

Shining Force Speed Run Walkthrough

by tskisoccer

Updated to v7.0 on Sep 11, 2017

NoWorries presents:

the "How to" for speedrunning Shining Force

Game: Shining Force I

System: Sega Genesis

FAQ: Beating Shining Force I in under 7 hours

Written By: NoWorries

Best Time: 4:50

Allowed Website: www.gamefaqs.com

www.neoseeker.com

www.supercheats.com

If you have a website you would like to post this at just shoot me an email

As always, the most up-to-date guide will always be found at gamefaqs

Version History: 1.0 Submitted 28 of May of 2014

1.3 Submitted 02 of June of 2014

-Updated with the actual link to the online video

-Improved a number of descriptions regarding paths

-Completely rewrote a few sections to now include Guntz as a hero

1.7 Submitted 15 of July of 2014

-Updated a few spots

-Updated some times

-Updated the Ideal Time as well added a sum of my best chapter times for what could be considered as "segmented". So as it stands, my best

"single segment time" is 6:26 and "segmented" is 6:10

-Updated with a new best time and a new video link

2.0 Submitted 30 of January of 2015

-Updated some times

-Rewrote a few sections to adjust for strategy changes

-Broke an hour on Chapter 6!

-Broke 70 minutes for Chapter 8!

-Set a new personal best: 6 hours 4 minutes

3.0 Submitted 22 of July of 2015

-SMASHED my previous Chapter 1 & 2 time

-Broken 2 hours for first 3 Chapters

-Broken 4 hours through 6 Chapters

-Completely updated the ideal time to more accurately reflect what they should be by roughly calculating out of battle time

-Updated a number of times and spots

-Added a mini-section concerning a challenge: Minimalist

4.0 Submitted 24 of October of 2015

-Added a new video for my best segmented run. As it stands, my best time is 5:54 and segmented is 5:51:25

-Added and changed a few details for some battles to make them easier to understand and replicate

-Added some new contact. I have started streaming about once a week and added a twitter as an easy way to let you know when that happens. Both are under tskisoccer, AKA twitter.com/tskisoccer and twitch.com/same There's other stuff as well, but that's the premise to find me if you want to watch some livestream.

-Added some major details regarding a number of battles and what heroes to use for optimal starting positions

5.0 Submitted 12 of April of 2016

-Whole bunch of random updates and fixes

-Had to completely rewrite a number of spots to incorporate completely new strategies. Not to disregard old ones, I've tried to include "both" pieces when necessary. Those should be noted along the way as they emerge

-Got a new best at 5:41 which is awesome and still tons to improve

-As my two year anniversary approaches, might as well get a new vastly improved guide uploaded!

5.5 Submitted 15 of August of 2016

-Updated strategies once again

-overall better team member management

-eliminated the warrior class from the run

-eliminated Kokichi and Zylo entirely as well

-Completely rewrote parts of the guide to make things as clear as possible

-New best time of 5:26

Here is a link to my best run so far

<https://www.twitch.tv/tskisoccer/v/80338958>

6.0 Submitted 09 of December of 2016

-Been putting in a ton of time racing against ty2358 as we race to the be the first to sub 5 hours. As a result, many new strategies have evolved and the time has improved quite a bit. As a result, I will be including NR around certain sections as a NEW RUNNER may want to start with safer and simpler strategies. Hopefully this will be clear in the text below

-New best time is 5:03:24, hopefully sub 5 happens soon

Link to my best run now (5:03)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQmRh3ZPTaw>

7.0 Submitted 08 of September of 2017

-The sub 5 update!

-Was featured at RPLimitBreak doing a race with Ty2358

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubUQ3F5U3mg> (that run)

-New best time is 4:50

<http://www.speedrun.com/run/9mrg662z> (video for best run)

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-Who should be reading this FAQ?- #The NoWorries Contract to Greatness

I put this in every faq I've ever written, and it goes something along the lines like this. By writing this, I commit to you the reader that I will bring to you not only my vastness of knowledge but do it with a sense of humour. I understand it's easy to get bogged down in detail as well as a mush of opinion but I strive to bring you something more than just a guide to greatness.

So who should be reading this? This is a guide on how to beat the game, Shining Force, in under 7 hours. It's a speed run. It's hard, it's tedious, it may test you at moments, but rest assured it is a good feeling beating the game with half a team of level 6 promoted heroes. There is a great level of expert required skill for this run so if you are a newer player I don't want to discourage you from trying this but it is going to be hard. For the more veteran players, I wish you the best of luck.

There will also be an accompanying video available on youtube on my channel which will be a complete runthrough of the game. That particular run is 4:50 which is currently my best published run. So on with this!

When it comes to speedrunning, there's always some rules, restrictions, and guidelines to be set forth. For Shining Force, there's nothing completely radical or insane to be made aware of. The game itself is extremely simple, take Max and your team of up to eleven other characters and go forth into the rather ordinary world of Rune as you battle your way through thirty battles to vanquish Dark Dragon and accomplish one of the more reasonable RPG's for speed running. Oddly enough, later Shining Force games are much more difficult to even consider speed running as the games themselves are much longer as well as the victory conditions for a number of battles is "kill them all" whereas in glorious Shining Force I, we will be killing them all only a handful of times.

Right away you're probably thinking well that's just dumb. The game takes 10 hours at least, your party would be far too weak to actually beat some of the battles, and just a couple of those first missions: how do you not kill everything? What about the rng (the randomness)? How does one not lose their mind dealing with those extremes?

Trust me, this is a question and a topic I've debated a number of times with my older brother Frolki a number of times. The beauty of the situation is that because the game operates on rng (but not TRUE randomness) there are certain patterns and exploits to be worked out. Things like, Domingo's and Max's tendencies to get focused over their allies is an exploitable factoid; whereas getting Max to point A in a number of spots, winning the battle despite there being a battalion of Rune Knights storming down his throat is a purposeful aspect that they the game programmers put into the game that one might as well exploit.

So how long does it take? As of right now, the time is highly variable as the path continues to get improved and continues to change as newer methods are developed. Dark Kobold would say that it takes just under 2 hours to beat the game using tas (tool assisted speedrun) and that's using Lua and matlab to really take advantage of the rng. While we are not remotely on that level (trying to do just the first battle alone is 1 in several billion, so the odds are quite stacked against us) we have manage to improve the time quite a bit.

As it stands, I can beat the game in under 5 hours. Realistically, I could maybe do it in 430 if I had insane luck; but as it stands, I'm simply looking for a good 445 which means I still need to save about 5 minutes through the run to achieve that goal though saving 10 minutes still is entirely achievable

Which is something I really want to take time to talk about. "How fast?" is a question that gets thrown my way an awful lot (as well as Ty2358, the second fastest runner who has clocked a 501 and 503 time for his best runs) and it is often difficult to really give a satisfactory answer. Many people with point to the TAS run by darkkobold and say "well he did it in 1:59:59 so an RTA runner could probably do it in like 2:30?"

NO.

First, let me explain the difference between his run and ours. His run skips the initial party. His first battle alone is perfection and is 1 in several billion (the odds of performing it). Even with beyond perfect luck, our run will never come close to the TAS due to the route differences. We cannot skip the intro party because it is definitely faster RTA to have them, specifically Tao. We cannot skip Anri, because it has been shown RTA to be faster to have her. Route differences, RTA versus what can be skipped with a TAS, make a 2, or even 3 hour run impossible to do RTA. Several battles in the TAS are a toss up between impossible and lulzy to even fathom to do RTA. For example, he beats Marionette on T2 with a double crit from Mae. Ken can't even reach. The odds of double critting on a boss are so low, it would take more than the 5 minutes or so to do the battle to reset the game to get that result. Another such example is Mishaela, where his Max double turns to avoid being blocked by enemies only to then outturn Mishaela so he can reach her, where he then double crits to defeat her. Another battle that probably verges on 1 in several trillion to be able to do since his Max has to be promoted and at the perfect speed to be able to accomplish this. In other words, the TAS and RTA runs of this game, will never look similar because we are limited by a number of factors, most importantly, the routing of the game due to limitations.

Next, allow me to explain the difference between our "Sum of Best" and what we consider the "Theoretical Best" of this game. Currently, my SoB is sitting around 4:14 with Ty2358's being basically there as well. However, we consider the Theoretical Best to be about 4:30, which is 20 minutes faster than the best run to date. What accounts for 16 minutes there? Things I've already hinted at somewhat. When our hero crits or doubles to beat a boss in 1 hit as opposed to several minutes, that becomes a gold split that is more or less impractical to replicate. When Ty gets 5 crits on Bats in 2-1 and busts our best gold by over a minute due to a double crit Blaze 2 that wipes out those bridge enemies, that's a gold split that is impossible to replicate. When Max hits the proverbial 20 attack at level 4 and we no reset for 23-24 attack with Power Potions and Tao has 19+ MP so we do a 11 minute split on Alterone, that is a split that is basically impossible to replicate.

What we have here, is instances of superb randomness that gives us GREAT best segments, but gives us impractical measures of which we can realistically assess what is our possible best. Instead, we have to sit down and go through the chapters and have a realistic goal that we add together to come up with what we believe is the theoretical best time (as of now). I'm always open to changes; and I even said once that sub 5 isn't happening without a major change, and what resulted was the improved Chaos battle which lead to an improved 8-1 and later an overall tightened Chapter 8 which has not only set the best run to date a 4:50 run, but then improved the Theory Best to 4:30.

Here's the breakdown

Looking at Chapter 1 (again, already an unrealistic gold split of mine in the very first battle which inflates that time by quite a bit) we see a goal of beating Alterone (and Chapter 1) in 36 minutes. To date, nobody has managed a 36 minute chapter 1 (that's 7:30, 7:30, 7:30, and 11:30 with the minute or so to finish chapter 1). All possible, but super hard to do.

In Chapter 2, it's one that could be summed as $10+9+7+7$ or 35 minutes. While that seems possible, one thing unaccounted for here is healing items and a broken power ring (as well perfect boosting, ghouls and Marionette hitting). Instead, a 36-37 minute goal here is more likely. That's 1 hour and 10-12 minutes through two chapters.

Chapter 3 is basically 4 and 5 minutes with 3-2 which is 11 minutes, a 20 minute chapter. We have to account for promoting Tao which goes in there somewhere, regardless, 20-21 minutes is perfectly reasonable. That's 1 hour and 30-33 minutes.

Chapter 4 has been improved (somewhat) since my chapter 4 is slower now due to promotions (that saves time later) but regardless, 17 minutes for Elliot, and then another 8-9 for both the other battles gives us around 35 minutes for this one, and 2 hours, 5-8 minutes.

Chapter 5 is another short one, coming in ideally $8+7+10$ or 25 minutes. This chapter could be a 22-23 minute chapter but let's cushion ourselves. Our total is now 2 hours, 30-33 minutes

Chapter 6 has gotten very fast, with the biggest issues being randomness in the forest and Mishaela battles. Sadly, there's little we can do about those and those battles together can cost upwards of 6 minutes of timeloss with little we can do about it. Regardless, an ideal looking run would be $6+9$ for the first 2 and then $17+12$ for Mishaela, which gives us 44 minutes or so. Our total is now 3 hours, 15 minutes

Chapter 7 has another two battles the first one and Chaos, where bad luck can cost upwards of 8 minutes combines. Ideally, $10+8$ for those battles, as well 4 and 5 for the two snipes, giving us 27 minutes for this chapter. However, as we our best 7 is about 34 minutes, I'm calling 30 minutes ideal until we can manage that. 3 hours, 45 minutes for our total

Chapter 8 has been improved from "sub 70" to "sub hour" to now "sub 50" and time may continue to get faster. But as it is, 15 minutes for Dark Sol and Dark Dragon, 3 minutes for Ramladu, and 15 minutes for Colossus. I've nearly done 8-1 in under 10 minutes, so for the sake of easiness, call it 10, which brings this to 43 minutes for Chapter 8, giving us 4 hours, 28 minutes for the ideal time. There's leeway in there, which inflates it, but there's also slightly unrealistic times in there, which helps decrease it. Regardless, that is where our "best time" comes from. Hopefully that helps. Sidenote, I'm gonna try to keep this updated to reflect any major changes that may come.

