

The first light of the day seeped through the window, casting a warm glow on the medallion that is on top of a small desk. Sleep had eluded me all night as I lay in bed, staring at the ceiling and pondering Neku's harsh words that had made me question everything. Last night, what Neku told me really bothered me, but after thinking about it more calmly, I realized her words held truth. I have been avoiding reality. My mother - had she lied to me all those years? And if I wasn't just an ordinary person, then what am I? Where did these strange abilities of mine come from?

I dragged myself out of bed and stood in front of the window. The big question now is what should I do.

Without being able to find an answer, I decided that, for now, what I really wanted to do and the only thing that kept me encouraged in all this wave of problems was to go see my girlfriend. Syvis has this magical effect on me that when I am with her, I feel calm, and I feel that no matter what problems I have, I will be able to solve them.

"Alright, let's go," I muttered, grabbing the medallion and slipping it into my pocket.

Sunshine, the foul-mouthed fairy inside, piped up with her usual curiosity, "Ah? Is it morning already...? Where are we going?" She said in a sleepy voice.

"Somewhere near the Oblivion building. I need to find someone," I replied, leaving my room.

"I don't want to go out! I haven't had breakfast yet!" Sunshine said, her voice tinged with annoyance.

The streets were already alive with activity as people went about their daily routines.

I continued walking through the streets, leaving the Midnight Dawn area and entering the more luxurious area of Oblivion. I scanned the bustling streets, my eyes darting from one face to another in search of Syvis. As I walked through the streets near the Oblivion building, I finally spotted her. Syvis was sitting alone at a quaint outdoor café, staring blankly at her plate of food.

"Found her," I mumbled under my breath. My face smiled automatically when I saw her.

"Found her? Who? Where?" I heard Sunshine's curious voice.

I was about to approach Syvis when I stopped after I noticed how Syvis remained fixated on her food, deep in thought with an expression that seemed sad—the seconds ticked by without her moving at all. Eventually, Syvis lifted her head, and she noticed me hastily trying to change her sad expression into one that looked like forced joy, but I could see right through it. Nonetheless, I just smile back.

As I walked to Syvis' table, Sunshine asked curiously, "Who is she, Dox?"

"She is my girlfriend," I responded in a whisper so as not to attract attention from people around, and think I'm talking to myself.

"Woohoo!!! Check out those massive jugs!" Sunshine said, sounding surprised, "She's quite a catch, Dox. How the hell did you manage to score such a sexy girlfriend?"

"Shhh!" I try to whisper.

"Hahaha! You're a pervert, Dox," Sunshine continued, "I didn't imagine your type of girl was the sexy type."

The voice inside the medallion couldn't help but spew out a crude joke about Syvis's ample chest, making me feel nervous for a second.

"S-Shut up!" I half yelled, forgetting my surroundings for a moment.

"Sorry...?" Syvis's eyes widened as she thought my harsh words were directed at her.

"Ah, n-no, sorry! I-I wasn't talking to you. T-There was just a mosquito buzzing b-by my ear," I stuttered, trying to cover up my mistake.

Syvis looked puzzled but accepted my explanation, "I-I see..."

"M-May I sit with you?" I asked politely, gesturing at the empty seat across from her.

"But of course," She replied with a big smile, "You don't even have to ask."

I sat down across from Syvis, trying to shake off the awkward atmosphere. A server approached our table, and I quickly ordered something to eat before turning my attention back to Syvis. The scent of coffee lingered in the air. Usually, that aroma awakens my appetite, but even though I haven't eaten much these past two days, I don't feel hungry. Syvis, sitting across from me, was also eating from her plate slowly as if she were also forcing herself to eat.

"Darx, are you alright? You look pale," Syvis asked with genuine concern in her eyes. Her gaze was intense, making me feel like she could see right through me.

"I-I'm fine," I assured her, but it was clear that neither of us was truly 'fine', "How about you? I've noticed you've been pensive lately. Is everything okay?" My voice sounded with concern.

Syvis glanced up with her exhausted eyes from her plate, her eyes briefly meeting mine before darting away, "R-Really? Sorry... It was not my intention to be distracted. It's just... I have a lot on my mind." She replied, forcing a smile as she looked away, avoiding eye contact. It was

evident that something was bothering her; however, she didn't seem to want to share her thoughts.

An awkward silence fell upon us, and we both fumbled for words to start a conversation, "So...how's Agnes doing?" I asked.

"Agnes...she is doing her best to put the guild's affairs in order. In a week, she plans to retire as guild master," Syvis said with a sad look.

"I see. It must be difficult to leave the guild to which she dedicated so many years of her life." I said, my voice sounding hollow.

