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Chapter 347

As the twilight deepens, casting long shadows across the vibrant city of Verdant Rise, Argon breaks the contemplative silence that had settled over the group. "It's already night," he observes, noting the gradual dimming of light and the bustling nightlife beginning to emerge within the city. "Let's go to the inn first."

Mia, now more composed and visibly adjusting to her new identity and the rapid changes in her life, immediately offers her assistance, eager to prove her worth to her new master and ally. "My Lord, I know a good inn," she says, her voice carrying a mix of excitement and pride. Having lived in the vicinity, Mia's knowledge of Verdant Rise and its accommodations could prove invaluable to their comfort.

Seraphine and Argon exchange a brief look, an unspoken agreement passing between them. They trust Mia's judgment, recognizing her eagerness to contribute to the group's needs.

"Lead the way, then," Argon responds, his tone indicating his approval of Mia's suggestion. The decision to rely on Mia's local knowledge signifies a step towards integrating her into their dynamics, treating her as a valuable member of their team.

The city around them is alive with energy, the streets lined with vendors selling exotic foods, rare ingredients, and curious trinkets that catch the eye. The aroma of spices and the sound of laughter fills the air, creating an atmosphere of warmth and vibrancy that contrasts sharply with the quiet intensity of their recent experiences.

After navigating through a series of winding alleys and bustling squares, Mia stops in front of a quaint inn that exudes a welcoming glow. The sign above the door, illuminated by a softly glowing lantern, reads "A Good Rest," promising a haven of comfort and relaxation.

"This is it," Mia announces, her voice filled with a hint of pride. "The Celestial Rest is known for its hospitality and the quality of its rooms. It's a favorite among travelers and locals alike."

Argon and Seraphine follow Mia into the inn, their presence causing a subtle stir among the patrons. The innkeeper, a jovial man with a keen eye for discerning customers, greets them warmly, quickly ushering them to a secluded table where they can discuss their accommodations in private.

As Mia approaches the counter to place an order for food, her newfound confidence and succubus aura attracting curious glances from the inn's patrons, a group of three young men wearing the same uniform as Mia makes their way towards her. Their stride is confident, almost confrontational, and it's clear from their demeanor that they're seeking to provoke a reaction.

One of the men, with a sneer etched across his face, breaks the silence. "Ohh, isn't this the commoner Mia?" His tone is dripping with disdain, aiming to diminish her.

Mia, without missing a beat, responds coldly, "What do you want?" Her response is sharp, a stark contrast to the timid girl they once knew in the outer courtyard of the sect. This sudden change in her demeanor causes the trio to raise their eyebrows in surprise, unaccustomed to such defiance from her.

The second man, taking a step closer, encircles Mia with his arm in a presumptuous gesture of familiarity before continuing, "You know how to talk back now, huh?" The underlying insinuation in his voice is clear, and he doesn't hesitate to add, "The rumor must have been true, that you slept with one of the teachers to get into the sect."

The accusation hangs in the air, a deliberate attempt to undermine Mia and provoke her into anger. Mia feels the stirrings of rage at the baseless insult but quickly calms herself, mindful of not wanting to disturb Argon and Seraphine with such trivial matters.

Instead of retaliating with words or physical violence, Mia's lips curl into a provocatively sinister smile. Drawing upon her newfound powers as a succubus, she weaves an intricate illusion around the three men. To the onlookers, it seems as if mere seconds pass, but for the trio caught in Mia's spell, they experience an hour of nightmarish torture where spectral women continuously dismember and reattach their limbs, subjecting them to endless cycles of pain and fear.

When the illusion dissipates, the three men are left in a pitiable state, their minds shattered by the horror they endured. They collapse to the ground, their bodies involuntarily releasing in terror. The inn's patrons can only watch in shock and confusion, having witnessed the men's sudden breakdown without understanding the cause.

Seraphine, observing the scene from a distance, can't help but feel a swell of pride for Mia's clever handling of the situation. "I tell you, master, she is talented, right? Hehe," she remarks to Argon, her voice laced with amusement and approval. Her eyes gleam with satisfaction at Mia's demonstration of power and cunning.

