

A Summoner's Little Story

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A Summoner's Little Story

by [Cryptek](#)

Summary

A young ordinary Summoner leaves a peaceful life of what he called near-but-necessary-boredom for a more action-packed one. As he steps into a greater story, he encounters many unusual things from the moment he does.

Notes

I decided to start an entirely different story... that is simply all.

Still, I hope you enjoy this little story you shall read! If there are any problems, please leave a few comments. If you just like it, please leave kudos!

Disclaimer: I do not own Brave Frontier (which belongs to Gumi and Alim) or the other OCs except the boy and the plot.

EDIT (18 August 2016): I also own the other OCs that belong to me, that is, the ones who did not have their creators mentioned.

The First Morning of Action

Chapter Summary

A new Summoner not originating from Randall has started his first day as a part-timer at the Akras Summoners' Hall. What changes will he bring?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dear Fray

How are you? I mean, if you're okay with living in the wild and all... well, I just hope you and your cousins are doing fine after that fiasco with that random goddess appearing in your town.

Anyway, there, uh, seems to be a shortage of Summoners ever since that little incident. With everyone trying to gather the escaped fusion units and dealing with the surge of demons from Ishgria, I was seriously considering writing to you for help. Well, actually, I'm doing that right now, as you read.

Well, the Hall (the higher-ups don't know actually, but I got Elder Grah's approval) needs your help in routing monsters and tackling the important, vacant missions. Even though you aren't affiliated with the Hall or the Randall Imperial Guard, everyone needs more hands. We already got wounded people, and we all need someone like you.

I already arranged a few rewards for you and your units if you decide to arrive here in the Capital and help by next Saturday. I'll meet you at the north entrance by then to introduce you to the Hall. Considering your immense prowess in combat, you would end up being an incredible helping hand. It's alright if you don't come. I mean, I don't want to barge into your peaceful daily life, but please consider this offer.

*Lo(incomprehensible scribbles) Your buddy,
Lin*

On a path leading to Randall...

A Summoner, sixteen years old, walked on a path to a city in the distance. He consulted a map, looked around the wide grassy fields and kept on walking, pebbles and dirt crunching underneath his steel-capped shoes.

This Summoner has short messy black hair that spiked a little sideways and downwards, with side-bangs that framed his gentle, angular face. He has dark green eyes that were slightly covered by his bangs, but he had no trouble with sight. His own body is overall medium, but only bulky enough to just shoulder the forest-green cloak he wore.

Underneath the cloak, he wore a zipped white, long-sleeved coat lined with red and black segments down the front, like an instrumental cutter. For comfort, this coat was a few sizes larger than he was. From the waist to bottom, pieces of lightweight, segmented armor sewn into the coat covered the thighs and legs as it separated in half from the zipper. The coat also has a hoodie with small black cat ears stitched to it. Underneath the coat itself was a simple blue shirt with gray colors at the ends, and black trousers. While he carried a large red leather bag, two swords were sheathed at his left and right hips: a kindjal and a shortsword.

It was a calm day at that time, the wind blowing and ruffling his hair. He was on his way to the Imperial Capital of Randall, a well-known city for its advancements in technology, magic, Akras Summoners' Hall and the Randall Imperial Guard. His long-time clumsy friend currently waited for him at the entrance for his help.

He just felt relieved for having something to do. It was a nice quiet (or peaceful at least, with his cousins) life back at his new forest town, but it was... boring. There were little to no major monsters to fight. There were not much travelers who came to his town, so there were hardly any updates on the outside world. Most of all, what was he going to do with his few battle-hardened units? They had hardly seen much action.

Fighting is unsafe, but it would be pointless if he and his units no longer fought at all.

A few days was what it took to get here, encountering a few monsters and people here and there, but at least he had adventure. Now he was going to get started this morning.

A few minutes had passed, and he was already getting nearer to his destination. The closer he got, the more buildings and people Fray saw until he guessed that he went into a small village.

The area he was currently in was probably named the Village of the Venturer, as seen in his map. It was a peaceful place, with plenty of wood, stone and brick buildings to go by that served different purposes that the Summoners in this area required. This village is the most popular of many villages that seemed to gather plenty of Summoners, leading to its larger-than-average size.

Fray maneuvered around a wagon pulled by horses carrying green bottles, then ducked to avoid a rubber ball being tossed around by a bunch of children. He quickly went on another path that he guessed would lead him out of the village and to Randall, only to get into a more crowded place, one that seemed to be a busy market.

"I need directions..." he muttered to himself. He tried to ask a burly man making a puppet, faltering when he seemed focused in his work. He then moved on out of the market and looked for someone who seemed knowledgeable about this place.

This is quite a big place. His search took him to a stream, where he could see small droplets flowing through it, all of different colors that served as potent Synthesis ingredients. A blue-haired boy sat on the shore, a halberd laid to his right. He had a wistful look on his face.

"Um, excuse me," Fray got his attention. The boy turned to see who did. "Do you know the way to Randall?"

"Ah, you must be a newcomer right? Just take the path in front of you and go right. You'll find a sign that should point the right way. Just watch out for the girl in red. She's in a bad mood as of late." He chuckled at that.

"Really? Is that the one you're talking about?" Fray pointed at the red-armored girl stomping towards the blue-haired boy.

The boy cringed, quickly getting to his feet. Fray idly noticed that Karl was half a head taller than him. "S-Seria...? Why do you look so mad now?"

"Mad? Mad!? Of course I am! You left me to report to Owen! Didn't you realize *he's* the one in a bad mood!?" Seria shouted, attracting a few onlookers, who pretended to ignore them.

"I-I'll be going now." Fray quickly backed away and started walking.

"...Were you flirting with that girl, Karl?" The swordswoman did not sound pleased.

"Wh-What girl? And I was merely showing the way to Randall to a newcomer!" Karl replied.

Girl...? Was something wrong with my masculinity? Right, so that boy Karl knows Fray is a boy, but that swordswoman...

Whatever. He had larger matters to worry about.

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It took an hour on foot, and even then he still had to ask for directions, what with the villages and towns he passed through, just to get to Randall.

In front of the gates, he felt like he was about to step into a new chapter of his life.

Or at least he let several people do so before he was able to.

A girl with waist-length snow-white hair ran by. The rims of her white sundress billowed behind her, the top covered by a blue jacket.

Following her was presumably her unit: a man with green hair and a saber by his side.

"W-Wait! Hey wait up! Your brother's still—!" He continued running and shouting between breaths, but the girl still ran as if she were excited.

Not a moment too soon, a boy that was dressed in black jeans and jacket, and red shirt and sneakers, taller than the girl, was shouting, "Hey sis! Hang on! You forgot your bag!"

He had a messenger bag similar to the one kept in Fray's travel bag, only this one was sky-blue. His greatsword padded on his back over and over as he ran.

"Aaaakuuuuumaaaaa!!!" A blond guy Fray's age came running along after the other boy, wearing a navy blue long coat, white T-shirt, brown trousers and armor covering his hands and legs. He seemed angry.

Duh.

Then a girl with long wavy black hair, with clothes that boasted purple in a vest and skirt, other than her red ribbon in her hair, and a white shirt and brown boots. She too was shouting.

"H-Hey! My cake! H-How do you not notice—!" She suddenly skidded on a puddle and stumbled right into Fray.

He quickly took her two hands, spun her around and half-flung her towards her target: the fist-sized pink box that somehow latched onto the blond's coat collar by a hook.

She narrowly managed to pluck it out as she spun, stopping by the gates. The blond did not even notice and continued sprinting for an unknown revenge.

"...Whoa! Dion's gonna flip when he hears about this! Wait, that doesn't even interest him... A-Anyway, thanks for the help uh... new girl!" The girl waved at him in thanks, Fray waving back in return.

He faltered though. *Girl? Again?* From that moment, he decided that people who do not pay attention do not notice his gender.

Once she was gone, Fray turned to look back if there was anyone else coming. Satisfied with the absence of eccentric people, he walked on.

He looked around. There was a row of buildings from where he was in front of him. Lin, however, was not where she said she would be.

Fray checked his silver pocketwatch. It was eight o'clock... Three hours early?

That was just his small dose of misfortune, he supposed. He can get familiar with the city in the meantime.

Had he looked back, he would have noticed two girls tailing him from behind a horse.

Chapter End Notes

Some of the characters are OCs you can find on Fanfiction.net. Their ages have been made to be younger, but their personalities, hopefully, remain the same. Please take the

time to read their stories.

The following OCs belong to their respective authors:

Akuma and Angel Kiyo by Code of Codex

Viktor Fulgur Rex by Garth Kaiser

Mizuki and Akki Hakuryuu by Darklight777

Lunar Rin by LunarRin

Some Friends

Chapter Summary

Fray has finally arrived at the Imperial Capital Randall, receiving his first ever mission from the Hall.

Fray walked around the city, taking in the sights like any other generic tourist that were on the sidewalks. Wagons and carriages rumbled by, pulled either by horses or driven on their own using steampunk engines.

The Imperial Capital Randall had an atmosphere of business and excitement, unlike the more quiet and peaceful one in the Village of the Venturer. Everywhere he looked, its city-goers minding their own business, walking around in this vast concentric place. Stone buildings always rose over two stories high, and several skyscrapers could be seen in the distance.

It was a slight surprise to see people riding magical mounts or being accompanied by people who looked battle-ready going around. Some of them might have been units of Summoners he heard about, or Summoners and magical warriors themselves. But all of them seemed to be headed towards one particular area.

Fray still had at least two hours left, so he decided to head for the single most largest structure he had seen: a very large building that looked like round cakes stacked on top of each other, getting smaller and smaller with every level, with a castle on top. That was also where some of the more curious-looking people were headed towards.

He headed over there, unaware of his destination's importance.

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Fray ended up inside the building, the ground level. Summoners and staff members ran here and there. Receptionists worked behind their wooden counters.

"Alright, is every Summoner accounted for?" a white-haired elder carrying a staff spoke with a loud voice. He stood at the center of the lobby, on top of a stage. Summoners gathered around to form a crowd.

"Not everyone," a black-haired receptionist said. "Some of them are still away on missions, but the majority of them are here."

"That will be fine... At any rate, the Elders wanted to gather all of you to help you prepare for the recent rise in demons..."

Fray listened in on the rather long announcement, but someone tugged on his sleeve.

"Fray... Fray..." He turned to look at a green-haired girl with headphones, like the receptionists he saw.

"Lin?" It had been at least a year since he last saw her, but she was definitely the same person.

"Fray!" she exclaimed in a whisper. "Y-You weren't supposed to be here for—!"

"I-I know, but well... I got here earlier. So, uh, what's this about?"

"Well, it seems they are handing out evolution and fusion materials in light of the recent new 7-star forms!" She indicated the newly-formed lines of people in front of a few stalls. People walked away with large brown packages.

"Actually, if I am here to assist the Hall, and I am a Summoner, is it possible for me to get anything from there?"

"Nope. Sorry, but—"

"You can go on ahead, Fray."

The white-haired elder from earlier had interrupted Lin.

"And you must be Elder Grah?" Fray asked suddenly. The only other person who should have known about Fray should be that elder Lin mentioned in her letter.

The Elder nodded. "I am. You must be Fray, the boy Lin talked wonderfully about."

Lin blushed and frantically waved her hands. "N-Not like that! But Elder Grahdens, really? Can Fray...?"

He laughed good-naturedly. "I said so didn't I? If this young man is going to be working with us, then he'll need the help." Grahdens walked off to somewhere else in the Hall, disappearing as quick as he came.

"...I guess I'll go get my package."

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"A-Alright... so Fray. Ahem. Well, you know how you are supposed to be helping the Hall with their missions right?" Lin said, looking nervous in her seat, even though only one familiar person was listening to her.

"Yes. You were saying?" Fray spoke from his seat in front of Lin.

They had moved to a more quiet café so that Lin can explain the details of his job. Lin had ordered coffee, while Fray had a croissant.

"While you may be helping the Hall as a mercenary of sorts, the higher-ups can't trust you with the bigger missions yet, so you would have to start from the lower missions, gain more

trust and reputation, then you'll be set for the higher ones! It's actually how it works in Raid missions."

"And these Raid missions, you said they have ranks 1 to 6?"

"Yeah! Normally, for the average Summoner of the Regular Army, they would take a long time to rise from one class to another, even if they're really powerful. But seeing as you're not one of them, and you're a professional at butt-kicking, you'll be regarded as a great force to be reckoned with!" She stood and made a ridiculously heroic pose.

Fray laughed softly, causing Lin to feel embarrassed.

"Wh-What!?" She sat down to her seat, turning red. "I'm really serious about how good a Summoner you are!"

"You praised me a lot back then, and you still do now. Aren't you being too overconfident with me?" He's good, but not that good, or at least so he thinks.

"U-Um, that's just what I think... anyway..." She dug out a few pieces of folded paper and a large bronze key from her pockets.

"Here's the first mission briefing." She indicated a red paper, the only color different from the others. "It starts tomorrow, and you'll be working alongside a few people. The other papers are the other missions that are available. You just need to go to the Administration back at the Hall, submit it, and you're all set to go on the mission. Also, here's the key for your cabin, and the address in that note. Are you sure you don't want to rent it?"

Fray shook his head and took the laid-out items. "I can pay for the land. Besides, I want to stay here for a good long time to experience many things in a new place like this. I already talked with my cousins about this, and they're fine with it."

"If you say so," Lin said. "The official who's going to collect the payment is coming at six o'clock tonight, so remember to pay him! We don't want something like that festival."

Fray's eyebrow twitched. "I don't think 'remember' is in your vocabulary Lin."

"H-Hey! I get to work all the time! You're pretty clumsy and... uh dumb... all the time."

Fray looked outside the window. The same white-haired girl and black-haired boy from earlier were walking side-by-side. "Even if I get unfortunate, at least it's a better situation than all the times you missed the trains at my town."

"U-Ugh, Fray!" Lin sighed, pouting. "You still are the same after all this time."

"You too Lin." The boy smiled. "I can't wait to do something together here."

She turned redder than usual. "Uh, um, after your missions, okay? Just make some friends out here and all."

"I will. And I better go now."

They finished their 12 o'clock snack and waved each other off, Lin looking happy as she went back to Akras Summoners' Hall.

Six hours left... What now? He supposed he could go around Randall more, or go back to the Village of the Venturer, where the cabin was near to.

The sunlight felt more warm in the afternoon on his slightly-tanned skin. He felt something else on his back though, like the way someone stared at him that it shook his sixth sense.

The feeling went away a few seconds later, but he felt a shiver down his spine.

The Village then... The nearby alleyway started to feel dangerous.

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The walk back went by quickly than expected, as if walking on the same path made it less time-consuming.

Back at the Village, there seemed to be more people now. Much of them were in the fields, rivers, forest and mountains gathering seemingly useful materials, and many of them radiated power. These were most likely Summoners who just came back after receiving their presents, although he was sure that announcement was more than just a present giveaway.

Fray had to avoid more people than usual, especially Summoners who summoned their units out.

"H-Hey there! Over here!" Just as he taking another detour to his cabin, someone yelled. It was most likely directed at him.

He turned right to see the same girl who got her small box back. Beside her were some units, six in total, all Fray recognized from a Unit guide.

"Hello. You're that girl who... nearly crashed into me?" he greeted in an unnecessary way.

She responded with more enthusiasm. "Yep! And... you're a guy?"

"Yes. I thought I made it obvious."

"Oh, well, it's just that you look way too cute and sharp... to be a hunk... like many others..." She reddened slightly at that. "And those ears!"

She lifted his hood up. "Man, what's with this!? You'd look even cuter with the hood on!"

An Earth-type man—Cyclonic Blades Dion—coughed. "Lunar. You haven't asked his name, or even told him about what you were planning on doing?"

"Oh yeah!" She quickly let go of the hood and stood by her units. "The name's Lunar Rin. And yours?"

"Fray. Just one name, nothing else."

"One name?"

"Um, my family couldn't decide on an official family name, and they didn't get to publicize it either."

"Well, that's alright." She seemed anxious about something, but kept energy in her bouncing feet. "Anyway, I was hoping you could help me for something."

"And what would that be?"

"I really need help to find a brown package. It's full of special Units I need for my squads, and I lost it right over there." She pointed to an apple orchard behind Fray. "I can give you a few Gems and Units if you want—"

"No need for that," Fray cut her off suddenly, skirting around her.

"Huh? Why?"

"Because I just found it, and it's with that one over there."

There was a man in a white shirt and blue overalls, looking smug about the package he held in his hands, walking out of the orchard and headed towards the nearby crowds.

"Come on Lunar!" Fray sprinted after the man, Lunar and her units following suit.

"Dion, Semira!" Lunar shouted to her squad. "Find that guy and make sure we don't lose him in the crowds. Everyone else, cut him off!"

Her units nodded or shouted affirmation and split off, except Pumpress Semira, who flew instead. The Summoners continued in their pursuit.

The chase led them back to the market Fray visited. Lunar looked around frantically while Fray focused on carefully finding any brown packages.

"Lunar, he went this way!" Dion shouted from a rooftop, getting the attention from several people below, who quickly lost interest. Maybe this was not the first time a chase happened?

They quickly dashed into an alley, where the man was being blocked by Ruin Herald Rize and Red Swordsman Farlon. Ice Legend Selena blocked off another exit to their left, and Virtuous Champion Krantz to the right. Semira floated above, dark energy at the ready in case the man tried to cheese it.

"Alright..." Lunar panted a little before speaking properly. "Now, where's that package?"

"Package?" the man asked. Fray instantly knew he was feigning ignorance. That was gutsy of him, considering the fact he was surrounded.

His nervous tone betrayed him though, but more importantly, the package was no longer under his wrapping arm. Instead, he had a pouch that replaced it.

"You don't have it. Where did you hide it?" Fray talked in a more interrogative voice, getting closer to him.

"Like heck I have it."

"Really? Sir, I don't know about you, but these are incredibly powerful units, ready to squash you like a worthless bug, and their Summoner isn't happy about having something important stolen. Do you really want to take your chances right here?"

The units helped by readying their weapons of choice. Farlon made a more intimidating growl.

The man stared at him for a moment before sighing. "F-Fine. I gave it to a kid just down that window." He pointed to the open window that seemed to lead into a kitchen. It seemed large enough for the Summoners to go in.

"What did you get in exchange?"

"Zel. The kid promised this—" he shook the pouch, which made a jingling sound, "—to plenty of other thieves recently if we steal those packages from the Summoners."

"Then you won't be needing this." Fray quickly snatched the pouch.

"H-Hey!"

"Try to take it, and we'll report you to the Imperial Guard." The boy slipped it into his bag.

The man gnashed his teeth, but stepped back.

"Thank you for your time." Fray briskly walked over to the window and slid inside without another word. Lunar stared at him, then back at the man.

"Uh, you're lucky we didn't rip you in half or anything. Come on guys." With a snap of her fingers, her units disappeared in flashes of light, then followed.

They went through the kitchens, ignoring the weird smells and eventually exiting out of a door to where the customers ate, just behind a long counter. While the place looked rundown, it was clearly still in business.

I-Is that puke? The condition of this place is not worth describing. Lunar's expression clearly expressed discomfort, as if to say, 'Get me out of here!'

A man was at the cashier, beside a grubby-looking waiter who calmly handled the reception. Lunar held a finger to her mouth and pointed to the exit out of the counter, just at the far end to their left.

They crouched, going into stealth mode and hoping they were not caught. Right as they were next to a cupboard, a nail snagged onto the bottom of Fray's coat.

He stopped a little, carefully tugging on it and trying to free it.

Just as he did, Lunar saw a waiter from over the counter, about to walk inside.

Not wanting to get questioned about how they got into the staff-only area, she quickly opened the empty cupboard and launched Fray and herself inside, shutting the door quietly.

The inside was cramped, so the two felt squashed against each other. Fray felt just about as nervous as Lunar was, who was starting to feel claustrophobic.

There was a small gap in the middle of the boards, where they could see outside.

"Hey guys," a red-haired boy was saying. He seemed to be head of a group of six other children a little younger than him, seated at a round table. All of them wore rags and were dirty. "This should be the last of the packages."

"You think it'll cover our boss's requirements?" a tough-looking girl asked.

"It should. We just stole like fifty packages or so, if Malda and Boplan counted their steals right."

"Really?" a boy that seemed the youngest of them all spoke up. "He'll never hurt us again?"

The oldest said with a determined smile. "He shouldn't, not after all we did for him. And then, we'll be free."

He picked up a bag from the table, which the girl and a bulky boy did the same to the rest. "C'mon. We should get going. Ma's gonna need it."

As they did, Lunar whispered sharply, "Fray, we gotta tail those kids."

"I know, I know, but you sure are not making this easy..."

Fray tried to move, and Lunar tried to do the same. She slipped, ending up staring directly into Fray lush eyes.

She reddened a little and managed to turn her head away.

With some difficulty and awkward movements, and careful timing, they avoided the waiters and went outside, following the unknown children. It was easy to do so; they lacked a bright aura that stood out amongst the ones in the crowd they moved in.

Investigation Already Complete

Chapter Summary

Summoners Fray and Lunar tail a group of street urchins to somewhere particularly important...

Chapter Notes

This time, unlike the prologue, I want to make longer, longer chapters until each one of them could be 10000, or at least 5000. I certainly would keep going until the last chapter, which would be a long time.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The children kept walking in a tightly-knit group, but moving quickly enough that Fray and Lunar nearly lost them. Several times, the children turned around corners, and Fray only just managed to see them disappearing out of the corners of his eyes that they were able to track them.

These children were clearly scavengers of sorts. They were young thieves, but they seemed more experienced in a more desperate way. Apparently, they were 'taken care of' by a man who may be a Summoner or someone selling the packages. Their biggest motive though was someone who was like a mother figure to them.

Lunar had seemed upset at this turn of events, but otherwise, she still kept a focused face and kept going. Fray intended to keep the same determination to find out who started all this.

A while later, they stopped at a small, rundown church. The Summoners hid behind a bench, far enough to not be spotted with a glance, but close enough to look.

The children knocked on the door. It was opened by a man in a black jacket, white shirt and blue jeans. His sunglasses covered his eyes.

Fray noted his golden and grey armor that covered his right arm, with a white crystal core on the shoulder-guard. Similar leggings covered his legs.

Overall, the man looked like a steampunk biker.

He let the children inside, his eyes scanning the overgrown lawn in front of the church, then closing it silently.

"Huh, this is the first time I'm busting a kidnapping operation," Lunar said, standing up.

"This is not kidnapping. More like... a large-scale thief operation. Those kids were working for their boss anyway," I replied.

"Well, those kids didn't want to do it, so it's still kidnapping," she insisted.

She sure had her own unclear thoughts. "Let's just sneak in and see what we can do there."

The two sneaked up to a dusty window. So far he detected no one near the windows.

The bushes by the windows made quiet crackling sounds when he brushed against them. Lunar looked into the window and Fray did the same.

Inside, there were the same children, joined by others, standing in rows. They looked like a small army, and the biker guy looked like the general standing in front of them.

The bags that probably contained the Summoners' units were piled up on the ruined altar. Fray imagined the amount of wealth that could be gained from that pile.

Steambiker Guy was apparently giving a speech.

"We need to listen in somehow..." Lunar muttered, but Fray put a finger on the glass. It glowed when he touched it, and he melted it to create a hole wide enough to listen with.

"You're a Fire-type?" She apparently realized she still had much to learn about Fray.

He nodded, and they started listening in.

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"Ulrin, Rick, Kelga, how were your 'searches'?" Steambiker Guy had an older, stereotypically malicious voice.

"No trouble Boss."

"No problems."

"Had to lose a guard, but we got a big haul."

"Good, good..." He paced around the big stone tomb, hands behind his back. "Malda and Boplan?"

"Nearly got caught by the Summoners. No one got a bead on our faces though."

"Yeah... urrrgggh..." the thin boy at the front groaned, clutching his chest.

One of the boys spoke up for him. "Boplan got a kick to the chest. Some noble did it. Could've smashed his insides in and all."

Steambiker Guy made a clucking sound. "And what did I tell you? We can't afford to waste more medicine on clumsy mistakes. Millie, Han, get him to the sick bay."

Two children supported him by his arms, one on each side, and carried him somewhere to the right, out of the Summoners' view.

"Alright, I do believe the plan should be complete."

"B-Boss... can we go now? We had a deal, and it's to let us go," the red-haired boy—Ulrin—spoke.

The man had a twisted smile on his face. "I said until the plan is complete. The gathering of the Summoners' units was another phase to the finale. And speaking of which..."

"You can go back into your rooms now. I don't need any of you runts knowing of this." No one moved.

Then Steambiker Guy's arm glowed red with anger. "Must I make myself spell it out?"

The little thieves scrambled to the right, where Boplan and the two other disappeared to. The man stayed behind, looking at the altar, then at the pile of bags.

"Better make sure the shipments be the last..." he muttered to himself, then walked outside the church. Fray and Lunar looked to the right, staying hidden amongst the bushes.

Steambiker Guy did not seem to notice. Lunar let out a sigh of relief and got back up.

"I'm still calling this a bust of a kidnapping operation. And you've got nice kitty fangs by the way. Are you sure you aren't a neko or something?"

Fray just glanced at her for a moment before walking around to the door and going inside the church. Lunar muttered something about plain guys and followed.

The interior was just as overgrown and ruined as the exterior. The pile was still left there for some reason. The man apparently did not care much for security.

"Well, we gotta report this to the Hall. But first, I want my present back." Lunar skipped over to the pile to dig out a package.

Fray examined the spot to his right, where there was a passage. The corridor was lit by a shade of red. Laughter can be faintly heard from there.

"Oops." Lunar had gotten her package, one that had her name on it, but a bag had dropped to the floor. Light as they were, only containing souls, they still made a loud *plop* when they reached the tiles.

Silence. Then footsteps from the corridor came.

"Hide!" Fray hissed, which made him look a little like he was baring his cat-like canines, getting behind a column far from the red-lit corridor. Lunar fumbled with the package, ripped

it out quickly to let several dozen orbs of light fly into her, pocketed the paper scraps and dashed behind an intact wooden bench.

"Think you heard something?" A boy had come outside, along with a friend, who was the tough-looking blonde from earlier.

