

Few Wives 111

Chapter 111 Total Annihilation!

Back on the battlefield...

"Lightning Tribulation!" Chloe didn't waste time as she immediately cast her strongest spell. The sky above them was covered in dark clouds. Lightning crackling within menacingly. She didn't attack immediately wanting to wait for the right opportunity.

"Well, now, this lightning reminds me of a distant memory...well, it's colour anyway. The puny strength is rather insulting.." Ares spoke while looking at the threatening dark clouds. He couldn't do anything to them at the moment since he had to focus all his energy on keeping Mest's mangled body alive while healing it.

Boom!

"Hmm?... impossible!!" Ares screamed hysterically while looking at Muku. Unlike unranked to R3 beasts who couldn't sense anything that was within the safe zone barrier. He could sense it clearly, so when Muku's aura exploded out. He immediately found out. Just as he found out about the impressive aura for a LR2 Evolver, he also found out about the silverish-grey mass forming in between Muku's hands.

"Oh, so you noticed it huh? Well, I'd like to congratulate you on being the first one to receive this attack. You wouldn't run away now, would you?" Muku, who had his eyes closed, knew from the iconic "Hmm?" That Ares had noticed what he was doing. He wasn't sure if he'd run away, so he taunted him.

"Mortal, stop what you're doing, and we can still be friends", Ares spoke calmly, but internally, he was very anxious. What Muku was creating happened to be the only thing that could harm him... Mithril, the Deity Slaying Metal that hasn't appeared for billions of years ever since "The Holocaust Of The Titans", a war he and a few barely survived due to sheer luck. Anyway, that's also a story for another day.

What mattered most at the moment was that Ares couldn't take back the wisp of consciousness that was controlling Mest's body. At least not fast enough. At the same time, he couldn't yet move Mest's body due to the injury, he was practically a sitting duck. He wasn't sure if what Muku was creating would be able to do something or not since he was still too weak. But if possible, he didn't want to take the chance but sadly, he had no choice in the matter.

"Master, I've been studying him since he received the attack from earlier. He isn't as arrogant as before. Which by itself isn't too surprising after what happened, but I also noticed that he hasn't moved even an inch, which is weird. Not to mention his words just now. I think he might be in a vulnerable position right now, even more than we thought" Audrey who hadn't spoken much since the whole ordeal began, made her presence felt.

She did so by saying something that made Ares want to rip her into pieces in anger. Couldn't she just stay quiet like before!?. Wouldn't Muku have seriously considered taking his offer!? Ares thought internally but didn't let it show on his face. There might still be a chance if he acts well enough...

"Really? Chloe, why don't you attack first and we'll see how he reacts. First try a little attack, if it's not blocked or dodged, go all out. Audrey you'll attack right after her and I'll attack last since I'm still gathering energy"

Or not.... As Muku immediately gave out his orders loudly. Not even caring about how Ares could clearly hear. The worst part, the bastard still had his eyes closed still gathering power for his attack, showing how he was more focused on that. Couldn't he at least open his eyes to show respect or something??

"Mortal, do you dare go against me twice? Do you know the consequences?" Ares spoke in a commanding voice clearly pissed off. Internal though, he was doing everything in his power to speed up the process of healing Mest's body, but, sadly, there was little he could do to speed it up. Again he cursed Mest's trash body that couldn't properly handle his energy, especially after taking such heavy damage.

"Umm, going against you once already gave us a death sentence so I don't really think it can get any much worse than that. Chloe!" Muku was immediately convinced that there was something wrong with Ares by his new threat. Before Ares might have been talkative, but there was an arrogance then that was no longer present now. And like he said, even if he was wrong, they were already given a death sentence by Ares, so there was no harm done. After all, Ares didn't seem like the forgiving type.

"Lightning Tribulation!" Chloe didn't waste anymore time as she immediately attacked. She didn't release all the lightning at once, just a single bolt.

Boom!

"Argh!"

And like Audrey thought, Ares didn't defend and it struck down directly on Mest's body, burning away some of the fur. Even though he couldn't feel any pain since the body wasn't his, Ares subconsciously screamed a little. Which made him feel a bit embarrassed. But before he could do it say anything else...

"Total Annihilation!"

CRACKLE!

BOOOOOOOM!

Chloe released the remaining lightning all at once. The first lightning bolt she attached with, was a metre thick. It was definitely deadly, but it was nothing compared to the full spell. It was not a lightning bolt, not a lightning pillar. More than anything, it seemed like a lightning tower striking down from above. How could it not be with a width of around ten meters?

Although its strength was nowhere close to the Union Spell that could break through Ares' energy. It definitely looked more threatening. And it did significant damage, especially now that Ares no longer could use his red energy to protect Mest's body.

The area around Ares, just outside the barrier was bathed in blue light, that was so bright that none dared look at it directly. Not even the caster herself could look.

"...."

As soon as the lightning cleared up leaving occasion sparks all over the place. Ares was visible again, he didn't say anything, seemingly unfazed. But Mest's body told a different story. After all, its grey fur, along with its skin, was gone. Standing in a deep hole around four metres deep. All Audrey and Chloe could see was his disgusting-looking skinless head. It was as if all the skin had been peeled off leaving all the muscles and tissue exposed. Which was probably why Ares couldn't speak, how could he speak with such a body?

Chloe, the artist of the work in front of them couldn't help but cover her mouth weakly in horror. She felt like vomiting but held it in. With all her knowledge from novels and anime, she knew that such things would likely become common, so she had to get used to it. And so, despite standing weakly after using up most of her mana, a resolute look was present in her eyes.

"Crimson Lance!" Audrey, who had long prepared her attack, reacted quickly and shot out a five-metre long and one-metre thick blood lance. She could have made it bigger, but she didn't have enough blood for it.

Bang! Splash!

Surprisingly, her spear turned to liquid the moment it touched Mest's body. To which Ares reacted by giving her a disdainful look. Likely thinking that she had messed up the spell due to being nervous since it was possible.

Which had happened a lot to many people in the apocalypse, just that it had never happened in Muku's group. Despite their different personalities, they were all strong-willed underneath, so it was never a problem for them. The first time they found out about it in the future, they were super surprised by it.

Ares' disdainful look suddenly turned to confusion when he noticed the little smirk on Audrey's face. Then it turned to surprise, then horror when he felt the blood penetrate into Mest's body and quickly start corrupting the blood. If left unchecked, he'd be stuck in a body he can't even control!

So he had to spread his energy even thinner just to stay in control. Now he was keeping the body alive, trying to heal it from the injuries that had again increased thanks to Chloe's attack. And with Audrey's eery ability he had never come across before, which also needed attention, he couldn't take anymore.

{What kind of weird ability is this!? I have come across blood manipulation before, but it was never as absurd as corrupting the body and taking control of it while the individual is still alive! Not to mention this weird energy lurking within that seems familiar somehow. Ah! Why am I so unlucky today!? If only I had run away when I had the chance!} Ares thought to himself while trying to keep Mest's body from falling apart. Regret is the main theme of all his thoughts.

"Finally done... Deity Slaying Art! First Form: Glimpse Of The End!" Muku, who had finally finished gathering energy and successfully creating a complete sword for the first time, called out the spell's

name. Which didn't seem like a spell name at all, more like a technique. And the way he said it, it was as if it was instinctual instead of having been thought of.

"OH NO! IT'S REAL!" Ares screamed out loudly in fear as he forcefully opened Mest's ruined mouth. The voice that came out was super raspy and unpleasant to hear, but it still clearly showed the fear Ares felt at the time.

BOOOOOOOOOOOM! (...B*tch!!!... Sorry, I just had to)

Chapter 112 Unbelievable Reward!

Mest was erased out of existence, along with Ares' soul fragment that was supposed to be immortal... The hole he was standing in was erased along with him. In its place now stood a crater....or a gorge? After all, it was seven meters deep, five meters wide and more than twenty metres long.

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A few moments earlier, as Muku was gathering energy...

[Anomaly detected...]

[Anomaly identified to be Deity Slaying Art engraved onto Mithril by unknown Law...]

[Individual doesn't meet requirements to learn complete Art...]

[Individual meets criteria to learn First Form...]

[Acquiring related knowledge...]

[Knowledge acquired...]

Prompt after prompt rang out in Muku's head. He almost lost control of the energy he was gathering while trying to make sense of what was happening. How could he not be a bit distracted when another

hidden power pops up? So what if he was the protagonist, shouldn't there be a limit to the power-ups!? And why is it not categorised as a "Spell" but an "Art" instead? Well, that's another story for another day, he had something to do...

The moment Muku put his thoughts aside, happened to be the moment he gathered enough power. The grey energy that obscured what he was creating also cleared up as it was drawn in by the creation.

Then it became clear to everyone present, including Muku himself who had never seen it. Even the first time he created it, he felt like something was guiding him. This was also the case with the initial idea he got of creating Mithril in the first place.

It was a grey sword. A sword so beautiful that even a person who hates swords would agree. It was so beautiful that Muku almost couldn't bear to attack with it. Three meters long, five inches wide with unknown characters engraved on it that Muku couldn't read them. Something in him told him that he wasn't yet worthy to know the meaning, his strength was too weak. The seven-inch hilt also had some engravings on it, which he again couldn't make sense of.

