

DEMONS 1201

[Chapter 1201 1201 Big Castle, Little Trees And MORE IDEAS](#)

Kress Chapter

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

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

Kress carefully scraped off more sand from the giant sand mound with a miniature shovel that was slightly smaller than his hand. He'd gotten it from the creepy Thyme in the corner just be yelling, and he'd resolved to stay away from Thyme while they were choosing to look like that.

Working on the castle was both nerve wracking and calming. His first cut, with the large shovel he'd started with would've seen the main tower taking up around half of the sand pile, which really wasn't what he was going for. This wasn't meant to be a 'wizard tower with walls' even if the concept in and of itself wasn't a bad one. No, he wanted a proper castle with a number of different towers attached to a large main building and then work on the surroundings a bit.

The other thing he'd grabbed when asking for his tiny shovel was a large, but squat bucket top hold the excess sand he was scarping off. He didn't want this special blend of sand getting mixed up into the normal stuff around the castle. A little bit was fine, it would hopefully remain within the walls, but he was taking off large chunks at times and they needed to go in the bucket.

Kress found that it was best to draw rough, VERY ROUGH, outlines of what he was expecting to castle to look like. It was mostly just a collection of circles and a few squares that denoted where he imagined the various towers and rooms would be as he was working. They'd be useful later, even if it would be a bit annoying to keep copying them all out.

For now, Kress was focused on the central tower, and he'd just barely managed to perfect the roof. It was more or less a cone, with a slight overhang on the tower itself. There had been a few scary moments where he swore the whole roof was going to just slide down and collapse but in the end it all stayed in place. Kress found himself working on the windows now. Part of him wanted to make a fancy room inside the tower, but that was just wishful thinking. He was pretty good at working with sand, but nowhere near THAT good.

Timmy was back to work carving out that big ravine, but Kress knew the little guy would be finished with it soon, and was going to need to think up a new job for him. While Blue was spending her time working on the houses. Kress wasn't really paying attention, so he could only hope she was making good progress. She'd set up down near the water like Kress had for her attempts, and unless he was really trying, he couldn't see what she was doing.

*I'm not sure what I can get Timmy to do once the ravine is finished. Roads would be ideal... but I don't have the city planned out. Still... maybe I should ask Blue to get Timmy to work on them? No wait, that wouldn't work because we still have to walk over the area so they'll just be ruined. I should make sure to leave space between the houses so that once we're getting close to being down I can assign Timmy to that task.

But what can I get him doing right now? I don't trust him to work on the fine details of the castle. Thyme was really clear that the little guy wasn't any smart. Which I don't exactly believe, because Timmy has managed to find a lot of colourful sand seemingly from nowhere, and perfectly mix the ratios of sand in a bucket. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

Which might not seem like much, and is technically a 'simple' order but I doubt your average idiot would get it even somewhat close. That's not even getting into the fact that it has the perfect water to sand ratio, SOMEHOW. Or that it was packed into the bucket just as perfectly. I've only had a few scares while carving away, and all of them feel like my own errors. Mostly due to shaking hands, but still, it's impressive. **NoVelNext.coM**

Might be best to just let Blue work on the houses and get Timmy to copy them all over the place afterwards... or perhaps I should be getting Timmy to work on the walls? It might box me in a bit but the walls will need little bricks carved into them and that seems like something Timmy could do. If Blue or I start the pattern and make sure it isn't too deep Timmy could surely copy that without trouble.*

Kress finished up with the window, even going so far as to give it a nice window sill around the structure. Once the first was done, it was much easier for him to make four copies around the tower so all the sides match. *Hmm... I could have Timmy work on the bricks of the tower I'm working on? No I'd probably have to lift him up to do that and I can't take a break from the main structures right now. I need to finish before the sand dries out.*

pandasNovel.com With a nod Kress continued scraping away. He was starting two of the other towers just below the windows of the highest one. To him, that made sense, you wouldn't want to ruin the view from the very top of the tower, so ensuring that all the others were out of sight should be good. The next two towers were a bit easier because Kress knew what he wanted them to look like, essentially smaller versions of the main tower. The windows were going to be annoying to do in miniature though.

Right so ideas for Timmy... could we get him to go looking for miniature looking trees? Maybe? But I suspect Timmy can just magic those up by standing outside of the circle. Still... if it would take a while maybe asking him to build up a stockpile would be a good idea? In fact yeah, I think that's a good place to start.

Kress looked over to see what Timmy was doing right now... but didn't see him anywhere. Kress paused and looked properly, scouring for the little guy. No sand was moving in the trench, though it was finished. He wasn't out helping Blue... wait. *Is he just sitting in the trench now it's done? I but he IS because we didn't give him any orders about what to do next. Dammit ok let's just quickly.*

Kress put the little shovel into his pockets and carefully backed away from the sand he'd been carving, then around the bucket he didn't want to kick over before power walking over to Timmy. He didn't want to kick up any normal sand after all. If that got into the bucket or worse, on the sand castle he was carving? Kress would've been pissed. It did mean it took a bit longer then necessary to get to Timmy, but that was a fine trade off.

Kress had been correct in his guess. When he reached the edge of the ravine he saw Timmy just sitting there rolling forward and backward on the balls of his feet. "Right, Timmy, new order. Whenever you finish a previous order, or encounter a problem with a previous order, I want you to report to either Blue or I, whichever is closest," Timmy saluted in, hopefully, understanding.

Kress nodded and continued, "Good. Next order is I want you to step out of the square and set up an area with miniature copies of various trees. They only need to be basic shapes. Sticks with spheres on tops, ones that are cones of leaves with a bit of trunk at the bottom. Other simple designs are fine as well. I want you to do up one hundred of each you can think of, though no more than a thousand total. Do you understand?" Timmy gave Kress a salute and dashed off.

Right... let's hope that's going to work out well. Kress headed back over to the sandcastle foundation to return to work... and saw Timmy making rows of little trees right next to the piles of colourful sand. Kress nodded. *At least Timmy is setting up in a good area. Not sure if he'll have any good ideas for trees, but even if only the two I suggested turn out well, we can still use a few of the duds, and then ask for more of the ones Blue and I like.*

Kress breathed out a long sigh. After turning away from the sand castle of course. *Timmy is going to be finished with those trees pretty quickly by the glance I gave him. I give it ten minutes tops before I need to have another way for the little guy to spend time. Damn. I wish I could just assign Blue to thinking of ideas for Timmy or something. Let's hope that the housing bucket is done soon, then I can assign Timmy to that.*

[Chapter 1202 1202 Meeting The Objectives](#)

Kress Chapter

The Competitors: Kress, Borgick, Midnight, Stan, Ellenell *novelnext.com*

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

παΠδσNovel.com Kress took a few shaky steps backwards until his legs hit the bucket behind him. Kress froze in place for a few seconds before letting out a long breath of air into his shoulder. A few careful steps later and he was taking in the entire castle. It was still missing some details. He hadn't put in the trees yet, the brickwork lines needed to be done, probably with Timmy's help. There was a spot for a pond that he planned to fill up with blue sand... but it was done.

Kress admired the castle. It had a large central tower set slightly towards the back and four smaller ones set around it. They weren't quite on the corners, they were all slightly offset as well and it gave the whole castle a slightly unique feel that Kress found himself loving. The base of the castle was boxy with windows lovingly carved into the sides and two large doors on the front.

The gardens off to the left were rather nice, as was his small guard barracks on the right. They were last minute editions and arguably not quite up to the standards he'd set for the castle itself but he was happier to have them there than not. Timmy had just recently finished up the trees. The little guy hadn't done anything fancy. Just the ones Kress himself had suggested, as well as two others. One had a square top instead of a circular one, and the other was... well it was basically a hedge segment.

Kress thought that was a bit of a poor showing from the little guy, but was willing to accept those trees as they were. In fact, Kress had asked Timmy to double the number of trees for each type to keep him busy while Kress finished up the castle... and then asked Timmy to gather more sand.

It took Kress a bit over an hour to finish up the castle, so they were somewhat past the hour and a half mark overall. Kress wasn't entirely happy with the amount of time it'd taken so far, but he wasn't going to complain too much. They still had plenty of time to fill in the townscape, perhaps more than they really needed. Kress moved over to Timmy and explained his instructions. "Ok Timmy, I'm going to hold you near the castle I just made and I want you to quickly fill in the brick patterns to match how I've started it already. Is that ok?"

Timmy gave Kress a salute, and the pair got to work. As they did that, Kress thought about Blue's progress with the houses. They turned out to be a bigger issue then the pair had originally thought. Blue had 'perfected' the design, and then gone to Thyme for a copy... and it all fell apart rather quickly. They hadn't considered how the hinge would move properly. The plan was for it to fan out sideways but that messed with the house too much as the hinge messed with the bottom wall.

