

Chapter 470 Reinforcements

“There she is,” one of the Shadows said after waving her over. “Lilith, savior of Riverwatch. Seems like the threat was exaggerated.”

“Or you are underestimating her,” another one said, amusement obvious in his voice. “Still... very stupidly.” He seemed to be grinning, despite the mask covering his face.

The man who had talked first growled. He was at least twice as large as Ilea, plus another Ilea in the form of muscle put on top of it all. His armor too should have weighed as much as a car. Savage, scratched and hastily repaired in parts.

“My offer stands, we can do it right here, right now,” the second one said, magic flowing around him.

Ilea smirked, identifying the bunch. Warriors and mages in their mid two hundreds. Claire certainly hadn't underestimated the threat, that much was sure. The two men who talked were both close to two fifty.

“Stand down, Miller,” a woman said, her voice calm and confident. She was smaller than Ilea, a fine light blue dress covering her slender form. Long raven hair fell down her back, her mouth and nose free but the upper part of her face covered by a simple black mask.

Ilea looked at her eyes, feeling the magic in the area through her sphere. *Hmm*, she thought.

[Mage – lvl 285]

The woman was by far the highest level individual nearby, aside from herself.

The brute man shut up, not even grumbling as he visibly relaxed.

“You too Duncan. Let the man be,” one of the men she had recognized said. “It is good to meet you here. Lilith now, is it?” he said.

“I suppose it is. And here I thought Shadows were secretive with their names,” Ilea said, glancing at the woman when she was done talking.

“Varren,” the man said. “We met briefly nearby and back in Ravenhall. It isn't surprising to see you have yet again advanced in power.”

“Names can be said without being given,” another man she had recognized said. “Charles. We met near Virilya. During the demon invasion.”

“You know her?” the woman said, likely their squad leader.

Ilea assumed Varren was the leader of the other one.

“Yes, I'm Petra if you have forgotten. No offense taken of course, names are annoying after all,” she said with a smile. “She was the one coming to Virilya. One of the reasons Ravenhall is how it is today, and not a demon infested ruin.”

Ilea smiled at the waiting group of Riverwatch officials, unsure if to interrupt. Alistair let them talk. Probably a smart choice.

“The magic I feel around you... I'm intrigued,” she said to the woman.

“I have heard a lot about you, Lilith. And your... resistance training. It seems, excessive,” the woman said. “Yet now that we seem to have traveled here for nothing, perhaps a small bout would not be such a bad distraction.”

“I agree,” Miller said, the massive man crouching as his magic flared.

Ilea looked at him and hissed, Monster Hunter flowing through the group and a few onlookers. She smiled at the fact that not all of them were frozen. Everyone had felt the power.

Miller’s eyes turned a little red when he could move again, the parts of his face that weren’t obscured by steel distorting into a vicious grin.

“Not exaggerated at all, it seems,” Warren said. “We have the matter of discussing our mission with the local governor however. I suggest we postpone getting to know each other.”

“You are crazy, I love it!” Petra said as she slapped Ilea’s shoulder.

Warren turned away and greeted Alistair.

“It won’t take long. We will receive payment from Ravenhall. Miller, some patience,” the woman said.

“We could play outside the city,” Ilea suggested, looking at the woman.

She seemed to consider. “He isn’t needed in the talks. Let him live, if you would be so kind.”

“I’m a healer,” Ilea said.

“Good to see you,” Charles said, waving at her.

Ilea nodded. “Can you fly?” she asked the brute.

“Flying is for birds. Do I look like a bird?” he grumbled.

“No, you lack both the beauty and grace,” she said and spread her wings. She grabbed the man with a few of her limbs, lifting him off the ground.

She expected a lot of weight and was still surprised. This creature, whatever it was, could be used as a projectile to breach even the walls of Virilya. Ilea wondered if she could even lift two of him. Probably not. An impressive feat for his actual size.

They flew out over the western forest, Ilea unceremoniously dropping the man a few minutes later.

He twirled in the air and landed like a bowling ball smashing away a few trees. Not quite a Strike but she had little training launching large men into forests.

She landed ten meters away, watching him stand up.

Level two fifty. Same as some of the Dark Ones. Let’s see what he can do, she thought with a grin on her face.

“Impressive. I doubted your strength. I still do. You slaughtered a whole army? They must have been weak. I could have done the same,” he said, his muscles straining as some of the steel of his armor bent.

Metal mage? No... seems to be pure anger.

“I’m sure you could have,” she said and meant it. Eight Shadows would have shredded through that low level army just like she had. She wondered if a few of them would have died, considering the

lack of healer. Harken had prepared well, pooling the higher leveled officers together to face her with the ranged support of an army. Now that she thought about it, she wasn't so sure anymore.

