1779 Leaving the Main Camp

Rain was used to spending time in the wilderness, so it did not take her a long time to pack her things and take down the tent. Her bow was unstrung and attached to the pack, and so were her quiver and sword - usually, she would have kept the weapons on the ready, but since there would be a cohort of Awakened leading the survey team, it was better to keep a low profile.

There weren't a lot of mundane people who habitually hunted Nightmare Creatures, and since Rain was supposed to be hiding, she didn't want to attract undue attention.

Saying goodbye to the few acquaintances she had made in the main camp, she hurried to the tent the road manager had mentioned.

Rain felt both relieved and a little wistful, knowing that she might never see this place again.

As she was nearing the large tent, there was the sound of several voices. Her teacher suddenly mumbled something from the shadows:

"No, it can't be... can it? Curses, it is! Damn, I knew this would happen!"

He sounded alarmed.

She slowed down and stared at her shadow in confusion.

"Teacher, is something the matter?"

He remained silent for a few moments, then said in a grave tone:

"Rain, I need you to listen to me very carefully She tensed, overcome by sudden fear, Her teacher, meanwhile, continued somberly

"There is a guy named Ray in that tent. Keep away from him... at all costs! Don't talk to him, don't listen to him... better yet, don't even look at him. Treat him like he has the plague. Do you understand? Nod if you understand!"

Rain stared at her shadow in bewilderment.

"W-why? Is he some kind of terrible fiend? Is he v -very dangerous?"

Her shadow stirred.

"Yes! Very, very dangerous! And he is something way worse than a terrible fiend..."

His voice shook with some dark, chilling emotion.

"...He's a male teenager! So, keep your distance, alright? Nod if you understand!"

Rain blinked a couple of times.

'Huh?”

"Huh?"

Her teacher hissed,

"What are you spacing out for? I said to nod if you understood. Why aren't you nodding?"

She took a deep breath, holding back many unflattering words.

"What on earth, teacher... you scared the hell out of me."

He scoffed derisively.

"You should be scared! A guy like that is a deadly threat for sheltered young ladies."

Rain remained silent for a while, then looked down at herself.

Rugged leather clothes, a body covered by bruises, dirty bandages hiding a barely healed cut on her side, calloused hands...

Where were these sheltered young ladies her teacher was talking about?

Shaking her head, she exhaled slowly and resumed walking.

"Got it. I'll keep that in mind."

'Crazy bastard.’

Her shadow followed.

"Hey! I didn't see you nod!"

Ignoring him, Rain approached the tent, knocked on the door post, and entered.

The spacious tent was a completely different beast from her own. The tent Rain used was meant for one person to sleep in, while this one was basically a small building. There were several compartments, field furniture, and one could stand Inside without bending their back.

At the moment, there were about a dozen mundane humans gathered near the entrance, all laborers like her - most of them were men, but there were a couple tough-looking women as well.

In the open space in front of them, four people were having a quiet conversation. Rain didn't need to look twice to know that they were Awakened.

One was a delicate young woman with fair skin and red hair, wearing a beautiful silk robe. One was a young man in leather armor, who was leaning on a table with a sullen expression. The third one... was clearly the Legacy.

She was a young woman with tan skin and strange ashen hair, wearing an intricate suit of full plate armor forged from lustrous steel. Her expression was serious, and her gaze was sharp.

Of course, all three were undeniably gorgeous, like all Awakened were.

It was the fourth person that drew all attention, though.

Rain held her breath.

There, in front of her, a stunningly beautiful woman in modest red garments was addressing the young Legacy... a Master. And not just any Master, but one of the Blood Sisters - an elite group of Ascended who served Saint Seishan, and had come from the Forgotten Shore with her.

She was saying in a husky tone:

"...time is of the essence, Lady Tamar, However, you must be careful. Do not get too close to the Hand, and whatever you do, do not cross the realm boundary: You should know the consequences. Be well, and I hope to see you again in two weeks.

The Legacy nodded.

"With the mape you provided, there should not be any problem. Please relay my gratitude to the Saint

The beautiful Master bowed slightly and left, not sparing the mundane humans even a glance.

There were a few moments of silence, and then, the Legacy turned to them. Her expression seemed dark

‘Gods…’

She was a baby!

All three of them were. None of the three Awakened was older than eighteen... Rain wasn't that far in terms of age, but she felt old and wizened when looking at them.

The Legacy frowned, then sald coldly:

"I am Tamar of Sorrow. These are my companions, Awakened Ray and Awakened Fleur. You should have been told about the nature of the task... our goal is to conduct the final survey of the environment for the last stretch of the Eastern Road. We will depart in two hours."

Rain studied Lady Tamar with curiosity. She didn't seem especially mean, but definitely had a severe personality. Although... considering her age, she must have Just Awakened recently. This survey was most likely the first mission she had received as an Awakened, so the young Legacy was definitely under tremendous pressure to perform well. Perhaps that was the reason for her harshness.

‘Great.’

Well, it didn't matter too much. Rain was not planning on following the road manager's advice to gain the girl's friendship and affection during the journey - she did not need another benefactor. In fact, dealing with the one she had was already testing the limits of her patience.

It was far more likely that she would barely exchange a few words with the proud Legacy in the next few weeks.

Awakened Tamar, meanwhile, briefly addressed each of the mundane laborers to learn their names and evaluate their character.

She reached Rain last and stopped in front of her.

"Name?"

Rain answered respectfully without looking the Legacy in the eyes:

"Rani."

At that, Tamar was supposed to move on. However, she lingered for a moment and looked at Rain's pack.

Then, she asked unexpectedly:

"How good are you with that bow?"

Rain finally looked directly at the leader of the survey team and smiled faintly.

"I'm decent."

The Legacy frowned.

"What about that sword?"

For a moment, Rain had a ridiculous thought of saying something outrageous, like that she was probably a better swordsman than the three of the young Awakened combined.

For some unknown reason, she wanted to brag when stared down by the beautiful Legacy girl.

Instead, she said simply:

"I can handle it fine."

Finally, Tamar studied her clothes.

"Do you have experience trekking in the wilderness?"

Rain nodded.

"Some."

The Awakened girl sighed, then finally looked away.

"Good. I was wondering why they sent someone that young, but it seems that you are not completely helpless... Rani. Don't slow us down."

Rain suddenly wanted to laugh.

How could that baby-faced Awakened call someone too young with a straight face? Legacy training was someone else, indeed!

Of course, she didn't laugh.

Instead, she bowed slightly.

"Ah, yes, Lady Tamar. I'll do my best.”

Two hours later, the departed the main camp and set out into the wilderness.