Get Me Out Of These Lööps, Bröther

Under Night In-Birth EXE: Late [cl - r]

Vatista counterplay document

'Gem Loops'

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Introduction/Notation

In this document I'll be discussing counterplay for Vatista's pressure - in this case, exclusively talking about the extended blockstrings and/or pressure situations she can create using her negative edge special move *Si Deus Fragmentum* (which will be referred to as Gems for the rest of the document), and the counterplay available to escape or deal with these situations.

This is not a guide as to how a Vatista player can perform these techniques, nor is it a guide to any of the simpler, more basic Vatista pressure. This is a resource entirely to help with the lack of knowledge around Gem Loops.

Yes, the GIFs are looped. Unless stated otherwise, they are just visual representations of the loops to make them easier to recognise.

Notation:
- **jX**: Jump move
- **dl.**: Delay
- **w**: Whiff
- **Microdash**: A dash shortened by performing a move quickly afterwards.
- **CS**: Chain Shift
- **VO/CVO**: Refers to Veil Off and Cross-Cast Veil Off respectively.
- **GT/Guard Thrust**: Refers to Guard Thrust accessed by using 214D whilst in blockstun. Spends vorpal if you have it, and spends 100 meter and causes a GRD break if you do not.

- **FF**: Vatista's Force Function, *Armabellum*, aka B+C. jFF refers to the aerial version, and [FF]/j[FF] refer to the increased versions of each of them respectively. 2FF refers to the crouching version.
- **Laser**: Refers to Vatista's [6]4X series of specials, *Mico Ruseo*.
- **Ball/Lumen**: Refers to Vatista's [4]6X series, *Lumen Stella* (Her 'fireball').
- **Drill**: Refers to Vatista's [8]2X series, *Transvolans*.
- **Flashkick/FK**: Refers to Vatista's [2]8X, series, *Ruber Angels*.
- **Flip Flop**: Vatista's hover move *Leviosa*, aka jA+B.
- **Barrier**: Vatista's guardpoint shield stance, *Concordia*, aka 2A+B.
- **Satellus/Triangulum**: A special move Vatista can use called *Satellus Triangulum*. Without meter, it can only be used by releasing a held Gem whilst the opponent is in the hitstun of a third Gem detonation in a combo. Good use of this as an ender can lead to a highly advantageous knockdown.

Terms:
- **Jails/jailing**: A blockstring with no gap, for example 2A > 5A.
- **2Gem/5Gem**: A gem set crouching or standing respectively.
- **Gem Limit**: A mechanic built in as part of Vatista's gems that prevents blockstrings longer than 5 Gem explosions. The limit resets after a gap in the blockstring of about 8 frames.

Gem Frame Advantage

Before we go anywhere with this document, it's important to talk about the frame advantage offered by Gems in different situations.

When Vatista detonates a gem, it causes two shockwaves: The first smaller, **inner explosion** created around the gem, followed by the larger **outer explosion** that ripples out from it.

A **2Gem** detonated close to the opponent will cause them to be hit by the inner explosion, which is less advantageous on block than the outer explosion.

Unless the opponent is standing, detonating a **5Gem** will cause them to be hit by an outer gem explosion and push them either towards or away from Vatista, depending on which side of them the gem was on. The only way to detonate 5Gem with a **normal** on the ground is with 5BB, which is important to keep in mind.

As stated in the Vatista tech archive, detonating gems with 5A or 5C leads to a far less advantageous cancel into another gem than doing so with a B normal, which is why gem loops are generally structured around using B normals to detonate in various patterns.

Here's a handy chart ~~that I stole from Foxof~~ **that details a Gem detonation cancelled into another gem set on block:**

Gem Inner Explosion w/ 5A: +1
Gem Inner Explosion w/ 2B/5B: +6
Gem Outer Explosion w/ 2B(2): +11 (Could actually be +10)
Gem Outer Explosion w/ 5BB: >+12 (+7~-2 if blocked standing)
Gem Inner Explosion w/ 5C: -1
Gem Outer Explosion w/ 5C: +/-0
Gem Inner Explosion w/ 66C: +6
Gem Outer Explosion w/ 66C(3): +6
Gem Outer Explosion w/ 66C(2): >+12

It's worth mentioning that Linne, Mika, and Vatista will still block the outer gem explosion even when stand blocking, which can make their lives considerably more difficult in certain situations.

Using system mechanics

Using system mechanics to get out of Gem loops will be a recurring theme, and it is almost always, if not always, an option.
**Guard Thrust** is your best friend to get out of gem loops. If you have no confidence in your ability to escape the situation in any other way, it's always there for you.

