

Chapter 93: Breakthrough

Rain splashed against the heavily muscular, pure white form of the worm demon. Its body lay wriggling above ground in an idle state, its tongues stationary, awaiting orders.

On its back sat a trio of people; Daven, Riza, and Tiffany, in that order.

Daven had one palm out, one palm holding onto a stone dagger, wedged deep into the worm's flesh, stuck between the flexible ribs.

Riza gripped Daven's hand intently, her other hand wrapped around the handle of her own, magical dagger as that too was stuck in the worm.

Tiffany, finally, held onto Riza's hand while her other also wielded a stabbed-in dagger.

It was an unusual arrangement but in lieu of some type of massive saddle for the creature, it was the best they could do in terms of riding it.

All around the grassy plains were upturned mounds of dirt and deep holes from many, many practise sessions.

Still, after seeing it in action, and knowing that it worked, Riza was worried; her hands were slick with sweat and her stomach churned with anxiety.

"Give the order," Riza said, looking behind her at Tiffany who replied with a small nod.

A mystical, white wisp reached out from the demon, reaching towards the massive worm beneath them, before vanishing in a blink of an eye.

The creature shifted under them, its flesh rippling from its powerful musculature stretching and contorting.

The tongues kicked into gear, no longer hanging idly but lashing at the ground, ripping up massive chunks of earth and throwing them into the gaping maw of the beast, devouring the ground swiftly.

It began to *move*.

Riza held on tight, digging the knife ever deeper into it as the scenery moved around her, passing by slowly and then faster and faster as the tongues transformed into a blur of movement, kicking up a dust cloud that occluded all of their visions.

And then, she fell.

Her stomach dropped as the rising sensation filled her, her butt briefly bouncing up as the worm demon suddenly nosedived into the ground, the grass rushing up to meet them in a head on collision!

But Daven was ready, with a powerful [Earth Shape] held in his hand, the grass disintegrated with but a touch, the dirt and compacted soil peeling back as if there was a forcefield around them.

From her handicaped view, it was like a disintegration ray was drilling straight through the earth as she fell, deeper and deeper into the ground, the blue skies above disappearing and being replaced with dark stone.

Light vanished in an instant, their seat bouncing tumultuously as the demon shifted and turned, up and down, as it dug.

Daven expanded his influence, the tight walls around them widening as Riza watched brown tendrils dipping and diving through the stone, a network of magical tentacles that shifted and pushed the stone faces away from them.

She could sense the intensity of the magic; it was running on full-power and burning her mind as she sensed the ferocity, sensed the essence from Daven eating matter itself.

She activated [Heal], doubling it up with [Distinguish Life] and [Maximise Mastery] to target both Daven and Tiffany. Daven was consuming a lot—far more than his regeneration could make up for—while Tiffany barely had any regeneration at all, even at level 9 with [Source of Spirit]. She only had so many [Message]s in her.

A limited number of orders she could give to the worm demon before it was out of her control.

And that's where Riza came in; with a maximised [Heal], that was 28 essence per second she was conferring upon Tiffany. A substantial amount that nearly matched Daven's regeneration and greatly eclipsed Tiffany's.

At a cost of 140 essence per second to herself, it used to be inconceivable to maintain it consistently but with the help of Nussy, Riza had so much excess essence she barely knew what to do with it.

Holy shit, it worked!

She squinted through the dust and minimal debris, slowly raising her head as she gained confidence she wasn't going to immediately hit it against stone.

The ground flew past her, the walls of the instantly-made tunnel flying by, reminding her of times she was in a train in a tunnel.

Oddly, there was a feeling of unreality to it all; the lack of wind in her hair gave a disparate sense of speed—a dichotomy between what her eyes were seeing and what her skin was feeling.

The worm demon dug, dug, dug. Riza shouted out rough directions and Tiffany relayed them to the worm, occasionally pulling it and popping out of the ground for a quick rest.

