

## Chapter 831 Black Sea

Ilea opened a gate. The busy scene of the Meadow's domain was quite interesting, especially with the now present Mava, but she wanted to do her part as well. There were plenty of avenues open to her, both to gain personal power and expand her available magic, but just as much species out there that could be convinced to help with their endeavors, or at the very least be warned about the potential coming storm.

The Mava were one part, but she had a feeling they had been the easiest to convince. *Still a few to go in the west.* Her real goal however lay within the Domains, but Nelras was right. To the Oracles she would just be a child of magic. If she hoped to convince them, she needed more than words. She needed the power of a goddess.

"Violence," she sent and the creature appeared before her, giggling before it settled on her shoulder.

She stepped through the gate and spread her wings, flying for a few minutes until she reached her destination.

"One drake at a time," she murmured, looking down from the cliff. Down into the endless waters of Kohr. The depths she had appeared in so long ago. The depths she had followed one of the abominations into. The depths where she had been seen.

She shivered and sighed.

Arcane healing flowed into her mind as she focused on her meditation.

She opened her eyes and smiled. The being on her shoulder was shrouded. In the fabric and yet gone. The baron knew that this was not an ordinary hunt.

*Let's do this.*

Ilea jumped off, her wings extending and her magic surging right before she entered the waters. There was no splash due to her resistance and she kept her momentum as she swam with her ashen wings. Her eyes could see well enough.

White flame burst to life. She was as ready as she would get. A beacon now, to anything looking for a meal. A meal or simply something to kill.

Monsters in the deep.

**'ding' 'Fear Resistance reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 6'**

A part of her wanted to flee. She could feel on a fundamental level that this was not her territory. Just a human. A human lost in another realm, drowning in the endless waters. And yet she pushed on. Going deeper still. Flashes of lights and massive eyes came to her mind, but her healing increased, heat gathered in her chest, and her flames burned brighter. *Just memories. Primal instinct. Push past it. There's no other way forward. Not if you plan to face the monsters born and made in this realm.*

*You can heal any injury. You can resist most magic. And you can flee, should they prove too dangerous still.*

She spoke the words in her mind like a mantra. Something to focus on as she flowed down into the dark. The only source of light were her own flames. A single speck in the endless void. Ilea could feel the pressure increase as she went deeper, yet her ears didn't pop, nor did she feel bothered. She simply held her breath, as if she had just jumped into a warm pond during a summer day. Signs at least that she wasn't entirely unprepared for the environment.

Ilea could hold her breath for hours, and even if she ran out, the second tier of Oxygen Repository allowed her to stay alive even if she had nothing to breathe at all. Behind her she could see the trail of bubbles, burnt up by her flames and heat, another trail that would lead creatures towards her.

*"How do you feel?"* she sent through the telepathic connection she had up. Ilea could no longer sense the presence of the little Fae.

*Violent*

The voice comforted her. *I'm not worried about the Baron at all.* She realized. Her descent had slowed, the darkness all encompassing. She was an intruder here. She wasn't welcome. No human should delve this deep into an ocean, let alone the ones in Kohr. She nearly let go of the air. Refocusing, Ilea closed her eyes and focused on her healing for a moment.

*There are monsters here.*

*That's why you came.*

*You're hunting. You're not being hunted.*

***'ding' 'Fear Resistance reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 7'***

She opened her eyes, realizing that she had put off using one crucial skill. *"I hope you're safe in your little space pocket,"* she sent to Violence.

*Safe*

*"Very well. Here I go then."* She charged Monster Hunter and sent it out. "Here." A single word, infused with the intent of a challenge. Sent by a human of all things that could have come to Kohr.

*Demons summoned from this place were enough to wipe out a major city of humanity. And those were mostly just the surface dwelling monsters. What am I doing here?*

A speck of light flared up in the distance.

A cone. Searching. Moving quickly before it became thin, then just a dot. Brighter then, with each passing second.

*Here I go,* Ilea thought as ash flowed into the water all around her, the heat in her chest and core at its height, all her buffs infusing her body with incredible power. She could feel herself tense, meditation and healing flowing through her in preparation of the coming battle.

The light became brighter, whispers coming to her mind. Strange words and concepts, pushing against the reality within her. She could feel it now. Something familiar and yet so distant. Everything was white, and then her vision was gone, eyes gauged out by ashen limbs, the sockets covered by all the layers of her mantle. The organs reformed, now unable to perceive the strange magic from the being that came closer still.

There was no message this time, as she had been seen before. Something about it reminded her of the puzzles she was presented by the meadow, but much more abstract. And colder.

