

Chapter 481 Choices

“The Demonic Herald,” Claire said, the group now sitting outside in the Kroll mountains. A rather large plate of ash hovered between them.

Ilea relaxed in an ashen chair, while the others chose to stand.

Filled mugs and a few plates with bread, cheese and various meats sat on the impromptu table.

A light shimmer of magic thrummed close to them, Claire’s runes making sure nothing would sneak up on them.

The moon and stars provided enough light for them to see, even without additional skills.

“One thousand demons killed, fear and mental resistance. Mind magic abilities I presume and fear based magic. That one is rare. So much so that I don’t think a Shadow in my lifetime was recorded with that ability,” Claire said, looking at her transcription.

“I’m worried about the part about the queen of death, leading armies of beasts,” Trian said.

“You think there is something else involved? Turning people into monsters through mind magic and fear?” Claire suggested.

“It does sound pretty badass,” Ilea said. “Mind magic might give me an opening to attack but it doesn’t really work against me anymore. I doubt it will be a major asset against powerful foes,” she said. “The fear one however...”

“People and monsters don’t have your resistances,” Claire said. “It will most definitely be a powerful asset. But the connection to demons is strong, I’m worried it might influence you.”

“Wouldn’t my resistance protect me against that too? I doubt a class or skill could really harm me at this point.” Ilea asked.

“Maybe,” Trian said. “But there were Shadows in the mid two hundreds killing their team members because of berserker classes and traits. It might work out for you but I think there are safer choices.”

Claire nodded and took a sip of her drink.

“I’m not in my mid two hundreds though,” Ilea said. *But this isn’t a second class either.*

“Next one would be the Ashen Lecturer. Inspired fear, create classes, broken minds, no requirement like the level six hundred one from the Herald,” Claire said.

“To have unlocked the Class before six hundred?” Trian asked, getting a nod in response.

“It should be the best option for the Sentinels,” Ilea said. She felt proud that such an option revealed itself. It meant they had managed something quite special.

“Don’t even think about that,” Trian said. “We showed them the way and gave them the tools to succeed. Let them succeed. There’s too much about pain and torture in there anyway. I don’t want us to end up like-”

Ilea stopped him. “We won’t. Okay?”

He looked at her, realizing that his lightning had flared out a little, burning a bit of the surrounding shrubs.

“It might be helpful but we’ve found incredible success as it is. I agree that my resources and person can be a stepping stone for the Sentinels but they shouldn’t be its constant foundation,” Ilea said.

“Rationally speaking, the option doesn’t seem as rare as the others. Get something that makes you stronger, or even harder to kill. Survive and your Sentinels will benefit more in the long term,” Claire said.

“I’m not sure about that, but I’m selfish enough to get something interesting, something new. I don’t mind teaching them what I know about healing and fighting but I’m not a lecturer. I don’t plan on being there every afternoon for the rest of my life,” Ilea said and put some cheese on a piece of bread.

“What was the next one?” Trian asked.

“Mad Shadow,” Ilea said through chewing her bread, a wicked smile on her face.

“Manners,” Claire commented.

“I didn’t fight a bloody Sand Elemental to be told how to eat,” Ilea said and continued her chewing.

“Manners aren’t a matter of power. Let’s table this discussion for now, but I’ll add it to your lessons,” Claire said and winked.

She’s fucking around, right?

Ilea squinted at her but the woman was already focused on her notes again.

“Defeated an army, well known... Shadow magic. That would be quite an asset to have. Being able to sneak into places, going unseen. Getting behind people unnoticed,” the woman said.

“You can use it to attack too,” Trian added.

Ilea downed her ale and made another sandwich.

“I can see through walls, can teleport inside. If I blink, I don’t make a noise. Plus my damage isn’t exactly focused on weakpoints and single hits, more on prolonged fighting,” she said and continued eating. *It would be cool though... shadows trailing me. Combined with ash I’d literally be the Specter of Death.*

“And you can float,” Trian said.

“And that,” Claire murmured, biting around on her pen.

“What about the knight? Sou-” Claire started.

“No,” Ilea interrupted.

“It could be go-” Trian chimed in.

“No,” she said again.

Damn you Maro. You fuck.

“Seems to be mostly based on leadership anyway. I doubt you’d like that,” Claire said and moved on. “Headless Horror seems like an uncontrolled murder class.”

“I deem it unwise to take that one,” Trian said.

