

Endless 281

Chapter 281: The Roar Of Gilgamesh [Part 1]

“Hah...” A long, heavy sigh escaped Chuck’s lips as he looked at the calendar in front of him.

Tomorrow was the Joint Magical Training of Class C up to Class A.

Mages from the three classes would use that opportunity to spar with each other, enhancing camaraderie and boosting sportsmanship.

At least, that was the vision of whoever thought of it. Unfortunately, reality was not all that great.

Nobles tend to use this opportunity to attack commoners “legally,” and it has long become a common practice for them.

He wasn’t classmates with Nessia in the past, but he still considered her one of his comrades in the club.

Before Alex dealt with the discrimination from the bullies eyeing them, the young lady had been the target practice of these stuck-up nobles. Naturally, Chuck stood up to them, which made him the new target of these bullies.

After Alex became the Blackmail King, the bullying stopped... but only for a while.

When they returned from their trip to Mount Heracles, another Magical Joint Training had been announced.

Although Nessia no longer suffered as many hardships as she had in the past, the students who switched to targeting Chuck once again used the training practice as a legitimate cause to gang up on him in a three-versus-one battle.

Of course, these battles were allowed, and those who could win against such a disadvantage would be given bonus academy points as a reward.

Chuck didn't back down from these challenges because he believed that as a man, he should not let the bastards get their way.

Unfortunately, while he was gifted with magic, Chuck's timid personality got in the way. Because of this, he suffered magical injuries and was sent to the infirmary.

Nessia had told him that they should tell Alex what was happening, but the teenage boy rejected her proposal.

He even said that they shouldn't always rely on their club president for everything. Also, the injuries he received weren't that serious.

Nessia was still very angry, but Chuck managed to dissuade her and promised that he would be more careful in the future.

"Whether it be in the trial or the real world, there are people who enjoy the suffering of others," Chuck muttered as he headed to the clock tower. "But don't worry, Sir Gilgamesh. I will not let them trample all over me ever again."

The laboratory that Alex had added on the floor below their main clubroom was now equipped with the necessary tools to perform alchemy.

There, he vowed to recreate a potion—the fruit of his and Sir Gilgamesh' blood, sweat, and tears.

A few hours later, Chuck finally finished creating five batches of the golden potion he learned from his trial.

But due to how tired he was after the potion creation ended, the teenage boy decided to rest inside the laboratory room. Soon, he started dreaming of the time when he was taking the Azgral Trial.

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The throne room of the Kingdom of Azgral was adorned with expensive decorations, matching the polished marble floor. But contrary to the luxury of it all was an air thick with something far less noble.

It reeked of greed.

“The rainy season is about to come, so I propose that we build a dam at the Southern River,” said with a smile by a Noble whose body would put a sumo wrestler to shame. “Of course, the kingdom can purchase stone from my quarry for a modest price.”

Chuckles and giggles from the other nobles spread inside the room, simply too familiar with how this game was played.

“That’s right. As for the workers... I’m sure we can find volunteers,” a noble lady commented.

“I agree. The peasants will be more than happy to work for free, and we can use some of the money from the project for more... important matters,” an old man played with his beard, his words earning smirks from his compatriots.

Naturally, they planned to build a dam using an exaggerated budget and put the majority of the money inside their pockets.

It was a very common occurrence in the Azgral Kingdom, and the reason why they could do such a thing was simple...

In their eyes, the thirteen-year-old King, Aurelian III, was no more than a puppet ruler. The young king was a very timid person, and regardless of what opinions he truly held in his heart, all he would do was clench his fist on his lap while staring at the marble floor of his throne room.

His Prime Minister, who stood on the right side of his throne, Lord Gilgameess, gripped his staff in both anger and shame. Just like the King, he was also a very timid person.

A King and his right-hand man, the ones who should be ruling their kingdom together, were treated as nobodies by the nobles who ran the kingdom according to their wishes.

Knowing that things couldn't continue like this, Lord Gilgamesh coughed lightly to catch everyone's attention, but he was completely ignored by them.

"Perhaps we should hire more villagers and pay them accordingly for their trouble..." Lord Gilgamesh said in a very low tone, as if fearing that confidently voicing his opinion would earn him nothing but disapproving glares.

"The Prime Minister is wise," The noble with a rotund body clapped his hands. "But our Kingdom has limited funds right now. I'm sure the people will be happy to serve for free, right?"

"That's right, Sir Alfred."

"Since they are the subjects of this kingdom, they should strive for our prosperity!"

"I second this motion!"

"I third it!"

< Synchronization Rate increased by 10% >

< Current Synchronization Rate: 60% >

'These damn bastards!' Chuck cursed internally. 'All of you are the reason why this kingdom has limited funds right now!'

The Prime Minister then glanced at the young King. The child's body trembled out of anger, visibly against the opinions of the greedy nobles. However, all he did was continue looking down at the marble floor, his gaze piercing through it as if it were the enemy he wished to tear into pieces.

Chuck couldn't help but see himself in King Aurelian's pitiful form. After all, he had suffered the same treatment in the Duke's household.

Since his mother was not of noble birth, the servants, as well as the retainers of the Duke, treated him like air and ignored his orders.

Whenever his repressed emotion burst and resulted in him making a scene, his brothers, especially Caspian, would berate and intimidate him in front of their servants, making them look down on Chuck even more.

Two hours later, Lord Gilgamesh escorted King Aurelian III back to his room.

The young king had a sickly body, and the stress he felt during court sessions was making his condition worse.

"Your Majesty, you don't have to join tomorrow's session," Chuck said. "I'll deal with them myself."

"Lord Gilgamesh, do you know what my father said to me a week before he died?" Aurelian asked.

"No, Your Majesty," Chuck answered.

"He said that a King is not someone who sits on a throne... but someone who can stand for his people, even when the whole world tells him to kneel."

Aurelian's pale hands tightened as he looked at the view of his kingdom from the hallway. "But every time I try to speak, my voice feels like a whisper in a storm. I cannot... stand."

Chuck looked at him quietly. Somewhere deep inside Gilgamesh's body, a low, controlled growl built in Chuck's chest.

"That's because you've been caged for too long, kid. A lion born in a cage forgets the taste of the hunt."

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< Synchronization Rate increased by 5% >

< Current Synchronization Rate: 65% >

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"Your Majesty," Gilgamesh said after a pause, "if you truly wish to stand, then let me sharpen the claws for both of us."

Aurelian tilted his head. "What do you mean?"

"Tomorrow... you will see."

Later that night, the Prime Minister's private laboratory lit up with the warm glow of crystal lamps.

Rows of jars filled with rare herbs lined the long oak tables.

The pot in front of him created golden smoke as he added one ingredient after the other.

Chuck then wrote down a recipe on the table, while a voice inside his head gave some advice.

"The Phoenix Herb is too strong, so you need to use the Snow Lily to counter its effects," Gilgamesh advised.

"Gramps, if we use the Snow Lily, it will just weaken the effect of this potion," Chuck replied. "We need something strong."

"But Chuck, if we do this, things might go out of control."

"That's exactly what we need, Sir."

"Excuse me?"

Chuck smiled faintly. "What we need is to go out of control."

"A-Are you crazy?!" Gilgamesh, who shared the same body as Chuck, gasped. "You madman! Why are you adding the Berserker Flower to the mix?! You fool, this will not make you go out of control, it will make you roar!"

"Sir, have you ever felt like shouting against the world because it isn't treating you fairly?" Chuck inquired as he reviewed the recipe that he had created with the help of the brain of the smartest Alchemist of the Kingdom of Azgral, Lord Gilgamesh.

"I do... but Chuck, there is a big difference between bravery and stupidity!" Lord Gilgamesh replied firmly.

"Sir, both of us live in denial," Chuck closed his eyes, feeling the anger in his chest rise up to the surface. "We always think that if we endure, things will get better. We think that if we just let those nobles do their thing, they would change their minds."

"But that's not how the world works, Lord Gilgamesh. Sometimes, I wonder, why is it always the good people who suffer? Why do bad people get away with hurting, harassing, and taking advantage of others?"

"In this dog-eat-dog world, where is justice? Where is the fairness? Then I realized that the perfect world that I have in mind doesn't exist."

Chuck then wrote a few lines in the scroll in front of him.

“Arrogance without power is not arrogance... It is stupidity.”

Chuck’s quill scratched across the parchment.

“Mercy without teeth is not mercy... it is submission.”

“Patience without action is not patience... it is decay.”

He paused, staring at the shimmering gold liquid slowly swirling in the flask before him.

“A man who endures injustice without resistance is not noble... he is prey.”

“A ruler who fears his servants is no ruler at all.”

“The meek inherit nothing unless they learn to bare their fangs.”

His hand trembled slightly, not from fear, but from the flood of images in his mind.

Peasants whipped for refusing to pay false taxes, servants beaten for speaking the truth, children robbed of their food in the name of “duty to the crown.”

