

Chapter 500 Invasion

Ilea blinked up when a wave of water washed away the living, dead, and everything else in its path. She blinked into a hall overgrown with roots, her ashen limbs fanning out to slash through the creatures and cursed.

Dozens of humans were instantly ripped apart, a swath of them stumbling over each other as they tried to get to her. Heart of Cinder incinerated all of them.

Ilea let the blade of the mantis creature dig into her ash, unable to penetrate the hardened defenses before its head exploded from a punched fueled with her spells.

She displaced three swaths of acid spit towards her by the three Wildflower Ants crawling on the walls. The poisonous acid landed on the Willow Mother, interrupting her wood magic.

Four more mantises appeared in the room, finding a quick end when Heart of Cinder expanded outwards, their bodies slowly falling, still affected by her Force.

The ants and their projectiles were quite effective coupled with Displacement, their carapace annoyingly tough against her punches.

[Pearl Mantis Sire – lvl ??]

Another two appeared, likely crazed and frenzied by its killed brethren. Both the cursed humans and insect like monsters liked to converge whenever she fought them.

Ilea spent the next twenty seconds slaughtering the remaining fifty or so creatures before she blinked up and to the roof. A large tree with pink leaves had grown on it.

She dissolved her ashen armor, reforming it again to make sure no armor reducing effects remained.

Her eyes tried to understand the changes in the wisps around her as she quickly scanned the messages in her mind since meeting up with the Lily associates.

‘ding’ ‘You have defeated [Willow Mother – lvl 382]’

‘ding’ ‘You have defeated [Wildflower Ant – lvl 320]’

‘ding’ ‘You have defeated [Pearl Mantis Sire – lvl 457]’

‘ding’ ‘You have defeated [Cursed Mage – lvl 68]’

...

‘ding’ ‘You have defeated [Wildflower Ant – lvl 375]’

The levels varied greatly but nothing so far had been above five hundred. The Mantises were the most annoying, capable of quick movements and teleports. As soon as she fought a few of them however, it became trivial to kill them. Their defenses weren't something to write home about and most every being in this city was already injured in some way.

Ilea wondered what the distorted space meant in the surrounding area. It had been obvious instantly that the mana in the whole area around the city was higher than it should have been but the space had seemed normal initially.

She assumed the growing vegetation was caused by either one or many of the creatures or by the mana density in some way.

'ding' 'The Azarinth Sentinel reaches lvl 353 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'The Azarinth Sentinel reaches lvl 354 – Five stat points awarded'

...

'ding' 'The Azarinth Sentinel reaches lvl 358 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'Kin of Ash reaches lvl 353 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'Kin of Ash reaches lvl 354 – Five stat points awarded'

...

'ding' 'Kin of Ash reaches lvl 357 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'The Faen Valkyrie reaches lvl 87 – One stat point awarded'

'ding' 'The Faen Valkyrie reaches lvl 88 – One stat point awarded'

'ding' 'The Faen Valkyrie reaches lvl 89 – One stat point awarded'

...

'ding' 'The Faen Valkyrie reaches lvl 103 – One stat point awarded'

'ding' 'The Faen Valkyrie reaches lvl 104 – One stat point awarded'

'ding' 'Absolute Destruction reaches 3rd lvl 26'

'ding' 'Azarinth Sphere reaches 3rd lvl 27'

'ding' 'Azarinth Perception reaches 3rd lvl 26'

'ding' 'Heart of Cinder reaches 3rd lvl 22'

'ding' 'Heart of Cinder reaches 3rd lvl 23'

'ding' 'Storm of Cinders reaches 3rd lvl 20'

'ding' 'Ashen Wings reaches 3rd lvl 26'

'ding' 'Eyes of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 18'

'ding' 'Keeper of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 29'

'ding' 'Force reaches lvl 18'

'ding' 'Force reaches lvl 19'

'ding' 'Force reaches lvl 20'

'ding' 'Force reaches 2nd lvl 1'

Active – Force – 2nd lvl 1

Push away or stop objects, constructs, and people from reaching you with Space magic

2nd stage: The strength of Force is increased against schools of magic you are familiar with. You may use Force freely within its sphere of influence, pushing in each direction.

