

Ilea had a lot to do, many creatures in the Descent left to face. Each resistance skill would take time but she felt simply going up the layers and then back down was likely the most efficient way.

In the end, she could simply teleport out back home, or rush back up if the Fae was still hanging around and had no way of following her.

“Think I can ask the Enavurin to level my Mental Resistance?” she asked, checking her skills. Only two levels remained and the creature certainly packed a punch.

The Fae nodded.

“You can help out as well with your space magic if you want to,” she added. *Also poison.*

Ilea checked the class skills that had abilities related to Resistance skills, unsure if her newfound third tier skills affected them in some way.

The only one that showed a change was Avatar of Ash, also the only one showing specific percentages compared to her Sphere, Armor and Core.

Passive: Avatar of Ash – 3rd lvl 1:

Increases your reflexes and speed by 50.5% [404%]. 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 [320%].

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% [130%].

Category: Body Enhancement – Ashen magic

At least another five percent resilience. Makes waiting with the other points much easier though, knowing it won't affect the third tier of the skill.

The hundred and thirty percent to the potential density of her ash was huge compared to another five percent to her already insanely inflated resilience. Both were benefits of course but now she felt another piece supported her decision.

I'll keep some third tier skill points if possible and won't use them on obscure shit like Blood Manipulation. Ice or Poison seems much more common.

Ilea felt it more reasonable to use them in case she faced a powerful being that demanded the additional defense. Or something that could level the resistance far into the third tier.

Thinking of which... twenty points for the first, twenty in the second and potentially thirty or even more for the third tier. At least sixty to seventy points per resistance. Should be able to get most to the third tier then.

For the moment, Ilea still stuck to her decision to keep her third tier points for the more commonly useful magic schools. Mental Resistance was pretty fucking high up on that list.

“Ready to get past that thing,” Ilea asked.

The Fae nodded and appeared in front of her chest, a translucent barrier coming to life before it was covered in a cocoon of ash.

Ilea blinked into the layer and charged her wings, keeping an eye on the Griffin that usually took a couple seconds before attacking, another one or two seconds passing before the wind attacks actually reached her.

Her wings thrummed with power right when the creature reached its comfortable ranged attack distance. Ilea activated her third tier and felt the air pressure increase as her Wind Resistance tried to push aside the element.

She reached the other side in no time, feeling some attacks hit close behind her as the Griffin quickly changed gears to more powerful spells that could keep up with her.

Ilea blinked through the last stretch, appearing in the stairwell that led up to the Enavurin. She turned to face the wall with her back as her momentum absolutely slapped her into the steel.

She left a small dent in the strong steel, finding herself mostly fine other than a couple minor bruises. All her defensive skills paid off, especially her shock absorption bonus from her second tier Blast Resistance.

Magically enhanced and likely created steel against a magically enhanced human using ash armor. I'd love to see how a normal car or truck would respond to me flying into it with enhanced wings.

Ilea was pretty sure some of the crash test videos she had seen would come close. For the cars that was. She was probably fine.

“You ok there?” she asked the Fae and sent some healing through the slowly opening cocoon.

It nodded and twirled.

Fast

“Right? It's pretty nuts,” she said. “I just can't really steer while I use it.”

“Let's see if our friend is doing well, I'm sure he'll be happy to hear about the corruption mostly being quelled.”

Baron Violence nodded as they ascended quickly through the stairwell, teleporting to avoid walking the stairs.

“Can you contact it?” she asked the Fae. “I don't have mind powers.”

The Fae nodded.

Greeting

Ilea felt a probing pulse of mind magic spreading before a voice spoke into her mind.

“You have returned. A surprise. I had expected your chance of success at below three percent,” the Enavuring said.

“What a greeting. I expected you to move your ass away from your tank at a similarly low percentage,” Ilea replied.

“An attempt was made to contact me but I could not sense you within the group. I had thought you had been lost or betrayed. I do not mean to be unpleasant but I was engrossed in a beautiful dream,” the being said. “Why do you disturb me?”

Sure, a dream in a dream, old one. Let them live a happy life, Ilea thought with a smirk.

“The corruption took over a Sand Elemental. We took care of it with some help. Thought you might like to hear that. Also I come with a small request, if you’re up for it,” she said.

“An Elemental... truly. It seems the changes to my blood have been dearly necessary. It is surprising however... that being must have refused to fight it. I doubt this corruption could overwhelm something so powerful.”

“We don’t know how it happened, just that it did,” Ilea said.

“Mhm... yes. I thank you, for freeing it and for surely taking care of most of the blood manipulation made from my body. I am glad the group that passed did not attempt something foolish,” the Enavurin said.

