

Chuck-2

They did this to me, is the first thing that pops in my head as I stare at the message floating before me. One of them is in league with my father and trying to drive me insane.

I clamp down on the thought hard and paranoia fight me as hard.

There's no one anyone here could even know the van would stop working here.

I'm imagining a message window in front of my eyes, it responds.

"Okay, who passed around the drugs without tell me?" the biker woman demands and I turn my head to her. The window blocks her from view so I turn it more until I see her around the sides. She notices me and instead of facing me, she likewise looks sideways.

"Are you seeing this?"

She's the one!

Except that everyone seems to be looking at something before them. A kid is even moving a hand before him as if he's interacting with something.

"Do you mean the message welcoming us to the system?" I ask, my tone more tentative than I'd like. Confidence has kept more problems away from me than anything else.

"Yeah, and what's this thing about an identity sheet?"

I shrugged. "Wait, you guys see it too?" the kid calls. "Mom! It's not just us."

He sounds way too happy about this. Kids.

"I guess we aren't crazy after all," the biker woman says with a grin.

"Just wipe it away!" a woman yells. "It takes care of it."

Sure, my father's voice whispers in my ear, because ignoring problems works so well for you Charles, doesn't it?

Half my problem he caused. But remembered goading aside, he did teach me not to ignore anything going on with me.

I touch it, and instead of passing through, the window sticks to my finger and I can move it to the side. There's a tactile sensation, a faint static as I do that. When I want to let go I pull my finger away and the window remains where I left it.

People exclaim surprise and I can see some batting away something only they see. A few tap away in front of them. The kid is making scrolling motions. He's getting into this. His mother, behind him, is frowning at something she sees. The old couple have retreated away from everyone, they look scared. I take a step toward them

Don't you have your own problems to deal with?

I might hate my father and this devil his influence left me with, but he's right. I need to get a handle on what's happening to me.

I tap the window and it blinks away.

That was—

— too much to hope for.

With the message a timer appears in the top left of my field of vision. Eighty-nine minutes and change, counting down. I tap it and move it to the top right. More comfortable there.

Well, insanity suits you, my father's mocks.

I ignore him, twenty-five years without him in my life has made that easier to do.

Identity Sheet generated. Do you wish to view? Yes/No

I go to tap the yes and stop. Reacting to something no one else sees makes me feel like my father has won. That he has driven me insane, so I think it.

Name: Charles Dorval
Species: Human (ethnicity: Caucasian)

Class: Courier, Level: 1

Attributes
Strength: 13
Dexterity: 10
Endurance: 12
Intelligence: 11
Charisma: 10
Aether: 11
Health: 12

Skills
System note to avoid over crowding your display, only skills with a level 5 or above are listed as part of the Identity Sheet. For a complete list, please refer to your Skill window.
Automotive repair, Level 6
Driving, Level 8
Endurance training, Level 8
Perception, Level 6

That's... what is this?

The Identity Sheet is the System generated representation of who you are. It is how the system will interact with your body and mind. As you are currently in the initiation period, you have the opportunity to make alteration to your Identity Sheet.

System Notice

once changes are accepted, they are final. Any Identity Sheet not completed will be considered to be left to the system to finalize. The Identity Sheet is the System generated representation of who you are. It is how the system will interact with your body and mind. As you are currently in the initiation period, you have the opportunity to make alteration to your Identity Sheet. Note that once changes are accepted, they are final. Any Identity Sheet not completed will be considered to be left to the system to finalize.

I glance at the crowd. At least half are not interacting with anything anymore. Did they go through everything already, or did they dismiss it like the woman called to do?

Who cares.

I read over—

You don't have to be your father, my mother's voice says.

"Did you guys read the description for the Identity Sheet?" I ask loudly.

"Don't interact with it!" the same woman yells. Now I can identify her. Business suit, high heels, expensive phone in her hand that she glances at as if any moment it's going to come to life and rescue her. "If you ignore it, it will go away."

"Hey!" the kid yells. "You can't ignore this, come on, you can make yourself into anyone you want."

"This is not a game!" she yells at him.

"Do not raise your voice at my son," the kid's mother replies, standing. She's barely taller than he is, but there's a ferocity to her feature that shuts business woman down. It doesn't last. When she looks at her son, she's lost again and he talks with her in low voices.

