

H. Academy 900

Chapter 900 207.1 - InfernoKnight

<Inside Irina's Dorm>

The hours blurred together.

What had started as a simple introduction to the game had turned into something completely different.

Irina sat there, gripping her controller, her amber eyes locked on the screen. Her expression was somewhere between awe, suspicion, and mild existential crisis.

Because this?

This didn't make any sense.

Four hours.

Four straight hours of matches.

And somehow—somehow—Astron was getting better at an unnatural rate.

At first, it had been fine. Expected, even. The game was new to him, but with her as his duo partner, they had an inherent advantage. Early on, their opponents were mostly other beginners, and since Irina had been playing for a while, she could easily carry their matches.

That was normal. That was expected.

But this?

Irina watched, utterly dumbfounded, as Astron effortlessly landed another perfect combo, chaining his abilities together with a precision that shouldn't have been possible for someone who had just picked up the game.

'No way. There is no way.'

The enemy champion barely had a second to react before Astron read their movement and countered it on instinct. He sidestepped their skill shot at the last possible moment, repositioned with flawless timing, and then—

BAM.

Another kill.

Another perfectly calculated, utterly clinical execution.

The announcer's voice boomed across the screen.

"Double Kill!"

Irina's mouth opened. No words came out.

"Double Kill!"

Irina's mouth opened. No words came out.

'What is this?'

She had been watching him closely throughout these matches, and the more she did, the more disturbed she became.

Astron wasn't just "getting better."

He was learning at an exponential rate.

At first, he had relied on pure observation—watching her, analyzing how she played, adapting to the mechanics. Then he started implementing things himself—small optimizations, faster reactions.

Now?

Now he was making plays that required deep understanding of the game's systems. Stuff that even experienced players needed time to learn.

Irina gaped as Astron instantly recognized when an enemy jungler was about to gank their lane, despite never seeing that champion before. He simply adjusted his positioning, predicted their approach, and dodged everything with effortless ease.

He was reading the game like a damn textbook.

'No, no, no, no, no—this isn't normal.'

Irina had played games with plenty of skilled people before. She had played against smurfs—veteran players using new accounts to stomp beginners. She had seen prodigies, fast learners, strategic geniuses.

But this wasn't fast learning.

This was absurd.

This was unsettling.

Irina found herself focusing less on the match and more on the player sitting next to her.

Astron's sharp purple eyes remained locked on the screen, unwavering. His posture was relaxed, his grip on the controller steady. His expression remained calm, utterly unreadable, but Irina could see it—

That focus.

That cold, calculating precision.

That terrifying efficiency.

She swallowed hard, fingers tightening around her controller.

And the worst part?

He was still catching up.

Even though she had started as the clear carry, the one leading every match, Astron was getting dangerously close to matching her pace.

She won games because she had experience.

Astron won games because he understood them on a fundamental level.

And at this rate—

—he was going to surpass her.

Irina felt a chill run down her spine.

She refused.

She absolutely refused.

'Hell. No.'

With a deep inhale, she sharpened her focus.

Irina tightened her grip on the controller, her competitive instincts roaring to life. She refused to be left behind, but at the same time...

She kind of liked this.

Even though there was that little pang of jealousy, seeing him improve so fast, there was also something satisfying about it.

If he was getting better—if he actually enjoyed playing—then maybe... maybe this could be something they did together.

Yeah. That's all this was.

Definitely nothing else.

She stole a quick glance at him from the corner of her eye.

They had been playing for nearly four hours now, and Astron had settled in. His posture had become more relaxed, his usual stiff composure giving way to something almost natural. He was leaning into the couch, his t-shirt slightly curled at the edges from the way he shifted against the cushions.

And somehow—his scent had started to blend into her space.

Irina inhaled, barely realizing she had done so.

It was subtle. Clean. Familiar.

A mix of something sharp, like steel, yet faintly warm, like the air after a summer storm. It wasn't intrusive, but it was there, weaving itself into her dorm as if it belonged.

She frowned slightly at the thought.

The last time they traveled together, it had been like this too. Being near him, sharing a space, existing in the same quiet bubble. But somehow, this felt different.

Because this wasn't a train cabin or a shared mission.

This was her dorm.

Her personal space. The place she spent most of her time alone. And yet, with him here, it didn't feel disrupted.

It felt...

She clicked her tongue and quickly turned her eyes back to the screen.

Nope. Not going there.

Instead, she exhaled sharply and focused back on the game.

"Alright, InfernoKnight," she muttered, adjusting her seat. "You're improving fast, but don't think I'm going to let you pass me that easily."

Astron, still calmly leaning into the couch, simply hummed. "I wouldn't expect you to."

Irina shot him a quick glare, but he didn't even look at her.

That smug bastard.

She wasn't sure what irritated her more—the fact that he was catching up to her this fast, or the fact that she didn't mind spending all this time with him.

As soon as the queue popped, Irina exhaled sharply and stretched her fingers. "Alright, let's see what you're picking this time."

Astron scrolled through his newly unlocked champions and, after a brief pause, selected one.

Irina squinted at the screen, processing the choice.

Then her eye twitched.

"Oh. You picked [Dravon]?" she said, raising an eyebrow. "Are you sure?"

Astron nodded. "Why?"

Irina rubbed her temple. "That character is... not that easy."

Astron glanced at the champion's ability list, reading it over. "Really?"

"Yeah... And that character..." she hesitated, debating whether or not to warn him.

Astron looked at her expectantly. "Has a?"

Irina sighed. "Has a bit of a reputation, let's say."

Astron's fingers stilled slightly over the controller. "Why?"

She leaned forward, propping her chin on her hand. "The players who main Dravon are kind of toxic."

Astron blinked, unbothered. "How so?"

Irina clicked her tongue. "Well, first off, the champion's kit is just high risk, high reward. You throw two axes, and you have to catch them after every attack to maintain your damage."

Astron hummed as he scrolled through the character's abilities, his sharp gaze calculating every detail.

"And on top of that," Irina continued, "you get extra gold for kills. Meaning you have to last hit perfectly to get ahead, or you fall behind hard."

Astron nodded, processing the information. "So, the champion rewards precision."

"That's one way to put it," she muttered. "But the real problem? If you screw up even once, you're basically useless."

Astron remained quiet for a moment. Then, after a brief pause, he locked in the champion anyway.

Irina blinked.

She pointed at the screen. "Wait, wait, wait. You're actually going to play it?"

Astron adjusted his grip on the controller. "Yes."

Irina groaned, running a hand through her hair. "Of course you are."

A part of her wanted to stop him—to tell him to pick something easier, something less likely to make him break his brain.

But at the same time...

She was curious.

Astron had been learning fast. Faster than she had ever seen before. And Dravon was a champion that demanded perfect execution.

Could he actually pull it off?

She exhaled sharply, shaking her head. "Alright, fine. You want to play the hard mode carry? Be my guest."

Astron glanced at her, his expression unreadable. "I'll manage."

Irina scoffed, crossing her arms. "We'll see about that, InfernoKnight."