

# Reincarnated as an Energy with a System

## Chapter 401: Dinner

"So, that device checks people's ability to passively gather Aether?" Ning asked confusedly after learning what the device did from the system.

According to it, the device was made up of a crystal that was highly concentrated with Aether. The white light was already in the crystal, but it was veiled behind the thick Aether.

Normally, it would remain that way, but when someone that could passively gather Aether placed their hands on it, the Aether in it drifted towards the surface of the crystal and the light would shine, letting the people know.

The device was an ingenious mechanism, but Ning still couldn't see the purpose behind it at all. "Why would it matter if someone can gather Aether passively or not? It's always the absorption skills that will help them the most anyway," he thought.

He thought what the middle-aged man did was useless and left the compound without any more thought.

The day was slowly coming to an end as well, so he decided to go check on the Golden Flour to make sure everything was fine there.

It took him no more than 15 minutes to get there, and when he did, he could see that it was open with few people walking in and out.

The place still seemed lacking in customers compared to the first time he was there, but there were at least people starting to return there.

He walked in and saw only Reeve staying by the table at the side.

"Hey, brother Reeve. I hope everything has been well?" Ning asked.

Reeve looked up with surprise. "Brother Ning? Where were you? I tried to find you so much today," he said.

"I was out wandering the city. Did you need something from me?" he asked.

"I, we wanted to thank you, brother Ning. I don't know how you managed to do it, but thanks to you, this bakery's name has been cleaned again," Reeve said.

"Oh, you got things sorted out already huh? That was fast," Ning said. "Also, you don't really need to worry about thanking me. I did it cuz you guys are my friends now."

"No, please let us thank you properly, brother Ning. Tell me if there is anything you want. If I can get it for you, I will," Reeve said.

"Hmm, well I don't really need anything... but, if you do want to do something, then treat me to dinner. How about that? You can consider us on equal terms after that if that's what your heart desires," Ning said.

"A dinner, huh? Deal. I will get Lisa to make the best meal she can prepare today," Reeve said.

"I will look forward to it then," Ning said with a smile. "Alright, tell me. What happened with the other guys? Did you get money or something?"

"Yes, we got the monetary settlement, and so did the theater group. Both the bakery and the mill had to pay us both," Reeve said.

"I hope it's a handsome sum for the trouble you guys went through," Ning said.

"It's alright. I might have asked for more, but Lisa would be mad if she found out how much I took, so I settled for a little less," Reeve said.

"Well, as long as it works for you guys," Ning said.

"I mean, we still lose in the end. The theater decided to end their business with us in fear of something like this happening again. The public opinion on the bakery has already shifted and it will be hard to bring it back to the same way it was too. Sigh, we're at a lesser standing than we were at the start," Reeve said.

Reeve shook his head thinking about the labor his wife would have to go through all over again to improve their bakery's standing again.

"Oh right," Reeve said. "Here, I got something for you."

"Hmm, what is it?" Ning asked expectantly.

Reeve took out a piece of paper and handed it to Ning. Ning took the piece of paper and read what was written on it.

"Herald Of War; 5th Day of the 14th Week of Year 286. What's this?" Ning asked as he turned the paper around and read something else that clued him in on what it was.

"Is this...?" he asked.

"It's a ticket for the upcoming theater show. The people from the theater gave us free tickets to the show. It's for the seat at the back, but hey, can't complain about something free right?" Reeve said.

"Oh, thanks a lot. I was meaning to go get a ticket to see what the hype was all about. It's... what? 4 days later?" Ning asked as he read the date.

"Yes, it's at the end of the week," Reeve said.

"Hmm, it should be fine. My suit gets ready a day earlier right? It should be more than fine actually," Ning said.

Ning and Reeve talked for a few hours, waiting for the bakery to close. Once it did, Lisa walked out ready to go back home.

She also wanted to thank Ning, so she was more than happy to make dinner for him. Before going back home, she took the two men through the market to pick out the best of the best meat and vegetables to cook tonight.

Looking at the ingredients, Ning too started to feel a little bit of anticipation brewing up inside of him. He was looking forward to this dinner as well.

The couple walked back from the market to their home which was a couple of blocks away from their bakery. Ning looked at the building and didn't see anything different from the other buildings besides them.

They walked up the stairs and went into their apartment and Reeve unlocked the door to their room.

"Welcome to our humble abode, brother Ning," Reeve said as he welcomed Ning.

"Thank you for having me," Ning said as he walked in, only to be very surprised by what he saw inside.

He really hadn't expected a place like this to be owned by these two.

## **Chapter 402: Forgotten Knowledge**

Ning walked through the door and saw the inside. Somehow, he felt that the house Reeve and Lisa owned was... very rundown. It didn't seem like a house that was owned by someone that had their own business or made a couple of Gols every few weeks.

'What's going on? Are houses just that expensive?' Ning wondered. His hotel room was much better than their home.

"Do you own the place or just rent it?" Ning asked as he looked around the dimly lit room with just a single table at the center and a bed at the other side.

Ning couldn't see any other furniture in the room at all.

"We rent it. We've been renting here for the past 3 years," Reeve said.

Ning didn't know how to ask them why they didn't find another place. He didn't feel it right to tell other people that he didn't like their home at all. Maybe they liked it themselves.

"I'll go start cooking," Lisa said and walked away from the room to the other room, which Ning assumed was a kitchen.

Reeve brought out cloth seats from under the bed and placed them around the small table. "Come sit, brother Ning. It's not much, but it's what we have," Reeve said.

Ning sat down cross-legged and nodded. The two started talking once more. Ning tried his best to keep his information to himself, but he still had to let some information out to keep himself from looking like a fraud.

"Oh right, I saw someone from the Aether Tower today. There were people gathered and one child even got chosen," Ning said as he remembered what had happened earlier today.

"Aether Tower folks? Ah right, today was the day huh? That kid must be lucky," Reeve said with a sad sigh. He seemed to still not be over his rejection.

"You said you tried to go there at 18 years of age right? Why were they here for such young children then?" Ning asked.

"They try to nurture young geniuses from an early age. That way, by the time they are an adult, those kids will be a great asset to the Aether tower," Reeve said.

"And you weren't chosen back then, so you tried once more?" Ning asked.

"Oh, no. The folks from Aether Tower never visited my village when I was a child. So, I stupidly believed that I had what it took to enter the tower. However, when I got there, I finally realized what true talent was."

"You wouldn't believe me brother Ning, but I saw an 18-year-old kid at the time that was already Aether Master and on his way to becoming an Aether Grandmaster. That shocked poor old Aether Student like me," Reeve said.

Ning nodded his head as he heard that. He then thought of something and asked, "I saw the man from Aether Tower use that crystal ball to choose a kid to take. Can you explain why?"

Reever looked very confused at the question. "Uhh... What do you mean 'why', brother Ning? What am I supposed to say?" he asked.

"I was just wondering why they used the crystal ball," Ning said.

"You know what it does right?" Reever asked.

"Yes. It checks how much a person can passively take in Aether, right?" Ning asked.

"Yes. So, that's your answer right there," Reever said.

"But why focus on only those who can passively take in Aether? That is something that can be easily given to someone," Ning said. "Just hand them a simple absorption technique. Those work way better than passively taking in Aether."

Reever cocked his head to the side in confusion as he asked, "Absorption technique? What's that?" he asked.

"What? You don't know what absorption techniques are?" Ning asked.

"No. This is the first time I'm hearing this," Reever said. "Is this something you guys use down in the south?"

Ning got confused. 'How could he not know about absorption technique?' he wondered. 'Does no one in this world know about absorption techniques?'

"How would you say one can increase their Aether rank? Without having to wait years passively collecting Aether, that is," Ning asked.

"Oh, that's pretty simple. You use the Aether ores. You can buy some and use them to improve yourself," Reever said.

"No other way? No wonder you were rejected from the tower despite having a quite amazing talent for it all," Ning said.

'System, are absorption techniques gone from this world?' he asked.

<No. Few Aether users still own it. However, they are heavily kept secret everywhere so not many know about them>

'I see,' Ning thought. 'It might not be a good idea to give him one then. If he improves and people get suspicious, he will get into trouble when I'm not around.'

"Brother Ning?" Reeve called after seeing him fall into a daze.

"Sorry, I was thinking about something. Let's change topics. Is there anything else you want to talk about?" Ning asked.

"Something else? Not really, I suppose," Reeve said. "Ah, right. There is one thing. I heard that a young mistress from a noble family is here in the town. The bakery took their chance with ruining our name in hope that they could piggyback upon the young mistress' anger towards us to ruin us."

"Fortunately, this so-called young mistress never spoke up at all, or we would have been screwed," Reeve said.

"A young mistress?" Ning asked. Those words reminded him of the bratty girl that he had now seen twice in the hotel.

"I might have actually seen this girl. There's one in my hotel that always walks around with a butler of sorts. Maybe that's her?" Ning said.

"Woah, you've seen her, brother Ning? Is she noble-looking?" Reeve asked.

"I would say so," Ning said.

"And pretty too?" Reeve asked.

Ning was about to answer when Lisa stuck her head out from the doorway to the kitchen and said, "Hey! Why are you suddenly talking about girls when I'm away? You better not be having any other thoughts.. Just sit tight, the dinner will be ready any minute now."

## **Chapter 403: Talking About The Past**

Reeve helped Lisa bring out the most beautiful-looking spread of food Ning had seen in a long while.

The servings of meat and vegetables looked scrumptious and highly appetizing, so Ning started eating as soon as it was served.

"Oh my god! This is so delicious. I haven't eaten something this tasty in a really long time," Ning said.

"Haha, thank you," Lisa said meekly with a bashful face.

"My wife is great, isn't she? I can cook if I need to, but her cooking is on a different level from mine. There is nothing she can make that won't taste good," Reeve said.

"Aii, stop saying that. You're embarrassing me," Lisa said.

"Don't be. There is no shame in truth," Reeve said.

Ning took another bite of the meat and said, "The flavor in these is so rich. Where did you learn to cook like this?"

"Oh, it was uh... back home. I was always interested in cooking, so I would sneak into the kitchen throughout the day and learn to cook," Lisa said. "My mother didn't like that I did that. She even scolded me multiple times, but... my passion for cooking made me keep sneaking back into that kitchen."

Lisa's face had turned melancholic when she remembered about her home.

"What about your father? Did he approve of your cooking or did he scold you too?" Ning asked.

"Sigh, his... father never cared about me enough to approve or disapprove of anything I did. Sometimes I doubted that he even knew I existed," Lisa said.

Reeve grabbed her hands. "Forget about them, Lisa. You don't need a family that doesn't care about you or your passion. I'm here now, and you can always rely on me," he said.

"I know, dear," Lisa said.

"You two are really close, aren't you?" Ning asked. He never got to see himself do the same with Ely. They were separated just too soon. He shook his head free of the unnecessary thoughts.

"Ah right, speaking of which, when did you guys meet? And how?" Ning asked.

"Oh, when I met her, she was working as a store clerk in Boss's store," Reeve said.

"Boss? Ah, the tailor. You guys met there?" Ning asked.

"Yes, the boss found me when I was down on my luck right, struggling after I was rejected from the tower. He gave me a job, put food in my mouth, and gave me a place to stay." Reeve said.

"I met her when she worked there too, and slowly we fell in love. How long has it been again? About 7 years since we met, I think. Although, we got married 2 years ago only," Reeve said.

"I was in a similar situation too. I had just run away from home and desperately needed help to survive. Uncle helped me a lot," Lisa said.

"He sounds like a great guy," Ning said.

He talked for a bit longer as he finished the meal. After talking for a little longer, he said his farewell and left the place.

He thought about the things he had talked about and found it inspiring that the young couple was suffering hardships together.

'Although, Reeve should earn a lot. Why are they staying in such a rundown place? Should I even ask that question?' Ning thought.

