

## Chapter 891 Scales

Ilea appeared in her home and formed a gate to the far north, into the valley of the dragon. *I'll have to be careful not to keep any heat or spells active when I arrive here*, she thought as she saw her entire home through her Domain. She still felt the connection to the pyroclastic desert, could feel the power of her auras flowing through her, and the Primordial Flame in her very soul.

Even in Erendar, she felt like the full extent of her new powers was dangerous to use, but here. Ilea suddenly didn't feel so sure anymore about going to a populated area.

*Just take some time and breathe. It'll be fine.*

She stepped through the gate and appeared in the valley, the stone ground still hot but most of the smoke in the sky had dissipated. Ilea did a double take when she saw another dragon next to the dead one she had left behind. For a moment she was ready to fight, but she quickly realized it was Garonoth, the massive being towering even above the Dragon of Calamity.

One of his clawed talons touched the head of the dead creature, the lance of ash still deep within the corpse.

*"And she returns,"* the being spoke, the deep growling voice neutral in her mind. He didn't turn his head but the eye she could see moved to take her in. *"Dragonslayer. Well done."*

He didn't sound glad, she noted. *"You said you couldn't fight this one."*

Garonoth moved his eyes back to the other dragon. *"And I could not. For what father could kill his own son?"*

Ilea held her breath. She opened her mouth, then closed it. He didn't attack her. He had been the one to lead her here. *So his words were true? The dragon posed a danger, but he couldn't kill him. It just wasn't a question of power.*

She didn't speak for a while, looking for the right words.

*"What was his name?"* she asked finally.

*"Names are for those awakened. But now that he is gone. If things had been different, his name would have been, Meran."*

*"He fought well,"* she said.

The dragon snorted, heat spreading out. *"Indeed. The prowess of a true dragon. And you did too,"* he spoke and turned his head towards her, the motion creating a wave of air that flowed aside. *"You did what I could not. Thank you, human."* He watched her for a long moment. *"He was a part of your path, his death, now a part of your power. I hope that his memory will lead to more than destruction."*

Ilea looked up at the dragon and smiled. *"I'll make sure of it."*

Again, he snorted, the wave of heat flowing over her, but all she felt was comfort. A strange connection, knowing the flames he could summon.

*I get it now. Why he didn't want to show off his flames. Not that I'll be nearly as responsible. But I get it.*

She sighed, then smiled. Now she felt bad for wanting to use Meran's scales and bones for equipment. At the same time she knew it would be really useful. *Elves eat their own to not waste them. And honestly, if my bones can provide armor to a bunch of Sentinels, hmm.*

*"I don't know much about dragons, or you specifically," she spoke. "But his scales were damn near indestructible. They could provide armor for hundreds of fighters. But I understand if your customs do not allow for such a thing, and I apologize if my words are offensive."*

*"You are the one who slayed him. You may claim what you wish," Garonoth spoke.*

*"I will only claim what you will allow," Ilea said. "But I guess a wing would be nice."*

The dragon snorted, then breathed in. *"Armor made for chosen warriors,"* Garonoth spoke and moved his talons, grabbing one of the massive dragon teeth before he broke it off with a single motion. *"You may take him now, if you can. I have grieved him long ago,"* he spoke and touched the dragon's head one last time. *"May his body become shield and strength to those you choose, Ilea."*

*"It will," she said. "May I visit you again? And maybe bring a friend or two?"*

*"Do what you must, friend of the fae,"* the dragon spoke and looked at the tooth. He spread his wings far and wide, slowly. *"And wield that flame with care."*

She smiled at that and waved as the massive creature took flight.

Garonoth snorted one last time before he shot up into the skies, a shock wave of air slamming into the valley and mountains, dust and debris raised as if a dragon had taken flight.

Ilea stood there and watched the fast moving creature in the skies, wondering if he had moved that quickly when they had flown here.