Category: Space Magic – Aura

'ding' 'Force reaches 2nd lvl 2'

'ding' 'Force reaches 2nd lvl 3'

'ding' 'Flare of Creation reaches 2nd lvl 4'

...

'ding' 'Flare of Creation reaches 2nd lvl 6'

'ding' 'Displacement reaches 2nd lvl 4'

...

'ding' 'Displacement reaches 2nd lvl 8'

'ding' 'Space Shift reaches 2nd lvl 2'

'ding' 'Body of the Valkyrie reaches 2nd lvl 2'

'ding' 'Space Awareness reaches lvl 13'

'ding' 'Space Awareness reaches lvl 14'

'ding' 'Space Awareness reaches lvl 15'

'ding' 'Deviant of Humanity reaches lvl 11'

'ding' 'Harmony of the Drowned reaches lvl 9'

'ding' 'Wood Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 2'

Ilea hadn't used Monster Hunter in the battles at all. Most of the creatures were immune to its effects due to their high level, nor did she want to paralyze them in the first place.

She wanted them to come at her.

I can push in all directions now? she wondered, testing it with a ball of ash she threw up into the air.

A few seconds later, she had already gotten the hang of it. Her sphere helped quite a bit with applying the Force spell. She could essentially push at something within Force's sphere of influence from all directions.

Ilea watched the Needle Flies in the distance, their magic forming before wooden arrows and spears rushed at her. Their eyes were at least as good as hers.

She used Force to push against herself from the side, effectively getting her out of the projectiles' trajectory.

I should try this inside the pirate's sphere. I think I'll just call him Bob from now on. It's just easier.

Force wouldn't be impacted by the same limitations teleportation had, nor would it be as affected by water magic anymore, if she understood the added skill description. She tried to stop the wooden projectiles with her space magic, finding them slowing down considerably before they clattered onto the stone roof.

Better. Still not perfect but better.

Ilea mostly ignored the brown hornet like flying creatures. Their wood magic was downright useless against her but they liked to stay at a distance, teleporting away whenever she even started to approach them.

There were thousands of monsters on the ground anyway, the few flying ones not much of a concern right now. Bob could blast them out of the air with his pressurized water anyway, not that she knew where the guy was currently. The city was quite large.

Ilea spent thirty five stat points each into Vitality and Intelligence before continuing her rampage. A few hours had already passed but they were far from done.

Ilea blinked into a large plaza and used Monster Hunter to taunt everything in the surroundings, the humans freezing for a few seconds as she charged Heart of Cinder.

She heard the buzz of dozens of monsters rushing towards her from all directions as she stood on the balcony of a government building. Her third Class spells were already doing work as she waited for more monsters to converge.

When the cursed humans started moving again, everything turned into chaos.

The mages retained their ability to cast spells but very few were even above level one hundred. They fought against the monsters but thanks to her use of Monster Hunter, many kept their focus on her.

At least two hundred people and thirty monsters were incinerated by her life force enhanced blast of fire and energy. Ashen spheres zipped through the plaza, punching through heads with ease as she displaced any projectiles coming her way back to one monster or the other.

Anything that got closer to her was shredded by the six limbs she kept active. A net made of ash caught a few monsters before it lit up with white fire. Another blast of fire turned dozens of creatures to ash.

Ilea had checked the cursed with her healing ability, finding that their insides were near entirely corrupted. Their minds retained some of their knowledge and capabilities, apparent by their use of magic and swords, but everything else was gone. Either that or some things still remained. Ilea however didn't want to consider such possibilities.

They were beyond saving. Perhaps high level mind, curse, and blood healers could somehow reverse the effects but not without rebuilding most of their bodies. If such people and Classes even existed.

