

Strongest 601

Chapter 601: From Now On, Your Name Will Be Optimus

William's and Chiffon's trial had ended, but the Half-Elf refused to leave the trial grounds.

He and the System were busy thinking of ways that they could smuggle the Gandamn off of the Floor of Creation.

After having a taste of piloting the Giant Robot, William was very reluctant to let it go. He was adamant about finding a way to smuggle, or recreate, the Giant Robot, so that he could use it in the outside world.

The System was currently busy analyzing the Law of Creation that managed the 25th Floor. Although the Gandamn was a fictional thing, William believed that there was a possibility that it could be replicated if one knew how the Laws of Creation worked.

Xanhast had already left the trial grounds along with his unconscious sister, Marissa. He had given up trying to convince William to leave and allow the other players to use the trial grounds.

As a compromise, William took the Giant Robot at the very corner of the vast plains, in order to not get in the way of the trial of others.

Frankly, all the players didn't mind this setup because they were still busy analyzing William's robot from afar. They had seen how amazing it was, and even the Patriarch, and Elders of the Colton Family were very interested in it.

< Host, it is impossible to recreate the Laws of Creation. I checked the database to see if it could be done, but the ability to materialize things out of thin air is only exclusive to this Floor. >

'Can we manufacture it then?'

< No. >

William was unwilling to give up. He asked the system to check the God Shop if there was any item that they could use to smuggle the robot off of the 25th floor.

After half an hour of searching, the two still couldn't find a way to make William's wish come true.

Just as the two were about to give up, the three divinities in William's consciousness began to glow. A minute later, a small, yet perfect replica of the Gandamn appeared on top of the CPU Core.

The System's monotonous voice became sharper, and had more life in it. After the changes had been made the Giant Robot faded away, leaving William, and Chiffon, standing right next to each other.

'System, what happened?' William asked. For some reason, a sense of anticipation was bubbling inside his chest.

< The CPU Core has been upgraded to a higher grade. >

< Importing all preferences from home interface. >

The system replied in a tone that reminded William of Aeon Man's artificial intelligence, Jarveez.

< Would you like to bestow a name to the System? >

< Yes / No >

William's eyes widened in shock when he saw the message on his status page.

'System, do you want me to give you a name?'

< Affirmative, Host. Please, give me a name. >

The Half-Elf rubbed his chin as he pondered. The system had been with him since he was young, and it had helped him tremendously in his journey. He had to give it a good name no matter what!

"How about I give you the name The Strongest System?"

< ... Host, please take this seriously. Your naming skills suck btw. >

William chuckled because not only did the System's voice changed, its interactions had become more lifelike as well. He liked how snarky it had become.

'How about Eren?'

< No. >

'Lelouch?'

< No. >

'Saitama?'

< No. >

'Gon.'

< Rejected. >

'Gok--'

< No. >

'Pikac-'

< Host, do you want me to electrocute you? >

William scratched his head. Giving names had not always been easy for him, so he was at a loss on what to do. Suddenly, he remembered Truck-Kun that had hit him during the time when he was about to cross to the silver portal that he had chosen.

Because of this incident, William was born in a world that was not his choosing. Even so, the world he was currently living in had given him a wonderful family, friends, and lovers who truly cared about him.

A smile appeared on William's face as he looked at the head of the Gandamn Replica that was talking back to him.

'Optimus,' William said. 'From now on, your name will be Optimus.'

< Optimus..., very well. From now on, you may call me Optimus. >

< System has been bestowed a name. >

< New features added. >

< System's Completion Rate: 3% >

-- All stats increase by 50 points

-- Every time the completion rate reaches a 20% completion marker, all stats will increase by 50 points.

-- Once the Completion Rate reaches 100% the system will be able to unlock its true abilities.

-- Once the Completion Rate reaches 100% all stats will increase by 1000 points.

-- Once the Completion Rate reaches 100% the title "Strongest System" will be unlocked.

The additional features caught William completely by surprise. He didn't expect that his insistence to smuggle the Gandamn would bring out unexpected results.

'Optimus, how do I increase your completion rate?' William inquired. He was very keen to raise Optimus' competition rate as soon as he could. The rewards were quite enticing, and he definitely wouldn't pass up the opportunity to complete it as soon as possible.

< I will grow as the host grows stronger. Whenever the host makes a breakthrough, or passes a certain milestone, the completion rate will also increase. >

'I see.' William crossed his arms over his chest.

Chiffon, who was standing beside William was looking at him in confusion. Her Big Brother had been muttering something every now and then as if he was talking to someone. Also, he would nod his head from time to time as if agreeing to something.

Fortunately, before Chiffon could ask if William was fine, the Half-Elf turned his head to look at her.

"Are you ready to go to the next floor?" William asked with a smile.

"Un!" Chiffon nodded.

As soon as the two held hands, both of them transformed into beams of light that shot towards the sky. A new adventure was about to begin, but they were still several floors away from their goal.

William didn't know how long it would take until they reached the 51st Floor, but he was sure of one thing. Whatever trial was waiting for them there, its difficulty couldn't compare to the previous floors that they had visited.

After all, no one had cleared it for the past thousand years. Although it didn't show on his face, William was feeling anxious. The trials they had undertaken seemed simple, but in reality they were not.

Take the Floor of Partings for example.

If William didn't have the Undying Lands, or the Dungeon of Atlantis, there wouldn't be a way for him to use the loophole that the Laws of the floor held. Chiffon would have been stuck on the 10th Floor and would have to wait for William to pick her up on her way back from the tower.

The same could be said for the Floor of Creation. Fighting hundreds of Myriad Beasts? This was a near impossible feat. William just so happened to know about a Giant Robot which had the capabilities to turn anything beyond the rank of Demigod into ashes.

If not for that, they would be stuck on the 25th Floor due to Marissa's grudge.

Even so, William and Chiffon had no choice but to continue. Their goal was to clear the 51st Floor, and there was nothing he could do about it. Whatever dangers lurked on that floor that had blocked Humanity's advance, he would have to face it head-on, or risk staying on that floor...

Forever.

Chapter 602: Acting High And Mighty Doesn't Suit your Senile Face

Cheers resounded in the arena as two fighters stood with their weapons drawn.

Prince Jason faced Alinska Lafitte from the Demonic Continent.

The two fighters appraised each other with a critical eye. Anyone that had survived the harsh competition wasn't someone ordinary, and although Prince Jason was arrogant, he knew that he couldn't underestimate the lady that was in front of him.

"Battle Start!" The referee declared as he stepped outside the arena.

Prince Jason raised his sword and Alinska summoned her spear. A second later, both fighters lunged at each other.

Having a longer reach, Alinska unleashed a consecutive barrage of spear thrusts, which forced Prince Jason to take defensive actions.

The attack didn't last long because Alinska noticed something wasn't right. She jumped away from where she stood, just in time to evade a metallic spike that jutted out of the ground.

Prince Jason didn't miss this opportunity and closed the gap between them. He specialized in Metal Magic, just like Wendy, but his technique was more refined than William's lover. In order to prevent Alinska from regaining her stance, several metallic spears materialized in the air and flew in her direction.

The demonic lady sneered as she twirled her spear, creating a purple barrier. The metallic spears pelted it to no avail, but that was only a distraction that Prince Jason created. As soon as he came within strike range, the Prince activated his artifact and slashed the barrier.

At first, many thought that it was a futile attempt, but as soon as the sword touched the barrier, it went through as if the barrier didn't exist.