"Y-Yeah..." Syvis's fork scraped against the plate, an awkward pause lingering, "Are you sure you are okay, Darx? You look tired, and you've barely touched your food. It seems like you've been busy."

Before I could respond, Sunshine chimed in again, warning me in a stern tone, "Hey, don't even think about telling your big titi girlfriend about me. I don't want more people knowing I'm here and risking the bad guys finding out."

I wanted to be able to tell Sunshine that Syvis is trustworthy, but I'll have to talk about it with Sunshine alone first. I don't want her to lose trust in me and try to escape the next time she wants to get out of the medallion.

"I've been a little busy with a quest I did for my guild. Maybe that's why I look tired." I responded to Syvis.

Syvis leaned forward, her eyes meeting mine more directly, "...I see," She responded after staring at me for a few seconds.

What I said was half true. However, Syvis seemed to realize that I was hiding information. Even so, she didn't press me for more answers. I feel bad for hiding things from my girlfriend, but once I talk to Sunshine and find more answers about my other problems, I will tell Syvis everything.

"You know what's more confusing than your relationship drama?" Sunshine spoke, "How the hell did your girlfriend's breasts grow so much? I should start eating whatever she eats."

A fleeting chuckle escaped me, a brief respite in the midst of emotional turmoil.

"Is something wrong?" Syvis asked, looking confused.

"Ah!? N-No, i-it's nothing," I said nervously, "So, uh, any plans for today?"

Syvis, her gaze fleeting, sipped her tea, "I want to check on Agnes later today, but besides that, not really."

"Um, I was going to see Oliver at the Inn after this," I finally said, feeling the need to change the topic, "Do you want to come with me?"

Syvis hesitated for a moment before agreeing, "Yeah, sure. That sounds nice."

I tried to smile as we finished our breakfast, but I couldn't help but notice that we had barely touched our food. Syvis also tried to sound cheerful, but her eyes would occasionally fix on something and stay silent for a while, or her fingers would nervously tap the table. It was apparent that there was a hidden layer of uncertainty beneath the surface of our conversation.

As we left the restaurant, I reached for Syvis's hand. She intertwined her fingers with mine, and we walked side by side towards the Inn. Despite the warmth of her touch, I could sense her tension and distraction during our stroll. A pang of guilt hit me for not disclosing the truth about Sunshine, but at the same time, I found myself perplexed by Syvis's demeanor.

Upon entering the Inn, we unexpectedly met Mia. Her face lit up when she saw me, "DARX!" Mia ran and jumped on top of me, hugging me tightly with tears in her eyes, "I've been wanting to see you since my sister told me you were alive!"

"Hey, Mia," I said, smiling. "It's great to see you too."

"You're a fool. You don't know how much we suffer thinking that you... you..." Mia said, hugging me with more strength, "You don't know how happy I am to know that you're okay!" She exclaimed with genuine happiness.

After Mia calmed down a little, we found a table and sat down, with Mia eagerly chatting about the time that had passed since we last saw each other. Soon, Oliver and Emma joined us, and our conversations turned to reminiscing about old times.

Syvis, not being part of our group, remained sitting next to me without speaking much. She clearly felt somewhat out of place, but she listened intently, occasionally offering a nod or a smile.

"It's been a long time since we were all together," Mia said.

"It reminds me of our days in the village practicing to become adventurers," Emma added, smiling and hugging Oliver's arm.

"I wish Amelia could be here too..." Oliver said sadly, "I really hope Amelia is okay wherever she is."

"Let's have faith that Amelia is fine and that we will see her again one day," Emma said as she was hugged by Oliver.

I really hope the same. Even though we didn't end on the best terms, I wouldn't hesitate to go help her if she needed my help.

"I recently received a letter from Cal. He said that if he finds out anything about Amelia, he'll let me know." Mia spoke.

"Really?" I asked, raising my eyebrows in surprise, "That's not something I would have expected from him."

"Cal and Fabe were bullies back then, but Cal has changed a lot since he left Fabe behind," Oliver added.

Now that I remember, Cal looked entirely changed the last time I saw him. However, I didn't have much opportunity to talk with him.

"Believe it or not, Cal become an artist, and his paintings are absolutely stunning," Mia said with a hint of admiration in her voice.

With a big smile, Oliver continued, "Before Cal left the city with his wife for work and moved to Oidao, Cal came to see me," Oliver added. "He apologized for everything he did to me in the past. Since he sounded sincere, I accepted his apology. Now we exchange letters from time to time."

"Wife!? Wow, that's quite a transformation," I muttered, trying to wrap my head around the idea of Cal turning into a decent human being.

