

Star Ocean: The Second Story Universe Mode Guide

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Star Ocean 2:
Universe Mode Guide

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Unlocking Universe Mode
- 3.0 General Strategies for the bulk of the game
- 4.0 The Cave of Trials
 - 4.1 Burglar's Nest
 - 4.2 Goddess's Altar
 - 4.3 Sealed Coffin
 - 4.4 Decision Point
 - 4.5 Hall of Warriors
 - 4.6 Gabriel Celesta
- 5.0 Iselia Queen
- 6.0 Unlimited Indalecio
- 7.0 Conclusions and Afterthoughts

1.0 Introduction

Welcome to my Star Ocean Universe Mode Guide. I took it upon myself to take on SO2 in the most difficult of settings, and along my journey, I found that there was no help to be found. So, now I am recording the things I learned along the way so that they can be used by future generations...

First, it is my opinion that this challenge should be reserved for those who have thoroughly mastered SO2 in the normal mode. You should have gone completely through the cave of trials, and beaten the Iselia Queen and Indalecio with his limiter off. It will also probably help if you're used to spending a lot of time to get everything in games.

Now that I'm speaking to those people who compulsively level up every character in every RPG they've ever played to Lv99 (or more in this case), let me say: This is tough! As you will see

from the first battle, you'll have to deal each enemy about double the amount of damage than normal to kill him. In addition, you'll have to level up a lot to succeed.

This guide is intended as a supplement for players who already know the game and have other guides with item lists, etc. I used Prima's guide, and to my surprise, there were not many glaring omissions. I suggest you find a guide that has a complete item list and, more importantly, an item creation list. I'm sure that there are several on GameFAQs. I also recommend the pickpocket guide on GameFAQs. It isn't completely accurate, but it is very helpful.

So, now leave Mirror Slice at the Door, and follow me down the path of video game legends.

2.0 Unlocking Universe (and Galaxy) Difficulty

As you may have read around, people say a lot of different things about unlocking the other difficulty modes. I have the American version, released in 1998. The only way I was able to unlock them was by getting ~55% of the voice samples. When you have this, you will hear a sound (the sound when you heal) when you go to your voice collection. If you then start a new game, you will be given the option of increasing the difficulty. (I chose to skip Galaxy mode altogether, if you want to wimp out and go for Galaxy, you should have no problems using the strategies here.)

To get all of those voice samples, you will need to play through the game more than once and get all of the characters. You should have your save game from your game in normal mode (where you beat the Cave of Trials, and then Indalecio, remember?) That should cover the bulk of the voices. Then simply start another game (with the other character) and get all the characters that you didn't get before. That time around, I played as Claude and got Opera, Ernest and Leon. I had all the voices I needed by the time I got to the Lacour Front Line (when added to those from my old game). In your old game, try to use all of everyone's moves at least once, and then you should only have to fight with each character for a little while in the new game to get enough voices.

3.0 General Strategies for the bulk of the game

Now that you have gotten into Universe Mode, all you have to do is survive....no problem, right?

Here I'll give some general tips on getting through the game. For complete walkthroughs, find other FAQs - nothing changes in this mode except for the difficulty of the battles.

First thing you have to do is choose your main character. You shouldn't be surprised that it has to be Rena so you can get Dias to join your party. You should always control Claude whenever you have him. You will also be getting Ashton, as to complete your party of swordsman. Claude is by far best, with Ashton as a close second, and Dias has his moments, and compared to the rest of the potential

team, he is outstanding. Make sure to do all the required things to get those two party members! (And not get Opera! - she's not horrible, like Ernest is, but you need Ashton for this).

In general, things are very tough at the beginning of the game. You will wind up using a lot of killer moves and not having a lot of money for blackberries and such. Take your time to level up, otherwise you'll just waste time getting killed over and over again.

One thing I highly recommend is getting the Mischeif item. To get this, you have to pickpocket Filia in a PA in Clik BEFORE it is destroyed. You will need to spend a lot of time getting enough money to buy the Bandit's Glove in Herlie. Fortunately, you will be leveling up and that will make things a bit easier. I started in Cross Cave then went to the Heraldry Forest in Mars Village, and then Laguss Mountain. Be forewarned, these battles will never really be easy at this time. Once you get the Mischeif item, you will be picking up items every so often, most notably Sour Syrups. These are great to restore your MP, especially since you don't have to pay for them.

Another valuable thing for MP is Master Chef. Once you are able to use it, you can make French Toast and Bird's Nest Soup, which restore more than half your MP and then you can save your Sour Syrups for battle. Compounding is also important, so you can make your own resurrection items, as Rena does not learn Raise Dead until about level 70.

