

Few Wives 141

Chapter 141: You all lack originality

"I killed seven MR2 beasts. While I would have gotten 14KP if Jade and Emily hadn't already wounded two. I only lost two KP. One point to each. So I got 12KP. Making me the strongest member of the team with 82KP out of the hundred needed points" Hope, who couldn't wait to see the envy in the eyes of the others, didn't delay to speak.

She was right to think that they would feel envy. While they could have done the math themselves and roughly come up with the figure. Hearing it from her still surprised them and left them envious. After all, R2 beasts didn't give much KP. So, getting twelve at once was a milestone.

Only two people were relatively still fine after hearing her speak. The two were Layla and Jade who had both killed a PR2 beast on that day. So while they didn't get as much as her, at least they got something. With how scarce R2 beasts were in that area, they were definitely winners to have gotten anything at all.

"Wow, good for you. You're definitely the strongest in the team now. Please take care of me in the future" Muku replied exaggeratedly. Playing along with Hope.

What she said was already within his expected range, so it wasn't surprising. As for her being the strongest in the team. They all knew who the real strongest one was.

"Hehe, Big Brother is such a weirdo" Hope spoke while rolling her eyes. She could tell that Muku was just playing along. But she was still happy that he was willing to do that for her. Even when they both knew that he would probably always be the strongest no matter what.

"No, I mean it. Anyway, what about Jade and Layla? We are all curious to know how many points a PR2 beast gives" Muku spoke. This time there was some real curiosity behind his words. They hadn't killed a PR2 beast before that. So the information was unknown.

"Oh, that. It's nothing impressive really. It only gives 5KP. And I also got 1 from the ant I had beaten up before that. So I'm currently at 76%" Jade spoke nonchalantly. But everyone could tell that she was really happy with what she got.

"It appears I didn't do enough damage to the MR2s I fought before the PR2, so I only got its 5KP. Putting me at 75%. Layla spoke calmly.

She didn't wait for Jade anyone to reply to what Jade said. They all knew that Jade would go on a bragging streak as soon as someone said something. Which she didn't want to hear, so she immediately spoke. Everyone other than Jade who was now pouting a little, silently appreciated her action.

"Five KP, huh? Well, it's a significant improvement, at least. I'm now curious to know how many the Ant Queen would have given" Muku spoke, his eyes a bit dazed as he thought of the Ant Queen.

Which, of course, brought his thoughts to something he had been trying not to remember. Which was Ares' ambush. He was extremely angry about that. Thinking about the emotional pain, it caused his girls, and the KP lost.

Sadly, that's all he could do. He didn't have an idea of where Ares was. Honestly, even if he did. There was nothing he could do to the Monarch. Their power difference was just too large.

The worst part was knowing that it was going to stay like that for a long time before they stood on an even playing field. That was if Ares didn't manage to kill him off somewhere along the lines. Which, honestly, he almost accomplished.

Knowing all that left him feeling weak and frustrated. He then sighed in defeat and let it go. After all, stressing over it wouldn't change anything. He could only try to do his best from then on so that it didn't happen again. It was also a lesson to never let his guard down too much in the current world.

So, while he lost badly as well as lost a significant amount of KP. At least he got a life lesson that might save him later on. One must try their best to focus on the positives after all.

The girls just looked on as the emotions in his eyes kept on changing every second. They could all tell that he was likely thinking about the Ares incident. It was so obvious that even Freya, who wasn't too informed and didn't know him much, could tell.

"Are you okay?" Hope, who couldn't take the silence anymore, asked. She could tell that he wasn't feeling too down at the end. But she still had to ask or she wouldn't feel at ease.

"Hhm? Oh. Yeah, I'm okay. Thanks for worrying, though," Muku replied with a smile on his face as he patted the girl's head.

"I was worried too! Pat mine!" Out of nowhere, Jade, who was sitting on another couch, came over and lowered her head in Muku's direction.

"..." Muku and the others froze for a moment. They never expected that she'd do such a thing. Even though she was always unpredictable, she never crossed a certain line. Yet then, she has crossed it so casually!. What could have possibly changed?

That's when it hit Muku and the three girls he had spoken to. The talk with Muku was probably the reason she felt it was okay to do that. While he said he wasn't going to advance. He never said they couldn't right?

With that realisation. While Muku's expression darkened a bit as he realised that things had already started changing. The eyes of the three girls glowed with excitement. As if on cue, they then got off their seats all at once and joined Jade. Since they were exposed already with him knowing how they felt, they might as well act shameless right?

"Us too!" They all exclaimed at once. While doing it alone might have been hard. Doing it together was manageable. Though they still blushed a little because of it. None of them were as shameless as Jade after all. They could get a bit crazy sometimes, but they were still mostly normal and rational people.

"Hey! What are you doing?! Can't you all do it another time? Why do you all lack originality so much!?" Jade was pissed and she immediately shouted at the others.

If they had just remained seated as she thought they would. She would have been able to pull ahead. After all, she would have been the only one to get head pats after Hope. Who pretty much didn't count. So she would be the first. Even if they got head pats later on, on another day, it wouldn't be as impactful as hers.

In the current situation, however, they would get them at almost the same time. Which would not break their four-way tie. This, of course, made Jade extremely unhappy.

If the others knew her thoughts, they would have been surprised at how shrewd she was. Acting like a fool while silently stealing benefits. They, on the other hand, had not thought of it deeply. They just always wanted to get head pats.

"It's fine, it's fine. I'll pat all your heads" Muku interjected before the situation turned into a fight. He immediately put his right hand on Jade's head. The girl was about to continue her rant, but the moment his hand touched her head, she cooled down.

Like a cat, she then closed her eyes, enjoying the head rub. Without her even noticing, she turned into her catgirl form and started purring softly. It was a rather weird scene, especially for Freya the newbie.

The image of majestic "gods" above mortal turmoils that had formed in her head was quickly breaking. Not slowly, but quickly. She was quickly realising that they were just as human as anyone else, just stronger. Even a bit louder and chaotic as well.

Surprisingly she didn't dislike it. With them not being as perfect as she thought they were. She wouldn't feel too out of place for being normal anymore. The atmosphere they created was like a safe haven away from the apocalypse. It was something she hoped to be part of someday.

"Okay move over! Your turn is up!" Just as Freya was revelling in her pleasant thoughts. Emily suddenly exclaimed as she pushed away Jade jealously.

"Hey!" Jade shouted displeasedly.

"Hey!" But Emily ignored her as she was focused on someone else. That someone else was Layla who had taken the chance Emily was dealing with Jade to step up and be the next one to receive the pats.

With that, the situation got louder and more chaotic. Muku just wryly patted whoever appeared in front of his hand. Audrey looked on with an awkward smile not knowing what to do. Elsa covered her face, feeling embarrassed for her sister. Freya was again stuck in her thoughts.

As for Hope, she had long joined the four girls in getting Muku's head pats. So what if she had been getting them for a long time before the others were in the mix?. Her brother's head pats were hers and hers alone! With her getting into the mix, the situation got louder.

This continued until it was time to sleep. While the situation had been loud and chaotic. Everyone was actually having a good time. It was times like that, that made living in the apocalypse bearable. Times when they could just forget all their troubles...

Chapter 142: Lisa?

The next morning...

"Umm, leader, there's someone from the stadium who wanted to see you before we left", Freya spoke to Muku a bit hesitantly. She still wasn't sure how to act in front of him or anyone else for that matter.

"Oh? Who's it?" Muku replied curiously. He could see that she was nervous.

A few words from him might have calmed her down a bit, but he preferred to let it happen naturally. At some point, she'll get used to her new life. There was no need to rush it.

"It's Lisa... She found out we're leaving today after I accidentally let it slip. Which I'm sorry for. After which, she asked me to help her talk to you before we left. I'd really appreciate it if you went to see her" Freya spoke, shrinking back a little when she mentioned how it was her fault that Lisa found out.

Even then, she forced herself to say what needed to be said. She and Lisa had actually become quite good friends after Lisa apologised. She was even sad to leave her behind, but she knew which was the smarter choice. Not to mention that she would become quite useless if she stayed behind anyway.

"Is that so?. Okay, I'll go see her. And there's no need for you to feel guilty for letting it slip. It's not like we were trying to keep it a secret that we are leaving. It just slipped everyone's mind that we hadn't talked to the stadium women about it. So, if anything, you did a good job," Muku spoke softly to Freya while patting her head. Which he had done subconsciously after the previous day's events.

By the time he realised what he was doing, which was only because of the frozen Freya. It was too late. As to not make the situation more awkward or seem like a mistake. He continued doing it for a little longer before taking his hand back. Then he walked away from Freya while heading for the exit.

"Are you coming or not?" Muku called out from some distance away from Freya. His voice was as natural as ever, seemingly not caring about what had just happened.

"Y-yes, I'm coming" Freya replied with a stutter while looking around her. She was making sure that no one noticed what had happened. From what she had seen in one night, Muku's pats meant a lot to the girls in the group.

So it was safe to assume that she wouldn't have a good ending if one of them had seen what happened. Luckily for her, she saw no one around. So no one must have seen anything. With a little sigh of relief, she ran after Muku. Joy filled her heart; she had just casually gotten what the others had to wait for a chance to get. So she felt really lucky.

