

Puzzle & Dragons Cross-Over: Wisdom of the Ancient Runes

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/24180379) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/24180379>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Major Character Death
Category:	Multi
Fandoms:	Puzzle & Dragons (Video Game) , Puzzle & Dragons X (Anime) , Xenoblade Chronicles 2 (Video Game)
Relationships:	Xavier (OC)/Valkyrie - Ciel (Puzzle & Dragons) , Hikari Mythra/Homura Pyra/Pneuma/Rex , Kaede (Puzzle & Dragons)/Rushana (Puzzle & Dragons) , Kaede (Puzzle & Dragons)/Valkyrie - Ciel (Puzzle & Dragons) , Kaede (Puzzle & Dragons)/Rushana (Puzzle & Dragons)/Valkyrie - Ciel (Puzzle & Dragons) , Teal (OC)/Francesca (OC) , Lora/Shin Jin
Characters:	Xavier (oc) , Valkyrie - Ciel (Puzzle & Dragons) , Kaede (Puzzle & Dragons) , Rushana (Puzzle & Dragons) , Rex (Xenoblade Chronicles 2) , Homura Pyra , Hikari Mythra , Pneuma (Xenoblade Chronicles 2) , Meleph Mòrag Ladair , Kagutsuchi Brighid , Zeke von Genbu , Saika Pandoria , Nia (Xenoblade Chronicles 2) , Byakko Dromarch , Tora (Xenoblade Chronicles 2) , Hana Poppi , Ace (Puzzle & Dragons X) , Lance (Puzzle & Dragons X) , Sonia (Puzzle & Dragons X) , Teal (OC) , Francesca (OC) , Lora (Xenoblade Chronicles 2) , Shin Jin , Kasumi Fan la Norne Haze
Additional Tags:	Post-Canon , Childhood Trauma , Childhood Friends , Marriage Proposal , Same-Sex Marriage , Summoning , First Kiss , First Time , Implied Sexual Content , Friends to Lovers , Angst with a Happy Ending , Breaking Up & Making Up , Sibling Incest , Suicide Attempt , Homophobia
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2020-05-14 Words: 23,745 Chapters: 10/?

Puzzle & Dragons Cross-Over: Wisdom of the Ancient Runes

by [Ninjitsu](#)

Summary

It's been one year since the Dragonoid's War shook the island of Dragoza. A mysterious relic was found after, but nobody on the island had no idea what it was. 18-year old Xavier and his companion, Valkyrie - Ciel, along with their friends, set out on a campaign to find the mysterious Elemental Runes in order to find out what the relic truly means. One thing they don't realize is that someone is watching. Someone who wants revenge after what Xavier's father did to her, a long grudge that has never disappeared. On top of that, there is a mole in the group, and someone has been giving information to whoever is watching Xavier and his group, but they don't even know there is a traitor. Many questions remain, however: Will Xavier find there is a traitor and manage to find out who? Will Xavier need to unlock the true potential he holds as a Dragon Master? Find out in this wonderful story full of love, betrayal, friendship, and plotline that nobody could've ever thought of. A story involving the crossover of two games: Puzzle and Dragons x Xenoblade Chronicles 2.

I do not own Puzzle & Dragons, the Puzzle & Dragons X anime, or Xenoblade Chronicles 2

Notes

This story will be updated over a long period of time. I'll update it more once I get out of school probably. Anyways, enjoy!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Preparations Being Made

Everyone sat down in their respective seats after taking their turns to say their final goodbyes. The *Dragon Master* was about to speak as the whole town of Crocus honored the deceased. Ace, his mother, his father, his girlfriend Haru, and his friends were all in the front. Unfortunately, it was Ace's grandmother, Angene, who had passed due to her age.

The *Dragon Master* was prepared to deliver the eulogy. "Good people of Crocus. We gather here today to remember Angene, one of the best Dragon Callers of her time. From the start, she was excellent, going beyond expectations during her Guild Exam. Her win in the Battle Cup was also stellar, and the monsters she used were incredibly strong and well trained. To me, she was an excellent role model. It was her and Master Vahatton who got me trained and helped me fulfill my goal to become a Dragon Caller, and their help made me the Dragon Master I am to this day. Not just this, she was also the mother of King, one of the most famous Dragon Callers to date. She always told everyone how she was eager to have King well trained, and King was quite the wild child back in his day." Everyone laughed at that last sentence for a few seconds, even King himself. "However, I think it was the way she helped her grandson that let her shine. We can't thank her enough for giving Ace the help necessary to start being a Dragon Caller. Her assistance gave him a path to becoming the strongest of them all. He followed that path very easily, despite there being major hurdles along the way. When he felt like all hope was lost, Angene was there to give him hope during the Battle of Prophecies, that took place right here, in Crocus. It was because of that inspiration that he defeated Lance and won the battle. She was a great citizen in every aspect. Let us stand one last time in memory of Angene."

Everyone stood one final time, holding flowers or clapping in her memory. After a few minutes, everybody left except for Ace and the group he was with. The *Dragon Master* came down and went to him, saying, "It's a sad day for the whole town, isn't it. But it's only fate that everyone passes at some point. We all have to prepare for it."

"Yeah, but it's still hard when the time comes," Ace replied. "Especially for her Myr, one of her monsters. She's been really upset."

"I've heard. I guess her sadness is why she just couldn't bring herself to come, correct?"

"That's the reason," Ace responded. "So, where are you all heading from here?"

"I have to go back to Libria. Master Torley needs me for some research," Charo explained.

"Yeah, I may as well head back to Geyser for now," Tiger told him.

"I have to head back to my hometown too. Master Herriot is waiting for my return," Garnet said.

"Alright then, I'll see you guys later, then," Ace responded as his friends were already flying on their delivery dragons. "What about you, Lance?"

“We have important matters to discuss with Master Vahatton, remember?”

“Oh yeah, right! I almost forgot about that,” Ace admitted.

“Lance, you can go on ahead. Ace and I will meet you there,” the *Dragon Master* said.

“Ace, I have a question that I must ask Myr. Could you take me to her?”

“Uh, sure,” Ace told them.

“Fair enough. We’ll see you there then, Lance,” King told him. Lance nodded his head and left them. Ace, King, and the *Dragon Master* left for Ace’s house, where Ace’s mother and Haru were already waiting for them.

When they opened the door, somebody was already walking towards it. “Hey, how was the eulogy, *Dragon Master*?” It was Valkyrie - Ciel, one of the *Dragon Master*’s monsters, and one of the tri-gods, as Dragoza called them. It was the duty of his family to be the guardians of the tri-gods, and the *Dragon Master* was chosen by Valkyrie - Ciel after an unexpected meeting between them (you’ll find out about that in my *Dragon Master* backstory fanfic). She walked up towards the *Dragon Master* and hugged him, as the two were very close, despite knowing each other for only six months.

“It went well. I can see you’re doing well for yourself,” the *Dragon Master* responded, hugging her back. “Anyways, I need to ask Myr a question. Have you seen her?”

“Yeah, I’ve been trying my best to comfort her, and it seems to be working,” she responded. “She’s in the backyard. I’ll take you to her.”

Valkyrie led them to the backyard, where Myr was sitting on the bench, tears of sadness easily noticeable in her eyes. She looked up at the group and said, “Oh, hello.”

“Hello, Myr. How have you been holding up?” the *Dragon Master* asked, although it was pretty obvious from the tears.

“Not well. Angene’s gone, and I’ve been pretty upset about it,” Myr responded, wiping the tears from her face.

“I can see that. Anyways, there is one question that I need an honest answer from you about,” he said. Myr made it obvious that she was ready to listen. “Where are you gonna go from here?”

“Huh?” Myr replied. “I... I don’t understand the question.”

“Sorry, those were the wrong words,” he apologized. “What I meant by that was: What are you going to do now?” Myr still looked confused. “Now that Angene is gone, the bond between you and the Soul Armor she had is broken. So you’re free. But where are you going to go? Are you going to stick around with a new Dragon Caller or just go off on your own?”

“Well...” Myr paused, then told him, “I haven’t really given it much thought, really. When Angene fell ill, I kinda knew that would be the end, but I never thought about what I was

going to do afterward.”

“In that case, I’d suggest becoming Ace’s monster.”

“Wait, what?” Ace seemed surprised by his response.

The *Dragon Master* looked at Ace. “I don’t see why you’re surprised, Ace. I had been thinking about it ever since Angene got sick. You’d be the perfect Dragon Caller for Myr to be with next.”

“Now that you mention it...” Myr paused again. The red and black haired girl took a bit of a breath, then said, “That does sound like a wise decision. I’d be happy to go along with Ace from here.” Myr then started glowing and turned into an Egg Drop, and came floating into Ace’s hand.

“Well, there you go, Ace. Looks like Myr found her answer,” the *Dragon Master* told him. “Anyways, it’s best that we be off. We can’t keep Lance and Vahatton waiting.”

“I agree. Ace, let’s go.” King told him.

“Right!” Ace replied.

“You’re coming too, right, Valkyrie?” the *Dragon Master* asked.

“Obviously,” Valkyrie answered. As they walked out of the door, Haru, Ace’s childhood friend and girlfriend, poked Ace’s shoulder.

“Hey!” Ace said, turning back to see who was doing that. “Oh, I thought it was you. What’s up, Haru?”

“Can I go with you guys?” Haru asked.

“You might as well come along. It’s not reserved to anyone specific, really.” Ace told her. After that, they all walked to Vahatton’s tower. They entered the tower and went up to the fourth floor, where the discussion was being held. They entered the discussion room, where Lance and Vahatton were already sitting down.

“I apologize if we kept you waiting, Master Vahatton,” the *Dragon Master* told him.

“No need. It’s not like we could’ve started the meeting without you guys, anyways,” Vahatton responded. As everyone got into their respective seats, the *Dragon Master* noticed someone sitting in one of the seats near his. It was his friend Deepsea, another Dragon Caller.

“Deepsea?” he asked, a bit confused. “I didn’t think you’d be here.”

“I was curious as to what was going to take place, so I came in and Vahatton invited me to join the meeting, so... yeah,” Deepsea responded, pushing her glasses upward.

“Alright then, no harm in that,” the *Dragon Master* stated, closing the doors behind him as he and Valkyrie went to their seats. “Let’s get this meeting started then, I guess.”

“You’re the one who called us here, *Dragon Master* . What is it you wanted to discuss?” Lance asked.

“I wanted to discuss this,” the *Dragon Master* told him. He pulled out a relic from his cape and placed it gently onto the table.

“Wait a minute. Isn’t this the relic we found after the Dragonoid’s War that took place a year ago?” Ace realized, the relic seeming familiar to him.

“Correct,” the *Dragon Master* responded. “I’ve been doing some research regarding the relic, but haven’t found much.”

“So we still do not know what the hell this relic is supposed to mean?” Lance questioned, a little agitated.

“Hold on, I didn’t finish. Anyways, regarding the relic itself, looking at it made more sense,” the *Dragon Master* told them. “As you can see here, there are strange symbols that look exactly like the symbols seen in the Orbs of this world. The symbols on the outside show Fire, Water, Wood, Light, and Darkness, while the middle shows Heart.”

“That is strange,” Haru said

“I’m with you on that one,” Deepsea agreed.

“Valkyrie. Have you seen anything like the relic we found or anything related to it?” the *Dragon Master* asked.

“Actually,” she went into her pocket and pulled out a gem-like rune item that looked like the Heart Orb in the center. “I came across this before I met you. Perhaps if I put this right in the center...” Valkyrie placed the rune in the center and it fit quite easily. After it went in, the rune started to glow, then revealed a hologram of a specific location.

Deepsea cleaned her glasses, then put them back on, and knew what the picture was. “I know what this is.” Everyone then turned to her and she told them, “This is the Isle of the Stone Fists. That green dot would be the location of the next rune. It seems like it’s all the way at the top of the Solitary Peak.”

“So it seems as if each time we find a rune and place it in its respective place on the relic, it will show us the location of the next rune,” Vahatton said to the group as the hologram slowly faded away.

The *Dragon Master* then looked at Ace, Lance, and Haru. “I’ll head to the Isle of the Stone Fists.”

“Really?” Ace asked.

“Alright. You’d better get ready. Ace and I will tag along. When do you suspect we’ll be leaving, *Dragon Master* ?” Lance requested.

“It’s nice that you’ll be coming with me. I could use your strength. Anyways, we’ll leave the day after tomorrow at dawn,” he told them.

“Understood,” Lance said. Deepsea wanted to protest the fact that she wasn’t going, but the *Dragon Master* was already one step ahead of her, telling her mentally, *You can’t go. I would bring you, but you’re not strong enough. I think you still have some training to do* . Everyone then left the meeting, and the *Dragon Master* went on his usual evening walk through the forest.

Meanwhile...

“Ahhh,” a group of people yelled as they came out of a portal in the middle of the forest that closed instantly after they came out. The group looked completely confused as to where they were.

“Are we even in Alrest?” one of the people asked. This group was Rex and his friends.

“Rex, what the hell did you drag us into this time?” Nia scolded.

“How was I supposed to know where this was gonna lead?” Rex responded.

“Now, you two. There is no need to quarrel amongst ourselves now.” Mòrag stated.

“Although I do admit, this is quite the predicament we got ourselves in.”

“I think it’s best to stay low for now,” Rex told them.

“Tora can see behind bushes no problem, if that okay with Rex-Rex,” Tora, the only Nopon of the group, said.

“Go ahead,” Rex answered. Tora then looked outside to see what was behind the bushes, and all of a sudden he was grabbed by the person walking.

“Hey, what mystery person doing to Tora?” Tora asked, shaking wildly, only to find out that it was the *Dragon Master* who picked him up. “Oh, Rex-Rex! It friend Xaer.”

“It’s Xavier, Tora,” Xavier told him. “Wait, Rex is here with you?”

Rex came out of the bushes. “Yep, we all are. Me, Nia, Zeke, everyone.”

He and Rex shook hands. “It has been quite a while, Rex. How’d you wound up here?”

“Well, that’s a bit of a story. But anyway, how’re you?”

“Quite good. Where are the blades?” Xavier asked.

“You’re just the person I’d want to ask about it. See?” Rex took the Egg Drops from his pocket and showed it to Xavier. Mòrag, Zeke, Nia, and Tora also has the same problem.

“I guess it seems coming into this world turned them into Egg Drops, how monsters are summoned in this world.”

“Is there any way to bring them back?” Rex questioned.

“Of course there is, you just say their name, and they’ll pop out,” Xavier responded.

“Ok, then,” Everyone said the names of their blades, specifically the ones they’ve always had, and then they came out of their Egg Drops.

“Ugh, Rex, what happened?” Mythra asked.

“My lady, I can see you’re unharmed,” Dromarch said. Brighid, Pandoria, and Poppi were also happy to see that their Drivers were okay.

“Come on, the city of Crocus is nearby, and it’d be a good place to rest for you guys,” Xavier told them as he led them to an inn in Crocus.

Apology Accepted

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Xavier was on the phone with his friend, Mach F, who lives on the Isle of the Solitary Peak. He was telling F that he was going to be over on the isle tomorrow.

