

DEMONS 1191

[Chapter 1191 1191 Testing Bloopers](#)

Once Kat finished laughing she asked, "So, what other games had silly interactions? We've still got plenty of games to talk about other than volleyball,"

Mint nodded, "Right well... I guess I'll cover the other game from today first. Um... I don't know like... everything everything when it comes to silly things in testing because like... I wasn't that interested myself, but the stories get around the dryad community you know? So... just take what I'm saying with a grain of salt. I know the volleyball ones are all true because I asked Thyme about them while the volleyball match was ongoing. Like... an hour ago.

"So they're both really fresh in my mind AND confirmed to have happened. Um... but for the log chopping... well that one was designed from the ground up not to have magic in it. Thyme did apparently do a few test runs with magic, but none of them were too ridiculous apparently. Um... the most interesting one was when Thyme came up with the idea to summon up a giant sawblade to slice through the wood.

"That made it ridiculously easy to finish. Plus, if you just set up a platform near the logs, then made the sawblade you could destroy your competition. A water jet cutter was also attempted... but apparently it actually wasn't that effective. It destroyed too much material in the process. Though, that reminds me. Originally you just needed to cut the logs into two pieces, which was deemed too easy. Then it was four pieces... which was very silly because they didn't need to be even.

"Apparently before that rule was implemented the best strategy was to turn the log on its side and then cut through it three times to separate it into fours. It did take an extra stroke, two instead of three, but because accuracy was basically a non-factor it was really fast,"

Kat slapped a hand over her face. "Dammit, I didn't even consider turning the logs around. I guess when I heard we were 'chopping firewood' I immediately thought of all the times I've seen them split lengthwise. I can't believe everyone overlooked something so simple," grumbled Kat.

Mint shrugged and said, "Thyme does have a habit of doing things like that. Actually, one thing nobody noticed is that the axes and the stumps were enchanted to do some funny things. You see, you were told to be careful not to break them, but that's nearly impossible. But, if you tried to use your axe to destroy someone else's stump? Your own would've split in half,"

Kat let out a long sigh, "I'm soo glad I didn't go after any of the stumps. I thought about it too but I was confident in my strategy and rightly so, I did win the event after all,"

"Ah, but I know Nabras was looking for a chance to do some damage to his competitors. Could you imagine the look on his face after he managed to find an opening, dash in, thinking this is his only chance to not get last... but then it turns out he just split his own log? I would've died laughing," said Burnice through fits of laughter.

Kat and Lily couldn't help laughing at the idea. It was quite amusing to imagine. The look of betrayal on Nabras' face would be something to remember. "Any other funny stories for the wood chopping event?" asked Lily.

Mint shook her head and said, "Not that I know of. There might be more, in fact, I'm sure there is... but I don't know them I'm afraid. It seemed like the least interesting game to me, so I didn't go looking for much about it. Um... what's next. I guess I can just go in order? The table tennis idea actually came up after volleyball, and it was decided that they could be similar to each other, though obviously without magic for the indoor one.

παΠδαςNovel.com "So that was built in from the start. Um... it was pretty obvious that the table and the ground needed to be closer together for smaller people but somehow we managed to overlook how much of an issue it might be for people of drastically different heights to play against each other. I'm not sure why it didn't come up in testing. I think you should take a look at παΠδαςnovel.com

"My two guesses would be that Thyme stuck to similar body types against each other as a baseline... or Thyme didn't consider how much slower having to move more than a step in either direction would actually be. Thyme obviously had to bring their physique down to approximate Rank 2, but they might've just... not done that properly? For someone like Thyme it can be hard to notice when they start to push past certain self-imposed limits like that.

"Don't get me wrong. Thyme's control is great, especially with mana but if Thyme was testing hundreds of matches and all the shorter versions of Thyme happened to be moving a bit faster then they should? I'm not certain it would register at all. Though... that's about the only thing that really came up for the table tennis. Except for the broken paddles. Lots and lots of broken paddles during testing.

"It's what made Thyme turn them into part of the game. They hold enchantment really poorly for some reason and Thyme didn't want to use really good materials on them to keep them intact... so instead leaning not to break them was part of the game. Which I think made everything more fun. It also meant the whole 'don't break your stumps' trick from the wood chopping was easier to fall into,"

"So, any other funny moments from the table tennis testing?" asked Burnice.

Mint shrugged, "Not particularly. I know a few that were funny at the time but aren't all that amusing in the retelling. Like the sudden destruction of the table, or in one instance, just the table LEGS after Thyme reinforced the tabletop. Um... there was that one time where Thyme hit the ball into the net and the ball got sliced up into little pieces. Picked a new material for the net after that...

"But yeah, there's not much I can think of off the top of my head. Dodgeball has quite a few though! First thing's first, there didn't use to be cannons. The balls also weren't filled with anything or easily popped. Like, they could pop, but it wasn't designed as part of the challenge. It was just supposed to be normal dodgeball really... but that turned out to be way too easy."

Mint paused for a moment to reconsider, "Or not too easy, but too easy for people to catch the balls. Then it became a game, not of dodgeball, but 'can you throw hard enough to push someone out of the ring' which really wasn't the point. When playing that version of the game though, the balls kept popping because of all the force, which gave Thyme the idea for redoing things. Though it didn't get properly implemented until much later on in testing.

"Then there was the issue of putting new balls into play. There were a few really funny iterations of that one. The first idea was just to rain them down from the sky constantly, forcing everyone to constantly dodge and stay on the move... but you didn't really get the chance to throw any balls you catch at someone because there was too other falling balls in the way. So that idea was scrapped.

"The next idea was to have one row of cannons fire out waves of balls every twenty seconds or so. The timing changed around a bit... but you could just camp the cannons really easily. So Thyme turned them up to be really fast... which meant the cannons were the real danger not the other players because you couldn't actually catch the balls. So you just had to dodge the cannon fire and you were good... which, once again, really wasn't the point.

"So Thyme scrapped the cannon idea for a bit and went back to basics. Giving everyone one ball to start off with and made some solid, but transparent, walls around the arena to make sure that you always had five balls in play. It was an ok setup but Thyme didn't like the flow of the game. You were incentivised to try and keep balls at your feet and catch or dodge the ones thrown your way.

"So with that, and Thyme's idea for making the balls easy to pop, they got to work properly implementing that and seeing if it did anything, even trying to see how things played out if the floor instantly popped any balloons that touched it. That iteration was a complete mess. The gunk in the balloons got EVERYWHERE. On the floor, the players, the ceiling somehow, and on the testing courts next to whichever one was running. A true mess. I heard about the cleanup after that one and it was over a day's worth of effort for THYME of all people,"

[Chapter 1192 1192 Twisty History](#)

"What about the last game?" asked Lily. "That seems relatively straightforward, but also the potential for silliness is high,"

Mint shook her head and explained, "No it wasn't straightforward at all. There's nothing like that game you can find... well anywhere really. The others were mostly based on mortal's children's games, but this was something Thyme had to basically work out from scratch,"

I suppose that makes sense. Sure to us it just looks like Twister and it the name gets translated that way because that's obviously what it is to us... but if they've never seen the game before Thyme might have struggled with it. Considering it was developed completely from scratch.

[Do you think the colours on it were real?]

What?

[Well if it's so obviously Twister to us... do you think the translation ability also made it just... look more like Twister to help with the translation.]

I'm going to say... no. At least, it might try to do that to other people but I have to have some faith in my eyes. Not even Thyme could do so. The idea that the translation is changing our perception like that would be... a bit much.

[I suppose... it's not like people's mouth's line up properly with what they're saying when you start to look. It's hard to notice if you're not trying, but once you think to look it's obvious. So I can at least believe that it might try, but fail in this case.]

Mint continued to elaborate as Kat and Lily chatted mentally, "Well, Thyme wanted some more indoor games and in this case they were aiming more for the... teenage age bracket with them. I don't properly understand the whole 'rampant hormones' or the idea of a sex drive all that well, but I did take enough lessons on it, and the consequences that I can guess WHY a game like Twister would be fun for those people.

"Anyway, we're jumping ahead. So Thyme needed something that was indoor, that would appeal to teenagers but wouldn't necessarily be something that only teenagers would like. There were a few different ideas thrown around, and apparently Twister wasn't entirely Thyme's idea, or at least, it was someone else's offhanded comment that helped Thyme figure it out.

