

DEMONS 1171

[Chapter 1171 Volleyball Match 1 Part 2](#)

Marigold and Gareth, vs Burgandy and Carl featuring Blue on the sidelines.

Current Match Score 2?-0

Gareth POV chapter.

Part of me really wants to say no and take the point... but I'm going to be teamed up with them both after this. Dammit Marigold, now I'll look like the bad guy even if I agree with you. I've got no choice though, because I'll look much worse if I take the point. "Yeah, we can lose that point. I don't really mind," said Gareth with a sigh.

Marigold nodded and looked over at the Thyme with the scoreboard, who nodded and flipped the counter back to 1-0. "Hey Marigold, how strong are you?" asked Gareth as Thyme was doing that.

"Really strong. I'm using a secret regenerator technique to make it seem like I've got almost no muscle, but I probably work out more than you. I'd say that I could beat you in an arm-wrestling contest. Well, not if you know secret arm strengthening techniques, we already established your girlfriend was too sleepy to attend to your needs, so perhaps you've got some practice in," said Marigold.

Gareth sighed and walked over to Marigold. Part of him wanted to smack her into the ground, part of him wanted to let the ground swallow her. *But she'd probably enjoy the abuse.* Gareth ignored his more violent impulses to whisper to Marigold. "I can summon and reinforce a large stone paddle. If you can hold it over the net and keep them from scoring we might be able to win that way. I've only got the mana to keep it solid for maybe... ten minutes maximum though. After that it'll probably be too weak and they could punch through it,"

Marigold considered the suggestion for a few seconds. "Can't they just smack the ball back into the stone over and over to reset their two-hit counter?" asked Marigold.

Gareth nodded, "Yeah but they might not figure that out straight away. Additionally, they'll be playing against themselves. If we can just hold strong, then we don't have to worry about messing up unlike them,"

Marigold frowned, "That's not true though. If they hit the ball in such a way it rebounds out of bounds, then aren't we the ones that lose points for that?"

Shit. She's right. Hmm... I could curve it perhaps? No, no it's just a bad idea. Well... no maybe a smaller one would be good? Trust Marigold to smack the ball back to the correct area while I deal with anything that's too far back. "Yeah I see the problem... but would a smaller one work?" asked Gareth.

Marigold nodded, "It can... but are you sure it'll be strong enough? You'll have to be on watch too. I can't just casually drop something like that on the ground. So if it sneaks by me, I won't be able to use my hands,"

"It should be fine? Probably?" said Gareth.

"Ok let's try it then," said Marigold, ignoring Gareth's uncertainty. Gareth nodded and got to work. It took some effort to form up what was essentially a giant fly-swatter but the real issue was keeping his mana connected to the thing once he pulled it out of the ground. Gareth frowned at the mental toll it was taking, but didn't let that stop him. Gareth just breathed in deeply and handed the pole off before getting ready to serve.

"Can you do something like that?" asked Carl seeing the signpost like structure.

"Yeah, but it'll be too fragile. Waste of mana. Just smack the ball hard enough and the whole thing will crumble," said Burnice quietly. Still perfectly audible to Marigold, and Gareth could hear parts, but Burnice did try.

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Marigold looked to Gareth but he just gave a sharp nod in return. Confident it wouldn't be a problem till he ran out of mana. Gareth threw the ball up and then served smacking it as quickly as he could to the other side of the court.

Carl knocked it up in the air, as Gareth hadn't aimed it properly to the sides. It was a simple adjustment to hit the ball dead on. Burgandy ran up behind Carl and smashed the ball as hard as she could towards Marigold.

Marigold's eyes flashed, she was ready to try this out. She jumped forward, intercepting the ball before it could fly past the net and smacking the ball down and off to the side. The paddle held and the ball drilled into the ground before launching off to the side. "2-0 to Gareth and Marigold," said Thyme.

"Wasn't that supposed to break?" asked Carl with a raised eyebrow, but casual tone. Not overly mad at the misinformation, but still interested in the answer. I think you should take a look at pαnIdαsnovel.com

"It should've shattered! The stone is nowhere near thick enough to hold back the force I used on that hit. It should've broken to pieces. I've smacked through walls stronger than it!" insisted Burgandy.

"Well, it's clearly still standing. So... is there anything we can do about it?" asked Carl.

"Look... I don't know how. Why don't you do something? There should be enchantments on your clothes. They might be useful," said Burgandy.

"I doubt it," said Carl, waving off Burgandy's demand.

Burgandy however, didn't like that. Even as Thyme threw the ball over for her serve she caught it and glared at Carl. "Hey, I'm keeping this half of the field stable for us all. Surely you can at least do SOMETHING useful?" grumbled Burgandy.

Carl sighed, not really liking where this was going. "Right, of course not. I'll just use my fire affinity to do something useful like burning the net, or setting myself on fire. I'm sure that you'll figure some way for that to be useful,"

"Look, do you want to win or not?" asked Burgandy.

"Obviously I do, but I'm not seeing the way to do that. Especially not by arguing," said Carl.

παΠδαςNovel com *This is actually working. I'm losing mana constantly as you argue and I'd really rather not be.* Gareth tried to catch Marigold's eyes and get her to temporarily put down the paddle so that he could stop reinforcing it... but her eyes were locked on the drama and didn't see him.

"At least I've been trying them out!" insisted Burgandy.

"Ah yes. Your first and only attempt that cost us a point. I'm sure that was very well thought out," said Carl, not quite able to stop himself. He did wince as soon as the words left his mouth. Despite his calm demeanour, he had no desire to be a doormat... but this probably wasn't the right move. Trying to calm things down, Carl continued, "Look, it's not like I can just ask Thyme what they all do. It's too dangerous to use an untested enchantment,"

"I can totally tell you what they all do," said Thyme from the sidelines.

"What?" asked Carl whipping his head around.

"Yeah, everyone's outfits all do essentially the same thing with slight variations. Except Marigold's. That one does nothing because that's actually her own clothing, it wasn't supplied by me," explained Thyme.

Everyone turned to Marigold and looked at the bikini she was wearing. Marigold fit in perfectly with everyone else here. Heck, Romilda had a smaller version of the outfit in a slightly different style. Nobody quite believed Thyme... but Marigold was nodding along, and Thyme wasn't going to just lie to everyone.

"Fuck it, whatever," said Carl trying to drive that bit of information from his mind. "What do they do?"

Thyme nodded and explained. "So, the shoes shoot a pillar of your element from somewhere. You can sort of control it by moving your front foot relative to your back, though the version actually comes from the bottom of the shoe in front so you can use it in kicks. Then there's the sphere of your element on the shirt. It's the same for all elements, and of differing usefulness. Then there's the pants, and they summon up a wall of the element directly in front of you,"

Ah yes. I'm so glad I'm not wearing a shirt. I'm only missing out on A MAJOR ENCHATMENT. Dammit Green. I get you wanted your eye candy but couldn't you have just convinced me to have my buttons open or something? I wasn't really mad before but hearing that I missing out on an... admittedly average effect is annoying. I mean, it would give me more options! Though seriously why does Marigold have a swimsuit... and wait is Vanya's enchanted or not? Considering how skimpy it is... I'm betting no...

"Does the wall have to stay on the ground?" asked Burgandy.

"No it doesn't, but it takes extra mana and you have to be in the air for it to also be in the air. It works by showing up a certain distance in front of you and isn't all that configurable. I wanted to keep the enchantments simple after all," answered Thyme. Burgandy did of course grumble a bit at that answer, but she didn't complain further.

[Chapter 1172 Burgandy Storms Off, Blue Storms On](#)

Marigold and Gareth, vs Burgandy and Carl featuring Blue on the sidelines.

Current Match Score 2-0

Gareth POV chapter.

Perhaps, in another world the final point would've been a long drawn out battle. Perhaps if Burgandy wasn't quite so mad, or Marigold so inspired things would've turned out better for the enemy team. As it was though? No sooner had the next round started then it was ending. Burgandy served the ball casually over the net, and Marigold used her paddle to smack it high in the air just over the net.

