

## Chapter 794 Father

Ilea glanced up at the sea of stars and smiled, spreading her arms as the Fae floated away from her shoulder.

It looked at her with its white lack of eyes.

“Give me your power, oh stars beyond,” she murmured, closing her eyes as she kept her face towards the stars.

A slight wave of space magic pushed down on her, the earth below giving way.

She opened her right eye and glanced at the fae, ignoring its attempt at destroying the organ.

*Mad*, it sent.

“Why? Because I talk to the stars? Maybe I can befriend them. I did manage to befriend you,” she said.

The Fae crossed its tiny arms.

“Oh I see. You’re jealous,” she said.

The Fae looked away.

“That means I’m right. Hello, stars? Can you talk to me?” she said, looking up. *I guess it would be kind of inconvenient if a star came closer to this planet.* The thought made her give up on the halfhearted attempt of channeling astral energies.

She teleported the Fae into her hands and cuddled it close to her chest, spreading her wings before she flew towards the city gates. This time the Guardians and guards on the wall recognized her immediately when she landed. Two machines and three human guards stood in front of the open gates, checking the travelers, merchants, and adventurers entering the city. It seemed just as busy as during the day. The only difference Ilea noticed was the fact that people moved directly from the gate bunkers to the city gate, very much aware of the people and forests around them.

*Secure travel, but also a way to avoid any and all dangerous areas in the Plains*, she thought, walking to the side of the gate before she leaned against the wall. Nobody complained.

*Wait?* the Fae asked.

“*Yeah. Ten minutes or so. They’re still in Virilya I think,*” she said.

*Bored* The Fae appeared on the ground and kicked away a small rock lying in the dirt.

Ilea formed two ash copies of the being and infused them. She let them loose a moment later.

“No, can’t be,” an adventurer said to his colleague as their group approached. He wore leather armor, a greatsword strapped to his back.

Another man dressed in a thick gray robe nodded quickly, his face largely hidden by a scarf and hood. “It’s her. Identify her.”

“*I can hear you people,*” Ilea sent to them, all four in the team tensing up as they looked her way.

“Apologies, Lady Lilith,” the leader said, his face clean shaven, black eyes taking her in.

**[Berserker – lvl 128]**

“I’ve heard a lot about you,” he said as he approached.

Ilea smiled. “That’s interesting,” she answered and teleported them to the other side of the wall. A few guards jumped down from above immediately. “*That was me. I moved them,*” Ilea sent to the guards she saw in her dominion before summoning a cloak, pulling the hood up before she teleported down and closer to the river, leaning against the foundation of the city wall with a sigh. *I’m literally famous.*

“*Come here, Violence. Or you’ll get abducted,*” she sent, moving the three beings towards her with Fabric Tear.

Ilea still heard the people above come and go, gasps and excited voices resounding at the first sight of the Guardians. Most adjusted quickly. Ilea even saw a considerable amount of people going about their business as usual, already adjusted or simply uncaring for the new addition of the machines. *Guess not everyone is going to give a shit.*

She did see Executioners move through the air and towards the nearby forests at breakneck speeds. New ones arriving in turn. Ilea assumed Aki had to charge them up before sending them back through his own network. The dagger did mention his expansion of the current Taleen network. For now only outside Accords cities that accepted the presence. All of them did.

Felicia was early. Her mark moved through the Plains in a split second, appearing far away and in the south. A few minutes passed before she moved again, this time arriving in one of the gate bunkers a hundred meters south of the Riverwatch walls.

Ilea was glad she could ignore the marks when they weren’t relevant. With all this recent long range teleportation, she would’ve long needed her healing to be active to counter the growing headache.

A few seconds later she saw the duo walk on the street leading to the city, Felicia wearing her Imperial armor, followed closely by the masked half elf and Immortal Guard Syrithis. They drew quite a lot of looks but nobody was brave enough to talk to them.

*Does that mean I just have more approachable vibes about me? Or was that specific Berserker just braver than most?* Ilea wondered. “*Hey, good to see you. I’m down by the river,*” she sent to Felicia.

