

Chapter 278-279: Siren's Song

"Xenos?" Loki repeated Ray's words. "What is Xenos?"

"Monsters with human-like intelligence. Ouranos is more suited to answer more questions about them," Hermes said with a soft smile. "He and Fels have known them for years."

Loki's eyes snapped open. "Ouranos is involved?"

"He gave me the quest of fetching this young lady," Hermes said, glancing at the Siren.

Loki faced Asahi silently. The involvement of Ouranos changed everything. The overlord of the Guild rarely became interested in anything. There must be something special in Xenos to earn Ouranos's protection.

"Why did ya tell us? ...and why are ya protecting... Ray?"

Asahi, who was questioned point-blank about his motives, shrugged. "I didn't want to hide big news like this from my allies. If you two don't want to be entangled in this, then please say it. Protecting Ray is my selfish wish."

He didn't need any support to uncover this mystery of the Xenos. If push comes to shove, he'll just reveal his strength.

Loki found his annoyed expression rather cute. He didn't seem to have any ulterior motive in calling them here. A grin surfaced on her face; the same grin responsible for earning her the nickname 'Tomboy Goddess' from her Familia.

"I can't back out from the dungeon's matters."

She might get to know more about the dungeon's goal behind creating monsters. After Zeus and Hera's exile from Orario, Loki had chosen to build a Familia strong enough to finish the last Great Quest: Exterminating the black

dragon slumbering at the ends of the world. She was going to rub it in Hera's face, after all, the goddess spared no chance in shaming her lack of boobs.

A small problem like this won't scare her off!

"What about ya, Fei-Fei?"

Hephaestus glanced at Asahi. She had joined this alliance for Astraea's sake and to know more about Asahi. He was capable of creating a life—did that make him a god?

"I don't know. Guess, I'll ride along."

"Wonderful," Astraea said with a smile.

Hephaestus's support, even in words, meant the world to her.

Hermes leaned forward and propped his hands on the table. "Astraea, Asfi here found your Familia in a hidden passage in the dungeon. What was it?"

"Oh, yeah. I completely forgot to ask that. How was your investigation?"

Astraea nodded at Loki's question before explaining what happened without revealing anything about Asahi. She changed the story of Asahi destroying the gates to the captured member of the Ikelos Familia carrying a spare key. Then she revealed details of Ishtar sponsoring the Evilus, only giving vague details on Asahi's stealth skill.

"I'm glad they came out alive from that."

It'd be a shame to lose the symbol of justice in Orario, Hermes thought. He was skeptical of how they survived such a massive explosion. His eyes stopped on Asahi, wondering how many skills this young man from the Far East had.

Hephaestus sighed in relief. "Ishtar is getting carried away... nothing unusual."

“Don’t be reckless,” Loki said, peering at Asahi. “Let your goddess deal with it.”

She had seen what he did to Apollo. The Sun God had lost all his splendor, left as a mere slave on Asahi’s whims.

‘Would his ability work on Ishtar too?’

Although she was curious, she didn’t want to take any chances of Ishtar seducing him. Intrigued by her growing worries for Asahi, she tapped the floor with her feet.

“I know,” Asahi said with a half-shrug. “I got no business with her.”

Loki nodded. “I’m gonna have to meet Ouranos about Xenos tomorrow to discuss some stuff. Astraea, will ya come with me?”

Loki wanted Astraea for her distant relationship with Ouranos and left Hephaestus as she wasn’t suited for political talks.

“Sure.”

Astraea saw no reason to decline to meet Ouranos. It had been years since she saw his dignified face.

Asahi looked at Hermes. “Can I ask you a question?”

“Go ahead.”

Hermes smiled at how casually he was being addressed. Everyone in Orario attached pointless honorifics to names. Whether it was a question or an answer, he was willing to humor the young man for Astraea.

“Who is Fels?”

Asahi felt like he knew Fels from somewhere. He had known Ouranos from some spoilers on season 3. He had a harder time remembering male names than female names.

“Ouranos’s eyes and ears outside the Guild. A mysterious being wearing robes.”

‘Oh, it’s the skeleton guy!’

(Indeed.)

Hermes took another glance at the Siren. “So can I take Ray now? It was my quest to send her back to her village.”

Ray felt uncomfortable under the indifferent eyes scanning her. She quietly walked toward Asahi and stood behind him. There was a healthy amount of respect in her golden eyes as she looked at Asahi.

Hermes was puzzled. What had Asahi done to become this close to the Xenos in less than a day?

“Asfi, you think they met before today?”

The deity received an odd smile from his follower.

“Fels-sama did say that the last time Ray left the village was years ago.”

Asahi only arrived at Orario an odd month ago. He couldn’t possibly meet Ray.

Hermes scratched his head. *‘Does he have a special skill?’*

The more he stared, the more uncomfortable Ray became. In the end, she shrunk behind Asahi, hiding herself from Hermes.

Asahi revealed a faint smile. “She isn’t going anywhere. I’ll take her back when she feels like it.”

A simple denial.

Hermes's quest won't be fulfilled without delivering Ray, and he will be killed by Ouranos if anyone in Orario saw a monster with human-like intelligence.

Hermes quietly looked at Astraea for help. Astraea shook her head as if saying she couldn't do anything. The Goddess of Justice had fallen too deep for the young man.

Helpless, Hermes turned to his follower for help.

Asfi, who was lost in how unreal this whole experience with Xenos was, didn't notice Hermes.

