

Chapter 483 Training

Burst of Creation was next, as expected an area attack around herself that used the white fire. It was admittedly close to her early levels of Heart of Cinder but with only three slots, she wouldn't add something she already had. Not if it was primarily an offensive spell.

Using both together felt a little weird, Heart of Cinders expanding more quickly thus creating two waves of attacks. Burst didn't need to be charged but Ilea found that she couldn't just use it without pause either. Several seconds between each use even.

The fires still lingered when she replaced the spell with Shrouding Cloak.

"An illusion?" Trian asked.

"No," Claire said, the two of them looking at the stone Ilea had shrouded. "It's not there at all."

"Eve would be proud," Trian said, still trying to look at the missing rock.

"Just doubt it's more useful than something else. Even the spear seems better to me," Ilea said.

Claire nodded. "I agree. For someone focused on stealth, this would be invaluable however. Or if you planned to explore unknown dungeons with a team. As a support ability..." she said and tapped her chin.

Ilea tried out the Blazing Force Shield, finding that both Trian's and Claire's spells managed to get through. Subdued, yes. She had expected more. What was interesting was the fact that the shield grew a little larger with each spell that passed through.

"It's too stationary," she said after a while.

"Second or third tier may allow it to be around you, and movable," Claire suggested.

"I have my sphere to redirect spells, and my ash and body to defend. If anything can still get through, I'd rather have this," Ilea said and switched to the last available skill.

Phaseshift.

Ilea felt the spell manifest, the space within and around her distorting in her sphere before she couldn't see herself anymore.

With her sphere that was. Her eyes just stared at the two hands she held up before herself. They looked a little translucent but still very much visible.

"Hit me," she said, her mana rapidly declining.

Trian obliged, sending a bolt of lightning at her chest.

She felt a part of the spell damage her, some of its mana absorbed by both her third tier resistance and her Sentinel Core. Most of the spell's energy moved through her entirely, dissipating in the distance of the night.

"Fascinating," Claire said before she lifted a hand.

Explosions wracked through the earth below Ilea, neither the spell nor the shrapnel affecting her in the slightest.

The lightning was different. I lost health, if not much. Did it damage my mana or soul? That wouldn't be health though, Ilea thought.

She felt her mass returning and let go of the spell, unable to use it again immediately after.

“Question is... can you move through things too?” Trian asked.

“No clue. Let's test it,” Ilea said with a smile.

Ilea could activate Phaseshift when she was being grappled. With the spell activated, she couldn't use blink or any of her other offensive active spells. Meditation and resistances didn't seem to be affected, as well as any passive or perception based abilities.

“I can't even move,” she said in a disappointed voice.

Her wings didn't have an effect either, refusing to move the space magic affected body of hers.

“What if you activate it with present momentum?” Trian asked.

Ilea nodded lightly and slowly flew towards the man, Phaseshift activating a moment later. Her body continued onward, passing through him.

He made a face. “That was unnecessary.”

“Could have dodged, you creep,” Ilea joked, winking at him. “Did you like my insides?”

“There was nothing there,” Trian said. “Confirming my theory that you're just a powerful magic entity playing human.”

“Feels like that to me too sometimes,” she said. “Then again, most everyone above three hundred could be categorized as such.”

Trian nodded to himself, looking at the distant lands. “I hope to reach such a status too at some point.”

“You can keep momentum. Can you move into the ground? You could move through Trian,” Claire said.

“And get stuck? I'd rather not,” Ilea said.

Claire shrugged. “Try it.”

Ilea did and found herself pushed out of the ground as her spell deactivated. It used considerable additional mana, the effect essentially the same as when she tried to blink into solid matter.

“At least you can't get crushed within the ground,” Trian commented.

“The ground would be crushed instead,” Ilea said, looking at the stone surface below as she squinted her eyes.

“Good thing you didn't chose the demon class. Wouldn't want the ground to be running away in fear,” Trian said.

“So it's between Phaseshift, Force, and Displacement?” he asked.

"I'm a little disappointed in the first one," Ilea said. "But the potential for all three is quite crazy. Grapples will still be a problem with Phaseshift, at least until I get to the second or third tier."

"You wouldn't want to give up Flare of Creation?" Claire asked.

"Not with it being a Body Enhancement spell... it would be a waste. I'm starting to think that Phaseshift might have to go," she said, obviously unsure still.

"You can't move, can't blink, can't use offensive abilities. A second and third tier might change that however, as you said. So let's think about it. Best possible version of the skill... you can move, use teleportation," Trian said.

"Maybe you'll be able to use it on allies too," Claire said. "I do think that maybe teleportation won't be possible... unbound from the physical. Moving would already help of course."

Ilea nodded. "But Force and Displacement could provide similar benefits. I could teleport away the enemy spell... or stop it entirely. Force to get out of grapples?" She thought about her encounter with the Ascended. Most of the time its metal spikes just pierced her from the ground, making it impossible to use her hands.

With her ash inhibited by other magic, Force could still push her out of that. If she's not entirely surrounded.

