

Endless 201

Chapter 201: Alex's Agenda

After returning from the fishing trip, Alex gathered his club members at the clocktower and hosted a fish buffet for them.

When the young man told them that they would be having fish for dinner, most of them thought that they would rather eat at the cafeteria.

But after telling them that they would be eating the rarest and most delicious fishes in existence, his club members finally relented and followed him to the club room.

However, there was a second reason why he gathered the gang, and it was because he wanted them to gain some academy points that they could use as early as now.

"So, I'm sure that the majority of you guys want to earn as many academy points as possible this early in the school year," Alex said as he gazed at his friends, who were busy eating grilled fish, fish soup, fishballs, and baked fish.

"Isn't that obvious?" Renard replied after he finished chewing his grilled fish, which was more delicious than he had expected. "We get points when we impress the Professors or get good grades in their exams."

"Well, that is indeed one way of gaining academy points." Alex nodded in agreement. "But what if I tell you that there is a way for you guys to gain thousands of academy points aside from scoring high on tests and other activities that are conducted by the professors?"

Everyone, who was busy eating, finally focused all their attention on Alex. Information about gaining academy points was something that they wished to know badly.

The majority of them were scholarship students, which meant that they didn't have a lot of money.

Yes, they did get a monthly stipend of twenty gold coins, which was a very big deal for commoners.

If they were thrifty enough, they could probably survive on one gold coin for a month.

Some of the scholarship students even sent half, or more than half, of their gold coins back home so that their families would be able to live a little better.

This was why becoming a student of Frieden Academy was a big deal among commoners, but it was very hard for one to pass through its yearly academy trials.

However, the Academy Points also served as currency in Frieden Academy.

By exchanging them at the Exchange Center, students would be able to buy things that they wouldn't see outside of the academy.

They could also buy things from their fellow students or exchange their services for academy points.

This was why gathering these points were very vital to everyone, scholarship students or not.

"So, what do we have to do?" Renard asked. "Stop with the suspense and spill the beans."

Alex smirked before raising a finger. "Okay, the best way to farm academy points is by going to the training room."

Everyone in the room looked at Alex as if he was some kind of rare animal that was being showcased in a zoo.

The young man was unfazed by their doubtful stares as he continued to explain why going to the training room would let everyone gather a lot of points.

"First off, Frieden Academy was founded to develop the talents that come from all over the continent," Alex explained. "As such, the training rooms are also meant to encourage competitiveness among students. Because of this, a ranking system has been implemented to highlight the most talented individuals in the academy."

The young man paused for a while before continuing.

“Frieden Academy has thirteen training rooms, and each training room has its own specialty,” Alex stated. “The first training room is a training room meant to test a person’s strength.

“Anything that is related to strength is measured there. The strongest punch, the strongest kick, the strongest body slam, the strongest sword strike, etc. Each category represents their own ranking... and those who are able to get to the top 3 will receive academy points.”

Alex then showed the chart that he had hastily scribbled earlier.

“Top 3 gets one thousand academy points,” Alex said. “Top 2 gets three thousand academy points, and top 1 gets five thousand academy points. These rankings are also separated by year. So there is a different ranking for the First Years, the Second Years, so on and so forth.”

By now, the club members of Endless Horizon were starting to understand what Alex was hinting at.

“I believe that every person here is talented.” Alex smiled faintly. “So, getting top 1 is not impossible. However, I need you guys to hold back at the start and avoid creating a score that is impossible to beat.”

Alex then crossed his arms over his chest as he glanced at Renard, who was already itching to go to the First Training Room to set a record for the strongest punch among the First Years.

“If possible, do not go all out at the start,” Alex explained. “Why? That way, others will be able to beat the records that you have set.”

“Wait, why would we allow others to beat our records?” Lavinia frowned. “Won’t it be better to go all out at the start so we can immortalize our names in the academy?”

“I’m sure everyone wants fame and glory, and I’m not saying that you guys shouldn’t leave your marks in the academy’s history,” Alex replied. “But won’t it be better if you let others beat your records? That way, you can beat their new records and gain thousands of academy points in the process.

"I call this academy point farming! Do you prefer to earn points just once or earn points many times throughout the school year? Which is more profitable? I'm sure you guys already understand what I'm talking about."

The young man then glanced at Charles, whom he believed could easily beat one of the records.

"Charles, the Seventh Training Room specializes in the Beast Category," Alex said. "You can summon monsters, right?"

"There is a challenge of summoning as many monsters as you can possibly summon. You can beat the current record by just summoning one more monster. That way, if someone somehow manages to beat your record, you can easily beat that again, right?"

Just like Renard, Charles was now very eager to visit the training room to get academy points.

The members of Alex's club weren't stupid, so they instantly understood the potential of farming academy points.

"Before the school term ends, you can challenge the training rooms again to beat your previous records. That way, when you become Second Years, all the First Years will have no choice but to fight for second place."

By this point, everyone was ready to break some records, but Alex raised his hand to stop them from being restless.

"There is one more thing that you guys should do when you challenge the rankings."

This was the moment that Alex was waiting for because breaking the records would also be good advertising propaganda for their club.

"When you register to challenge the rankings, make sure to state your name as well as the club you belong to," Alex instructed as he raised a placard with bold letters written on it.

Club Name: Endless Horizon.

“That’s right.” Alex nodded. “Not only are we going to be breaking records, we will break it in style. When you put down your names, put down your club as well.

“That will let the others know that it is the members of the club, Endless Horizon, who are setting the new records for the First Years. Who knows? If we get popular enough, we might even get club funding. Won’t that be nice?”

The commoners’ eyes lit up because the word “funding” had a nice ring to it.

The young man was purposely choosing the right words to entice his members, so that they would not forget to register their club after they managed to beat the current records.

Alex didn’t plan on only having his small group of friends as members of Endless Horizon.

He also planned to attract the hidden Named Characters in the academy, who might not be as popular as the protagonists, but their strength was the real deal.

What Alex really wanted to do was not create an ordinary club.

He wanted Endless Horizon to be the thirteenth Crest Club of Frieden Academy and send ripples among the powerful factions that controlled it from behind the scenes.

Chapter 202: Endless Horizon’s Prestige [Part 2]

[Scatterburst Drill Challenge]

Objective: Shoot or destroy as many clay discs as possible in a confined chamber. Discs are released in explosive clusters at a 5-10 feet range.

Mechanics: Reflex-based. Discs shoot out like shrapnel from random directions at high speed. Some of them might hit you, so be very careful!

Goal: Shoot and dodge the flying discs without letting yourself get hit once. The trial will end once a disc hits your body.

Alex smirked as Dim Dim read the mechanics of the second challenge it would try out next.

During its first try, Dim Dim didn't even get to the top 3, but that was fine.

The Dim Sum God wasn't competing just yet. It was only sizing things up, trying to grasp how the challenge played out.

After the first try, Dim Dim had grasped the basics, so it prepared itself for the challenge.

As with the first challenge, an announcement rang out in the second training room. Dim Dim had broken yet another record.

[Scatterburst Drill Ranking Challenge]

[First Place: Dim Dim]

[Affiliation: Mascot of Endless Horizon Club]

[Score: 14,225 Points]

After that, Alex allowed the Dim Sum God to take eight more ranking challenges, which ultimately made those in the training room look at the little white bun on Alex's head in disbelief.

Echo Shot Chamber, Reflex Ring, Phantom Flicker, Chain Trigger Challenge, Ricochet Blitz, Panic Pressure Mode, and Mirror Strike Challenge.

All in all, the Dim Sum God had beaten ten records in the archery room, which caused a commotion among everyone currently present in the second training room.

Curiosity spread like wildfire. One by one, the students watched the replay of the Dim Sum God taking the challenges, eager to see exactly how each record had been shattered.

“Wow...” a young elf with long silver hair and blue eyes looked at Dim Dim as it bounced around the room, throwing steel pellets left and right while dodging the clay discs flying around it.

She watched everything from start to finish, including the first challenge that the Dim Sum God had taken.

“To think that someone so little is able to do these things.” The young elf sighed. “So its name is Dim Dim, and it’s the mascot of the Endless Horizon Club? This is the first time I’ve heard about such a club.”

The young lady then accessed the magical database of Frieden Academy to check what the Club, Endless Horizon, specialized in.

She wasn’t the only one. Most of the people who witnessed the spectacle in the second training room did the same.

Curious about the little white bun’s origins, they began digging for more information about the Endless Horizon Club.

As the students shared the news of what happened in the second training room, the record-breaking bun was currently with Alex in the academy’s Exchange Center.

“Kukuku...”

“Kukuku.”

“Kukuku!”

Dim Dim chuckled as it rubbed its cheek on an alchemy bomb it had exchanged using its newly gained academy points.

It was planning to buy more steel pellets at first, but Alex told it that there were many items that it could exchange for.

The young man even helped Dim Dim view the catalog for throwing weapons, including Alchemical Bombs that would explode upon impact.

