

Chapter 648 Sightseeing

“It’s said that fourteen craftsmen worked on it for seven weeks,” Kyrie explained, his eyes on the fountain below them.

Ilea closed her eyes, enjoying the food an armored and hooded figure had delivered to them a few minutes earlier. She could certainly get used to this treatment, though her storage items made the whole thing kind of obsolete.

“It certainly looks lifelike,” she said after swallowing, looking at the two winged stone creatures engaged in endless battle.

“I’d hope so. It’s from one of the most prominent restaurants in the city. The fountain on the other hand was made by a drunk adventurer couple a few years back. Emmanuel liked it enough to keep it there. He may have had some issues with the nobles whose seventh residence had previously stood here,” Kyrie explained.

Ilea rolled her eyes while smiling. “What happened to it?”

“The house was removed to protect the mysterious artwork that had cropped up overnight,” he said.

“Understandable,” Ilea commented. “One of them was a water mage?”

“No. I suggested the fountain idea,” he said.

Ilea ate the rest of the meal, watching the busy streets below. The city was quite extensive, spreading over the hills with monumental structures towering over the otherwise quite simple stone buildings. A single high wall protected the residents against potential monster attacks from the wilderness, broad and well patrolled. While the capital couldn’t quite match the extensive size of Virilya, the differences visible in various districts, both in their layout and architectural designs hinted at Halstein’s wealth and age.

They stayed silent, enjoying the cool breeze flowing over the terrace of the high government building Kyrie had chosen as their first destination.

“The sunsets are quite lovely from here,” he said in a quiet tone.

“I can imagine,” Ilea said, thinking of the ocean view from her house. Wings really gave her a different appreciation for the vastness of the world. It also helped that most of the plains consisted of uninhabited wilderness. You could pretty much have a wonderful view wherever you were. Preferably with some elevation.

“Can you see the building over there?” Kyrie asked, pointing towards the northwestern part of the city.

“The complex with walls of its own? And a bunch of trees... people fighting each other I think,” she answered.

“Your eyes are incredible,” Kyrie said. “They look fascinating too.”

“Too much,” Ilea said with a smile.

He waved her off. “You’re just insecure because they’re your only weakness. What you see is the Halstein school of magic. Where young nobles learn and train alongside the children of wealthy families from all over the country.”

“Didn’t know you had a magic school. But I suppose if it’s just for the wealthy, it’s mostly a prestige thing? Virilya nobles have their own training facilities I think,” she said.

“Only the most powerful ones. Lys has the... well I wouldn’t call it a benefit, but here we are... the benefit of far reaching international conflicts. Nobility learn to fight and work together in their esteemed military. Our nobility had to find other avenues,” Kyrie explained.

Ilea rolled her eyes. “You’re aware of just how much of a propaganda take that is, right?”

The man laughed. “Well, should a conflict arise in the future, it’s better to be prepared. Training with powerful peers, sharing knowledge and experiences is what builds the foundation for the many alliances forming the web of power within Kroll. Some even go on to become adventurers for a time after they graduate. Which I feel is a necessity to temper the bonds made in the school of magic.”

“No warriors allowed?” Ilea asked with a smile. She assumed him and the King shared the bond he mentioned. The group did seem a little informal at times. Especially the Queen and Joel.

“It’s just a name. Though I admit most wealthy families prefer magic related classes,” he answered.

Ilea leaned back. “Hmm... I wonder why that is. Magic resistances make a huge difference. No resistance against a spear through the heart.”

“Just because you’re a caster doesn’t mean you can’t use a spear, and make it even more powerful with your magic,” Kyrie said, a thin curved blade appearing in his hand before it vanished again.

Ilea had to admit that she too used mostly spells to deal damage. She still felt the most dangerous enemies to her personally were purely using physical damage, though that was likely just the case because of her insane magic resistances and mana absorption.

“I do believe a part of it is the ranged aspect. Few people choose bows and the like, but being able to attack enemies from further away than the length of a sword is comforting to most. Especially when they simply train out of obligation or to reach a certain threshold for a longer life and guaranteed wealth. You must know that most nobles or wealthy merchants have hardly ever fought a monster that could genuinely threaten their life,” Kyrie said.

“Most nobles in Lys seemed quite capable at warfare, but I suppose I fought alongside a prominent bunch,” Ilea said. She admitted that most of the nobles she fought in Baralia seemed to have trouble facing an experienced fighter like herself.

“It’s a dangerous balance. Wealth brings resources and opportunities but the most capable warriors and mages I’ve fought were almost always adventurers. Little that prepares you better for battle than fighting monsters that can rip you apart with a single spell,” he said.

Makes sense that they all think Shadows are crazy. Despite their levels generally being close to those of higher nobility.

“I agree,” Ilea said, checking her marks to find that Kyrian, Feyrair, and Neiphato were doing alright. She hoped they were progressing well.

Kyrie chuckled. “I don’t have to tell that to Lilith. I’m glad you’re not a pure noble, wielding dangerous spells without ever having been on the receiving end.”