"Finally done... Deity Slaying Art! First Form: Glimpse Of The End!" Muku, who had finally managed to free himself from the sword's seduction, screamed out.

Unlike the usual times were the sword would fly out and hit the enemy. The time, the sword didn't move, it just floated in front of Muku while pointing in Ares' direction. The moment he called out the technique's name, a grey energy was shot out of the blade, and it flew toward Ares at a speed similar to the Union spell. Its strength is the same as well.

But unlike the union spell, the grey sword light wasn't mitigated by Ares' red energy. It hit him with all its force. On top of it, the feature that scared Ares most activated.

The sword didn't just erase the body, but it erased Ares' soul fragment as well which was supposed to be immortal. Which wasn't possible with any other ability.

Well, three other energies could do it. But those with the first one wouldn't act against him. While those with the second one were extinct and he would make sure it stayed that way.

As for the third...it was basically a myth at that point, even more so than Mithril. That absolute power, it better not appear again or all will be doomed with no way out.

But what really made "Mithril Energy" stand out was how it was born from hate. It wasn't supposed to be part of the list, and it initially wasn't. But the creator somehow made it work due to sheer hatred. And the pain the victim felt while getting killed by it was the most intense out of all the energies there.

The point is that Ares' fragment didn't die a painless death. It made sense that he would scream before being hit. As for Mest, his soul has long been consumed by Ares and his body was just a husk, so he didn't feel much. Well, other than when his soul was eaten, that is.

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"Woah!!" Elsa, who had been chillin' in the background since the beginning, couldn't help but exclaim in amazement. Even her somewhat reserved personality couldn't hold her back. Then again she was still a little girl after all.

Even Audrey, who biasedly thought Muku was the strongest in the world, was amazed. His bloodline power wouldn't shock her if it was the cause of such a feat. This, on the other hand, was different; how did he pull such a thing off?? She then calmed herself down by thinking that it only made sense for her master to be impressive. A proud and smug expression quickly appeared on her face. It was as if she was the one who used the attack.

Beside her, Chloe was also amazed. She wondered if that was the real difference between a Pseudo-Legendary Class and a true Legendary Class. If so, then the gap was way too big!! How were they supposed to compete??

As for Muku, he was just standing there, also awed by his own power. He couldn't even talk...which might be linked to how weak he felt after the attack that sucked him dry. He finally realised not only was his mana required to make the sword, but it was also required to keep it in existence. Which he thought was something only Rank Ones went through. But the sword proved him wrong.

The moment the attack was released, it faded away. The little time he summoned it was enough to suck him dry, it even left his body a little thinner than before. Which was a testament to the large amount of energy the sword needed. What he found interesting, though, was how the energy it shot out didn't

seem to be mana. And how it scared the arrogant Ares so much. After all, he was still in the dark about the history of everything.

[Congratulations for being the first modern humans to kill a Beast Progenitor! (Tiny fragment)...]

[Although it was a negligible part of his soul. Managing to kill it is a commendable task!...]

[All participants will be awarded enough KP to reach 70% as a reward!...]

While everyone was stuck in their own thoughts. Prompts that almost shocked the life out of them sounded. One has to know that none of them other than Muku had even reached 20%! Now they were getting rewarded with 70%??

They didn't even know that such a thing was possible. But it was a welcomed and pleasant surprise. Luckily, all of them participated, or someone might have died from sheer jealousy. After all, it would have taken them ages to reach such a high percentage!

The greedy Jade couldn't help but secretly wish that another Progenitor Soul fragment would show up. The reward clouded her mind, completely forgetting how it could have gone badly and someone could have died. Fortunately for her, she didn't say it out loud, or she might have gotten a beating from the others. After all, in her current state, she couldn't run away.

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"What a strong attack" After a while of silence. Chloe finally couldn't take it and spoke up.

"Yeah...thanks?" Muku replied, not too sure what to say to such a thing.

"But why didn't you use your telekinesis or bloodline power from start to finish? Wouldn't that have made the battle easier?" Chloe then proceeded to ask a question that had been on her mind for a while.

"Oh, that... I tried both actually. But for some reason, my Telekinesis would get cancelled out the moment it touched Mest's body. Likely something to do with Ares' intense mental power. As for my bloodline ability...the unreliable thing didn't even activate. I couldn't even sense it until Ares was killed for some reason," Muku explained with a wry smile, which turned resentful at the end. How could he not be resentful when his trump card failed when he needed it most?

What he didn't know, though, was that his bloodline actually saved him from getting into deeper trouble. Using Mithril might have made him Ares' enemy, but if he had used his bloodline's power...he would have become the enemy of all the progenitors and they'd hunt him down till his death. After all, the history of the bloodline was just too great. It wasn't something they were willing to let someone have...not again.

But that was something he would find out in the future. In the present, he was resentful and that's all that mattered.

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In a desolate and unknown area...

A humongous golden ape that seemed to reach beyond the heavens could be seen with its eyes closed. Energy waves are strong enough to instantly kill even a Rank Ten beast radiating from its body.

Suddenly its eyes sprang open, exposing golden pupils full of anger. On its lip, a little trail of blood could be seen flowing out. A few drops dropped to the ground below and destroyed it, sinking into the ground until they couldn't be seen.

"MORTAL... I WILL MAKE YOU PAY" the large ape spoke in a calm voice. Yet it boomed so loudly it shook the ground all around it. But the voice was familiar to Muku. For it was Ares' voice. And the body so large it could scare anyone who saw it to death was also Ares' real body.

If Muku had seen it before going against Ares, he likely wouldn't have gone against him. After all, who would dare go against such a thing and claim to be sane?

Chapter 113 Addressing the Stadium Women

The next day...

On the previous day, Muku and the girls returned to the mansion. Any further matters were put off until they had fully recovered. Which ended up taking longer than everyone thought. So they could only return to the stadium on the next day.

Which was where they were now, early in the morning. In front of them stood more than a hundred women wearing rags with malnutrition bodies. They were the same ones from the day before but unlike the dim look in their eyes the previous day. This time their eyes were filled with hope and reverence.

Although they had not seen the battle between Muku's group and Ares. They had seen the aftermath and they were awed. They felt like Muku's group weren't humans but demigods who had come to save them. After all, how could humans do such damage? They felt so reverend that they decided to dedicate their lives to Muku's group and threw away any ideas of suicide they might have had.

It was definitely a weird turn of events that shocked Muku's group, but after thinking about what the women had gone through. Maybe viewing their saviours so highly was understandable.

At first, they just viewed Muku highly, but after he told them that he couldn't have done it without the others. The women were even happier. Maybe finding out that women like them could also be so strong made them feel better. So their worship of Muku was quickly extended to the rest of the group.

Even little Elsa was added which made her so embarrassed that she refused to face anyone and stood behind Emily. After all, she knew that she wasn't that much stronger than the women, so them viewing her so highly just felt too weird to her.

Jade, on the other hand, was so pleased that she ran back to the mansion and brought back more than fifty kilogrammes of PR1 beast meat. The others couldn't help but roll their eyes at how it was so easy to please her. Just say a few words and she'll basically do anything for you. It didn't even take her long to return since the mansion had been brought closer.

Since it was already a done deal, the others also sympathised with the women so they didn't mind Jade helping them. Emily helped in cooking the meat. The others went around giving the women a plate of meat each on plates created by Muku. Who had gone to increase the size of the little well that was dug just outside the barrier? Apparently, the barrier was cut off from the outside world. After digging just two meters into the ground, you'd reach an impenetrable barrier, unlike the one above ground.

The good thing about beast meat, especially that of higher-level beasts like PR1s, is that it could get a person into peak state within minutes. And so, by the time the malnourished women were finished eating their first hearty meal ever since the beginning of the apocalypse... Their bodies had returned to looking as good as they did before the apocalypse. Even their ruined skin from all the abuse they had endured had returned to normal. Some even cried with emotion, after all, they had lost all hope.

Now, even with all the bad memories, they could never forget. At least they wouldn't be reminded of them by just looking at their bodies. The emotions they had long killed were starting to resurrect as they once again began looking forward to the future.

After the meal, they were all provided with water to wash their bodies. Which they did happily, even if they had gotten used to their stench, they didn't like it. Unfortunately, there were no new clothes they could be offered, but they were happy to have gotten what they had already gotten. So they just washed their rags, and with Emily's help, they didn't wait even a minute before they were dry and good to wear.

"Now ladies, I'm sure you understand that in the troubled times we live in. The only thing you can depend on is your own strength. With that said, me and my team would like to help you get on that path to self-improvement. So whoever is willing to fight beasts and get stronger, step on this side, and we'll help you," Muku, who was once again standing in front of the women, spoke with a serious look on his face.

While it seemed like he was being selfless. It was a calculated step for him and his team. Although his team were super strong and could probably take care of whatever they wanted on their own. It wasn't a bad thing to have allies. Especially in key locations like the safe zones. A Plan B was never a bad thing after all.

It was also the main reason he had helped Tom before...then Jack after. And now with Tom gone, he had to create new ties. And these ties would be even stronger than with Tom and Jack since these ladies would owe him everything. As he would have practically made them.

Was it manipulative? Yes! Very much so! But for his girls, he'd do anything. And it's not like the other side wouldn't be benefitting from the deal. In fact, they were probably benefitting a lot more since Muku's group might never need them. They, on the other hand, needed Muku's group to get stronger at the apocalypse's current stage, where R2s roamed everywhere.

