

After Prison 1711

[Chapter 1711](#)

Severin was momentarily taken aback by her question. He then replied earnestly, "Of course. I mean every

word. How can I possibly lie to you about that sort of stuff? Why do you ask? Have you already made a decision?"

Severin had asked that question half-teasingly, but Gilda nodded and answered with the utmost seriousness, "Yes. I've decided to give you a chance and try to accept you as my boyfriend."

"Really?" Severin's face lit up with joy, and he was beside himself with excitement. Gilda was a good woman, and he had been hoping to gain Gilda's acceptance. Diane and the others had already given their

consent, so he would naturally want to take responsibility for her.

Gilda smiled when she saw Severin's ecstatic expression. She rolled her eyes at him and used his words on him. "Duh! How can I possibly lie to you about that sort of stuff?"

"I'm super happy to hear that!" Severin was elated and went forward to reach for Gilda's hand.

Gilda frowned and asked, "Are you sure that you can accept me even though I'm no longer a virgin?"

Severin smiled bitterly and responded, "How many more times do I need to reassure you again? Haven't I

already told you that it doesn't bother me? I'm genuinely happy, Gilda. Is it okay if I hug you?"

"No!" Gilda lowered her head and felt her cheeks turn red. Her heart was filled with a gush of sweetness.

Severin could tell from her shy demeanor that she wanted the hug despite her apparent protest. He embraced her tightly, and her faint fragrance was so delightful that it began to make his heart race.

Gilda's heartbeat quickened, and she was as red as a tomato after Severin hugged her. Even though she had known Frederick for many years, they hung out far more frequently as kids than as adults. By the time

she grew up and understood the intricacies of romance, she rarely had a chance to meet Frederick. She would be lucky if she could meet him once a year, and the most they did together was spend time having a stroll around the sect.

Her feelings toward Frederick were more of a respect for his talents. He was nonetheless very attractive, and marrying him seemed to be the natural course of events because of their marriage agreement. In her mind, she was always destined to marry him and become the envy of many other women.

However, Frederick had never hugged her as Severin did, so she was surprised to feel her heartbeat quicken so much when Severin held her. Severin felt like the epitome of masculinity, fueling her unintentional wild thoughts even further.

“Why am I having these thoughts?” she wondered. She never had such lewd thoughts before, and she from girlhood into womanhood. Memories of that particular fateful night began to flood in—she may have been immobile, but she was fully conscious of her physical sensations.

Unbeknownst to them, four men had descended from the nearby mountains.

“Tsk, ts! Look at you two lovebird’s hugging each other so tightly! This is hardly the appropriate place for such affection, don’t you think?” one of the men remarked as they all blocked Severin and Gilda’s path.

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Severin swiftly released his grip on Gilda and halted the flying sword. He then turned around with a stern expression and faced the men. He rebuked, “It is hardly appropriate for you to interrupt a couple’s private moment together, don’t you think?”

Severin had been hoping to savor the moment a bit longer, so the abrupt interruption left him rather displeased. The man from earlier, however, grinned evilly and remarked casually, “We couldn’t help it! The sight of your impressive flying sword just fills us with envy.

“Yeah! Although, it’s not just the flying sword that we’re interested in. I can’t resist the allure of such a beautiful woman too.” A big-sized man with a round belly remarked as he eyed Gilda lecherously. Her alluring figure was captivating, and he could not help but gulp at her beauty. Her skin was incredibly fair, and her visage carried an ethereal quality reminiscent of a fairy straight out of a painting.

Their leader remarked with a sly grin, “Thank you for pointing out the obvious! She’s the most beautiful woman I’ve ever laid eyes on, and you’re not the only one who can’t seem to resist her.”

Severin smirked and retorted, “Your sky-high arrogance is a jarring mismatch against your pitiable attainment. You folks are trying to get yourself in trouble for blocking our path.”

He had discerned that three of the four men were warrior emperors, while the tallest one was a level one saint. Although they were considered to be highly skilled among casual practitioners, they were clearly outmatched against Severin and Gilda.

“Is that so? You’re pretty bold. I don’t think you’re even aware of how powerful we are.” The group’s leader clenched his fist and released the spiritual energy of a level one saint. “Feeling scared now?”

Severin grinned and prepared to make a move, but Gilda stopped him and said, “Let me handle this. I’ve been training for years without ever testing my strength. I’ve almost forgotten how it feels to fight someone.”