Other throwable potions were for sale as well, such as Alchemical Fire, contained in glass vials that burst on impact and doused the target in volatile alchemical flames.

Dim Dim even purchased Stink Bombs, which contained skunk essence.

“Kukuku!” Dim Dim chuckled evilly as it placed another potion inside its dimensional storage, making the clerk giggle.

Although the little bun chuckled like it was up to no good, that only made it cuter.

Alex was very happy about this outcome as well. After all, he and Dim Dim were partners.

The first arc of the story was fast approaching, and the little bun’s stash of throwing weapons was bound to come in handy for the problems about to come.

Dim Dim could solely focus on offense, while Alex could focus on defense. This was the perfect combination, and the two of them would definitely be able to overcome most obstacles with this strategy.

While Dim Dim didn't exchange all of its academy points, the little bun still spent a whopping 5,000 points on its purchases.

That was only a tenth of its academy points, yet it allowed Dim Dim to stockpile hundreds of exploding potions, making it a one-bun army!

After leaving the exchange center, Alex went to the first training room to check on Renard's progress.

Just as he expected, many people were checking the ranking boards, which prompted Alex to raise his head and look at them as well.

[Colossus Punch Challenge]

Objective: Deliver the strongest punch possible to a reinforced dummy.

[First Place: Fran Terra]

[Affiliation: Farmville Club]

[Score: 13,666]

[Second Place: Renard Vale]

[Affiliation: Endless Horizon Club]

[Score: 11,123]

'As expected of my Fran,' Alex muttered as he looked at the leader board rankings, not caring one bit that Renard only managed to take second place.

After they had their fish buffet yesterday, Dim Dim visited the Farm to play with Daisy and the other beasts being cared for by the dwarven twins, Fran and Finn.

Fran then told Alex about the situation of the farm, wishing that she had more academy points to buy seeds, fertilizers, and tools for farming.

Because of this, Alex shared the information to the young lady, who thanked Alex profusely because he managed to solve her problems.

'Sorry, Renard,' Alex thought. 'You know what they say. No waifu, no laifu.'

At this point in time, Fran was indeed stronger than Renard since she was already a Rank 4 Dwarven Berserker.

She was one of the hidden prodigies of Frieden Academy—one personally invited by the Headmaster to come to the learning institution.

Alex didn't mind that Renard only took second place, knowing that the latter's character growth would happen in a few months.

After that, one of the main Heroes of ELO would have an explosive growth, which would allow him to become the strongest First Year, when it came to physical might.

'I'm sure Renard will break Fran's record before this school year ends,' Alex mused. 'But until then, Fran will dominate the strength rankings of the academy.'

Just as Alex expected, ten of the rankings had Fran's name in it, with Renard only on the second place.

'He must really feel bad about failing to get first place,' Alex thought as he scanned the training room to see if Renard was still around.

And he did find the teenage boy. But instead of feeling depressed, Renard seemed very happy as he chatted with Fran, whose face was now beet red from embarrassment.

"... I changed my mind," Alex muttered. "This guy needs no pity. Time to kill!"

"Kukuku!" Dim Dim had already taken out a stink bomb from its dimensional storage.

Renard was happily chatting with Fran when he suddenly sensed a cold tingling sensation run down his spine. It was as if a monster had locked onto his body.

He turned around to look in the direction from which the chill had come, and there, he saw Alex approaching him with a smile that didn't reach his eyes.

Dim Dim was also holding a vial with a brownish gray color that made Renard sense danger.

The moment Fran saw Alex and Dim Dim, she greeted them with a smile as radiant as a flower in full bloom.

"Alex, thank you for your advice!" Fran said. "You have no idea how happy I am thanks to you."

Faced with a smile that had to be protected at all costs, all of Alex's murderous thoughts— including tossing Renard's corpse into the Arowana River as fish food—disappeared completely.

"I saw the rankings," Alex replied. "Congratulations. You did well."

The young man gave the young lady a thumbs up, making Fran's smile widen.

Seeing this, Renard glared at Alex, and the latter looked back at him as if he had already won in life.

Since he had played Renard's story quest as well, Alex had of course added Fran to his team lineup, creating two berserkers as front liners.

This was an epic combination that allowed them to decimate almost every monster in their path.

'Not this time though.' Alex sneered internally. 'Even if you are the protagonist, you should find other heroines to romance!'

The cute dwarf, who had no idea what Alex was thinking, asked him if he had eaten lunch yet.

Naturally, he said no, accepting Fran's invitation to go to her farm to have lunch together.

"Well, then. I'll see you around, Fran," Renard said with a smile, which he rarely showed to anyone.

"See you," Fran replied, returning a shy smile at the teenage boy who had suddenly asked her to be his friend in the academy.

Alex watched the young man leave in a good mood because he had met someone that was stronger than him.

This inspired Renard to work harder and focus more on his training, with the goal of surpassing Fran's records in the rankings.

Chapter 203: Endless Horizon's Prestige [Part 3]

"Have you heard the news?"

"Do you mean Endless Horizon Club members breaking records consecutively? Of course. I'm not that outdated."

"I've read their club's goals and mission. It's similar to what the Obsidian Fang Club does, don't you think?"

“Man, just getting in one of the Crest Clubs is already difficult. Did you know? Obsidian Fang only accepts one student from each grade every school year, totaling 4 this year. How strict are their requirements?”

“I have insider news. The president of the Endless Horizon Club tried to apply to the Obsidian Fang recruitment event but decided to back out when he realized that he could not enter with his friends.”

“I see! So that’s why he made a similar club.”

“What an upstart. He really thinks his club can become a Crest Club as well? Hahaha! Good luck with that!”

Since the members of Endless Horizon had managed to secure first and second places in the different training rooms, the name of their club was slowly but surely spreading to more students in the academy.

Their public information was also registered in the school’s magical database, allowing everyone to check their members.

Each of them was now a Record Breaker, except for one person.

That person was none other than their Club President, Alex Stratos.

Yes.

Alex still hadn’t beaten any of the records in the academy, making the students think that he was just leeching off his members.

The magical database of the academy also showed the achievements of its students, including the records they had broken in the academy.

After checking each of the members of the Endless Horizon and their achievements, everyone was starting to think that the new club was trying to break the balance of the Crest Clubs.

“Their Club President is a lucky person,” a chubby boy said while glancing at Alex in the cafeteria. “He doesn’t need to do anything, and his club becomes popular because of its members.”

In history class, Alex and Dim Dim exchanged glances before looking at the chubby boy seated nearby, one of Alex’s classmates.

His name was Bertram Humphrey.

He was only a minor character in the story, which the nobles used as a lackey to harass the scholarship students in the academy.

Bertram was broad-shouldered with a round face, soft cheeks, and a frame that made him seem larger than most students his age.

His dark brown hair was always a little disheveled, hanging just above his thick brows.

Though he carried himself with the bulk and presence of someone confident, Bertram was not a predator but a pawn.

‘Oh, I guess some nobles didn’t like a bunch of commoners breaking the records in the rankings,’ Alex mused. ‘But that’s fine. They will all shut up after class ends.’

The majority of the nobles looked down on commoners, and some would often go out of their way to prevent them from gaining recognition and achievements in the academy.

Their most common tactic was to turn these talented commoners into their subordinates, so they could gain credit from their hard work.

Of course, since the commoners usually felt like they had no choice but to obey the nobles, the majority of them agreed to become pawns, including Bertram, who was able to shove his weight among the First Years using the influence of the nobles backing his cause.

Alex's classmates heard the chubby boy's words, and some of them looked at Alex in disdain.

Of course, there were others who cast him worried looks—like Fran, who had gained a lot of academy points thanks to the young man's advice.

Alex waved at Fran, reassuring her that she didn't need to worry about him.

After seeing that his target didn't seem troubled by his taunts, Bertram decided to continue with his snide remarks, which prompted Chuck to light a spark on his bum, making the former cry out in pain.

Chuck didn't have many friends at the academy, and the first one he made was Alex. So, no matter how much Alex insisted otherwise, he had long decided that the silver-haired young man was his best friend.

As far as Chuck was concerned, it didn't matter what Alex thought. He was his best friend. Period!

"Alex, just say the word, and I'll roast that pig," Chuck said in a serious tone.

"And be punished for it?" Alex shook his head. "Don't you see? That is what he wants to happen. Just let him be."

"But if he keeps on talking down on you like this, won't your reputation take a nosedive?" Chuck asked. "If that happens, the reputation of our club will also go down. After all, you are the president."

"Don't worry. I already have a plan," Alex replied.

Yesterday, he didn't do any challenges because he wanted Dim Dim to play and enjoy the challenges.

But this time, he planned to break some records, and he would do it right after class.

A few hours later...

Alex and Dim ate together with their club members in the cafeteria during lunch.

There, more people like Bertram started to talk smack about the handsome young man, making his club members, with the exception of Renard, look at Bertram and his friends with disdain.

"You know, they are right," commented Renard, as if wishing to fan the flames more. "If our leader can't break any records, wouldn't that make people look down on us?"