“Perfect. I’ll arrive on the island by evening at the latest. That sound good?” Xavier told his friend.

“Great! Just one thing though. Should I wait for you and the group you’re bringing at the docks?”

“Nah, I already have another friend of mine waiting for my group when I arrive,” Xavier replied.

“Alright. Are there any updates on if Teal and Fran are coming?” F asked.

“They still haven’t been talking to each other since the war. I’m going to try to get their conflict resolved today. If I can’t do it, then neither of them will be there.”

“Okay. I guess I’ll see you tomorrow,” F said. “Bye.”

“Later.” Xavier hung up, then sent a signal to both Teal and Fran’s D-Gears. That signal meant they were supposed to head over to his HQ. They both got the signal and came over about an hour later. As expected, once they saw each other, they made their hatred clear. The twins just completely ignored each other, not even looking at one another.

“Alright, Xavier. What is it and why is Fran here?” Teal said upsettingly.

Xavier looked at the two of them in a way that meant “take what I’m about to say very seriously”. He then told them, “Look, you two. I know that you two absolutely despise each other. However, if you would like to come with my group to the isles, you’re going to have to sort this problem out. Otherwise, I won’t be able to bring you.”

“Yeah. Either way, I’m not going if she’s going,” Fran responded.

Xavier crossed his arms, then angrily told them, “There is also another problem here. This conflict that started a year ago should’ve ended months ago. The Guild is getting fed up with your arguing around every corner and so am I. Nobody wants this to continue anymore, so I suggest that for both of your sakes, that you get this conflict sorted out by the end of the day.” After saying this, Xavier walked away. “Valkyrie, lead them to the meeting room and stay with them until they sort this out.”

“Okay. You two, come with me.” Valkyrie told them, and the two followed her to the meeting room. Once they entered, the three of them sat down and got settled. Valkyrie was surprisingly amazing at handling conflicts between sisters, mainly because she’s had

experience with her own sister, Athena - Non. "I heard about the conflict going on between you two. I want to help you both solve this, so that you two can get along again, like you used to."

"Why would you want to help us?" Teal asked. She was honestly confused, as she expected Valkyrie to act like Xavier, considering he was her guardian.

"Because it's personal. Athena, my sister, and I used to argue quite a lot. But then we talked about it and we moved on, and we've been bonding ever since, despite me not seeing her for the past few years." Valkyrie responded, in a very calm, respectful tone. "Before we get to the solving though, I want to hear both points of view that you guys have. I'll start with Fran. What do you have to say?"

Fran took a deep breath, then started talking. "Well... this past year has been one of the hardest years of my life. The Dragonoid's War really changed everything in Dragoza, including my relationship with my sister. Something inside me awakened this lust for power. I thought that if I were to join Dominion, I could find a way to gain more power so that Teal and I would never be separated again. That I could protect what I loved." Fran started saying this and it became clear that tears were starting to form in her eyes. "It was clear that Dominion had a different goal, and that was to wipe out humans from the entire world. I didn't notice that until Teal had defeated me during the war." Fran paused for a moment, and as the tears kept flowing down her cheeks, the distraught girl told her sister, in a sad tone, "Teal. I never thought that this would happen. I've tried to tell you for so long, but you just wouldn't listen to me. You mean the world to me, and my love for you has never faded. I always loved you more than anything. I was just being a complete idiot, and I understand that, but the last thing I ever wanted to happen was for us to be separated again, just like when I left you for my dream of being a Dragon Tamer. Please... I-I just can't take this pain anymore. I just want us to be back together..." At that point, she couldn't stop herself and Fran broke down. Her hands covered her face as she cried, wishing that all this never happened.

Valkyrie came over to her and put her hand on Fran's shoulder. "Ok, Teal. You're taking on all of this."

"I..." Teal kept a straight face, but deep inside, she just wanted this to end. *Xavier is right*, she thought, *We've been keeping this conflict going on for absolutely no reason at all. I guess I'll share my point of view, or at least what it was*. "When I saw Fran for the first time after the Grand Battle Cup, I knew something was going on, so I tried to talk to her, but she refused. I didn't know what was happening, and then she wound up missing the next day. I looked for her for a long time, then I realized during the Battle of Archdemons that she had betrayed me when I saw her standing right in front of me. I asked her why she did all this, and she said that I shouldn't stop her. That what she was doing was a way she and I could stay together and never be split up again. I knew what Dominion was truly doing, and thought what she said was an excuse, so we fought. She said she had no choice but to stop me if I resisted, and I lost because of her newly found strength."

Flashback - 1 year ago

The battle seemed to have no end in sight. Dark and light energy particle shots were coming from all sides. Teal was sheltered in one of the homes, but at this point seemed to be running away from anything. She ran towards the end of the town, where she stopped to catch her breath. She looked up and saw one of the Dominion with their back turned towards one of the buildings that were destroyed.

“I’ve been waiting for you... Teal,” the person said.

“H-How do you know my name?” Teal managed to say, while still catching her breath. The person turned around and faced Teal, and once the person revealed themselves, Teal couldn’t find a single word to say. In front of her was none other than her twin sister, Fran.

“Surprised to see me?” Fran asked.

“... Fran, you’re on their side?” Teal said, and then she could yell, “But why?”

“We need power. Teal, if we’re both really strong, then we can stay together... just like we’ve always wanted,” Fran told her. “We don’t need to fight over this. I’ve wanted this power for too long. Teal, let’s gain power together and be that way forever.”

“Fran, are you even listening to yourself? Dominion isn’t trying to just gain power,” Teal responded.

“I’ve made up my mind, Teal. If you’re going to resist, then I’ll have to prove that I have the power to keep us together,” Fran pulled out her two chakrams and lunged at her sister. Teal got out her bow just in time and blocked Fran’s attack. Teal jumped in the air, charging up a glowing arrow and fired it. Fran threw one of her chakrams, blocking the arrow, while she jumped in the air with the other, striking Teal’s arm.

“Argh!” Teal yelled, and she fell back to the ground. She came down on her feet, removed from hand from where the wound was and then looked at it. She then turned to her wound, and she was bleeding, but at a very slow rate. She looked at Fran, and yelled at her, “What do you think you’re doing to me, you idiot! If this wound was any more serious...”

“Then why are you resisting! I’m doing this for both our sakes, so stop going against me!”

“Of course I have to go against you. Do you think I’m going to let Dominion take over Dragoza and let everyone suffer? Are you that stupid?”

“Then... you leave me no choice,” Fran chakrams started to glow, and then her Soul Armor, of the Divine Death Skydragon, Arkvelza. “If you’re not with me, Teal... then you’re my enemy.”

“Fran, stop this! Please!” Teal called to her, but her twin just wouldn’t listen. Fran charged at Teal and struck her leg. Teal then fell to the ground, one hand on her leg, and the other on her arm.

“Time to end this!” Fran started levitating in the air and her chakrams were on both sides of her. The two chakrams started charging up a sphere of dark energy. “Forgive me... my twin... my love.”

“Fran, don’t!” Teal yelled out, but it was too late. Fran had already charged up her attack, and she wasn’t going to let anything get in her way.

“Exterminating Endbringer!” the chakrams unleashed two powerful beams, both of them hitting Teal. Fran watched her sister suffering, screaming in pain. But she didn’t care. All she wanted was to get stronger with her so that they wouldn’t separate. But it all made sense to her, Teal was her enemy, and nothing would stop Fran from gaining power. Fran stopped her attack and went away, leaving Teal in the debris.

“Fran... why would you... do this... to me...” Teal fell to the ground, with tears coming out of her eyes as she fell. She lay there for hours, unconscious, but was eventually found by Xavier, and taken to a nearby medical station. Her injuries were severe, but she made a quick recovery thanks to one of her monsters helping with that. Xavier was told that Teal had woken up and came to check on her.

“Teal? You okay?” Xavier asked, calm in his tone.

Teal paused, and she closed her eyes as tears arrived again, shaking her head. “I-It’s just that... Fran... s-she,” Teal could barely speak without stuttering her words as she cried.

“I know, Teal. She’s on their side,” Xavier responded a little upset himself.

“I just don’t know why she’d do this to me. After I’ve loved her for all these years, why would she think power keeps us together.”

“If anything, it’s driving you apart. But Teal, do not fear. We will stop her and Dominion. Then, we can get a true explanation for her actions. For now, just get some rest. The war’s final battle is approaching, and we need all the fighters we can get.”

“O-Okay,” Teal said, lying down in her bed and resting for the next few hours.

About a week later

The final battle of the Dragonoid’s War had become one that everybody hoped to forget once it was over. The shots were being fired by both sides, casualties lying dead on the ground. Teal was flying on her delivery dragon to where Fran was, trying to take out anyone she could. The dragon roared as it neared the location. Teal told the dragon that she could take it from here and jumped down to Dominion’s castle, where the final battle was taking place. Teal was right, and she saw her sister right across from her. “I’ve been expecting you,”

“Yeah, no shit,” Teal told her.

“Well, that’s not very nice.”

“You think I should be kind to you after you nearly killed me?”

“Well, maybe you should show more respect for someone who is superior to you!” Fran yelled.

“Says the one who left me to go for her dream without me!” Teal fired back.

“Oh, I’ve had it with you!” Fran got her chakrams out and went for her sister, but instead of blocking, Teal just dodged and then jumped in the air as she did before. “That trick again? Well, I’ll just have to do the same as last time.” Teal fired the arrow again and Fran threw her chakram, the two attacks colliding as Fran went up to slice Teal with her chakram again. Teal used the dust to her advantage and got into her Soul Armor, then gilded upward while managing to seem as if she was in the same spot. Fran slashed into the dust but realized after a few seconds that she had completely missed.

“Wait.. what?”

Fran looked up and realized Teal was above her. “Not this time, sis!”

Teal fired a barrage of beams from the air, some of them hitting Fran. Fran got into her Soul Armor and glided to where Teal was, dodging any attacks she could. The two then went at it, right in the air. They were unleashing punches, kicks, and any other attacks they could land on each other. Fran managed to get above Teal and started charging up her move again.

Fran had hit Teal pretty hard as they fought in the air. She knew if that attack landed on her now... she knew she had to stop the attack with everything she’s got. Six aquamarine spheres appeared around her and slowly started orbiting around her, from her head down to her feet. She pulled back her bow and her arrow started to glow brightly. Fran was ready and unleashed her Exterminating Endbringer attack. This time, however, Teal used the spheres and created a shield surrounding her. Despite the attack strength of Fran’s skill, it couldn’t penetrate the shield. “B-But how? It was so destructive the last time!”

The spheres then gathered near Teal’s bow and drastically amplified its power. “Fran, this is how our battle ends. Please... come back to your senses!”

Teal then pulled back, preparing to release the arrow. “Heartbreaking Missile!” She released the arrow and with the spheres following it, it created a shimmering trail of light that followed it. Fran gathered Dark Orbs and tried her best to make a shield, but even then, it wasn’t enough. The attack landed and detonated once it hit. Teal noticed her sister starting to fall, but managed to catch her just before she hit the ground. “Fran? Fran?” Teal held her unconscious sister in her arms. “Then again, it is what she deserves for almost killing me.”

End of flashback

Teal was fighting back the waterworks but kept talking, “I defeated her in the Battle of Fates with my finishing blow. She did recover eventually, and she tried to tell me that she didn’t know that Dominion was fighting to exterminate humans from the world, let alone go as far as recreating a new one. So when we came back home, I got angry at her and we argued for what seemed like hours, and then I told her to never talk to her again and she moved out of our house.” Teal wiped her eyes and said the last thing she needed to. “I realize now that she really didn’t know that Dominion wanted to kill humans. So we argued... for nothing. Fran... I know I don’t deserve your forgiveness, but I just want you to know that I deeply apologize for all those terrible things I said to you. I want you to give me another chance, please... To be the sister... and the lover you’ve always wanted me to be.” Teal ended it there and took a few deep breaths.

Fran took a few moments to comprehend everything that Teal said, but then they both got up and walked over to each other. They both went into each other’s arms, embracing each other. Tears came out of both their eyes, as neither of them was able to hold back anymore. “Valkyrie... tell Xavier that the conflict has been resolved.” Fran said, and Valkyrie nodded, then left the two alone. They looked into each other’s eyes, and Teal put one hand on her twin’s cheek. “Teal... I forgive you... Under the condition that I get your forgiveness in return.”

“That’s... a deal. I love you so much. I always have, and always will.”

“I love you, too,” Fran then pressed her lips against her sister’s for the first time in a year. Teal returned the kiss and put her arms around her twin, not wanting to be apart from her.

Once the kiss ended, Teal told her sister, “Promise me this. That you and I will never be separated again, and that from now on, we’ll talk to each other if we have issues that need to be solved.”

“That’s a promise, my love.”

Meanwhile

Xavier went to the inn where he left Rex and the gang to have a short conversation with them. “Rex, you here?”

“Yeah, we’re right here, come in.”

Xavier walked into the room and told everyone to sit down to talk. Pyra had made dinner for everyone, and she even let her sister, Mythra, help her out. When they dug in, everyone was delighted by the taste of the meal and kept eating.

“Alright, you guys. Tomorrow, we leave for the Isle of the Stone Fists.”

“You said initially that it was going to be just you and two others, but changed your mind when you saw us, is that not correct?” Mòrag asked.

“That is correct. I think having you guys will help.”

“Hopefully you guys will be able to look after my Prince when I can’t,” Pandoria joked, referring to Zeke.

“Hey, you, just because I’m unlucky, doesn’t mean I need looking after,” Zeke told his Blade. Pandoria told her Driver that she was only kidding but still found his attitude hilarious.

“Does Xavier and friends know this world well?” Poppi was confused, as the robotic Blade thought that Xavier’s friends in this world were also from another world.

“Yes, this is my homeland. We’d know it front and center.”

“Well, that’s nice. But anyways, when do we have to be at the docks tomorrow?” Nia wondered.

“By dawn. We need to leave early, considering how far the island is from here,” Xavier explained. “We’re expected to arrive in the afternoon. Why do you ask? Did you want to make sure you have time for your catnap?”

The cat-eared girl banged on the table, telling him, “Shut it. Although, at least it wasn’t Shellhead saying that.”

“You still call Zeke that, Nia?”

“Well, of course. This bastard can never make his mind up for the life of him. You should’ve seen how much of a bloody idiot he’s been since we beat Aion.” Zeke crossed his arms and just looked away, knowing the comment was unfortunately true.

“Alright then. I’ll come to get you guys in the morning.” Xavier got up and thanked Pyra for dinner, then left the gang to their own accord.

“Well, in that case, friends should get lots of rest and be ready to wakey-wakey tomorrow,” Tora told everyone. They all agreed and prepared their things for the voyage tomorrow.

Chapter End Notes

As usual, only constructive criticism (I will be saying that at the end of every chapter. May become an annoyance, but I feel the need to emphasize it, as this is my first long work).

The Journey Ahead

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dawn was upon the island of Dragoza, and Xavier went to the docks along with Rex and his group. Xavier and four other dragon callers were already there, which consisted of Lance, Ace, Teal, and Fran, awaiting the arrival of Rex's group.

