their material is unknown to mortals.

Anklets can be attached to the instep of shoes.

Appraisal Lv. 10

DEF: △ MDEF: △

Appraisal Lv. 20

Midair Aptitude: Great

Let's see. My bangles turned to armlets, which are accessories worn on the upper arm. They're made of metal just like the detached sleeves, and they take an accessory slot instead of my arm equipment slot.

I also received some new anklets. They're attached to my boots instead of my ankles, however.

Gaining the anklets means I lose one ring slot. What happened there...? Ah, it removed my Ring of Dexterity. I'll replace my Stamina ring with the Dexterity ring instead. I have two rings each for Dexterity, Intelligence, and Spirit—three of celestite and three of hematite.

[Equipment-Accessory] Ring of Grace

Rarity: GO Quality: S+ Durability: — This simple ring is heavily affected by Stellura's powers.

By gathering excess magical energy, this ring is capable of producing arc orbs.

Due to it being created by a god, its material is unknown to mortals.

Appraisal Lv. 10

DEF: △ MDEF: △

Appraisal Lv. 20

Using this ring as an extra accessory slot will cause the wearer to enter a state of meditation. In other words, it's equivalent to two rings.

Provides the effects of using Meditation without any of the

drawbacks.

My ring has gone from making clear orbs to arc orbs. It's practically a production item that allows me to skip magic stones and go without using Liberta.

The names of the rest of my equipment have also changed, and the modifiers went from "medium" to "great," but that's it. Actually, my athame now deals physical damage based on my Strength stat and magic damage based on my Spirit stat. It pretty much relies on my highest stats now.

The Book of Eibon and Silver Key didn't change. I suppose they're separate from all of this.

It looks like I can change Light Armor to Cloth for my rebuild, and that should just about do it.

I'll also take the Rope skill while I'm at it. It branches from Whip and can be useful for my tentacles.

Ah, I haven't checked what common race skills I received at level 40. I didn't check the arts I gained during the event either.

Hmm, it looks like I can learn things like Poison Claw and Poison Fang, which inflict status ailments, but I think I'll skip those for now. I don't need the skills that grant resistance to all status ailments either.

Here's what I'm more interested in.

Magic Particle Encroachment

Increases the rate of status ailment infliction.

I'll take this passive skill.

I also gained arts for Book, Space Magic, and Secret Art of Necromancy.

Quick Cast: A passive art that reduces chant time.

Gravitas Maneuver:

Control gravitational pull and repulsive forces. Can only be used on yourself or targets you touch.

Teleconductor:

Give orders from within your mind, regardless of distance.

Magic Catalyst contains lots of passive arts. I can only be grateful they weren't active arts or I'd end up having to spend time filtering out the useless skills—like Corner Smite.

I'll need to test out this Space Magic art. It sounds very fun. If I adjust a person's gravitational pull, doesn't that mean items will start to fly at them? I'll have to be careful about where I choose to test this.

The Secret Art of Necromancy art is simple but much appreciated.

That's about it. All that's left is to try things out for real and see how they work. But it will be easier to do that once I'm back in a normal game area.

For now, I'll return to a public area of the Medium. The private areas are the lands belonging to each race, while the public area is the old castle, open to everyone.

I leave my true form behind and teleport with my incarnation.

The Pup Lord was waiting for me. “We welcome you, comrade.”

“Should I go around and greet everyone?” I ask him.

“No, they already know of you, so that is not necessary. There are not that many beings here.”

“Then I’d like to test out my powers before anything else.”

“Please do. If you are going to the surface, you ought to remove your aura,” he warns me.

“Understood. By the way, my occupations now say I’m an agent of the goddess and a ruler of the underworld. Am I supposed to keep doing both?”

“We are also agents of the goddess, so that is not a problem. If you are already a ruler of the underworld, then I am sure you may continue. How was the area of the Medium that you received?”

“There was nothing in it. It was like a separate vacuum where my true form exists.”

“Is that so? Are your powers a burden?”

“It’s not really a pattern. I just keep expanding, or so it seems, but I don’t know how big I’ll end up in the end.”

“I see. Then you must be expected to use your incarnation in the underworld.”

“I’ll be happy to do so. For now, I’m going to go test out what’s changed. It’ll be easier for me to understand that way.”

“Very well. Come back when you please,” the Lord tells me.

First up, I want to head to Ms. Primura’s shooting range and see just how much my blindness has changed things.

But before that...

Attribute: ?

Weakness: ?

Resistance: ?

Class: Outer One

Order: Low Ruler Race

Family: Stellura

Genus: Tindalos

Species: Lord of Tindalos

Status: Normal

I see. "Family" must refer to who you worship. So the Pup Lord and I are both part of Stellura's family!

Now I can breathe easy and return to the world of the living.

I head to Ms. Primura's shooting range from Starting Town's plaza. Oh, I'm Moses again splitting the sea of people. That makes things easy. I can walk much faster this way! How wonderful! Or was I just too slow all this time?

If the same calculations apply, now that Space Recognition Expansion is at level 40, I should be able to see at a radius of at least 120 meters. I decide to test it out right away.

Hmm...that radius doubles when I'm blind? That makes my current sight radius reach 160 meters, with a diameter of 320 meters. Better than I'd thought. That puts longbow users within my range of sight, but I still need to increase that a bit for Japanese bow users.

This also means my blindfold's modifiers aren't working to increase my range. I wonder what conditions activate them. Is it just the game's way of providing more assistance? If so, it'll be hard to feel its effects when I use it.

Since no one else is around, I'll test my tentacles next.

They can bind by coiling or biting, inflict stabbing attacks, sweep at enemies

with a blunt attack, and use Rope arts. I see.

The squeezing and biting binds deal continuous damage, and the tentacles themselves have a set amount of time they can appear. They go back to their starting point whenever the hole in space is closed. I suppose that's better than having them torn off.

However, I notice the bind itself and icon look slightly different. The icon... Ah, I see. The squeezing and biting binds are for grappling the enemy. They'll have to resist them differently than the magic binds. Does that also mean it's a battle of strength against my true form? If that's the case, rest in peace, enemies. I should use the tentacles' physical binds from here on out instead of magical binds, depending on the enemy, of course.

As expected, the tentacles don't deal much stabbing or blunt damage. Quite frankly, it's as pointless as fighting empty-handed. These inhuman lumps of flesh are just smacking people with all the strength they have. C'mon, put some muscle in it!

Only one tentacle can appear at a time, by the way. I don't know if you would call this its "skin texture," but surprisingly, you can change it to slippery, slimy, sticky, or smooth. I think I'll keep mine smooth. If I want to harass someone, I'll make it slimy or sticky. That sounds like it'd be simply wonderful.

It doesn't look like a snake when biting someone, like you might expect. Instead, it's like the tip of a worm opening up its four flaps to reveal all the little teeth inside. It reminds me of a certain worm monster you might have seen in a movie.

As they stick to me and separate again and again, I realize I have no way to test their automatic counterattacks right now. I think Lana might be able to help me out with that.

These spheres—bubbles, maybe? No, I'll stick with spheres—of various sizes turn skin-colored when I'm in my incarnated form. They must depend on my own skin color. However, they also catch the light like soap bubbles, so sometimes it's hard to describe exactly what color they are.

They emerge from random parts of my body, change shape like soap bubbles, and drift around in the air. Once they get a certain distance away from me, they

return and sink into my body. This process repeats over and over again. It's strange how they don't leave any holes in my body.

Could this be why I was receiving the Moses treatment in town?

Anyway, it's almost time for dinner. I'll return to the villa, finish up my business, and then ask Lana to help me test my abilities.

I leave Ms. Primura's shop and teleport to the villa with my Silver—huh? Oh, I can teleport instantly now! I'm really feeling the effects of leveling up.

But I *do* like the animation it shows when I use the Silver Key. I guess I should keep using it in that case.

"I see you've undergone quite a change..." a lady-in-waiting says when I arrive.

"I've become an outer one," I explain. "However, I'm still a ruler of the underworld, so I'll continue to take care of this place from here on out. Thank you for working with me."

"I was hoping you would say that. I understand completely."

"Anyway, I'm going to head to the other side for a bit."

"Of course. I'll inform the others of your evolution while you're away."

"Thank you."

All right. Time for dinner.

"Ah, you got to level 40, right, Sis? Did you go to the adventurers' union?"

"Huh? No, I didn't."

"You'll get a special little reward if you do!"

"Is that right?"

"They make you a C-rank adventurer if you've completed enough quests, and they start treating you like a real adventurer and everything."

"I see. I do their quests when I go hunting. What changed, exactly?"

"Well, I basically just got a system message that told me the tutorial was over, I guess?"

“Tutorial...?”

“It says ‘If fighting is how you make a living, you become a full-fledged adventurer at level 40. Now that you’re level 40, you can make it to any town you please. But you’re still not strong enough to explore dungeons or uncharted territory.’ That’s the gist of it.”

“In other words, you’re not supposed to go there until you get to level 40?”

“Everyone’s rushing to figure that out right about now.”

I’d been busy evolving and checking out my new skills. I’ll have to visit the union tomorrow. If a worker there calls out to me, it means I meet the requirements. If I don’t get singled out, then I haven’t met them yet.

“By the way, your thread on the forum’s really active, Sis. They said you evolved?”

“I’m currently figuring out what’s changed. All my equipment is different now, so there’s lots to do.”

“Oh! I’m gonna change my equipment too! I’m getting a military uniform made of royal mana silk!”

“You’re finally changing it? Royal mana silk too, huh? You must have spent a lot.”

“The problem isn’t really the price, just the stock. There’s a wait-list to get it now.”

“Right, those magic domesticated silkworms...”

“The people who’ve spotted you are only posting that you look ‘sexy’ and ‘crazy.’ Nothing else.”

“The ‘sexy’ part is probably because I have a blindfold and anime-style friar’s robe. As for ‘crazy’... Well, I understand.”

That would be thanks to Sphere Clemas Waver’s special effect, I’m sure.

I open up my connect board to look at my character. Ugh, I’m in that big sphere form! I’ll see if there’s something I can do about that... Ah, I can change it to my incarnation. The little spheres are appearing around me too. I let Rina

see.

“Oh yeah, you see this in fantasy stuff a lot,” she says. “The top part of your body is dressed in tight clothes, which is sexy, but... Whoa, this is crazy! What’re those things coming out? Eeeek! I doubt the devs were prepared for a chest of those proportions. You even have a blindfold and everything. They’re going all out to create a certain look, huh?”

“Your big sis has become an outer one, after all. And that’s a skill effect.”

“Ah, so you’re not an organic being anymore.”

“An organic being? I do have flesh, so I guess I’m sort of organic. I’m not sure I fit the full definition, but I do seem to undergo cell division. I wonder what I’m made of, and what I keep using to expand in that outer space environment. Mythical beings are so mysterious.”

“Hm? Are mythical beings classified as living things?”

“You know what? Let’s just stop talking about this.”

“You’re right. That’s enough.”

There’s no greater way to preserve one’s sanity than to stop thinking altogether.

I finish dinner, take my bath, and log in again.

I head to see Lana first.

“Lana.”

“Yes? Yes?! Oh, I see you’re no longer a human, Madame.”

“I feel like that was always the case, being Undead and all.”

“I suppose so. What is it that you need?”

“Will you help me investigate some things?”

“Investigate what?” she asks.

“I learned a new skill that automatically counterattacks when someone strikes me at close range.”

“How fun! Let’s get right to it.”

Lana eagerly agrees to help with my research. After some testing with her, I walk away with lots of good data.