What she didn't know was that a pair of grey eyes had noticed everything from start to finish. Fortunately for Freya, the eyes were Audrey's. Otherwise, if it was someone else, she might have gotten murdered on the spot... Maybe not literally, but she would have definitely faced some pain.

On the second floor, standing at a hard-to-see corner. Audrey looked on with a neutral face. But her eyes told a different story. There was nothing but yearning in them. Subconsciously she lifted her hand and placed it on her head before taking it back down. She then proceeded with her tasks as if nothing happened.

However, for some reason. Her heart felt weird. She couldn't place what the feeling was. However, she was certain that she didn't like it...

...

Outside the mansion...

"Speak!" Muku spoke the moment he saw Lisa, who had been waiting outside the gate.

While he had forgiven her and wouldn't do anything against her. Her terrible attitude had ruined his impression of her. Which was why he didn't bother being polite to her. Even if she came to him through Freya who was the victim.

"I uh... Right, umm," Lisa stumbled on her words, seeing his attitude. She had expected it, but actually facing it was different from just thinking about it. However, the reason why she was so nervous was not what one would expect.

Muku just looked at her, not saying anything. While he wouldn't be nice to her. He would do what he agreed to do. Which was to listen to what she wanted to say. Not to mention that he was also curious to know what she wanted to say. After all, the last time he remembers seeing her, she could barely look in his direction.

"I just wanted to tell you that I was nominated as the stadium's leader. Of course, if you don't want me to be the leader, I'll immediately step down. Though before that I want you to know that I have changed my ways and will do my best to keep the base safe along with the people in it. Also, whenever you need us for anything, I will even move mountains to help" Lisa spoke clearly after collecting herself. She knew that she couldn't waste his time for too long since he had to leave.

"Oh? Is that so? Well, congratulations then. Also, I'm sure the people at the base know what's best for them, so if they chose you then I guess they think you're good for them. I won't interfere with that. I like how you first said you'll protect the base and its people before assisting me. That shows me that you've really improved..." Muku spoke calmly, a lot less cold compared to when he arrived.

"Anyway, with all that said, I will forget what you did before and give you a clean slate. So the next time we meet, you better have lived up to your words. That is, of course, if a significant amount of time has passed from now. Still, as for being helpful to me. I won't believe it until I see it" Muku continued speaking without waiting for Lisa to say anything.

As he spoke, Lisa and even Freya could tell that he meant what he was saying. This was because the way he was addressing her had become the same as how he addressed them when they first met. It was neither friendly nor hostile. Which was great news for Lisa. It was even better than she expected.

"I will definitely do my best. If I do, leave it up to your expectations. I hope you can take us as your knights. That is my greatest wish. To fight alongside you," Lisa, who had for some reason become knight-like responded. She didn't shy away from expressing her desires as well.

"Hhmm... Well now, how interesting. To think a person could change so much in such little time. Still, I'll let you know. Being my knight won't be easy. However, I will promise you this. If you really can meet the criteria, along with those under you. Then I will take you all as my knights" Muku replied nonchalantly.

He didn't mind tossing around a few promises to motivate her to get stronger. After all, there was no way she or the others could meet his expectations... Right? He didn't even need nor want knights. Wouldn't he have to become some kind of base leader by then?

That sounded like work! Unnecessary work too! Look at Jack, the dude couldn't randomly get up and leave. Everything he did was basically scheduled! Who'd want such a life?

Of course, such thoughts didn't stop him from promising her. He was just living in the moment.

Freya just looked on quietly. She was shocked by what Lisa said. Lisa had only told her about notifying Muku about her new position. The rest was news to her... Just like how it was going to be news to the rest of the stadium women when Lisa tells them about it later on.

Despite all that, she was happy for Lisa and the others. If they manage to prove themselves and be taken under Muku's wing. They would basically be guaranteed a better future.

It was rare to find someone as strong as him, but he was willing to even give them a chance. Hell, it was already a miracle he didn't take advantage of them like many would have done if they had his abilities.

"Thank you for giving me... No, for giving us the chance. Also, may I ask what the criteria are?" Lisa responded great fully. She even bowed down on one knee to show gratitude.

Again Muku was shocked by how she had changed so much. It was like talking to a different person who had taken over Lisa's body or something...

"You, the leader, have to reach Mid Rank Two while your subordinates have to reach Low Rank Two. Just ten of them reaching Low-Rank Two is enough. Do that and I will take all of you under my wing. I will likely not return here for at least three months. So you have at least that much time," Muku spoke confidently, as he knew how hard it was to improve after that point.

With such criteria, she will fail. Then he won't have to start a random Knight battalion or whatever, which he didn't want.

"Understood. I will not disappoint you," Lisa spoke as a weird, determined light flashed in her eyes.

For a moment Muku sensed melancholy in her tone. However, as someone who wanted to get it over with as soon as possible, he didn't think too much about it. He just chalked it up to her thinking about the past...which was correct actually, just not in the way one might expect.

"Sure. Now if you'll excuse me. I have things to attend to. So until next time" Muku mostly brushed her off before turning to leave.

Freya gave a quick hug to Lisa, whispering her goodbyes before running after Muku.

Lisa silently looked at them go. She turned around to return to the stadium the moment they entered through the gate of the mansion.

"To think that's the World Ender. He's so different from the monster to come. I definitely have to change that horrible future" Lisa whispered to herself as she walked away. Pure determination blazing in her eyes. If anyone had heard her at the moment, they would have definitely been confused since what she said made no sense.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!....

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!...

As Lisa walked away, suddenly multiple whooshing sounds were heard behind her. Before she could react, more than a hundred silver swords stabbed the group in front of her. They all radiated with power.

"For your journey"

Those were the words written on the biggest sword which had also fallen closest to her. Reading those words she couldn't help but smile.

"Yes, I definitely have to change the future now"...

Chapter 143: New Path...

"Finally! Everything is done. We can finally leave!" Jade exclaimed excitedly.

She didn't like staying in such peaceful areas. Whether it was because of her class, her personality or a combination of both. She didn't care, all she cared about was getting to fight whenever she wanted.

"Yeah, but is it okay to set off in a direction we have never been to?" Emily asked worriedly.

That's right, they had agreed to go outside the city area for the first time since the apocalypse began. There were still beasts in the city area. However, Muku and the others felt like they no longer had the sense of agency they had at the beginning.

Which they thought had something to do with them being familiar with their surroundings. Then there was Ares' issue. Muku had been told about how Ares had likely been tracking them through his Beast Aura. Which had likely been placed in him during their first encounter, long before the ambush that added more into his body.

Which was probably why he felt that there was something wrong with his body back then. He also learned how it was because of Jade's help that he was able to recover, alongside Hope's of course.

A lot of things had been going on, and it had completely slipped everyone's mind to mention it. When it was finally mentioned and Muku thanked her for her help. Obviously Jade acted smugly while saying something arrogant until Muku's budding positive impression of her died again.

Knowing that she also benefited greatly from the ordeal made him not feel too indebted. At best, he would just give a little more thought to how he was going to make it up to her for the last "favour" he owed her.

Seeing his not-so-impressed expression. Even after learning about how she had basically saved his life. Jade was obviously offended and she started up a riot like usual. Also, like usual, Muku threatened her with his Telekinesis, and she calmed down. After that, everything continued smoothly.

With that said, because Ares' Beast Aura was no longer on Muku's body. The only way he could locate them was by looking for them in familiar locations.

So, their leaving wasn't only to seal better opportunities. It was also to get away from the petty Beast Monarch Ares.

Even knowing all that, Emily was still uncertain. She was one of those people who didn't like significant change. Even when whatever they were doing wasn't working, they'd still stick to what they knew. That's the kind of person she was. So, at the back of her head, she was hoping that they would reconsider.

She knew that staying wasn't a good idea, but she just couldn't help it. That's just how she was. She was okay with moving around different parts of the city because they were just that, "different parts of the city area". She was technically still in the area, so she didn't mind much.

However, this was different, they were going to a completely different place.

"Let's put it to a vote then" Muku chose the democratic but subtly manipulative path to answer her.

He already knew that most wanted to go. So the vote was decided from the start. He just wanted to show Emily that while she wasn't certain about leaving. Everyone else was. Knowing that she will not only go along with it now but will do so in the future as well.

He felt that the "democratic" way of doing things was a lot quicker. If he didn't do it like that, then he'd have to coax her with a few sweet words and probably have to give out a bribe or two. There was no way he was going to add more work for himself when he already had Jade to deal with.

"O-okay" Emily replied, hopeful that the others also wanted to stay. Then they could just look for a way to deal with Ares without leaving.

"Anyone who wants to leave and seek out new adventures and opportunities. Please raise your hands" Muku spoke while raising his hand to show his stance.

Like he expected. Jade, Layla, Chloe, Hope, Audrey and even Elsa raised their hands. The only ones who didn't raise their hands were the dumbstruck Emily and Freya.

Freya actually wanted to raise her hand as well. She supported leaving since that way she would be able to get stronger quicker. However, she was too nice and couldn't bear to see Emily singled out like that. So she didn't raise her hand, her one vote wouldn't change anything anyway. After all, everyone else had voted to leave.

