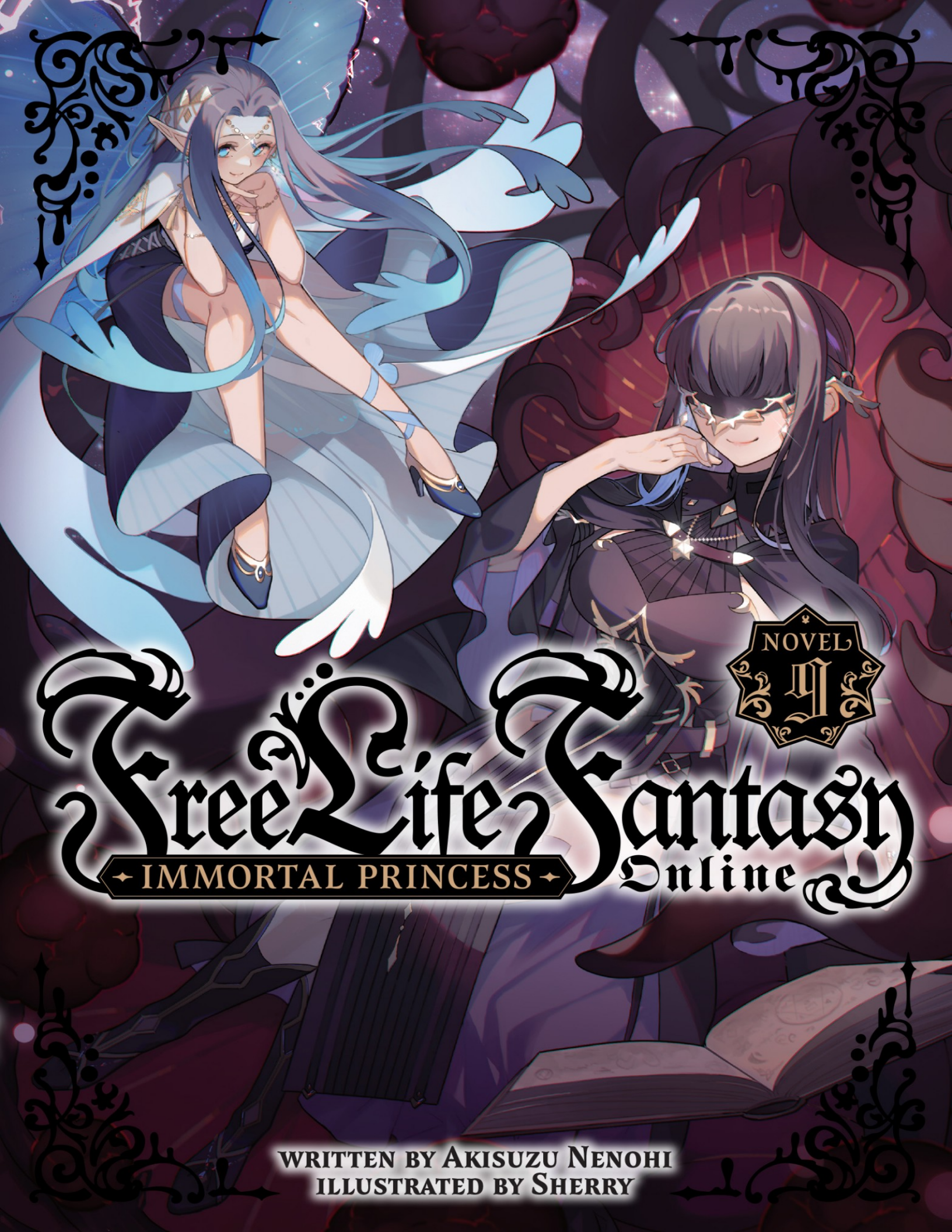

NOVEL 4
Free Life Fantasy Online
IMMORTAL PRINCESS
WRITTEN BY AKISUZU NENOHI
ILLUSTRATED BY SHERRY

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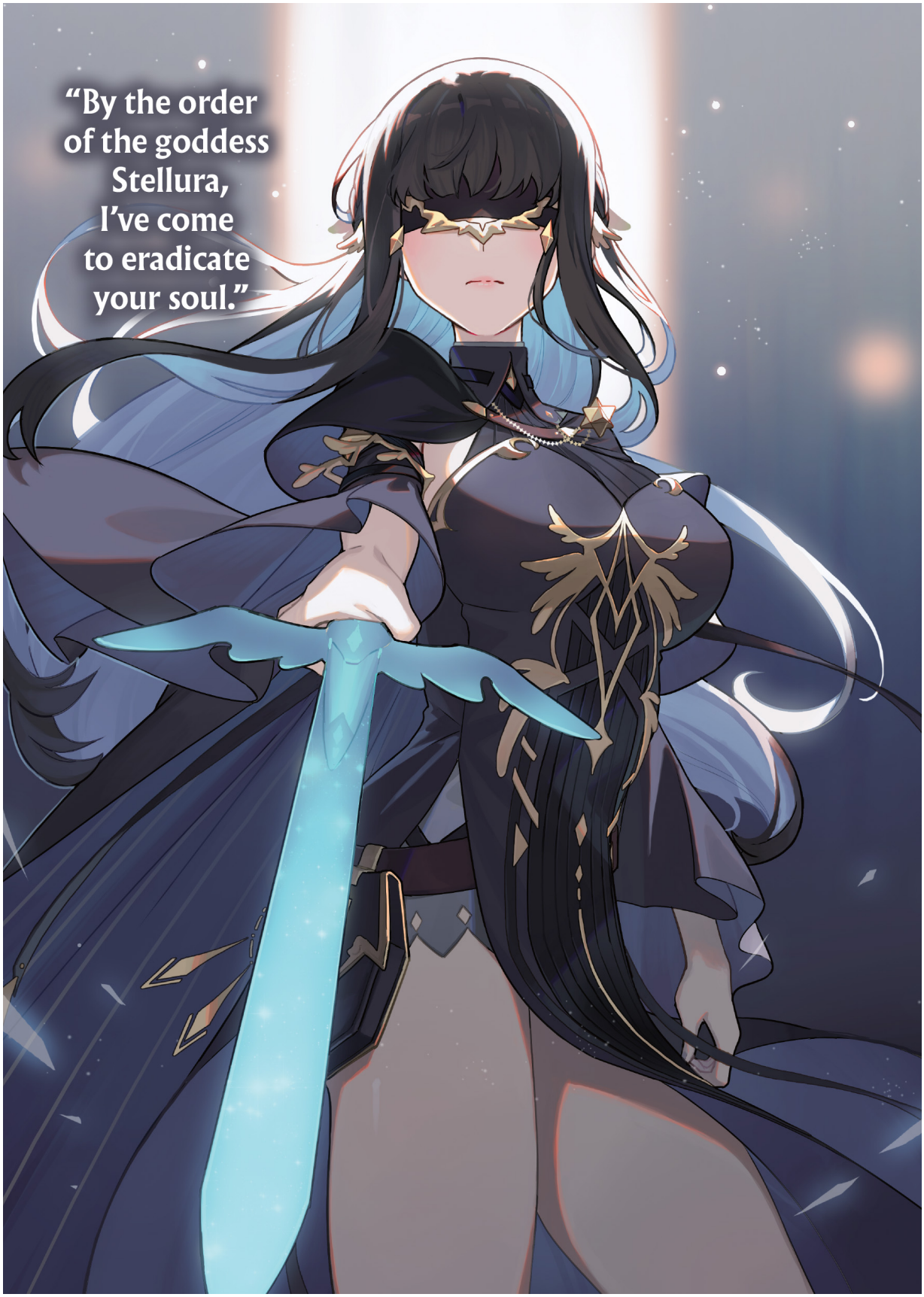
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“By the order of the goddess Stellura, I’ve come to eradicate your soul.”


"I knew it wouldn't be easy, but I can hardly land a hit on you!" Ms. Fairellen groans.
"Tell me about it."
While I knock away all of Ms. Fairellen's shots before they hit me, she dodges everything I throw at her.


Someone spotted the back of a black cat walking through the streets.

Free Life Fantasy Online

IMMORTAL PRINCESS

NOVEL 9

WRITTEN BY

Akisuzu Nenohi

ILLUSTRATED BY

Sherry

Airship

Seven Seas Entertainment

Free Life Fantasy Online ~Immortal Princess, Hajimemashita ~ Vol. 9
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Afterword

Character Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yura:
A second-waver streamer and fan of the protagonist. She's a small girl—less than 150 centimeters tall—and she has short light-pink hair she ties into a ponytail on the right side. Despite fighting with a two-handed axe, she wears a pink-and-white sleeveless idol outfit with a mini skirt.

Mitsuki:
Clad in a Chinese dress with slits that go all the way up to the hips, this bodacious, 176-centimeter-tall player is actually a macho man. His dress is blue like the water's surface, and he wears a silver hairpin with a yellow moon on it. He fights with a pole.

Penguin Mercenary:
They say you can hear an attractive voice coming from this cartoonish penguin suit. He has incredibly strong arms and wields a two-handed sword. He's never actually spoken to the protagonist directly, but he's referenced surprisingly often. Believe it or not, he's been appearing since Volume 2. He's actually a human under the suit, so no need to worry about him blowing up, dood.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 supreme 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.

Lieselotte:
The soul departed from the body the protagonist uses in Secret Art of Necromancy. Her soul is called Lisa, while her body is called Lizzy. Lisa's name may be dangerously similar to Rina's in the Japanese version, but fear not: The plot involving Lisa is already complete, so she doesn't have much more reason to appear in the story.

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.

Mi-go:
A race of builders that are isolated in the Medium. They created the mech races.

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:
Dungeon in the Ruins

OH, IT LOOKS LIKE INFORMATION about the event is finally out.

"Halloween Party: ~Night of the Sacred and the Blasphemous~"

Experience a Halloween party with your friends in the land of spirits!

Raise your torches, cleanse the forces of evil, and celebrate the harvest!

But throughout the lively festivities, you might spot glimpses of strange happenings…

FLFO's fourth official event is a Halloween party taking place this October. Please clear the third Saturday of the month on your calendars, as the party starts at 1 p.m.!

Time within the game will be accelerated during this event, just as it was during the second official event.

The party takes place within the city, and of course, there will be obstacles to encounter, so please work hard to overcome them together.

Don't forget to form parties on the day of the event, as we'll be splitting the same game field into multiple instances

to spread out players.

Halloween originally began as both an exorcism of evil spirits and a harvest festival, and we'll be implementing a campaign that reflects that—gathering-related skills such as Gather, Mine, Log, and Farm will be granted bonuses.

Let's all reap a plentiful bounty!

The title seems to reveal a link to the Cthulhu mythos, but perhaps we'll have to wait and see. The word "blasphemous" isn't very common in other contexts, is it?

I'll just have to figure that out in the event itself. And it's a city-based event too, it seems. That means we'll need the ability to either gather information or solve problems. The easiest way to get information out of people is to help them, after all.

In this game, you might be able to force your way through such obstacles depending on your occupation. Of course, if you aren't careful, you'll end up coming off as one of those people who abuses their authority to mow down anything in their way, so perhaps it's not that easy.

"I'm home!"

I return from school, relax for a little while, and then log in.

"Any issues here?"

"Nothing in particular. The gardener has just informed me that the tea trees have stabilized."

They finally stabilized? Now what comes next?

Green tea and black tea come from processing the leaves differently. In other words, if you ignore the natural qualities in different types of tea trees, you can make green tea, black tea, and even oolong tea.

I was planning to make black tea, my personal preference, but I'm just not sure how to process it. When I harvest the tea leaves with Chef activated, I acquire their raw, unprocessed form. It's probably the same for people who have skills that can be used for processing materials, like Farm. However, when I deactivate any related skills, I acquire the tea leaves in their processed form—all I have to do is select which kind of leaves I want, nice and easy—but any leaves gathered that way are set at a C quality. Activating those relevant skills means the quality of your leaves is dependent on the state of the field they grew in. You can have the healthiest field in the world, but you'll still end up with C-quality, preprocessed tea leaves unless you activate the relevant skills. They could even turn out lower than C if the field is in a poor state.

In other words, the pickier tea drinkers must cultivate a good field, raise the quality of their leaves, activate one of those skills involved in harvesting, harvest the raw tea leaves, and process them on their own.

Should I have the gardener harvest the leaves raw or already processed? This is the real dilemma at hand.

Since this is tea for drinking, I suppose a tastier tea is best. It will take more time, but I intend to savor this tea, after all.

Hmm. There's also a housing setup for tea leaves, isn't there? I think I ought to craft it.

[Furniture] Fully Automatic Tea Processor

Rarity: RA Quality: C Cost: 1,000,000 gold

Tools and materials specialized for making various kinds of tea.

Acquire tea leaves and select what you'd like to make.

Quality of finished items is affected by the skills of the person who placed this furniture.

I think I'll put this in my house. They have other machines that specialize in only green tea or black tea, but this processor is my best choice at the moment. As devastated as I'd feel if the other ones were capable of producing higher-quality tea, I'm at a loss—there's no further information about the machines on the forums right now.

"Please harvest the leaves raw. I'll turn them into usable tea leaves later," I request of the gardener.

"As you wish."

Producing higher-quality tea would probably be optimal from an RP perspective too. The problem is that only people on my friends list can visit my house, but perhaps I can carry tea leaves around with me to give out as presents.

Speaking of RP, I'm going to go and visit the prime minister.

“Prime Minister!”

“How can I help you?”

“Please teach me how to behave as a ruler.”

“What’s this? I think you’re a fine ruler already, Madame.”

“Really?”

“After all, a ruler is able to conduct themselves however they see fit. You already have the essential parts down, so there’s nothing to worry about.”

“Tell me more about those essential parts.”

“You are bold yet elegant at all times. A ruler must have the charisma to charm others. In other words, rulers must be able to easily sway people into action,” claims the prime minister. “Ruler, king, or queen is the title of someone who manages people. They’re the leaders who control others through their orders, and the most important part is to have the charisma to make people think, ‘I’d do anything for this person’s sake.’”

He says all this, but it still doesn’t quite seem right to me.

“Conducting yourself regally is an important part of that charisma,” he continues. “No one’s ever going to become a follower of someone without self-confidence, are they now? Confidence shines through in one’s words and actions most of all.”

Words and actions? Well, I have my movement assistance in this game, so I should be fine in that category. It’s been so long that I don’t feel like disabling it now.

“And can I keep speaking the way that I do?”

"Of course. It's not the choice of words that's vital, but the ability to express your own will. The manner of speech is trivial, so long as you can convey what you want the people under you doing."

"I see. So my will trumps my tone?"

"Have I not made it clear? Madame, I'll say it once more. Rulers are those who stand on top. It's all right to give specific orders to the people under you. Working under someone who gives specific instructions is better than someone who gives vague ones. It's a truth that has remained unchanged throughout the ages."

"Ah, I see. Some higher-ups yell at their subordinates for doing things wrong, even though *they're* the ones who weren't specific. Is that what you're talking about?"

"Correct. Those who serve shall feel the desire to meet or surpass the expectations of their master, even when given very few orders. A ruler who fails to understand this is showing a lack of talent for the role, so they should take care to respect that concept."

"Those subordinates must be very capable if the system still functions like that. If it were me, I'd be nothing more than a figurehead leader, wouldn't I?"

"You could even be looking at a coup, depending on the circumstances. Organizations with a charismatic leader at the top are incredibly powerful. We don't require much of you, Madame, so please continue to conduct yourself in that same grand way you always have. Don't stop coveting power either."

"Is it good to seek power?"

"Well, of course. The notion of 'justice' is laughable if it doesn't have power behind it. The victors decide what is 'just.' It's how the world works. I carry out the will of the goddess with everything in my own power. Speaking of which, you've done brilliantly with Lieselotte."

It appears the prime minister just praised me.

"Ah, however, be careful not to treat people on the outside the same way you treat your subordinates. Be sure you accurately judge what can be compromised on and what things cannot."

"I might let it slide if someone insults me, but if someone picks a fight with the goddess, the outer ones, or the immortals, I intend to respond," I reply.

"I understand taking on that responsibility on behalf of your subordinates, I suppose. But, Madame, I believe that even you can safely respond as you please if someone picks a fight with you personally."

"I always thought that the higher up a person was, the less emotional they were supposed to be."

"You mustn't get the wrong idea, Madame. There's no need to suppress your emotions. If there were, our leaders would all be mech races or automata. It's *determination* that you lack. There is no need to deny anyone's feelings, yours or another's, as all of them are appropriate."

Determination? I suppose that *would* take a lot of determination. All emotions felt in the moment are appropriate—both mine and the person I'm interacting with. That's only natural, as living beings are born capable of emotions. The incredibly old man before me chuckles

and tells me I could be replaced with a robot if I want to deny my own. Unlike me, his long history shows on his face.

Also, he's definitely acting disrespectful right now and failing to hide it. Please don't snicker at me like that. What kind of prime minister snickers at a young princess's concerns?

"Of course, to us immortals, picking a fight with you is no different than insulting Stellura herself. We follow and approve of the gods' will. If someone has a problem with that, they can pray at a chapel."

"And it's my job to remind people of that?"

"Exactly. It's all for the sake of your followers."

"I'll remember that."

"Conduct yourself boldly, Madame. If the head rejects something, the rest of us, your limbs, will be unable to function."

I'll have to come back from time to time to learn more about how a leader should behave. It's crucial information for roleplaying!

The outer ones, or great old ones, could probably help me in that area as well. In fact, maybe they're the very definition of how a leader should behave. They certainly act without limitations, after all. Though they rarely emerge from the Medium, it's not unthinkable.

Well, they'd probably just drain everyone's sanity bar if they did. I leave the prime minister's office and work on production for a while.

I can dig as much as I want from the large ore vein behind my villa—oh, but wait, there's going to be an event that boosts gathering

rewards. It would be wasteful to gather from here now. I'll save a week's worth of harvesting until Saturday, when the campaign starts.

Next, I collect night light grass from my field, since there's no guarantee on the amount I'd be able to harvest if I let it wait. I haven't asked anyone else to harvest from the ore vein and the fields, since I want to be the one to raise those skills. My servants only take care of my bees and tea trees for me.

Other players can employ residents to gather materials for them, but this employment will cost a pretty penny. A resident's salary is dependent on which skills they have, of course. However, I don't have to pay anyone from the castle, and they all have high-level skills since they've been around for so long. It's a very advantageous arrangement for me.

As for my bees, the gravitas hive actually functions the same way as my ore vein. Maybe I should have my workers leave the hive to me as well. Honey and ore will have to wait until the weekend.

Now I'll craft revival medicine from my Nether materials and MP mega potions from the night light grass I harvested. I can also make some mead of reminiscence with the honey I have on hand, although I'll be prioritizing lemonade production first.

That reminds me—my ore vein has finally started to drop mithril. It's sort of like the silver I've mined before, but a magical variety. It's not an issue, but it seems I can't mine regular silver from the vein anymore.

Mithril probably has a higher magical aptitude than magi iron. I could start using this material as my base for elemental metal, but I

think my priority should be upgrading all of my servants' equipment first. Right now, they use halchium and weapons with three different elements.

Wait a minute. Maybe I should use this material for Lizzy's burial goods instead. Flesh balls can't equip items in the first place, and Lizzy should really be my priority for new materials, since she's my main fighter. I'll have to check how the burial goods work one more time.

I only have one corpse and possession—Lizzy's body and axe—so that's doable.

But what about the burial goods? It says the options are "supplement/substitute equipment" and "upgrade materials." I'll have to try some things out and take notes.

Hmm. It's really no use. I'm going to need someone who works in production to help me. Mr. Ertz it is, I suppose. But he's not online yet, so I'll have to ask him later, before I go to bed.

I'll do all my mining on Saturday and have him process my mithril too. It's still a very rare resource, so it's worth having an expert do it instead of myself. After all, Alchemy requires so many materials.

I've finished my daily crafting, so all that's left is for Mr. Ertz to confirm my suspicions. That means I can focus on leveling up until dinner. Should I head south or go to a dungeon? I'd prefer to go to the dungeon with machinery enemies instead of the one in the north. The more long-range attacks I face, the easier it'll be for me.

They were really getting excited about machinery stuff on the BBS, so someone probably posted about where this dungeon is

located. Ah, this is it. It's to the southwest of the empire's capital, and the entrance looks like ancient ruins.

They say that the enemies are excellent at detecting intruders, so they'll swarm you until you're completely cornered—unless you've got enough firepower, that is. There are also tons of enemies who will turn you into Swiss cheese with their bullets if they manage to surround you. That's particularly important to avoid for players with low HP. There are some armed enemies that can fire very far, so it might be lights out before you can even get close to them. They're weak against blunt attacks, as well as lightning and ice, with fire and water having regular effectiveness against them.

These armed enemies must be the ones I ran into while hunting —the ones with the weapons on their shoulders. Those things could fire projectiles over a hundred meters.

Since I have all this information, I may as well head to the dungeon in the ruins. The closest portal looks like it's in Kastelgau, so I'll go ahead and teleport there.

Wow, what an impressive place. This building is a little too rugged to call a "mansion," so it's basically a big castle—the practical kind, not something built to be glittery and fancy.

I'll make my way north down the main road as I get a look at the area.

I know there are many adventurers because of the dungeon, but there sure are a lot of soldiers too, aren't there? The people on the main street sell their wares bravely to these soldiers. It certainly is

lively out here. Is it my imagination, or are there more machinery residents here than any other kind?

Oh, look at that. The city is surrounded by another thick wall. I'll try speaking with the gatekeeper.

"Good day. The walls here are mighty impressive," I greet them.

"Good day, Miss. Is it your first time in our town?"

"Yes, I just arrived. I'm an outsider."

"Is that right? This town was once a fortress, you see."

"What about that castle?"

"That was also once a fortress, though it's been changed to its current state over time."

The gatekeeper tells me that the forest to the east has been designated a danger zone, where this fortress was built as a protective base.

The dungeon to the north was discovered after that, bringing an influx of adventurers to the area. The army used to be in charge of the town back when it was part of the fort, but adventurers received permission to use it as a base before they headed out to the dungeon. They were entrusted as backup fighters in case of a crisis.

Then traders and more people came until the soldiers were promoted to lords of the land. In the end, the place developed into the town that stands here today.

"So, they went from manning the fortress to ruling over the territory? That's quite an upgrade," I remark.

"Well, they say the soldiers weren't happy about it, actually. Of course, that promotion only happened because they gave the adventurers permission to stay here in the first place."

"Perhaps they found it an agreeable change, themselves being soldiers and all. I'm sure they struggled a lot when they needed a higher level of firepower."

"Regardless of whether or not the soldiers wanted it, the result was that the town has grown into what you see now, so I don't think it was the wrong decision."

"It's so lively here. It's hard to imagine that the forest right to the east is a danger zone."

"This is actually the safest place to be, since it's so full of fighters. We also have a protective wall, as you can see."

So instead of being in a slightly more distant place with no fighters around, the dungeon is right next to a place full of fighters. This was once a protective fortress, so it's even safer than being far away from the dungeon. It's probably a different story if you get *too* far away, though, since it's not like it's easy to move villages or towns if need be.

I've learned what I wanted to know, so it's time to head for that dungeon. There's no need to visit the union this time, since the BBS already had information on the enemies I'll find.

I've arrived at a safe area at the site of the ruins. The entrance to the dungeon looks very mysterious, making any player wonder

what could have happened to this place. There are also stone pillars spaced out evenly and a crumbling stone wall.

The statue at the entrance makes it obvious that a dungeon is just inside.

I've heard that dungeons without portals use byakhees to fly players directly into the dungeon area. Of course, that's for people who aren't afraid of heights or byakhees themselves. I'll have to try that out next time, since it sounds like a good way to get around while I work on leveling up.

I step through the entrance and see what appears to be a man-made tunnel. The northern dungeon was nothing more than a normal cave, so this is quite the change in atmosphere.

Hmm. This tunnel is actually quite wide. But that's probably what makes it so easy to get shot from all angles and turned into Swiss cheese. Well, I guess it makes moving around more convenient.

I'm keeping an eye out for four-legged attackers. The robot dogs in this dungeon sprint at you, then shoot shotguns at you to stop you from reacting. Then they bite or shoot at point-blank range—most terrifying pups indeed. It's hard to reflect shotgun blasts back at the enemy in the first place, and these dogs fire off twelve bullets at once with their shells. I wouldn't be able to stop an attack like that at all.

It sounds like there are also close-range armed enemies in here too. I'll have to be careful about them as well.

I suppose I could simply leave my ball of flesh to handle the dogs. No, actually, balls of flesh don't fare well against robot dogs. Instead of swapping it for living armor, I think a skeleton is the right

choice. I can give him a stabbing weapon instead of a bow for a better matchup. In real life, wielding such a weapon would either be a matter of dealing instant death or no damage at all. But this is a video game, so it's wrong to think too much about such matters. After all, cutting an enemy's throat is only a critical hit. Although, such a critical hit *does* usually cause death for most enemies.

I summon Unit One as a customized skeleton tank, giving him a large shield, defensive skills, and a mace. I'll summon two main tanks since I'm fighting solo today.

I'll also summon two spirit bodies, give them Shadow Magic, and have them float above on standby. They can bind and attack any approaching dogs so that they'll draw aggro instead of me.

That just leaves Lizzy.

I give her a detailed explanation of my battle plan, telling her not to move around too much once she has a target. It goes without saying that stray bullets are a real danger in a dungeon like this. I intend to fight mainly with my reflection ability too, after all. Lizzy will have the job of attacking Unit One's enemies.

That should cover everything. All right, time to get going. I take my first step out of the safe area.

Skeletons step right on top of traps, don't they? At least status ailments don't work on them, so they should be fine so long as the traps aren't anything primitive like giant, tumbling boulders.

There isn't much information about this dungeon past the first few areas, since the players have only just reached it, and it's not like those are fully mapped out yet either. I hope I can get my hands on

some brand-new information, although my main objective is still leveling up.

The boards said that the enemies seem to be good at scouting. So why haven't any of them showed up yet? Are they all grouped together somewhere? It's definitely possible that they're all gathered around the dungeon's previous visitor.

Hmm? There's something small and round on the ground. The boards said that there were beacons in here. Wait, beacons? That seems like a bad thing when we're facing machinery enemies.

I tell Unit One and Lizzy to be on guard.

Ah, and here they are. It looks like a group of three of those dogs—the four-legged attackers. They look just like medium-sized dogs made of metal. Those tubes on their backs must be the shotguns.

I pair the skeletons with the spirit bodies and make them wait for one dog each to attack. I'll take on the last one myself. Lizzy can attack as she pleases, though she usually fights alongside the servants with large shields, using arts that draw the enemy's attention.

A head-on fight with shotguns and punches won't be very productive, so I'll head up into the air. They should lose strength once there's distance between us, since shotguns are meant for close-range fights.

I hang in the air with Coordinate Float and face the dog head-on by turning my body diagonally. It's strange how I can still move exactly how I would with my feet on the ground.

I bind each of the dogs at the same time before hitting them with pillars. While they're dealt damage, I get one to target me so I can separate it from the pack.

The dog runs toward me, causing Danger Sense to display a range of attack. Then comes a shrill noise and what sounds like steam being expelled from something. That's when the shell goes flying, hits the ground, explodes, and disappears.

Wow, so it looks like it only displays the estimated area where the shot *could* hit, but not exactly where it will land. I won't take much damage, so long as I keep my distance and avoid a direct hit. I can handle a few pellets—I just can't reflect these shots with any accuracy. All I need is to do is hold my sword in front of me, where the direct hits will come, and they should be deflected automatically.

These dogs' only long-range weapons are their shotguns, so that's all they use while I'm in the air. But they sure like to rapid-fire, all right! What a pain!

Lizzy's handling herself, but Unit One, the tank, is in trouble here. Magic guns seems to count as a magic attack, which Unit One's large shield—a physical item—won't be able to defend against very well.

Wait a minute.

"Unit One, block them with Magic Guard and Reflect Shield."

CLACK

This should reduce the amount of damage he takes.

Still, Unit One's AI is incredibly sophisticated. I never noticed, since I haven't encountered many magical enemies until now. Maybe it's time to feed him more orbs to level him up. I hope he'll soon be able to adjust his own setup depending on what enemy he's facing.

However, these shotguns are proving to be a real headache. Plus, they've been picking up rocks to throw them at me, baiting me into deflecting them all with my sword. If you have the right skills for it, the range of the attack appears while the dogs are mid-throw, but the actual course the rocks will take only shows up once their hand is extended to throw. This is far too difficult.

I happen to have a high magic defense stat, so these attacks won't be lethal as long as I'm far enough away, but I don't know a method to defeat these dogs very quickly at all.

I don't know if they use EP or magical energy, being an mech race and all, but if I shove my tentacles in the muzzles of their guns and blow them up, maybe I can get rid of their weapons all in one go. It seems possible, but there's a more efficient method I know of. Let's give it a try.

As soon as a line emerges from the muzzle, I wrap my tentacles around the dogs' torsos and the ends of their guns, bending the muzzles to face the dogs' necks. The goal is to make them take themselves out.

Whoa, that did a whole lot of damage. This is pleasantly easy. When I'm above them, they can't attack me with anything but their shotguns, so they never stop firing, and it's lights out as soon as I wrap my tentacles around them. This really must be a bug. Shouldn't

there be some sort of mechanic to prevent this kind of exploit? Well, I don't mind. It just makes it so easy.

I stop them in their tracks with a bind spell, hold the gun in place with my tentacles, and roast them with a pillar. Indeed, this method makes it very quick.

Only one dog left? Lizzy's on her way, so I'll focus on the enemies who just arrived as reinforcements.

It's an all-purpose shooting model MK I and a supporting fire model MK I.

The all-purpose shooting model MK I is anthropomorphic and holding a revolver.

The supporting fire model MK I has four arms and multiple legs. It has a total of six cannons—two on the shoulders in between each arm. It's not as bulky as the MK II that I met during the event, and it seems to be a continuous fire type. Regardless of the details, now I'll finally get to have some fun. Six cannons on one enemy is so overpowered.

The all-purpose shooting model appears to have a range of eighty meters, while the supporting fire model has a range of a hundred meters.

It seems magic guns have a very long range of fire—though, maybe not as far as a bow, since these can't fire at high angles. But since they're powered by magical energy, I doubt gravity has any

effect on the missiles' trajectory. They probably disperse upon impact too.

Something about the way they're shooting at me makes me feel like I'm playing a rhythm game. It's just like the kind where you have to swing a weapon across the line with the exact right timing.

Oh dear, death should not have taken thee! But actually, there's another one of you! Now we get to play again! Though, this whole process is really tiring my arms out.

Putting that aside, it really is true that enemies swarm you in this dungeon. It's perfect to level up Danger Sense, Instinct, and Unparalleled Style, but just having one supporting fire model around is equivalent to six individual gun-wielding enemies. Each shot from their continuous fire isn't very powerful, but that's not the issue at hand. I simply don't have enough arms and athames to handle everything.

I believe that arm movements are dependent on one's agility stat. My equipment set helps boost it, but it's still not good enough. There are some enemies who spawn before I have time to take them out, even though my method of vision allows me to see them perfectly clearly. I wish I at least had enough agility to eliminate those guys.

Actually, shall I start using my accessories to boost agility? I do have anklets for agility already, but a little more couldn't hurt, considering my base stats.

Those who use the Force are supposed to be able to see the future, but in my case, Danger Sense allows me to see things just

after they happen, not just before. I still need a certain amount of speed to do anything about it.

Lana has told me about the third-tier skills called Premonition and Sixth Sense, though I doubt they'll work for things like PvP. In the end, raising my agility is going to be a necessity.

I think it's about time I change up my accessories. I currently have two accessories each for dexterity, intelligence, and spirit. Should I swap out dexterity or intelligence for agility?

Ultimate Sorcery currently makes my spirit stat the base of all my spells, so I don't want to lower my spirit, but I don't really want to lower my intelligence either. On top of that, dexterity is what decides my accuracy in reflecting enemy shots. This is going to be a difficult decision.

Anyway, for now, I'll have Unit One and Lizzy take care of the enemies once a small group of them have gathered. We'll proceed forward without letting ourselves get swarmed.

I'll leave the normal close-range enemies to my servants, as those ones never interested me in the first place.

The first area of the dungeon has enemies level 41 to 46. As you proceed down to the fifth area, the minimum and maximum levels go up one per area. These include four-legged attacking types, all-purpose sword models MK I through MK III, all-purpose shooting models MK I, and supporting fire models MK I. I take note that I've confirmed their appearances in this dungeon.

This takes me to the fifth area with enemies level 50 to 55. I'm currently at level 43. I don't think I'll be able to make more progress

at this rate. I can't even take a minute to put my servants on standby, but perhaps that's a good thing since I'm technically hunting right now. The status ailments I inflict with Unknown Structure are incredibly useful too.

Heh heh! How delicious. The only problem is that reinforcements keep arriving, so the battle never stops, and that means my skill changes aren't updating. That happens when the battle ends, after all.

I'm excited for those third-tier skills I should be getting soon. Since I have some time before dinner, I'll do a bit more hunting while I still can.

Once I reach the fifth area, there are now all-purpose shooting models MK II and III, as well as the supporting fire model MK II. They all have different weapons, so there's no particular issues. If anything, the problem is that the spawn rate is changing. It could be my imagination, but I swear the all-purpose sword types aren't showing up as often as before. Maybe that's because it's more efficient to fight with concentrated gunfire from long distances.

I continue to reflect the enemies' shots while I attack them with my tentacles and spells. When I feel safe, I go for a hit with Snake Sword too. That's nonnegotiable, since I can't kill them quickly enough with just reflected shots alone. But I won't complain—I've been wanting to level up my other skills too. This dungeon is particularly juicy when it comes to my specific needs.

Your race level has increased.

Snake Sword has reached level 15.

You have acquired Distance Extension through Snake Sword.

Distance Extension

The range you can strike with weapons like snake swords, ropes, and whips increases as skill level rises.

Hmm? It sounds like a passive art that does exactly what the name says. This one seems pretty important. You can never have too much range for your weapons.

This is a good one that will be helpful for leveling. I'll be upgrading Superior Magic Assist soon, so I'd like to work on that until I reach Ultra Magic Assist.

Oh? What's this faint high-pitched noise I hear? It sounds like it's coming from over there. I can't see it, unfortunately, but I've got a bad feeling about this.

It's getting louder and louder the longer I listen. Does that mean it's closing the distance between us? Some sort of mechanical enemy has to be making a sound like this. I suppose I haven't seen *every* enemy in the fifth area just yet. There are probably rare varieties that exist in here too.

This doesn't sound like that jet engine attached to the panjandrum during the event. It's more like "shwing, pshh, shwing, pshh." What could it be?

Unit One and Lizzy have taken battle stances, so they must be able to see it off in the distance. The sound is changing now. It's almost like something is flying toward us. Now Danger Sense is activating!

It's a straight line, but a wide range. Is it going to charge right at me? I quickly jump out of the way to escape the line I'm shown. It's still too far away to see, so I don't know if it's going to fly at me at high speeds.

Oh, I see—hang on! It's so cool! That's a full-on weapon of war, isn't it?! How thrilling!

All-purpose Annihilation Model Lv 55

Its name is no lie. This highly mobile foe is equipped with heavy firepower for the sole purpose of annihilating its target.

Equipped with a handgun, grenades, and a blade. Built with multi-warhead missile launchers on its shoulders.

Attribute: —

Weakness: Blunt attacks, lightning, ice

Resistance: Slash attacks

Class: Mech

Order: Anthropomorphic

Family: All-purpose model

Genus: Annihilation model

Species: All-purpose annihilation model

It has a handgun in its right hand, though that looks more like a rifle to me. It also has a grenade launcher mounted underneath it, a sword attached to its left arm, and missile pods on both shoulders. I can tell it's eager for blood.

It's also so fast! That sound I heard earlier must have been it flying toward us using its boosters. I wouldn't have expected it to be so fast—I can't even dodge in time. I have to use Gravitas Maneuver to get out of the way.

Lizzy can avoid attacks on her own, but it's not very easy for Unit One, the skeleton.

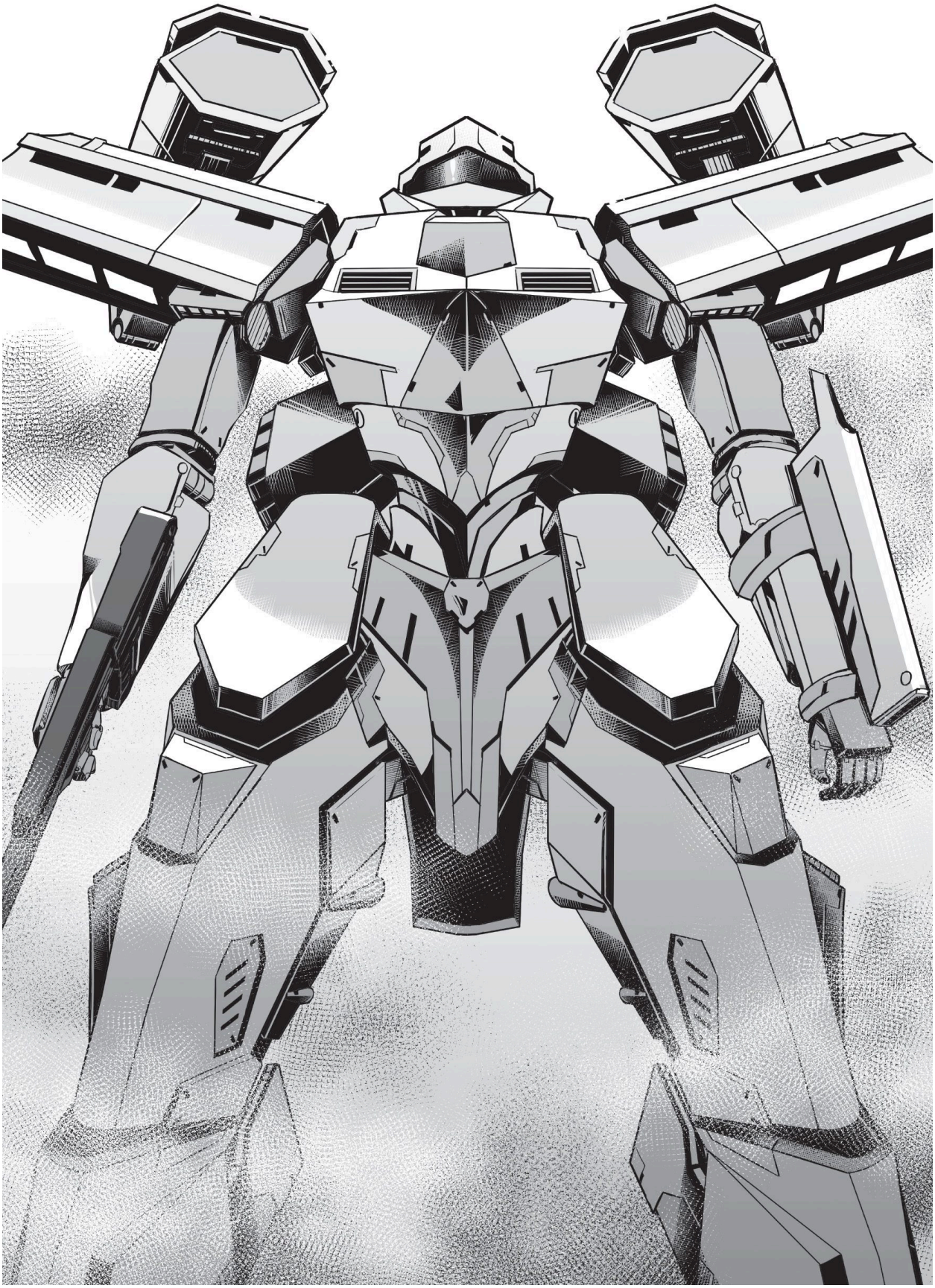
I thought I was in the clear now, but some sort of "pshh" sound makes me turn around in midair to see another line being displayed thanks to Danger Sense.

This thing has side thrusters too? It really *is* highly mobile. It only needs to activate a side thruster for one brief second to quickly spin around 180 degrees. Are we sure this thing didn't come from a different video game entirely?

Danger Sense shows me one line coming from its shoulder. That can only mean a missile attack! A single missile erupts from the all-purpose annihilation model's shoulder port before it lands back down on the ground again.

Identify told me that this enemy is equipped with multi-warhead missiles. Wait, multi-warhead?! Are you serious?!

The missile smoothly splits apart in midair, causing the single line from Danger Sense to split into many as the new cluster of smaller missiles come my way.



Ah! I can't do this! I managed to reflect a few, but I still lost 60 percent of my health!

This is probably where I should use a tank with Reflect Shield. These are guided missiles, which means they're just like the magic missile spells. The nice part is that as long as you manage to reflect them, even if you aren't very accurate, you've still sent a missile toward your enemy. The problem here is that it's simply too many at once. These multi-warhead missiles are like guided shotgun pellets that explode on impact. If that's supposed to be a joke, I'm certainly not laughing.

Their detonations are much smaller than what explosion spells can do, but that doesn't mean they're painless either.

