



Demon's Souls Guide

The land of Boletaria is slowly succumbing to a nasty fog, one that will slowly consume the entire world if its growth is left unchecked. That's where you enter the equation. As a daring hero, you'll travel through numerous regions, defeating powerful demons and doing your part to ensure mankind's continued existence.

As you work through Boletaria, we'll be at your side every step of the way. Check out what we have to offer...



In this Demon's Souls strategy guide, you'll find:

- **BASICS** // Start here if you want a strategic overview of how the game works. There's a lot more to it than you might imagine! Here we touch on combat, the Nexus, level progression and everything in between.
- **WALKTHROUGH** // With the basics out of the way, it's time to properly begin your adventure. Here, we'll walk you through every perilous turn, every major boss encounter and the dangerous roads in between.
- **Q & A** // Certain questions are bound to come up frequently, so we've taken it upon ourselves to collect the most likely ones and to briefly answer them. Start here if you understand most of the game but still want some tips or clarification.

With our help, we're confident that your voyage through fog-enshrouded Boletaria will be much more manageable. Saving the world has never been easier!

Guide by: Jason Venter

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Demon's Souls Basics

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To work your way through Demon's Souls, you'll need to master some basics or you'll spend much of your time confused and dead. The game can prove quite challenging for the uninitiated. Read through our notes on the general flow of the game to make sure that you're prepared, then consult our walkthrough if you need more specific assistance.

Combat

Demon's Souls is an action-RPG that actually pays proper attention to the "RPG" part of that label. What that means is that if you go into most fights swinging your weapon wildly, you're going to be slaughtered when you run out of the stamina that you need to defend yourself.

The trick is to approach each enemy with an appropriate plan. Sometimes magic is helpful and sometimes you really do need to just make a mad dash forward and start swiping. It's important to know which technique is right for which situation, though.

In general, you should only start swinging crazily if you have a decent chance of finishing off a dangerous opponent. Don't ever go into a fight where your strategy is to mash the 'R1' button and hope for the best. That'll get you killed. Instead, you can often make your presence known with some projectile attacks (magic works great) and then finish off tough opponents with a few final sword strokes.

The main reason that you can't simply mash buttons is your limited supply of stamina, which is impacted by character development. Each move you make, from a dodge to a slash, takes energy. If you run out of that precious energy, you'll stand around panting and you'll be completely exposed to enemy attacks. You want to avoid such a situation at all costs, so do whatever you can to leave some stamina in your meter and don't be afraid to retreat if necessary.

Blocking is often a good way to retain stamina, but it's not perfect. If you're about to sustain a blow from a weak enemy, that will work out just fine. If someone with a sword the size of Connecticut is about to strike you, well... the results could drain most or all of your stamina meter even if you perfectly block. There are times, then, when you should press the 'O' button to take a quick step back and potentially out of harm's way. That will leave you free to move back in for the kill as your stunned opponent recovers from his missed attack. As you might imagine, the game is designed so that those players who master that technique will have a much easier time than those who don't.

The final thing to remember is that magic almost always trumps everything. You can spend hours mastering the fine art of blocking and attacking, but really all that you need to do is learn and develop a few powerful spells. That'll get you through nearly every challenge. It's something to keep in mind if the game is consistently kicking your butt.

Character Development

In Demon's Souls, you don't progress through levels like you would in a typical RPG. Instead, you have a soul level. When you first begin the game, you'll be able to choose from one of several classes. The choice you make affects the equipment with which you begin your adventure. It's even possible to start with access to healing magic.

As you advance through the game, you'll soon pass the first real stage. You can then begin spending souls to increase your own soul level. Each time you turn in souls for a new soul level, you can upgrade one statistic (out of eight options). Then you'll have to reach another soul level before you can pick a stat to upgrade. Whether you pour all of your upgrades into one category or space it out, the cost to reach the next soul level will increase by the same amount.

Spirit Form

You won't likely have to play much of Demon's Souls at all to find yourself unceremoniously slaughtered. However, one intriguing side to the game is the ability to keep battling monsters, finding treasure and otherwise behaving in a heroic manner.

When you die, you'll be revived as a spirit. In this form, your maximum health meter is cut in half and your physical and magical attacks inflict slightly more damage than usual. Your defenses also appear to be slightly less robust. There are two ways to return to a physical form once you are a spirit: 1) you can defeat a boss demon, after which point you will automatically revive; 2) you can use a Stone of Ephemeral Eyes item.

If you find yourself playing frequently in spirit form, you should equip the Cling Ring. You'll find it in the first area of Boletaria Castle. The precious item increases your maximum HP in spirit form by 25%. That can often mean the difference between success and failure.

This system allows for a great deal of freedom. You basically decide how you evolve. For instance, you might prefer to focus almost exclusively on stats that will improve your ability to cast devastating spells, or you might lean toward a buff physical warrior. Since your defense rating gradually increases as you gain soul levels (no matter what other areas you upgrade), there's no *wrong* way to progress. You do need to keep in mind how you want to play, however.

If you want to have an easy time with the game, you should improve your Intelligence (so you can use spells more frequently) and your Magic rating in general (so that each spell cast does more damage). Powerful magic users get all the breaks. Those looking for more rewarding combat should opt for ratings that affect their stamina and the length of their life meters.

One final wrinkle is online play. You can only fight other characters within a certain level range of your own, so you need to make sure that your choices result in a character that can win quick and dirty battles. For instance, suppose you have a well-rounded character at a soul level of 140. If someone else comes along at level 135 that put most of his energy into creating a powerful magic user, odds are good that you'll be in a world of hurt from the moment a battle begins. Then you'll have a more difficult time developing in a new direction because you've already gained so many levels that each new one requires a ton of souls.

«	Combat & Character Development	The Nexus & The World	»
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The Nexus

The Nexus is your level hub, but it's also the place where you will repair dulled or broken weapons, leave off excess items and power up your characters.

Levels can be entered by way of archstones that are positioned along an arched staircase along the center of the tower. You'll see the blue-tinted fellow sitting on one side of those steps. From him, you can climb up and then eventually descend the stair archway leading to the right. The archstone nearest the guy is the only one that will be available at first, but you'll be able to enter other archstones once you complete the first proper area and talk to the character known as the Monumental near the tower's upper reaches. For the most part, each archstone has three main stages through which you can progress. You can tackle the archstones in whatever order you like and should absolutely do so if you want to have an easy time of things. See our walkthrough if you want our recommendation.

In general, stages get more difficult as you go and that means that you should level up while keeping the things that we've already noted in mind. When you want to increase your skills, you'll need to seek out the maiden in black. She usually hangs out near the base of the stairs where the archstones are positioned, or sometimes on the stairs themselves. Another favorite hangout is next to the statue that you will first see when loading a game that was last saved within the Nexus. Talk to the maiden and you can see your current level, as well as information pertaining to the requirements for future upgrades.

As you work your way through the game, you'll meet other characters who will appear in the Nexus. Many of these folks will take up residence in the main central chamber, while a few important ones will find places for themselves along the rooms to the side. Every time you clear a stage—particularly after talking to a non-playable character within it—be sure to thoroughly explore the Nexus in case someone new and important has arrived. This can prevent you from overlooking things.

The World

As you explore stages, you will find that they generally progress in a similar fashion.

An archstone leads to a general region, such as the Tower of Latria. You appear at an archstone and can advance through the zone until you reach a boss encounter. For instance, you'll battle the Fool's Idol when you reach the end of the first segment within the Tower. If you win, then a second archstone will appear and you can resume your adventure from that point if you so choose. This will allow you to reach a second boss who will then leave behind yet another archstone that provides you with the opportunity to find a third boss within each region.

When you begin working through stages, you'll often find fog-covered doors that serve to guide you most quickly toward the end of a zone. You can basically just keep moving toward those if you want to quickly move to the end, but there are reasons to explore. In particular, many stages have shortcuts that you can activate so that if you later find yourself needing to return to a stage, you can save yourself from a lot of pointless backtracking. The best weapons and items also tend to be off the beaten path.

A final consideration is the World Tendency rating, which is specific to each of the five regions that you will explore. If you're dying a lot at the hands of your enemies, this tends to lead your world tendency into the black and will cause tougher enemies to appear. Defeating those will help you back toward a white tendency. You want a white tendency because it often will allow you to see events and items that otherwise wouldn't have been available. An easy way to turn everything white is to make sure that you're not frequently reviving yourself. To be in full charge of your world tendency (useful when you want to improve your gear with items gained by killing powerful phantoms), you should probably avoid playing online much, since online play tends to rapidly alter world tendency.

Even before you finish a stage, though, the man named Stockpile Thomas will be available at ground level. You can leave items with him so that you're not burdened as you explore new regions, and so that you can pick up new gear and return with it to the Nexus. Next to Stockpile Thomas is the blacksmith. He will forge weapons befitting an amateur, if you provide him with souls and materials. These two characters both make your journey much easier, especially near the start of things, so be careful that you don't accidentally attack or kill them!

If at first you don't succeed...

There's no getting around it: for most gamers, Demon's Souls will be a challenging adventure. That means that you're likely to die a lot. That can be fun for awhile, but you'll still want to make progress at a reasonable rate. If you find yourself dying a lot, keep the following in mind:

1. **It's okay to level grind.** There are some regions that are especially good for this and you should take advantage of them. If you're constantly dying in battle just before you have enough souls to go up a level, or if you have enough souls but can't make it back to save that progress in time, start grinding for awhile until you're more powerful. It's better to spend a few minutes or even hours grinding than to spend that time—and then some—almost getting somewhere but repeatedly falling short.
2. **Don't clutter your equipment if you don't have to.** Are you fighting a tough boss and he keeps killing you while you're trying to cycle through the different healing items that you've assigned to the 'Square' button? Maybe you have too many spells and miracles memorized? Change that. You always know when you're about to face a boss, so just equip the items that you'll most need. Likewise, don't head into stages with a bunch of amusing but mostly useless magic. Focus on bringing only the stuff that you'll actually use so that you can more rapidly cycle through everything when the time comes to face that brutal boss. That way, you can focus on what matters most: staying alive!
3. **Target wisely.** If you are dying a lot because you can't see where you're stepping, it probably means that you've let the camera become locked on things you didn't really need to see. Remember that you can easily tap the 'R3' button to lock onto an enemy, then tap it again to regain control of your camera. If you have to target multiple enemies, lock onto one and then move the stick left and right to shuffle between targets. Sometimes it's really useful if you know where your nearby enemy is at all times and sometimes there's nothing worse. Learn to know when to watch the enemy soaring across the sky and when to focus on the stuff that's right at your feet.

Keep all of the above in mind and Boletaria may very well have found in you its savior!

Demon's Souls Walkthrough

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Demon's Souls is a unique game. After you clear the first few areas (the Tutorial and Boletarian Palace regions), you'll be able to tackle most other stages in any order you like. Sometimes you might be at a disadvantage if you don't have a useful item from another region, but there's really no rule as to which stages must be tackled in which order throughout the bulk of the game. This walkthrough is written in the order that we found simplest, but you're certainly encouraged to experiment and to see if something else works better for you. Some of it will also come down to how you level up your character, as there are times when enemies might be simple for a melee fighter but difficult for a magic user (and vice-versa). We'll be sure to note useful tidbits as we go so that you can follow along even if you're not playing through regions in quite the same order and even if you're leveling up differently than we did. Now, let's start the adventure!

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Tutorial

Following a narrative introduction, you'll appear at the start of a long passage. You're in an area that the game uses as a mandatory Tutorial zone. Head down the passage and you'll find a message on the floor. Press 'X' to read it and to learn that you can press 'R1' to perform a standard attack. This is useful information, as just beyond that you'll find a zombie-like enemy. Hit him with your standard attack a few times to slay him and absorb his soul.



Xiphos Way visiting.



Navigating the city by way of map.



You'll come across the first enemy almost immediately.



This narrow passage can make combat difficult if you have a large weapon.

Turn slightly to the right and follow that passage. You'll learn through additional notes that you can press and hold the 'O' button to sprint, while 'L1' will allow you to block weak attacks with your equipped shield. Just right from where you gain that second tidbit, you'll find a low area that you can cross on foot, leaving the shallow pool of water behind you. Proceed along this area to find instructions on targeting enemies, something that you do by pressing in the right analog stick (the 'R3' button).

You'll be able to put that to use shortly thereafter, as there is another zombie-like enemy in this area. Slash him and just beyond, you should see a spectral form running through the area. This isn't an enemy. It's actually a ghost image of a slain warrior that came through here before you. The animation will loop, allowing you to see just what you should avoid doing if you don't want to meet a similarly grisly fate.

From where you slay that enemy and first see the ghost, start up the stairs. You'll want to pay attention, though, as about halfway up the stairs you'll be attacked by another of the enemies. He can come from the shadows, so it's hard to see the attack coming. Smack him down like you have the others, then continue up the stairs.



Take what you need. This guy certainly can't use it!



A speedy guy will be coming from the marsh.

Now you should come across a corpse lying along the stairs. You can press 'X' to loot the body and obtain **Crescent Moon Grass**. At the top of the stairs, there's another message. This one tells you how to use items. From there, you can cross a narrow bridge through an open area, where you'll note an opening in some rubble to the left. Here, you can search a body to find some **Crescent Moon Grass**. From there, you can drop down to the area below and read a new message. It explains how to make sidesteps and lets you know how to roll, both actions that require the 'O' button.

Continue onward along the path and watch the area ahead. Before long, you should see a slimy guy running toward you from the marsh toward the left. He moves more quickly than enemies you've met up to this point, but you can defeat him in the same fashion for more soul energy. Once he perishes, continue onward through the archway toward the right and be ready for a fight; three more of the quicker opponents will rush you. Two may come at a time and a third may attempt to flank you, depending on how you've moved. You need to be ready for that, and to use your healing item that is equipped by default, if necessary.

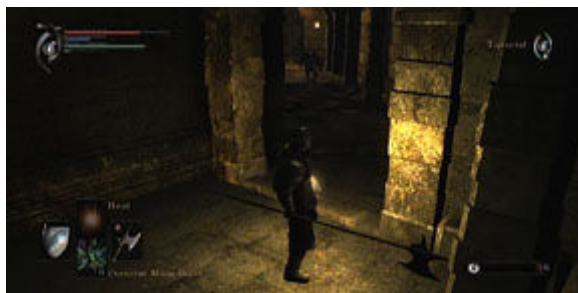
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Tutorial (cont.)

Once those three would-be bandits are corpses, you can turn your attention to a gazebo-like structure where there's a patch of glowing light. When you approach it, you'll find that it is an archstone. Touching it will warp you to a new area.



The archstone is a welcome sight.



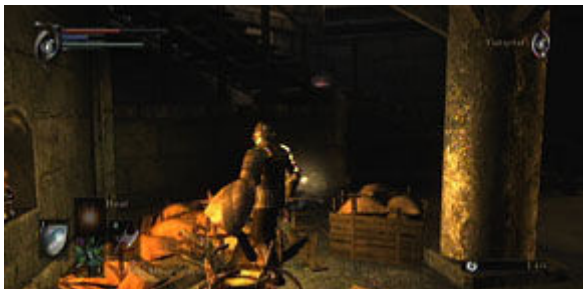
The hallways are not as deserted as you might believe.

On the other side of the archstone, you'll find yourself in another hall with your energy meter refilled. There's a message

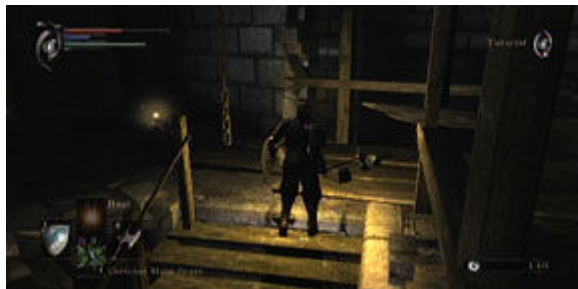
here advising that you can press 'R2' for a strong attack, which takes longer than your standard attack but predictably will inflict more damage if it connects with its target.

Continue past where you found that message and you'll arrive in a wider chamber where an armored opponent is waiting. He's the perfect target on which to test your stronger attacks, but be ready to block as part of the exchange of blows. You should be able to take him down without taking much damage if you play it smart. Once he falls, continue onward and you'll find another note on the floor. This one advises you that 'L2' will allow you to parry. That can be followed up quickly with 'R1' to counter the attack you've just parried, when appropriate.

Press onward from where you read that note and you will almost immediately meet another soldier. Take care of him, then proceed down the hallway to fight yet another of the armored fellows. Here, it's especially important that you remember to block or parry, since the cramped quarters make it difficult to unleash your fury on your opponent. Once you've taken care of that second arrival, keep moving down the hallway to reach another message scrawled across the ground. This one advises that you can press the 'Triangle' button to wield a weapon with both hands.



Smash apart the barrels and find some Half Moon Grass.



Head left here for a soul and a fight.

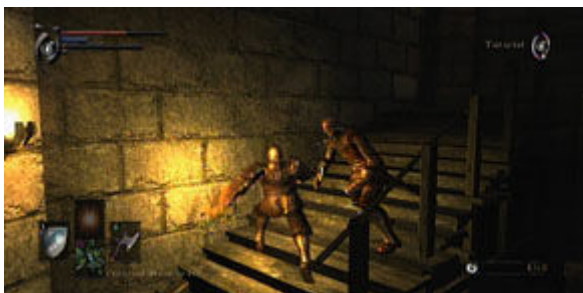
You'll be able to put that ability to the test almost immediately, since there's another armored soldier just beyond where you read the tip, but you're actually better off if you just fight him the old-fashioned way. Swinging your weapon around with both hands tends to leave you much more open to attack if you happen to miss, something that's rather likely if you have a lance or spear and find it bouncing against walls in narrow passages.

Defeat the soldier, then continue along the hallway and climb some stairs that branch off toward the left. At the top of this flight of stairs, you'll find a note on how to change weapons (though you can't just yet) and items. There are some barrels off to the left. Smash them apart and examine the remains that they obscure to find **Half Moon Grass**.

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Tutorial (cont.)

Beyond that, there's another staircase that you should climb. At the top of this one, you'll find that the path forks. If you head left, you can examine a corpse to find an **Unknown Soldier's Soul**. Do so, but be ready from an attack in that direction, as another enemy unit is waiting there. He'll go down pretty easily to standard attacks. Examine his remains for goodies if you have the option.



It's a duel on the stairs!



Dead soldiers are a great source of grass.

Next you should explore the region that was to the right from the head of the staircase you just climbed. Head along this route and you'll soon come to a room with what looks like a forge at its center. Just to the left, there's another staircase that you can climb along the room's left side. Halfway up, you'll find another soldier. Take him apart quickly with your

standard attacks, then resume your climb.

At the top, you'll find that you're on one end of a platform, facing off against another soldier on the far side. He's standing in front of a doorway with a nasty fog covering it. Start toward him, but keep your shield up. He fires arrows at you, which you'll want to deflect. After blocking those attacks, move in close and take him out with a few swipes of your weapon. Loot the corpse if an opportunity to do so presents itself, then pass through the fog.

On the other side, be ready immediately for a soldier to rush you. Take care of him as usual. Now you can head down a short staircase to the right to find some **Half Moon Grass** on a corpse, then return to the left and proceed in that direction past where you just killed the soldier.



Vanguard isn't friendly to new adventurers.



Your revival happens at The Vault.

As you proceed in that direction, you'll climb a long staircase, at the top of which waits another wall of fog. When you pass through this one, you'll find yourself in a corridor with a massive beast known as Vanguard. This is your first boss encounter, but don't worry; you don't actually have to win. He'll crash around the environment, swinging his huge mace. Hiding behind the huge stone pillars does no good, as he'll hack through them to hit you. Besides that, you're sufficiently weak that even a single hit will spell your doom.

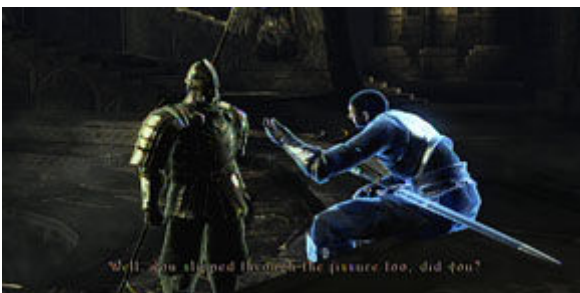
When you die, you'll appear in a new area known as The Nexus. This is the game's area hub, from which you can travel to available regions and do heroic things that (hopefully) don't involve your death. Since this is your first visit, you'll also receive **Nexial Binding**. Note that when you die in future areas, you won't be taken automatically to the Nexus. Instead, you'll be taken to the archstone that you followed in order to enter the zone in question.

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The Nexus

The Nexus is a useful area, as you'll find. You can turn around from where you first appear to find a man crouched near a pillar at the base of some stairs. He explains that you can touch archstones—like the one behind him—to travel to the different regions in search of demon souls. Right now, you have only one option, but that will change in good time.

To the left from where that gentleman rests, there's a blacksmith who will forge you weapons (or provide new ones) in exchange for souls, plus just past that you'll find Stockpile Thomas, who will hold onto items that you have obtained but don't wish to carry with you on any immediate adventures. This is important, since you can't carry a whole lot at once, particularly at this early stage in the game.



The dwellers of The Nexus are a vibrant lot.



The blacksmith can craft you weapons or improve those that you already have.

A final option that you may consider right now is a staircase that leads down a dark tunnel from the main portion of The Nexus. Here, you'll find many notes scrawled on the ground. They give you some of the same general information that you just obtained while working through the Tutorial region, but they're useful if for some reason you need a refresher.

Aside from the attractions already noted and some upper chambers that for now are mostly empty, The Nexus is mostly barren on this, your first visit. You'll find it more heavily populated after exploring other regions. You should visit the people indicated and take advantage of whichever of their services interest you. Then it's time to make use of the archstones to begin your proper adventure. Begin with the one that was just behind that first gentleman you spoke with, the Archstone of the Small King. You'll have only one destination within that region available, Boletarian Palace. Choose that location and begin your proper adventure.

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Archstone of the Small King - Boletarian Palace

The Boletarian Palace is a foreboding place, one inhabited by fierce dragons. A cutscene demonstrates that fact as you enter. Once it concludes, you can start forward through the area.



They should have known better than to mess with you!

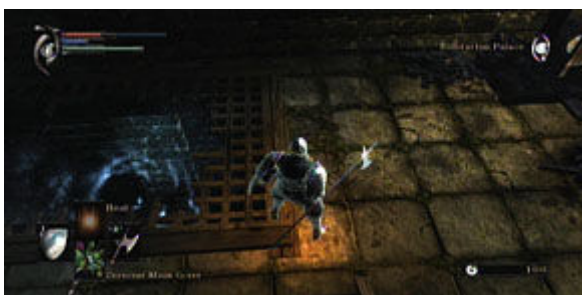


Target one nasty adversary at a time.

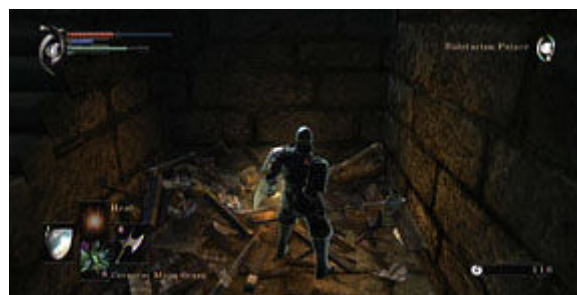
Upon entering, you're located in a plaza area. It's an open environment with a broad staircase leading upward on the other side of a fountain. Before moving forward, turn around and head back toward a closed gate. In the corner, hidden behind some panels, you'll find some **Half Moon Grass**. Add it to your collection, then turn around toward the plaza and head up the stairs past the fountain. Be ready for several enemies to rush you. They'll surrender quickly to even your standard attacks, but they may manage to harm you if you're not careful to block. It can be difficult to fend off multiple enemies at once, so remember to use your targeting skills and your shield.

As you continue along the staircase, you'll encounter more of the enemies. Tend to them all in your usual fashion, continuing past the place where ravens are pecking at a corpse. Past those squawking birds, you'll find still more enemies who try to ambush you from behind wooden planks that are leaning against the stone walls. The easiest way to defeat these fellows is to first block their opening attack, then simply retaliate with a standard attack. You should be able to cut them down without incident.

You're now at the top of the stairs, with what is currently a dead-end branch leading to the right and a more promising route taking off toward the left. Take time to loot any corpses, in case healing grass or other useful items have been left behind, then proceed left from the head of the staircase.



Be careful not to fall through the hole in the grating.



Firebombs are hidden underneath the furniture.

You'll now ascend a short, narrow staircase that leads into a square room. As you enter, look ahead. On a raised

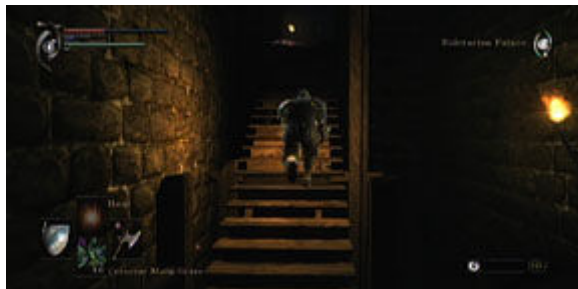
platform, there's an archer waiting to pick you off from his vantage point. You should hold your shield ready to block both the arrow he fires and the impending assault from a few other enemies who are closer at hand. Hack them to bits, then carefully stick to the edges of the room. There's a grating here and part of it has rotted away, leaving an opening through which you could easily fall to your death far below. Skirt that dangerous pitfall and climb up to where the archer is waiting, then tend to him.

Now you can pass through a new opening into another cramped room. There are two more enemies here, one lurking in the shadows to the right and one more plainly visible to the left. Take care of each of them in the usual fashion, then proceed through the room to reach what appears to be a bedroom of sorts. There's another guard here, so defeat him and proceed to the next room.

Here, you'll see a staircase leading upward along the left side of the chamber, while ahead there's a glowing light partially obscured by some furnishings. Break them apart and examine the light to obtain some **Firebomb** items, then go ahead and climb the stairs.



There are a lot of fog-covered doors around these parts.



You'll need to ascend a series of staircases guarded by fire-tossing soldiers.

When you arrive at the top of the staircase and start toward the right, you'll be assaulted by two more soldiers. Just block their attacks as they rush you together, then retaliate with a few strokes that should drop both of your assailants. Now you can continue past them to find a fog-shrouded door. Step through the fog.

You're now in another narrow corridor, this one with stairs leading up along the left side of the room and a more open expanse to the right at ground level. Head along here first to find an **Unknown Soldier's Soul** and the **Mail Breaker**, then return to the stairs and climb toward the higher level. As you do, note that an enemy is waiting there and spreading flames. These inflict minor damage when they touch you and aren't all that easy to avoid. Be careful.

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Archstone of the Small King - Boletarian Palace (cont.)

You're now climbing along stairs to reach the top of the narrow shaft. As you do, you'll periodically need to stop to tend to more fire-tossing opponents. Keep working upward and you'll finally arrive at a stone pathway leading forward through some scaffolding. There are a few more enemies here, then you can head left through an opening to find yourself scaling the outside of the building.



Another soldier is waiting for you just outside.



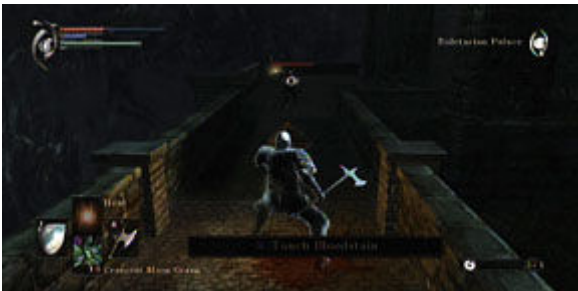
This is probably the guy that pushed that huge ball down the stairs...

This area is dangerous because if you get too carried away with your attacks, you could easily find yourself toppling over the side of the scaffolding that lines the building. At the same time, you do need to defend yourself against the soldiers

that will attack as you continue your climb. Stick to the walls, block as needed and you should be able to manage each encounter with little or no damage. Then simply heal yourself with herbs as needed.

When you reach the top of the scaffolding, you can head left through another opening. Here, you'll need to defend yourself once more from attack before starting up the steep, narrow staircase that you should see ahead. Proceed carefully, however, because shortly you will see a huge ball rolling toward you. Quickly run back down the stairs (or back step down them) and get out of the way of the ball. Otherwise, you'll take a lot of damage, perhaps even a fatal amount. Once the ball has come safely to a stop, break apart the debris in the area and start up the stairs to find a corpse that you can search to obtain the **Bastard Sword**.

Now climb the stairs, past where the trap was sprung. You'll arrive on a rooftop where numerous soldiers wait. These can be easily hacked apart with standard attacks, leaving you free to explore a rather wide area.



Don't bother fighting this guy just yet.



Instead, find the weaker knight near the catapults.

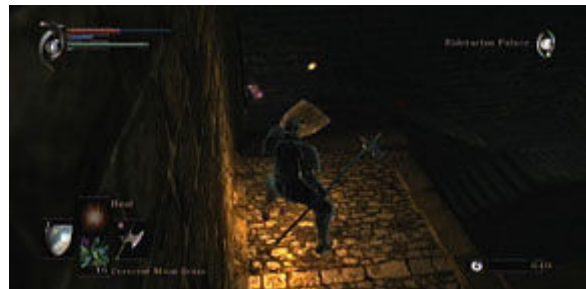
The path now splits. Keep the position at the top of the staircase in mind as a reference point. From it, there are several routes that you can follow.

You'll find the first route if you turn around from the top of the stairs and start toward where archers and a foot soldier are waiting among some wooden planking. Take them out carefully, keeping your shield up to deflect arrows, and you'll eventually arrive at a door to a wider room. You can continue in this direction to find a knight that's all but impossible to beat at this early stage in the game, but there's no point in doing so right now except to challenge yourself or to earn a bunch of souls. Your main reason for coming in this direction (which was to rid the area of the archers) has been accomplished anyway, so you should turn around and return to the head of the staircase.

Next, continue past the staircase to find a knight just beyond some catapult machines. Your strategy here is to block his opening attack, then retaliate with a fierce flurry of standard blows that prevent him from recovering. Repeat that as necessary. You should soon be able to knock him to the ground, leaving you free to either advance through a fog-covered door to the side or to continue onward along the tower wall to enter a new room.



You can drop off from here to find a hidden area.



Descend these stairs with extreme caution.

Before you do any of that, though, you should take a special detour that can save you a lot of time and grief down the road. Look to the wall along the right side of the area where you fought the knight. You should see an area where the short wall is pulled away to ground level. You can walk carefully through this opening to drop down to a ledge below. Do so.

Now you can turn around from where you fell and check the wall to examine a body and obtain the **Light Crossbow** and some **Wooden Bolt** ammunition. Next, look around some more and you should see an opening leading onto a wooden platform. Just to the left, there will be a soldier standing guard and looking out onto some stairs. You may recognize them as the set of stairs that you climbed before. Take care of the guard now, then go ahead and drop from the ledge to the stairs below. Climb back up to where you fought the knight a moment ago.

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Archstone of the Small King - Boletarian Palace (cont.)

Continue onward, ignoring the fog-covered door. You'll reach a room where you can grab more **Firebomb** ammunition. Past that you'll find a steep wooden staircase descending around the outer edge of a tower. There are enemies along the sides here that will toss firebombs at you, so you'll need to carefully eliminate them while taking precautions to avoid falling. The center of the room is an abyss. A single misstep could send you hurtling toward the bottom of the shaft so far below that you can't even see it.



Slash the chain on this platform.



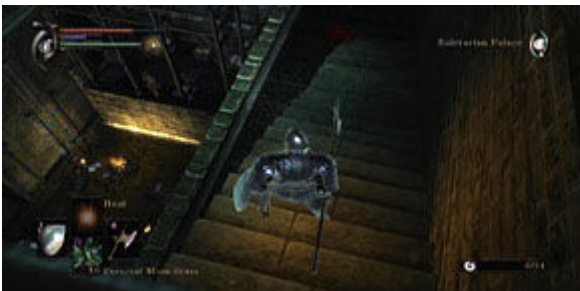
The Cling Ring is especially valuable.

Partway down the stairs, you should notice a doorway leading off toward the left. Pass through the archway and you will find yourself on a small wooden platform. Here, there are chains extended outward from what look like metal pimples on the stone wall. If you slash at the chains now, you'll get a reward in a moment. Go ahead and do so, then return to the stairs in the previous room and continue your cautious descent.

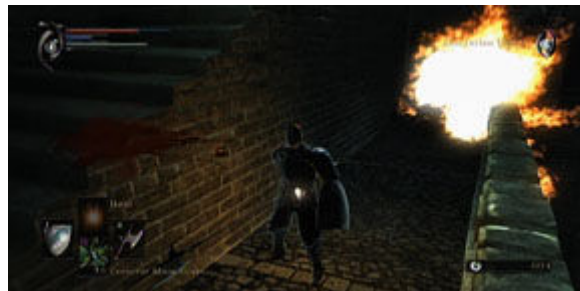
Things will get particularly dangerous as you near the bottom, since several fire-tossing enemies will attack at once in close proximity to explosive barrels. Remember that it's easiest to safely eliminate your enemies if you target them so that your swings don't cause you to over extend yourself. Once the last of the goons has fallen, you can safely descend to the bottom of the shaft. There you'll find a lever, which you should pull to raise a nearby grate.

Start along the hallway leading onward and there's a corpse you can search. Make doing so a priority, as you'll find the **Cling Ring**. This item is extremely important for the game's remainder, since it increases your life force when you're running around in spirit mode. Equip it immediately, then continue along the passage and look to the right. There are two corpses you can loot here. One contains **Old Ragged Robes**, **Old Ragged Gloves**, **Old Ragged Boots** and **Old Spice**. The other will grant you the **Jade Hair Ornament** that you can later hand in at the Nexus for a special ring.

