

# Season 15

## Mind and Magic



Season 14 widened the loop. It gave every character a craft, recognized how you play rather than only how fast, and rebuilt the ground the world stands on. This season turns inward, toward the mind.

Two kinds of mind, really. The first belongs to your enemies. Mobs weigh their options, play to a role, and at the high end hunt your weaknesses on purpose.

The second mind is your own. Magicians gain metamagic, a small reserve of will spent to bend the next spell to their purpose. Necromancers gain a whole new discipline built on the corpses they raise and the minds they break. Clerics learn to speak a single prayer over an entire company at once. The art of spellcasting gets deeper, stranger, and more deliberate. Season 15 is about intelligence: the kind you face, and the kind you wield.

## Spellcasting

Two changes land underneath every caster in the game before we get to any one class.

### *Early spells cost what they should*

The mana curve for low-level spells has been reshaped so that your first spells stay cheap as you grow into them. A level 1 spell starts and caps at 8% of your mana; level 2 at 20%; level 3 at 30%; level 4 at 40%; and level 5 settles back to the familiar 50%. Your oldest, smallest spells no longer bleed you dry to cast.

### *Failure means a fumble, not a waste*

Failing a spell no longer swallows the whole cast. When you fail, you fumble the incantation: the spell still goes off, but you pay the failure penalty on top of the normal mana cost, and you take an expertise penalty of your level divided by six. So the spell lands, but it costs more and is easier for your target to resist. A bad roll costs you efficiency now, not the entire effort.

## The Magician: Metamagic

The Magician's rework is one of the centerpieces of the season. Where every other caster works from a fixed list of effects, the Magician now shapes the spells themselves.

You gain a reserve of Metamagic Points: one slot at level 8, a second at 11, a third at 17. A point regenerates roughly every ten minutes, and a high Focus stat quickens that toward eight. The pool is shown on your prompt as a  $\sim$ r token, in your score, and on the train menu, and the new metamagic command lets you inspect the pool and arm a modification. Each point reshapes one spell.

The five modifications:

Mode	Level	Cost	What it does
Clarity	8	1 point	Restore 30% of your maximum mana, instantly.
Held	8	1 point + the spell's mana	Store a finished spell and release it later on the instant, bypassing silence and grapple.
Expand	11	1 point	Your next group buff covers every ally in the room, not just its usual target.
Quicken	15	1 point	Queue a second spell to fire the instant your next cast lands, in the same round.
Ruinous	17	1 point	Your next damage spell scars the room with a lingering effect for several rounds.

## **Ruinous effects**

Ruinous is the one that rewrites the battlefield. The effect it leaves depends on the spell you spend it on:

Spell	Effect	What it leaves in the room
Magic Arrow	Arcane Residue	Lowers enemies' resilience saves.
Flaming Hands	Ignite	A persistent fire burn on a single target.
Frostbite	Flash Freeze	A sheet of ice; melee attackers must save or be knocked off their feet.
Lightning Bolt	Charged Atmosphere	The next elemental spell cast in the room hits harder.
Fireball	Smoke Haze	Enemies fight at an attack penalty.
Acid Arrow	Corrosive Pool	A room-wide acid pool that eats away armor.
Earth Spike	Shattered Ground	Enemies can't flee or move into the room.
Energy Drain	Mana Void	Reduces enemy mana recovery and spell damage.
Meteor Swarm	Impact Tremors	Enemies suffer reflex-save and speed penalties.
Inferno	Lingering Flames	A room-wide fire burn.

## **Mirror Image**

A new defensive spell at level 11. You conjure three illusory duplicates of yourself. Each incoming attack has a chance to strike an image instead of you, shattering it and negating the blow entirely: 75% with all three standing, 67% with two, 50% with one. The spell ends when the last image is spent, or after about ten minutes.

