

156 – Freja Gyldenrose

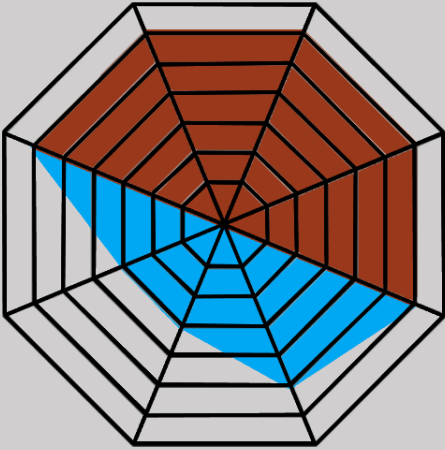
We were all crowding around Renji by the entrance of the chamber, and he was showing off his new updated Guild Card. Given the fact that Ludwig had revealed that the tools used by the Adventurers’ Guild for quests and rank ups were possessed items, I wondered if the Cards were the same somehow. Until now, I hadn’t put a lot of thought into the fact that they could so accurately measure a person’s aura and soul, but perhaps they contained something akin to the Soul Compass.

When you altered my Guild Card, how did you do it? I asked Saoirse.

I utilise my powers of creations to overlay it with an illusion. Do not ask me how it works.

I guess I’ll ask Ludwig then, since he seems to know.

Renji moved towards me and pointed the face of his Card at me. “Look, Ryūta! I got it! I can do magic now!”

<i>‘SKRALD’</i>			
ROLE: <i>Spellfist</i>		RANK: <i>Eminent</i>	
GENDER: <i>Male</i>		AGE: <i>20</i>	
ACUMEN: <i>A</i>	DEXTERITY: <i>A</i>	INTELLIGENCE: <i>A</i>	LUCK: <i>B</i>
PACT: <i>D</i>	SOUL: <i>D</i>	STRENGTH: <i>A</i>	VITALITY: <i>A</i>
ABILITIES <i>‘Omniglot’</i> <i>‘Brawler V’</i> <i>‘Spellfist I’</i> <i>‘Argonaut’</i> <i>‘Guiding Star’</i> <i>‘Thunder-fist’</i>			

Before I had the chance, he pressed a finger to the new skill set and it showed me all the abilities contained within Spellfist:

ABILITIES

‘Omniglot’

‘Brawler V’

‘Spellfist I’:

- *Affinity (Vibration) I*

- *Affinity Control I*

- *Affinity Release I*

- *Affinity Trigger I*

- *Devastation*

- *Elemental Enchantment I*

- *Focus Wielder I*

- *Invocation I*

- *Shockwave*

- *Soul Barrier I*

There were only ten abilities contained within, even though the starting Role everyone had always began with eighteen. I wondered if this was common for all Advanced Roles, though I’d never thought to ask. That being said, what was contained within his new Role seemed very powerful.

“You received a Vibration Affinity? What’s that?”

“I actually have no idea,” he said with a grin and a ton of excited energy in his body.

Armen stepped forward. **“It is very powerful, but the Backlash is severe. It can cause blindness and a sickness that makes your limbs shake uncontrollably.”**

“Like Parkinson’s?” I asked.

“I don’t know what that is,” he replied.

Seeing my expression, Renji was quick to say, “Don’t worry! I will be careful. Spellfist has an addition that Spellhands don’t get, which is the Affinity Release, and it can be used to alleviate the potential of Backlash, in exchange for basically exhausting all my energy. It’s supposed to be very powerful, like a Killer Move!”

“He talks like someone who has never experienced Energy exhaustion,” Kally commented sharply. I couldn’t help but nod though, and Emily seemed to agree as well.

His face blanched, before he repeated, “I’ll be careful.”

“You are lucky to have many potential teachers,” Armen said.

Kally huffed. “I have better things to do.”

“I know you’re taking a break from Guild quests right now,” Renji shot back with a devious smile.