In general, **you will often need to shield** to get out of certain loops. Shielding is done conservatively so you don't create patterns you can be blown up for.

Veil Off is also a universal option for getting out of multiple different gem loops. Other metered and meterless reversals can and should be used similarly.

The 5Aw Detonate loop

5Aw Det > 2Gem > 5Aw Det > 2Gem…
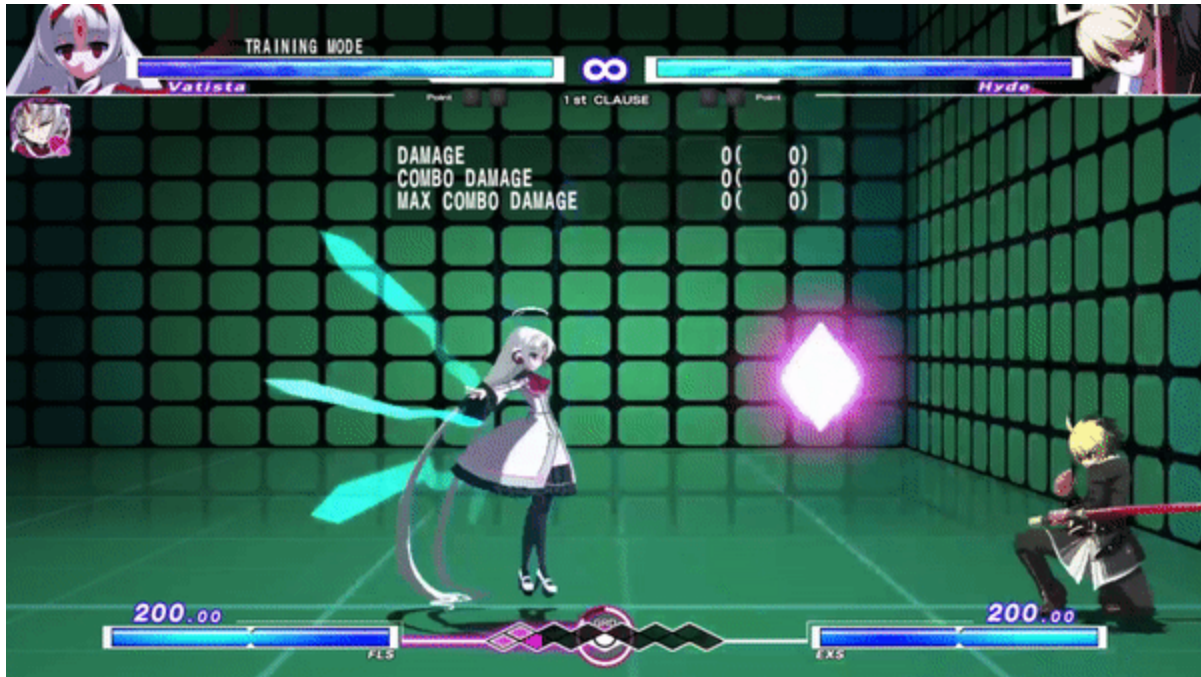
A classic Vatista corner loop, this one generally leads to the highest number of RPS situations and is an excellent way for Vatista to press her advantage. In addition, it's the only loop where Gem Limit is not a factor.

The simplest way to get out of this is to shield the outer gem explosion, which will push Vatista away from you. **You should only have to do this twice before the outer explosion will whiff you entirely**, and you are free to perform whatever actions will allow you to get around or through the gems, being it a fireball, some air shenanigans, etc. This is generally dependent on your character what options you can use, but every character has at least one, if not many. A common option is upback divekick: Wagner and Mika can j236A, and Merkava can use flight to swoop out. Jumping when out of the range of gem opens up a lot of punish opportunities.

If you are still within the range of the Gem where the outer explosion will hit your block, **do not jump** - Vatista can blow you up by hitting you with an air unblockable 5A or 66C whilst you're in blockstun.

If you have Vorpal and some kind of projectile invulnerable move or horizontal reversal, you can straight up just CS and slap that move to punish Vatista for attempting the loop. You are

essentially guaranteed to win vorpal from blocking this loop, but it is possible that Vatista will delay detonating her next Gem or Concentrate to try and bait a response from you, sacrificing her frame advantage to remain safe, which puts her often at a neutral situation with you.

Shielding isn't the be-all-end-all answer to this loop however, as Vatista can recognise it and attempt to blow you up with Assault dl.jB if you're slow, or microdash before her Gem set to reset her positioning and keep the mids coming. So, if this is happening, you can dashblock towards her.

