

Chapter 875 Future Drake and Drake like considerations

Ilea left Feyrair to his own hunts after a single minute of additional fighting. Though calling it a fight was certainly generous. As she had expected from him, the display didn't discourage him. Quite the opposite.

He simply vowed to reach the same heights, as he had done many times before.

She didn't doubt that he would reach her current power in time, but without quite as extensive healing as her, and perhaps less luck in finding high level creatures, it would certainly take a lot longer. She suggested he should go to Kohr, but he refused, with no way to get back on his own. The chance was slim, but if she died or was preoccupied, he would be stuck in the realm of the Navuun.

Ilea wondered how much of his refusal was due to reason. Perhaps he wasn't quite as eager to take the same kind of risks as she had. She didn't blame him, knowing how close she had gotten to death time and time again. He didn't have the same kind of healing, nor anything like her space magic, both major tools that allowed her to face the god like creatures she had recently taken down.

Before choosing her next hunting grounds, Ilea contacted Trian through her mark. *"The Meadow told me there was progress with the Bluemoon root?"*

"Yes. It's been quite promising. Prioritize your endeavors, but feel free to visit," he sent back seconds later.

Ilea took in a deep breath as she flew up to see the vast expanse of the mist laden landscape. *Maybe there's an Oracle here too or something of the like.* She immediately questioned the thought, knowing how vast this landscape was. The Marshes stretched far, but nowhere near as far as the wracked land of the North. *Same lightning on the Krahen Isles, and in the mountains above Paarah.*

She opened a bottle of ale and soon focused on the mark of Trian.

Malise kept her expression neutral as she healed Sentinel after Sentinel. Of course they had no injuries remaining on their bodies, but every last one of them sighed with relief when her arcane healing flowed through them. Hours and hours she spent on this, every single day.

The opportunities granted to her were ridiculous. She had been lucky, as were the others in her team, their suspicion the sole reason they had been chosen as the first to ingest the Bluemoon root. A choice instead of ferocious loyalty or a wish to get favor. There was certainly plenty of both in the members of the Sentinels, especially those younger and at a lower level.

Veyra had commented on it a few times. How it reminded her of her former Healing Order. The downright worship of higher level members, let alone the faculty and Ilea.

Though they quickly learned during their bouts, resistance training, and in the many classes, that independent and critical thought was not only allowed, but expected. Many of the higher leveled Sentinels interrupted the faculty or held their own lessons and bouts, sharing what they had learned through experience, and teaching others.

Refugees from all over the Plains, former slaves, orphans. All of them had their own history, some more willing to share than others, but Malise had enough experience with people to know that every last one of them had their own purpose to be here. Purpose that drove them, purpose that let them endure the arduous training. She herself didn't even know if she could've gone through with it all were it not for her new ability to heal mental strains.

There were many here more capable than her, and not just in mere magical power. She had found her match in many of the Sentinels. Competitive and ambitious souls, others selfless with unwavering will, others yet inspiring leaders, and some single minded battle maniacs. All of them, she respected. And all of them made her want to exceed even the expectations she had of herself.

Her new Class at the moment was both boon and bane. They were the first, others just recently having eaten the Elixir. She would've liked to train like everyone else, but the often untold expectation for them to heal everyone's minds was all present. And the Sentinels trained as much as they could, especially the newer ones. At the moment, herself, Veyra, Halra, and Balt took shifts using their healing abilities.

She herself had received the Arcane Healer Class mere days prior. Halra got something called Arcane Flame Wielder, Balt received the Arcane Medic Class, and Veyra received Arcane Priest. All of them had at least some ability to heal, both themselves and others, with Halra having the least potent healing, and Veyra the most powerful, though all of them had to touch their respective targets to use their spells.

Just a few more weeks of this and we'll have at least a dozen people capable of arcane healing. She suppressed a sigh, knowing that she was building a lot of goodwill and connections with the many Sentinels she healed. Though with how straightforward and purpose driven most of them were, she wouldn't exactly benefit as much as she would've with normal adventurers or even healers. They would help her if she asked for help, but they would've done so regardless of her mental healing abilities. And they expected her to work hard to improve, her status beneficial to everyone, but not something that made her be seen as special.

"Thank you so much for this," Ferren said, the young Medic Sentinel teleporting away to let the next person receive their mental healing.

Malise glanced towards the open entrance to the enchanted training hall, seeing Trian walk in with Ilea. It was the first time she had seen the woman since the feast. Her presence instilled the same instinctual feeling it had before, though she felt as if channeling her Reconstruction spell into her own mind helped somewhat with the presence of the Godslayer.

[The Untainted – lvl ???]

She evolved? Or her title is different.

"Malise got the Arcane Healer Class. As I said, they're all relatively basic and besides the Arcane Medic Class that Balt received, none of them have offensive intrusion abilities. It is surprising that

even Halra has a healing spell, though the Meadow assumes it's due to the original Bluemoon Grass the new Elixir is based on." Trian explained before they stopped near Malise.

"A remnant maybe, of the Azarinth Order," Ilea said. "Hey. Hope you're doing alright." She glanced at the line of waiting Sentinels.