"Yeah. Probably the bag dropping and all." She checked on the pile.

"Huh. This zipper isn't closed..." Fray saw Lunar make a nervous grin.

The girl zipped the bag back. "Someone's been a little careless, but no harm done I guess..."

The boy sat on the bench, which made a slight creak on impact, but still held. The girl joined him.

Now Lunar looked incredibly nervous. The slightest movement could shift the tiles at her feet and alert their presence to the kids.

"Huh. Now that Boss has the units, what now? He said something about an all-out attack right?" The boy seemed to be recapping their plan.

The girl nodded. "Obviously, he's fusing them for his squad. And now that the 7-star forms are out, he's probably going to wreck that baron's place."

"Still haven't gotten over that guy huh? And all the times we listen to him say about him..."

"Revenge... he was a decent guy, for a crook and kidnapper at first."

Lunar shot Fray a smug look of victory. He rolled his eyes and stayed silent.

"But that one job alone broke him. No way Carrie's going to survive at this rate." She said the name with warmth and affection.

Was this Carrie their motivation?

"Well," the boy said, "he's gotta let all of us go after this."

"Yeah, and what next? We go free, and then what? Once we go, we'll be on our own, surviving on the tiny pile of scraps and junk we have left, especially when Boss started rationing our supplies."

"We're gonna need a tiny miracle for all this to work."

"Then I'll grant you that miracle!"

Lunar suddenly stood up from her hiding place.

"Wh-What the—?" The girl stood up quickly, taking out a hidden butterfly knife, but holding it with inexperience.

"I said I'll grant you that miracle. I can tell you aren't bad guys. I can get you guys into an orphanage or somewhere you'll be safe. My friends can help you." She looked at Fray when she said this.

Why involve me when it was supposed to be my call...? Still, he did not like the treatment these children got. He was already wholeheartedly committed to Lunar's idea of safety.

Fray walked out of his hiding place. "We saw what that man did to you. I never went through that kind of pain, and we seem incredibly untrustworthy, but let us help you escape out of here. We'll make sure you get a new home, a new life from all... this."

The two children pondered on this. Then the girl said, "Thank you. We'll take your help, but..." She brandished her knife with a steely look of determination. "We'll fight to the very end if you try something fishy."

"Is that so Kelga?"

The man was standing behind them. Fray quickly whipped out his ice-edged Russian kindjal, frost coming off it. Lunar drew her diamond and gold twin blades, one with a diamond rose wreathed in blue flames, the other with a golden rose with ice edged on it.

"Pretty girl... and boy. You two should not have come here in the first place."

"We do as we like jerkface. We're getting these kids out of here," Lunar said with passion.

Steambiker Guy let out a single chuckle. "How naïve of you. Just like those Summoners who believe in 'good', those you call 'heroes'. What have they ever done for you?"

He slid his sunglasses off and tossed them away. The kids gasped. Lunar stifled one. Fray was mildly interested in the concentric, mechanical right eye in the man's socket.

The man's left eye was normal, with a vibrant blue colour in the center, but the right eye was made of polished black metal. Where there should be a pupil, there was a red light instead, surrounded by a spinning golden ring.

"That's just weird," Lunar remarked.

"Ha. I got these from a certain damned baron months ago. And those Summoner heroes who were guarding him at that time? They tried to toss me into prison without another word. Some compassion they had!"

"To be fair Boss, you were the one who started it..." the boy muttered quietly so only the two Summoners could hear.

His arm glowed red, but he continued. "I was fortunate enough to receive the help of an old friend, but that baron must pay. Kulyuk, Sodis, Griff, Farlon, Drevas, Libera..."

He summoned the aforementioned units, all who stood behind him. To the Summoners' horror, they were all 7-stars except Kulyuk, who flew and radiated even more energy than any of Lunar's units individually.

"Dion, Selena, Krantz, Farlon, Rize, Semira, to me!" Her units stood by her in a flash.

"No way, is that my—" Farlon started.

"7-star form?" The enemy Farlon grinned. "Of course I'm the more powerful you! I've outgrown myself didn't I?"

Lunar's Farlon snarled. "We'll see about that."

But the man did not stop. The gem on his arm glowed in a multitude of colors. As it shone, he shouted, "Savia, Vargas, Elza, Alpha, Balgran and Yuura!"

Six more units appeared, and Vargas flew in his Omni Evolution glory.

"N-No fair! *Ten* 7-star units and two Omnis!?"

"Well, this arm augments the magical capacity anyone stores. I'd say you're all done for. But... you kid." Steambiker Guy turned to Fray. "Where's yours?"

"Already here." Fray took a step back. "Limera, Adel, fire at will!"

"With pleasure! **Quadraft Ankh!**"

"Duke's Endurance!"

The left side of them exploded in flames, causing the wooden walls to burn instantly. A wall of red energy mixed with flames rose to protect the Summoners and children.

The enemy units were not so lucky. Each one took the brunt of the blast, knocked to the ground. Balgran had raised his shield and barely blocked the fire from reaching Steambiker Guy in time.

Outside the church were two Fire-type units: Volcanic Scepter Limera, staff at the ready, and Pyro Archfiend Adel, flying and about to deal justice.

They were already Summoned outside, Limera having been given an Overdrive right when Fray secretly used a Hero Crystal.

"You two," Fray turned to the children who were crouched behind the bench, "get your friends and get out of here as fast as you can, to the outskirts, on the path to Randall. We'll meet you there."

"B-But—" Kelga started, but she was interrupted by Lunar.

"Just do as he says. We'll be fine. Now go!"

They nodded and ran.

"Lunar, we need to take this outside, where the *entire* village has to see this." Fray hoped to get attention from anyone helpful.

She nodded. "Let's roll out!"

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As they ran outside, their units following behind. Four other units came up in white flashes and either ran or flew beside them: Sacred Lotus Piany, Lance Champion Vernil, Thunderbird Sabre Diana and—to Lunar's shock—Terra Halcyon Lance.

"Selena," she said, her tone racked with exaggerated grief.

"Y-Yes Lunar?"

"You are SO going to get an Omni Evolution once we're done here."

"What's the plan Fray?" Diana asked, running along beside him.

"We take this battle first to somewhere wide and empty, without any civilians getting caught in the crossfire, but somewhere in town where we can get enough attention from the Summoners here. Lunar, do you any place in mind?"

"In the fields over there!"

"Good. Watch out!"

A barrage of blasts and sharp objects hurled towards them. Some melted, broke or dissipated when they came close to the Fire barrier that was still in effect by Adel's Brave Burst.

Steampunk Guy was riding behind Sodis's horse, his units not far behind. "You're not getting away!"

They had to avoid a few more blasts until they finally vaulted over a few fences and reached an empty field save for tall grass. They stopped and turned to face the thief and his units.

"You just signed your death warrant," He got off Sodis's horse, eyes glinting with a thirst for blood. "Kill them!"

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Fray made the first move. He dashed towards Vargas, dodged the first few fire waves sent reflexively, jumped and lashed out with his kindjal. He pushed the Fire unit to the ground and knocked him away from his squad.

"Everyone! Pick your targets and start winning!" he shouted to his squad, who all moved instantly.

"Semira, back me up! We're taking Kulyuk! Selena, Rize, provide healing only when needed. Everyone else, you guys know what to do!" Lunar shouted to her squad before jumping after Kulyuk, Semira flying after her.

"Griff, nice to see you again." Krantz readied his blade against his ex-leader.

"Krantz. I won't feel bad about smashing your face in right now!" The Fire unit slammed his sword against Krantz's own.

Selena dueled against enemy Farlon and Sodis, Rize supporting with quick slams from her orbs while avoiding Drevas's spear jabs. Libera was taking on Dion and Farlon at the same time, though Dion kept attention on him, allowing Farlon to unleash his Brave Burst.

"Crimson Wing!" His fiery aura exploded and propelled him towards Libera, damaging her with flames with every wave of his sword.

Lunar ran towards Kulyuk, who fired off his BB at the start.

"Ortho Accretion!"

"Stop right there! **Malevolent Onslaught!**" The Pumpress shot her own SBB too, creating an explosion of Fire and Darkness that slightly singed Lunar's head.

"Thanks Semira! **Lunar Eclipse!**" She crossed blades and swiped downwards to make an 'X' that turned into a combined blast of fire and ice. Kulyuk barely managed to block this with the blue spiraling energy in his hand and deflected it to the sky.

She then suddenly disappeared in a flash of light, back onto the ground. With Semira's help, she was launched by the hand towards Kulyuk and plunged her blades right into his neck.

...Except it did not dig deep enough for everlasting damage, but good damage nonetheless. Kulyuk batted her away with the flat of his sword, Lunar coughing as she slammed into the grass.

"Ha!" Semira quickly swung her massive staff directly into Kulyuk's gut, then blasted him with bluish-dark energy. The Fabled Emperor did not look impressed and started attacking with massive slashes.

Lunar massaged her side where she was hit, dazed. It felt like getting hit by a sledgehammer, which she spoke from experience.

Her units were starting to get pushed back. The three remaining enemy units (Kulyuk, Sodis and Farlon) were starting to heal, and flames swirled around them, forming protective circles like Fray's Adel's BB did. Only Selena, Krantz and Semira were still standing, but they were all beat up, and their BBs were exhausted.

Lunar fumbled for her bag full of potions, then realized she left them at home. Silly her.

Just as the enemy units charged up their Brave Bursts, someone yelled, **"Lagoon Blossom!"**

Swirling tornadoes suddenly appeared, accompanied by massive waves of water that formed into a whirlpool in the center. The three enemy units were quickly swept up into it, futilely trying to escape before drowning in it.

It exploded, sending the units sky-high and disappearing in bright flashes of light, indicating their deaths.

Lunar looked to their saviour, who looked slightly burnt and very weak, but smiling a little. Behind her were traces of a massive battle, where the grass was cut, burnt and flattened. Diana, Vernil and the Sacred Lotus appeared to be the only survivors though.

Diana was pulling her sabre out of Balgran.

"That was for my friends, jerk." She seemed very satisfied though.

Fray was putting Steambiker Guy in a chokehold, cutting off his air supply until he was unconscious. He let the man drop to the ground.

"That... was quite some action in a while," Fray muttered to himself. "Lunar, are you alright?"

"Y-Yeah. Took some heavier hits than this." Lunar got up a little shakily. "What about you?"

Fray had soot on his cloak and front. "Fine as well. Vargas was much more tougher than anticipated, but I had some sort of help..." He trailed off.

"Alright. So... is anyone coming here? Especially when they seen a fireworks show like what just happened?" Someone *had* to have seen them right?

He shook his head and raised his right arm, palm wide open. A beam of pink and blue reached extended from it and hit a blue wall. Ripples extended from where it hit, making a large, translucent dark blue dome appear that covered the entire field. It cracked with the sound of breaking glass and disappeared, letting everyone see the clear blue sky again.

"I thought it was strange no one saw us and came running. It looks like this one put up a barrier that conveniently prevents anyone from seeing what the barrier covers, or let them inside."

"Huh, that was inconvenient." Then Fray tugged on the steampunk arm, which had stopped glowing ever since the man was knocked out. "Uh, Fray? What're you doing?"

"I want to examine this properly. I don't know what happens if Akras Summoners' Hall or some other entity get a hold of this equipment. I want guarantee that this will go to a good-willed scientist, so I need to get this to a trustworthy researcher I was told about, later." The shoulder-guard was taken off and put into his bag.

"But first," he prodded the Steambiker Guy with the tip of his shoe, "he goes to the authorities."

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Fray had Vernil carry Steambiker Guy on his horse, who did not seem flattered by the thief himself. Everyone else was unsummoned (or returned into them? Sent back?) to rest.

Fray and Lunar were carrying the bags of the Summoners' much-needed packages, each taking half of the burden. Luckily they were light, otherwise Lunar would collapse quickly, and then Fray would have to deal with carrying another body. He could not have one of his

tired units carry her, and Vernil's horse could only properly seat two, the Champion included, without danger.

They walked through the Village, where they got plenty of attention with their small injuries, but like their attention with Dion, they lost interest quickly. Apparently, it also was not the first time someone had to carry an unconscious guy and look beat-up.

Lunar said there was a guard station, so that was where they were headed. On the way, she excitedly kept on asking what kind of weapons he used, his BBs, how he fought while still carrying a bag, even when it was flattened against his back, how long he had been a Summoner without actually telling her (she thought he was a passing cat traveler).

Fray half-hearted answered only very few, feeling tired after what happened, in the past four hours when he checked his watch.

They ended up in front of the station, a large, cuboid-shaped three-story building of metal and stone. The double doors opened to let out a green-haired man.

His gaze glanced over Fray, like he was insignificant, but took a double-take at Lunar.

"Oh, it's you Lunar," he greeted. "What are you doing here now?"

"Taking a kidnapper to prison Lugi, *and* returning the stolen Summoners' presents!" she answered cheerfully.

"...Stolen presents?"

"Yeah! Apparently there were presents stolen by some kids and all, and we found the guy behind it all, and beat him up! He's right here now, and here—" she shook the bags to indicate them, "—are the stolen packages of today."

"I'll... be going now." Lugi wandered off.

"What's with him?" Lunar wandered out loud.

"He seems to be surprised we busted a thief operation, and managed to find these presents, although he does not seem to know about it. Most likely, that was what he was thinking about," Fray said thoughtfully. "But who is he?"

"Oh, the Quake God Lugi, head of the 23rd Demon Slayers Squadron, Sky Guard, uh Garden-something like that. We call him Lugi for short. He's pretty powerful, but... well, his anger gets the best of him a lot. But he's a good guy."

They went inside without any further interruptions, Fray dragging Steambiker Guy off the horse, feeling his weight carriage increase a little.

"Hey sir," Lunar greeted the guard at the counter. He turned to look at her.

"What can I do for you today young miss?" he asked.

"We got a kidnapper we want to turn in, and the stolen packages he had."

The guard looked at the man on the floor, then at the bags. Lunar took out one for proof.

"That's... that's a Summoner's... Where did you get all this?"

"A church." She explained what led Fray and Lunar here.

"...I'll be right back. Please wait there by the chairs while we sort this out," he said, before shouting to his back. "Harold! Landa! We've got a prisoner for Cell Level 2. Mirvan, Randy, we just got those lost presents to return now."

As he said it and walked upstairs to their right, two guards in similar green uniforms walked out of the counter and took Steambiker Guy by the arms, then dragged him to a metal gate. The guard at the gate opened it, and the thief was taken through. Two other guards came by and took the bags of presents.

As Fray stretched his arms, relieved of his burden, Lunar suddenly pulled him to the chairs.

"H-Hey. What's with the rush?" he asked, setting his bag down beside him.

"I just know we're gonna get bored, so... can I play with your cat ears?" She looked at his hood.

"...Go on ahead." He looked elsewhere, and Lunar suppressed a squeal.

They sat, Fray looking around the office and Lunar playing with his hood absentmindedly. The station was empty save for the two Summoners and a few guards at their posts. With Lunar being so childish, Fray felt as if he were the one paying for her bail, then waiting for her judgement in their chairs.

Her body being close to him felt a little warm and comfortable though. Although her dirty black hair was not as nice.

He noticed the ribbon coming off a little. "Lunar, may I...?"

"What?" She was feeling up the entire hood.

"Your ribbon. I can tie it for you."

He undid it, letting more of Lunar's silky hair wave around like a waterfall, then tied it back up quickly as he thought best.

"Wow, you're an expert. Did you wear ribbons?" Lunar's eyes held great expectation.

"I did not." That shot her down real quick. "I used to do it for my younger cousins."

"Family huh?" she muttered, going back to fiddling with his hood.

Fray then remembered the mission briefing he had for tomorrow. He took the red paper out and read it.

A moment later, he quickly realized what they just did.

A second after that, a responsible-looking guard came to them.

"You two have done the Village, the Hall and the Guard an incredible service!" he congratulated them.

"...Was that thief the one behind the missing presents cases? Where over the past few weeks, in which Summoners of the Hall and the Imperial Guard had reported their missing presents?" Fray asked. Lunar had stopped playing.

"You have heard of it? Why yes, that was the case. People had been investigating this matter for a while now, and you two youngsters managed to catch him. There is a large reward, which is in here..." He handed them two wooden crates and bags of Zel that were a little larger than the packages.

"The Village Guard thanks you. You may leave now."

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"And that was how we got that thief!" Lunar was telling this to her other units, other than her squad who had been there, and Shimmer, her childhood friend. The orphans were listening inside the spacious living room.

The children were allowed to camp at her house, in her backyard (where the traps were cleared away, after Selena accidentally stepped into a muddy one, and Farlon killed once again, this time by a spike trap). Shimmer and Lunar got all the tents, bedrolls and everyday living supplies they needed, and Carrie—a 21-year-old, motherly, yet sickly brunette—could not stop thanking them. They were to live here until the two friends found an orphanage or good place for them to stay in.

"And um, this guy, Fray, did you know him from anywhere?" Shimmer asked.

"Nope. But he was the one who helped me get my cake this morning."

"Is he really cute as you say? I didn't get a good look at him before," Semira said, pouting a little.

"Like a cat! He even has these cat ears on his hoodie and little fangs that stood out when I saw his teeth. All that's left is a tail!" Lunar grinned at the thought: a Cat-Fray.

Rize smiled a little slyly. "You sure sound really interested in this boy. Have you already fallen in love like those mortals in your TV shows, Summoner?"

"H-Hey Rize, back it up there." But Lunar blushed a little. "We just met."

"Well, we have the proof you do." Dion had a funny edge to his voice.

"And... what might that be?"

"Your red hot cheeks."

"D-Dion!" She tossed a pillow that hit him square in the gut, with enough force to bowl him over.

Everyone laughed (or smiled in a slightly twisted way, in Rize's case and a few other units'). Dion just promptly got off the floor and sat back up.

Heh. Fray, you just became my new buddy, and I hope you heard that telepathically. Lunar smiled, feeling better than ever after a little adventure. She looked outside the floor-to-ceiling windows and out into the night sky.

Elsewhere, Fray was paying for a new home, but sneezing and tripping over a rock first.

Chapter End Notes

Fray's units are also based on my most-used BF Global squad, but not all of them are there.

A Second Morning

Chapter Summary

Fray catches the eye of a certain white-haired girl.

Chapter Notes

I am so going to turn those twins into harem protagonists.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Fray was wide awake in his cabin, having woke up a little to early at half past six in the morning. The few neighbors beside his cabin were definitely not up yet.

The red mission briefing from yesterday was written like this:

'Investigation of Stolen Presents'

There will be an investigation held on the 1st of June, starting at 9.00 a.m., headed by Lugina of the 23rd Demon Slayers Squadron. Two other Summoners will accompany you on this investigation.

There have been many reports during this month where many of the Summoners' unit presents were stolen, coming in the form of brown packages. These reports came in the same time a few hours later after the units were released. These incidents have been narrowed down to somewhere in the Village of the Venturer.

The objective is to locate the thief, or thieves, behind this. We cannot allow Summoners to continue on their quests unprepared in the light of recent demon attacks. Go to the Guard Station in the Village to meet your companions.

Approved by Elder Owen, the First Summoner

Today is the 1st of June, which meant the near-end of the long summer season. More importantly, this probably meant he had the day off. If Lugina was head of the investigation, and he saw them turning in the thief, would he be at the station apologizing to the two other Summoners later? That the investigation has been cancelled?

Fray looked around in his living room, relaxing on his red couch. It was spacious, devoid of any decor, but that can be fixed later. So far, it was a good place, complete with four guest bedrooms, a kitchen, guest room, an empty one and an attic. He even had a small backyard.

His enchanted grey messenger bag was stuffed with potions and the crystal-embedded arm he intended to give to Noel of the Summoners' Research Lab. Potent potions and a ridiculously powerful piece of steampunk armor probably should not go together, but Fray had to hide the arm as he delivered it.

This Noel... he was the one who was said to have devised the means for Omni Evolution, or Omni-evos for short. The details were also written in the letter sent by Lin, which he tested on Lance, which worked amazingly. He supposed that was the reason for the large amount of karma, where Lance of the past would have turned into an even more amazing hero, had he had good karma.

"Oh... Fray?" It was Limera, winking sleep out of her eyes, having come out of one of the guest bedrooms. Sometimes, units like her would try doing things like sleeping out in the real world, rather than stay in their Summoner's soul... or wherever they went.

"Limera. You're up early," Fray greeted her.

"Yeah... I'm finally here, back in Randall, or at least it's really close by." She yawned a little and sat on the crimson sofa. "Y'know what I really wanted to see though..."

"Was the Imperial Guard, how much it developed and what impact you made. It obviously made history. I heard you could go to the Imperial Library for the lore about you."

Limera was one of the original members of the Randall Guard in her time from years to a century ago, the daughter of the Refugee Leaders, Reed and Lucana. Ever since her summon, she was curious about what happened to Randall, but she seemed content living in Fray's hometown.

Although she often set monsters on fire out of boredom, accidentally starting forest fires.

Limera stretched on the sofa. She looked ready to sleep again. "You're going out already?"

"Oh no, I think I'll go out somewhere around nine o'clock."

"Good." She walked over to Fray and sat in the couch with him, wriggling and squeezing a bit until Fray was sitting on her lap.

"Limera...?"

"Do me a favor and be my teddy." She wrapped her arms around Fray, leaned into the couch and started sleeping again.

She felt very, very warm like the Fire unit she is.

...He was starting to feel sweaty.

(-----)

"Angel, Akuma, good morning to you two."

"Hey Lugina."

"Good morning!"

The nine o'clock sun rose above them. Akuma squinted a little in the daylight, while Angel's skin welcomed it. Their units milled around, talking to some of Lugina's Earth Units.

"Okay, you two know what you're here for right?" Lugina said.

"Yeah. We were gonna take up that investigation thing, the one where our presents were stolen." Akuma still remembered the frustration when he saw that boy run away with their stuff.

"Well, it turns out some people already turned the thief in, and got the stolen presents back."

"...What?"

"W-Wow, well, that means we got our things back right?" Angel recovered quickly from the surprise.

"Yeah, here they are." Lugina handed them the two packages beside him on the floor.

"Hold on, who completed the mission?" Akuma felt somewhat interested in the people that saved him the trouble of going through another tiresome adventure.

And protecting his sister indirectly of course.

"Some cocky Summoner girl I know named Lunar Rin, and another boy I don't know about. He looked new to me."

"And can you describe them? I want to thank them for solving the case." Angel made it a point to be grateful to everyone who did favors.

"Well, I can just give you that girl's address, as for the boy, or was it a girl? Well, he's... huh." Lugina suddenly looked at something to his right.

"Huh what Mosshead?" Akuma asked purposely. He did not like the Summoner anyway.

Lugina bit back a curse for giants. "He's right there, the one with black hair and white coat."

He was walking on the sidewalks, narrowly avoiding a carriage. Unlike yesterday, neither his cloak nor bag was on him this time, leaving him in his armored coat that made him stand out even more. He had a new grey messenger bag with blue outlines, although instead of straps, it was hooked tightly to the right side of the back of his belt.

"Thank you Lugina!" Angel held the Quake God's hand in thanks, who blushed slightly from the momentary contact. Akuma glared at him though in a tired way.

Seriously? (Insert rude word here), I'm tired of breaking this up Lugina, was what Akuma's face seemed to say. Angel quickly broke off though and ran to meet the boy.

"Excuse me! Hello!" Angel shouted after him. The boy could not hear her though over the rumbling wagons. He continued to walk straight ahead.

Oh my, are those cat ears? Does he happen to cosplay?

Or was it a she? His clothing did not reveal much about his gender. Angel would have to confirm by getting close.

She suddenly tripped, stumbling slightly but quickly getting upright. The boy was getting farther away.

"Angel, don't run so quick next time." Akuma had caught up to her, and so did their units. "You see the boy?"

She shook her head. "I really wanted to meet that boy."

"Hey we'll get another chance. I think it's time for another Raid mission Sis."

(-----)

In the afternoon, in Randall's grocery shopping area...

"Milady, once again, Units do not have to eat," Lunar is said, carrying a basket full of carrots and radishes.

Angel hefted her own basket of apples and oranges. "But who's going to try my cooking?"

The Dark Unit smiled. "Fine, but it's best that I taste it. Anyway, it's only you and your brother that really needs it."

The Unit started a little daydream where she gets to be the housewife of Akuma. He was a really nice guy sometimes.

Normally, some Units already have another love in mind in their past lives, like Lunar is's crush on one of the Twelve Guardians, but sometimes these Units do not have the same ideals that apply to them in the present. Their mindset may be the same, but there are minuscule differences that sets them apart from their other copies.

Angel was not paying attention to her unit though. She was looking at the boy from the Village a few hours ago. Apparently, he just went out of an elevator that led to the Summoners' Research Lab.

"H-Hey! Over here! Hello!?" Angel frantically tried to wave at him, but being on the other side of a very wide bridge, where a river ran underneath, he could not hear her. He tripped over the leg of a bench and stumbled, recovered, and continued walking normally.

"O-Oh, Lunar is I have to go!" She ran after the boy, Lunar is shouting a word of protest.

By the time Angel got to the other side of the bridge, the boy was long gone.

"Angel... who were you trying to find?" Lunar is panted slightly, but her running were nothing compared to her deathly battles.

"Just a boy I wanted to thank since this morning. He was one of the two people who completed a mission early meant for me and Akuma, even though he probably didn't know about us. Muu~" Angel stomped her feet and pouted, feeling frustrated. Passersby just stopped and stared at the cute girl.

"I'm sure you will find him Angel," Lunar is laid a reassuring hand on her shoulder. "Now, it's best not to get your brother, Karl, and their friends waiting. I'm sure you would want to finish making dinner quick."

"Th-That's right! Karl and Seria are going to be at home in just an hour, and everybody else. Let's go."

As the two sped off to their home, a twin-tailed girl watched from a nearby alley.

(-----)

Akuma felt a very large shiver up his spine. He felt tempted to say *that very* quote.

Well, the other one without the word 'cute' in it.

He was making the mushroom soup in the kitchen, the third one he had to make ever since they got back from a Raid mission. This one was particularly big that it reached way over his waist, since he was hoping that: 1) Raaga and Kira do not clumsily knock it over and 2) its overall heat does not allow Quaid from laying a hand on it.

