

A Glitched 181

Chapter 181 The Power Of Cooking Magic

We moved forward with our plans and reached Ninhursag's tent, without thinking about going out for Pyuku, as although I was worried, I knew it would be fine as it is a pretty strong slime to be honest.

We reached Ninhursag's tent in an instant and we were greeted by the beautiful skin changer sleeping soundly below her blankets. Her body was quite big, so her foot was out of the bed... but she was still sleeping like nothing, even if the chilly air passed across her legs. I suppose she's quite resistant to temperatures changes, seeing how she probably lives, eats, and sleeps in the wild jungle.

"Ninhursag!" said Aquarina.

"Wake up already, it's around 11 Am!" said Zack.

"Hmmm? Ah! Eh?! Children... Oh, I slept here... right..." said Ninhursag.

She quickly tried to stand out of bed, but suddenly made a face of pain.

"Ouch... My entire body still hurts a bit..." sighed Ninhursag.

"You're still wounded from all the battles!" said Aquarina.

Ninhursag seemed pained by the wounds she had. Although they were recovering, her bones were broken a lot, and just yesterday many of her internal organs were also very damaged.

If it wasn't because my mother gave her a very intense healing session, she wouldn't be here to tell the tale, that's for sure. My mother is probably the greatest healer in the entire world, so as long as we are with her, we won't be dying any time soon.

However, the pain she felt was still there, and it ended making her muscles and bones pained for several hours, and probably days from now on, so she needs to slowly recover and rest for the moment.

"Ouch... Ouch..."

She sighed as she sat over the bed, barely managing.

I don't remember her being so exaggerated yesterday, she was probably drugged by the potions they gave to her yesterday, so she didn't feel all the pain even when we hugged her and more.

"We brought you food... But are you sure you're okay? You seem way too pained... I am a bit worried myself." I said.

"Yeah children, I am doing okay, don't worry about this old woman..." sighed Ninhursag.

"You're clearly not okay! Is there some way to calm the pain you feel? Is your body really okay?" asked Zack.

"Yeah it should be, Faylen's healing is the best in the world, I think..." said Ninhursag.

"I guess... Anyways! Eat up so you can recover quickly! Mom said she used Cooking Magic on it, so it has special recovery effect!" said Aquarina.

"Oh, Cooking Magic?" asked Ninhursag.

"Hey, I didn't know that existed either." I said.

"Me neither... What's that?" asked Zack.

"You don't know about Cooking Magic?!" asked Aquarina.

"I thought magic was all about the elements..." I said.

"Well, aside from elements there are many other branches of magic that combine the elements together into unique spells with amazing effects. Cooking Magic is one of them, I think! Or that's what mother told me..." said Aquarina.

"Oh, I think I know about it a bit... It is what's called High Magic, or Compound Magic, whatever the name you want to give to these types of magic, they're not part of the main elements but made of them, they're made by wizards and then spread around through spell books and the like, not everyone can learn them because they need study and also the required elements to have already been learned to at least intermediate level." Said Ninhursag.

"You're pretty knowledgeable with magic..." I said.

"Well yeah I hunt in the outside but I've also had many other experiences in my life, I learned magic from various people around the territory, so I know a lot. What did you thought I was, some feral woman without a bit of knowledge about anything?" asked Ninhursag.

"No... Well, a bit, sorry for judging you..." I said.

"Well, I am glad that I can surprise you in this regard then." Said Ninhursag.

"So Cooking Magic is something that you use to cook food?" asked Zack.

"It doesn't sound very useful for anything else..." I said.

"Yeah, but cooking food is important. Food is what drives people, delicious food can change a person's entire day, you know? It all depends in what we eat. As they say, we are what we eat." Said Ninhursag.

"Yeah! Mommy uses spells to make the food extra tasty... She said that she learned it because her cooking was always bad compared to auntie Faylen." Said Aquarina.

After Aquairna dropped those words Ninhursag began to laugh out loud, it seemed she was close enough with them to laugh at them and joke about them leisurely.

"Pffff... Hahahaha! To be expected of my fellow Nepheline... She really likes to take shortcuts sometimes." Said Ninhursag.

"Oi! I heard you, Ninhursag!" roared Nepheline, as she rushed into the tent.

"Uwah! H-Hello there..." said Ninhursag.

"Mommy, you know Cooking Magic, right?" asked Aquarina.

"Ah... Well yeah, but Faylen is the one that taught it to me..." said Nepheline.

"My mother?" I wondered.

It seemed that it was my mother the one behind the Cooking Magic stuff I didn't even knew about. Has my mother always been using magic in the food? I really never noticed that! It is a bit interesting, so it picked up my curiosity.

"Yeah, your mother is the one that taught me... Cooking Magic can help people gain power from the meals they eat, and to even extract the essence out of it to reinforce yourself. You've all grown stronger thanks to the food you eat through Cooking Magic, it is a very important magic when raising children so they can be strong." said Nepheline.

"So there are such uses... I never thought that that was the reason why I got stronger by eating the dragon's meat..." I said.

"Oi! Don't talk so casually about eating my corpse!" cried Ignatius through telepathy.

"Hahaha! You got eaten?!" laughed Furoh.

"S-Shut up!" roared Ignatius.

"Yeah, that's pretty much the reason why you got stronger like that, and also Aquarina... And even Zack." Said Nepheline.

Chapter 182 High Magic

Cooking Magic, a new type of magic introduced to us, this new concept seems to revolve around eating food that enhances the eater. It seems that this magic is a new type of magic from the things I didn't even know about, probably way too advanced from my mother to teach them to me yet, name "High Magic" or "Compound Magic" which utilizes various elemental spells to form even more complicated spells that have even more special and unique effects.

Cooking Magic is probably made up with Life Magic and something else... probably Fire Magic? It could be a good combination for it, and I am particularly good at both of them! But if it's really High Magic, it probably uses a lot more of elements than those two basic ones.

Cooking Magic was used for several types of things, but it seemed to essentially be the power to give cooked food special effects or to "bring out the potential of ingredients", in a way, it felt like a chef invented it because it was dissatisfied with its food, but there might be something more profound for the background of it, right?

I feel like I would be cheating my mother's teachings for trying to learn this ahead of classes, but I simply am too curious, and learning spells every day slowly is very boring to be honest, most of the spells are interesting but still, I wish she could go into more detail about the cool or interesting stuff, but she still is going through "elementary magic for little children" with me, so I can't even get into the juicy stuff like High Magic.