First off, the spheres don’t activate if I dodge the attacks. They’re triggered by getting hit, blocking, or parrying. Most importantly, they only activate about thirty percent of the time, and they randomly use either stabbing or blunt attacks.

The detached spheres clearly grow into tentacles much bigger than their original sphere size, but I’ve decided not to question it. It’s simply a mystery of the outer ones.

The power of the counterattack also changes based on your opponent. Lana changed her equipment and even swapped with other people’s items, resulting in a slight change in counterattacks.

In other words, it’s a fraction of my (or my incarnation’s, most likely) physical attack strength (unarmed) + opponent’s physical attack strength (with equipment). I just don’t know how big that fraction is.

The tentacles also attack very quickly, counterattacking at almost the same instant I get hit. Even Lana was having trouble evading them, so she had to block the hits instead.

This skill could be called a multi-strike, low damage type of attack. You would think this type of thing is easier to evade than block, but even Lana could barely dodge the counterattacks.

That means, theoretically, I can reflect long-range attacks and parry close-range attacks, and eventually, I’ll win every time.

...Hang on. Am I a tank now? How did this happen when I’m supposed to be a magic attacker? I can even heal myself with Holy Magic now too.

Am I a fisticuffs acolyte? I did have “clergy” added to my character description. Perhaps the idea is that I’ll win every battle eventually so long as I keep punching, since I can heal myself in the meantime. I’d certainly be happy if landing my hits is all that matters now.

“I know how to describe you, Madame. You’re the type of fighter who should be brought onto the battlefield to clinch the win. Of course, you’ll be a bit further back from the front lines, like something of a decoy. But you’ll be a great nuisance to the enemy. If they ignore you, you’re guaranteed to slaughter them.”

How strange. Just how will this build develop next?

“As a general rule, you should play passively because of your Reflection and counterattacks. You’ll naturally draw aggro—especially if you’re alone. Only that’ll be your enemies’ doom. Fear will drive them all toward you, even if they know they don’t have a chance. Their only alternative will be to do nothing, but that’d gives you the chance to take out their leader or attack with your spells. It’s game over for them, so long as there’s no one stronger than you in this battle.”

Ah, so even if I’m defeated, it’s just my incarnation that dies. I can always create another one. Even a lost body part just regrows in five seconds.

In conclusion, anyone who picks a fight with an outer one gets what’s coming to them. Excellent.

Right, I’m going to go to bed for the day. I’ll do the rest of my research tomorrow!

Official BBS 10

[Everyone loves] Princess Thread [Princess]

1. Princess Watchman

This is a thread exclusively for talk about Ms. Anastasia, the player.

Please don't write anything creepy here. There's a chance she might see it.

However, I'm sure Management will get rid of you quickly enough.

Now, let's discuss the princess.

She's the real-life big sister of the halberd-using Akirina. Both sisters are gorgeous.

She's currently an extra race from the zombie evolution called "Aversa Princess."

That unique dress of hers is extra equipment, and it doesn't drop when she's killed by another player.

She has a lot of fans, so if you've got PK on the brain, you better be prepared in more ways than one.

The princess is incredibly strong herself too.

The reason for her large fanbase is simply that she's beautiful, gentle, and powerful.

She also contributes lots of valuable information to the forums.

She was the one who discovered extra races, extra equipment, and skills like Superior Magic Assist, Secret Art of Necromancy, Space Magic, and Yin and Yang.

Her main weapons are her athame and book. She fights like a Jedi. Your weapon will snap if you try to imitate her.

The princess's production skills are Cooking and Alchemy. She possesses

Necromantic Magic.

Her main source of power is Dark Magic, in part because of her race.

Here are the following official videos where you can currently see the princess: TV Commercial 1: Defensive War. Official Trailer 2 - Defensive War Long Cut.

Here is her personal video page:

http://*****/Anastasia That's it for now!

>> **940 Please take over the next thread.**

671. Princess Watchman

The princess was so strong out there.

672. Princess Watchman

That's our princess!

673. Princess Watchman

She always has her eyes closed lately.

674. Princess Watchman

She's probably using the Force, no?

675. Princess Watchman

Are you serious?

676. Princess Watchman

Man, I really wanted that Princess plushie and figurine...

677. Princess Watchman

I got them! The plushie is the perfect size for cuddling!

678. Princess Watchman

Filled with regrets...

679. Princess Watchman

Same...

680. Princess Watchman

I got them thanks to her little sister.

681. Princess Watchman

Is her team the only one that got the princess?

682. Princess Watchman

Yep.

683. Princess Watchman

I heard only one team got the mini-Cecil too.

684. Princess Watchman

Yeah, since he was cutting everyone down.

685. Princess Watchman

Yep.

686. Princess Watchman

So, no more events for the next month?

687. Princess Watchman

What's that? Ms. Fairellen found something.

688. Princess Watchman

I don't know. It sounds like some kind of boost to Identify.

689. Princess Watchman

Whoa, it shows you more detail now! I bet Mr. Studylover will be happy.

690. Princess Watchman

I don't doubt it.

691. Princess Watchman

I wonder where the princess went off to?

742. Princess Watchman

Huh? Hey...guys?! The princess is...!

743. Princess Watchman

The princess is what?!

744. Princess Watchman

Sooooooooo sexy!

745. Princess Watchman

Stop messing with us!

746. Princess Watchman

...Heh.

747. Princess Watchman

Whoa, the princess evolved?!

748. Princess Watchman

For real?!

749. Princess Watchman

She must be at level 40!

750. Princess Watchman

I see! She looks hot!

751. Princess Watchman

Whoa, you're right! I can hardly take it!

752. Princess Watchman

Describe her! Hurry up already!

753. Princess Watchman

She shows less skin now, I think?

754. Princess Watchman

Definitely.

755. Princess Watchman

I think she's wearing a friar's outfit? But not like the kind they wear in churches either in-game or in real life.

756. Princess Watchman

Yeah, definitely a friar's robe.

757. Princess Watchman

It's the fictional kind that clings to her chest for some reason!

758. Princess Watchman

What? Princess is wearing religious garb now?

759. Princess Watchman

She sure is. She had a dramatic change in outfit.

760. Princess Watchman

She's blindfolded too! How insane is that?

761. Princess Watchman

A blindfolded monk?!

762. Princess Watchman

Um, something crazy's coming out of her too.

763. Princess Watchman

Huh? Explain.

764. Princess Watchman

I don't think I can find the words. It's just plain crazy.

765. Princess Watchman

Okay. It's something unexplainable but crazy.

766. Princess Watchman

She's a force of destruction in more ways than one.

767. Princess Watchman

So hot! Yeah, it's crazy. There's nothing else I can say about it.

768. Princess Watchman

Ugh! I’m so jealous of the princess’s body...

769. Princess Watchman

Can’t she share some chest with the rest of us?

770. Princess Watchman

Despite that body, she’s still a minor!

771. Princess Watchman

Oof...

772. Princess Watchman

Ack...

773. Princess Watchman

What a horrible reminder.

774. Princess Watchman

How can she be a clergy member with that chest?

775. Princess Watchman

She’s practically busting out.

776. Princess Watchman

Any man’s eyes are naturally going to drift that way.

777. Princess Watchman

Let’s drop this subject before Management runs over here and smacks us. So what did she evolve into?

778. Princess Watchman

It sounds like a really big jump, but maybe her equipment just changed.

779. Princess Watchman

You can take one look at her and know it’s not just the equipment.

780. Princess Watchman

For real? I can’t see her yet.

781. Princess Watchman

She’s clearly not human anymore...

782. Princess Watchman

But she was already a zombie. Would you still call that a human?

783. Princess Watchman

Ah, there she is! What *is* she?

784. Princess Watchman

Yes, I see now. Crazy sexy!

785. Princess Watchman

Hey, she just disappeared without any sort of animation.

786. Princess Watchman

I feel like Management was going for something very specific with that outfit. Is it just me?

787. Princess Watchman

No, it's definitely not just you.

788. Princess Watchman

It's not like it shows a ton of skin, but I think it's a sleeveless top underneath? Her cloak is covering it up.

789. Princess Watchman

It's even more appealing since the princess is the one wearing it.

790. Anastasia

Hello, everyone. I've evolved into an outer one.

The race is called The Drifting, Expanding One. My human form with the friar's outfit is my incarnation, called the Monk of the Medium.

791. Princess Watchman

Kyaaaah! It's the princess! Wait, Princess?

792. Princess Watchman

We'll have to change the names in the next thread.

793. Princess Watchman

Wait, if you have an incarnation, does that mean you're an outer god?

794. Princess Watchman

So that's why you had those floating sphere things? I understand now.

795. Princess Watchman

Sister Anastasia is pretty hard to say. How do you shorten Anastasia?

796. Princess Watchman

Don't the rich girls have nicknames for her?

797. Anastasia

They call me Stasia or Tasha.

798. Princess Watchman

Got it! Sistasia!

799. Princess Watchman

Um... I don't know...

800. Princess Watchman

Um... Beheaded.

801. Princess Watchman

Sounds like the name's rejected.

802. Princess Watchman

Seriously?

803. Princess Watchman

I've never heard of that creature in the Cthulhu Mythos before. Is that where they're from?

804. Anastasia

I believe it's an original. It's not as if the concept of evolving exists within the Cthulhu Mythos.

805. Princess Watchman

Ah, that's true. They stop evolving in there.

806. Anastasia

It sounded like you might be able to evolve into existing races, but it was different in my case.

807. Princess Watchman

The others probably come from the Cthulhu Mythos.

808. Princess Watchman

I sure am curious about your base stats!

809. Anastasia

HP: S

MP: S

Strength: B

Dexterity: D

Stamina: A

Agility: D/E (A)

Intelligence: C

Spirit: A

Resistance: SSS

Unique: SSS

My true form is honestly just an adornment that sits in its own space, so those stats are from my incarnation.

810. Princess Watchman

Two stats at “A”!

811. Princess Watchman

Stamina is for HP and physical protection, and Spirit is for MP and magic protection, right? You’re like a tank now.

812. Princess Watchman

But then there's her Resistance and Unique stat too.

813. Princess Watchman

Yeah, her evolution itself is unique, right? She'll be dishing out far more status ailments than she takes!

814. Princess Watchman

True. Are there restrictions on those stats?

815. Anastasia

Yes, naturally.

816. Princess Watchman

I knew it.

817. Princess Watchman

By the way, what's with the parentheses for Agility?

818. Princess Watchman

I'm curious too. Her ground Agility is on par with humans, but since her flying Agility isn't at zero, does that mean she can fly?

819. Anastasia

I'm also unsure about that at the moment. I can probably fly under certain conditions, so I plan to investigate that tomorrow when I wake up.

820. Princess Watchman

Whoa, it's already 10 p.m.!

821. Princess Watchman

Today went by really fast. Must be because of the event!

822. Anastasia

It sure did. Good night, everyone.

823. Princess Watchman

Good night!

824. Princess Watchman

Nighty-night.

825. Princess Watchman

See you later!

826. Princess Watchman

You know, I feel like I've seen someone like her before...

827. Princess Watchman

I know, right? Some character's name is on the tip of my tongue.

828. Princess Watchman

Could it be...the Maiden?

829. Princess Watchman

That's it!

830. Princess Watchman

I see. Yeah, she's a lot like the Maiden in Black.

831. Princess Watchman

Lmao, she's a Jedi from a FromSoft Game.

832. Princess Watchman

Damn, I can't wait to see her!

