1927 Blind Seer

Sunny had an excellent memory, but Cassie was on an entirely different level. Her memory was simply... absolute. It was incredibly vivid, detailed, and all-encompassing, as if it was impossible for her to forget something even if she wished to.

He knew that it had not always been like this. Cassie's ability to remember everything with perfect clarity had slowly developed as she climbed the Path of Ascension, most likely reaching its current state as a result of Transcendence.

It was bitterly ironic, therefore, that her memory felt fragmented and shrouded in fog.

Being drawn into Cassie's recollection did not mean that Sunny could read her mind — the only thoughts he could sense and hear were those that she remembered thinking, after all. However, he could still feel how burdened she was by the shattered nature of her past.

Great swathes of her life were missing, and that fractured emptiness seeped into the very foundation of her self, making the whole world feel like treacherous quicksand.

Nevertheless, Cassie was undeterred, confidently walking forward despite being unable to look back.

Sunny, though, was far less poised. As soon as the unfamiliar recollection blossomed in his mind, a strong sense of vertigo overcame him, and he swayed. If he wasn't sitting on a chair, he would have probably lost balance entirely. Cassie's world... was far too overwhelming.

He suspected that she must have been dazed when reliving his own memories — after all, the way Sunny perceived the world was unique and extraordinary. Not only was his mind split between several incarnations, but he also possessed a sense that humans did not, navigating the world full of shadows.

So, Sunny was not a stranger to complex points of view.

But the way Cassie perceived the world was simply overwhelming in its staggering complexity.

To start with, all her senses were incredibly sharp — many times sharper than that of over Saints, which were already far, far superior to that of mundane humans.

...All senses except for her sight, of course. Cassie's world was a world of darkness, and being blind was a mild shock to Sunny in and of itself. He had experienced being blinded before, but never as a permanent and inseparable part of his existence.

And then, there was more...

Cassie's own point of view was already disorienting enough, but it was not the only one she was living. As she was walking down a stone corridor, she was also perceiving the world through several other people.

There was Nephis, leaving the expedition force of the Sword Army behind to descend into the Hollows. The sweltering heat of Godgrave was pouring from the radiant sky, and drops of sweat were rolling down her lean, powerful body. Then, a wave of harrowing agony washed over her, burning her alive, and two beautiful white wings spread open behind her.

There was Sunny himself and his world of shadows, as well — the impression of his original incarnation was sharp and clear, the other two less so.

There was Jet, standing on a crumbled wall and looking up at the shattered moon, mesmerized by its broken beauty. There were Effie and Kai... and many others, as well.

There was a man in the depths of the government headquarters, watching in numb terror at the wall full of monitors. There was an Ascended woman fighting for her life in the depths of the scarlet jungle, supported from both sides by her fellow Song soldiers. There was an old man standing over an incandescent crucible, pouring a torrent of essence into the molten steel...

The overwhelming avalanche of sensations flooded Sunny's mind, making all the other perspectives a blur. If not for his experience of casting shadow sense across vast areas, he would have suffered a seizure there and then. As it was, he was only dazed, struggling to find his way in this kaleidoscope of varied lives. But that was not all, either — the worst was yet to come.

That was because Cassie's own point of View was split between two points in time, as if she was experiencing the present and the near future simultaneously.

And that included the feedback she would receive from her marks in her future, doubling the terrifying flood of knowledge pouring into her mind.

That weight of it was so heavy as to almost be unbearable.

Her ability to sustain it was monstrous.

It took Sunny some time to learn how to not drown in the blind seer's view of the world. Even then, he was barely staying afloat, feeling like a drunk — he limited What he paid attention to and concentrated only on Cassie's own perspective while pushing everything else into the dark corner of his mind. Cassie was walking down a long stone corridor.

She was blind, and although someone's measured steps were resounding beside her — weighty and metallic, far apart, betraying the person as a tall man wearing armor — his point of view was not among those she shared. Therefore, Cassie was navigating the corridor with the help of her Awakened Ability, which was a disorienting and bizarre experience.

Feeling a shift in the draft blowing through the corridor and knowing that a turn was drawing near, she habitually lowered a hand on the hilt of the Quiet Dancer. Suddenly, Sunny was enlightened why Cassie often wore her Echo in a scabbard on her waist, where the habit of resting her hand on its hilt had come from, and why she was still using the temperamental rapier despite how relatively weak it was in comparison to the enemies they usually faced these days.

'...I see. Of course!'

Awakened shared a sort of connection with their Echoes, allowing them to give the sorcerous constructs mental commands. Quiet Dancer, however, turned out to be a bit of a unique Echo — of course it was, considering its unusual nature. When Cassie held its hilt, their connection deepened, and she was able to vaguely sense what the flying rapier was sensing.

Of course, Quiet Dancer did not perceive the world as a being of flesh and blood would. It had no sight, no hearing, no sense of smell, and no concept of what these notions were. However, it did perceive something — which made sense, really. After all, the Echo did navigate its surroundings with fine precision when flying at great speed and fighting enemies.

Sunny was not sure how, but it had a way of sensing shapes and, especially, motion. So, when Cassie held the Quiet Dancer, she could very vaguely discern shapes and movement, too.

As the man walking by her side turned the corner, she seamlessly followed, managing not to bump into anything and maintain her graceful bearing.

It was when the man said something that Sunny was pulled away from his fascination.

"...therefore, Lady Cassia, you must succeed."

Sunny froze at the sound of the cold, commanding voice. A voice that tolerated no disobedience.

He knew that voice.

And he knew by whose side Cassie was walking, as well.

She lowered her head in a bow and answered respectfully:

"I understand, Your Highness. It will be done."

It was Anvil, the King of Swords.

Pushing a heavy door open, Anvil walked into a cold, damp room and waited for Cassie to follow.

Inside the room...

There was the smell of blood, and the sound of rattling chains as someone moved.

She could feel the prisoner's stare, but there were no words.

Only silence.

Cassie marked one of the guards stationed inside the cell and was finally able to see her surroundings.

in front of her... an old man who had once been dignified was chained to the wall, his clothes soaked with blood. His gaze was calm and heavy.

It took her a moment to recognize him as an elder from one of the Legacy Clans who had pledged their loyalty to Valor.

Nevertheless, the old man had turned out to be a spy of the Song Domain.