Now for a note on what you've just done: pulling the lever has opened a gate that connects your current position to the stage's opening area. Whenever you need to quickly come through now, you can simply dash up the steps where all the monsters attack at the beginning of the stage, head up the stairs to the left and then pass through a the newly-opened gate to the right (just ahead of the room with the archer and the rotted grating over the bottomless pit). This is a great time saver. For now, though, you should go ahead and climb back up through the area that you just cleared, to the place where you defeated the knight and previously ignored the fog-covered door. Now you'll want to pass through it.



Through the fog, you'll soon find another steep staircase to descend.



It's a good idea to avoid the explosive blast that the barrels generate.

On the other side of that fog-covered door, you'll find yourself in a small room. There's an archway to the right, so pass through that next and you'll emerge at the top of a steep flight of stairs. You should see enemies patrolling below, torches held over their heads. Descend the stairs and you'll arrive at ground level. Move toward the waiting enemy unit

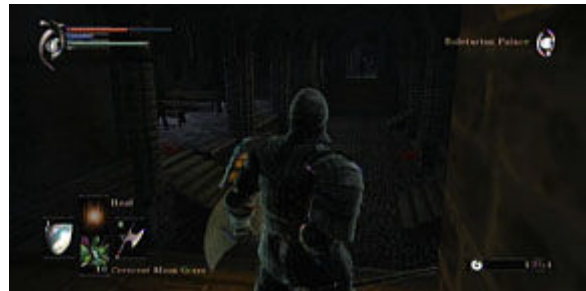
and watch for him to take notice of you as you near the first of several sets of barrels. When he does, quickly retreat. The barrels are explosive and your opponent will throw firebombs. You want to make sure that when the barrels explode, you're far enough away that the blast doesn't kill you. Once the barrels are eliminated, it's safe to kill the enemy.

Now you should find yourself looking along another hallway, where another enemy is waiting for you. This one doesn't have barrels to aid him, so you can safely head toward him and take him out in the manner that suits you. Note that he's also joined by a companion in the room just beyond, which serves as a branch in the path. You'll note some boards blocking the way to the right (where you can find a friendly merchant who looks like an enemy) and a dead-end balcony to the left. Remember the location of that balcony, as we'll be coming back to it in a few minutes. For now you should proceed directly forward, toward a place where you will see some barrels stacked.

As you approach the barrels, note that there's a path leading off to the left. There are some soldiers waiting there and they'll attack as you arrive on the scene. Carefully tend to them, then continue along the path that they were guarding as it branches toward the right. Another soldier should come rushing to meet you, so be ready to take him out swiftly. There is a fellow with a crossbow on a platform above and he'll rain destruction down on you if you take too long. Defeat the guy on the ground level, then head past him to the stairs he was guarding and tend to the guy with the crossbow. When he's gone, you can check a nearby corpse to find an **Unknown Soldier's Soul** item.



Why the archer was guarding a corpse will forever remain a mystery.



Another armored enemy awaits at the end of the passage.

There are still enemies in the area. Continue up the stairs and you'll find another of the heavily-armored knights that you should remember from near the second fog-covered door in the region. This fellow is guarding another such door, and here there's less room to maneuver. Not only that, but an archer is attacking from off to the left. Take care of the knight quickly with a series of standard thrusts, then tend to the guy with the crossbow. You can check a nearby corpse for some **Late Moon Grass** once the area is clear.

Now start back toward the fog-covered door, but you don't want to pass through it just yet. Instead, you should work your way back down the stairs, this time veering off toward the left when you arrive at ground level. Against the wall, you should find a staircase leading down to a lower level. As you descend, look ahead and you'll see that the area is crawling with soldiers. When you're partway down the stairs, they'll notice and start toward you. A good strategy here is to stay where you are, letting them come as they please. This enables you to take care of them one at a time. Then you can continue down to finish off any stragglers.

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Archstone of the Small King - Boletarian Palace (cont.)

Once the space is free of soldiers, look along the edge and you'll find an area where some barrels and debris are stacked. You can hack apart this obstruction to reveal a hidden passage. As you proceed along that passage, an enemy will come rushing to meet you. Defeat him, then continue onward and you'll come through at one end of a long passageway lined by slightly raised ledges on either side. You can head up along the right platform here to find an **Unknown Soldier's Soul** waiting to be retrieved from a corpse. Grab that, then continue along the main passageway. Your approach will attract the interest of another armed knight, so take him out as you have the others.



Stairs can keep you from being overwhelmed by enemy units.



Hard and sharp stones make the world go 'round.

With the knight out of the way, the path is clear to proceed through to the area that he was guarding. You'll find another room that allows you to either head off to the left or continue straight ahead. For now, pass through the archway leading left. Here, you'll be greeted by a swarm of enemies, but you can use stairwells again to limit the number that can approach you at once. Be prepared to use healing items if necessary between waves. Once you defeat the goons, loot their bodies for any goodies that you can find. Among them, you'll also find some bodies that were already waiting, including one from which you can grab some **Shard of Hardstone** and **Shard of Sharpstone** materials.

Continue to wander around this area to make sure that you haven't left any enemies alive. It's important that you completely clear the zone, so take a few trips through if you need to. Watch for archers, as well, and eliminate them if you find any that have thus far managed to avoid your wrath. If you were too busy dealing with enemies before to grab it, note that one of the rooms has an **Unknown Hero's Soul** resting in its corner, so be sure to snag that. When you're confident that the space is cleared, head back to the room you reached after killing the most recent of the armored knights. As you're approaching it now from obtaining the stones, enter it and head off toward the left. In that direction, you will find the **Scimitar**. It's located in a walled area, but you can head along the wall to find an opening, then backtrack to grab the weapon.



The man is pleased indeed to remain alive.

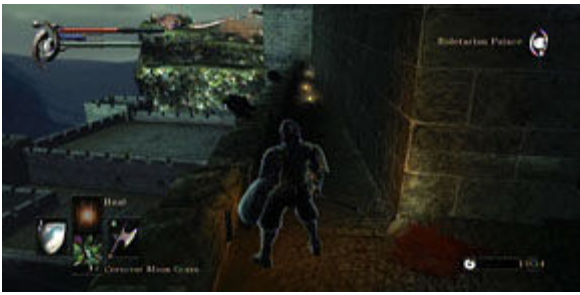


The Thief's Ring is easy to miss if you're not paying attention.

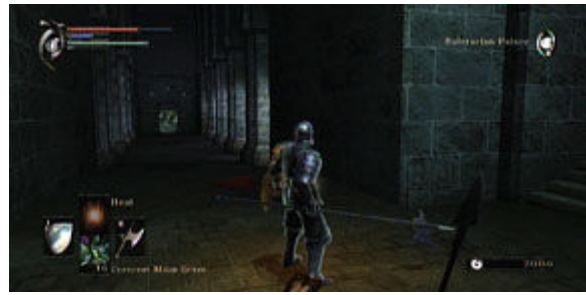
Now you should head all the way back through the area that you've cleared. Remember the balcony that we told you to keep in mind? It extends from the same general gazebo structure where you can explore a hallway to find the friendly merchant. Well, now it's time to take a leap from that balcony. Approach the low wall and you'll jump automatically over it, then drop a fair distance to the ground below. You shouldn't receive any damage. Now you can wander around in the cramped corridors and you'll soon find a narrow alleyway. As you arrive, someone shouts for help.

Move forward into the area and you'll see what looks like a knight-type enemy. It's not, though. This man can be useful! However, you first need to clear the area for him. It's full of enemies. Hack them to bits and try not to swing your weapon at the friendly fellow (something that's easier if you're careful to actually target enemies with the 'R3' button). Once they all fall, the man will stand where he is and you can press 'X' to talk to him. You'll receive the **Brass Telescope** for your troubles and he will start wandering throughout the area that you have cleared. Follow him long enough to make sure that he's doing so safely (and he will be if you did your job properly), then you should backtrack again. This time, you want to work your way to the hallway where you avoided the explosive barrels just after passing through the second of the fog-covered doors.

When you arrive there, look down from the high wall and you should see the area where you rescued your new-found friend. Head along the wall and as you look down, you'll notice a higher ledge with a glowing yellow orb. You can climb over the wall and drop down to that area, then search to find the **Thief's Ring**. This item is useful throughout the game because it serves as a cloaking device that allows you to get closer to enemies before they see you. Don't lose it.



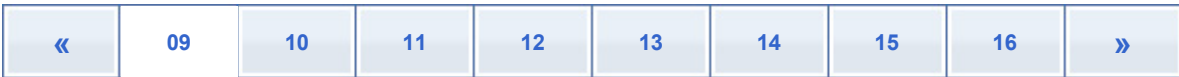
Where before there were enemies, now there are goodies.



Tempted by the deadly path to the left...

Now it's time to make some more serious progress through the stage. Backtrack to the fog-covered door that you previously avoided entering. Now the time is right to pass through it.

On the other side of the door, you'll find an isolated corridor that leads straight forward before curving toward the right. Here, you'll notice that there are a few wooden structures, box-like in shape. You can strike them with your weapon to send boulders rolling down the narrow passageway ahead, where the ravens sit squawking. There are enemies waiting there and the rolling boulders will kill them. You can follow behind, gathering healing items from the corpses. As the path reaches its end and turns sharply toward the right, however, you need to be careful. Proceed cautiously up some stairs and watch for the path to widen, as you'll soon be attacked by two enemies wielding spears.



Archstone of the Small King - Boletarian Palace (cont.)

Try to take on your enemies one at a time if possible, so that they can't press the advantage afforded them by their superior numbers. You should be able to roll out of the way of their weapons if necessary, but mostly your strategy should be to strike them with quick slashes so that they don't have time to mount a proper attack of their own. Once the enemies go down, you can decide whether to venture toward the left where powerful items await with even more powerful guardians (likely a suicide mission), or you can proceed directly ahead toward more enemies and an important encounter. We recommend the latter, especially since right now your priority should be clearing this first area so that you can open up the rest of the game.



When you see the dragon coming, make sure that you're not on the bridge.

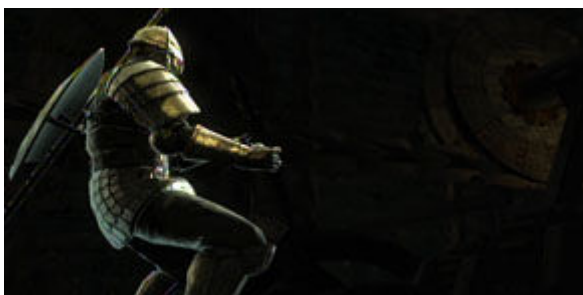


An unknown soldier's soul is just waiting for you to claim it!

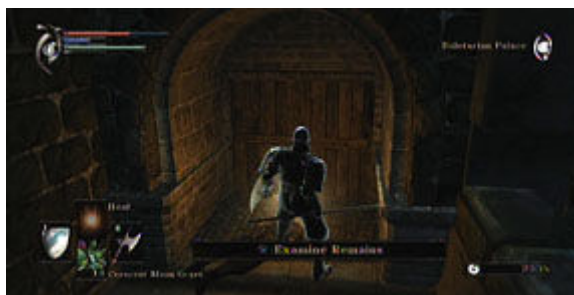
While going left is almost certain suicide, continuing straight ahead isn't exactly safe. As you proceed forward, you'll find yourself crossing a high bridge that is filled with enemies. You need to venture forward so that they notice you, then retreat back to the area where you just killed the two guys with the spears. Two or three soldiers can be lured toward you in this fashion. Then as you hang around near the bridge, a dragon will fly toward the skirmish. When you see it coming, you need to quickly backtrack to your safe spot so that you don't get fried to a crisp when the behemoth lets loose its fiery fury.

Keep a safe distance from the dragon so that you can watch how it attacks and for what duration. It should fly away for awhile if you retreat to your safe area. Then you can make a run for it across the bridge, keeping your shield held up so that any enemies who do manage to strike you don't cause any damage. Your priority must be reaching the opposite side of the bridge in one piece. You don't have time to stop and fight, as the dragon could return at any time. Remember that once you've started your trot forward, you should press and hold the 'O' button to break into a full run. Your normal movement won't allow you to move quickly enough. Once you reach the other side, then you can turn to fight any adversaries that remain alive and ready to give you grief.

You'll now find yourself at the top of a high area, with stairs leading down to a lower level. Take the stairs on the right side first, which lead to an **Unknown Soldier's Soul** item. Then follow the stairs that descend directly at the base of the bridge.



Pulling the lever will open an important gate.

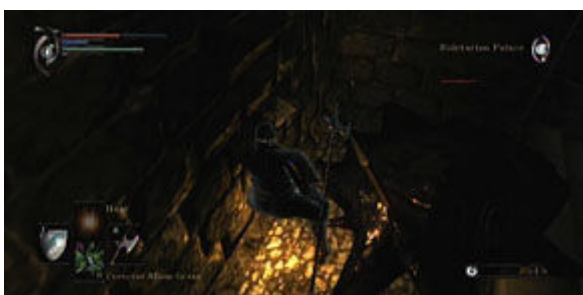


The turpentine that you find here will soon come in handy.

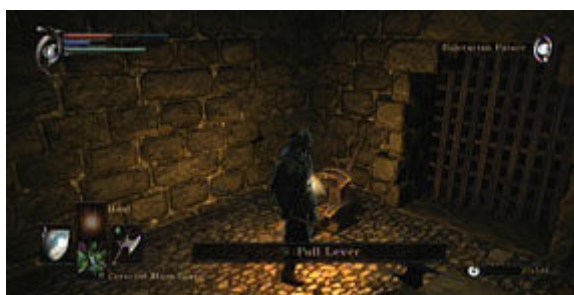
Down those stairs, you'll almost immediately find a lever that you can pull. Doing so triggers a cutscene that depicts a massive gate opening. This is a very good thing, as it will enable you to finally face the area boss. You're almost there. Before you can arrive, though, you need to clear a final series of passages.

Continue along the corridor and as you start down some stairs, you'll likely hear movement up ahead. Let the enemies come to you, as they will happily do. These guys are guarded fairly heavily, so you have to hit them with a few strikes apiece. As usual, try to limit their angles of approach and you shouldn't have much trouble. Once they go down, you can continue into the next corridor. Head left to find **Turpentine** fluid on a corpse (useful because it allows you to temporarily imbue your equipped weapon with the fire element), then travel in the opposite direction to encounter some more soldiers in a larger room.

The soldiers you encounter here will throw fire at you, so don't expect to just slash your way through without keeping your shield ready to counter the projectiles. There are only two of them, so you shouldn't have any trouble if you keep your head. The real challenge lies just ahead, as you come out at the top of another staircase.



These slimy fellows are good at shrugging off damage.



This lever should be a sight for sore eyes.

As you're sure to notice, the center of this chamber represents a long drop to the bottom. You'll need to slowly descend stairs, but along the way you'll encounter a new type of foe.

The monsters here are huge globs of slime. You can get in close, target them and slash them, but as you do you'll want to try to work your way around behind them. They are weak against blows from behind, but getting into that position can be tricky given the narrow ledges on which you find yourself. Though you may take some damage, it's almost safer to move right up against the foes, target them and then hack repeatedly until they expire. Then you can safely descend the stairs.

When you reach the bottom, you'll find a corpse that you can loot for some **Half Moon Grass**, as well as a lever that you can pull. Doing so will raise another gate. Happily, this one leads back into the main plaza that serves as the castle entrance. You can pass through this opening and either head right to face the area boss or left to warp back to The Nexus to spend your soul points on gear that will help you survive the coming battle.

Archstone of the Small King - Boletarian Palace (cont.)

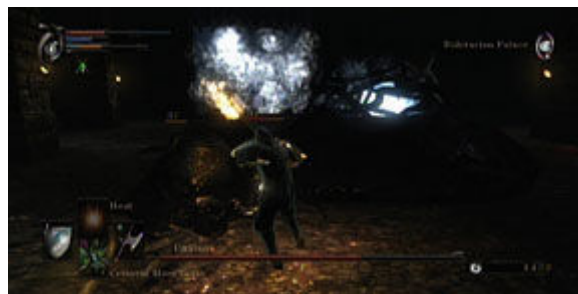
Once you're ready for the main event, pass through the huge gate and you'll come face to face with a powerful demon.

Boss Battle: Phalanx

Phalanx is actually a relatively simple boss, but when you first see him he can be quite imposing. Basically, he's just a larger version of the slime monsters you encountered on the stairwell just before pulling the final lever. Phalanx himself is only a huge blob without any method of defense, but he has a bunch of the smaller guys that have attached themselves to him. As you circle, they'll fire spears at you and you'll take a lot of damage if one connects without your shield in between.



Watch out for flying spears as you dance around your target.



Soak your weapon in turpentine to bring fire to the fray.

The trick is to stay a few paces away, then throw firebombs at the base of Phalanx that is most heavily populated by the smaller slime creatures. If you aim properly, the flames will cause significant damage to several of them at once. Then you can retreat (always with your shield held ready) and fire another one. If you find your health dropping, you should be able to back away and use a healing item or two, then return to the fray.

From time to time, the smaller slimes will detach from Phalanx to try to mess with you that way. You can take them out pretty quickly, either with more firebombs or by dousing your chosen weapon in turpentine. The latter technique means that each strike brings with it the power of flame, which should allow you to clear up any stragglers before turning on Phalanx himself. He's actually just a quivering mass of jelly (like Santa's belly) once you've tended to his helpers, so don't be afraid to push him into a corner and wail on him with your turpentine-drenched weapon until his life meter vanishes.

Once Phalanx is down for the count, you'll receive notification that you've been revived. Your life meter will also fill completely. Now you can run around the arena and pick up any items that the slime creatures left behind when they expired. Doing so earlier would have been dangerous, but now you'll be just fine. Once you've gathered any goodies, you can touch the glowing archstone at the center of the arena. You'll receive **Lead Demon's Soul** and you'll be warped back to The Nexus.



The first major demon has been slain...



The maiden in black is a mysterious creature indeed...

When you arrive back at the Nexus, it's finally time to worry about strengthening your character. Until now, you haven't been able to do much customization, but finally that can change as the real game begins. A cutscene will unfold and you'll be advised that someone called The Monumental will explain the Nexus to you.

Finding The Monumental isn't as easy as one might suppose. From where you appear at the base of the stairs that wind their way through the Nexus, you need to climb the stairs to their peak, which is still shy of the top of the chamber. There, you'll find an archway you can pass through to reach a circular room that appears to be a dead end. Look closely along the left side, though, and you'll find a narrow staircase that you can climb still higher. Follow those stairs up another level and you're now standing along a circular ledge that encircles the statue you were shown in the cutscene. Head left from there to find what appears to be a woman seated against a wall. Talk to her and you will find that she is The Monumental whom you were seeking (not the statue as you might have thought from the cutscene). She'll brief you on the history of the fog that shrouds the world and ask you to accept a quest to rid the world of demons, which you should accept. Doing so opens up the other regions so that you can find new demons to conquer.



The Monumental doesn't look particularly noteworthy.



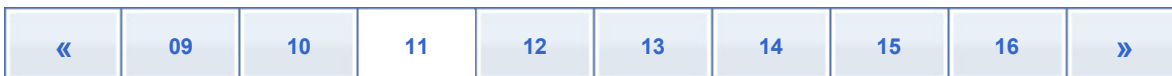
You absolutely seek soul power!

Once you have accepted that quest, head back the way you came, all the way to the base of the Nexus. There, you should find the maiden in black floating between two columns. Talk to her and she will award you the **Blue Eye Stone** and the **White Eye Stone**. Talk to her again and if you answer that you seek soul power, you'll have the option to transform souls you've gathered into upgrades to your character. How you choose to upgrade your character is entirely up to you, but you should know that each upgrade you apply increases the cost of the next one, regardless of which stat you improve.

When you've upgraded as much as you can, you should probably scout to find God's disciple (located on the ground level, in a room not far from the blacksmith). God's disciple will allow you to learn Miracle arts... in exchange for a hefty number of souls.

One last thing that you can do is climb to the very top of the area, higher even than where you found The Monumental. A staircase there leads to a door called The Pantheon, which you can touch to enter a room where game records are kept. Around the outer edge you can find a corpse. Examine it to obtain a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes**, an item that you'll be pleased to have later in the game. It revives you to your full physical form if you are slain.

Now you're done with the Nexus, at least for now. It's time to resume your adventure. Level up a bit and fill your inventory with useful items if you like (just battle monsters in the area you've already cleared until you have a sufficient number of souls), then head to the next challenge.



Archstone of the Burrow King - Stonefang Tunnel

When you first appear in this region, you're at the bottom of a steep flight of stairs. You can climb up the stairs, then proceed ahead along a lone walkway that lines one side of a cliff. Here, you'll find a corpse that you can investigate to obtain **Unknown Hero's Soul**. Now turn back the way you came. You'll note that rather than returning down the stairs you just climbed, you can continue past it along a wider walkway. There's also a merchant from whom you can purchase a few useful items, seated by a campfire. Behind him is a building with an inactive lift. You'll be able to use it much later in the stage, but for now you can safely ignore it.



An unknown hero perished here...

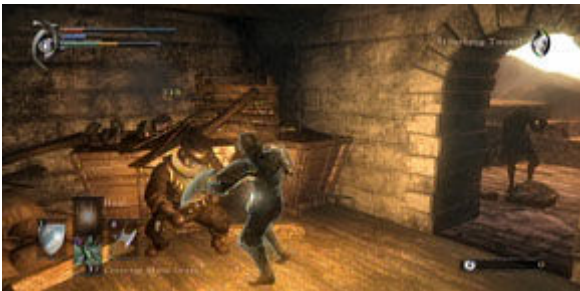


You can turn the handle to activate the outside lift.

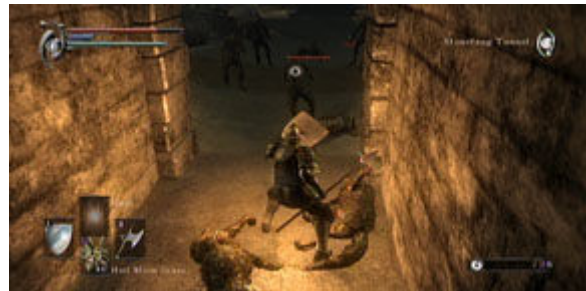
As you move beyond that merchant and continue along the walkway toward the right, you'll note that up ahead there are enemies atop a tower. They regularly heft huge boulders over the edge, attempting to smash any unwitting travelers who get too close. You should move cautiously through here, so that you're not smashed under the rocks. Off toward the left, though still within range of attacks from the nasty miners above, you can investigate a corpse to find **Sticky White Stuff**. Otherwise, you're good to proceed through the doorway at the tower's base.

Inside that building, climb up the short, narrow flight of stairs. At the top, look immediately to the right. You'll notice a doorway that you can pass through. Before you do, investigate the wall to the left to find a handle that can be turned. Go ahead and turn it to activate a lift that you can access by stepping through to the platform just outside of the door. You can ride this platform up to reach the area from which the miners were dropping boulders.

You'll find that the miners aren't alone. There's also a larger enemy in garish armor in this area who will try to hit you with ranged fire attacks. Hopefully, you've increased your stamina enough that the attack won't cause much damage if it connects. You can also roll out of its way, then get in close and hit the enemy with an aggressive series of standard strikes to put him out of commission. Then kill the nearby miners (they deserve it for dropping those boulders into your path) and grab the **Crushing Battle Axe +1** from a corpse on the outer ledge from which the miners were formerly tossing boulders. There's also a **Renowned Hero's Soul** in the same area where you fought the armored guy who tossed fire at you.



This guy uses powerful fire magic if you give him the chance.



The miners almost resemble a zombie army.

Collect the loot, then ride the lift back down toward the platform where you first boarded it. Continue riding the lift as it descends toward its lowest point. You'll find a small ledge below where you can investigate a glowing area to obtain another **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes**. Now ride the lift back up to the central level and proceed through the building.

As you continue left through the building past where you turned the handle to activate the lift, you'll find yourself facing several more miners. These ones like to hide in the shadows and attack when you're not paying attention, so keep your shield up to deflect any surprise attacks. There are four or five of them in all, each capable of withstanding several strikes before they'll collapse.

When the miners are dead, continue along the hallway as it grows narrow. On the opposite side of that hallway, you'll see the room widen. Start out into it and you should see some more of the miners walking around in a zombie-like state. Don't be too quick to rush them, though, as they're joined by wild dogs. Those brutes like to pounce you when your side is exposed, but your shield can easily enough repel their attacks and leave you free to follow up with some quick standard strikes. Advance slowly into the area and possibly bait a few enemies back toward the narrower hallway at a time to make the fight simpler for yourself.



There's another of the fire-tossing enemies just inside the building.



Watch out for miners as you climb the stairs!

Once you clear the space of both miners and dogs, you can continue forward. There's a stone structure directly ahead. Enter it and you'll find that it is densely populated by more miners. There's also another of the heavysset enemies that likes to chuck fire at you. Your first priority should be taking care of him, as he can otherwise wipe you out with just a few well-aimed attacks. Move in close and hack him to bits with a powerful weapon so that he doesn't have a chance to throw more than one fiery spell in your direction.

With the main threat gone, you should be able to refill your health, if it's dangerously low, and also pick up the items that the guy was guarding (if doing so won't overburden you). You'll find some basic forging materials, so you may prefer just to leave them and grab other more precious items that wait up ahead. Once you've grabbed what you need (and ignored what you don't), you can climb a narrow flight of stairs leading upward from the building. Exercise caution as you advance; you'll need to deal with several miners on the stairwell. It's easiest to know where they are if you repeatedly tap the 'R3' button while you climb. This will give away their locations and also target them, which makes them easier to deal with as you continue to battle.

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Archstone of the Burrow King - Stonefang Tunnel (cont.)

When you defeat the second of the miners, you can enter the room from whence he came to find a **Pickax**, if that's of interest to you. From that area, continue your climb toward the top. When you arrive at the very top of the structure, you'll find an **Unknown Soldier's Soul** on a corpse overlooking a torch-lined area ahead. There's a wooden bridge below and just to the left, which you can reach right now by backtracking down a short flight of stairs. Note that when you do attempt to cross that bridge, you need to be ready to defend yourself against another of the fire-tossing enemies. You can't attack him from where you are, though, as he's on the other side of the bridge. Run toward him with your shield held ready. As you run, the bridge will collapse and you'll drop to the area below.



Pull the lever to open a gate at the end of one of the above walkways.



Through the first fog-covered door, you'll find a fire-breathing lizard along the right wall.

This segment of the stage is heavily populated by more miners, plus the fire-tossing guy is still active above. Be mindful of his attacks as they rain down on you. Tend to the miners, trying to stick to a few at a time before finding shelter to let your stamina meter refill. Then take on a few more. Keep your healing herbs ready, too, as this is a dangerous area. When you've cleared it of hazards, roam along the edge and you'll find a lever. You can pull this lever to open a nearby gate.

Now it's time to backtrack to the area where you tried running across the bridge. You can easily enough do this by dropping to the lowest level, where you killed the dogs and miners a few minutes ago. Enter the building on that lowest level and climb the stairs again, all the way to the top. You'll notice that now the pathway to the right is available and leads through a high archway that previously was blocked by grating. It's the area that you opened by pulling the lever.

Run along this walkway now and pass through the fog-covered opening to arrive in a new area. Here, proceed forward to find a fiery lizard along the wall to the right. You can use distant attacks to take care of him if you wish, or you can ignore him and safely climb some platforms along the room's left side to find some **Half Moon Grass** on a corpse at the top.



Ignore the areas to the right of the path with fiery lizards and searing flames. For now.

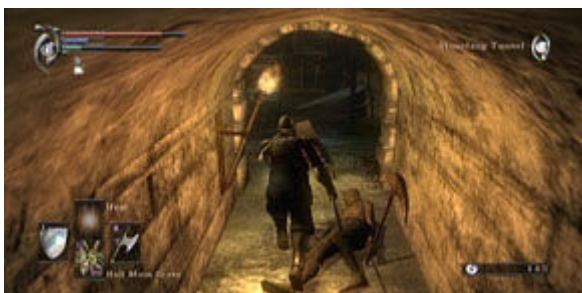


Also ignore the fog-covered door until you've proceeded past it to pull an important lever.

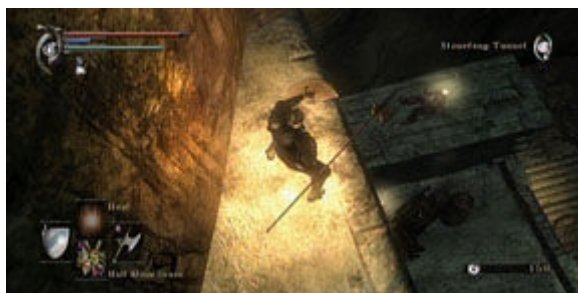
After grabbing the grass, look around and you'll notice that the platform extends down a darkened hallway. You need to head in that direction next, but it can be dangerous going. Approach with caution. The area is patrolled by several enemies with particularly nasty weapons. Fortunately, you don't have to take them on all at once. Get close enough to attract one, then retreat and let him come to you. Take him out, then repeat the process for his two fellows. Now you can safely proceed forward to find another fog-covered door along the left side of the hallway. You will return to pass through it shortly, but for now you should continue along the hallway after breaking apart some crates and furniture.

As you proceed in that direction, you'll need to deal with a few more miners before the path curves toward the right. At the bend, you can head just to the left to find an **Unknown Hero's Soul**, then go ahead and follow the path toward the right. You'll find some **Crescent Moon Grass** here, along with another **Unknown Hero's Soul**. In that same outdoor area there's also a handle that you should pull. Doing so activates a nearby lift beneath that leads back to the area entrance (or down to a hidden blacksmith below, though he can't do anything for you just yet). Now if you die, you can return to this section of the stage by riding the lift located just beyond the merchant near the level's entrance. How convenient!

Now you can head back to the Nexus if you need to drop off extra items that you are carrying, or if you need to stock up on items and spend your hard-earned souls. Since you can continue clearing the stage from almost the exact place where you left off upon your return, it's the perfect time to do so. If you do ride the lift down, make sure that you make a stop about halfway down to find a **Shard of Clearstone** on a corpse resting on a platform.



A miner with a pickax is no match for you!



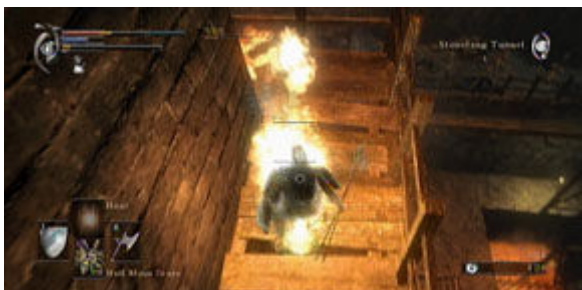
You can drop down from here to get some items and to sneak behind your enemies.

When you've done everything you need to back at the Nexus and have returned to the stage (or if you never left in the first place), go ahead and pass through the fog-covered door in the chamber that led outside on the upper level. You'll now appear at the base of a staircase. Start up it but be aware that as you reach the top and the hallway there heads left, a miner with a pickax will try to ambush you from the left. Have your shield ready to block that attack, then take him out with a few quick strikes.

From there, you can proceed into a wider room. This one is filled with more miners, so tend to them carefully. Once they're all gone, you can continue through the doorway beyond. As you do so, look to the right. You should see a stack of conspicuous barrels. Break them apart to reveal a staircase that you can climb to a rooftop area. Grab some **Crescent Moon Grass** from a corpse and walk left from the head of the staircase until you're positioned against the wall. From there, you can drop down to a platform just slightly below and grab an **Unknown Hero's Soul** from a corpse. Then you can drop down to another corpse and obtain a **Steel Shield**.

Archstone of the Burrow King - Stonefang Tunnel (cont.)

Now you're in the clear to start forward and attack the enemies ahead of you. They will be facing in the opposite direction, so you should be able to get the drop on them if you're quick about it. This of course means that you have an option. If you wish, you can ignore the enemies altogether. The path that you need to follow to reach the end of the level is up a staircase to your left. That's the safe route to take, but you may wish to fight the enemies instead. You can get a lot of souls that way, since there are so many of them. Once they're defeated, you can continue past where you battled them to find a rare enemy that prefers to flee rather than fighting you. If you manage to kill it (most easily accomplished with magic), you'll receive some valuable crafting materials. Then you can return to climb the afore-mentioned staircase.



The lizards are tough critters when you fight more than one at a time.

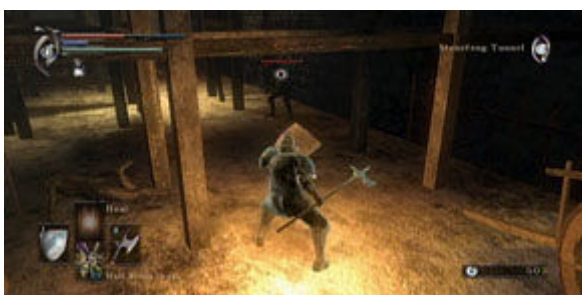


Stay on your guard when you reach the ground level after defeating the lizards.

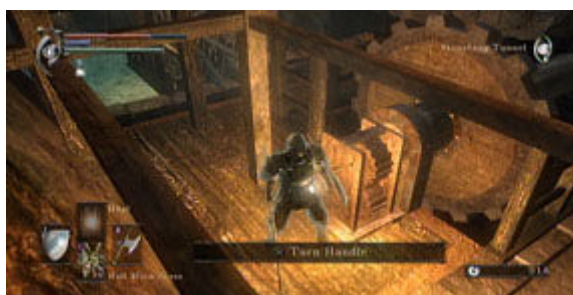
Once you climb the staircase, you'll find yourself circling a tall stone tower. Along the walls of the tower, you'll encounter several of the flaming lizards. You've seen them before, but you've never been forced to fight more than one at once. Now you'll need to do precisely that, since there's no avoiding the critters as you work around the tower.