Alinska didn't expect the turn of events, and hurriedly tried to block the attack, but it was already too late.

With a shout, Prince Jason cut off the Demonic Lady's arm as the latter bit her lip to prevent herself from screaming out loud. She had forced herself to lean to the side and sacrificed her left arm, in order to survive the killing blow that was meant to slice her body in half.

Prince Jason was about to do a follow up attack, but something unexpected happened. The arm that he had just cut off pierced his right shoulder, which broke his momentum.

Alinska screeched and thrust her spear forward, with the intention to stab Prince Jason's chest, destroying his heart in the process.

Princess Vanessa who was watching from the Royal Seats, covered her eyes as a whimper escaped her lips. She didn't dare to look at her beloved's unexpected demise at the hand of the Demonic Lady whom she thought was as good as dead.

No one expected Alinska's counter-attack to be so fierce.

Blood sprayed in the air as the weapon hit its target. A scream filled with pain and disbelief resounded in the arena.

Alinska's spear had grazed Prince Jason's waist, and the Prince's sword was firmly planted on her chest.

"H-How?" Alinska asked as blood spilled at the corner of her lips.

Prince Jason twisted his sword, completely crushing the Demon's heart. Until her last breath, Alinska didn't hear the Prince's reply.

Prince Jason knelt on the ground as he pressed his hand over the wound on his waist. The Demonic Lady's spear was coated in a powerful poison that even a scratch was enough to kill a person in minutes.

Prince Jason forcefully slowed down his blood flow, and tried to slow down the poison from invading his body.

The referee hurriedly declared the end of the match, and several Clerics standing at the side ran towards the arena.

The Head Cleric ran a diagnostic scan on the Prince's body and hissed at his discovery.

"Venom from the Two Horned World Cobra," the Head Cleric immediately administered a powerful cure spell, but he knew that it would only help slow down the poison.

The Two Horned World Cobra was one of the Myriad Beasts that lorded over one of the territories in the Demonic Continent. Its poison was very potent, and the only way to cure it completely was to use the Divinity of the Gods.

"Quick, take him to Aamon's Temple!" the Head Cleric ordered.

The Cleric knew that this was a fruitless task. There was no way that Prince Jason would be able to resist the poison until they arrived at the Temple, but there was nothing he could do. He could only pray that the Emperor wouldn't punish him for his inability to save the Prince's life.

As the Clerics were about to carry their Prince, a cold and commanding voice stopped them in their tracks.

"There's no need to go to the Temple," a beautiful woman with purple hair appeared a few meters away from where they stood. "I will take over from here."

"L-Lady Alina," the Head Cleric stuttered. He didn't expect that the Oracle of Aamon's Temple would be present in the tournament.

Alina ignored the Head Cleric and pressed her hand over Prince Jason's chest. She then closed her eyes and muttered a short prayer for the God that watched over the Kraetor Empire.

"Great Aamon, Our Lord and Guardian, hear my prayer in my troubled hour," Alina prayed reverently. "Renew my strength so I might show the world your greatness. Sustain our Prince with your power, so he may overcome this obstacle.

"I seek this of you, Our Lord and Savior. Absolve our Prince with your infinite mercy!"

A bluish light descended from the heavens and covered Prince Jason's body. When the light receded, Prince Jason's injuries were completely healed. Although his face was still a bit pale, his life was no longer in danger.

The Head Cleric thanked the Oracle as he ordered his subordinates to carry the Prince out of the arena.

'Too bad,' The Demon General, Zagarl Rannath, thought.

The handsome Demon General with gray hair, and two protruding horns on his head leaned on his chair in disappointment.

He was Carter's superior and the one responsible for the plan to abduct the talented young men and women of the Hellan Royal Academy. Unfortunately, his plan failed and two of his trusted subordinates had died in the aftermath.

The Demon General was hoping that the Prince would also die along with their disposable pawn. That way, there would be less competitors, and it would also deal a devastating blow to the Kraetor Royal Family.

Although some of the Emperors, and Kings had gathered in the Kraetor Empire for the competition, that didn't mean that their rivalries had ended.

It was not only Zagarl who felt the same. Several of the Kraetor Empire's rivals, and enemies were disappointed that the Oracle of Aamon was present in the competition. If she wasn't then one of the Princes' would have died, giving them a reason to celebrate.

Some of them glanced at Emperor Leonidas who was seated far from them in the VIP Box that was reserved for the rulers of the Central Continent.

The Emperor had a calm expression on his face. No one could tell what he was thinking, or what he felt at that time.

As if understanding their intentions, Emperor Leonidas smirked as he looked down on the arena.

"Only weaklings and cowards scheme in the dark," the Emperor said with confidence. "These kinds of people will not amount to anything. They will forever be mediocre."

The Emperors, Kings, as well as the Patriarch's of the other influential families were very tempted to spit on the Emperor of the Kraetor Empire. Among all of them, Emperor Leonidas was known as a schemer.

This was why he was given the title of the "Emperor that Stood Above the Clouds".

"Have you no shame, old man?" Empress Andraste wasn't able to take the Kraetor Emperor's words lying down. "You should just retire and wait until the day you kick the bucket. Acting high and mighty doesn't suit your senile face."

Emperor Leonidas chuckled and completely ignored Empress Andraste's outburst. Among the Sovereigns seated near him, the Amazon Empress was one of the handful of people that could openly berate him like this.

After all, the two of them had gone adventuring together when they were still young. They even shared several romantic nights together. It was quite unfortunate that their unions had born no fruit.

This was one of Emperor Leonidas' regrets. The same could be said to the Empress Andraste, who still held some lingering attachment to the man who took all of her firsts.. If only a child was born between them then their relationship wouldn't have become distant, as they parted ways to rule their own Empires.

Chapter 603: Prince Maximilian's Unexpected Move

"This is a surprise," a beautiful elf with light-green hair said with a smile. "You don't look disappointed."

Prince Maximilian grinned as he summoned his Rapier. "Lady McLean, although we quarrel, and treat each other as rivals, the members of our family don't find satisfaction in the death of our kin. I will appreciate it if you remember that."

Pearl McLean nodded her head as she summoned her bow. "I will remember that."

The earlier battle may have ended quickly, but the outcome of the match was something that the spectators didn't expect. One died, and the other one would have also died, if not for the Oracle personally making an appearance.

"Battle Start!" the referee declared.

Immediately, Pearl jumped backwards and her body floated in the air. The Elves were known for their strong magical power, and affinity to Wind and Earth Magic. Some of them specialized in Spirit Magic which allowed them to summon Spirits to aid them in battle.

Unlike all Elves, Pearl was a prodigy that specialized in Wind Magic. She was also Charmaine's older sister.

The reason why she joined the tournament was to find William and ask him to release her sister. Several of the survivors that had returned to the Silvermoon Continent had told her that her sister had been taken hostage, by the Half-Elf who was also the son of the Human Hero and the Saintess.

Pearl was out on a mission when the Elven Expedition sailed to the south. She only knew about the events that transpired there when she returned to the Silvermoon Continent.

Because of this, she begged the Elven Council to allow her to be one of the Elven representatives that would go to the Kraetor Empire and participate in the Tournament of Champions.

The Council approved her request because Pearl was truly one of the most outstanding members of the young generation. However, she had been made to swear an oath to never antagonize William.

Clearly, the Elven Council didn't want to have another confrontation with William after what happened to the Southern Continent.

Pearl released several wind arrows with deadly precision. Although she could only use Wind Magic, her proficiency with it was well beyond the ability of her peers.

