

Chapter 822 Allies

Ilea ignored the mind blown Mind Weavers, Adam and Octavia, instead signaling to the Meadow for a teleport.

She appeared in her room. *“Get Aki in here too.”*

An Executioner appeared the moment she had finished the statement.

“Ker Velor, the Architect, still has plans with Elos. In the coming months or years, according to the three mark divination mage. Adam’s daughter. No matter what the Accords decide, Octavia’s claims seem reasonable to me based on everything I know. She has lived in Kohr for some time, learned from the facilities there, and from the Mind Weavers,” she said.

“We will start to devise plans,” the Meadow sent. *“Both to prevent the Architect’s plans but to react as well in case we fail to do so.”*

“Another thing you will deduct once she’s done telling you about everything. There’s a Source in Eregar’s Haven. We should find out how the fuck it got there, why, and what the Haven itself is supposed to be,” Ilea said.

“Another source,” Aki repeated. *“I will discuss increased security within the Haven. Iana and Christopher will be interested. We will discuss possible options with them if the time allows. Anything else?”*

Ilea knew both of them were already talking to quite a few people. She smiled. She could fight insane creatures from other realms, could face Elves, and even Ascended, but what Octavia had suggested, she simply lacked the options to respond alone. If Ker Velor had been a crazed maniac destroying cities with his personal magic, she could go and fight him, but she had no idea how to even tackle anything the being had planned here. She had no way to find any facilities, had no way to find the Architect himself, all she could reasonably do was wait, and train.

If she didn’t have allies that was. Entire factions would consider this threat and possible ways to tackle it. Both the Meadow and Aki were incredible resources, but they had plenty of other people as well. Thousands. Fighters, scholars, scouts, enchanters, and organizers to make sure preparations were running smoothly. If Ker Velor planned to come back to Elos to take the remaining suns, for conquest, for revenge, or to experiment with the local denizens, he would face everything they had built. Everyone she had gotten together. And she was nowhere near done.

“I’ll go talk to Nes. I’ll try to get her involved in the talks, she’ll be able to confirm stories and suggest ways we can deal with things. Evan was there, three thousand years ago. Scipio should know plenty as well. Look for Dark Ones that may have been around, I believe Goliath at least knows some things as well,” Ilea said.

She checked through her marks. *“Violence. I might need your help. Potential of violence is high. Find me if you can.”*

“Maybe you want to Involve the Hunters as well, Isalthar or other might remember some things,” she said.

“Verena, if you can, get the Shadow Elders and Dagon together, Adam is back, Meadow’s domain,” she sent, finally contacting Nes. *“Got potential intel on Ker Velor returning to Elos to take another sun. May I join you?”*

“Of course, I am here,” Nes replied almost immediately, before any of the others.

“Violence!” came the predictable response from the little fae.

If I can convince the actual Fae to help in this.

Ilea didn’t consider as of yet, not about to try and get to the Fae without knowing the threat was indeed real. The Accords would understand based on the potential risk, but she had a feeling the Fae might not care too much about some metal being from another realm and its plans, though she could be wrong.

“I’ll try to be back as soon as I can. Aki, if you start to think the possibility of the threat is real, please start scouting for dangerous four marks in the far north and far south,” Ilea said.

“You plan to ramp up your training?” Aki asked.

“I’m not exactly the best scout, nor an enchanter. But if they do show up, we’ll need someone who can take down a prepared four mark Ascended, one used to battle,” she answered, activating her third tier transfer to the mark of Nes Mor Atul.

Ilea was moved through the fabric by her spell, appearing in the lounge of Scipio and Nes, both of them waiting for her.

“Did he return?” Nes immediately asked, her white eyes glowing.

Ilea took in a deep breath and sat down in one of the leather chairs, summarizing what she had learned about Octavia, Adam, and the Architect. She paused and considered as the others too thought over what they had heard.

Nes was the first to speak. *“As I told you before, the chance of an Ascended returning to Elos to take another sun is slim. Many of the facilities are destroyed, and the Olym Arcena is no more.”*

“Why would that matter? Can’t Ker Velor do it himself?” Ilea asked. *“Maybe he built new facilities? They’re required to take a sun? And they’re underground?”*

Nes considered. *“Yes, new facilities could have been added to collect mana, but it would’ve had to be entirely separate from the existing mesh of pillars and stabilizers. If he had planned to use the existing mesh, we would have known. Now for him to secretly build an entirely new one... I suppose it is possible, in the millennia since our Unity broke apart... if it is him. Though there are other realms out there, realms that know nothing of the Ascended, unprepared and unable to respond in any meaningful way. Ker Velor is a rational being, he would not chose Elos. Never.”*

“Never?” Ilea asked. *“Octavia seemed sure it was him, and she was sure he would come back. With an ally. You mentioned her to me before. The return of an ally, that’s what Octavia divined. It fits with what I learned as well, from my near death encounter.”*

“Ravana... would she?” Nes said, remaining quiet for a time. *“For her... perhaps he would...”*

“There’s your reason then,” Ilea said. *“If he reverts her to that extent, he’s at the same level as a fanatic.”*

“An entire mesh, by himself... It would take thousands of years, even with his ingenuity and power,” Nes said, the Navuun sitting down before her hands dropped onto her legs.

