

Ch 1.3 New Beginnings

As I was brushing my tail dry while Lefiya was also brushing my hair, Syr and Ryuu came into our room.

About a year after that war game with Freya, around the time when Nina Tulle, together with our captain Bell, started interviewing and forming our familia's second string; a lot of the members of certain familias who now collaboratively delve into the dungeon's depths started hanging out together.

Before this was frowned upon as Familias tend to hoard secrets to one-up each other but ever since Ouranos sat down Hestia and Loki together and came to an agreement. A lot of the women in the different familias tend to hang out at the Hostess of Fertility, we even reserve the pub every few months to hold an only female event.

That was actually the very event that got caught in the Black Dragon's fire breath, everyone was having a merry time and suddenly we were in that place with the "Evil" God.

Tilting my head as Syr had that very rare serious expression on her face. "I have a favour to ask everyone here." Syr began as she fidgeted in place while Ryuu just encouragingly urged her to continue.

Breathing deep as she prepares herself, "Would it be alright if everyone keeps my previous divinity a secret?" She explains her current situation to us, as she died in her mortal body while Horn was in her goddess form, she got reincarnated to this reality as a mortal as well.

*She still has most of her abilities, minus her charm and her ability to change fate, as she showed an edited copy of her current skills, pointing out that her current race, which she edited to be human, is now "**Katabatic**" meaning that she has descended from godhood.*

She explained that she really wants to experience what actually being mortal is, so she wants to hide the fact that she previously was a goddess to everyone.

Looks like Ryuu has already agreed to this before entering our room, looking at Lefiya who just shrugged showing that it wasn't really a big deal. We acquiesced to Syr's request much to her relief.

I sat incredulously while looking at Syr describing the really troublesome event she as her goddess self orchestrated a few years ago, as if she was also a victim in her own machinations. As I try to get both Lefiya and Ryuu's attention by tapping on their knees.

"The gods and goddesses' abilities or what we call as arcanum aren't necessarily sealed; I could be wrong but I think that before arriving at Genkai they are subjected to a system made by Ouranos, he's the first god who descended and is the god who prevents the monsters in the dungeon from coming out." Lefiya said, interrupting Syr while pointedly looking at Ryuu as she gestures to Gabrielle.

As Lefiya went on a short lecture on Arcanum and certain allowances allowed by Ouranos towards their divine authorities and attributes, I, like Lefiya, tried to discreetly tell Ryuu to apologize to Gabrielle. I did this by miming a bowing and praying gesture and trying to point towards Gabrielle's group.

It took awhile for Ryuu's brain to catch up as she suddenly stood up, bowing, while she sincerely apologised to Gabrielle. She even managed to tip her chair over much to everyone's surprise. This action seems to fluster Gabrielle as she tries to nonchalantly dismiss the problem.

After everything toned down I released a sigh I didn't know I was holding. Looking around as Marin asked about Rin and her group's alteration abilities, I feel somewhat thankful that we got grouped with quite the amiable group of people. Other than the problem with Ryuu, who quite understandably, was concerned with Gabrielle's allure.

I myself can feel the pull of attraction coming off Gabrielle while it doesn't really take much effort to resist, it still can be somewhat distracting when it catches me off guard. Maybe I'll try asking Shirou and his group about the Od cycling thing and Hermione about the Mind Arts.

While Rin and Illya were playfully bickering with Shirou. I was hesitatingly wondering whether or not I should speak out, as we haven't even begun eating let alone the planning session. Ever since Bell and Ais became official I started to actively try to break out of my soft spoken shell.

I found myself hanging out with different groups, first would be this group with Ryuu, Lefiya, some of the 2nd string Loki team, some other friends from different families, and much to my surprise Syr. I found that their light hearted banter, gossip, and the fact that when it's time to relax they don't really talk about the dungeon, quite appealing.

It also helped me with speaking out as I tried to match their pace, unfortunately some of the 2nd string from Loki and some other close friends like Airmid, Daphne, and Cassandra weren't with us. *'Hopefully they are somewhere safe and I can someday meet them again.'*

I also occasionally do hangout with Aisha as I owe her a lot for defending me from Ishtar. We generally either drink together in my room where some of my familia members usually join us, or we do hangout with some of the former Berbera in a bar they frequently visit back when we were in our previous familia.

While I do not participate in their shenanigans where they casually pick-up men, I do occasionally go out on dates with some of the kinder gentlemen who Aisha introduced to me. Nothing really went serious as I still had some lingering feelings towards my familia's captain and I wasn't really in a rush to move on. I guess this is the main reason why I got closer to Syr. Observing Bell, my personal hero who saved me from being sacrificed to Ishtar's plot, and watching his success story happen still gives me actual happiness and inspiration.

