

Chapter 563 Boning

Ilea dodged past the many projectiles that didn't just fly at her but homed too, even returning to annoy her after they had passed already. A cyclone of blood and bone.

The ground was covered in bone spikes shooting up to impale her, more growing with each passing moment.

The floor is bones, Ilea thought when the next wave of blood and rot magic ravaged her body. These damn mana intruders.

Her main focus was the avoidance of damage to her brain. And it worked reasonably well so far. She wasn't too worried because of her newfound Space Awareness abilities. Getting stuck in the sea of bones wouldn't be the end of her. Far from it.

Ilea activated Phaseshift, unsure if the Queen could even perceive her. Her eyes didn't seem the healthiest. She poured health into her spells, supplying Flare of Creation simply because she didn't have to risk the lower regeneration with her phased body.

The woman looked around, various visible pulses emanating but nothing managed to pick up Ilea's position. Or it seemed as such. The cyclone calmed, magic floating around the hall as if time had been slowed.

Ilea watched as the Queen floated out into the courtyard, continuing onward as Ilea displaced herself close to her.

Phaseshift came to an end and she returned to normal space, white flames flaring up as she shot burning ash onto the woman. Her limbs slashed through the Queen, having an easy time cutting her flesh but unable to cut or break the bones below.

She tried to aim for her eyes and brain in the little time she had on the offensive, finding reasonable success.

A pulse of blood and rot magic washed out in a sphere around the woman, leaving the ground without blemishes but punching through Ilea's body like an invisible freight train. She was pushed back, twirling in the air once before she stabilized and dodged the many blood blades and bone projectiles that moved at a higher speed once again.

So I can stay alive at least, through most of her attacks, Ilea thought. The damage to her body was extensive but so far the Queen hadn't shown the necessary frequency of attacks that would make this an impossible task.

But she's regenerating too. And I can barely get any damage in. Even with that direct attack, she didn't seem to care at all. Not that it's an indicator. Most high levels I fought didn't react much.

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

'ding' 'Rot Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 7'

Maybe that should be my focus. Slowly acclimating myself to her attacks and magic. If she's incapable of learning and if I can get away between encounters, I'll have my resistances maxed in no time. Maybe even add another one or two third tiers.

Ilea blinked and displaced both herself and many of the projectiles, the swirling storm around her never decreasing and quickly catching up with her fast moving form.

The targeted blood magic and rot attacks never let up, Ilea only able to deal with them due to her precognition.

At least it's nearly all magic.

Sentinel Core worked overtime, returning large chunks of mana from the devastating attacks of the woman.

Can I keep this up indefinitely? Ilea asked herself, already feeling somewhat good about the quote on quote fight as she regenerated large chunks of missing internals.

The Queen howled again, summoning six Specters that appeared from thin air, weapons drawn and teleporting towards Ilea.

Hmm.

Ilea focused entirely on the Queen's attacks, using her offensive capabilities to shred through the new Specters. She had to retreat after two had died, her body and ash too damaged to consistently put out damage. Flare of Creation was gone again, the benefit from her phased form disappearing.

She didn't use the skill at the moment, the cost something she didn't want to counter right now. Not with the heavy health damage the four mark could dish out regularly.

No way to really dodge it either, Ilea found. When she blinked before the spells activated, they simply wouldn't and the Queen would use them again where her enemy appeared.

"Just to be s-" Ilea said, twirling through the cyclone as her spells charged, ashen spears rushing out towards the four mark, deflected by blades of ash or simply stabbing into her without a discernible result.

She moved her wings, pushing away from the waves of magic, her stomach rupturing along with her lungs, heart, and left arm. Healing the damage wasn't very taxing, the matter still around after all, the rest of her body still connected and covered by her ash. The blades dug deep into her armor but only perfect direct hits managed to get to her skin below.

"To be sure! You're not-" she said again, displacing herself closer to the Queen after activating Phaseshift. "Sapient or something?" she finished her question when her spell activated.

Health is alright, she thought and healed herself, already supplying her auras with huge amounts of health. *Mana. Surprisingly high... well I'm not really attacking, am I?*

The monster didn't reply, instead floating towards the exit where she must've assumed Ilea to be.

Will you actually leave this place? How far is she willing to go?

The Trakorov hadn't seemed like a creature that would leave its domain and the same was true for all the other four marks she had met in the Descent but maybe those were different. *Or the dungeon itself is different.*

Ilea tried to displace the creature, only able to move her back by about a meter.

Oh well.

'ding' 'Rot Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 8'

Ilea appeared again and charged Monster Hunter, seeing the woman already floating up the stairwell.

She called out with her skill, fueling the intent with a request to communicate.

The response were a few dozen blades of blood mixed in with about forty bone spears.

Ilea tried her limited mind communication but didn't get a response there either. *No wonder, after killing her Specters.*

The four remaining monsters appeared close to her, quickly taken care of now that her Flare and Awakening had flared up again.

She blinked close to the Queen and activated Heart of Cinder, the spell shooting out of her right arm. Bright flames and energy enveloped the Queen, burning deep into the stone ground and wall behind her.