“The oppressed who accept their chains will raise children who think chains are normal.”

“The lion who forgets the hunt will bow to the hyena.”

“Silence is the sharpest blade of the tyrant, for it cuts the spirit before the flesh.”

Lord Gilgamesh was quiet in the back of their shared mind, and when he finally spoke, it was almost a whisper. "...You've thought about this for a long time."

Chuck didn't answer. He dipped the quill again, ink pooling like black blood.

"The day will come when the world gives you a choice. Kneel or roar. If you choose to kneel, you will spend your life staring at the boots of lesser men."

He set the quill down. The potion on the table glowed brighter, as if it had heard his words and approved.

Chuck reached for the flask, swirling it once more.

"Tomorrow, Sir Gilgamesh... we roar."

Chapter 282: The Roar Of Gilgamesh [Part 2]

The marble doors of the throne room groaned open.

The nobles, mid-laughter over some inflated canal project, barely turned to acknowledge the timid Prime Minister entering with the young King in tow.

But something was different.

Gilgamesh' gait was steady, his shoulders drawn back as his staff tapped sharply against the polished floor with every step.

King Aurelian III followed beside him, still small and pale, but glancing up every so often as if unsure whether the man at his side was truly the same one from yesterday.

Gilgamesh stopped just shy of the dais. His hand slipped into his robes, and with a smooth motion, he uncorked a narrow crystal vial filled with a potion that had a golden color.

Without a word, the Prime Minister raised the vial to his lips and drank.

It was fire and sunlight all at once, searing down his throat and flooding his veins.

His heart slammed against his ribs, each beat like the toll of a war drum. The timid whispers in his mind, the ones that told him to step back, to avoid conflict, and endure, were drowned beneath a tidal wave of something vast, hot, and unshakable.

Chuck's voice echoed in his skull, but this time it wasn't a growl. It was a roar!

"Now... show them who you are, Lord Gilgamesh!"

Gilgamesh exhaled slowly.

His back straightened, his gaze locked forward. The world seemed sharper and the air cleaner.

He then bowed to King Aurelian, as the young king sat on the throne before facing the nobles for today's court session.

"Shall we proceed with today's agenda?" Sir Alfred smirked. "I believe we were discussing the Southern Canal expansion—"

Lord Gilgamesh's voice cut through the room like a drawn blade.

"Silence, Mongrel."

The nobles froze. The words hadn't been shouted, yet they carried the weight of a thunderclap.

"E-Excuse me, Prime Minister?" Sir Alfred stammered.

Lord Gilgamesh tapped his staff once on the floor, and a ripple of flames spread inside the room, making the nobles cry out in shock and surprise.

“The one who will start this court session is the King, not you, Mongrel,” Lord Gilgamesh stated. “Who gave you the right to speak before our King, hmm? Is he the one wearing the crown, or are you wearing the crown?”

“Guards! Lock this bastard in prison to let him contemplate his wrongs! Make sure not to give him food and water for a day. If I discover that you ignored my orders, I’ll have all of you hanged!”

The Prime Minister’s voice was like a thunderclap that made the hesitating soldiers immediately take action to grab Sir Alfred, who seemed to have been put into paralysis by the Prime Minister’s shout.

The nobles looked at this scene in disbelief and anxiety, uncertainty creeping onto their faces.

Lord Gilgamesh once again tapped his staff on the marble floor, getting everyone’s attention.

“Order in the throne room, you are in the presence of our King,” Lord Gilgamesh said coldly. “Have you forgotten who gave you the ranks that allowed you all to live in luxury? Did you dogs forget who your true Master is?”

“L-Lord Gilgamesh, we...” a Noble with a curly mustache tried to voice his thoughts, but before he could finish whatever he was going to say, the Prime Minister pointed his staff in his direction and unleashed a Heat Flare, which burned the noble’s mustache.

A scream of horror reverberated inside the throne room as the noble fell on his butt, smoke rising from his now-naked philtrum.

His mustache had been burned completely, and only traces of ash remained on the place where it once was.

“Did I ask you to speak?” Lord Gilgamesh asked, his voice dripping of venom. “Guards! Take this Peasant to the prison, and lock him up along with that bastard, Alfred!”

The guards hurriedly picked up the fallen noble and dragged him out of the court room.

The moment the marble doors had closed, a pin-drop silence descended inside the room.

All the nobles had straightened themselves like students who saw their strict professor enter their classroom.

None of them dared to say anything and simply stared at the Prime Minister, who seemed to have grown two-meters taller in their minds.

“Your Majesty, please start today’s court session,” Lord Gilgamesh pressed his hands together and bowed to his King. “I believe it is about a canal project, and our loyal nobles plan to use up their own money to fund this project. Isn’t that right, you Mongrels?”

The Prime Minister’s sweeping gaze made the nobles shudder, and a moment later, all of them started to speak out loud, as if afraid that if they didn’t answer now, they would be the ones who would be sent to prison next.

“Yes, Your Majesty, allow me, Smith, to provide workers for this project!”

“I will also provide the salary of the workers as well as feed them during work hours.”

“Your Majesty, I will give the Kingdom a 30% discount on the materials that will be needed for building the Canal!”

“Did you say... only 30%?” Lord Gilgamesh asked, his eyes narrowing.

“I-I meant 50%!”

“Only 50%?” Lord Gilgamesh scoffed. “Are you courting death?”

“70%.”

“Hmmm?”

“90%!”

“Your Majesty, I think Alfred and that Mustache Dog need someone to play with them in the dungeons,” Lord Gilgamesh said. “Guar—”

“Free!” the noble shouted. “All the materials will be free of charge! Your Majesty, please allow me to handle this. I swear upon the Eggheart Family that I will make this project successful.”

King Aurelian took a deep breath before nodding. “Good. I look forward to hearing good news after this project ends.”

“Yes, Your Majesty!” the noble bowed as if he had just received a noble pardon.

“Your Majesty, I think we should strip the titles of the two dogs that I sent to prison,” Lord Gilgamesh proposed. “The kingdom has suffered long enough. I think a purge is in order.”

The nobles inside the throne room shuddered upon hearing the Prime Minister’s words.

They had almost forgotten that Lord Gilgamesh was actually the strongest Sorcerer in their kingdom due to his timid personality.

But now that the Rank 7 Sorcerer was bearing his fangs, they knew that if they annoyed him, it would not only be their hair or mustache that would be burned.

They might not even be able to leave the throne room alive, leaving only ashes as evidence of their existence.

Chuck, who was watching this from Lord Gilgamesh's Sea of Consciousness, gave all the nobles the middle finger while calling all of them Peasants in his heart.

Chapter 283: The Hope Of The Kingdom

"Lord Gilgamesh, that was amazing!" King Aurelian said with a smile. "I think I can finally have a good sleep after seeing those nobles squirm under your gaze. I wish I could do that too."

Lord Gilgamesh then crouched down, then gently rested his hand on the young King's shoulder. More accurately, Chuck was the one doing it.

By the time the potion's effect had reached the end of its time, the old man reached his limit, so he passed control over his body to the young man.

"Listen, kid. I'm sure you can do the same," Chuck replied in a serious tone.

"K-Kid?!" King Aurelian looked at his Prime Minister in shock.

"I'm sorry, Your Majesty, I stuttered," Chuck lightly patted his forehead. "I'm getting old now, and I'm starting to forget a lot of things. But like I mentioned earlier—what I did, you can do better."

"Really?" King Aurelian looked at the older man with a serious expression. "I can be just as cool and awesome as you?"

"Yes," Chuck answered. "Definitely. How about you try to be a little braver tomorrow?"

King Aurelian clenched his fists together before nodding in understanding.

"I'll do my best, Lord Gilgamesh."

“That’s the spirit!”

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The next day...

The King and his Prime Minister were having breakfast together.

They had ordered the servants to leave so they could talk in private.

After grabbing the King’s glass, Chuck poured the other party a drink. Unbeknownst to the young royal, the Conqueror’s Heart Potion that Chuck and Lord Gilgamesh created was secretly mixed into it.

Chuck’s plan was to dilute a small dosage of the potion into King Aurelian’s drink. That way, it wouldn’t be noticeable, and the effects would be subtle enough to ensure that the young King wouldn’t end up dependent on it in the future.

The young King was different from him and Lord Gilgamesh, who understood that they were timid by nature.

Confidence was something that could be attained gradually, and the process of that was to give the young king a little push in the right direction.

Sure, giving him the potion as it is would definitely make him confident, and he’d be able to face the nobles like a lion facing a herd of sheep.

But that would start the doom of him relying on the potion.

It would be bad for the King’s growth if he ended up with the mindset that he wouldn’t be able to do anything if it weren’t for the Conqueror’s Potion.

Lord Gilgamesh shared this thought and agreed with Chuck's decision.