"Alex doesn't need to break any records," Lavinia replied. "He just needs to direct us as the president of our club."

Renard shrugged, no longer adding more fuel to the flames.

He was still holding a grudge against Alex for what happened during the second trial and hadn't been able to let it go.

"Don't be impatient, Renard," Alex stated. "Don't you know how secret weapons work? For the best results, you only use it when your enemy least expects it. And the better you time it, the more your enemy will regret their decisions."

The young man then pointed at himself. "I'm the secret weapon of our club. The more people think I'm ordinary, the more they will lower their guard around me. But since you are itching to see me beat some records, how about we make a bet? If I break a record, how about you call me Master Alex from now on?"

"Dream on." Renard scoffed.

As much as he looked down on Alex, Renard would not dare to make a bet with him. For some reason, he believed Alex always had a way out of anything. That said, he had no plans to fall for his bet.

After eating lunch, Alex bid everyone goodbye and headed to one of the training rooms of the academy.

“Dim Dim?”

“You’re asking what challenge I will do today?”

“Dim!”

“Of course, I will take the challenge that will showcase my strength. We are going to the seventh training room. That’s the place where musicians and other performers train. I will go and challenge their singing rankings!”

When Dim Dim heard that young man’s declaration, it flinched so hard that it almost fell off from the young man’s head.

Knowing that things would definitely go out of hand, the Dim Sum God decided to preserve its sanity.

Dim Dim jumped off Alex’s head and landed a few meters away from him.

“Um, what’s wrong, Dim Dim?” Alex asked.

“Dim Dim!”

“Oh, you plan to play with Daisy and the other farm beasts?”

“Dim!”

“Okay. Have fun.”

After making an excuse, the Dim Sum God escaped so fast that Alex could’ve sworn he saw trails of dust in its wake.

The young man was genuinely happy because Dim Dim and Fran’s farm monsters were getting along.

It also gave him an excuse to visit the farm, and if he timed it right, he might get invited to eat some snacks or an early dinner later on.

“Okay, let’s do this,” Alex muttered as he entered the seventh training room, which would soon make the judges of the singing challenge wish that they could murder a student legally in broad daylight.

Chapter 204: The New Singing King! [Part 1]

After entering the Seventh Training Room, Alex immediately skimmed through the list of challenges and shortlisted which challenges he thought would fit him perfectly.

“Singing King and Queen Challenge, Harmony Trial, Pitch Perfect, Battle Choir, Muse’s Call, Lament of Echoes,” Alex muttered. “Yep. These challenges will do.”

Without any hesitation, Alex entered and activated the Ranked Challenge.

When he was asked to select a challenge, he chose the most obvious choice.

“Singing King and Queen Challenge, please!” Alex, who had been a self-proclaimed karaoke king back on Earth, wished to attempt the challenge that was, in his not-so-humble opinion, made for him.

He already checked who the current singing Queen was, and it was none other than Astrea, who had accidentally pushed him in two different portals during the class allocation trials.

As soon as he picked the challenge, he found himself standing on a stage, as if he were going to perform to thousands of people.

A moment later, five fairies appeared and sat at the judges' table.

"We will be grading your singing talent, human," a fairy with red hair said with a smile. "So make sure that you give us the best song!"

"All five of us will be judging your voice, and your score depends on how well you do," a fairy with orange hair commented.

"The maximum number of points that each of us can give you is 20 points," a fairy with blonde hair declared. "However, we have very strict requirements. Even the previous singing King only managed to get a score of 92 points from us!"

"So, do you have what it takes to be the next singing king?" A green-haired fairy smirked.

"Show us what you're capable of, human!" The last judge was a blue-haired fairy with glasses. She was busy filing her nails as if she wasn't taking this challenge seriously. "All you need to do is touch that crystal in front of you and think of the song that you want to sing. It will automatically play the instrumental for that song."

Alex had seen this orb before, so he knew exactly what to do.

He held it in his hands and thought of a song he liked. Instantly, the orb floated up, casting a gentle light over him.

As the melody filled the air, Alex began to sing right on cue.

"I don't want another pretty face

I don't want just anyone to hold

I don't want my love to go to waste

I want you and your beautiful soul~”

When Alex had just sung the first line, the five fairies reacted strongly at the same time. They had goosebumps, not because the singing was that good but because they felt it was as if someone had aimed an off-key dagger straight at their hearts.

The lyrics of the young man’s song were really perfect. While they didn’t know if he wanted them, he had definitely come for their souls!

They were veterans of bad auditions—survivors of screechers, warblers, and the dreaded genre abominations.

But this?

This was on a different level.

The moment Alex got into his rhythm—if it could even be called that—an apocalyptic resonance echoed throughout the stage.

It must be hard to imagine, but it could be explained in simpler terms. Imagine if a banshee, a broken trumpet, and a dying goose merged into one cursed entity and used the young man’s throat as their vessel.

Exactly.

“AAAAAARGHHHH!” the winged redhead shrieked, diving under the judges’ table as if under aerial bombardment. “THE CURSED NOTE! HE HAS UNLEASHED THE CURSED NOTE!”

“My ears! MY PRECIOUS EARS!” the orange-haired fairy screamed, conjuring a pair of emergency earmuffs woven from cloud silk.

“Huh?! Are you—ARE YOU TRYING TO WAKE THE DEAD UP?!” yelled the blonde fairy, who was furiously scribbling something on a scroll.

The distress rendered her handwriting barely legible, but if you covered your ears and squinted you could make out something that probably read “My Last Will and Testament.”

Meanwhile, the green-haired fairy had gone fully limp in her chair, eyes staring blankly into the abyss. “Mom...? Is that you waving at me from the riverbank? I still can’t go there now? But why? I miss you...”

Finally, the bespectacled fairy with blue hair was trembling. Her nail file was bent into an S-shape. “Who... Who am I? Where am I? What is this place?!”

The five fairies thought that things couldn’t get any worse than this.

They were wrong. They were very wrong.

When Alex got to the chorus, they felt as if they were witnessing the end of the world. But they weren’t exactly attentive witnesses either, because they were busy foaming at the mouth.

A few minutes later...

“Phew.” Alex sighed after finishing his rendition of the song, Beautiful Soul, which was once a popular song back on Earth.

He was all smiles, satisfied with his performance. It seemed that his singing today was much better than before.

But remembering that he wasn’t the judge, he glanced at the judges’ table. There, he saw the five fairies with foam coming out of their mouths.

Confused, the young man blinked once, then twice, before calling out to them.

“Um, excuse me, ladies,” Alex shouted. “I’m done singing. What’s my score?”

At the mention of the word “score,” the five fairy judges slowly emerged from their various states of trauma.

Each one looked at the other, as if trying to understand what had just happened to them.

After confirming that all of them were in similar states—disheveled and somewhat soulless—they confirmed that what was happening wasn’t a dream.

It was a reality they were facing for the first time in their lives.

The five judges didn’t hesitate to input Alex’s score on their judges panel, which was then tallied to show the score the young man wanted to see the most.

The giant scoreboard behind the judges showed a big zero, which meant that Alex wasn’t even able to get a single point from any of them.

The young man stared at the scoreboard for nearly a minute, thinking that there must be some kind of delay. After all, he was so amazing, his score couldn’t possibly be zero.

However, when the number still didn’t change after a couple of seconds, he glanced at the fairies, who were all glaring at him.

“Um, my score, please?” Alex asked politely.

“That’s your score!” the red-haired fairy shouted. “Zero! Your score is zero! Halfway through your chorus, the stage tried to eject you from this domain, but your singing was so off-key, it lost the will to fight back!”

The orange-haired fairy took out some pills from her magical pouch and, with shaky hands, stuffed them quickly into her mouth, as if it was the only cure for the trauma that she had just endured.

The blonde-haired fairy, on the other hand, looked at Alex with an odd mix of concern and disgust.

"I used to believe that no one was truly tone-deaf," the blonde fairy began softly. "But you... you sang in a frequency only suffering understands. My ancestors just disinherited me in a dream. They said, and I quote, 'You let that into your ears?'"

"...I have reviewed over eight thousand vocal performances," the green-haired fairy said monotonously, clearly no longer able to vary her tone and pitch. "This is the first time I need a Cleric. I have been cursed. I am certain. A singing curse. I now fear lullabies. Babies crying sound better than you."

"I just want to clarify something..." the blue-haired fairy said, blinking. "That wasn't a song, right? That was a summoning ritual, wasn't it? Because halfway through, I thought I heard the cries of ten thousand goose honking in the afterlife, demanding that you join them on the other side."

Alex blinked because the fairies' critiques made him think that they weren't satisfied with his first song.

But that was fine.

It was just a warm up anyway!

"Very well. I'm done with my warm up!" Alex declared as he picked up the orb again.

The five fairies visibly flinched as his hand touched the orb, their expressions twisting in horror.

It felt like being stabbed by invisible swords of emotional damage as they watched, helpless, while the orb slowly floated upward, indicating that the young man had signed up to sing yet another song.