Carl, not thinking anything of this, jumped up to smash it down after it started falling. Marigold had other ideas. She waited, timing it perfectly and managed to jump just a moment before Carl. His eyes were locked on the ball above him as he prepared to smash it down, so he didn't notice Marigold's paddle. Not striking out at the ball, but at him.

Carl felt something smash into his side, then all of a sudden he was flying head over heels as he rolled through the sand. Burgandy dashed forward, trying to get the ball before it hit the ground, but she wasn't prepared for this any more than Carl was. She tried to get moving as fast as possible, but it just wasn't enough. She barely managed to hit the ball and it went flying under the net.

"Ooh, that's 3-0 for Marigold and Gareth, so they take the first point! Give it up for Marigold and Gareth everyone!" said Thyme as they clapped using both bodies. "Now, it's also worth noting that this first match took us a bit longer than I'd anticipated, if we keep this pace, I'll be sending off another body so that the log chopping event can happen at the same time as the final few matches so that we have enough time for the final event.

"Ah, look at me speaking about the future when I should be focused on the present! While this match was going on I did up the draw, and with Blue stepping in, it'll be Burgandy stepping out. The next match will be Marigold and Blue against Carl and Gareth so... shuffle around however you want,"

Gareth nodded and started to move to the other side of the net. It seemed like the easiest way to go about it. As he did, he stopped pumping mana into that sign of Marigold's. It didn't crack just yet, but it wasn't being sustained by his will any longer. *I wonder if Marigold will remember that. I suspect she will, but it could be a good surprise if not.*

While Gareth was making his way across, Burgandy was glaring daggers at Carl as she stepped off to the side and the man in question slowly walked back to his half of the court, now covered in sand. Carl was seemingly unbothered by both the gaze and the sand, just shrugging back at her. It was hardly his fault he wasn't prepared to be slammed out of the arena in what had seemed like a normal sporting match up until then. Sure, it wasn't against the rules, but it just seemed like common sense. Though, part of him did want to ask Thyme if holding the paddle together counted as a spell. He wasn't going to, because he'd had enough of Burgandy. But he did consider it.

Marigold walked up to Blue and pulled her into a big hug as she started whispering in the fae's ear. Blue went a bit red, but she was whispering back so it was likely planning of some sort. Gareth suppressed a shudder and decided to start some whispering of his own once Carl stepped back onto the field. "Look, I don't know what those two have planned, but it feels bad," whispered Gareth.

"Yeah, I feel it too. Like I'm about to be crushed without resistance... but surely they aren't that strong right?" Gareth gave Carl an odd look as he spoke, Carl just glared back. "What, they're supposed to be our age. I can't see them completely crushing us. Even the round we just had wasn't what I'd consider a crush. How could it possibly be worse?" I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

Gareth, couldn't think of any way it could be worse. In his mind, a 3-0 loss was pretty bad. Sadly, it seemed Gareth was lacking in imagination because as it turns out? It could get a LOT worse. At first, everything seemed normal. Blue was in front, which was a little strange but nothing too weird considering it was their turn to serve. Marigold was preparing... and then she shot the ball up as high as possible.

Carl looked back to Gareth, who nodded, and kept a watch in front of him while only glancing occasionally at the ball. Carl was doing the same. As they were watching ahead though... they saw something strange. Blue cast a spell... but nothing seemed to happen. Gareth was almost ready to write the whole thing off when the ball came down to him, and he smacked it back somewhat accidentally. He'd overshot Carl by a bit and the ball was going under the net.

pandasnovel.com Instead of Blue moving to get it, Marigold sprinted forward and knocked the ball back and into the air. Still confused about what was going on, Gareth finally saw it. A huge wave of water was travelling from the nearby ocean and managed to pool up above the net. Once there it started to spin rapidly. Gareth wasn't entirely sure what to do about so he just asked, "Carl... what do we do about that?"

Gareth managed to hit the ball as it came down. He smacked it upward carefully, trying not to send it over the net. *What can Carl and I do about... whatever the heck that is?* "I can try to burn it off... but honestly that's a lot of water and I'm not sure I've got the mana for it..." admitted Carl.

"Yeah well... I'm not too sure what we can do about this either... shit..." Gareth muttered as the ball made its way to Carl. Having no choice but to send it across the net, Carl batted the ball lightly across. It caught in the swirling water and it didn't take long for it to be spat back out towards the back left corner.

Gareth sprinted for the corner as soon as he saw the direction, legs pumping a bit too much as he smashed holes through the layer of sandstone Burgandy had created. It seemed she was maintaining it during the match, unlike Gareth's naturally thicker layer that Marigold and Blue were now making use of. The holes he was making were costing him too much time so Gareth kicked hard against the ground and jumped awkwardly for the ball.

His outstretched arms managed to knock it away even as he hit the ground. Gareth was a highly trained individual, so he quickly dropped into a roll and hopped back up, but already Carl was forced to act as well. He had no choice but to smack the ball upwards to buy Gareth some time. NovelNext.com

Alas, it didn't help all that much. Gareth was on his feet, and the height was nice but it just meant it took a little longer for the ball to enter the water. Gareth had already made his start back to the centre when the ball was launched. *FUCK.* Gareth cursed mentally as he saw the ball heading for the other corner. *I haven't even made it back to the middle. Damn I'm going to have to hope this works out.*

Gareth knew he just had to hope Thyme wasn't lying about the enchantment on his shoes as her sprinted forward pouring mana into the enchantment but not letting it trigger. When he was as close as he could get, he twisted his ankle to a painful angle in order to, hopefully, get the angle right and then triggered the enchantment.

Mana rushed out of his body as a pillar of earth was summoned in mid-air and smacked the ball away, back towards the net... but slightly off to the side. Gareth cursed as he stumbled forward heavily cracking the ground enough for him to then fall forward onto the ground. It didn't matter though, because the ball was heading out of bounds. Blue and Marigold just had to let it fall there...

Yet even when Gareth had already given up. Carl was still ready to try. He could see where the ball was going, and he was charging towards that point. Just to the right of the net. He just needed to get their and smack the ball into the water torrent. It might still be their loss, but he'd just seen Gareth try, and he felt compelled to do the same. Perhaps it was seeing Gareth's determination... perhaps it was just seeing a nice set of abs glistening with sweat. Either way, Carl was inspired.

He managed the sprint. He hit the ball awkwardly backwards into the water, even as he slid on the sand and turned around. Sadly, while a good display of determination and a decent display of skill, it was ultimately futile. Blue just directed the ball to be spat out at the opposite side of the court to Carl. Neither men were capable of catching it. "1-0 to Blue and Marigold!" shouted Thyme.

[Chapter 1173 Gareth Has The Blues](#)

Gareth and Carl vs Marigold and Blue. Burgandy is on the side

Current Match Score 1-0

Gareth POV chapter.

Marigold wasted no time once the ball was handed over. Blue made a small gap in the water wall and let Marigold smack the ball through. Carl and Gareth shared a look of annoyance. Gareth smacked the ball up as high as he could, damn the risk of it falling out of bounds they needed time to discuss. "What are we going to do? Is there any way to get through that nonsense?" asked Gareth.

"I've got a few ideas. First, we hit the ball back at the same time. It'll be ridiculously hard, but maybe we can get enough power behind it with the two of us. Second idea, I can pump as much mana as possible into a fireball that destabilises Blue's control over the damned thing... but she's a trained mage and I'm not. So I'm not even certain it'll work. My final idea would be to make another one of those paddles and we just smack the ball back and forth until someone runs out of mana..." Carl trailed off.

"But once again, Blue is a mage and I'm not. Plus I didn't exactly have time to fully recover from the first round, mana wise, so we're not necessarily going to win... plus I'm not sure that the paddle will be big enough. Could you even lift something that covered so much area?" continued Gareth.

"Probably not by myself but if we worked together and used two, or just shared the load for one big sign we might be able to make it," explained Carl. The ball was coming down. They didn't have much time to discuss longer. Gareth glared at Marigold and she blew a kiss back at him.