She had to admit that she was quite different from an average Shadow. Neither that woman nor Miller, the man standing in front of her seemed very average however.

"Let's leave stories and speculations for others. Show me," she said and used Monster Hunter again, spreading her arms in a casual gesture.

This man was dangerous. To most others that was. To her, he looked like a suitable distraction until dinner time.

The magic around him exploded and he shot forward, a simple brute charge.

Ilea didn't care to dodge or blink. She was merely interested in how much damage he could deal.

Miller closed the distance in an impressive time for his size. He threw in a feint when he got close and grappled her, twirling before he slammed her down into the ground.

He didn't let up, rolling with her in tow before he closed his legs behind her back, coming to a stop.

Ilea watched as he slammed his fists down on her, his fingers shooting out to squash her eyes. His strikes looked erratic and wild but he was aiming for weak points quite efficiently. Throat, eyes and nose before he moved on to her torso.

She was surprised some of the damage actually moved past her armor of ash. *Waves of Mana intrusion. Interesting. His aim is quite good too. If his fingers weren't as fat, he could have gotten my eyes too.*

Not getting a reaction, Miller moved on to brute force, slower attacks slamming into her head as waves of mana flowed through her.

The damage was enough to make her use her healing from time to time. Her bones didn't give but her throat and some of her organs were mildly damaged. An impressive feat for someone a hundred levels below her. His hits seemed to get stronger too. Not enough to change anything in his favor however.

Ilea interrupted one of his blows with her hand, stopping his fist dead in its track. "Are you done?" she asked with a smirk behind her armor.

He twirled and threw her into a line of trees.

She used a few of her ashen limbs to avoid them, using the momentum to sling herself around and back at him.

Miller was waiting, his fist moving towards her approaching chest with all the power he could muster.

Ilea answered in kind, their fists slamming together as she came to a stop. She could hear the satisfying crunch of his fingers breaking. His arm however remained.

"Hmm, is that all you have?" he asked, apparently amused at the broken bones.

Ilea proceeded to dance around his defense, dodging his attempts to grab or punch her as she aimed for his knees, elbows, wrists and shoulders. Her wings and high speed countered his reach and finesse, her precognition overwhelming his technique entirely.

In a few seconds she had broken eight of his bones, the man's legs giving out under him as he tried to step back. His arms unable to move as well as they had before.

Anybody else would be on the ground but he can still fight.

She had used her attacks without mana intrusion, trying to give him a fighting chance. A few more moves bent his legs into shapes that could not physically carry him anymore. And still he tried to resist, now on his knees, flailing to get her.

"Stop it, or I'll move on to your face," she said with a sweet voice, stopping in front of him as she let his uncoordinated attacks slam into her armor.

"I admit, you are stronger than I thought," the man said.

Ilea smiled.

"But this is nothing. You are barely at my level," he said and grappled her, trying to use his weight against her as he brought them both to the ground.

He hugged her close and proceeded to headbutt her as hard as he could.

Neither of their skulls relented for a good minute, the dull sound of his skull colliding with her armor the only thing audible in the small clearing.

Miller's arms suddenly went limp, as did his legs. His eyes rolled back as he fell unconscious, the repeated trauma to his head too much.

"Okay," Ilea murmured and wiggled out of his hold. She stepped aside and used an ashen limb to heal the man.

He fights like a wrestler. With his weight and the power behind his punches, this guy can take on creatures much higher than his level. As long as he is larger in size.

She was a little disappointed at the lack of fast regeneration or health steal. Though she hadn't disabled her resistances, she hadn't felt a drain.

The man's bones snapped back into place and he woke up with a gasp.

"FUCK!" he shouted, looking around before his eyes found the woman casually sitting on a nearby rock, an ashen limb connected to him.

"What did you do?" he asked in a growl.

"You hit my head, with yours. Repeatedly," Ilea explained.

He put a hand to his chin in a contemplative manner. "You have hard bones. But just because I lost consciousness doesn't mean you bested me."

"Of course not," Ilea said, nodding with understanding.

"Then what are we waiting for?" he asked, slamming his fists together with a wide grin.

I like his spirit, Ilea thought and giggled. "Yes, let's continue."

The two enjoyed twenty minutes of sweet bone breaking and tree destroying brawling until the others arrived.

Ilea was just in the process of training her discus skills, twirling her body with the man in tow before she sent him crashing into a line of nearby trees, two of them splitting like twigs before he rolled to a stop behind.

Too many of his bones were broken to let him stand. He instead clawed his way back to her with one half working arm, a bone sticking out as blood pooled around him. His eyes were fixated on her as he growled.