"S-Stop! Let's talk this one out!"

"Oh my God! That was just a warm up?! Sisters, are we about to die?"

“He’s doing another one?! HE’S DOING ANOTHER ONE?! MOM, SAVE MEEEEEE!”

The green-haired fairy’s body just convulsed as if she had a stroke.

“Dear mother of...”

The pleas and reactions of the fairies were drowned out by Alex’s singing voice.

The heavens wept.

Thunder and lightning echoed in the domain, as if finding Alex’s song to their liking.

The fairies screamed...

And then...

Only silence remained.

Chapter 205: The New Singing King! [Part 2]

Alex blankly looked at the five fairies who had lost consciousness.

Their bodies twitched from time to time as if they had been electrocuted.

The young man wasn’t sure if they were still alive, so he wanted to check their condition. Unfortunately, an invisible barrier blocked him from leaving the stage, so all he could do was look at them and wait.

A moment later, five beams of light descended on the fairies, which allowed them to regain their consciousness.

It was an emergency feature of the domain, just in case the Fairies were overwhelmed with emotions.

When their gazes landed on Alex, all five of them recoiled as if looking at him was enough to worsen their PTSD.

"I'm glad you all regained your consciousness," Alex said with a smile. "Well, then. What's my score? I'm sure I got a higher score than my first one, right?"

The five ladies glanced at each other before huddling together for an important discussion.

"Sisters, I know this is against our rules, but I'm afraid that if we don't give him a decent score, he will sing again," the red fairy said solemnly.

"I'll be honest, I don't think I can survive another song from this human," the orange-haired fairy said bitterly. "Just give him a decent score and send him away."

The three other fairies nodded in agreement and pressed on their panels to give Alex a score.

This time the score wasn't zero but 85.

Although it wasn't much, this put Alex in the top 100 of the Rankings, which the fairies hoped was enough to satisfy the young man's ego.

However, after seeing the score, Alex sighed before reaching out to grab the floating orb for a third time.

Seeing his action, the red-haired fairy teleported and snatched the orb before the young man could even grab it.

"W-Wait!" the red-haired fairy shouted almost hysterically. "What's wrong? You already got a decent score! You don't need to sing anymore!"

“S-She’s right, you know?!” The orange-haired fairy also flew toward Alex, trying to convince him not to commit mass murder. “You are a great singer, but well... our standards are just really high.”

“Is it academy points that you want?!” the blonde-haired fairy asked, her voice laced with desperation. “We’ll give it to you! The first place’s reward is five thousand points, right? We’ll give you ten thousand!”

The last thing she wanted was to hear Alex sing a third song. If he insisted on trying again, she believed that song would also be the last song she would hear in her life. Actually, it might just become the last thing she would ever hear.

Alex was very tempted since ten thousand academy points was a lot of points.

But after seeing that Astrea was the reigning Singing Queen, he had decided that he should put more effort and become the singing King to match his Queen.

“I’m sorry, ladies,” Alex replied. “But I’ve made up my mind. My goal is to become the Singing King. It’s not just about the academy points—I believe that spot is meant for me.”

After the fairies heard the young man’s answer, all of them burst into tears and sobbed hysterically.

“Why do you—hic—hate us—hic—so much?” the red-fairy asked, crying so bitterly she could not stop hiccuping. “What did we ever do to you?”

“I’m still so young,” the orange-haired fairy whimpered as her tears fell like rain. “I don’t want to die.”

“So this is it.” The blonde fairy covered her face with both her hands. “This is how the world ends... Not with a bang, but with a song.”

“Do you know how much therapy costs these days?” The green fairy sobbed. “I might need to take a loan that I cannot pay back.”

The blue-haired fairy grabbed her sister's hands. "If we don't make it out of this... just know that I'm glad to have known you girls. Also, you don't have to worry about repaying loans if you're dead."

The five fairies hugged each other, as if they were about to take their final curtain call and retire together.

They then looked at Alex with the bravery of soldiers confronting certain death.

Perhaps sensing their determination, Alex nodded and reached out to grab the floating orb that had returned to the stage.

But just as he was about to grab it, all five fairies moved at the same time and pulled it away from his hands.

"I tried, but I can't do it!" the red-haired fairy said.

"Since it has come to this, let's do it!" the orange-haired fairy stated.

"When given the option to live or die, we should always choose the option for survival," the blonde-haired fairy declared. "Our duty mustn't end!"

"One plus one equals two." The green-haired fairy gritted her teeth. "But when Alex sings, one plus one equals zero. Since we cannot use logic and common sense in this matter, let's just throw them away."

The blue-haired fairy looked at her sisters, who all looked back at her with determination written all over their faces.

"Anyone here who objects to letting others handle the problem, raise their right hands," the blue-haired fairy instructed with steely composure.

None of the fairies raised their hands, which meant that they had chosen to push the problem to other people!

They were done!

This was no longer their problem!

The five fairies then glanced at Alex's direction and smiled at him.

"Congratulations, Alex!" the red-haired fairy clapped and confetti rained down from the ceiling. "You are now the Singing King!"

Magical cheers and music of congratulations rang inside the domain, making Alex feel as if his talent was finally recognized.

All the fairies praised him for his talent and even told him that he should just... hide it if possible.

However, the blue-haired fairy thought of an idea.

"Alex, do you plan to take the other challenges as well?" the blue-haired fairy asked, which made the other fairies look at her as if she had really gone insane due to the atrocious singing they had the misfortune of hearing.

"Yes, I do," Alex replied.

The smile of the blue-haired fairy widened as if she had just heard the thing she wanted to hear the most.

The four fairies then seized their sister and flew backstage to ask her if a donkey made of Alex's out-of-tune notes had kicked her in the head. They simply couldn't fathom what prompted her to ask such a thing.

"Sister, let me ask you this: Why should we be the only ones who have to suffer? Do you remember what that b*tch from the Battle Choir said to us a few days ago? She said that we're just wannabe judges," the blue-haired fairy calmly explained her rationale.

The four frowned, but the blue-haired fairy wasn't done just yet.

"Just listen," the blue-haired fairy said in a devilish tone. "Don't you want to see how she will react after hearing Alex's singing?"

One by one, the other four fairies started to smirk evilly.

Seeing that her sisters had been "enlightened" by her reasoning, the blue-haired fairy continued.

"But why stop there?" The blue-haired fairy snickered. "Won't it be best if we let others experience this as well?"

"You're right, sister," the red-haired fairy replied. "Sharing is caring, right?"

"Don't forget to record everything, okay?" The orange-haired fairy giggled. "I want to watch everyone suffer while I eat my snacks."

"Right." The blonde-haired fairy nodded. "I've never felt this excited since I heard Astrea's singing voice. This is going to be fun!"

"But what if they all break after hearing Alex's song?" the green-haired fairy asked innocently.

The other four fairies turned silent for a brief moment before chuckling with gleeful wickedness at the same time.

""Then let them break.""

The five fairies then exchanged looks and nodded their heads together.

A minute later, they emerged from backstage, wearing the brightest smiles they had ever mustered in their lives, each one shining with the light of a thousand lies.

“Alex!” the red-haired fairy exclaimed sweetly. “We have a proposal for you!”

“A proposal?” Alex tilted his head. “Is it another title? Maybe a trophy?”

“Oh, much better!” The orange-haired fairy giggled. “We’d like to sponsor you.”

Alex blinked. “Sponsor?”

“Yes,” the blonde-haired fairy chimed in. “You see, most participants take one challenge and leave. But you... you are truly a once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon. We think your voice needs to be heard more ears—I mean, um, your voice needs to be appreciated by more audiences.”

The green-haired fairy floated beside him with sparkling eyes. “Won’t it be amazing to conquer all the singing-themed challenges in the Seventh Training Room? You will be... a legend.”

“And legends,” the blue-haired fairy added with an impish glint behind her glasses, “must be remembered.”

Alex paused, a bit overwhelmed by their sudden enthusiasm. “So... you want me to take on all the other singing challenges?”

“Yes!” the five fairies replied in perfect harmony for the first time in their lives. ‘And make everyone go to therapy together!’

Alex grinned because he was now finding the five fairies really cute.

“So your next stop should be the Battle Choir Challenge!” the blue-haired fairy said before adjusting her glasses in a half-hearted attempt to hide the sadism gleaming in her eyes. “Knock her out, okay? Like literally knock her out!”

“You got it!” Alex gave the five fairies a thumbs-up.

Mere seconds later, an announcement reverberated in the Seventh Training Room, announcing that a new Singing King had been crowned, making the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Years present wonder who this great singer was.

Chapter 206: One-Man Battle Choir! [Part 1]

The next challenge Alex selected was Battle Choir.

Battle Choir was a bit different from the Singing King and Queen Challenge, where the challenger technically only needed to sing and move the judges.

In this challenge, the participant would be sent to an ancient amphitheatre where a single voice could shape the battlefield.

The objective of this challenge was to overwhelm a magical enemy choir using vocal resonance, rhythm control, and emotional projection.

