

Chapter 632 Enhance!

Ilea left through the gate prototype after saying her farewells to Trian. She planned to be back soon enough anyway.

“Hey tree,” she sent, waving in the general direction of eldritch energies.

“Still disappointingly human,” Meadow said.

“Welcome back,” Iana said with a smile. *“We’re nearly done with the security measures for our very own gate!”*

“That’s wonderful news,” Ilea said. *“Sorry to say this now but I’ll probably need another modified gate key. Gave mine to Kyrian.”*

The woman waved her off. *“I already modified the other one you gave us, here you go.”*

Ilea displaced the key into her hand and stored it. *“Awesome. Thank you,”* she said with a smile.

“No worries. I knew you’d either lose it or gift it to someone,” Iana answered and gave her a thumbs up.

Is that an insult? I’m unsure.

A space giggle went through the vicinity.

I guess I know what Meadow thinks. If only you weren’t so cute, Iana. If only.

“You gained weight,” the tree said, unnecessarily.

“Well observed, all seeing god,” she answered.

“It’s good. You’ll be able to face larger enemies more efficiently,” it said. *“You don’t seem to be in a rush for once. What has driven you to this secluded spot in this beautiful realm?”*

“Yeah, I’ll probably be around a little more in the coming weeks or even months. I need to max my third class skills,” she said so that the enchanters heard her too. A glance to the side showed her a group of Dark Ones waiting a few hundred meters away.

“They occasionally bring gifts for the great tree, or ask for guidance,” Iana said.

“They could come closer, no?” Ilea asked.

“I keep them away. Lest they be tempted to find out what my apprentices are working on. They can communicate just as well from there,” the Meadow said. *“So you’re here again... crawling back to the only true space magic teacher who could ever hope to elevate your measly spells.”*

Ilea rolled her eyes and transferred closer to the tree, feeling the mana density increase ten fold.

“Do you have some time to spare. I’m sure you’re very busy.”

“You know, I actually am. But you’re hardly asking for anything substantial. About ten human sacrifices per day should suffice as payment,” spoke the Meadow.

“Can I just leave bodies of myself here? I can even do twenty. If you just want the blood,” she suggested.

“It’s the souls I need,” it said.

“You don’t actually mention that, you know? You just ask for humans,” she said.

“Why would I deceive a mere mortal like yourself?” Meadow spoke.

“I’m immortal now. Age wise at least, so I’m getting close to morphing into a tree myself. Either that or a dragon,” Ilea retorted, seeing the space around her change, bits of rock forming in familiar and new patterns. Her training had just resumed.

“Oh are you now? Well, I suppose even a creature like you can achieve minor feats like that,” it said.

“You can add in some resistance training while we’re at it. What do you think would be more beneficial, earth magic or wood magic? I don’t want to use both third tier points,” she asked.

“That entirely depends on subjective opinion. In Erendar, I would’ve suggested the former. Here... well there are a lot of trees. In the human lands at least,” the Meadow said.

“You’re right. Earth is the safer bet,” Ilea sent and selected the resistance. The fact that she had trained with the Meadow allowed her to bring the skill to the third tier, though she assumed the Rubble Guardians would’ve had the same effect had she not met the magic tree.

‘ding’ ‘Earth Magic Resistance reaches 3rd lvl 1’

Earth Magic Resistance – 3rd lvl 1

The earth trembles as arcane beings bend its nature to their will. You have found stone and earth to be a worthwhile opponent yet stood unmoving in its destructive path. This skill will help you negate more of its damage.

2nd stage: Your skin and bones harden, adapting more and more to the element that threatened your life again and again.

3rd stage: You have faced true masters of Earth magic, gaining a better understanding of its substance. You are able to traverse through earth and stone far more easily than before. This effect is reduced with magically created or controlled earth and stone.

“Guess I can burrow now,” she said. *“So yeah, hurl a bunch of rocks at me between space attacks.”*

“As you wish,” the Meadow spoke, a shower of pebbles crashing against her armor with little impact. *“You’ve grown more dense.”*

“Do I have to find a stronger tree to train with?” Ilea asked.

“Don’t joke around like that,” the Meadow said, its voice entirely neutral.

Scared or ridiculing me? Whatever it is, maybe you’ll change your opinion in another thousand levels.

Ilea remembered her encounter with the Daughters of Sephilon. She knew her magic wouldn’t quite be comparable to the Meadow’s for *quite* some time. At the same time she knew that her magic didn’t have to be comparable to win a fight. The Wyrms were proof of that, as were many other monsters before.

This one can think though. I wonder what it would take to win a bout. Ah wait... it's a healer as well. Nope. I don't think I'll be able to do it. Bummer.

"What exactly are you thinking about? The look in your eyes has changed," the tree spoke.

Ilea smiled. "Just battle fanatic stuff, nothing you should concern yourself with. I have a question."

"Ask away."

"Thanks. Now that I'm at five hundred, I can actually enhance my skills. I waited so far because they're reset to the beginning of the third tier," she explained.

"And now that you're working on skills anyway, you thought about enhancing a few?" the Meadow said. "I don't see the downside. That is if you don't expect to need those twenty nine levels in the respective skills for some time."

