

Chapter 906 Monster Trainer

“Would you believe me if I told you that I lived in a land of magic and monsters for the past seven years?” she asked.

“With all the weird things that have happened since then? I don’t know. I don’t see you joining a gang or being a spy. But I can tell that you have changed. There’s something about you. Scared just to look into your eyes.”

Ilea grinned. “That coming from you. I guess I really did get stronger. You said strange things have happened? Like what?”

“Strange as in. Tens of thousand of people vanishing out of nowhere. All over the world. Strange measurements from different fields of study that should apparently not be possible. And this new type of energy discovered last year. Weather’s strange. They’re saying it’s getting worse too, but what’s new?” He laughed, then poured two cups. “Any clue what’s going on?”

“I do,” Ilea said and accepted the cup. “But maybe I’ll show you some things first. Might be more believable then.”

“Go on,” he said.

“You better sit down for this, and put your cup down as well. Don’t want anything to spill.”

He raised his brows, not reacting for a moment as he likely thought her words a joke. Then he sighed and sat down on the gray couch.

Ilea checked her domain now, just to see if anyone was close enough to overhear her, or to see anything, but it seemed safe enough. She raised her hand and closed the blinds with her space magic. The lamp in the corner flickered slightly.

“I woke up in a fucking forest that day. Thought it was a prank, or a simulation or something. Turns out no, I was transported to another realm entirely. A place with magic, monsters, and Classes. Classes as in, like... did you ever game or play rpgs?”

“Not exactly,” Mark said as he stared at the blinds, then back to her.

“There are numbers that show how strong you are, how much mana you have, which by the way, I think is this new energy that has been discovered. And according to someone I know, the appearance of this energy is also the cause for my displacement, and the displacement of so many others. I barely survived in that forest, found an ancient temple, and got my first Class.

“Long story short, I fought a lot of monsters and became this insane battle healer with ash magic and stuff,” she said and summoned black glass and ash around her. “I also have space magic, meaning I can do shit like this,” she said and let go of her mug, floating it around before she teleported it back into her hand, including the liquid inside.

“Those things are real? Right?” Mark asked. He got up and walked closer, touching the floating ash. “What the fuck.”

“Right?”

He sat back down and grabbed his mug. “I think I need something stronger.”

“A dragon. Like in a fantasy story,” Mark murmured. “And we’re all heading there, you say?”

“I don’t know exactly. But I assume once the mana density is high enough, people will start to get Classes. How long that will take? No clue,” she said.

Mark leaned back and sighed, drinking from his now Whiskey infused beverage. “I saw some people online, claiming to have seen magic.”

“Could be true, but I don’t know for sure. Seems too fast,” Ilea said.

“Think you can beat me in a fight now?” he asked.

“Mark. I can probably take gun shots to the face without getting injured. I don’t even know if the combined military might of this realm could kill me at this point. Would have to test with a nuke.”

He laughed, then stopped. “You’re serious.”

Ilea nodded.

He drank.

“I wanted to check in, now that I had the opportunity,” Ilea said after a while. “Are you alright money wise? Any goals or dreams that you wanted to fulfill? Some paintings or prints for your walls? This is the most gym apartment I’ve seen in a while.”

“What’s that supposed to mean? The gym is bringing in enough for a comfortable life.”

“I didn’t want to be offensive,” Ilea said. “But I’m kind of rich now.” She summoned a few dozen gold coins and placed them on the coffee table. “This is real gold.”

“I’d rather see that place you’ve been to. If you can or plan to go back,” Mark said with a smile.

“And no offense, but I’d rather not piss off any tax authorities with the sudden appearance of gold coins in my possession.”

“Didn’t think of that,” Ilea said. “Right. And yes, I do plan to go back. Maybe I can get you some paintings at least.”

“I’m not sure I like your enthusiasm about my apartment,” he said.

“These are blank walls. It’s depressing. I’ll bring you some, and you can decide if you want to keep them,” Ilea said. “Your choice. No pressure.”

“We’ll see. I took the day off. Anything you want to do after all that time?” Mark said.

She looked at the ceiling. “I do have coffee already.” Ilea smiled. “And the food in Elos is insanely good, but I suppose that has more to do with my wealth and connections than with the baseline food. I have some here actually. Hungry?” She summoned two of Keyla’s meals, forming an armchair of ash with a bunch of supports on the ground to spread out her weight before she sat down and hovered the other meal over to Mark.

“If you’re inviting,” he said. “Haven’t had food from a different dimension before.”

“Not sure if it’s another dimension exactly. I think it’s in the same fabric. So probably the same universe,” Ilea said.

Mark went to get a fork while Ilea relaxed, hearing the long forgotten sounds of cars driving by. It felt nice in a way. Here, she was just Ilea. Nobody knew her or could identify her. And worst case, they'd ask where she'd been the past seven years. Even Mark, having told him about her adventure, she knew he didn't really understand what she was at this point.

"You don't have a TV?" she asked.

"Beamer," he said. "And a digital movie collection."

"Digital. No more DVD collecting?"

"I have those too, but I just collect them. It's just easier to access them fast. Remote is on the couch."

