

Chapter 937 Cosmic Healer

Ilea looked at her hands and sighed. “You can do this,” she murmured, seeing the hundreds of people gathered in the warehouse below. Her black scale wings moved, the sun yet to climb above the mountains near Morhill. An early morning on a long day. She could see how busy the city was. Of course with the recent festival and all the building, it would be busy either way. But today was special.

Not because of a holiday but because of her. And her magic.

Guess it’s only reasonable, knowing what I can do, she thought and smiled to herself. Still okay that I’m annoyed. Poor ole me, can’t just go fight the next interesting monster because I can reverse the effects of aging and heal the chronic and debilitating effects of illnesses and long past injuries.

She had very much been of the impression that she couldn’t save everyone. She still couldn’t, of course, nor did she want to. But she could help out thousands. *Tens of thousands*, she thought, her pride winning over when she considered her immense magical powers.

“Hey Aki,” she sent, seeing one of the Watchers float over towards her. “*Think it’s alright if I heal them from up here?*”

“That would be more efficie- oh. You don’t want them to see you as some kind of goddess, do you?”

“Yeah. With what I’m about to do, don’t know. Just doesn’t feel comfortable to be down there. Just seeing some of the people now, how hopeful they look, missing limbs, missing eyes. Would be life changing to have something like that reversed, I suppose. And considering the effort I’ll put in to do just that, it doesn’t seem appropriate.”

“I’ll tell them to say a prayer of thanks to the great Lilith,” Aki said.

She squinted her eyes at the flying machine.

“*Maybe they can make a donation instead,*” Aki suggested, his tone more than a little dry.

“I’m stressed out,” Ilea said.

“Sorry. It’s funny to see the woman who faced both a Dragon and an Extraction head on be stressed out by healing some people.”

“Some people,” Ilea murmured, seeing hundreds more still gathering below. And this one was just the first of however many warehouses Aki had prepared. She hadn’t asked, just offered her day, to see how far they’d get.

“*The range is fine from up here?*”

“*It’s fine,*” she said.

Aki floated away again until the people below had finished gathering. Then he spoke up.

“*Whenever you’re ready.*”

Ilea closed her eyes. She thought back to when she had unlocked her healing magic. A random find in an azarinth temple. *Would I have died out there in the forest? Maybe I would’ve gotten something else, a more normal fighting Class? Scavenger or huntress or something?*

She shook her head. It didn't matter now. Not anymore. She smiled and breathed out, then opened her eyes. She took one last glance at the hundreds of people gathered in the hall below her. Anticipation, fear, stubbornness, and hope. *You made it through the Extraction and all that chaos. Maybe you got injured during it all.*

She flew a little farther up, then spread her arms. It wasn't necessary for her magic of course but it just felt right. Then she focused on her healing, like she had done thousands of times before. Here, she focused on a lot more people but compared to healing herself and her near indestructible body, this felt easy.

She mediated and poured mana into her skill until the last of the people was healed. Limbs restored, old scars removed, new eyes blinking in surprise. She saw faint smiles, as if people could finally relax, for the first time in years or decades. Then she saw the tears begin to fall, laughter, and cries of joy.

She shook her head at her own embarrassment, then smiled. *Good for them.* She still stopped looking, instead glancing over to Aki. "Done with this one, where's the next?"

"Already? That was barely five minutes."

"Was probably done after two. I wanted to make sure I got everyone," she said and winked.

"Hmm. The Great Lilith indeed," he sent, the Watcher turning to look southwards.

She followed his gaze and found a single green blinking light. "Off I go." She teleported the several hundred meters, and healed the second gathering. Then the third. Then the fourth.

Ilea followed Aki's Watchers until there were no more blinking lights.

"That's the last one," he sent to her.

Ilea raised her brows.

What she had expected to take weeks, was done in less than an hour. "Really, already?"

"It took weeks to prepare," he said and paused. *"There would've been more, of course."*

The Extraction, yeah, Ilea thought, feeling her stomach tighten. She shook her head and flowed cosmic healing through her mind. She would focus on the people who remained. It was what she could do.

