

Chapter 425 Creature of the Night

Ilea reformed her arm as she jumped back, watching the Vampire devour the limb it had managed to rip off.

Its recovery seemed to have no bounds, and neither did her own. The ground was covered in blood, chunks of flesh as well as a couple of her own limbs.

She hadn't managed to get through his bones but by now Ilea was pretty sure she wouldn't have to.

Her own mana intrusion spells had been reduced to the occasional Storm of Cinders to preserve mana. She wouldn't hesitate to use her full power if it decided to grab her again but the creature was even more wary now.

It looked at her, stopping its assault as it too seemed to be focused on recovering lost mana and health.

Barely a minute had passed but hundreds of blows had been exchanged. Enough to kill the same amount of normal humans, leveled below fifty perhaps.

It was both terrifying and thrilling. To face a creature like that and live. Not just that but to make it stop and reconsider her.

I can recover, let's see if it can too, she thought and moved eight of her limbs around each arm, intertwining the spikes at the end right on her fists. She blinked close, coming face to face with the creature as she slammed her fist into its chest.

It clawed into hers in turn, its left arm cutting into her leg, getting a third of the way into her bone.

Ilea adjusted the spikes in the last moment and shredded past the Vampire's ribs, completely squashing its heart. Moving the ash was nearly impossible as soon as it entered the body of an opponent but it was enough to line it up right before to get great results either way.

She trusted her Unity there, knowing the ash would find its target.

Teeth came down on her neck and bit deep, not quite severing her spine but getting close.

Ilea just grinned at the hideous creature as her left arm lashed out, a charged Absolute Destruction coupled with the physical power of her ash ripping through its shoulder. She grabbed onto its bicep and pulled, sacrificing some health to make herself just a little stronger.

Her legs pushed against his thighs as her wings pulled, ripping herself free of the creature with one of its arms stuck in her chest, her head hanging to the side with half her throat removed.

New tissue formed near instantly, her third tier healing replacing the missing parts as she ripped out its arm, throwing it to the side as her wings moved lazily.

The remains of its heart dripped from the combined eight spikes above her fists and she could tell it had made an impression.

The Vampire staggered back, nearly falling before it caught a nearby beam with its one remaining arm. The second one was healing but it looked painfully slow, blood still dripping from the violent wound.

The same was true for its chest.

Ilea could see the wound close but the heart within struggled to reform.

“Oh?” she asked and enhanced her voice. “Are we not quite as indestructible as previously thought?”

She grinned and appeared behind the creature before it realized the extent of its prey’s power.

Her combined limbs punched through the tough muscle on its back, ripping through and trying to grab onto the spine.

The Vampire turned, a powerful swipe of blood magic slashing through her as a continued assault of mind magic battered her mind.

Enough so that she staggered back, forced to back away as another swipe clawed through the air.

Ilea continued flying through the room, observing the now stationary Vampire slowly healing its grave wounds.

Deep cuts, arteries and bruises were not a problem but it had difficulties with the heart as well as missing limbs.

Still, it would recover in less than twenty seconds, enough to overwhelm most damage.

Not hers.

Ilea formed a dozen spears, sending them at the creature before she rushed in, tackling it as it bit into her flesh with a frenzy, ripping chunks of flesh from her chest, neck and face after getting through her armor.

Her right arm came down, ripping through the right shoulder. It took her two punches before she had to back off, her head nearly falling off as it was. The same was true for the Vampire’s arm, a couple slashes of her extended ashen limbs enough to sever the limb.

Ilea’s wounds healed as she breathed out, spitting out blood that had come to her mouth. She coughed once as her lungs reformed, watching the Vampire with a bunch of meat in its maw and half an arm.

Bunch of flesh wounds, she thought and focused her healing on her mind for a moment, the continued assault getting to her.

She didn’t let up, attacking with her limbs now that the Vampire didn’t have arms to fight back.

It charged and ran, teleporting from time to time to sink its teeth into her.

While its speed was higher than her and its teleportation was near instant, it failed to find purchase.

Ilea had precognition, ashen limbs that reformed when destroyed, each with a ten meter range as well as a bunch of projectiles flying in constantly. She focused on the wounds on its arms, rather vulnerable as they healed.

Mind magic didn’t give the Vampire an advantage, neither was its health drain very effective, nor its blood magic or blood manipulation. Ilea even out regenerated the creature. Its body was considerably tougher, her whole power needed to deal significant damage while hers was ripped apart with each strike.

And still she prevailed, flying through the small room with her third tier wings as if it was an aerial battle. Third tier healing won this fight, coupled with her second tier resistances against everything the monster threw at her.

Without Blood Manipulation Resistance in the second tier, a single hit could have been fatal. Without the second tier of Blood Magic Resistance, she didn't know what the creature could do to the blood in her body. Mental Resistance didn't even need to be mentioned, a single second of a shut down mind enough for it to rip her to shreds.

All coupled together let her have the advantage, let her be the one regenerating quicker, dealing damage instead of taking it. All of it together allowed her to fly through the hall, dodging through any attack that came her way as she twirled around the jumping Vampire, its jaws the last remaining weapon.

