

Chapter 636 Forgery

“Had enough?” Ilea asked.

The Fae nodded, floating up to sit on her shoulder, its ashen companion joining it a moment later.

“*Did the creature awaken your human maternal instincts?*” the Meadow asked.

“*Who knows?*” Ilea replied, dissolving her ashen copy. Just the ash Fae would be enough. Not like either managed to stop the creature from joining her after the battle. “*How’s the Mirage doing?*”

“*Solving my puzzles, as usual,*” the Meadow said. “*I doubt your presence would further its awakening.*”

“*Is that an insult or a scholarly observation?*” Ilea asked.

“*You decide,*” Meadow answered.

“*The first then. What about the Enavurin? Still asleep?*” she said.

“*Yes. And I suspect it will be. For some time,*” the Meadow said.

Ilea looked at the two Fae on her shoulder. “*Well. I have an ancient magical being sitting on my shoulder playing with an ashen copy I made and imbued with my will. All the while I’m talking to a living Meadow that may as well be a god. Maybe try talking with it through dreams or something.*”

“*Of course. I try every so often, but I’m a novice still and my mind magic is very limited,*” the Meadow said.

“*That was supposed to be a joke,*” she said.

“*Dreaming is simply another state of the mind, one with a lot of potential. I have met awakened with the ability to control them, to an extent. My methodical approach is limited in conjunction with this type of mind magic, especially with a creature as versed in its use as the Enavurin, as you call it,*” the Meadow explained.

“*Twentieth layer?*” she asked, not about to try and comprehend any musings the Endless Meadow had about dreaming.

They appeared in the waste, bits of glassed sand still visible where they had fought the Elemental. *Where Trakie fought the Elemental. As I am now, I could’ve contributed more than a bit of healing and distraction.*

“*Thanks,*” she sent to the Meadow, spreading her wings. “*Feel like visiting our lava friend?*”

Violence?

“*Some maybe, I always need more resistances. And few can melt my heart quite like our friend here,*” she answered.

Let’s

Goooo

Ilea giggled, speeding up towards the Trakorov's lair. They reached it quickly, the entrance open with waves of heat coming from within. "It's sleeping I think."

They found the massive creature rolled on its back, legs resting to the side as it breathed slowly.

"Maybe we should let it sleep and come another time," she said.

Violence vanished, appearing near the monster's absolutely massive head before it teleported a few nearby rocks, sending them flying at one of the creature's eyes. With enough velocity to kill a low level human.

The Trakorov made a few noises, finally opening its eyes and roaring, a wave of heat washing over them, the Fae already back behind Ilea.

She watched in awe as the massive being rolled over, puffing out waves of fire and heat as it slowly turned to find the intruders.

Did it get fatter? Probably shouldn't bring this up, she thought, waving at the monster. "Hey, been a while," she said, roaring with monster hunter imbued with the same sentiment. "Hello," she sent telepathically as well. *So many ways of communication. Can't even imagine how many ways someone like Meadow or Violence have. How do they even find the right channel to send on?*

The Trakorov puffed, resting on its stomach as it looked at them.

"Care to burn me up a bit?" she asked.

Burn!

Burn!

Burn!

"Yes, Violence," she said, patting the little creature.

The Trakorov just puffed again.

Ilea got a general bored vibe. *How dare you wake me up for this shit. Is that what you're saying?*

Trade?

"You suggest a trade? What could it want from me?" she asked, creating spheres of ash, imbuing them and letting them roll towards the creature. It seemed disinterested. "Okay, let me see what else I have."

She summoned a few astral spirit corpses. "Space meat from another realm?" she asked, displacing them closer.

The Trakorov sniffed the bodies before it opened its large maw, munching on them a few times before it swallowed. The look in its eyes changed a little and then it fell asleep once more.

"Oh well. Can't say I didn't try," she said. "The heat here is quite comfortable though."

The Fae didn't seem done with the attempt however, touching its chin as it looked between Ilea and the large monster.

Human

Flesh

“You want me to feed myself to it?” she asked.