"Even you too?" Emily spoke in a hurt voice while looking at her little sister.

"Sigh. Big Sis, I love you. Unfortunately, you have a problem with change. However, I and the others don't. We want to get stronger. Trust us, this is what's best for the group. I'm sure you'll get used to it soon. You just have to be willing to take the first step," Elsa spoke sincerely while looking into her big sister's eyes.

She didn't want to be on opposite sides with Emily, but she knew what needed to be done. Unlike her sister who was a heart of brain-type of person. She was a brain-over-heart type. In her head, logic was supreme.

Of course, she'd toss logic out of the window if Emily was in danger. But any other time, she would choose logic. She was also hoping that through such experiences, her big sister would become more mature in her way of thinking. Which was a weird thing for a younger sister to think but that's exactly what she thought.

"...Huff, fine. We'll do it your way then" Emily gave in. Since everyone wanted to go. She wouldn't be unreasonable and insist on staying, even if she wanted to really badly.

"Great!, I guess it's decided then. I'll get us moving" Muku spoke as he wrapped the mansion in his telekinesis and lifted it off the ground. The whole experience was rather mystical to Freya, who had never thought that one day she would ride on a floating mansion.

The girls immediately took their posts in different areas of the wall. Which they always did during flight to guard against aerial beast attacks.

"I don't want to talk to you, right? Hmph!" Emily spoke while glaring at Jade and Elsa, who were walking behind her, heading to their post.

While she respected their choices to vote against her. That didn't mean that she wouldn't feel salty about it. So she wanted some time away from them to cool off.

She then grabbed Freya's hand, who seemed lost, before storming off. The only person she wanted around her at the moment was Freya.

Jade and Elsa didn't say anything or keep on following her. They both knew her well enough that she'd be fine after a while. So, instead of prolonging her cooling process. They chose to leave her alone and sit on a different spot on the wall.

....

On the mansion wall...

"Thank you for supporting me", Emily, who had been sitting quietly for a while with the nervous Freya, spoke.

"W-what do you mean? I was doing it for myself; I also didn't want to leave," Freya replied with a nervous stutter. She didn't want Emily to discover which side she truly supported. Unfortunately for her, she was terrible at lying and it was obvious when she did so.

"It's okay. You don't have to lie. I know that you only kept your hand down so that I wouldn't feel isolated. For that, I thank you," Emily continued speaking, a grateful smile appearing on her face.

"I... Uh, no... Okay," Freya didn't know what to say after being exposed so quickly.

"I'd like to apologise for how I have treated you before. I shouldn't have done that. I was such a jerk" Unexpectedly, Emily apologised to Freya who wasn't expecting it at all.

"N-no, it's fine. You don't have to apologize. I had already forgotten about it anyway" Freya spoke while shaking her hands hysterically.

"... You're too nice. Luckily nothing bad happened to you before you met us" Emily looked at the flustered Freya for a bit in silence. She then spoke with a larger smile on her face. In her mind, she questioned why she ever found Freya displeasing to the eye.

"I... Right. I'm really grateful for you all allowing me to join your group despite my weakness" Freya replied. Her words were filled with nothing but honesty and gratitude.

"It's fine. You'll be strong soon enough so it's not really worth thanking us for it... Hey, can I call you Big Sis? I've always wanted a big sister, and you're exactly what I'd want her to be like. Kind and pure" Emily just wouldn't stop saying things that shocked Freya.

How did an apology turn to wanting to be sworn sisters? Was she even qualified to be the elder sister of someone like Emily? Wouldn't she feel embarrassed every day for having such a strong little sister while she was weak?

"I don't think I'm worthy... But if you really want to, I would be honoured to be your sister" Freya wanted to refuse.

However, after looking at Emily's eyes, they were glowing with expectation. She just couldn't bring herself to refuse. So she accepted the request. It's not like it was anything bad after all. She will just have to work harder and get stronger quickly. That way she won't embarrass her new sister for being too weak.

"Yes! You agreed! I'm so happy! Thank you! Thank you! Big Sis!" Emily exclaimed in excitement as she practically threw herself into Freya's arms. Luckily, she was still self-aware, or they might have fallen off the edge.

Jade and Elsa looked on at the weird scene from a distance away. They had no clue what the heck had happened or was happening. Jade could have eavesdropped if she wanted, but like she said to Muku before. She respected people's privacy... In normal cases.

And so, the rest of the group was unaware of the new sisterhood that had suddenly formed in the group. Which of course, they will soon learn of.

Chapter 144: Sister, Sister

Half a day later...

The group was gathered in the dining room having lunch. They weren't in a particular rush, so stopping for lunch was reasonable. It wasn't like they knew where they were going anyway. So there was no need to rush.

"So... Care to tell us what's going on?" Jade asked while she and the others all looked at Emily who had pushed her chair to sit as close to Freya as possible.

They also looked at Freya from time to time. Their eyes alternated between the gleeful Emily and the stiff Freya, who smiled wryly.

"Isn't it obvious? Me and Freya have become sworn sisters. She's now my Big Sister, hehe" Emily replied happily.

"Why aren't we sworn sisters then?" Jade asked with a dark expression on her face.

She didn't particularly care about Emily and Freya becoming sisters. All she cared about was why she wasn't Emily's sworn sister after all they had gone through. She had always wanted a sister after all.

"Hhm! Why would I want a sister like you who doesn't support me? Not to mention that you're a month younger than me and I already have a younger sister. Why would I want another one?" Emily replied with a disdainful tone in her voice.

Of course, the real reason she didn't do such a thing with Jade was because she had never thought about it before. However, she wouldn't admit that; she was still upset about the "betrayal" from Jade and Elsa.

"So that's how it is huh? Okay, two can play that game! Elsa, do you want a new and cooler Big Sister?" Jade, who was not one to be passive in situations, immediately thought of a counterattack.

"No, I don't want a new sister. Emily is fine," Elsa's blunt replied, dazed Jade a little. She even felt like crying because of it. Couldn't the little girl at least save her some face in front of the others? Now she didn't even know what to say.

"But I don't mind another sister... You definitely seem cooler than Emily too. So sure. If you want to be my second big sister, I don't mind" Fortunately for Jade, Elsa continued speaking after a little silence. Her words brought her back from the brink of embarrassment.

"Oh... Yeah! You made the right choice. I'm definitely cooler and more fun than that petty flame girl over there. From now on, I, Jade, am your elder sister. Whoever wants to find trouble with you must go through me first. Even if it's Emily and she does something you don't like. Tell me and I'll take her out or even that leader of ours. They are all nothing in front of your big sister here" Jade didn't waste time and immediately got into her new role excitedly.

She had always wanted a younger sister or any sort of younger sibling. After all, at her house, she was the youngest of three siblings and the older two were boys. So Elsa agreeing to be her little sister made her really happy. To the point that she even went a little rogue, tossing threats left and right.

Whether she could really do what she was promising. It would remain unknown since Muku and Emily just brushed her off. They wouldn't waste their time arguing with a made person like Jade.

"Wait! Doesn't that mean I'm the only person without a relative here?" Chloe suddenly exclaimed hysterically.

While she didn't mind as much as she made it seem. She wouldn't mind being someone's sworn relative like the others.

"I could be your relative if you want" Muku spoke, with a slightly teasing tone. He wanted to see how she would react when it wasn't the type of relationship she wanted with him.

"No!!!... I uh, I mean. I've always wanted a sister and not a brother. So it wouldn't work. In fact, there's nothing I hate more than having a brother" Chloe immediately rejected his proposition.

Her clearly false reasons made even her face heat up. She wasn't used to blatantly lying like that. But there was no way she was going to agree to be Muku's sister. That would basically be cutting off her own path of advancing forward just when she had found out that it was possible to advance.

"I could be your sister if you want" Surprisingly, it was Layla who spoke. No one was expecting her to even get involved in such a matter. Especially not in the way she did.

"Really?" Chloe replied slightly awkwardly while looking at Layla. She, just like the others except for Muku still felt slightly stiff when talking to Layla. This was mostly due to Layla's quiet disposition, which made it hard to figure out how she was feeling.

After all, it's really hard to talk to someone when their facial expression remains neutral most of the time. Which was because you can't measure how they feel about talking to you. So Layla wanting to be her sister came as a shock to Chloe.

"Yeah. I don't mind. I've always wanted a sister" Layla continued speaking calmly. Her eyes were unmoving as she looked at Chloe.

While she looked like that, inside she was actually very excited and nervous at the same time. She always felt a little out of place in the group. Not because they treated her differently in any way. Just that she felt that she couldn't match their wavelength. So maybe becoming sworn sisters with one of the girls will help her with that problem.

"Y-yeah. Sure, I'd be happy to be your sister" Chloe replied with a little awkwardness in her voice. She didn't know Layla's inner thoughts so she didn't know just how much Layla wanted it. She just thought that Layla took pity on her or something. But even then, she was willing to be Layla's sister.

Maybe that way, the feeling of being alone in the world that sometimes plagues her heart would go away.

"Hug to seal the deal?" Layla spoke while opening her hands wide. Clearly wanting to hug Chloe.

