

## Chapter 921 Peak

Ilea fueled the spell of the small Fae sitting on her shoulder. Reality shifted, before they appeared near the peak of a mountain. The air was cool, the winds howling past the cliffs below. Jagged rock lining all the way up to the highest section. She breathed in, feeling the pressure of dense mana.

Felicia collapsed to one knee, her breathing heavy, her eyes diluting slightly.

Ilea put a hand on her shoulder but didn't heal her yet, only keeping an eye on her vitals. She had experienced the same when she had come here for the first time. Right after her fight with Vor Elenthir.

*And now I could rip him apart. Just as he had done to me.*

Violence floated before them, eyes on Felicia.

"How do you feel, can you talk?" Ilea asked as she crouched down next to the woman.

Magic flowed out, Felicia's teeth clenching as a smile spread on her face. She cackled to herself and looked at Ilea.

She knew the wild look well. Her spells were active. She was protecting herself.

"We're staying here for a few minutes, let her adjust," she said, keeping a hand on Felicia's shoulder to provide a steady presence. The winds were all around them, she would find her calm.

Ilea looked at the suns, felt their heat battle with the cold air all around. They were high up. Higher perhaps than anywhere else she had been on Elos, though her flight with Garonoth likely went just as high. Compared to last time, she could place the location. They were somewhere in the far north and west of the continent.

Her focus went to the peak. Barely thirty meters away. Her eyes didn't notice anything strange. Her domain however, shined with the same radiance of some of the most powerful spells she'd had the pleasure of seeing. More than that, she saw the flowing web in the fabric itself, wisps swirling in a circle around the peak. She had not seen anything like it before, though she wondered how similar her own Sunbound Creation would seem to someone outside. Someone with a similar set of perception skills.

She smiled to herself, remembering her confusion when she had suddenly found herself in a strange space beyond the peak. Now she saw it. It seemed as obvious as jumping off a cliff and into the ocean. Day and night. Reality, and... something else. Something either within, or without. Though she had already been in the mists of an Oracle, had traveled to different realms, and she had her own little pocket of reality that she could summon whenever she wished. She grinned, feeling the sheer scope and density of this creation. If she hadn't known that a Faen cluster was responsible for this, she may have very well doubted this world was real at all upon seeing this phenomenon with her current sight.

"I'm... I'm getting used to it," Felicia said in a whisper.

Ilea moved her eyes away from the fabric and glanced down at Felicia. "Well done."

"What is this place... where are we?"

Ilea nodded towards the floating Baron. "This is his home. Well... not quite. But we're close. It's just ahead."

"The home of the Fae. You mean this is where the real thing is? The cluster, you said, right?"

"Yeah. And I won't lie to you. Going in there isn't better than what you feel now," Ilea said. "Know what. Might be safer if I go in alone first, to test the waters. In case I don't manage to heal your mind."

"You went in there years ago, no?" Felicia said and touched her shoulder. "I want to see it. Violence, think I will survive?" She glanced over at the Baron.

He gave her a thumbs up, without thumbs.

Felicia grinned.

"You make your own choices," Ilea said, spreading her wings before she started flying. "I suggest you close your eyes, and take in the feel."

"You're not closing yours," Felicia teased, flying next to her.

Ilea smiled. "Well yes. I want to see."

She activated her Fourth Tiers of True Reconstruction, Pyroclastic Flow, and Meditation. Last time she had perceived the presence of a Fae was when the Heart of Verivyen had sprung to life, an entire oasis brought into the sava desert. Her mind had been overwhelmed then, but she had been surprised, hadn't expected quite the spectacle that she had received. And she had not been the same as she was now. Not quite.

*I want to see it all this time.*

With another move of her wings, she passed the threshold. The entryway into the home of the Fae. Entryway into its domain. Its realm. Or something else entirely, that she had yet to understand.

Ilea breathed in, feeling the dense mana, more present than before, more focused and shaped. There was air, she found. Space magic was all around them. Stars, she saw, tens of thousands of them, glittering in a night sky of purples, reds, and black. Her marks were there, but they felt the same as when she was in Kohr or Erendar. For all she knew, they had stepped through a gate into space itself. Beneath them, she perceived a platform made of space magic itself, next to her, she saw a new line of a teleportation spell coming into existence. The Baron, she thought, vanishing forward and towards the field of stars.

