

Nav never spoke another word since it received its Atelier Item. The sweet nectar of morality couldn't have been crueler. It dangled before Nav, just out of reach.

Suspended was the cupcake, left to wait until the day Nav gained its body.

Frost tried to comfort Nav. It was her closest friend next to Jury. Despite its inability to express itself, the silence spoke a thousand more words than Nav ever could. An AI, machine, human – Frost didn't care what Nav was.

Nav was Nav, and she was going to do everything in her power to help it wish come true.

The Piece of the Fallen Star was their beacon of hope. If the Impuritas believed that the Advent existed in Brandar, then she needed to as well. A wish-granting object falling into the wrong hands was a recipe for disaster, and knowing how twisted the Impuritas were, she could only begin to imagine the horrors that would follow.

Thus, the search for the Piece of the Fallen Star became a priority next to 'investigating' the Scarlet Logic.

Their last hours in F-H5 were spent bidding farewell to acquaintances. The Overseer was glad to finally see them go, dismissing them with a scoff and a long yawn. The Tube Worm children overtook their role as the acting security. Under normal circumstances ImpulseWorks deferred all aid to the Scarlet Logic, and other nearby Sites in the form of Workers.

But these were rough times, and with the Scarlet Logic seemingly missing, their policies needed to be bent. Thankfully, they were at least flexible in this regard.

It was no mystery that the last thing ImpulseWorks wanted was a Zeroed Horizon event.

In other news –

The Impulse Artificer would not stop ogling over Ara. She was apparently a big fan of the late great Green Composer, having listened to their concerts and travelling shows.

Music was but one of the pleasures of the City of Hearts, right up there beside lust and traditional aspirations, such as the yearning to become stronger, to climb the ranks, become wealthy, etcetera.

They found themselves in the lobby once again. A small gathering formed as farewells were exchanged between the temporary Navigator and Frost's group. Several Workers and Employees were also set to depart with the Navigator into the newly built G-Z7 in Emvita.

"Wooooow! A relative of the great Haydn himself! I almost feel bad that ya had to get detained!" Kissaria laughed, admiring a proud Ara.

"See. I'm not a Corrupted after all." She hissed at a small band of Workers. "Finally. Someone else here gets it!"

"What music can you play! Wait – Don't tell me. It's gotta be the bongo drums!"

“Vi-o-lin. What do I got to do with bongo drums?” Ara’s smug excitement instantly fizzled away as she covered her chest, knowing *exactly* why.

“Don’t the physical features of a musician relate closely to what they’re good at?” Kissaria said. “The conducting wand the great Haydn used looked just like ‘em! Lankly and straight!”

“Sorry to break it to you but I’m not a girl. Wishes? Yeah right.” Ara muttered underneath her breath. “Piece of the Fallen Star. I’ll show them a piece of me. Black Dove! You used to have big ones too I bet! How’d you get rid of them!?”

“Don’t get me involved in your conversation.” Frost tried to dismiss her as she shared a small conversation with Papilia. “But I get it. If they were any bigger, then I also would’ve had problems of my own.”

Papilla tilted her head slightly, trying to figure out what she meant by that.

“I would’ve gladly taken care of them...” Jury uttered to herself, audible *only* to Frost’s sensitive ears. “I’m sorry for your loss.” She then solemnly said to Ara. “But have hope! I’m sure you’ll be able to live happily in that body.”

“Happily? You wanna fight? Easy for you to say when you have a Color as a lover. Same sex and everything as well. You make it sound so easy. Ugh... I just wanted to be the greatest Conductor. Up there with Haydn.” Ara lamented, dragging the mood down with her.

“You’re telling us that the guy version of you would draw more eyes than the current you?” Cer judged. “Heh. Good body. Bad eyes. Take Jury for example. Perfect all-round. Eyes like Frost. What more can you want –?”

“Little wolf. Do you mind?” Jury plucked Cer up by the collar, hoisting her like how a mother cat would carry its kittens.

“Lecherous wolf...” Ignis muttered.

“Woah! Ignis! You can’t say that!” Ber crossed her arms, unable to believe that such words left the innocent mouth of Ignis.

“They’re pretty lively huh? Sorry about them.” Frost apologized to Papilia, causing her to shake her head and smile.

“Don’t be. It’s nice seen so many people smile. You normally don’t see any in the Sites because everyone’s so focused and afraid. Death hangs on everyone’s minds.”

“Cept me!” The bunny woman exclaimed, emerging from Snap’s fur. She had been hiding inside of its ball form for some time now.

“I still don’t understand why they can’t just use their stronger personnel. I know, I know. You don’t need to say it. Temper Aspirations... I’ll believe it when I see it.” Frost exchanged looks with Kissaria. “If people are so free to chose what they become, then why trap them in this bird cage?”

“You’re not very interested in the results. You sound like a process-orientated person.” Papilia commented, hugging her manual and various stacks of paperwork.

“‘Means to an end’ isn’t my way of handling things. Surely there are better ways to run these Sites. But I’m not here to impart my knowledge on something I barely have an idea about. Just stating how I feel.” Frost sighed. “Good luck out there. Don’t get wrapped up in the little things. I’m sure you’ll make for a great Navigator.”

“You think so? I want to believe I can do it too. But it’s scary watching people die. It doesn’t matter how many layers of Scrying Crystals there are... It always makes me sick to my stomach.”

Frost reached out a hand to her. The woman didn’t flinch and subtly offered her head. The head pat was easily the equivalent of a hand on a shoulder, or back rub. She brushed through the Navigator’s slightly blue-tinted hair and smiled.

“At least that makes you one of the normal ones. I’m sure your Workers will appreciate that.” Frost spoke sincerely.

“I really hope so as well. Black Dove! Thank you for visiting us. Everyone, thank you. The Overseer wanted you out already, but I don’t think I can be that rude. If it weren’t for you, then we would have failed the Site expansion. By the way! What happened to you today? You just disappeared all of a sudden!”

Frost explained that she interacted with the Site Core directly. She never revealed the nature of her visit, and remembering the words of the Black Horseman caused Frost to wonder why they seemed so...

*Happy to see me. ‘Alive’. Do you think they thought I was stuck inside of the Black Forest all time?*

Nav didn’t respond.

*Sorry. I’ll leave you alone for now. Hey... Don’t be afraid to talk to me Nav. I’m always here to listen. As you always have been for me. For all of us.*

*You’re not alone in there.*