Basically then, Expel is like it always was, except really hard. One thing you'll notice is that everyone blocks A LOT. This is annoying, but there isn't much to do about it on the first disc. The combat skill Feint helps a little.

While travelling through Expel, you can begin to prepare for the next disc by getting the skills up in areas needed for the abilities about to be discussed.

When you get to Energy Nede, you have access to the majority of the game, as far as item creation. When you arrive, your primary objective should be to make the Eternal Sphere through customize.

The Eternal Sphere:

This is the best weapon in the game, until the very end when you can wear a combination of equipment which is better. The Eternal Sphere naturally shoots stars, which is what makes it so great. Enemies continue to block throughout the entire game, but when you shoot stars, they usually get hit a couple times. When this happens, sometimes the enemy is stunned long enough for you to get another attack in, or the enemy peeps (gets dizzy stars) and then you can really let them have it. The preferred fighting strategy from now on is to rush the enemy and just hit them with a regular attack until they die. This is much more effective than Mirror Slice. Unfortunately, Mirror Slice is pretty much useless, as I alluded to earlier, because everyone blocks so much. You can use it if you hit the enemy into a peep, but for the most part a regular attack is much better. For enemies which this doesn't work on, there is usually a killer move which supplements (Dragon Howl is best for flying enemies and Sword Bomber is good for creatures you shouldn't get close to - like the slugs who can eat you).

Unfortunately, Ashton and Dias don't have a similar attack until you get the Angel Armband (for Ashton at least...Dias can never

shoot stars!) but they usually can hold their own under CPU control. (Actually, Dias tends to die a lot, but I'd still take him over anyone else.)

In addition, an essential accessory you should have for all your fighters is the Slayer's Ring (you can get from PAs and pickpocketing - see other guides). This makes every hit count for three and makes you shoot three times as many stars! The Meteor Ring is good before you can get the Slayer's Ring (it only works 2x, which is still useful).

With the Eternal Sphere and Slayer's Ring, I was able to beat Limited Indalecio without taking any damage.

The next priority is to fashion yourself the best possible equipment. This means Blacksmithing. Your fighters all need Star Guards ASAP. Then try to make everyone the best armor, etc that you can. Customize is also needed for Ashton and Dias' (and to some extent Rena's) best weapons. You will need the Magical Rasp from the Fake Gallery shop (but only after you make the Star Guards, or else you won't be able to make them!) to make the best armors.

Also worth noting is a pair of Bunny Shoes you can swipe from the Bunny Statue in Fun City. Keep reloading until you steal them, these are really important. You can also win a pair at the races if you want to put in the time. Despite their low defense, these should never leave your feet until you find Valiant Boots (which give you the same speed with really good defense).

Also important are combat skills. At the top of the list should be Parry, and then almost all of the others. Important exception!!!: Strong Blow. This hurts you more than it helps you because when it knocks the enemy away, they get hit with less stars. (I actually would find a vacuum move, where you draw enemies closer really helpful, too bad there isn't one!) I also do not use Flip because it wastes too much time.

I know that I am recommending that you boost your combat skills, while at the same recommending getting up your item creation skills. Unfortunately, you have to do both, which requires some leveling up. When you first get to Energy Nede you are outclassed anyway, so you'd end up leveling up just to walk around on the map.

Once you have a good set of equipment and hit a decent level, you should have no problem getting to the Cave of Trials.

Once you get all your moves, you should equip Sword Dance and Dragon Breath/Leaf Slash on Ashton and Hawk Scream Blast and Illusion on Dias. Many people say to use Firebird Shockwave for Dias, but I like Hawk Scream Blast better. It almost always hits for 9999 and it goes through enemies and hits the ones behind them. Claude doesn't use many killer moves, but you should have Dragon Howl on standby for flying enemies. I like Sword Bomber in the other slot.

Also, don't forget about Atlas Rings. The power boost is worth the elemental weakness. Get one for all of your fighters.

4.0 The Cave of Trials

By the end of the game, I was beginning to think that I somehow switched back to normal difficulty. Feinal was a joke, along with the Ten Wise Men. Well, the Cave of Trials cleared up that confusion. I was

definitely on Universe mode. The Cave is really tough...like back-on-Expel -when-all-you-had-was-Air-Slash tough. The same strategies apply here, though. Just remember the floor puzzles from last time and be sure to go out an save after every floor.

