

Delia and Dyon stepped out and into the lowest level of the underwater skyscraper.

‘This library is massive. It spans the entire right side of this structure. 1000 meters worth of books? That’s wild.’ Dyon looked up in awe.

“This library is actually just one of 6. Each of the 6 pillars has an entire half dedicated to one. That’s in addition to the main library in the center pillar. Although, that one is much smaller.” Delia spoke as if understanding Dyon’s intrigue.

Having used a special entrance within the elevator, they stood in front of a desk much too grand to just be a reception desk.

A light and airy, yet masculine voice rang out. “Delia! It’s nice to see you. And who’s this friend of yours? Walking around with boys already, hm? I’m not sure what the Head would think about that.”

Dyon looked away from the massive desk and endless books to see a computer screen looking back at him. Within it was a well-dressed scrawny man with crystal framed glasses. His golden eyes shone with an unconcealed humor in light of his teasing.

“She’s actually already seen me naked. She’s quite the wild one.” Dyon beamed at the monitor.

“Oh my. You’re quite fearless. I like you. My name is Libro, it’s rare to find someone willing to tease Delia.” Libro chuckled.

Delia brought her sword hilt to Dyon’s side causing him to almost keel over.

‘This is the strength of a 16-year-old girl?’ Dyon looked over at her but she was already pretending like nothing had happened.

Dyon involuntarily coughed before introducing himself. "I'm Dyon, it's nice to meet you."

Before they could continue their bromance, Delia cut them off. "I'm here as a favor to this one. I'm letting him use my identification card for a few hours." She handed the card to Dyon.

With that, she turned to leave.

"I'm looking forward to seeing you again." Dyon said while watching her receding figure. Delia continued on, pretending like she hadn't heard him speak.

As the elevator doors were closing Delia spoke again. "The ceremony is being held in the center pillar. Ask Libro how to get there."

'What an interesting beauty. I wonder if there are any more like her here.'

Dyon smiled.

"So, Libro, I have a few questions for you." Dyon said while turning back to the monitor. "In fact, could I bother you to give me a quick summary of what this library provides?"

Libro smiled. "You must be the commoner I've heard so much about. They said you ran away, but it looks like that was wrong. You can't have been hanging out with the young mistress this whole time, right?"

Dyon grinned. "A man can't kiss and tell, now can he?"

Libro's airy laughter seemed to fill the library causing the students that had been drifting around to look over before shaking their heads and going back to what they were doing. It seems they were used to Libro's personality.

'Seems like that beauty has quite the high position here...' Despite his casual appearance, Dyon continued to analyze everything he could.

“This library, as you probably saw, is split into 100 levels for a total of 600 among the outer pillars. I’m responsible for all levels, which is why I sit behind this computer screen.”

Dyon’s eyes widened. ‘In charge of 600 levels by yourself? Even with monitors that would be impossible...’

“The levels you’re able to access depend on your identification card. Since the young mistress gave you hers, you have access to all 600 outer levels. But, even she doesn’t have access to the inner levels yet.”

‘A first-year student with almost unlimited access. If I’m right, her father must be head of one of the pillar families. Patia-Neva she said...’

“Though you have Delia’s access for now, you most likely won’t in the future. Usual first year students have access to the first 10 levels at the most, but even that’s in rare cases. Most are usually stuck at the minimum 1 level.”

“How do you increase the levels you have access to?”

“You can do it by performing well at the opening ceremony. Although that’s usually reserved for pillar family chosen, I hear they’ve made an exception for you. In addition, you can be promoted through grades by passing your end of year exams, you can participate in challenges and tournaments throughout the year, there’s also the possibility of ranking well in the numerous leader boards, and doing well in a faction you create or join.”

‘Factions again?’ Dyon couldn’t hold back his smile. These next few years were going to be fun.

“Although it’s the goal of most branch family students to gain access to higher levels in the outer pillars, the true treasure is within the inner pillar. There are no rules for how to gain access to it, just be outstanding.”

‘Just be outstanding. You don’t have to tell me twice.’

“Now, what were your questions?”

“I have a theory about this will your martial world harps on.” Dyon spoke thoughtfully, allowing his eyes to lose their focus.

‘Will? Ah, I understand. Delia must have dumbled it down for him’.

“If your world is proficient at manipulating these wills, then it stands to reason that your creations would hold them too, correct?”

Libro let a small smile creep onto his lips. “That would indeed be an accurate deduction.”

