

489 fix - +20 stat points – Int at 820 now.

Chapter 491 Reminiscence

“If an enemy can catch you once, they can do it again,” Ilea said and walked towards the girl.

Alice coughed up blood and looked at her with calculating eyes.

Ilea could spot the runed stones she had dropped during her fall but didn't bother doing anything about them.

“I wouldn't fight something as strong as you in the first place,” Alice said.

“But how would you know how strong I was? All you see is two question marks. Humans are quite different from monsters too, as you should know by now,” she said and stopped walking. “Also, you might fool someone else to step into your trap but with how aggressive you've been so far, it's quite obvious.”

Alice didn't let anything show on her face.

“At least you have the acting down,” Ilea said and stepped closer nonetheless.

A zap of paralyzing lightning flashed through her, slowed down by her resistance and entirely useless against her defenses.

Alice jumped up and punched at her.

“You've grown quite a bit, that much is clear,” Ilea said and grabbed her arm, breaking it. She turned the girl around and broke her other arm too. “But you're not quite at the level of a Shadow yet. Maybe another fifty levels or so.”

Azarinth is quite an impressive Class. Now that I see it in action. Level one hundred and fifteen and she's as powerful as some one eighties I've killed.

Alice dropped to the ground, sobbing a little now at the pain of her broken arms. They healed slowly but it would take another minute or two.

Ilea smiled when the girl looked at her, a grin on her face too and a fire in her eyes.

Is this just some elaborate acting to get me to help you again? Ilea wondered.

“I admit defeat. You're the same monster you were back then,” Alice said and stood up, wincing at the pain.

“You went back there then? To get out the bodies?” Alice asked.

“To destroy the Taleen,” Ilea said, not mentioning that she really just went to train her new Class a little. She had used Force in the short battle but she doubted anybody either noticed or connected the dots. Everyone had ten skill slots after all.

“Of course,” Alice said. “I will pay you for each body you have recovered either way. Double. Because it is you.”

Ilea glanced at Jaime, the man just shrugging.

“Build some well managed orphanages or do something else good with that money. I don’t need it,” Ilea said.

“I will,” Alice said and bowed again.

“Make sure she does,” Ilea said to Jaime as she walked back out of the cellar.

She couldn’t know if the girl was acting or if she really was learning to become less of a little shit. At least she had proven to be a capable fighter for her level. She simply hadn’t expected Ilea to be quite as powerful as she was.

“I wish to burn them,” she said, glancing back at the following three people.

“We can offer our courtyard for that occasion. We have enough wood to build a few pyres,” Alice said.

“Good,” Ilea replied and stepped into the hall. Nothing about them had changed except the blood on Alice’s clothes and the missing cloth on her left arm.

Ilea smiled at the face she immediately recognized, a mug of ale currently obscuring the man’s vision.

“Still with that ridiculous sword,” she said.

[Warrior – lvl 241]

Some progress at least. And he’s still alive.

“I knew it! I fucking knew it!” Lorcan shouted as he stood up and spread his arms. “The mad healer returns! Tell me, did you kill them?” his smile was broad and his breath not pleasant.

Ilea hugged him nonetheless, patting his back before she summoned the head of the Praetorian, tossing the thing at him as she sat down in her chair.

Lorcan caught the head and turned it around, looking at the half molten thing. His confusion turned to joy before he lifted it high up and shouted.

Many of the adventurers shouted their approval, most likely not knowing that the monster had been Taleen in the first place. Slaying a powerful beast was worthy of approval either way.

He placed the head back onto the table and sat down. “You took the job then. I was in the area and thought to post it, now that people are desperate after this rebellion. Gold is scarce, I thought I’d try and get some of them out.”

“Why not go yourself? You’ve gotten quite a bit stronger?” Ilea asked, putting the head back into her necklace, glancing at the other three quietly sitting down, not to disturb the large man and his even larger greatsword.

Lorcan shook his head. “I remember them still... the way they looked at me. I wouldn’t go there for fifty gold pieces,” he said and stopped to consider. “A hundred... maybe.”

Ilea smiled and glanced at the entrance.

Jasper entered and immediately found her eyes. He was followed by Jeremy and Rin, all three part of the expedition that had explored the Taleen dungeon. The old man had been one of the leaders, just as Lorcan.

A smile tugged on his lips as he approached. "I had not expected it to be you, nor that anybody would fulfill the job in the first place. A surprise, to be sure, but a welcome one."

Ilea raised her mug.

Jeremy and Rin joined too, the latter one staring at the ground.

"I suppose we need a third menu," Ilea murmured, hearing a plate clatter from the kitchen.

"Miss Forkspear," Jasper said as he greeted Alice.

"Mr. Horim. You know her?" Alice said.

"Of course. She was part of the expedition after all. Lilith, now quite famous I hear," he said and sat down.

Alice, Jaime and Ember opened their eyes wide at the mention of the name.

Lorcan roared with laughter.

