

Chapter 904 Legacy

Ilea refilled her wine when Verillion was done. *The First Hunter.*

She had never met the man, nor had she joined or trained with the Azarinth Order. The Order hadn't even been around anymore when she had gotten to Elos, and still, perhaps the Azarinth temple wouldn't have been left in ruin without Verillion Carn. Perhaps the Bluemoon Grass wouldn't have been there, or the books that taught her wouldn't have been left behind.

An ancient Order and their elixir, the Class they had developed, it's what jump started her adventure. She might've survived the wolves without it all, may have found a way to get away, to get another Class in time for her to get to a settlement, but she felt it was unlikely.

"I probably survived because of what you did," she said, knowing it didn't exactly change anything.

Verillion refocused, his posture straightening slightly before he sighed. "Then that is one good thing that came of it."

"It sounds rough. Your story. I'm glad you're in a better place now," Ilea said. "Sorry for all the shit you've been through."

He smiled, and drank from his glass. "So, how did you get that title?"

"What do you mean? I killed a dragon."

"You did, did you now?"

"You act like you don't believe it," Ilea said with a smile.

"It is rather hard to believe, despite you being a four mark."

"I did it before. Past nine fifty," Ilea said.

Verillion sighed. "I must be getting old. The last time I left my home to hunt a dangerous beast... I don't even remember it."

"You just leveled from monsters attacking your people?"

"More or less. Most of that in the first decades. The Orcs and Elves proved dangerous as well, before we were established as a notable faction in the area. One side effect of becoming a vampire, is the inability to bear children. So we are dependent on those who live in our cities just as they depend on our protection. Our enemies too, soon learned of that fact," he spoke.

"Is that the reason for the continued feud with the Still Valley?"

"We often pass on to our families, our history, and our failures. Forgiveness does not become easier with advanced age. I would even say it becomes more difficult, knowing some of the elves I've fought in my lifetime are still alive and out there. And they too remember. And pass on their beliefs.

"We depend on other species, or if you will, none vampires, to bolster our numbers. To grow. It is one way for us to find meaning. Whereas they are creatures made from magic, born of their Oracles, perfect in their minds, just like the Elders thought themselves perfect."

Ilea crossed her arms. "They grow up in that environment. Just like you say. People pass on what they know. And just like you took a different path, there are elves who did the same," she said. "But I know how you feel. Young Elves of the Fire Wastes have raided the westernmost cities of the Plains. I was there."

"There are always outliers. Just like I killed many of the Azarinth, there surely are those who wish to fight against the Oracles and the elves that they control," he said.

"I don't think the Oracles care much for what is happening in the world. If it doesn't concern the balance of magic," Ilea said.

"Did one of your elven friends tell you that?"

"I've met an Oracle in the Still Valley," Ilea said.

Verillion got up and stared at her. Then he sat down again. "What was it like?"

"Ancient. And strange. It felt similar to meeting an Elemental or a Fae. Her magical prowess was obvious, but she felt almost... removed, from worldly affairs. The Taleen machines killing young elves, the Monarchs acting as they wished, and still, they didn't change any of their rules, those who fought the One without Form were branded as Cursed ones, hunted by their own kind. She acted as if there was nothing to be done, as if I, a young stupid human, was not fit to understand their reasoning."

"And what do you think of that?" he asked.

"It's hot garbage. I've used my power to have an impact. You did too. Maybe some of it wasn't great, but I still would rather act than sit and do nothing," she answered.

"Acting bears risks. Perhaps they are not willing to take such risks. But I agree with you, and it's a revelation, to learn about how at least one of them thinks. Do you think you could kill them?"

"I have found and killed corrupted oracles in the Cursed Marshes," Ilea said, seeing his eyes go wide. "Against a clearly thinking Oracle? I don't know. Even with all my new power, I couldn't say for sure. I would have a good shot, but it could end in a stalemate."

"Not your death?"

"I have survived dragonfire before my evolutions, Verillion. I'm near fully confident that I can survive an Oracle. But I don't plan to fight them, not if they don't attack directly," Ilea said.

"That is your choice to make," he said.

"Keep an open mind, and maybe meet Isalthar and his Hunters," Ilea said.

"I will," Verillion said. "Though I don't think it will change my stance on those who have wronged me in the past."

"It doesn't have to," Ilea answered. "I'm just really tired of wars. Let alone having the power to cause or end them."

"Conflict is inevitable. One way or the other, elves or not. But I agree with you, focusing on our own is certainly more beneficial. And I understand your sentiment. But having the power to end wars is one I'd like to have on my side," he spoke.

Ilea sipped on her wine before raising the glass. "To wars ending."