So Blue went back to the drawing board. Hinge on top. It was a lot better... but not perfect. The problem with the hinge on top is that it left the point of the house really awkward looking from the bits of sand that managed to partially make it through the gap in the plastic. It also made packing sand in a bit of a pain because if you put in too much it'd start to seriously leak into the hinges.

So Blue asked Thyme to do away with the hinges entirely... and Thyme's response was to hold up two fingers. It took longer than Blue would ever admit to figure out that Thyme was trying to insist that meant it was actually two buckets not one. Blue, not knowing if that was acceptable and not wanting to bother Kress about it... went back to the drawing board AGAIN to try and figure something out. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

In the end, Blue came up with a rather complicated design that worked... in her mind at least. It had a bunch of overlapping pieces around the top that, in an ideal world, would've removed the problem the hinges had. When she finally got Thyme to test it? It did not. In the end she asked for a long shovel that matched the curve for the top of the house, then a bucket with a hinge on top that matched the house she'd mocked up perfectly, windows and brick markings included.

When it finally worked, Blue started giggling... and giggling, and giggling until she was struggling to breathe... and then she just passed out. Kress stopped carving the castle for a bit to move her away from the ocean so she wasn't at risk of being washed away or drowning and then got back to work. Clearly dealing with the houses was a lot more work then he'd intended to give Blue. Still, she'd done a good job and he was thankful for that.

Back at the castle, it took a surprisingly short time for the pair to finish up. Timmy moved swiftly, and efficiently. Kress was almost 'painting' on the correct brick indents just by moving Timmy around. Kress felt like he could just wave Timmy in a direction and have it brick patterned, but he refrained. No sense rushing things and causing a problem. Still didn't take long for 'everything' to be done.

Once it was, Kress made his way over to Thyme and asked for the dimensions he needed on the walls. Thyme was happy to help. Kress' design was a basic wall with a tower at one end. He didn't trust himself to flip it, but that was what Timmy was hanging around for. So new bucket in hand, technically Timmy's bucket, he went back and did the walls in no time flat. Timmy's help, the saved sand mix, and the wonderful new bucket of times, and it was done in less then five minutes.

In the time Timmy was putting up the walls, Kress had placed down the trees and used Timmy's shovel to transport the blue sand for the pond. Then it was all done. The castle. The walls, the scenery. It was ALL DONE.

"Hahahaha," laughed Kress aloud as a tear formed in his eye. Just the one though, and he suppressed his laughter quickly as well. Wouldn't want to pass out like Blue. She'd clearly worked too hard today and he hadn't properly accounted for that. *Still. She got the houses done so I can assign Timmy to making those. I'll need to mark out where I want the streets and stuff to go first, then get Timmy to throw up little housing areas around them with different colours while I work on carving out the houses in the ravines or something.*

Kress scratched at his chin as he thought, but not wanting to waste time with Timmy gave the little guy an order. "Timmy, I'd like you to make one house using the bucket Blue made, out of every sand colour. Place those houses in front of the sand piles. Then, I want you to make a mix of two colours either side in the middle of those houses. This is just to test them out for viability, they'll probably be destroyed later so you can be a bit rough with them if necessary,"

Timmy saluted, as Kress knew the little guy would. Such a reliable little guy. Wish I could take him on adventures more often. *Ok. That's given Timmy something to do, even if it's really just killing time. I'm not sure how I want to do this honestly... the town and the ravine. It really needs one person working on each with Timmy helping the person doing the town but Blue's out of commission... possibly till the end of the event.

Do I wake her up? It's a bit rude and we're not going to be short on time. So I don't feel the NEED to wake her up, even if I do feel the WANT. She deserves some rest, especially after she helped Gareth tie for second in that volleyball tournament. I certainly don't want her to feel like I'm forcing her to do more work than she's capable of. Even if the bucket solution isn't perfect, it's nearly perfect and she spent way too much mental energy getting it there.

Still... there's potentially a lot of time for her to be sleeping through. I don't want to lose because my partner slept for over half the time. Then again, the judges aren't here and Thyme has been insisting they aren't a judge this round. Unless they report back to the judges about how well we worked together. That would be a massive pain in the ass.

Hmm... I could get Timmy to make a fancy bed out of sand perhaps? Put her on that and make her part of the exhibit? A bit mean... but very amusing. Hmm... I'll need to give that idea some serious consideration.*

[Chapter 1203 1203 What The Other Teams Are Up To](#)

A chapter for everyone but Kress and Blue that are listed below

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

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

--- Borgick & Marigold ---

"Soooo... like, what's the plan here?" asked Marigold, putting on an accent to make it seem as if her intelligence had dropped several levels. She'd dropped into a blank stare while chewing on some of her hair just to get the point across.

"How the heck should I know you daft elf? Just because I'm a dwarf doesn't mean I've got experience building stuff. Besides, sand is basically a waste product! I don't ask you if you know how to grow trees using sawdust!" insisted Borgick.

Marigold's gaze turned sharp as she glared at Borgick with some heat, "I DO in fact know how to grow trees using sawdust. It's not the best material for most of them, but for a few? It works wonders. Now, perhaps that was just a bad example, but don't you practically grow up surrounded by stone? Surely you know more than me?" insisted Marigold.

"Look lass," said Borgick with a sigh. "I was never one for stonemason classes. I barely listened when they showed us how to mine and carve out the walls. I always had a knack for the blacksmithing side of things. How do you think I maintain my cannon? Certainly don't have anyone else for it. The fact I can keep it working without a forge and through a large amount of nonsense on adventures? That's a talent most don't have. So of course, now? I my talents don't lay in SAND!"

"Look Borgick, I'm not trying to make you mad here, but you're the one in charge. I'm happy to help. I don't care about getting dirty, or doing embarrassing things. Heck, if you turn me into part of the sculpture I'll be having the time of my life. Especially if it's a heavy load I'm holding. That being said? I have negative artistic talent and I've never built a sandcastle in my life. Well... that might be a lie, but I've certainly not built any in the last decade," said Marigold.

"Then why on Earth did you volunteer lass?" asked Borgick with a sigh.

"Oh that's easy. Midnight is out on account of already being in the contest, Vanya would've tried to take over the project after you annoyed her, Burnice would've turned you down if you'd asked her. She's nice enough but if sand gets in her burns..." Marigold winced, "Yeah she's not into pain like I am so... not her scene. As for Mauve? Honestly, she might've been a decent choice, but I decided I wanted to help so I jumped the gun on her,"

Borgick just groaned into his hands. He didn't know anything about sandcastle. He didn't know anything about fancy designs. He knew how to make cannons dammit!

Borgick paused. "Huh... Marigold? I have an idea that's just crazy enough to work..."

--- Midnight & Carl ---

"So... got any ideas?" asked Midnight.

"We could build a big sandcastle?" offered Carl.

"Yeah but... CAN we build a big sandcastle?" returned Midnight.

Carl pondered for a bit. "Well it's not like we'll know if we can or not if we don't try," answered Carl.

Midnight tapped his foot on the sand a few times as if the ground would suddenly open up and reveal its secrets. When no such secrets were revealed Midnight sighed. "I can't help but feel I was perhaps, not the best choice for this round. Sure it was a mystery, so we didn't KNOW I was a bad choice... but I'm not

exactly much of an artist, and my magic leans more towards darkness magic. Sometimes I think I have illusion affinity as well... but other times I just don't seem to get it. Still, that might just be my lack of artistic talent,"

παΠδαςNovel.com Carl shrugged and said, "Look man, you can't know if you'll be good at something till you try. If we fail... well there's always the other games. Your team is doing pretty well today. Sure it was a bunch of second places... but that's still pretty good. So if this fall through? I don't think they'll be upset,"

Midnight rolled his eyes, "I doubt anyone of them would complain. Burnice is here more for the experience than the prize. Marigold is here more for the experience as well, even if people would tell you she's here to show off for the elves. I'm here because I want a magic teacher and... I don't really know what Mauve's deal is..." said Midnight with a sigh.

Carl didn't ask about the fact Vanya's name wasn't on the list. Her reasoning seemed pretty obvious and he felt it best not to bring it up. "So... we try to build a castle then?" asked Carl. I think you should take a look at παΠδαςnovel.com

Midnight sighed, "Yes, I suppose we do,"

--- Stan & Gareth ---

"Would winning here be more likely to impress Kress or is he competitive? Should I just throw the round somehow? Not that I think I'm going to win if I try. This isn't really my area of expertise," rambled Stan.

Gareth just stared at Stan for a few seconds. "Is... is that why you wanted me on your team?"

"Yeah? Of course it is?" said Stan trying not to sound like he was talking to an idiot. "Sure the earth magic you use is an amazing excuse, but I've got barely any skin in this race. If I could trade a win or two for a date with Kress? Well... hook me up brother!"

