

Few Wives 191

Chapter 191: Psychic Emily?

"W..what are you talking about?" Jade stuttered as she asked nervously.

Inside her head, she was screaming out in frustration. This was the very reason she stayed away from breakfast. She didn't know why, or since when... But, for the longest time, Emily had been able to see through her whenever she was hiding something.

She thought that if she stayed away from Emily for a day or two. Then maybe something else will happen that will take her mind off things. If that happened, she would be able to hide what happened from Emily without seeming suspicious.

However, her plan failed the very morning she made it. What the hell was wrong with Emily? Did she have some secret psychic ability from even before the apocalypse or something? That shouldn't be impossible, considering Freya's mindscape ability.

"No, I don't have a psychic ability. I just know you extremely well, so stop thinking about it. Also, don't play dumb, we're long past that point," Emily suddenly spoke.

Her words made Jade feel a strong chill go down her spine. How can Emily say she is not psychic when she's literally saying what she was thinking?! Should she make a break for it and let Muku deal with her?

"Don't even try it, and his turn will come soon enough..." Emily spoke again.

At this point, Jade was feeling rather creeped out and a little scared. Her body turned weak under Emily's eerily calm gaze. Emily seemed like an All-seeing demigod sent to interrogate her at that moment.

If she were in her cat form, she would probably be hissing while slowly getting back. That's how much Emily was freaking her out.

"I... I really don't know what you're talking about. I swear!" Jade tried to play dumb one more time. Maybe Emily was just bluffing.

"So... Not only did you know something. You also did something?!" Emily spoke, this time her calm expression cracking a bit.

Jade broke out in cold sweat. How many incidents involving her did Emily go through?? The girl was practically deciphering everything just from looking at her!

"Okay, stop! I'll tell you everything. Just don't creep me out anymore, please!" Jade exclaimed in defeat.

She felt like Emily was going to find out everything anyway. So, it was better to just admit it from the start. If she's to be punished, it wouldn't be as bad, right?

She was now regretting the impulsive kiss. If it wasn't for that incriminating occurrence, she would have been fine with spilling the beans. She'd have done so long ago.

Which was how Emily caught her. Emily knew that Jade would become extra hesitant to reveal something when she also did something wrong. Otherwise, if it was just someone else's mistake. She had no problem with throwing that person under the bus after a little push from Emily.

Of course, it was only like that with Emily. Otherwise, she was pretty good at keeping secrets.

"Sure... Now, tell me everything you know," Emily replied.

She had recovered from the unexpected discovery of Jade's guilt. It still bothered her in her mind, though. She was wondering what it could possibly be that Jade did for her to feel guilty. Jade was a mostly unrepentant girl after all.

It couldn't have possibly been "that" right?... No, nothing seemed different about Jade. She didn't seem to be in discomfort either. And Muku wouldn't do such a thing. So, maybe it wasn't as serious as she thought... Maybe.

"Umm, so... At first I was minding my business, then I heard something. Which turned out to be..." Jade proceeded to tell Emily everything she knew. Of course, it wasn't anything graphic, but it was detailed enough for Emily to get a clear idea...

Emily's expression got darker and darker the more she heard Jade speak. At first, she would slightly bite her lip. Then she would intensely bite it to the point of drawing blood. Then she stopped biting it, tears began falling from her eyes.

Guessing something and knowing that it's likely true from the guess is different from it actually being confirmed. The confession visibly hurt Emily a lot. One of her dreams had been shattered just like that, it seemed.

She had long suspected that something would happen between those two before the two years were up. However, even if it was expected. It still hurt her a lot. She really wanted to be the first. To exchange her first for his.

"A... are you okay?" Jade asked nervously.

She didn't expect Emily to be so hurt by the news. After all, they all quietly knew that Audrey was likely going to be the first, even if Audrey herself was oblivious.

She wanted to give Emily a hug but didn't know if she would allow it. After a slight moment of hesitation. She went for it and hugged Emily. As her best friend, she just couldn't bear to watch while looking on.

Emily tried to get out of the hug at first, but she couldn't for obvious reasons. Jade was not someone she could even think of overpowering physically.

