

## **A Glitched 121**

### Chapter 121 What's My Mother's Age Anyways?

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Mother walked outside the tent as if she wanted some time alone.

"Maybe she needs some time alone," Nepheline could not help but say.

"Yeah... she's got some problems with her temperament... She's had a long life filled with many troubles, after all. It's normal for her to be like this sometimes." father replied, sighing at the end.

"Long life? Isn't mother around her late twenties?" I wondered.

"Huh? Hahahaha! Elves at that age are called toddlers..." Nepheline could not help but laugh at my words.

"No... Faylen is old," said Shade.

"Old? H-How old... daddy?" I asked.

Father seemed nervous. It seemed like he didn't want to answer me...

"Allan, have you never told your daughter exactly how old Faylen is?" Nepheline asked him.

"Well, he might not know the exact age either... we don't really know," said Shade in response to her words.

"No, he knows. I'm definitely sure of it. After all, he knows how old she was when he bedded her," said Nepheline soon after, chuckling.

"Don't talk about such things in front of the children." Of course, Shade reprimanded Nepheline for that.

"A-Ah, my bad..." Though, Nepheline quickly apologized.

"Daddy?" I asked.

"..."

My father gripped his fists before looking at me with a nervous smile.

"Your mother is... an adult for her race! That's all that matters," father eventually told me.

How old is my mother? I had not realized it, but elves were mentioned to be able to live for thousands of years.

"Tell me!" Well, I did not accept his answer that easily.

"Sigh..."

Eventually, my father looked at the ground and then back at me.

"Around... six... hundred... I think?" he replied, his tone unsure.

"EH?!"

This was worse than my assumption of her being in her 80's... to think she's actually six hundred?

What the hell? That's insane.

How long has she lived?

I can tell she's had such a long life, experiencing so many things... maybe this is why she's like this.

But it's even more surprising that she fell in love with a human whose lives weren't that long... even going so far to have a child with him.

I wonder why... did she take such a risk?

Knowing my father might die before her... of old age.

Although he's youthful right now, eventually... time is unforgiving.

"She used to be a librarian, a wizard, and a teacher in the Academy of Magic in her kingdom," mentioned Nepheline.

"She worked like that for hundreds of years, accumulating enormous quantities of knowledge in the process..." Shade added.

"Yeah... she was something like our senior, a teacher of sorts," father told me.

"R-Really?" I asked in slight disbelief.

"Indeed. We all reached out to her thanks to the Kingdom of Elves. They welcomed us to train us when we were younger. That's the place where we all learned magic and awakened it," said Nepheline.

"Hmm." Shade nodded in agreement.

"I guess the only exception to that is the Witch. She's also... quite old," Nepheline said not long after.

"I met your mother when I was... around thirteen... she was already like you see her now," father told me after that.

"Oh..." I could only utter those words.

After all, I can't help but think... did my mother just groom my father?

Ugh...

A strange feeling filled my stomach when I thought about it.

Was I a bit disgusted?

No, I can't act like this. My mother is my mother, no matter how old she is.

And my father is my father... no matter... how young he is?

"Wow, your mom is very old, Sylphy!" Aquarina could not help but say.

"I never thought elves could live for so long. They look so weak compared to us Amazon," said Zack.

"They live long due to various factors. One of them is that their bodies naturally metabolize mana into themselves and regenerate their own tissue. Of course, they're not immortal. They just have very long lives," Shade explained.

"Huh..." Zack could only utter that in response. It was a given that he didn't understand a single thing.

I guess my mother was really like that. Maybe it's because she's old is why she has such a short temperament? Then again, wouldn't it be the other way around? The older, the more wiser and calmer a person would be?

No?

I guess everyone has different outlooks in life.

"I'll go look for mommy," I said after some time.

"I'm coming as well," father said in response.

"No... I think I want to talk with her alone, daddy..." I told him.

"Eh? But she's my wife..." Naturally, father didn't expect such words to come out of my mouth.

"But... it's a thing between girls, you can't get involved," I replied.

"Sylph, that's...!" murmured my father as Nepheline and Shade petted his shoulders.

"Let her go," Shade told him.

"Yeah, she wants to talk with her mother alone. Understand her for a bit," Nepheline said soon after.

"...alright, don't take too long then... for now, let's cook dinner, alright?" asked my father as everyone else nodded.

With that, I walked outside the tent and began wandering around to look for my mother.

Surprisingly, I didn't find her anywhere.

I looked around the nearby tents and the roads formed by the village.

Aside from the people roasting their hunts and gathering to talk, dance, and sing under the night's calm and soothing atmosphere, I couldn't find her.

Eventually, I decided to conjure some magic. To be more specific, tracking magic.

Mana Wave, a simple wave of mana, and then Mana Detection to enhance its effects even more. These two spells form the combination named Mana Sense.

By spreading my mana around, I share my senses with it and... there she was.

Mother, you may hide very well, but you can't fight someone with endless mana. I simply spread my Mana Sense like an ocean until I found you!

She was sitting atop a tall tree outside of the village. I don't know why she went so far away from everyone else. Come to think of it, she's really crazy sometimes.

In any case, she was sitting while watching the moon.

Though, I'm sure she already knew I was making my way towards her.

With that, I used my Heavenly Sight to look at her with more detail even from a distance and found that her eyes seemed deep... as if many bubbling emotions were inside.

I cannot really understand the mentality of a person that has lived so long.

The countless memories rushing around her mind must be tiring for her.

"Mom?"

I quickly crawled the tree and reached her.

"Sylphy?!" she asked, her tone rather shocked.

I had used some stealth magic such as Stealth, which was pretty much a no-attribute spell that decreased the amount of attention one radiated. In any case, it was of the lowest grade. I've seen better ones used by Shade.

Maybe she didn't detect me? Was she relaxing?

"What are you doing all the way here?" I asked her.

"..."

Chapter 122 I'm Sorry

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I moved near my mother, balancing on top of a large tree branch before reaching up to her.

I sat by her side as she looked at me with a bit of apprehension.

"Mommy?" I asked.

"Yes, Sylphy?" she asked.

"Answer me!" I said in response.

"I'm here... because I wanted to relax a bit. I've been looking at the moon ever since I was your age. Since then, I realized that it often calms me down," she told me.

"Oh..." I could only say that as I nodded.

After that, I looked up at the skies. The dark night was pretty, devoid of clouds, with bright stars covering it. The moon was full today, like an enormous sphere of dim white light.

"Are you feeling, okay? I'm sorry for upsetting you... I don't want you to feel bad," I said sometime later.

"..."

My mother smiled faintly as she held my hand before moving me more to her side, hugging me.

"I'm not upset, dear... I was a bit... exasperated there. But I'm fine now... you know I love you more than anything, right?" she asked.

"I... I do." I replied.

"You're the precious treasure of my life, Sylph... and that's why I get so worried and stressed when something happens to you... our world is dangerous, lowering your guard can be fatal... I've seen others do this and... fall like flies one by one," she told me with a sigh.