Finally, of course the last group whom I hang out with are my friends from the far east, lately I've also been training with them even asking God Takemikazuchi for martial lessons. The

reason for this request was me wanting to no longer be a burden to my familia during dungeon raids.

While my familia assures me that my contribution is significant enough, and I myself understand that providing a level boost is something that can change the tide of any battle, I wanted to take up a more active role in the battles. I've even also asked Ryuu for lessons in concurrent chanting.

Anyway, steeling myself as I pluck up the courage to interrupt everyone. "Umm, shouldn't we start?" I suddenly felt bashful as everyone directed their gazes towards me. I flinched when I heard a clap as Hermione with both hands clasped asked for Rin, Haruka, and Ryuu's help in setting up, while Shirou stood up with Sakura and directed everyone towards the food we cooked.

With a wave of her wand Rose Potter summoned a bunch of dining plates and cutleries while she undid the stasis charm on the food. Shirou then approached me as he passed a bunch of plates and cutleries towards our group as he explained to everyone what the dishes are and what contributions each and everyone who volunteered did.

I myself turned towards my group, minus Ryuu, as I added a little more details on what the dishes are.

POV Change

"Okay, so far this is the summary of every hint we got." Haruka Azuma, who volunteered to condense the information delivered in this meeting so it can be easily reviewed, at the large board displayed in front of everyone.

On either side of the board are enlarged versions of everyone's stat sheet and to the top of the board are just bullets on how me, Rin, Ryuu and Haruka; with some input from Illya, Lefiya, and Rose, plan to tackle our current predicament.

Some of us did voice out their scepticism about whether or not to trust the advice given by the self-proclaimed "evil god", Rin then explained how Zelretch operates. According to Rin, while a lot of people try to avoid him due to his chaotic tendencies; his actions, still in the end, operate for the betterment of humanity and those whom he finds interesting.

Rose grumbled about manipulative old coots. Shirou, who somehow heard Rose's complaint, pointed out that if she thinks there's a problem she should voice her doubts and not let it fester. He explained that while everyone has been surprisingly effortless with working with each other, we still are walking on eggshells with each other.

He also added she doesn't really need to talk about her background or secrets, just to voice out her doubts rather than make it a problem later on when a misunderstanding might mistakenly confirm one of her preconceived misconceptions.

Much to Shirou's consternation both Rin and Illya were wearing shocked faces; in which devolved to them teasing Shirou, telling him how proud they are of him.

Shifting gears, Rin pointed out that they're already used to Zelretch's shenanigans and that they now operate on a simple philosophy, "the path of least resistance". She then explained that this is the reason why she and her group had been open on providing information, in which she explained is a total anathema to their culture as magi.

She further explains that while she has her doubts on Zelretch's godhood, is an extremely long-lived and almost omnipotent being. She expanded that even if you think about it from the point of view of their reality Zelretch could be no older than 2,100 years, since he was there during Solomon's era.

She reminded us that he is the magician of the Kaleidoscope, the operation of parallel worlds, he has experienced a multitude of timelines. So he might have a few screws loose whenever he intervenes, but so far he has never been malicious and it always ends to almost everyone's benefit.

I did ask why she has been doubting Zelretch's godhood as this at least is the second time she has implied that Zelretch was lying about his supposed apotheosis. She then explained that they were dragged into events where they were unfortunately exposed to beings with partial divinity and Zelretch just didn't have that weight of the divine.

In which the Orario group simultaneously nodded, as they too have been exposed to beings of divine origin.

She then added that even if he gained apotheosis, how does the operation of parallel worlds relate to granting skills?; and finally she pointed at her stat sheet, she explained that there are certain updates on her sheet that she didn't purchase, new blurred skills, and at the bottom there's a new category called blessings in which a lot of things are also blurred out.

All of us acknowledge this, like everyone else, I myself have things added and updated that aren't consistent with what I purchased.

"I think we'll tackle that part later on." I suggested let's focus on this first, as I pointed at the summarized list of hints we got from Zelretch.

1. Trust in the 13.
2. Develop this frontier planet.
3. Subjugate the planet dungeon.
4. There's something dangerous at the bottom of the dungeon and that we should defeat it before the year ends.
5. Our "adventure" starts beneath the bottom of the dungeon?
6. Register our group at Tarmein Prime.

