

Chapter 842 Fire

Ilea charged her heat as she watched the sphere of moving flesh. Its beams shot out in quick succession but the knights were many, and those it had taken down first were already rising again. Some of them at least.

A spherical pulse of void magic rushed out to remove the three knights who had closed the distance, golden light flaring up to protect them somewhat. Still they were thrown back, much of their bodies gone in an instant. Two more teleported close and the sphere moved its wings, vanishing from the fabric and appearing a few dozen meters back, beams shot out again.

So it either can't or won't use its area spell constantly. Good to know, Ilea thought and aimed, sending out the swaths of ash she had summoned in the meantime. Her spell flowed into the wrym eye and shot out, met this time by a void magic beam in return. The two energies fought each other for a split second before Ilea's magic vanished, the void weakened considerably before it dissipated ten meters in front of her.

Beam battles, how original, she thought with a smile, teleporting to avoid the next attack. A moment later the monster was focused on the knights again, their numbers still increasing.

Ilea moved her ash and set it alight, trying to catch the sphere with her mists and provoking a few relocations in turn. She started to see the issues Aki was having with the knights. More and more grouped up on the sphere, their teleports fast and their attacks powerful. The first hits started to connect, though the retaliation was swift and destructive.

But this time, you have me, Ilea thought with a grin. She had seen some of the monster's abilities, but she wasn't exactly the watch a fight from a distance type. The risks were exactly why she was here. Teleporting close, she was met with a beam straight to her chest. Her armor was vaporized, some of her skin gone as well. Her fist rushed out just as a slew of weapons moved in to strike the creature.

[Barren Sea – lvl ?????] - [Void]

She managed to identify the monster just before it stepped away. Ilea noted that even if she wanted to follow it's teleport, she couldn't. There was nothing to connect to. For the split second when the creature moved between its previous location to its destination, it may as well have not existed. At least to her senses. Ilea formed a large golden shield to somewhat protect the knights swinging their weapons through empty air. The beam was broader this time but less powerful, the Azarinth Star taking much of the force before the knights were hit.

They're allies. Might as well treat them as such, Ilea thought, using her reconstruction to heal the damage done to them. Compared to the golden light, she could not resurrect the knights, nor could she repair their armor, but she could keep them fighting for longer.

Shit, I'm not fighting this monster alone. She summoned another shield and flew closer to the void creature. *Kind of annoying with it being just above two thousand, but then again, I guess it kind of feels right,* she thought, charging with now near a hundred knights of old, beams of void magic impacting the teleporting group, Ilea helping some of them with her Fabric Tear when they could not use their own.

She sent spears of burning ash at the sphere and rushed in, pushing through the expanding sphere of void before her ashen limbs struck into nothing but thin air. Her barrier shattered, her attempt to dodge not quite fast enough in turn. This time only two of her ashen layers were destroyed. *Slowly getting there.*

She realized the knights had spread out in the extensive underground cavern lake. Small groups had formed to react wherever the ball of flesh appeared. It seemed they weren't pursuing it directly anymore, leaving that instead to Ilea.

Smart.

She wouldn't waste their efforts. Anything that challenged the territory control of the monster was a win in her book. Charging her wings, she aimed and shot off into the distance. Again, it reacted just in time. Ilea stopped and charged again, her barriers shattering as she prepared to strike again. She summoned her hammer and threw it into the lake. "*Only the flesh ball, the knights are on our side this time,*" she sent, hoping it would understand.

A second beam came her way when she shot off, knights ambushing the void creature from below. She watched as it used its sphere ability, her skin and ash reforming just as she impacted its form with a heavy strike, destructive mana unleashed into it from several spells, the physical force of the impact sending ripples through the monster's flesh, though it did not move from its position in the fabric. Ilea wondered if it could at all. She struck again but found the creature gone, appearing at the center of the lake, near where it had first appeared.

A pulse of magic emanated, rushing through the darkness.

Ilea felt a pull. Not quite from up or from below. Not from anywhere in the fabric itself, but from someplace different entirely. She could see the knights floating up, unable to move or teleport, their bodies trembling and floating towards the dark red wings. Another pulse moved past, coming from the creature called the Barren Sea. Her body lurched and trembled, bones and organs quivering. Ilea couldn't look at the wings anymore, her brain rejecting what she saw. She grabbed on to the knights that she could see, pulling with every shred of power her space manipulation granted.

