

"What do you think about this view, Flann?" I asked as I pointed at the city landscape before us.

"You were right, Aqi..." Flann got closer to me, looking at the view that I had pointed out. "This city looks beautiful."

I first looked at her reaction to the city, smiling and admiring the landscape. Then, I looked at the city myself. A city made in a post-anomalous catastrophe that carved out a half-circle area out of the cliffside next to the water.

It was a city named Vaatar, which was also called "The Semicircular City". The most popular city for tourists in that part of the Hegemony. With its shape, design, and views that would attract even entities from other species.

And yet, I never visited it as a place to rest. It was always related to something important. Whether it was before or after I became the loremaster. I could say that I should spend some time there when I have some free time, but... when will this time come?

"Aqi?" Flann sounded slightly concerned. "Aqadus?"

"Oh, apologies..." I got out of my 'trance'. "I got lost in my thoughts."

"Again?" My companion chuckled. "Which time did it happen today?"

"Probably the fifth or something like that..." I sighed.

"What were you thinking about?" The red-haired friend asked.

"That I never visited this city as a place to rest," I replied, turning my face towards her.

"We can do that now." Flann pointed at Vaatar.

"Maybe next time..." I responded with a smile, briefly sliding my hand down my beak. "We have an important experiment to conduct, remember?"

"Can't we do it here?" She asked.

"It's better to do it in a more secluded space," I stated before turning towards the forest near us. "I have a few ideas about what we can do. Still, it was nice to see Vaatar once again."

Without continuing on this subject, I turned around and began walking towards the forest. Flann quickly followed me, writing things down in her journal. I smiled a bit to see how she was acting like me, a trait fitting of my assistant.

"I remember that you visited Vaatar during your 'journey'," Flann stated, briefly stopping writing down in her journal.

"Indeed." I nodded. "Although it was something less... serious than I wanted."

"You had fun, Aqi." My red-haired assistant giggled.

"You can say that..." I chuckled, but then, I quickly returned to my neutral tone. "However, it was fun on the outside. It was still serious. That's why that visit was not just to 'stress out'."

"But it still appeared like you wanted to relax," Flann added, looking briefly into my eyes. "The way to describe it is you acted like Aeleg, but I know he still is somewhat immature and wouldn't have regrets acting that way."

"I know, Flann..." I sighed. "Part of me wished I could have a similar lifestyle to his, but I am too important now to do so. And besides... I have my ways to have fun now."

"And it's also practical." My companion smiled a bit.

We were on the edge of the forest. At first glance, it was a usual case of 'blade' type of forest. I knew many individuals who were confused about what type this 'blade' type is, but to put it simply, it can be imagined as trees with a seamless mix of needles and leaves.

"You think this will work?" Flann asked, sounding really interested in the outcome of our experiment.

"I hope so," I replied, then turned my gaze towards her. "I do not want to put you in danger. Especially in your current condition."

"I'm fine..." Koz'vna paused, then quickly continued. "As fine as a clone can be, I mean."

"Sorry for that..." I felt guilty because of her condition.

"Aqi..." Flann gently placed her hand on my shoulder. "I'm feeling better because of you. Sure, there are fluctuations regarding many of my aspects, but really, I feel better now, thanks to you."

"Thank you, my friend." I smiled at her. "Still, I want to correct those fluctuations."

"I know..." She nodded, then returned to her writing. "Maybe this new thing can somewhat help me. What was it called again?"

"Aeleg named it 'psionics'," I replied calmly. "I will come up with another name in the future. Perhaps."

"Still, remember the promise." Flann chuckled.

"Yeah, yeah..." I rolled my eyes. "Taking some rest after this experiment will be successful. We will see its effects soon."

We got into the deeper parts of the forest. As is the case with many of Mosvar's forests, it was a swamp. I was glad that it did not have an awful stench. For many mosvars, it was a nice place to rest and admire in peace.

My mosvar part thought so, too. However, I'm not only mosvar in my blood. Still, having no interruption from tiny flying animals that could interrupt this moment certainly added positively to the whole experience.

"Here we are..." I stated as I looked at the swamp.

"I guess it's my moment to shine..." Flann replied as she closed her journal.

"You know that..." I started speaking.

"...I don't have to do this?" She finished for me. "Oh, Aqi... I'll say this again for you. I appreciate that you gave me this freedom, but seriously, I want to help you. It's my decision. You're my friend, and that's the least I can do to show my appreciation for what you've done for me. Without you... I could..."

"Hey, you don't have to finish that," I gently interrupted her statement. "I am just glad to see you are doing fine. And I am glad you want to help me."

"So..." My red-haired companion looked at the deeper parts of the swamp. "I guess it's time, huh?"

"Sure." I nodded. "But you need to give me your arcanist's glove first, Flann."

"Of course."

Flann looked at her scaled left forearm, which was partially covered by the glove of my design. She quickly took it off and handed it to me, examining it for a bit before turning my gaze back towards my unusual assistant.

"Anything you want me to do?" Flann asked, awaiting my instructions.

"It will be something simple," I began explaining. "Walk on water to the deeper parts of this body of water then perform something unusual. Could be something like a fire vortex."

"Got it." She nodded.

"Remember, Flann..." I added. "While arcanists have to focus on their essence, you must focus on your mind when it comes to psionics."

"Isn't it the case with the arcane as well?" My assistant asked.

"For arcanists, the soul or the essence is the more important part," I began the explanation. "Because it is the conduit for the creation energy to cast more advanced spells. However, psionics focuses on using your own soul to cast spells, without any additions. That is why your mind is more important for psionics. Because you focus your own energy on casting spells. You do not focus on your soul to use creation energy to cast your spells. I know it can be confusing, but it is not. I believe you can do it."