In addition to [Heal], there was also a necessary constant [Intrinsic Tank], filling a little bubble around them with breathable oxygen and fog, and Riza needed to refuel, as well as get her bearings.

Combining the trees, the mountain range in the distance, and the sun in the sky above, she estimated their location and the location of the nest near Edderdorf as the demon plunged again.

For as fast the worm demon was being, it took a while to find the nest again; Riza's directions were vague and very inaccurate, resulting in many, many popping up above ground and recentring themselves. Moving in three dimensions was tough.

But then, eventually, it worked. A fire alighted in Riza's brain as she sensed the sole humanoid demon and a burbling group of beast demons—ones she had missed last time.

There.

And, sure enough, the worm demon broke through the wall of one of its own, older tunnels. The same tunnel Riza and Tanniya had walked down just days earlier.

“Is this the place?” Daven asked as Tiffany brought the demon to a stop.

“Yep,” Riza answered, withdrawing her knife and sliding down the slick, smooth side of the worm. Her feet thudded on the ground hard from the drop, her knees bending to absorb the impact effortlessly.

Daven dropped down as well, the earth reaching up to catch him and gently lowering him down.

The worm merely rotated, tilting Tiffany until her feet could barely touch the ground, where she withdrew her stone knife from its skin.

Riza closed her eyes and mentally counted how many beast demons were left.

Seventeen. Not enough for me to level up but enough for Tiffany to level at least once. The humanoid demon's level cap was 15 but she was still just level 9 at the moment, not having had any time to level.

"Daven, spear," Riza said, and the man nodded, stomping his foot on the ground as a slab of stone quickly extruded.

His fingers danced over the surface with finesse, sculpting and moulding until a perfect spear was made, at which he sliced his hand through the connecting rod and freed the weapon from the stone.

He swapped the weapon for Tiffany's dagger, clenching his hand on the small blade as it suddenly crumbled to dust.

Beast demons. Unsure of their levels. A level 6 had a bit over 600 health so I'll set [Leech] to 600. Should make them easy enough for her to kill, and the armour should keep her alive.

[Leech] (10/10)+ -Learned

Drain 629 points of health from 3 living entities

10m range

Cost: 33 es/sec

As a group, they ventured into the nest and, unlike last time, all of them could survive the fog.

The demons were all congregated around the central room, making them very easy to find.

As Riza approached, none of them attacked, remembering their orders, which made them very easy to kill.

Riza just used [Intrinsic Tank] to get rid of the fog and targeted the demons three by three until they were all staggering on low health, and even then, they still didn't attack.

A few thrusts to the head from Tiffany, and they were dead.

The humanoid demon was where Riza had left it. The one beast demon she had used [Reanimate] on stood guard by the door as she cleared the room of fog, finally able to see again.

Her goal here was simple; find out the locations of the other demon nests. With the worm demon, it was actually feasible to get rid of them all in a timely manner, finally securing the borders of her territory.

Unfortunately, the humanoid demon was unaware of any other nests than the one that had moved to Edderdorf and thus been cleared by Lefie, or the empty one that they were using before they migrated to their current one.

However, the eye demon was different; they were actually the ones that were a part of the hive mind, able to communicate with other nests and more.

Nominally, they could communicate telepathically with demons once they were close enough. Unfortunately, it didn't work that way with humans but Riza had also forced it to take the same language skills as the humanoid demon, so she decided to give [Message] a chance.

“Do you know where other demon nests are located?”

“Yes.” The voice was warbled and tinny, like coming through an old landline phone, but distinctly alien.

How did I not think to interrogate an eye demon earlier? Stupid Riza.

“Where?”

Unfortunately, it didn't know *every* nest, just the ones close by. A couple of kilometres at most; within range of Tiffany's [Inform], which was an interesting comparison.

Riza didn't just ask for locations, of which she received rough directions, but dug down deeper into what it knew.

For one, *how* did it communicate with other nests?