Felicia had gone back to one knee, breathing fast, with her eyes closed. Her spells were active, and her vitals seemed fine, though she was certainly in distress.

She tried to feel with her Star Touched skill but couldn't discern if this was an illusion of sorts, space itself, or some creation by the Fae. *Would it even matter?* she thought to herself as her eyes narrowed on a single distant star, glowing brighter with every passing second.

Light turned into fire as the distant being approached. A comet of pure white, streaking across the galaxy, growing in size until she could see the wings move across its lack of shape. Fluctuating, one wing here, another dozen there, a mere sphere of fire. Ilea couldn't focus on it, healing away an oncoming migraine from the strain of trying to grasp the creature she knew Violence to be a part of.

She moved her own wings, feeling her instincts scream somewhere below all of her magic. The growing form of the Fae was all encompassing now, as if the fires of creation had taken form and

spread through the very fabric of reality itself. A godlike being, one of few she had perceived to truly earn that name.

What she had once been, and what she had remained at her very core, screamed at the true form of the Fae, everlasting fire and the might of creation itself.

And yet she breathed, her wings moving in calm motions as she perceived and healed, Meditation slowly ticking away as the blood in her veins burned with cosmic energies. She was not who she had been, her very soul burning with the light of a star.

**[Fae – lvl ?????]**

Far above the Meadow. Above even Garonoth. And yet. She found that while its presence felt all encompassing, Ilea felt something else. Somewhere, beyond the endless streams of mana, and the fires of creation, somewhere, all of her perception could find and place this ancient being.

It was the most powerful manifestation of magic that she had ever felt. There was no question. No compare. And still, a part of her knew, that it was not endless, not immortal, but a being so powerful most would deem it such.

*“Ilea. You’ve grown more dense,”* a thousand voices spoke at once, barely filtered.

Ilea found her mind trembling to comprehend the voice, the effort far greater than the last time she had been here. There was not one connection, but a thousand, and her Meditation didn’t seem to help, but make things worse. She kept the spell up anyway. She didn’t want to lose. Ilea smiled.

*“And now I can finally see how dense you really are,”* she sent back, her mind straining. She felt it would be easier to see only with her domain, but chose to keep her eyes open. Flying over to Felica, she put a hand on the crying woman’s shoulder, seeing her lips quiver. *“I’m here.”*

*“Indeed. You’ve grown beyond most of our wildest expectations. No surprise to Violence. It expected you to grow even faster,”* the voices sent. *“But you have come here with purpose, have you not? The visit of a human, it had been, when last you stepped into our domain, but now you come as the bearer of a primordial force. A flame we do not know, and the threat of Extraction.”*

*“You know a lot, not that that’s surprising,”* Ilea sent and smiled. *“Violence kept you informed I assume?”*

*“Some of us have learned from the Endless Meadow, others from travelers and citizens of the Accords, others yet from bards, writers, and minstrels, all throughout the lands now claimed by the Meadow Accords. It pleases many of us that you have found and claimed this way of yours, and that like few, you have survived the tribulations required for your newfound realms of power. Ilea Spears, human, we salute you.”*

Ilea smiled. *“I’m flattered. It’s nice to truly meet you too. All of you. All that you are. Though I’m afraid while I grew much more powerful, I still can’t exactly keep up with what I think your communication is normally like.”*

*“An exchange of thoughts, emotion, knowledge, and understanding. The time required does not matter. Your efforts have provided all of that, to many of us, and for that, we thank you.”*

*“I don’t exactly claim much of that, but now that I’m here, I feel like I have to at least ask you for help with Ker Velor. How familiar are you with all that? With the Extraction, and what we can do to prevent it,”* Ilea sent.

The fires burned, many eyes opening and closing. Ilea felt like she saw a smaller Fae here and there, popping out of the floating sea of flames for mere moments.