"Thanks, Aqi." She smiled at me. "Here goes..."

From that moment, I focused on what Flann was doing. She closed her eyes to focus. Her breath was stable, and her stance was confident. For a minute, she almost looked as if she was turned into some kind of a statue.

Then, she opened her eyes. Koz'vna looked a bit confused by her surroundings, but then, she was confident enough to make the first step. Then making another. Her walk was relatively slow, yet it was still confident, as if the thing she was about to perform was normal.

I saw how she placed her hoof on the water's surface. It did not sink. It still produced a barely noticeable ripple, but she could walk on it. Without hesitation, she made another step. Then another one. She was walking on the water, without using the arcane.

Even if koz'venn have innate magic in them, it is only usable for a simple type of spells. And walking on water is not one of them. It worked. It actually worked. This 'psionics', as my friend called it, was not a failure. It can indeed be a step forward to help my race with its biggest problem.

"It works..." Flann was shocked, but then she turned towards me. "Aqi, it works!"

"The experiment is not done yet," I stated, with a smile on my face.

"Oh, right..."

I observed what my assistant was doing, making a mental note of what I was seeing. I had to be careful, though. If she was accidentally using the arcane without the catalyst, that could cause severe damage to her body. Or worse.

I was ready if that was going to happen. Our planet is treacherous when it comes to those kinds of things. And the last thing I want to see is my friend who is suffering because of me. With that in mind, I looked for any kind of abnormalities.

Flann was moving her arms in a specific gesture. I assumed that was her interpretation of 'going with the flow'. However, it came with an interesting effect. Soon after her performance, a fire vortex appeared on the water's surface.

"Incredible..." Flann was shocked once again.

"I guess we have the first psionics user..." I said that somewhat sarcastically, but I was proud of her performance.

"It's really not a..."

Her statement was interrupted by an unusual sound. I saw that it was a small animal. It had a brown and black coat, which was a mix of fur and feathers. It also had some green accents. I quickly recognized it to be an owlbear. An owlbear cub, to be specific.

"What..." Flann turned her face towards me, then turned it towards the source of that sound. "It's that cute..."

She got interrupted because she moved her vortex towards the cub, scaring it away. Also, she got out of her focus, and her legs immediately sank into the swamp. Fortunately, the water level did not even reach her hips.

"Great..." I could sense a deep annoyance in her voice.

"Flann!" I shouted towards her, concerned about her state.

"I'm fine..." She began coming towards me, getting out of the swamp. "I'll be close to you soon."

As she was going through the water, a loud 'roar' could be heard. Looking at the silhouette in the distance, I saw a big owlbear coming towards our position, most likely the mother of the cub we just met during our experiment.

Flann was not waiting for the mother's arrival. She reached for one of her pistols and began shooting at the animal. One loud sound. Then another. And then another. Followed by several other similar sounds.

I could also hear the clicks that her pistol was producing. There was no ammunition left in her magazine. However, the animal was not approaching us. I think it is obvious why that is. After the shooting, Flann quickly joined me, with wet legs.

"Ugh..." Flann was still annoyed because of the whole situation. "Now I'm covered with... gods-know-what."

"Wait a moment..." With a simple gesture, I made her dry again by using the arcane. "That should help."

"Thanks, Aqi." She sounded genuinely happy, but she still resumed her walk. "So you won't say anything about that animal that I shot at? The supposed mother of the cub we've met?"

"And what do you expect me to say?" I said a rhetorical question while I followed her back out of the forest. "We are animals, too, after all. That is the natural order. I will not punish you because you had to defend yourself. You did what you wanted to do, and I can respect that."

"Even if you are the loremaster, I sometimes think you're just saying things you want me to hear," my red-haired assistant stated.

"Flann..." I paused for a moment. "Even if I am the loremaster, am I that different from other koz'venn? Sure, I am Ascended, but other than that? I am the koz'venn who happened to be a part of our government that has a big weight on the shoulders, but in reality, I am pretty much the same guy who was just living in Zarr'kmen. I deeply care about my friends. And even if my words can make them uncomfortable, I just want the best for them. Especially you. After what you have come through, you deserve the best life that our existence can offer."

"So you..." She was unsure of her words. "When you said that I was the first psionics user... Was it true?"

"It could sound like something sarcastic, but I really meant what I have said," I replied with a genuine tone. "You have done well. Truly."

"Even if I'm just a clone?"

"I will say this again..." I place my hand on her shoulder. "I do not care about what you are. I care about who you are. And for me, you are a normal being. Better than many koz'venn I know."

Flann stopped on her tracks, and I did the same out of instinct. She looked at me, puzzled. I was waiting for her reaction. And that reaction happened really quickly. Without the word, she pulled me in for a hug. And I accepted it, also out of instinct.

"Thank you..." Her voice was somewhat broken. "Thank you, Aqi..."

"It's the least I can do, as someone dear to me said multiple times..." I said it somewhat sarcastically, but I meant what I said.

"Hahaha..." Flann laughed, coming out of our hug. "True, true... Still, you need to keep your promise..."

"And I will," I said with a smile. "Since we are near Vaatar, you want to spend some time with me?"

"Only if you'll show me everything this city offers." My assistant giggled.

"It may be hard, but I will try." I chuckled and then, I added: "But I must ask you for another hug."

She looked confused at first, but she agreed to my request. After she did so, a pair of wings came out of my back. While she was latched onto me, we started flying towards the nearest city. I offered her the best views, but I knew that we had much to do in the Semicircular City.