Chapter 12:

Sunday

I WAKE UP, finish my morning routine, and then log in again.

I pick up the consumables from my villa—the items for the church and the items for Ms. Sophie—before heading to the training grounds.

“Lana, there’s something I’d like to test. Would you mind slicing my arm off?”

“I mean, I don’t mind...”

Lana cuts off my left arm—not the first time I’ve felt this sensation.

The arm then returns to tentacle form, wriggles around on the floor, dissolves away, and seems to get absorbed into the floor.

My missing arm is displayed transparently until a new tentacle wriggles out of my shoulder. The tip splits into five fingers and takes the shape of an arm. Naturally, my sleeves and accessories come with it.

“I see. It looks like I don’t take any damage penalties.”

“You’re a true monster now, Madame.”

This is probably the only testing of Larva of the Other God that I need to do. The other part of the skill grants me automatic regeneration.

I don’t think I can test Bringer of Madness here. I’ll have to find a wild enemy out in the world to test it on.

I’ve read information on immunity skills on the BBS already, and the descriptions seemed to explain enough. I’m not even sure I can test these skills in the first place.

Soul Harvester doesn’t need testing either. I think it’s finally time to give Coordinate Float a try.

“That reminds me. Can you fly, Lana?”

“I can float, rather than fly. I’m a spirit body, after all.”

So Lana can float too... I think it's time I try it for myself.

Coordinate Float feels surprisingly stable. All you have to do is focus on where you want to move to, and it almost feels like you're walking on the ground in midair. You can also walk upside down or sideways.

However, with a rank E Agility stat, it's not like I can move very fast. I can fight in the air, but it will be a far cry from dogfighting in a fighter jet.

You can also glide in a standing position without having to move your body at all. It's very surreal. I don't think I'll make use of this mechanic at all. I'm not trying to be a comedian here.

The problem is that I still don't know what the parentheses mean. My best guess is that they relate to Gravitass Maneuver through Space Magic—the art that lets me manipulate the push and pull of gravity. I just don't know what fuels it or how hard it is to control.

But I'll never find out if I don't put it to the test. I activate Gravitass Maneuver...without a keyword, somehow?

I now see an arrow pointing downward on my 3D mental map and the word "default." When I change the direction of the arrow, I start getting dragged that way.

I see. I can change which way gravity pulls things. But what about repulsion? Oh! I've gone weightless. In other words, I'm probably supposed to combine Coordinate Float with Gravitass Maneuver.

I kick the ground in my state of weightlessness and begin to drift upward at a steady speed.

"Ow!"

My head struck an invisible wall. It won't let me go outside of the area.

This drains my MP pretty quickly. I guess I'll have to use Coordinate Float alone, which costs no MP if I just want to float. I switch to that skill and lose my state of weightlessness.

I can descend when using Coordinate Float on its own, but let's see what happens when I also set gravity to pull downward... Yes, that's pretty fast. I can

tell how strong the pull is based on how large the arrow is, but it's not going to be easy to use this method until I get the hang of it.

"You're back, I see," Lana remarks.

"I've figured most of it out. I'm just not sure I can master the art of flying."

Coordinate Float alone uses my E-ranking Agility. If I use Gravitas Maneuver from Space Magic on top of that, my A-ranking Agility stat is applied.

The spell pulls on my body, making me unable to control my posture. But that's fixed with Coordinate Float, and I can increase my speed further with another spell. In other words, Coordinate Float is my main way of maintaining a standing posture, and Space Magic spells adjust my speed.

Kicking off the ground in a state of zero gravity makes me move fast, but using it to keep going forward drains my MP. It's not a very intuitive strategy. It costs much less MP to change what direction I face by using the gravitational pull. That's probably something I'll be doing a lot.

My flying speed alone could surpass that of Ms. Fairellen, the Ecclesith, but I'm certain she's much more skilled at midair battles. If I'm a fighter jet, Ms. Fairellen is a combat helicopter.

There's just one little problem: I don't want to fly in a skirt. I already have my wyvern, so I doubt I'll do much flying myself. Then again, I might use these skills to float over ground-activated traps in dungeons.

If I don't fly much, I'll probably end up forgetting about the skirt issue until it's too late. I'll have to be proactive about flying.

The skills I need to focus on from here on out are Rope and Holy Magic. They should level up quickly, so I want to prioritize getting Rope to the second tier.

My process for Holy Magic is to heal as enemies hit me. This levels up both my automatic regeneration and defensive skills, so it's not a bad strategy. It looks pretty pathetic in a full-dive VR game, but the instanced dungeon in Starting Town doesn't have strong enough enemies for me.

I hear it's hard to level up combat skills once they're in the 40s, so I'll try to get all my non-magic skills up to that level too.

Ah, my equipment set has different effects now. I forgot to look at this part.

Set Effects:

02 Automatic Regeneration: Great

03 Incoming Damage Reduction: Great

04 Reaction Speed Boost: Great

08 Magical Energy Bundling II

12 Automatic Protection II

Wearing two pieces of equipment gives me automatic regeneration. Three reduces the damage I take. Four boosts my reaction speed, and eight grants me Magical Energy Bundling. When I have all twelve pieces on to complete the set, my Automatic Protection activates.

Magical Energy Bundling II

Retain a portion of magical energy when hit with a spell. This does not reduce the damage you take.

Retained magical energy will be added to the next attack spell you cast.

Automatic Protection II

Automatically creates a magic wall to diminish all incoming attacks. Activates at a fixed rate.

Physical attacks cause a red effect against the wall, long-range attacks cause a green effect, and magic attacks cause a blue effect.

Once the wall is activated, 10 percent of received damage and flinch reactions are diminished.

I lost my skill improvements, but I never really understood what they did anyway, so this is fine.

Magic Bundling and Automatic Protection seem nice. However, that flinch reduction seems like it will only be helpful in certain situations. I feel like there could be a tragic outcome if it activated during a multi-hit attack.

Now I'd like to see how Ars Magna changes Secret Art of Necromancy.

If I remember correctly, it makes my Secret Art of Necromancy capacity increase over time, reduces required capacity in summonings, and reduces lost capacity when a servant dies.

As I look over its effects, I realize it hasn't really "changed" things. It's made them worse!

My capacity use isn't changing at all, and now I'm actually losing more capacity when a servant dies.

Their death and purification penalties used to be 10–20 percent and 20–40 percent, respectively. But they're at 40 percent and 70 percent now. Is this because my skill level is so low? I'll have to level it up.

I'll take a note of my capacity before I go to bed tonight, then see how much it's increased by morning.

Actually, I should check something... Yep, I knew it. I don't have Undead Unifier anymore, so they lost their purification immunity. My servants can now fall victim to purification. That's definitely not good.

Suddenly, my Instinct activates. It seems that the Book of Eibon wants something.

New powers have been added to Ars Magna.

Ah, so that's what triggered it.

Ars Magna

Summoned servants will be granted your skills, in accordance with skill level.

Capacity for Secret Art of Necromancy will increase with time.

Capacity used in Secret Art of Necromancy is reduced. Capacity lost when a servant dies is reduced.

You may now use Ceera Squirm to summon wriggling flesh monsters through Secret Art of Necromancy.

There aren't any specifics, which is what I'm really interested in. Maybe Secret Art of Necromancy will show me what I need.

Now what's this...? The base cost for a summoning is (summoner's level \times 10 \times 2) \times 10? That's slightly different. Multipliers aren't possible and the skill relies on the summoner's base level.

Their stats are listed as follows:

Strength: A

Dexterity: F

Stamina: A

Agility: F/E

Intelligence: E

Spirit: E

It looks like the servants are very durable. They can heal themselves too.

This is all very unique. I'll try summoning a servant to decide what skills to equip him with.

A dark red, wriggling mass appears through a slit in space. It undulates, drips to the ground, and expands like a puddle. The liquid then converges, rises, and begins to bubble as it constantly changes its size and shape.

This unit is called a floating stronghold ball of flesh. Just as the name suggests, it's a lump of meat that moves by floating and is highly durable. Chunks of flesh tear away from the stronghold, causing it to spawn offspring. These offspring swarm enemies and self-destruct, according to the description.

The stronghold is capable of moving, producing spawn, and counter-attacking with its tentacles. The spawn are also strongholds, making them nice and durable too. The enemy has to destroy these offspring before there are enough to carry out a suicide bombing.

It's referred to as a "unit" because it's a lot like something from a simulation game. It's a floating stronghold unit that automatically produces self-destructing units.

It's quite big, being a stronghold and all. I see now why it took a 100× increase in cost to summon it. It's even bigger than I am. Actually, can I ride this thing?

It currently uses 8,000 cost to summon this servant, even though the base cost for a wyvern is only 3,200.

"How mysterious," Lana remarks.

"But this thing is still Unit One, isn't he?" I ask.

A tentacle extends from the stronghold and waves at me, which I take to mean he's saying, "Yep! It's me." He even tells me that his spawn are Unit One too. The Unit One offspring just have to charge at enemies, which seems nice and simple. I wonder if they automatically follow targets around.

The offspring are nothing more than small spheres. The floating flesh ball is the size of a house, while the offspring are about the size of volleyballs.

They circle the stronghold like satellites.

"By the way, Madame. Can you take other forms besides humans with your incarnation?"

"Hmmm..."

I'm not sure about that. I'll have to check... Oh, what's this?

"It looks like that's possible."

"Wow, what a nice sphere you've become."

I can become one of the flesh balls right after they've separated. I don't have any skills that limit my forms, so to be frank, there's no need to take this form at all. I can't even use Unparalleled Style like this.

"This sphere is actually quite large."

"It's certainly bigger than your human form. I wonder where you were keeping that sphere all this time?"

"I suppose that might be my chest."

"While your chest is sizable, I don't believe it is *that* sizable, Madame."

"Don't you think it's possible that the density of this body is different? I think it's highly likely that common sense doesn't apply to a being like me when it comes to taking up space."

"That is certainly also true."

Lana is quite sizable in the chest too, by the way. With a nickname like "Sword Princess," it's only natural that she's very attractive.

Anyway, now that the event's over, I want to explore places on the map besides the north and east.

I recall Unit One, and—ah, that's right. I teleport to the Medium and head to the old castle.

"There's something I'd like to ask Nyar. Is he around...?"

Oh, he just appeared.

"I'll kick you if it's something pointless," he warns me.

"Don't worry, it's very important."

"Is that so?"

"Please tell me the rules that outer ones must follow."

"Hmm. Very well. There isn't actually anything too strict."

One: Obey the goddess.

Two: You are forbidden from entering race-exclusive areas without permission. You must be granted access by a representative.

Three: Do not get in fights. You don't have to get along with everyone, but don't interfere in their business either.

Four: All races are equal. However, orders given by those with titles must be followed, so long as they're not unfair.

Five: You may not interfere with things on the surface world without a good reason, unless someone has broken a contract.

"That's about it."

"Can you elaborate on number four?"

"Very well. Most races have a representative. The ruler of Tindalos is named Mh'ithrha. R'lyeh is ruled by Cthulhu. There is the infuriating, blazing freak called Cthugha. Even I carry the title of Prime Minister. Most people will listen to your orders, so long as they relate to your role."

So Cthulhu does exist here. If Cthulhu exists, then Hastur must too, right?

I won't comment on what he said about Cthugha.

"You're still a rookie," he continues. "You could be granted a title someday, depending on the actions you've taken—especially as a sole being like yourself."

"So the titles are given based on performance or if they're a sole race of their own? What am I supposed to do when someone breaks a contract?"

"You'll find out for yourself when the time comes."

