

Chapter 788 Rogue

Ilea stepped through the gate and appeared outside of Riverwatch, the small hill overlooking the town still very much the same as when she had first used it to take a nap. *After reading some Fire magic books.* She glanced up at the trees, knowing they could no longer support her. *I've outgrown you.*

She turned to the city and smiled, seeing the flying Sentinels, the war machines on the walls, wisp like Dark Ones and heavily armored defenders ready to repel any kind of attack on the city or the guests they were expecting.

The Taleen had agreed to meet with the Accords, unsurprisingly. Ilea just hoped they would consider the benefits of future cooperation instead of holding on to their ancient technology. She had no qualms about Aki taking over the Sphere and Source in turn. The Taleen had made their choices and these were just some of the consequences. *At least Ormont seemed like he wants to do better.*

She cracked her neck, wondering how the city would look with a few hundred or even a few thousand Guardians. *I hope they can figure out reasonable deals with all the Guards, mercenaries, and merchants. Replacing all of that with efficient level two hundred machines will cause more than a few issues.*

Ilea sat down on the ground and summoned herself a meal. *Ah well, plenty of large minds on the job. Not like I have to worry about the economics of these things.* As Helwart had said a few days prior, the Accords were growing fast. Ready to defend each other and help with trade and resources. Ilea was sure more would join after not only teleportation gates had entered the playing fields, but a literal army of ancient dwarven machines.

She assumed the addition of the Taleen themselves wouldn't cause a large uproar, at least not within the human Plains. People barely even knew about the ruins they left behind, let alone anything about the people themselves. More dwarves, added to the ones from the Pit. The Cerithil Hunters could be an issue if the public knew about them, but she already had a few people in mind who could perhaps do something for the group's image.

I'm sure she would like to meet her father again at one point or the other. Now that his main purpose is fulfilled, he should have time to do so.

Traveling was not an issue anymore either, Hallowfort reachable in perhaps half an hour to an hour if one had access to any teleportation gates.

And I can be there in less than a second, she thought with a smug smile on her face. *Ah, first class space magic.* She assumed the only better thing was literally being in more than one place in the fabric, perhaps something the Baron could manage. She herself was not quite there yet, but more than happy about her marks and the copious amounts of teleportation options available to her.

She glanced towards the small teleportation hub outside of the city and smiled, seeing the arrivals. People made way as Sentinels and war machines protected the entourage of Taleen dwarves. *Just a random group of dwarves visiting the city for diplomatic talks.*

Ilea wondered if the two days were enough for information to spread throughout the Plains. The various kingdoms and empires would surely be interested to participate as well, let alone the Lily. *But it's already too late.*

Ilea spread her wings and flew up, finishing her meal as she watched the surrounding forests, the river, and Karth. She let herself fall before landing in front of the southern gate, waving at the group of dwarves and their protectors.

Ilea grinned at the barely concealed joy and excitement she saw in their faces, the older dwarves trying hard not to glare at the sky, trees, or the rushing water. Those born in Io were entirely lost. Ilea saw Hatta crouch down before she plucked some grass off the side of the road. "Welcome to Riverwatch," she called out when they were in earshot.

"Lilith," Ormont said, the dwarf blinking a little more than last time.

"Tears or bothered by the sunlight?" she asked.

"Both perhaps," he sent back. *"I do question how defensible this settlement is. Humans were never good at dealing with long range artillery and aerial attacks."*

"You grumpy old man. Forget the wars of old, or others might remember too," she said, giving him a long look.

"I did not mean to offend, Ilea," he sent back. *"It's just that..."* he shook his head. *"It is not easy to trust, after all this time."*

"That's why there are written rules," she sent.

"It's all alive!" Hatta called out, some of the other dwarves making similar comments. She looked at Ilea and waved, uncaring for the childlike demeanor she presented, either that or simply too overwhelmed to consider her high status as a Maker of the Taleen.

Ilea didn't miss the slight smile on Ormont's face as he watched the others. He did not reprimand them. He didn't even ask for order.

Passing adventurers and travelers smiled at the scene, some murmuring comments about mountain dwellers.

Ilea considered if the comment was racist in some manner but dismissed the thought when a part of the Accords came through the gates to welcome the dwarves.

Catelyn walked at the front, the fox still drawing some strange looks but generally because of her high level coupled with her appearance, not purely due to the latter.

"I am Catelyn of Hallowfort. We welcome you to Riverwatch. I hope the journey was not troublesome," she said.

Ormont turned her way and bowed in a respectful manner. "It has been a long time since we have used teleportation gates, Dark One blessed by fire. I am most impressed that you have managed to adapt our technology to this extent."

"There are talented enchanters among the peoples of the Accords," Catelyn said. "Though more are always welcome. Please follow, we have prepared an estate for the talks, and for you to stay, should you wish to remain for some time."

Ilea watched them go, nodding to the Sentinels at the rear of the loose formation, the team of four greeting her. She spread her wings and flew up, once again checking the forests, then glancing over the city itself. There were several hundred guards of various kinds, Shadows and even Shadowguards trained by Wayland himself.

Ilea flew down and checked her various sets of perception.