Vatista's 5A is 6 frames, and if you block the outer explosion of a gem when she does 5A Det > Set, she is +10. **However, if you block the inner explosion of a gem when she does 5A Det > Set, she is -4**. This means that if you have a move that is **9 frames or faster** that can hit the extended hitbox of 5A, or Vatista, you can dashblock in and punish the loop, or at the very least take your turn.

If you do not have a move capable of this, you can dashblock closer to her and attempt a punish or to take your turn with 2A, 5A or Throw. This is a little riskier, as it requires you to block her 5A detonate, and if she happens to react and immediately set a gem, then she will be +1 and will 5A trade with Gem det for a full combo. **While this can happen, the vast majority of the time it will not**, as the Vatista player would have to preemptively change the timing of their gem set in order to accommodate the 5A connecting, so 99.9% of the time if the 5A connects you will be able to punish with an A normal.
**She can still be thrown even if she is on point with changing her gem set timing**, but the reward is obviously not as big as a 5A/2A sideswitch combo.

It is important to note that whilst this is the counterplay to the 5Aw Det loop, it is still a Vatista-favoured situation, and if said Vatista player is quick to react, they can come to meet your dashblock and do their best to keep you in a blockstring and hopefully put you back into the same situation.

It's a skewed interactive situation that can aim to cause decision fatigue, but you ultimately will gain resources if Vatista does not leverage concentrate. Utilise the counterplay options well so you can step up from layer 0 and make these interactions happen.

The 2Gem/5Gem Sandwich

2C > 5B Det > 5Gem > 5A > 5BB Det > 2Gem > 2C…
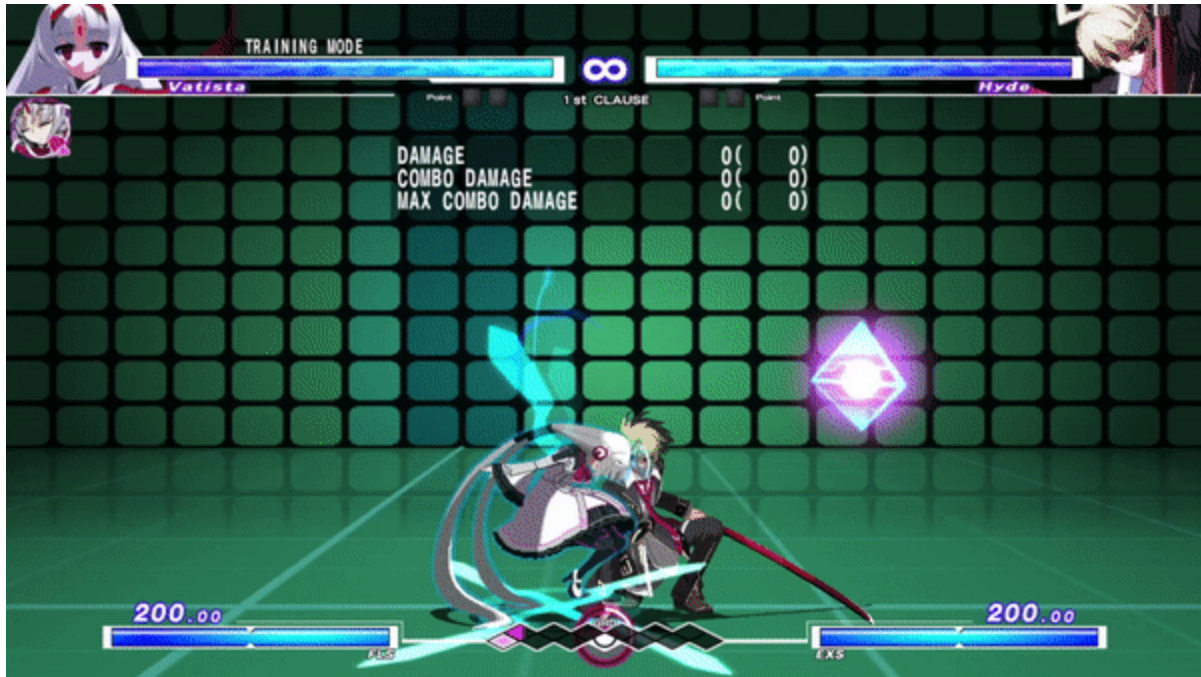
The absolute classic of Vatista gem loops: the 'B Drill is coming!' loop, or the Sandwich loop. **It can be run twice exactly before Vatista runs into the gem limit**, at which point she can 2C dl.5B to create a gap big enough to not hit Gem limit that cannot be counter thrown and is a frame trap against many normals because of the spacing and blockstun of 2C.