It was apparently a biological thing; the brain was psychic, or something. Riza was unsure and put an autopsy of an eye demon on the back burner for things to do later.

But it actually meant her forcing it to take [Message] was actually unnecessary, so that was good to know for the future.

Perhaps, most interestingly, it had information on who gave it orders.

The first time Riza tried asking this question, and every time since, the humanoid demons always gave the same answer; a demon more powerful than them that lived underground sent them orders. That was it.

As it turned out, since the eye demons were the ones that *relayed* those orders, they actually knew a little more.

Both in this nest and their previous one, it was the same demon that told them to move. The same demon that informed them of other nests' whereabouts and gave them orders.

There was, apparently, a 'taste' to this demon, that eye demons could tell. A distinguishing scent to its mental messages, which was how it knew they were orders to be obeyed.

Other eye demons concurred; it wasn't just one demon handling one nest but one demon handling all of them. Or, at least, one demon handling all the nests nearby to this one.

Some sort of Demon Lord, Riza thought, giving it an appropriate name.

And where did the orders come from?

Right. Beneath. Rensenfeld.

Riza tensed as soon as the familiar city name resounded in her mind.

That close?

She asked again. The same answer.

Somewhere, deep within the earth, beneath the city, sat a Demon Lord, commanding the nests of upper Toila, as Riza also termed this region of the province in her mind.

Then it hit her; *the tower. A coincidence?*

Whatever kind of demon it was, it was *strong*. The eye demon repeatedly emphasised this point when asked. It wasn't like a humanoid demon, or even an elder greater demon.

Although elder greater demons, like the worm, were strong, they were lower on the hierarchy than humanoid demons, subservient to their masters. It wasn't just pure, brute strength that established your place in the demon order but your purpose as well. *Why* you were made.

Part speculation, part gossip from the eye demon, Riza was forming a picture in her head of the enemy.

A demon as intelligent as a humanoid demon, presumably capable of using skills as well, and stronger than an elder greater demon.

That puts it at minimum, level 45. Same as an Enforcer. The strongest human is rumoured to be level 60, so say that's an upper bound.

There's at least one, possible more, within just Toila itself.

Before I arrived and dragged the Enforcers along with me, the strongest human in this province was Adewyn, at level 30. And she was spread across three different provinces, no doubt all with their own Demon Lords!

That confirms it. It has to be true. The Empire isn't a threat to the demons.

The eye demon didn't know more, unfortunately, and it quickly appeared like that they were done here.

Riza gave orders to both the humanoid and the eye demon of this nest, that when Tiffany spoke to them, she was speaking with equal authority to Riza. This would allow any future messages sent through Tiffany to be taken as direct orders.

And then, they were off.

*

The nests began to fall one-by-one. At first, it was inefficient and sloppy; Riza killed everything that lived there, using [Essential Leech] first but not doing much more to optimise their deaths.

The humanoid demon didn't stand a chance and was quickly finished off as well, raised with [False Life] as Tiffany did the talking.

The biggest dichotomy between [Raise Dead] and [False Life] was beginning to show itself. At this level of power, the difference in cost was insignificant to Riza; when she was regenerating over 600 essence a second, what did it matter that one summon cost 12.5 a second and the other, 25 a second.

They both had their pros and cons; [Raise Dead] allowed for total control and customizability over the build but at the expense of beginning at level 5 and requiring substantial investment to raise that.

[False Life], however, was far quicker; with each nest she cleared, that was another additional demon around level 25 that was under her control. What

had taken weeks or months in the past would now take one hour, from death to power. All at the expense of control—Riza just had to accept whatever skills the summons had when they were alive. It was out of her control.

In lieu of linguistics skills, it was Tiffany who conversed with the humanoid and eye demon, finding the locations of more nests. Arguably, a more streamlined approach, considering it was also Tiffany who controlled the worm demon.

The next nest was better. For one, only half the beast demons were slaughtered in the invasion, as Riza realised they could be used to expedite the population growth back at Rensenfeld.