As for some of the most "specific" things regarding speed running, the first and foremost is that this is "rts" or "real time strategy" or "real time playing" AKA playing on a console and not an emulator. This is done for a number of reasons and the biggest is the obvious difference between tas and real time running. This is where the rng would seemingly get in your way and make a glorious mess of things but that's where knowledge and skill come into play and give us the advantage over the enemy. Now, that's not to say that playing on an Emulator is frowned upon (I use one as my Genesis is, well, let's just say it has seen better days). The difference is playing on an Emulator and using something called

Save States

If you play on an Emulator (like I do) don't use these things and you'll be just fine. Most Emulators allow for saving just like a console would. I use the Fusion and it required a bit of reading and figuring out how to create the right folder so that it would save, but after that it was easy. The Emulator saves, resets, and handles just like a console (mine even records). Just don't be using Save States to redo misses and stuff. That's called

CHEATINGCHEATINGCHEATINGCHEATINGCHEATINGCHEATINGCHEATINGCHEATINGCHEATING

Ahem, anyways

So what do we have going for us? Luckily, there's not a whole lot of variable concerning the things that matter most. Misses, level ups, enemy movements, those are all rng and for the most part, we cannot control those. We can control however things like, starting stats, people in our party, our hero movements, in battle saving, as well as things like enemy placement and victory conditions never change so we know exactly what we are up against every step of the way.

We also have something else handy, and that's magic. How do I explain this...

The first advantage of magic is that it never misses. With SF1 setting the standard on insane evasion, magic is and will always be an answer for us.

The second advantage of magic is that AoE spells always provide an inflated value of EXP. In other SF games, if your mage is sufficiently overleveled, she will gain 1 EXP, maybe up to 5 or so if you hit lots of things that are "close" to your level. In SF1, your level 9-10 Tao can hit 3-4 enemies that otherwise give no EXP and still scrap together some. Additionally, an attack that might otherwise yield 10-15 points could grant 40-48 points because of a nice AoE splash.

The third advantage (and biggest) is that magic deals proportionally more damage in SF1 than any other. While the damage stays roughly the same across all SF games, the enemies in SF1 never gain as much health as the enemies in the other titles. For instance, the strongest enemies we encounter will have 50+ HP in Chimaera and Dragons, but in SF2, we encounter that much health pretty much be around post-Creeds. Similarly, enemies already get into 30+ range by the Desert battles whereas in SF1 we don't really see 30 HP enemies until chapter 7 (no joke). As such, the magic we learn is infinitely more useful here as 35-45 damage from Blaze 4 kills everything we will ever encounter basically. Freeze 4 literally does kill everything except for Dragon enemies thanks to their resistance.

We combine advantage 3 with the enemies clumping together more, and well, you can see why the run has evolved from "Tao+strong fighters" to "always give Anri > Tao > Balbaroy experience priority".

Character Overview

This is a very quick "spoiler" style section so that you can have an idea just what each character will do for this run. As it is a speed run, every action, every choice, every character; they must be important otherwise we are losing out on valuable precious seconds. Things like moving right to the shop as opposed to left to do other stuff first... it all makes a difference and adds up. I suppose a quick note; I'm not getting all the characters. Some people have discussed "100%" for this game including all the characters but let's be realistic. There is nothing in this game that actually counts (or is countable towards a goal) that could be considered "100%". For example, Donkey Kong 1, 2, and 3 all give the percent completion due to the sidequests in the game.

Banjo Kazooie has a definitive "100%" if you get all the notes, puzzle pieces, and break all the doors getting all the cool stuff (Cheato maybe not needed). In Shining Force, there is none of that. What's 100%? Grab all the chests? Kill all the monsters? Find all the useless items hidden throughout the game? It makes no sense. Therefore, the game is technically "any percent" as we don't grab all the characters though frankly, defining "100%" as getting all the characters is lame in my opinion. Anyways:

If you are familiar with my character guide available on gamefaqs, that will help you to understand my stance towards certain heroes.

The "Required Bunch"

This is everyone you either use, are forced to use, or serve some purpose. It is different than the next section which includes some required characters, but they are never placed on our team and we will never need their services

#As of Dec 5, 2016, a new record of was set that changed how we use some of the characters. As such, this list has been updated to completely reflect new strategies

Max

Another much needed update to Max's description; what we have found is that Max never needs to be promoted. After chapter 5, Max will likely never throw another punch so there's no real point to promoting him and punishing his stats. Basically, we hope to get him to 20 attack by Alterone so that he can be OHKOing the enemies and have him strong enough to get attacked, but more details on that below
In chapter 5, there are two chests available (def pot and bread of life) that are entirely skippable. I'd suggest you take them if your Max is feeling weak. What exactly is weak? By chapter 7, we're hoping Max has around 25 health and 13 defense (19 with White Ring) that makes him strong enough to tank a Jet. If your Max is lower on those stats, consider grabbing those

Ken

Ken is not great but as he's required (to get Tao) then we'll use him for about half the game. His attack tends to get decent (around 30 with Power Spear) so we'll use him through 5-1 and then replace him with Jogurt

Mae

Mae is completely awful with the new changes, it is even better to revive Ken if he dies in lieu of using Mae. We need her in our party for positioning so dead is a good option

Pelle

Some new changes have elevated Pelle from strong member to "only knight" as we now skip Guntz entirely and just use Pelle who becomes much stronger now. The change resulted from having two 3/4 knights but now we have one full knight. While the former seems stronger, they die more easily and result in lost damage so the latter is better

Vankar

I'm leaving Vankar in the list just because if Ken dies in 3-2, recruiting Vankar is faster than reviving Ken and Vankar is likely going to be better than Ken in most cases. In this event, only use Vankar until 5-1
While reviving Ken might seem faster, if Ken died in 3-2, he's probably terrible, which means you're better recruiting Vankar here

Luke

Luke serves a very important 2 battles. His high base power makes the first two battles breezy. However, his damage falls off as does Gort and because we are remembering TMM, we elect to let Luke perish and 1-2 and not look back. As a minor reference point, he has about a 10% chance to

start with 10 attack instead of 9 (15 versus 14) and that helps quite a bit but is in no way required to have a good run

Tao

Tao is our fiery queen and super useful for this run. If you can promote her by Chapter 3, do so, as having Blaze 3 for Chapter 4 is super helpful. Also, lots of Blaze 4 really does help. Her level reqs look something like 4 by 1-4

8 by end of 2

10 by end of 3

P3 by end of 4-1

P10 by end of 6

It's not required to have Blaze 4 by the end of Chp 6, but having it for Chaos does really really help as Blaze 3 is beginning to fall off here

And to clarify her levels, we actually want her to be promoted level 1 with 60+ experience at the end of Chapter 3. This allows her to be 3 by the end of 4-1. For exact reasons, read below

Anri

The major changes to the route have all revolved around Anri as Freeze 4 kicks so much ass it's unbelievable. As such, she always has EXP priority as we need to ramp her 20 levels in a very short time to get to Freeze 4. If she doesn't level twice in the first battle (2-2) it does hurt A LOT but you can still get her to Freeze 4 by the end of the game

5 by 2-2

8 by 3-2

10 by 4-1

P3 by end of 4

P6 by 6-2 (for Kane) (with at least 30 MP)

P13 by 8

Getting her to 5 grants her Freeze for the Circus Tent which is important as 8+8 (Freeze+Blaze 2) kills all the dolls. Blaze 1 likely won't cut it Getting her to Blaze 2 is essential as it allows her to level like mad as well as combo with Tao

She needs P3 by chapter 5 as Freeze2 + Blaze3 kills most enemies whereas Blaze 2 may not cut it

Having Freeze 3 for Kane not only is a necessary evil for continuing damage, it grants her the range to begin exploding in levels. It also lets her attack Kane (described below) and allows her to try and have Freeze 4 by chapter 8, the sooner the better, but she must have it for Dark Sol and Dark Dragon

Domingo

To think my first run skipped Domingo... the only thing is getting him those early levels because it makes such a difference. We need Freeze 3 at level 13 for Chapter 8 ideally, and level 10 is a good Chapter 7 goal

Lowe

Lowe is good for soaking up Dark Dwarves in battle 1

Khris

I love Khris, I really do, but for a speedrun of the Any% variety, there is no place for her. Try to get her eliminated before you are forced to stand around for a turn or two letting something kill her

Torasu

Shield is super useful so let's grab Torasu but he's pretty useless other than that so leave him out of our party until 8-3

Hans

Hans, like Lowe, should taste the blunt axe of a Dark Dwarf

Balbaroy

With the major changes to the run, Balbs is pretty much the clutch hero now. He takes over the run, and even solos several strong snipes for us. Thanks Balbs!

Amon

Sadly we won't be using this chick (no pun intended) a whole lot. Balbs has better starting stats so let her get axed right away

Musashi "Moose" Powerhouse

There are few words worthy to describe Musashi. He brings your best non legendary sword weapon to the team, he hits hard, he has amazing defense, he simply rocks this shit

Jogurt

WHAAAT you might say! Jogurt is useless, don't get me wrong, but there is one important feature that he serves: He's the LAST person on your list. What does that mean exactly? It's simple: Jogurt will always go to spot 12. Let me explain. In Shining Force games, your team is put into spots for each battle, basically numbered 1 through 12. In SF2, dead people do not occupy spots so you can control where people start and who is in your party by using dead people. In SF1, this is not the case, and dead people still have a spot reserved for them. As such, spot 12 is usually the worst spot (where Musashi, Kokichi, Zylo, and Hanzou) spend much of their time being so far in the back of the list. By having Jogurt in the party, he can effectively move people around by occupying that spot. The most notable spot is the double snipe done in Chapter 4, but there are other uses as well. Simply put, I'd go ahead and grab him

The "Not so helpful for the Speed Run"

This will be divided into "don't use" and "new runner"

Don't use these folks for a Speed Run

Arthur

He's weaker than all knights when he joins and takes too long for stats

Ernst

He joins weaker than Pelle, Vankar, and likely Ken

Gong

We don't need healers in this run and Gong takes time to recruit

Diane

She's not required to grab so go ahead and skip her as archers are slow and weak for a speed run

Lyle

I'm tempted to throw him in the NR section because he helps out quite a bit but really just skip him

Bleu

I can't imagine a time where putting in a weak slow 5 moving flying unit would be helpful

Adam

I can't imagine a time where putting in a weak slow 4 moving land unit would even scratch the surface of thought

Possible options for a New Runner

Guntz

Guntz is a 4 moving unit but he is not deterred by terrain which makes both 6-3 and 7-1 much easier than using Pelle. However, Guntz tends to be a tad weak and steals experience from Pelle (see above description) so the best strategy is to skip Guntz, but he does help newer runners for sure

