

A Glitched 981

Chapter 981 Slaying The Boss With My Girlfriend

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With lightning and fire on my sword, I destroyed the metallic spears that it conjured one after another, saving Aquarina from being overwhelmed once more.

"Aquarina, focus on its joints! I'll hold on their projectiles!" I said, as she immediately nodded.

"Roger!" She quickly took out her two daggers after considering that using her fists and the trident alone wouldn't be enough. "[Shadow Dagger Arts]: [Spectral Rush]!" Aquarina roared, her two daggers overflowing with her Abyssal Aura.

FLAAASH!

The golem couldn't even follow her movements anymore, as she resembled a specter made of shadows moving rapidly, evading its hammer blows with ease as she started hitting the joints on its arms.

The elbow and the shoulders were the weaker areas, the chest, where the core was, was being protected by several layers of mithril the golem grew to protect its weakest point.

So first of all, we had to immobilize it!

CLAASH! CLAASH! CLAASH!

Aquarina kept chipping away at the hard metal, cracks beginning to slowly appear. Our weapons were already superior to Mithril, made by the Witch of the Blue Mountain and reinforced with special Demonic Cores from powerful Demon Lords our parents defeated.

At the same time, I distracted the golem by attacking it with Petit Meteors at constant intervals. Because it was made of Mithril, however, Magic Damage was greatly reduced. This was a metal that resisted magic a lot.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"GRUOOHH!"

The Mithril Golem gave several steps forward, attacking me with its hammer and trying to stomp on me whenever I evaded and moved down.

CLAAASH!

I blocked the attack with Sapphire, the shield overflowing with black flames as I released the damage she accumulated!

"[Sea Dragon Soul Summon] + [Black Dragon Flame Shield] = [Abyssal Sea Dragon Flame Shield]!"

"ROOOAAARRR!"

The shield erupted with a gigantic dragon made of abyssal sea and black flames, its entire body colliding against the Golem and pushing it back for a few seconds, its body covered on several more cracks.

"Now!"

Aquarina's eyes glowed bright red as Abyssal Energies surged from her very bloodline, turning half her body into deep black color, her daggers absorbed this energy, growing into long black blades, and piercing the cracks I created!

"[Shadow Bringer's Blades]!"

SLAASH! SLAASH! SLAASH! CRAAASH!

With a series of slashing attacks, Aquarina's blades pierced and expanded the golem's cracks on its shoulders, until...!

"Ignatius, now!" I roared. "[Spirit Aura]!"

"Oooh!" Ignatius roared, his powers fusing into my Aura as his draconic flames overflowed through Scarlet.

"[Dragon Blade Arts]: [Blazing Dragon's Claws]!"

SLAAASH!

I swung my blade towards the shoulders, two enormous claws made of volcanic flames emerged at the same time, made out of my combined aura with Ignatius.

CRAAASH! CRAAASH!

Both strikes were the last push Aquarina's attacks needed, the golem's arms crumbled down, losing his ability to fight back with his enormous hammer!

BAAAMM!!

The sound of both enormous metallic arms falling into the ground made the entire caves tremble once more, as the golem desperately roared, conjuring dozens of Metallic Spikes from the ground.

"GRAAAH!"

"Oh no, you won't!" I said. [Demonic Katana's Raging Sea Dance]!"

I moved in midair like the waves of the raging sea, the illusion of a water dragon emerging from the slashes of my sword encompassed the metallic spikes, cutting them one after another.

SLAASH! SLAASH! SLAASH! "Now, Aquarina!"

As I did that, Aquarina rushed towards the golem, her two daggers fusing into a huge black spear, her aura erupting with frost and ocean's aura.

"[Abyssal Sea Dragon's Spear]!"

CLAAASH!

The impact alone pierced through the golem's several layers of mithril, its core finally shattering into pieces not by the spear, but the shockwave and force alone of the mithril covering it breaking apart! Aquarina's spear was destroyed when she hit it.

"GRUOOHHHH...!"

The golem gave a last cry of lament before collapsing on the ground, its body beginning to fracture and fall apart, becoming a mere pile of rich and high quality mithril!

"And done!" Aquarina celebrated, standing over the pile of mithril. "Wow! Why was this so tough though?! It was just a huge golem at the end of the day!"

"Aquarina, it knew Metal Magic and had this huge hammer." I said. "A Tier 8 Monster is still a Tier 8 Monster... Though it was much slower than others, it sure had a lot of defenses. It was a good idea to destroy its arms so it couldn't fight back as much anymore before striking it down."

"Yeah, like that, it was unable to annoy us as much with its physical blows. Although the magic was still there..." Aquarina agreed. "I guess this also helped me learn more about how to confront foes like these... Last time we fought golems was in the dungeon back home, and that one only has coral golems which are weak to magic..."

"Yeah, it isn't the same." I nodded. "Anyways, looks like everyone else is here already..."

We saw our friends finally arrive, everyone had utterly massacred most golems as they came here, gasping for air and looking rather exhausted.

"W-We're here! Where's the boss at- Ah..." Zack suddenly looked at the two of us, sighing. "No way, you already killed it?! That's not fair at all!"

"Hehehe, maybe be a bit faster next time!" Aquarina giggled.

"T-That's a Mithril Golem, right?" Luck asked. "Wow, it must have been tough! Was it strong?"

"Yeah, it was a Tier 8 Monster." I nodded. "Anyways, did you hunt down the other golems?"

"Mostly." Celeste said. "Though we didn't chase the ones that started running away. Its better to leave a few of them alive. I've read Golems reproduce by absorbing ores from the environment and dividing."

"I suppose you're not wrong in that." I nodded.

"Wow, surprising for Celeste to be this considered~" Laughed Mist. "Especially about golems..."

"W-What do you mean surprising?! I'm also a person, you know Mist?" Celeste crossed her arms, blushing a bit.

"I think we got a lot of EXP out of them! My level increased quite a lot!" Celica celebrated.

"Oh yeah, it was a good harvest, especially of materials too! So many spirit crystals!" Lara was bringing with her a bag of them.

Yeah, and about EXP...

Chapter 982 Lots Of Levels

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As I saw everyone happy over the EXP they earned, I checked the System Notifications Alice was eagerly showing to me...

Ding!

[You and your Party have defeated [Giant Stone Golem (Tier 4)] x55 [Giant Crystal Golem (Tier 5)] x41 [Giant Spirit Crystal Golem (Tier 6)] x33 [Giant Metal Golem (Tier 6)] x36 and [Giant Mithril Golem (Tier 8)] x1!]

[You earned 17.025.000 EXP!]

[Aquarina] has gained 10 Levels!]

[Zack] has gained 7 Levels!]

[Mist] has gained 6 Levels!]

[Celica] has gained 6 Levels!]

[Celeste] has gained 7 Levels!]

[Luck] has gained 7 Levels!]

[Lara] has gained 6 Levels!]

[Naturia] and [Yggdra] have gained 5 Levels!]

[Undine] and [Leviathan] have gained 8 Levels!]

[Undine] and [Leviathan] have reached Max Level and are ready to Rank Up!]