Behind him, the girls who were confused about when they offered such a thing remained quiet. They knew that everything Muku did was in some way of benefit to them, so they never questioned his choices. On top of that, they weren't opposed to helping these unfortunate women step on the path of evolution.

The women stood still in thought for a bit after hearing Muku's words. Then less than thirty seconds later, all of them resolutely moved to the place Muku had gestured to before for those willing. None even hesitated. The reason is that none of them ever wanted to get into the position they were in before due to weakness. They no longer wanted to be so weak that even weak men preyed on them. They wanted to fearlessly hold their heads up high in the apocalypse just like the girls behind Muku.

"Hmm, good choice. But I have to warn you. There's a chance you could die out there in a beast's mouth" Muku was pleased by how all of them were willing to get stronger. But he felt that he had to give them one more chance to back off so that they would be certain of their choice.

Again, all of them were willing. The threat of death didn't scare them anymore. After all, they had been wishing for it for a long time up to that point but it never came. So why be scared of such a thing? And even if they died, who cares? It was better to die while trying to gain strength for self-improvement than under some scummy man. Their blood was already boiling from anticipation for when they would finally get to face beasts and release all their anger.

With the improvement in their hidden strength attribute from the beast meat. They felt like they could take on anything at the moment.

"Good, good, very good. We'll set off in two days in batches of ten so that we can protect all of you" Muku said with a beaming smile. His words made the women want to beat him up. From how he spoke before, it was like he was going to mostly let them fend for themselves out there in their large numbers.

But now, to find out that their life was guaranteed, how could they not be poser off? Especially the ones that almost backed down, they realised that they almost got tricked into staying trash forever. They couldn't help but give Muku a resentful look. Such a hateful man!

"Hhh?...Oh! Had forgotten about that. Well, now this is awkward," Muku, who was standing in front of the women with a grin on his face, suddenly spoke loudly in a slightly embarrassed tone. How could he not be embarrassed when he promised all these ladies enough unranked beasts to reach Rank One? When he couldn't even find one beast for Elsa.

He couldn't help but feel slightly resentful of Audrey who waited for him to finish his speech before reminding him. What was he supposed to do now??

"Umm, so ladies. Although we're willing to help you get stronger. We are currently facing a shortage of unranked beasts, so it might take some time for you all to evolve. I'm so sorry about that. But we promise to stay close by until all of you are assisted" Muku spoke after thinking a bit. He had spoken in a way that basically made it the beasts' fault for not being around.

And he even used "we" instead of "I" as to throw the girls under the bus with him if the women were angered. The ladies, of course, understood all of this and couldn't help but glare at him. If they weren't in a public place and she wasn't certain that she'd lose, Jade might have attacked him on the spot for being such a snake.

"Umm, I happen to know a place where there might be more than a thousand unranked beasts". Suddenly before anyone could say anything. A timid voice sounded from within the crowd of women.

Chapter 114 Live for them.

"Oh.. everyone please make way, let the person who just spoke come forward," Muku spoke with keen interest while looking in the direction of the voice that just spoke.

If what the person said is true, then all their problems would be fixed. Little Elsa can finally evolve. While no one mentioned it, they were all curious as to what class she'd awaken after the influence of the Fairy Embryo.

Soon, an averagely framed and cute-looking young woman stood in front of Muku nervously. She was the one who had spoken out before. Oddly though, unlike most of the women present, while her clothes did look a bit faded, they weren't ripped in any way. And the light in her eyes also didn't seem to have dimmed down like the rest. Which made Muku quickly realise that she might have been one of the few "lucky" ones who had been saved for later.

This would explain why most of the women present didn't look at her positively. After all, who would like someone who was spared from the torture the rest of them had to face?. Especially when it was something as horrible as being defiled.

And even if it wasn't that bad, humans generally don't like others to be in a more fortunate position than them. If they should suffer, then everyone must suffer with them. If they should prosper, they should prosper alone. Is it unreasonable?...No, it's just human. At least that's the defence they would give you if you asked for justification.

"No need to be afraid, no one will do anything to you. First tell me, what's your name?. I'm Muku" Muku spoke in a gentle voice to the young woman. But not before glaring at the women who were giving her the stink eye. After his warning look, they took back their gazes and looked to the ground.

"I..ah, I am F...Freya. I..ah," The girl, named Freya, stuttered all over the place with her low, soft and gentle voice, making it rather hard to understand those around her. Of course, Muku's team members could make sense of it, but why should they?

"Please, take your time. We're in no rush. In fact, why don't you take a few moments to breathe in and out so that you can calm down." And so, Muku interrupted her.

Hearing him speak while she was still speaking or stuttering rather, almost made Freya's soul jump out of her body. She thought that her nervous way of speaking might have angered him, but quickly calmed down after hearing his calming words. Even the pressure she felt from standing in front of such a strong person lessened.

"R-right, when me and a few of the others we held captive in the stadium. I happened to overhear the bo...the criminal from before mentioned something about an ant colony east of here. He said that there were too many of them, and none of his men had AoE spells, so they couldn't take care of them without tiring themselves out. Actually, it wasn't only me who heard this, just that the others were all killed by that monster while "playing with them". It would have been my turn today had..." Freya managed to properly explain after calming down.

She got so confident that at the end, she was displaying an array of emotions, unlike when she began. Her emotions range from anger, fear and sorrow to relief, then disgust, then guilt. It was quite the show with her easy-to-read facial expressions.

"Oh, so that's what happened. And you don't need to feel guilty. It wasn't your fault what happened to them. There's nothing you could have possibly done about it. You all were just unlucky. Also, you shouldn't feel disgusted with yourself for being glad that it wasn't you. Who wouldn't be happy that they managed to survive such a situation? If you still feel bad about it, then live a life they would all be proud of in their stead, live for them." Muku couldn't help but try to console Freya.

The poor girl looked like she was about to collapse under her own thoughts let alone the unfriendly gazes she must have been getting for a while. Again he was reminded of the atrocities of the apocalypse. How he and his group were lucky to be strong or who knows where they would be. Or if they would even be alive.

"T-thank you" Freya spoke softly with her eyes teary as her emotions were slowly overcoming her.

"No prob..oof!" Muku, who was replying to Freya, was suddenly interrupted when the girl couldn't take it anymore and threw herself into his embrace. As a nice guy, of course, he wouldn't push her away. He could only hug her back until she calmed down. He definitely wasn't doing it because her body was so soft he didn't want to let go. And he wasn't again plagued by the question..." Why are girls so soft"? Because his thoughts were nothing but pure.

"Big brother"

Suddenly a gentle voice sounded from behind him. Both the voice and the words were familiar; he immediately knew who was calling him, but for some reason, he couldn't help but feel a chill go down his spine.

When he looked back at him, the chill disappeared. In its place, he now felt like he had been dipped in an ice cold lake. Behind him, he not only saw Hope's innocent smile. But every other member in his group other than Elsa had the same smile. But while they smiled innocently, their auras stated the opposite. He felt like there were seven chaotic monsters behind him. Luckily they were still in control, and only he could sense it.

Clearly, they were silently telling him to let go of Freya or face the consequences. And of course, like any good man who values his life he... didn't let go. The girl was just so soft he didn't want to let go. The best part, she wasn't his student or student's mother. So he could completely enjoy the hug without feeling immoral in any way. Seeing his defiant gaze, the girls were angered, but they didn't make a scene. They looked at each other, and without speaking, they agreed to deal with him later on.

Of course while he and the girls knew about his impure thoughts at the moment. His face was still stoic, completely looking like he was just consoling Freya. The women even thought that he was such a good person, to not care about their infinitely different positions like that by letting Freya cry in his arms. What they didn't know was that he was just a virgin unwilling to let any chance of hugging a cute girl go.

"Ahh!, s-sorry for that. I d-didn't, please don't leave me behind!"

After a while, Freya finally collected herself and realised what she was doing. She immediately jumped out of Muku's embrace, both in fear and embarrassment. She had never done such a thing before after all. And to do it to someone who literally had the authority to decide her future or even her life and death. How could she be so foolish??.

"Don't worry, I understand. Your emotions got the better of you. It happens, in fact, if you ever want to...Oww...Cough. Anyway, you and the others should go to rest for now. Since we have a lead. Well set off tomorrow with the first group. Which you will be part of, of course, after your contribution" Obviously, Muku didn't mind Freya crying in his arms.

He was even about to shamelessly offer her to come to him again whenever she wanted to cry, but a pinch from Jade, who appeared from nowhere, stopped him. And so, he could only switch topics and address everyone as he could see Jade was itching to pinch him again if he said something wrong.

"Y-yes sir!" Freya replied in her soft voice and ran off her face bright red.

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"So...is she the one?" Just as Freya and the others left. Jade, who was still beside Muku, asked such a weird question in a calm voice.

"Why do you ask?" Muku played along while pretending to be dumb.

"Oh, no reason. Just asking, you don't have to tell me if you don't want to" Jade replied, her voice still calm.

"You know, I'd believe you a bit more if you... Weren't grabbing my hand so tightly like you won't let me go if I don't answer you?" Muku spoke while prying his hand out of Jade's vice-like grip. After doing it he even noticed that there was a faint reddish handprint left on the spot she was grabbing. Which showed just how much strength she had used.