If there was a ranking among the young prodigies of the Elven Race, Pearl would be on the Top Five because of her uncanny fighting ability.

Prince Maximilian's face remained calm as he dodged the attacks that were coming at him from different directions. The Elven beauty didn't stay in one location, and flew all over the arena, sending a rain of arrows that showed no mercy.

The Prince dodged, and deflected those that he couldn't dodge. The fight had only been around two minutes when something unexpected happened.

"Okay, you are good," Prince Maximilian said as he dodged an arrow that was aimed at his head. "I concede."

Pearl, who was jumping around the arena, almost lost her balance when she landed on the ground. She was secretly preparing a full-powered attack that was capable of destroying half of the arena once it was unleashed.

However, before she could finish her plan, the Kraetor Prince had already surrendered, which left a complicated feeling in her heart.

"Are you sure you want to surrender?" the referee asked Prince Maximilian for confirmation.

The Prince nodded his head. "Yes. I concede this match. It is Lady McLean's victory."

Prince Maximilian gave the beautiful Elf a curt nod before leaving the arena.

The citizens of the Kraetor Empire didn't react to their Prince's surrender, but the foreign guests were unable to understand why Prince Maximilian gave up on the match.

A few minutes later, Prince Maximilian appeared in the VIP Box reserved for the Kraetor Royal Family.

"It seems that you met someone very formidable, cousin," Princess Vanessa said in a teasing tone.

Prince Maximilian chuckled as he sat beside the girl who had developed a crush on Prince Jason, ever since she was ten years old. Since marrying their relatives was a common practice among the Kraetor Royal Family, no one prevented Princess Vanessa from making advances on Prince Jason.

Unfortunately, the one she loved didn't seem to be too interested in her. Although they could talk normally, and even spent some time alone with each other, the Fifth Prince of the Kraetor Empire never said, did, or implied, anything that added fuel to Princess Vanessa's infatuation.

Even so, the Princess believed that as long as she endured and persevered, her feelings would reach her beloved, and he would, in turn, return the overflowing feelings she had for him.

"Yes, she is indeed very formidable," Prince Maximilian replied. "If I stayed there for half a minute longer, I would have definitely died. That b*tch intended to take half of the arena with me."

Prince Maximilian's scholarly facade disappeared as he openly cursed Pearl within their VIP Box. This room had been engraved by powerful runes, so he wasn't worried that everything he said would be heard by others.

For him, everyone in the room was family, except for Ian, who was seated beside Princess Sidonie. Even so, he believed that William's retainer was someone that could keep his lips sealed when it came to the secrets of the Kraetor Family.

Prince Darren, the Second Prince, almost choked on the fruit juice he was drinking. Many thought that Prince Maximilian was a strong fighter, but the truth was, he was more of a scholar.

The other Princes' and Princesses' were also alarmed by their cousin's words, because they knew that the eldest among them wasn't someone who liked making excuses.

The Prince was trained to fight using a sword since he was young, which helped cement the citizens' misunderstanding that he was a prodigy that excelled in sword fights.

In reality, the First Prince's sword skills were only average.

However, his true specialty lay in Fire Magic, but this was something that only the members of the Royal Family knew. Prince Maximilian rarely used this skill because it was his trump card. Those who had seen him use his magic had long been erased from the world.

He would not allow anyone to know the secret he was hiding, not only for his sake, but for the sake of the entire Royal Family since the Kraetor Family had a secret hidden in their bloodline.

The reason why the people thought that Prince Maximilian specialized in sword fighting was due to the Prince's inborn blessing, which was clairvoyance.

Prince Maximilian could see the things that would happen in the future. This ability only triggered if his life would be in danger. This was why, among the Princes of the Kraetor Empire, he was the least likely to die in any given situation.

While fighting against Pearl, the Prince saw himself being blasted into pieces by a powerful spell with unknown origins. Since he had no intention of dying, the Prince ate his pride and surrendered.

He would rather live and fight another day, than die and not see another day.

It was a very easy decision to make, and Prince Maximilian chose the most suitable option that would guarantee his life.

With this, the battles within Bracket A had almost been settled.

Emperor Leonidas knew of his grandson's ability, so when the latter chose to surrender, he didn't berate him. In the end, only one Prince would proceed to the next round, so it didn't matter if Prince Maximilian won or not.

Although the last battle was a bit lackluster, there was nothing that anyone could do about it. The next set of matches would be held the next day, and it would be Bracket B's turn to take the spotlight.

Princess Sidonie and Ian were also very interested to see the results of those battles. After all, the one whom they had their eyes on, Kenneth, would be in tomorrow's battle.

The beautiful Princess and her other half hoped that the lucky streak of the Silver-haired pretty boy would end. He was a threat to their happiness, so she wished with everything she had that William's Ex-Roommate would kick the bucket.

Ian knew what Princess Sidonie was thinking and smiled bitterly.

If someone were to ask her if she liked or disliked Kenneth, the answer would be Yes. However, she also felt that the boy really didn't have any malice, or hostility, towards William. It just so happened that he was so tight-lipped about the message he was carrying.

If only Kenneth had said the words that they wanted to hear, the two ladies might have been more than happy to allow him to personally pass his message to William, who was busy challenging the floors of the Tower of Babylon.

Chapter 604: A Thousand Years Of Waiting [Part 1]

After leaving the floor of creation, William and Chiffon appeared in a pure white world. There was nothing to see in this world, only the color white.

William frowned. According to the information he had, the next floor was called the Floor of Waterfalls. It was a floor that had over a thousand waterfalls, and the test would be finding the right waterfall where a treasure was hidden.

However, the world they were in didn't have anything. There was no sky, no scenery, nothing, but only pure white. It didn't take long for him to realize that something was wrong. William pulled Chiffon close to him as he scanned his surroundings.

He didn't want to get caught by unexpected surprises, especially surprises from the Guardians of the Tower of Babylon.

Chiffon clung to her Big Brother's arms while scanning the surroundings. She distinctly felt that something was wrong, but she didn't know what it was.

Two minutes passed in silence before the area above their heads opened up.

Just like a box that had been opened, they saw a blue sky. The sides of the pure white world also collapsed revealing beings that surrounded the two teenagers from every direction.

They came in all shapes and sizes, and some of them looked very alien.

As the two looked around, they recognized two familiar faces.

Xod looked at William as if the Half-Elf had owned him a million gold coins. Oogwei, on the other hand, had a smile on its face. It even waved at William and Chiffon, and the pink-haired girl waved back in return.

As if the last piece of the puzzle fell in place, William finally realized who these beings surrounding them were.

'They are the Guardians of Babylon,' William thought.

"Correct."

A being who looked like a Jellyfish floated in front of William. Its head was purple in color, while its tentacles had the colors of the rainbow.

"Allow me to introduce myself," the Jellyfish said in a calm and soothing voice. "My name is JellyBelle, and I am the Guardian of the 50th Floor of Babylon."

William nodded his head in acknowledgement, "I am William and this girl beside me is Chiffon."

"I know," JellyBelle replied. "Oogwei had already told us a bit about both of you. Tell me, William, what is your reason for climbing this tower?"

The Guardians looked at William with a serious expression. What they were doing right now was against the rules of the Tower. However, after hearing Oogwei's story, all of them convened and made a joint decision.

What is that joint decision?

It was to have a serious talk with William and find out his real reason for climbing the Tower. JellyBelle had the power to read the mind and heart of anyone. No one could beat it when it came to interrogations.