Ilea found it and teleported it into her hand, pressing the on button.

The small device on the floor next to her activated, the entire wall lighting up, a logo at the center.

"Cool. Always thought these were super expensive," she said and relocated her ashen chair.

"What?" she asked, seeing Mark's expression.

"You're hovering on an ash chair through my living room," he murmured and sat down on the couch, taking a cautious mouthful from the meal. A rice like grain covered in a spicy green sauce.

"Oh wow."

Ilea didn't expect to hear from him until he was done eating, instead using the remote to click through the menus, soon arriving at the movie section. "Anything good since I left?"

"Favorites," he said and pointed.

She navigated to the menu. "The Lighthouse, Green Knight... they made another Bladerunner?"

"That one is really good."

"Right," Ilea said. "Might want to watch a few of those with a friend. I told him about movies from Earth before."

"A friend from that other place? Is he like all medieval?"

"Society over there isn't that close to what I think the middle ages were like around here. Different problems and different technology. Otherwise they're human, just like us."

"You said there were dragons though," Mark said, eating the last bite of his meal. "This is the best curry I've ever eaten."

"My favorite cook," Ilea said. "And yes, there are elves too. Recently met vampires as well."

"Vampires?" he asked.

"That peak your interest?"

"Yes, I won't lie. Though everything about your new home sounds interesting. Oh, sorry if that's inconsiderate. You sounded happy when you talked about it all."

"I am happy," Ilea said. "It was weird, coming back here, and seeing everything again. It feels... mundane in a way. As if a part of me could just go back to work again tomorrow, but that's no longer me. If that makes sense."

“It does. You’ve grown up. I guess some choices were taken from you, but I’m not surprised you found your way regardless.”

He laughed.

“What?” Ilea said.

“Just thought back to before this all happened. You did seem a bit lost. Asked me every other day what major you should take. I guess you decided on monster hunter in the end.”

“I wasn’t that lost,” Ilea murmured.

He just looked at her.

“Alright, maybe a little.”

“Let’s go with that, sure,” he said.

Ilea summoned a bottle of ale and listened to the cars outside. They both drank in silence for a few minutes before she spoke again.

“Any idea what happened to my stuff?”

“Your stuff. Right. Apparently nobody got a response from your parents, so they asked me to keep it,” he said.

“You kept it, didn’t you? You old creep. Your long game plan wasn’t a joke.”

He smiled with confidence. “Of course I’d keep it. For the one and only woman in my life.”

Ilea rolled her eyes.

He drank. “Don’t give me that. You know I have a lot of space. You want it now?”

“Where is it?”

“In the cellar,” he said.

Ilea checked with her domain and soon found a few familiar items within a trash bag. There were three bags in total. “They threw out my furniture,” she murmured and summoned all of it up.

Mark winced. “Holy shit!”

“Sorry,” Ilea said, summoning her phone and charger, smiling at the headphones that were still there. “Why pajamas instead of this,” she murmured and plugged in her phone and laptop. “I guess we can visit Ravenhall while this charges.”

“Ravenhall?” Mark asked.

Ilea grinned. “Do you mind if I set a space anchor in your apartment? Mine was rented out, and I don’t want to stir up trouble.”

“You’re always welcome,” he said.

“Appreciate it,” Ilea said, a bit surprised that she felt her statement. She looked at him and smiled.

“It’s good to see you, Mark. I’m glad this world didn’t go to shit.”

“I’m sure we’ll get there in time. I’m glad you’re not dead,” he said and walked up to her, then grabbed her in a hug. He let go and sighed. “Are you made of steel now? You didn’t even budge.”

“Let’s just say, I’ve gained some weight,” Ilea said and set one of her Teleportation anchors in Mark’s apartment before she focused on her own. “Ready to go?”

“Go for it,” he said and raised his arms in a defensive stance.

Ilea smiled at that and activated her teleportation with Mark connected to the spell.

A moment later, they appeared in her house.

It was dawn, faint light coming in from the glass windows.

Mark breathed out as he looked around, then steadied himself against the table. “That didn’t feel great.”

Ilea checked him with her healing, but found nothing wrong with him. And she wouldn’t test her True Reconstruction on Mark, of all people.

“Identify? What’s that?” he asked.

Oh. It’s starting, Ilea thought.

“Dragonslayer? And four question marks?”

“Yeah. Took me a while to get all that,” Ilea said.

“I can’t possibly imagine. This is your place?” he said and walked around, opening the door out to the balcony. “You’ve got a view!”

Ilea joined him. “I sure do. Only place around as well.”

Mark turned and looked at the mountains. “Wow. That’s crazy! Where are we?”

“Southern mountains of the human territory. Welcome to Elos,” Ilea said and teleported past the railings before she spread her wings.

“You’re kidding me!” he shouted and spread his arms. “You can fly?”

“I can do a lot more than fly, old man,” Ilea said.

“I’m not even sixty!” Mark shouted back, the waves of the ocean below crashing against the cliff sides.

Ilea flew next to him. “Want to fly?”

“Is that even a question?” he said, holding up his arms.

Ilea smiled and grabbed him, gave him a layer of her armor, then flew up, careful not to go too fast.

