

Chapter 468 Lilith

Rowan knew he was losing control. "Prepare to fight, take her down as fast as possible."

"Everyone who flees will be executed!" he shouted, looking back. His eye twitched when he saw some of his soldiers were already turning away, more were stepping back, unsure of what to do.

Just because she can shout and kill one man! Undisciplined imbeciles!

"STAND YOUR GROUND!" he roared and prepared his two steel whips, imbuing them with power.

"I don't give a fuck about her ultimatum. Take her down now!" he said to the team in front of him, even some of them showing uncertainty.

"Come, I don't mind," the Shadow said, crouching as she held up one finger. "One minute, flee and live. Or die at the hands of Lilith." Her voice wasn't particularly loud but it traveled far, like the whisper of a demon.

Rowan watched as his elites used their skills and shot forward, some teleporting right next to her while others sent their spells forward.

His eyes opened wide when the Shadow started moving, her limbs rushing around as she twirled. Three men were impaled, her fist punching in the chest of another. A loud crunch resounded as his chest plate bent inwards, his ribs broken and his insides squashed to pulp.

The three impaled men were flung at the mages, one of them unable to dodge the body. Marbles of ash zipped around, two finding their targets as heads exploded in a mist of red.

Four warriors slashed their weapons at her only to find thin air as she weaved through their attacks, her limbs impaling two of them as one of her wings slapped away the third.

The last warrior dodged two of her punches only to get a knee in his crotch. She followed up with an elbow to his face, the force ripping off his head with a part of his spine still attached.

Lilith vanished and appeared over the downed mage, his cries finding no mercy as he was silenced with a sharp limb of ash through his skull.

"Time is up," the woman said as motion erupted all over.

Arrows were loosed, men and women shouted, spells impacted close to her but compared to before, none of them found their target.

Soldiers screamed and turned, some vanished and others went to their knees, overwhelmed by terror.

Rowan looked around at a loss. "Stand your ground!" he shouted, his voice lost in the explosions of ice and fire around them, the screams of men and women.

He turned and found two blue eyes staring at his own.

"Yo-" he started when a hand lashed out, slapping his cheek with enough force to nearly break his neck. He was lifted off the ground and landed hard on the ground a few meters away, disoriented and bleeding.

“Stand-” he started as he stumbled back to his feet, his voice stuck in his throat when he saw the ashen tendrils mow through his men as if they were bugs. Heads were pierced, corpses and living bodies were thrown around to all sides.

Spears and marbles of ash slammed through armor as if it was made of wet paper. Hundreds were fleeing.

Rowan saw soldiers trained and prepared for this day on their knees, praying to their gods as the creature of ash slaughtered their brothers and sisters in arms.

“A monster...,” he spoke, shielding himself from a fiery explosion to his right. Nothing stopped her. Shields and swords were broken through, spears snapped with their blades breaking against her armor. Arrows rushed past or had no impact. Spells hit allies or trees, the monster teleporting and shredding through their ranks like an unchained beast left to hunger for weeks.

What have... what have I done... who is she?

How could I have known?

He stumbled forward, his eyes still focused on the woman, only able to follow her due to the limbs of ash and the path of carnage she left behind.

Rowan watched as a mist of ash covered twenty men in formation, their screams drowned out until they fell a few seconds later, lifeless and covered in ash.

“Lord Harken! We must retreat!” an officer said, half of his right arm missing.

Retreat? How... one Shadow. Is she even human? He asked himself as he followed wordlessly, running into the forest with his ally, fleeing along hundreds as screams resounded and died.

He had lost control. Discipline and trust ripped from his hand by sheer force of nature. Whatever he was facing, it wasn't human. A creature of darkness.

Was it punishment? For forsaking his king and country? The Order of Truth?

He could feel his steps hasten, his eyes focused forward as he ran. He was the commander, Lord Harken. He was supposed to stand, to face the enemy and lead his army to victory. All his instincts told him to run, his rational mind overwhelmed by what he had seen.

Adventurers told stories of creatures powerful enough to slay whole towns, to break through walls and slaughter hundreds if not thousands. He had thought it hubris. Overblown stories by men and women who thought themselves heroes, trying to impress their lowly peers.

He believed it now. The thing could speak too. *Lilith. Lilith*, he repeated in his mind.

A sudden burst of magic came from the left and he teleported, his whips at his side as he felt a strong pressure on his mind.

The officer who had ran by his side collapsed, foaming from his mouth as he died.

“You are the commander? Are you not?” a voice resounded in his mind, something that was not human.

“Show yourself beast! Lilith! Come and finish it! Show me your power!” he said, finding courage in the mindless slaughter of his comrades.

A creature clad in black rags hovered out into the open, abyss like holes instead of eyes in his skull as a large mouth opened, sharp lines of teeth glinting in the sunlight breaking through the trees.

Rowan took a step back, at a loss for words.

[Mind Weaver – lvl 219]

“Mistress Lilith is looking for you. But I found you first,” the creature said without moving its mouth.