The exchanges has the others talking, comparing notes, so I go back to my screen. I did my part, they can handle the rest on their own.

Name and species. That sounds... why would anyone call humans a species? We're a race. Does this thing have a wiki?

Nothing appears. I guess it's too much to asks for to get a description of what this system means by human species?

Humans are a species originating from world—information unavailable, connections to core system not established.

Humans' defining trait is their adaptability, having overcome events after events that should have seen them extinct. Their secondary trait is a need to differentiate themselves from each other by establishing ethnicities.

Humans do not start with any modifiers to their attributes, but gain one attribute points per levels to distribute as they please.

Human exclusive Class: Jack of All Trades.

Do you wish to select humans as your species? Yes/No.

I'm not sure having this system read my mind is a good thing, the only other option is asking the questions out loud, and I won't be the one to act crazy on top of feeling it at the moment.

Are there other options?

The list that appears scrolls by so fast I'm left with an after image of it and nothing else. Until the last of them are what's floating before me. What the hell is a Zorgorath?

Species Query: Zorgorath

Zorgraths are a species originating from world—[translations matrix unavailable]

Zorgorats' defining ability is that of working together. A group of Zorgorath can accomplish more working as a unit than looking to accomplish the same task as individuals.

Zorgorath's starts with a two point bonus to strength and endurance

Zorgorath exclusive ability: Cooperation.

Do you wish to select Zorgorath as your species? Yes/No.

No. The window disappears, leaving the list behind. I glance to the top right. Seventy-two minutes. I have time. I place my finger at the top of the list and move it down as fast as I can. Names scroll by. I see Orcs and think of Lord of the Rings, and how is it that this thing has races from fictional books? Is it bringing them to life? Or is it pulling for the entirety of our imagination?

Leonid is the only name that's vaguely familiar when it stops moving. I get it going again, feeling silly, but I'm not the only one doing it.

When it stops this time, the name at the bottom pulls my attention.

Dragon.

Species Query: Dragon

Dragons are a species originating from world—[translations matrix unavailable]

Dragons are defined by their unending pool of magic. And their fiercely independence. Dragons will only work together under dire circumstances.

Dragons start with with a 2000 point bonus to their mana, 15 to their intelligence, 10 to their dexterity, 30 to their strength, 30 to their endurance, 45 points to their aether.

Dragon exclusive ability: Magical Dominance

Do you wish to select Dragon as your species?

System Note

Your world can not currently sustain Dragon Physiognomy. Please check again in fifty-three local years.

That's a crock. This thing should remove species we can't take instead of teasing us with that kind of power. The things I could do to my father if I was a dragon.

And what do you think I'd be?

You are not stronger than I am. I tell that part of me who can't stop trying to bring me down.

I pick human, I think to the system and leave Caucasian. I'm find with the way I look and I don't have the time to go through everything. I glare at my name. I shouldn't hate it, but I can never stop hearing Charles the way that man said it, filled with honey and promises of things he'd do to me.

Do you wish to change your name? Yes/No

Oh, Hell yes. I make the change I want, then ask for information on the class that's assigned to me.

Class query: Courier

Courier is the class dedicated to taking messages and parcels across vast terrains. They are the reason kingdoms can exist. They are known for their endurance, determination and mastery of travel magic.

Do you wish to pick Courier as your class? Yes/No

I hesitate. That's more or less what I do. More on the side of moving stuff, less on

the one of using magic to do it, but is that going to be useful now? I look at the stopped cars. More importantly, like the kid said, I can make myself into anyone I want. Do I really want to just stick with what I've done my entire life?

I have time, so why not look at my options? There was that humans exclusive class, to start with.

Class query: Jack of All Trades

Jack of All Trades is a human exclusive class. As such it can be purchased by other races, but at a cost of double the experience required to go up in level. The Jack of All Trades is someone with an ease at learning. This class will learn at double the normal speed, but cannot have any skills reach the Master Skill Level.

Do you wish to pick Jack of All Trades as your class? Yes/No

No. I get it now. Jack of all trades, Master of none. Does this system have a sense of humor?

What do I want to be? To do?

Me? The voice says in my father's sickly sweet voice.

Kill you, yes. I mentally growl.

