1390 Guiding Light

Standing up, Sunny stretched and walked over to where Cassie was standing. Extending his shadow sense through the cracked wall, he remained silent for a few moments, then smiled.

"Good catch. There is indeed a hidden space there."

To think that he had almost missed it...

The blind girl stared at him for a bit, which gave Sunny a hint to look around.

'Damn... it's still creepy, to know that she's riding my senses. Can't she ask, at least? That Ability of hers is not limited to sight, so... ah, I don't even want to think what kinds of things she can sense me sensing...'

Suddenly feeling hot, Sunny glanced at Cassie and asked in a stifled tone:

"What are you looking for?"

The blind girl lingered.

"If there's a secret space, there has to be a mechanism to unlock it. Some kind of lever, perhaps. Oh... and give me some credit, alright? I am polite enough to know when not to use my Ability."

He suppressed an impulse to jump back.

"What, you can read thoughts now, too?!"

Cassie took a deep breath, then patiently shook her head.

"No. It was just written all over your face."

Sunny let out a sigh of relief, then trembled.

'Wait... she's looking through my eyes, so how can she see my face?'

At that moment, Neph's patted him on the shoulder.

"Because she looked through mine. Honestly, Sunny... for someone who claims to have never used his shadow to do perverted things at the Academy dormitory, you sure think of weird stuff often."

He stared at her in disbelief.

"What do you mean, "claims to"? I absolutely did not! You know I can't lie!"

Nephis looked at Cassie with a hint of a smile on her lips.

"Notice that he said "did not"... instead of "have not". Hmm."

Sunny remained silent, his mouth open.

'Oh... I see what's going on.'

Scoffing, he turned away.

"Yeah, and until I say "will not", you better behave. Who knows what weird stuff I'll think of?"

There were a few moments of silence, and then Nephis said a bit awkwardly from behind him:

"...So, whatever mechanism there was to unlock the door, it has to have broken a long time ago."

He grinned and watched as she stepped forward and delivered a swift punch to the cracked wall. The ancient stone shattered and collapsed, revealing a dark space beyond.

Sunny shielded his face from the cloud of stone dust and peered inside.

Hidden behind a false wall was a small circular chamber. There was an altar in its center, with something laying on it. As Nephis raised her torch, its light reflected from a polished metal surface.

He suddenly felt the shadows shift slightly, and widened his eyes in disbelief.

'That glow...'

There was a staff of pristine white wood laying on the altar, untouched by dust or dirt. Both its ends were encased in a beautiful weave of bands of polished gold, with a single radiant gem... no, a crystal... crowning the top.

The rough crystal was easy to identify as a soul shard of a rather high Rank. Supreme, perhaps, or even higher. What made Sunny instinctively hold his breath, however, was something else.

The white staff was emanating an ethereal golden glow... the kind that Sunny could only see because his eyes had been altered by Weaver's lineage. The familiar and unmistakable shine that the things having to do with divinity possessed.

As he was looking at the beautiful staff, stunned, Cassie approached the altar and lowered her head. Her expression was more perplexed than shocked. She remained silent for a few moments, then said quietly: "How... curious. I did not know that it was here."

Both Sunny and Nephis looked at her with surprise. Throwing another glance at the staff, he asked:

"You know what this thing is?"

The blind girl lingered for a bit, then nodded.

"Yes... I think I do. It fits the description of one of the holy relics that the sybils brought into the Tomb of Ariel from the outside world. Supposedly, it was a gift from one of the gods, bestowed to a priestess of their temple in the distant past."

Sunny's eyes widened.

"Wait. Are you telling me that this thing... is a Divine artifact?"

His heart was beating wildly.

Cassie smiled.

"Yes, in a sense... meaning that it is rumored to have been created by a god. However, it is not a Divine Rank artifact, if that is what you're asking. Although it does have some mystical qualities, its power is actually not that great."

She remained silent for a bit, and then added:

"Actually, that can be said about most Divine relics, and therefore about most Divine Memories created in their image... not that there's many of those around. We humans perceive Memories as something that grants us power, but for the gods and the lesser deities... they themselves were the power. So, any relic they created would have been a mere tool of convenience, not something meant to empower them."

Sunny thought about his own two Divine Memories. That description fit them perfectly. Both Weaver's Mask and the Shadow Lantern allowed him to do astonishing things... and yet, there were indeed Memories in his arsenal that empowered him much more.

There was no doubt that his Divine Memories were infinitely more powerful, and yet, they did not make him much more powerful. He had considered this paradoxical situation plenty of times, and the conclusions he made were similar to what Cassie said.

The gods did not need external sources of power, and so, the tools they left behind served specific purposes — astonishing and wondrous, but not necessarily helpful to a human.

The blind girl, meanwhile, gently caressed the white wood of the beautiful staff and added:

"In any case, this relic is called Guiding Light. It's not even a tool made to be used by a god... just something gifted to a mortal out of affection. The powers it possesses are not that stunning. It had served the sybils well before they came to the Tomb of Ariel, but after that, this staff mostly held symbolic meaning."

Sunny stared at the beautiful golden glow for a while, then asked in a dubious tone:

"Not that stunning? So what does it do?"

Cassie thought for a bit, then hesitantly shrugged.

"It's supposed to guide people? Actually, I don't know that well."

She picked up the staff and held it carefully. After a few moments, the soft radiance of the soul shard crowning the relic swirled, growing more intense on one side.

Sunny blinked.

"What did you do?"

The blind girl suddenly seemed a little embarrassed.

"Uh, I just... sort of... thought in my head, "Miss Guiding Light, can you guide me to Wind Flower, please?""

He stared at her incredulously.

'Let's skip the first part for now...'

"So, this divine relic... is basically a pretty flashlight with a very basic navigation function?"

Cassie coughed.

"I... guess so?"

Sunny sighed, then shook his head and covered his face with a palm.

'And here I was all excited...'

Well, it could have been worse. The previous divine relic he had found in the wild was a wooden knife that could only kill one specific person, while simultaneously being responsible for turning that person into an immortal powerhouse.

Although the Guiding Light was not exactly an artifact worthy of being called divine, it was at least more useful than that.

...Actually, being able to know the general direction of almost anything you thought about was quite an amazing boon if used with foresight. Not to mention that it would help them find the members of the cohort sooner — which was why they had come to this temple, in the first place.

Sunny stared at the wooden staff for a few moments, then shook his head again.

"Well, great. Let's use this thing well. For now, though, we still have to find the information about Wind Flower."

They had already known where that place was located. What they had really come here to find was the information about what kind of dangers were waiting for them there.

Turning away, Sunny let out a disappointed sight.

'Damn it.'

As he walked back to the slated, he tried not to look too disheartened.

'This had to be the most anticlimactic discovery of a divine relic ever...'