

Endless 481

Chapter 481: How About You Pick On Someone Your Own Size?

"I see. So he does have potential," Duke Percival said after the first battle royale ended. "Even though everyone was targeting him, he still managed to reach the end, even surpassing a few Rank 4 with his techniques."

Having paid close attention to Renard, the Duke could accurately assess that he was strong enough to be Rank 3.

Among the contestants, there had been two Rank 4. Instead of fighting them directly, Renard had used the other participants as shields and even incited the others to target them as they had eliminated other participants left and right.

Agreeing with Renard about the threat these two had posed, the other fighters had joined him in attacking and eliminating them early.

Their goal of eliminating Renard hadn't changed, but it had been wiser to partner with him and take down the two Rank 4 combatants.

His two Martial Techniques, Berserker Dragon [EX], and Tempest Step [EX], had worked wonders.

It had allowed him to hit harder and move faster than ever before. Obviously, this had been very advantageous when he brawled with the others.

"It seems that you really have an eye for talent, Celestria." Duke Percival smirked.

"Father, I know what you're thinking," Lady Celestria replied. "Please don't bother him. He's just doing his best to become strong."

"Look at you being overprotective." Duke Percival leaned back. "Relax. I'm not going to kill him. But maybe I'll teach him a lesson so that he will know his place?"

Suddenly, a small steel ball bounced off Duke Percival's forehead.

The Duke then glanced at the little white bun, who was glaring at him from the top of the stone railings of their balcony.

Before he could even do anything, the little bun took out another steel ball from its dimensional storage and threw it at him so quickly he wasn't able to block it.

Once again, the steel ball bounced off the Duke's head harmlessly.

However, what it lacked in physical damage, it more than made up for with emotional damage.

The Duke was one of the most important nobles in Solara. Usually, no one would dare to be rude to him, especially in his own kingdom, but here a little bun was treating him as nothing but a joke!

Lady Celestria recognized Dim Dim right away because she had seen it many times in Frieden Academy.

She was now too worried about its safety to wonder how it had gotten to their balcony and embarrassed her father.

Just as the Saintess was about to reach out to protect Dim Dim, Duke Percival moved first.

But just as his hand was about to touch the little bun, it was lifted out of his reach.

"Oh, there you are, Dim Dim."

An old man wearing gangster sunglasses picked up the little bun and patted its head as the Duke's eyes widened in shock.

"I've been looking all over for you," Lex said with a smile. "Well then, shall we go now?"

Dim Dim nodded. "Dim!"

Lex then turned to leave, but his path was blocked by Duke Percival.

"Is that little monster your pet?" Duke Percival asked.

Dim Dim puffed up its cheeks and pointed at the annoying Duke.

"Dim Dim!" Dim Dim declared that it was neither a monster nor a pet.

"Just like Dim Dim said, it is no one's pet," Lex replied. "By the way, I overheard you planning to teach that child a lesson. Why do you bully kids? How about you pick on someone your own size?"

"Pick on someone my own size?" Duke Percival sneered. "Are you talking about yourself, old man? Are you sure your bones are strong enough?"

Lex chuckled because he had learned to suppress his aura in Slime Paradise until he was indistinguishable from any old man who could be seen in the countryside.

However, those who could be fooled by this would suddenly find themselves facing an existence that had once fought on par with a Paragon.

"The young sure are fearless, aren't they, Dim Dim?" Lex smiled faintly.

"Bleh!" Dim Dim stuck out its tongue and made faces at the Duke.

Originally, Alex had asked Dim Dim to pass a letter to Lady Celestria because he hoped to speak to her one-on-one. However, the Duke's attitude towards Renard had pissed the little bun off, so it had decided to punish him instead.

The two guards standing behind the Duke stepped forward with the intention of apprehending the old man, who had suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

However, when they were a few meters away from Lex, he unleashed a pressure that brought them to their knees.

This pressure then washed over Duke Percival, forcing him back.

“W-Who are you?!” Duke Percival finally understood that he wasn’t dealing with a normal person..

“Someone stronger than you,” Lex answered. “Do you want me to teach you a lesson so that you will remember your place?”

Having his words thrown back at him made the Duke frown. He was a Rank 6 Warrior, but the old man’s pressure made him realize that he had no chance of winning..

“Good sir, please calm down,” Lady Celestria said as she stood up. “My father was just joking earlier. He won’t really do something like that. It was just his way to make me behave.”

“Ahh! So it was just a joke.” Lex nodded. “Then is this the part where I should start laughing?”

Dim Dim giggled, amused by Lex’s expression and reply.

Lady Celestria also smiled because the old man had already dispersed the pressure that he was releasing earlier.

Lex then casually walked towards the exit, but when he passed the Duke, he lightly patted the middle-aged man’s shoulder.

“I am the Guardian of those kids,” Lex stated. “If you have any issue with their behaviour, just let me know.”

Dim Dim suddenly remembered what it had come for and jumped towards the Saintess.

Instinctively, Lady Celestria caught the little bun and squished its soft, chubby cheeks.

“Dim Dim!” Dim Dim took out a letter while its cheeks were being squished.

“For me?” Lady Celestria asked.

Dim Dim nodded. “Dim!”

The Saintess took the letter and kept it inside her storage ring before her father could snatch it from her.

She would read it later in the privacy of her room.

Chapter 482: The Gallant Blade

After completing its mission, Dim Dim leapt and landed on top of Lex’s head.

The Old Knight didn’t mind the little bun doing this because he knew that Dim Dim preferred to watch the world from on top of people’s heads.

It then put on its gangster sunglasses before pointing at its eyes with two fingers and then turning those fingers towards the Duke.

Lex found the little bun’s antics quite amusing, but since they had already done what they came for, there was no need to linger.

A few minutes later, when the Duke was certain that their uninvited guests had disappeared, he gave one of his knights an order.

The knight bowed respectfully and left to find the person that the Duke was looking for.

'Rank 7... perhaps even a Rank 8,' the Duke thought as he returned to his seat. 'It seems that I still underestimated the connections of that brat.'

Duke Percival gave his daughter a side-long glance. The Saintess had now shifted her attention back to the arena.

The second group, which included Emil Milan, had arrived.

Among the nobles, he was known as the Gentle Scholar. Out of all the Saintess's suitors, he and Henry Moritz were the most favored by the Duke.

Perhaps wanting to forget the earlier incident, the Duke focused his attention on the next round of battle.

Emil and Henry had recently made a breakthrough. Both of them were now Rank 4.

Truly, they were among the most outstanding in their generation and were poised to become future leaders.

When the signal to fight was given, chaos immediately erupted.

It was very noticeable that the combatants of Group B had split into factions, which were now fighting against each other.

Emil led one such faction.

Within minutes, everyone could tell that his faction was dominating the other teams.

Unlike Renard's desperate struggle against everyone, Emil's superiority seemed almost effortless.

Half an hour later, his team was the only one left.

As several spectators had anticipated, two members conceded, leaving Emil and his cousin as the victors that would proceed to the semi-finals.

“And there you have it!” Alex shouted. “That was an exciting match! Now, let’s see what the next group has in store for us!”

He was having such a fun time being the tournament’s commentator that he managed to refrain from badmouthing anyone.

He was even hyping Emil and his cousin up so that more spectators would bet on them winning before the semi-finals started tomorrow.