“To killing dragons,” he said. “Did you recover any of its blood, by the way?”

“Asking for a friend?” Ilea said.

“For myself. For selfish reasons.”

“I’m pretty sure its blood is being harvested. If it hasn’t dried up by now, but I have a feeling dragonblood doesn’t exactly dry quickly, or at all. I’m sure Aki has made proper preparations, knowing how valuable high quality blood would be to your kind, if only for economic reasons.”

“I’ll have to consider that in our talks then,” Verillion said, leaning back slightly. “Come in,” he said when the conversation didn’t naturally continue. An enchantment flared up and the door opened, Aki returning with Erik in tow.

“Discussing the secret world domination plot?” the old man asked.

“Would you actually care?” Ilea asked.

“Your factions together may actually pull it off,” he said.

“You didn’t answer,” Ilea said.

Erik summoned his pipe and dragged from it. He exhaled the smoke into the room and smiled.

“Who knows. I suppose it depends on how the world would look thereafter.”

“I have a few more things to discuss in regards to logistics,” Aki said. “Would it be possible to do so now?”

“Do you need me for that?” Ilea asked.

“No. Perhaps a gate at a later time, if the First Vampire allows for one of your anchors in Merrindayne or nearby.”

“You can set one right here, in this room,” Verillion said.

Erik burst out laughing. “No wonder she managed to convince all of those factions.”

“I understand that only Ilea can control and access such an anchor?” Verillion asked.

“Yeah,” Ilea said. “Pretty much. But I can open it to allow half an army to come through in mere minutes.”

“I have two people more powerful than entire armies right here already,” Verillion said. “If you’re in control, I’ll allow it.”

Ilea set her mark. “It’s done.”

“Let’s start with these discussions then, before I want to explore half the world again with the help of Ilea’s space magic,” Verillion spoke.

“I’ll be on my way then,” Ilea said. “Erik, you’re staying?”

“I will take part in the talks, if possible,” Erik said, looking at Aki and Verillion. They both affirmed.

“Then I guess I’ll be seeing you again later,” Ilea said. She teleported next to the First Vampire and offered her hand, which he took. *“It was nice getting to know you. And thanks for sharing your history.”*

“We are both affected by the legacy of the Azarinth, Ilea. Let’s try to make the best of it. Together.”

She grinned and let go. “Yeah. That,” she said and waved to the others, opening a gate to the North. She stepped through and breathed in the fresh air. The sudden absence of permeating blood magic was most refreshing. *Will have to get my weapon later today*, she reminded herself, though she was a little saddened by the fact that it was yet another toy to add to her collection. Equipment actually benefiting her grew more and more rare. Even her hammer could no longer hold up against any of her skills.

She summoned it and twirled it into the air, catching it again. “Divine,” she murmured and resummoned her copies. Already she was getting more lenient with refreshing them. She teleported most of them to Erendar and returned, infusing the cosmic magic ones to aid in Meadow’s research. She could feel the telepathic connection it established, not speaking but giving her the opportunity to do so. If she wished.

“Any insights as of yet?” she sent.

“Some, yes,” the Meadow replied. *“Congratulations on the successful meeting with the First Vampire by the way. As to your magic. I can give you a rundown if you want?”*

“Go for it,” Ilea sent.

“Deconstruction, on a fundamental level, restructures both matter and magic into its most fundamental state of mana. A perfect and thorough, well, deconstruction of most everything. A terrifying power, but we knew as much already. Your new healing spell is a little more interesting, as if affects the soul and fundamental things one may consider damage. It is thus in theory possible, to prevent aging while you use the spell. We’re unsure yet if you could reverse aging in other beings altogether. Compared to the fundamental baseline of mana, it is unclear what true reconstruction entails within a living organism. One option is the same result as Deconstruction, as mana could be considered perfect. Another more nuanced result could be the return to intended, unhurt, and peak condition, as in the most beneficial age and status an organism would consider itself. Testing on various enchantments and spells supports this option. We’re currently trying to figure out how cosmic magic determines such a state in the first place, or if it simply guides the spells themselves. A lot of new questions, and just as many options.”

“Deaging people? You mean I could become the Fountain of Youth?” Ilea asked.

“You may already be such,” the Meadow answered. *“We will soon move on to testing on willing awakened beings with birth defects and illnesses incurable by conventional or arcane healing.”*

“Sounds like I’ll be busy,” Ilea said.

“As busy as you’ll want to be. Just because you can use your magic to impact the world, does not mean you are obligated to do so.”

“That’s a puzzle of morality, Meadow. But I’m glad you’re conducting all the testing and documentation. I’ll be happy to fly around for a while and heal people. Shouldn’t be too much trouble with my extensive domain and teleportation gates.”