Scipio touched her shoulder. “We will stop him.”

“There is no stopping this,” Nes said. “The beings of this realm have tried before. They failed.”

“This isn’t the same,” Ilea said. “We have you. We have the Meadow, Aki, and a ton of other allies.”

“The claims remain... dubious, though plausible in theory,” Nes said.

Ilea nodded. “That’s why I came here. I want you to be there, at the talks. Octavia will present what she learned to the Accords. You’ll be able to judge it all yourself, and you can tell us what to look for, how to confirm that her claims are true. We don’t know how the Ascended harvest entire stars. You do.”

“There are secrets that are not meant to be known. Not by me, not by you. We have aimed to become gods, and it led to the desolation of our home,” Nes said, floating up again, her eyes glowing.

“You don’t have to explain the details. You just have to tell us how to find and stop Ker Velor,” Ilea said.

Nes shook her head. “If this is true... no... the realm is aligned already. It would be impossible to detect. If a new mesh has been created, there is nothing we can do but find and destroy it.”

“Then come with me, both of you. Tell the Accords what you know. Not all of it, but what we need to prevent this,” Ilea said.

Nes looked to Scipio, the two remaining silent for a minute.

Ilea assumed they were talking through telepathy.

She considered and spoke.

“I trust you to treat this information with the weight it deserves,” Ilea said as she looked at them, their attention back on her. Perhaps it was a gamble but after all this time, she trusted them enough to take the risk. Especially considering what could be at stake. “I made a connection with what Octavia told me. And I believe there is a source in Eregar’s Haven, powering an artificial sun, and perhaps more, down below Ravenhall.”

“One for the Taleen... and one for Eregar... who would have thought,” Scipio said with eyes focused on nothing before he burst out laughing.

“He would not have had the influence. The Azarinth were decimated, and the Shadows were not loyal to such a degree,” Nes said.

“Where would you have hid it? If you had been the one to have the Source. The remaining Ascended were scrambling to find the sun of Kohr but none had succeeded,” Scipio said.

“None that we knew of. I had assumed an Ascended had it, perhaps Elven kind, but the Shadow’s Hand?” she murmured. “After all this time.”

“He was powerful, you know. Even back then,” Scipio said. “Perhaps he survived, like we did.”

“You think Eregar is still around?” Ilea asked.

“Why not? I am, so is she,” Scipio said. “You’re still alive too, despite your ridiculous battles.”

“Offense taken,” Ilea said.

“Are you sure it is a source?” Nes asked.

“No. Not at all, but the connection of the Haven to Kohr, the fact that you don’t know where Kohr’s sun went,” Ilea said. “I’m sure we could arrange that you can investigate the Haven yourself. I’m happy with where the other source is, and how well it’s protected, but Ravenhall is... not exactly Iz.”

“It demands investigation,” Nes said. “Very well, Ilea. You have helped us, and you have shown us your trust. I will return this favor. To you, and to your Accords. Bring me to your meeting.”

Ilea grinned and opened a gate to the Meadow’s domain. “After you.”

Scipio frowned. “I hate that you have this.”

“Join me in Kohr and you’ll get your evolutions in no time,” she said.

“The fact itself that battle and violence is what provided you with such power is what frustrates me in the first place, Lilith,” he said.

“Blame the system. I’m just damn good at the game,” Ilea said with a smile.

She stepped through after them. “*Scipio you know already. This is Nes Mor Atul, Ascended and Navuun of Kohr and the Great Salt,*” Ilea sent to the various beings around, primarily the Meadow.

Two hundred mind weavers looked their way.

“*Old one.*” Whispers reached her mind, Nes bowing to the beings.

“*Children, forgive us,*” she sent.

Octavia glanced between Ilea and the Ascended, one of her eyes twitching slightly. She took in a deep breath and smiled, her fangs showing.

“*Those teeth seem impractical,*” Ilea sent.

“*You have brought an Ascended here, why?*” Octavia spoke.

“*Because if what you say is true, we’ll need her help to stop it,*” Ilea said.

“Scipio,” Evan said as he walked over. “It’s good to see you’re alive. Long it has been.”

Scipio glanced at him. “Her collection of ancient relics grows. Tell me, how did she convince the neutral observer?”

Evan smiled as more people appeared from the teleportation gate. It seemed the Meadow had cleared its domain, only trusted representatives and allies of the Accords allowed to be present. “She has a way with people.”

Scipio glanced at the crystal tree in the distance before he looked to a new group that appeared among the growing assembly. One floating with long white hair and white eyes, wind magic flowing around him as if he himself was exuding the element. Next to Isalthar stood the red scaled Feyrair, his eyes taking in the various beings, stopping on Nes. Elfie was present too, smiling when he saw Ilea. “She does indeed,” Scipio said.

“Elves as well,” Adam murmured, an Executioner still standing near him.

Ilea glanced over to the approaching elders, Verena and the Dragonkiller. Their eyes darted between the various beings gathered in the tree's domain.