Danger Sense activates again to show me a curved line and a dome shape. That's when I hear a unique "thunk" sort of sound. It must be a grenade being shot out of its grenade launcher. I move in closer so I can deflect the grenade while it's still arching through the air, aiming to send it back toward the enemy.

With another "pshh," the all-purpose annihilation model falls back, managing to avoid the grenade.

It's starting to shoot fewer missiles now, so it must not have a very high defense stat, but that high level of mobility is practically unfair.

The easiest way to attack a mobile enemy is with magic missiles.

"Zex Ra'se Mexa Persepho Apollo."

I fire off six Nox Magic Missiles strengthened with Overspell.

The all-purpose annihilation model draws them closer before moving with its side thruster. The missiles curve to follow their target, but since they can't turn at a right angle, half of them end up hitting the wall.

The enemy activates its main thruster to charge toward me, only to then use its side thrusters to turn the opposite direction and intercept the remaining magic missiles. Then it repeats the action to turn around and face me once more.

You have to be kidding me! This thing is putting on a performance like it's the main character here.

The magic missiles do lock onto their target, but in exchange, they're pretty slow. It seems the robot can simply use its boosters to outrun them.

The enemy's sword meets Lizzy's axe once it gets close enough, then activates its front thruster to fly backward again.

For now, I'll heal with Holy Magic—not that I won't be dead if it hits me with missiles again.

Its AI certainly is clever, isn't it? This guy is clearly on an entirely different level than the rest. Maybe it's considered a rare monster, or even a mid-tier boss that patrols the dungeon. It's certainly an elite enemy within the game world. There's one per area in a dungeon like this one.

To be frank, this is the type of enemy I'm going to start fleeing from the second I hear it in the distance henceforth. It's just too much

pain for me.

From above, the spirit body Unit One fires off a bind and a pillar. But as soon as the all-purpose annihilation model is bound, it activates its boosters and thrusters at full throttle. The output tears the binding to bits, allowing it to instantly break free of the pillar. I hurriedly dodge its charge. It seems bind spells aren't going to work on this thing—it's simply too dangerous when it charges you out of the blue like that. I was very nearly turned to mincemeat.

It uses its side thrusters to easily escape lances too. That leaves only wall or mine spells as potential options against it.

I reflect the enemy's rifle shots and grenades, and when it charges at me with its sword, I cast Nox Wall directly in front of me.

"What?! Oh no!"

I never expected it to activate its boosters in front of my wall and jump over. It changes directions midair, kicks its feet off the dungeon ceiling, and flies toward me with its sword out. I dodge just in time. I must have cast my wall a bit too early!

The spirit body Unit One and I work together to scatter mines—ah, and here come the missiles. Farewell, world!

Your HP has reached 0. You are unable to move.

Wait for revival / Respawn at designated point

Those missiles are utterly merciless. I'm supposed to have high magic defense, so maybe those missiles count as physical weapons.

Unit One and Lizzy are forcibly recalled now that I'm dead. The explosion sent me backward and straight into a wall, where I slid down for a little nap in the corner of the dungeon.

The weather sure is nice down here!

Holy Magic has reached level 25.

You have acquired Soul Shield through Holy Magic.

I see that Holy Magic leveled up. The same goes for Magic Resistance and High Magical Immunity too. I suppose it's more difficult to level up physical skills in this dungeon.

Ah, but for now, it's time to head home.

My particular character simply has her body dissolve upon death, rather than my corpse itself teleporting away. My vision switches back to its main form, but nothing else happens. With that, I split a fully equipped incarnation off of my original body. Now I have a spell to read about.

Soul Shield

By surrounding your soul with a protective film, you gain resistance to coercion, fear, and charm.

A spell to resist status ailments? That's not something I need in the first place.

Now I need to come up with a plan to defeat that particular foe. That dungeon is full of things I need, so I have to form countermeasures if I want to keep hunting there. The annihilation model was so quick on its feet, I had no time to think about it in the heat of battle.



Hmm. Lizzy's body is made of magical energy, so I don't lose capacity from her even when I die—I only lose a whole lot more MP than I do when a typical summoned servant dies. She hasn't been killed yet, so I'm not certain, but I would imagine there's a cooldown before I can summon her again.

The problem is Unit One. Should I give one servant a large shield and make the other a spirit body? He can come to me with Cover Move and use Reflect Shield when the missiles target me, reflecting them back at the enemy, and then I can make him quickly separate from me. Then, all the while, the spirit body Unit One can drop mines from above to stop the enemy in its tracks. Is that the formula to defeat it?

Cover Move has a little bit of a cooldown timer, and Reflect Shield lasts for quite a while. I wouldn't want to die on the second round of missiles while I wait for the cooldown.

I'd like to learn what triggers the annihilation model to fire its missiles. That should help me stay a bit more stable while I fight. I can coax it into firing the missiles once I learn the trigger, or maybe even stop it from firing while I wait for Cover Move to be available again.

Frankly, I should really flee as soon as I hear it in the distance, considering the gap in our levels. I can summon my servants again once the coast is clear. However, if my goal in going to that dungeon is to level up, I really *should* find a way to defeat the thing.

Hmm. I need some sort of safety measure while I wait for the cooldowns to end.

For now, I'll send Mr. Ertz a message now that he's online. Then I'll log off to eat.

I finish up a bit of this and that after dinner. Then I head to Mr. Ertz's shop.

"Good day."

"Oh, you're here. You said you want to test out a skill?"

"I'm curious about how my coffin works, but I can't test anything without equipment."

We move to his workroom with the furnace. There, I borrow tin, copper, and bronze equipment.

Now it's time to verify.

"You can't retrieve the items once you use them for upgrades. Well, they're cheap anyway, so would you mind if I use these for upgrades? It's a good opportunity for me."

"Sure, go on ahead. I made those when I was just starting to level up my skills. If anything, I'd prefer you buy 'em."

Lizzy is equipped with the default items she had on her while she was alive—something of an avatar for her, it seems. If I don't like how it looks, I can disable the avatar function and use the "add/replace equipment" button so that she'll physically display any new equipment I give her. In other words, right now, she'd turn into a fully tin Lizzy. I'm certain the default equipment looks different depending which corpse you have too, though since this is still a video game, it probably makes no difference in function.

It seems the burial goods are upgraded by either adding new equipment or preparing materials.

"So, you can add either a completed item or just the materials?" Mr. Ertz asks me.

"That's what it looks like. However, you can't skip over materials of higher strength. For example, you can trade out tin for copper but not for bronze. It rejects the material."

"Does the item quality make a difference?"

"Oh, hmm, did I notice anything? I think I use less MP when I summon now."

"I see…"

I'm starting by using a completed item, and while I'm not sure if that's the right thing to do, it seems like the best option at the moment. Her defensive power goes up and the equipment becomes a different color.

Putting in a completed item reduces the amount of materials required for an upgrade. The display always shows the amount of materials you'd need to upgrade all equipment at once.

As for the modifiers obtained from equipment, it appears they all depend on which items you give your servant. Upgrading them with materials gives you the option to keep them how they were before or change them. Frankly, it probably all depends on the material itself.

Upgrading a copper item with bronze material nullifies its item quality. It seems I no longer receive the MP reduction upon

summoning a servant using it, so that must be an effect from the item quality.

Upgrading equipment with a high-quality material affects it slightly, but if quality is very important to you, it's best to simply give the servant a completed item in the first place.

"It seems you can adjust the stat boosts you receive from burial goods when you're enhancing an item. You can redo them entirely too…oh, but it looks like it's only once. After that, they want you to pay money for the option. Game developers often do that sort of thing."

"Yep, it's pretty much the standard practice," Mr. Ertz responds.

"I see that you get the option to redo the stats again if you change the material. How kind of them."

"Maybe that's there in case the player makes a mistake?"

"I believe you're right. By the way, how much does steel currently cost?" I ask him.

From weakest to strongest, the materials used for upgrading go in the following order: tin, copper, bronze, iron, steel, high-spec cobalt or magi iron, halchium, and laichium.

"After laichium is a magi iron and magi silver alloy called ailil. That's how you get pure mithril," Mr. Ertz informs me.

"Ailil ingots?"

"I hear that players who don't specialize in magic use ailil. Mithril is too soft on its own unless you channel magical energy through it.

But you have to mix it with magi iron at the lowest, or the mithril loses all its special qualities."

"I have the money, so I *could* buy a whole set right now. But I should really decide on my stat modifiers first."

"That's a good plan," he responds to me.

Even steel equipment has modifiers only around twenty, making it as good as trash to someone like Lizzy. But steel is still booming on the market, so the price is rather high. Of course, I can't skip past steel, so I'll go ahead and buy it since I have no other choice. I'll decide on modifiers tomorrow while I change my equipment.

I purchase the materials weaker than steel from Mr. Ertz and leave. I'll have to come back again if my material requirements change, but I'll cross that bridge when I get to it.

For now, it's time for bed.

Chapter 2:
Second Saturday

IT'S THE SECOND SATURDAY of October, and it's starting to get pretty chilly.

I finish my morning activities and log in at 8 a.m.

What shall I do today? Hmm. I think I'll visit the Medium.

Time to find myself an expert! It can be a Yith or Mi-go, so I'll go with whichever I see first.

"Oh, Mr. Mi-go. I'd like to ask you about mech races."

"What do you want to know?"

"Are there any good ways to fight against the multi-warhead missiles fired by an all-purpose annihilation model?"

"Oh, those things? They're pretty weak if you know how to take them down. The way they fire off all their missiles at once has both merits and demerits."

Mr. Mi-go A tells me there are multiple ways of defeating the multi-missile attack.

First, my servant can use Reflect Shield to safely send them back to the source. They recommend this strategy.

Another simple method is to cast a burst spell that absorbs the cluster. You might still get hit by the explosion if you cut it too close, but aside from that, it's a safe and easy way to defeat the annihilation model—especially since those missiles have a small detonation range

as a trade-off for their tracking ability. One other small concern with this method is losing visibility when the explosion goes off.

Players with enough speed can also shoot the missiles down while continuously falling back. You can return fire with multi-lock magic missiles as well, but it's not recommended, as the multi-warhead missiles travel very quickly.

It's also possible to shoot the missiles with long-distance attacks or reflect them before they even split apart. If you can corner the enemy, the multiple warheads won't lock onto you once the missile splits apart. However, all-purpose annihilation models are highly mobile, making this impractical for human races.

Another method is to use a wall spell as long as there's enough distance between you, then throw something at the missile before it can split apart.

"So as you can see, there are many countermeasures you can take," the Mi-go concludes.

"Mhm. Now that you've laid them all out, I see what you mean," I reply.

"It's a tough one when you first run into it, but things are not so bad once you have some knowledge."

Considering my build, I'll have to either shoot the missiles down or reflect them before they split apart. If I can manage that, it's best to destroy them with Dark Burst.

I could also cast Raum Escudo and charge forward before the missiles split apart, but at a distance, reflecting them is the optimal

choice.

Each of the individual missiles is rather small and explodes with a low amount of impact. They pack a minimal punch too, but the danger comes from having multiple of them with a high degree of tracking accuracy.

I also ask the Mi-go about magic guns and how they're created. He tells me the story of their origin, but when it comes to their crafting method, he bluntly tells me to put some thought into it on my own.

I'll have to sum up this information for a post on the BBS later.

"By the way, where did you run into that enemy?" he asks.

"It was a dungeon in some ruins in Dinait, the empire on the southern continent."

"Oh, I didn't know there was a new dungeon with defense systems in that area."

"Now that you mention it, how do the dungeons come to be?"

"Hmm, to put it simply, they form thanks to the influences of Creall and Stellura. Us Mi-go are builders, not scholars. You should ask Cyaegha if you want to know more."

"Cyaegha? I haven't met it yet."

"It doesn't stay in one fixed place, but if you call for it from the second-story balcony in the castle, it will come."

So, there's a place to summon it? While I'm here, I may as well hear what it has to say.

I leave the Mi-go and head to the ancient castle. Now that I think of it, how could I even communicate with a Mi-go? No, I shouldn't start questioning such things now. The pup lord speaks too, and even golems can howl.

Now what does Cyaegha look like again? Let me think. Ah, I remember it being a round, floating mass in different games. This game in particular seems heavily based on Cthulhu TRPGs, so it's probably depicted as a single green eye surrounded in tentacles. On top of that, it's highly curious, right? So that's why it's called a scholar.

For everything else, I'll have to summon it to find out.

I don't regret coming here, but I probably should have asked for more details in advance. I don't even know how I'm supposed to call for it. I wasn't told to chant a spell, so maybe I just call out to it like I would for anyone? I'll come up with something else if it doesn't work.

"Can you hear me, Cyaegha? There's something I'd like to ask you about."

This must be one-way communication, huh? On top of that, I can't see very far away, so I don't know if I've done it right. I have no idea how fast it travels either. I think I'll try waiting for five minutes or so.

Ah, it arrived after three minutes. It seems I did it correctly.

Well, if I had to describe it in words, it's a black ball floating in the air. Once it's closer, I can see it's actually made of long tentacles with a slit in the middle…from which a single green eye stares back at

me. Instead of a crazed, bloodshot eye, it gives off a strong air of intelligence.

"I didn't recognize that voice, but now I see. You must be Anastasia, the newbie I've heard of."

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Cyaegha. A Mi-go told me about you when I asked him to tell me about dungeons."

"I see. And what do you wish to know about dungeons?"

"I'll start by asking what, exactly, *is* a dungeon?"

How is this person—or rather, this mass of tentacles with an eye—even speaking in the first place? Well, I probably shouldn't concern myself with such a thing. This is a video game, after all.

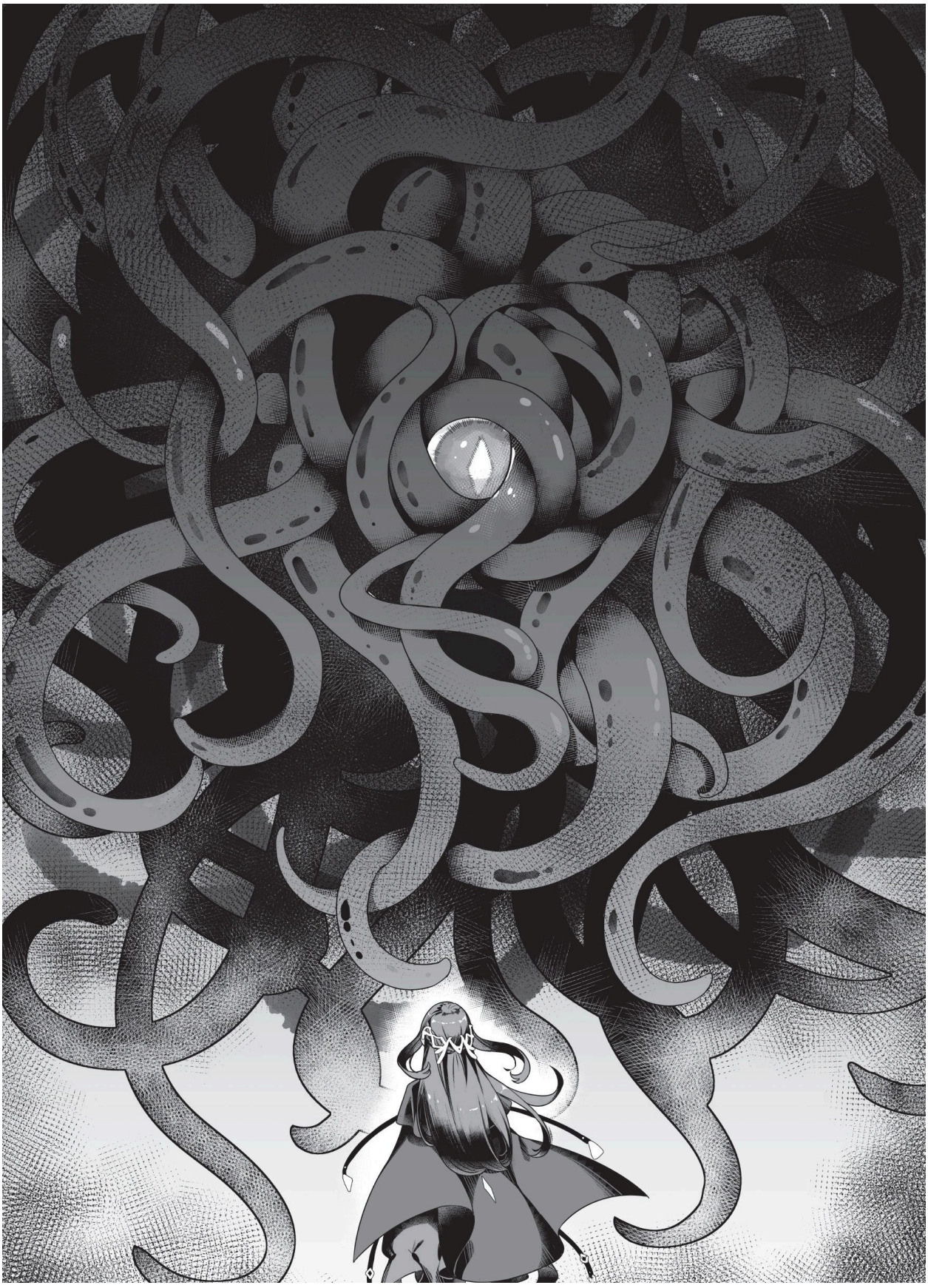
"They're made with the combined powers of Creall's creation and Stellura's control of time and space. Have you ever heard of the Akashic Records?" it asks me.

"If I remember correctly, it's a record kept of everything that happens in the universe."

"Exactly. Dungeons are connected to those Akashic Records."

Maybe it means that the memory fragments attached to Stellura's powers receive Creall's power of creation, fueled by mana to manifest these special realms.

People can then put two statues at these spaces to stabilize them, turning them into functioning dungeons that can be used by humanity.



"In other words, they're made from the gods' powers that flood this world in combination with mana," it tells me.

"It's not a problem to combine the powers of a main god and a secondary god?"

"I don't know if that's an intentional part of it or not. Mana alone isn't enough to explain it all."

"And what about the creatures that inhabit dungeons?"

"Most of them are born from memories of the past. They're recreations that come from those memories. Sadly, I don't know more than that. Different realms, such as dungeons, don't operate under our common knowledge."

"If dungeons are realms born from mana and bits of power from the gods, why do enemies drop items when they're killed? Even if they're recreations of memories from the past, doesn't that mean they're nothing more than mirages? But the drops stay around no matter what. So where do the physical items come from?"

"I believe Creall's power of creation is involved. It's the only possibility I can think of, but there's no proof of such a thing," Cyaegha tells me.

It seems Cyaegha possesses emotion, even though it's nothing more than tentacles and an eye. While you'd think it would be disappointed to have so few explanations about the subject, when I look into its eye, I only detect happiness. It's definitely some variety of scholar or researcher, all right.

"Do the enemies ever come from the future?" I ask.

"On occasion. However, it's easier to reflect on the past rather than predict the future. To put it in different words, it requires less energy that way. You may see beings from the future in large dungeons with an abundance of mana, as it's their source of energy."

"So, there isn't enough energy in the smaller ones?"

"I believe so. However, that isn't the true problem, frankly."

"It's not?"

"How do those of us, who cannot see the future, know that these enemies come from the future at all? Perhaps they existed somewhere that we weren't supposed to see. This world has creatures ranging from dragons all the way to fairies. The best we can do is make educated guesses, leave such questions in our memories, and wait until we can confirm our answers."

I see. There's no way of proving an enemy really came from the future. Scholars see things without proof as nothing more than hypotheses.

It's impossible and unrealistic to search for every bit of information hiding in this world. But frustratingly, people like Cyaegha enjoy the act of research and don't see it as an option to go and ask the gods directly. I highly doubt Stellura speaks to people like it in any case. Perhaps, at the very least, she'll confirm if something is right or wrong.

"You've answered all the things I was here to learn. Thank you for your time."

"Is that right? In that case, can I have some information in exchange? I'd like to know your name and race. Your body is an incarnation, is it not? I'd also like to know your incarnation's name and your true form."

"That's personal, so before I tell you that, what are your intentions with it?"

"Hm? It's no different than what you asked me about dungeons. My only goal is to fulfill my own curiosity. I won't spread the information around, of course."

"I suppose it would be rude to leave without giving you anything in return for your help. All right then."

I tell it my character name, race title, incarnation name, and occupation. Then I use the Silver Key to take us to the place where my true form dwells.

"Oh ho! How deeply fascinating."

It's flying around while staring at my true form—a mass of flesh that's constantly expanding.

"Now that I think of it, do you remember the selection you made? Which face did you choose to devote yourself to?" Cyaegha asks.

"Let me think. I went in the order of space-time, life, death, fate, contracts, and punishment."

"I-I see. How greedy of you."

It starts to spin around again, muttering under its breath as it puts his thoughts in order. I'll give it a minute—it'll be easier to learn

things from it if it's not so flustered.

After it spins a bit longer, its tentacles start to slow down, so I can tell that it's calm again.

"Mhm. It seems you have very strong powers of life. I bet being a zombie before your evolution has something to do with that. That's why you continue to expand, or perhaps the other aspects simply haven't developed yet."

"And how would I develop them?"

"You must grow stronger. There's simply no other way to put it. You probably haven't built a foundation that allows you to utilize them. Let me ask you, do you have Space-Time Magic yet?"

"I'm still at Space Magic, which is level 54."

"What about Premonition?"

"I'm at level 58, so I'm almost there."

"And Sixth Sense?"

"Again, almost there."

"Then indeed, you currently don't have a strong foundation. You have a bit of death power as a viscous race too. At this rate, your power of contracts and punishment will probably never—no, that's not true. Perhaps they come as a Nemeseia, since you chose them yourself. Hmm. Utterly fascinating. I look forward to seeing how you progress."

"So, I need to work on Space Magic, Danger Sense, and Instinct? They'll be ready to upgrade soon, so I think I'll prioritize them for a little while."

"That would be wise. There's no point in possessing seeds if you have no place to plant them. All right, let's return."

We use the Silver Key to return to a public area of the old castle.

In the end, I feel like I walked away with more information than Cyaegha did, but I won't comment on that. It looks very satisfied as is.

"Farewell! Come and see me once you've gotten stronger."

"I will. Until next time."

I watch it fly off into the distance somewhere.

All right, then. Since it's Saturday, I think I'll focus on leveling up those three skills. I'm definitely curious to see what benefits they'll bring.

Oh, that reminds me. I went to bed after getting Ultra Magic Assist. I need to take a look at that one.

Ultra Magic Assist

Accurate Energy Control

A passive art that reduces wastefulness and lowers MP cost when casting spells.

Perception Obstruction

You leave less of an impression. Players stand out less to residents and barely remain in their memories.

Optical Camouflage

You cannot be physically perceived. Ineffective against methods such as heat vision and echolocation.

Clean Forcefield

Impurities are less likely to stick to you.

Silent

Lowers the level of noise you make to stop you from being overheard.

Deodorant

Lowers the intensity of your scent to prevent you from being smelled.

Heat Resistance Forcefield

Grants resistance to terrain damage from heat.

Cold Resistance Forcefield

Grants resistance to terrain damage from cold.

Wind-Blocking Forcefield

Grants resistance to movement difficulty in strong winds.

Waterproofing Forcefield

Grants resistance to movement difficulty in water. Also prevents the player from getting wet.

There's something called Anti-Electric Forcefield as well, but I won't need that because of my race.

Players already know about Perception Obstruction through Light Magic and Dark Magic, but I'll have to post on the BBS about Optical Camouflage and all these forcefields that came from Space Magic.

But these aren't the only things affected by Ultra Magic Assist. Here's what I'm really interested in.

Space Magic

Short Jump

Teleport anywhere within your range of vision.

It's a short-range teleportation spell!

Since a range of vision is pretty limiting, it probably has lower casting requirements and cooldown time so that it can be used quickly. Well, that's not too bad for Space Magic.

It's meant for sneak attacks, but using it too much is probably a quick way to drain your magical energy. I bet you're supposed to teleport in, carry out your assassination, and then retreat. It must be an important spell for people on the dark side.

My athame and former Book of Keys have also been optimized by Ultra Magic Assist.

All right, now I think I'll work on leveling up until lunch. It's a good time to use my EXP booster on weekly quests. At this rate, I should be able to get three of my skills up to the third tier before lunch. Even my passives might hit the second tier.

The only problem is how I'm going to level up Space Magic. It's slowly going up thanks to Inventory Expansion, but even *I* would use far too much MP if I went out of my way to focus on Space Magic. It doesn't have any attack spells either.

Lemonade isn't a good relief for these spells that gobble up a bunch of MP at once. I suppose the best option is to consume a large amount of potions. I'll do the best I can while my ticket is active.

My hunting grounds will be the dungeon in the ruins, of course. It's time for revenge now that I know how to fight the multi-warhead missiles.

I think this calls for an "Iä! Iä!"

I teleport to the Dinait Empire from the Medium and chant "Iä! Iä!"

A byakhee emerges from the sky—whoa, with that seat it's carrying, it's like a flying trapeze! What a crazy idea.

"Going somewhere?"

"I'd like you to take me to the dungeon in the ruins southeast of here."

"Fine. Take a seat, and don't rock it too much. I don't want to hear any complaints if you fall."

Uh-huh. Sure thing.

I take a seat in what is essentially a big chair, with its backrest and armrests, so that I can be elegantly carried to my destination.

Time for a journey across the skies!

There’s just one problem—being carried and actively flying on my own are two very different sensations. When I fly, I have to always focus on what’s ahead of me. But being carried makes it impossible not to focus on what’s around me. It’s like the difference between driving and being in the passenger seat—not that I’ve ever driven a car myself.

“Ah, this way will be faster for you.”

As soon as the byakhee says that, the scenery around us grows blurred as it takes off at incredible speeds. We arrive at the dungeon instantly.

“We’re here.”

“Thank you. What was that just now?”

“Oh, you can’t do it yourself yet? I shifted the axis of the ground’s surface just slightly to travel through subspace. It’s a means of transportation that lets you travel at high speeds while ignoring obstacles, but you can’t use it unless you can perceive subspace. Most creatures will die in subspace unless they protect themselves from the lack of oxygen and extreme temperatures.”



I'd thought the golden mead was for outer space, but is it actually subspace? It's hard to imagine this game having fights in outer space, so subspace seems much more likely.

I predict I'll need golden mead, Breathing, Heat Resistance Forcefield, and Cold Resistance Forcefield. Spells are probably optimal over golden mead, considering the cost.

"Those who deal with subspace are called subspace users. Ones who can move through it as they please are called subspace cruisers."

"The beings from Tindalos would fall into those categories too, wouldn't they?"

"Yes, they're masters of it. I'll be on my way now."

"All right. I'll summon you again sometime."

"Certainly."

I watch the byakhee fly away before entering the dungeon.

I'll make my way down through few areas before using my EXP boosting ticket. Then it's time to get hunting. I hear the ticket is basically useless on third-tier skills, so I should use it now while I have it.

Hmm, it seems the all-purpose annihilation model is a rare enemy after all. I haven't found a single one this time. I'll be wasting my EXP boost if I die with it active, so I *should* be relieved, but a part of me is still hoping for revenge. Oh well. Maybe it will show up in the distance while I'm hunting.

I fly through the dungeon with Coordinate Float, going slow enough to make sure Unit One can follow me. Walking doesn't help

Agility Enhancement level up very much. I could run, but that would be out of character for me—if anything, I should be flying. It's unlikely I'll be seen by anyone else inside a dungeon, but the chances aren't zero either. Roleplaying is truly a restrictive art.

I see one supporting fire MK I model, which I can fight by myself, of course. These are good for leveling up skills, as they're trickier than the MK II models.

Lizzy is a bit stronger now that I've upgraded her burial goods, but there are still many materials better than steel. I want to raise her corpse level and burial goods level, but the enemies here are mech races, so I can't improve her magical capabilities. It's a real bother.

If I want her to get any stronger, I'm at the point where I'll have to give her orbs. I suppose it's not the end of the world, since I'm not using them anyway, but I can only obtain three or four orbs per day, making them very valuable. Well, if the alternative is to buy magic stones and use them, I may as well use my orbs.

The cave dungeon in the northeast is good for magic creatures, but it's not suited for solo play. I should form a party with Mr. Alf and Mr. Skelly if I want to head that way.

Lizzy is taking about as much damage as Unit One, so maybe there's some sort of restriction put on her with me as her summoner. Her behavior and responses are much better than Unit One's, so it's like her AI is fully independent. Her nimble body should be better than bones.

Spirit Enhancement has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.

By reaching the maximum level of Spirit Enhancement, you have unlocked Max MP Enhancement.

Waltz has reached level 60. You have gained 2 skill points.

By reaching the maximum level of Waltz, you have unlocked Gorgeous Dance.

Space Magic has reached level 55.

You have acquired Raum Distortion through Space Magic.

Gorgeous Dance

A Chinese peony when you stand, a tree peony when you sit, and a lily when you walk.

This skill is for you, who never goes a moment without elegance.

Grants modifiers to your torso, posture, and gait.

I upgraded Waltz? I'll pay the ten SP and unlock its third tier.

As for Max MP Enhancement, the more MP the better, so I'll go ahead and grab it too. Magic is my main form of firepower, after all, even if my tentacles grab all the attention.

My next third-tier skills should be Danger Sense and Instinct. Spirit Enhancement alone doesn't do much, so I'll work on Intelligence Enhancement too.

Raum Distortion

Create a distorted space around you that diverts long-range attacks.

Oh, this seems perfect for my current situation. I bet it's even better than Raum Escudo in this dungeon.

All right, back to hunting I go.

I have to go out of my way to use Space Magic, so I make a point of casting Raum Distortion and Gravitas. There's no harm in using them, and it's helpful for leveling that skill.

Also, it seems Raum Distortion diverts attacks based on a percentage chance while it's active, so I also use Raum Escudo to be safe in case an attack gets through. Raum Distortion is definitely the right choice against enemies with shotguns.

The biggest issue is that Raum Distortion registers before Water's Surface Style. I can still reflect attacks, since Raum Distortion simply diverts them, but it becomes much harder when the angle of entry is changed. If only I could reflect the direct shotgun attacks that don't get diverted, but of course, that's impossible.

"I'll take care of that one, Unit Four. You go help Unit One."

My current summoned party members are skeleton, skeleton, spirit-body, spirit-body, Lizzy, and a worker. It's a full party, though the worker doesn't participate in battle. Each skeleton pairs up with a spirit-body to fight while I let Lizzy fight however she pleases.

The ultimate issue with servants is that you have to give them instructions. The summoner usually conducts logistical support for them with their spells, but my goal here is to level up my skills, so I want to get involved directly in the fights. Of course, it's more difficult than staying behind them, giving out orders, and casting supplemental spells. But on the other hand, so long as I go in with a plan, things are simpler at the front lines.

I get Unit Four's enemy to target me and begin to reflect attacks. Unit Four moves to go help Unit One. Lizzy is beating up Unit Two's enemy from the side. The worker, of course, is off in a corner as he waits for us to finish.

Lizzy's axe functions like a tomahawk boomerang, so I wonder if it would be better to buy her a throwing weapon and store it in the smaller casket. I certainly don't lack the money, and if she has throwing weapons on hand, she can take down flying enemies with them. Tomahawks or franciscas might be better than knives since Lizzy already has axe skills. I'll have to take a look at Mr. Ertz's inventory next time I'm at his shop.

"Short Jump. Tuft Chrono."

I can teleport anywhere within my vision, which in my case, is my radius of perception. I teleport behind the enemy's back, use Tuft Chrono to stab it with nine more follow-up attacks, and finish it off.

It seems like Short Jump is pretty user-friendly. I just wish it consumed a little less MP. Ten percent per use is too much…

Strength Enhancement has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.

Strength Enhancement has reached the maximum level.

Intelligence Enhancement has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.

Intelligence Enhancement has reached the maximum level.

By fulfilling special conditions, you have unlocked Soul Enhancement.

Danger Sense has reached level 60. You have gained 2 skill points.

By reaching the maximum level of Danger Sense, you have unlocked Premonition.

Instinct has reached level 60. You have gained 2 skill points.

By reaching the maximum level of Instinct, you have unlocked Sixth Sense.

By fulfilling special conditions, you have unlocked Heavenly Eye.

By fulfilling special conditions, you have unlocked Divine Revelation.

Oh, look at all that! What could it be?!

I received the third-tier skills of Premonition and Sixth Sense. Heavenly Eye is a combined skill coming from Premonition and Sixth Sense. And Divine Revelation? This is definitely a rare skill. I don't even know what conditions I fulfilled for it.

I'll be taking Divine Revelation, of course. The name tells me it must be related to Stellura, even if I don't know what unlocks it.

It says that Heavenly Eye has conditions other than simply unlocking Premonition and Sixth Sense and that you must have multiple forms of sight outside of your physical eyes—or something superior to the bare eye. "Superior to the bare eye" is pretty clear, but I'm not sure what the "multiple forms of sight" means. I definitely unlocked it with my "superior" vision either way.

I don't intend to publicize Space Recognition Expansion, so I'll post about the conditions for Heavenly Eye while keeping the rest to myself.

As for Divine Revelation, I assume the unlock conditions are having Heavenly Eye and being a medium, since the name means receiving wisdom from the gods. To put it another way, you have to have the "blessing" title from a god. I think I'll keep this one a secret too. Everyone should think that I only have Heavenly Eye.

Without Heavenly Eye as a requirement, I should have unlocked Divine Revelation long ago by being a medium. Even the system log

shows Divine Revelation coming right after Heavenly Eye.

What I'm uncertain of is if Divine Revelation only comes from being a medium of Stellura, or if you have to choose space-time or fate from her—maybe even both are required.

After all, this skill derives from Premonition and Sixth Sense. It's hard to imagine a goddess in charge of space-time and fate has nothing to do with these skills, considering their effects.

I've also maxed out Strength Enhancement and Intelligence Enhancement. Spirit Enhancement was already maxed, so Strength Enhancement and Intelligence Enhancement combined to unlock Soul Enhancement. I can acquire it with six SP, as it's only a second-tier skill.

I can see where shotgun fire is going to come from before it even happens. Raum Distortion also tells me whether or not the shots will be diverted. But this isn't good! I can't make use of my skills' effects this way. Since I'm at a loss right now, I'll have to make this a time to level up Holy Magic.

Snake Sword has reached level 20. You have gained 1 skill point.

You have acquired Sonic Rush through Snake Sword.

Stamina Enhancement has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.

By reaching the maximum level of Stamina Enhancement, you have unlocked Max HP Enhancement.

By fulfilling special conditions, you have unlocked Body Enhancement.

Dexterity Enhancement has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.

Dexterity Enhancement has reached the maximum level.

Holy Magic has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.

You have acquired Protection from Holy Magic.

Sonic Rush

Instantly charge at a target, dealing stabbing damage and knockback.

Protection

Reduces physical damage while active.

They just keep coming.

Protection is a good one for magic users. I'll go ahead and use it for now.

I'll also use six SP to take Body Enhancement and Max HP Enhancement. As for the other new art, well, I'll just have to test it on an enemy.

It turns out that Sonic Rush is very convenient to use. I really like the arts that activate instantly. This will probably be a good one to clean up remaining enemies.

Still, I believe my final passive is Agility Enhancement. It's the one skill I can't do anything about.

This dungeon is particularly delicious because it also gives me useful drops.

[Material] Mech race Remains (magi iron)

Rarity: RA Quality: C+

The remnants of what was once a member of the mech race, reduced to a pitiful state.

Allows for extraction of magi iron.

This is the main item that drops here. Killing enemies is no different than mining for ore. It's not a bad deal at all.

Of course, I do have to leave some for Lizzy to use, but I'll sell the rest to Mr. Ertz.

Oh, what's that sound? We finally meet again, it seems. I use Quick Change to swap out my worker for a servant equipped with a large shield.

After a while, the all-purpose annihilation model emerges. It's time for a battle to the death. This time, I've come prepared!

"Unit One, you know what to do when it fires its missiles, right?"

CLACK

"Lizzy, you fight with projectiles."

I escape the enemy's charge and reflect its bullets. Lizzy hammers it with projectiles, then hits it with her axe when it charges.

Once the annihilation model fires its missiles, Unit One places itself in front of me with Cover Move, then uses Cover Ring and Reflect Shield to reflect the attack. Unit One returns to his position after that.

Oh, the enemy destroyed some of the reflected missiles, but that was still a good bit of damage. We can probably defeat it like this, even if we only reflect three missiles at a time. The time it takes to finish the job probably depends on how frequently we can get it to fire missiles. I tried reflecting a grenade, but it didn't connect with the enemy.

"Hmph. Unit One!"

It's Unit Two who comes to me this time, reflecting the missiles when they come. The all-purpose annihilation type is engulfed in the blast, thrown against a wall, and falls still.

This is much easier when you know a good strategy. I call my servants "Unit One" and "Unit Two" when I give them instructions, but they all share one AI, accessing it through something like a cloud. If the individual Unit One is on cooldown, Unit Two will act automatically without any discussion, so that part is very beneficial. There's no need to call them different things when it doesn't matter who does what.

Agility Enhancement has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.

Agility Enhancement has reached the maximum level.

By fulfilling special conditions, you have unlocked Limb Enhancement.

This makes six passives that've combined into second-tier skills.

I'd like to level up Space Magic, but I'm not sure if I can do that by lunchtime. I can probably get Cloth Armor to its third tier before that.

All right, back to hunting. Perhaps it'd be a good idea to keep diving deeper in the dungeon.

Oops, almost forgot! I recall the servant I swapped out for reinforcements.

Cloth Armor has reached level 60. You have gained 2 skill points.

By reaching the maximum level of Cloth Armor, you have unlocked Clothing Armor.

By fulfilling special conditions, you have unlocked Semi-formal Wear.

Semi-formal Wear

May overlap with other Armor skills.

You gain modifiers for each piece of equipment you wear if the equipment is suitable for your current occupation.

I see. For now, I'll take Clothing Armor for ten SP. I'll grab Semi-formal Wear too, since it seems like it has good effects.

I think the unlock requirements for that one are having an occupation and a third-tier skill in the Armor branch. I'm not sure if adventurers alone meet those requirements. Actually, according to the forums, it looks like they do.

To explain it in a simpler way, you just need to put on a work uniform. But adventurers' uniforms are their combat clothing, so the requirements are pretty relaxed based on what I'm reading.

My equipment should already work with this skill too. There's no harm in taking it for six SP.

"Grace" equipment has been optimized to its owner.

Hm? Ah, that must be from Clothing Armor. There's no notes about Semi-formal Wear. According to the forums, the effects should be working, so I'm sure it's fine.

I've made it down to the seventh area now, where there's no change in the enemies—their minimum and maximum level continue to increase by one per floor.

Space Magic should be leveled up soon, but it'll definitely be after lunchtime. Hmm…

Friends list… Rina… There she is.

"Hey, what's up?"

"I'm going to be late for lunch, so have some cup ramen or something in the meantime."

"Got it!"

That should do it.

Fortunately, Mom's out of the house today, so there won't be any trouble if I'm late.

Space Magic has reached level 60. You have gained 2 skill points.

You have acquired Optimization and Subspace Perception through Space Magic.

By reaching the maximum level of Space Magic, you have unlocked Space-time Magic.

By fulfilling special conditions, Space Recognition Expansion has been altered.

Silver Key has been optimized to its owner.

Oh, my vision changed.

That must be because Space Recognition Expansion was altered. It could also be part of Subspace Perception, or maybe even both.

Now to do some reading.

Optimization

Reduces MP used in space spells.

Subspace Perception

You can now perceive subspace.

There's not much to say about Optimization. It's a simple passive art.

The problem is Subspace Perception. I'm able to see that subspace stuff that the byakhee was telling me about, and the Silver Key now says "subspace ability enhancement: max."

Space-time Magic is only six SP as a race skill, so I'll go ahead and take it. Oh, it looks like Space Recognition Expansion is now called Subspace Recognition Expansion. Well, I'll go ahead and grab that too.

By fulfilling special conditions, Subspace Recognition Expansion has been altered.

Silver Key has been optimized to its owner.

There's just so much information to process.

I'll have to spend some time going over them carefully after I have lunch.

"Return."

Official BBS 1

[Another day] Comprehensive Production Chat Thread 110 [Of crafting]

1. Nameless Crafter

This is a thread to discuss production.

Please talk about production here.

Also check the boards for each skill.

Previous thread: http:// * * * * * * * * * *

Smithing: http:// * * * * * * * * * *

Carpentry: http:// * * * * * * * * * *

Needlework: http:// * * * * * * * * * *

…etc.

>>940 Next thread's in your hands!

417. Nameless Crafter

Hmm, I can't make any of the gimmicky stuff.

418. Nameless Crafter

Me neither. We're probably missing something.

419. Nameless Crafter

I can't craft a magic gun either. I don't even know how it's crafted in the first place.

420. Nameless Crafter

Are our skills not good enough? Or is it our facilities? Or do we not have the right items?

421. Nameless Crafter

If only there were blueprints or something.

422. Nameless Crafter

I can’t make a snake sword either. I don’t even know how it works in the first place.

423. Nameless Crafter

It has to be either a skill or a blueprint that we’re missing.

424. Nameless Crafter

Should we try a different approach? Princess’s weapon is a magic item, right?