“Some of them should be smart enough not to challenge a being as ancient and powerful as you. I’m not one of them, thus my request. I’d like you to use your mind magic against me. I’m two levels away from the second tier maximum,” Ilea explained.

“Two levels... is doable. I shall support you in this, pain obsessed monkey,” it said.

Caught you grumpy, hmm? Ilea thought and heard a giggle in her mind.

You two can just read minds, can’t you?

Nothing replied, as expected. Ilea decided to trust in her abilities. Should these creatures be able to read her mind like a book, alter memories and her very being, what would be the point of caring?

“Be thy merciful on this poor mortal,” she murmured to herself and disabled her space magic resistance, deciding to keep her Mental one up for now.

“You are sending mixed signals,” the Enavurin said. “I will not destroy your mind repeatedly if you do not want me to.”

“Do it,” she said and summoned a flask of poison, deactivating that resistance as well.

With a somewhat recent comparison to the Vampire, Ilea could tell that while the ferocious monster had been powerful, this one was a true master of Mind Magic. It made her want to fight it, to test herself against it with more dangerous stakes but the Enavurin would be against it, she was sure of it.

Quite different from the Deep Mirage that happily went for her life, enjoying the test of each others strengths and magic.

Several hours passed, her resistances rising slowly before she finally reached the end of the second tier.

‘ding’ ‘Mental Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 19’

‘ding’ ‘Mental Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 20’

'ding' 'Poison Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 15'

...

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

'ding' 'Space Magic Resistance reaches lvl 9'

'ding' 'Space Magic Resistance reaches lvl 10'

Ilea checked if her Mental Resistance could be advanced.

'General skills available for third tier advancement:'

- Mental Resistance

You have trained with true masters of mind magic. Human, Mind Weaver and Enavurin. Their expertise has tested your defense and Resistance in ways few could. Perhaps there is a case to be made if this training hasn't in the end led to your many resistances in the first place, leaving cracks in your sanity that even you could not heal. Stay safe.

I am safe, don't worry. Plus I'll be even safer with all those juicy resistances, she thought with a grin.

'ding' 'Mental Resistance reaches 3rd lvl 1'

Mental Resistance – 3rd lvl 1

You are more adept at resisting and detecting attacks to your mind.

2nd stage: Your mind is nearly impenetrable. Attacks on your mind will be partially reflected, causing harm to the attacker.

3rd stage: Your mind is a bright shield and warning to anyone that dares attack it. You can pin point attackers and gain a general idea of their mind magic capabilities. You gain the capability to initiate mental contact with those that are receptive, sending simple thoughts and feelings.

Oh, there you go, she thought and immediately felt a vast and powerful magical presence wash over her. Ilea grasped her head for a moment as she got used to the feeling, circulating healing mana through her body.

Ocean, it was her that sent the thought, out to anyone that might be capable of receiving it.

Safe? the Fae replied.

“Remarkable... you have found a way to the third tier... despite your young age. A matter of diverse and high level abilities then I presume? Do not worry Ancient One, she simply requires some time to adjust... to new understanding,” the Enavurin said.

Each of his words boomed in her mind, the last couple ones a little dulled.

Ilea steadied her breathing and closed her eyes, focusing on Meditation and her healing.

Safe, she sent to the Fae, as casual as she would be talking.

Mind, the creature sent and tapped its brow.

“Yeah... holy shit Ena. You're insane!” Ilea said and started laughing. “Did you just level your mind magic for a thousand years?”

The creature sent a chuckle. "Much longer than that, young one. Not all creatures focus solely on the demise of others and their own increase in power. Understanding alone can be satisfaction enough for some. Let it be a lesson, to not underestimate those you cannot comprehend."

"Hmm... can you use it? Just use more until I lose consciousness," Ilea suggested with a grin. "I could push the resistance so much higher!"

"I refuse. At this stage... it could become unpleasant, even for me. It would be a fine line and I do not wish to cause your demise. I have used this power only against few, my understanding of its effects on living organisms minimal at best," the creature explained.

Ilea nodded. "Sad to hear but I understand." She could just deactivate her resistance and train more with Weavy or someone else. There was no reason to push the ancient creature.

Everything here is ancient in comparison to me, she thought. Can't wait for me to be a couple thousand years old to call everyone I meet Young One.

Violence? She sent to the Fae.

Violence

Violence.

They could finally communicate on one level. Both sent giggles to each other and twirled in the air.

"I am glad I was of assistance to you, young human," the Enavurin interrupted them.

"Thanks!" Ilea said.

She informed the being about their findings on the twentieth layer but it knew nothing additional, neither feeling the need to offer more theories or speculation.

The being clearly wanted to return to its dream and Ilea had already potentially doomed a reality by waking it up, not about to add more to that.

"I shall visit you again, thanks again for the help," she said and bowed towards the water.

