



Games
for Windows™

BLADES



SOUTHPEAK
GAMES

SOUTHPEAK GAMES
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Important Health Warning About Playing Video Games

Photosensitive Seizures

A very small percentage of people may experience a seizure when exposed to certain visual images, including flashing lights or patterns that may appear in video games. Even people who have no history of seizures or epilepsy may have an undiagnosed condition that can cause these “photosensitive epileptic seizures” while watching video games.

These seizures may have a variety of symptoms, including lightheadedness, altered vision, eye or face twitching, jerking or shaking of arms or legs, disorientation, confusion, or momentary loss of awareness. Seizures may also cause loss of consciousness or convulsions that can lead to injury from falling down or striking nearby objects.

Immediately stop playing and consult a doctor if you experience any of these symptoms. Parents should watch for or ask their children about the above symptoms—children and teenagers are more likely than adults to experience these seizures. The risk of photosensitive epileptic seizures may be reduced by taking the following precautions: Sit farther from the screen; use a smaller screen; play in a well-lit room; and do not play when you are drowsy or fatigued.

If you or any of your relatives have a history of seizures or epilepsy, consult a doctor before playing.

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APPENDIX

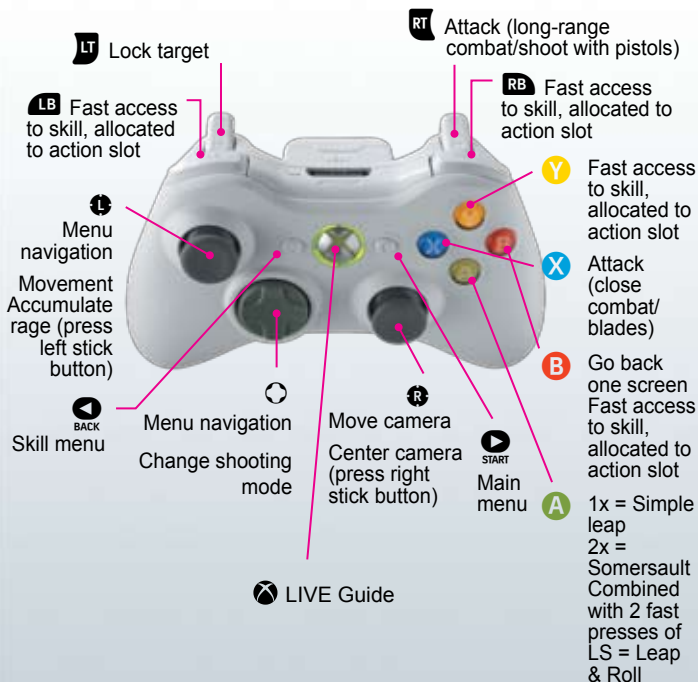
Key bindings

ACTION	KEYBOARD	MOUSE
Forwards	w	
Backwards	s	
Left	a	
Right	d	
Leap	h	
Action 1 (Close combat/ Blades)		left mouse button (LMB)
Action 2 (Long-range combat/ Pistols)		right mouse button (RMB)
Action 3	q	
Action 4	e	click wheel
Action 5	y	
Action 6	c	
Accumulate Rage	f	
Lock target		middle mouse button
Shooting mode	1 - 1	
Shooting mode	2 - 2	
Shooting mode	3 - 3	
Shooting mode	4 - 4	
Center camera		
Hide interface	c + r-Ctrl	

ACTION	KEYBOARD	MOUSE
Move camera		mouse
Skill menu	esc	
Main menu (via Skills menu)	esc	

Click on Main menu and Options settings to change the key allocations at anytime. The sub-menu item "Bindings" is the option you want here.

XBOX CONTROLLER



"THAT'S NOT A JOB FOR A LITTLE GIRL..."

You've no idea how often I've heard that.



By the "job", they mean my rather unusual occupation. I'm a treasure hunter - and I LOVE my job! Granted, it's not exactly a normal pastime for girls - I mean, my parents probably expected their youngest daughter to make something else out of her life, like my big sister did - she got married and started a family. Or I should at least get a 'respectable' job like the neighbor's daughter. She's a pharmacist - now THAT

would be more in my line, they say. Every time I'm home, all I hear is how 'educated' she looks, passing out tablets and medicines to her customers. OK, granted... these girls don't fight dangerous opponents and challenge the powers of The Dark - and their parents don't have to worry about them all the time. Every darn time our paper carries an article about some "mysterious happenings" in a ruined temple somewhere, the neighbors start talking... all my parents hear are things like, "Ayumi never played with dolls when she was little", or "Oh, I remember what a tomboy she was..."

OK, it is hard on my folks, I know - but I'm.... well... different than the others. For the life of me, I just CAN'T imagine being in a 'normal' job - and no way could I EVER live with a boring husband! I said it before and I'll say it again - a girl should do what she does best!

Anyway, I know one thing for sure: the next time I'm home visiting the family, I sure won't be telling them anything about this hair-raising adventure! They'd pass out!

HUH? HOW DID THIS ADVENTURE BEGIN?

Well, I'd say it started off pretty adventurous! I'd just been off on a trip prowling around for some loot - and as luck would have it, I found a really strange relic, as well as a crystal skull and some other stuff. This relic wasn't like my 'normal' kinda loot - it seemed to be kinda "incomplete", you know what I mean? I knew right away that it was different- something special. That's why I didn't even try to sell it to any merchants. I wanted to wait, to understand what I'd found - and I sure didn't have to wait too long either! Maybe it was pure coincidence - or was it? Anyway, I saw this relic in a merchant's place and I was sure it was the counterpiece to the one I was carrying around with me! It was as if the two parts matched exactly. And soon as the two parts touched, they started to fuse with one another! What happened then was so terrible that my Mom would've had a fit if she'd seen it. The powers of darkness possessed that room. There's no other word to describe it, but I didn't get too scared and I somehow managed to defy those powers. The relic finally turned into something like a map with an inscription on the back. I wrote it down - here are my notes.

"At the beginning of time, two divine entities ruled over the universe peacefully



and harmoniously. They were brothers and their rule was just - but their glory is now long-forgotten.

This wonderful era came to a sudden end when the seeds of conflict fell on fertile ground and one of the divinities, The Dark, tried to take all the power for himself. He plunged the world into total chaos and his brother, The Light, used all his powers to try to restore the

world to the way it used to be. The Light realized that he would have to banish their divine powers into two artifacts - and this meant he would have to banish himself too. Only in this way could The Dark be stopped and an end put to the chaos on Earth, since both divine beings were inseparably connected to one another.

No mortal may dare to search for the artifacts which are in a hidden location, guarded by the divine ones. The map must not fall into mortal hands - because divine power itself is bound to the artifacts. And woe to the evil-doer who dares to interfere with destiny! The artifacts are protected by a powerful curse which will bring eternal damnation to mortals and eternal darkness to the world..."

That's it. Anyway, I have the map now - and I know the legend that surrounds it. Quite a team to go up against, huh? The powers of darkness, a dangerous curse, wow. But hey... no way will this 'world in eternal darkness' stuff will stop Ayumi, no sir! A trip like this is a challenge for me! And if those artifacts are so well protected, I guess they have to be really valuable and powerful! I'm gonna find that temple - and I already have a good plan! Nothing and no one will stop me!