"So what elements does Cooking Magic uses?" I wondered.

"Well, it uses mostly Life, Fire, Water, Wind, Thunder, and Earth." Said Nepheline while crossing her arms as Ninhursag slowly began to eat the stew.

"That's a lot of elements!" I said.

It literally used all basic elements together?! I have yet to even learn anything of Thunder and Water yet, I am ok at most with Life, Fire is my specialty and Wind, and Earth are very low-level as well...

Nature Magic can help me learn Life and Earth Magic easily, but the thing is, I've mostly been taught Life Magic by my mother because she wants me to specialize in healing first. I can't blame her, she's also a healer so it's the best she can teach me...

She probably sees the three of us in a team and thinks that a healer is missing, so she decided to add me as the healer and teach me a lot of Life Spells.

Anyways, there's no way I am learning Cooking Magic any time soon, it requires way too many elements now and I have not been able to grow using any yet, even less reaching intermediate-level with one of them.

I guess not even fire magic is intermediate level... I am quite pathetic.

"Yeah, it needs a lot of elements, it is not something little children are learning, it is a complicated magic that perhaps not many can easily perform. Despite the simple name..." said Nepheline.

"I see, well, I wish I could learn it..." I sighed.

"Well, you got an elemental circle so it's possible that if you learn enough spells from the other magics, you'll be able to use it, my daughter." Said my mother, as she showed up in the tent and sat down in a wooden chair.

"Oh, mother..." I said.

"Yeah, I am here. I came here because Nepheline just rushed here when we were having a conversation. Seriously girl, why did you just ran away?" sighed my mother.

"Ninhursag called me... something, I don't remember now..." said Nepheline while rubbing her chin.

"Sigh... You're such a dork." Said my mother.

"Dork?! ...Well, yeah." Said Nepheline.

I suppose the hierarchy was very clear here, my mother, the eldest Elf here, can easily call anyone here a dork, even a heroine that saved the world.

"And done... It was good and... Yeah, it is working, the food... it really filled me with energy. Even the pain is gone, did you add some drugs in there?" asked Ninhursag.

"Drugs?! No, I didn't. I just made it, so the food relaxes the body after consumption." Said Nepheline.

"Yeah, why would we add drugs? We gave this to the children as well, you're really a dumb feral woman sometimes... Seriously," sighed my mother.

"Hahaha, as harsh as ever," said Ninhursag.

"Mom! Don't be so rude with people..." I said.

My mother noticed she had gone a bit too out of her usual dignified nature because she was relaxing too much between friends, and probably let go of her actual and usual nature as a friend, she noticed this and tried to apologize.

"S-Sorry... I didn't mean it like that... We often joke around. That's what adults do, dear..." said my mother.

"Those are some pretty rude jokes!" I said.

"Well yes... But even then, it's not like she's crying or something, right? She's completely okay and fine! Look at her, radiant as ever." Said my mother, pointing at Ninhursag and Nepheline.

"I don't really care." Said Nepheline.

"Since I remember her that she had treated others like this, you would die if you were to know how she used to treat your father..." said Ninhursag.

My mother quickly blushed a bit as she tried to make Ninhursag stop.

"Stop! Don't say a single word!" said my mother.

"Hahaha! I remember it! She was super rude all the time. Poor Allan, sometimes he felt pretty down. She was a strict teacher, but she also got a sharp tongue... Calling him "a talentless idiot" and other times a "muscle brain that only thinks with his word" and how to forget that time she called him a "brainless ape" that one time! Hahahaha!" laughed Nepheline.

"Eeeeh?! How can you call daddy like that, mom!?" I asked.

"T-That was in the past! The past! Years ago... I stopped calling my dear husband like that, Nepheline! Stop laughing!" roared my mother.

"Y-Yeah, she's now all lovey-dovey with Allan, it is very hilarious how much he tamed her..." laughed Nepheline.

"T-That's... S-Stop already..." sighed my mother while crossing her arms.

Chapter 183 The Heroes' Past

Amidst the jungles, a large Goblin Champion shrouded in burn wounds ran for his life, gasping for air. His muscles were already very tired, and he felt like he was going to drop dead at any moment out of pain and exhaustion. However, the monster was well-known for its supernatural capabilities, and it managed

to outrun his foes, mostly because they were distracted dealing with another Goblin Champion and over thirty goblins.

"Gahhah... Ugh..."

However, the Goblin Champion couldn't help but stop running as he gasped for air, coughing blood, he looked behind him to make sure nobody was following him.

"..."

And there was nobody.

"Hahh... Agh..."

The Goblin Champion took a small leather bag and drank some fresh water from it, satiating some of his thirst. After that, he decided to look back once more.

"..."

"Guh?!"

And instead of nothing there was a man covered in black robes resembling those of an assassin, a vigilant of the night, his face down his nose was covered by black clothes, and only his aquamarine eyes could be seen, sharply glaring at the Goblin Champion.

The Goblin Champion felt as if his heart had suddenly stopped.

And it did.

CLASH!

"Gueh?!"

The Goblin Champion looked down into his chest, as he found a horrible sight, a large dagger had pierced his heart, infusing deadly poison inside... the poison was burning through his heart as it spread across all of his blood vessels, his skin quickly turned purple-colored, as he vomited a mouthful of blood, his eyes rolled, and he dropped dead in the spot.

"That should be the last one." Said the man, Shade.

"Oh, you took it down?" asked another man, with bright red hair and orange eyes, Allan.

"Yes, it was almost dead, your fire is intense." Said Shade.

"Ahahah! Sorry, did you wanted to have a challenge? Not like it can amount to anything much." Laughed Allan while patting his friend's back.

"..."

Shade walked towards the Goblin Champion, pulling out the dagger and carving out the Magic Crystal, it glowed with a bright dark color.

"Another Dark Magic Crystal... You know what this means, right?" asked Shade.

Allan looked at the crystal while raising his eyebrows. The Man then looked around and shrugged.

"That... it is proficient at dark magic?" asked Allan.

"Sigh... Don't you remember that time when we fought monsters mass produced through the Demon's power? All of them had dark magic crystals, and they're filled with miasma." Said Shade.

He cracked open the crystal and then a horrid green and black liquid dropped over the floor, beginning to slowly melt away the dirt below.

