

Chapter 635 Eye of the Storm

Ilea slowed down when she saw the first wind blades enter her dominion. For now she refrained from teleporting away.

Last time they cut me apart, she thought, raising her arms to soften the blow from the first spell.

The blade whisked past her, a mist of ash stirred up where the spell had cut into her defensive layers. Not quite enough to reach her skin.

Ilea used her authority to pull the ash back, her armor healing when the next attack hit her, followed by a dozen more. *Really pissed you off there*, she thought, landing on the ground with her wings cut apart, blood dripping as her flesh and mantle recovered after the volley of attacks. The injuries were minor at best, most of the spells only cutting through various layers of ash.

She ran the rest of the way, closing the distance with the low flying Griffin, a grin on her face as she locked eyes with the eagle head. Her wings charged as her ashen spears rushed out, deflected by a whirlwind manifesting around the monster.

Ilea pushed through, coming close to the creature before a surge of air pushed her to the side, redirecting her flying form away from the Griffin, a few of her limbs scratching against its strong hide. She pushed destructive mana into it through her dominion, transferring back as she slowed down. Ilea dodged in the air, moving her tail and wings to avoid the homing wind blades coming at her.

A few of them grazed her, more of them deflected as she circled around the flying creature, its eyes on her at all times, not showing a reaction to the constant reverse healing going into it. She didn't hold back, the enemy spells easily restoring whatever mana she was using. A blast of heat rushed out, hitting a wall of air that formed out of nowhere.

The wall pushed against the heat, ultimately reaching Ilea. She could feel the pressure as she was sent flying back, her wings unable to withstand the spell until she hit the ground, her limbs digging into the stone to keep her there. She watched the Griffin advance, pushing the wall forward until she vanished, teleporting twice to reach it. Her fist lashed out, stopped entirely by visible air moving slowly around the monster.

Ilea released the heat within her in a circle, pushing against the defensive layer before she vanished again, this time grappling onto the creature's back. She could only remain for a moment, air pressure pushing her away a moment later. Using her third tier resistance, she went with the flow, coming back around where the spell's influence didn't reach. Her limbs scratched against the layer of wind before her fist finally landed, sending thousands of mana and health into the Griffin with a single strike.

This time it screeched, flying up to try and get away from her.

She saw a few hundred wind blades form, flying straight ahead as she activated Phaseshift. The blades past through while she stacked health into her auras, white flame erupting a moment later when she returned to normal space. Her hand reached out before she blinked, a wave of ash igniting as it spread over the monster's defenses. She teleported to the other side of the Griffin, using Archon Strike and Tempered Seal to send waves of mana into it. Another wave of heat and energy crashed into the sphere of wind she had felt coming with her precognition.

The Griffin was on the defensive now, flying up and away as it sent spell after spell against the ashen healer.

Ilea displaced, tanked, or shifted through the attacks, her teleportation repeatedly bringing her close, each moment she had in close quarters allowing her to send devastating waves of destructive mana into the monster, the seals gathering more heat with each strike, still residing within the being.

She stopped in the air, ignoring the wind blades impacting her armor, some cutting through where only one or two layers remained, digging into her flesh and drawing blood. A nuisance at best, and more importantly mana returning to her. Each strike cost her several thousand, forcing her to stay at a distance for a little while to recover. The Griffin had stopped moving quite as quickly, favoring its right wing. A few stains of blood showed on its side.

Ilea teleported back when she felt a large amount of mana gather close to her sparring partner. She grinned, looking at the gathering storm around her. *Already pushed you this far?* she thought, moving her wings lazily as she regenerated her mana, Azarinth Awakening flaring back up when her health reached its maximum, each second creating more heat within her.

She looked up to see clouds form out of thin air, a maelstrom of air whirling around as the tip of a tornado broke out of the clouds, moving down until it enveloped the Griffin. The pressure increased as the storm spread out, chunks of stone already ripped out of the ground and brought up into the fast moving wind. Her wings strained against the power, her spell and resistances unable to keep her steady.