Gort

The warrior class has been eliminated from the run entirely but for new runners, having the Atlas and a Gladiator can be extremely useful; especially in the chapters that are most difficult to get through, 1, 2, 3, and 4 and having a warrior can really help here. As such, I suggest Gort (always have) because he tends to get tankier and Luke dies in 1-2 for strategy

Alef

The best strategy is to skip Alef entirely. This results from her losing experience from the changes to Chaos. However, this is a tougher strategy and Alef uses magic so for a new runner I suggest you still grab her and promote right away to gain access to Bolt 2 in just one level. She does a lot of helpful things through chapter 8, but is not required at all

Kokichi

This new section now gives Kokichi a brief shot as he is certainly an option to new runners. I've debated scrapping him entirely due to his long recruitment and general lack of stats, but for a new runner, Kokichi is a powerful addition since he gets knight weapons and those are best

Zylo

The wolf basically makes the NR category and is largely why I'm doing this now as opposed to earlier. Zylo is extremely powerful when he joins. The battles he joins for are some of the tougher battles in the game and Zylo requires little thought to just run around and kill things. He's a very safe option for new runners to include. We skip him at the top tier due to his long recruitment and the fact we can do those battles without him

Hanzou

A surprising addition I'm sure, this came about when I realized that he really only contributes in Dark Dragon and somewhat in Dark Sol. In 8-1, he just stands around due to magic reigning supreme. Both 8-2 and 8-3 he does nothing, and well there you go. By skipping the ninja, we save time on him not taking his turn. For the last two fights, he does help though for new runners

2. The Guidelines

As with any good challenge, we have to have order and guidelines to measure fairness and have accuracy for what we are accomplishing. So here's the list:

1. Time starts after naming Max. Not in that screen, but when you actually accept the name for him and the game begins. This is done mostly to reduce the frustration of speeding through naming, not to mention gives you a chance to be creative with the name and not worry about it adding time.

Time ends with the lethal damage being dealt to Dark Dragon. Not at the beginning of your attack, but once the damage is dealt and he has faded from sight. This is important to note, as your character might level from killing Dark Dragon. The last input needed is to exit that screen and that is when time ends as you've lost control of your character.

Some have asked about letting the timer run to some artificial spot as you can scroll the text faster still. The problem there is that you can scroll the text faster ALL THE WAY THROUGH the end cutscene (until you get the show at the end) which seems silly. As the LAST MEANINGFUL INPUT is to exit out of the screen with the fatal blow to Dark Dragon, stop the timer there. Otherwise, you might as well do "J style timing" where you time from power on until you see "The End" on the screen. The timing I use is more "West style" or "TAS style" which goes from gaining control to last meaningful input.

2. Just to reiterate, this should be done on console and not emulator. I

understand many people don't have consoles or would prefer to play on an emulator. That's fine, just be prepared to receive grief as it's not what is "standard" by the guidelines set forth. Assuming you don't use any save states to "abuse" the rng, it could be questionably OK though a number of spots use in battle saves (IBS) which for an emulator takes less than a second to both use and to save whereas the console can take 5 seconds each time rather easily.

Other than that, I don't think there's a whole lot else. There's no known obvious glitches to abuse, there's no super skipping ahead or anything like that. Just our wits versus the game! Let's do this!

3. The Walkthrough

Chapter 1

It makes hardly any difference, but naming Max a single letter (Z) instead of Max (or any other name) saves 1 frame each time his name is displayed. A frame is the shortest instance in gameplay (think FPS) and NTSC (American Gens) runs at 30 fps so 1 frame is 1/30 of a second (you can go from there) basically, it's a minimal amount of time but it can add up.

Anyways... the game starts up, you talk to Lowe and we're ready to go. Now, I imagine we can't skip getting the basic core heroes without tasing so go right to the King (the lady in the central walkway can block you so be careful). For text, always holding up or down makes it scroll faster and I found holding B instead of A or C is safer as you can't try then talking to someone after it ends. Just be mindful of spots where you need to say yes so you don't cancel out right away! Now head south, get your team to join, return to the king (not return of the king) and get your 100 gold from the king. From here on, you can buy items (for marathons, buy healing) but otherwise, we've been skipping buying healing as we've really not needed to, it saves almost an entire minute.

Once inside the battle, I turn off battle messages and turn up the message speed to 4. It just smooths out the gameplay.

Battle 1

Ideal 6:31.95

My Best 7:58

*Ideal is best split, My Best is the split for my PB run

The ideal split is available on youtube

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxjw_S_KLpTZm9zXd8DSrh_IVNecF2qI1

We've been collecting our gold splits. Not all are mine and not all are there (we have 30 videos, but not all are gold splits as some golds were achieved before we started collecting them. Because of that, we have some "good" battles highlighted to showcase what should be done instead)

Here's what has to happen

- Max must level
- Tao must level (+3 magic points is a minimum)
- Lowe must die
- Hans must die
- Ken must die

Possible reset considerations: Luke only having 17 attack with the Middle Sword, Tao gaining +2 MP, certain people not dying, the battle going over 9 minutes long

Lowe and Hans dying seems simple, so Ken? Well, killing Ken allows for some time saves through 1-2 and 1-3 and we can revive him and allow him to level in the Alterone fight.

NR
Keep Ken alive as he can be a solid rock to smooth out the battles for you
NR

Turn 1

Ideally two goblins move down so that Max and Ken can hit them. This is kinda important. Everyone else just moves up. I would try to have Tao get kills on her first two blazes which simplifies her not having to kill to level. This is important to note, that if Max goes then Ken, don't have Ken kill a Goblin. To do this battle quickly and effectively, it is very important that Tao's first two turns involve kills so that her third one doesn't have to be a kill. It also opens a small possibility to level off her third blaze and then whack for another kill and more EXP

Turn 2

Hopefully there's a dead goblin on the left; this allows Hans to move up and to allow Lowe to move up to trigger the upper enemies. This hopefully results him in dying to Dark Dwarves. Clear out the other two goblins giving EXP to Max and Tao

Turn 3, 4, and 5 (to the end of the battle)

It's important to focus on giving Max and Tao experience. Get your fodder eliminated; the Rune Knight does a ton so you can feed them up there if you need to. Max doesn't have to be 3, but closer makes it easier. Tao doesn't need any extra EXP, but getting her closer to 3 means she gets to 4 easier which simplifies 1-3 for you and possible gets her to 5 and more MP

Once the battle is over, swap Max's and Luke's weapons as we want Luke to deal 8 damage to goblins and Max deals 4. Often, Luke only has 17 attack but there is still a chance to deal 8 which is why this is important. Otherwise, your guys probably deal 5 and 6 which is not enough obviously. As for updated strategy here, in terms of Max's experience, I approach this depending if Luke has the extra attack. If he doesn't, then try to get Max closer to 3 IE Max should kill at least 2 enemies post level 2 to get him closer to it. If Luke does have the extra attack, then Max doesn't need much extra post level 2 since getting Max to 3 is much easier here.

Battle 2

Ideal 13:40
My Best 16:59

Basically keep moving forward and attacking. There's not much strategy so here instead are some tips.

- The Goblins don't formation until you are at melee range with the initial 3 on the right side. If Max goes first and none of those have moved, you could just move him 2 spaces to guarantee Luke hits
- This is important as our goal in levels here is Max at 3 with 85+ experience and Tao at 3 or even 4 (can happen if she gets some club kills)
- The Goblins 6 man formation is just interesting. The back ones are trying to go forward and the front ones are trying to go back. This results in clumps and how you kill a Goblin only to have its spot filled. Pay close attention

and it is possible to abuse this by minimizing attacks made by the enemy

- Each attack (credit to Dark Kobold) is at least 7 seconds. If you can minimize those attacks, it is easy to save a ton of time
- The next trigger point is in the middle of where the 6 man formation starts. Number 1 2 3 for the top row and 4 5 6 for the bottom row, spot number 5 does not trigger the enemies to move; spot 2 does as well as any spot higher or to the left of those spots. Be aware of this as you don't want to trigger the extra goblins to move too quickly less you get attacked a lot
- Similarly, pay attention to the Dark Dwarves as there's no point to give them a free attack on us. They'll move if they get within 1 spot so be aware
- To win, attack down there with Luke and kill it with Tao. If she has 4 blazes then she can only attack 1 Goblin most likely, 5 blazes gives more flexibility.

Once that is over, go get Mae and then go to the treasure room, grab all of the chests except the middle left one (it's empty). Use the Defense Pot on Max now and swap the Middle Sword back for the Power Pot. Both the Antidote and the Angel Wing are going to Tao but you can wait on moving them for now.

NR NR
Go ahead and recruit Gort as he helps a lot. Maybe consider buying some herbs
NR NR

Battle 3

Ideal 20:43
My Best 25:05

There's 2 ways to approach this battle and it is mostly dependent on Max exp

Max has 60+ experience

If Max has 85+, he needs to simply move to the Rune Knights and proceed to sneak in (described below). If Max has 60 to 84 experience, he needs just an attack on a Dark Dwarf. For movement, move Max to the left of the bridge T1, T2 move up and around the Dwarf (if it didn't move because it went before Max on the previous turn, just move up and around the river bend (2 spaces) as to avoid drawing the bats. We want to minimize the other dwarf movement as well T3 and T4 are moving Max further up there for the sneak (described below). Mae and Tao focus on killing the bats and getting Tao to Blaze 2.

Max has 0 to 50 experience

He needs to have 85+ to level off the Rune Knight so pending his EXP, get him some before moving up. Bats give full EXP here (45-48) and Dwarves give around 36 points. Attacking a Dwarf is about 10 depending on Max's attack. Adjust, then send Max up there. If Max has 0 exp, 2 dwarf kills is about 70 experience so technically you could do the above description but pause at the edge to finish the dwarves. This however is slow, and again why we focus in 1-2 so much on Max getting him to that EXP value we're looking for.

The Max Sneak

At level 4, Max tends to gain speed, 1, 2, or 3. The plan then is to get Max right to the edge of the trigger zone, it's the tree line right above the water, about 7 spaces from Alterone. We need most of the Knights to move, then Max can move forward hit the Knight, ideally level and get 2 or 3 speed, then he turn orders sooner and sneaks in. Saving before the level is optional as a +1 or sometimes a +2 speed results in Max still seeding poorly and getting surrounded. This is also important for his attack, as we really want 20 attack

here, since that guarantees 22 attack and basically guarantees 23 attack which lets Max OHKO enemies in Alterone. To get 20 attack is quite rare (you basically need to gain +1 at 3 and then get a lucky +4 at 4). If you got +3 at level 3, you are going to be pressed just to get to 19 attack due to slingshot leveling, and if you get +2 at level 3 (the most common) you'll likely get to 19 without trouble, just know that 18 attack is basically the death of the run since 22 attack can OHKO but it likely won't

The Speed Ring glitch is described below, but the premise is this:

Turn order is calculated at the very end of the previous turn. Faster people tend to go sooner, but for calculating turn order, your "seed" is modified by a variable, call it X (speed + or - X = turn order seed). By gaining speed on your turn, you are now Speed + gain which helps to place you higher in the seed and boom double turn.