Severin agreed. “Go ahead. They’re just a bunch of pesky little flies that you can swat away.”

The thinnest among the four was starting to show some concern when he heard that. “Are they strong? Did we stumble upon a formidable practitioner from some sect?”

After all, the couple remained unfazed even though their leader had already displayed his skill. It was something thoroughly inconceivable to him.

Their leader felt a tinge of fear too, but he thought for a moment and sniggered. “What are you afraid of? They’re probably just bluffing! My attainment is that of a saint! I’m not going to be intimidated by just about anybody!”

Gilda could not be bothered to entertain their nonsense and dashed forward all of a sudden. Within seconds, she materialized before the leader and delivered a resounding slap to his face.

“You’re asking for it!” The man clenched his fist and attempted to strike Gilda, but his attack proved futile.

Gilda slapped him, propelling him several hundred meters behind until he collided with a nearby stone wall.

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The resounding impact echoed through the air as the man’s entire body became embedded in the stone wall. Blood trickled from the corner of his mouth and his face was drained of all color. His muscles and veins had torn, and there were no longer any lingering doubts about his death. Meanwhile, the fearful expression that he had just before his death persisted on his face.

The unexpected outcome of a level one saint being killed with such ease left the remaining three men paralyzed with dread. One of them stammered, “W–w–what level of attainment d–do you h–h–h–have?”

Gilda unleashed her spiritual energy without warning, causing an overwhelming sensation of oppression. that forced the trio to their knees. They were unable to entertain any thoughts of escape, and their foreheads were soon drenched in cold sweat.

“What attainment, you ask? A royal saint!” Gilda’s voice was ice–cold.

“We pissed a royal saint off?” one of the men asked.

“She’s... she’s a royal saint!” another mumbled,

The third then begged desperately for mercy. ‘Please spare us! We made a mistake! We won’t do it again!’

Gilda let out an icy chuckle when she heard them begging. “Spare you? Would you have spared us if we were weaker than you?”

With a casual wave of her hand, she sent forth a couple of spiritual energy blades. The blades darted forward and slit the throats of all three men, ending their lives with little effort. Severin then flew over to

the level one saint and removed his spatial ring. He then returned to collect the other three men's spatial

rings.

As he opened the rings to inspect them, he discovered that they contained little items of value. Most of it

was mediocre combat techniques, and there was only a paltry number of third- and fourth-grade spiritual

herbs.

Severin shook his head and muttered, "Man, these guys are poor."

Gilda smiled lightly and explained, "They're not that poor. You're just so strong that normal stuff doesn't interest you anymore. Besides, they're unaffiliated practitioners, so you can't expect them to have much on them."

After a pause, she continued, "It's a shame that their strength levels are too low. They might have been able to put up a decent fight if they were a little stronger. I wasn't even able to have enough fun yet after

being out of practice for so long."

Severin was speechless. Gilda claimed to be out of practice despite displaying remarkable decisiveness during the confrontation. He could only imagine how much easier she would have been if she were enjoying the battle.

Gilda hopped up to Severin's flying sword and gazed at him with a smile, "By the way, does it scare you that my strength is significantly higher than yours? As an example, are you worried that I might kill you if I

get angry in the future?"

Severin took Gilda's hand and responded with a gentle smile, "Why should I be afraid of you when I'm in love with you? And besides, what else could make you angry with me if you're fine with me having three wives?"

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Gilda felt a sudden burst of sweetness in her heart. She rolled her eyes playfully at Severin and said, "With

all the sweet talk that's coming out of your mouth, I doubt I'll ever have a reason to be angry with you."

Severin did a little stretch and continued to guide the flying sword forward. He later said, "My attainment

level might be lower than yours right now, but I'm pretty sure I'll catch up to you soon. You probably might

not even be strong enough to overpower me soon."

"My, my, you're quite confident!" Gilda countered. "You're saying that as if I'm just going to sit around doing nothing so you can catch up. Right now, you're only a level eight saint, while I'm already a level four

royal saint. It might be a tall order to catch up with me."

Severin chuckled. "Haha, my talent is pretty good, so don't be surprised when I eventually catch up."

Their journey proceeded smoothly, and they no longer encountered anyone foolish enough to challenge them for the flying sword. When nightfall came, the couple spent an evening at a small town and resumed

their journey the next morning.