You will be collecting a lot of great items, be sure to get them all and equip them. The setup you are shoot for is as follows:

Seraphic Garb
Valiant Guard
Duel Helm
Valiant Boots

The order in which you should equip your characters is:

Claude
Ashton
Dias
Rena

When you get tri-Ace, Dias and Ashton's places should be switched; Ashton really won't be fighting on the front anymore. Rena's helm is the Isis Tiara and she wears Valkyrie equipment.

4.1 Burglar's Nest

The first 5 levels are business as usual as far as strategy...just really hard. Once we get to floor 6, things take a turn.

First worth noting is the Santa Salesman that sometimes appears. You can stock up on minerals (which you should have no problem Alchemizing by now) or \$\$ with the Identify All trick. Most important, though, are the Tri-emblems and Go-Home Frogs. Buy several Go-Home Frogs so you can warp out of the dungeon when you need (its much harder to make it to the warp points this time around). Tri-emblems are also invaluable. Buy at least 2, 4 if you can afford it. They aren't better than Altas Rings, until you need the elemental protection...and you will.

On this floor, you will often run into grey Funny thieves. You can do only 1 damage per hit, but items will do normal damage. They do not have a lot of HP, so hit them with a couple of Flare Bombs for a lot of XP. You will need it for the boss.

The boss is Funny thief Lv99. He is difficult, but against your whole party, its not too bad. You will get a Funny Slayer as a prize. When you get back down here after saving, equip it.

4.2 Goddess's Altar

This is the first floor which is really hard (and that IS in the context of what you've already been through). The problem here is that the Funny Thief Lv99 is a regular enemy here and he shows up in NUMBERS. If you get a raided attack, you're pretty much screwed. They can kill your whole party in seconds. For this floor, I equip the Funny Slayer on Ashton (Claude still needs the Eternal Sphere for all of the other enemies on the floor) and change my formation to escape shift. DO NOT try to escape! You will die before you can. You can try to use a Fairy Cologne and run if you absolutley need to. (I haven't tried, but items like Skanda probably work)

The formation change is so that when you get a raided attack, your party won't be surrounded (putting a couple of seconds on your lifespan). When you do get into a fight with the thieves, immediately switch to Ashton. Use normal attacks on them. If you are lucky, you'll be able to kill them all before you are destroyed. Until you level up, a surrounded attack is pretty much a death sentence. Eventually you'll be able to survive regularly and make it through the floor.

4.3 Sealed Coffin

This level is pretty standard except for the bird monsters. They can stone you with a spread out attack. Equip all of your fighters with Duel Suits to protect them from this. Other than that, just level up until you're strong enough for the next floor.

4.4 Decision Point

Well, I told you to level up until you were strong enough, but your not. This is the hardest level in the Cave and you're never completely prepared. The enemies here can all kill you very quickly. The spider robots come in 3 different forms, 2 of which can kill you at this point. The large walker robots can always kill you, but they are much slower and once you start giving them a face-full of stars, they die pretty easily. If you haven't learned yet, its best to keep yourself on the outside of a group of enemies and shoot stars towards all of them. If you get surrounded on this floor, you are dead. If you get lucky, you can hit multiple enemies with your stars and and stop them from attacking and eventually, they will die.

There are 4 types of enemies on this floor. The walker robots get the highest priority because when they start firing their guns, anyone in range dies. Then we go for the spider robots. They all shoot bullets that spread out. If they hit you at close range, you will get hit with all of them, which hurts a lot. The light colored ones can deal you 3000 damage per bullet, which is also instant death. The darker ones deal ~1500 per bullet, which is easier to survive from. Some however, attack your MP, which is great because you can't die. For the lethal enemies, the only strategy is to not let them surround you and hope for the best.

Seraphic Garb is extremely useful on this floor. If you happen to get knocked down to below 100 HP, the Garb will raise your defense so high that you can't be dealt damage by any enemy on the floor! Unfortunately, Rena usually heals you which then lowers your defense and gets you killed. But sometimes its works out.

The most important things to get on this floor is the Valiant/Valkyrie Boots. Everything else can really wait until later and it will save you a lot of grief.

At the end of this floor, you will get tri-Ace for Ashton. Equipping this will make it the only thing that Ashton does, which is what you want. This is essential for killing the wizards on the following levels.

NOTE: From now on (after this floor) you will be encountering Dreamshades (the hourglass enemy). They frequently cast Dream Peace, which stops your party. This is certain death. Always kill the Dreamshades first!!

4.5 Hall of Warriors

Getting back down is going to be a real pain, but after this point, you can use the trap door on the first floor. This brings you down to level 9, but, as usual, the hardest part is level 10. Just level up until you can make it through. Once you get to the Phoenix, just keep hitting him with Dragon Howl until he's dead. Make sure you have some MP recovery; it will take a while. Always have Dragon Howl from here on out because you will be fighting several of the Phoenix typed enemies, which you have to kill with Dragon Howl.

