

## Chapter 767 Wasteland

Ilea stepped through the gate with most of her skills active, heat gathering within her core when she arrived in the desolate lands of the Great Salt. The fabric behind her normalized as her manipulation dissipated. She could see it now, how powerful the anchors really were, and how much effort was required to breach another realm without them present. She knew she couldn't do it. Not yet at least.

She looked around to see the massive crater still present. The light magic blast leaving a mark on the land. Months ago it had been, though now it was just one of many landmarks, something that might as well have happened ages past. Ilea found no demons in the vicinity, a few single monsters running over the salt stone platforms hundreds of meters away, unaware of her arrival in their realm.

She checked her status, having invested the stat points from the levels she had gained during her intense training.

### **Status:**

**Vitality:** 2000

**Endurance:** 530

**Strength:** 545

**Dexterity:** 500

**Intelligence:** 2000

**Wisdom:** 2100

**Health:** 67600/67600

**Stamina:** 5283/5300

**Mana:** 125922/126000

Ilea looked at her fist before she opened up her hand, the skin covered by several layers of smooth ash, white fire flowing over the surface in serene patterns, wisps of ash moving through from time to time.

She remembered the first time she had come to Kohr, confused and in the ocean. Unfamiliar with the creatures that roamed these lands, unfamiliar with the history. Despite the knowledge, and the obvious dangers, she felt it made the place more graspable. Ground she could stand on, not a strange alien place full of monsters and forgotten treasure, but the lands of the Navuun, of the Ascended. And she herself wasn't a random Shadow that followed the perpetrator of a horrific ritual, no, this time she was here to hunt. And she felt ready.

Ilea cracked her neck and spread her wings. The two broad limbs moved, pushing her heavy form off the ground and up towards the skies. Dark clouds moved, not a drop of rain falling, not a single sign of lightning in the endless expanse. She saw glimpses of the moon as she flew above the landscape, unsure if it itself produced the pale light or if it reflected the light of a distant star.

She didn't have to search long for her prey, her eyes picking up the feelers reaching out of the clouds kilometers away. The creature was massive, larger even than the whale like being they had fought above Ravenhall. Most of its form was hidden within the dark clouds.

Ilea charged her wings and flew towards the being, her spells at the ready. She slowed down when she felt the magic in the vicinity. The same void like presence she had felt after the blast, when she had first seen the large creatures. She circled the being floating within the dark clouds, using her various perception abilities to try and gauge its size, power, and magical abilities.

A new sensation was added to the void like presence as she approached. A pressure within her mind, complex and powerful. Something strange and maddening. Ilea resisted it with her Mental defenses, but the presence unnerved her slightly. Not quite as strange and alien as the Leviathan she had seen but this creature certainly had things going on within its mind or minds that were not meant for a human to even begin to comprehend, and it spewed it all out into the vicinity, like some mind magic vomit.

Ilea wondered if the magic simply couldn't be contained by the being, if it was some side effect of its immense power like the high mana density around the Meadow, or perhaps meant as a self defense mechanism, some kind of aura to get rid of pests. Demons that would think it dinner, instead finding whatever was left of their brains fried by the powerful mind magic.

She decided not to use Silent Memory in this fight, on the off chance that it somehow latched onto and took control of the creature. The combination might spell trouble. Not until she had full control of the artifact.

The pressure was immense, though as was the void magic now that she was a few hundred meters away from the large creature, its fleshy tentacles covered in bone like spikes, sometimes lashing out towards the ground where entire swaths of demons were sucked into nothing, vanished or consumed by the massive creature. Both her resistances to the respective magics were particularly high, though she planned to simply approach for now, to train the skills in case the being turned out to be too powerful for her to face.

The primal fear she felt at the sheer existence of her prey didn't dissuade her, instead it pushed her onward. A dangerous and unknown foe, after so many beings she now knew in and out. When she got closer still, Ilea could feel a spell build up, recognizing the source somewhere within the cloud. Her precognition picked up the attack. She slowed down and summoned three round and golden shields in front of her. A beam of pure arcane energy enveloped her in the next moment, two of the barriers shattering instantly, the third holding for a split second longer before three layers of her ash were burned away in an instant.

She could see the single purple eye from where the spell had come, the clouds closing in once more to shroud the organ in darkness.

Her ash reformed as she sent a greeting with Monster Hunter, establishing a telepathic connection a moment later.

Ilea shook in the air, holding her head as she canceled the connection again. Her ash opened up before she retched up blood and vomit. *Bad idea. Got it.* She wanted to rip out the bits of her mind that stored whatever the fuck had just been sent by the ungodly creature. "That's nasty," she murmured, wiping away at her mouth before her mantle closed again. She transferred when another beam lashed out at her, the source different this time. Two more beams slammed into her in the next split second, more golden shields blocking most of the first before she was hit by the second.