425. Nameless Crafter

It’s an athame. She said it’s a magic catalyst.

426. Nameless Crafter

Is it similar to a staff, except it acts like a whip when she extends her magical energy outward?

427. Nameless Crafter

I think that’s possible, but we don’t know for sure.

428. Nameless Crafter

I hear she can extend the athame, but it just isn’t very practical.

429. Nameless Crafter

I guess we’re missing some sort of component.

430. Anastasia

Hello. I don't have a method of crafting a magic gun, but I received a bit of information about them. I suppose I could give this to Mr. Studylover directly, but since I'm here, I may as well discuss it on the thread.

431. Nameless Crafter

Oh, what's this?

432. Nameless Crafter

I guess telling stuff to Studylover is the same as adding it to the Wiki.

433. Anastasia

>>430 What exactly is a magic gun?

Builder races like Yith and Mi-go developed them as long-range weapons, intending them to be used for defense systems that lack in magic. The guns' hammers hit a cartridge, activating it and shooting it forward with explosive force.

Cartridges are manifestations of magical energy. They start to disperse as soon as they're expelled from the gun, and they disappear when fired at the ground. You can charge cartridges with energy before going into battle so that you have them when you really need them too.

It was after development that they realized they had a few problems. Not only did the guns rely completely on cartridges, but it wasn't clear they'd be powerful enough to take out certain enemies.

On top of that, the system completely fails when they run out of ammunition.

Hence the systems were updated so that energy itself can be used like bullets. They also made it so that cartridges' magical energy can be amplified through the user's own power.

The current defense system—the guns carried by those mech races—allows firing both converted energy and cartridges.

434. Nameless Crafter

Whoa… Yeah, I don't think I can craft that.

435. Nameless Crafter

That sounds impossible with our current capabilities.

436. Nameless Crafter

It uses cartridges full of magical energy for a temporary boost… Magical Girl Lyrical…

437. Nameless Crafter

>>436 Don't go any further!

438. Nameless Crafter

Ancient Belka…

439. Nameless Crafter

>>438 I had the same thought, but keep it to yourself!

440. Nameless Crafter

But it definitely sounds like a good system.

441. Nameless Crafter

Am I misremembering, or didn’t the system you’re mentioning make you self-destruct if you’re too inexperienced?

442. Nameless Crafter

Well, it makes sense, since you’re temporarily amplifying the magical energy. Of course it’s going to go boom if you can’t control it.

443. Anastasia

I don’t know if it explodes in this game. These races are craftsmen, but they didn’t share the method of production for these guns.

444. Nameless Crafter

It seems impossible to craft a magic gun now that I’ve read how they work…

445. Nameless Crafter

By the way, what does “manifestations of magical energy” mean?

446. Nameless Crafter

It means the magical energy gets manifested, idiot.

447. Nameless Crafter

C’mon, don’t just go all dictionary on the guy.

448. Nameless Crafter

I loled at “go all dictionary.”

449. Nameless Crafter

They have the worst definitions sometimes.

450. Nameless Crafter

I know what you mean.

451. Anastasia

Ephemeral Doll from Secret Art of Necromancy also referred to the act of summoning a corpse as "manifestation summoning." I believe that, in other words, it's a technology that recreates magical energy in a physical form.

452. Nameless Crafter

Whoa! That's a surprisingly high-level technology.

453. Nameless Crafter

So it's not so much filling the cartridge with magical energy, but more like the cartridge itself is a condensed mass of energy.

Turning magical energy into a cartridge and bringing the hammer down on it turns it into even more energy. Then it disperses after being fired, since it's nothing more than magical energy in the first place?

454. Anastasia

I believe you have it all correct.

455. Studylover

I'll do a write-up about all this!

456. Nameless Crafter

Are you some sort of freak?

457. Studylover

Yep, I'm some sort of freak.

458. Nameless Crafter

Still a freak, all right.

459. Nameless Crafter

Nothing but freaks around here.

Anyway, since it involves magical energy, I suspect it's linked to Magic Assist or Alchemy.

460. Nameless Crafter

Agreed. Maybe there's some kind of sorcery alchemy?

461. Nameless Crafter

It could be a derivative of Smithing and Alchemy

462. Nameless Crafter

Can't rule that out…

463. Nameless Crafter

You might need Ultra Magic Assist too.

464. Nameless Crafter

Its core function is control of magical energy, after all.

465. Nameless Crafter

So, what'll happen when we use springs and stuff to build a genuine variable mechanism?

466. Nameless Crafter

You don't know? That's when it gets bigger.

467. Nameless Crafter

If you're going to be hitting monsters with something, it won't be very durable if it's too small.

468. Nameless Crafter

Ah, but I've actually already built a ballistic knife.

469. Nameless Crafter

For real? You made Spetsnaz-chan?

470. Nameless Crafter

You'd think you could use it with Dagger and Projectile. It's an exciting weapon, but to be blunt, it's impossible to use.

471. Nameless Crafter

Devastating.

472. Nameless Crafter

Yeah, since you have to physically go and retrieve the blade. It's better to just use throwing knives in battle.

473. Nameless Crafter

They're good for PvP, not PvE.

474. Nameless Crafter

You're definitely supposed to use them as concealed weapons. Would you keep extra knives on you like they're spare clips?

475. Nameless Crafter

But think about how that would work. It's still a pain to use, no matter how you look at it.

476. Nameless Crafter

I guess throwing knives are best left thrown after all…

477. Nameless Crafter

Excitement and practicality are two very different things.

478. Nameless Crafter

Why not just carry a bunch of ballistic knives on you? It should be easier to send a knife flying when you don't have to do the whole throwing animation.

479. Nameless Crafter

That's probably a good option, but the problem is that they're way more expensive than throwing knives.

480. Nameless Crafter

There're people with weird tastes out there, so I'm sure there's a good demand for the knives.

481. Nameless Crafter

I want one!

482. Nameless Crafter

See?

483. Nameless Crafter

How do they work, by the way?

484. Nameless Crafter

The handle and sheath are cylindrical, and the blade itself can be shot out. I made the blade by adding laichium to a throwing knife base. The rest of it is halchium.

485. Nameless Crafter

Laichium, huh? Yeah, that's super lightweight. Sounds like you went for durability for the rest of it.

486. Nameless Crafter

How much does it cost?

487. Nameless Crafter

I'm using good materials, and it's a derivative of Dagger.

It's about 60k to 80k for the set, and 20k to 30k for just the blade.

488. Nameless Crafter

The blade's not so expensive?

489. Nameless Crafter

Yeah, as I mentioned, it's the excitement that's the appeal. You're only going to use the blade like a dagger that you can sometimes shoot with Projectile.

490. Nameless Crafter

You use it like a normal dagger? Ah…

491. Nameless Crafter

I guess the materials are what you'd use for a dagger, not a throwing knife.

492. Nameless Crafter

Exactly. Although it might be better if you can come up with a way to use the blades like throwing knives.

493. Ertz

Do you make the blades one at a time?

494. Nameless Crafter

Yep. At least, that's where I'm at right now. I was thinking of trying to cast them out of metal too. Does that change anything?

495. Ertz

It sure does. You should be casting them if you're using them with Projectile. Well, you'll also have to decide on a mixture to use for the casting.

496. Nameless Crafter

Then I'll need to get a ballistic knife mold first.

497. Ertz

Good luck.

498. Nameless Crafter

I've got this!

Chapter 3:
Saturday Afternoon

I FINISH LUNCH before heading to the plaza in the imperial capital to verify some things.

I have nothing in particular to say about Clothing Armor, Semi-formal Wear, or the second-tier passives—their effects are all very simple.

The Silver Key's "subspace ability enhancement: max" has changed to "space-time ability enhancement: max." This must be because of the art I obtained at level 1 of Space-time Magic.

Space-time Perception

You can now detect the flow of time and distortions in space.

Currently, I don't know anything about this flow of time or these distortions in space. I don't even know how I would investigate them.

This art has also changed Subspace Recognition Expansion to Space-time Recognition Expansion—wait, hang on a minute. The level went down. I was almost at level 60, but now it's at level 28. Should I take that to mean some sort of internal modifier was boosted? Perhaps the same amount of experience that almost got me to level 60 is now equivalent to just under level 30.

It seems that I can view subspace as a sort of grid like graph paper.

Apparently, I can travel through it by imagining the grid being torn up or ripped apart. I simply tear a hole into it and go through. It repairs automatically over time, but I can also imagine the hole being plugged up again.

I bet that people who can't perceive this grid see this mode of travel like warping.

That reminds me—Inventory Expansion now has an MP cost of 10 percent while activated. I thought it was supposed to be 30 percent after level 50, but Optimization probably plays a big part in this.

I really thought I'd walk away with more SP after leveling my skills, but taking all the second and third-tier enhancement skills left me in a worse state than before—that's not to say I don't still have SP, though. There's still Radiant Magic and Darkness Magic to work on, as well as Rapier and Book. I'll leave Snake Sword for later.

I feel like I gained more display options when Space Recognition Expansion turned to Space-time Recognition Expansion, so I don't think there's anything to worry about with this one. If anything, it makes me one of those subspace users I heard about.

From what I've tested, it's possible to enter and leave subspace so long as you can perceive it. However, it seems it's not as simple to become a subspace cruiser. To do that, I supposed I'd need a means for operating *within* subspace.

I suspect that subspace is very similar to outer space, requiring a way of getting around without gravity. You also have to prepare for the lack of oxygen and extreme temperatures. The arts Heat Resistance, Cold Resistance, and Breathing are necessities here.

In conclusion, subspace is a place where dimensions or coordinates are off-kilter, and one can travel extremely fast without obstacles or air resistance to slow them down.

However, I can hear voices from the outside when I make a hole, and air isn't flooding in from it, so it's hard to say if it's exactly like outer space. It's probably best to simply think of it as a mysterious realm.

What functions utilize subspace? Ah, you can use it to get somewhere if you want to make a portal between two places. It's safe as long as you don't go Fox 4. It's also good for getting to hunting grounds. I guess I don't need to summon a byakhee anymore. Aside from those cases, I can use Short Jump for small distances and my key for anything longer. I always have Return as a way of going home too.

All right. It looks like the Halloween campaign has started. Resources can now be gathered in higher amounts. I think I'll head to my villa and mine all the ore I've been saving since Monday.

Oh? There's someone inside of subspace. Maybe subspace users aren't unusual after all, even though the byakhee made them sound like a rare variety.

It's even a child at that—or at least someone short. Identify isn't activating to show me their race or level, but I can tell their soul is

white. It doesn't appear to be a bad child, in any case.

They're dressed very strangely. I don't know if I should describe the style as traditionally Japanese, or if it's more like something a clown would wear.

A hand comes from behind and pokes at me, then yanks my arm into subspace. Yes, this is almost certainly a child. Unfortunately for them, my vision allows me to see behind me and into subspace, so they're not concealed whatsoever. But I'll still play along.

I react each time they poke my shoulder or tug on my cloak.

After a few moments of playtime, I realize a disturbed resident was watching us and had even brought over a unit of three knights making their patrol rounds.

However, they don't seem shocked by the arm emerging out of nothingness. The looks on their faces don't register as fear. How would I describe their expressions? Confusion? No, astonishment? It's more like, "Not this again." Actually, the knights' faces start to look more like they have stomach cramps when they realize who I am.

I wonder if this child is famous for their pranks. If so, that's quite the waste of their abilities. Or maybe that wastefulness is why their soul is still white—after all, a subspace user would make a perfect thief.

"You're Princess Nemeseia, aren't you? I'm very sorry. I love pranks, but I'm not a bad kid."

"That's all right. I'm not upset with you," I reply.

It seems the knights *did* know what was going on. The child must be a habitual offender.

The arm heads toward the knights this time.

"Enough already, Al! At least learn to pick your targets!" one knight yells.

Though the child has androgynous features, the nickname "Al" makes me think he must be a boy.

It's probably time I put a stop to this. I wrap my tentacles around his exposed arm and drag him out of subspace.

"Huh?! Whoa!"

"I'm also an outer one, so I can perceive subspace too."

I spawn two tentacles at my feet, wriggling them around to show them off, then spawn another one to rub hard against the boy's cheek.

I can touch him as long as it isn't considered harassment, and I always disable status ailment infliction while I'm in town.

"Aww… I *thought* you seemed similar to me, but I didn't really think you'd be a subspace user too!"

"Stop whining and learn how to pick the right person. You know who's right and who's wrong, don't you?" says a knight.

"But I *did* pick the right person! She's devoted to Stellura just like me."

"Ah, well, uh… I mean, just knock it off with the pranks in the first place!"



"Nooo!"

The boy keeps talking to the knight even as I rub his cheek.

Actually, his race is new to me.

"I've never seen your race before. What's your name?" I ask.

"I'm Alkady Proa!"

Alkady Proa Lv 48

A demon capable of distortion. A high-ranking class of demon also called warp demons. This is one of the rare surface-dwelling races capable of subspace use.

The Proa family are the most well-known warp demons of them all.

The Proas are devoted to Stellura, and many dress in jester costumes.

Attribute: —

Weakness: —

Resistance: —

Class: Demon

Order: Anthropomorphic

Family: Imp

Genus: Warp demon

Species: Warp demon

Status: Normal

So, warp demons are demons capable of distortion? They must be Space Magic users.

"My name is Anatasia Atropos Nemeseia. It's nice to meet you."

"Uh-huh, likewise!"

He grins, then suddenly grabs the tentacle rubbing his cheek, and, like a monorail on an iron bar—or maybe I should say like a pig on a spit roast… These similes aren't working. Anyway, he begins to play around with it.

Then he suddenly begins a lively display of spinning in circles.

"You seem like you love to have fun, don't you? I'm impressed by your energy," I tell him.

"So why do you have to waste it like this?" the three knights ask in unison.

"Because it's fun!"

"Ah, I see…" a knight replies.

"His powers must be very strong as a member of the Proa family."

"We just wish he'd use them for something more meaningful."

A cute, highly talented child from a prominent family who loves mischief and pranks. Now I understand why the others had those looks on their faces.

He appears to be roughly the age of an elementary school student, so his personality isn't too surprising.

"By 'meaningful,' you mean I should hire a bunch of security like the Calestia domain?" he asks.

"Huh?!" the three knights cry at once.

"What's the Calestia domain?" I ask them.

"It's the wizard earl's territory to the southwest," Alkady answers.

A wizard earl?! I believe that's a special title that exists in fantasy works. Of course, it's probably just an earl and his family who are well versed in magic.

But Alkady's remark about security makes it sound like there's trouble brewing. Even the knights are lost for words at the gravity of this information.

"Are they building their own army?" I ask.

"They have soldiers, and they were flying some flag I've never seen before, so I think they might be adventurers."

"In the Calestia domain? Did something happen in the Crystal Forest?" asks the knight.

"Maybe. It's like they're protecting something. They were moving in groups of three."

Judging by the knight's question, this domain must border the Crystal Forest, where something happened that made them resort to defensive measures.

"We've gotta report this to the higher-ups," one knight determines.

"You're right," the other two reply in unison.

"Do you remember what the flag looked like?" he asks Alkady.

"Hmm, what was it again? Something like a sun with two shadow people?"

"That doesn't sound familiar to me either," the knight replies.

It sounds like the knights are stumped. But a flag with a sun and two shadow people? I feel like Mr. Cecil's Knights of Dawn group might have had a flag like that.

Ah, that must be it. I remember him saying it's designed around the image of a knight taking their oath while the sun rises. They're backlit by the sun, so that you can't tell who they are.

"Was one silhouette of a man standing while another knelt?" I ask.

"Ah, maybe. One of them was smaller than the other."

"If I'm correct, then that would be the flag of my friend's guild. I did hear they were contracted to protect a noble's domain."

"They're outsider adventurers?" Alkady asks me.

"Correct."

As important of a conversation as this, Alkady looked sad when the tentacle he was playing with despawned, so I gave him another one for his entertainment. He certainly has a lot of energy.

"I see. They would've sent word to the castle if something happened in the forest. Normally, the royal order would be called out

if they needed defending. Have you two heard of anything?" the knight asks the others.

"Not a thing," they reply.

I should probably ask Mr. Cecil directly—us outsiders have the convenient whisper function, after all. Game systems are wonderful things.

"Hey there! I'm busy right now, so can you make it quick?"

"Certainly. Was your guild hired by the Calestia domain?"

"Oh yeah, we were. How'd you figure it out?"

"I heard it from an outside source. Is there a problem in the Crystal Forest?"

"Huh? The forest? No, no, that's not it. Wait, could this be a trap? Well, it doesn't matter. Squad 1, charge! Squad 2, wait a moment before rushing them. Squads 3 through 6, spread out and wait for orders. Squads 7 through 10, come in through the back. We're not going to let this reward escape us!"

He must be in the middle of a quest at the moment.

It sounds like the forest isn't related after all. Are they trying to capture something? Although, Mr. Cecil is already referring to the enemy as a "reward."

"Sorry, where were we?"

"Nothing's wrong in the forest?"

"Right, it's not about that. We're here to round up criminals."

"Ah, I see. If something was wrong in the forest, they should have contacted the castle and had knights dispatched, so I wanted to ask you about it."

"Got it! The landowner asked us to survey his territory, but it turned into a manhunt mission along the way. We're at the last stage now, so things should calm down after this."

"I suppose the knights wouldn't be called if it's just a criminal matter. Very well, then."

"Chronicle quests are kind of nerve-racking. We gathered information and found the criminals, and it sounds like they've even been put on wanted posters for their crimes now, so the lord's really out for blood."

"So that's why they've been ramping up security? The castle is probably going to hear word of this, so please inform them if anything else happens."

"Sure thing. Thanks for the help."

"You're welcome. Have a nice battle."

I'll inform the knights what I discussed with Mr. Cecil.

"Is that right? I'm just glad there wasn't a stampede in the forest," the first knight replies.

"Thank you for your help. We'll report this to our captain at once," says another.

"The guild is called Knights of Dawn, and the guildmaster is Cecil," I explain.

"Understood. We greatly appreciate the information."

The three knights give Al one last warning about his mischief before heading toward the castle.

"They never praise me when I'm behaving, so what's the point?" Al pouts.

I think he deserves a pat on the head. It's a bad thing to stray from the path of righteousness. I can only imagine the terrible things a subspace user could get up to if they fell to the dark side.

Al comes up and nuzzles my stomach.

"It's a lot, having a famous family," he explains. "It's even worse when you have siblings a little older than you."

"You have siblings?" I ask him.

"I have a big brother and a big sister. Big Brother is really smart, and Big Sister is so good at gathering information!"

Oh? His expression doesn't indicate that they're on bad terms. In fact, he looks very proud of them. He definitely wouldn't make that face if he hated them, and there's no trace of malice in his voice either.

"I'm proud to work hard for my family," he continues. "They're strict when I'm studying, but they're nice to me the rest of the time. Father always plays with me, and Mother pats my head a lot. Big Brother and Big Sister teach me all sorts of things. But you know what? No one else gives me things or praises me. I want to choose how I use my own powers. Is that wrong?"

Now I see. He must be receiving an education for gifted children.

Coming from a prestigious family means he can't be a child who does nothing but laugh and cry forever. His education makes him smart, but that just leads to him thinking about things more and more. Judging by how he was moving when he was playing with my tentacles, he seems quite powerful to boot.

However, he's still a child. He wants attention and praise. He wants to show his parents what he's accomplished, and he wants them to be happy with what he gives them.

What a backstory that is for a child. Although, I'm still a child too!

"I'm also a minor, or rather, a child in my home world, so I don't know the right answer either. But I believe it's good to decide how you want to use your powers. You simply have to take responsibility for your own actions."

"Take responsibility?"

"There's nothing wrong with having fun, but your idea of fun might feel different to other people. As fun as pranks are, the person being pranked could easily be upset by it."

"Hmm…"

"I know. I'll tell you something my mom once told me."

"Your mother?"

"Yes. It's a little long, but surprisingly, you really remember the things your mom told you in earnest when you were little.

"It's impossible to be loved by everyone. That's why you have to cherish those who *do* love you. Use your time for those people's sake.

"Those who say they hate you hold nothing but malice toward you, so there's no need to engage with them or hear them out. The opposite of love isn't hate—it's indifference. If they didn't care, they wouldn't say anything to you in the first place.

"Humans must verbalize their feelings if they want others to understand them. It's all right if you don't get along with someone—once you find that out, stop interacting with them. Neither of you will be happy with the other, and there's no need to end up in a situation where they hate you. It's a waste of time too. It's not cowardly to distance yourself from such people.

"If it's for something like work, where there's no getting away from them, then just interact at the bare minimum. There's no need to force a deeper connection.

"Those who criticize you aren't necessarily your enemy, so learn to use good judgment. Your likes and dislikes will always be exposed through your words and actions."

"That sounds hard…" says Al.

"It is. It's very hard when you're someone with a position of power, but I think it's a good state of mind."

"Hmm…"

"Ah, you can also use your position in the opposite way too."

"Opposite?"

"You can become someone who can't be ignored. I mean that in a positive way, of course. If you're someone people can't get by

without, they'll just naturally treat you nicely. Well, it will also add more responsibility to your actions."

It looks like he's deep in thought.

"I think you should be brave and speak to your mother and father. You can feel their love for you, right?" I ask him.

Al raises his head, perhaps having finally sorted his thoughts, and takes a step back from me.

Did his face change a little bit?

"Thank you, Princess Anastasia. I'll go home and speak with Father."

"You're welcome. It's a clergy member's job to guide lost little lambs. They'll never know how you feel unless you tell them outright. Good luck to you, Alkady."

"I'll do so. Goodbye!"

With that, he disappeared into subspace. I felt a little bit like I was talking to a different character at the end there, but he's probably just capable of all kinds of things.

Honestly, I did nothing but push the problem onto his parents. I'm just a student too, so I can't be in charge of helping to that extent.

I hope something I said points him in the right direction. But I would fall to my knees if I found out our talk made Al turn to the dark side after this.

Hopefully there's some sort of quest in the future where I can check on him again.

Anyway, I think I'll work on production as I look forward to seeing how this resident changes.

I teleport to my villa to mine from the ore vein in the backyard. First, I summon a worker before taking my pickaxe to get started.

CLANG CLANG CLANG

PLOP PLOP PLOP

There were three drops in that one, which is one more than usual. How delicious. I'll keep mining until I've exhausted the past week's store of ore.

Unit One picks up items that fall to the ground. Workers are very important in that way. It's such a pain to pick everything up by myself. With my worker here, I can keep mining without any interruption.

Now I have even more mithril on hand. I'll get Mr. Ertz to process it for me. I can have him make some equipment for Unit One and Lizzy while I'm there. It's a good time for it with the event just on the horizon.

I head to the kitchen after I finish mining and add tea leaves to the fully automatic tea processor.

What shall I cook today? I don't have an urgent need for money, so I'll prioritize Alchemy for now. Although, I've already finished my daily crafting, so maybe I'll make magic clay or five-element talismans. Actually, revival medicine would be better for skill EXP and sales.

I'll craft magic clay and revival medicine while I wait for the tea leaves to finish. Then I'll head to Mr. Ertz's shop. Sounds like a plan!

Here I am at the blacksmith! I've already checked my friends list to see that Mr. Ertz is online.

"Hey there, Princess."

"Is now a good time to have you turn these into ingots?"

"You got it."

I put in a request for Mr. Ertz to turn my mithril, magi iron, halchium, and laichium into ingots and hand over the ores. I'll give him the mech race remnants too, since they're magi iron.

"Oh yeah. Let me ask you something, Princess," Mr. Ertz says to me.

"Yes?"

"Is it possible to prepare elemental metal using mithril?"

"Ah, I haven't tried it yet. I'll test it out when I have the mithril ingots. I assume that you can, but the item quality might be an issue."

"Please do give it a try. I'll buy it from you if you can make it. And what are you doing with your regular gold and silver?"

"Understood. And I'm just holding on to my gold and silver. Maybe being a princess actually makes it too expensive to do or something, because I haven't made any connections that will handle those. Surely it's not impossible."

"Huh, you don't have someone for that? I can convert your gold and silver into currency, if you don't mind lending it to me. I get EXP

for it, so if you want to turn them into bars, I'll do it for free."

"Yes, that sounds like a good deal. Using them for Alchemy would be wasteful, so I've just kept them as ores. I'm not exactly in need of a currency conversion at the moment, so I'd prefer to have the metal bars."

"You've got it."

I hand over the gold and iron ores that I've been accumulating as well.

I watch Mr. Ertz enter his work room, and then it's time to ransack—I mean, it's time to search for the items on my list. I filter the items to show Projectile weapons. Hmm, I see. Throwing knives are pretty cheap. The axes are more expensive, but they'll be very cost effective since I'm using them for Ephemeral Brilliance.

Actually, wouldn't it deal more damage to have her throw a normal one-handed or two-handed axe? I'm sure someone has tested this, so I'll go and check the BBS.

Stone Throw and its derivative skills grant modifiers to the act of throwing something, but accuracy is highly affected by what item you throw.

Throwing weapons fly accurately to how you throw them and grant similar damage each time. Anything else will have poor accuracy and be difficult to land a solid hit with, even if you make contact with the enemy. They deal little damage if you don't manage to connect

the blade portion to your target. Spears are the easiest things to throw, followed by axes, with swords at the bottom of the list.

There's no real point in throwing things that aren't throwing weapons, though they can work as a distraction. But honestly, if you want a distraction, why not throw a nearby rock instead? It's way too costly to use your actual weapons for something like that.

All things considered, chakrams are quite handy. They're doughnut-shaped with the outer edge as the blade, so they're really easy to use. Another benefit is that they work like boomerangs, so you don't have to go and pick them up off the ground. However! They're just as hostile toward their wielders as their targets. The nature of this weapon makes it impossible to avoid that—you could say it's the biggest issue with that class of weaponry.

With all this said, my general recommendation is the throwing spear. The atlatl, a weapon that shoots spears, is super powerful. You don't have to do too much thinking! Just throw it, and if it hits, you'll pierce your enemy!

You get to be a primitive man—or be like the hyah ha guy!

What, you think a bow is better? Why would you say such a thiiiing?!

Bow and Stone Throw have some differences. Bows use dexterity, and projectiles have big modifiers on strength, so muscle-lovers should skip the bows. In fact, if you're interested in Stone Throw and its branches, you should be going for projectiles. If you've got muscles for brains, just join us and don't trouble your mind with all that complex archery stuff.

Such a passionate invitation. This person sounds very intense. They're definitely trying to drag people to their side. The information itself, however, is splendid. Not that I'm going to be joining them.

I should definitely go with axes for Lizzy, considering all of her factors. She also has the Art of Projectiles third-tier skill, so I'm sure she can handle things that are a bit harder to throw. I'll buy her throwing axes, since I'm not interested in picking a weapon based on what looks the most thrilling.

That leaves Unit One as a problem. He currently uses halchium and elemental weapons, and the tiers above that are ailil and mithril. I've mined some mithril—though not necessarily a *ton*—so making equipment for my servants is one option.

Should I give him ailil—the magi iron and magic silver alloy—or simply pure mithril? He should be clad in magical energy as a magic creature himself, so mithril is probably the best bet. Also, I can give servants Magic Assist skills, so mithril is the best bet. Lastly, I can materialize equipment with Ephemeral Brilliance, so once again, mithril is the best bet.

Those are the only factors I can think of at the moment. I suppose testing things out would be beneficial.

Mr. Ertz's shop has a new facility to test out weapons, so I'll borrow it for a little while.

I summon Lizzy and Unit One, make them test weapons, keep an eye on which options inflict higher damage, and ask the servants themselves for their preferences.

I gave Lizzy Magic Assist since she has Dark Magic, but I left Unit One without any additions.

Ephemeral Brilliance only works if you own the items you want to use, so I can't test it in this facility. I'll have to purchase them or go to a testing station for items. Until I can store items in Dream Casket, Ephemeral Brilliance will have to wait until I get Mr. Ertz's help.

I give Unit One Magic Assist, summon him again, and make him test it out.

"What're you up to now?"

"I was testing to see if ailil or mithril was better for my servants."

"Oh yeah? What did you find?"

"Which do you prefer, Unit One?"

He points at the mithril equipment.

"It must come down to whether or not you have Magic Assist," I remark.

"So it's the same for servants? People with Magic Assist and its branches say they think their skill levels have an effect on equipment durability."

"Is that right? So it doesn't affect attack strength?"

"That's what they're saying. They also think attacks are more efficient with Magic Equipment."

"That's for magic swords, right?"

"Yep."

Since he arrived at the perfect time, I borrow ailil and mithril items from Mr. Ertz to test Ephemeral Brilliance.

The results show the effects of Magic Assist drop—negating its existence entirely. The MP cost of using Ephemeral Brilliance also drops with mithril items. The magic aptitude must be a factor in how much MP is used.

In other words, I should go with mithril items, since nothing else changes.

I return the items to Mr. Ertz and take my ingots from him.

I now have 152 silver ingots, 132 gold ingots, 57 magi iron ingots, 123 halchium ingots, 29 laichium ingots, and 63 mithril ingots.

I'll start upgrading my materials right away.

"It requires more materials this time," I notice.

"Well, twenty ingots always felt like a small number."

"It was twenty for the full-body set, right? I suppose it can't stay so low forever."

Upgrading from steel to magi iron costs thirty ingots. Upgrading from magi iron to halchium costs forty ingots. Upgrading from halcihum to laichium costs forty ingots.

"It's fifty mithril ingots," I murmur.

"Ouch, that's gotta hurt," Mr. Ertz responds.

"I hoped to make weapons for Unit One too. How many ingots do you need for a tomahawk?"

"A tomahawk? Just two."

I want a one-handed sword, one-handed hammer, two-handed sword, two-handed hammer, small shield, and large shield for Unit One. Lizzy will just take a throwing axe. In that order, it will cost three, three, five, five, four, eight, and two ingots respectively, for a total of thirty ingots.

I have sixty-three mithril ingots—fifty for Lizzy's upgrades, leaving me with thirteen. It's not enough, but I'm not in a major rush at the moment.

Actually…

"I might have to buy the items separately and convert the rest of my mithril into elemental metal," I realize.

"That's probably better than using your own materials. You'd be doing me a favor too," Mr. Ertz replies.

"I've found some new gems too, though I don't particularly want to use them for elemental metal."

"You mean the sunstones and all those other ones?"

"Yes. You need a medium-sized gem or higher to make elemental metal, so I'll have to use Refine."

"And the conversion rate for that is three to one, I remember."

"I'll have to test it out when I get home."

"Sounds like a plan."

The new gems I've mined are sunstone, aquamarine, citrine, peridot, selenite, and morion.

For now, I'll buy items from Mr. Ertz.

Now I have a full set of mithril equipment—a tomahawk, one-handed sword, one-handed hammer, two-handed sword, two-handed hammer, small shield, and a large shield. Was that really 1.5 million gold? Well, there's no getting around it. Halchium was simply too weak and needed to be upgraded.

I'll also sell my halchium one-handed sword, one-handed hammer, two-handed sword, and two-handed hammer, as well as my magic gold iron one-handed sword, small shield, and large shield. My magic crimson iron one-handed hammer and magic sky iron one-handed hammer will have to go too.

"We'll have elemental mithril soon, so if you want, I'll buy your elemental magi iron," Mr. Ertz offers.

"I can't deny that magi iron is already too weak for top players. Is the price going down?"

"Yeah, first-wavers and second-wavers won't be buying it anymore."

Well, it's a nuisance to carry around anyway, so my only option is to sell them to someone.

In the end, I barely lost much at all. The price was lower, but some of them were elemental weapons, and I even sold more than I purchased. I suppose that makes sense. Elemental weapons really do fetch a good price.

"All right, I'm going to head home and begin production," I tell Mr. Ertz.

"Thanks for your business!"

I finish upgrading Unit One and Lizzy's equipment before returning to my villa. Then I summon Unit One and Lizzy and make them have a practice battle. They can even fight against a team of my villa staff. Their new equipment *does* seem to make a difference.

My next destination is my Alchemy room.

I use Synthesize on three small sunstones to make one medium size.

Then I synthesize a mithril ingot, the medium sunstone, and a magic stone to create a sunstone mithril ingot.

Next, I use a large almandine on a mithril ingot to make an almandine mithril ingot.

Elemental mithril is incredibly pretty. The bluish silver of the mithril combines with the faint hue of the gem.

Of course, the real issue is how it'll function. Between a large almandine and a medium sunstone, I should really be using the large almandine. I'll use the sunstone if both gems are the same size, but if not, it's too big of a factor to ignore.

That leaves me with thirteen mithril ingots. I think I'll make another eleven almandine mithril ingots and two sunstone mithril ingots. There's no point in selling only one ingot at a time.

It's also time to buy both medium and large magic stones. They're vital to Alchemy and its branch skills, after all.

Secret Art of Necromancy absorbs enemies, so I can't expect to get magic stones from drops.

I think I'll keep crafting for the rest of the day. I want to upgrade Alchemist to the third tier as well.

I'll bring my elemental metal to Mr. Ertz before I log off, put my revival medicine up on the marketplace, and go to bed.

Official BBS 2

[Another day] Comprehensive Production Chat Thread 114 [Of crafting]

1. Nameless Crafter

This is a thread to discuss production.

Please talk about production here.

Also check the boards for each skill.

Previous thread: http:// * * * * * * * * * *

Smithing: http:// * * * * * * * * * *

Carpentry: http:// * * * * * * * * * *

Needlework: http:// * * * * * * * * * *

…etc.

>>940 Next thread's in your hands!

237. Primura

Residents sometimes buy the furniture I make based off real-life items.

238. Nameless Crafter

Seriously?

239. Nameless Crafter

I see residents going into cafés sometimes. I didn't know they're out buying furniture too.

240. Nameless Crafter

They buy from food stalls all the time.

241. Nameless Crafter

Yeah, I've heard how the kids like to buy snacks and such.

242. Nameless Crafter

I've seen it too.

243. Nameless Crafter

My friend John Doe from the creative works department came to see me on a break. John says he wants to figure out the necessary amount of pillars buildings need so that they don't collapse. Let's teach him the answer.

244. Nameless Crafter

Now hang on a minute.

245. Nameless Crafter

Such specific information being demanded.

246. Nameless Crafter

How many John Does are there?

247. Nameless Crafter

How many do you think there are?

248. Nameless Crafter

What a wild pitch…

249. Nameless Crafter

Hmm. One for every person on the planet?

250. Nameless Crafter

What, like a doppelganger?

251. Ertz

Get John out of here and take a look at this screenshot.

252. Nameless Crafter?

Oh? Whoa!

253. Nameless Crafter

Holy crap…

254. Ertz

You can’t make it unless you know the right person, but I’ll post the results of my tests.

255. Nameless Crafter

Thanks, old man!

256. Nameless Crafter

Sacred Fire and holy water? There wasn’t much change with holy water alone.

257. Ertz

And here’s the ace up my sleeve!

258. Nameless Crafter

Seriously? There’s an even higher tier?

259. Nameless Crafter

So the silver sword of purification becomes a gleaming sword of purification.

It’s standard equipment for holy knights, and veteran adventurers always have at least one gleaming sword of purification in their party.

It’s made with Smithing, Alchemy, sacred light, and crystallized prayers.

260. Nameless Crafter

Its attribute is light, and it’s super effective? Lmao, that’s an undead killer, all right.

261. Ertz

I went and asked the church about it, and they told me it’s okay if it doesn’t have the church’s emblem since adventurers carry them too.

262. Nameless Crafter

It’s probably expensive, considering its element and its deadly effect on certain races.

263. Nameless Crafter

Appearence-wise, it comes with its own unique effect too.

264. Nameless Crafter

I’ve seen the holy knights training with their swords once or twice. So this is that glowing thing they use?

265. Ertz

It takes a lot of materials and work to make. It’s no simple task to forge one. But it looks like the results are gonna make that all worth it in the end.

267. Nameless Crafter

Why do you guys bully undead?!

268. Nameless Crafter

Because they stink.

269. Nameless Crafter

Because they’re gross.

270. Nameless Crafter

Because they’re dirty.

271. Nameless Crafter

I can handle skeletons and spirit bodies, but not zombies.

272. Nameless Crafter

That’s so sad.

273. Nameless Crafter

At least be nice to undead that are at the middle tier or above.

274. Nameless Crafter

Is that when they lose Decomposing Body?

275. Nameless Crafter

It just removes the smell. Everything else stays the same.

276. Nameless Crafter

Exactly.

277. Nameless Crafter

Gotta clean them up.

278. Nameless Crafter

Gotta sterilize them.

279. Nameless Crafter

They’re bacteria!

280. Nameless Crafter

Sanitize the filth!

281. Nameless Crafter

I thought you guys were acting like white blood cells. But you’re actually the hyah ha guy.

282. Nameless Crafter

Are your white blood cells like Mohawk?

283. Nameless Crafter

No way…

284. Nameless Crafter

Woo-hoo! It’s an apocalypse inside your body!

285. Nameless Crafter

We’re making leaps and bounds in finding new methods of torment.

286. Nameless Crafter

This may be a step too far! It doesn’t make any sense!

287. Nameless Crafter

Put the apocalypse aside for now.

The sword uses Sacred Fire, you said? I think Princess mentioned that before.

288. Nameless Crafter

A clergy member told me they have Inferno Magic and Holy Magic.

289. Nameless Crafter

We're crafters! We don't have skills like those!

290. Nameless Crafter

Yeah.

291. Nameless Crafter

Don't give up so easily.

292. Nameless Crafter

I'm going to prepare Sacred Fire, holy water, and magi iron.

I'll use Sacred Fire to make mithril ingots, then I'll use Alchemy's Synthesize on the ingots I made with Sacred Fire to give them light element gems. Lastly, I'll forge the Synthesized ingots with Sacred Fire and plunge them in holy water. Then I'll have swords!

293. Nameless Crafter

Right now, can you only get mithril from the depths of the cave dungeon?

294. Nameless Crafter

Housing items might have veins that drop it too.

295. Nameless Crafter

I sell holy water on consignment sometimes. But no one can beat Princess's quality when it comes to holy water.

296. Nameless Crafter

Other clergy members have lower-quality holy water too. Or really, it's more like Princess is just the strongest when it comes to religious things.

297. Nameless Crafter

You got that right!

298. Nameless Crafter

Yeah, a lot of people see Princess praying at churches.

299. Nameless Crafter

It's luck whether or not you'll be able to buy Princess's holy water, but it's easy to get some that's average quality. Sacred Fire is the real problem.

300. Nameless Crafter

In other words, we're supposed to use Sacred Fire Magic to light the furnace?

301. Ertz

Yep. It will stay lit even if you leave it alone. I don't know how much that maintenance costs.

302. Nameless Crafter

I'm sure a lot of people have Inferno Magic and Holy Magic, but I'd be surprised if they've taken Sacred Fire.

303. Ertz

They say it's ridiculously powerful against undead, but for anyone else, it just acts like normal fire.

304. Nameless Crafter

So you don’t need this weapon if you’re in a party with someone who has Sacred Fire, do you?

305. Nameless Crafter

Well, it’s probably gonna be expensive too, so you can just worry about it some other time.

306. Nameless Crafter

Even people with enchanting skills will probably have to wait on this one.

307. Nameless Crafter

Wouldn’t it be useful to have a Spetsnaz knife with blades enchanted by each element?

308. Nameless Crafter

I guess the cost might be less than making weapons for each of them. I can’t deny that it sounds exciting.

309. Ertz

It’d be a waste to use a mold in that case.

310. Nameless Crafter

The knife would be even better with something like a revolver’s loader you could attach to it.

311. Nameless Crafter

That’s if you can craft a Spetsnaz knife in the first place. Of course, I’ve done it myself.

312. Nameless Crafter

For real?!

313. Nameless Crafter

You made a pile bunker?! Nice going!

314. Nameless Crafter

It loses a lot of durability if you dry fire it, and you need an incredible amount of strength to use it.

315. Nameless Crafter

Is that to reload it?

316. Nameless Crafter

Yes, but it’s also because your arms will be dying after firing it.

317. Nameless Crafter

Ah, you mean from recoil?

318. Nameless Crafter

I want to try making a version that runs on magic, but I don’t know the fundamentals for that sort of thing.

319. Nameless Crafter

Is it easy to use?

320. Nameless Crafter

I think it’ll be practical in a fight, depending on your stats.

321. Nameless Crafter

No joke?

322. Nameless Crafter

I want to be the first to make a version for attackers that’s in the shape of a two-handed hammer. One-handed would be too

difficult, but with two hands, I think it'd be pretty powerful for getting in one good hit.

323. Nameless Crafter

That's the kind of weapon that packs a punch, but you'll be crying if you miss your target!

324. Nameless Crafter

Ah, that's another thing that hasn't been made yet. And it'll be really loud, naturally.

325. Nameless Crafter

I'm sure no one would expect the very first version to have noise control.

326. Nameless Crafter

It'll attract enemies with good ears!

327. Nameless Crafter

But you want to attract enemies if you're hunting!

328. Nameless Crafter

Would it count as both a stabbing and a blunt weapon?

329. Nameless Crafter

You both reload it and control the recoil with strength, so this must be great for people with muscles for brains.

330. Nameless Crafter

Forget the one-handed version! The accuracy on the two-handed one would already be all over the place!