He made his way back to the hotel using the evening street lamps to make way for himself. He went directly to his room and decided to practice for a bit.

He made a few rocks once again and tried to move them around using Aether only. After a few minutes, he stopped and went back to sleep.

Waking up for nearly 24 hours every single day, it wasn't surprising at all that he could sleep for 12 hours during the night.

When he woke up, another day with nothing to do started once again. The next two days went by doing the same thing. He wasted some time here and other time there. He ate when he was hungry, and finally, when he was bored, he went to the Bakery to spend some time there with Reeve who would also be bored.

Sometimes, Reeve would take him to different establishments to have fun. One of those days, he even took him to a gambling parlor where Ning nearly lost everything he had on the cards he played.

If it wasn't for being lucky one time, he would've lost it all for sure. Reeve didn't like gambling at all, so he only bet a very tiny amount. Thus, when he lost it, he didn't meet any strong emotions at all.

At the end of the 2nd day, Ning finally went back to the tailor to get his clothes. He made his way into the building and entered the store.

There were many workers in the store, but Ning wanted to speak with the boss, so he looked around.

He finally found the boss behind a black-suited person. When he walked closer, he could see something weird going on.



Ning actually recognized the black-suited man. He was the butler of the girl that he assumed was from a noble family. For some reason, the butler was bowing towards the boss with the boss seemingly annoyed about it.

The boss waved his hands around as he spoke inaudibly, and the butler who could hear it all quickly bowed again and walked away.

As his eyes followed him, Ning could see that the butler had gone back to the girl who was choosing fabrics over to his left at the corner of the shop.

Ning then made his way to the now free boss and said, "Hello sir, I'm here to get my clothes. I hope they are ready."

"Hmm, you are... " the boss looked at Ning's clothes. "Ah right, let me get your clothes."

The boss went and got Ning's clothes. "Here you go," he said. "Try it on."

"Okay," Ning said and went behind a curtain to get changed. It didn't take him long to finish wearing the clothes, and when he did, he walked out of the curtains.

The boss looked up and down at Ning and the clothes, and only uttered a single word.. "Perfect."

## **Chapter 404: The Play**

Ning dressed up in his new suit and walked out of his room. He felt weird wearing something so tight that he felt like his whole body was being constrained from the outside, but he had to go with what the society wore if he wanted to fit in.

Although, He didn't like the idea of wearing a hat, so he wore nothing on his head. Once he was ready, he went down the elevator and exited the hotel.

Today was the day for the theater play that he was looking forward to for 3 days now.

The theater wasn't that far away, so Ning reached the place in under 5 minutes. He met Reeve and Lisa outside the theatre and went in together.

The inside of the theater looked magnificent. Multiple bulbs lit up the inside while a cool breeze circulated throughout the hall prior to even entering the theater room.

"Let's go find out seats," Reeve said and walked in with Lisa. Ning followed behind and walked with them as well.

Their seats turned out to be at the very end of the hall, from where they could barely see.

"It's free, so you can't complain, can you?" Reeve said.

Ning didn't really mind sitting at the back since he had the magnification skill. But he worried that Reeve and Lisa wouldn't have as fun of a time.

The place started to get more and more filled and soon the lights dimmed as only the light on the stage shined.

A half-naked man walked onto the set, and with him, music followed. A low hum could be heard in the background as the man brought out a sword and started swinging it around.

The narrator started speaking. "Ever since his young age, Emperor Kron never had the talent for Aether. So, he spent all of his time focusing on swordsmanship and education."

"By the age of 20, he was a master at the sword. By 30, his understanding of politics surpassed even the best amongst the best. When he was 37, he defeated his brothers and became the Emperor of Xandria."

A girl in a maid costume walked from behind the curtains. "Your highness, the general is here to meet you," she said.

"Send him in," the Emperor said as he continued flexing his muscles while training with the sword.

The girls in the audience really seemed to like the handsome actor who played the emperor and his bare-chested body.

"Your majesty, I have come with bad news," the general said.

"You have come with news, General. Whether it is bad or good is something for me to decide," the emperor said.

"Your highness, the beasts are getting more and more restless. They attack the border cities and villages more and more frequently. If we don't do something soon, we will have to hear the sad news of these places being decimated someday soon," the General said.

"Hmm... that is bad news," the Emperor said. The Emperor thought for a second and called the minister.

"Yes, your highness," a bald man with a book walked out from behind the curtains.

"Send a letter to the Tower. I request as many men as they can give me," the Emperor said while facing the audience.

"Men, milord? What reason shall I tell them?" the minister asked.

"Tell them... we are going to war."

The rest of the play was about the emperor finding troops and fighting the beasts. There were some interesting costume designs that Ning found quite fun at the place.

What Ning found the most interesting was in particular the effects used by the theater. There were floating fire and water to give different effects, and Ning could only imagine how talented the person carrying out these effects must've been.

The war against the beasts ended and the narrator told them how the beasts never dared show themselves after the war.

The emperor then had a son, who would then come to be the current emperor of Xandria, Emperor Kain.

The final act of the play was the Emperor on his death bed. It turned out that all this time, he had been hiding a wound he acquired during the war against the beast, but he never let it hinder his will to help the masses.

There were sounds of sobbing from the audience as they witness the top-tier performance of the actor.

Ning didn't feel any emotion in particular, but that was likely because he wasn't part of this empire. He turned around to look at the husband and wife couple to see if they were emoting at all.

Lisa didn't seem to hold much emotion in her eyes, but Reeveer was definitely feeling the emotions. There were tears in his eyes as he was fully invested in the story.

The Emperor died on the stage and the curtain closed. The crowd stood up and gave a standing ovation at the fantastic play.

Reeveer was one of the most enthusiastic applauders amongst them. Lisa shook her head when she saw this and snickered a little.

Then, she saw something a little further away and her eyes changed. They went from entertained, to scared.

"Can we leave?" she asked. Ning hadn't noticed the change, so he was a little confused as to why she would suddenly ask that.

"Let's wait a couple of minutes. Let's thank the actors before we go," Reeve said, but Lisa wasn't having it.

"I'm... feeling a little lightheaded. Can we go back to the shop please," she asked.

"Oh, if you're not feeling well, then you should have told me earlier. Alright, let's go," Reeve said and started walking out.

Ning didn't have anything else to do, so he too walked out. As he left, he saw Lisa look towards the stage once more and leave in a hurry.

Ning turned around and looked towards where she did and saw someone there. 'Oh, she was here too, huh?' he thought.

"Brother Ning, you coming?" Reeve asked.

"Ah, yes.. Let's leave," Ning said and walked out of the theater with Reeve and Lisa.

## **Chapter 405: Is The Emperor's Job Easy?**

"Are you feeling okay now?" Reeve asked as he entered the bakery with Lisa.

"Yes, I'm feeling better," Lisa said. "I'm thirsty now. Wait here, I will bring you guys some water too."

Ning went and sat at a free table, and Reeve came to sit with him. "So, how did you like it, brother Ning? It was good right?" Reeve asked.

"Yeah, it was pretty good," Ning said. "By the way, that story... it was the same one you told the villagers in the desert right?"

"Oh, yeah. It's the story of Emperor Kron. Everyone basically knows the story already," Reeve said.

"Oh, and people still go watch the theater?" Ning asked.

"Of course. Just because they know the story doesn't mean that they don't want to see it play out in front of them. Seeing how much the Emperor gave up for our sake, it's quite heartbreaking to see. He's not considered the best emperor yet for no reason," Reeve said.

"Oh. I thought you watched the Theater play already. So we were just supposed to know this, huh?" Ning said.

"Well, I wouldn't have expected you to know that. It's only the Xandrians who are proud of our emperor, so," Reeve said.

"So, Emperor Kron died of the injury, and his son, Kain took over. Is that it?" Ning asked, trying to make sense of the royal lineage.

"Yes," Reeve said. "If not for his injury, Emperor Kron would've ruled for quite a long time. I suppose his son, Emperor Kain is going to rule for a long time now."

"So that's what you tell those poor villagers. They must take it as fact," Ning said.

"It is fact though, no? I mean, I don't see why the emperor would give up on his position at all," Reeve said.

"What if he just wants to relax for once?" Ning asked.

"He's the Emperor. He must be the most relaxed person of us all," Reeve said.

"Haha, you'd be surprised how much stress the people at high places go through on a daily basis," Ning said.

"What are you boys talking about?" Lisa walked out with the water.

"Oh, honey. What do you think? Is the Emperor's job hard or easy? I say that he is very relaxed, but brother Ning thinks that is not the case," Reeve asked.

"Why would the emperor's job be relaxing? He has to look after the entire Empire," Lisa said.

"Eh? But he has people he can order to do it for him," Reeve said.

"Yes, but he still needs to make the decisions. If he approves of something, and it turns out to be bad, he is the one everyone would blame. So, he would have to think about every decision properly," Lisa said.

"Uhh... damn, is it actually not as easy as I thought it was?" Reeve asked.

"I mean, it's definitely easier than ours, but perhaps not as easy as you might've expected it to be," Lisa said.

"Damn," Reeve said. "So, he might not want to stay an emperor forever then."

"Eh? Stay emperor forever?" Lisa asked.

"Ah right. Brother Ning doesn't think that Emperor Kain will stay as an emperor for as long as he could," Reeve said.

"No he won't," Lisa said. "It's already been 20-some years since his coronation. He should be giving up sometime soon."

"Wow, am I just that wrong at understanding the Emperor? I feel like I've been lying to those poor folks at the desert," Reeve said.

"Haha, you don't have to worry, dear. No one really knows anything. Everything will depend on the emperor in the end," Lisa said. "Alright, I'll go help them make bread. Keep talking you two."

Lisa left and went to the kitchen. Reeve stayed there trying to understand just why he thought being an Emperor was easy at all.

Ning chuckled quite a few times seeing Reeve go through revelations that had no business being one.

An hour or two passed by and the flow of customers increased by a lot. It was the breaktime for everyone, everywhere and so everyone was coming to eat at the bakery.

Reeve and Ning also got themselves some food and ate as they watched the staff maintain store business in this rush hour.

Towards the end just as the number of customers was getting really low, the door opened and two figures walked in.

Ning looked up and didn't divert his attention when he saw them. "Oh, it's them," he said.

Reeve looked up and Ning and followed his gaze towards the door to see a young, beautiful lady, followed by a middle-aged man in a suit and tie.

"Who are they, Brother Ning?" he asked.

"That's the noble lady I told you about. She might be the one you heard about," Ning said.

"Ah, her huh," Reeve said and looked at her.

The girl waved her paper fan around as she looked at the store. "Mmm, it's not bad for a place at the edge of nowhere," she said.

She then walked up to the counter and spoke to the girl, "This is the store that delivers food to the theater, right?"

"Uh, yes miss," the girl said.

"Mmm, and this is the same place that got them sick?" she then asked.

"We did not get the theater sick. It was—" the noble lady brought up her hands to stop the girl from talking any further.

"Yeah, I heard. It was a ploy by another bakery. Something must be good about this place to go that far, huh?" she asked. "Alright, bring me your best meal then."

The lady then went and sat at a free seat with her butler right by her. It only took a moment before Lisa walked out of the kitchen with food for her.

She walked up directly to the noble lady and said, "here's your butter coated bread and—" Lisa stopped speaking. Her eyes looked like they had seen ghosts.

The noble lady noticed that Lisa had stopped speaking and looked up when she too had a curious look on her face.

She cocked her head a little and asked, "Do I know you?"

## **Chapter 406: Ely**

"I-I don't think so," Lisa said and quickly put down the meal before turning around to walk away.

"Stop!" the noble lady ordered. "Turn around. I wish to see you once more."

"What's the matter, young lady? Do you know my wife?" Reeve asked as he walked forward.