"Oh! I remember now... So that's miasma?! Is there a Demon here making Goblins? For what purpose though? The war ended already..." said Allan.

"Yeah, it ended already but that doesn't mean they won't try to kill humans and conquer this continent, the Demon King is dead but their hate for humans is far from over..." sighed Shade.

Allan rubbed his chin while wondering about that.

"So the Summons that died a few hours ago..." said Allan.

"The red energy they saw before dying... it must have been made by a Demon Lord, our Summons are strong after all," said Shade.

"Yeah, anything that could kill them is certainly strong enough to be near our level... Well, not really, we have yet to confront whatever that was..." said Allan.

"And there is the dark presence we are sensing to the other side of the jungle... Allan, I believe something dark is approaching." Said Shade.

"I do too, friend..." sighed Allan.

Shade and Allan looked at one another for a moment, as the two sat down over a log and began to meditate what to do.

Shad seemed to be deep in thoughts, he didn't wanted more bloodshed anymore. After the previous attack against the amazon tribe by the invading demons that ended killing Zack's father and many others, he doesn't want to risk their lives anymore.

He knows that the heroes themselves are a source of trouble, their very presences attract misfortune, the Demons and the Demon Lords immediately can tell where they are due to their immense magical presences, and they might always come after them one way or the other.

Despite being so strong, they are also in constant danger, and their children also go through such danger as well.

Aquarina, his dear daughter, had already gone through a terrible experience herself, and was caught by a mysterious Evil God working together with a Demon Lord... He didn't wanted the same thing to happen again, not when Sylphy herself had to sacrifice her own body and use her strange powers to somehow survive.

Not even now he knew what happened back then... Sylphy's powers are a complete mystery even to her own parents, so Shade would naturally know even less. But it is a miracle that after being reconstructed by her mother, she came back to normal like nothing.

But he knew very well about this, and more... he didn't wanted them to go through the same pain.

If possible, he was willing to escape with the Amazon tribe and bring them to a safer area of the continent... this jungle, it had its dark secrets that made it more attractive than it should be to these dark forces.

"Allan, I don't want more bloodshed..." sighed Shade.

"Shade?" asked Allan in surprise.

"I don't want the same thing to repeat, the thing that happened roughly six years ago... When many of the amazon died... When Zack's parents died... I don't want that." Said Shade.

"But we are here now, we can make a difference." Said Allan.

"Even as strong as we are, we are not omnipotent... I've realized over time... I cannot save everyone," sighed Shade.

"..."

Allan fell to silence as he looked into the floor. Shade and he knew very well that life wasn't easy, even as strong as they were, they were unable to do everything in the world...

Even after having gathered so much strength...

They, as heroes, were unable to save everyone.

Chapter 184 Shade's Regrets

Shade knew that they were heroes. He knew that they were supposed to save people, he knew all of this and more. Since he was awakened as a Hero that he had hated this.

He never liked being a Hero to begin with.

But over time, he realized that it was more than just appearances, it was more than just arrogance, and it was more than just stupid tales about heroic men and women that saved the princess from the demon king...

It was a duty.

A duty that he was given because the Gods of this world, the protectors of humanity, wanted him to become the protector of the people.

It wasn't just a fairy tale, there was a world in constant conflict, the two major races of the world were in constant war, constant bloodshed, constant tragedies.

He, who had seen all of this with his every two eyes, the young boy of back then, who saw how everything on his life was taken away by the demons in the war... He was the one that knew very well what war was, and how horrible it was.

There was nothing beautiful about war, only bloodshed and tragedy, and the laughter of the bastards that benefited from this in the back.

And because of this and more, Shade decided that he had to do something. With the powers he was gifted by the Gods, he couldn't simply act arrogantly...

He had a duty to do, and he, as a victim of war, wanted to correct the past and save the people he couldn't save before.

In simple terms, he wanted a change, and if nobody was going to do it, he was going to bring a change with his very two hands...

Shade looked into the pond of blood left by the Goblin Champion, his eyes seemed to be filled with contempt and sorrow.

At the end of that war... there was no satisfaction to him.

Only regret... He realized that his powers alone couldn't bring a change to the world, and that at the end of the day, the Heroes were unable to save everybody.

"I know that we cannot save everyone..." said Allan.

Shade looked at Allan with his aquamarine eyes, his good friend who had accompanied him through his entire journey knew very well how he felt.

"You're sad again? Come on, cheer up." Said Allan, patting his back.

"Allan... There is not a single day that I do not have nightmares about their screams..." sighed Shade.

"..."

Allan looked at Shade's eyes, they seemed to be asking for help. He was not right on his mind.

"You... Have you not talked this with Nepheline?" asked Allan.

"I haven't... I don't want to annoy her with my personal problems." Said Shade.

"You're really an idiot, aren't you? That's why you have a wife, so you can talk to her the things you cannot talk to other people so easily..." sighed Allan.

"..."

Shade seemed to be in silence for a while.

"Which screams?" asked Allan.

"I... Of the people dying... Of the amazon..." sighed Shade.

"Them?" asked Allan.

"No... more... It is as if they were haunting my dreams... the demons that the paladins killed... the soldiers... those... that asked for mercy..." said Shade.

Allan wasn't someone insensitive, he was also affected by the sins he had committed, but as a hero, he carried with them over his shoulders, and endured them the same way Shade did.

But Shade was different than Allan, his mental stability was less, mostly because of his past and all the tragedies he had lived.

He was a silent man because he covered himself in a shell made of ice, and was cold and silent because there was nobody that could comprehend him... well, back then.

Now, he had Nepheline and his friends... so he should really open up some more.

"Come on, you shouldn't be speaking this to me... But still... Shade, I also am a person that is affected by what we did..." said Allan.

"I always see you so happy and calm... What do you do for these things to not torment your mind?" asked Shade.

Allan smiled faintly, as he took out a small medallion with the portrait of his wife and his daughter.

"I just look at this, and all these dark thoughts disappear." Said Allan.

Shade's eyes opened wide as he smiled a bit.

The beautiful Faylen and the cute Sylphy were in that portrait, this image by itself was what drove Allan through the most perilous of situations, which most of the time were his own thoughts and his own traumas.

"I see..."

Shade sighed, he didn't had such a thing for his wife and his daughter. Although he always had them at the back of his mind, he realized that he might not hold them as closer as Allan did with his family.

