

Ascension of the Sylvan Cosmos.

Chatper 70. Verdantia's Room.

Cinderielle was at a loss, her 18-year-old mind grappling with the enormity of the situation. The woman before her, serenely sipping on nectar, was a living being of power and wisdom far beyond anything Cinderielle could fathom.

As a Sylvan, she had an excellent affinity with natural beings, and the vines on the entrance had the same aura this woman had. Similar to Verdantia's mother being able to discern the World Tree's scents from Verdantia's staff and her body, Cinderielle could do the same with the vines and this woman.

The Fire Aether Sylvan was on the verge of biting her lips, but she restrained herself. 'A Level 20 summon. A summon that has completed the second Energy Cycle...'

The mere thought of a Level 20 summon was enough to underscore the woman's superior abilities. Creating and maintaining a summon was no easy feat, and the fact that this woman had summoned a Level 20 creature, using it as a mere door, hinted at a deeper, more profound meaning.

Verdantia's mother sipped again, looking deeply at the silent Cinderielle and Verdantia, and smiled. "Don't worry. You two might not know, but new World Trees sprout almost every year. Sometimes, even more than one. However, not all manage to survive until the point of becoming a proper World Tree."

The woman's voice was laden with a somber tone as she gazed at the golden liquid swirling in her cup. "World Trees are a tragic lot. Born to be mighty, they are as much a resource as they are a force. A World Tree that manages to evade enslavement, consumption, destruction, or any other grim fate is a rare survivor, one in a million." The woman's smile was tinged with melancholy. "And to add to their plight, World Trees are locked in a bitter rivalry, down to their very roots. If two cross paths, only one will endure."

Verdantia and Cinderielle thought of Fortuna's World Tree, and their hearts became heavy. Cinderielle, who had personally seen Liu Shu, knew both creatures were incomparable.

The majestic Fortuna World Tree towered above everything in the city, shrouding half of it with a massive canopy that instilled deterrence and reverence.

Meanwhile, Liu Shu was not as tall as the trees in the nearby grove, with a height that didn't even reach 10 meters.

Verdantia's mother looked at Cinderielle and Verdantia with a raised eyebrow. Inside, she thought that their reactions were quite interesting. 'Although it is a young World Tree, it is already quite a player, eh~. She got the hearts of my daughter and her friend. I wonder how she looks.' She pondered. 'Should I make a visit? Hm... I can't. I need to watch over that place and clean up some trash.'

She internally clicked her tongue. 'I don't know what happened, but they are becoming more active in this area- Hmm?' She paused her thoughts and looked at the two children. 'Active around this area... it only started happening recently... and a new World Tree...?'

While she didn't want to speculate, the clues fitted too well not to be accurate. 'Did they discover World Tree activity in the area and start investigating?'

Verdantia's mother spoke to them. "Don't worry. It's not like I will go and do anything. Since this World Tree seems to be liked by my cute little daughter, then I will naturally not interfere. Just know that I won't interfere in any regard. Meaning, I won't help as well."

Inside, she was thinking. 'More like I can't help since I'm quite busy, but well. These two don't need to know that, hehe.'

Cinderielle felt relieved, but there was a bitter taste in her mouth. 'I need to be more careful. It seems that Liu Shu has a strange scent around her, and even after showering, it is still there. Hm... perceptive people will be able to notice it, but...' Cinderielle was confused. 'How did she know that the scent came from a World Tree? Does she have special skills, or did she just guess at random?'

"Anyways." The woman stood up and walked around the table, giving Verdantia a kiss on the forehead. "Have fun. I've already eaten, and I need to check some things. Also, speak comfortably; there is no one other than Daury and us here."

As she walked away, she stopped with an exclamation and turned around with a smile. "I forgot to present myself. I'm called Verena. Daury is my partner. It's nice to meet you, Cinderielle."

Then, she walked away while humming.

Verdantia sighed and looked at Cinderielle, who also released a breath and leaned back in her chair. Cinderielle complained. "Your mother is too scary, okay? What kind of family is yours?"

Verdantia coughed and said awkwardly. "She can probably hear you."

Cinderielle froze for a second but relaxed again after not hearing anything in response. "Well, they are my honest thoughts." She sighed. "So, since your mother has placed everything in the open, let's talk."

Cinderielle sat up when the food was carried by strange flowers with stalk-like legs and a flat head that worked as a food tray. "These are quite nifty, and they are... Level 5?"

Verdantia commented. "Summoning is quite an interesting practice. While most skills call upon one type of creature, you can modify the summons if you get a talent just about summoning, with no specifics. Of course, my mother has been researching and practicing for several decades to be able to create such specialized creatures."

Cinderielle's lips twitched. "I see."

Verdantia asked. "Does Miss Cinderielle know about the nature of summoning?"

Cinderielle smiled. "Just Cinderielle is okay. Also, I know a little. For example, I know that summoning is based on Anima Energy, and it is also resource-intensive if you want the summons to be useful in battle. However, I don't know specifics."

Verdantia nodded. "Well, creatures with an innate talent for summoning use not only Anima but Willpower, too."