The noble lady looked at Reeve for just a split second before saying, "this has nothing to do with you. Step aside, I just want to speak to the girl."

"Honey, what's going on? Just turn around for her to see," Reeve said.

"I-I can't do that," Lisa said, refusing to turn around to show her face.

Ning looked at them from the side with a confused look. 'Is she someone Lisa knows? Perhaps from her home where she ran away from?' he wondered.

"I'm sorry, young miss. But my wife says she doesn't want to turn around, so you shouldn't force her. Please enjoy your meal," Reeve said and turned to escort Lisa back to the kitchen area.

"Hey! You can't leave like that. Don't make me use my authority here," the girl cried out.

"Miss, you shouldn't abuse yo—"

"Shut up," the girl ordered her butler. "Make that girl turn around. I know I've seen her somewhere before."

The butler was troubled. He didn't want to do what she said at all, but he was supposed to follow all of her orders.

"Miss, we shouldn't force people to—"

"Do you want me to report to my father that you couldn't even follow my orders?" she asked the butler.

The butler's face was even more troubled now as he was starting to panic. He did not want the complaint to reach her father's ear. Offending her father would mean an end to his career.

"Young lady, I'm afraid I will have to ask you to turn around and show yourself. Please don't make me do it if possible," the butler said.

"What? My wife doesn't need to follow your order," Reeve started to get angry. "Let's go in, honey. We don't need to deal with these two."

"I wish you didn't make me do this," the butler said as he shook his head. Suddenly he brought up his hand and stopped both Reeve and Lisa from moving.

He then started putting in the effort to turn them both around. Reeve tried to put all of his Aether to stop himself from turning around, but the opponent was just too strong. Before he knew it, he was half-turned and could see the man from the corner of his eyes.

"That's enough," Ning's voice came from the side. It was a calm voice in a calm tone, but it rang like thunder in the butler's ear.

"Let go and sit down," Ning said.

"Sir, please don't interfere—"

"SIT DOWN!"

The butler lost all control of his body and suddenly felt himself drop down on his seat. His hands he had stretched out wide were now tucked away at his side.

He tried to stop it, but Ning's ability was too strong. The butler found himself unable to move even a single finger without Ning's approval. Beads of sweat started rolling from his forehead.



Suddenly, the force keeping him constrained disappeared and Ning walked up to them.

"What's wrong? Why did you stop?" the girl asked her butler. She didn't seem to have realized that Ning had done something to him.

"Miss, there are experts here. I can't do what you say," the butler said.

"What? I thought you were an expert too. Didn't you boast to my father that you fought in the war against the beasts? Where is that pride now?" she asked.

"There are places where we have to give up, miss. This seems to be one such place. Please forget about the girl," the butler said.

"But..." the girl turned around towards Lisa who still didn't turn around. "I am so close to remembering her..."

Reever turned around to take Lisa back. They were about to enter the door when suddenly, a shocked sound came from the girl.

"AH! I remember now," the girl said. Reever immediately turned around to look at what the girl was talking about.

Ning looked curiously as well.

"It can't be though... I thought you were dead," the girl said as her eyes darted around trying to find a meaning for this. "Is it really you, Ely?"

Ning's heart skipped a beat when he heard that. 'Huh? Ely?' he thought and looked around. But of course, it wasn't his Ely. She was still back in Kumia.

Lisa stopped by the door and turned around. "So you figured it out in the end, huh?" he asked. "You're not as slow as you used to be."

"I—" the girl didn't speak anything.

"Camie!" Lisa said in an authoritative voice.

"Y-Yes?" the girl asked.

"Eat and Leave. I do not wish to speak to you," Lisa said. "Understood."

"Y-Yes." The girl named Camie nodded like a dumb girl.

Ning looked in surprise as the dynamic between the two girls had suddenly changed.

"Also," Lisa continued. "Tell no one about me. If someone comes here looking for me, the first thing I will do is go looking for you."

"N-n-no, I won't tell anyone," the girl said in a scared tone.

"Good!" Lisa said and finally turned around to go back to the kitchen with Reeve following behind her.

Ning wanted to go and ask questions, but it seemed like a moment when he should let the two of them be alone.

"Who is that, miss?" the butler asked in a low voice, but the girl kept shaking her voice.

"I can't tell you, but you will know soon. Can we leave today?" the girl asked.

"Today? But we have the hotel booked for another week until the next theater play," the butler said.

"Doesn't matter. This is far more important. We need to let her family know as soon as possible that she is actually alive," the girl said.

"But, didn't she just threaten you to not say anything, miss?" the butler asked.

"Yes, but she will be too caught up in her own events to even worry about me," the girl said. "Let's leave."

The girl didn't even touch her food and left the bakery. Ning sighed after hearing everything the girl said.

'Should I do something?'

## **Chapter 407: Too Late**

"Honey, what's going on? Why did that girl call you 'Ely'?" Reeve asked as soon as he walked into the kitchen.

"Argghh!" Lisa started pacing back and forth with a lot of worries written on her face.

"Honey, can you answer me please," Reeve asked.

"This is troublesome. Very troublesome," Lisa said. "If my family find out I'm alive, they will come back for me. No, I don't want to go back there. I left everything behind already."

"Are you... from a noble family?" Reeve asked. "Did I marry a noble girl?"

"What? There's no time to be thinking about that. You have bigger problems now," the girl said.

Reeve took that as a 'yes'. "Oh lord, I married into a noble family," he said with a stunned expression. "Haha, Father, Mother! Look at how well your child is doing."

Lisa looked back with an annoyed expression.

"Lisa, tell me. Which family are you from? Howard? Manners? Russels?" Reeve asked. "What's your surname?"

"It's Skulls," Lisa said with an annoyed face.

Reeve nodded his head when he got the answer, but when he thought about it, he stopped. "Wait, no that's my surname."

"And I married you. What else do you want me to say?" Lisa asked.

"Your family name. The noble family's name," he asked.

"Did you not listen to me? I left my family. I no longer consider them as my family," Lisa said.

"But you said they would come back for you, right? Isn't that why you don't want to let them know?" he asked.

"Yes, and that's a big problem," Lisa said.

"Do you have bad blood with your family?" Reeve asked in a serious voice.

"I... kind of. I have bad blood with 2 people, but my relationship wasn't that bad with the others," Lisa said. "But that was then. I don't know how many people would hate me now and they will rejoice to see me in pain."

"What sort of family is that?" Reeve asked.

Just then, Ning walked in through the door. "I came to inform that the girl is leaving the city today and says she is going to go report you to your family," Ning said.

"Dammit, I knew it," Lisa said.

"Honey, it doesn't matter. Anything that comes at us, we two can handle it together," Reeve said.

"Don't you see, dear?" Lisa said. "The first thing they do after they find me is separate us. They won't be able to tolerate me being married to you."

"What? They can't do that. What will they do? Make us divorce each other?" Reeve asked with a scoff in his voice.

"No," Lisa said. "They will kill you. They will kill you and hide all existence of our marriage. I am just a tool to make connections for them. I... oh god, we need help."

"Do you want to deal with the girl?" Ning asked. "If she forgets this ever happened, then you will be safe."

"What? Can that be done?" Lisa asked suspiciously.

"I know how," Ning said. "And don't worry, the girl won't have any problems afterward."

"If you can, then please do so," Lisa said. "In the meanwhile, let's go find Uncle. He is the only one who would know what to do in this situation."

Ning nodded and left the place. He quickly made his way back to the hotel to find the girl.

'What room is she in?' he thought and tried to find a number. Just then, he saw her in the lobby, seemingly doing nothing there.

'That was easy,' he thought and walked up to her.

The butler saw Ning coming towards her and immediately got in front of protecting her. However, before he could even do anything, the butler felt unable to move or even speak.

His eyes showed full worry as the girl hadn't even realized what was happening.

"Relax, I'm not going to hurt her," Ning said when he got close. He placed his hands on her head, and only then did she realize someone was there.

"What the—" before she could even finish sentence, she was dominated. Just to be safe, Ning dominated the butler too and let him free.

"Master!" they both called him.

"Listen up, forget that you ever met Lisa, or as you call her Ely. Do not reveal this information to anyone else," he ordered them.

"Yes master," they said.

"Good," Ning said and was about to turn around when the girl spoke.

"But master, I have already told people about it," she said.

"What?" Ning asked in surprise. He looked around to see if someone was there in the lobby and asked, "Who?"

"My father, master," she said.

"Your... father? Is he here too?" Ning asked.

"No, I messaged him through the telephone in the hotel lobby," she said.

"You te— shit! There are telephones here?" Ning asked and turned around to find one in the hotel lobby.

'Dammit, I can't do anything about that,' he thought. There was no point in making the two do anything anymore, so he let them go, but kept the domination.

He turned around and walked away from the hotel lobby. He made his way to the tailor where Lisa and Reeve should've gone to right now.

He saw them talking with the boss and walked up to them. "I'm sorry guys, but she already called back home and told her father about you," Ning said.

Lisa saw the world leave her for a moment. "No, this can't be happening," she said.

"It seems you have no choice but to embrace it now. Your family will come sooner or later to find you. It's better if you go to them first," the boss said.

"But what about him? They will kill him, won't they? The girl asked.

"Do you have that little faith in your own family?" the boss asked, but then suddenly remembered something and said, "Sorry, I forgot."

"Anyway, he is why you should go back yourself. Make a public return with this young man so that they have no way of hiding his existence after you return," the boss said.

Lisa thought about it for a moment and asked, "Is that really the only way?"

Reeve had nothing to say in what she was thinking as he had no understanding of the gravity of the situation.

"I'm afraid so, my child," the boss said with a heavy sigh.

## Chapter 408: Leaving

Ning woke up early in the morning. Reeveer and Lisa had planned to leave back to her home early this morning, so he wanted to make sure they made it safely there.

At the same time, he would be leaving this place and continuing his adventure.

He canceled his hotel room and left the place. He walked through the morning crowd and made his way to the train station.

"Oh, you guys are already here," Ning said as he saw the husband-wife pair waiting on the train platform with a few suitcases around them.

Reeveer was wearing the same dress as he did when Ning first met him in the desert, and Lisa wore a flower pattern pink gown with a blue flowery hat on her head.

"Oh, brother Ning, you're here. Thank you so much for doing this. My fear of what's going to happen keeps increasing more and more every hour. She won't even tell me anything either," Reeveer said.

"Don't worry, I will help you get there safely," Ning said.

"Thank you so much, Ning," Lisa said. "I will help you as much as I can assuming I still hold any authority back at home."

"It's fine. I'm just doing this because you are my friends. Besides, I was getting bored with this place anyway and it was time for me to leave soon," he said.

"Thank you," Lisa said once more. The train came to the station, puffing a plume of white smoke above it. Steam was released from multiple instances around the train and made the place look more crowded than it actually was.

The three boarded the train and went to find themselves a seat. The couple sat on two empty seats on one side, and Ning sat on the opposite side.

It was slowly starting to get hot on the train, so Reeveer took off his hat and so did Lisa. She removed her hairpin, and her beautiful black hair fell down onto her shoulders.

Reeveer looked at her and immediately his eyes went wide. "Honey!" he called out and whispered something into her ears.

Ning got curious and used his enhanced hearing to listen to what he had to say.

"Did you forget to dye your hair last night?" he asked. Lisa's eyes went wide when she heard that and immediately tried to put on her hat. But then, she stopped and her expression returned to normal.

"It's fine. I don't need to dye it anymore," she said.

"Huh?" Reeveer looked at her with a confused expression.

"What's going on?" Ning asked.

"It's... nothing, brother Ning," Reeveer said.

"Does it have something to do with her blonde hair?" Ning asked.

"Sshh! Don't say that out loud, brother Ning," Reeveer said with his finger to his lips.

"Oh sorry. Why not?" he asked.