In short, one’s singing voice could manifest anything.

A weapon, a monster, or even tools that could assist the challengers in fighting an entire Phantom Choir.

A magical ensemble formed of echoes, regrets, and spectral voices from fallen singers.

Alex must become a one-man choir, matching and overpowering the spectral group in both strength and harmony.

He must fight his enemies using purely vocal prowess by singing a song.

This challenge wasn't just about power.

It was about emotional clarity, vocal control, and defiant individuality that could overcome all odds.

A battle of wills, a battle of songs—it was the Battle Choir Challenge!

"It's been a year since someone had last dared to challenge the Battle Choir," a fairy with purple hair said smilingly. "Human, I will say this now: Countless students have suffered trauma and injuries after taking this challenge in the past.

"Some took years to recover, but others were scarred for life. If you are just doing this for fun, I advise you to take a step back and leave this place. This is not a challenge that just anyone can attempt without the determination to win."

Alex looked at the arrogant fairy and remembered what the five fairy judges of Singing King and Queen had told him before he took the challenge.

"The name of that b*tch—errr, judge is Melodina Ariawing," the red-haired fairy named Doh stated. "She is the most arrogant among the fairies because no one has won against her Battle Choir for the past decade."

"That's right!" Reh, the orange-haired fairy commented. "But if it's you, she and her Phantom Choir won't stand a chance!"

"However, you should also be careful," the blonde-haired fairy, Mii, warned. "We already know your singing prowess, and we believe in you, but she's no pushover either. You should go all out from the start to make sure she won't stand a chance."

"Unlike Singing King and Queen, Battle Choir doesn't care whether you are tone deaf or summoning the dead," the green-haired fairy, Fah, added with a smirk. "The more powerful the person's singing voice and willpower, the more powerful your manifestations will be."

“We will be rooting and cheering for you,” the blue-haired fairy, Sue, promised as she patted Alex’s cheeks. “Remember. You don’t need to hold back. Beat her in her own game!”

This brief recollection allowed Alex to focus once more on the purple-haired fairy, Melodina, who was clearly looking down on him.

“Start the challenge already,” Alex said. “I want to see just how strong your Battle Choir is.”

“Haha... famous last words,” Melodina sneered. “Do not forget, human, that I have already given you a warning.”

Once she was done talking, the fairy tossed an orb to Alex with a flick of her wrist. Like before, this orb could pull any song from his memory and play its instrumental.

“Well, then. Are you ready?” Melodina raised her hand and summoned a choir of musicians who weren’t able to let go of their regrets of failing in their craft.

They wanted nothing more than to destroy other talents and make people realize that all of them were failures!

That was the reason why the Battle Choir was the most dreaded challenge in the Seventh Training Room.

For some, the challenge left such a deep scar that they abandoned music so completely that they never again picked up an instrument or sang a single note.

Alex and the Phantom Choir sized each other up. The tension in the air was so thick and heavy it felt like tropical humidity.

The five fairies watched the battle through a magical crystal ball, their eyes filled with worry. What if they had accidentally sent the young man to his demise because of an impulse? Wouldn’t they have to bear the guilt for the rest of their lives?

Though, if the young man did end up too traumatized to ever touch music again... that didn't sound bad at all. They'd have a merit equivalent to saving the world!

"Will Alex really be fine?" Doh asked her sisters.

"Trust him," Reh answered. "Mii, are you sure that the magic crystals are recording?"

"They are." Mii nodded. "All we need is to support him."

"Always be ready. As soon as that b*tch makes an ugly face, we must zoom in!" Sue looked excited.

Fah looked at the crystal ball as if their lives depended on it.

All the fairies kept their eyes peeled. When Alex grabbed the orb and thought of the song that he had chosen for the Battle Choir, the fairies instinctively sat a little straighter.

After copying the song in the young man's mind, the orb rose up and shone faintly.

An upbeat and lively song started to play, prompting the Phantom Choir to also start playing their melody.

Melodina looked down on Alex haughtily as she hovered above her Phantom Choir. She was looking forward to a one-sided slaughter, which she had continuously refined over many years.

A devastating melody erupted from the Phantom Choir and manifested countless swords that were sent flying straight for Alex.

This time, Alex didn't only plan to sing.

He planned to sing and dance as well!

As the upbeat music played in the background, the young man sang and danced the opening lyrics of the famous song called Soda Pop by the Saj* Boys.

“Hey, Hey

Hey, Hey Hey!”

“Don’t want you, need you

Yeah, I need you to fill me up

Got a feeling that, oh, yeah (Yeah)”

“You could be everything that

That I need (Need), taste so sweet (Sweet)

Every sip makes me want more, yeah!”

Melodina, who was smiling earlier, flinched so hard it was as if she had been punched by an invisible fist at point-blank range. And that fist belonged to a seasoned martial artist who was also invisible.

Alex’s singing voice, which was similar to the merging of a banshee’s cry, a broken trumpet, and the honk of a goose dying with regrets created a powerful shockwave that repelled all the magical swords that the Phantom Choir had created.

“Did you see that?!” Doh laughed. “Did you see how hard that b*tch flinched?”

Roh chuckled. “Is it just me or does Alex’s singing voice sound not so bad right now?”

"It's still bad," Mii replied with a smile. "But seeing the horror on Melodina's face offsets it perfectly! As long as I can see that face, it's worth listening to this sh*t!"

"Hahaha!" Fah cackled. "Go Alex! Go Alex! Go Alex!"

"It's payback time, b*tch!" Sue gave Melodina the middle finger.

The five fairies didn't know why, but they felt happy at the sight of others suffering!

Alex's song didn't sound so terrible anymore! In fact, it felt like the song of an angel who was sprinting to the restroom in order to take a dump!

"You bastard, are you joking with me?!" Melodina roared in anger.

Her Phantom Choir was performing a classic, which was called the Ride of the Valkyries.

The opening melodies manifested countless swords, which was usually enough to end the battle right away.

But not only did Alex's singing created a shockwave that repelled all the swords, she and her Phantom Choir also received emotional damage from that damnable singing voice!

Alex's opener not only put a stop to the Phantom Choir's momentum, it also made them stop playing for a brief moment as they stared, in utter disbelief and bewilderment, at the young man who was dancing and moving his shoulders like a pro.

"What are you all looking at?!" Melodina shrieked. "Fight him!"

At her nagging, the Phantom Choir broke out of their daze and continued playing.

This time, winged warriors, similar to war angels, appeared and dived in, wanting to annihilate the hateful young man whom they had deemed as their enemy.

The Phantom Choir had finally summoned the Valkyries to battle, and they all flew at Alex like harpies about to hack him to pieces.

But Alex wasn't fazed. Oh, no, he wasn't fazed at all.

He was simply enjoying his performance. He then started on the chorus of the song like it was the most normal thing in the world to do.

"You're all I can think of.

Every drop I drink up.

You're my soda pop

My little soda pop~"

"Cool me down, you're so hot

Pour me up, I won't stop

You're my soda pop

My little soda pop!"

Answering his will, white clouds rose up behind Alex, forming a formidable army.

The hundreds of Valkyries who were about to hack the tone-deaf young man to mere bits froze mid-air as they stared in horror at the creatures that the young man had summoned.

Countless white geese appeared behind Alex and looked at the Valkyries with naked contempt.

The biggest of them all honked once, sending his message to the Valkyries.

“So all of you chose death.”

That was all the goose said before flapping its wings to lead its comrades to battle.

The Valkyries were proud and powerful warriors.

But seeing their opponents, they felt as if they were experiencing Ragnarok all over again.

“Charge, sisters!”

“For Asgard!”

The Valkyries regained their fighting spirit and clashed with the geese that numbered in the tens of thousands, blocking up the light of the sun and casting a dark shadow in the Phantom Choir’s and Melodina’s hearts.

The sky darkened under a storm of honks.

Feathers flew like shrapnel.

And in that moment, the Valkyries realized the horrifying truth...

It was Ragnarok all over again.

Chapter 207: One-Man Battle Choir! [Part 2]

An epic battle was fought above the skies of the amphitheater.

A war so overwhelming, even the Gods would've felt defeated before the battle began.

The Geese Apocalypse honked, bit, and slapped the Valkyries senseless until they all fell inelegantly from the sky like counterfeit shooting stars.

A few of these honking abominations even managed to breach the Valkyries' last defensive lines and charge at the Phantom Choir.

The largest of them locked onto Melodina, making the purple-haired fairy yelp in fear and surprise.

But it wasn't until the goose smacked her on the bum and sent her spiraling toward the amphitheater floor that a truly blood-curdling scream escaped from her lips.

At that moment, the loud laughter of the five fairies echoed through the Seventh Training Room, making the students pause their training and glance around in confusion.

"Hahahaha! I can't stop laughing. She got geese-slapped!" Doh held her belly as she guffawed.

"I'm going to be rich!" Reh said. "I'm going to sell this video to the other fairies who hate Melodina!"

