

Chapter 718 Bath

Ilea sipped on her wine as she returned to the Soul Forge. *We'll need a new name for this thing. The Sentinel Cube. Northern die. Soul Sanctum.* She teleported up to her room but found herself unable to get inside with transfer alone. *I'll leave the name to someone a little more creative.* “You changed things up I see,” she said to the Meadow, touching the door where a myriad of enchantments lit up to her magical touch. Invisible locks opened up and she was allowed inside.

“Yes. Perhaps I have been carried away a little much. Let me know if you want things changed up, I tried to apply some of the findings I've come to thanks to your spells and the knowledge shared by the Fae,” the being spoke.

“Well, now I'm curious,” Ilea sent back and smiled. She went inside and blinked her eyes immediately. A cool breeze greeted her, the moderately large room expanding farther than it should've. The door closed behind her and her dominion cut off. Her bed stood on a wooden floor, the walls made of stone bricks and decorated with a variety of weapons, treasures, and a Sentinel banner. Book shelves had been inlaid into the opposite wall, parted by an extensive hearth that looked to be inspired by the one downstairs. This one was nearly twice the size. Smoke rose from the fire up into an invisible vent.

Comfortable armchairs stood in front of the hearth, the floor in that section shifting to gray stone. Ilea squinted as she looked around. She tried to figure out how exactly the space in here was distorted. “Did you make a pocket dimension?” she sent, noting that the mental connection was still active. She could also tell that telepathy in general could be established through the strange space and all the enchantments in place, though there were privacy measures in place as well. Not that she assumed they'd do anything against the perception of the Meadow.

A satisfied thought reached her as an answer, followed by a giggle. The cool breeze in the room flowed towards the right part where the perfectly angled stone floor shifted to a more natural formation, the ground opening up where a steaming pool of turquoise water gave off steam. Fireflies flew above the pool and clung to the walls, some flickering in and out of existence from time to time. “Thoughtful. I appreciate it,” Ilea mused. “I do hope you can respect my privacy, even in such close proximity,” she said.

“Iana added a rather extensive set of enchantment requirements. Similar to their own home. I may be an ancient being with unlimited knowledge and near as much power, but the rules of magic cannot be broken. Not truly. Even someone as blind as yourself to the arcane nature of existence would immediately notice an incursion into that room. The room I set up for you by the way,” the Meadow explained.

Ilea walked into the pool, her clothes vanishing as ash moved around her waist and chest. She sighed at the already high heat but immediately started adding to it. “Thank you, Meadow. It's really quite lovely. And you know that.”

“Receiving information from other beings is the only way to reaffirm my superiority. Otherwise I might be perceived as arrogant,” it said.

“Yes. That would be horrible,” Ilea answered, cleaning herself off in the water. The steam reduced her visibility quite a bit but she could see a few enchantments on the other side of the pool. *How did they manipulate the space to this degree?* She shook her head, healing her mind before she got a

headache. The only place she could think of to even start a comparison was the Fae's own domain. *I wonder what I'd see there now, with my enhanced perception. My brain might just explode.* "What are these for?" She had moved to the other side, brushing her hand over the marked enchantments.

"Humans tend to enjoy a good view, do they not?" the Meadow asked. *"It's set up to let you see through from your side, while obscuring everything from outside."*

Ilea activated the main rune while leaning onto the side of the pool. Her smile broadened when the wall changed to let her see the proceedings in the domain of the Meadow, the angle even allowing her to see the somewhat distant expansive caverns of Hallowfort. She looked at Goliath working with Bralin, the crystal tree to the right and back, Iana and Christopher's building closer and to the right. Below the cube she saw the round table and all the council members and administrators preparing the festivities, the teleportation gate a little farther back.

"Hmm, yes. I like this very much," she said, noticing that not a single one of the high level beings had looked her way when the enchantment was activated. They couldn't see her.

Time to look through what that little expedition into Iz provided.

'ding' 'You have defeated [Executioner Praetorian – lvl 802]'

...

'ding' 'You have defeated [Hunter Praetorian – lvl 750]'

Those levels are just ridiculous. And I shred through them so easily. She turned around and relaxed in the heating water, rather sure the Meadow had enchanted this thing to be able to withstand a sun or two. She didn't bother to question the make of the liquid. Steam did rise but it neither started cooking nor did all of it evaporate.