The Fae shrugged.

Yes.

“What about Fae meat?” she asked, glancing at the floating creature.

No

meat

only

space

“Ah. Of course,” she said, raising her brows as she started cutting off a few arms, making a messy pile on the ground.

Truth

No

Meat

She just nodded, continuing her bloody sacrifice. *I’m really just giving it some of my mana. Fascinating... how versatile this resource is.*

Eat

See, Violence said and held out its little arm to her mouth.

Ilea felt inclined to actually bite but she just smiled instead. “I’m just joking, little guy. I wouldn’t rip you apart to feed a Trakorov. Don’t you worry.”

It appeared on her shoulder again, touching arms with its ashen copy.

“Think this is enough for a snack?” Ilea asked, the pile of bleeding arms now reaching her chest.

Maybe

“Maybe is fine. Let’s see,” she said and used Embered Core to set the pile alight, pushing it towards the Trakorov with an ashen plow.

They waited in anticipation, nothing happening for a few seconds until one of the creature’s nostrils twitched.

It once again opened its eyes and maw at the same time, taking in the whole pile. Bones crunched for a few seconds until it swallowed.

“Now up for some training?” she asked.

The Trakorov gave her a nod.

“You understand me?” she asked. This time she didn’t get a response. “Oh well, just burn me up with a few lava spells.”

The Fae giggled and vanished, seeking refuge near the top of the expansive lair.

Ilea on the other hand stared into the open maw of the Trakorov, watching as lava lit up within, her arms spreading before she was showered. Compared to the Wyrms' sun spell, the intensity wasn't exactly there. "Pump it up a notch," she said, gesturing with her melting hands.

The monster obliged, her blood soon boiling, as her skin melted. She sighed, relaxing in the molten rock as the massive monster sent the occasional burst of flame over her. Nobody could ask for a more accommodating spa experience, really.

'ding' 'Lava Magic Resistance reaches 3rd lvl 4'

'ding' 'Lava Magic Resistance reaches 3rd lvl 5'

No heat resistance, she noted, getting up to leave when the Trakorov went back to sleep, either seeing its obligation as fulfilled or simply sleepy. It had been a few hours after all. She glanced around quickly before contacting the Meadow. "*Violence with you?*"

"It is, yes. The violence you provided apparently wasn't particularly interesting," it answered.

"And yours is?" she asked.

"It has not requested any so far, opting to mess with your humans. Its runic knowledge is as impressive as I had expected," it said.

"What do you mean? Can you beam me back too?" she asked.

Ilea appeared near the Meadow. "*By the way, mind if I set one of my transfer destinations here?*"

"Of course not. What I mean is that Violence messes up key runes in easy to miss ways. They haven't even realized why their design has performed less efficiently in the past half hour," the Meadow explained.

She rolled her eyes, setting her third destination marker. "Violence, stop messing with them."

Boring

"Is Goliath ready?" she asked the Meadow.

"Yes," the tree replied.

"Great. Violence, we'll do some forging stuff. Want to watch? Maybe Goliath can make you something too if you're nice," she said.

The smith appeared a few seconds later, far enough away from the Meadow to not be bothered by the mana density.

He bowed to the tree, greeting the humans before he looked around.

"How much space do you need?" Ilea asked, walking towards the floating smith.

"This space should be sufficient," he said, having floated about twenty meters closer to the cavern wall. The smith turned and squinted, his eyes opening wide a moment later. "Is that?"

"Violence. Meet Goliath, best craftsbeing I know," she said. "Goliath, meet Violence. Part of the local Fae collective."

The little guy waved, floating closer to the smith.

“Spirit of old, I greet thee,” Goliath said and bowed. He summoned a pouch and emptied its contents onto the ground. “Welcome to our abode, honored guest.”

The Fae giggled, floating to the ground before it vacuumed up the glittering dust.

“What did you just feed him?” Ilea asked.

“A customary gift. Ground mana crystals. Long have I hoped to meet a traveler such as you,” he said, his eyes indicating happiness.