"Sure!" Chloe replied with a happy smile as she hugged Layla. Unexpectedly, she really did feel better after the hug. It was like she had gotten back something she had lost.

"I guess now I have a new daughter" Audrey spoke from the side with a gentle smile on her face. Before Chloe or Layla could say anything, they found themselves in Audrey's embrace.

Freya was confused. At first, the scene with Layla and Chloe seemed beautiful. However, it got weird when Audrey got involved. Like, what did she mean by a second daughter? She barely looked older than Chloe and Layla. So how could they be her daughters?

"Oh..." Freya spoke one word before trailing off. That was because Emily, who had realised what was happening from seeing her confused expression, had whispered an explanation into her ear.

Hearing that Audrey was actually 30 shocked her so much that she couldn't even continue her sentence. How did a 30-year-old lady look no older than her?! How was that fair? Does that mean she looked old for her age or... What did it mean? She was so confused.

Emily again noticed Freya's confusion. Along with how her head seemed close to exploding explained again. Mentioning how Muku's blood not only saved Audrey from a fate worse than death but also made her look so younger.

What she thought of after that was the very first thing she or the others thought of back then. And that was whether Muku could also make them look younger when they reached 30-40 or even 70. As she thought so, her eyes trailed onto Muku.

The moment she looked at him, he felt a sudden chill. Like someone was plotting a very sinister plan against him.

"No fair! I also want Ms Audrey to be my mother!" Again, Jade refused to be involved as she immediately complained.

"Rooooar!!!"

"Rooooar!!!"

Before anyone could reply to what Jade said. Two equally beastly roars rang out from a close by. Hearing the roars, everyone became alert.

They immediately got off the table and ran outside to check out what was happening. They couldn't afford to stay inside lest their mansion gets randomly destroyed.

"We aren't done! We'll continue this talk as soon as we get back!" Jade screamed as she ran with the group. Hearing her words, everyone rolled their eyes; the girl really didn't want to take any losses, huh?

It was the same with the head pats. Then the sisterhood. Maybe they'll have to consider whether they want Jade to get involved before saying anything in front of her in the future...

....

Three kilometres away from the mansion...

"Well, this apocalypse just gets better and better doesn't it?" Muku spoke sarcastically.

He had taken Hope, Jade and Emily while the others stayed behind. They couldn't all leave the mansion behind after all. They also couldn't leave without checking out what was happening, lest they be shot down by whatever it was as they flew by.

What they saw was definitely something they never thought they'd ever see. They had expected to see two beasts fighting or something like that. However, what they saw were two beasts fighting for their lives as they were getting dragged into the giant mouth of a plant.

Yes, a plant. A huge a*s plant at that...

Chapter 145: Living Cloud?

"Now that I look at it, the vegetation around here is way too lush and big" Jade commented calmly while looking at the fight.

"How are you so calm about a huge plant about to eat two LR2 beasts?!" Emily exclaimed. Sometimes she really couldn't understand how Jade's mind worked. Just when you'd expect her to be excited or something like that, yet there she was, calmly looking on.

"Why wouldn't I be calm? I mean, there were already Venus fly traps before this. Animal-type beasts mostly look like beastified versions of animals we already knew, so I already expected that plant-type beasts might appear soon" Jade replied matter-of-factly. She was even surprised as to why Emily was acting so exaggeratedly.

Hearing her, the others immediately went silent. They didn't expect such words from her. It was something they would expect from Layla but never Jade. That's when it struck them, they had forgotten that Jade was also in the school's best class. The girl usually acted so much like a muscle-head that they forgot that she was actually very smart.

"Why are you all looking at me like that?" Jade asked seeing the weird looks the others were giving her.

"No... Nothing. Anyway, I think I'll take this fight. After all, you and Hope already had your chance. Our leader also had his chance while it did end up badly" Emily quickly changed topics not wanting Jade to discover that they had indirectly questioned her intelligence.

"Well duh, why did you think I'm standing here and not there punching that plant?" Jade replied while rolling her eyes. Even Muku and Hope related with her reply. They both also wanted to try out fighting a plant-type beast, but sadly they had their chances.

"Oh... Right. I'll get to it then" Emily replied. For some reason, she started feeling like she was the one with a questionable intelligence level.

After that, she immediately ran closer to the three beasts in the long grass. She didn't try to be quiet because plants don't have ears so they can't hear... Right?

As for the other two beasts, they were busy fighting for their lives. So there was no way they'd care about some random human running toward them. The two beasts were a large buffalo-like creature with canine teeth and claws instead of hooves, its fur a pale grey colour.

The other one was a large brown cat-like creature, a bit smaller than the weird buffalo; it had spikes on its back that went down from its neck to its tail.

Both had various cuts on their bodies that didn't seem to be from the plant. So it was safe to assume they were good at fighting before the planta got involved.

Whoosh!

"Oh my!" Emily exclaimed in shock as she froze; a long, thick vine was quickly heading her way.

Bang!

While she had been right in guessing that the plant couldn't hear her. She didn't know that it didn't need to. It was extremely sensitive to anything that came toward it from the ground.

This is because its roots were spread all over the area below ground. So anything that stepped foot in that area wouldn't escape its notice. It was also the type to attack first and then ask questions later. Which made its attacks seem random, so Emily didn't even get a chance to react before the vine was in front of her face.

Luckily for her, Muku was obviously the fight. He quickly shielded her with his telekinesis and the vine smashed hard into what seemed to be clear space.

"I thought you'd know better than to judge these creatures based on what we know from earth creatures!" Muku shouted in a slightly rebuking voice from the back. It's reasons like that why he never liked the girls to go out without him.

While they were strong and could take care of themselves most of the time. They sometimes made big mistakes, the type of mistakes that could get them killed instantly. So he wanted to always be there to overlook the situation.

"Sorry! And thank you!" Emily shouted back feeling slightly embarrassed.

"It's all fault! Making me seem so reckless! I'll show you..." Emily angrily addressed the giant Venus fly trap-like beast as it took back its vine.

The creature didn't attack again, maybe it had sensed some danger or whatever reason. Its pull on the two beasts had also weakened. It also seemed to be... Sinking into the ground!?

"Oh no you don't! Golden Meteorite!" Emily immediately attacked when she noticed it retreating into the ground. A huge golden fireball instantly appeared above the plant beast and fell on top of it.

Bang! Boom!

The huge golden fireball hit the beast right on top of its large "head" and exploded on impact. The two beasts were also caught up in the explosion even though they were still a few meters away from the impact point. Again the others were reminded how destructive Emily was.

The plant-type beast was immediately wiped out of existence. In its place, a large hole that went deeper than they could see was left. Of course, it was completely created by Emily's attack; it was likely already there, and Emily's attack just opened it up.

The two beasts that had survived the plant had miraculously also survived Emily's attack. Though they were severely injured and couldn't even get up to run away. They had already given in to their fates at that point. They weren't even struggling to survive anymore.

"Hehe, that's what you get for embarrassing me" Emily spoke as she worked towards the hole. As for the 2KP she got from killing the plant, which turned out to have been an MR2 beast, she didn't even care. It wasn't anything impressive compared to what Hope or even the other two got.

What she was interested in was the large hole she had exposed. As for the two beasts, she would also put them out of their misery. However, she wasn't too excited about that either since they were just LR2s with minimal KP.

The others also came to join her. They then walked through the mostly burnt-away grass together towards the hole.

Caw!

Suddenly a loud bird cry was heard from the sky. The group all looked at the direction the sound was coming from and all their eyes immediately widened.

"Metal fortress!" For the first time, Muku didn't simply use his Telekinesis for group defence. Well, he did use it, but he used his metal element on top of that.

Which was understandable because what he saw was straight-up frightening. It was a living black cloud that covered at least half a kilometre in length.

Of course, it wasn't actually a living cloud. It just looked like one. While, in fact, it was thousands upon thousands of crows that were swarming forward together.

Astonishingly, they were mostly Half-step R2s with a few lower-ranked R1s. There didn't seem to be even a single R2. This was why Muku chose to just defend themselves instead of wasting their mana on something that didn't benefit them at all.

He wasn't sure whether it was a good thing that they weren't R2s or not. That was because if they were R2s, then the benefits would have been immeasurable for the whole team. They would likely even reach the peak in one battle.

The problem, however,, was whether they would be able to live through such a battle. After all, their mana was very finite, while the crows seemed endless.

The crows headed directed towards Muku's group. The area was soon enveloped in black. Everything that got in their path was destroyed. The two unlucky beasts that were still clinging on to life were devoured within seconds. Only their bare bones were left. It was as if they had long been dead to the point that all the flesh rotted away.

Clang! Clang! Clang!....

One after another, the crows hit the metal dome under which Muku and the girls were hiding. This continued for almost five minutes before the crows gave up. They had noticed that they weren't doing much damage to the dorm. They weren't even able to leave visible marks on it.

Such was the difference in strength. They were just lucky that Muku's group chose to be smart rather than waste their mana on them; otherwise,, they would have probably been massacred on the spot.

Jade was even itching for a battle, but Muku stopped her. Though her battle intent still leaked through the dome. It might have even been the reason why the crows quickly gave up and continued their plundering journey. They had sensed that they shouldn't mess with whatever was below the dome.

