

Chapter -35

“What now?” Bee asked.

“I actually hadn’t planned that far,” I told her.

Panda sighed. “I told you that killing the Announcer might not end the Event.”

“There’s still the Production Control Room nearby,” the Beetle Girl told me.

“You’re a genius!” Panda exclaimed.

“I guess we should go destroy it, maybe that’ll do the trick.”

“Worst case, it doesn’t and we can just wait for the cooldown of Dungeon-Break to eject all the Players from the Event.”

“Dungeon-Break?” Bee asked. “What’s that?”

While Panda recounted the events of what’d happened since we entered, a lot of which Bee already seemed to know, thanks to having watched me on the screens in Announcer Riii’s Commentary Booth, I pulled open my inventory again and inspected the three rewards I’d gotten.

‘Moon Boots’ x
<p><i>Disclaimer: these are not actual boots meant to traverse the moon.</i></p>
<p><i>Putting these on will negatively affect your Charisma. That’s right Charisma is a hidden Attribute that only we know! And in case you’re wondering, yours is -12 right now, but putting these on will bump it to -15. For reference, a glistening and steamy dog turd has -7.</i></p>
<p><i>Jumping while wearing these boots will make it feel like you’re jumping higher, even though you aren’t.</i></p>
<p>Weight: 2.1 Pandas</p>

“Ugh,” I groaned.

Panda stopped his recounting for a moment, but when I didn’t elaborate, he continued from where he’d left off, with Bee paying rapt attention.

‘Giant Slayer Trophy’ x
<i>Ah, crap, the Item Conjuring Department forgot to add a weight to this item...</i>
<i>Well, anyway, smashing this into your forehead will unlock the powers trapped within.</i>
<i>We were in a hurry to make this, so that’s the best ‘unlock’ method we could think of in a pinch.</i>
Weight: N/A

I pulled it out of my inventory and found that it did indeed not have a weight to it, as though the bulky metallic trophy was just spraypainted Styrofoam.

“Woah, what’s that??” Bee asked, then inspected it.

Panda was giving me a look like, “Dude... you’re interrupting me again?”

Then I smashed the trophy into my forehead. It immediately began a swarm of flies that in turn began to glow red, before imploding in tiny explosions.

“Uhhh...” I got out, before the next screen appeared.

Choose your reward! x
<i>That effect you just saw was a placeholder not meant to be utilized... Seriously, I’m gonna go have a talk with those slimy Silkworms about this screwup.</i>
Pick one of the options: ‘L4GSWITCH’ ‘Bossman’ ‘Giant-Slayer Lance’

‘L4GSWITCH’ x
<i>Ability</i>

Causes your body and abilities to become desynced from reality, as though you suddenly have a 999 latency ping.

Results may vary and you could possibly clip through world geometry, so use with caution.

Duration: 30 seconds

Cooldown: 1 hour

‘Bossman’

x

Passive

From now on, you’re “The Boss” and everyone will feel compelled to refer to you as such.

Enemies and Players will be slightly less inclined to pick a fight with you.

‘Giant-Slayer Lance’

x

Ability

Conjure a spectral lance out of thin air, which deals damage according to your Strength attribute and the level-difference between you and your targeted foe, before firing it forward like a ballista bolt.

Cooldown: 1 hour

If used to kill a Boss, the cooldown immediately resets.

“Oh boy!” Panda said excitedly, suddenly not upset about my interruption of his story.

“I think I’ll pick L4GSWITCH,” I said.

“Don’t be an idiot, Gambit!” Panda said. “Giant-Slayer is 100% the right choice here!”

“What do they do?” Bee asked.

“I really wish I could show you, but I guess I’ll just read them out loud.”

After she’d heard what the three options were, she agreed with Panda’s choice.

“Also, think about it,” she said, “If it has the potential to make you get stuck in walls and such, it will *definitely* happen.”

I thought about it and realized she was right. “They want me to pick it so they can conveniently have me get swallowed by the floor and die...” I commented. “Alright, I’m picking the Lance.”

Then I pulled out the ‘Fairyfly Wing’ and inspected it.