I see. Maybe I'll get a notification on my UI.

"Regarding number five, can I still go to the surface at my leisure?"

"It's probably fine, so long as no one's told you otherwise. That incarnation of yours has been weakened enough to exist on the surface, so maybe that's your

role in the first place.”

It makes sense that they wouldn’t put such harsh restrictions on a player. I appreciate that.

I say goodbye to Nyar now that I’ve learned the rules. I thank him before heading to the surface.

“Whoa... Big Sis, something’s coming out of you!”

For a moment there, I thought my sister had snuck up on me, but it appears to be a young resident boy.

“You can touch it if you like.”

“Ah, didn’t you used to wear a dress?”

“That’s right. I just have a new style now. Please be sure to tell your friends I changed up my look.”

“Okay!”

I watch the boy run off somewhere. I’m very impressed that he wasn’t frightened by “something coming out of me” at all. Anyway, it’s time to head to the church.

It’ll be faster to talk to a high-ranking clergy member than a lower one. That woman looks like a good candidate. I can tell their status based on the embroidery color of their robes, not the robes themselves.

“Are Ms. Luciana and Ms. Sophie around? I have deliveries from the Nether.”

“Y-yes. Please come this way.”

It looks like she’ll agree to help. She probably only hesitated a bit because of my new appearance. I’m surprised she recognized me at all, so I won’t comment on the hesitation.

The woman leads me to a private room where I wait for a while.

Ms. Sophie arrives first. “Whoa, you changed your style... No, you evolved, didn’t you?”

“I did. I joined the outer ones, but I’m still in charge of the Nether, so I can keep bringing you supplies if that’s not an issue.”

“There certainly *is* an issue.”

“Huh?”

Ms. Luciana arrives at this point. Ms. Sophie explains the situation to her, causing Ms. Luciana’s brow to wrinkle.

“Well... Outer ones are known as servants of the gods, so I suppose there’s no issue about letting you in the temple,” Ms. Luciana remarks.

“They could also be seen as the ultimate shrine maidens... But since it’s still you, I guess it’s fine,” says Ms. Sophie.

“That’s right. I understand the situation now,” says Ms. Luciana.

“I don’t have any particular orders to give you two, anyway. Ah, here. I brought resupplies.”

“Thanks. I was just about out,” says Ms. Sophie.

My crystal lotuses and holy punicas go to Ms. Luciana. The water of reminiscence and pure dirt are deliveries for Ms. Sophie.

“That reminds me, Ms. Sophie. Do you know of Gravitass Maneuver?” I ask.

“Of course. I just don’t use it much.”

“Is it because of how much MP it consumes?”

“Yeah. It takes way too much fuel. I can just use Falldown if I fall off my broom.”

“Falldown?” I ask her.

“You don’t know it? It’s a spell that slows your fall so you take less damage.”

“This is the first I’m hearing of it.”

“You get it with Ultra Magic Assist.”

Ultra Magic Assist? That must be the next tier of Superior Magic Assist.

I’m sure it’s difficult if it has to do with gravity manipulation. Ms. Sophie tells me that it’s much more efficient than Gravitass Maneuver, since its only function

is to slow falls.

Now I know that Ms. Sophie shares my sentiment that Gravitass Maneuver uses too much MP. It's less efficient than her broom, at the very least. In my case, I probably also have my own race modifiers that affect it.

"Ms. Anastasia, I'd like to ask about your outfit," Ms. Luciana says.

"I received it from Stellura. Or rather, I'm borrowing it, I believe."

"I thought as much. Have you received the occupation of 'clergy'?"

"I have. However, my other job is ruling the underworld."

"I see. Then allow me to teach you how to produce holy water."

"Holy water?" I repeat.

"Exactly. Any member of the clergy can make simple holy water. Please wait here for a moment."

Ms. Luciana leaves the room to retrieve the recipe. While she's away, I ask Ms. Sophie to tell me about holy water.

"What's referred to as 'holy water' usually means 'simple holy water.' You make it by praying over clean water that contains magical energy. For the kind that's not simple, you have to perform a whole ritual, so it's only used for major rites."

"Can the ritual be performed alone?"

"I don't think so, but I'm not clergy, so I wouldn't know..."

"I don't belong to the church either. I wonder if it's something I can do too."

"You can. Outer ones are closer to the goddess than anyone, so clergy members look up to them in a way. But since they look so scary, what they really want are Undead."

It's true that we're closest to Stellura, both in who we are and in physical distance from her. In that way, maybe clergy are jealous of us. We're both isolated in our own ways too. In that case, they must prefer to deal with Undead, who are somewhat less creepy in appearance.

We may look scary, but we're not bad people. As much as I want to say that,

appearances are very important to people. Before they get the chance to know us, we're written off as soon as we appear within eyeshot. *Hello, nice to meet you, goodbye.* How sad.

It looks like Ms. Luciana is back.

"Thank you for waiting. Here you go."

"I have something for you too, Nemeseia," Ms. Sophie adds. "It's a recipe that uses Nether materials."

You have learned the special recipe: "Simple holy water."

The recipe I receive from Ms. Luciana is recorded in the log. Ms. Sophie gives me the holy water she made with Nether materials. Actually, it appears to be a recipe for the base water itself.

"I can't make holy water itself, but I do make lots of water that can be used to make holy water."

"That's because I ask her to do so," Ms. Luciana adds.

"I see," I reply.

It looks like I filter the water of reminiscence in pure dirt and then say a prayer. That's pretty simple.

"By the way, you have to go through more steps if you don't use pure dirt. Pure dirt is great because the dirt itself is capable of purification. The water of reminiscence also has lots of magical energy. They're simple materials that are as good as it gets for making holy water. You can skip a bunch of steps and still create a high-quality product," Ms. Sophie explains.

In other words, I can only follow these steps because of the ingredients I'm using. Normally, you would have to clean up the water and dirt in different ways, consecrate them, and then say a prayer. But Nether materials are unique enough that you don't have to go to such lengths to produce holy water.

Ms. Sophie also explains that you can't use Laundry to clean them up either. It

sounds like a lot of work, so if I need holy water, I'll definitely craft the Nether kind.

"Are you aware of the powers clergy members possess?" Ms. Luciana asks me.

"Powers?"

"The clergy are capable of using mysterious powers. We can consecrate items or create holy water with our prayers. We also receive modifiers to all Holy Magic branches. Some examples of this would be Sacred Fire Magic or Sacred Song."

"I've never heard of either of those," I reply.

"Sacred Fire Magic derives from the combination of Holy Magic and Inferno Magic, and Sacred Song is from Holy Magic and Bard," Ms. Luciana explains.

"Church knights and holy soldiers use those a lot..." adds Ms. Sophie.

"Is that magic used specifically to fight against Undead monsters?" I ask.

"Uh-huh..."

Inferno Magic is the second-tier skill of Fire Magic. I believe Bard is the combination of Spell Song and Magic Recital. Those two are branches of Wind Magic, as far as I remember.

"In other words, I can't claim either one. My race only allows me to learn Light and Dark magic."

"Oh my. Is that so?" Ms. Luciana replies.

"Because you worship Stellura?" Ms. Sophie asks me.

"I believe that has something to do with it. My Fire, Water, Wind, and Earth spells are all locked, while my Light and Dark spells are strengthened. The same goes for their derivatives of Holy magic, Shadow magic, and Space Magic, of course."

"These powers require Fire and Wind magic, so it will indeed be impossible for you. I believe your Holy Magic will become Sacred Magic, with Space Magic becoming Space-Time Magic. Does that sound right?" Ms. Luciana asks Ms.

Sophie.

“Yep.”

“I think it would be best to focus on those branches of magic,” Ms. Luciana suggests.

“Sacred and Space-Time? What do Light, Dark, and Shadow magic become?” I ask.

“Radiant Magic becomes Aurora Magic,” she replies.

“Dark Magic becomes Chaos Magic, and Shadow Magic becomes Shade Magic,” Ms. Sophie adds. “Except for people like us, few people can make it to the third-tier skills.”

I see. That was very helpful information I just received. Coming from the two of them, I’m certain I can trust it. I won’t ask them about said magic’s capabilities—I want to look forward to discovering that part myself.

Residents also rarely reach third-tier skills. Of course, an unaging being like a Soricere wouldn’t have much trouble with that. Considering her level, I’m sure Ms. Sophie has plenty.

It sounds like combat skills are hard to level up once they reach their second tier at level 40. As a result, by the time any adventurers get to level 50, they’ve already started to age to the point that they have to retire and work as a union employee instead.

Most people who reach third-tier skills are A-or B-ranks at the union— in other words, veterans. The people who can make full use of those third-tier skills would be S ranks, who are considered equivalent to heroes.

By the way, I’ve just learned that Ms. Sophie is an S-rank adventurer. That makes sense!

It’s just about time for lunch. I can happily log out now after learning so much more about my skills.

I bid farewell to Ms. Luciana and Ms. Sophie before leaving the church.

Now what should I do with my time? I can check out the fourth area in the east while I level up Rope, or I could head to the west or northwest.

I do take quests from the adventurers' union sometimes but never fetch quests from the townsfolk. It may be worth changing that.

There are seemingly endless choices before me. This is most difficult indeed...

I think I'll unlock the portal first. That will be more convenient for me later on. That means I have to unlock the fourth area in the east.

Wait...actually, I should go to the adventurers' union first and see if I get that special reward Rina told me about. I enter the nearest union.

"Ah, Ms. Anastasia! Over here!"

"Sure thing."

Ooh, special dialogue. I'm just glad I met all the requirements.

I give them my union card. Once they return it, I see my rank has been changed to C.

By reaching level 40, you have become a C-ranked adventurer. You are now a full-fledged adventurer. Your horizons are sure to expand as you travel from land to land. However, you are not yet strong enough to traverse dungeons and explore uncharted territory. Why not take in more sights throughout this world? Somewhere out there, you'll find something that fills you with excitement.

By fulfilling special requirements, you have acquired the title "Full-Fledged Adventurer."

Full-Fledged Adventurer:

A commemorative title granted to those who reach an adventurer's ranking of C.

You are now seen as a full-fledged adventurer. However, you still

have plenty of room to grow.

“We all look forward to seeing your future accomplishments,” says the union worker.

“Thank you very much,” I reply.

“By the way...you’ve undergone quite a change, haven’t you?”

“I evolved from Undead to an outer one, so I just went to inform Ms. Luciana at the church.”

“I-Is that right...? An outer one...”

I chuckle inwardly. *I see your smile twitching, Miss. Don’t worry—I won’t point it out.* “All right. I’ll be taking my leave now,” I say.

“Of course. Come back anytime.”

While I’m here, I should go visit my master. Ms. Meghan might need more supplies too.

“Hello,” I greet her.

“Yes, he—ah! Who are you?”

“That’s quite the greeting, Master.”

“That voice... Princess?! You’re a lot different than last time.”

“Behold! I became an outer one.”

“Well, that’s impressive in its own right. But is it really worth celebrating when a person becomes an Undead, much less an outer one? It must be hard to live like that. Although I can’t deny that you seem to have shown up here like normal. What happened in the Medium?”

“This is my incarnation. My true form is in the Medium. I’m an outsider, so you don’t need to be so worried about me.”

“Well...if you’re fine with it, then I’m not worried. Did you tell Luciana?”

“I saw her when I dropped off the church’s materials earlier. Do you need a resupply too, Ms. Meghan?”

“Ah, perfect timing. I’ll take what you have.”

I leave the materials with her before exiting the store.