"Hey, Xavier, who are these guys?" Rex asked.

"These are Teal and Fran; twin dragon callers. Then here are Lance and Ace. The strongest we've got in the Dragon Caller Guild here."

"Poppi think that new friends seem friendly enough. Safe to talk with," Poppi analyzed.

"Thanks in advance, Popster, but I think we'd have been just fine anyways," Zeke said. They all walked over, and Rex came over to Ace and Lance, who were at the front of the group.

"So, you're Rex? We've heard a ton about you from Xavier. I'm Ace."

"My name is Lance. It is a pleasure to meet you all."

"The name's Rex, and these guys are Nia, Tora, Zeke, and Mòrag. The others with us are our Blades. Mine are Pyra and Mythra." Rex told them, handshaking Ace.

"The pleasure is all ours. My blades are Brighid and Aegaeon, who is in his Egg Drop right now." Mòrag said, then she and Brighid bowed to show respect, as they would in their empire in Alrest.

"Tora is Tora. This is Artificial Blade, Poppi. She has three forms. Very nice to meet new friends." Tora told them, and Poppi seemed excited as well.

Nia and Zeke introduced their Blades, Dromarch and Pandora respectively.

"Alright. The boat is all ready to leave the dock. Let's get on, and then it's off to the Isle of the Stone Fists." Xavier said to everyone. They all got on the ship and once they said their goodbyes to the town, Xavier started the ship and it sailed the ocean blue.

The two groups started conversing, and they found out they were similar in countless ways. They all saved the world, for one. They also have allies that help them in battle. Although, their fighting styles were completely different.

"So Blades take on more of a supportive role while the Drivers do the fighting?" Garnet asked.

"That's correct, although I do recall Mythra telling us that in Old Torna, they used to fight in ways similar to your current style," Mòrag answered. "The way both of our groups fight may

be different. Yet, maybe we can manage to learn from how the other fights, so that different ways may be used for different scenarios.”

“You’ve definitely got a point there,” Lance responded. “You really have lots of knowledge regarding such tactics. I’m curious as to how.”

“Mòrag is the Special Inquisitor of Mor Ardain. It’s her responsibility to know these types of concepts and to teach them to the army.” Zeke told them. “Of course I learned them as well. I am the Crown Prince of Tantal after all.”

“Yeah, it took him years to learn it though, because My Prince never listens to much whatsoever,” Pandoria said teasingly.

On the deck, Xavier, Valkyrie, and one of Xavier’s allies, Kaede, were all discussing what was going to happen once they reached the island.

“Okay, so what’s going to happen is Ace’s group will be on rest, since their strength still hasn’t fully recovered from the previous war. Valkyrie and I have something we must do with Rex’s group, you, and the person waiting for us, so we’ll go this way another way and then through this path here.” Xavier explained, pointing to the direction on the map. “Does that sound like a plan?”

“Yes,” they both said. Xavier then told Valkyrie to go report their plan to the two groups, as he wanted to discuss something with Kaede.

“I wanted to tell you who was waiting for us, but just don’t tell anybody. I’ll introduce them to the person we’re meeting once we get there.”

“Alright. But why do you want me to know?” Kaede asked, seeming really confused.

“Because... you know her,” Xavier responded, smiling at her.

Kaede took a moment to think about what he just said, then she responded to him by saying, “Wait, do you mean...”

“Yeah, it’s the one you think it is,”

Kaede had to take a moment and comprehend what was going through her mind at that moment. She then started hesitating, and said, “I-I haven’t seen her in four years. I don’t even have anything for her, either. Do I look okay? Am I gonna screw this up? Do I seem like-”

“Kaede!” Xavier called out to her and she stopped talking. “Breathe... You’re going to be fine. She’ll be so happy to see you, no matter what.”

“O-Ok,” Kaede replied calmly. She took deep breaths and reassured herself.

It took them a few hours, but they finally reached the Isle of the Stone Fists. Kaede was a little desperate when getting off the ship. Ace, Rex, and the others were all surprised seeing Kaede in that sort of mood. Valkyrie usually saw Kaede as someone serious and always prepared to defend herself, but right now, she was in such a good mood, yet showing desperation by looking everywhere on the docks.

“So you guys are finally here,” someone said. When Xavier looked towards the boardwalk, he saw a green-haired girl, dressed in aquamarine clothing, along with a lime green cape. The girl turned towards Xavier and the group, but more specifically at Kaede. “Hold up... Kaede, is that you?”

“Yes, it is... Rushana,” Kaede responded. Instantaneously, Kaede ran towards Rushana as fast as she could. Once Kaede got close enough, Rushana opened her arms and the two hugged and kissed, sharing a tearful, yet happy reunion. “My love... it’s been too long. I missed you so much.”

“I missed you too, sweetheart,” Rushana responded, embracing her lover tightly.

Pyra and Mythra just thought the two were so cute together. “Who’s the green haired girl?”

“That’s Rushana. One of the friends of the Dragon Master Family,” Xavier told Mythra. “As you can see now, she’s also Kaede’s girlfriend, and they haven’t seen each other in four years. Although, I’m sure the concept of relationships is familiar to you two because of a certain someone, hmm?”

“N-No, it’s not like that. W-We’re just Rex’s B-Blades,” Pyra stuttered. Xavier just laughed, considering Pyra wasn’t very good at hiding her feelings for Rex.

“Whatever you say. On the bright side, you hide them well enough so that he doesn’t know.”

Once Kaede and Rushana were done reuniting, Rushana went to formally say hello to Xavier, bowing once she was close enough to him. “No need for a formal greeting, Rushana.”

“Of course there’s a need, you’re the *Dragon Master*. Do you know how valuable a title like that is?” Rushana said.

Xavier responded, completely honest in his answer. “Titles don’t matter to me unless you’re an Ancient. Even if I am the most powerful person in all of Dragoza, I really don’t need a formal greeting. I prefer to be treated like how you’d treat any other.”

“I guess I shouldn’t be surprised by that answer.”

“Anyways, Rushana, can you and Kaede take Ace and his group to your place? I have something I must do with Rex and the others. We should be back by evening.”

“Sure,” Kaede told him, “Come on, you guys.” Ace and his group then left down one path from the docks, while Xavier and Rex’s group were heading down the other.

“Xavier, where are we heading?” Rex asked, puzzled as to why they weren’t heading to Rushana’s place to rest.

“I’m sure you remember Jin, from Torna, right?”

“Yeah...” Rex was still confused.

“We’re meeting Jin and another friend of mine at this factory my friend lives in,” Xavier told him.

“Hang on... I thought Jin died after killing Amalthus? How is he alive?” Nia questioned.

“Yes, it may seem weird, I’m sure he’ll explain.”

“Why won’t you just say how Jin is still... Never mind,” Nia was still weirded out as to how Xavier got Jin’s Core Crystal, but was just confused at that point and decided to just let things happen.

They arrived at the factory a few hours later. He placed his hand on the security pad, and it scanned the hand, showing a green light after the scanning. The factory doors opened and the entire group went in. They got to what seemed like a huge hangar with mechanical monsters, locked behind glass panes. “Hey, F? Jin? You guys here?” The room all of a sudden lit up and there was a hole in the floor, and they heard some sort of buzzing noise. A mechanical version of a monster named Noah appeared before them, activating itself.

So this is F’s new creation, Xavier thought. Once Machine Noah opened her eyes, a scanner came out of her head and she scanned the area, immediately seeing the group. The scanner turned red once it saw them and the scanner returned to her head.

“Intruders! Initiating Factory Defense Protocol!” Machine Noah said. The aquatic machine then fired pulses of water from her hands, aimed for the group. Xavier prevented the attack from landing using a shield of Wood Orbs.

“Looks like it’s made to defend the factory while F’s out. No choice but to fight, I guess.” Valkyrie and Xavier both pulled out their swords. Everyone else pulled out their weapons. “Hopefully you guys are still good at fighting.”

“Well, chum, let’s do this!” Zeke told Rex.

“We’ll give it all we got!” Rex said to the group. “Let’s go.”

The group prepared for battle and Machine Noah was ready to defeat them.

Chapter End Notes

As usual, only constructive criticism in comments. Thanks again for reading!

Ancient Traces Reveal Familiar Faces

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The battle seemed to go on forever. Machine Noah's mechanical body was barely scratched even after a single hour.

"Damn, how the hell are we supposed to win now?" Nia asked, being knocked back by Machine Noah's Prism Blue Burst skill.

"We need to do a Chain Attack!" Rex said, struggling to make even a single dent in Machine Noah's body.

"Not worth it, chum! Look at the Orbs surrounding her," Zeke told him. There were only two Elemental Orbs surrounding Machine Noah: Wind and Water. The two Orbs spun around the blue mechanical girl, glowing the color that respected their element.

Dammit. We'd need two more for a Full Burst. We'd do nothing with just two of them, Rex thought.

Just as he was about to announce a plan, Machine Noah summoned a rain cloud over her head. Tempest Rain was about to be used. The cloud suddenly turned a dark gray and shot bolts of quick lightning that shot that hit her opponents as fast a bullet. Nia was struggling the most, being hit left and right, and at this point, she could barely stand. "My lady, are you alright?" Dromarch asked his Driver.

"I'm hanging in there. But... we need to do something. We have to damage this bloody thing somehow."

"I got it," Rex called. "Mythra, use the Artifice!"

Mythra needed to lock on, but considering Machine Noah didn't move around much, locking on was easy. Her Core Crystal flowed with an emerald light, sending the message to her sky-high Artifice, Siren. The sky then seemed as if a blast created a hole in the atmosphere. The golden beam of light then came down and hit Machine Noah, seeming like it did some good damage.

After the smoke cleared, it looked like Machine Noah had some sort of shield around it. "The hell? Why would it have a shield?" Xavier wondered.

"Looks like I arrived just in time," a voice said. Another door on one side of the factory opened, and two figures came walking in. Xavier saw who it was and walked over.

"Just the people I wanted to see. It's been a while, F. And you too, Jin" Xavier said, extending his hand.

“It certainly has. I’m glad to see that you’re doing well. And it seems that your girl is too,” F joked, referencing Valkyrie.

“H-Hey. Valkyrie’s not my girlfriend. I’m just her protector,” Xavier responded, blushing fiercely. Valkyrie saw the three talking, and seemed weirded out when Xavier went all crazy, so she decided not to get involved.

“Sure... Not yet.”

“Oh, screw you,” Xavier responded and flipped F off as they continued to chat. Jin went up to Rex and his group, handshaking everyone and thanking them for saving their homeland, Alrest.

“How’d you wound up here? I thought you were dead,” Rex questioned.

“That’s a question for another time,” Jin told him. “So, it seems like Pyra and Mythra are separated now. How’s it been with them like this?”

“Well... I have to work a ton, especially with Mythra giving me the cold shoulder every few seconds,” Mythra just nudged Rex and glared at him, but Rex had learned not to look back whenever he sensed her doing so. “Anyways, Xavier told us we’d be meeting you here. But why?”

“I guess it’s about time I explain then,” F said, walking to Rex and the group. He gestured for Machine Noah to get back into her pod, where she was also kept behind a glass pane, just like F’s other creations. “Let me just start activating the system.” F walked over to this lever near the door where the others came in and pulled it. From the same place in the ground where Machine Noah came up, another machine was also there. It seemed very ancient, yet it was polished nicely and shone in the light that came down upon it.

“Hold on,” Valkyrie walked over to the machine to get a closer look. She mentioned, “I’ve seen one of these things in Old Torna back in Alrest. Wasn’t it some sort of revival machine? I thought it was destroyed during the Aegis War.”

“Before I came here, F asked me if I could find the parts of this machine in the Land of Morytha, on the Tornan Titan,” Jin said, as serious as always. “I was puzzled when I first found it since there were so many pieces and I didn’t understand what went into this thing. But then I came back here to Dragoza and surprisingly, F was able to restore it no problem.”

“I do have a knack for machinery after all, though I probably don’t need to explain that,” F added.

“Wait a minute... if the machine is used to revive others, then that’s why you wanted...” Brigid stopped for a moment, and Jin continued for her.

“Yes. I wanted you to bring Lora and Haze for this very reason. Of course, you wouldn’t remember her, since your Old Driver was killed in the Aegis War.”

“That’s true. I cannot recall those times 500 years ago. The only memories I have are from my journal, but even that isn’t sufficient enough at times,” F got the machine powered up and got it ready for action. Xavier helped F bring in the deceased Lora and Haze to the machine and placed them in the green pods that seemed to have some sort of ether energy going through them. They closed the pod doors and F was checking to make sure everything was in order.

“Jin, one thing still confuses me,” Mythra mentioned. Jin looked at her, asking what it was. “Lora is your old Driver, but will you still resonate with her as a Blade?”

“I don’t need to resonate with her, Mythra. I’m a Flesh Eater, remember?” Jin replied, pointing to the blood red Core Crystal on his head.

“Hey, Tora, can you check the machine, just in case the energy gauge goes red, which would signify too much energy?” F requested.

“Tora can do it. But considering friend’s knack for machinery, energy levels should not be too high,” the Nopon said to him, going over to check on it.

“Alright then. Let’s see if this works,” F said. He walked over to the lever and told everybody to stand back. He pulled the lever downwards and the power started to run through the machine.

Tora stood at the ready, just in case the gauge was red, yet while the energy levels were very high, the gauge never got to the point where it would turn red.

After about ten minutes, the two were released from their pods, and stood on the ground. Lora opened her eyes first, with Haze following soon after. Lora looked at herself and noticed she could move. She looked towards the group and the first person she saw was Jin. “Jin... is that you?”

Jin could hardly believe his eyes. He thought he must’ve been dreaming.. hearing her voice again was his primary goal. The reason he created the organization, Torna. “Lora... I...” Lora ran over and into his arms she went. It was a reunion that she never thought possible. Her eyes were gushing with tears as her original Blade held her.

“Jin... I never thought... that I’d...” Lora wasn’t holding back any feelings. Although her tears left her after a few minutes, it felt like she cried her eyes out. Then... Lora slapped Jin.

“Argh! What was that for?”

“That’s for joining forces with Malos after fighting against him,” Lora told him angrily, although she changed back to happy after. “Just needed to get that weight off my shoulders, you know?”

“So, this is Lora?” Rex asked.

“Ah, yes. This is my old Driver, Lora,” Jin introduced, “Lora, this is the new Driver of the Aegis. His name is Rex.”

“Oh, I remember that... somehow. It’s been 500 years, after all. Hold on... where’s Haze?” Haze was Lora’s other Blade, and she was pretty overpowered. Haze had the ability to restrict a Blade’s actions, stopping them right in their tracks.

“Well, she’s kinda...” Just as Jin was telling Lora, Haze woke up. “Right behind you.”

Haze shook just to see if she was really alive. She saw Lora and then she had a look of surprise on her face. Memories came flooding back to her, which is extremely rare for a Blade.

Time for a little review. Blades are awakened from Core Crystals, resonated with the person who awakened them, called a Driver. Once a Blade’s Driver dies, the Blade returns to their Core Crystal, but at a cost. Their memories are completely taken away from them, making it as if their previous Driver never existed. It was extremely rare for a Blade to recognize something and have memories come back to them.