"I guess... I am not someone that loves his family as much as you do..." sighed Shade.

Allan's eyebrows raised as he was left speechless.

And then...

SMACK!

"Ugh...!"

Allan hit him with a karate chop in the head.

"What was that for?!" asked Shade angrily.

"What the fuck was that for, Shade?!" roared Allan.

"What?! You were the one that hit me!" roared Shade.

"You're really an imbecile sometimes... Did you even hear what you just said?! "Maybe I don't love my family as much as you love yours"! What was that for?! You do! You love your family as much as I love mine!" roared Allan, he stood up and began to angrily yell at Shade as if he were a kid.

"You act like a stupid kid sometimes..." said Shade.

"And who are you to even say that when you said something so horrible? I am going to punch your stupid face if you ever say that in front of them!" roared Allan.

"..."

Shade was left speechless as he looked at his friend, he couldn't believe what he said.

Chapter 185 Fight Between Friends And A Resolution

Shade looked at Allan in surprise... Why was he so concerned about if he either loved or not his family? It wasn't his problem!

Shade couldn't help but grit his teeth as he hit Allan back, a punch in the gut, to boot!

CLASH!

"Ugh...! You bastard!" roared Allan, jumping over Shade and punching his face.

CLASH!

"Agh...! Why do you even care about my family?! It is my problem, not yours!" roared Shade.

"It is my problem because you're my damn family too, you fucking idiot!" roared Allan, punching Shade in the floor several times.

CLASH!

"F-Family...? Get off me already!" said Shade, as he kicked Allan in the balls.

BAAANG!

"Aaaaggh...!"

Allan rolled over the ground while making a bitter face.

"You bastaaaaaard!" roared Allan, as he leaped like a frog over Shade's legs and threw him off into the ground again!

BOOM!

"Uuuggh.! Fuck off already!"

Shade began to hit Allan in the back.

"Not until you take it back! Say that you love your family!!!" roared Allan, he began to hit Shade's face strongly, leaving him all swelled up.

"Why do you care so much?! You're acting like a lunatic!!!" roared Shade.

"Because you're my fucking friend! You made a family, fucking love it!" roared Allan.

"I love them! I know I love them! Why do you have to be so annoying all the time?!" roared Shade, hitting Allan in the stomach with a strong kick.

CLAAASH!

BOOOM!!!

A large crater was left behind, as the fight between heroes came to an end, without realizing, the entire forest around them was left devastated...

"Hahhh... Hahhh..."

"Augh... Ahhh..."

The two ended over the floor, gasping for air while looking into the sky.

The two began to suddenly laugh after that...

"Ahaha... You still got it on you." Said Allan.

"You bastard, did you really had to hit my face so much?" Asked Shade.

The two sat down once more over the floor, as Allan nodded.

"I'll get you one like this one, so you never forget what's important to you, and what you're fighting for."
Said Allan.

"...I know what I am fighting for, I don't need a reminder like you... But I'll take the offer," said Shade.

"Good!" said Allan.

"You're really an imbecile through and through," said Shade.

The two friends had discussed like this before in the past, it wasn't something weird for the two to beat the shit out of each other when they disagreed, but it had been a long time since they did this now.

Allan had grown angered at Shade because he had said something quite hurtful. He always thought that his friend loved his family as much as he did... so saying such a thing even hurt him.

Why? Because Allan saw his friend as his family, and so he saw his friend's family as his own family as well.

At this point he even considered Aquarina as another daughter, sister of Sylph... So saying such things offended him.

"You gotta talk these things to your woman... She's strong and amazing... Nepheline is someone very strong-willed... She's a dork sometimes but she's pretty amazing. You should really rely on her." said Allan.

"Who are you calling dork?!" roared Shade.

"Ahahaha! My bad..." said Allan.

"Sigh... You're right..." said Shade.

He sat down as he smiled faintly, remembering the beautiful Nepheline who always had his back, who always took care of him, and that always hugged him tightly while they slept on bed...

Why wouldn't he rely in such a strong woman?

She was the love of his life after all.

And then... recalling his little daughter, the angel of his life... the most beautiful treasure he had ever have in his life.

"Aquarina... Nepheline..." he thought.

He quickly stood up, as Allan took a log with his hand as if nothing and put it down.

He two friends once more sat down.

"So? What do we do? There are apparently two Demon Lord-level bastards here..." said Allan.

"I want to evacuate the Amazon Tribe from here..." said Shade.

"So you really want to do that... It's going to be hard..." sighed Allan.

"I know..." sighed Shade.

"But I am willing to help. What do you intend to do?" asked Allan.

Shade began to think many things, as he quickly made up a plan. Despite how painful it was to leave this place, they had to do it to save the Amazon from danger. It was going to be hard for the Amazon, and it wasn't going to be pretty for them either.

But it was something they had to do at the end, the right thing to do, as they often said... Shade didn't wanted to risk their lives anymore.

With two Demon Lord-level beings in here, the best thing he could do was to bring them outside, to a safer area.

"I think I have a plan..." Said Shade.

"I see... You're good with the plans. You put the brain and I put the muscle." Said Allan.

"You're still saying such childish things?" asked Shade.

"Ahahaha! I remembered it from back then..." said Allan.

"Sigh..." Shade sighed while waving his head.

"Though... I wonder... What are they even after? Just the Amazon? And for that they would deploy so many forces?" asked Allan.

He felt curious about what did these Demons truly wanted. Just eating human flesh didn't amount to it, and if they really wanted to make a difference, they should be attacking a major Kingdom, not the jungles...

Are they after the Heroes themselves? Or perhaps they want to kill the kids? No... It was probably something else.

Something different than what Allan was imagining, and Shade knew what they were after.

"They're not after the people. Nor they're after us... They're most likely figuring out a way to fight us but... They're here for another motive..." said Shade.

Shade looked at Allan with intrigue on his eyes, he was about to reveal something, a truth that Allan knew already, but that was something important they had not addressed in a while...

What could it be?

Chapter 186 The Ancient Relic

What could the demons be after? Shade had thought about it for a while, until he decided to share his thoughts with Allan. He had already made up a plan to bring the people out, but the major danger was now in what they were trying to take away from this place.

After all, this jungle wasn't just a plain old place where nature flourished and that was it... No, it was way more than that. It wasn't considered a sanctuary that not even the other human Kingdoms dared to touch for no reason.

