1845 Seventh Royal Legion

The [Mark of Shadows] played an important role. It protected Rain and gave her a few useful abilities, but its main purpose was to confuse people. After all, she did not want anyone to learn that she did not have an Aspect, and the snake tattoo bestowed upon her strange powers that could be seen as one.

Her teacher had mentioned that he was working on something else to make her disguise more convincing, as well. Rain did not know what he meant, yet, but was going to learn one way or another in due time.

What excited her the most was not the [Mark of Shadows], though.

It was the Memories her teacher had given her.

Oh, the joy and delight of having Memories!

Rain held a strong opinion that all the rest of the Awakened in the world had no idea how good they had it.

Her threadbare bodysuit and old clothes were gone, replaced by an enchanted armor. It was so soft and light that she did not feel any burden at all, but more resilient than her mundane equipment had ever been. The armor was made of dark grey fabric and lusterless black leather, fitting her perfectly. It was an Awakened Memory of the Fifth Tier — that was what she had been told, at least — called the Puppeteer's Shroud.

Its enchantments increased her mental endurance and resistance against mind attack, as well as allowed her to recover from mental fatigue faster.

…The armor looked suspiciously similar to what her teacher used to wear, so she suspected that it had not been, in fact, crafted specifically for her. But even if the Puppeteer's Shroud was a hand-me-down, Rain did not mind.

The euphoria of having a wonderful suit of incredibly light, but resilient armor that adjusted to fit her body perfectly, cleaned and repaired itself, and could be summoned at any moment was simply too great!

It was the reward for slaying the Awakened Tyrant.

There were two other Memories that she had received from her teacher, as well. One was a powerful bow made of green metal… in fact, Rain knew that metal all too well. It seemed that her teacher had smelted the blade of the Huntsman's axe to forge the limbs of the bow, while the string was made from some strange black material.

The bow was called the [Beast of Prey], and was an Awakened Memory of the Third Tier. Its enchantment allowed Rain to enhance the damage dealt by her arrows, as well as infuse one arrow with devastating force at the cost of most of her essence. However, the bow was also able to absorb and store her essence, somehow — so, with sufficient preparation, Rain could use the deadly shot twice.

She received the Beast of Prey in exchange for the Memory coupon her teacher had given her for slaying the Huntsman.

The third Memory she received, however, was a free bonus. It was a quiver of enchanted arrows that never seemed to run out. The arrows did not really possess any special qualities, apart from the fact that their flight was absolutely noiseless. They were also incredibly sharp and could pierce thick armor.

All in all, Rain was quite happy with her little arsenal. Of course, it was only the beginning — she expected to receive many more Memories in the future. Sadly, her teacher seemed determined to only award her Memories that fit her kills.

He could have given her something much more powerful, without a doubt, but then people would start asking questions about her identity. How could a newly Awakened girl with no backing be walking around with a soul arsenal that put even the Legacies to shame?

That sort of thing…

"Get up. Rest is over."

Tamar's voice drew Rain from her pleasant thoughts. Opening her eyes, she sighed and rose to her feet.

All around them, the Song Army was stirring. After ascending the left arm of the dead deity, they were finally ready to delve into the jungle growing on its white surface, and then cross to the colossal skeleton's collarbone. This rest stop was the last one they would be able to enjoy in relative safety.

The edge of the jungle was somewhere ahead, a few kilometers from the head of the column. The Seventh Legion was marching closer to its tail, so Rain could not see anything.

Nevertheless, everyone was tense. That was because everyone knew that they were heading into battle.

…Not that people like Rain and the members of her cohort could do anything in a battle like that. From what they had heard in the last few days, the jungle had been allowed to grow for long enough that most Nightmare Creatures populating its depths were of the Corrupted Rank. Awakened warriors were simply not powerful enough to face them.

Today, the battle was only for the Masters and the Saints.

And for the abominations enthralled by Beastmaster.

Just as Rain thought about it, a messenger arrived from the head of the column and hurried past them. She turned around and watched him disappear into the command tent of the legion.

Soon, several Blood Sisters emerged from it.

And then, their leader.

Rain couldn't help but hold her breath when she saw the Queen's daughter. Saint Seishan… was a striking woman, without a doubt.

With her strange, but beautiful grey skin and tantalizing grace, she was like an embodiment of nobility and regal poise. She seemed both inhuman and riveting, but most of all mysterious.

Her beauty was truly breathtaking.

It was to the point that the Blood Sisters, each an exquisitely beautiful woman herself, seemed plain and unassuming next to her. Rain still found it weird that most of the most powerful warriors of the Song Domain were women… but she couldn't complain. Especially here in the Seventh Legion, she sometimes felt that she was in a flower garden instead of an army.

Granted, those flowers were roses with bloodied thorns, and most of the rank and file soldiers were still men.

Saint Seishan led the Ascended warriors of her legion toward the head of the column. The Awakened warriors silently bowed as she passed, wishing her luck.

Rain couldn't help but do the same.

The Song Army was bound to suffer casualties during the push to establish a fortified base on the collarbone of the dead deity. Looking at the powerful members of the legion, she couldn't help but wish that all of them returned alive.

At the same time, Rain couldn't help but wonder…

Today, they were going to fight against Nightmare Creatures.

What would she feel when the time finally comes for them to fight against people?