The first important part to note about this loop is that **there is always a 1f gap between Vatista's 5A and 5B**. This is a natural frame trap, but also a gap you can always use to VO or use something like an invincible DP, Enkidu's CS > 214A, Londrekia's FF, or Orie's Sacred Spire, etc. **VO is obviously a universal option for this gap**.

By simply standing up to block 5BB detonate, every character except from Hyde, Carmine, Hilda, Eltnum, Seth and Yuzuriha can **reduce the frame advantage of 5BB det set enough to make it -2**. Those mentioned characters can however shield the 2C or 5A and stand up to get that frame advantage.
Further still, if you are not one of the characters mentioned above, **you can stand up to block the first hit of 5B and then crouch before 5BB detonates the gem and reduce the frame advantage even further, causing Vatista to become -8**. The timing is such that even if Vatista chooses to do 5B > 2C instead of 5BB det, you will still block the 2C.

The GIF below shows the timing.
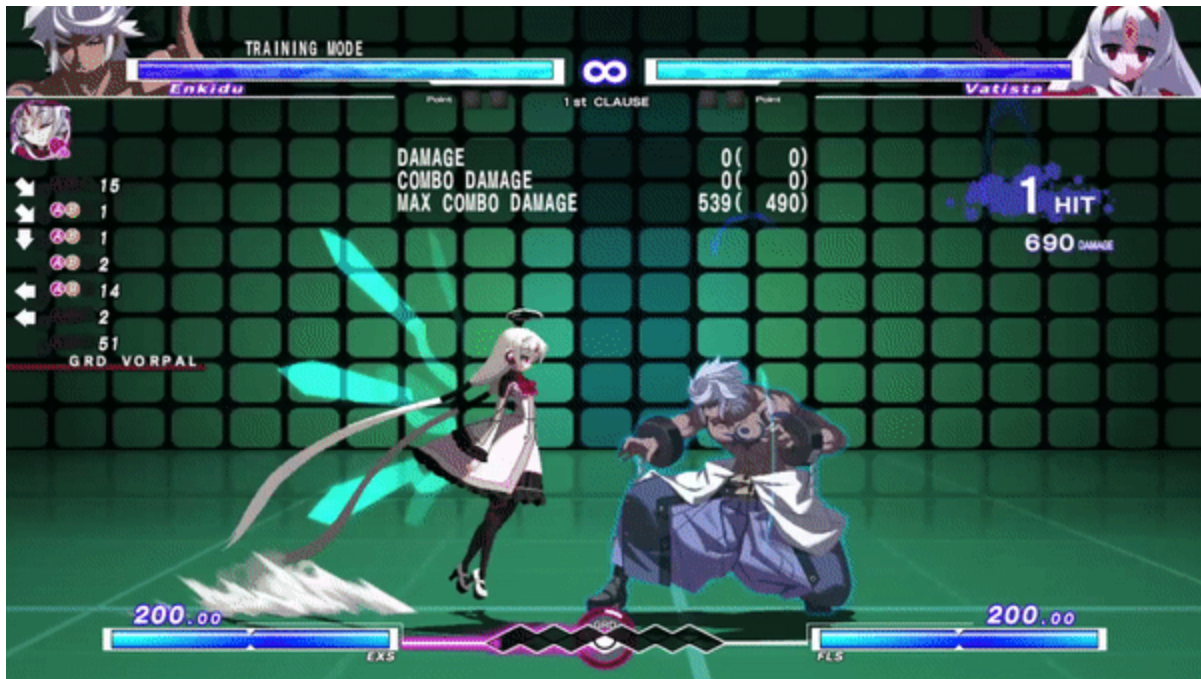
Bear in mind **if you crouch too early**, you will still block the outer detonation and **Vatista will be +12**.

It's worth mentioning that **Linne, Mika and Vatista** herself are too short to affect the 5BB Det Set frame advantage in any similar manner, so it is safer for them to conservatively shield to win vorpal for free, or get out using their reversal options in the natural gap.