Ilea tumbled in the air, a series of lights flickering to life behind the clouds, the tentacles now turning towards her as the entire thing moved, not hovering but somehow gripping to the air and clouds itself. She gauged the power of the spells and activated Primordial Shift, the flame of creation flaring up as she was anchored in the fabric, dozens of bright beams striking the strange

area where flames and flesh mingled with the fabric, arcane energy absorbed, destroyed, and burned away.

The damage was substantial but she had too many tools at her disposal for it to matter. Sentinel Reconstruction brought her health back in mere instants, Ilea coming out of the shift with more mana than when she had entered it.

She summoned her beam cannon and aimed, vaguely into the cloud. Her beam of near white flame and heat seemed almost comical compared to the light show she had just witnessed, albeit from within her strange affected space. One small human fighting an eldritch abomination whose presence alone would turn most people mad. Her beam cut through the distant clouds, into what lay beyond.

Ilea braced herself when she saw and felt the shock wave come, a pulse of magic the likes only monstrous four marks could summon. The ground below shook, wayward demons thrown aside or splattered against stone. A screech unlike anything she had ever witnessed. Emotions too confusing for her to comprehend, a pressure that battered against her mind and skull. She healed against it, bleeding from her ears and nose as she grit her teeth, her eyes exploding a moment later, just before the wave had passed.

“Gross,” she said, using her ash to clean away the blood and bits of eyes. New ones had already formed, not that she needed them overly much with all her perception skills.

**‘ding’ ‘You have heard чүрчүү. You resist its effects’**

Yeah, that’s about how it felt like, she thought and shuddered.

**‘ding’ ‘Fear Resistance reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 4’**

**‘ding’ ‘You have resisted the ? of чүрчүү. One Core skill point awarded’**

For something that easy? She smiled to herself, firing her cannon once more. The shock wave hadn’t affected the clouds at all, meaning she aimed in the same vague direction.

Ilea watched the beam vanish into the darkness, storing the tool in her domain as she watched the creature move towards her. It sped up, clinging to nothing as it pushed its form through the clouds. Glimpses of eyes, moving flesh, spike covered tentacles, and dozens of mouths were visible as the thing crawled the hundreds of meters in a split second, appendages whipping out at her with speed enough to break through the sound barrier.

Ilea teleported out of the way, seeing the shock waves as her ears popped. She appeared and formed three shields, one spiked arm already next to where she appeared. The mass of a city wall impacted her with a velocity that was faster than sound itself. The shields slammed together and broke, her world spinning after she was struck.

Her organs, bones, and flesh strained against the impact as she was flung aside, flying several kilometers through the skies before she impacted the ground, a furrow of salt stone exploding outwards as she twirled, getting herself upright before she slid to a halt. She went to one knee and spat out blood, a grin on her face as her injuries healed. *Incredible.*

The mantle of ash reformed as she straightened, watching the creature crawl through the sky, reaching her in mere moments. Twenty beams of arcane energy were released at her solitary form standing on the ground.

She removed her gate near Riverwatch and instead set it right in front of herself, another one aimed at the creature. The beams vanished and reappeared, another screech resounding as the being was struck by its own powerful spells.

“*Fuck you,*” she sent in a one way message, forming a drill in front of herself as she charged her wings. Ilea shot out a moment later, speeding up as the shock wave went past her, mind shaking as she teleported past the fast moving appendages. More beams enveloped her, the golden barriers shattering before she impacted the flesh. The violent rotations and dense burning ash created a wild whirlwind of flesh and blood, a large chunk of matter ripped away and set alight before a tentacle reached in with blinding speed and grabbed the burning ashen form.

Embered Heart released, the explosion of heat and near white flame burning away another few tons of flesh, the tentacle itself retaining its firm grip as her form was squished, muscle tearing and organs squashed. Bones ground against each other as she was compressed, a teleport bringing her out of the grip far later than she would’ve wanted. As soon as she had reached the being, the frameworks became more than a little confusing.

[ЖҫиҫНҫ - lM ?????] - [?]

Ilea teleported once more, her bones cracking back into place as her organs reformed. She remained too close to the creature, several of the tentacles striking at her. She managed to dodge four before one of them got her. This one from above.

She was sent straight down, the impact resounding through the vicinity as she was partially splattered. She coughed up blood and bits of her lungs, seeing with one eye as more beams were fired her way. She redirected them the same way as before, unable to smile yet with her splintered jaw. Not a priority for her healing. A split second later she teleported away, one of the large as a house appendages slamming into the ground where she had just lied.

“So very aggressive,” she murmured, touching her jaw as her mantle reformed once more. She watched the screeching creature of flesh in the pale skies of Kohr, its tentacles whipping through the air as it moved in incoherent patterns, ripping out chunks of its own burning flesh to throw aside.

