

Chapter 538 Teleportation

Ilea had to focus on forgetting the idea of a shedding Catelyn.

I could shed too... no pain and healing would make it a simple but bloody process, Ilea thought and nearly gagged. Let's not.

Now where do I find a weak creature, she thought and blinked out of Hallowfort, quickly reaching the surface again.

She made a turn and entered the Penumra dungeon.

Never explored this one, she thought, jumping down onto one of the roots. The entrance looked the same to her as she remembered.

The Drop Saurians didn't wait for long, a few of them cautiously crawling closer on the adjacent roots and walls.

Ilea waited for one of them to charge, catching the creature with her ashen limbs.

[Drop Saurian – lvl 363]

"Lower than me even," she mused, looking at the frothing creature trying to bite and claw her but unable to break through her restraints.

The projectiles shot by the various ranged variants that had reached a sufficient distance to get to her didn't penetrate her armor anymore.

Ilea sent a medium charged Heart of Cinder at some of the creatures, killing three more with a few ashen spears.

She called out with Monster Hunter, using her new second tier Deviant of Humanity to make it clear that the creatures were simply no match for her.

Ilea tried to grasp at what her captive felt and thought but it remained aggressive, trying to cut through the ash with continued vigor.

The others had retreated after her display, entirely uncaring for their captured friend. The corpses were left behind, one still falling down into the green hell.

Let's try this then, she thought and activated her third tier blink.

She summoned a cloak and placed it next to her on the massive root. Her fire making sphere appeared too, carefully placed inside a nook so that it wouldn't roll away.

Ilea tested her theory but couldn't be sure until the six minutes were up.

Blink activated and Ilea used her third tier of Space Shift to attach the monster, the sphere, and her cloak to her own long range spell with Displacement.

She appeared inside her house, with her cloak, her sphere, and a thrashing monster that remained alive and well.

A grin spread on her lips, her healing counteracting the effects of the low mana on the Drop Saurian. It wasn't quite as dramatic as on the insect creatures who had lived in Erendar all their lives. She assumed the Saurian would have survived even without her help.

Bad luck, I suppose, she thought and grabbed its head. A quick twist broke its neck.

Ilea slammed ashen limbs through its head, heart, and spine. The first move hadn't been quite enough to kill it.

This might be enough... as long as it doesn't resist, it should be possible.

She giggled, displacing both herself and the corpse out towards the Swordmouth tiger cave. Ilea didn't wait for them and just threw the monster body inside. Her wings spread as she ascended once more. The mission had been a complete success.

"You have returned... earlier than expected. Were there complications?" Meadow asked.

"None. I brought them all to Hallowfort. My friend guaranteed their integration into the local society. The mana in the area is high enough for there to be no issues," Ilea said, settling down in an ashen armchair.

"That is..." Meadow said as a ripple of various magic types flowed through the large hall, the black grass moving as if touched by the wind.

Ilea knew that the air hadn't moved.

"It worked... our training... the plan to bring them through. It really worked," Meadow said.

"Sounds like you didn't exactly trust me," Ilea said and crossed her arms.

"Oh don't look at me like that, Ilea. You know just as I do that there could have been many ways for this plan to fail. You act with an optimistic improvisation that I'm not familiar with. But it was you who saved them in the end," Meadow said.

"Well you opened the gate in the first place," Ilea pointed out.

"A selfish act, truly. I shall honor our deal and close it," Meadow said.

"Hold up a minute," Ilea said. She summoned a meal and started eating.

'ding' 'Gourmet reaches lvl 4'

"Well I figured something out. Might be easier to demonstrate," she said and stood up. Plate in hand, she threw up her fork and blinked, connecting the utensil with displacement to her blink.

Both appeared a few meters away where she caught the fork and continued eating.

"You... that is... does it work on your realm travel ability?" Meadow asked, sounding just a little excited.

"Well it worked from Elos to Elos. With a monster. I'll have to test if it works beyond realms too," she said.

"I see no theoretical way why it shouldn't... this is. You really did consider me, did you not?" Meadow asked.

"Of course. Did you think I'd leave a friend behind, just like that? I would have paid, pressured, or beaten Gyffold and Lys into submission to have you pass through and close the gate from our side but now we might not have to worry about any of that," she said with a smile.

Meadow remained quiet for a while.

“Ilea... I don’t know what to say,” the being said and instead sent emotions her way.

“I told you before. It’s not just a selfless act, Meadow. Your power and expertise is something we could use. As is the defense you can bring to the table with all your insane magic,” Ilea said.

A soundless giggle went through the hall, somehow manifesting in ripples of space magic itself.

“If you say so,” Meadow said.

“Well, I do,” Ilea said. *“No nation I know of has managed to get a four mark to cooperate with them on such a basis. You’d be as powerful as the acquisition of nukes.”*

“Oh sure. Sure,” Meadow said and sent a thought containing a smile.

“What are you getting at?” Ilea asked.

“Nothing, Ilea. Thank you. For your help and your trust. You saved several species from extinction and perhaps you may yet add another to your list,” the creature said. *“Closing the gate from this side will prevent the destruction of your city. However the spirit problem remains.”*

“I’ll protect the gate and then I’ll get you out of here,” Ilea said.