He calmed down and leaned over to her. "You got to three hundred before me. I'll need some details later. Ah, and you still owe me that bow."

Ilea raised an eyebrow, ignoring the gawking people and the confused Jasper. "Ah... I remember. The Elven bow! Hmm... yeah, that thing is in my house."

"I don't suppose you live here," Lorcan said with a smile.

"Ravenhall," Ilea said.

Lorcan nodded. "Well. Not like it matters anymore."

"You could visit. You were the one suggesting Balduur in the first place, I'm sure he'd be happy to see you too."

"The old geezer, still alive after all that demon stuff? How is his daughter?" he said and winked.

"She's a little young for you, isn't she?" Ilea asked.

"Oh, I have no interest in her. However if he's dead, she would need protection. Some of the best enchanting I've ever seen," he said.

Ilea turned towards him. "He is very much alive. And she is under my protection," she said.

"Both good news then," Lorcan said and sighed. "Plus I'm not welcome in Ravenhall, after what happened."

"I'm sure my word could change that," Ilea said.

"With those songs backing you up... that might actually be possible. But no. I'm happy where I am. Dawntree feels like a frontier city again. Now that we are cut off. A new government, new fire burning in the hearts of people. I would like to see how it develops," he said.

"You... are Lilith?" Alice asked, finally bringing herself to talk.

"Maybe, maybe not," Ilea said.

Jaime snickered to himself before he deflected a few of Alice's blows.

"Don't rub it in like that!" Alice said in a hiss, stopping her angry antics as she surely let Meditation flow through her.

“Apologies my lady. You have found your way back either way,” the butler said to Alice and winked to Ilea.

Jeremy smiled, a hand on Rin’s back. “It’s good to see you again. I was afraid you had been lost.”

Ilea wasn’t sure what he meant. *I wasn’t in the best state after leaving. Maybe he noticed.*

Lorcan glanced at her with a questioning look.

“You asked for books and gear?” she said, ignoring his comment.

“From the Taleen, yes,” Jeremy said.

“I sadly didn’t find anything substantial,” Ilea said. She didn’t mention the diary of the Legate she had found so long ago. “I did carve out what runes and letters I could.”

The man lit up with joy. “Perfect. Did you store them somewhere?”

Ilea showed her necklace. “In here.”

“I knew you got something out of there,” Jasper said and smiled. He didn’t look a day older than the last time she had met him.

“I don’t remember seeing you during the siege,” he added.

“I left. To Salia,” Ilea said.

The mood shifted quite a bit at the mention of the Elven attacks.

Better not mention my great Elven friends right now, Ilea thought and sipped on her ale.

“You offered your courtyard?” Ilea asked when the food arrived.

“Yes,” Alice said. “A part of the mansion was destroyed. I believe a sizable chunk of it was wood. To be honest, a part of me would like to see it all burn. But it would be a waste.”

“I heard about your brother,” Jasper said. “I’m sorry.”

“Sorry?” Alice asked. “I was the one who dealt the final blow. It was a Shadow that helped me get that far however,” she said and turned to Ilea. “As much as you think that I need a lesson on arrogance, I’m very much aware of my inadequacies. You were even there Jaime.”

“Mhm,” the man said. “I just thought she deserved it. Especially after you offered it so foolishly.”

“I hoped she would refuse, as decent as she is. Knowing now that you are Lilith however. Well it seems I had misjudged you. Sincerely... Lilith. I thank you for letting me live. After all my foolish actions.”

That one seems somewhat honest, Ilea thought with a smile, starting to eat.

“We both survived,” she said. “Enjoy the food everyone. We’ll be moving on to the Forkspear mansion shortly. Oh and I don’t require your gold. You can collect your deposits as soon as they worked through everything.”

“Are you sure? That is excessively generous,” Jasper said.

“I agree. I do want to recompense you for the danger that you went through,” Jeremy added.

Lorcan smiled.

“This was personal,” Ilea said, inspecting a cooked monster leg. “Now eat.”

“She was consumed by fury. A want for revenge. I understood of course but it seemed futile. I did what I could to train her, prepare her for what she wasn’t ready for,” Jaime said, the man walking next to Ilea.

“The Class you let her unlock really is quite something. With anything lesser, she would have died after a week in the wild,” he said.

“She still seems like a scheming little brat,” Ilea said.

He laughed. “In parts. She was raised this way. It takes decades to break out of the mold you were forged in. For most at least. Now that her brother is dead, the looming evil in her life is gone. I’ll keep an eye on her. Thank you again, Ilea. You have saved her life. Ours both.”

Ilea nodded. “I’m glad you are fine at least.”

“Don’t let her Class go to waste in an office,” she added.

Jaime smiled. “I do believe she has tasted the joy of battle. Why else would she challenge you?”

“She really thought she had a chance?” Ilea asked.

He shrugged. “Perhaps. I think she hoped to be defiant at least. She is done with being manipulated by others, and hopefully with manipulating others too. I think she can accept her loss quite easily and hopefully see it as a reason to keep up her training.”