Whoosh!

"I'm going to scout the area, be back soon. And don't do anything to her...Ike talking to you Jade!" Muku, who could sense that things were about to take a bad turn for him, quickly made a break for it. He flew away before anyone could say anything, only his words lingered in the air a bit before also disappearing. He felt like he had to mention something about them not hurting Freya or someone(Jade) might really try it. Who knew they could be so scary?.

Originally he would have taken at least one of them with him... But there was no way he was going to do such a thing in the current situation. What if they killed him there and disposed of the body.

"Sooo, Hope, hypothetically...Can your Whisperless Death spell kill a person without leaving any traces behind?" As they looked at Muku's fading shadow. Jade suddenly asked a weird question.

"Yeah...I guess so...Why do you ask?" Hope replied confusedly at the beginning. But her eyes widened from realisation before she asked Jade why she asked.

"...No reason" Seeing Hope's reaction, as well as the others. Jade immediately backed out from what she wanted to say. To think she was the only one who considered it...

She immediately felt angry at Muku. It was his fault that she even thought of it. If he hadn't said anything, she wouldn't have thought of it either... probably... maybe...okay, at least she wouldn't carry it out.

...

Somewhere within the stadium, Freya felt a sudden chill like she just avoided a great danger.

Chapter 115 Mother of the group

50 kilometres east of the stadium...

"Well...this is, definitely what we need. But to think there'd be so many," Muku, who was floating in the air, a bit of distance away from the ant colony, spoke to himself in wonder. He'd never seen so many beasts in one place before.

The ant nest looked like a four-story skyscraper built from mud and rubble. With at least a thousand unranked ants going in and out. On top of that, there were a sizable amount of Rank One beasts going around, too. He could also tell that a few monsters lay down below in hiding, which was why he didn't dare get closer. Who knew what ability they would have?.

Even if he was close to the peak of Rank Two. He dared not be arrogant. Especially when he was alone. Plus his body hadn't fully healed from Ares' attack even after Hope's healing. For some reason, although all the injuries, both external and internal, were healed. He still felt some slight discomfort whenever he moved. He suspected that there might be a hidden aspect to Ares' attack he couldn't sense.

"Well, I whatever, with the others here, it should be fine. I'll go back for now" After looking around a bit more and coming up with a game plan. Muku flew away.

As he left, a pair of huge black eyes looked in his direction from ten metres below ground. They had been looking at him since he appeared, yet he couldn't sense them. As for how they could see him through the soil? X-ray vision maybe? Well, whatever the reason, the owner saw Muku and would have attacked if he had come any closer. Which would have likely ended badly for him.

...

A few hours later...

"Oh, so her information was correct and there are even more ants than initially anticipated. With many Rank Ones and a possibility for multiple Rank Twos as well?...did Christmas come early this year!?" Jade repeated what Muku, who had just arrived, told them, getting more and more excited the more she spoke.

Her battle spirit was already blazing hot. The girl was becoming more and more like a battle maniac. The others couldn't help but be reminded of the legendary Amazons whenever she was like that.

"Yes, and don't you dare rush deep into the horde when we fight, or you're off the team", Muku, who had wisely waited a few hours to return despite having finished his work within an hour. As to let the girls cool off a bit replied Jade with a little smile on his face. How could he not tell what she was thinking?...the girl was just that rush.

Normally he'd let her be. But this time he couldn't do so since she still couldn't use all her strength. Heck, she still couldn't transform yet. So letting her jump into a horde of monsters with a possibility of Rank Two beasts popping up was not an option.

"What is that a threat!?, you'd kick me out just because of that after all we've been through together. After all, you've made me do??" Jade exclaimed with a surprised expression on her face which became sad at the end with a bit of shyness beneath.

"Don't be stupid; of course, it's a threat. Why would we want to keep a maniac that's always causing trouble in the team? And what do you mean by what I've made you do?? Can't you speak properly you brat? And why are you acting shy for no reason? Do you want to ruin my reputation?!" Muku exclaimed in annoyance at how Jade was trying to get back at him for denying her, her fun.

"Tsk, fine", Jade relented, knowing that she wouldn't win the argument anyway.

"So, about Fre..." Emily was about to bring up Freya but Muku interrupted.

"Oh, I just remembered there's something I had to do. See you all later..." Muku spoke while interrupting Emily. Before the others could say anything he had already flown out of the mansion. Like hell, he was gonna stick around to be interrogated when he had the strength to leave.

"I think you should drop the matter, or he'll leave like that every time you mention it. Which would be just wasting time" Layla calmly advised Emily from the sidelines. But the others could sense the slight frustration in her voice.

Clearly, she also wanted the matter to be discussed but had noticed that it wouldn't go anywhere unless they could trap him. Which they probably couldn't do even if they worked together. After all, it's Muku they were talking about. He might just sprout a new ability specifically made for escaping if it came down to it. On top of that, he already had telekinesis which they all still couldn't effectively fight against.

"Yeah, you're right. It's not like he's going to go off and start a family with her, leaving us behind right?... Right?". Emily accepted Layla's advice and even joked a bit, before scaring herself with the very joke. Hell, she scared almost everyone in the room.

Only Elsa, who particularly cared about anything as long as she had Emily. Audrey, who was a mature lady despite her present looks, was beyond such childish thoughts and was certain he would never do such a thing.

And Hope, who was his little sister, would obviously tag along even if there was a sister-in-law in the picture. Were fine with Muku getting himself a bride. Though none of them would want such a day to come to pass. They all preferred their current way of life. Where everyone in the group was happy.

"Oh, darling. Don't scare yourself like that. You know deep down already that he would never leave any of you behind. Why would he do that now when he didn't do so when you all were still weak?" Audrey chimed in to diffuse the situation. She talked like she was only addressing Emily, but she was addressing the others as well. She could tell that most of them were affected by Emily's words.

Her words seemed to do the trick as the girls immediately calmed down. Seeing this, Audrey couldn't help but smile wryly, thinking about how the emotions of teen girls were easily roused. Instead of just being Layla's mother, she had basically become the mother of the whole group.

...

The next morning...

Muku, his girls and 15 stadium women, with Freya among them, were already gathered in front of the stadium.

The women all had anxious looks. After all, it was their first time leaving the safe zone ever since the apocalypse began. Though in hindsight, now that they thought about it, maybe if they had gone out sooner, they wouldn't have gone through all they had gone through, right?

"Good morning ladies, I'm Audrey and the girls behind me are Layla, Chloe, Hope...." Although the girls had agreed to not hound Muku for what happened. They had begged Audrey to replace him in

addressing the women lest he got chummy with even more of them. Audrey, who wasn't able to refuse their pleading gazes, could only relent.

And so, she took Muku's place, which he was more than willing to give up. After all, he didn't like talking to strangers much either. Just that he was the one who had come up with the plan to strengthen the women so he felt that he had to do it. But if someone else was willing to take his place, he wouldn't refuse. After all, he wasn't nearly as lustful as the girls were painting him out to be.

"I'm sorry that it took us all this long to introduce ourselves. The situation was a bit complicated. Anyway, that's a thing of the past. We're here because of a different matter right? So please, step onto the hovering silver platform in front of you and take a sit. We're about to set off" Audrey continued to address the women as well as giving them instructions.

And so, they did what they were told. Which was to get onto the large silver platform Muku had created that had seats on it. It was a rather mystical thing for the women. Jade couldn't help but complain at the side since when it's them, he never creates seats and makes them stand all the way to their destination.

His reason is that either they do it his way or they walk. But they all knew that he was just being petty. Not wanting them to completely relax while he expended his mana. Which was rather childish, but they quite enjoyed that side of him as well since it was something only they knew.

...

Behind Audrey...

"Wow, Layla, was your mother always so cool and confident?" Hope asked Layla in a whispering voice.

"...I don't think so...at least I've never seen her like this" Layla replied after thinking a bit. Before the apocalypse, the only side of Audrey she had seen was the passive one never willing to take charge. So seeing her taking charge of strangers so easily and confidently was surprising for her as well.

"Maybe she got her confidence from her strength?" Jade chimed in from beside them.

"I doubt that that's true. We all got stronger, but we are basically still the same as we've always been. Just that you've gotten a bit crazier and rush...but even that's an increase to what you already had" Emily refuted Jade's claim.

"Emily... were you maybe just waiting for a chance to diss me?" Jade replied to Emily with a deadpan expression on her face.

"Hehe, maybe" Emily replied while giggling mischievously.

"Tsk, wait until our next match; I'll show you exactly how crazy I can be", Jade immediately fired back, unwilling to be looked down upon.

"What if I refuse?" Emily replied mischievously again which made Jade even angrier. And like that, the two girls started arguing until the others got involved.

What they didn't know was that Jade was actually right. Audrey had gotten her confidence from her powers. More specifically, the trace of Muku's bloodline in her body didn't allow for even its sub-host to be meek in front of others.

By the time the girls finished arguing. Everyone had already gotten on, and the journey had already begun.

Muku and Audrey chose to stay out of it since they couldn't even understand what they were arguing about.

Even little Elsa felt embarrassed for them. How was she younger than such childish people??. To think even Layla would join just because the issue of who was the strongest among the girls was brought up...

Chapter 116 She can't go

A bit over a kilometre away from the ant colony...