Ilea didn't feel distress or anything else coming from the cursed. It surprised her however that some of the insect monsters were seemingly in high distress. She had no experience with their body language but the way they attacked was crazed and reckless. Only the flying creatures retained some thought of self preservation.

She tried contacting them with Elos, English, mind magic, and Monster Hunter, sending various intent to back down and stop the fighting. Nothing worked however and the creatures kept attacking each other and her, both human and not.

Ilea had thought about simply leaving them here but the other side of the city confirmed that the cursed humans rushed out of the few broken gates on their hunt for whatever lay beyond. They were no danger to Ilea but she was sure there were hundreds of people still in the lands close by. Soldiers, slaves, and mercenaries.

It took her a while to slaughter them and barricade the gates with rubble. Displacement was quite useful in this, a push of concentrated Force slamming the rubble into place.

She met the pirate from time to time now, the city growing less populated by the minute, the two of them hunting down each and every last creature and cursed.

Ilea had to admit that his methods of clearing out open spaces was quite a bit more impressive than hers. He simply flooded everything, drowning or crushing the weaker creatures and using increased pressure to literally burst the higher leveled ones.

His third Class was revealed to her too, some kind of summoning thing. Ilea spotted sharks and small fishes swimming through his waves on occasions, even what looked like a five meters large octopus throwing around monsters.

It didn't come as a surprise that level four hundred monsters weren't much of a challenge to him.

"Sure about this? I don't sense anything specific from this building," he said after Ilea had led him to an expansive temple. They had cleared out the surroundings before meeting at the entrance.

"The dense mana is weird but the space distortions are even more confusing. They lead here. I'm sure of it now. This all feels very... unstable," she said.

He shrugged. "Eh, the monsters need to come from somewhere. Maybe they made a portal or something. Or they somehow summoned all the plant life coupled with the monsters living within," he suggested.

They teleported inside, slaughtering all the monsters that hid on the ceilings, behind pillars or walls. Ilea was much more efficient in the constricted space, killing most of their opponents with her fast and numerous teleports, space magic, and perception before the water even reached them.

"I'm quite surprised with the high levels. Helena was right after all. She always is..." he said, laughing at the last part. "Guess I won't be leaving this place without any gains."

"Speaking of," Ilea said as they reached a central chamber. It didn't take a detective or ritual expert to determine that this was the place where the blood ritual had taken place.

She stopped talking and took in the view. There were hundreds of corpses, most of them human and wearing robes. She waved her hand at the air in front of her, confused by the various wisps interweaving with each other.

"Lost your mind?" he asked and chuckled. "Should I flood the stench and corpses?"

"No... wait," she said and watched in fascination as a few nearby wisps interlinked. Ilea couldn't wrap her mind around what she saw but a burst of mana suddenly expanded from nothing.

With it came a Wildflower Ant. It landed on its feet and looked around before twitching a few times. Ilea felt its distress before it spotted them and attacked in a frenzy.

"That doesn't look good," Bob said.

Ilea nodded slowly. "They warped this space somehow," she said.

"These creatures aren't made for the low mana density here. Even with the mana flowing out from here... it's not enough. They must be going absolutely mad," he said.

"Flood it Bob. Destroy it all," Ilea said, hoping that the enchantments, runes, and corpses were somehow keeping this ritual active.

He just looked at her and blinked. "Bob?"

"Yes. It's better than Pirate or Destroyer," Ilea said, gesturing to the room with an annoyed expression.

The man chuckled as he flooded everything, beams of water slashing out into the ground, walls, and ceiling, collapsing everything.

"I need a name for you too then," he said.

If he's a higher ranked member than Helena, he already knows, she thought.

“How about Ilea?” she suggested.

The two appeared in the air above the temple, watching it collapse below.

Ilea could tell that the space was already stabilizing, enough for her to sigh with relief. If they could stop the rituals, they could stop more monsters from coming into their realm.

“Ilea... it’s still a stupid name but fine,” Bob said.