"Lisa has... um, an inferiority complex about her hair. She feels out of place with her blonde hair, so he has to keep dyeing it every day," Reeveer said.

"Oh," Ning said. "That can happen."

Suddenly, he heard a sigh coming from next to Reeveer. "That's not it, honey," she said.

"What do you mean?" Reeveer turned around to ask her.

"I don't have any complex. It's just... Blonde hair gives me away whenever I am out since no one else has it. So, I have to dye it. I couldn't really explain it to other people, so Uncle had the idea to tell people that I had a complex about it," Lisa said.

Reeveer looked dumbfounded. "Wait, so all the time we bought the expensive dyes for your hair, you didn't need it?" Reeveer asked, with a face that said he was betrayed right now.

"No!" Lisa exclaimed. "It was necessary. If I didn't have dyes, I would've been found out long ago."

"How?" Reeveer asked.

"Because only my family members can have blonde hair. That is where the name blonde started too," Lisa said.

"What?" Reeveer looked confused. "I have never heard of blonde hair belonging to a specific family."

"It's not a very well-known information amongst the commoners, but amongst the nobles, everyone knows this. That's why I had to do what I did," she said.

The train conductor came at that moment and asked for their tickets. Ning bought himself one and looked at Reeve who was too confused and stunned to do anything.

Lisa brought out a few coins and paid for herself.

"You're still not telling me about your family, honey. How are you? A Baron? A Viscount? An Earl? A Marquess?" Reeve asked.

Lisa just shook her head. "You'll find soon enough," she said.

Suddenly a card rolled up next to them. A middle-aged woman was selling food on the cart.

"You dears need anything?" she asked. "I have food and drinks."

"Do you have anything cold to drink?" Reeve asked.

"Let's see... I have chilled water, fruit juice, or tea. What do you want?" she asked.

Reeve thought for a moment and said, "Give us 3 glasses of juices then."

"Okay," the lady poured 3 glasses of juices and handed them to the three. "That would be 3 coins," she said.

"Oh, that's quite cheap," Reeve said as he paid her.

The lady took the coins and moved on. "Hey what do we do with these glasses— and she's gone. We should probably just keep it here at the side after we are done," Reeve said and handed the juices to Lisa and Ning.

"Alright, let's just drink up and forget about this depressive talk," he said and started drinking.

Lisa shook her head and also drank her juice.

Ning chuckled a little and looked at the orange juice in his glass. "Hmm?" he thought when he smelled something. He smelled once more and the orange juice definitely had something in it.

His eyes widened and he immediately gulped it down. Suddenly, he could feel something happening in his stomach, a low rumbling as it threatened to hurt him.

"Oh no," Ning thought when he realized what was happening.



He was poisoned.

## **- Chapter 409: Don't Shoot**

### **Chapter 409: Don't Shoot**

Ning didn't have to worry about being poisoned as his body could handle it without needing his intervention much. However, he couldn't say the same about the other two in front of him.

He looked up front and suddenly saw Lisa vomit out a whole bunch of juice onto the ground. He breathed heavily as she spat out what little juice there was in her mouth.

"Oh no, honey," she cried out and immediately turned around towards Reeve. Ning turned as well and was shocked.

Reeve was starting to foam at the mouth as his whole body spasmed uncontrollably.

"No!" Lisa cried out. She put her hands on his chest and all she could do was watch them shake in fear. She was trying to do something, but she herself didn't know what she could even do in this situation.

Her husband was dying of poison and the only thing she could do was watch him die.

"Move," Ning stood up and immediately touched Reeve's chest.

'System, heal him,' he ordered without wasting a single moment. A low light shined from underneath his hands as the spasming body stopped moving and Reeve finally coughed out the foam in his mouth.

He felt his body go weak and fell unconscious.

"What did you do?" Lisa cried out when she saw him faint.

"Don't worry. I healed him. His body is weak so he fell unconscious. He will wake up soon," Ning said. "Are you okay though? You didn't seem to have any problem."

"I'm fine. I can take care of myself," Lisa said as she checked up on Reeve.

"Did you know it was poison?" Ning asked

"Not until it was too late," Lisa said. "How are you okay? I saw you drink it too."

"Don't worry about me. My body can handle many types of poison without much trouble. I am a medical professional, remember?" Ning said. "What about you? Where did you learn to deal with poisons in your drink?"

"We're taught from a young age to deal with any situations. This was just one of those," Lisa said.

Ning looked at her with scrutiny and shook his head. "I'll go find that old lady. She has some explaining to do," Ning said.

"Don't," Lisa said. "That's only the start. More attacks will be happening soon. You need to find a place and hide for now."

Ning looked at her and asked, "Are you serious? How do you know that?"

"Because they want to make sure I never return back there. They are trying to get rid of me right here, and that was only the start. That old lady was likely never old or a lady. You won't find her on the train anymore."

"Also, she messed up the easy kill, so we will have to go through the much more direct attack very soon," Lisa said.

Ning's eyes went wide at the girl's deduction. "Who hates you so much that they would rather kill you than watch you return?" Ning asked.

"It's... likely my 2nd brother. He is the only one I know who can do this," Lisa said.

"Your family has internal struggling?" Ning asked.

"Yes," Lisa said. "it's never direct, but they still do it since it's impossible to point fingers without any evidence. They learned that I was coming back and likely plotted this attack."

"I see," Ning said. "So we still have enemies on this train."

"Yes," Lisa said as she looked at the empty seats around her with only a few people still there minding their own business. "It's very likely that we have enemies on this very cart."

Suddenly, a man about a few seats down who was reading his newspaper put down the paper and stood up. He reached behind him and brought out a gun before pointing it towards them.

"You are way too smart for a young lady that does nothing but sell bread," he said. "Although, all that brain isn't going to help you right now."

Ning looked at the man with a shocked expression. He wasn't shocked that the man turned out to be an enemy. He was shocked that there were guns in this world now.

'It's certainly developed to this point, huh?' he thought.

"Now, hands where I can see them, young miss," the man said.

"You don't have to do this. Just go away," Ning said from the side.

"Who the hell are you? I said hands up," the man shouted as he cocked his gun.

Ning however didn't put his hands up at all. "Don't shoot, or you will—"

**BANG**

The man shot Ning directly in the forehead. The bullet entered Ning's head and came out on the other side.

"AAAHH!" Lisa cried out.

"Uh-Uh! No shouting or moving, missy," the man said as he cocked his gun once more. "What happened to him is going to happen to you as well," he said.

"YOU!! Do you even know who I am? Are you aware of what you are doing?" Lisa asked.

"Nope, who are you, missy? You are certainly important for someone to pay 50 Gols just to kill you," The man said. Suddenly the man caught Lisa moving her hands and immediately shot her on her leg.

"You can't try that against me, missy. I've killed far too many people to be distracted from simple words," the man said and cocked his gun again.

"Now you die. Any last words?" the man asked.

"Yes, just one," Ning's voice came from the side as the man lost all control of his body. He moved the only thing he could move right now, his eyes, and looked to the side to see Ning get up with not a single wound on him.

He was miraculously resurrected somehow. The man's eyes went wide in fear at not being able to understand what had just happened.

Suddenly, he felt his hands move as his elbows slowly bent towards himself and the gun was directly pointed to his own temple.

His eyes were begging Ning not to do it, but he couldn't speak at all.

"DIE!"

BANG

The man sprayed his own brain all over the train floor and fell to the ground.

Ning looked at the dead man and shook his head.

Lisa looked at it and then immediately towards the others in the same cart.. "Careful, we have more trouble incoming."

## **Chapter 410: More Assassins**

Ning immediately stood up and looked at the two men towards the front of the cart that had stood up after hearing the sound of the gun shot.

They too brought out a gun and cocked it.

"Argh!" Lisa cried out. Ning turned around to see that she was bleeding from the gun shot to the leg she had suffered.

"Are you hurt bad?" he asked.

"I can manage," she said and brought her hands towards her leg. Before Ning could even say something, he heard the bullet drop onto the floor and could see the blood stop flowing from her wound.

She had somehow managed to fix her wound by herself.

"You are an Enchanter?" he asked.

"Yes, same as you," she said.

The door to that train cart opened and 3 more people entered. 2 of them were men and one of them was a woman that had features resembling that of the old lady that served them the juices.

All of them brought out their guns to target them.

"Shit!" Lisa said as she felt overwhelmed by the number of people in the cart. 5 people at once was not something she was proficient at handling.

Ning looked back and saw that Reeveer was still unconscious. The men were closing up on them and Ning got more alert.

His body wasn't strong enough to survive the bullets, so if he was hit at all, it would decommission him out of the fight for a second or two. That was long enough for the assassins to kill Lisa and Reeve.

"I didn't expect you to last this long, little girl," A man spoke from the front. He looked down on the floor at the blood puddle with the dead person next to it.

He then looked at Ning and said, "I wasn't aware that you would have an expert protecting you. The price on your head should have been worth more."

"If the price is not worth it, then leave. Go tell your client that you need more money," Lisa said.

"Unfortunately, I can't do that, young miss. We already took the bounty, now all we can do is fulfill it. Our reputation is on the line," the man said.

"Reputation? Who are you?" Lisa asked the man.

"You might have heard of us. We are the Shadow Pavillion."

Lisa's eyes went wide in fear. "No, not even he would be stupid enough to employ you guys," she said.

"I don't know who you are talking about, but we were assigned with the task to kill you. Now it's time we finish it," the man pointed his gun towards Lisa and pulled the trigger.

BANG

"AARGH!" Lisa cried out in shock as she brought her hands up in a futile attempt to protect herself.

However, the bullet never hit her or any other part of the train. It was like it had magically disappeared.

She slowly opened her eyes to see the look of shock and surprise on her attacker's face. She wondered what had happened when her eyes slowly focused onto what was in front of her.

The bullet was spinning in midair right in front of her without moving a single inch forward. The bullet then fell to the ground as a subtle yellow light shimmered in front of Lisa.

"What did you do?" the man asked in surprise.

"W-What's going on?" Lisa herself didn't know what was happening.

"You!... Shoot them!" the man ordered.

All 5 of the assassins in the room cocked their gun and started shooting.

**BANG! BANG! BANG!**

Multiple gunshots could be heard all around them as the shooting persisted for a few moments.

However, the assassins didn't see what they were hoping to see at all. Instead of blood pouring out of the bullet wounds, all they could see was a yellow shimmer in front of Lisa and Ning that had blocked every single bullet that was shot at them.

"What?" the man screamed out in shock. He couldn't believe what he was seeing. The spinning bullets fell to the ground, clanking on the metal floor.

While Lisa was stunned, Ning got to work. He put his hands forward and a bunch of rocks formed in mid-air. Ning put in Aether onto it and soon the rocks started burning.

With a simple push, the rocks flew through the air at a very fast speed and went towards the two men at the front.

The first man put his hands up front and used his enchanting powers to push the rocks a little to the side so that they missed him.

The other man however didn't seem to be an Enchanter, and instead an Invoker. He tried to create a layer of water to drown out the rock's flames, but he couldn't finish creating the water fast enough.

The rock hit in right in the chest and very quickly his shirt caught on fire. The man immediately dropped on the ground and started patting on his chest to put out the fire.

The other man walked up to him and tried to put out the fire using his enchanting skills.

During that time, Ning put forth his hands and the gun by his side flew up to him. He opened the chamber and saw that there were still 3 bullets left in it.

He immediately turned around and looked at the 3 assassins behind him who were trying to reload their gun.

"Stay in the barrier," Ning ordered Lisa and walked out. He wasn't confident on his aim at all, so he decided to get closer.

Once he was close enough, he pointed at the man in the middle. The 3 of them had just finished filling their chamber with new bullets and pointed at Ning.

However, slowly, their aim started to change.

The men and woman grunted, but they couldn't stop their hands from changing. They were now pointing directly at the two men that were trying to put out the fire.