After a while, she stopped struggling and just cried in Jade's arms. Which went on for some time before she was fine again. It seemed the matter was a really big deal to her.

"Thank you for that..." Emily spoke after calming down. Being hugged really helped.

"Sure. That's what best friends are for," Jade replied with a smile on her face.

"Yeah... Now tell me what you did after all that," Emily asked. Having returned to her interrogation mode again.

Just when Jade was feeling relieved about how she had dodged a bullet. Her first thought after hearing the question was to immediately get away.

However, Emily, who had anticipated it, clung onto her like she was glued on. Jade struggled to get free but couldn't.

"If you keep on struggling, I'm going to burn your clothes along with everything in this room", Emily spoke.

Her words made Jade wonder why people always thought Emily was the nice one between them. She was clearly pure evil! Who would even think of doing such a thing to their best friend?!

"Fine! Just don't do anything crazy after I tell you," Jade relented. Finding clothes in the apocalypse had gotten super hard. So, she didn't want to risk angering Emily and facing her wrath.

Emily nodded for her to continue. Her grip on Jade is not loosening even a bit. Which made Jade roll her eyes. Why was she still holding her when she had taken her whole room hostage already?

"Remember, you promised not to do anything crazy after I tell you", Jade spoke. Not saying what Emily wanted to hear.

"Say it already! Do you want me to burn something to show you my seriousness?" Emily exclaimed annoyedly.

Jade's unwillingness was making her feel worse. What could she have done?! Did she really do the unthinkable or something??

"Okay, okay. Don't get mad. Umm, so I took advantage of the information I had and.... Then I In the heat of the moment, I Then I ran out" Jade bit the bullet and told Emily everything.

She then closed her eyes, waiting for an explosion from Emily. She was even expecting to lose a few things.

However, even after a minute had passed. She still couldn't didn't smell anything burning or anything like that. She could only hear Emily's unchanged breathing.

She started wondering if Emily might have fainted while holding her. Or maybe she was so shocked she didn't know how to react.

Such thoughts prompted her to slowly open her eyes curiously. Her heart skipped a beat the moment she saw Emily's face. It was still as calm as before. Which was a lot more scary than her exploding from anger.

"Don't worry, I won't burn your clothes. I understand, you had a chance and you took it. Besides, someone else had kissed him first. So, what's one more right?" Emily spoke calmly.

"R... really?, I'm glad you understand. I guess I was worried about bothering. I should have had more faith in you," Jade spoke while letting out a sigh of relief.

It seemed Emily really wasn't angry. It was understandable since Audrey and Muku were the real villains in the story. She was just a side character. A minor villain in fact...

"Yeah... I won't burn your clothes or anything else. I'll burn you instead! How dare you take advantage of him like that?!" Emily's whole demeanour suddenly changed, just when Jade was starting to relax too.

Before she could do anything, both she and Emily were covered in flames. She could feel that the flames were different from the ones Emily used before, which wouldn't hurt her.

"Ahhh! You promised you wouldn't do anything crazy!" Jade screamed.

She was really scared. How could she forget that Emily was almost as obsessed with Muku as Hope was! They both found it unacceptable when someone took advantage of him. No matter who it was, apparently.

To think she'd die like that. Killed by her friend over a man they both weren't even romantically involved with yet...

Chapter 192: Muku and Emily

A while later...

Bang!

"What's going on in here? I heard we heard a scream... Oh my!" Hope exclaimed after budging into Jade's room with Elsa behind her.

They were talking about some random stuff in the kitchen when they heard Jade scream. They immediately rushed over. After all, something that could make Jade scream in fear like that had to be extraordinary. So, they rushed to help.

The sight that met them, however, was more shocking than they could have imagined. Jade was sniffing on her bed while Emily quietly looked on.

The smell of something burning was prominent in the room. It was also obvious to them what got burned... Which was Jade's hair. That's right, Emily had burnt off some of Jade's hair.

It wasn't done in an ugly way. She just burnt away some of its length. Leaving it rather short but looking smart. Nothing else was burnt. It was rather easy for Emily to do. Which didn't seem too bad, right?... Wrong! That's one of the worst things she could have done to Jade.