“The Spirits will not be interested in the gate. What they will seek, is I,” Meadow said.

“Then I’ll just have to protect you until it’s done,” she said.

“Despite your prowess, you cannot face the concentrated efforts of mundane Astral Spirits. You are no match for those who have yet to descend,” Meadow said.

“We’re not closing it immediately either. I can get stronger,” Ilea said.

“To an extent. But we cannot extend the risk too far. You will not reach sufficient power in time. Perhaps not ever,” Meadow said.

“Yeah I doubt that. You’re entirely useless while you close the gate?” she asked.

“Not entirely, no. However I won’t be able to stand against the creatures yet to come,” it said.

“You can’t stand at all,” Ilea pointed out.

“That is technically true,” Meadow said. *“As is the fact that we need allies.”*

“Allies. You didn’t mention that before,” Ilea said.

“I had not considered my continued survival. Well... perhaps I am overly dramatic. There is a chance I could survive against the Daughters for another eclipse’s length despite my weakened state during the gate closure,” Meadow said.

Ilea sighed. *“Don’t agree to suicidal plans without informing me.”*

“Ilea I know in what danger you live whenever you travel to the wastes. It’s unreasonable to expect of me what you yourself so obviously disregard,” it said.

“I can be unreasonable,” Ilea said and shrugged.

“Humans,” Meadow said, a sigh rushing through the hall.

“Oh don’t give me that. We’re all Eyes to you, aren’t we?” Ilea asked with a smile.

“Oh you are but that doesn’t mean I cannot form an opinion on certain pairs,” Meadow said.

“You mentioned allies?” Ilea asked. “The only one from my realm I can think of is someone I can’t reach at the moment.”

“A convenient circumstance,” Meadow murmured.

“You’re reading too much,” Ilea said.

“Stories were terribly finite and uninspired among the Awakened that lived in Erendar. Your comfort provided by safety and a plentiful environment truly let your minds roam. It’s quite enjoyable,” Meadow said.

“You managed to insult both the creatures that lived here and those living in Elos. Well done,” she said.

“Thank you. I am learning from an adequate teacher,” it said.

“Don’t blame it on me. You’re centuries old. If anybody should be beyond childish behavior, it’s you,” she said.

“No, you fail to understand, Ilea. I merely adopted this personality to manipulate you into releasing my true evil power. My actual mind is something a mere mortal could not comprehend. You would go mad in an instant!” it explained.

“Are you having fun?” she asked, crossing her arms in front of her as the empty plate vanished.

“Yes. Very. Michael is so dreadfully theoretical. I believe he suffers from a mutation that removed humor from his very essence,” Meadow said.

“Well I do hope you don’t tell him, otherwise he won’t stop pestering both of us,” Ilea said.

“I would have thought you liked the prospect of my insights into magic. Isn’t that one of the very reasons you stated before for wanting me in Elos?” Meadow asked.

“Michael isn’t the only scholar in Elos. I’m not sure his methods align with what I believe in,” Ilea said.

“And you would take all that knowledge for yourself, to support those beliefs. Even if it means humanity would not advance beyond their crude magical theory,” Meadow asked.

“No, I’m just saving a friend from annoyance,” Ilea said. “But sure, if you’d rather want it that way, you can make a deal with Lys, Michael, and Gyffold. To have you close the gate from the other side and then they could build a temple or some kind of prison in the ruins of the city. Just for you... and all the questions of all the humans for thousands of miles would come to you. Pilgrims from far away lands would seek your wisdom oh all knowing! Oh master of magic! One healing touch... I beg you!” Ilea delivered all of it in a monotone voice, moaning slightly after she was done.

“You win this round,” Meadow said.

‘ding’ ‘You win – One Core skill point awarded’

Let’s not mention that. I won’t hear the end of it.

“About those allies then,” Ilea commented.

“Yes. I have mentioned the few who remain from the previous eclipse. Some have reached sapience, others... well they’re not quite there or simply refuse to open their eyes fully. There won’t be many that remain but I have to assume some do,” Meadow said.

“You don’t even know for sure? Can you find them, contact them? What kind of creatures are we talking about anyway?” Ilea asked.

“I do not know. I have told you that my eyes do not reach as far as you might think. Nor do I have a way to contact those beings, not without potentially alerting the spirits of my presence. They are powerful creatures capable of resisting both astral and death spirits. Some remain blind, others with a form of sapience. There are not many I have met who would help us, nor could I offer them anything enticing enough to change their minds,” Meadow asked.

“Well you can’t contact them in the first place,” Ilea said.

“No. But you can travel quite quickly. I have seen the speed with which your wings propel you through the lands. Perhaps you may find the owner of this,” Meadow said when a pale blue thin head sized crystal appeared in front of Ilea.

She caught the thing and looked at it.

[Elemental Tear – Primal Quality]

“What?” she said out loud. She identified the thing again.

[Elemental Tear – Primal Quality] – [Ice Manipulation – lvl 10]

“Again, what?” Ilea said.

