

H. Academy 892

Chapter 892 Game night

As the tutorial progressed, the game introduced more mechanics—ones that were crucial for actual gameplay.

"Skills have cooldowns. Managing them efficiently is the key to winning fights."

Astron tested his champion's abilities, pressing each button methodically as if committing them to muscle memory. The cooldown timers popped up, and Irina could see him already calculating the gaps between each use.

'Okay, that's normal. Everyone learns that part fast...'

But the next section?

"Every champion has a passive ability. Pay attention to how it works—it can turn the tide of battle."

Astron read the description.

Then, he activated his next skill immediately in sync with his passive effect, landing a perfect chain of attacks on the practice dummy.

Irina's grip on the controller tightened.

'Okay, hold up. How the hell did he just understand that instantly?'

The tutorial moved forward, spawning an enemy champion in front of him.

The game provided a brief rundown:

"Enemy champions have unique abilities. Learn how they work, or risk being caught off guard."

Astron, of course, had no clue what this enemy could do.

So when it launched a spell straight at him—

BAM.

The attack landed clean, chunking half of his health bar.

Irina grinned.

"Ha! See? Even you can't—"

BAM.

The next skill hit him too.

'Pfft—!'

Astron didn't react, merely adjusting his position. But Irina could see it now.

That sharp focus.

That calculation.

The next time the enemy tried to cast—

Astron moved.

He dodged the ability entirely by side-stepping at the exact moment the skill animation began.

Irina's grin faltered.

'Oh, you've gotta be kidding me.'

A few seconds later—

He killed the enemy champion.

Cleanly. Efficiently.

Irina narrowed her eyes. "Alright. That was just one fight. The tutorial literally made that enemy easier for you."

But then—

Astron pushed forward, taking down the turret.

And then—

He repeated the process.

Three times.

Systematically destroying everything in his path.

By the time he reached the enemy base, Irina had gone from mildly amused to mildly horrified.

Astron blasted through the enemy Nexus in a flawless finish, the victory screen appearing before them.

"Congratulations! You have completed the tutorial!"

Irina just stared at the screen.

Astron set the controller down with a quiet, satisfied exhale.

Irina turned to him slowly.

"...What the hell was that?"

Astron raised an eyebrow. "The tutorial?"

She pointed at the screen. "That was not normal! Nobody picks it up that fast!"

Astron tilted his head slightly. "It was straightforward. The mechanics are structured, and the enemy patterns were predictable."

Irina groaned, burying her face in her hands.

'Oh, no. He's gonna be one of those players, isn't he?'

Astron glanced at her. "Is there an issue?"

She lifted her head, squinting at him. "We're queuing into bots next, and if you don't suffer at least once, I am going to make sure you do."

Astron's lips twitch—just barely.

"...Understood."

Irina huffed.

'This is NOT how this was supposed to go.'

Irina quickly navigated to the friend request section, preparing to add Astron to her list. But before she could, the system prompted him to set up an in-game alias.

Astron glanced at the screen, his fingers hovering over the keyboard.

And then—

'Hehe...'

An idea popped into Irina's mind. A mischievous, evil, absolutely perfect idea.

'He can't be trusted with naming himself. I need to handle this. Personally.'

With a smirk, she turned toward him. "Hey, can you grab the snacks?"

Astron blinked, his fingers pausing. "Snacks?"

"Yep." She waved her hand dismissively. "They're on the—uh, near the kitchen. Top shelf. Also, there are some drinks there as well."

Astron didn't move right away. Instead, his sharp purple eyes locked onto her, analyzing.

Irina sweated internally.

'He didn't notice, right? He totally didn't notice.'

Astron didn't say a word.

Then, after a long pause—

"...Okay."

Irina exhaled silently. Victory.

"They're on the..." Astron started.

"Yep, they're there," she quickly cut in. "Oh! And make sure to check behind the—uh, whatever's in the way."

Astron's eyes narrowed ever so slightly.