Ning calmly aimed at the man in the center and pulled the trigger.

BANG

## Chapter 411: Shadow Pavillion

A gaping hole appeared on the forehead of the assassin as blood started flowing through his head. The other two assassins nearly wet themselves when they saw that.

The man had died so easily. And yet, somehow his body was still upright, holding the gun in position to attack the other two assassins.

Ning brought the gun down and cocked it again before pointing at the 2nd man.

"N-No!" the man spoke, but that was all he could do. Ning didn't bother listening to the man at all.

BANG!

Another man was dead and still his body remained upright. Ning cocked his gun once more and pointed towards the last remaining person on this side of the cart, the girl.

Ning put his finger on the trigger as he looked at the begging eyes of the girl. She desperately wanted him to not kill her.

Ning suddenly put the gun down. "I can't shoot you," he said.

The girl's eyes widened with surprise and a happy expression came upon her face.

Then Ning spoke again. "Shooting you would be too kind. You tried to poison us, right? It's only right that I poison you as well."

Ning asked the system to make some poison that he could use against the girl. The system quickly created a vial of poison that appeared in a flash of light in front of Ning.

He caught the vial and slowly walked up to the girl. The fear in the girl's eyes was something Ning very rarely saw even in Kumia.

"If you do something to others, you need to at least be ready to have the same thing done to you as well," Ning said as he slowly opened her mouth and poured in the poison.

He waited for just 2 seconds before the most vicious of screams left the girl's mouth. Lisa who was not far away felt her heart skip a beat when she heard her cries.

She looked at Ning with fearful eyes at just what he was capable of.

The two men were done putting out the fire and they also saw the girl scream. They couldn't tell what was wrong with her at first, but slowly, they saw her stomach melt away as blood started pouring out of her.

BANG!

Ning put a bullet in the woman and shut her up for good. Even he hadn't expected the poison to do this 'good' of a job.

Even after she died, the poison kept eating away her inside as she practically melted from the inside out.

Even then, she was standing still with her gun pointed at the other two. Without a single wasted moment, Ning made her and the other two dead corpses shoot.

Multiple gunshots rang once more, but this time it was the two men who were being shot at. Immediately they ducked to the side of the train behind one of the seats.

Even then, one of them got hit on the legs. He dragged himself to hide behind the seat.

The two men would put out their heads and shoot towards Ning, but Ning was already next to Lisa by now and was protected by the barrier he had put up earlier.

Ning walked away from the barrier and towards the two men once they were out of bullets.

He walked up to behind the seats to see the two men furiously putting in the bullets onto the empty chamber with trembling hands. When they saw Ning show up, they felt fear like never before.

The man with the bullet in his leg finishing reloading and quickly pointed at Ning. Ning casually grabbed the gun and tried to pull away, but the man pulled the trigger before Ning could grab the gun away.

3 of Ning's fingers were blown away. "Tsk!" Ning cried out. He couldn't feel the pain, but he still didn't expect himself to be so slow that he lost to a normal human.



The other man finished reloading as well and pointed at Ning. Ning didn't bother with grabbing the gun anymore and directly pulled out a spear from his storage.

With a single swing, he managed to cut one of the men's wrists and half the gun of another man. The man with the lost wrist cried out in pain. Meanwhile, the other man was in shock to see his gun cut in half.

Ning looked at them with a disgusted face and swung once more. With that single swing, he killed both of the men at once.

Ning wiped away the blood from his spear blade using the men's clothes and stored it back. Finally, he returned back to Lisa and turned off the barrier.

"Who are you?" Lisa asked with a stunned expression.

"What do you mean?" Ning asked.

"You... you have killed people before?" she asked.

"Yes, I have," Ning said.

"But you said you were a doctor. What sort of doctor kills people?" She asked.

"I'm whatever I need to be," Ning said. "Come on let's leave this cart. It's not a good idea to sit around in such a bloody place."

Lisa mindlessly nodded as she kept staring at Ning and then at the other men.

"Don't worry, they won't harm you now," Ning said.

"They will. This was only the beginning," Lisa said.

Ning was a little surprised. "Are you sure?" he asked.

"You don't know Shadow Pavillion. They will keep sending people to kill you until the job is done. Since we killed their low leveled assassins, they will start sending higher ones to kill me," she said.

"Are they a well-known assassin group?" Ning asked.

"They are well known in the underground circles. They are very hated by everyone with high status, but somehow my brother seems to have gotten in contact with them and sent them to kill me," she said.

"Your brother must hate you a lot then," Ning said carelessly. He picked up Reeveer onto his shoulder and said, "Let's go.. We don't want to be seen with so many corpses around us."

## Chapter 412: Dual Awakener

Reeveer slowly got back to consciousness as the sound of the train rattling came from around him. He was weaving back and forth on the seat along with the train.

He slowly opened his eyes to see the sideways figure of Ning sitting on the seat in front of him. "What's... going on?" he asked. He found himself lying on his wife's lap with a splitting headache burning through his mind.

"Hey, you! You're finally awake," Ning said as he saw Reeveer open his eyes. "You were trying to drink the juice the old lady got us, walked right into her trap, same as us. Damn those assassins. We were doing fine until they came along."

He suddenly got up from his wife's lap and screamed, "Assassins?!"

The people sitting in the cart suddenly turned to look at him with a weird look. Reeveer cowered down a little and hid back into his seat.

"Assassins?" he whispered quietly.

"Yes, but it's fine. We've taken care of them already. We were poisoned by them, but fortunately for you, you had a doctor riding with you," Ning said.

"Let's not talk about that anymore, please. That is not an experience I want to keep remembering," Lisa said with a shaken face.

"Sorry," Ning said. "Anyway, you've been asleep for two hours or so. We should be reaching our destination in another hour."

"Oh, okay," Reeveer said dumbly. He was still confused a little and took the moment to gather his thoughts.

"So, I was poisoned?" he asked.

"Yes," Ning said.

"But why? A terrorist?" he asked. "Wait, no. You said assassins, so were these deliberate attacks?"

Ning didn't answer immediately and looked towards Lisa. He was waiting to see if she wanted to tell the truth or hide it.

"They were after me, and by proxy, you as well. Someone in my family doesn't want me to return," she said. "And it's likely my second brother."

"What?" Reeve asked. "Your second brother hates you?"

Lisa fell into thought for a bit and said, "Hate is perhaps not the right word. It's more like my existence is a threat to him, so he wants to get rid of me."

"Still, your brother tried to have you killed. What a shitty brother. What threat could a sister have to him?" Reeve cried out loud.

"He didn't have any before. But since he thinks I do, I will make sure there is some now," Lisa said with a determined face.

"How much money do you have?" she asked Reeve. "We will need to buy some dye at the capital when we land."

"I have the dyes right here with me," Reeve said as he brought out a paper bag.

"No," Lisa said. "Not black. I will need to dye my hair yellow."

"Yellow?" Reeve asked. "You really don't have a complex about your hair then?"

"I'm sorry. It was just a lie I had to say to not make you question my motives at the time," she said.

"You don't have to wait until the capital. I can't help you get your natural hair right now," Ning said.

"Really? You can do that?" Lisa asked with surprise.

"Eh? How will you do that, brother Ning?" Reeve asked with a confused face.

"Easily," Ning said and stood up to place his hands on Lisa's hair. "Any length choices?"

"No, I like it just the length it is," she said. Her hair went a little past her shoulders and that was the way she wanted it.

"Alright, here I go," Ning said and asked the system to return Lisa's natural hair.

In a flash of light, the dark colors went away from her hair and a bright blonde color remained that made her stand out a lot.

"Done," Ning said and sat back on his seat.

Reever's eyes went wide when he saw his golden-haired wife. "You look beautiful, honey. I can't believe what I was missing out on," he said.

"Eh?" she quickly grabbed her hair and brought it in front of her. From root to tip, every single strand of her hair had grown blonde.

A few tears left her eyes. "Thank you. It's been years since I've seen my hair in this color. I won't have to live in fear of being found out any more," she said.

Reever suddenly turned to look at Ning and asked, "Brother Ning, you can Enchant as well?"

Ning chuckled a little and said, "Yes, I can."

"Hmm, what do you mean as well?" Lisa asked.

"Eh, didn't you know? Brother Ning is an Invoker. But he can somehow Enchant too," Reever said.

"No way, wouldn't that make him..." Lisa gasped in surprise.

"Yeah, I'm what's known as a Dual Awakener. I can both Invoke and Enchant," Ning said.

"That's right. You created those rocks too. I forgot," Lisa said.

"Eh? What rocks?" Reever asked.

"Never mind," Lisa quieted down, not wanting to let her husband learn about the massacre.

"Let's just sit tight. We will reach the station soon," Ning said.

The rest of the way went normally. Ning left the seat once to go to the toilet and returned quite soon.

They watched the grassland with massive farms pass by from their windows. Ning could feel the air get significantly colder as the time went on and by the time the next hour had passed, it was the temperature had come to the point which in most places would be considered normal.

'We must be getting further from the equator,' he thought. The train kept moving as it whistled and puffed steam through the countryside.

In just a few more minutes, the grasslands ended, and more modern houses could be seen on the horizon. The capital was getting closer.

Far in the distance, Lisa saw the silhouette of a city through the window.

"We're here," Lisa said with a face of anticipation. It had been almost 15 years since she left, and she was finally back once again.

"I'm home."

## Chapter 413: Noble Square

The three of them got off the train and brought out their stuff to the platform.

"What do we do about the cart?" Lisa softly asked Ning.

"Don't worry, I've already dealt with that," Ning said. "Anyway, now that you are here, do you still need me to go along with you? Will you be in danger at your own home?"

"Please stay with us, if you can. The danger isn't gone yet. My brother won't stop targetting me just because I'm home. It didn't stop him before," Lisa said. "But the worse problem is the Shadow Pavillion. They won't let go of this humiliation so easily."

Ning nodded. "Alright, let's go then."

Lisa had her hair tied up in a bun and was wearing a hat on top of it. Unless someone really looked for it, they would likely not see her hair.

Ning took all the suitcases into his storage and they all walked out.

"Woah!" Reeve exclaimed when he saw the city. "It's so crowded, and the buildings are so tall. Also, why are they all so colorful? Do the people in the capital have that much money?"

"Have you never been to the Xandria city before?" Lisa asked. "I thought you came here to take your Aether Tower test."

"No, I took those in Sterling city. I would have come here for the 2nd test if I passed that. Unfortunately, I didn't," Reeve said.

Ning looked and found the capital to be much better than the city of beginnings. The place had many people, but the roads were also much bigger so it didn't look as crowded.

Colors flashed everywhere, be it buildings or people. Even the carriages were very colorful.

"Where do we go now?" Reeve asked.

"The Noble square," Lisa said.

"The... noble square?" Reeve asked. "What's that place?"

"As the name suggests, it's a place where only nobles are allowed to live in. Unless you have a noble title, you cannot purchase land in that area," Lisa said.

"Ah, right. I've heard of those. So your house is there too?" Reeve asked.

"It's close enough," she said.

Reeve walked out and stopped a carriage. It was a human-run carriage with the driver outside the carriage, controlling it with his Aether.

"Where to?" the driver asked.

"Uh... the-The Noble square, please," Reeve said. He wasn't used to riding human-drawn carriages at all and became a little awkward.

They all got in and the carriage started moving.

"Dammit, I didn't realize it was the expensive kind. I wouldn't have stopped him if I knew beforehand," Reeve said.

"Then why didn't you just send him away?" Ning asked.

"It makes me look like a cheapskate if I do that though. Also, don't all nobles ride these sorts of carriages? I want my wife to return like a noble too," he said.

Lisa giggled a little when she heard that. "Thank you for your kind thoughts, but unfortunately, what you said will not come true," she said.

"Eh? Why not?" Reeve asked.