The 5BB loop

2C > 5BB Det > 5Gem > 2C > 5BB Det...
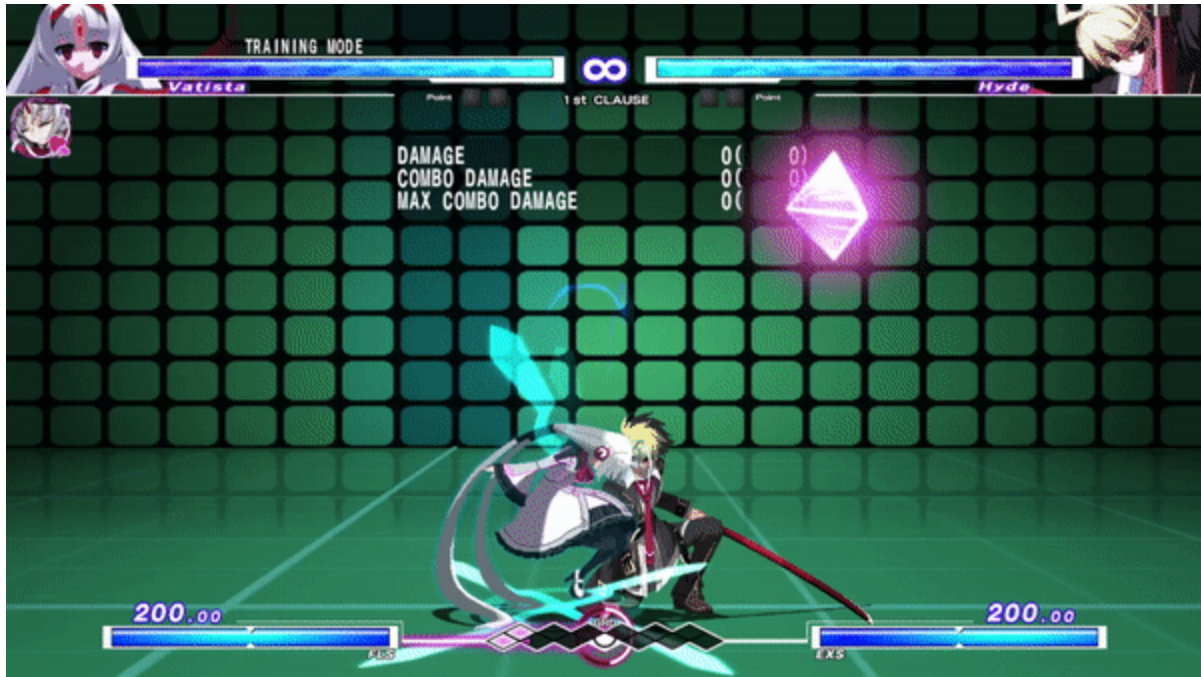
Not a regularly utilised loop, but a strong one regardless. It's difficult to maintain midscreen because the pushback from 2C will begin to move the opponent away from Vatista extremely quickly, and you can take advantage of this with some conservative shielding of 2C. This can force her to microdash 2C to maintain the loop.

Shielding 2C and standing up to block the explosion from the 5Gem like in the above loop are your best bets to reducing frame advantage and pushing Vatista away from you during this loop. Bear in mind that the further away Vatista is from you, the less you reduce the frame advantage when you stand up to block the 5Gem, so keep this in mind when choosing your options in the situation.

The 2B Loop

2B Det > 2Gem > 2B Det > 2Gem…
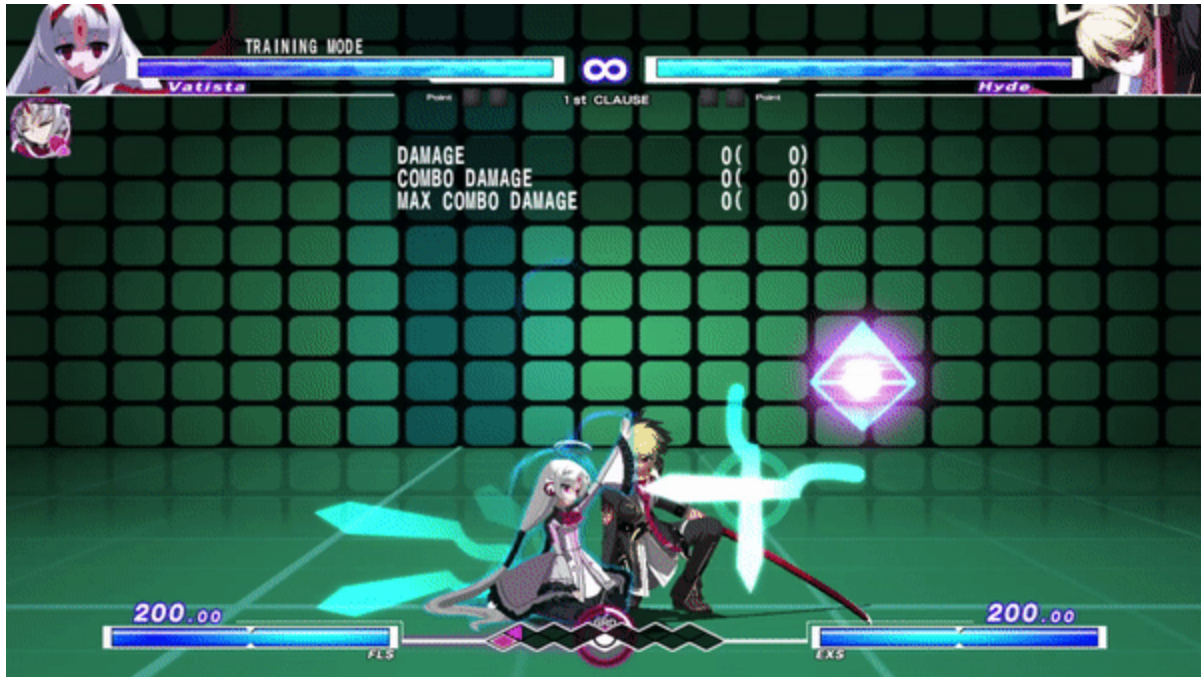
This is not particularly easy to set up, and can only be accessed when the opponent is pushed directly next to Vatista with a gem as far behind them as possible - but that's not to say it can't ever be done.
The easiest way for Vatista to access this is from a gem set behind the corner. Otherwise, she needs a lot of respect.
This 2B loop is completely gapless and is effectively impossible to escape from even with shielding, due to the plus frames provided by the gem explosion.