[Please select the Rank Up option within their Status to allow them to Evolve further.]

Everyone ended leveling quite a lot, and above all, Aquarina's Spirits hit max level before even an hour has passed by!

"Alright, looks like your Spirits are max level now!" I said with a happy giggle.

"Looks like!" Aquarina was also quite joyous. "Hmm, they don't look all that different than when they were level 1 though."

"They'll definitely change once they evolve." I nodded, as Glutton came back after a few minutes, having stored most of the golems we defeated inside his Inventory belly and quickly returning to his simple bag form, wrapped around my hip with a belt. "How about we evolve them right away then? I'll show you how much they change."

"T-Then let's do it!" Aquarina was very excited. "You guys... Are you happy about this too?"

"Hmm, dunno what you're talking about, but sure?" Undine was quite clueless.

"ROAR!" Meanwhile, Leviathan had somehow caught up to it and was nodding happily.

"Looks like they're excited." I giggled. "Can you sense Pyuku nearby?" I wondered.

"Yeah, he actually came to this crater. He might have slid through these caves because I sense him in the deeper areas." Aquarina said. "There must be some corridor or something over there... But let's evolve them first before advancing. Are our parents close?"

"They should be getting here slowly." I said, as I could sense their presences through the combination of Heavenly Sight and my Mana and Spiritual Aura. "Anyways... Let's do this. Alice?"

"Sure." Alice nodded, giving authorization to the Spirits of Aquarina to evolve.

Their bodies instantly glowed with bright sapphire light, our friends, which were chatting and resting in the caves, were suddenly attracted by the light they emanated.

"Wait, are they evolving or something?" Zack wondered in awe.

"I-It looks like!" Mist nodded. "Wow...!"

"They're shining so brightly..." Zephy said.

FLAAASH!

The two Spirits quickly underwent unique changes. Undine, who resembled a small mermaid with blue skin and fins in her ears, alongside long blue hair, turned larger, now having around the same size as a big dog instead of a small cat.

Her arms gained blue scales, and her fish-like tail gained a sharper end. Meanwhile, she gained sharp teeth, and a fiercer appearance, although she still looked cute.

Meanwhile, Leviathan, the little ice dragon, turned twice as big, around the same size as Undine by now, his appearance changed the least though, although his wings became larger too, but that was about it...

Well, my own Spirits never changed that drastically when evolving. And unlike them, this time I wasn't able to choose their evolution options, so it was left to whatever was most compatible with them.

Ding!

[Undine] and [Leviathan] have successfully evolved to D+ Rank Spirits!]

[All their Stats have increased.]

[They have gained new Skills!]

[Their affinity with their Master, [Aquarina] has dramatically increased.]

<Status System>

[System Owner]: [Undine]

[Race]: [Water Spirit: ★★]

[Class]: [Lake Fairy: ★★]

[Rank]: [D+]

[Level]: [0/30]

[HP]: [1.850/1.850]

[MP]: [7.000/7.000]

[Strength]: [1.200]

[Defense]: [1.200]

[Magic]: [3.700]

[Resistance]: [2.200]

[Agility]: [1.600]

[Luck]: [1.600]

[Charm]: [4.500]

[Skills]: [Water Manipulation: Lv6] [Sharp Spirit Trident: Lv5] [Turbulent River Currents: Lv5] [Healing Spring Water: Lv4] [Deadly Whirlpool: Lv1] [Song of Fear: Lv1]

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<Status System>

[System Owner]: [Leviathan]

[Race]: [Small Ice Dragon Spirit: ★★]

[Class]: [Little Dragon: ★★]

[Rank]: [D+]

[Level]: [0/30]

[HP]: [3.750/3.750]

[MP]: [4.900/4.900]

[Strength]: [3.350]

[Defense]: [3.000]

[Magic]: [2.650]

[Resistance]: [1.600]

[Agility]: [1.300]

[Luck]: [1.300]

[Charm]: [1.800]

[Skills]: [Ice Manipulation: Lv6] [Ice Crystal Scales: Lv5] [Freezing Breath: Lv5] [Icicle Spears: Lv4] [Frost Claws: Lv1] [Snowstorm: Lv1]

Their Stats looked much higher than before, that's for sure. And above all, they gained new Skills! Undine gained the ability to conjure some sort of whirlpool to trap enemies and... to sing?

It is some sort of song that sirens make to intimidate or fill their foes with fear, it might lower affected foes stats, so that's useful I suppose.

As for Leviathan, he gained the ability to grow his claws into big, very big ones, and also to unleash a little snowstorm to slow down foes and deal constant ice damage!

Not bad at all!

"Amazing... Y-You guys really changed this time... After years!" Aquarina couldn't help but feel incredibly happy, hugging the two of them. "And my connection with you two feels much stronger..."

"I've gotten bigger!" Undine was surprised. "I wonder if I can get as big as Naturia? Ah, master, stop hugging me so tightly- Eep!"

"Rooaarr! Graar!" Leviathan wagged his tail happily, licking Aquarina's face.

"Just what happened here? Did they evolve naturally?" Zack wondered. "Well, I guess it was about time but... this feels a bit suspicious.." He squinted his eyes.

"Hahaha... No way." I laughed. "A-Anyways! I think Pyuku is quite nearby, right in this cave! So let's go chase him!"

I didn't want to make my friends fight over who could get a System in their Familiars or not, so I simply avoided the topic for now... It is quite clear to notice that Aquarina gets quite a lot of privileges above them for being my girlfriend, but I try to be fair too!

"Hey, don't forget what you promised! The one that killed the most gets a reward!" Celeste said, stopping me as she grabbed my shoulders.

"R-Right! Ahahaha, silly me! How could I forget?" I laughed nervously.

At the end, the one that hunted the most was Zack, surprisingly. Aquarina ended getting more levels because she killed the Mithril Golem.

"You owe me an Armor now! Heheh!"

"Fine..."

Chapter 983 Finding Pyuku

Once done with taking care of storing the monsters' bodies, we decided to keep on moving, guided by Aquarina's senses, which sensed Pyuku very close by.

"So how did you meet Pyuku? I've read and heard about Slimes, but he's the only one I've ever seen..." Mist said.

"Well, yeah, we meet him back in the Amazonian Jungles, where our tribe used to be located." Said Aquarina. "It was in one of our many adventures, we just found him out of nowhere pretty much, wandering about aimlessly. He was hungry and started eating the monsters we hunted... And showcased how he could gain some of their abilities when eating them."

"Since then, he has accompanied us for years. Always showing up to help sometimes, though, these last years, he has become quite lazy." I explained. "I don't know why but he just doesn't like to fight anymore and just lazes around and eats."

"I don't really mind because he still occasionally helps but... I was worried he was growing depressed or something." Aquarina sighed. "I... I haven't taken good care of him I guess. He's much smarter than other monsters, maybe he wanted to meet more of his kin or something."

"I see..." Mist nodded. "Maybe he ran away because he heard there was a slime nearby? Or sensed it!"

"Another slime?" Wondered Aquarina. "In here from all places?"