Two, they realised, with the help of the resident humanoid demon already there, it wasn't just some random worm demon they were riding upon but the very same worm demon that helped to build the nests in Toila.

There was no need to interrogate eye demons for rough directions; the worm demon knew the tunnels it had carved out and could take them to nests directly!

Needless to say, this massive speed up travel time, since they were no longer aimlessly digging around the countryside like they were detecting metal.

It was also a massive weight off Riza's chest, no longer having to worry about destabilising the ground with a massive increase of hollow tunnels running underneath the province. Sooner or later, at the rate they were going, she half-expected everything to just collapse in on itself!

And so, they dug and they killed and they assimilated. Nest after nest after nest, until the entire northern tip of Toila had been wiped clean of demons. It was the least inhabited part of the province, yes, which also meant there were only a handful of nests actually situated here, but even that handful had taken hours to wipe out.

All the refugee beast demons were following along after the worm demon, collecting themselves together from different nests until the order was given to return to Rensenfeld.

Perhaps the biggest power increase from the entire excursion wasn't the humanoid demons or the beast demons but Riza's levels themselves, for she had an idea.

She had tried running the numbers and they were *big*. [Lone Wolf] was pulling its weight hard and it was all because of [Manifold Mastery].

It was too good to pass up. Even an upgraded version suggested a [Leech] that could reliably deal over a *million* damage a second!

It was insane, and even the prospect of another boon seemed less impressive than this.

She purchased the two skills—[Seeker Mastery] and [Manifold Mastery]--without question. She was half-tempted to upgrade [Manifold Mastery] as well from a three times multiplier to a five times one, but she held off. She didn't actually have many ways to get good use out of that unlike some of her summons.

So, she held off, but the levels kept on increasing. Thirty-three, thirty-four, and then, finally, thirty-five.

It felt otherwise... normal. The only indication the level was significant was the 20 stat points she gained upon the level up and the plus sign that now appeared next to her level in her stats.

The group took a break after the last nest, having cleared out a lot of Toila already and letting the travelling beast demons catch up to their location. Tiffany was constantly [Informing] them of directions, of tunnels, of where to go. Demons had an uncanny ability for underground navigation, it appeared.

Lying on the cold, hard ground, resting against the warm body of the worm demon, feeling the rushing of blood within it, Riza brought her status screen and just stared at it.

Name	Riza
Level	35+
Health	12510/12510
Stamina	9524/9524
Essence	14900/14900
Power	5(625)
Constitution	5(265)
Endurance	5(476)
Vim	6(398)
Essence	5(745)

Spirit	240(3615)
Health Regeneration	232/min
Stamina Regeneration	348/min
Essence Regeneration	683/second
Stat Points	95

Look how much I've grown. I may not have been gaining levels but all that essence I'm regenerating and subsequently spending on [Essential Leech] is certainly making up for it.

She opened up her boon choices.

You have reached level 25 and can now choose a Consolidation Boon

[Boon of Labour]

Effect: Non-combat skills level up twice as fast

[Boon of Body]

Effect: Physical skills level up twice as fast

[Boon of Mind]

Effect: Non-physical skills level up twice as fast

Hidden Boon

[Source of Spirit] -Consolidated

Requirements: Spirit is 2 times greater than any other stat

Effect: Spirit is multiplied by 3

Hidden Boon

[Lone Wolf] -Consolidated

Requirements: Have never been in a party

Effect: All skills are 2 times as effective when not in a party

Hidden Boon

[Way of Life] -Consolidated

Requirements: Two Life skills (10/10)

Effect: All Life skills are 2 times as effective

Hidden Boon

[Way of Primordial Magic]

Requirements: Two Primordial Magic skills (10/10)

Effect: All Primordial Magic skills are 2 times as effective

Hidden Boon

[Touched by Essence]

Requirements: Spend 24 hours submerged in pure essence

Effect: Essence regeneration is 1.5 times as effective. Ability to see and sense essence is enchanted