“... Lady Lora? Is that... you?” Haze came over to Lora and slowly enveloped her arms around her. “I never thought that I’d be able to see you again, milady.” Haze looked over at Jin, then went over and slapped him.

“... I’m not even gonna ask. I expected that.” Jin said, still feeling his other cheek after Lora slapped him. Surprisingly enough, Lora didn’t question why Haze did that.

She looked over at Rex and the gang and bowed. “It’s been a while, Rex. Did you manage to get to Elysium?”

“Yeah, but if you mean wanting to hear the story, that’d be extremely…”

“Long, yeah, I get it. Though maybe you could get started on the way to wherever we’re going if you don’t mind.” Haze responded.

“Uh, sure,” Rex said. The group said their goodbyes to F and left along with Jin, Lora, and Haze.

“Ugh, where are they?” Kaede asked, looking out the front window. “They should’ve been here by now. Is what they’re doing really taking this long?”

“Kaede, love, you’ve been complaining about the others being gone for the past hour,” Rushana responded. “Honestly, I wish you’d calm down a little bit.”

“I guess, but…” Kaede was just about to finish when the door opened and Xavier, along with his group came through the door.

“Sorry if we’re late,” he said.

“Oh, don’t worry. You made it just in time for dinner,” Rushana told them, then looked at Lora and her two Blades. “Who are those guys?”

“This is Lora, and her two Blades, Jin, and Haze,” Xavier introduced. The three of them waved, then came into the place. “Where are Ace and the others?”

“They’re upstairs, just relaxing in their rooms,” Kaede told them. “Anyways, Xavier, you got the game plan for tomorrow?”

“Do you really think I don’t?”

“Well… never mind. I guess I’m just ready to hear it.”

“Alright then. Get everyone from their rooms to come down, then we can discuss.” Xavier requested. Kaede went upstairs and got Ace and his group to come down and eat prior to the meeting. They all sat around the table and Valkyrie put their relic down onto the table. The Heart gem glistened in the light, then revealed an interactive hologram map of the Isle.

“Okay then. Let’s discuss what’s happening tomorrow,” Xavier said, making sure everyone will be on the same page. “As we should know, the dot right here represents the Rune of Wood that we must acquire. At the top of the Solitary Peak, guarded by the Isle’s Great Witch, named Zela.”

“If I may, I’d like to talk about Zela,” Kaede told the group. Xavier nodded, wanting to know more regarding the Great Witch. “Thanks. I remember fighting Zela once when I still lived on the island. It was before I reunited with Rushana after eight years of being apart from her since I was eight years old.”

“You fought against her?” Ace asked, considering how young Kaede was when she did.

“Yes. My whole life has been devoted to getting stronger so that I can protect what I love,” Kaede explained, then started clenching her first. “However... while I managed to put up a good fight, Zela still managed to overpower me, and I lost.”

“But still, fighting her at such a young age, and being able to put up at least a decent fight is pretty remarkable,” Mòrag responded, admiring Kaede’s desire for more strength.

“You really think so?” Kaede blushed slightly at the comment. “At any rate, Zela is very strong and should not be taken lightly. She can summon fists of stone from the ground to attack you at any moment. She can also create huge whirlwinds, and is one of the best at fighting physically.”

“I see. I’ve also heard from F that Zela has a disciple as well, who is known as Cherun, and a retainer named Selica.” Jin mentioned.

“In that case, getting the Wood Rune will be harder than I thought,” Kaede added. “Hell, even getting to the top of the Solitary Peak will be hard to do. The island is hard to navigate through, and I haven’t been here in four years, so...”

“I could help with that,” Rushana said. Kaede turned to her girlfriend, but she was more than a little worried.

“Are you sure, Rushana? I may not remember much, but I do know that the island is dangerous if you’re not careful. I wouldn’t want you getting hurt.”

“Kaede, you can sometimes be a little worrisome. I’ll be fine, trust me.”

Kaede still had her doubts but decided to go on with it. Rushana then discussed with the group on how they will navigate through. Once the discussions were done, they all went upstairs to their rooms and slept, waiting for the big day ahead of them tomorrow.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for reading, and please only constructive criticism

No Easy Way Up

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The sunrise could be seen beyond the horizon. The beautiful orange glow brought light to the world. Xavier had gotten up early and was gazing in the direction of the sunrise. He felt a nice, cool breeze go through his hair, and that same breeze raised his black cape right into the air.

I remember doing this every morning back then. It really does help clear my head, and it just feels great in general, he thought to himself. He then felt the presence of his faithful companion. “You got up early, too?”

“You know I’m an early riser, Xavier,” Valkyrie responded, walking over until she was next to him. “The sunrise sure is beautiful. You’re always really fond of it.”

“Of course I am. It just reminds me of how beautiful life can be, despite the struggles. It also constantly reminds me of something else,” Xavier told her.

“What is that other reminder?”

He held Valkyrie’s hand, then looked over at her. “Our promise we made. Remember that?”

Valkyrie could never dream of forgetting their promise, even if it was made months ago.

Flashback - 6 months ago

The campfire was burning as midnight slowly approached. Xavier and Valkyrie sat side-by-side, trying to get to know each other better, having only met a few days ago. The two realized that they have a ton in common. Both of them wanted to get stronger in order to protect what they love. They both also wanted to overcome the hardships that they faced in the past. Even though they had just met, however, it seemed as if they had known each other for years. They were already bonding not just like friends, but like an actual family, which they never feel like they’ve truly experienced.

“You know, I never thought that I’d ever meet someone in your family as kind as you are. Your family has a... reputation for taking advantage of their title as an excuse for power,” Valkyrie told him.

“That’s true, as unfortunate as it is. My father was like that too. I never believed in any of that power-hungry crap that my family believed in. I always thought anyone who believed in being power-hungry was just a fucking idiot. My way for power is that you bond with the monsters that fight alongside you. Only then will they be able to achieve their full potential.”

Xavier explained, "You've known my family for generations. I humbly apologize for the ways of my ancestors."

"Xavier... you don't have to apologize. I know it must've been hard learning that your family has done all that. But... just be glad that you're different. Maybe you can be the one that changes your family forever so that you can put that reputation in the past. I really think- wha?" Xavier put his arms around Valkyrie. She was in shock, but Valkyrie returned the embrace.

"You're right, Valkyrie," he told her. "I can be the one to change the entire face of my family. Although I can't do it alone. If we work together, you and I can change it. I swear to protect you so that we can change my family's reputation, no matter what."

Valkyrie was extremely happy to hear that, but she wanted to make it clear that she wanted to stay with Xavier forever. "Xavier... promise me that not only will you protect me, but also that we'll stay together... forever."

Xavier looked at Valkyrie and held her hand, saying, "It's a promise."

End of flashback

"I haven't forgotten about it for these past few months. I never will," Valkyrie said, then put on a much more serious face. "But... do you really think a promise like that is possible to keep?"

"Of course, Valkyrie. No matter what, I want us to stay together. Losing that will always be the last thing on my mind," the two of them embraced again, and the cool breeze seemed to make Valkyrie's hair blow in that direction. The sunrise made Valkyrie seem to glow in a beautiful light.

"Xavier... please never leave me," Valkyrie said, meaning it through friendship, but her voice still sounded like something said by a goddess.

The two kept up their embrace for a while. Xavier then looked at Valkyrie and kissed her forehead. "I won't, Valkyrie."

Rushana woke up not too long after, went up to the roof, and rang the gong on top of it. The sound seemed to vibrate throughout the house. Everyone got up, especially Kaede who fell out of bed.

"Urgh. I forgot that Rushana had a gong as the 'alarm' to wake up," Kaede recalled, getting up from the floor. Everybody had their stuff ready and went outside the door to the back of the house.

“Seems like you all are wide awake,” Xavier mocked, with Valkyrie giggling in the back.

“Come on. Did our wake up call have to be a gong?” Ace questioned.

“I feel like she put it there just so she could laugh at us when we wake up,” Zeke said.

Kaede shook her head. “Nope, the gong’s always been here.”

“Anyways, enough about that. Rushana, what would be the fastest way to the Solitary Peak from here?” Xavier asked.

“From here, I’d go down that path,” Rushana pointed in the direction where the path was heading. The path looked extremely old, as it has been there for thousands of years. “There are some strong monsters in the way, but that’s the fastest way I can give you.”

“Alright then. Here’s the plan. Rex’s group will come with me. Everyone else will go to the docks and keep watch of our ship. Sounds good?”

“We’ve got it under control,” Teal told them, and led the group towards the docks.

“Ok, is everyone else well rested and ready to go?” The whole group nodded, and Xavier got them going. “Rushana, are you coming too?”

“Of course. Who else is going to keep my green life goddess company as we journey through?” Rushana asked, looking at her girlfriend.

“Excuse me? I’d be just fine, thank you very much. But it wouldn’t hurt to bring you along. Just be careful,” Kaede said. Rushana gave her a reassuring smile. The group then advanced to the path and set out on their quest.

“Yah!” Xavier dealt the final strike and defeated the Dragon Knights in their way. They were now at the foot of the mountain, which took three hours to get to. Rushana wasn’t lying when she said that the monsters here are pretty strong. That Storm Hawk Dragon, Kuarje really held them back, but at least they could manage. “We made it to the foot of the mountain.” He looked up and saw that the Solitary Peak was huge. Only the gods would know how high it was. “It’ll be a long trek up.”

“It’s been so long since I’ve been here. I remember having to climb up this entire mountain. Boy, that wasn’t easy, let me tell you that,” Kaede recalled.

“I can imagine. How long did it take you to climb this thing the first time?” Xavier asked.

“Too long. The Solitary Peak is beyond heights anyone could ever imagine.”

“Well. Might as well start walking then,” Mythra told the group. Everyone agreed and started walking on the path of the mountain.

“Flare Drall!” Xavier called, summoning his faithful and fiery dragon. He matched four Fire combos and the dragon defeated the monsters in their way. “Holy shit. There are way too many monsters here.”

“Yeah. They’re pretty strong too.” Mòrag said, unleashing the azure flames upon the monsters attacking her. The onslaught had stopped and the sun was below the horizon. “It would not be wise to travel during the night. We should rest here.”

“Agreed. Any further and we could have crazy strong monsters on our hands.” Kaede added. The decision was made to rest, so the group set up camp. Pyra and Jin made food for everyone, and the others just sat and talked.

“I’m intrigued by the way you battle. So different compared to just using the weapons of our Blades. Instead, it seems like the opposite, where the Driver, or Dragon Callers, as you call them, supply the power to the monsters, and then they attack,” Mòrag said.

“In a way, that’s how Jin and I used to battle. He and I would use his sword to fight whatever, or he would just go in and attack himself. The same thing with Haze,” Lora remembered.

“I still think you and Haze look like twins when you’re next to each other,” Mythra told her, then looked at the others. “Don’t you guys think so too?” Everyone agreed that Haze and Lora looked very similar. It was rare for a Blade to resemble their Driver so well.

“I could say the same about you and Pyra,” Haze responded jokingly. “Or maybe even Rex.”

Mythra’s face turned red in almost an instant. “I-I have no idea who you’re talking about... just shut up.” Everyone laughed. *Dammit, Haze. Now you too?*

“Xavier, what’s our next move?” Ace questioned.

“Well, we haven’t found any shortcuts at the moment, so we just stay on the path and keep defeating any monsters that stand in our way. That’s our best course of action for now.” Xavier was getting ready to sleep at that point. “Make sure to get some rest so that we’re fully energized for tomorrow.”

The night was quiet. Everyone had fallen asleep, getting ready for the next day. Everyone... except for Kaede. She had been awake for a few minutes. Realizing her girlfriend was sound asleep, Kaede managed to silently get out of her lover’s embrace and walked away from the group. Valkyrie heard some sort of walking noise and got up to see what was going on. She saw Kaede walking up the path on her own and secretly followed.

A little bit higher up the mountain was an excellent viewing area of the island. Kaede looked over yonder and saw the flower fields, where the flowers seemed to let off some sort of small glow, yet it was noticeable enough for her to see. She sat on the field of the viewing area and looked at the beautiful view.

“Can’t sleep?” Valkyrie asked, walking over to her.

“Oh. Did I wake you?”

“Not really. I just noticed you were gone and decided to follow,” Valkyrie told her. “This is a wondrous view, isn’t it?”

“It’s one of my favorite places. It helps take my mind off of things and gives me a calm feeling,” Kaede explained. Her voice sounded a bit concerned.

“You sound a little worried about something. You alright?”

“I’m fine. It’s really nothing to get concerned over.” Kaede lied.

“Come on. I know you well enough to know that you’re never awake at this time unless you’re worried about something,” Valkyrie said sympathetically.

“... Ok. The thing is...” Kaede paused, taking a few deep breaths. “I’m scared.”

“Scared?” Valkyrie was surprised. Kaede was the type of person who wasn’t afraid of anything. “Of what?”

“Of facing Zela again,” Kaede admitted, the mere thought of this making her feel uneasy.

“Why are you scared?”

Kaede took another deep breath and looked at Valkyrie. “Do you know what an irrational fear is?” Valkyrie nodded. “Well, I have an irrational fear of failure.”

“Failure? Isn’t that sort of...”

“Rational, I know. I just consider it to be irrational,” Kaede said, continuing, “Anyways, I don’t know if I’ve told you this before. But the reason I’m one of Xavier’s allies is that I’ve been training under him for the last four years.” Kaede was a bit uneasy but kept a straight face. “I battled Zela again about five to six years ago. This was after Rushana and I fell in love. I battled as hard as I could, but... I lost once more.”

Valkyrie could imagine what battling a Great Witch would be like. They both knew Zela was incredibly strong.

“Rushana witnessed that battle, then recommended that I train with Xavier. I want to show Rushana that I took advantage of my four years with him. But I’m really scared that I’ll let her down. Not to mention Xavier as well.” Kaede just looked down at her sword.

“Sometimes I just feel like I’m not good enough for anyone, even if I do train.”

“Don’t say that, Kaede,” Valkyrie said. “I’m sure that Rushana would be proud of you no matter what you do.”

“I know that, but...”

“But nothing. You’re a strong fighter, probably one of the strongest I’ve ever met. You’re brave and you never give up a fight. On top of that, you have such a supportive girlfriend. I’m sure she’d be proud knowing you tried.”

Kaede never thought Valkyrie knew so much about her. She’s only known Valkyrie for a month. “I understand that. But do I really have the strength to take someone like Zela head-on?”

“I’m sure you do. Just stop doubting yourself or that makes it worse,”

“... You’re right,” Kaede said. “I might have the potential to take on someone as strong as her. Although... a little more practice wouldn’t hurt either. Would you mind sparring with me?”

“I thought you’d never ask,” Valkyrie responded, eager to see what Kaede has in store for her. They both got up and Valkyrie went about 20 steps away from Kaede. They both took out their swords and readied themselves. “Bring it, sister.”

“Oh, I will,” Kaede seemed more serious now. Kaede ran towards Valkyrie and their swords clashed, and they kept their duel going. When it came to sword fighting, Valkyrie was at the advantage. She had been perfecting many sword techniques for generations. Kaede wasn’t surprised by how skillful her opponent was, considering Valkyrie is one of the tri-gods.