It had been a long time since Gilda had ventured outside the sect, and the beautiful scenery they encountered along the way brought her much joy. Severin's decision to indulge her with some shopping in a city during the evening made her feel young at heart again. Gilda enjoyed herself very much over the course of several days, and their relationship blossomed as a result.

As time flowed on, a bustling city soon appeared within sight.

"We've arrived, Gilda. South Link City is just up ahead," Severin announced. "Let's get off from the flying sword and enter through the city gates on foot. We wouldn't want to draw any undue attention to us."

Gilda frowned in confusion. "What do you mean? Are we going to draw a lot of attention if you fly in?"

Severin explained, "The organization that I've established at the behest of my master is known as Dracodeus Temple, and it contains plenty of members. Though I've already passed down authority to a new leadership and am now technically not associated with them, there are simply too many disciples within the organization. If news were to spread that I've returned, they'd all come to pay me a visit at the county governor's mansion, I'd rather not have that kind of hassle."

Gilda giggled and covered her mouth. "I see. You're just worried that a throng of people will visit you. I don't really like that either, so I can relate."

After a brief pause, she added, "But my father asked you to show me around the city when you have the time. How will you do that if you're so hesitant to show your face around here?"

Severin sighed. "South Link City is a lovely place, but there aren't many good places to go sightseeing here. My plan is to rest for two or three days after we arrive at my home, and we can later venture to other nearby cities that have better scenery. There won't be a lot of people from other cities who know

about me, so you'll be able to enjoy more scenic sights without having to worry about being swarmed by a crowd."

Gilda agreed. "Okay. You're my guide, so I'll go along with your plan."

Severin steered the flying sword to descend near the city entrance and put it away before making their way to South County Mansion on foot.

The guards posted at the door were incredibly excited when they saw Severin's return. "The governor has

returned!" They immediately dashed in to announce the news.

"Did I hear that correctly? Severin is back?" Maurice, Judith, and the rest of them got a little emotional after hearing the commotion. They all started to wonder if they misheard it.

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Catherine and the Shanahans were elated to hear of Severin's return. They had feared that he might not return from his journey to the secluded sect since the path of attainment often necessitated letting go of

many human connections.

Zachariah was thrilled to hear the news and rushed outside too. He had expected to see Sheila, but the only woman standing beside Severin was someone he did not know.

"Who might this be, Severin?" Judith asked as she approached Gilda curiously.

Maurice looked at Severin with a knowing smile, unsurprised that his son's outstanding qualities would attract yet another beautiful woman.

Severin smiled and introduced them to everyone. "This is Gilda, daughter of the Skyblue Sect's leader."

Then, as if to pause for emphasis, he finally said, "She's also my girlfriend."

"Why'd you have to be so blunt about it?" Gilda was taken aback by how candid Severin was in announcing that they were dating. She felt a little embarrassed and shot him a glare as a result.

Severin then added, "You probably still haven't gotten used to it being my girlfriend yet."

Everyone was amused by Severin's comment and burst into laughter.

Megan then asked, "Did you return with your new girlfriend so she could meet your parents? Why didn't.

you bring Diane and the others with you?"

"Diane and Sheila are busy training." Severin explained. "We're preparing to enter a secret realm soon, and

they're so occupied with improving their strength that they couldn't spare the time to accompany us."

Zachariah inquired excitedly. "How is Sheila's level of attainment now? I'm sure she made considerable progress, right?"

"Sheila is now a level seven warrior emperor, and further breakthroughs are on the horizon," Severin said.

Zachariah beamed with pride. "She's already a level seven warrior emperor? That's splendid! She's become a strong woman now!"

William and Felicia were equally eager to hear about Diane's progress. "And what about Diane? How strong is she now?"

Severin replied, "Diane's attainment is slightly higher than Sheila's. She's already a level eight warrior emperor. I'm pretty sure that she might even make a breakthrough and become a saint in another twenty

days. That will ensure her safety when we enter the secret realm."

+15 BONUS

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[Chapter 1716](#)

Megan was staring suspiciously at Severin when the latter smiled and produced a tiny bottle with a wave of his palm. He handed it to her and said, "I returned to give you this. Do you remember my promise to give you a treasure that could change your attainment if I managed to find something like that? Well, here it is. There are two drops of liquid inside this little bottle. Fill a bathtub with water and put one

drop in. Then soak yourself in the bath. Do this twice, and your attainment talent should be sufficiently boosted to help you make a swift breakthrough to profound master.”