"Not sure who, Thyme has lots of friends, but one of them came to visit and said something along the lines of, 'their teenagers, just give them an excuse to get hot and sweaty in close proximity to their preferred sex' and Thyme apparently spent the next twenty minutes making it very clear this wasn't supposed to be a sex thing. The friend suggested an excuse for dancing, but Thyme turned that down as well because it really wasn't what they were looking for...

"Before the friend said 'Well I don't see how you could untangle the sex from the teens or the teens from each other, especially not in a private resort' and apparently that's where Thyme got the idea. Not that our version of it got all that lewd. Marigold was certainly trying, but in the end basically everyone was forced out of the game because they couldn't reach all the necessary spots. Which... is just weird. In testing that almost never happened. Or at least, not without other people being in the way.

"Anyway... the first idea was just throwing everyone in a large box and having them running around hitting buttons that popped out of the walls and floor... and it wasn't a bad idea at all but Thyme couldn't work out a good way to simplify it for widespread use. Too much of the 'inner workings' were just Thyme making sure that it all continued to operate. I'm sure with enough time it could be worked out, but there were enough other reasons to put it off to the side instead. I think you should take a look at pandanusnovel.com

"The next idea was to slim it down and make it just a single flat area, but then it became more of a game of whacking the buttons. It was better to take up a position and camp it, abusing the length of your arms to try and hit as many buttons as possible. Which while fun, was not the type of game Thyme was looking for, so that too was pushed off into the 'another time perhaps' pile of things. *noVeLnext.cOm*

"It took a few more iterations to even get close to the form of Twister you all saw. The very first version was a slightly smaller mat, that had the same number of dots, except none of them were coloured, they were all numbered instead. The idea was, you'd spin the spinner, it would select a number, and then you would have to touch it with the correct limb. It turned out to be much too luck dependant. Sometimes you could just stick to one section, while others you were required to have a limb in all four corners of the board.

"So that got scrapped. The ways things were divided changed a few times. There was the one where the mat was separated into four but it was quadrants instead of four lines of dots. This one wasn't right either because you just had everyone fight around the dots closest to the middle you could. It did get all the players up close, but it just didn't play well in testing. Of course, Thyme would never get

embarrassed pressed up against themselves, so that part was hard to test for... but it still didn't seem right.

"Eventually Thyme would get others to help test things, but not just yet. It took a bit but they got to the current design, however... Thyme didn't necessarily want to stay there. Thyme thought it was too simple and a bit dull as it was, so there were all sorts of additions tried. Fighting, which was quickly prohibited, magic... also quickly removed. My personal favourite was when the mat was changed into a bunch of stepping stones over the water. It didn't actually change much in practice but it LOOKED really cool. Not as easy to move around as the mat though.

"There were a few attempts at trying to make the mat more slippery. Make it harder for people to keep their grip while playing. Thyme tried all sorts of things. Water, oil, cake mix. That last one was a very weird testing day from what I'd heard. In the end though, none of the additions could really be said to make the game BETTER. The current Twister is rather elegant in its simplicity. It can be moved just about anywhere; the rules are easy to understand and anyone can run it."

Mint paused for a moment just to let that all sink in before she continued. "Oh, right there was that one attempt to play Twister on the water, with the dots less fixed in place, and more a series of connected floating pontoons. I hear that one was quite popular once Thyme brought in some outside help. I'll bet you'll never guess who Thyme got to help test some of the more refined versions of the game!" Mint finished with a massive grin that was too wide for her face.

Kat and Lily shared a look before Kat said, "I don't see how either of us would know the answer, we're not even from this dimension,"

Burnice shook her head, "No see, the way Mint is grinning at us tells me that it's gotta be someone super important... wait fuck it was Auctifer wasn't it? Thyme threw a few prototypes at Auctifer and his Queens and just let it happened... right?"

Mint's oversized smile stayed fixed in place as she nodded rapidly. "Yeah that'd be right," said Burnice with a sigh, "I can imagine he rather enjoyed the game?" Mint continued nodding. "Urgh... I bet he tested all the variations with a bunch of different people and ended up saying that the simple version was best right?"

παΠdαsNovel.com "Exactly!" cheered Mint. "Auctifer explained that the one they could just... carry around and set up anywhere was so much more fun and convenient. It was also pretty easy to add things too if you wanted, but Auctifer felt like they were always 'nice one off additions' that were funny once or twice, but not all the time,"

Welp. I guess that explains why Mint thought we'd know the answer. Auctifer IS pretty important... though... I wonder if this is a coincidence. Did Mint know we heard about Auctifer just before twister got played the first time? Or did she just assume we'd know of Auctifer because of how important he is.

[I can't say. It could be either I guess. Still, I'm not sure why Mint would know when we found out though... she's not as connected to everything as Thyme is right? Though I suppose Thyme could've mentioned it... but I feel like Thyme wouldn't be going around talking about conversations they'd eavesdropped on. At least, not without good reason]

[Chapter 1193 1193 Tales Of A Flower](#)

"So Burnice... do you have any interesting stories? Probably about Marigold?" asked Kat.

Burnice sighed but nodded with a smile on her face, "Oh boy do I have stories about that woman. I can barely even tell apart some of them. Mostly the ones involving Marigold flirting with someone strong looking in a tavern, and then letting them beat her up. It's... shocking how long it takes some of those people to realise she's enjoying it.

"Like... seriously. Marigold will see an angry woman and decide within ten seconds that it's a good idea to go annoy her... which... I guess if you're Marigold it IS a good idea. Considering either she's receptive, and happy to go along with it, or she's not, and she kicks the shit out of you... which is what Marigold wants from it anyway," Burnice shook her head, "I'll never understand Masochists.

"It makes me wonder if the regeneration affinity messes with her head, or if she was always going to be like that and the regeneration just enabled her, thus making it worse. We'll never know of course, but most people say that affinities tend to suite the person they're given to, even if it's not immediately obvious that it's the case, or it takes some years to become apparent. *nOvelnext.cOm*

"Not sure I totally agree with that... but whatever this is about Marigold. Yeah, a hobby of hers is just... messing with women in taverns and then going along with the fallout whatever it might be. A lot of women will beat up Marigold, then they'll declare that she'll be a chair as punishment and...

"I'm really not sure how it keeps happening. Like, I've never once seen anyone other than Marigold act as a chair so how the fuck does she keep finding the exact kind of weirdos that will SUGGEST the idea so Marigold can pretend to be reluctantly going along with it. Not that she pretends well mind you, but most of these people are drunk and don't notice. Though... I can't really tell you about anyone ONE encounter because they're shockingly samey after the first few times.

"So... hmm... what's the next best one... OH I know. This was when we were younger, and Marigold was kidnapped. Vanya was beside herself, the fae were pretty sure she was off getting drunk or something, and I was on Vanya's side. Irresponsible and reckless Marigold may be, but she's never just left without telling us. Especially not to sneak off and have sex or something, because she enjoys airing that sort of info out to get reactions from people.

"So for her to just... vanish? It was very out of character. The reason it happened was because Vanya was down with a nasty stomach bug so she wasn't actually in bed with Marigold for once. We were staying at one of the smaller cabins Auctifer owns so there's a few bedrooms so we didn't hear anything when Marigold vanished.

"Anyway, we start scouring town for her, and it turns out she'd been kidnapped by the local crime family. Which... wasn't very large or very powerful considering the town had... maybe two thousand residence tops. So when I say it was a crime family, I do mean family. It was a family run business and they mostly just run some illegal gambling dens under the pubs. Which... look I won't get into exactly why that's weird, just know that gambling isn't illegal in the elven kingdom. Or... any of the kingdoms I don't think. Anyway, for some reason, they thought Marigold was someone else entirely. The thought she was the daughter of this merchant caravan that had robbed the casinos once.

"Anyway, we finally sneak down into the interrogation chamber, with suspiciously no guards, to find one person crying in the corner, and it wasn't Marigold. See, I did mention these guys were just a small family right? So they didn't have a proper torturer, just 'Uncle Benny' who was a creepy looking dude, but actually really nice. Their whole plan was to just try and scare some info out of Marigold and then let her go.

"Then the screaming started. All the guards first assumed Benny actually knew what he was doing... but then they realised that it was a MAN screaming. Well, one brave soul looked in, threw up in the doorway, and then ran away screaming. The rest of the guards decided he was the smartest of the group and decided to join him.

"Anyway, Marigold decided that clearly Benny didn't know how to use any of these torture implements they'd scrounged up so she started demonstrating them... on herself. When we got down there, there was blood all over the table, Marigold, Marigold's clothes, and Benny. He was just... crying on the floor. Poor guy.