"Sometimes people change for the better, Darx," Mia said softly, looking at me, "We can't always judge them by who they used to be."

As our conversation continued, I couldn't help but steal glances at Syvis. She seemed lost in thought, barely participating in the discussion. She tried to hide it behind her smile, but every once in a while, her eyes would betray her unease. Deep down, I knew there was something Syvis wasn't telling me, and it made my heart heavy with worry. I wondered what was going on in her mind.

"It's a shame that Fabe didn't follow Cal's path; on the contrary, he became a worse person than he already was," Mia said with a sigh.

I noticed Emma tensing up, her hands gripping the table's edge tightly. Oliver noticed it, too, and moved closer to Emma as if to make her feel better.

"Fabe could never get over receiving the lowest rank in the adventurer ritual. That turned him into a drug addict and criminal. A shadow of his former self." Mia concludes.

Seeing the atmosphere getting tense when talking about Fabe, Oliver decided to switch gears and lighten the mood, "Hey, Darx, Syvis, my daughter's birthday party is tomorrow. You two have to come. It'll be great to have you here!"

"Sure, we'd love to!" I responded. Syvis nodded, smiling warmly at Oliver.

"Fantastic! We're looking forward to having you both there," Emma chimed in, her face brightening up again.

We continued talking about trivial things for a while, enjoying each other's company as the sun began to set. When dusk arrived, Syvis and I decided it was time to leave.

"Take care, Darx," Mia said, smiling at me, "I'm really happy to have you back!"

"Thanks, Mia. I'm also glad to see that you are doing well."

"See you tomorrow at the party," Oliver added, giving us a wide grin as we left the Inn. Emma waved, also reminding us not to miss their daughter's big day.

Once outside, Mia took her way, and it was just Syvis and me in front of the Inn.

I hesitated for a moment before speaking up, "Syvis.... d-do you know by any chance where I could find my mother? I need to talk with her."

Syvis looked concerned after she heard me. After all, she knows the strained relationship between my mother and me since she married Kase, "I'm not entirely sure. Ilene doesn't spend much time around the Oblivion guild building. I'm not exactly sure where she would be." Then she added cautiously, "Is everything alright?"

"Have you met my mother in the guild? Maybe spoken with her?" I answered her question with another question.

For some reason, my question made Syvis nervous. I imagined they likely had crossed paths in the guild building before since they both belong to Oblivion. I imagined it would be an awkward encounter, but Syvis's estranged reaction makes me think it was more than just that.

"I spoke with Ilene once, although it was a short conversation. We didn't really talk about much." Syvis responded, avoiding meeting my eyes.

Why do I feel like Syvis is lying to me?

"Sy-" I try to speak.

"Darx, if you want to talk to your mother, I understand, but you must be calm. It wouldn't be good if a fight broke out like the last time. If you need me to be with you, I can accompany you." Syvis told me.

"Ah? N-No, it's not necessary..."

"Are you sure?"

"Everything's fine," I reassured her, although we both knew things were far from perfect.

After an uneasy silence, Syvis, with a worried expression, continued, "O-Okky.., Then I need to go and take care of some matters. I'll see you tomorrow at the party."

"Sure," I replied, trying to sound casual despite the awkwardness.

I leaned in and gave her a soft kiss on the lips, "I'll see you tomorrow at the party."

As I sensed Syvis's body gently parting from mine after the kiss, an unexpected impulse surged within me, compelling me to envelop her in a tight embrace. The inexplicable desire to keep Syvis close overwhelmed me. Strangely, Syvis displayed no surprise and, on the contrary, reciprocated the hug. In that silent exchange, we spoke volumes without uttering a word. We didn't say anything to each other and just stayed hugging regardless of whether people were watching us. I felt Syvis's face buried into my shoulder while I felt the heat of her body and the smell of the perfume she always uses. In that moment, the things that had kept us distant left, and with that hug, we expressed what we felt for each other.

After a while, we separated. After that, with the most beautiful smile I had ever seen, Syvis said goodbye, "See you, Darx," She said as she turned and walked away.

"See ya..."

I watched her disappear into the distance. I feel like it's a scene I've seen many times: Syvis walking away and disappearing into the crowd of people. However, this one in particular, for some reason, feels really sad.

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"Can I vomit now? Such a show of love made me nauseous!" Sunshine's voice appeared out of nowhere.

Sunshine had been so quiet since we arrived at the Inn that I forgot she was still here.

"Hey, I'm hungry. Let's go eat." Sunshine told me with an annoying tone of voice.