Lisa just smiled and looked out of the window. Her face showed an expression of nostalgia as well as unfamiliarity as she looked outside.

"This place has changed a lot," she said.

The place transitioned from a commercial place to one with fewer people but bigger buildings with signs hung around them.

"Building of Agriculture. Office of Electricity and Telecommunication. Are we in some sort of government zone or what?" he asked.

"Ah yes, this is the area with a lot of government buildings. In fact, every single government building is right here, in this very block" Lisa said.

The carriage went past the governmental area and reached a much nicer neighborhood. The houses were much cleaner looking and had a lot more color. There were also significantly fewer people here.

"Is this the Noble square?" Reeve asked.

"No, this is just a simple area for richer families to live in,' Lisa said.

"Eh? Such nice location and it's not for nobles?" Reeve was surprised.

"You will be shocked when you see how well the nobles' houses are," Lisa said.

Ning looked out and saw significantly more colors that just made the area look aesthetically pleasing.

It didn't look as depressing as the city of Beginnings did.

"I don't see many kids around here," Ning said.

"What's the day today? 2nd of the week right? They must all be in school right now," Lisa said.

"Oh, so they don't work like in City of Beginnings?" Ning asked.

"No, people here can afford enough without sending their children to work as well. Still, you will see them in the commercial area from time to time," Lisa said.

The neighborhood changed once more and Reeve was finally sure that this was the noble square.

Each of the houses was massive manors with its own garden and lawn. They were all far apart from each other, and he could see many servants tending to them past the walls.

"Where should I stop?" the driver asked from outside.

"The furthest you can go," Lisa said from inside.

"The furthest?" the driver looked at them in shock. "Are you sure?"

"Yes," Lisa said.

The driver didn't speak anymore and brought them to the furthest he was allowed to around here and stopped.

The three of them got down on the side of the road at the end of the noble square. Reeve felt his heart bleed when he paid 30 Sils for just that one ride.

"Let's go," Lisa said and walked forward away from any of the houses in the area.

Reeve was confused, but he kept on following. Finally, they came upon a massive mansion, far bigger than any of the ones that Reeve had seen previously.

"No way! So big," he said softly as he looked at the wide mansion. He couldn't even tell how long it was, but just from the length, he could tell that the person living here must've been one of the richest men in not just Xandria, but in the entire world.

There was a long line of people at the gate, waiting to enter the building. Reeve also walked up to the line and got in the queue.

But then a hand grabbed his arm and pulled him away.

"You don't have to line up," Lisa explained.

Ning followed the two as they strayed away from the long queue of people and went directly towards the main gate that wasn't even open.

"Open the gate," she ordered the guards standing guard.

The guards were a little surprised. They looked at her face but couldn't recognize her at all. Still, the way she was giving orders, they couldn't immediately ignore her.

"Miss, please queue up in the line. We will let you enter once we've confirmed your identity," the guards said.

Lisa sighed and took down her hat. "Then bring someone with more authority," she said.

The guards immediately went pale in their faces when they saw the golden hair flow down from her head.

They immediately ran away and got an older gentleman who was wearing a blue suit and tie and had a monocle on his left eye.

The moment he arrived and saw Lisa, his eyes went wide.

"Open the gate," he ordered.



The guards opened the gate and the old man walked out. He immediately got onto his knees and spoke.

"It's an honor to welcome you back, Your highness, Princess Elizabeth."

## Chapter 414: The Palace

Lisa smiled when she saw the old man. "Uncle Tim, I didn't expect to see you still working here," she said.

"Your highness, this old bone has only known this one job. No one else would accept me due to my lack of experience," the old man said.

"It seems your humor hasn't changed either. If you are considered inexperienced, then it's safe to say that this empire is in deep trouble," Lisa said.

"Haha," the old man laughed. "Please come in, Princess."

Lisa nodded and walked in. Ning followed behind her, only to realize that Reeveer wasn't moving at all.

He turned around to see that he was awestruck at what was happening.

"Honey?" Lisa too noticed that he didn't move and called out to him. "What's wrong?" she asked.

"Your highness, these are?" the old man asked.

"This is my bodyguard," Lisa said as she pointed to Ning. "And this is Reeveer Skulls, my husband."

The old man's eyes went wide. "Yo-your husband, princess? You got married?" the old man asked in surprise.

"Yes, I got married for nearly 2 years now," she said.

"Oh dear god! This is big news. Let's go in quickly princess. I still need to announce your return to the whole family," the old man said.

Ning pulled Reeveer who was slowly coming out of his shock. "Um, dear... when he says, Princess... it's an endearing term right?" he asked.

Lisa chuckled when she heard that. "I'm sorry for keeping this secret, but No. I really am the princess. I am the 3rd daughter of Emperor Kain, the only royal Princess of the land.," she said.

Reever's jaw dropped when he finally heard the truth come out from his own wife's mouth.

"It's... really true then?" he asked.

"Yes," Lisa said. "Now let's go in."

The path past the gates went past 2 massive gardens on either side of the road, which split around a giant 20 meter wide, circular fountain with multiple streams of water coming out of it at the center.

The split road then joined on the other side of the fountain, in front of the main palace.

The palace itself was fully white in color with golden accented pillars at different places.

Ning could see that the palace was nearly 300 meters wide, with a little open area on either side before massive trees grew around them.

Ning counted close to 40 different windows just on the front 3 floors of the palace, each tinted in a shade of black that made it impossible to see inside.

He then saw multiple pointed endings on the roof up at the top that had guards sitting on them, looking around the place.

He was only then starting to notice the other people that were around the place. The maids, servants, guards, there were so many of them, and every single one of them was looking at him.

Or more accurately, they were looking at Lisa with faces of shock.

The three of them walked up 3 stairs to reach the main door of the palace and walked in.

The people inside turned to look at who was entering, and when they did, they were all shocked.

"They all recognize you?" Ning asked.

"No, it's the hair," Lisa said. "My status is on a higher level thanks to my hair."

"Your hair gives you a higher status?" Reever asked confusedly. "How does that work?"

"Amongst the prince and princesses, only 3 of us were able to acquire the golden hair from our father. This means that only the 3 of us have a right to become the future ruler of this empire," Lisa said.

"What? Does that mean you ca—"

"Sister?" a surprised voice came from somewhere in front of them in the hall. Lisa turned around to see a black-haired girl that was slightly younger than her.

"Lina?" Lisa asked with a shocked expression.

"Is that... really you, sister Liz?" the girl asked. The girl didn't look that similar to Lisa, but she had features that both of them shared.

"Yes, it's me, Lina," Lisa said as she started to get teary-eyed.

The girl called Lina immediately ran up to her and hugged her. "I didn't believe them when they said you were alive. Thank god you are," she said.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you anything when I left, Lina," Lisa said as she hugged her sister back.

"Bu-But how? We found your corpse during that night. I thought the assassins had got to you," Lina said.

"They did, but I was saved," Lisa said.

"You were saved? Wait, does that mean 7th Mother is alive too?" Lina asked.

Lisa's face turned pale when she heard that. "No, mother she— she didn't leave with us. She..."

Lina gasped. "I'm so sorry sister. I thought because you survived that she—"

"It's fine. I know your intentions weren't bad," Lisa said.

Lina stepped a bit back from Lisa and looked at the two men beside her. "Who are they? She asked.

"This is my bodyguard, and this... is your brother-in-law," Lisa said.

"Hello," Reeve greeted her.

Lina looked at Reeve head to toe and said, "Hello, I am Princess Elina, who are you?"

"I am Reeve Skulls," Reeve introduced himself.

"Skulls?" Lina cocked her head. She tried to think of the surname for a bit, but no information came to her mind.

"Are you a noble of a different empire?" she asked.

"What? N-no, I'm not noble," Reeve said.

"Eh? Sister, you married a peasant?" Lina asked.

"Watch your tongue. That's my husband you are talking to," Lisa scolded.

"Oh, sorry," Lina quickly bowed her head.

"Your highness, let us go to your room. You might want to rest," the old man said.

The old man then called someone nearby. It was a maid that seemed to be cleaning.

"Can you take the princess' bodyguard to the waiting area? I will be back in a few minutes," the old man said.

The maid nodded and called Ning, "This way."

"I'll see you guys later," Ning said and followed the maid.. Lisa and Reeve split away from him and were taken to their room, while Ning had to be on his own for a while now.

## **Chapter 415: Payment**

The maid took Ning to an open living room. The room had light coming in from the giant windows and was brightly lit.

There were 4 sofas in the middle, all surrounding a single massive glass table that had a flower vase at the center.

Directly above the table was a beautiful chandelier hanging from the patterned, white ceiling.

Ning sat on one of the tables and looked around at the walls. There were different drawings on them, all belonging to various men and women he had no way of recognizing.

Directly in front of Ning on the wall was the biggest drawing of all. In the drawing was a man holding a sword directly through a beast's chest.

The man had golden hair and had a well-built body. As for the beast, it looked like a lion, but there were purple cracks all over its skin.

The drawing was meant to represent a sense of glory and victory, and Ning could feel that coming off of the painting.

'That must be Emperor Kron who defeated the invading beasts from the empire,' Ning thought.

From yesterday's theater play, he remembered that the Emperor used swords, so it was quite easy to recognize him.

'Blonde hair... is that why he became the emperor?' he wondered.

Footsteps rang out from outside the door, and Ning looked to see the old man named Tim walking into the room.

"Sorry to keep you waiting for so long," the old man said as he entered.

"It's fine. Are the two doing okay? Are they settled?" Ning asked.

"The princess should be fine settling down, it's her home after all. However, the prince consort might need a little more time," the old man said.

"Oh that's good," Ning said.

"May I know your name?" the old man asked.

"It's Ning. Ning Ruogong," Ning replied.

"Ning... Ruogong? I'm afraid that's a name I have never heard of before," the old man said.

"It's fine. I'm not a citizen of your empire or anywhere close by. So it's obvious," Ning said.

"I see, Mr. Ning. Thank you for helping to bring the princess back all the way here," the old man said with a bow.

"No problem," Ning said.

"How would you like to get paid?" the old man then asked.

"Sorry?" Ning was caught off-guard.

"The payment. I doubt you are fine with what the princess promised to pay you. How would you like to get paid?" the old man asked.

"Oh, I'm not doing it for the money. They are my friend, so I was just helping them," Ning said.

"No way. Please tell us what you would like to get paid with. Money? Land? Title? If it's possible, I will hand it to you," the old man said.

"I'm not joking. I really don't need any form of payment," Ning said.

"Ah," the old man said as if he understood something. "You must be of the sense that you could stay with the princess and get closer with the royal family. I must disappoint you, mister Ning. After you take your payment here, you are to leave the premises and never return to the princess again."

"The royal family has much better guards than you, so you will no longer be needed," the old man said.

"Oh," Ning said. He didn't expect to be thrown out so quickly. He was expecting to be welcomed to stay since Lisa was the one who brought her in.

"Call Lis— I mean, Princess Elizabeth. She will tell you to keep me around," Ning said.

"I'm afraid I cannot do that," the old man said. "You will have to take your pay and leave."

"But I was specially asked by your princess to protect her. Are you going against her wishes?" Ning asked.

"We respect the princess's wishes, but we will go against them when it comes to her security. We can't let a random guard stay around her at all, so I must ask that you tell me what you want to be paid with so that I can send you away without you keeping any bad feelings towards the royal family," the old man said.

"You really won't let me stay even if the princess wants me to?" Ning asked to confirm.

"I'm afraid not," the old man said.

Ning sighed. "Very well then. I will be leaving," Ning said and stood up from his seat.

"Eh? What about your payment?" the old man asked.

"I told you, I don't need any," Ning said.

"Are you... for real?" the old man asked. He hadn't expected Ning to not ask for anything in return for safely bringing the princess to the palace.