“I don’t think you can reach even level three hundred without staring down death at least a few times. Not in a reasonable time frame that is,” she said.

“People live long once they reach level two hundred, some even before that. A slow and steady progress is usually preferable than a quick death. You just happened to slip through,” he said.

Ilea didn’t deny the argument. She could’ve been dead hundreds of times over if she had missed a dodge here or failed to teleport there. And she wouldn’t have it any other way. Being able to heal a beheading certainly helped, but she felt like she had earned that privilege.

“I told the faculty that I’d be visiting this afternoon, to train with the students willing and give some pointers. Perhaps you’d be interested to join me?” he asked.

“Free resistance training while scaring the shit out of some upstart nobles? What better way is there to spend an afternoon?” Ilea asked with a smile. She could think of a few better ways actually but right now she didn’t feel like fighting another four mark. Something a little more light seemed preferable.

“I thought as much. My duties generally prevent me from visiting but me and Joel received orders to look after both the Corinth and Lilith. I do believe it would do the students good to fight someone like you, if only to show how insignificant their current power truly is. Most of them may never get that opportunity until it is too late, or they’re smart and form an adventuring group. Even then however, the first time they encounter a formidable monster could be their last,” he explained.

“It’s a valuable lesson. I agree. I’ll join you, but here I thought my company was more to you than just orders,” Ilea teased.

Kyrie smiled. “I’m merely being transparent. Joel wasn’t happy when I suggested a trade of duties, but he has always been susceptible to gambling. Only Bryce’s presence at the Fort made me even consider leaving my brother there to... look after the Corinth Order. I’d be surprised if he’s still there,” he said and stood up, offering a hand. “I didn’t mean to insult you. I very much enjoy your company, Ilea and I chose to be here.”

She rolled her eyes and grabbed his hand. Ilea noted the tension in his legs and arm as he helped her up, neither his face nor posture betraying his slight struggle. A gentleman, unlike a certain Baron.

“I still didn’t get a Shadow magic resistance,” Ilea said. “Perhaps you could indulge me on the way?”

“Certainly,” Kyrie said. “There are a few wonderful architectural marvels if you’d prefer to walk?”

“Sure,” Ilea said with a smile, the two jumping off together, slowing their fall with separate sets of wings before they landed gently.

‘ding’ ‘You have learned the General skill: Shadow Magic Resistance – lvl 1’

Shadow Magic Resistance – lvl 1

A sub school of light magic allowing for a highly specialized set of tools to both incapacitate and kill. A more subtle approach and finesse is required to bring this magic to its true potential. You have faced and survived encounters with masters of its use, making you more resilient against it.

Ilea enjoyed some ice cream. She was pretty sure the flavor was nowhere near as sweet as ice cream back on Earth but sweets here generally shared that characteristic. Perhaps it had to do with a lack of processed sugar. *I'm sure they have a way to produce something similar here, just with magic.*

Her thoughts were interrupted when they reached the grated entrance to the premises of the magic school. *Can't imagine how pissed the nobles will be when we open the same but for everyone, she thought with a smile. Gotta have tournaments too, to rub it in even more.*

"Lord Fiore," an armored mage standing behind the gate said before he fueled a nearby enchantment that opened the entrance. The man bowed when they entered, giving Ilea a long look. She just wore casual clothes, eating her ice cream as she glanced at his gear.

[Time Mage – lvl 208]

"That's a rare one," she mused with a smile. Ilea noted the ten fancy throwing knives and two daggers on his belt. *Already have that maxed for now and I doubt this one will push me to the third tier.*

"Should I inform the principal of your guest?" the man asked.

"No. I'm sure Lady Lilith can introduce herself to the students," Kyrie said and walked ahead. "Thank you."

The time mage and Ilea locked eyes as she ate her ice cream. She couldn't resist using her Deviant aura for just a split second, watching the man stumble back, his eyes wide open.

Kyrie had his blades drawn, armor covering his body as he turned around, ready to face the monster he felt. "Was that... that was you, wasn't it?" he asked, glancing behind her to see if he hadn't missed something.

Maybe I shouldn't do shit like this if even the Head Kingsguard of a major kingdom nearly gets a heart attack from my presence.

"Yeah, sorry it slipped out," she said with a smile.

Kyrie looked at her before he resumed his walk, his armor vanishing again as she joined him. "A lesson is important. However I'm not sure how beneficial deep mental scars will be to the future leaders of our kingdom."

Ilea smirked. "Getting nervous?"

"I brought you here. And to my surprise, I trust you," Kyrie said. "But it's easy to forget the ashen creature who slaughtered a horde of demons when you walk around with ice cream of all things."

"Just use identify to remind yourself," she said, nibbling on the cone.

"How can you mask it anyway? And why doesn't it work against me?" Kyrie asked.

"Trying to get state secrets out of this date? I see where your heart lies, Kingsguard," she said as they walked past a few large buildings, muffled magical impacts audible beyond.

Grass and trees decorated most of the complex, cared for by a few nature mages, one of them checking a nearby tree.

