

Once Human

Legendary Return

My proposals for profession progression and social gameplay

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I propose connecting profession progression, rare boss hunts, competition for resources and social activities. Beastmasters and Gardeners should have their own reasons to form a team and participate in endgame. The Head Chef keeps a culinary identity and supports allies, while players gain opportunities for trade, rivalry and their own server stories.

I have brought together my proposals for professions, world bosses and social activities, including additions to my previous email. All numerical values are examples intended to explain the mechanics.

What this revision clarifies

System	Clarification
Head Chef	Meal weight and two-stage food support for non-Chefs.
Gardener	Breeding replaces the combat keyword; limited spore collection and contested harvesting.
Beastmaster	Debuff-applying combat birds are distinct from flying mounts.
Living chess	Return after a repelled capture, health restoration, sacrifices and the check-resolution exception.

Contents

1 Professions and teams • 2 Head Chef • 3 Thunderbird • 4 Overgrowth boss • 5 Breeding and economy • 6 Competition • 7 Social games • 8 Living chess rules • 9 Further concepts and overall goal • 10 Balance tuning

How I mark proposal status

Defined — the concept rule needs no further elaboration from me.

Developer refinement — balancing, implementation and playtesting.

In development — a part of the idea I am still developing.

A colour applies only to the highlighted passage. Green does not mean that a mechanic has been implemented or validated in-game.

1 Professions and survivor teams

The concept centres on a four-player survivor team. A profession gives a player a personal objective: the Beastmaster seeks a rare creature, the Gardener seeks a rare harvest and the Chef creates dishes. Team members combine their combat abilities for the chosen hunt or resource harvest. The next event can have a different organiser and different priorities.

Profession	Personal objective	Combat contribution
Beastmaster	Bosses, materials and pet capture	Combat birds and debuffs.
Gardener	Rare boss spores, seeds and vines	Living turrets with selected combat keywords.
Head Chef	Recipes and processing rare ingredients	Powerful food and additional support for allies.

Personal progression and interdependence

In my experience, Gardeners and Beastmasters need stronger reasons to participate actively in endgame. I want players to choose these professions for their main character, rather than only to supply a Chef with resources.

I want to preserve interdependence between professions while giving each its own combat value. Ingredient trading is therefore complemented by combat birds and plants: Gardeners and Beastmasters contribute directly during an encounter.

The Beastmaster supplies legendary creature meat and materials; the Gardener supplies anomalous plants and spores; the Chef turns ingredients into dishes. Beastmasters and Gardeners also gain combat tools of their own. Trade complements their active roles.

Choosing a team composition

Four slots create choices between additional damage, Chef support and a second harvesting specialist. The proposal does not impose a mandatory party template. The aim is to encourage teams to discuss a plan, allocate jobs and choose abilities for a particular hunt.

I see Beastmaster progression in combining several combat birds with different debuffs, and Gardener progression in combining two or three vines with different status effects. Players could select pets and plants to complement their weapons, opponents and team objectives.

2 Head Chef and ally support

The Chef progresses from weaker early experimental cooking into a strong endgame profession. Combining food remains possible, while powerful meals occupy more of the available food slots.

Example progression	Ingredient efficiency
Below level 20	75% of base efficiency.
Next tier below level 40	100% of base efficiency.
Maximum level 50	150% of base effect potency and duration.

At maximum level, I propose increasing the potency and duration of custom dish effects to 150% of their base values, or 1.5 times the baseline.

This progression lets players first learn cooking, then create competitive recipes and finally gain an endgame advantage from profession mastery. Enhanced food for non-Chefs should bring them closer to the Chef’s capabilities while preserving the Chef’s specialisation.

Meal weight

I propose assigning a slot weight to each dish. With two available food slots, an ordinary dish occupies one, while a dish made from legendary boss ingredients occupies both. A Chef chooses between combining two ordinary dishes and using one especially powerful dish. This preserves food combinations while preventing the strongest recipes from being stacked together.

Two conditions for stronger non-Chef food buffs

At maximum level, I propose unlocking a food property called Ally Support or Divine Food. A non-Chef consuming this food receives enhanced buff percentages. If a Chef is in that player’s team, the enhancement increases further. This is a two-stage effect: additional Chefs do not add further stages. Food therefore helps narrow the gap between professions, while having a Chef participate adds further value to the team.

Experimental Kitchen

Expanded ingredient slots allow adjustable proportions. Simple recipes scale with ingredient quantities; legendary combinations of Thunderbird meat and botanical materials require precise ratios. Success records a recipe in a personal cookbook; failure produces toxic grey sludge with penalties. Hidden recipes and special effects are also proposed.

