1482 Third Way

Illuminated by the gentle light of the sacred tree, the Chain Breaker was flying through the darkness. It moved in a wide spiral, descending lower and lower into the abyssal darkness with each spin. Around it, the moving walls of the dark tunnel were twisting and turning as the water comprising them revolved at a dreadful speed.

Now that Cassie had repaired the enchantment circuit of the ancient vessel, the immediate crisis was resolved. The members of the cohort finally received a chance to catch their breaths. The events of the past day had simply been too overwhelming... the destruction of the island had followed immediately after the battle with Undying Slaughter, and so, everyone was exhausted.

They simply dropped to the deck, praying that nothing terrible happened in the next few hours — minutes, even — at least. Sunny temporarily took the steering oars, allowing Nephis to heal Cassie's mangled hands. After that, everyone remained near the runic circle, looking into the darkness.

"Where do you think the vortex leads?"

Effie's voice sounded a bit stifled.

He lingered for a moment, then sighed.

"I don't really know. All I know is that someone passed through it and survived, in the past. Granted, that person was of the Supreme Rank."

Sunny paused for a moment and added, his voice somber:

"It might be the inner wall of the pyramid. In any case... we shall see."

After that, he glanced at Cassie. Now that they had been granted a moment to compose themselves, his curiosity was tingling.

"By the way, why did you need that piece of rock to repair the ship?"

The others seemed curious, too. The blind girl hesitated for a bit, then explained:

"I guess... imagine a locked door. There are a few ways to get on the other side of the door. The simplest is to use a key — provided you have one. In this case, the key would have been the detailed knowledge of the original enchantment of the Chain Breaker. I do know a few things about it, but not enough."

She pointed to the runic circle, which glimmered faintly in the darkness.

"The second way is to be a locksmith who understands the structure of the door's lock — or any lock, really — on a deep level. That way, you can pick it without a key. Sadly, my knowledge of sorcery is not that deep. Which left only the third way... brute force."

Cassie briefly touched her hands. Under the influence of Neph's flame, her soft skin had regrown. There was no blood, bared flesh, and pale bone in sight. The ghastly wounds were gone.

"I don't know if that piece of rock really came from the Estuary, but it is definitely the same as the stone walls of the pyramid. Which means that it was a part of an Unholy Titan once. You have experience crafting extraordinary weapons yourself, so you know how much the material matters. Therefore... I simply borrowed the power of the material to make up for my lack of knowledge."

Sunny stared at her incredulously for a few moments, then let out a sigh.

"I don't think there was anything simple about what you did, but... okay."

Her explanation did make some sense. Sunny was not too knowledgeable about runic sorcery, not to mention the enchantments of the Chain Breaker. However, he was a modestly accomplished sorcerer himself. As such, he knew that a valuable material could indeed substitute skill, sometimes.

For example, he would have to be a god of weaving to create an enchantment that could allow mundane steel to pierce the hide of a Great Beast — if such a thing was even possible. But if that mundane steel was replaced by the bones of a Great Tyrant, there was no need to even add an enchantment.

Weapons crafted from such bones would possess a mystical power of their own, and that power would be enough to kill the Great Beast. At least in the hands of someone as strong as Effie, and while the abomination's own mystical power was diminished by grievous wounds to its soul.

'I should remember this lesson well.'

Sunny had no doubt that he would create many Memories in the future. Before, he was mostly only worried about acquiring enough powerful soul

shards and learning the patterns of varied weaves. Perhaps it was time to start concerning himself with searching for extraordinary materials, as well.

He smiled faintly.

"In any case... good job repairing the Chain Breaker. It was just in time."

There were a few moments of silence, and then Effie suddenly cleared her throat.

"Yeah, great job, Cassie! But, uh... can someone please explain to me how the hell is Chain Breaker here? What is it doing in our Nightmare?"

Sunny blinked a couple of times.

'Right. There was this mystery, as well...'

He and Nephis glanced at each other. A moment later, he said hesitantly:

"Honestly, we have no idea. You should already know about how weird time functions inside the Tomb of Ariel... so, our current theory is that one of the previous owners of this ship visited the pyramid at some point. It was just drifting aimlessly far upstream. There was no one aboard and no signs of who that previous owner had been, so... Neph and I took it."

Effie looked at them with a strange expression, then grinned and patted the deck with her hand.

"Well... it's good that you did. I can't even describe how much I missed my cozy cabin while roaming the Great River on the back of a weird mutant shark. Look! The floor is solid! I might honestly cry!"

Still smiling, she turned to Jet and asked:

"So, what? You really got your Aspect Legacy?"

Jet glanced at her and shrugged.

"Yes. And before you ask... no, you can't eat it. Too bad you didn't receive anything cool yourself, huh?"

Effie's smile widened.

"Who says I didn't?"

With that, she stretched her long legs, assumed a more comfortable pose, and let out a small laugh.

"I did. If you consider a Supreme Memory cool, that is..."