

After Prison 1701

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Severin looked at Gilda and struggled to find the right words. After contemplating for a moment, he said, "You're right. As long as you don't take it to heart, these rumors will soon pass. People tend to be drawn to the latest gossip, but they'll eventually move on to the next new thing."

Gilda nodded in agreement. "I know that nothing's going to change even if I get angry over it. I have reason to suspect that the Horizon Sect's members are behind this. There's a high chance that they're spreading it to tarnish my reputation." She paused for a moment before continuing, "In a way, that's a good thing. It's further proof that Frederick isn't a good person. I'm glad I didn't marry him. My life might have been ruined if I had."

Severin felt a slight tremor hearing this, Gilda was indeed a virtuous woman with strong principles. After contemplating for a moment, he took a courageous step and gently held Gilda's hand. "You're an amazing woman, Miss Gilda. Perhaps you can consider dating me if you're okay with that idea? I vow to treat you well."

"W-w-what are you saying? Gilda was taken aback. Her face turned bashfully red as she withdrew her hand immediately. Her heart was pounding wildly, and she never expected Severin to confess his love to her in such a direct manner.

"I'm serious, Gilda. I hope you'll think it over. You don't need to give me an immediate answer. I'd just like the chance to try and win your heart," Severin said earnestly.

"I understand what you mean. I'll think about it," Gilda responded, nodding. She then turned and flew away.

She had been caught completely off guard by how fast her heartbeat was when Severin held her hand. She even began to question whether she was beginning to have feelings for him. Severin's outstanding qualities were clear for all to see. His ability as an alchemist had made him a highly sought-after potential partner for many female disciples.

Severin smiled as he watched her leave hastily. "I'm going to have to confess my feelings eventually, so I might as well do it a little earlier. I wouldn't want someone else confessing to her in the time that I'm inside the Paradise Secret Realm. She would no longer be interested in me anymore if someone else was ahead of me."

Gilda rushed back to her residence with reddened cheeks. As she emerged from her house, Wuhricht noticed her blushing face and cocked an eyebrow. "Why is your face so red?"

"Is it? You must be seeing things," Gilda stammered as she placed her hands on her slightly warm cheeks.

"By the way, didn't you say you were going to meet Severin? Why are you back so soon?" Wuhricht casually slipped in a question.

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Gilda hastily replied, "He's busy making pills. I didn't want to disturb him, so we just had a brief conversation before I left him to do his work." She then immediately entered the house.

Wuhlricht walked out of the door and muttered to himself, "What is going on with Severin? He's completely clueless! My daughter is very beautiful, and she even took the initiative to drop by and see him. Isn't that a very good opportunity for them to grow closer? He's been crafting pills for days on end now. It wouldn't hurt to take half a day off to spend time with my daughter, right?"

Wuhlricht's thoughts then took a different turn as he suddenly realized, "Is it possible that Severin doesn't like Gilda? That doesn't make any sense though. Why did he promise me that he'd take good care of her if he didn't like her? Does he feel a sense of obligation simply out of guilt?"

After contemplating for a while, Wuhlricht decided to confront Severin about it. He arrived at Severin's residence just as Severin was back in his yard.

"Uncle—master! What brings you here?" Severin asked, feeling slightly anxious that Wuhlricht had arrived just moments after Gilda left. Wuhlricht could not have come over that quickly unless Gilda had told him something.

"Let's talk inside," Wuhlricht said, wearing a serious expression.

Once they were behind closed doors, Wuhlricht got straight to the point. "I have a question for you, Severin

"Please ask away," Severin replied.

"I want to know if your promise about taking good care of my daughter is genuine. She's no longer engaged, so I'm genuinely hoping that you two will end up together."

Wuhlricht continued, "I'm not trying to put pressure on you though, so let's get that straight. You only agreed to help her because I begged you to and put you in a tight spot. I want you to be with her out of genuine love and concern, not just because you regret what happened. You understand what I mean, don't you? You must show genuine concern for her before you can attempt to win her heart."

Severin was a little startled initially. He wondered if Gilda had already told Wuhlricht about Severin's confession so quickly. He looked at Wuhlricht and replied earnestly, "You have nothing to worry about. I've given this a lot of thought, and while I do feel a sense of responsibility toward her, I've come to realize that she's a very good woman as I'm getting to know her better. Gilda deserves to be loved. She's strong in her convictions about love and justice, and she's filial and sensible too. If she returns my feelings, I'll cherish her out of genuine love for her."