"We've read and investigated about this elusive race of creatures, but there's very little aside from common knowledge." I said. "Though, we've discovered they used to be very common several hundreds of years ago, until they became increasingly rare."

"Are they wild monsters or something?" Wondered Zack. "If he's so smart, there's no way, right?"

"They're a strange bunch, there might be subspecies that were more animalistic, and also those that were smart, kind of like in the same category as dragons in that regard." I explained.

"You dare compare us Dragons with mere Slimes?!" Asked Ignatius angrily, but we ignored him.

"But why did they disappeared?" Wondered my little brother rather innocently.

"They were overhunted. Young slimes seemed to be everywhere at one point, so much they were seen as pests. They were hunted to near extinction because of how easy it was to kill them. Their materials were also quite useful, their slime serves to make Mana Potions and Health Potions, and has multiple hygienic usages, while their core holds mana and is pristine, used primarily to create magic artifacts." I explained.

"W-Wow... I didn't think they could be this useful, but... overhunted?" Wondered Mist, feeling a bit bad. "Poor Pyuku... Maybe he lost his family or something..."

"Pyuku is definitely special compared to other slimes though..." Aquarina said. "No slimes in the books we've read have his abilities. He can seamlessly shapeshift into larger forms than his actual size, and his

whole Absorption Ability is also very unique. He also seems to grow stronger by eating monsters, although he stopped being as gluttonous for years now, eating just whatever food I offered him..."

"It feels like... He just lost the entire will to fight, huh?" Luck sighed. "Maybe... he started to realize he was alone in the world."

"..."

At Luck's words, we felt extremely sad, and suddenly, everyone fell into silence.

Until Lara reprimanded him.

"Luck! Did you had to say something so gloomy like that?!" She said angrily, hitting his head with her scepter. "Don't be so pessimistic! I'm sure there are others like him somewhere!"

"Ouch! Okay, sorry! I was just saying what I had in mind... I somehow can relate to him, a bit..." Luck said. "When I lost my big brother I... I felt so alone and sad. It felt like nothing else really mattered. If I didn't had Lara with me back then, I might have died prematurely. Maybe... by my own hand."

"I told you to stop saying such things!" Lara cried, hugging him. "Dummy! I'll always be there for you!"lights

"Hahaha, okay, calm down, sorry... Maybe I shouldn't have opened myself too much there." Luck apologized.

"No, it's fine." I smiled faintly. "I really appreciate you telling us this... I hope you never feel like that again, Luck. If you ever felt like talking, we're here for you too. We're your friends after all."

"T-Thanks, I'm fine, really." Luck felt embarrassed at my words. "I've mourned my brother and... I've avenged him. I think I can move forwards. One step at a time, but I can."

"Well said bro." Zack smiled, patting his shoulders. "You got us."

"Thanks Zack." Luck laughed a bit, feeling blessed to have us.

"Indeed, you have us as well." Suddenly, a large and colorful bird appeared above us.

"Ninhursag?!" We all felt a bit surprised.

"Hello children, well done, you've cleansed most of the cave of the golems, but left several alive." Ninhursag said. "I acknowledge your strength and also your compassion. It is good to trim down the dangerous monsters, but they're also an important part of our ecosystem, leaving a group alive will keep them coming, bringing forth more benefits to it. Although they're mostly mindless creatures that attack anything on sight, golems eat dirt and excrete it back, clean from any toxins. They purify the stone they eat, kind of like earthworms. They're necessary to keep this floating continent clean and healthy."

"I-I see..." I nodded. "We were talking about a lot of things, actually..."

"I did hear a bit." Ninhursag quickly turned into her real form.

FLAASH!

"Pyuku seems similar to me, we might be the lasts of our kind." She said. "He is a mysterious being, and he was present in that invasion of the Blue Demon's Army... I also remember something he said when he came to that jungle."

"What do you mean?" Aquarina raised an eyebrow.

"The Blue Demon... He was looking for someone that had gone missing." Said Ninhursag. "He hadn't come to simply avenge his father in the Jungles. He was also looking for someone known as the "Demon Prince"... I don't know who that might have been, he died before he could find him but... Pyuku being intelligent, and also quite mysterious. I guess I felt rather suspicious about him."

"That's..." I felt taken aback by that information.

Was Pyuku... this entire time, someone else completely?

But that's...

"Hey, Pyuku! PYUKU!"

However, Aquarina interrupted my train of thoughts, running towards the slime, which was at the end of the vast corridor.

"..."

He was looking at a huge mural.

Chapter 984 Pyuku's Truth

Pyuku's silhouette could be seen from all the way here. His form wasn't... the same as before. He didn't resemble a tiny little ball of blue goo. He had become taller, and taken a slightly human-like shape, with his core, which he often hid from our view, glowing like a diamond within his chest.

His appearance was hard to discern, it could only be described as between a boy and a girl, with long, bluish hair, sharp and bright rainbow-colored eyes, and a dress made of blue slime...

What... is happening?

"PYUKU!"

Aquarina ran towards him, as Pyuku gently caressed the mural he had been looking at, completely ignoring her. His rainbow eyes seemed to shine with sorrow.

The mural...

I took a glance at it as we moved right behind Aquarina. It had a beautiful carving, resembling what looked like a huge floating castle- no, several of them, descending from the stars.

From them, there were large, glowing figures, raising their arms as if asking to be praised. At their side, there were small... creatures.

They looked tiny and spherical, made of some sort of colorful liquid. There were blue, red, green, yellow, and more.

All of them sitting near these beings, as if they were loyal servants.

I could also notice other figures resembling normal humans, and their other variants, such as taller and lankier red-eyed and white-haired ones, and bigger and muscular ones.

And also, there were elves, with sharp ears, and elves with wings, fairies, the race of my grandmother...

There was also Anima, with animal features on their bodies, led by people with very dark skin, similar to Ninhursag.

There were also smaller people with strong arms, perhaps Dwarves?

And other silhouettes we couldn't discern, they looked too old.

But this mural... it seemed ancient and even mystical in nature.

And Pyuku gently caressed it, looking at the small and colorful creatures accompanying these aliens, its eyes filled with sorrow.

"Pyuku? Is that you?"

Aquarina walked towards the slime, he never stopped looking at the mural.

"Aquarina. What does this mural convey to you when you look at it?"

"E-Eh? Y-You can talk?!"

"Answer me, Aquarina..."lights

Aquarina felt speechless as we finally reached them, standing right next to her. Pyuku exuded a powerful Aura of Mana, resembling an endless stream of rainbow colors.

"T-That's..." I muttered, incapable of believing it. "Pyuku, you... you're not what you made us believe, weren't you?"

"I never lied to you." He answered. "I never pretended to be someone else... I was simply being my most basic being, the roots of my bloodline. What my creators designed us to look and act for. We were cleaners, designed to clean everything. The world and its pollution, every corner of it."

He pointed at the murals.

"Do you see them? My brethren? They were so small and cute..." Pyuku sighed, tears flowing from his eyes. "We served our masters well, we worked for them, we did it happily... We wanted nothing but praise, we lived a life lower than cockroaches, and we only expected the bare minimum from them."