“You alright?” she sent to him as the winds flew past. *“Telepathy by the way. Unlocked it a while ago. You should be able to answer.”*

“Hello? HELLO!”

“No need to shout.”

“Oh. Sorry,” he sent and laughed. *“I’m like the old man who doesn’t understand smartphones!”*

“You’re still shouting,” Ilea said, laughing to herself as they flew through the valley.

“It’s beautiful!”

"It is," she answered, smiling all the way to the mountains near Ravenhall.

"This is incredib-" Mark spread his arms. "Wow! That's a fortress! With cannons and is that a dragon? Up there!" He pointed. "Have you seen that?"

"No way," Ilea said in a dry tone. "A dragon."

He punched her shoulder, then shook his hand as if he hurt himself. "So cold and cool. What happened to you?"

"Want to meet the organization of battle healers I helped found?" she asked.

"Show me," he said.

"Don't want to get you through the city, give me a second," she said and focused on Trian's mark. *"Are you in the headquarters? Can I join with a friend?"*

"You may," came the answer.

"Sorry for your stomach," she said and saw Mark brace himself once more. A teleport later, she appeared in Trian's office, the man's hair disheveled, stacks of files on his table.

"You guys don't have computers?" Mark said. "Nice to meet you."

"Hello," Trian said and glanced at Ilea.

"I went to my home realm. This is the guy who trained me," she said, just barely stopping herself from slapping Mark's back.

"You went back," Trian said and leaned back in his chair. "He has no Class. Did you want him to take the elixir and join?"

Ilea looked at Mark, the man looking back at her. "I didn't think of that. Maybe he can have a look around first, talk to some of the Sentinels."

"He can do that. Should I assign someone?" Trian asked.

"I'll take him myself for now," Ilea said. "Hey, I was wondering. That island where we found Cless. Remember the name?"

"South of Damwell. Scrain islands, but you'll have to find the specific one," Trian said.

"Thanks. Don't think that will be an issue," Ilea answered and went to the door. "Come on, Mark. Let's show you around."

"Trian Alymie. Headmaster of the Medic Sentinel Corps," Trian said, standing now and his hand offered.

Mark took it. "Mark Darrings, trainer of the Dragonslayer."

"Are you fucking kidding me," Ilea murmured.

"Good to have you, Mark," Trian said and sat back down, watching them leave before he returned to his work.

"Good looking guy," Mark said. "Is he the one you're dating?"

"No," Ilea said. "We used to beat the shit out of each other though."

"No better way to bond." Mark nodded.

“Lilith,” two nearby Sentinels greeted them with nods.

“Lilith?” Mark asked.

“I used it instead of my real name ages ago. Kind of stuck,” she said.

“Lilith, the dragonslayer. I’m not sure if I’m dreaming this up.”

“Nothing that a bit of fighting can’t fix,” Ilea said and led him down to the training halls.

“Are you going to show off your crazy magical powers?” Mark asked as they entered, a dozen lower leveled Sentinels already there, two of them fighting each other.

“No. I’m not a hundred percent confident I wouldn’t kill someone on accident. When I get more used to the power I have. It’s not been too long since I reached my last evolutions.”

“Evolutions?” Mark asked as they joined the group of onlookers, all but the fighting ones greeting them.

The arcane battle healers teleported to avoid blows, dodging and attacking in turn, one using her fists, the other one a set of axes.

“They’re fast and powerful. The technique feels a little strange,” Mark spoke.

The fighters stopped. “Do you have any pointers?” the woman asked.

“I’d have to watch you for longer,” Mark said. “But I do have some ideas.”

“You want to stay for a while?” Ilea asked. “You seem in your element.”

“If I can? I’m sure they can show me around as well. Been a while since I’ve seen young fighters with this much tenacity and grit.”

“Who are you, sir?” one of the young Sentinels asked.

“Just a gym owner. Trained that one, back in the day,” Mark said and off handedly pointed at Ilea.

“But, you don’t even have a Class,” one of them spoke.

“I don’t,” Mark said with perfect confidence.

Ilea smiled and took a step back. *“I’ll leave you to it. Will be back soon. Could leave a magical mark on you that lets me teleport to you and communicate telepathically once per hour.”*

Mark turned to face her. *“Scared of getting lost again?”*

“Just makes things easier,” she said.

“Go for it.”

She touched his shoulder, leaving him marked.

“Now that is a strange sensation,” Mark said. “I can return to my gym though, right?”

“As long as I’m alive,” Ilea said.

“Reassuring,” he answered and turned back to the young Sentinels. “Where were we?”

Ilea chuckled, thinking back to when she had joined his gym. Of course the faculty here knew about Classes, about fighting styles, magic, monsters, evolutions, but the way Mark spoke, the way he had these Sentinels already captivated. There was more to it. Experience, authority, and genuine care.

He might as well join as a teacher, but then we'd have to get his Earth students here too. She stopped herself there. No need to rush. Let's see what he thinks of the Sentinels, and of Ravenhall.

"Contact me through the mark or go bother Trian if you need anything," she sent.

He gave her a thumbs up, not even looking her way.

Right. Forgot who I was talking to.