Ilea started spinning around the Griffin, the storm now reaching her as her vision was reduced to her dominion, her body tumbling as debris broke against her armor. She could see the tiny blades of wind moving chaotically through the air, her precognition unable to determine their flight paths. Dodging turned out to be impossible anyway, Ilea unable to maneuver through the pressure, teleportation the only thing that allowed her to evade an incoming attack if necessary.

She felt her armor slowly ground away by a thousand cuts, much like the four mark Bluetails had managed in the ocean. Here however, she persisted, her defenses holding up thanks to the additional layers and her healing. She laughed, the sounds drowned out by the raging storm as she tumbled, crashing with chunks of stone the size of cars, leaving pebbles and dust in the winds, mixing with ash and blood where the velocity had managed to pierce her defenses.

The impacts hardly bothered her. It would take more to break her bones, Ilea's mind focused as she healed through the abuse, the spinning making her a little dizzy, Flare of Creation and Titan of ash however preventing her from getting stunned. Another use of transfer brought her out of the storm, the perfect calm in the air confusing her for a moment as her wings and eyes adjusted.

Not out of the storm, she thought, seeing the towering whirlwind move around her, a pillar remaining within its center. She could hardly believe how still the air here was, as if she had come to a sealed off room without any windows. And yet she could feel the presence of the storm, not just magically but instinctual. Ilea felt the hairs on her back stand up, the sheer power around her pushing her to seek shelter.

She smiled at the idea of sheltering inside the ongoing whirlwind against the perfect stillness around her, her eyes finding the Griffin as it moved down to her height within the pillar. Its wings had stopped pushing against the air to keep it afloat, they moved slower now, almost in an ethereal manner. Her dominion was alight with magic, everything around her part of the very spell woven by the creature.

Transfer didn't work. *Just as I thought*, she mused, unraveling the ever changing fabrics around her. Displacement would bring her somewhere, though she was sure the magic nearby would influence her destination. Ilea let it be for now, not about to back down against this spell until she had no other option but to do so.

She felt the pressure increase to ridiculous degrees, her body pushed together as she tried to press against it. The air within her lungs left with a gasp, Ilea's eyes popping a moment later as her body shook, her blood vessels rupturing as her ash was pressed into her skin. Her dominion remained active, reversed healing still entering the Griffin, its body trembling as it seemed to breathe a little harder.

Ilea's own healing kept her alive and focused, the enhanced blades and spears of air now cutting into her dealing massive damage to her ash and skin, some even destroying organs. None managed to get through her bones, displacement preventing any of them from reaching her brain. *Too stupid to focus on my mind it seems*, she thought, her face locked in a grin as her muscles struggled to move against the pressure. *If you can't kill me*, she thought, her ash and body cut up and healed again a hundred times over. *You will lose*.

Barely half a minute passed when she felt the pressure lessen, her arm straining as it moved up, aiming to point towards the Griffin. Her eyes healed, this time resisting the pressure. She finally managed to get her arm high enough, her hand shaking before her auras glowed brighter for a moment, all the heat gathered within her sent out in a chaotic beam of energy and flames. The heat within the Griffin ruptured its insides in the same moment.

She grinned, seeing her attack brush away the disrupted defensive air around the Griffin, setting its form alight as it screeched and retreated. Ilea flew after the descending creature, the storm around them breaking down as rocks and debris was flung all around, impacting the ground and walls with clouds of dust and showers of rocks.

The Griffin landed, half its body scorched as it stumbled to the side slightly.

Ilea landed a few meters away, a wave of air pushed aside by her abrupt impact, a single teleport bringing her close before her fist impacted the monster's beak. The physical force of a charged Archon Strike ruptured her arm, cracking the Griffin's beak at the same time. She charged again, watching as the monster stumbled backwards, its talons alone keeping it from falling.