331. Nameless Crafter

That doesn’t matter! The thrill is what’s important!

Chapter 4:
Sunday

I TEST SUBSPACE using the wolves outside of Starting Town, but it turns out that I can't access it while in battle. I'm supposed to use Short Jump instead, I conclude.

I can use subspace to emerge behind a target and perform an initial attack, but I don't have good skills for that sort of thing, so it won't do me much good. If anything, *I'm* the one in the position to be assassinated. It doesn't make sense for the character I'm roleplaying either. I'd prefer to use my tentacles more proactively instead of subspace.

I knock out the wolves, absorb them, and open subspace this time. Then I get another wolf to target me so that the subspace is between us.

It charges toward me, passing through subspace to begin its attack—powerless against my High Physical Immunity.

Then I use my tentacles to thrust the wolf into subspace. I lift it from below instead of swiping at it. This is a test, after all. I don't want to kill it too soon.

I watch as the wolf is absorbed into subspace and turned into polygons. Does this mean that beings who can't perceive subspace are unable to enter it, but those of us who *do* recognize it can drag others in? Well, if that wasn't the case, byakhee travel would be impossible.

Killing enemies with subspace results in no EXP. Of course, that's because there was no "experience" in the first place.

This is a video game, after all, and I want to avoid methods that give me no EXP or materials except as a last resort. The entire point of hunting is to gain those two things. Killing enemies with subspace is nothing more than a waste of time.

It might be a good option for eliminating enemies that aren't delicious enough—in any sense of the word—but it would still be easier to enter subspace myself the second I spot them, ignoring them entirely. It's more efficient to exclude myself from the situation instead of throwing every enemy into subspace—something that has the potential to fail at times.

It's the perfect weapon for fleeing as soon as I lay eyes on an enemy, but outside of that, there are no uses for subspace in combat.

It's simply one more convenient power I have in my arsenal.

As a race that is clearly at a higher rank than most others, I have limitations. I can't simply exist normally without disrupting the balance of the game. However, I can still act and use my skills freely, so this doesn't particularly bother me.

The restrictions make it so that I don't gain much damage from leveling. I receive a bonus to Light Magic and Dark Magic as part of my race, making them a bit higher than other inhuman races, but in exchange, I can't even take other elemental skills at all. It's a pretty big disadvantage of my race.

There's a tendency to focus on the amount of damage you can deal in video games, but that number isn't the biggest appeal of being

an inhuman race. That would be the unique plays that only inhumans can make. Of course, from a different perspective, these unique plays could be thought of as *all* inhumans are capable of.

Each player is different and will perceive this as either an advantage or a source of stress. Residents will also speak to you differently during conversation, and in the first place, players may find themselves struggling to control their character as they intend.

That's why inhuman characters are recommended for players interested in roleplaying. They're powerful in fights once you get the hang of them…except for those instances when they're nothing more than scarecrows. They also have hard counters that can, in a worst-case scenario, kill them instantly. Inhumans have both extreme advantages and disadvantages in that way.

My main source of firepower is my Light Magic and Dark Magic skills. That's why my main weapon uses Book.

My athame is more like a backup item than a main weapon. Personally, I treat it like a shield. Snake Sword has been more helpful than Rapier in letting me use it as an actual weapon. I keep my athame in my right hand's equipment slot and my book in the left hand slot.

I also have my passives and production skills. These are more areas where you can see how I play my character with a heavy focus on my race skills. Passive skills are wonderful things. They'll always give you the exact same effects and will never betray you.

As for combat, well, everything's fine. There haven't been any changes in that area.

I wonder if there's anything I'm missing that could help me roleplay more proficiently.

There's so much potential as an inhuman race. I want to focus on RP more, especially after my conversation with Eli's dad. In other words, I need to be doing more inhuman-like things from here out.

Personally, I don't think anything is more inhuman than my tentacles. The next closest thing is Secret Art of Necromancy.

Necromancy and tentacles—no matter how you look at them, these aren't things a hero is supposed to be involved in. As an undead branch race, it's inevitable that I'll lean toward the dark side. Dark heroes exist too, but I'm not interested in defining myself that way. They're still heroes, just with different perspectives on justice—nothing more than that. A hero to your homeland, but a bitter foe to any other country, as it were. I prefer knights over heroes for sure.

But as for RP, I believe my words and actions are fine for now. I have the game's assistance in how I move. As for my manner of speech? I should probably use the imperative form more, but my current polite speech isn't off the mark either, I assume.

Appearances are the easiest way of showing that you're roleplaying. It's also the easiest part to change and tells a story at first glance. However, appearances alone don't necessarily tell the world you're in character. It's more likely that you've simply dressed up to match your occupation or interests.

Movements or manner of speech are essential for RP—ideally, you'd have both to make it perfect. Take Mr. Mohawk, for example. He has shoulder pads, a belt, and a dagger—and just listen to how he

speaks. He's a hardcore RP enthusiast. If he had the equipment alone, people might think of him as unique, but nothing more.

You truly need an impact to remain in people's memories. Visuals are the way to go if you're going to use anime or manga as a reference. Your character should also be unwavering in their beliefs. It's easiest to determine a course of actions and always stick to it.

Hmm. I'll return to town now, as the wolves are starting to become a nuisance. Their silly AIs keep picking fights with someone much stronger than them.

I return to the main plaza and—oh, speak of the devil. Although, I was just thinking of him, not speaking, in this case.

"Good day, Mr. Mohawk."

"Huh? Hey, it's Princess! Haven't seen ya in ages!"

"Do you have a minute for us to speak about something?"

"Hee hee hee! Fallen in love with me, have ya?"

"Your RP is certainly something to fall in love with, but you're mistaken. I've decided that I'd like to start taking RP more seriously, and I thought I'd ask your advice."

It's the perfect opportunity, so I decide Mr. Mohawk is worth hearing from. It's better to bounce ideas off someone else than ponder alone.

"Hyah ha ha ha! Good move, Princess! But y'know, people've already got an image of you stuck in their heads. It'd be stupid to change up your act too dramatically now."

I suppose I've become too famous to completely change courses now. I've also taken an occupation already, so there's no benefit in making any changes there either.

"For now, I don't intend to change course. I have the game's assistance in how I move as well. I was simply looking for new ways to emphasize my RP, if only a little."

"Hee hee hee! I like the sound o' that."

"I was just looking over my stats again to see if there's anything I can work with. Is there something I could come up with by combining the keywords 'princess,' 'clergy,' 'necromancy,' and 'tentacles?'"

"Gyah ha ha ha! Sounds like a porno!"

Oh, is he in a party? That surely must've been a reply to someone in his party chat. Surely.

"All right, how about we talk a little more seriously?" he segues. "I remember your post with all the info on the conquering thread."

It seems I'm now speaking to the man behind the character of Mr. Mohawk.

"Hmm. What should be your main focus?" he ponders. "The key points are you being a princess, an outer one, and clergy. Actually, maybe your best option is to focus on the concept of 'supreme authority.'"

"Y-you might be right. That sounds good, since I have no intention of changing my manner of speech or movements."

"You think of royalty when you hear 'authority,' and there's different varieties of 'princess' that exist out there. But if you aren't going to change your speech or actions, hmm…"

"I'd like to do more inhuman-like things to make the most of my inhuman race. I thought my tentacles and Secret Art of Necromancy would be useful for that."

"I see. Let's exclude 18+ stuff, considering your age and the particular game we're playing. Maybe a dark fantasy vibe would be good."

Tentacles and skeletons *do* push me in the direction of dark fantasy. "I remember getting a lot of useful results when I searched for girls and skeletons. Girls and tentacles is like doing an internet search on the hardest difficulty," I add.

The clean version of Mr. Mohawk sums up our discussion thusly: "You're a young lady and a princess, so you ought to make your skeleton hold a parasol for you."

"That's a bit ordinary. I don't quite see the appeal."

Mr. Mohawk swiftly moves onto the next idea.

"You could have the skeleton carry you in his arms so you don't have to walk around."

"I see. That sounds nice."

I'll have to consult with my servant about this. It would be nice to have a slightly larger skeleton to carry me, but it's essential that it's comfortable. It'd hurt if it's not a good fit, and I wouldn't be able to keep it going for very long.

Yes, I must confirm whether this is possible…

"Why don't you sit on some sort of throne, have your skeletons carry it around like knights, and wriggle your tentacles all around?"

"It sounds nice from a visual perspective, but won't I get in people's way?"

We're currently in the town square. Mr. Mohawk takes a look at our surroundings and nods. I certainly see the appeal, but that sort of thing is better for grabbing screenshots. Should I prepare a fancy chair that isn't just for tea parties, perhaps?

"Can you control your tentacles? And how many can you use at once? You could sit on them if you can make them take whatever shape you like."

"The number of tentacles goes up as my skill level does. They're very easy to control."

"It might work if you just sit on a few tentacles while you keep them bent."

I see. I made the right choice in consulting Mr. Mohawk after all.

"Getting carried' is the best way to move from place to place," he says.



"I agree. That means I'll have to carefully pick the right type of servant and test how well their AI can handle it."

"If it doesn't work, just switch to the tentacles."

"Thank you very much. I'll give it my consideration."

"Hyah ha ha ha! Always good to see another RPer join the ranks!"

Ah, he reverted.

I watch the loud but nice man head out to do some hunting. Then I check the customization options for Secret Art of Necromancy.

Visually, it's better to have a larger servant carry me, but summoning cost and servant size are directly linked. I can just swap them out if I get into a battle, though, so using an expensive one wouldn't be the end of the world.

This is RP—appearances should be prioritized above all else. I'll go with an ogre for that reason, not a troll.

What skills do I give him? The Gravity Control and Footwork branches should be good. I'll also give him passives and fill the rest of the slots with defensive skills.

I'll name the template "RP method of transportation." Now it's time to summon him and give this a shot.

A skeleton ogre emerges three meters in front of me, so I waste no time in having him carry me.

It's surprisingly hard to carry a person in your arms princess-style. This is a skeleton on top of that, but I intend to have Unit One master this move.

Perhaps I should adjust my own gravity to make my body lighter. Removing gravity entirely would just make it even more difficult, so I'll lower it down to a multiplier of 0.6.

Unit One's priority is appearances, not stability. I can simply fly if I want stability or speed, but that's best ignored right now. One benefit of using undead is that their arms don't get tired and start to tremble.

There's nothing more comfortable than sitting in an actual chair, of course, but that's also best ignored right now. There's nothing wrong with it so long as it's not a source of stress—or as long as he doesn't drop me.

Would it be more comfortable if I gave the ogre four arms? I bet it would be perfect for him to support my head, back, hips, and legs. I'll have to start testing out more variations.

Unit One doesn't really have much impact. He actually looks somewhat suspicious. I'm certain now that he's lacking the correct vibe. Should I equip him with a tattered robe or something of the sort?

In that case, I should go to Mr. Dentelle's shop and have him help me create an avatar for my servant. I can tell him to ignore the effects of the material and focus only on looks, since stats don't matter in this situation. Vibes are very important in RP, and appearances are generally the first thing you nail down. It's something I'm going to have to think about—not just for myself but for Unit One as well.

Softness is going to be very important here. I could also use real money to purchase extra bones for the model rigs.

But first things first: I have to see Mr. Dentelle. I ask Unit One to carry me to the shop.

"Oh? Ah, it's Princess," Mr. Dentelle greets me.

"Good day. I'd like to ask you about something."

"What would that be?"

"I want to make Unit One look more impactful."

I explain my RP plan to Mr. Dentelle, who quickly begins writing up an outline of ideas.

I considered dressing Unit One like some sort of knight, but that didn't quite feel right. I think a black robe or something sort of grim reaper-like would be most fitting.

If I wanted to put armor on my skeleton, it'd be easier to simply summon a living armor servant in the first place.

"You're going to have to spend real money if you're picky about how the robe moves," Mr. Dentelle informs me.

"I'll be able to use the avatar as much as I want, after all. I've been considering spending money on it."

I want the sleeves moderately torn with the hem considerably tattered. The hood should be a bit oversized, and the color…well, it'll be black, naturally.

The robe might move unnaturally without rigging it with enough bones to make it flutter properly.

“It’s just a robe, in the end. Is it worth using a complex animation rig for it?” Mr. Dentelle asks me.

“The rig does default to having a lot of bones in the first place.”

I can still preview items’ rigs even if I don’t own them, allowing me to purchase what I need after seeing it.

Different equipment has a different bone count. If you want to change the bone multiplier, it will change your ability to obtain such an item. A two-times multiplier is usually only available by purchasing it with real money. The next level down, a 1.5 multiplier, is available in drops or with real money purchases. The lowest multiplier is 1.25 and can only be obtained via drop. The two highest multipliers, 2.5 and 3, can only be acquired through raids and monetary purchases—the former still being undiscovered in this game, leaving you with no choice but to spend money.

“The regular ones don’t seem so bad. Do you think a two-times multiplier is overdoing it?” he asks.

“Possibly, but I think it’s fine to overdo it a little. I don’t want to spend another 800 yen if my 500 yen leaves me with regrets.”

“Yeah, students don’t have a ton of money to spend however they like. I guess it’s better to be picky now—that way you don’t have to come back to it later.”

A 1.5 multiplier is 500 yen, then 800, 1,200, and 1,600 for each step up.

It seems that armor doesn’t start out with many bones. Frankly, I don’t think increasing them will make much difference.

Cloth items have quite a few bones—robes and cloaks having the most of all. But even then, they tend to be simplified just enough to not look strange. You can still see these clothes moving a bit unnaturally if you really watch them closely.

"I wonder how many bones that cloak of yours has, Princess."

"I'm not sure. It's unique equipment, so I assume it's a lot, but I can't see the rig."

"It might be something even higher than players can ever make, since the devs themselves put that item in the game."

"I suspect the developers might tell me if I ask them directly."

"Should we go for a shot in the dark and try emailing them?"

We spend some more time making changes to equipment, and before long, we receive a response from the developers.

The developer in charge of equipment responds that my cloak has slightly more bones than a normal cloak with a three-times multiplier. The development team decides on the amount based on the rarity of the item—something that reaches the maximum potential without causing any trouble.

They got carried away and added too many bones at first, which were pointless in terms of bodily movement, and ended up creating garbage equipment that did nothing but increase burden on the player. That was how they decided that slightly higher than a three-times multiplier was a better choice.

"Your clothes are meant for everyday wear, Princess, and I think they're pretty mature as attire fit for the gods. Your athame and book

probably have more bones than armor. Your equipment is treated like sacred treasure, so I imagine the flavor text is certainly nothing to make light of, correct?"

"I received my equipment from Stellura, so I really have no choice but to treat it like sacred treasure. I'm sure true sacred treasures are even more unbelievable."

"That's true. They're pretty tame compared to the usual fantasy genre treasures, even if you ignore that this is an MMO. Or at least, that's what I used to think, anyway."

Setting all that aside, it's about time we return to settling the bone count. I would go with a three-times multiplier if I didn't want it to look unnatural in the slightest, but, that would be a different level of dedication entirely, so I decide two-times is plenty for normal clothing with how I'll be using it.

"They say that the bone count is most clear when you bunch up the fabric. Yeah, that makes sense. Hang on a minute," Mr. Dentelle says.

"It's not like I'd be bunching it up on purpose. That's why a two-times multiplier should suffice."

I'd expect nothing less from a top player. Mr. Dentelle has already prepared cloak samples with different bone counts.

We compare my cloak to his samples, bunching them up to see the noticeable differences.

My cloak balls up neatly, while the normal cloaks are slightly distorted and stiff. The two-times cloak looks a little like a hard

material that's been rolled into a ball. I can't make out any differences between my cloak and the three-times multiplier cloak. It's only slightly more apparent when I compare it to the 2.5 multiplier.

"The texture depends on the cloak's material, right?" I ask.

"Yep. It catches on things a little easier with a lower bone count."

Parts of it are less fluid when the item has fewer bones, so that's to be expected.

"Oh?" I say suddenly.

"What is it?"

"I just got a message that says I can participate in a race story event around two in the afternoon."

"Whoa, a race event? Is it for outer ones or Nemeseias? They're both big names in this world."

"I believe this is a Nemeseia job, as the only thing I can think of is Mr. Cecil's quest."

"That's right, he was talking about that chronicle quest. Okay, how's this look?" he asks.

"I like it."

I don't know who this event is about or what they've been up to. I'm completely in the dark, to be honest.

I choose a material once the design is completed, spend my real-life money, and purchase it. All that's left is to commission a producer and wait for the finished product.

"I can make this in no time," Mr. Dentelle declares.

"And how much will it cost?"

"Since it's for an avatar, 50,000 gold will do. It's a robe, after all, and you picked a material to give it a good texture."

I watch Mr. Dentelle enter his workroom and close the door behind him to get started. I'll do some shopping before I leave.

Mr. Dentelle is a producer who works with the Needlework skill. That's why his store is full of items made from cloth and leather. In other words, his clientele consists of players who wear light armor—players such as magicians and scouts.

However, I sometimes see tanks come into this shop too. They're usually here to shop for overcoats, cloaks, and robes. Mr. Dentelle also sells waist accessories, such as belts.

Overcoats and cloaks are equipment used to combat bad weather, and belts allow one to carry more secondary weapons. It might seem trivial, but it's actually an important piece of equipment to consider. It's sort of like having a raincoat—better to have one than to not. Naturally, having a belt affects how many things you can attach to your waist. Given all the uses for his items, it's no wonder Mr. Dentelle has such a diverse clientele.

His inventory is also incredibly diverse too. He stocks leather equipment suited for a fantasy adventurer's style, equipment that you could swear you've seen somewhere else, and even anime character costumes. His dresses range from maid uniforms—naturally—to

Japanese shrine maiden outfits. There are even swimsuits for sale here.

Red loincloths? Who would ever want to equip such an item? Actually, I'm sure people like that exist in this game. Oh, tracksuits? He also has gym clothes, and are these *hakama*?

Adventurer's equipment, dresses, and maid uniforms fit into this world just fine. But it's natural to want total freedom when you're playing a video game. It's clear people are enjoying themselves here.

"All done!" Mr. Dentelle declares.

I pay him for the cloak and immediately equip it to my transportation servant's avatar. Now it's time to board Unit One. Is "board" the right word? Regardless…

"It gives off…a slightly better impression now that he's not just a skeleton," I observe.

"Hmm. Maybe you can't improve skeletons much more than this."

"I believe you're right. Servant size directly affects cost, and I can't do much more than change or add parts to him through Customization."

"I see. What if you raise your skill level?"

"It'll be at level 60 soon, so I believe I'll learn some sort of new art."

My chauffeur still feels a bit lacking, but there's nothing else I can do about that.

I think I'll leave the shop now and have lunch. There'll be an event waiting for me sometime around 2 p.m.

I finish lunch, get some light exercise in, and log back on.

It starts at 2:20? Then I have a bit of time. It's not long enough to go hunting, so I think I'll focus on production.

Oh, it's a message from Mr. Ertz.

"Hello, you've reached the royal family," I greet him.

"Howdy, Princess. Could I get your help with something?"

"What would that be?"

"Can you get me some holy water?"

"Holy water? Sure, that's quick enough to obtain."

"Is now a good time? I'll buy it from you."

"Sounds good. I'll bring it to you once I have it."

"Thanks, and sorry for the hassle."

In that case, I'll get home and start on the holy water.

I prepare water of reminiscence and pure dirt, filter the water through the dirt, and pray. This quick method is all it takes to produce simple holy water.

Of course, I don't receive any EXP this way, since I'm not using skills. The base EXP is pretty low too. It's not a fruitful process for me—except in the sense that I can sell it for a profit, since you have to be clergy to craft this holy water. It's more difficult to obtain for everyone else.

I finish up my crafting and head to Mr. Ertz's shop.

I've arrived, but I don't see Mr. Ertz anywhere. He must be in his workshop. The resident shopkeeper shows me to the back of the store.

I hear the clanging of tools as soon as I open the door. It's a telltale sign that he's in the middle of crafting. I enter the room to find Mr. Ertz and a man I've never seen before. He seems to have a job relating to magic of some kind. Perhaps he's clergy?

"Oh, you're here! Sorry for the trouble," Mr. Ertz greets me.

"Making holy water is an easy process, so it's no trouble at all."

"Then let's hurry and try this out."

"What are you up to here?" I ask.

"I'm just trying to make a sword with holy water and sacred fire."

"I see. So this man is here to provide the sacred fire?"

"My holy water isn't the highest in quality, you see," the man explains to me.

It seems he *is* a clergy member after all. It was apparent enough from his uniform.

I've heard that holy water should grant the same bonuses as revival medicine. It might come from having an occupation and a "blessing" title, or maybe race plays a role as well. I feel like that's a likely factor, seeing as how I can craft S+ holy water.

That aside, Mr. Ertz begins his tests. He douses the sword in holy water and heats it with sacred fire to forge it.

"It might be best to use sacred fire to process the ingots beforehand, then turn those ingots into the weapon," the clergyman suggests.

"Should I go with silver for the base? Since it's a weapon, what else could I possibly use but magi silver?" Mr. Ertz proposes.

"You're probably right," the clergyman agrees. "As you'd expect, that would make it highly effective against undead."

That must mean it's effective specifically against certain races and even elements. I'm sure the race modifier is very strong, but that just makes the elemental bonus seem unnecessary.

"A silver sword of purification. It must be part of the line of 'purification' weapons."

"Is it glowing a little?"

"It does appear to be faintly glowing. It must come with this special effect," I speculate.

It's very common for stronger items to glow in video games, but this may be unique to the purification line of items.

"Despite the name, this seems less useful for purification and more inclined to undead slaying. I doubt purification resistance is going to do much against it," I remark.

"Yeah, I agree. I might give it to someone else to test out," Mr. Ertz says.

All right, it should nearly be time for this race quest of mine. I wonder when to expect it?

"Should I buy another magical energy furnace and use it for sacred fire?" Mr. Ertz ponders.

"Is that expensive to maintain?" the clergyman asks.

"That's going to be the issue. It's fueled by magic stones," Mr. Ertz explains.

Although he can simply purchase holy water from me, sacred flames require the presence of someone who can use the magic—that is, he needs to call for a clergyman every single time. Alternatively, he can keep sacred fire in a furnace, though that requires a constant supply of magic stones to keep burning. I personally don't think it would be a bad idea, so long as there aren't any disadvantages.

"Now that I think of it, what would happen if you mixed a light gem with magi silver made in sacred fire, then forged it into a sword by using holy water and sacred fire?" I ask.

"Hmm. Good question. That sounds interesting," Mr. Ertz replies.

We can't do anything without a mithril ingot forged in sacred fire, so I'll accept the prototype. I doubt I'll actually be able to test this any time soon, however.

I come bearing a job for you as an outer one, my medium.

Oh, I can hear Stellura's voice.

The gods give you their orders. We have identified a hopeless fool who continuously meddles in our domain. You must eradicate his soul.

The quest also tells me that a resident will be assigned to this role if I refuse, since it involves other players.

Working with other players probably means that time won't stop for this quest. They want me to know I can't make detours like a normal quest.

That's why I've been notified in advance this time.

This is a chronicle quest relating to my race, and the conditions refer to it as a branch of a chronicle guild quest. That must be Mr. Cecil's guild.

I'll accept the offer, of course. I do as the goddess desires. I would never refuse a chronicle quest once it's been offered to me.

"Punishment"

The gods have granted you permission to destroy a target who repeatedly committed the taboo of meddling with souls.

Use Aforgomon to call forth an incarnation and burn this target to a crisp, soul and all.

Quest giver: Stellura

"All right, I'm going to go work on my quest now."

"See ya," Mr. Ertz answers.

I bid the two men farewell, return to my villa, do a quick outfit change, and use the quest UI to open up a portal to my target.

I emerge from the portal in what appears to be a courtroom. At a glance, I can identify the presiding judge, nobles, civil officials, knights, adventurers, and the defendant.

There's a cage in the center of the room with a man inside. The knights all surround him while the adventurers are seated off to the side.

The judge sits at the highest point in the room with nobles seated slightly lower, then civil officials seated in a line under them.

Despite such an audience, they unsurprisingly start to stir upon my arrival. The knights place their hands on their sheaths, ready to draw their swords. It's a natural reaction for a knight, so I won't remark on it.

More importantly, I spot Mr. Cecil seated amongst the adventurers.

"Ah, so that *was* your portal, huh, Princess? You came before we could even call you."

"Good day, Mr. Cecil. I came here through a slightly different entrance than the rest. I was wondering if you would be here. Is this your criminal? How are things proceeding?"

"The trial only started a little while ago."

"Then I'll wait until the conclusion. I have my own business to take care of."

I'm sure I can complete my quest once the affairs of the mortal realm are completed. They need to keep records of the criminal process, so I'll be rid of this wrongdoer whenever they finish up.

"I'm not the one in charge, but I'm sure that's fine. There's no way the empire is going to reject you. Actually, they probably *can't* reject you," Mr. Cecil speculates.

"I intend to complete my job with or without their permission," I reply.

I wouldn't simply nod my head and leave if they told me to. A quest from a god takes ultimate priority.

Stellura is my highest authority—or rather, this character's highest authority. I'm going to prioritize her will as my mistress.

My current mission is a soul eradication. It sounds like the four gods decide on a soul eradication together—it's not Stellura's decision alone, since the quest used the word "gods."

For now, I stay with Mr. Cecil and wait for the Dinait Empire to finish their proceedings.

This will probably be posted on the chronicle quest catalog. That means it's time for some RP!

"Very well. Let us proceed," declares a noble.

"We'll continue where we left off," says another.

They're nobles in their late forties—probably dukes or marquesses. Their clear, deep voices resonate in the room to quell the

murmurs.

I make eye contact with the judge, who continues the proceedings. The officials begin their work again, and the knights return to standby mode, removing their hands from their sheaths. The judge looks to be the same age as the nobles.

The two nobles were surprised when I arrived, but they quickly regained their composure. I wonder if they know about me already? The church has been sharing information about me, at the very least, so nobles should be fully aware of my existence—especially high-ranking ones.

I'm a bit curious about them too. I'll chat with Mr. Cecil a little while the trial continues.

"Mr. Cecil, who is this judge and the important-looking man seated next to him?"

"They introduced themselves at the start. The judge is Marquess Arthur Logunov, and Duke Bernard Granin is here as the noble representative."

"And what about the man in the well-tailored robe and staff?"

"That's our client. He's Magic Earl Emiliano Calestia."

Mr. Cecil's information causes Identify to display their names and profiles. The duke and magic earl have the highest levels amongst the nobles in the room. They're the same level as the knights. It's curious, since they're also around the same level as the judge. Also, the magic earl took similar action to the knights when I arrived.

I’m curious about these three men, since they clearly stand out in the room. And this is Duke Granin, is it? He must be one of Lana’s descendants. Or perhaps it was only her name, not her bloodline, that lived on.

“…years ago, he attacked small villages and used its people as sacrifices in his rites. This was none other than the forbidden act of Chimera Creation. They were human experiments utilizing everyone from orphans to traders. Now, only days ago, the man before you was attempting to conduct a sacrificial ceremony in the protected region known as the Crystal Forest…”

This explains why the man’s soul is pitch black.

An attack on a village? I see. This sounds a lot like the description Lisa gave me. I’ve likely found the missing perpetrator. I can’t wait to deliver the good news.

“Please refer to the written report you’ve been given…”

It looks like Mr. Cecil has one, since he’s involved in the case. They must have been handed out at the start of the trial. I’ll take a look at Mr. Cecil’s copy.

Village… Village… Ah, here it is. It’s a report from the time of the incident. An explanation of the backstory? This is the most important part for me.

“Lieselotte, a young girl chosen for sacrifice, was rescued when the others couldn’t be saved in time. The effects the ceremony will have on her are still undetermined. The girl states a desire to become

stronger, so we'll be putting her through basic training as we keep an eye on the situation."

So the knights used the pretense of helping her get stronger as a way to observe what the ceremony had done to her. Lisa was trained by the knights, and the knights got to watch over the girl they rescued. Since the empire was also able to obtain more information that way, it was a beneficial arrangement to everyone.

"The church was unable to break the curse, as it'd already eaten its way into her soul. Miss Mila Lilienthal, a second-tier saint who was present during the attempts, also failed to remove the curse. We are currently at a loss as to how to proceed."

A second-tier saint? That means she has Haventhys's divine protection. "Miss Mila Lilienthal." I'll make a mental note of that name.

They've also detailed the curse's effects.

"The adventurers' union will be looking after Miss Lieselotte. We've been given word that Miss Mila Lilienthal has attempted to remove the curse on multiple occasions now. Our duties as knights end here. We wish the girl a happy future."

Well, Lisa is doing well at the moment. She's a member of the Nether's army now and may have even been reunited with the people from her village, now that I think of it. It's highly likely, as they mentioned it being a small village. I'm sure her parents remain in the Nether, at least, as they would have fretted over her being the only missing soul from the village.

I'll have to ask her about that when I go to report this new information. I'm sure Lana is already doing something about it, in any

case.

"There isn't enough information about this ceremony. Is it a mystery to you as well, Lord Castelia?" the judge asks.

"We're unable to provide details either. I have a lead on some information, but it requires His Majesty's permission."

"So it's in the castle's banned books section? If even *you* require the emperor's permission…"

"Indeed. It's in the depths of *that* library section."

A written report about the ceremony? Ah, it sounds like it's something players can't see.

[Event] Ceremony Report

This report does indeed describe how the ceremony works, but its author likely had little understanding of the rite.

Since they didn't know how to discern the relevant information, they've filled the report with every last detail they were able to.

It's not an easy read, since there isn't a single detail lacking, but it should be understandable to certain readers.

You could call the person who wrote this report a genius, but how many people on the surface world could even make heads or tails of such a report?

"Well, if it's an event item, there wouldn't be a whole description written up about it."

Or so I thought. That's when my bookmark floated up, turning into the book, and began to flip through pages. It stopped somewhere in the middle, at which point the Book of the Elder Keys displayed the information as a pop-up.

"We've confiscated a book with a mark on the cover matching the mark this man's group wore on their bodies. I'd never seen the language written inside, but it was a skin-crawling sensation nonetheless," the civil official explains.

"Even though you couldn't read it?"

"Yes. It was like I was looking at something I shouldn't be. It's a source of great unease. Here you have it."

The official is holding a book with a black cover and a faint marking—the one Lisa said the man's group were branded with. This is none other than the Yellow Sign.

The Book of the Elder Keys displays another pop-up about this book.

The King in Yellow

A play that is filled with both beautiful and dreadful words.

Readers, performers, and audience members will be slowly lured into madness.

The King in Yellow

An incarnation of Hastur.

So there's both the "King in Yellow" that refers to Hastur's incarnation and the "King in Yellow" referring to the play in book form.

I don't think its content is readable in the first place. That must mean it was used as material for Ancient Languages. Of course, that would definitely be a mistake.

Yellow Sign

A symbol of subconscious madness and wickedness, indicating that something is connected to Hastur.

This sign has little effect on a healthy individual. They will feel uncomfortable but nothing more.

The mentally unstable will begin to have nightmares upon viewing the sign.

I assume everyone who investigated this has viewed the Yellow Sign, since it's on the cover.

If it has to do with the mind, then it must rely on the spirit stat. Spirit is my main source of power, so mine is very high, but very few people level up the stat much at all outside of clergy members.

For now, I should stop that magic earl who's trying to sneak a peek at the cover.

"It's best not to look. I suggest sealing it away in the forbidden books section."

"A-are you familiar with this book?" he replies.

"To put it simply, it relates to us outer ones."

"Really? This book?"

"I told you to stop. You may go mad if you look at it without my involvement."

I still don't know everything about outer ones in this game. I don't even think you can define them as something fully good or bad in the first place.

Well, even if outer ones see objects like these as nothing more than a form of amusement, they're still capable of inflicting harm upon humanity. They're all at max level and have too high stats to be in any sort of danger. In this case, it's not about good or evil at all. The only question is who holds accountability.

Perhaps the best conclusion is to handle things on a case-by-case basis.

It seems the judge, duke, and magic earl have finished their discussion about what to do.

"The complete lack of information is troubling. Isn't there anything we can leave on the record?"

"Let me think. First, this book is called *The King in Yellow*, and the symbol on the cover is referred to as the Yellow Sign. The King in Yellow is an incarnation of Hastur, an outer one." I briefly summarize the information given to me by the Book of the Elder Keys. "However,

I don’t know if it’s driven this man to insanity or if he was like that from the start,” I add.

“But it does seem that none of the investigative team have suffered from exposure to this book.”

“I’ll confirm that no one has been having nightmares.”

“I don’t want it so close to us. What should we do with it?”

“Is there any choice but to have it sealed away in the forbidden books section?”

“I wouldn’t mind taking it off your hands,” I offer. “I can return it to the original owner that way.”

After a bit more discussion, they decide to turn it over to me. It’s added to my inventory as an event item. I’ll have to return it to Hastur later on.

The trial continues, mostly consisting of a discussion between the judge and civil officials with the duke occasionally asking questions. The magic earl is in charge as the authority who captured the culprit, so he provides testimony based on what he witnessed. Mr. Cecil and the other adventurers are here because they participated in the arrest as well.

There are other nobles in the courtroom too, but they’re generally just here to observe. They’ve probably stayed silent because no problems have arisen.

The knights stay on constant alert, keeping a watchful eye over the courtroom. They’re here to protect the nobles, of course, but also to stop the criminal from fleeing and bring order if the adventurers

cause a disturbance. My sudden arrival was a cause of concern for them too. There are all sorts of things a knight may need to respond to.

"That is all I have to offer you." The civil official steps down after his final piece of information.

"Do you have any objections?" the judge asks.

"Hmph! What's there to put me on trial for? You can save the masses so long as you make a few sacrifices! It's no different than what the rest of you do!"

"*We* carry the responsibility of this country on our backs. I'm fully aware that it's not a blameless task. But we will never lose sight of the things in this world that need to be protected. A country is nothing without its people."

"The power to kill and the power to fight! What's so different about them?! It's important to gather data about all creatures! You knights and adventurers! You kill living beings too, right?! So how am I any different?! This empire grew bigger and bigger because it had power!"

Nobles clean up problems with the smallest sacrifices they can make to get by. Researchers prepare to face problems before they arrive.

"I'm not saying that I don't understand your excuse, but such actions can't go without condemnation."

"We can't allow you to sacrifice anyone, even if you believe it's for the sake of the country and the future."

If that kind of reasoning would fly, everyone would use such an excuse. Either way, the crime is still the crime. There's no getting out of the death penalty with this one.

The judge formally hands down the culprit's death sentence.

"I'll remember your patriotism, but it won't come without consequences."

"Someday, you'll regret losing this brain of mine!"

"Don't worry. We'll manage to get by without you."

"Take him away."

Oops! I can't let them remove him just yet.

"Ah, one moment, please. I haven't finished my business with him," I interject.

"Why exactly *did* you come here?"

I leave Mr. Cecil and the other adventurers to stand in front of the culprit.

Now's the chance to *really* do some RP. I'll adjust my demeanor and tone for this.

I face the man, extend my hand, call for my athame, and produce a blade of light.

"My name is Anastasia Atropos Nemeseia. I am an outer one and a ruler of the afterlife. By the order of the goddess Stellura, I've come to eradicate your soul."

"Eradicate…my soul…?"

It’s too late to go all pale-faced now. Your judgment has already come.

Everyone in the room, aside from the players, gulps—even the judge, duke, and magic earl. It’s proof of how serious a soul eradication is in this world.

“Pitiful lamb, abandoned by even the goddess of mercy. Your reward for meddling with the soul, Stellura’s domain, is a fiery demise that makes even death seem forgiving.”

“N-nooo! That’s not…”

“Now feel the wrath of the gods. Aforgomon.”

“Wait—”

I was wondering what this animation was going to look like. But the man simply disappeared.

You’ve done well.

That marks the end of my quest.

“Wh-where did he go?”

Could he be in the Dreamlands now? I’m not sure if they exist in this game, but he’s in a different realm, at the very least.

Chained naked to a massive stone chair, waiting eternally for Aforgomon—the ruler of time—to arrive. Finally, he emerges and heats the chains until they’re white hot. The body dies, but the soul remains captive.

He’s sure to meet his demise somewhere amidst that endless torture and suffering.

Suddenly, his body returns to the spot where he’d just been held.

His flesh is burnt, but strangely, he’s still clothed.

“All right then. I’ll leave his remains in your hands,” I tell the men.

“W-was he captured by the god of time?”

“Indeed.”

“That poor fool…”

The duke pities the man. His patriotism was probably the real thing—he simply chose to express it inappropriately. Of course, those methods turned into a major problem.

Being captured by Aforgomon in the TRPG erases a person’s existence entirely—even memories and records involving them. It’s as if they never existed as a person in the first place.

Isn’t this a little nicer, in comparison? Records describing this man as a fool who incurred the wrath of the gods will definitely remain. Of course, I doubt that makes any difference to the man who was burned to death.

“With that, court is now adjourned. May the things you’ve seen here remain in your hearts so that you never forget them.” After those words from the judge, the knights carry the corpse away.

Oh, that’s right. “Your Honor, I’d like to discuss something else with you as a Nemeseia. Ah, it’s nothing bad, so don’t look so

nervous.”

It’s awkward to ask more of him just when he thought everything was concluded, but I still have business with him.

“Would you two like to listen in as well?” I ask. I’ll bring the duke and magic earl into this too.

“Are you sure?”

“It’s perfectly fine. The judge will be in charge of the matter, but it involves the country itself as well.”

“I believe you previously summoned an arbitrator. What is the current situation now?”

“Ah, so that’s what this is about? It was lost in that idiocy—no, I mean, the power struggle.”

“I won’t comment on the topic. Instead, I’ll give this to you.”

“Thank you, Princess Nemeseia.”

“All right. I’ll be on my way.”

I say goodbye to Mr. Cecil and teleport to my villa.

My next destination is the Medium.

I won’t waste any time in returning this book.

There’s just one problem. Where is Hastur? I remember some association with Aldebaran, so would that be a separate area?

Ah, it’s Pup Lord! He always shows up at the perfect time!

“What is it?”

“Excellent timing. Do you know where Hastur is? I’d like to return this.”

“This is the book he was searching for. Did he drop it in the world of the living? I will summon him.”

Pup Lord disappears. I trust he’ll bring Hastur to me.

More importantly, did Hastur truly drop this book into the living world? I didn’t know you could drop something from one realm into the next. I bet other Cthulhu-related items have been dropped as well.

The Lord of Tindalos returns with an incarnation of Hastur fully clad in yellow clothes and wearing a pale mask—a very famous appearance for him. He truly is a king in yellow, just like the title of the book.

“Good day, Hastur. I’m here to return this.”

“Ah, yes.”

His long yellow robe reaches all the way to the ground, where he produces countless tentacles that reach out and take the book.

Is Hastur on the younger side? Surely he’s not a boy. Perhaps a young man?

“So, I dropped this in the mortal realm? Now I see why I couldn’t find it anywhere.”

“That book is capable of harming humanity. You ought to be more careful,” Pup Lord warns him.

“I didn’t *mean* to lose it. It was out of my hands.”

“I am sure of that. Just try to leave it in more stable places.”

“I’ll do my best.”

That’s not really the answer you’d want to hear. It’s not much better than “I’ll think about it.”

“It’s nice to meet you,” Hastur says.

“Likewise,” I reply.

I’ve finished my errand here, so it’s time to go back.

All right. Is it time to hunt? No, I need to finish production for Mr. Ertz before that.

Until next time, Mh’ithrha and Hastur.

Official BBS 3

[Online gamers] Comprehensive Conquering Thread 112 [Are full of worldly desires]

1. Passing Conqueror

This thread is a comprehensive thread regarding conquering new areas.

Put down any information you can.

Past threads: http:// * * * * * * * * * *

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42. Passing Conqueror

The world has expanded so much.

43. Passing Conqueror

It's a real fantasy world now.

44. Passing Conqueror

How many countries have we found so far?

45. Passing Conqueror

Yeah, I wonder too.

46. Passing Conqueror

Middle:

Marclant Dukedom where Starting Town is located.

Northeast: Kradal Kingdom, land of the dwarves.

Northwest: Enchanted Tiaren Kingdom, where the elves live.

East:

Nearence Kingdom, where the main church is located.

South:

Chrichston. Not much to say about it.

The aquatic races' starting point is in the ocean between continents—the underwater city of Atlantis.

Above the ocean between continents is Tír na nÓg, the fairy land.

Southern continent:

Dinait Empire, the first place you can visit.

Floating continent:

Heaven and Hell, the lands belonging to the angels and demons respectively.

47. Passing Conqueror

So ten in total?

48. Passing Conqueror

These are the above-ground countries, not including the Nether, Abyss, or Medium.

49. Passing Conqueror

Could you really call those "countries" in the first place?

50. Passing Conqueror

I think it’s fine. I mean, the Nether and Medium both have prime ministers.

51. Passing Conqueror

Frankly, they’re as big as any country. We only see a fraction of it when we die.

52. Passing Conqueror

There was a video of someone doing a walking tour through the Nether. It was mind-numbingly huge.

53. Passing Conqueror

There’s videos like those?

54. Passing Conqueror

It’s only natural, since it’s where the souls of all the people on the surface gather.

