

Quite powerful for someone at level one hundred, she thought and started reading through the backlog of notifications from the extended period of fighting.

'ding' 'You have defeated [Corrupted Zanedin Hunter – lvl 583]'

...

'ding' 'You have defeated [Corrupted Zanedin Hunter – lvl 622]'

'ding' 'The Azarinth Sentinel has reached lvl 332 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'The Azarinth Sentinel has reached lvl 333 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'The Azarinth Sentinel has reached lvl 334 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'The Azarinth Sentinel has reached lvl 335 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'Kin of Ash has reached lvl 331 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'Kin of Ash has reached lvl 332 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'Kin of Ash has reached lvl 333 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'Kin of Ash has reached lvl 334 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'Sentinel Reconstruction reaches 3rd lvl 23'

'ding' 'Azarinth Awakening reaches 3rd lvl 21'

'ding' 'Sentinel Sphere reaches 3rd lvl 6'

'ding' 'Sentinel Core reaches 3rd lvl 17'

'ding' 'Sentinel Core reaches 3rd lvl 18'

'ding' 'Azarinth Fighting reaches 3rd lvl 21'

'ding' 'Azarinth Perception reaches 3rd lvl 2'

'ding' 'Armor of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 22'

'ding' 'Aspect of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 20'

'ding' 'True Ash Creation reaches 3rd lvl 20'

'ding' 'Heart of Cinder reaches 3rd lvl 11'

'ding' 'Ash and Ember Unity reaches 3rd lvl 19'

'ding' 'Ashen Wings reaches 3rd lvl 2'

'ding' 'Avatar of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 10'

'ding' 'Avatar of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 11'

'ding' 'Avatar of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 12'

'ding' 'Keeper of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 17'

'ding' 'Monster Hunter reaches lvl 4'

...

'ding' 'Monster Hunter reaches lvl 6'

'ding' 'Veteran reaches 2nd lvl 4'

'ding' 'Veteran reaches 2nd lvl 5'

'ding' 'Blast Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 17'

...

'ding' 'Blast Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 20'

'ding' 'Blood Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 4'

...

'ding' 'Blood Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 10'

'ding' 'Blood Manipulation Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 15'

...

'ding' 'Blood Manipulation Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 17'

'ding' 'Curse Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 16'

...

'ding' 'Curse Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 20'

'ding' 'Time Magic Resistance reaches lvl 20'

'ding' 'Time Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 1'

Time Magic Resistance – 2nd lvl 1

The intricacies of time magic are difficult to grasp, its secrets hidden forever to most who attempt the plunge. A rare few have managed to bend the elusive force to their will, making it a dangerous tool both for themselves and for their enemies.

2nd stage: While it certainly eludes your simple mind, your body has learned that the flows and waves of time are fickle. Bent and shrouded for too many times, you have found a center in it all. A calm in the sea of time. It will take a true master to disturb what you have found to be truth.

No wonder you elude me, with those vague fucky marketing descriptions, Ilea retorted in her mind. She wasn't truly annoyed, rather enjoying the banter between herself and her subconscious. At this point it was the easiest explanation for the personal attacks.

'ding' 'Time Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 2'

...

'ding' 'Time Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 7'

Back to insane leveling speeds, she thought with a grin, her eyes once more imploding. The bleeding stopped near instantly with her recovery active.

There were two ashen Fae by now, moving quickly through the air and trying to catch the real one teleporting through.

The small forms made it easier for her to control two at the same time. Their movements as well were simple.

For the first time in a while, she had jumped quite a couple of levels in such a short period of time.

She felt that soon, the Zanedin Hunters too would only provide a reasonable growth to her and not the explosive experience she had collected in the last hours.

Now, where's the layer with the level seven hundred version of you lads? She thought, looking over the remains.

Parts of her body were still pulsing with corruption, only kept in check by healing magic.

A dozen or so creatures remained on the layer, moving alone or in groups of two or three in the outskirts. Far enough away so that the loud battle hadn't reached their ears.

Ilea spent twenty stat points each into Vitality and Wisdom. There was a very small chance that something would reduce her health to zero with a single hit but the risk still remained and every point of Vitality could make a difference.

I now have six general skills at the second tier and level twenty, she wondered. So there's no requirement like with the third tier class skills. Or maybe it's just more?

There was no way she could know of course. Ilea didn't think anyone had lied to her, she simply thought that each bit was a piece of the puzzle. Most of all, she trusted the dragon elf. If she just continued leveling up resistances, she would at some point have a breakthrough.

With so many possibilities present, poison, time, blood manipulation, corrosion, gravity, lightning and even ice, the Descent really was a prime ground for an insane resistance boost. For anyone brave and resilient enough to face the dangers of course. Also with enough regeneration. And something like Avatar of Ash that helped increase the impact of magical damage.