She stepped closer, an upper cut slamming into the monster's jaw. Ilea felt the flesh and muscle on her arm explode, stripped away by the sheer force of the attack as she dislocated her shoulder. The Griffin's head whipped up, a crack resounding as something in its spine broke. It slumped to the ground immediately after, not moving anymore.

Ilea breathed out, grabbing her shoulder before she pushed down hard. A crack resounded as she balled her right fist, her ash receding for a moment to let the stripped and dead flesh fall to the ground, fresh muscle and skin already forming below.

"You're a tough motherfucker," she said, crouching down to check the beast. It was still breathing, despite all its wounds and the broken neck. *A good training partner*, she thought and looked at a nearby slab of rubble, jumping up the three meter high rock before she sat down and summoned herself a meal. Ilea kept an eye on the Griffin's health, trying to figure out its anatomy with her dominion. Helping it heal didn't seem necessary, so she let it be.

VI

O

LENCE!

The Fae appeared on top of the downed monster's head, jumping up and down before it stomped a few times. It shied away when the body twitched, teleporting behind Ilea's head.

She laughed, nearly choking on her food as she saw her ashen copy and the dark Fae rushing towards them, unable to keep up with the excited Baron.

"Did you enjoy the show?" she asked, continuing her meal as the Fae looked at her food with curious white eyes. Ilea offered it some but the creature just looked at her.

Show

Good

Strong!

"The storm spell was pretty impressive," she said, checking her messages quickly.

'ding' 'Sentinel Reconstruction [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 2'

'ding' 'Sentinel Core [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 2'

'ding' 'Ashen Wings [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 2'

'ding' 'Phaseshift reaches 3rd lvl 23'

'ding' 'Space Shift reaches 3rd lvl 21'

'ding' 'Body of the Valkyrie reaches 3rd lvl 27'

'ding' 'Ashen Limbs reaches lvl 2'

'ding' 'Deviant of Humanity reaches 3rd lvl 11'

'ding' 'Oxygen Repository reaches 2nd lvl 7'

'ding' 'Spear of Ash reaches lvl 2'

'ding' 'Veteran reaches 3rd lvl 22'

'ding' 'Wind Resistance reaches 3rd lvl 8'

'ding' 'Wind Resistance reaches 3rd lvl 9'

'ding' 'You have survived the Blade Tempest spell, one Core skill point awarded'

Solid for a quick and easy battle, she thought, trying to feed the Fae some rice.

No

Food

"It's good though," Ilea said and continued eating. Her ashen constructs had reached them again, the little ash Fae hitting the real one on its head with its arm.

Confused

“It’s because you didn’t wait for them. It’s dangerous to just come here, there is still some debris falling,” Ilea pointed out, though what fell now mostly came from the ceiling where heavy impacts left quite a bit of damage.

Safe

Ilea pointed to a several meters large rock crashing into the ground, a wave of dust and wind spreading out from the impact.

“Safe?” she asked, raising her brows.

Safe.

The Fae nodded, avoiding eye contact.

Both of them glanced back to the Griffin when the creature slowly got up, disoriented and slowly moving its wings.

Ilea charged up monster hunter but a tap to her armored cheek stopped her.

Violence

Talk

“I’m not sure more violence will convince it not to attack again,” Ilea said.

The Fae tried to make her eye explode but failed to destroy the resilient organ. It made a few annoyed noises as Ilea giggled.

You’re missing a few thousand more of your kind to get the job done, she thought and watched the Fae float forward a little, establishing a mental connection with the Griffin.

The creature looked up, its eyes focusing as it glared at Ilea and the Fae. It remained motionless for a moment before it lowered its head, sitting down with its wings spread to the side.

“What’s happening?” Ilea asked.

Submit

Acknowledge

Stronger

“It’s submitting to me?” Ilea asked. “Or to you?”

You

“I see. So it’s not hostile anymore. That’s good. Can you ask if we can train sometimes when I’m around?” she said.