A beam of Embered Heart lashed up and enveloped an incoming appendage. It hardly stopped before it struck the ground, Ilea already gone, more of its form now covered in the fires of creation.

She formed a set of thirty spears, setting them all alight before she sacrificed a few thousand of her health into the flames. Sending them out, she watched as the appendages slapped away the projectiles, some blasted by arcane beams, her ranged attack easily deflected.

Ilea dodged a few more appendages, the impacts sending large chunks of rock flying, debris still in the air from the previous strikes. She could feel the void pressure manifest all around her, the spell sucking inwards as she tried to teleport away, only managing to get off center by a few meters. A strange sound reverberated as the entirety of the area was sucked into nothing, the power rippling through her form as she was flung aside, impacting a nearby outcrop of stone before a large tentacle swatted down. This time she could teleport, right back to where a large sphere had been ripped out of the ground.

*Impressive power,* she mused, flying backwards as she tried to stay away from the ridiculously fast moving appendages. The creature wasn’t above level two thousand, but it was higher leveled than the corrupted sand elemental at least, one seven or one eight. Which meant she could now at least survive against creatures in the leagues of the Daughters of Sephilon. Ilea grinned as she teleported through the many attacks and beams, sending some back at the screeching creature. The void

attacks continued sporadically, the sheer force of the combined attacks ripping through her insane defenses with ease, and yet she recovered. Time and time again.

*I'll come for you soon enough, Meadow*, she thought, yet again drilling her way into the innards of the large monstrosity. This time she even managed to rip through an eye. She tried to avoid the tentacles coming in to get rid of the invader but other than sending out a bit more burning ash, she couldn't avoid the fast moving limbs.

Once again she was crushed before she escaped, one of her ribs sticking out of her throat when she appeared yet again. She simply showed it back in, the wound closing right after, her organs settled once more, those squashed healing quickly. *Limited body of flesh my ass. Ker Velor would already be bits and pieces of metal if he faced that thing.*

She circled the being in a wide arc, most of the cloud now gone as it trashed around and screeched, beams of arcane energy flashing up as it crawled through the air, Ilea twirling and dodging, teleporting, and redirecting, some of the spells enveloping her, golden barriers and ash eating up most of the powerful beams. She was flung aside with another surge of void magic, the air sucked out of her lungs as she was sent twirling through the air. She teleported when a limb lashed out towards her.

*Then again, why would a mere Ascended fight something as powerful as this being?* She grinned and formed another drill, heat charged within her as she sacrificed her health to increase the power of her flames. She charged her wings and space magic, flying into the thing with gates and teleports to avoid its flailing defense, the pulses of void and mind magic barely slowing down her approach. Golden shields shattered, defending against the beam of arcane magic right before the eye exploded in a gory mess, ripped through by the violently spinning ash drill. A beam of heat and energy burned into the creature from within. Ilea raised her hand and made a fist, the space magic gripping a random portion of flesh before it was squished with a squelching sound, blood and innards violently shaken before she was removed from the massive form.

Her perception of time slowed as her brain was about to burst, Primordial Shift activated as she was stabilized, powerful fires enveloping the limb of flesh and bone around her.

The monster screeched, a dozen strikes of sound breaking flesh walls slammed into the immobile being of space, flesh, ash, and white flame. She remained anchored in the fabric, even the surge of void magic unable to rip her away into nothingness.

Ilea refused. Thousands of times had she faced these types of magic. Even the Meadow could no longer displace her without difficulty. What was a monstrosity of flesh against what she had trained for? *Just a beast. A tumor born of magic, left to roam the nothingness of Kohr, to kill and consume.* The bits of flame and flesh vanished, Ilea teleporting back and away as she let her mana recover from the costly spell.

She bathed in the beams of arcane energy, absorbing a large chunk of the mana as her form refused to be eradicated. *Just another Drake.* She grinned, excited for the hunt for the first time in weeks. Her eyes reflected the bright flames now enveloping a fourth of the enormous creature, its large wounds only closing slowly, many of its tentacles occupied with ripping out the burning flesh, unable to extinguish the fires of creation that brought her a constant stream of health and mana. She took in a deep breath and smiled, Monster Hunter coming out in a challenging roar, the sound rippling over the devastated landscape of Kohr, no demon or mind weaver with a shred of self preservation answering the call of Lilith.

Ilea watched in awe as a massive spell formed around the being of flesh and void, its entire form twirling before it was sucked away into nothingness. The remaining clouds and air nearby was sucked in, the sound louder than her roar. She smiled and flew closer, serene stillness returning to the region. *Oh, dear monster, only I am allowed to do that.* Ilea saw the very fabric, the thin and weakening line remaining before she grinned and latched on to the recent teleportation spell. *You won't escape Lilith, wielder of the Azarinth Star.*