Although she didn't seem to want to show her emotions that much, mother's eyes were filled with such a deep sorrow that it made me sad deep down. It made me realize the pain of being someone who had a long life ... seeing so many people fall before her, all those friends and companions she had become acquainted with...

"I know... I'm sorry..." I said in response.

"You've said sorry more than enough times already. I just want you to realize the preciousness of your life to me and... your father as well. Don't act reckless without having calculated the risks well enough, okay? I know you're strong. You've already learned so much and you're still not even five years old... I believe you will eventually surpass all of us... but for now, you're still developing and growing. This is the stage where most people act recklessly and end up... falling," mother said, letting out a sigh once more.



"I understand. I also calculated the risks... Furoh ended up being a good person, mommy. Do you want to speak with him?" I asked.

"W-With the demon?" mother asked in response.

"Yes, he's willing," I replied with a nod.

"...very well, show him to me." Mother nodded after hearing that.

As she had agreed, I decided to summon Furoh outside of my Soul Scape.

However, because he would be too hideous in his normal form, and because it was tiring to summon him entirely right now, I decided to summon him in his "compact" form.

Soon, a small treasure chest appeared, floating in front of me.

It slightly opened as mother could see a few eyes inside. A few seconds later, a long tongue came out.

He was shy and disliked to show the rest of his body.

"So, you're Furoh... you're like a mimic?" she wondered.

"No... I'm actually not a mimic, I just... hide and pretend to be one," Furoh replied with a sigh.

"Why?" asked my mother.

"Because my appearance... it's hideous..." he said, sighing yet again.

"..."

My mother looked at the demon while squinting her eyes.

"I see. The innocence of this demon is genuine. He is, in fact, just a child... probably not so far from your age," mother said soon after.

"Huh? That young?" I wondered.

"I-I'm actually 7 years old!" Furoh said all of a sudden.

"He joined during the last year of the war, and was born just two years before that, no?" mother said, shocking Furoh.

"H-How could you tell?!" Naturally, Furoh wanted to know.

"I have special senses. I can detect life and track their origins," mother said with a calm expression.

"Y-Your mother's scary," Furoh could not help but say.

"No, she's awesome." I said in response.

"I-I guess..." murmured Furoh.

Furoh ended up being a bit older than us by 3 years. I was born some time after the war ended, so we're not too far apart in age.

From the looks of it, his race grew up very quickly.

But what I was really surprised about was that my mother could tell so much. Her powers were amazing.

"Furoh, you better behave in front of my girl. Make sure to protect her with your strength," she told him after some time.

"I-I will!" replied Furoh.

"There's also that dragon... make sure to not fight with him too often. I've heard that demons and dragons actually don't get along," mother added soon after.

"Huh...?! Dragon?" I asked.

"Ignatius, the dragon you have," mother responded.

"You know he's an actual dragon?!" I asked.

"The very moment I glanced into him. His spiritual aura told me everything... I also know you have some sort of ability that lets you absorb souls or something. That's how you got him, right? You have powers I've never seen before, Sylph," mother said with a sigh.

So, my mother knew about it this whole time?! Ugh... well, she doesn't know about the system yet. Well, at the very least, I still got that consolation prize.

"Sylphy... you've grown," she told me all of a sudden.

"Huh?" I was confused.

"Almost five years since you were born, and you've grown a lot already..." she replied.

"Mom..." I muttered.

"You know? Before I met your father, my life always felt fleeting. No matter how much time passed, it all felt like it was going nowhere. Everything felt stagnant. There was no harmony to me, no colors, nothing... it was dull... all of it." she murmured.

"..."

"But then I met the Heroes and then... your father... back then he was young, and he was cute... I acted as his teacher. Over the years, he grew attached to me, a lot actually... several times I told him that it wasn't right, that he shouldn't pursue me... that I was too old... but he continued anyways. He then told me... he always said that I... someone that sees life as something dull and stagnant, was his sun atop the sky..." she continued with a sigh.

"He really said that?" I couldn't believe it.

"Mm... he captivated me and I gave up... and then, you came out of it. Even after living for so long, I realized that my life finally began when I married him and I gave birth to you... all these years of pure joy and love... It was something I've never felt before, something that filled me with such happiness... and many other emotions too..." she said.

"Mother..." I could not help but mutter.

"I'm grateful for you, Sylph... You've given me a reason to live like nothing else..." She looked at me before kissing my forehead.

"I love you so much, my daughter..." she said, giving me the most tender smile I've ever seen in my life.

I had never seen someone so genuinely show their love and affection like now.

Even my mother in my previous life never had the chance like my mother in my second life.

Without realizing it, I began to cry.

Then, I hugged my mother tightly.

"Mommy... I love you too!" I told her.

"Sylphy..." She let out a happy sigh, hugging me back.

At this point, both of us began to cry like dorks.

But then, I began to giggle a bit, and she giggled as well.

"Why are we crying so much?" she asked.

"Because we're happy...!" I told her.

"Is... that so?" she asked in response, looking at me warmly as she caressed my cheeks.

"Let's head back for now. Your father must be waiting for us," she said soon after.

"Sure!" I nodded in agreement.

And like that, we went back to the tent, and enjoyed some dinner with everyone else.

This was such a long day... but like many other days, it was fleeting, and will be left behind... but I'm sure it will remain in my heart forever.

Chapter 123 Upgraded Status

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A few days had passed since then, and today was now my birthday.

I was near Yggdra, my eyes closed in mediation.

I had already practiced 3000 swings of my blade. Even if it took me a bit more time, I was increasing the pace because I felt like I wasn't growing stronger fast enough.

Although my parents kept telling me I was incredibly strong for someone at five years of age, and that I could easily beat even grown adults with my bare fists, that wasn't really what I wanted.

I don't know when, but we'll surely be attacked once more. The entity that trapped me and Aquarina in a different space... he won't simply give up forever and live as a hermit in the mountain now... he'll surely come back.

Because of that, I must prepare and work hard... I cannot rest. I cannot relax...

I...

Ugh, never mind. I should stop for now. I'm tired.

Then again, I've already done what I wanted.

My magic circle inside my soul was glowing with bright elemental brilliance. The light it emanated was beautiful.

It had also grown in size. In fact, it was actually twice as big than before!

And it was filled with many runes, all combining together to strengthen my magic power and make it easy to conjure more complicated spells.

Well, it had just crossed through Tier 1, Rank 10, finally reaching Tier 2.

Indeed, throughout all this time since I made the magic circle, I had finally become a Second Circle Magician, a Tier 2 Magician!

And with that came a great enhancement to my elemental magic damage, as well as the natural control of my mana. It also eased up the ability to conjure spells and create magic circles of higher tiers. As of now, I could easily conjure spells at Tier 1, but until now, spells at Tier 2 and above seemed overly complicated.

However, thanks to Agriculture and Ember, I was more or less capable of creating effects from higher tiered spells to an extent, at least with Fire and Nature Magic.