She could feel something burn away at her ash. It wasn't heat. It wasn't acid, or something akin to silver magic. She felt the fabric itself was affected, as if something pushed against her very existence. The being, whatever it was, did not come into the range of her dominion. And yet she could feel its magic affecting her form. Light. Light and space. She could feel the power of the spell, could tell how much it would affect her, how much it would damage her.

Her resistances to both types were incredibly high. Some of the strongest she had. Both trained with Aki's Sphere Guardians and the Meadow itself. She could face this creature. But to identify it, she had to see it. With her eyes or within her dominion. The former wouldn't work, she knew as much, though not how exactly the spell worked that affected her eyes specifically. *Is it attacking me? Or is it just a side effect of how strong this thing is?*

She gulped and moved closer towards the source of the light. Slowly. The magic grew more intense. The barrier summoned from the Azarinth Star shattered. Her regeneration and healing pushed against the decay of her outer armor, the ash around her moving with her through the endless waters. Finally, the being came into her sphere.

**[Скрытый указатель - lvl ????]**

It was small for a four mark of its power, perhaps the size of a small house. Higher level than all the creatures she had seen in Kohr. Not quite as high as the Meadow but it wasn't far off. A few hundred levels at most. Strange solid eel like tails flowed behind a slightly oval body, a single organ producing something bright. Bright.

Ilea could hear the whispers once more, the decay of her armor quickening as she tried to establish a mental connection to the creature. A task she found impossible to perform. The whispers grew louder and her dominion itself grew brighter, until she could not perceive herself or the being before her. She turned off her skill, leaving herself entirely blind to her surroundings.

All she could feel now was the magic impacting her form, and how much magic came from the being that floated ahead. She remained static, knowing that the longer it damaged her, the stronger her resistance against it would grow, the more damage she would deal with her spells. Before she could consider her next move, she felt the exuded magic skyrocket a hundredfold. Waiting for her precognition, Ilea teleported right when the surge happened, some of the light striking her regardless.

She appeared in the water as far away as her transfer spell could move her. Several layers of her armor had vanished. Not burned away or damaged, but removed from the fabric entirely. They regenerated as she opened her eyes to catch a glance of the creature. She could see it in the distance, a broad cone like beam of bright light shining in the darkness. A lighthouse piercing a calm sea. Seven dark tendrils moved in serene patterns behind the oval thing. Before her armor had recovered fully, it was gone.

Ilea closed her eyes before it turned her way. She felt a pull, a sudden rush of water as she realized everything within the cone of light had vanished, the pressure filling what was lost. Her wings and her resistance pushed against the vortex, let the water flow past her as a maelstrom was created deep below the surface.

If it was an intelligent being, it did not try to communicate. It tried to dissolve her. To kill her.

**'ding' 'Divination Magic Resistance reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 17'**

Ilea felt a shiver go through her as she felt the magic. Not someone trying to find her but the monster before her. At least the whispers were gone, but she could neither use her eyes nor her

dominion to see. *Which leaves me one thing*, she thought, feeling the magic once more on her form. She charged her wings and shot towards it.

Blind, she rushed through the waters. Much of the vortex remained but she found it didn't matter. It was simply not enough to pull her away from the direction she was going. Ilea felt another surge of power. She raised her hand and aimed in the broad direction, sending out her charged Embered Heart in a cone of her own. Right before she vanished, up and away as the light and space tore at her own framework. An unpleasant feeling, she found. Not quite like anything the Meadow had done in their training. More akin perhaps to the Fae, making her eyes disappear, though back then she lacked her understanding of the fabric, and her perception of space.

She realized in that moment how terrifying the little Baron's antics had really been, though she supposed her awareness had revealed a lot about the Meadow, the more powerful she got, the more it would reveal about the Fae.

Only one layer of her ash remained, the rest gone into nothing. Another surge of water rushing past began as her third tier healing restored her ash. She perceived no reaction from the monster, unsure if her spell even reached it, let alone hurt it in any way. Once more she charged her wings, aimed in the direction she thought the creature to be, and shot off.

She felt the water rush past, felt the powerful whirls all around, intermingling now as tons of liquid had been removed from the fabric itself. She had no time to wonder as she felt another surge. This time she vanished earlier to avoid it entirely, only to find the creature readjust and aim where she appeared. A use of her fabric tear made her vanish once more.

This time she opened her eyes for a split second, seeing through her ash and aiming once more before the cone of light focused on her once again. She rushed forward and repeated the maneuver, healing herself whenever she could. Ilea didn't know if the third tier of Eternal Brawling was active as she did not technically see the attacks coming, but for her Primordial Flesh and Titan Core, it didn't matter. Every second engaged in battle would increase her resilience against the monster's attacks, and so far it didn't seem intelligent enough to adjust to her.