That way, he could win even more money if Renard won.

At the end of the first Battle Royale, Alex had even publicly raised the possibility that Renard’s victory was due to luck!

“If I had participated, Renard would have been eliminated within the first three minutes!” he had boasted.

Of course, none of his club members took his words to heart because they knew he had bet their club funds on Renard!

If they hadn’t already known about this, they would have never believed that he really had faith in Renard no matter what he did.

When Group C entered the arena, Alex glanced at Henry Moritz—who had every intention of outshining Renard or Emil—before raising his hand.

“Battle Start!”

And with that, mayhem and cheers engulfed the Colosseum once more.

Henry Moritz moved like a blade drawn from its sheath. He was fast, sharp, and attacked without hesitation.

A controlled fury burned in the young man's eyes. He refused to be overshadowed by Renard's surprising rise or Emil's easy dominance.

Today, he would remind the other nobles, especially the Duke of Dawn, that he was still one of the brightest stars of Solara's younger generation.

Several participants lunged toward him, believing that eliminating him early would give them a fighting chance.

They were wrong.

Henry's sword moved in a blur, annihilating those who had tried to attack him. His elegance in battle had earned him a nickname—the Gallant Blade.

His sword strikes were deadly yet graceful. Their power came from his determination to become stronger, which was now obvious to everyone in the audience.

But unlike traditional swordsmen, Henry also knew how to add variety to his attacks so his fighting style would be more unpredictable.

A pained groan escaped one of his attacker's lips as he planted his foot on the young man's chest and sent him flying.

"Too slow," Henry murmured as he eliminated another combatant, who had tried to stab him in the back.

He was already powerful on his own, but that didn't mean he looked down on strategy. Like Emil, he also had two helpers by his side.

They were friends who admired him and had willingly followed him into the arena. Together, they were able to cover each other's weaknesses and force their enemies on the defensive.

Duke Percival nodded with approval from his balcony.

"As expected of the Moritz heir," the Duke commented. "His technique hasn't declined. A leader among young men."

Lady Celestria remained quiet. She couldn't concentrate on the battle, busy wondering about the letter that Dim Dim had given her.

Her heart was still unsettled after the earlier incident with Lex, not from fear but curiosity.

Just then, the crowd exploded in cheers as Henry managed to defeat the Rank 4 leading an opposing team.

The battle between the two groups was intense, but Henry still managed to come up on top.

"Unbelievable!" Alex shouted. "Henry Moritz defeated a Rank 4 with such ease, befitting his title as the Gallant Blade. Oho? Is he showing off for someone on the balcony? Maybe a certain Saintess watching from above?"

Henry's eyebrow twitched.

Celestria covered her mouth and coughed softly, pretending not to hear the teasing.

Duke Percival glanced at the commentator's booth and snorted. "That brat has quite a slimy way with words."

“But he certainly makes the tournament livelier,” Celestria replied.

The young lady didn’t tell her father that Dim Dim was Alex’s “Nature Spirit”.

At least, that was what he had said back then when she had asked about the little bun.

When the battle finally ended, Alex made sure to praise Henry so much that even the latter was starting to feel embarrassed.

When it was time for the fourth battle royale, Alex smirked when he saw Charles entering the arena.

He had registered his friend and paid the sign-up fee.

Alex wanted to build Charles’ confidence and this tournament was the perfect way to do it.

Nessia had been opposed to this until Alex had mentioned that the champion would get seventy percent of the money from the prize pool.

“The prize pool comes from the fees collected from the participants,” Alex had explained.

“Is that so?” Nessia had asked before turning to Charles. “Beat Renard if you have to.”

Charles had scratched his head, surprised by his girlfriend’s sudden support.

“I will give you a special gift if you manage to win,” Nessia had promised.

Standing in the arena, Charles still had no idea what kind of gift it would be, but just the thought of it filled him with competitiveness.

He had shocked the First Years of Solara Academy by defeating Gideon so easily, but that had only been the tip of the iceberg. Now, he would show everyone the fruits of his training.

Chapter 483: That's High Quality Boyfriend Material Right There!

In Endless Leveling Online, Charles Lambert stood out among the playable Unique Characters because of how notoriously difficult it was to get past his tutorial stage.

Even the professional gamers could only raise a white flag in surrender, stuck at the start of Charles' route. His quest was simply impossible.

What exactly made everyone give up on him, you ask?

His Unique Skill, Challenger's Mark.

A skill that passively attracted aggressive monsters as soon as they were within several meters of his range.

That itself posed trouble, but it wasn't all that bad. At least not compared to what would happen whenever Charles set foot into a dungeon.

Challenger's Mark made it nearly impossible for anyone to clear the Dungeon of Beginnings.

Not only would his aggro range expand to two kilometers, but the monsters affected by it would also turn berserk and manically charge at him, aiming for the kill.

The worst part... the range also applied vertically. In other words, the lower floors of the dungeon were also affected, resulting in a Dungeon Outbreak.

Alex had been the very first to clear his tutorial quest. And for the feat of clearing something deemed nearly impossible, the God of Games, Eriol, had sent him to Arcana.

Now, that same troublesome skill had evolved into Challenger's Mark [EX].

This time, its range was no longer two kilometers.

It was SIX kilometers!

If found out, this skill would make Charles the mortal enemy of adventurers, whose livelihood depended on Dungeon diving.

More importantly, a Dungeon Outbreak was a serious matter. If things went wrong, it could wipe out entire villages, towns, and even cities.

And yet, a character who was supposed to die from it was still very much alive, standing in the arena to fight in the tournament.

Charles glanced at his savior and benefactor, Alex Stratos, who was also looking back at him with a warm smile.

“Everyone, are you ready to rumble?!” Alex asked, to which the contestants and audience cheered in response.

Even Charles found himself raising his hand and shouting along.

With practiced movements, Alex raised his arm and announced the start of the battle.

“Battle start!”

As soon as the signal landed, Charles rushed to the very edge of the arena.

His choice of action wasn’t unique, and many others did the same.

While these participants deemed it potentially safer, reality didn’t guarantee that.

After all, only the last two standing would proceed to the next round. If they all avoided fighting, the battle royale would drag on.

Fortunately, the warriors didn't disappoint the audience and engaged in combat.

His hands turned obsidian black from a partial void transformation, giving him superhuman strength.

The young man's hands weren't the only parts that transformed.

Concealed by his shoes, his feet had also blackened, giving him a boost in speed and power as he unleashed the basic martial arts that Alex had recommended to him, which he bought from the Exchange Center with his own Academy Points.

The fighting skill he had studied was called the Stone Breaking Fist.

As implied by its name, this martial art allowed its practitioners to unleash punches that could break stones and boulders.

It might be basic, but in the hands of Charles, it was a deadly weapon that broke the bones of the contestants targeting him.

He complemented this martial art by a movement technique called Void Footwork, which let him move in unpredictable steps, making it hard for the enemy to know where he would be as he eliminated one opponent after the other.

By the time half of the contestants were already eliminated, everyone had already noticed Charles' skillful performance.

Even Duke Percival took notice of the young man who had been defeating nearby opponents within three blows.

Every punch he delivered hit like a car, sending some of his opponents flying as soon as his fist connected with their bodies.