"Michele, pass me the shiitake mushrooms."

"Here!" Michele, dressed in a frilly apron, was helping him (Secretly, she was trying to impress her Summoner). Zephyr and Alice somehow managed to roast a few turkeys together after a few mass-fail trials. The other Units made sure no one else 'stumbled' into the house out of their training field, although Quaid and Elza were out gathering ingredients in the forest.

Akuma was not sure why he and his twin were doing this. It started with a roulette after a particularly nasty demon invasion, and they got the responsibilities of managing the celebration dinner.

Everyone helped though, from time to time only, as agreed on by the others. Karl, Seria and even Lugina provided the party supplies, and so did their friends. Grahdens, and amazingly Owen helped by arranging for some food ingredients to be sent to them, allowing the twins some time to do their Summoner jobs.

Eventually, Angel and Lunar is returned, and eventually the afternoon faded into night. Karl, Seria, Elder Grah, Owen, and at least a dozen other unique people showed up in fancy clothes, or at least respectful ones. By then, everyone was chatting or doing little games

around the house. A musical band with Units and Summoners played an easy-going song out in the lawn.

Many battle-pumped Units wanted to spend their time sparring with other units, so their Summoners let them fight in the training field, where massive explosions lit the field, and people bet a few trinkets, items and rare materials on their victories.

A black-haired girl in a long purple dress just won another match and cheered.

"Lunar, that girl... She needs to set a better example," Owen chided, drinking a glass of... mystery orange juice.

"Oh ho. Owen, you would be surprised about how she jumps at every opportunity, and so do we! Look at this crab porridge! Angel has outdone herself," Grahdens chuckled, holding a steaming bowl. Both Elders looked smart (and probably more intimidating) in their tuxedos.

"Anyway, the Summoners need this break. They have all been through a long ordeal. Even if they're more youthful than us, they still have limits. Not that we are *that* easily tired out," Grahdens added.

Owen glanced at his friend with a piercing glare. "You may be right, but still..." He looked back at the battling Units. "These teenagers are fighting over *items*."

"Actually, it was the Units' request."

Owen stayed silent for a moment, then sighed.

"Excuse me."

Grahdens turned to look at the young man he met yesterday. He was dressed in a business suit colored in different shades of white and red, with a black tie against a white shirt.

"Fray! Congratulations on completing a major quest on your first day, and making friends with a powerful Summoner no less."

"Elder Grahdens. And er..." Fray did not know who the other old man was, but he was not someone to cross.

"Owen." The Summoner just peered at him, then walked off. "I shall be off somewhere."

"Well then," Grahdens said, seeing Owen off, "what can I do for you young Fray?"

"My friend Lunar Rin was the one who invited me here, and she said to come meet her here. Do you know where she is?"

"A fake date was it she said...?" He murmured that to himself, then continued smiling. "Ah, you can find her over there."

"Thank you sir." He jogged off without another word.

"Ho ho. Youth."

Lunar was filling a bag full of very necessary items for her Spheres, leaving a few weeping Summoners. Her units looked satisfied, who kept winning ten times in a row. She spotted Fray running down a gentle slope down to the field and waved to him.

"Hey Fray! Finally you're here." Lunar quickly wrapped her arm around Fray's left, startling the boy and Lunar's Units.

"Lunar, what are you doing?"

"Uh, just follow my lead first, then I'll explain later."

Dion was taken aback by this. "Lunar, you said you were just inviting Fray."

"Oh yeah, I still haven't told you all. Eh heh, well, there is this guy—" she suddenly stopped when she looked to the left.

"Lunar, there you are! Are you sure you don't want my...?" A man in a rich white suit came up to them.

"...hand? Who's this?"

"Oh! Well, uh, this cute guy here is my good friend Fray. I *did* tell you I was going to bring a date~"

The rich-looking guy looked crestfallen. "I-I'll be back for you s-someday... my sweet..." He half-sauntered, half-limped over to the house.

"Finally..." Lunar quickly let go of him.

"I am so sorry! I told that guy who's been into me for like years and years, that I had a date: you! That probably shook him off enough."

"I-It's fine. No one was really harmed, except perhaps that person, but it is fine," Fray reassured her.

The lazy Summoner then walked around him in a circle, examining him at different angles. "But... where's your cat ears?"

"Just because I did have cat ears sewn in the first place, does not mean it applies to my other outfits," Fray replied stiffly.

"Hmph. I wanted a good picture..." She must really want that picture.

"Can everyone come to the house please?" Someone spoke using a megaphone from the house's backyard. *"We're getting a dance-off here, and we want to see some legs moving!"*

"Well, I think I'll sit back on this one. But Fray... you still need more fame for yourself," Lunar said, starting to push him to the party.

"You don't have to push me. I wanted to meet more people, so I'm going." He quickly shook off Lunar. "But you don't want to dance?"

She grinned. "I'm just that lazy. Still, I hope that you actually danced before~"

(-----)

Angel stood at the edge of the crowd near the large spot where the dancers were going to, in front of the musicians' stage. Every partygoer here was excited for the finale of this party: the dance-off.

It was simple; dance in the most greatest and flashiest way according to every song played, and the challenges issued by the announcer. After every two challenges, those who did not get judged well were eliminated, leaving the best. Be the best of the best, and you win at least 20 Gems given by most of the Summoners who took the small contest as a large betting game.

A unit threw a ball of light high up into the air, and so did a few others. Soon, the dancing floor was colored red first, then white, and kept on changing to give dramatic light effects.

"Okay!" A teenager stood on by the stage as the announcer, using a megaphone. "I am Markem, and I will be the emcee for this day's dance-off. Now, would all those who want to participate step forward?"

Over half of the entire party stepped forward. "Good! Now, scramble yourselves around..."

They did as he said. "Alright, now, I'm sure you polished on your dancing techniques, I mean who doesn't want Gems? Well, remember, for the best dancer—or dancers—they will receive a small trophy, and exactly 20 Gems! Now here's our first song!"

It was a song that sounded like something out of a royal medieval period.

[Reception at the Palace by Mack David, Al Hoffman and Jerry Livingston]

"Alright, please summon your Unit of choice for this song and start dancing!"

Bright flashes of light allowed Units to appear, most of them being elegant-looking and capable of handling royal dances.

Angel scrambled her brain for anyone, decided on him, and summoned.

The Valiant Edge Quaid appeared in front of her. This time his sabre was not by his side, and he appeared to have removed his armor.

"Angel. May I have this dance?" He was smiling brightly, holding out an arm.

"Let's go." She took his arm gratefully and started.

They whirled around gracefully around the few dozens of Summoners and Units at the dance floor. Nearly a half of them stumbled on their feet, but they managed somewhat. Quaid

seemed to guide Angel a lot, who nearly tripped once in her high heels, but she stayed fine.

While Quaid was having an enjoyable time with his beautiful and cute Summoner, he could sense at least twenty jealous pairs of eyes, especially those from his fellow male units.

On the other side of the dance floor, Fray was being twirled around by Limera, who was the more leading partner. She had discarded her sleeveless robe in favor of a fiery-orange dress.

"L-Limera, are you sure you know how to dance to music like this?" He was feeling a little dizzy.

The last time Limera danced at a royal ball, her own dance partner ended up in a twirling disaster. She thought it had something to do with her fighting moves that did involve spinning.

On another note, Fray was aware of the many eyes on him (for his noticeable two fang-like teeth when he opened his mouth) and Limera (because she was a Unit that was rather rarely summoned, or most likely, never seen before).

It did not matter much to the both of them. Fray was hoping for the Gems and people he could meet, and Limera liked to spend time with her cute Summoner.

Once the music ended halfway, Markem raised his megaphone, "Splendid dancing! But now is a time for a challenge change. Now, will all the units return?"

The Units dispersed from the crowd (Limera winked at him as she went) or disappeared in flashes of light. "Now, the next song, and the next challenge: dance with the sheets of paper sent to you."

Markem tossed a piece of parchment into the air, which exploded into smaller pieces and magically flew to every dancer. Once they read it, some cheered quietly or groaned in total disbelief.

Fray caught his and read it: ***Lin***

He was surprised by this turn of events, but quickly spotted the green-haired girl moving around and looking.

"Lin!" he shouted. The girl looked and ran over to him.

She looked elegant in a green dress with white at the top. "F-Fray! I never knew you came here! Did you already get my invite?"

"Uh no, I actually already got it from a friend..."

"Oh hey, the music's already starting!"

As it did, Lin and Fray held hands together, dancing around, but narrowly stumbling into many couples. Clumsy people: double the trouble.

It was not a boy and girl pairing for everyone though. Some were paired with that of the same gender, some seemed to be paired with their arch-enemies. The same black-haired boy and blonde boy from yesterday were spotted glaring at each other (the taller one did most of the glaring, while the other seemed unsure). A red-slitted-eyed girl with waist-length white hair and matching blouse and skirt danced with a person that looked like her older sister, only with black twintails, violet piercing eyes and an gleeful expression.

Nearly half the couples were unsafe pairs, but Lin was... a little better, if a walking accident-maker was safe.

Although, every time Lin was about to say something, Fray had to steer her out of the way of a couple, so they had little to talk about. She still was amazed by the little quest from yesterday he talked about.

"Really? Fray, your accidents extend to saving the day!?" she asked in a flabbergasted way.

Yes, they did, or it simply is a lucky moment...

"Ora," he made that small sound that does not need to be read into. "I cannot believe I just did a quest intended for this day a day early. And it all started with a lost package."

"So you made a new friend at the end right? Great! That means you must be adjusting to life here."

"Mmm..."

The dance went on with several few accidents, ending as the couples either pushed each other away or parted calmly

"Alright! We had few close calls there, but we have our people who are moving on to the last three rounds!" Markem announced.

He threw another piece of parchment that separated into smaller pieces like the last one. This flew to Fray, Angel, Akuma, Grahdens and six others.

Elder Grahdens was chosen? For an old man, he seemed to dance well.

Fray looked at the others. Some of them were the people that stood out yesterday, others were unfamiliar yet strangely eccentric-looking as everyone else.

He saw the white-haired girl with red eyes from earlier looking at him, and the other girl in the blue and white dress, who stared at him so hard that he was sure someone else noticed this behavior.

"Now, the next song!"

It was a more faster song, one that inspired energy all the time, and it just fills you with... determination (the feel to dance).

[Better When I'm Dancin' by Meghan Trainor]

"And the challenge: dance one by one in the center! Contestants! Make a circle! And Akuma, you're going first!"

"Me huh? Well, fine then." The tall one walked in massive bounds, looking sharp in the yellow and orange lights.

Gotta get those Gems... he was thinking. He awkwardly started stepping first, then eventually got used to the rhythm, and then he was making use of his long legs to pull off wavy movements across the floor.

"Go brother!" Angel cheered, and so did many other girls.

"Good on you Akuma!" Markem complimented him. "Elder Grah, you're up next!" Akuma walked off the stage while Grahdens walked past him.

"Well, well, let's see if this old man still got it! What d'you say guys?" Markem was answered with cheers.

Grahdens summoned his staff, then well... shuffled across the floor. It was not that bad though.

"We call that OK! Angel, our angel, step forward please!"

It was her turn. *You can do this!* She started twirling and danced with grace.

A few second later into the dance, everyone was already cheering. She was already racking up plenty of points, perhaps a little more than her brother, and definitely more than Elder Grah. Angel was starting to enjoy herself.

Karl smiled, and Lugina was gaping. Seria, especially, was reminded of her grace, and wondered if she should have showed off in the contest.

"Still our Angel! Mizuki, you're next!"

The show continued as the kuudere was up. She made fantastic leaps and bounds as expected of an assassin, though her demeanor did not match the song in any way. Her sister, Hakuryuu Akki, made similar movements, although her happy-go-lucky voice spoiled her performance, and no one knew why she glanced in the direction of her sister and the cat-fanged boy. Viktor Fulgur Rex displayed full-on vigor like his middle name, and surprisingly, Shimmer an unexpected contestant (Lunar was beside herself at this revelation, who did not notice her), stepped around in her best moves.

"That's good. Now, the uh, new guy!"

Fray stepped forward, feeling all eyes on him.

He backflipped, then started spinning, stepping and making sharp movements so cool that everyone was entranced somewhat.

"Whoa! The new guy's already making one heck of a debut!"

The crowd murmured.

"He's cool..."

"What's with those quick moves?"

Fray certainly went all-out. Adel and Lance nodded with approval, and Limera grinned, remembering the times he taught Fray how to spin on his foot.

Meanwhile, Angel really wanted to meet this teenager more. Akuma's curiosity about him grew a little.

After impressing everyone, and the rest of the contestants danced, the contest moved on to its third phase.

"Alright, only eight people get to move on: Angel, Akuma, Viktor, Mizuki, Shimmer, Marvin, Rei and... uh..."

"It's Fray!" the newcomer shouted.

"Fray! Sorry to you two—" he nodded in acknowledgement to Akki and the other boy, "—but the dance-off moves on! Now, for the third song."

[A Thousand Years by Christina Perri]

The light orbs changed colours to different shades of pink, red and green to reflect the theme.

"Classic love song! And you know what that means: everyone, guys and gals, pick the other of the opposite sex!"

Everyone rushed. Marvin got with Rei. Akuma, with Shimmer, looking incredibly intimidated by the size of her partner. Viktor's smile out-shone Mizuki's and Angel...

The snow-white beauty was in front of Fray. She looked more relieved and energetic than everyone else.

"Um, hello Angel," Fray tried to make small talk as he put a gentle hand on her waist.

"Fr-Fray! That was your name? Well, I really wanted to meet you since this morning," she nervously said, putting her left hand in his.

They started dancing, each one doing different variants as they went in a circle.

Lunar was looking from the crowd. Karl and Lugina were staring at Angel and Fray, who were equally moving with grace, although Fray had slowed a little for Angel.

"Whoa," Lunar was commentating on an entirely different subject, "this is the 'everyone-gets-jealous-of-a-harem-protagonist' situation. All this jealousy... I actually get to see this with my own eyes..."

"Shut up Lunar," Lugina muttered sharply.

"Er, I do not know about what you said..." Karl was still looking though.

Lunar looked at the graceful couple, then chuckled. "I kinda feel jealous of that girl already..."

Seria was in a similar situation. She was probably going to chew Shimmer out later.

"So you were the ones who were supposed to take that mission today?" Fray was asking.

"Yeah! Lugina spotted you, and I've been trying to get to you ever since. I really want to thank you." Angel's sky-blue eyes shone pink in the light.

"I... it was a simple accident." He turned her around by the arm.

"No, really, Akuma's already working hard with the demons and all, that lately whenever I go on a mission with him, he starts to take steps to protect me first. He seems to get tired all the time that I feel worried. Finishing that mission, the one with the dangerous criminal... You took a lot of stress off him."

"You two care for each other a lot... I feel jealous of Akuma."

"Why?"

"He has a really cute and caring girl for a sister. I never had one like that."

Angel blushed. "Th-Thanks..."

Someone yelped. Akuma was glaring at Fray, Shimmer having a hard time with her hands. Thankfully, only Angel and half the entire crowd noticed.

...? His hands are cold and warm at the same time. Not too stiff, not too big, his plain-looking hands were nice and gentle.

Then the song came to a steady end, with Fray and Angel getting into a duo-finale-style pose of their own.

"We have a winning couple!" Markem sounded even more excited than usual. "What do you think about Fray and Angel guys and girls?"

Everyone gave an unanimous vote.

"Heck yeah! Fray and Angel, this night's Prince and Princess! You two get ten Gems each, so come up here!"

The two got on the stage, everyone else both cheering and/or glaring for prize, love, and awesomeness. Markem handed them each a pouch full of the sparkling precious materials.

"Now there," Markem said after the two went off the stage. Angel was jumping up and down for winning. "We still have one final phase: a battle over the other prize, a sack ton of zel, and bragging rights! Now, will these people move to the training field: Viktor, Akuma, Fray, and Mizuki!"

Chapter End Notes

The three songs belong to those who created them as mentioned, and are not mine.

Night Battle

Chapter Summary

The Summoners fight it out at a small mock tournament, first being Akuma vs. Fray.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

They were out on the training field, everyone watching from wooden benches or chairs brought over from the house. Already, some of the people were placing bets on who won.

Fray was up against Akuma, who were going first. The match between Mizuki and Viktor would come second.

The rules were this:

- 1) If a Summoner is knocked out or their entire unit squad is defeated, victory goes to the other. They can also surrender.
- 2) Each side is permitted to go all out.
- 3) Only the Summoner and their five units can go in a squad.
- 4) Only one Leader skill can be activated.

"Limera, Adel, Diana, Vernil, Lance..." Fray called his units, then stomped his foot to create a small iceberg that erupted from the ground in front of him. He pulled an icy handle from it, freeing a short curved sword shaped like Mordre*.

"Tazer, Tridon, Uda, Alyut, Alpha..." Akuma brought up a black greatsword from his house.

Not surprisingly, everyone had 7-star units, but Viktor who had Darvenshel as a 6-star, and Akuma's Tridon as a 6-star too. They did not seem too bothered by this though.

Everyone commented on the units.

"Well, impressive," Grahdens remarked. "I sense an immense amount of energy from his units, unlike Akuma's, who require more power."

"Fray already Omni Evolved Lance?" Angel said in surprise.

"Yeah, I ended up getting motivated to Omni Evolve my Selena too when I saw him." Lunar sat on a chair next to Angel's. "We haven't met by the way. Lunar Rin." She held out her right hand.

"My name's Angel," she said while shaking the other girl's hand. "You were the other one who completed the quest today right? Um, thanks for that."

"Hey, no biggie. I got a heap rewards for doing something that was a total coincidence anyway."

While the girls talked, Karl was commented about Fray to Seria, Lin and Lugina, both sitting on the same bench. Elise, the Raid mission receptionist, Noah, a Demon Slayer, and Sera Starride, a receptionist of Akras Summoners' Hall, came to show up late at the party.

"He does not look anything like the newcomer I have seen before."

"Yeah, well, we'll see quick if he's a rookie or not." Lugina still had doubts, and so did Seria.

Fray shot his hand towards the sky, creating a fiery, elegant rune that floated on his palm. Torrents of red and blue magic started swirling around his units, runes circling.

"Ohhhh—! This is Fray's Leader Skill!" Lin excitedly said to Karl, Seria and Lugina. Lunar and Angel listened in as well, but paying attention to the battle.

"His Leader Skill?" Karl asked. Leader Skills were the auras of a leader of a group that energizes the people in the squad.

"Yep! He told me about it back in his town. Just watch what it does."

"So!" Akuma shouted from the other end of the field. "You must be the guy who took care of that mission today. I want to thank you for that."

"You're welcome, even though I never intended for anything good for you. But your sister already told me." Fray thought he was a good person.

Until he saw the glint in his eyes that is. "Then stay away from my sister. Tazer! On the one with the staff!"

Tazer rode his waves and launching like a saw, he started to clash against Limera. She blocked with her staff and blasted him with fire, knocking him backwards. Lance flew after the Cyclonic Emperor.

Everyone was taking on an individual, except for Limera and Lance, who were fighting Tazer and Exvehl. It would be close for them, but they were strong.

Akuma immediately threw himself at Fray, who blocked his greatsword easily. He ducked under a swing, backstepped from a kick and thrust his kindjal.

It glanced off Akuma's sizable sword, who glowed slightly with the energies of Fire, Thunder and Dark.

These elemental energies flowed to Uda and Alpha, which helped them in their battles against Diana and Vernil. Uda continuously parried every lightning-quick attack from Diana, though he had more nicks than her. The magical torrents still flowed strongly around the sabre-wielding unit, blocking most of the electricity and assisting Diana's swift attacks.

Alpha swung his massive sword against Vernil, who had slight trouble adjusting his spear spins and thrusts to counter the blade's sweeping attacks. Vernil spurred his horse to move a little faster for a charge, knocking Alpha's sword out of the way, allowing for a stab into Alpha's chestplate.

Alpha parried and jumped back. He felt his Brave Burst ready.

Vernil used his Brave Burst first though. **"Skirwing!"**

The Brimstone Emperor blocked most of the icy blast, but it still affected him. He still rushed under Vernil's guard and slashed.

"Caldus Inferno Shock!" Alpha's slash consisted of a large wave of fire that burned and blasted Vernil's horse back for a meter. Flames swirled around Alpha's chest and healed the injury.

But then he stumbled.

"Weakness'? Fine, let's see how longer you will last!" He shouted, running towards Vernil.

The effects of Alpha's BB reached his teammates and started healing them slowly. Limera and Lance used their SBBs after that, healing and providing defensive buffs for their teammates.

Several more BBs and SBBs came, and either team was stacked with survival-based buffs, up until a point where each side made even larger craters in the ground before. Akuma's Alpha and Zephyr were quickly taken out by Fray's Limera and Diana, with the help of Vernil's 'Poison' and 'Injury' debuffs. Lance, despite his Enhancements, was defeated taking every attack for everyone.

Akuma had lost his Water barrier after taking Fray's stabs, and the green-eyed boy still had his Earth barrier. Even the defensive wind from Lance's SBB was up. However, once he loses his barrier, he would be relying on Lance's leftover Earth power.

Akuma was a hellish fighter in his own right, and while his swings mostly went wide, they were devastating if one landed on Fray, and he had much stamina to throw around.

His red eyes glinted so much in the moonlight that they reminded Fray of a demon's.

Akuma then made a stab for Fray's chest. He spin-kicked it aside and did a leg sweep with the momentum of his earlier spin.

Akuma landed right on his head and tumbled. The tall one scrambled for his sword, but Fray kicked it away.

Akuma glared directly into Fray's eyes. The recipient of the glare shivered, again reminded of Akuma's demonic eyes. The green-eyed Summoner never liked the concept of demonic rituals and such, having accidentally read a book once that touched heavily on the subject.

"Kid, you're pretty good," Akuma said, getting to his feet, wary of the blade pointed at him.

"Thank you, but I am sixteen years old. So will you surrender?" Fray said, remaining cautious for any of his units.

Akuma muttered something in a language from the eastern lands. "No way. Me and Angel really need that prize."

"Ora. You would never give up. Fine," Fray dropped his voice a little. "I'll make this quick."

Fray grabbed Akuma by the neck, then put him in a chokehold similar to the one he did to Steambiker Guy. "We just need to knock out the leader anyway."

The boy was much, much, much shorter than Akuma, and lacked power in terms of strength. But Fray was pumped with energy from his team's combined Brave Bursts, and combined with his Leader Skill, Akuma did not feel like a giant.

Akuma scrambled and scratched at Fray's face. He held while Akuma continued to flail, turning blue.

"Summoner!" Uda tried to get past Diana, but she kept on blocking him from reaching his Summoner.

"O-Oh, Fray knew how to... use a chokehold?" Karl said with surprise. A gentle-looking boy using a military-like move did not seem match.

"Impressive... Akuma was usually able to escape and destroy everything like a wild beast, but now he is restrained by a smaller boy." Grahdens chuckled a little.

"B-Brother..." Angel was somewhat worried and made a move to stand, but Quaid stopped her.

"Don't worry Angel. As you could see, Fray is merely defeating him in, well, the least violent way possible," he reassured her.

"Darn, Fray's being more of a bad... guy than ever." Lunar was impressed once again.

"Scary... Yet cool," Angel agreed a little, still concerned about the match's safety.

"Do... you... yield...?" Fray managed to utter, grunting as Akuma tried harder to escape the hold.

Had Akuma held his breath for exactly four more seconds earlier, then he would have had overpowered Fray. But then he went limp.

Fray gently laid him on the ground, while Akuma's units, friends and a few other females started shouting.

"Uh... anyway, we have a winner!" Markem had been standing in awe of the match, but he regained composure. "Victory goes to the newcomer!"

The cat-like boy then created a small ball of water on Akuma's face and let it drop, splashing the face and waking Akuma up quickly. The young man scowled and sat straight up.

"Akuma Kiyo, you have been defeated. So..." Fray held out a hand to help lift him up.

Akuma let out a low growl and got up on his own. Fray just let his hand fall down and they walked back to the stands awkwardly.

"Now that this match has ended, Viktor and Mizuki are up next...?" Markem faltered as a teenager came by and whispered something urgent in his ear.

"F-Folks! It looks like Mizuki isn't around now. Apparently she left the party in a hurry with her sister. So, sorry Viktor! You'll get your bet back after this!"

"Awww....." Viktor visually looked depressed, arms slumping.

"And Fray, since you already won your battle for the prize, but didn't fight the second one, you get half of the prize." Fray was handed a fairly large pouch of Zel.

"Akuma, for consolation, you can take the other half." Akuma was also given a similar pouch, which slightly softened his glare on Fray.

"I guess that's the last highlight of this party! So folks, you can either go home, or you could simply volunteer to help clean up the party. I bet our modest Angel would turn away help and save everyone trouble, but why should we listen to her?" Markem winked at Angel.

Everyone shouted words of agreement to help with cleaning. "Great! Come on guys, some of us need to clean up the main trash attraction: the puke in the house, in three, two, one..."

"WHAT IS THIS!?" Lunaris screamed from the house.

"Aahhhh!!! My face has been tainted!!!" Kanon yelled in agony. It was a wonder how he got his face splashed.

As the excitement from the party died down, Fray decided to stay behind and help.

Ten... Five(?) minutes later...

"Wh-Wh-Whoa..." Akuma was in awe of how fast everyone worked. "How the hell did you finish in just five minutes?"

"Six minutes actually," Grahdens corrected. His beard was stained with something green though, but Akuma decided not to tell him about it. Old man's probably going to find a surprise later.

"Right," Seria said, looking pale, "I... I will never be looking at brussel sprouts the same way again."

"I'mma gonna check that out of my list of possible breakfasts," Lunar decided. "So Fray," Lunar clapped a hand on her new friend's shoulder, "you actually gained a ton of fame back

there. And heck you never showed me how you fought, even on our first mission."

Fray looked bashful. "I fought before, but I never gauged how far I could go. Was I really that strong against Akuma?"

"Strong? You took on an Omni unit on your own back then!"

"Like I said before, I had some help."