Gareth just rubbed his temples as he tried to work out what the best thing to do here was. Frankly? He had no idea how to deal with this. It's not like he'd talked to Kress about his best friend's love life recently. Gareth kept rubbing his temples, the headache he could feel building didn't seem to want to go away. Was he supposed to play wingman? Help Kress get together with someone that was clearly interested in him? Was he supposed to defend his friend's virtue? "Dammit I should've talked to Kress about this nonsense," mumbled Gareth under his breath.

Stan pretended not to hear so he could ask again, "So... what do you think I should be doing?"

Gareth let out a long sigh and decided to err on the side of letting Stan do what he wanted. If Kress was mad about it later? To bad, his friend deserved a chance at love. Who was he to say Stan wasn't that guy? Gareth wasn't exactly optimistic, but he wasn't going to be roadblock. "If you'd asked me a few weeks ago, heck even just a few days ago... I'd be telling you to let Kress win somehow. That he'd be happier to show off... now though?

"I think he'd enjoy the competition. He seems to have picked up an affinity for sandcastles recently. Not that he'd never gotten into the hobby before... it's something that comes and goes I think, but he's really developed a fondness for them this time around. I think trying properly and failing will be much more

impactful then throwing completely. If you win? Then you can use that as an excuse to hone your technique together. Can probably still do that if you lose,"

Stan's smile widened. "Thanks Gareth. I'll take the advice... but how exactly does one build a sandcastle? Besides the obvious?"

Gareth's face dropped. Suddenly, this seemed like a much harder task than it had been just a few moments ago.

--- Ellenell & Burgandy ---

"How much of your magic do you think will be allowed in our structures?" asked Ellenell.

Burgandy gave a shrug and said, "How should I know? It's probably something we should've clarified with Thyme. I mean... it could be anything from 'it just needs to look like a sandcastle' to 'if you strengthen the sand too far you're out'. Then again... Thyme ISN'T a judge so perhaps even they don't know where the line would be drawn. Perhaps it'd be ALLOWED but not necessarily... good for our final point total,"

Ellenell nodded slowly in understanding. "Right... I suppose I can understand that. We'll need to consider just what we're building and how much we want to lean on your stone. I think we might as well try. It'll give us a unique edge over the competition. If it fails? Then we have still tried,"

"Hey, Gareth's on Stan's team. I might not be totally unique..." offered Burgandy.

Ellenell waved Burgandy's concerns away. "Stan's greatest interest is getting into Kress' pants for some reason. I'm not sure how much we even need to worry about that team. I doubt they'll be making major use of Gareth's powers, so much as Stan will be trying to wring out as much information as they can from Gareth's brain,"

"Right... so what were you thinking of making?" asked Burgandy.

Ellenell sighed, "Well... it might seem cliché but part of me really wants to make a large treehouse. Perhaps a few interconnected ones. Using your earth as a base, we can pack on wet sand to the sides and make it seem like a more impressive structure than it is. I'm not sure how large we should go... or if it's a good idea. If you're willing though?"

Burgandy nodded slowly, "I think it's a risk... but I'm willing to try. It is very cliché though. Are you trying to play into the elf stereotype for some reason?" agreed Burgandy.

"Ah excellent, glad you're onboard," said Ellenell with a smile. "As for if I'm leaning into things? Not so much... but it IS a stereotype for a reason,"

[Chapter 1204 1204 What The Other Teams Are Up To An Hour Later](#)

Another chapter for everyone but Kress and Blue that are listed below (As said above, it's about an hour into the round)

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

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

--- Borgick & Marigold ---

"You know that idea that's 'just crazy enough to work'? Well Borgick, I'm pretty sure it hasn't worked," said Marigold. She was standing next to a big pile of somewhat wet sand. Her hands and legs were covered in sand that had gotten stuck and she had a frown on her face.

Borgick sighed. She was right. In front of them the sand pile looked nothing like a cannon. In his mind, Timmy was good for collecting sand, but it didn't seem to be helping. "This... might be more difficult than I'd initially thought yes. I'm still somewhat committed to the idea... I just KNOW cannons. I can't see myself doing better with anything else... but we're not doing so well are we?"

Marigold shrugged and said, "Look, I'm as happy to keep going with this as I am to switching to something completely different. I'm just not sure this is going to work. Even if we manage to get the base looking like a proper base, can we keep the cannon looking like a cannon? Or would the roof of it collapse under its own weight? I suppose I could try really compressing some of the sand into something closer to sandstone... but that's not going to be a fast process,"

Borgick shook his head slowly as he looked over the pile of sand. "I think what's really holding us back is the water ratio. I think we've been a bit light on the water. If we just mix in a bit more, maybe pack the sand a bit tighter then we can really make a start," explained Borgick.

"If we pack the sand too tight we won't be able to mould it into shape. Same if you're trying to make sandstone. You'll need to make sure you pack it into a curved shape so that we can use it for the top. Urgh... I'm not really happy with this... look Marigold, you got any other ideas? We've already wasted an hour and while I really WANT to do a cannon... but I can see it might not be working out," continued Borgick.

Marigold just shrugged and said, "I'm happy to stick with the cannon idea if we can figure out how to get it working,"

--- Midnight & Carl ---

Midnight and Carl both stared down at their completed sandcastle. They'd managed to squeeze in a number of sand buckets all together to make a base, then filled in the gaps before adding extra buckets worth of sand at the corners, with two in the middle. It only went up to about armpit height, and sure they hadn't gotten to the detailed work yet... but it could certainly come out very nicely. That being said... it wasn't a BIG sandcastle. Not at all.

"I feel like we've failed with this attempt," said Midnight bluntly.

"I have to agree with you somewhat," conceded Carl. "It's not BAD necessarily, and I'm sure we could add a lot of life to it... but it IS rather tiny compared to what we were planning to do with it... and the fact of the matter is that we've nearly finished it and we're only an hour in. I think we've got to start from scratch and somehow make the castle a LOT bigger or... do something else? Maybe just add things around it or something?"

Midnight sighed. "I'm really not sure what to do about it. I know Thyme can give us larger buckets but I don't exactly know enough about this sort of thing to know HOW we go about making it larger. I'm not sure just increasing the size of the buckets will work out for us," said Midnight.

"I mean... couldn't we ask for a big wide bucket for the base?" asked Carl.

"Yes... but I'm not sure we could spin it over quickly enough to stop the sand going flying," answered Midnight.

"What if... we like get a big shovel as well. A big flat one that one of us can hold to keep all the sand inside?" offered Carl.

Midnight was nodding rapidly as he spoke, "Yes... yes that would be perfect. We can make use of much larger buckets with that technique. Good idea there Carl. What... what should we do with this little castle though?"

Carl rubbed his chin as he looked at the castle. He stared at it for a few minutes before an idea came to him. "it seems like a waste to just destroy it... so what if we make it part of the overall... 'sculpture' I guess is the word? We make a smaller castle like half the size, then we make a bigger one double the size, and if we have time make one double the size of that? Or maybe just like fifty percent larger, if that gets a bit much for the final castle,"

Midnight grinned and said, "Yes, yes I'm rather liking that idea. We'll have to add a few details to this one, but that shouldn't take long. Should we do that before or after building the other castle," Carl shrugged. Still, they had a plan.

--- Stan & Gareth ---

Stan and Gareth were looking at their first attempt at a sandcastle and... were not very happy with it. Not at all. One side of it had collapsed. The front 'door' looked more like someone had dragged a finger through the sand at the front, and the main tower was more of a cone really.

παΠδαςNovel.com "I'm proud of our efforts," said Stan firmly. I think you should take a look at παΠδαςnovel.com

Gareth... couldn't actually find it in him to disagree. The castle was rather ugly, and it was clearly falling apart but they'd TRIED dammit, and looking at it now? It was rather satisfying all told. "Indeed. I'm... surprised at how fun this was. I might need to look into building the odd thing with Kress when he goes to play with some sand,"

Stan nodded, "Well as long as it's not EVERY time Kress goes out. I'll need to sneak in a few dates here and there as well,"

Gareth, having already accepted Stan's way of thinking, and hoped for his success nodded and said, "Of course. I wouldn't want to get in the way of a date or something close to it. Still, perhaps I can talk Green around as well and we can make a double-date out of it. That would surely be less awkward then three of us,"

"Yes, that does sound like a fun idea," said Kress with a smile. A smile that quickly fell off his face. "Still... as proud as I am of our dinky little sandcastle... I can't say that it feels like a winner to me. Blasphemous perhaps, but as precious to my heart as it is, this sandcastle isn't winning any awards,"

Gareth sighed but nodded. He agreed with Kress completely. It was a sad but true statement. "Should we lean away from sandcastles then? Perhaps make a giant fish? Pack all the sand down, draw on the scales and hope that we've got enough details on it to make it pop?"

Stan pondered the question, "Hmm... I'm not saying no... but I'm not really sure our design skills are up to something like that," answered Stan.

"I'm not sure our sandcastle skills are up to making anything better," retorted Gareth with a slight chuckle to show he meant no harm with it.