All right. Time to unlock some portals.

I teleport to Barberek, which is located in the third area to the east. My destination is Finfelden in the fourth area.

Instead of traveling by horse or wyvern, I’m going to use Coordinate Float and Gravitas Maneuver. This way is much faster. I probably just need to step on the gas and I should be fine.

I exit through the eastern gate, float a few meters up, and then accelerate toward the east.

I’m a bit further up off the ground than I would be on a horse. The wind sure is creating drag... Ah, that’s right! There’s no need for me to face forward. I can just become a human missile. Or would “human rocket” be more apt, since I’m traveling in a straight line rather than an arc?

Woow! This is cool! I’m going so fast!

The town wall comes into view up ahead. Just as I thought, flying in a straight line is a fast way to travel.

...Hang on. Do I even know how to stop? Am I in trouble?

I pull my body up, reversing gravity and putting my legs down to try and skid to a stop.

“H-hey! Are you all right over there?!”

It looks like a gatekeeper rushed over when he saw the strange projectile—me—flying overhead. But I’m in no condition to respond right now!

I divert from the gate to avoid hitting any people, moving off the road a bit. However, that puts me on a collision course with the wall. If I hit it at this speed, I don’t think I’ll walk away unscathed.

Ah, it’s no use. I can’t slow down! I turn into a sphere and go *splat* against the wall.

“Ugh...”

Thankfully, I still have some health left over.

I scrape my body off the wall and return to my human form. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to call me a slime at this point.

"Phew... I almost lost my incarnation. I'm sorry for the commotion. I'm an outer one and an outsider. May I enter?"

"Ugh... Just please be careful in town. The children would have cried if they were here instead of me."

"It was my first time flying, so I forgot to slow down. I probably should have just flown upward instead. I'll try that next time."

"Anyway, welcome to Finfelden! It's an honor to meet an outer one!"

"Oh, I only just became one, so I'm still a rookie."

"By the way, are you here because of the trouble in town?"

"No, I'm just out on a stroll. I'd like to add it to the destinations can teleport."

"I see. That's a relief. By all means, enjoy the town."

I made it here safely. Well, maybe not as "safely" as I could have. But all's well that ends well, as they say.

Now that I've arrived, I head to the town square and unlock the portal to Finfelden.



The east side of the kingdom of Nearence contains the head church. This kingdom is famous for its agriculture and wine, meaning the east side of town is covered in fields scattered with flowers here and there.

Most of the buildings are made of white stone. I wonder if that color is related to the religion of this particular town. It's a beautiful place, but it seems like it would be a pain to clean.

I take a peek at the conquering thread on the BBS. Hmm... Ah, they've made it to the royal capital. It looks like you're expected to reach it when you're level 40 or above. That must be what that system message Rina mentioned was about.

Now that I know I can reach the royal capital, should I go and unlock the portal now or go when I have some free time? I think I'll try to get there today.

A little girl is staring at me. I wonder if she knows how to get there.

"Hello there. How far away is the royal capital from here?"

"Hello! Um, it's two towns over!"

"Straight to the east?"

"Uh-huh!"

"I see. Thank you. Here, share these with your family."

I only have holy punicas on hand, but I think she'll like them.

I leave the child and start to head east. I can ask the gatekeeper for directions too.

"A girl told me that the royal capital is two towns over. Is that correct?"

"It is. Go east from here until you arrive at Bideminster. The royal capital, Nearence, is to the east of that town."

"Thank you for your help. I'll be on my way then."

"Have a safe trip!"

Yes, please pray that I don't crash on the way there.

Official BBS 11

[An update] Chatting Thread 100 [is coming]

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://****

>>940 Please make the next thread.

263. Resting Adventurer

Who's that weirdo over there?

264. Resting Adventurer

Could this be the birth of a new celebrity?

265. Resting Adventurer

Explain?

266. Resting Adventurer

It's like... How do you say it?

267. Resting Adventurer

Uh, I don't know.

268. Resting Adventurer

The Unnameable.

269. Resting Adventurer

Hastur...?

270. Resting Adventurer

Knowing this game, it's entirely possible.

271. Resting Adventurer

Um, there's some blindfolded girl with black hair, and things are coming out of her.

272. Resting Adventurer

Could it be...the princess?

273. Resting Adventurer

It definitely is.

274. Resting Adventurer

That was an easy guess.

275. Resting Adventurer

She's impossible to ignore in a crowd.

276. Resting Adventurer

The girl with a black and white friar’s robe, a gold-embroidered cloak around her shoulders, and who has a huge chest?

277. Resting Adventurer

Yeah, her!

278. Resting Adventurer

I thought so.

279. Resting Adventurer

Calling her the black-haired, blindfolded girl was already distinctive, but saying “things are coming out of her” was the giveaway.

280. Resting Adventurer

A lot of people already have their own recognizable keywords.

281. Resting Adventurer

True. There’s “Mohawk” and “hyah ha” and stuff.

282. Resting Adventurer

That’s for the same guy.

283. Resting Adventurer

He’s living it large in this game.

284. Resting Adventurer

That's a given.

285. Resting Adventurer

I can't stop myself from laughing whenever I see Mohawk or Bennett.

286. Resting Adventurer

Right? I get so weak.

287. Resting Adventurer

I know exactly how you feel.

288. Resting Adventurer

They really leave an impact on you. Once you see them, you'll never forget them.

289. Resting Adventurer

Characters who stick in your brain really are the strongest, huh?

290. Resting Adventurer

Bennett in the Free-For-All was practically cheating. How can you not laugh at that?

291. Resting Adventurer

Same for the official trailer. I've replayed it so many times.

292. Resting Adventurer

I know what you mean.

293. Resting Adventurer

Speaking of the Free-For-All, the princess was pretty funny too. I keep rewatching it.

294. Resting Adventurer

Same here!

295. Resting Adventurer

Mr. Skelly, on the other hand, comes off like a little henchman.

296. Resting Adventurer

Would you ever guess that he's a lich?

297. Resting Adventurer

And to think he's in a party with Mr. Alf and the princess.

298. Resting Adventurer

There's always one guy like that in the group.

299. Resting Adventurer

C'mon, leave him alone.

300. Resting Adventurer

But you gotta love him despite how weird he is, right?

301. Resting Adventurer

Duh. Of course.

302. Resting Adventurer

He’s definitely the easiest kind of character to interact with.

303. Honehone

It’s me, your beloved idol, Mr. Skelly!

304. Resting Adventurer

Drop dead!

305. Honehone

HA HA HA HA! I’m already dead!

306. Resting Adventurer

Y-yeah, fine, that’s true.

307. Resting Adventurer

Lmao.

308. Resting Adventurer

Right, he’s a skeleton.

309. Resting Adventurer

But he definitely doesn't fit the definition of "idol."

310. Honehone

That can't be!

311. Resting Adventurer

Exactly! We're telling you it can't be!

312. Honehone

Are you saying you don't find my curvy bones sexy?!

313. Resting Adventurer

You're going too far...

314. Resting Adventurer

What a maniac.

315. Resting Adventurer

I do like...his bones...

316. Honehone

Whaaat...?

317. Resting Adventurer

Now you're creeped out?

318. Resting Adventurer

That's too cruel, Mr. Skelly.

319. Resting Adventurer

How cold-blooded are you?!

320. Honehone

I don't have any blood.

321. Resting Adventurer

Right. He's a skeleton.

322. Resting Adventurer

I love this guy's personality.

323. Honehone

Heh heh heh... Ha ha ha! Mwa ha ha ha haaa!

324. Resting Adventurer

Despite the laugh, he's still just a small fry.

325. Resting Adventurer

People who do that evil laugh are usually either mid-tier-boss-level villains or

just comic relief characters.

326. Resting Adventurer

Exactly.

327. Resting Adventurer

So who else fits the idol criteria?

328. Resting Adventurer

Hmm, good question.

329 Resting Adventurer

How about Princess’s little sister? I guess she’s more the “little sister” or “childhood friend” type.

330. Honehone

Wasn’t there a popular streamer? Ms. Yura, I think?

331. Resting Adventurer

I don’t know. I play the game, so I don’t watch streams...

332. Resting Adventurer

Same.

333. Resting Adventurer

That’s Ms. Yura, AKA Second-Wave Princess

334. Resting Adventurer

Ohhhh?

335. Resting Adventurer

Is she the spoiled kind of princess?

336. Resting Adventurer

I doubt it. If she's popular, that means a lot of people like watching her.

337. Resting Adventurer

She just streams herself having fun in the game. She doesn't accept offerings from people because it's not fun for her that way. By the way, she's a big fan of the princess.

338. Resting Adventurer

The princess sure has a lot of fans.

339. Resting Adventurer

You could say that again.

Chapter 13:

Sunday Afternoon

I FLY ABOVE GROUND, aiming for a height that makes me hard to hit. I increase my speed little by little, enjoying my easy flight.

You have entered an event area.

Quest: “Protect the Trader” is now active.

What’s this? There are a group of people fighting to protect their carriage from monsters, although there’re so many enemies, the people can only really defend and not attack. The group appears to consist solely of residents, and I can tell the game wants me to swoop in to their rescue.

“Protect the Trader”

You have spotted a traveling trader under attack by monsters.

Rescue the trader and his guards.

Activation Conditions: Random

Completion Conditions: Destroy all monsters.

Failure Conditions: Trader and guards are fully eliminated.

I see. So this is a random quest?

Well, I flew right past it, so I’ll head back there. It’s somewhat inconvenient to go so far out. It will help when my 3D mental map has a bigger range, but I just know it’s going to be a pain to level it up from here out.

“It looks like you could use a hand,” I greet them.

“Y-yes, please!”

The man in the carriage—likely the trader—doesn’t seem to be a combatant. There are several adventurers who seem to be protecting it, but they’ve been surrounded by monsters. I’m very curious about the state of this battle, but I’ll ask about it once the threats are taken out.

Now that I’ve accepted the quest, it’s go time.

I summon Unit One as a floating stronghold flesh ball at a bit of a distance. This seems like the perfect time to test out his fighting potential.

“Unit One, attack any monsters attacking the carriage.”

He can’t make his “CLACK CLACK” noises now that he’s not a skeleton. Instead, he extends a tentacle and waves at me. It’s cute in its own way—or at least, that’s how I choose to see it.

I watch the flesh ball produce offspring as I use Relentless Savage Ones to see if it’s helpful in a real fight.

Unit One is ejected from Unit One, Unit One gives birth to Unit One, and Unit One is ejected from Unit One again. It’s highly confusing, but this is the truth of what I see. I’m sure the next Unit One will be even more terrific.

I strengthen my stronghold with defensive, resistance, and automatic regeneration skills. It’s a special build to emphasize its unique traits. All-purpose builds in MMOs tend to come out lacking in Dexterity, so it’s easier to create specialized builds and swap them out depending on your needs.

I plan to start leveling up other skills once I’m at a higher level, although I haven’t decided on which skills yet.

Army boar Lv. 43

This pig will charge any foe. It knows no fear.

Attribute: —

Weakness: —

Resistance: —

Class: Animal

Order: Beast

Family: Boar

Genus: Boar

Species: Army Boar

Status: Normal

Poor boars. Even the description is poking fun at them.

I wonder if army boars are supposed to be like warhorses. Knowing no fear seems like a bad thing, but perhaps that's because it has no one riding it.

Since these enemies are at a higher level than me, I'll be sure to take them out one at a time, leaving none behind.