The woman smiled and started towards the riverbank, floating down with a casual use of wind magic before she landed a few meters away from Ilea.

Syrithis followed behind, landing before she looked at the three Fae like creatures battling each other with ashen swords and space magic.

“*Hi there,*” Ilea sent to them both.

**‘ding’ ‘Telepathy reaches lvl 15’**

*Thanks for reminding me that I should work on my skills,* she thought, rolling her eyes at the message.

“*Is that...*” Syrithis sent.

“*Syrithis, meet Violence, Violence, Syrithis,*” Ilea sent.

*Friend!* the Fae exclaimed.

Syrithis jumped back, hands going towards her eyes as her wind magic flared up.

*“It’s just a greeting,”* Ilea sent.

*“What do you mean? It nearly destroyed my eyes!”* the half elf sent.

*“Way to freak out over nothing. You could use the space magic resistance training it seems,”* Ilea sent.

Violence knew not to attack Felicia, but the Immortal Guard was fair game. They were powerful enough to deal with a bit of eye opening space magic after all.

Syrithis remained at a reasonable distance. *“I thought the Fae were peaceful creatures, exploring the lands.”*

*“Well not this guy,”* Ilea said. *“Violence has anger issues.”*

The Fae turned towards her and somehow hissed, sending out a wave of space magic that thumped against the stone foundations. Her hood fell with the wave.

*No*

*Issues*

*Violence*

*Fuels*

*Me*

*“Yes, as I said. Anger issues,”* Ilea answered, squinting her eyes before she used her space manipulation to throw the small Fae into the river.

It plopped into the moving waters before being flushed away, occasionally resurfacing to throw space magic back towards Ilea.

*“Is it going to be fine?”* Felicia asked, following the small form with her eyes.

*“Ah don’t worry about it, they might as well be indestructible,”* Ilea sent and stood up, stretching when the Fae appeared on her head. It tried to rip out her hair, failing as the ashen copies flew up and restrained it. *“Syrithis, how have you been?”*

The masked half elf twitched when she heard her name. She shook her head slightly, watching the scene from behind the safety of her white and silver mask. *“I have been well, Ilea. The news of your... acquisition has left an impression. It is why I’m here.”*

*“Yeah, I’ll let the others deal with all the politics and treaties. The Guardians will be a massive help. I assume you want to meet the Hunters?”* Ilea asked.

*“They... were there?”* Syrithis asked, taking a slight step forward.

*“Of course. We fought the hordes together. Isalthar is alive and well, before you ask. As are Fey, Ben, and Seithir,”* Ilea sent.

The half elf remained silent for a few seconds before she bowed lightly. *“I appreciate your candor. This is not information you had to share with me. I had hoped for an offer to meet them, but I did not expect it. There are other reasons too, that much I offer to you in return. Alyris wishes for me to*

*find out more, about the current state of the Hunters, the Guardians, and the Dwarves of Io, whom I believe are the remnants of the Taleen.”*

*“We can go to Iz, I suppose. I don’t see a reason why you shouldn’t meet the Hunters,”* Ilea said as she focused on Niivalyr’s mark. *“Gonna bring a half elf and a human friend to you in a moment, alright?”*

The confirmation came a few seconds later. *“Do as you wish, I am in a side room of the Guild Hall, discussing with Evan.”*

Ilea considered for a second if bringing Syrithis to Evan was an issue. She looked at the masked woman as the fae fought atop her hair. *“You don’t have beef with Evan Trayne?”*

The half elf shook her head ever so slightly. *“If by having beef you mean if I have a dispute with the man, then no. However it’s been... a long time, since we met,”* she said. *“He knew my father.”*

*“Right,”* Ilea said and activated transfer, connecting the beings around her to the spell when it activated, bringing all of them into a spacious room deep below Karth. Dull green light shined from above, a set of comfortable leather chairs standing next to a stone table. She saw the heavy stone seats in the corner of the room. Neither Elfie nor Evan seemed surprised. She assumed the elf had informed the sand creator.

