

## Chapter 613 Wyverns

“Why don’t you do the honors,” Ilea said, looking at the elf flying near her.

She started charging Heart of Cinder, feeling the heat build up within her core. Kyrian had exceeded her expectations, but she wouldn’t let herself be outdone.

*What an interesting set of isles, she thought, watching the next chain fly off into the distance. Might be a good idea to train here for a while. If I can hunt these overgrown Drakes in groups, it’ll be more effective than even Hunter Praetorians.*

Feyrair flew past them, spreading his arms wide to welcome the Northern Bluetail.

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Kyrian focused on recalling his metal. He couldn’t manipulate the steel at that distance beyond pulling it towards himself. The Bluetail struggled against his hold, stronger than the last one but not by much. About level seven hundred. If he had to battle it directly, the fight would take some time.

The curse circle remained prepared, just in case it would be needed. Feyrair was close to level four hundred, just seventeen levels lower than him but the confidence the elf exuded was on an entirely different level.

He had his reservations of course. Plenty had been said about Elves and he knew of the atrocities they had committed in the independent cities of the west. Nothing close to what humanity did to itself but it was always easier to put blame and anger on someone different. Feyrair was just one of them however, and Kyrian wouldn’t judge the elf by the actions of his people.

He perceived that Ilea didn’t seem to be bothered at all either, her confidence in the elf about as high as his was for himself. Feyrair would be trustworthy at least, otherwise Ilea wouldn’t have brought him with her.

*For them it’s not a struggle, something to be overcome each and every day. It’s what they thrive in, he thought, watching the excited elf increase the power of his peculiar flames. Ilea too was preparing some kind of spell, either to help him if need be, or for when she would face one of the Bluetails herself.*

Kyrian would have to lie if he said he didn’t find at least some enjoyment in these fights. Exploring caverns, fighting more experienced Bluetails, some with different magic tricks than others. Or just facing off against the Golems left behind in the various keeps, the battles coupled with traps scattered through the halls proving quite challenging as well. He knew how powerful he had become, he knew what he could do. And he trusted his abilities. In that way he had become more confident than ever before.

And still. He had doubted his friend again. *Of course she came for you. Why would you insult her like that?*

He shook his head lightly. This train of thought wasn't helping, in any way. It would just take time to adjust again. Meditation had helped, as did the Vrayar, but these past years had taken a toll. One difficult to pin point.

Kyrian threw two more chains and added as much spin to them as he could through magic. His curse was already spreading through the creature, making it slightly sluggish. The added Blight would help too, especially against the Bluetails. One last pull brought the monster crashing down into the mountain side, a satisfying shriek resounding.

He grinned lightly, remembering all the times he had nearly been killed by these damned birds. Four days prior was his last near death encounter if he recalled correctly. He pushed the chains down, adding weight to them as he let the flails dig into the ground.

The Bluetail pushed away, ripping one chain free before the thing snapped around its body once more.

Kyrian felt a surge of heat and magic, the elf expanding into what looked like a winged Wyvern. *A dragon?* he asked himself, watching as the creature came down hard on the Bluetail.

They were about the same size, Feyrair's red body exuding white flame. "Set it free," he said, his voice a gravelly whisper.

Kyrian didn't mind, removing his chains with a quick motion, the metal returning to him. This time he had the links attach to his armor, just in case the elf failed to restrain the beast and he needed a little more strength to his steel.

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Ilea watched as Feyrair tackled the Bluetail, claws and teeth digging into scaled armor as their magic clashed.

*Which dragon creature wins this one?* she asked herself. The Bluetail had the level advantage. Its movements were quicker and it hit harder too. But Feyrair regenerated quickly and he was vastly more experienced. Where the Bluetail had likely hunted far inferior prey throughout its life, Feyrair was the opposite.

He dodged the more precise attacks from the creature, using the constant heat and fire of his body to slowly injure the being. One claw attack managed to lodge itself into the Bluetail's neck, the damage itself not substantial but it allowed Feyrair to use his breath attack in a direct and continuous manner while avoiding retaliation.

The monster's eyes were burnt before it managed to get free. But now that its perception was impaired, it had difficulties responding effectively.

Feyrair disengaged, circling the roaring monster, occasionally rushing in to deliver a strike with his burning claws, ripping out scales and flesh before he retreated once more. White flame clung to a large part of the creature's body, slowing regeneration and continuously damaging it.

The Bluetail sent waves of air and torrents of water at the dragonling, its attacks now too inaccurate to provide more than a slight deterrent.

*It's not trying to flee either,* Ilea thought, wondering where on the spectrum of monster and animal the being really was. The definition wasn't really clear but to her, monsters attacked no matter how injured they were, whereas an animal would likely prioritize its own survival, or that of their young.

The creature roared again, rushing Feyrair directly, without using any magic.

Ilea smiled, knowing the elf would take the challenge head on. Wise? Maybe not. Impressive? Also no. But it was expected. She hoped he wouldn't die against the frenzied monster.