"When we showed up he runs over screaming and says 'Arrest me! I don't care if you ain't cops, just take me away from that fucking demon!' in between tears. We felt so bad for the guy that we just nodded. Myself and Mauve dragged him away, not because he was unwilling, but because he was having trouble standing his knees were shaking so much.

"And that was the story of how Marigold managed to accidentally scar multiple men for life and shut down a family owned gambling ring all by getting kidnapped, but not for anything she'd actually done personally or who her real family was... instead it was because she looked a bit like someone else. And just... damn it was a night," I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

Mint giggled "Did she really manage to scare them all that badly?" Kat and Lily were laughing as well, but unlike Mint, they could believe it.

"Oh yeah. The 'Uncle Benny' left the life of crime completely. He actually bakes pastries in the capital now. It was really... really awkward when we went to the new bakery as a group. We didn't know it was him, but as soon as we all walked in together, he spotted Marigold, screamed, and ran out the back door. Poor guy. It was all the funnier because Marigold's Mum was there too, and she ended up on the floor laughing about the fact Marigold scared someone that badly they ran away on sight.

"But yeah... really awkward when we then had to explain to the rest of the customers why the bakery was closed for the day because the head chef had run off. He came back eventually, and his food IS really good. Marigold just isn't allowed to visit the bakery anymore, and I heard he refuses to work with read jam," explained Burnice.

"NO" insisted Mint.

"Yes!" insisted Burnice right back.

pandasNovel.com "I can scarcely believe it. I mean... how did she scare the poor man so much?" asked Mint.

"I don't think you want to know Mint... it's really gross just to think about," said Burnice a little green.

"Then again... you're part tree so maybe it won't bother you... but look, no, I'm not going to go over it. I'll

just say that because Marigold is really weird she likes to use torture implements while having fun in the bedroom and leave it at that ok?"

Mint frowned, obviously not totally satisfied with the answer, but she could see how uncomfortable Burnice was with the subject and agreed to drop it. "Ok then. What's Marigold's mother like? Is she also a masochist?"

If anything, Burnice looked even greener than the question. "Mint... there are some things you just... you just don't want to know about people. I don't think, if given the choice, I'd want to even know that MARIGOLD is a masochist. It's just that it's so in your face you sort of get used to it over time. I do NOT want to know what her parents get up to. Either in the bedroom, or anywhere else. So I'm afraid I can't answer you, and I'm not sure I would even if I did know. That image is going to stick in my mind forever..."

Mint gave a confused glance over to Kat who shrugged and said, "I don't have parents so I can't comment, but I think her feelings are pretty universal,"

Mint then looked at Lily who nodded and explained, "It's just a weird thing for us to think about. I think it's part of the disgust response because incest is really bad for mammals. So we don't like to picture our parents, or our friends' parents in sexual situations,"

Mint nodded and said, "Ok. I understand what you are saying. I don't think dryads have that issue at all... but I guess we don't think about that sort of thing much either. I know we're not wired up for sex like you guys are. Honestly creating more trees is a very clean process for us,"

"We don't want to know," said Kat, Lily and Burnice together. None of whom wanted to know anything at all about 'tree sex'. It was one thing when they were just trees, but another when those trees could think.

[Chapter 1194 1194 Tales Of A Flower Part 2](#)

Burnice continued her series of tales with another sigh, "The next interesting encounter I can think of for Marigold was that one time she pushed Vanya out of the way of a boulder. Now, you might think that it was very selfless, and quite honourable... but Vanya had plenty of time to get out of the way herself..."

"In fact, even after Marigold knocked Vanya out of the way there was still time for her to... move or just do anything to avoid getting crushed. We were in some old ruins and it was coming down from behind us... but it's not like we only had a small area to squeeze into, or that the boulder was moving particularly fast. The groove for the boulder trap was knee high at best.

"We had enough time for a full argument about it in fact. Marigold was all 'Go on without me'! And Vanya was like 'Stop being a fucking idiot and just get out of the way' to which Marigold responded 'No it is too late, I cannot be saved. Do not mourn me!' Vanya decided that Marigold was being silly... so she went up to Marigold and tried to pull them both out. Marigold kicked her away though.

"Which was pretty rude... but she did get run over by a boulder shortly afterwards... so it was arguably justified? Honestly, Marigold is lucky the ground was so soft there. Sure she can regenerate but if her head had been crushed I'm not sure she would've been ok. Vanya was genuinely worried about her that

time. Of course, Marigold just moaned the whole time as her back slowly put itself together after she was crushed.

"Marigold did get properly punished for that one. Vanya wrote back to Marigold's mother, her name is Dahlia by the way. So Vanya wrote back home to try and get some advice, because she was really quite scared for Marigold's safety that time, and it really scared her... but you'll never guess what the punishment was..."

Hmmm... it's gotta be something super wholesome right?

[Obviously. But I don't know in what way.] "My guess is going to be... that you put her in a blanket and then Vanya spoon-fed her hot chocolate," said Lily.

"Close, but no," said Burnice.

pandasNovel.com Kat shrugged, and seeing that Lily was guessing decided to join in on the fun. "I guess I'll go with Dahlia turned up and treated her like a kid for a few days,"

Burnice shook her head once again, "Dahlia did actually do that once as punishment, but that was for a completely unrelated incident and we were much closer to the capital when it happened so Dahlia only had to take one day off work,"

Mint, seeing that neither of her two friends' guesses worked, went the other direction, "She was locked in a box for a day," Lily and Kat looked at Mint confused. "What, clearly your guesses weren't right either,"

"True but Burnice said I was close," retorted Lily.

Mint opened her mouth to retort... but couldn't think of one so she closed it and looked over to Burnice for answers, which she gave. "Right, Lily was the closest to correct. So, first off, Vanya chained Marigold up as best she could. Nothing too weird at first, just this time, Vanya made it impossible to get out because the chains were enchanted to paralyse someone. So once that was activated, and Marigold started to get really excited...

"Marigold was bundle up in a massive blanket while Vanya wrote nice things about Marigold on her skin. As she did this, she read each one of them out. That's when Marigold started panicking, but obviously she was paralysed so she couldn't escape. Once Vanya got done with it, Mauve and I stepped forward and started to read out all the times she'd helped save us since we joined the party and how thankful we were that she'd kept us alive for a few years at this point.

"Then Midnight came in and read out a letter from Dahlia that talked about how proud she was of Marigold, and how all the adventures we'd been on had been great publicity for the kingdom. How Marigold had 'selflessly' stepped in front of blows meant for a number of strangers and how she'd managed to protect so many innocent people. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

"At some point during this whole thing Marigold started crying... and just... the haunted look on her face when we were done. Honestly it made us think we might've gone just a tad too far when it came to that punishment... but Vanya put her foot down. 'I put up with injuring you horrifically for your enjoyment. The least you can do is take into account my feelings sometimes. Sure we're not really dating, but god that doesn't mean I want you to die, certainly not before I do. We're elves for crying out loud. If you

don't make it to 100 for some stupid reason I will rip your soul from the afterlife and then resurrect you as a plush toy to keep save till the end of time' which... I mean, that's a thing I guess,"

"Are you sure they're not dating?" asked Lily. Again.

Burnice looked over at Marigold and Vanya who both seemed rather pleased with themselves right now. "Honestly Lily? The more I think about it, the more certain I am that the only two people who think they're not dating are each other. It might even be true in their heads... but I also bet that one day Dahlia and Vanya's parents are going to get together and sort out a wedding ceremony for the two of them. Their attendance will be mandatory,"

"Yeah..." Lily said slowly taking her own glance at the pair. "Vanya seems to actually understand Marigold... which is a big deal. I guess neither of them a quite ready to admit what that means though. I can't imagine being with anyone who isn't Kat so... I guess I don't really understand the idea of denying it. I mean... I was scared sure..."

"But if someone else said it to me, and Kat didn't deny it, I wouldn't either, I was just afraid of rejection. Those two... yeah I don't have any good words for whatever those two think of as a good idea. I'm honestly surprised they both agree that they're not dating instead of just one of them... but whatever. I guess Marigold likes variety in her beatings... but she clearly comes back to Vanya every time," *nOvelNext.coM*

Mint tilted her head to the side, "Are you all not being a bit silly? While it does sound like they care for each other, it sounds more like they're best friends then future spouses,"

"I mean... they have sex a bunch as well, that doesn't sound 'friendly' to me," said Lily. "Or... it might be 'too friendly' for just friends,"

Mint shrugged, "If you say so,"

Kat rolled her eyes and asked, "So how long did it take for Marigold to recover from that punishment?"