“It’s quite beautiful, isn’t it?” Meadow asked with a sense of nostalgia. *“It was given to me during the last eclipse, by a creature I’ve sheltered for a few decades. An Ice Elemental, as the look and name suggest. The few thoughts we exchanged back then were a pleasant distraction from the battles and the overbearing void of the frozen wasteland.”*

“It’s the first item of Primal quality I’ve seen,” Ilea said.

“Truly? I suppose it would be quite rare to come across something like that. I have treasured it for millennia,” Meadow said.

“And I can use Ice Manipulation while holding this?” she asked.

“Yes. Though without related Classes, I suppose it’s quite useless to you,” Meadow said.

“Can you level it? Get the skill higher?” Ilea asked.

“Yes. However I had little success. It was at level one when I received it as a gift,” Meadow said. *“I found that I had little talent in the magics of ice and cold. Perhaps you would fare differently?”*

“No clue... I mean you can learn magic as a general skill too, right? Would this help me get it as a permanent skill?” she asked.

“Perhaps such would be possible. You need however extensive training and a high affinity to gain such skills as general abilities,” Meadow said.

“Would be weaker too... but that’s interesting to know. A skill associated with a piece of gear... that opens up so many possibilities... what other gear qualities are there? Do you know of others?” she asked.

“There are others on this level, yes. I have confirmed the existence of the Ethereal Quality. And that of the Divine Quality. The former is related to Spirits I believe, as I have only ever seen them used or left behind by high level Astral creatures. The latter may be a little more complicated,” Meadow said.

“You’re talking about gods? Items bestowed by beings so powerful they’d count as divine? Where would they reside? Can they communicate with us?” she asked.

“Well, yes. You see, I’m one such being,” Meadow said.

Ilea laughed.

“No you’re not,” she said.

“This is a little awkward. I’m not joking at this moment. There were items that gained the Divine quality bonus if created or enhanced by me,” Meadow said.

Ilea blinked a few times. *“Okay. So can you enhance my armor?”*

“I regretfully have to inform you that such is not possible. Not anymore. Not right now. I believe a sizable following is necessary, those who believe that one is indeed a god. There is more involved... once I made the discovery, it became more difficult to bestow such power to items. Almost like my awareness of the attribute’s existence rendered me unable to bestow it. Or perhaps my own inability to consider myself a god led to the outcome,” it explained.

“Damned. Do you have a bunch of those items left? What did they do?” she asked.

“Sadly they are lost, by now perhaps even decayed. There were items slightly enhancing various abilities related to my magic. They were so weak it all was useless to me but some of the Awakened wore them proudly. The first awakened space magic wielder beside myself had reached understanding through a shield I had bestowed with power,” Meadow explained.

“I see. Pretty cool though... it means I might actually find something useful. Or perhaps I could have someone forge something with high level materials,” she said. “Back to the Tear, why give it to me?”

“It resonates with the Elemental. Even just moving it across this hall I can determine the direction of where it resides. You should be able to tell at least if you’re getting closer after a few hundred kilometers or if you’re moving farther away,” Meadow explained.

“An Ice Elemental... I mean I like the idea but how do you know it would help you? Let alone listen to me?” she asked.

“It isn’t particularly... talkative. However your arrival with the Tear should have an effect. I understood that it felt deep gratitude for the shelter I once provided,” Meadow said. “Otherwise... well you have managed to befriend me... and from our various conversations I take it I’m not the first powerful entity you have allied yourself with.”

“I mean sure. I can try to talk to the thing. If anything it could punch my second tier ice resistance to the third. Or it would allow me to level it at least,” she said.

“Yes, that would be enough. Though I suggest you do not anger it. I do not doubt your survival but it may be difficult to convince the ancient being after a show of animosity,” Meadow said.

“I’ll do my best,” Ilea said with a grin. “How long do you think I can train here until our prospects become seriously troubling?”

“They were seriously troubling long before you even arrived here. I suppose another one of your months won’t make much of a difference but we shouldn’t wait much longer than that. I also suggest you test bringing a spirit into your realm, if you can,” Meadow said.

“I’ll test it, don’t worry,” she said. “Do you know if there are any four mark spirits around that I could hunt?”

It would be quite an achievement to kill a four mark while alone.

“The Daughters are the only ones I know of who reach that level. With what I have seen, I doubt you can kill them,” Meadow said. “You have a chance of survival in a direct confrontation. Maybe. But you should not seek such creatures out.”

“Any dungeons here or places where other four marks reside? You must have met many in your time,” she asked.

“I have met a few, yes. The eclipse has already disrupted what would otherwise be dungeons. The four marks I know of have opened their eyes at least partially, thus I won’t tell you where to look for them, even if I knew, not with your intent to fight them,” Meadow said.

“Party pooper,” Ilea said.

“Thoughtless Barbarian,” Meadow returned with a mental shrug.

“Are the daughters awakened too?” Ilea asked.

“To an extent. More than some monsters but less than others. I won’t kill them if that is what you’re asking. Not that I believe killing them is even really possible,” Meadow said.

“Great,” Ilea said.