"I will welcome you, in a couple of your centuries. Sleep well," the creature said, its presence changing to a more serene feeling in her mind.

The ripples in it stopped and soon it was completely still.

Leave? The Fae asked.

Ilea watched the mind magic presence of the Enavurin for a couple more minutes. It continued to be overwhelming but she could let it wash over her by now, could accept it as reality.

With a mind like that, no wonder it can just sit there for millennia, she thought and turned to the Fae, giving it a nod before she flew up to the exit. She shivered, a part of her considering that the dream joke might not be too far from reality.

Ilea decided to focus on something more tangible again, flying over the flowing waters of the thirteenth layer as she waited for one of the Varass drowners to catch her in its gravity magic field.

Poison, gravity, harmony of the drowned?

Underwater? She sent to the Fae.

It shrugged.

“I mean are you safe underwater or do you need air? These creatures have gravity magic and try to drown others,” she explained in more detail.

Safe

“Alright,” she said and continued the search.

It took a while but she finally felt the pull, deactivating her resistance as she was dragged underwater.

Instead of fighting the creature, she drank a bit of poison and watched the Fae swim around her in circles. She added an ashen clone to it as she felt the pressure on her eyes. *Honestly, I can take it.*

She deactivated her armor, feeling the power of the gravity magic increase several fold, pushing her to her knees on the ground of the river, her body immovable against the pressure. The air was pushed out of her lungs as her eyes exploded in a gory mess, popped by the pressure instead of by space magic.

Challenge? The Fae sent with a vigorous joy.

Beautiful, Ilea thought, the last of the air leaving her body.

Ilea didn't exactly understand how drowning worked but she knew that healing against it without any air in her lungs wasn't pleasant. She had learned that with William and now she learned that she preferred ice spears cutting through her instead of gravity magic pushing the force of tons of water down on her.

She had lost track of time, letting the creatures test their magic on her until the pressure suddenly stopped.

What? She thought and found the Varass Drowner drift away in the currents. *Excuse me?*

Ilea blinked to the creature and grabbed it.

Attack! She sent in her mind, trying to hold on to the monster.

[Vile Varass Drowner – lvl ???]

It struggled before its magic activated again, pushing down on her.

Good, she sent, feeling the distress from the being through her sphere.

It couldn't answer or decided not to but the being understood that it had become prey in its search for food.

The training continued for another two or three hours before the monster passed out from mana exhaustion or regular exhaustion. Ilea had no way to tell.

She didn't feel bad for sucking the predator dry, deciding not to kill it as a thanks.

The Fae watched the monster drift away and shook its head, glancing at Ilea before appearing on her shoulder.

'ding' 'Harmony of the Drowned reaches lvl 6'

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

...

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

'ding' 'Poison Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 18'

'ding' 'Space Magic Resistance reaches lvl 11'

...

'ding' 'Space Magic Resistance reaches lvl 16'

Ilea appeared on a nearby rock and enjoyed a meal between training sessions. *This is taking too long... I need more of them.*

"Can you help me find them?" she asked. "I need at least two or three to make the leveling a little quicker."

The Fae saluted and vanished.

Together, the two found several of the Varass Drowners that apparently weren't the best at hunting for prey, remaining in stationary positions until something moved through above.

With three of them, Ilea's leveling speed increased massively, her body crushed and her bones regularly breaking as she regenerated herself without any sense of pain.

She did consider getting Pain Tolerance to the third tier but compared to most of her other skills, it wouldn't be a pleasant cruise. Avatar of Ash would help of course but even the reduced pain she would go through on a daily basis was likely too much to handle for a human mind.

For now, she focused on the skills that were immediately available and easy to get.

'ding' 'Harmony of the Drowned reaches lvl 7'

'ding' 'Gravity Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 9'

...

'ding' 'Gravity Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 20'

'ding' 'Poison Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 19'

'ding' 'Space Magic Resistance reaches lvl 17'

...

'ding' 'Space Magic Resistance reaches lvl 20'

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

Space Magic Resistance – 2nd 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.

2nd stage: A true mystery, how you have sustained so much damage through Space Magic. You must have truly angered a being to summon such scorn. Your body and its parts become more difficult to displace.

'ding' 'One third tier General skill point awarded'

“Fucking nice,” she said after blinking out of the water, easily ignoring the powerful magic now that her ashen armor and resistance was active again.

The Fae appeared on her shoulder and lied down.

Sleep? She asked.

Exhausted, the creature replied.

“Thanks for the help, little one. Just relax. I’ll protect you,” Ilea said and moved on, taking a sip of poison.

She chose not to kill the Drowners, feeling herself so far above their power there simply was no need. They obviously had some form of intelligence and she wasn’t about to murder them for the somewhat low experience they would provide, especially after they had helped her out so much.