"That's the question... isn't it," she mused. "I can only enhance each skill once? What does it do exactly?"

"So far I have only learned of the one enhancement, yes. Though again, you're human. I am not, nor are any of the Awakened I have shared information with on this topic. The effects can vary depending on the skill. A stronger effect or an added effect to the third tier only. Nothing is fundamentally changed as far as I know, unlike with evolutions," the Meadow explained.

"So it's always better," Ilea said.

"It should be," the Meadow answered.

"I got another option called Derivative General skill. What does that one do exactly?" she asked.

"You did? Interesting. I have only met two creatures who have received that option so far. I suppose it makes sense with humanity... you are versatile and adapt more quickly than others. Of course only because you're so very bland and weak to begin with, but that is besides the point," the Meadow spoke.

"It is indeed," Ilea answered.

"It will create general skills based on techniques you frequently use and have mastered to a degree. In your case... hmm. The ashen things on your back, you use them a lot but I have found them to be weaker than your flesh limbs. Are they a separate skill already?" it asked.

She shook her head.

"Then perhaps that would be an option. As to the actual benefits of the skill, it is hard to say, though they are not quite comparable to your Class skills," it explained.

"So just another enhancement?" Ilea asked.

"A specialization more than an enhancement," the Meadow said.

"Will I get options once I choose it or is it random what I get?"

"That I do not know, young healer," spoke the ancient tree.

"Guess I'll have to try that out too... so, which skills should I enhance?" she mused, looking through her list.

Archon strike is my main damage output at the moment. I think that would be too risky right now. Plus I'd probably have to kill things to level it effectively. Or risk killing them at least. Don't want the Class levels quite yet.

Sentinel Reconstruction... might be an option. No evolution with Arcane Eternal and with all the other regeneration and defensive boosts, this might be the time to actually risk it. The third tier will still be there anyway. And I'll have forty levels in the skill still. Leveling it only requires me fighting strong enemies and getting hurt, so that one's easy.

Azarinth Awakening... the base effects would tank a bit but that one will take a long time to level anyway. With my recent two hundred percent to body enhancement skills, I'll hardly feel a difference to before my evolutions. Also a good candidate.

Transfer... I'd rather not change. Though... would the cooldowns... no, they're static. So it wouldn't really matter. Just the distance I can teleport would be affected. With Displacement around, I could easily enhance it now.

Dominion. Kind of want to keep the range how it is. It's such an important skill, I'll probably do that one later.

Sentinel Core I could level well, but do I want to reduce the numbers? At the same time, even a small bonus could be insane with how good the base skill already is.

Eternal Brawling is possible but with the other options available, maybe not yet. Plus I'd have to fight stuff to level it. Huntress not yet either because I want to keep the high number of marks. Sight seems fine the way it is. Not sure I even want to invest five core points into that third tier. It's good to have but I should be able to get away from pretty much anything as it is.

Arcane Circulation is another possibility but again, might take a backseat to other skills.

So that's one Class. Plenty of possibilities... at the same time I don't want to burn all my core points. If I do five per Class it's fifty already. Let's see the Titan Class first.

Mantle is my main defense next to Reconstruction. I don't feel comfortable lowering both skills at the same time, even if it would be way more efficient time wise. Emergencies can come up at any time and I can't just reduce my defense by such a large chunk. With the recent evolution I think I'll prioritize reconstruction.

Titan Core... well I kind of want to properly try it out before I enhance it. Origin... not sure. It's been so vague, might just add more vagueness. But I have to enhance it at some point. Maybe once my third Class is at five hundred. Right now it's still a really important asset in pretty much every battle. Embered Core I want to properly get a grasp for first, same with Tempered Seal. Both offensive skills too so hard to level without killing things. Authority... is an option. Definitely easier to level without killing anything than the previous ones, still harder than a defensive skill.

Wings are a good option. With transfer I have a good way to travel long distances and I think at the beginning of the third tier I was already pretty fast. I'd lose to Kyrian for sure though... but if I don't invest now... he might win once he's at five hundred. Can't let that happen.

Vision is more offensive again. I'd rather go for Avatar of Ash. Most of the important bonuses are static there as well. That leaves Embered Form, which is entirely too offensive to level for now.

So we have Reconstruction, Awakening, Transfer, Sentinel Core, Circulation, Authority, Wings, and Avatar as good options. Should be able to level all of them without having to kill anything or even

attack it in the first place... as long as I get hurt. Sounds acceptable. Eight skills, so forty core points.

“Did your mind deactivate?” the Meadow asked.

Ilea looked up, ignoring the space and earth magic crashing into her. “I looked through my skills... I’ll try advancing a few. Give me a minute.”

She chose Avatar of Ash first.

‘ding’ ‘Avatar of Ash [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 1’

Passive: Avatar of Ash [Enhanced] – 3rd lvl 1:

Increases your reflexes and speed by 50.5% [606%]. Your ability to avoid damage to your vitals when dodging increases.