Granted... it might be a little dangerous... but every self-respecting treasure hunter in the world would give an arm and a leg to have this map. I found it and this adventure is mine! OK, the legend might turn out to be lies, but so what? I can always find some kinda stuff to sell on the black market! So no sweat! But you know something? I have a hunch. Just a... gut feeling, that this is gonna be the adventure of a lifetime.

OK, I s'pose I should deal with some technical details before we get started... but that's just not ME. Slashing enemies with my gunblades? Yeah, any time. Boring descriptions of game menus and control? No way! Right, talk to you a couple of chapters later, OK?

Hey! HEY! Can somebody PLEASE take over here and get the boring stuff done, huh?

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM:

Windows XP® with Service Pack 2
Pentium 4 2.0 GHz processor or equivalent;
512 MB RAM;
DirectX™-compatible 3D graphics card;
ATI Radeon x1650 256 MB or nVidia GeForce 7600 256 MB;
HDD with 5 GB free space;
DirectX 9.0c (included in the package);
Keyboard;
Mouse;

RECOMMENDED:

Windows XP® with Service Pack 2/Windows Vista®
Pentium 4 3.0 GHz processor or equivalent;
1024 MB RAM;
DirectX™-compatible 3D graphics card; ATI Radeon x3800 512 MB or nVidia GeForce 8800 512 MB;
HDD with 5 GB free space;
DirectX 9.0c (included in the package);
Keyboard;
Mouse
Xbox 360 Controller for Windows
Internet connection

INSTALLATION

Insert the data disk into the appropriate drive. If the "Autorun" function is activated, the Autostart menu will appear on your screen. If the Autorun function is disabled, open "My Computer" on your desktop and select the appropriate drive. Double-click "Autorun.exe" to call up the menu. Click "Install X-Blades" to start the installation program.

The installation requires at least 5 GB free hard disk space - and this applies only to program data. You'll need more disk space for self-created files, like current game stages or screenshots. This is why we recommend available hard disk space of at least 6 or more GB on your installation partition, since the operating system also requires free disk space for the swap files. If your operating system is Windows XP, a desktop symbol and a "Quick Launch" icon in the taskbar is automatically created when the installation procedure has finished. Windows Vista users can use the Game Explorer to start X-Blades.

After you click "Exit" to quit the Autorun menu, the game launcher starts automatically - or start X-Blades right away by clicking "Launch game".

Click the icon on the desktop or in the Quick Launch taskbar to call up X-Blades. Alternatively, you can also start the game via the Start menu shortcut. To do this, click

Start - All Programs - Topware XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX- X-Blades. Windows Vista users can use the Game Explorer to start X-Blades.

REMOVING X-BLADES FROM YOUR PC

To remove "X-Blades" from your hard drive, click Start - Control Panel - Add or Remove Programs (XP) / Uninstall a program (Vista). Select "X-Blades" and click "Remove" (XP) / "Uninstall" (Vista) to remove the game from your hard disk. In the following dialog box you can decide whether or not you want to permanently delete all partially-played games and personal settings.

SERIAL NUMBER

You'll be asked to enter your serial number when you first start the game. Your personal serial number is located on the back of this manual cover. Once the number's been accepted, you'll only need it when you install the game again.

ACTIVATION

To play X-Blades fully, an additional activation is necessary. There are two options here: the first is online activation via the Internet.

We recommend this method, by the way- it's the fastest. After you've started up the program and entered your serial number, you'll be prompted to activate it - just click "Activate". The program will now connect to the activation server and complete the process in a few seconds. Remember you need to be connected to the Internet to do this!

The second option is activation by telephone

If you don't have Internet access, select the "Activation by Telephone" option. Now you'll see a 16-digit activation code. Call the number on the insert card that was included in your game box.

TIP - this hotline is only for product activation. If you have any technical questions or queries on game content, please use the relevant support hotline. If you don't wish to activate the product right away, you can do it later... but until you activate the game, it will only run in Demo mode.

REGISTRATION

Registration is voluntary and gives you several important advantages - as a registered user, you have access to various extras - and you'll be informed about all product updates and enhancements by e-Mail. For this you'll need an Internet connection and a valid e-Mail address.

In the Main menu, click "Register" (You can also register when you activate the game). When you've registered, you'll receive an e-mail confirming your registration and containing a link to the Download area.

STARTING THE GAME

FIRST SELECT THE DESIRED LANGUAGE.

If you don't want to make any specific settings, you can start the game. Otherwise you can specify graphic quality and sound options before you start playing - but choose the best resolution for your graphics card. If the game is running too slowly, we recommend that you first disable advanced graphics settings like Antialiasing, Auto-Exposure/Adaptation and Parallax - they put very high demands on your hardware. You could also try reducing the resolution,

but remember that image quality may significantly deteriorate if you do this - especially if you have an LCD monitor.

You can also start "X-Blades" in a separate window mode by selecting the relevant check box.

GAMMA: If your screen image is too dark or bright, you can adjust the color intensity with these controls - and that will also adjust the brightness of your screen image. Bear in mind that these changes won't affect the window mode.

GRAPHIC QUALITY: Here you can make general graphic quality settings to match your graphic card's capabilities. If your computer fulfils only the minimum system requirements, choose "Minimum" or "Low". If your PC fulfils or exceeds the recommended system requirements, choose "High" or "Maximum". You can also make other user-defined settings through the following options:

ANTIALIASING: This technique makes jagged edges look smooth on your screen. If the game runs too slowly, choose a lower level or "off".

ANISOTROPY: The higher this value, the better the quality of textures on surfaces. If the game runs too slowly, choose a lower level or "off".

TEXTURE QUALITY: This is another way of changing the imaging quality of textures. Possible levels are Low, Medium and High. On graphics cards with a video memory of 512 MB or higher, the texture quality should be set at "High". On graphics cards with a video memory of 256 MB, the texture quality should be set at "Medium". If your graphics card has less than 256 MB video memory, the texture quality should be set at "low". "X-Blades" runs fastest at the lowest setting - but at the expense of graphics quality.

You can select the relevant check boxes to make the following graphics settings - but please note that any changes you make should match the capabilities of your graphics card.

HDR (HIGH DYNAMIC RANGE): This option increases the graphic quality and enables a whole series of visual effects, like the reflection of light sources on different surfaces. HDR is available for all supported graphics cards (but don't forget the minimum system requirements). If your graphics card isn't too good performance-wise, selecting this option will cause the game to run more slowly.

AUTO-EXPOSURE/ADAPTATION: This option is only available if HDR is turned on. It provides additional optical effects. HDR is available for all supported graphics cards (but don't forget the minimum system requirements). If your graphics card isn't too good performance-wise, selecting this option will cause the game to run more slowly.

BUMP: This option creates the impression of more realistic surfaces. If the game runs too slowly, we recommend switching off the "Bump" option.

PARALLAX: If you switch this on, the impression of more realistic surfaces will be intensified. The option is only available if you've selected the "Bump" option. If the game runs too slowly, we recommend that you switch "Parallax" off.

You can also modify the sound.

FULL-SCREEN IMAGE SMOOTHING: Turning on this option significantly increases the image quality. We recommend that you turn it off if your PC's video card isn't too good quality-wise.

UPDATES TAB: An automatic search for updates on the Internet is included with the game. The "Check Updates" key displays a list of available updates. The "Download Updates" key will download them to your PC and launch installation.

The "Automatic Search for Updates" option turns on Check Updates when you start the game. In the game launcher you can adjust the basic graphics settings and download the latest game updates.