The sudden commotion in the inn draws the attention of two guards stationed nearby. As they rush into the establishment, their eyes immediately fall upon the unsettling sight of the three young men from the Starlight Sect, now in a distressing state on the floor. Their uniforms, emblematic of the prestigious sect, make the guards halt in their tracks, shock registering on their faces.

"Th-this..." one guard stammers, struggling to process the scene before him. The reputation of the Starlight Sect's students precedes them; known for their overbearing nature and disdain towards those outside their ranks, the sight of their members in such a vulnerable state is jarring.

With a sense of urgency, the guards approach the trio, attempting to piece together what transpired. "What happened here?" the second guard inquires, his voice firm yet tinged with unease. He scans the crowd, hoping for some clarity, but the patrons offer only bewildered looks in return.

The atmosphere is tense, the patrons' silence speaking volumes. The guards, aware of the Starlight Sect's influence, tread carefully, not wanting to incite further trouble.

Turning to Mia, the first guard tries a different approach. "Miss, can you tell us what occurred?" he asks, his tone respectful yet cautious. Mia, however, remains silent, her cold demeanor unyielding. The two guards didn't dare to question again. Because of the uniform of the Starlight Sect she's wearing.

Frustrated by the lack of cooperation and unable to ascertain the cause of the student's condition, the guards find themselves at an impasse. With no choice left, they carefully lift the three students, preparing to take them for medical attention.

As the guards carry the students away, the inn gradually returns to its previous state of lively chatter and warmth, the incident soon becoming just another tale in the city's colorful tapestry.

In the midst of the gradual calm, the innkeeper, eager to move past the unsettling event, gestures towards the kitchen, signaling the arrival of Argon's ordered meal. A server, balancing a tray laden with an assortment of dishes renowned in Verdant Rise for their exquisite flavors, makes his way to their table with practiced ease. The food, a vibrant array of local delicacies, offers a welcome distraction from the evening's earlier disturbances.

As the dishes are laid out before them, the inviting aroma of spices and freshly prepared cuisine fills the air, drawing appreciative nods from Argon and Seraphine. Mia, having displayed a fraction of her newfound abilities, settles into her chair with a quiet sense of accomplishment, ready to partake in the meal. The focus now shifts to the enjoyment of Verdant Rise's culinary offerings, the incident

with the Starlight Sect's students momentarily pushed aside as the group indulges in the feast before them.

After enjoying the array of dishes offered by the Celestial Rest Inn, the atmosphere among Argon, Seraphine, and Mia becomes more relaxed, a stark contrast to the earlier tension. The rich flavors of Verdant Rise's cuisine provide a momentary escape from the complexities of the cultivation world outside. Once their meal concludes, the trio contemplates their next steps.

Argon, ever the cultivator dedicated to his path of strength, decides to utilize the quiet of the night not for rest, as most would after a day's journey, but for cultivation. In their realm of existence, the need for sleep diminishes with higher levels of cultivation. Instead, the night offers a precious opportunity to delve deeper into the mysteries of the law and enhance one's understanding and power.

As they rise from their table, preparing to retire to their respective rooms, Seraphine turns to Argon with a playful smile dancing on her lips. The glow from the inn's lanterns casts soft shadows across her features, emphasizing the mischief in her eyes. "Master, since we only rented three rooms, do you want me to accompany you?" she inquires, her tone laden with an implication familiar to Argon, reminiscent of Isadora's own seductive overtures.

Argon, accustomed to such advances from his subordinates, especially from those like Isadora and now Seraphine, who wield their charm as effortlessly as their power, meets Seraphine's gaze with a calm, unyielding expression. His response, firm and clear, leaves no room for misinterpretation. "No, I'm going to cultivate tonight, so don't let anyone disturb me," he states, his voice reflecting the seriousness of his intent.

Seraphine, taken aback but not offended, retracts her offer with a graceful nod, understanding the depth of Argon's dedication to his cultivation. "Of course, Master. I shall ensure that no one will disturb you," she assures him, her playful smile fading into a look of admiration for his unwavering focus on his path.

The trio then makes their way to their rented rooms, the inn's corridors quiet save for the soft footsteps of its late-night inhabitants. Mia, now a part of this enigmatic group, follows silently, her thoughts a whirlwind of emotions and realizations about the new life she has stepped into.