Cinderielle blinked. "Willpower? That stat is so mysterious, to be honest. It is among my highest ones, yet I'm a bit clueless about its effects."

Verdantia used her hands to grab the food and eat the plate with cooked vegetables. They were fleshy and similar to what meat would look like. The taste was also salty, strong, and delicious. Cutlery was rarely used to eat because they didn't really need it for most foods.

Vegetable farms were also typical everywhere. Even if Sylvans were descendants of plant creatures, humans ate meat, too, when they were descendants of animals. Some carnivore Sylvans refused to eat vegetables. However, in general, people didn't care much. Both humans, sylvans, and other races, like beastmen, ate both vegetables and meat.

After munching on the food wrapped in a leaf, the delicious and savory sauce that was held inside burst into her mouth, making Verdantia's long ears flap in happiness.

Cinderielle laughed softly, finding her cute. She asked as she raised the food. "Is it that delicious?"

Verdantia swallowed the food and smiled. "Try it, and then tell me."

Cinderielle took a bite, her teeth making the crunchy leaf shatter, and the food entered her mouth. The burst of flavors contained in the leaf made her orange eyes light up. "Ohhh!"

Verdantia snorted. "Eat with the mouth closed, exclaim afterward."

Cinderielle spoke with her mouth full. "But it is so delicious!"

She didn't bother with her anymore. Still, she rolled her eyes when she was sure that Cinderielle looked to tell her about her thoughts.

Cinderielle felt a bit embarrassed and decided to eat a bit more cleanly.

After they ate in peace, they washed their hands and mouths and went to the second floor, where Verdantia's room was.

Once they entered, Cinderielle was welcomed by a charming and relaxing room. There was an open balcony with exotic flowers adorning the edges, looking like a garden. The bed was an actual flower bed, while the floor was covered in a layer of earth with soft grass growing on it like a carpet. The brown furniture made out of pure wood had irregular shapes as if they had grown into that shape instead of being carved.

Verdantia spoke, confirming that it was more than appearance. "All the things in this room are actually alive. They've been grown by using gardening arts to gain their current shapes. I have to use special tools to regulate their growth, which allows me to come into contact with plenty of flora. Also, take off your shoes. You will flatten the grass with them much more than you do barefoot."

As sylvans who were extremely close to nature, even the little bugs running around the room were part of the charm. As a full natural garden, the problem of bugs and other types of tiny organisms was solved by placing natural predators.

Cinderielle could spot a large spiderweb between some of the vines while also seeing carnivorous plants in a few corners.

The ecosystem carefully created by the species living in the room ensured that everything remained clean. There were even subterranean predators for worms and such. The earth layer was only a few inches thick, so birds and other animals could similarly hunt underground bugs.

In short, the place felt clean, natural, and welcoming.

Cinderielle looked toward the bed out of curiosity. "Say, although I don't mind sleeping with a few little critters as well, don't you find it bothersome when they make your skin itch?"

Verdantia pondered. "I don't feel them at all. I even sleep naked."

Cinderielle pouted. "You don't? Are you one of those sylvans that have a natural body odor that repels bugs?"

Verdantia giggled as she sat on her flower bed. "Well, perhaps."

Cinderielle snorted. "You are so lucky. I really love to sleep in such places as well, but my skin is a bit sensitive, and I always get itchy and wake up."

"Well, bad luck, I guess."

Cinderielle snorted again. "You are not sincere." Then, she approached a chair and placed it with the backrest forward, sitting on it while leaning forward on the backrest. "So, let's speak about Liu Shu."

Verdantia placed her hands on her lap and signaled with her chin. "Well, what do you want to know?"

Cinderielle sighed. "At first, when I came, I wanted to confront you about not getting too close to her. However..." Seeing Verdantia's gaze sharpening, Cinderielle frowned. "Hey, let me finish."

Verdantia warned. "Think well about your next words. I'm not playing around with this, Cinderielle."

Cinderielle smiled coldly. "As if I'm joking around. Verdantia, I don't know how close you are to Liu Shu, nor do I care. However, I wanted to make clear that I'm looking at her as a future partner."

Verdantia spoke coldly. "As if I'm not the same. Do you think that you are the only one allowed to target her? Just her life aura is enough to make my entire body shudder. Nothing and no one will stop me from getting close to her when I meet her."

Cinderielle paused, and her smile became smug. "Oh, so you haven't seen her magnificent form yet?"

Realizing her tongue slip, Verdantia tried to recover. "Regardless if I've seen her or not, I have a weapon with her materials, while you don't have anything similar."

She knew because if that was true, Verdantia didn't believe that Cinderielle wouldn't be carrying that thing around with her all the time. She personally did so with the staff, so she was sure of it.

Cinderielle's smug smile cracked, and then a war of words began between them, exchanging all their interactions with Liu Shu as if they were in competition.

By the time they were finished, both were discussing how great Liu Shu's presence was and sending so much praise her way that Verena, who had come with some refreshment, rolled her eyes and didn't even bother interjecting, leaving them to their own devices.