The two of them dueled for quite a while, and it was sunrise by the time they came back to the campground. Everyone was awake by the time the two returned.

“Where have you two been?” Xavier asked.

“Let’s just say Kaede wanted to spar with me,” Valkyrie responded.

“Fair enough.” The group had finished packing their things. “Come on, let’s keep moving. The mountain won’t climb itself, will it?”

The group then started advancing on the path. Valkyrie and Kaede looked at each other, smiling, then joined the others.

The group got far in their advance, however, they came to a point where the path ended.

“Shit, the path ends here,” Nia said.

“In that case, we go up!” Rex replied. Rex took out his anchor and fired it at the cliff, and carefully began scaling the rock, hoping he wouldn’t fall.

“Of course you were going to say that. Well, I don’t think anyone else has an idea on how to-”

“Poppi, initiate jet boosters,” Tora said.

“Easy.” Xavier got a bunch of Wood Orbs from the ground and combined them, creating a vine tied to a rock on the higher end of the cliff. Valkyrie got on Xavier’s back and he climbed the cliff no problem. Mòrag used her whip swords, Zeke used his Sonic Thunderslash to speed up there. Everybody else used their Soul Armor.

Dammit, Nia thought, and of course, she was the last one up, thanks to the vine Xavier created. “This really isn’t easy to climb, is it?”

“It’s the Solitary Peak. Of course it’s not easy to climb,” Kaede told her. “At least we have the path we can still walk on.” Just as the last person got up the cliff, a monster named Tree Dragon, Ash, along with two more of the same dragon, appeared before them. “Well, now we’ve gotta fight. Let’s go.”

Chapter End Notes

You may be wondering how these chapters are being updated pretty quickly. The first 10 should be out easily. The others... not so much. Thanks for reading, and only constructive criticism comments!

Whirl of Emotions

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Kaede did have her talk with Valkyrie earlier, but she still had doubts. Sure, she knew her friend was right, but still... Kaede felt like there was something missing. Her irrational fear was still spiraling throughout her body, and she still felt some sort of lack of confidence within her.

“Hey Kaede, you feeling okay?” Valkyrie asked, seeing her friend in a bit of a downstate.

“Huh? Oh yeah, sorry, I was just spacing out,”

“If you say so.” The group had just reached the point where the mountain interfered with the clouds. The group advanced, and in a number of minutes, they were above the clouds, and the peak of the mountain was in view.

“What a beautiful sight to behold,” Mòrag said. They looked over the clouds and saw the whole entire island from there. The vast forests and fields of the island would make one feel so alive.

“We’re getting close. Might take just a day or so to get to the peak,” Kaede said. “If you want to rest, there’s a perfect place to camp up ahead.”

A beautiful flat bit of land on the mountain was what awaited the group when they arrived. Kaede was right, it was the perfect place to camp.

“Ok, guys. We’ll stop here for today,” Xavier told everyone. The whole group was getting a bit tired of walking, so they were relieved when they got to the camping area.

“I can start cooking food if you guys want to eat,” Pyra said.

“We should. I’ll help you out,” Jin responded, starting the fire while Pyra got the ingredients.

“Kaede. Another thing... Once we do get to the peak, what should we expect to see?” Xavier asked.

“Well, when I came here, this is what I saw. We should approach a cave once we get to the peak, which houses the Summit Horn Wisedragon, Bacches. Bacches is also known as the Guardian of Cyclone Castle. Once we defeat him, a path will reveal itself and we can walk to the castle. Zela will be waiting for us in there.”

“What is Zela’s fighting style?” Ace questioned.

“Zela is an all-out offensive fighter. She uses these metal gloves that enhance her physical power. Again, she can summon wind storms and stone fists from the ground.” Kaede explained.

“Damn. That makes her pretty powerful then.”

“It sure does,” Kaede responded.

“We will also take on her disciple, Cherun, and Selica, one of the five Dracoblades, who wanted to test our strength as well.”

“I guess,” Kaede got up and started walking. “I’m going to go off for a bit to train.”

“I’ll go with her,” Valkyrie told them.

“Alright. Stay safe, you too. Call for help if you need us,” Xavier reminded her. The two nodded and left for another field ahead of the campgrounds.

“They haven’t been back for a long time now. It’s dark now and it’s been four hours,” Rushana said, getting worried.

“That’s true. Should we go check on them? They said they were a bit ahead of the camp?” Xavier asked, also getting a little worried. Rushana nodded, so they both went to where they were training. They heard swords clashing with each other. When they got to the place, they saw Kaede and Valkyrie dueling with one another. Kaede summoned a cyclone and knocked Valkyrie back, but Valkyrie’s shield protected her.

“You’re really strong, Kaede. At this rate, you’ll be strong enough to beat her,” Valkyrie said.

“Yeah, but I’m still in doubt,” Kaede responded, putting away her sword to catch her breath. “I really don’t think that I’ll be able to get over being scared to fight Zela again.”

“Kaede, you should really stop doubting yourself. You’re making me worried,” Valkyrie replied, going over to her.

“Look, I get that I should stop, but... I’m just too fearful,” Kaede was definitely not acting the way she usually does in these kinds of situations. “I remember her saying something to me when I first fought her, and then, just remembering that is part of the fear.”

“What did she say?”

“She said this: ‘Kaede, the fact that you cast a shadow over your own weaknesses isn’t helping you. You let your second personality overpower you in battle. When that happens, something stops you from truly unleashing your strength, because you keep holding back. Find that strength, because you’ll never be able to earn the respect of others if you keep doing this!’” Kaede said, hesitating a bit after.

One part of this sentence caught Valkyrie’s eye. “A... second personality?”

Rushana was also in shock. “Kaede has never told me anything about this.”

"I... guess I never properly told you about myself," Kaede said to Valkyrie. "The thing is... I-,"

"Kaede... why have you never mentioned this to me?" Rushana went over to Kaede, looking worrisome.

"Rushana... where did you...?"

"You and Valkyrie haven't been back for a while, so we thought we'd come and check on you guys," Xavier replied, coming over to the group. He went over to Valkyrie and embraced her. "You had me a little worried."

"Sorry, Kaede and I were training and we lost track of time, it seems," Valkyrie replied apologetically, hugging him back. Kaede was trying her best to resist her girlfriend's urges, but she felt as if she had to explain.

"Kaede, sweetheart, please. I need to know what's going on."

"A-Alright," Kaede said, sitting on a nearby rock. The other three came to her and sat down. "I've never told this to you, Xavier, have I?"

"I've never heard you talk about this second personality."

"I never told anyone because I'd always feel so ashamed about it after my first fight with Zela," Kaede said, looking downward. "This personality is one I usually have during battle, and by battle, I don't mean training. I become way more aggressive than I usually am, and don't really care about anything else other than the battle."

"Kaede..." Rushana all of a sudden got a little worried.

"Zela was able to defeat me because I got too greedy with my tactics and tried to take her out as aggressively, and as quickly as possible," Kaede continued. "Because of my cockiness, Zela managed to easily find any opportunity to attack, and that's how she beat me."

"I knew you were a little cocky back then, but I never thought you were like that," Rushana said. "What I want to know is what caused this 'second personality' to start occurring inside you?"

"To be honest with you, I have no idea," Kaede still thought about its cause to this day. "Why didn't you tell anyone?" Xavier asked.

"Because I always thought I'd be weirded out for it. I didn't want to hurt my own image, I guess."

"It's definitely... interesting. I've never heard anything like this before. I'm still surprised you haven't told this to Rushana."

"We might've been able to help you if you had just told us, honeybun," Rushana said, holding her girlfriend tightly.

“I know. I just...” Kaede took a deep breath, then muttered quietly, “How am I supposed to explain this?”

All was quiet for a few moments before Xavier broke the silence. “You don’t have to explain it if you don’t feel comfortable doing so. Whenever you feel like it’s the best time to do so, you can go ahead and tell us.”

“Thanks, Xavier,” Kaede said gratefully. He sounded just how a mentor would when giving advice to their apprentice. “Anyways... we should probably be heading back. The others will be worried about us.”

“We should,” Valkyrie agreed. Everyone got up and headed back to camp. Rushana looked at Kaede worriedly, concerned about how she’s doing. Kaede felt a sense in her relief, a huge weight taken off her shoulders. However, now she had the fight to behold tomorrow. That was her third battle against the Great Witch of the Solitary Peak.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading! Only constructive criticism in the comments!

Into The Storm

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The crew walked on the trail after packing their things.

“Just a little more, guys. The entrance to the cave is in sight,” Xavier directed, pointing towards the giant chasm within sight. “Is that where the Wisedragon of this Island is?”

“That’s it, alright,” Kaede confirmed, making a careful advance towards the entrance.

“Remember, Bacches is incredibly defensive, and extremely strong when it hits, so be on your guard.” Everyone nodded and Xavier let Kaede lead the way. With only mere torches shining through the pitch black caves, it was incredibly difficult to see. Valkyrie pulled out her sword and it gave off a white, radiant light that lit up the rest of the cave, revealing the statue of the Summit Horn Wisedragon itself.

“Kaede, it’s just a statue here. Are you sure this is the right place?” Lance asked.

“I can confirm it,” Kaede walked over to the statue and held out her hand. An endless amount of Wood Orbs started appearing all around her. “El Alam Dragoza Nims Bacches. I awaken you from your slumber, almighty Summit Horn Wisedragon.” The Wood Orbs were slowly being absorbed into the statue and a green aura formed around the structure. The colors changed from a light brown to forest green, the plates becoming bronze, along with the horns and claws becoming a valiant gold. The dragon appeared before them, giving off a menacing roar.

“I am the Summit Horn Wisedragon! Who dares summon me?” the Wisedragon spoke, through the use of telepathy.

“It is I... Kaede, the Mountain God’s Wind Dragon Caller. I’m sure you recall that we have met once before.”

Bacches looked down at her. “Ah, yes. I do recall that time. You were such a reckless teenager back then.”

“H-Hey. You’re embarrassing me in front of these guys.”

“Oh well, some things never change, do they? I assume you summoned me to gain access to the Cyclone Castle?” The whole group nodded. “As you know, per tradition, those who attempt to gain access must first make it past me.”

“That is a known fact. Which is why...” Everyone drew their weapons, preparing for battle. “We’re going to take you down right here.”

“We shall see.” Bacches unleashed a ground-shaking stomp at the group. “BRING IT ON!”

The group was blown back by Bacches' roar. The golden parts of his body became charged with electricity.

"The real fight starts now. Get prepared," Kaede told everyone.

The huge Wisedragon looked down upon them. "True strength is one thing. But your endurance is another. I'd like to test yours," A magical green circle appeared under the dragon. "Bacches Enhancement!" A green aura suddenly appeared on Bacches, and he shook the ground with his stomp once again, only this time, the tremor was much bigger.

"What is that?" Rex asked, trying to attack him with his blasts of fire, which were now doing pretty much nothing.

"Bacches Enhancement. Multiplies Bacches' power by five, and increases his defenses," Kaede replied, striking the legs of the Wisedragon.

"FIVEFOLD?" Rex said, extremely surprised.

"Prepare yourselves!" Bacches was surrounded by green thunderbolts, and he got into a head butting position.

"Look out, here it comes!" Mòrag warned. Everyone got out of the way, except Kaede.

"Kaede, what are you doing? Get out of there!" Rushana tried to run over to Kaede, but Bacches unleashed his attack first.

"Thunderhorn Destruction!" Bacches charged directly at Kaede then all went into dust.

"Kaede!" Rushana yelled worriedly. As they waited for the dust to settle, Rushana held her heart with both hands, hoping her girlfriend was okay.

The dust eventually settled, and what she saw was astonishing. Kaede was there, holding out both her hands, and creating a shield of Wood Orbs, stopping Bacches in his tracks.

Kaede was struggling to hold him, and Bacches was slowly getting through. "Come on, come on..." Kaede pleaded, hoping the shield would last long enough.

Eventually, she managed to bring enough force to use the shield and managed to turn it into an attack, blowing Bacches back a fair bit. She, along with the others managed to land many strikes on him. Eventually, he stopped the attacks.

"That'll be enough now," Bacches said, going back to his podium. "You've proven that you're strong enough. I can see how much of a formidable swordswoman you've become, and a Dragon Caller as well. I see true potential within you, something that has yet to be unleashed."

"I... Thank you, almighty Wisedragon," Kaede bowed before him.

"Challenge Zela with everything you have, and take this as well." Bacches rolled a green sphere towards Kaede, and she picked it up.

“Is this... an Egg Drop?”

“It is indeed. I have seen enough to the point that I’m willing to give you an Egg Drop of me, Bacches. I hope it’ll help in your fight.” Bacches then returned to the stone statue he was before, and a boulder in front of the cave was removed, showing a huge vine bridge towards the Cyclone Castle.

Here we go, Kaede thought to herself, advancing along the bridge. The others followed after. The castle was just as Kaede remembered it to be. A huge whirlwind was swirling on a cloud podium, with four taller whirlwinds acting as the towers. When the group arrived, the whirlwind sensed their presence and created a hole big enough for all of them to fit through. Inside was a rugged battlefield, with many rooms surrounding it. At the other end of the field, there was an emerald throne, with two torches on each side of it, and sitting there was the Great Witch of the Stone Fists, Zela.

“Hm? Kaede, is that you?” the Great Witch asked, taking a stand. “It’s been years since you last came to my castle.”

“It really has, Zela” Kaede and Rushana both bowed, and the others I followed suit.

“Oh, and is this the great Dragon Master, Xavier? Along with his fiancée, Valkyrie - Ciel?”

“W-We’re not lovers! L-Let alone... engaged,” Valkyrie told her. Xavier just turned away in embarrassment, while the others laughed.

“Suuure. You totally don’t love him,” Zela teased. “Well, enough of that. I heard you were coming for the Rune of Wood, is that correct?”

Xavier nodded.

“The only way I’d give it to you is if you take me down. I highly doubt you can take me on, especially with my disciple here... Cherun!”

From one side of the field, a door opened, and Zela’s Bubble hat-wearing disciple came out of there.

“Lady Zela, you called for me?” she asked.

“I did. These guys want the Rune of Wood... care to help me out?”

“Of course, milady.” Cherun summoned two ice fists using her small, icicle staff. Zela put on her gauntlets and two stone fists appeared next to her.

“Alright, game plan. Rex’s group will take Cherun. My group will-” Xavier didn’t finish when Kaede interrupted him.

“I’m fighting Zela alone!” Kaede said loudly. Everyone turned to her.

“Kaede, you can’t. Zela’s way too strong. You’ll lose like you did-”

“Can you at least be a bit supportive, Rushana?” Kaede questioned. Rushana bowed apologetically. “At any rate, I want to redeem myself after I lost to you last time, Zela. I want to show you how I’ve changed!”

Zela looked at Kaede, and nodded. “Alright, if that’s what you want. I guess I’ll call in another friend of mine to even out the playing field. Selica!”

There was a brief whirlwind on Zela's left, and the Master of Nine Strikes appeared right out of it, a blade in each hand. “I’m ready, milady.”

