

These Tragic Souls and a Sword Reborn in an Intergalactic Space Opera

Story Intro: "Welcome! I'm an evil god, though not that evil of a god!" is what they woke up to. Join our heroes and heroines, having just met their demise, displaced by an extradimensional event."

Story Starts

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Book 1 - The Empty Twin

Ch 1. Gaining Trust in the Thirteen

(Rin Tohsaka)

[Part 7 of ?]

Rin—oh so kindly—lifted her heel from Shirou's foot as she flipped her hair. She didn't really know how many magical creatures typically existed within a hoard, school, or herd, since these creatures had long since moved to the Reverse Side of the World in her reality. But six thousand plus mouths to feed? That was a number she could understand.

'Six thousand house-elves alone would require... what, half rations compared to humans? And then centaurs, merfolk, goblins on top of that...'

From what she'd gathered from Hermione and the rest of their fractured group, their Project Noah had been quite literally a Noah's Ark designed to restart human society and preserve every conceivable living being from their planet. So perhaps they could attempt farming. Though she genuinely didn't know if any of the magical techniques from their side could help facilitate faster harvests, or if such knowledge even translated to this strange new existence.

*'Though everyone has **'Conceptual Crossover,'*** Rin thought. That particular serendipitous purchase was quite convenient—and suspicious.

Then something clicked. She remembered: the first thing she'd purchased was a **Hint**, and one of the first recommendations had been '**General Knowledge**'. She'd prompted information about Celestial Dungeons almost reflexively.

The thing about '**General Knowledge**' was peculiar. At the back of your head, you somehow knew about things it could provide, but only in the vaguest sense—these were general topics, surface-level understandings. Sometimes you could still probe for something obscure, asking in a way that might reveal it as a subtopic of something larger, something already within your grasp but not yet conscious.

But that's the thing, you only vaguely know what '**General Knowledge**' knows, you still need to prompt and process the information. The processing felt weird to Rin, it was as if you suddenly remembered things that were always there—

"I've already looked up information about Celestial Dungeons whilst we were reviewing items from both '**Inherit Claimable, Unclaimed Inheritance**' and '**Inherit Previous Life's Assets**,'" Ryuu suddenly interjected, her voice cutting through Rin's spiralling thoughts. The elf bit into a piece of chicken, her eyes lighting up at the taste before she paused, swallowing carefully. "Apparently, most monsters from Celestial Dungeons are edible, though that'll provide little more than meat. Hopefully, the first biome we encounter—or the next one after that—will be a forest, jungle, or something rich with vegetation."

Rin noted, with some amusement, that Ryuu turned noticeably green at the prospect of consuming monster meat, even as she recited the information with a straight face—or tried to.

"Good," Rin said crisply, flipping her hair back with a deliberate gesture as she approached the whiteboards with purposeful strides, marker already in hand. Writing 'Current Crisis' across the pristine white surface in bold, confident strokes, she noted with a slight start how her hand had automatically formed the letters in Aurebesh—this reality's, or at least this galaxy's, universal writing system according to '**General Knowledge**.' The characters flowed from her

marker without conscious thought, muscle memory that shouldn't exist yet somehow did. "I urge everyone to prompt '**General Knowledge**' for its information about Celestial Dungeons. We need everyone briefed on this for now."

Beneath 'Crisis', she wrote 'Food' with careful precision, underscoring it twice for emphasis, then added in smaller script that the current stock was approximately a month and a half's worth. Her handwriting was neat, economical—each letter deliberate and clearly legible even from a distance.

She continued writing in bullet points: could be extended using monster meat; even better if we encounter a favourable biome and harvest dungeon flora. The marker made a soft squeak against the board as she finished the notation, stepping back to survey her work with a critical eye, checking for clarity and completeness.

"Excuse me," Syr's voice cut through the quiet scratch of marker on whiteboard, clear and matter-of-fact, as if she were simply adding an item to a shopping list, as she continued, "I also need to add that my hint told me that we have a one-year time limit, otherwise we'd die a gruesome death."

The room's atmosphere shifted instantly, palpably.

Everyone froze at that declaration, conversations dying mid-sentence, utensils pausing halfway to mouths. The weight of it settled over the assembled group like lead in the air, heavy and suffocating. Eyes turned towards Syr in unison, expressions ranging from shock to disbelief to carefully controlled alarm—some managed better masks than others. Syr herself wore a perfectly neutral face as she blinked twice in return, meeting their collective stare with an almost disconcerting calm, as though she'd merely mentioned the weather rather than announced their potential doom.

"What?" Syr asked, her tone guileless, looking genuinely puzzled by their reactions, grey eyes wide with confusion.