Loki could see any through his tricks, so he wasn't about to play with words here. With a sigh, Hermes leaned back into the chair.

'I'll have to be happy with what I got.'

He got to know about Ishtar, Evilus, and the second dungeon. All without paying a single cent. On top of that, he saw what kind of man Noble Rookie was...

A young man with incredible charisma. Perhaps a little reckless for sneaking into the Ishtar Familia, but he made it out alive with the evidence. On top of that, he had immeasurable potential as he was the fastest person to reach level 2.

His harem also couldn't be denied, as every one of them was said to powerful women.

The chances of him being a bad person were so small as the Goddess of Justice chose him as her partner.

'Seriously. He doesn't look like the type to become a hero...'

None of the current heroes strived for a noble goal except for Finn. Maybe he made a mistake in comparing adventurers to the heroes who fought monsters throughout the ancient age. One worked for-profit and the other for pure desire to help others.

'I like adventurers more~.'

Zeus, of course, had denied his vision. Zeus always bragged about true heroes rising in the new age. But so far Hermes had seen none after Zeus's exile... or rather the old man had planned everything to escape the clutches of his beloved wife Hera.

Zeus's figure running in the distance still made him laugh. Perhaps it was time to pay the old man a visit, and see what that naive kid was up to.

Meanwhile, on the highest floor of Babel, Freya swished with her silver hair. Her silver eyes took in the city covered in brilliant lights flickering from the magic stone lamps.

"Helen."

"My Lady."

A girl standing beside her straightened her back. Grey hair was cut in a way that it covered the right side of her face as though she wanted to hide something. Her black eye quivered as she replied to her goddess.

"Any words from Allen?"

"Nothing. My Lady."

Freya released a disappointed sigh. The catman had been tasked to collect some information from the Far East. A job like this would usually be given to

low-level Familia members, but Allen was punished for his carelessness during the meeting with other goddesses.

“He can’t find information on one person. Useless. I’ll make Ottar train him for a week.”

The goddess pouted as she thought of another punishment. Allen hated being weak. However, in front of Ottar’s mountain frame, he felt anything but strong.

Helen clenched her jaw behind her goddess’s back.

‘That man... will pay for this.’

The image of the golden-eyed young man rose to her mind, and her face twisted in rage.

The diagrams of maritime nations and the terrestrial locations outside Orario covered every open space on the wall. In addition, unique items excavated from historical ruins were concealed behind a shelf, and exotic plants from deserts lined up on tables.

Behind one of these tables, a blue-haired woman could be seen, writing something with her signature silver feather quill.

“Failure.”

This was the first cross on her rather flawless career. She couldn’t even blame the innocent-looking Siren for this failure. Everything happened because she wasn’t competent enough to deal with the situation.

Her emotional struggle was put on hold by the creaking wooden door.

Hermes popped his head inside with a bright smile. “Perseus, I’ll be gone for a week or two.”

Her deity was as careless as always. His feet never stayed in the city for more than a month. He usually disappeared for a fortnight or even longer.

“What’s it this time?”

“To meet an old friend outside Orario. Just keep an eye on Asahi for me.”

“How can you leave the stalking duty to a young woman!”

Asfi’s shout was heard by no one. The deity had long disappeared, knowing full well how Asfi would respond.

Putting the pen down, Asfi heaved a sigh. “Asahi...”

She had heard rumors of him. A talented rookie surrounded by numerous beautiful women comparable to the goddesses. Some called him the Noble Rookie, pointing him to being a noble’s descendant from the Far East, a continent wrought in war and bloodshed.

Asfi pulled open the drawer and picked up the black helmet with a brim. Hades Head.

Using this magic item, she could hide from anyone in the world.

She had hidden this item from her or some goddess will murder him for peeking at her.

‘Letting a former princess stalk an adventurer...’

Her deity’s odd orders frustrated her like usual.

Once Hermes and Asfi left, Astraea recited the real story to Loki and Hephaestus. The goddesses were a little amazed at how swiftly he dispatched the anomaly known as Juggernaut.

As the first one to discover the monster and its traits, Astraea had the opportunity to be credited with achievement from the Guild. Her Familia was already a B-Rank one. Reaching A-Rank required some achievements on top of having strong forces.

“Give it to Alise.”

Asahi couldn't care less about this minor stuff.

“But she won't like it.”

“We can do it without her knowing, right?”

“Okay...”

What a terrible man he was for forcing a Goddess of Justice to lie. Though, the goddess didn't seem dissatisfied with his words.

As it was already past ten, Asahi escorted the goddesses to their home. He returned to Astraea's room and pecked her forehead.

“A goodnight kiss for my goddess.”

Her heart pounded.

Her cheeks burned hot.

As if she was suffering from a fever.

She couldn't raise her head to meet his eyes, which were most likely carrying a teasing glint.

The heat rushing through her made her dizzy.

“Thank you!”

Giving her thanks, she hurriedly closed the door and slumped to the floor.

‘This... this is harder than I thought.’

(You'll get used to it. We all do. Heck, I couldn't look him in the eye when we first met...)

Klyscha's voice was lidded with heavy emotions.

'It must be quite something.'

(It was the fateful meeting of the century, no, millennia.)

Astraea collected herself and walked toward the bed. She removed her dress and wrapped herself in the blanket.

'How did you two meet?'

(It started when...)

Astraea listened to what might become her favorite bedtime story, narrated by none other than Klyscha.