OK, if you're happy with the basic settings now, click "Start Game".

To quit "X-Blades" click "Quit" at any time.

MAIN MENU

Menu navigation functions in the standard way.

Continue game

This is the fastest way to return to the game you last played.

New game

This menu item starts a new game and gives you the choice between three difficulty levels: "easy", "normal" and "hard".

Load game

This accesses your partially-played games.

Options

This menu item accesses the general settings. Here you'll find the "Parallax" and "Dynamic light" options for which you may have made settings before you started the game. You can access this page at any time during a current game. You can make the following settings:

Blood

This is where you specify whether or not blood should be visible during combat.

Parallax

Please refer to the appropriate chapter for further information on this subject.

Dynamic light

Please refer to the appropriate chapter for further information on this subject.



Video quality

Depending on the quality of your system, you can choose between high (HD720p) and low (SD480p) video quality. Unless there are glitches or pauses during video playback, we recommend that you use HD.

Note that if the selected vertical screen resolution is less than 720 (e.g. 960x720 or 800x600), low video quality (SD480p) is set by default.

THE FOLLOWING SETTINGS CAN BE SET IN STAGES:

brightness
sound volume
music volume

In addition to these general options, you can customize the game controls.

Controls

Alongside the mouse the game is controlled by means of the Xbox 360 Controller for Windows. In this section you can allocate various axes to your controller.

The following are available:

Camera: Invert X
Camera: Invert Y

Vibration

You can also activate the Vibration function of your Xbox 360 Controller for Windows.

Mouse sensitivity

You can specify the mouse's sensitivity in steps. Increase this parameter if you find the camera is moving too slowly.

Bindings

If you want to change the key allocations, double-click the key in question. Now you'll be prompted to enter something for that key. If your selection is linked to a specific function, you'll be asked to confirm whether or not the original key allocation should be deleted. If you click YES, and enter the function you want the key to have, the previous allocation will be deleted.

Remember to allocate the key's original function to a different key!

If you want to cancel your changes, click "Default". This will undo all your personal key allocations.

You'll find an overview of all the key allocations in the relevant chapter of this manual.

Language

Here you can change the current game language and enable/disable video subtitles.

Language (voices): This relates to the language in which the game characters speak. You can choose a language by clicking on it.

Language (text): This relates to the language in menus, screen messages, subtitles and all other screened texts in the game. You can choose a language by clicking on it.

Subtitles: Here you can enable/disable video subtitles.

Bear in mind that this option can only be accessed from the Main menu - you can't access it during gameplay.

Diary

This accesses a list of all the cutscenes which you've already seen in the game - you can watch them again at any time.

You can also take a look inside Ayumi's diary here - this means you can trace all her treasure-hunting adventures and events that have happened until now.



Bestiary

This menu item gives you access to a clearly laid out list of all opponents and characters you'll meet during gameplay, plus the crystals you can find on the various levels. This list is a very useful reference work - it not only offers you those detailed descriptions, it also has helpful information and tips about the weak points of individual monsters.

You can access the Bestiary from a current game by calling up the Skills menu and the Game menu.

Credits

Here you'll find a list of all the guys and gals who have participated in the making of X-Blades.

Quit

This exits the current "X-Blades" game and returns you to the desktop.

STARTING A GAME

Click the "New game" button to start a new X-Blades adventure. Then select one of the two available levels of difficulty: "Easy", "normal" and "hard".

What you select here will affect the life energy of the heroine, the speed of her regeneration and the price of certain skills.

By the way - a "pro" mode becomes available when you play the game right through for the first time. This is the highest level of difficulty - if you want to use a healing spell at this level, it'll cost you twice as many souls every time you use it!

SAVING AND LOADING A GAME

SAVING: You can save a game at any time. The last completed level, your gained skills and the points you've attained are saved. If you don't actually complete a level, the current gameplay stage you reached will not be saved.

From the Main menu, open the relevant dialogue box and select a memory slot. You can save up to 10 partially-played games (including the Autosave slot).

AUTOSAVE: When you start a new level, X-Blades carries out an Autosave, enabling you to rejoin that game at any time in the future. The game that is autosaved is always saved to the first memory slot.

LOADING: Select a partially-played game from the list and confirm your selection.



CONTROL

Game control in X-Blades is similar to that of all the classic action games. You'll find an overview of the standard key allocations at the end of this User Manual.

Ayumi's basic control is carried out by means of the WASD keys or the arrow keys/left stick [LS]. Hold down an arrow key/move the left stick [LS] and the heroine will sprint away in the corresponding direction.

The camera has more or less unrestricted movement - it's controlled by the movements of the mouse/right stick [RS]. Ayumi automatically moves in the direction in which you pan the camera.

Press the Spacebar/A to make Ayumi perform a leap. If you want Ayumi to perform a double leap with somersault, press Spacebar/A twice in succession. This special leaping technique enables Ayumi to land on high ledges, etc.

Press the arrow key/the left stick [LS], arrow key/left stick [LS] and the Spacebar /A one after the other to get Ayumi to safety by leap-rolling.

Basic attack movements are controlled by the mouse buttons/X or the right trigger [RT]. A left-click/Pressing X will make Ayumi carry out a close-combat attack with her blades.

Start a long-distance attack with a right-click/the right trigger [RT] - meaning Ayumi will utilize the capabilities of her gunblades and fire at her enemies from a safe distance. You can change the various shooting modes using the 1-4 keys/directional pad [DP].

Magic attacks are triggered by Y, Q, E and C/ left Bumper [LB], Y, B and right bumper [RB] allocated to the action slots..To access the Skill menu, press Esc/BACK. This is where you manage your skills (magic spells, shooting modes, upgrades, items). In the "Spells" sub-menu, you can pay a price in souls to learn

new magical skills and/or allocate them to action slots.

Under "Bullets", you'll find an overview of all available shooting techniques which Ayumi has already mastered (or can learn in return for payment of souls).

The "Items" sub-menu contains rage and healing spells, as well as regeneration and special form upgrades that you can buy for souls.

In contrast to the Main menu, the Game menu neither has the "New game" nor "Diary" menu items - nor does it have the "Language" sub-menu item in "Options".



INTERFACE

Health scale

Green energy symbolizes Ayumi's life energy. The scale is self-loading, but it takes a while - however, Ayumi can speed up the process by using a healing spell or by releasing the energy of a green crystal. In the "pro" difficulty level there is no automatic regeneration unless the special regeneration upgrade has been activated.

Rage scale

This scale symbolizes a special energy which Ayumi possesses - energy used mainly for the effects of spells. It loads itself automatically in the heat of combat when Ayumi uses her blades.

Even if she takes a hit, Ayumi will go into a rage - in the truest sense of the word! Red crystals are also suitable for triggering rage. Like magic spells, rage can also be bought with souls - in the "Items" menu. Long-distance attacks like magic spells or gunfire have no positive effect on rage.

When the chips are down and she doesn't even have souls available, Ayumi can put herself into a trance using intensive concentration - and then use her increasing anger to create the rage she needs. However, you must remember that she's completely defenseless while in this trance. Press the default key F or any hot key that has been allocated to the action slots/press the left stick button to put Ayumi into a trance.



The Demon state scale

As soon as the first of the five diamonds is displayed, Ayumi can activate the transformation spell. The rule is - the more diamonds, the longer the duration of the transformation.