NR NR

With Gort (and Ken), you can take a safer and slower route which kills more of the enemies and allows for assistance up there with Max. By placing a hero to his right, the Rune Knights cannot block him (Ken or Mae can reach there) as well placing someone in front of the left Knights prevents them from going to Max. Tao can also draw aggro if you must

NR NR

After the battle, go grab the healing seed in the lower right building where you talk to the dude to gain access to the castle. You probably had to heal Max, NBD. Grab the Power Potion as well. If Max has 20 attack (he gained at least 6 attack from levels 2, 3, and 4) then you can power potion Max twice. At 22 attack, he OHKOs most enemies in this battle, at 23, he OHKOs everything. But if Max has 18 or 19 attack, then I wouldn't bother. Instead, you can try to get him to level 6 where hopefully he gains the missing attack, then you should potion him! Maybe, we'll talk about it. Anyway, inside the castle, grab the Def Potion (use it on Max) and then save the Bread of Life for Anri. Those are the top and bottom chests on the left in the treasury. Revive Ken and do the rest of the story stuff

Battle 4

Ideal 32:50

My Best 37:17

The hardest part of this battle is turn 3 if someone goes before the bats so we don't have this awkward turn where nobody comes to us. Basically, go up instead of right. We only have to "fight" two Rune Knights and all the bats as everything else is stationary. As such, clumping enemies for Blaze 2 and focusing down the bats is important. Have Khri's perish, try to get Max and Tao up to level 5, and hurry through it. Likely, Tao will have 17 MP but here are some suggestions as to what to do if her MP is a certain amount (we always want to Blaze 2 the Archer/Mage group in some manner of speaking).

(worst) 14 or less MP

2 Blaze 1's and 1 Blaze 2 (cause one for group)

(bad) 15-16

3 Blaze 1's and 1 Blaze 2 (maybe just all Blaze 2 if you can group)

(common) 17

1 Blaze 1 and the rest Blaze 2

Another option is to Blaze 2 the group, and then Blaze 1 a few times, maybe even having Ken help out with kills

(good) 18-19

1-2 Blaze 1 and the rest Blaze 2

(best) 20+

Blaze 2 for days, maybe just 1 Blaze 1

My best is 22 MP on Tao, that was awesome, but that rarely happens, so understanding different ratios by mod 5 arithmetic (basically, what do you have left after using Blaze 2) allows for maximum damage and EXP out of Tao. Also, she can whack archers and mages with her staff for a few points of damage IF she is lacking on MP (less than 17). Generally speaking, you want to blase the archer/mage combo from across the river, but if she has little magic (less than 17), you can instead blaze the 3 dwarves and the archer once they regroup as she'll be near to club them. Mix it up

Once you end the battle (first kill them all we've had darn it!) sprint to the king then use the dragon head (grab that seed) and bail out on this chapter!

Chapter 2

In Rindo, all you've got to do is grab the Speed Ring (second row, third house), talk to the Mayor and move out (leave the Speed Ring on Max)

NR NR

Buying a Power Staff on Tao if she has 17 or less MP can be helpful as those attacks are more than Blaze 1 meaning you can save magic for hard to hit enemies (or Blaze 2)

NR NR

Battle 5

Ideal 42:49

My Best 49:51

This is one of my most exciting improvements. First things first, if you still haven't gotten rid of Lowe, Hans, or Mae now is the time. The next thing is make sure Max has the Speed Ring not equipped. Take out the dwarves and bats (if you move to max movement each time, Ken or Max should be able to kill one of the dwarves that Tao blazes) allowing you to put people through to avoid getting choked. Try to get off as many blaze 2's here to clear things out, and with any luck by about 6-7 minutes you're heading towards Manarina. Send everyone left and careful to not block Max or Tao. By all going left, the troops never organize leaving themselves spread out which is quite nice as Max is less likely to die though you have to be careful as they tend to not aggro unless they can move within range and attack.

The movement here is tricky, but I've largely figured out how to do it the right way each time, so here's how it works. Note, Max needs to OHKO the Dark Mage so that's really helpful, otherwise Ken or Tao need to be in position. Our goal here is to avoid healing so that we still have 2 seeds.

-The lower left Zombie is our marker, when Max is 3 spaces from him (he can be either 3 down or 2 down) the Zombie won't move. If you are 1 down and 2 to the left, the Zombie will move.

-We want to have it move (Max needs the Speed Ring through all this) so position accordingly. That way, Max can move and hit and Tao can blaze and kills the Zombie

-At this position, this draws down the Dark Mage, this is why Max needs to OHKO it. Unequip the Speed Ring here as we are hoping the other Dark Mage then out turns Max the previous one

-Move and equip the ring; if Max has 9 or less life, heal him if he outturned the Mage, otherwise you're fine

Inside Manarina, we have only 2 things to do so talk to Anri, then follow her but grab the Domingo Egg first, and then talk to her recruiting her. Give her the Speed Ring but don't equip that on her yet. Go ahead and dive into the earth (using that Bread of Life if you saved it)...

Battle 6

Ideal 52:10

My Best 1:01:05

This is a very turn-specific battle (my split is named "Bad Turn RNG") so here goes my best way to explain it (the biggest thing here is having Anri level twice as it really really helps)

TURN 1

Tao zaps the right Zombie, Anri EQUIPS the Speed Ring and kills it. Everyone else surrounds and kills the other Zombie. Note! If your team cannot kill it, then leave an open space and it will retreat backwards, mildly changing turn 2

TURN 2

Anri outturns Tao and moves over to zap the Zombie by the bridge. Tao now can Blaze 2 the Zombie-Mage-Archer (if the Zombie moved over, zap the pair and the Mage instead). Hopefully you can kill the Mage before it goes (hence the Bread of Life shoving Anri out of 8|9 health range). Get Max|Mae over there, Ken can attack with the Spear depending on the situation

TURN 3

UNEQUIP the Ring from Anri as she roasts the weakened Archer and levels. Tao and Ken can take out the other one safely (Ken could attack it honestly on Turn 2 depending on turns). Get Max near the bridge and time crossing the bridge with most of the bats moving.

TURN 4

Get across the bridge. Max can buffer the bats to group up for Blaze 2 and whatnot. Re-EQUIP the Speed Ring here

TURNS 5-7

Kill Bats. Get Ken closer to Power Ring. Try to save some magic, ideally, 7 on Tao and 2 on Anri. Unequip the Speed Ring as you move into position

TURN Engaging the Dark Mages

Depending on how well you've done (and your peeps have leveled) we may have magic still. If we have enough to Blaze the Skeleton twice, then don't Boost as it could crack. Otherwise, we need to clear a path/take out the Mages. Unequipping the Speed Ring can let Anri double turn a Mage, whacking it with the Power Staff. Everyone else just does good damage.

It's important to note that for Anri to 3-->4 she needs two kills and one extra hit. But to go from 4-->5 she needs 4-5 kills so be weary. As stated, having Freeze for the Circus is huuuuuge. Consider boosting Anri to kill the Skeleton for 48 experience; she will deal 14 so it needs some damage. If you have magic remaining, 2 blaze 1 can do it as well.

Time to go advance some story and head back to Rindo. If the Power Ring cracked, repair it and buy some healing seeds (some on each hero).

Battle 7

Ideal 58:35

My Best 1:09:44

This is a rather straight forward battle in all reality. Before that battle starts, this is important:

Ken have the Power Ring

Anri have the Speed Ring EQUIPPED (not worried about glitching here)

Basically, Tao should Blaze 2 the dolls and everyone else tries to clear them out before they move (hence why Freeze is so important). The purple ones tend to be faster than the Evil Doll so keep that in mind.

Turn 2 just move left outside the tent. If the Evil Puppet outturns Ken, then allow Anri to kill it. She could kill it regardless, but if Ken goes before it then it is faster. Ideally, Ken can reach the top of the floor on the left side here though there is nothing wrong with waiting a turn

Turn 3 move on up to the tent: if Ken made it up, then Max+Tao can kill the Evil Puppet. Ken should IBS and boost himself

Turn 4, kill the other dolls (stay to the left to avoid the bats) and boost Max with Ken

Turn 5, save before your attacks and clear Marionette. Try to keep getting EXP onto your Mages

Interesting sidenote, this is one battle that I cannot really replicate in terms of golds since without Gort, it takes me 1 turn longer to finish this battle since I get onto the tent 1 turn later than before. It's fair though, since Gort costs more time than that in other areas

After that, just grab the most top right chest for the defense pot then head out. Chat to the mayor do the whole burning thing and head out. Before starting Shade Abbey, make sure the Ring isn't broke, use the defense pot on Max, and give Max 1 herb and 2 seeds (buy some if you need to).

Battle 8

Ideal 1:05:32

My Best 1:17:55

NR NR

If you have anyone else besides Ken, Anri, Tao, and Max, just adjust the strategy accordingly IE Gort can tank some and whatnot

NR NR

Max stays put and attacks or heals depending on his need.

Anri moves left and blazes the Zombie, Tao moves and kills it. Ken blocks for Tao and can boost himself. Ideally the Zombie moves first, but whichever, you'll have 2 to 3 enemies clump. Kill them. Now Ken needs to hit the Ghoul with the Spear while Tao and Anri clear out the enemies. Try to get Tao to level 10 and Anri to 8. When the enemies are lined up, be mindful of their non-movement, since the farther Zombies can sometimes move around and can hit your squishy Mages if they aren't positioned correctly. I can't really describe it; you kinda just have to play around with it to see what I mean.

After Balbaroy joins, give him the Power Ring and then go talk to Amon. The reasoning here is simple: in a new chapter, your menu is defaulted to Max, so we want that Speed Ring on Balbs but that would require more tedious movement.

It only saves a few seconds but it's a good habit to get into

Chapter 3

Say hello to our best hero! Balbs is essential to this run and yeah, not much else to be said. Repair the Power Ring if you need to and talk to the "Queen" and head into battle.

Battle 9

Ideal 1:09:08

My Best 1:22:08

We're going to drop the Master Mage so here's the best plan adjusted. Balbs moves down normally, but at the spot just to the right of the stairs, don't put him there, instead put him up and right one (it's 7 spaces from the Mage).

Tao and Anri can move down, use Amon and Ken to form a wall. Only kill the Skeletons with Tao/Anri, trying to get them to level (if Tao can get to 10, great). Don't move Max at all. Balbs can OHKO the mage with a crit or double, but likely it'll be 2-3 hits over a few turns depending if the priest heals or not. Yeah it's random and stinks but oh well.

So we're grabbing Zylo? No, just leave immediately. Repair the ring if needed and buy 2 power spears. Promote Tao. If she isn't 10, it's not impossible, but 4-1 will be harder without the super level trick. In that case, try to get her to 11 at the very least. To 12 IS possible but probably requires more time than it's worth (since you'd need her to kill more P Knights than you really want to leave for her).

NR NR
This is where you recruit Zylo and watch the Kokichi cutscene if you want
NR NR

Battle 10

Ideal 1:20:21

My Best 1:34:12

BATTLE SET UP

Balbs should have the Speed Ring EQUIPPED as well as have the power ring.

NR NR
If Zylo is in your party, you'll boost him instead of Max
NR NR

Turn 1 is all about setting up for turn 2. The nearby archer marks the spot to which you must move past in order to aggro the enemies and prevent the lower P Knights from moving across the map, hence the Speed Ring on Balbs. You'll want to IBS and boost Max with Balbs. Max will kill the nearby Skeleton, move your mages over to the left and send Ken all the way up left to hit the left Skeleton from below. This is all prepping for Archer movement. If Amon is still alive, send her up and left as well. The Archers have weird movements, so protecting the mages is the number one priority as the die in one shot. Max is tougher and boosted can eliminate enemies quickly especially if we get lucky with the boost glitch, see below for more details.