Jade loved her long hair like she would a sister. She would always groom it any chance she got. The only reason she didn't brag about it openly was because the others also had great long hair.

"Sniff, sniff. I... Can't believe you actually did that!" Jade spoke in between her sobs.

"I can't believe you did that either. Now we're even. I have someone else to deal with..." Emily replied unmoved.

She then left the room. Hope and Elsa immediately got out of the way. They didn't want any part of the current Emily. They didn't even know why she was angry. So it would be unfair to get caught up in something they knew nothing about.

As for Jade... They knew her well enough to guess that she probably deserved it. Her reaction also proved that she knew she deserved it. Otherwise, she wouldn't be so easily bullied.

The two looked at each other while thinking. They wanted to follow Emily, who had just entered Muku's room without knocking. However, they immediately gave up on that idea after looking at Jade. They headed downstairs instead.

Layla, Chloe and Freya also heard the commotion. However, unlike Hope and Elsa. They knew that it was probably nothing serious since they couldn't sense any enemies having entered the mansion. For that reason, they didn't bother to go check it out.

Layla and Chloe were focused on improving their strength. Freya was still scared that she might have been discovered before. So, she decided to stay away for a bit.

If she really was discovered. She was too scared to even face them. Maybe they would forgive her through pity after seeing her meekness, right? Well, she hoped so, at least.

As for Audrey, she was still out cold. It seemed the intense activity took a lot more out of her than expected.

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In Muku's room...

"I know you're awake... Get up, I want to talk," Emily spoke in a gentle voice just after entering Muku's room.

Her demeanour wasn't as dark as it was with Jade. Maybe taking care of Jade and the crying session helped.

Not to mention that what happened wasn't exactly unacceptable to her. She was just overwhelmed by frustration from losing the chance to be first. So she was mostly okay after venting a little.

As for giving Jade a fiery haircut? Well... That was mostly her being petty because Jade also beat her to the punch. Only if she had been a bit bolder in the past.

"... What is it?" Muku spoke in a tired voice. Not even bothering to open his eyes.

Emily could tell that he was feeling mentally drained. It seemed despite doing what he did with Audrey and not regretting it. It still weighed on his mind.

"..." Emily looked at him for a moment without saying anything. She then walked over to his bed with a resolute expression on his face.

Without saying anything, she then got onto his bed. Then into his blanket. She continued to quietly hug him beneath the covers. Her head lay on his chest.

Muku's eyes instantly snapped open. His mind got even more chaotic. He was wondering what the hell had gotten over the girls recently. Were they trying to give him a heart attack or something??

"What are you doing?!" He exclamation while trying to get out of Emily's hug. However, he would have to hurt her a little to do that. Which he wasn't willing to do.

If his mind hadn't been chaotic and groggy. She definitely wouldn't have been able to even hug him like that. She was lucky to catch him in that state like Jade did. It was like they could tell when they would be successful in their sudden attacks.

"I know what you did yesterday..." Emily spoke one sentence calmly.

She had gotten so comfortable lying next to him that she had closed her eyes. She even sounded a lot more relaxed.

Hearing her statement. Muku instantly cooled down. He stopped struggling and just stiffly lay there. His mind was blank. Basically, giving up on thinking of anything.

It seemed he used up all his luck when he bagged Audrey. To the point that he got unlucky afterwards... Which was understandable considering how top tier in everything Audrey was...

Still, he couldn't help but curse Jade in his mind. It hadn't even been twenty-four hours since she promised him her silence. Even stealing some benefits. Yet she had already sold him out to Emily. Why did he trust that idiot anyway??

As for how he knew it was definitely Jade who sold him out? Well, Emily was the type to immediately look into this type of thing after finding out. And, Jade just let out a scream a while back. So it was pretty obvious what took place.

He would also bet that Jade's actions played a big part in Emily's realisation. Even before she was told anything. Which was completely true. Without Jade's behaviour, Emily wouldn't have come to that conclusion just because Muku and Audrey were missing from breakfast.

However, Jade was a different story. It was basically guaranteed that something was going on if Jade was missing during meal time...