Ayumi will learn to master the "Lightform" and the "Darkform" during the course of the game (depending on her progress).

Souls

This shows the number of souls accumulated by Ayumi. They are needed to acquire new skills. Particularly healing and rage spells can prove to be valuable the further the game progresses.

The heroine gains souls when she eliminates opponents - and she gets up to five times as many for using strike series (Combos) in close combat. Ayumi also gets souls for collecting treasures, some of which are hidden in ancient jugs or vases or in tombs - Ayumi must break these with her blades to get to the contents.

Action board

The currently selected skills for a fast attack are saved on the action slots. In the center is a slot for the various shooting modes - you can change these modes using a hotkey (1-4 by default)/directional pad (DP). Newly-learned skills and purchased upgrades are actively assigned to the slots. Other skills not selected for the current attack are returned to the pool of skills.

Condition of the opponent

The scale of your opponent's life energy depends on the environment in which it's displayed. Depending on which opponent has to be defeated for you to successfully complete the level, the scale can display the following:

the remaining life energy

a) of the Boss opponent.

b) of a whole group of opponents. When the group has been defeated, the next wave of monsters (more powerful than the previous ones) is usually triggered.

c) of the monster generators that have to be destroyed.

CHARACTERS

Hey, I am back, as I promised. Heard enough about menus and settings, huh? Ain't it much more interesting to talk about the characters we are going to meet?

So let me tell you a little about myself. First off my name is Ayumi....

I'm the best treasure hunter there is - and a virtuoso with my gunblades. I can shoot with them and fight my way through the massed ranks of my enemies - I call that my "Slash Dance", by the way... and like I told you before, a girl should



do what she does best. Huh? Dangerous? Of course it's dangerous! But can you see me in a boring job? Me? No WAY! Nothing scares me, so I always work alone. I haven't told a soul about the map I got under such "mysterious circumstances", so we'll soon see what secrets I can track down this time. I think I'll start by searching for one of the artifacts described in the legend on the back of the map. If it's true ...

I mean, if a deity from the past really did transfer all of its power to that thing, it would be worth a fortune - a lot more than a gold trophy or even one encrusted with diamonds!

Anyway... at the risk of repeating myself... my name is Ayumi - and I'm going to tell you about Jay now too...



Jay

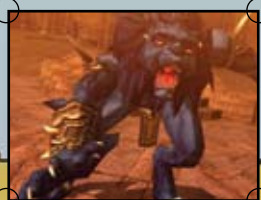
Well, I was soon to find out that I wasn't quite as alone on the island as I'd thought...

Normally, if I'd found competition here, well, let's just say I might have got a little upset. But Jay played an important role in my adventure right away - and he IS kinda cute I suppose. If only he'd stop being so... so MACHO with that light magic of his! But I must admit he does know his stuff. In combat, he uses a powerful light explosion and his punches are really something. I just hope him being here won't make things more complicated than they already are... but... I don't want him to go either... weird!



The Light

I never expected anything like this guy! He looks like a lion, with runes on his skin and he guards the Artifact of the Dark. He's a Master of Magic and you better believe he can really cast effective spells! His powerful light beam hurls opponents to the ground and causes bad damage. But I sensed right from the start that The Light avoids close combat, like lots of magical beings. Although, just between you and me, I wouldn't advise any close combat with this guy - and not just because of his horrible breath either! His hands or paws or whatever they are can cause terrible injuries. Dark magic and Fire magic are the best spells to use on him.

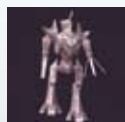


The Dark

OK, the Light wouldn't win too many popularity contests. But The Dark now... that's one NASTY being! And he actually guards the Artifact of Light! Kind of ironic, huh? Anyway,

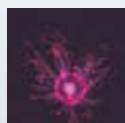
he is a tenacious opponent. His dark spells are dangerous. And in hand-to-hand combat, he uses those big dreadful paws of his. He's also kind of resistant against magical spells! No sweat tho' - you can hurt this guy in two ways: either an accurate strike with a sword or the good old "Sparkling Swords" spell - any one of the two will break through his defenses and really damage him.

MONSTERS



Depressors

I hate these machines, because the Dark uses them to control his icky minions. All I know is that they're armed with machine guns but thanks to their stupid design they have a slow reaction time and their microchips short-circuit with electricity.



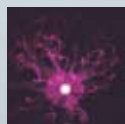
The Curse

I can't stand this product of dark magic. It seems to be a mix between an object and a creature. It can't cast spells, but it sure can summon hordes of monsters. I can't seem to attack it directly but defeating all of his minions causes it to retreat for a while. Hmm Coward!



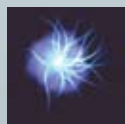
The Queen Spider

Oh how I truly despise this bug! The Queen Spider, armed with armor and magic, controls all of her squishy babies fiercely. She lives in the upper part of the castle and getting to her is hard because her brood blocks the way. Fighting her will be tough since her "highness" surrounds herself with bug-babies who allow no one to harm their beloved 8-legged Queen.



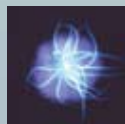
The Dark Guardian

This powerful substance often appears near the Dark. I don't know if something that serves the Dark or is simply part of his magic. I can tell you this. The Dark Guardian has powerful spells, but also releases particles that explode on impact. Like all bizarre elemental things it is vulnerable to spells that counteract its own.



Ice Elementals

Ice Elementals are the result of unscrupulous experiments of ancient sorcerers. They are the materialization of ice magic that has come to life. Brrr! I get cold thinking about how they can freeze their enemies with ice. I always use spells of opposite elements against them.



Ice Guardian

According to legend, the Ice Guardian is the oldest of all Ice Elementals, and, like its lame counterparts, it attacks with ice magic. I can still feel the cold of its kamikaze-like attacks that will freeze you solid if it hits you. I make sure to use spells which counteract its own.



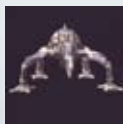
Dark Elementals

I dislike these dangerous particles of the Dark. I know that they're technically not alive but they're just like parasites. After they melt you with dark magic they suck up your energy. The Dark Elementals grow very quickly which requires a lot of energy. This makes them very aggressive because they're always in search of food.



The Fire Elementals

The fire elementals were created in the early era of the world when the planet was still being formed and volcanoes were tearing up the Earth's crust. I would warn any misguided adventurer from approaching them. Anyone who comes across these explosive baddies will probably end up becoming burnt toast.



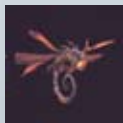
Galapagos

Ha! I've noticed that these cloned versions are only half the size of the originals. Perhaps the Dark was reluctant to make copies of the ancient Galapagos due to their destructive tendencies. Regardless, these cloned copies have less stamina and weaker armor but what they lack they make up with unquestionable obedience.



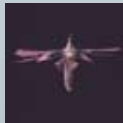
Monster Generator

This machine gets me so mad! It really doesn't create monsters but teleports them to battle a threat. Mainly ME! Regardless of how it works it's equipped with defensive spells and can only be destroyed by blades.



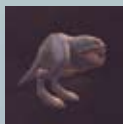
The Six-Winged

Eww! It looks like a one-eyed dragonfly, but despite having an eye they seem almost blind. It's as if they track me by the heat I am emitting or something. The eye is used as a weapon to shoot energy at me. I find shooting back with my guns and spells put them down pretty easy.