On turn 2, Balbs should move up past the mountains and again, IBS and boost. Use your mages to eliminate the skeleton although you may need to stagger depending on the Archer/Amon taking their turn.

From here, Balbs should take out the 2 P Knights on the right, I'd IBS for his attacks because missing. Depending on how much EXP he got from the Mage (was it 1, 2, or 3 hits) you can squeeze in an extra skeleton kill as well before Balbs loses his Boost. At this point, you should be able to position for AOE on the Priest and Lizardman, and position for the next P Knights to move.

Their trigger is kinda hard to explain, but from where the Priest is: it's about 3 spaces up from there. The actual marker is defined from the right P Knights (the higher one draws the line across that you must break). Position someone to prevent the Knights from extending their movement too far (to force an AOE) and then eliminate them. Balbs will need to IBS and boost and then take out the upper enemies.

From here, all you need to know is that P Knights are the only real EXP for Tao if she's promoted, hopefully she is. Our goal is to get Tao to 60+ EXP but not actually leveling and to get Anri to 10.

Battle 11

Ideal 1:24:28

My Best 1:39:15

Not much to say, fly Balbaroy over and kill the Silver Knight before the Laser Eye attacks. Boost him about a turn before getting there and I'd suggest Speed Ring glitching on his second turn (equipping it at the end of his second turn) as this bypasses the Pegasus Knight movement and keeps his speed higher for the battle.

For inventory management, you can drop Max's sword and make sure he has a rather empty inventory heading into chapter 4. If you don't have 10 on Tao or 8 on Anri, you can lure the nearby Lizardman down for some extra EXP.

Chapter 4

There's quite a bit to do here as the Chapter opens up so let's optimize. First, head up and recruit Jogurt and promote if needed. From there, go see Elliot to knock that out. Now go to the leftmost wagon and grab the Chest and buy 2 Longswords. Balbs and Max want one, and the Bread of Life can wait for later. Head to the front wagon now, grab the Quick Chicken and tell them they can leave. Hopefully you can promote Anri here; which, it is better to promote her at 10 here rather than delay to promote at 11. If she isn't 10 yet, then you must get her to 11, but regardless, that's the goal

NR

NR

Kokichi will join here if you looked for him in chapter 3; make sure you have enough Power Spears if you plan on him. If Ken died and/or is weak, Vankar is a quick recruit and can be a nice option as well (he joins with 28ish HP and about 28ish damage with the Power Spear). You only need 2 knights for Elliot but if you are newer, having additional members can certainly help

Battle 12

Ideal 1:41:07

My Best 1:56:12

This battle is done in 3 stages, so we'll break it down like that. Remember that if you have additional heroes, filter them in as needed.

Stage 1, the clash

It takes 3 turns to move across the battlefield and trigger the nearby group of enemies. Ideally Pelle does this before any enemies take their turns. The Lizards hurt, especially the Heat Axe; the Knights give better EXP but are harder to hit. But if Pelle moves 7 and then 7 and then 3 spaces (all to the right) he triggers the enemies and stays mostly out of harm. You end up with a conga line of enemies lining up for Max. This is essential as Tao+Anri can do great damage with Tao leveling into a Blaze 3 (that's a full clear) and Anri can move and equip the Speed Ring to attempt to double turn for near clears on P Knights. Ken should position to block below the line and Balbs should IBS and boost Pelle as we want Pelle to get good exp. Max should mostly stay put to keep enemies clumped. It should take about 2 turns to clear the enemies, mostly on turn orders and ability to hit flyers. And to reiterate, your Wizards should try to kill P Knights if possible since Lizardmen and Silver Knights do not give good EXP to promoted characters.

Stage 2, the knights

The Dark Priests in the middle mark the line to cross for the Silver Knights. These are great for pushing Anri up levels (to 11 if she wasn't promoted, or to 2 if she was and hasn't) and giving more EXP to Pelle and Balbs. Max is very low priority and Ken has no priority here. Priests give such low EXP but can give EXP to Max or Ken, Pelle or Balbs if 8.

Stage 3, Elliot

We want Pelle to hit 10 here so you might have to adjust pending how the previous stages went, but regardless, if you boost Pelle and save for his hits he can eliminate Elliot in 2 to 3 rounds. You can also save for boost but it just depends really, I've done both with just Pelle or Pelle and Ken; it depends on Pelle's EXP. Regardless, Pelle should be 10, Tao and Anri should both be 2, Tao could hit 3 but it's unlikely without very good EXP management, but I will say again, getting her to 3 here is quite helpful since we REALLY want her to go first in the next battle and at level 2 (especially with a bad level up) she might get blown passed by Domingo. Balbs hopefully is 10 but it's more likely he's very close to 9 or is 9.

Afterwards, go ahead and recruit Domingo. There's a Steel Sword available in the wagon as well. Promote your people, give Pelle both the Speed and Power Ring. Exit the town to the right and then reset to get to HQ more quickly to then swap Domingo in for Lowe.

NR

NR

Grab Guntz. You'll want to delay promoting Pelle. Swap out Mae and Lowe for Guntz and Domingo. If you have Kokichi and or Zylo, swap out people like Luke and at this point, Ken. Put the rings on Balbs

NR

NR

Battle 13

Ideal 1:50:56

My Best 2:06:01

The new strategy for this fight is quite cool to be honest. By dumping Lowe instead of Mae, our turn 1 is now moving Tao up (Blaze 2) on the upper Knight and then killing it with Domingo. Anri and Ken can kill the left Knight, and Pelle who's slow now can move up above Tao. Don't equip the Speed Ring yet. I say don't equip the Ring, since ideally Pelle goes before the Silver Knight on T2 but goes AFTER either the P Knight or Hellhound (for obvious EXP reasons). However, due to a number of runs getting punished by this not happening, I have just been equipping the Speed Ring on Pelle and foregoing that opportunity. He can still level to 2 though by boosting on his next turn and killing the two Silver Knights in his path north and the Hellhound boss.

The next turn is going to be moving into position; Domingo will move up and break the trigger for the enemies. If we get unlucky here, Domingo dies, but that is a critical or double attack from the fire breath so hopefully that doesn't happen. Pelle moves and can hit the Hellhound. Move everyone else up

Use your mages to clear the nearby enemies, more P Knights are on their way so get ready for that as well. Pelle is continuing to move up except here he can equip the speed ring and boost himself. Balbs is also continuing to move. See Pelle is going to kill the Silver Knight on the wall and then the Hellhound; Balbs is going to hit the Artillery twice to defeat it. Continue giving EXP to Mages.

Afterwards, recruit Ernst, promote if Balbs is 10, otherwise head along

Battle 14

Ideal 1:59:23

My Best 2:16:13

There's not much to this battle either, just blast blast blast things away. Your first turn should frankly be setting up your team to protect your squishy heroes and whatnot. Blaze 3 + Blaze 2 makes short work of EVERYTHING here so do that and proceed forward. Getting more levels on your casters is crucial and yeah. Surround and stab Balbazak when ready.

Your levels at this point should be your Mages 3-4 and Pelle 3 as well. Any higher is fine as well. Also, make sure Pelle doesn't have the Speed Ring equipped during the end of the battle and IBS for boosting because we need the ring in the next battle.

Chapter 5

Battle 15

Ideal 2:06:34

My Best 2:24:34

Alright, if Balbs hit 10 during Balbazak, Egress (either that Angel Wing or Speed Ring) and promote Balbs.

The set up and execution of this battle is precise and changes heavily if you

have additional members, though, it still plays out largely the same.

Turn 1

Move Tao to the right 2 spaces. Move Anri to the left, placing her 2 spaces below the barrel. Move Domingo down 2 and right 3. Balbs should be promoted and should go after the Conch has moved into his range, move over and attack it from above. Max is going to stand on the stairs, Pelle can move 1 space and equip the Speed Ring and boost himself. Move Ken down 7 towards the P Knights

Turn 2

Move Tao above Max, position Anri up one and left one from Tao. Move Domingo over and onto the ship near Balbs. Pelle should kill the nearby Conch. Move Ken 7 spaces down again. Balbs can attack the Conch again. Max stay put.

Turn 3

Blaze 3 and Freeze 2 kills Sea Bats, do that. Position Domingo to the right of the stairs to form a nice set up once those P Knights move up. Pelle keeps killing enemies. Balbs collects more experience. If Ken did poorly last turn, he has to stay near to keep those Knights moving up, otherwise he can move up and start fighting, try to form a blockade for AOE. Max is useless.

Finishing the battle

AOE is your friend, so keep clumping the enemies. Pelle hits hard now, switch over to the Power Ring unless boost hasn't ended. Your levels on mages should be looking spot on, 5-6 and hopefully Domingo is 4+

Afterwards, swap Jogurt in for Ken and give all 3 rings over to Balbs. Grab the two right chests as well and use those on Max.

Battle 16

Ideal 2:13:07

My Best 2:31:09

This battle is improved upon even more than before. I'm currently 10/10 on the 3 turn snipe and I think it will stay that way. So here's how it works.

Turn 1

Move everyone straight up; Pelle gets free EXP from the Skeleton. Make sure Balbs is moving 9 spaces.

Turn 2

Tao moves in front of the Worm, uses Blaze 3. Anri moves to the right and uses Freeze 2. Domingo just moves up 5. Depending on turns, Pelle might get another hit but otherwise just move him down towards Max. Put Max up a bit. Put Jogurt over on the right. Balbs moves up 8 and over 1, equips the Speed Ring and boosts himself.

Turn 3

Collect EXP if you can, but Balbs kills the Mage. The reason this works better is by breaking the trigger on turn 2 sooner, the Worms harmlessly move up 2 spaces which frees up the whole process for Balbs. Very exciting.

Afterwards, give the Mobility to Domingo and Speed to Pelle. You could buy a Steel Lance for Pelle if he's gained about 6 attack since he can OHKO now, but it's your call.

Battle 17

Ideal 2:22:10

My Best 2:41:06

The second ship battle, AKA battle 17 AKA 5-3 is the single easiest battle to lost an inordinate amount of time on and it all comes down to execution. The battle can easily be accomplished in less than 10 minutes, but a single mistake can put you into the 13 or 14 minute time frame. So let's begin.

The first move needs to be getting your people down. Domingo is essential for his placement as 3 seabats move up towards your group and Domingo needs to get the bats to group up (less they come up spread out). Using the two pieces of the ship below us as our guide:

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POT | PILLR | CRAT | OPEN | STAIRS
OPEN | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN
OPEN | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN
XXXX | OPEN | OPEN | XXXX
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The two outer seabats can each move to POT and CRATE, the other can move below PILLAR. By putting Domingo in either spot in front of POT or CRATE, you'll achieve a nice grouping. This lets them get roasted on our next turn by Blaze 3 and hopefully Freeze 2 from Anri. The shells are going to move up, Pelle can equip the Speed Ring and go after the one on the left, move Max. If Jogurt is alive, he can tank a hit. Balbs can boost himself to OHKO enemies which helps. It is rather important that Jogurt does perish here because we need him in our party but the next opportunity for him to die is a long ways off so it is entirely possible we have to wait around to guarantee Jogurt dies. Ideally the Conch runs up and just smokes him in the face

On Domingos next turn, he needs to get down to the left of the center pillar where he alongside Pelle will aggro all the enemies into a huge clump. Now we rinse/repeat magic damage and obliterate everything. Simple right?

Chapter 6

Before we can head out we have a few things to do. Krin and Karin are sisters whom need to be talked to before battle 18 and before battle 20. Other than that, repair if needed and head out.