"Well, that was certainly an interesting experience" Muku spoke after dispelling the dome.

"It would have been even better if you had used your Telekinesis instead of your metal so that we could see what was happening" Jade spoke in a slightly complaining voice.

"Yeah, I could have. Unfortunately, that would have been a waste of mental energy that would be more useful in moving the mention," Muku replied calmly. Completely unaffected by Jade's words.

He was still looking around the area which had been a mini forest before. It had all been flattened by the crows. Even some of the trees were knocked down by the large crows while most were stripped of their leaves.

It was only then that he could vaguely see that the area might have been a park before the apocalypse. To think the change was already so great in some areas...

"Whatever, are we going to check out the hole or what?" Jade moved on to the next matter. The crows were just small fries in her head, after all.

"We are, but let's go check on the others first. We'll move the mansion closer and explore the place together" Muku replied as he lifted everyone with his Telekinesis and flew back toward the mansion...

Chapter 146: Underground Forest?

A while later...

Muku and the girls had gone back to check on the others as well as bring them along. As expected, there was no issue with the crows. The girls were inside the mansion so the crows just passed them by.

So there was no delay in bringing them along with the mansion closer to the hole. As for why they didn't just ignore such an ominous-looking thing... Well, they were feeling adventurous. The hole was something new, and they couldn't sense any threat from it, so...

"So who's going in first?" Jade asked. She, who could see in the dark and was practically fearless, didn't want to go first. The reason being... She couldn't see the bottom of the hole. It seemed to be getting larger the deeper it went too.

So, if there was something down there. It would be something amazing. Whether it would be amazing in a good way or a bad way. It was yet to be known. Whichever it was, Jade wasn't willing to be the lead. Being fearless didn't mean that she was stupid.

"To think The Beast Empress is a chicken", Emily, who had been behaving quite pettily with Jade since the "betrayal", mocked.

"You go first then" Surprisingly Jade wasn't triggered into making some rush decision. She calmly responded, putting Emily on checkmate.

"W-what? Do you think I won't do it? Unlike you, I have the guts. In fact, everyone follow me... Woah!" Emily replied hesitantly, kicking herself in her mind for unnecessarily causing trouble for herself. Only if she has stayed quiet. After all, she already knew that Jade was uncharacteristically calm that day.

The worst part is that she got so caught up in the moment to the point that she jumped into the hole. If Muku hadn't caught her with his telekinesis, who knows what would have happened? After all, the idiot couldn't fly, which she seemed to have forgotten when she jumped.

"Instead of someone leading... Which I don't think anyone but me can do for obvious reasons. Why don't we all go together?" Muku spoke, not even addressing Emily and Jade's little episode. He created a familiar platform as he did so.

The girls all got on. It would have been wise to leave a few to watch the mansion, but no one wanted to stay behind, so they could only hope for the best. The area didn't seem to have humans nearby. Also, beasts wouldn't randomly attack a building for no reason. So it was probably okay to leave it unattended for a little while.

And so the group slowly descended into the hole which kept on expanding outward the deeper they went. Emily has cast a fire spell that floated above them for better lighting. However, after a certain point, it couldn't light up the whole area. It was like the darkness was eating away at the light.

...

An excruciatingly long time later...

The group had been descending for the better part of an hour. They could have descended quicker, but they had to be cautious. Which dragged the experience a lot more than it would have been without the need for caution.

"An underground garden?" Hope asked no one in particular as she looked around the place.

All around them were green plants. Which was surprising since no sunlight would reach that far down. Yet, even so, there they were, looking majestic and beautiful.

From giant trees to beautiful flowers. It was like they were looking at a piece that was cut from Eden. It was probably only possible due to the existence of the wondrous power known as mana.

"More of underground forest..." Jade replied while looking at the greenery that extended beyond what her eyes could see. Her eyes could see pretty far, so it was quite a lot.

Freya just looked on in a dazed state. She was wondering if such sights were normal to the rest of them since while they looked impressed, it didn't seem like they were moved that much. Which was quite surprising considering how she couldn't even close her eyes from how beautiful the sight looked.

"A-are we going to land?" Freya asked after calming down. She couldn't wait to smell the flowers. Which she was certain smelled great from how beautiful they looked. As someone who had always loved flowers, she felt like she was in a dream.

"Hhm... What do you all think? Should we?" Instead of replying to what Freya asked. Muku asked the others a question of his own.

"Well... I want a fight so yeah... Let's go!" Jade replied excitedly. Seemingly having gone back to her old self. Her battle intent was already surging.

Her reply, however, confused Freya greatly. She wondered why Jade was talking about fighting when there was nothing but flowers and trees below. Was she going to beat up the defenceless plants or something?

"I say we should be cautious and test the waters first" Layla gave her own take on the matter. While she also wanted to battle as much as Jade, she still wanted to guarantee her's and the team's safety. They were stepping into uncharted territory so caution was best.

"I support Layla's idea" Chloe gave her opinion as well. The others followed suit. Unlike Jade, they weren't mindless when the opportunity for battle arose.

"Tsk, you all are just killjoys" Jade spoke while rolling her eyes. Her battle intent decreased significantly.

"Now to your question Freya. You must remember something. The current world is different from the old one. What you see might not be what you think it is. Also, try your best to remember everything the others mention that's related to beasts okay?" Muku ignored Jade and addressed the confused Freya who became more and more confused the more he spoke.

Not giving her the chance to say anything. Muku created a large blade and then shot it at a large flower down below. The action made Freya even more confused, but only for a moment more...

"Roooooar!"

The so-called giant beautiful flower she wanted to spell roared like a beast as it started frailing around. A huge mouth opened up on the very flower she wanted to get close to.

Freya's body immediately went cold. That's when Muku's words made sense. When he picked them up before, he had mentioned something about a plant-type beast. However, she didn't put it in her head, thinking that it was a rare case and wouldn't happen again. Not to mention, none of the plants they were looking at looked like the one he mentioned.

So, she a flower lover who easily overlooked their humongous size, didn't think that they could be monsters. She felt so noob and embarrassed.

However, the plants didn't give her more time to think. Soon after the one Muku stabbed roared, the whole forest was aroused. Beastly roars filled the area as countless vines charged towards Muku's group.

It seemed the plants had other ways to sense their opponents besides using the ground.

"Haha. Finally! Beast Form!" Jade laughed as she turned into her beast form, which looked like a large green tiger. She had jumped off the platform before Muku could say anything.

He could easily bring her back but they couldn't fight properly gathered together like that. So he let her be. She'll clean up the initial group for the rest to land and fight from. There was no need to stop free labour right?

And so, Beast Jade landed on top of a beast tree. She then started slashing left and right all over the place. She didn't stay in one position for long. Dodging vines and clearing ground.

However, for some reason, no matter how many plants she killed, she didn't get any KP. As she was in her battle-crazed state, she didn't care to think about why that was. The girl kept on clawing at anything that moved. Soon a sizable group had been cleared by her... Well, it was covered by corpses of plant beasts, but it was good enough.

Muku and the others then landed and joined the battle. It became like a light show in the dark if anyone looked at the scene from afar.

"Wait, something is wrong! Why aren't we getting any KP? These things clearly have the strength of LR2s at least" Unlike Jade, Muku and the others were mostly clear-headed even in battle. So they quickly realised that something was wrong.

"Their mana seems to disappear into the ground after they are killed too. Maybe it has something to do with that," Elsa, who had been watching the battle from the background since she couldn't participate, commented.

Freya, who was standing along with Elsa, was surprised since she didn't notice anything. However, soon she realised that it was likely due to their difference in experience.

"Really? Then there's something really fishy going on here. Everyone, keep your guards up and don't stray too far" Muku immediately gave his order after hearing Elsa's words.

The others took heed of his words and fought more cautiously compared to before. Except for one who was still acting as recklessly as before.

"This brat is going to be the death of me" Muku spoke while massaging his forehead. Feeling a headache coming on because of Jade's unruly behaviour.

Unlike before, he grabbed her with his Telekinesis and brought her beside him. It was no longer viable to let her do what she wanted in such an uncertain situation.

"Hey!...Hhm?" Jade, who has been forced out of her craze by Muku, wanted to complain, but that's when they all sensed something.

They all looked in a certain direction. Their expressions are tense. Muku was even ready to make a hasty retreat if it was necessary.

Whatever was coming wasn't going to be easy to deal with...

Chapter 147: Emergence

"What tha?!" Jade exclaimed in surprise as what they sensed from the distance suddenly intensified and spread in every direction. Even the area they were standing on was affected.

Just then, before anyone could make sense of what was happening. The ground started shaking. The aura they were sensing getting more and more intense.

Muku didn't waste any more time as he grabbed the girls and flew up. He only stopped after there was some significant distance between them and the ground.

At that point, the whole forest was covered by the aura. Surprisingly, it was even more intense than the Spider Queen's aura. Without anyone having to say it, all of them realised that whatever the source of the aura was. It was definitely a Rank Three.

This was obvious from how almost all the team members could barely keep standing on the floating platform. Only Muku and Audrey were relatively still fine. Which was likely related to his bloodline that flowed through both their bodies.

While a surprise that his bloodline gained an ability to shield him from strong auras. It was a welcomed surprise. Especially in their current situation. They would have definitely fallen to the ground had he been affected as well.