Hidden Boon

[Way of Metamagic]

Requirements: Two Metamagic skills (10/10)

Effect: All Metamagic skills are 2 times as effective

Hidden Boon

[Summoner's Choice]

Requirements: Summon 100 entities

Effect: Choose One: All summons are 50% more effective OR All summons are 50% cheaper

Hidden Boon

[Way of Psyche]

Requirements: Two Psyche skills (10/10)

Effect: All Psyche skills are 2 times as effective

Hidden Boon

[Way of Air]

Requirements: Two Air skills (10/10)

Effect: All Air skills are 2 times as effective

Hidden Boon

[Gestalt of Life]

Requirements: [Way of Life] and ten life skills (10/10)

Effect: Upgraded and passive Life skills can be levelled. Gain a skill point for the Life skills

Hidden Boon

[Delegator]

Requirements: Summon 1000 entities

Effect: Summons copy 10% of your stats upon creation. Summons can communicate telepathically with each other. Each summon increases your stats by 0.1%

Hidden Boon

[Covering your Bases]

Requirements: Every stat is above 100

Effect: Upon level up, each stat increases by 5. Each stat is multiplied by 1.1. Increase stats gained upon level up by 5

Hidden Boon

[Molting]

Requirements: Regain a lost body part

Effect: Lost body parts are slowly regenerated over days

Shit. That's a lot of new ones. I guess a lot has happened since the last one. When was that? Fuck, that was before Daven and Sanders. Wow. That was back in the days of Litchendorf.

A bittersweet smile crept up on Riza's lips as she reminisced.

Back when it was simple. A half-hearted chuckle.

Daven looked over his shoulder at Riza, checking if she was alright, before returning to his practise. He had gotten it into his head that he could replicate what the worm demon could do—clearing a large area at that speed. Maybe he could.

Let's go through these one by one. The returning choices are the way skills and [Summoner's Choice].

Back then, I was considering [Summoner's Choice] for the cost decrease but now, that 50% more effective is looking far more appealing. Doesn't go into detail. Is it like [Lone Wolf] where it doubles every skill? Does it apply to stats? Both or just one?

Either way, it would be good. The skills would be incredible with the multiplicative nature of skills but even stats is insane; someone like the worm demon would become even more unkillable.

[Way of Air] and [Way of Psyche] are new since the last time but neither are that enticing since I already have [Lone Wolf] and now [Manifold Mastery]. The only appeal would be how they interact differently from [Lone Wolf] to the skills, like [Way of Metamagic] works.

Now, onto the truly new ones.

[Gestalt of Life]. That is truly unique. [Animate Critter] (passive) could be levelled so I create an even stronger automatic army. Assuming it's similar to its active version, that would be a level 9 critter for free, right?

No. [Lone Wolf] and [Way of Life] would still apply, bringing it up to level 36. Wow. That's far more impressive.

Wait a minute. Now that I have [Manifest Mastery], let's look at the upgraded [Leech].

[Leech] has reached level 10

You can choose to spend a skill point to upgrade the skill or turn the skill into a passive

[Leech+]

Drain 220 health, 4 stamina, 4 essence from a living entity

80m range

Cost: 10 es/sec

[Leech] (passive)

Constantly drain 40 points of health from nearby entities per second

8m range

4 stamina and 4 essence a second. Assuming it follows the expected levelling curve, that's 40 at level 10. Calculating with maximise and manifold, that's... 840. And that's not even accounting for range compression, which easily brings it into the thousands and probably the tens of thousands with [Seeker Mastery].

How much stamina does the worm have again?

Name	Jormy
Level	42
Health	1258320/1258320
Stamina	758100/758100
Essence	265/265
Power	15729(15729)
Constitution	8420(8420)
Endurance	9975(9975)
Vim	21946(21946)
Essence	5(5)
Spirit	5(5)

Health Regeneration	673600/day
Stamina Regeneration	1667896/day
Essence Regeneration	265/day

758,100 stamina.

