

“So... according to what I can tell from the stars, the Hakurei Shrine should be dead ahead.” Renko says as she looks up at the sky, not paying attention to where she was walking. She would’ve tripped on a tree root were it not for Maribel yanking her by the shirt and pulling her upwards.

“Well, don’t forget to look at where you’re walking. I swear, were it not for me being around, you’d be dead already.” Maribel grumbles. She sighs before giving her partner a soft and warm smile. She does like to protect Renko. Knowing that the love of her life is safe within her hands fills her with a sense of power and control that she can’t describe, yet she yearns for it, just as much as she yearns for Renko’s love.

“Ahahaha, sorry Merry! You know how my “powers” work. They’re not really useful if I’m not looking up at the sky.” The burnette says with an embarrassed laugh. While she may not like to admit it, she does like having Maribel around to protect her. She can’t even begin to tell how many times she’s broken a leg or an arm just from her not paying attention. Perhaps it’s for the best that she doesn’t tell Maribel that it’s been more than five times.

“I know, but that doesn’t mean you can’t look down every now and then.” Maribel sighs before taking Renko’s hand into her own. “So, why are we going to this shrine anyways?”

“I’m glad you asked my tall British girlfriend.” Renko smirks.

“Technically I’m Irish though I grew up in Britain but continue.” Maribel corrects.

“You see, according to this website, The Hakurei Shrine is said to be the gate into not just another world, but a whole new dimension and reality itself! One where youkai, vampires and other mythological creatures exist and play. A land of eternal dreams and beauty!” Renko excitedly exclaimed, having a hard time to stay calm. Just imagining the two of them being able to document this properly would be a giant first step for the Secret Sealing Club!

“That’s if we can even cross into it in the first place.” Maribel tells Renko.

“Awww come on! You have that boundary manipulation of yours! Surely that can help!”

“I can only see boundaries. I can’t manipulate them. Not yet at least. But I’m trying to work on it.”

“Damn, that’s a shame. Well I guess you just confirming it’s existence would be enough for me then.” Renko shrugs as she continues to walk hand in hand with Maribel.

Eventually the two club members would walk under a worn down torii gate and enter the shrine grounds. In front of them they see a worn down shrine, which clearly has seen better days. Nature has almost fully reclaimed what was once taken away from it. “This is it.” Renko says as she looks at the shrine. “Can you sense anything Merry?” She asks.

Maribel nods as she feels a very powerful boundary enveloping the shrine. Yet what’s odd about this boundary is that it seems to start here, but goes on for infinity in some other realm. Almost as if the shrine serves as a door way. “I can feel something here, but I can’t determine where it actually is.”

“Alright, I’ll take a look around to see if I can find some kind of seal then. Renko says as she starts walking around the grounds, trying to find anything that could give away the fact that it’s a gateway to another reality.

While Renko is investigating, Maribel stares at the shrine. Something starts to build up within the depths of her heart as she stares at the old abandoned shrine. Seeing how the wood is rotting and the roofing tiles are falling apart, the way that vines are using the donation box as a pot of soil and seeing the rust envelop a once golden bell makes the college girl feel sorrow. It’s like she’s seeing the death of dreams and fantasy right in front of her. She gives a frown as she steps forward and closer to the shrine. She wishes that it didn’t have to end up like this, getting forgotten by all of humanity, and having no purpose. She closes her eyes and sighs.

When she opens them again, she finds the shrine magically restored to what it once was. A beautiful blue roof with shining gold bells and Sakura trees blooming all around it. Maribel is amazed at what she’s witnessing as she looks around her. It’s almost as if she was taken into another world! She looks up into the sky and sees fairies flying around and playing games with each other. Behind her she sees a massive village and an endless bamboo forest to the east of said village. This just isn’t some other world, this world has a whole entire society within it! Maribel quickly rushes up to the shrine to perform a donation ritual. She donates ten thousand yen, rings the bell, claps her hands and bows. Maribel looks up and into the shining gold bell. It was so shiny that it practically acted as a mirror!

As Maribel looked into the bell, she noticed an odd figure in the reflection. It seemed to be of an older woman with long blonde hair and wearing a hat exactly like hers, though there was a large red ribbon on it. Their dresses look nearly identical too, with the exact same shade of purple too. Maribel turns around quickly, only to see that the woman has disappeared. Feeling a bit scared, she turns her attention back to the bell, only to find her reflection replaced with that of the woman she saw earlier. On closer inspection it would seem that this woman is her! But much older and taller than she is now. “What the...” Maribel utters as she steps back.

*‘This... is our dream come true. A land for the forgotten to spend the rest of their days in happiness. A world that rests on the border of dreams and reality, a land of fantasy, a land called Gensokyo.’* Says a mature womanly voice in Maribel’s head, scaring the girl.

With a sudden blink, Maribel finds herself back on the old abandoned grounds of the shrine she arrived with Renko. “Hey Merry, are ya okay? You kinda just... zoned out there for a good five minutes. I was about to call the ambulance if you didn’t respond.” Renko asked concerned.

Maribel shakes her head, dismissing the vision she saw as nothing more than her imagination. “Yeah... I’m fine. Just got distracted in my mind. That’s all. Did you find a seal?” Maribel asks.

“Nah... I couldn’t find anything. But that’s not very important right now. I just want to make sure that you’re okay. I’m supposed to be the one that zones out into daydreams, not you Merry.” Renko says, holding Maribel’s hand with a loving embrace.

“I told you silly, I’m fine. Just a daydream that I got distracted by.” Maribel reassured her girlfriend by giving her a warm hug and a kiss on the forehead.

“Well, are you going to tell me what you saw?”

“I saw my ultimate goal in life, perhaps you can call it my dream.”