

Still have a few skills to go, Ilea thought and continued with her enhancements.

'ding' 'Arcane Circulation [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 1'

Passive: Arcane Circulation [Enhanced] – 3rd lvl 1:

You have learned of Archon Strike and Sentinel Reconstruction. Now you will learn of their Reversal.

Upon activation, Archon Strike will send a part of the struck enemy's mana into yourself. No mana will be released on impact, rendering Archon Strike's offensive potential to zero.

Upon activation, Sentinel Reconstruction will send a destructive force of channeled mana into yourself or an enemy you touch, the healing aspects are reduced to zero.

2nd stage: You may have both the original and reversed aspects activated at the same time. When an enemy partially or fully resists either Archon Strike or Sentinel Reconstruction, you absorb the dissipating mana.

3rd stage: Healing, power, resilience and speed. All requires balance. Your respective Destruction and Reconstruction spells have their potency increased by a static 25% of your lowest stat. [112.5%]. You may channel health in addition to mana into the respective offensive uses of Archon Strike and Sentinel Reconstruction. Health cost to activate effects is reduced by a static 20%.

Category: Body Enhancement

A reduced health cost? Meaning I have to sacrifice only four thousand health into Archon Strike to get the full five thousand effect? Only for the health part... another incentive to use that aspect I suppose. But with the new bonus to Azarinth Awakening, I might want keep health usage to a minimum. I guess I only use it against enemies that can hurt me anyway.

'ding' 'Authority of Ash and Ember [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 1'

Passive: Authority of Ash and Ember [Enhanced] – 3rd lvl 1:

You are one with Ash and Ember. Allies rushing to your aid.

2nd stage: Your understanding grows, allowing you to create greater change in ash and ember. Imbue mana into your creations. Ash and Ember you imbued retains its form until the mana is used up.

3rd stage: The elements themselves become an extension of your body, an extension of your will, for as long as they stay in physical contact with you. Ash not connected benefits from passive abilities enhancing your body. You may imbue commands into ash and ember you have imbued with mana.

Category: Ashen magic

No change? Wait... the simple part is gone. So I guess I can give my ash a little more complex commands?

'ding' 'Ashen Wings [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 1'

'Passive: Ashen Wings [Enhanced] – 3rd lvl 1

Your understanding of ash allows you to form wings from ash and ember. Strike your enemies from above and close the distance to deliver your wrath.

2nd stage: Your wings become more dense and tangible, able to help you defend and attack.

3rd stage: Ash Creation and Unity prove you are above the rest. Shape and form your wings to your liking, now directly affected by your control. An added tail shall make you one with the skies above, not a mere human imitating flight but one who revels in it. You may charge your wings with mana and stamina to dramatically increase your flight velocity at the cost of heavily reduced control. Your resilience is increased greatly during a charged flight.

Category: Body Enhancement – Ashen Magic

Kind of expected that one, she thought with a grin. I guess my ash noticed how much I liked the way Kyrian cut through that Bluetail.

“Done,” she sent.

“Some useful benefits I hope?” Meadow asked. “Do you believe you are ready to face your last nemesis?”

“You’re not my last nemesis, Meadow. Also no. I’m not delusional,” she answered. “But I have plenty of things to try out and a punching bag would help immensely to figure things out.”

“So you want to fight me in addition to your skill training?” the creature asked, a gust of wind flowing out as the mana in the air increased to a near visible level.

“Calm your leaves,” Ilea said and sat down, focusing on the space magic puzzle still floating within her dominion. “There are a few creatures here who I want to remind of my existence.”

“I understand. If you can, leave them alive,” the Meadow spoke.

“The Elemental and Trakorov for sure. The Griffin? Well I don’t want the experience right now anyway,” she said.

“How very considerate of you, to leave these peaceful creatures alive,” it spoke.

Ilea rolled her eyes. “Peaceful creatures that instantly attacked me when I first showed up. The Trakorov didn’t, alright, but I feel like that has more to do with my companion than anything else. Same with the Lightning Elemental. I just want to train a little.”