*Dammit, we just didn't have any time between rounds. Marigold knew what she was doing. She can get a win as long as Blue's mana lasts, so she has to reduce the time it's being kept up as much as possible. Though... that does make me wonder... should we be using the paddles to smack things directly upwards instead? Make it a large flat stone that we both hold and then smack the ball upwards? No Thyme might count that as both of our 'touches' of the ball.

Still... would hitting things directly up save mana? Probably not? I'd still have to reinforce everything as we held it so we'd both be draining mana and I'm not willing to believe that my bodged together stone reinforcement takes less mana than a real spell. That's one of the main reasons to actually use spells. The mana savings. Dammit.

The next thing to consider is should I start trying to make something right now? Or should I wait for next round? If I start now and fail because I need to do something taxing... like say, chase the ball all the way to the corner, then I'm just going to be wasting mana when I need to stop. On the other hand... we're probably going to lose this point if I can't come up with anything.*

Carl smacked the ball forwards and upwards, giving the team as much time as he could. Gareth sent a thumbs up his way. It wasn't much, but was something and it wasn't like Gareth had anything better to do in that moment. Neither of them liked how casual Blue was looking at the moment. It was looking like maintaining the water wasn't particularly draining on her reserves.

Then again, why would it be? We saw her pull the water out of the ocean, so she just needs to pay the mana cost for floating it instead of keeping it summoned and floating. I don't really know enough about spells to know just how small the amount is though. Hmm... I really wish there was a clearer solution to this problem. What else could I do?

The ball was launched back but Gareth was watching it and ready. It was still a close run thing but he managed to get it up in the air before it hit the ground and give both him and Carl more time to think about the path forward. Carl wasn't saying anything either, but Gareth wasn't concerned. noVeLNext.cOm

pandasNovel.com *So... I could throw rocks into the water? Not sure if that'd help. Maybe it'd increase the mana cost? But it'd probably increase the cost of it more for me if I had to make them. So I'd need to compress a bunch of sand into sandstone and then throw it in... but I don't know that it would really help. That's a lot of water and it's just sandstone. Though... would Blue need to pay extra mana to keep it up in the air? If she does maybe there's a point where the stone gets too much? I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

But what's stopping her from just shooting it off to the sides? Nothing. The fact she can accurately fire the ball probably means that I wouldn't get anywhere with that plan. Unless... could I just shove a bunch of sand into it? Would the sand absorb the water and make it harder to move around? Possibly, but once again we run into the issue of 'Blue can probably just fire it out' which isn't what we need.*

Carl managed to make contact with the ball and hit it up and forward... maybe enough to get past the water wall if Blue didn't bother to move it. Gareth watched closely, interested to see what Blue would do in response. This meant that he was watching the moment Blue and Marigold realised that it didn't matter. Carl had hit it a bit too far forward. Blue didn't move the water, and Marigold didn't move to intercept it. The ball landed out-of-bounds behind the back line.

"2-0 to Marigold and Blue," said Thyme as a vine stretched out and snatched the ball from the sand before handing it over to Gareth's team. Obviously, they weren't in any hurry to serve, and got into a huddle.

"Have you got any plans? I've been thinking and thinking but nothing I can think of would actually work," said Gareth with a scowl on his face. "Extra rocks to the water? She throws them out. Collect the water with sand? Same issue. Try to compete with the mana reserves of a mage using paddles? Fat chance. I wish there was something I was missing... but there just doesn't seem to be," said Gareth.

Carl nodded along with Gareth's explanation before a spark came to his eyes. "Gareth. I have an idea. It's mean, and terribly rude... but it MIGHT work,"

"Right well... I guess we'll have to decide if it's worth pissing of our future teammates, so... lay it on me," said Gareth.

"Fire as much attack magic as we can... under the net, straight at Blue instead of trying to deal with the water. A good mage Blue might be, but I doubt she'll be able to keep such fine control of the water up and running while she needs to dodge boulders," explained Carl.

Hmm... It's not a terrible idea... but it's not going to make us any friends is it? I'm... somewhat leaning towards not bothering... I wouldn't want Blue to win as many matches as she could... and then intentionally throw away the game for me, or me and Carl. "I'm not sure it's worth making an enemy of Blue like that. I mean... I can see it working... but I'm not sure we SHOULD do it," said Gareth.

"I know. I even somewhat agree with you... but I don't see any other part forward," said Carl.

Gareth nodded in understanding. "I get what you're saying... but Thyme might even be annoyed with us for it. Remember, the whole point of this was to keep things casual. Plus... reinforcing a paddle is one thing, but throwing fireballs over the net? At a person? Thyme might decide that's casting spells 'on the other side of the net' and give them a point for it,"

"Ah... yeah actually... no that would totally be casting spells on the other side of the net wouldn't it? Blue's been careful to keep the water just barely on her side of the net so... yeah we'd probably be called out for it wouldn't we? Shit. Does that mean even our plans to disrupt the water might get us in trouble?" asked Carl.

"Shit it does... I'm surprised Blue has managed to be so... domineering for this match. I just... what else can we do?" asked Gareth.

"Nothing I think... we just gotta play it out and accept that Blue's team made a great call sending her up for this particularly event. It's basically a mage's paradise. She's got free reign, can't be attacked and her element is really good for this as well," said Carl.

"Right... well, might as well try to run her out of mana," said Gareth with a shrug, knowing how this was going to end.

[Chapter 1174 Blue Note](#)

Gareth and Carl vs Marigold and Blue. Burgandy is on the side

Current Match Score 2-0

Gareth POV chapter.

Gareth had been right. There was nothing to be done. The final point, and the thing that pushed them over the limit was simple exhaustion, and not on Blue's part. Both Carl and Gareth had worked together. Sprinting from side to side, and occasionally back to back. They held on for an impressive amount of time. The ground under their feet was broken, repaired and rebroken. Gareth felt his mana reserves getting more of a workout then... perhaps he'd ever tried for.

There were a few moments of tension. Where the ball was so close to the edge that Carl and Gareth hoped and prayed that Thyme would become their lord and saviour. Declaring a point to them. That the ball was out of bounds. That their effort was worth something. Perhaps it was, perhaps it wasn't. Thyme was clearly an impartial god and the ball didn't ever fall out of bounds.

Gareth and Carl had struck at the edges of the water formation. Struck at the centre. They'd tried to go under it, and they'd tried to go over it. Though they were especially careful with that last one. Sadly, it was not to be. Blue held strong and Marigold mostly just relaxed. Perhaps if Gareth and Carl hadn't been so clearly trying their hardest, she would've gone for a distraction play. Perhaps a bit of a striptease...

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But that would've been too disrespectful even for her. The determination that both men showed was exceptionally appealing, and it felt wrong to spit on their efforts. Even Blue was starting to feel a bit bad for what she was doing. Not enough to stop of course, especially not after coming so far. Not after clawing their way back over that fucking mountain to return to the tournament. To give up in the face of determination? That would be an insult to her team, an insult to herself, and an insult to the two trying so hard.

Gareth was the first to fall. The hardened stone flooring was nice for sprinting around... up until it failed to absorb the water from all the sweat fast enough. When his foot slipped out from under him, Gareth had a hollow moment of panic. A horrible feeling that it was all over, just because he'd been careless with his footing.

But Carl had come in flying. His feet surrounded by burning fire. The wonderful bastard had practically glided over the ground, even overshooting the ball by a bit and managing to hit it back over the wall. Gareth struggled to his feet, ready to run for the next one... when he heard a crash.

Gareth turned around and saw Carl stuck on the ground now. His feet were completely red and his shoes were crispy. Clearly they weren't designed for that trick. Carl's face was filled with pain, and

regret. Knowing he could not stand. Gareth saluted him, and ran for the ball's inevitable return. He even managed to smack it back twice as Carl stumbled to his feet... and it was not the fourth return, but in many ways the third, that would be Gareth's undoing, despite returning the ball in question.

Blue had sent the ball right to the opposite corner to Carl who was in the back left. Gareth charged at the front right section of the court, and now he didn't have time to slow down and turn. He also knew Carl wasn't recovered enough to catch the ball if he hit it straight up. So Gareth just kept running, slipping on the sand as he whirled in place and smacked the ball back into the water.