"Yes... if only we could make better use of Timmy. Perhaps he can help us somehow? What is he doing anyway?" asked Stan.

"We told him to gather sand... though I'm not sure we ever told him where from or how much. So where is he getting it from and where is he putting it?" asked Gareth.

Stan and Gareth looked around confused. There was no sign of Timmy. "I... I feel as though we may have made a mistake," said Stan.

"Yes... I'm getting that feeling as well. I... do we call him back?" asked Gareth.

"I mean... we have to right?" asked Stan somewhat worriedly.

"I mean... Timmy is just part of Thyme right? So it's not like he's at risk of dying?" offered Gareth.

Stan nodded, then got an idea and said, "So... if he's a part of Thyme he should still here us when I do this right? TIMMY TIME TO COME BACK WITH THE SAND YOU'VE COLLECTED!"

Suddenly there was a rumbling, and then a mountain of sand was deposited on top of Stan and Gareth. It was actually dumped further back so that they could still breathe... but they were covered up to their chins in sand now. It was all over the place, and the only reason it was staying in the box HAD to be magic. "Well shit," said Stan.

--- Ellenell & Burgandy ---

Unlike the other teams, who were struggling for one reason or another. Some with ideas close to success... others... not so much. Ellenell and Burgandy were looking at their prototype tree with smiles. It was smaller than they planned for the final version, but this was just a test. It was working well. The tree itself ended up being porous so that the water in the sand could sink and make it 'cling' to the tree better. The first prototype didn't really keep the sand on it as well as they'd liked. The branches were a bit questionable as well, but Ellenell and Burgandy agreed that it'd work better scaled up.

"I feel like we're getting a bit behind," mumbled Ellenell. "This prototype was necessary but I can't shake the feeling that we're not making great time," *nOVELnext.com*

Burgandy was about to respond when a giant pile of sand just seem to appear in the area next to them. "You know Ellenell? Something tells me we're not actually doing that bad," Burgandy said with a completely gobsmacked look on her face.

Ellenell, confused, turned around and got just about the same look. "Oh... dear me. Well... I... I don't even know what to say to THAT. I guess... are they do some sort of insect nest? A warren perhaps?"

Burgandy shrugged and said, "No idea, but I'm guessing that was a poorly worded order to a Timmy,"

Ellenell looked down to the ocean at their own Timmy who was packing the sand well for them. But little else. "Perhaps..." mumbled Ellenell.

[Chapter 1205 1205 The Return Of Kress And Blue!](#)

Kress Chapter

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

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

Blue might not have remained asleep long, but while she was Timmy and Kress got to work. Timmy was given the following order "Timmy, I want you to follow me as I work. When I say 'Houses' followed by a colour or asking for a mix of two, I want you to start putting down house buckets and fixing them up where I'm pointing. In addition, I want you to draw out a road matching the one next to use right now. The road should follow the lines that I'm drawing. I do not need you to use any of the coloured sand for the rodes. Does that make sense?"

Timmy gave Kress a salute and seemed to vibrate in place. *Right. That's all set up then. I can get started. I'll try not to put too many things close together, not even the roads. I still need to walk around after all. That being said? I think we can start to close off some areas if needed. I'll still need to work on whatever 'major' buildings we choose to do, but it shouldn't be too hard if I leave space. If I muck it up though? Hopefully Timmy can fix my mistakes.*

With that Timmy and Kress got started on their work. Kress started with the area around the castle. Not particularly close to it of course. There was still a wide ring around the castle itself that could be built upon later, or even just used for foot traffic. Still, it seemed like a good starting point for them.

Kress marked out the made road, and almost wished they'd made a template for 'generic shop' but frankly? That was just making things overly complicated at this point. The houses would be good enough stand-ins for generic buildings and they looked quite nice after all the effort Blue went to. The road Kress was marking out took practically no time at all for Timmy to carve out.

"Line of houses on either side please," said Kress. Timmy saluted and got to work. While Timmy was doing that, Kress started to branch the road out, making sure to still keep enough rooms around the houses to step around them if necessary. The first thing Kress did was a residential district. He made sure the road was slightly less then perfect, as if it needed to be fixed and righted a few times because of the houses, while curling in on itself.

Once that was done, Kress got started on where he was imagining the library would go. He had an idea how to build something that screamed 'library' out of sand and was prepping for the future. He still

made a little area for houses around it though. Once that was done, Timmy had caught up with all the roads, so Kress walked back over and motioned at the residential area. "I want you to pack as many houses in here as you can while adding a line of green sand between the road and the house, and a tree for everyone on. Mix colours with the neighbours every fourth or fifth house, and use those to transition the colours. Make sense?"

Timmy of course saluted and got to work. Kress smiled at the little guy working as three houses went up in quick succession. That's also when he realised he could hear crunching on the sand behind him. Turning around he saw Blue wobbling over towards him. "Um... hey Blue... are you... alright?" said Kress trying not to be awkward, and failing.

"Sorry..." mumbled Blue as she got closer. "I really don't know what came over me. I mean, it was a bit of effort to succeed but I didn't realise I was so tired. I guess I was just wound up a bit tightly. After all the spell casting during the volleyball, then having Gareth and Green... enthusiastically offer a massage I apparently agreed to over lunch then this... I guess the stress just got to me."

"Do you want to rest a bit more?" offered Kress. It wasn't something he wanted to offer necessarily, but they were making good time so far and Kress wasn't going to force the issue if it was going to cause problems.

Blue shook her head... but couldn't help it when a yawn escaped her mouth in the process. When it finally ended Blue's shoulders slumped forward in resignation. "Look, I don't want to be a dead weight on this team. I'm happy to force myself to stay awake... but yeah it seems like everything is catching up to me and I'm not necessarily handling it well. I can sleep when this is all over... but we've still got... how long do we have actually?"

"About two hours still," said Kress.

"Right that's better than I feared," stated Blue. I think you should take a look at pantheonnovel.com

"Look Blue," said Kress trying to work out how to put this delicately for a few seconds before a lightbulb went off in his head. He turned around and waved his arms at what he and Timmy had been working on. "No seriously LOOK Blue. This is what we've managed because of your help. Look at all the houses going up. They add a lot of character to this area. I'm going to put in a lake, and a park or two. I've got plans for the library, and you're free to add any building you think you can. But you don't NEED to. You've done well so far, and you can take an hours break if you think it will help,"

Not that I want you to of course. There's still the entire ravine to draw up as well as planting the trees in the park, spreading some green sand over the ground to make it look like grass. Maybe add that in a few other random places as well. Maybe 'growing' from some of the cracks in the road? Something to think about I suppose. Anyway I guess I can just wait and see what she says.

"No, I doubt it'll do me any good," said Blue with a sigh. *I'm glad to hear it. Probably not the best for Blue's health, but that doesn't mean I'm not glad to hear it. Her help will allow us to get so much more done.* "Gareth and Green didn't bother me ALL lunch break and if that wasn't enough for me to recover? Then I think I'm going to need a proper night's sleep. I'll just tough it out and try not to fall over again,"

"Just be careful. If you fall asleep just before the end Timmy and I might have to turn you into part of the exhibit," joked Kress.

Blue laughed as well, "How would you even integrate me into the scene,"

Kress shrugged, "I guess it depends where you fell asleep? If it was just around town Timmy and I might make you a bed that just... is there for no reason. Or if you fall asleep in the trench I might see what I can do to imply that you falling down caused the trench or something. I don't know, it wasn't a proper plan. Though we did think of making you a bed of sand. Seemed like a bad idea after a bit of thought,"

Blue nodded and said, "Yeah probably. Not sure if I'd have woken up or not... but it doesn't sound particularly comfortable,"

pandasnovel.com "Well Timmy and I moved you away from the water, just in case. So I'm going to say chances are no," offered Kress.

"Huh," Blue turned back to look at where she'd been laying down but it was impossible to tell. There wasn't any Blue shaped divots in the sand, and even if there were it would've been hard to see from this angle. "I didn't notice. Or at least, I don't think I did," said Blue.

Blue shook her head. It wasn't important right now. The real question was, "What do you want me doing?"

"Well... what do you want to be doing? You can mark down some roads and housing sections instead of me, you can get started on the library if you want. It won't be hard to explain how I'm thinking of building it. You could start carving little house into the walls in the trench. That part might take a bit of practice, but if you fail at the start it's fine. Um... you could look over the trees? I don't know why you would, but we've got little trees now. You could be in charge of placing them or something?" Kress said with a shrug. There was a plethora of things Blue could be doing.

"Um... I do WANT to make my own fancy building... but I'm not sure I have a good design for it so I think I'll start with trying to carve out the walls of the cave then. Is that fine?" asked Blue.

Kress nodded and said, "Of course. Perhaps try and leave space for little carved walkways. Timmy can probably manage them,"

Blue saluted like she'd seen Timmy do a few times at this point. "Got it chief!"

