

## Chapter 753 Finals

“A battle to the death would’ve likely ended differently as well,” Catelyn said as they watched the two groups leave together.

*Shadows and Sentinels*, Ilea thought as she watched the nobles return to their discussions within her domain. *We have both firmly on our side.*

“Healers tend to be good at surviving,” she said to the fox.

Catelyn glanced at her with dancing flames in her eyes. “Indeed. I have seen it first hand.”

“You’re not quite so bad yourself, fire fox,” Ilea replied.

Ilea leaned back and summoned a meal for herself, the fight having served as a bit of a distraction from the events out of town. She hoped for no more annoying little surprises, at least until Hector faced Kyrian in the finals. The man seemed like someone who thrived on causing annoying surprises. She watched the performance of a dancing and juggling group as she ate, the pauses between fights longer now as they reached the end of the tournament.

---

Lily stayed seated, having bought tickets to the last few fights of the day. She was silent as the performers danced through the sand with expert movements, music playing through the enchanted devices in a manner that she hadn’t heard before coming to Morhill. It wasn’t what kept her still however.

*Not even a minute.*

She had barely been able to follow the fight. Three Sentinels fighting against four Shadows. Their levels were high, yes, but she had defended herself against Edwin, had fought against a near level two hundred Sentinel herself. The finals of the pre two hundred tournament were nowhere near what she had just seen. It did make her feel a little better about her earlier loss that Celeste went on to win.

These groups however had been in an entirely different league altogether, teleporting around, coordinating spells, timings, angles. What she had managed to grasp was incredibly impressive, and the rest was simply too fast, or obscured by the various spells they used.

*Absolute chaos. But they stayed focused until the end.* Maybe not the pinnacle of single humans or users of magic, but certainly the pinnacle of coordination. She felt bad for the dancers that had to follow up that fight. Their movements seemed almost crawling. As if slowed down, now that she watched them. She glanced up to the terrace, most of the people already gone and returning to whatever they had been doing up there before. She did spot Ilea sitting at the corner again. The woman had left at some point earlier, though she didn’t know why.

She ordered some food to eat while the performers continued to entertain the crowd. More showed up later, some doing magic shows with various elements. The duo using burning smoke and water to cut through the various clouds looked the most interesting to her but Lily really just wanted to see the finals.

The suns slowly moved over the horizon, shadows moving over the arena, cast from the mountain tops closest to Morhill. She drank from her new canteen when the announcer finally started.

It was time for the main tournament finals. Lily had to stand up to see something, the people around her starting to talk and cheer, getting up to see the contestants. She had seen the Cursed fight before but not the Destroyer. Both of them she had seen down in the preparation hall but neither were there for long or spoke with anyone.

She watched them step away from the elevator, the Cursed clad in heavy metal armor, perfectly linked together without a visible weakness. A few choice spikes adorned his helmet, shoulders, and thighs, the look alone more intimidating than most monsters she had faced. It wasn't just that however, something about how he moved. It made her feel on edge. As if she watched a dangerous four mark... one that was far more intelligent than the ones she had seen.

The Destroyer in comparison walked around in an almost aloof manner, twirling once as he spread his arms and looked at the crowd, quickly losing interest and focusing on his opponent. The spectators went quiet when he started talking. "You're the one from that restaurant," he said, loud enough for everyone to hear. "No Lilith here to save you now."

The Cursed glanced up to the terrace and then pointed. "She's right there."

"You know what I mean," the Destroyer said and sighed. "You're no fun. Come on, let's show these poor fucking people what true power looks like." He spread his arms, water flowing onto the ground from seemingly nowhere.

His opponent didn't reply, but instead started floating, six flails appearing around him. They exploded into shards of steel, his hands raised as the storm of needles flew out, entirely ignoring his opponent.

Half the arena ground was already covered in liquid, the Destroyer raising one hand before a broad torrent of water shot out with blinding speed.