Wuhlricht was content with Severin's response. "I'm happy to hear that. Since you have genuine feelings for her, you should take the initiative to spend more time with her when you have the chance. Go for walks with her. Don't spend all your time making pills. You've already crafted a lot of pills for the sect, and we're no longer in as short supply as we were before."

Severin smiled and said, "I'll do my best. I can see that she's comfortable around me, so I'm confident that I'll stand a good chance as long as I put in the effort."

“That’s reassuring.” Wuhlricht said, reaching for the door. “I’d have nothing to worry about anymore if you two are together. I think you’re far better than Frederick anyway. He completely burned bridges with her, disregarded their prior relationship, and ruined my daughter’s reputation. That was already bad enough, and he made things worse when he allowed people within the sect to spread slanderous rumors about her. If our sect had been as strong as theirs, I would have already confronted him and taken him to task.”

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In response, Severin smiled and said, “Narrow-minded people like her won’t go far in the future.”

“Well then, I shall excuse myself now.” Wahlricht nodded and quickly departed.

Severin did not expect his three wives to show up just moments after Wahlricht left.

“Aren’t you three supposed to be training?” Severin asked in surprise. He could not help but feel as though they had planned to come in at that moment.

Sheila smiled and explained, “We were done for the day, and we were just about to chat with each other in the next room when we heard the sect leader paying you a visit. We were curious, so we couldn’t help ourselves from listening in on the conversation.”

Severin was speechless for a moment and his expression soured a little. “Don’t you think it’s a little rude to be eavesdropping on our conversation?”

“Well, we couldn’t help it! And you two were being pretty loud. We would’ve overheard you even if we didn’t want to,” Sofia said.

Diane then added, “We didn’t expect the conversation to revolve around marrying Gilda. We didn’t know you liked her either. Don’t worry, though. We all think that Gilda is a good person.”

“We all sympathized a lot with Gilda,” Sheila pointed out. “She lost her first time to a stranger and was abandoned by the man she deeply loved. Her vile fiance even went so far as to spread malicious slander about her. We all thought it would be wonderful if she could find a good man to treat her well, and now that man has finally shown up!”

“Yeah!” Sofia agreed. “We’re going to have another ‘sister’ soon.”

“And just so you know, we’re fine with that,” Sheila said. “We genuinely think that Gilda is a wonderful woman, but does it bother you that she’s no longer a virgin? Some men might not be able to accept that.”

Severin was a little speechless but he eventually assured them. “I don’t mind at all. A person’s past doesn’t matter to me as long as I genuinely love her.”

The three women had even more admiration for Severin after hearing that.

However, they were a little surprised when Severin said to them, "But please don't tell anyone about this yet. I haven't found the right time to tell Gilda."

"Are you afraid she might reject you?" Sheila asked.

"Don't worry," Sofia encouraged. "You'll succeed in winning her heart if you do it the right way."

Severin smiled wryly and revealed at last, "That's not what I meant. What I meant to say was that I am the person who took

Gilda's first time."

"It was you?!" Their eyes widened in disbelief when they heard that. Sheila—in particular—had been prepared to confront the perpetrator responsible for Gilda's ordeal if she ever found out who it was. In a shocking turn of events, that man was none other than Severin her husband.

Sofia, too, exclaimed in surprise. "You can't be serious. Was it really you?"

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Diane was also surprised at the revelation. After a moment of thought, she chuckled and said, "Haha, if it's really you, the it's even better if you manage to win her heart!"

"Yes, but you mustn't let her know right now. Win her heart before revealing the truth to her. If you tell her before she falls for you, she might dislike you or even resent you. That'll make things even more difficult for you," Sheila advised after giving it some thought.

Severin concurred. "I agree. This is something that must only be revealed at the right moment."

Sofia thought for a moment and asked, "Does that mean your body has a unique constitution too?"

Severin nodded. "Yes. I have what's called the Sun-Heart Constitution."

"But why did Gilda's attainment level increase significantly while yours remained stagnant? Isn't it unfair?" Sofia questioned somewhat bitterly.

Sheila realized that point as well and immediately complained, "Yeah! Shouldn't your attainment level have increased just as much as hers?"