Just as I opened my eyes, Alice contacted me.

"Sylphy, I think I've finally managed to upgrade the Status!" she said with glee.

"Eh? Really?! C-Can I finally level up?" I asked excitedly.

"...No. That part of the Status alongside the Stats is still... frozen and stagnant," she replied, only to sigh soon after.

"Oh..." Of course, I sighed as well.

"However! I added something else, you can now see your Circle Tier and your Physique Tier there. It's accurate and will upgrade itself as you progress... but that's all. It's more so you can keep track of it," she explained.

"I see... well, let me see... Status."

Soon, an image made of transparent light emerged before my sight.

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<#23a System>

[System Owner: [Sylph Natoria Bravo]

[Magic Circle: Tier 2 | Rank 1 (Elemental Magic Circle)]

[Physique: Tier 1 | Rank 4 (Strengthened Body)]

[Level: 1/#523a]

[Class: [Farmer]

[HP: [10/10]

[MP: [20/20]

[Strength: [4]

[Defense: [3]

[Magic: [50]

[Resistance: [10]

[Agility: [6]



[Luck: [-10]

[Charm: [20]

[Skills]

[Royal Elven Lineage]

[Agriculture]

[Lesser Fire Magic: Ember]

[Mana Usage]

[Hero Seed]

[Divine Protection]

[Heavenly Sight]

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Aha! There they are...

[Magic Circle: Tier 2 | Rank 1 (Elemental Magic Circle)]

[Physique: Tier 1 | Rank 4 (Strengthened Body)]

So, I'm at Tier 2 Rank 1, just as it says there... Elemental Magic Circle is also written... is this due to my magic circle type? I guess so...

And then... Physique.

Aside from Magic Circle Tier, there was also the Physique Tier. This was how people grew stronger physically. By exercising, reinforcing the body with magic constantly, and doing a variety of other things, such as growing up, the Physique Rank increases.

I think it has been slowly increasing since I began to grow up, though I'm sure the daily practice using my blade has increased my physique's strength as well. After all, this exercise was engraved into my body.

Despite being a little girl, I got some nice muscles!

With that, I looked at my thin and noodly arms, noticing that when I touch the muscles, they're actually not soft at all. They're very hard... like rock.

Wow, a Physique at Tier 1 Rank 4 is already this strong? I guess buff people are around this rank then?

Then... how strong are those at Tier 2? Wait... my father probably has a Tier 9 body.

Isn't that super insane? I see why he's able to slice a dimension just using sheer strength...

Shade also helped during that time, so he must be close, at the very least Tier 8... he's so slim yet so strong...

I wonder what Physique Tier my mother is at... she hasn't showed her strength at all, although I remember one day seeing her carrying a large corpse of a beast like nothing... maybe she's hiding her strength in front of me. If she traveled and did so many things with the heroes, I would guess, at the bare minimum, for her to be Tier 6... maybe Tier 7? Although she specializes in magic, there's no way she's that weak physically. She definitely wouldn't have survived if it was the case.

Hmmm... thinking about my mother and my parents, I realize I should be going back home. They were preparing things for the birthday.

With that, I looked at Yggdra, my Eden Apple Tree.

"It has been a few years already, you've grown big... I wonder how bigger you'll become, Yggdra."

"..."

"I still remember that time when you spoke to me and gave me Naturia. I've been raising her as much as I can... she has been of great help..."

"..."

"Hopefully one day, you can speak to me once more... your voice was soothing..."

"..."

With that, I looked at the beautiful tree and gave her a hug, and decided to walk back home.

But then, I felt something.

An aura of life and nature behind me, flowing everywhere within the tree.

"Sylph..."

The little voice of a gentle girl resonated around.

It didn't feel like someone really mature, but more like an innocent child.

It felt so beautiful to hear, soothing my heart.

"Y-Yggdra?"

I looked back, but everything was silent again.

"..."

Chapter 124 A Small Talk With Yggdra

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"I guess you wanted to talk? Go on, don't be shy."

"..."

"Geez... well, take your time."

I walked back home but once more, it happened.

She was very shy, I see.

I stood there without looking back at her.

"Sylph... Sylph..."

"Yes?"

"...Sylph?"

"Hmm?"

"Sylph!"

It felt as if a little girl was playing around with me. Her embracing aura encompassed my body... I could somehow see the faint humanoid figure of Yggdra walking around me, playfully jumping.

It looked like a fairy, a creature from myths, from fairy tales... a little creature.

"Heheh..." She giggled cutely.

I closed my eyes to not scare her as I gently caught her and hugged her.

"Sylph!"

"So, you can already talk like this?"

"..."

I felt her little body-shaped aura pressing on my body. Maybe meeting her was her way to greet me for my birthday?

"Little Yggdra, can you talk more?" I asked.

"More talk...?" she asked in response.

"Yeah. See? You're talking more now," I told her in response.

I was really wondering what made her turn out this way. I've heard from my parents that trees that had magical properties could develop their souls as they grew. In fact, some of them could evolve into spiritual trees and become far sturdier and taller.

Trees that could speak like she does have lived for thousands of years already, but this girl had only been living for less time than I had. I think I planted her before I was a year old, so she must be near my own age... so five? Almost five years of age.

And she's already talking... it must be all thanks to my powers. After all, I've been using Agriculture on her every single day, nourishing her. As my mother said, this power I had made Yggdra evolve ahead of her age and allowed her to develop new powers.

That she gave birth to Naturia was already a big signal that her amazing capabilities seemed to have no bounds. If this was possible, then Yggdra could develop even more with each passing year...

I wonder if she'll find a way to walk on her own one of these days. It would be nice to bring her with me.

Yggdra spoke a few more words, which only made her look more adorable.

"Sylph... speak? Me speak..." she told me.

"Yes, you speak... your name's Yggdra... mine's Sylph... you know, you're like my little sister, right? I love you lots, Yggdra." I told her.

With that, I hugged her again and caressed her head. The form she appeared in resembled a tiny humanoid creature no bigger than half my body. It was like a small gnome or something, but made out of only white and yellow light, plus a verdant aura.

She didn't have any face and it was all bright over her body... but her voice was so soothing and innocent that it would calm anyone's heart.

"Love... sister!" she said, seemingly lose some of her shyness.

"Why are you so shy, dear?" I asked.

"Shy..." she replied, only for her to start slowly dissipating all of a sudden.

"Ah, you're tired? You're going to sleep?" I asked.

"Sleep... Sylph!" she cried.

"Don't worry. I will come every day, so you're never alone..." I told her.

"Hmm...!" she said while nodding as she slowly faded away before going back to her body.

She must've done this because she misses me. Perhaps when I go away, she feels sad.

This little tree is very clingy, I see...

With that in mind, I decided to go back to her and hug her one last time.

"Sleep well, Yggdra... I'm going to celebrate my fifth birthday now... I wonder how many years 'll live... I hope as many as I can, so I can stay by your side..."

"..."