Burnice thought about the question for a few seconds before answering, "I suppose it depends what exactly you mean by... recover. Obviously there was no physical damage done to Marigold so as soon as we released her one could argue she was fine. The restraints didn't do any damage at all!

"But just as obviously this was more of a mental punishment. I know Marigold was scrubbing at her arms for like a week afterwards, as if she was still trying to wash away the kind words. She would watch us all warily for the first few days... oh and for about a month afterwards if someone nearby complimented anyone, not just Marigold she'd like, jump and freeze up, while eying everyone around her warily as if she was about to be barraged with compliments again.

"Vanya did keep a list of compliments on her for a while afterwards... in fact she might even still have it because I don't remember her getting rid of it... but I can't be sure about that, it's not like I'm watching Vanya all the time. So it could've just gotten dumped at some point, or Marigold could've snuck it into the garbage one night. I could see plenty of different things happening to that paper.

"Anyway, if Marigold started to plan something stupid Vanya would just carefully start to unfold this small piece of paper from one of her pockets and most times Marigold would quickly abort the plan and

promise not to go through with it. A few times she made, and won, the argument of getting to do it anyway but those attempts were quite rare and sometimes unsuccessful."

Mint nodded, with her face set into the most serious look she could manage as she said, "Ah yes, process wood. Truly paper is a thing to be feared." Of course, Mint's face cracked pretty quickly after those words were out of her mouth and everyone nearby was laughing.

[Chapter 1195 1195 Kress Castle Plans](#)

Kress chapter

Kress stared at the mirror and spun the shovel in his left hand, bucket held in his right. He was dressed in light, airy clothes and equipped for a sand castle contest. *I'm going to look really silly if I rock up on stage with a bucket and shovel instead of weapons and then find out it's an obstacle course or something... but I'm certain it's going to be a sand castle contest and I'm willing to steak looking a bit silly on that certainty. Though we'll probably be provided with digging equipment.*

Kress spun the shovel in his hand a few more times. *I wonder what idea I should go with. Obviously going for a sand CASTLE is a classic and it could let me show off in a number of ways, both with the little details and with the large scale construction. But... it is pretty standard even so. All the people that end up surprised, which I suspect will be most of them, will all just go for castles as well. I'm sure I can do it better than most in the sand castle building space...

παΠdαsNovel.com But if someone manages to come up with something unique then even the best sandcastle might look boring. Still... we're going to have a lot of time. What can I do that's suitably impressive? I could probably make like a sand treehouse? But would that be impressive to a dryad? I've got no idea. I could do something suitably... fun like Thyme seems to want... but I'm not sure what constitute 'fun' like Thyme seems to be after. I could make a big pool or something? Though making detailed figures to populate it would be a massive pain, bordering on impossible even with the Thyme.

So let's scratch the pool idea. Probably waterslides as well. Fireworks? Hmm... the sand isn't particularly colourful here so I don't see that working out well. Maybe I should do a sand castle with added sand town around it? That could suitably elevate my castle above anyone else's. Doing little trees might be a pain... and if I added rivers I might struggle a bit... but I've got a lot of time to complete it, so it might be worthwhile. Ok, so put 'Sandcastle and Sand Town' on the top of the list. Let's keep brainstorming. nOvelnext.cOm

I could do an underwater scene? Coral is a fairly sturdy structure, more so than leaves anyway so doing up little sand coral should be possible... plus depending on the rules I might just be able to use bits of REAL coral that's dried out. I could do a little underwater river and line it with shells... maybe do an underwater town? Hmmm...

Should I expand my sandcastle and town concept to make it an underwater sandcastle and town? Not sure how I'd convey it was all underwater instead of on land. I might be making it overly complicated.

Though if Thyme provides us with some fancy sand I could coat everything with a layer of blue to imply that it's underwater? That might be cool...

If I've got help I might be able to excavate a big gash through the sand and then set the houses into the walls? Make it seem like they're using an underwater trench as the place the town was built. Hmm... I could see it... but maybe I could just pretend it was a normal cliff? Make up little elevators? Not sure how I'd make tiny elevators but I could go about it that way... hmmm... so above water or below water? I guess I could just build the thing and then not tell anyone what it's supposed to be unless directly asked. I can just say whatever it looks MORE like one it's finished?

But won't it look a bit like a mess if I don't have a unified vision for it? I suppose that could be the case. Shells here, and there while I make trees or something in other places. Not ideal certainly. I'll think about it a bit more in the future. For now I'm still locking down ideas. What else can I do that's not just based around a sandcastle? I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

I suppose I could do a giant portrait? That sounds like a massive pain in the ass though. I'd have to be very careful not to disturb it as I moved over the damned thing and made any corrections that are needed. I suppose if I was really careful and worked from a corner outward it would be fine... but what about the breeze? If the wind picks up too much then I'd need to go in and fix things and that might be impossible depending on what needs to be fixed. Though... I could see Thyme blocking the wind for the contest. Not sure if they'd consider the wind a feature. Thyme might want to keep it around so things are difficult.

Should I try for like... an underground city then? Dig out a big bowl or even further and like, carve out sections so that it can't be blown away? Might be nice but it's a fucking SANDCASTLE AND TOWN COMBINATION AGAIN.* Kress threw his shovel up at the ceiling, not particularly hard, just to get some of the anger out. He caught it again on the way back down, and then bounced it over his palm for a few moments, making sure it didn't tip over and land on the floor.

*Right. So let's think of something that isn't town related then. I could... carve a giant monster? That could be fun. I'm not sure I can think of one that's suitably impressive when compared to a more standard fight... but I'm sure I could think of something that's at least 'decent'. I could either go for something longer, like those death worms and have them coming in and out of the ground and go for quantity over quality, or maybe I should focus on one good looking animal that I can get some nice detail into?

Something with scales maybe? Fur would be all but impossible to make look nice just using sand and whatever else is around. A sea monster of some kind might be thematic... and if I wanted to, I could do up some fake waves made out of sand and make it look rather impressive. Yes... I can see that working well. So is that something I want to go for? I'm leaning towards... maybe. I'm still not sure if the results would be more impressive than a really nicely done town, but at least it's different.

So... anything else? If I don't go for giant monsters or for little towns... I can't think of anything. I mean, sure landscape stuff but I can show more proficiency by adding a town to it or something. Maybe I should decide if I'm better off pretending it's underwater or not? Or trying to work out how much time we've actually got? Thyme wasn't exactly clean but I know it's a good few hours.

What should the process be then? Making a town might be the best way to hedge, because you can build a suitably impressive castle first and then you can work on all the smaller stuff like houses in a slow ring outwards depending on how much time you've got left... which seems pretty simple even if it'll be a bit hard in practice. If I want for a giant monster, or a reasonable sized monster, then I'm committing to finishing just the monster and a few background details within the time limit... but not TOO inside of the time limit.

Yeah it'd be a horrible use of your time if you finished up like an hour early... but then again, depending on the rules you might get bonus points for finishing early. I'll try to remember to ask Thyme about it before the round starts. Perhaps I should also look into sabotage? No that's not a good idea. I'm confident that will be against the rules in some way. Hmmm... but what about working together?

Would Thyme put in a rule against working together? Like, I build a nice castle and then Stan builds a giant animal of some kind to attack my castle? Both better together but clearly judgeable apart? It's certainly an interesting idea... but I have no idea how skilled Stan is when it comes to building things together. So even if I can trust him not to screw me over... which is still a bit up in the air, then I'd also have to trust him to be good at his job. Which is a completely separate matter really...*

Kress let out a long breath as he glanced out of his window. The day was wearing on. His food was eaten, and there likely wasn't much time left before the round was set to start. *Perhaps I should wrap up this musing and start heading outside to the staging grounds? I wouldn't want to be late.*

Occasionally missing content, please report errors in time.

[Chapter 1196 1196 The Secret Round Is...](#)

Kress Chapter

Everyone had assembled in front of the stage that Thyme had set up. It was set up perpendicular to the ocean and had a massive amount of beach space behind it. What remained of the volleyball court had been completely removed, leaving the final challenge mysterious. Thyme was lounging on a big chair that was raised up slightly so they could look at everyone. They were wearing a castle-bucket as a hat with seashells covering the spot their nipples would be if they had any, and finally Thyme had some pants made out of seaweed. "I call upon everyone participating in this round,"

Kress, Borgick, Midnight, Stan and Ellenell all stepped forward and climbed up onto the stage. Thyme nodded pleased, "Great, everyone is here. I see that one of you has come prepared," everyone except Kress was just dressed in normal clothes, though Borgick did have his cannon, so perhaps they were the one prepared for the task. "This is where I let everyone know that the rules.