"So far the only actionable things on this list are numbers 1 to 4." I began, "Thankfully everyone purchased **"General Knowledge"** and some form of aptitude related to adventuring; in which in this reality is also related to raiding dungeons."

“But I’ll give a brief overview, according to what we could gather. We are currently on a frontier planet that unfortunately has developed a planet dungeon.” A planet dungeon is a phenomenon where a planet is suddenly overrun by monsters in which they devour living things on this planet and convert that into energy where a permanent connection to an alternate reality is opened.

This connection to an alternate reality is what they call a dungeon. Not much is publicly known about this actual phenomenon as the connection is both present on this plane and not at the same time. You can define the bounds of the dungeon from an outside perspective, but the space inside is limited but at the same time larger.

It pretty much mimics the hidden warded lands in our wizarding communities. A good example of this is the Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$, you can define its real space dimension as the size of the 3rd pillar after Platform 9, but the sub-space within, while vast, has defined boundaries.

“We can’t really know for sure which frontier planet we are on, other than the fact that this planet shares an orbit with another and that we probably are in the Grakkan Empire.” I surmised. “Though if we are a frontier planet that co-orbits another and that we are supposed to register in Tarmein Prime, we probably are in the Leafil System. As I can’t think of any other close systems within the Grakkan Empire that’s close to Tarmein Prime that fits this planet’s description.

“So while this planet currently seems alive and healthy due to the lush green forest that surrounds our camp, there are probably no other living beings on this planet other than maybe the odd insect, bacteria, fungi, or small creature that survived the purge.”

“On top of that this situation is a bit troubling as a planet dungeon constantly siphons a planet’s energy for its own use making it barren and dead.” Ryuu suddenly interjects beside Rin, who stands on the opposite side of the board. “This means that the dungeon’s energy is probably currently full or close to full which might result in a dungeon break.”

Everyone’s countenance suddenly shifts as they probably are recalling the information provided by the skills they purchased. While every knowledge provided by the skills we purchased has already been assimilated you still need to actively integrate and process them. It is like the difference between memorising and knowing.

A dungeon break is a phenomenon like the initial purge but this time monsters will burst forth and escape the gravity well of the planet towards space. This is like when a dandelion blooms and spreads out its seed. Oftentimes due to the vastness of space this dungeon break amounts to nothing, but sometimes it might take purchase on a planet and will subsequently infect it thus repeating the cycle of the purge and the planet growing a dungeon of its own.

“Thank you Ryuu, so as you can see we have our work cut out for us.”, I began “To formally begin our planning each of us shall formally introduce ourselves and we shall also provide information about our skills from our previous life, what skills we can offer right now to help with our 4 actionable goals.”

“We’ll begin with our group,” looking at my companions. “But before we begin, I think what Shirou said a while ago makes sense.”

“Yes, we are very lucky that everyone is quite amicable with each other despite being total strangers, but we should also try to ease the pathway where we can eventually trust each other.” I nodded as I continued further, “I’m not saying we should all air out our secrets, but I think we should try to be more open with each other. After all, we are currently stuck with each other in this very dangerous place with nowhere else to go.”

Both Rose and Gabrielle nodded at me acquiescing to my acknowledgement of Shirou’s earlier statement. I then reached towards my hip where a pouch suddenly appears as I removed it from its place.

“This is my mokeskin pouch; if anyone bought **Inherit Previous Life’s Asset** or **Inherit Claimable, Unclaimed Inheritance**, you probably have a temporary bag of holding. This operates pretty much the same way.” I then put my hand in it pulling out a top.

“This is a sneakoscope, this is a device we use by our law enforcement. This is a type of dark detector that lights up and spins whenever someone untrustworthy is nearby. Another use case is for detecting some form of falsehood in what someone is conveying or also trying to hide something.”

“Hermione, ask me about my aunt and uncle.” Rose shrugged nonchalantly as she volunteered.

“Are you sure?” I asked, showing a bit of concern.

Gabrielle frowned as well, as Rose gave an awkward smile. “It’s been years now, I don’t really care too much about them anymore.”

A large sigh escaped my mouth as I asked, “Do you like your aunt and uncle?”.

Rose then neutrally said, “My aunt and uncle are complicated.”, and with that statement the sneakoscope began to emit a light and spin slightly.

“My aunt and uncle are the very definition of a model citizen.”, Rose continued as the the sneakoscope flashed and spun more violently.

“My aunt and uncle are very flawed individuals,” After that statement the top stopped spinning but as Rose continued, “whom I no longer want to think about, I have already moved on, past their influence.”. Unfortunately, after that last statement the sneakoscope sputtered a bit.