Eyan watched the streets from the tavern's balcony. She had chosen the location for both the great view of the main road leading to the city center, as well as the wonderful selection of cocktails the barkeep offered. Truly a visionary. A warm breeze flowed through her near golden hair, untamed today to seem more like an adventurer. The confident Neria, solo adventurer, thief, and smuggler. She didn't just pretend to be her, she was her.

"Enjoying the sights?" Jacob asked as he joined her on the balcony. The man moved a hand through his thick black hair, smiling her way with a hungry look in his eyes.

Neria liked him. He wasn't anywhere near her power, but she did enjoy some company when moving through the cities. He didn't mind confident and strong women, nor did he think himself anything too special. A good man, one she might consider settling down with in a few decades.

Eyan on the other hand found him suitable for her current purpose. Another part of her disguise, and a way for her to seem trustworthy to those frequenting the Westfront tavern. And today she needed her disguise to be perfect. Since the previous night had begun, and all throughout the morning, more people had arrived. Guards, warriors, Shadows, Sentinels, even the war machines from the northern dwarven town of the pit.

She had spotted several high level individuals searching through the city. Riverwatch was preparing for something, though she didn't know how important the event really was. The Accords had copious amounts of resources, especially in their trained adventuring personnel. So far she didn't consider the events enough to alert her contact in the city. The Heavenly Sweets would learn everything she learned in her weekly report.

Eyan had made the call in the morning, but by now she was getting a little restless. The guards had not stopped coming. It would be difficult to reach her contact without anyone at least seeing her. She spotted a group of high level Shadows moving past on a roof just a few streets away. Adventurers she had seen before during her stay in Virilya a few years prior.

Should I have informed them? It was too late to have doubts. All she could do now was learn everything she possibly could.

Eyan turned away and looked at Jacob, smiling a knowing smile as she sipped on her drink. She didn't miss the group of Shadowguards on the opposite roof, using the glass balcony door to keep them in her peripheral vision. *Did they spot me?*

"Any idea what this is about?" she asked Jacob, turning her attention to the guards moving through the street below.

“There are more guards around than usual,” Jacob said, being very obvious as he leaned over the balcony railing.

Yes. Good boy. Nobody truly dangerous could be this oblivious, Eyan thought as she put a thoughtful expression onto her face. *They’re not leaving.* She felt something approach, nearly moving her head to the side when she perceived the presence. A mind. A warning. Someone with a powerful mental defense and presence. Stronger than anything she had ever felt before. She took a sip from her drink when she felt the presence stop in the air about fifty meters away. *Don’t look up.*

The presence vanished. Entirely.

Eyan took in a deep breath and looked to the sky. Her eyes widened when she saw the black wings move in slow motions. An ash clad woman floated in the air, blue eyes staring right at her.

“*It did seem like you noticed me.*” a voice spoke into her mind.

Eyan made herself stagger back and hit the railing, nearly dropping her drink before she stabilized the glass with both hands. She smiled and looked around in confusion before glancing up at the flying person. Her performance was perfect. “Me?” she asked, pointing at herself.

“*Yes. Sorry, didn’t mean to startle you. Are you a mind mage?*” the woman said.

This is bad. Eyan

“*I... yes, well. Kind of,*” she answered. “*But I try not to advertise it.*”

She noticed my initial reaction. At that distance?

“*Right. Well, have fun in the city,*” the winged woman said before she looked to the group of Shadowguards.

Is it her? She had been too far away to identify. “Should we get a little more comfortable?” Eyan asked her companion.

“If I am what you desire,” he mused, swirling his glass.

Eyan narrowed her eyes and nodded towards the room, demonstratively looking at his ass while she tried to listen to the happenings around her.

“... of courses, Lilith,” one of the Shadowguard on the opposite roof said.

Her heart stopped for a second as she followed Jacob inside. *It’s her. She’s here. In Riverwatch. What is happening?*

She closed the balcony door and closed the drapes, turning towards the man before she moved closer. One of her fingers ran across his arm as she locked eyes with him. A pulse of her magic and he collapsed onto the bed. *I need to inform them.* She ran a hand through Jacob’s hair. *Next time.*

Eyan collected her things and checked her hair before she teleported out of the building. She repeated her teleports through the practiced route. Cellar, cellar, first floor, alley, attic, cellar. Ten more spells and she arrived in a damp room below the city. She positioned herself and used one last spell, appearing between a set of traps laid out in the sewers of Riverwatch. Walking towards the opposite wall while avoiding any of the triggers, she quickly pressed the hidden sets of enchanted bricks and waited for the entrance to open.

No perception spell would get past the enchantments. Up a ladder and into the art gallery of her contact in the city. She went to the table, making sure not to leave any prints on the ground. Her

coded message was short and concise, left inside the hidden compartment of the desk. They needed more eyes in the city. Right now. Eyan rang the small enchanted bell and went back through the hidden exit, making sure to close everything before she went down the ladder.

Down at the bottom, she took a deep breath before she walked to the enchanted brick wall. A hunch perhaps, or paranoia, but she used her illusion magic to cast a vision spell. Some of the enchantments dampened the impact but she could still see through the wall. Her eyes widened when she saw the same woman who had talked to her outside of the balcony. Lilith.

