

A Glitched 271

Chapter 271 An Eccentric Hero

Arafunn was a strange and almost eccentric man, I didn't know what he was up to, but he seemed to be a good person... Because he was a hero like my parents. They trusted him, and I decided to lower my guard for that reason. Thankfully, I had the memories and experience of my previous life, giving me a better maturity than someone like Aquarina, who was still surprised and a bit wary of him, thinking he was strange. Her powers should be able to detect some sort of emotion or something else coming from him, right? I wonder what it could be.

Well, if she doesn't say it out loud, he probably doesn't have bad intentions, but that Aquarina is still on alert could mean she's still just very shy to strangers she had never seen before or that there is something more to him. I hope it is the first one.

"How about we eat dinner? I got some meat bread, and eggs, how about I make some meat loaf?" He asked.

"Oh, I like that! I've been missing your cooking, Arafunn..." Sighed Nepheline.

"Haha, is that so? I guess I wasn't as useless as I remember!" He said.

"You were never a useless member, Arafunn, don't take what the Witch said to you to heart, she was always messing around." Said Shade.

"Okay, okay! I was messing around, don't worry about me you guys, I am completely okay." Said Arafunn with a charming and relaxed smile, this man was certainly someone interesting.

"After all, I think she was into you, but you never reciprocated it." Said my mother.

"She was?" Wondered Arafunn, looking a bit flabbergasted at everybody.

My parents and Aquarina's parents looked at one another in silence, and then, as if this was some sort of comedy act, they all facepalmed at the same time.

"Arafunn you're so philosophical sometimes, but you're really, REALLY dense!" Said Allan.

"Oh my god, I can't believe this man..." Sighed my mother.

"Incredible, you're still the same air-headed elf we all remember." Said Shade.

"Hahahahaha!" Nepheline just laughed.

"E-Everyone, stop messing around with me! Shouldn't you be happy we got to reunite, what sort of nonsense are you laughing for now?" Sighed the elf, as he crossed his arms and raising an eyebrow.

"The Witch of the Blue mountain had romantic interests for you for a while, Arafunn... It has been over 10 years since then now. Have you ever seen her again?" Asked my mother.

"She had...? Agh, I am so bad at this..." Sighed Arafunn. "Living so much really just broken my perception of human's emotions. Also I already had someone in that time."

"Eh? All that philosophical talk and you can't empathize with people?!" I asked in disbelief.

"It is not that, he can. But not at the level of depth that he can notice romantic interests. Or more like... he's generally way too oblivious. Eh, kind of reminds me of you." Said my mother.

"Me?! I am not dense!" I said angrily. "Right, Aquarina?"

Aquarina looked at me while raising her eyebrows and then calming down, glaring at me expressionlessly, as if she was a bit bored.

"Huh, sure." She said while crossing her arms.

"Eh? Why are you angry out of nowhere?" I wondered.

"Nothing!" She said.

"Eehhh..." I was left a bit surprised, my best friend suddenly got angry at me! W-Was I also oblivious of something about her?

"Sylphy you're just as dense as you're strong." Said Zack. "But anyways... Erm, sir elf, are you really... a legendary hero that defeated the demon king?" Zack asked rather boldly. "You really... Erm, how to say this... You don't really look strong."

"Oh?! Hahahaha! Young man, you really don't know that elves can't really grow buffed like Shade or Allan, right? We are nimble fairies of the forest; we move swiftly and strike at our enemies' weak points! ...But more importantly, I was actually a supporter. My songs possess magical properties. It is not for nothing that I was given the title of the Hero of Soothing Rivers and Songs! On all of this Realm, my songs knows no equals." Said Arafunn pridefully, as he puffed his chest and raised his chin, he was really cartoony.

"S-Songs? So you're really a bard... A bard hero, I never thought such a character would join the party to defeat the demon king... But there is indeed some tales about you as well." I said rather surprised, being reminded that I had heard around the town about the heroes. There were no statues of them but also my mother told me there were statues of them in major cities of this continent.

"I sing beautiful songs sometimes, but songs alone are boring, I often just add melody to stories, to epics. After we defeated the Demon King, everyone ended overly gloomy, so I dedicated myself to make songs and stories about our journey so the people would be able to also experience and... empathize with us." Said Arafunn.

"Empathize?" I asked.

"Well, you see... People don't see heroes as people." Said Arafunn.

"...What? Why?" I wondered.

"Isn't it obvious? Heroes are an idolized figure, an idol that people look towards by rising their heads, a person... no, a being that embodies the justice that everyone believes on. They do everything that normal people would only dream to accomplish, and they are said to be able to even save the world if they work together... Heroes are a device for people to unify their thoughts and emotions into an idol. It wouldn't be a stretch to say that they treat us like saints or gods. Some aristocrats used us as near-god-like figures to control the masses." Sighed Arafunn. "People grow desensitized about the heroes, and they see us as almighty, all-powerful people that can solve all the problems of the world... It is far from the truth."

"..."

"So, he dedicates his life to tell our stories and our journeys, so the people can learn that... we are just the same as them..." Said my mother, as she seemed rather... depressed out of nowhere.

"Mom..."

Chapter 272 Heroes Reunited

Heroes, what are heroes? From what I've always understand, from my previous life and from this life, they're those given special abilities and blessings, people born with incredible talent, capable of leading the masses and bringing victory, the hope of people's hearts... But is that really the truth?

What are heroes, truly? In this world so driven by conflict between the races, especially humans against demons, heroes were figures idolized by everyone. As humans experienced so much pain, so much suffering, and lost so much hope through the wars against the demons, heroes were chosen by the gods to defeat the demons and ultimately their leader, the demon king.

The peoples' despair, their suffering, and everything else they went through was concentrated into the heroes, the burden that they had to hold into their shoulders. Granted supernatural talents and powers by the heroes' blessings, they were given the task to carry humanity's burdens and defeat the demons, they were the hope of everybody's heart.

Are they... still the hope? Seeing how people reacted in the town, they still are. To think that my mother and my father are beloved so much by everyone, honestly, it makes me very happy that they are

admired so much, they worked very hard to reach this point after all, they deserve the praise and the love.

