2037 : Spirit Sea

Rain rolled the words on her tongue.

Promise of a Distant Sky…

It was a beautiful True Name, if not as fierce and fearsome as most other True Names were.

The name felt unfamiliar, but strangely comforting. Like a piece of the puzzle that she had not known was missing from her soul, and now finally fell into its place, thus making her soul more… complete.

'What a strange feeling.'

Sunny studied her expression with a hint of curiosity.

"I'm guessing you are thinking about your True Name?"

Rain nodded.

"Yeah. I like it… I think. It's pretty."

It was also not at all what she had expected. Such a pretty name did not seem to fit her… her life had been anything but pretty, after all. In fact, it had mostly been crawling through mud, slaughtering Nightmare Creatures, and witnessing indescribable horrors here in Godgrave as of late.

Her brother chuckled.

"Indeed it is."

He grew quiet for a few moments, and then added in a more serious tone:

"Names have power, Rain. A quite literal power — you will learn about it while studying Shaping — but a more obscure power, as well. A True Name is an anchor of one's self, and knowing yourself is the first step of walking the Path of Ascension."

She smiled.

"What is the next step?"

Sunny seemed to be surprised by the question. He remained silent for a moment before answering.

"The next step… is imposing yourself upon the world. But you don't have to worry about that just yet."

He sighed.

"In any case, do not reveal your True Name to anyone — at least for now. Others share it freely, but you might have noticed that some do not… like Seishan, for example. Or the Sovereigns. That is because they understand more than the rest, and they understand that while making your name be known might be a powerful boon, it can also become a curse."

Rain considered his words for a few moments.

It made sense, in a way. She already knew that there was a Sorcery of Names, and that Names had power. Therefore, wouldn't a powerful Shaper be able to make someone powerless by using their True Name, or otherwise gain power over that person?

Rain did not know enough about Shaping to be sure of her conclusion, yet, but she had not been planning to share her True Name with anyone either. After all, her Awakening and her very existence were highly unusual — she did not need to attract any undue attention.

Sunny stared at her silently for a while, then added in a somber tone:

"Don't go around telling everyone what your Flaw is, either. I get it, you had to tell Tamar… but show some discernment and restraint, will you? You know how vulnerable you are because of that Flaw."

Rain grinned.

"I wasn't planning on telling anyone else, anyway. Well, for now… maybe Ray and Fleur, in the future…"

He waved a hand dismissively, an irritated expression on his face.

"Whatever. Do as you wish… go on, read the rest of the runes."

Rain was still trying out the sound of her True Name, but she was also curious to see what else the beautiful bracelet could show her.

So, she turned back to the runes.

Name: Rain.

True Name: Promise of a Distant Sky.

Rank: Awakened.

Soul Core: [564/1000], [237/5000].

Rain stared at that last string of runes in confusion.

She knew what the first counter meant — that was obviously the measure of her soul core saturation. She had been in Godgrave for several months now, having participated in many battles. Her contributions had not been modest, either, which meant that she was awarded with plenty of soul shards.

Rain had been keeping a mental score, of course, and the result was almost identical to what the runes were showing. Even without counting, she could feel how much stronger she had become since Awakening.

But what the hell was that second number?

Two hundred and thirty-seven… out of five thousand? What did it mean?

She looked at Sunny with a silent, but quite loud question in her eyes.

He chuckled.

"Ah… that. Your soul core is a bit special, you see."

He lingered for a few moments, then said in a contemplative tone:

"There are some Awakened with unique soul constitutions. For example, I know a woman whose soul core can grow continuously, unrestrained by the limitations that most Awakened share. I know people who can form multiple soul cores akin to Nightmare Creatures, as well. You, however, are different."

Her brother scratched the back of his head.

"It is hard to explain, considering that I don't understand it fully myself yet. Let us just say that your soul is deeply connected to the essence of the world. Thus, you have access to a… a form of spirit essence. That spirit essence does not saturate your soul core directly, and, therefore, it does not make your body stronger. But it is still under your control."

Rain's eyes widened as she came to a realization.

"Wait… is that why my Soul Sea looks like that?"

Her Soul Sea was not at all like the books described. Its surface was indeed like an endless sea, and there was indeed a beautiful sun — the representation of her soul core — hanging high above the water, with little lights representing her Memories orbiting around it.

Or at least that was how it had been before.

However, over time, something had changed, and the radiant sun became surrounded and partially obscured by aimlessly drifting clouds. There were just a few of them, for now, but she had noticed that their number was growing.

Her Soul Sea already looked a bit grey and stormy, with cool winds disturbing the surface of the clear water.

Sunny nodded.

"Indeed. Those clouds are the representation of the spirit essence you've been able to accumulate. I am not sure how you can absorb more, exactly — that, you will have to discover by yourself. Searching for a way to deepen your connection to the world should be the correct direction, I think."

He smiled meaningfully.

"Needless to say, it would be very beneficial for you to accumulate as much spirit essence as possible…"