"Karma is a b*tch, yoh~" Mii giggled. "Making Alex the Singing King is worth it. We are witnessing history in the making, sisters. A legend is about to be born!"

"Omo, you're right, sis," Fah commented. "I feel like I don't need therapy anymore. Watching this is so soothing, it cured everything I didn't even know was wrong with me. I probably wouldn't need therapy for the next hundred years."

"This time, it will be Melodina who needs some therapy," Sue chuckled like a witch. "This is what a real Battle Choir is like!"

“Alex really brought the apocalypse.” Doh sighed after laughing so much. “To think that he would weaponize geese in a Battle Choir? Who in their right mind would do that?”

“Our boy does.” Sue grinned. “He may sing like a garbage disposal eating rocks... but damn it, that’s our King!”

The other fairies looked at her and began cackling like witches as well, fully enjoying Alex’s singing voice, which they now gave a perfect score of 100 points!

While the five fairies were enjoying the suffering of others, Melodina found herself surrounded by geese, all of which were regarding her like she was half-dried dog excrement that had the audacity to be stuck to the bottom of their webbed feet.

The biggest of them honked loudly, as if asking Melodina for her last words.

“How can this happen?” Melodina wept bitterly. “This is not what I signed up for.”

She could still accept a loss if it had been a real Battle Choir against someone singing a song truly worthy of the theme.

A battle of wits, a battle of wills, a battle of songs!

But this wasn’t a battle song.

No.

The young man wasn’t even singing a song!

It was pure noise!

NOISE!

NOISE POLLUTION!

POLLUTION!

Melodina couldn't accept such an outcome.

No. She refused to accept it!

She looked out over the battlefield and watched, helpless, as her Valkyries were reduced to particles of light, their dignity and valor trampled under the relentless charge of the goose army.

Nearby, her Phantom Choir screamed in fear, desperation, and powerlessness as the furious geese descended upon them without mercy.

It was at that moment when Alex's song finally came to an end, putting a fitting conclusion to the Battle Choir, which would be remembered for many years to come.

Technically, he didn't break any rules.

In fact, his win in the Battle Choir was more legit than his win in the Singing King and Queen challenge.

No one, not even the Headmaster, could find fault because this was indeed the essence of the Battle Choir.

"I refuse to accept this!" Melodina shouted. "I want a rematch!"

She thought that Alex would deny her, but the young man just smiled and said, "Sure."

Melodina looked at the handsome young man, who casually flipped his hair as if he were in a heavy-handed shampoo commercial.

For a brief moment, she thought that she was the one in the wrong and truly didn't understand that any means that could be used to win a war must be used.

This wasn't just a normal singing battle anymore.

It was a battle where someone's pride was on the line.

The geese army slowly faded away, but before they did, Alex gave them all a respectful bow.

All the geese then saluted Alex, as if telling him that they would fight for him anytime as long as they heard his tone-deaf summons.

The members of the Phantom Choir gripped their instruments as if they were weapons, feeling humiliated by their defeat.

They had once been proud musicians too.

Masters of their craft who had ultimately fallen to jealousy as they envied the talent of others who far surpassed their own.

This had transformed them into evil spirits who wished nothing more than to destroy talented individuals and make them unable to become the stars that would reign over the world.

"Let's start," Melodina declared, pointing at Alex with determination.

"I'm ready when you are," Alex said, holding the orb in his hand.

For the finale, he chose the song called "Endless Leveling Online".

Yes. It was none other than the theme song of the game, which Alex loved very much.

It was a song that Astrea sang during the Cultural Festival Arc.

“Battle Start!”

Melodina shouted. This time, she sang alongside her Battle Choir.

The title of her song was Unstoppable, and it reminded Alex of the popular song sung by the artist named Sia back on Earth.

Radiant light descended upon Melodina.

Her size increased to that of a human woman. Not only was she bigger, she was also arrayed in battle armor.

It had been many years since she had personally fought against challengers.

The Phantom Choir poured their souls into their instruments, playing a powerful song that transformed the fairy into a warrior who could cut down even Demigods.

Behind her, other warrior fairies appeared, ready to fight for their honor and pride.

Melodina didn’t attack Alex right away. Since she was the Challenger this time around, she allowed the young man to also summon his fighters.

Alex smiled faintly as he summoned a drum set used by drummers in bands back on Earth.

This time, he wouldn’t be singing a song but playing an instrument.

Rainbow clouds gathered behind him, forming a person.

It was none other than Astrea Nocturne herself.

She was the Singing Queen of Frieden Academy, as well as the singer who sang the theme song of Endless Leveling Online.

Alex's drums thundered as his Queen started to sing.

— — —

Astrea's angelic voice spread in the surroundings, manifesting the power of the Arcanas, who were the deities of the world.

"In the Fool's first step, the journey calls,

A path unwritten, fate enthralls.

The Magician whispers, 'Shape your way,'

With will and wonder, night turns to day."

"The High Priestess holds the key,

Secrets hidden in mystery.

The Empress grows the world anew,

While the Emperor builds a throne so true.”

The Fool, the Magician, the High Priestess, the Empress, and the Emperor appeared in front of Alex and charged at Melodina and her Fairy Warriors.

They clashed across the skies of the amphitheater and fought tooth and nail with each other.

At first, Melodina assumed she could easily defeat the Fool. After all, he carried nothing but a wooden staff and wore the plain clothes of a common traveler.

But no matter how many times they clashed, the staff didn’t break. Instead, it pushed her back with surprising force.

Then, the chorus of both songs were played, drastically increasing the combat prowess of each participant.

Astrea continued to sing with passion, and soon, the chorus of the song and Alex’s drumming reverberated through the surroundings.

“Endless leveling, rise and fight,

Through the Arcana, claim the light.

Fate’s a game, a deck in play,

Through the cards, We find our way~”

But of course, it didn’t end there. As Astrea continued to sing, more powerful deities appeared and clashed with the Fairy Warriors, pushing them back with each clash.

“Justice waits, her scales are clear,

The Hanged Man sees, but holds no fear.

Death's not the end, just a door swung wide,

A Rebirth forged in stars' divide."

"Temperance sings in balance true,

While the Devil tempts with shadows new.

The Tower falls, the past erased,

And from the rubble, stars are traced."

The Major Arcanas of the Tarot Cards came to light, fighting alongside Alex and Astrea, whose song had manifested a portion of their powers.

The five fairies, who were watching the battle, no longer laughed.

They were already familiar with Astrea, but this song shook their very core.

"Hey, aren't those... the Deities of this world?" Doh asked, looking at the summoned beings who were now fighting against Melodina.

"Yes," Reh replied in a solemn tone. "This song is able to materialize their divine forms."

"... Just how?" Mii's eyes widened in shock. "Is this even possible?"

Fah was speechless because she thought that she was actually looking at the Deities of their world, which only a handful of mortals were able to meet.

However, she was also wondering if they were real or not.

Sue was doing her best to stay calm.

After meeting Alex, she felt like a frog at the bottom of a well, seeing the vast sky for the first time.

None of them—including Melodina, who realized who she was fighting against—had expected that the young man would be able to call forth such divine personages to fight for him.

As the last verse of the theme song of Endless Leveling Online started, Melodina was struck and sent flying toward the floor.

However, her Phantom Choir stopped playing and caught her, not wanting the fairy to get hurt any longer.

After catching the fairy, they looked at Astrea Nocturne, who finished singing the final chorus, making them understand that they had lost this battle before it even began.

“Endless leveling, rise and fight,

Through the Arcana, claim the light.

One more battle, one more day,

Through the cards, we find our way...”

The melody faded, and the Major Arcanas disappeared one by one.

However, before doing so, they gave Alex a glance, as if remembering the face of the human who had called upon a sliver of their power and manifested their divine presence for a mere challenge.

Chapter 208: Did The Challenge Suffer A System Error?

"I lost," Melodina muttered, her voice barely audible.

She had prided herself on being the undefeated Master of the Battle Choir Challenge for several years.

But now that she had faced Alex, she learned one painful lesson... In the face of absolute tone deafness and zero self-awareness, all songs, voices, and techniques—no matter how heavenly—were meaningless!

At least, that had been her belief until she personally fought him in round two.

Alex had neither sung nor danced at that time. All he had done was beat the drums, supporting his Queen as she sang the theme song for Endless Leveling Online.

Surprisingly, the purple-haired fairy didn't feel too dejected after losing to the young man for a second time.

Why? Because she had felt the true essence of the Battle Choir during the second battle.

Also, it had been an honor to face the Deities of the World, who represented the twenty-two Major Arcanas of the Tarot Cards.

Despite her loss, it was still a battle she could proudly mention to anyone. After all, aside from her, was there any other fairy who had received the honor of fighting tooth and nail against the Deities of their world?

Even the five fairies couldn't help but look at Melodina with pride. Although they didn't get along, she was still a Fairy who represented their race in that epic battle.

Melodina then sensed a presence standing in front of her, making her look up.

The young man, who had come to challenge her, knelt and offered his hand for a handshake.