But... there is also a bad side to it, being an idol is not a good thing, especially for the people behind the hero title, they... my father, my mother... despite being so strong and amazing, they really can't do everything.

They're idolized as the hope of everyone's hearts, but they're also people, they cannot really save everyone, they are prayed like gods in some villages, people ask for their miracles, some even make statues of them and offer prayers to them.

But my parents know they cannot bring miracles to people, if someone far away is getting killed by monsters, they cannot do anything about it. In fact, they often say how hopeless it was when the demon king died. They always said... that nothing ever changed.

My father seemed to have always believed the entire hero thing, and even said he was brainwashed by those nations in this continent to believe on himself as someone as great as the tales said. But after what they did, after their journey ended, but nothing changed, they realized, everyone, that they had been playing in the palms of these rulers.

They were tools used to control the masses, to defeat the demons and to make atrocities, they were weapons, even, forced to slay the leaders of the demon nations and slay... even civilians, as Shade laments all the time.

Heroes... don't exist, they're merely a fabrication.

Is that... what Arafunn is trying to tell? He's trying to use his songs and his stories to tell the truth of what happened. Perhaps... he just wants people to understand that they were merely people with dreams that came together for the greater good, but that they were not near as perfect or indestructible.

After all, many heroes perished through the journey, sacrificing themselves to continue such a hopeless crusade into the demon continent... Sigh.

"Well, that's sort of the past now! Over ten years has it been already? I couldn't even tell." Said Arafunn.
"Traveling around the world is really fun, so my perception of time gets lost. Haha..."

"Arafunn... Sir..." I asked.

"Hm? Yes, dear?" He asked.

"...Do you feel regret for what you did?" I wondered.

Arafunn's smile disappeared, as his eyes slowly began to lose their light. He walked around the house as he seemed to sorrowfully smile. His eyes seemed to be reminiscing of something, remembering something...

"I wish I could... But the things I experienced, and the friends I made along the way... They make up for it. I don't regret the journey we made... But perhaps, I do regret some of my decisions." He said rather seriously.

"I see..." I sighed. My mother caressed my head gently as she looked at me.

"Sylphy, don't ask so many personal things to this old elf. He's actually older than me." Said my mother.
"He's too old so he might even have Alzheimer now."

"Eh?! How rude! I am only 873 years old, I am still in the prime of my youth!" Said Arafunn.

"Hahaha! My bad, I guess you're still a young adult." Said my mother. "In the other case, I am quite young."

"You're still quite old, I am merely 250 years older." Said Arafunn. He crossed his arms rather angrily.

"Heh, you never change, old Arafunn..." Sighed my mother.

"I never thought he was so old! 873 years?! Are you serious?! My wife is way younger than you, old man." Said my father.

"He's the oldest of the group after all." Said Nepheline.

"Somewhat, it doesn't feel like it." Said Shade while crossing his arms. "He's too childish. How come someone so old can be so childish?"

"O-Oi! You're an edgelord, this is why you think anything that is not about darkness is childish!" Said Arafunn.

"Haha, it is easy to provoke you as well." Laughed Shade.

"Shade! Stop messing around with me!" Said Arafunn.

Is this my idea or is this the first time I saw Shade smile and laugh so easily like now? I guess Arafunn was the member of the party that always lightened the mood of everyone... I suppose that's the job that a bard must do.

"A-Anyways, Sylphy, Aquarina, do you want to see how I make my meatloaf? Maybe we can also bake some bread while we are at it, we are dining like kings tonight!" Said Arafunn, quickly wrapping a white apron around his waist.

"Eh... You're still using that apron?" Asked Ninhursag. "We only meet for a while but every time you cooked you used it."

"This is the apron of my mother dearest! Why wouldn't I use it to cook? Do you want my expensive clothes to get nasty or something?" Sighed Arafunn, he changed his attitude and nature a lot. It seems he... relaxed a lot with his friends.

Arafunn invited me and Aquarina to cook with him. I don't know why, I am pretty sure he could just cook himself, but perhaps he wanted to teach us how to make meatloaf. I actually know, I've seen my mother do it and I've even memorized it, so I don't really know what's his plan.

Maybe he just want to interact with us as we are the daughters of his friends? I suppose. I wonder if he got any son or daughter himself, being so old, there's no way he doesn't have a descendant...

"Alright girls, you two are going to help me! Aquarina, use water magic with this hard bread and break it into crumbs, all watered down into a mass." Said Arafunn.

"Huh? That sounds a bit disgusting, how are we going to eat this?" She asked.

"It is an old recipe, when you make this mashed bread with water, this dough-like thing can be used with the meat to give it a lot of consistency! It is also a good way to use old bread instead of throwing it away, right? It is a technique that poor people like me use!" Laughed Arafunn.

"Ooohh... Okay then." Said Aquarina. She grabbed the hard pieces of bread and began to slowly tear them apart over a bowl, adding water using magic, she made the bread get very wet, slowly tearing apart and becoming a mushy paste. It didn't look appetizing.

"You know? There's another technique you can do with hard bread!" Said Arafunn. "If you pour some water over the hard bread and then put it inside an oven or over some fire in a pan, it will slowly warm up, and the water over it will evaporate, making the hard bread become very soft again!" Said Arafunn.

"You sure know a lot about how to use hard bread, bard..." Sighed my mother. "You got the talent to earn a lot more money, I don't know why you're so obsessed with living like a homeless man."

"Haha, dear Faylen, don't you get it? there is a charm in living like this, wandering around, free as the wind, the ceiling is the sky, the bed is the grass below my feet, I eat what I find, and make some money along my journey by singing... I guess it is hard to understand for a little princess!" Laughed Arafunn.

"I-I am not a spoiled princess! I always hated being one, in fact..." Sighed my mother, crossing her arms angrily.

"C-Come on, don't get so angry now." My father began to calm down my mother. "Arafunn, please don't remind her of that... In fact we are currently moving there..."

"Oh, is that so? Oh right, I saw that group of tents with Amazon, I guess you're really moving out of the jungle!" Said Arafunn. "Oh my, oh my, that sounds really dangerous... You're planning to cross the sea too?"

"Yeah, that's the plan." Said my mother. "We are doing this because I know it is safer there. After all you know how the people of the empire would treat the amazon..."