As he did so... the momentum of the turn and his previous run caught up to him. The sand under his feet went flying and he fell down into the dirt. Gareth was panting. His legs were weak but he **WOULD NOT GIVE UP HERE**. Gareth surged to his feet... much too late. The ball was already about to touch the ground at the other end of the court.

Gareth collapsed down onto his knees and then faceplanted into the ground. Defeated.

"THE PASSION! THE FAVOUR! THE DESPERATE STRUGGLE FOR VICTORY! YET IT WAS NOT ENOUGH! BLUE HAS CRUSHED THIS GAME, AND OWNED THE SCOREBOARDS BUT SHE DID NOT BREAK THEIR SPIRITS! I WANT EVERYONE TO TAKE FIVE, NO TEN MINUTES! I'm ordering a ten minute break for everyone.

"You want food? I'll make sure there's food. Water. Expensive mana restoratives? I probably shouldn't but you bet your ass I will. I want to say there should be no hard feelings this day, for that was truly a work of art! What a match! If I had more control over the rules of the tournament I'd be handing out bonus prizes or points. Alas, I do not. So eat! Drink! Restore your ailing minds and bodies! And Carl get over here and let me heal your feet" Yelled Thyme. Even if they did lower the volume more towards the end. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

Green sprinted over and pulled Gareth into a hug, "Great job honey, come on, let's get you something to drink," whispered Green. It was rather comical seeing her pull Gareth into a hug, then a princess carry without any issues at all.

pandasnovel.com "Thanks Green," responded Gareth.

While that was happening, Asteodia walked over to Carl and gave him a hand up, pulling him to his feet and then letting his arm rest over her shoulders to support his weight as she took him over to Thyme.

"What, no princess carry for me?" asked Carl.

"Hey, you're not getting married to me, so no princess carry for you. Heck, you didn't even invite me out to dinner," said Asteodia with mock offence.

"Heh, sorry you're missing a crucial part I find necessary for a romantic relationship so there will be no ring for you," said Carl.

Asteodia snickered as they got to Thyme who quickly healed up the burns. While that was happening, Green was setting Gareth down at the table that had suddenly appeared and started piling food onto a plate for him. Gareth thought Green was going a little overboard, but he didn't complain about the pampering.

Marigold and Blue slid onto the other side of the table and Blue said, "Sorry about the water... I didn't think it'd be quite so effective. I mean, I'd do it again... but I do feel a bit bad about it,"

Marigold nodded, "Yeah... sorry for coming up with it," admitted Marigold. "I didn't think it'd be so good either, but when Blue admitted to her worries about not being fast enough to cover the front I came up with it... and damn did she run with the idea. Sure it won me the round... but what am I going to do when I have to fight that nonsense?"

Wait... Marigold came up with that! I assumed Blue had figured it out while she was watching us all from the sidelines. Damn, flirty Marigold might be... but she's got a real brain between those ears.

"Yeah... it was pretty brutal. How much mana was it costing?" asked Gareth as Green tried to feed him bits of fruit. *Green, I'm not sick or injured... this might be a bit too much pampering. Plus it's just a lot of food. Ah whatever I can't bring myself to stop her.*

Blue winced before answering, "Honestly... it was super cheap. I didn't need to create any of that water, and I was basically just getting it to spin about. It wouldn't stand up to a proper attack... but a air-filled ball that floats to the surface? I don't even need to reinforce things much. Just keep it up in the air and spinning. I could probably hold it for like an hour without breaks... maybe longer,"

Damn. "Guess we know who's going to win this particular challenge," said Gareth.

Blue nodded awkwardly. "Yeah... sorry I didn't mean to just... destroy this contest the way it seems I have. I'm not going to stop, but I do feel a bit bad, especially when it wasn't even my idea. I would've taken the credit if Marigold didn't throw herself under the bus just to keep the annoyance focused on me...

"But whatever. If Marigold is taking credit for her idea, she can take some of the heat. It's a great idea and I'm super glad I was partnered up with her first so I can stomp the rest of my matches, but I do wish things were different. Perhaps if another mage was to fight me, or Kat was using her demonic energy things would be different... but aw well," finished Blue with a shrug.

I guess the real question is how much effort do I put in. With the win Marigold and I managed, we're ahead of the pack. I'm not sure if it'll come down to individual point wins or if Thyme will just allow a tie for second place... but it looks like that's where Marigold and I are headed with Blue solidly in the lead. Should I try to change it? Or more accurately... CAN I do anything?

[Chapter 1175 Planning Between Matches](#)

Currently Between Matches

Gareth POV chapter.

After calming Green down and escaping all the extra food, Gareth moved over to Burgandy who had somehow acquired a chair for herself. She was sitting off to the side awkwardly so he just crouched down beside her. "Sitting alone I see," said Gareth, trying to keep any recrimination out of his voice.

Burgandy snorted. "Yup. Feel like a bit of a loner but it would be even worse if I tried to fit in with everyone else during the celebration. I've calmed down now, and I was a bit of an ass to Carl during out

match... and I'm still not exactly 'calm'. I've got a few ideas for fighting Blue once it's my turn... but I don't know who I'm going to be paired up with next, so forgive me for not sharing,"

"Gareth," answered Thyme.

Burgandy let out a yelp, jumping to her feet, fists ready to fight as she turned to face the Thyme that appeared next to her. It was one of the referee Thyme's, the female one specifically. Burgandy and Thyme stared at each other for a few moments, before Burgandy asked for clarification, "What do you mean?"

"Nobody else is asking, but the next match is you and Gareth versus Carl and Blue," explained Thyme before they simply walked off, as if they no longer needed to be involved in the conversation. Which, Gareth supposed, they didn't. *Still mighty weird to just walk away after answering the one question but I suppose if we do have need of more answers Thyme would pop up again and provide them. Why just walk away like that though?*

Burgandy watched Thyme walk back over to their chair. Of course, Thyme being Thyme turned around to wink at them before teleporting up into the seat instead of climbing the ladder like a normal person. Gareth just rolled his eyes at the display. Not terribly surprised that Thyme would do something like that.

"Right..." said Burgandy sitting down awkwardly, still somewhat rattled by Thyme's presence, and rather in-your-face proof that Thyme was usually listening, and certainly could listen anytime they wanted.

"So... um... the plan I came up with for us would be to just raise the ground as high as we could. Then we could spike the ball down through the water, and Blue or Marigold would need to send it up high to get at us,"

Gareth rolled the idea over in his head for a few moments, and noticed a potential issue immediately.

"I'm willing to be that if we raised the ground up past the net and then the ball smacked against the side of the platform, Thyme would count that as 'hitting the ground' otherwise it'd be unfair," explained Gareth.

"What and that nonsense Blue has been doing with the water isn't unfair?" grumbled Burgandy.

Gareth shrugged and responded, "I'm not saying that Blue's tactic is completely above board, but it's at least technically possible to get through. Sure your plan is to raise a platform, but imagine if we raised just a single wall stretching up high enough to block any jumps. Thyme would totally call us out on that. Plus, considering you almost lost an extra point against Marigold and I for a much tamer use of 'the ground' I'm willing to bet good money that we'd get in trouble for raising a wall on our side to stop the ball,"

Burgandy clicked her tongue but she didn't argue with Gareth's point. It made a lot of sense after all.

"So... what, we just raised the wall up to the height of the net then?"

Gare nodded, "Yeah, if we can manage it. If we can't maybe just try to raise the front half of it? I'm not a wizard so I've got no idea how much mana this is going to take,"

Burgandy nodded slowly and said, "I... can see it working out. I'm just not sure if we can spike the ball hard enough to get through the water. Sure it'll make returning shots easier, at least in theory, but can we even score going about it like this?"

"Hey this is your idea," defended Gareth.

Burgandy glared back at him, "Yes, and I wasn't the one fighting against Blue last round, so I've got no idea about the amount of power required to get through the water wall. Unlike YOU. So I would like for you to provide some insight," I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

"Fair point. As for if we can do it... I'm going to say maybe? Carl and I got a few good hits in, and the ball sunk deep into the water... but it never looked that close to breaking out through the bottom. Still... with a good spike? I think it can be done, but it's going to be a fair bit of effort," said Gareth.