I sweep its legs with my tentacles when it charges at me, causing the boar to hit the ground and take damage. The ground really *is* the ultimate weapon. It did more damage than the sweep itself thanks to how fast the thing was charging.

I use the Rope art Capture to simply wrap around an enemy. However, the game does the wrapping part for me, which makes it extremely easy. I'm allowed to designate what target I want captured, but not much more than that. I'll probably need a better art to specify things like which body part it should wrap around.

The biggest threat the boar poses is its charge. So long as I sweep its feet to stop that attack, it isn't much more than a very stubborn foe. How nice for me. It's very convenient to level up with.

I continue to smack boars with my tentacles, leveling up my skills as I inflict damage.

Unit One's attacks really pack a punch. Specialized builds are truly the way to go. Unit One's power isn't very strong, since he's a self-explosion type that doesn't actually die. But he does more damage than my tentacles, so that's all I

need. It's silly to expect firepower from a tank.

I've learned from the forums that Rope skills are dependent on Dexterity and Strength. My Dexterity is on par with a human's, but since I'm in the form of a humanoid, I should have more than enough Strength to use. The problem is just *how* to use it.

I could bind enemies with my tentacles and deal slashing attacks, or I could continue my method of having the tentacles constantly striking enemies while ensuring they won't get in the way of my own fighting. The latter seems optimal for my fighting style. Stopping the enemy from moving has all the benefits of a counterattack like Reflect or Parry. I think I'll continue to strike with my tentacles, focusing on ways to increase my DPS.

I see that Unit One has an animation of flesh chunks falling off him when he's hit... As an immortal suicide bomber, seeing his meat go flying everywhere makes me nervous.

The flinch effect from suicide attacks is pretty nice, and the knockback his counterattacks deliver is quite strong. His durability is on the higher side too. A capacity of 8,000 comes with plenty of abilities.

However, it's not all-powerful. Now that I'm using it in a real battle, I can clearly see a few downsides.

The first problem is my servant's size. He's just really big and will definitely get in the way within enclosed spaces like cave dungeons. Then there's the knockback issue. He does take less damage from knockbacks, but that's not necessarily for the best. He's defenseless if an enemy attacks him right before or after that.

I think this servant will be helpful as a meat shield, as you might expect from such a creature. This means his optimal use will be as an off-tank, not a main fighter.

Unit One has the Floating Stronghold skill, which can't be changed. This results in him automatically being targeted by enemies in a certain range, as well as giving him access to Coordinate Float.

Since I can't give him any equipment, he can't use any Great Shield arts. It's a

definite downside, and I don't know how well he'll function as a main tank without them. The ball of flesh would probably be torn apart if anyone attacked him with their full power. That's a fatal flaw for a main tank.

But while everyone's busy finishing off the enemies the main tank is grappling with, the off-tank's role is to handle anyone else who's around. They can also take over for a main tank if they're struggling in their battle. But my servant can't instantly draw aggro since he can't use the Great Shield arts, making it tricky for him to swap places with a main tank in a fight. Then again, it'd be easier for him than it would be for me, as someone with no skills to attract the enemy's focus at all.

Well, that's what's great about this game's summoning system. I have lots more options to handle different situations now. Mr. Skelly, as a lich, has even more abilities through the normal version of Secret Art of Necromancy. I think this flesh ball is going to be my main servant from here on out.

It's hard to tell if Soul Harvest is working well, since I can't see monsters' MP. I won't be able to test this until I have a player agree to PvP me. It doesn't ultimately matter that much, but it'd be nice to have the extra information.

All right. Time to focus on killing these monsters.

I have Unit One move forward little by little and take on multiple targets. Once he takes more damage than he can handle, I destroy one of the enemies for him. I can probably count on the adventurers protecting the carriage to lend me their firepower once they're able to break free.

It's also helpful that Unit One's knockback sends enemies flying into me after they get too close to him.

I smack the flying enemies with my tentacles and bind them on the ground. Ha ha ha! How does that dirt taste down there? Can you feel nature's blessings? Good, because you'll never fly anywhere again.

"All right, we can move! Let's kill 'em!"

"Yeah!"

It looks like the adventurers can move again. I'll work on wiping out the enemies gathered around Unit One.

As always, I fight with my magic while I parry incoming attacks, occasionally dealing damage with reflections. I also smack the monsters around with my tentacles.

There's just so much to do. Actually, that's mostly in part to the tentacle smacking. I wonder if I can eventually increase their strength in exchange for a longer cooldown time.

I'm sure that would give me trouble if I was fighting another player, but right now, everything I have to consider is overwhelming: where to bring out the tentacles, how to attack with them, which angle to strike at, *etc.* Isn't there a more efficient way to do this? All I need to do is land hits, so the rest of those factors shouldn't matter. Maybe I can just designate a single target at a time.

In other words, the best option is to treat this as a semi-automatic weapon. Unparalleled Style is the only reason I can't do that right now.

Now that I think of it, can you create macros in this game?

Using macro tools outside of the game itself is banned, but the actual macro functions within the game itself are pretty generic. I wonder if that's because this is a full-dive VR game. I'll check the BBS once I'm done here.

Oh, it looks like we've finished off the last enemy. The others are just wrapping up too.

"Phew! Looks like we managed to survive."

"Yeah, one way or another."

The trader is bowing to me repeatedly. I feel like he has quite a lot of adventurers with him for protection.

I wonder what this quest is really about... I want to know the backstory. I'll have to ask for more details.

First, I'll approach them. Well, I'll recall Unit One before I do that. He'd probably be too overwhelming for them.

"Wow, thanks for the help, Miss!"

"I'm just glad you're all right. That was quite a lot of enemies, wasn't it?"

“Ah, about that...”

The man who appears to be the leader of the adventurer group explains the situation. Apparently, this trader was transporting a slightly defective product. He was asked by a higher-up to ship out an important material. That material was a base ingredient for medicine, but if you didn't preserve it right, it would lure monsters toward it.

In other words, the trader simply mishandled his product. Fortunately, he'd decided to be extra safe and take more guards with him than usual.

“We're so lucky you came to our rescue. It's not much, but I hope you'll take this as thanks.”

Quest: “Protect the Trader” completed.

Rope has reached level 5.

You have acquired Arm Capture through Rope.

Your reputation among adventurers has improved.

Your reputation among traders has improved.

“All right. We're going to head out now.”

You have entered the normal area.

Arm Capture is an art for wrapping around someone's arms. What happens next depends on the user.

Hmm, it looks like I received a bit of money and EXP. I also improved my reputation by saving them. That's probably the main reward of the quest. It never hurts to have a greater reputation, and other players will want to clear a quest when one appears. I'll be sure to help anyone who needs it.

In a way, teleporting from statues or with the Silver Key actually kind of

makes me feel bad, now that I know of such quest events. Only players are able to use these methods. If residents could teleport, there would be no escort missions to protect traders.

The trader and adventurers head out into the normal area. I'm sure they would have simply disappeared if I'd failed. I'm not sure what will happen to them now.

Upon failing a quest, it's normal in games to have the same quest trigger again randomly. Failing the quest means the characters are killed. Maybe I could even bring their possessions to the adventurers' union and report their deaths. Does the same quest activate again with different people, in that case? That's a bit sad.

I've left the event area, so I'll head to town first before I check the BBS. I fly a bit away from the road so as not to scare the horses belonging to that trader and his guard.

Now that I think of it, I would just look like a regular human if you removed the sphere effect. That effect comes from the Sphere Clemas Waver skill, so maybe I should disable it when I'm not fighting.

I spot a wall right ahead, so I steer up while reducing my speed. Fortunately, I manage to avoid smacking right into it.

"Welcome to Bideminster!"

"Greetings. Should I go through the eastern gate if I want to reach the royal capital?"

"Yes, that's right. You'll be heading straight there if you follow the road."

So the east side of the map is a straight road from Starting Town to the royal capital? That makes it nice and easy.

I enter the town and unlock the portal in the town square. The climate is similar to Starting Town's, since they exist in the same kingdom, and the buildings themselves look the same too. Any religion-affiliated buildings seem particularly identical.

All right. I'll head straight to the royal capital.

This time, I manage to slow down before getting so close to the wall around the city.

“Welcome to the royal capital of the kingdom of Nearence.”

The biggest town I’ve seen up to this point is still Starting Town. Imbamunte, the port town to the south, comes in second.

But the royal capital of Nearence I’ve arrived at is quite large too. It looks to be about the same size as Starting Town, judging by what I see on my map.

A unique trait of this town is the two separate castles near the town square. Although, one of the buildings is designed to look more like a church.

Then again, I feel like it’s more appropriate to call it a great temple than a giant church. And like all churches in this world, they have idols displayed in the form of statues, so maybe it really is a temple.

Churches are places for worshippers to congregate, while temples are places where the gods are enshrined. Of course, I’m not sure that applies to this world.

Anyway, I’ll unlock the portal first.

The portal to Nearence’s royal capital has been opened.

All portals to Nearence’s major cities have been opened.

Set respawn point: Yes/No

Thanks, but that will be a no.

I didn’t expect all major cities to unlock once I reached the royal capital’s portal. Of course, I don’t know where these cities are either.

I look at my teleportation destinations and see the seventh and eighth areas are now available. The seventh area is Castreyu and the eighth area is Dinselve. I don’t see any other changes.

I feel like if I ignore roads and fly straight to the royal capitals, I can unlock

everything if I stick to the proper routes. It's worth giving it a shot.

In the meantime, I'll check the forums for macro information.

Naturally, some people have already brought this up for discussion. Management said that macros will be implemented in an upcoming update, but that post is dated close to when the game first came out. Isn't there anything more recent?

Oh, it looks like they'll be adding it in the October update. Their target audience are the players who can't handle action very well, but veterans who make use of macros will be able to surpass human capabilities. They'll also be implementing a gesture replay feature they previously shelved.

"You may or may not be able to activate a transformation sequence. However, we're not gonna give you any invincibility frames!" So what that means is you can be evil and beat someone up during their transformation sequence.

They say more details about how it works will be revealed in the next update description. I see.

All right, I'll head back to Starting Town for now. I don't currently have any business in this part of the map.

The first thing I see when I arrive at Starting Town are its dense crowds. Oh, there's Mr. Dentelle. What perfect timing. I have something to ask him.

"Good day, Mr. Dentelle."

"Hm? Oh, Princess!"

"Do you make compression shorts at all?"

"I have gym shorts and leggings, if that's what you want. I guess there're some short ones too, now that I think of it."

"Those should do what I need them to."

"Since sizes aren't necessary in a game, women probably don't want to shop for clothes at my store much, especially not for things like compression shorts. There's gotta be a female player who runs a specialty store for underwear,

right?”

“With so many players in this game, I think that’s possible.”

Mr. Dentelle and I check the production board on the BBS, but it’s hard to tell, since no one appears to be advertising. I make a post asking about the existence of such a thing.

Several minutes pass. It doesn’t seem like anyone knows of a shop like that, but I’m sure one has to exist somewhere... Oh, a reply just came in.

“Would you look at that? There *is* a specialty shop,” says Mr. Dentelle.

“It seems so. A specialty shop for women’s underwear. It sounds like men can’t even enter at all.”

“She must have changed the door settings for that. I remember seeing that you can limit certain sexes.”

“Then I think I’ll go take a look now.”

“Okay. I’m heading back to my store.”

I say goodbye to Mr. Dentelle and head to the shop mentioned on the thread.

It’s located just off the outsiders’ stall street, which is away from the main road itself. Displayed in the windows are mannequins dressed in underwear, but the shop interior itself is obscured by curtains, so I can’t see inside. There are even seats outside for male players to sit and wait.