Riza quickly leaned forward, withdrawing her knife as she began rapidly scribbling numbers on the ground.

Okay. With maximum range for my current skills, reduced to 10 metres, that's... 200,760 stamina and essence damage a second.

Holy shit. 4 seconds to completely enervate the fucking worm demon. That's... that's just ridiculous

And it can be even better. [Seeker Mastery+] and [Manifold Mastery+] is a 4 times increase by itself, probably.

Right?

She had the hypothetical numbers on that as well.

782,600 stamina and essence damage per second. That's more than the total stamina of the demon.

Fuck.

The biggest downside is that it's attached to [Leech], which I've confidently established by this point has a massive fucking drawback in that it relies on line-of-sight to fucking skin.

Wait a minute again. How would [Heal+] level?

[Heal+] -Learned

Restore 380 health, 4 stamina, 4 essence to a living entity

Cost: 10 es/sec

That's already 4 essence a second. If it's 40 essence a second at a hypothetical level 10, that's a profit of 30 es a sec. The theoretical maximum with all the skill investments would be... 1,400 essence per second, at the cost of 350 for a total profit of 1,050 es a sec, already eclipsing what Nessy is giving me.

Those numbers are so high. [Lone Wolf] is so busted. The downside is levelling and increasing your level cap is harder. I suppose at lower levels, that's a bigger issue but when you're my level, you have so many skills that the multiplicative effect of it dwarfs the downside.

That, or my assumed scaling for the skills is wrong. Although, that would mean something like 0.1 per level rather than 1 would be the case, but the system tends to avoid decimals when it can.

Okay. [Gestalt of Life] is definitely a strong contender but the caveat is that a lot of its strength is from [Manifold Mastery].

Maybe it's that skill that's busted? Riza shook her head, getting back on track and shimmying to the side for a new, blank canvas of ground.

Next up is [Delegator]. Now, this is insane, but I suppose it does have a high requirement. 1000 summons is a lot.

Taking the effects one at a time, the starting effect is strong but I'm unsure if it's stupidly powerful.

With my current stats, that's like a minimum of 20 in each of the physical ones. For my critters, that's a substantial increase but for something like the worm demon, it's not even a drop in the ocean.

But my physical stats aren't what's high, are they? Spirit is what's important and that's 3615. Already, that's 361 starting spirit.

"Daven! What's your spirit stat?" Riza shouted, startling the man somewhat.

"Two-hundred and twenty-two!" He shouted back.

Already higher than his.

Let's look at Nesy, Jupy, and Ascles. Nesy's spirit is 1 but Jupy and Ascles is both at 156. Less than half of 361. With [Manifold Mastery+], Ascles is providing me 20 essence a second. That becomes 50 per second with the increased spirit.

Jupy, however, has [Way of Life] which means his regeneration is lower, providing only 7 essence a second. 361 more essence brings that about on par with Ascles current essence and both pale in comparison to what Nesy is providing me.

If I want to optimise my summons for anything other than essence regeneration, the extra spirit doesn't help them much.

Interestingly, however, Nesy actually receives the most from it. I've already invested in essence for her because she needs the total essence to use her more expensive blood skills. If she began with essence, [Well of Essence], [Well of Spirit], and [Knowable Essence] means I no longer have to waste stat points on essence.

Perhaps I'm looking at this the wrong way; it's not [Raise Dead] but [Animate Critter] that would benefit the most. Sure, you lose the multiplying power of skills and boons but the sheer number of critters under my command would make up for it.

Moving on, summons able to communicate telepathically with each other, without limit I guess, makes me a bit sad for Tiffany; I don't want to see her made redundant. There's only a handful of people in our group who wouldn't benefit from that though, and with my ever-increasing number of summons, she becomes more and more obsolete.

It's unassuming at first but war is as much about information and communication as it is about anything else.

Suddenly, an idea sparked into Riza's head at the boon's potential use.