Burgandy nodded and said, "So we have a plan then,"

"Indeed, I guess we do," agreed Gareth. With that Gareth left Burgandy to being a loner and spent some more time with Green. This time, she was resting on his chest, which was certainly more familiar than all the pampering. It felt like everything was right with the world.

"Right, before I call this next game to begin, I'm going to make you all an offer. We can either start the log chopping event soonish, during the volleyball matches, or we can put them off until after lunch and allow people to do the log chopping event during the secret round that I have planned for the afternoon. Originally, I didn't want any overlap, but it's clear I wasn't factoring in enough time for the volleyball events.

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"Now, not to sway you all too much, but I suspect that it would be preferable to most people if we move the log chopping event to the afternoon... but technically speaking it could put those people participating in the secret event at a disadvantage. That is mostly a technicality, and I don't want to explain why and ruin the surprise... just know that while it would mean missing out on less action, it will have other consequences," explained Thyme.

Gareth looked down at Green who was resting and shrugged. Picking her up he walked over to where the rest of his team was gathered. Lily was asleep on Kat's head, sprawled out while Kat herself was keeping occupied by... turning her skin and muscles to water? It looked a bit weird. Nixilei was looking at Kat with a fascinated gaze while Kress looked like he was pretending to not be involved with those crazy people. "I think it'll be up to you Kress, what do you think?"

Kress shrugged, "I don't really mind man. I'm not sure what it means that I could be at a disadvantage, but I have a strong feeling about the secret round. So I'm going to say that while technically it matters, I'm not sure it'll matter to ME specifically. Though maybe I'll be wrong. Who knows,"

"Right... so what's your answer then?" asked Gareth.

Kress shrugged, "Let's do it later. This way we can all stick around and support you during the volleyball tournament. As I said, I'm not too worried about this disadvantage,"

Thyme popped up beside Kress and made a note, nearly causing the group to jump in surprise... but Kat wasn't paying attention, Nixilei was paying too much attention, Gareth had just seen that joke and Kress managed to suppress his reaction well.

Gareth left Green on the ground nearby, ignoring Kress' incredulous look as Thyme called together everyone once again. "Right, so the break is over, and we're getting back to it. Pretty much everyone agreed to host the log chopping contest later on, so that's what we're going to do. It wasn't unanimous, but I'm not going to say who had the contrary opinion, or if there were one or two teams that held it. Obviously, the majority wanted to do it later, so it can't be more than two. Anyway, Gareth and Burgandy, Versus Blue and Carl GO! Marigold who is serving?"

"Gareth and Burgandy. They're going to need the extra help," said Marigold with a smile.

Burgandy growled but didn't deny it. Instead they used the chance to work together to raise up the ground beneath them. It took a lot of mana, but not all that much effort. With two earth aligned fighters and Thyme's enchantments it wasn't hard to get the mana down into the ground, and raising it up was taxing on their reserves but not their minds.

παΠδαςNovel.com By the time it was all done they even had a little staircase at the back so serving wouldn't be an issue. Blue was set up of course, but Gareth and Burgandy were ready. Gareth served basically blind, but he just needed it hit the ball towards the mass of water. Then he sprinted up the dirt.

Burgandy and Gareth were both ready to face the ball. Ready to leap to whatever corner Blue shot it towards. They were certain they could compete with the speed. They watched the ball... and instead of being launched it was more of a plop. The ball just... dropped out of the water onto the stone platform barely clearing the net. "One point to Blue and Carl!" said Thyme.

"I feel like kind of an idiot," said Burgandy.

"I don't feel any better," agreed Gareth.

[Chapter 1177 Clawing At Points](#)

Gareth and Burgandy vs Carl and Blue with Marigold on the side

Current Match Score 1-1*NoVeLnext.com*

Gareth POV chapter.

Once Marigold started comically booing from the sidelines, and throwing out rather weak insults such as "Throw the ball pansy," or "Clearly Burgandy is worn out, but people leave my bedroom twice as exhausted and five times as satisfied" with a big smirk on her face, Burgandy and Gareth decided it was time to serve. Even if it was just to shut Marigold up.

It did have the side effect that Carl and Blue weren't particularly concerned with how long the other two took. They were clearly enjoying Marigold's commentary. Still, eventually Gareth made his serve. Once

the stone platform was lower just a touch. Gareth's serve was a slow lob that gave him plenty of time to get back in position before the ball hit the water.

Once it did, Blue tried to drop the ball off right at the edge on Gareth's side, but he was ready for it. Stomping the ball back into the water only for it to shoot out over his head. Gareth backpedalled and smacked the ball back once again, only for Blue to keep up the pressure on him specifically. Rushing forward to get the ball for the third time in a row, Gareth put a bit of his frustration into the kick.

It wasn't enough frustration apparently, because the ball came back flying over his head. Gareth backed up again, and just as he was about to jump at the ball, his foot hit the edge of the stone platform. His eyes went wide and he tried to overcorrect but it wasn't quite fast enough. Even as he was slipping, Burgandy was already moving. She'd seen Gareth trip and wasn't about to lose a point to it.

She sprinted as fast as she could and dove off the platform, ready to catch it before it hit the ground... perhaps a bit too ready. You see, the ball was actually heading out of bounds. Not by much, but Blue had overshot. Which is what makes it all the more crushing for Burgandy as she smacked the ball back... and landed outside of the zone. Her eyes widened as she realised what she did, but didn't let that keep her long.

She was charging back up the stairs, though Gareth had something in mind. Despite the ball not needing the extra energy, he managed to sprint under it and hit it up towards the sky, cancelling some of its sideways momentum and giving Burgandy precious extra seconds. Those seconds ended up mattering because Blue tried to use Burgandy's recent run to score a point on her side of the court.

It wasn't enough luckily... and so the group of four settled back into a rally. This time, Carl was keeping his attention fixed on the ball, no relaxing for him. Burgandy and Gareth were both kicking the ball back into the water. Sometimes using more force, but usually not bothering. It didn't seem to be costing Blue any additional mana when they put in that extra effort. So they were trending towards not bothering.

Still, it was hard to find a good opportunity. Gareth and Burgandy saw a few decent chances... but Carl was always watching closely so it never seemed to be the right time. Sadly, the stalemate wasn't really favouring them. At this point, Blue had been able to reflexively return the ball as long as it wasn't anything fancy, but Gareth and Burgandy kept needing to put in more effort.

Eventually, they had to slip up. Burgandy went for a stomp on the ball... but she missed. The ball slick with the water it had just left slipped past her heel and smacked into her other shoe before she could even react. "Point to Carl and Blue. 2-1" said Thyme.

Burgandy cursed at herself even as the ball flew back into the water. Thyme let Blue drop it down to Carl by opening up a section of it so he could serve. "Sorry about that," mumbled Burgandy, mostly trying to keep her anger at herself in check. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

"It's no problem. We've been doing well, and even getting one point is a great showing. Still... even though it's 2-1 maybe we should take a few more risks?" said Gareth.

Burgandy nodded, clearly waiting too long for an opportunity wasn't a good plan. So it was convenient that they were able to decide quickly because Carl wasn't waiting. He smacked the ball into the water as soon as he possibly could to get things started again. Burgandy, in turn wasn't going to let this chance

go. Seeing that Carl was so far away from the front, she waited for the launch and then jumped and smashed the ball with everything she had.

Carl was already running forward, just to get in position, so seeing Burgandy go for it just made him speed up. As he was doing this Gareth was sprinting over to help Burgandy. The ball crashed into the water and managed to keep up the momentum all the way to the bottom, just barely managing to out of the water. Carl was waiting though and he was ready. This time he managed to smack it back up into Blue's spell.

pandasNovel.com Burgandy was pulled off this edge by Gareth, though he dropped her quickly, causing her to stumble slightly. Gareth was already sprinting for the other side of the platform where Blue was trying to catch him out. The ball was already leaving the water and Gareth could see he wasn't quite going to make it... *shit I'm not going to be able to recover easily from this.* "Burgandy cover me!" yelled Gareth as he dove.

