1385 Flame of Divinity

As they walked through the corridors, Sunny kept clearing their way with the help of the Crown of Twilight. Of course, they could easily swim through the flooded portions of the temple — but why would they, if there was an easier way?

The walls of the narrow corridors glistened, reflecting the light of a luminous Memory Nephis had summoned. Soon, Sunny noticed a subtle change in them. If the ancient stone was unadorned before, now, it was covered by the remains of beautiful murals.

He couldn't quite understand what was depicted on them, though —partially because the murals were heavily damaged, partially because the images were quite strange. They were more symbolic than descriptive... at least that was the conclusion he made.

"...What's that?"

Noticing that Nephis seemed to be interested in the murals as well, Sunny finally gave voice to his curiosity.

She hesitated for a few moments, then shook her head.

"I'm not sure."

In front of them was an image depicting a vast black field that looked strangely terrifying. In the middle of it, a mass of golden flame was burning, illuminating the darkness with its radiance.

Cassie slowed her steps and turned slightly, facing the mural. After a moment of silence, she said matter-of-factly:

"It's the myth of creation."

The two of them looked at her with some confusion. Feeling their gazes, the blind girl sighed, then smiled lightly.

"The inhabitants of the Dream Realm had a myth of how the world came to be, of course. Actually, many of them. Most shared common points, though."

She pointed to the mural.

"In the beginning, there was only the boundless void of chaos..."

Sunny tilted his head a little, remembering the description of a Memory he once possessed... the Memory of a drop of Shadow God's blood. The runes he had read told the same.

Of course, Cassie was slightly altering the meaning due to the difference between the language of the waking world and the runic language the Spell used. There was no void of chaos... because the words "void" and "chaos" meant the same thing.

Come to think of it, it had been the same in the human language once, as well. These days, when someone said "chaos", they wanted to describe some sort of a huge mess. But the initial meaning of that word simply meant emptiness... the void.

So, saying that there was only the void meant the same thing as saying there was only chaos.

It was the dark abyss that Weaver had apparently visited, and where the gods had come from.

Cassie, meanwhile, continued:

"The void was everlasting and everchanging. Terrible beings dwelled within the void, as well. But then came desire, and with it came direction."

She pointed to the golden flame.

Sunny raised his eyebrow. These last words were exactly the same as in the description of the drop of ichor.

"Yeah, I've heard something similar before. But, to be honest, I never really understood what all of it actually means. Desire, direction... why are they so significant?"

It was Nephis, not Cassie, who answered:

"It's simple, really. Well... it's a paradox, but a rather simple one. Since the void was eternal, limitless, and forever changing, it was inevitable that sooner or later, it would produce something that contradicted its fundamental qualities. In other words, something unchanging. That was desire. A single constant in the forever shifting abyss."

She coughed, and then added with embarrassment:

"Oh... at least that was how it was explained to me. But if you think about it, it makes sense. A desire can't change, because if it does, it ceases to be itself and becomes a different desire. So, the concept of desire is static by nature."

Sunny blinked a couple of times.

"Huh? What? That's... a bit too complicated for me. What a weird myth! I like the ones you tell way better — you know, the stories about cunning men defeating giants, building wooden as... horses to conquer cities, and fighting sea monsters."

A subtle smile appeared on Neph's face.

Sunny enjoyed the view of it, then scratched the back of his head and added:

"But I get the idea. Desire was the first unchanging thing born from the everchanging void, so it was in contradiction to the void."

She nodded.

"Yes. A desire also can't exist by itself. It needs a subject. You want something, strive for something, dream of something... so, a desire has to be directed somewhere. Hence, with it came direction."

Sunny looked at her with a strange expression.

"That... strangely makes sense."

So the direction the myth spoke about was a natural consequence of desire... or rather the concept of desire being born within the void. And since both were constant, their existence was in opposition to the forever changing abyss.

Where there had been only chaos, there was now something resembling order.

...Coincidentally, the word "directionless" could also mean "disorderly" in the runic language. And therefore, the word "direction" could also mean "order".

Even though it was not entirely correct, such an analogy made it easier for Sunny to understand the underlying meaning of the strange creation myth. It was a conflict between chaos and order... the void creatures represented chaos, while the gods represented order.

He hesitated for a moment, then asked:

"But a desire for what? What was that desire?"

Cassie laughed quietly.

"Nobody knows. In fact, I don't think that anyone can know... we humans are not capable of truly understanding divine matters, after all, so this myth is merely a crude facsimile of the real story. Personally, I think it was the very idea of desire, not a specific one. That's why there is a fairy tale about the Well of Wishes here in the Tomb of Ariel — a magical place that can grant any wish, not just the correct one."

Sunny looked at her, amused.

"...You know that fairy tale too?"

Cassie coughed and turned away in embarrassment.

"Oh. Yeah... it's popular among the younger inhabitants of Fallen Grace. I listened to it once or twice out of curiosity."

She lingered for a moment, then walked to the next mural. On it, six radiant figures were shown standing around the mass of golden flames, which had become much smaller. Vague, but terrifying shapes could be seen in the surrounding darkness, swarming them. The blind girl pointed at the image.

"The gods were born from desire. Then, they waged a terrible war on the old ones, the creatures of the void."