

Chapter 695 Coordination

Ilea and Owl soon came to the conclusion that using telepathy was far superior to coordinate than speaking. It was an easy thing to convince the impressionable Lich to turn their preparation into an impromptu session of skill and mostly resistance training.

Beams of soul and death magic burned into her, the former occasionally paused to make sure her core didn't take too much damage. The Lich itself was struck by waves of arcane healing, beams of charged heat, and ashen spears.

Ilea looked inward with her Soul Perception, the flames moving around the central sphere like form she couldn't focus on. The fires were there even when the skill wasn't currently active, both protecting her from foreign influence and shielding her against attacks. The defense wasn't absolute, especially against a four mark being like Owl. With enough hits and subsequent pauses, Ilea could tell that the damage repaired itself faster than before her evolution too. Either that or it had to do with the high level spells the lich threw her way.

"You should have quite an easy time against pretty much any creature that has a soul," Ilea said, a death magic burst washing over her ash, a few layers gone before they healed and reformed at the same time.

The Lich flew around her stationary target, not perfectly used yet to her increased mobility. "The Meadow has said similar things. I will be careful."

"Speaking of the Meadow, did you see its soul?" she asked.

"I get an idea of it when I look at the being, but to grasp it is beyond me. I believe there is something similar in place as your flames. More abstract however. Confusing to me. I couldn't even grasp at its soul if I wanted to," the Lich explained.

Another few spells struck her. Her death magic resistance was already at the end of the second tier but the Lich needed someone to practice with anyway. And she could level plenty of her other skills this way. A few ashen spheres formed in the air around her, heat gathering within before she sent them flying towards the being.

Near white explosions of heat and fire spread out from the fast moving balls, the Lich teleporting to avoid the blasts.

Ilea teleported the last two spheres and made them explode right behind the creature.

Owl was rocked forward, the back of her ethereal form covered in flames as she hissed in an unpleasant low pitched tone.

"Is that a warning or something? To those that dare attack you?" Ilea asked with a smile, a few dozen spheres floating around her, heat gathering within. She didn't plan to move a lot with her weight increased to the maximum of seven hundred and fifty percent beyond her already high base.

Owl continued the hiss for a moment before a blast of death magic flared out around her, the flames sputtering out against the impressive field of magic. "It is merely the pain... or should I say, the unpleasantness of having one's very form burned."

"Do you have resistances anyway?" Ilea asked.

“Yes,” the Lich said and floated around her with apprehensive eyes, the small orbs darting between the many projectiles hanging in the air around the continuously burning woman. “Not very high leveled. Ice and Heat in the second tier, the rest below still. Not many of the creatures Death caught could even damage me,” she explained.

“But you do have general skills. I suppose you classify as a Dark One, or maybe even whatever species you were before... or just a Lich? How many Classes do you have?” Ilea asked out of interest. “Oh... let me know if you want to keep those things to yourself. I know people generally dislike sharing information regarding their magic.”

The Greater Lich waved her off. “Death thought like that, yes. That’s why I hardly ever learned anything useful. He kept most everything to himself. Let me see... I have one Class, ten skills.”

“One Class... I wonder. How much resources and stats do you have?” Ilea asked. “I have about eighteen hundred vitality, with various buffs that comes out at nearly seventy thousand health points.”

“Oh. I see. Surprising... hmm... I don’t have the vitality thing, or anything else. I can see my health though,” Owl said and looked to the ground.

“You don’t want to share?” Ilea asked with a grin.

“No... it’s just...” she said and fidgeted with her hands.

“I’m just interested. Haven’t ever asked something as high level as you,” Ilea said.

Owl glanced her way. “It’s... a bit above five hundred thousand.

“Oh,” Ilea got out and gulped. “That’s a lot,” she added and smiled. *Hmm. No wonder it takes me so many spells to kill a four mark.*

“Physical damage I take is halved... and from most magical attacks, a part of it only damages my mana. It’s kind of part of me,” Owl said and looked at her hands. “Ah yes, I have nearly eight hundred thousand mana,” she added, weirdly conflicted between embarrassed and proud.

Ilea whistled. “Damn. Not bad. I’m just above a hundred thousand. But I guess it’s to be expected from someone at your level. How else would you cast your fourth tier spells?”

“Ah, I don’t have one of those,” she said and smiled with the purple line on her ethereal face suggesting a mouth. “The Meadow said I would get one at some point if I get better with the ones I have. But they use up a lot of mana anyway. Thousands for each spell.”

“Hmm... I can hit for that much too. Mana wise that is, I’m sure our various bonuses are different,” Ilea said. *Can I assume that I hit at four mark level then? I mean one strike powered with all my skills should take between a few thousand to nearly ten. Granted I have to charge them a bit longer than whatever she’s producing.*

It made sense to her too, the last few battles against other four marks not lasting nearly as long as they had even a few months prior, before she had reached level five hundred in her first Class. *But just straight health and mana wise I’m pretty far behind.*

“How quickly do you recover your health and mana?” she asked.