Malise was about to answer when she felt healing similar to her Reconstruction enter her mind, far more potent than anything she could conjure up.

Many of the Sentinels still waiting said their thanks and left the hall, others asking what just happened with some confusion. A few just glared at Ilea with terror or admiration.

That has to get pretty annoying at some point, Malise thought. "I'm doing fine, Lilith," she said, choosing not to call her Ilea in front of other Sentinels. She didn't expect it but it could create unneeded tension. "My Arcane Healer Class is at level eight, the skills growing quickly with my continued ingestion of the Bluemoon root. Reconstruction is already at level twelve. I have to touch people to heal, and it requires quite a lot of mana." She used the spell on herself to demonstrate, assuming Ilea had a way to perceive her magic.

"Arcane Form is a body enhancement spell that increases my resilience and Dexterity. Arcane Shield lets me conjure armor made of pure arcane energy." She activated her aura and shield, slight blue light shimmering around her black leather armor. Runes shimmered in the same light where her skin was exposed.

"Blink lets me teleport, with a very short time between uses." She teleported one meter away and then back. "And Arcane Body reduces the pain I feel. It also lets me recover with natural regeneration, no matter how bad the injury."

Ilea didn't interrupt her. She smiled when Malise was done. "Kind of funny to hear those names again. No Destruction spell yet?"

"Balt has it," Trian said. "He also has an arcane beam, and arcane shard spell, both ranged abilities that leave intrusion damage. Halra's abilities are closer to a standard body enhancer's, but built on arcane fire with a blueish color. Her ability to heal herself will set her apart of course, as it did you."

"Battle healers like Malise?" Ilea asked.

"Balt is an Arcane Mage, Halra an Arcane Warrior, and Veyra is an Arcane Healer," Trian explained. "And we're sure to have more soon, likely with a deeper connection to the Sentinels."

"As long as we don't become another Healing Order," Ilea murmured.

"Plenty of examples to learn from," Trian said.

"Thanks for showing your abilities, Malise," Ilea said.

Malise bowed. "Thanks for freeing up an hour of my time."

"I used to heal an entire hall of writhing Sentinels. I'm sure you won't be busied for long," Ilea said and grinned.

Writhing Sentinels. Of course. She's the one who founded this place.

Ilea got a serving of food from the Golden Drake supplied mess hall, greeting a few of the present Sentinels, most of them quite new to the organization. *Everyone else already left again, I guess. I just hope they get to travel around from time to time. Teleportation gates are useful, but spreading your wings and flying through an untouched snow covered valley is just too good to pass up.*

She teleported down and into Trian's office, past the enchantments that failed to prevent her entry.

"You don't have to demonstrate just how insufficient these defenses are against high level space mages," he murmured, pouring himself a cup of tea.

Ilea sat down on an ashen chair to not damage the nice armchairs in the man's office. "Not just any high level space mage. Me."

He turned and sat down. "You. I heard of your recent adventure in the Marshes."

"Interesting fights, yes."

"You know you don't have to push yourself this hard, don't you?"

"What do you mean? I enjoyed the battles," she answered.

"I know you do, but I hope you're not taking even more risks because of the Architect," Trian said, sipping from his tea.

Ilea ate in silence.

"No matter who or what attacks the Accords, you're not the only one there to defend us," he said.

Ilea finished chewing before she gulped. She smiled. "No, but I'm part of the Accords, and I want to pull my weight. You're nurturing the next generation of Sentinels, and I do what I do best. I fight monsters. You know me, Trian. I've taken arguably stupid risks since coming here to Elos. I've taken stupid risks in the past week even. Not because I want to protect people, but because it's who I am."

"I know who you are, Ilea," he said with a smile. "Just be careful, okay? Possible danger will always be there. We all know you will pull your weight. But you can rely on us doing the same."

She looked at him for a few seconds, then continued eating. What he said made her feel strange. As if tension in her stomach had vanished that she hadn't even felt was there. She smiled and nodded, finishing her food before she stood up. "I will try. Thank you, Trian."

He just smiled and sipped at his tea.

"I'll see you around," she said and stepped through a gate, to the domain of the Meadow.

"*Can you teleport me outside?*" she sent to the being, removing her space magic resistance.

Ilea was moved in the next instant, appearing once more in the dark northern landscape.

She flew to a spot with a nice view, overlooking a few mist lakes with dancing Miststalkers.

"*Are you alright?*" the Meadow sent, the being still present, even kilometers away.

Ilea didn't answer for a while.

"Do you think the Miststalkers will ever awaken?" she asked instead.

"They are strange spirits. I will continue to try of course, but they are gone when the suns rise, and return when they set. I cannot tell the difference between these spirits, and I don't know if I have seen the same one twice before. Even Owl has difficulties differentiating them."

"Hmm."

"Are you concerned about the Cerithil Hunters? You met with them, didn't you?"

"I did, but no. They seem more than capable." she sent and paused. *"As is everyone else."* Her eyes opened wide. A light smile came to her face. *Trian, you shithead.*

Ilea sighed and fell onto her back, spreading her arms wide. The rock felt comfortable.