Battle 18

Ideal 2:26:57

My Best 2:46:11

By sticking close to the mountains you don't spawn anything and Domingo/Balbs make short work of the boss, the Dullahan. Have Balbs boost himself the turn before and you're ready to roll. The 3 Artillery need to be killed and frankly I'd give them to whomever is close to a key spell. Tao always is a good choice as Blaze 4 is essential, but Anri is the preferred option since Freeze 3 and Freeze 4 exist. Pelle can give the Speed Ring to Balbs on turn 2 here.

Once that's done, repair the Ring if needed and then collect the Broadsword from the north-eastern house (if Boken is standing like in your path, ignore it for now), as well the Halberd and Shower of Cure from the house where Bleu is. We won't be using Bleu much, but before fighting Kane let's move that Halberd to Pelle. I also find giving all my Shower of Cure to Ernst to be nice housekeeping.

#Team Update#

Max (Long Sword, 3x Healing Seed) 12-14
Mae {dead}
Pelle (Halberd) 4-6
Luke {dead}
Anri (Mobility Ring) 6+
Tao 7+
Domingo (3x Healing Seed, Speed Ring) 5+
Khris {dead}
Hans {dead}
Balbaroy (Broadsword, Power Ring) 2+
Amon {dead}
Jogurt {dead}

Battle 19

Ideal 2:36:10

My Best 2:55:24

This battle has changed slightly and if you have more members, you can adjust basically on Gargoyles but largely the plan is the same. On the first turn, move Max up into the HQ area and put him on the stairs. By doing so, as long as you time breaking the trigger line across the map, the Gargoyles never move which saves quite a bit of time. Move everyone else to the right.

If the Master Mage out turns Anri, she can move over and use Freeze 3; otherwise I'd just use Blaze 2. Also, try to keep 20 MP on Anri for Kane, so do some maths to plan accordingly.

On your next turn, don't move past the Golems until all Gargoyle have moved: this is because triggers. Otherwise, continue to kill everything with magic. This is important to track. Domingo, Tao, and Anri are all likely faster than Gargoyles, so they won't be passed the line yet; which means moving Pelle and Balbs across the Golem line cannot be done until all the Gargoyles have taken their turn. If one of those dudes does move before the Gargoyle, move them over and down, but not past the Golem line. This way they can still make it to Kane in time but won't attract the Gargoyles on the next turn.

Turns 3-4, move people over to the right. Position Domingo up so that's 5 spaces from the upper Dullahan, unequip the speed ring on him the turn before you are planning on moving in. Boost Pelle as well. You don't have to IBS for the boost, since Balbs boosted does minimal damage. If the ring doesn't crack then sure go ahead and boost.

If everything is timed right, Domingo will be in position, and your folks will be over and ready. Tao will stand under the Durahan and Blaze 3 it and the Master Mage. Anri can Freeze 3 on Kane, killing the Master Mage. Ideally Kane goes before Domingo (hence the unequipping Speed Ring) so that Domingo can move to the Durahan and Freeze 2, killing the High Priest. If you still have enough MP for Blaze 3 and Freeze 3, then you could consider equipping the Speed Ring here, but it's not important, yet. Pelle is gonna smack Kane, and Balbs should move past Kane like 1 space. This triggers a weird glitch called "run away Kane" where Kane will go up 1 space to where the High Priest was and do nothing. Pelle will get attacked by the Durahan but it's fine. If you were able to boost Balbs as well, Balbs can kill the Durahan instead. Proceed to blast Kane down; if you can give Tao the kill it's really helpful to getting her to 10; if we can get to 10 during Mishaela, it saves quite a bit of time as we can ignore the Durahans and just blast Mishaela down in one round.

From here you gotta head back to Rudo after doing the Kane thing; talk to both sisters and then head out (making sure everything is repaired again). Head out but make sure to give Balbs the Mobility Ring.

Battle 20

Ideal 2:53:14

My Best 3:15:00

This battle keeps getting changed but hey, I'm trying to make it faster so let's just keep changing it. Domingo with the Speed Ring here is essential to prevent him from getting double turned; later you can give it to Pelle before Mishaela. Just move everyone to the right, including Balbs who should move 9

On turn 2, depending on Gargoyle RNG, you may have to kill it with your Mages. Regardless, make sure Domingo can move 5 and stay on the mountains. Pelle should focus on continuing to move far. Move Balbs way over to the right, but keep him on the mountains, 4 spaces from the Bowrider to avoid being attacked. This is to draw up all the Belial so that we can kill em with magic.

Tao and Anri will need to position for the Belials in the middle coming; Domingo should be able to reach and cast Freeze 2 on the Gargoyle and Bowrider and equip the Speed Ring. Pelle hopefully goes (save for Halberd use) but if he cannot, just move him over. Move Balbs down 9 more spaces. If Balbs managed to go before a Belial, which sucks, just move Balbs over to the right 9 spaces again. Technically, you could have IBS and boosted Balbs on the previous turn so that you could IBS and try to get Balbs to kill the High Priest. It's not a bad strategy (he can kill it from the mountain) but the downside is the increased saving. This newer strategy cuts nearly all the saves from the battle except for item usage by letting magic kill Belial and only needing Balbs to hit the bottom High Priest. Besides the added saves, once the Boost clear message has appeared, you cannot reequip Balbs less he loses Boost and you reboost; which can further add saving. Ultimately, it's up to you as to what you think is best. Moving Balbs straight down is best, but if he goes before the Belial, then you have to adjust.

Ensure Domingo doesn't die, (heal if he's below 20) but keep clearing up top. Balbaroy can IBS and boost, move him just below the mountain range to draw up the Golem. If he's a lower level, you may want to do this later and clear the lower mages and Golem first to avoid tricky turn orders with the Golem.

Keep clearing up top, you can move down once you are ready to clear out the mountain enemies. Moving 5 spaces from a mage aggro's it. Balbs needs about 7 turns to clear out the bottom 6 enemies, save for boost and save for the Priest kill. Adjust as needed.

TLDR | Summary Plz: Balbs is killing the lower 6 enemies and the rest of your team is killing everything else. Use magic on Belial and don't crack any items yet.

Give the Mobility Ring to Tao and Speed Ring to Pelle for Mishaela

Battle 21

Ideal 3:05:10

My Best 3:30:01

Best way to break this down is turns.

TURN 1

Move everyone up and towards the right side of the staircase. Equip the Speed Ring on Pelle. Hopefully the Gargoyles all outturned Pelle, in which case you can simply bolt them. If Pelle goes in between Gargoyle turns, you can get "bad gargoyles" which is an inability to wipe them in 2 casts, Bolt and Blaze 2

TURN 2

Anri is going to Freeze 3 the Bowriders (two of them) and Domingo can Freeze 2 the center; this allows Balbs to attack the furthest one, eliminating them all because they're dangerous. Hopefully we got a good formation so that Tao and Pelle can kill the Gargoyles (hence the Speed Ring). Don't bother saving for Halberd here. Keep moving Max to the left as his goal is to grab the Evil and Black Ring.

Turns 3 to Master Mages

Move over to the Mages. When you are positioned, blast away on the 4 (leaving the further Mage to be attacked). Pay attention to your levels/magic, as AOE is fine, but if we can, leave enemies to be attack as Dullahans and Belial are more important magical targets.

Turns Master Mages to Mishaela's platform

I'd move Balbs to go grab the White Ring/Shower of Cure, he doesn't really help out here and grabbing those saves like 40 seconds of Max walking later. The Belial will start to move down, deal with them as you see fit but like I said, having magic for the Dullahans can really help. Mishaela takes virtually no damage from magic so don't worry so much about her. Before moving onto the platform, have the Belial taken care of and everyone else grouped up (Balbs not so important)

Getting on the platform

Pending your magic, you may have to adjust, but basically Dullahans are tough at 22 HP to kill as Blaze 3 + Freeze 2 kills them. Otherwise, they'll go for Domingo, so use that as well. IBS for boosts, send a Mage to grab the Light Sword, use Domingo on the left to aggro Mishaela, kill Mishaela with Pelle and Balbs. Not much to be said.

If you already have Blaze 4, then you can simply time your Mishaela approach to ignore the Dullahan by hitting Mishaela with Blaze 4 and both boosted heroes; obviously Anri can cast Freeze 3

Chapter 7

We're nearly done but now things are getting REALLY tough. It is evident that our team cannot keep up with these enemies, hence why Musashi "Moose" Master has joined our team and hopefully we are sporting some very strong magic in combo with our newly acquired Evil Ring/Bolt 3. Let's briefly run through who we still have.

Max | He'll have the White Ring and Black Ring for this next battle, give him a Healing Seed and Shower of Cure for Chaos, after that he'll just have the

White Ring and 3 Showers.

Pelle | Give him the Halberd, Mobility, and Evil Ring for the next battle, Evil Lance and Mobility for Chaos

Anri | Freeze 4 at P13, that is the goal

Tao | Blaze 4 at P10, get there

Domingo | Give him the Speed Ring and triple Healing Seed for now, hopefully he doesn't die in 7-1

Balbaroy | Should be getting up there in level, 6-7+ ideally. He'll continue with the Power Ring for now

MOOSE! | Musashi is incredible but we'll pick him up after Chaos and add him to our party in chapter 8

Others...

Alef | we'll be neglecting her entirely

Torasu | Leave him out of our party until after Ramladu

NR NR

The plan here has changed dramatically, and largely doesn't reflect any new runner strategies. If you are using other people like Guntz, Kokichi, or even Zylo, adjust accordingly. Guntz will likely be your #1 instead of Pelle, and Kokichi could honestly be your Evil Ringer. Zylo should be dropped here

NR NR

Battle 22

Ideal 3:15:13

My Best 3:43:08

An extremely tricky battle here but hopefully with some luck we can get out of here without too much trouble. Turn 1, move everyone over to the right. Domingo should move 4 right and up 1, Balbs should IBS and boost himself. Make sure to move Balbs above the mountain range.

Turn 2, Pelle should be able to IBS and bolt 3 a group of 4 (Belial, Jet, and 2 Dullahan). Domingo can move over into position as well, Balbs can hit the Jet ideally, but maybe the Dullahan if Domingo can get into position. That closer one drops the Doom Blade, an essential drop. Tao and Anri can kill the closer of the Belial.

Turn 3, move Domingo down as far possible, we want to start moving the enemies over so that our Bolt 3 can be really strong. Equip the Speed Ring on him here but you may have to wait, it depends how many enemies have moved so pay attention. Pelle will likely just attack a Dullahan, but again he could IBS and bolt 3.

Rinse repeat to clear out the battle, try hard to avoid anyone dying; Domingo with the Speed Ring should avoid being outturned. You don't have to IBS for Bolt 3 on your last use.

Afterwards, grab the Devil Lance and Turbo Pepper (Lance is going to Pelle) give all the rings to Balbs

Battle 23

Ideal 3:18:18

My Best 3:47:37

Move Balbs up above Max and keep him on the wall. Turn 2, move him 8 spaces, equip the Speed Ring and boost himself. Turn 3, move 9 and kill the Demon Master. Your only source of concern here is if Balbs is very fast and goes before the Jets on turn 2, in which case you might have to save with Max to get a turn order that keeps Balbs from getting blocked, but that doesn't really happen often.