The trick in dealing with the lizards is to not let them surround you. Try to make sure that you never have to fight more than two at a time, since getting close to fight them works about as well as standing in the middle of a campfire. You'll take damage when there's any physical contact, so you're better off with ranged attacks if you can manage them. Otherwise, use the corners of the building to provide shelter while you heal between attempts at taking out each of the lizards.

When the last of the lizards has fallen, you can descend another set of stairs toward a wider area below. Heal first, though, as you'll be attacked by dogs upon your arrival. Remember to block them as they pounce, like usual, then counter with quick standard slashes to put the pooches to permanent sleep.



You'll need to exterminate more miners while dodging around the base of the wooden scaffolding.



Turn the handle to drop water all over the nearby inferno.

After tending to the canines, you'll need to double back from the base of the stairs that you just descended. Here you can break more barrels apart and start down another wooden plank. You'll find **Ed's Grindstone** along with an **Unknown Hero's Soul** beneath the planking that you're descending.

Be careful as you go for the latter item, though, as you'll also encounter several miners in the area. These ones should be dealt with one or two at a time. Don't go rushing into the fray or you'll run out of energy. You can backtrack to the wooden planking if you need to limit the number of sides from which your opponents can approach, or if you need to use healing items. When you've cleared the area of the miners, you'll be able to reach the far wall and find a handle that you can turn. Doing so will cause a bunch of water to drop down on the fiery area that you might recall seeing near the

area's second fog-covered door (next to the central room with all of the fire lizards along its walls).

Now that you've accomplished that task, you're almost through the stage. Drop down to the area below, then head forward and make for a wall to the right. You've been here before and should recognize your surroundings pretty easily. Climb the stairs and proceed along that hallway to find yourself at the stairs leading down into the area that formerly was bathed in fire. The water has done its work and now you can cross.



Distance yourself from the barrels if you see the enemy magic user moving.



Turn the handle to descend toward the waiting area boss.

Even without flames to impede your progress, you can't afford to let down your guard. As you cross the recently-drenched area, you'll find it mostly barren. Enemies that once waited there were killed by the water, but you'll soon find that you're not entirely safe. After descending and climbing some stairs while following a twisting path along empty hallways, you'll come across stacks of explosive barrels. These are strategically placed so that if they are ignited, you run a great risk of being obliterated in the ensuing blast. There's a very real chance of that happening too, as one of the fire-tossing enemies waits near the far side of the chamber. When you approach, he'll toss a fireball your way. As soon as you see him moving, quickly retreat. The worst of the barrels should detonate without damaging you. Then you can rush your enemy and slash him to ribbons when you get close enough.

Once the magic user is out of the picture, you can proceed through the fog-covered doorway that he was guarding. On the other side, you'll find yourself proceeding down a long passageway lined by wooden planks. As you advance, be advised that there's another miner who will attack you along the way. Keep your shield held high and advance slowly so that he doesn't manage to surprise you. After you take care of him, you can safely continue forward without concern. You'll soon come to a more open room with a lift platform. Here, there are cranks that you can turn to ride down to the lower level. Don't do that just yet, though. Look around and you should see a raised platform off to the right. You can climb a plank here to reach a corpse, which you should loot for the extremely valuable **Kris Blade** (terrific for magic users).

Once you've done that, then you should go ahead and make your way to the platform. There's one crank along its left side and one at the center. The one on the left is used to summon the platform if it's not in place when you arrive (something that will happen only if you are returning to fight the area boss after previous failed attempts). The one at the center will take you down to the lower reaches of the dungeon. After riding the lift down to the lower level, you can collect a **Chunk of Spiderstone** from a corpse positioned at the back of a dead-end passage, or pass through a fog-covered door to face the boss demon.

Boss Battle: Armor Spider

The Armor Spider demon is deadly if you don't know what you're doing, but there are a few tips you can keep in mind to easily toast it.

When the fight begins, you should spend most of your time rolling around to avoid attacks. The spider will attack with its powerful legs and will also shoot webbing at you. The webbing slows you down to a crawl, making you an easy target for the legs, which can inflict serious damage. Thus, it's in your best interests to steer clear of the sticky stuff.



The first part of the fight should be spent dodging.



When the spider starts breathing fire, that's your chance to move in and inflict serious damage!

As you move around the arena battling the spider, look for opportunities to approach diagonally from the side to the left or right of its maw. This will often allow you to avoid both the webbing and its legs, which tend to aim more frequently toward the area just in front of the creature. You should be able to get in a hit or two, but that's about it until the spider begins firing a steady burst of fire.

If you're in proper position when the fire is spewed (just to the right or left of the spider's head), you can move in and wall on it while it belches the flames. If you're powerful enough and hit fast enough, you should be able to deplete close to half of the spider's life meter in one round. Then when the flames stop coming, you should quickly retreat to heal while also working to stay out of the range of its legs and webbing. When you're confident, you can move in again and hit it quickly before retreating. It seems that the spider more frequently resorts to the wall of flames when it has taken minor damage, so in that sense you can engineer your own opening to attack. As long as you have some Half Moon Grass and you put the above knowledge to use, you shouldn't have much trouble.

Once you defeat the boss, you can explore the edges of the arena to find a **Chunk of Spiderstone** and a **Renowned Soldier's Soul**. Touching the archstone the first time will reward you with **Hard Demon's Soul** and **Pure Spiderstone**, while touching it again will allow you to warp back to the Nexus.

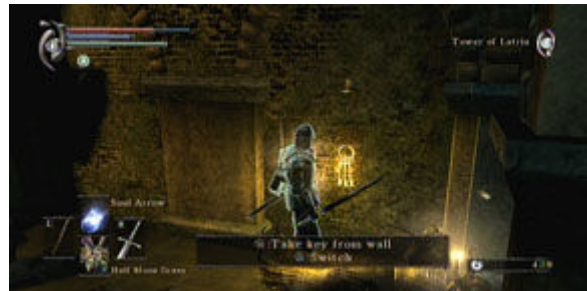
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Archstone of the Tower Queen - Tower of Latria

From the entrance, proceed forward along the dark hallway. You'll find that this whole area is poorly lit, which makes exploration dangerous not only because of the enemies that populate the region, but because the tower itself is full of pits you can easily fall into if you're not paying attention. Fortunately, your journey forward at the beginning will take you to a safety rail, not a pit. From here, you can proceed either to the left or right.



You'll find remains near a dead end if you head right from the safety rail.



Going left instead leads to a set of keys and an enemy.

Start by traveling right. Ahead of a gate that you can't pass through just yet (it's locked, so you'll come back later once you have a key), there's an open cell with a corpse that you can search for some **Augite of Guidance** items. Now backtrack and this time follow the path that led left from that first safety rail. You'll proceed past several locked cells with prisoners inside. They'll reach out at you with their arms as you pass by them, but they can't harm you unless you're foolish enough to open the gates, in which case you'll have some enemies to fight. Don't do that unless you're anxious for conflict or you want to check the cells for items. The exception is the third cell on the left (the last one on this particular wall), which you can open to investigate a corpse. You'll receive a precious **Wooden Catalyst, Wizard's**

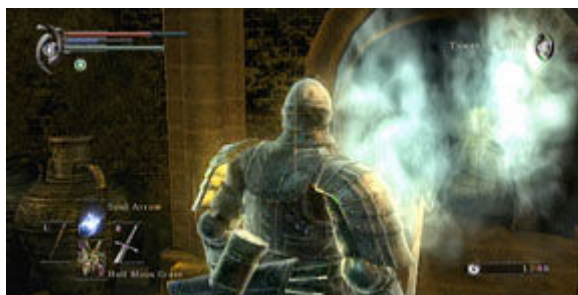
Clothes, Wizard's Gloves and **Wizard's Shoes** for your troubles, so you should definitely do so if the way is clear.

From that cell, continue around the railed area as it continues toward the far wall and then wraps to the right again. At that second bend you'll find your first enemy in the area, a guard that rushes you once he sees you. Note that these opponents are capable of slowing you down significantly if they hit you with their magical attacks, so your best bet is to hit them with magic of your own just as soon as you can target them. Then you can finish the job with melee attacks if needed. Once the guard is defeated, check the nearby wall for the **Prison of Hope, 3F Cell Key**. There's also a **Renowned Soldier's Soul** on a corpse in the corner to the left.

Keep going along the ledge where you fought the first guard and grabbed the keys. You'll find a path branching left down another corridor, but first move past that. Hack apart some caskets and search the area beyond to obtain a **Renowned Soldier's Soul**. Now you can head through that passage.



Slain guards often leave behind useful Fresh Spice items.



Through the locked gate is a mist-covered doorway.

As you arrive at the safety railing on the other side, look quickly toward the left. There will be another guard coming toward you, so take him out with magic and melee attacks before he can harm you. Note that he also possesses the Soul Arrow spell, which can take away a good portion of your life meter, so be ready to step to the side if you see that coming. When the guard is dead, proceed cautiously forward. There's a skeleton hiding behind a column along the passageway that will try to startle and kill you. Return the favor.

Past the skeleton, you can start toward the right and along that wall you'll find another **Prison of Hope, 3F Cell Key** hanging on the wall. Grab it, then continue along that passage past where some skeletons are hacking at the inside of their prison cell. You can ignore them and keep going to find a body dangling over a railing near the end of the path. Investigate to obtain another **Renowned Soldier's Soul**. Then head back the way you came.

You'll now want to backtrack all the way to the area's first safety railing, where previously you proceeded toward a gate at a dead end and found the Augite of Guidance. When you come to that locked gate now, you're carrying keys that will allow you to pass through. On the other side, you'll find the area's first fog-covered door. Pass through it.



The prisoners were asking for it, anyway!



Don't fall for the poison trap!

On the other side of that fog-covered door, you'll climb some stairs before proceeding along a passage. As you do so, watch out for a skeleton that will attack behind a support pillar. He's easy enough to eliminate, fortunately. Continue around the railed area. There's a locked gate to the left that you can't pass through yet, while the main passageway will head back toward the right.

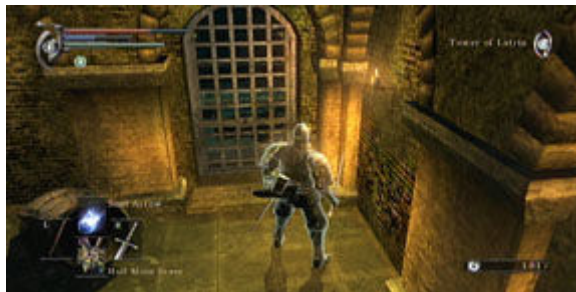
Along this route there's a cell door with a glowing item plainly visible on the opposite side. There also are numerous prisoners inside the cell, none of whom appear to be particularly sane. If you get too close to their place of confinement, you'll take damage. It's best to hack at them as you trot by and that way you'll inflict the damage rather than receiving it. You can also enter the cell if you like, slaughter a bunch of skeletons to the left and right, then examine the glowing item to obtain the **Estoc** sword.

Archstone of the Tower Queen - Tower of Latria (cont.)

Now exit the cell and continue in the direction you were headed. You'll find a new opening along the left side that you can pass through. Head through that area and you'll notice what look like bronze statues to the left and right. You can get near them and will have the option to 'Open' the devices, but you should resist the temptation; opening a unit will cause the doors to fly outward and hit you with poison-tipped spikes that were inside, plus there's a prisoner waiting inside. You should avoid the traps altogether unless enemies force your hand by emerging from them (which they will perhaps attempt if you make a lot of noise passing through)..



Two more keys for your collection...



Once you have the key, you'll be able to open this gate.

Just past the trap statues, there's an opening leading out onto another balcony area. Here, another guard is patrolling. You can wait for him to pass in front of the door, at which point he'll slowly turn toward you to fire magic at you. This is a good time to rush him and hack him apart with a weapon, or to use some magic of your own. Once the guy is dead, you can step out onto the ledge he was patrolling and from there proceed to the **Prison of Hope, 4th Floor Key** and the **Prison of Hope, 4th Floor Cell Key** from a hook on the wall. Don't worry about the area that lies to the left; it just ends at a gap that you can drop through to fall to the previous floor in an area you've already explored.

Now that you've gained two more keys, backtrack through the area with the poison statues and head right to where the locked gate was positioned. You'll be able to open it.

Through the gate, you should look immediately to the right. There's another guard here who will likely try to hit you with projectile magic. You need to be ready to step to either side of those attacks and get close so that you can tend to him with melee strikes. Once he goes down, you'll be able to explore the area more safely.



Watch out for more magic-wielding guards in the new area.

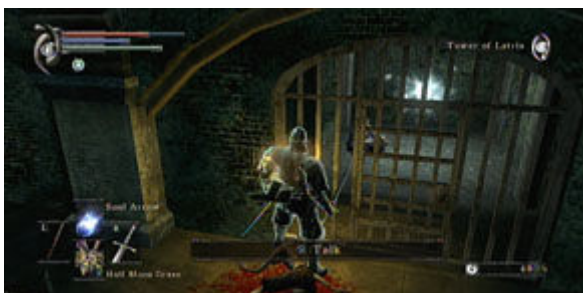


Among other things, this woman offers to sell you the valuable Ring of Avarice.

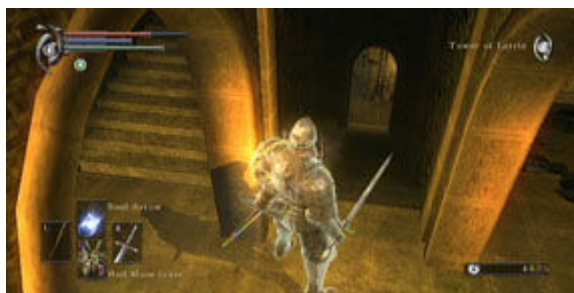
Beyond where you killed that guard, you'll find another cell door to the right. You again have the key to open this, so do so and pass through to the other side. There, another guard is patrolling along a nearby railing. You should be able to take it out with projectile magic, but you need to watch carefully in case it readies a spell of its own. Note that you can also use the stone pillar to block any magic it hurls your way, though that same pillar can also prevent your attacks from finding their mark. Melee works easiest here, since the pillar allows you to safely get close.

With that guard dead, you're once again safe to explore. Along the right side of the balcony from where you entered through the cell door, you can find a **Renowned Hero's Soul** along one railing. Past that is another guard that will hurl magic at you. He's on the opposite side of a gap that causes you to drop down to the area below, so you can't hit him from this side unless you fire magic at him. That's dangerous, as he tends to hit you as often as you can hit him.

To the right of the corridor where you can face that guard, you'll find another cell. If you open this one, you can step inside to meet a new merchant woman. She has a lot of the standard items that you would expect, but also stocks the **Ring of Avarice**. The asking price is 50,000 souls, quite hefty, but if you buy and equip the ring you will gain more souls from each enemy slain. That's tempting, and something worth remembering if you choose to return later. Stock up on what items she has that you want, then head back out along the railing area toward the left, where you entered. You've explored the right portion of the room, so now it's time to see what you can find along the left side.



There's an important prisoner waiting in this cell.



There are too many stairways and doors in this labyrinthine tower!

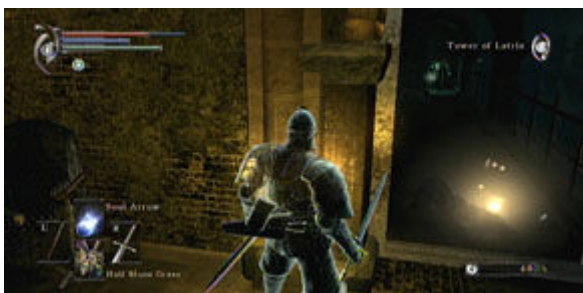
Keep an eye to the right as you head along this corridor, since the guy that you couldn't reach on the opposite balcony will still be pacing. He can throw magic if you stop while out in the open. When you reach the end of the corridor, you'll find a locked gate. However, you have the key to open it. Do so and proceed to the next room, where you'll find yourself at the top of a staircase. Descend to the area below.

Partway down the stairs, the landing widens. Stairs continue down through a narrow archway. You'll continue down those in a moment, but first walk past them and find **Old Spice** resting on a corpse near another archway. If you proceed through here, you'll find a locked cell with a glowing light inside on the right wall. You can't open the cell right now, but don't worry; you'll be able to return just before finishing the stage to rescue the imprisoned Sage Freke. For now, return to the head of the staircase you previously passed and now you should descend them.

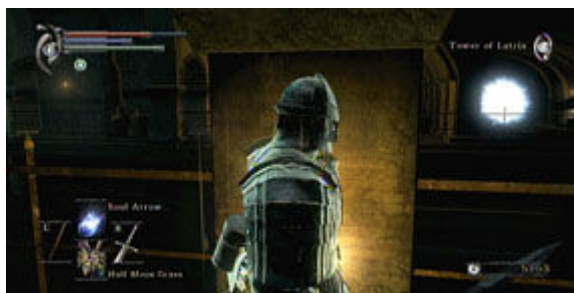
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Archstone of the Tower Queen - Tower of Latria (cont.)

From the base of that staircase, you can start forward along a deserted passage. There's a locked gate to the right, then just past that some keys are hanging on the wall. You can't open that first gate right now, but you should investigate the hanging keys (easily visible as a pinpoint of light) to obtain the **Prison of Hope, 1F Key** and the **Prison of Hope, 1F Cell Key**. Now continue along the passage and open the doorway at the end. There's another gate to the right, but again you'll find that none of your keys can unlock it. Instead, go through the gate at the end of the passage.



Grab the item only after killing its guardian.



You can't harm the enemy just yet, so seek shelter from its shots until you can.

On the other side of that gate, you'll find a short staircase that leads to another wall of fog. Pass through the fog and you'll be at the top of another narrow staircase to your right. Ahead, the area widens slightly and you'll see a glowing item. You can grab that item to obtain the **Heavy Crossbow** (a weapon that lives up to its name), but note that it's not unguarded. Patrolling the hallway beyond it is the guard that was so quick to toss magic at you when you entered the cell where the merchant was waiting. This time, you're within range and can take out your enemy. Do that first before you dare to grab the item.

Once you've grabbed the goods, go ahead and descend the nearby staircase. At the bottom, you'll find another gate that you can open. When you step into the room beyond, you should see some pillars immediately ahead and an open expanse toward the right. Head forward and get behind the pillar, a good point from which to mess with the camera so that you can more easily look around you. The wide expanse off to the right is a dangerous area, as there's a powerful foe somewhere in the distance. It'll fire an endless stream of shots toward you when you are within view. Just a few of those can kill you quite easily, but the pillars provide suitable shelter.

Your first goal in this area is to rid yourself of that dangerous enemy, but you also need to collect some important items throughout the area. From the first column ahead of the entrance to this area, continue along the wall, taking shelter behind one column after another and waiting to make sure that no arrows will hit you. Continue in this direction and soon you'll be out of the enemy's range.



You can hit your foe with magic through these pillars.

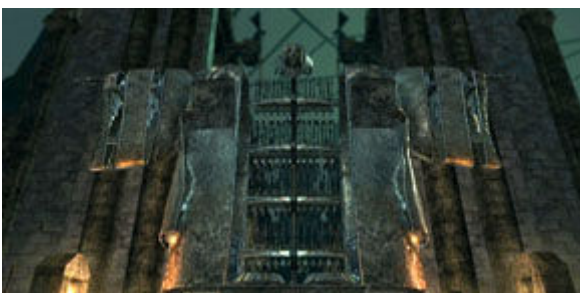


Next head through this opening.

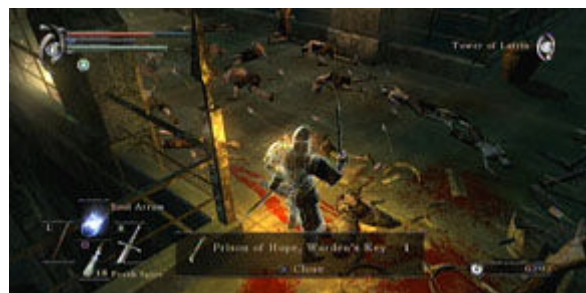
Just as the path ahead begins to widen, you'll be attacked by a prisoner. Defeat him, then investigate the immediate area to find some useful items. Of particular note is the **Silver Bracelets**, which generate more souls when equipped. Unfortunately, only female characters can equip them.

Continue right from where you can obtain the bracelets. At the end of that narrow walkway, the path widens. Ahead, you'll see a crumbling wall and some glowing items beyond. If you approach, you'll attract the attention of the powerful enemy that you were just avoiding. However, the pillars at this angle provide excellent protection and you should be able to easily fire magic shots in between them to hit your enemy, then move slightly to the side so that any shots he fires in retaliation harmlessly bounce away from one of the pillars. You can tell that your shots are connecting when you see numbers indicating the amount of damage dealt. You may have to use a magic-restoring item, as he can absorb quite a few hits. Once he's dead, you can then check the nearby glowing area to obtain some **Old Spice**. There are other items in this area, as well, so grab them if you have enough energy to carry more items. You may not.

Once you've gathered the loot that interests you, it's time to look for the path to proceed onward from here. You'll find it through a wide opening just beyond and to the left from where you killed the tentacled monster. There's a door just to the right of that opening that you can open to head up some stairs, but for now that route is a dead end. Just go ahead and proceed through the opening.



The ballista will turn you into mincemeat if you cross its path.



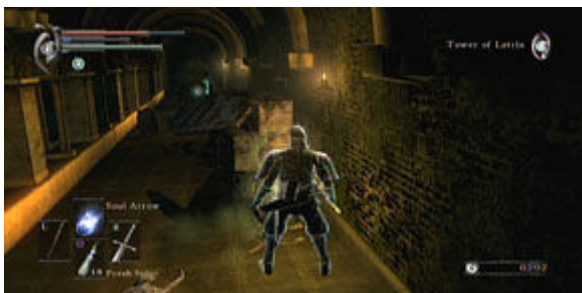
Venture to the edge of the path to grab an important key from a corpse, however.

On the other side of that archway, you'll be treated to a brief cutscene as panels slide aside to reveal a ballista weapon. This device will fire volleys of arrows in a steady fashion along the walkway that allows you to most easily proceed onward. If you get caught in these shots, you will of course die a grisly death. However, you do need to approach the area where the arrows are firing. Just along the edge of the well-protected path, there's a corpse with a glowing item that you can grab. It turns out to be the **Prison of Hope, Warden's Key**.

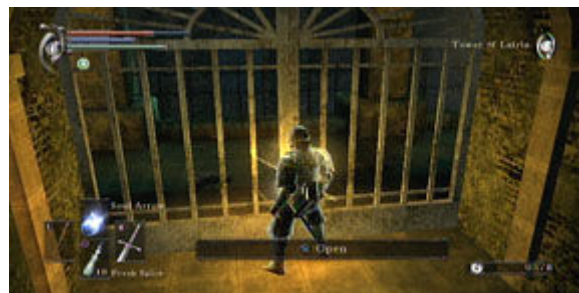
With the key in hand, it's now time to backtrack through the tower until you reach the passage where you obtained the 1F keys. Remember the two doors there that you couldn't open at the time? Now you can.

Archstone of the Tower Queen - Tower of Latria (cont.)

As you arrive back on the scene, the two locked doors should now be on your left. Through the first of those, you'll find a long corridor with another guard. This one's near the opposite end, so if you want to take him out you'll have little choice but to advance toward him in plain sight. Be sure to avoid his arrows, but particularly his more powerful attack that sucks you up and allows him to drain your energy. When you defeat the enemy, you can grab the **Renowned Hero's Soul** from a body draped over the rail, then continue onward and through an archway leading to the right.



The guards along this corridor are dangerous because they can see you coming.



You can pass through this grate if you have the proper key.

Through this opening, you'll find a wider room. To the right, there's another guardian patrolling a hallway. Defeat this guy so he can't surprise you, then start down the hallway to find another **Renowned Hero's Soul**. You don't have to worry about continuing down the hallway from there, as it only leads back into the room where you grabbed the 1F keys.

In the wider room, you'll find another locked gate. You can open it to gain access to a wider hallway. You're now at the top of a rather high staircase. You can descend along its base and follow a wide pathway around to the base of a tower. The door ahead is open, so pass through it and then look to the right. You can ascend a winding spiral staircase, then at the top you can head along a lengthy walkway on higher ground. Keep moving in that direction and pass through a doorway to find a small sanctuary room. There's a body here that you can examine to obtain a **Silver Catalyst**.

Now you should backtrack to the ground level. Head left from the entry door and you'll find another door, this one covered in fog. Pass through the fog and you will arrive in an open area with another tower directly ahead of you and the ballista to the right.



The ballista isn't so tough when you come at it from behind!



Some people make their homes in the strangest of places...

Fortunately, the ballista can't harm you since you're behind it. You can walk over to it and press the 'X' button to pull a lever that will deactivate it. That leaves you free to explore the area just beyond it (which previously was in the path of the arrows) and to grab any items that interest you.

With the ballista disabled, you should next head into the other tower that you saw. There, you'll climb another spiral staircase, then make your way along more of the long ledges. At the opposite end, in another small room, you'll find a man seated on a stool. Just behind him, on the wall, you'll see keys hanging. Investigate that bright spot to obtain **Prison of Hope, Special Key**. Now you can talk to the man on the stool. He claims that he is but a humble servant and won't cause you trouble. That's a nice sentiment, but not really true. Kill him and then he really won't cause you trouble.

Now that you have the key, you have options. You can descend the tower, then look to the right and there's a stairway you can climb to the right. In this direction you can find the area boss, but first you should backtrack to the cell that we

previously identified as being the unfortunate dwelling place of Sage Freke. You may find it easiest to return to the entrance then follow our instructions in this area walkthrough to find his cell again. When you arrive, you'll be able to use the Special Key to open the cell.



Sage Freke has been imprisoned here for a long while.



Your foe becomes visible when you target it and get in some good hits.

Talk to the sage and he'll explain how he wound up in the cell. Then he'll outline his plans to leave and reward you with **Geri's Stiletto**. You've now done everything that you can at the moment in this stage, short of finding and defeating the boss, so tackle those two projects next.

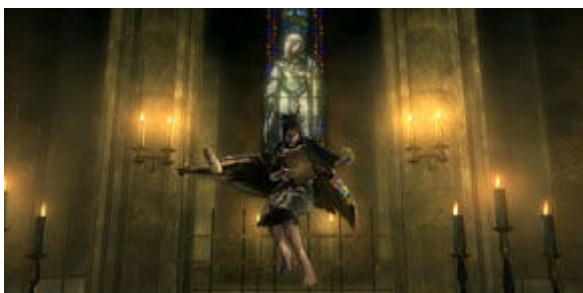
Retrace your steps until you're on the walkway in front of the now-deactivated ballista. You can drop over a small dropoff just to the side of where the arrows were firing when the machine was active if you want to find a spare **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes**. However, getting anywhere from there tends to be a fatal proposition, so don't grab the item unless you're prepared to die when you drop from the ledge.

To reach the fog-covered door that leads to the level's boss, just head back to the twin towers behind the ballista machine. From there, continue up the stairs and you'll face one final enemy before the boss. This foe is invisible, so keep a shield help up as you ascend the steps. Your foe will fire arrows and you can lock on from then to reveal the fiend, then move in close and use a few melee strikes or hurl some magic. The enemy has a long life meter, so after you get in a few hits you'll need to back away a bit and then repeat the process once your stamina returns.

When the enemy is defeated, continue up the stairs and the wooden doors at the top will open ominously, then fog will appear across the space. Prepare yourself with protective spells, then pass through that wall of fog to face the area boss.

Boss Battle: Fool's Idol

This battle begins easily enough. Move across the room and you'll find several weaklings wandering amongst the pews in the chapel. Slash them quickly to take each of them out. There are around eight or ten of them.



Your foe likes to float in the air, probably to avoid her own floor traps.



Eliminate the little guys before you battle their queen.

When you've fought for awhile and the weaker fellows are done for, your real opponent—the Fool's Idol—will begin to attack. She has two basic methods of attack. One is to raise her hands in the air and summon traps along the floor (they appear as green markings) and the other is to fire arrows. The general process is that she'll place the traps, then slowly pelt you with magical spells from a distance.

What you need to do is move close to her, then slash her as much as your stamina will allow. She'll take a few hits, then will teleport away from you and split herself into three. Only one of the three forms can take any damage, but all of them

will fire magic in your direction. Fortunately, the clone idols don't hit as hard. You can run around the area, keeping to the outer edge to duck away from spells. Also, check behind the altar where the idol first appeared to find **Baby Nail**, a rare weapon that is hard to retrieve once the battle ends.

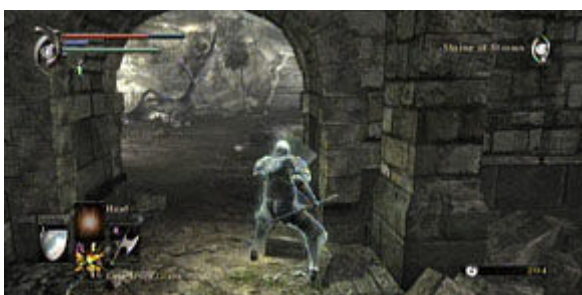
To win, just keep finding the real idol while avoiding traps. Hit her a few times with your sword before she disappears and then reappears elsewhere. Repeat the process until her life meter is completely depleted.

After you defeat the boss, head toward the altar and you will cause another cutscene that depicts some gargoyles swooping down. They'll drag you up to a higher portion of the stage. There, climb a staircase to your left as it wraps around the outer wall to a platform above. Now you can then touch an archstone once to receive **Doll Demon's Soul**, then again to warp back to the Nexus.

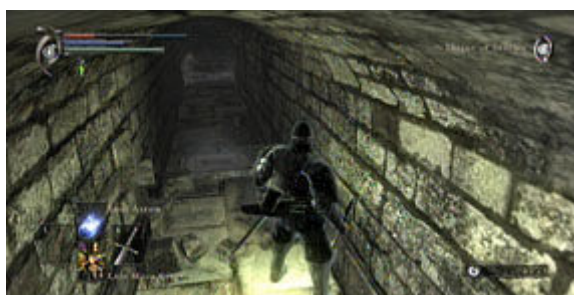
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Archstone of the Shadowmen - Shrine of Storms

The Shrine of Storms lives up to its name, with overcast skies and an oppressive fog in the air. The whole area is bathed in gray, which can make it difficult to see enemies as you proceed forward.



Through this archway, you'll find a series of dangerous skeletons along some stairs.

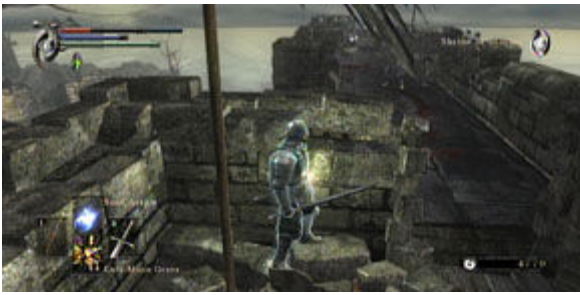


Keep to the side of the passage and watch for the glowing tile, which triggers an arrow trap.

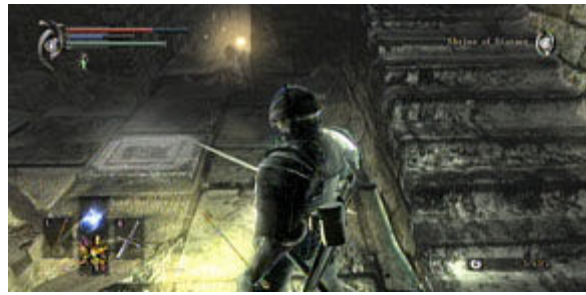
Begin forward and you'll encounter the first of many skeletons. He rolls toward you, so be ready to dodge away. Once he's close, you can move in and take care of him with a few melee attacks, which will earn you nearly 300 souls for a relatively simple fight. The plentiful skeletons mean that this stage is a terrific place to go up a few levels, if needed. Moving on from there, you'll pass through an archway into another plaza with a wide staircase ahead. There's some **Half Moon Grass** on a corpse that's left from that opening, if you're interested.

As you continue forward toward the wide staircase, you'll find several more of the skeletons, including one that will attack you with arrows from the top. Try to fight only one skeleton at a time, which keeps them more manageable. You can move forward to lure them down to your level. While they don't have much of a life meter, they can remove much of yours with just a quick hit or two. It's important that you don't give them the opportunity. There are several of them, including two as the stairs turn sharply left about halfway up, so don't let your guard down until you've tended to each of them and also the nearby one that fires arrows.

When the skeletons have been cleared away, you can continue up the stairs to find more enemies. They'll be firing arrows at you from above, where you can't reach them, so quickly move toward the archway ahead. It's covered in a fog, but you can pass through it and from there into a hallway. Once the fog dissolves, look to the left while passing through the archway. There's an opening in this direction, which you should follow. As you proceed along that narrow corridor, watch the floor for a glowing tile. When you step on it, be ready for some arrows to fire at you from further down the corridor. You can avoid them by quickly pressing toward the right side of the passage. The arrows will pass by your side and when the last of them have missed, you can continue onward.



You can veer toward the right to eliminate those pesky archers.



Avoid the trap as you head for the Copper Key.