“You want to make yourself feel better, now that you can actually face them?” the Meadow asked.

“That too,” she said with a shrug. “Anything wrong with that?”

“It’s very human of you. Though I suppose finding monsters to train your skills against is an important goal,” Meadow spoke.

“It is. And even if it weren’t, I’d still do it,” she said.

“How very predictable,” the being said.

“I never claimed to be hard to figure out, ancient tree,” Ilea answered with a smile. Forty seven core points remaining. Don’t have enough for all my skills anyway... might as well try.

'ding' 'One derivative General skill unlocked'

Available Derivative General skills:

[Spear of Ash]

[Ashen Limbs]

[Bulwark of Ash]

[Drill]

Ah shit. I want all of them. Twelve points... fuck it.

'ding' 'You have learned the General skill – Spear of Ash – lvl 1

Spear of Ash - lvl 1

You have mastered the ability to form and throw spears made of ash. Damage dealt with ashen spears is increased by 20%.

Worth a measly three points.

'ding' 'You have learned the General skill – Ashen Limbs – lvl 1

Ashen Limbs - lvl 1

You have mastered the ability to fight with limbs made entirely of ash. Required manipulation is reduced by 25%.

'ding' 'You have learned the General skill – Bulwark of Ash – lvl 1

Bulwark of Ash - lvl 1

Many times have you used walls of ash to defend yourself and your allies. Resilience of ashen walls is increased by 20%.

'ding' 'You have learned the General skill – Drill – lvl 1

Drill - lvl 1

You have used your body and ash to form what is essentially a human powered drill. While quite silly, the devastating attacks showed results. Drills spin 50% faster.

Definitely worth it. I wonder what else I could unlock if I try things out. The copies I tried out are sure to become an option at some point. Or the focused eye beam.

"You're distracted," the Meadow spoke. "You won't be able to level your skills if you're not focused."

"Sorry... I got a few general skills with core points," she said. "You mentioned before that once I enhance all my Class skills, I should get a fourth tier option?"

"You're far from even enhancing all your skills, Ilea. Let alone getting them to their maximum level again. Once you get there, the option should present itself. It did for me," it spoke.

"What's your fourth tier spell?" she asked.

The Meadow laughed. *“Curious, as always. I will show you, once you manage to win.”*

“Win what?” she asked.

“Do you have to ask?” the Meadow spoke.

A bout?

She pouted a little. *“That’s not possible.”*

“Then you better find a way to do the impossible,” it said.

“Wait... you have one for every school of magic... or am I wrong?” she asked.

The tree remained silent, with a smug air flowing through the area.

Ilea wondered how she knew the air was smug but she supposed her space awareness just wasn’t quite there yet to determine the exact reason.

“I’ll find out eventually,” she said with a grin

“Of course you will,” it spoke and lightly pat her head with an invisible force.

Ilea tried to see the spell formation instead of reacting in another way. The Meadow was right, she should focus on her training.

A few hours passed without meaningful progress, Ilea’s concentration lapsing as she fell on her back. *“This sucks.”*

“Dancing lessons at some point?” she sent to Claire.

A few seconds passed. *“In three days. Sunrise. My office.”*

Ilea grinned, already looking forward to something a little more grounded than literal space magic.

“You’re not quite as driven as I remember,” the Meadow spoke. *“What’s wrong?”*

Ilea looked at her hand, rolling in the black grass before she looked at the tree. *“Last time it felt more urgent,”* she said. *“You don’t mind me being on the grass by the way?”*

“Perhaps I could give you an ultimatum. You reach the end of the third tier or I destroy this world,” the Meadow said.

Ilea just rolled her eyes. *“You’re not a good liar.”*

“How would you know anything I said so far has been the truth?” it asked.

“A hunch,” she mused.