The teenage boy and the Prime Minister were stuck in one body.

Unlike Alex and Latifa, who were mostly in control of their senses and had been using their original bodies in the trial, Chuck was just a consciousness inside the body of an old man.

He was like a second personality that Lord Gilgamesh had materialized out of stress from not being able to do his job properly as the Prime Minister.

"This juice has a unique flavor," King Aurelian said. "But it tastes nice."

"Good." Chuck nodded. "Shall we now head to the Throne Room, Your Majesty?"

"Okay!" Prince Aurelian said with a smile, his face becoming a little more rosy as if he were drunk.

Chuck also poured himself a drink containing the potion and drank it until the last drop.

A few minutes later, the two entered the throne room.

The moment they appeared, all the nobles stopped talking and sat properly.

King Aurelian walked confidently towards the throne and sat on it like he always did.

But the nobles sensed that there was something different with their Little King, whose gaze seemed to be sharper and full of life.

"Today's court session will now begin," Chuck declared. "Do you have anything to say before we start, Your Majesty?"

“Proceed,” King Aurelian replied.

Chuck nodded before glancing at one of the Nobles who were responsible for starting the discussion for today.

“Speak,” Chuck ordered.

“Y-Your Majesty, the Merchant Ships that sail the Sea of Zahar are being attacked by Pirates as of late,” the noble reported. “We have deployed our navy to find them, but whenever we mobilize, the pirates are nowhere to be found. I believe they have at least one informat from the pier tipping them off.”

Chuck remained silent and allowed King Aurelian to handle this matter.

The young King was smart. In fact, he was a genius when it came to politics. Unfortunately, he was too timid to voice his thoughts.

But now, his voice spread inside the throne room, making the other nobles, who were looking at the Prime Minister, shift their gaze in his direction.

They thought Lord Gilgamesh would end up handling the matter, so they were very surprised when their young, pitiful king spoke out loud.

“I’ll give you exactly four days to find the spy and annihilate the Pirates,” King Aurelian replied. “I don’t care what methods you use, but if this problem is not solved by then, I will order you to be chopped up and fed to the fishes.”

“Your Majesty, I don’t think I can do it within four days!” The face of the noble who ruled the Port City of Zahar turned pale after hearing the King’s declaration.

“You can’t do it?” King Aurelian rested his head on the palm of his right hand and crossed his legs together. “Well then, how about I give a Royal Decree. If anyone can solve this pirate problem within four days, I will make them the new Baron who will oversee the City of Zahar.

"In fact, if there's anyone here who could solve this problem, I will delegate them as the new Lord of the Port City."

As soon as he made this declaration, all the nobles inside the throne room became excited and started making pledges.

"Rest assured, Your Majesty!" a skinny noble, who looked like a villain in a novel, stood up straight. "I, your faithful servant, Baron Pinoco, will solve this problem within four days!"

"I will also solve this problem, Your Majesty," a countess replied. "It just so happens that I have also created an anti-pirate fleet. I will not fail this mission and protect our people from those pirates!"

"Very well," Prince Aurelian replied. "I will leave these tasks to all of you. May the best noble win."

A faint smile appeared on the King's face, as if amused by the current situation.

Knowing that the time was right, Chuck called out the second noble, who had something to report.

"Your Majesty, bandits are currently plaguing the small villages around Donner Mountain," the Noble stated. "I wish to ask for your aid in subjugating them."

"Um?" Prince Aurelian arched an eyebrow. "Lord Gilgamesh, are there more rooms in the dungeon today? Marquess Benedict seems to want to change residence."

Marques Benedict, coughed lightly before giving his reply. "Understood, Your Majesty. I will drive them off myself using my private army."

"You should," King Aurelian said icily. "What's the point of your thousand-strong army if you don't put them to good use?"

"You haven't been paying the right taxes as of late, and your reason was that you need to build an army to fix the rampant banditry in your area. Marquess, am I a joke to you?"

“No, You’re Majesty!” Marquess Benedict replied. “I will handle this properly!”

“You have four days,” King Aurelian answered. “If not, I will send the army to your domain and ask them to eliminate the real bandit. Guess who? It’s the one talking to me right now.”

“H-Hiiiiic!” Marquess Benedict flinched after seeing King Aurelian’s glare.

Chuck chuckled internally and gave the young King a thumbs up in his heart.

The session continued, and the longer it went, the less his Majesty needed to speak to handle the problems that plagued the Kingdom.

“Your Majesty, the funding for the dam we are building is insufficient. Can I ask for more budget from the treasury?”

“Um?”

“Oh, goodness me! There was a mistake on my part. The funds are enough. It seems that I haven’t been getting any proper sleep as of late. My apologies, Your Majesty!”

Chuck then snapped his fingers, and a few guards grabbed the noble who was pocketing the kingdom’s funds to fill up his own treasury.

Another noble nervously voiced his thoughts and spoke in a polite tone.

“Your Majesty, the irrigation channels in the eastern farmlands are collapsing due to the recent floods. We request the crown to send engineers...”

King Aurelian clicked his tongue and glared at the noble, making the latter’s body stiffen.

Beads of sweat formed on his forehead, and for a brief moment, the noble thought he saw Lord Gilgamesh make a slitting motion on his throat.

“A-Ah... on second thought, I will... naturally... pay for the reconstruction myself. I will also send my personal engineers. The Crown should not be bothered by such a trivial matter!”

Another noble stepped forward. “Your Majesty, the mines in Grey Hollow have stopped production due to equipment shortages. If you could provide—”

King Aurelian slowly drummed his fingers on the armrest, his gaze drifting to the noble without saying a word.

“I—I mean,” the noble stammered, “We... will simply import new equipment at our own expense! Yes! We will have the mines operating within a week, Your Majesty. I swear on my family’s honor.”

Chuck fought to keep the smirk off his face.

“Your Majesty, there is a shortage of guards in the western border fortresses, and—”

King Aurelian tilted his head slightly, eyes narrowing.

The noble swallowed hard. “O-Of course, my men and I will personally train and fund recruits... at no cost to the kingdom! Naturally.”

By now, every noble in the room had picked up on the pattern.

The King hadn’t even raised his voice. A click of his tongue, a drum of his fingers, a narrowing of the eyes—these tiny gestures were more terrifying than an army.

When the last noble brought up the “critical” shortage of grain in his province, King Aurelian simply leaned forward slightly, resting his chin on his palm.

"I'll... buy it. Myself. Personally," the noble muttered before anyone could say a word, his knees trembling.

By the time the court was dismissed, not a single coin had left the royal treasury. Yet half the kingdom's issues were already being "voluntarily" resolved.

Chuck leaned toward the young king after they arrived in the King's personal chambers.

"Well done, Your Majesty," Chuck praised. "You didn't just solve this Kingdom's problems. You made them solve it themselves."

King Aurelian gave the faintest of smiles. "It was easier than I thought. To think that I was scared of those buffoons all these years. Lord Gilgamesh, it was all because of you that I managed to take that one step."

"And you will continue to take that step, Your Majesty," Chuck replied, kneeling in front of the young King, and resting his hand on the boy's shoulder. "For you are the hope of this Kingdom. You shall have nothing to fear, for I will support you."

"Okay!" King Aurelian nodded happily.

Chuck had stayed in the trial until Lord Gilgamesh's body deteriorated and could no longer walk anymore.

Even so, he watched with pride as Prince Aurelian III made the Kingdom prosper under his rule, entering a golden age.

On his deathbed, the King knelt while holding the hand of his most trusted advisor until he drew his last breath.

Finally, Chuck awoke from his sleep.

“Where?” Chuck felt a little disoriented after finding himself inside the laboratory room instead of his luxurious residence inside the palace.

A moment later, he felt something touch the side of his face.

Dim Dim, who was holding a handkerchief, was wiping the tears on Chuck’s cheeks.

“Dim Dim?” Chuck looked at the little bun, who smiled back at him.

Dim Dim nodded. “Dim.”

“What are you doing here?” Chuck asked.

“Dim Dim.” Dim Dim replied before pointing at the clock on the wall.

After seeing that it was almost seven o’clock, the teenage boy’s sleepiness disappeared completely.

“I’m late!” Chuck stood up in a hurry and ran toward their dormitory to change into his uniform.

Dim Dim blinked once then twice before jumping toward the table to look at the four bottles of Conqueror’s Potion that Chuck had left behind.

After a minute of hesitation, Dim Dim stored the potions inside its dimensional storage and jumped out of the window, quickly trying to catch up to Chuck.

Today was the Fire Mage’s joint magical training day.

Dim Dim had a feeling that Chuck might need the potion to face those who treated him like dirt.

Chapter 284: You Will Call Me, Sir [Part 1]

When Chuck arrived at the Combat Mage Training Grounds, the sparring matches were about to start.

Since he was late, his arrival pulled the attention of the students, as well as Professor Isolde, who was in charge of today's joint class.