“I agree. Though rationally speaking, flesh and blood magic might be a great addition, coupled with your regeneration,” Claire said.

“It does sound dangerous, not necessarily for me though,” Ilea said. “But... despite the allure and my apparent madness, I do think it’s pretty fucking gross.”

“You can clean yourself,” Trian said, gesturing at her ashen armor.

“Doesn’t make it any better. I’d rather take the demon one,” she said.

“The rider one sounds like a wildcard,” Claire said. “Same with the Arcane touched one.”

“Both would probably give you quite a bit of power,” Trian said.

“They would,” Ilea said and relaxed in her armchair, looking up at the stars. “Lava magic could be a nice addition, though I’d say my ash and embers already cover the ranged aspect.”

“I’m not sure if it requires me to have a Trakorov at hand too. The logistics though... can’t exactly lift it. Or feed it. The mana that would take...,” she shook her head. The thought of a Trakorov appearing at her side whenever she did battle was both awesome and comical.

She snickered, thinking of the beast squeezing through small dungeon tunnels, just breaking through the whole structure.

“Arcane magic is mostly just beams as far as I’ve seen, right?” she asked.

“Near instant cast spells with devastating destructive power. Eats up lots of mana but the classes usually have ways to mitigate that. Arcane classes often make other magic better too, which may be beneficial,” Trian said.

Ilea wasn’t sure. “I already have a beam. Would just be another one. Even if it makes ashen magic better, I’d prefer healing or body enhancement. The Horror class might provide that.”

“The Arcane class talks about mana density too. That you would only be satisfied by the most precious mana,” Claire said.

“I don’t exactly want to feel uncomfortable in normal mana density,” Ilea said.

“We don’t know how it would change your body,” Claire said.

“If something like that could even have an impact on you,” Trian said.

“Could mean nothing,” Claire said.

“Yes... I do think we’re being too cautious. I’ve resisted a Veramath’s mind magic,” Ilea said. “I would think all of these Classes would benefit me, without turning me into a ravenous monster.”

“Don’t underestimate the power of class changes. There’s no resistance to the effects and if you decide wrong, you could end up a different person entirely,” Trian said.

Claire moved the page of her notebook. “What about the last one, Faen Valkyrie? The requirements are focused on your new violent friend. Sounds like what you accomplished is quite the feat. Judging by the pre level five hundred requirement, it’s the most rare of the bunch too.”

“What’s the Flame of Creation?” Trian asked.

Ilea shrugged. “Fire magic? Space sounds cool too, maybe some long range teleportation or abilities like the Ascended had.”

“I just hope the connection to the Fae won’t be a problem,” Claire said.

“Says that I already bonded with it, not that it would change anything about that. I like the mention of my body being a weapon too,” Ilea said. *Plus I trust the little bugger.*

“So it’s Demon, Shadow, Horror or Valkyrie?” Trian asked.

Ilea sat back and thought about it. “Sounds like it.”

Mind, Shadow, Space, or maybe even flesh and blood?

She looked up at the stars and thought about the potential each school of magic could have for her. The Baron had saved her with a space magic spell, had gotten them out when the Ascended had her pinned down.

Shadow magic could achieve something similar, she thought. Both resilient and destructive, to defend and execute judgment.

It sounded similar to her Sentinel class. Ilea wasn’t one to hide in the shadows. Neither was she one to bend people’s minds. The Horror class might have sounded more appealing if it hadn’t been for the recent Abomination and Specter encounters.

Maybe I could visit other realms. Check up on Earth, she wondered if that was a good idea.

“You made a choice?” Claire asked, looking at her.

“Violence it is,” Ilea said and stood up.

“Maybe the Fae Does have an influence over her,” Trian said and chuckled.

“I would have chosen that one too,” Claire said and summoned a lighter, ripping out the pieces of paper and burning them.

Trian raised a questioning eyebrow.

“I’ll tell Dagon about the general idea. Nobody needs to know the specific classes,” she said.

“You two stay at a distance, just come closer if I fall unconscious or something,” Ilea said.

Trian and Claire nodded and teleported away.

Don’t fuck up my mind little guy, Ilea thought and selected the Class.

She felt the speck of energy within herself light up suddenly. Her essence, or soul. Heat rose up and she perceived with her healing and soul perception abilities how something spread through her. It looked like, fire.

The unsettling feeling turned into pain, expanding and intensifying as the flames spread. Not just physical pain but Ilea knew her soul was hurting too.