"Ah, yeah... Thankfully Bright Dawn is very isolated from the rest of the continent so they won't make a fuss in here, although they're still staying far away." Said Arafunn. "Anyways, how about I accompany you? I was planning to go to Atlanta anyways... Or the beast-kin continent, whichever one. Been a few decades since I visited them."

"Sure, we'll love to have you around." Said my father. "But you should stop with your stupid jokes or my patience is going to run low in no time, Arafunn, you're warned." Said my father rather menacingly.

"Hahaha. Come on, Allan, you got a bit too grumpy out of nowhere... Ah! Right, you humans grow old so fast, are you already an old man? How old are you- Oh, you're over thirty now! That's a lot for humans, isn't it?" Asked Arafunn.

"That's still young! I am as young as I used to be, I am still a teenager in heart, you elf!" Said my father angrily.

"Ah, it has really been that long?" Sighed my mother. "For me it felt... like an instant."

My mother said such words as she looked down into the floor. I suppose it must feel like that for her, someone who has lived over six hundred years... I suppose even time itself goes fast for her in some way, it is the perception inside of her mind like this? But it feels so long since I was born... Does she see it as little time? It has been... seven years!

"Mommy don't say that!" I said angrily.

"Eh?! S-Sylphy...?!" She asked nervously.

"I was born over 7 years ago, isn't that a lot of time? It felt like a lot to me!" I said.

"...Certainly, it felt like that to me as well when I was younger, but as you grow older... and older... It is... like a passing wind..." She sighed.

"Ugh! Mom, stop being so gloomy!" I said.

"I-I am not being gloomy!" She said angrily.

"Okay, okay, let's calm down for now, we don't want to discuss pointless stuff, right?" Asked my father.
"Faylen, I'm sure you're lying, you always say stuff like this anyways, even though each day seems long to me, I see you enjoy each day as well... I know your perception of time is changing with us."

"W-What gives you the right to say that?" Asked my mother while blushing.

"I am your husband?" Asked my father.

"Ah... Right..." She said. "W-Well, whatever's the case, enough blabber for now, let's cook something! Arafunn, I hope your meatloaf can contend against my pizza."

"Pizza? You're making pizza today, mom?!" I asked.

"Yep! I got all the ingredients now, so let's make something in that old oven of yours, Arafunn." Said my mother.

"How wonderful, you got suddenly pumped up! Haha, you're really changed, haven't you?" Arafunn laughed, poking at my mother. I can see that he likes to tease people.

Chapter 273 Cooking With Family

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Chapter 274 Naming Senses From Other Tribes

I continued cooking with Arafunn and Aquarina, as we enjoyed the rest of the day until the sun began to slowly descend from the horizon. Arafunn taught us how to make his "meatloaf" which was mixing the minced meat he got with some eggs, the bread mush with water, and then mixing it all into a big meat dough... or something like that. I think that's how we are going to call it for now, meat dough. All of this meat dough was put over a long metal bowl in the shape of a baguette, where Arafunn put everything.

"That's it? That's really it?" I wondered. Looking into the meat loaf only to find that it was put over the entire thing and that was it. Wow, I guess I shouldn't had really looked at it as if it were the best thing ever.

"Well, I think you thought it was going to be something incredible, Sylphy? It is just meat loaf. What, you thought I was going to pour some magic? Well yes. But that doesn't mean it is anything incredible." Said Arafunn, as he released golden magic sparks over the meatloaf before putting it in the oven. "With that, the Cooking Magic shall enhance the flavor! How lovely, everyone is going to like this."

"I thought you were going to teach me cooking magic..." I sighed.

"Haha, not everything in the world is about teaching you how to get stronger or something, you know? Sometimes you gotta just sit down and relax for once." He said.

"...Hm, I guess you might be right in that." I sighed.

"Right? Of course I am right. Now, let's wait for this- Oh, what is this amazing smell?!" Asked Arafunn, looking towards my mother's direction, as the oven she had brought outside of her item bag was already making a delicious pizza.

"Huh? Don't you remember when I made this to you guys back then? You all loved it to death." Said my mother. "It's called pizza! Arafunn, remember that big piece of bread, with cheese, ham, and salami cut down into piece son top? Remember that at the very least!"

"A-Ah! I get it now! Okay, I remember." Said Arafunn while nodding confidently. "That's the one with the cheese that stretches around and is ultra-super delicious, right?!" He asked like a child, eh was really happy to know my mother was cooking that very dish.

"Yep, that very one! I guess you remember it well, huh?" Said my mother with a prideful smile. She seemed rather happy to have her cooking remembered so clearly by the old elf.

After that, the door suddenly opened, with my father, Shade, and Nepheline coming from outside.

"We felt useless so we began making a big roasted six-limbed lizard." Said my father.

"Eh?! You heartless monsters, are you roasting the little lizard that brought you here?!" Cried Arafunn.

"What? No, idiot, it is a different one, we won't eat the one carrying us. I even named him Paul." Said my father.

"Paul, seriously? How's that a name you'll give to a giant lizard?" Asked Shade.

"Hahaha! Allan has always been bad with naming; it is good that he let the naming to Faylen for his daughter. I bet he would had named her Alita or something." Said Nepheline.

"M-My sister was called Alita! It is a beautiful name!" Said my father.

"Haha, here he goes again. Mountain people's naming sense is terrible." Said Nepheline.

"Huh? And what does Nepheline even means then?" Asked my father.

"Nepheline means strong and robust!" Said Nepheline.

"H-Huh... Good for you." Said my father while averting his gaze from Nepheline. He felt a bit offended.

"Don't worry daddy, if I ever have a child, I'll let you name her or him." I said.

"Eh?! Really, Sylphy?! You're giving me a grandchild?! But that's... I don't know if you would be able to conventionally, but I guess you can adopt too, there are many children in this world left without parents due to the wards after all!" Said my father.

"Huh? What are you talking about?" I wondered. How come I won't have a grandchild? I mean, I had never considered it but eventually, right? I mean I will live super long so one day I'll hit with a guy... or maybe a girl? I had never considered it until this point but...

Wow, sexual life is quite complex, what do I even like? My previous life I was clearly into a guy, he survived so I was happy for it, but I never got to confess that I liked him so that was left kind of... there. It was slightly platonic, mostly because he was handsome and quite hard worker.