Yggdra's aura encompassed my body, embracing me before going back. Her presence became dimmer as she seemingly went to sleep.

My mother had told me that trees slept most of the time. They required sleep to save up energy. Intelligent trees that were able to talk which she had met before slept for years. On the other hand, Yggdra usually slept for months.

I wonder when she'll wake up again to greet me?

Looking at her bark, I caress her gently before going back home now that the clingy little tree had gone to sleep.

Surprisingly, the door of the house was open. Soon, I found my family outside. They were all grilling a lot of types of meat. There were also sausages, ribs, burgers, beef, steaks, and more.

"Hey, look who's back!" said my father.

"Sylphy, you're finally back! You were practicing for like three hours..." Aquarina could not help but say.

"Eh? Hahaha! I get engrossed every once in a while, so I don't realize how long I take..." I replied.

"You really practice a lot... you're such a workaholic for your age..." Zack could not help but say in response.

"Well, you also work pretty hard, don't you? I've seen you swing your axe in front of the trees and slowly cut them off yourself to make lumber every morning," I said in response.

"W-What? Are you spying me or something? Pervert..." Zack replied.

"S-Sylphy wouldn't spy you anyways! A-Also, I work hard as well, Sylphy!" Aquarina said in response to Zack's words.

"Indeed, she's doing my harsh training every morning," said Shade all of a sudden.

"H-Harsh training? Well, I know you're practicing magic and the knife... and your movements has gotten pretty good but what sort... of training?" I asked, curious.



"Ah well, going around a trap-filled area, evading giant logs trying to hit her, jumping over cliffs and maneuvering through trees... also aim training, throw training, bow training, knife training, jump training, acrobatics and..." replied Shade, listing a lot of tasks.

"Eh?! T-That's a lot!" I could not help but mutter.

"Daddy, don't tell her! It was supposed to be a secret! Dummy!" exclaimed Aquarina while pouting angrily.

"A-Ah! I forgot... sorry... wait, Aquarina, don't get angry with papa..." Shade quickly apologized as he began to follow Aquarina who walked away angrily while crossing her arms.

"Why did she want to keep it a secret?" I asked.

"Well, she's worried you'll begin to worry about her. Also, she said she doesn't want to be a burden anymore or something like that," Nepheline replied.

"I see..."

Aquarina, you've really grown a lot.

Chapter 125 Aquarina's Resolve

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Meat was being cooked over the grill. The pieces of meat were from all sorts of beasts, from Wild Boars to Six-Limbed Lizards, and even other sorts of creatures. There were some strong ones that father had gone to hunt by himself in other areas of this floating continent, but I had not seen them so I couldn't really tell what this other meat is. In any case, most of it was red.

There were also some fishes, crabs, shrimp, and skewers with vegetables and mushrooms being prepared. All in all, there's a big feast today. I also heard my mother say that she would prepare a cake and that it was almost ready, so I can't wait to eat some delicious cake from mama.

For now, I followed Aquarina from behind.

"Aquarina, don't be mad at your daddy. I recognize your efforts. I won't get worried, don't worry," I told her.

"S-Sylph..." Aquarina ended up sitting near a tree as she looked back at me.

We were quite far from the rest of our family. Zack decided to stay with the adults because my father offered him a piece of meat to taste it. Plus, he liked to be spoiled by the adults a lot.

I sat near her and hugged her, rubbing my face over her shoulder.

"Come on, Aquarina..." I said once more.

Aquarina grew redder as she began to release steam from her ears, which got very red from the hug.

"S-Stop..." she muttered.

"Huh?" I asked.

Did she tell me to stop?

She never had rejected my hugs before.

"O-Okay. Sorry if I made you uncomfortable. I won't do that again," I said while bowing my head a bit.

"Uwah! N-No! I-I don't mean to stop forever... I-I love to be hugged by you..." she said in response.

"Is that so?" I asked.

"Yeah... it makes me feel comfortable. Since I was a baby, we've always been together, right?" she asked.

"Indeed, I remember when we first met... there was that big and scary bug," I said, only to sigh.

"Oh... you're right, that thing was pretty scary..." Unsurprisingly, she also sighed.

"Yep, but we've grown out of that already... we even went through a crazy challenge by ourselves..." I giggled.

Aquarina looked at me with a worried look after that.

"Y-You think what happened back then is a laughing matter?" she asked rather seriously.

"Huh? N-No... I... I didn't want to make fun of it... I just want to lighten up the mood," I replied while shrugging my shoulders.

"Hmm..." She let out a sigh after that, looking down at the grass while touching it tightly with her hands.

"Aqua...rina?" I asked.

"S-Since that day that I was left... quite... scarred... my life... your life... it was all hanging on a thread... we were so close to dying... for all our journey to end so soon..." she murmured.

"..."

"A-And... I couldn't... I-I... it made me so frustrated when I saw you do so much for me... because I was so useless... it made me so angry with myself... I hated myself," she continued.

"Aquarina, you don't have to..." I muttered.

"B-But that's how I felt!" she replied, crying rather loudly.

"...I see." I could only say that in response.

"A-And... I know you also felt bad... even if you like to pretend everything is okay..." she said soon after.

"..."

"So, because of that, I decided to just grow stronger myself and help you out... I don't want you to protect me, I want to do it the other way around!" she said, while blushing and looking into my eyes.

"Aquarina..."

"A-And... I asked papa to teach me... his training is harsh... it hurt a lot... sometimes I even started crying... Papa comforted me, but he was also harsh sometimes... he said that a person cannot grow stronger without bleeding and crying in the process... the path to grow stronger is harsh and filled with painfulness and bitterness..." she told me.

"T-That's not really something a father should tell a five-year-old child..." I could not help but say.

"I know papa was a bit harsh there but... I wanted it to be that way," she replied.

"I see... so, you're dead set on growing stronger, huh? I already noticed it back then. Actually, you've grown pretty strong." I told her.

"T-That's not enough... I don't know if it's enough..." she said with a sigh.

"I think it's enough for your age so...!" I said in response.

"S-Sylphy!" she exclaimed out of nowhere.

After that, she moved closer to me and looked into my eyes.

But unlike the first time I meet her, where her eyes were filled with doubtfulness, fear, and timidness, there was now a strong conviction within them. She was different.

"Let's spar!" she said out of the blue.

"Eh?!" I uttered out of shock and confusion.

Spar?!

Wait, she wants to fight me? Why?

Is she angry at me?

"A-Aquarina, sorry for making you mad... don't get angry! I don't want to fight you..." I replied.

"I-I'm not angry in the sense you think... I just want to test my own strength, and see if I can compare to you, even if a little bit..." she explained.

"I see..." I slowly nodded after that.

It might be my birthday now, but I guess there's no point in arguing with her. I want to see how strong she is as well... but I had never truly imagined that she would ask me to spar with her.

With that, I stood up and extended my hand to her.

"Then come," I said with a solemn expression.

Aquarina nodded in response, but instead of taking my hand, she got up by herself.

"Sure!" she said as she shook my hand instead.