Suddenly, his hand grew into a gigantic claw, hitting the mural.

CLAASH!

Countless cracks spread across it...

"But they discarded us once we were not useful anymore." He muttered. "We were nothing at the end, tools to discard later... Not even you people were treated this badly. Only us..."

"Pyuku, I...!" Aquarina tried to talk to him.

"Do you understand what I'm trying to say?" Pyuku asked. "Our tribe was scattered across the world, the commands of our creators stopped from one day to another... Those incapable of working without their commands perished quickly, hunted down to extinction. Our bodies seemed quite useful to many... Our young, foolish and innocent, slaughtered mercilessly. Those that fought back were hunted too, and those that escaped, survived barely."

His rainbow eyes began to glow, tears constantly flowing from them. His words were filled with so much emotion, with so much sorrow... I never thought he had been saving all of this, that he had been pretending to not be suffering this entire time.

"The cleansed the world from all its toxins, from all the miasma, so all of you could survive there. And this was the end of our tribe, unrecognized, forgotten, hated..." Pyuku sighed, slamming the wall again. "We were just seen as monsters because we couldn't communicate with words. The last of my ancestors ran towards the Demonic Continent, the place where they could continue feeding on the miasma while cleansing it. In there, we built a small place, an underground kingdom of our kin and many other friends, people that didn't see us as monsters... Yet, in that war, it all went down."

"Pyuku, I know you're suffering and all but... Please calm down, let's talk things out, okay? I'm sorry if I ever hurt you for treating you like... a pet. I didn't know you were so smart and could talk and...!" Aquarina was desperate to apologize.

"There's nothing to apologize for. I do not resent any of you." Pyuku said. "I do not hate you... I am simply coming to the realization of how tragic and pointless our legacy has been. Of how, in the last moments of our kin's lives, they all came together, to give birth to me."

"C-Came together?" Zack asked. "What... do you mean?"

"I am the last Slime, and the one born from the last fifty of them." Pyuku said, his hands overflowing with rich mana we never thought he possessed. "I am what they worked so hard to create, someone that could change shape, someone that could speak with words... And someone that could grow stronger. I am the Slime Prince. I was made in all of your appearance, in our endless struggle to be accepted by our creators, we wanted to look like you, their favorites. Human, with eyes, with hands, with the ability to become stronger..."

He suddenly fell to his knees, beginning to cry even more.

"Yet... I always held a small hope within my heart that there would be at least one of us left... I wanted... I wanted to meet someone like me... for once in my entire life...!" He cried. "It's so unfair... SO UNFAIR!"

TRUUUUMMM...!

His power erupted from his body, an enormous shockwave of Mana reached us.

Chapter 985 Berserk Slime

TRUUUUMMM...!

"W-What with this strong Mana?!" Zack muttered, stepping back. "Pyuku was always this powerful?!"

"I-I didn't know he was this strong...!" Aquarina said, covering herself with her arms from the shockwave of Mana.

However, another one came rushing towards us right away. Pyuku wasn't doing this intentionally though, he seemed to have gone through a very strong emotional breakdown, and his power was becoming uncontrollable.

"[Mana Disruption]!"

I waved my hands, as sparks of purple lightning surged from my hands, the strong shockwaves of rich mana surging out of his body were nullified, as they quickly disappeared.

FLAAASH!

"Urgh...!" Pyuku felt slightly weakened, falling to his knees. "Hahh... I'm alone..."

However, that didn't seem to make him snap out of it.

"Pyuku, you're not alone!" Aquarina cried. "You have me! You have us! We'll always be there for you... I-I'm your friend, right?!"

"I'm the last of my kind..." However, the Slime didn't listen to her words, it seemed as if his own mind had fallen into some sort of endless nightmare.

"He doesn't seem to be alright." Ninhursag said. "Could something in here have affected his mind? Or is this something that Slimes in specific suffer?"

"He did say that his kin had a very different kind of mind, and that they couldn't speak..." I said. "It wouldn't be strange if their minds worked completely differently than ours. Maybe he had been enduring it so far but... He's at his breaking point. We need to catch him and tell him right into his face that he's not alone! Or he simply won't listen!"

"Okay...!" Aquarina nodded, decided. "L-Let's do it! I'll do it!"

"A-Are you sure?!" Zack asked.

"We'll go together then." Ninhursag stepped forwards. "Children, stay behind. The three of us will advance. Sylphy, can you cancel out his Mana Shockwave with that power you used?"

"Mana Disruption?" I asked her. "Yes, I think I can do it, but it'll cause a backlash on him each time... I don't want to hurt him too much."

"Hmm, then we'll have to bear with some of the pressure." Ninhursag said. "Let out your Beast Auras! Let them encompass your entire body, like a natural armor!"

She stepped forwards, her foot hitting the ground and generating cracks, fighting against the endless pressure emerging from the slime.

"A-Alright...! [Beast Aura Manifestation]!" Aquarina roared, her Aura erupted from her body, resembling a gigantic sea dragon, resembling a long sea snake.

However, there was also a second figure emerging from the sea snake-like dragon, hiding beneath its shadows, an enormous shapeless being opened its countless red eyes, veiled in pure darkness.

"[Beast Aura Manifestation]!" I roared at the same time, exuding the pure Beast Aura without any Skill intervention.

The enormous figure of a red dragon emerged from my soul, spreading its two wings. And also there was a huge green tree, spreading its branches into the skies and its glistening leaves shining brightly.

"Both of you are exceptionally talented!" Ninhursag was shocked. "To think you've developed Secondary Beast Auras already, and so unique at that! Aquarina's secondary Beast Aura might be the result of your Darkage Bloodline developing, and Sylphy... it must be because of Yggdra and Naturia, and your strong affinity with nature itself! A Beast Aura that is in the shape of a tree... this is incredible!"

"We can talk about this later though!" I said. "Let's move...!"

We gritted our teeth as we kept advancing towards Pyuku. His humanoid body slowly beginning to shapeshift into a formless appearance, melting into the ground.

The only thing left was his face, distorting into anger and frustration, sorrow and sadness, screaming, cursing the heavens.

"GRAAAHHH...!"lights

"Pyuku! Please...! Don't cry!"

Aquarina herself was beginning to cry after seeing him like this. It was honestly one shocking thing after another. I had to be there for her too.

I held her hand tightly, looking into her eyes.

"We'll do this together."

"Sylphy...!"

"Yeah, move!" Ninhursag roared.

We battled the enormous pressure, which kept growing larger. Step after step, without giving up. We imbued our very wills against the shockwaves, clashing against it with our Beast Auras.

Ninhursag's Beast Aura was the strongest, emerging in the form of several beasts at once. Each one most likely being one of the forms she could take, simply incredible.

FLAAASH!

"Pyuku! Stop this! You're not alone!" Aquarina roared, stepping further and further.

"Why was I cursed with this existence? Why did everyone sacrifice to give birth to me?" Pyuku screamed, hitting the ground. "Those murals... Their words... my kin... there is nobody else left behind!"