"From your units?" Karl asked. "They were formidable."

"Yes..." Fray said, but in a more smaller voice. "I did get that help."

"So Fray," Angel said right next to him, "is there anytime you're free?" She seemed a little shy.

Akuma's mouth twitched, but he was occupied making sure every admiring girl stayed away from his greatsword.

Fray cupped his chin with a hand. "I have work to do for the Hall, but I should be free this Sunday, which is actually... five days from today. Is there somewhere you wanted to go with me?"

"There is. I was hoping we could go out together to—"

'Date!?' Most of the males, including Karl, Akuma, Lugina and even Grahdens thought of this.

"—fight in the Arena. I was wondering how—"

'Much of a boyfriend you could be?' They thought this too.

"—well I could go against your units, now that I evolved them."

"You just evolved them right? Have you fused them yet?" Fray asked.

"Yes, they should be halfway to being fully strengthened. I also just unlocked their Super Brave Bursts."

The two chatted about time arrangements and what they would do after. Akuma saw this clearly and itched to smash Fray's head in. Karl and Lugina looked a little jealous, Viktor studied the two with interest, and Grahdens seemed to nod with approval.

"Sunday then, Angel." Fray felt a sense of achievement of gaining another possible friend. His hometown had been almost devoid of any person his age after its near-destruction, other than his cousins, so seeing young Summoners here had been a relief.

"Sunday!" Angel excitedly said.

(-----)

"Mizuki, the caravan is here. Whatever shall we do now?"

"What we do best: sneaking. But no deaths like always."

"Hmph, what is the point of having weapons then..."

"Onee-chan, no more bloodshed. I had enough of taking lives freely. Come on."

Akki whipped out Despero and Maeror, two scissors made of orichalcum and diamond, both looking like opposites of each other. Her tongue licked the metal, where maybe blood would stain it.

"I shall, my dear."

Chapter End Notes

What Noel gathered from everyone else from that night...

Fray's 6-Star Profile:

Name: Frostfyre Fray

Personality: Partially 'kuudere', yet rather sharp, somewhat plain, patient and accepting. Curious and adventurous, but harsh to anyone that annoys him (mainly Lunar Rin). He sometimes has his lucky moments, but equally unlucky moments that affected him since childhood, getting him into unusual and comical situations (like the festival incident).

Likes: Sweets, bitter things, exploration, weapons, reading, messing with his young cousins

Dislikes: Anything traumatic (like certain magazines), thinking about the far future, spicy things

Element: Fire

Weapons:

Pyrbrand: A Fire broadsword, forged by a blacksmith using shards of a broken *War Demon's Blade* sphere, combined with the Flame Jewel of a slain Jirayen, and the Blaze Pearl of a Balmedia.

It sports a crimson red blade, golden pommel and crossguard, with a red runed jewel on the bottom, and a crystal handle wrapped in ash-colored leather.

Sphere effects: Boosts ATK by 90%, boosts BB gauge every turn and greatly boosts elemental damage.

Mordre: A Water kindjal, forged by the same blacksmith, with the roots of a Meru-Meru, the Scaly Pelt and Shiny Jewel of a Laguna Rex, and a broken *Frozen Fantasy* sphere. Has a cyan crystalline blade, with ornate purple lines etched on it, a small grey crossguard and pommel, with a handle made of wood. Nearly invisible blue lines run through it like veins.

Sphere effects: Boosts all stats by 30%, boosts BB gauge when attacked and increases hit counts.

Leader Skill: *Arcane Territory*

Boosts all parameters by 25%, BC and HC efficiency by 30%, BB attack by 25%, greatly recovers HP (6000-8000) after hits exceed a certain amount (49 hits) within two turns and mitigates all elemental damage by 10%.

Brave Burst: *Beat Blitz Blaze*

24 combo random Fire attack on all foes (a salvo of firebolts and rune circles appearing almost everywhere), boosts ATK, considerably boosts DEF relative to how high max HP is for 3 turns and greatly boosts BB gauge (shown by purple fire runes surrounding the units).

Super Brave Burst: *Ever Zero Weather*

48 combo random Water attack on all foes (hurl solid shaped ice weapons), chance to inflict Paralysis and Sick (frost effect on the enemy), greatly boosts REC, boosts DEF relative to ATK and activates Water (Ice, usually in the form of a thin dome or conjured thick shields) barrier (5000 HP).

Extra: He activates both elements to his full power when he dual-wields *Pyrbrand* and *Mordre*, although since his main element is Fire, he does not use ice as much and merely crafts solid objects with, mostly dome-shaped barriers. Also has an multi-capacity crossbow he made, which he takes on some quick-kill or capture missions.

Notes: 'Mordre' is French for 'Bite'.

EDIT (10 September 2016): Edited Fray's profile. Major changes.

EDIT (11 September 2016): Removed the rhyme and changed the appearance of Fray's Leader Skill.

The Lure of Adventure

Chapter Summary

Two close friends make their way to Fray, only to become caught up in a plot for cross-world domination.

A little seven year old girl with long and curly black hair with dark brown tips walked side-by-side on a path with her older brother, who had the same hair as she did, only with a lighter shade of brown tips, and with shorter and spiky bangs. She wore a dark green sweater and matching beret, velvet red shorts and matching shoes. A sandy-yellow bandana was wrapped around her neck. Part of her waist-length hair was swept to her right by a blue pearl hair clip, and her matching sea blue eyes sparkled with excitement.

Her twelve-year-old brother wore a similar outfit, wearing a red shirt on the inside of a green leather jacket, grey jeans and black sneakers. He carried a simple bag containing his provisions, like his sister's smaller green bag. He too had blue eyes that scanned anything in front of him under the sinking sun in the horizon.

Like Fray, they were on their way to Randall for travel, but their sole reason was the aforementioned person.

The boy looked to his right, seeing a column of smoke rise from a house beneath it. It was in the middle of a village, and... apparently was under attack.

The brother decided that they should move quicker. He tightened his hold on the girl's hand and walked faster, hoping they could get away in case anything else happens to them.

An hour later...

How did it come to this? How were they the ones under attack?

The boy was running through the forest, alone, hoping his sister was somewhere safe where those men were not there. Hopefully that portal led somewhere good. If not, well, his sister had always been incredibly resourceful.

He avoided an axe swing and stabbed out with his spear. The axe recoiled, and its wielder backed away quickly with a cry.

Two more men appeared, and three more did behind them. Their bodies were like that of a buff human's, but they had a horn on each side of their heads. Their clothes consisted mainly of shoulder-guards, metal leggings and pants, and bare packed chests. Each of them would have either a massive axe to rip or a hammer to smash with. All of them looked equally vicious with a thirst for blood.

The boy spun his spear and knocked out one, then the other with a skull-smashing swing. More followed with massive area attacks.

He rolled under them and made three quick jabs to their sides. One was bleeding with a critical injury.

He heard more shouts and growls to his left. He decided it was time he disappeared now.

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Fray was walking back towards his house after a tiring day of eliminating bandits, and an hour's worth of 'otaku-style' shopping with Lunar. He felt a little more accustomed to the Village of the Venturer and Randall after the past three days, but he still found more secret spots and paths with every hour in that peaceful place.

He then felt a shift in his gut, that is, something magically pulsed nearby.

"Hello? Fay?" someone very young was calling out a certain nickname, in front of his door.

Fray saw a familiar girl knocking on his door.

"Korell?" His little friend turned as he called.

"Fay!" The girl, only reaching his waist, rushed at him and wrapped her arms around Fray's waist tightly. "I'm so glad to see you!"

"Korell..." Fray hugged back and looked around. "Where is your brother?"

"Umm... He told me to go inside a weird blue portal to get here. He was staying behind to stop some bad men with horns."

"...We should go inside for now."

They went inside the house, where Fray called Limera, Piany and Vernil to his living room, all of whom had been inside the house guarding it for the three days.

"Korell? My sweet little girl~!" Limera playfully stretched her arms outwards for a hug, which the girl rushed into.

"Auntie Limera! How was your trip?"

"Fine kiddo. Yours?"

They started talking excitedly, while Piany and Vernil gathered around the girl. Adel and Diana summoned themselves into the room.

"Why is Korell here?" Diana asked.

"Here." Fray went back from the front door, holding up a sealed white envelope addressed to Fray. "I forgot to check my mailbox. I guess they were planning on visiting me."

"We were Fay! But we also wanted to stay with you," Korell said.

"Stay with me? Because you wanted to explore too?"

"Me and my big brother do! We really like being with you wherever you go."

"Hear that Fray?" Limera said with a joyful grin. "You're their dad."

"We are not even related Limera. And when I left the house, I never meant actually traveling the entire world," Fray chided softly. "But, I guess you can still stay here."

"Yay!" Korell threw her hands up in a cheer.

"But first things first. Where is your brother?"

"R-Right... ha... here..."

Fray quickly snapped his head towards the doorway to the guest room (there was no door by the way). There stood his other friend, looking battered and tired, but standing fine. The door was still unlocked, which was how he got in.

"Bramwell. What happened to you?" Fray quickly strode over to him and examined him.

"I am fine Fray. Just... ran into some strange people." Bramwell still had the same frown when he was alerted.

The boy was led to sit on the sofa. Bramwell and Korell's bags were placed on the side of it. He seemed slightly dazed.

"I'll go make some tea." Fray went off to his kitchen.

The next morning...

"Oh... this brings memories," Bramwell was watching from the door to Fray's room.

The siblings effectively moved into Fray's house after they explained what happened yesterday. Roughly, they were chased by bloodthirsty horned men who attacked a village like bandits, but the villagers had escaped safely.

Apparently their guardian, another one of Fray's old cousins, had arranged for them to go to a school in the Village. Their length of stay? Very, very long. Fray would take care of their living expenses from that point on.

That also meant having to sleep with Korell a lot, when he acted as the second father back at their house. Limera and the other units liked to play with the siblings, but the girls liked Korell a lot, especially Limera.

Fray, Korell and Limera slept on the bed in Fray's room in that order, having been dragged by the girl to do it as they did back then. The scene reminded Bramwell of his parents, when they would sleep with their daughter, whenever she woke up from a nightmare.

The boy giggled and took a picture with his old-fashioned-looking camera. Luckily the flash did not wake them up, and he quietly left to make breakfast.

The three continued to sleep soundly, Korell snuggling the most.

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"My name is Bramwell."

"A-And my name is Korell..."

They went to the the second floor of the restaurant of the Raid Mission office, somewhere in Randall. Summoners waited or ate their orders, and waiters and waitresses served them in the busy place.

Lunar had invited Fray to lunch with Lugina and Paris, so they sat at a round table for eight. Korell was shy around new people, so she sat on Limera's lap and tried to hide by wrapping Limera's arms around herself. Bramwell felt honored and nervous to be meeting with powerful Summoners.

Paris and Lunar just could not take their eyes off the shy girl in front of them. Lugina glanced at the two and did not have many expectations from them.

"K-Korell r-right?" Lunar stuttered as her otaku side kicked in. "Could you by any chance call me... 'onee-sama'?"

"This... this must be a glimpse of paradise..." Paris muttered very quietly.

"U-Ummm..." Korell shrunk in Limera's lap.

"Excuse me," Bromwell got their attention, "you're all Fray's friends?"

"Well I am!" Lunar declared proudly. "Just not these boring two."

""Lunar..." Paris and Lugina deadpanned/growled at the same time.

"Kidding, you guys are awesome. But Fray, are you married or something?"

"No, I guess you could say I am something like their other parent."

They were taken in when their father died on a hunting trip, and their mother from giving birth to Korell. Their parents were friends with Fray's and his cousins', so they wanted to do a favor by taking them in.

"Four days, and you're already getting into some more plot responsibilities?"

"What?"

"Nothing..." Lunar waved the statement away. "Can you um, move the kids out of here first? This is pretty important business."

"We'll go Miss Rin," Bromwell said with rapt attention, taking hold of his sister's wrist. "Come on Korell..."

Once the two were at another table, with Limera to take care of them, Lunar turned her attention back to Fray. "So first of all, have you ever heard of the Four Fallen Gods?"

"Yes." Fray had read about it. "Maxwell, Cardes, Zevalhua and Afla Dilith, the gods that took over Grand Gaia. There had been reports from my uncle, who is a Summoner, that they were defeated by several young Summoners, along with Lucius, God of the Gates, who turned out to have evil intentions. Tilith, Lucius's disciple, currently replaced him."

"You've done your research, but yeah. Now, have you ever used one of the gates to go on a mission?"

"No. All of my part-time missions were relatively minor, except the major one on Mt. Abe. All I had to do was just ride over there with Vernil."

"What Lunar means to say is that the doors had not been working properly lately, and they still don't function fully now," Paris cut in. "Apparently she had discovered a new land in Grand Gaia, called Eneroth. Accompanying that fact was the discovery of two whole civilizations; two other races we never knew about."

"Do they happen to be similar to humans?" Fray asked.

"Yeah," Lunar answered. "One race is called the Morokai, people with horns on their heads, and the other is called the Deva, who look like elves with pointy ears and all."

She rested her elbows on the table. "These two races were at each others throats ever since they met each other, but I know a guy and a girl who were working together to bring peace to their people. Ironical thing is, they were a Morokai and Deva respectively. Last I saw them, they were taking care of a few Morokai bad guys, who are actually kind of the main instigators of the situation in the first place."

"I was one of the very few Summoners who ended up in Eneroth, but I had been there the longest. I wanted to go back to check on their situation, but I was hoping to bring some backup with me if I could help with them. So far... I got no one, not even these two." Lunar pointed to Paris and Lugina.

"Hmph, I haven't got time to settle a war. It doesn't even have anything to do with the Hall, or even Grand Gaia." Lugina was being unhelpful as usual.

"I agree for once with this man." Paris had spat out 'man' rather than said it, but she moved on. "I too have no obligation."

"And you want me to go with you now?" Fray asked in a baffled voice.

"Yes, please, Fray. Those guys could need my help anytime now. I know we haven't seen eye-to-eye or you owe me anything—"

"We don't, because we are not that close to be not 'eye-to-eye', and you're the one that owes me a little for the package," Fray interjected, yet Lunar remained undeterred.

"—but please help me."

"...Well, I guess you have to owe me again. Fine, I could go on another adventure."

"Thank you Fray!" Lunar shook his hand many, many times. "I promise you won't regret the adventure!"

"Fine, well, I should get prepared at—whoa!" He was interrupted by a large figure in a brown cloak, who bumped his shoulder as he walked with long strides.

Fray and the others watched the figure moving at quick pace and went by the table Limera, Bromwell and Korell were still sitting at. A few seconds later, the sound of something being smashed on wood came from where the figure was, and the restaurant was quickly engulfed in a grey fog.

Customers cursed and shouted, while others tripped. Fray quickly stood up and shouted, "Korell, Bromwell! Limera!"

The sound of heavy boots stomped past him, along with a muffled squeak of someone. Fray instinctively reached out for it and seized something rough.

He suddenly felt something solid on his stomach. The next thing he knew, he was flying through the air and landing on the ground, feeling the air knocked out of him.

"Out of here!" Lugina shouted, and with a *swish* of parting air, the smoke quickly rushed out of the windows.

Fray quickly stood up, silently thanking his high pain tolerance. He scanned the tables, already knowing that the figure had taken Korell, even as his friends shouted for her.

He quickly went over the wooden railing that stopped anyone from falling to the ground floor. Landing on the ground safely (it was not that high anyway), he looked for the kidnapper.

The same figure in the brown cloak was taking Korell by putting her on his arm, running through the halls where Tilith's gates would appear, taking them to the Demon Slayers' destinations. Fray ran after them.

The figure walked under a stone archway. Past it was a shining, floating door in the middle of a small room, with ornate carvings. It opened its double doors automatically and the figure walked into it, Korell flashing a look of fear and yelling for Fray.

Fray rushed after her right as the doors closed, plowing into the figure.

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The three tumbled out of the Gate. The figure went sprawling to the ground, Korell falling off and landing on her bum safely. Fray quickly got off and landed a stomp right on the figure's head, knocking him out before he got on his hands.

Someone gasped next to him. Fray quickly looked up, realizing the change in scenery.

The figure apparently tried to go to his comrades, who were incredibly surprised and raising either axes, polearms or even gauntlets. All of them were spiky, meant to be heavy weapons, and their wielders looked buff and demonic with their horned heads.

They were all in the middle of a square roughly 40 square metres wide, and there were three pathways that led out of it, but all of them were being blocked by what Fray assumed to be the Deva—no, Morokai warriors, surrounding him and Korell in a circle. More innocent-looking Morokai were being blocked off by the warriors, who let them pass through from one exit to another.

Fray slowly helped Korell up on her feet, who quickly grabbed on to his sleeve for reassurance and safety.

One warrior shouted, "Who are you!? You shall pay for what you've done to our comrade!"

"Halt! King Azurai comes!" said another. "This... these Deva shall crumble beneath his might!"

Deva...? Oh, it was most likely because of the hood that had somehow covered his head when he rolled, and Korell's beret covering her head, so they would not know what race they were. Most likely, they thought there were Deva people, or they were extremely confused and did not know what to call them.

Fray detected another presence behind his back, more mighty and overbearing than any of the warriors. He turned and found himself looking at a Morokai clad in plate armor head-to-toe with a dark blue hue, adorned with gold to give a royal look to it. His ragged purple cape billowed behind him.

Blazing orange eyes stared at him from deep inside the helmet, not showing a piece of skin. They showed no mercy.

"Who are you, who dared to wound one of my subordinates?" His deep commanding voice was as rough as a dry throat could be, or just halfway.

"..." Fray decided he needed to go. The warrior, not himself by the way.

Without warning for any Morokai, he stomped his foot on the ground. A rumbling sound followed, and the armored Morokai shot high into the air. A column of jagged ice shards appeared where he should have been, which was double the height of Fray's.

Another rumbling sound came, and this time the Gate was blown to sparkly bits when another glacier appeared beneath it. It ensured no other Morokai would cause any trouble going through it, or any unfortunate Summoner from going through.

While all the Morokai were shocked by the ice, Fray picked up Korell off her feet and carried her like a baby, then sped off around the ice column he made.

He dashed through the streets, avoiding any Morokai and sending warriors flying with a single kick. He hoped that he was running to an exit out of this city.

A roar of anger came. Most likely, it was the Morokai warriors' commander.

"GET THAT CHILD, DEAD OR ALIVE!!!" he bellowed. **"CLOSE EVERY GATE INTO THE CITY!!! THAT BRAT OF THE RIH'ALNASE SHALL NOT GO UNPUNISHED!!!"**

And by the time the guards has closed the gates, Fray and Korell were out.

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"Have you heard?"

"The king was suddenly thrown by a column made of pure ice..."

"Do you think it was the battlemage, Haile?"

"Impossible. The child in the hood was nowhere large, even if it were a girl. Even so, she might be a Deva trained under her..."

The guards of the city were discussing at an outpost situated next to the northern gates of the city. Someone was listening up on it's stone rooftops.

"King Azurai was in quite a rage when he returned back to the palace."

"Yes, that he had his Inquisitor backing away from him for a small length. His anger could've powered a volcano, huh?"

"Well, back to work men. We don't want an angry captain if he saw us like this..."

They muttered words of agreement and went back to their posts. The lithe Morokai leapt quietly and quickly back to the ground, slinking away as no one noticed the shadowy blur. It went back to the guards' table for a moment though, where any fruit or bread disappeared.

The small Morokai sneaked back to a cloaked figure, tall and imposing as one of the elite warriors.

"Did you find anything?"

"I... did..." she said, munching on a cookie.

She told him what she heard, gaining the Morokai's full attention.

"This newcomer came out of a gate like that girl from Grand Gaia described... A Summoner perhaps?"

"...Should we go... now?"

"We should." The cloaked man left through the gates easily and looked back at the city's palace, which shone with decorations. Lava poured through some parts of it, where those parts looked like machinery.

"That newcomer girl... was able to surprise my father?" He shook his head, wondering if this is just another big surprise to be explored, one Lunar should be familiar with.

Rih'alnase

Chapter Summary

Fray and Korell, now on the run from slavers, are lost in the deserts of Baldemar, Eneroth. Luckily, they meet a friendly tribe of rebels.

Chapter Notes

The following takes place in the world of Eneroth.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Ezra skipped past several sand dunes and was quickly stopped by the sight of a stranger piggybacking a child.

She thought there was something unusual about their aura, other than their clothing, like the girl's battledress-like white coat. They did not emit the rough kind like the Morokai, or gentle like the Deva. Rather, the unusually flat-chested girl (that aspect was a huge relief for Ezra; she had a tough time rivalling Avani's) with the cat-like ears (probably where she hid her ears) radiated a ton of power that just might match Avani's, or maybe the entire Rih'alnase!

Ezra had to investigate them out of pure instinct.

"Hello!" she greeted in a cheery voice. That sent off a suspicious wave to the stranger. "Uh, you alright there?"

The stranger backed away a little, but replied anyway.

"O-Oh, well, we just happen to be passing by... no we actually just got transported here," she said in a tired voice, with a pitch not too high or low, like a child's. "Me and my friend here ended up getting into trouble with some strange men, so we escaped from that city."

Ezra looked at the surprisingly cute girl at the other on her back, then at the nearby city. "From Ostagoth? Oh... I see... hey. Do you want to come with me to a safe place, without any Morokai and all? I know a few friends who could help."

The stranger looked at her with curious eyes.

"I-I mean, the concept of kidnapping by using a 'paradise' as a lure is well-known, but honestly, we've got oasis's to go by for food and water, and no way we're gonna steal from you. You look battered and uh... never mind. You wanna come with me?"

"...Lead the way then. I really need help now."

"Huh? Oh... sure." That was easy enough to convince the girl.

Half an hour later...

They introduced themselves to each other, Ezra laughing at the unusual names, but Fray pointed out both he and Korell were foreigners, so her name was just as unusual to them.

Korell had been sleeping a while during the journey to Ezra's home base. Ezra, like the girls at the restaurant before, was tempted to poke her cheek, but Fray moved too fast for the Morokai to calmly do so.

The Frostfyre was unsure why the Morokai was actually being friendly to them in the first place, but he sensed no malicious intent from her exaggerated happy movements. He needed a guide and place to stay in Eneroth anyway.

Speaking of which, hopefully he could find the two people Lunar talked about. Hopefully, he could convince them that he was on their side.

"So, Ezra," he asked her, who walked backwards to face him, "why did those Morokai see the Deva as their enemies? I mean, I'm new to this land."

"Well, all I can say is that it's because of a certain event in history, hundreds of years ago, when they first met each other, they just realized they were far too different in terms of culture, ways of living and all. Ever since then, Morokai and Deva did not bother to welcome each other. Even then, those guys were pathetic."

The girl in the ragged cloak pointed behind her with an armored thumb. "That's where I'm taking you."

"But I'm a stranger, and so is Korell. Why take us to a secret place?"

"Well, first of all," Ezra held up one index finger, "you just got chased by the warriors of a Morokai warlord, by the sounds of your 'situation', so that makes you a priority to get to safety. That's what me and my friends do: make sure no one gets hurt by the Morokai-Deva conflict, and end it without as many casualties as possible."

The Morokai then held up two fingers. "The second is that I can tell you're really powerful, maybe like that Summoner Avani described. I was hoping you could—"

"Wait," Fray interrupted her. "You said Summoner. Did this Summoner happen to be a girl named Lunar Rin?"

"Yeah! How'd you know...?" Ezra stopped suddenly with a look of realization on her face, although the sudden action made her start to stumble.

Fray quickly reached out for her hand and grabbed it, stopping her fall, then pulled her until they were nose-to-nose.

He quickly let go of her, Ezra grinning.

"You know, you're kind of like a gentleman. But seriously, are you from this Lunar's world?" She had started walking again.

Fray nodded. "I was told by her about this place. She asked me for help to help her friends here in Eneroth, the ones who were trying to stop the war between the Morokai and the Deva. And since you knew about her, do you know about a Fire-type Morokai and a... Water-type Deva?"

"Yep! I bet they're gonna be excited. They're so lucky I found you, and maybe I'll be seen as a professional from now on..." Ezra had a wide sly smile.

The three continued moving on, still chatting, Ezra still oblivious to the fact that Fray was a boy.

15 minutes later into Baldemar...

"We're here!" Ezra announced.

They stood in front of a stone wall that stretched for miles on either side of them. Sentries that looked like Deva wore slim armor and carried light, sleek weapons by their sides. Some of them had seen Ezra and the other two and were calling to get the gates up.

They walked through them and eventually found themselves walking through a vibrant community of Deva, and the occasional Morokai walking about.

Unlike Ostagoth, this village had a more lighter atmosphere, although this became a little diluted whenever a Morokai citizen parted through crowds of Deva, like sharks in a flowing sea. The pointy-eared people would glance at the horned ones warily before moving on.

Some people would look at Ezra and either wave or greet her, especially children.

"Big sis Ezra!" One Deva girl with her crowd of friends called her out.

"Hey there... Terrin, right?" Ezra remembered as she greeted them back. "How's your mom?"

"She's fine thanks to big sis Nyami and you! Are you gonna play with us again?"

"Sorry kids but I got some important Rih'alnase work to do, but hey, I'll come again with Nyami, okay?"

The children cheered and ran off, chanting '*Rih'alnase!*' with pride.

"So who or what is Rih'alnase?" Fray asked.

"It's a special clan that you know, helps Deva and Morokai alike, the friends I was talking about? Our leader is Avani, a Morokai chieftain, and the one who came up with the name, which meant The Children of the Wind." she explained. "Though we're more like one big family I guess, these days, trying to avoid trouble."

They headed towards a big stone structure. An old temple, it seemed. It looked sturdy for a visually aged building.

Once they were there, Ezra opened the double doors and raised her arms in the air, spinning in a circle. They went into a conference room of sorts just after a few steps from the front door, with a hearth in the middle, and some rubble and slightly destroyed pillars to decorate the place.

"Home sweet home!" she declared. "Hey Chief, I found two guys you'd want to meet!"

A Morokai wearing what looked like various animal pelts, but still showing much skin, came from a hallway leading deeper into the temple. Some women nowadays seem to wear less clothing for the sake of speed in battle and beauty, but the two chainblades hung on her back erased any traces of the thought.

