

Last System 304

Chapter 304 Arthur's Stance

"You are not an invader," the voice of the monster filled my eardrums, spreading through the entire area as if its words were the gospel from the heavens.

As the voice passed by the area, the entire place turned silent, as if not a single element of flora and fauna nearby dared to make even the smallest noise.

Such was the power behind each of the monster's words.

"And you are not an owl," I replied after gathering my courage and resting my weight upon Mia's shoulder.

'Is she going to be okay?' I asked myself, stealing a glance at the girl's face.

I didn't even need to look at Mia to understand just what the hell was going on with her. Sure, I didn't even have the slightest clue as to why was it happening, but I could see just how insane amounts of energy she continued to pull, only to dump it all on me.

'At this rate, I will recover pretty quickly,' I thought, only to gnash my teeth together and raise my eyes to the monster's head. 'The thing is, this needs to end as soon as possible,' I thought, taking a step forward and forcing myself to raise my Mage's Tower.

If there was a power that would allow me to defend Mia from that monster, then it could only be this spell. Even though I still had my phantom blade skill along with the arcane spear to pair it up, the sheer size of this bear-like monster alone would make that skill completely obsolete.

After all, what use could I have from a phantom blade that sneakily elongated the blade of my spear by a few inches if that still wouldn't be anywhere enough to go past through that monster's shallow parts of the skin and actually damage its muscles and insides?

'This situation is really turning into a pain,' I thought, grasping at straws to find a way out of this situation.

"I'm not an owl indeed," the monster stated, clearly replying to the small remark of mine. "And taking your words into account... Tell me, little one," the monster ordered, "where did you get this power from?"

For a moment, I turned silent. I simply stared right into the monster's eyes, trying to figure out what it was thinking.

Yet, as seconds turned into minutes, I had no other choice but to realize that my lack of an answer could be taken for an answer as well.

'Not knowing its principles makes it hard to come up with a fitting answer,' I thought.

A naive man would likely say to just be honest. But right now, I couldn't afford to just be honest and explain things to that monster.

Right now, my biggest priority was to keep Mia safe. If it would be possible, saving my own skin and maybe even Hera's would also be on my agenda.

And with tasks so difficult as those, I couldn't afford to just nod my head and explain everything to that powerful monster, hoping for the best while at it.

No, it would be sure comfortable to just be honest. But in my current situation, I simply couldn't afford to do so.

"I first obtained it after killing the first Invader that I stumbled upon," I finally uttered my response, only for my voice to fail midway.

Yet, rather than waiting for me to repeat my words in a proper manner, the monster started to... shake?

At first, only its front legs shook over its belly. Yet, its entire body started to shake before long, only for the air to fill with the weirdest laughter I have ever heard a second later.

"You?" the monster asked, only to explode in laughter once again. "You killing an invader?" the monster asked, its laughter only intensifying.

Then, in a single instant, the monster cut down on its laugh, turning serious again.

"Don't make me laugh!" the monster shouted, sending a shockwave of his voice my way.

Facing the mental attack, I had trouble standing up. Without Mia's support, that voice alone would easily topple me back to my knees, only reinforcing the image of that monster being the top power right now.

"Believe it or not," I muttered silently, unable to be bothered to raise my voice anymore.

The exchange from before already proved that regardless of my voice's volume, this monster would understand me.

"The first monster I encountered, I killed before using the energy it left for my own purposes," I explained, this time not allowing the giggles of the monster to throw me off. "Using the power that I obtained in this way, I managed to fulfill the quest given to me by the man who turned out to be within that monster," I added, only to make a long pause.

'I might not be your match in terms of strength,' I thought, my lips quivering a little before forming a small smile. 'But I'm hella sure I can be far more dramatic than you!'

I was perfectly aware of how little meaning this quasi-dick-measuring contest had. Whether I could be more dramatic than this monster or not...

It didn't really matter in the long run. But right now, by claiming this kind of small victory, I could somewhat rebuild not only my own morale but also the mindset of Mia and Hera.

"Request of a man from within the monster?" the bear leaned its massive head to the side.

Even this small movement of its caused a powerful gust of wind to tear through the space around me.

"What do you mean?" the monster asked, clearly puzzled by my words.

'Good,' I thought, tightening my fists.

Catching the monster's interest turned out to be successful. And now, although only a little, I regained my ability to change the outcome of the situation. But more importantly, now that the monster openly came out to ask a question, my hopes of stalling for time for a little longer came back to life!

"Assuming that the invaders you are talking about are those violet, shapeless..." I started to explain, only to stop my words right in the middle of the sentence. "Shapeless? No, that's not right," I shook my head upon noticing my own mistake...

Or rather, by following each of the steps of the plan that I hatched beforehand.

"I mean, if those invaders you kept going on about are those violet monsters without a predefined shape," I acted as if I finally found a way to put those beings into words. "Then those guys are not really sentient," I added, revealing my own take on the situation.

It was an explanation based on the stuff I learned from Hera, things I understood on my own, and all the occasional circumstantial data I obtained so far.

I could be very well wrong. But right now, I didn't care about it in the slightest. Because rather than trying to figure out the true meaning of what was going on, I was simply trying to buy myself some more time!

'Just a little bit more,' I thought, gnashing my teeth against each other.

"Yeah, your words fit the creator's description pretty well," the monster said, dropping several more hints about the situation with this short, off-handed... or rather, off-pawed comment.

'Damn it,' I thought, clenching my jaws and forcing a smile on my face.

It was insanely tempting to pry into that monster's words. All my hopes for stalling for time vanished when the chance of learning more about the origins of this world appeared before my eyes.

"Gulp," I swallowed my saliva so hard that it made an audible sound.

"Then are you aware that those... invaders of yours are not actually attempting to attack this place?" I asked, using a bit of the little energy to speak out loud.

Even though it wasn't necessary for the monster to understand me... It changed the feeling of my message. And right now, this feeling was what I bet all my hopes of stalling for time at!

"Are you sane?" the monster asked, leaning its head to the side yet again. "Do you even understand what a word invader stands for?!" it asked, clearly infuriated by my seemingly stupid remark.

"I know what that word means," I replied in a calm voice, sending Mia a glance before putting a little more of my weight on her shoulder.

It felt weird to rely on a girl like that. But from the happy look on her face, it didn't appear Mia minded it whatsoever.

'Well, as long as she is okay with it,' I thought before moving my attention right back to the monster ahead.

"The first invader I fought with, I killed," I stated before taking a step forward.

Still supporting me from the side, Mia silently followed while helping me to keep my body up.

"But when all the energy around him vanished, he uttered just a single request before dying to my spear," I stated, stopping in my tracks, raising my head, and looking directly at the monster's face.

"He asked me to save the others," I stated after yet another theatrical break before pointing my hand towards Hera. "And being a kind human being, that's exactly what I'm trying to do."

There wasn't any hesitation in my voice. Yet, there was fear.

Because by pointing my hand at Hera, I made yet another gamble. But for the first time in my gambling history within this world, it wasn't my own welfare or prosperity that I was betting with!