“He really didn’t exaggerate,” Charles said as he chuckled and floated down to join her. “Now this, is a battlefield.”

“He likes to destroy trees,” Ilea suggested.

“It was you who threw him,” Varren said in a dry tone.

“You must have fought for a while to get him to this state,” the squad leader said.

Ilea nodded, not mentioning that she had worked him down to this broken state fifteen times already. She learned about his moves during the time, the leg he favored and the feints he preferred. The heavy brain damage she continued to deliver on his mind prevented him from doing the same.

Or he simply wasn’t a fast learner.

“Let’s pause for a while, honey,” she said and crouched near the man, healing him with one of her limbs.

“How’d it go?” she asked, not looking back at the others.

They had come with a mission but Shadows were quite independent. She wouldn’t hesitate to put them into their place if they decided to go against Riverwatch.

“There is no need for hostility, Lilith,” the woman said. “We simply received a report and a part of our payment for coming in the first place. And an offer to stay for a while, which we declined. Neither me nor Varren deemed it necessary to remain.”

“That’s good to hear,” Ilea said and helped the massive man up, his bones back where they should be.

“Let’s call it a draw. In my favor,” he said.

“You did well on that last round,” Ilea said and nodded. The crawling mess he had been really made her shake in fear. Close to the Ascended. Very close.

None of her skills had leveled during the ordeal but it had certainly been entertaining. And sometimes that was more than enough.

“What are your plans then? Still up for that bout?” Ilea asked, looking at the group.

“I wouldn’t say no,” Duncan said, summoning a dagger that he twirled around his fingers.

No dagger resistance out there, she thought, looking back at the woman.

“We have another assignment east of here,” she said and looked at Miller. “But I suppose it has been a while since I met my match,” she said, a sly smile on her lips. Her black eyes seemed to sparkle for a split second before they returned to normal.

At two eighty, there are plenty of matches out there, lady. Maybe you should leave these plains once in a while, Ilea thought but didn’t say anything.

Varren nodded. "There was a monster infestation reported north of Kroll. I suppose we can stay for the show, if you don't mind. Since the last tournament was so... rudely interrupted."

"I don't care," Ilea said.

The woman shrugged.

"What do you guys have? Any interesting magic? I pay ten gold for a new resistance," Ilea said.

The two woman in Varren's squad looked at each other. Neither of them had talked so far.

"Fire mostly. I doubt you lack that," one of them said, giggling.

"I use wind and sand... not rare either but perhaps?" the other one whispered, the sound traveling through the area with magic.

Is she using wind for that?

"Cool voice thing you've got going on but I have all that. You can join the arena in Ravenhall if you want to earn some silver," she said and returned her attention to the others.

"My magic is mostly arcane," Varren said.

"Void, but it's the daggers that deal the damage," Duncan said, once more twirling his weapons around. "I would still like a bite, if you would indulge me."

Ilea knew that Petra used lava and Charles light. That only left Miller and the woman whose name she had yet to learn.

"Ladies first," Ilea said and spread her wings, ascending to reach the same height as the woman.

"I won't hold back, considering your reputation," she said.

"Oh? Please don't," Ilea said as politely as she could.

She wondered if the Shadow could reach the same heights Feyrair had displayed. Somehow she doubted whatever she had could top a dragon transformation.

The others moved aside when a powerful pulse of mana rushed out from the woman. Mana Ilea had never felt before.

Please be something cool!

Ilea watched as the woman's pupils changed from black to something else. A deep void interspersed with specks of light like the night sky.

Magic manifested in the form of hovering shapes, vaguely resembling arrows. They brimmed with energy, colored in shades of red, blue, and purple. It looked like the light around the Shadow dimmed as her power manifested.

The arrows rotated around her in a complicated pattern as she lifted one of her arms. A tiny speck of light formed in front of her outstretched palm, the same sly smile on her lips.

Ilea felt the attack coming and the damage it would deal. The decision was obvious. *Disable armor, get fucking roasted!*

A beam of dark light came and went, washing over her body. She felt the various aspects of the magic, its complicated form. At first she thought it arcane in nature but there was heat too, something that felt like space magic, and finally something else. Something new.

She reformed her armor without actually using the skill, instead reconstructing the shape with created ash.

“Interesting,” she said with a smile, realizing that the casual expression on the woman had changed.

Really? You really thought that would be enough to take me out? No wonder you're that arrogant. Well then, let me teach you a few lessons. After I've gotten a resistance to whatever space mumbo jumbo you're throwing around.

Ilea would enjoy playing around a little before showing this young Shadow the dread of Lilith.