The surface of the stone table was adorned by various runes and symbols, etched into it by its creators. A set of large tomes lay on top. Two cups filled with steaming liquid stood next to the books, a small tea cooking station set up in one corner of the room. Someone had even added candles, to break up the green light at least a little.

Evan leaned back in his leather chair and took a sip of his drink. *“Lilith. And you, I presume, must be Felicia Redleaf.”*

*“Greetings,”* Felicia said. *“Evan Trayne, of the Foundation. I have heard some stories.”*

He smiled. *“I can imagine,”* he said, glancing at Ilea before he stood up. *“Syrithis, dear. You’ve grown,”* he said, walking up to the half elf before he hugged her.

Syrithis returned the gesture. *“Evan. It’s good to see you again.”*

*“Is it? You could’ve at least sent a letter,”* he said. *“It’s been centuries.”*

The half elf looked away. *“I was... busy. And then it became kind of weird. You were watching us anyway, and I had to consider... my allegiances.”*

*“Of course,”* Evan said, a genuine smile on his face as he held her arms and looked at her. *“And I have to say, I’m quite impressed with both you and Alyris. I’m glad you two found each other.”*

*“That...”* Syrithis said and looked around. *“Nobody knows about that! Who talked?”*

Evan let go of her and went back to his chair, sitting down with a sigh. *“Girl, I’ve known you since your were a child. Nobody talked. That doesn’t mean I didn’t know.”*

*“But then... the Foundation. You could’ve...”* Syrithis said.

*“I am not here on behalf of the Foundation of Glass. I am here as a friend to Isalthar. And the information I have on you, is that of a friend,”* he said. *“Now go and meet your father.”*

*“You... father?”* Felicia asked, looking at the various faces, getting stuck for a few seconds on Elfie.

"I didn't mention that?" Ilea asked.

"You did not," Felicia said.

Ilea shrugged. "Anyway, this is Elfie. Or Niivalyr. Elfie, Felicia, Syrithis. Two high ranking people from the Empire of Lys."

"I can tell what you are," Elfie said, looking at Syrithis with mist like patterns moving in his dark gray eyes. He hissed in a welcoming manner.

Syrithis looked at the others and hissed back.

"That was awkward. How long since you've met any elves?" Ilea asked before she herself hissed, the sound much more pronounced.

"You're getting too good at this," Elfie said.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Ilea asked and squinted. "Hissing isn't exactly the most complex of sounds."

"Yeah, yeah," Elfie said. "Just... the old superiority. It takes a while to work through that."

"Yeah," Ilea sighed. "Going to be difficult to break that cultural phenomenon with some of the Domains."

"Some? All of them," Niivalyr said. He sounded tired, shaking his head lightly.

"Time and effort," Ilea said. "If that's the goal. I sure as hell won't convince anyone," she said.

"You beating a few of them to death with your bare hands will sadly be more convincing to most than anything Isalthar has to say," Elfie said.

Ilea rolled her eyes, glancing at Syrithis. "Isalthar. Right. Come on," she said and led the two out into the massive hall. "*I see the Hunters have demolished it a little more?*" Ilea sent to one of the present Pursuers. The opposite wall showed heavy impacts, a crater at the end of the hall where a lectern had stood.

The Pursuer shrugged. "*They're manageable. I'm glad they have stopped destroying Guardians. For the most part.*"

Most of the elves were lounging around. A few were sleeping, some encased in ice, others buried in the stone floor. Ilea spotted one inside of a monster carcass, happily snoring away.

"*Bunch of existential crises happening all at once?*" she sent to the machine.

"*An understandable phenomenon, based on the circumstances. They have celebrated their victory. But now new questions arise. It will be intriguing to see where they all go from here. I am gathering a lot of information,*" Aki sent back.

"*You sound more like an artificial intelligence than before. Doing okay yourself? With all the changes?*" she asked.

"*It's quite a lot to take in. I'm still not fully used to it. All the projects, treaties, and considerations are a great distraction from the void like dread of considering my own new existence. The Meadow has shared some quite intriguing words with me however,*" Aki said.

"*Oh it did?*" Ilea asked with a smile.