The loop can last for a little over 5 seconds before it ends automatically due to Gem Limit. Whilst difficult, Vatista can partition a B Drill during this loop for a 15 frame overhead.

It's possible to shield the gem explosion and VO the gap, or even just VO if the loop is sloppy and a gap is left, but if you don't have a meterless reversal, don't have enough meter for VO or any other metered move in your arsenal and don't have vorpal for guard thrust, this is an unfortunate case where you really do have to block the mids and attempt to react to a 20 frame overhead, which you likely can't. The saving grace here is that you will gain GRD extremely quickly from this loop - but it's best not to autopilot on your shields in case you get hit by B Drill or Throw and GRD broken.

The 2B Sandwich

2AA > 2B Det > 2Gem > 2AA…
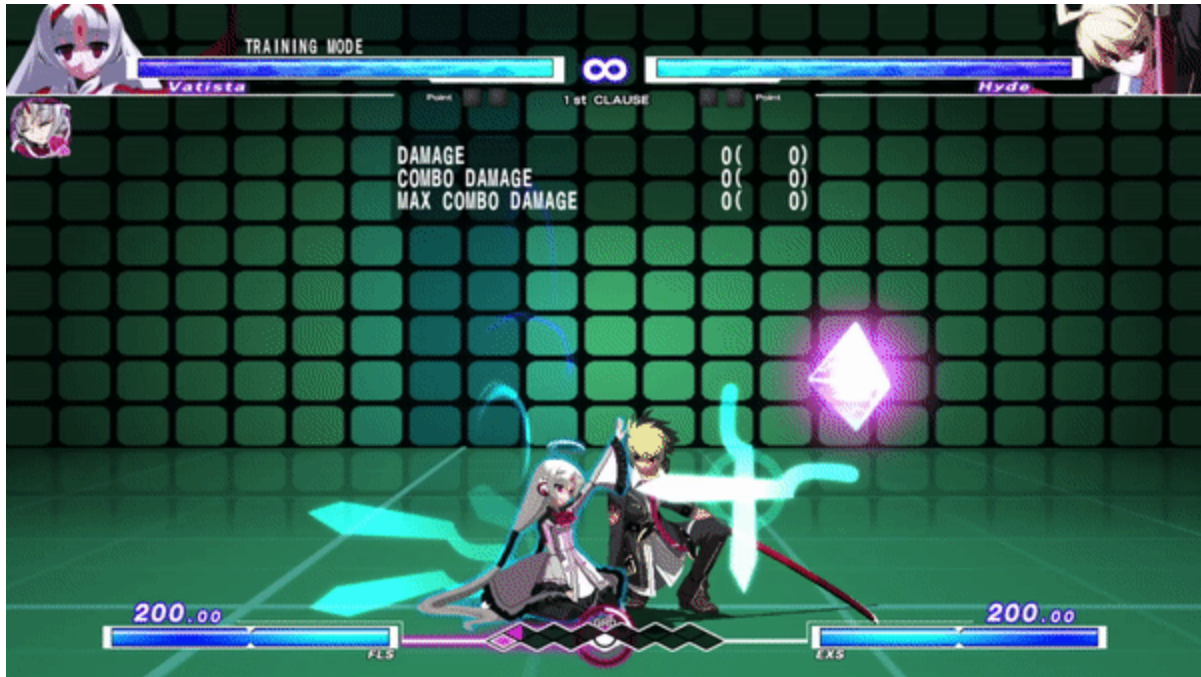
A fairly common loop that can occur if Vatista happens to get a gem behind the opponent midscreen. This is a preferred loop for running throw mind games with gems.