Maybe... maybe this whole place was just built for me? Ilea thought. *Just to create the perfect anti magic warrior.*

She smiled at the idea but thought it rather suspect. If there was some powerful entity who had built this whole place for a somewhat mundane reason, she would bet her money on a zoo.

Ilea made an ashen spear vanish right before it was about to hit the Fae. The ashen creatures followed after, returned to the magic permeating the very air around them.

"You alright, little guy?" she asked, extending an ashen limb.

Tired

Its eyes were a little smaller now, partially closed as it drifted onto the ashen limb.

Eat?

"You want food?" Ilea asked and summoned one of Keyla's meals.

The Fae shook its tiny head as it was moved closer to the woman.

"That's a grave insult. If you were anything but a cute little Fae creature, I'd probably fight you for that," Ilea said with a feigned warming tone.

Eat

“I mean, go ahead if you need anything from me. Health, stamina, mana. I have it all,” she said and expected a massive maw to rip out chunks of her flesh.

What happened was much less spectacular and gruesome. A simple mana drain.

She kept the resistance deactivated to make sure the Fae wouldn't get damaged by her mana.

No shit you're hungry, she thought, watching her resource drain by nearly twenty points per second. With meditation active that meant a drain of a little over six points per second.

Ilea soon realized that the creature had fallen asleep. Its small six dark wings rested on its back, sometimes quivering a little as it continued to drain mana from her.

Is this going to wake some kind of maternal instincts? She wondered with a smile. The little guy was cute, certainly. Also a highly respected being amongst ancient Dark Ones and probably not something she should take as lightly as she did.

As well as a great many other things, she thought with a smirk.

The fact that it could injure her without defenses was certainly out of the ordinary. A level one hundred creature. The noble with the white flame was impressive but this creature here, kind of defied the logic of this world.

The parts at least that she had known thus far. Ilea was pretty sure her own existence was more than a bit of an outlier as well. People already freaked out at her quick advancement to level two hundred. Now she was three thirty and beyond any sapient creature she had met and could identify so far.

Beings centuries old.

She decided to ignore it. The feeling of being special or misplaced. Ilea was taken from Earth and brought here. She had paved her way and had settled into a more comfortable self. One that would make her own decisions, would find her own answers.

And so she pet the little Fae. Its head was composed of a black material that seemed to absorb the very light around it. To the touch it felt like nothing she had ever experienced before or could categorize in any way.

The experience was weird and she let go of it again. Her mind was whirling, trying to find a way to understand and make sense of what her fingers had touched.

It had been a long time since she had felt like something really deserved the name of magic. The Elemental she had met came close and perhaps her feelings would change if she could actually touch it but this Fae really deserved the mythical name.

Great, now I want to touch that lightning bird, Ilea thought, tapping her leg with a finger as she checked the notifications she had received from the eye popping game.

'ding' 'You have learned the general skill – Space Magic Resistance – lvl 1'

Space Magic Resistance – lvl 1

Most who try to chase this elusive school of magic will find and choose the Void instead. You have fought a being of truly peculiar making, have faced and survived its spells and may count yourself amongst the few to call this skill their own.

Hmm, I was sure that was void. Didn't feel any different than what Maria did to me, Ilea thought.

'ding' 'Space Magic Resistance reaches lvl 2'

She spread her wings and looked for some of the remaining creatures. It didn't take long but she didn't want to engage with the Fae unconscious.

"Hey, wake up little guy. I'm going to train a little more," she said.

No reaction graced her.

"You can watch me get injured," she added, seeing its wings twitch a tiny bit. "Blood and guts."

It slowly woke, eyes opening as it took in the surroundings.

I know you heard me, Ilea thought but she couldn't be mad at the cute little thing.

I don't think this was supposed to happen until my mid thirties, Ilea thought. *Oh well, let's cap out some more resistances and then move on.*

This time, she let the creatures attack without any ashen blades moving around herself.

She noted that with her time magic resistance active, the skips didn't happen anymore. It seemed the monsters weren't considered true masters of the magic. *Good to know, I guess,* she thought and once more deactivated her defenses.

The skips started happening again, four of the creatures digging into her flesh as she stood and healed. Ilea thanked Pain Tolerance once more, to make this opportunity feasible at all.

She'd be reduced to a quivering mess of tears and sorrow in a matter of seconds were it not for the skill. Most people likely would, bodies and brains made to protect themselves. Not to stand in fire or smile amidst four rabid corrupted magical creatures that tear and bite into one's body.

Ilea blinked up from time to time, activating her resistances once more to cleanse her body of the vile orange goo.

The Fae watched, hovering a couple meters to her side.

Just a little creepy, she noted and dived back down.

The curses had little effect on her by now, her resistance left active as it was capped at level twenty anyway. It was about time magic and blood manipulation by now.

After around ten minutes, Ilea decided to add a little spice to the mix, summoning a bottle of poison and taking a sip. She glanced over to the Fae.