"But first! I've got to reveal what this round will be. Kress seems to have my measure... it's going to be a sand structure contest! Yes, you'll be given the next four hours to make the best sculpture you can from sand. I'll be bringing in a panel of judges to eliminate my bias. The structure needs to consist mostly of sand, but anything found on the island is fair game... unless it comes from the inn. I'd consider that cheating.

"For every person working on the sculpture you'll be provided a bucket and shovel, but you can request I change the size of those tools at any time. You will all be confined to a marked area for each team. Crossing into an enemy teams area will not be grounds for immediate disqualification, but loitering or interrupting their work will be. No magic is allowed inside of any of the marked squares including your own, but if you can make use of it outside the area that's fine.

"To make things interesting though... every person will be allowed two extra team members. The first will be... one of these!" Thyme snapped their fingers and a Timmy appeared. A small, miniaturised version of Thyme. They had a bucket on their head, a little shovel in hand, and they were wearing oversized pants that came up to their armpits. "They are very strong, magically powerful and will follow any command given to them... but they will also be... idiots. Doing EXACTLY as they're told. So be careful. They'll be a really powerful addition to your team but you'll need to watch them.

"The second member of your team will be one person from a rival team. It will be first come first serve, as you may only pick one additional person from each team. It is worth noting that all members of the winning team will receive full points, so additional members are encouraged to try and win it. Though it is worth mentioning that additional team members must listen to the main contestant. Before we start allowing you to pick your extra team members are there any questions?"

Kress ignored Stan who was collapsed on the ground like this was some sort of catastrophic failing on his part. *Right. I need to work out what questions I have, as well as what person I want on my team. First question: What are we being judged on? Second question: Can Timmy use magic inside the square, and if they CAN will we be punished if the Timmy does so. Third question: How many times will Thyme change out our tools. And are there rules about breaking them?

That's probably everything. I'll go through those questions, then I can start planning who I want.* So that's what Kress did, he asked all the questions in one big list and Thyme responded, also in a big list. "Timmy's will try to use magic if you ask them to, but you will be punished and possibly removed from the round if they use it inside the marked zones. You can get as many sets of tools as you want, but I'll be taking away a set every time you get a new one so the number stays the same. There are no rules about breaking them, but to replace tools you need to give me the whole set back so I can swap them out. Finally, it was your first question but it's my last answer... I don't know what you'll be judged on, I'm not a judge,"

Ellenell took the chance to ask, "In that case can you introduce us TO the judges so we can ask them?"

Thyme shook their head, "I'm afraid not. I'll be summoning them in just for the judging... and for the food afterwards. I had to promise them something for coming to judge your sculptures after all. I'll need to get out the flood lights so everyone can see properly... or I could just use spatial manipulation to make it seem like the sun is still above the island. I'll get back to you on that one,"

Hmm... not being able to see the judges beforehand and guess what they might like is a bit of an annoyance. For all we know they could all really like... flowers or something and the best way to earn points would be just to make a giant ass flower or something equally silly. "Thyme, I know you can't say what we're being judged on, but will there be multiple categories?" asked Kress, hoping to get some sign that the variance would be reduced. I think you should take a look at pαΠdαsnoyel.com

Thyme thought that over for a few moments, stroking the handle of the bucket they wore on their head. "I'm going to say... yes? I think so? I'm pretty sure there will be multiple categories but I can't be completely certain, as once again, I am not a judge,"

pandasNovel com *That's something. Ok... do I have any more questions? Maybe? Not right now I don't think. Hopefully someone else can ask a few while I consider who I want on my team. Burgandy has potential, because she's got Earth affinity... but her attitude is also pretty terrible. That and you can't use magic inside the marked area. Which... might not be a big issue. If I can get her to make small detailed structures out of sand using magic, then carry them in on a stone plate or something that could be really useful. But attitude problems aside I'm not sure that's possible. She seems to be on Gareth's level.

Blue might be my next big ask. Her ability to summon large amounts of water would be really useful. I could have her on sand mixing duty just outside of our marked area... though we haven't seen how big the marked area is just yet. Wait that's a question I probably should ask... how big is the area? Aw well someone else might ask for me. Um... what was I saying? Ah yes Blue. Getting Blue to mix the water into the sand for me could be huge help... but I'm not sure she'll want to cast even MORE magic today. So that could be a risk.*

Kress was lucky, as Midnight decided to ask Kress' question, "Thyme, how big will these marked areas be?"

"They will be one hundred metre squares, roughly. I'll have glowing lines that mark them out properly for everyone," answered Thyme.

*Right. That's pretty large. I'm still thinking Blue might be my best grab. I'd take Stan as a helper if I could, but clearly that's not possible. March might be worth asking just for her strength... but I suspect that Timmy will be able to fill her roll. Do I have a backup though? Just in case I'm not the person who gets to ask first? Burgandy... maybe as a third place person. So who would I want from Romilda's team, or Marigold's team?

Kat's been chatting with Burnice... so she might be alright? Not sure she's any better than anyone else. Not Marigold... I don't trust her not to mess around. So maybe Vanya, maybe Burnice. Though Mauve was pretty accurate with her axe... would that translate to detailed work with a shovel? Yes... yes it just might. So I'd take Mauve from that team then.

From Romilda's team... maybe just Carl? He's nice and chill... though Asteodia might have some good ideas. Aw well, they're pretty low on my priority list and I'm hopefully not going to be choosing last, so it should be fine if I only have a vague idea for who I'd pick from that team.*

"Can we request tools in any size and shape?" asked Ellenell.

Thyme made a 'so-so' gesture. "Somewhat? I'm willing to stretch things a bit, but you need to always have something that can pass as a bucket, and something that can pass as a shovel,"

OOoh, that's a good question. I can certainly make use of that little bit of information.

[Chapter 1197 1197 Sandcastle Assistants!](#)

Kress Chapter

The Competitors: Kres, Borgick, Midnight, Stan, Ellenell

"Kress, due to your clear preparation for this event in particular, you'll get your chance to pick your assistant first and select who will be going after you," said Thyme.

Excellent. Kress certainly wasn't going to argue with that. "Can I discuss it with my first choice before confirming things?" asked Kress.

Thyme nodded, "You'll have a few minutes to discuss yes, but after five minutes I'll be forcing you to choose. We don't have all day anymore,"

Kress nodded and jogged over to Blue. Nabras and Bonas turned surprised gazes to Kress, but Nell seemed oddly smug. Blue seemed a mixture of exasperated and resigned. "Hey Blue, interested in joining my team for this event?"

"Gee, I'm popular today aren't I?" asked Blue to the air. "Why is it exactly that you think I'm worth recruiting for this?"

Kress shrugged and said, "Well firstly, I think your water magic will be useful for mixing sand and water to get the right consistency for things. On top of that, your mage training should've given you a good eye for details. Finally, I know you're at least somewhat friendly with Kat, so you aren't likely to deliberately sabotage my efforts." It wasn't quite the full reasoning, but it was good enough.

Blue tapped her foot on the sand a few times. "I'm really not looking to use even MORE mana today..." Kress just shrugged. It was a decent worry and he wasn't going to force the issue if she wasn't interested. "Still... I've had a bit of a rest. How much work do you expect me to do exactly?"

Kress once again, shrugged. "I'm willing to take what I can get. I'm sure I can figure out some good instructions for the Timmy to mix sand if you want a break or something. It just seems like using magic for what I can would be the best choice,"

"Hmm..." Blue let out a long hum as she thought on the answer. "Who would you grab instead of me? If I turned you down?"

Do I actually want to answer that? Not particularly... but I do want to recruit Blue enough that I'm willing to reveal a few more of my cards. I'll just talk about my second choice. Nothing more. If Blue wants to turn me down, I can point out that the other contestants can ask after me, and I'm not sure if she can say no if one of us forced the issue. Plus technically, she'll have to follow instructions. At least according to Thyme.

"Probably Burgandy? I don't actually know what other mages we have but Burgandy's earth element is something I could at least think of a few uses for. I'd just lose a lot of time transferring the completed designs into the marked area... but I worry about just how long that would take. On top of that, she's not a mage, so she might not be able to help get the details right," answered Kress.