[Chapter 1206 1206 Coming Up On The Final Stretch](#)

Kress Chapter

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

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

Three hours in and quite a few things had changed. The obvious one, for Kress and Blue at least, was when Thyme set up the lights. Large orbs of glowing yellow light outlined the boxes for everyone. Kress

had gotten curious after the additions of the lights and found that Thyme had also shut off visibility around the other team's bubbles. No longer could he see the progress they were making... not that Kress had really bothered before, but now when he looked over the square was all fuzzy, like looking through fogged glass.

The next thing that had happened was the 'ravine' had been abandoned by Blue. After numerous failures she'd decided that it wasn't worth expending her effort on. Kress wasn't entirely sure that was true, but he let her take over the 'urban planning' aspect of things. She was responsible for marking out the roads and housing sections for Timmy. They'd been at this a while now and most of the area was filled up with various things, with Blue working on the two largest parks during that time as well.

Stepping around the houses and other obstacles was getting a little difficult, but they HAD planned for this so it was certainly still possible. It required careful stepping and lifting their knees up so as not to accidentally knock anything over... but totally possible. The parks were a bit of an issue, but they had enough 'grassy areas' and a thick coating of green sand so stepping on it wasn't too big of an issue when it was necessary.

Both Kress and Blue were a little disappointed with the roads now they were this far in. The houses were a riot of colours, the parks really popped and the unique buildings Kress had made were also a wonderful sight... but the roads? They were just normal sand. Which was fine. It was too late to fix, and finding a good colour for them would be all but impossible at this point. That didn't mean they weren't still considering changing it. Perhaps if they had more time they would.

The first thing Kress had worked on, was of course the library. For that, he had Timmy put a few colours together... but didn't really mix them per say. The sand first in, that would later become the top, was a brownish orange made to look something like old leather. It wasn't spread evenly, but piled up a bit on the sides. Under that was a thin layering of white sand with a touch of yellow spread very sparsely throughout for the 'paper' layer. The rest was filled up with a mix of the previously listed colours, and a large portion of black sand. All appropriately wet and packed down of course. *nOveLnext.cOm*

Once it was flipped over Kress got to carving. He first carved out the 'book' on the top. He made sure to keep the colours correct and even managed to carve out a few lines of 'pages' so that the roof looked like one giant book. Then he got to work on the entrance. That was a little tough, but with a few sticks from Timmy inserted at the front, he was able to carve out a small entrance with an overhang. The sand pillars were in reality wooden sticks with sand stuck to the outside, but nobody needed to know that.

The really tricky part, was once that was done Kress made it look like the door was cracked open ever so slightly. It was a massive pain to carve and had to be redone twice. Luckily Kress was able to just move the door further back into the wall, but if he'd needed to restart a third or fourth time, things would've been much harder, and likely would have required Kress to add sand back onto the structure. Luckily, that didn't happen so Kress was able to move onto the carving little windows and adding small trees around the edges of the walls. I think you should take a look at *παΠdαsnovel.com*

The next building Kress was planning to build was a sort of 'mayor's house' but Blue quite rightly pointed out that they had a CASTLE for the town already. They didn't need a mayor's house at all. So with that scratched off the edge Kress instead made a coliseum. This was mostly because it was easily identified,

and easy to make. Kress just designed a bucket that was shaped correctly and then had Timmy tip it over. They did add in quite bits of more colourful sand to help separate it from the library though.

Kress then took the current design and altered it a bit to get an amphitheatre instead. It wasn't hard. Kress just took off around half of the stands, and then designed a stage for everyone. There was some internal debate regarding if it was worth digging down into the ground so that there was a roof to back the stage, but Kress didn't bother in the end. Just making it a straight wall and carving some flowers on the back. Unoriginal? Perhaps but they'd done a whole lot of work on this sand city and he wasn't going to spend more time then necessary on what was a simple way of adding unique buildings.

Kress worked on the local prison after that. He was, admittedly, struggling a bit with ideas. There were simply too many buildings that were vaguely building shaped even if they were important. The only other thing he could think of at the time was doing a post office with a letter as the roof, but he'd already used that trick with the library and didn't want to repeat it so prison it was.

He picked up some wooden wire from Timmy and used it to make a prison yard. Then he used a bucket, altered once again after a visit to Thyme that gave him what was essentially a square donut. Things stalled out a bit there until Kress asked for some thin sticks. Once that was done he carefully carved out little hollows with beds in them and then added sticks to the front, both for support and to look like prison bars. The windows were perhaps, being a little cheeky but he managed those as well.

Once that was done, Kress took a bit of a break from crafting unique buildings to work on the cavern. He wanted it make his carven house perfect so that Timmy could just copy it over. He quickly realised why Blue had so much trouble. The problem was that the sand just wasn't all that compact compared to the stuff they'd been working with. Timmy had spoiled them a bit there. Kress debated for a while concerning exactly what to do with the ravine for a bit... but the answer was easy. Dig it deeper.

Timmy took a break from housing placements at this time, and Blue got to work on another park, with one was going to have a water fountain in the centre instead of a lake. Kress made sure to ask Timmy to leave 'cracks' that looked suspiciously like stairs allowing for a full sized person to climb out when the little guy was digging deeper. Kress got to work alongside Timmy, using the more compact sand as his canvas and managing fairly well. It was still a bit awkward, the sand still not as compact wet properly, but he'd just have to deal with that.

Eventually, Kress got the hang of it. He made a little carven by using a really small shovel and hollowing out the inside. Kress left in enough sand for a 'bed' and a table, even if the table was just a box. Chairs were too much of a risk once he got the hollow done so he didn't even bother. A little counter finished off the house then Kress got to work on the outside. Carving a little walkway for people to come and go.

Kress let out a long sigh when he looked at it. *It's nice. I've got a lot of little details that really add to the house and make it seem real... but you've got to get right up next to it to see any of them. Dammit. There was a reason the houses we made for the main town were all just solid sand. Too much effort for basically no gain. The outside of the house isn't even that fancy despite my efforts.*

Kress let out another long sigh. *Well... it's been three hours. We've got one hour left... but damn am I feeling it. I shouldn't be this tired but mentally? It's wearing on me as well. Getting all the little details in everything right is costing me. Hopefully we can tidy everything up before the deadline. I'll just need to

get Timmy to copy this and do perhaps one more unique building. I'd go for a circus tent if we didn't have the amphitheatre and coliseum already. I'll have to think about it.*

Occasionally missing content, please report errors in time.

[Chapter 1207 1207 EVERYONE IS HERE!](#)

EVERYONE CHAPTER (Well all the people listed below)

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

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

--- Kress & Blue ---

Kress collapsed backwards into the sand exhausted. Blue was about to faceplant into the pile of sand but Kress quickly hurled himself to his feet and stopped her. "What? I'm tired same as you? Can't I rest on the comfy looking sand piles? Sure we had to send Timmy out for more a few times but we're done right?" Blue snarled.

"Blue... you were about to fall face first into a pile of sand. A pile of very fine sand. You ALSO need to breathe. Can you see how these two things conflict with each other," said Kress.

Blue's eyes widened in horror as she realised the fate Kress had just saved her from. She rolled out of his grip and landed back down on the sand. It wasn't all that comfortable but god she was tired. "Sorry about that... and thanks. I'm just... god I'm so tired. I can't believe we got it all done," groaned Blue.

"Heh, we had to do a few of the houses ourselves so Timmy could finish off the roads and the trench but it was worth the effort. Even if we had to do some careful running back to get more sand mixes. Still, I can live with that," said Kress.

"Urgh, I'm so unbelievably glad I'll be forced to take tomorrow off. I need a fucking break," grumbled Blue.

"Sorry for asking you to join in. I didn't realise you were that tired," offered Kress.

Blue waved him off... but she was too tired to actually raise her hand so it was somewhat awkwardly swished through the sand instead as she said, "Don't worry about it Kress. I could've said no, and this was a lot of fun. Exhausting as all heck, but fun. I didn't realise sand could be so sturdy if it was packed tightly enough. I just hope those last few houses we rushed a bit to get done will survive the judging,"

"Well technically we still have like... a minute left," pointed out Kress.

"Nope, I am sleep. Do not bother me with that," said Blue jokingly.

--- Borgick & Marigold ---

After much trial and error, and way too much effort on their part, Borgick and Marigold had managed it. A CANNON. The first real breakthrough was asking Timmy to make some large but bendy sticks. This let them build a wireframe for the cannon. Then, Marigold and Borgick worked together to really pack the

sand down into slightly curved sections that were literally hammered into shape. Sure they had to use something that was technically a shovel or a bucket...

But they got around that by asking for a bucket, shaped like a hammer, and then asking for a shovel that perfectly fit the hole in the hammer. Then they had... well a hammer full of sand. It needed to be packed down as well and it was a little awkward to use but they managed it.