Irina's heartbeat sped up.

'He didn't see through that, right? RIGHT?!'

A few more seconds of tense silence.

And then—

Astron turned and left the room.

The second he was gone—

Irina moved. FAST.

She slammed the keyboard, pulling up the username input.

'Alright, what should I name him?'

She had one shot at this before he came back.

Irina's fingers flew over the keyboard, her smirk widening as she typed.

She didn't even have to think too hard about it.

If he was going to be her duo partner, then his name should reflect that, right?

Her in-game name was [InfernoQueen].

So naturally...

[InfernoKnight]

She hit confirm with a smug little grin.

'Perfect.'

A name that made it very, very clear that he was hers.

Whether Astron liked it or not, the moment he stepped into her gaming world, he belonged to her. And now? The entire server would know it.

She leaned back, arms crossed, reveling in her absolute genius.

'He's going to be so confused. Heh.'

But then—

A sound.

Footsteps.

Astron returned, way faster than she expected.

Irina froze.

Her amber eyes darted to the screen—where the username change confirmation still flashed bold and clear.

And then—

She turned to Astron.

He was already looking at the screen.

His sharp purple eyes took in the name. The words. The meaning.

Irina felt a drop of sweat slide down her back.

'Oh no. He saw it immediately.'

For a moment, Astron didn't say anything.

Astron stared at the screen.

[InfernoKnight.]

His fingers hovered over the controller, his sharp purple eyes flicking between the name and Irina, who was now frozen like a criminal caught mid-heist. Her smugness had evaporated in an instant, replaced with barely contained panic.

Astron blinked.

'So that's what she was up to.'

Truthfully, he had known she was planning something the moment she had asked him to fetch the snacks. It wasn't hard to tell. Her voice had carried that deliberate nonchalance, the kind she used when she thought she was being clever. And while anyone else might have fallen for it, Astron had long since learned how to read between the lines of Irina's antics.

If he had wanted to, he could have caught her in the act immediately. He could have been back in a fraction of a second, effortlessly exposing her little scheme. Or, better yet, he could have monitored her from afar—his senses were more than capable of tracking her movements without even trying.

But...

He didn't.

Instead, he let her have her moment.

Because as much as he enjoyed outmaneuvering her, as much as he found satisfaction in winning their little battles of wit... he also liked this side of her. The side that schemed and plotted, that grinned with mischievous delight, that reveled in pranks just for the sake of seeing his reaction.

She was easy to read, but that didn't mean he disliked it. If anything, he found himself entertained by how much effort she put into messing with him.

And now, watching her squirm as realization dawned on her that he had caught everything—

Yes. This was satisfying.

Astron tilted his head slightly. His expression remained unreadable, but there was the faintest hint of amusement in his gaze.

"You were... quick," Irina blurted out, breaking the silence.

Astron said nothing.

Irina shifted in her seat, her eyes darting anywhere but at him. "That was—uh—fast! Did you even check behind the—uh, whatever I told you to?"

Astron still didn't respond.

Because he was waiting.

Waiting for her to break.

And she did.

Irina groaned, throwing her hands up in dramatic surrender. "Alright, fine! I did it! I renamed you! But listen, before you say anything—just think about how cool it sounds, okay?"

Astron exhaled softly, his gaze returning to the screen. "InfernoKnight," he repeated, voice calm.

"Exactly!" Irina said, leaning forward, desperate to defend her decision. "It fits! You can't just go around using some boring name like 'A-01' or whatever. You need something with style!"

Astron remained quiet, letting her dig herself deeper.

Irina pressed on. "And come on, it matches mine! InfernoQueen and InfernoKnight? That's perfect duo synergy!"

At this, Astron glanced at her, one eyebrow slightly raised. "Duo synergy?"

Irina coughed. "I mean—uh—yes! Of course! Think about it—when people see our names, they'll immediately know we're a team. They'll fear us!"

He let her words settle.

And then—

"You just wanted to mark me as yours."

Irina choked.