Seeing the deteriorating situation Muku didn't dare stick around. He immediately took his team and headed up at his fastest speed. The light from Emily's spell was already out. The girl couldn't keep casting it under the pressure of the aura.

So as Muku went up. All he had to rely on was his minor night vision, which was nowhere near as good as Jade's. Unfortunately, she was of no use at the moment as she was as affected by the dark as the others.

As he looked around the place, his eyes met two glowing grey eyes that were looking at him. That's when he realised something he almost always overlooked. Audrey's class, while it didn't require her to consume blood after the mutation, was still a vampire-type class. Vampires can see in the dark!

"Audrey, can you see what's going on down there?" Muku asked not wasting time on the fact that he almost always overlooks the lady's abilities. Which wasn't his fault since, in normal situations, she chooses to stand down and let the enthusiastic girls act.

"Let me see... Oh my!!" Audrey replied as she shifted her gaze from Muku to the ground below. She exclaimed in surprise and fear as soon as she saw what was down there.

"What is it?" Muku, who could only see a few metres away from him, asked Audrey hastily. Audrey rarely lost her composure, so whatever she was seeing was something extraordinary.

"It's... It wasn't ground. It's a monster!" Audrey replied instinctively, still in shock. She had even closed her eyes refusing to look down. Her aura she was using to protect the girls faltered. Which added more work for Muku but he didn't complain since he was the one who told her to look down.

In Audrey's mind, the sight of what she saw kept on replaying. The thing they called a forest rose into the air, and a large mouth with countless teeth was exposed. The mouth was so large that they were as small as an ant to an elephant in front of it.

That's just how different the size difference was. It was probably why the creature didn't act when they first arrived. They weren't worth the effort. However, when they started attacking it's body. It had to act lest they did some significant damage after a while... A long while.

The only reason they managed to survive the ordeal was because of Muku's bloodline. Otherwise they would have definitely been killed on the spot.

That wasn't even the scariest part. The scary part was how the creature was slowly but surely rising higher and higher. It was coming out of the hole. Whether to pursue them or for some other reason. It was unknown to Audrey, but she was certain that she didn't want to be close by when it finally managed to come out.

.....

A little over ten minutes later...

Muku had finally reached the top. He had to increase the speed even more after Audrey's episode. Which increased his mana expenditure by quite a bit.

"Quickly move the mansion away from here please!" Audrey, who had significantly recovered her mental state, exclaimed in a slightly hysterical tone.

"Okay" While he didn't completely understand what was happening. He didn't stand around like an idiot delaying time while asking stupid questions.

He immediately got into action. The lady said quickly, and that's what he was going to do. Questions could be reserved for later. He always hated idiots in movies who first asked questions when they were told to move. Thankfully, those idiots usually died first, so he could somewhat stomach it.

Anyway, as Muku made his way to the mansion. The girls who could freely move again were behind him. They were all smart people, so they knew when to ask questions and when not to.

Soon, everyone was in the mansion, and it took off. A few minutes later when the mansion was already a significant distance away. The ground around the hole started shaking and cracking. The cracks kept getting bigger and bigger as the shaking increased. The pattern continued until eventually...

!Wooo Boom!

The ground gave out as it imploded with a boom. However, the fallen earth didn't fall as deep as one would expect from what was there. Strangely to those who didn't know what was happening, the soil started to rise up from within the hole.

However, it wasn't rising alone or on its own accord. Something was rising with it. A humongous plant monstrosity, unlike anything anyone had ever seen before.

It looked like an even more exaggerated version of the plant monster the group killed before. The shape of a Venus Fly Trap, the colour of one as well. However, that's where the similarities ended.

The creature had what seemed to be a forest on top of its head. Which was the very forest Muku and his group were standing on before. It's body was even larger than that of a whale, by a significant margin too.

"ROOOOOOAR!"

The beast let out a roar that shook the earth. Even those that were hundreds of kilometres away felt it. Strong winds blew in the direction it roared. Trees and other plants were uprooted and thrown whichever way they went.

If Muku hadn't reacted quickly, he and the girls might have had their ears destroyed from the noise. Luckily, he had protected everyone with a telekinetic barrier that blocked sound.

They were also fortunate that the direction in which the plant monster roared wasn't the one they were in. Otherwise their mansion that was just starting to get the upgrade it needed would have gotten destroyed on the spot.

Seeing the behemoth with their own eyes made the others realise why Audrey had been so hysterical. They stood no chance against that thing. Their strongest attacks were not only too small in their biggest states. They probably also could do significant damage to the thing's defense. Which was guaranteed to be way stronger than the "forest" on its head.

As for Muku's erasing gaze? It might be deadly, but he could only use it for a little while before his eyes couldn't take it. He wasn't sure how much damage he would be able to do in such little time, so he didn't even bother trying.

Sometimes one has to acknowledge that certain feats were beyond their capabilities. It's not about being weak or giving up without trying. It's about being reasonable and knowing your limits.

After all, where there is a will there is a way. In Muku and his group's case. It would be, where there is life there is a way. They chose to retreat since the battle was beyond them. They can always fight the beast in the future when they get stronger if their paths cross. That time however, they had to go.

So Muku used his Telekinesis to the best of his abilities and sped up their get away. Luckily for them, the beast didn't seem to care about them much after getting out.

Well, it would probably have thrown a few attacks in a normal setting. However it didn't have the luxury for such as a few "friends" were coming to "greet" it.

Four overwhelming auras were quickly speeding in the direction of the beast plant. The four happened to be the very four that came out of the portals soon after the World Evolution. As for the fifth, which was the white wolf, it was didn't make an appearance. Maybe it was occupied with something else.

Looking on from a distance, though it was more of sensing on since they were too far to see. Muku and the girls could tell that something major was about to occur.

The right move would obviously to run as far away from the area as they could. However the group was feeling quite adventurous. They wanted to at least be close by to get a better sense of what a Rank Three was.

They were so crazy that Muku landed the mansion, and he, along with Jade, Layla, Hope, Emily and Chloe, backtracked without it. That's right, they wanted to be closer to the action.

Audrey, who didn't want to be part of it, was left behind to look after their weaker members.

The reason why Muku and the girls even had the guts to go back it was a decent one actually. One of the Rank Three passed by their floating mansion and didn't even give it a glance.

So it was safe to say that for the moment. As long as they don't provoke the Rank Three beasts. They will most likely be completely ignored because of their weak strength. All they had to worry about was the shockwaves if there was a battle.

They had enough confidence in themselves to stay out of harm's way. So they went back to enjoy the show.

Chapter 148: Clash of Titans

"So it has begun already huh?" Shockingly to Muku's group, a feminine voice spoke from the direction of the plant monster.

If they weren't mistaken, it was the one that had spoken, and it did so without moving its large mouth. Which made the whole experience even more strange.

It had never crossed their minds that these creatures could actually speak. Especially not a plant-type. The reality that times had changed hit them all hard again.

"Earth Guardian, you appeared too early. This isn't what was agreed upon. For that, you should let us kill you without resisting" Before Muku and the girls could get used to the fact that the plant could speak. One of the beasts that had appeared spoke as well.

It was a large black tiger that looked to be around 20 metres in height. Also, like the plant, it didn't move its mouth like humans did when it spoke. For some reason, while they were certain that the language the two beasts spoke wasn't the same as theirs. They could still understand every word.

It was a quite mystical experience. However, the information they overheard didn't let them dwell on it for too long. While it was little, it exposed a lot. The major revelation was that the plant was an Earth Guardian, whatever that was. And also, it wasn't supposed to appear yet.

Which pretty much meant that they had likely screwed up really badly by disturbing the plant beast. So, they were all secretly praying that their actions weren't too significant.

"Oh please. I never agreed to anything. The leaders did. I was just playing along until now, but since I'm awake now. I might as well continue doing what I want" The plant replied in a dismissive voice. It was clearly not taking the four beasts seriously.

"I guess we're going to have to do this the hard way then..." The black tiger replied in a serious tone. Its aura, along with that of the other four, started to rise.

It, being a dark element beast, was quickly submerged in darkness as it covered itself in its condensed domain. Which was a sign that it was already close to breaking through to Rank Four.

The other beasts, which comprised a Giant Green Eagle, a Giant Three-Tailed White Fox and a Brown Buffalo-like creature with paws, claws and jaws, also deployed their condensed barriers.

The Eagle was submerged in a swirling wind. It was also the one that had passed by Muku's group as it flew to the battlefield. Which made it easy to tell that it had the wind element.

The Three-Tailed Fox was covered in a purple mist. Muku's group couldn't tell which element it was. However, they were certain that they didn't want to be at the receiving end of it.

The Feline Buffalo was covered in a brown Earthy energy. Clearly an Earth Elementalist. The energies around the beasts took the same shape as their bodies as they covered them. It was like they were wearing energy armour.

Though Muku's group could tell that it was more than just armour. It was also a weapon which was definitely going to be used in the battle to come.

"Sigh, it seems my weakened state is enough for even little brats like you to think that you stand a chance. However, let me educate you all. No matter how weak I get, you will never stand a chance. For I am out of your league" The plant replied arrogantly.