All it needed to do was use one of its rainbow-colored tentacles to pry the answer directly from William's mind. However, since what they were doing now was illegal, it decided to take the pacifist approach and just settled for a dialogue.

This was the first time that all the Guardians below the 50th Floor had brought a player to their domain, and perhaps, there would be no precedence after.

"I came to the Tower with the intention to clear the 51st Floor," William answered.

"And why do you want to clear it?" JellyBelle inquired. "You already know that none have been able to clear it for the past thousand years, and yet, you still want to clear it? Do you know how many have come to challenge that floor? These people are stronger than you.

"In our eyes, you are just an outstanding youth, but that's it. Sure, you may be able to reach my Floor, but it is impossible for you to clear the 51st Floor."

William smiled. He didn't understand why the Guardian of the 50th Floor was telling him these things. In his perspective, the Guardians should remain neutral and not interfere with whatever the players wanted.

However, right now, they kidnapped him and Chiffon. What could this mean? It meant that things weren't so simple. Although JellyBelle seemed to berate William, the tone it used didn't have malice or any kind of hostility.

"It doesn't matter whether I can clear the 51st Floor or not," William stated. "The fact still remains that my purpose for coming here is to go to the Floor of the Devils and conquer it."

"Just where is your confidence coming from? Are you thinking of using your million-strong goblin army to pave the floor for you?" JellyBelle asked in an amused tone.

Several of the Guardians also chuckled. Truthfully, they too, didn't know what was on the 51st Floor.

The 1st Floor up to the 50th Floor were called the Challenger Floors.

The 51st up to the 100th Floor was called the Floors of the Elite.

The Guardians of the Challengers and the Guardians of the Floors of the Elite were separated into different planes.

None of them could interact with each other.

This was why the Guardians didn't know what kind of Challenge was available on the 51st Floor, which had stopped humanity's climb to the top of the Tower.

Truth be told, the Guardians wanted to know what was on the other side. That way, they would know the reason as to why no one had succeeded in the past. Right now, no one dared to climb up to the 51st Floor.

Most of them only wanted to reach the 50th Floor, and the Guardians had already given up on Humanity.

However, William came. If he was only someone that wanted to climb the tower then that was fine. But, he was climbing the tower with the intention of reaching the 51st Floor and clearing it.

To the Guardians this was good news because they could finally use William as their eye, to see what was on the other side of the veil, that even their authority failed to breach. Even so, they must first know if the Half-Elf was really serious in climbing the tower, or if he was just spouting nonsense to make himself look good in their eyes.

"I don't know the reason why you brought me here, and I don't really care," William said as he held Chiffon's hand firmly. "Just like everyone in the tower, I am climbing it for my own reasons. I humbly ask all of you to allow us to proceed to the next floor. People's lives depended on my mission."

JellyBelle floated near William and extended its tentacle towards his forehead.

"Don't move," JellyBelle ordered. "If you cooperate we will let you go unharmed, but if you resist, you will stay here in this place forever."

Although the Guardian's tone was still civil, the aura it radiated would not accept any opposition.

JellyBelle pressed the tip of its tentacle on William's forehead. It didn't care whether the Half-Elf wanted to cooperate or not.

The Guardian of the 50th Floor only wanted to know one thing. It wanted to know if William really had the ability to end the boredom that it felt for the past thousand years.

Chapter 605: A Thousand Years Of Waiting [Part 2]

As soon as the tentacle touched William's forehead, JellyBelle saw a pitch-black world. It turned around and looked at its surroundings, but there was nothing that could be seen but darkness.

"It's not good to invade other people's privacy."

A soft and teasing tone reached JellyBelle's ears which made it quickly look behind it.

The darkness slowly lightened up revealing a throne that was as black as the world it resided in.

Seated on the throne was an otherworldly beauty who was looking at JellyBelle with amusement.

The Guardian of the 50th Floor wasn't able to stop its body from shuddering because it realized the identity of the being it was staring at. The beautiful lady that was seated on the throne was someone that it couldn't afford to offend no matter what.

"Go back, Guardian," the beautiful lady ordered. "You have overstepped your bounds. I don't like bugs laying their hands on my property."

"F-Forgive me," JellyBelle stuttered as it hurriedly cut the connection.

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The tentacle had only touched William's forehead for a few seconds before JellyBelle pulled it out. The Jellyfish's body shuddered uncontrollably as if it was hit by an electric shock. A moment later, JellyBelle crashed on the ground as if it had lost its ability to float in the air.

The Guardians became alarmed and JellyBelle's close friends hurried to check its condition. After looking at it upclose they realized that the Jellyfish had lost consciousness.

Oogwei walked towards the unconscious Jellyfish and tapped its head repeatedly with its foot, while chanting a spell. A minute passed, and the Jellyfish's tentacle started to move. It had regained its consciousness, but its body would still shudder from time to time.

William glanced at the Guardian with a confused expression. Earlier, when the tentacle touched his forehead, he felt a shock run through his body. After that, JellyBelle hastily pulled back its tentacle and lost consciousness.

The Guardians at the scene frowned because they didn't understand what was happening. They chose JellyBelle to be their envoy to communicate with William because they trusted its ability to get to the bottom of things.

They never thought that one of the strongest Guardians of Babylon would faint just by touching the red-headed teenager's forehead!

"Y-You!" JellyBelle shakily pointed one of its tentacles in William's direction. "You were sent here by a God?"

"Yes," William replied. "I was sent here by a God to clear the 51st Floor of Babylon. I will greatly appreciate it if you allow me to proceed to the next floor unharmed."

What William and JellyBelle didn't know was they were referring to two different Gods. The Half-Elf was referring to Aamon, while JellyBelle was referring to the Primordial Goddess that it had seen a few minutes ago.

"So that is the case...," JellyBelle's body slowly floated in the air. "You are here under the orders of a God."

The Guardians finally understood why JellyBelle had an intense reaction earlier. If what it said was true then the reason it had received a backlash was due to its attempt to pry against the workings of a God.

"So, what is everyone's decision?" Oogwei asked.

Xod, who had its hands crossed over his chest, answered in a casual manner.

"Since he is under the orders of a God then his intention to go to the 51st Floor and conquer it is genuine," Xod replied. "I believe that the Gods had finally decided to resume the progress of humanity and send this Half-Elf to pave the path for the next Era."

The Guardians nodded in agreement. They too think that this was the will of the Gods. Since that was the case, why was there a need to fight it? Their reason for bringing William in their domain was to give him a chance to directly jump to the 51st Floor in one go.

JellyBelle's duty was to test whether William had the ability to clear the 51st Floor or not. Now that they knew that he was being guided by a God, they were more eager than ever to send him to the Floor of the Devil, which no one had cleared in the past.

JellyBelle, who had just recovered, remained silent. It appraised William from head to foot as if trying to find the reason why THAT Goddess was favoring him.

A few more minutes passed before a sigh escaped JellyBelle's thoughts.

"Fine. As the Guardian of the 50th Floor, I hereby grant you passage to the 51st Floor," JellyBelle raised its tentacle and a ray of light covered William and Chiffon's bodies.

"I have planted a part of my consciousness inside you," JellyBelle commented. "All of us here want to see the 51st floor through your eyes. I wish you goodluck. Know that even though a Goddess is watching over you, that doesn't guarantee any chances of success."

'Goddess?' William thought. 'Is it talking about Lily?'

William wanted to ask JellyBelle what the Goddess looked like, but before he could do that, the world around him had already changed its scenery.