"No, I don't need anything," Ning said. "Although, I would like to know something."

"What is it?" the old man asked.

"If I wanted to be the princess's guard, what would I have to do?" Ning asked.

"We only employ people above Aether Magister that are certified from the tower. Anyone less cannot work as a guard, especially not one for someone so important like the princess herself," the old man said.

"I see. Aether Magister huh? I guess I will have to go to the tower now then," Ning said.

"Thank you, I will be leaving now," Ning said and walked out.

The old man looked dumbfounded. Still, he snapped out of his shock and asked the guards inside the palace to show Ning the way out.

They brought Ning all the way out to the gate and let him go out. Ning sighed as he walked out of the gates and looked around.

He wasn't in a location where he could simply catch a vehicle out of here. He looked at the surroundings and it was still late morning, so he didn't even want to take a vehicle out of here.

He walked his way out of the Royal Palace area until he made it to the Noble square. Then, he roamed the streets until he went past the government building, the middle-class area, and finally entered the commercial area once again.

"Let's find me a place to stay for now."

## **Chapter 416: Disbelief**

Ning got himself a room in a hotel in the commercial district, which wasn't very different from the room back in the City of beginnings.

It was a tall building, and Ning stood before the window to look at the capital city. People moved in the streets like a colony of ants. The sheer number of people in that one place was baffling.

It reminded Ning of those few cities in the Southern continent of Kumia, where they were so packed that they had to make buildings that went sky high just to accommodate them.

He then looked into the horizon and could see a massive black building that towered over every other building. It stood somewhere outside of the government district in the west and was so massive that Ning didn't even need to think twice to realize what it was.

"So that's the Aether Tower huh? Are these folks so good that they are even sought after by the royal palace?" he thought.

He walked away from the window and sat on his bed. He was curious about the royal family, so he brought a small piece of information from the system that gave him a general knowledge of them.

Ning was a little surprised when he found out that Emperor Kain had 3 wives and 7 concubines. That was a number he hadn't expected to see.

Even in Kumia where polygamy was normal, he hadn't seen this many wives to a single man. 'Damn, the emperor sure has a harem,' he thought.

Amongst those 3 wives, only 1 was the royal empress and everyone else held no authority in the royal court.

With the 10 women, the emperor had fathered a total of 22 different children. Amongst them, only 3 had managed to successfully inherit the emperor's golden hair.

The 3 were the second son of the Emperor, Gilian Xandars who was born to his second wife. The 5th son of the emperor, Amien Xandars, was born to the first concubine.

And finally, the second daughter of the Emperor, Elizabeth Xandars, was born to the fourth concubine.

The next ruler of the empire would be chosen from amongst these 3, and the choice would entirely belong to the emperor himself.

"I see," Ning thought. "If you have no say in becoming an emperor, and you really want to become one... then the only way to guarantee your victory is by getting rid of your competition."

"No wonder her second brother tried to kill her and stop her from returning. She adds another threat to his ascension to becoming an Emperor," Ning thought to himself.

"It seems she won't really be safe until the Emperor chooses a successor, which is also entirely up to him."



"System, can you let me know if either Reeveer or Lisa ever have any threat on their life?" Ning asked.

<Constantly monitoring two humans will cost a lot of energy>

<Are you sure?>

"Hm, it will really cost a lot? Is there a way to make that task cheaper?" Ning asked.

<There are some ways>

Ning spoke with the system for a while before settling on a way where he could monitor them, but he also didn't have to spend a lot of energy.

Light shined in front of him and something appeared. Ning grabbed the thing and disappeared.

\* \* \* \* \*

Reeveer was way too stunned to function normally any time soon. He laid on the bed, wondering if this was all a dream.

Sometimes, he would have to get up to check if he was even sleeping on a bed, considering it was so soft that he didn't even feel it half the time.

Lisa had gone to the bathroom to freshen up, so he was stuck alone with his own thought.

He looked at the brilliantly white ceiling with patterns that he didn't know could even be made by people.

He was just a village boy who excitedly left the village to go study in the tower and was rejected.

He struggled to even survive with the bare money he was able to gather after those days.

He didn't want to return to the village as a failure, not that he had anything left for him there at all.

His parents had died to the attack of the beasts, along with many other of his friends and neighbors.

He remembered the times when he felt like everything was going downhill. The rejection, the lack of money to even feed himself, the feeling of being a lost cause to the society.

There were times when he had contemplated suicide. There was a time when he nearly went forward with that thought.

It was only when the boss found him in the streets and offered him work in his store that he was able to get back on his feet.

It was thanks to the boss that he met Lisa there as well and fell in love with her.

He had just expected to live a normal life with his normal wife who was simply self-conscious of her hair. What a stupid thought that was.

To think that he was now suddenly the Prince consort to the only royal princess with a claim to the throne.

In just a single day, his world had turned upside down, and he was unsure if it was all even a dream or real life.

"I'm going to go mad if I don't talk to someone about this," he said to himself.

"Well, then you can talk with me," someone spoke from in front of him.

Reever immediately got up from the bed and saw Ning standing up in the middle of the room.

"Eh? Brother Ning, how did you get in here?" Reever asked.

"I snuck in here," Ning said.

"Oh no, this is the royal palace. You need to leave before they find out you are trespassing, especially to a princess' quarters.

"I know, I will leave as soon as I'm done with what I came here to do," he said. "Go bring your wife. It's a very important matter that concerns her too."

## **Chapter 417: Wedding Rings**

Lisa and Reever were sitting on the bed, curiously waiting for Ning to explain why he had done something so dangerous just to get to them.

"Right, so here's the thing," Ning said. "I have already been kicked out of the palace."

"What? Why?" Lisa asked in a loud voice.

"Well, the old man, what was his name? Tim? He said that I am not worthy of being a princess' bodyguard. So, he offered me some rewards and sent me on my way."

"He can't do that. I employed you," Lisa said.

"Well, apparently not when it comes to security. You don't seem to have a say on who guards you," Ning said.

Lisa didn't say anything. She too knew that this was true, and also for the better. The guards, maids, and servants that worked in the royal family had to go through an extensive background check to make sure they aren't a threat to the royal family.

So, someone like Ning, who was brought in by them would not be able to stay around at all.

"What if I tell them about your skills? Maybe they will let you stay," Lisa said. Then she thought of something and asked, "Do you even want to stay? You want to wander the world, right?"

"It's fine. I want to stay, or at least protect you guys until the throne is passed to one of you three," Ning said. "Although, I'm curious. Will they even pass the throne to a girl? Imma be honest, your father doesn't exactly seem like the person who cares a lot about women, or he wouldn't marry 10 of them."

"I'm not saying he's sexist or anything, just that he might favor a son more than a daughter," Ning said.

Lisa stayed quiet as she gathered her thoughts and said, "I don't know if he would choose me. We... don't exactly have a close relationship. Actually, none of us do. Father has always kept to himself and only rarely talks to us."

"Mother said he used to be a happier person, but... apparently, he changed after grandfather's death," Lisa said with a sad face.

"Grandfather? Do you mean Emperor Kron? The man that fended off the beast?" Ning asked.

"Yes. Grandfather died of the injury he sustained in battle, and for some reason that changed father," Lisa said.

Ning listened to her speak and nodded. "What's the age difference between you and your other two brothers who inherited the hair?" Ning asked.

"Age difference? Umm, the Second brother is 4 years older than me, and 5th brother is just 10 weeks younger than me," Lisa said.

'Hmm, given this world's date system, that's a small enough gap that giving up the throne based off on who is older wouldn't really make sense,' Ning thought.

"Brother Ning, you took such danger just to come to ask some questions?" Reeve asked with a confused face.

"Ah right, I got distracted. Sorry," Ning said. "So, as I said. I was let go from the palace, so I can't be around you guys to protect you."

"Thus, I have come to give you something that will protect the two of you even without me," Ning said as he brought out something from his storage.

He brought out two rings, both made up of gold and had a small, white diamond at the center.

The ring looked quite expensive, given the materials it was made out of. "Here, wear this from now on. This is your wedding ring starting today," Ning said.

The two of them took the rings and looked at them. "Brother Ning, is this... real diamond?" Reeve asked.

"Of course," Ning said.

"Oh my god! Aren't they near impossible to make? How did you make these?" Reeve asked.

"Make?" Ning was surprised that that was the first thing Reeve's head went to. 'Right, he thinks I invoked this.

"Don't worry about how I acquired it. Just wear it from now on," Ning said.

"Uhh... okay," Reeve said and wore the ring on his middle finger. Lisa did the same as well.

"Um, can you guys swap those to your ring fingers? People need to think that's your wedding ring, okay?" Ning said.

"Okay," they said with a weird face and swapped their rings around.

"What's so special about these rings, Brother Ning?" Reeve asked as he admired it closely.

"These rings are going to protect you, while I am not around," Ning said with a smug face. He was proud of what he had come up with along with the system.

"Eh? These rings will protect us? How?" Reeve asked. Lisa looked at him curiously as well.

"Listen up and be amazed," Ning said. "When you are ever in danger, the gem on the ring will change color to let you know."

"If there is someone within a 10-meter radius of you, the diamond will turn Red. If someone is using Aether arts within a 15-meter radius of you, the diamond will turn Blue if they are invoking, or Green if they are enchanting."

"If someone is using a firearm, or any ranged attack on you, the diamond will turn bright orange. If you are in the presence of poison, the ring will turn purple."

"The ring will also pulse on your finger to let you know something is happening, so you can see it. It will also pulse fast to let you know if either of you is in danger."

"I will also know if either of your rings changes colors or pulses."

"And most important of all, whenever you are in danger, actual physical danger, the rings will create a physical barrier around you and make you invisible."

"If that happens, just keep quiet and hide," Ning finished speaking. He waited for them to speak, but both of the husband and wife remained dumbfounded, with no words coming out of their mouth.

Finally, Reeve asked, "Brother Ning, are you pulling our legs? There is no way these rings can possibly do so many things at once."

Ning scratched his head and said, "It's that hard to believe huh? Here, let me show you."

## **Chapter 418: Aether Tower**

Ning brought out a gun from his storage and pointed towards Reeve.

"What? N—"

**BANG!**

Ning shot without hesitation. Lisa cried out when she saw her husband get shot point-blank, but when she realized that the bullet never touched him, she was surprised.

"It's the same thing from back in the train," Lisa muttered under her breath, but Ning managed to hear it.

"Yeah, it's a barrier. See, it works," Ning said and saw the shaking Reeve. "Uhh... sorry about that. I probably should have given notice."

"Dear Alexis save me," Reeve prayed. "Please don't do that again, brother Ning. I was about to have a heart attack."

"Yes, sorry," Ning said. "Right, so you know it works. Just keep the ring on your fingers at all times, and NEVER ignore the pulses. They will save your life."

"If this works... then it is really amazing, Ning," Lisa said. "How were you able to even invoke such a complicated item?"

"Uhh... can you just ignore that part? It's a trade secret, I guess," Ning said. "Alright, I will leave for now. See you guys later."

Ning walked out of the room and disappeared, leaving Lisa and Reeve to remain amazed at the rings he had just left them.

He reappeared back in his hotel and laid on his bed, thinking of the next step in what he would have to do.

"Hmm, let's go see if they are having some enrollment right now," Ning thought and walked out.

He wandered the street of the capital, eating delicious food on the way, enjoying a carefree life. He visited different stores and bought many things that he may or may not need, but still wanted.

He looked at the sceneries, watched the people rush to do their daily job, and finally, after nearly an hour, reached the location he had wanted to come to.

The Aether Tower.

A 3-meter tall wall surrounded what was one of the largest buildings he had seen in his entire lifetime.

The Aether tower was made up of some sort of shiny purple rock on the outside. It was a cylindrical-shaped building with a slightly larger middle portion and a smaller top portion.

