

Chapter -29

It was way worse than the Meat Flower, because the entire chunk of Mimic Meat tasted of synthetic grape, while its unsettling texture and powerful stench made me gag violently, as though triggering some primal response that knew it was bad to eat it.

Choose your reward! x
<p><i>Just because something is a delicacy, it doesn't mean it's actually good. Our poor Species Sampling Department had to taste-test all the food on your world and the conclusion was:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>you are all nasty.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Anyway, rewards:</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Pick one of the options:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">‘Randomizer’ ‘Mimic Buddy’ ‘Reflective Shell’</p>

I was immediately reminded of the one time I'd tried a weird Swedish delicacy that'd smelled like a garbage bin left out in the summer for three weeks without supervision. Pushing the horrendous memory aside, I clicked the options to get some more information.

‘Randomizer’ x
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ability</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Allows you to randomize an enemy by swapping them with another enemy.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>This works on minor enemies as well as bosses. The outcome is completely random, so a Boss might be turned into a Level 1 cockroach, or, vice-versa, a Level 1 cockroach might become a level 99 World Boss.</i></p>

Cooldown: 6 hours

‘Mimic Buddy’ x

Passive

*Mimics are now friendly towards you and will surrender any
swallowed treasure if you pat them gently.*

Other Players will however find you slightly less trustworthy.

‘Reflective Shell’ x

Passive

Your skin has a 25% chance to reflect impact damage.

Don’t ask me how it works, it just does.

Sidenote: you’ll also start to smell a bit like seafood.

“What the hell,” Panda muttered in disbelief. “They’re all actually not terrible?”

I nodded. “Finally.”

“Should definitely get the Randomizer!” he said eagerly.

“There is no way in hell I’m trusting the System on this. Didn’t you tell me just moments before a fucking Mimic showed up that everything is rigged??”

“I suppose I might’ve said something like that.”

“I’m picking Reflective Shell,” I decided and clicked on the option.

“I thought you said you didn’t need defense.”

“Getting shot really changed my perspective on that,” I replied.

With the Mimic Meat out of the way, I figured it was time to evolve Brock, so I pulled the pop-up back into view:

Weaponlution — Level 8		
Hydra +1 Blade +80% Weight	Batter +30% Swing Speed -30% Cutting -30% Slashing	Purple+ <u>Purple²</u>

“I wonder what Purple² does,” Panda said curiously.

“Pick Hydra!” Brock insisted.

“There’s no way I’m testing out ‘Purple+’!” I told him, before clicking the ‘Hydra’ option, even though the ‘Batter’ swing speed was probably better.

The purple Bonk Hammer made a sound like two balloons being rubbed against each other, before a wet *pop* announced the arrival of a second hammerhead, which grew next to the original one and had a short neck connected to the main shaft at a forty-five-degree angle.

“*Me willy’s a Siamese Twin now!!*”

The next level-up appeared immediately after the effects of the transformation had subsided:

Weaponlution — Level 9		
Batter +30% Swing Speed -30% Cutting -30% Slashing	Long Shaft +5in Length +20% Weight	Hydra+ +1 Blade +60% Weight

“Eh... I guess ‘Hydra+’ for symmetry,” I muttered and clicked it before anyone could argue with me about it.

Another head appeared on the end of the Bonk Hammer, opposite side to the first, creating a very strange-looking weapon. I was slightly worried that the additional surface area at the end would blunt the impact damage it was capable of dishing out, though it was likely that such realistic worries might not factor into the weapon, which was, by its very existence, counter to the rules of normality.

Weaponlution — Level 10		
Double Trouble	Homerun	Rainbow Trail

+Repeats damage of attack half a second after initial strike	+Objects hit by your weapon fly at 3x normal speed	<u>RAINBOW</u>
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“Another special evolution!” Panda said excitedly.

“My hand-eye coordination sucks, so I’m picking ‘Double Trouble’.”

“But what about ‘Rainbow Trail’!? Don’t you want to know what it does??”

“Not even slightly. It might just be some kind of earbleed version of the Nyan Cat song on repeat for all we know, or it might fuck up my tastebuds again.”

As I clicked the option, no obvious change overcame the Bonk Hammer, but Brock immediately groaned in pleasure, which, considering that I was holding him, made me deeply uncomfortable.

“Please stop that.”

“*But it felt so good...!*”

“I’ll throw you away if you don’t stop squirming!”

Weaponlution — Level 11		
Long Shaft +5in Length +20% Weight	Crusher +25% Impact +50% Weight	Shockwave +Double Trouble’s 2nd strike produces a powerful shockwave

“Hmm,” I hummed, looking at the options.

“‘Crusher’ is the best one,” said Panda.

“I guess I don’t need more shockwave power,” I replied in agreement.