'ding' 'The Arcane Eternal has reached lvl 511 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'The Ashen Titan has reached lvl 509 – Five stat points awarded'

'ding' 'The Primordial Arbiter has reached lvl 501 – One stat point awarded'

'ding' 'The Primordial Arbiter has reached lvl 502 – One stat point awarded'

'ding' 'Archon Strike [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 5'

'ding' 'Azarinth Awakening [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 12'

'ding' 'Arcane Dominion [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 6'

'ding' 'Sentinel Core [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 13'

'ding' 'Sentinel Core [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 14'

'ding' 'Eternal Brawling [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 7'

'ding' 'Arcane Circulation [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 9'

'ding' 'Mantle of the Titan [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 8'

'ding' 'Mantle of the Titan [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 9'

'ding' 'Titan Core [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 6'

'ding' 'Embered Heart [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 7'

'ding' 'Tempered Seal [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 4'

'ding' 'Avatar of Ash [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 12'

'ding' 'Embered Form [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 4'

'ding' 'Fires of Creation [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 8'

'ding' 'Space Manipulation [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 6'

'ding' 'Deviant of Humanity reaches 3rd lvl 25'

'ding' 'Arcane Magic Resistance reaches 3rd lvl 23'

'ding' 'Void Magic Resistance reaches 3rd lvl 18'

'ding' 'You have faced the Guardians of the Sphere and survived – One Core skill point awarded'

And that's enough to enhance another skill, Ilea thought with a smile. The training was certainly worth it. If only I could face those Guardians without an entire army hunting me down at the same time.

For her next enhancement, she looked to her third Class. *Fabric tear for an addition to my teleports. Or Primordial Flesh for another bonus?* She chose the first one after half a minute's consideration. She felt that the downsides of resetting her remaining skills to the start of the third tier would be offset by all the other skills leveling up as fast as they did.

'ding' 'Fabric Tear [Enhanced] reaches 3rd lvl 1'

Active – Fabric Tear [Enhanced] – 3rd lvl 1

Shift space to your will, making objects or people appear somewhere else.

2nd stage: Magical constructs are now affected by Fabric Tear. You may change the orientation of the objects you displace.

3rd stage: You may choose two flat areas and connect them through space. At the time of marking an area, it has to be within the range of Fabric Tear. Areas have to be connected within one day of activating the spell. Three sets of connections can be upheld at a time with exponential costs.

Space Magic

Spatial anchors last for a day now? And there's no distance limit anymore. Hmm. So basically another way for me to move people and magic at long distances. Through realms even. Wait with the day long limit I can start to ignore my third tier transfer cooldowns by just leaving a marked area wherever I start. And the spell should form instantly instead of the nearly twenty seconds for transfer.

Although anything else that might be hunting me would be moved through the area too. Which might even be a good thing... I could just bring an enemy here and have the Meadow trap them or something.

She quickly informed the being of the new ability. Or more precisely, the removed restriction on her previous spell.

"So you're going to bring all the bullies directly to your parent and have them deal with it?" the creature asked.

Ilea smiled and looked towards the distant crystal tree. *"Yes. That."*

"I should also warn you that in the case of this particular spell, you're creating two anchors. One at the destination and one at the origin. Compared to your previous way of traveling long distances," the being said.

"Right. You're concerned about a space mage figuring out the connection?" she asked.

"I see my lessons aren't entirely wasted. Yes. Your ability is a direct application of space magic. It is much easier to abuse than teleportation gates enchanted to prevent such a thing, or even your single anchor spell," the Meadow explained.

"I'll try not to use it against the most dangerous creatures. Or I'll just set an anchor in noman's land and go there first before I use transfer," she suggested. *I'm doing stuff like that already anyway.* She dried herself with spreading ash, clothes appearing below an expanding mantle as she cracked her neck and summoned the stack of letters. *"You know the Plains. Can you set up a flight path for me?"*

"Starting at Ravenhall?" the Meadow asked.

"Yes, that works," Ilea said and jumped into her bed. She grinned when the mattress caught her without issue, the bed frame not even groaning as enchantments lit up in her magical perception. *Made to hold an immortal. A dense immortal.*

She left a few minutes later, using fabric tear to get through the dense mesh of enchantments after she had figured out most of them. A puzzle, but not one of the hardest the Meadow had presented. Ilea was greeted with a plate of wood appearing where she did, a map of the Plains depicted on the surface. *"Is that supposed to be me?"* she asked, looking at the small figure with black wings, the being depicted at the start of a line, several arrows added to make sure even a child would understand.

"Well done, Lilith. I knew you could grasp the intricacies of this complex illustration," spoke the Meadow.

"Your immaturity is leaking. Maybe you should practice interacting with other creatures for another ten thousand years or so before you engage in complex conversations," Ilea shot back.

"You have deliveries to make, girl. No time to engage in a battle you're so thoroughly unarmed in," it said.

Ilea looked at the map and made it vanish, activating transfer with her home as the destination. *“I’ve got quite a lot of practice fighting without arms.”*

“Touche,” the Meadow sent just before she vanished without a trace.

Ilea appeared in her home and teleported up and out. A thunderstorm raged in the distance, the suns low on the horizon, barely able to push through the clouds. Rain fell on her ashen form, barely sticking thanks to her resistance. Her wings charged with power before she shot up, air and water pushed aside by the armored healer. She flew in an arc, punching up and out of the clouds to see the red skies before she once again entered the darkened lands.