She watched as Lilith carefully found and activated every single trap activation mechanism. The woman didn't let the small needles and arrows strike her. Instead she caught them with her bare hands, and then slowly pushed them into her neck. *What the fuck. Why is she...*

Lilith looked her way, her eyes narrowing slightly.

Fuck.

She followed me here. My teleportation. The enchantments masked sound too. Eyan rushed up the ladder as fast as she could, reaching the top before she broke into a run. She activated a shrouding spell before she sneaked out through the hallway, making no sound as she stepped on the dark marble floor. She found an exit when she heard steps from beyond. Eyan froze and stepped to the side, finding a niche between the displayed armor of a knight and an intricately decorated vase.

"... of course, Alistair. It is an honor to offer my estate for a meeting of the Accords," a woman spoke, the voice slightly raspy, dulled through the closed door.

"I apologize again for the short notice and the secrecy. The enchantments here are some of the best in the city," a man answered.

Eyan cast her vision spell again, seeing none other than the governor of Riverwatch, clad in ceremonial black armor. He walked next to a woman wearing a conservative green dress, her slightly curly brown hair flowed free, long enough to reach her lower back. Eyan knew her. Miranelle Halfort. Her contact in the city and the woman she had just left a coded message for.

Miranelle laughed. "Yes, though I would have expected the Accords be able to match my creations. What with the teleportation gates and those strange sound recording devices. I would've..."

The sound trailed off as the pair walked into the estate.

A meeting of the Accords? Here? Why Riverwatch?

She took in a deep breath, keeping her magic active as she watched entire teams of Shadows, Sentinels, and Shadowguards enter behind the pair. Some she saw spread out. Eyan held her breath and dispelled her vision spell when someone opened the door and entered her hallway.

[Battle Healer – lvl 240]

The woman was clad in steel and bone armor, her black eyes taking in the hallway, moving over the knight, Eyan, the vase, and onward. She closed the door and walked down the hallway.

Can she inform the order? Or is she expected to stay here? The governor mentioned secrecy. They wouldn't allow her to simply leave after something was revealed to her.

She had to find out more. Walking to the door, she watched through the wood until none of the guards looked her way. She silenced the frame, lock, and handle before she opened the door and

walked out, still shrouded. Most of the guards were looking through the estate by now, or they had taken positions on the roofs and walls around. Another group she saw patrolling in the courtyard.

Lilith did follow me here. They will know to look for someone of my description. She moved behind a nearby bed of roses and crouched. Eyan looked up when she heard a loud whistling sound, a black winged form stopping in the air above the estate, the wave of air caused by the sudden halt flowing over the grass and flowers.

Now we'll find out if she can spot me, Eyan thought with a slight grin. She prided herself in her ability to fool mages. Especially those with a lot of perception skills. Boons to be sure, but they tended to cripple someone's ability to truly investigate a place.

Lilith moved her wings a few times as her eyes scanned the yard, then she shot off again.

Eyan breathed out, seeing the gates to the garden open.

In came what seemed like the entirety of the Accords. The Dark One Catelyn, Elana Invalar, Claire Russel, Trian Alymie. She moved already, not about to stand so close to the entrance with that many high level mages present. The chance of one of them being able to find her was too high. She kept an eye on the walking group, now spotting the dwarves at the back. *They're confused. No. Awed. Who are they?*

Their clothes and gear stood out, yes, but all that told her was that they weren't from the Pit. *Are they the reason for the meeting?* She froze when the curse and metal mage floated over towards where she had walked, his gray eyes scanning the ground.

[Metal Mage – lvl ???]

She gulped, continuing onward as she kept her spells in the perfect balance. *Lilith left already.* She looked at the curse mage following with his eyes. Kyrian was his name, and possibly one of the most dangerous humans in the Plains. *Mesmerizing,* Eyan thought before she vanished. She appeared and repeated the teleportation several times before she sneaked through the city streets, moving past groups of people as she started putting up her hair. Her storage necklace supplied her with different clothes, her illusion magic changing her eye color once again.

Strange dwarves at a high priority Accords meeting in the Halfort estate. She noted down the information, using the regular code as she made her way through the city. She didn't look up when the dark winged figure flew past once again. Miranelle was occupied, but there were other options. Slower options, but they would have to do. The teleportation network was certainly useful for their little order of bakers.

"Do you offer springwood ale?" she asked the bartender in the tavern. Two drunkards were the only other occupants at this hour.

The man looked up, cleaning a glass as he raised a brow. "Springwood ale for the Miss. A rare drink, that," he said and grabbed a dark bottle from the top shelf before handing it to her.

"My father used to work at the brewery, I wish I could find and contact him," she said, the statement a lie.

He nodded and walked closer. "I have friends in the town. I could ask around."

She handed him the coded message. "Thank you. Tell him Neria sends her regards."

"I will," he answered and bowed lightly.

Eyan took the bottle and left the tavern. The security at the estate was far too high for her to enter, but she could poke around at the edges, maybe talk to some of the Shadows. They usually liked her. A smile came to her face as she sipped on the ale.