Severin was briefly at a loss for words, but he soon replied, "Well, if my attainment level were to increase dramatically, then I would've become a royal saint by now."

"Oh yeah! Then you wouldn't be eligible to enter the Paradise Secret Realm anymore." Sheila replied. "It's a good thing you didn't experience the same rapid breakthrough then, or else you wouldn't be able to enter the Paradise Secret Realm and help find the miniature black tower!"

Diane, however, lamented, "There are plenty of other saints in the sect who could be sent to the Paradise Secret Realm even if he couldn't. I think it'd be better for him to make the breakthrough and become a royal saint. Not a lot of people can reach such heights in their attainment."

Severin smiled and said, "Don't worry, I was still able to get some benefit from it. I absorbed a substantial amount of spiritual energy from the surrounding energy, but I'm keeping it suppressed and

stored in an energy sphere within my energy core. This stored energy can be harnessed to enhance my attainment once I'm inside the Paradise Secret Realm."

"I can't believe something like that exists?" The three women were stupefied after listening to Severin's explanation.

"I understand now. Does that mean that you'll be able to make a breakthrough to royal saint? Perhaps even level four or level five royal saint?" Sheila asked when she digested what Severin said.

"I'm so jealous! Such an opportunity is truly a divine gift. It's beyond what any ordinary person can imagine." Sofia marveled

at the revelation.

Severin smiled but his expression soon became serious. "By the way, you must all train very hard to elevate your attainment as much as possible. I heard that we'll end up in different locations within the Paradise Secret Realm after we set foot in it.

Sheila expressed her concern for the danger that lay before those with low attainment. "Does that mean we'll have to find each other again after we enter?"

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Severin smiled wryly and said to them, "Well, if you're worried about that, then perhaps it's a good idea for you to stay behind and focus on your training."

"Not an option," Sheila replies immediately. "We haven't been to the Paradise Secret Realm yet, and we're all very curious about it. Besides, aren't practitioners like us supposed to engage in more battles and face death fearlessly before we can improve? We need to go."

Sofia chimed in and smiled. "We ought to be numb to death. If we fear for our lives, we will never be able to attain true strength"

Diane added, "We've all been training super hard with the aim of entering the Paradise Secret Realm. We're not just going to abandon it halfway!"

Severin nodded after hearing their determination. "I've been told that we'll all be separated when we enter the Secret Realm, but we'll usually find ourselves in the extensive forest within the realm's periphery. We can then make our way towards the

center after we enter."

He then paused for a moment before continuing, "Once you're in, your priority is to locate Skyblue Sect disciples with higher attainment levels than you. It will be safer to stick with them at all times. I'll immediately start locating all of you. Do not act rashly if you come across any high-grade spiritual herbs that are guarded by formidable spirit beasts."

Sheila reassured him with a smile. "We've learned the Mind's Eye technique from you and we'll be able to discern the spiritual beasts' attainment level. We won't engage in combat if it's higher than ours.

“Excellent” Severin said. “The three of you have a very decent level of attainment already, and you’ll have another twenty or so days left to continue training. I hope that you’ll all be able to raise your attainment by the time we set off.”

“We will,” Sheila said. “We’re aiming to increase our attainment by one or two levels.”

At that moment, Elsa returned with Selene. A bright smile spread across Severin’s face when he saw his daughter return

After a moment’s contemplation, he turned to his wives and said, “Selene won’t be able to come with us, and we haven’t had the opportunity to spend time with her lately. We’ll have about twenty days left before we enter the paradise secret realm, so how about we take the rest of the off from practicing and bring her to town this afternoon? I’ll stop making pills too. We can buy some spirit beast meat and enjoy a barbecue in the yard tonight. How does that sound?”

Sheila’s eyes lit up at the prospect of savoring some barbecued meat. “Sounds amazing! Let’s do that!”

Diane shared the same sentiment. “I haven’t eaten your barbecued meat in a while too. Looks like I’m in for a treat.”

Elsa’s mouth watered and she could not resist asking. “Can I join in and have some too?”

Severin chuckled. “Of course! By the way, I hope Selene hasn’t been a bother whenever she goes looking for you in her free

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“No, not at all” Elsa assured. “Selene is so adorable that even my seniors and juniors are all excited to see her. She brings a smile to everyone’s faces, and we all look forward to seeing her.”