Her gaze wandered to the large body. *Now. How do I move this thing.*

She spread her scaly wings and flew a little closer. It had taken her Primordial Shift to move the dragon last time. Her Fourth Tier Reconstruction came to life, cosmic energies flowing through her. She raised her hand and focused on the massive framework. Fabric Alteration activated as she felt the weight and size of the creature before her. Ilea raised her chin and focused, moving her hand as she watched the dragon rise from the ground. She raised her other hand and opened the largest gate she could manage, right in front of the now floating corpse.

*That's going to be a tight fit.*

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The Endless Meadow saw all in its domain. A part of it sprang to the fissure imposed within its space. A spell very much like Ilea's, but far more powerful. It could not be sure. Several hundred messages went out to the citizens of Hallowfort and those in its domain. Alarms raised and beings

moved deeper and into prepared shelters far within the stone. Agents of the Accords were moved onto gates that led to all the major allied cities, spreading knowledge of an imminent attack.

Its spells were at the ready, and the Accords were prepared for anything that came through that gate.

*“Incoming!”* a voice reached its many minds. A familiar one at that.

Amused, the Meadow waited, not yet releasing the state of emergency, in case Ilea had been compromised or something managed to imitate her voice and spell, somehow sending it a long range telepathic message. It would not underestimate a potential enemy, and it would not endanger those it vowed to protect.

Through the gate, out in the northern wastes, the Meadow saw the head of a dragon come into existence, its gargantuan body slowly moving through the broad gate that no longer seemed quite large enough. It was lifeless, one of its eyes gone entirely, its brain destroyed and blood no longer flowing.

Had she done it? Fought and killed Garonoth? Perhaps, though the Meadow knew Ilea had flown away with the large being, and the measurements taken by the Watcher did indicate that this was not the same being.

*Her magic. She has advanced. Far.*

When the massive wings and tail of the dragon had moved through the gate, its body fell, crashing into the ground where a shock wave of air and debris extended outwards.

Ilea passed through the gate herself, her wings and armor different. She glowed with power, and forces the Meadow could not comprehend.

*“What the fuck, you didn’t catch it!”* the being spoke. Its voice the same as that of a dear friend. Its face the same. Everything about it seemed familiar. But it could not be, could it?

***[Dragonslayer – lvl 1004]***

And within the being, there were the stars, the very forces that had eluded it for millennia. Proof of two hundred and eight theories, and something else.

A feeling that the Meadow had not felt since its inception. Not fear, but terror. Its minds observed the emotion with interest.

It had to look away. Avert its eyes from what it saw.

A flame, that was not meant to be.

*“Who art thou?”* the Endless Meadow spoke.

The creature landed near the crashed body of the dragon, her brows rising as if she were surprised.

*“Come on now, Meadow. Take a deep breath. It’s me. I mean who could shove the corpse of a dragon through a space gate directly to this anchor. Think.”*

*“Prove it, creature,”* the Meadow spoke and flared its power, the very earth trembling and space itself roaring with its might. An instinct, long dormant, so basic it resented the show, and yet it could not do otherwise.

The being raised a hand to its chin, then smiled.

Another fissure formed nearby, this one familiar as well.

Out came the Baron Violence, Fae and friend to both itself and Ilea.

*“You can tell it’s me, right?”* the creature spoke, looking at the small being.

*Oh*

*my*

The words of the Fae were unclear. It glanced towards the Meadow, seeing through the fabric, and addressing it directly with ten voices overlapped. *“Thine concerns are misplaced, tree of the north and moon beset by darkened lands. This truly is the one we know and whom we cherish. Bearing flame and heart of fire, she has slain what only she could slay, surely digging deep through flesh and shit alike. I shall haunt her dreams and bowels for not inviting me to such a feast, but wow, looketh how she gloweth! The cosmos has not seen such radiance in all the ages that we’ve known!”*

The words were true, the Meadow knew, shame and embarrassment flooding through some of its minds, relief and pride prevalent in others. *“It is you, truly?”*

*“Scared you, didn’t I? You should see my new Shift,”* Ilea said and grinned.