“Thank you,” Alex said. “This is the first time I’ve fought a battle like this, and I can say with utmost certainty that it is something I won’t forget in my lifetime.

“Some battles are won with strength. Others, with sound. But the best ones? They’re won with spirit. You had that in every note.

“Frankly, I believe the world needs more battles like that. Where both sides walk away stronger, prouder, and louder. You have made that possible. This is one hell of a Battle Choir.”

Melodina felt her eyes moisten, but instead of lowering her head like a defeated warrior, she smiled and reached out to shake Alex’s hand as her tears started to stream down her face.

The Phantom Choir looked at their Mistress and clapped happily because they, too, felt that it was an honor to have fought alongside her.

“Thank you, too,” Melodina replied. “I never felt so alive in my life until that battle. It was... something I will remember till the end of days.”

Suddenly, five colorful pillars descended on the amphitheater.

Doh, Reh, Mii, Fah, and Sue appeared and congratulated Alex and Melodina for an amazing battle.

“As expected of our Singing King!” Doh lightly patted Alex’s shoulder. “I believed you could do it from the start.”

“Melodina, I don’t like you,” Sue stated. “We sent this young man here on purpose to put you in your place. And frankly, we enjoyed the first half very much. Your miserable look was very entertaining.”

The blue-haired fairy then fixed her glasses using her middle finger before continuing her speech.

“But in the second half, you didn’t just fight for yourself, Melodina. You sang for your kind. And every note echoed with the pride of the Fairies. That battle was more than music. You made history.”

Mii nodded. “Indeed. We may have our differences in that we are not insufferable b*tches like you, but I am glad to have witnessed your battle. It was so legendary, it might not happen again in the future.”

“A battle against the Deities of the world, and a Fairy fought until the end!” Fah clapped. “Don’t worry! We recorded it! All the Fairies in the world deserve to know this! They deserve to see this!”

Melodina felt something warm spreading inside her chest.

Just like the five fairies had said, they didn’t really get along. But she had indeed done something that every fairy could be proud of, and it made her very happy.

“You girls, I’m sorry for everything,” Melodina said as she reached out to hug the five fairies, who hugged her back.

Alex looked at this scene with pride as if he had personally mended ties and mediated misunderstandings to make the fairies’ reconciliation possible.

But he didn’t know that while the six fairies were having a group hug, the blue-haired fairy, Sue, whispered something in Melodina’s ear.

“Since Alex is already done with the Battle Choir, do you want to join us and watch him attempt the other Musical Challenges?” Sue asked.

At first, Melodina frowned. After fighting Alex, she had no doubt in her mind that the other fairies who acted as the judges of the other challenges would suffer.

But this frown didn’t last long, quickly replaced by a devilish look.

“Yes,” Melodina replied. “I’ll go with you. I think I might start liking seeing others suffer as well.”

The six fairies smiled diabolically and chuckled at the same time.

They then asked Alex to challenge the other fairies. Unsurprisingly, the young man happily agreed.

But before that, another announcement spread inside the Seventh Training Room.

— — —

[Battle Choir Ranking Challenge]

[First Place: Alex Stratos]

[Affiliation: President of Endless Horizon Club]

[Score: 9,999,999 Points]

— — —

When the students heard and saw the results of the challenge, all of them gasped in shock.

“A-Almost ten million?!” a young lady spluttered. “Is this even possible?!”

“How can someone beat this record?” a young man frowned. “Did the challenge suffer a system error? Is this bugged?”

“Alex Stratos?” a pretty First Year murmured. “Isn’t that the guy who walks around with a little white bun on top of his head?”

Alex was quite popular among the First Years, not only because he was handsome, but because Dim Dim was always with him.

[E/N: In the face of absolute cuteness, handsomeness isn’t even worth mentioning.]

The little white bun was adorableness personified, and many ladies wished they could squeeze its soft, round cheeks.

Because of this, they became aware of Alex. That said, it didn’t take long for them to realize that the new record holder was the person whose club members were starting to make waves in the different training rooms.

“Singing King and Battle Choir Champion? This guy is insane!”

“Is he really that good? I want to hear him sing once.”

“I mean, if he can become the Singing King and gain such an insane score in Battle Choir, won’t that mean that he has a Godly voice?”

As everyone was starting to talk about Alex, the young man had already proceeded to take his third challenge, which made the six fairies spectating him laugh like little witches who enjoyed the suffering of their own race.

Chapter 209: Challenge’s End

Alex left the training room with a skip in his step because his passion for music had been reignited.

However, all the fairies whom he had faced and defeated gave him the same advice.

“You have amazing talent! You should just keep it hidden! Forever if possible!”

Under the countless gazes that bore into his back, Alex stopped walking, turned around to face them once more, and flipped his hair like a K-pop Idol.

“I am the Club President of Endless Horizon,” Alex declared. “Alex Stratos. I hope that all of you have a wonderful and amazing day.”

After giving everyone a slight bow, he turned around and walked away.

The young man was feeling very smug and was even looking forward to Renard’s reaction after the news of his one-sided victory in the Seventh Training Room reached the Ironheart Dormitory.

“Sometimes, I scare myself when I get serious,” Alex muttered as he headed toward Fran’s farm to look for Dim Dim.

Also, it was almost lunch, and he was very hungry.

If he was lucky, he might once again taste Fran’s cooking.

Her cooking might not be the most delicious in the world, but it was every single dish she cooked was made with great care and used ingredients that she had grown with her own hands. Alex always looked forward to eating her dishes.

Meanwhile, at the Staff Room of Frieden Academy...

The Musical Professor, Ms. Arienna Lyrell, who had also judged Alex’s singing during the class allocation trials, heard the news.

But when her teaching assistant told her that the person who managed to get first place in the challenges went by the name of Alex Stratos, Professor Arienna genuinely believed that she was being pranked.

Alex had left a very deep impression on her, so it was impossible for her not to recognize the name.

“Alex broke all the records of the Seventh Training Room?” Professor Arienna blinked. “He even became the Singing King?”

“Yes, Professor!” The assistant teacher nodded. “Every music student has been talking about it!

“Are you sure that it’s Alex Stratos?” Professor Arienna frowned. “That Alex Stratos, whom we heard sing in the Trial of Music? Is Alex Stratos a common name?”

The assistant teacher hesitated before answering, “I believe that it’s the same person.”

“...” Professor Arienna decided to take a look for herself and immediately left the staff room for the Seventh Training Room.

She was the manager of this training room, so she could access the musical records of the battle.

But when she tried to check them, she couldn’t find any of them.

“Strange...” Professor Arienna muttered. “Why haven’t his challenges been recorded?”

What the professor didn’t know was that all the fairies had erased the evidence of Alex’s singing from the magical database.

If news of his singing came to light, people might start to question if they were even qualified to keep their positions as the judges of the Seventh Training Room.

Aside from the second round of the Battle Choir, all other evidence of Alex’s performance couldn’t be found within the academy’s database.

This was also the only recording that the students could see when they tried to look for the challenges that he participated in.

Everyone already knew who Astrea was, so when they saw Alex summon her, they knew that her voice would already be a winner.

But what took them by surprise was that the song she sang was one they were hearing for the first time.

Also, when they saw the beings that manifested from Astrea's singing, they instinctively felt that they were looking at something divine.

The majority of them even thought that they had seen these beings somewhere before.

Minutes later, it finally hit them.

The Deities of Arcana, whom many people wished to meet but were unable to find, flashed across their minds.

The statues of these mythical beings were scattered all across Arcana.

And the beings fighting Melodina looked exactly like them!

"T-This... is this even possible?" Professor Arienna couldn't help but gasp after seeing this scene.

She then immediately wrote down the lyrics of the song that Astrea was singing, making sure she copied every word down to the last letter.

The Professor then copied the recording onto a magic crystal and left the Seventh Training Room to look for Astrea.

She would ask the young lady to memorize the song and see if she would be able to manifest the same beings when she entered the Battle Choir.

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On Fran's farm...

Dim Dim was currently perched on top of the Doom Cow, Daisy, and chatting with the leader of the Farm Animals.

It was none other than an Eagle Parrot that was nearly three-meters tall.

The name of that Eagle Parrot was Captain, which Fran had bestowed upon it when it had hatched from its egg.

Since then, the Eagle Parrot had been watching over the young Dwarf who had raised it with love and care.

"Your friend is here, Dim Dim," Captain noted when he noticed the young man walking towards them.

The Dim Sum God was chewing on a cookie as it turned around to look at the farm's latest visitor.

"Dim!" Dim Dim waved at Alex, which prompted the latter to wave back at it.

"Dim Dim, you should have been there," Alex said proudly. "I managed to beat all the challenges and got first place?!"

Dim Dim blinked once then twice before eating the rest of the cookie in its hands because it needed time to process what it had just heard.

"Dim Dim!"

The Dim Sum God praised Alex, but deep inside, it was wondering if the two of them needed to leave the academy.

Why?

The little white bun was afraid that the Professors would come looking for Alex to pay for property damage, magical restoration fees, emotional trauma compensation, or whatever absurd charges they might want to file against the young man after reviewing what had happened in the Seventh Training Room.