3 Beastmaster and the Thunderbird

At maximum level, a questline opens for tracking, capturing or eliminating unique world bosses. The first is the Thunderbird, found in high mountains and persistent storm zones. A Beastmaster-crafted Storm Tracker detects anomalous electrical activity and highlights its nesting area.

Damage	Original reference	Interaction
Shock	100% immunity	Accumulated charge triggers a super-attack, followed by shield failure and lower flight altitude.
Physical	50% resistance	An anomalous field interferes with ballistic attacks.
Blaze	20% resistance	Protection from dense feathers and resilient skin.
Frost	Vulnerability	Disrupts the charged body through the creature’s anomalous properties.
Blast	Vulnerability	Disrupts flight and can ground the boss in combination with stagger.

Ground combat

When fighting from the ground, the team tracks the bird’s position and prepares opportunities to bring it down. The boss changes flight direction rapidly, so players must combine fire against a moving target with evasive movement. I propose an encounter driven by the bird’s behaviour and the team’s counters, without mandatory transitions at health thresholds.

Screech and lightning. The sonic attack drains Sanity and briefly staggers players. Targeted lightning strikes immediately follow across sections of the battlefield, making the short loss of control particularly dangerous.

Snatch and drop. The bird dives at a selected player, grabs them and carries them skyward. Stamina drains continuously during the ascent and reaches zero at the apex. After release, some stamina regenerates during freefall, leaving a brief opportunity to survive using a V-ability or a melee move that stalls the fall. Ascent height and recovery timing need tuning to make this survival window usable.

Forced landing. Blast damage combined with stagger mods can bring the bird down. Players must clear the landing area: the falling body instantly kills anyone underneath. Electrical area damage persists around the grounded boss, so bringing it down creates an attack opportunity without making the space beside its body safe.

Charge overload. Shock attacks charge the boss instead of dealing normal damage. At the threshold, it unleashes a powerful storm attack, after which its protection breaks and its speed and altitude drop. This route requires surviving the discharge before exploiting the weakened state.

Aerial combat

Once Beastmasters tame chicks, equip them with saddles and distribute them to other players, later Thunderbird encounters can become aerial raids. Flying mounts gain an active Air Dash for evasion; riders must track their own flight direction and the boss's position.

Against mounted players, the bird uses mid-air rams, tracking ball lightning and powerful gusts that disorient riders. Air Dash helps evade incoming threats, while a gust forces the rider to regain their flight direction. Attack selection and combinations adapt to aerial combat.

Developers would need to tune lightning pursuit speed, wind strength, ram telegraphs and Air Dash recovery. I want mount control and well-timed evasion to determine the outcome.

Materials and chick capture

Storm Feathers are used for special arrows and later for universal ammunition that adds Shock damage regardless of weapon model. The same feathers are used to craft the Isolating Tranquilizer for chick capture. Thunderbird Bones are a Tier 5+ material for weapons with unique traits. I propose preventing two weapons with these traits from being equipped simultaneously.

After each successful boss kill, aggressive chicks have a chance to arrive at the battle site. Their arrival is not guaranteed. They are initially hostile: defeating the adult bird does not automatically turn them into pets.

To capture a chick, a Beastmaster needs an Isolating Tranquilizer crafted from Storm Feathers. Applying it to a hostile chick pacifies the bird and enables taming. Feathers therefore connect hunting the adult boss with capture preparation: its materials support both weapon crafting and mount acquisition. Without the tranquilizer, chicks can only be harvested for raw materials.

Safe riding requires a specialised modified dielectric saddle. The acquisition sequence is: defeat the boss and obtain feathers, craft the tranquilizer, pacify an arriving chick, tame it and fit the saddle.

Chick spawn probability, tranquilizer consumption, pacification time and saddle cost require developer tuning. My concept defines the capture method and its connection to boss loot.

I propose separate species of combat birds for applying debuffs. These are different birds, not Thunderbird chicks; tamed chicks serve as flying mounts.

4 Overgrowth boss and maturation cycle

The boss roots at a fixed location and gradually spreads across the surrounding area. Players choose an early kill with lower rewards or wait for maturity. Only stage four enables rare spore harvesting and access to legendary seed material.

Stage	Example HP	Development
1 Inception	1,000,000	One protective shoot.
2 Reinforcement	2,000,000	Three shoots in total.
3 Expansion	4,000,000	Six shoots in a hexagon; spore-infected adds.
4 Blooming	16,000,000	Spore cloud, bombardment and a limited harvesting window.

Protective shoots must be destroyed before the core can be attacked. I propose keeping resistances consistent across stages: Physical and Blast deal 100% of base damage, while Frost and Shock deal 75%. Blaze is the plant's main vulnerability. This boss has no absolute immunities.

Growth and acceleration

An example natural wait is 90 minutes to bloom, with 30 minutes for each of the first three stages. A Gardener processes vines into Stardust Fertilizer and applies it near the roots to advance the boss by one stage. Early stages yield substantially fewer vines. Resources for the full accelerated loop are intended to depend on killing another stage-four boss.

