

## CHAPTER 9

Early morning, the sun just beginning to rise shone through the window to Sora's living room. It soon reached a certain fairy, who awoke from the bright light hitting her.

"Gwuh, what time is it?"

She rubbed the sleep out of her eyes and checked the time.

"5:00?! I never get up this early!"

She looked around the room.

"Sora's probably already up."

She scanned the house, she soon found him, stationary in a room adjacent to the living room.

She flew into the room, and much to her surprise, he was still fast asleep.

"Hmm...Heheheh."

She got an idea. Not a creepy idea, but a way to prove herself to him. (Not that he viewed her in any bad light aside from the reincarnation incident.)

She flew into the kitchen, put on a makeshift apron, tied her hair back and began to cook breakfast, using Murasako's guide as reference.

6:00, Sora's nose reacted to a smell coming from the kitchen. He got up to see what it was.

When he got there, he saw quite the scene. Ginko was floating in the middle of the room, with singed clothes and charring on her face, there was a lingering smokey smell in the room, but there was a nicely plated breakfast for two on the table.

"Breakfast is ready!"

Sora didn't know what face to make.

"...What happened?"

Ginko said with a smile, "I made breakfast!"

Sora decided not to pry any further, he could figure out enough from the scene in front of him. Also, she was in a good mood, so nothing too bad must have happened.

"Looks delicious, thanks."

They scarfed down the food, which was surprisingly good. As they were beginning to wash the dishes, Sora remembered something.

"Oh yeah, remember yesterday, when you said about finding a scanning magic user?"

"Yeah?"

"I remembered someone I know who has a shop on dark street that can use scanning magic. We could go today during free time to see if I have any other attributes I can use."

"Sure, sounds fun!"

"Maybe you can learn another kind of magic too..."

Ginko reacted as if she never thought of that.

"Ha-have you never considered doing that?"

"Of course I have...I've just been, uh, too busy to try!"

"Right..."

So another day of training began.

They once more gathered the weights outside and Ginko began instructing him as Murasako laid out for her.

"Okay, so it looks like the muscle training was almost good enough, we just need to perform them more effectively. Thankfully, there was a book in your library on weightlifting."

"Huh, I really gotta clean out my house."

They went over the proper ways to exercise, from how to hold the weights properly to the right form to have while performing the exercise.

After that was over, Sora fell back onto the ground to rest.

"Wow, I'm still exhausted, but I feel less worn out than yesterday."

"I just wish I'd been smarter yesterday..."

"Stop putting yourself down. One day of mistakes is better than ten."

"You're right, I just keep agonizing over how bad I am at stuff."

"Well, then let's get some lunch and go see if you can be learning any new tricks. That should help raise your spirits."

Ginko rested her chin on her hand.

"Okay."

After lunch, they headed out to dark street. It was a bit of a walk from the catacombs, but they made decent time.

Dark street was far less crowded than most of the areas they'd been lately, but you couldn't call it deserted by any means. It had a bunch of the kinds of shops and businesses that weren't exactly shady, but felt like it.

"So, how do you know this guy?"

"Uh, well..."

Sora got a slightly embarrassed look on his face.

"I used to live around here, and I kinda worked for his dad for a little while over in the black market."

Ginko was quite surprised to hear this.

"B-but don't worry! I gave that life up ages ago. I know he's supposed to have some kind of business here, but I don't know what."

Suddenly, a dark shadow appeared behind them.

"Well well well, if it isn't little old Sora..."

Both of them jumped.

Before them stood a man, his face obscured by the dark cloak he wore that covered his entire body.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you...Or did I? Kyakyakyakyakya."

His strange laughter crept both of them out.

"H-hey, Clifford, haven't seen ya in a while. How's it going?"

"Kekeke, very well, my dear companion. My fortune telling business is as they say, booming! Why don't you come in and give it a try?"

Ginko whispered to Sora, "Was he always like this?"

"I seem to remember he was a bit more...normal? But he wasn't a bad guy back then, so we should be alright. I think?"

Not feeling very confident at the moment, the two of them followed Clifford into his shop. The main room was dimly lit, and filled with books on fortune telling and the occult.

"Welcome to my little abode! Have a seat wherever."

He passed by Sora and whispered something softly to him.

"Your girlfriend is marvelous by the way, good job."

Sora blushed and felt increasingly awkward.