"They're after the core..." said Shade.

The core.

A name that made Allan rise an eyebrow in curiosity, the young man didn't know what it was.

"The core?" asked Allan.

Shade sighed in disappointment over his friend's bad memory, he really didn't remember the most basic of things sometimes.

He quickly told him what he knew about "the core" while Allan heard attentively.

"Don't tell me you even forgot this, don't you? Aside from protecting the Amazon, there is something very important guarded in the depths of this jungle, the ruins of the ancient God Civilization..." sighed Shade.

Allan's face slowly changed from confused to serious in a few seconds, realizing that "the core" was something of a treasure related with the Gods themselves, and the ancient civilization they once had in the surface of the world, long ago.

Similarly to the continent of Cloudia, this Jungle was an important area of this place, a place that was once populated by these Gods.

"The Civilization of the Gods... You're right, it was so long ago I almost forgot... When we explored this place... Those ruins where we stopped that Demon from getting into, where Ninhursag told us to not step into..." said Allan.

"Yes, those ruins... The ones behind the waterfall..." said Shade.

"That's... Did you ever explored that place? I know that you and Nepheline have spent more time here and all of us..." muttered Allan.

"Yes, we went there a few years ago. We have decided to protect this place not only because of Nepheline's tribe, but because of the ruins of the Gods. We received their oracles asking us to protect those ruins with everything we had..." said Shade.

"So they did that?" asked Allan.

Shade nodded as he looked at Allan.

"The core that I talked about, you remember a bit of that, right?" asked Shade.

"The core..." said Allan.

Allan didn't know much about it, but from what he knew, the core was a special artifact left by the Gods, an incredible artifact capable of holding an incredible amount of magic power. Anyone that could get their hands on it would instantly become someone incredibly powerful, and it is said that the power of the gods themselves could be achieved by obtaining it.

"So they really want that..." said Allan.

"They want to get into the ruins and probably steal it, their forces and all... It is made to distract us, but I got my spirits guarding the entrance, they cannot get there easily. They probably will try to attack the Amazon Tribe so we are distracted guarding it, and then, move there, I bet..." said Shade.

"So what do you plan to do? I would guess you want to bring the people with us before doing anything else?" asked Allan.

"Yes, we are moving them out... We'll have to face more of these monsters, they're infesting the entire jungle by now, it will be harsh... If we had teleportation magic, things would be easier but it's hard to come by with a teleportation stone strong enough to teleport so many people." Said Shade.

"At most we can use summons and other things to carry them all..." said Allan.

"Yeah, but that's about it..." said Shade.

"Then let's begin, how long will the preparations take?" asked Allan.

"I have calculated that roughly a week... It will take its time, we have to be alert for any danger though..." said Shade.

"Got it." said Allan.

As the two stood up once more to walk back to the village, they suddenly noticed a blue slime wandering around, devouring the corpses of all the goblins they ate, and then the cores as well, while slowly gaining small boosts of power...

It was a bit off-putting to see, but instead of attacking they realized it was the slime friend that the girls had tamed...

What was it doing here?

"Is that Pyuku?" asked Allan.

"So you don't remember anything else, but you can clearly remember this monster's name?" asked Shade.

"Well... they brought it yesterday." Said Allan.

"Pyuuu!"

Shade quickly grabbed Pyuku by shaping his shadows into a large claw.

"What are you doing here, slime? You're planning something?" asked Shade while squinting his eyes.

"Pyuuuuu..."

Pyuku was being pressed rather tightly and felt that it was slowly asphyxiating.

"Oi! Don't be so rough with the creature, it is friendly and the girls like it, leave it be." Said Allan.

"But isn't it weird that it showed up out of nowhere?" asked Shade.

"Well, let's bring it back, maybe the kids got an explanation." Said Allan.

"Okay..." said Shade.

The duo quickly walked back home, as Pyuku was trapped in between shadows and wasn't freed by Shade until they reached the village.

"Here's your slime, it ran away." Said Shade.

"Pyuuu..."

Pyuku felt like it could melt away, Shade was really rough at carrying him around.

"Pyuuuuku!" said Aquarina.

"You brought him back! Thanks..." said Sylph.

The two girls grabbed the slime, as Pyuku sighed in relief that it was being carried around.

"Please don't go around like that again! It was very dangerous! What if you end up dying or something?" asked Aquarina.

"Pyuu!" said Pyuku.

"Yeah, yeah! What if an accident happens?" asked Sylph angrily.

"Pyuuukuuu..." sighed Pyuku, it seemed to be apologizing.

"He is very hungry, he ate all the corpses left by us..." said Allan.

"He ate every single goblin, I never thought there would be something so gluttonous before..." said Shade.

"Pyuu, pyuu!"

Pyuku was certainly a rather mysterious monster, but it seemed to be kind-hearted, and the heroes didn't feel any threatening aura nor bad intention from him.

Chapter 187 Aquarina's Father Resolve

After dinner, my father and Aquarina's father finally came back from wherever they went. They also brought the mischievous Pyuku with them, I had really thought that he had abandoned us, and perhaps he did but my father brought him anyways.

Aquarina seemed to be the happiest that the slime was back, and I was quite surprised. Pyuku had a lot of potential but if it was that independent of a monster, it would be hard to actually tame it. Pyuku is probably sticking with us for convenience only, and it hadn't grown closer to us like a tamed monster would do.

"Pyuuuuku!" said Aquarina.

"You brought him back! Thanks..." I said. I saw my father bringing Pyuku back, as he gave it to Aquarina. She opened her arms and began to squeeze the slime rather tightly.

Pyuku seemed to sigh in relief that it was grabbed by us though, Shade and my father were being a bit too rough at carrying him.

"Please don't go around like that again! It was very dangerous! What if you end up dying or something?" asked Aquarina.

"Pyuu!" said Pyuku.

"Yeah, yeah! What if an accident happens?" I asked.

I was actually quite nervous as well, but I was trying to convince myself I didn't care about Pyuku... Well, it didn't work, I really did care at the end, which sucks.

"Pyuuuuuu..." sighed Pyuku, it seemed to be apologizing.

"He is very hungry; he ate all the corpses left by us..." said my father.

"He ate every single goblin, I never thought there would be something so gluttonous before..." said Shade.

"Pyuu, pyuu!"