"There is one more place I have to go. Hold on a little, please. After, I will give you all the fruits you want." I reply.

"Uh? Where are we going now?" Sunshine asked impatiently from the medallion hanging around my neck.

"We're going to a place I really don't want to go and never thought I'd be forced to visit," I told her cryptically.

Ignoring Sunshine's questions, I started walking towards the most elegant part of the city once again on the same day, eventually stopping in front of the gates of a large, imposing mansion.

"Wow, Who lives in this huge castle?" Sunshine inquired, still puzzled by my actions.

"It's not a castle. It's just an unnecessarily large mansion." I replied, staring at the enormous mansion with worry. I couldn't shake the feeling that I was about to step into a hornet's nest.

"Whatever. Why are we here, then? Are we going to break in or something fun like that?" Sunshine asked, sounding happy, "Let me tell you, I have the best sleep magic! I can make all nine heads of a hydra fall asleep in no time, so I take care of the guards!"

"Would you stop asking questions for a moment and let me think?" I snapped, my nerves getting the better of me.

"Fine! You don't have to be such a jerk about it!" Sunshine huffed, clearly annoyed at my response.

I stood there in silence, gazing at the mansion, unable to bring myself to take any further steps. The truth was, I didn't want to be here, but I knew I had no other choice. I have experience with Syvis, and I know that if I try to look for my mother in the Oblivion building, they will just ignore me, so I only have this option left.

"Alright, look, I'm sorry for snapping at you," I finally said to Sunshine, realizing that my anger was misdirected, "The reason we're here is because my mother might be inside. And she's the only one who might know anything about my strange abilities."

"Really? Your family lives in this huge place!? I never would've guessed a simple boy like you came from wealth," Sunshine said, sounding genuinely surprised.

"It's not my family. It's just my mother and her... hu-husband. I don't belong here," I clarified.

It really feels disgusting to call Kase my mother's husband.



"Okay, so why don't you go inside and talk to her? I want to go eat soon. What's stopping you? If you lied to me about the fruits, I will curse you for 30 generations!" Sunshine said aloud.

"It's not that easy. I'm not welcome here. My mother's new life doesn't include me. But I need answers, and she's the only one who might have them," I explained, taking a deep breath to steady my nerves.

"Fine, let's get it over with. I don't want to spend the whole day standing here," Sunshine grumbled, resigning herself to the situation.

Just as I was summoning the courage to approach the mansion, a voice called out to me, "Hey! What are you doing in front of my house?" When I turned around to see who it was, I recognized that it was Mili, Kase's younger sister, "If you're a thief, I'll kick your ass myself!" She continued.

"Wait, I remember you! You're my teacher, Syvis' boyfriend, right!?"

"Ah, yeah..." I replied awkwardly, scratching the back of my head.

"Then what are you doing here?" She asked, looking genuinely curious.

I hesitated but decided to be honest, "I'm actually looking for my mother, Ilene."

"Your mother? You mean... Ilene is your mom!?" Mili's eyes widened in surprise, "I had no idea."

"Y-yeah," I stammered, unsure of how she would react to this new information.

Mili seemed to consider the situation for a moment before she made up her mind. She opened the bars of the mansion and gestured for me to come inside, "Well, come on then. I'll take you to her."

"Really? Thank you," I said gratefully, following Mili onto the grounds of the lavish estate.

As we walked toward the mansion, Mili continued to chat with me, "I never would have guessed that my teacher Syvis' boyfriend was my brother's stepson. It's kind of weird, isn't it?"

"Please don't call me that!" I half shouted feeling offended, "A-Anyway, do you know much about your brother's relationship with my mom?" I inquired.

"Truthfully, I don't know much about it. My brother doesn't like people getting into his business," Mili said, "At first, it was strange that my brother married a woman way older than him. Still, I guess it's common for noble men and women to marry individuals younger than themselves, so I didn't think much of it after."

I just stayed silent. The world of nobles is really not to my liking.

"Anyway, we're here," Mili announced as we reached the front door of the mansion, "Let's go find your mother."

As we entered the opulent building, I couldn't help but feel a sense of unease, knowing that this was where my mother now lived with Kase. But for now, all I could do was follow Mili's lead and hope for the best.

Upon entering, Mili was immediately greeted by a group of servants, bowing and uttering, "Welcome back, Miss Mili."

"Hello, everyone," She replied with a warm smile before turning to me, "This is Darx, Ilene's son. We're looking for her."

The servants looked at each other with confused faces. I wonder if they know anything about me.

One of the maids said, bowing respectfully, "Lady Ilene and Lord Kase are currently in their bedroom."