Her first destination was a town she had visited once before. Myrefield.

Amara stepped out onto the large balcony of the headquarters, finally getting some fresh air. And some quiet. A couple had sneaked out as well but they were more than occupied with each other to even take note of her.

She still checked their levels quickly and made sure they weren’t just pretending. Spies tried to infiltrate their little town every other day. Helena still refused to let them take care of the intruders. Amara understood the power it conveyed to not even kill the spies and instead let them go back without clothes, their gear, or any information, but she couldn’t help but think a more permanent solution would deter their enemies. The complex political games her mistress liked to play were nothing short of headache inducing.

Guarding the town or going out on assignments was much preferred, though lately things have calmed down a little too much for Amara’s liking. She signed to the four hidden figures she saw on the nearby rooftops, her brothers and sisters signing their replies. Nothing suspicious going on, as usual. She looked up and took in a deep breath. The rain was welcome. A deterrent to all but a preoccupied couple. Instead the outside was deliciously quiet.

She would allow herself a few minutes, knowing how many other assassins were ready to intervene within the restaurant. Many of her colleagues didn’t share the same aversion to political games and intrigue, qualities that would keep them in there with the many influential guests, and away from herself.

Amara checked her armor and blades, the enchantments perfect as always. *I have to go for a spar soon or I’ll go mad.*

She enjoyed the rain for another few minutes when one of the others appeared atop their building, masked face towards the sky instead of the ground. They turned and signed to the others, frantic movements that signaled incoming danger at the highest speed possible.

Amara felt the pulses of magic from her allies, her own adding to the mix to signal an incoming being. She teleported up onto the headquarters herself and looked towards the skies. Some of her allies would check the grounds, others would rush to Helena and the guests in preparation for battle but she herself was not meant for any of those tasks. A slight grin tugged on her lips as she hoped

for a foolish visitor looking for a fight. Lightning flashed in the distance, the skies illuminated for the fraction of a second. All she saw were black wings, the very air parted as the being approached.

A Sentinel? Here?

An impact resounded from the middle of the large square, dust and debris settling as the rain poured down on the being. Amara watched as large black wings dissolved, the humanoid figure straightening from the crouched position as dark figures spread out on the square around it, each with their own magic and weapons. She looked at the being and waited, her instincts speaking up for the first time in months. This wasn't a runaway Sentinel. She had seen some of them before.

She appeared down on the square herself, staying at a distance as she interpreted the signs of her allies. *Do not engage. High level. Send for reinforcements. Prepare evacuation.* She felt herself tense up at the reactions, the experienced assassins showing visible reactions in their body language. Amara herself prepared her magic when the being turned her way, dark armor and a horned helmet. Blue eyes met her own. She froze. *Is that?*

She could tell the woman was amused. *Why is she not saying anything?*

"State your name and your business in Myrefield," one of the others said, voice calm. The tension was near palpable.

"That is Lilith," Amara heard herself say. She forced herself to stay calm and walk towards the woman while signing the others, reaffirming them not to engage. *Did she come to fight?* The stone below the woman's feet had been broken. A sloppy landing.

Lilith tilted her head to the side ever so slightly. *"Nice group. It's disappointing that I shouldn't cause any diplomatic incidents,"* the woman said, through telepathy.

Amara's eyes opened wide when the voice appeared in her mind. She watched the woman raise her arms slightly when one of her allies sent out a wave of blood magic. She signed to disengage but it was too late. They split between eight people now sending spells towards the single target that had failed to identify herself in the appropriate time while the rest signed to stop.

She watched as the spells impacted the ashen figure, all meant to disable her.

"My, are we tense today," the woman spoke. "I'm Lilith," she said, still looking at Amara. The spells impacted her armor without eliciting a reaction, debris and magic deflected or spreading over her. "Now what's the appropriate response to being attacked in this territory? I guess it's you creating the diplomatic incident, or am I wrong?"

"Cease fire," Amara spoke. She didn't have to invoke her authority very often. "Lilith, I apologize for the reception. We were not informed of your coming."

The woman rolled her shoulders before she glanced at the people who attacked. The look in her eyes nearly made Amara take a step back. *This is not the same person I met before.* Only high level monsters managed to invoke a similar instinctual reaction in her and she most certainly trusted those instincts. They had saved her many times before.

"I would love to accept your invitation to play, but I'm on a bit of a schedule. Is the head baker home?" Lilith asked, the tension gone in an instant.

Amara released a breath she hadn't realized she had held. "She is. I will inform her immediately."

One of the others signed something. *Overstepping authority.*

She grit her teeth. *Arrogant fool.* She signed him to stand down. Helena would have to judge them later but if they wanted to prevent a bloodbath right here, they had to prevent further provocations.