

## **Their Decision**

### **Several Months Ago**

Selia sat in the chair, still feeling a bit weak from their ordeal. She and Ryun had achieved something grand. Created a Spiritual Tool, something that she hadn't heard about before. It was an achievement worthy of recognition. Erdania was sprawled on the couch, and Ryun stood leaned on a wall nearby. They were... resting, or at least they pretended to be, in fact, they were keeping an eye on her. What the two of them had done had hit her harder than it had Ryun. She still felt the loss of what they had achieved in that moment. Their bond had reached a height unlike anything that they had before. Unlike anything that she had ever thought possible. It was hard to return to being just... herself. She had seen herself clearly in that moment, both from her and from Ryun's perspective.

And it did hurt, to learn that she had... wallowed in her grief. That she had let herself become so detached. She glanced at Ryun. He had always appeared detached to her, but she had known better. Through their bond she had felt his emotions, when he let her. He cared, the issue was that he... he just didn't think in the same way that others did.

When they had been one, it was... unsettling to see herself through the lens of his understanding. It wasn't his understanding of her that had impacted her so, but her own view from a different perspective. It was hard to accept sometimes, but they were all broken in their own ways.

"What did you want to talk about Ryun?" Erdania asked. He had asked them for a conversation. She could even feel his Aura and techniques around them, destroying any sound coming from the three of them beyond the little area they were in.

"About the future," Ryun said.

Selia turned exchanged a look with Erdania and then looked back at him. She had some insight into how he viewed the world, but she didn't

really know what his plans for the future were, aside from advancing his Cultivation.

“What about the future?” Erdania asked.

“Seeing all the other Sect Heads, meeting the most powerful and influential of them had given me an idea of where we stand among the Sects.”

“How so?” Selia asked him.

Ryun crossed his arms across the chest and tapped a finger against his elbow. “I am strong, you are strong too. I had gotten a sense of how strong most of them are, and while personal strength doesn’t always mean everything, it tells me a lot. I would put myself, and the two of you in the top levels of that group, but not really near the top. There are still some who I would consider stronger than me, alone,” he turned his eyes on Selila. “But together, I don’t think that there is less than a handful of them who could be our match, especially after what we went through.”

She knew that he was referring to what happened during their smithing at the end, still she didn’t quite follow his train of thoughts.

“And what does strength have to do with the future?” Selia asked.

“A lot,” Ryun said. “My goals are simple; I want to protect what is mine and to have the freedom to advance my Cultivation. But also... honor and obligation,” he said.

Selia blinked and Erdania sat up on the couch, then twisted to look at him. “Honor and obligation?”

Ryun nodded. “Can you tell me what you think it is?”

Erdania glanced at Selia and then answered.

“When I was young, I was described it as a give and take. The sects are structured in the way that, at least ideally, the resources flow toward singular points, those who have the talent to reach high. It is then the

obligation of those who had been propped up by the rest to protect people beneath them.”

Ryun nodded. “I grew up in a world far different than this one, I’ve struggled a bit with what Sect ways meant, what honor and obligation meant. But... now after so long here, after seeing other sects and...” He paused, then shook his head, a sad smile. “It makes me think of Eerv.”

Selia blinked, of all the things he could’ve said, that hadn’t been what she had expected. “Eerv Ji Van?”

Ryun nodded. “I killed his sister and nephew,” Ryun said. “And still he surrendered to me, he understood honor and obligation even though he failed at the big part of it. He was... unlucky, he didn’t live and breathe Cultivation in the same way I do, that is why he closed himself off and ultimately failed in what he set out to do. Still, he taught me a good lesson. I see it now; Sect are better than what other factions have. We united to fight this threat, even though it came late, even though most have some self-serving reasons.”

“They agreed because they know that the enemy is a threat and that other factions were not doing anything about them,” Erdania said.

“Of course, but there is more. Many of them had... talks in private, there is a lot to plunder in the territories of the factions that the taken had conquered,” Ryun said.

Selia blinked, that... hadn’t occurred to her. She looked at him and once again had to remember that he was able to hear everything in the entire city during the summit.

“So what does that have to do with what you want to talk about?” Erdania asked.

Ryun looked at them for a moment, and then spoke. “I want us, the three of us to live together for a long time. In order for us to accomplish this we need resources and power. And more... soft power I guess,

influence. Hitor had managed to unite all of the Sects under his banner and point them at the threat, that is the kind of power that I want.”