At the end of the passage, you'll find yourself in a square room where you can either head left through an opening to return outside, or you can turn right to ascend a winding staircase. Through the opening you will find a black skeleton that you should kill with projectile spells and a final flurry of sword slashes. He's guarding a **Crescent Falchion +1** weapon. If you're not interested in that, just climb the staircase. When you reach the top, you can continue left along one path, or right along another where you will see a skeleton soldier and also the archers who fired at you previously. Take them out as you see fit, then continue along the wall in the direction where they were positioned. Be careful as you do, though, as another skeleton archer is positioned across the plaza and will fire arrows if you stop to rest in open spaces. There's also a flying manta drifting through the area that you can target with your arrows and magic, if you like. If you can do so while avoiding the distant skeleton archer, you should eliminate the beast. Otherwise, you'll just have to deal with it later.

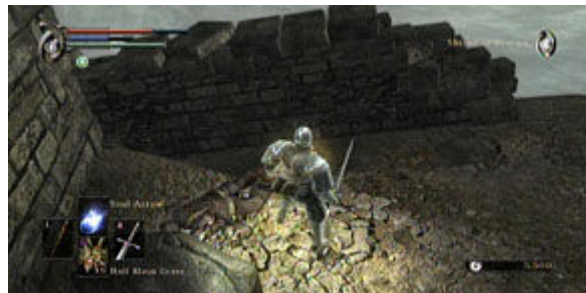
When you reach the other end of the narrow wall, it will widen again and you can descend a staircase. Steer clear of the tile on the floor here, which is another trap. Just past it, you can find a body at a short, dead-end passage. Investigate the remains to obtain the **Copper Key**. Now climb the stairs to the top of the tower.

Important Note

There's a shortcut you can take to the area just ahead of the zone's boss. If this is your first trip through the level, you should go ahead and take the long route to reach him, but if you're just anxious to try fighting him again and already have the items you need, there's a trick to save you some time.



Remove your heavy armor. Position yourself here, then roll forward to land on the crumbling wall beyond the stairs.



Once you land, drop straight forward off that wall to reach an area below, where you should re-equip your armor.

First, remove any heavy armor that will encumber your movement, then position yourself along the corner of the wooden scaffolding that overlooks stairs winding their way down the tower. Face out toward the wall just on the opposite side of those stairs (not the corner to the left, but the straight wall directly ahead of one edge of the scaffolding), which is in ruins.

Now you need to roll forward so that you land on that crumbled wall. From there, you can drop down to the rocky ledge below and re-equip your armor. You should now be able to grab a **Regeneration Ring** from a corpse in the nearby area, then head along a narrow trail to a wider room. Head through a passage here (avoid another of the spike traps) and then descend a staircase beyond. You'll have to battle another black skeleton now, but then you can pass through a wall of fog to fight the area boss. Skip down to the end of our walkthrough for this section if you'd like help with that.

If you've decided not to take the shortcut, cross back over to the first set of stairs. Descend them so that you're back at the archway that was covered in fog. You're now ready to continue into the open plaza beyond. Here, you possibly still have a manta to worry about, which will eventually notice you and start to swoop toward you. Watch for that moment

and when it happens, unleash your attack to bring the beast to the ground.



Magic is the best option for eliminating the huge guy.



You can safely descend into this opening.

With the manta gone, you can turn your attention to a larger target: the huge guy with the ax who is stomping around the edge of the area. If you get near, he'll swipe at you and a single blow could be fatal. It's better to keep a distance and hit with magic. In this manner, you can take the fellow out before he even levels an attack at you.

Once the area is clear, you can safely collect any incidental items scattered around. The available goodies are just fairly standard stuff, so don't put yourself at too much risk to grab loot. The skeleton in the area above is still capable of hitting you with his arrows. As you continue through the area where you defeated the large ax-swinging monster, you'll find a fairly open pit area and to the right of that another of the fog-covered doors. There's also a staircase leading down and toward the left, just ahead of that door. You don't need to bother with those stairs unless you want **Shard of Cloudstone** items, which you can grab easily enough that you might as well do so if you're not worried about weight constraints. Be sure to investigate the area around here to find some more souls and the **Uchigatana** sword as well, but be careful of the manta that occasionally flies nearby or it can get in some cheap hits. Retaliating is difficult, since it's presently just out of the range of your magic. Don't worry about attacking it for now. Instead, descend through the afore-mentioned opening in the ground.

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Archstone of the Shadowmen - Shrine of Storms (cont.)

At the base of that opening, you can then proceed along another narrow passage. Again, watch for a tile on the floor that will activate another trap. Past that, the corridor seems to come to a dead-end wall. Hit it with your sword to reveal the ongoing path... which happens to be populated by skeletons. The passage is narrow enough that if you have enough stamina, you can just mash the 'R1' button to hack right through both of them without taking any damage.



You can open the gate with the Copper Key.



You can leave items at the tree for rewards.

There's a path leading off to the right as you continue along the passage, but you should ignore it for now. Instead, keep advancing straight forward and you'll find some **Crescent Grass**, then beyond that a locked cell door. This can be opened with the Copper Key that you obtained a short while ago. When you open the door, you'll be able to talk to a new character, Graverobber Blige, who will be happy to sell you merchandise. He stocks the various components of leather armor, the shards of cloudstone and some other incidental herbs that may prove useful. His prices are reasonable, so this is a good place to stock up on any items that you may need while clearing the remainder of the stage. When you're done shopping, head back the way you came but this time you should take the branch that was on your right as you approached (now on your left as you head away from Blige).

Along that new passage, you'll find another dead end that once more can be hacked away to reveal a skeleton welcoming party. Take care of that wretch, then keep moving along the passage with your defenses ready. You'll climb

some stairs, where another skeleton will attack. Tend to it and beyond that you'll be able to keep climbing. Watch out for skeletons as you go and you should soon come to an opening that leads out toward a grassy trail.

You can climb to the head of this trail to find a tree. There's a bird in its branches that squawks and wants you to leave behind items. If you leave the right item, you can come back for a reward. If you leave the wrong one, nothing will happen. There was an **Augite of Guidance** on the trail leading up to the tree. You can leave that behind for some arrows. The Soul Remains item—and you should have plenty from fighting skeletons—will net the same reward. You can experiment to find other rewards.

When you're done with the bird in the tree, return down the trail and head back to where you first dropped into the pit, near the fog-covered door. The easy way to get back there is to head back down the trail from the tree to the room at the top of a staircase where you just fought those skeletons. Then head through the opening that's now to the right and along that wall to find an archer skeleton. He's the one that was bugging you awhile back, when you first entered the wide plaza. Now you can have your revenge. Kill him, grab the **Compound Long Bow**, then drop down to the area below and pass through the opening. Now you're back near the fog-covered doorway, which you should now pass through to the area beyond.



Your very dark enemy will make quick work of you if you don't go on the offensive.



Make your descent cautiously, as trouble awaits at the bottom.

Here, you will find yourself on another staircase. You need to ascend cautiously, as your path is barred by more skeletons. There's an archer up above, plus a standard skeleton closer at hand. At the same time, the airborne manta creatures will be trying to hit you with their attacks, so you need to keep moving and firing with your magic. Make sure that you have some to spare.

As if all of that isn't bad enough, through one of two openings to the left you'll find yourself facing a more lethal opponent. He'll find and attack you if you get close, even if you don't enter his precise space. You'll do best if you find him first, target him with 'R3' and then pick him off with magic until he's closer, then finish him off with a flurry of standard melee attacks. When you win, you can grab the **Adjudicator's Shield**, which you ought to equip immediately. It's powerful and restores your HP over time when equipped. Later in the game you can power it up to make it even more useful but even now in its standard state the shield is fantastic equipment.

Continue along the path that you're following as it wraps around the square structure where you grabbed the shield. On the opposite side, you'll need to hold to a wall as you pass over another of the trap tiles and more arrows go flying. Then continue past there to find a steep slope. You should descend carefully along here and make sure that your health is full, since up ahead you'll be facing another swarm of enemies.



The skeletons don't do well against your magic.



You've found a third fog-covered door within the area...

As you arrive near the bottom of that slope, you'll meet more manta enemies. The ones that you fight here are particularly dangerous, since there are two or three of them and you're pinned against the face of a cliff on a relatively narrow trail with a long fall awaiting you if you step out of line. Therefore, stop to spend the time and take care of each manta properly. You don't want one surprising you later.

When the mantas are gone, you still have skeletons to worry about. The ones along this treacherous trail are gold-

colored, which doesn't mean much except that they have more powerful weapons and better armor. That's enough to be lethal if you get close on a narrow ledge, so try to pick them off from afar with magic, or advance until they start after you and then retreat to the wide area near the beginning of the path that gives you more room to maneuver. There are three of the skeletons along the way, as well as a final manta or two that could surprise you if you're not paying attention. Then you'll reach another of the fog-covered doors.

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Archstone of the Shadowmen - Shrine of Storms (cont.)

This area is relatively free from nuisances. You can head along the lower level to find another opening on the left. Head along this path to its end to find the **Regenerator's Ring** on a corpse. Note that this is the area where you would have appeared if you took the shortcut that we detailed earlier in the walkthrough for this section. Also, on the same level as the path leading to the ring, you can find another opening leading deeper into the rubble. You'll be able to head along that route to reach the end of the stage, but don't go there just yet.



The Graverobber's Ring lies across a narrow ceiling beam.



A view to a battle with a black knight.

First, head up some stairs and onto a partial ledge. There, a wooden beam leads across a gap. You can carefully walk along the beam to arrive on another ledge on the opposite side, where you can search a body to obtain the **Graverobber's Ring**. Now return to the lower level and head for the opening along the room's right side. Note that a tile is positioned across the path that will cause more arrows to fire when you step on it, so be ready to hug the wall as usual.

Through that passage, you'll arrive at another staircase descending toward a pit. On this one, there's another of the dark enemies. He's every bit as weak to magic as his predecessor was, so use spells to damage him until he gets close and then finish him off with your standard melee attacks. When that's done, descend toward the final fog-covered opening in this particular area. Refill your life and magic, then when you're ready you should cast a Protection spell (if you have it) and pass through the opening. A boss battle awaits you.

Boss Battle: Adjudicator

If you have powerful magic, this fight can be a breeze. If you don't, you'll have a lot more trouble but should still be able to win. Before you pass through the fog to battle the fellow, it's a good idea to buff your defenses if possible. You should by now have some decent magic, perhaps even the Warding spell if you've played around in other areas.

Once you enter the actual area where the battle takes place, keep in mind that you'll be negotiating a vertical chamber split between about three layers. On the top, there is a stone walkway that blocks much of your view of the area below. You can do absolutely nothing here except take damage, so immediately make your way to some stairs and descend to the middle level.



On ground level, you can dance around your slow-witted opponent.



If you're above him and can't see much, he actually has the advantage.

On the middle level, a magic user can do a lot of good damage. Work your way around the ledge and try to target your enemy's head (not his torso or gut) so that you can fire spells that way. However, you also need to be working toward stone columns that line the side of the area. Here, you can seek temporary shelter in either corner just beyond the columns. That's a good place to use restorative items, as necessary. Your enemy will slurp at the ledges with his long tongue, which can do some hefty damage if your stats aren't good or you don't have your defenses boosted. You can roll to avoid the tongue, however, and when you're not dodging you should be able to get in a few hits with spells. Repeating this process a few times should give you plenty of time to take down your opponent with little damage taken.

Melee fighters have things a bit rougher. To do any real damage, you'll have to drop down to the lowest level and face your enemy's gut. The huge fellow will be spinning around and swinging at you with his sword, so you need to keep to his side to avoid the worst of his attacks. From that position, you should be able to see a blade broken off in his gut. There's puss oozing out. Since you can't reach high enough to hit your enemy's head from down on the ground, you'll have to attack his gut while continuing to dodge attacks and heal. This is definitely a fight where magic makes everything much simpler.

Once you defeat the boss, you can touch the archstone to receive the **Swollen Demon's Soul**, then touch it again and you can warp back to the Nexus.

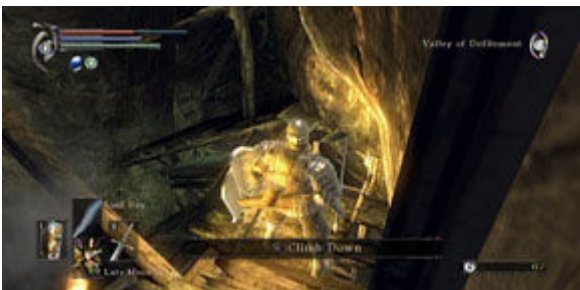
Note that if you return to that first area with white world tendency, you will find a man named Satsuki near the entrance where formerly there were only skeletons. If your tendency is white, he'll ask you to find his sword Makoto for him. If you do so, you'll have to fight him. It's probably better just to keep the sword for yourself.

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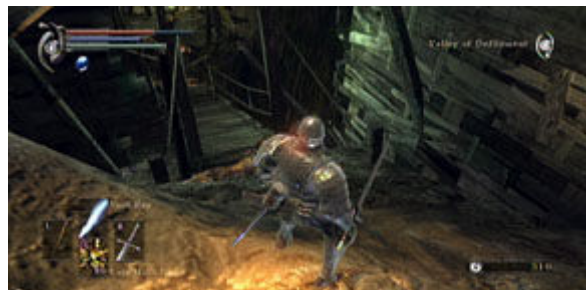
Archstone of the Chieftain - Valley of Defilement

The Valley of Defilement is one of the shortest stages in the game, but it can still prompt more than a few deaths if you're not careful in how you proceed. Most of those will likely come from drops into the abyss that serves as the stage's primary landmark, but you may also succumb to a number of other hazards.

When you first head forward from the start, you'll come almost immediately to a drop-off leading into the aforementioned abyss. Fortunately, there are some planks leading up to the left. You can investigate under those boards to find the **Royal Lotus** among some brush, then you should climb the boards to higher ground.



There are several ladders in the area that you can use to safely



Move quickly over the bridge, as well as any narrow boards

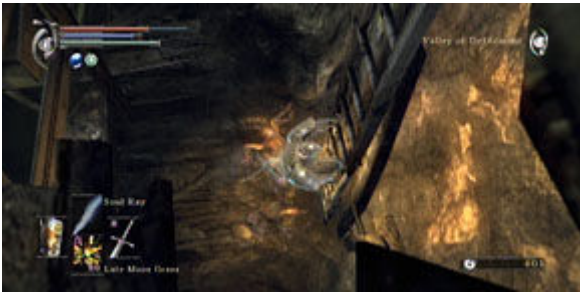
reach lower platforms.

nearby where footing isn't secure.

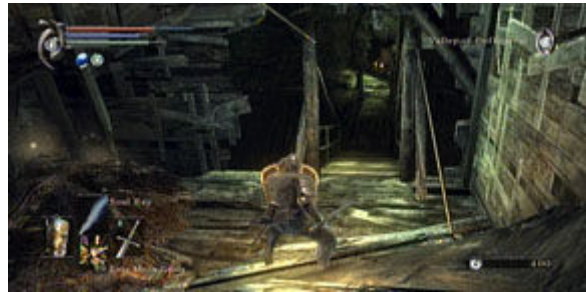
The boards will loop slowly around, ever ascending, with a pit stretching wide to the left. Keep climbing and periodically along the way you'll fight the goblins so common to this area. They carry burning torches that they'll swing toward you, but they're not actually all that difficult to defeat despite the elemental assistance. Just don't let them surprise you and you'll easily survive each of their attacks. Keep working around and you should come to a ladder, which you can descend to find a **Morning Star** weapon. Then you can climb up and continue along the upper level. You may have to break apart some debris as you proceed.

Walking along this area can prove extremely dangerous. Though the enemies aren't so bad, it's quite easy to slip over an edge and fall into that bottomless pit. In fact, it's so easy to tumble over the side that some of your enemies will do precisely that as you knock them around with melee attacks.

Keep working along the planking and you'll come to a rope bridge over a narrow gap, and beyond that some narrow boards. Cross these quickly, as there are enemies along the other side that may take advantage of your tenuous footing if given the chance. Then continue working along the boards until you arrive at the area's third ladder.



Enemies rush to club you as you descend the third ladder.



Left of the bridge just after the fog-covered door, you'll find some enemies that pretend to be dead.

As you descend this ladder, you'll notice more enemies gathering around the base. When you get near, they'll jump up to club you. Since they don't actually inflict much damage, you're probably safe to just quickly descend and then clear them away quickly with sword strikes. If your defenses aren't so good or you don't have health-generating equipment to aid with recovery, you may prefer to take care of them from the area above so that you don't have to waste restorative items. Once you eliminate the threat and descend, you'll find yourself in a nearly enclosed area. From here, you have two options.

If you're feeling brave, you can head out along some planks to the left, then make a dangerous jump down to a ledge below. Be sure to leap from the end of the board, not the side, since a leap to the side is more likely to prove fatal. When you land, you'll find a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes**. You may take some damage from the fall, depending on your dexterity rating, and some enemies will also attack you. Defeat them and you can drop down to the right and find more enemies guarding some **Storied Soldier's Soul** items. Then past those, there's a red blob that you can defeat from a distance (to avoid being poisoned). That critter is guarding the **Blessed Mace +1**. All in all, that's quite the haul! Now you can look along the left side of the area to find an upright board. Approach it and you can press 'X' to knock it down and cross over the gap. On the other side, you'll need to take care of some rats with projectile weapons or magic so that you don't have to get close to them and risk catching the plague. Equip the Ring of Disease Resistance before you approach, if it's in your inventory. You should also skip the next four paragraphs of this walkthrough, which detail an alternate route that you'll not be following on this particular trip through the stage.

Your other path from that enclosure where the enemies gathered at the base of the ladder leads across some planks and to the area's first fog-covered door. Cross over and enter it. On the other side, you'll find yourself walking around toward more wooden planks. Another monster will attack here. Once you tend to him, you can proceed down a slope and you'll notice a bridge ahead and some brush to the left. There are glowing items there (an **Unknown Hero's Soul** and some **Faintstone Ore**), but approach cautiously. As you get near, the corpses lying around will animate. It was a trap! Fortunately, a few quick strikes can take care of both of the monsters, leaving you free to grab the items.

Now you should continue your slow descent, crossing the bridge over the pit to reach a wider area on the opposite side that branches left and right. If you head left from here and descend some planks, you can find a host of items including a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes**, **Saint's Boots**, **Saint's Gloves** and a **Saint's Robe**.



The red objects look bizarre. Hit them with projectiles from a distance to avoid being poisoned.



Watch out for falling rocks and large monsters as you proceed along the boards leading left.

You can grab those items, then backtrack to the bridge and this time start toward the right. Pass through an opening here for what may be your first encounter with some strange red bulbs. If you slash them, they'll burst into dangerous clouds of poison. You're better off hitting them with projectiles. Then when they're gone, you can follow the ledge around and descend to find a filthy woman who will sell you items if you have sufficient souls. She stocks black turpentine, Stone of Ephmeral Eyes items and some powerful armor, along with other stuff that you may find interesting.

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Archstone of the Chieftain - Valley of Defilement (cont.)

Buy anything you need from the merchant, then descend some planks toward the area below where the merchant is camped. As you near the ground level, be ready with projectile magic. Several small rats will rush you. They'll go down easily enough to melee attacks, but then you run the risk of catching the plague from them. You'll be safer if you play the coward and eliminate them from afar. This is the room where you will appear if you took the dangerous jump that led to the Blessed Mace.

Once the rats are gone, you can proceed along planks through an opening to the left. Be careful, though; when you start forward along those boards, some rocks may fall from above. Now head across but be ready for a fight. The monster that approaches you here is much larger than his brethren and able to inflict significant damage with each swing of his powerful arms. When you get near, you want to slash the heck out of him and hopefully he'll go down before he can attack you. Note that he's also joined by a smaller one of his fellows, so be ready to block any attacks that come from that less noticeable companion.



Yet again, stay away from the explosive red fog that these creatures expel when dying.



Be ready for a large monster to attack after you eliminate his weaker pals.

When you continue through the opening after fighting the larger monster, you'll find yourself in an enclosure with straw scattered across the wooden floor. Here you'll be attacked by several more of the smaller goblins wielding torches. Slash them apart quickly, before they can inflict much damage, then go ahead and climb the boards leading upward along the edge of the room. These lead to a room with more of the poisonous red bulbs, which you should again kill from afar. From where you enter, target the two on the right first with your magic, then when they're gone you can step over to their remains and turn to safely fire at the one that is closest to the planks that you used to enter the room.

Look off to the side now and you'll see an opening that leads toward another bridge. There are enemies on this bridge, but they likely won't start forward just yet. You can actually hit them with projectile magic before they even begin to advance, which makes avoiding damage pretty simple.

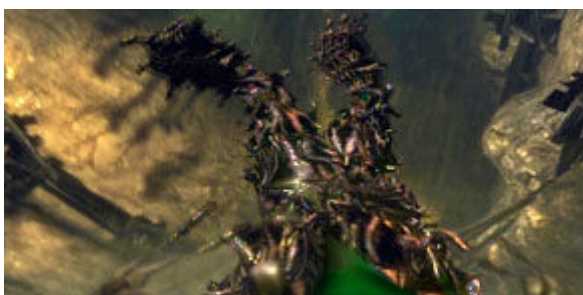
Once those enemies are gone, start across the bridge and you'll cause a larger one of the guys to start toward you in

quite a hurry. Hopefully, you have magic and can weaken him from a distance, then finish him off with sword strokes as he gets closer. Remember that you can also backtrack to the larger room so that you're not forced to fight him on the bridge. Once he goes down, you can safely cross the bridge to arrive at a shack on the far side. There's a plank leading downward here. At the base, you can investigate behind some planking to find **Full Moon Grass**. In the same area, there's a wall of fog that leads to the area boss. Prepare yourself with any necessary spells, then step through to the encounter.

Boss Battle: Leechmonger

When you first appear in the arena, you'll witness a sequence as your enemy arrives from the murky soup that fills his arena. Then you'll find yourself positioned along a ledge. Though common sense would suggest that you should run forward, this is actually a very bad idea. You'll almost immediately fall to your death as you plunge over a ledge toward a bottomless pit.

Instead of a suicide dash, then, look toward the left. There, planks lead down along the outer wall of the cavern. Since you're far too high to possibly harm your opponent, you'll need to start following the planks down and around the outer edges of the region. As you do, the boss will regularly send three-way leech balls flying toward you.



Your foe's body is covered in leeches.



Use Fire Spray magic from up high! It's cheap but oh, so very effective!

Be careful as you proceed. You have two choices now. One is to head all the way to the bottom (quite the hike) and to step through the swampy soup to use melee attacks on your opponent. If you go with that route, make sure that you have good armor and gear that will regenerate health as you fight, even if it's only a little bit. You'll want to be ready to heal yourself periodically as you hack away at your opponent.

If you have powerful magic, a wonderful alternative is to descend only to the point where you're positioned along a long, flat stretch of planking and can press 'R3' to target your foe. Then you can just dodge back and forth to avoid leech balls while you hurl fireballs with the Fire Spray spell. You'll likely take only limited damage, especially since the spell also seems to fry the leech balls before they can hit you in most cases. Just keep using that strategy to drain away the boss's life meter and in no time at all you'll emerge victorious.

When you defeat the boss, you'll be free to gather the sparkling items along the swampy floor of the cavern. After you've grabbed what you want, including a **Great Club** from near the base of one of the planks, touch the archstone along one side (it's positioned in a narrow passage) to receive the **Wriggling Demon's Soul**. Then touch it again to return to the Nexus.

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Archstone of the Small King - Phalanx Archstone

You'll gain access to the second portion of the Boletarian Castle region immediately after you defeat Phalanx in the first portion of the Boletarian Palace. Though of course you can tackle the Phalanx Archstone area immediately after that, some of the challenges that you'll face—particularly the area boss—are more easily cleared after you've leveled up your character a fair bit and learned some useful magic.



There are numerous slime creatures in the opening area.



Up the stairs from the dead horse, you'll find some Half Moon Grass.

When you appear enter the new zone, you'll find yourself in the huge hallway where you defeated Phalanx. You can even backtrack to explore the first region if for some reason that interests you. Continue along this passage to pass through a narrow corridor that then widens into a high-ceilinged hallway. Here, there are numerous slime enemies like the ones that attached themselves to Phalanx during that battle. The first of them are to the left and right as the hallway widens, but there are more as you continue.

Be careful when fighting these monsters, since they're capable of tossing spears toward you and will do so frequently. As before, you want to get around to their sides so that a single slash or two will eliminate them. This allows you to avoid a protracted battle against each slime. That's especially important here, since fighting one slime at a time will likely distract you from dealing with another and cause you to take damage when a spear hits your unguarded flank.

Once you've cleared the area of the slimes, you can explore along the right side of the room to find the **Throwing Knife**. Near an overturned cart and the corpse of a horse near the room's left side, you can climb a short set of stairs to loot a corpse and obtain **Half Moon Grass**. Finally, there's an **Unknown Hero's Soul** along the wall at the base level near the short platform where you grab that grass. Head down that hallway to find it, as well as the soldier fellow that you met with in the first segment of the Boletarian Palace, Ostrava.



Ostrava is hiding in a cell near the Unknown Hero's Soul.



You're safe from the dragon's flames in this stone structure.

As you approach the soul itself, Ostrava will inform you that the area ahead has turned into a feeding ground for dragons. That's good information, as it definitely will affect how you need to approach the coming challenge. For now, grab the soul and then proceed along the passage where you killed the slimes. It will grow narrower again and you'll find yourself looking out onto a more open bridge, littered by wooden planking and ravens.

When you start out across the bridge, you will likely notice that there are numerous items waiting to be grabbed. You definitely don't have time to do so, however, because a dragon will be coming. Ignore the items and make a rush through the area (press and hold the 'O' button to do so) until you reach the shelter afforded you by a walled structure partway across the bridge. Here, you can pause to catch your breath. You'll also find that there is a small platform branching off from the side of the room, from which you can either climb stairs leading upward or descend a flight of stairs toward an area below.

Begin by climbing toward the area above. Archers and spear-wielding soldiers are stationed along the stairs and in a wider area up top, so keep your shield held ready and be careful to kill them when you see an opening. You'll hear the dragon causing havoc nearby, but he won't attack as you deal with the enemies. Once they're dead, look around the area at the top of the tower to find an **Unknown Hero's Soul** on one corpse and the **Wooden Catalyst** on another. Now return to the lower level. You now have two choices: you can either run along another portion of the bridge while avoiding more dragon breath, or you can descend another flight of stairs for some adventures in the lower regions. Since the latter option leads to some interesting events, we recommend doing that on your first trip through the region.



Keep your shield up and the dog's leaps won't inflict much damage.



You can't yet obtain the item you see glowing behind the merchant.

When you arrive at the lower portion of the dungeon, you're underground. There's a tunnel branching both left and right. You'll need to explore the area to the left soon, but before you do that you should head right through the gate. You will hear dogs snarling and barking in this direction, and soon you'll face them as you proceed through the dark corridor. As you advance, you should keep your shield held ready and move slowly. There are two soldiers in the immediate area who will try to ambush you from behind stone columns along the sides of the passageway. Move slowly and periodically tap the 'R3' button to easily spot them ahead of time.

After the more normal soldiers, you'll come across a new adversary: ravenous dogs. Defeating the beasts isn't actually all that difficult if you fight with appropriate caution. The hounds can pounce you and inflict significant damage if they hit you from behind, but if they leap against your shield the most you'll lose is stamina. Then you can retaliate with your weapon of choice. The only problem really is if you let yourself be startled. Remember that there are four or five dogs, so you shouldn't let down your guard until you've killed that number.

Continue past the last of the dogs and keep your shield up as you do. There will be another archer, plus you'll find an **Unknown Hero's Soul** on a corpse along the passage. Past that, you'll reach a merchant who will happily sell you items. He's seated just in front of a grating, behind which glows an item that you can't reach at this stage in the game. Buy anything you need, then turn around and head back toward the base of the staircase that you descended after fleeing the dragon. As you go, make sure that you grab the **Crescent Moon Grass** from along the what is now the right side of the passage, if you haven't already. You also need to make sure that you haven't somehow missed killing any enemies, since you want the route to be absolutely free of goons.



Look for the Ring of Gash resistance after slaying the archers.



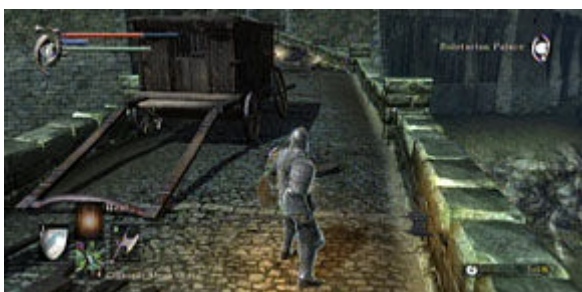
Face to face with Ostrava again...

When you reach the staircase, don't climb them. Instead, continue along the passage. You should hack away at some boards that block your path here. Keep moving in that general direction and along the way, you'll encounter several archers that you need to kill. Be cautious here, as they like to attack in groups. If you're trying to hack one and two others are firing arrows at your exposed side, you can take a lot of damage. Try to target one archer at a time with 'R3' and wait to strike until after a volley of arrows. You can retreat to shelter if you need to and the archers won't immediately follow, a fact that gives you time to apply healing herbs if necessary.

Make sure that none of the archers are left alive, then check the glowing corpse to find the **Ring of Gash Resistance**. Now continue to the far end of the passage to find Ostrava. Press 'X' to talk to him and he will give you **Dark Moon Grass**, then proceed through the passageway that you have just cleared. He'll climb the first staircase that he comes to, but you should continue along the hallway toward where you met the merchant a moment ago. Just before that, there's a staircase on the right side that you can reach by smashing some planking. Do so and climb the stairs.

Archstone of the Small King - Phalanx Archstone (cont.)

Now you're back on the upper level. To the left, a dragon is still roaming the unfriendly skies, while to the right the staircase continues. Keep climbing and you can reach the top of the tower, where two more archers are waiting. Kill them, then check the nearby corpse to obtain **Compound Short Bow** and **Heavy Arrow** ammunition. Now go to the doorway that allows you to enter the tower at the level that's even with the walkway. To the left through that, there are several archers that you should take out so that they don't shoot you in the back. Once they've been tended to (and their bodies looted for any healing items that they may leave behind), turn toward the right and you'll find yourself facing a fog-covered door. Pass through it for a view of another long, open stretch. It's time for another race against the dragon, who will come zooming into view to try and fry you mid-dash. Obviously, you need to move quickly.



Position yourself near the wagon to begin your dash.



The knight is joined by a legion of weaker units and archers who fire at you from above.

The problem in this case is that there are numerous enemies waiting on the other end of the dragon's gauntlet. They're smart enough to avoid the flames, so they won't be destroyed ahead of your arrival. You'll have to deal with them the moment you outrun the dragon breath. The even worse news is that the group of foes consists of pesky archers shooting at you from above (out of reach), several infantrymen and a heavily-armored knight. If you want to survive, it's not a bad idea to buff yourself with magic or items (such as turpentine) before you even begin your dash. Make sure that your health is also full, or close to it. You can move up to the space just ahead of the wagon along the left side of the castle wall, then wait until the dragon flies overhead and begins its attack. Now quickly follow just behind it, running with your shield held ready.

When you reach the other side, you should be able to efficiently eliminate any waiting adversaries without stumbling backward into lethal flames or running out of health. Hit the infantrymen first with two or three strikes, then take on the knight by blocking his first attack and following up with a series of your own standard attacks. Of course it helps if you've equipped a weapon that won't consume large amounts of stamina with each swipe.

Once you kill that first armored knight, you should quickly heal yourself. Let your stamina return before continuing down the corridor to deal with a second one, who will rush to meet you when you come within his line of sight (or if you did so while fighting the first knight). Fortunately, the late arrival is a loner. You shouldn't have as much difficulty tending to him now that he doesn't have any backup beyond the archers, who won't even be able to pitch in if you're under the stone archway. Besides that, your turpentine is likely still in effect. If you keep attempting this sequence of fights and find yourself dying repeatedly, you might want to return after leveling up your character a bit.



Kill the archers on the rooftop, then safely gather the surrounding loot.



Through the wall of fog waits another boss battle.

Once you successfully kill that second knight, continue along the passageway toward another wall of fog. Before you pass through it, search the area to the right and you'll find a staircase leading upward. Climb those stairs and you'll

come out onto a wider landing. Here, you can kill a tiny enemy if you manage to get over to it before it vanishes (you'll see it positioned against the far wall as you emerge from the top of the staircase). Targeting it with the 'R3' button as you approach should help.

Now climb another flight of stairs to reach the top of the tower. There, you should kill two archers, then search the nearby bodies for several items. In this general area you'll find the **Royal Lotus**, a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes**, a **Renowned Soldier's Soul** and an **Unknown Hero's Soul**. Now you can head back downstairs and pass through the wall of fog to fight the area boss. Before you do, cast defensive magic if you have it, as you'll need all the help you can get. Also make sure that you have quick access to strong healing items, such as the Half Moon Grass.

Boss Battle: Tower Knight

The Tower Knight is a massive foe, flanked by a number of archers on higher walls. You'll want to first climb to these walls and eliminate those fellows so that they're not picking at you as you try to eliminate your main target. Even getting to the walls is difficult, though, with the tower knight thrusting at you with his massive lance. You need to anticipate those strikes and roll out of their way as you make a mad dash for one of the staircases that leads to the upper level. You can't safely heal until you reach higher ground, as the knight will just slash you apart while you stand in one spot absorbing your healing herbs or magic.

Once you're on the walls, there are quite a few archers to worry about. Proceed carefully toward them with your shield at the ready. You don't want to get overwhelmed by their shots, which can drain your stamina meter much more quickly than you'd like and prevent you from blocking additional attacks. Cautiously tend to each archer and when you're done, you can safely heal yourself before assaulting your actual target.