"Care to continue popping my eyes?" she asked, forming a copy of her head and turning an ashen eye to nothing. With her armor active it would be more difficult but she believed in the little guy.

Support!

The Fae formed a fist and nodded.

Quite motivated the bugger, she thought and blinked down again.

She had no clue how much time was reasonable. Already her levels and skills had increased quite considerably since splitting up with her group. Especially her third tier skills would help quite a bit.

Avatar of Ash pretty much doubled the physical defense and offense of her ash, aided by any resistance skills she brought to the second tier.

Her wings would help tremendously against anything that required speed or maneuverability to beat. The upgrade to her sphere would allow her to protect her allies from magical damage and her Perception third tier would allow her to take more risks.

All in all a good combination of upgrades. Perhaps not quite what she had hoped for when she decided to split from the others but it would make a difference.

Ilea wasn't sure if her evaluation was skewed either, fighting higher leveled beings from layer to layer. The fifth or sixth level creatures would surely be torn apart even easier by now.

She blinked up again, sighing as her body recovered. Both her insides as well as her skin and muscles were pretty fucked up. Even with a powerful reduction to the curses, the beasts still had sharp teeth. Teeth that could penetrate her ashen armor that even the combined effort of ten Hallowfort mages had a hard time getting through.

And that was before the upgrade to its density.

Even if my theory is obviously wrong, this dungeon really was a way to solidify the power I gained from my last evolution.

By now she felt like she had grown into her new body. The capabilities of the Azarinth Sentinel and a Kin of Ash clearly on display as she took direct and continuous beatings from monstrous entities. Let alone the fact that she could slaughter them by the hundreds.

She decided to continue until her Blood Manipulation resistance reached level twenty in the second tier. Three levels wouldn't take too much more time without the damage reduction and the active removal of the corruption.

Ilea wondered how someone without this additional ability could even train the resistance after reaching the second tier. *I didn't try turning the effect off yet. Might work just like the Pain Tolerance one.*

She would give it a shot should there be a need to test some blood manipulation on her with the damage reduction present, as specific and unlikely that scenario was.

The remaining training lasted three full hours, one for each level in Blood Manipulation Resistance. Her other skills leveled quite a bit more quickly. The main reason was her healing that constantly fought against the spread of the corruption. Without it, even Ilea wouldn't survive a Zanedin onslaught for long.

She flew up and motioned to her shoulder, flesh and ash reforming as the Fae appeared and sat down. It had little trouble staying balanced, even in flight. She was glad the creature at least seemed to understand the danger these monsters posed to it. And yet she had never felt discomfort or fear. Apart from when she had found it.

Ilea had located the exit and way to the seventeenth layer some time ago, a half open gate sitting around sixty meters above ground in the wall, hidden between large boulders.

She didn't bother hunting down the remaining creatures, easily avoided by flight. Ilea would be back for them, sooner or later. There were still some resistance levels to be gained after all.

The thought of leaving turned and corrupted creatures behind irked her a little but the monsters were already dead, they were beyond caring. The Griffin would take care of them should they decide to move up. Anything further down should be able to defend itself, or was already corrupted. She checked the fruits of her labor and pressed on.

'ding' 'Monster Hunter reaches lvl 7'

...

'ding' 'Monster Hunter reaches lvl 9'

'ding' 'Veteran reaches 2nd lvl 6'

The taunts had no discernible effect on the monsters but she still used it whenever possible. Their corruption already had their minds fried and she was happy the skill even leveled at all.

'ding' 'Blood Manipulation Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 18'

...

'ding' 'Blood Manipulation Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 20'

'ding' 'Poison Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 13'

'ding' 'Poison Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 14'

'ding' 'Space Magic Resistance reaches lvl 3'

'ding' 'Space Magic Resistance reaches lvl 4'

'ding' 'Time Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 8'

...

'ding' 'Time Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 10'

She was surprised her Poison Resistance leveled so slowly, the stuff was pretty fucking strong after all. So were most of the other magics she was getting hit with of course.

The Fae tried its best but with her armor active, there was just too little damage being done, even with the resistance deactivated. She would find some time soon, in case the creature stayed around for another couple days.

For now, she focused on the next layer.

Ilea wasn't sure if she had reached sufficient power at this point to have the impact she had on the earlier layers. On one hand, she had just slaughtered hundreds of level six hundred creatures alone but on the other, the Elemental and the Griffin had certainly proved unbeatable. For now at least.

It really just depended on how far the expedition went, how far the corruption reached. And where her team currently resided.

Alright, so at this point I'll only engage monsters that are corrupted. I can come back whenever to check out the rest.

“I’ll go find my friends now, alright little guy?” she asked the Fae on her shoulder, landing in front of the slightly ajar steel gate that likely led farther down.

Violence?

“Don’t worry, my dear. There will be plenty of violence either way,” she said with a grin, blinking past the gate.