She wondered why it never used the claws on its feet. Perhaps it never had to before and had completely relied on its hands all this time. It was a monster after all, a creature that had difficulties adapting to their foe, learning from their enemy.

A creature that had always been on top, never found an opponent it could not beat with sheer overwhelming force. There might have been encounters with dangerous beasts in the other layers but if it found itself incapable of killing the enemy, it would simply retreat.

Now however, it was in a complete frenzy, focusing on Ilea with everything it had.

She didn't know if it was because of any of her skills, the devastating injuries she dished out or the simple arrogant fact that a level three hundred and forty human was challenging this ancient creature.

And she didn't care.

Ilea had fought monsters ten times more powerful than her, capable of destroying her with a single strike and she had prevailed. This upstart creature of the night was nothing to her. She could see it move, could see its attacks coming, could tell the feints and could resist its magic of the mind.

Neither did she underestimate it, carefully flying through the room as she continued her constant assault, knowing from experience that she could very well have to conserve her mana and keep at it for hours on end.

It only took a couple more minutes.

The Vampire fell, hitting the floor and sliding in the blood before Ilea landed on it with a heavy thud. Her ash slashed into it, cutting through its neck and back before she ripped its spine from the bloodied body.

Heart of Cinder discharged into the heavily fire resistant creature, burning it up from within as she threw the spine to the side.

Several charged two handed strikes against its skull followed while her ashen limbs continued to rip out chunks of flesh, punching through all of its highly resistant and still regenerating organs time and time again.

A last hit cracked the skull before it caved in, brain matter covering her ash layered hands.

Ilea didn't stop, not until the Vampire had turned into something barely resembling a once living creature, the ding finally resounding in her mind.

'ding' 'You have defeated [Starving Vampire – lvl 753]

'ding' 'The Azarinth Sentinel has reached lvl 343 – Five stat points awarded'

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'ding' 'Kin of Ash has reached lvl 342 – Five stat points awarded'

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Ilea sat back and once more cast Heart of Cinder, burning and pushing away the blood and guts.

Fucking disgusting, she thought and activated Meditation, both do deal with her low mana as well as the smells and the sight. *Another problem with my fucking super eyes.*

'ding' 'Absolute Destruction reaches 3rd lvl 21'

'ding' 'Sentinel Core reaches 3rd lvl 8'

'ding' 'Sentinel Core reaches 3rd lvl 20'

'ding' 'Azarinth Fighting reaches 3rd lvl 23'

'ding' 'Azarinth Perception reaches 3rd lvl 5'

'ding' 'Azarinth Reversal reaches 3rd lvl 16'

'ding' 'Armor of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 25'

'ding' 'Aspect of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 22'

'ding' 'True Ash Creation reaches 3rd lvl 21'

'ding' 'Heart of Cinder reaches 3rd lvl 13'

'ding' 'Storm of Cinders reaches 3rd lvl 14'

'ding' 'Storm of Cinders reaches 3rd lvl 15'

'ding' 'Ash and Ember Unity reaches 3rd lvl 20'

'ding' 'Ashen Wings reaches 3rd lvl 5'

'ding' 'Eyes of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 2'

'ding' 'Avatar of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 15'

'ding' 'Keeper of Ash reaches 3rd lvl 19'

Holy shit there Kin of Ash, nice one. Even caught up!

Ilea heard the giggling in her mind as the Fae slowly floated down, clapping its hands menacingly.

“I still identify as a healer, right?” she asked, a little worried because her second class had caught up again. It normally wasn’t a problem and she was pretty sure her main class was the one she identified as if both were at the same stage.

The Fae nodded.

Joy!

“I’m pretty fucking exhausted, not gonna lie,” Ilea said and circulated healing mana through herself. She kept a look on the Vampire’s remains, sending her Heart of Cinder into the chunks of meat and bones whenever it was sufficiently charged just to make sure.

If anything had a recovery as ridiculous as her, it was that thing.

‘ding’ ‘Monster Hunter reaches lvl 16’

‘ding’ ‘Veteran reaches 2nd lvl 10’

‘ding’ ‘Blood Magic Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 11’

‘ding’ ‘Mental Resistance reaches 2nd lvl 18’

Ilea spread her thirty five stat points into all of her stats, five points each and ten for Wisdom.

Status:

Vitality: 816

Endurance: 405

Strength: 515

Dexterity: 420

Intelligence: 740

Wisdom: 905

“You enjoyed the violence it seems,” she said and let her wings carry her up towards the Fae.

It landed on her shoulder and nodded.

Beautiful

Loot!!!, the Fae exclaimed into her mind as it twirled vertically in place and pointed.

“I saw it, just give me a couple minutes,” Ilea said. “You could check on Ilas if you want to do something productive.”

The Fae twirled faster before it slowed down in the next minute.

Loot

“You know you can just get it if you want,” Ilea said.

The Fae appeared in front of her face and commenced to boop her ashen helmet.

Healthy?

“I am,” Ilea said, smiling as she realized what this was about.

Human?

“Yes, yes. I know. I thought you of all beings understood. I like *Violence* more than *Loot*. At least most of the time,” she said.

