

Chuck-45, part 2

See, if you hadn't listened to her, you'd have gone with the Vanguard and you'd have beaten the crap out of anyone who got in your way.

And been that much like you wanted me to be?

Like someone who'd make his mark on the world? Definitely.

Bullshit. You were making me your attack dog or something like that. If you hadn't left, you'd have continued screwing with my head until you were the only one who made sense.

I ask for the level 2 Switch ability to not have to listen to more of his justifications.

System Query: Switch ability Tier 2 abilities, detailed
Once the Guardian reaches level 5 and Switch is level 5, Tier 2 abilities become accessible.
Enhancements: Switch can be enhanced with one additional buff. Vitalize adds a healing over time buff to the target on activation of the Switch ability. Health increased by 10% (rounded down) of the Guardian's health per second, for 60 second. Each Level of Vitalize adds 5% to the increase and 15 seconds to the duration. Shockwave Landing: The Guardian's arrival via switch can create a concussive force in all directions, able to push away anyone or anything within 10 meters and massing less than the guardian by 5 meters. Each level of Shockwave adds 10% to the mass and distance affected, and 50% to effect of the push.
Addendum: Aetheric Guardian Enhancement Spectral Guardian: on activation of the Switch ability, a Spectral double of the Guardian remains at the target's arrival location and will protect the target. The double has the same attributes as the Guardian, but its health is bases on the Guardian's Mana. While the Spectral Guardian is active, the Mana pool cannot be accessed. Each level of Spectral Guardian increases the effectiveness of the Mana pool by 10%
Protection: the target of the switch is granted a protective aura that reduces all attack's chances of success by the Guardian's intelligence. Each level of the Protection ability adds 1% to that protection.
Link: a mental link is created between the guardian and the target, which allows for mental auditory communication. This communication cannot be blocked by conventional outside influence. The range is the Guardian's intelligence in meters. Each level in this ability increases the range by 10 percent.
Addendum: Aetheric Guardian The Aetheric Guardian can spend his mana to alter the ability's effects. The mana must be spent before the activation of the ability. Cost of mana use is reduced by 5% per ability level.

Oh, take that link thing.

And have *you* talk to whoever I'm trying to protect? No thanks. You're enough of a bad influence on me. I'm not letting you foster yourself onto anyone else.

Don't you want there to be at least one person giving them good advice?

I'd love that, by that's not you by any stretch of the imagination.

Fine. Let me guess, you're taking that protection ability, so whoever you care about will be nice and safe.

I ignore the derision in his tone as I reread the information. I'm surprised my mother's voice doesn't offer an opinion. I don't hear her often, but this feels like the kind of situation where she'd try to steer me in a good direction. She is why I took the Guardian class, instead of assassin. Maybe she trusts me to make the right decision this time?

My father scoffs, of course.

He is right that I should keep whoever I've selected safe. I have made myself a bodyguard, after all. But doing that at the expense of keeping myself safe feels wrong. The best way I know of protecting anyone, beyond getting them out of dodge fast, is beating the crap out of whatever is after them.

That would make the Spectral Guardian perfect for the job. It's not like I use my mana for anything.

So, it's all about them, isn't it?

That's the problem with that enhancement. And if I've planned things correctly, he's already out of danger, and everyone's focussed on me. So it's not like he'll need the protection.

The expected comment about my planning capability doesn't come.

The same thing applies to Vitalize. Yes, if he's injured, that's going to help, but I've already screwed up if it's gotten to that point.

Another opportunity for my dad to comment he isn't taking advantage of.

Dad?

Keep going, I want to see how much of what I taught you stuck.

You already know what I'm going to pick.

But I want to hear your thought process.

You already know that, too. You're my subconscious.

Isn't it amazing how often you say that, and yet, you still think of me as your father?

Whatever. The only one that makes sense for me to get is the shockwave enhancement.

Not the only one.

The only one, since I'm the one that's making the decision. It takes who I'm protecting away and clears the area immediately around me so I can prepare for the upcoming fight.

Only if your opponent masses less than you. This wouldn't have helped against Bernard.

That goes up as I put points into it. And I mass more than most people.
But not most of the monsters you've encountered.
 I don't see anything else in there that's going to help me against that.
That's true.
 I ask for the tier three abilities.