After that, we moved to a clearer area above a small hill on the grasslands surrounding my home.

Zack and our parents already noticed we were doing something weird, so they slowly walked towards us, finding both of us facing each other.

I unsheathed my blade, while Aquarina unsheathed her knife.

"Wait, what are these girls doing?!" my mother blurted out in surprise.

"Let them be," father said in response.

"EH?! B-But they're going to fight!" Mother was quite worried.

"Yeah, look at their eyes. They really want to." On the other hand, father wasn't.

"Aquarina... you're bolder than I imagined, my daughter," Shade could not help but say.

"S-She's really going at it, huh?" Nepheline said with a sigh.

"These girls are really crazy... ugh." murmured Zack while facepalming.

As the soothing wind caressed our faces, we faced each other, wielding our convictions within our hearts.

## Chapter 126 Sylph VS Aquarina

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Aquarina requested a match with me. I tried to reject it but... she was serious about it.

How could I even reject that with such conviction in her eyes?

I understand how she felt. I've also felt powerless and useless countless times.

Perhaps way more in my previous life... when everything was taken away from me... I felt lost.

Until I realized that the only strength I could really rely on was my own.

Perhaps she also came to this same realization.

She really wanted to protect me, so the only thing she could do was grow stronger than me.

Let's see how good Shade's trainings are, which I've been wanting to take as well...

Aquarina brandished her knife as she suddenly coated it in mana. Then, her eyebrows furrowed while looking at me.

"I'm Aquarina Darkage Grandstone! Here I come!" she exclaimed.

"I am Sylph Naturia Bravo! Come at me!" Naturally, I returned the favor.

After that, I coated my bronze blade with mana and looked at Aquarina in the eyes.

We were no longer friends now.

We were rivals.

I saw how Aquarina masterfully manipulated mana around her body and enhanced her entire body's muscles and bones. In an instant, her power suddenly increased by tenfold.

She rushed at me while a river of crystalline water appeared behind her. It was as if she had become a river flowing incredibly fast across a mountain.

CLASH!

Her knife clashed against my blade, something I had intercepted long ago. After all, I could see two seconds into the future. I could predict each of her movements!

CLASH! CLAH! CLASH!

Aquarina's movements, however, were incredibly fast. Even predicting them was not enough. Even though I enhanced my body with a variety of spells, I was gritting my teeth, making me recognize the might of this girl.

She moved incredibly swiftly, more swiftly than me. She jumped around and tried to attack my weak spots every second. From how she moved, it was obvious that it wasn't the way a knight fought.

It was the way an assassin did.

I could clearly see it, the phantom of Shade emerging behind her as if he had imparted his arts on his daughter. Her eyes flashed with bright aquamarine light. There was a certain eeriness, a certain ruthlessness and coldness that assassins always had within their eyes as they fight.

I see. So, you've taken that path, Aquarina.



CLASH!

Crack... crack!

Her blade clashed against my blade once more as the two blades clashing against one another generated sparks all around us. I noticed Aquarina was sweating, her breaths becoming bated.

"Come on, we're just getting started. Don't get tired that easily!" I said, quickly utilizing techniques that my own father taught to me.

If you're using the techniques of your father, then allow me to use those of my father.

Blazing Blade Arts: Imposing Flame Sword.

I coated my blade in flames as the fire unleashed a strong wave of heat, pushing Aquarina away with a strong force.

BOOM!

"Unngh...!"

Aquarina barely kept herself standing as she unleashed her own powers.

"Moist Mist."

A moist mist quickly coated her entire body as the burning sensation of my heat dissipated easily.

Water against fire, huh?

I could see it in Aquarina's eyes. She noticed that I was like her.

"Can you see it?" I asked her.

"I can see it... the might of your father... you've inherited his techniques as well!" she said excitedly as a smile like I've never seen before emerged on her face. A smile filled with the excitement and thrill of battle.

"That's right," I said while nodding.

"I'm going to get serious as well... so make sure to not take me lightly... or you'll regret it!" she said after that.

"Alright! Come at me with everything you've got... I will also go all out," I replied with a grin.

"That's good!" She grinned as well.

Suddenly, Aquarina disappeared from my sight.

What? How?!

CLASH!

I saw two seconds in the future as Aquarina hit me in the back, while I dropped half dead on the ground...

She's going attacking me from behind with incredible speed! What's this technique?!

In any case, I swiftly turned to my back and intercepted her in time!

CLASH!

"Y-You saw through it?!" she asked in surprise.

"That's a pretty tricky technique! But nothing escapes my eyes," I told her.

Aquarina smiled as she continued to fight against me. Her knife continued to move incredibly swiftly as her slim and small body jumped around, trying to attack me from many different directions consecutively.

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

Each time I intercepted right on time, barely!

Then again, it was time for me to also put some more effort. I told her I was going all out, right?

"Ember..." I murmured.

I conjured Ember a hundred times over my blade until it was completely covered in flames and then, I swung it right before her.

"Blazing Blade Arts: Slashing Blaze."

FLAAAAASHH!!!

The fire unleashed a powerful flame that sliced and burned everything it touched.

Aquarina clashed against it, but its strength was too great.

"Aggh...! Ocean Knife Arts: Ocean God's Trident!"

Then, something wondrous happened before my eyes. I could barely believe it.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Aquarina's movements became so sharp, precise, and fast that her knife suddenly seemed to have shaped itself into a trident, clashing against my flames three times before making them dissipate in an instant...!

FLAAAASH!

After that, she headed straight towards me...!

"Ocean Knife Arts...! Oceanus Harpoon!!!"

TRUUUMMM...!

Her knife once more was encompassed by large quantities of mana as her knife seemed to move so strongly and sharply it resembled a harpoon coming to take me down!

"Amusing! If that's the case, let me introduce you to my very own technique... Flashing Blade Art: One Hundred Mirage Blades!"

This was a technique I've been training in secret.

Combining the Light Magic my mother taught me, alongside my Ember, and then using my Heavenly Eyes to predict the future, adding in the swift movements and techniques I learned in my previous life, as well as the swift and strong movements of my father's arts.

The Flashing Blade Arts were born.

The name was quite exaggerated, though. There were not a hundred mirages, but there was still a dozen. And that was enough.

"W-What...!" muttered Aquarina in surprise as she saw my body suddenly divide itself into a dozen as I spread a domain of light, reflecting light and making it seem as if I had become many.

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

And by enhancing my body to my limits and my blade with the power of light and fire...!

Aquarina missed every attack as she attacked my mirage clones. Then, I reached up to her, using the incredibly fast movement of my blade...!

CLAAAASH!

"Guhh...!" Aquarina vomited a mouthful of blood as I hit her stomach with blunt part of my blade, sending her to the air as she soon fell to the ground.

BOOM!!!

...

Chapter 127 A Friendship Between Heroes Daughters & Birthday Presents

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"Uwaahhh..." she cried in pain.

I quickly dropped my blade and ran towards her.