This massive demon is as lethal as he looks.



Run carefully and be ready to roll so you don't take significant damage on the ground level.

Even without support from the archers, the Tower Knight is a fearsome foe. To damage him most effortlessly, you'll need to hit him with magic from the upper levels. This is easily managed by standing on one of the shielded platforms where an archer was, pressing 'R3' to target your foe's head, then unleashing your projectile spell as your enemy starts to briefly lower his shield. Then once you've let loose the shot, roll back from the platform because a spear thrust is coming where you were just standing. Once you avoid that, you can repeat the process or heal if necessary.

If you don't have projectile magic available, you'll have to rush down to his level and dance around his legs where he'll have more trouble hitting you with his spear magic. There, strike at his ankles and try to stay behind him so that finally he will fall heavily to the ground. Be careful to avoid him as he does this, since his massive girth can easily crush you. Once he's on the ground, you should rush around and slash at his head, which is where you can inflict actual damage to his lengthy life meter. Throughout the process, remember that if you start low on life, you can head back up the stairs to where you defeated the archers, find shelter and heal yourself. Then you should return to the attack. The fight is immeasurably easier if you go the magic user route.

After Tower Knight has been defeated, you'll receive the **Iron Demon's Soul** when you touch the archstone. Then you can touch it again to return to the Nexus. Take the soul that you gained and visit Freke back in the Nexus, if you've saved him. You can exchange the Iron Demon's Soul for the Warding spell, which is extremely powerful defensive magic. You can use it for any tough encounters that lie ahead and it will significantly reduce the damage you receive. Now you're ready for new challenges!

Archstone of the Burrow King - Armor Spider Archstone

From the Armor Spider archstone that serves as the entrance to this second region, head forward along the passage. Ahead, you'll see a glowing enemy along the floor, near a stone wall. However, if you try to target it with 'R3' you'll reveal another enemy that's closer still: a miner with a pickax. You need to take care of the miner, which will allow the other elusive enemy to escape. That's fine, though, as your hands will be full with the miner and his powerful attack.

Once the miner is gone, you can continue as the path widens into a larger room. Here, mine carts will arrive on-scene from an opening and some tracks that lead left. If you get near the cart, the cargo it is carrying will flare up and then quickly explode, inflicting severe damage to anything within its blast radius (including another mining enemy who is working near some tables on the room's left side). Be sure to avoid that blast, since it can kill you—or come close—with just one exposure.

You now have an option about how you proceed through the stage. You can continue left along the tunnel from which the explosive carts appear, or you can head to the right in the direction that the glowing enemy fled. There are more miners here, but also a shortcut to the stage's boss area. The path you take is up to you. Just know that the right path, while much shorter, is also very dangerous. You'll have to make some tricky jumps and you will miss out on some helpful items that are positioned along the lengthier route, particularly the Ring of Flame Resistance that makes the area boss battle simpler. Both routes eventually converge just ahead of the boss chamber.



The glowing enemy will flee as you get near and miner with a pickax will attack.



Steer well away from the brown mine cart or it'll explode.

We'll start by describing the longer route, which leads left toward the source of the explosive mine carts. If you would prefer to take the shorter route, skip ahead to the final few paragraphs devoted to this section of the walkthrough. Before we provide strategies to help you defeat the area boss, we'll briefly outline what to expect along the shorter route.

Continuing left through the long passage with the mine carts, you'll find several of them moving toward you as you advance along the corridor. There are a total of three of them in the passage, but one or two might have been eliminated as you cleared the wider room near the area's beginning. A useful strategy for any that remain afterwards is to get near enough to them that they start to expand, then quickly retreat so that the resulting explosion doesn't harm you. In this manner, you can continue through the area without taking damage.

On the other side of the tunnel, quickly look to the right where a fire-tossing enemy is waiting behind a wooden column. Target him and take him out with a few quick strikes before he has a chance to fry you to a crisp. You will have to hit him a few times, which drains the stamina, so between attacks try to put the wooden column between yourself and your enemy. It will often block his fireballs so you can safely heal yourself or plan your next move. When the enemy is gone, you can investigate the nearby area to find a lift that you can ride to a lower area. **Augite of Guidance** items rest on a corpse draped over a nearby railing, and there's also a door leading into another passage.

You've arrived at another crossroad of sorts. You can either ride the lift down, or you can proceed through the next corridor. Both routes will lead to the same approximate place and allow you to pick up a few common stones and soul items. The real difference is in the enemies you encounter along the way. Another thing to keep in mind is that if you take the lift, then die at the bottom, you'll have to summon it back up to the room with the flame-tossing enemy before you can ride it down again. The handle that you need to turn to accomplish that is just to the left of where you find the afore-mentioned enemy.



These red soldiers are formidable opponents indeed!

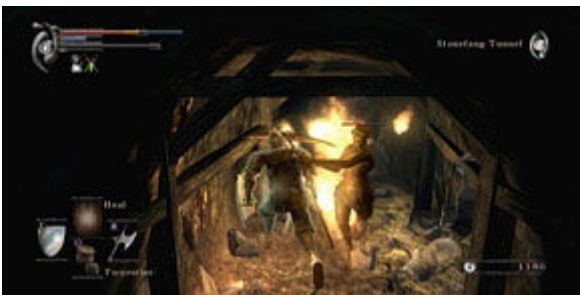


Along this path, watch out for the floating balls of light. They'll explode!

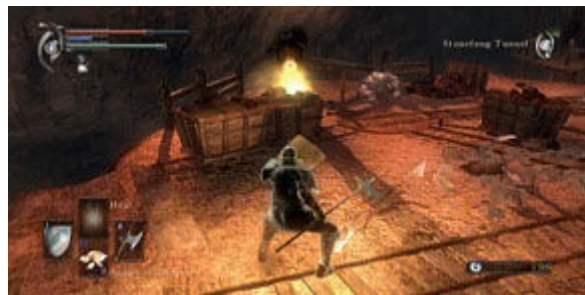
For the most part, the safe option is to ride the lift. On the way down, you'll surprise some of the enemies that like to scurry away. Now you should stop to consider some new options. You can either follow the fleeing monsters down the long hallway, or you can turn around and proceed in the opposite direction (the superior option if you're interested in avoiding a tough fight).

If you follow the cowardly guys, you'll attract the attention of two very powerful enemies in bright red armor. These fellows have spectacular physical defense but aren't particularly good at dealing with fire attacks. You can use turpentine on your weapon, toss firebombs or just rely on a bit of magic to defeat them. Try to fight one of the two at a time or you'll be blocking so much that your stamina will become exhausted. If that happens, you're pretty much dead. After defeating the soldiers, you can continue onward to deal with the other enemies that fled. You should be able to kill a few of them before they all vanish. Then you can backtrack to the lift and proceed in the opposite direction.

Along the hallway leading way from the lift—and in the opposite direction of the two soldiers in red armor—you'll come to a fork in the path where you can either continue forward and slightly to the left or follow a passageway that branches toward the right. You'll need to go with the latter option as a path winds down through an area with a low ceiling. Be careful when the path curves sharply back toward the left, though, as in this new direction you'll encounter a ball of light that floats in the air. When you get near, it'll briefly expand and then detonate, like the similar balls of light that were on mine carts at the beginning of the stage. Make sure that you back quickly away. After the ball explodes, continue along the path and you'll come to a 'T' in the path. To the left, there's a miner with a pickax. Take him out carefully and grab the items that he was guarding if you want them, then turn to the right and continue in that direction. You should appear in an open area with wooden planking along some rock walls around you and with some beetle-shaped enemies patrolling. These are called bugbears and they'll play a major role in your next few minutes of play.



Cramped space can make the miner difficult to defeat.



Duck behind mine carts to avoid the worm's fiery breath.

To backtrack for just a minute, though, suppose that you chose not to ride the lift after taking care of the fire-tossing guy near the beginning of this region. There are some things you need to know about that route.

The first thing you need to know is that you'll find your progress along the narrow corridor impeded by stone carvings that look like worms. You can roll forward to burst through these (if you have a long weapon like a halberd) or you swipe with a shorter sword, but be careful; after the third one, there's a miner waiting with a pickax. He'll carve you to bits if you're not paying attention. Make sure that you have your shield ready to deflect his attack. Then you can dance out of the way to let your stamina recover before moving in for the kill.

Archstone of the Burrow King - Armor Spider Archstone (cont.)

Past the miner, you'll come to a more open area and now you'll have to face a live worm that breaks free from the soil. You can use magic to eliminate him quickly, but don't use fire magic. That's the worm's chosen poison. If you don't have any suitable spells, you'll need to use melee attacks. The worm has solid defense, so you'll want to move in and hit him twice, then quickly roll away before he can spew flames toward you. Repeat as necessary until the worm is dead. There are a few worms in this area, so be sure to kill them all.



The enemies in this area look like giant beetles.

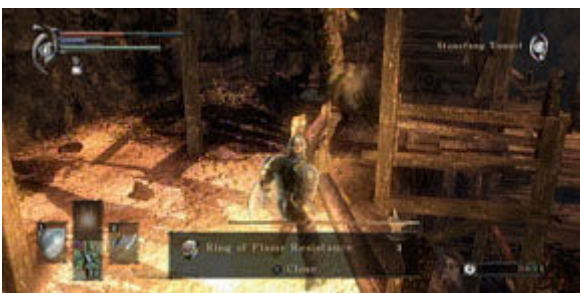


You've found another adventurer.

Now that you don't have to worry about the worms, you can investigate the area to find several items on various corpses. These include **Unknown Hero's Soul** and some stone splinters. When you've gathered everything, you can then drop down to a platform just below where you found the splinters. Be sure not to drop down elsewhere or you'll plummet to your death.

When you land on the next platform down, you can drop down along two more ledges while collecting loot from the corpses. Note that if your dexterity level isn't high enough, you will take some damage as you make each drop. There's no helping it. As you continue to drop, you'll land on some wooden ledges. Continue along these and you'll encounter a new, beetle-shaped enemy with thick armor. You'll find that it's every bit as strong against fire as the worms you fought on the ledges above. Move past the new enemies—or deal with them, if you like—and head down a steeply sloping plank toward a wider area below.

You're now in the approximate area where you would have arrived if you rode the lift. Whether you got here by following trails and dropping from ledges or by riding the lift and pressing along the narrow passageways just after, your next goal is the same. You need to look around and find a particularly large bearbug stuck along the planking. Just down the slope from there you can meet a fellow traveler. The man encourages you to take a nearby item that's resting on a corpse, beneath the area where the bearbug was trapped. You can search the glowing corpse to obtain the **Club**. Unfortunately, you've now attracted the attention of the bearbug from above. It has likely fallen and is blocking your path, but it won't actually try to damage you just yet.



The Ring of Flame Resistance is nice to have in your inventory.

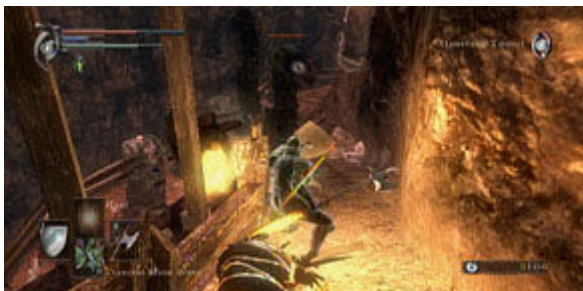


The smaller bearbugs are more than ready to attack if you let them.

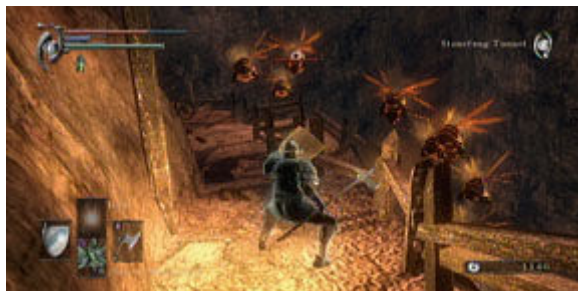
You can break away debris to the enemy's side with your weapon, then work back around and start back up the trail. Above, a worm will emerge from the soil. Take care of it as you have worms encountered previously. Keep this location in mind, as you'll be returning shortly. Now head back down to where the bearbug remains stuck. He's still not going to attack you, but you need to hack him to bits so that you can move freely again. As you do, watch his life meter. When you deal a crippling blow, you need to retreat because a huge explosion is coming. Rush back up to where you killed the worm just a moment ago, shield held at the ready. That way, you won't be killed by the blast.

After the bearbug is out of the way, the traveler will start wandering the area. Talk to him to obtain the **Ring of Flame Resistance**, a valuable item that you can equip to nullify some of the harmful effects of fire. That's all sorts of useful in stages like this one, so make sure that you equip it promptly. Your traveling friend doesn't seem to think that he's parted with anything particularly precious, but what he doesn't know can't hurt him.

Now it's time to continue down the trail past where you initially found the fellow adventurer situated. As you descend, you'll find the path partially blocked by two smaller bearbugs. You can pretty easily advance on them, hit them two or three times, then roll back to safety and refill your stamina before attacking again. When those two foes are defeated, continuing onward will prompt a visit from several more of the fire-breathing worms. Use magic to take care of them if possible, as moving in close to attack is suicide. Alternatively, you can drop through a gap along the path ahead of the worms to land on a pathway below and proceed onward without dueling against the trio of worms.



Three worms can be too much if you try to kill them up close.



There are too many bugbears for you to stay and fight them all.

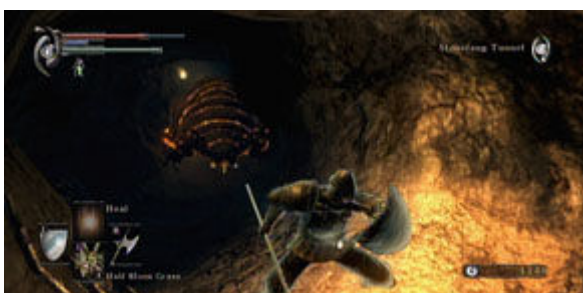
Shortly, you should come across a u-turn in the path. If you keep going straight, you can talk to a merchant among some rubble and even make some purchases. Otherwise, you can continue around the u-turn as the path proceeds down a hill. At this point, you'll notice numerous bugbears buzzing around in the air. There's a whole swarm of them, more than you can reasonably take care of with melee attacks. The best strategy is actually just to keep running down the path. The insects move slowly and shouldn't be able to keep up with you unless you stop to fight the worms that emerge from the ground along the way. Better to run past those nuisances, as well.

At the base of the path, you'll come to a fog-covered archway. Pass through the fog and you can enter a cavern area. You're now at one side of what will feel very much like a maze. Periodically, you'll come up against the larger bugbear enemies that can withstand a significant amount of physical damage. If possible, you're best moving around them and continuing without stopping to engage them any longer than necessary. You need to conserve your healing items.

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Archstone of the Burrow King - Armor Spider Archstone (cont.)

To do that, proceed down the sloping passage from the entrance to the cavern and you'll come to a 'T' in the path. Head right here for a **Storied Soldier's Soul** positioned on a corpse at a dead end, if that interests you. No enemies will attack here, so you might as well grab it. Then you can turn around and continue toward the area that lay to the left of the entrance. As you proceed, you should stick to the left side of the path. You'll come upon one of the large bearbug enemies. You can draw him slowly up the branch of the path that you have followed, then backtrack and run around the other side to avoid fighting him.



Get the large bearbug to follow you and you can sneak around it from behind.



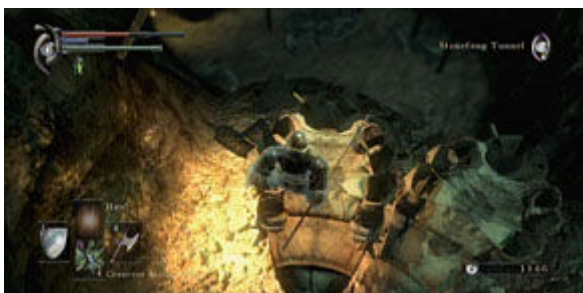
The cave's treasure isn't well-guarded.

Now continue along that main corridor until you come to an intersection where you can go either left or right. Straight

ahead there will be a short embankment that you can't climb, while you can head down a hill to the right to face an unavoidable bugbear. If you're interested in treasure, follow the directions in the next paragraph. Otherwise, skip that paragraph and keep reading starting with the beginning of the next one.

To get some neat items, you should head up the path leading left from the intersection. As the path widens, you can find an **Augite of Guidance** item behind some bones. Then you can continue along a new branch in the path to arrive at a small drop-off. Drop down and then proceed toward the left. You'll next come to a 'T' in the path. Here, you can head left to find the **Dragon Long Sword +1** at the end of a dead-end passage. Grab that valuable weapon, which adds the flame element to your attacks and is powerful even when left unmodified, then return to the intersection. Continuing straight ahead from here will take you to a lava-ringed area that can quickly drain your life. It's more dangerous than you really need to worry about right now and the rewards are relatively minor. Instead of proceeding in that direction, head right at the intersection so that you're now retracing your steps and headed back toward the cavern entrance. When you drop over a small bank as you arrive at an intersection, you'll want to take a left turn so that you're now headed.

Since the bugbear ahead of you now can't be avoided, take it out carefully by moving in and striking a few times, then retreating. Repeat the process as necessary, or use attack magic to make things go more quickly. Remember to steer clear of the self-destructive blast once the beast has breathed its last.



You're now looking down on the last section of this particular region.



Finally, you've reached the region's boss.

Past that bugbear, you'll come to another intersection. Here, you can turn right and follow a short passage to obtain a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes**, which is guarded by another vicious bugbear, or you can just take a left turn and follow that path straight forward to reach the exit of the cave. You'll now find yourself standing on a high ledge, overlooking an area rather far below. To proceed, you have to drop down to that space.

You've now arrived at the area you would have reached if you followed the shortcut from the beginning of this area. Remember? You had the choice of going left through the long passageway with the exploding minecarts, or taking the right path that was guarded by some miners. That second route eventually reaches the area where you'll arrive after making your way through the maze-like cavern. Getting there by way of the shortcut simply requires you to drop down a series of platforms. The catch is that a lot of the drops are pretty significant, which makes the shortcut a fatal proposition if your dexterity rating isn't high enough.

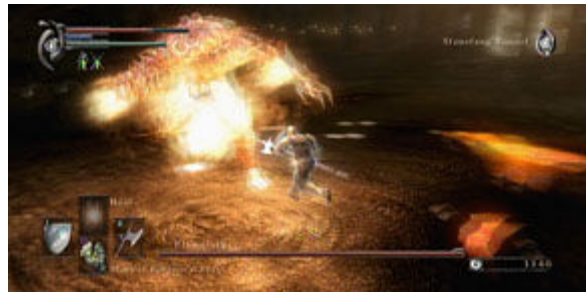
When you arrive in the region's lower portion, whether by taking the shortcut or by following the much longer route that we've thoroughly described, worms will break free from the soil to attack. Try to find a place that's outside of the range of their attacks (thankfully they're not all that mobile) to heal yourself if necessary. Then move past the worms, killing them if you wish or simply avoiding them. You'll be able to proceed from there along a narrow passageway which soon comes to a 'T' in the path. From there you can take a right turn to reach a fog-covered opening (don't miss the **Full Moon Grass** along the left side here, or the **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes** along the right). If you prefer, you can also head left to find some more worms. They're guarding some loot. Defeat the last batch of worms and grab the **Hands of God** weapon (useful for close combat), then return to the fog-covered opening. Once you're ready, pass through it to fight the area boss.

Boss Battle: Flamelurker

When you first appear in the arena, your opponent will make a grand entrance that involves him crawling across the roof of the cavern, then dropping to the floor to try to smash you. This looks impressive, but it's not a move that he'll use regularly throughout the battle. Instead, he'll simply hop around and try to club you with his flaming arms, which definitely have a wide range. He'll also pounce on you and create fiery explosions, so you should have your Ring of Flame Resistance equipped if at all possible.



He knows how to make an entrance!



Try to get around behind him to inflict the most damage.

With that and a strong shield, not to mention the Warding spell if you've learned it, you can block the worst of Flamelurker's attacks and duck behind pillars when you need to restore health or magic energy. Don't lean right against pillars, though; back away a short distance on the screen, or otherwise your opponent can damage you through the rock. Note that your odds of surviving contact with the beast are best if you're in actual human form, since the lengthier life meter can often mean the difference between life and death if you get caught in one of your enemy's combo attacks.

If you're relying on melee attacks, the basic strategy is to simply roll around and let your reflexes keep too many attacks from connecting. Then when you get the chance, move in close and strike him from behind. Remember that keeping your adversary targeted will make the process simpler. He actually doesn't have a lot of strength if you manage to get in a few good hits. Magic users, meanwhile, can roll around and attack from a safer distance, but you're still going to have instances where Flamelurker gets too close for comfort. Make sure that your shield is within easy reach. Go on the offensive when possible and you can win this!

After you defeat the boss, you can collect any items from the immediate vicinity that you may not have felt safe grabbing previously. Then you can touch the archstone twice. The first time, you'll receive the **Red Hot Demon's Soul**, while the second time you will have the option to return to the Nexus.

A note about the Red Hot Demon's Soul: you can take it to the blacksmith at the bottom of the lift in the first section of the Archstone of the Burrow King. Talk to the man and he may accept the item, which is what you want because it will enable him to upgrade weapons that you can't get upgraded by the blacksmith back in the Nexus. This is an extremely worthwhile use of your time, so make sure that you take advantage of it if your weapons are starting to disappoint you. You may have to choose the "Talk" option several times before the blacksmith will request that you give him the soul. Remain persistent until you've given away the precious soul, then get back to your adventure.

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Archstone of the Tower Queen - Fool's Idol Archstone

You'll find that the second portion of the Tower of Latria can be much more dangerous than the first. As you progress, you'll need to deal with a variety of gargoyles like those that called you up here in the first place. They tend to attack where you'd least like, leaving you with limited footing and plenty of opportunities to fall into darkness.

From the entrance to this area, proceed along the path leading forward. It descends along a rather steep slope lined by torches, then arrives at a wide pedestal near the base with a flame burning at the center. There are short paths branching off to various sides. One of the longer ones leading left comes to a dead end where you can find a **Renowned Hero's Soul** resting on a corpse near the end of a precipice. Then you can return to the wider pedestal and follow a path that continues to descend.



You'll fight one gargoyle along the second wide platform with a torch.



Another gargoyle attacks on the path leading onward from there.

Along this path, you'll run into a gargoyle about the time you reach a second wider pedestal. Despite his significant size, the gargoyle is difficult to see as he swoops down out of the darkness. Be careful of his attack, as he has a long range and can inflict pretty heavy damage if the blow connects. Be ready to block it with your shield, then retaliate with a few melee swings (though don't get so carried away that you fall from the platform and into the abyss below). You may also wish to use magic, which you can hit the gargoyle with ease even when he rises into the air for another swoop. You can also put the burning torch between yourself and your enemy to eliminate the effectiveness of his attacks. Gargoyles tend to leave behind **Unknown Hero's Soul** items.

When the gargoyle is done for, continue along the path leading ahead yet again. This one isn't descending, but rather is heading toward a large wall with an archway leading through. As you proceed in this direction, watch the path for shadows from above. You should see what appears to be a wing, which is your cue that another gargoyle is about to attack. This time you don't have a lamp to protect you, but you should be able to block his attacks and then get in a few melee hits before he retreats and the process repeats.

After taking care of that gargoyle, you can safely proceed to the archway leading through the wall, which comes almost immediately to a railing with a path leading both left and right. You'll be returning here shortly.



Arriving at the crossroads after defeating the gargoyle along the stairs.



Backing into the tunnel and tossing fireballs at your enemy is a solid strategy.

Start by heading to the right down a short path. There's a branch to the right here, while you can follow to smash some pots and obtain **Old Spice**. Grab that, then head along the path's branch as it starts toward the right. Here, you'll find a **Shard of Moonlightstone** just ahead of a steep drop-off. Just right from the archway that you use to enter, you can break some more pots and grab a **Renowned Hero's Soul**.

Beyond that, stairs lead downward along the wall. Follow them as they descend, but be ready for another gargoyle to attack. You have less room to maneuver here than ever before, but your strategy shouldn't really change from what it was when you dealt with the previous ones. After defeating that gargoyle, continue downward to reach a crossroads in the path. You can head straight ahead from here to break some pots and grab loot. Going right leads to a short dead-end passage (note its location, as you'll be coming back here just before the end of the stage for some serious goodies) and going left leads to yet another gargoyle. This one is easiest to deal with if you throw projectile spells his way. You can even back into the tunnel, where he will be reluctant to follow, and pelt him with spells from there.

After killing that gargoyle, you can continue along the ledge he was guarding to reach some moonlight stone items, in both chunk and shard varieties. After grabbing those items, you've gone as far as you can in this direction at present. It's time to backtrack all the way to the first intersection you reached.



Climb up the staircase that leads left from the first intersection.



More gargoyles will attack you along the narrow walkway, so advance slowly.

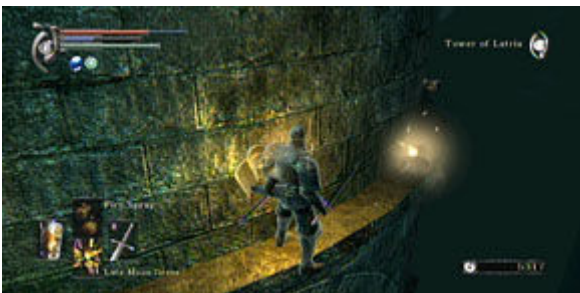
This time, you should head left from that intersection, up a steep staircase that curves along the high stone wall. When you reach the top, you'll find yourself at another intersection. There's one path leading left into darkness, or you can continue straight ahead.

The path straight forward is a dead end until awhile later, so go ahead and travel along the path leading left. Multiple gargoyles will attack in this area, so you'll do best if you advance slowly. This will allow you to fight one at a time before dealing with another one. You'll have a difficult time of it if you try to fight several at once, since the narrow walkway makes it dangerous to strike more than once or twice with your sword (and because targeting the flying creatures sometimes makes it difficult to even tell where the walkway ends and the abyss beneath you begins).

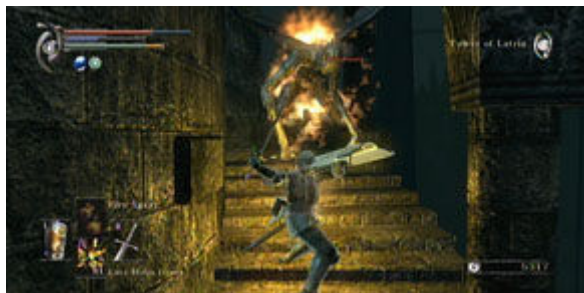
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Archstone of the Tower Queen - Fool's Idol Archstone (cont.)

Once you've defeated the last of the gargoyles along this route, you'll reach a short staircase. Climb up that to another of the wide, circular platforms with a torch at the center. From there, you can head along a short outcropping to the right, then hop across onto the base of a huge stone pillar. Along its edge, you can obtain the **Flamberge** sword. Then you can return to the circular platform and proceed forward toward a tower that you will see in the distance. Here, another gargoyle attacks. Be ready for that and hit it with your magic or lure it back to the circular platform so that you have more room to move. Then when the gargoyle is done for, continue on to the tower and proceed toward the fog-covered door. Here, yet another gargoyle will attack. Take him out as you did the previous one.



Perhaps the risk is a bit much for some Old Spice.



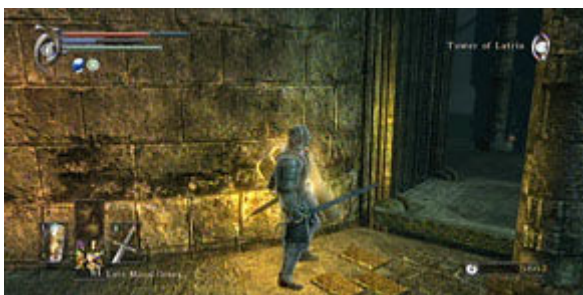
There's another gargoyle along the winding staircase that leads up the tower.

You're now ready to proceed through the fog-covered door, but you might not want to do so just yet. If you like, you can *carefully* edge along the brick work to the right (it's perilously thin) to grab some **Old Spice** from a corpse that waits there. Then you can shimmy back left and pass through the fog, then proceed safely toward the right.

As you advance, you'll find yourself ascending a staircase that wraps along the outer side of the narrow tower. You should be careful not to venture too far to the right as you climb or you'll fall to your death. Partway up the tower, you'll come to a flat landing before the stairs continue upward and toward the left. When you arrive, you should hold your shield ready. Taking another step or two will prompt the arrival of another gargoyle. As usual, you don't have nearly as much room as you might like to deal with the fellow, but by now you should be capable of taking him out with relative ease. Just remember that staying on the offense remains your best bet, since any attacks you block defensively will drain enough stamina that you could be left open to retaliation from the gargoyle.

Once you've advanced past the gargoyle, you'll be able to proceed toward the top of the tower. When you arrive, you'll

find an elevator. It may not be in place as you get there, so be careful that you don't rush forward and fall down a shaft. Once the lift does arrive at your level, you can dash across it to explore the short space just on the opposite side. There you'll find a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes**, which you should grab before finally riding the lift upward.



Make sure to ride the lift, not fall down the shaft.

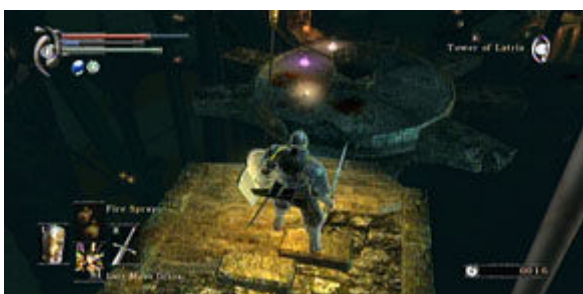


The worshipers don't offer much resistance as you slay them.

When you arrive at the top of the lift, you can step off onto another walkway. Here, you should hear the sound of flapping wings, which signifies the nearby presence of another gargoyle. It'll be attacking shortly, so be ready for that. If you remain near the lift, you can use stone columns to make it difficult for the gargoyle to attack you unless it lands. Using magic here is difficult because of the camera perspectives, so you'll likely have to rely primarily on melee attacks.

After killing the gargoyle, continue your ascent and you'll reach a large open space. There are more stairs ahead, but to the left you'll see some raggedy enemies with their hands lifted to the heavens in worshipful supplication. Together they are providing power to an object you don't want to remain activated. Though some may perceive the action as unkind, go ahead and mercilessly slaughter the defenseless worshipers to trigger a cutscene that depicts a huge chain falling away. This causes a distant tower to shudder, which was your goal. Now you should grab any nearby items from the corpses.

At this point, you may have some options. If this particular stage has a White Tendency, you can continue climbing stairs that lead upwards along the one side of the tower. Doing so will allow you to obtain an important key for use in the first portion of Latria Tower. There's a prisoner waiting there that you can free if you have the key. However, if you don't have the needed tendency just yet, your only option is to continue proceeding through the level. You'll find the means to do so to the side of where the worshipers were positioned. A set of straight stairs (not the winding ones that you climbed to ascend the tower) leads down toward a new area.



You can drop down from here if you want to explore the area that you see ahead of you (and you do).



Free the prisoner from his cage, then ride in it to reach the swamp below.

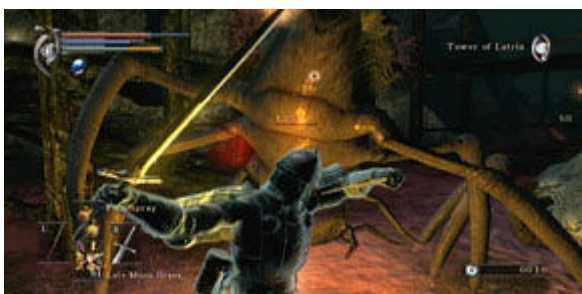
Descend along those stairs and you will reach another of the circular platforms with a torch burning at its center. You can investigate a corpse dangling along the left side for **Fresh Spice**, and you will also notice an open cage positioned along one extension. There's also a staircase descending toward the right.

If you want, you can step into the cage. Stand there for a moment and the gate will close. Then the cage will lower you to the swamp far below. However, that option will cause you to miss out on meeting an important character. You should instead descend the short staircase, then follow the ledge at its base until you reach the end. Here, if you peer over the side you should see a broken bridge area below. Drop carefully down to the bridge, then continue along it to reach a circular platform. Investigate a corpse lying along the left side to obtain a **Shard of Archstone**. To the right, you'll see another of the dangling cages, but this one is closed.

Archstone of the Tower Queen - Fool's Idol Archstone (cont.)

Approach the cage and you'll see a prisoner inside. When you talk to him, he'll ask if you have come to fight the demons and inform you that he is here for the same purpose. You'll have the option to free him, which you should go ahead and do. Once that's tended to, you can then either kill him or ignore him as he walks around the platform. If you choose the former option, you can return to this area later to find his powerful armor in a bag. A riskier option (but one that you may find more rewarding) is to let him live. Then when you defeat this area's boss (or the boss of another dungeon, perhaps), you'll be able to head back to the Nexus and find him wandering around on the second floor. Make sure that you check there immediately after defeating a boss. At that point, you'll definitely want to kill the fellow, or he'll go around killing the NPCs. If you kill him within the Nexus, you'll receive souls in addition to his armor.

Whatever you decide to do, you'll need to step into the cage where your unfriendly prisoner was held when you're ready to proceed. It will allow you to arrive in the same general area as the other cage that was positioned on the previous platform.



The hideous enemies try to mount a surprise attack, do don't be caught off guard!



There are lots of items near the base of the tree, just above the planking.