"Chuck No Rizz, you're late," Professor Isolde frowned.

"I'm sorry, Professor," Chuck replied apologetically. "I was studying till late last night. I overslept."

"Fine, line up with the others. As punishment, you will be fighting four mages today in this sparring match."

"... Yes, Professor."

Chuck lined up with everyone else before lightly tapping his storage ring. A moment later, his face turned pale, realizing that he had forgotten to store the Conqueror's Heart Potion inside his storage ring before rushing out of the clock tower earlier.

Perhaps noticing his anxiety, Nessia moved closer and asked if he was alright.

She was already planning to request Professor Isolde for a two versus four spar later, with her partnering with Chuck, so that the young man wouldn't have to fight them all on his own.

"I-I'm fine," Chuck replied. "It's okay, Nessia. Thank you, but I don't want you to get into trouble because of me."

The nobles, who were jealous of Chuck's good looks as well as his family's background, eyed each other and nodded at the same time.

Clearly, they planned to make the handsome teenager suffer a miserable defeat under the guise of a sparring match.

One by one, the mages fought and sparred against each other, pitting the higher classes with the lower classes.

Suddenly, the Second Years also appeared on the training grounds, occupying half of it.

Chuck's brother, Caspian, was among them. Seeing Chuck, he approached the other party.

"Good morning, Professor Isolde," Caspian greeted the Magic Professor of the First Years.

"Good morning." Professor Isolde gave the young man a brief nod. "This is our side of the field, please return to your post, Mr. Caspian."

She couldn't call him Mr. Rizz because that was how she called Chuck, so she decided to just call Caspian by his first name instead.

"Don't be like that, Professor," Caspian replied. "I'm just here to see if my brother is now proficient in using magic. I have a proposal, Professor. Why don't the Second Years have a sparring match with the First Years today?"

"I'm sure this will strengthen the bonds between us all and allow them to challenge someone stronger than them. Don't you think that this is a good idea, Professor?"

Professor Isolde frowned but also found the idea good.

Also, this would give them a change of pace and allow the First Years to fight stronger and more experienced mages, which she believed would be beneficial for them.

"Very well, I agree with this proposal," Professor Isolde nodded. "But, will Professor Nixie be fine with this?"

"I am fine with it, Professor Isolde," Professor Nixie, who had come to see what Caspian was up to, replied. "I'm sure my class will have many things to teach our First Years."

“Well, if you’re fine with it, I don’t see why not.” Professor Isolde smiled.

“Great!” Caspian clapped. “Then I propose to personally challenge my brother, Chuck, in battle. You see, my father has high hopes for him. I want to see just how strong he has become after enrolling in the academy. You’re not going to reject my challenge, right, brother?”

“O-Of course not,” Chuck replied. “Bring it on!”

Caspian sneered in his heart. Ever since the day their Lionheart Club had lost to Endless Horizon, all their members had been keeping a low profile.

All the pent-up frustrations were starting to get on their nerves, and Caspian wanted to vent his anger at his brother, who was also part of the club that brought them down a peg.

Just as Chuck had resolved himself for a beating, he heard the mooing of a cow in the distance.

Of course, he wasn’t the only one who heard it.

The other students heard it as well, so they all glanced at the entrance of the Combat Mage Training Grounds at the same time.

There, they saw the Doom Cow, Daisy, and perched on top of her head was Dim Dim, wearing his gangster sunglasses.

“Dim.” Dim Dim said, pointing at Chuck.

Chuck frowned, but since the little bun was looking for him, he decided to approach the white bun to find out why it had come to the training grounds with Daisy.

“What are you doing here, Dim Dim?” Chuck asked. “I’m busy right now, so I don’t have time to play.”

Dim Dim smiled before taking out a golden potion from its dimensional storage, making Chuck's eyes widen in shock.

"I-Is that..." Chuck looked at the golden potion that he had made several hours ago in surprise.

"Kukuku." Dim Dim chuckled as he handed the golden potion to Chuck.

Since the young man's back faced the others, they didn't see the potion in his hand.

"Thank you, Dim Dim," Chuck said with a smile. "I'll treat you to something good later."

Dim Dim fixed its gangster sunglasses and gave Chuck a smirk.

Without any hesitation, the teenage boy drank the potion until nothing was left.

He could feel heat washing over his body as the potion took effect. A moment later, his eyes became sharper, and a confident smile appeared on his face.

"Stay for a while, Dim Dim," Chuck said with confidence. "I'll show you something good."

"Dim!"

Daisy then moved toward the audience stands in the training grounds, where Dim Dim jumped off.

The little bun then opened the Arcana Shop and bought a bag of potato chips to enjoy the show Chuck had promised would be good.

"Chuck, you will be the first to represent the First Years in this joint spar with the Second Years," Professor Isolde explained. "Your opponent is your brother. Will you be able to beat him?"

“Easily,” Chuck replied as he walked toward the center of the training grounds, where his brother was waiting for him.

“Are you ready to be taught a lesson?” Caspian asked in contempt. “Just know that I will be fighting seriously, so I’m sorry in advance if you get hurt.”

“Shut up, Peasant,” Chuck replied as he lazily rested his staff on his shoulder. “Dogs like you need to know their place.”

The First Years and the Second Years, including the two Professors, looked at Chuck as if they were seeing him for the first time.

Even Nessia, who had known Chuck for a while, couldn’t help but stare at the teenage boy, whose presence seemed to have changed entirely.

But the teenage boy was not finished yet.

“Professor, this Peasant alone is not enough to defeat me,” Chuck said to Professor Isolde. “How about you add those four Mongrels to fight for his side? I want a five versus one battle.”

The four mages, who originally wanted to beat the crap out of Chuck earlier, were more than happy to join Caspian’s side.

“Sire, please allow us to fight with you,” one of the mages whom Chuck had called a Mongrel pleaded. “We need to teach your brother a lesson and make him understand that being humble is a noble’s trait.”

“Very well.” Caspian agreed. “But make sure not to get in my way, okay?”

“”Yes!””

Dim Dim, who was busy eating some potato chips, noticed a presence beside it.

The little bun glanced at the Princess' Maid, Mary, who had been sent by Princess Xenia to deliver a message to Professor Isolde.

But seeing that Chuck was about to spar with other mages, she decided to wait until the match was over.

"What a fool," Mary muttered. "Asking to fight five mages so he will have an excuse for his loss is just asking for a beating. He's just making a fool of himself, right, Dim Dim?"

Dim Dim shook its head. "Dim."

"You think Chuck will win this match?" Mary asked in disbelief.

"Dim!" Dim Dim nodded.

"You shouldn't put your trust in people who didn't deserve it, Dim Dim," Mary stated. "That way, you will not be disappointed by the outcome."

Dim Dim didn't reply. Instead, it just smiled and even offered the bag of potato chips to Mary, who decided to try one for the first time.

Soon, the little bun and the maid were munching on potato chips in harmony while they waited for the battle between Chuck and the five Peasants to begin.

Chapter 285: You Will Call Me, Sir [Part 2]

A confident smile lingered on Chuck's face as his gaze swept through the five mages.

His reaction evoked a frown from the face of his older brother, Caspian, who turned to the four mages behind him.

"Don't interfere," Caspian ordered. "I'll personally teach my brother the ways of magic. Anyone who makes a move will be attacked."

The four nobles nodded in understanding and eased up a bit.

Caspian then glanced back at his brother.

“Are you ready, little brother?” Caspian asked in a tone filled with disdain.

“This Sir is born ready,” Chuck answered. “Are you sure you don’t want those four mongrels to help you attack me? You’ll regret it if you go alone.”

“Shut up.” Caspian pointed his staff at Chuck. “I’ve long wished to teach you a lesson. After this spar is over, you will understand your place.”

“Understand my place?” Chuck smirked. “I’d like to see you try.”

Professor Isolde and Professor Nixie exchanged a quick glance, then nodded at the same time.

“Since both of you are ready, let the sparring match begin!” Professor Isolde declared.

It was obviously a sibling feud, and their verbal quarrel was a waste of class time. Not to mention, the joint training was for the students to learn better.

Going by common sense, the pairing was unfair.

But admittedly, the Professor’s impression of Chuck hadn’t been great to begin with, and it deteriorated even further after Alex made a fool of everyone during the student assembly. In her eyes, it would be fine if Chuck received a beating or two to help him understand the reality of the world.

To her shock, the scene that followed could only be described as unexpected.

As soon as the battle commenced, Caspian chanted and summoned countless Fire Bullets, unleashing them in Chuck's direction.

On the other hand, Chuck simply pointed his staff at Caspian without casting. A moment later, a fireball as big as a car erupted from the tip of his staff and shot toward Caspian, making everyone gasp in shock.

Mary was about to eat the potato chip Dim Dim had handed her, but she subconsciously dropped it as she stared at the view before her in shock.