The Half-Elf and the pink-haired girl found themselves standing on a raised platform. In the distance, a massive maze could be seen. The Maze reminded William of the labyrinth that protected the Minotaur Race from outsiders.

'A maze would not be enough to prevent people from clearing this stage,' William thought.

Although mazes were hard to clear. It was not impossible. William didn't believe that humanity failed to advance to the next floor because none of them were able to find the exit of the maze.

While William was thinking of other possibilities as to why no one was able to conquer the floor, a series of notifications appeared in his Status Page which made his eyes widen in shock.

< Connection to the Thousand Beast Domain has been disconnected >

< Connection to the Dungeon of Atlantis has been disconnected >

< Connection to the Goblin Crypt has been disconnected. >

< Connection to the Undying Land has been disconnected >

< The Test of the Devil has started >

Chapter 606: Devil's Floor [Part 1]

After reading the series of notifications, William became alarmed.

This was the first time that this had happened so he immediately consulted the System to ask what was happening.

'Optimus, what happened?' William inquired.

Ever since the System had an upgrade, its functions had also improved as well.

< Give me a moment, Will. I am currently analyzing the laws of this floor. >

The Half-Elf sighed internally as he gazed at the maze in the distance. Chiffon noticed the subtle changes in William's expression because she had been observing him pretty closely ever since the two of them had started to spend time together.

With a glance, she could tell that something was wrong.

"Big Brother, what happened?" Chiffon asked.

William lightly squeezed her hand before replying.

"We can't go to the Thousand Beast Domain to play for the time being," William answered. "No matter what happens, stay close to me. We will enter the maze in just a few minutes."

"Un!" Chiffon nodded her head.

She had complete trust in William's judgement and simply gazed at the Maze in front of her. Dwarves had an uncanny ability of retracing their steps no matter where they were. It meant that regardless of where they went, they would not get lost in the place since they knew where they had traveled before.

Even if they couldn't find the exit of the dungeon, retracing their steps wasn't a problem. Because of this, Chiffon was confident that they could find the exit of the maze without fail, albeit it would take some time to do so.

For the time being, William decided to have lunch with Chiffon, while Optimus was busy analyzing the notorious floor that no one had conquered before.

An hour later, several system messages appeared in William's Status Page.

< Will, according to my analysis, there is a certain law that prevents any kind of domain from overlapping with this floor. But, rest assured. Our connection with the Thousand Beast Domain, Dungeon of Atlantis, Goblin Crypt, and Undying Lands, are merely disconnected. It will be reconnected the moment we leave this floor. >

William nodded in understanding, 'Thank you. What about the maze? Can you find the exit?'

< No. The mapping system also doesn't work in this place. At most, you can only clear the places that you have travelled on the map. Be careful, Will. I have a bad feeling about this place. >

'Thank you,' William replied. 'I will keep that in mind.'

Even without Optimus' reminder, William had already decided to take this matter seriously. This was not the first time that his Domain had been blocked by a law of the Tower. The Floor of Parting also had similar laws that prevented others from hiding in a domain in order to proceed to the next floor.

If not for the fact that the Undying Lands was governed by its own set of rules, Chiffon might have been left behind when William ascended to the next floor.

After eating, William and Chiffon stepped inside the entrance of the maze. After walking for some time, they came across their first intersection.

"Let's go right first," William said.

"Un." Chiffon nodded her head in agreement.

An hour passed as William and Chiffon entered the maze. Whenever there was an intersection, they would always choose the right path. William gave Chiffon a special marking pen, and the little girl would always write an arrow in the direction that they traveled.

Chiffon found this very interesting and took her job seriously. Meanwhile, William and Optimus were carefully mapping the area that they had traversed. They were looking for signs for any changes in the pattern of the maze.

So far, there were no changes. However, William noticed something strange. In the black area of the map, on the place where the map was not revealed, there were several red spots that blinked unceasingly.

Naturally, these red spots were hostile creatures. The Half-Elf had already anticipated that something like this would happen, but he wasn't worried. The two continued to chart their course until twelve hours had passed.

William frowned when he looked at the map. After twelve hours of walking they had only covered a small area of the map. This just proved how big the maze was. It also made William realize that conquering the 51st Floor in a day was out of the question.

Earlier, he tried to break down the walls to no avail. The walls were protected by the Law of the Guardian, so destroying it was out of the question.

Flying and any other forms of flight were also disabled. After turning into a corner, William saw a blinking red dot that they would come across at the next intersection. This battle was inevitable, and William was also curious on what kind of Monster was waiting for them at the other side.

"Chiffon, wear your gauntlets," William said as he summoned Stormcaller.

The pink-haired girl's expression immediately became serious as she equipped the Devourer's Gauntlets.

Instead of waiting for them to make a right turn, the red blinking spot started moving.

William immediately took a fighting stance, and Chiffon did the same. Their eyes focused on the right intersection where the monster was going to appear.

A few seconds later, a red, frog-like man with a freakishly big head, peeked at the corner of the intersection. Its blood-red eyes stared at William and Chiffon with undisguised hunger. It then gave them a creepy smile, showing a mouth without teeth.

This was the first time that William saw this creature, so he immediately used his appraisal skill to get its information.

< Yara-ma-yha-who >

-- Devouring Vampire

-- Bloodsucker

-- Threat Level: A (Mid)

-- Cannot be added to the herd

– The Yara-ma-yha-who likes to hunt unsuspecting travelers when they least expect it. Although it is only a meter tall, and is very fast and agile. It sucks its victim's blood through their fingertips, while its mouth could devour its prey even if they were ten times its size.

– Once it devours its victim, it will immediately take a nap. After it wakes up from its nap, it will regurgitate its victim and take a nap again.

– The Victim that had been regurgitated would be extremely weak from the loss of blood, and their skin would have a reddish tinge in them. It is advisable that those that had been regurgitated must do any means necessary to escape.

Once the Yara-ma-yha-who wakes up from its nap, it would once again hunt its victim and devour it again. Everytime the victim gets devoured and regurgitated by the The Yara-ma-yha-who, there will be changes in their body.

The victim would become smaller, and their skin redder. It was said that after the Yara-ma-yha-who devours its victim for the fourth time. The next time the Yara-ma-yha-who regurgitates its victim, they would no longer be human, but a Yara-ma-yha-who.

As the Yara-ma-yha-who looked at William and Chiffon, a creepy laugh emerged from its toothless mouth.

Soon, this laughter was followed by a chorus of laughter that came from all over the maze. The red blinking dots on the map were slowly converging towards them. According to William's estimate, there were at least a hundred of them.

"Chiffon, no matter what happens, stay as close to me as possible."

"Understood, Big Brother."

As the red dots drew closer, the laughter of the Yara-ma-yha-who became louder. It had been a very long time since they had sucked the blood of those that were foolish enough to enter the 51st Floor.

This was William's and Chiffon's first battle within the floor that was given the nickname...

Devil's Floor.

Chapter 607: Devil's Floor [Part 2]

Lightning snaked around William's body as the power of Stormcaller burst forth. He knew that this was a critical time, so he intended to get serious and use the power of his Prestige Class. He hadn't been spending his time idly in the Southern Continent after the war with the Elves.

William knew that he needed more power once he stepped into the Central Continent and didn't stop training his other Job Classes in the Dungeon of Atlantis.

'Optimus, change my Job Class to Ninja.'

< Understood. >

As soon as the Job Class was activated, a dozen clones appeared in front of William. This was the Clone Skill that was available in the Ninja Skill Tree. Ninjas were known for their agile movements, assassination abilities, and ninjitsu.