"Great, a time limit," Illya interjected with heavy sarcasm, her voice dripping with exasperation. Her arms crossed over her petite frame—the gesture somehow making her look both imperious and put-upon at once. "When we say a year, does it mean the twenty-four-hour, three-hundred-sixty-five-day year? Local year? Galactic Standard year? Because those could differ wildly, and I'd rather not plan around the wrong calendar."

It was a valid point, frustratingly so. Rin raised her eyebrow as Syr adopted a sheepish look, her earlier confidence evaporating like morning mist. "Umm... I didn't really follow up." Syr's eyes looked upward, not meeting anyone's gaze, her expression turning evasive. She seemed to be studying the ceiling with sudden fascination.

Rin felt a spike of irritation lance through her chest, hot and immediate. '*No point snapping at her now.*' She ruffled her own hair in frustration, the silken black strands sliding through her fingers as she tried to massage away the tension building at her temples.

"Okay, let's assume the worst," she said aloud, her voice clipped but controlled. "Maybe the Celestial Dungeon would go into a dungeon break—at least that's the catastrophe I'm thinking would happen within a year—within a regular twenty-four-hour, three-hundred-sixty-five-day year, the shortest possible timeline. Let's account for what margin of error everyone is comfortable with—eighty or ninety per cent? We need to decide now what safety buffer we're planning around."

The thought alone made her stomach twist uncomfortably, a cold knot of dread forming, but she compartmentalised it.

According to '**General Knowledge**,' dungeons generated their own energy—self-sustaining magical ecosystems that, once rooted, could maintain their homeostasis for a very long time. In fact, according to recorded history so

far, they have maintained themselves for as long as the oldest governing body has existed.

For a dungeon to reproduce, it had to reach an overflow state after a certain period of homeostasis. After that threshold was crossed, the 'roots' of the dungeon would reach out and passively absorb the planet's inner energy—drawing from the core itself, bleeding it dry if left unchecked. In contrast, multiple minor dungeon breaks would happen in a cascading pattern, where energy was consumed, absorbed, and harvested by the monsters spilling onto the surface like a plague of locusts. The image alone was grim: waves of creatures pouring forth, devouring everything in their path until the world was stripped bare.

This overflow state was typically reached when a dungeon had grown to either fifty or a hundred floors—well, at least that's what had been observed in documented cases. There were multiple examples of planet-bound dungeons with more than a hundred floors, but those existed only because the planet governing that dungeon fed it energy in a carefully controlled environment, maintaining a delicate balance. Skilled dungeon administrators would hire multiple adventurers to cull the monster populations regularly, preventing the dungeon from ever reaching that critical overflow state. It was management, not mercy.

On the contrast, if a Celestial Dungeon was kept unchecked and it reached an overflow state where it had harvested every scrap of energy in the celestial body it was occupying—draining it completely dead—then it would 'bloom'. At that critical point, the monsters within would achieve the capability to escape the gravity well of their celestial body, flying out into the void of space itself like seeds on the wind. And whatever celestial body they landed on—planet, moon, asteroid with sufficient mass—they would take root and form another Celestial Dungeon, beginning the cycle anew. A plague that could spread across star systems.

'Self-replicating magical catastrophes that can survive in a vacuum.

'Wonderful.' Absolutely wonderful,' Rin thought with heavy sarcasm, the internal tone awfully sounding like that arsehole version of Shirou she'd dropped within four days of the Holy Grail War—Archer, with his insufferable pessimism, dark quips and murder-suicidal plans. Though at least he had helped Shirou in the end, she'd give him that much credit. Rin shook her head sharply, dismissing the memory, and looked behind her at the assembled group.

Rin could see everyone around her adopting what she now recognised as the telltale sign of prompting '**General Knowledge**' for additional information—that brief, distant look in their eyes, pupils slightly unfocused, as they actively queried the skill and processed the knowledge being revealed directly into their minds.

"That's it, I think we can have our cake and eat it too," Rose suddenly interrupted, her voice bright with revelation as she approached Rin and the whiteboard. She snatched up another marker with enthusiasm, already beginning to sketch out her thoughts in quick, messy strokes.

But when Rose turned back to face their assembled audience, she was met with a wall of confused expressions. The elves—Ryuu, Haruka, and Lefiya—had brows furrowed in polite bewilderment, Haruhime's ears tilted quizzically, and Marin's head cocked to one side like a curious puppy. Both Rin and Hermione shook their heads in exasperation.

Shirou, at least, explained, "I think it's best described by killing two birds with one stone, or achieving two goals with one solution." He paused, his golden eyes meeting Rose's for a brief second, then meeting Rin's, who just gave him a challenging eyebrow. "From what I could understand, Rose has a solution for both the food supply issue and the dungeon break problem."

Rose's confident expression crumbled into something far more sheepish, one hand rising to ruffle through her vivid crimson hair. "Right, yeah—sorry about

that," she apologised with an embarrassed smile, her emerald eyes flickering between the non-English speakers. "Should've remembered some idioms might not be universal. Cultural thing, my bad."