“Let’s go, you guys!” Xavier called, and the group split into two portions. Rex’s group fought Cherun, while Xavier, Valkyrie, and Rushana went up against Selica. That left Kaede with Zela.

With a shing, Kaede pulled out her jade sword, and held in both of her hands. “I’ve been waiting for this, Kaede. If you’ve really changed, then prove it with your strength.” They both charged at each other, and the fight began.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading! Constructive criticism in the comments only please!

Memories Forever Forgotten

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Argh!” Kaede yelled as her sword clashed with Zela’s metal gauntlet. Zela gathered Wood Orbs and counter-attacked with an uppercut, and Kaede was sent flying to the other end of the battlefield. The Great Witch put a summoning circle right under Kaede and a stone fist appeared out of it, grabbing her. “Let me go!” Kaede said with hostility, writhing to try and escape.

“You haven’t changed at all from our last fight. You’re still holding back, and your second personality is getting a hold of you again. I’m disappointed,” Zela slammed Kaede onto the battlefield. “You might as well give up now. You have no hope of defeating me.”

Kaede was struggling to get up. However, she couldn’t lose this fight. “You’re... wrong, Zela. You don’t understand why. I’m not just fighting for myself anymore... I have people to actually fight for. My friends, my mentor, and... my lover.”

Rushana looked over and saw Kaede, and started to look worried. Kaede looked back and gave her a reassuring smile. “That’s why I have to win. I can’t stay in the shadows any longer... I must surpass my weaknesses... and protect what I love!” Kaede revealed an Egg Drop in the handle of her sword. “YAMATSUMI DRAGON!”

The Egg Drop began to glow, and out of it came the dragon that Kaede had summoned. “Dimension Formation - Green Life!” The dragon unleashed a roar and all the orbs surrounding Kaede became Wood and Hearts. Kaede matched as many as she could, and got on to her dragon, commanding it to go into the air. “This is where you’re wrong, Zela. Being able to fight for something... That’s what unleashes my potential. Now I have people I fight for. My friends... my sisters... and my girlfriend,”

“So she does know... or does she?” Zela told herself. She used a summoning circle to propel herself into the air. “Well, if that’s what makes you stronger, PROVE IT!”

“... Soul Brave,” Kaede became surrounded in a green glow, adrenaline flowing throughout her body. Her dragon roared, and she got on. “Lend me your strength, Yamatsumi Dragon. Let us become one and finish this!” At this point, nobody was fighting, instead watching the intense battle that was taking place right in front of them.

Zela gathered all her strength, the Great Witch’s fists being surrounded by monstrous winds. As she saw the emerald glow coming from her opponent’s sword, a fierce tornado spawned under her. She charged towards Kaede, not holding anything back. “Show me all your strength!”

“Calamitous Cyclone Strike!” Kaede jumped off Yamatsumi Dragon, becoming surrounded by crazy fast winds, her sword glowing a forest green. Zela used all her strength, jumping

straight at Kaede, the metal gauntlets and glowing sword clashing with a loud BANG! A huge explosion was created, and all that could be seen was dust.

“Kaede...” Rushana said, clasping her hands together, hoping her lover was okay. The dust cleared after some time, and the two battlers were standing on opposite sides of the field, carrying visible scratches and scars on their bodies, both breathing heavily. Zela was the first to fall, but managed to barely support herself with her hands.

To Kaede, the world around her seemed to disappear, and she fell to the ground, her sword falling out of her hands. Rushana instantaneously ran over, so did Xavier and Valkyrie.

“Kaede, love, please say something,” Rushana said, holding Kaede in her arms. After a few moments, Kaede opened her eyes, the Dragon Caller tried to stand, but needed support from Rushana. “You battled hard. No words can express how proud I am of you, sweetheart.”

“Heh, thanks,” the Dragon Caller said, getting her sword and sheathing it, coughing a bit.

“I’ll take the healing part from here. Odin Dragon!” Xavier summoned one of his allies, and it used its skill, Draupnir. Kaede and Zela both felt a surge of energy throughout their bodies, the damage they received slowly fading.

“Wow... You’ve really grown into a remarkable young woman, Kaede,” Zela came over, putting her hands on her shoulders. “You managed to put your other self behind you, and at the same time, achieve your true strength. Looks like your training with the Dragon Master himself paid off.”

“I guess so...” Kaede responded, smiling. Yet, she couldn’t help but feel a little uncomfortable for some reason. Only to realize the pain would come up.

“You did keep your promise, right?” Zela questioned. Kaede all of a sudden started to shake and hesitate a bit. Rushana held her, but she couldn’t stop it.

“Uh... I...” Kaede’s breathing began to pick up speed.

“You didn’t. Nobody knows about what happened... back then.”

“Please... don’t say anything,”

“Kaede. I told you that you have to tell people about what happened. Why didn’t you?”

“I-It’s because I didn’t want them to-”

“Kaede... is everything okay?” Valkyrie asked, a look of worry on her face.

Kaede acted like she didn’t know what Valkyrie was talking about, stuttering, “Y-yeah. Everything is okay. W-Why wouldn’t it be?”

“Look. You’ve got to tell them. I know it’s hard, but you-”

“Shut up! I’m not saying anything about what happened to me as a child. I refuse!” Kaede all of a sudden bolted through the door of the Cyclone Castle, running as far away as she could, and not looking back.

“Shit. That wasn’t supposed to happen,” Zela said, beating herself up a bit over what just occurred, then sitting back on her throne, arms crossed.

“What do you mean when you said what happened back then, Zela?” Xavier asked. Rushana was a bit in tears, but wanted to hear as well.

“I… I didn’t want you to find out this way. I really didn’t. But, I guess I don’t have a choice. Are you sure you want to hear it?” Everyone nodded. Zela took a deep breath, and then began to tell them what occurred.

Flashback - 12 years ago

“You weak, insolent child!” Kaede’s father said, slapping her hard. Kaede recoiled back, feeling the intense pain. Kaede’s mother also approached her, looking extremely pissed off. All the while, Kaede’s two sisters, Sumire and Tsubaki, just watched, doing absolutely nothing to calm her parents.

“This was never supposed to happen. You weren’t supposed to fall for her! You are intended to keep this bloodline alive, but no, you want to go off and fall in love with your best friend! I can’t believe you wouldn’t listen to us!”

“Mommy! Daddy! I’m sorry! Please, just sto-” Kaede was horrified, crying and begging for them to stop.

“We’ve had enough of you, Kaede!” both her parents said, opening the door and throwing her as far away as they could, with her sword. “Never come back here again, you-!”

Kaede was too upset to hear the last part of the sentence, crying and knocking on the door, screaming at her parents to let her back in.

She gave up after hours and hours, and she took her sword, getting away from the house. “I swear to the gods. I’ll get stronger and when I find you guys again… You will feel the wrath of my sword. Mark my words.”

4 years later - still in flashback

Kaede knew that she was at her parents’ house when she saw the green coloring of the structure. “So they never changed the color. What idiots.” Kaede slowly approached her family’s home. She knocked on the door, gathering Wood Orbs. It took a while, but her parents eventually opened it, seeing that it was Kaede. They instantly closed it, only for her to kick it, the door flying across to the other end of the house.

“Knock knock!” Kaede said, taking out her sword, the blade absorbing the Orbs. “It’s about time that I finally got my revenge.” Her parents both took out their swords.

“Kaede. Stop this right now! You’re not allowed here!” her father told her.

“I never asked, asshole!” Kaede yelled.

“What did you just call your father?” her mother responded angrily.

“I’ve had enough of you guys never loving me the way you should’ve. It’s time to end your reign over this family. I’m here to fight both of you... to death!”

The two parents looked at each other, and then looked at their former daughter. “You have no right to say that. You’re no longer a part of thi-”

“Who gives a shit about what you say, you ass! I’m here to relieve the pain I’ve kept for 14 goddamn years. If you have anything to say, you might as well tell me now, for they will be your last words.”

“There’s only one thing we have to say to you, Kaede!” the two said, getting into their battle stances. “DIE!” The two charged at her, and Kaede readied herself to fight for her well being.

“Hrah!” Kaede cried out, stabbing her mother right in the heart. She watched as the sword went into her mother, then she took it out, leaving her to die. Her father watched as Kaede’s mother died, the blood on the hands of his own daughter. Kaede turned toward him, and slowly advanced, clashing swords with him. Eventually, she managed to knock the sword out of his hand and cornered him.

“W-Wait, Kaede. Stop, there’s no need for us to fight. I’m sorry for everything... just please don’t hurt me,” Kaede’s father begged. But to her, it was too late. She started to choke her father, pinning him to the wall.

“I don’t want an apology... I want to see you die! Let’s hope your miserable time in hell will teach you a lesson!” She started slicing at his neck, and her father screamed in pain, dying after mere seconds. Kaede started breathing heavily, but then realized what she had done. She walked out of her house, her hands covered in the blood of her parents, and sheathed her sword. Only a little time passed before Zela appeared.

Kaede stood before the Great Witch, falling to her knees. She knew trouble was coming. “Z-Zela, Great Witch of the Solitary Peak. W-What could possibly bring you-”

“Don’t try to sugarcoat it, Kaede. You know that I see everything that goes on throughout the island. I know what you just did to the people who brought you into this world!” The Jade Dragon Caller slowly backed away, fearing the punishments that she could face for murdering her own parents.

“Yeah, and those wastes of space didn’t raise me at all. You have no idea what they did to me. Hell, they even threw me out of my own fucking home!”

“Silence!” A whirlwind started forming under Zela. “Unless you want to be sent into my stormy wrath then shut up!” Kaede kept her mouth shut, visibly shaking, and eventually everything blanked out as she fell to the ground.

She had been unconscious for a few hours now. Kaede was lying in the makeshift bed that was set up for her. Waking up, with nothing but the stone walls around her, she tried to get up

noticing her sword on one side of the bed. Eventually sitting up, Kaede felt a bit light-headed, having to support herself in order to fully get up.

“Ugh, my head,” she complained, putting a hand over it. She eventually remembered what happened before she passed out, then went out the door.

“So... you’re finally awake,” Zela spoke after she heard the door close. Kaede couldn’t bring herself to speak, her eyes filled with fear, hoping that the Great Witch would have mercy.

“I... I’ll take whatever punishment you see fit. Even if the murder of my parents cost me my life.”

“Don’t worry, Kaede. You are not to be punished.”

“Wait, what? But I-”

“I honestly thought that you would bring your parents down. I always resented them for one reason or another. I can see why you would go to such lengths... even if it’s not right,” Zela said, getting up from her throne. “However...”

Kaede gulped. “However?”

“I want you for others to realize about your past, mainly to offer condolences and any help moving on from this.”

“I don’t want people to know about this. My life could be put on the line if people know... and I could lose friendships with people I bond with if I do.” The fear in her eyes turned into tears, and she tried her best to hide them.

Zela sighed, being understanding, then resumed what she was saying. “It’ll be hard, but you’ll also never be able to let go of what happened if you don’t.”

“I... Alright. I promise. Only if I get to battle you one day.” Zela nodded at her words, and signaled for Kaede to take her leave.

End of flashback

“I never knew Kaede was abused by her parents. They seemed so nice to me,” Rushana said.

“They threw her out because of her sexuality, and being a lesbian myself, I know how it feels to be shot down by people who don’t like that way of thinking,” Zela responded.

“Now that we know the story, we really should look for her.”

“But friend Kaede could be anywhere on island. It take us forever to look,” Tora said, his ears flapping around.

“Xavier, you and your group should head back to her house. Rushana and I will look for her. I hope to have her back to you guys by tomorrow morning or earlier,” Zela told them. The group nodded and left. Zela and Rushana then immediately left to search for Kaede.

“I really didn’t want to do this. But what does it matter? They all probably hate me now.” Kaede took out her sword, and held her Egg Drops in her hand. “You’ll soon be free, you two. I’m not needed in this world. I hope you’ll find a better Dragon Caller than me.” Kaede held the sword in her hand and aimed it at her neck. She sighed, tears coming out of her eyes as she readied herself. Slowly bringing the sword closer to her throat, Kaede muttered her last words. “Rushana... I love you more than anything else in the world. I’m sorry to have been such a burden to you over the years.”

“Don’t even think about it, Kaede,” Zela said, jumping right in front of her, pulling the blade right out of her hands.

Kaede got up and ran to get it, but Rushana blocked her way. “Rushana, move. This is for your own good”

“I’d rather be burned alive than have to watch you commit suicide,” Rushana said, not moving an inch.

“Why do you want to save me? A girl who has blood on her hands. A girl who can never make anyone proud. A girl who-”

“Kaede... CAN YOU SHUT THE FUCK UP AND LISTEN?” Rushana yelled, instantly covering her mouth after she did, regretting the way she said it. Kaede instantly stopped resisting and looked her in the eyes, not wanting to make things any worse than they already are.

“S-Sorry. I shouldn’t have raised my voice like that,” Rushana apologized, clearing her throat, then looked at her girlfriend. “Kaede... Zela told me everything. What you did was horrid, but you shouldn’t kill yourself because of your past.”

“But... I murdered my own parents, and I never kept my promise to Zela. I’m such a failure... So why are you trying to save me?”

“Kaede...” Rushana looked at Zela. “Could you leave us alone to talk, Zela? I can take her back home from here,” Zela nodded, and then started making her way back to the Cyclone Castle, while the two stayed to talk. Rushana went over and stroked Kaede’s cheek, wiping away at the tears. “Sweetheart... who you were back then isn’t who you are now. What you are is one of the strongest people I’ve ever met. You’re kind, strong, brave, caring, and so much more. You’re the greatest friend I ever had, always protecting me from danger, listening to me when I was upset, and most of all... you taught me to face my fears head on, and to never give up, no matter how serious or complicated the problem was. Kaede, you are the Dragon Caller... the valiant heroine that swept me off my feet. Know that I love you more than any words could ever say. No matter what happened to you in the past, I’ll help you let go of it... even if it takes the rest of my life.”

Kaede’s eyes watered at her words. Nobody had ever cared for her this much. Kaede kissed her girlfriend, harder than she ever had before, to the point where they could barely breathe.

Then, they shared an embrace, and Kaede let all the tears that have haunted her for 22 years flow across her cheeks. “Rushana... I’m so sorry for beating myself up. I-I love you too.”

“Shhh. I know, Kaede. Just let it all out. It’s okay... I’m right here, my love.” Rushana said, letting her own tears out as well.

The sunset was once again upon the group as they stood at the docks, boarding the ship. Xavier, Valkyrie, Kaede, and Rushana all still stood there while everyone else was boarding.

“I’ll see you soon, Kaede. I can’t wait to see how much you improve when we meet again,” Rushana said, holding her lover’s hand.

“Bye, Rushana. I love you.” Kaede responded, kissing her.

“Actually... that won’t be necessary, you two. I had been thinking about how much you both missed each other and I want to ask you something, Rushana,” Xavier said, smiling. “How would you like to come with us?”

Rushana’s eyes instantly lit up. “Wait... really? Of course I will.”

“Are you for real, Xavier?” Kaede asked.