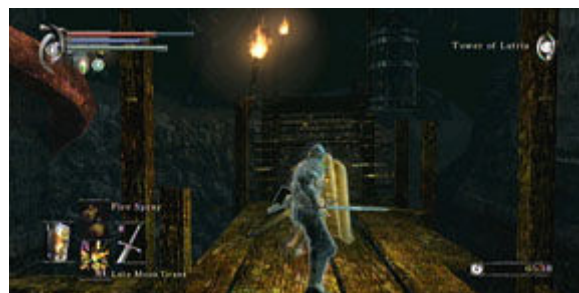
Once you arrive in the swamp after riding the prison cell down the chain, start around the tower as the grassy soup leads toward the left. Here you'll soon be approached by a few crawling enemies. They're gray and have really small, almost human heads. You can hack them apart easily enough with a series of melee attacks.

After dealing with those bizarre enemies, wade across the purplish soup to a nearby set of wooden stairs. You may have to look around awhile to find them, depending on which cage you rode down from the area above. Mostly, know that the steps are far toward your right if you stopped to free the prisoner and used his cage to arrive here in the swamp. As you explore, be ready for more of the gray bugs to leap from the planking above to attack. You can usually hear them skittering about before they pounce, so let that sound serve as the warning that enables you to avoid them. There also are some smaller bugs here, red in color, that you can easily hack apart.

Once you find your way onto the planking itself, clear the area of any remaining bugs and work your way around to some steps that lead upward yet again, toward the base of a huge tree. Here, you'll find that you can head toward the right to gather a few items that are glowing, or left for the same purpose. Go right first to find a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes** at a dead end, then left to find the **Renowned Soldier's Soul**. Past that, more planking takes off toward the left and you'll need to be prepared to take care of another of the gray bugs with human faces.



The insects that guard the Ring of Disease Resistance can be safely eliminated from a distance.



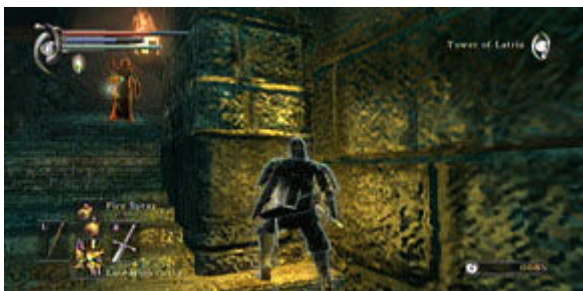
Beware: as you approach the cage and steps, three insects will attack at once.

Kill that bug and then proceed along the planking where it was positioned. You'll find another bug as you work your way

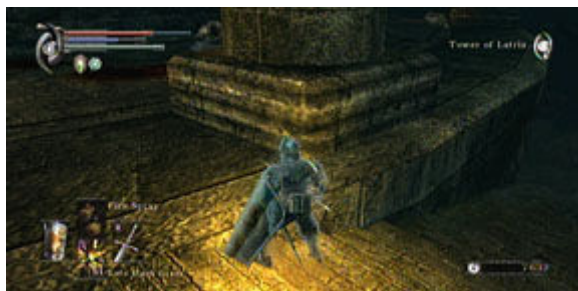
around, as well as a few branches in the path. Be sure to explore the outer reaches, as in this area you can defeat two more of the gray bugs near a dead-end at the base of another large tree to find a **Ring of Disease Resistance** waiting nearby. This is a useful item and should be equipped immediately, since the areas in the nearby vicinity love to inflict disease on careless adventurers.

After grabbing that ring, continue to investigate the area on this level of the planking and you'll find one leading toward another of the huge tree trunks. Along this one, you can skirt its side toward the left, just slightly uphill. There's more planking leading left from here, which wraps around toward a set of wooden steps leading upward past one of the cages like the one you rode down to the swamp. You may also notice a tentacle resting against the embankment to the left, and beyond that a fog-covered opening.

When you get to the area described, advance carefully. Make sure that your magic is full and as you head up the steps, you'll be approached by three of the gray insects at once. Back slowly away, pelting them with a steady stream of magic, and you should be able to survive the encounter. Fortunately, they can't approach you too aggressively because the ledge is so thin. Once you kill the insects, you can advance to the solid ground ahead.



The column can prevent your powerful foe from noticing you until you want him to.



Don't come around the pillar until you're ready for a fight!

Continue along the slope leading left and you'll see the fog-covered door, which you're now able to pass through. Before you do, though, continue left to grab the **Renowned Soldier's Soul** and some **Dark Moon Grass**. Now you should pass through that door.

On the other side, you'll find that the path forks. The right branch is almost immediately a dead end with nothing worth seeing. Head left and you'll be able to pass under a waving red tentacle arm, then start up some stairs. You'll notice that support columns line the right side of this pathway. Stick to the right wall while ascending and when you reach the first of those columns, duck behind it and then move the camera so that you can see the stairs ahead. Before long, you should see a cloaked form slowly descend, then turn around and start back up the stairs. Now you want to rush up and hack at him from behind. He's like the guards from the prison portion of the tower that you've already cleared, only his life meter is much longer. You'll have a more extended battle.

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Archstone of the Tower Queen - Fool's Idol Archstone (cont.)

Once that guard is defeated, you're free to continue up the staircase. When you reach the top of the stairs, you'll be on the left side of a huge stone pillar. On the right side are two more of the gray bugs. As you work your way around the pillar, they'll attack. Be ready for that by either having your magic prepared or a powerful shield quipped that can repel their physical attacks and allow you to follow up with melee strikes.



Backtrack for some precious moonlightstone items.



Hit the gargoyle with projectile magic for a brief respite.

After you kill those first two bugs, continue onward toward the place where some large red tentacles are lying across the path. Two more of the gray bugs will attack you along here, though they're more difficult to see coming because of the tentacles. Fortunately, you can use the architecture to your advantage to keep the insects from pouncing on you. That makes them relatively easy to defeat.

Investigate the area around the tentacles (near the right side, along a drop-off) to find **Fresh Spice** and **Old Spice** items. In this same area, your ruckus with the insects has likely startled one of those skittish enemies that you occasionally come across in some regions. He will have run away and plummeted to his death over the side of the ledge. If you want to get some easy loot, backtrack the way you came, down to the base of the trail just beyond the stairs. There, you can check the carcass of your suicidal enemy to find rare items such as **Chunk of Moonlightstone** and **Pure Moonlightstone**.

Now climb back to the area where you defeated that most recent group of gray insects, near the tentacles, and continue along the ledge. You'll see a new narrow ledge leading through an opening in the rock wall to the right. Torches line either side. As you advance along here, be careful to have your shield ready, or some projectile magic. When you pass through the opening in the rock, there's a gargoyle positioned to the immediate right. He'll try to take you down with projectile shots of his own. You need to either block those with your shield or fire some magic at him. Damage him enough and he'll flap away into the darkness, but don't be fooled; in a moment, he'll come running along the ledge toward you. You can back away to the wider platform and hit him with more magic, but be sure that you continue to block or dodge his shots.



Thumping heart, your time has come!



Grab the goods, then drop down to a portion of the level that you've already explored...

Once that sneaky gargoyle is toast, you can more proceed along the pathway that he was guarding. There are two more gargoyles along the way, though, so be ready to tend to them. At the other end of the platform, the path widens around a circular tower. You can head left to smash some jars and find **Storied Soldier's Soul** on some remains that wait just beyond. Then you should head back around to the right and continue in that direction to find another opening for a lift. Wait for the platform to arrive, then step onto it and ride it toward the top with your shield held ready.

The elevator comes out at the base of another staircase that wraps around the tower to the left. As you arrive, you'll likely hear the sound of another gargoyle off to the right. Certainly, you can stay to fight him if you like. By now you should be fairly adept at defeating the hateful gargoyles as you climb treacherous stairways. However, know that the area just at the top of this stairs is particularly important. You don't want to mess up just before reaching the top, so you may prefer just to run up there.

When you do arrive, you'll find another congregation of worshipers gathered around another large chain. Kill them as you did the previous group and the second chain will fall away. You'll be treated to a cutscene that depicts that happening, as well as the result: the thumping heart that you've heard in the distance while exploring this zone will collapse to the earth and split open. More of the gray insects with human faces will crawl out from the new opening.

From atop the tower, you should now head left along a walkway. This path leads back toward the beginning of the stage. You can find a corpse and item resting near the end, then drop down to the area below. You're one of those round platforms with a torch positioned at the center. Now it's just a straight shot back to the absolute beginning of the stage and the waiting archstone. Taking a trip back to the Nexus to resupply or to head to a safer place to pick up a few last souls and go up another level isn't a bad idea at all, especially since now you won't lose any real progress by doing so.



The spidery gray fellows now line the stairway leading down toward the tower's base.



You can loot the newly-available area for some serious treasure!

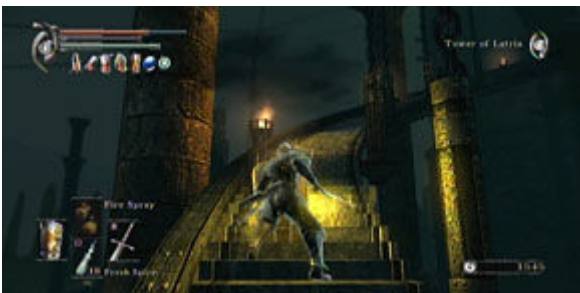
When you're ready to continue through the last leg of the stage, you need to head along the circular, torch-lined platforms until you reach the large circular tower. As you did when you arrived here at the beginning of the stage, you have options about where to proceed from there.

You should first exercise the option to head down the stairs leading to your right. When you were here before, you grabbed some items and fought a few gargoyles. Now there are new enemies lining the corridors: more of the gray-colored insects with tiny human heads. You should take them out with your usual caution, using projectile weapons and magic. Continue down along that low path until you reach the chamber that previously was a dead end with a strange substance blocking the path. Now that substance is gone and you can proceed to find some important items, guarded by a series of the gray insects. These new items include the **Ring of Avarice**, **Gold Mask** and **Epee Rapier**. You'll also find some spice and a bunch of **Storied Soldier's Soul** items, which are always welcome. The trip down here was definitely worthwhile.

«	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	»
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Archstone of the Tower Queen - Fool's Idol Archstone (cont.)

With those items gathered, you should now return to the fork in the path and this time continue climbing. You may recall that when you were here previously, another path had been blocked. As with the lower obstruction, this higher one has been removed. Now you can climb higher on the tower than you could before, which will take you to a new staircase.



Climb the steep staircase over the abyss, but watch for torch light up ahead.



There are valuable items left and right from the fog-covered door.

This staircase is easily identified because it rises steeply toward the heavens. As you climb it, you'll notice that the left side has a short lip but the right side is completely unguarded. You should veer toward the left as you climb so that you don't accidentally fall off that right edge.

Another thing to do as you climb is to watch for an enemy ahead. There will be one patrolling the stairs, a magic-using guard like the one that you avoided earlier in a stage by hiding behind a stone column. Here, there's no such column. You can watch for the guard because his torch that he uses while patrolling gives him away. Wait until the enemy turns around and starts back up the stairs, then rush up behind and hack at him. You likely won't damage him enough to kill him, so you should quickly retreat when your stamina runs low. Then let it return and move in to kill the guy.

When he's done for, you can continue climbing the stairs. Eventually, walls will form along both sides. Then you'll reach the very top. You can head back left now, along the top of the wall on the left side, to find a **Storied Soldier's Soul** at the end in that direction. Or you can continue right to find a wall of fog. Don't pass through it yet, though. First proceed to the far right, where you can find some **Old Spice**. This can be useful, since the best strategy for the coming battle is to

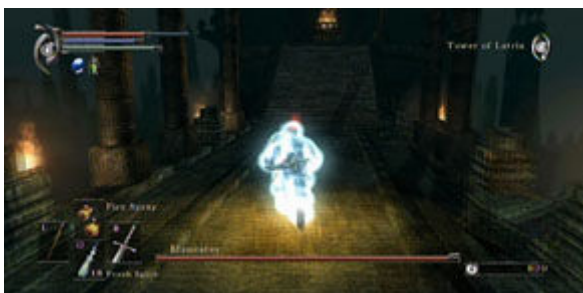
have plenty of magic power available. Now you should cast your most powerful defensive magic and step through the fog.

Boss Battle: Maneater

Prepare yourself for a battle when you step into the arena to face Maneater, as the fight you're about to enjoy can be one of the most difficult ones in the game. Strong magic makes it easier, but you'll still be in for a brawl.

When you first appear, you'll find yourself on a long pathway and there will be a large gargoyle stomping toward you. The pillar-lined pathway leads up to another of the area's circular platforms with a torch burning at the center, but you're probably best off ignoring that for a moment. Instead, make sure that you have your Warding spell activated (since otherwise the enemy can inflict fairly significant damage if you don't manage to block or dodge his attack), then target your enemy and start hitting him with Flame Toss spells. These are his weakness and will inflict more damage than any other methods.

The Flame Toss spell should slowly chip away at the rather long life meter. Stay near the area where you entered, healing as necessary and hitting him with the magic. If you have a reasonably long magic meter (around 200 should do the job), you should be able to take down most or all of your opponent's life meter. The key is to do so fairly quickly (meaning that you should be careful not to fire just as he's taking off into the air, since you tend to miss). There are times where he'll slowly stomp toward you and you can hit him two or three times, then quickly step back out of the way as he swings at you with his arms or howls and sends a sonic wave outward (fortunately, the latter has quite limited range).



Start by making a dash for the distant torch.



You can circle around it to limit your exposure to your enemy's attacks.

When you've battled for awhile, your enemy's life meter should be almost empty. At that point, a second of the beasts arrives. You'll likely see his life meter before you see him. He'll stomp at you from the far end of the arena, which is why it was a good plan to stay closer to the opening. Make sure that you quickly finish off the first fellow, since fighting two of these guys at once is suicide. Then you can turn your attention to the second one and repeat the general process.

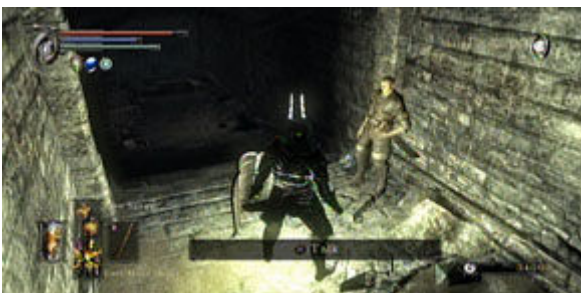
Some things to keep in mind: 1) try to stay near the approximate center of the path so that if you take two or three hits, you're not knocked off the edge and into the abyss; 2) Make sure that you keep your Warding spell active, as the fight lasts long enough that you may need to renew it a time or two; 3) If you find yourself running out of energy or magic, refueling in the middle of an encounter with Maneater can be fatal (make a run for the circular torch platform first and let that shield you while you recover).

This is a tough fight, but if you follow the above strategy (substitute swords and projectile weapons if that's how you're leveling up your character), you should be able to emerge victorious.

Once you defeat the boss, you receive **Mixed Demon's Soul** by touching the archstone. Then you should touch it again to return to the Nexus.

Archstone of the Shadowmen - Abjudicator Archstone

When you appear in this area, you'll be able to head forward and down some stairs (or you can make a short drop from the higher ledge). Here, you'll come across a more open area. If you advance into the space above, you need to be careful. There are flying manta enemies who have a habit of hitting you with their barbs from a distance before you can even see them. They'll fly around to the front side eventually, but by then they may have hit you a few times if you're not paying attention.



Graverobber Blige has some decent inventory, considering his location.

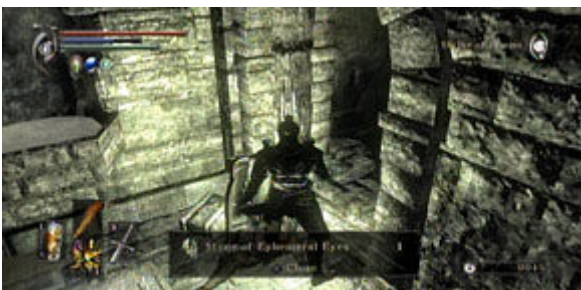


Fry the tall, liquid guys with fire magic.

Circling back from the stairs, there's a doorway leading into a narrow hallway. Along the left side, you can check the glowing spot on a corpse for some **Soul Remains**. If you met him in an earlier area, Graverobber Blige will be further along the hallway, near the right side. He has some materials that he can sell you, and also some weapons and the usual restorative items. Buy whatever you want, then press onward.

You'll now come to an important portion of this stage. At the end of the same hallway where you meet Blige, you can step on a large plate on the floor. This will cause the double doors ahead of you to open and will trigger a cutscene. The camera sweeps over an area ahead, which consists of a large balcony leading to a narrow opening along the far right side of the room. That corridor leads to a staircase that you can descend to reach a magic user who is summoning strange, liquid-type enemies to attack you. As you advance toward the opening, the magic user will continue to summon those creatures to assist him whenever you kill those already in action. Each one that you kill produces a substantial number of souls, so this is an easy place to do some level grinding if that's of interest to you.

Left from where you enter the room on the upper level, you can search a glowing corpse to find the **Kunai** weapon. When you're ready to proceed, you should move forward and take out the enemies close at hand, then keep advancing toward the stairs. Hopefully, you have some fire magic (two blasts from the Flame Toss spell should do the trick) and can attack all enemies a distance so that you don't have to get too close. As for your sorcerer friend below, you can stand on the balcony near the archway and pick him off from above with more of your fire magic. That way, you won't have to worry about his devastating magic-infused attacks.



From where you find the stone, head down one landing and check for a secret passageway.

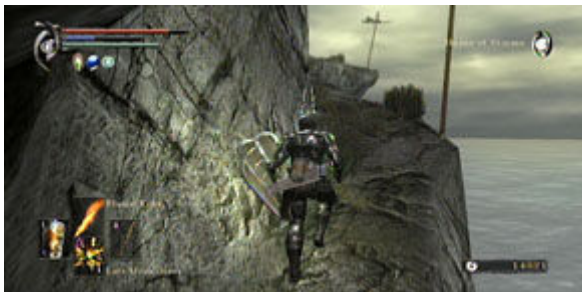


Proceed cautiously. A tough enemy awaits just outside that door frame!

When you defeat the sorcerer, you can either take the stairs or you can drop down from the balcony to his area below. You'll find some **Full Moon Grass** and an **Unknown Soldier's Soul** on the corpses around the area. Enemies that you've slain may also drop Darkmoon Stone shards. Now look to the pedestal where the sorcerer was standing. There's an altar there with a floor switch behind it. You're not ready to activate that just yet, but you'll be returning shortly and should keep its location in mind.

For now, there are some precious items that you might want to add to your inventory. Head around the base of the stairs near the pedestal, along the left side. There's an archway there and you can climb some stairs to find a corpse at the top. Carefully move to the corpse and check it to receive a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes**, but don't touch the trap plate positioned on the floor nearby. Now head back down the stairs you just ascended, to the next landing down. Here, you can strike the wall along the right side (you should see markings that suggest an archway, barely visible along the brickwork) with your weapon to reveal a hidden passageway.

Before proceeding along that passage, cast the Warding spell (if you have it) and prepare yourself to use fire magic. As you proceed in this new direction, you'll come to one of the powerful enemies with two swords. You should try to hit him with fire magic from a distance, then finish him off if necessary with some melee attacks from up close. Once he goes down, check his body for any items he leaves behind. He'll sometimes drop some valuable Pure Bladestone, though more often he only parts with chunks.



Make your way along the cliffs while avoiding manta attacks from the clouds to the right.



Patches thinks that you should look in a deep pit to find treasure.

With that enemy gone, you're still not entirely safe in this area. Ahead, more of the flying manta enemies will be circling in the air over the rocky outcropping. There are several of them and they tend not to get close enough for you to hit them with your magic. You should carefully check the end of the outcropping to find a **Storied Soldier's Soul**.

Now you should look toward the area to the left from where you just defeated the dark skeleton. If you head in that direction, you'll find that there's a narrow walkway leading along the face of the cliff. As flying manta enemies attack you (though less frequently if you equip cloaking magic or are wearing the Thief's Ring), you'll be able to head in this direction to find one of the skittish enemies that flees upon your approach. Try to take it out from a distance before that can happen. Continuing in that same direction, the trail loops back on itself and you'll eventually reach a corpse with **White Bow** and **White Arrow** ammunition. Grab those goods, then drop down to collect a **Storied Soldier's Soul**. Continue around the bend and you'll find yourself back at the first doorway you entered upon arriving in this area (just ahead of the doors that led to the sorcerer). Now you're ready to return to the general area of the altar.

Once you arrive there, head down from that pedestal and follow the room around along its right side. Here, you should meet with Patches (whom you may recall from a previously cleared area). Talk to him and he will tell you of incredible treasure at the bottom of a nearby pit. If you go over it to examine the hole he's talking about—and you should—Patches will kick you through the opening.



You'll find an enemy and some treasure in the pit.



Don't forget to talk to the NPC positioned near the shallow pool at the pit's side.

You'll land in a rather open pit below. There are goodies scattered around the floor here, but you shouldn't worry about those just yet. After all, you're not alone down here. If you turn around from where you landed and look behind you, there's an enemy that you can target. You should first cast the Warding spell, if you have it, then go ahead and approach. Note that there's a stalagmite along the floor here that you can put between yourself and your enemy if you need a short break from his attacks to recharge. Otherwise, a good strategy is to move in close and block his attacks with your shield, then slash him a few times yourself. Now back away with your shield raised as you let your stamina return, then repeat the process. You can also pelt him with fire magic if you prefer.

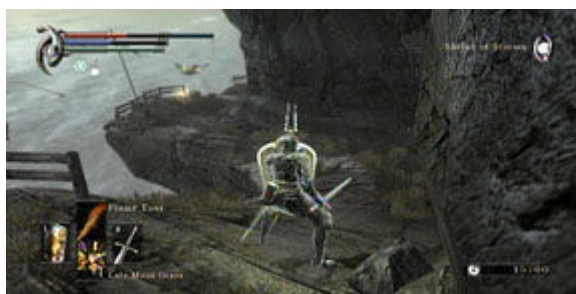
Archstone of the Shadowmen - Abjudicator Archstone (cont.)

Once that dungeon companion is done for, you can go ahead and collect the surrounding loot. There's the magical sword, **Makoto** (it will be out of reach if your world tendency isn't white enough), as well as **Crescent Moon Grass** and **Shard of Darkmoonstone** items. You'll also find another NPC in this area. Be certain that you talk to him. He will express his delight at your arrival. Now you can head along the outer area of this pit, past where you just defeated the enemy, and there's a door along the side. Pass through it and climb the stairs.

There's an **Unknown Soldier's Soul** on a corpse partway up the stairs. Beyond that you'll reach a switch on the floor. Stepping on it causes the passageway ahead to open up and you'll find yourself facing Patches again. Talk to him now and he will be very sorry for his nasty trick (which was meant to end with your death, as you may recall). He'll hand over the **Ring of Gash Resistance** to show just how sorry he is. Now you can return to the altar where you fought the sorcerer. Remember the plate behind it? Step on that now to open doors on the opposite end of the chamber that lead back outside.



You'll startle a trio of skeletons as you proceed along the narrow trail.



Don't rush toward treasure along the trail or you'll announce your presence to golden skeletons.

When you pass through the new opening and into the light, you should have the Thief Ring's equipped (or cloaking magic active) so that you don't attract any unwanted attention. The flying manta enemies continue to patrol the skies ahead and they'll definitely take shots at you if they notice your presence. Besides that, you'll need to deal with skeletons.

From the wide opening, head toward the right and you'll find a narrow trail. This works its way slowly along the cliff and as you proceed along it, you'll find yourself going up against the afore-mentioned skeletons. The first one is a swordsman and will approach as you get near. Hack him apart in the usual fashion. After him, you'll attract the attention of an archer-type unit. You can hit him from a distance with magic to easily remove him, then move a little bit closer to cause another soldier to rush you. Defeat him and then continue slowly along the trail. As you round a bend, you'll notice two golden skeletons ahead. Make sure that you don't get too close to them, as they'll approach when they spot you. If possible, you want to fight only one at a time. Be careful of their powerful strikes.

When you've dealt with the skeletons, you can safely keep moving along the trail to grab **Storied Soldier's Soul** from the glowing corpse where the path briefly widens. Past the skeletons, you'll find a fog-covered doorway that you can enter to arrive at a narrow passageway.



Watch out for this guy's powerful beam or you'll be toast.



It's not a bad idea to run down along the paths until you arrive outside again.

Before you pass through the fog, cast the Warding spell to improve your defenses. Make sure that you have a strong

shield equipped, also. Enter the fog, then hold up your shield as you advance along the passageway. There are items lining the sides, but for now you should ignore them. When you reach a wall, you'll find that the trail continues descending toward your left. Move in this direction and you should see glowing light start to form. This is a powerful beam that will inflict serious damage if it connects without your shield absorbing the blow. Make sure that you are prepared and that your shield takes the worst of it, then hit him with melee weapons until he collapses.

Though you've taken out that threat, you're still not safe. Now you need to continue quickly down the passage. There will be more enemies like that first one appearing shortly, summoned by a sorcerer that waits further down the path. Rather than continuing to slowly advance while fighting a gauntlet of the powerful summon creatures, you should rush down to where the sorcerer is waiting and tend to him with either some fire magic or a few quick melee strikes. He's near the bottom of the cavern, so you'll have to make several turns to reach his hiding place. You may prefer to simply keep going, since when you reach the very bottom you'll find a fog-covered door that you can easily pass through to return outdoors.

If you do decide to stay and fight, know that the sorcerer isn't your only enemy. There's also another guy that you can't see at all. You'll know he's around if you hear laughter trailing behind you. Rather than standing to make a fight of it against someone you can't even see, you may prefer to simply exit through the fog-covered door that we've already mentioned. Right now, it's better to save your available resources for the area boss and for fights that are more difficult to avoid.



There's another guy who will fire a beam near the end of this passageway, next to a sorcerer.



You're safe from attacks while in the mossy passage.

When you emerge from the doorway, you'll find yourself ready to start along another narrow trail leading along the cliff. Fortunately, no enemies will attack you here. You can continue out in the open for awhile until you reach another opening. Before you enter here, you should use Warding magic if you have it and have sufficient magic points, since the next area is a bit dangerous.

Enter the cavern and run forward along the narrow path. You'll find another of the semi-transparent enemies along here, but you can take him out with either fire magic or sword strokes. Continuing beyond that, the path curves sharply left. Here, you'll find another of the enemies that fires a powerful beam in your direction. Make sure that you block it with the shield, then use magic to take out the guy that was firing it. If you keep moving onward from there, you should be sure to watch the path to your left. There's a recess along the path where another sorcerer is hiding. When you get close, you need to be ready to take him out with either melee attacks or still more fire magic. When he goes down, his cohorts will also and then you can breathe easier again.

«	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	»
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Archstone of the Shadowmen - Abjudicator Archstone (cont.)

From where you killed that sorcerer, the path leads downward and toward the left. You'll now wind your way through a narrow, moss-covered passageway that curves erratically as it descends toward a lower area. There's a **Storied Soldier's Soul** along the way that you should grab, then shortly after that the path widens abruptly as you arrive at the edge of a large, circular chamber.



Slugs and explosive lights make a dangerous combination.



Along the right side of the lower level, you can find treasure such as the Ronin Ring.

Though it doesn't immediately look it, this area is quite dangerous. As you proceed forward, you'll notice a lower area that looks like a gray soup. Here, slugs are bathing among the muck. On higher ground, swirling lights are circling around a pedestal area ahead of you.

Your first priority should be getting a feel for the manner in which the lights move. They follow a pattern, so you should be able to avoid them. When one gets near you, it will begin to expand and then explode. The blast inflicts severe damage and if you survive it, there's a chance that you'll fly like a rag doll and may land in the lower area where the slugs are positioned. You definitely don't need that!

Advance toward the area and watch the lights as you tend to the slugs from the safety of the upper ledge. You shouldn't have much trouble eliminating them with fire magic if you're not forced to their level. You can cautiously destroy each one, or you can simply veer left along the passageway to find a route that leads away from most (but not all) of the dangerous critters and lights. Remember that you can also head back to the moss-covered passage and equip rings to slowly refill your health and magic. Make multiple trips into the room, eliminating a few slugs each time, and you should be able to safely collect loot along the lower levels when all is said and done. There should be lots of **Sticky White Stuff** on snail corpses, as well as **Shard of Suckerstone** items. Near the right portion of the chamber, under a low archway that is patrolled by several slugs that are difficult to see, you can also loot a corpse to find **Ronin's Ring** (it prevents weapons from wearing out as quickly) and **Hiltless** (a powerful sword that damages its user).

When you're done grabbing goodies, you can head along that left stone path to find a narrow opening that leads to some stairs. At the top of those stairs you'll find a fog-covered opening that grants admittance to the area boss arena. Prepare yourself as needed, making sure to equip the Thief's Ring, then enter.

Boss Battle: Old Hero

The flow of battle with this fellow will as usual depend on whether you're going with ranged or melee techniques. If it's the latter, you'll need to make quick rushes to strike, then retreat. Your opponent has attacks that can cause wide area damage and will sometimes use two or three of them in a row, so you need to back away before he uses one after taking damage.

As a magic user (or an archer), things will go simply. You just need to keep a distance and strike with your ranged attacks, whether those be magical or otherwise. There are pillars that you can use to block attacks, or to at least make yourself harder to reach, and you can occasionally duck out from them to fire shots.



The numerous stone pillars provide terrific defense.



If you're fighting properly, you should often find yourself firing shots at your enemy from behind and from a very safe distance!

Target your foe by pressing 'R3' so that you can keep tabs on him, but don't be afraid to snap away from that if you need to get a better feel for where you are going. The fight will go bad quickly if you get stuck in a corner, so make sure that

you move around rather swiftly and have your healing items ready for use.

One final note is that your foe is deaf, which is where the Thief's Ring comes in. If you don't make too much noise and you stay behind cover most of the time, you'll be a much more difficult target for your rival. That should be enough to allow you to last through the fight when otherwise you might not. Another nice part of this fight is that your opponent doesn't move around a whole lot. When you see him looking down the center of the main aisle and squirming around, he's probably going to rush you. Make a little noise where you're at, then quickly sprint and roll to the opposite side of the aisle. Run along some pillars there, then turn around and if the old hero rushed, you'll now be a safe distance away from him. Now you can heal—if needed—and pelt him with magic a few times before repeating the process.

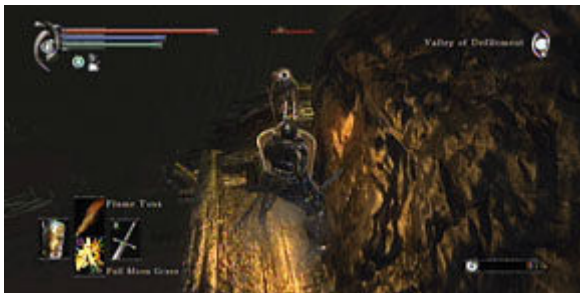
After you defeat the boss, you can explore the passage. There's a **Legendary Hero's Soul** on the altar that you first saw upon entering, plus you can find some healing items and arrows elsewhere. Then you should touch the archstone to receive the **Hero Demon's Soul**. Touch it again after that to return to the Nexus.

Back in the Nexus, look for Urbain (the NPC you may have freed in the pit) and you can learn the Second Chance miracle, if that's of interest to you. It can automatically revive you one time if you fall in battle with the miracle activated. Handy!

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Archstone of the Chieftain - Leechmonger Archstone

Most of this stage harms you simply by existing. Before you enter, you should make sure that you have a Regeneration Ring equipped (to refill health that will frequently be drained as you work through the zone), Gloom Armor pieces (gained by defeating Yurt, who is found and freed in the second Tower of Latria area) equipped and the Abjicator Shield equipped. That combination will essentially nullify the poisonous effects of the swamp that you'll be exploring, plus you should bring along fire magic and a weapon that uses that element, such as the Dragon Longsword +1 that is located in the zone just ahead of where you battle Flamelurker (look near the volcano area). That's a lot of preparation, but it will make the stage much simpler.



You'll encounter the first goblin along the narrow planking.



There are more of them once you drop down to the lower area.

Once you're ready, it's time to start working through the swamp. When you appear in the entrance, you'll find yourself wading through a narrow ravine. Follow this pathway for awhile and you'll come to a precipice. Ahead, there's heavy rainfall that obscures your vision. To the right, you can walk along some narrow planking positioned against the side of a cliff wall. Head along that planking and you'll find the area's first enemy, who can easily be fried with fire magic or slashed with a few quick melee attacks.

As you follow the planks past that fellow, you'll soon come across an area where there are several short drops leading off toward the left while the main path continues to the right. The area to the right is a dead end at present, though later you can come back around (the long way) and drop a plank. That plank will then serve as a shortcut through the stage if you have to make numerous attempts to clear the zone on the way to the area boss. It's a nice convenience, but of course it's not yet active. That means that you should follow the short series of drop-offs for now.

At the bottom, you'll see a wide expanse of swamp. Venturing through this will damage you and will make things difficult, particularly if you don't have the proper equipment. However, you can generally wade for short distances before poison takes effect. Thus, you can find solid ground throughout your excursion and can use healing items (or just wait for your healing equipment to catch up to any damage that you may have taken). Before you do any of that, though, you'll want to take care of two nearby goblins. Both are weak to fire magic, so use that if you have any to spare.



You'll find many precious souls along the wooden planking near the swamp's right edge.



Once you can get there, the little island is a good place from which to attack slimes.

