

Multiverse 284

Chapter 284: The Girl in the Wind

At the same time, in Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo, in Yushima.

In a corner near Kuramaebashi Bridge in Yushima, there stood a small shrine.

This was a shrine built beside a path in Yushima. Unlike Shichio Shrine and incomparable to the nearby Kanda Myojin Shrine, it was a modest shrine with no regular chief priest or shrine maiden in residence, managed instead in turns by local believers living nearby.

Although the shrine was relatively small in scale, its various functions were fairly complete. The front hall's gate was also very elegant—one glance was enough to tell that the incense offerings had never ceased. Even during the shrine's least popular periods, there must have been people coming to pay their respects.

And it was in this very shrine, before the gate of the front hall, that two people appeared.

These two, one was a beautiful woman in men's clothing, the other a middle-aged salaryman—both dressed in a distinctly unique fashion in every sense.

They were none other than Sayanomiya Kaoru and Touma Amakasu.

"Why are we waiting here for someone this late at night?"

Touma Amakasu looked like he had just been dragged out of bed by his boss, his face full of resentment.

"I believe I've voiced more than once that overtime is a terrible cultural practice, haven't I?"

At those words, Sayanomiya Kaoru didn't even spare him a glance, and spoke leisurely.

"I've also told you more than once that if I have something to do, I'll definitely drag you down with me, haven't I?"

The woman dressed as a man showed not a trace of apology—rather, she looked like someone saying, "If I have to suffer, don't think you'll get off easy."

"This is a violation of labor law! It's disgraceful capitalist behavior!"

Touma Amakasu protested vehemently.

"Then go ahead and sue me," Sayanomiya Kaoru said cheerfully. "It just so happens that I'd like to escape for a while. If I hide in prison, maybe I won't have to deal with all that trouble anymore, right?"

Touma Amakasu's eye twitched fiercely.

"To avoid troublesome matters, you're even considering hiding in prison?"

He looked at Sayanomiya Kaoru with utter disbelief.

"Anyway, the Sayanomiya family wouldn't let me stay in there too long. So hiding inside for a bit—why not?"

Sayanomiya Kaoru spoke such things with righteous confidence, leaving Touma Amakasu speechless.

"Who are we waiting for here?"

Touma Amakasu changed the subject, no longer wanting to dwell on it.

Seriously, if even his boss was trying to skip work, what was a humble wage-earner like him supposed to do?

"For someone a bit troublesome," said Sayanomiya Kaoru, seeing that Touma Amakasu had stopped complaining, and let him off, saying, "Of course, the troublesome one isn't her personally, but the elders behind her."

Elders...

Touma Amakasu knew very well that anyone referred to as such by Sayanomiya Kaoru could only be those troublesome figures who always hid in the shadows and refused to show themselves.

And the person representing them, to his knowledge, could only be that one...

"Really, of all times, someone that troublesome just had to get involved now."

Sayanomiya Kaoru began to complain, a hint of a headache showing on her face.

"What are those elders trying to do?" Touma Amakasu seemed to realize something, his expression changed, and he lowered his voice. "They're not planning to do something to that King, are they?"

"I don't know." Sayanomiya Kaoru shook her head. "But judging by the looks of it, they definitely want to establish contact with him first."

"...Was it premeditated? Or spur of the moment?"

"Probably premeditated? After all, that person was still in Sardinia this morning, wasn't he?"

"So what exactly do they want?"

"If I knew, I wouldn't have to be here, preparing to have a war of words with whoever they're sending."

The superior and subordinate exchanged banter at the gate of the shrine's front hall, speaking one sentence after another, until a certain moment when they fell silent at the same time, turning their gazes forward.

There, a figure appeared without a sound, walking slowly toward them under the moonlight.

Suddenly, an abnormal gust of wind surged up and swept around her, making her long, beautiful, jet-black hair sway, forming wave after wave of ripples, creating a rather ethereal scene.

Before long, the figure's appearance entered the sight of Sayanomiya Kaoru and Touma Amakasu and was taken in completely by their eyes.

She was a girl with a dignified face, as if a fairy by a clear spring, exuding a natural aura.

The girl wasn't particularly tall, but her figure was very alluring. She wore a white blouse with a khaki vest and a pleated short skirt over it. Her long legs were clad in knee-high socks, and she wore little leather shoes on her feet, dressed like a high school girl—her uniform seemingly from some unknown school.

This girl dressed like a high school student had a long cloth bag slung over her shoulder. Inside it clearly lay something extraordinary. Even though the bag seemed to have a spell to conceal magical power, those with sharp senses could still faintly perceive the terrifying presence emanating from within.