## ***Arcane Prodigy***

The Magician capstone at level 20, replacing Deathstrike on their list. It requires an active Trance. For five rounds, your metamagic reserve is held at full and every modification costs nothing, so you weave metamagic into every cast without spending a point. When it ends, the Trance collapses with it. The cooldown is roughly twenty-four minutes. Necromancers keep Deathstrike as before.

## **The Necromancer**

The Necromancer has always raised the dead. This season they learn to read the living, break minds, and turn their risen servants into weapons, then wear one like a second skin. Seven new abilities carry the class from a summoner into something colder and more surgical.

### ***Grave Bond — level 2 passive***

One of your risen servants is bound so wholly to your will that it is counted among the dead, not the living. That single minion no longer diminishes the experience you reap from a kill, and no longer counts against a challenge. It is, in effect, a built-in ethereal bond for one corpse, learned the moment you can raise one.

### ***Vivisect — level 3***

Cast on a creature to lay it open and read what it is. On a failed Fortitude save it reveals three of its hidden traits; on a save, one. The traits are drawn from its force affinities, its status immunities, its racial and class skills, and its temperament, the very intelligence and role described later in these notes. The reading is shaped by what the creature is made of, and reads differently for flesh, undead, elemental, construct, or something with no body at all. It deals no damage and starts no fight. You can only learn about the same kind of creature once an in-game day. (24 minutes)

### ***Miasma — level 5***

Fill the room with a poisonous cloud. Every couple of rounds, each enemy actively fighting you or your allies must make a Fortitude save or be poisoned, and takes a little poison damage whether it saves or not. Idle bystanders are left untouched. One cloud to a room; recasting renews it.

### ***Synapse Shock — level 6***

A lance of mental force, and the first of the Necromancer's mind spells. It works only on the living; the undead and the mindless feel nothing. It deals mental damage, and on a second, separate failed save it leaves the target dazed, fumbling roughly one action in six for a while.

### ***Frenzy — level 9***

Cast on one of your own risen corpses to drive it berserk: more damage per hit, a higher critical chance, and faster swings, for a short burst. When the frenzy burns out, the corpse collapses and can be raised again. One frenzy to a corpse. It is a tool of action economy, not raw power, meant to buy you a violent few rounds before the body gives out.

### ***Corpse Explosion — level 11***

Name one of your risen corpses and detonate it. The body charges your target and bursts in a torrent of dark magic, destroyed in the blast. The primary target takes the full hit, scaled to the corpse's own level, everyone else fighting you takes half. A Fortitude save halves the blast. Unlike Frenzy, the corpse is gone for good. Deals bludgeoning damage.

### ***Psychic Hemorrhage — level 15***

The heavier sibling of Synapse Shock, and living creatures only, the same as before. It deals serious mental damage, and on a failed save the target is stunned for a round or two.

### ***Eyes of the Master — level 16***

Possess one of your own corpses. Your body slumps where it stands and you act through the dead one, limited to whatever that borrowed body can do and none of your own spells. Your abandoned form bleeds a little mental damage each round, and if it dies you are torn free. End it by switching back, or by the corpse's death. It is made for scouting ahead and springing traps with a body you can afford to spend.

## **The Cleric: Avow**

A new spell at level 14. Avow is cast on yourself and costs about 75% of your mana, priming you for roughly two minutes. The next eligible prayer you speak, whether Bless, Purify, Sanctuary, Protection, or Prayer, radiates to every member of your group in the room at once, charmed followers included. Speak it before a hard pull and bless the whole line in a single breath.

## **The Shaman**

### ***Summon Elemental is no longer sustained***

Summon Elemental now works like Summon Familiar. A single cast gives you a charmed elemental on its own timer: no mana held in reserve, no chance of interruption each round, and nothing to be stripped as a sustained spell. Call it and get on with the fight.

### ***Anti-magic rooms suppress, not cancel***

Walking into an anti-magic room no longer tears your sustained spells down. They are suppressed instead: they simply stop working while you stand in the room, and resume the moment you leave. Tempest, Soothing Rains, Favorable Winds, Misty Veil, and Retribution all survive the trip now. And the trick of slipping past an anti-magic room's checks while mounted has been closed.