“Oh my gosh! Who’s that handsome guy over there?” Alex said, pointing at Charles. “He’s so awesome! So charming, so suave! If I were a girl, I’d definitely confess to him after this tournament ends! That’s high-quality boyfriend material right there!”

Hearing Alex’s nonsensical statement, Charles almost tripped while charging at his opponent. The last thing he wanted was to be the center of attention. However, Alex seemed hell-bent on shoving him under the spotlight.

From the audience seats, Nessia also glared at Alex for making Charles stand out too much with his comments.

The rest of the club members only chuckled, giggled, or smirked, amused by Alex’s new troublemaking antics.

Chuck laughed out loud and even started to cheer for Charles. He shouted, “I was the one who raised that kid!”

Soon enough, only ten people remained, each strong in their own right.

Among those ten people were two teams, composed of three or four young men respectively.

Charles and the other two solo players had no one to cover for them and had purely survived through sheer skill and effort.

“Let’s eliminate the others first,” one of the team leaders proposed. “We can fight against each other once the small fries are defeated.”

“Good.” The other leader nodded. “We’ll target that girl, so your team shall deal with those two guys.”

“Make it quick.”

“Fine.”

After agreeing to a temporary truce, the two teams charged at Charles and the two other contestants.

Charles and the other guy exchanged a nod of understanding and also formed a temporary alliance with each other.

The young man and the leader of the group targeting them clashed with each other.

That initial exchange helped Charles figure out that his opponent was a Rank 4, supposedly stronger than him.

He felt no anxiety. On the contrary, he was ecstatic. For a long time, he’d been wanting to face someone stronger than him.

Alex had been doing that since they met, and Charles believed that if his benefactor could do it, so could he.

The clash between him and the leader resulted in a thunder-like rumble.

It forced Charles four steps backward while his opponent only took one.

That exchange told him their difference in strength, but Charles still wasn’t rattled in the slightest.

The black obsidian color coating his hands spread to his arms and to the rest of his body, leaving only his head.

He knew he wouldn’t be able to win unless he fought for real, so he decided to go all out.

But this transformation caught the attention of Duke Percival and Lady Celestria, who exchanged glances with each other.

“Is he one of them?” Duke Percival asked.

“I’m not sure,” Lady Celestria replied. “But he gives off the same presence.”

Duke Percival narrowed his gaze, locking onto Charles at the moment.

“I’ll assign people to pay close attention to him,” Duke Percival decided. “Unless he does something funny, we’ll keep observing him from afar.”

Lady Celestria nodded, agreeing it was the right thing to do.

Someone else in their Kingdom had powers similar to Charles, and that person was someone they didn’t dare to provoke.

‘Void-Touched...’ Lady Celestria mused. ‘To think one of them will appear here in the tournament. I wonder what will happen if that person finds out.’

The Saintess then glanced at Alex. The young man was still hyping the battle, centering the majority of his commentary on Charles.

Lady Celestria felt complicated. It seemed that Alex was surrounded by many unique and promising individuals that every kingdom would wish to sponsor and put under its umbrella.

Chapter 484: It’s Too Early To Party

“H-How?!” the leader of the group that Charles was fighting collapsed on the ground in disbelief.

He had unleashed his strongest punch at the young man, but the latter had managed to dodge it by a hair’s breadth and counterattacked at the same time.

The leader had thought that he could tank Charles' blow and retaliate with his own deadly strike, which he had been very confident of.

But not only had his punch missed its target, the force of his opponent's punch had far exceeded his expectations.

It was as if that single punch had blown away all the air inside his body. But that hadn't been all.

Charles, who seemed to have finally found the opportunity that he had been looking for, had unleashed three more combination attacks.

Each punch had emitted a sound similar to a large drum being beaten and it had brought the Rank 4 combatant to his knees before collapsing completely.

Without showing any mercy, Charles raised his foot and stomped it hard on the young man's back, making him turn into particles of light.

He panted for breath afterwards because his opponent was that strong.

The only reason why he had won was because the leader had underestimated him. Charles had waited for the perfect opportunity to deal his strongest strike, unleashing a blow that could smash a boulder to pieces.

Nessia felt her soul leaving her body when the defeated leader's two teammates ganged up on Charles while he was still trying to regain his bearings.

During that crucial moment, Charles pressed his palm on the ground and shouted.

"Summon!"

A magic circle expanded under his hand and a Rank 3 Obsidian Soldier Ant emerged in front of him.

The Obsidian Ant blocked the blows of the two teenagers, buying Charles some time.

The appearance of the two-meter tall ant surprised his opponents. But they were able to regain their composure right away.

They unleashed devastating blows against the monster, hoping to kill it. However, the Soldier Ant stood firm, blocking their attacks because it specialized in defense.

With an ally helping him, Charles targeted one of his opponents and dealt with him as fast as possible.

Acting as a tank, the Obsidian Ant made sure that no one would be able to sneak attack its Master.

There was no rule that forbade using summoned creatures in battle. They were regarded the same way as spells, a common sight during the battle royales as many magicians had joined the tournament to showcase their might.

Unfortunately for these magicians, they were targeted by the majority of the contestants before they could prepare their strongest spells.

Charles could summon at least five more Obsidian Soldier Ants, but he decided to settle with just one.

He didn't know how the judges would react if he summoned more, so he didn't increase the number of his minions.

After eliminating the first team, he glanced to check how the girl was doing.

The young man who had fought together with Charles had been eliminated first, so he decided to help the girl to even up the battlefield.

However, a glance was enough to tell him that the girl didn't need any help.

In fact, it was her opponents who needed it so badly!

'A Rank 4,' Charles thought as he looked at the young lady, who was wielding a war axe as if it was part of her body.

Her enemies weren't able to block her blows because they were simply too powerful.

Also, the crazed look in her eyes struck them with the fear that she was going to eat all of them alive! Try as they might, they couldn't shake this fear and eventually lost their will to keep fighting.

Charles decided not to interfere because the girl might set her sights on him if he did. He had also unsummoned the Soldier Ant and distanced himself from the axe-wielding girl.

"Ouch!" Alex exclaimed when he saw the girl cleave one of her opponents in half, reducing him into particles of light. "That has to hurt. It's a good thing that the safety spells of the arena are in effect. Otherwise, this would be a bloody tournament."

Even the audience didn't know if they should cheer or be intimidated by the young lady, who was clearly a dark horse.

A few minutes later, Alex declared the end of the fourth battle royale.

The eight survivors of each group now stood at the center of the arena, waving at the cheering crowds.

"Tomorrow, the semi-finals will be held!" Alex declared. "So, I hope that you will return to watch the fights tomorrow! It will start at nine in the morning. This is your announcer, Alex Stratos. It is a pleasure hosting this tournament for all of you!"

The young man then waved at the crowd, eliciting cheers and whistles.

After bidding everyone goodbye, the eight survivors glanced at their opponents before leaving.

Renard and Charles left together because they were technically allies, so they decided to look out for each other.

Alex also followed them to ensure that no one would use foul means to take them out before the battle next day.

A few hours later, they all gathered back at the hotel.

The First Years were very happy because Renard's and Charles' victories were also their victories.

Chuck wanted to party, but Alex and Princess Xenia stopped him.

"It's too early to celebrate," Alex said. "Also, they still have to fight tomorrow."

"Fine." Chuck sighed before suddenly remembering something. "By the way, thank you, Renard."