"Ezra, you've returned! And these are...?" Avani had a calm tone suited for a leader.

"People who came from the other world, you know, like the Summoner, Lunar Rin, right? The ones Haile and Korzan talked about?"

"Ah yes. But what might your names be?"

"My name is Fray, Chieftain, and this is my... friend, who I am currently taking care of. And..." He took off his hood.

"Whoa, you don't have any ears sprouting out of your temple?" Ezra exclaimed.

Fray wondered if Ezra is Lunar's early reincarnation or double of this place. Their obnoxious personalities would make them close to twins, but only almost.

"No, I never had ears from my head, nor do the people I know have any extra parts. But I think there might be something like that in Elgaia... but no, these ears were just sewn onto my hood for fun by my cousins," he explained.

"Really?" Ezra sounded dissatisfied. "By the way, your hair sure looks smooth." She reached out to touch it, but Fray moved out of her reach.

"Hold on, I should wake Korell up first."

Fray shook Korell. "Hey... wake up. We arrived."

The girl did. She blinked and looked around as she was lowered to the ground.

"Where... where are we Fay?" she asked timidly.

"Somewhere in a safe village. Oh, and there are some new people here you should meet."

He nudged Korell towards them, only for her to grab onto his sleeve and hug it. She looked at the two Morokai in wonder though.

"Uh, hey Korell," Ezra said, crouching to be at the little girl's height. "In case you forgot, my name's Ezra. Nice to meet you!"

She tried for a handshake, but Korell backed away a little.

"She truly is cute..." Avani admitted. "Fray, does she happen to be your adopted daughter?"

"No, she's just a friend I am taking care of, along with her brother. Come on, Korell. You should be getting over shyness for now. These are friendly people, and we're their guests, so introduce yourself."

Korell stepped forward, beret covering her eyes as she looked down a little. "U-Um... My name is Korell... nice to meet you." She bowed frantically and hid behind Fray.

Ezra and Avani (who was more composed in Fray's opinion) both squealed a little. Very unfortunately for Nyami, Korell had a certain cuteness that overpowered the catlike Morokai's.

"Well then Fray," Avani interjected, breaking the mood, "can you explain what happened to have gotten you here?"

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Fray explained the circumstances that led him here, once they were seated at two sofas facing each other with a small coffee table to separate them, in the corner of the lobby. The humans sat on one side, while the rest sat on the opposite one.

For the Morokai, this was their first time meeting people from another world, and they were intrigued by their characteristics, their way of life in the other world, and whatnot.

Oh, if they only knew about the deep origins of the humans of Elgaia... but that is a story for another time.

Once they were done, Avani was discussing what they were doing exactly, and how they were going to make use of Fray's help when the doors opened.

They looked to see another Morokai with pink hair with the body build, armor and weapon of a berserker itching for a fight. Standing at least a metre behind him was another, much smaller female Morokai, who looked very intimidated by the bigger one.

"Korzan!" Avani stood and greeted. "We were just greeting our new and special guests. How goes your report on Ostagoth?"

"Not good, although me and Nyami may have some news you would want to hear. It's about Azurai." He walked—or lumbered, more accurately, but in a confident way—and leaned on a column. The catlike Morokai—Nyami—zipped behind another column far from Korzan and climbed on top of it.

"They say that he was disabled by a small figure who suddenly appeared through a portal, after knocking down one of the kidnappers. They wanted a child of the race from that world

to experiment on. Those Morokai..." Korzan's expression turned twisted and upset. "Never have I felt ashamed for this... sudden invasion, as if they had the right rather than to consider peace. Although that's boring, if there was no bloodshed," he added, wanting to gauge the power of an Elgaian warrior.

"But more importantly, the king was disabled by a tall tower of ice. That otherworlder must have used incredible magic like Haile to be able to stop Azurai."

"What do you suggest by telling me this Korzan?" the Chieftain asked.

"I'm saying, maybe he's like that Summoner, Lunar. I'm not sure if this girl, that's what they claim at least, is like that, but she is in a predicament that I hoped we can get her out of. If she owes us, then she would be obligated to help us with our cause, and I would be given a new sparring partner of course!" Korzan hefted his mighty axe. "If she does not consent... well, we shall fight for that right."

"Ah, your name is Korzan right?" Fray finally asked. He flinched a little when the berserker turned his glaring eyes at him.

"I think I am the one you were looking for."

Korzan stared at him. "...While I can see you are of the same race as the Summoner I have encountered recently, the figure was described to be a girl. You, however, are a boy. Is this supposed to be a trick?"

"Hang on," Ezra interjected. "Fray is a boy?"

She then dashed in front of the boy and started... 'rubbing' Fray's chest area with her hands.

"Uh..." Fray was unsure whether to slap her or yell *Harasser!*

"Wow, you really are flat. I mean, seriously, there's Avani and Haile, and then there's me coming in maybe second or third place, and uh, Nyami comes in the fourth and last place. But you would probably rank five and all..."

Ezra's hands then started to move down to somewhere private.

"Hey!" Fray pushed her off of him. He was already the victim of several offenses, and he was not going to let that happen again. "I am not a girl! I was already mistaken for that several times. And Korzan, I will demonstrate for you to know who I am exactly. Avani, is there a wide, safe place like a training ground?"

"It's just outside, in a wide field. I'm certainly curious about the powers you possess, apparently enough to surprise even the Overlord Azurai, of all people." Avani had a smile to show that she was interested.

"And while you're at it, why not let Korzan take you on?" Ezra suggested.

"What?" Fray said instinctively, but Korzan laughed.

"A duel with a guest from another world? Interesting! The Summoner had fought well against me, but let us see how an ice magician who surprised my father fare!"

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Everyone except the fighters sat on the stone steps leading back into the lobby.

"Okay, Korzan, I am actually a Summoner like Lunar, but I can choose to fight on my own. So what will it be? A one-on-one match, or one-on-six?" Fray said from the other side of the stone field.

"Use all you have at me new one!" Korzan flexed his muscles as he readied his greataxe. "I want a challenge, and I am not easily pleased."

"If you say so..." Fray drew Mordre and called his units forth.

"Piany, Cyan, Limera, Adel, Vernil." His units appeared out of five white runic circles. In flashes of light, they came battle-ready.

"Just like they described... Summoning..." Avani muttered. Ezra and Nyami were in a similar state of awe.

Korell was excited to see her 'father' get back in action again, just like the times when he faced off against other Summoners and monsters.

"Fray, what's going on now?" Limera came by his side and asked.

"We're fighting against a Morokai now. The one in front of us."

"Morokai?" Vernil asked.

"I can see you truly are a Summoner Fray! But are your units worthy of my blade? Come at me!" Korzan roared as he ran towards them, axe ready to decapitate.

"Piany, you're taking point! We attack now!" Fray barked orders. His squad assembled and took up their weapons.

Piany and Cyan sent a few tornadoes and bolts respectively. Korzan stumbled a little at the tornado while the bolts shattered against his axe.

"You need more than peashots to stop me!" The Infernal Ravager swung his axe once Fray and a few of his units were within range. Fray rolled, while Vernil and Adel blocked the next swing.

Korzan pushed them off and started engaging Adel in a fierce deadlock.

"Heh, if I remember, you units have your own backstories before you died!" Korzan said, breaking the hold and exchanging blows now. "You have the eyes of someone who had seen battle."

"The same is to you as well, Berserker," Adel replied. "But if I dare say, you have not seen demons in combat!"

Vernil and Limera rushed in to help, while Piany and Cyan continued to rain long-ranged attacks. Fray was looking for a nice opening, but Korzan's wide attacks to keep the units away made it hard.

"Velkar Fissure!"

The massive flames from his attack rolled off of his axe forced the close units back, some burnt, but Limera quickly healed them with a wave of her staff. Piany's Leader Skill helped as well.

"Cyan, Brave Burst!" Fray shouted.

"As you say! **Vittel Blast!**"

"Is that it now?" Korzan grinned as he batted away the blast, the elemental disadvantage taking effect.

He was suddenly sent flying as Fray kicked him in the chest. The Summoner's foot hurt, but he had done his job.

"Everyone else, Brave Bursts!" he yelled.

Everyone unleashed their SBBs now that they were charged, except for Fray though, thanks to the Sparks they made. The attack blasted Korzan into the ground and made a decently large crater.

"It's not over yet Summoner!" Korzan had amazingly survived, but he was largely injured, as his limping stance indicated. **"Shakti Dabana!"**

With his health having mostly deteriorated from the combined attack, this powered his SBB further and created flames even more destructive than the last one. He even recklessly poured all of his energy into it.

"Ever Zero Weather!" Fray used his own SBB as a counter. The sky darkened, though it was because of a dark cloud that formed above them. Massive chunks of hail started to shoot down and formed jagged ice pillars in front of Fray's team. Korzan's SBB melted away most of the ice though.

The flames broke thorough the barrier, but not much of the damage got through. Adel, Limera and Piany's SBBs helped prevent the worst of the attack.

Korzan, however, looked incredibly worn out. The surviving fighters took this chance to rain down attacks.

The Morokai finally took a knee to the chest by Adel, and crumpled to the ground after rolling across it for three metres.

"Sir Korzan?" Fray managed, a little out of breath.

"...Summoner..." Korzan sat back up, coughing. "You are a worthy warrior. Perhaps a few grains more than Lunar."

"What!?" Everyone turned their heads to see who shouted.

Standing in front of the entrance into the lobby was Lunar herself. Beside her was a Deva woman with blue hair with red tips, and a staff that gave off an icy energy.

"Korzan, I totally wiped the floor with you back then!" Lunar continued, walking up to Korzan, more miffed than angry.

Chapter End Notes

I thought that Eneroth and Baldemar were two separate places in Grand Gaia at first, but I read the lore about Korzan first for research, and found out that Eneroth is a world. But is Baldemar another place in Eneroth?

Still, please leave any kudos and comments if you like this story!

Morokai and Deva

Chapter Summary

Fray and Lunar Rin agree to help the Rih'alnase wreck havoc in the Morokai's forward camps (which is very convenient in fulfilling Lunar's earlier request. Lucky for her and the tribe?).

Chapter Notes

I decided to have Korzan fighting somewhat weak in his fight against Fray, in terms of levels. Korzan's level would be still Level 10 game-wise. Despite his UBB, he still has yet to reach full power like most of the Rih'alnase.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Once Lunar had stopped boasting about herself and berating Korzan for 'improper judgement', she proceeded to place a green crystal the size of a heart behind a wall covering the temple's lobby. It shone with a familiar light, like the one from the Gate.

"Tilith created this beacon so that I can set up a gateway between here and Elgaia. I just need to set this up here..."

Lunar placed it there by the wall and smashed it under her heel. The faint rainbow outline of a Gate shimmered against the wall for a moment and disappeared.

"And done! It should appear whenever we ask it to, and it'll take us anywhere in Elgaia, as long as you were already there. Now..." Lunar turned to Haile and Korzan. "Guys, you were saying you needed help?"

"Ah yes," Haile said, "let's all return to the meeting room first."

They all gathered back around the sofas and table, though Korzan leaned on a nearby pillar again. Korell was being watched by Nyami, making the girl squirm in her seat.

"Lunar and Fray, it seems that the Overlord's forces are searching for us at this very moment, and sped up ever since the battle Lunar participated in," Avani said.

"Enemy scouts have managed to find several of our outposts, and I think they're about to discover the village. Luckily no one was hurt." Haile spread out a map of the desert. In the bottom right is the village. At the top left is the Great Deva Wall, blocking off any entry into Myrrantia, homeland of the Deva.

"My outriders avoided several patrols here and here in the desert, but they're becoming more and more frequent, and each enemy squadron would be found nearer to the village," Avani explained.

"I even slew several veterans while I was guarding the Boneyard," Korzan added with a proud grin. "None of them stood a chance."

"Except I took out the reinforcements that would've obliterated you..." Haile muttered.

"What was that?" Korzan snarled.

"Nothing important. The point is, they managed to set up a forward camp at our outpost stationed near the Achmiros Divide. It's only a matter of time before they find us."

"So we just need to smash that camp and get them off your backs?" Lunar summarized.

"That's one objective," Avani said. "But there are still other possible reinforcements from the other camps to worry about. And we have to ensure that none of our enemies trace any of our tracks back to the village."

"Why don't we just attack the camps all at once?" Fray suggested. "It's a quick way. How about you let me and Lunar target the biggest camps? Where are they?"

Avani pointed to two spots. "The Laguda Dunes, and the Oasis. The Oasis forward camp is where I have seen the most veterans gather."

"What!?" Korzan exclaimed. "Why leave all the glory to the boy and girl? I shall have a part of these battles!"

"That's fine Korzan. If the Oasis has the most toughest warriors, you can come along with me and tackle it. Lunar can go with someone else, maybe..." Fray was unsure who should go, but Haile raised her hand.

"I can go! I'm one tough mage to take down!"

"You should do great then. The rest can take down the camp at the Divide, while reinforcements would be occupied dealing with me, Lunar, Korzan and Haile. Either Avani, Nyami or Ezra can be the ones guarding the village, while the other attacks. How is that for the plan?" Fray said breathlessly.

"That's a great one Fray, but how good are you exactly in battle, even if you have more numbers as a Summoner?" Haile asked. She never saw him in combat after all.

"I have hunted and fought demons, monsters, gods, even other Summoners ever since I was seven years old. I am much more than you think." He had the same look of determination in his eyes, like a cold fire, in Lunar's opinion. "So, shall we do this at night?"

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Lunar crept from behind a sand dune and dashed over to the next one. Dion jumped from dune to dune, disappearing in hushed billows of wind as sand scattered in small tornadoes. Her other units were not as stealthy, except for Semira, who floated silently.

"Ugh, sand..." Farlon muttered angrily, "...more and more sand in my boots."

"C'mon Farlon, you could probably melt them to glass later. We're near now, so stay low." Lunar and her units were to sneak from the north side of the camp, while Haile came in from the south in a pincer attack. Torchlights were the few sources of light for Lunar to see at the camp, allowing her to spot several illuminated guards.

From her spot, she took out a spyglass from her bag, one she stole from a pirate unit in Grand Gaia. She mentally marked them.

"Right, Farlon, you go in and just go all 'smash' around the place and be the distraction," Lunar explained the first phase of the plan.

"Smash as in destroy everything? I can do that." Farlon grinned and readied to charge in.

"We're here to take out any Morokai. Dion, Semira, you two go there and sneak around and take out the most powerful soldiers. Everyone else is to provide support to Farlon to keep up the distraction. I'll be with you guys too."

"Stay safe Lunar," Dion said as he left quietly.

"I should warn you Lunar, I already sensed one with dark magic. You better stay serious once more." Semira then floated away after parting advice with her.

"I will," Lunar muttered. "Farlon, set attacks to kill. Just don't dice this time."

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The battle was slightly one-sided, though there was a situation where Lunar got slightly careless and ended up forcing Cure potions down Farlon's throat (he ended up being cocky with his newfound power). Overall, the entire camp was devastated, and any warriors that survived would not be waking up that night. As for the bodies, the death count reached over 100 (there were 259 or so in the first place).

Why were there deaths? Well, the Morokai were going to kill for perspective petty reasons (racism, slavery and kidnapping), and honestly for both Lunar and Haile, they simply could not avoid doing so.

Once most of the imprisoned people, a mix of Morokai and Deva ones, they were about to be on their way when something shook the ground.

Lunar snapped her head to Semira who was scouting in the air.

"Semira!" she shouted. "What'd you see!?"

"Some strange scorpion monsters! Dragons, and one scorpion that looks more powerful than the others. We even have Deva riders!"

"How did they know about us being here Haile?"

"A trap, most likely, though I don't know why the Deva are here instead of Morokai. But if they're like the ones we fought before, we should get ready. Now help me with the prisoners, we can't let them get caught in the crossfire. Also, can you get one of your units to lead the slaves to safety?"

"Aye aye. Rize?"

"I got it Lunar. Come on, children, follow me." The unit led the group off to the village, taking a detour where no tracker should be able to track them.

"Right, guys. Take positions here and there..."

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Avani knocked out another Morokai with a kick and ripped through another with her blades. She leaped through the air and wrapped her chains around a small crowd. With the momentum of her leap, once she landed, she swung the group and smashed them into a tent.

Nyami barreled through warriors and launched them sky-high, then pouncing on enemies at high speeds as she wrapped herself in dark energy.

She pounced on the last one. "Camp... secure..." she said.

"Good. We should get back now." Avani waved to the rocks nearby. The terrain surrounding them had plenty of hills jutting from the ground, some tall enough to use as vantage points, others having plenty of natural cover. Morokai from her clan rushed to the campsite to bind the surviving enemies with ropes. Some also looted whatever was left of the camp.

Then one shouted and pointed to a small rocky hill. A figure rose from it, being a silhouette against the moon.

Something whirred through the air as it cut through it at high speeds. Avani reacted on her instincts and called out a warning.

Too late. The Morokai fell quickly. More of the air-cutting sounds followed as more long and thin projectiles flew towards them.

"An ambush! Get to cover now!" the Chieftain barked to everyone, sweeping an entire volley of arrows out of the air with a gale of her weapons.

Morokai archers returned fire at the now-visible enemies, looking much more slender and faster than Avani's hunters. Some Deva quickly intercepted the rushing close-range Morokai from behind the rocks, letting their own archers cut them down.

"Nyami, take the archers on that hill! I will deal with the ones on the ground," Avani shouted to the Morokai behind a boulder. She nodded and dashed around the camp, doing a flanking maneuver.

The Chieftain dodged several arrows before swinging her blades at the first Deva. He managed to step out of the way of the first one, only to trip after the second chain swept his feet from under him.

She slammed her right boot on his mithril helm with seemingly excessive force, due to the durable nature of the metal. All of these elite soldiers had the silvery stuff on them this night.

Again, she spun and swung her blades around her, creating a whirlwind that blew all the fired arrows off course, along with several Deva. With a chainblade wrapped around one soldier, Avani used him as a wrecking ball that plowed through several of his comrades at once.

Back on the hill, Nyami shot towards the archers like a bullet from behind the hill. She clawed and kicked the archers into unconsciousness, some tumbling to the ground and hopefully not breaking their neck. None of them could hope to hit an agile fighter at close-range. They hardly had time to switch to swords before they got hit.

This small battle should not take too long now would it? Avani thought hopefully.

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"Oh jeez... did I have to lose again in rock-paper-scissors?" Ezra grumbled as she sat on a crate against the village's wall. "I ended up taking sentry duty..."

Morokai and Deva guards alike, though wary of each other, sometimes looked at the cloaked Morokai who lazed about.

In reality, Ezra is one of the most powerful members of the Rih'alnase, having been responsible for most of the destruction wrecked upon every Morokai base, Deva patrol or attacking monster. Whenever she was there, clan members would clear the area so that they would not get in her way.

The girl yawned and laid down on her back. Sometimes her leggings would feel sweaty, but since it was nighttime, she felt somewhat cold and felt fine. The low temperatures seemed to tempt her to sleep.

Too bad Korell did not stay. Ezra could have cuddled with her on her breaks and sweetened the deal with Nyami and maybe Fray, although it was probably for the best that she returned to Grand Gaia as soon as possible.

Those thoughts made her want to sleep in her delusions...

But no! She had a job to do! She sat back up and stared up at the twinkling stars to distract herself from napping.

Her eyes next saw something brown and flying so fast that she did not register it until it crashed into a hut.

Wood splintered as a guardsman flew from the shock of the impact. Ezra raised an arm to block a shard of flying rock.

"Deva! Deva mages to the left, using cloaking magic! We're under—" the yelling sentry was quickly silenced by another crash, this time directed at the wall.

Ezra wasted no time standing and jumping off the crate, easily landing on the stone wall. Sentries ran back and forth, archers firing and mages casting either reparation spells for the wall or offensive spells against the armored crowd at the wall.

A dozen Morokai below Ezra lifted a battering ram made of stone and started smashing the gates, attempting to force it open. Archers were about to fire at them when fireballs, ice, boulders and arrows rained down on them. They quickly ducked for cover.

Ezra drew her blades and swatted several out of her way, then created fiery shockwaves that eliminated most of the projectiles.

She watched the Morokai being covered for by long-ranged Deva attackers. It was a sizable force of around 70 people in total, but a just barely enough to mount a siege on the village walls. Why exactly they were working together was beneath her, but she had to stop them.

"Hey guys! I'll take the mages and archers while you good archers cover me! The rest of you, keep the intruders off the wall and protect the village!" Ezra shouted in her best commanding voice and jumped off the wall.

She would have smashed into the crowd of Morokai below if she had not spread her wings.

Men on the wall watched in awe as she flapped her multicolored wings and glided safely to the clump of trees and shrubs where her targets were hiding in.

Several mages chanted and fired off elemental projectiles. Ezra dodged all of them with the help of her wings, or slashed through them with ease.

Several thought less smarter and ran at her with swords. The part-Morokai-part-Deva unleashed a flurry of jabs and hilt strikes that left most of them groaning on the ground. None of them actually managed to touch her.

Ezra was suddenly knocked to the ground by a combined beam of energy made by five magicians. Her back steamed, but she quickly rolled behind a palm tree as she avoided another blast.

She rubbed her back, which felt hot and stung. "Alright, let's do this again..." she muttered under her breath and dashed towards the group.

They separately started firing bolts of blue energy, though some of them were tinged with different colors that was the same as their different wings on their backs, a trait that marked the Deva.

Ezra jumped and flew high into the air, forming a ball of fire and ice. She threw it just when the magicians created another combined beam.

The beam crashed against the orb. They pushed each other when the beam started to lose against the push, along with the wavering will of the magicians.

Ezra watched from behind a tree when the orb finally went straight at the Deva and exploded in a bright burst of red and blue. Bodies flew in the air like ragdolls.

Now that the artillery was taken care of, this left the wall guards free to assault the closer enemies from the wall with arrows, blades and classic cauldrons full of boiling tar. Morokai dashed back and forth with the cauldrons while Deva supplied arrows from the guard towers.

Ezra was about to help them when she sensed someone behind her.

She whipped her head around and pointed her blue sword at the newcomer, hidden in the bushes. "Who is it?" she called out.

He responded with a flying dagger that Ezra easily parried. Somehow, that gave him enough time to get behind her.

Wha— Is this an assassin!? Ezra blocked a sword stab—one with a shining blue crystal floating in the middle of the handguard.

The enemy in front of her wore a ragged hooded cloak, preventing Ezra from seeing this one's face or clothing, but judging from the body curves, she deduced it was a woman.

She slashed and stabbed relentlessly at Ezra, her sword mostly a blur for every second. The carefree girl kept on parrying and countering with equal speed, wary of the assassin's fast movements.

This time the assassin kicked out right when Ezra was had started jumping for a pounce attack. The kick caused the girl to fly straight into a tree.

The tree was fine, and somehow, so was Ezra. She took bigger hits than this after all.

She ducked under a stab and continued blocking. But since the assassin had only one weapon, Ezra twin blades started to overpower her opponent in a flurry of slashes.

Then her opponent withdrew a hand into her cloak and brought out a set of golden scales, the one that symbolized justice in courts. It glowed an icy blue before she thrust it forward.

Large ice crystals, sharp and shiny, grew instantly from the sand in front of her and snaked towards Ezra. She dodged by flying high and landing on a tree, safe from harm.

Ezra quickly looked at her opponent and found no one. She had dissapeared quick.

"Darn..." The assassin must have been an elite that she could have captured for questioning, or at least significantly reduce manpower within the ranks of either Morokai or Deva.

Ezra looked at the walls. The besiegers had been routed and were captured. Anyone else was obviously done for.

Morokai and Deva working together? Preposterous. Azurai made it clear he hated the Deva, and the Deva responded in kind, resulting in the 500-year-long war. Why would they suddenly band together of all times?

Ezra decided that everyone was having their fair share of trouble this night.

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Korzan brought his Vulcan Axe in a wide arc that decapitated several more Deva warriors.

He brushed some blood off of his axe, only managing to stain his gauntlets a little. Finally, that was the last of them.

Fray raised his hand and encased most of the surviving enemies in an ice prison, while his units set any slaves free or burnt down the walls, ensuring that the base was not used again.

They were ambushed after the destruction of the camp with a town-sized population of 300 at first, which soon was littered with around 200 bodies. Then there were the Deva, who had at least 100 deaths and 80 survivors.

Exactly why the Deva were here Korzan did not know. He just thought it was a sick joke for them to be working together, but there was a reason for their pitiful ambush. They were not even taking them seriously with their fodder-like forces.

"Korzan we should go now," said Fray. "The men Avani sent are here now."

"Hmph," Korzan grunted. "Go back first. I need to see something important."

Fray looked at him for a moment before nodding and leaving with his units.

Korzan was still unsure of the new Summoner who had recently shown his squad's might tonight. Fray and his men may have merely shown a fraction of their full power, unlike his duel this morning. He gritted his teeth at the thoughts that he should get stronger, enough to destroy the boy.

He walked into a tent larger than the others, looking around for something specific. One of the captains he knew and defeated happened to be one that carried valuable items such as messages.

Korzan kicked a chest open and rifled the scrolls and folded messages. He scanned each one, keeping anything that he found noteworthy.

He soon found a sealed scroll with the elaborate wax seal of a Deva closing it. It was already opened.

Korzan unrolled it and read its contents. He growled as he finished and placed it in his satchel.

"Father... You still have your own surprises do you?"

Half an hour later...

"So the Deva were waiting in ambush?" Lunar said at their meeting at the sofas. There was a long cut on her neck where the Kamekichi (Avani named it) tried to sting her, but it was being healed by Selena. Everyone else had similar injuries that anyone could easily recover from.

"They were," Korzan reported. "It was a surprising amount, but none I could not take."

"You had Fray and his units by your side," Haile said. "There were hundreds of highly trained warriors after all."

"I took over a hundred more than Fray!"

"Actually," Fray interjected, "me and my squad took down more than that, deaths and captures included."

"What?" Korzan never liked being outmatched in just about anything.

"But you did take down all the elite soldiers. Even Adel alone needed help against a group, so you had an amazing amount of power I should note."

"Is that so...?" He seemed pacified for now.