"While I'm not sure how large the first biome would be," Rose continued, recovering her momentum as she turned back to the whiteboard, marker already moving again, "if we take advantage of at most half of the house-elves—that's about three thousand—and maybe two-thirds of the hoards of goblins, we're looking at roughly thirteen thousand personnel total. We can essentially strip-mine the first few floors daily and on a rotation system, so we get our food supplies sorted, plus this also depletes the Celestial Dungeon of its accumulated energy, making absolutely certain that it doesn't go into an overflow state and trigger a dungeon break."

Rin studied the diagrams Rose drew whilst she explained. It was rough—very rough—but the underlying concept was sound.

"Good, that's a nice idea," Rin acknowledged aloud. "Though we need to scale this properly since the energy upkeep of a Celestial Dungeon is quite low at higher floors compared to lower ones." She paused, her eyes going briefly distant as she actively prompted '**General Knowledge**' for more specific parameters, feeling the information slot into place in her mind like pieces of a vast, intricate puzzle clicking together—energy distribution models, floor-by-floor consumption rates, optimal harvesting patterns. "Let's target an excess of food production at one and a half times our current upkeep—build in a safety margin for waking up more help and unexpected demand spikes."

She glanced over at Hermione, who had been running calculations in her head, her brown eyes distant with concentration. "Hermione, was I wrong in my understanding that you can't simply remove any individual from stasis quickly? Is there a gradual revival process involved? I was wondering how long it would take?"

"Are you asking for the reason to develop the planet, or are you wanting to scale up Rose's strip-mining proposal?" Hermione asked, her analytical mind clearly trying to determine the scope of the question.

Rin paused for a moment, considering how to frame her response, before replying, "Actually, it's both," she admitted, meeting Hermione's gaze squarely, her expression serious. "We need specialists to develop the planet properly—agricultural experts, environmental specialists, botanists, zoologists, infrastructure planners, and probably other specialised professionals we haven't even thought of yet. And eventually, we'll need enough people actively awake and working to ensure the energy level of the Celestial Dungeon is always cycling below full capacity—constant maintenance to prevent overflow."

"It is true that we don't really have the expertise to develop the planet properly," Gabrielle suddenly interrupted, her melodic voice cutting through the thoughtful silence that had settled over the group.

Rin felt it again—that subtle, instinctive pull of attraction radiating from the platinum-blonde Veela, warm and coaxing like sunlight on bare skin. She cycled her od deliberately, feeling the familiar current flow through her circuits, steadying herself against the involuntary draw.

"We can probably manage isolated farms in the meantime," Gabrielle continued thoughtfully, one elegant hand resting lightly against her chin as she considered the options. "Perhaps we should establish an isolated, heavily warded area for the sealife as well—keep ecosystems separated until we understand the environmental balance better. We'll start removing the stasis charm from select experts today, of course. Still, the problem is that the length of time required for a stasis charm to be fully, safely removed is equal to the time the individual was placed under it. By my estimation, most of those who have backgrounds in planetary development or anything relevant to our current predicament were under the charm for about a year now."

Rin frowned slightly. Given their looming deadline, that was far less than ideal.

The trio of wand-witches—Rose, Hermione, and Gabrielle—then took turns explaining the mechanics and limitations of the stasis charm to the rest of the assembled group, Hermione having already briefed both Haruka and Rin previously.

Hermione, ever the methodical lecturer, gave a detailed breakdown of the stasis charm's construction: it involved a combination of ritual magic and potioncraft, she explained, where the individual was placed within a self-contained temporal bubble—a pocket of space where time moved at such an infinitesimally slow rate that it was practically frozen. The charm was layered over the Draught of Living Death, an extremely strong sleeping draught which put the imbiber into a death-like state akin to true suspended animation.

When Lefiya asked why they couldn't simply use the potion alone, her pale brows furrowed in genuine curiosity, Hermione explained the reason for the second time today.

"We didn't know how long Project Noah would need to run," she said quietly, and Rin could hear the weight of old fears beneath the calm explanation, the strain of someone who'd had to plan for the absolute worst-case scenario.

"The death-like sleep from the draught alone wouldn't be enough for an indefinite period—months, perhaps, but not years or decades. The body would eventually require calories to sustain even minimal function, however reduced. And if individuals were left in that suspended state without the temporal stasis reinforcing it, motor function and neural activity would subsequently degrade over time, cells dying one by one in slow motion. We'd be waking corpses, not people—bodies without minds, or worse."

A grim silence followed that image, heavy and uncomfortable. Several people shifted in their seats, suddenly finding their food less appetising.

Hermione pressed on, her voice steady despite the morbid subject matter, clearly determined to ensure everyone understood the full scope and limitations.

