

Barely an hour had passed since Tsubaki and Dana had returned from that mysterious meeting, and the Keeper had just returned to his state of 'dormancy' after appearing to tell the two of them their rewards for their participation in the meeting. Tsubaki was left dazed at what she had been told, while Dana stood off to the side with a contemplative expression.

They had been given one common reward, while Tsubaki had received something extra. For their common reward, they were able to request a change to be made to the world system, so long as that change did not cost more than their earned points. Given that they were not able to think of what sort of change they would like, this reward had been left on hold until they made up their mind.

What left Tsubaki dazed was her special reward. Dale had requested for her to establish her own church. In doing so, she would be able to officially obtain priests and bolster her own powers. Dana thought it was only something natural for Tsubaki to do, as the servant of the Keeper himself and a goddess in her own right, but she knew that Tsubaki wouldn't see it that way.

In fact, Tsubaki had initially refused. She did not want to be worshipped alongside the Greater Pantheon, feeling she was unworthy. It was only when Dale left behind one parting phrase that she was struck senseless while he returned to his heavenly home.

"This was a unanimous decision by all of us."

Perhaps, if it were just one or two people, Tsubaki could still argue for the sake of those who disagreed. As long as there was someone among them that didn't want her to form a church, she could object in the name of respecting their decision. But now, with every member of the Greater Pantheon saying that she should do this, she was left with no choice.

"Do you want help setting things up?" Dana asked with a small grin, and Tsubaki's head slowly turned towards her, a glimmer of hope in her eyes.

"Yes, please..." It was rare to see her so flustered like this, but Dana was obviously going to help her finish this job.

The little elf chuckled, flashing a thumbs up at Tsubaki. "Alright, Tsuba. Just look at it this way, the stronger you get, the stronger he gets. Now, let's figure out your church name, and some doctrines for you to give your people."

"I already have the name." Tsubaki muttered quietly, catching Dana by surprise.

"Oh? Come on, don't keep me in suspense!"

The kitsune goddess turned to look at the Keeper sitting on his throne, and then back at Dana again. "The Church of Nine Lights."

Over the span of three weeks, one shocking revelation after another was passed down to the world. Each one seemed more awe-inspiring than the last, and nobody knew what to make of it by the time it was all done.

First, the Head of Research of Deckan, a man acknowledged to be associated with the Keeper, had invented a specialized chamber that would drastically increase the success rate of achieving perfection. Previously, only one in ten people would be able to pass after making careful preparations. Now, if the reports were to be believed, the odds had increased quite substantially, with a guide being included for what levels are needed in order to maximize one's chances.

This alone had shocked the various worlds to their core. Perfection was the dream of many, but a dream so dangerous that few were still willing to attempt it. Granted, the new chamber was far from a guaranteed chance, and the risk of death was still enough to deter many who would otherwise choose to undergo the procedure. But for those willing to take the chance, it was a blessing from the gods themselves.

Secondly, the Keeper's Servant announced to the world that she would be establishing her own church, under the guidance of the Keeper himself. While there were many who already worshipped Tsubaki as the first mortal god, few actually did so openly. It had been considered a blasphemous act to regard the 'lesser pantheon' on the same level as the higher gods.

This church, the Church of Nine Lights, would only have one key base within each world. The priests would be hand-selected by Tsubaki herself, keeping the number of official worshippers rather small. Yet regardless, the fact remained that she was creating her own religion, and this served as the signal for others to do the same.

Blank, the God of Games, announced that he was creating the Church of Digital Thought less than one week later. The main focus of his church was to provide an organization where other sentient programs like himself could gather and exchange information. Although he was the first of his kind, there had been several others like him developed in recent years. They had merely not received the blessing of Ashley that had allowed Blank to achieve divinity.

After Blank established his church, he announced to the public why Tsubaki had chosen to keep her church small. Each priest that the church accepted became a voice in the divinity's mind. For a program such as himself, he could filter through thousands of voices with relative ease. However, for Tsubaki, it was clear that her limit should be far lower, despite ascending to

godhood. Due to this reason, the churches of mortal gods would still be smaller than those of the greater pantheon.

Yet, it was soon proven that that would not be the only difference between the two classifications. Shortly after Blank made his announcement, the final piece of information was revealed. This revelation did not come from the gods themselves, but was rather something about the gods that the mortals soon discovered.

A young elven boy tightly clenched his fists as he entered the church. His clothes were tattered and dirty, clearly showing his poor lifestyle. Worse still, his skin was sunken and pale, and it was apparent that he was not eating well. Despite this, the church did not turn him away. Even as several of its members sent scornful looks towards the young man, he walked to the altar.

Anyone could make an offering to the Goddess, this was a rule that had been passed down through countless generations. To refuse anyone doing so, no matter how small, would be to refuse the sanctity of the Goddess herself. After all, it was not for them to judge the value of faith.

The man knelt before the altar, extending a shaky hand. When he released his fist, a dozen coins clattered into the offering bowl. Of them, one was silver in color while the rest were a dirty bronze. At this sight, the eyes of some of the followers softened.

From the man's appearance, and the health bar above his head that could not easily be faked, it could be seen that he had starved himself. Had he spent that money, he would not have been able to eat a *good* meal, but he would have at least had something to fill his stomach. Instead, he chose to offer it to Ryone. This was both a touching and foolish decision, as one must always value their own life.

The boy clasped his hands together in prayer. *Mother Ryone, please accept this offering. I know that it is little in the eyes of the Goddess, but it is all that I have to give. My sister has taken ill, and we cannot hope to afford the medicine to save her, nor to hire a cleric to show his holy light. Please, Mother Goddess, she has done nothing wrong. Please see fit to help her recover.*

There was a flash of golden light from within the offering bowl, a clear sign that the offering within had been accepted. Everyone thought that the matter would end there, and that the boy would leave after his prayer. As he got up, however, his eyes passed over the offering bowl and he hesitated.