"What do you mean?" Muku asked, trying to keep calm.

"You know your heart has already sold you out, right?... Anyway, let's stay like this for a little longer, then talk," Emily spoke calmly again.

Muku panicked even more. Did she intentionally lie on his chest to hear his heartbeat? And she said it matter-of-factly. Not giving him a chance to defend himself. How overbearing! Why does it seem like his knowledge of the girls was constantly getting proven wrong?

Jade was supposed to be too brash to even think of blackmailing him. Yet she had done so twice!. Emily was supposed to be too nice to manipulate someone's actions with her words. Yet she was doing it!

Even Chloe practically threw him under the bus with her father before! He couldn't help but gulp thinking about Layla... What would she do when she finds out?!

The two stayed like that for close to an hour. Muku was restless throughout the whole process. However, Emily was clearly enjoying it. She even took a short nap to prove it. Though honestly, despite everything. Muku didn't hate the experience.

"Okay, now we can talk. I will not hold what you did against you. It was bound to happen. However, you'll have to make it up to me for breaking your promise," Emily spoke soon after waking up.

"What do you have in mind?" Muku asked tensely. He was hoping she wouldn't mess around with him like Jade did.

"Oh, nothing too serious. Just this... From now on, I can come to sleep here whenever I want. I promise not to do anything else. Of course, you're free to refuse. I'll just be disappointed and nothing more. I'll take it as having loved the wrong man. Someone unwilling to take responsibility for his actions," Emily spoke calmly.

However, her statements were quite loaded. She spoke her desires. Expressed her love and indirectly left Muku with no other option but to accept. After all, she has questioned his core values. It was hard to even recognise her as the same, extremely kind Emily he knew. The girl lying on his chest seemed way darker.

It was clear to see that while she said she forgave him. She was still pissed off. So while she was trying to let it go, a little malice still slipped through. It was completely understandable, though. She was the one who liked him first, before everyone else, after all.

Hell, she fell in love at first sight. So, knowing that those who came after her were advancing further than her. Taking away some important times was rather annoying.

"Fine... As long as you don't do anything else. Like you said, I messed up. So, I should take responsibility," Muku replied in a defeated tone.

Even if he knew what she was doing. He could only give in to her. It wasn't anything unreasonable anyway. It could cause some problems, but it was something he would deal with when the time came.

"Good", Emily only said one word. Muku could hear the happiness in her voice, though.

Which was correct. Emily was smiling brightly away from his sight. The way she looked at the incident changed as well. It no longer seemed so bad in her head.

After all, without it. Who knows when she would have been able to fulfil this dream of hers...

Chapter 193: Who's your boss anyway?

"Can you get up now? I'd like to go out," Muku spoke defeatedly after seeing that Emily was showing no sign of moving.

"Just a little longer, please?" Emily replied while holding him even more tightly than before.

"Just five more minutes and that's it", Muku replied.

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Five minutes later...

"H..hey!" Emily exclaimed after Muku suddenly jumped out of bed.

She had loosened her grasp. So it was easy for him to do. She pouted while looking at him walking out the door. She wondering if he had realised that she wasn't going to let him go.

A slightly embarrassed smile then appeared on her face. She had let go of all the negative emotions. So what if she wasn't the first? She was going to make sure that she was the best when the time came...

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Bang!

"Jade, you snake, how could you sell me out so eas... What the hell?! Pfft Hahahaha" Muku, who had gotten some leverage on Jade after the betrayal.

No longer hesitated to see her. So much so that she was the first person he went to see after escaping from Emily. Just as he was speaking, he noticed her shortened her hair. He immediately burst into loud laughter while pointing at her.

There was definitely a heavy dose of schadenfreude mixed into his laughter. How could he not be like that after the stress she made him go through?

"You totally deserved it, you cheeky brat! Hahahaha. I wish she had burned it away instead! Hahahaha. Even I have longer hair than you. Hahaha," Muku kept on adding fuel to the fire while laughing at Jade.

"GET OUT!" Jade exploded out into an angry shout.

Bang!