Ilea didn’t comment on it.

“You destroyed a whole army?” Lorcan asked as he joined them.

“Parts of one,” Ilea said. “The rest fled.”

The man laughed.

“Were you there when it happened? Ravenhall I mean?” he asked.

She nodded. “And I was there when we retook the city.”

“Mhm,” he nodded. “The siege here lasted for quite a while. Many of the nobles had relocated quite a while before things had gotten as bad as they were.”

“How did you break out?” Ilea asked.

“A few Shadow squads attacked them from the south. We sheltered them whenever necessary. At some point I think they didn’t think it entertaining anymore,” he said. “The four we managed to take down certainly helped.”

She nodded.

“Were you not hunted when you left?” he asked.

“I was. But they fought amongst each other. They were young, as most Elves that attack human settlements are. Easy to anger and very emotional. I got away and later killed them with a few Shadows that appeared,” she said.

Lorcan smiled. "Good. You seem to know more about the world now than I do," he sighed. "Sulivhaan. That was his name I believe. He did mention meeting someone in Salia. A young healer of incredible power."

"He's a good man," she said, noticing that they had arrived at the mansion.

It didn't take long to build a few pyres with this many high level warriors assembled.

Ilea placed each body on a prepared altar, the group trying to identify them, Jasper writing down their names. He had been the one in charge of personnel, having known nearly all of the expedition members.

"Only a few are unaccounted for," he said without further comment.

"The dungeon is clear. They must have escaped," Ilea said with confidence.

"Possibly," Jasper said.

They proceeded to set alight the pyres, quickly attracting a crowd of people and guards that came to see what was going on.

Jasper, Alice, and Lorcan seemed to be well known enough to allow for an uninterrupted funeral.

Jaime was the first to lift one of his swords, the blade flaring out in a bright flame as he looked upwards.

Ilea formed ash, letting it swirl around the rising smoke, quickly joined by many others who bid their farewells.

These had been adventurers of Dawntree. Many of them at least. Some had been well known, for better reasons or for worse. All of them however deserved better than rotting away within a closed off Taleen dungeon.

Jeremy held Rin as they cried together.

Ilea had goosebumps, hundreds of spells firing up into the sky. *Like fireworks*, she thought, glad she could give these people some closure.

She herself had gotten hers with the destruction of the Praetorians.

"Do you plan to stay?" Lorcan asked after a few minutes.

"No. I've been here too long already," Ilea said with a smile.

He sighed, glancing at her before his eyes focused onto the smoldering embers once more.

Ilea lifted a hand, the ash floating up before it vanished. "I don't mind staying a few more hours. With you."

He chuckled. "You've changed."

"I have." Ilea said. "I'll find you."

"Ember, come on," she said and nodded to the woman.

The girl fidgeted, startled to be addressed by Ilea.

"Y... yes," she said and bowed.

"What are you doing?" Ilea asked, stopping as she looked at the girl.

"I... eh... I'm trying to show respect... for Lilith," Ember said.

Ilea felt the distress grow in her. "Calm down. I'm Ilea, a friend. Now come, there's too many people here." she said and continued walking.

The two quickly found a somewhat empty bar, Ilea ordering a mug of ale and some water, unsure if the woman really was immune to the effects of alcohol.

"What I mentioned before. I could set you up in Ravenhall, if you want to. A normal job or maybe even something a little more interesting," Ilea said, taking a sip of ale.

"Ravenhall... that's a long way from here," the girl said. "A long way from the Corinth order," she added in a whisper.

"In here?" Ilea heard someone say from outside.

A woman entered a moment later, red flowing hair and a summer dress of the same color. A broad leather belt wrapped around her waistline, with a sword strapped to it.

"Who the fuck are you? Get away from that girl," she called out to Ilea, walking closer with a hand on the handle.

"Diana... what, no please wait, she's...," Ember said, looking between the two women.

Ilea continued to sip on her ale, taking in the woman. *Quite beautiful, brazen, and direct. Perhaps a little too much, like me.*

Diana looked at Ember and then focused on Ilea. "I don't know you. Are you from Kroll?" she asked, her blade still ready.

[Healer – lvl 125]

"Lots of questions. Why don't you sit down with us before I make you," Ilea said.

The woman huffed, a smile tugging on her lips. "Are you with the order?"

Ilea rolled her eyes and displaced the sword she had still not quite drawn. "Which order?" she asked, looking at the wholly inadequate weapon.

"Threatening me with this?" Ilea murmured to herself.

Diana whistled.

A man clad in black armor appeared in a crouch next to her, daggers drawn.

"Oh, hi Hayden," Ilea said and waved at him with the sword.

"You... what?" Diana said.

"Why did you call for me?" Hayden asked, confused as he sheathed his weapons. "That's Lilith. She's not with the Corinth. At least I don't think she is."

He nodded to her and pulled out a chair.

Diana lost all the color in her face, her eyes focused on Ilea.

"Lilith?" she stammered out.