In my previous life I was just a normal human girl, I was just taught to choose a competent guy to love and then just make a family, I didn't had any very specific "likings" per say, other than making a family.

But now that I got magic, I am an elf that lives very long and everything... What should I really do? Should I seek a partner that I love and can match with me? A boy? Or... wait, a girl?

...What about... Aquarina?

No, that's wrong... We are just kids now; I shouldn't really even consider something like this now. Ugh, but now that it was brought to my mind, I feel kind of like I am going to begin thinking a lot of stupid things more often... I have yet to hit adolescence though, so... Ah, I better just not think about it.

But as I looked at Aquarina talk with my mother about the pizza and laugh at Arafunn's jokes, I suddenly felt slightly different... She's cute, isn't she? ...But what is this other feeling I am having?

...

"And ready!" My mother said, putting the freshly baked pizza over the table, the smell of cheese, baked dough, and the delicious spices, tomato sauce, and ham and salami cut down into pieces over it all merged together wonderfully. Man, pizza is the best.

"Time to dig in!" Said Arafunn happily, putting the meatloaf over the table.

Chapter 275 A Personal Talk 1

I ate a lot of meatloaf and pizza to forget those weirds feelings I just got recently. I had never really considered anything romantic until I said something about my own children, but having children really meant having someone to love and do... do... lewd stuff.

After all, kids don't pop out of nowhere, right? They come after... a night of passion. Yeah, let's leave it at that. And when I thought about, I realized that... I should just pick whatever I wanted, right? I had indeed found girls cute in my previous life, even my teacher... I guess I had a crush on her I think. She was so cool and beautiful now that I remember her... Even though her body was covered in scars and she was always cold-hearted, she had a beautiful body nonetheless and a radiant red hair, just like mine now.

Huh, I hope she's doing alright, I ended loving her more like a second mother than anything, although I really did feel like I had a crush on her now that I remember my feelings. But now that I am in a new life, with a restarted life, I don't really know what to think... All those people I once felt feelings for, those people I loved, they're all gone from my life.

I am in a completely different world and... I don't know if I will ever be able to go back to that world now. I am stuck here. Not... like I dislike the idea though, I love everyone I've met... Well, except those that tried to harm us. But my life, despite the hardships there were along the way, and the big challenge I once faced against that one Demon Lord, it has been very enjoyable

I think this second chance, even if it was a mistake, has been really enjoyable, and I truly happy that the god committed that mistake... And seeing how I am in a new world, the question about love had finally resurfaced in my mind after over 7 years of living here.

Through my entire young life I had left love as something I shouldn't think about nor really try to experience, I was a toddler after all, babies shouldn't go around romancing things, right? But now,

although I am still called a baby girl sometimes... I am growing up. In a bit more time, I'll reach 8 years of age, and then 9, 10... I will be a teenager before I realize.

Maybe I shouldn't really think about it even now, there are many people that never trouble themselves with stupid romance stuff, but... I am really trying to not think about it, however, now that I got Aquarina inside of my mind, it feels like she doesn't even want to leave it!

Well, I have always found her adorable and cute, but there is now something different. I remember she made me skip a beat some time ago... And now I feel that same feeling when I did when I look at her smile and enjoy her food. Maybe I shouldn't overthink it, my mind is that of an adult, even if a young adult, it is wrong to romanticize a kid... I will just suppress these emotions. Even if I am a kid myself now, my mind is not, and there is still a sense of morality I will never cross.

Aquarina is my lovely little sister and friend, and nothing more than that!

...Ugh, it is indeed hard.

But it's nothing lewd, actually, it is just like the feeling of... "I wish I could spend the rest of my life with her" kind of thing.

Uwah, I can't believe I said something similar to her, in fact, I promised it...

Ugh, so embarrassing... I had once worried about liking someone of the same sex before, even in my previous world, there was indeed some hate and discrimination against those people, I remember there was a couple of guys that were in a romantic relationship in my village, the people there didn't look at them well, especially those that were religious, calling them "sinful freaks" and some went as far as calling them "demons".

I don't even know what had happened to them after the bandit raid, but I hope... they are okay, wherever they are.

But in this world... aren't I freer from society's norms? And my parents look so lax as well, my father just told me that I could just adopt someone if I wanted... Maybe having strength also means having freedom to do as I please.

However, I should probably stop overthinking it.

"What's wrong, Sylphy? You got gloomy, dear." Said Arafunn, who was sitting near me. My mother was sitting at the side of Nepheline and Ninhursag this time around. "Is something troubling you?"

I had only met this man for a day but he's already so close with me, it feels like I met an old uncle that I really felt familiar with. I wonder if he's actually related to my mother somehow? Maybe not... not all elves are related, right?

"Uncle Arafunn... I... No, never mind." I said.

"Hm..." Arafunn suddenly hummed, as he suddenly spoke without saying a word. I felt as if his voice spoke into my mind... Is this telepathy?!

"Sylphy, tell me, it is something you don't want others to know? Not even your parents or your friends?" He wondered.

"Ah... W-What is this?!" I asked.

"Oh, this is my Mind Song Spell, it allows me to sing in the minds of others, it also works as a telepathy~" He giggled. "Are you annoyed by it? I will stop if you say so."

"Oh... I see. No, don't... I... I was wondering something, Uncle Arafunn..." I sighed.

"Yes, tell me." He said. "I have traveled far and wide across the world, I have accumulated unimaginable wisdom! I might have some answer to your questions."

"Then... Is it okay for people of the same gender to love each other? I mean... Does this world's people... accept it?" I wondered.

Arafunn fell in silence, as he looked at me with surprise, and then he smiled warmly.

Chapter 276 A Personal Talk 2

"Ah~ Youth! So nice and cozy, isn't it?" Giggled Arafunn.

"D-Don't laugh at it!" I cried.

"So who is it?" He asked. "Oh, I bet Aquarina! You two are very close!"

"I-I am not thinking about anything! I-I would never try to think that way with Aquarina..." I said.

"But you did?" He wondered.

"Guh..."

"Well, you're just a little child. You're way too intelligent though, just by peeking into your mind, I can tell you're incredibly mature..." He said. "However, to answer your question, I would say... It depends."