Before you advance in the direction of the small islands leading across the center of the swamp, you can head to the right through the soup. In this direction, you'll find wooden scaffolding that bars you from going further. Along its base is a Regeneration Ring, if you don't already have one and don't want to buy one (though by now, that's likely not the case). There also are plenty of valuable soul items up for grabs. If those are of interest, you can proceed along the planking to collect them, but it's slow going. You're better off returning to the area to the left, where you can more regularly find dry land to make your navigation go more quickly.

Diagonally left from where you find the Regeneration Ring is an area where numerous slime creatures circle a patch of dry land with wooden kindling all over it. You can step onto that and then send a bunch of fire spells to the slimes to slowly whittle down their substantial numbers. There are more soul items here, plus the slimes frequently drop lotus items that will help to cure status ailments throughout the remainder of the stage (useful particularly if you came here without the recommended equipment).

Defeat those slime creatures, or simply move carefully past them. Soon you should see another small island, but this one is patrolled by more fearsome foes than the slimes. There are three small goblins that may rush you (try to lure them out one at a time), plus a larger one is waiting for you to get close so that he can make your life difficult. The larger fellow will rush you after the first bit of fire magic hits him, so if that's your tactic you'll want to make sure that you switch to a melee weapon after the first or second hit lands. Otherwise, you'll be in a poor position to defend yourself when the massive goblin gets up in your face.



Just past the large goblin, you'll find a fog-covered archway.



You can climb a series of planks guarded by insects and goblins, but wading is safer.

Once you've taken care of goblins large and small, head across the little island and you will find some planking that leads along a stone outcropping. Head along this planking and you'll come to a fog-covered archway. This is a good time to rest up and use any healing items that you deem necessary. When you're ready, pass through the fog.

On the other side of that opening, you'll find the path ascending to the left while to the right you can proceed through more of the soupy marsh. The path to the left is actually the dangerous one, since it leads along scaffolding from which you can fall to your death. You're probably better off wading through the muck just to the right, keeping close to the base of the scaffolding (kill any insects that attack with weak fire magic) until you come to another large patch of land. Note that if this stage has a white tendency, you can also find a woman named Selen on a small island off to the right. She'll ask you to find her brother. Talk to her if she's there, then head back toward the scaffolding's base and continue to the patch of land on its far side.

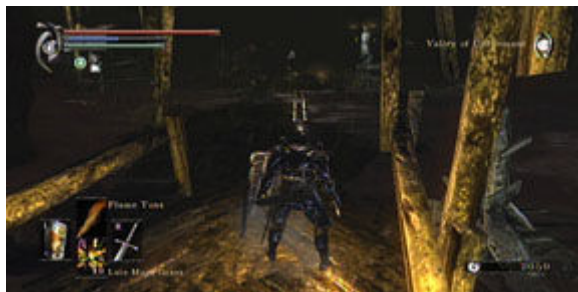
If you decide to go left instead of wading through swamp water to the right, watch for airborne insects as you begin to ascend the planking. Though you can use your standard fire magic to toast them, that can consume a fair bit of your meter. A better technique is to use the Fire Spray spell that you obtained from Sage Freke. This will hit numerous enemies while allowing you to move and barely consuming any of your precious magic meter. There are two insects, then a goblin, then several more insects as you continue your climb. When you find yourself working through a procession of goblins, it's time to start paying attention. After you defeat two or three of them, you need to keep an eye on the left side of the path. There's a space here from which goblins will appear. If you let them surprise you, they could knock you from the planking and send you plummeting to the area far below. That will prove fatal if it happens.

Therefore, you should either equip the Thief's Ring so that you can sneak past undetected, or you should just rush by them so that they drop down after you've already left them in your dust.

Past that potential ambush, the path will again descend toward the swampy area below. It will come to a large patch of solid land, which is where you should have arrived if you followed our suggestion and waded through the muck rather than working your way along the raised scaffolding.



Fire magic works when the leeches are advancing toward you.



Powerful goblins await on the island ahead of the area's second fog-covered archway.

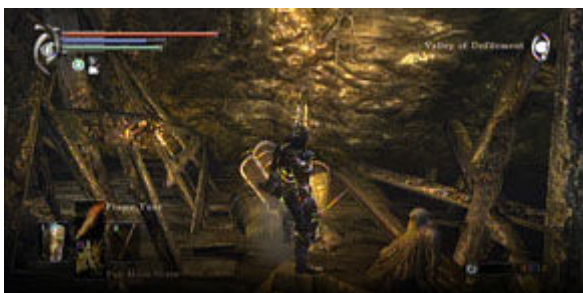
As you reach that patch of land, whether by the high route or the low one, you'll be greeted by more of the flying insects. Take care of them the same way you did the ones before them, then continue along the planking that lies at water level. In this direction, you'll progress along several more small bits of land before reaching several leech enemies. These guys have tough shells that are impervious to attack when you try to hit them from a distance, but if you move in closer the leeches will slither to meet you. That's your chance to hit them with fire magic or with flame-enhanced weapons.

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Archstone of the Chieftain - Leechmonger Archstone (cont.)

Past the leeches, you'll want to advance slowly. There's another small island ahead and it's guarded by giant goblins. You should make sure that your Thief's Ring is equipped. Then you can move just within range, fire off some magic and retreat. The goblin should return to its post, allowing you to repeat the process and slowly eliminate the goblin. Be ready in case something goes wrong and the giant goblin chases after you, in which case you'll need to be ready for a tougher fight (Warding magic is your friend if that happens).

When the goblin goes down, you should advance cautiously again, as there will be another giant goblin. You should be able to take him on with the same attack-and-retreat tactic that worked on his fellow. Then you can proceed slowly and pick off two more enemies with fire magic or arrows from afar. Now go ahead and pass through the fog-covered opening.



The Filthy Woman is back to sell you some merchandise if you're interested.



Thus perished the four goblins.

On the other side of that opening, you'll find yourself on more planking. There's a narrow path leading through shanties constructed of wood here. You'll also notice an opening along the planking to the right, where you can drop down to the marsh level again if you so choose.

You can head along the planking to find the merchant woman that you will likely recognize from the first section of this region. She's positioned along the left side of the walkway. Talk to her and you can buy any items that interest you, including the various components of the Meridian Armor, if you don't have it already. Her prices are absurd, though, as

usual.

Past the old woman, the wooden walkway descends toward the swamp level once more. You can find some healing grass to the left, but watch the bank ahead first. As you approach, another goblin will stagger to meet you. Take him out however you like, then collect the restorative item if you want it. Now you should climb up the planking past where the goblin was positioned.

You're now going to make your way along the wooden walkway, being mindful of more goblins that populate this area. Proceed cautiously and be ready to defend yourself. They will crawl out of pretty much any shadow or space you see, and even some that you don't. Most of them are just the standard goblins, so you should move around with your shield held ready and a sword handy. Then when you're attacked—sometimes by two or three at a time—it's no real problem. You can deflect attacks, then follow up with a quick series of strikes and take out pretty much anyone you encounter.



This journey along the side of the cliff will save you from having to backtrack later.



Knock down this plank and you'll activate that all-important shortcut!

Your path through the area will take you slowly upward as planks loop back on one another. Along the way, watch out for magic-wielding goblins that can poison you with clouds of acid, but otherwise you shouldn't even come close to having a problem. When you reach the very top region, you'll see stairs leading toward twin torches that are positioned on either side of a fog-covered opening. This is the boss arena, but you shouldn't head there just yet. First, there's the matter of making sure that if you need to return to this stage later, you've activated the handy shortcut near the beginning of the stage.

To do that, look along the planking that's positioned along the edge of the cliff. You'll see some narrow planks leading off along a path in that direction. You should follow those planks, with magic ready for use. As you proceed, you'll soon find yourself facing some flying insects. Eliminate them in the usual fashion, being careful not to let them get near enough to knock you from your precarious perch. Then press onward. You'll need to continue in this direction, battling a few more insects and also some goblins. There's also one of the enemies that likes to run away as you begin to approach. Kill it with projectile attacks if you can spare them. If you look down at the swamp to the right, far below, there are also some of the large goblins on a little island. You're in a perfect position from which to kill them with fire magic, if you wish. After all the trouble those goblins have given you so far, you'll likely be sorely tempted.

Continue along the planking and soon you'll reach the end of the pathway, where there's a final plank in a vertical position. Approach it and press the 'X' button to "Operate" it. The plank will fall across the gap. Now you can continue straight forward to reach that first open ledge at the very beginning of the stage, or you can return to the fog-covered opening where the boss awaits you.

Before passing through that opening, you should make the usual preparations. Remember to cast the Warding spell, and make sure that you have enough magic energy to survive an extended battle. Use the Stone of Ephemeral Eyes if you are in spirit form. Now pass through the fog to face the boss.

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Archstone of the Chieftain - Leechmonger Archstone (cont.)

Boss Battle: Dirty Colossus

If you have fairly powerful magic, this attack will go much more smoothly than you might anticipate. At first it can seem like you're going up against a capable opponent, but he's actually a bit of a pushover compared to his peers.

When you first appear in the arena, run forward toward a central platform where your enemy awaits. As you get near, he will issue forth swarms of flies. These tend to come in three or four blasts at a time and can easily be avoided by rolling to or moving quickly to either side. In general, you should keep circling back and forth so that you're a less vulnerable target. If you have your enemy targeted, you'll have an especially easy time maneuvering.

Once the flies have swarmed away, hopefully none have hit you. If some did, you can backtrack a bit toward the edge of the area and burn them off using the flaming torches positioned along the sides. Since the flies only do limited damage and this fight can go fairly quickly, you might also choose to ignore the flies and just keep fighting. If you have enough healing items, that could actually work quite well.



You should target your enemy with fire-based attacks once his fists are out of the way of his vulnerable stomach.



When you're covered in black, the flies will leech your health.

The Dirty Colossus demon is only vulnerable to his stomach. When you target him with 'R3,' that's the area that should automatically be highlighted. However, you can't just fling fire magic at him whenever you like. He'll often cover his weak point with his arms, so you have to watch for his limbs to move away. That's when you can fire a shot or two and hope to connect. Then you need to be ready to dodge out of the way because attacks are likely on their way.

If you've made your magic powerful enough, the fight should go easy and you won't even need to refill your meter. If you're stuck using melee attacks, you're going to have to move in close and attack, then quickly back away because your opponent can sometimes slam his fists down on the ground and you don't want to be there when that happens. Fortunately, he doesn't actually inflict a lot of damage. Regardless of your approach, you should be able to do quite well for yourself without using anything more than a few healing items.

After you defeat the boss, you can touch the archstone to receive the **Eroded Demon Soul**. Touch the archstone again after that to warp back to the Nexus. Once you arrive, you can take your newly-acquired soul to Sage Freke to learn the 'Acid Cloud' spell, which corrodes enemy armor and weapons. Sweet!

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Archstone of the Burrow King - Flamelurker Archstone

Though it may seem odd, you should venture deeper into the Archstone of the Burrow King before returning to the Archstone of the Small King. Otherwise, entering that other area will find you with your path obscured by impenetrable mist.

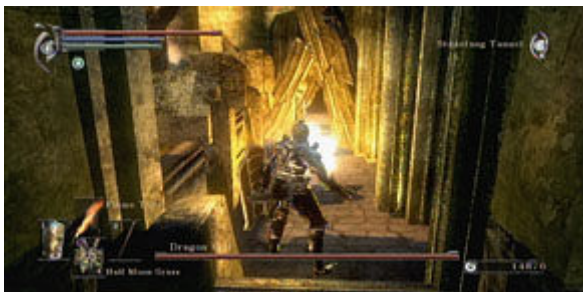
After following the Flamelurker archstone, you'll appear where you defeated Flamelurker. Ahead, you can wander down a long hallway to reach a fog-covered door. Pass through it and you'll find yourself in the arena with the area boss.

Boss Battle: Dragon God

When you first appear, you'll be at one end of a short hallway. Ahead, you should see a massive dragon. It's only partially visible through some stone pillars and at first it won't harm you.

Move quickly forward and get behind one of the pillars. If you have a white world tendency, from here you can head left for an item. Otherwise, your next goal is to proceed along the path leading to the right. The problem is that debris blocks

it. As you head in that direction, the dragon will attack by slashing at the platform with his claws. If you get struck by one of those, you'll take substantial damage, though likely not enough to kill you. Then you can hack away the debris (or slowly tear it apart with magic from a distance) and continue along the path leading right. There are some healing grass items and a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes** resting on corpses along this route.



First you need to break through rubble to find two spear guns.



Then you need to hack away the dragon's horn.

When you reach the far end of that path, you'll find yourself on a wider ledge with a spear gun. You can step up to its side for the option to operate it with the 'X' button, which will launch a powerful spear at the dragon for massive damage.

Your next step should be to climb down some stairs that now will be plainly visible toward the left. When you get to their base, you'll have to head along another platform. As you do, the dragon will breathe fire if he spots you making those rushes. The easiest way to avoid getting caught up in the blaze is to take shelter behind each stone column that lies between you and the dragon. Then from your shelter, you can throw some magic at the debris blocking your progress. A few blasts should take care of each bit.

When you reach the far left side of this ledge, there's another of the spear-shooting machines. Operate it as you did the previous one and now the dragon is almost dead. His head will come crashing down on a ledge below. You'll need to head down some stairs leading right, and from there onto an open ledge with a trail leading down to where the dragon's maw has settled.

You're now at the most dangerous part of the fight. You need to hack away the dragon's horn to finally kill it, but you need to wait between bursts of scalding steam that will damage you if they connect. Wait for one such burst of steam to conclude, then run up right against the tip of the horn and hack at it. If the blow properly connects, the dragon will convulse briefly before returning to its position. You have to land several blows to finish off the beast.

Once you defeat the Dragon God boss, touch the archstone that appears along the ledge. You'll receive the **Dragon Demon's Soul**, as well as **Pure Dragonstone**. Touch the stone again to return to the Nexus.

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Archstone of the Small King - Tower Knight Archstone

From where you appear after passing through the archstone, you can head forward toward a fog-covered entryway. Some of the fog extends to the ground level, as well. If you're at this stage too early, starting through that mist prompts a message to the effect that only those who have slain the Archdemon may pass onward. To proceed, you must first defeat the boss in the third section of one of the other worlds. We recommend the Archstone of the Burrow King's boss. Once you've defeated him, then will you be allowed to proceed.



Birds in this game seem to love gathering near disaster and wooden carts.



Goodness gracious, great balls of fire!

Once you arrive at the mist with all requirements met, you'll trigger a cutscene. The gate will open and you'll see an obese enemy with a nasty face and top hat bow before you, then vanish. You're now free to advance along a wide passageway lined by closed doors and windows.

Continue along that path to arrive at the edge of a plaza with carts and a bunch of ravens gathered around a pile of rubble and corpses. As you approach, wild dogs will attack. They are easily defeated by first blocking their pounces, then hacking them to bits. When the threat is neutralized, you can investigate the charred remains to find three **Storied Soldier's Soul** items. There's also a narrow alleyway snaking its way to the right from the corner of this area, near a corpse that you can check for some **Late Moon Grass**, but it's blocked by a locked gate and you don't yet have the key. You'll come back later.

Continuing left from the entrance to that alleyway, you'll see a wide staircase gradually ascending with buildings on either side. As you start up those stairs, watch the way ahead. Some rolling balls of flame will start down toward you. The easiest way to avoid them is to quickly dash toward the left, behind a recess in the wall so that the balls roll harmlessly past. Then you can proceed toward higher ground.



This fellow makes for a hideous tour guide...



There are plenty of soldiers to kill through the grated gates.

As you advance, you'll next come upon several enemies gathered rather obviously on the landing just ahead of the staircase that you're climbing. You can pelt them with magic from a distance, or just draw close. A cutscene is triggered in which the fat guy that greeted you at the first gate leads his companions away from your approach and the portcullis comes down to block our path. Following that scene, head up to where the portcullis has descended and find a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes**. Now head back down and you should notice a passage that branches off from the side of the stairs.

When you get near this point, you'll have to deal with several soldiers. They're in confined space and should go down without much trouble, but keep in mind that they're quite willing to block your melee attacks. If they do, you'll lose a lot of stamina, so it seems to work best if you attack with magic or trick them into wild attacks and retaliate after their swinging attacks miss you.

After defeating those soldiers, proceed along the passage that they were guarding. You will likely encounter another few goons who weren't quite drawn out by your battle with their fellows. Then you should reach a more open area again with some tables that you can smash toward the left and past that a walkway leading along a balcony.



You might want to come back for these items after eliminating a pesky archer.



The archer isn't so tough now!

If you follow that balcony toward its edge, you can look out over an area with several corpses lying around a series of drop-offs. There's an archer down below, so hold a shield ready if you peer around the protection of the short wall. You can drop down to find some **Full Moon Grass** and an **Unknown Hero's Soul** (though beware of a soldier that lurks behind a stack of crates on the lower level), or you can ignore the loot for now and head along a staircase that descends toward the left. This is the safest course of action, plus you can circle around later to pick up what you missed.

Down the narrow stairs that wait to the left of where you can drop off to find those items, you'll find a soldier waiting. You can tend to him with ease on that narrow space, then continue descending as the stairs turn right. You're now in the lower plaza area, down from where you could have dropped down to grab the afore-mentioned items. That of course means that you're again exposed to the archer, who will once more happily fire arrows at you. You should ascend the stairs ahead of you carefully now and you will see an area where you can crash through some tables to take care of the archer while ahead of you, more soldiers await on some stairs.

Fighting both groups of enemies at the same time is risky, as the archer may shoot you while you deal with the sturdy soldiers. If you can, it's best to deal with enemies one at a time, possibly taking them out with projectile weapons or magic (starting with the archer). Then you can't find yourself with your stamina drained. Once you clear the area of any immediate threat, it's safe to grab any items you may have left behind a moment ago.



The treasure at the end of this corridor is a trap!



The soldiers here are surprisingly deadly.

When you're ready to proceed, continue up the stairs but watch at the head of the stairs because there may be a soldier waiting there to push a flaming boulder down toward you. You'll obviously want to avoid that if you see it coming, then move past it to defeat the soldier who sent it your way.

Continuing up those stairs, keep your shield ready in case any soldiers are waiting in ambush. You'll find a short, dead-end passage to the left as you climb (which is probably empty by now, since you've likely killed the soldier that normally would be positioned there), then just after that a short passage to the right. Along this one, an archer is likely waiting. Have your shield ready to block his shot, then move in close and finish him off with your melee weapon or some magic. Now keep climbing.

The next passageway leading to the right from the main ascending staircase is a little longer and there's a corpse at the end. You can search it for a **Slave's Shield**, but be careful. As you start down the passage, you should hear what sounds like someone dropping down behind you. That's precisely what it is, too. Turn around and be ready to fight, as a soldier will rush you. Hack him apart, grab the item, then return to the stairs and continue your ascent.

Archstone of the Small King - Tower Knight Archstone (cont.)

You'll now come into a wider plaza area with a short stone wall directly ahead of you. To the left is a fog-covered door, though you won't be entering that just yet. Look across a gap and you'll see several archers gathered on the opposite side. You can fire at them with your weapons or magic if you like, but be careful to do so only after blocking a volley of arrows. Take out all of the archers, restore your health if you like, then cast Warding to protect yourself as you start toward the right. There's an opening here from which several tougher soldiers will emerge. Take them out carefully, since they're very good at blocking and since their strikes drain your stamina quickly even when you do block.



This merchant sure does get around!

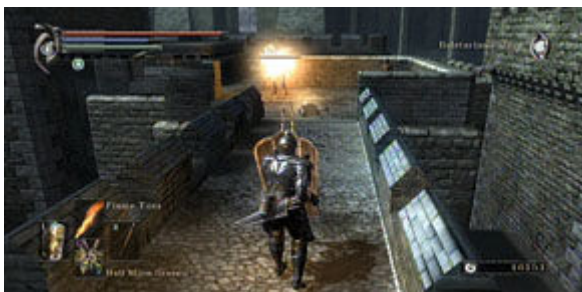


Deal with this guy using powerful fire magic from a distance, if possible.

Once those soldiers are defeated, continue into the building. Note that there are a total of three soldiers in this area, so if you've only defeated two (likely) there may be a third waiting to surprise you on the stairs. If you defeat him and continue climbing, you'll find a merchant waiting at the top to sell you some wares, including various components of the Plate Armor, the pricey Knight Sword and the equally expensive Knight's Shield. You can head outside from there to find the **Great Sword** resting on a corpse on a ledge just to the right. Then you should descend the way you came (or drop off toward the left) and make your way through the fog-covered gate that you ignored a short time ago.

Through that gate, the corridor turns almost immediately toward the right. Don't round the bend carelessly. Shimmy along the wall and peer around the corner. There's a guard patrolling here, so you want to come out when he's far enough away that you can hit him with fire magic if that's a method that interests you. Otherwise, be prepared for another duel that's up close and personal. Once your enemy falls as a result of that duel, proceed forward.

As you come around another bend toward the right, you need to make sure that you're ready for a tougher fight. Have plenty of magic and cast Warding if you think you'll need it. When you step out into daylight again, you'll notice some stairs working up the side of a building ahead of you. There's a guard patrolling this area, one of the larger fellows that can inflict severe damage on you if you let him get close enough. Ideally, you can target him with 'R3' from a safe distance, then toss a few fire spells his way while slowly retreating as necessary. When you fell him, you'll obtain **New Moon Grass** and an **Iron Ring of Keys** from his corpse. Those keys are important if you're interested in learning the most powerful magic in the game, so make sure that you don't miss them. You'll be using them shortly.



The enemies you encounter here aren't that tough when managed alone and from a distance.



Don't descend these stairs until you've first headed to the lower right to easily kill the archers.

With that guard gone, you're not entirely safe just yet. As you climb through this area, there will be several more guards patrolling the stairway and there are archers when you reach the top of the first landing that widens to the right. You should tend to them quickly and back away as necessary, since other soldiers are probably rushing you from higher ground. Dealing with all of them at once is too risky. When the immediate area is clear, you can drop from the side of the stairs to a wide platform not far below if you want to grab some **Royal Lotus** items. Then you can continue your climb.

Be careful as you ascend. You'll come to a place where there's a stone ledge leading left toward some debris at a dead end that you can smash to find a corpse. Grab **Late Moon Grass** from that. The stairway ascending from this area is guarded by a fellow with another burning bale of hay. As you start up the stairs, he'll push it down toward you, so you should drop carefully off to the side and let the flaming ball roll right past you. Now the guard will come soon after, so be ready to take care of him with either melee attacks or your magic. Then you can climb to the area where he was positioned.

Look around and you'll see narrow ledges that you can proceed along. There are guards patrolling here, so advance slowly and you shouldn't have any trouble tending to each one with some magic or melee strikes. Shortly, you'll arrive at the far edge of the wall and you'll find stairs leading to an area below where archers are waiting. Keep your shield ready when you see them, since they'll certainly see you and will fire arrows.

As you approach your viewpoint, you should notice that you can either head toward the right or the left. Go right first, as this allows you to get close to the enemies and safely eliminate them. You can also grab an **Unknown Hero's Soul**, then look down from the corpse where you find that to fire upon some enemies that are waiting in the area below. Then you should return to where the path split and this time head along the narrower left branch as it descends along the side of the building.



Retreat back up the stairs and pelt your opponent with magic, if possible.

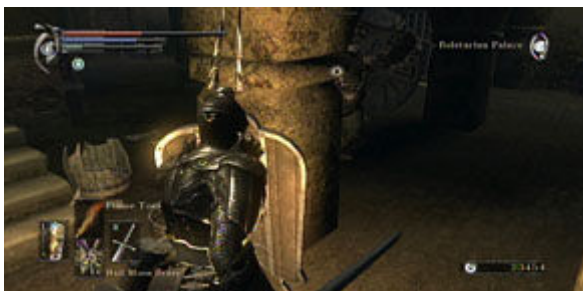


Pulling this lever raises the portcullis so that you can more easily pass through the stage on the main staircase.

In this direction, you will find some crucial encounters. Start down the stairs, knowing that you'll come first upon a foot soldier, then an archer not long after him. You can take them out easily in the usual fashion and continue down the stairs to find yourself looking down at another of the larger enemies like the one that had the unfortunate incident with the portcullis as the stage began. This fellow you should be able to hit a time or two with fire magic from high on the stairs. Then you can slowly retreat and continue hurling magic at him to finish him off before he even gets within range to harm you.

Once that fellow is down for the count, make sure that you check his body to receive **New Moon Grass** and the **Official's Cap**. You're now on the other side of that same portcullis that you encountered near the very beginning of your excursion through this area. As you near it, you'll hear cries for help from the other side. Someone needs your support and you definitely want to lend it. There's a lever just to the right of the lowered portcullis, so go ahead and use it to raise the gate.

Now the man who was crying for help will rush through with several soldiers following just after. You should probably cast Warding if you have it available, then take care of the soldiers however you like. Fire magic works well if you have sufficient energy left. Your heroics here will allow you to save the unfortunate fellow who was being chased. He'll thank you for the support and you'll be pleased to know that if you have to repeat the stage later, you can save a lot of backtracking through the tower areas that you've been spending so much of your recent time exploring. Now you can just head straight up these stairs and the boss isn't far away from you. However, don't worry about that just yet. Instead, you should put some of the items you've recently obtained to use. Specifically, you need the Official's Cap and the Iron Ring of Keys that you've looted from the corpses of the fat soldiers.



You can use the pillar to protect you from your chunky adversary as your stamina meter refills.



Biorr is pleased that you saved him... but sleepy.

You'll use the keys first. Head down the stairs to the archstone that you used to enter this level. You'll be back at the arena where you defeated the Temple Knight in a previous stage. Continue past that point in the direction where you should see the familiar sight of one of the knights that likely gave you a fair bit of trouble when you were first on your way to defeat the Tower Knight. As it so happens, they're guarding a dungeon that you can now enter with the Iron Ring of Keys that you have obtained.

Defeat the knight closest to you if you like and look for a door along the right side of this corridor. It's just a wooden door that almost blends into the background, but if you approach it you'll have the option to use your keys. Do so and head down the stairs to a wider dungeon area. There's a jailer down here, so be warned. He's another of the fat soldiers that are located throughout this area. It's not easy to back away here and use magic in short bursts like it is above ground, but fortunately there's a pillar that you can duck behind so your enemy can't reach you easily. Then you can sneak out, hit him a few times and circle around to let your stamina return before repeating the process.

When you win, you should check the jailer's corpse to find **New Moon Grass** and the **Bloody Iron Key**. You can also safely search other cells here to find the **Storied Hero's Soul**, as well as a prisoner who will identify himself as Biorr. He's grateful that you've saved him, but now he just wants to sleep for a bit. That's fine. Leave him to his devices and gather any loot from the area, then return to the archstone entrance and continue past it toward the area with the fountain and the caged hounds. Remember the narrow path leading into the corner area? You want to head there now.



The guard is slow to follow if you pelt him with powerful magic.



You've finally found Yuria, most powerful of the magic users!

As you arrive at the entrance to that alley, head to your "Equipment" screen and equip the Official's Hat. Start down the alley and shortly you'll come to a gate, which you can open using the Bloody Iron Key that you obtained just a moment ago. Now proceed along the alleyway and there will be a path leading left, then widening ahead of a tower. Before you take that path, continue down the alley to find a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes**, then backtrack to the turn and make your way to the tower.

Once inside the tower, advance toward the wall to the right and you'll be able to climb some stairs. When you get near the top, you should see another of the fat soldiers waiting. You can easily tend to him if you have fire magic, since you can attack from the stairs and he'll be slow to descend toward you. Take him out with magic and retreat as necessary, or use melee attacks if you prefer to live dangerously. Once the fiend goes down, switch out your cap for whatever you were wearing previously and head up to where the man was standing guard. Sitting cross-legged on the floor, you'll find the witch Yuria who was apparently so powerful that she warranted all of these guards. She declines to follow you for now, but she's grateful that you have saved her.

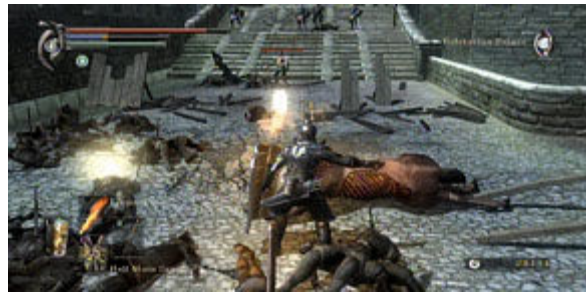
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Archstone of the Small King - Tower Knight Archstone (cont.)

Now you should start back down the tower, but make sure that you check bodies along the way to obtain the **Ring of the Accursed** and the **Ring of Magical Nature**. You can also drop to a wooden scaffolding along the way to snag a **Legendary Soldier's Soul**. When you've grabbed all of the interesting loot, return once more to the area with the fountain and the caged dogs. Head back up to where you raised the portcullis awhile ago and this time you'll want to continue ascending the wide staircase.



This marks the third time that you've saved Ostrava, hopefully.



There's a lot of resistance on the way to the fog-covered opening that leads to the area boss...

As you head up the stairs, you should meet with the soldier that you freed from his enemies by raising the portcullis. It's Ostrava again! When you talk to him, he'll thank you by rewarding you with **Pure Clearstone**. Then he'll wander off once more, leaving you free to continue up the slope.

A word about Ostrava...

At this point, there's something that you should know. Now that you've received the Pure Clearstone from Ostrava, you should probably kill him. He has nothing else to give you except the Mausoleum Key, which you can obtain by defeating him. If you leave him alive and either exit the area willingly or do so after falling in battle against Penetrator, you'll possibly come back in time to watch Ostrava wander into a group of enemies and get killed. He may die even before you can reach him. If that happens and the game decides to be nasty, you very possibly won't be able to get the **Mausoleum Key** that he is carrying until your next trip through the game.

Once you have the Mausoleum Key, you can enter the mausoleum any time you like before clearing the game. The mausoleum is the room that was so difficult to reach when you first explored Boletaria Castle. Remember the long walkway where a powerful knight was patrolling near the catapult machines? If you defeat him now, you can advance past him and use the Mausoleum Key to open that door. Then you can battle with the enemy that appears there (for more information on this, look to the "Penetrator Archstone" section of this walkthrough) and if you win you will receive his powerful equipment. Whew!

Continue climbing past where you can talk with Ostrava and you'll meet some more enemy units. In fact, you'll meet more enemy units than really have a right to gather in a single place. There are wooden barriers scattered along a walkway here, then stairs leading up toward a fog-covered archway. As you try to work through this area, you'll be accosted by numerous soldiers, as well as archers who fire at you from higher ground. The presence of the latter enemies makes it difficult to make much headway with the grunts, since every time you try to hurl a spell at them you're likely to get shot with an arrow. Since blocking sword strokes against these guys does little for you except almost instantly drain your stamina meter, it's best if you can fall back out of the range of the archers, take out the soldiers there with your preferred method, then resume your trek forward while falling back to regroup as necessary.

Getting close enough to the fog-covered gate will trigger a cutscene wherein another of the hefty guys briefly appears. This one vanishes through the fog covered gate, leaving you to defeat any archers and soldiers that still haven't fallen to your weapons or magic. Be mindful of the last three soldiers, positioned side-by-side on the stairs. They seem to be made of tougher stuff and are particularly adept at avoiding spells cast from a distance. If they start toward you at once, it's time to cast Warding and tough things out with melee attacks.

Of course, right now might not be the best time to proceed at all. It's possible that you have gathered together a lot of souls and you may wish to return with them to the Nexus. Consider that a very reasonable option. If you plan to fight the boss, clear out those last three soldiers the best you can and grab any items that you've left unclaimed. If the soldiers regularly give you too many fits, you may instead wish to attempt sprinting past them. You'll have to do some dodging and will likely take damage, but you should still be able to break through and make a run for the gate. Then you can pass through the fog and into the boss arena before your pursuit catches you.

Boss Battle: Penetrator

This fight is going to go remarkably smoothly if you followed our instructions and freed Biorr. When you appear within

the arena, there will be a short cutscene and then you'll engage in battle with the grizzled knight fighting by your side. His main purpose is to deal a little bit of damage and to serve as a distraction so that you don't have to face Penetrator head-on.

When you do have to fight Penetrator directly (and you likely will), know that he has a few basic attacks. He'll swing his lance around overhead and then send it lashing out. When you see that about to happen, you need to roll quickly out of the way so that the weapon doesn't skewer you. If you don't manage to avoid the attack, you'll be stuck on the weapon like a bit of meat and hefted into the air, a process that can remove a large chunk of your life meter. That's particularly true if you haven't casted Warding on yourself.



This guy knows how to make an entrance!

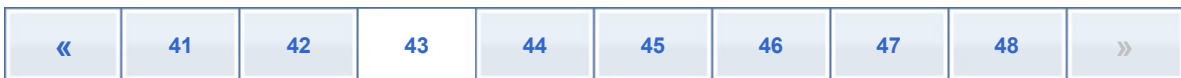


Target Penetrator from behind or from the sides while he battles Biorr.

The general strategy is to let Biorr do as much of the fighting as possible. Lure your enemy within his range, then roll quickly to a side. With any luck, Penetrator will continue to hack at your battling companion and you can move around to his flank. From there, you can attack with either projectile weapons and magic or with melee strikes. If you choose the latter, know that you'll need to land a blow or two and then quickly distance yourself so that you don't wind up on the lance.