55. Passing Conqueror

Big Brother Cecil’s updated chronicle quest is so long.

56. Passing Conqueror

I’ve been watching it too. The playback bar is extremely long. I’ve only finally hit the halfway point.

57. Passing Conqueror

Mr. Cecil isn’t the big brother type! That’s not his character!

58. Passing Conqueror

That’s the part that got you?

59. Passing Conqueror

Then what type is he?

60. Passing Conqueror

Uh, he's a knight. A glorious knight.

61. Passing Conqueror

He's a more idealized kind of knight. Not the boorish type at all.

62. Passing Conqueror

Agreed.

63. Passing Conqueror

He's definitely more like a knight from an otome game than a fantasy knight.

64. Passing Conqueror

I loled.

65. Passing Conqueror

In other words, "Elder Brother" is a better fit!

66. Pressing Conqueror

Behold the birth of Elder Brother Cecil.

67. Passing Conqueror

We already have Big Brother Lucebarm, after all.

68. Passing Conqueror

I bet he just seems like a glorious, honorable knight, but when you tear the mask off, his heart is actually corrupt. I can see right through him.

69. Passing Conqueror

Yeah, you sometimes get characters like that.

70. Passing Conqueror

True!

71. Passing Conqueror

But that's fun in its own way too!

72. Passing Conqueror

Knights are technically nobles, just at the bottom of the hierarchy, right?

73. Passing Conqueror

I think it's simpler in this world.

74. Passing Conqueror

Oh yeah?

75. Passing Conqueror

They're soldiers, to put it bluntly. They're not nobles, but they're more important than the average person.

76. Passing Conqueror

Do nobles address them without honorifics? Like maids?

77. Passing Conqueror

Yep. But it gets more complicated with the higher-ranking knights, like captains, since they're often sons of noble families. I hear all the imperial knights are something like third sons of nobles and that sort of rank.

78. Passing Conqueror

That makes the hierarchical society really tricky, yeah.

79. Passing Conqueror

Mr. Cecil's guarding a magic earl?!

80. Passing Conqueror

Magic earl?!

81. Passing Conqueror

Like from a family who produces brilliant wizards generation after generation? No, it's possible they just have really high max MP.

82. Passing Conqueror

That must mean there are lineages that produce knights too, right?

83. Cecil

I've heard some earls are called combat earls.

84. Passing Conqueror

Elder Brother Cecil!

85. Cecil

Um… Whatever. I won't say anything. The finale of that chronicle quest was shocking. After we finished up our time to shine, we got to stay and see how everything was resolved. Be sure to watch it to the end too.

86. Passing Conqueror

He's letting us call him Elder Brother Cecil, everyone.

87. Passing Conqueror

It’s more like he’s turning a blind eye to it.

88. Passing Conqueror

The royal capital asked you to protect the territory, and then it turned into a criminal roundup?

89. Passing Conqueror

They’re sneaking into the Crystal Forest to get information!

90. Passing Conqueror

What’d this guy do that’s got you chasing him? What was he charged with?

91. Cecil

He was put on trial after we caught him, so you’ll see, but the kingdom had put him on a wanted poster for high treason. Does that make more sense?

92. Passing Conqueror

That’s the gravest crime out there, right? Did he target someone in the royal family?

93. Cecil

You’ll find out in the trial toward the end. His crime was something unique to this world.

94. Passing Conqueror

I see. Going off the playback bar, that must be coming up soon.

95. Passing Conqueror

Oh, here’s the courtroom. I’ve gotta commit these nobles’ faces to memory!

96. Passing Conqueror

It’s most important to know their ranks and names. I was getting worried that I didn’t know any of them, but then they went and introduced themselves.

97. Passing Conqueror

The presiding judge is Marquess Arthur Logunov. Duke Bernard Granin is the nobility representative.

Magic Earl Emiliano Calestia is there as a witness. Everyone else is nameless.

98. Passing Conqueror

Granin? Huh? Why does that sound so familiar?

99. Passing Conqueror

That’s the name of Princess’s teacher. He was fighting a shoggoth during the event.

100. Passing Conqueror

Oh! So he’s the daddy?

101. Passing Conqueror

Exac—wait, no!

102. Passing Conqueror

She’s the mommy, if anything.

103. Passing Conqueror

The teacher is the soul of a war hero, so she’s the older one. The man inherited her bloodline. I just have no idea how many generations have passed.

104. Passing Conqueror

Hey, it’s Princess!

105. Passing Conqueror

Princess just showed up in this.

106. Passing Conqueror

Whoa, I’m starting to get a bad feeling about it!

107. Passing Conqueror

Princess showed up in a courtroom? Ah! Farewell, then.

108. Passing Conqueror

Ignoring the nameless nobles, do we know anything about the ones who introduced themselves?

109. Passing Conqueror

They’re a duke, marquess, and a magic earl. They would definitely know how to track down information.

110. Passing Conqueror

If they didn’t, they’d be simply incompetent.

111. Passing Conqueror

Hey, the crime they just mentioned is shocking.

112. Passing Conqueror

Wow, I see. He wasn’t targeting the royal family or forging the king’s seal. He’s a rebel who meddled with peoples’ souls.

113. Passing Conqueror

And he destroyed a whole village? That’s crazy.

114. Passing Conqueror

He gets the guillotine, huh? That sounds a lot better than some of the stuff they did in this era.

115. Cecil

The magic earl told me all countries use the guillotine on people sentenced to death. They just want to quickly deliver their souls to the immortals.

116. Passing Conqueror

I see. What's this? Princess just stood up.

117. Passing Conqueror

Oh? Oop…

118. Passing Conqueror

Princess is so cool—wait, Aforgomon?! That's the avatar of Yog-Sothoth!

119. Passing Conqueror

The criminal vanished!

120. Passing Conqueror

If I remember correctly, Aforgomon's victims are said to return as burnt corpses?

121. Passing Conqueror

…He returned.

122. Passing Conqueror

I think they imprison them naked, leaving their clothes unharmed.

123. Passing Conqueror

But memories of him won’t be erased, right?

124. Cecil

You around, Princess? There’s something I’ve been curious about.

125. Passing Conqueror

Outer ones are so powerful.

126. Passing Conqueror

Princess was so enthusiastic. What else would you expect from a roleplayer?

127. Passing Conqueror

And the resident acted so realistic too. I could never do what she does…

128. Passing Conqueror

Same. Well done, Princess.

129. Anastasia

Well, it’s a video game, in the end. I was told to eliminate him in a quest from Stellura. Also, you called for me, Mr. Cecil?

130. Cecil

Hey there, Princess! The name Lieselotte appeared on the investigation report submitted during the trial. That’s the girl from that one skill of yours, isn’t it?

131. Anastasia

Correct. That would be Lizzy. I told her that her enemy was avenged. I learned that she also got to reunite with the people from her village in the Nether.

132. Cecil

I see, I see. That's good news. So this was her character's backstory?

133. Passing Conqueror

You think they're linked?

134. Passing Conqueror

That's a pretty dark backstory to give a character.

135. Anastasia

Let me sum it up. The executed prisoner is the man who destroyed the village she was born in, and her body and soul were nearly offered up as a sacrifice. She was rescued by some knights who found her at the last second, but her soul remained cursed from this incomplete ceremony. She had to use pure force of will to stop the curse from taking over her body, although it did stop her from physically aging past that point in time. Even so, she became an adventurer to save people like how those knights saved her.

Curses are especially strong when they involve the soul, however. One day, Lizzy's willpower couldn't contain it anymore, so she lost control and was killed by a monster. That meant ownership of her soul went to the curse, which was why my skill quest was to put a stop to her.

136. Passing Conqueror

That’s heavy, all right.

137. Passing Conqueror

This was the girl with the two-handed axe during the defensive war?

138. Anastasia

One and the same. I cleared the quest because it was well suited to me, but Mr. Skelly mentioned that it would be hopeless to someone like him. The skill requires a corpse, meaning I had to beat the quest without damaging her body whatsoever. Even though the curse had taken over, Lizzy was still level 68 during her life, so she was a force to be reckoned with. That said, there was a part of the quest where she was in a weakened state, and her adventurer friends from when she was alive assisted me too.

139. Passing Conqueror

She sounds crazy powerful lmao. How’d you clear it?

140. Anastasia

I observed her while her adventurer friends fought to stop her. My race allowed me to see that a curse was attached to her soul, so I had the clergy member the adventurers had brought with them call for reinforcements. After that, the adventurers managed to get Lizzy still so that I could use a skill to separate her soul from her body. Then I cut the curse away from her soul, allowing the adventurers and I to beat it up. The clergy members finished it off with a purification.

141. Cecil

And that method of clearing the quest was only capable for a race who can interact with the soul. Mr. Skelly would have needed to come up with a different strategy.

142. Anastasia

This is just a theory, but I believe I could have led her to a church and had her purified by the statues if saving her was the only objective. Although, it probably wouldn't have left her body behind, so that would mean failing the skill quest.

I checked with the Abyss and learned that someone involved was missing. I searched for him until we finally came face-to-face in Mr. Cecil's chronicle quest.

143. Cecil

He had a good motive and all. It's just the method that was wrong.

144. Anastasia

You could call it an act of patriotism, but he must have had a few screws loose.

He acted before the problem arose, just like a researcher. That's not like nobles, who are always going to be one step behind problems.

Let me give an example. Nobles would hurriedly take preventative steps if a plague were beginning to spread. But this man would be the type to begin human experiments on orphans to in preparation for a plague that would likely arise someday.

145. Passing Conqueror

Ah, I see now.

Yes, it's like how police can only act in response to a crime.

146. Anastasia

Exactly. Perhaps his method would result in fewer victims overall, but allowing that sort of thing will lead to the collapse of the kingdom.

You can't overlook his actions or else the law will lose all purpose. That's how I interpret this case.

147. Passing Conqueror

What a crazy story they whipped up.

148. Passing Conqueror

Can't they do something simpler and just make him a normal villain?!

149. Passing Conqueror

And Princess still mercilessly executed him despite all that.

150. Anastasia

It makes no difference to me. I am an enforcer, not a saint. I'll slay anyone Stellura instructs me to. This quest came directly from a god, after all!

In this world, I am an outer one, a ruler of the afterlife, and a follower of Stellura. She is my supreme mistress in all things!

That's the new type of character I'm working on.

151. Passing Conqueror

Ah, yes, such intense RP. But calling it a quest from a god is a bit greedy.

152. Passing Conqueror

What else can you expect from a player in this game? The RPers really enjoy themselves.

153. Passing Conqueror

There's wildly different levels of RP though. Some of them are cool, but then you've also got the ones like Mohawk.

154. Mohawk

Gyah ha ha ha! You rang? Big Brother!

155. Passing Conqueror

He wasn't summoning you!

156. Mohawk

Hee hee hee! That's too bad! You can call me whenever you want, Big Brother!

157. Passing Conqueror

Lmao, he's such a good guy.

158. Passing Conqueror

He's the type of character whose appearance hurts his reputation.

159. Passing Conqueror

Speaking of RP, I saw Princess being carried by a skeleton. She's truly embodying darkness.

160. Passing Conqueror

I saw that too. I could practically hear the dark fantasy BGM in my head.

161. Passing Conqueror

She’s so peaceful normally, but I bet she gets unbelievably intense the second she enters combat.

162. Passing Conqueror

Like the type of character whose vibe and BGM totally change the second they engage with an enemy.

163. Passing Conqueror

Are you talking about BGM for an execution?

164. Passing Conqueror

I don’t wanna meet Aforgomon… I don’t wanna meet Aforgomon…

165. Passing Conqueror

I don’t think anyone does.

166. Passing Conqueror

Azathoth!

167. Passing Conqueror

Your only option is to die at that point.

168. Anastasia

That reminds me. I met Cyaegha and the King in Yellow.

169. Passing Conqueror

jump

170. Passing Conqueror

Sit down, zealot.

171. Passing Conqueror

sit…*jump*

172. Passing Conqueror

I told you to stay in your seat!

173. Passing Conqueror

dash

174. Passing Conqueror

Whoa! Run away!

175. Passing Conqueror

You two really get along, huh?

176. Passing Conqueror

If he gets along with a zealot, doesn't that make him a zealot too?

177. Passing Conqueror

Surely you jest.

I love how "Dimensional Shambler" sounds. Japanese is so much lamer.

178. Passing Conqueror

You mean Kuuki-san?

179. Passing Conqueror

In Japanese, it's just pronounced the same way as "Air" lmao.

180. Passing Conqueror

But it’s spelled with different kanji. It uses “space” and “demon.” It’s still cool!

181. Passing Conqueror

Iä! Iä! Hastur! Hastur! Aaaah!

182. Passing Conqueror

Can someone put a stop to this zealot already?

183. Management

You called?

184. Passing Conqueror

LOL.

185. Passing Conqueror

They’re the ones that show up?

186. Passing Conqueror

shudder I swear I’m not a bad zealot!

187. Passing Conqueror

A zealot isn’t a good thing in the first place.

188. Passing Conqueror

Yeah, what he said.

189. Passing Conqueror

Aww. I wish I was able to charm you all.

190. Passing Conqueror

That sounds bad.

191. Passing Conqueror

No, it is bad.

192. Passing Conqueror

The zealot's got some silly dreams.

193. Passing Conqueror

There's a lot of Cthulhu characters that interfere with dreams, so that's no laughing matter.

194. Passing Conqueror

Wake up, John Doe! It's time for your sleeping pills!

195. Passing Conqueror

Damn it!

196. Passing Conqueror

Those creatures that chase you in your dreams? Heh heh. See? They'll come at you from both sides.

197. Passing Conqueror

John Doe was once again consumed by his dreams. To his side stood his mother. Her lips were curved into the shape of a crescent moon—a most unusual sight.

198. Passing Conqueror

Stop writing horror stories about John Doe.

199. Passing Conqueror

Cyaegha is the eyeball guy, right? I see him in other games sometimes.

200. Anastasia

Yes, he’s a floating being with one eye. But this Cyaegha had tentacles too.

201. Passing Conqueror

Ah, right. Beings from the Cthulhu mythos tend to look like that.

202. Anastasia

I also met a space-type warp demon boy in the Dinait Empire.

203. Passing Conqueror

A warp demon?!

204. Passing Conqueror

Wait, but demons are supposed to use light and dark elemental magic. How can he be a space type?

205. Passing Conqueror

This must be a hint that there’s a loophole somewhere.

Chapter 5:
Vs. Fairellen

HMM. IT LOOKS LIKE Mr. Cecil's chronicle quest has been posted to the list. That means the devs decided that the quest ended with the best possible outcome. Was that because of the soul eradication?

Any outer one besides myself probably would have taken the culprit and left, ignoring the Dinait Empire's trial entirely. Or perhaps it depends on the person. I doubt anyone other than Pup Lord would reach the best possible outcome, although it's hard to imagine someone of his class showing up in the first place. He's something like a helper character from my perspective, but he's supposed to be a leader of Tindalos—Mh'ithrha is an arch-lord, and don't you forget it! He may not quite be an outer god, but he's a doggy capable of taking on Yog-Sothoth in a fight. Identify calls him a low-level ruling race, though I think that's putting it lightly.

That reminds me. It sounds like Lizzy's true form—that is, her soul called Lisa—managed to reunite with the people from her village. Since the Nether army—or more accurately, the afterlife army—patrols both the Nether and the Abyss, she got the opportunity to see them again.

Ah, how touching that she could reunite with them! Even though it's in the afterlife. A reunion is a reunion, at the end of the day.

Hmm. Oh, it looks like an expansion is ready. I'll head to the place outsiders go to return from death.

The outsiders donate to the Nether in what is currently a bungalow. But now, when I add another story…it takes on the appearance of a log cabin. The entryway still contains the offering box, but the snug bungalow has become a much more spacious log cabin. It's getting fancier and fancier.

I have more expanding to do at the Evernight Castle.

The castle lights up for a moment before revealing a more polished form. I wonder what it looks like on the inside? I may as well take a look.

The interior is very nice, as there's not a single speck of dust to be found. But that's not unusual—the maids clean this castle up very nicely. Rather, I went out of my way to mention it's very nice thanks to the new materials.

Oh my! Were these decorations always here? Not only are the small cracks and bumps slowly being removed, but the decorations themselves are getting fancier.

I don't see any changes on the map. I suppose I shouldn't expect any new additions to the building.

Oh, look at that. The army facilities have been upgraded. What do they have for me? Oh ho! Not bad at all. It looks like something you'd find in an arcade. Not that I'd know, since I don't go to arcades.

Let's see… I'll use the "edit details" option to set it up for a solo player in time endurance mode. I'll go with the condition that getting hit more than four times within a three-minute window equals a loss, and I'll also set the player and enemies to be at equal levels. Four enemies for a ranged battle should do the trick. Starting positions,

distances, and fighting space will all be randomized. Attack frequency? I'll set that to "normal" for now. I'll keep my range of movement to the center area—it looks like enough space for me. Finally, I'll skip the permitted and banned skills options.

Yep, these settings look good.

Combat simulator settings complete. You have selected custom combat mode. You may begin battle by entering the permitted area and mentally confirming you're ready to start. You may also press the "start" button on your UI.

I move to the center and set my athame to the space element—oh, wait, I forgot I have space-time now. Space's effects are a reduction in weapon attack strength and an increase in weapon defense capability. It's a superior element that's served as my athame's main source of power…and now its animation is even nicer. It's the same dark blue with white dots reminiscent of stars, but now swaying softly like the light is refracting.

Putting that aside, I'd like to give this simulator a try now that it's programmed.

A countdown begins once I focus my mind on starting the simulation. Upon reaching zero, bits appear to serve as my enemies. There's one in front of me, one behind, and one on each side for a total of four bits—exactly how many I set it up to have. Their spawn points, positions, distances, and directions they're facing should all be

randomized, so perhaps they'll appear more unevenly in other instances.

They shoot at me just as I programmed them to do. Four familiar warning lines are displayed—actually, these aren't familiar at all. I strike down all four shots for now.

The bits begin to move before resuming their attacks. They all head in separate directions with different speeds, ending in different places. That changes the order that they attack me.

Fairellen has logged in.

Fairellen has arrived for a visit.

Hm? Ah, she must be here for her nectar.

Danger Sense—or Divine Revelation in this case—is displaying multicolored lines in this simulation, not the usual red ones.

Now there's red, green, blue, and even orange. The colors are given numbers, with 1 for red, 2 for green, 3 for blue, and 4 for orange. These colors appear and then grow darker.

The color shows the order the shots will come in and the darkness of that color indicates timing. There are other gauges too, so perhaps those will be more accurate. The problem is that these colors and gauges are surprisingly unreliable. The gauge will suddenly deplete all at once as if it's lagging. Maybe my skill level is too low and it's hurting the accuracy?

Nevertheless, the lines themselves pop up early. Before the bits even decide to fire, a prediction line appears and narrows down into the actual attack line. This must be precognition!

I focus only on blocking the shots instead of reflecting them, making things much less difficult. Keeping things simple also increases my chances of survival when I'm surrounded like this. Of course, it's still just as hard to get the timing right.

Looks like four bits isn't enough. I had to dodge far more shots in the ruins' dungeon. It's no fun unless I increase the enemy count a little.

Oh, it's over? I wonder if I'll get skill EXP. This simulation is mainly for players to train with their skills, but can also be used to practice party coordination or test out brand-new skills on enemies.

I should have expanded this place sooner, but oh well. It's part of the castle expansion, and undead players who belong to the Nether can use it too. Though, I'm not sure if they'll have to take turns or if the simulation works in instances.

I'll spend less time practicing stances and start using this simulation from here on out.

Now that I know how it works, I'll return to my villa, though I'm sure Ms. Fairellen will be making her fairy nectar from crystal lotuses with or without me there.

I find her hard at work harvesting from the military magic battle bees, careful not to set them off.

"Good day, Ms. Fairellen."

"Heya!"

Ms. Fairellen is still the same eclesith she's always been—that is, she's still a bluish-white fairy crackling with electricity.

"Guess what. I met a cavalier sidhe the other day!" she tells me.

"That's the tank branch of the fairy races, correct?"

"Yep! They said they use a special floating method for flying, and their stats are set up for close combat fights. They even had some sort of backstory about how they have a unique method of applying magical energy."

"That all sounds interesting, but what's this special floating method?"

"They told me it lets them brace themselves even when they're in midair, since they're tanks and all."

"I see. It figures you wouldn't want an attack to send you flying backward."

It probably works like my Coordinate Float but with a different name. My version lets me float in the air by manipulating space.

I thought Coordinate Float was rare, but it sounds like that might not be the case. Although, I do wonder if both skills have the exact same effects.

"You questioned them a little, didn't you? Can they float in reverse or at diagonal angles?"

"It's possible, apparently, but it's super hard, since they just

kinda drift like a balloon."

"Now that I think of it, floating races *do* sort of waver up and down a little."

It sounds like they aren't *exactly* the same after all. This must be a high performance version of floating, as far as stability goes.

"Now that you mention it, your floating skill doesn't cause you to drift up and down at all, does it, Princess?"

"Mine makes it exactly like I'm standing on the ground, so it's incredibly stable. But it lacks speed in exchange for stability."

"It's surprising how many types of flight there are in this game."

The biggest distinction is between Fly and Float. Some types of flight consume MP while others don't. Birds have their own variety of Fly that doesn't use MP—just like fairies, whose Float doesn't use MP either. Even different fairy races who share Float might experience the skill differently, like how wind fairies are said to fly while water nixies "float" and light sprites "waft." Then there are variations such as the way eagles can fly normally and use MP only for sudden speed increases or maintain a higher maximum speed, resulting in flight that's somewhat unnatural.

"They lean their bodies and use MP to flap their wings. It's like a quick boost," Ms. Fairellen explains.

"The G-forces sound intense," I remark.

"If you get too carried away, you can't tell up from down and end up meeting death's sweet embrace."

"In other words, vertigo? Inhuman races don't come with gauges like on a plane when they fly, after all. Such is the burden of all flying types."

"What about you, Princess?"

"I don't do dogfighting, so that's not an issue. There's no need for me to soar around at all. I also have a unique form of vision."

"Oh yeah? We never got to fight during the sports festival. I really wanna try a midair fight with you!"

"I'd be all right with that. But I'm unable to do dogfights like a fighter jet, just so you know."

"I get plenty of that from hawks and eagles already."

"Ah. I don't have many opportunities for midair combat, so I'd definitely be interested."

"But we can't do it here, right?"

"No, we'll have to go to the hunting grounds."

This place is part of its own unique field. Ms. Fairellen can only come to my villa, which is counted as a private area belonging to me. If she wants to go anywhere else, she'd have to be undead and clear the trials granting access to the Nether—the land of those who have passed on. She would become like Persephone, the wife of Hades, if you will.

"All right, this should be more than enough! Here's today's share."

Ms. Fairellen gives me her fairy nectar, which I pass along to a nearby lady-in-waiting. She'll store it in the kitchen for me.

"That reminds me. Are you familiar with lemonade of reminiscence?" I ask her.

"Yep. It's my favorite drink."

"It's made with military magic battle bee honey and water of reminiscence. But you can actually use fairy nectar as well."

"Do you know what effects it grants?"

"The fairy nectar version increases recovery a little more, but that's about it."

"It sounds like a lot of work for such a tiny improvement."

You'd definitely choose fairy nectar lemonade if your only priority is performance, but it's less appealing when you factor in having to craft all that fairy nectar in the first place—especially because I consume so much lemonade while hunting.

Ms. Fairellen would probably prefer to use her fairy nectar for honey mead. It's much more beneficial that way, so long as you don't drink enough to cause any problems.

"All right! Let's go to Starting Town, Princess!"

"Very well."

She's already used the mini statue in my garden to teleport away, so I'll follow her lead.

It's a weekday, but Starting Town is as crowded as ever. This is where we'll be using duel mode—not a form of PK but a mode of proposing PVP where only accepted parties can be struck by attacks.

I see that duel mode offers a lot of detailed options as well. I can set the duel area, change the victory and defeat conditions, apply

handicaps, and even enable wagers.

Leaving the permitted area will result in a loss. It seems I can specify a dome-shaped area, a spot within town, or even all of Starting Town and its surroundings at the largest. That includes the fields with wolves and rabbits, just shy of the forests where different enemies spawn. I can also disable this setting so we don't have to worry about going out of bounds.

There's an altitude setting as well. I can specify a loss if either party goes a certain number of meters above or below ground.

"What should our victory and defeat conditions be?" Ms. Fairellen asks. "The usual loss conditions are your health going to red or your health going to zero."

"There aren't any death penalties in duel mode, right?" I confirm.

"Yep!"

"Then let's call it defeat when your health hits zero."

"Yeah, that's good! It'll be easier that way."

I keep the win/loss conditions as they are. It all comes down to how much HP we lose. I can also set the duel area so that it will register if someone goes out of bounds.

I'm able to specify the health conditions of the duel with numbers from zero to ninety-nine. "Zero" refers to an empty health bar. Conversely, if I'd set it to "ninety-nine," whoever took even 1 percent damage first would lose the duel.

We'll be dueling in the sky above Starting Town. Whoever is first to lose all their HP will be considered defeated.

I use the UI to make the duel area encompass everything within the town walls. Then I'm shown a preview with a circular column standing taller than the town's buildings. It's probably displayed in the world as well, but I can't see it with my form of vision.

"Hey, can't you record these duels too?" Ms. Fairellen asks me.

"It lets you select fixed points or player perspectives to record from."

"Mind if I record?"

"Sure, that's all right."

"I'll set eight points of view, with one from above and one from below. There's also player perspectives. Are you going to enable that, Princess?"

"I don't use my eyes in the first place, so I'm not sure how it will turn out on video."

"So that blindfold's not just for looks, huh? It lets you choose if you want your skills to show up in the records. Does your vision work the same as a slime's?"

"Let me confirm."

Now that she mentions it, I remember slimes having a unique form of vision to their race. Perhaps I should disable my skills and use my race's default vision.

Ah, I see the third-person perspective is gone. I remain in first-person with a circle of vision around me. Any spot I focus on faintly

changes color.

"This is how I see," I inform her.

"Whoa! It's kinda like a slime. So you really can't see past the circle at all?"

"No, I can't. It's like being in the dark with lights around you in all directions."

"I guess everyone's gonna prefer different styles."

Slimes see a dome-shaped area that becomes blurry after a certain distance, almost as if they have bad eyes. The amount of space they see clearly is less than mine, but it's no different than what a player with normal vision can see. Technically, their field of vision isn't quite 180 degrees either, but since they crawl across the ground at all times, it's about the same thing.

I can currently see a radius of 409 meters. It definitely feels like the distance formula changed once I upgraded to Space-time Recognition Expansion. I wonder how much further it will go. Frankly, being able to see *too* far would only be a burden.

"Okay, let's just record the whole thing," Ms. Fairellen suggests.

"I agree with that."

We've finished setting up the duel.

I press the "finish selections" button and the screen changes to the word "ready." There are now buttons to begin the duel or cancel it.

I can't press the begin button until we've entered the duel area, as we'd otherwise both be disqualified for being out of bounds as

soon as the battle began. Makes sense, doesn't it?

The two of us head up into the sky and face each other.

"All right! Ready?" Ms. Fairellen asks me.

"Yes, let's begin."

We both press the begin duel button. Suddenly, text appears in the center of the playing field.

Ready...

3...

I call my athame up to my hand and change it to a space-time light sword. My bookmark floats upward and transforms into the book.

2...

1...

Fight!

I start to chant a spell the second the duel begins and reflect the Tonitrus Arrow Ms. Fairellen shoots at me. I don't even have time to dodge it. Now that I think of it, fairies are invulnerable to their own attributes, aren't they? That means I don't have to reflect her shots back at her. That makes things easier.

I'm up against an eclesith—a race said to have the strongest flight aptitude of all the playable options. That flight aptitude may not

be used to its fullest potential for some players, but this is Ms. Fairellen I'm dealing with. She's been flying around since the beta version. I'll assume it's impossible to hit her with ball or arrow spells. My drift compensation from the game won't work when she's darting all over the place.

I finish my chant, shooting six Nox Magic Missiles out of my book.

Ms. Fairellen flies away from them, of course. She can accelerate and sustain pretty impressive speeds. She even shoots arrow and lance spells at me while she's flying. They're good choices against me, considering I don't fly around like her. Not that I won't still manage to knock them out of the air.

Ms. Fairellen and I fire light, dark, lightning, and wind spells at each other.

"Tonitrus Plode!"

"Magic Barrier."

A page from the Book of the Elder Keys comes forward, creates a barrier in front of me, and blocks the majority of her bolts of lightning, though some still make it through.

"They didn't penetrate like I thought they would!" she complains.

"Barrier spells are powered by one's spirit stat," I inform her.

It seems that lightning deals more damage than other spells. I forget, are combined spells' damage calculated only by the

incremented portion? I should start assuming that combined elements, aside from light and dark, deal extra damage.

"Sonic Rush."

"Eek!"

Hmph. She survived that? I wanted to finish the job with one move, but it wasn't a clean hit. That's disappointing.

The tip of my whip actually broke the sound barrier with just a normal swing. Using Sonic Rush allowed me to inflict the fastest attack I'm capable of.

The art's description says you "instantly charge at a target, dealing stabbing damage and knockback"—ultimately, it's a simple art where you select an enemy and charge at them. It all comes down to what the tip of your whip connects with, but considering it's already breaking the sound barrier and yet continues to accelerate, it's surprisingly easy to use.

I'd be able to hit her without much difficulty since I'm not going at a speed that would cause drift. The issue is that spells are long-range attacks, whereas Snake Sword, a combination of Sword and Whip, is for mid-range targets.

In other words, I'm lacking range! I don't see why she'd come any closer to me either.

"I knew it wouldn't be easy, but I can hardly land a hit on you!" Ms. Fairellen groans.

"Tell me about it."

While I knock away all of Ms. Fairellen's shots before they hit me, she dodges everything I throw at her.

"You leave me no choice!" she declares.

"Hmph."

Ms. Fairellen has started to move from left to right. Then she begins to fly in a circle around me. She's utilizing her speed to fire off spells from all directions.

The Testing Team's Wiki said that, starting at level 40, chant speeds are reduced for spells of the same element. Is it fair to say the eclesith is a race specializing in magic attacks? I can hardly believe this rapid fire. She can't fire the same spell back to back, since there's a recast cost, but she can maintain a nearly constant stream of spells by rotating between balls, arrows, and lances.

My race's strong points are my stamina and my recovery ability, but that makes me essentially a defensive character. That goes to waste if I never take hits in the first place. So instead of my main fighting method, I'm starting to think it could be more fun to send out my tentacles and lay on the status ailments with Unknown Structure.

"How do you like *this*?" Ms. Fairellen taunts.

"Heave-ho."

"No way! Seriously, Princess?!"

Ms. Fairellen was in the middle of flying underneath me to get behind me when she fired off a spell from below. I can't parry in that state, naturally, so I would normally take evasive maneuvers at that point. But Coordinate Float is truly a wonderful skill. I just have to

maintain a central point that I can rotate around to avoid hits—oh, the joy of three-dimensional midair combat.

My vision also exists as a circle centered around me, meaning I don't lose sight of Divine Revelation's prediction lines when Ms. Fairellen is behind me. The only thing I need to worry about is maintaining a stance with Unparalleled Style. I try to stay in Water's Surface Style the entire time.

"I warned you that I'm very stable when it comes to combat," I remind her.

"Dang, you move like you're in zero gravity! But that'd be bad since you're wearing a skirt."

"That's true. It's not *actually* zero gravity, of course." Gravity still works on me like normal, so I'd be exposing myself if I flipped upside down. I have my compression shorts on, of course, but it's still not ideal.

"Well, it's gonna take more than that to stop me!"

Is it just me, or is this magic fight of ours going nowhere? Neither of us can hit the other. I seem to be the one with the advantage, as Ms. Fairellen will die if she makes a mistake and gets hit.

Eclesith are capable of breaking free from binds. I, on the other hand, can use my Book of the Elder Keys and Magic Barrier so that she can't kill me while I'm bound. Then I only need to continue knocking away shots as I heal over time with Holy Magic.

Neither of us is capable of landing a decisive hit. Maybe it really is time I finally bring out the tentacles? I believe tentacles out of nowhere would spell certain doom for Ms. Fairellen's. It'll be hard to catch her when she flies so fast, but what if I set them up like a wall for her to crash into?

"How do you like *this*?!" she taunts.

"Oh? Ah…"

Six Tonitrus Magic Missiles, each spawning at a different point, fly at me from all directions.

Her scattering the targeted missiles like that means I'm surrounded by attacks on all sides. I see what she's going for.

It's an effective attack against someone like me, who's a relatively large, unmoving target—although, if I escape calmly and precisely, the missiles will end up hitting each other. But rather than that, I have another way of getting out of this. I hope this is enough to finish her off, but using the ancient language for things other than attack spells increases the chant time.

I knock away the arrows and lances, luring the missiles toward me until the very last second.

"Short Jump. Mey Persepho…"

"Whaaaat?!"

I teleport behind Ms. Fairellen, chanting my spell in the ancient language as I swing my sword at her. She jumps out of the way.

"…Heria."

"Magic Barrier."

That's the exact response I expected. I chose a burst spell so that it didn't matter if she dodged my blade, though she still negated most of the damage with Magic Barrier. And now there's some distance between us.

"Sonic Rush."

"Argh!"

It's hard to land a clean hit on something as tiny as a fairy, so she survived the hit with some HP left. I'll slap her around with my tentacles.

"Oof!"

"I win. Please spend the day figuring out how, exactly, you were defeated."

"Peh! You brought out the tentacles at the last minute?! That really pisses me off!"

"Now's the time to get it all off your chest."

"I know that!"

We're just messing with each other. We wouldn't speak this way if we weren't on good terms.

"You teleported during that fight, didn't you, Princess?"

"That's Short Jump. I learned it through Ultra Magic Assist and Space Magic when the latter got to level 30."

"It's a spell to teleport short distances?!"

"Correct. It drains 10 percent of my MP."

"It always comes down to the cost, huh?"

"I wonder if there are accessories that reduce MP consumption for each element?"

"I wouldn't be surprised."

But frankly, I'm not sure equipping accessories for Space Magic would be worth it. I should definitely prioritize Dark Magic, Light Magic, or Holy Magic before that. Accessories fill equipment slots, so there's only so many I can have.

"It was fun to fight in the sky, but you're impossible to beat in a 1v1, Princess!"

"I'm pretty knowledgeable about pure magic and archery, after all."

"The tentacles are a big problem as soon as they appear."

"I could probably defeat you by using my tentacles as a wall, don't you think?"

"Ah, you mean if I crash into it? I'd definitely hit it. Wall spells can't usually be cast in the sky, so I don't have any countermeasures."

The ideal move would be to swipe her with my tentacles from whatever direction she's flying, like I'm the batter and she's the ball, since that would deal the most damage…but Ms. Fairellen could easily avoid such a hit. I'd graze her at most.

"Frankly, I think a close range 1v1 would have ended even more tragically," I speculate.

"Really?"

"My tentacles counterattack automatically when I'm hit at close range. I would only have to ward off your attacks while my tentacles

struck back and killed you by inflicting status ailments."

"Oh my gosh."

The tentacles don't pack much of a punch on their own. It's better to think of them as parry tanks that can be used for status ailments. My tentacles don't need to be strong so long as I have Unknown Structure.

With that, it's time to head back down to land.

I check the videos we recorded too. It's interesting to watch the fight from both my and my opponent's perspectives.

"It even lets you switch cameras and play videos side by side," I note.

"What file extension are these videos? Ah, here they are. It has eight fixed cameras plus our perspectives for a total of ten videos all under sequential file names."

They take up a lot of hard drive space, but I can't deny how convenient it is to have so many perspectives. Plus, if there are any fixed cameras we never fought in front of, I can delete their feeds and change the other file names to save space.

A single PvP match with ten perspectives lasting as long as ours amounted to forty gigabytes. I don't see the harm in saving them for now.

"There's just one problem. I don't think there're any video sites out there that can play them in this format," says Ms. Fairellen.

"Ah, that's true. You can't open them on video sites. Should players edit the files into one video and upload it that way?"

“That sounds like a good way to do it. You can also compress them and put them up for others to download. There are applications that can play them that way.”

“The fixed perspectives are very wide. They’re not very helpful. You can’t really make out any action.”

“You’re barely moving at all, Princess.”

“Then why don’t the two of us post our own perspectives?”

“Sounds good! In that case, I’ll just save my own perspective to upload.”

I save the video filmed from my perspective and begin the upload process.

That reminds me. I want to test something I thought of while I was at school. I summon Unit One as a floating fortress flesh ball.

“Can you change your body’s shape, Unit One? If you can, show me a circle. If you can’t, make the letter X. If it only works under certain conditions, make a triangle.”

Unit One doesn’t answer. Instead, his body starts to ripple. After a moment, he makes a triangle with his tentacles.

“So there are conditions? Well, you’re probably too big to transform into anything too detailed. Is it something that takes getting used to?”

That seems to be the right answer.

He moves around by floating in this form, so there’s no need to move his body at all. He can extend his tentacles to counterattack, which I suppose is already one way he’s capable of changing forms.

Does this mean I should ride around on a floating fortress flesh ball? I'd excluded it from consideration without thinking, as it's such a massive servant. But creatures like giants, golems, and arachne exist in this world. I feel like riding around on a floating fortress is the vibe I'm looking for. It's certainly better than my iffy, customized skeleton.

"Unit One, can you mold your top half to make the shape of a chair?"

His top half appears to be retracting, so I'll head on up.

I don't believe anyone other than myself has summoned this servant yet. That means I'll be instantly recognizable to all who lay eyes on me.

Unit One's body is rippling as he changes forms. It's quite lumpy—not the most comfortable seat in the world.

"Now that I think of it, how many tentacles can you make, Unit One?"

He spawns more tentacles than I can easily count.

This gives me another good option—I can have him form a chair with his tentacles. It won't look pretty, but I gave up on the visuals long ago, so that doesn't bother me anymore.

"I'd like a surface to sit on with a backrest and armrests."

Change the angle of the seat a little more—ah, yes, that's perfect!

"You're really embracing the villain role, huh?" Ms. Fairellen remarks.

"I think it's inevitable. I discussed this with Mr. Mohawk, and we both ended up concluding that dark fantasy is the only genre that makes use of all my unique factors."

The top half of the flesh ball is entirely tentacles now. It's quite a frightening sight I've created just so that I'll have something to sit on. In any normal story, such a seat could only belong to the villain—one who doesn't appear until the secret level after a game's credits.

Ms. Fairellen floats up to me and sits down on one of the armrests.

"Honestly, the biggest issue is that I have few opportunities to use this. I mostly move around through teleportation and subspace travel."

"You should ride this thing around town if you want to leave a good impression. It's so impactful!"

The skeleton is definitely the lesser choice if I want to leave an impact.

It looks like my video finished uploading. I'll share it alongside Ms. Fairellen's video to include both perspectives.

"What are your plans after this, Ms. Fairellen?"

"Hmm. The event's this Saturday, so I think I'll work on leveling up."

"They mentioned that it's going to be a city event this time."

"And the title sounded like it was hinting at more Cthulhu stuff."

"As is the standard for this game."

"Maybe for *you.*"

"I wonder if Shub-Niggurath will be involved, since it's Halloween? I can't think of any other Cthulhu character associated with fertility."

"Me neither. Maybe we'll see black goats if it has something to do with Shub-Niggurath."

Shub-Niggurath is a goddess on the same level as Yog-Sothoth, and she's quite famous. She's an Outer God who holds the title "The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young." Her Dark Young are also a high-ranking servitor race. I definitely think it's relevant. The Dark Young work tirelessly to spread praise of their mother.

"No one's found any information about Shub-Niggurath yet, as far as I'm aware. I suppose she could be Haventhys, if it's really that simple," I ponder.

"Haventhys is the goddess of mercy, right? I think it's possible."

"It's hard to rule her out, considering what we know about Stellura. It's also possible that they gave multiple functions to each god since there weren't enough of them, and now the gods in this game are inconsistent."

"I see. In other words, they're a bunch of weirdos?"

"I suppose—ow!"

A beam of light shot out of the sky and pierced me the second I said "I suppose."

You have been scolded by Stellura.

Such a casual delivery of divine punishment!

"What happened?" Ms. Fairellen asks.

"Stellura must have taken my 'I suppose' to mean I agreed with you."