Kyrie smiled. "I like to be efficient. And who knows how many spies are following us. I can't be too self serving."

“Oh poor you,” Ilea said as they passed the closest building, a four story structure with rich decorations of marble, large windows on the ground floor suggesting an extensive hall beyond. Blue tiles covered the roof, smaller terraces built into the side.

A few groups of students had started looking their way, some of them glancing down from the windows or terraces, wondering who the woman with Lord Fiore could be. One young man suggested it was Lilith but he received a few mocking insults for the ridiculous proposal.

“Though I’m sure you can imagine the reactions nobility will have on this date, if you would call it such.” Kyrie said.

A politician after all, Ilea thought. She was starting to lose interest in the man. Too many considerations and ulterior motives seemed to be mixing in due to his position and background. She didn’t blame him for it of course, she herself wasn’t exactly just an everyday normal girl after all. If anything the situation made her appreciate her friends back in Ravenhall, Hallowfort, and the Krahen Isles even more.

Feyrair couldn’t give less of a shit about her status. To the Meadow she was barely intelligent enough to be considered awakened, and her team has known her for so long, they just thought her antics silly. She smiled, thinking of Kyrian who would surely find himself in similar situations soon enough.

“The training fields,” Kyrie introduced, gesturing to the extensive pit filled with trees, boulders, and even a small pond. The entire area seemed to be deliberately crafted, allowing for ambushes, defensible positions, and exposed elevated areas.

Ilea wasn’t terribly impressed, but she had enjoyed the ridiculous training ground of Eregar’s Haven. This felt too sterile somehow. Exactly what an academy would provide. Most of the battlegrounds she fought on were just boring caves or empty fields. Then again, her approach didn’t exactly require tactical consideration.

What’s the point of cover when both me and the monster can blow it all up in an instant?

“The faculty expects us in about half an hour but perhaps we can garner some interest already,” he said.

“Let’s see what they can do then,” Ilea said and jumped down into the training area. About a dozen students were already present, some hiding as they waited to ambush their foes, others comparing spells.

She quickly donned some leather armor on top of her clothes, her ash mantle still present near her neck due to the events of today. Ilea hardly assumed there was any danger to her here but being overconfident was usually a mistake. “What’s the deal with that druid healer who was with the king?” she asked.

“Lady Veyers? She’s been part of Kroll nobility for... a long time. And an important advisor to the King,” Kyrie said, his voice taking on a more calculated tone.

“She seemed like an experienced mage. To a notable degree,” Ilea said. She wouldn’t try to explain what she felt from the woman, she hardly understood it herself after all.

Kyrie didn’t react in a suspicious manner. “I assume her age is responsible for that. I’m sure you’re more perceptive than others. I have never thought her especially striking, though I don’t presume to compare myself to you.”

“I see,” Ilea said, looking at the two young women who had noticed the newcomers.

They bowed, their entire focus on the man next to her. “Greetings Lord Fiore. We heard you might visit this afternoon,” one of them said with a bright smile.

Popular, are we? Ilea thought, glancing at the man.

Both of them wore clean and well cut battle garments, lightly armored and lined with bronze and silver metals. It seemed the materials were chosen for harmony and style rather than defensive quality. The colors matched their respective hair.

“Greetings. Joanne, and Helia, was it?” Kyrie said with a smile.

Ilea could nearly grasp the joy lighting up in the girls’ faces as he got both their names right. *Let’s see if you get the guys right too, or else you might risk plummeting my opinion.*

The man gestured to Ilea, forcing their attention away from himself. “May I introduce you to Lilith.”

“Lilith?” one of them asked. “As in, the real Lilith?”

The other woman bowed lightly. “Greetings, Lady Lilith. I’m Helia Waad, it’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance.”

“Likewise,” Ilea said.

[Water Mage – lvl 83]

[Light Mage – lvl 112]

She wondered how absolutely the two girls would get ripped apart by a level fifty Sentinel. It made her proud and a little terrified of the monsters they had set upon the world. *Maybe I shouldn’t judge them before I’ve seen them fight. Who knows, I might be surprised.*

Ilea doubted it, but they’d get a chance to prove her wrong. And she would happily admit it if her judgment had been false.

Helia at least seemed nice, the other woman obviously quite annoyed that someone had taken away a fraction of her deserved attention. If looks could kill. Well, she was a light magic user, so that was likely closer to reality than it was an idiom in this case.

“Tom, Green, Valot,” Kyrie greeted the group of men joining them.

Charming after all, Ilea thought, smiling to herself which somehow seemed to annoy the light mage even more.

The three men had curious expressions, each wearing high quality light armor without a blemish on them.

Do they not fight each other here? Or did they just get out the fancy dresses for Kyrie?

“You must be Lady Lilith,” one of them said and bowed lightly, his peers barely containing their snickering.

Was I like that back when I walked onto the university grounds? They barely seem older than twenty, the same age as some of the Sentinels.

The difference was striking, not just in their attitude but in everything they were.

All of them hovered around level one hundred. She would have to be very careful not to accidentally kill them. *No sudden movements, Ilea.*