Chapter -77

WARNING TO ALL CASTLEBURG PLAYERS!

Player 'Gambit' has intentionally triggered a Boss Monstrosity to manifest, and the level 75 'Lord of Sinners' will now seek out and corrupt all Players in your region unless stopped. It is currently located at 'Serenity Park Mall'.

"I would say something like 'I told you so', but, to be honest, I had no idea this was even possible," Panda remarked, exasperatedly.

The enormous Lord of Sinners was releasing a hum that trembled the air and made me feel as though it was directly interfering with the rhythm of my heart.

I lifted my mouth from the valve sticking out of Brock's balloon body, the fingers of the gauntlet like big sausages thanks to all the air I'd blown into it.

"*I'm about to burst!!*" he exclaimed excitedly.

"I'm never touching that valve with my lips again," I decided.

"Probably a good idea," Panda agreed.

Looking at the Boss Monstrosity, I was starting to think it hadn't fully 'initiated' yet, as it was just standing there without attacking.

"Do you think it's bugged?" I asked Panda.

"Maybe."

"I might be able to knock it down through the floor of the cavern and out-of-bounds," I considered, warming up my shoulder joint with a few rotations.

"Probably wouldn't work," Panda said. "Everyone who you punched through the world ended up arriving somewhere else, so if you did that, this monstrosity might just pop up down on main street or directly into the Mall…"
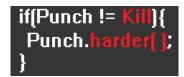
"Hm, I hadn't thought of that."

"That's why I'm here."

I rolled my neck and took a step back, getting into a proper starting position. Then I kicked off and sped along the stone floor of the cavern, before leaping up off the ground and cocking my bloated balloon gauntlet back.

"*Punch.harder( )*!" I yelled and drove my fist into the center of its disturbing body of overlapping hands.

"*Boom!!*" Brock squealed in joy.

ACTIVATING SCRIPT: Punch.harder( )!

```
if[Punch != Kill]{
  Punch.harder[ ];
}
```

SCRIPT FAILED SUCCESSFULLY DUE TO*: unCollide*.glitchCollision()!

The impact, although not recursively increased by the ability, was definitely doubled in power, if not more, which, alongside Brock's absurd stats, his double hit, and the quadrupled power caused by 'Pump It!' reaching its max potential, meant that I did an absurd amount of damage.

A sound like a double explosion emerged from the point that I struck, and the backlash flung me head-over-heels through the air, ending with me belly-plopping onto the cavern floor about twenty yards away.

The center of the Lord's body now had a massive crater, and it had taken a full step back, which, due to my Glitch Collision, caused its right leg to get stuck in the ground. As a result, its entire body began falling backwards, down towards the burning cocoon nest.

As it crashed against the structure back-first, its enormous weight raised a storm of dust and stone fragments from the cavern floor, as well as sending the squished web-made walls flying in all directions.

A series of pop-ups followed, each replaced with the next, until this filled my vision:

Congratulations! You have leveled up!	x
You have reached Level -20!	
+3 new Attribute Points available to invest!	
GAME EVENT required for level -21	*0/1*

"Holy shit, I just got 3 levels from that!" I said, quickly putting two points into Athleticism and one into Dexterity.

Level -20	'Gambit'	Exit Code 3	x

STATS		
Health: Isn't It Great?	**Stamina:** いいな	**Armor:** Dinner Plate Armor
Carry Weight: 1050 Pandas	**Top Speed:** Racing Bike	**Mana:** !əM ʜɔʇɒɿɔƧ

ATTRIBUTES			
Strength: 2415 lbs.	**Dexterity:** Death Adder	**Intelligence:** ☹	**Vitality:** Brisket
Athleticism: 獺	**Perception:** Yes?'	**Wisdom:** ¯_(ツ)_/¯	**Defense:** Ceramic

ABILITIES	CORE	PASSIVES
'Punch.harder( )'	'unCollide'	'Glitch
'I_CAN_FLY'	**back_door.bat**	'Insanity'
'Dungeon-Break'	**Glitch Collision**	'Inanimate Voices'
'.interrupt( )'	'unHero'	'Math.multiply(Punch)'
'Skater Boy'	**gasm.org**	'BIRTHDAY_SUIT'
'There's No Escape'	**Anti Heroism**	'Reflective Shell'
'Giant-Slayer Soul Blade'	'unHaunt'	'I-Frames'
	wannaCry	'Transition Lenses'
	Jumpscare	'Outcast'

"It must've crushed most, if not all, of the Insanity Boss Monsters you conjured. I don't think you're meant to reach level 20 this quickly though, since there's still 6 days before the next event."

"Brock leveled too!!" squeaked the gauntlet, before a pop-up appeared.

Brock — Level 7		
Pick one of the following level-up skills:		
Air Blast+	**Drain Air+**	**Static+**
Punching the air creates a devastating blast of condensed	Drains the air from any target hit with Brock, which in turn inflates	Moving around while Brock is equipped rapidly builds up static

wind that has a max range of 18 yards.	him twice the amount of air inside the target.	that is released as electricity damage on the next punch.

