

Chapter 65 Steps

'ding' 'You have defeated [Undead Orc]'

'ding' 'You have defeated [Undead Human]'

...

'ding' 'You have defeated [Undead Overakar]'

'ding' 'Omen of Vengeance reaches lvl 30'

Stat points +2

Vigor +1

'ding' 'Blood Frenzy reaches 2nd lvl 19'

'ding' 'Reaper Jump reaches lvl 16'

'ding' 'Blood Rupture reaches 2nd lvl 3'

'ding' 'Blood for the Living reaches 2nd lvl 18'

'ding' 'Fury of the Unarmored reaches 2nd lvl 13'

'ding' 'Fury of the Unarmored reaches 2nd lvl 14'

'ding' 'Two Handed Weapon Fighting reaches 2nd lvl 18'

'ding' 'Roaring Pursuer reaches lvl 27'

Brutality +1

'ding' 'Thunderous Shout reaches 2nd lvl 1'

Active: Thunderous Shout – 2nd lvl 1

Stun your foes with fear. Rupture their eardrums and go forth to kill your enemies. Shout your rage, shout your fury, and empower your voice with deafening sound.

2nd stage: Thunderous Shout helps you and allies that hear you overcome magical fear and terror.

'ding' 'Reverberating Charge reaches 2nd lvl 2'

'ding' 'Sound Perception reaches 2nd lvl 9'

'ding' 'Tremor Sense reaches lvl 16'

Overakar, Kate thought, looking at the scale she had just cut off. It had a dark green color and was about the size of her hand. Its surface was rough and it was several centimeters thick. Not too heavy

but not exactly light either, considering her enhanced strength. *That shout improvement should help against more Emissaries. If I can bring myself to use it, once its spell is active.*

Or against anything else using that kind of magic. She was mainly glad that her shout now affected her allies too.

Kate threw the scale onto the small pile she was collecting. She tried to get different sizes, humming to herself as she worked.

“Will help in a minute, have to decide on an evolution and I want to update the map first as well,” Logan said.

“No rush,” Kate said and kept reading through the text in her vision. She had some choices to make as well.

‘ding’ ‘Support Class Requirements met for [Omen of Vengeance – level 30] – Show possible options’

She paused with her work, careful not to move her leg too much as she rested against the bulky form of the Overakar.

‘ding’ ‘Requirements met for Support Class acquisition [Omen of Vengeance]: Ice Breaker’

Wreathed in ice. You have fought prolonged battles in the cold, surrounded by ice and snow. You have pushed through a mana infused blizzard and survived. You have used the calm of snow to stay hidden and hunt your enemies. You have used snow and ice to create an ambush against your foes.

The Ice Breaker brings to a still the elements of the world, freezing their enemies, summoning ice to defend against physical strikes and magic alike. They are used to the cold, surrounded by it, and yet their heart beats ever stronger, in their pursuit of their foes. Until those moving are frozen still, nothing left but shattered remains.

Unique stat: Calm

Would you like to acquire the Class: Ice Breaker?

Ice magic? Kate wondered how that would look like exactly. Throwing icicles? Simply freezing undead where they stood? The description didn’t exactly offer a lot. Did she have to touch monsters to freeze them? How much mana would that take? She did like the inclusion of ice to defend against enemies. Another layer of armor perhaps? *And at the same time, I just don’t have that many stat points in either Wisdom or Intelligence.*

She was familiar with the unique stat as well. Melusine had it. It helped keep a steady hand and a calm voice, helping as well with keeping the surrounding people calm. *Does that calming effect work for me as well, if I have the stat myself? I wonder if that could help with my berserking abilities.*

She read through it again, then went on to the next option. She saw there were four in total, one more than when she had gotten her first Sub Class.

'ding' 'Requirements met for Support Class acquisition [Omen of Vengeance]: Heavy Charger'

Unstoppable. You have wielded heavy weapons in close quarters to break bones, to shred armor, to crush the heads of your enemies. You have thrown heavy weapons to kill your foes. You have slain three or more creatures with one strike of a heavy weapon. You have faced down monsters larger than yourself and have come out victorious, time and time again.

The Heavy Charger moves without fear, without doubt, the demise of their enemies as sure as death itself. They wield heavy weapons, blunt, sharp, serrated, edged, curved, straight, whatever they find useful enough to swing or throw at the creatures standing in their path. They are one with their chosen weapons, never to be separated, never unarmed in the face of battle, body and mind hardened by blood and death. Go now, and charge into the fray, until you stand victorious.