Perhaps it would have been an unbearable experience a year prior, but after absorbing the collected mana in the Descent, this felt like a minor inconvenience at best.

She ground her teeth against the feeling, refusing to turn off her pain perception. *This class is mine, and I will take all that comes with it.*

Ilea let her ashen armor recede to her back when she felt the flames break through her skin. The fire was pale, white, just like Feyrair’s. It moved lazily as her body was slowly set ablaze with the strange element, neither wind nor her movements animating the flames.

She noted her health dropping rapidly, canceled out by her combined regeneration and healing. Ilea wondered if any of her resistances worked against the fire.

As the heat built, so did the damage to her body. She lifted her hand to look at the flames, creating ash that swirled amidst the new power. The nearby element didn't destroy her creation but somewhat incorporated it, the colors shifting around each other.

Her health had slightly declined a minute later, when the fire slowly settled, not vanishing but flowing instead into her body. She closed her eyes and breathed out. Ilea focused on the newfound power, making a fist as she healed the lost health.

'ding'

New Class: The Faen Valkyrie

Intelligence +20

Wisdom +20

Space Magic is improved by 100%

Resilience is increased by 250%

Body Enhancement Magic is improved by 100%

Ilea expected a few new skill notifications but instead received something else entirely.

'ding' 'Following requirements have been met. Has [Locked] or has unlocked an additional class beyond the limitations of their race.

Core skill points have been unlocked.

Core skill points replace Class specific third tier skill points.

Retroactively applicable achievements unlocked:

<i>You have survived an untouched Arcane Shift –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>You have visited the Great Salt –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>You have befriended a Mind Weaver –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>You have befriended a Fae –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>A song about you has spread to five cities –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>You have trained with a Lightning Elemental –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>You have reached the speed of sound –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>You have unlocked Third tier General skills –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>You have ridden a Trakorov –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>You have absorbed pure Arcane energy –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>You have entered the Home of the Fae –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>You have unlocked 10 third tier General skills –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>
<i>You have helped create three new classes –</i>	<i>1 Core skill point awarded</i>

You have unlocked 50 resistance skills – 1 Core skill point awarded
You have unlocked the Soul Perception skill – 1 Core skill point awarded
You have unlocked a Third Class – 1 Core skill point awarded

Ilea wasn't sure what this all meant. *No new skills?*

She checked her status as her companions slowly approached again.

Name: Ilea Spears

Unspent statpoints: 30

Unspent Core skill points: 16

Unspent 3rd tier General skill points [1714 Total skill levels]: 3

Class 1: The Azarinth Sentinel – lvl 351

- **Active: Absolute Destruction – 3rd lvl 24**
- **Active: Sentinel Reconstruction – 3rd lvl 30**
- **Active: Azarinth Awakening – 3rd lvl 30**
- **Active: Blink – 3rd lvl 27**
- **Active: Sentinel Sphere – 3rd lvl 25**
- **Passive: Sentinel Core – 3rd lvl 30**
- **Passive: Azarinth Fighting – 3rd lvl 30**
- **Passive: Sentinel Huntress – 3rd lvl 8**
- **Passive: Azarinth Perception – 3rd lvl 23**
- **Passive: Azarinth Reversal – 3rd lvl 20**

Class 2: Kin of Ash – lvl 351

- **Active: Armor of Ash – 3rd lvl 30**
- **Active: Aspect of Ash – 3rd lvl 30**
- **Active: True Ash Creation – 3rd lvl 30**
- **Active: Heart of Cinder – 3rd lvl 20**
- **Active: Storm of Cinders – 3rd lvl 18**
- **Passive: Ash and Ember Unity – 3rd lvl 27**
- **Passive: Ashen Wings – 3rd lvl 24**
- **Passive: Eyes of Ash – 3rd lvl 17**
- **Passive: Avatar of Ash – 3rd lvl 30**
- **Passive: Keeper of Ash – 3rd lvl 27**

Class 3: The Faen Valkyrie – lvl 1

- **Active: None**
- **Active: None**
- **Active: None**
- **Passive: None**
- **Passive: None**
- **Passive: None**

General skills: Hidden

She sighed, relieved to find six available slots in her new Class. *That's pretty good for a "subdued" Class, she thought with a smile.*

The Core skill points were interesting but she had no clue what they could or would do. For now, she focused on the Class skills, hoping that there were options after all.