Before everyone knew it, the Fireball had devoured the Fire Bullets, dispelling their effects.

The Fireball's trajectory hadn't veered off-course, resuming its way toward Caspian, who was too shocked to dodge the spell blazing in his direction.

"N-Nooooo!" Caspian shouted when the Fireball was only a few meters away from him.

But before the spell could hit him, it detonated mid-air, sending a gust of hot wind expanding outward, blowing Caspian away.

The arrogant noble crashed on the ground and rolled a few times before coming to a stop.

"Is that it?" Chuck asked before resting his staff on his shoulder. "What a disappointment. I thought you were strong since you kept on spouting nonsense earlier. Who knew you'd be so weak, I didn't even need to chant."

Caspian looked at Chuck in disbelief. He even thought that he was fighting someone else instead of his brother.

With an expression of shame and embarrassment, he glared at the four nobles, who were supposed to help him fight with his brother.

"What are you four waiting for?!" Caspian shouted. "Attack him!"

The four nobles wanted to defend themselves by reminding him that it was he who insisted that they not join their duel. But they also knew that Chuck's strength surpassed everyone's expectations and that he would no longer be as easy to deal with as before.

With that in mind, they all decided to fight seriously.

The four mages simultaneously cast different spells.

Taking the handsome boy's display of power into account, they decided to finish the match as soon as possible by using their strongest spells.

Chuck smiled faintly and even waited for the four to finish chanting their spells.

Those who had gone to the Heracle Mountains had experienced many things and learned a lot from the trial.

For example, Alex might not have acquired the Fighting Skill Hammer for All Seasons, which belonged to Kael, but that didn't mean that he didn't learn it. In fact, as long as Alex practiced the technique with a hammer, he might acquire the skill right away since he had merged with Kael during the final battle against the Barbarian King.

The others had a similar experience, including Chuck.

Lord Gilgamesh was a Rank 7 Pyromancer, so his proficiency in Fire Spells was nothing to scoff at.

During his time with the Prime Minister, Chuck had experienced a war with the neighboring kingdom, where Lord Gilgamesh fought an entire army by himself.

Due to the synchronization rate, Chuck had fought the war using Lord Gilgamesh's body, allowing him to better understand how to wield the fire element.

Simply put, Chuck now knew what it was like to become a Rank 7 Pyromancer, opening up a new door for him.

He also acquired Lord Gilgamesh's techniques, as well as his unique fighting style.

The Prime Minister was a battle mage, and although he mostly used magic in battles, he was also proficient in using his staff in close-range battles.

Chuck watched as the four mages finished casting their spells before lightly tapping the ground with his staff.

A moment later, a whip made of flames grabbed the foot of the four mages, pulling them hard. With that, they collapsed on the ground before they could even hurl their spells at him.

The backlash from being interrupted mid-cast made the four mages' faces contort in pain. And to their misfortune, Chuck wasn't done with them.

The handsome young man used his whip to bind the bodies of the four pitiful mages before making them turn around.

"It's time to teach you Mongrels a lesson," Chuck sneered. "Remember this day as the day when you learn how to be decent people."

Without another word, four fiery whips slapped the bum of the four mages, making them scream in pain.

Suddenly, Chuck felt a fluctuation of magic from his right side. There, he saw Caspian summoning a six-meter-long flame spear, blazing with his fury.

"Die!" Caspian roared in anger before throwing the spear towards his brother. "Flame Spear!"

"Oh, I almost forgot about you." Chuck smirked before snapping his fingers.

A giant flaming snake emerged from the ground and devoured the flaming spear whole.

Before Caspian could even understand what had happened, several fire whips bound his body and raised him high up in the air.

A moment later, his butt was spanked by a whip, not once, not twice, but thrice in quick succession, making him cry out in pain.

Caspian felt his cheeks burning out of embarrassment and shame as he glared at his half-brother. Obviously, they had been used as an example to show everyone what will happen if they crossed Chuck in the future.

Chapter 286: You Will Call Me, Sir [Part 3]

“Didn’t you say you were going to teach me a lesson?” Chuck rhetorically asked with contempt. “Unfortunately, you’re not qualified. Where did you get your arrogance when you and these peasants only amounted to that much?”

Chuck snorted before snapping his fingers a second time. A nearly discernable ripple of power expanded outwards, which was only noticed by the two Professors, and Nessia, who was paying attention to the teenage boy’s sparring match.

He didn’t chant anything, but more flaming whips materialized in the surroundings and started spanking the bum of the five mages who thought they could bully him.

“Dim Dim, is that really Chuck?” Mary asked the little bun beside her, who was still eating potato chips.

“Dim.” Dim Dim nodded.

Just like Mary, Nessia was also very surprised. After all, she had seen how Chuck had been bullied every time they had a joint magical training with the other classes.

But her surprise didn’t last for long before a dawn of realization descended upon her.

"I see... so that's it," Nessia muttered.

She was also part of the expedition team that went to the Heracle Mountain after all, so how could she still be clueless? Chuck must've gained the power he showed right now from the trial he had completed.

Unlike Alex and Latifa, who were part of the same story quest, Chuck and Nessia didn't experience the same setting together.

They had two completely different story quests, which led to her not knowing what kind of trial her club member had faced.

Professor Isolde and Professor Nixie deemed that enough was enough and asked Chuck to release his opponents, which the latter gladly did.

"From now on, whenever you five Peasants meet me, make sure to call me Sir," Chuck declared. "Do we have an understanding?"

"Damn you!" Caspian growled. "I'll never forg—ahhh!"

A crisp whip lash reached everyone's ears as a fire whip materialized behind Caspian's body and struck his butt.

Professor Isolde and Professor Nixie were about to go and stop Chuck when the latter raised his hand.

"Professors, as you can see, this is a family problem," Chuck stated before walking toward his fallen brother. "I hope you don't interfere now, just like earlier."

He then walked towards Caspian and grabbed his hair, forcing him to stand up.

"Are you mad?! I won't forgive you for this!" Caspian growled in anger.

Suddenly, a resounding slap spread in the surroundings as Chuck b*tch-slapped his brother, who still didn't learn his lesson.

"Sir," Chuck said before slapping his brother a second time. "You will call me Sir."

Another slap, followed by another, and another, and another.

"Please... stop," Caspian pleaded.

"I won't repeat myself," Chuck raised his hand once more. "I will train you until you understand who your superior is."

Another crisp slap reached everyone's ears.

Those who had looked down on Chuck in the past shuddered at this overwhelming display of brutality, making the young ladies avert their gaze in fear.

After his tenth slap, Caspian, whose face was beaten and bruised finally relented.

"Please.... Stop... Sir," Caspian begged with a face covered with tears and snot. He had never encountered such suffering in the past because he grew up in a Ducal Family.

Anyone who dared to hurt him would be dealt with by his family, allowing him to throw his weight around without fearing repercussions.

But this time, he couldn't do that.

He and Chuck were siblings, and he doubted that his father would lend him a hand in order to cover this mess.

The Duke believed in the motto, "Might makes Right!" They were both his sons, and Caspian knew almost for certain that if this matter were to reach his father's ears, the latter would only look down on him and offer no help.

Chuck finally let go of his brother, who fell on the floor like a puppet that had lost its strings.

The handsome teenager then glanced at the four others mages before raising his hand.

"F-Forgive us, Sir Chuck!" one of the Mages pleaded. "We won't do it again!"

"Have mercy on us, Sir! We promise not to do it again."

"Sir! Please, spare us just once!"

"Hic!"

Chuck flipped his hair and looked at the sky as if he were gazing at Lord Gilgamesh, who was giving him a thumbs up.

The teenage boy winked at the old man before glancing down at his fallen brother.

"Remember this day," Chuck said, his voice calm yet carrying across the training grounds. "Not because you lost to me but because you learned the truth."

He stepped forward, his shadow falling over Caspian, who still lay crumpled on the ground.

"Strength doesn't bow to titles, and respect isn't given by birthright. It's taken... by fire."

With that, he rested his staff lazily against his shoulder, smirked at the stunned crowd, and turned his back on the five defeated mages.

“Class dismissed, Peasants.”

Chuck then walked away without another word, making Professor Isolde and Professor Nixie look at the troublemaker.

‘Are we a joke to you? Why are you dismissing our class? Are you the professor?!’

That was what the two professors wanted to say at the moment, but they were too shocked by Chuck’s sudden change in attitude.

Chuck didn’t leave the Training Grounds right away.

Instead, he walked towards Dim Dim and Mary.

Dim Dim offered Chuck a potato chip, and the latter took it with a smile on his face.

But instead of eating it, he stuffed it into Mary’s lips, who was looking at him as if she were looking at a complete stranger.

“Eat,” Chuck said in a voice that wouldn’t take no for an answer.

A moment later, a crisp sound reached his ears as Mary bit on the potato chip subconsciously.