Each gem in this loop is +6, and since 2A is 6 frames, it can be made gapless. **Of course, as you should have realised by now, all gem loops without an 8f gap in the blockstring will automatically end due to Gem Limit after around 5 or 6 seconds**, so what the Vatista player will be doing during this time is looking to make you respect the loop by leaving a small gap, and then blowing up an option you pick once you've started showing some respect.

Some conservative shielding of 2B will guarantee you win the next Vorpal cycle from the sheer amount of GRD you gain. If you want to get out as fast as possible, you can greenshield the second 2A, but this is extremely risky, as you can get GRD broken for it if the Vatista player is on the ball.

The 2B Corner loop

2B Det > 2Gem > 2B Det > 2Gem…
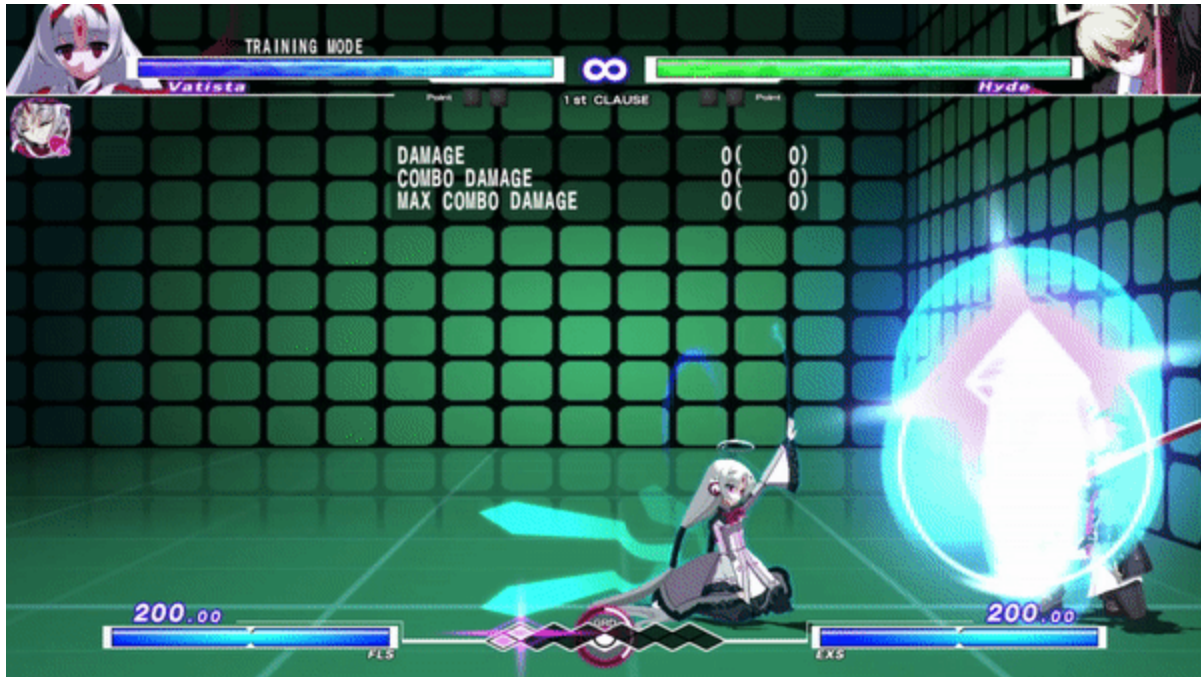
This loop where both Vatista and the gem are in front of you whilst you are in the corner is a very simple loop you cannot dashblock out of. It's generally used as a knowledge check to encourage mashing or bad shields.

If you shield 2B, you will push Vatista away from you *extremely* quickly. If this does not happen, you're shielding incorrectly, and Vatista can and will blow you up for it. Just holding 1AD or greenshielding continuously are great examples of what not to do.

If you only greenshield off the first hit of 2B once each time, it should still end after around 2-3 reps, so still very quickly, and you're guaranteed a nice chunk of GRD for your troubles.