"Woah...it really is like a lake of ants!" Jade, who could see things a lot clearer than the others, couldn't help but comment in awe. Her hands were already itching for a fight.

"Don't you dare! Remember what you promised! Besides, in the first days, we are all just bodyguards while these ladies fight. We wouldn't want to run out of unranked ants because you got too excited after all" Again, Muku ruthlessly burst Jade's bubble with his cold words. Her battle intent that was quickly rising deflated back to zero in seconds.

"Tsk, party pooper", Jade cursed Muku in a whisper, then stood aside in protest.

"Ladies, the plan here is that I'll first get each of you an ant to fight alone to get familiar with how they attack. After that since we wouldn't want to be here for longer than necessary. I'll increase the number of ants. Don't worry too much since these unranked beasts, even if they are ants, won't be too much stronger than you all. After all, you all got your various hidden attributes increased by the beast meat" Muku immediately explained how things were going to work to the girls while completely ignoring Jade. Much to her displeasure, but she didn't make a scene knowing that it wasn't the time for such things.

"Every understand?" Muku asked the women if they understood after finishing his explanation.

"Yes sir!" The ladies called out in unison. Of course, they weren't too loud to avoid attracting attention from the ants.

"Good, now let me go get you the first batch" Muku spoke in a pleased tone before flying off.

What he was about to do was nothing new. It was practically the same thing he did with Elsa. Just that this time he'd have to bring back more beasts than before and do it a few more times.

....

"Okay, your sixteen rings are prepared. Each of you get into one, and I'll release the ants" Muku, who had sixteen ants floating behind him, addressed the women along with Elsa.

The women hesitated a bit, seeing the large scary-looking ants with their legs kicking all over the place. Elsa was different though. She had been itching to get into action for a long time. The little girl was rather pitiful. Seeing everyone else fighting almost every day and being around for big fights and yet being too weak to even tickle the enemy.

So, while her facial expressions hadn't changed much, underneath the veil, she was super excited. While she thought she was hiding it well, the others from her group could see it clearly enough. After all, they had been spending every day with her, so they had her all figured out.

Seeing her so excited made Layla seem a bit conflicted for some reason. But after a few seconds of thought, a resolute look appeared on her face. Then just as Elsa was about to walk to her ring, she stopped her by putting a hand on her shoulder.

"Hmm?" Elsa made a confused sound while looking back at Layla. Firstly she didn't understand why she was being stopped. And secondly for it to be the ice queen who basically never talked to her before to be the one to stop her? She was more than confused.

"Umm. Layla, what's the problem?" Emily, who was standing with the group, asked, also confused. After all, Layla rarely involved herself with anything when she didn't have to.

"...She can't go...not now" Layla replied after thinking about it for a bit.

"Why's that?" Emily asked, not looking offended or angry. She had faith in Layla's decision-making. So she felt that there must be a reason for her current actions too.

"Every time someone from our group makes a significant advancement. There's always a large spectacle accompanying it. With that mark on her forehead, I suspect something similar will happen. It would be best if she evolved closer to home where it's safe, away from most beasts," Layla explained her reasoning.

"O...oh. I guess you're right. It's just a little more time. I'm sure she can wait" Hearing Layla's reasoning, Emily wanted to call it absurd at first. But after thinking about it a bit. She realised that there really was a high possibility of something like that happening. Their group was just that weird after all.

"Yeah, I also agree with that. Don't know why it slipped my mind. We could have gotten into some real trouble" Muku chimed in.

He was even sweating a bit. Even without considering his group's weird disposition. Just considering how Elsa got the Water Drop mark on her forehead was reason enough to play it safe. After all, the thing

caused such a spectacle when it was just an embryo and unclaimed. Who knows what it will do when it emerges?

Like him, the others also thought the same. And so, to Elsa's slight dissatisfaction, she was held back from participating in the killing event. Well, it really was like an event.

The girls were even betting on who they thought would kill their beast first among the women. Of course, at first, it was only Jade who wanted to bet. But after putting up her juicy R2 beast meat dinner on the line. The others joined in too. The meat was just that tasty.

Only Muku and Audrey didn't participate like the down-to-earth and responsible adults they were. Though internally, both of them were cursing their years for not allowing them to be rash.

And so, while all this was happening with Muku's group. The women finally managed to gather their courage and all entered their respective rings. Surprisingly the timid Freya was first to get in. Her reason? Only she knew. Just before entering, she glanced at the merrymaking that Muku's group was doing, and she felt somewhat weird about it, unlike the simple admiration from before. And before she knew it, she was in the metal ring ready to battle.

Not wanting to be outdone by her. The others quickly made up their minds and entered their own rings. It's truly weird how humans operate, huh?

...

A bit later...

"Okay Ms Freya, are you ready? I'm about to let go of the ant" Muku spoke to Freya from outside the ring.

Gulp

"Y-yes, I'm ready" Freya gulped down some saliva while looking at the large ant that was standing more than a metre tall in front of her. Its large black head and sickle-like mandibles looked threatening like they were ready to cut her in half and eat her on the spot.

She then looked at the silver blade she held. Her confidence immediately surged up for some reason. Then she gave a hesitant at first, but confident at the end reply.

"Good", Muku replied with a smile, then immediately let the ant go. He then went to deal with the other women one by one until everyone's battle began.

...

Back at Freya's battle...

She was visibly tired. Her rather big chest heaved up and down, sweating all over her body. There were even a few bloody scratches on her body. Clearly, she was having an easy time. But her eyes were still resolute, and her grip on her sword was still as strong as ever.

Opposite her, the ant was in a worse state than her. One of its back legs was cut off. There was a large slash on its forehead and another one on its side. On top of that, many little cuts were all over its body. Its body fluids were leaking all over the place. It could barely stand.

"Wow, she's good", Jade, who was overseeing her battle along with those of a few other girls, spoke to herself. At first, she hoped that Freya would fail badly and then ask for her help. That way, any interest in her Muku might have would end, and she wouldn't be a problem anymore. The outcome was set in stone!...at least in Jade's head.

But surprisingly. No matter how much she struggled. How hurt she got. Freya never once asked for help. She kept on fighting until the point where the ant was almost dead, and she still stood strong even in her wounded and tired condition.

Before she knew it, Jade found herself rooting for Freya. She couldn't help but be reminded of their weaker days when the battle seemed like a life-and-death crisis. It might as well have been since they

really could have been killed then. By the claws and teeth of an unranked dog no less...an idea completely absurd to the current her.

"Haaa...yah!" Freya shouted as she drew upon her last energy and rushed toward the ant. The ant, not willing to be outdone, also rushed forward. The two warriors, at the end of their strength, met in the middle of the ring for their final clash.

While it was painfully slow to Jade. It was still quite entertaining to watch. It's like watching two toddlers slapping each other nonstop. You just won't be able to look away wanting to see which one will win their little fight.

The battle was decided when Freya said "yah!" As she had finally managed to come at the ant from the right angle and managed to stab right through its head without being cut by its mandibles.

[Condition for evolution met. Kill nine more beasts to become a Rank One Evolver and gain specialisation]

An old and familiar prompt to many rang out in Freya's head for the first time. Startling the poor girl into jumping up in fright since Muku and his girls had forgotten to mention it. This is understandable since they've been in the game for so long that they've forgotten the little things about how they got in.

Chapter 117 Struggle for strength!

"To think she would be the first one to kill her beast despite her personality" Jade suddenly spoke to no one in particular. There was a hint of disbelief in her tone, but other than that she seemed fine. After all, since none of them chose Freya due to various reasons, not just their bias, no one would be getting anyone's meat.

"Yeah, none of us saw it coming", Emily chimed in, feeling a bit salty. She really didn't want Freya to stand out so much.

"Oh well, stuff happens I guess" Chloe just shrugged it off. While she also didn't want Freya to get closer to Muku, she didn't hold any particular negative feelings for the girl.

"Well yeah, you'd say that. After all, your choice was the second one to succeed in killing, while mine couldn't even kill theirs," Hope immediately replied to Chloe with a lot more saltiness in her voice.

While it was okay to lose. But the fact that her choice couldn't even complete the task really stung. Especially when everyone else's choices at least killed theirs.

That's right, the girls had gathered up after the fifteen women all finished their battles. Of course, not all of them were successful, like Hope's choice, who passed out mid-battle. There were actually five of them who didn't successfully kill their ant opponent.

And the lucky ants were released back to their nest by Muku under the confusion of the girls. When they asked him about it. His answer was "Since they won their battles, they deserve to live a while longer before the eventual death when we wipe the nest out"

When they asked him what the difference in dying a little later and dying now. His answer was, "Isn't it the same with humans and our little lifespan. Are you saying that just because we're destined to die at any moment, we should just die now?"

After that, the girls didn't ask anything more. They felt like he was just displaying his weirdness differently.

While in reality, although Muku really did want to give them a bit more time to live. His main reason was to see whether whatever was hiding in the ant colony that he could barely sense would be aroused by the injuries on the ants or not. Or whether, more specifically, it cared about the bottom-tier ants that weren't even Rank One yet.

If it showed some movements then their plan to get all the women at the stadium to Rank one could be in jeopardy. As there is no way the R1 ants would survive a clash between higher Rank beings like themselves.