Friend!

“Indeed,” Ilea said, watching the Fae appear on top of Goliath’s head.

I should get some mana crystals to feed random powerful entities I meet, she thought. “Got any crystals for sale?”

“Not for sale, but you may have these,” the smith said and summoned a few medium sized crystals.

“I appreciate the gift,” she said and displaced the crystals, storing them inside her necklace.

“Here is the design, Endless Meadow,” Goliath said and rolled out a plan on a stone workbench that formed below the smiths’s arms. “It is appreciated.”

“*Simple enough,*” the Meadow said, creating several walls around their area, essentially building a simple house. “*Wouldn’t want things to start burning.*”

“Not like you couldn’t put out a fire,” Ilea said.

“*I dislike the smell of burnt flesh,*” the Meadow said.

A large forge formed from the ground up, the stone cracking as its density increased. The creation had several layers and openings, the top reaching nearly three meters in height.

Goliath continued showing plans to the Meadow, additions connected to the forge forming all around the central unit.

“And a mold of her armor,” Goliath said.

“Don’t you have one already?” Ilea asked.

“That one would melt if we tried to use it here,” he answered.

“I see,” Ilea said, watching stone form around her. She left one layer of armor on as the Meadow created the first part of the mold. She breathed out when the stone moved away once more.

“Perhaps I should employ your services more often, Endless Meadow,” Goliath joked.

“*I shall assist you whenever you require such,*” it answered.

The smith laughed to himself, the sound changing towards something devious at the end.

I think you just signed a contract that you may regret in time, Ilea thought.

She sat down in her ashen chair, the Fae running around with its ashen copy. Ilea raised her brow when the Fae ran closer to the Meadow, teleporting around as it giggled, finally hiding behind the crystal tree as the ash copy floated after it. *Well it’s used to high mana density after all.*

She just still thought it peculiar that something so powerful wasn't even at level two hundred. Her instincts didn't scream at her either whenever she was close to the creature but she assumed that could just be familiarity, or because the Fae was inherently not very threatening.

Even the hive was more confusing than threatening. Though it could've likely removed me from existence with a single thought.

Goliath chucked a third of the massive Wyrms scales into the forge, stone closing around the opening as he explained some changes to the mold, the Meadow responding instantly.

"Now we only need something to burn," Goliath said.

"Wood should suffice, if it comes from me," the Meadow said, roots forming near the forge and growing into the openings.

"Perfect. Being of ash, I believe you should have some heat or fire spells at your disposal? With enough time, we should be able to reach the required temperature," Goliath said.

Ilea already formed heat within her. "Meadow, can your stone take my heat spell?"

"Test it here," the creature said, creating a set of walls nearby, the stone cracking as its density increased.

She increased her weight, holding out her arm towards the walls before she unleashed a fully charged chaotic beam of fire and heat. The flames broke against the wall and flowed to the side and above, dissipating to reveal glowing stone with a slightly runny surface. The wall still held however.

"That is ridiculous for something at level five hundred. But then again, you have killed four mark creatures before, so perhaps it is justified," the Meadow said, adding another layer to the forge and all surrounding walls. "Over time it may actually melt through the walls."

"I appreciate the compliment," Ilea said with a grin. "I'm quite proud of my melting powers."

Goliath just giggled to himself, rubbing his hands as he went and touched the still glowing wall.

"Marvelous. Truly... spectacular. There is much... I may ask of you two. May I... set up a residence here, ancient one?"

"You may reside in that section of the wall. Shall I make a copy of your workshop?" the Meadow said, a nearby root pointing at the section it had indicated.

"That would be most generous, weaver of space, mother of earth, and giver of life," Goliath said and bowed again. "Master of heat and ash, I shall ask of thine assistance, whenever you are here."

Ilea smiled. "You're just charming everyone with your compliments," she said and walked up to the smith, taking his hand. "I'll give you a mark too. You can contact me using ten words or less whenever you need help with something. Works once a day."

