

Chapter -40

A sound like tearing fabric came from outside the cocoon structure and seemed to emanate above the amphitheater. It was immediately followed by a loud bass-deep thrum of wings. I had no idea what had just manifested itself into being, but it sounded absolutely massive in scale.

“Crack open the snail and let’s get the hell out of here!” Panda urged.

I didn’t waste a moment and elbow-slammed the iridescent shell of the Psychic Snail. Like sugar glass, the exoskeleton burst apart into powder and small fingernail-sized fragments, revealing a pale slimy body. The part that’d been hidden by the swirling chambers of the shell still held that peculiar shape, while the rest visibly began to sag.

The head of the snail slowly pulled itself off of the floor, with the eye-stalks telescoping outwards and its large mouth flaps chewing on themselves. It was somehow kind of adorable, but I wanted the Plugin it held and I wanted to cut off the broadcast, so it had to die.

I smashed Brock down onto its head.

BONK!

¿BONK?

The squishy flesh flattened against the floor as both of the attacks landed, producing a sad slimy *squelch*, before slowly pulling itself back together.

“It’s not working!” I said in horror. “Its body is too soft!”

“Stand back,” Bee said, and I immediately obeyed.

She aimed her palm at the pitiful head of the Snail, then said, “Beetle Blast!”

A tiny needle shot out through the hole in her hand, lancing into the creature’s head and producing a strange *slurp* as the hole it formed was quickly squeezed shut. A moment of silence passed, then the Snail’s head began rapidly expanding, before blowing up like a skin balloon filled with too much air. Some of the jelly-like meat spattered into my open mouth, tasting like grape pudding, while Panda, atop of Bee’s head, had to dodge a golf-ball-sized eye with the stalk still attached.

“*Not bad aye. Nine out of ten,*” Brock commented, as though he was a judge of the grotesque and macabre handing out a score.

As the Psychic Snail died, a metaphysical tremor rolled out from its body, feeling similar to the tingling sensation of the brain zaps, which I used to get from going cold turkey on the medications forced into my body by the Asylum orderlies. All my muscles started to quiver like instruments in an orchestra, while my fingers involuntarily splayed and curled in a strange rhythm. Then a single wordless sound was blown into the depths of my ear canals, sending a carpet of gooseflesh rippling across my skin.

Bee made a strange noise and even Panda was affected, though Brock was silent for once.

“That was... *something*,” I mumbled.

Hissing and bubbling emanated from the snail's dead body, as it quickly began to boil in the room-temperature air, its squishy flesh evaporating into invisible particulates that I highly doubted were good to inhale.

I drew in a deep breath.

Bee imitated me.

“Tastes a bit like chicken on the tongue,” she commented.

I nodded. “Not the worst I’ve had.”

“Stop that!” Panda scolded us. “Don’t breathe it in!”

“*Brock doesn’t have a nose. That’s proper sad, ey?*”

“I’ll find an evolution that gives you a nose,” I told him.

“*I love you!!*”

“Look!” Panda said, pointing at the ground where the Snail had been. There was a floating red wisp, similar to the one that I’d seen after killing a Player some hours ago, granted the color was different.

“I don’t see anything,” Bee muttered.

I stooped and put my hand on the wisp.

Leftovers of Enemy ‘Psychic Snail’:

‘unCollide Plugin’

Without hesitation, I picked it up. It was pretty heavy for its foot-long size, and was constructed of a shimmering type of silver metal. I quickly inspected it:

<i>‘unCollide Plugin’</i>

x

—**PLUGIN**—

Although harvested from a Psychic Snail, this Plugin does not do what you think it does.

When collision is a bother, just unCollide.

*Plugin Ability: **back_door.bat***

*Plugin Passive: **Glitch Collision***

Weight: 24.151518 Pandas

I had no idea what it meant by ‘unCollide’, so I looked at the two skills to see if they explained it further.

‘back_door.bat’ x

Plugin Ability

*Normally only reserved for the **GREAT GAME**’s special forces, like the **Glitch Hunters**, this is a **System executable that allows you to cross boundaries, whether physical or metaphysical**. It has some unexpected uses, due to how flexible its definition of a ‘boundary’ is.*

WARNING!

*Possession of this Ability is **prohibited!**
Utilizing this Ability constitutes major **System Subversion!***

Cooldown: 2 hours

‘Glitch Collision’ x

Plugin Passive

This isn't any normal kind of Passive, as it applies its affect to only some of your skills.

All listed skills have +4x knockback, though can no longer activate recursively. Knockback effects also cause some unexpected results when environment collision is involved.

Affected Skills:

‘Punch.harder()’

‘Giant-Slayer Lance’

‘Math.multiply(Punch)’

‘Reflective Shell’

Affected Items:

‘Brock’

“I have more questions than answers,” Panda said, reflecting my inner thoughts.

“Can I see?” Bee asked.

I spoke the strangely-verbose command, but in response she just made a “Huh” sound.

“It’s giving me an error that says ‘Restricted Access’.”

“Weird.”

“I think you should slot it into your chest,” Panda advised. “Even though you lose the crazy power of your Punch Harder ability, since this prevents the recursion from taking place, you’ll get insane knockback power that, to my ears, sounds like it might glitch your opponents into the environment.”

“It also affects Brock, for some reason,” I said.

“*Fak yes cunt!!*”

“Brock! There is a Minor here! Enough with that foul mouth of yours!” Panda exclaimed.

“Since when did you care?” I asked him.

“I really don’t mind,” Bee replied.

A tremor rolled across the web structure of the Production Control.

“Uh, guys?” Panda started. “Do you remember that strange sound from just before you killed the Snail?”

“What about it?”

“Well, while we’ve been chatting, I think those Glitch Hunters have found our location.”

“Let’s go beat them up,” I said. “I want to try out this new thing.”

I lifted the Plugin up, then carefully inserted the end into the cavity at the top of my chest. With a perfectly-tight fit, the cylinder slowly slid down into my body, before releasing a puff of steam and popping out a small turning lever. I spun it clockwise with my right hand, and then a jolt of energy flowed through me.

PLUGIN INSERTED.

Booting up ‘unCollide’ protocol.

Installing...

A sound like that of a dial-up modem tore through the air, before a loud *click!* seemed to announce its completion.

PLUGIN INSTALLED.

‘unCollide’ protocol now in effect!