Severin asked, “How’s your alchemy progress been lately? Made any improvements?”

Elsa blushed and confessed, “I’ve been occupied with training and preparing myself to enter the Paradise Secret Realm. Alchemy has been put on the back burner for a little while.”

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Elsa then paused for a moment before adding. “But I was fortunate enough to make a breakthrough several days ago and become a first-grade high-rank alchemist.”

Severin could not help but chuckle when he heard that “First-grade high-rank alchemist? That’s some good progress, and yet you’re still so humble.”

“You’re progressing very quickly, Elsa! Plenty of people must be jealous of your talent,” Sheila added. “It’s a shame that we don’t have the aptitude for alchemy as you have. How we wish we could learn alchemy too!”

Elsa smiled and reassured them, “But you already have a steady supply of pills from your husband. Since you can always ask him to make some whenever you need, there’s no reason to bother yourself with doing alchemy. It’s a very laborious and time-consuming task”

“Shall we make a move?” Diane asked. “We’ll take a walk around town and buy some groceries for our barbecue.”

Severin agreed and said, “Oh, and I’d have to buy some wine from town, too. I need to replenish the stock in my spatial ring.

Sheila then chimed in. “Let’s get going then! I can’t wait any longer!”

The group quickly took flight and descended the mountain. Severin’s afternoon with Selene and the ladies proved to be very enjoyable, more so when such opportunities to spend time with each other were very scarce.

As the sun began to set, the group proceeded to make their way back up the mountain. Along the way, many of the sect’s disciples greeted them with the utmost respect. Severin became like an idol in the disciples eyes, and they were immensely grateful to him for the pills that aided in their attainment.

When Severin and the group returned home, they started a fire and began grilling the meat. The aroma left Sheila salivating profusely.

To their surprise, Gilda came over after being drawn in by the enticing scent. She smiled and said to them, “What do we have here? Is this a feast I smell? The aroma is just divine!

Sheila asked, “Miss Gilda! Good to see you here!” She and everyone else were delighted that Gilda had joined them. They liked her, accepted her, and hoped that Severin might be able to win her heart as soon as possible.

“Please just call me Gilda. There’s no need to be so formal,” Gilda responded with a smile.

Gilda had been preoccupied with many thoughts after Severin confessed to her. She would occasionally find herself thinking about his outstanding qualities, believing that he was someone she could entrust her life to. For those reasons, she felt that

he was ready to explore the prospe

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“Olay! We’ll call you Gilda from now on! I hope you won’t mind if we treat you like our sister from now on!” Sheila grinned as she exchanged glances with Sofla and Diare. The three of them were the only ones who truly understood the significance of treating Gilda as their ‘sister’, Gilda’s understanding of that was very different from theirs.

Gilda smiled and took her seat. “Of course!” She then turned to Severin and asked, “By the way, do you remember what my dad promised you last time?”

Severin thought for a moment and eventually remembered. “I do. He said he’d help me find a treasure that could help change a person’s talent for attainment.”

“Then why didn’t you ask him about it when you arrived?”

“Because he didn’t say anything about it to me, so I didn’t want to impose it on him. And besides, he might not have mentioned anything about it because he hasn’t found it yet.”

Gilda chuckled and handed a small porcelain bottle to Severin. “You do remember” Well, my father promised to find it for you, and you’re right in guessing that we hadn’t found it at first. However, some of our disciples have finally managed to complete their mission and locate it. My father wanted me to hand it over to you.”

Severin was happy to hear that. “I wanted to use this to change Diane’s attainment talent, but I found something similar and gave it to her already.”

“Does this mean you no longer have any use for this?” Gilda asked.

“I still do,” Severin clarified. “Diane’s sister, Megan, has no talent for attainment. She’s young, and she’s now a level nine grandmaster, so this treasure will be very helpful in enabling her to start training in the future. She can use this to make breakthrough to profound master and set foot firmly in attainment.”

Diane then said, “This is amazing! Megan will be thrilled to know about the existence of a treasure that can change her attainment talent.”

Severin added thoughtfully, “That’s right, Benjamin is an alchemist, and his attainment talent is quite good too. Megan might feel inferior to him because his attainment level is so much higher than hers. She’ll be incredibly happy if she finds out she can start training “However, Severin then said. “But since you’re all very busy with your training, I think it’s best that I deliver it to her alone”

Gilda then interjected, “It’s been a long time since I left the sect, Severin. Can I join you and treat this as a short little trip to relax?”