The two tumbled down the side of the mountain, spells flaring up, fire, wind, and water splashing over the half frozen stone ground as their claws and teeth ripped into scales and flesh.

"Should we intervene?" Kyrian asked.

"Oh no, he's very hard to kill," Ilea said, just giving him a quick glance before she focused back on the fight. Just in case she actually did have to intervene. But the Bluetails didn't seem to have regeneration on par with an Executioner. More importantly it seemed Kyrian was right and the Bluetails really weren't the brightest.

"He turned into a dragon," Kyrian remarked as they flew a little closer to the two large brawling creatures.

Both showed plenty of injuries now, only the Bluetail however unable to heal them.

"He did. But to be honest, for how old he is and how he fights, it's surprising that he's not long past level six or seven hundred," Ilea said.

"He didn't strike me as particularly old," Kyrian said.

"I mean it's not like I've seen his birth certificate," Ilea said. "But I suppose if you fight the same creatures all the time, you're not going to advance quite as quickly."

"No. You stagnate. Only the highest level Bluetails I could manage still made me level in the last few months," Kyrian said. "I assume you mean the Taleen?"

"Yes. They do have higher leveled machines but they're supposedly quite rare," she said. "Not that I can attest to that based on the last few months."

*Thousands in Iz, just as many in Izla.*

Feyrair finally managed to grapple the injured Bluetail, biting deep into its neck as his flames expanded. He jerked his head to the side and tore off the Wyvern's head with a loud ripping sound.

The elf returned to his normal form, wounds and armor regenerating as he stumbled a few steps.

"These creatures are fantastic!" he exclaimed as his wings spread again.

*Are we the baddies?* Ilea asked herself as she looked at the bloodied and tore apart corpses. She sighed, reminding herself that these weren't some random animals grassing on a peaceful meadow.

They were Wyvern like monsters attacking without provocation, if Kyrian's words could be believed. And if she trusted anybody to tell the truth, it was him.

"You don't seem pleased?" Feyrair asked.

"You didn't even nearly die," Ilea murmured, flying a little higher.

"That was a level seven hundred Bluetail," Kyrian murmured.

Feyrair laughed. "What do you have in mind then?"

Ilea watched the distant group of Bluetails, four of them remaining now. They were flying closer to their mountain but didn't seem to be interested much in the fires that had flared up due to the fight. Instead they were flying lower and towards the ocean.

She charged up Monster Hunter and cupped her hands in front of her mouth, roaring a challenge towards the beings.

"I hope you two are ready," she said and activated Phaseshift.

The Bluetails swerved towards them as soon as the sound had reached them, their screeches and roars reverberating on the mountain side as they came to meet the challenge.

"We don't know their levels," Kyrian said. "Unnecessary risks."

"You're not alone anymore," Ilea said. "I believe the risks are more than mitigated with our presence."

"If they're all close to seven hundred, let me try alone," Ilea said with a wide smirk.

Kyrian and Feyrair gave each other a look in the same moment, their expressions hidden behind scale and steel armor but some kind of mutual understanding seemed to have been reached. They both floated back, making some distance between them and the flying creature of ash.

*Nothing but a dick measuring contest*, she thought and sacrificed tens of thousands of health to boost her auras.

The Bluetails quickly closed the distance, their flying looking almost aquatic in a way.

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Kyrian knew Ilea had always been the strongest of their group back in the Shadow's Hand. Even when she had difficulties catching up with a quickly moving Trian, or when she couldn't breach Claire's shields during their bouts. What she lacked in versatility, she made up with speed and tenacity. Her sustain and resilience were absolutely ridiculous. It really hadn't surprised him that she had managed to face down a four mark creature at her comparatively low level.

And now she was close to five hundred. Things had changed in the past years. Both for him and for her. While he could do more now, he still preferred a certain approach. Facing the creatures of these isles made it impossible to avoid insane risks but while for him it had been an unwanted yet

ultimately favorable circumstance, his healer friend seemed to seek out specifically those kind of battles.

Ilea returned from her slightly transparent state, her form lighting up in bright white flames and auras so powerful, Kyrian could nearly see them with just his eyes. Burning ash spread on her back, her wings set alight as eighteen ashen tendrils fanned out in a way to welcome the approaching monsters.

The Bluetails flew close to each other, the first one forming a torrent of water that rushed towards the solitary target a split second later.

Ilea raised her arm, energy flowing from her core and out of her palm an instant later, a broad cone of fiery light flared up and engulfed the first two Bluetails.

The spell ended, the closest Bluetail gone entirely, as if it had never existed. The one behind showed burns on nearly its entire body, one of its wings gone. It failed to keep in the air and twirled to the ground, hitting the mountain side hard before it stood up, screeching up at the floating being.