Unique stat: Fortitude

Would you like to acquire the Class: Heavy Charger?

Heavy weapons, hmm? Kate especially liked the line about never being unarmed in battle. She had lost her hammer in the middle of it all plenty of times already. And she *did* like to throw the axe, not that it often was a very smart decision. *But how exactly would that be remedied? Some way to teleport it back into my hand?*

No ice armor or something like that here either, though there is the line about a body and mind hardened by blood and death. She didn't know if that was just an acknowledgment of her journey so far or something more specific, something she would unlock by getting the Class. She didn't exactly want to wield death magic or anything of the sort, if that was what it meant, though compared to the first option, this one felt more practically applicable, though perhaps less interesting in the long run.

If there is a long run.

"Hey Logan, you have Fortitude from one of your Classes, right?" she asked, seeing the unique stat the Heavy Charger would provide.

Logan glanced up. "You're getting an evolution too?"

"New support Class. I hit thirty."

He looked at her for a moment, then grunted in an affirming manner. "Fortitude is a Vitality specialization, supposedly makes you more physically durable, increases your mental fortitude, and increases your ability to not get stunned by impacts and the like. Hard to say how much of a difference it makes, really, but on paper it sounds pretty useful. Might be a good option, seeing your leg and all." He nodded towards the leg in question.

Kate raised a brow. "Are we comparing each other's durability now?"

"I'm wearing metal armor. It's not exactly a competition," Logan said.

Just wait until I get my scale mail, or whatever it will be called, Kate thought. She glanced at Logan again, then shook her head slightly when she saw he seemed focused on his own notifications.

*She looked around at the dead, the dark blood covered dungeon corridors. Despite their circumstances, it felt good to joke around like that. Maybe as a way to disassociate from the horrific shit all around but early on, and when they had fought with Grey and Ethan, things just hadn't felt quite like this. *Maybe I wanted to be a good role model.* It didn't feel right. She assumed it was just the fact that everything that had happened had been more than a little overwhelming, both from a reality bending perspective and just stress wise.*

*Which can only mean one thing, she thought and gulped. *I'm getting used to this.**

She didn't really know what to do with that thought. Something to think about at another time, in a less dangerous place, with less shit to get done. So she instead looked at the next Support Class option.

'ding' 'Requirements met for Support Class acquisition [Omen of Vengeance]: Weapons Specialist'

Unpredictable. You have used a wide variety of weapons at range and in close quarters to hunt and kill your enemies. You have used four or more different weapons to slay enemies during a single encounter. You have injured a singular enemy with three or more weapons before you killed them. You have fought and killed in utter darkness.

The Weapons Specialist is equipped and prepared for every possible situation. They are ready to face enemies at range and at close quarters, out on a frozen field or within dark corridors. Never without an alternative or hidden blade up their sleeves, they slay their foes with brutal efficiency. Be it traps, an ambush, an extended break, or open battle, they are ready, always, their arsenal unending. Prepare and fight, with everything you have, and all that you can salvage.

Unique stat: Finesse

Would you like to acquire the Class: Weapons Specialist?

Yeah, I mean that's what I've been doing but what will this Class give me? Or does it just make the things I have and can do better? Maybe I can carry more? Finesse was for small dexterous movements. Grey had that for sure.

*It felt like a solid Support Class to have but it also felt like the option lacked the potential of Ice Breaker and the oomph of the Heavy Charger. *Probably more versatile though. Hmm.**

'ding' 'Requirements met for Support Class acquisition [Omen of Vengeance]: Combat Leader'

Dependable. You have consistently fought on the front line, shielding your allies from danger. You have risked and suffered severe injuries to fight your enemies and to protect your allies. You have inspired others with your deeds. You did not falter against overwhelming odds, you led the charge, without fear, without doubt.

The Combat Leader is aware of their team, their abilities, potential, and their limits. They stay calm under pressure and can adjust their plans even in the heat of battle. They see the

weaknesses of their allies, and inspire them to overcome them. Not through pressure, fear, or rule, but through example. They know that nothing will stand in the way of a prepared team, built on capability and trust. Lead them, with empowering spells and inspiring words alike, share your strength and see your enemies falter.

Unique stat: Charisma

Would you like to acquire the Class: Combat Leader?