*It is her. And how I hate and love her.*

*“Please refrain. For once, I mean it,”* the Meadow said as messengers were sent after those already gone. *Nothing but trouble, that damned human.*

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Ilea raised her hand for Violence to land but the little creature crossed its arms and stared at her.

*“I feel like you’re mad at me,”* she said.

He looked away, as if pouting.

*“I was worried you’d be in danger,”* she said.

The Baron didn’t look at her.

*“I got some new stuff, and I went to Erendar. There are Daughters of Sephilon there, and I can fight them.”*

The Fae turned its head slightly.

*“You can tell I have the flame, right? I can show you,”* she said, smoke, ash, and volcanic glass flowing into existence around her hand.

The Fae turned fully now and sat down, arms however, still crossed.

Ilea laughed, and patted the little creature. *“There’s still a dragon I can introduce you to. He’s pretty friendly.”*

*Missed*

*Battle*

*“There will be more, don’t you worry,” she said and raised him up to her shoulder. “I have to wait with the fire though, I feel like the Meadow is a bit spooked.”*

*Reasonable*

*Fear*

*“Are you saying you weren’t sure about me either?” she asked, feigning outrage.*

*Soul*

*Marked*

*But*

*Different*

*What*

*Is*

*Flame?*

*Ilea addressed both the Fae and the Meadow. “It’s called the Primordial Flame. Apparently I’m the first wielder,” she said and gave them both a run down of her new Classes and abilities. “Make sure Aki knows as well.”*

*“I will. Dragonslayer,” the Meadow spoke.*

*“Don’t do that,” Ilea said.*

*“What do you mean? Dragonslayer?”*

*“You don’t need to compensate now because I freaked you out.”*

*“Whatever you say, Dragonslayer.”*

*“You’re a piece of shit,” she sent.*

*“And you are... an incomprehensible enigma to every rule in the universe. You can’t just... punch yourself to this level of space magic mastery, let alone that... weird, power, you now wield. Cosmic energies and the Primordial Flame, let alone uncapped harmony at all times. Your mana is ludicrous as well for something at your level. I suppose there are benefits to slaying a dragon, but this? I will need some time to process this. A few minutes at least!”*

*“Entire minutes?” Ilea asked before she turned to the Fae. “I must’ve really shaken it.”*

*Very*

*Scary, the Fae nodded vigorously.*

*A Pursuer appeared nearby, the green eyes taking her in.*

*“Congratulations, Ilea. I suppose I lack the perception of the Meadow, but your feats are noted,” Aki said and turned to look at the dragon. “And you moved this thing here. What should be done with it?”*

*“Armor and weapons, I guess. And anything else that would be useful,” she said.*

*“It will attract predators and scavengers here, nor are most craftsmen and women capable of working near the northern storms. I suggest another relocation, if that’s possible,”* the silver machine said.

*“Sure,”* Ilea said, then grinned.

*“You have something in mind?”* Aki asked.

*“Well. I don’t suppose you’ve informed my team yet, of this development?”*

*“No. I see. Hmm. It would be out of reach for most high level predators. The Meadow could keep it safe in the Descent, but I can see the political value. I’m afraid it should be discussed with the Accords before you make that move,”* Aki spoke.

*“Maybe keep it vague at least. A surprise would be funny,”* she said.

The green eyes flared up. *“I will do my best. Perhaps an event too. There are a few invitations I would like to extend, if you wouldn’t mind?”*

Ilea smiled. *“Sure.”*

*“We’ll keep the vote to the highest ranked members, and the information strictly confidential for the time being. Your team will know.”*

*“They will know, but they won’t really see it until it’s there,”* Ilea said.

*“I can see your point,”* Aki said. *“The vote is underway. The Accords are still dealing with the sudden emergency measures imposed by the Meadow.”*

*“I’ll go set up a gate, a suitable distance away,”* Ilea said.

*“I’ll let you know when to come,”* Aki said and walked over, a silver hand forming before he touched her non occupied shoulder. *“Well done. I mean it. Welcome to the Four Marks.”*

She gave him a nod and turned towards the massive dragon.