System Query: Switch ability Tier 3 abilities, detailed
Once the Guardian reaches level 10 and 1 Tier 2 ability is level 5, Tier 3 abilities become accessible.
Aura Shield: Half of the damage targeting the Guardian's target is taken by the Guardian instead. Each level of Aura Shield reduced the effective damage taken by the Guardian due to the transfer by 1%
Scry Ward: prerequisite: target must be designated as Ward. The Guardian knows the exact location, in relation to the Guardian's position, of the Ward within a 2 kilometer radius. Exception: spending 200 mana will allow the Guardian to know the location of their designated target even if they are not designated as Ward. The duration of the knowledge is 20 seconds, and does not increase with levels of Scry Ward. Each level for Scry Ward increases the range by 10 percent.
Addendum: Aetheric enhancement. By spending 200 mana, the Guardian can switch to the target's location anywhere within the Scry Ward's range.
Reinforcement: prerequisite: target must be designated as Ward. The guardian can teleport next to their Ward. The range is 50 meters per level of Reinforcement. Knowledge of the Ward's location is not required. Exception: spending 200 mana will allow the Guardian to know the location of their designated target even if they are not designated as Ward.
Shared Burden: The Guardian can transfer their health to another with a touch. The rate of exchange is 1 to 1. The recipient's health cannot increase beyond their current maximum. If the recipient is designated as a target, touch is no longer required. If the recipient is designated as Ward, they gain an extra 10% to the health transfer. Each level of Shared Burden reduced the cost in health to the Guardian by 1%
Healing Magic: You can access to the healing branch of magic spells. Each level of Healing Magic is added to the spell's effective level. Exception: the bonus cannot apply to a spell that has not been learned.
Addendum: Aetheric enhancement For 500 mana, the Guardian can cast any 1 spell from the branch of healing magic that it has been learned or not. This casting does not count as practice toward learning spells.

Any thoughts?

That he doesn't immediately have a snarky or denigrating reply for me tells me this tier isn't going to be great. Healing magic is about the best of the bunch, I add, when he still hadn't commented.

I'm not going to contradict you. Everything else seems design to get you into more trouble than you've already gotten yourself in. Knowing healing magic at least means you can stop depending on others for that.

And I can use it on others too.

You aren't level ten, so it isn't like it matters.

I ask a variety of question to the system, trying to get how much experience I still need to reach the next level, and get nothing. If it can be done, it's beyond me. I'll have to ask Terry.

I ask for tier four—

What's the point? It's not like you're going to reach it anytime soon.

I'm trying to plan ahead, so I'm not in this situation again. You know, having five ability points I didn't use for four levels? Knowing what to expect means I can ask Terry for advice instead of depending on you.

I call up Tier four.

System Query: Switch ability Tier 4 abilities, detailed
Once the Guardian reaches level 15 and 1 Tier 3 ability is level 5, Tier 4 abilities become accessible.
Aura Shield Enhancement: Prerequisite: Aura Shield. Retaliation: 50% of the damage the target would suffer is reflected onto the attacker while Aura Shield is active. Each level of Retaliation increases the reflection by 5% Resolve: 50% of the damage transferred to the Guardian is evenly distributed to refill the mana, Willpower and stamina pools while Aura shield is active. If one pool is filled, the points are distributed among the remaining pools. Last chance: if the target reaches 0 hit points while Aura Shield is active, a shockwave a triggered, pushing anyone and anything within 2 meters 25 meters away, as well as removing any physical debuff affecting the target.
Aether Reserve: the Guardian gains a secondary reserve of mana. The reserve is half the Guardian's main reserve, plus 10% per level of Aether Reserve. Mana regeneration going to the lowest reserve first until they are even, then both go up at half the normal regeneration. Each level of Aether Reserve increases the regeneration by 1% Exception: If the target is designated as Ward, they can access the secondary reserve. If the Guardian as a Spectral Guardian ability, the secondary reserve remains accessible while it is active.
Guardian's Resolve: The Guardian gains a defense against willpower attacks

<p>while a target is designated. Damage targeting willpower is reduced by 10% plus 1% per level of Guardian's Resolve.</p> <p>Exception: if the target is designated as the Ward, the defense if doubled.</p>
<p>Guardian's Endurance: The Guardian loses their stamina at a reduce rate and gains a protection against Stamina attacks while a target is designated. Stamina drain and damage targeting Stamina is reduced by 10% plus 1% per level of Guardian's Resolve.</p> <p>Exception: if the target is designated as the Ward, the defense if doubled.</p>
<p>Eased Burden: When the Guardian and designated target are within 5 meters of one another, all pool regeneration is increased by 100% plus 10% per level of Eased Burden.</p> <p>Exception: if the target is Designated as Ward, the bonuses are doubled.</p>
<p>Linked Casting: Prerequisite Link and Scry Target Abilities.</p> <p>The Guardian and the designated target can use their spells or abilities through of the other person. All calculations for distance and range are made as if that person was the one making use of them.</p> <p>Exception: if the target is Designated as the Ward, cost for Spells is reduced by 25% and all effects of abilities increased by 25%</p>

Well, that was a waste of time.

Not really. Now I know that if I wanted to get Linked Casting, I'd want to get the prerequisites.

And are you getting that ability?

No.

As I said, waste of time.

Guardian's Resolve and Endurance look interesting, but otherwise nothing jumps out. I call up the list for tier five

System Query: Switch ability Tier 5 abilities, detailed
Please Select a Tier 3 Switch ability to unlock access to Tier 5 Switch abilities.

I guess there are limits to what the system gives us access to. But at least I know what I want now.

I put my five points in the Shockwave enhancement. To see if I can, I call up the list of healing spells.

System Query: List of Spell: Healing Branch
Please learn one Healing Spell to unlock access to the Healing Branch

That can wait anyway.