Pyuku was certainly a rather mysterious monster, but it seemed to be a good monster. It didn't have any threatening intentions, and Aquarina who had the ability to discern the intentions of things, was not afraid of him.

This only meant that Pyuku was actually not evil by nature, nor it had bad intentions against us, it was pretty much a "good monster".

But I am afraid that he might not see us as important as we consider him, he seems to not care about us at all to an extent, as he didn't mind going away and eating corpses...

I had to do something to reprimand him.

Well, he did care about us though... remembering the fight against the goblins, he saved our lives a bit, and helped fighting. Well, he's certainly an odd fellow.

"Pyuku! Why did you go away like that?! Didn't you know we would get worried?! Are you satisfied with that? Bad slime! Bad!" I said.

I began to stretch Pyuku's body around, as he released small squeaks of pain.

"Pyuuu... Pyupyuuu..."

"So you better stay with us, and if you're planning on going out, you better tell us in advance!" I said.

"Pyuu..." sighed the slime.

"Sylphy! You don't have to be so rude with him! He already understands, right?" asked Aquarina.

"Pyuu..." sighed the slime.

"Okay then, I guess that wraps it up! You two girls now go to sleep, it is already too late for children to be awake." Said my mother.

"Right, you two go to bed, Zack, I'll bring you to your tent if you want to." Said Nepheline.

"I can go back to my tent on my own, don't worry about it..." said Zack.

"See you tomorrow, Zack!" I said.

"Yeah, see ya." Said Zack, as he walked away.

"Then you two girls... Hmm, I think a little bath would be better for you two before bed, you smell a bit stinky." Said my mother.

"S-Stinky?" I asked.

"Yeah, I am covered in dirt... It is Pyuku, he was all dirty!" said Aquarina.

"Pyuuu..."

"Well then, let's go to the bathroom, I will warm the water for you. Nepheline, can you serve some food to the men?" asked my mother.

"Yeah, I'm on it." Said Nepheline, as she was suddenly stopped by Shade.

"W-Wait..." he said.

"Eh? What is it?" asked Nepheline.

Shade suddenly approached her as he gave her a kiss in her lisp.

"Huh? Wha... What was that for?" asked Nepheline.

"...What's wrong with that?" asked Shade.

"I... Nothing... It is just rare to see you acting lovely..." said Nepheline.

The two looked at one another for a bit, as Nepheline held Shade's hands.

We all stopped in there as we looked at the pair suddenly act lovely.

This is the first time I see Shade acting like this, I think.

"Hm~? Did my womanly charm finally softened you?" asked Nepheline teasingly.

She was a tomboyish woman, it could be said she was quite manly, so she wasn't very expressive of her emotions either, and Shade as a man that seemed always silent and expressionless, didn't showed many emotions either.

But seeing them act like this was very cute, it felt like they were opening up in front of us.

"Well, you already softened me long ago... Nepheline I am sorry..." said Shade.

"Hm? Why, dear?" asked Nepheline.

"I haven't been as close as I should had been... I am... too silent sometimes... I keep things for myself... I shouldn't do that. Allan told me that I should be more open." Said Shade.

"Ah! So it was that rascal..." said Nepheline, glaring down at my father.

Before the intense glare of the amazoness warrior, my father began to laugh nervously.

"What did I told you about getting into the private lives of other people!?" asked my mother, smacking my father's head, but she was very weak compared to him so she ended with her hand all red instead, while my father was unfazed by her attack.

"Ouch..."

"Haha, sorry... I didn't meant to... Ah... S-Shade is just my friend..." said Allan.

Nepheline looked back at Shade as Shade seemed to blush a bit.

I realized how handsome this man really was as he showed more of his face and his expressions...

"Don't worry about it. I am the one that knows you better, Shade. I am sure that whenever it is the time, you'll talk things out with me..." said Nepheline.

"Nepheline..." said Shade.

Chapter 188 Aquarina's Soul Scape

Shade and Nepheline acted quite lovely in front of everyone. it felt a bit off-putting, but maybe they had stuff saved up for themselves that we didn't knew about.

Aquarina's face was fascinated by the scene, however, as she looked at them looking at one another lovingly while her aquamarine eyes shone brightly in fascination.

She seemed happy to see her two parents acting lovingly.

"Papa, mama! Me too!"

She quickly dropped the slime into the floor and reached her parents, hugging both of them while they were hugging.

"Of course you too, dear." Said Nepheline.

Shade lifted Aquarina with his slender arms and kissed her nose gently.

"I love you, my daughter." He said.

"Papa... I wuv you too!" said Aquarina, as she kissed her father's cheek and hugged his shoulders with her little arms.

This was way too cute.

And then without realizing it, my parents suddenly lifted me with their arms and kissed each of my cheeks gently.

"Eh? Wha...? That surprised me!" I said.

"We couldn't resist seeing there was a little girl right here that needed some love too." Said my mother.

"I've been missing you the entire day, Sylphy!" said my father.

"Heheh, is that so? But where were you, father?" I asked.

"Well... We were hunting down goblins and thinning them down in numbers," said my father.

"We'll most likely go again tomorrow, sadly." Said Shade.

"I see..." I said.

"But I want to spend more time with papa!" said Aquarina.

"I am sorry, we'll make up for it after I am done with these things, okay?" asked Shade.

"Okay... But promise it..." said Aquarina while nodding cutely.

"I promise." Said Shade.

This was really just a cute little fluffy moment.

My parents brought me to the bathroom, which wasn't like the one in our home, and was a small wooden room with a bathtub made of wood as well, this is where we wash in the tribe.

It is quite rustic... but it is better than nothing.

My mom used some basic water spells to generate a lot of water and then water used the "Boil Water" Spell until the water was on point, and then all three of us took a family bath together.

Mother washed me thoroughly while my father let me wash his back, he had a lot of dirt and even a bit of goblin blood stuck around, so I had to wash him well.

The warm water and the atmosphere really relaxed me; I almost fell asleep while resting over my mother's torso as we relaxed in the bathtub.

"Alright, let's dry you up and we'll bring you to bed, Sylphy, don't fall asleep now..." said my mother.

"Yeah, wait a bit... Warm Wind."

My father used two elements combined, low-level wind and fire spells together to generate "warm winds" that can easily dry out the body after taking a bathroom.