"Sir Priest?" The boy called out to a man not far away wearing the blue robes of the church. The priest frowned, his opinion of the boy dropping when it seemed like the boy had regretted his offering. There was no way to ask for a refund from the Goddess.

Still, he put on an amiable smile and walked over. "What is it, child?" He asked in a gentle tone, his eyes never leaving the figure before him.

"I... I don't think she accepted my offering." The boy's words surprised the priest, who had himself seen the golden light. Clearly, the offering had been accepted, so what was he on about?

As the priest turned to look at the offering bowl, his eyes grew wide in shock. There were more than a dozen coins in the bowl, just as he said. However, these were clearly not the same coins as had been placed by the youth himself. Each one was a shining golden coin with the picture of the Goddess on both faces.

At a passing glance, they could be thought of as a normal golden coin, if not for the fact that they appeared to shine with a faintly divine light. Clearly, these coins had been touched by the hands of the Goddess personally.

His brow furrowed, the priest went in to pick up one of the coins, testing it and sensing it with his own power. When he did so, a system window appeared before his eyes.

A token of faith, bestowed by the Goddess Ryone. Can be exchanged within the Boundless Caravan for goods and blessings related to her power.
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The priest gasped in shock, nearly dropping the coin. His eyes went to the boy, who was now clearly showing a look of concern. Several thoughts raced through his mind at once, and he was even tempted to buy these coins off of the boy for substantially more than had been initially offered.

"Sir Priest?" The elven boy spoke up, driving him from his thoughts.

"These are the blessings of the Goddess." The priest said, pushing the coin into his hand so as to not allow himself to be tempted further. "Seek out the Boundless Caravan, and she shall allow you to exchange them for a gift."

The boy looked at the coin, as well as the others in the bowl, with a bit of doubt. Still, he picked them up and held them in his fists as he turned to leave. He didn't truly believe that this 'gift' would be anything substantial, but his faith demanded he see it through. After all, he had prayed for a way to save his sister, and had been answered with these coins. Could they be what he needed?

The trek from the church of Ryone to the Boundless Caravan was truly not large. Even for someone with a body as frail as his, it took less than five minutes for him to arrive at the bustling center of trade.

The boy waited, looking for a line that seemed smaller than the others. His small frame would cause many to overlook him, and his poor attire even moreso. Thankfully, he found a line that was just ending, and moved over to stand behind it.

When he moved up, he was greeted by the questioning gaze of a mature elven woman. "May I help you?" She asked curiously, and it was clear that she did not believe that he would be able to purchase anything from the caravan, nor that he would have anything of value to sell. As such, she could not quite place why he was there.

"Y-yes... I'm sorry, I was told to come here with these." He lifted his hands up to the counter, dropping the glowing coins upon it. The woman's gaze shook as she saw the coins, which seemed so similar to the one that she herself used to summon the caravan, yet with a golden luster.

"Give me just a moment." She spoke in a more respectful tone, conjuring the silver coin that opened the caravan. "May I ask how you obtained these coins? I must say that I have never seen them before."

"I... I just went to the church." The boy spoke in an even more confused tone, unsure if he had found a blessing or a disaster. "I made an offering and asked for her to help my sister... and these coins appeared in the bowl."

The woman nodded, as if to show understanding despite not knowing what was going on. She held up one of the coins, and a new section of the trade platform appeared. One that she had never laid eyes upon before. This section contained blessings and items that could be purchased from the gods.

"L-let's see... with these coins, you can ask the Goddess to display magic for you up to the third tier three times, or ask for enlightenment. If you are able to gather the tokens of Leowynn, you will be able to use both to convert into currency. According to the exchange rate, you could buy eighteen haram."

There was a gasp from the boy, who clearly knew that he had not spent anywhere near that sum. Eighteen large, golden coins could be purchased with just one silver and a few copper coins? However, a moment later, realization struck him. "I... I don't have anything else to offer up to Leowynn. If I choose the magic, can I ask her to use a healing spell on my sister?"

The gaze of the elven woman softened, and she checked the information on that option. "I believe it should be possible. If you would like, I could buy the rest of these tokens from you for

ten haram.” Their full value was twelve, but given that they could only show that value after using another offering to obtain the tokens of Leowynn, the elven woman felt that this price was fair.

“Yes, please.” The boy nodded his head. One use of magic from the Goddess would be enough for him to save his sister. As for the golden coins, they could be used to buy a bit of food for the two of them.

The merchant smiled, processing the sale. “Can you tell me exactly what kind of magic you’d like to purchase? I need to put the information in to finalize it, it looks like.”

“O-oh. Uhm, could you make it a spell to cure diseases? My sister is really sick, and can’t get out of bed.” Magic to cure diseases would typically be reserved for priests of Udonā, but if this were the Goddess of Magic herself, surely there would be a way, right?

“Understood.” The woman put in what he had said, and one third of the coins shattered into golden light. These lights converged onto a new coin, this one displaying a strange spell diagram atop its surface. The merchant held it up to inspect it, before passing it to him. “Give this to your sister, and help her break it. The spell inside will activate on whoever broke the coin.”

After saying that, she took the rest of the tokens of faith, and handed the boy ten golden coins. Just as he was turning to leave, the door of the establishment swung open loudly, a raucous laugh entering as a local lord entered. “My faith has been rewarded by the Goddess! Help me to exchange this.”

In his hand was a token of faith, much like the ones that the young boy had just sold. It was clear that he was looking forward to receiving a mountain of wealth from his greedy gaze. Yet, the gaze of the merchant was chilling. After all... he had only one token. That would be the same as one haram, according to the exchange rate she had just seen.