While they were hammering everything into place, they sent Timmy out to go get some grey sand. The plan was to force that into a spherical shape and pile it up next to the cannon as fake cannonballs for the display. They also added in more wood as the base of the cannon and made it seem more realistic. Well, other than the sand, but hey it did have to be a sandcastle after all. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

pandasnovel.com Borgick and Marigold were under no delusion that this was a winning play. Not after four hours of working on it. Heck, they'd worked out it probably wasn't a winning play after two. Despite that? Despite all the troubles? They'd agreed it was worth it. Marigold agreed because she didn't have any better ideas, especially not two hours in. On the others hand, Borgick stuck with it because of passion. He was hoping that his clear love and passion for this project would help shine through.

--- Midnight & Carl ---

After the first hour Midnight and Carl had immediately gotten to work making a larger sandcastle. They could see that Marigold and Borgick were making a cannon, and that Gareth and Stan were... dealing with issues of excessive amounts of sand. At least before Thyme hid all the progress. This spurred them on further. With seemingly no competition for the castle idea they were marching ahead.

They'd split their duties. Carl and Timmy worked together making the new, castles, while Midnight focused on adding in the little details. Carl, sadly, never realised that Timmy was completely capable of flipping the buckets by himself without the shovel trick, but what system they did have WAS working so really it was fine. Timmy and Carl would both hold the shovel against the bucket while grasping at the sides. Timmy even had an extra long handle on his side to help out. Then they'd flip it together.

Now, unlike Kress and Blue there were a few... mishaps in the construction process. They ended with four castles. Two larger then the original, and one smaller. The largest one being... only a touch larger then the previous size. The main reason for this was that Carl and Midnight simply didn't have the experience working with sand that Kress did and that led to a few... mishaps.

Midnight, luckily was spared from them. Unluckily, this was because he saw Carl's failures and resorted to carving things very slowly. This meant the smallest castle had almost no details, and the largest one was somewhat lacking compared to the other two as well. This was mostly a result of a few collapses during construction. Carl and Timmy managed to work together to put things back together... mostly, but the repairs did look a bit wonky in places. Perhaps if they had more time or experience it wouldn't have happened. But really how noticeable was it?

--- Stan & Gareth ---

For Stan and Gareth the first thing they had to do was obviously remove all the excess sand, but then they had an idea. What if they just rolled with it? So instead of building a castle they decided to build a sunken temple. The first part was digging out a hole in the centre that would allow them space to build.

It went... alright. Really they should've just asked Timmy to help earlier. Once that was done things went swiftly... until the ground to a halt again. Building a temple was hard as it turned out. They also didn't take the time to mix any water in either, so they were building a temple with dry sand that they'd compacted.

Still, they did EVENTUALLY work it out. Once they did, they had Timmy perform several jobs, such as mixing in some water for a better foundation. Compacting the sand, and digging it out in a few other places. Once that was done, they got to work properly making the temple. It was very... triangular, but with a lot of effort... by Timmy... they were able to get the inside carved out with little pews and everything. *noveLNext.cOm*

Of course the fact that sand flowed down over the temple and covered part of the entrance wasn't great. Especially not when the only reason it happened was because they were trying to get out of the hole they'd dug themselves into. Aw well, they'd do better next time. Perhaps stairs?

--- Ellenell & Burgandy ---

Ellenell and Burgandy sat down. There was still fifteen minutes left on the timer, but they were content. Once they accepted the use of extra non-sand materials? Things went wonderfully. They'd built one main tree, and then connected it to four other smaller trees. The main trunk and the limbs were all made out of stone, with divots in them. That took up most of Burgandy's time and effort. While she was doing that, Ellenell was slathering on sand, some darker brownish sand that Timmy found, and then carving it up to make it look more like real wood. Timmy, on the other hand, was dealing with the other non-sand bits. Timmy added the real leaves and built out the bridges that went from tree to tree.

The houses were a bit of a pain, and had involved all three team members working together to get them right. Ellenell thought they could've perhaps done more... but Burgandy had really struggled to get the full-sized trees done in time. The level of fine control of her mana was simply beyond what she could normally. She wasn't a mage, and it was only with a lot of patience and even more shortcuts that they'd managed it.

When all was said and done though? Ellenell and Burgandy could look at the trees with pride. Perhaps they could touch up one or two things, but if they did? Well that ran the risk of ruining something, and with only fifteen minutes left on the clock it just wasn't worth the risk. "So, how do you think we'll do in the final rankings?" asked Ellenell.

"It really depends," said Burgandy, thinking on it for a moment. "We can't know for sure what the judges are going to be looking for... and with Kress around we might be in for some tough competition. I mean, he was definitely prepared for this... BUT that doesn't mean he's GOOD at building sandcastles, just that he'd correctly guessed we would be,"

"I suppose we'll just have to see," mused Ellenell.

[Chapter 1208 1208 TIME Said Thyme While Munching On Thyme.](#)

Kress chapter

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

"TIME" the word boomed across the field, and as Thyme spoke all the competitors, and the rest of their groups, were all teleported to a platform Thyme had set up in the sky. With magic, it was easy to keep the temperature normalised and stop the wind from blowing in, and Thyme did as much easily.

The people who had teleported in were separated into three, arguably four groups if you counted Thyme as a group in and of themselves. Kress was in a group with all the people that had just completed their sandcastles. To his surprise, they all still had their Timmy's with them. Kress wasn't really sure what to make of it. The Timmys all seemed to pick up some defining attire from everyone else.

The Timmy that worked with Kress and Blue now had boardshorts matching Kress' own, and vibrant blue hair cascading down his back that matched Blue's in tone. There was a bucket on Timmy's head again, but it was one of their house buckets now, if slightly malformed to work better as a hat. Of course, Kress' team wasn't the only Timmy that looked different.

Stan and Gareth's Timmy looked to be wearing... priest robes made out of sand? Kress didn't know what to make of that. The Timmy with Burgandy and Ellenell didn't have anything on at all. He just looked like a small dryad. Which of course, was a bit weird in and of itself. The fact that their Timmy's skin was now sand coloured only added to the strange vibes Kress got when looking at that Timmy.

Carl and Midnight's Timmy had a hat that looked like a smaller Timmy holding up a shovel victoriously... but on the smaller hat Timmy was another hat... that was an even smaller hat Timmy. It went on like that, perhaps infinitely, perhaps just a few more stages until Kress' eyes weren't good enough to follow it anymore. *I'm a little worried about that team now. What the heck did they manage to build that would give their Timmy a hat like that?*

I guess the priest robes could be something of a worry as well, but I don't expect Gareth and Stan would've made an all that impressive temple. I do want to know why it's sand coloured though. As for Burgandy and Ellenell? I'm just... confused as to what I should feel about that one. Are they a risky team or not? Why doesn't Timmy have anything on? Why is that Timmy sand coloured? At least Marigold and Borgick's makes some sense. Not sure if it'll be a contender, but it makes sense.

Kress was of course talking about the fact Marigold and Borgick's Timmy had a cannon as a hat. Kress shook his head and looked over the other two groups. One was of course the rest of their teams, and they were just wearing what they had earlier. No, the other group was more interesting... if you ignored the fact Thyme was dressed as a giant sandcastle with sand tower pauldrons, tower castle hat and what looked like a working drawbridge over their crotch area. Kress didn't really want to think about that part.

"Right, let me introduce all of you to the judges!" said Thyme with a smile. "First up, is this cranky old man I found in the forest!" Thyme waved his hands and said 'cranky old man' had the distortion effect around them fade. He had a gruff looking face and a notable scar across his chin. His hair still had some black in it, but it was peppered with white lines. His beard was completely grey. Kress had just one thought when looking at him.

THAT'S THE FUCKING KING ISN'T IT!

"I'm just here because I was promised free food," said the grumpy old man.

I'm telling you it IS! Is anyone else seeing this? Kress looked around and apparently nobody knew their history well enough. Not even Nixilei... wait... Kress looked at Nixilei again and her eyes were clearly twitching. *Right ok. So I'm NOT the only one who can see this... but apparently it's only like two people that can see that Thyme knows the MISSING HUMAN KING. Then again... that's not really a surprise is it? Still surprising that he's here... but probably not that Thyme knows the guy.*

"Next, I found this random hippy trying to sneak around so I grabbed him as well," said Thyme with a shrug and a gesture towards the spot there was now an elf with a rather obvious fake beard in clear view. This time, Kress noticed Marigold's hole team staring with mouths open, except Marigold who had her hands slapped over her mouth. *That's Auctifer isn't it?* Kress looked over at Nixilei. The eye twitching had gotten worse. *Yup. That's gotta be Auctifer.*

"I mean... I'm just here for whatever dudes," said probably Auctifer in the worse approximation of a drugged person he could manage. Kress was that drugged person a few days ago. He'd know. He certainly wasn't annoyed at the accuracy. No sir.