"I am, honored," he said, his golden eyes suggesting joy. "Now... may we begin?"

"Sure," Ilea said, her boots digging into the earth as she walked back.

"What exactly did you eat?" the Meadow asked.

"It's a skill. I get faster heat generation in exchange for more density," she explained.

"One positive for another positive. I fail to see the downside," the Meadow said.

"Speed is the downside," she said. "Evasion."

“*You hardly require either with space magic and healing,*” the creature said.

“Which is why I’m getting some heavy armor now,” Ilea said with a grin. “Think you can upgrade the Armaments of Lilith with the scales as well?”

Goliath glanced at her and shook his head with a sad expression in his eyes. “I’m afraid not. But as you train with it, such may not be necessary. It is... impossible to say.”

“The living quality, yes,” she said and summoned the armor. *No restrictions to heavy armor anymore*, she thought and tried to get her Mantle to spread around the massive armor. The spell failed to take hold, only normal ash capable of surrounding the Armaments. She sent a spear into the thing, damaging its shoulder before she tried to heal it back with her third tier. A chunk of steel was flung out, dents forming where the damage had been present before. *Hah. It works.*

She assumed she simply didn’t know the armor well enough yet to heal it effectively with her third tier. *But if Goliath thinks it has the potential to reach something close or even better than the Wyrmscales, I should probably spend some time training inside this thing as well. With my increased weight, the slow movement won’t be such a downside anyway.*

Ilea summoned the Wyrms eye and held it with the massive hand of the Armaments, sending a beam of heat into one of Meadow’s walls, the focused energy managing to burn about ten centimeters into the hardened magical stone.

“What in the name of all gods am I looking at?” Iana said from about twenty meters away, her and Christopher watching the scene with interest.

“Goliath’s creation,” Ilea said, her voice dull and barely audible inside the thick living plating.

“What?” Iana asked.

“The Armaments of Trials, armor made with the heart of a mithril vein. Only time will tell, what may come of it, time and the trials the ashen one will face within it,” Goliath explained.

“That’s more of an explanation than I got,” she said.

“*You wouldn’t have appreciated it anyway. The present beings are all scholars and creators, unlike the barbaric destroyer that you are,*” the Meadow spoke.

“*A bit bitchy today, are we?*” she sent, crossing her massive arms before she put away the armor once more. “I’ve been thinking. That eye... the range is pretty nuts but I can’t exactly aim it well. Maybe you could use some of the scales to make me a weapon of sorts in which I could place the eye. One with an actual scope,” Ilea said and formed a few rifles out of ash. “Large enough to be held by the Armaments.”

“Interesting design... did you encounter such creations in your travels through the wilderness?” the smith asked, the others looking on with interest as well.

“No, that’s from my home realm. We didn’t have magic but these were called rifles. Combination of a steel barrel, gunpowder and steel bullets. A small explosion would propel the projectile out. I’d prefer if we didn’t make them though, the world would’ve been a better place without their existence,” she said.

“*Except for the one you just requested,*” the Meadow said. “*Though I can see how dangerous such an instrument would be against those untrained in magic or wearing powerful armor. Similar to crossbows or siege weapons I have heard about.*”

“Without the eye and my spell it would be useless anyway. I just need a focus with which I can aim and shoot the heat through my ashen limbs inserted into it. And speaking of weapons technology, I’m actually surprised with how little large scale magical shit I’ve seen so far. Most runes were set into walls, defensive in nature,” she said.

“There are plenty of offensive creations,” Iana said. “It’s just too expensive to make for most low born individuals. And higher level adventurers and mages prefer to use the magic and skills they’ve trained with.”

“Just comes down to mass production then. If you can arm a few thousand level thirty humans with rifles equaling the spell power of a level two hundred adventurer, you could make quite a force with little training,” Ilea said.

“Nobody in power would want that,” Iana said.

Ilea grinned. “Ravenhall and Hallowfort might like the idea of armed guards, but yeah, it’s probably better if we don’t start distributing dangerous weapons anybody could use to kill high level adventurers.”