One of their specialties was to create clones of themselves that aided them in battle.

The Prestige Class Ninja was acquired when William visited the Temple of the Ten Thousand Gods. Its requirements were the Geomancer, Stalker, and Archer Job Classes.

The Stalker Job Class was the next form of the Thief Class. As for the Archer Class, William had maxed this Job Class long ago. The Geomancer class had been trained by Ashe, which also allowed it to reach the necessary level requirement.

Two years after the war in the Southern Continent ended, William focused his attention in unlocking the strong Prestige Classes like the Elemental Lord and Ninja to boost his repertoire in battle.

Each clone possessed 50% of William's strength. However, instead of holding Stormcaller in their hands, they were wielding various weapons.

Five of them were wielding swords called Ninjato, which was the default weapon of the Ninja Clones. The other five held Kama in each hand, while the last two held crossbows.

(A/N: Kama is a form of sickle.)

A dozen clones was the maximum number that William could create right now. If he wanted to have more clones, he would have to upgrade the Ninja Job Class to its final form, Shadow Sovereign.

Although these dozen clones were weaker than William, they gained all the buffs of William's King's Legion, which increased their stats by a good margin. Also, there was another hidden trick to William's close which was...

""Quick Shot War Art Second Form!""

All the clones said in unison. At the same time, dozens of Yara-ma-yha-who, appeared at the path leading towards them. They were so fast and agile that they were able to walk on the wall itself.

The meter-tall Yara-ma-yha-whos opened their disgusting large mouths and jumped at William's clones with the intention to cling on them like a koala. That way, they could wrap their arms around the clone's body, sucking their blood, while their abnormally large mouth would devour their bodies starting from their head.

This scene would be perfect for a horror movie and was guaranteed to make anyone scream in fear. Chiffon was intimidated by their appearances, and numbers . Because of this, she unconsciously took a step backwards. That was how scary the scene was in front of her.

As the Bloodthirsty Devouring little vampires jumped in the air, the clones completed the war art they had prepared in hand.

""Shotgun!""

Powerful Auras erupted from the tip of their weapons and pushed back the approaching Yara-ma-yha-whos including those that had jumped into the air to attack them from above.

William, on the other hand, raised Stormcaller and dozens of lightning bolts erupted from its tip, blasting the disgusting creatures away and severely wounding them.

Chuckle

One of the severely injured Yara-ma-yha-who raised its head and grinned. The injuries on its body were healing at a rapid pace, similar to the regeneration abilities of the trollhounds.

William snorted as Stormcaller once again crackled in preparation for the next attack.

His clones followed suit as they, too, prepared to use a more powerful war art to deal with the annoying Yara-ma-yha-whos whose regeneration made them a very annoying enemy to fight.

""Quick Shot War Art Fourth Form!""

William and his clones roared.

""Grand Bazooka!""

A loud explosion echoed within the maze as the Yara-ma-yha-whos cried out in pain from the attack that had torn their bodies apart.

Since the passage was not that wide, the effect of the Grand Bazooka was quite profound. All the Yara-ma-yha-whos who had attacked William were all blasted into bits.

William frowned because he noticed that the pieces of flesh on the ground started to wriggle. He had a very bad premonition, so he decided to obliterate them again for the second time.

However, before he could even do anything, Chiffon stepped forward and opened her mouth. The wriggling pieces of flesh were helplessly sucked inside her mouth, making them unable to reform their bodies.

The surviving Yara-ma-yha-whos who saw this scene instantly panicked and ran away in fear. They were creatures who specialized in sucking the blood of others, and devouring them whole.

However, when they saw Chiffon do the same, their survival instincts kicked in. All of them chose to flee. They were not afraid of getting injured, or blasted into pieces because they could still regenerate and re-attach their bodies.

But, if they were devoured then that would be their end. This was why, instead of confronting the pink-haired girl, they chose to escape for the time being.

The maze had several other creatures in it aside from the Yara-ma-yha-who, so the little critters were confident that they would have their revenge. Soon, their chuckle once again echoed within the maze, making Chiffon cling to William's arm in fright.

The Half-Elf sighed because he knew that this was only the beginning. There were blinking red dots on the map that were bigger than the Yara-ma-yha-who. The annoying little devouring vampires were troublesome enough, William only hoped that they would not encounter stronger monsters.

He was sure that the opportunistic little bastards would pay close attention to them, and wait for the right opportunity to go in for the kill.

"Let's return to that dead end we found a little while ago," William said. "It is not safe to travel right now. We need some rest."

Chiffon was still shaken from the encounter, so she just nodded her head, while clinging to William's arm.

They didn't know that at the center of the maze, someone was paying close attention to their every move.

That being licked his lips in anticipation as he waited for his guests to arrive at his location. Even from that distance, it could hear the sound of William's and Chiffon's heartbeats.

"Yes. This is what I want to hear." the being chuckled as it focused on Chiffon's loudly beating heart. "The heart of someone with a strong Divinity. I can't wait to pierce your chest, and take that small and innocent heart of yours from your body."

The being once again chuckled as it resisted the temptation. He needed to ensure that his two guests would reach the center of the maze first. That way, he could start the real Trial of the 51st Floor.

A trial that would make the hearts of his prey, succulent and sumptuous.. Hearts that he would eat, in order to break the seal that bound him inside the Tower of Babylon.

Chapter 608: I Will Bulldoze My Way Through

William and Chiffon retraced their steps to return to the dead end that they had seen a while ago.

After the battle against the Yara-ma-yha-whos, The Half-Elf knew that they couldn't continue to push forward for the time being. Hundreds of blinking dots had already arrived at the area, that was just outside the black fog that covered the map in his status page.

Along the way, William used his Runemaster Job Class to place traps on the floors, and walls, that lead towards their destination. Some of the Yara-ma-yha-whos were quite impatient and followed them as they retreated, triggering the traps.

The little vampires cried out in pain as they hastily retreated. Although they had a fast regeneration ability, the power of lightning decreased the speed of their recovery. Also, the lightning traps were very painful, which made the Yara-ma-yha-whos very hesitant to follow William and Chiffon.

Their creepy chuckles spread across the maze like the cacklings of hyenas, who were encircling the prey that they had chosen.

"Sleep, don't mind them," William said as he softly patted Chiffon's head.

Chiffon didn't move because William's touch calmed her down. However, she was still worried about the Yara-ma-yha-who whose chuckles were growing in fervor.

"How about you, Big Brother?" Chiffon inquired. "Are you not going to sleep?"

William smiled, "I will sleep later. Don't worry, I will wake you up when it's your turn for watch duty."

The pink-haired girl reluctantly nodded her head before leaning her head on William's chest.

Both of them were seated with their backs against the wall. Although this was not a comfortable position to sleep in, the two had no choice but to adjust due to their current situation.

William created a sound proofing spell and applied it to Chiffon's ears. This way, the little girl wouldn't be too bothered by the creepy chuckles that resounded within the maze of the 51st Floor.

Several explosions could be heard in the distance. Clearly, some of the Yara-ma-yha-whos decided to try once again, and stepped up on William's traps.

'Optimus, do me a favor and alert me right away when they go past the danger zone,' William said. 'I will also rest. I leave the watch duty to you.'

< Affirmative. >

Just like Chiffon, William was very tired as well. He knew that in order to break out of their current situation, he needed to be properly rested in order to react to any kind of situation.