*“Yes. We are similar in a sense. Far reaching, far seeing, immortal, and laden with responsibility. It is quite fortunate, to have one such as it as perhaps a... peer,”* Aki spoke.

*“Well, I’m glad you have someone to talk to about your incredibleness. Just remember that at the end of the day the Meadow is a tree and you’re a dagger,”* Ilea said.

*“Yes. And you’re some sentient flesh inside of a bone prison,”* Aki said.

*“Precisely. So let’s to the best we can,”* Ilea answered before she addressed the white haired elf near the entrance. *“Isalthar. I brought a guest.”*

He interrupted the conversation he had with a few other Hunters, glancing over before his white eyes landed on the masked Syrithis.

She hadn’t said a thing, merely looking towards the group of elves.

*“A... guest. Indeed. I am... how did you know?”* he asked, excusing himself before he hovered over to them.

*“A human lover? For a Val Akuun?”* Ilea said and winked.

Isalthar considered her before he smiled ever so slightly. *“A long time ago, it was a human that managed to quell my anger.”*

*“She must’ve been quite something,”* Ilea said.

He nodded. *“She was.”* Isalthar turned to the half elf. *“Child.”*

*Okay. I guess if you don’t learn anything about being a father. Wait, fathers aren’t really a thing for elves at all.*

*“Father,”* Syrithis said. *“I... congratulations, on your victory.”*

*“Thank you,”* Isalthar said.

*Wow this is awkward.* Ilea wondered if she should say something. *“Need some help?”* she sent to the elf.

*“I... perhaps. But you are a female? Would you know of the father?”* he asked.

*“Jesus, Isalthar. You should’ve explored a little more with Ben. Or learned from the woman,”* she said.

*“Quariaa was a forest witch... she did not know of some matters. And perhaps I was not in a state to learn,”* he said.

*“Okay. So do you know what a hug is?”* Ilea asked.

*“No,”* the elf replied.

*“Fuck, okay. Well I mean I don’t know if you elves even have Oxytocin. I’ll show you,”* Ilea said and moved back a little. She produced an ashen copy of herself and hugged it. *“Do that to her.”*

*“I can see what you’re doing,”* Syrithis said, turning around before the elf hugged her.

*“Like this?”* he asked.

The half elf stood there before she slowly raised her hands, closing them around the elf’s back. Her body shook, soft sobs resounding.

*“Is this normal?” Isalthar asked as he looked at Ilea.*

*“This is the first time I see you freaked out. Wait how the fuck did you even procreate without knowing how to hug?” she asked. “Do I want to know this?”*

*“There was fighting... a lot of blood... I was confused at the time, Ilea,” he said. “She was not strong enough to hurt me, and she nearly died quite a few times. But with healing magic I-”*

*“Maybe not. Just hold her. It’s normal,” Ilea said. Is this Quaniaa related to Celene?*

*“If the elves move to the Descent, you two can see each other more reliably,” Ilea said. “And I’m sure the Meadow can teach you some things about human fatherhood. I suppose she knows plenty about elven culture already.”*

*“There are no fathers among us. She is one of very few half elves. They are hunted by both our kinds,” Isalthar said. “We thought it better for her to build a life amongst your kind. Her chance of survival was higher, especially after she had been a successful Hunter for years.”*

*“Makes sense,” Ilea said before she addressed Aki. “Hey, where’s Zoy?”*

*“Zoy is sleeping in a nearby home,” Aki said.*

*“Okay, kind of creepy that you know that but fine. I think it might be helpful for her to talk to Syrithis. She’s not a half elf but they share some... circumstances,” she said.*

*“A thoughtful observation. I will suggest such to the Huntress, and the Immortal Guard Syrithis,” Aki said.*

*“Thanks,” Ilea said before she addressed Isalthar again. “Do you love her?”*

*“I do. Of course,” he said.*

*“Are you proud of her?” Ilea asked.*

*“How could I not be?” he asked.*

*She smiled. “Then tell her.”*

*“But she surely knows this,” Isalthar said.*

*“Trust me on this. Just tell her,” Ilea said, brushing at her eyes with some ash.*