"Ugh, was I too harsh?! Aquarina, let me heal you, it shouldn't be lethal!" I exclaimed.

"Sniff... No... I'm not crying because it hurts... I'm crying because I lost!" she cried.

"A-Aquarina..."

Her little aquamarine eyes began to pour out tears of sorrow and frustration as she looked at me.

"You don't know how much you mean to me...! I want to protect you... if I can't win against you... how can I hope to one day protect you...?" she lamented.

"Aquarina, you don't really need to protect me..." I replied with a sigh.

"But...! I don't want you to... to go through..." she murmured.

"That was my choice, Aquarina. I can protect myself. Your strength, however, is more than enough to protect yourself... instead of obsessively wanting to protect me, how about we work together so we can cover each other's backs?" I asked with a bright smile as I extended my hand towards her. After that, I began to slowly heal her.

"Sylphy... but I'm... not strong enough yet..." she muttered.

"I'm sure you'll eventually be strong! Now come, grab my hand, and stand up already!" I said in response.

Aquarina's eyes shone brightly as she looked at me as if she were looking at something that affected her greatly...

She nodded as she held my hand and stood up with my help.

"Ugh... my tummy..." she said with a slight groan.

"I think I went a bit too hard there... are you okay? Let's ask mom to heal you." I said to her.

"Thank you... Sylphy... I think I understand now," she said in response.

"You do?" I asked.

"Mm! Let's protect each other's backs..." she said.

"Hehe, that's the spirit," I answered back with a smile.

We walked back home as we were greeted by our parents.

"Sylphy! Why would you do something so reckless?! This girl is really going to make me go crazy!" my mother could not help but let out a sigh.

"Hahaha! My daughter, I've never seen anyone use such a crazy technique before!" On the other hand, father was quite jubilant.

"Incredible work, Aquarina, Sylph. You two are growing to become fitting heroes to replace us- no, even stronger than we could have ever hoped to be," Shade told us.

"My little girl, you've grown so much! Mooch, mooch, mooch!" Nepheline said, carrying Aquarina in her arms as she bathed her with kisses.

"Hahaha...! Stop, mama!" Aquarina could only giggle.

My father held my hand as he smiled back at me.

"Sylph, you're a good girl," he said.

"A reckless good girl." mother added, holding my other hand.

"Maybe a bit..." I giggled in response.

"Now, now, let's go celebrate your birthday. We got a special gift for you," father said.

"Ooh?!"

Could it be... what I asked him back then?

We went back home as we began to enjoy the meat on a table. There was a lot of fruit juice for us, with ice cubes to make it cold. The meat was tasty and filled with juice, the spices used in each type of meat complemented them amazingly.

"Seriously! You two really had to fight so much?! You almost gave me a heart attack..." Zack could not help but say.

"Hehe! You were scared!" said Aquarina in response.

"I bet you pissed your pants." I laughed.

"W-What? No way! I am going to train so freaking hard that I will beat up the both of you! ...But for now, I would rather not spar with you or I'll end up swallowing my words," replied Zack.



"Hehe, at least you're honest." Aquarina giggled at that as well.

"Yeah, don't worry. We'll train you together so you can grow big and strong." I said with a laugh.

"S-Stop making fun of me out of nowhere!" Zack could not help but say.

"Come on, don't get mad now. We're friends, don't we?" I asked with a cheeky smile.

"Yeah... I-I guess that's what friends do." He sighed, suddenly blushing and getting red.

"I-I won't let you get too close to Sylph though..." murmured Aquarina as she suddenly got in the middle of us.

"W-Who wants that anyways? S-She's a creep sometimes." replied Zack.

"T-Take that back!" Aquarina protested.

"Haha! I guess I'm really weird sometimes, no?" I giggled in response.

"Now, now, children. It's time for the cake." Before our conversation could escalate, mother interrupted us.

After a few hours of eating, the day was slowly coming to an end, and with that, a cake with lighted small candles arrived at the table.

"Happy birthday, my dear princess," mother told me with a light smile.

"Already five years? Geez... You surely grow fast. Happy birthday, Sylph," father said soon after.

"Happy birthday, dear," said Nepheline.

"Indeed, happy birthday," added Shade.

"Happy birthday! You better come to my own, okay?" said Aquarina.

"Yeah, happy birthday I guess..." said Zack.

"Thank you, everyone...!"

I blew the candles on the cake as the fire quickly went away before everyone began to clap happily.

"Here's the gifts!" my father said not long after, quickly bringing a wooden box to me.

On it was a small painting of a blue-colored witch hat.

"We asked her again about it and well, she did splendid work," father told me.

"I wish I could see her one day," I could not help but say in response.

"You'll surely do when its due time... now open that crate," mother said.

I slightly opened it and... inside it was a sword.

A long sword made of silver. It was radiating a strong magical aura. The blade seemed light and thin, but incredibly sharp, just enough for someone small like me to wield just well.

I looked into the blade with fascination as a smile surged on my lips.

The handle was finely decorated, yet it wasn't anything too fancy either. It was covered in purple leather, which was actually very hard, though I quickly realized it was some sort of exoskeleton...

Well, it also had a small purple and black jewel on the middle of the handle, fueling the entire blade with a powerfully dark aura.

"She said it took a long time to make. She had to work pretty hard for it," mother said.

"Grab it and take a look," father urged me to wield it.

This is the blade... that I requested from my father... the blade made out of Beelzebub's materials.

He really asked for it to be made...

Chapter 128 A New And Wonderful Sword

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The amazing sword I was gifted was nothing short of incredible... it even emanated a strong presence from within. Darkness and shadows flowed out of it constantly, but in a dim form. It wasn't too much either.

After looking at it, I held the sword. It was heavier than my usual sword, but I was still more or less capable of wielding it and carrying it around. The fact that it was heavy didn't matter when my own shoulders and arms had grown very strong after doing so many daily swings with my blade...

It wasn't as heavy as my own size, though. Then again, I'm already able to carry things above my size through the usage of spells that increase my physical strength.

I'm also at Tier 1, Rank 4 in my Physique, so I'm more than capable of fighting pretty well!

Eventually, I took the blade before raising it upwards.

Infusing mana into it made the blade suddenly turn a purplish black color...

It was quite pretty...

"The blade has a lot of special effects, but you must be careful. It appears that it could even curse those that it hurts, so don't use it to spar with Aquarina or Zack if possible. Make you grow strong enough in magic that you can even dispel the curses of this weapon..." mother said.

"Okay, I got it," I replied.

"It's a dangerous tool. We're giving it to you because we trust you. After the hardships you went through, we believe that you can handle it... well, if things go badly, we can always help but... if you don't show us that you can handle this blade correctly, we'll take it away from you," father said soon after.

"Until you grow into an adult!" added mother.

"Ugh... alright, I won't be reckless with it. I promise. Don't worry," I assured them.

My parents were quite concerned about my safety. I get it. This thing was very dangerous. After all, it was made out of a fragment of the magic crystal of the Demon King's subordinate, Beelzebub, after all.