The 66C Chase loop

66C Det > 5 Gem > 5A > 5BB Det > 2Gem > 66C Det…
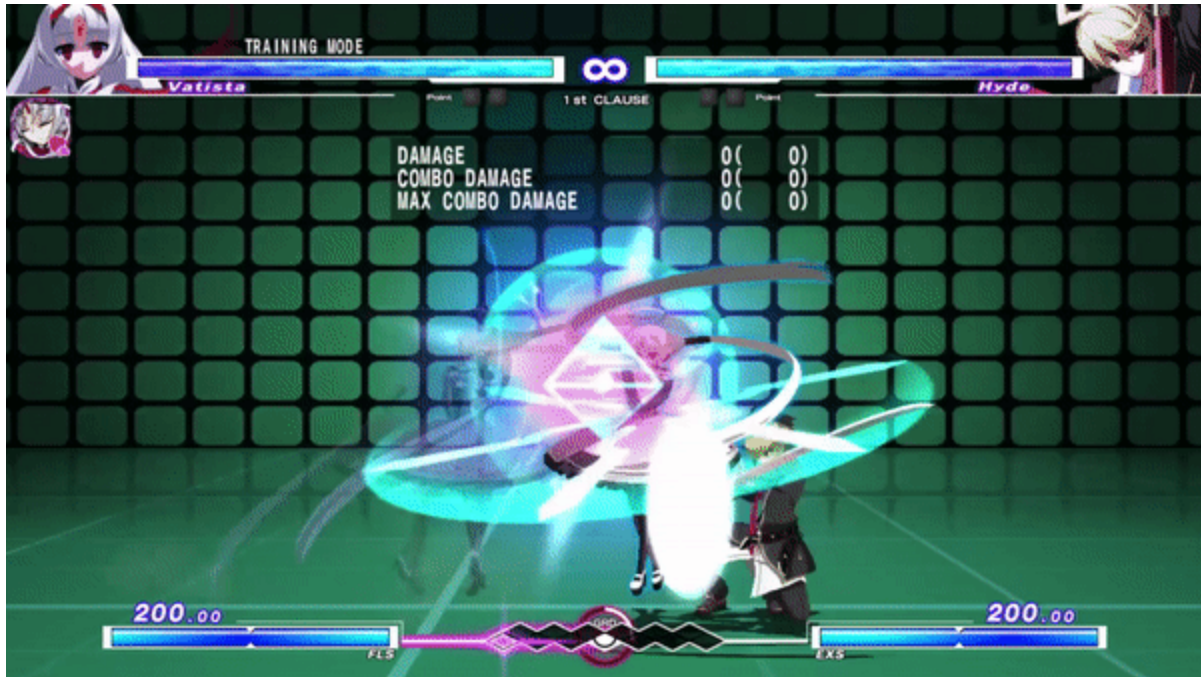
A loop that can be used to effectively 'chase' the opponent on backtech after a combo, and steadily push them towards the corner. **There's no actual mix in this loop**, but it can be used to close the distance and transition into another loop that does have mix, or even to simply check an opponent who shields badly or attempts to backdash.

The easiest and safest way to get out of this loop is to block and take Vorpal for free. **The loop itself ends automatically after 4 seconds due to Gem Limit**, at which Vatista will be forced to continue into a regular blockstring. If it does not end in this amount of time, then Vatista has left an 8 frame gap in the blockstring to prevent her from hitting Gem Limit.
If you aren't comfortable holding the mids, there are other things you can do to deal with it.

Again, like the 2Gem/5Gem sandwich, **there is always a 1f gap between Vatista's 5A and 5B**. This is a natural frame trap, but also a gap you can always use to VO or use something like an invincible DP, Enkidu's CS > 214A, Londrekia's FF, or Orie's Sacred Spire, etc. VO is obviously a universal option for this gap.

VO is obviously not always an option however, and trying to reversal out of a 1f gap is not always easy for a lot of characters, but there are other options.

The loop is as noted above, 66C Det > 5 Gem > 5A > 5BB Det > 2Gem > repeat - or more specifically, 66[C] > 5]A[Gem > 5[A] > 5BB Det > 2]C[Gem > repeat. This means that after the 5A in the loop, **Vatista only has her B buttons and C buttons available**, which she of course uses to continue the loop.

Like in the 2Gem/5Gem sandwich, you can stand up to block the 5Gem explosion and reduce the frame advantage so that Vatista becomes -2 or even -8 depending on your character. Unlike the 2Gem/5Gem sandwich, Hyde and Hilda can create a gap they can mash in this way.

Final words

Huge thanks again to Foxof for proofreading this document for errors, as well as Mo.Sin for ~~forcing me to lab~~ helping me with suggestions to test with labbing the loops and frame data changes.

If you have any further questions, feel free to hit me up on twitter or come to Vatista chat in the Under Night discord!

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