A few hours passed, and the defensive line that William had set was slowly being chipped away by the relentless little vampires. Due to their vast numbers, they were taking turns in clearing the lightning mines that the Half-Elf had set beforehand.

The System was paying close attention to the little critters to ensure that they wouldn't be able to sneak attack the two teenagers who were fast asleep.

A few hours passed, before William was awoken abruptly by the System.

< Will, they're here. >

William opened his eyes and dispelled the sound proofing spell on Chiffon's ears. He then lightly shook the girl who was drooling on his chest.

"Chiffon, wake up," William said as he stared at the blinking red dots that were only a few hundred meters away from them. "We have company."

Chiffon opened her eyes, but she was still half asleep. However, her drowsiness disappeared instantly when she heard the familiar chuckling sounds of the Yara-ma-yha-whos.

The pink-haired girl immediately stood up and equipped her gauntlets. Although she was still fearful of the creepy, little vampires, she knew that fighting them was inevitable.

William took a step forward and took a deep breath. He had already consulted with Optimus earlier that their chances of advancing on the maze, littered with thousands of Yara-ma-yha-whos, was not ideal.

Sure, they could defeat them, but they would just keep on coming back. William had a nagging feeling that these thousands of little vampires were once the challengers who had come to the 51st Floor with the hope of conquering it.

He estimated that those below the rank of Adamantium (Centennial Rank) had all turned into Yara-ma-yha-whos. Those who were stronger might have transformed into more frightful beings, which represented the big red dots on the map.

According to Optimus' estimate, the Yara-ma-yha-whos in the maze numbered in the hundreds of thousands, while the red dots numbered in the thousands.

It was clear that this was an uphill battle with no end in sight. This wouldn't have been a problem if William could summon his army. Unfortunately, that option was ruled out, so he had to do what was needed in order for him and Chiffon to survive.

Although 98% of the map in his status page was still covered in black fog, something could be seen at its center.

A small, stationary, golden rectangle could be seen at the center of the map. Although William and Optimus didn't know what it was, both of them guessed that it was something important.

'According to your calculations, how high is the chance for that golden rectangle to be the exit of this maze?' William inquired.

< 53% >

William narrowed his eyes as he came to a decision.

Finding the exit using normal means was not possible. They would have to deal with the Yara-ma-yha-whos constant harassment, and that would be an exhausting experience. Also, it greatly increased the risk of them being overwhelmed by their sheer numbers.

After careful deliberation, William decided to take a chance. He didn't know if the plan he had in mind would work. But, he would rather try than fight a losing battle of attrition.

Chiffon unconsciously took a deep breath when a few small heads poked at the corner of the intersection.

Three Yara-ma-yha-whos, looked at William and Chiffon before chuckling. A few seconds later, more of them appeared, instantly blocking the only path that they could take.

"Chiffon, I will bulldoze my way through," William said. "Stick to me, and don't get left behind."

Chiffon nodded, "Understood."

William summoned a metallic golden staff in his hand as he took a step forward. He then pointed its tip towards the snickering little bastards who were staring at them with hunger.

"Break all the walls that stand before me!" William roared. "Ruyi Jingu Bang!"

Chapter 609: Such A Waste Of Good Genes

Ruyi Jingu Bang extended and increased its size.

The Yara-ma-yha-whos who had already entered the pathway shrieked as the tip of the golden staff, smashed unto their bodies until it slammed on the wall of the intersection.

William could feel a powerful resistance that was resisting Ruyi Jingu Bang's blow. He knew that it was the laws of the world that prevented the destruction of the walls of the maze.

However, what was Ruyi Jingu Bang?

It was a weapon that could increase its length, size, and weight.

William roared as he continued to increase Ruyi Jingu Bang's size. It was at that moment when several cracks appeared on the wall that had already turned the little vampires into meat paste.

With a loud crack, the wall finally collapsed. The Half-Elf didn't relent and charged forward. The weapon in his hand answered his call and glowed brightly. All the walls in front of them were smashed to pieces.

"Chiffon!"

"Un!"

William and Chiffon ran as fast as they could as the Half-Elf used Ruyi Jingu Bang as a battering ram.

Immediately, the blinking red dots in the map were alerted and immediately swarmed towards them.

William decreased Ruyi Jingu Bang's length, but not its width. If you look at this scene from afar, it would appear that the red-headed teenager was holding a giant bazooka.

"Quick Shot War Arts, First Form!" William shouted. "Destroy everything in your path!"

"Railgun!"

A powerful explosion took place that sent William skidding tens of meters from where he stood. The recoil of the attack made his body creak as the bones on his arms cracked.

The Half-Elf endured the pain and began running. Sun Wukong was one of the most indestructible beings in creation. Although his bones had cracked, they were healing at a very rapid rate.

Meanwhile, all the monsters that had flooded the destroyed walls were obliterated to bits. This included the larger beasts that looked like a Cockatrice, that were rumored to have the ability to turn living creatures into stone.

Although William had destroyed the first wave of monsters, more came. He plucked out a few strands of his hair and blew on them, creating clones.

The clones' roles were to only protect them from the monster attacks, while William's role was to keep smashing the walls until they reached the center of the maze.

William was forcefully breaking the laws of the domain using Ruyi Jingu Bang, but this also came at a price. The duration of his Heroic Avatar was being sapped quite quickly.

With a loud shout, the Half-Elf smashed the final wall that blocked their way.

Chiffon's eyes widened when she saw what seemed to be a giant red oak tree. At its center, a rectangular red portal shone eerily.

"Chiffon," William said as he held her hand. "Let's go."

"Yes," Chiffon replied as she firmly held William's hand.

Thousands of monsters were rushing behind them, so the two didn't think twice and ran towards the red portal.

As soon as their bodies passed through it, a devilish chuckle echoed within the maze of the 51st Floor.

The chuckle sounded amused, and was even filled with anticipation.

After hearing this chuckle, the monsters stopped their advance and dispersed as if nothing had happened. The broken walls that William had smashed slowly returned to its original state. A few minutes later, all the traces of the battle disappeared.

The only thing that remained was the devilish laughter that belonged to the Lord of the Devil's Floor.

Meanwhile, in the Kraetor Empire...

Kenneth had just defeated his opponent, which made him one of the final contestants in his division. Right now, his final opponent was Eleazar Blackthorn who was lucky enough to get the free pass on the ballot draw, due to having an uneven number of participants.

As he walked down the arena, he glanced at the lightly-tanned young lady, who was wearing light-weight leather armor.

The lady returned his gaze with a smirk that seemed to be asking, "What are you looking at?"

Kenneth averted his gaze as he walked towards the seats that were reserved for the contestants of the tournament. He didn't want to create any trouble during his stay because it would only complicate his mission.

Lilith snorted as he turned her gaze back at the arena. For her, Kenneth was too delicate looking to match her preferences. As an Amazon who was looking for a potential partner, looks, bearing, and strength was important.

'He is strong, but too girly looking,' Lilith thought. 'Such a waste of good genes.'

The young Amazon shook her head lightly as she walked towards the arena. Her opponent was not a stranger to her. They had met several times when she was exploring dungeons and domains, and every time they met, they would always battle each other.

"My Dear Lilith, tell me, are we perhaps fated to be together?" Ged asked with a smile. "I don't know why the two of us always ended up fighting each other, but, there must be a deeper meaning to this, yes?"

Ged was well-known as the bastard prince of the Tenser Empire. He refused to get the surname of the Royal Family and settled for her mother's family name, which was Walker. This earned him the scorn of the Royal Family, but none of them dared to do anything underhanded to the bold teenager.