"Wait here. I'll go call her," Mili said, leaving me in the grand foyer as she disappeared down a hallway.

I stood there, surrounded by luxurious decorations and expensive furniture, feeling out of place and uncomfortable. This wasn't my world. The air here felt heavy with secrets and deceit. I clenched my hands into fists, trying to keep myself calm as I waited for Mili to return with my mother.

"Darx?" Sunshine whispered from inside the medallion, "You okay?"

"No," I admitted truthfully, "I'm not okay. This place... it's suffocating."

I sighed, steeling myself for the inevitable confrontation with my mother and possibly even Kase. Minutes passed like hours as I stood there, waiting. Thoughts raced through my mind, each more troubling than the last. What should I say? Would she tell me the truth about me? And what if Kase showed up? What then?

"Darx," Mili's voice finally broke the silence as she returned, "Your mother is on her way."

"T-Thank you...."

Seconds after, the sound of approaching footsteps echoed through the halls.

"Well, I'll go and leave you two alone to talk," Mili said before going down one of the hallways.

The moment I saw my mother descending the grand staircase, my heart twisted in a knot. For some reason, her cheeks were flushed like she'd been exercising. Still, her eyes sparkled with happiness as she approached me. Probably thinking I had forgiven her for marrying Kase.

"Darx, I'm so glad you're here," She said, her voice brimming with hope, but I couldn't meet her gaze.

"I'm here to talk," My voice came out tense, betraying the turmoil inside me.

Before my mom could respond, the sound of footsteps echoed through the hallway. Kase appeared shirtless, his pants unbuttoned as if he'd just thrown them on. He smirked when he saw me, clearly enjoying the situation.

"I thought it was a joke when Mili said you were here. However, you picked the worst time to drop by our lovely mansion," He said mockingly.

My blood boiled at his words, but I clenched my fists and fought to remain calm. Then, the realization of what he meant hit me like a ton of bricks. Seeing Kase with her top exposed and her pants unbuttoned and my mother with her cheeks flushed... T-They were having s-sex just moments before I arrived. Kase's arrogant expression left no doubt in my mind. I felt sick to my stomach, but I couldn't let Kase see how much that had affected me. I refuse to give him the satisfaction.

"I'm just here to talk with my mother. Once I'm done, I'll leave," I muttered through gritted teeth.

Kase chuckled darkly, his eyes gleaming with malice. "Oh, come on, Darx. Don't act so innocent. And don't worry about interrupting us. You must have known that things like this happen between a husband and his wife."

"Enough, Kase!" My mom intervened, her voice firm and laced with annoyance, "Darx is my son, and if he wants to visit or even move in, he has every right to do so. As your wife, this mansion is as much mine as it is yours."

Kase looked surprised by the resolve in her words, but he quickly regained his composure. Smirking, he responded, "Very well, my dear wife. I'll accept whatever you want. But..." He glanced at me, his eyes narrowing, "I must say, Darx, moving in might not be such a good idea. You see, Darx, your mother... she can be quite... vocal when we're together. And even though this mansion is vast, I'm certain you wouldn't appreciate hearing her moans of pleasure while I have my way with her."

Even though I was trying to stay calm, my anger was more than I could contain. I was about to attack Kase when my mother reacted by slapping Kase.

"You're not going to disrespect me like that!" My mother snapped, her eyes narrowing at him. I could see the anger simmering beneath her composed façade.

"Fine, fine," Kase conceded, raising his hands in mock surrender, "I'll leave you two alone to catch up." He glanced at me with a malicious grin before turning back to my mother, "But first, let me say goodbye to my loving wife."

Kase approached my mother and kissed her. Disgusted by the sight, I turned my head away, not wanting to witness that. I felt my cheeks burn with embarrassment and anger, my fists clenching involuntarily. All I could do was tell myself over and over what I must endure in order to get the answers I needed. After that, I don't plan to return to this place ever again.

"Alright, I'm off to the guild now," Kase finally said, breaking the liplock. He smirked at me one last time before walking towards the door, "Remember, Darx, don't touch anything that doesn't belong to you."

Fucking asshole! One of these days, I will kill him or die trying. As he left, I could feel the tension in the room dissipate slightly. However, the uncomfortable feeling still remains.

I took a deep breath, trying to stay calm and focused on my purpose here. My mother, noticing Kase's absence, attempted to close the distance between us once more.

"Darx, son, I..." She began, her eyes looking like she was pleading for my understanding.

"Stop," I interrupted, raising a hand to keep her at bay, "I'm not here to reconcile. I need answers; I need to know the truth about me, about my true origin." My voice was cold and distant, a stark contrast to the warm voice I used to use with her.