“Thank you so much! I thought you’d forgotten all about it! I’m glad you came back and gave
gave this to n

to me!” Megan exclaimed in joy. The treasure meant the world to her because it was the key to whether or not she would be able to become a practitioner.

Severin then reassured her, saying, ‘Benjamin is an alchemist, so you’ll be able to train very efficiently in the future with the pills he makes. We’re not sure if we’ll have another chance to return, so please must take good care of everyone for me.”

Megan nodded fervently. “I will.”

Severin then said, “I’m going to make a reservation at a restaurant tonight. We’ll celebrate your newfound path to attainment while letting Gilda experience a sumptuous feast.”

“Okay!” Megan agreed with enthusiasm after some thought.

Severin then proceeded to introduce Gilda to the Shanahans and his parents. After spending a few days in South County Mansion, Severin distributed some pills to the bodyguards so they could improve their attainment. Finally, he left with Gilda.

The couple visited nearby cities for a few days before heading back to the sect. Along the way back, Severin asked, “How do you think Sheila, Sofia, and Diane would feel if they knew you were my girlfriend?”

Gilda was startled by the sudden question. “Are you planning to tell them already? Maybe we should take

things slowly. I’m not ready for that yet.”

Severin chuckled and understood Gilda’s hesitance, “Okay, I won’t tell them just yet. I’ll let you break the

news to them once you’re more comfortable with it.”

Gilda smiled gratefully and said, “Thanks for your understanding.”

Severin felt his heart flutter as he looked at Gilda. He eventually asked, “Can I kiss you?”

Gilda blushed in an instant and said awkwardly, “I’m not mentally prepared for a kiss yet. And besides, it’s

going to be embarrassing if someone sees us making out on the flying sword.”

Severin approached her with a grin and pulled her into his embrace. “Don’t worry. I’ve used my mental power to scan within a hundred-mile radius of this place, and you can rest assured that it’s only the two of

us in that area. We can share a little kiss a private.”

“B–b–but I’m not r–r–ready yet!” Gilda was red, and her heart was beating madly. Although they had grown much closer in the past few days and she had already begun to accept him completely, kissing was something very foreign to her. She and Frederick never went that far in their relationship despite being together for a long time, while things were progressing a little too rapidly with Severin even though he had only been with her for a few days.

In that split second that Gilda spaced out, Severin lowered his head and planted a kiss on her red lips.

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Gilda’s eyes widened in bewilderment as she was pulled into Severin’s embrace. She had not expected Severin to be so bold as to kiss her so forcefully, but it did not take long for her to close her eyes and enjoy the feeling of being kissed by someone.

Several minutes passed, and Gilda gently pushed Severin away and stared at him with flushed cheeks. Don’t you think you’re being too ravenous, Severin? How long more are you going to continue kissing me? We’ve flown nearly a hundred kilometers now! What if someone spots us?”

The coquettish expression on her face left Severin feeling a warm flutter in his heart. He could tell from Gilda’s bashfulness that she had fallen in love with him.

Severin smiled sheepishly and scratched his head. “Your lips are so kissable that it was a little too addicting for me.”

“As if I’m going to believe you!” Gilda rolled her eyes at Severin before sitting awkwardly to one side of the flying sword.

Two more days passed, and the couple finally returned to the sect.

Severin used the flying sword to send Gilda back to her house, where Wuhlricht was enjoying some tea in the yard. As soon as he saw them return, he came over and remarked nonchalantly, “You were out for,

what, ten days? I didn’t think you’d return so early. I thought that you’d be out a little longer.”

Gilda hopped off the flying sword and said, “Why would we need that long? We’ve already enjoyed ourselves a lot during the past few days.”

Severin then put away the flying sword and chuckled. “That’s right. Gilda had a wonderful time during our journey.”

Wuhlricht laughed. “Hehe, I can tell. She’s been smiling ever since she got off your flying sword. Why else

would she be smiling if she didn’t have fun?”

He then noticed the new dress Gilda was wearing and asked, “I’ve never seen you in that dress before. Is

it new?"