On the other end, if it didn't care, then at least for a little while they would be safe to carry out their large endeavour. If they are lucky, maybe it will move after they've already gotten all the women to rank one.

So more than anything, releasing the ants was nothing more than a simple probe.

As for not telling the girls. He felt that he shouldn't baby them too much. In fact, Jade's senses should be more than enough to sense the hidden boss, even clearer than him in fact. But he'd noticed that she'd started to depend on him so much she was losing her vigilance which dulled her senses.

Even the sharpest beast would lose its edge if it lazed around all day. Let alone Jade who was still getting used to her abilities. Especially now when her abilities were weakened with her mana to Beast Aura conversation going on.

His plan was to use the hidden beast not only as a source of much-needed KP but also as a learning opportunity for Jade. As well as the others really, even if their senses aren't as sharp as Jade or even his. They should still be mindful of their surroundings, especially in such a setting where it's almost obvious that there would be something hidden.

{Sigh, I guess I really have been pampering them too much. Should maybe leave them alone for a few days and go out alone?... Nuh, that seems familiar like a recipe for even greater disaster. In all the movies where such a scenario occurs and the dude leaves. When he comes back, someone is either dead or dying. So nuh...the best I can do is be more mindful of my actions from now on}

While Muku's thoughts were all over the place. His facial expressions hadn't changed much. So the girls didn't notice anything. Only Audrey vaguely felt that something might be up but she didn't know how to ask. So she could only look on in worry hoping that whatever was wrong would get fixed. Though even she didn't sense anything related to the hidden boss.

....

Around an hour later...

"Okay ladies, sure you've all rested enough. And Hope has healed all your injuries. So it's time for round two. I'm sure you've all discussed amongst yourselves so now you all should have a better idea on how to properly fight those ants and win.

This time I don't want to see anyone failing. In fact, whoever fails this time won't get another chance" After seeing that the women had rested long enough. Muku immediately proceeded with the next round.

Hearing him, those like Freya were feeling a bit more confident than before. And were sure they could win a lot easier than before. There were still the five who had failed the first time. They felt the pressure increase on their back.

But as Muku said, they had discussed it with the others. So, unlike before, they won't just randomly charge at the ants and get beaten up. So while they felt pressure, they weren't ready to back out yet.

And so, the ladies jumped into the second round. As expected, those like Freya, who had succeeded once, already had an easier time the second time around.

They not only didn't get hurt nearly as much but they also took a lot less time and weren't completely covered in ant body fluids. However, the part about being covered with ant body fluids didn't matter much since they were all already drenched from the first battle.

As for the five that had failed before. At first, things didn't look too good for them. Which was mostly caused by their own nervousness from having failed before.

But after a while, they calmed down and started to properly fight. They even became almost as good as the others. Which definitely had nothing to do with Hope threatening to poison them if they failed again.

.....

Later on in the day...

The women who had been fighting for most of the day since morning, were now barely able to keep standing. They had never worked so hard before in their lives. In fact, they had never worked even half as hard.

But the unfeeling monsters in Muku's group who they thought were saints before, but not anymore. Wouldn't let them go. They wouldn't let them rest for more than an hour.

The worst part is that even if they got injured, they wouldn't let you go since you'd be healed soon after. On top of that, whenever they tried to drag the battle on so that they could expend some of the daylight... A blue lightning bolt that didn't injure them but hurt like hell would strike them on the spot.

They were all regretting their decision to get stronger after suffering so much. But since they had already begun, they could only continue while shedding tears of blood hoping that the day would quickly come to an end.

Their only happiness at that point was knowing that even those who were left behind would also suffer one day. They even promised each other to not mention anything to the others when they got back.

"Hehe, ladies, I know that some of you can, if not all of you, want to quit right now. But remember, the only path to strength is hard work. Even me and my team went through all this. Look where we are at now. Whenever you're about to give up, just look at us and say to yourself, "I can do it! I will be as strong as them one day" Muku gave a motivational speech to the resting women.

"But since this is all new to you, we will stop here for today. You've all killed nine ants each anyway. We'll just take the remaining one each that are needed with us and you can kill them whenever you're ready" Seeing that even though the women were still willing to continue if he said so, especially after his speech.

Muku chose to stop the battles for the day. After all, the women all looked like they were close to dying from exhaustion. He wasn't a complete monster who didn't know when to stop after all...even if he did push them a bit too much. That was unavoidable since there were a lot of them and while he and his group couldn't afford to stick around for too long. They also had some growing to do after all.

...

As Muku was addressing the women...

"Umm, Emily?" Jade whispered to Emily beside her.

"Yeah?" Emily replied in a similarly low voice.

"When did we ever struggle like they did?" Jade asked her confusedly.

"Shhh, shut up! He's trying to motivate them okay! And the only reason we didn't suffer was because the dogs didn't come one after the other nonstop. So stop talking unless someone hears you and they get demotivated," Emily immediately replied in a hushed voice while hurriedly covering Jade's loose mouth.

She wasn't certain whether the women would be demotivated or not after knowing that they hadn't gone through such a hard time. She thought that it was better to be safe than sorry.

Seeing Emily's exaggerated reaction, Jade just shrugged not knowing what she did wrong. But she didn't say anything else.

On Muku's side. He wrapped things up with the women. Then went to grab the needed number of ants, and then they left...

Chapter 118 Remnants

On the way back to the stadium...

"Oh look! People!" Jade suddenly shouted out in surprise when she saw several people dashing away in the distance.

Her reaction was understandable though. After all, even though they moved quite a lot in the apocalypse, they seldom come across other people. Not that people were completely gone from the outside world. But what sane person would stick around when they see a floating mansion coming their way?

Because of that and the fact that people generally no longer loitered around because of the many beasts going around. Made it pretty hard for Muku's group to encounter people. Especially when it's close to nighttime. Most people who lived in the outside world would have long retreated to their hideouts.

After all, beasts ruled the night even more than they ruled the day. Not to mention that humans are generally not good at dealing with things in the darkness. Even if a person had night vision, they would still choose to avoid the night if they can.

Hell, even Muku's group, who had Jade and Layla, who would still be fine, if not better, at night. Didn't normally move around during nighttime. It's like an instinct for most people to avoid the night if they can. The point is, seeing people going around in an area that didn't seem to have any possible hiding areas close to 6 PM was rather odd. Especially when people were generally hard to spot in the apocalypse world...

"Ahh!" Suddenly, a surprised and frightened voice rang out from one of the women behind Muku's group.

He and the others immediately looked back at the source. It was a young woman who was now shaking in fear while looking in the direction of several people. Even the eyes of the other women were filled with fear as they also looked in the direction. Anyone in the know could easily tell what was going on.

"So, I think it's safe to assume that those are the escaped gang members from Mest's gang" Muku made an educated guess from the information he had and the reactions of the women.

He had found out the previous evening that some of Mest's gang members had escaped while he was fighting him. They were in some of the stadium's rooms when he killed the ones outside. And when Mest came to confront him. Some who recognised him ran away. The wimps from the group that didn't even know him also ran away.

He thought that they would have gone far away by that point. So he didn't bother with trying to look for them. Just attributing their escape to their good luck.

But to think the idiots would still be close by moving around like headless sheep. It was really bewildering, but then again, it's understandable that he wouldn't understand how the minds of such people worked.

"Can I deal with them?" Jade, who had been bored out of her mind most of the day, offered to help. To her, they showed up at the right time since she had been looking for something to vent her frustrations on. And for some reason, they hadn't come across any beasts outside of those ants since morning.

"Sure, just don't kill anyone. I've got a plan for them" Muku agreed to let Jade take down the gang members. He had no reason to refuse and could see that she was about to blow as well. The girl just wasn't the type to sit still.

"Great! But I can't promise that a few of their bones won't be broken", With that happy but terrifying reply. Jade disappeared from the silver platform.

....

Around a kilometre away from Muku's group...

"Hey!, do you also see what I'm seeing?" One man asked his companions with a bewildered look on his face.

"If you mean a group of people on a floating platform with a bunch of large ants floating above them...then yeah" Another one replied with a similarly bewildered expression.

"Oh, good! I thought I was going crazy," The first man to speak said while heaving a sigh of relief.

"Nuh you're fine...but such an odd sight. I can only think of one person group who can do that..." The second guy reassured the first guy.

But his words his words immediately terrified everyone in his group. He himself was also terrified when he realised what he had just said and what it meant.

"Run!" Nobody knew who said it among them. But as soon as it was said all of them immediately made a break for it. Everyone ran in their own direction, it could even be said that they scattered away.

"Ahh!"

"Ahh!"

"Ahhhh" ...

Suddenly as they ran, a green blurry figure would rush up to each of them and punch them once. Each punch was done in a specific way. At the end of it, all twelve of them had been punched back to their initial position. Though unlike before when they stood. This time they were on the ground in a pile, groaning in pain while clutching their stomachs.

"It was a good idea to immediately run when you spotted danger. But sadly, you were all too late" Suddenly, a youthful and arrogant female voice sounded as the blurry green figure became clearer until the person within became completely clear. Obviously, it was Jade.

"Argh!, it's one of them!" One of the gang members groaned first before speaking in terror. He could already feel his demise quickly approaching.

"Wait!, she's alone...maybe the others are too slow and will arrive here late. Why don't we try to take her out before they are and make our escape" Another member who was also fighting through the pain on the ground spoke.