"It depends?"

"This world's religions doesn't punish anything of the sort. If you were worried about that. The Elves in particular are often asexual through most of their lives, only getting a partner to make a child very rarely." Said Arafunn.

"A-Asexual?!"

"Don't worry, it is a choice, but one we take because we live too long... Even amongst elves, romantic relationships end after a couple of decades, we get bored of the other at the end. Of course, short-lived races are also captivating to us, but they die very quickly, so when they go away it is very heartbroken..." He sighed with a sorrowful smile.

"Eh? They die... Ah..." I sighed.

"...I still remember the love of my life. I hope he is in heaven watching over me." He said with a warm smile, seemingly, his eyes were filled with emotions.

Wait, did he said "he"? Oh...

"Do you believe in heaven, Arafunn?" I wondered.

"Of course, it is boring if you don't. I dislike thinking that people just get swallowed by an endless void after dying, you know? Haha..." He giggled.

"Anyways, since he passed away that I decided to not seek more love, he's still inside of my heart, and I doubt... I will be able to even replace it for all the centuries I will live." He said.

"Oh... You must have loved him a lot." I said.

"Yeah... Haha... Ahem! Anyways, I shouldn't really be talking about that! Now, now, let's get technical. TECHNICALLY, there is no country that discriminates against people that swing that way, the other, or both... HOWEVER! There are certain groups of people that will always pester you about that. As long as you grow stronger enough to stand on your own and defend the one you love... You can love whoever you want, Sylphy." He said. "Of course, as long as it is consensual! So if you ever think about that with Aquarina... you must know if she also swings that way and reciprocates the feelings, hm? Don't force people to love you."

"I-I know that! I would never force anybody, and please stop naming Aquarina in this! T-This is just a thing I am thinking about personally, it doesn't involve her!" I said angrily.

"Haha, you're such an adorable little girl, Sylphy, you're really like my brother's daughter." Said Arafunn.

"B-Brother's daughter?" I asked. "W-Wait... you're really..."

"I am not technically your uncle, more like grandpa? I am the youngest brother of your grandfather, the father of Sylphy. Yeah, I am part of your family, haha..." He laughed.

"W-Whaaat?!" I asked in shock, everyone suddenly looked at me with surprise.

"S-Sylphy? Is something going on?" Asked my mother confusedly.

"E-Erm, no... not at all, don't worry about it, mommy!" I said while trying to pretend there was nothing wrong going on.

"Hahah, I told her through telepathy about being her grandpa's little brother... I screwed up, she was supposed to know this later, wasn't she?" Asked Arafunn.

"Ugh, idiot uncle!" Sighed my mother. "Just how stupid can you get?!"

"Mom, don't treat like that your uncle!" I said.

"Well he's just like two hundred years older, not that much." Said my mother.

"Hahaha, don't worry, Sylphy, this is our dynamic." Said Arafunn.

"Isn't he your uncle grandpa then?" Asked my father. "I knew about it but I have no idea why your mother was so much into keeping it a secret..."

"Isn't it obvious? The moment she gets to know she'll..." Muttered my mother, as I hugged my uncle grandpa.

"Uwah! S-Sylphy?!" He asked timidly.

"I finally found another family member! I am not letting you go away, Uncle Arafunn!" I said.

"Hahah, I see, so this is why you didn't wanted to tell her." Laughed Arafunn.

"She'll overly clingy..." Sighed my mother.

"W-What? Clingy? I am not clingy! I am just happy I found another family member! Hey, Uncle, you gotta stick with us then! How about living with us in Atlanta?" I asked happily, filled with expectations.

"E-Erm, it would be better not to, Sylphy. I am free-hearted man, I cannot really stay in a place for way too long." He said apologetically. "I might stay with you guys for a few months but that's my limit."

"Huh?! But..." I sighed.

"Come on, cheer up, Sylphy. We have barely met for a day, alright? We are long lived races, but even then, we have to appreciate every single day... That way, life doesn't move so fast... It is the greatest battle we elves have..." He said.

"Uuuh... Okay..." I sighed.

I really felt quite surprised that Arafunn was my family, but I immediately felt happy about it. I've always dreamed about meeting the whole family, both from my mother and my father, as in my previous life I was never able to as my grandparents had all passed away... In fact, my previous life father was an orphan, so not even he knew who his parents were, meanwhile, my previous life mother's parents perished out of a disease at a early age, leaving her at the age of 10 without anyone.

It was indeed a harsh life back then, but those two still built a beautiful house and... a beautiful family with me and my little sister. But since I reincarnated, I've always wanted to meet uncles, grandparents, cousins, and more. And Arafunn resulted to be the young brother of my grandpa! Isn't that amazing by itself?

I just didn't wanted to let him go now...

Chapter 277 Hungry Familiars

After I was calmed down by my parents, I was able to better assess my thoughts and what I had asked to uncle Arafunn regarding love and... everything else within that spectrum. It really felt quite cringy to remember but it still an important thing I cannot really forget. But it seems that this world's is way laxer in that regard, and it seems that gods don't punish people for that either. The only things often considered sins that deserve punishment are innocent's murder and stealing.

However, in this world there will always be people that will discriminate... So he said I have to grow as strong as possible to protect my love. My love...My lov- Uwah! I have to stop thinking about this for now! I am a child! A child! I cannot just think these things, they're inappropriate!

...

After we have eaten everything, Arafunn said he wanted to join us in the tents of the Amazon tribe, so we swiftly walked back to the tribe after spending almost an entire day in the town, we got so many products that I fear we might have emptied the entire place, but thankfully they said that wandering merchants bringing goods were common, several of them showed up every week in fact.

I am just glad we didn't made any sort of fuss and we were able to successfully get everything safely. I had even imagined we would end up encountering someone like the Duke or an arrogant noble, like those novels my mother has in the library back at home, where the protagonists always went through encounters against "selfish and cunning young masters" that were often involved with aristocracy or something.

Phew, thankfully we dodged that bullet. ...Well, that's probably just exaggerated fantasy, there's no way all nobles are evil or something, we cannot be stereotypical in that regard.

"Huh, so you ate a lot, huh? Must have been nice, huh?"

Suddenly, I heard the voice of Furoh resonating through my mind.