Becoming a one woman healthcare system.

The thought didn’t much bother her, she found. Compared to her initial ideas of joining different fields of study, to maybe make a slight difference whilst doing something interesting, this was far cooler.

If she really could heal the way the Meadow suggested, she would certainly help out. And she knew that would mean a lot of responsibility down the line. At least until anyone else with cosmic healing would show up. Not something she assumed would happen anytime soon. And still. She was surprised to find that she didn't really fear the possible responsibility.

As long as it doesn't mold everyone into the same perfect human. That would make the world pretty boring.

"Make sure you test it on monsters and animals before. Don't want it to fuck up people's minds."

"I'm very aware of that possibility," the Meadow answered. "We will be thorough."

One woman healthcare system talking to one tree research facility. She focused on Felicia's mark, amused by the thought as she peered through her mark with Fabric Alteration. She found the woman sitting at her work desk at home. *"You have time?"* she sent.

"Why did my Divination resistance just level up? You better show up and explain yourself."

I can explain.

Ilea decided to not use her divination ability on her marks again. It had been done on a whim, but she could see the fault in invading the privacy of those trusting enough to let her place a mark on them. After a short conversation and asking permission from Verillion, she decided to take Felicia on a date in Marrindayne, introducing her to the First Vampire and Zeriel in turn.

She received her non stationary blood magic automatic turret. And she insisted on getting two beautifully crafted pistols for Felicia, both as an apology and because she liked the look of them.

"Ilea, it's fine. I was just surprised. You can use the skill to check on me when you feel like it," Felicia said as she looked at the pistols.

"I know. I didn't just get them as a way to apologize. You wanted to try outfits on me. Now try this," she said and hovered a leather tricorn hat towards the woman.

Felicia sighed and put on the hat. "Happy?" She raised the pistols and posed.

"Very," Ilea said. "You look like a pirate."

"What even are these things?" Felicia asked, pressing one of the triggers.

Ilea raised her hand and stopped the bullet in mid air with her space magic. "Let's not upset the weaponsmith."

"You could've explained these to me. A ranged projectile?" Felicia asked.

"You could've not pressed random things," Ilea said.

Felicia smiled. "True. I apologize." She pointed at the Glarkson Mark Eight. "What is that then?"

"Same thing, really," Ilea said and teleported the thing into her hands. She then moved both herself and Felicia down into Zeriel's testing facility. "I haven't actually tried it yet, but he said it'd be fine." She focused on the enchantments and felt the blood magic fueled by her own body activate.

"Maybe you should take a step back. In case this thing explodes."

“What is it g-” Felicia started when the barrels started spinning, the rushing sound of four thousand bullets per minute drowning out her voice and everything else in the hall as Ilea aimed and drew a line across the opposite steel wall.

Twelve seconds of bliss later, Ilea felt the glowing heat of the blood magic machine gun in her hands, the barrels white red with smoke rising from the chamber. Bits of stone fell to the ground on the opposite wall, a few enchantments flickering with magic. “Fuck yeah,” she exclaimed and grinned, glancing over at Felicia. “That’s one of the cartridges gone.”

“That’s all from one magical weapon?” Felicia asked, looking between the wall and the cooling weapon.

“It does need to be fueled with blood and pellets. But I suppose it beats a crossbow,” Ilea said.

“Barely,” Felicia said in a deadpan voice, raised her other pistol, and shot at the wall.

Felicia drank from her smoothie as they walked through the red lit streets of Marrindayne. They stopped in front of a cathedral and admired the glass work.

“This is going to send another ripple through the Empire,” she murmured.

“Hey now, Virilya is super impressive too,” Ilea said.

Felicia glanced at her and turned back to the cathedral. “The imperial court is still scrambling at the news of you bringing down a dragon, let alone you bringing it to Ravenhall. The rumors of you being a four mark didn’t help. And now, vampires.” She shook her head.

“You didn’t confirm that I’m a four mark?” Ilea asked.

“Not yet. Well, some of the Imperial Guard know. As does General Ryse. But he’s in touch with the Lily, so that’s no surprise. I don’t think me confirming it would make the news any easier to digest. You may as well have become a god of some sort,” Felicia said.

“Goddess. Also I’m far more powerful than most of the divine beings I’ve met. Not to brag,” Ilea said.

“You’re bragging,” Felicia said and smiled, walking on. “And you still didn’t show me that flame you mentioned.”

“You’ll have to get a bit stronger for that first,” Ilea said.

“It sounds so interesting though.”

“Interesting as in, would potentially blind you and make you mad,” Ilea said.

“Exactly,” Felicia said, slurping the rest of her smoothie through the straw. “Interesting.”