That bastard was a dangerous foe. His power was quite admirable as well. If I lowered my guard around this thing, it might end up going badly for me...

Like, for example, its weight was very heavy, so I could end up losing balance and damage my own skin, getting cursed in the process...

Hmm... I have to take extra care while wielding it.

But I do wonder though... what sort of powers can I get out of it? And what's the curse like?

"What's the curse?" I asked.

"I have not analyzed it well enough yet, but it seems to weaken the body and suppress the regeneration of wounds... Beelzebub's essence is on it. With him being a demon that was able to control an aura of decay... it might end up corroding wounds and make them rot," father said in response.

My eyes shone brightly at that.

It was very deadly!

Just what I wanted!

A weapon deserving of my assassin-like teachings from my previous life!

Though, because of that, it's also very deadly. I cannot use it carelessly and end up doing something bad...

"And that's why it's very important and special! Don't go around swinging things with it too much. At most, use it to practice against monsters and well, dummies, I guess... your father as well, he's a monster, so it's fine," mother warned me.

"W-Who are you calling a monster?!" Naturally, father did not take her words that well.

"Well, daddy is a monster when it comes to strength... he always lowers his strength when he fights me but he's really formidable!" I said in response.

"Indeed, he's crazy strong. Never lower your guard around this guy," added Shade.

"You too, Shade?!" Father could not believe it.

I think my father was having a mental breakdown over absolutely nothing. For some reason, he disliked being called "so strong he's like a monster" ... well, maybe my father was more emotionally sensitive than I had originally thought.

"Daddy, you're a very gentle man. We're just joking. You're very lovely," I told him.

"Ahh... Sylphy..." In response, my father hugged me tightly and kissed my cheek.

Mission accomplished. Father has been cheered up. He really can't fight against the charm of his daughter, it seems.

"Anyways, now that you're done checking the sword. We got our own gifts too," Shade told me.

"Yeah, here dear. Happy birthday," said Nepheline.

"I helped make it!" added Aquarina.

"Oh?"

With their words, I opened the box. What I found inside was a beautiful set of accessories.

There were new earrings, which were lost in the fight against Hell, alongside a necklace, and a ring. They were all made of bright red jewels. From the looks of it, it seemed that they emanated the power of fire from within.

"We hunted down some fire-type monsters and refined the materials with your pop's help," Nepheline explained.

"Wow, really?" I asked.

"Yeah! This time we made it together, without asking the witch. She's was too busy with the sword..." father said.

"Your father has proven to be a good crafter. In my many years, I also learned how to craft magic accessories, so my help was crucial," added mother in a somewhat prideful tone.

"I see... amazing, thanks a lot, everyone..." I could only say those words.

Aquarina smiled warmly back at me, and so did everyone else.

I quickly wore the accessories, they all looked very pretty.

"You look so cute, Sylphy..." murmured Aquarina while blushing a bit.

"Really?" I asked.

"Y-Yeah... you're the most beautiful!" she said.

"D-Don't say that... you're also cute," I replied while petting her head.

"I also got you something of my own. I wanted to make you an accessory to boost your Light and Nature Magic since you seem to be developing them quite nicely. I saw you use that "Flashing Blade Art" and it was very strong. You used Light Magic to the max there, right? So, this will help you. I call it Elven Ring of Nature's Light," mother said.

After that, she gifted me a ring which had a jewel... or two combined together, which shone with bright gold and green light. The double-colored jewel was very pretty, so I wore the ring right away...

Chapter 129 More Birthday Gifts

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Much like the other set of accessories, this ring gave me an instant boost to my magical capabilities. I could just "feel it" as my elemental magic was being boosted.

Perhaps it would be easier to conjure Light and Nature Element spells from now on.

As of now, Light was the hardest because I don't have a skill in my Skill List that could let me conjure the element automatically, like Agriculture or Ember. With that, I have to learn it from scratch. Then again, I'm getting pretty fine at it if I do say so myself.

"You like it?" mother asked as she watched me wear the ring.

"I do! It looks as pretty as your eyes, mommy," I said in response.

"O-Oh my... Really? Fufu..." My mom, flattered by my words, giggled adorably.

My mother was indeed a beauty amongst beauties when I saw her more closely... one would grow used to their parent's appearances after growing up, but comparing them to the many people I meet in my previous life was very hard. The two of them were just incredibly beautiful.

This makes me, once more, wonder how come there's only pretty people in this world? Everyone's just pretty... I guess except for Furoh... but he's beautiful inside.

"Now you really look like an elven princess with all those accessories," Nepheline could not help but say with a giggle.

"R-Really?" I wondered.

"Yeah, you're ready to inherit the elven kingdom now and sit on the throne! Hahaha," said father with a chuckle soon after.

"I-I will do my best!" I replied.



"Wait! No, don't try to do that... don't joke around with stuff like that, Allan," Mother sighed.

"Oh... S-Sorry." Of course, father quickly apologized.

"What's so wrong with the kingdom?" I asked.

"Well... This is... hmm. It's complicated..." mother could only say that.

Ah, I better not follow up on this. I don't want to bother my mother.

I better ask her some other time. Today's my birthday after all.

Zack suddenly walked near me as he looked at me shyly. For some reason, he suddenly grew red as a tomato.

"I-I couldn't find anything as great... as you. Nor something really deserving... but I made something with the help of Ninhursag..." he said.

"Ninhursag?" I asked.

Zack nodded as he took out a bracelet from his pocket. It was made of the leather and scales of an actual Thunderous Tyrannosaur. It even had small fangs and markings engraved on it.

It was quite finely made for something he crafted with her. Though, it was quite surprising that both of them would join hands to gift me something.

I wish Ninhursag could have come.

"This is so pretty... thank you, Zack! I will make sure to also thank Ninhursag when I see her," I said as I wore the bracelet.

"Ooh, it's pretty. I can also detect some magic on it," said my mother.

"Yeah, good work, Zack," said Nepheline as she gave a thumbs up.

"I'm glad you could make her something. Next time, don't shy away from asking for our help as well," said Shade.

"I used to wear leather and fang accessories back then as well," father could not help but add something to the conversation.

"Good work, I guess," said Aquarina while blushing a bit.

"Haha... I-I didn't expect that it would be so accepted... Ninhursag told me she enchanted it with the power of the forest... she also told me that it might also resist lightning," Zack added.

"Ohhh... I see! Thanks a lot, Zack!" I replied as I hugged him tightly and petted his head.

"W-Whaaaa?!"

He cried in surprise as he got all stiff and became even redder than before.

I think this was the first time I showed him this affection, but he was honestly a good boy and I wanted to hug him to thank him.

"I also want a hug..." murmured Aquarina.

"But I already gave you a bunch!" I said in response.

"M-More!" she said.

"Aquarina, don't be too spoiled, alright?" her mother could not help but say with a sigh.

"Good job, Zack," Shade said soon after as he petted the boy's head.