"Furoh? W-What's wrong?" I wondered. "First time I see you so pissed!"

"S-Sylphy, you're a treacherous and evil girl!"

"W-What?!"

Just as I arrived at my tent and dropped over my bed, I began to hear Furoh making a fuss inside my Soul Scape, he seemed completely heart broken, my little flesh noodle was all sad! I couldn't help but feel sad myself as well. He was perhaps my most spoiled familiar after Naturia, after all, unlike the grumpy Ignatius, Furoh was more lovely and let me pet him and treat him with affection.

"You're awful, oi!" He cried, using his country boy accent. Even now he had a hard time talking without his accent.

"Yeah, you're awful, worst master ever!" Said Ignatius. "Must have been pretty good, right? All that tasty food!" Ignatius began to work together with Furoh for the first time and it was just to bash on me for having enjoyed tasty food.

"FOOO!" Naturia also roared angrily! Eh?! What's this?

"I am sorry! Don't get mad at me! D-Did you wanted food as well?!" I asked.

"Yeah! You know? Your mana can nourish us to the point we don't need to eat... but I used to eat trash all my childhood, seeing you eat all sorts of tasty stuff really makes me boil with envy! Uwah, I want something tasty too! Why are you so evil with me?!" Cried Furoh.

"I am so sorry! I-I'll bring you something tasty asap! There was some meat loaf left!" I said.

"I-I also want some! You're awful! How do you think I'll grow into a dragon again if you don't feed me?!" Asked Ignatius.

"You don't get involved on this! You're just a soul, Furoh has a body so you two are different." I said.

"Well, spirits can apparently eat and refill their energies by eating. Also, Ignatius is right, if you feed him with tasty, magic-filled food, he might grow faster." Said Alice. "Ahem... I would also like some meat loaf..."

"Eh? Alice too? Well, I am glad you want to try out new experiences but this feels a bit overwhelming..." I sighed.

"Just hurry!" Said Ignatius. "Evil master that doesn't feed us!"

"FOOO!!!" Natoria also seemed to be very angry, this was the first time I saw all of them unanimously agree on something.

And from within my Soul Scape, in the distance, there was the soul of Beelzebub, who was also known as the Demon of Gluttony, he was not saying a single thing, but I could guess he would love to try out food.

Can a soul that had yet to turn into a spirit eat food? Wait, maybe I could tempt him into becoming my spirit by offering him all the tasty food he could eat as he becomes one... And showing it off right in front of him would add to the pain!

Ohoho! Delightfully devilish, Sylph!

I quickly moved outside of my tent, as I found Aquarian right in front of me, I ended hitting her because I was in such a hurry, and both of us ended falling over the ground...

"Uwaah!"

"Uagh!"

BONK

"Ugeehh... S-Sylphy, were you in a hurry?" Aquarina looked at me with her adorable expression. She looked so adorable in her new dress that I felt heartbroken when I threw her down like that.

"I-I am so sorry!" I cried, quickly healing her from any bruises and slowly helping her stand up. "There! Sorry... I was in a hurry because I wanted some food..."

"Eh? Food?" She wondered. "Didn't you ate a lot? You're going to get fatty if you eat too much!" Aquarina reprimanded me, and I felt a bit bad.

"W-Wait, that's not it! My spirits, they're hungry." I said. "They want food. Remember that I got Furoh? He wants food even though Mana could suffice... I think I should had given him more food, sometimes I forget for days."

"Eh?! You don't feed your spirits?! I always give daily snacks to Undine, Leviathan, and Pyuku..." Said Aquarina.

Chapter 278 I Am Weak To Her

Ugh, I guess even Aquarina does this more commonly than me, I am literally the worst. Even though my endless mana can keep them well feed forever, they still want to experience the joy of eating food. And now they had all combined their efforts into bashing it at me...

"Okay, I'll accompany you, let's make some sandwiches for them, we can use the leftover meatloaf, some tomatoes, mayonnaise, and lettuce, would that be enough?" Wondered Aquarina.

I asked the guys down below inside my soul scape, and they were all drooling, so I guess it works for now. But tomorrow and.. for the rest of my life, I will try to feed them more things, probably I will ask mother to give me a bit of whatever she cooks.

And like that, we reached the area where the food was stored, finding the meatloaf still over a table, it was covered and wrapped in leather, keeping it fresh and warm. We took a knife and cut it into slices, alongside some fresh bread, and we made up some sandwiches with Aquarina.

"Huh? Why five? Don't you just have three familiars?" Wondered Sylphy. She didn't knew about the existence of Alice, the System, nor of Beelzebub that was trapped in there.

"Haha, Furoh eats a lot, you know? He's a big demon." I said.

"Huhh, okay then..." She said.

"Alright."

I quickly grabbed the sandwiches and opened a small portal into my soul scape. It is possible to store things inside, but they often dissipate into energy after a few hours, and might even prove to be bad for the soul, so it is usually not recommended to store things inside your soul.

However, the food will disappear quickly as they're going to eat it, so I threw inside all five sandwiches, with some freshly boiled aromatic herbs tea as well, and the spirits happily received everything. I had created an avatar inside as well, which distributed the sandwiches.

"Oooh, this sandwich is good!" Said Ignatius. He began to eat the sandwich from a little dragon snout that came out of his eggshell. The eggshell itself had been slowly cracking more over the weeks, but it slow. But probably this means that he'll hatch eventually.

"Hmmm...! Fooo! Foooo!" Naturia enjoyed the sandwich, being a nature spirit doesn't mean she doesn't like meat, it seems.

"Ahh... T-This incredible sensation! S-So this is... EATING?! Oh... I have missed something so amazing! I am so happy I am a Spirit now!" Alice said, as she devoured the sandwich. She didn't had a mouth so the sandwich looked like it was slowly being tore apart with bite marks.

"Uooooohhh! T-This amazing taste! Just what is this sandwich?!" Asked Furoh.

"Just meat, tomato, lettuce, and mayonnaise..." I said.

"M-Much better than the garbage I ate!" Cried Furoh.

And lastly... I used my avatar to grab the other sandwich, the last one, and I flew near Beelzebub, offering the sandwich to him.

"Hey, Belze, want some food? I could give you this sandwich if you join me." I said.