Ilea spread her ash in front of her, sending a burning mist at the skeletal remains of the Queen to hamper her regeneration.

She was forced back when the blades started to cut up more than just her armor. Ilea watched as the monster lifted a bony arm, blood magic forming at the tip of the index finger.

A small red sphere formed, quickly sending out wisps and strands of red energy that seemed almost alive. The woman's body in the meantime knitted itself to existence again, quickly reforming her pale flesh atop the durable bones.

Just an imitation, Ilea thought, knowing that the skeleton below was what she was fighting. *It's like a shield of flesh.*

The blood magic sphere grew and so did the strands of energy, digging into the stone and earth in the courtyard like bloodied whips.

Ilea felt herself pulled towards the energy. *Gravity magic?*

She realized that it wasn't magic at all but actual gravity instead. *How fucking dense does that thing have to be?*

Ilea blinked towards the palace, watching as the Queen finished her spell and sent it flying with a flick of her wrist. The blade cyclone and bones had never ceased, still hunting for Ilea like an invisible force controlled them.

Impressive manipulation skills, that's for sure, she thought, wondering how cool it would be to have a couple hundred ashen spears move around, hunting a single target as she just floats with a disinterested look on her face.

Not quite as gritty and direct as I'd like though, she thought with a smirk, moving her body through the onslaught of weaponry as she laughed.

The sphere didn't move quickly, on a direct course towards the palace. The blood magic whips that swirled around the dense near black center ripped through the ground with ease, some reaching even the ceiling and taking with them chunks of stone. The rotten remains of trees were slashed apart.

Ilea found that a direct hit cut deep into her flesh, instead deciding that it may not be the best idea to get too close to the more turbulent center.

She tried to displace the thing close to the Queen, hoping the whips would damage her too, the small form now floating closer behind the roaring spell.

Displacement failed to grasp at the creation.

Okay, time to fuck off then, Ilea thought and blinked upward. She used her teleportation abilities until she climbed up a few floors.

Her eyes opened wide when she saw the spell materialize in the stone hallway ahead, at the same distance from her she had actually been at before. *Ohno*.

The walls shook at the gravitational pull, wisps of blood cutting through the stone on this floor and those above and below.

Ilea started to be affected too, her body not quite moving as easily now that she got closer to the phenomenon. Heart of Cinder flashed out, burning into the core without a visible effect. And it kept moving closer.

Is that space magic or what?

She tried to focus on the sphere, a few whips of blood now cutting into her flesh, too close and fast for her to dodge. Blink activated, Ilea focusing on the wisps, seeing some sort of connection to herself within her sphere before the spell manifested again, the distance to her maintained.

Another few floors were devastated, Ilea having moved up even higher to avoid the Queen. So far she hadn't used a single teleportation skill, besides this moving sphere.

Okay, what to do, she thought, watching the sphere move closer as more and more tendrils of blood cut through her, already reaching her bones.

Ilea used Flare of Creation and the third tier of Azarinth Awakening, supplying both with high amounts of health before Phaseshift activated. The Resilience bonus would help quite a bit. She used her third tier of Displacement to form a gate about one centimeter in front of her and one right behind her.

The wisps of blood lashed into the gate and came out behind her, Ilea pushing more and more health into her abilities while Phaseshift was active.

Come on, move faster you shit, she thought, looking at her rapidly declining mana as the sphere got closer.

The gravity started to distort the space itself as it moved closer, the sphere now entering her gate.

Ilea saw half of it appear on the other side before her spell collapsed in on itself.

Energy exploded outwards as her gate vanished, the black sphere separated into two halves with hundreds of red wisps slithering out and into Ilea.

She raised her arms and displaced herself, finding the spell still connected to her. The blood magic simply passed through her phased form, dealing massive damage to her health with each strike.

Ilea watched her numbers move down and up, her third tier healing doing all it could do to keep her from reaching zero.

She used her teleportation whenever she could and after four tries, the spell finally did not follow her anymore. Her health had reached two thousand at one point.

“Blood fucking magic,” she murmured, her body returning to normal space as she watched the rest of the corridor collapse onto itself, a thousand furrows and cuts visible in the walls around.

‘ding’ ‘Blood Magic Resistance reaches 3rd lvl 10’

Yeah, you fucking better.

‘ding’ ‘You have survived the Seeking Wrath of Lumian spell while below level one thousand – One Core skill point awarded’

“Good fucking job,” she murmured and looked at the destruction left behind by that thing.

How the fuck was I supposed to get away from that shit. It wasn’t using space magic to move. Was there a mark left on me or something?

She tried to check her body but couldn’t find anything.

Well now she’s probably regenerating again already. Maybe I should find a few blood mages to train. Or I could just work on my rot resistance.

Ilea thought the latter seemed reasonable. There was a chance her spells had an effect on the Queen but so far she wasn’t sure. Even a charged Heart of Cinder hadn’t left any visible damage on the skeleton.

But it’s the same as I am. Once my damage pushes past her regeneration, I win.