Lily took in a deep breath. It looked like the man had just summoned an entire river. She watched the water slam into the floating armored mage, most of it crashing into the barrier a few dozen meters behind. The torrent became smaller, more pressurized, finally as thin as a beam of light magic from the previous fight. A dome of water exploded out from where the spell impacted the shields of steel.

She looked at the ground, the entire arena now covered in half a meter of water, the metal shards having moved down below, sometimes reflecting bits of light as they cut into the stone ground. She knew the curse mage used runes to cast some of his spells, but under water?

The pressurized beam stopped, all the fluid still in the air around the Cursed floated and encased him in a sphere of water.

Lily watched it slowly get smaller, the Destroyer moving his open hands closer together as he himself was elevated by a wave, to be at the same height as his opponent, a broad grin on his face and his eyes glinting with joy. She could see the curse mage's movements slow down but his metal didn't seem to be affected in the slightest.

His head cocked to the side ever so slightly, a pulse of magic released from his imprisoned form.

The Destroyer looked around, moving his arms to his chest before he too was encased in a sphere of water. Green light pulsed from below the now meter high water covering the entirety of the fighting grounds.

Lily fell back into her seat when a wave of curse energy slammed into the barrier covering the arena, the pressure pushing her back despite the defensive measures. Most everyone else watching experienced the same, green light now shining from the runic field covering the entire floor of the flooded space. The Curse mage moved his arms, splinters of steel returning to him before they formed rotating plates around him, pushing against the water until he was freed.

The Destroyer grinned within his sphere, torrents added to the floods as he sent beams of pressurized water to the ground in an effort to get rid of the runes. An effort which didn't seem to make a difference. The runes still glowed, even with stone being cut through. He looked to his left where a massive chunk of spiked iron slammed into his defensive barrier, the thing was held by a chain connected to the Curse mage. It was slowed but not entirely stopped, three more flails entering the sphere and slowly pushing in, towards the center and where the Destroyer was hiding.

Metal spears shot out at the sphere but failed to get more than a few centimeters deep into the water. Instead they returned back to the Curse mage. His armor moved as metal was added to it, a wedge of steel forming in front of him as magic surged around the floating man.

Lily saw a group of Sentinels land behind the barrier where the Curse mage would likely move if he could get past the Destroyer. They talked to the spectators and started moving them out of the way.

*They're scared he's getting through the barrier?* Lily watched as a single form clad in ash appeared next to the Sentinels. *Lilith*. The woman waited in a relaxed manner, the few people who had remained vanishing instead.

---

Ilea planted herself against the ground. Kyrian wasn't the best at aiming his wedge attack and if the Destroyer dodged away, she didn't know if the barrier could keep him inside.

Her friend rushed forward but of course the pirate didn't budge, his sphere of condensed water split as the metal mage was slowed down, his flails pushing further inside as Hector's defense was pushed to the limits. Torrents of condensed water pushed against the approaching curse mage as the energies flowed through the entirety of the arena, the barrier already vibrating with his magic.

Bob finally flowed away, gritting his teeth as he teleported to avoid the unstoppable force coming his way.

Kyrian slammed into the barrier with a loud impact, a shock wave flowing over the slightly yellow defense. His eyes met Ilea's as his metal flowed away.

She smiled below her armor as he turned and rushed out again, his flails moving through the air in wide arcs, slamming into the defenses of the Destroyer. Half the arena was under water by now, the

barrier keeping the element inside. The curse runes remained between the cracked ground, pulsing with green light and imposing magic. Ilea now teleported too, staying in the trajectory of her friend who stopped holding back, knowing he wouldn't smear entire groups of spectators in case he broke through the barrier.

Ilea used her Fabric Tear to get the people further away, the announcer explaining the measures as the people were bunched up, some annoyed, some afraid, most of them excited and cheering.

The pirate now moved through the cursed waters with a black metal mage following in turn, all the pressure and spells unable to stop him entirely. Of course Kyrian was prevented from teleportation but his curse did work too, the man not showing any wear from the constant spells of the Destroyer.