"I think I'll stay here for a while," she sent.

"I'll be here. If you need anything," the Meadow sent back.

Ilea lay there and meditated, letting the magic flow through her as she started to breathe consciously. She soon calmed.

Ilea opened her eyes slightly when a nearby explosion rocked the ground. *Already morning*, she thought, turning to the other side when another bolt of arcane lightning cracked into the northern landscape. Checking her Meditation Fourth Tier, she found that 33 seconds were available to her by now.

I guess that counted as motionless and focused.

She smiled at the thought of focused meditation. *A focus on breathing and mana flow many.*

Keeping her eyes closed as bits of rock impacted the ground nearby, she decided to use up a few seconds of her Fourth Tier, if only to better understand what perfect synergy meant, and how quickly she could turn the skill on and off.

Ilea activated the skill and she immediately felt herself calm. Any doubts, any confusion, all gone in an instant. She could feel the mana flow through her, could feel the ground she was laying on. She heard her own heart beat and took a single breath before she deactivated the skill yet again. One second had not passed, but she found her remaining time to sit at 32. Testing with another split second, she found that there didn't seem to be a time requirement between uses, but her saved up time would shrink by one second either way.

Which means in theory, I'd have one hundred one second moments where I can both calm myself down and assess the situation, and to cast spells for cheaper.

When she used her Reconstruction Fourth Tier, she felt powerful, as if she was one with her magic. Her Ash Fourth Tier still felt somewhat overwhelming, as if she temporarily unlocked unlimited potential, at least for her ash. But Meditation calmed her down. She just knew what to do, and while it didn't explicitly increase her perception, it almost felt like it. She assumed because her entire being knew what to focus on, and where to put resources. *Perfect synergy, with everything that I am.*

Ilea looked at her hand, closed in a fist. She lay on her back again and closed her eyes, deciding to try and meditate as the arcane storms drifted by.

She wondered if Trian had been right. Wondered if she really did push herself more than usual. *But I've done that before, when it was necessary.*

Ilea smiled. *Hmm. Guess that means he was right. Partially at least. Continuing the fight against the Wind of Aveer was a moment's choice. But I suppose my want to improve as fast as possible in case that I have to face the Architect could've influenced me subconsciously.*

Difficult, to really find balance when I both enjoy what I do, and have so many reasons to do it. Should I seek out less powerful monsters? Should I help train the Sentinels?

For now, I think I'll just meditate.

And then, well. One Drake at a time.

Ilea was woken from her meditative state a few times when she was directly struck by arcane lightning. With her precognition, she had enough time to raise her shields and some ash, not that either was necessary, but it proved the quickest way to be back in her meditation right after.

Hours passed in what felt like moments. Ilea felt similar in some ways to how she had felt back in the Azarinth temple, weeks before she had unlocked and leveled her Blink spell far enough. She often felt the urge to go and hunt the next creature, but she stopped herself. It felt right in a way, to stay here. To breathe. To not be among the busy life of the Accords, preparing for a threat that may appear tomorrow, in ten years, or not at all.

She felt an urge to explore, to fight if anything came up, but more so at the moment, she just wanted to be here, to have some quiet among the storms. By now she had already maxed out her available 100 seconds in her Meditation Fourth Tier, which meant there was no longer a productive need to stay here and meditate.

She decided to stay nonetheless. The decision, she found, made her smile. It felt right.

"There are a few four mark targets that Aki could guide you to," the Meadow sent what felt like half a day later.

Ilea found that night had fallen yet again.

"I think I'll stay here a little longer," she sent back.

The Meadow spoke to her again when the suns rose in the morning.

"Did you come to any conclusions?"

Ilea rolled to the side, as if she was looking towards the tree far in the distance, and below ground. *"That it can feel nice to sit around and meditate for a while. Though I suppose I've always known that."*

"Contemplating existence and your own mind, your own being, it is a marvel, and a privilege, but just as much necessity. For life itself," the being answered. *"What made you forget?"*

Ilea smiled. *“Many things, I guess. It’s just been busy. Same issue with my power leading to responsibility, but just as much a shit ton of opportunities that came with both Aki and you. The last few weeks have been quite intense. Came close to death a few more times than might’ve been necessary.”*

“Is it necessary at all?”

She grinned. *“Hardly anything quite as exhilarating than a close fight with something as strong or stronger than me.”*

“I’m glad you have found some perspective. I woke you from your trance because the Seals below the Haven have been broken a few minutes ago. They await your presence, should you wish to be there,” the Meadow sent.

Ilea sat up and stretched, yawning before she remembered she hadn’t eaten anything in more than a full day. The thought made her smile slightly. *“I’ll go check it out. Can’t well ignore it now that they’ve put in so much time and effort.”*

“You could.”

“Yeah, I know. But maybe they’ll find something interesting,” she sent and focused on the mark she had on Nes.

“Once you’re done, Ilea. Perhaps there is something we can discuss,” the Meadow sent, its voice in her mind contemplative. Uncertain in a way she had rarely perceived.

She cast her third tier Transfer spell and cracked her neck. *“I’ll let you know when I’m back.”*