“I’ll have you know that I’m busy teaching this young prodigy,” she retorted, putting a hand on Emily’s head, even though she wasn’t that much taller.

“Maybe he can join our lessons?” Emily suggested.

Kally sighed. “You’re lucky Emily is so good-natured.”

Renji grinned victoriously.

“What does Devastation and Shockwave do?” I asked.

“Devastation is quite a crazy ability,” Renji answered. “It’s similar to Crusaders’ Judgement, in that it gathers a ton of power into a single strike, but the effect varies based on Affinity.”

“**Vibration Affinity is great at dismantling things at their most fundamental level,**” Armen commented ominously. “**I have seen it used to pulverise humans and buildings alike. No armour nor physical defence can withstand it.**”

“They want you to test your powers on other humans, right?” Emily asked, and Renji nodded gravely.

“If they do not allow you to practice first, you may accidentally trigger a potent Backlash,” Kally said.

“Where do they even plan to have this show fight?” I asked.

“There’s a duelling arena in the westerly side of Academy,” Kally replied.

Loud footsteps brought all of our attention to the walkway steps nearby, as the many Peacekeepers surrounded the two hooded figures that’d watched the ritual.

Speak of the Devil, I remarked internally.

It seemed none of the others, except Potts, had noticed the two people previously, but Renji and Kally were quick on the uptake, lowering their heads in respect as the leading figure pulled back her hood to reveal a doll-like face.

The aura that washed over me was unmistakable. It was pure-white and its outer edges shifted through the colours of the rainbow. Her eyes were like her aura, with an ever-shifting galaxy trapped in her irises. Unlike Torvalder, she was blindingly-beautiful, but in a too-perfect way, as though a child of artificiality. She had a long neck, a defined jawline, but also apple-cheeks and charming dimples. Her skin was milky-white, her long hair was shock-white and braided, and there was not a single blemish nor fault to be found in her appearance. She was similar in height to me, but the air about her dwarfed everything in sight.

Most interestingly, her body was covered in a dress made of sharp angular scales formed of steel, which fluttered as though alive, and her hands were covered in sleek gauntlets with long sharp talons. There was a choker of thin metal around her long throat and trapped in her braids were metal rings, which also moved as though alive. The constant motion about her person was mesmerising, as though she was a predator performing an elaborate dance to confuse her prey.

The person behind her pulled back his own hood as well, only to reveal a plain-looking Native with brown hair and eyes, and a face scarred by acne.

Amusing, Saoirse immediately remarked.

Why? It’s probably just her manservant or something.

“**That is the Prince, I believe,**” Armen explained in my mind.

But he’s... not like the rest of his family at all.

It confused me that the Gyldenrose family had somehow produced an offspring with seemingly no powers. I wondered if it was intentional or a mistake.

“I have seen it before. Although the Royalty in my time could pass on their powers to their children, it was not without many failures in-between.”

Before I could question it further, the girl, no, the Princess, spoke:

“Eminent Skrald, congratulations on your Ascension. As you are aware, my brother is an admirer of yours and he looks forward to the display of your newfound powers in the arena later.”

I saw the moment her voice washed over our group, as well as the other people in attendance, like the Paladins, Priests, Genius, and the Peacekeepers. All of them were spellbound by her, and yet, somehow, her voice had no effect on me, nor Armen and Saoirse for that matter.

“Thank you, Princess Freja,” Renji said sincerely, pride in his voice.

Freja looked at each of us in turn and I noticed the surprise in her expression when her eyes met mine, though it was gone an instant later. Then her attention moved to Saoirse, who returned her gaze with a grin on her face, before lowering her head respectfully.

“You accompany yourself with many unusual people,” she told Renji.

“I am proud to be able to call them my friends,” he answered.

Before he could say anything further, the exorcist behind me piped up in a shrill and desperate voice.

“My Lady! I must inform them of the Demon in our midst!”

As one, the Peacekeepers surrounded our group, and the nearby King’s men drew their weapons.

Goddamn it, Potts...