"Yes," Gilda replied with a smile. "Severin took me to some cities and bought me a couple of dresses and shoes. He insisted on them even though I told him not to buy too many."

Wuhlricht laughed. "That means he cares about you a lot."

Severin then informed Wuhlricht, "I'll be heading back now."

Severin approached her with a grin and pulled her into his embrace. "Don't worry. I've used my mental power to scan within a hundred-mile radius of this place, and you can rest assured that it's only the two of

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Wuhlricht then reached for the teacup and continued to sip his tea.

"Oh, we're together now. I enjoyed my time with him these past few days, and I'm starting to like him even

more now," Gilda said as she sat on the swing and recalled her time with Severin. A sweet smile graced her lips as she reminisced about the moments that they shared,

Wuhlricht was so surprised by her revelation that he spurted out his tea. He asked in bewilderment,"

You're already together? I'm clearly behind the times here."

Gilda chuckled at her father's jaw-dropped reaction. "Haha!"

Meanwhile, Diane and the others had recently concluded their training and were in the process of stabilizing their levels of attainment. When Severin returned, they all gathered around him with Selene.

"You're finally back!" Diane said.

Sheila then asked, "So, did anything happen when you and Gilda went out alone?"

Severin replied as calmly as he could, "No, nothing happened. We just went to South Link City and

returned to the sect after delivering the item to Megan.”

Sheila sighed and rebuked him for his stubbornness. “You’re kidding, right? I can’t believe you’re such a numbskull! This is a perfect opportunity to spend some alone time with her. Couldn’t you have taken the initiative to take your relationship to the next step?”

Sofia chimed in, “Yeah! Why didn’t you take things more seriously when you had the chance to do so? You

let such a good opportunity go to waste!”

Diane then added with a bitter smile, “Sigh. The only thing he thinks about is refining pills! I’m beginning to

think he’s losing his mind from all that alchemy he’s doing.”

Severin could not hold back after hearing their remarks and erupted in laughter. “Gilda has agreed to be my girlfriend, but she asked me not to tell any of you yet because she’s still feeling shy. Keep it a secret for now, okay.”

Diane rolled her eyes. “Pift. You didn’t think you could trick us, could you?”

“He’s secretly happy but wants to play dumb with us,” Shella quipped.

“It’s positive development though!” Sofia said. “Gilda has moved on from the past and is ready to start a new relationship. This is a good sign, but we need to play along since she’s still shy around us.

Severin proposed, “By the way, Gilda’s dad says that he wants to try some of my barbecued meat. It’s past

noon already, so let’s make our way to town to get some fresh food. We’ll have some barbecue for dinner

with him and Gilda. It’s time I show him my cooking skills.”

Selene’s eyes lit up when she heard that. “Are we having barbecue again tonight? Hooray for barbecue!” Everyone was amused to see how excited she was for dinner.

[Chapter 1719](#)

Needless to say, Severin’s wives were just as delighted as Selene after learning that they were going to have a barbecue for dinner. Before long, they left for the town at the foot of the mountain and bought many of the ingredients.

When evening came, Wuhlricht arrived at Severin’s residence with Gilda.

“My, oh my! It smells heavenly! Gilda and I caught a whiff of the delicious aroma right from the entrance! My stomach is starting to grumble,” Wuhlricht remarked as he entered the yard.

“My dad brought a few jars of fine wine for everyone. He wants to enjoy himself tonight,” Gilda added with

a smile.

“Oh! Then I’d be happy to taste some of the wine that our sect leader brought. I bet it’s going to taste fantastic, Sheila commented, licking her lips.

“I’m already looking forward to it,” Diane said.

The evening started on a good note. After tasting a piece of Severin’s barbecued meat, Wuhlricht completely disregarded his image as a sect leader and ate gluttonously. At the same time, he praised Severin continuously for the delicious barbecue. Gilda was glad to see her father enjoying himself.

As the night went on, everyone was satiated from the delicious wine and the hearty servings of barbecued meat.

The following morning, Severin began refining a fourth-grade high-rank pill. Having perfected his technique for fourth-grade medium-rank pills, he felt ready to attempt the high-rank version. The sect would benefit immensely if he succeeded in refining the fourth-grade high-rank pills. It had the potential

to elevate the Skyblue Sect’s standing.