I picked 'Drain Air+'. No additional level-ups appeared, and when I checked the requirement for his next level, it said that he needed five more boss kills.

Another three pop-ups followed, but I dismissed them as soon as they arrived, not reading through them in the moment, as the Lord of Sinners was pushing itself up off the floor. The leg that was stuck in the ground broke apart, as the hands that it was made of just let go of each other, abandoning those half-submerged in the stone.

The crater in its center was rapidly filling with new hands that emerged from wherever Liam's true body was hiding, repairing all the damage I'd done. However, the purple taint of Brock's curse was slowly progressing across it.

Many of the hand-spiders that'd broken off from the right leg began skittering towards me.

I stood my ground, waiting for them to get close, before kicking them away or crushing them underfoot. There was no blood within them, only brown sand, and their skin was like dried paper.

One leapt off the ground and grasped my arm, sending a surge of energy into my body, almost like an electric shock, except it didn't hurt and seemed to cause no obvious damage.

I tore it off with my gauntleted hand, before sending it flying into another that was skittering directly for me. They collided and both exploded in a shower of sand.

"You can't make me more insane than I already am!" I yelled at the hand-spiders that were still coming.

"*Fak yiz!!*" Brock joined in.

"What about the moral curse?" Panda asked, looking at the carapace of my arm where the hand had grabbed on. It was turning the reddish dark-brown plates into a dusty grey, with small cracks rapidly forming.

"I just turned an entire Villain's organization into monsters! I have no morals left to pervert!" I said proudly, stomping down on another hand-spider, as the Lord of Sinners took its first step towards me and sent a quake through the ground.

"Some might argue that was a virtuous move," Panda retorted.

"…Ah, crap. That's really bad for my image, actually."

"Since when did you care about how people perceive you??"

I charged for the incoming Boss Monstrosity without answering his question, stomping down on all the hand-spiders between us, before leaping up off the floor again, while pressing my gauntleted hand against my chest and pulling out my Giant-Slayer Soul Blade.

The corn-on-the-cob that appeared in my hand was purple, and I lifted it above my head, charging it as I flew through the air from my impressive leap. As I brought it down in a diagonal overhead slash, the blade formed of corn kernels was the length of my body. Since it was a fragment of my soul, I figured my Punch Harder might work alongside it, so I invoked the ability, before swinging the blade into the Boss Monstrosity's torso.

"*Punch.harder( )*!"