When she realized what she had done, the young lady’s face turned beet red. It didn’t take her long to understand what had happened.

Chuck had managed to overwhelm her with his charisma and confidence, and the realization made her cheeks burn from shame, embarrassment, and possibly other reasons she didn’t know about!

(A/N: We call that Rizz where we came from, Sir.)

Knowing that Mary would no longer eat the remaining half of the potato chip, Chuck confidently put it inside his mouth and ate it.

"Hmm... delicious," Chuck said with a smile before exchanging a high five with Dim Dim.

"Dim Dim?"

"Sure, I'll have one more. Thank you, Dim Dim."

Chuck once again held a potato chip, but didn't eat it right away.

Instead, he held Mary's gaze before taking a bite, making the young lady shudder subconsciously.

"E-Excuse me," Mary said. "I will return to the Princess' side!"

Mary didn't know why she was feeling flustered because in the past, she had treated Chuck lower than an insect.

But that gaze, that handsome face, and that confident smile made her maiden heart skip a beat.

Chuck watched as the maid retreated in haste before chuckling. Clearly, he was in a good mood, and it was all thanks to Dim Dim, who had delivered him the Conqueror's Heart potion, which could conquer any kind of fear that a person held deep inside their timid hearts.

Chapter 287: Preparation For The Preliminary Exam [Part 1]

"Have you heard about what happened in the Combat Mage Training Ground?"

"Of course! I was so shocked! It isn't hard to believe that Chuck won against Caspian. However, they said he overpowered his older brother. That's not even the most unbelievable part! There were apparently four more mages, which meant he won against five. The rumors must be exaggerated."

“It’s all true. My friend was there, and the rumors are indeed accurate.”

“Damn. Endless Horizon Club isn’t as simple as they look, huh?”

Chuck hadn’t gone back to his room yet, so Alex only learned about his roommate’s feat through the rumors as well.

He was a bit worried about Chuck, so he asked Dim Dim to go and check if he was fine.

The little bun only returned with Chuck during History Class, and from what Alex could see, nothing seemed to have happened to either of them.

If there was one thing he noticed, it was that his roommate had a cheeky grin that didn’t go away even after classes ended.

Out of curiosity, Alex asked Dim Dim what happened, and the Dim Sum God explained everything while fixing its gangster sunglasses on its face.

‘Conqueror’s Heart Potion?’ Alex blinked. ‘Must be a unique recipe. I never came across that potion in the game.’

Alex was unperturbed about not knowing the potion from the game. Based on Chuck’s outstanding performance, the potion must be far from ordinary, and the silver-haired young man understood that items of that caliber were often gatekept from the public.

Whether these potions were discovered by accident or made by accident, those who have access to them would either put these potions in auction houses or utilize them for their guilds or their own interest.

In short, a potion like Conqueror’s Heart was a trump card that might overturn a losing battle into a winning one.

Chuck told him after class that he would return to the dorm to sleep until dinner. But according to Dim Dim, the teenage boy was just too embarrassed to see Mary and Princess Xenia, especially after the incident that happened in the training grounds.

As soon as he entered the clock tower, he saw Nessia and Charles chatting in the corner, while Lotte, Mary, and Princess Xenia were discussing something about magical theories.

When he arrived, he noticed that the fox lady glued to the bed, Latifa, opened her eyes briefly to look at him.

The two held each other's gaze for a few seconds before the young lady once again closed her eyes to go back to sleep.

'I still need to talk to her and ask if she can enter people's dreams,' Alex thought.

Since they returned to the academy, Latifa had appeared in his dreams twice.

He couldn't remember much of what happened in the second dream. The last thing he remembered was that he and Noelle took Latifa to the Karaoke Shop to sing together.

At first, everything was fine. But when Alex started to sing, the world suddenly crumbled, and he woke up after.

Since then, Latifa no longer appeared in his dreams, which made him feel relieved and sad at the same time.

'Maybe I'll ask Lotte later.' Alex glanced at Latifa's Second Alter, whom he got along with quite well.

The same couldn't be said for Latifa's third Alter, Lumi, who for some reason always had a bone to pick with him. There was no avoiding her since she and Lotte guarded Latifa in shifts, allowing the other to wander around.

When he asked her why she seemed upset with him, the fox lady would just say, “Hmph! That’s none of your business!”

In the end, he thought Lumi might have fallen for him due to how dashing and handsome he was during the Morgim Trial.

Of course, he knew that if he said this out loud, the young lady would probably slap and kick him to oblivion.

Since he didn’t want to mess with the three fox ladies for the time being, Alex sat beside Nessia, who was having a discussion with Princess Xenia and Mary.

“I heard about what Chuck did in the training grounds from Dim Dim,” Alex said. “Did he really beat up his brother in front of the First and Second Years?”

“He did,” Nessia replied. “I was so surprised. I never knew Chuck had that kind of ability. He used both magic and intimidation to overwhelm his opponents. Still... I’m sensitive to magic, so I know Chuck has very strong magical powers. It’s just that—the way he fought was impressive. It’s like he’d been in dozens of battles before.”

Mary nodded reluctantly. “I’ll admit, I underestimated him. Everyone did. And today... he proved us wrong.”

Mary lowered her head as if hiding the expression on her face. What happened between Chuck and her was still fresh in her memory, and remembering it made her cheeks feel as if they were burning.

Alex leaned back in his chair, smirking faintly. “I told you. Our club isn’t made of pushovers.”

Nessia smiled. “It was a one-sided display of power. He even made Caspian call him ‘Sir’ in front of the crowd. Lastly, he also called his brother a peasant, and the other nobles mongrels. Do you know how humiliating it is for a noble to be called a peasant or a mongrel?”

“Oh, I can imagine,” Alex replied, picturing the scene in his head. “I’m sure Chuck will be in the spotlight for a few days.”

“Word has already spread to the upper years,” Princess Xenia said. “Some of them are curious about him now. You know how it is. When someone suddenly goes from weak to strong overnight, people will start watching.”

Alex nodded in sincere agreement. After all, he knew that Chuck’s confidence then was mostly thanks to the Conqueror’s Heart Potion the latter consumed before the sparring match.

He was also a little worried. If Chuck were to become addicted or over-reliant on such a potion, it would start a vicious cycle of him suffering from withdrawal symptoms and being forced to consume it regularly.

Charles, who was listening to the discussion, suddenly spoke up.

“I think Chuck’s rise in power has something to do with the Trial,” Charles commented. “I’m sure all of us have learned a thing or two from our experience.”

Everyone nodded, including Lotte.

According to Latifa’s second Alter, she also gained something after the trial ended.

As to what it was, the only one who knew was Latifa.

“I believe that whatever we acquired in the Heracle Mountain must be kept secret,” Alex said. “Unless it’s absolutely necessary, make sure you do not tell anyone about it. On that note, we should also prepare for the Preliminary Exams.”

“Seriously, having back-to-back events is exhausting,” Nessia complained. “We just finished the Battle Royale, then we went to the Heracle Mountain. Then, a month from now, we will be having our Preliminary Exams. Time sure flies, huh?”

“Indeed.” Princess Xenia nodded. “But Alex, do you know what kind of Preliminary Exam we will have this year? I’m sure the staff has an idea, but they still haven’t revealed anything to the student body.”

“I have an idea on what it is,” Alex replied. “If I’m not mistaken, the Preliminary will be a Dungeon Expedition.”

Charles flinched after hearing the details of the exam. The teenage boy had absolute trust when it came to whatever Alex was saying.

If Alex were to say that the sky would fall tomorrow, Charles would believe it without a shred of doubt.

And that only made his anxiety worse. After all, he had learned the hard way that he and dungeons weren’t a good combination.

Chapter 288: Preparation For The Preliminary Exam [Part 2]

If Alex’s words were true, then wouldn’t he be doomed when the Preliminary Exam comes?

Charles’ passive skill, Challenger’s Mark, would basically summon a stampede whenever he step foot into a dungeon.

Noticing Charles’ anxiety, Alex faced the other party and gave him a reassuring smile. “Don’t worry. I already have a plan in mind.”

Similar to the Battle Royale, all the Classes from Class F up to Class A would participate in this dungeon expedition.

But this dungeon would be something especially made by Professor Rowan with his space magic.

After what happened in the Battle Royale, the Headmaster didn’t want to suffer any casualties and made those who opposed him criticize the academy.

The Demon Worshiper’s sudden attack on the Battle Royale had already put everyone on edge, so having a second invasion would seriously damage the academy’s reputation.

"A dungeon expedition?" Princess Xenia frowned. "Where did you get this information?"

As a member of the Royal Family and a student of Class A, the Princess and her brother, Prince Edward, would usually be informed about these things ahead of the public.

Alex knowing information ahead of people with their status just showed how formidable their club president was.