His hands managed to brush the ball and hit it back in the water, but mostly just because of how little energy it had leaving the water. Of course, while the ball didn't have much energy. Gareth did. He'd been running full sprint before initiating his dive... and that energy didn't just leave him when the ball was hit back. Gareth tried digging his toes into the stone but it wasn't enough to stop him going over the edge.

Blue made use of this and shot the ball straight back out at the same place, but Burgandy was already rushing over. Unlike Gareth, she was fast enough to kick the ball back into the water, and was already turning around... but Blue was faster. She sent the ball speeding to the other end of the platform. Gareth had only just made it back onto the stone, and Burgandy was springing as fast as she could...

But perhaps she didn't need to. Burgandy didn't let up her sprint but she watched the ball as it was sent out by Blue, and Burgandy dug into her mana reserves. Then smashed her leg down on the platform, pushing the enchantment on her boots to the limit. Not to launch pillars of earth upwards... but to launch a pillar of it out the side starting at the corner. The stone went flying, and with the angle, the ball simply continued through the now empty space... off the edge and out of bounds. Blue looked on in horror, and reflexively shot out a bolt of water to catch it... that she quickly reeled back in just a moment after she'd launched it.

"TWO TO TWO. IT'S ALL TIED UP BETWEEN THE TEAMS. THIS NEXT POINT WILL BE THE DECIDER!" shouted Thyme as he snatched up the ball and then handed it off to Burgandy.

Gareth walked up to Burgandy and clapped her on the shoulder, "Damn, that was amazing. I'm not sure I would've spotted something like that,"

Burgandy nodded, but she was glaring down at her shoes. They were somewhat crispy. "Yeah... but I really pushed the enchantment on these shoes. I forced it to act a bit too far outside of its parameters and fried the mana channels. The enchantment on them is completely fucked now," grumbled Burgandy.

Gareth looked down and saw she was correct. He frowned at the sight. "That... but that shouldn't be the case right? What you didn't seem like stretching the enchantment all that much though... it was just

changing the direction a bit, and normally you can manage that for these sorts of active enchantments," said Gareth.

Burgandy clicked her tongue and said, "Well yeah... but this is a bit more than that. I completely messed with the aiming, I also forced all the dirt away so it was completely 'empty' under the pillar. I also had to do all that while running and not using the shoes properly... plus they just aren't made from the best materials. I probably wasn't kind when shoving my mana through it either..."

Gareth nodded in understanding as he said, "Well, not sure if you'll be able to get an extra copy of them from Thyme once the round is over... but I'd say if you do it was worth it for the point. We're all tied up, we just need one more point to win this and that's much closer then I ever expected to get against Blue. You got any fancy ideas about how we get this last one?"

[Chapter 1178 Blink And You Could Miss It](#)

Gareth and Burgandy vs Carl and Blue with Marigold on the side

Current Match Score 2-2

Gareth POV chapter.

Dun-Dun

Gareth stared down at Blue and Carl. Burgandy was hidden in the back as she got ready to serve. Blue was spinning the water wall much faster now, Gareth was assuming it was to help prevent balls getting pushed through the water but he couldn't be sure. Carl was bouncing on his feet, trying to keep himself limber. His eyes were scanning the water, though the increased speed meant more foam and limited his visibility somewhat.

Dun-Dun-Boom

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Burgandy twisted the ball around in her hands. Part of her wanted to pass the ball back to Gareth. Let him take the final serve. He'd done well enough last time, and it was clear he knew how to hit a target. Yet Burgandy's pride wouldn't allow it. The shot should be easy. Just an easy lob towards a massive amount of water. No problem. Easy peasy. So why was she sweating?

Dun-Boom-Dun-Boom-Boom

Just gotta kick the ball hard enough through the water to win this. Carl needs to be distracted somehow as well... so maybe I should try dropping a rock into the water right as Burgandy goes for the stomp? That could confuse Carl somewhat... and with the water foaming up a bit more it might be tough to differentiate them... Hmm... not sure how I'd get a good sphere for it? You'd either take time or use the enchantment on one of the shirts. One of the shirts I DON'T HAVE.

Crash-Boom-Dun-Boom-Crash.

"Ok Thyme... I know you're a little eccentric but seriously what's with the music? It's a little distracting," asked Blue.

Suddenly there was the sound of a scratching record and the music on the background faded as Thyme pouted. It was worth noting that the large box Thyme was using to spit out tunes didn't HAVE a record player attachment, and it was entirely possible Thyme didn't know what a record was. So the Thyme still played that particular sound when the song could off was very strange. Unless that was just what sound the music player made when being forcefully shut off of course. Though that would just raise other questions.

Thyme glared at Blue with both bodies and huffed, looking away for a few seconds... as they summoned a third body next to Burgandy so that she could watch the show, complete with their own enchanted music player. Burgandy just rolled her eyes. "Well, you see Blue. Considering this is the first close match of the tournament, I thought the music would make it a bit more fun. Alas, seeing as you're anti-fun I'll just pack everything up and we can all sit in silence and listen to the waves," said Thyme.

Blue let out a light groan and said, "Look, if the music means that much to you we can keep it. It's not THAT distracting, certainly not compared to the sounds of battle... I'm just used to those sounds. Music isn't really my thing, so... just do whatever,"

Thyme shook their heads, "Nope. I can't be seen as interfering with the competition so if the music really is a distraction, I have to turn it off. Even if it's technically affecting you all evenly right now, Marigold is off to the side. Which means I'm not effecting all the matches evenly. If that makes sense,"

"Wait seriously?" asked Blue. Thyme nodded. "Can I take back my complaints?" Thyme shrugged. "Well is that a yes or a no?" I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

The Thyme's made a 'so-so' gesture as they spoke. "Sort of? The problem is I can't be sure you're telling the truth and it at least seems like you're asking for the music back because other people like it. Which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it does make it hard for me to justify turning it back on,"

"What if... you put the music player next to me and I turn it back on?" asked Blue.

Thyme thought for a moment, "I could probably justify it if I gave each of you a music player to turn on or off. Though they'd all be connected. So if one was off they all would be..."

Burgandy decided to cut in, "Look, can we just play? I was nervous enough getting ready to serve, and now we're talking about things that don't really matter. I want to get this point done so I can relax somewhat and hopefully get Blue on my team next match,"

"Right, well, Burgandy has spoken so get ready for the final point everyone!" announced Thyme. The third copy of them disappearing. Burgandy nodded at the spot Thyme just was, as she spun the ball in her hands a few times before breathing out. Eyes locked ahead of her at nothing.

Burgandy got ready, and then she served. Despite her slightly shaking hands and sweat covered palms, the serve was fine, if a bit low. She hopped back onto the stone in time, and then the rally began. Blue was sending the ball out quicker then ever before, though this was offset by not sending it quite so far to the edges. Gareth and Burgandy danced at the edge of the stone to kick the ball back into the water over and over again.

Things were not looking promising for them. The increased spin on the water was killing the downward momentum of the ball, making the challenge of finding the right moment harder mostly by virtue of the fact neither Gareth nor Burgandy were sure it could be found anymore. As Gareth was kicking the ball back into the water again and again, he was also trying to think up a good plan.

παΠδσNovel com *Shit. I didn't think a bit of extra speed on the spin would make this so much harder. What can we do to push through the water? Just stomping down as hard as we can probably isn't enough anymore... but I don't know what else we can do. The only thing I can think of is a silly idea to use Burgandy as a bat. With a good swing and a good kick from her it MIGHT be possible...

But we'd definitely lose before it worked out right? We'd need time for me to pick Burgandy up. Time for me to run to the ball. Time for Burgandy to get used to everything. I'd need to warn her about it beforehand, which would also warn Blue and Carl... probably? The water isn't exactly quiet but I doubt it's loud enough to stop us from being heard... right?