She thought about it for a moment. *At least let me regenerate for a while.*

Ilea blinked and displaced herself upward until she reached the area she had fought the Specters first.

Her resistance deactivated and she immediately felt the nauseating feeling return. *Damn. I fucking hate this.*

Ilea let her mana recover slowly, the stunt with that seeking wrath spell costing her heavily. *Something isn’t right*, she thought, coughing up blood.

Her eyes opened wide before she blinked up into the caverns above. *Ah fuck.*

The rot reached further than before. Tunnels that had been unaffected before were now permeated by the rotten aura. *She’s the source. And she’s fucking moving.*

Ilea tapped her leg with a frown.

If she reaches even just the top floor of that stone settlement, the whole town above will die a fucking miserable death.

“No way around it then,” she thought and blinked down again, her mana still recovering.

She found the queen a few floors above the courtyard, projectiles simply cutting through the stone as she followed some form of perception to hunt her prey.

“I’m back,” Ilea said when she appeared, her fist slamming into the woman’s head before she vanished downward. The sphere of magic didn’t reach her this time.

She used Monster Hunter when she reached the courtyard, calling for the Queen.

Ilea cracked her neck and knuckles. *I woke her up, I’ll put her to sleep.*

The four mark too her sweet ass time to reach her again, floating out of the stairwell with the same expression she had on her face before.

Hollow eyes stared at the waiting adventurer, her hands lifting to create more spells.

Alright, let's continue.

Ilea used Phaseshift immediately, stacking her auras again before she unleashed a charged Heart of Cinder.

She tried keeping her assault up but was pushed back by the powerful sphere emanating from the skeleton, skin forming again as it continuously shot out its spells.

Ilea used her ranged attacks and limbs constantly as she teleported in and out, delivering just a bit of destructive mana with each attack. Storm of Cinders would strip away any defense the woman had against mana intrusion and the longer her fight lasted, the stronger she would become. Body of the Valkyrie had activated too, the damage reduction allowing her to take a few more hits before she had to retreat.

Sentinel Core enabled her to persevere at all but as time went on, Ilea started to question her ability to overcome the powerful monster.

Her skin reformed time and time again, her skeleton still looking pristine whenever her fleshy armor had been stripped away.

For the sixth time in an hour, she had to blink up through the ruined settlement to deal with one of the annoying rage balls the queen liked to summon. By now the high resilience bonus from Body of the Valkyrie allowed her to tank them with medium safety, as long as she didn't fuck up the gates.

The problem was that during her time dealing with that spell, the queen could regenerate her mana and health. Ilea didn't know how much but if her own power at level four fifty was any indication, the Queen had a lot to draw from.

Maybe it's not the skeleton at all that is my enemy.

Ilea reached the lower floors again, calling for the queen to catch up with her. She wouldn't risk engaging her in the tight corridors, definitely at a disadvantage with her abilities. Plus with each use of her anger issues, the Queen would move higher in the complex.

She sent a few ash lances at the approaching queen and vanished into the palace, most of the front destroyed and cut up by the first blood whip ball. Ilea just went into the small chamber behind the throne and checked the various graves.

No artifact, nothing. Just bones.

She didn't have time to check her monster encyclopedia for a potential curse breaking ritual to release this angry Queen from her skeletal prison.

This may be the wrong decision.

Ash spread out in the room, setting everything alight with a pale white flame. Every skeleton, every tomb, all of it was reduced to ashes.

"Please find rest," Ilea murmured. *Probably just created six more curses to strengthen her.*

A howl resounded from outside.

Something at least happened, Ilea thought before wisps of blood cut through the wall separating her from the throne room.

Okay no, just anger.

She displaced herself out and towards the floating woman, finding herself face to face with the dark sphere of her most powerful spell.

Ilea rolled her eyes and blinked upwards, repeating the step a few times until she reached a sufficient distance from the four mark.

Phaseshift activated followed by the gates close to her body, the spell quickly dealt with, leaving her with about half her health.

This isn't working, she thought and checked the few notifications she had.

'ding' 'You have defeated [Specter of Rot – lvl 625]

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'ding' 'You have defeated [Specter of Rot – lvl 632]

'ding' 'The Faen Valkyrie has reached lvl 379 – One stat point awarded'

'ding' 'The Faen Valkyrie has reached lvl 380 – One stat point awarded – One Core skill point awarded'

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

She felt the mark left on the Queen as she slowly floated through her self constructed tunnel.

'ding' 'Phaseshift reaches 3rd lvl 9'

'ding' 'Flare of Creation reaches 3rd lvl 16'

'ding' 'Displacement reaches 3rd lvl 12'

'ding' 'Body of the Valkyrie reaches 3rd lvl 11'

'ding' 'Body of the Valkyrie reaches 3rd lvl 12'

'ding' 'Veteran reaches 3rd lvl 14'

'ding' 'Blood Magic Resistance reaches 3rd lvl 11'

'ding' 'Blood Magic Resistance reaches 3rd lvl 12'

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

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

'ding' 'Rot Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 9'

...

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

Alright, let's see what we can do.