“I figured with the... incident that we learned about, I believed it was about time that Rushana came with us, to provide some motivation and help you out.”

“Xavier... thank you so much!” Kaede exclaimed happily, hugging Xavier, then going back to Rushana. “In that case... I think it’s time.”

“Time for what?” Valkyrie seemed a bit confused. So did Xavier and Rushana.

Kaede looked back at Rushana, and wrapped her arms around her, staring into her eyes. “Rushana... the love of my life. From the moment I first laid my eyes on you, I instantly knew I had to befriend you. I never thought at the time that we’d become lovers. You have always been the greatest friend I’ve ever had. When we fell in love, I knew you’d be the light that destroyed the shadows of the path I was walking. I want to tell you that I’ve loved you since the moment you and I first met. Now... under the most beautiful sunset I’ve ever seen on this island, I thought that it’s time to do something I’ve been wanting to do for years.” Kaede went into the pockets of her kimono, and pulled out a tiny box. Kaede kneeled as she felt the wind blowing in her direction, raising her cape. She opened the box and looked up at Rushana as she did. Inside it was a golden ring, glistening with a radiant light in the sunset. On the top was a shining green emerald, which she knew was Rushana’s favorite gemstone. “Rushana... the goddess that enlightened my life... will you marry me?”

Rushana could barely comprehend what she was seeing right now. Her girlfriend was kneeling right before her, her cape sailing in the wind, and holding an engagement ring. Rushana teared up with joy, her hands over her mouth in surprise. “Oh my god... I-I must be dreaming.” Rushana had envisioned moments like this, but never thought that it would

actually happen. Kaede kneeling, with a ring, and wearing a beautiful smile on her face. “You’re actually asking me to marry you.”

“What’ll it be, my love?”

“Yes. Yes, a million times over. Of course I’ll take your hand in marriage, Kaede... my deity of green life!” Rushana said, as she held her hand out and let Kaede put the ring on her.

“It’s beautiful on you, Rushana. I’m looking forward to our wedding day,” Kaede responded, standing up and kissing her deeply.

In the back, Valkyrie wiped a tear, and even Xavier did too. Valkyrie broke the silence, whispering, “Such a beautiful scene.”

The two looked at them, signaling that they were ready to board the ship. Valkyrie came over and hugged the newly engaged couple. Xavier congratulated them, then they all got on, ready to head to the next island.

Chapter End Notes

Aww, wasn't that proposal cute? Anyways, thanks for reading, as always, and leave only constructive criticism in the comments!

There will be implied sexual content in the next chapter. You have been warned :).

Freezing Our Friendship

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The ocean blue was quite calm this time of year. Everyone was below deck either chatting, playing a team strategy game, or enjoying tea. Kaede, Rushana, Xavier, Valkyrie, and Pyra were all enjoying a tea break and started talking about the recent events that had taken place.

“Kaede, Rushana. Congratulations on your engagement. Mythra and I just can’t stop thinking about it!” Pyra happily said, drinking the tea.

“Thanks. Frankly, I’m still comprehending it myself,” Rushana responded, smiling.

Rex came into the room, back from sparring with Lance. “Room for one more?”

“There’s always room for another, my friend,” Xavier told him, getting a chair so he could sit down. “How’d the sparring go?”

“It went alright. Lance is pretty strong, though. Even with Mythra and her Foresight, it proved a tough challenge.”

“Somehow, I knew you’d say that,” Xavier replied, then looked at Valkyrie. “You and I will spar once we’re done here. Is that okay with you?”

“You know I never back down from that sort of request, Xavier,” Valkyrie said, fixing her orange hat. “I’m ready when you are.”

“In that case, we’ll take our leave for now,” Xavier got up and went out of the room, with Valkyrie following close behind. “We should arrive within a few hours.”

Within that time the group arrived at the island, which was covered in snow and ice, yet seemed to shine with such a soft glow. Of course, the frigid air wasn’t tolerated so well when it came to Xavier’s group, with a few exceptions.

“I-I-I-It’s so c-c-c-cold,” Nia said, going up to Pyra for warmth.

Not again, the red-haired Aegis thought. Zeke just seemed to stand there casually, along with Pandoria, his blade. After all, he grew up on the Titan of Genbu in Alrest, which had cold climates all year, so the cold really felt like nothing to him. If anything, he felt like he was home.

Valkyrie was glad to have stayed in her Chosen Form, where she had the warmth of her clothes, while her White Swan Form would be making her freeze.

“There’s an inn near the docks. Let’s get there as soon as possible,” Xavier ordered, the whole group following.

Once the group got to their rooms, they were relieved by the warmth of a cozy fire. “Bloody hell. It’s freezing out there,” Nia said.

“I’ll admit. Even as the Flamebringer, I do feel a sense of frost when it comes to this location,” Mòrag agreed, wincing at the irony of her sentence.

“Xavier did say that around this time of year, the Isle is at its coldest,” Mythra added, shivering slightly. “I really don’t know how others can even stand it. Hell, even Zeke can withstand this. If I was out there any longer... I’d feel like I had frostbite.”

“All of you are worrying about the cold. It’s kind of amusing,” Zeke told the group, laughing quietly.

“Easy for you to say, Shellhead,” Nia responded, desperately wanting to punch him.

“It is quite cold, isn’t it?” Xavier said, walking in. Everyone nodded, except for Zeke, who shook his head.

They had been in the room for a few hours, and Xavier walked over to grab some food. “How are you holding up? You look a little tired,” Zeke mentioned.

“I just woke up from a nap, so I’m fine, really. I’m used to the cold around here. We’ll be leaving tomorrow morning, so get as much rest as you can for now.”

“What about-” Nia asked, but was quickly interrupted.

“Kaede and Rushana? They were going to settle down for some time, but at the last minute, they decided to come with us, mainly because one of Kaede’s sisters, Sumire, lives here.” Xavier answered. “We leave tomorrow, and tonight I won’t be available. So if you have any other questions, ask either Teal, Fran, Ace, or Lance.”

“Out of curiosity, why?” Rex asked.

Xavier’s face turned a bit red and he turned towards the door. “N-Nothing you need to know about, at least not now.” The others just laughed as Xavier left, a few surprised that he became so flustered.

Probably has something to do with Valkyrie, I assume, Pyra telepathically stated to Mythra.

Yeah. Probably best to leave them, then. Let’s hope he doesn’t screw whatever it is up, Mythra responded, and the two giggled.

Once the night arrived and Xavier knew that everyone was asleep, he woke Valkyrie up.

“... Xavier?” she said, rubbing her eyes. “What’s up?”

“Come with me,” he responded as she got up.

The two left the inn and went into the forest, the blue leaves guiding Xavier to where he wanted to take Valkyrie.

“Where are we going?” Valkyrie asked.

“We’re almost there, don’t worry.” After walking for a few minutes, Xavier saw the location he wanted to take Valkyrie.

It was a serene lake, the turquoise color fitting in with the surroundings. There were small bunches of flowers surrounding the lake, all vibrant with different colors, and seemed to let off sparkles into the air.

“Wow... it’s beautiful,” Valkyrie said, looking at Xavier and smiling.

“I knew you’d like it. Let’s sit down over there,” he replied, pointing at a small patch of grass on the side of the lake. Valkyrie nodded and they went over to take a seat, and unfortunately she was a bit cold. Xavier took notice and wrapped his cape around her, doing his best to warm her up. “Better?”

“Yeah, thanks,” she responded. “Why did you want to take me here?”

“I wanted to talk to you, but away from the others. It’s not all the time that we get a chance to talk alone like this, especially with the current circumstances, you know?” Valkyrie nodded. “Come what may, it’s my duty to protect you. I wanted to ask... what do you think of me?”

“What do you mean?” Valkyrie tilted her head.

“I mean, me. My personality. What am I like to you?”

Valkyrie took some time to think about it, the silence a little unsettling. She then spoke, “I... honestly admire you. The way you’re so supportive of everyone. Your kindness, strength, and how you always put others before you. Not to mention that you’re the greatest friend I’ve ever had.” Valkyrie thought to herself as she said friend, and while it was nice to be Xavier’s best friend, she wanted something more.

“Valkyrie...” Xavier said, his face going a little red. “Keep going, and you’ll make me blush,”

“Not that I don’t notice your face doing said blushing,” she teased. The two laughed.

“Thank you. I really mean it, Valkyrie,” Xavier smiled. “I... have something I want to give you.” Xavier, from his cape, took out a necklace with five jewels in a circular formation. Each one representing the elements of life: Fire, Water, Wood, Light, and Darkness. He put it on Valkyrie, telling her that it looked nice on her.

“I love it, Xavier. But... out of curiosity, why are you giving me this?”

“I have the exact same design on,” Xavier showed it to her. “If we ever get separated... I want you to look at this necklace and remember me, okay?” Valkyrie nodded, a tear in her

eye just at the mere thought of them being separated, but Xavier wiped it off and hugged her. “It’s okay. I’ll make sure that never happens, but this is just in case it ever does.”

Valkyrie held him tighter, not wanting to let go. “Xavier, I... have something to say.” Xavier shut up so that Valkyrie could talk. “The thing is... you and I have known each other for months, yet it feels so much longer. You’ve always been a great friend, and I’ve cherished that friendship for so long.” Valkyrie paused and took a deep breath. “But... I want something more. I have desired love for so long; I’ve told you that before, and...” Valkyrie put her hand on Xavier’s cheek, and brought their foreheads together, before looking straight into Xavier’s eyes. “... I love you, Xavier. So much...”

Xavier was about to respond but was interrupted when Valkyrie pressed her lips against his. This wasn’t the first time they had kissed, but... this one felt better than the other few that they shared. They wrapped their arms around each other, partly for warmth, but more to deepen the kiss. I thought I was going to be the one confessing. Next thing I know, it’s the opposite, and she kisses me, he thought but wasn’t complaining with how things were going.

After some time, their lips parted, but they just couldn’t let go of each other and kept up their embrace. “Last time you said it, you meant it as a friend. But now... it has a completely different meaning to us. I’ve fallen for you too... Val. Funny enough... that’s the reason I brought you here: to confess.”

“You don’t know how happy that makes me, my love,” Valkyrie said, smiling and looking up at him.

“That makes both of us,” Xavier responded. “We made a promise seven months ago. Let’s make a new one, here and now.”

Valkyrie nodded. “Valkyrie. I promise to keep making you happy every day. I promise to be the one to listen if you’re ever feeling upset. I promise to do my best to keep us from being separated. I promise to protect you from all threats that come our way. Most of all... I promise to keep you in my heart at all times, and to always love you,”

“I promise the same, Xavier... no matter what,” she responded, hugging him. “I have a proposal, Xavier. If a tri-god guardian falls for the one they are protecting, a ritual must be performed. This is so that we can both get stronger.”

“Well, anything to gain strength... what do we have to do?” Xavier asked.

“Well, um... How do I explain this? We have to...” Valkyrie paused. She looked away, her face getting redder by the second.

“What is it that must be done?” Xavier questioned, seeming confused.

“You and I... we need to... make love,” Valkyrie said. Xavier blushed at the answer.

“R-Really? But... I-I have no experience. I’ve never done it before,”

Well, I kinda hoped you didn't, Valkyrie thought. “It’s the only way. I-I have no experience either, and while I want to become strong, I... I don’t want to force you into this. I don’t want you to be uncomfortable.”

“Valkyrie,” Xavier comprehended what was just said, and understood Valkyrie to the fullest. It took him a while to think, and the area was extremely silent, nothing but the wind whistling in the air. “If that’s what it takes... I’m willing to make love with you,”

“H-Huh?” Valkyrie looked up at him.

“Yeah. But I have to ask you. Are you absolutely sure that you want to do this with me? Once it’s done, we can’t undo anything. You can say ‘no’ if you want to hold off for now.”

“I’m... sure. I want this,” Valkyrie said, planting another kiss on Xavier’s lips. “Please... take me, Xavier. Make me yours.” Xavier nodded, carrying his new lover back to the inn, where their night passed with pleasure, warmth, and comfort.

Dawn rose upon the new day. The group was surprised to find Xavier and Valkyrie downstairs first, and they decided not to question that they were more... affectionate with each other than before. At least, not for now. Once everyone had their breakfast, the group started their journey to the Great Witch of the Ice Flowers, Reeche.

Chapter End Notes

Yeah... that happened. Anyways, thanks for reading! Constructive criticism is appreciated!

Settling The Score

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Chilling winds whistled through the frosty trees. Crystal clear snowflakes came down from the cloudy sky. Xavier said that the sun would rarely show itself to the island, which was the reason for its cold climates all year.

“Why does it have to b-be so c-c-cold,” Rushana asked herself, the group continuing to walk down the path.

“You think this is cold?” Lance responded, “Just wait until we get to the top of the mountain. How fun that will be.”

“You know what else would be fun? Keeping your voice down so that we don’t have to deal with an avalanche,” Kaede said, shivering even through her kimono. There were no leaves to speak of on the trees. All icicles. Even the trees were completely frozen in the diamond-like solid. Night came quickly and the group got far, but not far enough, so they had to camp for the night. Kaede and Rushana, out of curiosity, went over to Xavier and Valkyrie, who were sitting near the fire, Valkyrie’s head resting on Xavier’s shoulder as she slept.

“Hey, you two. What are you guys doing up at this time? Everyone else is already asleep,” Xavier asked quietly, as not to wake up his paramour.

“Rushana and I have wanted to ask... what happened to you and Valkyrie?” Kaede asked.

“What are you talking about? Nothing happened... we’re doing just fine,” he responded, face going slightly red.

“Come on, we all know what you’re hiding from us, lover boy,” Rushana added, winking. That wink was enough to make Xavier cringe.

“Like you’re one to talk, Rushana.” Rushana just shrugged, and Kaede chuckled slightly. Xavier sighed, “Fine. Valkyrie and I are lovers.”

Now you decide to admit it, Kaede thought. “Really? Hold on... she’s one of the tri-gods. Have you two done the ritual?”

“I will neither confirm nor deny that,” Xavier responded, trying to be as serious as possible. Kaede and Rushana just looked at each other and smirked. Then looked back at him.

“At least you finally confirmed what we’ve wanted to hear, Xavier.” A rustle heard in the “trees” caught them off-guard. Apparently, that rustle, but not their conversation, was enough to wake everyone up.

“What in hell was that?” Zeke asked, drowsy, but with a frying pan in hand, as that was the closest thing he could find. The ice-covered trees caused echoes to be created among the winds. Footsteps were heard in the distance, getting faster every second, until, from the shadows, two figures slashed their blades at the group, Xavier and Kaede blocking the strikes. The two people landed on the other side of the campgrounds, charging straight at the group, and Rushana put up a shield of Wood Orbs to prevent damage. Kaede just watched as Rushana protected her, surprised, yet fascinated at the same time.

Gods... did I pick the greatest fiance, Kaede thought. The two attackers landed back where they were and stopped the onslaught.

“Hold, Arondight,” one of the two said. The one that talked went over to Xavier, bowing before him. “It is nice to see that you’re safe, milord.”

Arondight walked over, and bowed, right next to Masamune, the other person. Xavier told them that the bow was unnecessary, and they got up. “Ah, you two. Sorry if I made you worry.”