She didn't stay back, instead rushing the creatures with quick moving wings, dodging around their maws and talons as her limbs ripped into their scales, leaving streaks of white flame and sometimes deep bleeding gashes. Wind blades vanished and appeared below to hit the injured Bluetail. Ilea sunk her limbs into the neck of the weaker creature, her fists slamming down on its skull with visible mana surges spreading into its head. A spray of burning ash set the whole back side of it alight before she was swatted away by a stream of concentrated water.

Kyrian watched as the second Bluetail fell, unmoving as the flames still clung to its body. Lances of burning ash slammed into the injured creature on the ground as Ilea stared down the last of them, her auras weakening a moment later.

"We might want to take that one together," Ilea said, her voice sounding excited as a gust of wind pushed her back.

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***'ding' 'You have defeated [Northern Bluetail – lvl 684]'***

***'ding' 'You have defeated [Northern Bluetail – lvl 721]'***

She knew the injured one was close to death as well, the weakest of the group. Her focus shifted to the leader of the pack, or murder, however a group of Wyverns was called.

***[Northern Bluetail – lvl ???]***

"It's close to nine hundred," she said. "What do you think, Kyrian?"

The man appeared next to her, steel flails attached to his back and hovering close. "With the two of you? We can try."

Feyrair rushed past, his form expanding once more as he roared at the flying Wyvern.

“Your circle works?” Ilea asked.

“It’s not obstructed,” Kyrian said. “Yes, it will.”

“Perfect. Let’s try without first,” Ilea said and followed the dragonling, displacing large blades of air, some already having cut into his wings. She just sent them down to the injured Bluetail, glancing down to see it fall apart as it was struck by one particularly potent blade.

She landed on Feyrair’s back, sending spears of ash forward as the bird rushed them in turn. Ilea blinked into the torrent of water that came their way, her high resistance pushing the element aside as she braced the powerful spell. She teleported behind the Bluetail right before it reached her, the open maw instead crashing into fiery claws behind her.

Two flails twirled around the monster’s legs, binding them together to render its talons less useful. The other four swung around its wings, Kyrian holding on to them as he tried to pull the creature away from Feyrair.

Ilea could feel the powerful curse magic flow into the creature through the steel chains. She displaced herself onto the monster’s back, using the distraction from her team to focus solely on her offense. Punches and ashen limbs sent her mana pool into the creature as destructive waves, her ash alone not quite able to pierce its densely packed and resilient scales.

An explosion of air pushed away all three combatants, Ilea back in an instant with her blink, Kyrian still holding on to his chains and Feyrair simply using the opportunity to spread fire with his breath. They all showed injuries but Ilea determined all of them not to be in mortal danger, her ash spreading far now, allowing her to check her allies with ease.

The Bluetail realized that the situation wasn’t going in its favor, rushing forward and tackling Feyrair before it moved down to the ground. The impact sent Ilea flying, the creature breaking through the chains on its legs. Talons clad in wind magic ripped into the pinned dragonling, cutting through his defenses and getting stuck.

“Go!” Ilea shouted, using monster hunter to enhance her voice before she formed a gate behind the large Bluetail.

Feyrair grabbed on to the talons and stood up with a surge of heat and fire, pushing the monster through the gate.

Ilea shut it, Feyrair’s clawed arms pushed back when the connection was removed, the Bluetail appearing in the circle Kyrian had prepared.

He was already there, floating above as the creature struggled against the chains. Bright green energy flared up as the runes came alive with power, a cone of light rushing up beyond where Kyrian floated.

Ilea flew next to Feyrair, healing his injuries as she watched Kyrian float down, the chains moving up to him before they connected to his armor. Energy rushed into him, destructive power in turn going down into the Bluetail that struggled more to move with each passing moment.

“Come on,” Ilea said and rushed to the circle, burning ash spreading onto the being a moment later.

Feyrair added his breath a moment later, with far greater results.

They didn’t stop their spells until the ding resounded within each of their minds.

***‘ding’ ‘Your group has defeated [Northern Bluetail – lvl 872]’***

***‘ding’ ‘The Azarinth Sentinel has reached lvl 477 – Five stat points awarded’***

***‘ding’ ‘Kin of Ash has reached lvl 471 – Five stat points awarded’***

***‘ding’ ‘The Faen Valkyrie has reached lvl 426 – One stat point awarded’***

Feyrair turned back and fell to one knee, blood still dripping from a gash on his chest but it was healing.

The circle of curse magic flickered out, Kyrian floating down to join them. “That was fast,” he remarked.

“Took quite some time actually,” Ilea said. “Your curse managed to keep it from flying away?”

“They’re easily confused. The blight added more to that than any other effect of the spell,” he explained.

“You can get stuck in a lose rope if you’re drunk enough,” Ilea remarked with a laugh.

Kyrian glanced at the being before he looked at her. “Something like that.”

“That was... refreshing,” Ilea said. “A bit more of a challenge would have been welcome but it’ll do.”

“There are a lot more dangerous creatures here than Bluetails. Or you could try to fight them underwater?” Kyrian asked.

“I’d rather not,” Ilea said. *Although for my fear resistance, it may just be helpful.*