1856 Champions of Song

Saint Seishan did not seem daunted by the astonishing power and status of the people gathered in the command pavilion — which should not have been surprising, really, considering that she was a princess herself.

Rain, however, was overwhelmed. There were close to fifty Transcendent champions around her, and each of them possessed a presence. Some auras were subtle, while some were forceful — they were all undeniable, though, almost making her feel dizzy.

Or drunk, maybe… in any case, it was an intense feeling.

She furtively glanced at Tamar. The Legacy girl was not really showing it, but Rain could tell that she was affected by the wondrous atmosphere of the tent, as well.

They were protected by the calm presence of Saint Seishan, at least. Without it, their state would have been even worse.

Lady Seishan walked across the spacious room with her usual elegant poise, greeting her sisters and vassal Saints gracefully as she went. Somewhat relieved, Rain was finally able to look around.

She regretted it almost immediately.

'Ah… that is simply unfair…'

Everyone around her was chillingly beautiful. It was as if she was in a lavish museum where every sculpture and painting had come alive. She had seen plenty of stunning people before, and was not so bad herself… but surrounded by the nobility of the Song Domain, Rain couldn't help but feel utterly plain.

Judging by Tamar's wistful expression, she felt the same.

'Why am I surprised?'

She was looking at Saints, after all. Competing with a Saint in terms of one's looks was a fool's errand.

Consoling herself that way, she tried to assign the names she had heard to the beautiful faces.

Rain had heard a lot about the most prominent figures of the Domain while living in Ravenheart, of course. She learned more about them from Tamar in the recent weeks, as well. So, they were not complete strangers.

She knew Saint Seishan, of course. The commander of the Seventh Legion was somewhat obscure, and there was little known about her. She had been the last of the seven Transcendent princesses to become a Saint — however, that did not mean that she was weaker or younger than the rest.

It was just that Lady Seishan had spent almost ten years as a Sleeper on the Forgotten Shore. After returning from that ordeal, she attained Transcendence in a fraction of time that the others had required. In fact, it often felt like the rest of the queen's daughters treated her with a lot of respect. Especially those who were still Masters.

Queen Song had more than seven daughters — adopted daughters, of course. It was just that only seven had become Saints so far.

The next person who attracted Rain's attention almost made her stumble.

It was hard not to notice him, considering that there were relatively few men in the command pavilion. The one she couldn't help but stare at was tall, with broad shoulders and narrow thighs, wearing an austere armor with few adornments.

He had a somber look and cold, deep eyes. His face was mature and way… way too handsome! Most importantly, he had tan skin and strange ashen hair.

It was Tamar's dad!

Rain blinked a couple of times, then blushed a little and looked away. The man was at least two decades older than her, but he was also a Saint. She couldn't help but feel a little out of breath, and looked at Tamar with a silent question.

The Legacy girl frowned, then whispered:

"Yes, that is my father."

Rain's eyes widened a little.

'Damn, Tamar! I didn't tell me that your dad was… was a total smoke show!'

Shaking her head, she tried to distract herself by looking at someone else.

That, as well, was a terrible mistake. Because the first person who caught her eyes was none other than Beastmaster, a woman so breathtaking and tantalizing that there were countless songs written about her.

Even the thin scar that marred her demonically beautiful face did nothing to detract from her beauty. Instead, it only made it more alluring… hypnotic, almost. Impossible to look away from.

Rain knew that Beastmaster had earned that scar somewhere in Antarctica. Awakened did not usually have scars, since their bodies could recover better than those of mundane people, and there were plenty of people with healing Aspects around. The fact that a princess of Song could not erase such a long scar suggested that the wound that had left it was not ordinary.

Nevertheless, Beastmaster wore it like a badge of honor.

Rain barely managed to look away and concentrated on a few other people in the command pavilion.

'Let's see. Silent Stalker, Princess Moonveil, Lonesome Howl … and that must be Revel, the Dark Dancer.'

Those were four of the remaining five Transcendent princesses. The last one was missing, or at least Rain failed to recognize her.

Silent Stalker was strangely unassuming. In fact, it was hard to notice her at all — the woman was standing near the wall of the pavilion, leaning on a support beam and half-hidden in the shadows. There was a silent aura about her, but her gleaming eyes were focused and attentive. She was wearing a black hunting attire.

Moonveil was delicate and beautiful, with a slender build and a soft, pale face. Her hair was white, and her eyes seemed to glimmer with the afterglow of pale moonlight. She wore a modest dress instead of an armor, but Rain could recognize a fellow archer when she saw one.

Lonesome Howl was tall, lithe, and full of barely contained bestial energy. Her handsome face was illuminated by a slight grin, and her eyes were full of cocky confidence. She wore leather trousers and a sleeveless vest, leaving her toned, tan arms exposed.

Lastly… there was Revel, the Dark Dancer, also known as the Lightslayer. She was the first of the Queen's daughters to have Transcended, and therefore somewhat of a senior to the rest.

Her hair was raven-black, and her eyes were like two obsidian gems. With her dark clothes, alabaster skin, and exquisite beauty, she was undeniably striking. As for her character, Rain couldn't tell what the princess was like. All she could see was that there was depth to her gaze, and a subtle coldness to her features.

If Rain had to say anything, though… it was that Lightslayer looked a little forlorn. As if she was missing something that she would never have.

'What a strange thought.'

Just as Rain thought that, Princess Revel suddenly spoke, her slightly husky voice easily resonating across the pavilion.

"Let us begin."