"Thank me for what?" Renard arched an eyebrow.

"For making me rich!" Chuck laughed. "I placed my bet on you and I have won a few thousand gold coins. You're the best."

"Thank you too, Renard," Nessia said with a smile. "I also earned over a thousand gold coins because of you."

The young lady then glanced at Alex, making the latter cough lightly.

"I have complete faith in you, Renard," Alex said. "You didn't disappoint me."

"... you bet on me too?" Renard asked.

“Yes.”

“How much did you win?”

“Oh... Just two million gold coins.”

A pin-drop silence descended on the room. This moment of peace was broken by Chuck, who looked at Alex in disbelief.

“T-Two million gold coins?!” Chuck exclaimed. “How much did you bet? A hundred thousand?!”

“Yes,” Alex replied.

He didn’t even bother to mention that his winnings were actually four million because Lumi had also made a bet under her name with his money.

Renard didn’t know how to feel after hearing that Alex earned millions of gold coins because of him.

However, seeing that everyone seemed ready to rob him, Alex felt anxious and hurriedly explained himself.

“I used our club funds to bet on Renard,” Alex explained. “So of course the money I earned is also for our club! As you may already know, we are still not getting a lot of funding, so I have to be resourceful to generate our budget for the year.”

After making everyone understand that the two million gold coins were their money for the club, they decided to not trouble Alex any longer.

Since it was their club’s money, it meant that it would be used to make their lives more comfortable.

Even Renard felt that he made a contribution, so he no longer pestered Alex. However, he made a mental note to use half of his savings, which was around fifty gold coins, to bet on himself tomorrow.

The first day of the tournament ended well. In fact, stories of the battles were now being shared in every tavern across the city. Now, everyone knew the names of the eight combatants who would be fighting each other when morning came.

Chapter 485: You're So Uncute Today

"So... Can you do it, Dim Dim?"

"... Dim."

Alex and Dim Dim were currently discussing a very important matter that would affect the upcoming matches.

For the next segment of the tournament, the plan was to let the eight contestants draw numbered balls from a box. And to maintain the level of hype, Alex wanted to make sure that regardless of who picked what, Renard, Charles, Emil, and Henry would not end up fighting each other.

Basically, the strongest four would be battling the weaker four, but the match-up must appear random.

Alex just had no idea how to make it work. Thinking the Dim Sum God might have a way, he asked if it could rig the placements in the tournament.

"Dim Dim."

"You could, but you won't?"

Dim Dim nodded. "Dim Dim."

"I understand." Alex sighed. "So we will just let Fate decide who fights against whom."

Truth be told, the young man didn't really care about the pairings that much. All he wished was that Renard and Charles wouldn't be pitted against each other tomorrow.

Although the chance was low, the possibility still existed.

Renard and Charles had both retired early so that they could get some proper rest for the battle

Meanwhile, Chuck and the other students were still up, too excited about the upcoming matches to fall asleep.

Also, after hearing how much the troublemaker had won at the gambling house after betting on Renard, the other students were also contemplating whether they should gamble as well.

Princess Xenia and Prince Edward didn't dissuade them, but cautioned that they should not place too large a bet.

"The higher the expectations, the greater the disappointment," Prince Edward said. "I know you want to support your fellow students, but just do things in moderation."

"Don't bet money you cannot afford to lose," Princess Xenia added.

After that reminder, everyone decided not to bet all their pocket money on Renard and Charles.

When morning finally came, Renard slowly opened his eyes and looked at the light coming through the window of his room.

His biological clock always woke him just a few minutes before sunrise. As a part of his daily routine, he spent a few minutes meditating before getting up.

This habit not only woke him up fully but also calmed his heart.

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Inside the Dawn Estate...

Lady Celestria rose from her bed and walked toward the window to look at the city as it slowly roused from its slumber.

She had a restless night, waking up every two to three hours for reasons only she knew.

Of course, the main reasons were the battle happening today and the letter Alex had passed to her.

In that letter, the young man mentioned that she shouldn't worry about Renard being targeted by the nobles outside of the Colosseum.

Alex already anticipated that some of the nobles might pull some dirty tricks, hindering Renard from participating in the tournament. As a preventative measure, he had asked Lex to keep an eye on Renard and deal with those who wished to bring him harm.

Duke Percival had been one of those people. But after meeting the old knight, he had decided that it was not wise to anger someone stronger than him.

He might be a Duke, but his position didn't mean that he could make enemies left and right.

Ordering his private soldiers to deal with the old man and the little bun was an option, but his gut instinct told him that doing so would only bring ruin to himself and his family.

As someone who had fought on many battlefields, Duke Percival trusted his sixth sense. After all, it had saved him in many life-and-death battles.

Lastly, Alex added in the letter that the Saintess better not play with Renard's heart. Because if she did, the president of the Endless Horizon Club would not sit idly and let her do as she pleased with one of his members.

“For someone who doesn’t get along well with Renard, he’s being overprotective,” Lady Celestria muttered.

However, since she had no intention of playing with Renard’s feelings anyway, she didn’t take offense.

If Renard won, he would gain some prestige. That might help deter those who harbored bad intentions against him.

Of course, her father might also do something to the young man to teach him a lesson. But after meeting the old knight, she had a feeling that her father wouldn’t make a move for the time being.

As for the other nobles, Lady Celestria had no ability to stop them.

Among the ladies of the nobility, her status was akin to a princess.

She was the Saintess, and any noble family would want her as a daughter-in-law.

Lady Celestria just hadn’t expected that her casual word would bring Renard so much trouble and force him into a very dangerous position.

‘I’ll believe you, Alex.’ Lady Celestria glanced in the direction of Solara Academy. ‘Make sure to keep him safe.’

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A few hours later...

After witnessing the intense battles that happened a day ago, the people were very curious who would win today.

According to the organizer's announcement, the semi-finals would be held today.

This meant that among the eight contestants, only two would remain. They would be the ones fighting in the championship match tomorrow.

Six battles were scheduled to be held today, and once the dust had settled, everyone would be able to see who among the members of the young generation would stand ahead of everyone.

"I'm getting nervous," Chuck said as he walked towards the Colosseum.

"Really?" Princess Xenia arched an eyebrow. "So, who did you place your bets on?"

"I split my pocket money and bet on Renard and Charles," Chuck replied. "That way, no matter who wins between them, I'll get my money back with a little bit of interest."

"That's a sound plan." Princess Xenia nodded.

"How about you?" Chuck asked. "Who did you bet on?"

"I don't gamble," Princess Xenia answered. "The members of the royal family of Avalon are not allowed to do such things."

"How about you, Mary?" Chuck glanced at the maid walking behind them. "Who did you put your money on?"

"None of your business," Mary replied without hesitation.

"You're so uncute today."

"That's it. You're sleeping on the floor tonight."

“... I’m sorry! Please forgive me!”

Nessia, Lapiz, and Lumi couldn’t help but smirk after hearing that banter.

Dim Dim was currently perched on top of Lapiz’s head. From afar, it looked like she was wearing a small white hat that was wearing its own gangster sunglasses.

Alex, Renard, and Charles had gone early to the Colosseum to avoid the crowd.

The student councillors guarded the eight participants, making sure that no one would get hurt under their watch.