"There must be someone, somewhere!" I said, my hands unleashing the power of Mana Disruption, weakening his aura so we could move forwards. "Pyuku, you're not alone on this!"

"I... I also lost everything. I was also just as alone as you are, young slime." Ninhursag said. "But I found friends, and these friends became my precious family. That you may be the last of your kind does not mean that you are alone. Don't be selfish and embrace those that care for you!"

Her fists reached Pyuku, but didn't hurt him, she punched his aura and destroyed it as each of her fists glowed brightly, the Aura of her beasts shapeshifting, becoming her claws! Fur, feathers, and scales surging from her hands.

"You're not alone! Definitely not alone!" She roared, hitting his aura! "And I will SHOW YOU!"

Crack, crack...!

CRAAASH!

The aura shattered like glass by her sheer power alone. Ninhursag was already surpassing her previous Realm and evolving even further. Even these powers she was showcasing, I don't remember her using them before.

"Now!" She told us, as Aquarina and I nodded at the same time, leaping towards Pyuku.

"GRAAAAH!"

Pyuku screamed in agony and frustration, his body emerging as countless tentacles waved everywhere. We evaded them through our heightened senses, reaching him with each step.

"Pyuku! We love you!"

"That's enough, stop this already!"

The two of us hugged his slimy and cold body, our Auras and our warmth embracing his existence.

FLAAASH!

In that single second, his eyes opened again, shining with rainbow light, his sanity seemed to slowly come back, as his Aura weakened and dissipated.

"Ugh...! W-Wha...?"

Chapter 986 Calming Down Pyuku

Pyuku slowly opened his eyes again, realizing we were hugging him with Aquarina. His shapeless form slowly taking back the appearance he had before, of a young-looking boy... or girl.

"Are you feeling better now?" I asked him. "Can you relax and explain what you found out?"

"I-I..." The young slime didn't know what to say. He seemed to feel some guilt, but also seemed to still have the same feelings as before.

"It's alright, we're here for you!" Aquarina smiled. "We're pals, right? Since we found you! Like Ninhursag said, that you might be the last of your kind doesn't mean you're alone. And who says you're the very last? You know how BIG the world is, Pyuku?"

"Aquinara..." The slime sighed, nodding. "Sorry... Sorry for lying to you and everyone else about who I truly was. I felt like if I simply pretended to be a slime, my life wouldn't become complicated. But... as the years went by, I felt more and more depressed. It felt as if life was becoming meaningless."

"Of course you would feel that way." Ninhursag said. "You were accompanied by people but could not speak your heart out, you couldn't have someone to talk with because you choose to pretend to be something you weren't."

"..." The slime prince remained in silence as he nodded. "You're right... It is all my fault at the end, that I felt this exasperated, and that I ended breaking down like I did. I'm really sorry- Ah, are you hurt?"

He started checking Aquarina's arms and legs, but she was alright.

"I'm fine, really! Don't worry about it." Aquarina smiled. "I'm just relieved you're feeling okay now. Just, don't hide more things from us, okay? We want to learn about you and, know you better, right?"

"Of course..." I nodded gently. "Please, open up with us. There's no need to feel afraid."

"Ugh... Guuh..." Pyuku started crying again, hearing our words. "Thank you... I'm sorry again... Sniff..."

"It's fine, it's alright..." Aquarina comforted the slime with a hug.

Everyone else arrived at our side once things calmed down. We decided to wait for our parents to arrive and make a small camp here. I took a few things from my Inventory and set a small bonfire, deciding to cook something tasty.

The meat of the lizards Aquarina hunted before was still fresh, so I decided to butcher one with her help and then cut the tender parts of the meat into giant steaks, which I began to grill after seasoning.

At the same time, I saw the Quest Completion Notification.

Ding!

[You have Completed the [Special Quest]: [Level Up Aquarina's Spirits and Find Pyuku]!]

[After leveling up and evolving Aquarina's Spirits, you've found Pyuku in a terrible mental state, and helped him recover with your words and love.]

[However, there's still a lot to learn about his origins, and what he read in this strange mural... And don't let me get started about the whole mural itself!]

[Too many mysteries!]

[The Quest Completion Rewards have been increased for completing the Quest in less than 2 Hours.]

[You Received The Following Rewards]: [10.000.000 EXP] [Yggdrasil's Heart Fragment 1/3 (A+ Grade)] x1 [Rune Growth Enhancement Nut (A+ Grade)] x5 [Physique Growth Enhancement Bean (A+ Grade)] x5]

"These rewards... Yggdrasil Heart Fragment? One of three?" I wondered. "And these growth items are different than the others...!"

"Indeed, these are new items to fit your growth. Now that the other enhancement items seem to not work properly with you, we calculated it would be better to boost the speed in which you create your own runes or enhance your physique!" Said Alice.

"The other Potions gave too little Runes now, and my body wasn't growing much stronger either." I nodded. "And that's when I was drinking dozens of S Rank ones, so you're right. I'll keep on training and cultivating on my own, these growth acceleration items might be more worth it in the long run!"

I checked their effects, they were interesting.

lights

[Rune Growth Enhancement Nut (A+ Grade)] / [Physique Growth Enhancement Bean (A+ Grade)]

A Special Nut or Bean created to boost the growth of someone's magic circle or physique, created in ancient times by a famous Sage, once consumed, a powerful Magical or Strengthening Aura will encompass your entire body.

These Auras will accelerate your natural growth of Runes within your Magic Circle, or the Physical Fitness of your Physique by +300% for the next 72 Hours.

Each usage of these items will lower their boost by -5%.

So I can use them around 60 times each before their effects are completely lost? Well, interesting. I will be using them for a long while, seeing how they last for 72 Hours.

"But what's the Heart thing for?" I wondered.

"Check it~!" Alice said.

[The [Quest System] nods, you have to check its description.]

[Yggdrasil's Heart Fragment 1/3 (A+ Grade)]

A Fragment of a small Yggdrasil's Tree Heart. It contains its mystical essence, capable of not only enhancing the magic power of someone that absorbs this item, but also strengthen their connection with Nature as a whole.

Once the three fragments are together, the True Heart can be recreated. Once the True Heart is fully absorbed, it is possible to undergone Class Rank Up according to the affinities of the user.

Remaining Fragments: 1/3

"It's a Class Rank Up item! Like the Divine Farmer Elixir." I was surprised. "Nice! But... I need two more?!"

"It is too strong, so it can only be generated through fragments. You'll have to work hard to get the other quests!" Said Alice.

"So that's it..." I nodded. "I guess there's no helping it, you can't get everything easy in this life."

[The [Quest System] says they have the other two quests in standby...]

Ding!

[This Quest has been shared with Aquarina.]

[Aquarina Received The Following Rewards]: [5.000.000 EXP] [Water Spirit Essence Crystal Fruit (A+ Grade)] x1 [Ice Spirit Essence Crystal Fruit (A+ Grade)] x1 [Slime's Favorite Snack (A+ Grade)] x1]

[Aquarina] Level has increased by 3!]