With that bag on her shoulder, the girl came before Sayanomiya Kaoru and Touma Amakasu.

"Are you here to greet Ena?"

The girl spoke in a pleasant yet carefree voice as she addressed the two.

"Long time no see, Ena." Sayanomiya Kaoru smiled at seeing a familiar face. "I knew it. If it was someone to represent that old man, it would definitely be you."

"Long time no see, Miss Ena." Touma Amakasu seemed to know her too, and greeted her familiarly. "It must've been tough for you to come down from the mountain so late."

At the sound of their voices, the girl—Seishuin Ena—still maintained her carefree demeanor.

"Indeed, Grandpa really knows how to make people run around. Ena was still training, but he suddenly called me down the mountain and asked me to bring Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi. I thought a Divine Beast had appeared and needed Ena to defeat it."

Even though she mentioned Divine Beasts, beings rivaled only by the pinnacle of humanity, Seishuin Ena's tone held little reverence. Instead, she spoke as if she had long been accustomed to dealing with beings beyond human understanding, perhaps even interacting daily with beings even higher than them. It felt very natural.

Of course, Sayanomiya Kaoru and Touma Amakasu didn't show any surprise.

Because they knew very well that although this girl looked young, she had indeed been with such beyond-human beings for a long time and could no longer be considered an ordinary existence.

"Are you planning to stay here?" Sayanomiya Kaoru glanced at the shrine behind her. "There's no place to live here. Why not let me arrange another place for you?"

"No, no need. Here is fine." Seishuin Ena shook her head while refusing, saying, "Being in a crowded place is just troublesome. Not only would Ena be uncomfortable, but even Ame no Murakumo would be displeased."

"So Ena will just stay here. Sleeping on the floor is fine. It's pretty much the same as training in the mountains."

"Besides, Ena already got the shrine key from the administrator."

As she spoke, Seishuin Ena took out the key from her pocket and opened the gate of this shrine, called Tamano'ura Shrine.

The three of them walked into the shrine and sat down in the front hall.

"Ena." Sayanomiya Kaoru knew Ena wasn't the type to play word games, so she asked directly, "May I ask what your grandfather sent you here to do?"

No sooner had Sayanomiya Kaoru finished speaking than a strong wind swept through outside the shrine, as if a storm was about to hit, shaking the entire shrine.

"Aiya, looks like Grandpa doesn't want me to say." Seishuin Ena looked at the wind outside the window and said to Sayanomiya Kaoru helplessly, "Sorry, Kaoru, you know I can't go against Grandpa's will."

"Not even a little hint?" Sayanomiya Kaoru frowned. "Aren't those old men underestimating people a bit too much?"

"No helping it. Grandpa is just like that. Don't think he's easy to talk to—he's actually even more hot-tempered than those God-Slaying Kings." Seishuin Ena blinked. Though her expression was innocent, she somehow gave off a faintly seductive aura. "Anyway, Kaoru, just know that Ena is here for something big."

Standing behind Sayanomiya Kaoru, Touma Amakasu was instantly speechless.

Wasn't that just openly admitting they were up to something?

Normally it might be fine, but why now of all times?

"Forgive me for being blunt, Miss Ena." Touma Amakasu couldn't help but say, "If you're targeting the new King, then you'd best think things through before you act."

"We don't know enough about that King yet—we're still unclear about his methods."

"If he turns out to be a tyrant like the Eastern European Wolf King or the Chinese Martial King, then acting recklessly could bring calamity to this country."

At those words, Seishuin Ena didn't retreat at all. Instead, she showed a very interested expression.

"You two have already met the new King, haven't you?" Seishuin Ena looked genuinely curious. "Could you tell Ena—what kind of person is he?"

"What's this?" Sayanomiya Kaoru looked at Seishuin Ena's curious face and raised an eyebrow. "Are you really that interested in him?"

"Yes," Seishuin Ena admitted frankly. "Ena has never met a God-Slaying King—only heard tales from Grandpa and Grandma about how powerful they are."

"Even Ena, if she went to challenge them with Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi, would get thoroughly beaten up, it seems?"

"Are Kings really that strong?"

Seishuin Ena's curiosity seemed a little abnormal, as if someone had deliberately incited her.

Sayanomiya Kaoru and Touma Amakasu exchanged glances, then looked at Seishuin Ena in unison.

"You'll know once you go see for yourself, won't you?" Sayanomiya Kaoru smiled. "After all, we couldn't stop you anyway, right?"

The smile on Seishuin Ena's face instantly grew more vivid.

"Then let Ena go meet him personally."