“If you have grievances or grudges with each other, you can settle them in the tournament later,” Alex declared. “For now, we will decide your placement. All of you are to draw balls from this box. Each ball has a number.”

Although he was certain that they would not do anything against each other when the tournament was still ongoing, it wouldn’t hurt to give them a reminder to prevent potential problems from cropping up.

The young man watched as the contestants approached him, eager to know who they would be fighting in the arena today.

Chapter 486: Freeze The World Before My Eyes [Part 1]

“Those who share the same number will be fighting against each other. The numbers also decide who goes first. Those with number one will fight first and those with four will be the last.

“Lastly, the winners of Group One and Group Two will fight against each other to decide who progresses to the finals. The same will happen for the winners of Groups Three and Four.

“Don’t worry, our healers will ensure that you will be able to fight at your peak performance, so feel free to go all out and don’t worry about anything else.”

Alex glanced at all the contestants, stopping at the only girl among the final eight.

'I didn't think that she would join the tournament,' Alex thought.

She had long, dark blue hair, but it was her eyes that drew everyone's attention. They were as sharp as her axe. Alex knew that it was because she had barbarian blood flowing in her veins.

Her name was Melissa. She was a supporting character in the game. Just like all the characters in the ELO, she also had her own romance route.

Alex glanced at Renard and laughed internally.

Melissa would naturally be drawn to the Main Characters in ELO.

Right now, Renard and Prince Edward were both in Solara. Perhaps one of them would catch her fancy.

As for how things would develop from there, Alex was content with taking a step back and letting nature take its course.

One by one, the eight fighters drew the balls inside the box.

As if a greater power was involved, Renard, Charles, Emil, and Henry ended up with different numbers and would not face each other for now.

However, there was something that Alex didn't predict to happen.

Renard looked at the ball in his hand and the three on it seemed to stare back at him.

He then glanced at the only lady among them, who was eyeing him with a devilish smile plastered on her face.

As Fate would have it, Renard would be fighting against Melissa.

Although Alex had confidence in the young man, Melissa was not an easy opponent to defeat.

Not only was Melissa two years older than Renard, she was a Rank 4 Beast Barbarian.

Her power allowed her to manifest the power of beasts, granting her superhuman strength, speed, endurance, tenacity, and savagery.

Alex was worried because in the game, Renard had to battle Melissa.

And in that battle, Renard would lose eight times out of ten.

If he lost, he would say that he was still lacking and needed to train more.

If he won, it would make Melissa interested in him, unlocking her romance route.

'Sh*t,' Alex cursed internally. 'They're supposed to meet at the end of the first term. Why do they have to fight now? I might lose my money this time around!'

Alex had split his winnings and asked the members of the Zodiac to make a bet under their names.

Naturally, he had gotten all of them to bet on Renard. He was starting to regret his decision.

There was a saying that you shouldn't put all of your eggs in a single basket.

And right now, the basket named "Renard" had a two out of ten chance to win against his opponent, whose strength far surpassed his own.

“All of you will step into the arena once your names are called out,” Alex said. “Those who drew number one, you have ten minutes to prepare. I’ll head to the arena now to announce the start of today’s matches.”

The moment Alex left the room, the combatants looked at their opponents from head to toe, sizing them up.

Lex was also inside the room because he was one of the security personnel that Alex had chosen to look after Renard and Charles.

The young man didn’t dare to drop his guard against the nobles of Solara, so Lex needed to be present in the waiting room to handle any problematic situation that might arise.

When Alex appeared in the arena, the crowd cheered right away.

The young man smiled and waved at the audience. He even playfully blew some kisses in Lavinia’s and Lumi’s direction, making the two girls blush at his antics.

“Ladies and gentlemen, are you all ready to see another round of exciting battles?” Alex asked.

“””Yes!”””

“In that case, prepare yourselves because today’s matches will not disappoint you!” Alex declared. “Without further delay, let me introduce our fighters!”

“On the left corner, we have the Gentle Scholar, Emil Milan!” Alex shouted. “However, today he will not be gentle because he will be fighting someone who refuses to go down easily. Please make way for Mr. Adam Mantium!”

When Emil and Adam entered the arena, thunderous applause and cheering broke out from the audience stands.

Both fighters had performed remarkably well yesterday. Adam Mantium had been the other combatant from Henry's group to survive the battle royale.

Emil glanced at his opponent, who was a step away from becoming a Rank 4.

Although the Gentle Scholar was already a Rank 4, he also understood that he couldn't underestimate his opponent.

The young man with silver-blond hair and eyes the color of sapphires gazed at Adam, already thinking of how he would defeat his opponent before the battle started.

"Are both of you ready?" Alex asked, raising his hand.

Emil and Adam nodded at the same time.

"Battle Start!"

The moment the signal was given, Emil raised his hand and conjured countless ice spikes that jutted off the ground, heading towards Adam like an unstoppable wave.

Adam slammed his fists together, turning his entire body into the color of dark steel, making it as hard as adamantium.

Instead of waiting for the icicles to reach him, he decided to charge forward, shattering the ice spikes left and right.

Emil summoned his staff and tapped the ground under his feet, creating a pillar of ice that rose several meters high.

The young man looked down on his opponent from the top of the ice pillar before raising his staff above his head.

“Winds of winter, gather and rise,” Emil chanted. “Freeze the world before my eyes!”

The wind picked up and a blizzard manifested inside the arena.

The protective barrier prevented the spell from affecting the audience, but due to the fierce winds and snow, the visibility inside the arena dropped dramatically. For the spectators, it was like they were outside a massive snow globe that had just been shaken up.

Emil was saving a trump card that he planned to use against Renard and Henry, so he didn’t want them to see it in advance.

Chapter 487: Freeze The World Before My Eyes [Part 2]

The snowy winds howled as the blizzard intensified.

Emil knew that the barrier would keep his spell from spreading out of the arena, so this was the perfect opportunity to trap his opponent without letting anyone know how he did it.

No one could see anything apart from the dome of snow and ice. The lack of visibility dampened some of the excitement the spectators felt. Henry and the other contestants, however, felt a little frustrated.

‘Emil sure knows how to hide his secrets,’ Henry thought. ‘I guess I have no choice but to go all out against him from the start.’

The two of them had been rivals since young. One was a mage, the other a magic swordsman.

They had sparred a few times in the past, but those matches had ended in draws time and time again. The reason for this was because both of them hadn’t been fighting to the fullest. They had simply wanted to keep each other in check.

But this tournament was different.

Henry glanced at the VIP Seats where Lady Celestria and her father, Duke Percival, were seated.

Since the Duke of Dawn and the Saintess were present, he had to show his mettle to impress them both.

While there was no guarantee that the champion would really become Lady Celestria's fiancée, winning the tournament didn't have any downsides.

In fact, there was a possibility that Duke Percival might take this as an opportunity to play matchmaker and give the champion the chance to court his daughter.

While no one could see what was happening inside the arena, a raging battle was being fought.

Adam was busy crushing the pillars of ice that were meant to trap him while Emil unleashed Ice Spears one after the other.

The Gentle Scholar was at a complete advantage, toying with his opponent who only had high defenses—thanks to his strong body—going for him.

"If I were you, I'd just give up!" Emil shouted as he fired a dozen Ice Spears at his opponent, who were punching them to oblivion.