The last option left a slightly bitter taste in Kate's mouth. Sure, she had wanted to protect them. It was easy for her to fight and risk herself for others. For many reasons, she knew. But now there was more to it. There was more to it since she had gotten her first Class, maybe even since she had killed those first goblins, or maybe it had been there for longer, she wasn't sure. She did want to protect people, did want to empower them. But she didn't have to charge the Overakar today. There was nobody in direct danger. They could've retreated. A smart leader might've decided on that. But she had wanted to fight it, had wanted to find out what it could do, how she would match up.

The rush of adrenaline, the rush of blood magic, letting go and giving in to her berserking abilities, the focus of it all. It was intoxicating, and all the other things on her mind, protecting others, securing a future, getting revenge, the anger she felt, the power she felt from being in control, from fighting back, it all mixed together. She wasn't sure if her magic and excitement was supporting her ability to protect others, to fight back against this nightmare, or if she only used the knowledge that she had people to protect and avenge to justify her bloodlust.

Lead the charge? Without fear and doubt? More like dulled by berserking magic.

She knew that self doubt wasn't getting her anywhere. Logan was right, she felt the things she felt, and she wouldn't suppress them. Maybe she would tone it down to not scare someone else but she wouldn't lie to herself.

It all mixed together and it felt like every piece of it mattered. She did want to protect and inspire others to fight, she did want to lead by example, to show that they could fight back, that they could retake what was theirs. That they could survive, and hope. But she also wanted to just slam her axe through the monsters that have come to her valley. She wanted to hear their bones splinter and break, she wanted to see the terror in the eyes of her enemies when she met them.

A complicated mix, not one she deemed healthy for a leader. With and without berserking magic that dulled and focused the mind on battle alone. No, a leader needed to be focused on leading, needed to understand the bigger picture, needed to see everyone else during a fight and not get lost in it.

And then there was the simple reality of responsibility. It gnawed on her, somewhere deep in her mind, that Grey and Ethan might've not died if it wasn't for her and Logan's presence, if they had treated them like kids instead of adults. She knew that what they'd done was right but the price they paid, was everything.

It had been circumstantial, natural even, the way they met at Keilberg Castle, the way they all tried to figure out this changed world. It had felt good, to see them grow, to see herself struggling with it all, overcoming fears, fighting, along everyone else. It felt good, not to be alone.

And that still felt good. But Logan was different. He understood the risks. He didn't treat it all like some game, didn't have to. *Or you're just scared.*

Kate shook her head. This wasn't the time to try and process things. She had wasted enough time.

Quickly going over the Classes with Logan, she made her decision. Ice Breaker was out due to her low Wisdom and Intelligence stats. She didn't want to invest more into them right now either, her magic meant to support, and if ice magic drained her mana, she wouldn't be able to use her sound magic in turn.

Combat Leader was out, which left Heavy Charger and Weapons Specialist. Both looked solid but if she had to choose between a heavy axe or hammer or an inexhaustible arsenal of random weaponry, she just felt more comfortable with either of the first. The same was true for choosing Fortitude over Finesse. It felt right, and she'd be specializing as well. When it came to potential, she felt like going for one weapon type would yield better results in the long run. And in the short run too.

'ding' 'New Support Class [Omen of Vengeance]: Heavy Charger'

Unique stat acquired: Fortitude +1

Skill slot acquired [Heavy Charger]: Active +3

Skill slot acquired [Heavy Charger]: Passive +3

Skills gained in Heavy Charger:

Active: Bound Weapon Return – lvl 1

You may bind one heavy weapon to yourself and recall it to your hand. This ability is limited to ten kilometers and the farther away your weapon is, the longer it will need to travel. Higher levels in this skill will increase the ability of your weapon to break through obstacles on its return to you. You may change your weapon binding to another once every three days.

Passive: Heavy Weapons Expert – lvl 1

You have learned to better adjust your weight and strength when attacking with heavy weapons, reducing stamina usage by 5.5% when wielding them.

Hmm. I like that, Kate thought, trusting her magical instincts as she grabbed her battle axe and focused on it. It felt like her focus increased before something invisible snapped into place.

"What did you get?" Logan asked.

Kate leaned the axe against the dead Overakar and held up her hand, half a meter away from the handle. She activated her new ability and twitched when her axe shot out and into her hand, even turning in a way so that the blade was facing forward. She could tell that it barely used any mana either, the magic fast and natural, similar to her berserking abilities and not something to overly focus on like her Reverberating Charge or Aura of Silence.