Underneath the “open” sign is a message saying that men are forbidden from entering, since this is a women’s undergarment specialty store. I enter the store without delay.

A shop clerk exclaims, “Oh, the princess is here!”

An angel player approaches me. She says that although she’s not on my friends list, she was curious about me as a fellow flying race, so she took the opportunity to come see me.

“Welcome! The compression shorts are on the wall right over there!”

I head to the area she specifies to see what’s available. The wall has an information poster that says compression pants activate when equipped in the

underwear slot.

“Welcome! Please feel free to browse any of our items!”

“Oh, this is so nice!”

“There’re more than I expected!”

A large group of women has started to file into the store. Getting your name out there is so important. You’ll never sell anything unless people know your store exists.

I have my own underwear set, so I only need the compression shorts, but it looks like the others are here to shop for undergarments. It may be a video game, but I understand the feeling of wanting to customize everything available to you.

If I want to match my clothes, I should go with black shorts. Actually, my dress is white on the inside, right? I’ll go with white shorts instead.

Now I have to find a pair that won’t show their lines through my dress. I’m glad I don’t also have to decide on how see-through I want them to be.

I browse multiple designs and materials before previewing a pair of white shorts. They’re made of a nice material while still looking fashionable. They seem to do the trick, so I’ll go ahead and purchase them.

I can come back and shop again if I need anything else. Of course, they don’t particularly affect your stats, so it will just have to be for fun.

The store is pretty packed with female players now. I’ve already made my purchase, so it’s time for me to leave.

All right. What should I do next?

I’ve maxed out Mythical Languages and have a lot of free time now. Should I have Lana teach me more stances while I also work on improving my Alchemy circle? My other options are to increase my base level, increase some skill levels, or go exploring.

Considering the amount of time it takes, I’ll work on the Alchemy circle for

now. I return to my royal villa and stare at the circle in my Alchemy room. I can't take notes in the game's interface, so I'll have to write it down on paper. Ah, now that I think of it, do erasers exist in this game? If not, it would be easier to write on the ground.

Has the testing team looked into this...? Oh, of course they have.

I discover that writing with magical energy paper and a magical energy pen allows you to erase your letters without an eraser. As long as you have Magic Assist, you can erase letters by tracing them. They don't currently know how to make the pen and paper, while the ink uses magical energy water and doesn't deplete as quickly as regular ink. Because it can disappear, you don't want to use it on important documents.

Certainly, that's not an accident you want to experience. But it will be convenient for my current undertaking.

I'm impressed with the testing team as always. They really know how to research the last things you would ever consider. It must be their nature to look into things the rest of us consider unnecessary. That's not to say that they're not very helpful.

Let's see... I can make magical energy paper, and it looks like I can make the pen too. The newest information shows that others have discovered the recipe for magical energy paper as well. There must be a lot more players with Alchemy now. I haven't seen a magical energy pen yet, however.

Magical energy pens can supposedly be made with small magic stones and certain types of ingots. Magical energy water is made by filling distilled water with your energy. After that, all you need to do is stick the pen in the water. The element of the magic stone supposedly changes the color of the ink, so I'll use a Dark stone.

I think I'll choose halchium for the metal, even though it's a bit heavy. I transform four ores into an ingot and combine them with the stone.

My plan for today is to do my crafting after dinner until it's time to go to bed. I'll craft magical energy paper and water too, and enjoy a low-stakes evening.

Official BBS 12

[Magic] Comprehensive Magic Chat Thread 95 [is a dream]

1. Nameless Magician

This is a thread to discuss magic.

Please talk about magic here.

Also, you can check the other boards for each skill.

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

Comprehensive fighting chat: [http://*****](#)

Comprehensive production: [http://*****](#)

>>940 Next thread's in your hands!

537. Nameless Magician

How do you guys make progress on your skills?

538. Nameless Magician

Mmm, there haven't been many new discoveries since we got to the "improvement" phase.

539. Nameless Magician

I'm not gonna do any of that until I get the base six elements up to third-tier, at least.

540. Nameless Magician

The ones that get “II” added to them? What’s it like?

541. Nameless Magician

Not much of a change, because their power probably relies on your base stats in the first place.

542. Nameless Magician

To be honest, if there’ve been any changes, you don’t feel them.

543. Nameless Magician

At the most, spells get a bit more powerful and use a little less MP.

544. Nameless Magician

It’s not much to write home about, but it definitely improves your efficiency.

545. Nameless Magician

We probably just can’t appreciate it since there’s nothing from Magic Invulnerability yet.

546. Nameless Magician

The invulnerability skill tree, huh? Right now, it feels like there’re more weaknesses than strengths.

547. Nameless Magician

How good can it be when it’s a skill you get at the start?

548. Anastasia

Hello. I've come to let you know about all the new information I've gathered. Please wait a moment while I summarize it all.

549. Nameless Magician

Ah, it's the princess! Is this for Space Magic?!

550. Nameless Magician

Leveling those spells up seems like it would be a huge pain.

551. Nameless Magician

Right, since there're no attack spells.

552. Anastasia

By the way, this information comes from a higher-up in the church and a Sorciere.

2nd-tier derivatives:

Holy Magic and Inferno Magic produce Sacred Fire Magic Holy Magic and Bard unlock Sacred Song.

3rd-tier skill names:

Radiant Magic becomes Aurora Magic.

Dark Magic becomes Chaos Magic.

Holy Magic becomes Sacred Magic.

Shadow Magic becomes Shade Magic.

Space Magic becomes Space-Time Magic.

The next information relates to Space Magic spells.

Lv. 40: Gravitas Umkehren:

Using this art after a gravity spell will cause gravity to reverse.

Bind Barrier:

Apply a barrier that imprisons your target. MP consumption will increase depending on strength and range of barrier. Cannot be damaged with attacks.

Lv. 45: Gravitas Maneuver:

Control gravitational pull and repulsive forces. Can only be used on yourself or targets you touch.

553. Nameless Magician

Wow... Look at that...

554. Nameless Magician

There's so much to take in!

555. Nameless Magician

Judging by the sources of that info, it seems like we can trust it, right?

556. Nameless Magician

They wouldn't tell a pointless lie to an outer one like the princess.

557. Anastasia

>>552 By the way, I was told that Sacred Fire Magic and Sacred Song have special effects against Undead and are a favorite weapon of the church's knights and holy soldiers.

I didn't ask about any spells because I don't want spoilers.

558. Norbert

I'm curious about Sacred Song, but if it means I need a derivative of Light Magic, I'm not so sure...

559. Nameless Magician

I'm so excited for these. Space Magic looks like it only gets even more full of possibilities.

560. Nameless Magician

Yes, it's so adventurous. Not that I have it!

561. Nameless Magician

It seems like you need either Light or Dark magic, but either one is fine.

562. Nameless Magician

The biggest problem is how much MP Space Magic uses.

563. Nameless Magician

Exactly. It's not efficient at all.

564. Nameless Magician

To meddle with space itself is an inhuman power in the first place.

565. Nameless Magician

Reversing and controlling gravity sounds really fun!

566. Nameless Magician

We'll probably start seeing weirdos who fall *up* instead of down.

567. Nameless Magician

But the MP cost!

568. Nameless Magician

This.

569. Nameless Magician

That's where Space Magic hits a dead end.

570. Nameless Magician

Yeah, it's basically like supplemental magic outside of combat...

Bonus Story: Producers' Tea Party

IT LOOKS LIKE I have fifteen minutes left. I can expect the others to start showing up soon.

"Princess! Can I come over now?"

"Certainly."

"Okay! Here I come!"

"My maids should show you where to find me."

"Got it!"

After some time, I get a message about visitors arriving. My resident maids guide Ms. Primura to my location. Her bunny ears sway with each step.

We'll be gathering in my backyard, where there's a nice view of the flowers. You can't see the herb fields or ore mine from here, though you can still spot the tea trees.

"Morning, Princess!" Ms. Primura greets me.

"Good morning."

Since she arrived early, we chat while the villa maids tend to our needs. They seem very motivated to serve, since I haven't had guests over in so long.

"Your maids are so cool! Is this what maid cafés are like?"

"I've never been to one, but I'm quite sure they're not alike at all."

"Ah, I thought so."

These are "royal villa" maids, after all. My house is meant to be a private living area for royalty, which means their job description is entirely different from that of a maid café employee.

"If they did any cute fanservice like that, they'd probably be dragged out of the house..." I ponder.

“Oh really?”

“Yes, they’d certainly be fired. I don’t know if they’d be physically taken away, but I’d bet that I wouldn’t see their faces here again.”

“Oh no, that’s scary!” Ms. Primura cries.

My maids may resemble maid café workers, but they’re entirely different. I doubt you could even say that they work in the same industry.

“But I’m only talking about the maids at my house here. I don’t know what other maids might be like.”

“I see! I haven’t met any other nobles or anything yet.”

“I could see maids being used as assistants for crafters at some point. You might even end up with butlers.”

“I’ll take whoever I can get, as long as they buy me materials to craft with at the price I ask for.”

Ms. Primura is a woodworker who sells furniture, so I imagine she’ll receive lots of orders from noble clients in the future.

“Howdy, folks.”

“Hi, Mr. Ertz!”

“Welcome to my villa.”

Mr. Ertz arrives while we’re chatting. I’ve prepared a dwarf’s chair just for him. Humans and beasts can share the same size of chair, but dwarves, giants, and living machinery races have their own special chair designs.

Dwarves are short but heavy for their size. Giants’ size makes special accommodations for them unavoidable. Living machinery need their chairs to be stable or else they’ll break. They may be the same size as humans, but they’re extremely heavy. I’ve prepared special chairs for Mr. Ertz and Ms. Nephrite.

Ms. Nephrite, Ms. Salute, and Mr. Dentelle arrive soon after Mr. Ertz. Now all of my guests have arrived.

“Whoa, am I the last one here?” asks Mr. Dentelle.

“You all came at once, so it’s basically a tie!” says Ms. Primura.

Actually, it’s still a bit before the scheduled time we agreed to meet.

“Should I hand these over before I forget?”

“Yes, please do,” I respond.

“Oh, that’s right.”

Since guests are allowed to eat and drink as much as they please, everyone brought their own respective favorites for my servants to prepare and serve.

Now that everyone’s here, it’s time to begin—not that we really have anything to do other than chat.

“As always, I’m really curious about your equipment, Princess. It looks like another big change,” Mr. Dentelle says to me.

“That’s because my whole race tree changed. Now I have cloth armor.”

“Oh, so that’s what it was? It’s a lot different than magic silkworm silk.”

My clothes are made of a different material than Eli’s and Abby’s dresses. It makes sense that Mr. Dentelle would be so fascinated by this mysterious fabric.

“You look so mysterious now, Princess.”

“That would be thanks to the blindfold. However, I’m still a member of the clergy.”

“It’s a very fancy design—nothing like what the residents wear. I guess that’s what comes with your position.”

“Yes, my status isn’t like that of the resident clergy.”

Reverend Nye, an incarnation like myself and Nyarlathotep, isn’t the type of person who leads lost lambs to safety. He kills the people who come to him for help while laughing, telling them they’ve now been freed from their worries. However, I can’t deny that Nyar might also enjoy keeping people trapped in their own struggles.

Just as Ms. Nephrite says, my position seems much more subdued.

“By the way, Princess, you’re growing medicinal herbs, right? Are you trying

to make mega-potions?” asks Ms. Salute.

“I am, but there’s a bit of a problem.”