"Don't make me laugh," Adam sneered. "I admit that you are indeed a very powerful Ice Mage. But so what? You cannot keep this blizzard up forever. I know for a fact that domain-like abilities like yours consume a lot of mana. Sooner or later, you'll run out of juice. When that happens, I will end you!"

Emil knew that Adam was right.

The Blizzard he conjured was truly powerful, but its upkeep burned a lot of mana. Moreover, he was still unleashing dozens of Ice Spears at his opponent and that needed mana too.

At most, he could only last for fifteen more minutes.

"What's wrong?" Adam laughed. "You suddenly became quiet. Cat got your tongue?"

“Shut up, mongrel,” Emil replied coldly.

Adam smirked. “So much for the so-called Gentle Scholar. Did you name yourself that? What a pompous bastard. Henry is still much better than you!”

Adam was one of Henry’s friends. He intended to defeat Emil here so that his friend could advance to the finals without worrying about his rival.

However, the blizzard was also doing some damage to him. Although he had high defenses, the coldness was starting to penetrate his body, numbing him.

Still, he acted like he was fine so that Emil would feel flustered. That might give him an opportunity to strike.

With a roar filled with determination, Adam reached out to grab one of the Ice Spears thrown at him and threw it back to Emil.

The Ice Mage was forced to dodge the sudden counterattack, allowing his opponent to grab the remainder of the Ice Spears and hurl them at him.

The snow had already reached Adam’s knees, so moving was a monumental task for him.

Since he couldn’t get up close and personal with his enemy, he decided to be resourceful and use his own spells against him!

“Fine! A battle of attrition it is!” Emil dodged the other Ice Spears and simply focused his powers on strengthening the blizzard.

The wind and snow picked up, slowly burying Adam’s body.

Of course, Adam didn’t take things lying down. He tried to move, exerting his reserved strength to charge at Emil’s direction.

Emil laughed at Adam's pitiful attempt to get close to him.

The young man simply summoned a pair of wings made of ice. As soon as the wings attached themselves to his back, he flew as high as he could while maintaining the intensity of the blizzard.

He then raised both of his hands and the snow around Adam transformed into giant snow hands.

With a thunderous roar, Emil pressed his hands together. The giant snow hands obeyed his command.

Trapped between massive palms, Adam knew that Emil intended to crush him and end the battle once and for all.

Adam resisted with all of his might, using his incredibly high defense to endure the punishment that would have made others surrender.

"Just give up already!" Emil growled, using all of his willpower and strength to crush his enemy while keeping the blizzard active.

Adam didn't bother to reply because he was using every ounce of physical and mental strength to resist.

For the next few minutes, nothing changed. Both young men struggled without gaining—or losing—any ground.

The minutes ticked by so painfully slow that they felt like they were fighting for years.

However, both knew that was impossible, so they only did what they could do and that was to endure and give everything they got!

"Such an interesting battle," Lex muttered. "It will be over soon."

While everyone couldn't see what was happening inside the dome, he alone could "see" through it.

And just like he had predicted, Emil finally ran out of power a moment later. The young man slowly descended into the snowy world that he had created.

He panted for breath. Despite the coldness of his surroundings, beads of sweat formed on his forehead.

The snow finally died down and everyone was able to see the outcome of the battle.

"Winner, Emil!" Alex declared.

Adam had already been teleported outside of the arena half a minute ago. The young man was immediately swarmed by medics, who used their healing powers to bring warmth to his icy cold body.

Emil wiped the drool from the corner of his lips using the back of his hand. He was practically a spent candle, having overexerted himself.

'I underestimated him too much,' Emil thought as he glanced at Adam. 'It seems that Henry found a good teammate.'

The young man took out a stamina potion from his storage ring and chugged it all down without a care in the world.

Only when he finished drinking all of its contents did he feel slightly better.

Emil then gave Henry a side-long glance before walking out of the arena.

He wanted to collapse so badly, but he wouldn't do it in front of his rival!

Some of the medics approached Emil and asked him if he was hurt anywhere. The young man replied that he wasn't hurt, but he decided to ask the medics for some potions.

He would be fighting one more time today, so he needed to return to his peak and rest while he still could.

A few minutes later, a few mages from Solara Academy used their flame magic to disperse the snow that had piled up in the arena.

Dim Dim, who was building a little snowman in a corner, sighed as its creation started melting before its very eyes. Knowing that playtime was open, the little bun ran back to Alex.

When the arena was dry once more, Alex called for the next pair of combatants. Charles would once again take center stage.

Chapter 488: The Ideal Man That All The Ladies Deserve

“Let me introduce our next two fighters!” Alex shouted. “Hailing from the town of Avencia and known as the All-Rounder Knight, we have Sir Otto Matic! Please give him a warm welcome!”

A young man with sharp features made his way to the arena.

He had dark-brown hair and was over six-feet tall. He was holding a spear in and walked with firm, confident steps.

Alex had asked Dim Dim how strong Otto was. The little bun had replied that the young man was a Rank 3 Spear Knight.

‘So he is the same rank as Charles,’ Alex thought while breathing a sigh of relief in his heart.

Otto didn’t look simple. A glance was enough to tell Alex that his friend’s opponent had fought many battles and was no amateur.

After letting the Spear Knight bask in the crowd’s cheers, Alex smiled and raised his voice to introduce his friend

“Ladies, and gentlemen, please welcome the heartthrob of Frieden Academy!” Alex shouted. “He might not be the prince charming you are looking for, but he is the ideal man that all the ladies deserve! Come here and show everyone what you’ve got! Make way for Charles Lambert!”

For a brief moment, Chuck thought that Alex had shouted his name instead of Charles.

Alex’s description matched him so perfectly that he almost jumped from the audience stands into the arena.

Perhaps expecting that the troublemaker might do something foolish, Princess Xenia grabbed his left arm and Mary grabbed his right, holding him in place.

“”Don’t even think about it.””

The two ladies said in unison, making Chuck blinked innocently.

While this was happening, the one Alex was actually calling for contemplated if he should just remain where he was.

He was about to exit the holding area, but after hearing Alex’s introduction, he wished that he could just dig a hole and bury himself in it.

While he was still wondering what he should do, Alex’s voice reached his ears.

“Where is our Prince Charming?” Alex asked. “Come out Mr. Heartrob! Grace the ladies with your good looks!”

Nessia was very tempted to shoot a fireball at Alex for giving her boyfriend a hard time.

She knew that Charles didn’t have thick skin like Alex and Chuck! She was very pissed that her club president was putting her lover in the spotlight.

In the end, Renard popped up from behind Charles and pushed him forward. The audience burst out laughing at the sight of the “Prince Charming” and his beet-red face.

“Don’t worry, I’ll help you beat up Alex after the tournament ends,” Renard promised before giving Charles one last push. “He is getting too unhinged as of late.”

Charles reluctantly nodded in agreement and made his way to the arena while looking at the ground in front of him.

He didn’t dare to raise his head to see the spectators who were calling out to him from the stands.

The young man just wanted to get the battle over and done with so that he could hide in the waiting room and wait for everyone to forget him.

A few minutes later, the two fighters stood facing each other.

“I saw your battle,” Otto said with a smile. “Let’s fight the good fight today, Charles Lambert.”

“A-Ah yes! Let’s fight the good fight, Sir Otto Matic!” Charles snapped out of his trance, and bowed towards his opponent.