“Humans and their hunches. You place way too much trust in your instincts and feelings, disregarding crucial evidence. But I suppose I should be thankful. I wouldn’t be here otherwise,” the Meadow spoke. *“And no, I do not mind. Here I do not need to restrain my form to a dedicated area within a temple or to hide myself from mana starved beasts.”*

“We definitely do, you’re right. But I suppose it’s what makes us human. Or a part of it,” Ilea said. *“Do you know Goliath by the way? Dark One smith living in Hallowfort. He came back after the Elves attacked me.”*

“A curious creature that one, yes. One of few who have been able to communicate with me directly,” it spoke.

"You talk often?" Ilea asked, sitting up now.

"No. Goliath is not a talkative being, nor one that wishes to be disturbed. Features I can appreciate deeply. A stark contrast to you. Because you ask a lot of questions, and you constantly come to me for help and training," it said.

"I get it," Ilea answered and stood up, cracking her neck.

"Unable to figure out your own skills, trying to get an easy way to power, abusing me for teleportation," the Meadow continued.

"I said I got it," she repeated.

"Share your godly secrets, Endless Meadow. But you don't even bring gifts or sacrifices," it continued yet again.

Ilea leaned forward a little and smirked. *"And that's exactly why you like me, you dumb old piece of landscape. Can you beam me up to his smithy?"*

"After that insult?" the Meadow asked.

"Yeah," Ilea said.

A laughing wind went through the vicinity before she vanished, her resistance disabled to allow for a direct teleportation.

"Hello there," Ilea said, looking at the smith, his golden eyes focused on a delicate construct of interlinked steel wires.

"Welcome, being of the arcane," Goliath spoke and looked up, the shape of his eyes suggesting joy. *"Have thou come for a request, or to seek counsel?"* he asked, his whisper like voice reverberating through his smithy.

Ilea leaned against the burning hot forge and summoned the Wyrms eye. *"Ever seen anything like this?"*

"That is an interesting object," the Meadow said.

"Don't spy on me," Ilea answered.

"Just because your vision is limited to a ridiculous degree doesn't mean I'm spying when I don't reduce mine to a similarly stunted field of view," it said.

Goliath came closer, taking the eye after a questioning gesture. *"You have... fought this creature?"*

Ilea nodded.

"A journey it must have been," Goliath spoke. *"I have not the tools nor the skill to use this as raw material. If you wish to embed it within armor, I could do so."*

"I'm not sure yet. I can use it with my ash anyway and I think it might be safer if I just store it inside my necklace when I don't need it. I'm more interested in the quality. Any idea what it does?" she asked.

"Draconic. Indeed. Born of flame... it should be resistant to most damage. More so against everything that is fire and heat. And I believe... yes, it shares the regenerative characteristic of timeless objects," the smith explained.

Ilea crossed her arms. “Really? The Wyrms didn’t seem to regenerate... at all.”

“Those of draconic origin... are old. Truly, ancient. It will recover if damaged. How much time such a process will require? I do not know,” Goliath said.

“*Hope it’s not a human lifetime,*” Meadow said. “*Better not damage that thing if you want to use it.*”

“*I figured,*” Ilea answered and summoned the Scorching Wyrms scales instead. “Think you can make me a set of armor from this?”

The smith looked over the material. “This is... most impressive. The durability. I won’t be able to forge this. Not here.”

“What do you need?” Ilea asked.

“I would require... a forge more durable than these scales. This is not made of metal, nor stone... this material is unique to the Wyrms it belonged to. I would have to summon heat enough to shape it,” he spoke.

“What could be durable enough to hold that amount of heat?” Ilea asked.

“Endless Meadow,” Goliath answered.

Ilea sighed. “Why is that tree always the solution?”

“*Because of my incomprehensible beauty and splendor,*” the Meadow spoke. “*I shall help. I’m interested in that material as well. Creating that amount of heat however...*”

“That, will be my task, with the help of thee,” Goliath said and pointed at her.

“Sure,” Ilea said and grinned. “And we have the Trakorov backup plan.”

“*It may not be inclined to help,*” the Meadow said.

“Why do you think so? It helped with the Elemental,” she said.