The Ancient Six-Winged

This ancient creature has to be the oldest of its species. It hides in rocks and cliffs with only the small Pangos to keep it company. I guess they must hold it in high regard cause they share food with it and defend it fiercely. This Ancient is pretty smart because it uses long-range attacks to its advantage. I would use Light and Fire magic against it.



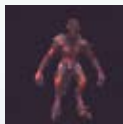
Pangos

Geez! The Pangos are extremely nervous, chronically hungry creatures. Don't let them fool you just because they have no magic. I know first hand how sharp their teeth are. They'll use agility and numbers to overwhelm you. They'll wear you down till you collapse and than they rip you apart.



Pangolin Warrior

I heard legends that say these warriors were once a primitive but peaceful race. I guess the Powers of the Dark changed them forever. Thankfully for me, they're not built for hard combat and are only dangerous in larger numbers.



Pangolin Sorcerers

These guys are a real pain. They're the most dangerous servants of the Dark who are armed with various kinds of spells. They can be injured by the magic of the elements (including teleportation). They can defend themselves against spell attacks are only susceptible to ice magic attacks.



Phantoms

The Dark freed these ghosts from the Kingdom of the Dead and gave them the power of flight. They're really not that spooky unless five of them form a pentagram. If they do then watch out, because they release a powerful beam of dark energy. Just blast one of them to prevent the blast. The Phantoms are best dispatched with steel or magic elements (fire, ice, etc.)



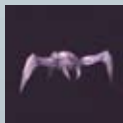
Giant Galapagos

Until they became slaves of the Dark, these creatures lived an easy-going life on a distant island. During its modification, the Giant Galapagos was covered by heavy armor which protects it from projectiles and ice magic. They use an impressive fire magic, but have no defensive magic.



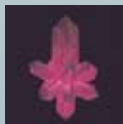
Spiders

Spiders were among the first predators to populate this world! So I guess that is why the Dark chose them to be some of his first servants. These eight legged creepies have strong armor and can use a deadly beam. Lightning magic is the best way to melt through their armor. But because there are few lightning storms on the island I had to make my own.



Crabs

These crustacean crawlers really get under my skin. They're lightly armored and have no defense to magic attacks. One at a time I had no problem with them but if they surround you then good night. It's rumored that the Crabs were bred by the Dark to act as scouts and saboteurs.



Red Crystal

Red crystals give me the energy of Rage.



Green Crystal

Green crystals give me the energy of Life.



Yellow Crystal

Yellow crystals give me the energy of Souls.



Fire Crystal

Fire crystals load my blades with fire magic.



Ice Crystal

Ice crystals give me the energy of ice. When I smash them, all opponents within range are frozen solid.

SPELLS AND SKILLS

At the start of the game, my basic skills are blade and gun attacks - and of course my dazzling appearance. New skills are progress-activated and can be learned when I've collected enough souls.

During the course of the game, I'll get souls for defeating enemies. The number of souls I've collected is displayed in the upper right corner. I need souls to learn special skills like magic spells and shooting modes or how to use various items. By the way - don't worry about missing the right time to learn new skills. The screen display will tell you when you have new skills available.

I can open the screen for managing my skills. I can select the relevant icon and confirm that I want to learn a new skill.

I can always link the new skill to one of the action slots. If no slots are available, I can change the slot allocations to suit. The skill not being currently used will be returned to the skill pool - I can call it up later at any time.

Also, I can use spells from the Skill Book without linking them to action slots. To do this, select a spell in the relevant menu and click "Use"/press "X" on your Xbox 360 Controller.

Blade Attacks

I discovered my blades in an abandoned tomb many years ago on one of my many adventures. The rumor behind the weapons was that they were built by Hephæstus himself, and that the weapons change their shape in each new owner's hand. Interestingly enough, my blades are naturally razor sharp and never dull. They are perfect for dispatching foes at close quarters. This is exactly what I use them for.

SPELLS/MAGIC

Darkball

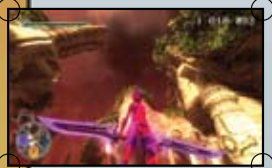
I find myself in situations where other powers fail, and the dark power seems to be the only thing that can overcome the situation. Darkball seems useful. I could throw a ball of energy that explodes on contact and throws my opponent to the ground. What makes it even more appealing is that monsters without any magic skills can't escape from Darkball and creatures of Light are extremely vulnerable to it.

Dark Rage



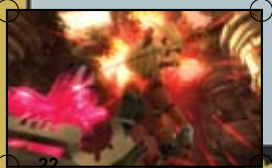
Sometimes I find myself in some really crazy situations and I feel like letting the dark power control me. I love releasing this power when I am surrounded by enemies. It's as if I am creating a network of darkness that lashes out of the ground at those around me. I'm beginning to see how the Dark power can be used to help me. (Requirement: Darkball)

Darkform



Yes! The Dark power truly is amazing. I don't know why I never embraced it before. When I do, I'm rewarded with almost god-like qualities which I use to smash my opponents. I can feel the power flowing through me which allows me to run, attack, and shoot faster. But I also feel this power consuming a large amount of my souls. But there is the advantage of using other Dark powers such as "Darkball". I think it consumes less energy to use, however it doesn't seem like I can gain Rage while I'm using it. Interesting. (Requirement: Dark Rage)

Earthquake



I learned this skill when I was in the plains of Africa where a local Shaman taught me how to harness this ability. Originally it was used to scare away predators of the plains. I took it a step further and used it to smash enemies around me. I now use

this power to help me get out of situation where I am surrounded but the only problem is when I am fighting flying creatures.

Sparkling Sword

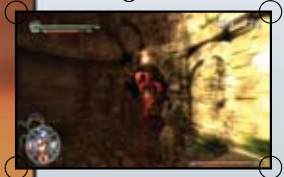


I learned this move from a warrior-priest who I helped bring a rare artifact to. He says that the spell "communicates with the gods, causing my blade to form a sparkling sword." Whatever the case I know I am able to throw enemies high into the air and slash them up pretty badly before they hit the ground. It's particularly effective against weaker enemies. (Requirement: Earthquake)

Teleportation

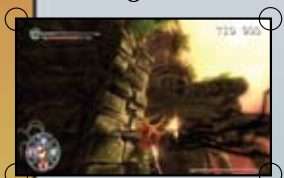
A chance meeting in the desert showed me this skill. I met a wise man called Azilir there and he told me all about his adventures and what he'd learned - including the secret of Teleportation. This spell can suddenly move you a few yards from your current position. Very practical - especially if I'm in a tight situation or if I want to surprise an unsuspecting opponent.

Through Strike



I learned this from an old monk. It's like Teleportation, except it combines that spell with a deadly blow. The Through Strike involves moving fast towards an opponent, piercing him through and through - then you find yourself behind your defeated opponent's back. (Requirements: Teleportation + Sparkling Sword)

Piercing Strike



The Piercing Strike isn't just effective against airborne enemies - I look good doing it! (Heh-heh!) The technique is more or less like a teleportation leap combined with a hard blow. I once saw something like it in a monastery, where monks were in combat training... but I want to perfect the Piercing Strike! (Requirements: Through Strike)

Fireball



I always loved fire, even as a little girl. Then people noticed that I was able to command fire in some mysterious way. That's why I have a special affinity for these skills - and I like learning them. A Fireball can be hurled against all kinds of enemies, even airborne opponents. On impact, it explodes and throws the opponent to the ground. This spell is really effective against Ice Elementals.