Otto chuckled before taking a fighting stance.

Charles took a deep breath before he, too, took a fighting stance, partially transforming his hands and feet as he imbued them with the power of the Void-Touched.

Duke Perciva and Lady Celestria focused their attention on Charles.

“He is indeed a Void-Touched,” Duke Percival muttered. “This person is a rule breaker.”

Lady Celestria nodded. "It is best that we don't make him our enemy. He might have just awakened recently, but once his people discover his existence, they will become overprotective of him."

Seeing that both fighters were now ready, Alex no longer delayed the second round and shouted to start the battle.

"Astral Piercer!" Otto didn't hesitate to unleash one of his sure-kill techniques that allowed him to charge with his spear like a raging comet.

It was fast and deadly, which was the perfect combination when it came to spear attacks.

Charles didn't have time to evade, so he did something that made Alex arch an eyebrow.

A black shield that looked like an insect's carapace appeared on the young man's left arm.

Instead of blocking the spear head-on with his carapace shield, Charles angled the shield to his side like he planned to deflect the attack and minimize the momentum of the strike.

Sparks flew as the spear and the carapace clashed with each other. Just like what Charles intended, the spear was deflected to the side, but his shield also cracked due to the force of the collision.

But that was fine.

He had already achieved what he wanted to do, so he took a step forward and unleashed a straight punch as his counterattack.

However, his fist only hit air because his opponent did the impossible.

After Otto had missed his spear strike, he slammed the spear point into the ground and used that momentum to vault upward in a smooth, explosive motion. His boots brushed past Charles' shoulder as he soared past him.

As soon as he landed, he followed up his attack by swinging his spear backwards, hitting Charles' back and sending him tumbling to the ground.

If not for the fact that he had subconsciously imbued his entire body with the power of the void, he might have already been eliminated by Otto's fearsome follow-up attack.

Fortunately, his defenses had risen significantly. The stinging pain spread through his back, but he was still in the battle.

"I thought I already won, but it seems that you're one tough nut to crack," Otto commented as he took another fighting stance.

Charles propped himself up from the ground and did the same. This time, the pitch-black power that covered his body suddenly manifested golden threads that fluttered around him.

Nessia gasped after seeing this scene because she was quite familiar with this technique.

Charles had used it against her during their sparring match. It was, bluntly put, a very annoying ability.

Alex was very curious what those fluttering golden threads could do. He wasn't aware that his friend had learned several new techniques due to the Unique Skill, Growth [EX], that he had given him a few weeks ago.

Chapter 489: Don't Let The Beast Take Over You

Intense clashing sounds reverberated through the arena as Charles and Sir Otto fought tooth and nail against each other.

Compared to the previous battles, these two appeared more equally matched, but that made it even more exciting.

Everyone could see the match, but some were struggling to catch up.

"Can someone tell me what's going on?" Chuck asked, turning to Princess Xenia and Mary.

Four minutes ago, golden fluttering threads had appeared on Charles' body.

Everyone watching couldn't help but be shocked at the spectacle that unfolded within such a short time.

Charles' relentless assault looked like a blur to his opponent, who desperately and barely blocked every attack.

The only reason Sir Otto could cope with Charles' insane and erratic movements was because he had many years of experience in fighting against opponents who were stronger than him.

A grunt escaped the Spear Knight's lips as he skidded back several meters. His hands had already gone numb, but he held on and refused to yield.

Even Alex was shocked by Charles' current performance. The golden thread fluttering around his body seemed to have their own will, allowing the young man to practically bounce around midair as if he were stepping on solid ground.

Dim Dim had used a similar technique in the past with magical shields.

But Charles took this to the next level. His moves were simply impossible to predict.

Even Evangeline was looking at her club member in disbelief, unable to comprehend how her future sight didn't work on him.

Her future sight couldn't predict his next moves. This had never happened before.

All she could see was a black blur with streaks of golden light bouncing off the air and attacking the Spear Knight mercilessly.

Even Renard's expression, somehow, became more serious than usual because this was the first time he was seeing Charles fight like this.

“Enough!” Sir Otto roared in anger as he imbued his spear with the element of air, creating a powerful gust that expanded outward.

He hoped that this explosive force would repel Charles and break his momentum.

But he was wrong.

Like a hot knife cutting through butter, Charles pierced through his opponent’s air barrier. His fist connected with the young man’s chest.

The force of the blow sent the Spear Knight flying until he hit the invisible dome that prevented the attacks of the combatants from reaching the audience.

After bouncing off the barrier, Sir Otto suddenly felt a hand grab hold of his head.

A moment later, he tasted dust as Charles slammed his head against the ground, resulting in a crater that was at least four-meters wide.

Just as everyone thought that the brutality would continue, Sir Otto’s body turned into particles of light and was sent to the tent where medics were waiting.

The sound that Charles made was not human. It was a beastly roar that sent shock waves through the arena, scaring the spectators, who were now doubting if the protective dome was strong enough to keep them safe.

“Dim Dim, I choose you!” Alex shouted as he threw Dim Dim toward the arena.

The little bun was holding Grandma Agnes’ wooden sandal, which it didn’t hesitate to throw at Charles.

After the sandal left its hand, the Dim Sum God summoned its little toy hammer. It was fully prepared to smack some sense into Charles after the sandal had done its job.

Charles sensed the approach of the sandal and tried to evade it. However, this wooden sandal was a Legendary Item that would never miss.

The young man had entered a berserk state while using his new ability, so his allies needed to either knock him out or smack him until he reverted back to normal.

The wooden sandal collided with Charles' forehead, stopping his movement mid-air.

Dim Dim didn't miss this perfect opportunity and smacked the young man's cheek with its toy hammer, sending him slamming to the ground.

With an agility and dexterity that it developed from poking people nonstop, Dim Dim smacked Charles cheeks like a whack-a-mole with its hammer.

The hammer actually didn't deal physical damage.

It dealt mental, spiritual, and emotional damage to its target, which was also perfect for exorcising ghosts possessing the bodies of people.

After a few smacks, Charles' eyes, which had turned red due to the use of his powers, finally returned to normal.

"W-What?! Awww!" Charles could only cry out in pain as the toy hammer smacked him for the umpteenth time.

"Stop, Dim Dim! It's me!"

"Dim?"

Dim Dim who was about to smack Charles once more paused its attack.

“Yeah, I’m back to normal,” Charles said, enduring the splitting headache that he didn’t know was from Dim Dim or from using his powers.

The last thing he recalled was attacking Sir Otto using his new ability. But after a minute had passed, he seemed to have fallen into a trance and no longer remembered what happened next.

“Dim Dim!”

“I’m sorry. I’ll be more careful in the future.”

Dim Dim waved its toy hammer at Alex, telling the young man that it had everything under control.

“Winner: Charles Lambert!” Alex shouted after confirming that his friend had already returned to normal.

However, no cheers came from the audience. Everyone was too shocked to process what had just happened.

Even Duke Percival and Lady Celestria were solemn. While most of the other spectators were confused, it was clear to them that Charles had lost control after tapping into his true power.

“Dim Dim.” Dim Dim offered to accompany the young man back to the waiting area, which he readily accepted.