Hearing his words, the others hesitated at first. But after thinking about it. They didn't have any other choice in the matter. It was either this or they would soon be captured and eventually killed. Probably in a horrible way too. After all, they knew what they had done deserved nothing less.

"Okay, let's do it!" One after the other, they all agreed to the plan as they got up still clutching their stomachs.

Soon, they were all up and looking at Jade viciously like they were ready to tear her apart.

"Little girl, you better get out of our way unless you want to face our combined wrath. Which I assure you, you won't be able to take", One of the gang members threatened Jade menacingly, hoping that she would back off and they could have more time to run away

They still hadn't noticed that the others from Jade's group weren't making an effort to move faster. Otherwise, they probably would have realised that they had no chance. Since only confident people would move like Muku's group was doing in such a situation.

"Oh, is that so?. Again, good plan...but can you succeed this time?" Jade replied with a playful smile on her face. Her voice still sounded as arrogant as before.

"You brat! We'll make you eat those words!. You think you are our opponent just because that Muku fellow is strong and you caught us off guard?!" The gang members were instantly angered as they immediately ran toward Jade.

Their bodies glowed with different lights from their various powers. Honestly, at that moment, they looked quite threatening.

"Hehe", Jade only gave a small chuckle. Then she disappeared from their sight again. This time they couldn't even see the blurry green silhouette from before.

....

A little while later....

"Did you have to break all their limbs though?" Emily asked Jade with a deadpan expression on her face.

Her eyes looked at the twelve gang members who were groaning on the ground. Each and every one of them had both their hands and their legs broken in wired angles. It's not that she felt pity for the beasts in human skin.

She felt like Jade was doing something completely unnecessary and troublesome for no reason at all since, later on, the gang members would be punished anyway.

"Hehe, what do you mean? You know they all attacked me at once right?. Me, a weak and alone young girl. I was just defending myself. What if they had taken advantage of me if I didn't do this?" Jade replied mischievously, clearly in a good mood. She was also looking at the twelve gang members, enjoying her handwork.

"Tsk, whatever you psycho" Emily replied while rolling her eyes, not wanting to bother with Jade anymore.

"Me, psycho!?. You're the one who laughed like a crazy person before when you used your powers"
Jade retorted and fired back. Refusing to take the insult lying down.

"Do you want to fight?" Emily replied with a smile as her body was immediately enveloped by a golden flame.

"Sure" Jade didn't back down as her Beast Aura started leaking out as she looked at Emily.

"Okay girls, that's enough. This isn't the time or place" Audrey intervened after noticing that things were quickly getting out of hand.

"Yes ma'am!"x2 Both girls replied at once and dispersed their gathering power. They respected Audrey that much.

"Okay everyone, let's get ready to go" Muku who had been watching the show quietly finally spoke up. He was keeping to his words of not overly involving himself in every small issue. Which seemed to be the right decision so far.

And so, with a bit more baggage. Of the groaning variety, the group continued their journey...

Chapter 119 Fairy Summoner

Around thirty minutes later...

"Finally. We're back!" Chloe spoke with relief in her voice. Surprisingly, in their group, she was the one who disliked being around a sizable group of people the most. Even more than Layla who would just ignore them and fade to the background.

"Yeah, but it's dark though. I guess we'll have to wait until tomorrow to hold a "trial" for these scum"
Jade replied. She felt quite disappointed as she couldn't wait to see the show.

"On top of that, Elsa and the others might have to wait until tomorrow to ra(No!)..." Hope chimed in before she was interrupted by a loud protesting voice.

"I mean... I ah... It won't take long for me to kill the ant and evolve. So please don't push it to tomorrow," Elsa, who was the one who had the sudden outburst. Surprising everyone, returned to her normal, soft voice of speech as she explained herself.

The girl has waited so long. Her advancement also kept getting postponed at the last step. She just couldn't take it anymore. Her outburst even surprised Emily who hadn't realised just how much her little sister wanted to advance yet.

"Hehe, it seems little Elsa can't hold herself back anymore", Jade teased, which made Elsa's little face red with embarrassment. But she still didn't take her words back, showing just how badly she wanted it.

"Don't worry Elsa, it's just a little dark out. And your sister is here, we can just use her as a torch if we can't see(Hey!). We won't postpone your advancement any longer. I'm sure Hope was just joking" Muku finally spoke to address the issue. Some of his word choices prompted a cry of protest from Emily as she felt insulted by how he likened her to a torch, but he ignored her and continued addressing Elsa.

"O...okay" Hearing Muku's reassuring words Elsa stuttered a bit as she replied. She still felt embarrassed, but everyone could clearly feel the relief in her voice.

"While originally I wanted us to eat first before dealing with your advancement. But since you seem unable to wait anymore, we can start with that. Freya and your group, you can stay here and rest for now, I'll call you all when I need you. It should be in an hour or so" Muku continued with his address.

He and his group then went out of the barrier leaving everything else behind. The gang members were obviously not a threat anymore with broken limbs and shattered mana cores which Muku and the rest only realised later that Jade also did. The girl was just too ruthless.

As for the ants. Hope, who had advanced further in her poison control, paralysed the ants. So it wasn't a problem to leave them behind.

The girl was quickly turning into a healer with some debuff capabilities as well. Her poison manipulation was becoming more and more versatile. Just like everyone else with their own abilities.

....

Around a kilometre away from the mansion and the stadium...

"Umm, did we have to come so far?" Jade couldn't help but ask while rolling her eyes.

"Who knows, really? This is something new for all of us after all. What if she summons a waterfall the moment she evolves and destroys our mansion before we can react?" Muku replied. And he truly believed his own answer. Like Layla, she was also certain that something amazing was definitely going to happen.

"Tsk, whatever. Let's just get this over with" Jade didn't want to continue the unnecessary argument. Not to mention she could feel Elsa's burning gaze on her, practically accusing her of wasting time. The little girl was super intense when her interests were on the line it seemed.

"Okay, let's get on with it then" Muku spoke as he brought the floating ant to the ground.

Everyone but Emily looked on with glowing eyes from anticipation. It was understandable that she wouldn't be as excited as the others. After all, they really did use her as a freaking torch in the end.

Even though they had real torches at home, the others dared to support each other in saying that she was enough.

Hell, even her own little sister agreed to the idea, the traitor!. Not caring about how her sister felt about being used as a torch. With all that, she could only begrudgingly agree while plotting her revenge in the future.

"Here", Muku spoke as he handed Elsa a familiar-looking silver blade. Though this time, it was a lot stronger than before and the designs looked more refined and realistic.

"Thank you", Elsa said as she accepted the sword, then immediately turned towards the helpless ant that had been paralysed. If she hadn't waited so long for the moment to rank up, maybe she would have

wanted to fight it out with the ant. But she had waited long, so the ant could only helplessly die under her blade.

"Ha...Ya!" She didn't waste any time as she immediately plunged her blade into the ant's large head. The weakly kicked out with its legs as it died with grievances. Even if it had to die? Couldn't they have let it throw in a move or two? Humans were truly too ruthless.

[Kill count met. Evolution Commencing. Core formation in progress...]

[Core formation complete. Initializing Specialisation...]

[High affinity with water element detected. Requirements for High Class: Water Mage met]

[High Class: Water Mage Awakening...]

[Error]

[Error]

[Special property detected...]

[Special property: Water Fairy Embryo detected]

[Link between individual and embryo detected]

[100% Compatibility detected]

[Embryo's influence on individual's affinity detected]

[Water affinity increasing]

[Water affinity increased to "Extremely High"]

[New specialisation initiating...]

[Specialisation generated. Pseudo-Legendary Class: Fairy Summoner (Water) awakening...]

As the prompts rang in Elsa's head one by one, although she felt numb all over. And she couldn't completely understand what was going on. She was the happiest she had ever been.

Finally, she was stepping onto the true path of evolution. And soon enough she will be able to stand tall to tall with her sister and assist her. She won't always need to hide in the background anymore.

As she stood there, her eyes closed. The Water Drop mark on her forehead started glowing with a gentle blue light as everyone looked on. Her golden hair was flailing all over the place due to the heavy winds that had suddenly appeared out of nowhere. The scene looked quite heroic and exaggerated.

"Pss, do you think she's about to turn into a Super Saiyan god? She already has long blond hair, so it's gotta be beyond three right?" Jade, who was recently introduced to DBZ and DBS by Chloe, couldn't help but comment as she looked on.

"Shhh!" Sadly for her, Muku and the others weren't going to entertain her this time. Though honestly they couldn't help but wonder the same after she mentioned it.

Boooooom!

"All my god!" Emily screamed in surprise while covering her mouth.

How could she not be surprised?. A large fifty-metre-tall blue and ethereal avatar of a little fairy had just exploded out of her little sister. They all looked like ants in front of the large avatar.

On top of that, the air it was radiating was a thousand times stronger than anything they had ever faced before. It definitely was way beyond Rank Three, or maybe even Rank Four.

Not to mention that the avatar seemed sentient as it kept on looking around it in confusion. It then looked down at them, which made them all feel extremely tense and suffocated even though it wasn't using its aura to suppress them. Surprisingly, after looking at them it smiled innocently.

Boooooom!

Out of nowhere, the avatar exploded. The clear night sky was immediately covered by rain clouds as it started to rain heavily.

