

## Alchemy of Hearts chapter 3

### Chapter 3: The Search

At the centre of a long corridor built with wood, two men with beards dressed in different colours and patterns of Kimono had grave expressions on their faces while gazing at the stormy weather which was spattering heavy rain drops.

Both men, Lord Date in white and Lord Shiba in a patterned kimono, looked to be in their late fifties but were actually mages older than Sato Naoki.

Sato Naoki came from the direct and only true bloodline of the Alchemist, which means that only their lineage could live for so long because immortality ran in their bloodstream. 2

How then did these two men manage to still be alive for more than seven centuries? It looks like they have been up to something over these years.

“This sign is ominous. I can sense a threat being birthed.” Lord Date said with his gaze stretched into the distance, and his long grey-coloured beards fluttered in the night breeze.

His hands were crossed behind his back as his unkind gaze continued to stare into the distance.

“Which of our enemies do you think is being birthed, can you sense it?” Lord Shiba asked in a low dangerous tone. He had a sword secured on his waist, and he looked like he was ready to slaughter someone soon.

Lord Shiba exuded fierce energy at the thought of anyone that dares to challenge them. His eyes showed just how bloodthirsty he was,

“I can’t sense anything from here. We have to conduct an emergency search before the clear signs in the sky disappear,” Lord Date replied after sighing deeply.

“Do you think it’s the Seer?” Lord Shiba evaluated as his grey brows knitted together, and for a second, his gaze relaxed a bit.

He and the other members of their group have been waiting for the Seer for 3 centuries, since finding out about her relevance to the success of their mission.

Slowly, Lord Date retracted his gaze from the distance and fixed a solemn look on him. “If it is the Seer, then we have to get a hold of that child immediately!” 2

“We have to inform the others at once! What about the Shogun and the Empress?” There was a sense of urgency and gravity in his tone.

This matter would be very serious if truly the Seer would be birthed tonight.

Lord Date shook his head disapprovingly. “We are yet to verify this speculation. The Shogun and the Empress cannot know of this half-baked news. Inform the others to gather the samurais for the search!”

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Daisuke arrived in front of the Ito family’s house on foot. His hair and clothes were drenched in the heavy rain as he stood in a puddle of water with his horse nowhere in sight.

Even as the drops of pressured water from the sky splattered on him, his attention was on the wails from Ito Hana and the midwife from outside and frowned slightly.

“Ito Haruka, I will protect you till master awakens!” He swore under his breath as beads of rainwater fell from his eyelashes and dropped onto his clothes.

Then, a clap of thunder resounded in the sky to signify the relevance of his oath.

Daisuke remained unshaken by the loud rumble. Bringing his hands forward, he slowly raised them while gathering the raindrops at his feet.

Once the raindrops reached his waist-level, he twirled thrice at full speed before pushing the energy that had gathered in his hands, towards the building belonging to the Ito family.

Immediately, the sound of wails from inside the Ito family’s wood house ceased, and could not be heard anymore. There was dead silence as if everyone had suddenly retired for the night.

Daisuke slowly retracted his arms and straightened up his body. He was quite satisfied that he was able to do something for his master when he was incapacitated.

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Soon, the wails of a newborn followed by her mother’s cries after an hour inside the Ito family’s house were heard.

“Congratulations Milady, your daughter is here!” The midwife announced with a big smile plastered on her wrinkled face. 3

Ito Haruka, the one whose existence was foreseen by the prophets of old some centuries ago, has been born...

Ito Hana's husband and son who were distressed while waiting for a while now heard the good news and looked relieved. They couldn't wait to be ushered in to see the mother and the child.

Ito Hana held the baby wrapped in a white shawl on her chest and wrapped an arm around her slightly for a moment as the little one cried.

There was a smile of relief on her face as tears dripped down her eyes. Slowly, she lifted the little one from her chest to glance at her beautiful face, and this was when she noticed something off.

"Why is there still blood on her hair?" She asked in a weary tone.

The midwife to whom that question was delivered, didn't know what kind of reaction to display.

"Milady, that's not blood on the front part of her hairline. Your daughter has two hair colours, but the red one looks like a birthmark to me." 1

This was the birthmark Sato Naoki noticed on the baby a few months ago, and planned to cover up on this very day.

At first, when the midwife noticed that red colour patch on the baby's front hairline, she thought it was blood, and maybe because of the darkness of the night, she wasn't seeing properly.

But having the light close enough to illuminate things for her after cleaning up the baby, confirmed that her sight was still working perfectly.

Again, Ito Hana squinted while staring directly into her eyes. She was lost in thought for a moment and had to be called back by her, and was reminded of the crying child in her arms.

"Milady, your child needs to be fed."

Ito Hana glanced at her child's hair one last time before pushing the left side of her clothes down with one hand to reveal her breast, before latching the child's small tender lips on it, to enable her to suck her milk effortlessly.

Whilst her baby sucked hungrily, Ito Hana beckoned on her only servant in the room who has waited upon her all through her labour.

"Ane, prepare a healthy black dye suitable for the baby," 2

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In the heavy outpouring from the sky, the loud neighs from more than a hundred horses galloping in the rain resounded in the deserted streets.

The samurais whipped their horses and kicked them, urging them to go faster.

In the forefront of these hundred samurais were Lord Date, Lord Shiba, Lord Toyotomi and Lord Satake. These Lords were the Daimyos.

The Daimyos were powerful magnates under the Shogun that ruled most of Japan from their vast land holdings with an iron fist.

Each time the peasants and merchants saw any of these Feudal Lords, they would tremble and hurry out of their way, for they knew the kind of punishment that would befall them if they dared to block their path.

These Daimyos and their samurais rode till they came to a crossroads and stopped briefly.

Their heavy breathing was silenced by the heavy downpour of the rain as the samurais waited for the Daimyos to make a decision.

“We must find that child!” Lord Date declared in a powerful voice while sparing each of the Lords a glance.

The other Lords nodded in consensus with sharp piercing gazes matching their powerful aura.

Lord Date glanced at them one more time before urging his horse to start moving as he picked one of the routes and immediately, twenty-five samurais followed him on their horses.

With Lord Date gone, the other Lords each picked one route as the remaining samurais divided themselves into three groups and followed them at a similar pace.

The search for the Seer began as every house that had signs of life was barged into, scaring its occupants in the process.

When Lord Satake approached the street where the Ito family lived, he commanded a search in the houses that still had their lights on.

“Search the houses with the lights on!”

Fortunately, Daisuke’s powers were strong enough to prevent someone like Lord Satake from seeing through his illusions, thus making the Ito family’s house appear abandoned which saved it from the search.

All the children birthed that night were personally examined by the Feudal Lords but they ended up being disappointed in the end.

The newborns were without the smallest aura of relevance, but that didn't make them give up on the search.

Moreso when the Shogun caught word of it, he ensured the search continued.

"No matter how long it would take you if you must examine everybody one after the other, do it! Find the Seer and bring the person to me!" He had commanded.

Once his edict was passed, the Daimyos continued with their search along with their samurais.

The Feudal Lords being mages, took it upon themselves to personally try to sense the special energy from every newborn, and growing child, as the year progressed.

However, they were unaware of the fact that even if the child Ito Haruka stood before them, they would still be unable to detect her special energy and powers.

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\*DICTIONARY\*

Shogun – Title of the military dictator. He was one who usually wielded more power than the emperor, or had equal authority with him. He was the leader of the Feudal Lords (Dark Souls/Mages).