Wow, even Aquarina got her own unique rewards this time?! Was it because the Quest was shared with her? I think this is some new function that wasn't explored beforehand...

"Huh?! What is this?" Aquarina was surprised when she saw items materialize in front of her as she walked towards me.

Chapter 987 Slime's Favorite Snack

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[The [Quest System] says they have the other two quests in standby...]

Ding!

[This Quest has been shared with Aquarina.]

[Aquarina Received The Following Rewards]: [5.000.000 EXP] [Water Spirit Essence Crystal Fruit (A+ Grade)] x1 [Ice Spirit Essence Crystal Fruit (A+ Grade)] x1 [Slime's Favorite Snack (A+ Grade)] x1]

[Aquarina] Level has increased by 3!]

"Huh?! What is this?" Aquarina was surprised when she saw items materialize in front of her as she walked towards me.

Two big, blue-colored fruits made of crystal emerged, alongside a strange bag of what seemed to be small little, blue-colored treats.

She got items to boost her spirits and Pyuku, it seems!

"You got your Quest Rewards." I said with a smile. "Careful not to drop them!" I caught them with my Spiderwebs coming from my hands. "There."

I made a cute basket with the items inside, Aquarina was amazed after seeing them, checking their descriptions one after another.

Anybody that get the System has smaller versions of my most basic abilities, such as the ability to appraise items for their details and information.

However, compared to mine, they're much less detailed!

For example, this is Aquarina's item description:

[Water Spirit Essence Crystal Fruit (A+ Grade)]

A strange fruit made of crystals.

Has spirit essence inside.

It might be liked by water spirits.

And this is mine...

[Water Spirit Essence Crystal Fruit (A+ Grade)]

A mythical fruit that only grows within areas filled with Spiritual Essence, it glows with a blue color, filled to the brim with water attribute spiritual energy.

When consumed by a water-attribute spirit, it enhances their Mana and Magic Power greatly, and may help them grow their abilities further.

If consumed by someone that is not a Spirit, it might help them develop spiritual abilities... or if they're incompatible, it might cause food poisoning and no additional effects.

The difference between both was like heaven and earth! But I am still happy they get something out of it... With the basic information she can at least discern something, even if a little bit.

Of course, I can also let her see my detailed description.

"Ohhh, I see! So it can help Undine get stronger? I don't really need it, so I'll give it to her! And there's one for Leviathan too." She nodded. "And snacks for Pyuku?"

"These are weird..." I said.

"They look like the bags of snacks from Earth, how hilarious." Giggled Alice. "It's named plastic by the way, it can take many shapes, these plastic bags are widely sold in Earth, containing snacks of all types. They can last for a while without using any magic."

"Wow..." I said, grabbing the bag.

It had a logo or something with a little blue slime with big eyes, and a smile, very different to Pyuku, and it was devouring these little blue snacks, saying "YUMMY!".

[Slime's Favorite Snack (A+ Grade)]

An otherworldly snack from a faraway world, this snack is the Slime's favorite meal! Crunchy, sweet, a bit salty, and deliciously addictive! In a flash, they will finish these before they can even realize, and brighten their mood greatly!

Special snacks for Slimes, when consumed completely, it will strengthen the Slime's Magical Power permanently by a random amount between +1% to +50% and awaken hidden talents.

If not consumed completely, no effects will be given.

When eaten by others than slimes, it might cause food poisoning and no additional effects.

"This is perfect to lighten his mood!" Aquarina was delighted. "Sylphy thank you so much for this!" She hugged me and gave me a big kiss in my lips. "Mooch!"

"Heheh, it's fine, I did it for you." I giggled, smiling like a dummy too much in love to even think straight.

[The [Quest System] protests! They say they made it!]

Yeah, yeah.

"Pyuku! I got you something good! Come!" Aquarina called Pyuku, as she gave him the bag of snacks.

"W-What is this?" He wondered, still feeling saddened. "Huh? I've never seen a bag like this... It's crunchy inside?"

"Open it slowly." I said.

"Okay?" The slime slowly opened the bag.

Suddenly, a sweet scent emanated from the bag... Even knowing it could poison us if we ate it, it smelled really good!

Pyuku instantly grabbed a little blue snack from it and took a bite with his mouth, it was like our own too, with teeth and all.

Crunch~!

Uwaah! That sounded really crunchy now!

"Hmmm... So sweet!" Pyuku said, his rainbow eyes shining brightly. "Yummyyyyyy!"

He made the same sound as the slime in the package!

Without waiting any other second, he started to devour the entire bag, the snacks disappeared one after another until nothing was left.

Aquarina and I were drooling as we saw him eat them, the smell was something we've never smelled before, it was amazing.

"Hmmm~ Ah! I ate them all?! Nooo!" Pyuku cried, licking the entire bag's interior until it began to dissipate into particles of light, disappearing. "Ah... It's gone."

Did this really lightened his mood?! He looked sad rather than happy!

FLUOOSH!

However, my train of thoughts was interrupted as I saw his body erupt with new power.

Ding!

[Pyuku] has consumed the [Slime's Favorite Snack (A+ Grade)] completely. Its effects have been activated.]

[His Magic Power has increased permanently by +38%!]

[Pyuku] has awakened his Abilities further.]

[Higher Level Shapeshifting now available.]

[Can now better create textures and colors.]

[Higher Level Absorption now available.]

[Can now take the form of selected living beings it has consumed.]

[Soul Damage has been healed. Mental Stability has been achieved.]

"Wow, you became so strong, Pyuku!" I said. "Are you feeling okay?"

"Y-Yes..." Pyuku looked at his own hands, slowly turning from jelly colored to blue skin, actual skin this time! "A-Amazing, what is this? I never was able to reach this far in my shapeshifting..."

"It must be the magic snack!" Aquarina said. "Your magic power skyrocketed too. Feeling alright?"

"I am feeling super alright actually! It feels like... my own mind has calmed down too." Pyuku said.

Maybe it has to do with his Soul Damage being healed... But what even caused his soul to be damaged?
Only his trauma and loneliness?

Or something else?

Chapter 988 The Origin Of Slimes

We tried giving Pyuku a System Seed after that, to see if we could help him grow even stronger... However, he rejected it. His soul seemed incredibly large, because it was the fusion between fifty Slime Souls. He had a lot of untapped potential, and that snack ended making him even stronger.

Powerful souls that have already enough power cannot receive a System; they end up rejecting the seed naturally. As if their souls are protecting themselves from it... Maybe it thinks they're like a parasite or something? In a way it feels like one, but has no negative side effects, it simply helps someone grow faster and develop their latent potential fully.

For now, Alice absorbed the seed back and got the EXP points back too, it is a useful way to try if it works and I don't lose any EXP if it doesn't either.

The lizard steaks were almost done too, I brought out some potato salad and tea, and we started digging in while being in front of that strange mural, its very presence felt slightly eerie.

However, the atmosphere we exuded as we ate and talked together easily eased everyone's hearts, and so did Pyuku's too.