Blue nodded but didn't say anything. Kress pretended to check his watch... only to see a watch appear on his wrist. The fact that it was made out of sand and the numbers were counting down from five minutes implied rather strongly this was Thyme's doing. Apparently he had about three minutes left.

Another minutes passed, so Kress had to ask, "What's your decision? I don't exactly have infinite time here,"

Nell elbowed Blue and made a 'go-on' gesture. Blue just sighed at Nell's response but nodded, "Right... I guess... is there anything you can say to convince me?"

"Everyone saw that I was the most prepared for this task, and everyone also saw me come over here and ask you to join my team... so even if you say no to me you'll probably have to say no to four other people," said Kress.

"That's a bit of a dickish way of persuading me, but fuck it, I guess I'm in," said Blue with a shrug as they both made their way back to the platform, with Nell clapping behind them as they went.

Once Kress made it back onto stage, Thyme asked, "Right, so who's next then?"

"I guess... Ellenell can go next? I'm already working with his teammate so I might as well go with that," said Kress.

"Right, I can see the logic," said Thyme with a nod. "Ellenell, you have five minutes," I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

Ellenell shrugged and moved down to request Burgandy's help. He had heard Kress' idea after all and didn't have any better ideas for picking who should help. "Burgandy, would you do me the honour of acting as my assistant for this challenge?" asked Ellenell.

"Sure, why not," said Burgandy, taking much less persuasion than Blue. Ellenell and Burgandy nodded at each other and then headed back to the stand. Burgandy's team wasn't surprised at this turn of events, considering they'd heard Kress talk as well. Still, Burgandy's teammates were planning to make fun of her for agreeing so easily when they next saw her.

With that confirmed, Ellenell decided to do the same as Kress and pass the buck towards the team he was working with, and picked Stan to go next. Stan pouted at Kress for a few seconds before wandering off into the crowd. He looked everyone over a few times, with his gaze landing on Kat, who just raised an eyebrow as if asking 'you really want to do this?' but neither said anything.

Eventually Stan turned to Gareth who had a full set of clothes on this time and said, "Gareth, you might not be Kress, but I humbly ask you work with me to show him I know how to build sandcastles!"

Gareth felt his smile twitching somewhat but nodded and said, "Look, I'm not sure I can really help you beat Kress in a sand castle building contest but I'm willing to team up with you for this part,"

Stand seemed to think that was an acceptable answer because he turned around and headed back up towards the stage with Gareth following after them. That just left Borgick and Midnight who would be picking assistance from each other's team. Thyme was curious as to which one Stan would pick first. So they waited for an answer... and waited... and waited... "Stan... can you announce who's going next?"

"Oh... um what?" said Stan somewhat distractedly as he looked around. "Um... sure that one," said Stan pointing towards Midnight... over Borgick's head. Thyme looked at them both awkwardly for a few moments.

παΠdαsNovel.com "Right... Midnight?" offered Thyme, not really sure who Stan had meant. Midnight shrugged but moved forward. He walked over to Carl.

"Hey Carl want to join my team?" asked Midnight.

"I don't mind, but am I really the best choice?" asked Carl.

Midnight shrugged, "I dunno but you seemed super chill in the earlier event, and that seems useful for a long task like this. Asteodia could work... but she overlooked the whole 'no magic thing' last time and I don't want to risk that,"

"Hey!" said Asteodia from the side.

Carl rubbed his chin for a few moments before shrugging, "Right well, nobody ever said I don't know how to listen to orders, so I guess I'll be coming along," *novElnExt.Com*

Thyme waited for the exact moment Carl and Midnight had stepped up onto the platform before turning to Borgick and saying, "Looks like it's just you my friend, who are you going to recruit?"

"Oh ay, leave the dwarf till last. We're not going to complain," grumbled Borgick. Thyme just shrugged at the dwarf, not really sure what to say. Borgick waved Thyme's half-hearted concern off and went to Marigold's team and looked them all over. Marigold of course posed seductively, trying to draw attention her way. Vanya was pinching her nose, Burnice was looking away with a cloak on and Mauve was staring right at Borgick waiting for him to pick.

"Looks like I'll be getting a lass on my team regardless of what I pick... but do any of ya want to sign up?" asked Borgick.

"Oh memememememem!" insisted Marigold.

Borgick looked at the rather telling silence from everyone else. "Nobody else going to compete for the spot?" asked Borgick.

Burnice snorted and said, "Yeah like I'm going to get between Marigold and a chance to show off. I'm not that stupid,"

Borgick looked over to Vanya who just gave a shrug of 'what-can-you-do'. Borgick wasn't exactly pleased with that answer, but Mauve returned a similar shrug. "Right, guess you'll be on me team then Marigold,"

Marigold, not one to let a chance slip by pulled Borgick into her arms and rushed back to the platform like she was making a touchdown in football. Quite a few people were worried she'd slam the poor dwarf into the stage as well. Thyme just watched Marigold do her thing while making sure nobody got hurt in her charge. "Right, it seems everyone is paired up..."

[Chapter 1198 1198 Getting The Planning Done](#)

Kress Chapter

The Competitors: Kres, Borgick, Midnight, Stan, Ellenell

"SO LET'S GET STARTED! The judges will start arriving an hour before your time is up, so you can ask them any questions you want then," finished Thyme. Everyone was staring around so Thyme clapped their hands together, "Well? Get going! You're burning time just standing there. All the areas have big copies of your face floating over them. If you want, I can teleport you there right now. You'll see a copy of me in the corners if you need anything else,"

"Teleport me and my team please," said Kress not wanting to waste any time. Blue glared at him as they were teleported. "One moment Blue," Blue crossed her arms and glared. "Agent Timmy, it is your mission to find as many colours of rock and sand that you can in five minutes, and then make it back here to deliver your findings. Use any means necessary, including magic. Just no magic inside the square ok? In fact, if you can dump any colourful sand just north of the square that would be great,"

Kress Timmy saluted and then vanished on the spot. Once they were gone, Kress turned back to Blue and said, "Right, that way we're not wasting time. Sorry for the quick teleport, but there was no reason to stick around, and I want to get started on work as soon as possible. I've debated the merits of various structures, but I can't think of a better idea then building a nice castle up on a 'hill' and then building out a little town around it. Do you have any problems with that,"

"Um... not a problem per say... but why is that your best idea? You came prepared for this, so I'd have thought you'd know some secret," said Blue.

Kress shrugged and said, "Right, so the big problem is the time limit. If we pick anything other than the castle and town idea, then we're running the risk of not finishing in time, or wasting it. If we pick something that can be continually added to, then we can make the best use of what time we have. I thought about big monsters, murals, and variations on theme, but they just won't work out as well. Now, we can do some interesting things with the castle town, and I'm happy to go over them, but I need to know if there are any major issues with it,"

"Nope... ah... yeah I've got nothing. I'm willing to follow your lead here," said Blue.

Kress nodded, not having expected any other answer before responding with, "Right, in that case, we've still got a few options. The first is just keep it basic. Standard circular castle, with walls if we can manage it, and a few nice details. Then we work on the town. Bunch of similar houses to start with, and then a few unique buildings if we can manage it.

"Second idea, is to make things undersea themed. That might rely on getting some coloured sand from Timmy, but we can build things up in basically the same way, but we make more use of shells from the beach. Shells instead of roof tiles, more coral like structures instead of trees. No sticks or anything of the sort.

"Thirdly, we could spend some time carving out a massive groove through the sand, and then drawing little houses and what not into the walls. It might save us some effort for a big effect, but we'll need to

do a lot of digging and it might limit us in unforeseen waves. Perhaps a mix of things might be best if we go for this one.

"Fourth idea, is that we pack on the sand, and split the area in two. Have two of everything, two towns, two castles, two sets of everything we make. It'll be a lot of running back and forth, but we can put army tents or something in the middle to give the whole scene a bit of spice. Now, which of those seems the best to you?" *novElnext.com*

Blue looked a bit dazed after Kress' rapid-fire series of examples but she managed a response, "Um... ur... what about going with a combination of the third and second ideas? We can get Timmy to make a bunch of little trees, and the big groove can have part of the town fallen down inside it. Of course, if we don't have time to flesh it out we can skip it in the end... but it would give us something unique, I think,"

Kress nodded along, "Yes that's sound reasoning. Are you willing to start mixing the sand and water now? If not, we can make do for a bit by just using the buckets we've been provided,"

pandasNovel.com "What bucket?" asked Blue. I think you should take a look at *pandasnovel.com*

Kress pointed to the two buckets and shovels that were sitting beside Blue. "Those buckets,"

"When the heck did those get there?" asked Blue as she looked them over.