"Wow, now this is a fucking congregation of freaks," Pierce said out loud before she laughed.

Verena's eyes stopped on Adam, fire erupting around her as her axes materialized. She rushed forward near instantly, a scream resounding before a streak of fire lashed out against an appearing barrier.

"Adam Strand will be judged for his crimes. After the talks have ended," the Meadow spoke.

"Says who?" Verena hissed, walking from side to side as she stared at the man behind the barrier.

"The law," Aki spoke.

Verena slammed her axes into the barrier again when Neiphato broke off from the dozen or so Elves, walking over with calm steps. He simply stepped in front of her, smiling at the woman. She slammed one of her axes into him, finding growing would that slowly snuffed out the flame. The elf moved around her before he downright grappled her in a hug. "Let's get you something to kill. Meadow, can we get to the sixteenth layer?"

The two vanished a moment later.

A few hisses resounded from the elves. Amusement. They mostly looked at the Mind Weavers and Nes.

Ilea saw the first representatives of the Accords appear at the gates.

"I apologize," Octavia sent, the woman sitting on a rock and looking at Ilea. *"Our arrogance nearly cost us everything. Please forgive me."*

Ilea just smiled.

"Your allies are diverse. Perhaps we may yet prevent a catastrophe," Octavia sent.

"I hope we can get a few more on board. We can visit the Mava for one," Ilea said when she turned her head to see a familiar war machine move out from the Soul Forge.

It walked over, looking around. "Well, well, well," he spoke with a slightly robotic voice. "Ascended and Cursed. It seems fear will always hold you creatures back."

Isalthar turned and moved over. He tilted his head slightly. "Who are you, to speak with such arrogance."

The machine hissed, though the sound was strange, distorted. "I am Nelras Ithom, former Monarch of the Sunlight Wastes." He glanced at Nes.

Her eyes glowed for a moment before she glanced at Ilea. "How is this possible?"

"Soul shit, a sphere or something," Ilea said. She was aware that her words explained nearly nothing, though she was thoroughly amused by the reactions, despite the reason they were here. Like a bunch of acquaintances meeting finally.

"If only I had my real body," Nelras spoke. "Such meaningless talks would not be necessary at all."

"You did, and you ended up in a sphere," Ilea said.

"I would not make the same mistake twice," he spoke. "Ker Velor does not fight with honor."

“Yes. That’s kind of the point. Otherwise I would’ve wiped the floor with him already,” Ilea said.

The machine chuckled, the distinctively elven body language looking strange on the war machine. A predatory crouch followed by a hiss. “At least you’re not entirely lost. Are you sure you’re not elvish?”

“I’ve considered the same,” Feyrair said as he walked towards the war machine. “Nelras Ithom. How was it, being a monarch?”

Another hiss, followed by more hissing.

Ilea rolled her eyes.

“I would be honored to introduce you to the Mava,” Octavia spoke. “Perhaps with some of your allies here, they could be convinced to lend their support.”

“It’s their realm too. I don’t see why they would stand aside,” Ilea sent back. She glanced to Fey who was engaged in a hissing bout with the former Monarch. *“I’ll have to talk to you later.”*

He glanced over to her. “Why?”

“Because you’re the closest thing to a Dragon here. Garonoth, was it?” Ilea said.

The elf disengaged and stepped closer to her. *“After all this time? You would wish to meet him? Ilea, with all due respect, you are not ready. I don’t know if either human or elf will ever be.”*

“When are we really ready for anything?” she asked him and hissed, garnering the attention of a few of the Hunters.

“There it is,” Nelras spoke and hissed again. “If I am still Elf, so is she.”

“She is a Guardian of Cerith,” Isalthar spoke. “And she is human.”

“Why should she be limited to such a weak species,” Nelras asked but Ilea ignored their discussion.

Instead she smiled, seeing her shadow team join the gathering.

“Welcome to the party,” she sent.

Kyrian focused on Nes, his metal armor covering him as he approached without a word.

Trian and Claire looked at Adam, joined by Sulivhaan, and Dagon.

He couldn’t look at them, his eyes boring into the ground, only lightly shaking his head, still behind the barrier summoned by the Meadow.

Sulivhaan looked between Adam and the Elves, glancing to Ilea. His body was tense but he didn’t speak.

Trian teleported to Ilea. “How are you?” he asked after stepping next to her, arms crossed in front of his chest.

“Surprisingly well. Can’t help but be excited to absolutely wreck an Ascended’s day,” she said, pausing for a moment as she watched the various conversations, groups interacting that would’ve not met without the existence of the Accords. Without her. *“And I’m glad everyone’s here. It feels... it feels like this was the point.”*

“The Accords. To grow and cooperate, to respond to threats unknown. I agree, and I’m proud to be part of it all,” Trian said as he touched her shoulder. *“As will the Sentinels.”*

Ilea smiled. For anything that was out there. Ascended, demon, elf, eldritch abomination, this is what would stand in their way, should they choose to invade Elos, or the territories of the Accords.

She cracked her neck. *And I will be the front line.*