Sheila was elated when she heard that. She believed that it would be the perfect opportunity for Severin and Gilda to interact more and get to know each other better. “Great idea! You two should travel together.”

Diane concurred, “yes, you’ll be bored if you go back alone, Severin. It would be better for you to have Gilda keep you company since she wants to take a short trip out of the sect too.”

Severin agreed. “Sounds good. Let’s set out tomorrow morning then and return early. Is that okay for you, Gilda? I’ll come by to fetch you at your house tomorrow morning.”

Gilda nodded readily. “Okay I’ll be waiting tomorrow!”

When the barbecue meat was ready, Severin cut off a slice and placed it on a plate. He offered it to Gilda and said, “Here! Dig

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Gilda frowned when she looked at the barbecue. “Greasy food isn’t really my thing”

Diane encouraged her, “Give it a try. You’ll regret it for the rest of your life if you don’t! His barbecued meat is out of this world. It’s the best you’ll ever have!”

Sheila added, "Some people said the same thing as you did in the past, but they couldn't stop eating after taking the first bite. Don't you think the aroma itself is mouthwatering?"

Gilda felt that they were being a bit over the top with the way they described Severin's cooking, but she eventually decided that there was no harm in trying it. As soon as she took a small bite, she immediately admitted, "You're right! This... this is amazing!"

Following that first bite, she continued to eat and savor the delicious barbecued meat that melted in her mouth. "The meat is super delicious!"

Sheila handed Gilda some wine and said, "Have a drink. We have plenty of fine wine here too."

"Don't be shy, Miss Gilda!" Selene said in between mouthfuls of meat. "We bought loads and loads of spirit beast meat to

barbecue."

Gilda felt a growing fondness for Selene. She smiled warmly at the little girl and said, "Okay! I eat some more! This barbecued meat is just so delicious. I've never had anything like it before."

Selene took pride in her father's cooking, boasting, "It's my dad's specialty. Even Mommy Sheila, my second mommy, can't master it just yet

Sheila rolled her eyes playfully at Selene and said, "I'm still learning, Selene. It isn't easy to learn the craft!

That heartwarming exchange left made Gilda chuckle. "Ah, so you're her second mother."

"Yes," Sheila affirmed. "I'm her second mother, while Sofia is her third mother. You'll be the fourth if you marry Severin."

Gilda blushed when she heard that bold comment. Sheila, after all, had a knack for speaking her mind.

Sofia then seemed to play along. "What are you talking about, Sheila? You're making her blush!"

Sheila then turned to Gilda and said, "I hope you don't get upset by what I said, Gilda. I sometimes say stuff without thinking. and only realize later on that I might have misspoken."

Diane admonished her, saying, "What were you thinking when you made that remark? Gilda is the sect leader's daughter! You shouldn't make that sort of joke."

Gilda reassured them, "It's fine. I'm not offended. Besides, I'm not one to hold grudges anyway. I enjoy the camaraderie and close relationship you share with each other. I'm a little jealous of how well the three of you get along with each other!"

Sheila then deliberately made another casual remark, "There's nothing to be jealous about! You can become one of us too!" Then, she immediately covered her mouth and apologized, as if she realized her gaffe. "Sorry about that,"

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Sheila's words made Gilda blush again, but the latter felt a tiny little glimmer of happiness in her heart. Gilda had developed feelings for Severin and wanted to try dating him. Her father seemed to think highly of Severin, and that was likely the reason he asked her to join them and bring him a gift. It was a clear sign that her father supported the idea of her being with Severin. Gilda, however, had her concerns. She was worried that Severin's three wives might not like her, or worse, resent her and bar her from joining their group. Nonetheless, her fears were allayed after she sensed their receptivity toward her. None of them seemed to dislike her in any way, so she felt that there was a good chance for her to be welcomed into their circle.

Severin then kindly cut another large piece of barbecued meat and placed it on Gilda's plate. He smiled at her and said, "Have some more. Don't mind Sheila's teasing She's always like that."

"I don't mind it at all." Gilda nodded appreciatively and continued eating.