“What are you doing here? Demon creature!” Rowan shouted, his weapons at the ready as he watched the dangerous being.

“I live close by. And then I felt this power... and now this... feast. She wastes so much flesh. A shame really! So here I am, collecting the scraps,” the being said as it lifted a clawed hand.

A powerful surge of magic slammed into his mind, Rowan finding no other way but to teleport away as far as he could. His Resistance was strong but not enough to counter whatever that being was.

He turned back and watched as it lifted the officer’s corpse, biting down on his neck.

“Run, human, run until you collapse,” he heard the voice, the being somehow still reaching him.

Rowan kept running. *She commands demons too. Mind demons... I have to warn the kingdom, maybe the high king will forgive me, maybe they will be able to help.*

No, we have to avoid this place. She offered us to flee and I laughed at her. Foolish! How stupid can I be.

He ran for twenty minutes, the shouts and screams lessening over time. Soon he found himself entirely alone, running still as fast as his legs would carry him. He saved up his teleport skill in case the enemy showed up.

Rowan felt his heart thrumming in his chest, his breath the only thing he heard in the thick forest. *Did I cross into Nipha already?*

He had to regroup, find the survivors, return to Wynehold and think about what to do.

A whistling sound came from above, Rowan jumping to the side, crouching between two trees for cover. Something heavy impacted the ground, roots groaning.

“There you are,” the voice said.

No

No, no

Rowan stepped back and stumbled, catching himself thanks to the high dexterity he had.

Before him stood Lilith, clad in her dark ashen armor, her eyes cold as ice.

The two trees snapped when an ashen limb flashed through, four more pushing the heavy wood to the side as if to make space for the queen of death herself.

He closed his eyes and sighed. “Do it then, finish it,” he said, resigning himself. “I only ask you to keep your word. Don’t kill those who fled.”

The woman seemed surprised. “I don’t plan on breaking my word. Nor do I plan on killing you. Not right now at least.”

“You want to torture me and feed me to your demon friend?” he asked. He could try to attack, could try to get a hit in but he had seen what his strongest warriors accomplished. There was no way he could succeed.

“Weavy came to join? That damn demon,” Lilith said and shook her head. “No, I don’t particularly like torture. We will free the slaves and you might be able to return to your city. With some changes to your local policies. You didn’t seem as stupid as some other nobles I’ve met and I’m happy to see you actually care about your soldiers. If only the same was true for your slaves,” she said and spit on the ground.

“Our slaves are well fed and taken care of! Don’t you dare talk down on Wynehold like we are some sort of savages,” he said and threw down his weapons.

“Slavery in itself is savagery. Every human has a right to their own freedom. One of the things that will have to change if you want to keep your city and people. I’m sure losing you would cause more harm to them than the sudden freedom of your slaves. Think about it. You’ll have plenty of time,” Lilith said as a few ashen limbs moved around his body.

Her wings moved, casting long shadows before she ascended. Rowan was dragged behind, hitting his shoulder on a branch.

He closed his eyes and calmed himself down. He was still Lord of Wynehold and his duty has yet to end. Rowan ground his teeth. Defeated by a savage and someone who thought slaves were worth the same as nobles.

“Bring them over here!” Dale shouted towards a group of guards. Dozens of soldiers wandered aimlessly before their captors, dejected and entirely defeated.

“Where are the water mages, get the fuck over here, we can’t have half the forest burning down!” he shouted once again, pointing at a few uncertain mages walking amongst the carnage. “MOVE MOVE MOVE!”

They did move, focusing on the trees instead of the mince meat.

Half of that would have been enough, Dale thought as he looked around. He wasn’t sure if it would have been. The officers were defiant until the last one of them was ripped apart by her.

He was just glad a large part of the army had actually fled. He knew Ilea would keep her word and let them go. The same wasn’t true for their hunters or other people who would try to gain something out of this.

“Earth mages, holes and fill them with wood. I want this carnage cleaned up until this evening!” he said and walked briskly back to the wall. All the blood and the corpses would attract a large amount of monsters. The fight wasn’t over quite yet.

He just hoped nothing as powerful as Ilea showed up. *Hopefully they just come to eat and ignore the city.*

Dale had seen a lot in his life but the scene on the field before Riverwatch topped everything. *Not quite everything. Seeing it happen certainly topped it.*

He still wasn't entirely sure he wasn't dreaming.

Ilea had briefly showed up half an hour ago to put back the mark he had used up.

A few earth mages had extended a section of the wall to allow Alistair a base of command. Officers came and went.

Rescue operations to get out people from collapsed or burnt buildings were already under way.

"Dale... I...," Alistair said as he looked at him.

"It's alright. Take your time. It took me years to accept her existence," he said with a wry smile. *A few more years and she will do this without even moving. Ah stop it, there's no sense in trying to understand that woman's power.*

"Where is she now?" Alistair asked.