Another pulse came and she had to let go, activating the Primordial Shift in turn. The pressure lifted somewhat, her fires burning bright. The cavern she had only just seen was gone, replaced by nothingness beyond her flames. Her dominion could not detect any magic. There was no fabric or any matter beyond her own creation.

"Do not despair, brave knights. Let the flame of Lavien blaze within your hearts," the chorus spoke, from nowhere and from everywhere.

Ilea could feel the magic of the golden light, but she could neither see it nor make out where it was. The nothingness ate away at her fires but she pushed harder, with everything she had. The Fourth Tier activated, the white flame flaring up within the void, life burning bright within the emptiness. She was no god, and did not think that hope alone or Lavien would keep her alive. No, she had her magic for that. Her own fire, her own healing, her own resilience, that she built and trained, forged, and pushed to the very limits. The arcane flowed through her veins and through the very fabric she forced into existence.

A moment later, the cavern was back. Air was back. Magic was back. The fabric was back. She was returned. Many of the knights were not.

Golden light protected a few dozen, their bodies half dissolved, dropping down towards the water like falling stars.

She had not been removed into the void, but the void had been brought to her.

Not the most pleasant experience, Ilea thought as she charged forward with her arcane enhanced wings. She left a trail of flame and ash in her wake, teleporting to follow the disappearing monster. Arcane magic surged when her limbs lashed out, her fist impacting the unmoving creature from beyond, Embered Heart releasing in a sphere around her, white flame clinging to the deep red wings of void.

She would burn it away. She would bring it to the fabric, keep it here, and burn away everything it was or wasn't. She was not a knight of old, a remnant of Marahn, nor was she a spirit or a goddess, clinging to an ancient will.

She was Lilith. Arcane Eternal. And she was here to hunt.

The creature left into the void and Ilea charged her wings. She saw the silver threads of her hammer, the divine artifact still there despite the monster's spell. Knights started to rise when she shot off with a shock wave of heat and air. The monster sent one spell into her blue tinged golden shield before she struck it once again.

Ilea floated in the air, healing herself when the creature vanished in return. The arcane power was gone, leaving her with the now familiar frayed feeling. A beam of void magic impacted her quickly summoned shield, her teleports letting her avoid the next two strikes. Her ash healed, the impacts further lessened by her various abilities. She pressed forward, flew and dodged, sent spears and fire towards her enemy. Silver treads and teleporting knights ambushed from below, unable to reach the fast moving being but providing some distraction.

She slowed to a stop when she felt another pulse. Looking closely, Ilea could see dark blood seeping from the creature's form, falling down into the murky lake below. The flesh pulsed and quivered. It was hurt.

She watched it, summoning her hammer before she stored it safely within her domain. Primordial shift flared to life when the second pulse flared out, the nothingness returning all around. Ilea felt her fourth tier returning and this time she pushed back. The arcane flared up within her.

Raising her arms, she pulled on her health and mana, fanning the empowered fires of creation, spreading them out and through the void, as far and wide as she could reach. If there was nothing to be set aflame, she would instead turn everything to fire. The arcane wracked her form within her own piece of the fabric. But she could see it now. Wisps returning to the void. Magic visible where nothing had been there before.

Cracks formed. In the very reality around her. A reality imposed by a monster of the void.

"I'm a monster too, you know? And I have fought ones like you before," she spoke into nothingness, her fires spreading farther. *"You will just be another one."*

Her fourth tier waned as she willed it, the reality around her crumbling, the fabric back and spreading. Wisps, light, and darkness returning, bringing form to all that was. White flame engulfed the very air.

Ilea took in a deep breath, her body regenerating from the heavy strain. She smiled, taking in continued breaths as she watched the red wings clad in fire, the writhing sphere of void at their center. Magic flared up and out, beams striking the ground in its attempts to rid itself of fire.

The creature succeeded just as Ilea aimed and sent a beam of heat and fire straight into its center.

It sputtered, a flare of void flashing out, failing to extinguish the flames that stuck to it.

Ilea stored her cannon and flew closer, sacrificing swaths of health as she summoned ash around her, the fires flaring up with added fuel. She stopped above the writhing mass of monstrous flesh, activating her third tier Spear of Ash. Her arm was raised as she watched the ash thrumming into existence, a spear as thick as the head of her hammer, six meters long, and as she willed, flaring up with fire.

