2030 : Runs in the Family

So, not an Aspect.

Sunny was not really disappointed — in fact, he had not expected Rain to unseal her Aspect so soon — but he was a little concerned.

If not that, then what?

One disturbing possibility came to mind… that Rain had been infected with a seed of Corruption in the middle of that damned battle. After all, from what he could tell, most of the people who became carriers of the Spell had some reason for why their souls were fertile soil for the Nightmare to take root.

And what better reason could there be than the appalling terror of the Godheart Battle?

Still, he had already studied Rain's soul, searching for any sign of encroaching Corruption. It was pure and pristine, just as it had been before… in fact, if anything, it seemed more whole than it had ever been before.

Sunny looked at Cassie somberly.

She took a step back, faced Rain, and smiled faintly.

"First, allow me to congratulate you, Rain... it seems that you have a True Name."

Sunny froze for a moment.

Was that it? She received a True Name?

Did that mean...

However, at that moment, Cassie shook her head subtly again, as if having read his thoughts.

"In fact, you have had it for some time, already. If I were to wager a guess, I'd say that you earned it during your Awakening… a name is a tool of distinction, after all, and there is hardly a more distinguished feat than becoming an Awakened by yourself in an age when everyone else carries the Nightmare Spell."

Rain blinked a couple of times, then threw a sideways glance at Sunny.

"...You told her?"

He coughed.

Right. Cassie was not entirely a stranger, but she was also not someone Rain knew well. It would feel strange to learn that many of her secrets had been shared with a distant acquaintance.

However, it was really not his fault.

"It's not that I told her… it's just that Cassie has a way of knowing things. It's better to just make peace with it."

Rain stared at him for a few moments, then turned back to the blind seer. Her chin rose a little, and she asked while trying to suppress her excitement:

"Oh… okay. Well, anyway — so, what is it? My True Name?"

Cassie remained silent for a few moments, which caused Rain's expression to grow worried.

"Wait! It's not… something stupid like Not So Funny Anymore, is it?"

The blind seer chuckled, then shook her head.

"I am sure that it's not. It's just that… much of your being is a puzzle to me. Usually, I see things much clearer — but today, I need to interpret the insights myself. Therefore, although I gained an understanding of your True Name, it is going to take me some time to decipher it."

She hesitated, and then glanced at Sunny.

"I'll need your help, as well. And Nephis too."

He scratched the back of his head.

That… actually made sense. If the Spell was not translating the insight Cassie gained into a convenient collection of runes, then interpreting a True Name was no easy task. In fact, it was an entirely new kind of challenge.

However, he was sure that they could solve it in a few days. Cassie possessed the knowledge, Sunny was a master of dead languages, and Nephis was a talented Shaper — she had more experience dealing with True Names of things than both of them combined.

Rain sighed in disappointment.

"Oh…"

Sunny wanted to sigh, too.

If Rain had gained her True Name during or as a result of her Awakening, then he still had no idea what happened to her during the battle.

Feeling his tension, Cassie turned her head slightly and smiled.

"I also saw your Memories. It's quite an impressive collection, for a young Awakened. It's just that…"

She was talking to Rain, but facing Sunny.

"...The Green Canteen? Safety First? Really?"

Then, she pursed her lips.

"And what is up with those descriptions?!"

Sunny scowled, feeling as if he had been unjustly slighted.

"What? Those are great names! Short and to the point!"

Cassie let out a heavy sigh and shook her head again.

After remaining silent for a few moments, she spoke again:

"You also seem to possess three Attributes, Rain."

Three… that was more than Sunny had expected.

The blind seer continued:

"One is related to affinity to shadows, and is… somewhat external, I think. It should be the result of the Mark of Shadows. The second one, though, is quite a surprise."

Sunny raised his eyebrow, listening intently.

Cassie hesitated a little, as if choosing the right words.

"It has to do with… names, I think. And power. In short, I suspect that you possess a rare talent — an affinity to Shaping, the most ancient kind of sorcery."

Rain seemed stunned.

Sunny was quite surprised, too.

'So Rain's primary talent… doesn't even have anything to do with combat? She is meant to be a sorceress?'

Why had he been forcing her to hunt Nightmare Creatures all that time, then?!

No, no... a sorceress or not, she still needed to know how to defend herself. So, he had nothing to feel sorry about.

He remained motionless for a moment.

'Damn, does sorcery run in our family or something?'

One fact could not be denied anymore, though…

Sadly, it seemed that their mother's poetic talent had been passed on to Rain in its entirety, leaving nothing for Sunny.

That could explain his own lack of naming sense, at least!

Rain finally came to her senses, lowering her head to stare at the runic circle Cassie had created.

"Sorcery? Well… wow. That sounds fancy."

With that, she turned to Sunny and grinned.

"You said you were a sorcerer too. Can you teach me?"

Sunny smiled awkwardly and shook his head.

"Shaping is very different from the kind of sorcery I practice. They share some basics, but not enough to qualify me as a teacher. In truth… actually, I tried to learn the Sorcery of Names on many occasions. But it was all useless. I just don't have the talent for it — and unlike runic sorcery, one has to be born a Shaper."

He paused for a moment, then added:

"Don't worry, though. I already have a teacher in mind…"

Nephis knew more about Shaping than anyone he had ever met, with the exception of Ananke. So, there was no better person to teach Rain than her.

It would be quite a hassle to arrange the lessons, sadly…

But if Rain did learn at least the very basics of Shaping, it would be a great boon to her. It would also mask her lack of an Aspect perfectly.

Finally, he looked at Cassie.

"What about the third Attribute?"

She lingered for a while, then frowned slightly.

"That one, I'll have to ponder on it a bit longer. All I can say now is that it has to do with Rain's soul, as well as its connection to the world. Both are… quite special."

Sunny scowled.

His sister wasn't…

Cassie interrupted his thoughts once again:

"Don't worry. It is entirely different from the Attribute you used to possess."

He let out a sigh of relief.

The last thing Sunny wanted was to learn that Rain was Fated, just like he had been.

That damn Attribute had brought him so much pain and sorrow that he would not wish it on his worst enemy.

In fact, he would not wish it on any enemy. A Fated enemy would be a real nightmare to deal with!

Rain seemed both excited and curious. Eventually, though, she simply smiled.

"So… I have a True Name, a talent for sorcery, and am quite a special person on top of that. Oh, and I am also a real Legacy — a princess of the Shadow Clan, no less. Ha! Am I not a lucky girl?"

With that, she looked at the frayed and bloodied fabric of the Puppeteer's Shroud and grimaced.

"What the hell, why am I in such a sorry state then?"

Glancing at Sunny, she pursed her lips.

"Then again, princesses are not faring too well these days. I hear three of them were beaten half to death by some vicious scoundrel today."

Sunny coughed, ignored the jav, and looked at Cassie.

"Anything else?"

She slowly shook her head.

"Nothing that I can see."

He sighed.

That made it easier, then.

If the change that had happened to Rain was not connected to her Aspect or her True Name…

Then it only left one possibility.

Something that even Cassie could not see… at least not yet, as a Saint.

It seemed that Rain had attained her Flaw.