“It’s my real name,” Ilea countered. “Call it stupid one more time, I dare you.”

“Don’t tempt me like that, foul witch,” he said and looked around at the half collapsed city, flooded in parts with hundreds of corpses visible. It was eerily quiet.

“Call me Hector,” he said.

“Good to meet you Hector. I’ll refrain from calling your name stupid,” Ilea said.

He laughed. “Oh look at you, Lilith, the moral superior!”

“Should we clean out the rest?” she asked, trying to locate any moving creatures. She spotted a few, all of them decidedly human.

“A quick search, ten minutes. Don’t focus on the humans. We can leave some for the imperials,” he said. “Something else I wanted to mention. While we’re here...”

He looked at her as a wide grin grew on his face. “You know, I’m sure much of the wealth here was moved away on short notice but there is always gold and gems found in a conquered city.”

“I wanted to mention it earlier,” Ilea said. “I don’t suppose a pirate like you has some kind of treasure sense?” she asked.

The man winked at her.

“Really?” she asked, looking at him as they reached the protected vault.

“I told you, I’m an honorable pirate. It’s only fair that you get a third of the wealth,” Hector said with a generous expression.

“Half,” Ilea stated. “And you better empty your pocket items. I know you just got me here to crack these enchantments.”

“Vile accusations,” he said and shook his head. “As if someone as powerful as me wouldn’t have a way to break through some high powered anti magic enchantments fueled by hundreds of mages before they died.”

Ilea rolled her eyes and charged Absolute Destruction.

The vault cracked open with a boom, stone stone and debris flying inside as the protective enchantments vanished.

The two rushed inside and stored everything they could get their hands on, ash and water quickly encompassing the whole treasury before any contingencies even managed to activate.

Ilea blinked and stored the last batch of valuables before a massive explosion of dark red flame, shrapnel and curse magic washed over her.

“Are you alive?!” Hector called out after the dust had settled.

Ilea pushed away the chunks of stone that had fallen on her with Force and her ashen limbs. “We got it all, right?”

“Sure. I don’t suppose you’re open for trade? You don’t strike me as someone who knows anything about enchanted weapons and armors,” he said.

“Which is exactly why I would never trade with you,” Ilea said with a wink.

She had gotten four hundred and thirty gold out of the vault, coupled with a variety of armors, weapons, ingots, monster parts and trophies, as well as other treasures.

“You’re no fun. I need to chunk some stuff into crates, my storage items will fill up if we continue at this rate otherwise,” Hector said, glancing at the four rings on his left hand.

“How much wealth is in there anyway?” Ilea asked.

“Don’t look at a pirate’s wealth like that!” he said and lifted his hands defensively.

Ilea chuckled. “Let’s get out of here.”

They appeared outside after a few teleports from the underground vault.

“Admittedly, it’s not as much as you’d think. Looting the destroyed towns is actually one of the main reasons I came. Don’t mention that to the others. All the cities I support cost a lot of gold,” he said.

Ilea rolled her eyes. She wasn’t sure if he was joking or not. It didn’t matter either way. She had gotten quite a bit out of it herself.

“Why did nobody hide inside the vault?” she asked while summoning a few crates, filling them with treasures before storing them again. This way, the various items used up a significantly lower amount of space within her necklace and bracelet. She trusted both items but stored this newfound wealth inside her necklace.

Hector followed her example and shrugged. “Not fast enough? I heard the expanding wave was quite quick. Not that those inside buildings would have even perceived it.”

“Hmm. Any more vaults around?” she asked.

“There are a few more places we can check but we don’t have time to search every little business. Velamyr would ask annoying questions too if there was nothing to be found inside the taken cities,” he said.

“What about the exploded vault?” Ilea asked with a smirk.

He looked like he was deep in thought. “Monsters... they tried to, get the gold,” he figured with a shrug. “I guess.”

Ilea rolled her eyes. “Lead the way. Not like we’re saving a lot of lives by clearing out the monsters. I’m sure he doesn’t mind that much.”