It looked slightly oval in shape but clearly wasn't. Even the very base of the tower was at least a hundred meters in diameter.

"Woah, it looks so much bigger in person," Ning thought. There were guards at the gate with people going in and out of the place.

Ning walked up to the gate and asked, "Hello brother, do you know if the tower is accepting students anytime soon?"

"Yes, the preliminary test is going on right now," the guard said.

"Eh?" Ning said with a surprised face. "There's one right now?"

"Yes, it will go on for maybe another 2 hours. Once done, there won't be one for another 10 weeks," the guard said.

"Huh?" Ning was stunned. 'But I haven't prepared or anything. Oh no, what should I do?'

"Can I go and take the test right now?" he asked.

"Yes, if you pass the criteria, they will test you," the guard said.

"Criteria? What criteria?" Ning asked.

"You have to be no older than 40 years. That is the criteria," the guard said.

"40 years?" Ning asked.

'I should be younger than that right?' Ning didn't know how old he was considered to be. He didn't have a soul to be tested, so they could only test the body. However, since the body was newly made, and he had only used it a few times even over the last many years when he was in seclusion.

"Yes, I am younger. May I go in?" he asked.

"Sure," the guard said and showed him the way. Ning thanked the guard and walked into the compound.

Inside the gate, he saw a long line of people queueing up for something. 'That's the test right?' he thought and went there.

He made sure to ask a person in the queue if this was the line for the test, lest he accidentally became a teacher another time.

Unlike last time, he didn't have much knowledge of Aether arts to even be good as a teacher.

Ning waited for his turn, which took nearly an hour to arrive. When it finally did, the line had moved into the open ground floor of the Aether tower.

In front of him were two tables side by side with two different items on them. One of them was a crystal ball that he had seen before, and the other one was a solid metal block with a meter on it.

Ning didn't know what it was, but he walked up to it.

"Place your palm on the metal," the person in charge of that table said.

Ning nodded and placed his palm directly on top of the metal plate. He waited for a bit and the meter gave a reading.

22

"Hmm... something is wrong," the person who read the meter said.

"What's 22?" Ning asked.

"It's... supposed to be your age. But... you are too old to just be 22," the person said.

"Eh? Is something wrong with your machine? I'm 36 years old already," Ning lied without a single change in his facial expression.

On the inside, however, his heart was beating really fast. 'Damn, I haven't been out for long in this body huh? 22 years is what? 9 normal years?' he thought.

The person did something and asked Ning to replace his hands. However, the number still said 22.

"Do you have an identity card on you?" the person asked.

"Ah, yes," Ning said and quickly asked the system to make one for this country. He handed it to the person, who read it and gave him a pass.

Ning then walked onto the next table where he greeted the next person in charge.

"Place your hand on the sphere," the man said unenthusiastically.

Ning nodded and placed his hands on the murky, purple crystal as he waited for something to happen.

## **Chapter 419: Admission**

The murky shadows in the sphere moved away to reveal brilliant white light that shined so bright that Ning had to block it with his hands.



The shine he had produced was far, far brighter than the young child he had seen a few days ago back in the city of beginnings.

The person in charge of the sphere cried out in shock. "C-C-Call the teachers!" he shouted.

The person who was in charge of age suddenly ran from his place and went somewhere.

"Please stay on the side for a moment." The man had lost all boredom and unenthusiasm after he saw the bright light.

'Hm, I wonder what made that happen. My fully acclimated body or my automatic absorption technique,' Ning thought.

The people in line were also surprised and looked at Ning in awe. They weren't even mad that their turn wasn't coming at all as they all waited to see what was going to happen next.

A man in his 50s arrived, brought by the man who was sent to get him. The old man was about as tall as Ning but had a chubbier body. He had a circular face with a bald head and gray beard.

He wore a black scholarly robe with white pants and had a shawl around his shoulders. He wore gold-rimmed spectacles with a golden chain attached to them in case they fell from his eyes.

The man arrived next to Ning and looked at him. "Are you the one who just tested?" he asked.

"Yes," Ning replied, wondering who he was talking to.

"Can you place your hands on that sphere once more?" he asked.

"Sure," Ning said and placed it back. The same phenomenon rose once more as a stark white light appeared from inside the sphere.

"My god! Just potential," the old man muttered under his breath. "May I know your name, young man?" he asked.

"I am Ning Ruogong," Ning introduced himself.

"Ning? What an unusual name," the old man said. "Young man Ning, I am called Elric Ringer. I am the vice-president of the Xandria Aether Tower."

"Oh," Ning said, understanding that this person was likely very important. "Nice to meet you, Vice president."

"Where are you from, young man? To think we missed such talent before," the vice president said.

"I am not from around here. I come from a village in the north, around the desert," Ning said. "It was only in recent years that I came up south."

"I see, no wonder we didn't find you. We should start sending more willing teachers to go find talents down in the north," the old man said.

"This... test. I passed it right?" Ning asked.

"Yes, my child. With flying colors," the vice president said.

"Ah, nice. So I am eligible for the next test too, right?" he asked.

"You don't need to worry about the next test. You are exempt from taking the next test. We can directly enroll you right now," the vice president said.

"Oh, are you sure? Won't that be against the tower rule or something?" Ning asked.

"No way. No one is going to contradict me, especially when I am trying to enroll a student with such high potential," the vice president said.

"Oh, alright then. Thank you," Ning said.

The vice president Ringer turned to the person he had come with and said, "Take him to the office and ask the teacher there to enroll him, okay?"

"Yes, Vice president," the man nodded.

"Where are you staying, my child?" the vice president asked.

"In a hotel, in the commercial district," Ning said.

"In a hotel? That's so bad. You can move to the dorm in the tower right now if you want to," the vice president said.

"No, no. It's fine. I want to experience living in the city for a while," Ning said.

"If you say so," the vice president said. "Remember, you can always just join here if you ever want to."

"I will keep that in mind. Thank you, Vice president," Ning said.

"Alright, go get yourself enrolled," the vice president said. He then brought out a piece of paper from his storage and wrote something on it.

"Where you are enrolling, just hand this paper to the teacher, okay?" he said. "I will need to return back to work, but I will see you later."

The vice president left the place, talking to no one else but Ning.

"Come on, brother. Let's go," the man said and took Ning along with him. They walked for a while, then up the stair once, and arrived in front of a room.

Ning read the word 'Admission' on the wall and waited for the person inside to walk out.

Once they did, the man took Ning inside. "Teacher, I have someone for you to admit to the tower," the man said.

"Oh, but it isn't the time to, right?" the teacher inside said. It was a female teacher who wore a similar cloth to the Vice president, just modeled in a way to make it more feminine.

"It's the Vice president's order," the man said.

"Oh," the teacher finally looked away and towards Ning.

"You are getting special treatment, boy. You must've done something to impress the vice president," she said. "Here, fill this form as well as you can."

Ning nodded and took the form. He took one of the pens on the table and started filling it up.

The man took his leave and left the place to go back to his work.

Ning filled the form the best he could and handed it back. The teacher took the form and read it.

"Everything looks fine. Now, just pay 30 Gols," she said.

"Eh? 30 Gols?" Ning asked. That was a lot of money to ask for such a 'young' man like him.

"You don't have the money?" the teacher asked, her eyes shining unusually for some reason.

"Ah, no," Ning said. "Ah, but I do have this thing the vice president gave me." Ning handed her the piece of paper.

"Oh," the teacher said and took the paper before reading it. Her expression dulled as she looked a little disappointed.

"Congratulations kid, You have a full scholarship.. Be sure to thank the vice president when you meet him again."

## Chapter 420: Aether Beasts

Ning walked out of the Tower. He couldn't believe how easily he had gotten enrolled there.

'3 weeks later huh?' he thought as he remembered what the teacher in the finance room had said.

2 weeks later, there was the 2nd test, which Ning didn't know anything about. Once the people that passed here, passed there too, they could finally be enrolled.

The sun was high in the sky. It had been so long since he had woken up, so many things had happened, and yet it was still only half a day.

'I'm not going to get used to this anytime soon, am I?' Ning thought. He took out the admission card from his pocket and looked at it. It had his name and age as well as a stamp officiating his entry to the tower.

It looked more like an identity card for an employee, rather than a student. "That was what sects were too, weren't they? Just a business with the face of a school. Maybe this is the same,' Ning thought. He was right.

"I have 15 days to spare," Ning thought when he returned back to his room. "What am I supposed to do all of those days?"

He didn't want to waste his time learning the Aether arts, as that was what he would most likely be doing in the Tower in 15 days after all. Learning something only to have to learn it again would be quite redundant.

He also didn't want to go unconscious for the next 15 days as Reeve and Lisa could need him any moment. Also, he would want to collect as much Aether as he could with his automatic Aether absorption technique.

15 days of aether was a lot. Given how Ning considered days, it was close to 23 days of collecting Aether.

"What can I do then?" Ning wondered. Finally, something struck him. "Let's go find a part-time job."

\* \* \* \* \*

Ning couldn't help but laugh at himself as he stood in front of a metal door with a giant bucket in his hand.

The bucket was filled to the brim with some kind of grain that Ning was handed.

"Was I always fated for this?" he wondered. He stretched out a key that was attached to his hip and used it to unlock the metal door in front of him.

He pushed the door and immediately closed it after entering. He didn't want what was inside to leave.

Ning whistled as he shook the bucket and made some noise with the grains inside of it.

The room he was in was filled with rocks and grasses. The ceiling above him was lit up with powerful bulbs that gave the room a resemblance to being outside.

Ning stepped past the straws and feces as he made his way to the bottom of the giant rock in the middle and looked upon it.

He scattered the gains on the stone platform beneath the rock and banged the empty bucket on the ground.

A curious head peeked from atop the rocks. A head with two spiky horns, 2 black, beady eyes, and a purple scar upon its face.

Ning knew that wasn't a scar. It was just how it was supposed to be. The head moved forward to reveal a 3 meter long, four-legged creature with tiny black wings on its back.

The beast had scales on its body instead of fur, all of which had lightning-like scars, each of them glowing purple.

The tail of the beast was thick and long and ended on what looked like a flower, a weird body part that Ning had never seen before on anything in Kumia.

This was an Aether beast.

Ning was, once again, working in a zoo.

Of all the places he searched for a part-time job, this was the only one that had a vacancy open and was looking to employ just about anyone.

The pay wasn't really good, not that Ning cared about the money at all. He was just looking to pass time.

"Come down and eat," Ning said.

"FOOD?" the beast asked. Ning didn't know the classification for Aether beasts, he didn't even know if there was one. All he knew was this was one of the less intelligent beasts.

It was just about as intelligent as a house dog could be, which wasn't to say that house dogs had bad intelligence, it was just that the beasts he had been around before this could hold up a conversation with him, while this one could not.

The deer-like beast jumped down from atop the 5-meter tall rock, slowing down its fall by flapping its wings as fast as it could, failing to make an impact on its speed.

It fell onto the ground with a bang, but it suffered no harm at all. Ning pet the beast as it got down to eat the grains.

"Eat, Eat. No one will steal these from you," Ning told the beast. The beast perfectly understood Ning, it wasn't sure why. It didn't care either.

Ning waited for it to finish eating and watched the beast go to the small water fountain at the corner of the room to drink.

Ning took out a watch from his pocket and looked at the time. It was 12 o'clock in the morning. The zoo was going to open now.

Ning left the room and walked outside before locking the door once again.

"How do you do it?" a man suddenly asked outside. He had been watching Ning pet and feed the beast, something everyone had been unable to do.

The last zookeeper had left for this exact reason. The beast kept threatening to attack him, instead of actually eating what it was given.

"I... have always been good with beasts. I think I give off a harmless vibes," Ning said.

"Well, whatever it is, we are glad that it's working, thank you," the man said. "Anyway, the zoo is going to open now.. You should go take a small break and get back to work."