"They were there after we exited the teleport, so I assume Thyme put them there as part of transit. Now, where do you think we should the castle? I'm thinking either the centre, or the top. If we have it in the centre we can build out in all directions... but if we put it at the top you can hopefully send the water up topside and we can mix sand there for a bit. Can't start too close to the beach sadly because the tide is coming in and certainly going to encroach on our square before we're done," said Kress.

"Oh... um... maybe start at the top and work down then?" said Blue unsure.

"Can you pull sufficient water? When Timmy gets back we'll use him to dig a big whole for it, and then I'll be putting you in charge of mixing sand while Timmy and I start to build up the base of the castle," said Kress.

"Um... yeah lifting the water shouldn't be too much of a problem. The gaps between the squares should be more than large enough. How long till Timmy gets back though?" said Blue.

Kress scratched at his chin, "Still a minute or two I imagine... so we can start drafting plans out I think. The first thing is that for the little identical houses we can ask Thyme for a bucket that matches the shape closely and build off of that. Maybe we can even ask for it to open up with a hinge so that we can get the roof the correct shape without much fuss,"

"That sounds... useful," said Blue hesitantly.

Kress shrugged and said, "Time will tell if that's going to work. The other thing we need to decide is what big buildings we can feature across the town. I'm thinking... library, church, maybe some docks if we have time... but I doubt we'll get that close to the sea. Maybe if we have time, we can get Timmy to make a miniature lake for us and build docks on that... but I feel like that's more of a 'last hour' type of project.

"Hmm... what else... guard posts probably? I can see them making good landmarks to break up the monotony. Parks and trees, obviously. Though I doubt we can manage smaller segments of water. It's not worth doing the work for those. Hmm... what else... an auction house maybe? But I don't know how to design a little auction house. And ideas Blue?"

"Um... we could do like a coliseum or an amphitheatre?" suggested Blue.

Kress nodded, "Yes... yes that could work well. Hmm... we might also be back on for the rivers or ponds of Timmy can find some blue rocks to crush up into sand. Maybe even an aqueduct if he finds a lot of them. Do you think we could manage market stalls?"

"No... probably not," said Blue.

Kress nodded and said, "Yeah... Timmy might be able to manage it if we can build a bigger copy of a few and then ask Timmy to make copies... but I don't see us taking the time to get a proper bazaar going. Keep it in mind though. We'll have to see how good Timmy is at the delicate work before thinking of that sort of thing,"

Blue nodded somewhat awkwardly. *Hmm... Blue is still clearly overwhelmed. I'll just keep quiet until Timmy gets here then. Wouldn't do to overwhelm her further. I need her mind operating at peak efficiency so that she can mix the sand well. Timmy and I can focus on the castle first. It'll need to be MASSIVE. Though I'll probably limit the tallest sections to my own height. if it's too much of a struggle to work on then it'll eat up too much time. Once that's done we can work on the town. Probably try to put down one unique landmark every few metres, but we'll have to see what size we make the houses. That and see what Timmy brings back. That could change everything*

[Chapter 1199 1199 All That Glitters Is SAND](#)

Kress Chapter

The Competitors: Kress, Borgick, Midnight, Stan, Ellenell

The Assistants: Blue, Marigold, Carl, Gareth, Burgandy

Kress and Blue stared at the pile of sand. Stunned. Timmy had separated them by colour, which was nice... but it was a ridiculous sight. The sand was sparkling in places and covered a whole range of colours. Heck, there were three varieties of blue that Timmy had found in just five minutes. It wasn't a small amount either. Each pile was large enough to build at least two miniature houses by Kress' estimation. "Damn, I almost want to use some of these for the castle..." mumbled Kress.

Blue looked over the sand, some of it soaked through already, making it clear that it came from the ocean. Honestly, Blue was more confused as to where the dry sections of display came from. Still, it WAS impressive to look at. "I... I think you might be right. Getting enough sand will have to be Timmy's job... but it just looks so stunning that I don't see any other way to go about this. If we didn't make the castle out of the good stuff... it'll look awkward by comparison,"

Kress nodded, agreeing with everything Blue was saying. "I think we might want to spend a bit of time mixing some sands together, find the right balance of colours and then make the castle out of that. Timmy! I need you to gather as much sand of the colours you've already found as you can in... I'll give you another five minutes, but we might need more later. Sound good?" responded Kress.

Timmy, once again, saluted Kress before vanishing. *You know I wonder if I should be worried about what I've just done. Perhaps 'as much as you can get in five minutes' is going to be a bit extreme... but I don't see what else I could've done. We're going to need more colourful sand. This is just the beginning.*

"What sort of mixes are you thinking of using?" asked Blue.

Kress looked over the veritable rainbow of sand in front of him and frowned. "That's the real kicker isn't it? So much of this looks great. Part of me wants to just pick the sparkly purple and only use that for the castle just to make things simpler... but that would be pretty boring wouldn't it?" asked Kress.

Blue nodded, "Yes I believe it would be. We could possibly make the colours line by line. I'm sure Timmy could stack them all properly for us... but perhaps doing a mix of sand JUST for the castle might make it stand out properly? Perhaps we try and mix three or four colours, while other big buildings are just a mix of two?" suggested Blue.

Kress looked over all the sand before nodding and said, "Yes... yes I think that will work out for the best. With that in mind... I'm thinking we go for a sort of... mixed sunrise? Purple, orange and a few blended colours between that? Might need to ask Timmy for more of a few specific piles, but I think it could work,"

Kress was telling the truth with the amount. They had plenty of darker purple sand but they barely had a handful of the slightly lighter purple stuff. If they added pink they'd need more of that as well, but they had plenty of oranges of all shades. So that wasn't a colour they were worried about.

"Shall we get started on the mix?" asked Kress. "Once it's done we can just get Timmy to copy it... then we'll have to deal with wetting it all appropriately,"

pandasNovel.com "Sounds good," confirmed Blue. Once that was said, the pair got to work. They split the sand piles into the smallest segments they could, which sadly for them was only quarters. They really needed more light purple sand. Still, four attempts was enough for two each and they got to work immediately.

Kress started by trying to use what sand they had the most of, just for testing purposes. It very quickly turned into a complete mess so he discarded his efforts quickly. Blue took the time to balance the colours as best she could. Letting them flow from one sand type to another. It looked amazing in her hand... but Kress had to point out a major problem. "That looks lovely, and I can see that you arranged that with care... but that's not what we want. We'll be mixing all the sand randomly to stop it taking forever. Still, it's a good start,"

"Right... my bad, I guess I got too focused on making it look nice," said Blue with a sigh. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

"Hey, it's ok. It does look really nice. If we were just sticking with the castle we could spend hours blending it in perfectly, and maybe in another world that could win us the game... but I really don't want to spend that long working on just the castle," said Kress.

Blue nodded in understanding... but before she could return to her work Timmy returned and dumped a massive amount of sand on the pile. Kress felt his jaw drop. Timmy had separated the piles well, probably with magic, but now even the smallest one was easily as tall as Kress was. The largest of the piles, one of the piles of green sand, was taller than both Blue and Kress put together. "Holy shit," said Kress... and Blue. Though Blue's words were a lot quieter and lost in Kress' own, allowing her to avoid being overheard.

"Right... um... shit... what do we get Timmy to do while we're mixing this sand?" asked Kress.

"I... I don't know? We're only like... ten minutes in! I didn't think the Timmys would be so efficient!" insisted Blue.

"Well neither did I. Heck nobody thought they'd be this good I bet... the real question is... what do we do to make the most out of him?" said Kress.

"I... we could... we could get Timmy to work on the ravine maybe?" suggested Blue.

Kress nodded, "I could see that working. You seem to have a better eye for colours than I do. Shall I mark out space for the ravine while you mix up a good colour for the castle?" suggested Kress.

"That's fine with me," confirmed Blue.

Kress nodded and headed off, "Timmy follow me!" said Kress. He walked a bit of the way down, not wanting to cause too many problems by leaving a big ravine in the middle of the marked area that they'd constantly need to jump over. Kress ended up choosing a spot about halfway down the square, and slightly off of the centre. "Timmy, without using magic I want you to dig a ravine that's twice as wide as I am and deep enough to go up to my shoulders. I want you to follow the line I'm making and use that as the centre for the ravine. Can you do that?"