"The reason why it takes time to safely remove individuals from stasis is that we must gradually synchronise the flow of time within the bubble with the actual flow of time outside it. The temporal differential has to be closed slowly, carefully, in measured increments—rushing it would cause severe physiological shock as their bodies tried to age months or years in seconds. Possibly fatal. Once both time flows match perfectly, maintaining equilibrium, the bubble is pierced and dissolved. After that, we administer the Wigenweld Potion to counter the lingering effects of the draught and gently coax them back to full consciousness over several hours."

With that sobering thought hanging in the air, someone else wisely changed the topic to something less grim.

"In the meantime, let's depend on the dungeon for food provisions, shall we?" Lefiya added, her soft voice brightening the mood slightly as she reminded everyone of Rose's practical solution, her pale features composed and confident. "Ryuu and I both invested in the '**Appraisal Skill**' when we selected our abilities from the reincarnation store. With that, we can easily identify any monster parts that aren't edible or are potentially toxic—it provides direct information about composition, quality, and safety."

"Oh yeah, I forgot about that," Rose said suddenly, her tone bright with realisation, and with a careless flick of her wrist, her wand appeared in her empty hand as if summoned by thought alone—the wandless summoning smooth and practised. A tall stack of parchment floated smoothly into the air in front of her, hovering at about hip height, the sheets rustling faintly in the still air like dried leaves.

Rin's eyes widened as she recognised the intent, her stomach dropping. '*Oh no. She's going to—*'

"Uh, Rose, no—!" Hermione tried to interrupt, half-rising from her seat with alarm written across her face, one hand outstretched in warning, clearly knowing exactly what was about to happen.

Too late. Far too late.

With another casual wave of Rose's wand, the stack multiplied explosively—dozens, then hundreds of identical parchments materialising in mid-air with a sound like rushing wind. They scattered wildly in every direction, propelled by uncontrolled magic, fluttering and spinning through the air like a chaotic blizzard of paperwork unleashed upon an unsuspecting office. Sheets smacked into faces with soft thuds, tangled in hair, landed directly in bowls of food with splashes, draped over shoulders like capes, covered the whiteboards, and generally created an absolute mess across the entire gathering area.

Rin grumbled under her breath, irritation sparking hot in her chest as she reached up and plucked a parchment off her head where it had landed and draped itself over her eyes like an impromptu blindfold, thoroughly blocking her view of everything. She pulled it off her face with more force than strictly necessary, the paper crinkling under her grip, shaking it once to straighten it, and quickly scanned the contents with narrowed eyes.

Shirou's stat sheet.

She blinked. *'Of course it would be his.'*

She frowned slightly as her eyes tracked over the details—his Element and Origin both listed simply as Sword and the particularly troubling: his blurred nature of his race classification. She shook her head, filing the information away for later consideration. *'We'll need to discuss that eventually. But not now.'*

"Okay, anyway," Rin said aloud, raising her voice slightly to cut through the rustling chaos as people around her picked parchments out of their laps with careful fingers, plucked them off their plates where they'd landed in food, and extracted them from various other inconvenient locations—tucked behind ears, draped over heads, stuck to the whiteboards. "At least we have something planned for now. Who here has the **'Appraisal Skill'**?"

Lefiya, Haruhime, Haruka, Marin, Hermione, and Ryu all raised their hands in turn, even as they brushed stray parchments off their shoulders and tidied their immediate vicinity with varying degrees of exasperation and amusement.

"Good," Rin continued, her mind already organising the next steps. "Once we also know what poisonous materials look like—establish a reference—our Structural Analysis can assist with the identification of edible meat as well. And from what I understand, everyone here has **'Conceptual Crossover'** listed in their skill sets. We can teach Structural Analysis to everyone. It's foundational enough that anyone with proper mana control should be able to learn it." She paused, glancing sideways at Shirou with a faint, teasing smile. "Though Shirou here is an absolute expert at that particular mystery."

"Well, I'm terribly sorry if I'm not an Average One," Shirou replied, his tone dripping with sarcasm as he leant back against the table, arms crossed, one eyebrow raised in dry amusement.

Rin maturely stuck her tongue out at him in retaliation, earning a few quiet snickers from around the table.

It was then that Rin noticed Hermione suddenly furrow her brow, her gaze fixed intently on the stat sheet in her hands.

"What's an Average One?" Hermione asked, looking at the stat sheet she held, glancing up to meet Rin's eyes. "Because I remember seeing that listed as my Element, and I see that you're classified as one as well, Rin."

Rin felt a flicker of satisfaction—this was familiar ground, the kind of structured explanation she excelled at. She flipped her hair back over one shoulder with a smooth, practised motion, settling into the comfortable rhythm of lecture mode.

"Right," she began, her voice taking on the clear, confident cadence of a teacher addressing an eager class. "Let's start with the fundamentals, shall we? Elemental alignment and Origin..."

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END

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