"She said she wanted to get the Lord. For negotiations," Dale said.

"What negotiations? The battle is over... she slaughtered them. I have met Shadows, Dale, but this..." he just shook his head.

"She is a special kind of person. You can ask her yourself once she's back. I'll take care of my share of the cleanup. You take care of governing the city," Dale said.

"Dale... it was you, wasn't it?" Alistair said and nodded to his hand.

"Maybe. Maybe she was just in the area," he replied and winked.

"This event will ripple through the lands. Added to the history books of Riverwatch," Alistair said.

"She already has songs about her. Lilith, the healer of Ravenhall. We just added another verse," Dale mused.

Alistair moved closer and whispered, "A demon was sighted in the forest. Can you inform Walter that that creature shouldn't be so obvious?"

"I'll send a letter," Dale said, this issue barely making his list of current priorities. "Anything else?"

"No... no, I'll leave it to you. Thank you. Dale. Really," Alistair said.

Don't need to thank me. I just called her here, he thought with a smile and walked down the stairs. His joyous mood quickly turned solemn when he returned to the field of death. *Work to do. We survived another day.*

Ilea saw something move in the forest and shot down, taking the Lord with her until she landed next to Weavy. The momentum accidentally smacked the commander of the enemy army into the ground, dirt filling his mouth and nose. An accident. Definitely.

“Weavy, you need to get the fuck out of here. The guards will fight you!”

“Mistress! What a beautiful display! Truly magnanimous! Thank you,” he said in a joyous tone, taking a massive bite out of the corpse in his hands.

“I must say however, your tendency to waste food is worrying, especially because you say of yourself to be a lover of food,” Weavy said and shook his head, blood dripping to each side.

“Weavy, we humans don’t eat other humans. We bury them to send them off to the afterlife,” she said.

“Ah yes... I forgot. A foolish thought. There is only the endless void. It isn’t easy... to let them do so... I saw some of them burning them! Just burning them!”

Ilea felt his distress about the situation and patted his back. “It’s alright. Come on, I don’t think it’s good for your mind to stay here. Go to the western forest and hunt an animal or two.”

He nodded slowly. “I shall... yes, I shall do that. Thank you. Humanity really is disappointing... such a waste,” he said and murmured the same phrase a few times as he hovered away.

Ilea kept an eye on the demon for a few minutes, watching him move away from the battlefield and the forest east of Riverwatch.

Such a progressive demon, worrying about foodwaste in the middle ages.

The Lord coughed and took a deep breath. “Why!?” he shouted. “You said you disliked torture!”

“Eating dirt isn’t torture. Now shut up before I change my mind,” Ilea said.

“You won’t. I know people like you. How did you reach such power? Did you make a deal with that demon? Or are you the elite of an order? The order of Balance perhaps?” the man asked.

“You certainly got back your spirit,” Ilea said, ignoring his questions as she sped up and rushed to Riverwatch.

Now I have to participate in fucking politics again, she thought, annoyed as she flew over the carnage left behind by her demonstration.

The lives she took weighed on her but mainly, she was glad Dale and Riverwatch were safe again. She would have killed every single one of their soldiers if it had been necessary to achieve that end.

Soldiers and guards alike took a few steps back or recoiled at the sight of her when she joined Alistair on the wall.

“Lord Harken,” she introduced and threw the man down.

He slowly stood up and brushed off his armor.

“Lilith,” Alistair said and bowed.

Oh no, not him too, she thought and glanced at Dale working on the field.

He glanced up to her and waved, as if he saw a friend on a Sunday afternoon stroll.

She waved back.

“I’ll help with the cleanup. Can you draft something up? I’d think it reasonable for him to stay in charge back in his city. No slavery anymore or any other vile shit,” she said.

“We are not born equal,” the lord whispered with an angry expression.

“You’re right, some of us are huge fucking shits,” Ilea said.

“I’m sure I can work something out... as well as the surrender of the Baralia forces and the conditions about the takeover of all present slaves,” Alistair said.

“The prisoners?” Lord Harken asked, respectful in tone.

“They will be returned to your command as soon as you signed the respective contracts,” Alistair said. “Is that agreeable?” he asked and looked to Ilea.

She nodded and blinked to the field, helping to rid corpses of their gear before putting them into the pits. She had some qualms about just burning them but then again, she was the one to kill them in the first place. Compared to the demons, they at least carefully put the corpses away, removing identification and gear.

The blood would attract monsters.

“Hey,” she said to Dale as she walked past carrying sixteen bodies.

“Thank you,” the man said.

“It’s no matter, I produced them so I should help with the cleanup.”

“No, I mean thank you, for coming when I called,” Dale said, a genuine smile on his face. “You can leave it to us by the way. My guards prepared for war and now they only have a cleanup.”

“I’ll stay for a night. Just in case monsters or soldiers come back,” she said.

The man nodded. “Care to join us for dinner? I would have had today off.”

“Sure, after we’re done here,” Ilea said.