For some reason, Muku couldn't help but imagine it as a lady dressed in green, disdainfully looking at the four beasts like they were worth less than an ant in front of it.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The four beasts clearly didn't care about what the plant said as they immediately charged forward. The other three beasts didn't even bother speaking from start to finish. Clearly, they already knew how it was going to turn out.

"Fools" The plant had become really chatty since the moment it said its first words.

As soon as it spoke, vines exploded out from the top of its head and charged in for directions. Each beast was attacked by countless thick vines. The plant monster was around 50 metres tall. An adult Blue Whale is around 30 metres or less. The beasts attacking the plant were between 20 and 15 metres.

So, the size difference could easily be noticed, along with how absurdly huge the plant was. It was like an adult fighting a toddler. Even if the toddlers were more in number and were technically equal in strength to the adult. The size difference would still play a part.

If the plant was slow in its reaction, then the four beasts would have the advantage. Unfortunately for the beasts, the plant was way too good at moving its vines around. It did it quickly and accurately in all directions. So it didn't matter if its actual body was slow. They couldn't get close enough to attack it.

They could barely defend themselves against the vines. Their condensed domains were quickly giving in to the lashes. If they didn't change their tactics, they would likely be defeated soon. All they had been doing since the battle began was jump or fly all over the place trying their best to dodge the vines.

Clearly, that plan wasn't working. The plant didn't even seem to be going all out as it kept on mocking them as they fought. It was a rather frustrating experience for the four beasts. However, it was quite entertaining for Muku's group. They never knew that there were beasts with such "strong" personalities that could put even the most vulgar humans on notice.

Soon the beasts gave up on fighting the plant in close combat. They all retreated a distance away and started gathering up power. They were preparing to send out their strongest ranged attacks.

A humongous pitch-black orb appeared above the tiger. A huge tornado appeared below the eagle. Countless huge rock spears appeared around the feline buffalo.

Oddly, no visible attacks appeared around the fox. Its aura just got more intense, matching the other beasts. So it was safe to say that it was also preparing some kind of attack.

"What? Couldn't get close to me so you thought ranged attacks would be better? Let me show you a bit of my power then" The plant spoke, still as arrogant as ever.

At this point, even Muku's group was a bit annoyed by it. Couldn't it just shut up and focus on the battle like the others? Why did it have to always announce what it was about to do like a third-rate movie villain? Didn't it know that it was basically setting up death flags for itself?

However, while they did find it annoying. They hoped it came out on top. While they and it weren't allies, hearing it being called Earth Guardian and knowing that the other side was invaders was enough for them to support it.

Anyway, as soon as it spoke. The plant's body exploded with a green aura. The mana was so strong it blew away everything around it. Raising dust around the area. Its body was completely covered up in the dust.

The four beasts, however, didn't wait for the dust to settle. They immediately threw their attacks at it. A tornado, a black orb and countless rock spears flew into the dust.

What Muku's group didn't notice were the hints of purple in all three of the attacks. Which was likely the doing of the Fox. It had the ability to add a buff to the attacks of allies making them stronger. Which was why nothing visible appeared around it when it was preparing to attack. Its power was merging into the attacks of the others.

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!....

One earthshaking boom after another rang out. The attacks were so strong that Muku's group immediately lost hope in the plant. At the same time, they couldn't help but feel that it deserved it for not fighting seriously from the start.

"Hehe... Nice try" When the four beasts were breathing heavily as they looked at the area covered in dust and smoke. A voice that made them feel even weaker than they already did rang out.

BOOM!

Another boom immediately rang out. However, it was a different kind of boom. It wasn't an attack. It was the result of the plant forcefully blowing the dust and smoke away with its aura.

As soon as the dust cleared, everyone's eyes widened in surprise. Whether it be the four beasts or Muku's group. That was because the play they were seeing was no longer the plant from before.

While the colour was still the same. Everything else was different. Instead of a giant Venus Fly Trap. In its place stood a giant green Humanoid Lady?

The scene was so bizarre that no one knew what to make of it. They even forgot how to breathe as they looked on.

"What? Is my true form too beautiful for you?" The plant... Woman spoke teasingly. It was clearly enjoying how surprised everyone looked. Also, unlike before, its mouth moved correspondingly as it spoke.

Chapter 149: Show of strength!

"Impossible! The current world's mana level shouldn't be able to support your true form!" One of the beasts shouted in shock.

It was the Fox and not the Tiger that shouted. The Plant Lady's transformation must have shocked it too much to the point that it couldn't stay silent anymore.

How could it not break character when the only reason they dared to fight the Plant was because it shouldn't have been able to take its true form. So the realisation of the real danger of likely dying they were in made it unable to keep its cool.

While the Plant Lady had gotten smaller after transformation. With a new height of around 25 metres. Only a little bit taller than the four beasts. They felt a lot more pressure from its new form compared to its previous form.

In fact, the pressure they felt at that moment had multiplied by at least ten times. Which was about equal to the increase in power the Plant Lady got. They were struggling to fight it before, so one could imagine how much harder the battle would get for them.

"Hehe. Sorry little fox, but I'm a little bit different from most. Now die," The Plant Lady spoke. As soon as its words fell, the ground beneath all the four beasts exploded. Thicker vines than before came out from beneath the ground.

The vines were so quick that three of the four beasts were instantly ensnared. Only the green eagle, which had been flying around in the air, managed to briefly get away. However, within seconds, it too was captured.

Just one move from the Plant Lady clearly displayed the difference in strength between the two sides. The four beasts tried to struggle as their condensed domains protected their bodies. Unfortunately, the defence didn't last long, as the thick vines soon broke through their domains.

"You fiend! We'll show you! We refuse to go down without a fight! ROOOOOOAR!" The tiger shouted as it and the other three released their domains.

The condensed state wasn't helping. So they thought they might as well release the basic form. Which was pretty much submerging the surrounding kilometre with their elemental power. The purpose of it was to restrain the opponent's elemental power while boosting theirs. On top of that, the domain in itself would constantly attack the enemy.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

The four released their domains at once. While there would be a clash since they had different elements. They didn't mind at the moment. All they cared about was doing as much damage to the Plant Lady as possible.

So, the whole area was covered in a mix of strong winds that cut everything in their path. Followed by a pitch-black smog-like substance that eroded and ate away at anything it touched. On top of that the ground was shaking and cracking, rocks flying all over the place that mixed together with the wind tornados that had formed. Supporting it all was a purple energy that was making everything else stronger and more chaotic.

Muku's group could barely see what was going on at that point. They also felt fortunate that they were more than two kilometres away or they would have suffered if they were closer. Luckily they had considered how a kilometre or so wasn't too much distance for such big creatures, or things really would have gone south for them.

With such an apocalyptic-like scene happening before their eyes. Changing the landscape, they thought that the Plant Lady was definitely having a hard time, at least. After all, even the ones who deployed the domains. The four beasts were also getting gravely injured by what they ignited. It had long gone out of their control.

"Honestly..." In the chaos. A calm voice that shocked everyone was heard.

BOOM!

A familiar scene of everything being blown away occurred. However, at that time, it was a lot more shocking.

After all, the difference between the two acts was like slapping an ostrich away. Which was mildly impressive. Compared to slapping away a T-Rex. Which wasn't just impressive, it was absurd.

To weak beings like Muku and the girls. What the Plant Lady did was no different to blowing away the apocalypse. After all, there was no way, even with their various abilities. Would they have been able to get out of such a situation? Let alone so easily.

"I was so planning on keeping you all alive for a little longer so that you could provide me with a little information. Sadly, you all are too eager to die," The Plant Lady spoke in an annoyed voice.

She had clearly gotten over the pointless struggle of the four beasts. Just like how a human would be annoyed if an ant they casually squashed until it was half-dead still came for round two.

Green energy replaced the scene from before on the ruined earth. The sight of it made the four beasts fall deeper into the pits of despair. The reason is that it was actually the initial state of a domain. It was literally the thing that those starting out their domain training could summon.

In other words, the Plant Lady didn't even need to deploy a full barrier to defeat them. It was also the ultimate humiliation, for them to put everything into that attack to receive such a response. However, they didn't care about the humiliation at that moment. After all, it was at that moment they realised that they were definitely not going to make it out of the situation alive.

"Wait! We're sorry! Please have me... Roooooar!" The tiger immediately changed its tune. Its initial arrogance was completely gone. All that was left was a beast that was willing to do anything to keep its life as it immediately begged.

Its comrades didn't look down on it; in fact, it was quite the opposite. They hoped that the Plant Lady listened to its plea so that they would be saved.

However, their hopes were quickly dashed as the tiger was squashed, strangled and broken into pieces by the vines before it could finish speaking. Clearly, the Plant Lady wasn't in a forgiving mood.

The three froze for a second as they watched their comrade get instantly killed like that. While they weren't the best of friends and pretty much only knew of the others' existence before that day without any real interaction. At that moment, they really felt for the tiger. The reason was that they knew that they were looking at their immediate future.

After that momentary freeze, the three immediately started struggling to free themselves from the vines. They were doing it so intensely that one would think that their lives depended on it... Oh, wait.