“*What about me shaft!? Won’t someone think of me shaft!?*”

“You’re long enough as is,” I told Brock and clicked ‘Crusher’. The only noticeable difference was that the weight increased. Despite still being a balloon hammer, he was back to weighing the same as when he was a shortsword.

Weaponlution — Level 12

Crusher+	Blunt	Ghost Strike
+35% Impact	+50% Impact	+Double Trouble's
+40% Weight	-100% All Other Damage Types	2nd strike bypasses all armour

“Damn...” I said, as I saw the last option.

“You’ve got to pick it!”

“But they’re all so good...”

“Gambit, don’t be a fool now.”

I sighed and clicked ‘Ghost Strike’.

“*Woah... That’s an odd sensation.*”

I lifted Brock up and moved him around a little, immediately noticing that some kind of misty blue trail followed him now. It was kind of like a portion of his soul was trailing behind the heads of the hammer.

“That should be all the upgrades,” Panda said. “Now do your level-up and let’s get out of here.”

“What about the Fusion Gum?”

“Does it actually do anything?”

I frowned. “Panda... you literally told me to check everything.”

“I guess I did.”

“You seem kind of out of it,” I said.

“Well, think about it, you just killed five Players without meaning to and it didn’t faze you in the slightest.”

I shrugged.

“See! *That* right there is exactly what I mean!”

“Doesn’t Superman kill a bunch of people when he fights villains in the city?”

“...Did you just compare yourself to Superman???”

“*That’s pretty delusional, Nigel,*” Brock commented seriously.

I ignored their remarks and brought up my Status screen, sinking my new attribute point into Vitality for more Stamina and Health:

Level -7	‘Gambit’	<i>System Glitch</i> ^x
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STATS			
Health: Ain't Not Good	Stamina: いいけど	Armor: Plastic Bottle Suit	
Carry Weight: 1000 Pandas	Top Speed: Mountain Bike	Mana: Literally Zero	
ATTRIBUTES			
Strength: 2300 lbs.	Dexterity: Joey	Intelligence: TBD	Vitality: Ribeye
Athleticism: 蝙蝠	Perception: 'Yes?'	Wisdom: N/A	Defense: Plastic Bottle
ABILITIES		PASSIVES	
'Punch.harder()' '...Break' 'I_CAN_FLY' 'Dungeon...'		'Glitch' 'Insanity' 'Inanimate Voices' 'Math.multiply(Punch)' 'BIRTHDAY_SUIT' 'Reflective Shell'	

“I think a Tomahawk is superior to Ribeye,” I muttered, taking offense to the System’s ranking of cuts of meat.

“Ehh, Gambit?”

“Yea?”

“Look at your Insanity Gauge...”

“What the fuck. Why is it like that??”

“I guess because of the Conspiracy Whistle.”

“Does this mean I have 110% Insanity now??”

“That seems to be the case.”

“I wonder if it changes anything.”

The Panda shrugged. “I don’t think it’s meant to happen.”

I shook my head. It was just another thing that was broken. I picked up the Fusion Gum and inspected it:

‘Fusion Gum’ x
<p><i>Guess what flavor it has! That’s right, it is the famous 7-course-meal flavor, all in a single piece of gum! Truly a marvel of science!</i></p> <p><i>Of course, to you it’ll just taste of grape. Guess it sucks to be you.</i></p> <p><i>Chewing this gum allows you to combine two skills into one, producing very powerful results.</i></p> <p><i>We recommend throwing this gum away, since there’s obviously no telling what you might break if you use it! We’re willing to ignore past transgressions if you do!</i></p>
Weight: N/A

Panda read the tooltip and then fell silent.

“Sorry Gambit,” he said. “I’m glad you ignored my advice to overlook the gum.”

I smiled and patted him on the head. “Don’t worry about it. I was just following your past advice.”

“You know, I just realized, using ‘Dungeon...’ and ‘...Break’ without this gum wouldn’t have done what we thought it would, because they’re separate Abilities.”

“That warning at the bottom sounds like they really don’t want me to use it.”

“So? What are you waiting for?”

Flashing him a grin, I unwrapped the wax paper and threw the flat piece of gum into my mouth. As I bit down, an explosion of synthetic grape filled my mouth, before a menu appeared:

ACTIVATING SKILL FUSION!

Choose two Abilities or Passives to combine:

“Combine ‘Dungeon...’ with ‘...Break’,” I responded.

COMBINING SKILLS!

—Patreon-exclusive Copy—
—Kristoffer Pauly (aka “Dosei”)—

One moment...

...

...

...

New fusion skill created!

Congratulations!

You have unlocked the new Ability:

‘Dungeon-Break’

No sooner had the message appeared than a new and ominously-familiar announcement followed:

WARNING!

A GREAT GAME ADJUDICATOR HAS BEEN SUMMONED!

CEASE HOSTILITIES OR BE VAPORISED!

VACATE THE LANDING ZONE IMMEDIATELY!

“Uh oh.”