The rest of the dungeon will be conquered by our Eternal Sphere strategy, along with some serious levelling up.

4.6 Gabriel Celesta

This fight is pretty much as difficult as everything else so far put together. I was able to beat her at level 220.

The main problem here is that our Eternal Sphere strategy doesn't work because she constantly counterattacks. In addition, we have to change our equipment to protect us from her spells. Atlas Rings are dangerous because they weaken you. A Slayer's Ring on Claude isn't necessary and is sometimes bad (the more attacks against her, the more she'll counter attack).

The main thing to do in this battle is to prevent her from casting spells. However, if you all out attack, you will get hurt. She is vulnerable and usually doesn't counter while she's casting, so always attack her then. Otherwise, as Claude, you have to try to hit her from behind. Dias will usually do normal attacks (a Slayer's Ring is good on him) and enabling flip will help him get more hits in. (As Claude I find it better to manually move around). Ashton will constantly be casting tri-Ace which is good.

I equip the Levantine Sword on Dias (some stars from the Eternal Sphere can be good, especially from behind) and the Holy Sword Farwell on Ashton. Dias and Ashton probably don't need Atlas Rings; they should have Tri-emblems instead (to help protect against magic spells). As for Claude, you can go with the standard Atlas/Slayer's Ring combo, but remove the Slayer's Ring if her counterattacks become too frequent.

Dias will die frequently in this fight. Rena will eventually revive him, so it's not imperative to do it yourself and waste items. You will often be put in the position of being the only member of your party left alive. When put in this position, you have to do your best to keep Gabriel busy, so if Claude can do that by himself, then resurrect Rena, otherwise resurrect one of your other fighters.

Eventually, she will die. If you repeatedly get killed, try leveling up some more (I like floor 13 for the XP). It's worth the time, because each time you die fighting Gabriel, you have to go all the way back down (and sometimes fight that damn Phoenix). All that time is wasted since you die. Sometimes it's better to take the time to level up than to try to beat her early.

5.0 Iselia Queen

The Iselia Queen is the next super-boss to fight, which Gabriel alluded to as she died. You need to take the Silver Trumpet and compose the Evil

Melody. After you exit the menu when this is played, you will go into a fight with the Iselia Queen. She looks like Gabriel but is much, much worse...

Well, I finally beat her. It took me 245 levels, but I did it. She is real pain. She is much faster and counterattacks a hell of a lot more than Celesta. Here is the equipment setup you need:

Claude:	Rena:	Ashton:	Dias:
Levantine Sword	Fallen Hope	Holy Sword Farwell	Holy Sword Farwell
Duel Suit	Seraphic Garb	Seraphic Garb	Seraphic Garb
Valiant Guard	Valkyrie Guard	Valiant Guard	Valiant Guard
Duel Helm	Isis Tiara	Duel Helm	Duel Helm
Valiant Boots	Valkyrie Boots	Bunny Shoes	Valiant Boots
Sheild Ring	Tri-emblem	Stone Check	Stone Check
Angel Armband	Sheild Ring	Sheild Ring	Sheild Ring

Once you start beating her, replace the Holy Swords with Levantines as you get them and Tri-emblems and stone checks by Angel Armbands (while equipping Duel Suits to keep you sober).

Killer Moves:

Claude: Sword Bomber (If he does any other, than have this be the only one)

Ashton: tri-Ace

Dias: Crescent Moon Flash

For this fight, you will be controlling Dias. It is imperative to keep your team away from Iselia. Claude will do Sword Bomber, which keeps him far away, but Dias must be controlled or else he will do normal attacks. Crescent Moon Flash is best because it always keeps you a certain distance away (like Sword Bomber) and it is very fast.

Turn off Flip, Strong Blow and Float on everyone.

You will need a lot of MP healing items for this one. I went through about 15 Fairy Mists. I had back up as well (Merlin Drinks, Mixed and Sour Syrups, etc.) I was able to beat her in about 20-25 minutes. The mists should last that long. Also, pack a bunch of Care Tablets. Use these on Rena as soon as the fight starts and every time you resurrect her (which should be never).

Strategy:

Here is another fight that is impossible until you are strong enough, then it is relatively simple. I had Claude at Lv 245 (the highest of the group) and Dias was at 231 (the lowest). As I said, you have to control Dias for this one. The Queen counterattacks a lot and you almost always peep when you get hit by the counters. I first tried experimenting with some Peep-nons, but eventually realized that the best strategy was to avoid it altogether. (Interesting sidenote: when you waear an Angel Armband, you absorb her counterattacks--not as useful as you'd think, though.)