"Still, I have something you should, that may explain the Deva appearing." Korzan brought out the scroll from the campsite and unrolled it on the table for everyone to see.

'Overlord Azurai,'

'We have gathered the troops as you requested for the traps you decided to place. The Rih'alnase should be converging on your camps as we speak. While the Deva lie in wait, your Morokai will be there as an enticing trap to weaken them first. If they are willing to protect their hidden home, then the close camps would lure them out. They shall be finished once they are divided, having overestimated their combat capabilities.'

'As a reminder, once the majority of the Rih'alnase are defeated, the half-blood girl, Ezra, shall be ours for the taking, as part of the truce. The Deva and Morokai alike shall experiment on her powers. Once research is complete, we shall leave her, powers depleted as agreed, in order not to use her as a weapon in future wars, and be on our separate ways.'

'The defeat of the Rih'alnase shall be a boon for all of us in the deciding war for Eneroth. May this truce last and be worth it in the end.'

'Yours Sincerely, the High Councilor of Myrrantia'

"...I was the big target all along?" Ezra asked quietly.

Fray and Lunar had not known Ezra was of mixed blood until they got back. It also explained the different designs on her two blades.

Hybrid powers and weapons were known to be incredibly powerful, even in Elgaia, so it made sense for the two nations to become interested in her blood. The prospect of Morokai and Deva powers combined together would definitely attract attention.

"Don't worry Ezra," Avani reassured her, "we'll protect you. We are the Rih'alnase, and I'd be damned to leave anyone behind."

"We are... a family..." Nyami muttered, taking one of Ezra's hands after removing a clawed gauntlet.

Ezra smiled. "Thanks."

"Moreover, both the Morokai and the Deva want to destroy us anyway, most likely because of our interventions in whenever we rescue slaves, or prevent any battles. Obviously, both sides would be displeased." Avani had a worried look on her face.

Everyone was quiet, trying to think of something else to say, but a rainbow light shone from outside where the field was.

"Hey the Gate's being used. I think it's probably a friend," Lunar said, standing up.

There were the sounds of a few footsteps coming before their owners came in front of the entrance: two boys with a halberd and a spear.

"Karl? And Bramwell? What are the two of you doing here?" Fray asked.

"Fray, Lunar, we came to check on you two," Karl explained. "Seria and Gramps were worried so they sent me. Bramwell, here though..."

"I wanted to see this world and to make sure you're safe Dad," Bramwell said, clearly excited to be here—

"Wait wait wait wait," Lunar interrupted. "Dad...?"

"Fray, this... is your son?" Karl could not help asking.

"Fray!? You're already married?!" Ezra exclaimed.

"I have heard of those things happening in Eneroth, but to see this with my eyes..." Haile shook her head.

"STOP!" Fray yelled. "Bramwell is not my son, and I'm not married, and I do not have a single romantic interest!"

The room was silent. For some reason, every girl looked at Fray. Karl coughed.

"We're getting off track! Anyone can talk to me about my romances later. Karl, Bramwell, is there anything else you wanted to tell here in person?"

"A-Ah yes..." Karl stuttered. "First of all, it is my pleasure to meet you all of Rih'alnase. My name is Karl, head of the 24th Demon Slayers Squadron, 'Rebel Lance'. My childhood friend Lunar spoke highly of you."

"Karl, that's a long introduction. Were you trying to score some points or something again?" Lunar drawled.

"N-No I'm not! I was trying to be polite! Anyway, I'm here on behalf of Elder Grah's request to take the two of you back."

"Take us back? But we haven't stopped the war here yet!" Lunar still had a promise to fulfill, and she just cannot leave her friends for that.

"He meant that you two cannot devote all of your time to this place. You—and I'm just repeating what he said—are a Summoner of Akras' Summoners' Hall, first and foremost. And Fray, you still have work to do. As much as I don't like the war in another dimension, you still have your lives as Summoners."

"Karl, the Morokai had portals leading to Elgaia. They even took Korell to be an experiment!" Fray retorted.

"That's something you have to take to Gramps. But remember, we still have to protect Elgaia from Ishgria, Lunar. We still have yet to defeat the Demon Lords."

Lunar gritted her teeth, then relaxed. "Fine Karl. We'll just... work out a deal. Fray?"

He stood up as well. "I guess we are not going to be back for some time. Will everyone here be alright for now?"

"Hey Fray? We're one mean war machine," Ezra said. "Of course we'll take care! You just solve your problems, and we'll hold down the fort here."

"We already received more help than we could ever repay you two. You should go and solve your own problems, but if you ever need help, remember the Rih'alnase!" Avani puffs her chest out proudly, hands on her hips.

"Thanks guys! We'll be back!" Lunar skipped out while dragging Fray along with her.

Karl sighed. "I suppose Eneroth has its fair share of problems."

Chapter End Notes

I must say, the research on Allanon makes his personality just like that of Malcolm Fade in the Mortal Instruments series by Cassandra Clare. Just noting to any fans of the author's work. Sometimes I wonder if Allanon was based on Malcolm Fade, or the other way around.

The Hakuryuus' Problem

Chapter Summary

While Fray goes on a date (nothing serious) with Angel as promised, the Hakuryuu sisters discuss a family problem.

Chapter Notes

I forgot to mention that the timeline is when the Summoners defeat Lucius and explored a bit of Ishgria, but since this is slightly different from the original storyline, I made it that the demons are not that big of a threat, but they still have to be eliminated either way, so... You will see later.

5th of June, Sunday, 1 o'clock in the afternoon...

"So Angel, your brother could sense any lovey-dovey thing we do?" Fray asked as he carried a basketful of groceries.

"Yes," she said with an awkward smile, "he would say this certain phrase that well, annoys me. But I find it endearing that he cares so much."

They walked in an alleyway to avoid the screaming boy that rampaged the streets of Randall. Both Fray and Angel were going to a café she recommended for a break.

Akuma was not the only one looking out for her though. Lunar had dragged Shimmer and her units to spy on their date, while Karl, Lugina and Seria came to look from a building. Seria was the one who insisted on 'protecting Angel's purity'.

The two ended up at the café, which was much more famous in the eastern district, called the 'Instilling Phoenix'. It was rather retro in a way that made Fray feel at home, and enough red and orange to color a sunset that made the few customers inside stand out.

"Messiurs, table for two?" an ordinary tanned attendant asked in a French accent. He showed them to a table by the windows. There were not many customers today, which was strange, but the quiet added to the peaceful atmosphere.

"You were actually really great Fray, back in the Arena! You were promoted several times that you might already reach Warlord rank! Brother could really use your help training, um,

not that I want you to," Angel said as she laid her blue jacket on the back of her metal chair. Her longsword was propped on the wall under the window beside Drawnhigh and Mordre.

"Mmm... I really never thought of myself as *that* strong," he replied. Similarly, his coat was draped over his chair.

"But you are. Sometimes I wondered if we can really defeat the Four Fallen Gods back then, before they were actually defeated that is. They were known to be so strong, even when they were weakened over their time in Grand Gaia, but now... Here I am, with my dear brother and friends." Angel sighed and looked out the window reminiscing.

"You must have had a reckless, yet wholesome adventure," Fray summarized.

"It really was. Although, there were many other Summoners helping whenever we were not there or doing our other missions from the Summoners' Hall. But eventually over the years, we managed to defeat the Four Gods."

It actually took half a year, so 'years' was an exaggeration.

"And I think already am having my own now." It was Fray's turn to look outside.

"You mean... about Eneroth?"

"Yes, Elders Grahdens and Warlon had told off me and Lunar for trying to help stop a war, commendable as it seemed. They didn't want a shortage of manpower if they get an important mission for us while we are missing, so we agreed on a schedule, or when someone from Eneroth delivers an incredibly important call for help."

"Eneroth... There's this war?"

"It was said that the war there had already started centuries ago. Since Lunar told me what had happened there, and I had a first-hand view of it, I want to help make peace, despite the fact that I just took lives, not that they were the first beings..."

"You took lives...? But they weren't like the enemy units and monsters revived right?"

Fray shook his head. "They were sentient beings just like us, only with more parts to tell them apart."

"And I thought killing Units was bad..."

"You don't like killing at all, do you?" Fray had figured Angel for a pacifist.

Angel's eyebrows drooped. "It was awful, doing that in Grand Gaia. Monsters and animals... well, I guess I can afford to if I had to, but Units are people like us. I didn't like it when I saw Summoners treat theirs badly."

Akras Summoners' Hall looks out for their Summoners and discipline them, but not everyone is always reachable to the Squadron Heads and Elders. But if they catch anyone mistreating their units, like assault or serious abuse, they have the authority to strip them of their powers

and units as they see fit. Even so, as long as the Summoners do their jobs or do not show off their 'activities', they can keep their squad, provided that they keep to the line drawn between work and play.

"But Fray, that's awesome. I only defeated Maxwell with my brother and my Units, helped clear away the monsters and went on Raid missions."

'That actually is already a lot of experience as a Summoner. I don't understand why you would self-depreciate yourself if you did all of that,' Fray thought.

"Angel, you were one of those who stopped Lucius as well. There was a joint mission with several Summoners, and you and your brother were responsible in cutting off Lucius's reinforcements and shaving off part of his health. That meant you had played a large part in saving both Grand Gaia *and* Elgaia. I only just concerned myself with one world."

"Phoenix-boiled Gumbo, strawberry shortcake and chocolate brownie and iced tea for the couple?" a blond, young waitress brought their orders.

"Y-Yes, but we're not a couple," Angel said with a slight blush.

"Oh, but my good sir," she turned to Fray, "if this is a date, then you scored a mighty one. Worthy of a four-leaf clover, if I could say." She sounded dejected.

She brightened up though as she looked at Fray. "But if this doesn't work, you could take me up sometime...?"

"No. You're just desperate for love are you?" Fray replied bluntly.

"I am..." She slumped and walked away without another word.

Angel giggled. "You sound like you have done this before."

"There were several times," he admitted. "But shall we eat?"

He took a sip, and coughed out smoke as his mouth steamed.

"Th-This gumbo has an u-unusual amount of spice!" He quickly drank his tea, feeling it cool what felt like fire.

"I-I'll try..." Angel said as she spooned the red soup. Looking closely, it bubbled as it still stayed heated.

She drank it all (it was a big spoon)...

...and drank tea, along with an ice cube.

"Th-Th-This gumbo... I never tried this b-before... when I came here..." She slurped the ice cube that jutted out of her left cheek before talking. "I think this is why the café was called the Instilling Phoenix..."

"But it would be a waste. This can be a nice endurance test..."

Fray and Angel braced their tongues.

(-----)

Lunar stifled a laugh when Fray accidentally got some Phoenix-boiled Gumbo on his trousers, which steamed and caught fire. Shimmer gasped as she saw Angel panic and pointed at the fire with her index finger.

A marble-sized orb of water formed at the tip and doused the fire, but it had enough uncontrolled force to knock Fray down to the ground. Angel panicked again and helped him up.

"This is totally just like a couple on a date," Lunar commented. She and Shimmer were eating banana splits with strawberry ice cream at a far table, with a clear view of the supposed date.

"Well, I guess I can enjoy looking at a genuine date... but Semira..." Shimmer said, looking to the unit at another table nearby.

"I simply must record something genuine like this!" She had Jack fly, holding a video camera like a drone. She was recording out of fun, in fact.

While they were watching from inside the café, Seria and Lugina were keeping attention with binoculars from a rooftop. Karl had brought along his and the two Summoners' paperwork and was currently working through them alone, approving equipment use, arranging reports and prioritizing missions and such.

"Karl, are you sure about doing all of that?" Seria looked away from her binoculars for a moment, concerned for her friend.

"Yes I'm fine... just go ahead and keep spying. I can collect my debts from you two later," Karl replied hurriedly. "That Nalda Delia needs to be exterminated... And another Arkem too...?"

"Suit yourself Karl," Lugina said without turning away from Angel. He gritted his teeth in jealousy.

"Ugh... I want a cake..." Seria started to drool through a frown.

"What?" Lugina muttered.

"Nothing!"

"...Hey, hey what's with you two trading cakes... Newbie you look too cheerful!"

"I wonder if something like that could happen between me and Akuma... not that I want it, and knowing our luck, it'll never happen..."

"Oh, what's with this ridiculous idea... Koy, Sada, Renlam, we do not bring cats, puppies or goldfish into battle!" Karl muttered to himself, feeling somewhat frustrated at another suggestion like this he has to address.

The evening...

The 'date' came to an end in the evening. Amazingly, Akuma went headfirst over a railing into one of the great waterfalls of Randall, and was being warmed up at home, effectively stopping his efforts to ruin their outing. Angel was satisfied and apologized for the trouble of avoiding Akuma. Semira stored another video tape in Lunar's secret tape stash, and Karl eventually would have his own paperwork done by other people.

"So Fray, how was your date?" Limera asked after she had a satisfying tour around Randall with her squadmates, Bramwell, and Korell. After having found the current Randall Guard to be proficient in its duty, she was confident in Randall's future.

"That sort of was a date, but it was not much like that. Still, we had a great time."

'Besides, Limera already knows I had some experience.' He did not say this out loud though.

Deciding there was nothing else to do, Fray went into his room and sat on his desk, which was more suited to be a place to work with paper. He took a thick, white leather-bound book from one of the desk's shelves and set it open, ready to be written on. He then fished a fountain pen from a little wooden box on the left shelf.

Sitting down on the comfy chair, he tapped his pen on the blank page, wondering what to write in his ten-year-old diary. He could start continuing the short story he made, but he wanted to document a little of the days here.

Writing a diary entry is tough.

(-----)

The next night...

"The demon is down now," Mizuki announced. She wiped sweat off her forehead after the tough long battle with the Decay Demon Melord.

"Great... I guess that leaves..." Seria paused to list the next Demon Lords they have to stop.
"Four more to go."

Akki was wiping slime off her scissors, some of it landing on the marble floor of the palace they were in.

"Disgusting, vile creature..." she said. "Unworthy of coming anywhere near my dear sister."

"Are you still sure about bringing your asylum-worthy sister along?" Seria whispered to Mizuki.

"She is very talented in fighting," the young assassin insisted. "And if I left her at home without me to keep her in check, what do you think would happen?"

Seria grimaced. "We can take her."

"Do you think Mora still wants to fight by the way?" Mizuki asked. "I still sense some enmity, though whether or not it is towards us I don't know."

The she-demon (not a curse) decided to stop toying with them, sort of, after defeating her (and taking an interest in Seria). Now she just talks to them every now and then with a higher appearance frequency than the War Demon Shusui.

"Mora... has plans for us, which obviously involved defeating all the Demon Lords, but it was obviously not for Tilith's freedom," Seria said. "Rather, it's bigger than that."

"So what?" Victor said, who had been wiping off all the slime on his coat on a pillar. "We were gonna take down every big demon here anyway. If she gets in the way, we just gotta smash her!"

"That's probably the best plan we got anyway," Seria affirmed, "but we shouldn't stay here too long, if a demon gets the idea to attack us now."

"I will summon the Gate now." Mizuki closed her eyes for a few seconds.

A Gate appeared in front of her, shining with its rainbow glory.

"Let's get going... Ugh, Melord was one nasty monster. Look at my hair..." the brawler complained. "He's even worse than a Grand Jelly!"

"You could've stopped running into him with your fists, you know," said Mizuki's unit, Miku. "Otherwise you wouldn't have been any more slimier than what's left of my good skirt."

They all stepped into the Gate one after another, finding themselves in the grassy fields outside the Village of the Venturer, brightened by the moonlight of the sky during nighttime.

"Im'ma gonna take a long bath. See you guys later!" Victor trudged off in his slimy boots.

"This ick... I-It actually got into my pants...? How...?" Seria muttered. "Ahem, well, I'll see you tomorrow Mizuki, and Akki..." She went off hurriedly to do the same thing Victor wants to do once he gets home.

"Summoner, I do believe you and your sister require a bath now," another one of Mizuki's units, Kanon, said behind her.

Mizuki felt exhausted, and she was sure her older sister was. They hurried back to their apartment in Randall and took a bath.

The younger assassin decided to take a bubble bath, having been in the same situation as Seria earlier. Whatever goop came from Melord had a weird smell, and it was something Mizuki did not to be humiliated with.

"Oh Mi~zu~ki~" Akki sang from behind the door to the bathroom. "Can I come in?"

Her sister was surprisingly perverted towards the assassin, too, so Mizuki's response was, "No."

There was click from the door though, and it opened.

"Akki—" she tried to say, but was then interrupted when Akki jumped into the bath herself, naked.

"My, Mizuki, your skin surprisingly looks better than mine, even after all those missions~" Akki traced a few scars on her sister's skin, which was still mostly smooth.

Mizuki sighed and let her sister toy with her white hair, back turned to her. Akki can be stubborn when she committed to something. This was not the first time such a thing happened.

"So sister..." Akki had a slightly darker tone this time. "Who was that boy you've been spying on?"

"...What? Fray, the new one?" Mizuki said cautiously. If her older sister suspected her of having a crush...

Not that she was *that* interested in him. Just a simple person that caught her attention.

"The new one. Why exactly have you been looking at him ever since that time?" Akki pressed.

It was a momentary glance that turned to full examination, back at that inn in a village. The sisters were there on another mission to take out escaped Ishgrian demons roaming around in that area, but someone had already taken care all five of them.

A boy the age of sixteen had done it, and the Hakuryuu sisters had seen him leaving the village after that.

Mizuki could still remember the default expression back then that matched the one she saw a few nights ago at the party: somewhat expressionless, but much more aware and awake than hers.

"He was interesting," Mizuki said.

"But it was more than just interest was it? Usually when one interests you like your friends, you wouldn't pay as much attention to them, but this boy caught even more of yours. Now is this a crush I hear?" Akki's hands creepily straddled her sister's belly.

"I don't..."

"Fun's over." Akki suddenly stepped out of the bath and went outside to their bedroom, not forgetting to wrap a towel around her.

Mizuki stared after her sister's disappearing figure through the right of the open door. She then relaxed in her tub.

"Frostfyre Fray..." she muttered. "What do I see in you that makes me give you my attention? Or maybe back then..."

She sighed for the second time that night.

The next morning...

The Colosseum was not as packed as it was on the weekends. Mizuki went through the crowds as smoothly as possible, careful not to run into anyone as she rushed to an informant she was meeting today.

He was waiting in a private waiting room reserved by him. She met him there, where he sat on a sofa.

"Miss Hakuryuu, I do believe we have business," he said in a gravelly voice. His shady black coat and fedora accentuated his 'mystery spy' look.

"We do. Here are the jewels..." She placed the pouch full of stolen loot, taken from a baron that had been getting in the way of man's 'workers'.

"And no one has died I suppose?"

The assassin shook her head.

"Good. Sit down first." Mizuki obliged.

"Regarding your parents..." He took out a small green binder from the inside of his coat and flipped through the pages, ending at one that showed several pictures.

"Dozens of people were eliminated the moment the assassins knew of these pictures, not to mention data as well. I do hope you know the value of this page, and why the Hakuryuus have done it," he said, taking out the page. Mizuki gingerly accepted it.

The man tipped his fedora to Mizuki and left without another word. She scanned the contents of the page and carefully slid it into a black folder she used to store important documents, then put it back into her rucksack.

Mizuki would have to review the documents at home, seeing as this was confidential information. She quickly left the Colosseum and headed straight for home.

The alleyways of Randall were nice shortcuts, and allowed anyone to go through them stealthily in the capital, but there were plenty of shady gang members that have not been

cleared out by the Randall Imperial Guard... yet. However, Mizuki had an aura of death that kept every assaulter from making a single step towards her.

And if anyone had the guts to rob her of anything, they were left on (or in) the ground with large and various bruises on their limbs.

Just as she reached the stairs to her apartment, someone called out to her from behind.

"Miss Hakuryuu!"

She knew it was Fray immediately. He was most likely just greeting, but assuming that his existence was not found out by the Hakuryuu assassins, and that they are already here, monitoring both Mizuki and Akki, anyone she is seen with could be taken on the spot as hostage against the sisters.

Well, any random innocent could do as a hostage. Mizuki was not *that* heartless, and she made sure Akki was 'nice' to everyone.

At any rate, she wanted to lower such chances of that happening, so she dashed into her apartment immediately.

Fray, who was walking on the street next to the apartment building, was somewhat surprised, but he did assume her to be a shady person with important secrets. Whatever she had to do probably is something she did not want him to get involved with.

He shrugged and continued walking, ignoring Akki's stares from the rooftops.

Special: Father's Day

Chapter Summary

Everyone (maybe not necessarily everyone)—humans mostly—has a father they care for on this day.

Chapter Notes

Roughly around 11:30p.m. on 19 June 2016, I realized it was Father's Day. I decided to quickly make this around that time in order to commemorate today, even though it is late.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Limera, your father and mother were named Reed and Lucana right?" her Summoner asked from the kitchen, where he was cooking dinner for the two of them that night in the house.

Their names made the Unit hitch her breath for a moment before saying, "Hmm? Yeah, what about them?"

"I was wondering if we had met them yet. But saying that now, I don't think so. We had already met plenty of units over the past few days, yet we never saw any of the Refugee Leaders."

The Elgaian Refugee Leaders: a group of six people in the past who fought to lead the refugees from the war in Grand Gaia to Elgaia, leading to the creation of Randall, and everywhere else in this world they live in. Reed and Lucana were known to be the only ones who made it to Elgaia.

Limera remembered all the times she wanted to be a hero like them as a child. Her disappointment after that in their unwillingness to help Randall was what led the young woman and her brother to the Randall Guard.

"Well, yeah, although I'm not so thrilled to meet my mom and dad again, or even my brother."

"Why not?"

Limera sighed. "It's just... I practically ran away from home and forced my brother to come along because he cared about me so much, and I really loved him for that. But our parents, well, after I ran, I hardly ever heard of them again. I get small reports of them helping people

who needed it as they wanted after the Great Escape, and I get messages that they still care about me and my brother, but..."

She rested her head on her arms on the table she was at. "What happens if we meet in person? Would they still care after going against what they hoped for me?"

Fray glanced at his partner Unit before turning his attention to the meatloaf in the oven.

"I think they still would," he said truthfully, but Limera would know if he was being truthful. "I think... that they would be proud regardless of whatever you did, unless well, it was bad of course."

Limera stared at him with lazy eyes. "I think that you're saying that I'd done something good. You mean the Randall Guard?"

He shrugged. "The Randall Guard *did* help Elgaia greatly. You were a legend because of your efforts."

"Hmph, and you think they're proud of me for that." She sat back straight up and smirked, feeling boastful. "I did pass my name down the history books as a hero after all. Luckily, the historians never found me drinking and beating up gangs and that stuff."

"You do realize that I might update my Guide after what you said right?"

"Don't care. I'm dead anyway right? Heck, there's tons of other legends that could've made mine insignificant."

Fray winced before taking out the meatloaf. "You really did not have to say such a thing that way."

She laughed. "Well, it's the truth isn't it?" Limera's stomach audibly rumbled. "So where's the egg you put in? Tell me you did, 'cause I'm really going to burn down the house if you haven't put it in."

The Summoner quickly turned to the fridge to get some eggs.

"Wow, you didn't?"

The next day...

Angel turned away from her letter addressed to someone to look in front of her.

A boy and a girl was with their father strolling down a path, enjoying a peaceful morning. They seemed to hardly have a care in the world with their smiling father.

She often wondered how it would be nice to grow up with their father if he were still alive, including her mother too, who probably could have stopped Akuma from being a 'cussy-cussy jerk' as some people called him.

"Hey, Angel," Akuma said once he arrived, ready to take her to their parents' grave. "You sure we couldn't have done this on their birthdays or something?"

She shook her head. "I want to at least somehow tell Father about today, and I know you do it too."

It was not that Akuma did not like their father. Aceton Kiyo had been a great one, but he had plenty of mysteries surrounding him even then.

And then there was his murder, committed right in front of the boy.

Those were bad memories he never wanted to share with anyone at all.

But they went anyway, to the cemetery, where their parents' graves were. There were several other people, most likely people who had the same idea as the twins'.

Standing in front of their parents' graves brought Angel ill feelings, but this was where they were. She knelt on the ground and opened the letter.

"Dear Father," she said. "It's been a long time since we last visited. Me and Akuma managed to stop the Four Fallen Gods in Grand Gaia, and ever since then, we had so much fun meeting new friends, getting new experiences, and well... I wish you had been there with Mother too. I hope you're proud of us..."

She stopped. Akuma stood by solemnly and was tempted to ask *What's wrong?*

"Sorry Father," she finally muttered. "I don't know... We don't know what happened to you to have your life taken from us so early, but we'll find out one day."

Akuma cleared his throat. "You heard Angel, Dad. We'll bury the \$u\$@re who did this to you under deep 2)t!, and I'm sure you'll rest, finally, for good."

A few leaves drifted by due to a powerful gust of wind, as if they responded to their words.

Akras Summoners' Hall

"Hey Karl?" an energetic male Summoner by the name of Koy asked his Squadron Head.

"Yes?" Karl was waiting for his squad to assemble and finish one exploration mission in Ishgria, then let them off for Father's Day.

"Do you know your... biological dad?"

Karl's body stiffened, but thankfully Koy would not be paying attention to that.

"...Not really. Not even Grahdens seems to know." That was one thing no one should know about for the time being.

"Oh, well, just saying if you could you know, say 'Happy Father's Day' after all the years you and he were apart. Might be an awkward thing to do eh?"

Karl just turned away.

Knowing that he had a demon for a father did not make Karl comfortable in the slightest. That would explain all the power he was reputed to have, and the strange red tail from his lower body whenever he activated the hidden power.

Sending a gift for Father's Day to him would be awkward. Why exactly would a Demon Lord accept human traditions?

"Karl," someone familiar called from behind him.

Seria looked cranky as ever. "All this Father's Day commotion is getting to the heads of my men. When we said to make it quick to buy their gifts, they seemed to be on a shopping spree, so you better come along with me and find them."

"Seria wai—" Karl tried to say, but Seria just forcefully pulled him along.

Well, he has his friend as usual to occupy him.

Koy would later ask Grahdens about it, and bet that his captain had a demon for a father.

1 o'clock in the afternoon...