After that, I felt refreshed, and ready to go to sleep until tomorrow morning.

I was brought to the bed where I found Aquarina already resting over the bed she was also given a bath, but it lasted less longer than mine.

"Sylphy! Come sleep at my side!" she said.

"Okay!" I said.

I rushed into the bed and covered myself in the blankets, Aquarina also covered herself in the blankets, it was warm and comfortable, and I just wanted to sleep now and not worry about anything for now.

"Good night." Said my mother.

"Sleep well you two." Said my father.

Shade and Nepheline also showed up outside the tent, they had already left Aquarina but came back to wave her hands at her.

The lights were off, and we closed our eyes....

However, Aquarina got closer to me, and she hugged me.

"Sylphy..." she said cutely.

"Yes?" I asked.

"Never leave me, okay?" she asked.

"Huh? What was that for?" I wondered.

Aquarina waved her head a bit.

"Nothing... I just... I am happy to have you as my friend." She said.

"What about Zack?" I wondered.

"Eh? Why are you even talking about that annoying kid?" sighed Aquarina.

"Ah... Well, whatever..." I sighed.

"So?" she asked with a needy look in her eyes.

"Aquarina, I am not planning on going anywhere, so rest assured, I am not going to escape this place or something, I will stay with you." I said.

"Really?" she asked.

"Really..." I said.

She held my hand tightly as she rubbed her head over my chest.

This little girl was way too cute... I want to protect her more than anything in this world.

"Good night, Aquarina."

"Good night, Sylphy..."

We both slept peacefully after I kissed her forehead.

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When I opened my eyes, I found myself elsewhere.

Everywhere I saw, there were palm trees and a beautiful ocean.

I was standing on a small island in the middle of a beautiful blue sea, the sky was as blue as well, and the sun was shining brightly atop the skies, there were fluffy white clouds as well, floating slowly and leisurely.

There was the salty breeze of the sea as well, which was very relaxing.

But where the heck I am?!

I looked around the island, as I suddenly found a small pond of sea water in the middle of it.

In there, there was an altar, with a large and beautiful blue egg on top, the blue egg was surrounded by beautiful corals decorating it, as if it were a precious treasure.

I quickly moved towards it and suddenly was found by somewhere else.

"Sylphy?"

I looked to my back and found Aquarina, with her spirit Undine at her side.

"Aquarina? Is this a dream?" I wondered.

"No... This is my Soul scape... I didn't knew you could come here!" said Aquarina, as she got to my side and hugged me.

"Me neither... I wasn't even aware of this ability... But anyways, what's that egg over there?" I asked.

"Oh, that egg is... I don't know. It has always been there... for some time now," said Aquarina.

Chapter 189 The Mysterious Egg

Somehow, I had landed inside of Aquarina's Soul scape.

But what is a Soul scape? Well, it had been briefly explained before, but soul scape is a special space inside the soul where familiars and spirits can reside.

And your own consciousness can go there as well when you sleep, so you can train magic and talk with your spirits.

Of course, it is better to always just train in the outside world, but inside of the soul scape its always relaxing.

It often shapes itself to the elements of the familiars and what they feel comfortable with.

The places where they felt the most comfortable is often where the soul scape will shape itself.

Naturia shaped my soul scape as a forest with a vast grassland, while Ignatius made a part into a volcanic wasteland. And then, there was a Furoh which made a part into some sort of black desert with a forest filled with fog...

Aquarina only had one spirit of water, so her entire soul scape was an ocean with a small island on it.

And in the island, there was a pond of water with an altar holding a mysterious egg.

I wondered if I could bring my spirits in here, but it was impossible, they didn't reacted to me.

"I don't know how I got here, but it seems that this egg is special... It has a very strong spiritual power of water... I can sense it... It kind of reminds me of Leviathan when he showed up..." I said.

"Leviathan?" asked Aquarina.

"Yeah..." I said.

"Hmm..." sighed Aquarina, as she stepped into the pond of ocean water, and I followed her from behind.

The water was cold in our feet, and there were algae and even fishes swimming around this little pond, it was an interesting place.

"So what do you think this egg could be then?" wondered Aquarina.

"I don't know, but I think it is something special... Have you tried touching it? I remember that my fire spirit hatched from an egg too!" I said.

"Touching it..." said Aquarina.

She touched the egg lightly with her finger, but nothing happened.

For that second.

The second after, the egg began to glow with a bright light, flashing with a bright aquamarine aura that spread around wondrously.

FLAAAASH!

"Uwah...! What is happening now?!" asked Aquarina.

"It is reacting to you! Touch it more, hold it!" I said.

"O-Okay!" said Aquarina. She hurriedly grabbed the egg with her hands, as she suddenly infused mana into it without realizing- no, it was more as if the egg itself drained mana out of her.

The egg continued to glow brightly as it gained a new bluish glow to it, and then, it began to slowly crack!

Crack!

Crack...!

"Wow!" said Aquarina in surprise.

"It is cracking, it is about to be born!" I said.

"No way... Am I getting a new pet?" asked Aquarina in surprise.

CRASH!

Suddenly, the egg cracked into pieces, as an explosion of aquamarine light sent us all flying into the air.

BOOM!

I fell over the sand as I didn't feel any pain, but I did feel a bit dizzy.

"Aquarina...? Where are you?" I wondered.

"I am here... Ugh, it suddenly got chilly all out of nowhere..." said Aquarina.

We quickly stood up as we began to slowly walk towards the place where everything happened, the altar was now crushed into pieces, and the pond of water was... frozen.

What we found in front of us was something completely out of the ordinary, it was... something we had never seen before at all. I wondered what it could even be, but I really couldn't imagine what else could it be other than the being inside the egg.

Amidst an icy fog, a small and snake-like creature suddenly flew towards Aquarina and jumped over her, attacking her!

"GROAR!"

"Kyyyaaaah!"

"Aquarina!"

I rushed to her rescue as fast as possible, but when I reached her, I found Aquarina in the floor, being licked by what seemed to be something similar to a small draconic sea snake, covered by crystalline scales and having a small and cute head, licking her entire face.

"Hahaha! Stop! It tickles!"

"Graaoo~"

The little sea snake seemed friendly and cute, as it continued to lick Aquarina's face. I wondered where this thing came from, it didn't seem to be related with Leviathan, or at least, it is not him.

But what is this then? Is this her own spirit? Did Aquarina just created one over time?