Spore barrages and withering

During bloom, the boss targets players with barrages of three precise spores. Only Gardeners can harvest them. Barrages are limited, originally proposed as four or five. At the limit the plant withers and disappears: final boss loot is lost, while collected spores remain.

A team can collect the penultimate barrage and finish the boss before it withers. An earlier kill is safer but reduces the harvest; waiting for more spores increases the risk of losing the final loot. Players need to count attacks and prepare their main damage burst in advance.

5 Breeding and rare resource economy

Single-use cultivation

Harvested material lets a Gardener cultivate a rare plant on their territory and obtain vines. The harvest is single-use, and the domestic plant produces no new seeds. Cultivation requires Acid and Polluted Water, and harvesting destroys the planter. The Gardener returns to the world boss for new planting material.

Spores retained after a failed fight are a partial reward. They do not enable unlimited plant reproduction or replace all resources from a successful mature-boss kill. Vines also serve as fertilizer and as feedstock for Acid extraction.

Collecting spores without killing the boss therefore remains a valid partial success. However, rapidly repeating the full cycle requires resources from a defeated mature boss. A single-use harvest prevents one successful collection from becoming an unlimited supply of planting material.

Combat vine keywords

Breeding input	Combat result	Rule
Base vine	Poison damage over time	Original living turret.
Vine and hot pepper	Fire variant	Breeding selects the effect.
Vine and icy melon	Frost variant	Breeding selects the effect.
Vine and Gunpowder	Unstable Bomber	The keyword replaces Poison; Blast elemental damage.

Breeding replaces the vine’s original Poison keyword with a new combat keyword. For example, combining a vine with Gunpowder produces Unstable Bomber, the existing Blast elemental damage effect. I propose allowing Gardeners to deploy two or three different vines and combine their effects within a build.

For me, breeding is about choosing a combination of effects for a build. Several different vines create more ways to prepare for combat, while replacing the original Poison effect prevents endlessly adding effects to one plant.

Additional materials

I also propose a vine-derived stimulant for low-Sanity builds. It reduces maximum health and Sanity while granting substantial resistance to incoming damage. This lets players activate low-Sanity abilities and offset part of their character’s vulnerability.

6 Competition on PvE and PvP servers

Competition for rare resources is intentional. Finding a boss or investing fertilizer does not automatically protect a specialist’s investment. Gardener-specific resources belong to the Gardener who successfully collects them first. Damage contribution alone does not guarantee every participant a share of the harvest.

I deliberately retain the risk of spending fertilizer and losing the harvest to another team. It gives scouting, timing and coordination a purpose. On PvE, teams compete over collection and the pace of the kill; on PvP, they must also protect their specialists from other players.

Beastmasters likewise compete for rare bosses, materials and pets. I want locating a creature and preparing for the hunt to matter, and the arrival of another team to change players’ plans. Each event gives its specialist profession a personal objective around which to gather allies.

Situation	Team decision	Risk
Plant still growing	Wait or spend fertilizer	Rivals may kill it early or benefit from acceleration.
Spore barrages underway	Harvest while managing boss HP	Excessive damage shortens harvesting.
Penultimate barrage	Switch to the finishing burst	Insufficient damage before withering.
Rivals on PvP	Protect the Gardener or attack	Fighting players consumes the time and resources needed for the boss.

Example team encounter

A team finds a plant and decides to accelerate its growth. Its Gardener prepares to harvest while allies clear threats and manage boss health. A rival team arrives as bloom begins. The first team can kill early and reduce the harvest, or risk waiting for another barrage. After the penultimate attack, it needs a coordinated damage burst.

On PvP, rivals can attack the harvester and their protection. Winning the firefight does not guarantee event success: if the boss withers, final rewards are lost. Temporary alliances and competition over the finishing moment can emerge. Players choose for themselves when to cooperate and when to attack.

7 Social games and meeting places

I want players to have reasons to meet outside the standard PvE loop: play, negotiate trades, watch tournaments and return to familiar places. Mini-games should support social interaction without becoming mandatory daily chores.

Stardust Chess and card games

Two players open a dedicated interface at a game table in a safe zone, faction camp or player-built bar. Chess pieces, cards and tokens use the game's characters, factions and creatures. Standard tabletop chess is distinct from the combat variant with living statues.

Living Monolith Chess

A large open-world board holds monster statues. During an attempted capture, the attacking and defending pieces animate and fight. The defending player may intervene with melee weapons. Preparing a melee build is part of the competition; equalised player stats are not a baseline requirement.