"It's not as good as just shifting through things," Trian said. "No matter how strong it gets."

"I disagree. The lightning already affected her, even if just slightly. All your other bonuses, like your armor or even potentially your new space magic skills would be useless on the risk that Phaseshift can ignore whatever spell is coming your way," Claire said.

"That's true...", Ilea said. "Essentially what you said. The main thing I'm worried about is the damage that still got through. If it's uncertain that I can avoid it, I'd rather trust my defensive abilities."

"The same is true for grapples. What if whatever holds you is magically enchanted or infused. It could grip on to even your phased form," Claire added.

"We're assuming the best possible version of the spell. Maybe a part of the damage gets through but you could avoid most everything else," Trian said, "Get out of any grapple or trap. Plus the damage was low, wasn't it?"

"Your spells would deal low damage anyway," Ilea said and winked. She wasn't entirely sure about it.

"Plus, Force and Displacement would provide a lot more options. Especially if we consider that they will probably get second and third tier bonuses too," Ilea said. "I could displace whatever is grappling me before it reaches me, could stop it dead with Force. Or use both skills to get openings against the enemy."

Trian nodded. "I can see the appeal. Phaseshift just seems like a good way to get out if everything else fails."

"And then I get caught again? Displacement might offer some form of longer range teleportation or maybe even a way to move myself out of a grapple. Force might allow me to stop any spell dead in its track, let alone the enemy that casts it," Ilea said. "While all my armor and other skills are still available to me."

“I admit, Displacement and Force seem more versatile. If you didn’t take damage at all, I’d still argue for Phaseshift. But Lightning isn’t exactly the rarest magic around. I’m somewhat sure Soul, Space or Void magic would still affect you. At least in the first tier,” Claire said.

“Hmm. Even assuming that the damage is reduced... if I have to give up the bonuses from my armor, the availability of Blink and all other offensive skills? I think the risk is too high,” Ilea said.

“You could test and see what the second tier changes,” Trian suggested.

Ilea nodded. “Same with the other two...”

“Why not replace Force with Phaseshift?” Trian suggested.

“It allows me to control the battlefield, stop people and spells. I think the benefits outweigh the potentially less powerful grapple defense, in most situations that is. And even if I can’t avoid a spell that could be disastrous, I can slow it down with Force and potentially displace it. With Phaseshift I might have to hope that it passes without major damage, which is a gamble,” she said.

“It’s less cool too,” she added in a murmur.

“Then chose what feels right,” Trian said.

Claire quirked up an eyebrow at that.

“She’s gotten way... and I emphasize, WAY, more powerful than us in a few years of fighting. If anything, her decisions have led her here. Maybe we should think about our own abilities and limitations less and instead chose what feels right,” he said.

“That’s the stupidest thing I’ve heard today... and I read a lot of reports,” Claire murmured to herself.

Trian laughed. “Well, I’ve learned not to look at everything from one angle only. I do believe she should chose the skills she likes the best, knowing they are all good, have drawbacks and sky high potential.”

Ilea nodded. For now she had chosen both Force and Displacement, with Flare of Creation rounding out her active skills. The option to change them would remain but for now she was happy with the combination.

Class 3: The Faen Valkyrie – lvl 1

- Active: Force – lvl 1

- Active: Flare of Creation – lvl 1

- Active: Displacement – lvl 1

- Passive: Space Shift – lvl 1

- Passive: Body of the Valkyrie – lvl 1

- Passive: Lull of Battle – lvl 1

“Can you switch skills during battle?” she asked.

“I wouldn’t recommend it, but yes,” Claire answered.

“You let go of Phaseshift then?” Trian asked.

“For now,” Ilea confirmed and formed a dense ball of ash, pushing it away with Force before teleporting it back with Displacement. A dull white flame intertwined with wisps of ash from her armor, limbs moving lazily on her back.

Trian looked at the scene and smiled. “And so it begins.”

Claire pushed some air out of her nose.

“What about leveling the Class itself?” Trian asked a few moments later.

Ilea looked at the two. “I’m not sure. Theoretically a single Specter should bring my Class level to fifty or a hundred, no? Same with the skills. Second tier at least.”

Claire shook her head. “It doesn’t work like that. Well, it doesn’t for second Classes. Otherwise people would replace inferior options more often. They do level faster than higher leveled classes and skills but the contribution is measured in some way. Your assumption might be correct if you killed a Specter with your third Class skills only. I doubt that will be possible.”

Ilea nodded. “I’ll test it out for a while. See how it goes.”

“Maybe you should fight some low level stuff, things you can take out with your new Class alone,” Trian said.

“The fire burnt through my shields. Anything at around two to three hundred should be possible,” Claire suggested.

“So, low level stuff. Got it,” Ilea said, winking at a groaning Trian.

“I don’t suppose you’ll be participating in any lessons in the next few weeks?” he asked instead, changing the topic at hand.