Elsa who still hasn't opened her eyes since the beginning. Finally, she started to steer before opening her eyes weakly.

"Sister, I finally did it" She spoke in a low and weak voice as a little and rare smile appeared on her face. Then she closed her eyes again; this time though, it was because she had lost consciousness.

Muku, the experienced, unconscious-people-catcher jumped into action. He caught her with his telekinesis while at the same time shielding everyone from the heavy rain.

"Ah yes...the old, faint soon after doing something amazing trope. Thought I'd never see it again" Jade commented while the others silently agreed. After all, most of them had gone through it. So they understood it well; it had been a rather large part of their lives in the earlier days of the apocalypse.

"What a spectacle... also, did she just awaken to Rank One but already has strength a lot stronger than us? I'm so confused and jealous!" Hope spoke while scratching her head.

"Let's return first. This isn't a place we can discuss at" Muku spoke while creating a familiar platform. He chose to first return before any questions. Which was reasonable since, technically, they were standing in the rain at night.

"Yeah, we can talk later" Emily supported Muku's decision while looking at the unconscious Elsa with gentle eyes. She had managed to read Elsa's lips before she fainted, and the words really warmed her heart.

And so, the ground quickly returned to their base. As for dealing with Freya and the others?. That will have to be done the following day.

...

During the time that Elsa broke through. The four cardinal rulers of the territory Muku and the others lived clearly sensed it.

And because of that, none dared appear. After all, the aura they sensed was way beyond their pay grad... cough, their own auras. What idiot would run toward certain death?

In fact, even though they never ventured out much anyway. They each immediately decided to themselves to avoid that place if they did venture. Not just them too, all the beasts that sensed the aura would avoid that place like the plague.

It even scared off any humans who were strong enough to sense it. Or those who were close enough to see it. From that day onward, the stadium would likely be a lot safer than the university.

So, in a way. Elsa made the area around the safe zone just as safe as the safe zone itself. Just that beasts would become even rarer to find close by from then on.

Chapter 120 Elsa wakes up

Back at the stadium...

It still rained heavily. While Muku or one of the others could oversee Freya's group's evolution since it didn't rain in the barrier. They were all no longer in the mood for such. So, Muku just provided them with the necessary weapons. Then told them to deal with it themselves if they wanted to and left.

While it did make Freya and the others a bit sad that they were basically ditched for the night. They didn't hold hard feelings since they had already received too much help from Muku's group. Not to mention that all of them had seen the giant avatar from before. So, they completely understood why they were being ditched.

They weren't sure what the incident was about, but they knew it was related to Muku's group. After all, it had happened in the direction they had gone, soon after they went. But like the ants they were. They dared not ask questions. They already knew all they needed to know. Which was that Muku's group was amazing and unbelievably strong.

So, they quickly got to killing. They didn't choose to wait for Muku since they knew that soon he wouldn't be an option to rely on. So it was better not to be too dependent on him from the start. Even Freya was of the same mind. Unfortunately for her, fate had other plans. She had no idea what an odd future awaited her as she stabbed her sword into her last unranked beast kill that mattered, and her evolution began.

.....

The next morning...

"So how is she?" Muku asked the red-eyed Emily just as she came down the stairs to join the others for breakfast.

"She hasn't woken up yet, but she seems stable", Emily replied as she tiredly slumped down onto her seat.

"Even knowing that you still robbed yourself of sleep due to your unnecessary worrying, I bet" Jade immediately mocked her best friend with a look of disdain on her face.

"Sigh, whatever. I'm not in the mood to play with you right now" Emily, who didn't know how to argue in her defence since what Jade said was true, chose not to argue at all.

"Tsk, you think I want to play with you either you worry-wart.? Sorry, but I got better things to do," Jade snapped at Emily, then focused on her food again.

Emily, who was busy serving herself some food, didn't bother replying. She really hadn't slept much. And while in normal cases, with her level of strength,, it wouldn't have phased her. This time, it was different since she had been worrying about Elsa too much, which had drained her mentally. So while her body and strength were still as strong as ever, they just mimicked what she felt. Which was weak and sluggish.

"Why didn't anyone wake me up? I could have heated up the food a lot better than normal fire" Emily asked the others after biting into the meat that was warm on the outside but cold on the inside. Her question was a valid one, too, since normally she was always there when breakfast was prepared. Whether for the initial cooking or heating. After all, her fire really was a lot better when dealing with beast meat than regular fire.

"Jade tried but you wouldn't wake up. I suggested trying harder, but she stopped me, saying that we should let y...mph," Hope replied. But before she could finish, her mouth was covered by an embarrassed Jade who had appeared from the other side of the table in less than a second.

"Ahem, what she meant was that we all unanimously decided to let you sleep...Right, Hope?" Jade immediately spoke after covering Hope's mouth not letting anyone else speak. She even gave Hope a threatening look as she did so.

"Y...Yeah. I was mistaken. We all agreed to let you sleep. Forget everything I said before" Hope, who gave in easily whenever threatened, immediately changed her statement to match Jade's. Though, of course, everyone could clearly see what was going on. Especially with Jade nodding along triumphantly by the side.

"It definitely wasn't Jade's idea when she stopped Layla from waking with a little ice" Sadly, Jade had celebrated too early as Hope wasn't done speaking, and she immediately sold her out with her last words. Though there really was no way Emily hadn't figured out the truth.

"Hope!" Jade shouted out in disbelief. How can anyone be so clueless when it comes to lying.?

"Don't shout at her, I know you love me."Emily,, who was feeling better after eating, immediately teased Jade. She had already been thinking of how she was going to get back at her. But she never thought that her chance would come so soon.

"Shut up! You don't know anything! She doesn't know anything! Don't listen to her! And isn't it only natural to worry about a team-mate"? Jade tried to defend herself with her face red from embarrassment. Sadly for her, the more she talked, the less believable she seemed.

"Hehe" Emily didn't say anything, but her little laugh said all that she wanted to say.

"Hmph!, whatever! I'm outta here!" Jade spoke before leaving. She reasoned that since she couldn't win the argument, she might as well leave the table. And so, with her plate full of meat in hand, she headed upstairs.

Emily didn't say anything more to provoke her. She knew that it was already her win, so there was no need.

....

Upstairs...

"Mmh", Elsa, who had been unconscious since the previous evening, finally started to stir. Her voice leaked out of her mouth as she did so.

Grrrr

Suddenly, a foreign sound rang out from her body. She immediately clutched her stomach.

"I'm hungry!" She exclaims to herself as she gets off the bed and runs for the door. She could smell something good just outside of it.

Bang!

She pulls the door open with so much strength that it slams into the wall.

"Hhm?" Jade, who was passing by with her food, made a confused sound as she saw the door getting slammed open and an almost mad Elsa lunging toward her.

"Food!" Elsa shouted as she aimed to grab Jade's plate.

"Not my food!" Jade exclaimed as she jumped away to avoid Elsa.

"What!?" She exclaimed in surprise again as a hand made out of water extended out of Elsa's hand.

It then grabbed the largest piece of meat from her place before she could react. And then retracted back to Elsa until it was completely gone, leaving the large piece of meat in Elsa's hand. Surprisingly the piece of meat wasn't drenched in water despite being grabbed by it.

"No! My meat!...You little brat! The first thing you do after evolving is steal my food!?" Jade screamed out in horror as she looked at Elsa bite into her meat.

"Wait...that's Rank 2 meat! Spit it out! So you want to explode!?" Jade screamed again, this time in real horror. Even though Elsa had evolved to rank one. She was still too weak to consume Rank Two meat. She had to reach at least the peak before that.

Unfortunately, by the time Jade realised the graveness of the issue, Elsa was already taking the last bite. All that was left in her hands was the bone.

"Emily!!!" Jade, who couldn't think of what to do next, did the only thing she could think to do. Which was obviously to call Emily and let her deal with things.

"What!? What!? You've been screaming a lot up here. What's happeni... Oh no!" Emily complained as she connected the dots at what had happened the moment she saw the bone in Elsa's hand and her greasy lips.

The others who came after Emily were also shocked and horrified by what they saw. While Elsa's body was able to eject the energy before. That was only because the amount wasn't too much. But this time...

" ... "

" ... "

" ... "

"Okay! What's going on here!?" Muku finally couldn't take the silence.

They had all been looking at Elsa in horror for close to a minute. Waiting for something bad to happen, but nothing happened. All they got was Elsa blinking back at them quietly. Honestly, by the end of it that kinda seemed like idiots.

"Umm, thank you all for worrying, but the little fairy took care of the extra energy. It was actually the one that directed me to the meat since it needed the energy" Seeing that they had calmed down, Elsa finally spoke.

"Why didn't you say that sooner then!?" Emily speaks as she walks up to Elsa and flicks her forehead.

"Don't scare me like that again you understand!?" Emily continued speaking without waiting for Elsa to say anything as she also took her in her embrace and silently wept.

"I'm sorry sis, I won't do it again. And I know you all have questions. And I'm ready to answer anything that I can," Elsa consoled her big sister, then addressed the others.

"Great! Let's go downstairs and discuss while sitting down then!" Jade, who had already forgotten everything, spoke as she pushed Elsa and Emily toward the stairs.

"Also, Emily you're going to have to reimburse me for the meat your sister snatched from me" Or not...Jade will always be Jade it seemed.