Timmy saluted Kress, and he got to work, sketching out a mostly straight path for the ravine that went from the start down almost to the bottom of the right side of the square. Timmy was doing quick work... but it was visible now. Kress could see it would take Timmy a while to dig it all out. Perhaps close to twenty minutes.

Probably for the best that it's actually going to take Timmy some time to do this. Timmy can do insane stuff... but it seems a good chunk of that is related to the magic he can use. Without magic Timmy is a very diligent, but still mortal worker. Very useful, and primed to save us a bunch of time, but I don't have to worry about explaining everything to Timmy. That's good. Hmm... maybe I should also start on the designs for the standard houses? That way I can ask Thyme for a bucket, and get Timmy started on that next. Hmm... best to check in with Blue first.

So that's what Kress did, he checked over the progress Blue was making. He could see quite a few discarded mixes that had been dumped off to the side... but they were getting increasingly similar as they went on, and it was somewhat hard to tell just how many iterations Blue had been through to get to this point. "How are you going with that?" asked Kress.

"I feel like I'm just a few dashes of colour off from it being perfect," insisted Blue.

Kress nodded and said, "I can see that. You look like you're getting close. So... if you don't mind, I'm going to leave that with you and try to work on getting a basic house done. That way we can get Thyme to make a bucket to match my basic house so we can just copy them all over the place. We can make them all different colours to spice things up, but it will be a good project for Timmy to work on once the ravine is done. That's going to take the little guy a while... but not more than twenty minutes,"

"Yes sure, I'm so close to getting this done. Just leave me to it," said Blue distractedly. Kress just nodded and walked away. Not entirely sure Blue had even been listening but that was fine. She was doing good work, and he had a house to design.

[Chapter 1200 1200 We're Gonna Need A Bigger Bucket](#)

Kress Chapter

The Competitors: Kress, Borgick, Midnight, Stan, Ellenell

The Assistants: Blue, Marigold, Carl, Gareth, Burgandy

Kress was finding it surprisingly hard to make his housing models interesting. It wasn't too hard to make a basic square house and that was probably 'good enough' if push came to shove but he wanted to make them a bit more interesting than that. Right now he didn't even have any tiles on the roof. The overhang was barely there and there wasn't even any windows. The door wasn't too hard to make though. Kress had set up right next to the ocean. It provided plenty of waterlogged sand, and he didn't really care if it got washed away. For now this was just testing.

Still not entirely happy with this. I'll need to do some more work on it before I ask Thyme for help. If I can just get the base right without it all falling apart then I can ask Thyme for a copy which should be perfect... it's harder than I thought keeping everything workable for a 'bucket shape' even if we're cheating with the side release latch. Heck, just the overhangs would be impossible if it was a normal bucket.

Kress glanced over at the sound of crunching sand and saw Blue. She had her provided bucket, likely full of sand, and was heading his way. Kress brushed down his pants a bit to get some of the sand off, it wasn't all that effective, but he found the motion familiar and calming. Kress jogged over to Blue who stopped once they got closer. "What do you think of this?" said Blue.

Kress looked down at the bucket Blue held out towards him. Inside was a lovely mix of purple and orange with a few dashes of other colours added in and a fair amount of it sparkled in the afternoon light. "Wonderfully done Blue. I think this will work as our mix for the castle. Is there any last minute changes you want to make to it? Or shall I ask for a big bucket?"

"No I think this is perfect as well... but what do you need a big bucket for?" asked Blue.

"I thought it was obvious?" said Kress confused before he shook his head. No sense being cocky about it. "Right, sorry, clearly it wasn't. Ok, so the plan for the castle is this. I'm going to ask Timmy to make up an exact match for the sand in the bucket you've got there. Well first I'm going to ask for a big bucket from

Thyme, but the plan is to get one that's about as tall as I am and as wide as I am with my arms held outwards like this,"

Kress held his arms out completely straight before continuing, "Then I'm going to get Timmy to compact the sand down into the bucket, just, as much as the little guy can. With water mixed in as well of course, just to keep things workable. Once that's done, I'll get Timmy to dump it all into a marked area, and from there I'll slowly scrape away the sand we don't need until it looks like a castle. I mean, you're free to help as well, but I'm not sure how easy it would be for two people to work on the castle together,"

Blue looked at Kress stunned. "I... I wasn't thinking you'd make the castle so big... I mean... no I thought you'd just build it up with a bunch of buckets. One tower for each of the corners, do your best for a wall, and then try and stack two or maybe three for the main building... but no clearly you've got other plans," said Blue.

Kress nodded and explained, "Indeed I do. See, your plan would work fine... but it would also take more work for a lesser result. With Timmy's strength and Thyme's promise of infinitely variable buckets, a large one that will let me carve away will be perfect. I hope I can get it done quickly before the sand dries wrong. That will be the real risk. It'd be better if you could help with that but alas, no magic in the marked area..."

"Couldn't we... make it outside the marked area then transfer it in?" asked Blue. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

Kress made a 'so-so' gesture before explaining, "It's possible we could yes... but I see it as a big risk. We'd need a platform, and we'd need to be certain Timmy could move the structure without it falling apart... but we can really only test something like that once it's built. The platform is probably attainable... but another thing to think about is the fact that we'll still be left with that at the base of the castle. So we'd need it to look nice, or cover it up with sand afterwards..."

Kress trailed off with a shrug. Blue frowned at that but she could the general gist of what Kress was saying. Moving the castle would cause a lot of little problems that could be avoided by just accepting there was a time limit and being careful when carving away at a big block of sand. "Do you think you can do it?" asked Blue.

Kress nodded and said, "I think so. It's not going to be anything too fancy. I'll add little touches where I can of course... but it will still be fairly simple in overall shape and style. My biggest worry is the walls... but it might be best to just do them separately after the base is done. We'd need to dig out a bunch of sand down at the base if we make them part of the main structure, and that seems like a recipe for disaster,"

Blue nodded, once again understanding the problem Kress was talking about. "Do you think you can get a bucket for the walls?" asked Blue. **NoVeInExt.COM**

"Oh certainly," said Kress. "It might need to be done in segments, making it square while the castle has a round base, but that shouldn't be too much of a problem. We can add a little pond or some trees or something if it looks too weird,"

"Sounds good," said Blue with a nod.

"Right, do you want to go give the instructions to Timmy? Perhaps mix in the water first so you can just ask him to copy it with the water included? I'll go over to Thyme and get the bucket," said Kress.

Blue shrugged and agreed, "Sure, I'll go mix in some water and then get Timmy,"

Kress nodded and walked over to the corner where Thyme was... doing Thyme things. It was hard to find the right words for it, in Kress' mind anyway. Thyme was tied up to a post and was dressed like a beachgoer... but they had straw poking out of their clothes as if they were a scarecrow. Their head was lolled forward and staring at the ground and their legs were stuck together on the post... somehow. There was no nails or anything that Kress could see.

Not that I want to see the guy nailed to a post. That'd be just weird. Doesn't make them being stuck there with other means any less weird though. "Hey Thyme..." said Kress slowly. Thyme reacted to the words by snapping their head straight up and staring at Kress with glowing eyes that seemed to hold galaxies in them. "Ok that's just showing off. Whatever, can you please give me a bucket that's as tall as I am with a diameter approximating my arm span?"

pandasnovel.com Thyme just nodded without saying anything. Their body creaking and groaning like they were moving for the first time in a few thousand years... then a bucket vanished from where it was left in the square, and a new one appeared next to Kress matching his specifications. Kress glared at the thing. "Right... because that wasn't creepy at all. Thanks Thyme," said Kress clearly. *I'm not even going to complain that it's nowhere near where I wanted it because honestly? I'm not sure I want to interact with... whatever the fuck Thyme is right now.*

Kress struggled a bit to get a good grip on the bucket but eventually he managed it. It wasn't heavy once it was in his hands, but the outside was a bit slippery and hard to hold onto. His ingenious method of carrying it was to put it on his head and use his hands to balance it once it was there. Kress made his way over to Blue and Timmy with shaky steps. Then Timmy dashed over, to Kress and made a grabby motion with his hands.

Kress, rightly guessing that Blue had asked Timmy to help, did his best to lower the bucket carefully onto the little guy who took the weight without issue and dashed off to get to work mixing the sand together. Blue was helping out as well. While he'd been busy with Thyme she'd pulled up a bunch of water from the ocean. And was holding it above Timmy where the bucket was. Kress could see that every few seconds Timmy would signal Blue, and she'd add a bit more water to the mix. *Seems like they've got this under control.*