“Health takes quite some time. I still haven’t regenerated the damage from your flames before. Mana is okay down here, but it’s faster near the Meadow, or in the City of Glass,” she said.

“Mana density I assume?” Ilea said.

“That’s what the Meadow says, yes. Another reason why it’s dangerous for me to go to low mana areas. My regeneration would be slowed a lot,” she answered.

“Makes sense,” Ilea said. *Will I have that problem too at some point? But I’ve started as a classless human and basically level zero. I could survive even without mana, maybe that’s just what everything else has built on?* She hoped her body wouldn’t start to require ambient mana. Already she could absorb some with Sentinel Core but the amount didn’t make much of a difference with her overall high regen. *I might even outpace Owl if we’re simply tasked with filling containers with health and mana. Given enough time. She just has a higher total. And more powerful spells, despite the similar mana cost.*

The being still hit like an absolute truck with each attack, but Ilea might as well work as a crash test wall at the truck factory.

“I haven’t really seen a four mark monster run out of spells before,” she mused.

Owl nodded enthusiastically. “Yes! I wondered that too, because apparently many lower level beings have to be careful with their magic. My abilities can’t really use a very high amount of mana, and I can’t just use them all the time. The Meadow said that once I get a fourth tier skill, that one will cost a lot to use! Here I think I might run out at some point... if we continued for a long while. But in my old dungeon, I don’t think that could have happened.”

“The absorption, right,” Ilea said. *Taking four marks back to the plains would be a pretty viable option to hunt them down then. More than I thought before. The pain they experience surely helps too, but no wonder the Dragons of Elos haven’t annihilated humanity already. It’s not just a lot of fucking effort, it also leaves them vulnerable.* She grinned at the thought.

“Yes. I like your ash and your flames. You use them so easily! I wish I could make up combinations like that with my magic,” Owl said.

Ilea smiled at her. “I’m sure you’ll get there too. Just keep training, and ask the Meadow to help you out. I have a lot of skills to work with too, and three total Classes. Makes combining things easier.”

“I’ll try my best,” Owl said with a smile, a sphere of vibrating death magic forming between her hands.

Ilea shook her head ever so slightly, the beam pushing her a few steps back as her mantle was shaved away. *She doesn’t even understand what kind of insane magic she’s wielding.* Her eyes opened wide when she realized she was the one who had just easily survived the creatures attack, her own spells following her now, explosions of energy and white flame pushing the Greater Lich away. *Maybe I should hang out with normal people again sometime.*

She thought about the dinner she had with Willa’s parents. Normal humans. Of which she too, was one. Definitely. Most certainly.

Owl and Ilea worked for another hour to both train their magic and learn to synchronize their spells.

The whole ordeal seemed more beneficial for Owl, the training not quite as effective for Ilea as her bouts with the Meadow. She did however enjoy working with a new partner. With someone as high leveled as Owl, it really showed how important actual combat experience was in a real battle. Ilea assumed most fighters who could resist or avoid the Lich’s soul and death magic would be able to eventually win. Win or survive at least. Owl did have a one kilometer teleport range and could move through some non magical matter.

“You might be a good partner to train with the Sentinels,” she said when they flew back to the cube, the preparations done according to the flare signal shot up by Verena. “Once you’re a little better at tuning your spells. They’d get killed in a single blast otherwise.”

“Oh, that would be interesting! They’re all healers like you, aren’t they? With ash and all,” the Lich said.

“Mostly,” Ilea answered. “And your magic types aren’t exactly the most common. Well... I’ve run into death many times but I think that’s just my luck, or misfortune.”

“Will they be able to visit now that the gates are done?” Owl asked.

“Soon I imagine. Once the Ravenhall people have met the council in Hallowfort,” Ilea said and quickly checked her messages.

‘ding’ ‘Eternal Brawling [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 2’

‘ding’ ‘Titan Core [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 2’

‘ding’ ‘Deviant of Humanity reaches 3rd lvl 24’

‘ding’ ‘Soul Perception reaches lvl 12’

‘ding’ ‘Teaching reaches lvl 9’

‘ding’ ‘Soul Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 17’

‘ding’ ‘Soul Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 18’

Pretty good progress for a bout with a friend, she thought.

“Will they not think me...” Owl said and paused.

“Think you what? An undead monster far beyond anyone’s imagination?” Ilea asked.

The being looked her way. “I wouldn’t have said it that way.”

“Hah, don’t worry. Everyone will be blown away by Meadow and Aki. With them around, you won’t stand out as much,” Ilea said. “Plus my friends are pretty used to ridiculous beings at this point. Not so sure about the rest of the councils, but they’ll be fine.”

“I hope so,” Owl said.

They reached the cube and found it covered near entirely in stone. More or less smooth with dozens of markings scratched in. Steel plates, glass spheres, various gems, and a set of mirrors were all placed above or within the added layer.