Hector frowned and raised both his arms under water, the dome like barrier now filled nearly to the brim. Magic surged before a thirty meter long black eel rushed out, three meters thick, its maw opening with meter long teeth, lightning flowing along its smooth form. It impacted the metal mage as blue lightning surged all around, the barrier sizzling with the energies.

Ilea watched as metal flails changed shape into scythe like extensions, the man moving through the large eel with blades circling around him. The monster was reduced to chunks of black flesh, blood seeping into the green pulsing pool as Kyrian resumed his charge. He turned his head and looked at Ilea, giving her a nod.

"What is it?" she sent.

"Get me more barriers. Curse," he sent in a calm voice.

Ilea looked up to the terrace. "Claire? Anti curse barriers?"

The woman appeared a few seconds later, a group of mages moving closer. They floated around the barrier and added five more layers in a variety of shimmering colors.

Kyrian looked around and nodded, his blades splintering and spreading out on the ground, adding to the already glowing formation. He spread his arms as pressurized water slammed into his armor, cutting through the outer layers of his defenses. He opened his eyes as a pulse of magic flared out, slamming into the first barrier, all the water around him pushed aside for a moment before it rushed back to envelop him.

Hector watched with wide eyes and a broad grin as the spell manifested, a pillar of green light flashing up, the first barrier shattered with a loud crash, the second and third gone a moment later.

The water burned away as if consumed by the destructive energies, Hector's sphere around him reduced moment to moment as he glared at his opponent. "Well played." He took a last look around before the remaining water around him slammed against his body, the man gone with it.

Ilea saw the teleportation, a flash in the fabric as the spell manifested. *Towards the coast. Fancy that.* She wondered if the spell worked through different realms, the next barrier shattered before the energy of the massive spell dissipated.

Silence returned to the battleground.

Kyrian landed in the middle of the arena with his metal once more gathering around him, reforming into floating flails before they vanished. Of the water that had previously filled the entire arena, nothing remained.

She smiled as the other barriers came down, the mages still floating nearby. Ilea started clapping, the spectators soon joining in before loud cheers resounded all around.

*“Well done,”* she sent to her friend.

Kyrian waved at the crowd in a reserved manner. *“Well, he was more than a little rude to that waitress. Anyone would’ve done the same.”*

*“Sure, Kyrian,”* she said. *“I did promise a favor for the one that beats him but you know you can ask me for anything anyway, at all times.”*

*“Maybe save me from this attention?”* the man asked as Sentinels and Shadows landed near him, nobles and rulers joining in to congratulate the winner of the main tournament.

Ilea smiled. *“Sure.”* She appeared next to him and spread her wings, charging them as she grabbed his arm and flew up. *“Where’d you leave Aliana?”*

*“She was watching in the crowd,”* the man replied, now flying next to her.

Ilea formed an ashen copy and sent it back down. It returned about ten seconds later with the woman in question. *“That peak over there has a wonderful view,”* she said and pointed to one of the mountains northwest of Morhill, overlooking the Plains that spread out below.

*“I appreciate it,”* Kyrian said and turned to Aliana, his armored hand outstretched.

Aliana glanced between Ilea and the man, a hunger in her eyes.

*“Enjoy yourselves,”* Ilea said with a grin and let herself fall down. She saw them close in and kiss before she twirled in the air and spread her wings, slowing her descent until she landed on the half destroyed battle grounds of the main arena.

*“You can’t just steal away the winner!”* one of the Lys nobles complained, arms spread.

Ilea just glared at him until General Ryse himself came and touched the man’s shoulder.

*“She did anyway,”* he said and gave her a look. *“I appreciate your efforts to protect the spectators.”*

She gave him a light nod and watched him leave with the noble.

A nearby earth mage scratched his head as he looked at the entirely shattered and cut apart ground. He glanced up and looked at Ilea, sighing slightly before he got to work.