"What's wrong Sora?"

"I-it's nothing."

Clifford sat down behind his desk and slammed a crystal ball down onto the top.

"Greetings! I am the great fortune teller, Clifford Inogashima! Everything you are about to hear is 100% accurate! Now, without further ado, what would you like to know?"

His loud monologue had the two of them stunned and unable to think for a few moments, but Sora finally spoke up.

"Uh, yeah. I wanted to find out if either of us had any other magic attributes we could use."

"Ooh, fun. Been a while since I got one of those. Mostly all I get is 'Is this chick into me?' or 'How can I land that hot dude.' It gets old real fast."

He channeled his magic through his crystal ball and it spread out over Ginko first.

"Eep!"

"Don't worry, it won't read anything more than I tell it to. So your secrets are safe."

After a minute and a half, the scan was complete.

"Aha, it says here besides your latency magic you have the capacity to learn reflect magic! Very fascinating."

Ginko got the biggest smile on her face.

"Sora! Did you hear that? I can learn reflect magic!"

"What kind of magic is that?"

"Exactly as it sounds, it can reflect magic and other attacks back on the sender. It's a powerful defensive magic!"

"Kekeke, very true. And very rare, the royal knights would kill for a reflect magic user in their ranks. If I remember correctly, the last one they've had in the past decade or so was the old captain of the first squad, but he retired a few years back and they've been in rather hard times."

At this point Ginko was zipping through the air, spinning all over the place.

"Well, now I suppose it's your turn, Sora."

The ball did the same thing to him.

"Alright, the results are in. And the verdict is...!"

Ginko and Sora sat in anticipation.

\*BOOM\*

The crystal ball went up in smoke, and Clifford recoiled in terror.

"No! My baby! Are you okay? Speak to me!"

He shook the crystal ball all over, but nothing happened.

"Oh well, it was old anyway." He tossed it into the corner.

"I always have a spare." He opened a cupboard full of crystal balls and grabbed another.

"So what happened?" Sora inquired.

"Well, things like this will happen from time to time. Just means you aren't very compatible with this type of scan. Sometimes there's a reason, sometimes there's not, but there's not much we can do about it."

"So we can't find out if Sora can use any other magic?"

"Unfortunately not. At least, not right now. But, I'll tell you what, since this happened, I'll give you a free reading of your futures for you."

"Uhh, okay I guess."

Ginko agreed with him.

"Alright, let the fun begin!"

"?"

"?"

"That's my catchphrase for when I read the future."

After a few minutes, the scan was done.

"That took longer than the other ones." Sora said.

"Of course it did, I was reading into the future! Not simply reading you as you are right now. It takes time to bend the rules and learn what the future has in store for you."

The crystal ball shone.

"Ahahaha! I see..."

Ginko was excited suddenly.

"What? What do you see?!"

"Ohoho, I must hold true to my standards as a fortune teller of class. I cannot reveal everything here to you."

"What?!"

"What?!"

"Hoho, don't fret, for that is only so the future still plays out as scripted. However, I can tell you your future is going to be quite eventful."

Sora was losing his patience a little.

"Can't you tell us any more than that?"

Clifford put his finger to his chin to think for a moment.

"I suppose this should be safe enough to divulge."

He made a dramatic movement and pointed menacingly at Sora.

"You will spend the rest of this year without leaving the kingdom of Nogard!"

"!"

"!"

The two of them were speechless. To a normal person, this information would seem useless and very likely to occur. But to them, as well as to Clifford, who had

obviously just learned their story, it was more than enough to tell them that something was strange.

"Now normally, I'd like to discuss payment with you, but since we're old buddies who haven't seen each other in ages, plus the incident with the busted ball, I'll waive the fee this time. Just be sure to come back sometime! And bring more friends!"

He was moving his fingers all around in an odd way as he said this. And with that, their visit to dark street was over.

"Hoohoo! I sure do love it when I meet old friends again."

The ball he tossed in the corner began to fizz.

"Hmm?"

It suddenly lit up and startled Inogashima.

"Gah! What? What is this?!"

He scampered over to the ball and held it up in front of his face.

"Ohohoho, kyakyakyakyakya! I see! It makes much more sense now! Fufufufufu..."

He set the crystal ball down on his desk. The results on the ball showing not a reading of Sora's magic, but two simple words.

KEEP OUT.

END OF CHAPTER 9