Without intervention, the capture is guaranteed to follow the chess move. Piece attributes vary by rank, and the attacker receives enough advantage to ensure that outcome. The combat sequence should remain readable and should not randomise an ordinary capture.

Rewards and tournaments

I propose modest rewards with only a small difference between the winner and loser. I want players to come for the match, the conversation and the competition, rather than turn the mini-game into a mandatory source of rare resources.

When tuning rewards, I would check whether a series of short arranged matches becomes more profitable than normal play. A small winner-loser reward gap should encourage participation, while reward eligibility should preserve the value of playing a full match.

I also propose secret achievements for recreating famous matches. For example, The Professor's Gambit could reference the Harry Potter chess scene, with players reproducing the corresponding position and combination.

A large-scale variant has players act as pieces on an arena board, with two leaders commanding the sides and captures resolved through melee combat. A full board implies 32 pieces and two commanders. Pieces receive roles, minor buffs and traits based on their rank.

8 Living chess rules

Chess position determines move legality, check, checkmate and draws. Combat intervention changes the outcome of an ordinary capture but does not permit ending a turn with one's own king in check. The king has no separate melee-defence mode.

Situation	Result
Capture without intervention	The attacker captures the target and occupies its square.
Defence fails	The ordinary capture is completed.
Attack repelled	Both pieces survive; the attacker returns to its starting square and the defender stays. The turn is consumed.
Combat ends	Surviving pieces recover their health; the opponent takes the next turn.
Legal capture of the checking piece to resolve check	Intervention is disabled and capture is guaranteed.
Checkmate or stalemate	Checkmate is a loss; stalemate is a draw under standard rules.

Check is resolved by moving the king, legally interposing a piece or legally capturing the checking piece. Guaranteed capture applies only to a legal move: it does not permit moving the king into another attack. Repetition concerns the entire position, side to move and move rights, not merely the king's square.

Tactical examples

Luring a knight. It can be better to leave a piece undefended in combat: the knight captures it and lands on a square where it can be recaptured. Repelling the attack would instead return the knight to its former safe square.

A lure after a repelled attack. A player allows their attack to be repelled, hoping the opponent then captures the offered piece and opens a mating line. In this way, a combat advantage can become the bait for a positional trap.

A prepared melee build helps defend pieces, but checkmate ends the game regardless of character strength. A player must assess both their chances of winning the fight and the position that will result afterwards.

The check-resolution exception preserves a legal position: when the checking piece is captured with a legal move, combat defence cannot cancel that capture. In other fights, returning a repelled attacker to its starting square and restoring health preserve the importance of position and the spent turn.

9 Further concepts and overall goal

Outpost Mimic and sea boss

The Desert Ghoul disguises itself as an outpost or abandoned base without an ownership flag. On approach, walls, crates and workbenches reveal maws and jointed limbs. It is a composite boss: building components act as independent combat units, creating opportunities for area damage and methodical room clearing.

For deep-water zones and anomalous currents, I propose Ouroboros, a colossal sea serpent. Hunting and fighting it would expand the naval side of Legendary Return. I will present detailed naval combat mechanics in a separate addendum.

What players gain

Feature	Player benefit
Head Chef	Culinary progression, meal choices and team support.
World bosses	Hunting, preparation and timing the finishing attack.
Gardener	Contested harvesting and combat plant breeding.
Beastmaster	Rare pets and combinations of combat debuffs.
Chess	Positional play, melee defence and deliberate sacrifices.

With these proposals, I want to connect personal progression, team hunts and social interaction. Each profession gains its own objective, each team has a shared plan, and the server gains reasons for rivalry, meetings and stories created by the players themselves.

10 Balance tuning

I propose preserving the rules described here and tuning numerical values through playtesting. I want preparation and coordination to provide an advantage while each profession retains a distinct way to participate.

Food and support

I would compare two ordinary dishes with one dish made from legendary boss ingredients in potency, duration and cost. Repeated consumption and combinations with drinks also need testing. The two levels of non-Chef support should narrow the gap between professions without stacking bonuses from multiple Chefs.

Maturation and harvesting

Vine yields and fertilizer costs should maintain the link between killing a mature boss and accelerating the next one. I would test the complete cycle: waiting or accelerating, harvesting spores, finishing the boss, cultivation and preparing for another hunt. Barrage intervals should allow harvesting and responses to rivals while preserving the threat of withering.

Combat pets and plants

I would test survivability, simultaneous pet and vine counts, effect frequency and interactions with weapons and mods. Debuff-applying combat birds are other bird species, not Thunderbird chicks. Gardeners choose between different vines, each with its own keyword.

Chess pacing and rules

For combat chess, I would test fight duration and intervention strength across different melee builds. Defence should be useful, and voluntary sacrifices should retain tactical value. Special moves and draw counters need to work consistently with repelled captures while preserving check, checkmate and stalemate conditions.