“*I doubt that creature would heed any call. It mostly just sleeps and hardly answers my attempts at communication,*” it said.

“Well, that’s just your lacking charisma. I’ll figure it out if it comes to that. Maybe my heat will be enough... focused through the eye if needed,” she said. “You have time later?”

Goliath bowed lightly. “I shall join you, at this moment.”

She waved her arms in front of her. “No, no. Finish what you were working on. I’m not in a rush. Just remembered something else anyway.”

“I will call for ~~our~~ ~~me~~ once I have finished my work,” Goliath spoke.

Ilea blinked a few times, trying to figure out what she had just heard. “Did you...,”

The Meadow grinned within her mind. “*Curious. I told you.*”

Curious indeed, she thought before Meadow teleported her back.

“Tana, Chris, you two should probably have a look at this as well,” she said and summoned the runed rubble she had gathered on the Krahen Isles, right after their fight against the Terror. “I found

the same runes below Ravenhall. The distance equals what the Taleen could do but I doubt it was them who set this up, mostly because it seemed like they had tried to storm the keep on Krahen.”

The enchanters paused their work, crouching down to check on the runes. A few started floating.

“*Unknown to me. Blood magic, I’d wager,*” the Meadow spoke.

“I’ll let you guys check it out. Let me know if you find out more. And don’t accidentally bring the world’s end,” Ilea said.

“We’ll try not to summon anything,” Iana said, scribbling some things down into her notebook. She blinked a few times, looking away from the runes. “Powerful, these.”

Ilea felt as the Meadow healed the woman.

“*I will have a few of my eyes on them,*” it said. “*Already bored?*”

“*I don’t feel like sitting here solving puzzles all day. I’ll be back later. Not like you’re running away,*” she said.

“*Movement is relative,*” the tree spoke.

“*What’s that supposed to mean?*” Ilea asked.

“*Solving these riddles will bring you closer to the answer. Perhaps one day, you too will find understanding,*” it said.

“*Wonderful. Can you teleport me to the tenth layer, oh Endless Meadow?*” she asked.

“*At your service, Lilith,*” it said, moving her to the cliffs.

Ilea spread her wings immediately, stopping her fall before she looked around. She felt the winds, stronger than most everything usually present on the northern surface.

She slowly descended, landing on a plateau of rock, various sections fractured, crevices leading further down. *Now let’s see if it’s still up for a fight. Would surprise me if it isn’t.* She charged monster hunter, pausing for a moment before she looked up. *Hmm. Something’s missing.*

“*Violence. Training in Descent. Lightning Elemental. Join? Violence,*” she sent the message.

“*Violence!*” came the reply.

Ilea smiled, releasing monster hunter in a whistle that reverberated against the walls, reaching far through the cavern despite the strong winds.

A screech resounded from below, blue sparks flowing through the air when a large blue bird shot out from one of the many cracks, twirling in the air before its glowing eyes came resting on the intruder.

“I’m back. Remember me?” she said with a grin, waving at the creature.

[Young Lightning Elemental – lvl ???] - [Bored/Hungry]

“What do you even eat?” she asked. The bird was close to being a four mark but she had no idea how long it would take the creature to get there, if it was possible at all.

The elemental didn't reply, instead charging a massive lightning spell.

So that's how it is, she thought and added layers to her armor, increasing its durability to the highest possible degree. Her azarinth aura started glowing, enhanced by her healing and regeneration. The ash she could control was reduced somewhat because of her enhanced armor but she found the impact to be much less than creating copies.

Heat started to form within her, both Titan and Embered Core working in tandem to quickly increase the broiling energy within. She grinned at the incredible charge, reaching in seconds what had taken her half a minute before her evolutions.

Blue light flashed, a bolt of lightning zapping through the air and entering her dominion.

Ilea burst into white flame, her smile widening when the attack crashed into her outstretched hand, much of it absorbed both in heat and mana. A part of it was destroyed by her flames and the rest burned into her ash, unable to get through her thick armor.

"I hope that's not all that you have," she said, cracking her neck.