Yes

A few seconds passed before the Griffin stood up again, shaking its body before it looked at her.

“What does it want?” she asked, eating more of her meal.

Command?

“Command? Is it my pet now or what?” she asked.

Pet?

No.

The Fae touched its chin, thinking about something.

Submit

Servant?

“Servant... yeah, I don’t really want any servants,” she said. *“Hey Meadow, the Griffin wants to be my servant or something? Can you maybe talk to it. Maybe it’s willing to cooperate with you. No servitude of course, just deals for food or something. I don’t know how smart it is.”*

“What? You... how??” it asked.

“Ask Violence. I didn’t do the talking,” she said. “Can you ask if it can work together with Meadow?”

Tree?

Okay, the Fae said and shrugged.

“Your little friend is...,” the Meadow sent.

“Is what?” she asked. Nothing came back. *“Didn’t expect you to have the capacity to be speechless.”*

“You lack the brain size to understand what your so called friend has accomplished here and how it did so,” the Meadow explained.

“So it’s my fault you can’t explain shit? Alright,” Ilea sent, focusing back on her food. She didn’t care much about the Griffin but if it could help her train, she was all for it.

“Ilea... I have a request,” the Meadow spoke.

“What is it?” she answered.

“Can you ask the Fae if it’s willing to... teach me?” the Meadow asked.

Ilea burst out laughing, storing her empty bowl as the creatures around her looked on.

“I don’t think there is anything comedic about the situation,” Endless Meadow said.

She couldn’t stop, brushing away tears.

“There is no shame in asking for help. That creature has knowledge gained through millennia of study. It’s only natural for me to acknowledge its expertise,” the Meadow sent, embarrassment and confusion mixing into the mental communication.

Ilea calmed down slowly, looking at the little Fae before she grabbed it and held it up high, the creature giggling at the gesture. “Oh ancient Violence! Unmatched scholar! Share thy knowledge with this puny human.”

BOW

BEFORE

VIOLENCE

“Have mercy on this poor woman, space god,” Ilea said and laughed. “Sorry, Meadow. I couldn’t help it.”

The tree remained silent.

“It’s just... this little guy? Really? He’s so cute,” she sent and hugged the creature close, its form nearly vanishing against her ash.

Warm

She formed some heat, smiling as the Fae snuggled against her ash. She added a small blanket. “I don’t have any magic crystal cookies sadly.”

Ash

Fine, the Baron sent and somehow started consuming a part of her blanket.

“Hey don’t eat the blanket, I can just make more ash,” she said, creating little spheres she filled with mana and some heat, the Fae consuming the gifts quickly.

Happy

“Glad to hear that,” she said and patted its head, smiling to herself. “Meadow asks if you can teach him by the way.”

Meadow

Friend?

“Yes. You can trust it,” Ilea said.

Violence

Help

“Thanks,” she said and made a bit more *food*. “You don’t have to stick around by the way, I’ll be back again to fight,” she said, looking at the Griffin. She quickly used monster hunter, whistling to the being, trying to say thanks.

The Griffin looked up and spread its wings, calling out one last time before it flew off, likely to return to a spot near the ceiling.

Ilea looked at its flying form. *“Violence will teach you,”* she sent.

“Thank you,” the Meadow sent.

“Don’t thank me. And don’t thank him yet. I have a slight inkling that it’s not going to be exactly what you’re wishing for,” she said.

“Ilea, unlike you, I have patience. Getting to talk to a part of the Fae’s consciousness is a valuable step. Another thing to thank you for because it may not have agreed otherwise,” Meadow said.

“Well, finally something I can do for you after all the help you’ve provided,” Ilea answered.

“I appreciate it. Really,” the Meadow spoke. *“I’ll rip you apart extra hard later.”*

Ilea just smiled and shook her head, knowing that any answer to that would just be met by feigned ignorance or an even worse line.