

## Chapter 229: The rumors

After a normal trip, we arrived at our destination. Babel at this time was quiet as the adventurers rarely entered the dungeon at this time. I had come here multiple times, but never explored the floors above. The tower was goddamn tall, so it should have something interesting.

“Freya lives at the top?”

“Yes, she does,” Astraea replied, gazing up at the tall structure. Her walnut brown hair faintly sparkled in the moonlight. She turned to me with her charming gentle smile. “Let us take the elevator.”

Elevator exist here? Well, it’s normal. These gods with normal human bodies would die from exhaustion before they got to the top floor.

Astraea led me in a different direction than the dungeon. The narrow pathway opened to a massive open hall. The wooden elevator was in the center, attached to wires coming from the circular hole in the ceiling.

Astraea knocked on the elevator door, and it split open. Elevator with sensors? What is this, modern world?

She stepped inside and beckoned me. I stood beside her. Instead of your usual numbers, the elevator had some kind of runes drawn. Astraea closed the door and touched the top rune. It lit up and the elevator began ascending.

“Convenient, isn’t it? All with the power of a magic stone.”

Magic stones sure were useful in this world.

I looked up. The starry sky peeked from the hole. It was still painfully slow compared to my world’s elevators.

“Asahi, you mentioned different technologies in your world. Did you have something like this elevator?”

“Yep. We did.”

I told her about the elevators, cars, and airplanes. Astraea listened intently with a smile on her face. Well, a woman like her won't be interested in tech talks.

“Impressive indeed. You know, how would your world define ‘Justice’?”

I was taken aback by her question. Justice... that's a surprisingly deep question.

“Justice would be along the lines of doing what's right.”

Astraea nodded firmly, absentmindedly staring at the elevator door. “I think so too.”

“Still, wrong or right—both are subjective. Take a thief for example. He is stealing medicine that he can't afford because his wife is sick. Will you throw him in jail or hang him for his crime?”

“I... I have no idea.”

She couldn't answer. Justice is nothing more than a concept. That's what I think.

“What will you do to him?”

“Simple. If his wife truly loves him, I'll release the man. If not, he is rotting in the cell for his life.”

I'd rather not provoke a woman into becoming a yandere. I have seen their power beforehand.

“Love... I see.”

It seemed like she comprehended something. Before I could ask, the elevator door slid open. And the mountain of a man was standing on the other side. He looked down on me in a literal sense, sizing me up with narrowed eyes.

“Lady Astraea. Lady Freya is expecting you in her quarters.”

He stepped aside, giving enough room for only one person to pass through. I wasn’t welcomed there.

“Astraea... sama.”

“Asahi is coming with me,” Astraea said, standing dignified before Ottar. She was slowly becoming my third favorite goddess. Then again, I was only close to three of them: Klyscha, Leme, and Astraea.

Ottar raised a brow, not expecting Astraea’s courage. “But, Lady Freya said—”

“I need his advice on some matters.”

Ottar sidestepped from our way. Astraea walked out into the front hallway. I took a step forward, flashing a grin at Ottar.

“Don’t be angry at her. She was just looking out for me.”

Ottar’s brows twitched ever so slightly. Shaking his head, he strode into the left hallway. He was surprisingly calm for a hulk.

“Asahi.”

“Coming.”

I followed Astraea through the dimly lit hallway. The pale gray color gave this place an elegant look for sure. The short walk led into the room with four couches with a table in the center. Freya was right in front of me,

smiling and sitting proudly with her legs crossed with a wine glass in her hand. The night sky truly emphasized the charm of her silver hair and white dress.

Loki and Hephaestus were sitting on the left and right couch, reading a parchment.

Loki glanced at me and her eyes opened slightly, giving a glimpse of her red pupils. Her surprise lasted a moment before her cheeky grin returned. “Lookie. If it ain’t the famous Noble Playboy stirrin’ every female’s heart in Orario.”

She was acting like it was our first meeting to fool Freya.

Hephaestus turned to me, looking up and down with her single crimson eye. She was in a white shirt with long black gloves on both arms. The two open buttons on her shirt showed a tiny glimpse of her fair cleavage. Her messy red hair gave the impression that she just woke up.

Yet I found the Goddess of Smithing more attractive than Freya. The reason being her thicc legs wrapped in black tight pants.

It’d be a bit rude to stare too much. I gave a polite nod to Hephaestus. “I’m Asahi Marikawa, the newest member of Astraea Familia. Pleased to be here.”

“Hephaestus,” she casually introduced herself. “So you are the new guy Apollo was crazy about—”

“Hephaestus, questions can be asked later,” Freya said and placed the glass on the table. “Let them sit first.”

Loki kicked the empty couch. “Brat, bring your butt here.”

I let Astraea sit first then settled on her left, doing my best to not mind Freya's curious gaze. This damn goddess, leave me alone would ya!

Loki passed the paper to Astraea. "Traces of Rudra Familia."

"And their potential location," Freya cut Loki off. "They are rumored to be hiding on the twenty-seventh floor."

Seventh floor? The water dungeon? We didn't find anyone there, so it was a false rumor.

"Twenty seventh," Astraea said. "The same floor everyone fought the Nightmare Behemoth."

"Indeed. The nightmare that was summoned to destroy the dungeon lid. They could be gearing up to perform another ritual of the same scale."

"Can anyone fill me up on this Behemoth?" I asked.

Astraea told me about the monster that was spawned after sacrificing several gods to the dungeon. It was stronger than Monster Rex Udaes of the 37th floor. The dungeon officially had a grudge against the gods, it was proven once again.

I looked at Freya. "I just have one question. Can you trust the source?"

Freya shook her head. "I did call it 'rumor.'"

"Then let them be. They are either fishing for some god or trying to lure the forces from the city."

"Fishin'? I like the sound of that." Loki chuckled.

"But," Astraea interrupted. "The adventurers near them will be in danger. I can't let that happen."

“Astraea, we can leave a notice on the Guild. The adventurers who can travel to 27th can take care of themselves.”

I was going to take care of them myself later without involving Astraea Familia. I had no desire to put the Familia into danger just to earn some white knight points. Knowing the hotheaded Alise, she’d charge straight into the dungeon to finish off the remnants of Evilus.

“I know that, but—”

“We can discuss it later at the Familia, okay? No need to argue about it here.”

Astraea reluctantly nodded. Sheesh, her sense of justice was befitting of her title ‘The Goddess of Justice.’

Loki leaned forward and clapped. “Quite the rowdy hoodlum you picked up, Astraea. But I think he ain’t wrong. This smells fishy.”

“Glad to be of use, Loki-sama.”