No that's now something we can really rely on. It's not like they're actually underwater, they're just under water. Hmmm... could I instead throw bad puns out at them? Try to get them to laugh? Hmmm... hmm... as dumb as that idea is... it's also probably better than using Burgandy as a bat. Though there is the potential for collateral damage.

I wish I knew what Burgandy found funny. I need to stay away from that. I'd try to rely on what I know of Green's sense of humour and hope it was shared amongst fae... except once again, that's just as likely to work on Burgandy as it is on Blue. Shit. Ok... so what sort of jokes do I make? It's not like I consider myself a particularly funny person.*

While Gareth was thinking funny thoughts Burgandy was similarly raking her brains for the answers to their problems. Sadly, she was having less success than Gareth's out of the box thinking. Burgandy would come up with half a dozen bad plans, and then discard them all out of hand for being generally bad, or because they were actually impossible. She did actually come up with a similar idea of using her teammate as a paddle, but she discarded it quickly for many of the same reasons Gareth had.

So the rally carried on. Plans were made and thrown out... mostly just by Burgandy and Gareth. Blue focused on keeping the speed up, and the water loss down, while Carl did his best to stay focused on the ball. Always keeping it in sight to make sure that he wouldn't be responsible for losing the final round. He wasn't too stressed about it. He'd lost a point, and Blue had lost a point in turn. He'd keep his head held high regardless of what happened... but winning was the goal. Especially with Blue on his team.

In the end, a small slip-up was what galvanized everyone into action. If it could even be called as such. After such an extended rally, it wasn't anything to be ashamed of. What happened was... Carl sneezed. Just as the ball came flying out of the water and Burgandy took the chance. She jumped out and smashed down as fast as she could using all of her strength to break through the water.

Gareth was moving for her, ready to pull her up but alas, it was not to be. The ball didn't shoot out the bottom, it came bouncing back quickly and was launched towards Gareth's side of the platform. Gareth killed his sprint and turned around... much too slowly. The ball dropped gracefully out of the water and towards the stone platform. Gareth pushed as much mana as he could into lowering the entire structure... but he wasn't a mage. It wasn't fast enough. The ball hit the stone. Blue and Carl were the winners.

[Chapter 1179 Gareth Sits This One Out](#)

No Match

Gareth POV chapter

It was now Gareth's turn to sit off to the side. He wasn't entirely sure he liked it, despite the break. Thyme had cleaned up the court by just swapping it with another patch of sand further down the beach. If Gareth looked over he could see a number of times bodies getting to work smashing it up. It certainly wasn't the most efficient way of doing that. Gareth knew that with a few spells Thyme could've turned it all to sand. Especially with spatial affinity at such a high level. Instead, Thyme was smashing the stone platform like a mortal.

"Hey Thyme, do you think I can get a chair?" asked Gareth.

Thyme shrugged, "Sure why not?" said Thyme as Gareth felt a chair appear beneath him, knocking him off his feet and raising him up off the ground. It kept rising until his chair was about a head shorter than Thyme's, giving him decent height but still clearly below Thyme's.

This wasn't quite what I had in mind. I was thinking more 'couch' or 'recliner' then a tall chair like this but I suppose this is fine... though I can already feel myself getting jittery. I'm... frustrated. Blue played well and there's no hard feelings but I feel like I should still be fighting.

The next match was Burgandy and Blue against Carl and Marigold. Marigold was taking the time to pose in exceptionally risqué ways in front of Carl who just seemed to be mildly confused by the whole thing. "You know I'm gay right? I can appreciate that you're a beautiful woman, but it's more the way you appreciate a nice statue or a painting. This isn't exactly doing anything for me," explained Carl.

"Oh I know," said Marigold as she continued posing, "But Blue and Burgandy have been staring at my ass for the last five minutes so I'd say it's still working,"

Carl looked over to see Burgandy and Blue quickly wiping some drool away from the corner of their mouths. "I wasn't aware they were lesbians," mumbled Carl.

Unluckily for him, Marigold heard it and decided to comment, "I'm not entirely sure they are myself. Not everyone is so rigidly gay like you are. Some people have a bit of curiosity to them. They might not be gay... but I'm a very attractive woman, a very attractive woman who's more than just half-naked. Plus, I know how to work it,"

"If you say so," said Carl with a nod. Truly not understanding the point of this. Kat would be right there along with him if she couldn't see Lily's thoughts on the matter. Those seemed to swing back and forth between agreeing that Marigold was hot, and focusing heavily on Kat to chase away thoughts of Marigold... making her hornier and more easily distracted by Marigold. Kat just started petting her, removing all thoughts from her mind. It was easier, and less strange.

Marigold for her part just rolled her eyes at Carl, though secretly she was really interested in what his boyfriend looks like. What was he into? Beards? Muscles? Powerful thighs? Toned asses? Why the list

could go on forever, and Marigold just couldn't get a sense of it. His eyes didn't seem to focus on any one part of her as she displayed everything next to him, so she wasn't getting any hints. A shame.

Gareth, unaware of this and lost in his thoughts... continued to think. *Is that why I'm already hating this break? Because my mind and body still think the fights still on? I didn't surrender and I wasn't 'defeated' at least, not the way that arguably matters. So... what I'm still in fight mode? That's going to be annoying. I really should relax before my final match. Then again, I'm working with Blue for my final match so I probably don't need to do anything. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

It'll be against Burgandy and Marigold. Hmm... could Burgandy lift up enough of a platform without my help? I'm going to guess the answer is no. I'm guessing she could, at most, do the front... quarter? Maybe less? Plus her shoes are burnt out so that might limit her further. Hmm...

So that will put me on two wins, Marigold on two wins, and Blue on four wins? Once again, I wonder if that means Thyme will declare it a tie, or if he'll find some way to put one of us ahead of the other. I'm guessing whatever seems more amusing? Then again... if this is all meant to be relaxing perhaps Thyme will say 'you two can share it'. Actually... I suppose Thyme could give us both half a point. Not sure if Thyme can do that. Though I don't exactly see why not.*

While Gareth was lost in his thoughts Thyme tapped him on the shoulder, "Gareth it's your time to shine. Who is going to serve?" asked Thyme.

Oh right. Forgot about that. Um... Gareth looked over at Carl and Marigold, then over at Blue and Burgandy. *Time to come up with reasonable words.* "Part of me wants to hand this over to Carl and Marigold because it's been established that Blue is dominating this round... but you know what? I think she should get a chance to serve," said Gareth throwing the ball towards Blue. "Of course, that might just be because it's my turn to be on her team next. So read into that what you will,"

Marigold clicked her tongue in annoyance as that cut off one of her main strategies for winning this round, or at least getting one more point. Still, she wasn't too annoyed, understanding Gareth's logic well. Carl on the other hand just nodded completely unconcerned. Blue and Burgandy got to work. Which in reality meant Blue got to work summoning up a whole bunch of water. Though Burgandy DID step in to help. *NovelNext.Com*

Burgandy lowered the ground in the front half of the court and started to compact the sand down so that Blue could rest the water there if she really needed to. Once the water was spinning and the sand was compact, Burgandy served the ball.

This led to a long rally, where Marigold and Carl were both trying really quite hard... but it was ultimately for nothing. Blue's defence was too good, and without the extra height from the stone they struggled to get a good smash going. They got close a few times, with Marigold jumping up high and catching the ball near the net... but the problem was the extra height. Sure Marigold could slam the ball down faster than both Gareth and Burgandy, but the air slowed the ball down before the water finished the job so it still wasn't enough.

So the rally continued for a while... and continued... and continued... and honestly from what Gareth could see Marigold was really going for it. She hadn't found any great new plan, she was just determined

to get this done. Carl's 'patrol area' of the court kept shrinking as Marigold sped around the court, kicking up sand as she went, catching the ball wherever it went and throwing it back.

Burgandy was just resting on the sand. Saving her energy for if it was proven she actually needed to watch things. Despite it probably being disrespectful she was also using the time to try and figure out a good plan for beating Blue next round. Her current best idea was to see if Thyme would allow her to get away with lowering all the sand around the net and causing it to fall over. Thus allowing her to throw 'over' the net at Blue's feet. Yeah... Burgandy didn't have high hopes for that plan.

