

## H. Academy 891

### Chapter 891 Game night

The game loaded in, and Astron's character appeared at the starting platform. A sleek, cloaked figure with glowing ethereal arrows hovered slightly above the ground—one of the ranged carries, a high-damage but fragile champion.

Astron examined the screen, fingers adjusting on the controller as he took in the interface. His purple eyes flicked over the abilities, scanning the stats like they were battle data.

Meanwhile, Irina was already grinning.

'Oh, this is perfect.'

Since she usually played support, she might as well teach him the carry role.

That way, they could duo together.

And sure, maybe it was a bit ridiculous, but she had been envisioning this exact scenario for a while now.

Not that she'd ever say that out loud.

The idea of playing together, of carrying the game as a duo, had crossed her mind more times than she wanted to admit.

Of course, there was also the fact that carry was the hardest role for a beginner.

Glass cannon. Squishy. Completely reliant on positioning.

One wrong move? Dead.

So, naturally, it was perfectly suited for Astron to suffer.

"Alright, listen up," Irina said, resting an elbow on the armrest while looking at him. "You're the carry, which means you're weak as hell but hit like a truck. Your job? Stay alive and kill."

Astron nodded slightly, still scanning the stats. "I see."

Irina smirked. "No, you don't see. You think you do, but you don't. You're going to die instantly if you overstep even once."

He glanced at her. "So don't overstep."

"Pfft. Easier said than done." She clicked her tongue. "You have to be precise. Read movement. Time your attacks. Know when to fight and when to run."

Astron nodded as if he understood.

'Hah. You're so confident now. Let's see how long that lasts.'

Irina exhaled through her nose, still smirking as she navigated through the menus. "Alright, before we even think about throwing you into a real match, you're doing the tutorial."

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Astron tilted his head slightly. "Mandatory?"

"Obviously." She clicked through the setup process. "You can't just make an account and start playing right away. You need to hit level three before you can even queue against bots."

Astron's sharp eyes flicked toward the top-right corner of the screen, where the system had automatically linked his ManaNet account to the game. A brand-new username popped up beside a level one indicator.

"Creating an account is easy," Irina explained. "It syncs with the ManaNet database, so it basically does all the work for you. But you can't just jump in." She grinned. "They make sure people at least pretend to learn before throwing themselves into ranked hell."

She selected "Tutorial Mode", and in an instant, the screen changed to a pristine training field, glowing runes carved into the stone floor as enemy dummies stood waiting.

Astron's chosen champion spawned at the center of the training grounds, bow drawn, glowing arrows hovering at his fingertips.

A text box appeared on the screen.

"Welcome to the Beginner's Training! Here, you will learn the fundamentals of controlling your champion, attacking enemies, and surviving in battle!"

Irina chuckled, leaning into the couch. "Alright, rookie. Let's see if you can even handle the basics."

Astron didn't respond immediately. Instead, he rolled his shoulders slightly—just a tiny movement, but one Irina had seen before.

He was already preparing himself.

Her smirk deepened.

'Oh, this is going to be fun.'

The moment Astron's champion appeared on the training field, the system prompted him with basic movement instructions.

"Move your champion by tilting the left stick."

Astron, with all his usual precision, tilted the joystick—only for his champion to stagger forward awkwardly, wobbling like a newborn deer before stopping abruptly.

Irina barely held in a laugh.

'Oh no. Oh, this is even better than I imagined.'

Astron tilted the stick again, and this time, the character zigzagged across the training field in a way that made it look like he was either incredibly drunk or deeply confused about where his feet were supposed to land.

"...This movement is inefficient," he muttered, adjusting his grip on the controller.

"Pfft—!" Irina definitely heard that tiny note of frustration.

"Well, yeah," she teased, resting her chin on her hand. "Unlike actual combat, you're only using your hands here. No real footwork, no full-body movement—just you, the controller, and your bad motor skills."

Astron narrowed his eyes at the screen, clearly analyzing the problem. He attempted another movement input, but his champion jerked forward and then stopped again, as if debating whether to obey his command or simply collapse.

Irina let out a short snicker.

'This is amazing. I should've recorded this.'

"Alright, alright," she said, stifling another laugh. "You're moving like an old man who forgot how to walk."

The moment Irina finished teasing him, Astron fell into absolute silence.

She blinked.

No retort. No questioning. No sarcastic remark.

Just... complete focus.

His grip on the controller adjusted slightly, his sharp purple eyes scanning the screen as if it were a real battlefield.

'Huh?'

Irina had seen this look before—the same kind of intense analysis he used during combat, like he was breaking down every single movement and response in real time.

And then, it happened.

Little by little, his movements stabilized.

The awkward staggering? Gone.

The weird start-stop hesitation? Vanished.

By the time the second wave of minions arrived—barely forty seconds into the game—Astron's champion was already moving and aiming properly.

'No way.'

Irina squinted at the screen.

His character was still new-level clunky, sure, but he had already figured out how to position himself properly, track enemy movement, and shoot his arrows with decent accuracy.

"Oi," she muttered, eyeing him suspiciously. "You better not be secretly good at this."

Astron didn't even look at her. His fingers moved smoothly over the controller, guiding his champion as if testing out the input timing.

'What the hell? No way. This is not normal.'

She had seen people struggle for HOURS with these mechanics. Even Julia, who was naturally good at games, had taken way longer to adjust to controls.

But this guy?

Forty seconds.

And he was already grasping the basics.

Irina clicked her tongue and crossed her arms.

"Alright," she muttered, shaking off her surprise. "Next part. Last hitting gives you gold. That goes for minions, monsters, and enemy champions too."

Astron's eyes flicked toward the gold counter in the HUD. Without a word, he adjusted his position slightly—just a fraction.

And then, as the minions lined up...

He started last-hitting them.

Irina's eye twitched.

'Oh, you have GOT to be kidding me.'

Irina leaned in slightly, watching closely.

Astron had zero experience in gaming. He had never played before.

So there was no way—absolutely no way—he was going to land his last hits properly on the first try.

Right?

The first minion came into last-hit range.

Astron's champion fired too early. The shot whiffed, and the minion died to another source.

'Ha! Knew it.'

The second minion? Another miss.

The third? Same thing.

'As expected.' Irina smirked, leaning back slightly.

But then—

The fourth minion.

Click!

The arrow landed cleanly, securing the gold.

Irina's smirk froze slightly.

'Oh? Lucky shot, maybe?'

She kept watching.

The fifth minion came. He mistimed it—barely.

The sixth? Hit.

And then the seventh—

He got the cannon minion.

Irina's hands froze mid-motion.

Her brain short-circuited for a second.

He had missed the first three, sure, but then he had landed three out of the next four.

And one of them was the cannon minion?!

'Hold on, hold on, hold on. That was just luck. That had to be luck. Right?'

Even she struggled to consistently secure cannon minions sometimes. The health bar was tricky to predict, the timing was always slightly off, and yet—

Astron had just done it perfectly on his first attempt.

She turned her head slowly, looking at him with suspicion.

"You..." She squinted. "You sure you've never played before?"

Astron, still focused on the game, didn't react immediately. Then, without looking at her, he said calmly—

"I haven't."

Irina's eye twitched.

'Liar.'

But no—no, she knew he wasn't lying.

That was the problem.

He had never played before.

And yet, somehow, his instincts were already catching up to the game's mechanics.

'This is ridiculous. What kind of monster just picks this up like that?'

Irina took a deep breath, narrowing her eyes at the screen.

'Alright, fine. If you're going to get good this fast—I'll make sure you struggle first.'