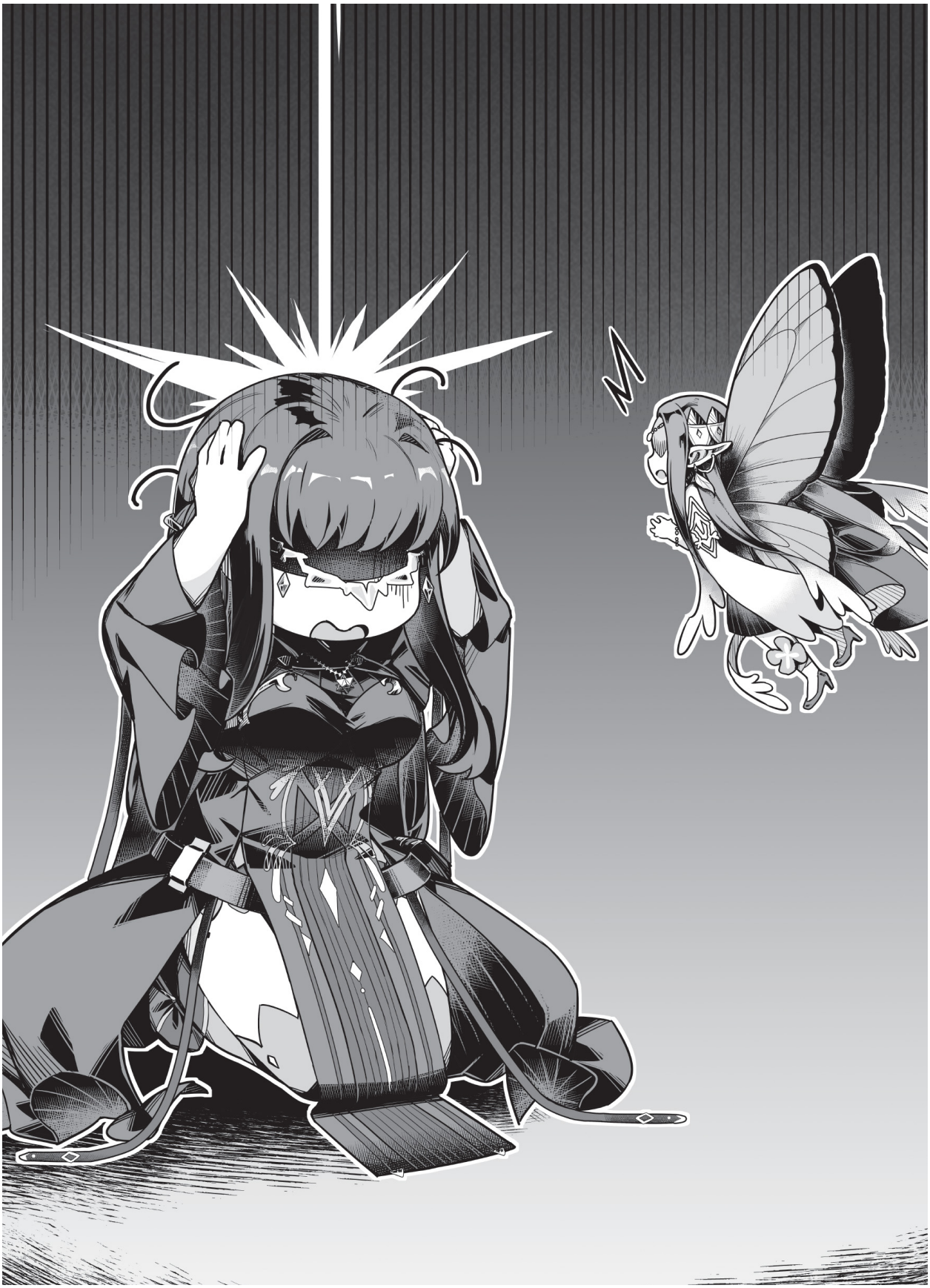
"But it didn't hurt me at all."

It had looked like Ms. Fairellen was hit by the beam of light too, since she's sitting on my chair's armrest, but it sounds like it had no effect on her.

"That's probably because you're not devoted to Stellura."

"I see!"

"Ah! Does this mean the deeper your connection to a god, the easier it is to incur divine punishment?"



"Oh dear!" Ms. Fairellen cries.

"How could this be? Don't tell me the beloved Japanese insincere smile isn't allowed?! I guess I have to make sure to actively reject such insults so long as I serve the goddess."

"Yeah, maybe status means a lot in this world's society too."

"So let me try something. I'm a god! Nope, nothing this time. That means Stellura allows jokes."

"But you probably couldn't get away with saying that around residents."

"This is definitely going to help me roleplay."

"Good stuff, huh? Okay, I'm gonna go do some hunting now."

I watch Ms. Fairellen fly off into the distance. What now? It's a weekday, so I probably shouldn't spend all my time holed up in dungeons.

I've had a lot of my time eaten up by my daily crafting thanks to the harvesting bonus we get during the Halloween campaign. I'd also like to craft more MP potions to have on hand, so production is still inevitable.

For now, I'll go gather more capacity.

I return from school, log in, play with the combat simulator after my stance training, harvest from my fields and my ore vein, and do some crafting. Cooking and Alchemy are slowly going up.

Once I finish the usual routine, I'm going to head to the church in Starting Town and pray. I don't think I'll fit through the doors on my

flesh ball, so I'll use the skeleton today. I won't pray while the skeleton's carrying me, of course.

Should I work on leveling up, do more crafting, or walk around town to find a new quest?

Help me, Stellura!

Towns are important places to improve your popularity.

I didn't actually expect a response. Popularity? Hmm. I suppose she means that my power and position only mean something when people know who I am.

Do people know the name Nemeseia, just not that it belongs to me? I thought they could tell by looking at my outfit, but it sounds like recognizing my face is more important. I believe popularity tracks how many people recognize you, while affinity tracks how much the residents like you.

Let's go with that for now. It's all hidden data either way, so I'll never know for sure.

Judging by reactions to me in the Dinait Empire, you seem to gather more information the higher your social standing, so I should be perfect once the old ladies in town know who I am too.

Parading around on Unit One is probably the best way to increase my popularity, while affinity is likely boosted by completing quests and such. Although, if other people find chronicle quests like Mr. Cecil's, that would almost certainly help with my popularity as well.

Now I need to open portals to the other royal capitals. But that will have to wait until after the event!

I’m going to have Unit One carry me around while I level up before this Saturday.

I’ll probably have Radiant Magic and Darkness Magic’s third-tier skills in time for the event.

Official BBS 4

[Almost time] Chatting Thread 116 [For the next event]

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 Open a new thread, please.

530. Resting Adventurer

Nants ingonyama…

531. Resting Adventurer

Bagi chihuahua.

532. Resting Adventurer

Chihuahua: "This is my kingdom. If I don't fight for it, who will?"

533. Resting Adventurer

You morons turned the lion into a chihuahua!

534. Resting Adventurer

They've both got round eyes!

535. Resting Adventurer

Their tails stick straight up when they're scared!

536. Resting Adventurer

St-stop this!

537. Resting Adventurer

Imagine that beautiful sunset scene with a chihuahua…

538. Resting Adventurer

I curse you guys to turn into chihuahuas too.

539. Resting Adventurer

No, it’s a lion. That thing doesn’t have the round, cute eyes of a chihuahua.

540. Resting Adventurer

What are you talking about, John Doe? It’s a chihuahua, right?

541. Resting Adventurer

Lio—no, you’re right, Mom! It’s a chihuahua!

542. Resting Adventurer

We’ve lost him.

543. Resting Adventurer

Some of the things I’ve seen in the ruins dungeon make me believe in the Force.

544. Resting Adventurer

This game isn’t that similar to PSO2, is it?

545. Resting Adventurer

>>Wrong Force.

He’s talking about Princess’s jedi powers.

546. Resting Adventurer

She walks forward while still reflecting attacks from the supporting fire model MK I. I can feel the force flowing from her.

547. Resting Adventurer

That MK I’s unique advantage is its continuous fire.

548. Resting Adventurer

Yet it becomes its own worst enemy when going up against Princess.

549. Resting Adventurer

She looks even more like a jedi when she twirls her athame around.

550. Resting Adventurer

I get it. It makes me want to twirl something too.

551. Resting Adventure

Uh, that’s just you.

552. Resting Adventurer

What, you don’t twirl tennis rackets?

553. Resting Adventurer

Yeah, like when you’re waiting for the serve.

554. Resting Adventurer

Exactly! You get it!

555. Resting Adventurer

Ah, you mean spinning it in your hand. Princess's version is much more precise!

556. Resting Adventurer

For real? Nice! Do it more!

557. Resting Adventurer

If you've got a sword made of light, how could you not twirl it?

558. Resting Adventurer

I'm sure it has a purpose other than just RP. Swinging your sword when you reflect a shot actually increases the damage of the reflected shot.

559. Resting Adventurer

Seriously? They actually added that detail?

560. Resting Adventurer

Yep. Of course, the harder you swing, the more difficult it is to aim.

561. Resting Adventurer

It still looks cool, so I don't care about that part.

562. Resting Adventurer

But it's a lot easier to return a shot with a shield.

563. Resting Adventurer

Wait, isn't it actually pretty hard to do that?

564. Resting Adventurer

Are you trying to reflect shots from the center of your shield? Shields are usually curved to fend off incoming hits, so you have to hold it at an angle to reflect shots.

565. Resting Adventurer

Seriously? I didn't realize you have to account for the shape too.

566. Resting Adventurer

You sure do. Meanwhile, while a sword is flat, it's also long and thin, so that makes targeted reflections super difficult.

567. Resting Adventurer

You can assume that if something looks a certain way, it's going to register hits exactly how you'd expect it to.

568. Resting Adventurer

You should always remember what shape your shield is. It's good for when the enemy unexpectedly changes up their attacks, not just for reflecting.

569. Resting Adventurer

Got it!

570. Resting Adventurer

You know, wouldn't Princess be a sith based on her outfit's coloring?

571. Resting Adventurer

True!

572. Resting Adventurer

I'm not sure what to think of that, considering her roles.

573. Resting Adventurer

She’s the embodiment of darkness who does the bidding of the gods!

574. Resting Adventurer

Sort of like a shinigami. The “gami” means god, so technically, they’re sacred beings.

575. Resting Adventurer

Lmao, Princess and Fairellen just started battling.

576. Resting Adventurer

For real?! Where can I watch?!

577. Resting Adventurer

They’re in Starting Town, just way up in the sky so it’s impossible to see anything! Damn!

578. Resting Adventurer

Aw, they’re in the sky?!

579. Resting Adventurer

This is Fairellen we’re talking about. Princess also seems to be casually flying around.

580. Resting Adventurer

I mean, she’s not a human.

581. Resting Adventurer

She’s “something” that’s taken a human form.

582. Resting Adventurer

Think we could see you-know-what? Just the tiniest glimpse?

583. Resting Adventurer

What are you trying to see? The Medium?

584. Resting Adventurer

They say if you stare into the Medium, the Medium stares back.

585. Resting Adventurer

What would you do if tentacles started wriggling back at you?

586. Resting Adventurer

I don’t want to see any eyes either. I’d be making eye contact with something.

587. Resting Adventurer

What would you make eye contact with by staring up a skirt? Lol, that’s terrifying.

588. Resting Adventurer

I like girls who seem like they keep animals in their skirts.

589. Resting Adventurer

But I don’t think it would be an animal in Princess’s case.

590. Resting Adventurer

She’s in trouble.

591. Resting Adventurer

You can tell that Fairellen’s fighting her heart out.

592. Resting Adventurer

Their spells are lighting up the sky. It's right out of a fantasy world.

593. Resting Adventurer

I know what you mean. It's kinda nice.

594. Resting Adventurer

Ms. Fairellen really grabs your attention.

595. Resting Adventurer

Well, yeah. Her race makes it so she gives off sparks.

596. Resting Adventurer

Ah!

597. Resting Adventurer

Fairellen died! What a good-for-nothing!

598. Resting Adventurer

I mean, they were dueling.

599. Resting Adventurer

Did anyone record it?

600. Resting Adventurer

I didn't see any of those little fairies.

601. Resting Adventurer

Don't you have the option to record a duel? They might still have the video.

602. Resting Adventurer

Sounds like they do have it. Eagerly awaiting this!

603. Resting Adventurer

I’m spamming F5.

604. Resting Adventurer

Don’t do that to their website.

605. Resting Adventurer

I’m spamming Ctrl+F5.

606. Resting Adventurer

That won’t change anything!

607. Resting Adventurer

It’s Alt+F4 that you’re looking for.

608. Resting Adventurer

The window disappeared!

609. Resting Adventurer

LOL.

610. Resting Adventurer

I can’t help but laugh.

611. Resting Adventurer

Anyway, I didn’t realize those shortcuts worked here.

612. Resting Adventurer

You can pull up an on-screen keyboard.

613. Resting Adventurer

Seriously? Whoa, it works.

614. Resting Adventurer

Take this! Random bullshit go!!!!

615. Resting Adventurer

No!!! My C drive was reformatted!

616. Resting Adventurer

No, anything but that…

617. Resting Adventurer

I need a fresh install.

618. Resting Adventurer

"Oops! The media you installed can't be found."

619. Resting Adventurer

Don't joke about that. It actually happens a lot.

620. Resting Adventurer

It really does.

621. Resting Adventurer

Video's up.

622. Resting Adventurer

He's right. It even has both perspectives. I love this kind of thing.

623. Resting Adventurer

The hell am I looking at?

624. Resting Adventurer

So this is what Princess sees?

625. Resting Adventurer

She doesn’t have eyes in the back of her head. It’s even more than that.

626. Resting Adventurer

It turns out that her blindfold isn’t just for style.

627. Resting Adventurer

I see. So her jedi style comes from Danger Sense.

628. Resting Adventurer

It looks impossible, at least until you get the hang of it.

629. Resting Adventurer

You’ve gotta be ready for what’s thrown at you if you play as an inhuman race.

630. Resting Adventurer

If anything, real life probably seems less convenient once you’re used to this sort of vision.

631. Resting Adventurer

Lightning Magic travels so fast, but all of Fairellen’s attacks are getting knocked away anyway!

632. Resting Adventurer

Princess deflected lightning during the camping event too. It makes sense that she can do it in a 1v1 battle.

633. Resting Adventurer

Yeah, they only beat her in the free-for-all once they surrounded her.

634. Resting Adventurer

Experience the same despair as when Darth Vader comes at you in a narrow hallway in Star Wars Battlefront!

635. Resting Adventurer

Calm down. You feel the exact same despair when there's a jedi on the other end of that hallway.

636. Resting Adventurer

Can't help but laugh in that situation.

637. Resting Adventurer

It's even funnier when you win because of some kind of mistake.

638. Resting Adventurer

Watching Ms. Fairellen's perspective really makes her feel like a Star Wars NPC.

639. Resting Adventurer

She can go upside down too?

640. Resting Adventurer

Can we get just a peek? Wait, there it is!

641. Resting Adventurer

She wears compression shorts under the skirt, you know.

642. Resting Adventurer

I couldn't care less!

643. Resting Adventurer

All right then.

644. Resting Adventurer

I see. So that's how she fires her magic missiles?

645. Resting Adventurer

Huh?!

646. Resting Adventurer

Princess is right behind her!

647. Resting Adventurer

Did she teleport?!

648. Resting Adventurer

Ah, RIP.

649. Resting Adventurer

I have so many questions about Princess's final moves there.

650. Resting Adventurer

It must be a short-distance teleportation spell, since she called it Short Jump. I'm sure that comes from Space Magic.

651. Resting Adventurer

And the other one was a special activation keyword?

652. Resting Adventurer

What, you mean Princess wasn't just being cringe? Sad.

653. Resting Adventurer

It works differently than casting spells the normal way.

654. Resting Adventurer

I don't use magic. What's so different about it?

655. Resting Adventurer

You can see it if you watch Fairellen's perspective. The process to cast it goes in a slightly different order depending on spell variety. Here's how it works for ball and arrow spells:

1. Select the spell.

2. Wait for the gauge that appeared to fill. Players refer to this as your chant or chant time.

3. The spell materializes once you say its name or activation phrase.

4. Pick a target and fire at them.

656. Resting Adventurer

I see. Yeah, that's totally different.

657. Resting Adventurer

From what I can see of Princess's gauges, I guess she's setting up the spell with that language of hers?

658. Resting Adventurer

It might be for RP, but it does seem hard to use. Doesn't it suck to cast spells on delay? Your gauge is full, but you don't say the activation keyword.

659. Resting Adventurer

You can select a spell based on the situation if you set it up in real time, though.

660. Resting Adventurer

Then wouldn’t she use a shot or lance spell instead of bursts for this fight?

661. Resting Adventurer

Maybe? But this is Fairellen she’s up against. I could be wrong, but burst spells seem more like guaranteed hits.

662. Resting Adventurer

Fairies are small, you know? She’s an eclesith and flying all over the place.

663. Resting Adventurer

She uses Short Jump like it’s nothing.

Is she selecting a spell, setting coordinates, telling it which way to travel, and activating it with keywords? I think it might work for any location within her range of vision.

664. Resting Adventurer

That’s what I thought too. I wonder if the way she’s facing makes a difference. Does she teleport in the direction she’s facing, or can she set a destination? Setting a destination would be really overpowered with how much space her vision covers.

665. Resting Adventurer

Her race probably reduces MP usage too. Princess uses 10 percent per jump.

666. Resting Adventurer

That’s the most overpowered part!

667. Resting Adventurer

She can use it to avoid hits or launch surprise attacks too. I'm curious about the cooldown time, but I doubt the chant speed stops it from being practical.

668. Resting Adventurer

Papa! Her tentacles aren't sexual at all!

669. Resting Adventurer

Stop it! She's gonna go Rambo!

670. Resting Adventurer

Stop it! She's gonna wear a bandanna and get a mullet!

671. Resting Adventurer

I don't think that's what that means.

672. Resting Adventurer

First Blood—it'll be your blood that gets spilled!

673. Resting Adventurer

She's gonna go Rambo mode with her tentacles? That's horrifying.

674. Resting Adventurer

Don't forget that these aren't tentacles from porn. They're from the Cthulhu mythos.

675. Resting Adventurer

Almost no one can escape once they're in the clutches of tentacles. You're never gonna beat a monster in a battle of strength.

676. Resting Adventurer

Some tentacle monsters kill you as soon as they touch you.

677. Resting Adventurer

I'm pretty sure Unknown Structure is like that.

678. Resting Adventurer

Ms. Fairellen would have had an awful time if Princess had been swinging her tentacles around from the start.

679. Fairellen

I'd run into them and die!

680. Resting Adventurer

I'm dying.

681. Resting Adventurer

You're *dying*?

682. Resting Adventurer

I meant that it was funny. It's a thing they say overseas.

683. Resting Adventurer

I see.

684. Resting Adventurer

Yeah, Fairellen doesn't have the stamina for it.

685. Resting Adventurer

Such is the fate of all fairy races.

686. Fairellen

Everything aside from that is a breeze.

687. Resting Adventurer

Right, since you guys have speed, just not stamina. I guess you insta-die if you go charging in.

688. Fairellen

Walls are my natural enemies. Forests are scary too!

689. Resting Adventurer

I guess you really do have to surround Princess to take her down.

690. Fairellen

Maybe close-range attacks in waves would do the trick? But she can always escape into the sky!

691. Resting Adventurer

It’s safest not to start a fight with her in the first place!

692. Resting Adventurer

You speak the truth.

Chapter 6:
Fourth Official Event

I FINISH UP my morning routine and log in.

Oh, I have a message from Mr. Cecil. He's sharing the information he put on the forums last night. He forgot to post them until later in the night, after I'd already gone to bed.

He informs me that the magic earl told him it's best to be able to dance if you want to form relationships with nobles, and he wants to know if I have any leads on skills for that sort of thing. I see.

There's Waltz and Dance, but those are second-tier skills from Footwork, so they're not actually useful for dancing, I assume.

I've never actually danced in this game. Trying it out might trigger something, but it sounds like you need a connection to teach you how to dance. Mr. Cecil looked at his friends list and determined I was most likely to have such a connection.

I could try ballroom dancing with Eli or Abby, but I think I'll ask the prime minister first. What about Nyar? I'm certain that he can dance. The Faceless God has many talents. But I won't go to him—just imagining it sends a chill down my spine. Dancing with Nyar sounds like dancing with misfortune itself.

Could the Medium provide any leads? Well, considering how they all look, I'd almost certainly end up learning a "weird dance."

"Outer One does a weird dance!"

"XX has lost their sanity!"

That would be dreadful.

I need to stop thinking about such silly things and go visit the prime minister.

"Prime Minister!"

"What is it?"

"Do you know how to dance?"

"What's this? I probably remember how, but not like how they do it on the surface."

"Ah…"

I'm sure different eras and different countries have unique styles of dancing.

Hmm? Now that I think of it, I don't even know anything about the class system of the surface world. I understand it in Stellura's realms of the dead—the Nether, Abyss, and Medium. To be fair, though, I'm low ranking in the Medium, so saying I fully understand it might not be entirely true.

"It'd be a bit sad to admit that I can't dance despite the position I hold. If I refuse, is it best to give the reason that my dance style is different from what's used on the surface?"

"I doubt anyone on the surface would ever ask you to dance, Madame. However, I don't mind teaching you if you wish to learn."

The event starts in the afternoon, so I think I'll spend some time working on this.

We relocate to my villa and bring a lady-in-waiting into a room that's not being used. It's time to get dancing.

First, I try to follow the steps he teaches me. I seem to be receiving the game's assistance with this. Is Gorgeous Dance helping too? It's actually quite easy.

I have some experience dancing in real life too, so I get the very basic steps down in no time at all. Next, I pair up with the prime minister and have the lady-in-waiting watch for mistakes.

Your actions have unlocked Dancing.

Oh! Has it already been two hours? I'll take a break and give this a read.

Dancing

While this activity is enjoyed by royalty and nobility, there are many derivations, so pay close attention.

You should learn social dancing if you wish to form connections with royalty and nobility.

I don't know if that much is expected of adventurers, but this could lead to opportunities for them. First, they raise their adventurer rank, then they get their name out there by taking on jobs, and eventually, they're invited to balls based on whether or not they can

dance, perhaps? Then they form more connections with other nobles at those balls.



It costs three SP, so I'll go ahead and grab it.

Dance

Dance: Undead

That must be because I learned from the prime minister. Does that mean different races have their own dance styles? Maybe it's not just humans but races like fae and angels—those with confirmed lands—who have their own styles.

This one doesn't have skill levels, just like Identify. It must exist so that you can display the dance styles you've gained arts for.

After a bit more testing with the prime minister, I see that this skill displays movement instructions through your vision. I can always dance while I look at this guide, if worse comes to worst.

I thank the prime minister and lady-in-waiting for their help before sending a message back to Mr. Cecil. Although, we'll probably run into each other during the event.

I'll have less than three hours left if I want to get lunch before it starts. I'll dedicate an hour to lunch. But then what?

I recall this event allowing you to bring in items, now that I think of it. Did I make a mistake? I should have bought cooking ingredients, since there's time acceleration within the game. No, chefs will take care of that. Oh, I should move some honey to my inventory.

I think I'll prioritize Alchemy. That means revival medicine and holy water. I should also make a lot of distilled water while I still have

access to my crafting facilities. It's a real pain to get.

My infinite canteen is already full of water of reminiscence. Should I take pure dirt too? I have a container I use for making holy water, so I just need to fill it with fresh dirt and stash it in my inventory.

I need crystal lotuses and holy punicas for revival medicine. I'll have my villa staff gather those for me while I craft until lunch.

My little sister and I are eating lunch in the living room.

"What party are you gonna play with, Sis?"

"Probably my usual one. I don't know where the twins will end up yet."

I can party up with Mr. Alf and Mr. Skelly like usual, but it sounds like this event is going to be split into different servers, so I don't know what will happen to Mr. Ame and Ms. Trine.

I think they'll show up if they want to join us, so I don't mind partying up with them if they ask.

"I wonder what this event's gonna be like."

"It's set in a city, so it might be all about running errands."

"I'm not super thrilled about that."

Most people don't love fetch quests, but I'm sure they're much less cumbersome in this game, where you can have intelligent exchanges with AI. It's hard to turn down requests when they casually slip them into the conversation.

I haven't done any fetch quests in quite a while. It doesn't exactly suit my position in the game.

"What level are you right now, Sis?"

"I think I'm level 46. I hardly level up at all anymore," I reply.

"Yeah, the pace has really slowed. I wonder if players will start using alternative methods soon."

"True. You quickly tire of leveling up in dungeons all day. Maybe we'll start to look in other directions, now that there's chronicle world quests and such."

"Chronicle quests aside, the only world quests so far have been in Starting Town. I wanna search for more, but it's hard with just one party."

"It's not incredibly appealing either, considering it could be more goblins."

The goblin events are likely all about killing as many as possible, but we don't know what other requirements are involved. It's reckless to attempt as a single party. If you want to kill a bunch of enemies, it's safer to quietly enter a dungeon and do your hunting there. Plus, I have production whenever I'm looking for a change of pace.

"That reminds me. I'm going to bring revival medicine materials since we're allowed to take our items into the event."

"Ah, yeah. I bet it's gonna be hard to make things once it starts."

"I have a lot of meat on hand and can probably prepare it on location, but I still took military magic battle bee honey out of storage to keep in my inventory. I'll also bring the revival medicine and holy water I was just working on."

"You can play a little more dangerously if you've got revival medicine, huh? I'll buy your holy water if we're up against any undead. Oh, that reminds me. You get any magic skills to the third tier yet?"

"Yes, I've hit the third tier for assist, light, dark, and space. I was slow to obtain Book, so that will take a little longer."

Radiant Magic became Aurora Magic and Darkness Magic became Chaos Magic. I learned Ceras Gravitas and Haus Gravitas with them. I'm just glad I was able to level them up before the event.

"Have you used them yet?"

"Of course. They're a lot more eye-catching now, and the AOE range is pretty big."

"Oh yeah! They've started calling the better AOE spells 'range magic' on the BBS."

"Range magic, huh? These spells are visually impressive, so I'd like to keep using them, but the MP isn't very efficient."

"Spells with a classic vibe are so cool!"

A sword of the element I was using crashes down from above, pierces the dirt, then contracts and explodes. This explosion is like a burst spell with a bigger range. I *did* get an idea what this was referencing, but I decided not to pay attention to that.

I hope to get about six enemies in one hit, considering the chant speed and how much MP it uses.

"They say normal AOE hits three enemies while range magic hits about five, so it's not bad to use in terms of MP efficiency," Rina says.

"Is that all? But you'll need a tank if you're going to bait that many enemies at once."

"Yep. You usually don't have a tank when you're hunting with a single party either."

"Enemies don't often gather up to that extent. You'll need to kite them."

"Sounds like it would be too much to handle. You're only gonna use spells like that when you're fighting insects, or maybe in a defensive battle."

"Probably. I'll have to rely on single-target spells," I conclude.

Gravitas spells come at level 1, so if I keep up at this pace, I should have eight more to learn.

"Huh?!" Rina suddenly cries.

"What is it?"

"They're saying they just discovered revival magic!"

"Now, of all times?"

"'You unlock it by using revival medicine ten times or having it used on you ten times. It's an extra spell added to Holy Magic!"

"I see. My party members never die, after all."

"Exactly! This info comes from the Testing Team, by the way."

"Ah. Of course."

Until now, everyone has played carefully, since your only choice upon death was to go to the Nether. But revival medicine allows you to come back from the dead right there on the spot. It has a long

cooldown time before it can be used again, but the Testing Team must have steadily made progress.

"The event's starting soon, but should I learn Resurrection now?"

"Hmm. I think it's worth it, if it's equal to ten potions. I want to learn it beforehand."

"Everyone's probably in a rush to do the same. It's just hard to get your hands on that much revival medicine."

"I don't exactly want to use all ten of mine right before the event."

"Ah, can we get by with five if we do it together, Sis?"

"Yes, actually, since it says you either use the medicine or have it used on you. But you have to wait a while to be revived."

"Oh, I see. Do you have enough?"

"Of course. I stocked up for the event, and I even prepared materials to craft more once it starts."

"That's my sis, all right!"

We quickly finish up our lunch to learn Resurrection before the event.

I log in for my afternoon session.

My ladies-in-waiting prepared materials for revival medicine and holy water as requested, which I take and stash in my inventory. How much revival medicine do I have now? This should be enough, I suppose.

Next, I send messages to the people on my friends list. I want each party with a Holy Magic user to learn Resurrection.

I could also message the solo players as well. Ms. Cupid, the angel, is one such example. Wait, is she the only one? I guess so. Ms. Fairellen, Ms. Clementia, and Ms. Mead don't use Holy Magic as far as I know. Mr. Mutt uses Dark Magic, and Ms. Yura fights with her two-handed axe. Hmm…

This should do it for now. I'll head to our meetup spot.

"Ah, it's Tasha!" Abby greets me.

"Oh, I see you're all here," I observe.

"There's nothing else to do before the event at this point."

It isn't just Abby and Ms. Dory who've showed up because they use Holy Magic—Eli and Ms. Letty are here as well. Players from all the other parties have also joined us.

"What's up? I had nothing better to do right now."

"All the revival medicine is gone from the market. Can't say I'm surprised."

Sugu and Tomo have joined us. It makes sense that everyone would be here. They've surely finished their event preparations by this point and were just waiting for it to start. Well, it's a good thing to have a bigger crowd, as the revived player will have the debuff of not being able to be resurrected again for a while. We have to ensure everyone unlocks Resurrection before the event starts.

It's a simple process. We get a person's HP down to 1 in duel mode, then let a rabbit or wolf deal the finishing blow. It's actually

pretty easy to unlock Resurrection when you know what the goal is.

"Huh. It has a long chant time and uses so much MP."

"That's true. Revival medicine even grants you more HP when you come back."

"I think I can get by, since I've got my bow!" Ms. Cupid doesn't sound worried.

Since I can make my own high-quality revival medicine, I'd only use this as a means of revival when I run out of medicine or want to preserve it. It's quite a dilemma, as I prefer to use my MP for attacks.

"I appreciate this contribution, my liege! My comrades and I can't take many hits before we perish."

Mr. Musasabi and his guild are all ninja, after all. It's incredible in its own way.

"I'm glad I've got a backup method now," says Mr. Cecil.

"Same!" Mr. Lucebarm agrees.

Indeed. It's like having a safety measure. Still, we don't currently end up in such long battles that there's any chance of running out of revival medicine during one—nor are they even long enough for the post-revival debuffs of using the medicine to run out.

"Whoa, it's almost time. Let's get back!"

Ms. Kotatsu is right. It's about time we return.

With the event just on the horizon, Starting Town is full of people. We've come to the northern gates, but I took a look on the way here. I can only imagine how crowded it will get when a little more time has passed.

Yep, it's time to show off. I summon Unit One as a flesh ball, sit on top of him, and float toward the town square.

"You stand out way too much, Sis! It's hilarious."

"Do you believe in the gods?"

"Would I get smacked from above if I say that I don't?"

"Hm, that's a good point. It's not exactly a question in this world, especially considering divine messages exist."

The twins should be able to find me easily if I keep this going while we travel to the center of town. Of course, it would be much easier to simply send them a whisper.

"You're quite the eye-catcher, Princess."

"Good day, Ms. Fairellen."

"Howdy!"

"What do you think of my new ride?"

"You look like a villain! A blindfolded nun sitting on a ball of flesh? I'm lost for words."

"Hey, Princess! Let us join your party!"

Suddenly, I hear Mr. Alf call out to me from below. I send both him and Mr. Skelly party invitations.

"Who are you partying with, Ms. Fairellen?"

"I'm going with Mead's group for this one!"

"That includes Ms. Clementia, yes?"

"Yep, and the mutt too."

I haven't seen either of them recently, now that I think of it.

“What about Mr. Mohawk?”

“He’s playing separately this time.”

“There’s Princess!” two voices call in unison.

Oh, the twins have arrived.

“Good day.”

“How dost thou fare, Princess?”

“Wow…”

“Hee hee!”

They must have tried using a greeting they looked up. The big grin at the end sort of gave it away. But oh well. They’re still adorable.

“Do you have room in your party, Princess?” they ask in unison.

“Give me one moment to check.”

“Okay!”

With permission from Mr. Alf and Mr. Skelly, I invite the twins to our party.

“What are you naming the party for this one, Princess?” Ms. Fairellen asks.

“Our party name? It’s ‘If the Bird Doesn’t Cry, Bully It.’”

“Like the Tokugawa quote? Except in this case, you’re gonna make it cry until it’s coughing up blood? That’s merciless!”

I look at the party window and find something surprising.

“You two are almost at level 40? That was certainly fast.”

“We get bonus EXP!” the twins respond.

"Ah, now that you mention it, that sounds familiar."

The twins' equipment gives them a slight EXP boost. That makes it all the more beneficial to have them in our party.

The problem with them joining us is that the twins are second-wavers, so their progress is a bit behind the rest of ours. They'll have to work harder if they want to keep up.

Having some members at a lower level than the rest isn't ideal in any game—it will almost always cause some form of disadvantage. However, their base level shouldn't cause any issues at this point.

Fighting an enemy ten levels higher isn't too difficult in this game, but it's recommended for players to be within five levels of each other. This is because skill level is crucial, and players with a lower base level can be assumed to have lower skill levels.

"What's your highest skill level right now?" I ask.

"Um, it's 43!" they answer me.

"That's pretty high. Is your base level only just under 40?" asks Ms. Fairellen.

"Uh-huh!"

It's easy enough to guess that. A base level of slightly under 40 typically means they'll have second-tier skills over 40. They'll hit third-tier skills once their base level is closer to 50. Second-tier skills max out at 60, so they'll be quite hard to level up.

The amount of EXP you receive changes depending on your base level and that of any enemies you defeat. An enemy that's a lower level than you results in less EXP, while higher-level enemies

grant more EXP. That bonus amount decreases the higher level you both are, so it's best to have a bit of a gap between you.

You receive EXP for your base level just by being near fighting party members, but skill EXP is limited to times that you personally use a skill yourself. In other words, power-leveling too much will make this game hell later on.

Well, everyone in this game is limited to one character, so there's really no need to resort to power-leveling in the first place.

"I don't know how much EXP we'll receive in this event, but once it's over, we could probably form a party to level up in a dungeon," I suggest.

"We'll work really hard!" the twins declare.

"But aren't they in a good spot already, considering their skill levels? There's an EXP gain decrease after level 11, but it's not much at all, right?"

"It's 5 or 10 percent from level 11 to 15. I feel like the number becomes impossible to ignore once you hit level 16."

"Yeah. Well, it's harder to fight when there's a big gap."

We'd be fighting in our usual hunting spots, so the twins would face enemies ten levels higher or so. I can't imagine them staying focused on the battles long enough to level up significantly.

An imposing timer is counting down in the sky above Starting Town, just like before. With only ten minutes left, teleportation should unlock any minute.

You are now able to teleport to the event field.

"Oh, the portal's open! See ya later, Princess!"

"Until next time."

It's time for my party to teleport to the event field using our UIs.

Connecting to event server... Waiting for entry... Complete.

Gathering required data... Complete. You have been assigned to Server 1.

Preparing to teleport to event field...

I forgot that they said they'd be splitting us up across different servers. Dividing us before the teleportation strays slightly from the norm.

I teleport once the countdown on my UI hits zero.

A field? It's full of players teleporting in, but I don't see any man-made structures nearby. Perhaps that's due to my unique form of vision.

It's also nighttime. I wonder if the event is set to start around dawn.

"'Sup, Princess!"

"We meet again, Ms. Fairellen."

"I recognize a ton of people. They must have put the first-wavers together."

"Perhaps they based it on when we started playing."

"I think so."

"And here I brought the twins along with us. It's only a city event, so I hope they'll be fine."

"I'm sure they will. The devs would have predicted that sort of thing."

That's true too. I don't feel that showing off my RP to other first-wavers will do much, so I recall Unit One and head to the air using Coordinate Float.

I'll fold my tentacles to sit on them like a throne.

"You *really* look like a secret boss in a game."

"The problem is that my tentacles automatically despawn after a while, unlike Unit One's tentacles."

"So you'll randomly hit the ground at some point?"

"Indeed."

It's only natural—they can't just stay around forever. Be that as it may, it would be incredibly lame to have my cool pose interrupted by toppling to the ground suddenly.

"Yoo-hoo!"

"It's nice to see you again, Ms. Clementia."

"Long time no see!"

They really *did* lump us first-wavers together. Well, it's more fun to play games with the same people, and I'm sure it was easier to balance the servers that way too.

"Ha ha ha ha! It's me, everyone!"

"Good morning. I'm Mitake."

Yatsuzuka-san and Mitake-san are here just like every event. Except this time, there are eight minutes left before it's scheduled to start.

"As we previously announced, this event's main setting is going to take place within a town. This town was created specifically for the event and will become inaccessible upon its conclusion. It's no different from the main game server, so your occupations and titles will have the same effects."

"But it's not just the town! All the residents in it are made for the event too! Don't worry about consequences in the main game for this one!"

In other words, something's going to happen that *should* have consequences in the game world?

"Players have been split up across different servers like during the more recent defensive war. As a general rule, players are divided into which wave they joined in, so you're likely to recognize the majority of people around you. Exceptions occur based on the party you've joined. The BBS has also been split into different servers."

"The lower your server number, the fewer players you've got, but you've all been playing for longer! The bigger numbers have more

people, but they haven't been playing long! The difficulty won't change based on server number either!"

"There are multiple stories written for this event, and each server will have their story selected randomly. The resident AIs are currently in suspension. Your stories will be selected two minutes before the event begins, at which point residents will awaken."

"Even we don't know what you guys are gonna get! It's exciting! Information from all the stories you don't get stays in the event, however, so be careful not to get misled!"

"Information is everything in a city event. You must proactively search the area, take on hunting or harvesting jobs from different groups, and complete missions given by residents."

"There's no general commander or anything like that for this one, so feel free to form unions or whatever you like! Information you gather gets automatically shared with all other players through the UI! Ain't that nice? But that also means anything that doesn't get shared is totally unrelated, and it's not even there to mislead you!"

"That's all we'll share for now. Please discover the rest through trial and error as you enjoy the event."

"You'll be able to view all the server threads on the BBS once it's over! We'll post videos once they're all nice and edited!"

Let's sum up the important details. There are no special advantages or disadvantages given based on server number, but the randomly chosen story we're about to receive will set the difficulty for our entire server.

We're currently on Server 1, the least populated of them, but we'll also have the highest average stats as majority first-wavers. Having more players makes it easier to gather information, so that might prove to be an issue. We're probably expected to make the most of the situation as the group who've played the game the longest. That also means we have the highest ratio of players with occupations, so hopefully that gives us more means for gathering information.

There's no general commander this time, and any information we receive will be automatically shared with the server, so long as it relates to the event. However, some of this information will be red herrings.

That about sums it up for now.

I see a woman holding up her hand to ask a question. Ah, I believe that's Ms. Yura.

"You're Ms. Yura, yes? What seems to be the issue?" asks Ms. Mitake.

"Yeah, and I'm actually a second-wave solo player."

"Oh, well, it seems a certain percentage of high-ranking players are allowed to join the groups above them. You're a second-waver, but you're with the first-wavers. A high-ranking third-waver could join the second-wavers, and so on."

"What 'ranking' do you use for that?"

"It's based on your base level and skill levels."

So it's sort of like the top ranks of each wave are catching up to the wave ahead of them?

Oh, it's Mr. Mohawk and Mr. Mitsuki. There's another woman—no, actually, the game referred to him as a man, didn't it? Mr. Mohawk is already such a strange character, and now his party has become even stranger.

We have the nice but loud guy, the man in the Chinese clothes, and the young man—I'll go with that for now—in the dress. They look like a good team all together like that. I don't know how that makes me feel.

Having the first-wavers and top second-wavers put on one server probably means my entire friends list is here. I check the list and see that everyone's name mentions them as being in Server 1, meaning they're definitely around here somewhere.

For now, I should group up with my party.

"Princess! Let's form a union if there's no commanders and stuff this time."

"Ah, certainly."

What should our union name be? Since this is a city event, I'll go with something from the Paranoia TRPG. Ah, it's two letters too long? Okay, I'll choose a different one instead. I'll use my usual description for recruitment.

"Looking for people who will work hard and do what it takes to get the S-rank clear. If a member of our union intentionally causes harm to others, please send a video to our leader if possible before

expelling them from the party. We will remove and blacklist them from the union once confirmed with multiple party leaders."

That should do the trick.

"I made a union. It's called 'Happiness of the Citizens Is Mandatory, Troubleshooter.'"

"Was that town Alpha Complex?"

"Your union name sounds suspicious, like you don't know if you'll be able to work together or not."

"Is there a problem, Troubleshooter?"

"Of course not!"

I add Ms. Fairellen and Mr. Cecil's parties and set it to automatically approve any of my friends who ask to join.

Joining a union shares your location on the map, so all the members start to make their way toward us. Before long, there are only two minutes left before the start of the event.

"Oh, the residents are awake now! We're supposed to instantly teleport to the town's statue when the event starts!"

"Do we need to unlock a portal?"

"Nope!"

It's like we're waiting for a new theme park to open their doors.

"All right, have fun, everyone!"

"This concludes our introduction."

The two GMs fade away until they've completely vanished. It's ninety more seconds until the start.

“What should our plan be?” asks Ms. Kotatsu.

“Shall we not use our own discretion for the time being?” Mr. Musasabi answers.

“That’s fine. We’ll prioritize whatever info gets shared with us first,” Mr. Lucebarm agrees.

The three of them have now joined us at our meeting spot. I agree with their course of action, so I don’t have anything to add.

We’ll probably be traveling with our parties rather than individually to start. My party all belong to the Nether—well, that’s not entirely accurate for me, but not incorrect either. The Nether simply isn’t the *only* realm I belong to.

“Hyah ha ha ha! Fine day for an event!”

“Hey there, Mohawk.”

“You’re as beautiful as ever, Cecil, darling! It’s so nice to see you all again!”