The Emperor favored him because of his fighting prowess, and allowed him to attain some degree of freedom. Although everyone called him a bastard, he was still recognized as a Prince by one of the powerful Empires that stood in the Central Continent.

Lilith chuckled as she nodded her head in agreement. "You're not bad, Ged. Your looks, and physique are passable, but you are a softie inside. You know that I don't like softies."

"How bold of you to assume that I have an interest in you." Ged crossed his arms over his chest and grinned. "Having you as a wife or concubine will be the death of me."

"Don't be like that. If I don't really find a suitable partner, I will consider you as my last resort."

"Should I be honored then?"

"You should."

Ged shook his head because they had already had this conversation countless times before. Lilith was a beauty, even among the Amazons, but Ged only thought of her as a good friend. Aside from her good looks, Ged abhorred her vices like gambling and theft.

What he wanted was a loyal and virtuous lady, and not a powder keg that could blow up at any moment.

"Well then, how about we have a bet for old times sake?" Lilith asked as she summoned a short sword and a shield.

Ged summoned a two handed sword and made a few casual swings. "Go on. I'm listening."

"If I win, you become my servant for a month," Lilith stated. "If you win, I'll be your servant for a month. Do we have a deal?"

"Only on the condition that neither of us will have the authority to auction or sell each other in order to gain profit," Ged replied.

"Tsk!"

"You never change, Lilith."

After that light banter, the two clashed at the center of the arena, leaving the referee dumbfounded.

"I still haven't said the start of the battle," the referee muttered helplessly.

To his credit, no one paid attention to him and only focused their gazes at the two combatants who were exchanging blows with sneers on their faces.

Chapter 610: You Can Stop Daydreaming

Lilith and Ged exchanged several blows that rang across the stadium.

Both of them had a firm grasp on each other's fighting ability. They had already fought against each other so many times in the past, and most of their Trump Cards were known to each other.

Empress Andraste sighed as she looked at her daughter, duking it out with the handsome boy that came from their rival Empire. The Tenser Empire and the Amazon Empire weren't really at odds at each other.

Both Empress Andraste, and Emperor Eugene of the Tenser Empire, do their best to not antagonize each other. The Emperor even joked at the Empress that he would give his blessings if Lilith were to drag Ged back to the capital of the Amazon Race.

Because of this, there was a time when Empress Andraste urged Lilith to drag Ged back to their Empire, but the latter refused it. The Amazon Princess would always say that Ged was not fit to become a mate of any of their warriors because he was a softie.

In truth, Empress Andraste didn't know if Lilith and Ged had the possibility of being a couple. The two of them would always bicker, and fight, but their battles were not a fight to the death.

The Amazon Empress felt like Lilith was only using Ged as a reserve candidate, just in case she didn't find a man that matched her taste. Truth be told, she had a feeling that Ged just treated her daughter as a naughty little sister, who was at loggerheads with her older brother.

'Well, if it is meant to be then it is meant to be,' Empress Andraste thought as she leaned back on her chair. 'Maybe I should just kidnap the boy and bring him back to our Empire by force. Let's see if my daughter will react then.'

As the Amazon Empress was busy concocting a kidnapping plan in her head, the battle in the arena was starting to heat up.

"The Amazon Princess is living up to her reputation," Evexius said softly beside Emperor Leonidas. "Prince Ged has also improved a lot. I think he is now stronger than Prince Jason. If the two of them meet in the finals, our Prince would have a hard time if he fought him in close combat."

Emperor Leonidas nodded his head. Currently, the remaining participants--who had not been eliminated--in the tournament were the strongest members of the young generation. Anyone of them could become the champion.

While it is true that Prince Ged was stronger than Prince Jason when it came to physical prowess, the Prince of the Kraetor Empire relies more on technique and strategy to get what he wants.

After five-full minutes of non-stop attack and defense, the two fighters pulled back at the same time.

"You've improved quite a bit, Lilith," Ged praised.

"And you didn't." Lilith chuckled. "Looks like you are destined to become my servant for a month. I've missed your cooking, make sure to not disappoint me later."

"You can stop daydreaming."

"Me? Daydreaming? What a joke. I want to eat steak tonight, medium rare is best."

Ged didn't answer. Instead, he lowered his double handed sword, with its tip pointing towards the ground in front of him.

When Lilith saw this, the smile on her face disappeared and was replaced with a serious expression. She knew that Ged was now about to get serious, and the play time was over.

The Amazon Princess tapped her round shield twice with her sword. Sharp blades protruded at the corners of her shield, which could easily cut flesh like a sword. The short sword in her hand glowed golden as light particles emitted from her body.

"It has been a while since I've seen the Dance of the Fireflies," Ged said softly. "Let's end this properly, Lilith."

The Amazon Princess took a fighting stance as she prepared to strike. The two fighters faced each other as if they had agreed beforehand to end this battle with their next attack.

The audience held their breaths, as they waited for the outcome of the match.

Without any warning, both fighters disappeared from where they stood. A few seconds later, a blinding light erupted at the center of the arena, forcing most of the spectators to cover their eyes.

Empress Andraste's gaze didn't leave the two fighters. After seeing the result of the clash, her hand clenched into a fist.

'You underestimated your opponent, Lilith,' Empress Andraste sighed.

The other veterans shared her opinion. They were the ones that weren't fazed by the brilliant light that surrounded both fighters.

Ged's sword had pierced through Lilith's right shoulder, which made the Amazon's face tighten. Her sword had also fallen on the ground, and with the condition of her arm, it would be impossible for her to pick it back.

"Looks like this is the end," Ged commented.

"Yeah," Lilith agreed. "It's my win."

Lilith's bladed round shield was pressed on Ged's neck. A trickle of blood had already stained its blade. If the Amazon Princess was to push it a little more, the young man's neck would have a large gush in the next second.

Ged pulled back and released the grip on his sword. Just like Lilith had said, it was indeed her win. The Amazon Princess had incredible flexibility, which enabled her to twist her body at the last second, preventing a lethal injury.

"I concede, you are the victor of this match."

"Okay, that's now 128 wins and 127 losses. Remember, prepare my steak tonight. I want medium rare."

"..."

The Clerics rushed up to the arena and deftly pulled out the sword on Lilith's shoulder. They then healed their injury and gave her a few potions to drink to increase her speed of recovery.

Emperor Leonidas applauded, and the rest followed suit. Deep inside, he was feeling depressed. Truth be told, he wanted William to participate in the tournament.

He had seen him fight alongside with his army, but it wasn't enough to assess his overall strength. It was quite unfortunate that the Half-Elf had to leave the Kraetor Empire because of their Patron God's quest.

The Emperor knew why Prince Jason joined the tournament and what he would wish for if he won. Frankly, Emperor Leonidas had already thought of his answer if his grandson were to wish for what he had in mind.

For now, he tossed the idea at the side of his head. In order for that to happen, Prince Jason must win first.

'I'll cross that bridge when I get there,' Emperor Leonidas mused as his gaze landed on his granddaughter who was seated in the VIP seats reserved for their family.

He had received several marriage requests for Princess Sidonie, not only in the Kraetor Empire, but in the surrounding Empires as well. However, he rejected them all. His granddaughter had already made up her mind, but the Emperor didn't know if this was the best for her.

Emperor Leonidas was planning to use the tournament to know if William was truly a capable person. Sadly, he wouldn't be able to see the aces hidden in the Half-Elf's sleeves.

Aces that he was quite interested to see.