"From how far away does that work?" Logan asked.

"Ten kilometers, supposedly. And there's travel time."

"How fast does it fly? It flies, I assume? And not like, scrapes against the floor?"

Kate set the weapon down on the floor and walked a few meters away. She reached out her hand and recalled her axe, watching with her brows raised as the axe flung towards her like a projectile. She ducked and heard the weapon clatter to the floor behind her.

“About as fast as if it was thrown,” Logan said. “You could probably use it to hit a monster as well, if you position yourself between the axe and yourself.”

“Right,” Kate said and raised her hand again to the axe on the floor. Somehow, she felt bad to have ducked and not caught it. She focused and this time held her ground, the weapon slapping into her hand without causing her any pain. She felt as if the momentum slowed right after it touched her hand as well, making the process of catching it much easier than if someone threw the weapon into her hand without magic.

The Passive skill was much more straightforward. Not flashy but more than welcome.

“Which evolution did you decide on?” she asked, looking at her axe and then towards Logan.

“Armored Guardian to Fortress Breaker, mainly due to the mention of prolonged battles, mana recovery, and obviously the Vigor addition. I’ve been feeling bad that I’ve been needing more sleep than you, maybe I can catch up with that now,” he said.

“Skill changes?” Kate asked.

“The voice infusion I had can now break enemy focus too, it should make them feel fear while still pulling their attention towards me. I got a charge as well, similar to yours I think but it seems more meant to break enemy formation or barricades rather than simply making me move towards the next monster. And the best benefit to me, I get some mana back after every battle, more if I’ve used more sacred spells.”

Kate nodded to herself. He had been very conscious about using his mana, mainly infusing his bullets but otherwise using his spells somewhat sporadically. Depending on how much mana he got back after an engagement, it could heavily change how he fought.

She went back to cutting off scales, Logan soon joining her when he was done with updating their map. With all the undead they’d been killing, Kate did wonder how a fight against a more intelligent set of monsters would go at this point. Her shout and her intimidating presence didn’t exactly shine against the undead, and now that Logan’s voice infusion had changed as well, they’d be even more fearsome to anyone who could at least comprehend it.

She put her two stat points into Vitality to bring it to an even forty but with her new support Class, she was ready to get back to investing into Strength.

Kate focused on the scales, then slowed down her breathing. This was just the break that she needed, though she would’ve preferred going back and having a cup of steaming hot coffee. *One step at a time.*

Kate Lindgren

Unspent stat points: 0

Class: Omen of Vengeance – lvl 30

- **Active: Mindless Ferocity** – 2nd lvl 20
- **Active: Blood Frenzy** – 2nd lvl 19
- **Active: Vengeful Charge** – 2nd lvl 10
- **Active: Reaper Jump** – lvl 16
- **Active: Blood Rupture** – 2nd lvl 3
- **Passive: Blood for the Living** – 2nd lvl 18
- **Passive: Fury of the Unarmored** – 2nd lvl 14
- **Passive: Two Handed Weapon Fighting** – 2nd lvl 18
- **Passive: Unrelenting Carnage** – 2nd lvl 6
- **Passive: Terrifying Presence** – lvl 8

Support class: Roaring Pursuer – lvl 27

- **Active: Thunderous Shout** – 2nd lvl 1
- **Active: Reverberating Charge** – 2nd lvl 2
- **Active: Aura of Silence** – lvl 16
- **Passive: Sound Perception** – 2nd lvl 9
- **Passive: Echo Awareness** – lvl 13
- **Passive: Tremor Sense** – lvl 16

Support class: Heavy Charger – lvl 1

- **Active: Bound Weapon Return** – lvl 1
- **Active:**
- **Active:**
- **Passive: Heavy Weapons Expert** – lvl 1
- **Passive:**
- **Passive:**

Status:

Vitality: 40

Vigor: 15

Fortitude: 1

Endurance: 24

Perseverance: 15

Strength: 25

Brutality: 12

Dexterity: 8

Intelligence: 7

Wisdom: 12

Serenity: 15

Equipment:

Torso: Direwolf Cloak [Common]

- Low grade Cold Resistance

Legs: Splintered Bone Armor [Common]

- Low grade Fire Resistance

Trinket: -

Food: Hummus Sandwich [Duration 1 hour]

- Stamina regeneration +10