Fire Blades

The power of Fire amazes me, because it truly is a skill that has aided me in many battles. I've learned to harness the power of fire and imbue it into my very own gunblades. This is quite a skill to master because the last thing an adventurer wants to do is melt her own weapons accidentally. This spell also allows me to shoot blazing projectiles at my enemies as well. Fire is a beautiful thing. (Requirement: Fireball)

Fire Rage

You know what they say. Don't play with fire if you don't want to be burnt. Well I've love playing with fire and when I do, some things really do get burnt. In my many travels I learned how to create a ring of fire that allows me to incinerate everything around me. Not only is this power good for getting out of a sticky situation, it's also great for warding off troublesome boys who think I need their help. (Requirement: Fire Blades)

Ice Arrow



I got this spell on one of my trips into the icy world of the mountains, where I came across a settlement of beings that seemed to be half-antelope and half-human. I hid and watched how they hunted Yetis using these Ice Arrows. The arrows froze the Yetis stiff for a while. I knew that frozen enemies would be easy meat (or ice) for my blades – but it's easy to carry out a long-range attack on a frozen opponent too.

Ice Flower



I found this skill from an artifact I...er...borrowed from the mountain dwellers. It took me a while to find it in their caves, even though I think the antelope people never knew of its existence. After I researched the artifact and learned from it I was able to shoot ice crystals up from out of the earth. It was very helpful on my way back down the mountain when I was attacked by wolves. I'm

actually very excited about using this power with some of my other spells. For example, I can knock enemies down with earthquake and than give them some cold revenge with Ice Flower. (Requirement: Ice Arrow)

Lightform



The Light truly is a power to reckon with. When I let the power wash over me, it's almost like I enter some form of trance. I have control of what I'm doing but it's almost as if I'm not doing it. Weird. The Light power enhanced my running, fighting, and shooting abilities but at what price?

I can use "Ray of Light" more efficiently but it seems like I can't collect Rage points while in this form.

Light Blades

The power of Light is just as strong as other powers. Perhaps more so? I can actually use the Power of Light to envelope both my blades and guns and use it to inflict awesome damage! I can't get over how beautiful it looks...or how deadly it is. (Requirements: Lightform)

Ray of Light



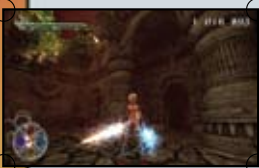
Hmm...this is Ray of Light is actually very impressive.

This spell consists of a ray of glittering light that is hurled against an opponent. It explodes upon impact, dealing out damage points galore. I've seen it do incredible amounts of damage to creatures of the dark. It will be interesting to what else it can do. (Requirements: Light Blades)

Flash of Light

Wow! The Light Magic truly is awe inspiring. I mean it's not at all what I thought it was going to be. I was expecting some sparks and maybe some fireworks, but this is amazing. I'm able to form powerful beams of light, bundle them together, and shoot them toward enemies. It is so powerful it consumes everything in the vicinity and works really well against servants of the dark. I truly am amazed at what this can do against groups of enemies. (Requirement: Ray of Light)

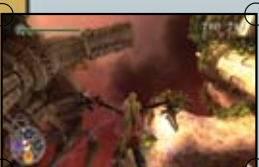
Lightning Blades



Nothing says, "leave me alone", than lightning running up and down your blades. I learned this move from a mysterious man I met one day on the road. The rumor is that it was Thor the old God of Thunder himself. I personally don't believe it but whatever the case I'm now a stronger fighter because of it. Now I can dance through hordes of enemies striking sparks with every blow. If that man

truly was the God of Thunder I bet I've made him proud.

Lightning



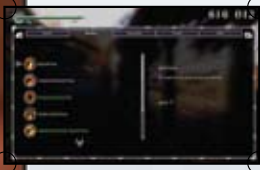
You might not think that atmospheric bursts of anger are acceptable from a sweet-looking young lady. Good thing I'm not! Don't make the mistake of annoying me in combat because I will let you know that you are in a highly charged way. I learned this move while climbing in the Himalayas and it really paid off. I can now summon lightning to strike through multiple opponents, even enemies in the air! (Requirements: Lightning Blades)

Lightning Range



I personally love this move when I am surrounded by enemies. The bolt of lightning itself really isn't that powerful, but the look from one monster's face to the next, as the bolt paces through them all, is simply priceless. I've also found that this is a particularly good way of taking out bothersome machines. (Requirements: Lightning)

BULLETS



Shooting

I've had these gunblades for longer than I can remember. They're perfect for both close combat and long-distance fighting. Perfect for softening a monster up with bullet than finishing him off with cold steel when he gets close. I never have to worry about reloading since the gunblades are magical by nature.

Furious Shooting

In the heat of battle, my anger can get the better of me. In this case it works out to my advantage because it increases my damage and firing speed. The problem is when I run out of Rage I tend to loose that momentum.

Furious Bullets

I learned this trick from a gunslinger from the West. He actually taught me how to shoot through opponents and cause the bullets to ricochet. It causes so much havoc amongst the enemy rank. Hahaha. (Requirements: Furious Shooting)

Wide Shooting



I was taught this from a battle-hardened soldier. She taught me how to shoot in all directions allowing me to kill multiple enemies at the same time!

Improved Wide Shooting

I took the knowledge of Wide Shooting one step further.

Mega Shooting

I actually thought of this one on my own. I can shoot powerful rounds of ammunition. They are both sparkling and hard-hitting and cause massive damage. The catch is that it takes a few seconds to charge before firing again.

Improved Mega Shooting

I improved Mega Shooting so now I can reduce the time for loading energy projectiles.

UPGRADES



At the beginning of my quest it might seem like I have basic skills. I can, however, expand these skills and learn new ones throughout my adventures.

X-Blades has a system for upgrades. When I find three pieces to an artifact I level-up in that skill.

SHOOTING UPGRADE: Finding Silver artifacts will improve my shooting skills.

MELEE UPGRADE: Finding Golden artifacts improve my close combat skills.

AIRSTRIKE UPGRADE: Finding Ruby-red artifacts improve my attack techniques from the air.

I can advance to level 3 in each field. When the game starts, I will have rudimentary shooting and close combat skills.

Shooting upgrades (silver artifacts)

LEVEL 1

My projectiles cause more damage to opponents.

Individual shots cause more damage than multiple shots. Here I must pull the right trigger after every shot.

LEVEL 2

In Level 2, still more damage is meted out to opponents.

I can also shoot in more than one direction at once. To do this, lock a target and move at the same time with the arrow keys/ the left stick [LS]. In the case of two-handed shooting, I will fire in the direction of the targeted enemy and in the direction of movement at the same time.

LEVEL 3

At this level, damage caused is once again increased.

The level-up also enables the following Combo:

Press the left mouse button /X twice in succession and shoot (timing is important). Use this technique and you'll be rewarded with additional animated attack graphics and Slow Motion. The damage I give my opponents will also be considerably increased and the opponent will be driven back. I will end the Combo with especially effective fire from my pistols.

Melee upgrades (golden artifacts)



LEVEL 1

This increases the damage of my blades.. The level-up also enables the following Combo: press the left mouse button /X and hold down the key/X while pressing any arrow key/moving the left stick (LS) in any direction (timing is important). I will now carry out a furious animated attack in the chosen direction causing a great deal of damage to my enemies.