The most important element in this equation is the Sheild Ring. This reduces all damage against you to 1/10 of it normal power. This makes it impossible for you to die in one hit! (Of course the shockwaves hit you multiple times, so they are still very dangerous). The only problem is that the Rings can and will break. However, they give you a good enough start, and with everything else working, you'll be fine.

A minor suggestion: fight this battle outside the Cave of Trials. The

beach environment is very flat and there are no obstacles.

Before the battle (but after you play the Evil Melody) play the Song of Blessings (Piano #2). This raises all parameters, and is really helpful. Start out the battle by using a care tablet on Rena (this will prevent her from being stoned -- not that she really does much anyway). Then just keep doing Crescent Moon Flash. Claude will be Bombing and Ashton will be Acing. This will keep her too busy to do much and it does a lot of damage. You should be doing 9999 per hit, with about everything (Sword Bomber really does the most -- 5 x 9999 each time). The Song of Blessings helps with this. The other major thing that I attribute to this song is a high increase in Parry. When I did this, I was able to block almost every incoming hit. Even the shockwaves were completely blocked. This is very good because it tends to keep the Sheild Rings intact.

As the battle progressed, I tried to keep everyone's MP high (even though I had been using the Fairy Mists). Also, I suggest using a Discovery Card and an Extension Card during the battle. This will help you to get the coveted equipment that she drops (Angel Armbands and Levantine Swords) and to double the already absurd amount of experience up to 2 million.

Using this strategy, I was able to beat her in about 25 minutes, without anyone dying. And actually, I later saw that all of my guys were still Practicing!

If you intend to keep fighting her to get more Armbands and Swords, it gets easier. Eventually (once you have Armbands for everyone) you can go back to the Slayer's Ring and normal attacks with Claude and Ashton (no tri-Ace!). This makes the battle go much faster. If you go this route, however, I suggest equipping Claude and Ashton with Holy Sword Farwells. They significantly raises their AVD and HIT stats, which make them block nearly everything. The strength decrease is really not noticeable -- you'll still do 9999 with all of those combat skills! Dias can have a Levantine Sword, since he'll still be using Crescent Moon Flash (you will still have to control him). I've actually gotten to the point where all I need is Claude and Ashton to beat her. I use them and grab 2 other losers who sucked the whole game and leveled them up in no time!

6.0 Indalecio Unlimited

Wow, this guy is a joke. After all we've been through, and we can just walk right up to him and rip him a new one. Well, I don't know if I could handle any more frustration at this point anyway.

I set up my guys with the strategy to beat the Iselia Queen repeatedly. I gave Holy Swords to Claude and Ashton, who used regular attacks. They had Angel Armbands and Slayer's Rings...which have proven to be the ultimate combination.

Dias and Rena didn't really contribute too much to this fight, but he has a Levantine Sword and she was set to Aid Friends, if you really need the advice.

The only thing that Indalecio has up his sleeve is his incredible speed. He can move faster than Bunny Shoes and cast while moving. This sounds bad, but when your Angel Armbands absorb half of his spells, it doesn't really matter. He was able to kill half my party with Earthquake, but a couple of Resurrection Mists later, and they were back to kicking @\$\$.

Indalecio can stone you with a shockwave-like attack. I was wearing Seraphic Garbs, so I just used some Care Tablets and I was fine. I suppose if you really want to, you can equip Duel Suits.

When in battle, just run up and hammer him. He'll sometimes get stuck in your star blast, but usually he escapes. Keep chasing him, and eventually you'll catch him for a bit and deal some damage. He will cast spells, but your Angel Armbands should protect you. Always have Claude and Ashton alive, then others as necessary. He will die relatively quickly...he doesn't have nearly as many hit points as the Iselia Queen. And that's it, you've done it!

7.0 Conclusions and Afterthoughts

I took it upon myself to do this challenge because so many said it was impossible. I am glad to have proved them wrong, and if this ever gets up on GameFAQs, it might be the only thing on the internet that claims that Indalecio is beatable on Universe mode.

There were certainly tough parts, but I was able to do everything in about 90 game hours.

Please let me know if this guide was helpful to you or if you have any questions. You can contact me at JediKnightOTRnd@aol.com.

Thanks for reading and be proud of what you've accomplished. You've done something that many have said is impossible and have attained a level of coolness that few mortals are even aware exists. Its just you, me, Casey Loe and Fonzie from Happy Days up here doing incredibly cool things like starting jukeboxes with our fists and whatnot.