Limera was out on an errand in the Village, going to a market for some groceries.

She was suspicious of the list Fray gave her though. There was turkey, rice, salt, spices and such, the kind one would need to make a dinner. Usually they would be more simple like omelettes and beef stew, but it looked like they were going to have visitors.

Once she filled her basket with half of the needed ingredients, she went off to another spot where there was fish, only to bump into a certain person with purple eyes.

"Limera?" he asked.

"Rouche?" she asked in kind.

He was holding a basket of fruits in his arms, most likely shopping like she was.

"Sister!" the Pure Knight exclaimed. "It is a relief to see you again, and although I want to hug you—"

Limera did that for him instead, one arm around him.

"Y-Yeah, it's uh, great to see you too," Limera said. She noticed the fact that he was a six-star Unit, being able to detect this level of energy.

"So, even though I'm the younger sister, you're the one who's awfully weaker than me huh?" she teased because she felt like it.

"What? You're... a seven-star? Well, my Summoner can help me evolve eventually, and we'll see who is the better one another day. Still, you are quite lucky to have attained that much power. I take you are on a shopping trip like me?"

They talked for the remainder of the trip, Limera enjoying her time again with her brother. It was enough to say that he was still as caring as ever.

Once they were done, they took the same path, although Rouche had said he was going to another person's house on the instructions of his Summoner.

"So Rouche, who's this Summoner of yours?" Limera asked.

"Ah, a young aspiring girl of nine years, who still goes to a school nearby," Rouche said proudly. "She met a friend there who happened to have a Summoner for a guardian. This Summoner had asked if she summoned our parents though."

Limera had a slight inkling of the answer. "And did she?"

He nodded. "I was quite surprised that she already summoned them before me. It was quite the reunion when we got together. Although..."

"Would you like to go to the dinner with me? To meet our parents, that is?"

The offer was nice, but she was not in the mood.

"Sorry Rouche. Maybe another time."

"Come now sister. Look, why don't you just at least look at them for a few seconds without having to meet them?"

"Nuh-uh. I'm already getting close to my home now, so you should just go."

"I doubt it. This is still the same path I was given directions to take."

They still kept on walking, Rouche still pestering his sister to go. Caring as he was, he would usually be the one back in their day convincing Limera to be 'more careful, less rash'. It was a trait he inherited from their mother.

They soon reached their destination though, but it was completely unexpected.

"Rouche, this is my house. Now go on," Limera presented and made a 'shoo-ing' motion.

"But this is the same place I was supposed to go to. Do you think...?" Rouche went inside anyway.

The Volcanic Scepter quickly understood everything from there like her brother did. No wonder Fray asked her about her parents!

She inwardly boiled like her title implied, tempted to yell Fray's ear off for making a surprise like this, but that 'would be rude to her new guests', as Fray would scold her.

Inside, there were four other people she never met as a Unit.

One was Rouche's Summoner, a young girl who had red hair with green highlights, reaching her shoulders. She wore a matching crimson blouse and a long, green and wavy skirt. A silver necklace with the shape of a pentagram rested on her neck. Her golden yellow eyes scanned the living room with a meek curiosity.

The other units were those she knew about: Reed, Lucana and Lucina.

"Limera," her Summoner greeted from behind her. "Sorry about the surprise, especially when you did not want to meet your parents, but I can see that you still wanted to meet them anyway."

She wanted to protest, but when her parents turned at the sound of her name, they set their widened eyes on her.

"Uh... hey Mom, Dad," Limera greeted awkwardly.

They suddenly rushed up and hugged her. Her brother chuckled nearby as he took his boots off at the guest room.

Dinner had been a lively affair.

Korell and the rookie Summoner—"Merla," she answered—met each other at school and did much together ever since. As the young Summoner was so socially awkward that her only human friend was Korell herself, Fray took it upon himself to break her out of that condition by inviting her with her most trusted Unit: Lucina, who was a five-star Unit.

On a side note, Reed and Lucana were recently-evolved seven-stars, which was thanks to her devoted time in several Metal Unit Parades. This allowed Reed to have memories of his children.

Soon, it was nighttime. Father and daughter sat outside on a bench Fray placed near the house, while everyone else chatted with each other in the house and had a great time.

"So Limera..." Reed said to break the silence. "You're dating already?"

At first, the Volcanic Scepter was going to make a witty retort like 'Yep, the cutie's my boyfriend!' or 'We're practically married!' just to mess with new people, but instead she blushed. Someone who knows and loves you for a long time can see through most deceptions you put up after all.

"Uh, not at all Dad," she replied instead. "Fray's... already with someone."

"And who might that be?"

"Eh, well, she's not really around anymore, so he's kind of confused whether or not he wants to move on, but he'll make that decision eventually." Limera has faith in her Summoner. This is not the first time he faced a personal problem, much less an identity crisis.

"Huh, he's a good kid. Although that probably wouldn't have stopped me from... well, *doing* something," Reed snickered.

"Dad. I'll really burn you if you try."

He wanted to say that that might not work since they have the same element, but he opted to laugh instead. "That's my girl."

Limera grinned and threw herself at the warrior, almost pushing him off the bench.

"You're a great dad, and you always are—were, I guess—one," she said.

Reed smiled and hugged her back.

"Awww," Lucana said from the front door. "Sweetie, I do believe you received your Father's Day present?"

The Scorching Sword flashed a toothy grin. "I did."

Chapter End Notes

I finally finished this in the rough span of two days. I do hope all fathers out there have a great time with their children, and that my father—who has been sick for a long time—is well and better than he would be later on than today.

Hunting

Chapter Summary

Fray goes off to hunt for some demon limbs for a project while two assassins have people to kill.

Feat Jewel:

A special jewel created when Yugreia unleashes its true power. The Yugreia is known to be a demon possessing properties that oppose water and fire. As such, researchers had confirmed the same properties in this dark stone by tossing one into a body of water, which turned into fire. And when tossed into fire, it turned to water: an item that creates such a paradox. Researchers continue to hope for breakthroughs in their field as soon as they possess more.

Fray closed the bestiary, quickly deciding on which demon he should hunt today.

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"Yo, Fray," Victor greeted his partner for the mission.

"Victor." He nodded in reply.

"Guess this is the first time we're partnering up huh?"

"It is. Nice to meet you. Is there anyone else coming with us?"

"Nope, just us, but we're more than enough."

"That sounded too confident."

"Hey, I've beaten up hundreds of demons before! And I can see you're no slacker."

"Thank you then."

They arrived at Mount Dahm using the Gate, at a small camp where they could rest if needed. On a table inside the tent was a map of the area.

"So how'd you wanna go about this Fray? We split up and search for it first and call each other if one of us finds it first? Or go in a group?"

"We can just send out our units to cover more ground, although that could waste our powers before we get to the demons. So... we'll just split up. I'll take my squad to the left of here. You can take the right."

Viktor nodded. "Happy hunting. But how about we make this interesting?"

"How so?"

"A bet! The first one who takes down their monster first gets... treated to dinner by the loser. You up for the challenge?"

Fray merely smiled. "We'll see."

The Village of the Venturer

"Wanna hang out later with us Bramwell?"

"No, I'm fine. I still have that homework to do," he said to his classmates.

"Eh, alright. Meet you tomorrow?"

"Sure Calvin. You too Donna, Tyvell, Ien, Yae, and Marle."

These were some of the many students he got to know at his new school, which is one the branches of the Evergreen Foundation. He was in middle school, while his sister was in elementary.

He looked at his wristwatch as he checked his backpack for any missing things. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, which meant that Fray should be returning from his mission by now. Korell should also be out on the playground with her new friends.

Bramwell reflected on the time he called Fray 'Dad' in Eneroth. It was unusual, but it was more of a test of how he and the people around him would react. He did act more like their responsible father plenty of times.

"Brother!" Korell shouted from her swing.

He reached the other part of the large Evergreen school grounds. There were plenty of children much younger than Bramwell being picked up by their parents and guardians.

Korell herself jumped up and waved goodbye to her friends, then ran off towards her brother.

"How was your school Korell?" Bramwell asked.

"It was great," she said. "There were so many people who wanted to be friends with me!"

They went back home calmly, trading stories of their eighth day in their new school. The sun started to turn the sky orange as the afternoon continued.

While they waited for two Summoners to flip an overturned wagon in their way, Korell stared at the Units moving the obstacle.

Summoners only discover their powers after random periods of time. However, not all people gain these powers obviously, like Bramwell, although Summoners are widely regarded as the most powerful beings to walk in Elgaia and Grand Gaia. Even so, they are not the only powerful ones to exist.

"Brother," Korell tugged on the edge of his shirt to get his attention. "Do you think I can be a Summoner like Fay?"

Bramwell chuckled and ruffled her hair. "You have a slight chance," he admitted, "but it's not all that easy being a Summoner, even if you actually know magic now."

Korell was capable of using Light offensively, defensively and supportively, but she has yet to fully develop that, which is why Fray was helping her with it from time to time, in case she may need it. Other than that, she was an excellent student.

Most Summoners possess a certain degree of magic, but not all of them had to be able to use it or have a perfect affinity to the six main elements. They even could just rely on their Units if they had no other options.

They walked on once again, spotting several more oddities in the village populated by many Summoners, like a male teenager being chased by an angry female Unit in a maid uniform. By the sounds of the righteous assailant, she was forced into it after realizing her Summoner tricked her with a bluff.

Another dozen steps gave them a sight of male Evergreen high school students being chased by a woman with scissors, cackling wildly as several Village guards barely restrained her. Korell had to be pulled away from incoming rains of sliced boxers, while citizens screamed for their bare lives.

It was a place that was safe, yet full of mishaps and trouble, mostly stemming from all the Summoners living here, or at least anyone that happened to have any significance. Despite the fact that Demon Slayers worked to kill every demon horde surging from Ishgria, the entire populace was very calm.

'Judging from how the Summoners manage their Units, like Fray and Uncle, it's not so different from being an... idol producer was it? Or an informal commander,' Bramwell thought.

He then thought of the group of friends he was with, and all the other groups, clubs and societies formed at his school. Being a leader of such groups must be hard and complicated.

This village was no different from their home.

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"Limera, Adel, Piany, Lance, continue distracting it. Vernil, use **Skirwing** once you're ready. And Drevas, help make an opening... now!"

"I shall! **Libre Fusion!**" The Earth-type Unit readied his glowing lance.

Once the Yugreia stopped hailing its attacks on the barriers put up, Fray dashed and jumped, slamming his firesword into the monster's arm, pushing it away, at the same time the Brave Burst hit.

Vernil took this chance to summon and manipulate a huge wave of water, blasting the monster with water, forcing it to flip over.

"Concentrate attacks on it now!" Fray shouted.

They rained down random slashes, jabs and blasts on its exposed side, and soon, the beast started to stagger once it got back up.

It blew waves and waves of fire and water, but hardly any of them were close to injuring anyone for their high endurance and nimbleness. The Summoner sidestepped around a lashing root and grabbed hold of one, while Adel held another on the opposite side.

They pulled the monster down together, leaving it wide open for the umpteenth squad barrage.

It roared and thrashed weakly, but it soon died rather anticlimactically.

The demon itself was not so tough. After all, back then Fray would face at least one every month for his training alongside a few other trainees. It had been only Limera at first during those training months, which slowly grew to the team he currently had now. With that, after the first few hunts, the next ones became smooth sailing.

Fray looked at the Emerald Pike, a friend Unit from a friendly Summoner from the Rebel Lance division. The younger Summoner wanted to meet later after they were done with their missions, having taken an interest in Fray.

Although this Unit was a six-star one, it did not matter to the boy as long as Drevas was strong. And he was strong anyway, despite the lack of intensity compared to his own seven-star units. Koy was a younger man anyway, and the care packages from the Hall only helped until that point.

"Drevas, is everything fine?" the Summoner asked.

The demon seemed to scowl a little before answering, "Yes, I thought there was something in the trees behind us... For a moment there, I thought I would have to address my annoying master. This respect I am gaining from you is not something I am entirely accustomed to."

"Annoying?" Fray asked as he carved and moved around various parts of the fallen Yugreia.

"Master Koy would pester me about various things such as my lance, my relations to any demons and how am I getting along with my other 'teammates'. Although, such attention is... not the worst I expect all the time. But he could be surprisingly disrespectful towards the women."

"Disrespectful... Like intruding on their privacy?"

"Or so I was told by the females in my group. Surprisingly, they could cope with his attitude, considering how less 'flattering' other Summoners were lately."

A pervert, most likely, but at least a good one right? This was the first time he met one, and it would explain why Koy was looking at Fray up and down many times.

Most likely because he was 'more girlier than Karl', as Lugina japed once.

Fray kicked at a fallen root and eventually found the orb-like Feat Jewel under it. He scooped it up and placed it inside his bag, then scanned the entire monster corpse.

I can use the rest of the demon for parts obviously, but the special project I had it mind using the Jewel... Why not go further?

Later at the Research Lab...

"Ah, Fray, you wanted to check on that arm device?" Noel greeted.

Fray nodded. "How goes the research?"

"Very well! Who knew the crafter of such a device was capable of channelling energy properly for any practitioner of magic to use? It seems to be a mere prototype, but in time, it would be yet a grand revolutionary device."

The young scientist was excited at the prospect of inspecting a machine that managed to allow the outlaw from before to summon more than six Units at once—a feat incapable for any Summoner to perform, or at least next to impossible.

"Reverse engineering such a device will take time. But the fact that someone knew how to use magical circuits..." Noel shook his head. "Never mind. Although bringing this to the Lab may have been more than just a wise decision you know."

"How so Noel?" Fray asked.

"Magical circuits? Crystals for power sources? And the ability to summon even more Units in spite of the mass power-draining effects? The Summoners of Old would know this is a unique device and demand mass production. Warlon, Grahdens and even Owen, leader or not, would not be able to dissuade all of them from such power, not when there are so many benefits to be gained if the Hall were to grow that way. Summoners would push for such a development. Many more situations could be solved, but there can be certain repercussions. And if most of their elite Summoners equipped them..."

Noel smiled wryly. "They would be a little too unstoppable for anyone's tastes, even if they wanted to do so in the best interests of the people."

He puffed out his chest with pride. "So it's up to me, Rhynt, and the proud researchers of the Lab to deal with what others cannot comprehend!"

Fray let out a low chuckle, ruining Noel's little moment.

"Mr. Fray, I take pride in what I do," he fumed. "And I certainly will abide by the need for wisdom to decide what happens to the device. Now, here we are..."

He pushed open double steel-reinforced doors, leading to a wide open space where advanced technologies were being disassembled and studied on tables. Scientists in similar white lab coats worked and took notes in the mainly-white space.

A scientist shot a rainbow laser beam using a machine inside a testing chamber, aimed at a very thick chunk of mithril. It was most likely the one Fray had brought back a few days ago from Eneroth.

"Ah yes," Noel said when he saw it, "that strange metal has so far made not much sense, being a supposed stuff of legend and all. Incredible durability yet incredible lightness? I was thinking if it could be used for the prototype Crystal Crest... name to be changed later."

"Crystal Crest? Is that the name you are giving to the prototype?"

"Yes, well, I still believe there is a better name for it somewhere. Did you want to name it yourself?"

"No, that's fine. So where is it?"

"Right over there. It's being inspected by Rhynt. So you were saying you wanted to put it into another application..."

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On the 19th of June...

Tesla was hardly baffled by the three imposing figures below her, backs turned, easy targets to put down.

A dive from the rooftops, followed by a single mess seconds later, and a minute to clean up the scene, the assassin walked out of the alleyway leading to that spot in the suburbs, acting casual as if the disguised Deva were never there before.

"Mission complete operator," she whispered using her Communicator—a prototype stolen months ago.

"Good. There was another Deva group reported to be sneaking into the stores nearby... near Sector Eight. You know what to do."

Her mission was to kill every Deva who attempted to infiltrate Randall for any information and resources. This is to satisfy their Morokai 'partners' by allowing their own infiltrators to encounter no Deva once they arrive in the city.

Tesla walked and blended with the crowds, getting close to her destination. She kept her hood up to ensure no Randall Guard or Summoner find her trademark blindfold, being on the run after all.

Soon, she found *Pete's Commodities*, a store that is incredibly popular for its variety of items.

And a front for a black market.

It did not take long to pay the 'fee' to go through the backdoor, which was actually an entrance the underground shop, more known as *Pete's Market*.

The underground market was just as big as the three-story building aboveground, meaning there were three basement levels here. Each level was similar for its dim lighting on the ceiling, save for the stalls and tents full of assorted goods.

The Deva were newcomers, so it was likely that they would split up and gather information about this place.

Like the fifteen other groups she 'met'.

The assassin strolled through a crowd and put her back against a bookshelf, mentally peeking around the corner and sensing one target conversing with a dealer. He was conveniently close too for a stealthy takedown.

As soon as the dealer turned away, she lunged, retreated—along with the Deva by the neck—and clamped her other hand down on his mouth. Tesla wasted no time strangling him while blocking out the noises, making the Deva struggle frantically.

The same dealer had just realized his potential customer went missing as Tesla placed a slip of paper drawn with powerful runes that can teleport anything to a set point—a secret graveyard in this case.

The paper absorbed the death energy given off the new corpse. The runes activated, making the body glow and disappear in a ghostly purple light.

While the dealer looked left and right, Tesla dashed to another stall and hid under a long counter that turned around a corner. The cashier was on the other side attending a line of customers, buying useless voodoo dolls. The next Deva was looking around at the shelves in a curious way.

Tesla had often wondered about these otherworldly invaders, usually examining them with distaste, be it Deva or Morokai. Without a doubt, the Morokai would enslave every Elgaian in sight with barely any care for what the humans did. The Deva would be no better, enforcing their laws on the land, starting with Randall.

Her lord had miraculously struck up a deal with their leader months back then, a few good weeks after faking their death. They had tried to create a portal through technological means with the help of a freelance scientist, just to use whatever resources they had left back at their

secret base, but instead it malfunctioned and led to that unknown land the Summoners talked about: Eneroth.

Eriole had stumbled upon a battle between the two races and simply picked one side. He had got thrown into it the moment he stepped into it after all.

He picked the Morokai on a whim, but he seemed to be reconsidering his decisions after that, especially when he learned of their brutish ways.

Nevertheless, he gained a powerful ally. Their agreement was that Eriole would lead the provided men to invade Randall and take out the two greatest threats to his and the Morokai's plans: the Akras Summoners' Hall and the Imperial Guard. In turn, Elgaia's resources will support the Morokai, giving them the help to defeat the Deva, and establish Eriole's rule over Randall. The Imperial Guard will be reformed according to the lord's wishes, and the Hall will crumble once and for all. Any supporters, especially Summoners, will be swayed to their side through any way possible.

It would be a glorious day for Elgaia, and for everyone they would save.

The last body was teleported away. He had tried some alcohol at a bar, and somehow ended up getting somewhat drunk. That made it all too easy, considering how people hardly care for drunkards.

Since Tesla was underground, her earpiece cannot reach the signal to her headquarters. This should be the last mission though, and she was running low on Grave Slips, as they were called by the scientist, so she turned to leave.

Except there was a certain pair of eyes telling her not to leave just yet.

Her senses flared, telling her there was something metallic and sharp coming from her right. She ducked, and heard a *thud* to her left, indicating something like a knife was embedded in a wooden rafter.

"Ah~ It's been quite some time since I clashed with another assassin of... remarkable skill."

The voice came from in front of her. Whoever it was, she was definitely deadly.

"You must be Tesla. Would you care to come with me~?" the assassin asked sweetly.

The bluenette responded with a series of jabs with her sword, all of which the other assassin obviously avoided.

"Now now," the assassin called, now on top of a shelf to her left, "I simply want to 'talk'. My dear sister wanted to meet this dear lord of yours~"

Tesla clicked her tongue in annoyance (and instant cold rage at how she mocked her relationship) and jumped at the assassin, sword outstretched.

The mystery assassin responded with a swift combo of slashes, parrying the sword. Tesla guessed the woman had shiv-like weapons, feeling and sensing them, even if she cannot see.

Her sword swung fast, meeting more air as the woman continued to dodge. Like most assassins, she seemed to focus more on speed to compensate for her lack of strength.

Chains exuding a menacing aura sprung from the ground, attempting to chain her legs together. Tesla easily pirouetted and sliced them apart.

"Ara ara~?" The woman sounded surprised. "Such senses..."

By now, the entirety of the underground had heard them. As no one wanted to get caught up in a bladestorm, customers fled while merchants casted enchantments to protect their goods. Others hid in fear.

Tesla once more slashed and kept on fighting as much as the other did, neatly avoiding any of the magical chains that came repeatedly at her. She spun on her left heel to deliver a fast roundhouse kick, forcing the assassin to block it with her arms.

This chance was taken to freeze the assassin's legs, rendering her immobile.

"Nothing can hope to chain me down assassin!" she yelled. The ice started to break already as she pulled with great strength.

Tesla backpedalled, spun around and sprinted away for an exit. If this assassin was here and knew about Tesla and Eriole being alive, even being able to track her down, then she and her lord were compromised. She would have to warn him immediately.

The cackles of a maniac erupted throughout the basement as the unknown assassin went after her counterpart.

Bladed Reunion

Chapter Summary

Fray, Mizuki and Akki travel to a haunted town to look out for signs of a nationwide invasion.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Seven years ago...

The lights at the Spring Greetings Festival were bright at that time, standing out in the night. Children, adults and couples alike walked around the stalls to play, buy limited edition things and have a good time together.

"Uwahh!" A black-haired boy in a navy blue T-shirt and grey suspenders tripped and fell face-first into a cone of cotton candy. His green eyes blinked as he got back up.

"Kuroneko..." a girl said behind him. She wore a long lavender dress and brown shoes. Her green sun hairclip had a yellow star in the center, sweeping her bangs to the left, standing out in her dark purple hair.

"You are clumsy as ever," she finished with an unchanging, small smile. She reached out to take a clump of cotton candy and ate it.

The boy took the cone off and tossed it into a nearby wooden barrel where the trash goes, and the cotton he brushed off his hair.

"Sorry if that's what you wanted," Fray said. They had a limited budget for food after all.

"It's fine. After all, how would we enjoy the more active games with a full stomach?" Her sharp black eyes seemed as knowing as ever.

"But again, why THAT nickname?"

"It means 'black cat' in Japanese remember? You have cute fangs, cute black ears (even if they're sewn on your hood), and cute favorite food: salmon!" the girl teased. "So, how about a game?"

He tried not to roll his eyes in annoyance. His coat's hood had ears as a fond prank made by his older cousins. His otaku (it was otaku right?) of a cousin had shown some foreign merchandise from his trip, and she found the girly name for him.

It was not so bad though, but half their classmates and families picked it up later on.

"Well, how about that one?" The boy pointed to a gun gallery.

Both of them ended up spending most of their time competing in various games, even ending up in a fishing competition.

Eventually, the girl managed to get herself wet trying to bait a large blue fish, and the boy had more luck (for once at that time) and caught a rare blue fish.

"Fray is really strong..." said one boy in the crowd.

"Aha... Miss Maki was not the best at sports, but she still looked cool tonight!" a girl said to her friend.

"Trill, your admirers are here," Fray pointed out.

"Oh I don't see the point in involving myself with them. Let's get going—watch out for that horse—!"

"Yikes!" a girl screamed as the horse she was riding on slammed into Fray, making both of them stumble and the girl to fall.

In a split second, Fray managed to twist his body as he dashed and landed under the girl, acting as a cushion.

The wind was knocked out of Fray, and his head hurt, but the girl was safe.

"F-Fray! Sorry about that!" the green-haired girl got up hastily, stumbling in her matching green dress.

"It's fine Lin. Fray has quite the body to endure punishments all the time," Trill reassured her.

"Even so..."

"Look Lin, the fireworks are going to start soon," Fray cut in, brushing dirt off him like it was nothing. "You're here for it right? Why don't we gather with everyone who should be at the spot by now?"

Lin looked at Fray for a second before feeling more calm. Even if he were roughed up, he probably would put on a straight face and stay either aloof or forthcoming, whichever created less issues for anyone.

"It's over there in the clearing, just... um... through that path!" she answered after the pause.

Trill smiled. "Good, let us...? Hmm...?"

"Is something the matter?" Fray asked.

"Do you know how I am capable of magic? That also means I can detect such energies."

"Yes... So?"

Trill narrowed her eyes and turned around. She took a few steps forward and stopped, looking around.

"I can conclude something. First: it's amassing," she said this as she turned to look at her two friends.

"...Okay?" Lin said for her to go on.

"Second and last: it's behind me."

Then something blew them back. Hard.

(-----)

Present Day, 20th of June
Imperial Capital Randall, the Hakuryuus' Apartment

"You want to 'employ my services?'"

"Yes, Fray-dono," she said. "You were listed as such at the Akras Summoners' Hall, being an 'extra', as they put it. Anyone can request your help that way. While you may work for it from time to time, you still are a freelancer whenever you are free."

Mizuki had come to him just a while ago at his house, after simply asking Karl for his address. After asking him for help, they went to her apartment, discussing at the kitchen table.

"But there was a telephone number you could've just used. Was it something private?" he asked.

Mizuki nodded. "Very."

"So this concerns you and your sister. Speaking of which, where is she now?" He looked around for her.

"By now, you should be well aware of my sister's... targets, Fray-dono. She is sent on an errand for your sake."

He left it at that and decided to move on.

"Can you explain what is wrong Miss Hakuryuu?"

Despite the fact that they were both essentially the same age, they had maturity, and they did not mind being referred to formally, so the air between them took on a more professional one.

She placed a folder on the coffee table and opened it, revealing pictures of several people.

"This is a guard's report of the Hakuryuu assassins killing several veteran Summoners in a village days away from here," she explained. "A reporter managed to confirm this by taking pictures before being killed shortly to eliminate any traces of their presence. Eventually, the guards were taken too, but not before my informant's spies retrieved the report. You should note that I had to do a mission for him to earn this information."

Hakuryuu assassins? Her relatives?

"And why would this informant want this report in the first place?" he continued to ask.

"He had several disagreements with them, and wanted to expose them—to quote him—"out of spite," at a cheap price for me. Having received this, I decided to research the assassins' targets."