“Y-yeah, you too, Mr. Mitsuki.”

Mr. Cecil gave a polite response, even though his generic smile was twitching. But it was only a greeting, not anything forceful, so he probably didn’t feel like he could be any colder than that. Perhaps he’ll get more used to Mr. Mitsuki in the future.

The new man in Mr. Mohawk’s party has quite androgynous facial features. He’s also a bit on the smaller side, so the dress doesn’t seem particularly out of place on him.

Ah, Rina, Tomo, and Sugu’s parties have arrived too.

"Lemme introduce you to this guy! He's Ayumu, a second-waver. His name is spelled with the kanji for 'walk,'" Mr. Mohawk declares.

"His reason for dressing that way is a little different than mine," Mr. Mitsuki adds.

"I wouldn't say it's been traumatic, but I've been teased a lot for my face and stature. Especially at school festivals. But when I saw Mr. Mitsuki, I realized I may as well dress like this while I'm here in the game. It's nice to meet you all."

"Ah, yeah, school festivals. We know what he's talking about," the men say.

The men are all nodding their heads, so they must understand. I understand it too, just in a different way.

"Indeed, you can't do anything about the features you were born with. That's why it's important to view them in a positive light, or even use them as a weapon," I say.

"You've already overcome that, haven't you, Sis?"

"Yes, although it was very easy to use them as a weapon in my case. But it really comes down to one's own personality and perspective."

"There's no need to reveal anything you don't want to," Mr. Mitsuki says.

"No, it's not a problem. This is something in the past, anyway. Our mom is Japanese, and our dad is British. I took after Dad, while my sister took after Mom. I only have black hair in this game because I wanted to look different than I do in real life."

The innocence of children can also make them cruel—cruel enough to do things like pour carbonated drinks into anthills.

Such children couldn't simply ignore me and my uncommon appearance. Not to imply that I was mature at that age. We were all just children, so it was only natural.

"I didn't know you guys were only half Japanese. So that's why you were speaking English on your stream?!"

"I get viewers from the English-speaking world and Japan! Yay!" Rina cheers.

"I already stand out with my hair and eye color, and considering my body too, what choice do I have but to use them as weapons? Not that I haven't put in effort to have this body."

"That's fabulous! You've got the right idea! Most problems are just silly little things, from my perspective! Although, the person whose problem it is might see it as much, much worse!"

I don't know how to feel when Mr. Mitsuki puts it like that. He's very persuasive. Or rather, there's nothing at all I can object to—not that there's any need to object at all. The only person who can understand your own troubles is you, in the end.

"Hyah ha ha ha! But Ayumu's been havin' a lot more fun with it lately!"

"My biggest problem is how many expenses I'm accumulating. I purchase male combat equipment but dress in women's fashion, after all."

“Why not find ways to raise money if you’re that strapped for cash?” Mr. Mitsuki asks.

“You could get used to cross-dressing in the game, then go-all out during the next school festival. Try and steal a bunch of hearts. I think everyone will have very amusing reactions. You might even get one over on some of those people who gave you issues.”

For some reason, that suggestion causes Mr. Ayumu to recoil. I don’t understand why.

“You’re really something, aren’t you, Princess?”

“It’s the product of being teased so much. You should resign yourself to your own fate. They’ll probably cry tears of joy.”

“Well, one reaps what they sow. It’s almost time for the event.”

Ah, I bet Mr. Cecil has feelings about that too. Even though the game helps by giving him a boost, he still has that face. I won’t question him about it—I just happened to notice the bitterness in his usual smile.

As everyone heads toward the town for the start of the event, my party takes a casual walk. The twins are floating rather than walking, of course.

“Where should we start?” I ask.

“Hmm, if everyone else is gonna run around and get a feel for the town, we ought to hit up the church first,” Mr. Alf suggests.

“We can follow Princess while she makes her courtesy call to the church,” adds Mr. Skelly.

“Okay! She can do it!” the twins say in unison.

"Indeed, let's head to the church first," I conclude.

I fear that it may be harder to obtain information about the church than other things in town. If they had some sort of trouble with their organization, would they really want to reveal it to an outer one?

But that doesn't change the plan. We're probably the only ones dealing with this particular field. Clergy players like the sacred fire user at Mr. Ertz's shop will be able to give us information about the church itself.

Torches come into view as we approach the town. They have fields of pumpkins and scarecrows with pumpkin heads. It's a very standard setup for a Halloween event.

The town looks even more like Halloween the more it comes into view. Some torches have been placed in hollowed-out pumpkins and draped with cloth to look like they're wearing capes.

We make our way into town. Our first destination is the town square.

"The pumpkins look good for Halloween. It's just the colors that are weird," says Mr. Skelly.

"Must be something unique to this world," Mr. Alf wonders.

Their conversation prompts me to focus on the colors. The town uses orange, black, blue, and green for decorations.

"Do the colors mean something?" the twins ask.

"Yep. I don't remember specifically, but we can just look it up," says Mr. Alf.

Orange represents pumpkins, fire, and warding off spirits. Black represents the darkness of night, witches, bats, and black cats. Purple represents supernatural abilities and magic. White represents ghosts and bones. Red represents blood and danger. Green represents poison and monsters.

"Orange and black are fine as they are. But blue and green? Could they come from Haventhys?"

"Colors of the fertility goddess?" Mr. Skelly asks.

I doubt it comes from the real-life meaning of using white, red, and green for decorations. I feel like these are colors meant to be used for fully fledged costumes.

"But that leaves me curious about why there's no yellow being used."

Orange is for pumpkins and fire, and black is for the night. Witches are doctors in this world, and they don't have black cats with them as familiars.

Green is Haventhys's color—the color of her hair and eyes. I'm sure blue is for water, but is yellow for soil?

"Maybe pumpkins fall under 'crops,' not 'orange.' That's why yellow is for soil," Mr. Alf suggests.

"Ah, that's a different way of looking at it," I realize.

Orange represents fire. Black represents the night. Blue represents water. Yellow represents pumpkins. Green represents Haventhys.

"Perhaps we can get the answers from the church," I suggest.

The town square is decorated for the event as well, of course. A statue of Stellura sits in the middle like always, but there's quite a lot of space set up around her here.

I'm curious about that.

"Excuse me. What is this space for?" I ask.

"We stack up wood and start a fire! Gotta get going on that soon."

It's more on the scale of a campfire than a bonfire.

I release the resident I captured—or rather, the one I merely asked a simple question.

"I bet we're gonna get a quest to set up the campfire," says Mr. Skelly.

"A test of strength? I could see that," Mr. Alf responds.

"We've found something that stands out, so let's head to the church next," I suggest.

"I see it over there. Churches are nice and easy to spot, no matter the town," says Mr. Alf.

"They're so recognizable!" the twins chime in.

We head to the church with the same design as its Starting Town counterpart. Most large cities share the same template for their churches. At least, that's true for the chapel sections, which are open to the public.

I take the lead, with Mr. Alf and Mr. Skelly on either side of me and slightly behind. The twins float between them overhead as we

head to the church in our formation.

"We're supposed to be outsiders who've taken an interest in this festival for the underworld, isn't that right?" I ask.

"Yep. They had that flavor text written for the roleplayers," Mr. Skelly confirms.

"Then you won't mind if I use that story to steer the conversation, will you?"

"Nope!" he replies.

"It's in your hands!" say the twins.

All right. I'll be working that backstory into our talks.

"Please look at the clergy member's embroidery on their robes and use that to discern their role. The order is red, green, gray, and then gold."

"Got it!" Mr. Alf and Mr. Skelly answer.

"We won't talk!" the twins respond.

"Well, that's not the worst idea for you two," Mr. Alf tells them.

"Agreed," says Mr. Skelly.

I'll probably be doing most of the speaking, so that won't be an issue.

Ding!

Information has been shared with you.

The text popped into the game log along with a noise like a wind chime. It seems we've gained information relating to the event. I expect to hear this chime a lot while everyone is still running all around town.

"It says this is actually a harvest festival."

"Didn't we already know that? Oh? A nun with solid colors just did a double take at us and ran off somewhere," says Mr. Alf.

"Come out and face us!" Mr. Skelly cheers.

"You sound like you're picking a fight," he warns.

From their perspective, four blatant undead races have just walked into the church. Since they're with me, someone who looks human at first glance, the nun must have rushed away to call for a higher-up.

Solid colors are worn by monks and nuns—people training to become fully fledged clergy.

"They must have a priest, or maybe a bishop here, considering the size of the town. I wouldn't be surprised if there's an archbishop too, since this is an event."

We arrive at the front entrance to the church and are greeted by someone with gray embroidery.

"Oh my! I see that you're undead, from what I can tell."

"Good day. We're outsiders here for a visit, so we've come to say hello."

"Is that so? It's going to be a lively festival. Shall I call for the archbishop?"

I knew it! They must be doing paperwork in the back while the bishop oversees things.

The GMs mentioned that we'd be treated the same way as we are in the regular game, even though this is a unique event map. That means things will probably go more smoothly if I meet with the archbishop.

"They must be in the back tending to office work. We can go see them ourselves. What will the rest of you do?" I ask my party.

"Hmm, if you're going back to meet the archbishop, we'll stay here and question other people," says Mr. Skelly.

"Do you need guards, considering your position?" Mr. Alf asks.

"I would need them if I was a ruler alone, but my position is more nuanced than that, so no, I don't need to be guarded."

That's why I'll go in alone. The bishop leads me through the chapel and into the back of the church.

"That outfit must mean that you're Princess Nemeseia, correct?"

"Yes, indeed. My name is Anastasia Atropos Nemeseia."

"I am Bishop Beriess. It's an honor to meet you."

Yes, it's definitely important to greet people and confirm who they are.

We stop in front of a simple yet sturdy door.

"I know I just led you here, but I really should have taken you to a different room," the bishop says.

"Is it a chaotic scene in there?"

"I don't believe it's in a state to receive any visitors, much less yourself."

Bishop Beriess knocks on the door.

"What is it?"

"It's Beriess. I've brought Princess Nemeseia to see you. I-Is the room in an acceptable state?"

"No, not at all. I'm coming out."

"Very well. My apologies, Your Highness."

"That's all right. I didn't exactly warn anyone of my visit."

Bishop Beriess is very apologetic, but I understand. They're in the middle of their festival. I'm sure it comes with lots of paperwork that needs finishing.

A man wearing a robe embroidered with gold—or yellow, more accurately—emerges from the room.

The inside briefly entered my range of perception when the door opened. There were certainly a good few mountains of paperwork stacked up in there.

We relocate to a different room before finally introducing ourselves.

"My name is Edvard, and I am the archbishop here."

"I am Anastasia. I am an outer one and a ruler of the afterlife. I came to say hello, as I intend to stay in this town during the festival."

I have to be careful in what we discuss, since I'm his superior, but I enjoy being able to speak in any tone I please, at least.

We chat for a bit, have tea, and go our separate ways after not very long. Edvard has his mountains of paperwork to deal with, after all. I can continue my conversation with Bishop Beriess.

I decide to ask some questions as we return to the chapel.

"Bishop Beriess, what is the significance of this town's festival?"

"It has two purposes. First, we give thanks to Haventhys by putting on this harvest festival. But we also light fires because the border between the spirit realm and the surface becomes less defined."

So it *is* a normal harvest festival, but the border between realms leads to the return of the dead.

"There is a very old saying that we still use at our festivals."

To seek light is the proof of the living.

To seek darkness is the proof of the dead.

The living spark fires in search of light.

The dead turn their backs in search of darkness.

Walk the path of light with fire as your guide.

Walk the path of darkness with shadow as your guide.

Undefined, yet stable border.

Though light and darkness come together, they shall never melt into one.

"I don't recommend traveling on your own during this festival."

"Is there a chance of being harmed?"

"Trouble ranges from mischief all the way to people going missing."

"Are they taken by the dead?"

"I am unsure if it's the dead's doing, but many mysterious things happen here. The festival starts today and grows in scale over its three-day period."

"I see. So the third day is the peak."

"Yes, that's when the border is expected to be at its weakest."

Ding!

Information has been shared with you.

The windchime sound plays as I'm notified about new information relating to the event.

"Having connected to the Nether, I highly doubt the souls there would lure the living to them. I'm sure they miss people they knew during their lives, but they wouldn't do any more than that. That leaves the souls in the Abyss or a third party," I speculate.

"The living cannot forget the dead either, which is certainly a factor. That reminds me. People haven't *just* gone missing. Others experience great changes in their personalities."

"Great changes? The spirit world? Could it be the Medium?! Could they have laid eyes on one of Stellura's outer ones?!"

"I… I see."

"It's a different story if they came here for punishment, but if someone in town peered into the Medium…"

Outer ones usually keep their auras contained so as not to affect others when they come to the surface for punishment, and only one of them shows up at most. But what happens when the living peer into the Medium? I could only describe it as a tragedy.

The mood has become very heavy, so I'll change the subject.

I confirm that our speculation about colors was correct—yellow is indeed used to represent pumpkins here.

"Oh, you wrapped up too, Princess?" Mr. Alf greets me.

"Yes, I was able to greet the archbishop."

"We heard about a landowner here. Wanna go say hi?"

"Landowner? Considering my position, I'm only interested in things relating to the church."

Of course, coming to the church and introducing myself was my own choice. I wouldn't go out of my way to greet anyone else, aside from the royal family. Frankly, there's no point in forming connections with a noble if he's too low-ranking, as he won't have the influence we're looking for.

"What rank is this man?"

"He's an earl. Earl Curt Forsell."

"Lord Forsell. I see."

Perhaps I should visit him if it would help gather information. But frankly, it's more trouble than I'd like to go to. Although, it definitely *would* be easy to obtain information from a noble.

I'll wait until trouble starts to break out. I'm satisfied now that I've formed connections with the bishop and archbishop.

"I'd prefer to start searching, rather than spending time meeting people," I conclude.

"Okay, then let's walk around town. It's an event, after all!" Mr. Alf agrees.

"You're the one who got us this new information, aren't you, Princess?" Mr. Skelly asks.

Oops, I almost forgot to read it.

The basic information I received about the festival was shared with everyone. It mentions how this is both a harvest festival and a blurring of the borders between realms. I doubt anything about these fundamentals will be updated for the rest of the event.

By the way, the town's name is listed as "Howard." That seems very intentional. Maybe this really *is* an all-out Cthulhu event after all. The name of the event did use the word "blasphemous" too. It's meant to set the tone for horror.

Of course, I don't care what the event covers so long as it's enjoyable.

All right, let's begin searching the town!

Chapter 7:
Halloween—Day 1

I'M CURIOUS—is the border between the spirit world similar to space-time and subspace? I don't believe any ordinary person will be able to answer that, so I'll keep the question to myself for now. I don't currently think it's a very good lead.

We leave the church and head to the town square.

"They're saying you can exchange avatars with the event NPCs in the town square."

Players can exchange male outfits with the male NPC and female outfits with the female NPC. Or more accurately, an event UI pops up when you're near them, and you exchange outfits through that.

Vampires, mummies, jiangshi, ghosts, witches—the avatars are dressed in the standard array of Halloween costumes.

"This one's Medjed, not a ghost!"

"You're right!"

The players next to us are cracking up. I'm curious now, so I'll preview the ghost costume too.

Heh heh! Yes, that's the standard look when you dress in a white sheet. Some people will see it as a ghost, and others will see it as Medjed.

"Ew, look at the little shoggoth!"

"Who the hell asked for *that*?!"

Little shoggoth? Ah, this one? It's a dark, iridescent sheet unlike the white sheet for the ghost, and it has a bunch of eyes drawn all over it. They even have avatars with Jack-o'-lanterns on their heads.

The NPCs also offer recipes for pumpkin pie and stew—even cookie cutters in the shape of pumpkins.

It sounds like the game gives you Halloween tickets as a reward you can exchange for these things. The tickets are a separate system from the quests and information that residents already offer you.

"I don't need an avatar, but I *would* like to get my hands on the recipes and cookie cutters," I say.

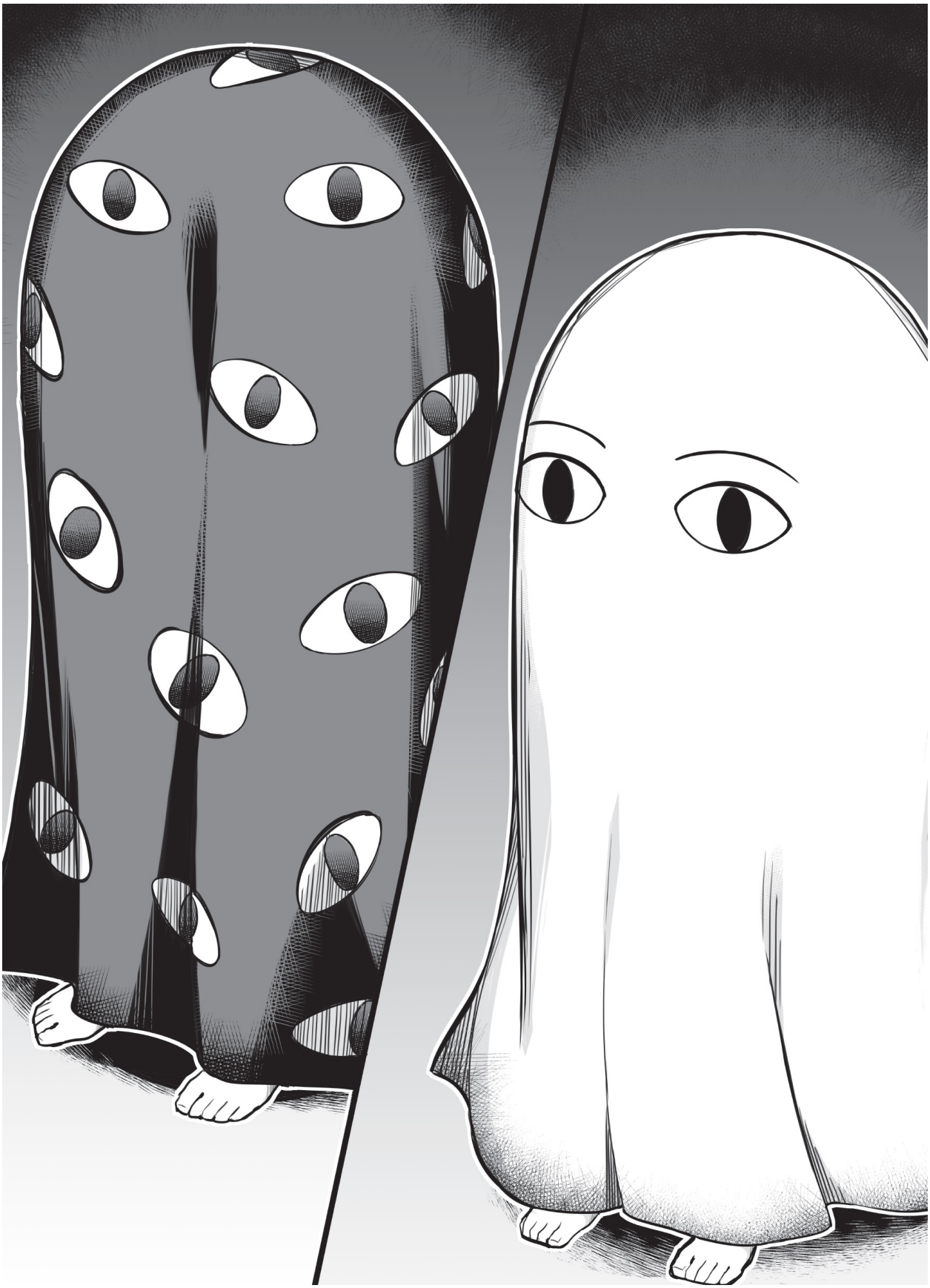
"I'll exchange my extra tickets and keep whatever I get in storage," says Mr. Skelly.

"I mean, we pretty much already look like we're in costumes," Mr. Alf responds.

"We're ghosts!" the twins elaborate.

Yes, they're inhuman races, after all.

"There are mansions in the northeast and southwest. The adventurers' union is to the east of the town square, and the church is to the west. The field we started in is to the west too. There's also a mountain to the south and forests surrounding us."



Mr. Alf describes what a flying player has provided the community. They started at the town square and took a video of themselves making two full laps in the air over town. I can fly too, but my range of vision doesn't cover the entire town, so I'll have to watch the video.

"Did you ask where the earl's manor is?" I ask the others.

"His is the one in the northeast," Mr. Skelly replies.

"Then the manor in the southwest remains a mystery."

The mountain stretches from the south to the east. In other words, going too deep into the eastern forest means you'll bump into the mountain.

"Is the mountain being mined?" I ask.

"It's possible. The houses around it had smoke coming from their chimneys," Mr. Skelly answers.

That would be black smoke from blacksmiths. I heard magic-operated types don't produce smoke in the more advanced setups, though. The most expensive equipment performs at a high level, operating off of mana without needing external fuel sources like firewood. It absorbs the air in its process rather than producing chimney smoke.

In other words, you can tell a smith is using standard equipment if black smoke is coming from their chimney. They won't be suited for processing items that use magical energy, although they can still process normal ores.

Not that this is particularly important.

"Is the south something like a worker's district?" I confirm.

"That's what I hear. They're calling it a trade district."

Mr. Alf is reading that from his UI, so he must be finding information on the BBS. With the basic information out there now, perhaps it's time to find a fetch quest.

"I feel like we could move separately at this point. What do you say?" I ask the others.

"We should probably split up if we want to find things faster," says Mr. Alf.

"Yeah, there's a ton of players around here," Mr. Skelly replies.

"That's true. But the problem is that it will likely be hard to receive quests when I'm around."

"You've gotta be brave to ask a favor from a ruler!"

I don't do fetch quests, after all. It's a disadvantage of my position, but that position does allow me to obtain other quests, so it probably evens out. Of course, I still don't get quests as frequently as everyone else. It would be strange to constantly be assigned to matters meant for me specifically.

We'll be splitting up and moving around separately until we receive a party quest. Although, we're all undead, so perhaps we won't have any advantage with this type of thing.

I think I'll take a look at the quests the adventurers' union is offering.

The union building is also a template, so it's nothing unfamiliar to me. I doubt there will be many resident adventurers here, as the

town is so remote.

Oh, Mr. Cecil is fighting a dummy with a weapon I've never seen before. I travel through subspace to enter the training grounds.

It looks like a light sword, but it's not. It's one of the glowing ones that has been upgraded to a high level.

"Oh, hey there, Princess."

"Good day. Do upgraded weapons glow in this game as well?"

"No, this is something different. Take a look."

Mr. Cecil turns to face the dummy and chucks the glowing sword he was holding in both hands. He missed the target, but that's not what matters. The sword cracked and disappeared upon landing. Mr. Cecil mutters to himself about taking Projectile, then turns to look at me again.

"Divine Call. Double Call."

"Wow, did you learn to summon weapons?"

Divine Call made the space in front of Mr. Cecil's right hand glow. He was able to reach in and pull out the same sword he just threw.

Then he used Double Call to duplicate the sword in his right hand, leaving him with twin blades.

"I received Sigrdrífa's blessing the other day, you see."

"And that's how you unlocked the skill?"

"Probably, but it's a rare skill, so I don't know the exact requirements."

"I didn't get any extra skills when I received Stellura's blessing. I'll bet race has something to do with it."

I like the idea of unlocking rare skills from receiving blessings. Sigrdrífa is the goddess of war. Mr. Cecil is a pure combat fighter and a guildmaster, so it's highly probable that Sigrdrifa took a liking to him.

"The problem is that it's counted as a race skill."

"A race skill? For humans?"

"Yep. For humans."

So it's a human race skill. It seems quite unique for that.

"It's supposed to be a skill to copy sacred treasures and summon them. The Japanese name reads as 'summon tool,' but it's pronounced with the English word 'surrogate.'"

"So the skill name is Surrogate? It sounds like a very unique ability."

"Right now, it's just a way to show off with swords. I think my skill level is too low. By the way, this sword is called Answerer. It's one of the other names Fragarach was called."

"Fragarach? So you've managed to get your hands on something named after a mythological weapon."

"There were other options like Mistilteinn and Brionac, but the skill wouldn't let me get them."

It sounds like he could only select one sacred treasure. Mr. Cecil only uses a sword and therefore possesses One-Handed Swordsman. He'd be in trouble if he copied something like Mistilteinn.

"That reminds me. Us humans have started to figure out our hidden modifiers in this game."

"So they *do* exist?"

"Our hit registration is a little more generous than other races, as far as we can tell by testing different methods."

"The modifiers affect player controls, not stats?"

That sounds like it's a buff meant for beginners, but more lenient hit registration is actually very beneficial. Humans can deal more DPS that way, after all.

Players should choose to be humans if they want to fight with combat skills, while other races are ideal for using stat-based attacks. Although, inhumans in particular attack with skills and are attacked *by* the elements.

"I waited around the adventurers' union for a while, but nothing happened. I think I'll try searching other places," Mr. Cecil informs me.

"Perhaps it's best to search around during the day and wait for developments once night falls."

"Are you the one who found the basic outline of the festival, Princess?"

"I learned it from the bishop when I went to visit the church. There's an archbishop working there too."

"I heard the church is the nucleus of the town. Is Halloween a religious festival in this world?"

"Yes. It's a harvest festival meant to give thanks to Haventhys."

I don’t mind helping out, but I won’t comment much on Haventhys, since Stellura is my primary goddess. I’ll be a dedicated cooperator and nothing more.

Mr. Cecil has finished beating up dummies to get the hang of Answerer, his summoned weapon, so the two of us return to the union lobby and check the quest board.

“There are plenty of quests here. I hear completing hunting quests gives you tickets, but I don’t see what help that will be in the event,” Mr. Cecil says.

“Or perhaps now is the best opportunity for those who want to amass tickets?”

“I guess we’re not exactly swamped at the moment. I didn’t really want any of the ticket prizes, personally.”

“I was hoping to earn the cooking prizes.”

The event avatars are the main use of tickets, but RPers such as myself don’t need those.

“Actually, maybe I could dress as a vampire,” I realize.

“It’s not bad for a free avatar, I guess.”

“So long as this is the right way to get it, of course.”

The hunting quests are to take out monsters outside of town, in the forest, and even on the mountain. This union doesn’t seem much different than the others—it’s only been changed to give Halloween tickets upon quest completion.

“Information keeps getting posted to the BBS, but none of it is very critical,” says Mr. Cecil.

"It's a four-day event, making it shorter than the camping event, and the climax is supposed to take place on the third day. Yet we're still failing to find key information."

"I wonder why?"

I should probably find some sort of action to take. I'll start by checking in with my party.

"Did you find anything?" I ask.

"Nope!" Mr. Alf answers.

"Nothing super important," Mr. Skelly adds.

"Everyone's so busy!" the twins comment.

"I just took a look at the jobs in the adventurers' union. The enemies here aren't very strong."

That must be for the players who joined later so that they can keep up with the first-wavers' pace. The monsters here aren't quite worth hunting for players like us.

"Then should we keep wandering around?" Mr. Skelly asks.

"Are the enemies weaker than the twins?"

"Some are equal level and some are lower."

"Then we don't care! We'll walk around town some more!" the twins respond.

There are some prizes I have my eye on, so I'd like to earn tickets.

My best shot is likely to be the campfire in the town square. I've already heard that you receive tickets by transporting firewood for the

residents.

"Got a plan?" Mr. Cecil asks me.

"I think I'll haul wood for the campfire. I feel that undead aren't particularly suited for city events, considering our positions."

"Being too important can also cause issues, huh?"

"Don't forget that heroes in other games are often used as gofers."

"You're not supposed to think too deeply about that."

"My husband forgot his lunch! Can you deliver it to him?" You have to question the sanity of anyone who would ask that of a hero. Perhaps heroes are seen as reliable due to their strength and trustworthiness, but making them deliver lunches? That's too far.

Though any woman who prioritizes her husband over a hero is a good wife indeed. But unfortunately, the players are the people controlling these heroes. We receive money and EXP from quests, and delivery fees from such wives are surprisingly high for these simple tasks. It's the price they must pay to ask such a favor of the hero.

This game automatically grants quest rewards if you're not given a unique scene where your client rewards you. The UI displays the words "quest cleared" and provides you with your reward.

I even received Stellura's blessing in such a fashion from clearing Ms. Luciana's quest.

"Gofer or not, I'm going to head toward the campfire," I tell Mr. Cecil.

"Sure thing. I think I'll wander around the outskirts of town."

I say goodbye to Mr. Cecil outside of the adventurers' union.

I'll join the others transporting and stacking lumber. They're stacking it in the town square, but the wood itself is kept elsewhere, so there's a bit of travel.

My first stop is the storage shed in the north.

I…just passed by someone carrying wood dressed as a penguin. How utterly surreal. I believe that player uses a two-handed sword, so they must have a high strength stat.



Let’s see. I think I see the resident in charge of the firewood.

“Is there still lumber remaining?”

“Yep! Lots of it!”

“Then allow me to carry some.”

“Uh, it’s pretty heavy. This is a festival for Haventhys, so please don’t use any of that space storage stuff from Stellura.”

I can lift the wood up, but I won’t be able to carry it on my own. My race gives me a high strength stat too, but my one passive modifier alone isn’t enough in this case.

“Don’t hurt yourself or run into anyone else. Just do however much you’re able to.”

“I can do the lifting part on my own.”

I wasn’t really planning on hauling it in the first place. I lift up the wood at both ends by using my tentacles.

This incarnation has less strength than my main body, so I can’t lift the logs from the middle—just the ends. But my tentacles come from my main body and retain its strength, so once I add a third tentacle, I can carry the wood just fine.

But there’s a smarter method to this. I summon Unit One as a fortress and make him spawn tentacles for me to pile the logs into. I’d like him to be able to take five logs at once.

Once he’s carrying four logs, he stops me before I can add the last one. I’ll have to take it myself—actually, I’ll just summon skeletons to haul this one. It’s difficult to use my tentacles that much.

"We'll take these to the town square," I tell the resident.

"Y-yeah, thanks for the help."

I'll ride the fortress—actually, let's have him float, since he's carrying the logs horizontally. I'll have the skeletons, Unit Two and Unit Three, carry the other log like a palanquin.

We set out from the storage shed in the north. Our destination is the campfire in the town square.

"Wh-whoa, that's a crazy way to carry them."

"I feel that it shouldn't matter if I use space storage, since I'm already connected to Stellura no matter what I do."

The warning about Stellura's "space storage" was, essentially, a way of telling me not to use my inventory. So why am I allowed to transport the wood when I serve Stellura?

Well, allowing us to use our inventories would mean a single player could finish the entire quest, so it's probably just a pretense to avoid that. The four gods seem to be on good terms, and I doubt they'd be upset by such a thing. If I'm not receiving divine punishment, then it must be an issue of human feelings and nothing more. I suppose festivals and acts of devotion all come down to human feelings in the first place.

I receive five tickets for bringing five logs to the campfire and another five tickets once I stack the logs as instructed. I simply had Unit One stack them one at a time to complete the mission. This is probably the easiest way of obtaining tickets, so long as you have the stats or means to carry it out.

The residents thank me and the game awards me Halloween tickets.

Then I exchange my tickets with an NPC. I receive eight pumpkin pie and stew recipes as well as two pumpkin cookie cutters.

The campfire quest took a lot longer than I expected it to. Stacking the wood correctly ate up more time than transporting it.

The event started in the morning, but it's already past lunchtime. I don't understand why no one is uncovering information yet.

"I can't find anything!" says Mr. Skelly through party chat.

"We're probably supposed to wait until night. Why else would we be coming up short?"

"No results from us!" the twins chime in.

"How do horror stories usually start, again?"

"Something has to happen to set off the main plot, right?" Mr. Alf asks.

"We need that starting point!"

"There's still a bit of time before it's dark out. I already exchanged tickets for recipes, so I think I'll kill time with production."

"We're gonna hunt!" the twins cry out.

"Be sure to come back to town when it starts to get dark."

"Okay!"

With so many players coming up empty-handed, there's no choice but to sit around and wait for something to happen. I'll stay on

the side of the town square closest to the church and do some crafting. It would be great to reach Alchemy Mastery today.

Mr. Alf and Mr. Skelly meet up with me while I'm crafting. They tell me they've given up on wandering around town.

"We decided it'd be better to find a place and stay there," Mr. Skelly explains.

"We're just going to sit around and wait," Mr. Alf follows up.

It sounds like they'll be acting as my guards for the time being.

Perhaps I should have spoken with the earl when the opportunity presented itself. No, it was definitely the better choice to spend the first day in town instead of going all the way out to his mansion. It's much more likely that the earl will become involved of his own volition.

I pass the time with my production.

"Hey! You crafting?" Tomo asks.

"Yes, since our races seem to be at a disadvantage in a city event."

"Undead and an outer one? I see how that's tough."

"Have you guys come across anything?" Mr. Skelly asks him.

"Nope, nothing."

"Yeah, didn't think so."

"I haven't seen any notifications either. I think everyone's really stuck."

I listen in on Mr. Skelly and Tomo's conversation. It sounds like nothing's changed.

"Right now, we're marking places on the map that seem important. It will help us move around more efficiently once the event kicks off."

"That reminds me, do you know what that huge building in the southwest is?"

"It's the feudal lord's former mansion!" Mr. Skelly answers him.

"So he moved somewhere else?"

"They said he's been working on moving little by little for a while now."

If he's still in the process, then he must have been living there until very recently. That means the home is still occupied and isn't abandoned. It's not a haunted house like you would expect in a horror event.

"Where's Sugu?"

"Hauling firewood. It seems like it's gonna be important for the event."

"Oh yeah, the big campfire. I brought wood over until I got the tickets I needed, but maybe I should keep helping until it's finished."

"I'd expect the residents to show up at the last minute to get the job done. The campfire is supposedly a requirement for the festival."

This festival was originally going to be run by the residents on their own, after all. But this is a video game, so I wouldn't be

surprised if the players are supposed to assemble the campfire themselves to earn some sort of effect or modifier.

Should I utilize my union to finish the job?

"I'm checking in with each unit's captain. Have you discovered anything substantial?"

"Nope, not at all."

"Can't find anything that seems worthwhile."

"Same."

The fewer the players, the more frantically everyone should be searching. But they're still coming up empty-handed. I'll bring up the topic of the campfire while I'm at it.

"That's really the only thing that might relate to the event?"

"But we can't help if we don't have strength."

"We can't use Psychokinesis in towns either."

"Ah, I forgot about that."

Psychokinesis is a spell that lets you carry items based on your magic stat. It uses MP, and since MP recovers automatically in town, it would be a good option for hauling materials. However, arranging the firewood for the campfire requires more subtle maneuvers. Those who aren't confident in their control over the spell should stick to transporting the lumber manually.

"Our server doesn't have a ton of players in it. It's probably best to come up with a plan."

"There's just one problem. How're we supposed to form a plan if we don't even have a starting point?"

"And it's a big town that was built to hold a ton of players. Should we pick out an area for surveillance?"

"We should have aerial patrols too, since we've got flying races here!"

Not everyone is in my union, of course. It's only a small number compared to the entire server's player count.

"I'm sure many players are wandering around the city, so most will be working on the campfire. What about the hunting grounds?"

"The hunting grounds are open!"

"I saw the twins out there. They're second-wavers, right? Hunting's not really worth it for us first-wavers."

It sounds like the hunting grounds aren't popular for a server full of high-level players. But that means they're relatively empty—perhaps containing a clue that's been overlooked.

What should we do?

"Players not in our union will probably keep patrolling the town no matter what. That means the campfire will be ignored once everyone gets their prizes from the ticket exchange. The hunting grounds—or more accurately, the town's perimeter—will also be mostly ignored since it offers little benefit to us."

"We might get some people to team up with us if we explain the plan on the BBS."

"Shall those of us with night vision keep watch over the town's perimeter?"

"Nope, that's no good."

"Shouldn't your party wait inside the town, Princess?"

"Exactly, my liege."

"It'll be faster for you to take charge if we need to interact with the nobles or the archbishop."

I was unanimously rejected by Mr. Lucebarm, Ms. Kotatsu, Mr. Musasabi, and Mr. Cecil!

"That means flying players will have to be stationed outside while the rest of us work on the campfire. Once that's done, we can start patrolling the town. Does that sound good?"

"What about the forest? You can't see into it from above."

"Shall we split off another group to patrol the forest?"

"Uh…"

"Do we have the numbers? The town's so big as it is."

"I don't think we can afford to spare anyone."

"Then it will be best to have the flying players observe who comes in and out of town."

There's a bit of empty space around the town that they'll be able to watch over from the sky.

"They say they're gonna light the campfire just before it starts getting dark."

"Someone from the church lights the campfire, then the residents light their own torches from it and take them to light bonfires and stuff near their homes."

"It's midafternoon already? We don't actually have much time."

"They say the lighting of the fire is part of the ceremony, so it probably starts even sooner."

The ceremony involves the lighting? I was wondering what might happen if it rained, but perhaps the fire is able to keep burning.

I should probably ask around for more information about the ceremony. Luckily, the church is right behind me.

I grab the nearest nun I can find and begin to question her.

She explains that the ceremony is conducted with holy water and lumber as the catalysts for the sacred flames. Transporting those flames around with torches and lighting other bonfires is a way of keeping the border between worlds stable.

In other words, there's no need to patrol anything illuminated by the fire? That would reduce the scale of our search a little. Between this and the information I received from Bishop Beriess, we can probably assume that fire is a form of safe area in this event.

The nun also explains that the ceremony itself isn't very long.

I thank her, return to my crafting, and share this information with my union.

"I see. That makes sense. We can probably work out which positions to take because of that."

"Hey, doesn't that sound bad for those of us who fly?"

"True. The sky might be dangerous."

"It's only the first day. If anything, today might be our only chance to act."

"Bishop Beriess told me the border is weakened on the third day."

"Then if we're going to move around, tonight's the night."

I'm sure there will be gatekeepers, at the very least. The bonfires will be scattered around too. Because of this, flying players will be keeping an eye on the fields outside of town. Players in the town won't need to watch over the town square and main roads thanks to the bonfires.

"Ah, Tomo."

"Yeah?"

"You said you were marking important locations on your map, right?"

"Yep. Was it a good idea to map out areas with bonfires?"

"Each individual bonfire is too much to mark, so let's cross out streets with bonfires on them."

"We don't have enough time to finish that now. Should we mobilize the whole union?"

"Good idea. I'll check with them."

I'm sure they'll help out if I get their approval. Once they send me their map data, I'll compile it, distribute it to each party leader, and ask them to share the map with all of their members.

"I see. Cross out all the roads with bonfires, right? What color should we use?"

"We should all use the same one. How about red or orange, since it's for fire?"

"Green might be better to indicate it's a safe area."

"Let's go with orange to represent the bonfire areas."

"Sounds good."

My members will act quickly once the plan is set.

I divide up the town into roughly equal areas and assign them to people based on their number on the union member list. That concludes my job for now. Tomo also left to walk around town some more.

We'll work on this bonfire map before the residents are at the point of finishing up the campfire assembly. The goal is to take our time and complete this ourselves rather than making the residents do it.

Mr. Skelly is going to post our union's plans on the BBS as well. Mr. Alf is still in guarding mode like always. As for the twins, well, they can keep hunting for a while.

I ask Mr. Skelly and Mr. Alf for the position of the sun while I check the clock on my UI. Once the sun is closer to setting, we head to the sight of the campfire.

"It's time, everyone. The sun is on the verge of setting, so let's work on transporting firewood."

"Time already? I'll combine what we've got and send you our map data."

"There's more spots without bonfires than I expected."

"What would be the point of the event if the entire town's covered in safe areas?"

"I guess that's true."

Indeed. I doubt there are bonfires in back alleyways or anything like that. All the action in horror movies set in cities are in the alleys. If the event was set in the forest, the animal trails would be the scary part.

It's time to wrap up my production and combine the map data I received from all the party leaders. While I work on that, the other union members can start hauling in firewood to finish assembling the campfire.

Naturally, the main roads branching off the town square have bonfires set up along them. It's the smaller streets veering away that are missing them. It's safe to say that if a road is confirmed to be a certain width, it will definitely have a bonfire along it.

I quickly make sure the same roads aren't marked twice before sending the maps back to the leaders—along with my own party members, of course.

It's already dusk? The campfire is quite large now. I wonder if it's almost ready.

"It's so big, but it still needs work?"

"They said they're building it up larger than usual."

"Should we be worried about that? I can think of more than one reason."

"Ah, they said we can stop bringing lumber!"

"Is this the last trip?"

"Yep. They're just gonna take what we brought and finish - assembling it."

It seems the residents would have put together a normal-sized campfire if there weren't enough outsiders. Having outsiders alone work on it made it more likely that they could get a bigger campfire.

I continue to craft, watching as a giant and their party of magic users help stack the last wood. There's activity in the church behind me too. It should all kick off any moment now. Did we finish the campfire in time?

"Hm? Ah!"

"What?" Mr. Skelly and Mr. Alf ask in unison.

I was distracted. My revival medicine came out at a quality of A.

"It seems that the border has started to weaken."

"Oh yeah?"

"It functions the same way as subspace, from what I can tell."