"Next is some woman I picked up at a brothel," said Thyme, and waited for everyone in the room to turn their incredulous looks towards them. "No not like that. I was making some deliveries to them as a favour to a friend and saw her there and decided 'she'd make a good judge so here she is!'"

Thyme's hands waved and once again there was a new person could be seen. There were a fae, and based on the pattern Kress had a pretty good guess as to who this was as well. The fact Green's eyes were sparkling and Nixilei's eye looked like it was going to vibrate out of his socket. Now technically Kress couldn't say he was certain that was Titania. Furthermore, the fact she was dressed in a comical amount of makeup that looked more at home on stage than... elsewhere, did complicate matters... but Green and Nixilei seemed rather 'certain' as did the other fae around now Kress was looking. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

"I'm also just here for the free food I guess?" said probably Titania with a shrug.

Kress felt like slapping a hand to his face... but that would just mean that Thyme would win! It didn't help that Thyme was already waving their hands again, "This one... well I don't really know what this one is, it's so dirty I can hardly tell. I'm thinking of calling it a soot goblin"

"I'm a bloody dwarf you annoying tree!" shouted the soot goblin. Obviously. No dwarven royalty here. Nope. Kress wasn't looking at dwarven royalty covered in soot and neither was anyone else.

"Right... well," Thyme slowly seemed to contemplate the words, "I've never heard of a 'bloody dwarf' but I suppose there are known insects found all the time, so why not new species of dwarves? That makes sense right? Do you want some beer? Would that calm you down?"

"You're a right shithead aren't you Thyme?" said the soot goblin that totally wasn't Odir "You know very well I don't drink alcohol,"

"Strange behaviour for a dwarf," said Thyme. "Are you sure you're not a soot goblin?"

Don't laugh. Don't laugh. Don't laugh at the fact Odir is covered in soot. This is not funny. Don't laugh.

"Well may-be I wouldn't look like a 'soot goblin' if you'd let me wash off before teleporting me here! You better have some good fruit juice around or all increase taxes on your bloody grove by 200%" threatened the soot goblin. No Kress wasn't in denial. You are.

Thyme shrugged and threw a teeny tiny barrel at Oditr, who caught it easily. She sipped what was there and frowned. "I feel insulted... but this IS good juice so I'm going to let it slide," said Oditr. I mean, the soot goblin.

"Excellent! Now onto the last judge!" Thyme waved their hands once more and Mint appeared. Not that Kress knew who she was.

Mint looked around confused. "Thyme what am I doing here? You didn't inform me of anything I needed to do today... and what's with all these new people?" Mint said as she gestured at the other judges. Obviously not recognising them.

"Well I picked up some random people on the street," nobody was believing that line at all, "but I can't really pick one beastkin. That just wouldn't be fair. So instead, I've picked you to be a judge!" said Thyme with a smile.

"Right..." said Mint slowly "But what exactly am I even judging?"

"Sandcastle contest," said Thyme quickly.

"I... I don't know anything about building sandcastles. I've never been on a beach until recently. Why am I a judge for a sandcastle contest?" asked Mint even more confused now then before. **NovelNext.cOM**

"Hey neither do they?" said Thyme pointed at the rest of the group. "I just picked up a random old man, a hippy, a nymphomaniac, and a soot goblin, so you being a judge is fine,"

It was at that moment the 'soot goblin' screamed and pounced at Thyme. Kress couldn't help it. His face to his hands as he groaned. *What the heck is this mess!*

[Chapter 1209 1209 How The Judges Judge](#)

Kress chapter

"Now that the judges are introduced, they'll each be announcing what criteria they are judging BY. The judges won't be overlapping here, each of their scores will be completely separate. The way we'll be determining the final winner, and runner up, will be first taking the winner in each category and giving them a point. Then we'll be giving the person with the most total points, an additional two points on top of that. The team with the most points at the end will be consider the winner, with the running up being the second most points.

"If there are ties in each category, then the other judges will come together and decide who won that specific category, and the bonus points alongside it. If, somehow, only one team manages to get any points at all? Sweeping every category? Then nobody will get second place. I mean come on, surely you

guys can manage to win at least one category, right? Now, let's hear our judges explain what they're looking for," said Thyme.

"Wait! I don't even know how this all works! How am I supposed to pick a category for judging?" asked Mint, a slight tinge of panic in her voice.

Thyme shrugged and said, "I cannot provide you any suggestions lest that count as unfairly influencing a judge,"

Mint looked to the other judges and pleaded, "Does that mean the rest of you can help me?"

The old man just shrugged and said, "Don't look at me, I'm probably going to judge based on what looks the nicest. Nothing fancy. I'm just an old farmer named Steve, so my opinion ain't to important,"

No your name if ULF and let's not pretend nobody knows that either. Whatever. I guess if he wants to pretend even in front of Thyme and the other rulers he must be pretty committed to the retirement thing. Still... I don't see any other reason 'Steve' the farmer would be here alongside everyone else.

"Well I'M going to ask Thyme to duplicate everyone's squares and then test them all for durability," said the soot goblin. "I'm not so rude as to destroy the originals... but I want to see just how well it all holds up. Just a few light earthquakes! I'm sure Thyme can simulate that for me. Anyway, depending on the damage I'll give you points. Both for how well everything survived, and for how nice it looks afterwards. Each half is worth five of the ten points I can hand out,"

pandasnovel.com Mint gave Thyme a confused look. "Can... can she do that? Splitting the way her points are judged? That seems... a little strange," said Mint slowly.

Thyme shrugged and said, "I'm not a judge so I can't really stop them from judging however they want. It seems fine to me,"

Mint glared at Thyme and shot back. "What, so I could say that I'll give my points based on whoever left the most footprints in the sand and that would be a valid method of judging this sandcastle contest?"

"If that's how you want to judge I'm fine with it," offered Thyme sincerely.

Mint felt like tearing out her hair. It wouldn't have gone well, her current body was pretty well made, fake hair included. "No I do not want that to be how I judge things, that's ridiculous!"

"I dunno... if you're not using it I'm tempted to make it how I give out points. Oh, and if we're using fake names... I call Bob" said 'Bob' the hippy.

Mint glared at him but didn't say anything. Instead, she turned to the only person who hadn't said anything yet. "I feel the urge to rate the sculptures using something silly as well, like perhaps how fuckable it looks," said Titania.

Ah. I remember when I was confident we could win the sandcastle contest because our team built the best sand castle. My confidence is very quickly draining away. I mean WHO RATES SANDCASTLES LIKE THIS. The worst part is, I can't even speak up and complain to them about it because I know exactly who they are. I do wonder why most everyone else is staying quiet though. Hmm... poor Mint. She doesn't know what she's gotten herself into the poor girl.

Of course, the reason that nobody else was talking was that contrary to what Kress thought, everyone seemed to recognise at least one of them. The fruit juice comment was enough for people familiar with Oditr to realise who she was. Auctifer was obvious to most of the elves, and a good number of the fae. As for Titania? The fae were all trying to pretend they didn't know who she was after being introduced as 'someone Thyme found at a brothel'. Except Green of course, who looked like she wanted to go say hello but wasn't sure it was appropriate. Well that and Nixilei's firm hand on her shoulder. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

Kat hadn't connected the dots yet, but Lily had. She was currently hiding behind Kat to hide her laughter while refusing to explain to her girlfriend what was so funny. Carl hadn't worked out who they were, but did notice everyone else freaking out better than Kress did and was being careful not to do anything too stupid until he figured out why everyone was so worked up.

"I feel so lost, why is the one introduced as a 'crazy old man' the most sane amongst you people?" whined Mint.

He's the oldest? Kress suggested internally. He certainly wasn't going to say it out loud. Though... he leaned over and whispered to Blue, knowing that he'd probably be overheard. "What do you think our chances are now? This has become rather strange,"

Blue flinched at the sound of Kress' voice but calmed quickly. Without turning she whispered back, "I have no idea. Tit- I mean, the fae woman probably won't stick with... f-f... I can't say. With THAT as her criteria but she seems tempted. I don't really know what's going on either,"

"What is with you people?" asked Mint, perhaps more loudly than intended. She first rounded on Oditr, "Your idea is at least somewhat reasonable, and maybe, if the others had less crazy ideas I'd be cool with it, but I can't help but feel like you started us off on this crazy train," Mint then turned to Auctifer, "You shouldn't be taking my bad ideas as good ones. I was thinking of the craziest example I could, why would you accept it as an answer? Also, why would you pick a fake name? Why not Stave as being a fake name, assuming it is?" Mint turned to Titania, "I think you were joking... so I'm not going to say anything else other than that,"

Mint then turned, slowly to the old man 'Steve'. "I don't know if your name is fake or not because I have no idea who you are and you SEEM reasonable... but I am worried about this 'crazy old man' bit. So just... I dunno if you're going to do something crazy can you just get it out of the way now?"