## Smarter Foes

The other mind of the season belongs to the mobs. Ishar's combat AI has grown by steps over the years, and this is its next evolution, aimed at the complaints the last version earned rather than a replacement of it. The engine a mob uses to choose its moves has been reworked so that a fighting creature rates every ability it could use, sorts them, and takes the best one that clears its own judgment.

The rough edges are smoothed. Necromancer mobs that leaned on Exhaust and rarely reached for Reave or Drain now use their real arsenal. Casters that leaned too hard on debuffs have settled down. Healers that overlooked their own emergencies pay attention now. The larger change is that mobs are no longer uniformly all-knowing, the loudest complaint about the old behavior. Every mob now carries an intelligence, from Mindless to Genius, and only the sharp ones see everything. A dumb beast is genuinely dumb: it can't tell that you're immune to fire and will breathe it at you all day. A genius reads your affinities, plays around your saves, and when you drop below a quarter of your health it stops conserving mana and goes for the throat. Every mob also carries a role, aggressive, support, control, or none, that weights what it reaches for; an aggressive caster spends its whole pool while a support caster hoards mana to heal. Most of the world sits at Average and plays fair. Only specific, dangerous creatures, zone bosses and above, think at the high tiers, and some of them may pressure your backline and pick the right target on purpose. You will feel the difference. And if you want to know what you're facing before it's obvious, a Necromancer's Vivisect reveals a creature's intelligence and role.

This is still being generally rolled out, a lot of mobs remain to be reflagged and may sit at Average / None where they may become more or less intelligent or specialized as we can get to them.

## Combat: Reeling

Stuns now have diminishing returns. When you stun a foe it starts reeling; stun it too many times in a row and it becomes steadied, immune to further stuns for a short, fixed window before it can be locked down again. Smarter foes shake it off sooner: a mindless thing can be chained for a good while, a genius almost not at all. The window is a flat, reliable duration, not a die roll, so once a foe is steadied you can count on it.

You can read it on your prompt. A new `~R` code shows whether your current target is reeling, still open to a stun, or steadied and immune for now. There's a new `HELP REELING` that lays out the tiers in plain language. Reeling governs Concussive Strike, Neural Spike, Psychic Hemorrhage, Ice Strike, and Screech; paralysis is untouched. Mobs have learned the same lesson, and won't waste a stun on a target that's already steadied.

## Items & Equipment

## Equipment Auras

Some worn gear now projects an aura that buffs your whole group. Wear an item with an aura of, say, +5 attack, and everyone grouped with you in the room carries +5 attack for as long as you wear it and stand with them. The buff keeps itself refreshed from the truth of the moment: leave the room, unequip the item, or fall, and it lapses on its own. There is nothing to juggle and no window to exploit, because it is recomputed constantly rather than handed out and forgotten.

## More modifiers

Objects can now carry up to six stat modifiers instead of two. This will be used sparingly, but the ceiling is there when a piece earns it.

## Escort Quests & Wardens

Escort quests have been overhauled to try to improve their implementation.

- Your charge now travels at a proper pace, about a room every six seconds, where it used to stall for forty-five or more.
- Falling behind no longer fails the escort. Your charge stops, waits for you, and tells you so. An escort now fails only if the escortee dies, the clock runs out, or you abandon it.
- Escorts can carry real deadlines now, shown on your quest objectives, and your charge will warn you when time runs short.
- Everyone in the group earns credit at arrival, not just the leader. Members too far away when it ends fail cleanly and can retry.
- Escortees no longer path through locked doors and stall forever, wander out of their own fights, or get hijacked when another player accepts the quest mid-run. A failed escort can always be retried.
- Quest givers return to their post when it's over instead of stranding at the destination, Orimick included, who now finds his own way back to the Overseer's Cage.
- And Wardens now hunt. A warden will leave its post to intercept an escort passing within range, then return to its watch. Fight it off; the clock keeps running.