Though Severin had previously contemplated refining fourth-grade high-rank pills, he later prioritized the

fourth-grade low-rank and medium-rank pills because they were needed more urgently by the sect. With

the shortage crisis resolved, he had ample time to focus on the high-rank pills.

As he observed the materials before him, he muttered to himself, “I’ve gone through the
s over and

over again in my mind. I probably won’t waste so much materials after mastering fourth-grade medium-rank pills.”

Severin then adjusted his mindset and began the crafting process. Elsewhere, Gilda woke up with a frown

and was incredibly worried.

“My period has never been this late before. It’s been more than ten days past my usual cycle, and it’s
us.”

+15 BONUS

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A sudden thought then occurred to her.

That stranger had taken her first time during her most fertile phase of the month. She could not defend herself because she was paralyzed, and it went without saying that she was also unable to utilize her spiritual energy to protect herself. The sun had risen by the time she regained consciousness, and the man was no longer to be seen.

"No, it can't be. This is impossible! No, no, no! This can't be happening!" Gilda exclaimed in dread. It had taken her so much effort to forget about that night's events, and she feared that she might be pregnant as a result of that horrendous encounter.

Though Gilda believed that Severin would understand and accept that she had her first time taken away by necessity, she could not be sure that Severin would still accept her if she was pregnant was the assailant's child.

[Chapter 1720](#)

Gilda began to think that Severin would be repulsed by her if he found out that she was carrying someone

else's child. He might still be averse to her even if she decided to abort the child.

Gilda was so overwhelmed with fear that her mind was starting to buzz.

"No... this can't happen! There has to be another reason why my period is late. I'm not pregnant, right? It has to be a coincidence!" Gilda shook her head repeatedly and paced anxiously in her room. She did not dare to dwell too much on that and was desperately hoping that she was overthinking.

She eventually sat down, closed her eyes, and used her mental power to check the situation in her womb.

Her face paled with fright as soon as she found out the truth. Her worst fear had come true—she had

gotten pregnant due to that fateful night.

“Why is the world doing this to me?” Gilda cried out in resentment. She did not even have the slightest idea as to who the child’s father was!

“I need to terminate the pregnancy.” Gilda decided with a heavy heart after some thought. “I’ve already lost my virginity for the sake of my life, and there are now rumors circulating and tarnishing my reputation. If anyone finds out that I got pregnant before marriage, I’d be disgracing my dad and the sect.”

As she thought of the potential threats that the child posed to the sect and the smearing that might follow upon the child’s birth, Gilda decided to act resolutely and channel her spiritual energy toward her abdomen. Unfortunately, her compassion got the better of her and she could not bring herself to do it even after several attempts.

She was well aware that the tiny little fetus was a human life that was created from her flesh and blood.

“Why can’t I go through with this?” Gilda clenched her fists in frustration. She could only feel helpless and tormented.

Over the following days, Gilda isolated herself to calm down under the pretext of training. Unfortunately,

her emotional state showed no improvement.

One fine morning, Wuhlricht was getting concerned over her isolation and approached her door. “Are you

up, Gilda? Severin and his group will be leaving for the Paradise Secret Realm soon. Don’t you want to see

them off?” he asked from outside her room.

Gilda smiled ruefully with a lonely look in her eyes. “No, I’m not going. Please pass on my regards to them.

I’m almost at a breakthrough.”

“I see. Okay then,” Wuhlricht responded with a frown. He understood that his daughter might be at a open area.

Severin frowned when he noticed Gilda’s absence. Sheila, too, was a little puzzled when Gilda did not come along with Wuhlricht.

It was understandable that they did not see each other in the days leading up to their departure because Severin had been busy crafting pills and Gilda was giving it her all in training. However, something did

not seem right when Gilda did not show up to see them off. After all, they were all about to journey to the Paradise Secret Realm, which was known for being an exceedingly perilous place.

“Why isn’t Gilda here to see us off?” Sheila asked as soon as Wuhlricht and the others arrived.

Wuhlricht smiled awkwardly and replied, “I asked her to come, but she says she could not leave seclusion just yet because she seems to be on the verge of a significant breakthrough. However, she did tell me to convey her best wishes to all of you.”

Sheila remarked, “Oh, so she’s about to become a level five royal saint then! Wow, I wish I was in her shoes!”

Severin was very considerate of Gilda’s situation. “It’s understandable that she needs to remain focused since she’s already on the brink of a breakthrough.”