“No. Now that everyone has ways to heal themselves, and ash magic spells too. There’s little I can provide anymore. Speaking of which, do inform me once the first of them hit level one hundred. Maybe their spells will be strong enough to injure me then,” Ilea said.

“You could provide Space Magic Resistance,” the man said. “But I digress. Do enjoy working on your new spells.”

“We can explore some of the dungeons together now. Might be some of the creatures you fought will be just right in power,” Ilea said.

“Good idea. And we can benefit too,” Claire said. “I would very much appreciate that.”

“What about your resistance training?” the woman added.

Ilea thought about it. “I’ll pause it for now. Might get back to it again before hitting four hundred. But at this point... hmm. I’ll think about it. Cancel it. Or work something out with Trian to get the Sentinels some classes?”

The man waved her off. “Way ahead of you. We’re working on that internally for now. As soon as some basic resistances are met, we’ll work with the Shadowguard. They have a wide variety of magic at their disposal, between level eighty and close to two hundred.”

“You have it covered then,” Ilea said, happy to know the man was this reliable.

“Should we get to it then? We still have a few hours of the night,” he said.

“Her third Class got you going?” Claire asked. “I suggest we stop in Ravenhall for a short while. Get everything in order. A few hours of heads up at least for those usually joining your resistance training.”

“Fair enough,” Ilea said. “Though we do pay them.”

“We have a reputation to uphold. Keeping people happy or at the very least content is important. Even if they are merely providing a service,” the woman said.

Ilea rolled her eyes. “Sounds excessively exhausting.”

Claire stared at her. “And yet you have been on time every single day. You care, don’t pretend not to.”

“Yes, yes, we are not our uncaring Shadow selves anymore. I know,” Ilea said. “I’ll fly you back. Do you need time too, Trian?”

“Only a few minutes. Should we train in one of the halls?” he asked.

“Sounds good,” Ilea said and grabbed the two of them, her wings charging before they shot into the night.

“I really need a flying skill,” Claire murmured to herself as she steadied herself after landing.

A few Shadowguards arrived, unable to keep up with the flying speed of Lilith.

Clouds and rain had obscured them a little.

“Lilith, apologies,” the apparent captain said from behind his helmet, the squad having surrounded them on the nearby roofs.

“No worries,” Ilea said and summoned her badge.

“I wouldn’t mistake that aura,” the man said and jumped off the roof, his team following in silence.

“They’re getting better,” Trian said. “I doubted they would spot us in this weather.”

“Not all of them are that good. I’m still bothered by the simplicity of avoiding the defensive enchantments with flight,” Claire said and looked up.

“There are sensors in place at least,” Trian said.

“Anybody with flight and teleportation will vanish rather quickly upon entry. Especially if they’re as strong as a Shadow,” the woman said. “Doesn’t matter if we know someone is here.”

“Not much we can do, other than putting the whole city underground,” Trian said.

“Damn our unnecessary need for sunlight,” Claire murmured. “We’d be so much safer as a species.”

Ilea chuckled. “I’m sure you and the enchanters will figure something out. A constant shield powered by barrier mages?”

“Even Virilya can’t do that for the whole city,” Claire said.

“Ravenhall isn’t nearly as large,” Trian said.

“The point still stands,” Claire said. “We already have teams in place to protect important areas and buildings in case of a siege. Most has already been moved underground of course.”

“Your office hasn’t,” Ilea commented.

“I’m human too. And it is nice to have some sunlight once in a while,” Claire said and waved to them. “I’ll join you as soon as I’m done.”

“Do that. Aki knows you,” Trian said and jumped to the nearest roof.

Ilea followed. “See you.”

“You can’t just avoid it all the time!” Ilea said, frustrated that Trian just sidestepped her Displacement. Force was useless too because he never got into its range.

He cackled, flying around her in the large simple stone hall lit by magical lights above and on the walls.

“It’s just SO satisfying, to be able to keep up again for once,” he said.

Ilea thought about using her other skills, reduce him to a regenerating pile of meat.

“Don’t!” he said loudly and pointed a finger at her.

“You know me too well,” she said with a sweet smile.

“Your fangs are showing,” he said.

“No they’re not. I can see myself,” Ilea replied, looking at her perfectly normal teeth within her sphere.

“Don’t trust everything your sphere says,” Trian muttered as he sent a few bolts of lightning her way.

Ilea tried slowing them down, using Displacement to move a few wooden shields in the way of the bolts, keeping them in the air with Force.

The wood splintered, the remaining energy of the spells slowing down as they reached her body, fizzling out on her armor.

She focused on Trian and tried to teleport him somewhere else, finding him just slightly out of range.

“Ten meters,” he said with a smile as he twirled through the air.

Ilea rolled her eyes, keeping the splintered shields in the air for as long as she could. Mana itself was not the problem, though the cost increased exponentially as time went on. It simply felt like her grip with her Space Magic slipped, the longer she tried to hold on to something.

“No levels yet?” Trian asked.

She shook her head.

It wasn’t exactly a surprise. She considered this testing more than anything.