He might have won the battle, but he didn’t feel like he truly won. The one who had defeated Sir Otto wasn’t him but a stranger that had taken over after he had lost control of his senses. It wasn’t something to be proud of.

As he walked past Renard, the latter lightly patted Charles’ shoulder.

“You need to train more to control your power,” Renard said. “Don’t let the beast take over you. You must control the beast and use its power according to your own rules.

“I understand.” Charles nodded. “Good luck on your match.”

After saying those words, the young man headed back to the waiting room in order to calm himself down.

Since he had won, he was expected to fight a second time. The last thing he wanted was to once again lose control of his senses so publicly and force his friends to neutralize him.

Chapter 490: Battle Of The Beasts [Part 1]

In order to dispel the tension, Alex announced the third battle of the day.

“Over two hundred participants had registered for the tournament and only eight remained after the battles royale,” Alex said with a smile. “Among them, there is one very special young lady. Please give a round of applause to Melissa Lockridge!”

The moment the beautiful young lady with long dark blue hair entered the arena, the men cheered and whistled.

Melissa smiled sweetly and even waved her hand at the audience, enjoying the attention that she was receiving.

The people adored her because she was the only lady that managed to reach this stage in the tournament, and all the girls support her a hundred percent.

From afar, she looked like a delicate young lady. However, she was a very powerful warrior. Those who had bad intentions due to her appearance would find themselves facing the sharp edge of her axe!

Alex then spoke once more, preparing to introduce Renard to the audience.

“Some of you already know the reason why this tournament is being held,” Alex stated. “Yes, this tournament is held because of one person and one person only—the young man who everyone believes is Lady Celestria’s secret lover.

“The one who everyone assumes has won the Saintess’s heart. However, whether the rumors are true or not, only they themselves know. Regardless, let us all welcome the young man who has made all of this possible. Please give him a warm welcome! Here comes Renard Vale!”

Renard confidently walked towards the arena, not minding the countless pairs of eyes that locked onto him.

The cheers that followed weren’t as strong as Melissa’s because only the First Years from Frieden Academy cheered for him.

But Renard didn’t care.

He hadn’t come to Solara to please anyone or win anyone’s approval.

He had simply come here to prove that no one could step on him as if he was a bug which had crawled out from under a rock.

The nobles might call him a country bumpkin.

They could call him delusional, a frog in the well, or even a gold digger.

However, he didn’t give a damn on what they thought.

He was a man of few words because he conveyed everything he needed to tell through his actions.

And right now, he would show everyone who Renard Vale was.

As he neared the centre of the arena, a solemn silence descended.

Even Alex felt this change, but he made no move to break the silence.

Suddenly, Melissa smirked and summoned her axe. She used it to support her body as she leaned forward.

“You might be a country bumpkin, but you are a looker,” Melissa said boldly. “Hey, if you lose, how about you become my boyfriend? Instead of courting the Saintess, why don’t you court me instead?”

Lady Celestria frowned after hearing Melissa’s words. For some reason, she suddenly found the young lady quite annoying.

But a second later, her eyes widened in shock when she realized that she felt offended!

For her, Renard was a special friend whom she could show her true self. While she did entertain the possibility of romance, she didn’t consider it seriously because she was the Saintess of Solara.

Her life should be devoted to her Deity. Even if she married one day, it would only be to the person her Deity had chosen for her.

“The Sun” didn’t explicitly tell her that Renard was that person. It had only mentioned that she should go to Frieden Academy because a fateful encounter was waiting for her there.

“Wow! Did you hear that folks?!” Alex wouldn’t miss this opportunity to make fun of Renard. “Melissa is asking Renard out. Will this guy, who only knows how to fight, finally open his heart to the ladies around him?!”

Renard did his best to stop his lips from twitching. He stared at his opponent and gave her his answer.

He took a fighting stance, raising his fists in preparation for battle.

“Playing hard to get huh?” Melissa grinned. “Fine. I like strong-willed men. I hope you don’t disappoint me.”

Alex didn’t need to be told that both fighters were ready to fight. The young man raised his hand and gave the signal to start the third round of battle.

“Battle Start!”

Melissa grabbed hold of the handle of her axe and roared mightily.

Her roar sounded like the roar of a bear that was ready to fight a rival that had appeared in its home turf.

The silhouette of a giant bear momentarily appeared behind the young lady’s back before vanishing completely.

At the same time, Renard closed the gap between them and the two opponents finally came to blows for the first time.

Melissa’s axe collided with Renard’s fist, which was coated with his aura. A powerful boom erupted from the point of impact, breaking the ground under their feet.

Both fighters held their ground, which surprised both of them as well.

The two fighters were confident in their own strength, so they were taken aback that their opponents were not the slightest bit shaken.

However, Melissa was the one who was more surprised.

Even though she had just broken through Rank 4, she was still physically stronger than Renard.

Melissa had expected that Renard would be pushed back after their exchange, especially since he was fighting barehanded!

After that surprise passed, both fighters started to seriously attack each other without holding back.

Melissa's axe swings were very deadly, but Renard dealt with it by deflecting it to the side and unleashing his own counter-attack.

With deft, practiced moves, Melissa used her axe's handle to block his blows. She was muscular, but she was also agile.

Both fighters weren't backing down and were dishing out blows at point-blank-range.

Renard's attacks were faster, but Melissa was able to block them just fine.

Nearly a minute later, the first one to be forced back was Renard.

Blood dripped from his knuckle because he had not managed to dodge Melissa's continuous strikes completely.

However, the wound was shallow, so it didn't concern him too much.

Knowing that he would be at a disadvantage if the fight continued to be close-range, Renard decided to improvise.

He stomped his foot on the ground, making a piece of the arena break apart and rise up.

Renard then grabbed hold of the fist sized stones and started throwing them at Melissa.

The young lady was surprised at first before she laughed out loud, blocking the stones with her axe.

“What’s this?” Melissa teased. “Are we playing throw the stones now? Two can play that game!”

Using her axe like a golf club, the young lady swung it against the ground, sending a meter-wide portion of the arena flying towards Renard.

Renard didn’t dodge this attack. Instead, he grabbed hold of the projectile and used brute strength to stop its momentum.

Although he was forced back a few meters, he succeeded in catching the massive slab of stone.

His arms trembled for a brief instant, but he held it firm, surprising the audience and Melissa.

The young man exhaled sharply and, with a twist of his body, hurled the stone back at his opponent with even greater force.

The young lady grinned fearlessly at the projectile that was returned to her. “That’s more like it!”

Melissa swung her axe in a horizontal arc, cleaving the projectile in half.

The stone split cleanly into two chunks that whistled past her shoulders before crashing against the arena wall like cannon fire.

Dust burst outward and the crowd thundered with excitement.

Renard didn’t waste the opening he had created.

The moment Melissa’s swing finished, he was already rushing in, aura swirling around his legs, boosting his speed.

Alex had taught him to be flexible and use any means that was necessary to win. Although he had relied on his fists to fight his battles, his new fighting style gave him the flexibility that he was starting to use for the first time since entering the tournament.

Fist and axe clashed once more, but Renard had other plans.

Without any warning, he kicked Melissa's leg, making the young lady grunt in pain as she momentarily lost her balance.

But before Renard could follow up his attack, the young lady swung her axe upwards. He was forced to roll to his right and narrowly avoided being sliced in half by the crescent energy blade that erupted from her axe.