"Didn't I tell you I'm a Seer?" Alex replied with a smirk. "I sometimes get visions about these things."

"So you also foresaw the Demon Worshiper Invasion during the Battle Royale before it happened?" Princess Xenia asked.

"Yes." Alex nodded.

"Then why didn't you tell the staff about it?" Princess Xenia inquired.

"The reason is really simple," Alex answered. "They will not believe me because I don't have any proof."

"So you took matters into your own hands because you knew that the Demon Worshipers were coming?" Mary asked.

"Yes." Alex nodded. "And fortunately, my gamble worked."

Of course, he didn't mention that he, Dim Dim, and Nessia had worked tirelessly to ensure that their Club would come out on top of the Battle Royale.

"I see. That must be why Chuck didn't leave my side during that event." Princess Xenia frowned. "I thought he was just being annoying."

Alex chuckled in amusement. It was only now that he found out what Chuck had done during the Battle Royale. After all, he had been too busy dealing with the Demon Worshipers.

“So what are we going to do this time?” Princess Xenia asked. “I will give you my full support.”

After becoming a club member of Endless Horizon, Princess Xenia realized that this was not just a club meant for fun. It couldn't be a coincidence that Alex and his members had constantly at the center of the major events happening in the First Years.

But she was most impressed with Alex's guts, daring to clash with the Crest Clubs, who held absolute power in the academy, second only to the Student Council.

While she didn't want to admit it, she was always looking for a touch of excitement in her life.

The Battle Royale and the Trial of the Heracle Mountain were right up her alley. And for some reason, she also believed that she was in good hands as long as Alex was the one who was steering the ship called Endless Horizon.

She and her brother already had a few chats, discussing Alex's background.

Unfortunately, they failed to dig up anything. Was he a commoner? Or maybe he was an exiled noble from a faraway kingdom who wound up in the Floating Islands of Thalloria and started his new life there.

“First, let me explain about the mechanics of the dungeon expedition,” Alex said. “But, remember this. Whatever you hear from me should not leave this club room. There's a chance that all our preparations will be in vain if the Headmaster or the Staff were to know that we knew the contents of the exam beforehand.”

Everyone nodded in understanding, not wanting to betray Alex's trust.

Seeing that everyone was waiting for him to discuss his plan, the young man shared the information about the event, which he had learned through the game.

“Unlike the battle royale, the focus of this exam is to gain as many points as possible,” Alex stated. “Points are earned by killing monsters. The stronger the monsters, the higher the points. It’s similar to the event that Professor Gareth had made us do in the Mistral Weave Forest.

“Princess, since you and Mary are in Class A, I believe you are going to form a team with your brother, correct?”

“Right.” Princess Xenia nodded. “My brother is a prodigy like me. I believe he will become the next Supreme Magus.”

Alex smiled faintly because what the princess was saying was indeed the future for her brother, Prince Edward.

As one of the Main Heroes of ELO, Prince Edward was a cheat character.

He would automatically gain one point in Intelligence and Magic every time a stat was added to his Stat Parameters.

This made him the strongest mage class in the game, while Renard was the strongest Physical attacker.

As for Astrea’s brother, Cassian, who was also one of the Heroes in the story, he was more of an All-Rounder.

Unlike Renard and Prince Edward, Cassian would gain a stat on either Strength or Intelligence every time a stat point was added.

The increase of stats alternated between these two Stats Parameters, resulting in an ideal Magic Knight build.

“Very well. It will be a competition between your team and ours,” Alex said. “But regardless of who wins between us, our two parties will take first and second place.”

“Oh? You sound very confident.” Princess Xenia arched an eyebrow. “Then again, with my team, we have a high chance of becoming the highest scorer in the Preliminary Exam.”

“You’re right.” Alex nodded. “But you will only get a chance to become the top 1 if you listen to my plan. If you don’t, regardless of who you team up with, you will not get the highest score, no matter what.”

“While I’m inclined to disagree, I know better than to argue with you,” Princess Xenia stated. “Since you sound very confident that we will lose if we don’t follow your plan, then I will believe you. The only problem is my brother.

“You see, after what happened in the Lionheart Society, it is impossible for him to not hold a grudge against you. There’s a chance that he’ll be unwilling to cooperate with your plan.”

“Well, if he doesn’t, then it’s his problem.” Alex shrugged. “We’ll talk more about this a week before the Preliminary Exam starts. For now, I want you all to make preparations for a dungeon expedition.”

“”Okay.””

After they escaped the Dungeon of Beginnings, Alex told Charles to never tell anyone about his passive skill, Challenger’s Mark.

The young man warned him that if others knew, they might exploit Charles, or worse, eliminate him due to the power he possessed.

Last but not the least was the fact that Charles had another secret to keep.

He was someone the scholars of the world referred to as “Void-Touched”.

Someone who had managed to escape his fate to die due to Alex’s intervention.

This change had turned Charles into a Half-Monster, allowing him to transform into a Legendary-Grade Existence.

Right now, he was still unable to control this power.

The only thing he could do was partially transform his arms and legs depending on the situation.

If people were to know that he was a Void-Touched, they might eliminate him to prevent a future threat to the Kingdom of Avalon.

Chapter 289: The Tale Of Alex Stratos [Part 1]

Alex deliberately stayed behind after adjourning the meeting.

Since the others had their own business to attend to, they left the clock tower one by one. Once he was certain that everyone but Latifa and Lotte were out, he approached the sleeping beauty's bed and looked at the young fox lady.

Lotte stood at the side, her arms crossed over her chest as she watched Alex. A faint smile adorned her lips, her eyes slightly squinted as if looking at something very amusing.

"Latifa, can we talk?" Alex asked as he sat on the bed. "I want to ask you something."

No answer.

Looking at Latifa's face, Alex was almost sure she was asleep, just like always.

But there was something that didn't escape his notice—when he sat on the side of the bed and asked his question, her tail started to gently sway. Was she really asleep?

Since he had no way to verify, Alex went with the safer option, asking her Second Alter, Lotte, instead.

"Lotte, can you or Latifa enter people's dreams?" Alex asked.

“No comment,” Lotte answered.

“What do you mean no comment?” Alex blinked. “I’m just asking a simple question.”

“And I’m just giving you a simple answer.” Lotte smiled sweetly.

“No comment is not an answer.”

“It is a reply, no?”

Alex sighed before glancing on Latifa’s swaying tail, which seemed to be mocking him. For a brief moment, the young man was tempted to hold that tail and press it against his cheek to feel how soft it was.

However, he couldn’t possibly do that. After all, Latifa was a girl. Holding her tail without permission would be inappropriate.

He could still remember that the young lady had kicked his character, Alex Stratos, in the game when an option to hold her tail appeared on the choices.

At that time, he felt it was the obvious choice.

Unfortunately, his affection rating for Latifa was very low at that time, so instead of raising her affection, it only made it decrease.

But it didn’t end there. Latifa also unleashed a 99-hit Combo, instantly killing his game character on the spot.

Alex didn’t want to experience that suffering in real life!

Suddenly, Alex had a thought.

He leaned a little closer to the young lady before saying something.

“Let’s go sing Karaoke next time.”

The fox tail that was gently swaying earlier stood straight, its hairs hardening like needles.

Alex also saw the young lady subconsciously clench her fists, and her expression turned into a pout.

Although this couldn’t be considered as evidence, the young lady’s reaction was too funny to ignore.

Lotte, who was looking at the two, covered her lips as her body shook from time to time.

Clearly, she was holding back her laughter as she also found Latifa’s reaction quite funny.

“So you’re not going to admit anything, huh?” Alex asked. “Hmph! Since you and the Latifa in my dream are different people, I’ll make sure to give her a hug. I’ll also hold her tail while I’m at it.”

Latifa’s tail, which already stood on end, ignited with a purple flame, which made Alex hastily back away.

“You’re not allowed to hug me in reality or in a dream,” Latifa replied, glaring at Alex.

“So you’re the Latifa in my dream, correct?”

“Huh? What are you talking about?”

“You just admitted it earlier!”

Latifa frowned. "I didn't admit to anything. However, you're not allowed to touch me if you dream of me."

Alex sighed and raised both of his hands in surrender.

"Okay, let's talk this out." Alex grabbed a chair and placed it right beside the bed.

After sitting on it and making himself comfortable, he gazed at Latifa and asked in a serious tone.

"We both saw each other's memories," Alex said. "I don't know what you saw, but I believe you saw some unbelievable things, right?"

Latifa puffed up her cheeks before lying back down on the bed, facing the other side and only showing her back to Alex.

Clearly, she didn't want to talk.

In all honesty, Latifa saw unbelievable things.

However, it wasn't the memories that Alex had on Earth.

The memories that Latifa saw were the memories of Alex Stratos.

The Alex who faced off against Boss Monsters, which were Rank 7 and higher.

Latifa was truly shocked when she saw Alex's Dungeon Raids alongside his guild members.