"Useless..." The Plant Lady, who had become no different to a death god to everyone present, spoke. As her words fell, the three beasts were all killed at once. Their bodies having been squeezed to pieces like the tiger before them. The ending was so anticlimactic compared to how they were when they made their appearance.

"Oops! I probably shouldn't have done that," The Plant Lady, who had started calming down after the battle, spoke to herself in a low voice.

As if waiting for her to acknowledge her mistake. The sky above her immediately darkened after she spoke. An oppressive aura then descended directly onto her body. Surprisingly, the absurdly strong Plant-Lady that had made quick work of four peak Half-step R4s was easily pushed to the ground by the aura.

It created a deep imprint on the already ruined earth. Luckily, it has moved away from the hole or it might have fallen back into it.

"YOU DARE NOT ONLY EMERGE BEFORE IT WAS TIME. YOU ALSO DARED TO KILL FOUR OF THE CURRENT OVERLORDS?" A deep voice full of anger spoke from the sky above.

The language it used was the same as the plant and the beasts. A language that everyone understood even if they didn't speak it or even know about for that matter.

"I... I didn't wa-ke up on my o-wn. A-as for the wea_klings. It was self-defence" The Plant Lady struggled to speak as it defended its actions to whoever the voice belonged to.

"SILENCE! THE REASON DOES NOT MATTER! YOU BROKE THE RULES. FOR THAT YOU MUST DIE!" The voice replied in an unmoved tone, still angry. Clearly, the owner didn't care about the reasons; all it cared about was dishing out punishment.

"No! I refuse! I never agreed to any rules and by cowards like you!" The Plant Lady spoke in a defiant voice as her eyes looked into the distance. In them, Muku's group was being reflected.

However, they didn't seem to stop there; they were looking even further behind Muku's group. She was looking at the mansion. More specifically, at Freya who was standing just outside the gate with Audrey and Elsa.

BOOM!

Before the voice could reply, her body exploded into green energy that quickly flew into the distance. The energy reached Freya within a split second.

Before anyone could react, it slammed into her and disappeared into her body. Freya's body was pushed back by the force and hit the gate behind her with a bang. By the time she fell to the ground, she was already unconscious.

"AHH!"

The scene was so bizarre to the point that Elsa let out a shriek in terror.

Chapter 150: Possession!

"YOU DARE! I WILL MAKE YOU REGRET THAT ONE DAY YOU ROGUE FAIRY!" The voice boomed, even angrier than before.

However, for some reason, it didn't do anything after that. The sky immediately cleared and the otherworldly aura that only affected the Plant Lady also vanished.

Muku and the girls looked at each other for a moment then they sprinted forward. There was no way they were going to let such good meat go to waste. That's right, they were targeting the beast meat from the four beasts that were killed by the Plant Lady.

They didn't completely catch what had happened with the Plant Lady. All they understood was that she had somehow escaped. Also, the voice owner had left. They didn't know what had happened with Freya back at the base. So they weren't in a rush to return.

At that moment, their priority was to gather up the beast meat and quickly leave the scene. After all, who knows if another Rank Three would show up soon. While they could have just left without touching anything. To minimize the danger against themselves. They refused to let go of such a rare opportunity to get free R3 beast meat.

As for how they were going to store all of it? They weren't, they were just going to take as much as Layla's Shadow Pocket could take. They would also search for search for beast cores.

Jade's ability to detect them wasn't working for some reason. She could tell whether there was anything or not by just glancing at the beast's corpse before. When there was something, there was a special feeling she would feel. When there wasn't, there was also a feeling for it. She was getting neither of them when she looked at the corpses.

The group figured that it might be because the beasts were of a higher rank compared to hers. Or maybe because of all the chaotic energy that had been mixed into the air of the area that was messing with her senses. Maybe it was both. The reason didn't matter. The fact of the matter was that they had to do it manually for the first time ever.

As for why they ran forward, it was to quickly get things done. They had seen so much and learned so much in that area to the point that they were tired and a little scared. So they wanted to quickly get over with and leave.

They immediately began working. For a few minutes, they toiled away. It was really hard for them to cut up the hard bodies of the beasts. Thankfully, their hard work paid off, and they soon filled up Layla's Shadow Pocket with 500 hundred kilogrammes of meat. Which was the maximum it could take.

While they did feel sad that they couldn't take all the meat, the sadness was reduced by the fact that they found four cores. That's right, all the beasts had cores. It seemed that from Rank Three, most beasts, or maybe all had cores. They weren't sure yet. They'd have to study the matter further after they rank up.

After getting all they could they didn't stick around. They immediately went back to the mansion. Where they were greeted by a weird scene the moment they arrived.

....

Soon after Muku's group left a new figure arrived at the battle scene. It didn't just arrive out of nowhere. It first started lightly snowing out of nowhere. Then, the snow got more and more intense until the visibility of the area was almost completely blocked by the heavy snow.

Oddly though, the snow avoided the bodies of the four beasts. Which made it easy to tell that what was going on wasn't a natural occurrence. One could argue that it was a sudden snowstorm in spring, so it was easy to tell that it wasn't natural.

However, on the contrary, the weather in the apocalypse was all over the place in some areas for various reasons. So a sudden snowstorm wouldn't be seen as strange by most people. Seasons had been long killed off by the apocalypse. Mother Nature just did what she wanted when she wanted in the apocalypse.

Anyway, soon a giant wolf around 15 metres appeared. Its blue eyes cautiously look around the place. It was ready to run if anything went wrong. It had noticed the bodies of the four beasts that were stronger than it which were missing some parts and were in pieces. So being extremely cautious was understandable.

"Sigh... This is why I didn't join these fools. It's stupid to challenge a Rank Nine Fairy just because she has been weakened to your level. It seemed something else happened as well... Whatever, not my problem.

I'll gladly accept this free meal and be on my way" The wolf spoke to itself in a young and calm male voice.

Then without delay, it started gulping down on the meat of the four beasts. As for the missing meat and beast cores? It didn't care. It couldn't use the cores, and the meat was free, so why feel angry about some being missing?

The wolf's stomach was like a black hole as it kept on eating and eating nonstop. It only stopped after all the meat was gone. All that was left were four piles of bones stripped away of all their meat.

Its aura was also visibly different from how it was when it first began eating. It had increased by around half of its strength when it arrived. The ability to grow stronger by just eating was something all beasts had. However, beasts like the wolf with stronger bloodlines got a lot more returns than normal beasts when they ate.

....

Back at the mansion...

While the wolf they narrowly escaped getting eaten by was busy with its meal. Muku's group was also facing an issue of their own.

That issue was Freya. Or more specifically the Plant Lady. The thing was that when they arrived, Freya was already up. However, she was no longer herself.

Her eyes had changed from their usual colour, whichever that was. To a seduction green different from Jade's fierce green. Even the way she carried herself changed. Before, she always had an air of timidity around her. However, that was gone. She was now releasing nothing but a confident aura.

That's right, she had been possessed. The Plant Lady had invaded her body to escape punishment and immediately took over upon arrival.

By the time Muku and the girls arrived. She was lying lazily on a couch in the house. It was quite amazing how easily she got used to her situation. It was almost like she wasn't the one who had almost gotten herself killed before and fled after destroying her body.

"Hello, little boy. You must be the leader of this special group of girls here. Or is it your harem? Fufufu... How bold of you. Only a rank two but already starting a harem. Then again, I do like a man who knows what he wants" The Plant Lady in Freya immediately stood up and walked toward Muku as soon as he entered the room.

By the time she finished speaking, she was playfully brushing his face with her hand. Muku and the others were so shocked that none reacted. Whether it be Muku's group that has just arrived or Audrey and Elsa who had been with Freya from the start. None understood what was going on.

"Audrey... What's going on?" Muku didn't bother trying to talk to Freya who seemed to have lost it. He immediately asked his right hand what was happening.

Audrey, who seemed to have been waiting to be asked what was going on, immediately told him everything. She didn't skip even the littlest of details. She spoke so quickly that she didn't even get a chance to breathe until she was done.

"So that's what happened..." That's all Muku managed to say. The expressions on his and the girl behind him's faces immediately darkened.

How could they not get what was happening? It was so obvious. The Plant Lady, who they thought had fled into the distance, had actually fled into their teammate!

What were they supposed to do in such a situation? The memory of how the four beasts were easily bodied by her was still fresh in their minds. So a forceful approach was definitely out of the picture. Trying such a thing would simply be seeking a horrible death. The Plant Lady was definitely not a nice character after all.

"Greetings, Senior Plant Lady, yes, I am the leader. What do I have to do for you to leave my teammate's body? I'm willing to let you take over my body instead" Muku didn't waste time. He acknowledged the Plant Lady's existence and her words but ignored the harem part, he didn't want to dive into such murky waters at the moment.

Without delay, he went to the point. Which was asking what she wanted for her to leave Freya's body. He couldn't bear to see Freya be possessed like that. Especially when he had promised the girl safety, so for her to get possessed on her first day was... Well, it was bad and super unlucky for both of them.

"No!" "No!".....

Multiple voices protested the moment he offered himself. None of them were willing to let him do that.

Hearing him and seeing the reaction of the girls. The Plant Lady smiled mischievously. She was clearly enjoying the situation...

She then opened her mouth about to speak but someone else beat her to it...