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Verena stayed atop the roof of the adventurer’s guild. Bells resounded as she heard shouting from below. Dozens of winged healers, mages, and warriors were still flying above the city, the large dome like barrier brimming with power, massive cannons moving atop the three walls of Ravenhall to seek a target, all of it connected to allow their beams to pass through.

*“A false alarm,”* came the voice of a dear friend. Pierce landed on the roof and sighed, summoning a hair tie before she bound her hair. *“Can you believe it? My heart was pumping. All these green ass machines, cannons, and enchantments, and it’s a false alarm.”*

*“It’s good training,”* Verena said.

Pierce’s eyes went wide. *“Think they made it up? Just for this? An exercise?”*

Verena didn't know. She could see the value in it, but somehow she doubted the Accords would act so aggressively. They would at least announce a date. *But what could've spooked the Meadow to this extent? A level five threat warning. Evacuation of all non combat personnel and a complete activation of all defensive measures.*

"The Meadow apologizes for the undue warning," a voice resounded, coming from a floating circular machine with a single green eye. A Watcher, as Verena had learned.

"I was having lunch," Pierce complained.

"Apologies for lunch," the Watcher said. "The vote just passed. An explanation will soon arrive. Please join me."

"Join you?" Verena asked.

"If you wish to see the reason for this state of emergency," the machine said.

"It better be fucking good," Pierce said and crossed her arms.

They followed the machine until they arrived on the roof of a restaurant, the view of the surrounding mountain ranges exquisite.

Quite a few people were already present. Verena saw some of the higher ranking Shadows, Sulivhaan among them. There were Sentinels there too, more arriving as she landed. Claire, Trian, and Kyrian joined as well soon after, as snacks and drinks started to be served, a single Executioner present and standing next to the roof, green eyes sparkling, with what felt like mischievous intent.

"... couldn't help but join as well," said Helwart, champion of the Pit, piloting his war machine that took up a sizable chunk of the roof.

Some of the mages added more platforms, a few annoyed murmurs going around at the additional war machines that joined in.

*He seems to know what's going on, Verena thought before she locked eyes with Trian, the man smirking as he sipped from a thin glass of sparkled wine. And he does too. So this is about her.*

Verena gave him a slight nod and now smiled herself. *Enough of a spectacle to gather all of these people. And to send out a full emergency alarm. This will be good.*

More beings appeared when Aki spoke up.

"Once more, the Meadow extends its apologies for the sudden invocation of such a high level threat response. I do believe it was warranted," he spoke and turned in the air. "Please turn your attention southwards."

Verena raised her brows when she saw the flying shadow crest a distant mountain peak. She took in a deep breath and smiled, shaking her head before she walked over to a frozen waitress, grabbing a tall glass herself and taking a sip. She couldn't help but join her friend, moving an arm around her shoulder. She didn't say a word. She didn't have to.

Pierce was shaking, her words quiet. "It's unfair..." She sniffled. "Are you seeing this?" She turned to look at Verena, tears in her eyes.

"It's okay," Verena answered and brushed away the tears.

The Dragonkiller shook her head, disbelief painted on her face. "I can't."

Verena held her close and brushed her hair. “She’s going to make fun of you aaaaall day.”

“She will, won’t she?” Pierce whispered. “Look at the size of that thing.”

“Massive,” Verena said.

“And she’s carrying it.”

“She sure is,” Verena said, watching the sight as most everyone else either remained entirely paralyzed and quiet, or hollering with joy.

Some of the dwarves were outright laughing at the sight.

“That’s a dragon, isn’t it?” Sulivhaan asked, taking in a sharp breath.

“She did it,” said Kyrian, a smile on his face.

“Let’s keep those barriers up,” Claire said as she walked over to the Executioner. “Don’t want a bunch of rockslides to destroy half the city.”

Aki turned towards the Administrator, green eyes glowing bright. “We’re setting up models for placement. She encourages everyone who wants to lend a hand to join her.”