2nd stage: Your muscles grow more dense. For each Resistance skill your body becomes tougher. First tier Resistances equal a static 5% increase, second tier equal a static 10% increase, third tier equal a static 15% increase [550%].

3rd stage: You can choose to allow magic damage to bypass your related resistance skills. Effect is canceled automatically upon reaching 50% of your health. Each Resistance skill in the second tier or higher increases the potential density of your created ash by a static 5% [205%]. Each Resistance skill in the third tier increases the speed of your ash projectiles by 5% [80%].

Category: Body Enhancement – Ashen magic

Faster projectiles... for five core points and a need to level the third tier again. Hmm. It really is a straight upgrade though. And I have to do it at some point anyway.

‘ding’ ‘Sentinel Reconstruction [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 1’

Active: Sentinel Reconstruction [Enhanced] – 3rd lvl 1:

Send a healing pulse of mana into yourself or your ally with a touch. This skill can be channeled.

2nd stage: Your control is increased greatly, you can now focus your healing on specific parts of the body. As long as mana and health remains, your Sentinel Reconstruction will restore your body. Lose your head and see for yourself! Health loss and critical blows are recalculated due to the nature of your healing.

3rd stage: You have healed your body time and time again, knowing every cell and where it belongs. Sacrifice a large amount of mana to rush your healing to unprecedented speeds. Lack of knowledge about your body may result in heavy damage. Effect can be used on allies.

Category: Healing

Now that’s more like it, she thought with a grin. Her healing was already good, now she assumed she was close to what a high level cleric or priestess of an Order could do. Coupled with her dominion bonus, an enemy would have to more or less kill an ally within a second or two. The mana cost will be crazy too though, depending on how many there are to heal. And I suppose I should get familiar with their anatomy beforehand.

‘ding’ ‘Azarinth Awakening [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 1’

Active: Azarinth Awakening [Enhanced] – 3rd lvl 1:

Your body glows with the power of Azarinth, increasing your resilience, speed, Intelligence and Strength by 70.5% [705%].

2nd stage: Your sight, hearing and sense of smell is also affected by Azarinth Awakening

3rd stage: You are one with the Azarinth. The skill’s upkeep has been removed. Instead you may overcharge it with your life’s energy. The amount depends on both skill level and health used. Excess health regeneration and healing beyond your full health can instead be used to overcharge Azarinth Awakening.

Category: Aura – Body Enhancement

Ilea immediately felt the increase in power when she activated the effect, her regeneration alone providing a noticeable benefit. With her healing active too, she felt like she already matched the level thirty benefits from the previous version of the skill. *Might even be a bit stronger*, she thought with a grin. It would only last until she took damage and had to actually heal herself. Any health sacrifices could just be stacked on top however, which made the skill even more useful.

‘ding’ ‘Transfer [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 1’

‘Active: Transfer [Enhanced] – 3rd lvl 1:

Immediately appear at a distant place. Distance based on the level of the skill.

2nd stage: The time between transfers is reduced greatly. No ground contact needed between transfers. Upon arrival, you may use up to 500 mana to create an arcane explosion damaging enemies and disrupting magical constructs and spells.

3rd stage: You may set five destinations you touch. You may change each destination once per week [32.43h]. You may travel to each destination once every day [4.63h]. Cast time is reduced by a static 50% for destinations you have already transferred to.

Category: Teleportation Magic’

Two more, yes! And another cast time reduction. So down to less than twenty seconds. From like half an hour at first, hah!

‘ding’ ‘Sentinel Core [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 1’

Passive: Sentinel Core [Enhanced] – 3rd lvl 1:

Your body was changed by magic. All pain is reduced greatly. Your body is 40.5% [526.5%] more durable. You heal even fatal injuries without help of healing magic. Your natural Health regeneration is improved by 120.5% [1566.5%].

2nd stage: The magic of Azarinth settles inside your body. Your resistance to magical damage is increased by a static 25% [325%] and your bones are three times as heavy and dense.

3rd stage: Your body was battered and forged by magic. You absorb mana from enemy spells that hit you. Efficiency is determined by enemy mana used and your resistance to the type of magic. Mana cost for all skills reduced by a static 25%. Your body can absorb ambient mana. Amount dependent on availability and harmony.

Category: Healing – Body Enhancement

Ilea tried it out, gathering heat and channeling her healing to reduce her mana a little. *Alright... hmm. Pretty good, but I guess that's because of the Meadow density around here. Still nowhere near close my regeneration but any additional mana absorption is nice.*

"What did you do?" the Meadow spoke.

Ilea blinked her eyes, looking at the tree. *"What? I enhanced a skill and can absorb ambient mana now."*

"Marvelous... you really are an interesting species. You're not dependent on it I hope?" it asked.

"Says nothing about that. Just an additional way to get mana. I still regenerate normally too," she said.

"Good," it spoke.

"The enhancements are nice. Not sure if they're worth this many core points if there will be better options once I reach whatever requirements they have," she said.

"They are direct benefits to your main abilities, which form and define your power. Whatever else there may be for a human like you, I suggest enhancing everything you can," the Meadow said.

"You're right," she murmured telepathically.