Gareth climbed down from his chair to grab a bottle of water from the drink table. Probably would've grabbed a snack as well if that hadn't disappeared after the celebration was done. Gareth downed the water before making his way back to the chair and continuing to watch the show. It was... getting a bit dull.

Carl barely needed to move, and Marigold was like a machine. No showing off. Now fancy struts, just constant sprinting around the court and returning to slightly left and forward from the centre of her side of the court, with Carl relegated to the back right corner. Granted, Carl's lack of movement wasn't really his fault... but it certainly wasn't keeping Gareth entertained. Marigold's mad dashes was a bit more entertaining... but things were bouncing around a bit, and Gareth decided it wasn't that interesting. Certainly. Can't be any other reason.

So he was leaning back in his chair and looking at the little tarp that was blocking the sun above him. *Right... so I... I guess I just don't know what to do? At least I've calmed down I suppose. No longer feeling like I need to jump back into a fight... but now I'm BORED. Which might be worse. Maybe I should just go and hug Green? No everyone else stood at the side of the court when they were on break... probably. I admittedly wasn't paying too much attention. Hmm... maybe I should leave?*

[Chapter 1180 Talking To A Talking Head](#)

Blue and Burgandy vs Carl and Marigold

Gareth POV chapter

The match, that had seemed to be a matter entirely based on endurance finally had someone slip up. It could be argued this was good planning on Blue's part, or poor planning on both Carl's and Marigolds. Blue managed, through a combination of luck and skill, to shoot the ball right at the edge of the area Carl 'patrolled'. Both Marigold and Carl went for the ball, not watching the rest of the court, simply acting on instinct...

And they smashed into each other, toppling to the ground. Carl's head was ringing and he would need at least a few moments to recover, but Marigold was running a low level of constant regeneration to keep herself running at peak performance. This meant she was recovered from the impact mere fractions of a second after it happened... the problem with that was she was still falling. Recovered or not she wasn't able to get up in time.

Oh sure made the attempt, but because of the impact Carl's arm was pushing her neck downwards and she wasn't able to both move her head out of the way and pull her legs in enough to kick off the ground so that she could recover and send the ball flying back. Instead it landed just a bit above them. Marigold tried to reach out with her hands, but they were just a tad short. "Point to Blue and Burgandy," said Thyme.

FINALLY! Gareth shouted mentally as he checked back into the match. That point alone had taken over thirty minutes. **Though... that does beg the question, can Blue keep up? If it's Marigold's endurance against Blue's who will fall first? Marigold is using mana to keep her stamina topped up but I don't know how efficient that is. Blue on the other hand is just using her mana. I suppose we'll just have to see.**no1elnext.com

Blue was clearly having similar thoughts, because she used the short time between Thyme retrieving the ball and Marigold serving to sit down and closer her eyes. **Does that actually help with reducing the mana cost? I can't say I know enough know enough about magic... actually I can probably just ask Thyme.** So that's what Gareth did, "Hey Thyme, is whatever Blue's doing actually going to reduce the mana consumption of her spell?"

Thyme, not wanting to take their eyes off the action, popped off their head and then quickly regrew another one. Placing the first and now bodyless head down on the arm of the chair facing Gareth. Gareth ignored the twitching in his eye as the head spoke without any lungs. Clearly, chicanery was afoot. "Would you mind elaborating?" asked Thyme.

Gareth tried not to comment on it. It was a difficult trial, but Gareth managed. "I'm wondering if meditating actually helps with... I don't know... mana efficiency?"

"Well that really depends," said Thyme with a smile. "What Blue is doing MIGHT be good for her, but it also might not be. My guess would be that she's attempting to calm her mind and more efficiently make use of the mana she's already using, giving her 'more mana' to work with in the long run, even if the amount hasn't technically changed. Of course, it doesn't always work. The fact that she can't see the spell anymore might actually cause things to get more out of sync and costing her more mana."

"It is also possible she's trying to take in mana from the world. It's a somewhat advanced technique that lets you recover mana more quickly. Though it's not taught to everyone. If done incorrectly it can damage your mana pathways and cause all sorts of issues. I would guess it's a little too advanced for Blue... but then again with the ocean right there if she's careful and she does know the technique taking in only water mana would reduce the strain.

"Of course, she could also be trying to stimulate her own production of mana. It won't work. Mana regenerates at a constant rate and there's nothing you can do to force your body to generate more or if, but some people DO believe it's possible. They'll even say as much. They're either delusional, or taking in external mana at least somewhat safely,"

"Wait... then what about mana potions? I always assumed they forced the body to regenerate mana just like you can get ones that force the body to heal itself. And wait, what about eating? That can give you a boost as well..." said Gareth.

παΠδαςNovel com Thyme shook his head, "You're misinterpreting the cause here. Mana potions don't force you to generate more mana, they either have mana in them that disperses slowly into the body, or the ones more focused on long term regeneration absorb external mana into your body for you, filtering out a lot of the issues. As for after eating? Eating a steak filled with mana works the same as drinking a liquid filled with it," I think you should take a look at παΠδαςnovel.com

Gareth nodded, "Huh... the more you know I guess. It's just never really come up. Just... one of those things that just works... though I guess not exactly huh?"

"One must always continue to investigate the small mysteries, lest the world become dull indeed," said Thyme 'mysteriously'. It was twice as effective considering they were just a talking head right now. Totally.

Gareth still nodded, not wanting to be impolite. Still there was obvious question to ask while Thyme was paying attention to him. "Soo... who do you think is going to win?"

Thyme shook their head. How they managed that without a neck, Gareth wasn't sure, but his guess was magic. Thyme answered with "I'm afraid I can't say. It's not that I do not have a guess, but announcing who I think is closer to victory is probably putting my hand a bit too far on the scale,"

"I'm not sure it's that different from talking about what Blue is doing," returned Gareth.

"Ah, but I simply listed the possibilities. Blue could be doing all of those things, none of those things or perhaps even something I haven't thought of," said Thyme.

Gareth frowned, "But you specifically said 'My guess would be that she's attempting to calm her mind' I feel like it doesn't get any more direct than that," retorted Gareth.

Thyme nodded, "Indeed I did say that... but it really is the most common thing people do when they're meditating, which it looks like Blue is doing. Still, I suppose saying it was 'my guess' was a bit of a lie. I have more than enough proficiency in sensing mana to know exactly what she's doing. I was merely pointing out that with no information about her, my guess would be the first. It's a common think among mages, though its effectiveness is quite varied,"

Gareth wasn't entirely sure he believed times response. *Might just be something Thyme felt the need to say to avoid getting caught up in the rules. Those do seem to rear their head on the occasion... and Thyme might just be trying to play it cool and pretend none of them were broken. I... could see it happening. It's a minor issue at best... hmm... I can't be certain.

Sure I didn't see any sign Thyme was lying... but Thyme can control multiple bodies at once and they can all have different facial expressions. Making sure it looks like he isn't lying to me is probably easy for Thyme. So just going off of gut feeling probably won't help me here. You know what? It doesn't matter. I'll just assume Thyme was giving me an extra hint that they weren't really meant to and pretended to back off. Better for my sanity that way.*

While Gareth and Thyme were having their discussion the round was continuing without issue. Nothing interesting was happening. Well... that's not true. Burgandy was making a sandcastle to pass the time... and probably piss off the other team. It was somewhat working. Marigold was glaring daggers at Burgandy, but it hadn't caused her to miss any of the return shots just yet. Carl was keeping his chill and

didn't care that Burgandy was messing around. If anything he was happy. It meant if they got through Blue they'd be certain to score.

Sadly it didn't seem like that chance would come any time soon. Marigold was still doing great work but she just didn't have the right angle to get through the water. Getting the ball over the net required either a lob that killed a lot of the momentum, or Marigold needed to risk a jump, guessing the trajectory early and slam the ball down... but it'd need to be at the PERFECT height for it to work. Too high and it wasn't much better then lobbing the ball back, so Marigold wasn't really going for those.

Marigold's current hope was that she could outlast Blue completely. Though if that would work... Gareth had no idea.