“Oh, what’s that?”

“It’s always nighttime here.”

“Ah! Morning light grass...”

“Exactly. I don’t know what to do about it.”

Sunlight is a requirement for growing morning light grass, as the name implies, so they quickly shrivel and die in my fields. That means I can’t harvest the materials I need for mega-potions now that I’m above level 40.

“However, my night light grass, which I’ll use for MP potions, is growing at a very high quality.”

“I see... Did you already look at the housing equipment?”

“You mean the mini-sun and mini-full moon? My gardener tells me they won’t be of use to me.”

If you have a basement or shed with fields inside, setting up mini-suns or mini-full moons allows you to grow unique crops.

“Really? They don’t work?”

“The elemental energy here is too strong. It overpowers the mini-sun.”

“I didn’t know that was possible!”

“I could test it with multiple suns, but that would be extremely expensive...”

“Yeah, being the person to test out game mechanics can really hurt your wallet. You’d need a basement or shed too.”

“Well, I only really use MP potions in the first place, so I don’t think it’s the end of the world.”

“Wait, you can use potions now, Princess?”

“Yes, ever since my race tree updated. I can also use Holy Magic on myself.”

“Sounds like you’ll be leveling up your skills in no time.”

My race tree went from Undead to outer one, resulting in all these changes. I can now use potions and Holy Magic on myself without taking damage, which is a big improvement.

The other guests chat amongst themselves while Ms. Salute and I discuss potions. It looks like Mr. Dentelle and Mr. Ertz have paired up, as have Ms. Primura and Ms. Nephrite.

Eleanora, my personal lady-in-waiting, brings in some of the sweets and tea I prepared. That was good timing, since we were running low at the table. I'm sure I can count on her to keep us well stocked.

Mr. Ertz begins to chat with me next. "By the way, Princess, do you remember how there're leprechauns in this game?"

"Leprechauns... Ah, you mean the harvesting fairies? That was when we were camping, right?"

"Sure was. They've started bringing in elemental ores."

"Really? I can only make elemental ingots right now. Are there spots where you can mine these ores?"

"They say you have to mine them from golemen."

"Ah..."

Now that I think of it, I saw some people swinging pickaxes at a golem once. It wouldn't surprise me if you could mine elemental ore from the elemental golemen that we saw in the dungeon.

"That makes sense, but are leprechauns capable of combat at all?" I ask Mr. Ertz.

"Nope. Not really."

"I thought as much. I'm surprised they managed to mine that ore."

"They said it's some race skill they have, but it's not very efficient either."

Mr. Ertz tells me that leprechauns stealthily mine using race skills that help them hide. They have to strike the precise spot on a moving golem to make

any ores drop, and if their aim is slightly off, the golem will recognize it's been attacked and chase the leprechaun down.

"They said they get more drops the higher their race skill level. It only helps them in caves when the skill's underleveled, but once it gets higher, it affects what they can find in forests and stuff too."

"I just assumed that leprechauns would only be able to mine in caves, but that actually sounds very impressive."

"Yep. They're really good at harvesting stuff."

Mr. Ertz explains that leprechauns are large for a fairy race, and they also float instead of fly, meaning they're not particularly suited for combat. But they can harvest materials from high places, and the bigger ones are better at harvesting too. They can run on their feet pretty well, but they're slow when floating, making them bad at evading enemies compared to other fairies their size.

They excel at Dexterity while their Agility is average, with roughly equal Strength and Intelligence on the higher side. In other words, anyone who plays as a leprechaun must have exactly one playstyle they want to follow. Leprechauns can reach the highest Gather level of any fairy race, so I understand why they would go that route.

"The elemental ore they mine from golems is really high quality; there's just a very low quantity of it," Mr. Ertz tells me.

"So it won't affect your dealings with me?"

"Nope. It's not gonna change the market price or anything."

"I doubt there are many leprechauns out there, and that dungeon is pretty difficult in relation to the enemies' levels."

"That's true. Elemental metal is still gonna be really valuable."

So long as they can be sold at a high price, that's all that matters. I use magi iron and gems, personally.

"Leprechauns bring me wood they've collected!" Ms. Primura tells me.

"They bring me medicinal herbs," says Ms. Salute.

“I get their gems,” says Ms. Nephrite.

It sounds like they’re regular customers of these leprechauns. But I suppose that makes sense, as it’s best for first-wavers to bring their harvested items to fellow first-wavers. They’re the ones who will pay the most for those materials. It’s also possible that players at lower skill levels won’t even be able to use said materials.

“Oh, are those the military magic battle bees?” asks Ms. Nephrite.

“They’re worker bees called royal carpenter maids.”

“They’re so tiny.”

“Only the maids are that small. The rest are about eight times bigger, at the very least.”

“Whoa! The big ones are lining up in formation.”

“Those would be the royal vespinæ and hornets. They’re usually guarding the maids.”

Since Ms. Nephrite specializes in handicrafting, she doesn’t have any reason to be around bees.

The vespinæ and hornets are split into troops who protect the nest and queen—known as regina apis—and troops that protect the carpenter maids, who patrol their domain while collecting food.

The hives at my villa are located out front, so any bees coming to the backyard must be part of the patrolling unit.

“Do you get beeswax and propolis? I’d like to use them to polish my furniture,” says Ms. Primura.

“I haven’t seen any yet.”

It would probably be best to ask Eleanora.

Eleanora tells me that beeswax and honey drop at about the same rate, while propolis is more common than royal jelly. However, those two items aren’t guaranteed to drop at all. In other words, there are periods of time where neither item drops.

“They can be used for furniture wax, makeup, medicine, candles, and even food, I believe. It sounds like there’re plenty of things to do with beeswax and propolis.”

“I want to get my hands on both!”

“I’d be happy to supply you, since I don’t use them myself.”

“I wonder how much they cost. Propolis would be more expensive, right?”

“Could I have some too?” Ms. Salute asks. “I’d like to try making things like hand lotion.”

I’ll sell my beeswax and propolis to Ms. Primura and Ms. Salute. I’ll probably only use the honey and royal jelly myself—maybe not even the royal jelly at all.

“Princess, how are your sales of magic clay going?” asks Ms. Salute.

“It tends to sell when I put it up on the market. I just wish I could obtain magic stones a bit more easily...”

“Magic stones, huh? I don’t use those at all right now. Maybe I’ll find a use for them with my potions eventually.”

“You do need them for Alchemy.”

“That reminds me. I heard a lot of people are trying to get their hands on more five-element talismans.”

“It’s a bit of a pain to craft those,” I reply.

“What do you use?”

“Magical energy paper.”

“Ah, that’s a little pricey.”

“There are a few recipes for magic paper, but paper materials don’t grow here in my domain.”

“Wait, do you need vegetable fibers? I’ve got lots!”

It makes sense that Ms. Primura has them in stock. But vegetable fibers require magic gel in the paper recipe, which means I still have to use magic stones to craft it.

“Do you happen to have magic vegetable fibers?”

“I’ve never seen any.”

“If I have that kind, I can make magic paper without any magic stones.”

“Ah, hang on, hang on!” Ms. Primura rummages through her inventory. “This type of wood might drop magic fibers.”

“What kind of wood is it?” I ask her.

“It’s from a forest dungeon enemy.”

The wood came from a sacrifice tree—an enemy with quite the frightening name.

“I’ll take this wood, do some of this, a little bit of that...and it’s done! I got magic fibers!”

“You made some? Then it sounds like they’re rather simple to produce. Hopefully the quality holds up.”

I take the magic vegetable fibers from Ms. Primura and use Magic Alchemy Circle to combine my ingredients. The result is five sheets of magical energy paper, just barely reaching C quality, which is good enough for me. Then I use Magic Alchemy Circle on the paper to combine it with other ingredients.

“I’ve managed to make a five-element talisman.”

“Looks like it’s at B quality. Good enough, right?”

“You can make the fibers with scrap wood, so it’s easy to get a whole lot of them!” says Ms. Primura.

“Do you need any of these, Ms. Primura?”

“Nope... Ah, actually, let me see one!”

“Oh, to unlock the skills they grant you?”

“I’d like one too,” request Ms. Nephrite and Ms. Salute simultaneously.

“Me too!” the men say next.

“Here you go,” I reply.

Five-element talismans are used for skills that deliver buffs and debuffs, but I

don't see myself using them at all. They don't suit a character playing a shrine maiden, and now that I think of it, I haven't seen anyone using them. I'm sure *some* players out there are making use of these items.

For now, I'll sell my talismans.

We drink, eat, and chat for a while until it's time for my guests to head out.

I'm sure they'll go right back to crafting as soon as they arrive at home. I think that's what I'll work on too.

Bonus Story: A New Friend

IT'S FOGGY TODAY in Starting Town. I don't really mind, so long as it's not raining.

"Ah, Princess!"

"Good day, Yura-san. I haven't seen you since the event."

It looks like she's livestreaming again, judging by the green fairy floating behind her.

"You look so different now."

"Allow me to count up your sins!"

"Pfft!"

The people around us seemed to get a laugh out of that too. I'm sure everyone knows that famous line from Kamen Rider.

"That sounds way more serious coming from a clergy member."

"You aren't wrong about that, considering the role I play as this race."

"Please forgive me!"

"All right, Haventhys forgives you. But my goddess don't!"

"By 'goddess,' you mean your tommy gun, right?" I remember that line from a certain movie.

"All these bad jokes are really waking up my chat."

"That's a good thing."

"Are you ever going to livestream, Princess?"

"I don't mind being shown on streams, but I don't want to become a streamer myself. At most, I'll record a video and upload it whenever I feel like it."

The trailer that showed Mr. Skelly during the camping event has garnered quite a lot of views already.

“Your idol costume is so adorable, Ms. Yura.”

“Mr. Dentelle made it for me! Woo-hoo!”

“...Is that right?”

Him again? Ms. Yura wears a frilly pink-and-white miniskirt with a big ribbon. I just *know* Mr. Dentelle had fun working on this. The color combination really makes her stand out.

“May I send you a friend request?” I ask.

“Yaaay! Of course you can!”

We only got to speak for a brief period during the sports festival. Since Ms. Yura wears such an eye-catching pink outfit, I expect to continue to see her from here on out. I’d like to have her on my friends list.

“All right, I’m going to go hunt!” she informs me.

“Enjoy!”

Afterword

GOOD DAY! I'm Akisuzu Nenohi.

This has been Volume 7. It introduced our first dungeon—a staple of RPGs. That was followed by the sports festival event, and then our heroine evolved again. It was quite a dense volume this time around.

Lots of characters appeared in the story thanks to the official event, though their names were sometimes just mentioned briefly. We even met a few new players and residents.

The Cthulhu Mythos characters showed up in full force for this book, even if only for quests and the event. Well, I suppose they're all somewhat similar in that sense.

I hope to continue adding elements from the world of Cthulhu that you don't absolutely have to recognize, but if you do are sure to bring a smile to your face. This story being set in a VR game allows me to implement these things more easily, unlike an isekai setting.

Finally, we get to see the long-awaited (or maybe not for you) clergyman version of our heroine. She looks great, doesn't she?

Her beautiful thighs don't need any more explanation, but as for her upper body, you might be surprised by how much skin she's showing. However, you wouldn't notice it until she's moving, since her body is covered in a cloak. Our heroine walks very gracefully, so you wouldn't catch any glimpse of skin until she's in combat. Shocking, no?

I hope you enjoyed Volume 7, if only a little bit.

Let's meet again in Volume 8. Thank you very much for reading.

March, 2022



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