The grid I see with Space-time Recognition Expansion is wavering. The spots and the amount it wavers aren't constant, so it must be randomized. I could predict where they'd arise if I knew the laws behind this sort of thing, but I don't think I could research

something like that on my own. Or more accurately, it sounds like a headache.

The bishop and archbishop emerge from the church. Other clergy members with embroidered uniforms follow them. They're probably bringing the holy water I heard they'd be using.

"Look at that! What an impressive campfire."

"I've been told that the outsiders built this."

"I see. So it's their work? We better make sure to meet the standard they've set."

The clergy members bow to me before heading to the campfire.

"I should tell the twins to come back now," I realize.

"Are they gonna join the other flying players?" Mr. Alf asks me.

"Ah, I'm not sure yet."

Many residents carrying torches have started to emerge. Their role is to transfer the flames to the bonfires.

They gather in the town square while the union members retreat from it. Players move quickly when their goal is an S-rank clear.

"Mr. Ame, Ms. Trine, please head back to town now."

"Okay!"

"If you like, you can join Ms. Fairellen's group if you happen to run into them."

"Got it!"

That should do the trick.

The ceremony should begin soon. This is where the event really kicks off.

"I'm sure you've forgotten, but sleep is required for this event."

"…"

"What do we do?"

"I'm not sure. Ms. Primura, the twins, and I will definitely need to sleep."

"Primura does carpentry, so we can get her help once she's awake."

"It just hurts to lose players with night vision."

Going to bed at night is probably another aspect of the horror event. I don't know what to expect. I feel like we'll either wake up to nothing having happened, or we'll die in our sleep.

I believe this event will be the "nothing happened" kind, but that doesn't necessarily guarantee a happy ending either. If nothing happens, it just means we haven't been able to find the problem. It will probably come back to bite us when we least expect it. At that point, it's too late. I'm certain that will be the outcome. The very premise of an event is "something happening." It's a city event, so I doubt anything will attack us while we're asleep—at least, I certainly hope. Well, I suppose it'd be an interesting development.

Of course, I'll be asleep after my bedtime!

"It's only dusk right now. I hope something happens before I go to bed."

"But horror stuff always happens in the middle of the night, right?"

"Yeah, that's true."

"Well, whatever happens happens."

"Que será, será!"

The ceremony is well under way now.

Jugs of holy water are placed around the firewood. The clergy then form a circle around the campfire and offer prayers while the archbishop chants a spell.

Archbishop Edvard's spell and movements cause the holy water to emerge from the jugs and land on the wood. I can't see any magical energy with Magia Trace, so this must be powered by the ritual itself.

The jugs are emptied of holy water, and the clergy finish their prayers. Suddenly, a light green glow appears. The campfire was lit without any form of coal or spark. It must have been the power of the holy water.

It's a scene that screams "fantasy." The green flames are absolutely lovely.

I believe green fire exists in real life too but only when heating up metal. In other words, this green fire is no ordinary sight. I guess you can also catch a glimpse of it in fireworks.

The residents begin to light their torches with the green fire and transport the flames to the bonfires.

"I see. The flames don't waver at all. I'm sure the residents are worried about the border too, and this ritual may be wisdom passed down from their predecessors. Well, I can't deny the possibility that the gods directly granted them this method of self-defense."

"Either their predecessors made this ritual for them, or it was channeled by a medium," Mr. Alf speculates.

"Couldn't we light torches from it and carry them around with us?" asks Mr. Skelly.

"It's a good plan to stay safe, but won't we miss the entire event that way?"

"I didn't think of that."

I could see us being given a quest like tracking down a child who ran away from home. The torch method might be good for something like that, but otherwise it would be counterproductive.

"We found Ms. Fairellen!" the twins inform me.

"Then please join up with her group."

"Okay!"

The twins have joined the rest of the flying players. I know I can count on them.

"It's getting darker," Mr. Alf remarks.

"Night is falling! It's *our* time!" Mr. Skelly cheers.

The clergy members also leave the town square after the fire is lit. They're carrying the flames with their torches too, of course. They

must use it for stoves and the like to keep the flames alive inside the church.

"Oh, Princess Nemeseia. We've prepared a room for you should you need one. Someone in the church will be awake at all hours, so they'll gladly show you where to find it."

"Thank you, Archbishop Edvard."

Now that I think of it, I never reserved a room at any inn. While there aren't that many first-wavers, there are probably too many of us to all stay in the inns. I'd be more than happy to use the room in the church.

The veil of night has descended. I listen to the crackle of the firewood and gaze at the fire's green glow.

"It certainly is peaceful," I remark.

"A skeleton illuminated by flames in the darkness isn't exactly peaceful. It's right out of a horror game," says Mr. Alf.

"Hee hee!" Mr. Skelly giggles with a grin.

"But he's not so scary when he opens his mouth," Mr. Alf retorts.

"Why won't you love me back?!"

"Shut your mouth."

Yes, most peaceful indeed—even when I'm accompanied by a headless man and a skeleton.

"Nothing is going to happen if we stay by the fire. What say we go for a walk?" I suggest.

"Let's do it," they answer in unison.

We set off on a stroll, using our maps as references.

Most buildings in this world are made of stone. I assume it's meant to be a countermeasure against monster attacks, though they'll survive fires this way too. While stone is usually hard to acquire, space storage exists in this world. There aren't cars or heavy machinery here, but people can use magic, summon servants, and even conjure familiars, so they're capable of many things to make up for it.

To describe it simply, this game world is based off Europe in the Middle Ages, but a much more idealized version with royalty and nobility, castles and mansions, rows of buildings in the town outside of a castle surrounded by forests, and an economy where everyone travels by carriage. In so many words, this world is much more developed compared to its real-life counterpart.

Well, I don't see anyone other than us outsiders walking around outside right now, considering the situation. I feel a lot lonelier than before.

There are usually a lot of residents walking around outside at night. It would be inconvenient to players to lose access to shops and facilities if the residents had to go to bed at a certain time.

"Hm, it looks like some residents are patrolling too."

So not *everyone* is locked away inside their homes. I'm sure gatekeepers are out too. The last thing anyone wants is for monsters to penetrate the town.

"Whoa!" three residents cry at once.

"Good day," I greet them. "I see you're hard at work."

"A-ah, Princess Nemeseia and her party, yes. You startled us."

Oh, that's right. We all have night vision. We're not carrying torches either in case they interfere with the event. We must have appeared out of thin air to these residents.

I don't think I look scary, but Mr. Alf could be cause for alarm, and Mr. Skelly would give anyone a fright. It's hard to deny that, in a horror setting, we'd normally be the ones going around scaring people.

"I see. We'll start using Light so that we don't startle anyone else. I'd feel terrible if combat started up. Terrible for the person who attacks me, of course."

"Thank you for the consideration."

Mr. Alf and Mr. Skelly don't have Light Magic, so it's up to me to use the Light art, suspending a ball of light above our heads.

We go our separate ways from the three residents.

We wouldn't have any issues if we were attacked. Any resident who lays hands on a Nemeseia will be in big trouble. They might die from shock. I wouldn't have it that way, of course. I'm sure they'd be mortified, but I wouldn't want it to be to such a dramatic extent.

It doesn't matter if the attack hits or misses. It's the very action of attacking in the first place that's the problem. No one can ever attack royalty, no matter their justification, or else it amounts to high treason.

The only option at that point would be to silence all witnesses by telling them they saw nothing, and that this never happened. It would've been feasible with three residents against three players like us. Still, whoever attacks me would probably feel crushed by their own guilt. That's possible too.

Taking their own life wouldn't even be of any help in that situation either, as Nemeseias are royalty of the afterlife. Death is no escape. They'd truly be stuck between a rock and a hard place.

That's why we're using Light to make ourselves known—not for our sakes but for everyone else's. I suppose we'd be fair game for normal royalty, but it's not as if we plan to leave town in the present state of affairs.

We turn our attention back to the search. I only hope we come across something helpful.

We spend a few hours circling through town.

"Good thing the restaurants are open. They know now's the time to make a profit off all of us," says Mr. Alf.

"There's no need to leave their buildings at night so long as they stock up during daytime. The restaurants won't run into any trouble when the customers are coming in."

Thanks to these restaurants, players with cooking skills haven't had their hands full. That said, there's not enough restaurant space for everyone to enter, so everyone has to go in at different time slots.

Tomo's map has actually been rather useful. He placed stamps to mark different varieties of shops. They just blend in on the normal

map, where you have to zoom in to find specific locations.

Information has been shared with you.

"Oh!" the men cry.

"Let's see," I say with anticipation as I check the info.

"Someone spotted the back of a black cat walking through the streets. They chased after the cat but eventually lost sight of it."

"A kitty? Now that I think of it, I haven't seen cats in this world yet," says Mr. Skelly.

"A black cat. Black cats on Halloween are usually depicted as witches' familiars," Mr. Alf speculates.

"But aren't witches doctors in this world? Do they even have familiars?" Mr. Skelly asks.

"I'm not sure. Familiar spells do exist, at least."

I feel like familiars and spirit companions are the same concept, just with different names. Summoning Spell's servants have a different name too. Perhaps there's some sort of ritual we can do to create a familiar.

I, on the other hand, *have* seen a black cat in this world. It was in the old castle in the Medium. His name is Nyarlathotep. If this is his incarnation with the three glowing eyes, then he's definitely here for mischief.

He can gaze into our world, but can he really come here? I'm curious. Considering the power his kind holds, I wouldn't be surprised if he showed up here without any fanfare.

"Did they only see the *back* of the cat?" I wonder.

"They probably chased it from behind, and that's when it disappeared," Mr. Alf replies.

"I sure hope it didn't have three eyes," I reply.

"Three eyes?"

"Three burning eyes. It's an incarnation of Nyar. If you ignore the three burning red eyes and the identity of who they belong to, he's nothing more than a cute kitty."

"Uh, I feel like he'd totally disavow that."

"Nyar can't be cute, even if he looks like a cat?"

"Meeeoow!" Mr. Skelly, um, imitates Nyar.

"Would he allow such a thing? A collaboration where he appears in that form?"

"I wouldn't have too much of an issue if he showed up on his own," Mr. Skelly replies.

"We'd definitely need a protagonist," Mr. Alf suggests. "Ku and Has would show up at that point too."

"But then Nyar might suddenly turn into a robot," I reply.

"That'd be fine. Living machinery already exists in this world."

I haven't seen a robot *that* big yet, though…

We chat as we walk along, but there's nothing particularly noteworthy. The grid is still wavering, though it doesn't seem to link to the event in any way. Some outsider is just going to have to get lucky.

"They're forming a search party on the BBS to track down that kitty," Mr. Skelly informs us.

"I suppose it's *something* to go off of," says Mr. Alf.

"I just pray it doesn't have three eyes," I reply.

It feels like the event is going to end with us still strolling through the streets and chatting.

It's time for me to go to bed. Mr. Skelly is reading the event thread, but he tells me they haven't caught the cat yet.

I'll head to the church to sleep now. Mr. Skelly and Mr. Alf are continuing their patrol, so we'll be apart for a while.

The church's chapel is open to all visitors. It's quiet inside, but it never feels lonely due to the other residents around. However, tonight the chapel is vacant. The sanctity of the space is emphasized by the utter silence in the building.

I say a good-night prayer while I'm here, then I ask the nun to show me to my room.

"Please don't hesitate to use this room as you please."

"Thank you."

To visitors, the heart of a church is its chapel, but to the clergy, the heart is more like the living quarters. There's a building for members to live in, of course, and another for church operations. Making space for all that means there's few rooms for guests, but I

imagine the room I've been given is the nicest of them all—thanks to my position, of course.

I sink into the large bed that's been cleaned with the Laundry art. It's slightly smaller than the one in my villa.

Oh?

Information has been shared with you.

"Did you see that right? That Jack-o'-lantern just moved!"

Pumpkins, huh?

Good night.

Official BBS 5

[Fourth event] Halloween Day 1 [Server 1]

1. Management

This thread is for the fourth official event: Halloween.

Please use it as a general discussion thread for anything about the event.

395. Sightseeing Adventurer

I really want to find a clue.

396. Sightseeing Adventurer

Same here. But we've gotta find the starting point first.

397. Sightseeing Adventurer

The basic information comes in little by little.

398. Sightseeing Adventurer

Whoa, there's a big wave of it.

399. Sightseeing Adventurer

The town's name is already giving me a bad feeling about this.

400. Sightseeing Adventurer

Howard Town? Lmao.

401. Sightseeing Adventurer

Howard as in Howard Lovecraft, right? I'm sure of it.

402. Sightseeing Adventurer

Lovecraft?

403. Sightseeing Adventurer

Howard Phillips Lovecraft. You can think of him as the author of the Cthulhu mythos, even though that's not entirely accurate.

404. Sightseeing Adventurer

Oh ho. In other words, this event probably involves the outer ones?

405. Sightseeing Adventurer

We can always just leave Princess behind and go home.

406. Sightseeing Adventurer

How wicked.

407. Sightseeing Adventurer

I don't want it to end up as Princess + outer ones versus the rest of us.

408. Sightseeing Adventurer

Yeah, they're not necessarily on our side, after all.

1109. Sightseeing Adventurer

You can exchange tickets from the residents in the town square. Actually, it'd be more accurate to call them event NPCs.

1110. Sightseeing Adventurer

Oh yeah? Ah, I see. They're definitely NPCs.

1111. Sightseeing Adventurer

They only speak set phrases? Yep, that’s an NPC.

1112. Sightseeing Adventurer

And they give you costumes. Why am I not surprised?

1113. Sightseeing Adventurer

Well, it’s better than going for something weird and original.

1114. Sightseeing Adventurer

Except one item is way crazier than the rest.

1115. Sightseeing Adventurer

Lol at the cute shoggoth. What’s going on there?

1116. Sightseeing Adventurer

You can call them cute if you want. I still think they’re creepy.

1117. Sightseeing Adventurer

Isn’t that just an iridescent cloth with a bunch of eyeballs drawn on?

1118. Sightseeing Adventurer

It’s a unique evolution of Medjed.

1119. Sightseeing Adventurer

Seriously? That’s crazy.

1120. Sightseeing Adventurer

You’ve gotta spam the B button.

1121. Sightseeing Adventurer

It’s the only option.

1122. Sightseeing Adventurer

Congratulations! Azurill has evolved to Pikablu!

1123. Sightseeing Adventurer

Not Pikablu!

1124. Sightseeing Adventurer

I forgot about Pikablu. How nostalgic.

1125. Sightseeing Adventurer

I always loved that guy.

1126. Sightseeing Adventurer

Same.

3241. Sightseeing Adventurer

Uh, Princess is hauling lumber for the campfire.

3242. Sightseeing Adventurer

So those things summoned through Secret Art of Necromancy are called servants as a nickname?

3243. Sightseeing Adventurer

It's a proper use of the word servants.

3244. Sightseeing Adventurer

I mean, that's exactly what they are.

3245. Sightseeing Adventurer

Princess's method of transportation looks insane, but it's just as weird to see a penguin hauling lumber too.

3246. Sightseeing Adventurer

Well, he uses a two-handed sword, so I'm sure he's got the stats for it.

3247. Sightseeing Adventurer

It's still so weird to hear that voice coming out of a penguin.

3248. Sightseeing Adventurer

Yeah, he has such a nice voice. It's hilarious.

3249. Sightseeing Adventurer

So, do we have any other information?

3250. Sightseeing Adventurer

Got nothing.

3251. Sightseeing Adventurer

"Ahhh, got nothing, got nothing!"

3252. Sightseeing Adventurer

Another nostalgic post.

3253. Sightseeing Adventurer

What was that character called again? The got-nothing sprite?

3254. Sightseeing Adventurer

Yep. I can still draw Bemu Bemu, even now.

3255. Sightseeing Adventurer

Same.

3256. Sightseeing Adventurer

We're just waiting for night at this point.

3257. Sightseeing Adventurer

Now’s the time to gather tickets, right?

3258. Sightseeing Adventurer

Yeah, if this is a horror event, it’ll probably get started at night.

3259. Sightseeing Adventurer

Let’s exchange tickets while we still can.

3260. Sightseeing Adventurer

In other words, gotta haul firewood?

3261. Sightseeing Adventurer

What about hunting?

3262. Sightseeing Adventurer

It’s not really worth it for first-wavers.

3263. Sightseeing Adventurer

You get tickets when you clear adventurers’ union jobs, but the firewood’s more efficient.

3264. Sightseeing Adventurer

Guess I’ll be hauling lumber then. It seems like a good thing to do for the event too.

3265. Sightseeing Adventurer

I hear it’s gonna be a special fire for some sort of ceremony.

3266. Sightseeing Adventurer

So it’s important? Then I’ll help out too.

6752. Sightseeing Adventurer

Hmm. We've already got less people than the other servers. Maybe we shouldn't have people covering the same areas.

6753. Sightseeing Adventurer

I'd rather get an S clear if possible.

6754. Sightseeing Adventurer

I appreciate the big union coming up with a plan for all of us.

6755. Sightseeing Adventurer

It's such a big town, y'know. I think I'll join up with 'em.

6756. Sightseeing Adventurer

My party's gonna spread out a little.

9315. Sightseeing Adventurer

Hey, who the hell started playing horror game BGM?! It's scary!

9316. Sightseeing Adventurer

Aaaah, I love this song!

9317. Sightseeing Adventurer

Where's it coming from?

9318. Sightseeing Adventurer

Northeast of the town square?

9319. Sightseeing Adventurer

I'm gonna go listen.

9433. Sightseeing Adventurer

Is this the Yomawari theme song?! I’m really scared!

9434. Sightseeing Adventurer

Whoa, it switched to the Midnight Shadows theme.

9435. Sightseeing Adventurer

Don’t hit us with the horror game stuff. It’s making it way too scary out here.

9436. Sightseeing Adventurer

Not to mention the fire is green.

9437. Sightseeing Adventurer

This is a piano song, right?

9438. Sightseeing Adventurer

I feel like something’s gonna jump out at me.

9439. Sightseeing Adventurer

Nooo! I don’t wanna be chased!

9440. Sightseeing Adventurer

Kittyyyyy!

9441. Sightseeing Adventurer

Kitty-caaaat!

9442. Sightseeing Adventurer

It looks like a black cat from behind, but are we sure it’s really a cat?

9443. Sightseeing Adventurer

Cats are cats. Why shouldn’t it be a cat?

9444. Sightseeing Adventurer

They must have been enchanted by the cat. You can see it on their faces.

9445. Sightseeing Adventurer

I bet they look like they're experiencing euphoria.

9446. Sightseeing Adventurer

Now recruiting troops for a cat search party.

9447. Sightseeing Adventurer

Guess I'll join you.

9448. Sightseeing Adventurer

Let's do this! It was on the northwest side.

9449. Sightseeing Adventurer

Roger.

12063. Sightseeing Adventurer

Hey, what's going on?

12064. Sightseeing Adventurer

No thanks, I just ate.

12065. Sightseeing Adventurer

This is serious! Something's off with this place.

12066. Sightseeing Adventurer

Don't be silly, Gramps.

12067. Sightseeing Adventurer

Stop acting like idiots!

12068. Sightseeing Adventurer

Is it just me, or does the mini map show you at a slightly different spot? Ah, it fixed itself.

12069. Sightseeing Adventurer

You’re just tired.

12070. Sightseeing Adventurer

Seriously?

12071. Sightseeing Adventurer

Hey, where am I?

12072. Sightseeing Adventurer

How the hell would I know?

12073. Sightseeing Adventurer

Don’t tell me you don’t know how to read a mini map.

12074. Sightseeing Adventurer

That can’t be true. They’re so easy to read.

12075. Sightseeing Adventurer

People like that really do exist out there…

12076. Sightseeing Adventurer

Seriously? I’d understand if they couldn’t read maps in real life, at least.

12077. Sightseeing Adventurer

Mini maps show you your location and what direction you're facing, after all.

12078. Sightseeing Adventurer

I hate those mini maps that rotate when you do.

12079. Sightseeing Adventurer

I know what you mean. It's like, how am I supposed to know what direction I'm going if you keep spinning around?!

12080. Sightseeing Adventurer

Couldn't agree more. You've gotta check the compass direction for every little move. It's so annoying.

12081. Sightseeing Adventurer

I agree, but we're derailing the BBS.

12082. Sightseeing Adventurer

Are you saying the BBS never gets derailed?

12083. Sightseeing Adventurer

…Of course it does!

12084. Sightseeing Adventurer

I'm seeing some sort of optical illusion.

12085. Sightseeing Adventurer

In town?

12086. Sightseeing Adventurer

I ended up in a different place from where I was trying to go.

12087. Sightseeing Adventurer

I told you so! It wasn’t my fault after all.

12088. Sightseeing Adventurer

That’s what everyone says when they do something wrong.

12089. Sightseeing Adventurer

It’s! Not! My! Fault!

12090. Sightseeing Adventurer

Please go home, goodwill ambassador.

12091. Sightseeing Adventurer

Those of you who’ve seen it—it’s time for a sanity check!

12092. Sightseeing Adventurer

More importantly, do we know the cause yet?

12093. Sightseeing Adventurer

I dunno. It’s so tricky.

12094. Sightseeing Adventurer

Summon the fab five!

12095. Sightseeing Adventurer

Knock it off. I can hear their voices in my head.

12096. Sightseeing Adventurer

Imagine if they turned up to sort out my MC house.

12097. Sightseeing Adventurer

That’s a nice everything you have there…

12098. Sightseeing Adventurer

Sssss…

12099. Sightseeing Adventurer

We’re getting off track.

12100. Sightseeing Adventurer

Pumpkins?

12101. Sightseeing Adventurer

Yep, looks like the pumpkins.

12102. Sightseeing Adventurer

Jack-o’-lanterns?

12103. Sightseeing Adventurer

We can’t find that cat!

12104. Sightseeing Adventurer

I’ve caught glimpses of it, but it always runs away.

12105. Sightseeing Adventurer

What else is there to do?

12106. Sightseeing Adventurer

We can check on the bonfires. There was also a quest to look for a missing kid, but that’s about it.

12107. Sightseeing Adventurer

A kid went missing?

12108. Sightseeing Adventurer

By check on the bonfires, you mean check that they’re still burning so we still have safe areas?

12109. Sightseeing Adventurer

That’s really it?

12110. Sightseeing Adventurer

That’s it.

12111. Sightseeing Adventurer

Then should we assume that we’ve already got key information in there somewhere?

12112. Sightseeing Adventurer

I dunno, since I didn’t make this event. But I bet searching for the kid is important.

12113. Sightseeing Adventurer

Should we look around the place they went missing?

12114. Sightseeing Adventurer

But there’s no eyewitnesses or anything to go off of.

12115. Sightseeing Adventurer

Maybe they dropped something in the place they went missing.

12116. Sightseeing Adventurer

A lost item?

12117. Sightseeing Adventurer

Well, we’ll be looking around either way. If something’s on the ground, someone’s sure to spot it.

Bonus Story:
LIVE! Interviewing Famous Players!

OKAY, LET'S GET this stream started!

"Hey there, everyone! It's me, Yura! I'll explain what we're doing once more people join!"

Today's plan all comes down to luck, though it's easy enough to explain.

Hmm. All right, now's a good time to start.

"Today is a test of luck! I know what the title says, but first I've got to find some famous players to talk to."

I'm going to chat with famous players who have a little free time. I've prepared some questions and can pick ones from listener comments too. I just won't ask them any personal information, of course.

Oh ho! If it isn't the shining hottie!

"Elder Brother Cecil!"

"Ah, Ms. Yura?"

"He's so hot!"[1]

Uh-huh, he's the same handsome knight as always! That embarrassed smile he gave me when I called him "Elder Brother" made him even hotter!

"How can I help you?"

"I'm trying to interview famous players. Do you have some time?"

"Is this for a livestream? I can talk for a bit."

"First off, tell us your name!"

"I'm Cecil, the guildmaster of the Knights of Dawn. It's a pleasure."

"The pleasure is all mine, Mr. Cecil!"

I must be lucky to bump into Mr. Cecil right off the bat!

"Is there a story behind your guild's name?"

"I called us 'knights' because we carry the same battle skills and morals knights do. I picked the 'dawn' part at random."

"So there's no meaning to it?"

"Right. But it works, doesn't it?"

"I can picture it fitting in well in other games too, yes. It's not weird to say aloud either!"

"That's the kind of thing I was going for. It's an important aspect."

"Yep, totally! Well, that part only matters if you have friends."

"Oof! You're killing me over here."

"That was unexpectedly harsh," Mr. Cecil remarks.

"Friends? Where can I buy those?"

"I think one friend costs about 800,000 yen these days," I explain. "I'm talking about AI, though."

"It's a lot cheaper if you just buy this game. There's all kinds of residents in here."

"A lot of people want to play solo even when they see all different kinds of people in an MMO!"

"True. It's probably like working in a café or something. Not that I'd know."

I don't know either.

"Why did you decide to use dual swords as a main weapon?"

"Because they look cool, don't they?"

"I understand completely."

"But aren't they difficult to use?" I ask.

"That only makes them more appealing. They're really strong when you know how to handle them, and they just look so cool. There's no downside to mastering them."

"I see. Did you consider any other weapons?"

"I like spears and stuff, just not actually using them myself. Oh, I'm talking about the two-handed ones."

"You mean long-handled weapons? I hear spears are quite easy to use."

"I mean, yeah, you just stab things with them."

"Are hammers and axes similar?"

"You have to get the hang of them, just like how it's hard to hit the target head-on with a blunt weapon. You might be able to figure out an axe once it's in your hands, but it's surprisingly hard to balance

its weight. They're at least easier than hammers, since they have a blade."

"I suppose that *would* offer quite a difference in damage."

"With spears, you just have to stab at spots that look soft enough. It's easy to deal the same amount of damage with each hit, so it's not a complicated weapon on its own. You also need less dexterity than other weapons, since you only use it to thrust at a spot of your choice."

"I see!"

"Having a short spear and shield is an extremely safe loadout. People call that the standard spear build. You can always go with a two-handed spear for more firepower too."

So that's why they say spears are good for beginners?

"Why did you choose a two-handed axe, Ms. Yura? Axes are pretty niche weapons. Not to mention, it doesn't really suit an idol."

"The more boorish the weapon, the better, don't you think?"

"Ah, I see. I understand completely. You made the right choice."

"It's also strong against most enemies. A-at least, so I've heard."

"Plus, it counts for both slashing and blunt attacks, is super effective against wood, and surprisingly easy to guard yourself with, since it's so big."

"It's hard to fight in tight spaces, but that's true of all large weapons, right?"

"Yeah. You might be able to get by with a spear, but two-handed swords and two-handed hammers are going to be a problem like the

two-handed axe."

"So, should I carry a secondary weapon?"

"Fighting would be easier that way. But it's up to you."

"Is that so?"

"Uh-huh. The weapon that's easiest for you to use should be your priority, whatever it may be. In a full-dive action game like this, your choices are directly linked to your motivation. The most familiar weapon is best."

"Sometimes you know you're better with one weapon, but you still wanna kill things with another."

"Exactly," Mr. Cecil agrees. "They're all good once you master them. Princess uses the weapon in her right hand like a shield, and her sister's got that halberd too."

"If only everyone's personality matched the weapon they *wanted* to use."

"Yeah. It's no fun when they don't align. Although, put in a little practice and you can get used to just about any weapon. By the way, this is becoming more of a chat than an interview. Is that an issue?"

"Anyone have any questions for him?"

No doubt I'll get some weird ones, but anyway.

"Do you have a girlfriend?"

"Nope. Next question."

"I'm Cecil."

"Really? Next question."

"You're ignoring that one?"

"I'm a big fan. Please send me your autograph and stamp it with your blood."

"You must be an assassin."

"You think they want proof of your death? I sure hope that's an assassin. It's way less creepy than thinking a *fan* wants your bloody autograph."

"They're from the radical branch of fans. Next question."

"Do you have any other friends in the game aside from your guild and party?"

"Let's see. I talk to Mr. Ertz, the blacksmith, and Mr. Dentelle, the tailor, pretty often. They repair my equipment and provide me with new items. Who else? I guess I'm friends with my fellow guildmasters."

"Ah, you mean like Mr. Musasabi?"

"Mr. Lucebarm, Ms. Kotatsu, Ms. Akirina, Tomo-kun, and the like. Princess and her party hunt at different spots."

"Aaah. They hunt in the caves and ruins, right?"

"Yep. That's why I don't talk to them that often."

I see. They usually team up during events, but Princess's party hunts separately from his, so they don't come across each other very often!

"Oh, I've gotta get hunting now," Mr. Cecil says.

"Okay! I'll go look for someone else next!"

I thank Mr. Cecil and watch him leave.

All right! Now it's time to find another vict—I mean, another subject!

Oooh, look over there!

"Mr. Mohawk! Do you have a minute!"

"Hyah ha ha! Well, if it isn't Yura? You better film my good side!"

"The 'hyah ha' guy cares about how he looks on camera?"

"It's up to you to preserve this gallant form for future generations! Gyah ha ha ha!"

Hang on. An apocalyptic hyah ha guy isn't supposed to care about future generations!

He's as stylish as ever, I see. Mr. Mohawk has the hairstyle he's named after, no shirt, a belt, and spiky shoulder pads. He leaves no detail ignored. I'll do my best to restrain my expressions and my laughter.

"I'd like to interview you if you have a moment."

"Gyah ha ha ha! Ask me whatever ya want, Sis!"

"Why the 'hyah ha' laugh?"

"Hyah ha ha ha! It's simple! I do it because the normal me would never laugh like that!"

"Thank God for that!"

"You're a working adult, isn't that right, Mr. Mohawk? I can't picture that in the slightest."

"Yeah, I'm an office worker. So what?"

"Pfft!"

"Hee hee hee! I'd get the sack actin' like this!"

"Ha ha!"

Hey! You can't just act like a wild man, suddenly open up to me, and then start licking your dagger like that! How am I supposed to stop myself from laughing?! Even the comments are nothing but "lmao."

"I know you play solo, but who do you party up with the most?"

"Mostly just Mead, Fairellen, and the mutt. I usually join Clementia and Mitsuki too! Hyah ha ha!"

"Uh-huh, I see! So you're all DPS."

"Not many tanks in this game in the first place!"

"Yes, it's scary to be a tank!"

"It takes guts, that's for damn sure!"

It's pretty common for video games to have low populations of tanks, but adding the full-dive VR element on top of that? Yeah, I get it.

"Do you use any weapons other than your dagger, Mr. Mohawk?"

"I use purification magic and Projectile on the filth! Hyah ha ha ha!"

"Purification magic? Ah, you mean fire spells?"

"I've got wind spells to turn up the heat too. For long-range enemies I can't hit with spells, I've got no choice but to use Projectile on the suckers!"

"Are visuals the most important thing for you?"

"Gyah ha ha ha! Damn right! That's the first thing I think about."

"He's a true RPer. He's playing with self-imposed restrictions."

"Hee hee hee! But it's real fun," he cackles.

"I can tell you're enjoying yourself, but you really limit yourself that way."

"No need to think about all that stuff! Sometimes just havin' a preference is no different than roleplayin'!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"I know this one chick who dresses like a mercenary. She's got a spear, round shield, and a mace as her secondary weapon. She wears leather armor with chain mail and a big overcoat. She says she's not playin' as anyone other than herself, but she just likes dressin' a certain way. Wouldn't ya call that RP? She told me she loves that grimy fantasy style!"

"Aaah. In other words, there's no need to put on a whole performance like you, Mr. Mohawk?"

"Princess is a pretty good example too."

Yeah, there're many different forms of RP out there. Some players will create an entire character they perform at all times like Mr. Mohawk. Some players fully *become* their character through their choice in weapons, armor, and even the way they speak, like Mr. Musasabi.

Other types simply value the setting they're playing in—in other words, they immerse themselves in the game world. They can

maintain their normal personalities that way, but they dress just like any other resident. Mr. Mohawk described the girl as being dressed like a mercenary, but more accurately, you'd probably call her an adventurer, considering I hear they're who she hangs out with, plus that's what she registered herself as during the tutorial and everything.

Then there are types like Princess, who adjust their character depending on the time and place. Ah, maybe the group of young ladies fit into that category too…

"I'm gonna go huntin' now," Mr. Mohawk tells me. "The young ladies are right over there for ya."

"Huh? Oh, you're right!"

"Gyah ha ha ha! Come find me if ya need something else! See ya, Sis!"

So *this* is the "loud but nice person." He even laughed really hard when he saw the forum post saying, "This Mohawk guy dresses like a wacko and says really lewd and crazy things. I can't take it!"

I thank Mr. Mohawk and see him off on his hunting trip.

Next up are the young ladies.

"Hey there, ladies! Do you have time for an interview?"

"A green camera fairy? Does that mean you're streaming?" Ms. Abby asks.

"Make sure we look nice on camera," Ms. Eliza demands of her attendant.

"Yes, my lady!"

There's two young ladies in dresses and two maids! They look so fancy! It's amazing!

"Please start by introducing yourselves!"

"I'm Eliza. Letty is my attendant."

"We're Abby and Dory!" Ms. Abby says next.

"My name's Yura! It's nice to meet you all!"

Ms. Letty and Ms. Dory stand silently behind their mistresses. It's most impressive. These four players truly have a very different atmosphere than everyone else. The only thing that could make it more impressive would be for Princess to be here.

"What's your relationship with Princess?!"

"We're childhood friends," Ms. Eliza replies.

"Our parents visit hers, and that's when we get to see her!" Ms. Abby adds.

"Oh! Does that mean Princess invited you to join her in this game?"

"No. It looked interesting in all of her videos, so we decided to study abroad."

"This game isn't offered overseas yet!" Ms. Abby explains.

"*Huh?"*

"Excuse me? You're studying abroad just to play a video game?"

"That's obviously not the *only* reason, but the timing worked out."

"We hadn't been to Japan in so long!"

"Whoa. You two are *actually* rich young ladies, aren't you?"

"I suppose. But we're dressed like this because we wanted to look a certain way. Oh ho ho ho!"

"LOL, she's got the high-pitched laughter down. She sounds like a villainess."

Mr. Mohawk is one of a kind, but these ladies are distinct too. Did she practice that high-pitched laugh? There's no way that's her real voice. It *can't* be, right?

Yes, she tells me she practiced it. That's a relief.

"Do you have a concept for your characters?"

"We're a heroine and a villainess, obviously. Though, that's just for our appearances. Everything else is the real us."

"I thought about getting pink hair, but I decided I wanted to have matching drills with Eli!"

"So you have different hairstyles in real life?"

"You can't wear your hair like this without wires. I don't want to go to all that work just for this style," Ms. Abby explains.

Ms. Eliza acts how you'd expect based on her appearance, but Ms. Abby is actually quite forthcoming. How interesting. Perhaps you would describe her more like a realistic heroine rather than the more sly girls you might see in the genre.

"While I have you, there's something I'd like to ask of you," Ms. Eliza states.

"Oh? What would that be?" I reply.

"Can't you find a way to make the Japanese language a little less complex?"

"Yeah, that's fair."

"Ah, yes, I hear learning it is quite tricky."

"Although, we've been hearing Japanese since we were little, so it's easier for us than for most people," says Ms. Eliza.

"Kanji are naturally complex, but counting numbers is pretty hard too!" Ms. Abby complains.

"Numbers?"

"Ichi, ni, san, shi, go, roku, shichi, hachi, ku, jyuu," Ms. Eliza begins.

"And in reverse, it's jyuu, kyuu, hachi, nana, roku, gou, yon, san, ni, ichi!" Ms. Abby finishes.

"Some people switch up 'seven' and 'four,' while others don't," Ms. Eliza observes.

"Uh, I guess that's true?"

"Ichi, ni, san, shii, gou, roku, shichi, hachi, kyu, jyuu. How's that? They're easier to say that way," I offer.

"But you say 'ku-ku' when you're multiplying nine times nine, right?" Ms. Eliza asks. "You don't say it as 'kyuu-kyuu.'"

"Hitotsu, futatsu, mittsu, yottsu, itsutsu, muttsu, nanatsu, yattsu, kokonotsu, tou."

"I know that one! It's hi, fu, mi, yo, i, mu, na, ya, ko, to, right?!" Ms. Abby chimed in.

"I've never heard anyone do it that way before."

"I just can't learn them by ear!"

"That's a very old way to count," I explain. "Maybe grandmas would count that way from time to time, but that's about it."

"That comes from Yamato kotoba, the native Japanese words. You count years with 'tose' and 'ka' for days. For a person's age, being twenty years old is called 'hatachi,' which is the one exception to the counting rule."

"Same for 'tsuitachi' when you count days. It means the first day of the month."

"It's so much trouble," Ms. Eliza concludes.

"There's just so many exceptions!" Ms. Abby adds.

"Ah, come to think of it, you can count using the Hi-Fu-Mi norito or the Iroha poem too, can't you?"

"And those are just an arbitrary prayer and poem used out of convenience because they don't repeat any syllables."

"I see!"

"I've heard of the Iroha poem but not the Hi-Fu-Mi norito."

"I only know the 'iroha nihoheto' part!"

"Iroha nihoheto, chinuru wo. I don't know the rest."

"Japanese is really great when it comes to expressing something! Lots of words seem the same, but they actually have different nuances! Of course, I'm sure it's hell if you have to study it intensely though."

"Japanese is beautiful and unintelligible. Honestly, we don't really understand it either."

"Agreed!"

It turned into a discussion of the Japanese language by the end, but that's fine!

I got to talk to Mr. Cecil, Mr. Mohawk, and the young ladies. It was a great success!

I did more chatting than interviewing, but at least I had fun talking to everyone. Should I give it another shot sometime? I hope I can speak to different people in the future. I didn't run into Princess, Ms. Kotatsu, or Ms. Mead this time.

Yeah, I've gotta do this again. But for now, I'm stopping the stream and heading out for a bit of hunting.

Afterword

GOOD DAY! I'm Akisuzu Nenohi.

This has been Volume 9 of the series. Our heroine leveled up in a new dungeon, worked on production, met residents in relatively important positions, enjoyed some PvP with Fairellen, and reached the start of the official event.

Coming up, we have a Halloween horror event that's only just begun, so I can't write much about it here. I'll discuss it more in the next volume.

First, let's talk about the dungeon in the ruins. This dungeon can be thought of as the inside of a factory where mechs appear as enemies. The majority are equipped with long-range weapons for indoor battle, making it a delightful hunting spot for our protagonist.

The dungeon itself is actually one of the more difficult ones. The Mech race are generally built out of metal armor—weak against blunt weapons but resistant to slash attacks. They all attack with high precision and have great hit rates, since they're machines, but their individual attack strength, frequency, and movement speed vary from type to type.

By the way, the mech race is based on a certain mecha game.

The chapter "Vs. Fairellen" was a sudden PvP fight between friends that erupted in Starting Town. If it wasn't obvious enough from how it went in the volume, our heroine is basically a hard counter for someone like Fairellen. As a pure magic user, her only means of attack is casting spells, and as a member of the physically small fairy race, she has little stamina. Put simply, she dies. Fighting our heroine in a 1v1 would be enough to make anyone feel useless.

The protagonist also came to join Cecil's chronicle quest through a different path. She arrived to bring about its conclusion.

Stellura referred to the quest as the heroine's "job as an outer one" in this chapter. You're very perceptive if you found that strange!

Immortals show up to handle people who lay their hands on souls, that being Stellura's domain. If the royal family, high-ranking nobles, or the like were to partake in such a crime, the entire country could be wiped out as punishment. Meanwhile, outer ones appear specifically to punish those who violate contracts with Stellura, such as when someone annuls their own oath to the goddess—outer ones may also be called upon to punish Sorcieres, who could easily be too much for humans to handle on their own. In that case, when it's generally the role of the Nemeseia immortals to punish those who interfere with the soul, why would the in-game message describe it as a job for an outer one?

The shocking truth—well, no, it's not exactly shocking—is that immortals simply *can't* carry out a soul eradication. The immortals—including Nemeseias, their royalty—act solely as Stellura's proxies in

the management of souls. It's their job to maintain the afterlife and bring peace or punishment to each soul, nothing more, nothing less. They have neither the right nor the ability to eliminate a soul.

I may go into more detail later on in the story, so I won't give a full explanation just now, but gods and outer ones are the only beings capable of performing soul eradication. Not all outer ones possess the ability either. There are few instances where soul eradication becomes necessary in the first place, so there's no need for everyone to have that capability.

So that's why the heroine's mission was described as her "job as an outer one." I could write even more about outer ones and immortals, but that's plenty for now.

The new chapter in this volume is written from Yura's perspective.

The rest of this series is written from the perspective of Anastasia, within which it's impossible to show any scenes where she's not around. I thought it would be easy to use Yura, the streamer, to show characters interacting outside the heroine's presence.

By the way, Mohawk mentions the "chick dressed like a mercenary" in this chapter, but she's actually the uncouthly dressed woman our protagonist mentions in Volume 3. She was nothing more than a passerby out on a nice walk, so I don't have a name for her, and I haven't decided if I'll settle on one yet.

This series will be hitting double digits with the next volume. I believe most of it will cover the official event.

I hope you enjoyed reading Volume 9, even if only a little.

Let us meet again in Volume 10.

October, 2023

Footnotes

Bonus Story: LIVE! Interviewing Famous Players!

[1] Text written in italics are comments from listeners.



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