Steve stared back at Mint for a few seconds and eventually said, "No man is an island. They're a lot closer to spider webs. Picking up dust, dirt, debris and occasionally other insects that are quickly devoured,"

Mint growled out, "I'd slap you if I wasn't trained so well in hospitality,"

"Slap me if you want, I won't stop you... but I might return the favour..." said Steve ominously.

Mint shook her head and said, "Nope, I'm not doing it, I'm better than that,"

"Not to interrupt this... lovely little conversation," said Thyme as they head extended until it was between Steve and Mint, "However we do need to get a move on. It's past dinner time for everyone and I'm sure nobody wants to hear a bunch of random people arguing about nonsense so if everyone could

pick what they're judging things on that would be great! Oh, and doubling up IS allowed, in case that wasn't clear before,"

Steve spoke first, "I'm sticking with 'best looking'. I don't care about anything else, it would take too much effort,"

"And I'm sticking with destruction," said Oditr. "As a dwarf, having a shoddily built display is worse than having nothing on display. It shows you didn't care enough to put the effort in. Though, I'll be easier on everyone as I do realise it should be mostly made up of sand,"

Titania spoke next, "I suppose I'll go for the 'most creative' then. I want to really see those minds at work in the sculpture,"

Everyone looked to 'Bob' next but he just shrugged and motioned to Mint who sighed and said, "I guess I'll join up with Steve on this one. I'll just vote for the one that looks the best,"

Auctifer thought for a few more moments and said, "I want to go for something interesting... so I'm going to give out points based on how well the things that aren't sand are used," *NovElnext.com*

"In a sandcastle contest?" asked Mint.

"I'll allow it," said Thyme. Mint glared back at Thyme. Steve grinned. 'Bob' grinned. Oditr looked around for more juice, and Titania smirked seductively.

[Chapter 1210 1210 Exhibit A](#)

Kress chapter

Judges: Ulf/'Steve' Auctifer, Oditr, Titania, Mint

Criteria: Looks, Not-sand features, Structurally Sound, Creativity, Looks

Thyme walked passed each of the judges to hand them all a clipboard with five pieces of paper that were mostly blank. There was 'Sandcastle 1' at the top of the first, and the others would presumably be ladled 2-5. Other than the label, there was a box at the bottom. Thyme quickly explained, "In front of you are some pieces of paper to make your judgement on. You can put whatever you want in the free space. Notes, temporary scores. Anything. Once you've looked through all five of the displays, I'll give you judges a further ten minutes to finalise your answers.

"Once the time is up, I'll be collecting your clipboards and whatever is in that box will be your score. If it's not a number between 0 and 10 then it won't count towards the contestants scores... AND" Thyme paused to make sure everyone was paying attention. "You won't be getting any dinner,"

"Wait I'm only here for the free food! How could you take that away from me!" growled Steve.

Thyme folded their hands of their chest and glared back while responding. "I think if you can't manage to write five numbers down in a box then you don't really deserve any food do you? At least, nothing good. Think of it as encouragement to actually do your job,"

Steve grumbled some more but didn't actually vocalise any words simply pretended to sit down. Kress felt his eye twitch as this 'old man' managed to not just SIT in the air, but lean backwards as if he was in a reclining chair. Mint looked just as shocked as Kress felt. Eyes and mouth wide open as Steve relaxed.

"Right... everyone good?" Thyme asked and when there was no complaints Thyme nodded to himself. "Right, good then. Let's see what the first bit of art on display is!"

Thyme waved their hands and suddenly the platform they were on was moved backwards and angled slightly. It wasn't hard to stay standing, the incline was very slight after all, but it was noticeable. A moment later, a square of sand appeared in the air next to them. Kress could see a moderately sized cannon made out of sand... though looking closer it might be 'sandstone' instead.

Thyme smiled and said "Feel free to walk around. There's an invisible platform above the display that you can walk on. Don't get too close to the edge of the square though... who knows what could happen,"

Kress of course, walked straight over to the edge without any fear before pausing. *Do I really want to do this? Yes, Yes I do.* Kress then went down on his knees and went to wave his hand over the edge... when his hand smacked into an invisible wall. "Right... it's a box. Yeah that makes sense," mumbled Kress as he shook out his knuckles. With his increased strength and durability from adventuring, the pain barely registered. It was more habit than anything else.

When he got up, he saw Blue standing behind him with a smirk on her face. "What, I felt like it needed testing," answered Kress with a huff.

Blue just smiled and said, "Of course, testing Thyme is obviously a great decision,"

"Hey, he's not a judge this round so if I was ever going to push Thyme's buttons now IS the Thyme to do it," said Kress while wiggling his eyebrows. Well he tried anyway. Wiggling his eyebrows wasn't a skill Kress had practiced but Blue got the idea. She just rolled her eyes.

"What do you think of the cannon?" asked Blue.

"The cannon?" returned Kress. "I... I'm not sure. It looks like a normal cannon made out of sand really. Props for making it real-sized I guess but it takes up a rather small area compared to what we were given and I don't think we're at risk of losing to them... unless they do really well on the durability scale,"

Blue nodded in agreement as she glanced over at the mass of people surrounding the cannon at the moment. With the display being so small, relatively speaking, there just wasn't much to look at so everyone had huddled together. There was the first ring of just judges as they circled the cannon. Then a step back was clump of people, then further back there was one more ring, mostly of people on tiptoes, or March. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

Kat and Lily were standing off in the corner making out instead of paying attention to the cannon so... good for them? *Honestly I'm surprised Stan hasn't noticed me hanging out with Blue and started glaring. Not that he's got competition from Blue of course. She's not really my type... but Stan doesn't know that. Hmm... should I mess with him? No that could end really poorly. Especially when I'm not certain I want to return his advances yet.*

Eventually Thyme started to wave people off the platform. As everyone made their way back to the other, visible platform, Thyme asked, "Right, so judges, what's your initial impressions? Theoretical scores? Subject to change after seeing everything else of course?"

παΠdαsNovel.com "You still haven't shown me how stable it is!" said Oditr.

"Right right of course," said Thyme as they clicked their fingers. A moment later the space below them seemed to shiver for a second before returning to normal. Presumably this was Thyme swapping out a copy. "How do you want me to test this?"

"Shake it a bit. Like panning for gold. Double the force every shake until things start breaking," said Oditr.

Thyme nodded and did so. The first shake did nothing, the same with the second. Kress honestly stopped counting how long it took but eventually the cannon started to fall apart. The supports were actually the first to go. Then the legs. Then the lower half of the cannon. The top was pretty solid though, and stayed together. Thyme looked to Oditr who nodded, "Yup I'll call that good enough,"

"So what's your score for it then?" asked Thyme.

Oditr shrugged. "I'll have to see the others. I'm thinking... it gets maybe a two for how it looked once things started falling apart... but a four or a five for sticking together? We'll have to see,"

That's a bit harsh. Thyme hit the thing pretty hard. What are you expecting it to hold up against? A real earthquake?

"I'm afraid I'll have to give it a two," said Steve. "It was a nice cannon... but I don't exactly see the beauty in cannons myself so it's getting a low score," πOVeℓnext.com

I don't necessarily disagree but damn Ulf you're brutal when you want to be.

"Steve is... somewhat right at least," said Mint. "I want to give it something better, because it seems like a really well made cannon... but I agree it wasn't all that nice looking. I'm thinking along the lines of a four?"

I wonder if Mint is just trying to be nice or if she sees enough merit in it to give it a four? I suppose time will tell. I don't really know anything about them.

Auctifer spoke next, "For me I'm angling towards a low score as well, perhaps a four like Mint? The supports and especially the base were a nice touch, but they didn't really pop for me. They were just that, supports. Everything that wasn't made from sand was just part of the cannon. Still, the non-sand parts were important so... a fou- no, perhaps a five?"

Right... I have no idea what to think about Auctifer's score. It seems a bit high... but I just don't know how he's evaluating things. Still... I'm going to say that's a bit high.

Titania looked back at the cannon for a few seconds, "In some ways... this isn't very creative at all. In others... it's a wonderful piece of art. I can clearly see the care and attention that was put into making that cannon. It isn't just a sandcastle shaped to look like a cannon, but almost a real cannon made out of sand. I suspect with more time it would be a working cannon made out of sand..."

"But there wasn't more time. I've got to judge based just on what's there... and I'm still not sure how creative I think it is. Certainly it's ARTISTIC. Perhaps more artistic than the sculptures intended... but artistic non-the-less so... I guess I'm just going to save five? Until I know more then I'll move it up or down. It's a very uncertain five after all,"

Not sure I need to comment on Titania's score. She made it pretty clear what she thinks, and the five is just because it's the middle number not because she actually thinks five is the correct answer here. Still... I feel a strong urge to have some sort of thoughts about Titania's scoring process considering I critiqued everyone else's but I'm coming up with nothing. She explained her thoughts well and the score is mostly meaningless.