1822 Miraculous Feat

Actually, Rain already knew what miracle could save her. It wasn't a miracle that could happen to her, but rather a miracle she could make happen.

It was her Awakening.

Just like her teacher had said, it was the only solution to this lethal predicament.

The problem was that the formation of her soul core was far away, while the Tyrant was too close. The abomination was not drawing closer yet, but it would soon.

If Rain could rest with no distraction and concentrate on meditating steadily, there would have been hope of Awakening before the hideous giant caught its prey. But she had to escape from it, dragging Tamar across the wasteland, from dusk till dawn.

She had to rest at night to recover at least some of her strength, so there were only a few short hours for her to circulate her essence while keeping watch.

Those hours were woefully insufficient for the task at hand.

But actually...

Wasn't she looking at it all wrong?

Rain remembered the previous night. The cool sensation of water droplets falling on her face, the joy she felt. Back then, she was circulating her essence. She took Tamar's helmet and moved it from below the overhanging stone ridge to catch the rain, hoping to quench her unbearable thirst.

Which proved something vital.

It was that she could move and control her essence at the same time. As long as her concentration wasn't broken, Rain could do whatever she wanted while forming her core.

Of course, it wasn't easy to keep her essence under control when doing something else. It was already hard enough to maintain the raging whirlpool while in a state of perfect peace, not to mention extremely tiring.

And yet, if she could circulate her essence while traversing the wasteland, then she wouldn't just have a few pitiful hours at night to form her core. Instead, she could keep forming it constantly, for as long as her mental fortitude allowed it.

Rain felt a strange compulsion to laugh and cry at the same time.

'Of course... of course! Why not?'

She was already doing something unprecedented by trying to Awaken without the help of the Nightmare Spell. As far as Rain knew, no other human of the waking world had ever done that.

And yet, she didn't just have to perform that miraculous feat, but also do it while being pursued by an Awakened Tyrant and dying from physical exertion. Lost in the wild reaches of the Dream Realm with no help, hope, or support.

It wasn't fair at all.

But it also made sense, in a strange kind of way. After all, making history was not supposed to be easy.

‘I can do it... I must do it. I have no choice but to do it.'

Rain gritted her teeth.

And then, ignoring her terrible fatigue and suffocating strain, she reached into her soul and tried to move her essence.

The heavy mental and spiritual burden was instantly added to the crushing hardship of pushing her tired body forward.

As soon as she took the next step and felt the wire rope cut into her skin painfully, her concentration was destroyed, and she lost control of her essence.

Rain took a laborious breath, gripped the rope tighter, and tried again.

This time, she managed to keep hold of her essence, but lost control of her abdominal muscles, allowing them to relax. She instantly lost balance, stumbled, and sprawled in the mud.

"Ah..."

Tamar subdued voice resounded from behind, tinged with concern:

"Rani, are you alright?”

Rain exhaled slowly, then pushed herself off the ground and wiped the mud off her face.

Well, with how dirty her gloves were, she might have just added more mud to it.

"I'm... fine."

Pulling up the alloy harness, she gripped it again and pulled the stretcher forward.

She did not make the same mistake the second time.

It was terribly difficult, and ruthlessly hard. But after a while, she managed to take several steps without losing control of her essence.

Then, a dozen steps.

Then, a hundred.

And finally, Rain forced herself to keep walking and circulating her essence at the same time. Her vision had turned blurry, and her mind felt as if it would collapse from strain.

But it did not.

Her body did not crumble, either.

So, she kept walking.

After a while, her hearing seemed to have turned incredibly sharp, She heard the makeshift stretcher scraping against rocks. She also heard the melodious ringing of crystals of essence colliding with each other, She could almost hear the roar of the radiant whirlpool as it revolved within her soul.

Eventually - she did not know how much time had passed - she thought that she could feel her essence with incredible clarity, like she had never felt it before. The sensation of it flowing through her, within her, was almost physical.

And so, it was almost as if her body and soul became one, indistinguishable from each other.

When that happened, she pushed her essence harder, making it revolve even faster. The pressure at the heart of the whirlpool increased, and the speed with which the next grain was being formed increased as well.

Much more importantly...

Rain wasn't limited to meditating a few hours a day anymore. She could keep the process of core formation at all times - while she walked, while she talked, while she rested her weary body on the ground.

As long as her will held, she did not have to stop.

The question was...

What would take longer? For her will to shatter, or for her soul core to be formed?

Rain was going to find the answer, whether she wanted to or not.

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As night fell, so did she.

Rain collapsed on the ground, unmoving. This time, she remained motionless for far longer than yesterday.

It felt like her body had shut down.

She had never been so utterly beaten before, or exhausted so terribly.

And yet, she still continued to control her essence, never letting its current stop or slow down.

After a while, Tamar awkwardly crawled over to check on her. The Legacy girl helped Rain turn over, supported her to sit up, and shoved a strip of meat into her hands.

"Eat."

Rain smiled weakly and forced herself to take a bite.

The Tyrant had fallen behind in the latter half of the day. Her speed had been greater with the harness, and she had covered much more distance. It was still nowhere near enough to escape the pursuit, but at least they would survive another night.

Probably.

They even had some water left.

After quenching her thirst and consuming enough meat to refuel her depleted body, Rain sprawled on the ground and sighed.

"Ah. I'm going to be terribly skinny by the end of it."

Tamar stared at her with an incredulous expression.

"That's what you're concerned about?"

Rain considered laughing, but found the thought too tiring. In the end, she said:

"Why, of course. I want the Tyrant to be left hungry after it gobbles me up. Skin and bones, that sort of thing..."

The young Legacy remained silent for a few moments, then sighed.

"You have a very morbid sense of humor, don't you, Rani?"

Laying on the ground, Rain grinned.

"What can I say? If you live with wolves, you'll howl like a wolf. Someone has been a bad influence on me."

After a while, she added:

"...I'm sure I'm pretty delicious, though."

Tamar had her usual stoic expression on, but at that moment, it cracked a little.

Looking away, she suppressed a chuckle, and said in a serious tone:

"I'm sure you are."

As she did, Rain felt another radiant crystal being formed deep within her soul.

The melodious ringing was growing louder, and more frequent.