Why not? I almost ask for the class list, but stop myself. That might never end, instead I try for the list of combat related skills.

It's not as long, but I'm still dizzy by the time it's done. With one swipe down it scrolls to the top and I stop myself from asking what an Aborial Jumper might be. If I can't understand what the name means, I want nothing to do with it.

Assassin is the next one that means anything and I grin.

Class query: Assassin

The assassin is the class of the stealthy killer, the one who moves in the darkness, or among the crowd without being noticed. His blows are precise rather than strong. Many favor the dark over the light, and while the term assassin comes with evil connotations, not all of them kill for evil reasons

Do you wish to pick Assassin as your class? Yes/No

My finger is over the yes when my mother's voice comes to me. *Don't let your father be the reason for your decision, Charlie. We survived him, you have to move on, look beyond him.* This is more a memory than my conscience speaking to me in her voice.

If I want to be something my father would never be, I can't be in the combat classes.

He was about destroying anyone around him, I'd have to be—
Near the bottom is Guardian.

Class query: Guardian

The Guardian is the protector of the general population. They place themselves between citizens and dangers. They are most often found among city guards, surrounded by other fighting classes, such as the fighter, the archer, the commander. Historically, many Guardians have been wandering defenders, traveling to towns or villages without the ability to defend themselves. Guardians are known for their ability to take damage more than to inflict them, although an experienced Guardian can be a force to reckon with in a fight.

Do you wish to pick Guardian as your class? Yes/No

I hesitate again. I'm no defender. I can barely stand others most of the time.
That's it Charles. Remember who matters. Not them you. Do what is best for you.
No. I tap yes.

Guardians receive one point in Strength, two points in endurance, two points in health per level, and one unassigned attribute point. Each level they also receive one point to put in their Ability and one in their skills.

Sub Class: Aetheric Guardians.

The Aetheric Guardian as the ability to infuse many of their abilities with Aether, altering how the ability works. On top of other bonuses, the Aetheric Guardian increases the Aether attribute by 1 on setting it as your class and gains a point in Aether and a spell point per level.

Magic is... an interesting option, but it doesn't tell me how it's going to affect the abilities, or what they are

Ability Query: Guardian Abilities

Switch: The start of the bodyguard ability tree, you gets to switch place with a target to protect them. For the ten seconds, plus one second per ability level, following the activation of the ability, your Endurance and health are doubled, plus ten percent per level, and your target heals one point per second per level for fifteen seconds plus one second per level. Range: 10 meters plus 10 per level. Cool down, fifteen minutes. If the target is designated as the one being guarded, the range is doubled and line of sight is not required.

As an Aether Guardian, mana can be used to alter the range or cool down.

Wall: The start of the Crowd Control ability Tree, you can great a wall the is five meters wide and hight plus 5 meters in width and one in height per level. The durability of the wall is ten times your endurance and can not be crossed in any directions, making it good to protect people no matter on what side of the wall you are. Duration, one minute per level, cool down five minutes. As an Aether Guardian, mana can be spent to increase the duration, reduce the cooldown, or alter the dimensions of the wall.

Charge: The start of the Offensive ability Tree, you can activate a charge that will double your strength, plus ten percent per level for the purpose of the damage you cause, but your endurance is reduced by half for the next minute, minus five percent per level. Cool Down, one minute. As an Aether Guardian, you can spend mana to alter the strength increase and endurance decrease as well as the cool down.

Chuck read them over. Charge was tempting, but he felt his father's influence in that decision. And while he knew his mother would approve of him talking the wall ability. That would basically mean he was always around crowds of people. That left Switch. It would still be more useful when with others, but it didn't require large groups.

He made his selection and confirmed it.

Name: Chuck Dorval

Species: Human (ethnicity: Caucasian)

Class:Aether Guardian, Level: 1

Ability Tree: Bodyguard

Ability: Switch, Level 1

Attributes

Strength: 13

Dexterity: 10

Endurance: 12

Intelligence: 11

Charisma: 10

Aether: 11

Health: 12

Skills

System note

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listed as part of the Identity Sheet. For a complete list, please refer to your Skill window.

Automotive repair, Level 6

Driving, Level 8

Endurance training, Level 8

Perception, Level 6

Strength Training, Level 10