"Ahhh, the steak's so good!" Mist was munching on it as she made a big sandwich. "Hmmm! I never thought this lizard would taste this good! Surprisingly delicious!"

"Yeah, multi-limbed lizard meat is delicious and tender most of the time, they're godly ingredients that sell for a fortune down there." Ninhursag pointed out.

"Ah, this potato salad goes well with it!" Zack was happily eating at Mist's side. "Ah, can I have a bite of that sandwich? Did you add cheese?!"

"Hehehe, no it's mine! Make your own!" Mist giggled as she didn't allow her boyfriend a bite.

"Zephy, do you like these cupcakes I made?" Celica was offering my little brother a sweet pastry she made.

"I do! It's so fluffy!" Zephyrus couldn't be happier, the two had been growing even closer these last months. My brother is trying his best after I recommended him a few things.

"Hehehe, I'm glad you like it! My golems can't eat so they can't tell me how it tastes." Celica giggled.

"Hey Luck, taste my bread too! I baked it with spirit fire!" Lara gave Luck her bread.

"I ate a few already! They're too burnt!" Luck complained. "I don't want any more, Lara!"

"Eat them!" Lara kept stuffing them on his mouth.

"Graargh!" Luck was suffering, but this was also part of their love.

I think...

"Anyways, as lovely as this atmosphere has become, I am still curious what the hell happened with our fellow slime friend." Celeste broke the ice. "Pyuku, right? Can you explain yourself?"

"Eep...!" Pyuku seemed a bit intimidated by her intense glare, her eyes glowed bright red, as Celeste's sharp tail was slamming the ground like a whip angrily.

"Hey, don't be so rude! He has gone through a lot." Aquarina said. "But... yeah, can you tell us now?"

"I-I guess I could try." Pyuku nodded. "It's just that... Ah, well, I... It's a long story. Are you willing to hear it?"lights

"We will." Ninhursag nodded. "Please, open up to us."

"Yeah bro! ...Or sis? Just say it." Said Zack.

"Is Pyuku a girl or a boy?" Wondered Mist, now that Zack said that.

"I-I don't know, we slimes possess no real gender, we reproduce through division." Said Pyuku. "But I have yet to mature to reproduce myself, in several more years... Maybe."

"Alright you guys are quite interesting I suppose." Celica nodded. "So you're genderless, huh?"

"I-I guess?" Pyuku wondered. "I never thought about it, you can call me a girl or a boy, I don't really mind." He shrugged.

"Well that makes things easier then." Ninhursag said. "Now, boy, tell us."

"Okay..." He said, as he slowly started eating a piece of steak. "Hmm, so good- Ahem! Anyways..."

He slowly told us what we heard beforehand, but with much more detail than before.

First of all, how the slimes escaped from the main continents into the Demon Continent, where the last survivors created an underground village.

They cooperated with other, similar demons with different problems, which were not accepted in the surface, and working together by complementing each other's weaknesses, they lived in harmony for hundreds of years.

However, ultimately, nothing lasts forever. The village was eventually attacked when the latest war occurred, both human armies and demon armies ended destroying it, pillaging what they could find, and killing the demons inside.

Indeed, even the demon army used to pillage villages of other demons, usually using the excuse of them being "cowards" for not joining the war and accusing them of being traitors to the Demon King.

The Demon King allowed this to happen too... Maybe I don't feel bad about his death anymore.

And in their last moments, as they were being hunted and taken away as precious materials, both demons and humans blinded by greed coming in turns one after another, the last Slimes gathered in the depths of the ground.

In there, they underwent a special ritual, one they've been preparing for their whole lives, one they prepared to ascend... and become closer to the creations the gods favored better.

They felt both resentment and frustration for this, for having been made... unequal to the rest. They cannot speak, and they couldn't change their forms too much, other than being liquid. They lacked eyes, mouths, noses, everything that made others identify each other.

People thought they were monsters, even when they are a race of smart beings, made to... clean things efficiently. Although we are all the Gods' creations, they thought they were the most unfortunate, cursed with bodies that couldn't communicate with others, and that couldn't grow stronger no matter how hard they tried to cultivate.

They could not develop a Physique, nor their Souls could harbor Magic Circles. Their cores could have Mana, but it was a limited amount from birth that only was restored when they ate filth, and it could not grow farther than their maximum amount, or they would risk their cores breaking.

They thought of themselves as truly cursed beings.

And this ritual they prepared... was what would bring them to evolve into a new being.

Chapter 989 Pyuku's Past

The fifty Slimes desired to become stronger, to become better... And with the help of the demons, they built a huge underground facility, a gigantic magic circle imbued with as many magic materials as they could find or mine in the underground.

Even the Demon King Fragments were used, precious minerals that grow rarely across the Demon Continent, said to be the crystallization of the first demon king's soul. Incredibly rare ores that contain amazing power capable of boosting the abilities of Demons.

And they used whatever small fragments they found for this ritual... Their combination was agonizing, their bodies and souls split into countless pieces as they melted into a single being.

However, their last will remained within the new life born from their sacrifice...

"Become stronger, become better... And once you can finally speak... Ask them, our creators."

"Why did you abandon us?"

This was the only thing these serviceable beings wanted, this little and innocent question. Even knowing full well that the answer would be harsh, they needed to know.

Deep inside of their minds, inside of their hearts, they wanted to hear a definitive answer. As beings that seemed to always work below their every command, they struggled to find a place because they were no longer given one.

They were abandoned...

Slimes were probably the creators of the Gods that suffered the most among all of us. While humans, elves, dwarves, and anima populated the world and created their own kingdoms and legacies.

Slimes felt lost, incapable of building anything, incapable of speaking or creating a proper culture... And they felt lost, they despaired.

They wanted to hear their master's last command.

It is so sad...

"And that is how I was born." Pyuku said. "I had no name, I never had one... But you gave me one, although a bit dumb... I appreciate the name you've given me, Aquarina, Sylphy."

"We gave it to you because it sounded cute and that were the cute sounds you made..." I felt embarrassed. "We would have definitely given you a deeper name if we knew you were so intelligent!"

"Yeah!" Aquarina nodded.

"There's no need, I'm fine with it as it is, even if it might have no literal meaning, to me it holds one." Pyuku smiled. "It gave me a sense of self like nothing ever did... Thanks."

"..."

"..."

We felt a bit speechless after his words, but he suddenly continued narrating.

"When I was born, I was buried by rubble, so the invaders were unable to find me." He sighed. "And, well, it took me a while to get out. I got lost in the underground, finding caves after caves, running away from monsters, and eating whatever I found. It was because of that that I found out about my abilities. I gained the true power of my kin which was suppressed by the Gods, Absorption. With it, I can absorb abilities from monsters I devour, although to a limited extent. And also grow stronger a little bit. My other ability was Shapeshifting, although it is not like Furoh's Mimicry levels of perfection, it allowed me to transform my shape very freely."

"I understand, but why did they call you the Demon Prince?" Asked Ninhursag.