*“The world is in motion. More so than what you would perceive as long ago. Ancient secrets are uncovered, and new paths for millions of creatures are created. The Ascended of Kohr perhaps have set their eyes yet again on this realm we do and do not inhabit, though we see much, we are not all seeing, and the Architect, as you name him, has taken precaution. Some of us have sought to find him, and none have returned. Lost and taken, or worse, by a choice of curiosity, a choice of courage, a choice of hope, or one of inspiration.*

*“Many remain within that seek to help your cause. We know the way of dwarves, mining in the deep, and yet we do not wield their tools and magic. We know the way of those Awakened, seeking treasure, ruin, in the depths, and yet we do not know to tread this path ourselves. Guardian of Iz himself, machines equipped with powers of the void, are delving as we speak, and yet we do not know to make and send machines ourselves.*

*“We are the Fae. Our ways are those of life. Of space. And fire. We have found much to see, in the lands of Elos, and we hold these stories dearly to our hearts. Know that, Ilea Spears, Lilith of Ravenhall, that we shall do, what our ways permit.”*

Ilea breathed in, knowing that her Meditation would soon run out.

*“Thank you,”* she sent back, not entirely sure what the Fae had offered, but just the knowledge of it not being entirely neutral or uncaring made her feel more grounded. The attitude and opinions of the Oracles had left her annoyed at some of the ancient beings in her realm. But they were not all the same. She breathed out and looked around. *“Are we in space?”*

*“We are part of the fabric,”* the Fae answered after some consideration.

*“I mean, is this a created space or are we somewhere between the stars and planets? Floating around,”* she said, turning around where she saw the endless expanse.

*“We have chosen to leave this consideration up to you,”* the Fae replied. *“Your visit. We are thankful for your presence, and we understand your haste, young human. But we had hoped to see. With our true nature.”*

Ilea grinned. *“The flame?”*

*“If you would, indulge us,”* a thousand voices spoke.

Ilea looked inward, to her essence. Her very soul. She breathed in and raised her arm, her eyes now focused on her palm, where a near fluid flame came into existence. Bright. A speck of orange in a sea of yellow light. She stepped away from Felicia, keeping an eye on her vitals as the flame spread onto her ash scale armor. Raising her other arm, she brought into existence a sea of fire spreading out into the void of space, stopped soon by an invisible force she broke through a moment later, shattering what she knew to be some cage set up by the Fae.

A rush of air, she felt, her wings and weight unaffected as she moved to keep Felicia steady with her space magic. Her concerns were unfounded, air swirling around the woman as she kept on breathing, her eyes still closed. She seemed calmer now, though her hands were shaking, sweat on her brow.

Ilea reeled in her flames, into the cage where she kept them burning for the Fae to see, and feel.

Another breath, and she willed away the fire.

She checked on Felicia once more. *Still in once piece. "That was just me. No need to worry."*

"No need to?" Felicia shouted into her mind. *"What the fuck was that! That was worse than what's still there!"*

"*You wanted to see the flame,*" Ilea teased.

Felicia was quiet for some time. *"I didn't even see them."*

"*I'm happy to show them to you whenever,*" Ilea said. *"But somewhere in the wild, where nobody can hear you scream."*

"*Wherever you like,*" Felicia sent.

"*That. Was the most beautiful thing we have perceived in some time,*" the Fae sent, finally speaking once again. *"Thank you, for this gift of experience, Ilea."*

Ilea smiled and did a curtsy. *"Of course. You've been a big part of my journey, and my powers. If you ever need help with anything, feel free to hit me up."*

A giggle flowed through reality itself. Or perhaps the feeling of one. Sound returned with it as the cage was closed yet again and filled with air.

Ilea knew now that they were in space, or someplace just like it.

"I'm going to try and open my eyes now," Felicia said and did just that.

Her breathing quickened before she focused on something before her.

Ilea followed her gaze and found white fire. "I'm curious. What do you see?"

"It's difficult to focus on," Felicia murmured, then averted her eyes. "Lots of wings, I think."

Ilea smiled.

"What?" Felicia said, raising her brows in a mock annoyed gesture.

"Oh you would not understand. With your small, human, brain," Ilea said and grinned, dodging the air blade thrown her way. "If you're ready to attack me, maybe we should get back to the dungeon."

Felicia smiled. "Maybe we should."

Ilea turned to the all present eyed soup. "I suppose we'll be off again then, but it was nice to meet you once more. The real way."

*"A pleasure, human. May we meet again. In time. And space."*

*Not sure if that's meant literal or as a pun.*

Felicia bowed, likely speaking through telepathy with the ancient being, or what little she perceived of it.

The two of them flew back towards the distorted fabric, and the gate that brought them back to Elos. Cold winds flowed past at the mountain top, distant clouds visible far below.

Felicia glanced over. "What did you mean, the real way?"

Ilea smiled. "Gotta get stronger to find out."