She started stabbing into the ground again, laying down her thoughts linearly as best she could.

Okay, okay. Let's begin at the centre, in Rensenfeld.

Say, there's a central processing station there. An eye demon; something capable and used to telepathically sorting through bundles of messages. Like a phone operator, I guess.

Now, I can't communicate with beast demons but the eye demon can. With my infinite essence, I raise a bunch of beast demons and station them literally everywhere in the province, constantly reporting back to the eye demon, or multiple eye demons if the load is too much.

Now, all of a sudden, I have full, instantaneous coverage of the entire province. As long as I have a summon next to me, which I always do, whenever something comes up, the eye demon tells the summon and I'm alerted to anything important that's occurred.

This is a radio network. Mobile phones. Whatever. It's modern, expansive communication. There's no easy way to replicate that with skills, is there?

I can do it even better; raise a bunch of humans and send them everywhere in the Empire. I can get live updates on what's happening there.

And, even better, spies. This is a boon, not a skill; spirit or essence shouldn't pick up on this communication, right? Not like how I can see when Tiffany uses a psyche skill to talk.

There's a sea of potential there, and it's just a third of the boon.

The last feature is juicy too. Each summon increases my stats by 0.1%. With 1000 summons, that doubles all my stats. Like a mini well skill for all of them.

Couple that with actual well skills, that's a significant boost.

Damn. [Delegator] is strong as fuck.

These feel like 4th tier essence skills. How they break the system in their own ways. They remove limitations.

Riza's head was spinning from all the possibilities. She needed to take a minute to calm down before moving on.

[Covering your Bases] is interesting. I guess it's like a source boon but for when you invest in every stat? Although, you can only get the boon at a later level than the source ones.

Immediate thought: this is incredible with [Perfect Body]. If it works like I suspect it would, that the first two features would synergise incredibly well with the skill.

Although, I hazard a guess that it would make it harder to obtain the source boons like Tanniya and Adewyn want? But it's definitely less of a boon-investment, which is good. Especially when you consider that level 45 is the earliest when you can take a non-source boon for those builds.

The extra stats on level up is nice but not actually that important for me since I get the majority of my stats from [Essential Leech].

[Molting] is the final one. I imagine this is available because I lost my eyes and then regained them. Not too strong, but certainly interesting. Unfortunately, it's not a skill, so it's probably hard to find things that synergise with it and how to build a build around it.

Just doesn't have enough of an impact for me.

I wonder if there's a skill tree about losing limbs? Now there's where it would be useful.

So, what will it be?

We can rule out the way boons straight away. [Manifold Mastery] has a lot of overlap.

Next, it's not [Molting]. Just too narrow in scope and too weak.

[Covering your Bases] we can rule out as well. [Essential Leech] can bring me to the same point it can, just a fair bit slower. Not worth a boon, I'm afraid.

That leaves three options: [Summoner's Choice], [Gestalt of Life], and [Delegator].

Compared to the breadth of the other two, [Summoner's Choice] will only make my summons a bit stronger, and I don't think that's good enough. A couple levels, the right skills, or maybe even a way boon would likely have the same or greater impact.

So, either [Gestalt of Life] or [Delegator].

Riza sat in silent rumination, mentally comparing the two boons together. Minutes passed as the only sound that could be heard was the crumbling rocks of Daven's exercises.

[Gestalt of Life] just isn't necessary enough. I just don't have enough life skills that can meaningfully benefit and even [Leech+] doesn't matter since regular [Leech] deals an absurd amount of damage as-is.

She chose [Delegator].

As soon as the decision was made, her muscles locked up and her neck was craned towards the ceiling as a sudden rush of energy poured over her.

Explosive power suffused her muscles as electric shivers ran through her. Her mind was awash in otherworldly, euphoric sensations as the world turned white.

And then, a second later, it was over. She sank into the ground and heaved out a deep sigh as a puff of violent energy escaped her mouth.

That was... an experience.