“Alright, everyone’s here then,” Iana said, Aki floating in the air while holding both of the enchanters in his hands. “Owl, Ilea, familiarize yourselves with the marked sections. We noted the various elements you’ll have to use and in what way.”

Ilea floated around the cube, her dominion picking up every marked section, each with its own set of instructions. For her, arcane, space, and heat. Verena would help with the latter but one was specifically marked for her beam, a circle at the center of one of the sides.

“How long are we talking exactly?” Ilea asked, not having seen any mentions of time.

“All needs to happen within one point four seconds. That is if the first eighteen enchantments are destroyed simultaneously, otherwise we’re working with zero point six seconds in total. Based on everything we see and understand. In case something goes wrong or anything in the mesh causes a chain reaction, I suggest you get us out of here as fast as you can,” Iana explained.

Ilea carefully checked the sections. “And how will I know if something goes wrong?”

“You will know,” the woman answered.

I don’t think you understand how many high level spells I’ve seen. She didn’t voice the thought, assuming that if any defensive measures get activated, their intrusion had failed.

“This won’t be easy…” Ilea mused, setting up large ash spheres that hovered in the air around the cube. Each changed into a symbol related to the magic they had to use. “Owl, what do you think?”

The Lich still floated around the cube. “I can hit everything on this side… and here,” she said and teleported. “That still leaves three enchantments where I won’t be able to reach.”

Ilea used Fabric Tear to move the being. “Seems to work fine. So where exactly do I have to put you?”

Owl floated into position and aimed. “Here is good.”

“Verena?” Ilea asked.

“I’ll need one teleport to here,” the woman replied, floating on the other side of the cube.

Ilea spent another few minutes setting up her spheres, now moving them close to where the impacts had to happen. She could feel the location of her ash, knew the form it took. Spheres were added to the teleport locations where she would have to put her two teammates after their first two barrages. “Just a wave of space magic fine?”

“Yes,” Iana said. “Enough to disturb the fields in place. For you, not a lot.”

“I see,” Ilea mused and finished her setup. “Let’s try a few times without spells.”

“And let’s do it like this. We count one to five, two and four being the teleports. Roughly one second in total,” she said to the group.

“Understood,” Verena replied and appeared in her position.

Owl gave her a nod and did the same.

“Can we add a count before it starts too?” the Lich asked.

“Makes sense, so one two three, then one through five,” Ilea replied.

Both confirmed as most of the others made some distance. Aki remained with the two enchanters, ready to leave before they would go with the actual attempt.

Ilea started counting and they all did their thing.

“I messed up two of the gates,” Ilea murmured.

“Can you teleport me about half a meter further right and up?” Verena asked.

A few of the ashen spheres were moved before they tried again.

The group repeated the preparation another twenty times before they felt comfortable with their positioning.

Iana watched the next thirty attempts with bated breath, the two high level humans and the Lich repeating the section to memorize their targets.

“What do you think?” Christopher asked.

She didn’t reply for a few seconds, instead focused on the three beings teleporting through space. *One second.*

“I would think it impossible,” she said. “But if anybody has a chance, it’s those three.”

A group of thirty high level mages would’ve been ideal but the more people involved, the harder it would be to coordinate.

“It’s worth an attempt at least,” Chris said.

“*We’ve got the targets down, I think,*” Ilea said straight into their minds. “*Working on the timings now.*”

Iana gulped. If any of the enchantments were damaged even a fraction of a second before planned, the whole thing would blow up. On the one hand, she really wanted to see how the defensive enchantments measured up against something Claire or the Meadow could set up. On the other, she really wanted to know what was inside the so called Soul Forge. The Shades were certainly interested enough.

“You know we won’t see the explosion. All we’ll see is defensive spells and burning ash,” Chris said.

“Ruining the fun,” she murmured. “Aki, get us to the others.”

“As you wish, Enchantress,” the dagger said and moved them through the air. He landed a few seconds later near the waiting group, Bralin already preparing a defensive perimeter with runed stone.

“Let’s add our own,” she said to Christopher and got to work.

Ten minutes later, everything was ready.

“*Aight, got the timing down too. As best as we’ll ever be,*” Ilea said. “*Well, maybe not, but I want to crack this thing.*”

“*Go ahead,*” Iana answered, her and Chris looking through their binoculars.

She held her breath, seeing a shimmering purple form in the distance, left of the cube. To its right side flew a winged being of white flame, and to the front, a humanoid clad in fire.

“*Ready?*” Ilea asked, her voice reaching them still.

“*One two...*” the count came, fast enough to fit five beats into one second.

Iana watched as beams of magic lit up in the distance, a light show of purple, white, turquoise, and fiery red. The angles changed within split seconds. And then it was over.

“Did they do it?” Pierce asked, looking through the slit in the enchanted stone wall ahead.

“*Cube has calmed down. Magic output is much lower,*” Ilea sent.

Iana breathed out and put down her looking glass. “They did it...”

Chris jumped up in joy before he hugged her.