She also saw him die in some of those raids, which made her feel confused.

In the end, she thought that they might be the memories of Alex's past lives, similar to the time when she and Alex were in the Morgim Trials.

Because of this, she decided to enter his dreams to see if she could gain some information about his past lives.

However, what she saw was a world very different from her own.

Noelle, who had a very close relationship with Alex, seemed to know her as well for some reason.

In fact, Latifa found the dream quite weird since she was unable to manipulate it.

The young lady wished to know more about Alex, so she entered his dream to see traces of his past.

But whenever she tried to dreamwalk, she would always find herself inside the apartment of a young man who didn't look like Alex at all.

However, Latifa knew with every fiber of her being that the young man was really Alex.

He had dark-brown hair and brown eyes. Although he wasn't as handsome as the current Alex, he still had this charm that could attract ladies if he put some effort in his looks.

Also, Noelle seemed to be a little older than her as well, but not by much. At most, she was in her late teenage years by human standards.

Outside of Alex's apartment was a world that was very different from the world she was in.

She took in these sights and sounds, thinking that it might also be part of Alex's other past lives, which he dreamed subconsciously.

But when they took her to the Karaoke Shop, Latifa experienced something that made her question her life choices.

Noelle sang beautifully, and even Latifa, who wasn't well-versed in the musical arts, enjoyed it greatly.

Alex also sang wonderfully, making her heart skip a beat. Frankly, she would like to listen to him more.

However, when she tried to imagine the singing of the Alex she knew, the Alex in the dream transformed into the silver-haired young man she was familiar with.

Although she was surprised about this sudden turn of events, she was still very happy because her wish was granted.

However, the moment Alex Stratos sang, the world shattered completely, and she fainted then and there.

When she woke up, she suffered from a migraine, which lasted for hours.

Since then, she decided to put her dreamwalking on hold for the time being, until she understood what happened in Alex's dream.

The young lady's thought was broken when he once again heard Alex talk to her.

"Latifa, look at me," Alex said. "Let's talk."

Latifa didn't answer right away, and Alex remained silent as if waiting for her answer.

This silence lasted for a few minutes before Latifa turned around to look at him.

"I'm sorry," Latifa said. "I intruded in your dreams without permission."

"That's fine," Alex answered. "Now, can you tell me what you saw in my memories? I don't want you to have any misunderstandings, so I wanted to have a proper talk. That way, I can explain things properly."

Latifa nodded. "Okay. I also wanted to know the truth. Did you really fight against the Rank 8 World Boss, Cerberus?"

Alex blinked. "Excuse me?"

"I said, did you really fight the Rank 8 World Boss Cerberus?" Latifa repeated. "How did you manage to survive that encounter when you're just a Rank 2? That's impossible, right?"

Alex tilted his head to the side because the Rank 8 World Boss, Cerberus, was one of the Raids that he had participated in with his guildmates.

"Also, did you fight the Rank 8 Field Boss, Dullahan, with only two people supporting you? That's a little insane, don't you think? I saw you die three times fighting it. But since you died so many times, how come you're still alive?"

"Do you lose your power every time you die? Is that why you are only a Rank 2 Warrior right now? Are you an immortal or something?"

"Last but not least, I saw you when you were still a baby. You were held by a middle-aged man wearing a crown. Are you perhaps a prince of a faraway kingdom?"

Lotte, who was listening quietly from the side, looked at Alex in disbelief.

There was no reason for her to doubt Latifa's words. Alex must've truly fought against strong monsters in the past.

Latifa was looking at Alex with curiosity and waited for the young man to answer her questions about the handsome and dashing Shield Savant she saw in his memories.

Chapter 290: The Tale Of Alex Stratos [Part 2]

The young lady's revelation shocked Alex. Those weren't the memories he thought she'd see.

But the most curious thing was her mention of a baby and a man she had assumed to be King. A frown appeared on the young man's face as he wondered why Latifa saw such a thing.

"You saw me as a baby?" Alex asked. "And I was being held by a person you think is King?"

"Yes," Latifa replied. "Is the Alex in your dream your past life or something, then you reincarnated as that baby in this world? If yes, then it all makes sense now."

"Right... it makes perfect sense," Alex muttered. 'No, it doesn't!'

Of course, he didn't share his thoughts out loud since he barely had a vague idea as to why Latifa saw a baby Alex in his memory.

After organizing his thoughts, Alex asked Latifa to share some more of the memories she had seen during their brief synchronization.

Latifa then reiterated his memories as the Shield Savant, which made Alex breathe a sigh of relief in his heart.

'Good thing she only saw the memories of Alex Stratos, not my memories of Earth,' Alex patted his chest gently. 'Also, aside from the monster raids, she said a few things about my childhood in this world.'

Latifa carefully observed the young man, who seemed to be deep in thought.

She had told him everything, hoping that he could explain why the Alex before her was far too different from the Alex she had seen in his memories.

A few minutes later, Alex finally raised his head, and looked at Latifa in the eye.

“Latifa, there are some things I can tell you and some things that I can’t tell you,” Alex said carefully.

He didn’t know how much he should share since it would be very difficult to make it make sense for her without lying.

No.

Alex truly had no choice but to lie at this point. He couldn’t possibly tell her that everything she saw was just his data in a “game” called Endless Leveling Online, in which she was one of the characters.

“I understand.” Latifa nodded. “Just tell me what you can tell me.”

“First of all, the Alex you saw fighting against the Rank 8 World Boss, Cerberus, is me and not me at the same time,” Alex said. “The same can be said for the fight against the Dullahan.

“You can think of it this way—you didn’t see the memories of my past but the memories of my future. I’m obviously just a Rank 2 Oathkeeper, so how could I possibly fight Rank 8 Monsters?”

Latifa blinked before reluctantly nodding in agreement. “Yes, it’s indeed strange. The Alex I saw in my dreams is cooler and more charismatic than the current you. He is also stronger, if you know what I mean.”

“... Hahaha.” Alex laughed nervously. ‘Good thing she believed me!’

Latifa tilted her head slightly, her fox ears twitching as if she were trying to read the truth between his words.

“But...” Latifa said softly, “if those are your ‘future’ memories, why did I see you as a baby before all of that? And why was that man holding you like you were his child?”

Alex’s smile stiffened. Looks like he still wasn’t as safe as he thought he would be.

"I can't explain that part yet," he replied. "Not because I don't want to... but because I don't have any recollection of it. I mean, I was just a baby at that time, right?"

Latifa nodded in understanding. "I forgot to mention that I saw a younger version of you. I think around nine or ten years old, pursued by some armed warriors.

"There is an old knight escorting you at that time. He was wearing silver armor, holding a shield with a gryphon's emblem embedded on it.

At this, Alex's eyes widened in shock. "Is he holding a black war hammer?"

"That's right!" Latifa nodded. "It was a black war hammer that seemed to be made from obsidian or something like that."

'The Guardian of the North...' Alex thought. 'Don't tell me...'

The young man once again remembered the backstory that he had written when he created his character, Alex Stratos.

This confirmed his assumption that Latifa had only seen the memories of his game character. But instead of feeling relieved, this revelation made Alex feel anxious instead.

"Alex, who are you really?" Latifa asked.

Alex was still reeling from the information overload, so he spoke the first thing on his mind.

"I'm your future lover," Alex answered.

"Wha..."

“Huh?!’

When Alex realized that he made a slip-up, he immediately waved his hands to deny everything he had said.

“W-wait, that’s not true... I mean, it’s true to a certain extent, but it’s not true right now... but I’ll make it happen... arghhhh!” Alex scratched his head because the more he tried to explain, the more things would get out of hand.

After taking a few deep breaths, Alex stared straight at Latifa.

“Please forget what I said right now,” Alex said in a serious tone.

“O-Okay,” Latifa nodded. “I’ll forget about it.”

“Don’t forget it completely.”

“Hey! Make up your mind already!” Lotte smacked Alex’s head, which made the young man cry out in pain. “Do you want her to forget or do you want her not to forget?!”

“Lotte, why are you hurting your future lover?” Alex rubbed the spot where the young lady smacked him.

“It seems that I didn’t hit you hard enough.” Lotte picked up a chair from the club room and raised it high up to smack the living lights out of the young man, who was making fun of her.

“O-Oi! Time out!” Alex summoned Everguard and took a defensive stance. “I-It was just a joke! But it might not be a joke as well!”

“Damn you. I told you to make up your mind already!”

“Murder! Help!”

Alex knew that the situation couldn't be salvaged for the time being, so he decided to use Shield Charge, aiming for the door of the club room.

He cancelled the skill mid-way, and hurried out of the clock tower before Lotte could smack the living lights out of him.

The young man wanted to talk to Latifa more, but things had gotten out of hand.

For the time being, he decided to make a tactical retreat and wait for everyone to calm down before they resume their discussion.