For a moment, I was certain I saw Zack's ears release steam. Plus, he seemed to avert his gaze from me every time he could... I shouldn't have hugged him. He's way too shy sometimes...

After the gifts, we decided to eat cake. I was waiting for this the entire day. After all, I loved my mother's cake the most. The cake was soft and not that dry. Plus, she used fruit juice to make it moist. The cream on top of it was also milky and soft, so good... also, the fresh fruits between the layers were wonderful as well.

The combination of flavors really hit the spot! I ate at least five pieces myself until my mother stopped me and told me to wait for tomorrow's breakfast.

The night was already pretty late, so my parents told us to prepare to go to bed.

I was also tired and wanted to sleep on my bed for the rest of the night...

The exhaustion was taking over my body. After taking a warm bath, I jumped on my bed.

Aquarina and Zack were given beds at each side of my own, so they were sleeping in my room.

Aquarina wanted to come sleep on my bed all the time, but I told her that she had to sleep on her bed.

"I wanna cuddle..." she muttered.

Sigh... after acting so mature and cool earlier, she went back to her baby mode.

Well, she's technically still a baby girl, so I can understand that.

"Aquarina, stop being so clingy. Let Sylph sleep on her bed by herself," Zack told her.

"S-Shut up..." replied Aquarina.

"Come on, don't fight now... I'm so tired... I'll sleep for now, alright? You two also close your eyes and sleep!" I told them.

"Okay... good night," replied Aquarina.

"I'm tired too..." muttered Zack.

As I closed my eyes and slept, I found myself inside my Soul Scape.

In there, something was happening.

A large mass of purple mist and black darkness was emerging atop the skies of the grasslands...

Naturia, Ignatius, and Furoh looked at the skies with me.

Alice was by my side as well...

Chapter 130 A New Soul Emerges Within My Soul Scape!

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I had grabbed the sword back then and immediately felt a power leak into my soul that moment. It seemed that the "requirements" were complete.

What requirements? Well, to "trap" a strong soul inside my own Soul Scape.

Like what happened with Ignatius.

I had experimented before. It seemed that only exceptionally strong beings' souls could be "trapped" this way.

Weaker monsters... cannot. I had tried it before, hunting a small demon rat, taking out their mana crystal, and holding it tight while infusing mana into it.

Nothing happened...

But equipment made of very strong beings' magic crystals that I've seen die and therefore I have gained their "Experience Points", which was actually just me draining a large chunk of their souls? It was possible to get them.

So, these were the "requirements" that had made me conclude that it worked like that... kind of.

The requirements were:

Kill or be present with a "party member" that killed something.

That "something" must be exceptionally strong, something at the level of adult dragons such as Ignatius, or a Demon General, like Hell or Beelzebub.

After that, that "something's" soul would be absorbed into my soul thanks to Alice.

After that, I had to find some sort of finely crafted magic equipment that carried this monster's magic crystal.

It didn't have to be the entire piece, but a decently big one.

After that, it was done. The two pieces of the puzzle would unify, while the soul would emerge inside my own Soul Scape.

Even if I unequip the item, it would still be there, so the item itself would have a part of its power "drained".

Nevertheless, the piece of equipment was still strong even when it was "drained" of the piece of soul inside, so there was no problem.

And well, here it was... the one I kind of wanted.

I always wondered... if I was able to tame Ignatius, why not try something bigger this time around?

A giant and grotesque fly emerged atop the skies of my soul's landscape.

It looked down on us with its gigantic, red-colored eyes with multiple lenses on them.

Its exoskeleton looked tough, not at all like the thin one flies had.

It was even metallic in appearance and luster.

"Guhh?! Where the hell am I?!" he cried with a mildly annoying voice.

"A bug?" everyone asked at the same time.

"Yeah, he's Beelzebub, a Demon General!" I said in response.

"Oh, I see... So that's why- WHAT?!" exclaimed Ignatius.

"Foo?! Fooeh!" exclaimed Naturia.

"I agree with Naturia. Sylphy, did you really have to bring this thing here?!" Alice could not help but ask.

"B-Beelzebub-sama?! He's a bad guy! He's a psycho..." murmured Furoh.

He seemed to have met him before.

"Oi! Underling! Who are you calling a psycho?!"

Beelzebub flew down and greeted us rather boldly.

He was currently bigger than all of us combined, looking like a giant fly that was at least three meters tall...

"N-Nobody, sir!" replied Furoh.

"Hmmm... what is this place? Who are you- huh? A human girl- no, an elf?" murmured Beelzebub, looking at my astral projection.

"You're trapped inside my soul for all eternity," I told him.

"What?" Beelzebub was a bit shocked I spoke so boldly without trembling in fear before his presence.

"Y-You're not trembling in fear before my presence?" he asked.

I guess I read his mind...

"Of course not! I'm fearless!" I replied.

"T-This can't be... am I dreaming? Ungh... I had... I was killed by those damn heroes at the end! Even when I had so much power on my side... to think that I was such a fragile being at the end, how frustratingly infuriating!" he lamented with a sigh.

"Yeah, it's quite sad..." I told him.

"You're just messing with me! And what's with this band of weirdos? Ugh, you know what? I'm just going to kill all of you and find a way out," he said, using the scythe-like arm claws he had, trying to slice us out with them.

However, it went pretty badly because it obviously didn't work like he wanted. He tried to harm us, but it didn't work. It was obviously not going to do anything because we were all astral beings.

"Huh?! Why can't I kill you?!" he cried.

"You're inside my soul. No matter how much you harm us, we'll go back to how we were a second after that... We're all astral projections... your power is sealed unless you become my familiar and I manifest your power outside of my body," I told him.

"Eeeeh?!"

Beelzebub was hit by the harsh reality. His world view was being shattered into pieces with each passing second as he suddenly dropped over the floor and looked at us once more, as if we had suddenly betrayed him or something. Damn, can't he calm down a little bit? Its not like we did something so terrible! Relax for once...

"T-This... this... ungh...! Aggghhh! No way am I going to obey a mere human! A nasty human like you?! I would never bow down my head! I would rather... die! Kill me!" he cried.

As I expected, powerful beings were very prideful, and won't let themselves bow down to me.

I remember it took several years for Ignatius to bend the knee for me and join my crew after he gave up. Well, he also kind of grew fond of me after we battled inside this place for so long.



But I fear that Beelzebub was not that type of battle junkie that would recognize a person after battling with them for a while. At most, he's a psycho that's into making people suffer.

He even discarded his own comrades on his battle, even Ignatius valued his kin and would never betray nor sacrifice them like Beelzebub did...

So, despite being enemies from my parents, the two were obviously different from one another in many ways.

"Beelzebub-sama, Sylphy is not a bad person...! You should join her," said Furoh timidly.

"Shut the fuck up, worm!" roared Beelzebub in response.

"Who are you calling a worm?!" I asked, pointing a blade I formed with my astral projection at him.

No one messes with my little Furoh and gets away with it.

Maybe I should just torture his soul until he gives up...