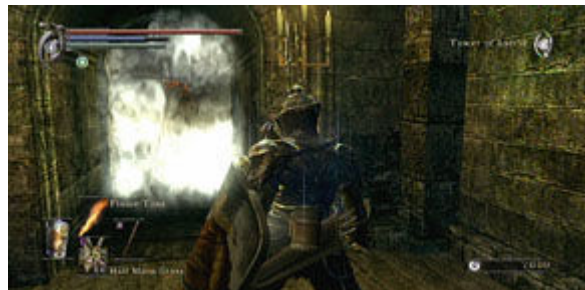
If for some reason Biorr isn't with you in the battle, you of course won't have his precious distractions to keep Penetrator from focusing on you. Your strategy won't need to change a whole lot, though. You'll just need to keep a distance and roll out of the way of his attacks, then move in and get in a strike or two when your adversary has over-extended himself after missing you with a combo. You'll wish you had Biorr along, though, so try to make sure that you do... as well as some potent healing grass. If you stop and use a weak healing item, you'll be worse off than if you used nothing at all. Just play smart and stay as far away from the lance as you can unless attacking from the sides and you should be able to win.

Once you defeat that boss, you can touch the archstone that appears to receive the **Silver Demon's Soul**, then touch it again to return to the Nexus. There, you can give the soul to Yuria to learn the Curse Weapon spell or to Freke in exchange for the Light Weapon spell.



Archstone of the Tower Queen - Maneater Archstone

This stage can basically be described as a long, winding staircase followed by an arena. However, that could be enough to lead to your death as you advance toward the boss battle.



There's not much room on these stairs to step around magic blasts.

The fog-covered door at the top of the stairs leads to a boss battle.

From the archstone, start forward. You'll come to what appears to be a dead end. However, it's just poor lighting. Look to the right, just ahead of where a corpse is positioned against a wall. There's a staircase leading up from there.

As you step onto the stairs and begin to climb, you'll trigger a cutscene. Once that concludes, you're free to climb again. When you begin to do so, you'll be met by several of the insects so common in this area. Take them out with your melee weapons or with magic and keep climbing. There will be more of them, followed by one of the red-cloaked fellows capable of casting powerful magic at you. When you see him coming, target him and start backtracking down the stairs as you toss magic in his direction or fire with projectile weapons. If you must, there's also the possibility of using melee strikes, but it can be fairly risky.

After that first cloaked fellow, you'll fight more insects, then another of the dangerous magic users. Fortunately, they tend to drop Fresh Spice items so that you can refill any magic you've lost while making your ascent. Keep climbing and you should finally reach the top of the stairs. Here, a fog-covered door leads toward the left. Prepare yourself, then pass through it to reach the boss arena.

Boss Battle: Old Monk

If you are playing online, your opponent as you enter this arena will be drawn from a pool of available players who fall within your general level range. How they choose to fight you may vary ridiculously, so there's really no use trying to provide a strategy for that. Just fight with a common sense approach and maybe you'll win.

If you happen to be playing offline, however, you'll fight a standard boss. This fellow looks quite strange. Fortunately, his odd looks don't accompany a particularly dangerous fighting style. You should be able to win this with either magic or melee attacks and your strategy won't vary much regardless.

The arena where you'll be battling is lined by a bunch of chairs. You'll be running around a fairly spacious room, hopefully avoiding the chairs that are clustered around the edges of the space. If you get too near to these, you may find yourself cornered. You can survive that, but you're more likely to take a hit or two, or even to get caught in a series of hits that could put your life meter at risk.



This guy looks stupid but he has strong defensive capabilities.



He can fire balls of light at you from a distance.

The general strategy is to keep moving and firing magic or projectile weapons from a distance. You should target your foe so you always know where he is. If you stay out of his range, he won't hit you since most of his attacks are punches. Even when you get closer, you can block these with your shield, though your stamina will falter and potentially leave you open to follow-up attacks. You can usually move in and get in a few strikes with your weapon, then back away to heal or otherwise regroup.

Occasionally, you'll see small balls of light forming around your enemy's shoulder level. These will cluster into a ball, then fire at your current location. They can easily be avoided if you keep moving at a steady pace or if you roll to the side. Really, they're only dangerous if you have let your life meter get too low and are caught trying to consume an herb. Therefore, make sure that you only heal or cast defensive magic when the light orbs aren't about to fly toward you.

For the most part, this is a fight of endurance. As long as you have some healing items at hand and are smart about when you use them (which shouldn't even need to be all that frequently), you shouldn't have any real trouble winning this battle.

After you defeat the boss, touch the archstone once to receive the **Yellow Demon's Soul**, then again to return to the Nexus. There, you can give the newly-acquired soul to Urbain to receive the Banish miracle (it expels Black Phantoms from your world). If you prefer, you can give it to Yuria to learn the Soul Thirst spell, which generates twice the experience points when you slay enemies. A third option is to hand it over to Sage Freke to learn the Homing Soul attack spell. You can also take it to Ed the blacksmith to create the wicked Insanity Catalyst. Choices, choices!

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Archstone of the Shadowmen - Old Hero Archstone

This area isn't particularly lengthy, but you'll find that it can be quite dangerous. When you first appear, directly ahead of you there will be one of the fog-covered doorways. When you pass through it, you'll trigger a cutscene. Then you'll be engaged in the area boss battle, just like that.

Boss Battle: Storm King

When you appear within the arena, you'll find that it is a large, open space along a rocky shoreline. As you move along this area, you need to watch out for numerous flying manta enemies. There are quite a few of them at the start and it's difficult to target them with your fire magic when you're also being pelted by attacks from quite a few others.

If you're already in soul form, you might choose to spend your first few attempts at the area just grabbing items. You can run around the area, ducking through a building along the right side to find the **Holy Arrows** and moving along the banks on the left to find areas where you can drop down for other items. Near the far end of the arena, you will find one of the skittish enemies that likes to run away upon seeing you, though killing him just now can be a bit tricky. There's also a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes** in that direction. Finally, closer to the left center of the area (near all of the tombstones) you can find a weapon called the **Stormruler**. It is pushed into a tall rock slab, so you'll have to press 'X' to remove it. This powerful weapon should be equipped immediately, as you'll find that it makes bringing down your enemies immeasurably easier. You can target them in the air with 'R3,' then slash to bring them down with a powerful slash.

Since you don't need to rely on magic for this battle, any spells you cast should be geared toward increasing your defenses and attack power or increasing the amount of experience points that enemies yield when slain. Otherwise, this should be a purely physical battle.



The sky swarms with manta enemies as the battle begins.



When the little guys are gone, its time to take down the one in charge!

Your strategy when you're ready to fight should be to bring down manta enemies one at a time while ducking behind the shelter afforded by the brick ruins. These won't protect you entirely from the dangerous barbs that your enemies fire, but you can at least use the walls to make yourself more difficult to spot from above. Of course, staying in one spot isn't a good long-term plan, so you'll want to move around and try to stay along the fringes. From there, you can more easily target individual enemies and hopefully avoid finding yourself attacked by too many at once. You should be trying to get rid of the smaller guys as quickly as possible, since you do have a time limit before the larger fellow gets within range to attack. You don't want to still be dealing with a bunch of the little manta enemies when the big one arrives.

After awhile, you'll find yourself facing only the larger manta. Despite his size, he shouldn't give you too much trouble. You'll be able to target him as he makes his slow circles over the battle area. You can duck behind boulders to somewhat avoid attracting his attention, then when he circles overhead you can hack him apart from beneath. Usually, you can hit him two or three times from below and he won't even see you. If he does see you, however, be prepared to dodge a stream of the barbs. The ones that the Storm King himself fires are larger and inflict more damage than those

utilized by the smaller manta enemies, but usually you can survive contact if your health is at a reasonable level and you quickly refill your energy afterward. Then it's back to hacking at the manta. When you've punished him enough, he'll plummet to the ground and the battle is concluded.

After you beat the boss, touch the archstone once to receive the **Storm Demon's Soul** and a **Pure Cloudstone** item, then again to return to the Nexus. You can turn the new soul into Urbain to learn the Anti-Magic Field miracle if you like, or you can take it to Ed the blacksmith for another large sword.

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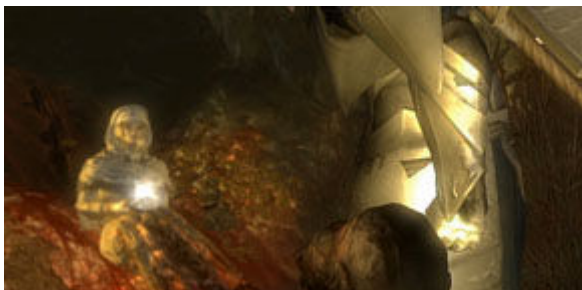
Archstone of the Chieftain - Dirty Colossus Archstone

This area is tricky because when you first enter it, you'll be standing practically on a precipice. If you proceed straight forward at a brisk pace, you'll almost immediately fall along a passageway that spirals down to your death. Instead, veer toward the right and carefully move forward to find a ladder, then descend it. Continue along the path at the base, veering right and you will safely reach the bottom, where a fog-covered gate awaits.

Boss Battle: Maiden Astraea

Pass through the fog-covered gate and you will arrive in a rather unconventional boss arena. Your arrival triggers a cutscene. It depicts a maiden sending forth her knight, whom you will be battling. As you advance around the raised area, you'll see worshiping creatures and the maiden will encourage you to leave the area. However, you can't really do that. As you'll notice from a life meter along the bottom of the screen, that maiden must be killed.

Getting down to where the maiden waits is your first challenge. Move toward the right from where you first arrive, past the worshipers who can either be killed for some easy experience points (though not a lot of it) or ignored, depending on your preference. Continuing along that ledge, you'll find more worshipers gathered near a rocky overhang. If you approach the edge and look down, you'll see a bunch of squirming enemies below.



The maiden sends forth her knight to battle you.



You'll die rather quickly if you try to play fair with your opponent.

You can drop over that edge without dying from the fall, but when you reach the bottom those enemies will attack you and can quickly overwhelm you. Their attacks also inflict the plague status upon you, which is rather debilitating. You'll need to distract the enemies and run past them if you want to have a real chance at the boss. In order to accomplish that, push a few of the worshipers over the edge and watch as the enemies below swarm the unfortunate wretches. Now you can drop down yourself and head toward the right. You're close to the maiden by this point, which means that you're also close to her knight.

The maiden's knight is a powerful foe indeed, capable of easily breaking through your shield defenses and overwhelming you with a few swift blows. He also is strong against your magic attacks, so you need to be ready for an extended fight.

The easiest way to defeat him is to quickly cross over the stream of soup where the plague-ridden monsters attack. On the other side, there's an embankment that you can begin to climb. As you do so, the knight will chase after you. However, a short ways up the bank he'll turn around and return to the maiden's side until you get within his range. This is a predictable pattern that you can exploit to easily defeat the knight. Simply move forward until he starts toward you,

then back way toward the edge of his range while throwing magic at him. You'll be able to avoid his sword that way and also won't be slowed by the awful water. If you're stuck with melee weapons, you can also bait him in that direction and get him to attack, then slash him a few times and retreat. Either way, you should be able to slowly and safely wear down his health until he dies.

Once the knight is dead, be sure to check his corpse for numerous (heavy) armor items that you'll definitely want to have in your collection. Then head over to the maid and talk to her. She will be distraught over the death of her guardian and will kill herself without a fight.

With that boss gone, you'll be able to touch the archstone once to receive the **Pureblood Demon's Soul** and the **Ring of Sincere Prayer**, then again to warp back to the Nexus. You can turn in the new soul for the Resurrection miracle (from Urbain), the Relief spell (Yuria) or the Death Cloud spell from Freke. You can also obtain a Blueblood Sword from Ed the blacksmith if you want. In general, the first two options will make you popular if you plan to play a lot of online co-op with friends. The Death Cloud spell is lethal against many enemies, as it affects them with plague. The sword is also neat if you're a more physical warrior.

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Archstone of the Small King - Penetrator Archstone

If you've leveled up properly and have defeated the bosses that waited at the end of every other available region, then it's time to finally tackle the game's last proper stage. Otherwise, you should go back and complete any level building or item gathering that you had in mind. Finally, you should clear your inventory of any heavy items that you won't immediately need or you won't be able to pick up some special gear in this stage. Pack lots of Fresh Spice if you're a magic user, as you may want to be able to quickly refill our meter when battling a dragon and other nasties. When you've made all of the appropriate preparations, enter the archstone.



Be careful of archers as you approach the dragon corpse.



Cast your Warding magic and use melee attacks to easily survive this encounter.

Start forward down the hallway but keep your shield up. Through an archway, you should see what at a distance looks like a pile of stone rubble. As you get closer, you'll see that it's the corpse of a slain dragon. Standing on that corpse are three archers who will fire at you as you approach. Block a volley of arrows, then move in and target them so that you can blast them with projectile magic or weapons. If you prefer, you can move in closer and hack them apart with a melee weapon. Grab two **Storied Soldier's Soul** items from the corpses resting on the ground just ahead of the dragon, then proceed along the corridor again.

Now you'll see three soldiers positioned side-by-side along the path ahead. As you approach, there's another of the skittish enemies that runs when when you get near, though you may not want to risk attacking him with too much enthusiasm or you could be led into the range of those three soldiers. That could be a problem, since they're particularly nasty. You'll want to deal with them on your own terms (preferably with Warding magic in effect) so that you don't get slaughtered.

If you're lucky, as you approach you'll be able to lure one of the three soldiers to you first. He's a swordsman who can quickly drain your stamina if his attacks connect. Back away so that you don't accidentally get within range of the other enemies, then deal with him using melee attacks. If you can dodge his attacks, then move in with a series of your own attacks, you shouldn't have much trouble. That's particularly true with Warding magic in use. Then when he goes down, you can check his corpse to find the powerful **Penetrating Sword**, which is a blade best used with two hands.

Next you can deal with the other two enemies. One is an archer who will drop the **White Bow** when defeated and the

other one wields a spear. If you're forced to deal with those two last enemies at once, you may wish to retreat behind one of the nearby pillars, which you can use to block shots from the archer and also to find shelter while your stamina returns so that you can battle the fellow with the spear. He'll drop the **Tower Shield** when you kill him. Keep in mind that once you kill these three particular enemies, they won't reappear if you return to the stage later. This is your only chance to grab the items that they drop, which is why we recommend that you enter the stage with light equipment.



Knights are easier to battle when you have daylight on your side.

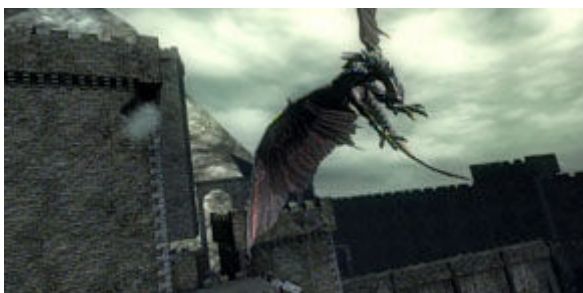


Try not to attract the enemy that waits at the top of the stairs as you battle the archers.

Past where you defeated those three powerful enemies, check the alleyway to the left to find a **Stone of Ephemeral Eyes** on a corpse. Then return and head slowly down the alleyway that was to the right. Along this route, you should startle another of the skittish enemies, who you can hopefully pelt with magic to kill for the precious goodies that he drops. Note that it will probably run away before you get close if our armor makes much noise or you don't have the Thief's Ring equipped.

Continue toward the end of the alley and look left through a dark archway. There's an enemy that patrols here, one of the knights with the glowing red eyes that can be so troublesome. Let him see you, then lure him outside where you can deal with him more easily using either magic or smart melee fighting. You may also want to have Warding in effect, if you're used to its convenient protection. Once the knight goes down, return to the entrance he was guarding and move a little further inside.

There's a staircase that winds its way along the right wall here, but as you climb you'll be attacked by two enemies with crossbows. You can't hit them easily with magic from the ground level, so you'll have to start climbing and block their shots as you go. Climb high enough and you'll attract the attention of a soldier, so you may wish to do that on purpose, then drop back down to the lower level and let him chase you out into the alley so you can deal with him separately from the archers. Then you can return and more confidently tend to the archers. You'll still want to be careful, though; there's another of the red-eyed knights on higher ground. If you see him coming (or hear his heavy footfalls), you should quickly retreat so that he follows you outside. Battling him on the stairs is too dangerous.



The dragon arrives to crash your party.



Dragon breath will tend to your first enemy along the castle wall, and possibly even a second one.

Once the area is cleared of enemies, you can go ahead and climb the stairs, then find yourself looking out a doorway that leads along a castle wall. As you pass through the doorway, you'll trigger a cutscene that depicts a dragon crashing along the building, then landing on a perch ahead of you. That perch is just to the left of the pathway you must follow and the dragon will periodically breathe flames along the route. Wait for a few bursts of fire that will tend to a strong enemy waiting ahead, then slowly advance just to the edge near where the flames begin.

From here, you may be able to see a distant enemy far along the wall. If you try to run just behind the dragon's breath, you'll be stopped short by an enemy who blocks your path. Then when the dragon breathes fire again, you'll be fried. Your best option is to start attacking the dragon with ranged weapons or magic. Fire magic is useless, naturally, but your soul attacks should gradually inflict damage. When the dragon is halfway dead, it will fly away and you can proceed along the walkway, taking care of the ax-wielding enemy without the distraction of imminent death by fire.

Your other option if you don't want to fire at the dragon just yet is to lure that ax-wielding enemy forward using shots

from your bow. You may be able to trick him into walking into the middle of some dragon breath, which then will make it easier to dash the full distance of the wall when the dragon breathes it flames. It's really up to you. Either way, you should eventually be able to make your way to the far wall. Note the enemy that will run at your approach and kill it as you proceed in that direction if possible. Then pass through the archway.



Check for treasure at the base of the wide staircase.



This is as close as you dare to get until you're ready to make a dash.

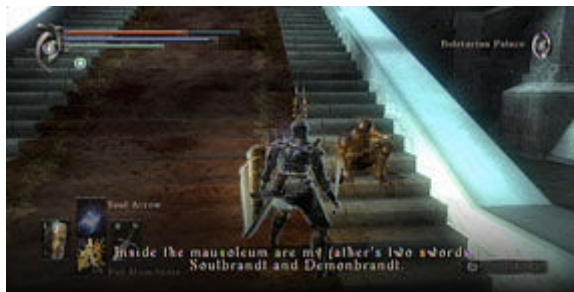
You'll find yourself in a small, furnished room with stairs leading upward again. Climb those, then pass through and head along a passageway. Now you'll arrive at one side of a wide staircase that leads up and toward the right. You can start down the stairs toward the left to find the **Knight Sword** and the **Knight's Shield** on a corpse, or you can start toward the right to gradually ascend. You don't want to climb too high, though, or you'll come within range of dragon breath.

Yes, the dragon has found a new perch. This one is every bit as inconvenient as the last one. His flames will cover the only pathway forward in frequent bursts, so you need to either take out a ranged weapon to continue chipping away at his life meter or you need to adopt a riskier but more productive strategy. Note that if Biorr survived the battle with Penetrator, he'll also be positioned behind one of the pillars, firing arrows that will slowly wear down on the dragon's health. That's a nice bit of support for you, but unfortunately the attacks don't do a whole lot of damage.

If you're feeling daring, your strategy should be to run under the dragon in the wake of his flames. This seems to work best if you keep toward the left side, though you may find differently. When you get under the dragon, its flames will no longer reach you. As you might imagine, this is tremendously useful.



There's a safe point under the archway that you can use to finish off the dragon.



This will be your last meeting with Ostrava while he's of this world.

Continue just a short distance forward so that you're under the large archway, then look back the way you came and toward the sky. If you're positioned properly, you should see part of the dragon's neck and its head through the archway as it continues to breathe flames. From here, you can target the creature and pelt it with either more soul magic or with arrows. As before, you'll inflict minor damage but are perfectly safe. It's not a bad idea now to kill the dragon so that if you have to return to this area later, you can do so without the inconvenience of dragon breath. When you win, you'll receive a fair bit of experience and also the **Large Flame-Scale Demon's Soul 1**.

Once the dragon is defeated, backtrack to get any items that you may have missed. In particular, check to see if Biorr is still alive. If he's not, you'll definitely want to loot his corpse for his rare and powerful armor. There's no use letting it go to waste! If you didn't talk to him prior to battling the dragon, there's a good chance that he's still alive. When you're done grabbing everything, resume your climb up the stairs.

Archstone of the Small King - Penetrator Archstone (cont.)

Now you'll find yourself climbing some stairs in an enclosed corridor. A red carpet runs along their center. In this area, you should meet with Ostrava if he's still alive. He'll kill himself now and you can obtain the **Mausoleum Key**, if you didn't take our advice and eliminate the poor fellow earlier in the castle.



Retreat along the bridge so that you're not knocked over its edge.



Ride up the elevator to face the boss.

Continue up the stairs and you'll come next to a lengthy bridge area that leads over an open chasm. On the far side of that bridge is a doorway, but there's a dark enemy waiting ahead of it. This appears to be Ostrava, back from the dead in an evil incarnation. Before you approach, you should cast Warding magic to defend yourself against his strikes. Then when you get near and he starts toward you, back up along the bridge so that you're not forced to fight at its center where you can easily be knocked over the side. As you retreat, you can toss fire magic at your opponent if you have it, which will make for an extremely easy fight, or you can just wait until you reach the red-carpeted stairs and then deal with him using melee attacks. When you win, you can obtain the **Rune Sword** and **Rune Shield** as item drops.

With the path cleared, you should next cross over the bridge. On the other side, you'll find an elevator that you can ride up to the area's boss. Before you do that, though, you may wish to return to the Nexus to stock up on items again (since most of the enemies in this current stage won't be returning) and you may want to visit the mausoleum with the key that you gained from Ostrava to defeat the enemy that waits there.

Optional Boss Battle: Old King Doran

You don't actually have to kill this boss, just weaken him a bit. If you're a magic user with the proper spell, this is incredibly simple. As you head through the archway that leads into the room, target your enemy and cast the Poison Cloud skill. This will surround him in a poisonous mist that slowly leeches away his energy. You only need to get close enough that its range just barely touches him, and if you have the Thief's Ring equipped you can stand there while he takes damage. Then cast the spell again as needed until his life meter drains sufficiently.



If you have the Poison Cloud spell, use it to make this fight a total piece of cake.



Your reward for damaging your opponent sufficiently is a powerful sword.

If you'd prefer to use melee attacks, then you'll of course want to cast the Warding spell. Old King Doran fights about like you'd expect, with strong physical attacks, but you should be able to dodge around the area and make use of the stone columns for protection if you need a break from the swordplay.

When you've eliminated around 10% of your enemy's life meter, he will introduce himself and tell you to go ahead and take the sword that he was guarding. You'll find this positioned in the slab. Pull it out and you will add **Demonbrandt** to your inventory. As Ostrava will tell you if you let him live long enough, this two-handed sword is the perfect weapon with which to battle Old King Allant.

Once you're ready, return to the bridge where you battled the enemy that appeared after Ostrava's suicide. Take the elevator ride up to face the boss.

Boss Battle: Old King Allant

When you enter the arena, there's a short cutscene. Then you'll find yourself locked in battle with the king. He might not look like a particularly tough opponent, but he's plenty capable of wiping you out if you give him the chance. As the battle begins, the king will walk slowly toward you. You now have a bit of a choice: do you fight him fairly or do you go the totally cheap route that guarantees victory as long as you have a bit of patience?



Your enemy is easiest to hit with magic just before he charges you.



If this attack connects, you lose a stat.

If you want to fight fairly, you should begin by casting the Warding spell so that any damage you receive is somewhat reduced. Then your strategy should be to target your enemy and keep moving so that he has a hard time charging and hitting you with his sword strike. The good news is that you can block most blows with your shield and will lose only a moderate amount of stamina. Dodging works even better. Then you can either retaliate with melee strikes or you can back away to fire projectile magic (which mostly misses unless your foe is preparing to charge) or to heal.

Besides the standard physical attacks, Old King Allant will sometimes use charged area attacks that send a wave of energy toward you. When you see this coming, get out of its way as quickly as possible. Going down to the lower level near the entrance works good if your enemy is standing on the upper tier, or vice-versa if you're near him on that lower level. You also need to avoid letting him corner you. He has a move where he sends a ball of light toward you and leaps to your side to skewer you with his blade, which then allows him to permanently steal a stat point from your character. Worse, he can use the move repeatedly if after falling to it once, you're not quick to roll away upon recovering. Make sure that if you do get caught by his soul-sucking move, you quickly mash the 'O' button and roll away at the first opportunity.

Of course, you can avoid all of those complications if you take the cheap route, which works as follows: 1) Equip the Thief's Ring; 2) Enter the arena and as the king starts his slow march toward the entryway, head quickly left to seek shelter against the short wall that obscures you from sight; 3) Listen for the king's footsteps to stop a short distance away; 4) After waiting a moment, head up the short set of stairs but stop just as you reach the top; 5) Target the king with 'R3' and then use the Poison Cloud spell until its effects fade; 6) Use the spell again, and again, and again... as often as you like until the king dies without even attacking you. See? We said it was cheap! It can take awhile for the magic to inflict the required damage, but it'll happen as long as you don't run out of magic.

Once you defeat the boss, you can touch the archstone once to receive the **False King Demon's Soul**. A voice will say something intriguing, then you can touch the archstone again to return to the Nexus.

The Nexus (End Game)

When you return to the Nexus with the False King Demon's Soul in your possession, a cutscene is triggered. You're now just ahead of the very end of the game. If you want to head into completed archstones to gather goodies, you certainly can. However, it's no longer possible to gain levels by talking to the Maiden in Black.



Talk to the maiden to take a trip down the gaping hole.



At the bottom, head past the maiden and clear a path through the brush-strewn passage beyond her.

If you talk to the maiden now, you'll trigger a sequence in which she pulls you down into the pit at the center of the Nexus. When the two of you arrive at the bottom, there's a scene and then you can proceed forward along a path choked by overgrowth. Chop at any obstructions with a melee weapon to remove them. When you reach the far end, there's a wall that you can pass through to arrive at the final boss battle.

Boss Battle: King Allant

You've finally found it: your last battle in the game. Though we've helped walk you through defeating a fair number of brutal enemies, the wretch that you face now is downright pathetic.

When you appear along the edge of the arena, you'll be looking out toward a fetid pool of water. Crouched at the center of that pool is the enemy that you're meant to slay. However, he essentially just sits there, waiting for you to kill him.



Before you fight, of course you can chat.



Tear apart your final foe with fire magic.

If you have any projectile attacks, there's no need to even step into the water during the fight. Just stand along the bank and hurl magic at your foe. Each strike does reasonable damage, since the monster that you're defeating doesn't even have strong armor. Since he won't fight back, you're pretty much guaranteed a win here. The real battles are all behind you, so send this pushover to his grave and reap the rewards!

When you deal the last damage to King Allant, the **Soulbrand** weapon will appear and you can add it to your inventory. Now the Maiden in Black will come forward to lull the Old One to sleep.

With the last boss defeated, you now have a choice between two possible game endings. You can either leave as the maiden suggests (just pass through the fog and start along the trail to trigger the closing credits) or you can kill the helpful woman. If you choose the former option, you'll receive the **Maiden in Black's Demon Soul**, while going the latter route allows you to instead receive the **Red Eye** and the **Old Beast's Soul**.

After the closing credits, you'll appear back in the Nexus in the "New Game +" mode with all of your gear (keys excluded) and skills that you gained during your previous trip through the game. Let the adventure continue!

Demon's Souls Q & A

Demon's Souls can be a bewildering game at first, especially since there are times when it takes slightly unconventional approaches to the action-RPG. In this section, we've gathered some of the questions that we see most frequently. Check here if you just have a quick question, then consult our full walkthrough if you need more detailed information. Please note that the answers to some of the questions below do contain information that some may consider spoilers. You have been warned!

QUESTION | **When can I start leveling up my character?**

ANSWER | Before you can level up your character, you'll need to clear the Tutorial area (or die in the attempt) and enter the Nexus. This is the game's level hub area. Once there, you'll be able to touch an archstone near the ground level to enter an area known as the Boletarian Palace. Clear this zone and you will be revived and returned to the Nexus, where several new characters will have appeared. You will need to talk to the lady in black, who will turn souls that you have collected into character upgrades.

QUESTION | **Where can I quickly level up my character?**

ANSWER | The Archstone of the Shadowmen areas (taking place within the Shrine of Storms) are excellent places to level up throughout the game. The first area begins with a series of skeletons that you can battle for significant souls. This should be enough to level you up to the point where you can clear that first area and advance to the second, which begins almost immediately with enemies that spawn creatures worth decent souls. The enemies that do the spawning are also worth a large number of souls, meaning that you can make quick runs and kill them for 6000 or more souls every two minutes or so (if you have the Ring of Avarice equipped). In this manner, you shouldn't have a lot of trouble reaching a soul level somewhere near 90, which should prove sufficient to carry you through most or all of the game depending on how you assign stats.

QUESTION | **How should I build up my character?**

ANSWER | The answer to that depends on how you want to play the game. If you plan to be a melee fighter, then you should definitely focus on the Strength, Endurance and Vitality. For a magic user, the Intelligence, Magic and Faith categories are of particular interest, plus you should still put some effort into increasing your Vitality. If you don't plan to play online and battle other players much, you may want to consider a well-rounded approach that focuses on Endurance, Magic, Faith and Vitality with some spare efforts contributed to Intelligence and Strength. That option will ensure that you can face most bosses with confidence and the energy that you need to defeat them without constantly using items. If you're having an especially difficult time working through the game, a well-rounded character with emphasis on Magic can make things simpler.

QUESTION | **Do I need to complete the stages in a certain order?**

ANSWER | Aside from the Tutorial zone, the first stage and the final moments, the game can essentially be completed in whatever order you like. Some items from one zone will help you in another, and some regions contain challenging areas that are best avoided until you've leveled up your character, but this is true of even the first standard stage. Feel free to explore things in whatever manner you like, or go through in the order indicated by our walkthrough for the most possible help from this guide. We've chosen to cover the stages in the order that the game's developers appear to have had in mind (based on where and when valuable items appear and approximate enemy difficulty).

QUESTION | **What happens if I kill some of the NPCs that looked at me funny? I'm a total badass!**

ANSWER | You can attack and potentially kill non-playable characters throughout the game, but you're better off not doing so unless specifically noted in our walkthrough. The reason for that is simple: if you kill a character and you wind up needing his or her services, you've effectively ruined your chances at easily finishing the game. Though you *can* attack just about anyone, there are cases where even a single errant sword strike can turn someone against you. Consider the ramifications if you kill Stockpile Thomas and can no longer store excess items back in the Nexus, or if you slay Sage Freke and can't learn his invaluable spells. We recommend restraint.

QUESTION | **What should I do with the souls that I find?**

ANSWER | Throughout the adventure, you'll find many smaller souls lying around on corpses. These add to your supply of souls and can be used to level up more quickly. You can find much more potent ones after defeating each boss, as well. For the weaker ones, which include Unknown Soldier's Souls and even Storied Hero's Souls, you're pretty safe doing whatever you like. You might want to save some for last-minute repairs at the blacksmith or important item purchases, but otherwise you should spend them to go up levels. The souls that you gain from bosses, however, are another matter. They give what seems like a lot of souls at first, but if you consume them you permanently lose options. The last thing you want to do is spend a powerful soul going up a level—losing a potent spell in the process—when you could have gone up that same level by spending a few minutes battling monsters. Nearly every boss soul is better used to make a weapon or learn a spell.

QUESTION | **How do I get more powerful equipment?**

ANSWER | While the blacksmith within the Nexus is a nice enough fellow who will provide you with equipment that works nicely against the first few bosses, there will soon come a time when his services simply aren't sufficient. When this moment occurs, you'll need to head to the blacksmith that you find through the Archstone of the Burrow King. Just up the stairs, you can find a merchant in front of a building with a lift. The lift won't operate until you pull a lever much later in the stage. Once you do, you can ride the lift to its base to find a hidden room with a blacksmith working. When you defeat Flamelurker at the end of the second stage within the Archstone of the Burrow King, you'll receive the Red Hot Demon's Soul. You can take this item to the hidden blacksmith. Talk to him a few times and he'll ask for that soul, which you should then give him. Now you can get him to forge powerful gear for you (just as long as you have the required materials).

QUESTION | **Where do I learn the most powerful magic spells?**

ANSWER | Most of the truly useful spells in the game, including Warding, can be learned from a magic user known as Sage Freke. To find him, you'll need to venture most of the way through the first portion of the Tower of Latria (found in the Archstone of the Tower Queen). Near the end of that area, you'll climb a tower and find a man who claims to be innocent. He's using magic that blocks your path to the area boss. Just beyond him, there's a key hanging on a wall. This key will open a cell earlier in the stage where you will find the sage waiting. Once he's been rescued, you can return to the Nexus and you'll find him in one of the side rooms on the floor level. You can learn spells from him in exchange for some of the souls gained from slaying area bosses. For instance, you'll learn the Warding spell after you bring him the soul gained from killing the Tower Knight.

Freke isn't the only mentor who can teach you magic. There's also a witch named Yuria. She possesses the most powerful magic of all. You can find her in the third segment of Boletaria Castle, but you need to make some key efforts or you won't be able to coax her back to the Nexus. Look to our walkthrough for more details.

QUESTION | **How do I learn more powerful miracles?**

ANSWER | The most powerful miracles can be learned from Saint Urbain, but first you have to find him. He's in the second portion of the Shrine of Storms, through the Archstone of the Shadowmen. Near the beginning of the stage, you'll descend to an altar where an enemy is summoning semi-transparent foes from pools of silvery water. Kill the guy doing the summoning, then check around the base of his altar to find a trail of glowing orbs that leads to a fellow named Patches (who you will also meet in another area in the game). He'll encourage you to look down a hole and when you do, he'll kick you down it and laugh at your fate. At the bottom of that pit, you can talk to a man positioned near one side of the room to find Urbain. Next you'll need to find your way out of the area, which is guarded by a powerful enemy along the other side of the pit. Defeat that fellow, then head up some stairs to exit the pit. Urbain will now appear in the Nexus.