"Ah, that's... Well, as I ran from place to place, I hid my identity, wearing clothes I found or stole." Pyuku sighed. "And I became friends with someone, a Demon Prince by the name of Hellanova. Our meeting was brief, but it still lingers in my heart."

"Hellanova?" I asked. "Who... Who was he?"

"He was a young prince of a small country, that no longer exists anymore." Pyuku sighed. "We became friends through a single week, where I was entering his camp to steal food because I was too hungry. He was nice and feed me food for free, and asked me who I was... It's... well."

Hellanova was an innocent child that found himself in the middle of a war between many small demon nations for territory. Utilizing the Demon King's war as a pretext, they started waging war against one another for resources.

His country was small, and it was easily targeted. He and the royal family escaped with some soldiers, trying to find somewhere safe to wait until everything ended.

In those days, they were being constantly chased down by mercenaries contracted by other countries. Every day was running for them, from one place to another, endlessly...

When Pyuku meet him, his two parents had already died, and he was only being protected by five guards, the very last ones with loyalty to the family.

He described him as a clear-blue skinned boy, with two pairs of skinny arms, and silver eyes. His hair was purple and reached his chest, and he had tiny black horns on his forehead.

Hellanova had a small blue tail behind his back, which ended on a claw he used as a third limb to grab things. The boy offered Pyuku food with it, timidly.

"Are you hungry?" He asked me..." Said Pyuku. "Why are you trembling in the floor over there? Are you okay? You can have this food too, I don't mind... Mama and papa went far away, so we got more food now." He often told me..."

Remembering an old friend, Pyuku started to grit his teeth, his fists clenching really hard...

For a couple of days, Pyuku timidly visited the child, taking the food he offered to him... eventually, he brought things in exchange, shiny rocks the demon boy liked.

And other times, he hunted something and shared the meat with him and the guards that protected him.

It was a brief encounter, but... Hellanova loved him as his friend.

As they talked with one another every night, and as they wandered the endless landscape of the Demon Continent while being chased by danger at every corner, the two wondered what was awaiting for them in the future.

And he often said...

"I want to meet mama and papa again! And once the war is over... I wanna go on a journey with them! And meet many new people and make new friends! Like you!"

It seemed the guards told him they had escaped, instead of revealing the harsh truth of their deaths...

"Such a bright innocence..." Ninhursag smiled faintly.

Chapter 990 Demon Prince

But it all came down one day, after their almost two weeks of travels together... When they were caught and surrounded by mercenaries and soldiers from the enemy nations.

They wanted Hellanova dead not only because he was just a member of royalty of that family, but because of the power his Demon Core carried.

His family were named the Blue Asura and were a mystical and strong family of Demons capable of channeling the power of the Element of Chaos.

However, because in the past they destroyed too much, one Ancient Demon King sealed their whole bloodlines' powers, and made them weak and frail instead.

A curse that lasted until the very last one of them, Hellanova, the star of hell, as his parents called him.

But it was a different story if their bodies were opened, and their cores taken away. With magic, it was possible to unseal their cores and bring forth chaotic magic.

They were hunted because of this reason, over their own resources in their small country... It was all a small conspiracy to take away their cores and turn them into powerful artifacts.

That would be later gifted to the Demon King to appease his anger by these countries.

And this is why they relentlessly chased them, until the very last child...

Punished by the sins of his ancestors, which he never committed, Hellanova was born in a crippled and weak body, incapable of conjuring the element that once made his family feared.

Helpless, this was the day he would have died...

Except that Pyuku had other plans for him and changed his fate forever.

"I took his place."

"So that's why...?!" Ninhursag muttered.

"Yeah..." Pyuku giggled a bit. "It was... rather hard to do that but it worked, I think."

He explained that it was something they planned to do. They used the blood of monsters he hunted to pain Hellanova's skin red instead of blue and hid his tail and additional arms by wrapping them on clothes around his body, while giving him a big black cloak to cover himself up completely.

When the mercenaries and the soldiers arrived, three guard stayed with Pyuku, while Hellanova was no longer with them, he had stealthily left them behind in a small town they visited, with two other guards.

"Are you sure about this?" He had asked him. "Why? Why are you going so far for me? We only meet for like two weeks..."

"You're the first friend I ever made." Pyuku answered plainly. "Take care, Hellanova. I hope you can live a long life, so you can meet new friends, and travel the world."

And he handed him something, a small blue jewel, shinier than anything the little demon boy had ever collected, it contained mana within, a strong amount of it.

Pyuku made it into a small wristband, and gifted it to the little boy, who was in tears...

"W-Wha is this?" He asked.

"This is... a piece of my heart, please, bring it with you. I don't know what it might do, but I want it to protect you, friend!" Pyuku smiled back.

"Friend..." Hellanova continued crying, as he gave Pyuku one last hug, before they departed forever.

He said he could still remember his shiny silver eyes glancing at him one last time, before they never meet ever again, for dozens of years.

Pyuku resulted to be much older than us if he was born in the middle of the war... Yet it seemed his mind only matured when he interacted with others and made new friends.

And little Hellanova was the first ever friend, that gave him a slight sense of what friendship was.

This, was then used to befriend us, and when we named him, we gave him a better sense of self, of who he was, and what he was...

He confronted the mercenaries with the last three guards that decided to sacrifice themselves to make it seem like they were protecting the prince.

"They're here... you cannot run anymore, little prince."

The mercenaries and the greedy soldiers kept walking closer, weapons in hand and magic being conjured. The three guards gave a smile to Pyuku.

"Thank you for your noble sacrifice."

"With this... the prince will be able to live on."

"Maybe one day... he might awaken back that power that once beloved to his glorious bloodline."

As they spoke, Pyuku felt sorrow and anguish, but nodded, nonetheless.

"We are eternally grateful for your benevolent soul, friend."

They said that in unison, confronting the armies of foes together.

He said they fought bravely but perished by the weapons and magic of their overwhelming foes.

Pyuku too, was captured, he faked his death, and let them carve out a black crystal from his chest, a sphere-shaped demon king fragment he had saved since he escaped his destroyed home.

Which he shaped into a sphere. These fragments can also channel the energy of chaos to a limited extent, so it was a perfect replacement.

It somehow worked, and they left him in the middle of the desolate landscape, he cried for many nights, without moving.

He was too tired because they gave him a beating he had never experienced before...

But above all, he was also sad for the lives that were sacrificed, and also happy that his friend made it out...

"However, once they left, and I escaped away, some found me out due to me imitating my friend's appearance. And kept chasing me around. Quickly, the rumor that I was still alive spread out, and then, many demons were looking for me." Said Pyuku. "I escaped into the Human Continent by infiltrating in the boats going there, but somehow the rumors spread even there, and I was chased. The Blue Demon that you talked about most likely heard the rumor and chased me. Even after all these years, the rumor is still ongoing, and I'm worried that my friend is still being chased..."

"So that's why he called you Demon Prince..." Ninhursag nodded. "It makes sense now... I suppose. What a noble act, Pyuku. You're truly a warrior."

"A warrior...? Me?" Pyuku wondered, feeling embarrassed. "I just... did what a friend would had done."