

Chapter 386 Recovery

Lucas shook his head and focused, a red spot visible where Ilea had attacked him. “You got me out of it.” He said and moved his hand to the spot, some of his wounds still regenerating.

His robe seemed to knit itself closed again.

Ilea saw that his body certainly didn’t look as old as he acted. “I did.” She said, looking him over, her focus on his wounds. The man certainly didn’t need a healer. Not out of combat.

“I’m glad you moved away at the first sign of beasts.” She said and turned her head. “Ilas is gone, must have returned to the others.” Ilea commented absentmindedly.

‘ding’ ‘Your group has defeated [Shade Shredder – lvl 488] – For defeating an enemy one hundred and seventy or more levels above your own, bonus experience is granted.’

“I lost control again. I thought... that by retreating, I could avoid this... mess.” Lucas said, looking at the Shredder corpse. “It was not even corrupted.” He sighed, his wounds and robe finishing a full recovery, blood still dripping to the ground.

“That’s probably why it even came for you. Frenzied beasts are easier to lead on compared to those still retaining their instincts.” Ilea replied and gave him a look. “You regenerate rather quickly. A skill?”

The man coughed and smiled. “Ah, yes. I cannot heal others yet my own body will recover rather quickly. Especially after... killing.”

“You lose control once you are in battle. I don’t care about your beliefs but you have a berserker class.” She sighed, each of her sentences met with a wince.

“I called your name, tried to pry open your wooden helmet. You attacked both me and Ilas. I know you don’t like the topic and back in Lisburg it wasn’t my business. Now however, I’d like to know more about it. How to stop it or use it.” Ilea finished, storing her damaged bone armor and slowly moving her ashen armor to clean off the blood and sweat.

The blood and ash mix was moved to the ground as her bone armor appeared again under her ashen one, regenerating ever so slowly.

Lucas opened his mouth several times before he finally got some words out. “I’m... sorry. It’s... it’s complicated...”

Ilea sighed and went over to the dead creature, tapping its dented and scratched shell. *Maybe some armor out of that?* She wondered.

“I’m sure it is.” She said, starting to rip on the plates, finding them separating rather easily compared to when the beast was still alive. “And I also don’t care.”

“Just tell me how it activates and how I can stop it. If you can’t control yourself anyway, you might as well give us an edge. For both your own and our survival.” Ilea said and ripped a chunk of the shell away.

[Shade Shredder Shell Piece]

Figures. She stored it and continued.

Lucas seemed to think about it but in the end conceded. “My wooden form takes over after I sustain around five percent of my life as damage. Sometimes even from less. I...,” he paused and winced as he watched Ilea rip away more of the creature.

“I used to be able to control it, use it.” He sighed, his eyes glazing over slightly.

“Why not anymore? Something with your evolution?” Ilea asked as she continued her bloody work. Now at least her ash armor was intact.

Lucas shook his head. “No. No I have not leveled up since then.”

Ilea nodded. “Look, I can tell you’re having a hard time talking about it. Just tell me how you regain control.”

“Out of battle.” He immediately replied. “Do not attack me. Prying open the wood nearly made me lose it again, I could tell. Talk to me, as you did. I think... that works.” He said, a bitter smile on his face as he explained it.

“Works for me.” Ilea murmured and continued her work in silence.

“What about the others?” Lucas asked with an anxious tone. He looked towards the tunnel they had traveled before.

“They’re fine. We join them when I’m done or they join us.” She said, checking the rest of her notifications.

‘ding’ ‘Sentinel Core reaches 3rd lvl 6’

‘ding’ ‘Wind Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 9’

A lack of time resulted in few rewards. The levels she had gotten from her solo kill were welcome of course, the ten stat points once again going into Intelligence.