She didn't wait or consider, didn't talk, or gloat. She simply sent the weapon down, before her prey could once more recover.

A heavy impact resounded when the spear struck home, the fires spreading as the sharpened ash dug deep, a whining sound echoing through the caverns as Ilea pushed the weapon down with all the harmony that she could muster. She charged her space manipulation and sent out the final push. Skewered flesh was ripped out of the air, finally moved from its static position, down and into the shallow lake. A dull impact, that sent waves through the still waters, the ash digging deep into the stone, the flesh unmoving, skewered and half submerged within the lake.

The two burning dark red wings slowly lost their color, faltering and fading as they slowly floated down.

A ding resounded in her mind, followed by a few more, Ilea watching from above as the three remaining knights approached the corpse.

A rapier, a lance, and axe, all bit into the dead flesh one last time, the knights sinking to their knees, their hands around the handles of their weapons, their oath fulfilled.

And so they remained, unmoving, the mana fading from their forms.

"Godslayer," the voices sounded out once more, as if fading. *"I thank thee. This ancient evil has been felled at last."*

Ilea raised her brows, still flying in the air. She crossed her arms and watched the scene. *Yeah, but now it looks like they killed it. I mean it's impressive that three of them survived at all, but come on, they were hardly even a distraction!* She rolled her eyes and sighed, accepting that the whole knights fulfilling their ancient task thing was kind of cool. Not quite as tragic as the fate of those in Tremor.

'ding' 'You have helped the Knights of Marahn fulfill their sacred oath – One Core skill point awarded'

'ding' 'You have conversed with the remnants of Lavien of Marahn, and earned her respect – One Core skill point awarded'

'ding' 'You have survived the World of Nothing spell – One Core skill point awarded'

Suppose all that jazz wasn't entirely useless.

'ding' 'You have killed [Barren Sea – lvl 2032]'

Oh? No split with the others? Was their contribution so low or did they just not count as allies? Or because they died in the end? Or faded? She floated down a little and checked the beings with her healing. All of them were gone, but from what she could see, they had been gone for a very long time. I guess you can't split experience with the remnants of a will. All the better.

'ding' 'The Arcane Eternal has reached lvl 776 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'The Arcane Eternal has reached lvl 777 – Five stat points awarded'

...

'ding' 'The Arcane Eternal has reached lvl 786 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'The Ashen Titan has reached lvl 771 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'The Ashen Titan has reached lvl 772 – Five stat points awarded'

...

'ding' 'The Ashen Titan has reached lvl 781 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'The Primordial Arbiter has reached lvl 770 – One stat point awarded – One Core skill point awarded'

'ding' 'The Primordial Arbiter has reached lvl 771 – One stat point awarded'

...

'ding' 'The Primordial Arbiter has reached lvl 780 – One stat point awarded – One Core skill point awarded'

Seventy three already. I'll have to start thinking about that fourth tier general skill sooner than I thought.

She put all her new stat points into Vitality, if only to increase the time she could use her Fourth tier Reconstruction.

'ding' 'Azarinth Barrier [Mythic] reaches 3rd lvl 26'

'ding' 'Bulwark of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 9'

'ding' 'Monstrous reaches 2nd lvl 19'

'ding' 'Spear of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 5'

Just four skill levels. That's the issue when you're too awesome already. Everything's maxed out. She smiled to herself, floating close to the three dead knights and the remains of the void monster.

Should I burn it all? It looks kind of poetic. Almost like a statue. The smell didn't quite speak for that interpretation but she didn't think that fact would be an issue to anyone who would travel all this way.

Definitely worth coming here, for the levels alone. Ilea considered already reporting to Aki, but she didn't want to bother the machine before she had actually found something worth mentioning. The massive steel doorway remained open, leading into the presumed Ascended facility.

I wonder when I get to fight one of them again.

She made a fist and opened it again, looking at her palm before she focused back on the large metal doorway. Her wings started moving. *I'd like to see the Architect defend himself against my Fourth tier.* Ilea enjoyed the thought, though even more, she wanted to get stronger. One ace up her sleeve could mean the difference, but she didn't just want a difference, she wanted a landslide.