Sheila lifted her glass and encouraged everyone to have a good time. "Cheers, everyone! A good glass of wine is the perfect complement to a delicious meal of meat."

Gilda relished the atmosphere and joined in the toast, raising her small bottle of wine too. After everyone clinked their bottles, she took a hearty sip

Meanwhile, Wuhricht paced in the yard while waiting for Gilda's return. He was worried that Gilda might return as soon as she handed Severin the gift. However, Gilda had not returned after an hour, and a little smile appeared on Wuhricht's face. She must have had plenty to talk about with Severin if they spent an hour with each other.

Then, another hour passed. Wuhricht's smile soon turned into a frown. "Why is she taking so long? Are they having such a good time with each other?"

Another hour went by before Gilda was spotted flying back from the mountain

"What took you so long?" Wuhricht approached her immediately. He noted the scent of alcohol on her and was concerned, as Gilda did not usually drink much. He was worried that she might not have fully healed from her previous relationship with Frederick, and that she was merely putting on a forced smile for him all along. "Were you drinking? You don't usually drink" Gilda explained, "You have no idea how delicious Severin's barbecued meat is, Dad It's amazing! They were having a barbecue when I arrived, so I joined them. The food was so irresistible that I couldn't stop eating! We had a wonderful time, and I had some drinks with them. By the way, Severin said he'd be going alone to send the treasure home. Since I hadn't left the sect for a long time, I decided to accompany him for the short trip. He'll come pick me up tomorrow morning.

Wuhricht was a little surprised to see such a genuine smile on Gilda's face. It had been a long time since he saw such a bright

smile.

"Haha, that's great! You should get some rest now then. I'll have to try Severin's barbecue one day to see what all the fuss is about," Wuhricht said with a smile.

"You should definitely try it," Gilda said. "You won't want to miss out."

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Gilda then smiled and went to her room.

“Ah, so she had dinner with them and had fun, Wuhlricht remarked as he watched Gilda leave. Wuhlricht had not seen her that happy in a long time, especially since Frederick broke off the engagement with her. His fondness for Severin grew by the day while his dislike for Frederick deepened. Frederick’s involvement in spreading rumors about Gilda only added to his displeasure.

Gilda woke up early the next morning and took some time to get dressed. After some contemplation, she opted for a shorter knee-high dress that exposed her beautiful legs. She could not help but smile as she admired herself in the mirror and basked in her stunning outfit.

“Gilda!” Severin’s voice called from outside. Gilda opened the door and dashed out upon hearing his familiar voice.

Severin’s eyes lit up at the sight of Gilda in an eye-catching short dress. She tended to wear longer dresses and it was the first time she wore a slightly shorter one. It lent her a slightly different than usual and radiated with immense beauty

Wuhlricht emerged with a smile and understood the reason for Gilda’s outfit. “You’re here! You don’t get to return home often, so take your time and enjoy yourself. Gilda hasn’t left the sect in a long time, so please do me a favor and bring her sightseeing”

“Don’t worry.” Severin nodded. “I’ll make sure she spends a wonderful time with me.”

Wuhlricht offered a reminder. “But don’t have too much fun though. You wouldn’t want to miss the opportunity to enter the Paradise Secret Realm, right? There’s another eighteen days left, so make sure you come back on time. After all, the sect is counting on you to find that miniature black tower.”

“Understood.” Severin smiled. He then took out his flying sword, which grew bigger at his command.

“We’ll be leaving then.”

“Be safe, you two!” Wuhlricht waved to them.

Gilda hopped on the sword with Severin and turned to her father, saying. “We’ll be leaving now! Take care!”

The sword then rose into the air and flew into the distance.

Gilda stood at the front edge of the sword, and Severin smiled as he looked at her. “How long has it been since you were last away from the sect, Gilda?”

Gilda reflected for a moment before replying, “More than ten years ago, I think I was still a child then. Most of the time it was to visit some of the secluded families. I’ve never been to a normal city before.”

Severin smiled and said, “So you’ve been missing out on a lot of life’s experiences then. Still, a lot of practitioners would envy your upbringing. You’ve had access to the best attainment resources since you were young’

Gilda smiled back and acknowledged that. "Yes. Everyone's life experiences are unique. That's what makes each person's journey different."

Then, Gilda turned to look at Sewerin's handsome face and asked earnestly, "Did you mean what you said the other day?"