LEVEL 2

From Level 2, my blades will cause even more damage.

The level-up also enables the following Combo: press the left mouse button /X twice in succession and hold the key/X down while pressing any arrow key/moving the left stick (LS) in any direction (timing is important). I will now perform very impressive and highly effective animated attack in the chosen direction.

LEVEL 3

At this level, damage caused is once again increased.

The level-up also enables the following Combo: press the left mouse button /X three times in succession and hold the key/X down while you press any arrow key/move the left stick (LS) in any direction (timing is important). I will carry out an impressive and highly effective attack Combo out a furious animated attack in the chosen direction, displayed by special animated attack graphics.

Airstrike upgrades (ruby-red artifacts)

LEVEL 1

As soon as I attain Level 1, I can attack while performing a simple leap. Using an upward blade strike, I'll attack opponents standing directly in front of me. To do this, press the left mouse button /X right after pressing the Space Bar /A.

LEVEL 2

Form Level 2, I know how to carry out an especially powerful, downward-directed leaping attack. To do this, press the left mouse button /X shortly after I've performed a double leap. I will carry out a frontal strike on all opponents, whether airborne or ground-based.

LEVEL 3

Level 3 is comparable to Level 2 - the only difference is that I will also carry out width attacks in addition to attacking frontally.

ITEMS

Healing

This healing spell feeds itself on defeated souls and restores my life energy - but only to a certain extent, not completely. The number of souls used depends on current game progress, so the "soul price" can vary considerably - it's a lot more for higher levels and less for lower levels.

Rage

Like the healing spell, I can use the rage spell to restore my rage in return for souls.

Max. Healing

This completely restores my life energy.

Max. Rage

This completely restores my rage.

Regeneration Upgrade 1 > Regeneration Upgrade 2 > Regeneration Upgrade 3

This upgrade affects the regeneration rate of my life energy. The price of souls and the effect of the upgrade increase with each upgrade level.

Special Form Upgrade 1 > Special Form Upgrade 2 > Special Form Upgrade 3

My transformation into either the godly Lightform or Darkform lasts longer. The price of a soul and effectiveness increase with each new level attained.

TIPS

Magic spells like 'Fire Blades' endow my blades and ammunition with the magic of the elements -in this way, I can also fight enemies who are resistant to steel.

The best way to avoid 'Fireballs' is to leap over them. A leap can also free me from enemy encirclement. If suddenly I find myself in the middle of a crowd of nasties, I don't have to get involved in hand-to-hand -I can either get out of there fast or use a spell like "Ice Flower".

I can always shoot Magic projectiles (like 'Fireball' or 'Darkball') from the air.

I'm always on the lookout for treasures. I can always accumulate artifact elements which will reward me with powerful upgrades. I should be prepared to look even in unlikely places - maybe on a high ledge that I can only reach by leaping?

It's worth the effort to keep searching for statues and sarcophagi, even in enemy-free areas - they could contain valuable souls and hidden artifacts.

I shouldn't think that an area cleared of enemies will remain that way for long- it won't! But re-engaging the enemies will allow me to collect more souls which I

can use for new skills. This is particularly a good trick if I am stuck on a level. A tactical retreat has saved the life of many a heroine!

I won't find bonus items and artifact elements in locations where I've already found them!

'Furious Shooting' and 'Furious Bullets' are shooting modes which cost me rage, but that doesn't apply to other shooting modes - so I should think about that in the heat of battle, in case I suddenly find I've no rage left and I can't cast any more spells!

My opponents are immune to some damage types and susceptible to others. I should find tips about each monster's weak points in the Bestiary It has especially helpful tactical tips about Boss opponents, because a tactical approach is more intelligent when going against opponents like the Queen Spider!

In emergencies, certain items can help! Particularly during situations like hard combat against Boss opponents, I tend to forget about what my health is at. So I should always try to keep an eye on that green bar - and maybe get ready to use a healing spell to restore it!

Destroying monster generators will prevent my opponents from respawning. So I should focus my attacks on the machines first before I start eradicating the monsters - but I shouldn't forget to watch out for phantoms in the vicinity - they're sneaky and can form a pentagram behind my back before I know it.

When I attack opponents continuously - I need to try to land series of strikes without getting injured myself. This will increase my hit ratio and double the number of souls I can collect!

The best way to gain rage is to 'dance' with my blades through the ranks of the enemy - I need to get right into the thick of things, even in hectic combat situations - close combat is great for collecting rage points. With just a few well-placed sword strikes, I can start using the most powerful of spells.

Some areas of the island are dead ends. I hate that! If there's no portal to take me to the next level, I should turn around and retrace my steps.

In transformation mode (Lightform and Darkform) I can't gain Rage points.

In the level "Observation deck", I must escape from a trap during a mini-game! Dangerous blades spring out of the ground at regular intervals - and the only way to avoid them is by making precise leaps. I need to keep track of when these blades appear - and can't forget the healing magic either!

STRATEGY GUIDE

Caution - contains spoilers!

THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES YOU WITH SOME TIPS WHICH YOU'LL FIND VERY USEFUL AGAINST THE MANY OPPONENTS YOU'RE GOING TO MEET ON THE ISLAND. REMEMBER THE GOLDEN RULE - THERE ARE OFTEN EASIER WAYS TO WIN!

THE LIGHT: The best way to fight this powerful guardian of the artifact is to stay away from his claws and throw a lot of "Fireball" spells. This spell does require a Rage price - but at the start of the game, you can obtain Rage for a reasonable number of souls. To do this, just move to the Skills menu and open "Items". However - the more the game progresses, the higher the price for Rage will rise! And don't forget that your Rage bar fills itself up automatically when you hit an opponent with your gunblades... but it won't fill up if you just shoot at him! Here's another Rage tip - keep your eyes open for the red crystals that regularly appear in the Temple. When you see one, strike it with your gunblades to smash it - now watch Ayumi's Rage increase!

Be wary of The Light's magic attack - it can easily throw Ayumi off-balance... and any Pangos hanging around surely won't miss this opportunity.

TIP: Take advantage of the time during combat to collect as many credits as possible and secure as many souls as you can - so while you're slashing at an opponent, don't forget to smash vases and sarcophagi too (when you can) to collect bonus items fast - because if you wait until the Light takes his leave at the end of the level, it will be too late!

CRABS: Use your guns to keep these lively little creatures at bay! You can also use "Earthquake" if you see that they've surrounded you...

THE SIX-WINGED: These six-winged menaces hate heat - so try the "Fireball" and "Fire Blades" spells. "Fire Blades" aren't cheap at the start of the game (1500 souls), but it's an investment that will soon pay for itself. Upgrading your blades doesn't cost too much Rage - and the effect is even better if you want to keep your opponents at a safe distance - so move away fast and fire at those huge wasps! The Rage principle also applies here: if you don't have enough, you can buy more by clicking "Items" in the Skills menu.

PANGOS AND OTHER EARTHBOUND OPPONENTS can be effectively defeated by the "Earthquake" or "Fire Rage" spells... just as well as by **AYUMI'S BLADES OR SHOOTING**.

ICE ELEMENTALS: Fire is ideal in combat against these creatures. Throw as many fireballs as you can against these frosty freaks. But be careful - if Ayumi gets hit by one of the Ice Elementals, it will slow her down for some time.