Name: Ilea Spears

Unspent statpoints: 0

Unspent 3rd tier skill points [The Azarinth Sentinel]: 0

Unspent 3rd tier skill points [Kin of Ash]: 0

Class 1: The Azarinth Sentinel – lvl 316

- Active: Absolute Destruction – 3rd lvl 17

- Active: Sentinel Reconstruction – 3rd lvl 17

- Active: Azarinth Awakening – 3rd lvl 15

- Active: Blink – 3rd lvl 13

- Active: Sentinel Sphere – 2nd lvl 20

- Passive: Sentinel Core – 3rd lvl 6

- **Passive: Azarinth Fighting – 3rd lvl 14**
- **Passive: Sentinel Huntress – 2nd lvl 20**
- **Passive: Azarinth Perception – 2nd lvl 20**
- **Passive: Azarinth Reversal – 3rd lvl 7**

Class 2: Kin of Ash – lvl 315

- **Active: Armor of Ash – 3rd lvl 17**
- **Active: Aspect of Ash – 3rd lvl 10**
- **Active: True Ash Creation – 3rd lvl 11**
- **Active: Heart of Cinder – 3rd lvl 6**
- **Active: Storm of Cinders – 3rd lvl 4**
- **Passive: Ash and Ember Unity – 3rd lvl 10**
- **Passive: Ashen Wings – 2nd lvl 20**
- **Passive: Eyes of Ash – 2nd lvl 20**
- **Passive: Avatar of Ash – 2nd lvl 20**
- **Passive: Keeper of Ash – 3rd lvl 9**

General Skills:

- **Elos Standard language - lvl 6**
- **Harmony of the Drowned – lvl 1**
- **Heavy Archery – lvl 5**
- **Identify - lvl 9**
- **Meditation – 2nd lvl 20**
- **Veteran – lvl 8**
- **Arcane Magic Resistance – 2nd lvl 16**
- **Ash Magic Resistance – lvl 1**
- **Blast Resistance – 2nd lvl 11**
- **Blood Magic Resistance – lvl 15**
- **Blood Manipulation Resistance – lvl 4**
- **Corrosion Resistance – 2nd lvl 9**
- **Crystal Resistance – 2nd lvl 1**
- **Curse Resistance - 2nd lvl 4**
- **Dark Magic Resistance – lvl 15**
- **Death Magic Resistance – 2nd lvl 4**
- **Dust Magic Resistance – lvl 1**
- **Earth Magic Resistance – 2nd lvl 2**
- **Fear Resistance – lvl 9**
- **Health Drain Resistance – 2nd lvl 20**
- **Heat Resistance – 2nd lvl 18**
- **Gravity Magic Resistance – lvl 2**
- **Ice Resistance – 2nd lvl 7**
- **Light Magic Resistance – lvl 17**
- **Lightning Resistance – 2nd lvl 8**
- **Mana Drain Resistance – 2nd lvl 20**
- **Mental Resistance – 2nd lvl 15**
- **Mist Magic Resistance – 2nd lvl 10**
- **Obsidian Magic Resistance – lvl 3**
- **Pain Tolerance – 2nd lvl 9**

- *Poison Resistance – 2nd lvl 9*
- *Silver Magic Resistance – lvl 1*
- *Soul Magic Resistance – lvl 8*
- *Stamina Drain Resistance – lvl 5*
- *Time Magic Resistance – lvl 4*
- *Void Magic Resistance – lvl 7*
- *Water Resistance – 2nd lvl 1*
- *Wind Resistance – 2nd lvl 9*
- *Wood Magic Resistance – lvl 9*

Status:

Vitality: 723
Endurance: 400
Strength: 510
Dexterity: 415
Intelligence: 696
Wisdom: 767

Health: 7230/7230
Stamina: 3683/4000
Mana: 6849/7670

The last usable chunk of the Shredder’s defense was removed with a wet squelch and stored in her bracelet, the storage item undamaged.

She looked at the rest of the corpse and felt bile rise in her throat. Ilea noted that light had returned to the mine, Lucas spells floating nearby.

“I appreciate it.” The elder said suddenly. “Saving me, caring enough to ask.”

“Why are you here, Lucas?” Ilea asked after a moment of silence, turning away from the disgusting blackened remains.

The man didn’t reply, keeping his gaze focused on the ground.

“Come on. The others are waiting.” Ilea said, tapping his shoulder.

The walk back wasn’t long, the damaged tracks now showing even more abuse thanks to the group’s battle.

Ilas nodded as he saw the lights approach.

Catelyn was still standing near Maro, her fire caressing over his body as it had fifteen minutes prior, when Ilea had left.