And this ice growing everywhere... this spirit is an Ice-Attribute Spirit!

"Wow, what kind of spirit is this?" asked Aquarina.

"I don't really know, but it should be something related with Ice..." I said.

"Ice?" wondered Aquarina.

"Did you make a pact with it?" I asked.

"Yes, it was almost instantaneous... when it happened, I saw a bit of its memories... I saw various things... Within them, there was something special that I had not seen before..." she said.

"W-What did you see?" I asked.

"I saw a lot of giant snake-shaped dragons swimming in the ocean, and they were all living in harmony in the oceans, swimming around with other smaller people... And in there, there was someone else as well..." she said.

"Oh? What else? What else?" I asked excitedly.

"A gigantic sea snake! It was so big... Was that the Leviathan you always talk about? I saw it leaving a special egg inside of me, and then leaving, as if flying into the skies, the heavens..." said Aquarina.

"T-That must be Leviathan... So he left this egg for you. This little spirit must be related to him! Maybe it is his egg? Wait, her egg... Was Leviathan a girl this entire time?!" I wondered.

"M-Maybe?" said Aquarina.

"Grao!"

The little sea snake-like dragon suddenly began floating around the air, while leaving icy fog everywhere. It had a hard time controlling his elemental power. It was going to be a bit hard to tame it.

Chapter 190 Aquarina's New Spirit

While sleeping, I ended sneaking inside of Aquarina's Soul Scape, and guess what! There was something special inside, a little egg.

I remember seeing this egg before, but I never thought I would get to see it again like this, this was pretty amazing. I guess I got some kind of ability that let me infiltrate other people's soul scape.

I wonder why? Where did this power come from? Is this Soul Magic? I remember that the System is composed of Soul-Attribute Runes as well, and that the runes it had were leaking into me and letting me absorb these elemental powers, as if the System was also a spirit.

I can only think about the System in this situation... I can't really think about anything else. And well... the System had been evolving lately, the more EXP I have gotten for her over the many things I have hunted in this time, the more bugs she's resolving, so she is slowly unlocking more power.

She even told me the other day that she might be able to do something awesome in the near future, perhaps finally I might be able to enjoy a few of the little benefits of the system, aside from endless mana that I cannot properly handle, or my body will burst into pieces, or immortality that doesn't have regeneration so when I am too wounded, I cannot even move!

Anyways, this wasn't about me, but Aquarina's new friend.

"Amazing, with this new spirit I could grow stronger as well... I have a hard time using ice magic for some reason... but maybe he can help me with the affinity!" said Aquarina.

"Ice magic seems pretty lethal... Are you sure you'll be able to handle it?" I wondered.

"Yeah, don't worry about it! I will do my best." Said Aquarina.

"Graao~!"

The little sea snake began to swim around the air, as if the air itself was water. The two of us began to consider what name should we give to the little draconic creature. A name I had come out with was...

"How about we call it Leviathan?" I asked.

"Leviathan? Like him... or her?" asked Aquarina.

"I know it sounds weird but... maybe we could think of this as his reincarnation in a way. I don't know if he or she could properly reincarnate when it was a soul, but maybe a fragment of its soul was left, and that formed into an egg inside of your soul scape..." I said.

"Hmm... You're right." Said Aquarina.

"So how about Leviathan then, do you like it, little guy?" I asked.

"Graaaao! Graograaa!" said the little draconic sea snake, as it flew around and licked my face, covering it in a thin layer of ice.

"Ugh..." I muttered.

"Ah! Sorry, Sylphy! Are you okay?" asked Aquarina.

"Y-Yeah, I am fine..." I sighed.

I quickly took out the ice out of my face and smiled.

...

At the end, we stayed a long time with Leviathan, the little creature was extremely needy, but didn't had any intelligence like Ignatius had, so it wasn't particularly an annoying creature that was constantly talking nonsense, it was just very clingy at most, like a needy pet that just wanted a lot of attention.

The origins of it are very mysterious, and we had decided to ask my mother, who knows a lot about spirits, about what could this little spirit be all about and from where did it exactly originated from.

My mother was always an amazing and knowledgeable woman, so I am quite excited about knowing more about what she knows about spirits.

After playing for a while, I suddenly realized that I could leave by flying upwards into the sky of the soul scape, and then I said my farewells to Sylphy, as I landed inside of my Soul Scape once more.

"Ah Sylphy, you're back!" said the System.

"Yeah, what's up? I was inside of Aquarina's Soul Scape... I don't know how I got there..." I said.

"You got inside another's person soul?!" asked Ignatius.

"That's not something that happens every day..." said Furoh.

"Come on now, leave her breath some air..." said the System.

"But how do I got in there? Was it your power?" I asked.

"Hmmm... I don't know. This must be something else manifesting within you, Sylphy... But I also wanted to tell you something, my powers had advanced enough, I believe, I think I can give you something special." Said the System.

"Huh? really? That fast?" I asked.

"After your father defeated that Hell guy, the giant skeleton, I gained a lot of EXP, and it converted into a large quantity of fuel, and then in the subsequent days as you hunted many wild beasts... It was finally possible for me to repair more errors. The system is still very much glitched, and it might be impossible to fully repair it, actually... But it might now be possible to select one of your Skills, which I can make into a Leveling Skill!" said the System.

"Huh? How so?" I wondered.

"Well, you see... With the power I got, I can make one of your Skills into a Skill that can level up! Meaning that with enough practice, mostly using it over and over again, it can gain proficiency over time, and you can level it up so its total power and intensity is automatically enhanced. Also, as skills level up, new skills could be automatically unlocked, generating effectively a Skill Tree." Said the System.

"Huh?! That's crazy! Was that actually in the original power of the System?" I asked.

"Yeah, it was, but it was for all Skills, but you can only pick one..." said the System.

"Hmm... Which one should I pick?" I wondered.

I looked into the Skills I had.

[Royal Elven Lineage]

[Agriculture]

[Lesser Fire Magic: Ember]

[Mana Usage]

[Hero Seed]

[Divine Protection]

[Heavenly Sight]

"Royal Elven Lineage, Divine Protection, and Hero Seed cannot be selected, those are not leveling Skills even in the original features..." said the System.

"I see... then... Hmm... Agriculture, Ember, Mana Usage, or Heavenly Sight...?" I wondered.

This was a big decision.