Skills available for The Faen Valkyrie:

Active - Flare of Creation

Let the fires erupt, burning away your health in the exchange for devastating power. Attacks with your body are infused with the Flame of Creation, dealing lingering damage to health, mana, and magical constructs. You are immune to stunning, fear, and shout abilities. Your resilience is increased by 25% [200%]

Category: Aura – Body Enhancement

I would assume that's the fire that just burned away at my health as soon as I unlocked the Class. That would be cool to have, just for the aesthetic alone.

Two hundred percent increased resilience were quite laughable compared to the bonuses her main auras provided but she assumed this had to do with the subdued power of the third class.

It would still make a significant difference, of course.

Active – Spear of Creation

Wield the fire of creation as an extension of your arms. The spear is especially useful against magical defenses.

Category: Fire Magic – Space Magic

The spell sounded interesting to her but without a Body Enhancement bonus, it wasn't incredibly tempting.

Active – Displacement

Shift space to your will, making an object or person appear somewhere else.

Category: Space Magic

This one is interesting... could I just move an enemy's weapon away? Or the enemy itself to create openings? I could also move a drink from my fridge into my hands without getting up. I like that.

Active – Burst of Creation

Let the fires spread, creating a sphere of lingering flames around yourself.

Category: Fire Magic

Ilea dismissed this one pretty quickly. Her Heart of Cinder had this one covered. Doubling down on damage was an option but the risk of the skills somehow distorting each other was there too.

Three slots... you might already not make the cut.

Active – Force

Push away or stop objects, constructs, and people from reaching you with Space magic

Category: Space Magic – Aura

I want this. I want to be Neo, yes!

She wondered if even in the third tier, the skill could be used to stop actual bullets. She hoped the answer was yes.

Active – Phaseshift

Expending a large amount of mana, you can temporarily unbind your body from the physical and pass through barriers. You may let spells and physical objects pass through you unhindered. Be aware that certain types of magic will retain some or all of their impact.

Category: Space Magic

Oh, that's cool too. Fuck, there are too many options. I want all of this.

Active – Shrouding Cloak

Invoke Space magic to hide yourself or objects in your vicinity in plain sight.

Category: Space Magic – Aura

Hmm. I'm not big on hiding. You're taking a back seat, she thought and moved on to the next one.

Active – Blazing Force Shield

Form a shield of fire before you that will devour spells and objects alike.

Category: Fire Magic – Space Magic

Ilea preferred the idea of Force compared to this shield. *Before you... that sounds situational at best. Not that I couldn't have used this plenty of times before.*

She found that it was the last available active skill, checking out the passives instead.

Passive – Space Awareness

You become more aware of the density and shifts in the fabric of Space itself.

Category: Body Enhancement – Perception Aura

She wasn't sure what it meant exactly.

“What did you get?” Trian asked, finally breaking the silence after they had reached her.

“Give me a few minutes,” she murmured, continuing to read.

Passive – Space Shift

Space wields easier for you, allowing you to unravel its mysteries. Teleportation abilities can be used again 50% faster [100%] and you can travel 20% farther [40%].

Category: Space magic

That was a must have for her. Blink and Reconstruction had always been the key abilities that kept her alive. Using her teleportation twice as fast again after casting it would allow her quite a bit more maneuverability, let alone the increased distance.

Passive – Dimension storage

You gain a personal dimensional storage space allowing you to store and retrieve unliving physical items at your will.

Category: Space Magic

A storage item replacement. Hmm. My necklace can't really be destroyed but what could a second and third tier add to this? she wondered.

Passive – Body of the Valkyrie

The flame of creation flows through your veins, increasing your resilience by 15% [135%].

Increases your physical damage resistance by 5% [45%]. Increases your magic damage resistance by 5% [45%]. You won't be fazed anymore by heavy damage or powerful sources of light and sound.

Category: Body enhancement – Space Magic

Those multipliers are nuts. Even though the actual increase isn't that much.

Passive – Lull of Battle

You are one with war and battle. Less Endurance is needed the longer you fight.

Category: Aura – Body Enhancement

Useless... but a second and third tier could be interesting. A gamble though, she thought, biting her lip. If only there were five slots each, fuck.

Ilea had a lot to think about, feeling the distress building in Trian.

“Come on! Fucking tell us,” he said, arms crossed as a spark of lightning flashed out and seared a nearby rock.