Ilea noted that Elfie was still sitting up to the wall, some of his wounds still showing. She extended two tendrils of ash when she reached them, checking and healing both of them.

“My spell has done very little. It feels as if he is just eating up my mana.” Catelyn commented, glancing at Ilea quickly. “I’m glad you two are safe.”

“Mhm... her work.” Lucas replied quietly.

“He was in this condition back when we helped you with the Feynor, Catelyn.” Ilea said and flowed healing magic into the necromancer. “It’ll take a while but he’s going to be fine.”

Elfie was already back to his full health, still sitting there in his shredded armor, half of his mask missing. Pale white skin showed below, scars visible even in the dull light.

“Seen a ghost?” Ilea asked as she stepped over and summoned a meal.

The elf momentarily glanced at her. “No.. no. Thanks for the healing. I need a moment.”

She smiled and started eating the meal previously intended for the elf. A chuckle left her as she stepped back, realizing what had just happened.

“Take your time. Make the right decision.” She commented and summoned a cake next to Catelyn. Ilea still had twenty seven of them left.

The fox sighed and cut out a piece with two of her tails. “You make this horrible adventure worthwhile. Thank you.”

“Cake and healing. It’s what I do.” Ilea said and smiled brightly, her face revealed to allow for eating. She sat down next to Maro and held out her spoon, not getting a reaction.

“These creatures... they weren’t corrupted.” Catelyn said. “Have we already moved past the origin?”

“We should investigate further.” Ilas replied. “I have yet to find traces of the expedition. Uncorrupted beasts remain still in the fifth layer, these creatures have simply been spared.”

“Or they just killed everything that tried to corrupt them.” Ilea suggested, chewing on her food.

“Swallow before you speak.” Maro coughed next to her.

“Hey, look who’s back.” Ilea said with a smile. “You’re not one to speak, with your public indecency.” She nodded towards his crotch area where little of his armor remained.

The man sighed, a fresh armored robe appearing to cover him up. “I hate Shredders.”

“Not ordinary ones. Never have I heard of them above the three hundredth level.” Ilas supplied. “Yet they were called Shade Shredders.”

“Changed by whatever happened in the north, no doubt.” Maro said. “I vaguely remember there being Shredders in the lower levels of the Descent. Normal ones, not these... abominations.”

“Wait till we find the corrupted ones.” Ilea said and chuckled.

“The corruption will complicate things. They are rather fast and capable of breaking through each of our defenses. That is, if they managed to injure you?” Catelyn asked as she looked at Ilea.

“They did. But it’s just a matter of ripping out the corruption, isn’t it?” She asked.

“From a thousand cuts?” Catelyn asked. “Well... I could burn it out of you I suppose. Perhaps your heat spell would do the trick, the corruption not being part of your body. It worked for me back in the first layer.”

“I’ll keep that in mind. I think dealing with frenzied ones will be easier, even if the corruption comes into play. Just let me take point.” Ilea said and finished her meal.

“You don’t have to say that twice.” Maro said. “I’ll dream of those teeth for months.”

“It’s finally getting interesting.” Ilea said and stood up, cracking her neck before she walked towards the nearest Shredder corpse. She continued healing Maro, the necromancer far from recovered and healing slowly.

Too burnt up. She noted, huge chunks missing from the corpse. The same was true for the other one, both finished by Catelyn.

The one she had killed was likely too damaged as well, her ashen limbs having punctured in many places, her Heart of Cinder having partially burnt the rest.

A sudden flash of magic made her turn, all eyes focused on Niivalyr.

He opened his eyes, a dull white glow emanating from them as he floated up from his sitting position.

Ilea smiled and approached.

[Mage – lvl 300]

“Show me.” She said with a broad smirk, arms crossed in front of her as she gave him an expectant look.

The elf turned his head to look at her, the corners of his mouth moving up as his teeth were exposed.

A shining white barrier formed in front of him, runes and letters Ilea couldn’t read spread on it both visible to her naked eyes and within her sphere.

“Shiny letters, what do they do?” She asked, watching the barrier split up into various smaller shards that blinked out of existence, appearing once more around Ilea.

“Go on.” She said, her face covered by ash again before the shards finally slashed into her armor.