“So, your books would hold them. So, if I say... decided to understand the will of the book instead of reading it, my understanding would probably be far deeper and I might even save some time.”

Libro was shocked, “I’m not sure a beginner like you would be able to do something like that. That’s a speed-reading technique that does indeed exist, but it requires at least a basic understanding of martial theory and a powerful soul. Considering your explanation, you may have accurately stepped through into an initial understanding, but that’s all it is. You’ll need a much deeper understanding to even attempt to understand the technique.”

Dyon only smiled. “I’d like a book on this speed-reading technique, the most basic books you have on martial world theory, as well as a rule and culture book for this school and society. Also, if you have a book of the current factions in this school, I’d appreciate that as well.”

Libro curtly nodded. His job was to help students find the books they needed and guide them through when they were lost. It seemed that Dyon was set on this path and the choices of books he made were decent enough.

As Libro fiddled with something on his side of the screen to track down the books Dyon asked for, Dyon continued to look around. This truly was the first time he'd seen such a grand library.

'It wouldn't even be fair to compare this to that library.' Dyon thought taking in a deep breath.

On either side of the elevator door was an expanse of glass going from one side of the building to the next. Dyon noticed small cuts which he recognized as other doorways once he watched a student step through one. He nodded to himself, it made sense for there to be more entrances than just the one elevator.

The desk in front of him seemed more like a display of wealth than anything else. It was made in ancient wood that breathed an air of nature into the already book-like smell of the library. The carvings on it swirled and dipped into a fantastic pattern. Dyon almost couldn't resist touching it.

'I wonder what the other side of the building holds.'

Libro looked up and in a display of what Dyon assumed was his view of grandeur, slammed a final button that opened up a chasm in the large desk. 14 books flew up and out at Dyon as he scrambled to catch them.

"You're pretty sinister." Dyon said while laughing and catching the last book.

"How else would I have fun all day. This control room isn't exactly comfy." Libro said with a mysterious smile.

Dyon was once again given another shock while looking down at the books. "They were all written by the same person?"

"Ah, the Sapientia family." Libro said in reminiscence. "I still remember the day I earned my crystal glasses."

‘So, it’s a family. They own the monopoly on information? If only the books on martial theory were written by them, it’d be one thing. But the rule book, the culture book, the speed-reading technique and the book of factions too?

That’s utter nonsense. No one sees an issue with this?’

“The Sapientia family is actually one of the few families with multiple main branches. We’re basically responsible for all research and development in the Martial world for this universe. If you want to become a researcher, you join the family. If you’re good enough, you become part of a main branch. Not many other families even think about giving that chance.” Libro sighed in pride.magic

“It can’t possibly be that no one who’s ever made a discovery has chosen not to join the family, right?” Dyon was confused. This one family can’t have written every book for the martial world.

“Well, the Sapientia Family is the leading expert. Meaning, any new book that will be published must pass through a subsidiary branch at a minimum. The higher the ranking of the Sapientia branch that approves it, the more reliable, rare and sought after the book is. Every book will say Sapientia on the cover, but you can find the true writer on the inside. The only exception would be techniques. But obviously, speed reading is a technique that would be highly beneficial to a researching family, so it’s not a surprise that it was created by us as well.”

Dyon nodded. He found this world fascinating. To have a single family monopolize information would cause an outcry in his world, but it was perfectly normal here.

“Thank you for your help, Libro.” Dyon said sincerely as he walked to the end of the desk and past it to look for a place to read.

Libro shut off the monitor and switched his view to the cameras of the base floor library. He was interested in seeing how Dyon would approach this and if he could really understand in the short time he had left.

‘If he reads the speed reading book first in over eagerness, he’ll end up wasting all 12 hours he has left trying to understand. Let’s see if he makes the right choice’.

Dyon walked through one of the main isles of books and ladders to find a small pond, flowing with odd golden water. Ignoring the glances of curiosity from the surrounding students, he picked a meditation platform and sat down.

‘The speed-reading book requires a basic understanding of martial theory. So, it’s clear that I’ll have to read the basic books first. Even if it takes most of the time I have left, I’ll have to finish at least 2 before reading the speed-reading book and trying to finish the last ones.’

Libro smiled as he watched Dyon pick up the basics of martial theory book. ‘Delia sure knows how to pick ’em.’

Delia would probably hit him in the side with her sword too if she had heard that thought. Libro chuckled to himself and watched the future bloom right in front of him.