"But I'm sure there will be more, once the news spread. I also don't think you'll be able to change people's minds now about your status of goodhood. Healing someone's age old back pain is bound to make them feel deeply grateful," Aki sent.

Ilea rolled her eyes. *"Yeah, whatever you say, machine god."*

"I'm your dagger. And you're just some lost adventurer who stumbled upon some dwarven gold," Aki said.

Ilea smiled. "Yeah."

"Claire said she'd be ready once you're done," Aki said.

"Right," Ilea murmured. "Where is she?"

"In the Haven, with her mother."

Ilea nodded. *“Thanks for organizing everything. Would’ve taken months for me to travel around and gather people up to heal.”*

“I set up, you punch,” Aki said. *“Now go off and see your friend. And if you’re free after, I have something else to discuss. Potentially interesting.”*

“Oh?” Ilea sent.

“I won’t spoil it quite yet,” the machine answered.

“Did you find a nest of Calamity dragons?”

“Not quite that interesting,” Aki answered.

Ilea smiled and flew up, then towards Ravenhall. She teleported down and into the city, then into Viscera and past it, down into the Haven. Floating in the ancient landscape set up to conceal the Source, she cracked her neck and smiled. “Took me hours to make that journey back then. Now... where’s Claire.”

Checking her marks, she found the woman down in one of the many buildings that had been added to the underground facility. She landed in front of the wooden cabin and knocked on the door. Carefully.

“It’s open,” Claire said from the inside.

Ilea opened the door and glanced in. She smiled when she saw the calm look on Claire’s face, her hair in a bun. She wore a blue linen dress with silver jewelry.

The living room was furnished with leather chairs. A fireplace was set into the back wall, various enchantments suggesting the place wasn’t quite as rustic as it seemed.

Cless sat on a couch in one end of the room and stared out of a large window, giving Ilea a side glance when she entered but mostly pretending that she wasn’t interested. Which was quite obviously not the case.

“And here she is,” Claire said. Not to Ilea, but to Leia, the thin woman wearing a green nightgown. Her skin was wrinkled. She looked older than the last time Ilea had seen her. Her hair was gray and thin, the look in her eyes vacant.

Claire knelt down next to her mother and cupped her hand in both of hers. “I’ve told you a lot about her. How disorderly she always was. How she didn’t read the reports I prepared, and how she always rushed into battle with more passion than thought.”

Ilea raised her brows, crossing her arms in front of her. *Just here to make fun of me?* She could see the grin on Cless’ face, almost sending some destructive healing into the girl. *But that would be mean, and she would crumble to mere dust.* She could see the girl twitch slightly, looking away into the forest. *Yeah, you better hide.*

Claire glanced at Ilea now, still holding Leia’s hand. “And I told you about how important she’s become to me. To a lot of people. How reliable and strong she is. A good friend. A friend I would trust with my life.”

Ilea glared at Claire. “How is this somehow worse?”

Claire smiled. A smile that didn't quite manage to hide how nervous she was. How vulnerable she felt. She turned to Leia. "And she's become a powerful healer. Maybe the most powerful one in this realm, or every realm. And maybe, if you let her, she could help you too."

Cless shifted, turning now to look at them.

"Ilea. I know you don't have to, but would you mind touching her hand?" Claire said.

Ilea nodded, then smiled and walked over. "Of course, Claire." She knelt down, using her space magic to make sure the floorboards didn't snap like twigs. Then she looked at the older woman, unsure how much she saw. She saw her pupils move but there was no focus. "Missus Russel. I will try to heal whatever it is that needs healing."

"You can start," Claire said, her voice tense.

Ilea focused and closed her eyes. This time, she didn't just focus and use her magic. The Fourth tier of Meditation activated and her perception slowed at the same time. She felt the slight warmth of Leia's hand, listened to hear her heart, one beat, then another one. She looked with her magic, and her soul perception. Then, when she had seen everything that she could see, she activated True Reconstruction and as calm and slow as she could, she guided her cosmic power into the woman before her.

Ilea didn't breathe nor did she open her eyes, seeing through her domain how thin hair filled out again, and how wrinkles grew soft. They didn't quite vanish but Leia looked younger now, perhaps in her fifties compared to her seventies before. She healed until there was nothing left to heal, and then her magic waned.