‘Fairyfly Wing’ x
<i>The wing of the Fairyfly Announcer known as Riii.</i>
<i>It is delicate and lightweight, as any insectoid wing, but its fragility belies its strength.</i>
<i>In order to unlock its powers, you must put it on your tongue and swallow it whole.</i>
Weight: 0.1 Pandas

“Do they have some kind of Feeder fetish, these guys??” Panda exclaimed.

I didn’t question it at this point and put the wing, which was about the size of a post-it-note, onto my tongue and then closed my mouth. The wing immediately started melting as though it was some kind of strange sugar. I gulped it down, tasting nothing but synthetic grape as usual.

By now, the skin and flesh on my face had more-or-less returned, thanks to the Mothball Spaghetti, but it was bright-pink like a newborn baby’s. The pain of my broken ribs was also now just a faded soreness, and a mental fog I’d had, perhaps the remnants of several overlapping concussions, was also cleared away.

I actually felt good.

Like, *really* good.

“Uhhh, gambit...” the plushie started, looking at me weirdly.

“Yes, my beloved?” I asked, picking Panda up in my arms.

“I think that wing was spiked with LSD.”

“You’re very soft,” I told him.

“Your eyes have turned completely black,” Bee remarked.

I reached over and patted her on top of her head. “You’re a good person.”

“Alright, let go of me!” Panda protested, hammering his squishy arms into my chest. “I don’t like this version of you! It’s too much love!!”

“*What ‘bout me, Nigel!! Hug me too!!*” Brock yelled from where he lay next to me.

As I was about to lift him up and praise him for his good work, the effects suddenly disappeared.

Slowly, I glanced down at Panda, then over to Bee.

I cleared my throat and lifted the plushie off of me.

“Sorry about that,” I said.

Choose your reward! x
<p><i>Apparently, one of the grunts in the Item Conjuring Department was a big fan of Announcer Riii, so they laced the Wing with a toxin meant to make your bones turn into flexible pasta tubes and crystallize your blood. It’s not a fun way to die, trust me.</i></p> <p><i>Before the poison could take full effect, we intervened on your behalf and purged it from your system. Although most of us hate your guts, we are prohibited from using items and abilities to outright kill you. Rest assured that the Grunt in question has been scheduled for crucifixion.</i></p> <p><i>Apologies.</i></p>
<p>Pick one of the options:</p> <p>‘.interrupt()’ ‘(Gravity *= -1)’ ‘Handy Helper’</p>

“Holy shit, they actually poisoned you!” Panda exclaimed.

“It was kind of nice, to be honest,” I replied.

I looked at the options, surprised that two were Glitched abilities, but, then again, Riii had used several of those.

‘.interrupt()’ x
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ability</i></p> <p><i>Can be used to interrupt any ability or spell, as long as it is used after it has been activated. The targeted ability will be put on a forced cooldown equal to .interrupt()’s duration.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Duration: 2 minutes Cooldown: 5 minutes</p> <p><i>Cooldown increases by number of uses in the last hour, meaning the second use has a cooldown of 10 minutes, then 15, 20, and so on.</i></p>

‘(Gravity *= -1)’ x
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ability</i></p> <p><i>Reverses gravity in a sphere around you equal to Wisdom multiplied by 10 yards.</i></p> <p><i>I hope you have a strategy for what to do when the effect wears off...</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Duration: 10 minutes Cooldown: 6 hours</p>

‘Handy Helper(s)’ x
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ability</i></p>

Splits your mind into two, with one half gaining two additional spectral limbs that have a Strength value equal to your Intelligence attribute.

The number of limbs increases by two for every ten points of Intelligence.

Duration: 15 minutes

Cooldown: 24 hours

“Ugh, two of them use Wisdom and Intelligence...” I groaned. “They’d probably have no effect if I tried to use them then.”

“The reversed gravity one has the potential to be really powerful, so you could take that one and see if there’s a way to change your Class such that you get Wisdom?”

“Are you trying to turn me into a Mage??”

“Would it be so bad?” he asked.

“Unless I can become a Mage that punches things, I’m not doing it!”

“Don’t be a little baby!” he scolded me.

I clicked ‘.interrupt()’ just to spite him.

Panda let out a sigh.

With all the new rewards out of the way, I popped on the ‘Moon Boots’, to which Panda and Bee both made a ‘Yuck’ sound immediately, then started stomping off towards where I seemed to recall the Production Control Room was located.

Every step felt like I was walking on bouncy balls.