Selia blinked. “He is old, and respected, but he is also powerful. People in the sects respect those that have power that have high tiered Cultivation and feats under them.”

Ryun nodded. “Which is why I want us to demonstrate what we can do during this battle, they call me the Undying Void, and that name is apt, but there is more that I can do, that we can do. During the fighting at the Tournament many had seen us, but I don’t think that many understand what our bond means, especially now. I want us to show that to everyone, to demonstrate our power.”

“Why?” Erdania asked.

“Security, knowledge, there are many reasons. The core fell because people were not united, because everyone looked after their own interests. The Empire fell because it was alone, with no one willing to help them, even with us going there we failed to save it. I want the Twilight Melody Sect to be great enough that it can fight off anything, I want us to have allies that will come to our aid.”

“We can grow the Sect,” Erdania said. “There are many refugees nowadays, and we can always make an effort to conquer the territories on the Frontier, it will be expensive, but it can be done.”

Selia narrowed her eyes. “What do you actually mean Ryun?”

He smiled. “Things are going to go wrong with our attack, they always do. And when that happens, I want the three of us to show what we can do. I want us to demolish everything in our way and let them all see just how powerful we are.”

She sensed that he didn’t say everything that was on his mind. “And then?”

He met her eyes. “War, conquest, honor and obligation.” Then, his expression turned serious. “The strong rule, isn’t that the way of the Sects?”

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## **Now**

Selia kept her platform made out of Qi above Ryun as he plummeted to the ground. Some of the flying monsters had noticed them now with him no longer keeping them out of sight and headed in her direction. She manifested the **Sanguine Flame of Laquud Cloak** around her robes, increasing her willpower, control, and making her techniques more effective. She used **Greater Projection Armor** and covered herself in pale silver armor made of overlapping plates crafted out of an ethereal-like Essence. It was a silver Light Essence given shape by her Mind, brought into existence by her Class perk. Then she channeled two techniques, or rather the same technique twice at the same time. With **{Sanguine Flame Spear}** she crafted two long spears in the air above her, the sense of heat and something deeper, a vitality unlike anything she had encountered before in her life. The blood, the source of life, bound with flames. The dark green spears were crystallized Qi, she held the min the air with her will, the Qi easily responding to it—and her **Greater Projection Manipulation** helped out too.

As soon as he landed, he unleashed his presence and Selia followed immediately after.

The **Presence of the Eternal Huntress** unfurled from deep within her, it touched the great aura that had expanded from Ryun and immediately her sense changed. Their colors mixed, red and blue becoming violet as their minds connected on such a deep and intimate level, the ranges of their perk combined and two became one. Both of their stats and speed soared, and that of their enemies decreased.

Through his mind she could *see* what he saw with his sense, not clearly, but like an itch in the back of her mind. Monsters were coming at him from all directions, and she used her techniques. She used her ability **[Copy Construct]** several times in quick succession, the speed she gained from the presence lowered the already short cooldown from her **Repeat Ability** perk. Then, before the monsters could reach Ryun, she sent her spears flying with her will. Green and black spears fell from the sky, piercing the monsters as Ryun rose from the crater, killing them instantly. His blue and white armor was glowing, and as he raised a hand a javelin appeared in it. She kept casting her technique and ability filling the sky with spears made out of Qi. Through Ryun she felt the monsters all around the battlefield and as he focused on those that came in their direction she saw them too. With **[Target Tracking]** she sent a few spears flying at the monsters, but most of her attention was down on the ground, her **[True Sight]** let her track the monsters on the ground and she kept them from reaching Ryun.

They were in perfect sync she reacted to cover him and he to cover her, there wasn't even the need for words. She felt him use his technique as a General charged in his way, a large six legged one with a head that looked like a battering ram, he threw his javelin, and it exploded as soon as it hit the General's head. The wave of Oblivion Qi obliterated its head, erasing it in an instant as if it had never been there in the first place. Selia saw another General readying to fire and sent her spears at it. She pierced its skin with ease, her stats were so high that her spears passed through as if there was no resistance. With **[True Detonate Construct]** she ripped it to shreds. Then Ryun started firing thin beams of his Qi into the monster horde, cutting thousands of monsters in half as Selia sent spears down on any that came near him.

Then, as they carved a small piece of ground in the middle of the monster army, they started fighting in truth.