Afterwards, and one of the biggest changes here, just head back to the King. If your Power Ring cracked, go ahead and repair it first (recruit Musashi as well) but you don't have to party him. Give Tao the Turbo Pepper in her inventory, and give Anri the Speed Ring. If Balbs has less than 27 speed, leave it unequipped. If Balbs has over 28 speed, have her equip it. Give Balbs the Dark Sword and Power Ring, Pelle the Mobility Ring and Evil Lance. You may want to Quick Chicken Anri as well if Balbs is fast to help get her well over 33 speed

Battle 24

Ideal 3:26:51

My Best 3:58:40

Here's the deal, this battle works but is totally insane. I strongly suggest watching Ty2358 doing it during his best run which is about 90 seconds slower than mine but his went flawlessly, my first recorded attempt did not.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9ydlcF2cbU>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3S-G9J_aGI&t=1s

Above is our best battle. Admittedly it has a nice critical in it but now you have two different approaches to beating this battle

Regardless, here's the general plan. If Balbs is slower, IE less than 27, it will be a turn 2 kill but much simpler. Otherwise, it will be a turn 2 kill but more complicated. Chaos has 32 speed which is where those numbers are derived from. Pelle with Evil Lance and Balbs boosted with Dark Sword is more than enough damage to kill Chaos, so that's the plan; we need to bring him down towards us.

If the Demon Master outturns Tao, move her over and Blaze 4 (I really hope you have it now) otherwise Blaze 3 and Pelle can use Bolt 3. If she goes first, IBS and use the Turbo Pepper (turn on Battle messages and reset if you don't get +2). Where that Demon Master moves is very important, as the space next to it marks a dangerous spot to stand, so don't put anybody else there until after the worms and Torch Eye have moved. Keep that in mind, as Anri can move near there if Balbs is slower than Chaos. Otherwise, Anri will need to move up to the nook in the corner, that aggro's Chaos.

Balbs and Max will likely get attacked, they should both be OK here. That's where the Shower is for, you may have to use it on Max's turn depending on the damage that went down on that first turn. Move Pelle up and over near Max; his exact position changes depending on Balbs; because HE aggro's Chaos unless you need to bring Chaos down sooner because Balbs may be too fast.

Balbs can move up and over, IBS and boost himself, EQUIP the Dark Sword.

If Domingo is alive, he should move to that space 2 away from the Demon Master as that properly draws down the enemies.

I realize this is tricky, but the video is a great tutorial so use that as well.

Your turn 2 involves killing Chaos; Max moves over and gets shielded between Domingo and Tao (or Tao will shield him on her turn. Blaze 4 the Demon Master or Blaze 3 if you don't have it. Anri and Domingo are great blockers for Max. Save for Balbs and Pelle and defeat Chaos after he moves. Ideally, Chaos goes and then Balbs and Pelle can harmlessly attack him, that's why Balbs being faster here can complicate things.

Go ahead and give Balbs the Chaos Breaker and all the rings. If you didn't Turbo Pepper Tao here, do it in the next battle.

Battle 25

Ideal 3:31:58

My Best 4:04:16

It takes Balbs 5 turns to reach and kill the Armed Skeleton at the bottom who is the boss. The turn before, equip the Speed Ring and boost himself. You can move Max twice to be a little closer, but don't keep moving otherwise enemies will aggro. If Balbs has 75 or less attack, go ahead and IBS before the attack as I've had very rarely him not do enough damage. He DOES do enough but sometimes the game is weird. Now let's roll out.

Chapter 8

Aahhhh Runefause, the glorious end is upon us! This is the hardest and most twisted chapter yet, not to mention we are tired from playing for 5 hours but press on! The battle is nearly over. Let's quickly review our team and what they'll all have.

Max | White Ring, Black Ring, Shower

Pelle | Evil Lance, Evil Ring, Halberd

Luke (dead)

Anri | Speed Ring (unequipped for now)

Tao

Domingo

Khris (dead)

Hans (dead)

Amon (dead)

Balbs | Chaos Breaker

Moose | Katana, Power Ring, Mobility Ring

Jogurt (dead)

So swap Musashi in for Mae. After Ramladu, put Torasu in for Khris. That's it. It looks insane, but we save a ton of time by minimizing turns and this works.

Let's continue

Battle 26

Ideal 3:42:12

My Best 4:15:05

With the above set up, it works. Tao can move out and Blaze 4 the Chimaera and avoid getting attacked. Everybody else sets up on the right. On turn 2, Tao is triggering the Chimaera to move so with ASCII art

C

C C X C C Wall

Moose

That's the general set up. The left most Chimaera hopefully dies. With Max on the right, our general set up will keep Moose there and the two Chimaera will move down into that position, the other moving over keeping a space. That's a good Bolt 3 on turn 2. To do that, move Tao up far enough so that she doesn't get attacked by the moving Chimaera. Pelle can block the left Chimaera

From there, you can clear them out and then the battle is basically over.

Domingo and Balbs can kill the left group with Freeze 3 and 2; IBS for Pelle to bolt 3, once on the Dragons and once on the skeletons but after Anri has used Freeze 3. Tao can then clear the Dragons with Blaze 4, Moose can take out the Bowriders.

It's a tricky set up, but it works and is generally faster than what you can hope for otherwise.

Battle 27

Ideal 3:44:47

My Best 4:18:39

So Blaze 4, Freeze 4, Freeze 3, and Moose kill Ramladu. Obviously move up. Domingo will need to shield Max unless the nearby Steel Claw goes before Musashi. Putting Tao to the right of Ramladu prevents his heal. Tao on the stairs won't die, but Ramladu may heal himself, so consider that when moving. Basically, if nobody is gonna die to Robots, then leave her on the stairs to avoid reviving later

Once Ramladu falls, go back and revive our party and make sure everything is repaired. Add Torasu to our party, give our rings to Balbs, and head out.

Battle 28

Ideal 4:00:05

My Best 4:35:15

This battle really has come so far and is much easier to pull off now thanks to a better understanding of the movement. Balbs is going to keep moving while everyone else kills things; let's elaborate.

The nearby Chimaera are coming down, hopefully Anri waits to allow one to move over so she can Freeze 4. Moose is going to position over on the left to block for Max. Everyone else position nearby, keep Max in his spot. Balbs needs to move up and over, keep him away from Chimaera, but move 9 spaces. Domingo similarly needs to move up and over.

The Dragon cannot reach Max from where it moved, use someone to block, maybe Moose, and Tao can kill it next turn with Blaze 4. Anri and Pelle should be able to eliminate the Chimaera that position up around Moose. IBS for the Evil Ring, last time we'll have to. Move Balbs and Domingo more. Don't move Balbs up too high yet, focus more left.

Someone needs to move between the columns at the start, as this aggroes the enemies once Balbs now breaks that trigger. Use Moose. Move Balbs so that he moves 8 spaces from the left Colossus head which draws it over safely. Keep moving Domingo because he'll draw that head down towards him. Once the Jets and Skellies are moving down towards Moose, you can pull him back, basically set up a fort to get some good clumping to eliminate them quickly.

Balbs is now moving onto the nearby wall; it prevents the skeleton from attacking him and gets him into position for the next turn. Move Domingo as to not be attacked by the skeleton but so that the Colossus head moves after him. If Balbs gets attacked, oh well, but the goal is to avoid having to use a Shower here.

IBS and boost Balbs. Move him onto the cliff, keep him about 9 spaces from the center head. If Balbs has 79 or more attack with the Power Ring, he can equip the Speed Ring for a double turn attempt on the center head (if he took damage) otherwise just double power ring attack. Save for those hits.

Afterwards give the Power Ring to Max, Mobility to Moose, and Speed to Anri. Use that Chicken on her now as well if you haven't yet. Max should have the White and Power Ring and 2 Showers. If you have a third Shower still, give it to Torasu

Battle 29

Ideal 4:06:58

My Best 4:42:09

The battle here is planned to take 4 turns, Dark Sol dying on turn 4.

Turn 1

Move Tao up to the middle of the path, position everyone else near but avoid the Torch Eyes. Keep a space open for Anri to move 5 (hopefully Pelle goes after them and can bolt 3 the left side)

Turn 2

Move Tao up and Blaze 4 the right Torch Eye. Anri Freeze 3 the robot group on the stairs. Move everyone else up. Domingo should be on the right side, Max IBS and on the left, boosting Musashi. The dragons can move to the lower platform, so keep a space for them to move there as they're coming now but we want to avoid attacks.

Turn 3

Move Tao to the middle and Blaze 3 the group, as long as you didn't get lowest damage rolls on both spells, all the robots will die (12 and 14 are your worst rolls FYI) but since we have a save from Max boosting Musashi, we'll be fine. With that, if you moved correctly the Dragons will move straight down but not reach anyone. Moose can move and hit Dark Sol (consider saving) as well as Pelle. Anri use Freeze 4. It makes a lot more sense when you just do it in battle. Hopefully Anri doesn't go before the Dragons, the left one is just moving after Max so no concern there, it's the right one that's scary but Anri is tough

Battle 30

Ideal 4:14:05

My Best 4:50:00.36

This is it. Our whole run has been building to this one fight and now everything is on the table. If something needs to shatter, let it. If you

have to use a Shower of Cure, do it. We must win.

Our party is super small but luckily if you've followed my advice, this should take around 8 minutes and wham bam pizza man. The first turn is all about setting up; we want to avoid anyone getting attacked by the Skeletons. Torasu is going to move up so that he can Shield himself on the spawner, Max is going to go to the left and sit on that spawner soon as well. Because of this, we're focusing the left head first but stay with me. It's entirely likely that Balbs sits on the left spawner initially and uses the Chaos Breaker while we kill the middle head. The main reason for this possible switch is due to the Power Ring breaking, and Pelle and Musashi don't die to Dark Dragon as fast as Balbs does.

Musashi is going to get attacked by Dark Dragon, so he can move up and hit but keep everyone else spread out. Max can boost Pelle or Balbs, just don't boost Musashi yet since he's gonna get blasted.

Your next turn, put Domingo near the center head to draw focus, hit it with everything you got; well, Tao can Blaze 4 one skeleton and Balbs will kill the other. Save before Max moves onto the square.

The dragon should go down quickly here, Domingo will tank that first hit. Move over to the left head thereafter and hit it. Any time Max is exposed, save before you take his turn to avoid Bolt 4. The left head goes down very quickly though; Shower if everyone is low. Rinse repeat then for the right side, stop that timer once the last head is defeated!

There. We've done it!

4. Discussion

End Remarks

This run has come a long way and what's fascinating is my trend has largely remained the same: terrible beginning, godlike ending, make new pb/wr. It never fails, and the day that I can manage to have a mediocre to maybe even good early game, then perhaps the 4:30 could actually happen. Regardless, the fact I managed a 4:50 exactly is both hilarious and saddening, but in either case, there's still plenty of room for improvement (at least 20 minutes worth) and it's a second sub 5 run which is very exciting.

Anywho, in Chapter 1, we have with this most recent run a largely crappy chapter. The only reason the run continued was because Alterone went very well nearly becoming the new best. Sub 8 after 1-1 is fair, but sub 17 after 1-2 is pretty unacceptable. We can easily do sub 15 there so to get 16:59 after 1-2 is just "silly" in the amounts of time loss. Similarly, 25+ after 1-3 ain't great but that battle did at least go well. We finished chapter 1 with a ~38 minute which like I said was saved by Alterone. Anything over 40 minutes I personally reset.

Chapter 2 was a complete fiasco. I had about a minute to save in each battle and instead lost about a minute in each battle. Suffice to say, the chapter can reasonably be done in 35-37 minutes and this run took about 40 minutes so in conclusion, it was bad.