"Eh?! You think you can easily win me over with mere food, human?!" Asked Beelzebub angrily. "...Well, certainly, perhaps I might... Think it if you give me the sandwich."

"So you'll think about it?" I asked.

"...Perhaps if the sandwich is not disappointing." He said.

"Huh... Then go ahead." I said with a smile, as Beelzebub jumped towards the sandwich and attempted to devour it, but it was futile... it didn't work at all to begin with.

"Eh?! I can't eat it! You tricked me! How can the others eat but not me?!" Beelzebub looked at me angrily, almost about to strangle me.

"Haha, that's because you're not my spirit. Once you turn into a spirit, you will be able to eat! As of now, you're merely a Soul Fragment inside of my own Soul Scape... It is pretty convenient to become a Spirit, actually, and if you grow strong enough, you'll even be able to regain a physical body, I've heard that the strongest spirits out there can reach that point." I said.

"S-Spirit..." Beelzebub looked at my spirits as he finally and genuinely began to consider finally turning into my spirit.

"Tch! N-No! I won't succumb to your temptation!" He said. "He cried. "Get out of my sight at once!"

"Geez, such a boring fly..." I sighed. "Well, I will try to bring you new food every day, I hope you can resist it..."

"Y-You vile monster!" He said.

I flew away while laughing evilly, as I was finally brought back to reality. I had sat down over my bed, and I had already changed into my pajamas. The night was a bit chilly so I was going to quickly sleep. However, as I turned off the candles, Aquarina infiltrated the tent and jumped into my bed.

"Aquarina?! I-I told you that you shouldn't come to my bed..." I sighed.

"But we've always slept together..." She said. "P-Please?"

Aquarina looked at me with her puppy eyes. I cannot... resist them...

Ah, I am so weak.

"Sigh... Okay..." I sighed, as she quickly cuddled with me, covering herself with the blankets and hugging me. However, unlike other times, I felt a bit embarrassed out of nowhere. I couldn't help but blush a bit, and I was quite thankful that she wasn't able to see my face in the darkness of the night.

"Sylphy..." She said silently after a bit.

"Hm?" I wondered.

"Do you... like somebody?" She wondered.

"E-Eh? Like somebody...?" I wondered.

"Yeah... I-I was just thinking about it... Do you like Zack?" She wondered.

"Zack? Well, he's... cute. But I don't like him in the sense I think you're referring..." I sighed.

"R-Really?!" Asked Aquarina, getting incredibly and suddenly happy.

"Y-Yeah... What's troubling you?" I wondered, trying to play it cool despite my heart beating incredibly fast.

"N-Nothing! N-Never mind..." She said. "I just... I want to tell you that... Y-You're my heart, Sylphy..."

"Y-Your heart?" I wondered.

"I-It's what my father always says to my mother... It means... Being very close, or something..." She said.

"Oh..."

I didn't really know what to say... But I felt like it was the right thing to tell her something to comfort her. I don't know if she was being serious, but at the very least...

"You're also my heart, Aquarina..."

"S-Sylphy..."

"Now, let's sleep for now, you don't want to wake up too late, right?"

"R-Right, good night, Sylphy!"

"Good night, Aquarina..."

I hugged her back and we ended cuddling together, sleeping soundly after that.

Chapter 279 The Evil Gods 1

In the world of Terrarium, there are many Gods. The Four Original Gods were the ones that descended from the stars, the four of them created the twelve Chief Gods, given the task to maintain and nourish humanity, while adapting the new world they had discovered for the inhabitation of their race and creations. However, many more gods were born out of love between their creations, sometimes out of pure selfishness, as they required more servants to spread out their tasks. The twelve gods then created many subordinate gods, some were spirits which they allowed to ascend to divinity with their powers, and others were children between one another after a night of passion. Like this, their creations also made more gods between one another, and many more gods were born.

Over the eons, the world of Terrarium had many gods overlooking from the heavens, although they were always unified together in a big pantheon, disputes, and differences between the twelve gods surged. Some argued against the other's ways of handling things, this created disapprovals, and sometimes, even hate between each other. This made it so they couldn't control their temper when somebody that always disagreed with them was present. The twelve gods separated then, creating twelve pantheons with several gods in each pantheon.

Each Pantheon represented each element that these twelve gods governed. The original four gods overlooked their creations, which they created specifically to protect humanity and their other creations and to "adapt" the world of Terrarium so their race and their creations would inhabit it. Gods could be said to be rogue entities, traveling from stars to stars, using their powers to bring life into other worlds. However, the four original gods saw in the world of Terrarium flourishing life without any godly intervention, quickly after, they realized this wondrous world with vegetation and life was... alive.

As travelers and conquerors, they set in motion the conquest of this living world, creating the twelve titans to oversee Terrarium and then the twelve created more gods to work for them, and then, humanity and the other races related to humans emerged spontaneously, spreading across the world and conquering it with their adaptability and amazing capabilities compared to other entities in this world, especially their great intellect and the ability to develop abilities that were not purely magic-based, Weapon Techniques, Physiques, and other supernatural powers were quickly developed. But as the bloodline of humanity became thinner over the generations, and their god given powers slowly dissipated, they grew weaker.

And the world of Terrarium decided to counterattack... that's when the first Demon King was born, and the Gods realized that the world wasn't going to let them do as they pleased. After the Demon King's war which even took the lives of several subordinate gods, the gods retreated into the skies, where the world's creations could not reach them.

But what about humanity? Humanity ended staying in the world's surface, populated by monsters and... demons, these two forces constantly attempted to overpower humanity and bring them to extinction.

The Gods, fearful of the monsters and demons, and the rebirth of a new Demon King, they granted Blessings and power to their creations, and Heroes were born, representing each of the twelve gods, these powerful members of humanity and other related races unified humanity as a whole against the menace of Demons, who were advanced forms than monsters, as shared many qualities, but were intelligent and cunning.

And like this... history has repeated itself over many eons, over and over again. A Demon King rises, destroys, and is defeated. Humans become heroes, fight for what they believe, and die. The circle never ends...

"It never ends..."

The figure of a transparent entity floated amidst complete emptiness. It mildly resembled a human, but it was made out of transparent energy, shining with bright, cosmic light.