The Fae nodded and pointed at her.

Understand

Strange

Human

“Do you want to check the loot or not?” she asked.

The Fae nodded and vanished, appearing in a splatter of gore as it giggled. It stood up, triumphantly holding up what looked like a black claw.

“Well done,” Ilea said and laughed.

The Fae floated over, the blood dripping off as if it didn’t want to stick to the surface of the creature.

“Found a claw, hmm?” Ilea asked and received the item.

[Midnight Claw of the Red Church – Ancient Quality] – [The path of true blood lies before you]

“Isn’t that fucking ominous?” Ilea asked and stored the item in her bracelet. “Any clue what it is?”

The Fae shrugged.

Blood

“I figured. Maybe it makes people into vampires. Or mad men,” she suggested. “Do you need cleaning?”

The Fae shook its head.

“Ilas!” Ilea shouted a moment later, moving her wings to keep herself above the blood and guts. Only around ten minutes had passed since they had entered the facility. She doubted the dark one was far away.

“Can you tell where he is?” she asked the little creature.

The Fae shook its head.

“Vampire’s toast, you can come out!” she enhanced her voice with Monster Hunter to make it travel a little farther.

The Dark one showed up a couple seconds later, appearing still shrouded within her sphere.

Ilea looked up and waved towards the spot she thought him to be in. “Hey.”

Ilas appeared and jumped down, landing on the sticky steel floor. “You... you did it?”

“Are you... sure it was the Vampire?” he asked, looking at her with apprehensive body language.

“Starving Vampire, level seven fifty three. Mind magic, blood magic, blood manipulation and regeneration. That the one?” she asked.

Ilas looked at her and took off his mask, his one eye glaring in disbelief before he collapsed to his knees. The dark one started sobbing, his head lowered and four hands on his thighs.

Hug, the Fae sent.

“I’m really bad with consoling,” Ilea whispered to the creature.

The Fae shook its head before it appeared next to the dark one’s head, patting it with a stubby arm.

Ilea decided that floating there was more awkward than looking around, slowly flying through the room and checking the few things of interest.

The writing was of course indecipherable for her and she’d let the Fae take care of Ilas before she asked it for help. *Elfie might speak the language but I can’t exactly take a picture.*

She didn’t want to leave the hall either, just in case there were more creatures around that could endanger the others.

“I am sorry,” Ilas said as he stood up, wiping at his one eye before he covered his face again. “It is... sudden.”

“Don’t worry, Ilas. I’m happy to help. Now, let’s search this place and see if there is anything useful,” Ilea said.

The whole facility had been defiled by the Vampire. Blood and gore as well as bones adorning most of the rooms. There were piles of rusty armor, gear as well as carapace and scales.

Ilea even found a Wyvern’s remains. Completely destroyed and shredded. As they looked through the mess, she realized the Vampire had a rather extensive hunting ground, many of the creatures she had met and fought represented here.

“Think it had a way to travel the layers that we didn’t find? Or did it hide itself from the Lightning Elemental and the Griffin?” Ilea asked, not expecting an answer from the occupied dark one.

“The altar and the writing makes me think it had once been part of the Red Church. They surely had secret passages only accessible to them. Was it Intelligent still?” Ilas asked.

“Not a shred. Maybe far below in its subconscious but it didn’t seem like more than a frenzied monster,” Ilea said.

“I thought so... how much it remembered of such passages is unclear, if they even existed. It is possible mind magic helped it stay hidden as well,” Ilas suggested.

“Possible... it was a rather efficient hunter. I just happened to be mostly immune to its abilities,” she said.

“That is what I had hoped. You showed incredible tenacity and defenses as well as regeneration I had not encountered before,” the dark one said. “At the very least, you would survive.”

“It’s pretty hard to kill me, I agree on that. And still, the Elemental and Trakorov came a little too close,” she said. “I’ll have to work on more resistances as well as better gear that doesn’t just instantly melt.”

“With all due respect, Ilea. You should not be able to face those creatures and live. The combination of defensive abilities, a variety of resistances and self healing should simply lead to a slower death. And yet with all your additional skills, you are able to face monsters that others on your level would hide from,” Ilas added, moving a bunch of bones to the side.

“No need to flatter me, you reached your goal,” Ilea said.

The dark one chuckled. “It is not flattery. If anything it is a warning. You have to realize that what you are doing is far from the norm. Yet you didn’t strike me as inexperienced either so this may be useless to you. Just be mindful of the power you wield and the power of creatures like this Vampire. Walking the line between life and death does not have to be a constant in every battle. There are many ways to progress safely.”

“Like exploring the deeper layers of the Descent in search of treasure?” Ilea asked with a smile.

“I was young. And I simply share the lesson I have paid for dearly. It was not meant as an insult or unwanted advice. I apologize if it seemed as such. You are beyond my power and that of this Vampire and I am in your debt, forever.” the dark one said.

“Oh, I’m not offended. That creature nearly ripped off my head several times. I think I’m aware of my limitations,” Ilea said. *I just like it, makes me feel alive*, she thought but didn’t voice it, knowing he had lost people to this way of thinking. A good reason to focus on traveling and at least fighting alone.