So bad in fact, that I was about ready to wrap it up in Chapter 3 but somehow things continued. The Balbs snipe was fair (not much to lose time on anyway) and 3-2 went well. By in large, Chapter 3 is a quick and easy chapter with only 3-2 being the troublesome fight potentially.

Chapter 4 was fine. If I was completely honest with myself, I might admit that it actually went better than average clocking in right around 36ish minutes. Not much else comes to mind.

Chapter 5 was fine. Nothing outstanding nor terrible. Really there isn't much else to say.

Chapter 6 was good. Finally got a good Kane battle as well got a great 6-3. Mishaela was completely horrible, as I recall, I got bad gargoyles. In the end though, I was at 3:30 which is a good time.

Chapter 7 was largely fine. With 2 snipes, again, there isn't much that can go wrong, but 7-1 and 7-3 can be trolly and and with 6 minutes of future time save on those battles, I actually was in the red around here which is rather discouraging.

Chapter 8 was godlike and there isn't much to be said. I have to admit, I haven't updated this guide with the most recent PB (so I'm comparing the new 4:50 splits against the previous 4:55 splits you never saw, not the 5:04). Anyway, gold splits on Dark Sol and 8-1, near gold on Dark Dragon, good Ramladu, and solid 8-3 clocked this run in at 4:50:00:(36) which is not bad.

In the end, I basically need to have a run where my early game goes well. With my current splits, I can be minus 7 or 8 minutes by the end of chapter 2 which is hilarious to even imagine.

Collecting the Sidenotes

Side Note: Stat Items and Rings

Defense Potions: Max

These things are rather useless for the most part. However, they are quite essential early for Max not dying as there are a number of spots (like Shade Abbey) where he must get attacked. Later, you can use these on Domingo if you so desire as Max shouldn't ever get attacked post Chapter 2 for the most part. The extra one in Waral can be skipped unless Max is very weak feeling

Power Potions: Balbaroy

Save these for Balbaroy and use them before Colossus unless his attack with the Chaos Breaker equipped is less than 55 before the Armed Skeleton

As explained earlier, if Max has 20 attack after 1-3, you can power potion him for the OHKO, a strategy that speeds things up quite a bit and is better. But Max won't always get there so just keep in mind

Bread of Life: See Below

These aren't so good but I tend to use some on Max if he's struggling but I try to save them for Below. The first one on Anri can be huge if you can

save it

Legs of Haste: Anri

I've been using it on Anri right before Chaos and then equipping the Speed Ring on her to guarantee her outturn on Chaos. This is because Balbaroy tends to be too fast meaning I have to play around Balbs possibly going before Chaos on turn 2

Turbo Pepper: Tao

Use it on her. Make sure she gets +2 movement

Power Ring: Whomever

This goes on whomever we need it to. Refer to the walkthrough

Speed Ring: As needed, then Anri

This thing gets tossed around a lot, refer to the guide

Mobility Ring: As needed

This thing gets thrown around like a frat mattress. It's always for who we need to have it

Evil Ring: Pelle

Once we get this ring, Pelle becomes our 4th caster unless he's fighting a boss or a relatively weak enemy

Black Ring: Max

This ring is entirely skippable but giving Max the ability to Blaze 2 later on when he's completely pointless helps. Since my Max gets filled up with items for 8-4 and 8-5, the ring could go to Musashi at that point

White Ring: Max

Yup

Side Note: Bread of Life

I've mentioned a couple of times HP thresholds, so let's talk about it. There are a total of (3) three of these things. The first one is for Anri, as it can push her well out of Blaze 2 range. The latter two aren't so important, and can even be skipped, but they can prove useful.

The first is available in Chapter 4. If my Max doesn't have 22+ HP by 4-3, then this is a good time to use one. The reason is that Max will tend to take 7 points of damage from Sea Bats. Giving him 22+ HP obviously gives you an extra turn to live. The last is available in Waral alongside that Defense pot which like I said, can be skipped. It just depends on how you're feeling

Other than that, let's look at exact HP amounts that are important.

18+ will push you out of Freeze 3 range. Demon Masters use Freeze 3 and it is the strongest not-bolt 4 spell to be faced by Dark Dragon.

22+ will push you out of Torch Eyes laser attack. It can do 18-22 on a normal hit so pushing someone to 23+ can guarantee their survival. Most people hit this naturally, but Tao really struggles on her HP so she's a decent candidate here as she won't really get above 22 until level 12 or 13 promoted.

27+ will push out of the fire breath from Chimaera. Most heroes prefer this as the regular claw attack annihilates all but Guntz, Hanzou, and Moose.

30+ will push out of the frost attack from Dragons. Their attack is stronger, but having more than 30 health should keep you alive

35+ will keep you alive against Demon Breath hopefully. It doesn't seem to do more than that and well, if it double hits then GG you're dead

So you can see where the breakdown occurs. Anri will usually get to Demon

Breath range, Tao hovers usually around 20 HP or so, and Hanzou can have more than 40 health but giving him 45 is basically insurance to survive 3 lasers. This is why I say the Breads aren't super helpful but you can see how pushing Anri or Domingo into that extra HP range can speed things up as you can play more fast and loose.

Side Note: End Team

This is basically how our end team will look:
Max - White Ring, 2x Shower of Cure, Power Ring
Pelle - Halberd, Devil Lance, Evil Ring
Tao, Anri, Domingo
Torasu
Musashi - Mobility Ring + Katana + Black Ring
Balbaroy - Chaos Breaker

Discussing the Glitches/Abuses

The Speed Ring

Not so useful later on, but early that +4 agility can make someone get their turn much faster. It can be used on someone to get 2 attacks in a row, or more importantly to allow Max to move twice in a row. Later on, the Speed Ring should be on someone slower who needs more turns, usually Pelle or Anri

Max/Domingo

The game programmers decided these two almost always have priority. In fact, it goes something like

Max > Domingo > Healers/Mages > Archers/Flying Units > Everything else

To the point to where enemies will move past viable targets to stand in line and not attack just because they're closer to someone. As a result, this is a very helpful abuse especially once Domingo can take a hit or two. For Max sadly this run you won't be using this so much later on however early you can still get some nice use out of it. In Domingo's case, I believe he has such a high priority as he is both a "flyer" and a "caster" which puts him above everyone besides "hero"

The Boost Glitch

This is definitely a glitch as the game will even say "boost has ended" but it actually hasn't. Boost is supposed to go away after 1-3 turns, but in fact stays until you've taken damage, or gone up a level. Curse damage does not count as damage; you have to be attacked. This is the most helpful and abusive of all the glitches as you can boost someone for 8 or 9 minutes so long as your careful. It reduces the need to BS as much as well as allows you to take out many more enemies being able to take advantage of knowing not to level or who recently leveled and whatnot. Many thanks to Darkkobold for this one

Turn Order Manipulation

Something I talk about often but not in great detail so here goes. The Turn Order, or Battle Order, whatever you want to call it, is calculated at the very end of each turn (by the person who moves last). This is very easy to

notice as you can save with the last person to move and restart to see how the turns change each time. Early on, this has practically no use as the speeds are too close to each other and too hard to manipulate but later on once people are faster then it is more controllable. Basically, each person's speed stat can "change" by about 12% for turn order calculation. To explain, in Dark Kobold's TAS of this game, he explains that Max needs 22 speed for the Mishaela battle, as that speed allows Max to get outturned by the Bowriders (to avoid being blocked) but then when he equips the Speed Ring he then can outturn Mishaela and OHKO with double crits. It's fascinating, and we use it in a couple of spots, most notably 8-3 and 7-2 to make sure bad things don't happen to Balbs.

Cliff Aggro Manipulation

Weird, but grounded enemies will not attack flyers on a cliff/wall unless their end of turn positions puts them in that spot. This is most obvious in Colossus as Balbs sits very near an Armed Skeleton but the walls keep him safe. This does not work against enemy flyers though

A new challenger approaches!

So basically, I had this idea of trying some new way of beating the game. As hard as it may seem, replaying this game ten or eleven times can become a bit boring and stale, so I wanted to try a new challenge, deemed, "Minimalist".

The premise is simple: We collect that only which we need to defeat the game. This means that our party will be just 12 members. Max, Mae, Khris, Balbs, Amon, Pelle, Ernst, Bleu, Alef, Torasu, and Adam are all required and Gong will tag along because Max needs some help early in that first battle.

How do we skip the others like Tao, Luke, Gort, Ken, and Hans? There is a video, but basically there's a blonde hair'd guy walking around we need to "push" lower and let him block the guards. That lets us leave town and shazam we can skip the other characters. Strangely enough, this is the starting mark for this time as well, as timing the process of doing that is tedious and stressful as getting it perfect is just a waste of time.

Anywho, I'm also uploading a video of this to my same account, titled "SF Speed Run Minimalist" for your pleasure. The strategy largely stays the same (hence no new guide) and I'll probably not go nuts trying to improve it but we'll see. The major difference is using Khris (Quick) to do some cool things and Balbs gets the Turbo Pepper for imba 9 movement which helps. Not collecting Musashi, Kokichi, or any casters early makes this fairly tough early, but later on, Max and Pelle become absolute beasts. It's a fun challenge to say the least, and I've gone and done a speed run of it! My current time is 6:47 which is still better than my first "any" percent run done a long time ago, but it's nearly an hour slower than my current best.

Good luck and have fun!

5. Conclusion

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Please specify "SHINING FORCE I SPEED RUN" to differentiate from my other Shining Force guides/works out on the webs. I do appreciate your time. If you don't do this, I probably won't respond. I may also not respond because I'm very busy but I will do the best I can.

You can also follow me on twitter NoWorries tskisoccer @tskisoccer

You can also follow me on twitch to know when I'm streaming

<https://www.twitch.tv/tskisoccer>

Acknowledgements

Gamefaqs - For getting me into guide writing

Awesome Games Done Quick (AGDQ) - For getting me into Speed Running. It is technically run through the Speed Game Demos

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCId5mQSBVAOrOdLdfY1J4VQ>

Which is their channel. AGDQ is their charity event that raises money for Cancer and it's fascinating even if you are not big into video games. But big thanks and shout out to them for getting me serious into actually doing this and maybe you'll see me at AGDQ 2016 running this game if I can consistently get it down to six, six and a half hours.

DarkKobold - The brave soul who TASed this game in under two hours. Your video was both awesome to watch and extremely helpful for giving me ideas how to run this faster. Naturally I'm not tassing so I can't get the double crits like you do with Lua but I think I worked it out pretty well for myself =)

But the Boost Glitch was invaluable, thank you

His webpage: <http://tasvideos.org/DarkKobold.html>

Twitch - For adding a fun and new interesting dynamic into speedrunning. Huge shoutouts to everyone who routinely comes and watches me play!

Ty2358 - My strongest competition, I enjoy racing and suffering the bad RNG with you my friend

BowieTheHero - My British lad from overseas, he and I are running Shining Force 2 at RPLimitBreak 2016 and he and I talk way too much Shining Force in general as he complains that I get lucky and I try to remind him of my bad RNG which does happen

Myself - For enjoying this game far too much. It's unhealthy

You the reader - Well, without you folks, this isn't nearly as fun. Also, I hope you enjoy the video. Just don't be too harsh as it's far from perfect; I just wanted you to have something to have in tangent with this guide as words aren't perfect sometimes

Camelot Software Planning and Sega - obviously, for making the game

END TEXT

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