"What a disgusting cycle... Is this what the four gods wanted from this world?"

The figure looked into the world from below, the vast world of Terrarium.

"I failed my attempt at killing them... That Demon General proved to be incredibly weak at the end. What a disappointment."

In the world of Terrarium there were many Gods. Some gods served the great twelve, but others sometimes decided to be by themselves. Over time and many generations, these gods continued to increase in quantity, they were often called rogue gods. Some made themselves known by the world and the gods as enemies, growing selfish, and with a never-ending desire for power.

Others created their own religions and cults and tried to make humans pray to them, gaining power from their belief, but because they stranded from the original twelve, they were cursed for not serving their creators, and their appearances distorted to how their hearts truly were, becoming monstrous and demonic in nature and appearance... these were called Evil Gods.

Some of them even decided to ally the enemies of the gods, demons. They began to help demons fight humans, as demons were often desperate for power, and had no gods to pray to. Over thousands of

years, these Evil Gods became famous figures in the Demon Continent, and gained unprecedented power from the beliefs of billions of demons, some had speculated that their power, from mere subordinate gods, could now rival the twelve.

And amongst all of them... one of such Evil Gods had the power to manipulate space. It was one of the oldest Evil Gods who strayed from the path of serving his masters. Distorted by his own beliefs of what peace truly was, he walked his own path and became a feared god when he created a pact with the world. He still could remember it, when he promised the world's will that he would do as he was asked in exchange for the power he received.

"I shall fill the world with dungeons and bring demise to humanity."

And since then, Dungeons began to emerge all across the world, corrupted miasma distorted space and time, creating ruins out of nowhere, with internal and vast spaces inside... This was the beginning of the Age of Dungeons and Labyrinths.

Chapter 280 The Evil Gods 2

Feared as the Evil God of Dungeons, this entity had attempted the assassination of Sylph and Aquarina, two of the future heroes that would one day change the entire world as a whole. As he was a being that fed upon the fear of the masses against dungeons, he could not let these destined figures to step forward with their lives.

Having learned about a glimpse of a possible future from the Evil God of Prophecies, he could not remain calm. Using the connections he had with some of the remnants of the Demon King's subordinates, he contacted a powerful Demon General said to be immortal, who had the power to revive. It was said he fought the heroes and revived later on, learning about their tactics and powers.

Using him, he attempted to kill Sylph and Aquarina, but he couldn't count on the insanity of the power that the surviving heroes had attained. Now, his plan failed. He was one of the few who had the power to manipulate space to an extent, creating pseudo pocket dimensions where he could trap people inside. He used the same formula of magic to create dungeons, although it had become an automatic process as his authority spread across the world.

Before dungeons, monsters were not as varied as now. Most of them were gigantic beasts or mythical creatures, but when dungeons emerged, the Evil God of Dungeons used all the miasma, corrupted mana that had been accumulating in the planet's crust for eons to distort space and time and create special structures, dungeons. There are small dungeons, that often spawn very little creatures from inside, and there are also enormous labyrinths that reach the skies, or go far deep into the world.

They're often called the nests of monsters, and this is where most of the monster variety that had spread across the world originated from. The twelve gods referred to the Evil Gods as "the traitors" who used their powers for their own benefit, corrupting humanity. They were a reminder of their own selfishness and mistakes as well, but some even believed that they were the "necessary evil" who balanced the world by itself, keeping humanity fighting also was beneficial, as it strengthened them and didn't let them grow lazy when the Era of Peace after the Demon King was defeated came.

But for the majority of the gods, Evil Gods were a menace, and they had been tracking them down and sometimes even managing to defeat them after large God Wars, which often happen away from mankind's eyes. But when Evil Gods fall, Subordinate Gods tend to die as well. Sometimes, when Gods die and they're not retrieved in time by their surviving allies, their bodies fall like meteors from the sky, filling the entire world with divine energies and corrupted miasma, which only fills the world with more power and make dungeons pop up even quicker, benefiting the Evil God of Dungeons.

Therefore... he is one of the greatest enemies of the gods. His powers are based in dungeons, and the fear that dungeons and monsters cause to all people in the world, including demons themselves is treated as some sort of worship, which becomes his strength. Over thousands of years, he has become an important figure within the Evil Gods that inhabit the skies of the Demon Continent.

The cycle of demon kings and heroes had been going for eons now, and it has never truly changed, the Evil God of Dungeons had been massing power in silence over this time, but now, he wanted a change. He was going to turn the table upside down. His first attempt at changing a future that didn't benefit him was his attempt at killing the two daughters of a pair of surviving heroes, but his dimension was destroyed by the limit breaking power of their parents.

The Evil God of Dungeon, since then, has been pondering what must he do now. The power of the Heroes has grown way too vast, they shouldn't had survived for so long, and the worst thing is... even as old as they are, they had continued to evolve their strength and magic. To make it worse, the Demon King was going to be born soon, very prematurely so, and it might be born while the old heroes are still alive, if they could find him, they would be able to easily slay the child before it becomes a menace to the world, and the cycle could be stopped prematurely. While the chosen heroes develop in the background, they would acquire incredible powers, and save humanity by bringing demons and monsters to a corner.

That... wouldn't be good for him. If the heroes would attempt to slay the Demon King while it was a child, why shouldn't he do the same? As the only Evil God that can act directly upon mortals due to his space-manipulating abilities, it was an obvious thing to do. Gods in general are unable to properly inhabit the world below, as it is filled with energies and miasma which is dangerous to their divine bodies. Evil Gods change their structure to adapt to the world a bit more and can survive in areas that are rich in miasma, but still, the amount of power needed to descend is simply not worth it. However, the evil god of dungeons is capable of attacking certain targets with enough planning and strategizing.

Sadly, the power of the young heroines were more than he believed. He was sure that they should had died in that moment, the power of the Demon General they were fighting had the strength to disintegrate matter and take away life in an instant. Heroes could resist him as they were powerful enough, but children should had turned into ashes right away... Yet... they fought and somehow won?

"I still can't believe it... There's something very weird about this girl... Sylph." The Evil God of Dungeons pondered, as a subordinate Evil God suddenly emerged at his side.

"My lord... there are news regarding the Great Twelve..."

"Hoh?"