GIANT GALAPAGOS: It might seem crazy - but the best way to defeat these fire-breathing beings is to stand directly under them! Use your gunblades to slash at their back legs - you'll get lots of Rage if you do this - and then you can cast the "Fireball" spell. One thing about Pangolin Warriors, however - they just will NOT

leave you in peace! But don't worry too much about them - the Warriors are ideal for chopping-up practice with your blades - and that in turn will fill up your Rage bar! Remember to come at the Galapagos from behind to cast your spells at it... that's the safest place to be when it starts ejecting its bursts of fire. And red crystals appear regularly - even under the monsters' bellies!

PHANTOMS: You can defeat the sinister phantoms using elemental spells. As soon as you've learned a spell which upgrades your blades with elemental energy (like the "fire blades" or "lightning blades"), any shots you fire at the phantoms will be deadly for them - but remember... upgrading your blades costs Rage! These phantoms can be really dangerous when they form a pentagram. If that happens, try to wipe them out fast! But bear in mind that an attack on their pentagram formation costs lots of your life energy - and if you don't have enough, it's goodbye Ayumi!

MONSTER GENERATORS: This spawn of evil can only be destroyed by Ayumi's blades, shooting won't do it - but it will help if you upgrade your blades with elemental energy (e.g. "fire blades"). Also, "Sparkling Swords" will deal significant damage to a generator - almost finishing it off.

PANGOLIN SORCERERS: some of them (those with blue skin) can repel your magic back at you, so be careful. Those Pangolins are only vulnerable to gunblades enchanted with magic. If there are several of these Sorcerers facing you and a Monster Generator nearby, don't kill them right away - if you do, the Monster Generator will just create new ones. Destroy the Monster Generators instead, and then wipe out the frozen Pangolins.

TIP: certain sub-groups of the Pangolin have a nasty habit of disappearing from one place and reappearing in another. Shoot these from a safe distance with your gunblades and an enchantment spell like "Fire Blades".

THE QUEEN SPIDER AND HER SPAWN: The Queen Spider is hard to handle. Her life is protected by swarm of magically-immune insects flying above her. So, start by attacking them with your gunblades, and then attack the Queen herself with well-aimed "Fireballs". But be careful... don't get too close to her, or she'll ensnare you in her magic web - and that will be a continuous drain on your life energy.

FIRE ELEMENTALS: Fight the Fire Elementals using the opposite element once again... and that's ice! Note though, that the "Ice Arrow" doesn't freeze a Fire Elemental as it does with other opponents. Instead, it destroys it immediately.

THE DARK IN THE TEMPLE: The Dark in the Temple is surrounded by his Pangolin Sorcerers - they seem to be connected to their master by magic threads. Take care of the Pangolins first by slashing them with your blades. This will fill up your Rage bar - and that extra Rage can be used for various magic spells like the "Ice Arrow" or "Fireball". Then attack The Dark! A well-aimed "Ice Arrow" will freeze him - and give you a few moments to spend on other spells like "Sparkling Swords". But be careful! When The Dark approaches you, he will attack using a powerful force wave - and then he'll start creating new Pangolin Sorcerers.

TIP: Don't start celebrating too soon... even if you've defeated the last Pangolin and no more are being created by The Dark, he usually has something left in reserve - like a formidable summoning spell! So when you reach this stage, try to destroy the entity The Dark summons with bullets and make sure your Life energy bar is full - otherwise it's bye-bye to Ayumi!

THE ANCIENT SIX-WINGED: This is yet another opponent who surrounds himself with minions, and again, it's better if you attack them first. However, The Ancient Six-Winged can create Pangos faster than Ayumi can leap away, so trying to kill those creatures using conventional methods won't work. Look for an ice crystal and lure all the Pangos to it... then smash the crystal when they're all close! And don't worry about the crystal - it will be as good as new again in a little while.

If you do everything right, you'll have a horde of frozen Pangos all around, and when the "threads" connecting the Pangos to The Ancient Six-Winged have been severed, you can attack the old one with all kinds of fire spells (e.g., the "Fireball"). We recommend that you buy more Rage for this short period (even if it is a bit more expensive at this level). The extra Rage will enable you to cast the spell against the flying monster several times in succession - and that will finish him off for good!

TIP: there is an alternative here too - you can learn the "Ice Flower" spell to freeze the minions of The Ancient Six-Winged - and if you have enough souls (you'll need 380,000!), a combination of the "Ice Flower" and a blue crystal is also very effective.

DARK ELEMENTAL: It's a case of opposites here again - so fight The Dark with light! Learn light spells, like "Light Blades", for example. Then learn the "Furious Shooting" skill (if you haven't done so already). Now use "Light Blades" on your gunblades to upgrade them and press the key for "Furious Shooting" (usually the #2 key) - then shoot the Dark Elemental with your Light Blades to finish him off. A word to the wise, however: this Elemental is really hard to put down!

DEPRESSOR: You can defeat this machine gun-wielding metal monster if you freeze it then use attack spell like "Lightning" - this is the best method to deal with the Depressor.

VIOLET RAY-SHOOTING SPIDERS: This sub-species of spider can only be defeated by Lightning. First learn the "Lightning Blades" spell (if you haven't already done so), then the "Lightning" spell. Fight non-aerial opponents with your blades to gain Rage and use the Lightning spell against those ray-shooting creepy-crawlies.

LEVEL OBSERVATION SITE: To avoid the spikes shooting out of the ground, you just have to think logically - look closely at the order in which the spikes shoot up and disappear again. Then walk on to (or leap on to) the spots where the spikes disappeared - but don't worry if you misjudge this and receive a serious wound; you can still use a Healing spell. It's worth the effort involved, because if you can hold out long enough, Jay will come and rescue you from this trap.

THE DARK (AT THE GREAT GATES): attack him first with your "Sparkling Swords" - (Important!! you'll need lots of Rage for this, so smash a red crystal!). As soon as The Dark creates an Elemental, destroy it with the opposite element. When you've destroyed them all, freeze The Dark with an Ice Arrow (the Ice Flower won't work here) and attack him with your Sparkling Swords.

While the Elementals are active, The Dark becomes transparent - and he is invulnerable to attack. Just avoid his attacks and destroy the Elementals as fast as you can. When all the Elementals have been destroyed, The Dark will again be vulnerable to your attack. Then he'll try to protect himself by creating Pangolin Sorcerers linked to his being by magic threads. You'll have to freeze these Sorcerers using the Ice Flower spell. When the Pangolin Sorcerers have all been frozen, you can attack The Dark One again, after which he'll cast a terrible Hurricane spell. When this happens, get your heroine out of there fast - the best place to hide from the vicious winds is one 'floor' down under the bridge. When the hurricane has blown itself out, The Dark will again be vulnerable to attack for a short time - then he'll start creating Elementals again.

POSSESSED JAY (AT THE GREAT GATES): When Jay is possessed, you can only defeat him with Light magic - use the Ray of Light at the very least (you must learn the Light Blades spell first before you can use the Ray of Light). Attack Jay with the Ray of Light - but don't forget you'll need lots of Rage for this one!

TIP: LIGHT FORM HELPS A LOT!

SCREENSHOTS

You can shoot screenshots of your own adventures in X-Blades any time you like - just press "Print Screen" on your keyboard. On Windows XP the screenshots will be saved in the ["My Documents/My Games/X-Blades"] directory. On Windows Vista you can use the "Saved Games" link in the Game Explorer to access your screenshots.

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