“Unfortunately, how we perceive the sneakoscope’s detection may vary. This can be overly sensitive and is just used as a guide in interrogations and not as evidence. So if a sneakoscope lights up because of something you don’t want to share, you can just give a vague truthful explanation on how you don’t want to talk about it.”

"My relationship with my parents has been amazing." I also volunteered, as the top looking object slowly began spinning and emitting a soft light. "I don't want to talk about it as it's a complicated topic." The sneakoscope then died and toppled on my palm.

"This can even detect deceit even with good intentions, like when if you want to plan a surprise birthday party." Gabrielle awkwardly smiled. "So don't just trust it, you need to further investigate and add context to find the truth."

I chuckled a bit as I remembered that incident when we were organizing a surprise party for Rose and she went all Mad-Eye thinking that Grimmauld Place was compromised. Rose also slightly chuckled at Gabrielle's example as she also probably remembers the same incident.

Syr quirked her eyebrow at Gabrielle as she asked about what happened. Much to Rose's dismay, Gabrielle briefly gave a summary of what happened. The air in the room significantly lightened after her story.

"Ahem." Coughing into my hand, as I continued where I left off. "Anyway, I'm just volunteering this device so as to lessen the doubt when each of us are presenting. Does anyone have any objections to using this object? If you don't object to using this device please raise your hand."

The majority raised their hands, there was a pause as Shirou focused his eyes on the object at my palm as Illya, Sakura, and Rin were looking at Shirou in waiting. Shirou then shrugged, smiled and raised his hand as the trio then followed suit.

Of course everyone caught that brief exchange, "What was that?" Lefiya, now facing the magi, asked.

"Oh, Shirou was just analyzing the object, to check the legitimacy of their claims." Rin smiled at Lefiya. "I was actually going to volunteer this information to belay everyone's doubts." To further emphasize her point the sneakoscope didn't react to Rin's declarations.

"Oh, what exactly did Shirou do?" Haruka asked as she sat on a barstool beside the white board as she removed the cap on her marker.

"Structural Analysis, this one of the few spells I'm proficient in, works exactly as its name suggests." Shirou volunteered as Haruka hopped of her stool and encircled the Lv. 82 structural analysis on Shirou's stat sheet, the Lv. 49 on Rin's, the Lv. 8 on Sakura's, and the Lv. 26 on Illya's.

"This is one of the most basic spells a magi could learn, we could easily teach this to everyone. Shirou just took that spell to the extreme." Rin said.

"Well I'm sorry if I'm not an Average One." Shirou sarcastically replied in which Rin maturely stuck her tongue out in retaliation.

“Ah yes, Average One,” as I looked at the enlarged stat sheets where several of us had that written as an element and looking at another classification which I do not know about. “And do you also know anything about what an Origin is?”

This was one of the few things that I observed while I was arranging the stat sheets. On top of that even when I prompt **Help Guide** or **General Knowledge**, no information is provided.

“Ummm.. looks like we’ll get sidetracked again if we talk about that in depth.” Illya interjected, “But to put it into simpler terms an origin is a soul’s starting point that affects everything in your life, it also can affect how your magecraft behaves.”

“An Average One as an elemental alignment basically just means that you are compatible with the 5 great elements.” Rin continued for Illya. “It actually is quite a rare elemental alignment in our reality, but to be fair we have 3 elves which are beings that are close to spirits and elementals and I don’t know the origins of the witches in your reality.”

“Oh, thank you but yeah Illya is right we haven’t really actually started yet.” I said as I saw both Rose and Gabrielle sporting an awkward smile.

‘Well they know about my proclivities in acquiring new knowledge.’ I thought. ‘Let’s just start.’

“Okay, just to begin with my group, my name is Hermione Jane Granger, 25 years old, you already know Rose Lily Potter, 24, and Gabrielle Isabella Delacour, 20.” I began. “In our reality magical humans are called Wizards or Witches.”

Looking around as I started my introduction, “The three of us are part of a semi-secret government section called The Unspeakables and just before our transportation to this reality, we were part of quite a large task force called Project Noah.”

“A few years ago the divination department of The Unspeakables had a prophecy regarding the eventual downfall of humanity due to demonic incursions. Our task was to gather a sample of each living thing on Earth that is genetically diverse where a healthy population can be reproduced if a restart would happen.”

“We also were tasked to gather and copy knowledge both from the magical and non-magical side of humanity.”

I pulled another palm sized chest, as did Gabrielle and Rose. “We think this can be our major contribution to our success, especially with developing this frontier planet.”