

Chapter 322: The Awakening Ceremony (I)

The Onmyou Protection Hall was the place that housed all the Onmyou Mages and Samurai of the Yamato Dynasty; its position was similar to magic knights in the West, and its leader—the Onmyou Shogun—was the same position as the Wizard King: the leader of the military in the kingdom.

Inside one of the halls, a middle-aged man sat cross-legged in a chair, wearing a kimono and an official hat. This man was the current Shogun of the Yamato Dynasty: Seimei Arata.

While dealing with a bunch of documents, he suddenly stopped briefly.

“Come in,” he said in a deep and authoritative voice. Then, a man entered the room before kneeling and bowing his head. Without moving from this position, the man said: “Shogun-sama, this humble slave has brought news.”

“What is it?”

“The priestess said she had urgent news.”

Arata stopped working for a moment before looking at the man kneeling on the floor.

“Couldn’t she come herself?”

The servant did not say anything nor dare to move. Arata kept looking at the man, and his silence created an overwhelming pressure. Despite trembling with horror, the servant just remained in this position.

“Fine, I’ll go see her.” He placed the pile of documents away before heading to the top of the building, where a small shrine was located. The shrine was designed in a way that allows for star gazing.

In the middle of the shrine was a beautiful maiden with long black hair, dressed in Shinto Priest clothes. She gazed at the stars until she heard the sound of his footsteps; however, she did not look at him when he arrived.

“Why did you call me?”

The Shinto Priestess, known in the dynasty as the Divine Maiden, finally looked at Arata. Her pure black eyes, which seemed to contain the stars, made his heart skip a beat, and he almost took a small step back.

“The stars have recently changed,” said the Divine Maiden, with a calm and ethereal voice.

“What does that mean? Can you be more specific?”

“The star of change shined in the Heaven: a great change is about to occur in the dynasty.”

Arata frowned after hearing this. The last time she made a similar prediction was slightly over 15 years ago. Back then, the Yamato clan had just reunited the continent, making their family reach an unimaginable peak.

Unfortunately, or fortunately for many people, the Emperor—who was one, if not the greatest Onmyou Mage on this continent—suddenly passed away, drastically weakening the Yamato clan and threatening to destroy this short-lived dynasty.

Luckily, some members of the Yamato clan were wise and rapidly relinquished some of their powers.

During the War of Unification, the Yamato clan granted noble status and power to all the royal families who surrendered peacefully without much resistance. But after the Emperor’s sudden death, they returned their status to royalty before changing the law.

The position of Onmyou Shogun—which the Yamato Clan previously held—could now be acquired through competition amongst the royal family, thus relinquishing most of their military power.

This decision stabilized the dynasty and preserved some of the Yamato clan's power while forcing the royal families to fight amongst each other: it was a clever tactic.

During that era of great change, Seimei Arata allied himself with the Divine Maiden, and with her help, he became the Onmyou Shogun.

"Why are you telling me this?" asked Arata.

"Because you're still useful, and you have not completely broken your words," said the Divine Maiden nonchalantly, an act which made Arata secretly clench his hand.

He took a moment to calm down, "Do you know when and where this change will occur?"

"Unfortunately, no," replied the Divine Maiden as she looked in the sky. "Something or someone seemed to be blocking my divination."

"In that case, I will pay attention to detect any new changes."

After saying that, Arata left without saying anymore; meanwhile, the Divine Maiden looked unbothered.

Back to Edward.

In the past few days, he has been gathering a lot of information, mainly on Ki and how to hide from them properly. When it comes to Onmyoudo or the magic of the eastern continent, most of the information is sealed tightly in the nobles' minds, blocking most mind-reading measures.

Then there is the seal that would destroy the information if he tried to get through forceful methods. Although he could technically circumvent these methods, it requires a lot of time, time he did not have.

Edward had to curse how strictly this country controlled knowledge regarding magic.

Of course, he was being slightly hypocritical since he did the same back home. Ultimately, he had to rely on his plan to become a student and infiltrate the Academy.

With his new knowledge of Ki, he used a form of True Magic to control his cells and semi-permanently changed his appearance to that of oriental descent. He did this to prevent someone or something from casting a Spell Dispersing Method or Anti-Magic on him to reveal his true identity.

Once that was done, he forged his identity as an orphan. Edward briefly pondered whether to take the identity of a noble despite the slight risk involved. However, thinking from a long-term perspective, it was best to be a commoner.

He planned to use his new identity—Kozuki Akimitsu—to change this eastern continent. He wanted to lead a rebellion and spread the ideas of social equality and other modern concepts amongst the commoners. That way, when these people are brought back to the Empire, they can integrate easier.

So, when the day of the National Awakening Ceremony arrived, Edward—now a short, skinny to the point of being malnourished Japanese teen of the age of 15—was in a wooden caravan pulled by horses.

There were many other children from the orphanages with him. And on the road, many other caravans could be seen. The National Awakening Ceromy was the same as the Grimoire Selection of the western continent.

All the children of age headed to the Onmyou Royal Academy, where they would undergo a ceremony that determined their fate. While all the children in the caravan had a worried look, Edward remained calm.

This was the persona he created for Kozuki Akimitsu: a calm, charismatic, and extremely intelligent child. He weaved countless memories for the orphanage's caretakers, the children, and the people in the small town he came from to better establish his identity.

So, when people eventually check his background, they wouldn't discover any anomalies.

After a few days of travel, the caravan finally arrived in the capital, only one day from the time of the ceremony. The orphanage found a cheap inn to stay in for the night before bringing the children to a large venue.

As soon as Edward arrived, he noticed many things. First, the large venue was divided into two sections: one side was composed of a bunch of children dressed in silk clothes with bodyguards to protect them.

Meanwhile, his side mainly was children dressed in tattered clothes, with many people having dirt on their clothes or face. He could see the envy and low-self esteem of the children on his side, but he did not say anything.

Soon, an older man with white hair and a long white beard showed up at the venue with a glowing blue crystal in his hand. He called a name, followed by that person's age and place of origin.

Then, his caretaker pushed one of the commoner kids forward, forcing him to walk in front of the older man.

"Place your hand on the crystal ball and close your eyes."

The commoner hesitated for a moment since his hands were dirty, but he still followed orders out of fear. The crystal orb shone with a light, then, a few seconds later, a katana with a tornado symbol at the base of its blade manifested in front of the kid.

"Samurai, ordinary blade, wind attribute," said the elderly man calmly, his voice echoing throughout the venue. The kid was shocked after hearing this before being excited. However, the older man told him to head to a specific line behind him before he could celebrate.

Then, another name was called, and another commoner kid also walked over with excitement on his face. Unfortunately for him, what manifested from the crystal was a rake—an agricultural tool.

The older man did not say anything besides telling the child to head for the exit. After that, many commoner children went through the ceremony. However, most of them will manifest things like chef knives, agricultural tools, musical instruments, and other items not related to fighting.

Only a few would awaken a katana that contained a design based on the five elements of wood, fire, earth, water, and gold.

Finally, one child awakening something else: it was a wolf a little over 3 meters tall. After seeing this, the older man said:

“Onmyou Mage, attack Shikigami, water attribute.”