Valkyrie, slightly hiding behind her lover, whispered, “Who are these two?”

“Well, sweetheart, these are my two retainers. Masamune and Arondight. They have sworn to protect me ever since I inherited my title,” Xavier responded. “I’m sure you two have heard about her.”

“We have, Xavier. You’ve been seen with her all the time from what people have told us,” Arondight responded. “I must know. Now that you two are paramours, especially since she is one of the tri-gods, have you-”

Xavier stopped her there. “Again, I will neither confirm nor deny it, and prefer to stop talking about it now.”

The armored girl rolled her eyes. “Well, nonetheless, it’s good to see you again.”

Everyone, other than Xavier and Valkyrie were confused regarding these two, but after some explaining, they got the point.

Morning came around quickly, and the group kept hiking up the mountain for constant hours. They came across a house covered in snow and ice, well-suited for someone of the Water attribute. Kaede realized who the house belonged to, and requested that they ask to stay for the night.

Of all the places I could’ve found, why’d it have to be this? I know I suggested the stay, but... There was no time to think about what was about to happen, and Kaede knocked on the door.

The door opened, and out came Kaede’s sister, named Sumire, dressed in her traditional blue kimono, similar patterns as the one Kaede had.

“Ah, Kaede, what a surprise. And the Dragon Master himself?” Sumire said, in a nice, yet also suspicious tone that went unnoticed by everyone but Kaede.

“Hello there, Sumire. I’ve heard a lot about you from your sisters, Kaede and Tsubaki. Very nice to meet you,” Xavier responded. “I’d like to ask if you would allow us to stay for the night. We’ve been hiking for quite a long time now, and are in need of somewhere to rest.”

Sumire smiled, moving out of the way to let everyone in, but grabbing Kaede secretly and whispering, “I’ll deal with you later.”

The gesture went unnoticed and the group settled into the spare rooms that Sumire had. Valkyrie looked around and saw how unique Sumire’s house was, bits of culture on almost every wall, whether it was paint or other items. Despite that, however, she sensed some sort of ill intent within Sumire, and how Kaede tensed up when Sumire was near her. She decided to pay it no mind for now, but to keep her guard up, just in case. Xavier went over to her, and Valkyrie told him what she was suspicious about. Her boyfriend then said to keep her eyes open, and make sure to help Kaede if necessary.

In the meantime, Rushana was also admiring how the house looked, eyes roaming across every item, each seeming more valuable than the previous. “It’s nice of you to invite us in so kindly.”

“Of course,” Sumire responded, successfully pulling off a kind act to hide the grudge against her sister. “It’s usually very lonely around here, considering I live on this mountain. While I do prefer the quiet time, it’s nice to have visitors every once in a while, y’know?”

Rushana nodded. Dinner was served almost minutes later, and everyone came down to eat. Sumire was an incredible cook, the flavors of her food bringing delicious tastes to everyone’s mouths. Kaede stole glances at Sumire, staring angrily at her for seconds at a time. Nobody except Valkyrie and Rushana noticed, and when Kaede didn’t show up in Rushana’s room to get some rest, Rushana and Valkyrie secretly went downstairs to find out what was going on. To their surprise, although maybe it shouldn’t have been, Xavier and his two retainers followed. Kaede and Sumire were walking outside, the plains in the back of the house covered in beautiful snow.

“So... you went through with your love for Rushana, didn’t you?” Sumire questioned.

“I did,” Kaede responded, looking at Sumire. “Let me make something clear. I don’t care what you think and if you try to hurt Rushana, I won’t hesitate to protect her, even if I must use force to do it.”

“Just what I’d expect a bitch like you to say. You never were deserving of Mother and Father’s respect. You’re just another weakling, one that doesn’t deserve to wield a sword, or carry down our family’s name.”

Kaede shook her head, taking her sword out. “I never did think that you’d be so against the fact that I’m a lesbian. Hell, I’ve seen you do so many idiotic, stupid things towards people like me.”

“It’s all for the family, Kaede. Mother and Father didn’t want to ruin the bloodline, and guess which one of us did that?” Sumire told her angrily. “You never were a fighter, always tripping and focusing more on friends. How do you think that’d even-”

“It’s not my fault that you were always alone. Being so cold to everyone you met, even towards Rushana. You’re lucky she can’t remember that now.”

“Oh really? I’m sure you’re aware of the many magical scrolls I possess. Maybe one of them can reveal those awful memories, bringing her into utter despair from which she can never recover! Maybe then you’d learn something about protecting the bloodline of this family!” Sumire yelled, getting out one of those scrolls, unleashing a cold blast that struck Kaede right in the arm. The wind dragon caller was knocked back, struggling to get up due to the cold slowing her movement.

“If you really want to... you’ll have to kill me. I’ll protect Rushana until death; it’s the least I can do after she helped me to free myself from my past. I won’t let you lay a finger on her, no matter what!”

“In that case...” Sumire used the scroll to prevent Kaede’s movement by encasing her arms and legs in ice that stuck to the ground. Despite struggling, Kaede couldn’t escape, frigid crystals keeping her in check, and not even her sword could move. Icicles formed around the blue haired girl, her sinister smile being seen through the blizzards that were being created. “Farewell... Caller of the Mountain God.”

At full force, she sent the sharp, cold spears flying towards the sister she once loved. Kaede closed her eyes, and readied herself for the worst.

Flashback - 17 years ago

The tree leaves shimmered in the bright sunlight as the rain stopped. Sumire and Kaede were told to run along by their parents, and they went out to the flower fields. The different warm colors of the petals on each individual plant brought a very content vibe throughout. The two sisters fell into the flowers together, laughing and holding hands as they did. They usually didn’t get much time to themselves due to their training to become Dragon Callers, but this was a chance for the young kids to truly bond as siblings. The jewels on their necklaces glowed as the two enjoyed their time together.

“I’m gonna get you!” Kaede told Sumire, running after her in their game of tag.

“Good luck, haha!” Sumire laughed, sprinting away as fast as she could, but it ended up being futile, as the smaller wind girl was surprisingly fast for her age. The two fell forward, their constant laughter couldn’t be stopped.

“I think this one will look nice on you. The color fits with your kimono,” Sumire happily said, weaving the yellow sunflower into Kaede’s hair, while Kaede did the same to Sumire with an indigo daisy. The sisters then layed in the field, watching as the clouds went by and saying what they thought each cloud looked like. They went into the lake behind their house and splashed around for a bit, prior to going home and allowing their parents to press the

flowers between the pages of their photo albums, letting them dry so that they could be preserved. But all good days come to an end as the night came quickly. Sumire was already asleep, but saw the door open to her room, Kaede entering with a small stuffed dragon.

"I can't sleep, sister," she said, running into her older sibling's arms.

"Here, come with me," Sumire responded, placing her younger sister right next to her, still holding her. "I'm so glad that you're my sister, Kaede. I want us to stay together, always!"

"Me too, Sumire. Me... too," Kaede fell asleep in her sister's arms, Sumire's eyes lightly tearing up after she heard her sister say she wanted to stay with her.

"I'll never leave you, Kaede. I promise," Sumire pecked Kaede's forehead, eventually dozing off.

4 years later - still in flashback

Kaede was lying in her bed, crying after her parents physically abused her. Sumire could hear it from her room, annoyed by the sound.

"Can you please be quiet, Kaede?" Sumire asked.

"B-but... Mommy and Daddy hurt me," Kaede responded, the waterworks seeming to have died down a bit.

"What did you do this time?"

"I... I-I just told them how I feel about Rushana, y'know, my best friend, or I guess I should say-" Kaede wasn't done, but was interrupted by Sumire anyways.

"Lover?" Sumire asked, and Kaede nodded, the water dragon caller having to take in what her sister just said. After a few moments, she snapped, saying, "What the hell is wrong with you? You shouldn't be falling for someone at this young of an age, let alone a girl. Why do you have so many problems, and why do I even have a sister like you?"

"Sumire... I thought you loved me. I thought you didn't want us to ever be separated; that we'd always be together."

"I wish I never did! I absolutely despise you now. I never want to do anything with you again. Consider our bond as siblings to be broken!" Sumire got up and left, slamming the door to Kaede's room. Kaede cried more than she ever had before, and it didn't seem like things were going to get better.

End of flashback

Life flashed before Kaede's eyes as she saw the icicles coming straight at her. She couldn't shield herself, couldn't move, nothing.

Suddenly, Valkyrie, Xavier, and Rushana all got in front of her, putting up an Orb Shield. Xavier, with his other hand, managed to melt the ice that immobilized his apprentice.

“What?” Sumire was in shock, seeing the shield be put up and Kaede out of the ice. “Where did you guys come from?”

“How dare you try to hurt my fiance, Sumire... who is also your sister?” Rushana yelled angrily.

“This is for the sake of my family’s blood. Everything went fine, until you had to show your dumb face, you bastard!”

Masamune just wasn’t having it. “Trying to hurt my lord’s apprentice whom he trained for years. Something so vile can only be punishable by death itself!” The samurai-like retainer readied himself to charge straight at Sumire, only to be stopped by Kaede.

“This is my fight, not yours!” Kaede said, running straight towards Sumire.

Rushana looked worried, and Masamune attempted to follow Kaede, but Xavier stopped him. “Milord, if I may be blunt. This wretch has tried to kill your apprentice, and she should be-”

“Masamune. As much as I know that something like this is extremely terrible, Kaede’s right; this is not our fight. Sheathe your sword for now,” Xavier told him, and Masamune was reluctant to obey, but he knew that he shouldn’t do something that his master didn’t want him to do, so he yielded, but kept a grip on his sword, which Xavier saw and allowed.

Sumire, angered by how Kaede was protected, unleashed a harsh, cold blizzard, the chilling winds, while slowing Kaede down, didn’t prevent Kaede from dishing out powerful strikes with her arms. Kaede also struck Sumire’s leg with her sword, causing her to fall on her knees and hold her leg. More cold blasts and a few icicles were unleashed towards Kaede, causing minor wounds and bleeding. But at close range, it was Kaede who had the upper hand, and it came to the point where Sumire could no longer even struggle, and Kaede noticed her giving up.

Sumire was breathing heavily and incredibly intimidated by Kaede. She never expected her to have as much strength as she did, even if Kaede had trained under Xavier, the Dragon Master himself. “Let’s... stop this... Sumire. You’ve had... enough.”

“Never. You need... to realize... that you should never have ruined... our bloodline,” Sumire said as she tried to hide her fear.

“You can’t hide how you really feel now from me. I can tell that you’re scared, you coward,” Kaede responded, her sword close to Sumire’s cheek.

“S-Stop... Wait. Please don’t hurt me... anymore than you already have. You win... I’m sorry, I...” Kaede took her sword and held it over her head with both arms, then going down to strike Sumire’s head, the latter closing her eyes. Kaede, however, ended up stopping the blade mere inches away from its target.

Sumire then looked up, seeing the blade. Kaede exhaled and put her sword away. She told Xavier to heal both of them, and due to his concern that Sumire might try something funny,

he had Masamune and Arondight go right next to Sumire, each retainer on one side. “Why? Why did you...?”

“I stopped my blade only because of how much I loved you back when we were kids. You were always someone I felt like I could come to when it was necessary. Someone who I thought would always have my back and support me. Someone who would help me through my dark times. Someone in my family that actually loved me. But I guess that you’re not who I thought you were. You’re just another bastard who never cares about the people who want to be close to her, and just pushes everyone away because of how she was raised. I wish I could’ve been a sister to you, but that will never happen. Tomorrow, you are considered dead to me. After leaving in the morning, I never want to see you face ever again. Not now, not after I’m married, not ever!” Kaede yelled, tears flowing from her eyes as she ran back into her house. Rushana ran after her, and so did the others in the group, leaving Sumire out there to just think.

Kaede hid in the corner of her and Rushana’s room. Once she heard her lover come in, she didn’t even try to look like she was hiding, and just kept her hands held in her knees, covering her head.

“Kaede. Please come out,” Rushana said. Kaede took a bit, but eventually stopped crying for some time. The two went to sit on the bed, Rushana holding Kaede as she started to cry again.

“Sumire... s-she said that I...” Kaede stuttered as her tears flowed from her eyes.

“Shh. It’s okay... it’s okay. I’m right here, Kaede,” Rushana responded. After some time, the crying stopped. “What happened?”

“Sumire and I started arguing over how I ruined the family bloodline, she called me a bitch, said I should never wield a sword, how I never deserved my parents’ respect. She brought back old memories that I wish I never had, and even threatened to hurt you, and I just...” Kaede took deep breaths as Rushana continued to hold her.

“Don’t listen to her, Kaede. None of that is true. She’s just making you think that.”

Kaede shook her head. “Everything I’ve done has made me such a screw up. I’ve only been miserable ever since I was eight, and I’ve just-”

“Never recovered, right?” Rushana knew what Kaede was going to say, and Kaede could only nod in response. “If I may be honest, I didn’t really think that you had recovered even after attempting to kill yourself. You still feel that hurt, sadness, anger, and you feel the negativity still within your soul. You have let your past influence how you see everything, even after opening up a bit about it.”

Kaede didn’t even have words at that point, only knowing that everything Rushana said was right, and tears started flowing again.

“Kaede. I don’t need to be someone experienced to know that you’re depressed. You need help from people who care about you, yet you never want to open up. Why is that?” Rushana

asked.

“Because... I don’t want to look weak,” Kaede whispered, somewhat loudly.

“It’s not a sign of weakness to ask for help, Kaede. You have people who care about you. You have your friends. You have me, honey,” Rushana told her. “I’ve told you this before, and I will say it a thousand times if I need to. You’re strong, Kaede. You’ve been through so much, yet I know you can stand back on your feet if you really try. Don’t keep everything inside... you don’t have to look brave around me. If something is bothering you... just talk to me or our friends, and I promise you that we’ll do the best we can to help. I know I’m asking for a lot, but... I really care about you. I want you to be happy. I want-mmmph?!” Kaede couldn’t hold it back any longer, and just kissed Rushana, placing one hand on her fiancé’s cheek. Rushana did the same after coming back to reality.

Once disconnected, Kaede hugged her and said. “Rushana... thank you. Thank you for always being there to help me and support me. I’m not good at opening up to people at all, and I’m sure you’re aware of that but... I’ll try to, for you.”

“No problem, Kaede. I only want the best for you. Thanks for at least giving this a try. I love you so much, dear.”

“I love you too, my beloved,” Kaede responded. The two fell into each other’s arms, enjoying a peaceful rest together.

Morning arrived once again for the adventurers, and after breakfast, the group was about to leave. Kaede threw something Sumire’s way that looked like some sort of book. “It’s your album that you never cared to pick up from home. That’s the last thing I’ll ever give you.”

The door closed behind them and the group ventured out, trying to put what happened the night before behind them.

Chapter End Notes

From this point forward, I will be updating the story less probably until school is over. Thanks for reading, as always, and leave constructive criticism in the comments!

Implied sexual content will be in the next chapter. You have been warned :).

End Notes

Leave constructive criticism only! Thank you for reading and I hope to most more soon, especially once school is out.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!