She was swimming with her ashen wings, deep within the black waters of Kohr, engaged with an eldritch creature of horror, robbed of her sight both visual and magical. Ilea was terrified of the oceans, terrified of what might lurk within, terrified of the unknown. But now that she had seen the being, now that she had felt its magic, it was all the same. She was fighting a monster. And monsters, she could fight.

A grin came to her face when she impacted something solid. A split second. Enough for her healing to connect, for Archon Strike and Tempered Seal to find their marks, all the heat she had managed to store, rushing out in an instant, the fires of creation spreading over whatever they could find, ashen limbs lashing out, trying to cut into the monstrous creature. She could feel the impacts, dull against the thick skin of the creature, Ilea latching on with her ash, keeping the source of light away from her. The marks she tried to set vanished mere moments later.

She felt the incoming attacks, wishing she could laugh at the heavy strikes of the thick eel like tendrils, keeping the air within her lungs as each blow sent shock waves through the waters, her response in kind as she ignored the strikes of the four mark. Organs ruptured and were healed as the bludgeoning ripped away chunks of her ash, all the damage reformed as she healed herself and pushed destructive mana into her enemy. Where it had gone for the kill, the creature stopped after less than two seconds, instead grabbing onto her and flinging her away, but her ash latched on to its limb, the sudden stop of her momentum shaking her organs and brain, healing keeping her awake

and focused, the fires of creation keeping her from getting stunned. She was hunting. She was not being hunted.

Light and space burned once more, forcing her to teleport away. This thing hit as hard as the Meadow, but instead of the tree, this one went for the kill. The pull of the waters increased as more and more sections went missing, the vortex growing more chaotic with each spell of the monster.

She appeared and resumed her swimming, a quick glance letting her aim before she shot off again. This time however, she did not hit the creature. Instead she felt its magic come from an entirely different direction. *Not great.*

Ilea teleported out of the beam, back to where she had expected the creature. Activating her dominion, she perceived the fabric all around her. And she found what she had been looking for. A single strand. Teleportation. She latched on and turned off her perception, eyes still closed when she appeared, ashen limbs extending before they scraped against the thick skin of the deep sea horror. She moved close immediately. Her fires surged as thousands of points of health flowed into the spell, heat and magic pulsing into the monster with white flame spreading on its form. She could tell the flames from before were gone. She didn't care. There was more where they had come from.

She could feel a surge of magic. Her experience with space magic made her instinctively activate her anti teleportation aura but she found it only delayed the spell for a split second. The monster slipped past a moment later, breaking her hold on it and vanishing despite their touching frameworks. *Almost as good as me,* she thought with a smile, latching on to its spell with her dominion active for a mere split second.

She appeared, repeating her aggression, following its next escape and three more right after. Ilea found herself drifting in the waters, waiting for her teleportation cooldowns with the monster already gone. *Maybe it's actually better.* She followed the spell as soon as she could, finding another empty space with her ash slashing through the waters. Her perception activated again but instead of finding the single strand she was looking for, she found bright spots all around. Pulsing. In the fabric.

A moment later she felt them in her precognition, and she felt the spell manifest. Ash formed in walls all around as her wings moved to envelope her. A golden shield wrapped around her. The surge that followed was immense. Only what she had felt in Erendar came close to what this being summoned. The pressure came a split second later, water boiling instantly and then turned solid, searing hot as the ocean all around exploded. A constant push of space magic locked Ilea between the expanding ice, unable to move and unwilling to teleport as her shield was shattered instantly, her ash pressed against her skin, blood boiling and organs rupturing as her bones ground against themselves. Three sources of pressure were nearby, she could feel the power flowing through them, could feel it build. Her legs and her neck bent, the bones snapping but her ash holding on, her body pressed into a shape that would've killed most other humans. She remained and activated her Primordial Shift.

Immediately the pressure lessened, tendrils of white flame, flesh, and space itself pushing against the incomprehensible magic all around. Most of her wounds and broken bones healed but her body remained locked in its twisted position, Primordial Shift growing in power as the seconds passed, the monstrous spell fighting against its equal.

Ilea didn't know how long she remained in the stalemate. Two seconds, half a minute, or an hour, though the latter she deemed impossible due to the upkeep of her spell. She wished she could've seen it happen, could have perceived the monster's spell, but she did not dare add to its power by

giving in to mere curiosity. This was no simple Wyvern. It was one of the most powerful wielders of magic she had ever met, and she planned to kill it.