Suddenly, Fran appeared, carrying a basket of freshly picked cherry tomatoes.

“Alex, Dim Dim, have the two of you eaten lunch yet?” Fran asked. “I’m just about to cook something, so if the two of you are interested, feel free to join me.”

“I haven’t eaten yet,” Alex replied. “Free lunch is always good!”

“The food in the cafeteria is also free,” Fran commented.

“But I prefer eating the food that you make, Fran.” The young man gave the cute dwarf a thumbs-up. “It tastes better because I know that you personally raised them on this farm.”

Fran smiled faintly after hearing Alex’s sincere words. She then looked at the little white bun.

Dim Dim told Fran that it usually only ate cookies, but it would love to eat Fran’s cooking.

Since she had two additional guests to feed, she decided to put more effort in her cooking today.

“Okay, I’ll have it ready in thirty minutes,” Fran said before going to the house to prepare their lunch.

Just as Fran entered the house, the young man sensed a presence behind him and saw Fran’s twin brother, Finn, walking toward the farm, pulling a cart filled with chopped firewood.

"You're here again, Alex?" Finn frowned after seeing the young man who had been loitering on their farm for the past few days.

"I came here to pick up Dim Dim," Alex replied.

"I see." Finn glanced at the little white bun, whom he didn't mind staying in the farm.

As for Alex... the young man was still a stranger in his eyes.

There had been no shortage of humans who were trying to get close to his sister. Some of them might mean well, but there were others who were looking at Fran as if she were some kind of rare animal they were seeing for the first time in their life.

This didn't sit well with Finn, who had been protected by his sister ever since they had left their hometown.

The Dwarf was very tempted to tell Alex that he shouldn't spend so much time at the farm because he could instinctively feel that he was just like the other men who were trying to get into his sister's good books.

But unlike the other guys who visited the farm, Fran actually liked talking to Alex.

Because of this, Finn decided to just observe Alex for now.

'It won't be too late to bury him six feet under if he really does something stupid,' Finn thought before pulling the cart to the shed where they kept their firewood.

Although they could use fire crystals to create fire for cooking and heating, Fran and Finn preferred to use wood because it felt more natural to them.

Alex watched the Dwarf walk past him, knowing exactly what Finn was thinking.

Fran's twin brother was the first obstacle that players had to overcome in order to get Fran's happy ending.

By raising Finn's good impression of him, Alex knew that the Dwarf boy would be more inclined to support him in the future.

Although Alex planned to do that, he didn't want to use the methods that were available in the game.

He wanted Finn to recognize him properly not because he already knew his likes and dislikes. This, after all, was no longer a game.

Alex didn't want to treat relationships as if he was just raising the affection meter of the people around him.

No. He wanted a relationship of mutual respect, which was something he was taking very seriously.

'I guess I will have to approach this differently.' Alex sighed internally. 'But that will have to wait until the first main event of the first arc ends.'

In a month's time, all the First Year Classes would have to participate in an interclass battle royale.

'The demon worshipers will make their move soon,' Alex thought. 'But it's fine. I already have a plan in mind.'

The young man thought about Nessia, who would play an important role in the upcoming battle royale.

If things worked out the way he intended, then the battle royale would be a stage where everyone would truly learn the might of Endless Horizon.

Chapter 210: Someone Trying To Poke The Hornet's Nest

The president of the student council, Theo, looked at the reports that his secretary, Cassandra had prepared.

“Knowing you, I’m sure that all of these are real,” Theo said after putting down the documents in his hands.

“It is real,” Cassandra replied. “The members of Endless Horizon went to the different training rooms and did the challenges there.

“While some of them only managed to get Rank 3 and Rank 2 on some challenges, their President, Alex Stratos, cleared all the challenges of the Seventh Training Room and became its top ranker.”

Cassandra then placed a recording crystal on top of the president’s table.

“With the exception of one video of the Battle Choir challenge, the Fairies have deleted all the logs of Alex Stratos’ other challenges,” Cassandra added.

Theo held the recording crystal and poured his magical power into it.

A moment later, the projection of Alex’s and Melodina’s final battle played. After watching everything, Theo placed the crystal back on top of the table and eyed his secretary.

“This kid is really mysterious,” Theo stated. “No records can be found prior to his arrival at the Floating Islands of Thaloria.”

The president then raised one finger to continue what he was going to say next.

“He became the Oathkeeper of the Clawford Tribe and participated in the Monster Stampede in the Town of Thaloria. After that, he was one of the survivors of the Dungeon Outbreak in the Dungeon of Beginnings.

“He then passed the second trial of the academy and founded his own club, Endless Horizon. I don’t know what this kid is planning. But, I want to know if he is going to be useful to us or not.”

Cassandra arched an eyebrow. “Didn’t the Headmaster say that we should avoid antagonizing them?”

“Cassandra, we are not going to antagonize them,” Theo corrected. “I just want to know if Alex Stratos’ goal is to keep the order of the academy... or break the status quo and bring chaos to the students.”

The president of the student council walked towards the window and placed his hands behind his back as he observed the students walking in the distance.

“I am the current president of the student council and—just like my predecessors—my goal is to ensure that everyone will have a safe and memorable learning experience here in the academy,” Theo declared. “But the more I think of Alex Stratos, the more I think he is someone trying to poke the hornet’s nest.”

Cassandra giggled. “Maybe that is what this academy needs. Everything has been the same for decades. The nobles’ treatment of the commoners and the corruption that is lurking within every room, every hallway, and every place that we cannot see.”

Theo didn’t reply right away. He had thought that Alex’s club would be buried among the countless clubs that failed to leave their mark in history.

But now, Endless Horizon was making history.

Especially Alex whose Battle Choir score was nearly ten million.

A record that was impossible to beat using normal standards.

However, after watching the video, Theo understood why Alex had been given such a score.

It was because he had managed to manifest the forms of the Major Arcanas.

Nobody in this world would be able to easily do such a thing. But he did it.

As to what the consequences of this incident would bring to the young man, even Theo didn’t know.

But one thing was clear.

Everyone was now talking about him as well as the young lady, Astrea, whose song had made the manifestation possible.

“Pay close attention to any news involving Alex Stratos and his club members,” Theo ordered. “Lastly, have the preparations for the Inter-Class Battle Royale been finalized?”

“We need a week to finish making the final draft,” Cassandra answered. “It has to receive the approval of the Headmaster as well as that of Professor Gareth, who is in charge of the Mistral Weave Forest.

“Since we want this event to be different from what happened last year, we are planning to add some gimmicks.”

Theo smirked. “I look forward to what you guys are preparing for this year.”

“Look forward to it, President.” Cassandra smiled faintly. “It’s going to be more exciting than what happened last year.”

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Inside the clocktower...

“Well, how did your challenges go?” Alex asked.

“It went well,” Charles answered. “I got so many academy points.”

“Indeed.” Nessia nodded, unable to hide how happy she was. “It’s the best thing ever. Now I can exchange points for my everyday needs.”

Lavinia had only managed to get third place in five challenges, but she was still pleased with the points she had gotten with her own abilities.

She planned to challenge them again in the future once she was stronger.

Charles, who got third place in two challenges, was also quite satisfied with his performance.

Renard, who got second place in nearly all the challenges attempted, was actually content as well. Although he didn't get first place, he managed to befriend Fran, whose strength impressed even him.

"Now, I will tell you the main reason why I asked you guys to get as many points as early as you can," Alex stated. "As you may already know, the academy's annual event for the First Years is about to begin."

Alex lightly tapped the table and a magical projection showing the words "Inter-Class Battle Royale" appeared.

"This is another major event that will reward the students with thousands of academy points," Alex explained. "But not everyone will be able to get those points. Only those who remain standing at the end can benefit from this event."

The young man then scanned the faces of his club members, who were paying close attention to him.

Since Alex had said that the prize was thousands of academy points, all of them wished to know more about it.

"Although it is called Inter-Class Battle Royale, it just means that all the First Year classes will participate in this battle royale," Alex continued. "In the end, only ten people will be awarded ten thousand academy points each."

"T-Ten thousand?!" Chuck gulped. "That's a lot of points."

“Indeed.” Alex nodded. “But, it’s not going to be easy. So, I want all of you to use your points to make the final preparations for this event. Take note, all of us must become part of those ten survivors.

“It doesn’t matter if we are in different classes. All of us have already fought together, so we will be stronger as a team.”

Alex then raised three fingers.

“Lavinia, Nessia, and Renard are all in Class B,” Alex said. “Chuck, Charles, and I are in Class C. Since we will be sent randomly inside the Mistral Weave Forest, we must prioritize teaming up as soon as possible.

“The other classes will also be forming teams, so this will not be an easy battle. However, I intend to add a few more people to our lineup. The first person is Fran from our Class.”

Renard who heard this nodded in agreement.

Since he was someone who recognized those who were stronger than him, having Fran in the team was a good thing in his opinion.