Ilea breathed out. Then she felt a slight tug on her hand. She grasped the moving fingers and held Leia's hand. Ilea opened her eyes and looked back at the same eyes she had seen before, but they were no longer vacant. They were present. Focused. Awake.

Leia opened her mouth, gulping, closing it, then she opened it again.

"Don't rush," Claire said, her voice cracking slightly.

Leia made a noise then, and looked at her daughter. "C-" she gasped.

"Yes," Claire said and sobbed, hugging Leia. And Leia hugged her back.

Ilea let go of the hand and took a step back.

Cless had joined them. The girl glanced up at Ilea, then slapped her back in a casual manner, speaking in a tone that suggested the same sentiment. "Nicely done."

"I can see your tears, little girl," Ilea sent.

Cless smiled, wiping at her eyes before she showed her tongue. *"And I can see yours."*

Ilea smiled and grabbed Cless' shoulder. "Yeah," she said, using her ash to wipe away the tears rolling down her cheeks. "Go on and hug them, I know you were down here a whole lot."

Cless sobbed and rushed over, halting right before she reached the two.

Leia hugged Claire close, then opened her eyes and looked at Cless. She gestured towards her. "Come," she said, her brows rising, likely at the sound of her own voice.

Ilea watched the three hug each other. *Well, now I'm just standing here,* she thought and smiled.

“Thank you, Ilea,” Leia said, looking at her now. She kissed Claire’s forehead. “For everything.”

“Of course, ma’am,” Ilea answered.

“I think that’s what I’m supposed to call you. And my daughter,” she said and touched Claire’s cheeks. “I’m so, so proud of you.”

“I-” Claire said and took in a sharp breath, then wiped away at her tears. “I said you shouldn’t rush.”

“I will damn well rush when I please,” Leia said. “Speaking is strange,” she added. “I’m sorry, Claire. I’m so sorry. After Farenir... I just... I couldn’t, couldn’t be there anymore. I heard you, always, and I saw you, but it felt as if there was a fog between me and the world, as if this body wasn’t mine. I don’t know what Ilea did but it feels like... like I’m here, here and now.”

“You are,” Claire said. “But I always knew you were somewhere in there. Too stubborn.”

Leia only glanced at Ilea. “Now you know where she learned it from.”

“I don’t mind it. And I do need someone to do my taxes,” Ilea said in a dry tone.

“You don’t do taxes, you’re pretty much a goddess,” Cless said.

Ilea raised her brows, glancing at Claire.

“Goddesses are not exempt from taxes, I’m afraid. Though I suppose she could remove the entire government and be rid of taxes in the first place,” Claire said.

“Don’t give her ideas,” Leia said and sighed.

“Do you feel alright?” Claire asked.

“Yeah. Just, tired. And hungry,” Leia answered.

“You have a lot to catch up on,” Ilea said.

“We do,” Leia said. “But you’re welcome to be a part of it.”

“I appreciate it, and I’ll be happy to come and pay you two a visit when the time is right. But I don’t want to stand between the reunion of a mother and her daughter,” Ilea said.

Cless joined her side. “I will also, not stand between that.”

Ilea ruffled her hair, enjoying the annoyed look on the teen’s face. “Growing up so quickly, aren’t they?”

“They are,” Leia said. “Cless, I will have you visit too. There is much you have shared that we must talk about. From woman to woman.”

Cless averted her gaze.

“She will visit, I’m sure,” Ilea said and turned with a wave. “It’s good to meet you, formally I mean.”

“And you, Ilea. Chaotic travels to you,” Leia said.

“She did listen,” Ilea said, stepping outside as Cless said goodbye and joined her.

The girl frowned. “Since when are you my mom? My actual mother is around now, you know?”

Ilea smiled and glanced at the girl. “I know. I brought her back. But she’s not yet an interdimensional space mage capable of keeping a teleporting young divination mage in check.”

“I don’t need checking. Wait, what do you mean *yet*?”

Ilea walked towards the trees. *Smells like barbecue*. Aki would have to wait. A short while. Whatever slightly interesting thing he was offering, it surely wasn’t as exciting as barbecue.