Her expression did not change in the slightest as she flipped over the report sheet. On the page was a description of the victims and the assassins, pictures included. All of them happened to depict the gory deaths of Summoners, but in the background, there were a few hooded figures circled out in red ink.

"The veterans that were killed a few weeks ago were stationed in the village to protect it from the many demons and monsters as of late. I am unsure what my... parents wanted to gain from killing them, but it is most likely a mission issued by someone."

Mizuki's expression turned more serious, reflecting the mood they had now. "Further research indicates that they are headed for Randall, judging by the deaths in establishments on the way from the first village over the past few days, albeit at a slow rate."

"So they plan to infiltrate Randall?" Fray asked after a few seconds of thought.

"Perhaps," she replied, "but knowing them, they are likely to force me and my sister into joining them somehow, or they are going to assassinate someone important here as a mission. The Imperial Capital, after all, is where many significant individuals for leagues across lands and seas would gather."

Fray was unsure whether to question Mizuki's past as an assassin, but opted to keep the conversation going. "So the purpose of telling me all this is...?"

"To assist me in the elimination of the assassins, and the capture of my parents when possible. Furthermore, it would be beneficial for *all* of us if their mission was not carried out, assuming it affects much of Elgaia." Her expression had not changed in the slightest ever since the start of the unofficial debriefing.

"...I understand that you are a stranger Fray-dono," she said more softly, "but currently everyone else I know is occupied with their missions. You are the only who happens to be strong enough and unoccupied at the moment."

The missions Fray was assigned to were relatively easy, since he still had not ranked up. Even then, he was still a mercenary at best in most of the Summoners' eyes, so he was usually somewhat free.

"Don't worry Miss Hakuryuu, I accept."

"Hmm, strangely, I expected that of you."

"Because I am like most nice people? But I want to be paid in zel. Is that acceptable?"

"250000 zel?"

"...Acceptable. When and where do we start?"

A Certain Cult's Haunt (yes, this is the name of the place)

The Haunt had the physical establishments of a medieval town and the air of a cemetery, as if someone was going to die quick at any given moment. The low mist seemed to encourage such activities (and they were surprisingly uncommon in this area), and the rituals conducted in nearby drove off any curious tourists. The night helped to enforce the darkness surrounding it.

This village was one of those places the Akras Summoners' Hall wanted to not only clear, but utterly destroy, due to the immense dark energy it radiates, attracting monsters, demons, necromancers and unsuspecting travelers who became victims of 'various processes'.

This is also a good place to hide in due to the dangers of walking on the streets, even if it were protected by walls. Not all people would want to visit such a place.

The Haunt was still inhabited by ordinary residents, mixed in with a few cultists and dark magicians. There were guards to protect them, although they ended up protecting the invaders too as they were smart to disguise themselves amongst the townspeople, preventing the guards from investigating and kicking them out. The town council was helpless.

Theoretically, the assassins would want to hide themselves this way and stay here for a while, since Mizuki's forcibly-employed elite spies reported no such figures going in. Based on the trail of deaths left in many establishments, they would be here soon before they reach Randall.

Were they expecting Mizuki and Akki later on? They may prioritize their mission before their daughters though. Or were they waiting to ambush any attackers sent after the assassins? Unlikely, since Mizuki wanted to keep this situation quiet from the Summoners' Hall, until she was ready to reveal what happened.

These few questions ran through his mind as he waited in a tree, beside an older twin-tailed she-devil who continued to stare into his very soul.

Akki was definitely what people these days would call a *yandere*. Not only does she love her sister to the point of marrying her, she would actually attempt (emphasis on attempt) to kill any person who seemed interested in Mizuki.

Well, I could have gotten paired up with a much less friendly spy, he thought dryly. The spies spread throughout the village acted as messengers and scouts. The magic in the Haunt prevented electronic signals from reaching any of their Communicators, and any communication spells were negated by the density of magic here, forcing them to rely on eyes, mouths, legs and ears.

Fray tried to keep a composed eye for any suspicious activity in his area, but it seemed that Akki's frequent glances bore into him. It unnerved him slightly, but he had imprisoned psychopaths before in his village.

He sincerely hoped to make easy small talk, but Akki made herself clear from the start, "I'm keeping an eye on you so that you don't get touchy-feelly with my imouto. Mi-chan, I'll take this aberration!"

Fray tried for another look, but there was the same glare. He sighed, and asked, "Akki-chan (the honorific was forced by her, to 'take the heat off her sister'), how dangerous are your parents exactly?"

"Hell of a lot dangerous," she answered, surprisingly, "obviously, but we have grown much."

Akki seemed downcast for a moment, but snapped back to attention. "But that's one question I'll answer."

"What? I just—"

"Shush, ingrate! First of all, what did you do in our apartment? I know it's about that boring debriefing, but did you *do anything else?*"

Well, she decided brew tea for us, but that's not quite a pleasant answer for you, is it?

"Tea," he said anyway.

"Tea? Black... tea...?" Akki was obviously displeased.

"It was sweet."

He could hear her take a deep breath to control herself. Was black tea a sign of closeness to her?

While she muttered something about a hit list, Fray went back to scanning his surroundings. The air was incredibly thick with something, and it was not just magic dulling his senses. Fray hoped to be out of this dark place soon.

Assuming he does not get murdered by his temporary partner.

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They were definitely here.

Mizuki had developed her senses to the point she could detect killing intent from miles away, and she was receiving high levels from multiple entities just outside the four-metre-tall town wall.

She saw over a dozen figures quietly put down the wall guards in a multitude of ways: poison darts to their necks, strangling, surprise daggers from behind, and a few other less merciful takedowns.

All the figures wore tight black clothing and cloaks, some with light armor while others had heavier ones, in case they needed to go into combat.

One figure had a particularly muscular build compared to the others, which Mizuki recognized. He looked around to see if no one was watching, thankfully not spotting Mizuki, and joined the rest of the assassins on the ground.

They formed a circle just under the tree Mizuki was on, most likely to debrief their objectives. There was one particular person that stood out.

"Are all of our men accounted for?" her father asked a lieutenant in a quiet voice, except it was like a knife cutting through air.

The lieutenant nodded. "Good. Remember the plans. Slay anyone that happens to be intruding on our bases, and watch for my daughter. I know she is here somewhere..."

The young assassin kept her cool as the assassins—to her internal surprise—dispersed. The burly one took one last glance at the wall before moving as fast as he came.

They came here to establish a forward base, she noted mentally. That should give us a window of time to act accordingly.

Standing up on her perch, she was ready to jump when she realized there was something behind her. She was only fortunate to have realized it just in time that there was something coming from that direction.

With a pirouette, the young assassin managed a look at her assailant, all the while dodging a knife strike.

Her mother, with a—decidedly—expectant smile.

Chapter End Notes

Finally decided to update again, after what may have been a month. It actually is easy. It is just that... it was not always a good time to try and update? Sorry, for those who took an interest in this story.

On a side note, I decided to do hand drawings of all the OCs. I am not sure how to post them yet though, but I do hope to show them to their authors.

EDIT (15 August 2016): Corrected 'lieutenant'. Thank you for pointing that out Leonhardt!

The Failure of Three Youngsters

Chapter Summary

The three adventurers' stake-out finally brings about some results, but the Hakuryuu sisters now have to face their teacher, their parents, in battle.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

People lay around unconscious, having been knocked out by the blast. Others were able to stay awake and coughed from all the dust thrown up.

Three children were some of the people who did cough. They brushed dust off and helped each other up.

Fray went first, "What happened...?"

"An energy blast of sorts," Trill answered. "It came from over there..."

She pointed to the cloud of dirt and dust, preventing anyone from looking past it.

Then there was a large, dark silhouette.

Lin made a little 'eep!' and hid behind Fray. Trill took a step back in uncertainty and kept watch. Fray was a little terrified, to say the least.

The figure stepped forward into the moonlight, now being the only source of illumination when all of the lanterns' lights around them were snuffed out by the blast. The light the figure emanated, though, was something more eye-catching.

It was a woman with long, teal, wavy hair and violet eyes. She wore an intricate, dark purple-accented dress that looked more like a flower as she moved.

Fray thought that if Trill were to grow up, she *mayhaps* would look like this, only this one was much more menacing, and humorless. And if the young mage girl could not be any more darker, the lady in front of Fray can definitely overtake that darkness.

A giant wasp hovered beside her. Floating in the air was some sort of flower, glowing purple. Both were as ominous as the ladylike being in front of them.

The lady scanned her surroundings, turning only her head, then finally focusing on the children as if they were not there before. Fray felt Lin shiver under the gaze, making him tense and stretch an arm to the side protectively.

"Who are you three?" she drawled.

That night was not very destructive, but it was not so pleasant when the lady left.

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Fray had slipped from his branch and nearly landed on his left shoulder. Thankfully, he managed to do a roll in mid-air so that he tumbled and rolled on the ground instead of putting pressure on his arm and breaking it.

The impact was not so pleasant, but the armor he had helped. Fray managed to get up and groaned slightly from the pain.

He heard a 'tsk' from above him. Apparently Akki was disappointed that he did not have to go to a hospital. Actually, even if he broke something, the fire magic in him was set to prevent critical injuries and slowly heal him. It took a long time though that it was a liability in the middle of a battle, but it was better than taking a couple of days to recover, or when you are all alone without a medic.

"Ma'am!"

That was the cry of one of the hooded messengers. He was on a rooftop beside the tree.

"Ah, you," Akki said with disdain, like he was scum from somewhere bad, "what is it now?"

"It's the young missus back at the north. She seems to be in battle with one of 'em 'sassins! And the others are headed to the west of this place!"

Rather than looking worried, she nodded grimly and grinned after that, making the messenger back off.

She whipped out her scissors, spinning them like one would spin a revolver. "It seems 'Kaa-san and 'Tou-san are here with their dolls and toys. Messenger, you may leave now."

As he complied gratefully, she pointed one of her scissors at Fray, saying, "Boy! If you want to prove your worth, go and help Mi-chan! I'll take on 'Tou-san and the others for now."

"But even you cannot stand against so many on your own," Fray pointed out.

Akki lowered her head, muttering a string of words too fast for Fray to hear. Then a black miasma formed around her, images of skulls and chains floating like a typical necromancer spell.

The miasma then coalesced into some sort of aura. Fray could feel the power of death radiating from the assassin.

"Mizuki is not the only one with a special mode, y'know?" Akki announced with a voice more haunting than the original. "Now move it cat!"

She hopped off the tree and dashed at speeds Fray was familiar with, heading to the east. She seemed to think the assassins were that way, somehow.

At any rate, Fray had a job to do. He ran and started summoning his Units.

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Mizuki swung her scythe—a dark green and heavy one with two heads on one end, named Inordinatus Herba—and missed again.

Her white-haired mother made a sound akin to disappointment and threw a knife. She used short blades as her primary weapons and was enhanced by blood magic like Mizuki as well, from killing so many people. Underneath her black robes were a butcher's array of knives, daggers, and many other pointy things that shone intensely, as if to stress on how sharp they were.

The young assassin deflected it, then barely spun her scythe in time to sweep a barrage out of the air. One knife got through her guard but bounced off the magical armor the assassin conjured.

Mizuki continued to pursue her mother in a high-speed chase, already launching sweeping attacks that would have made Elza, Alice, Ciara and many other reapers proud.

But they always seemed to be a foot short.

That was what Mizuki expected anyway. Her parents were the ones who taught her the basics of fast movement and the way of the scythe.

Which was why she needed to take it up a notch.

"Blood Release, Level Three," she muttered as she flew through the air. Pressure was felt all over her body as a blood red aura manifested. Her eyes shone more red than possible. Her scythe felt lighter.

The fight took them to the streets, where townsfolk were screaming in panic and running for their lives as the two assassins fought with more ferocity.

Mizuki bounded over to her mother with a single step and swung her scythe. It was hard enough to force the older one back as she blocked with two elegant hunting knives.

While the mother skidded, Mizuki jumped and spun, turning into a human sawblade. One of the knives was knocked out of her mother's hands, but the attack missed when she sidestepped it.

As the scythe dug deep into the ground, Mizuki's mother lunged at her daughter with a kukri. Mizuki quickly lifted herself on the scythe's pole and spun on it to kick her mother away.

Her Units were not summoned, practically forced to watch from the sidelines.

Milady, why will you not let us!? Kanon insisted.

You can't take on your okaa-san alone! Luka seconded that.

Selena sighed. *She won't let us, especially when this fight is personal to her. She'll need all the strength she has now without having to summon us.*

True, that. Besides, her mother would dice her into pieces the moment she attempts a summon.

My apologies, my friends. But I will win! Mizuki thought back as she shot forward, wrenching her scythe out of the ground.

The two continued to trade blows, although Mizuki seems to be increasingly facing the bad ends of the blades. It did not help how she was aiming to wound and disarm her mother. Nevertheless, no one stopped for a moment as they dashed here and there, weapons clanging against each other.

They went into a deadlock for a moment before leaping back for a pause in their fight. Somehow, they landed on a short, barren house with a flat roof.

Elsewhere, explosions rang out so loud that the entire town must have heard them. A building broke down in the distance, tipping over as purple smoke curled off the side facing towards the obscured sky. Men shouted as a woman cackled with delight.

"Both of you have improved," her mother finally said, having observed her daughter and the destruction. Her voice was not as soft as it was those years ago, but it was the same dull tone Mizuki recognized.

The older assassin stretched out her hand behind her. Knives she lost earlier magically flew towards her as they arranged themselves in a semicircle above her, pointed at Mizuki. Red lines glinted in the moonlight on the various metallic, sacred and alloyed blades, each meant for different missions.

Despite the magic in the air that made it difficult for magic to be externally created, her mother seemingly had no problem with it. Maybe the returning magic was internal, or she was just that powerful and used to the darkness. Magic was not something you should understand entirely in the first place anyway.

"We have." Mizuki did not want to waste time prolonging the inevitable.

"Why will you not come back? You have already employed your skills to kill people. Why not return home and put those skills for better use here in this world?"

"I already have a home Okaa-san. I may have killed so much, in the past and the present, but I have friends to look after now. Sorry, but I *will never* return home. This place is much more enjoyable anyway, and I will make sure you never fulfill whatever plan you have."

Her mother tipped her hooded head. Her red eyes, same as her daughters', observed her before blinking in conclusion.

"Mizuki... I suppose you will just be a mere obstacle in our need to restore peace."

"Peace?"

"I am sure you know of our family's ways to bring all criminals to justice, to put them to the sword, so that they will never endanger us again. However, there are people of power in Randall who would prevent us, that much our employer has known."

"This employer... Eriole?"

"Correct." The woman did not sound surprised that her daughter found out. "It has become tiring to see so many scum in this place, that we have to continuously kill every one. Whenever one is slain, more take their place. This is very prominent in this particular part of Elgaia. You know that much."

"Eriole had planned to rule the capital with an iron fist. You think that his rule would stop all of that?"

The woman nodded. "You yourself have admitted back then that it is tiring to rid your homeland of all criminals. Surely this plan is perfect."

"You know Eriole is worse than having criminal scum run around."

"True... but have you ever heard of this phrase? "There are no wrong decisions. You just take one, and turn that one into the right decision.""

"Unless that decision kills you. Or it dooms too many people to be even a good one. But it is a good quote."

"What I mean to say is will you join us for an end to all this?"

"Okaa-san, you know that Eriole will not spare the Akras Summoners' Hall or the Imperial Guard. He will kill anyone that dares to stand against him. That means nearly every person capable of fighting in Randall and the Village of the Venturer. You know of the demons we still need to stop."

"You have a lack of faith in those who have rallied under Lord Eriole, including our assassins. We will do better than your precious Summoners. Mercenaries, loyalists, various supporters of the cause, even the... larger organizations are much more than you think."

So many people... And what of these 'larger organizations'? Eriole has been busy, but those last words sounded odd.

"Hakuryuu Mizuki," her mother said with a tone of finality, "are you or are you not with us?"

Mizuki stared at her mother, already knowing the answer.

"No."

"...Hakuryuu Assassin Mizuki..." her mother said formally, "you may begin."

They rushed forward, Mizuki quickly releasing two seals off the Blood. A raging torrent of power went through her as she went into Level One.

If one observer were to look at her now, she would have the same white hair, only there were more streaks of red through it now, even more than Level Three. The white looked even more starker than before, like a ghost's might look. Red and blue lines shone on her skins where the blood vessels may be. Her armor looked more wicked and solid, more spikes and chains here and there. She had her slitted red irises and black pupils... but no one would want to deal with the addition of black sclera.

Her strength was amplified as she smashed her scythe against her mother's blades. All of them had raced towards her, but they were smacked aside and clattered to the floor momentarily before floating back up.

The older assassin flew at her with faster legwork, dodging every strike neatly and jabbing at her sides, her heart, her neck, all vital spots. Mizuki parried them all and countered with equal lethality.

The scythe should have been heavy. Orichalcum and crystal parts should have weighed her down, but now she wielded it with strength more than enough to rival Korzan.

Mizuki then performed an awkward combo: slice downwards, cause the pole to stand upright as it smashed through wood and stone, hook on, use the pole as a springboard, roll, and kick off her opponent's gut.

Her mother managed to step back and avoid the first slice, and would have dodged the last move had Mizuki not used the Blood Release. The reaper's speed had been boosted to turn her into a human cannonball.

Mizuki kicked off her mother with enough force to knock her off the building, then rolled into a crouch back on the roof. The older woman went flying into the air and plowed straight into a warehouse on ground level.

Mizuki wielded her scythe again, red and blue lines pulsating all over her skin, and leapt into the warehouse.

East of the Haunt

Akki had taken down several assassins and forced them into a retreat. Even though she is not a Summoner, she is a one-woman army in her own right.

The Hakuryuu Assassins were pushed back into a shopping district just as degraded-looking as the other districts. The air was distasteful, the looks were too plain and barely maintained... this is a bad place to be in.

An assassin blew a dart from an alley. Akki deflected it with a flick of Maeror. Others had fired a volley of arrows, but she rolled and jumped, avoiding all of them.

She went right into an open window of a shop and descended on an assassin immediately. He did not really stand a chance when she slashed out his throat.

Eight assassins went into the shop. Despero and Maeror went into a flurry when Akki put a lifetime's experience of killing into her body.

She kicked a chair that smashed against one enemy. She then parried three dagger strikes and kicked all wielders back, threw Despero at someone's face and snipped at a knee with Maeror.

She kicked off the shop's counter and thrust her scissors into the wounded person's heart, backed off to avoid a knife throw and tossed Maeror with even more force. The assassin was pinned to the wall, bleeding out from a punctured stomach.

The other four were constricted by ghostly purple chains as soon as they arrived. They had been choked to death in fact. Their limbs bent at awkward angles.

Well, there were supposed to be a few hundred assassins in the clan, but it seems that her father just brought a small force. Maybe there were fifty all around the Haunt.

But these assassins were not to be trifled with.

The assassin smashed by the chair had recovered and launched herself at Akki. Instead, she received a kick to the face for her trouble and was thrown by the neck out of the window.

Akki retrieved her scissors and leapt out of the window. She made a show of raising her arms to get attention and yelled, "Are you not entertained!? 'Tou-san, hurry up and come on out! You don't wanna lose every man under your command and lose everything you need to invade Randall, do ya!?"

She felt a ripple of fear in the assassins still hiding and taking aim at her. The assassin girl had scrambled to her feet and materialized behind a fruit stall at an adrenaline-induced speed, just as scared as the others. But there was one presence she knew very well.

He landed on the ground with his two feet, red eyes glaring in distaste, salt-and-pepper hair showing his age. Unlike the others, he would not be so easy.

"Akki..." he murmured, flipping out a pocketknife. That was no flimsy metal though...

(-----)

The fight took Mizuki and her mother into a courtyard. An old fountain still worked in the center of a 30-by-30-metre square paved with stone bricks. Medium-sized trees and benches underneath them dotted here and there, which showed it was a relaxing spot for the nearby inhabitants of the cottages. Despite the hazardous environment of the Haunt, the townsfolk tried to make it better for themselves.

Too bad the assassins here ruined it.

Mizuki continued to push back the assassins that had joined the fight in the courtyard. They had been sent by her father, clearly knowing about the Summoner's skill. It was only thanks to the high level of Blood Release that she was able to make it with only a few scratches so far.

One assassin leapt to toss a bomb. Mizuki thrust out with a hand, creating a burst of dark purple energy that blew the assassins and the bomb back.

The bomb however was a smoke bomb that broke upon impact. It crashed against the side of a building and spread a dense white fog throughout the wide area.

Mizuki focused her eyes, her nose, her ears, all senses on high alert. One came close to her left.

She backflipped and swung her scythe in the air. A satisfying screech came out of the attack.

She landed softly. Another came closer, but clearly more cautious. She closed her eyes and blocked a sword strike, then swung *Inordinatus Herba* in a wide arc. It cut something, but she could feel the presence disappear.

Mizuki then swung her scythe downwards with enough force to push the air and fog away from the spot of the impact. The dozen assassins that were still in the smoke at first quickly rushed at her, stealth now impossible.

How careless.

Mizuki executed several consecutive slashes, spinning and flipping her scythe here and there with calm precision. Bodies went flying, while the wounded crawling away as they tried to get past the bladestorm.

The young assassin ducked a palm strike, then sidestepped a knife-like hand strike, and the unarmed warrior was sent flying with a quick roundhouse kick.

She felt something bite at her side. As she pulled a thrown knife off her back, more assassins streamed into the courtyard. In the corner of her left eye, she saw bowmen on the rooftops of several houses. She cannot reach them with these fighters swamping her.

Maybe it was time to summon her much-needed help.

Except to do that, she would need to stand still for a moment. The assassins were not giving her the seconds required to do that.

"Brat of the assassins!" one assassin shouted. "You dare to run from our noble cause?"

"You and your traitor sister will both pay!"

Mizuki did not want to activate Level Zero Blood Release. If that was to be activated now, her parents—having a special connection to their children's magic—would track her every move and make things incredibly hard for Mizuki. The high energy released could possibly

be tracked through the dense magic of A Certain Haunt. Monsters may swarm towards her in response.

She prepared herself to repel a volley of arrows...

But a wall of fire appeared in front of her.

"Adel, continue protecting Mizuki! Cyan, continue firing. Everyone else, take out the assassins on the ground! It does not matter if you kill them or not, just make sure they stay down!"

There were several voices of approval as a green beam lanced towards the rooftops. Half of the roof was blown away as the bowmen scattered.

While more beams went towards the rooftops, some accurately blowing men off or piercing through the unlucky, an armored, green-haired man dashed past Mizuki and jumped impossibly high, leaving small air trails. He landed on a roof and slashed his spear, creating a strong gust that blew every archer off.

A Fire demon stood behind Mizuki, parrying and casting a red barrier that stopped the projectiles aimed at her. He cut an assassin down and leaned back to avoid a passing sword, then blasted the attacker with fire.

"Mizuki! Summon your Units now!"

There was Fray, in his white coat, fighting off several assassins alongside his two remaining Units. He seemed to be adjusting to their speedy way of fighting, and continued to be on the defensive. Will he last for much longer though?

Mizuki shook her head on concentrated.

After five circles appeared, her entire squad popped into existence and leapt into the fray.

Miku blasted three assassins charging at her, letting Kanon blast them into a tree. Ciara rode on her abnormally large phantom wolf, smacking assassins aside or cutting them down if they got too close. Luka sang her Brave Burst, boosting the Units' battle capabilities, and nimbly leaping around several shurikens.

Selena was beside her, carefully putting her hand on her injuries so that Mizuki would not wince, not that she could anyway, thanks to the Blood Release. She closed up the cuts and scratches, letting green light get to work.

"Hakuryuu Mizuki," she said, "YOU are a very foolish and prideful young woman."

"Sorry Selena-san," Mizuki tried to apologize. She really wanted to say more, but that was not what the assassin was good at.

The ice woman huffed. "We can talk about that later. We still have your mother and father to fight, no?"

They fought alongside Fray's timely squad, driving off the assassins. Whenever someone was wounded, and they were very frequent, Selena and Limera healed them. Adel and Lance protected them from any distanced assassins, while Miku and Luka blasted those enemies with holographic musical notes.

Diana cut down another assassin, letting Fray complete his icy creations: a butcher's array of spears and archer's dream of blunt arrows. A preferential mix of lethal and non-lethal attacks.

He reared back Mordre and pushed it forward, letting them tear into the charging enemies.

"There are way more assassins than what you said in your report Mizuki!" Fray shouted to her, fending off one. "Where are they coming from?"

"Mercenaries! Okaa-san said she was with some mercenaries!"

"Then that makes it altogether troublesome..."

Kanon covered him by shooting thunderbolts at a knife-thrower, then at a swordsman. Piany created tornadoes of water that swept up a pack of hunting dogs, while simultaneously healing poison afflicted upon Mizuki.

The young assassin kicked a spearman and slashed a summoned wolf into two. More rogues came at her.

She prepared to use her dark energy, until someone shouted, "STOP!!!"

A buff-looking assassin stood atop a house, alongside two dozen more assassins behind him. Beside him, beat up and slumping against him...

"Onee-chan!" she sharply muttered.

"Your sister is still precious, isn't she?" he drawled. "Lay down your weapons."

"Everyone..." she said to them, knowing this will not end well.

Her Units unsummoned their weapons first, or at least stopped being in a hostile state. Fray's squad was hesitant, but he motioned for them to do the same, and so they did. The teenage Summoner himself sheathed his broadsword, Pyrbrand, it was called.

The assassins aimed their weapons: sword, dagger, bow, crossbow, knife, bomb—all of them at the two Summoner squads.

"Tch, weak," the lieutenant said.

Mizuki glowered. That may be the price to pay for caring for a loved one, but she did not regret it one bit.

"Fray-dono..." she murmured to Fray.

He seemed to know already. "It's fine. I threw myself into your lot. I knew the risks."

His eyes seemed to glint at that moment though, like he was clear-sighted all of a sudden.

Mizuki raised her eyebrows. Maybe they both have a few *more* things in common.

Chapter End Notes

EDIT (26 September 2016): Made minor editing and fixed grammar and spelling mistakes. Again, thank you Leonhardt.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!