## The Client: GMCP & Mudlet

How you actually play Ishar gets a serious upgrade. The server now speaks GMCP fluently, streaming a broad feed of live data to any client that wants it: your vitals and position, full character statistics, your affects sorted into buffs and debuffs, inventory and equipment, your group, your skills and cooldowns, who's online, room information, the game clock, and chat channels.

On top of that feed sits a full Mudlet interface. Panels for vitals, status, affects, and group. A clickable hotbar of your abilities, greyed on cooldown, with tooltips showing your learned percentage and mana cost. Clickable exits, inventory, and equipment. A compass rose, an embedded map, a who-list with tell, follow, and group actions, and an inline chat window. Class-resource pips track a Magician's metamagic or a Rogue's edge. You can rearrange or hide any of it with the `ui` command.

Getting it is one word. Type `mudlet` and the whole package downloads and keeps itself current. It is also listed in Mudlet's own package manager, under Toolbox → Package Manager → Available → Ishar. A website-client version with the same treatment is on the way.

## Challenges

A charmed or raised follower dying in the middle of a fight used to silently void a challenge that was otherwise perfectly valid. That is fixed. A Necromancer's Grave Bond corpse is explicitly exempt as well, counting neither against the challenge nor against your kill experience. And when a servant does taint a trial under Soul Drain, the aura of challenge now visibly gutters out with a message, so you learn the moment it happens instead of discovering it at the kill.

## Balance & Bug Fixes

### *Regeneration potions*

Potions of regeneration used to tick every 3 seconds. Now the interval is randomized, roughly every one to three combat rounds and averaging about two, and the total healing is budgeted against the potion's duration rather than a fixed number of ticks. The practical effect is close to half the average restoration you're used to, and less of a sure thing. More profession-balance changes are in flight.

### *Item rebalancing*

A broad pass over item balance is underway as well, starter kits included. Those changes aren't fully finalized, so they aren't laid out here in detail yet, but expect a fair number of familiar pieces to shift before and around launch.

### *Profession rebalancing*

This did not receive as thorough of a pass as intended – but various artificing crafts, alchemy crafts and enchanting crafts have had either rewards or components tweaked. There may be more on this, as this was an important body of work that did not receive the time it deserved.

### *Engagement Track*

In a similar vein, the Engagement track was not expanded as hoped due to real life constraints on our time. The weights have been mildly adjusted and the rewards have been shuffled or changed – the Title and Deck reward will certainly be swapped out and were left as placeholders.

### *Fixes*

A great many bugs were fixed this season, many of them swept up in the larger reworks. A few worth naming:

- Mob followers dying mid-fight no longer wrongly fail an otherwise-valid challenge.
- Casters, and necromancer mobs in particular, cast the right spells again instead of leaning on the wrong ones.

- Sustained spells are suppressed rather than cancelled in anti-magic rooms, and can no longer be bypassed while mounted.
- Mob memory was rewritten so a summoned or reanimated helper dying before the kill no longer skews experience and scaling.
- Amongst others.

## Looking Ahead

Mastery Tiers. The top levels of professions teased in Season 14, the relics, remembrances, and apotheoses, still have work left before they ship. They aren't imminent, but they remain firmly on the radar as the endgame the profession system was always building toward.

More for the Magician. A lighter teleport debuff and new portal destinations, with Barcas, Hedros, Erols, Jolnara, and Cadain on the list.

Smarter still. Mob intelligence will keep expanding, with more hand-tuned minds on the creatures that deserve them.

The website client will get the same interface treatment as the Mudlet package.

As always with a season this large, some of it will misbehave in ways testing didn't catch. If regeneration, a fight, an escort, or a zone does something strange, please report it, and reach out to an Eternal+ if it needs a closer look.