The familiar feeling of a powerful curse flowed through her as they hit, now more directly affecting her compared to his previous appliance through runes formed on the ground or simply using some form of ranged curse.

With her resistance and healing, it wasn’t much to deal with. A feeling of nausea. “Only one class?” She asked carefully, feeling the curse reside.

“Indeed.” Niivalyr replied, forming another set of barriers around him. “Marvelous...,” he said to himself as he inspected his own magic.

Ilea’s fist slammed into it with her full power, sending a shock wave to the nearby walls.

Not a crack showed on it.

“Let’s hope this one is enough to protect you from a Shredder.” She said with a smile, refraining from using her mana intrusion spells against the new barriers. It was a big moment for him, she didn’t intend to ruin it.

Ilas was at two sixty eight already too. Still further away from his next evolution than Elfie had been but they had time. Plenty of monsters to slay.

His high mobility and teleportation skills had kept him out of harm's way so far. Ilea hoped it would stay that way.

Maro was healed up against after around half an hour, Niivalyr in the meantime testing his new as well as changed abilities.

The elf definitely seemed more formidable now.

Ilea especially liked his white glowing eyes whenever he used his barriers. The things had gotten sharper too, reminding her more of those Albert had used back when they had fought.

Elfie's armor had been replaced by an enchanted black and red robe, back to his old look. He did have a second mask however and decided to wear it.

The group moved through the tunnels more carefully now. Ilea at the front, walking on the ground. The rest followed, floating. A few of Maro's skeletons were walking beside Ilea, enough distance between them to allow for individual Shredder attacks.

They didn't talk anymore, simply moving through the tunnels, Ilea occasionally pointing in a direction whenever a fork in the way showed itself.

A while later, Ilea felt a weird pressure in her mind and gestured for the others to stop. "Mind magic." She said. It was subtle. The complete opposite of what the Veramath had thrown out. She felt it vanish once more, perhaps because she had injured whatever creature it was with the feedback from her resistance.

"It stopped again." Maro said. "Very subtle. You have the second tier bonus too, right?"

Ilea glanced his way and nodded. "Should we split up?"

"No. We just kill it faster than it can do the same to us. You can heal the mind as well. If it's a trap, we should stay together." Catelyn said.

Ilea nodded once more and continued walking. She came across an entrance to what looked like a resting place for the miners.

It had once been fortified, the steel and wood now bent and broken. A few of the simple beds, chairs and tables still remained, some visible still in the ground and walls.

Landslide? Ilea wondered as she saw the hidden furniture in her sphere. She picked up something else as well, a weird spot on one of the walls.

Fuzzy and confusing, not an absence of something but she felt compelled to look away, to ignore it. And still, she knew it was there.

Ilea walked closer as the rest spread out in the hall before she called out. "There's something here." She said and poked the wall.

A row of teeth suddenly became visible, biting down on her arm.

Ilea chuckled, her battle precognition informing her about the damage.

The teeth ground on her arm but failed to penetrate, a bolt of lightning impacting her a second later as well as a mental attack that she easily shrugged off.

[Blighter Stone – lvl 283]

The group had walked closer upon her call and watched the wall.

“A Blighter Stone.” Maro said and laughed. “Wow, that’s a high level. I didn’t know they could reach that far.”

“What are they?” Lucas asked as he watched with fascination at the wall’s changing color.

“They pick a spot and hide, usually using some form of bait, light or magic to lure prey in front of them.” Catelyn explained. “First time I see one and certainly the first one to use mind magic.”

“Mimic.” Ilea said with a smile.

The thing continued biting her arm, working its way up but getting stuck, unable to digest her.

“Not corrupted either.” Ilea said before she pushed destructive mana into it, holding on to the tongue when it tried to run away on its tiny legs that formed under it.

‘ding’ ‘You have defeated [Blighter Stone – lvl 283]’

Feel kinda bad about that one. She thought and sighed.

“Let’s have a look around while we’re here. Maybe rest.” Catelyn said and started walking through the hall.

“Rest seems dangerous with Shredders around.” Ilea commented, shaking off the dead creature before she joined the fox. “We can go another couple hours to find something more defensible.”

Sleeping was one thing but three of them had a brush with death in their previous battle, not necessarily something they sought out as much as Ilea did.