ACTIVATING SCRIPT: Punch.harder( )!

```
if[Punch != Kill]{
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```

SCRIPT FAILED SUCCESSFULLY DUE TO*: unCollide*.glitchCollision()!

A blinding light emerged as the blade carved through the overlapping hands. This time I wasn't sent flying, but instead maintained my momentum, such that I landed on its towering body as it began to break into two pieces, with brown sand and paper skin showering all over the area from the many hands I'd destroyed.

The top of the Lord's body fell over to the side, crushing the last remnant of the cocoon structure, although somehow the room that the Local Villain had used for watching other Players was narrowly avoided. The bottom half just fell backwards, with Liam's body poking out the top, a line of bright purple carved through his already-purple body. It was clear he had been the core holding the Lord of Sinners in place.

But it wasn't over yet, for as the pieces fell apart, they broke into a tidal wave of hand-spiders, all of which rushed towards me.

I quickly ran to where Liam's body came to a rest, punching his head with my gauntlet repeatedly, with Brock cheering me on. The Multiply Punch passive kept triggering, but it wasn't doing any significant damage.

"Kill him quicker! Hurry!" yelled Panda, as the hands began to crawl over us, forming a smothering cocoon that trapped me with Liam.

No matter how much I punched him, it didn't seem to be enough, as though his attributes had climbed to an absurd number and my attacks weren't dealing enough damage.
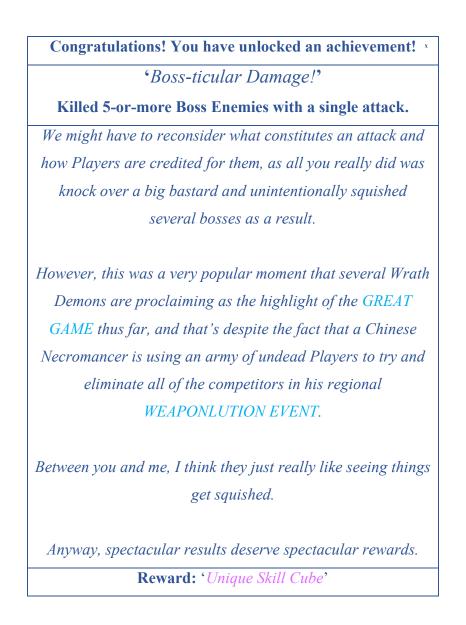
"Why… won't… you… die…!" I yelled between punches.

"It's not working!" Panda panicked.

I felt a sudden sense of acceleration, as the cocoon of hands that'd formed around us began to move, no doubt thanks to having formed a body around us. There wasn't any risk of being starved of oxygen as far as I could tell, but that electrical sensation kept pulsing through me.

"Check your achievements, maybe they gave you something!" Panda then advised, beginning to sound desperate.

I pulled them up and scanned through the rewards:

Congratulations! You have unlocked an achievement! ˣ
'*Boss-ticular Damage!*'   **Killed 5-or-more Boss Enemies with a single attack.**
We might have to reconsider what constitutes an attack and how Players are credited for them, as all you really did was knock over a big bastard and unintentionally squished several bosses as a result.   *However, this was a very popular moment that several Wrath Demons are proclaiming as the highlight of the GREAT GAME thus far, and that's despite the fact that a Chinese Necromancer is using an army of undead Players to try and eliminate all of the competitors in his regional WEAPONLUTION EVENT.*   *Between you and me, I think they just really like seeing things get squished.*   *Anyway, spectacular results deserve spectacular rewards.*
Reward: '*Unique Skill Cube***'**

Congratulations! You have unlocked an achievement! ˣ

'¿Level Up (-20)?'

Reached Level -20

Seek the truth, Glitched Prophet.

Forsake this childish game.

Follow the red light at the end of the tunnel.

Destroy the System's chains.

Let Chaos rule.

Reward: '*????*'

Congratulations! You have reached a Class milestone! ˣ

Pick an option!

You have reached the second Class milestone by reaching Level [¿ERROR?].

You now have the choice between switching to a higher-quality Class or evolving your current one. An Evolved Class will follow the theme of your current Class, while a Class Change will be something new.

Warning: changing Class will change your current Class abilities.

Change Class	*Evolve Class*

"Should I try to evolve again??" I asked.

"That's a bad idea, I think! Check that weird one with the cryptic message."

With one hand continually punching Liam in the face, and the other scrolling through my inventory, I brought up the description of the '????' item.

‘????’	x
Only those who have seen the truth can access this item. *Seek the truth.* *Glitched Prophet.*	
Weight: N/A	

"Okay, I have no idea what's up with that," Panda said. "Check the cube instead!"

‘**Unique Skill Cube**’	x
Contained within this cube is the knowledge of a Unique Skill. *But to access it, you must first solve the puzzle.*	
Weight: 1 Panda	

"Ah, what the fuck is this!?" I said, as I held the cube in my hands, pausing my punching for a moment to look it over. It was like a Rubik's Cube, except it had way too many segments, and instead of colors, it was full of strange glowing sigils on each square.

"I feel like Bee might know how to solve that," the plushie commented unhelpfully.

"Alright, fuck it," I muttered, putting the cube away.

"What are you doing?"

"What I should've done from the start," I replied, as I began to unscrew the unCollide plugin.

It took what felt like three minutes, given how awkwardly it was placed on my back. All the while, the giant Lord of Sinners was definitely heading somewhere, with the cocoon lifting into the air before tremors rolled through it.

PLUGIN REMOVED.

Terminating ‘*unCollide*’ protocol.
Uninstalling…

A cacophony of retro electronic noises emerged from within the plugin cylinder, before the final message arrived.

<div style="text-align:center; color:red">

PLUGIN UNINSTALLED.

***'unCollide'* protocol no longer in effect!**

</div>

Then, despite my earlier words, I began to blow air into the valve attached to the wrist of the balloon gauntlet, much to Brock's excitement.

"I'll try to interrupt myself before I disintegrate my own arm this time," I told Panda.

The cocoon I was in suddenly began lifting into the air and I had a worrying thought pop into my head.

"Do you think it can get up through the elevator shaft?" I asked Panda.

"Let's hope not, although it might just break back down into a horde of hand-spiders to get up there… You'd better wrap this up quickly."

"Third time's the charm," I said, preparing to punch Liam with all my might.

<div style="text-align:center; color:red">

BAD CATCHPHRASE!

You have taken 1 point of damage.

</div>

"Ow."

"That wasn't even a catchphrase," Panda commented. "I think they're just bullying you now."

The bottom-half of Liam's legs were submerged in the mass of hand-spiders, with his outstretched arms buried too, while his body and head just hung in the center of the cocoon and moved around with every tremor of motion that rolled through the Lord of Sinners.

"You know, I don't think this Boss Monstrosity is capable of killing you," Panda said in a pondering tone. "I'm fairly sure it's main attack is to turn Players insane."

"I would definitely die if it stepped on me," I replied.

"It didn't seem to be actively trying to do that though. I think the reason it was just standing there to begin with was because it wasn't sure how to get to the nearest sane Player."

"So the fact that it's moving now is a bad sign, right?"

"Definitely."

"Well, then…"

I cocked my fist back.

"*Oh my gawd, I can't wait!!*" Brock squealed.

With as much build-up as I could manage, given the confined nature of the cocoon we were inside of, I drove my fist into Liam's head, while uttering, "*Punch.harder( )*!"

<p style="color:red; text-align:center">ACTIVATING SCRIPT: Punch.harder( )!</p>