She then got up from her bed and pushed Muku out of her room. She then slammed the door in his face. She wasn't in the mood to deal with him at that time. She was still mourning her precious hair.

Muku didn't resist. He knew he couldn't talk to her when she was like that anyway. He also had some other things to do.

He then went to his next destination. Which was Audrey's room. He smiled wryly the moment he got into the room. The lady was practically sleeping on the same place he left her on the previous night.

Of course, he had to move her to the bed. So he gently picked her up. Making sure not to wake her. He then slowly placed himself on the bed, into her blanket.

He wanted to leave immediately and let her sleep. However, her sleeping face was just so mesmerising he couldn't help wanting to caress it for a bit. So, he lay next to her, then began caressing her face and hair softly. Taking in her sweet scent.

A gentle smile automatically appeared on his face. He felt quite blissful and blessed in that moment. Who wouldn't feel blessed when they knew someone like Audrey gave them their all?

"Mmm" Audrey suddenly stirred with a her voice leaking out a bit.

Muku was startled and immediately wanted to get away. He didn't want to wake her up after all. However, Audrey had different plans. Just when he was about to take back his hand. She grabbed it and pulled him back.

Muku immediately looked at her face to see if she was awake. He was met by her slightly opened eyes that were clearly very sleepy. Then out of nowhere, she pulled his hand on top of her. Then hugged his body that had gotten closer.

"Good morning, pretty lady", Muku spoke softly. However, he received no response.

He then looked down and noticed that Audrey had gone back to sleep. It almost seemed like she only woke up to pull him closer. He could only smile wryly again and stay like that.

It was only thirty minutes later that Audrey woke for real. The lady almost jumped up from her bed after finding herself in someone's arms. Unfortunately, her body wasn't feeling up to the test. It felt so heavy she could barely move.

Muku found it both funny and concerning. They really shouldn't have been so extreme when they did it. Especially when it was just Audrey's first time. Though it kinda stroked his ego, the fact that he hit it so hard she couldn't move.

Anyway, it was still concerning. How will he explain it to the others who didn't know? It would be too suspicious to say that she is sick, right? After all, did Evolvers even get sick? Especially R3s?

"Should I call Hope?" Muku asked. It was better to be awkward than leave Audrey like that.

"N... no! That's way too embarrassing!" Audrey instantly refused. Her face turned red from just the thought of it.

After all, Hope's healing spells always glow visibly brighter on the injured area. Which would mean... No! Audrey refused to go through that. She'd rather stay as she was!

"Okay... I have something else we can try. It will take a little more time and effort, though," Muku suggested something else.

He could understand where she was coming from. Not to mention that even Hope would probably figure things out in such a situation. Even if she was rather naive and pure. She still knew some stuff from school after all.

Honestly, he didn't know how she would react. Which he would rather not find out. That little sister of his can be quite unpredictable sometimes. She might go around telling everyone by mistake or something like that.

"Okay... I'm fine with anything else," Audrey replied. She had an idea of what he was talking about. She wasn't against it despite not liking it too much. It was a lot better than the embarrassment.

"Great! Let me go take care of something first," Muku replied, then after a nod from Audrey. He went out.

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

"Why has no one come out since yesterday?. Should I go and report just that?. No, that whole boss of mine will probably not accept it. Do these bastards like their mansion that much?... How do they even have a mansion anyway? And how tf did they move it here? It definitely wasn't around anywhere near here before. Sigh, I want to go rest. I don't even get paid for this" The spy from the NL Base spoke to himself.

He had been quiet at the beginning. However, after so much time of just observing a motionless mansion. He was bored, tired, sleepy and hungry. So, he felt like he had to vent or he would lose his mind.

"Well, actually. I feel you've done enough. You've been here since yesterday, after all. Your boss can't be so unreasonable as not to accept that right? Who's your boss anyway?" Suddenly, a voice spoke from beside the spy.

"It's Abel that white-haired a..." The spy replied by mistake, then he realised what was going on. He was supposed to be alone. How was there someone talking to him?!

A cold chill went down his spine. He was legitimately scared. For someone to come so close to him without being found out. It was either a ghost or a being much worse... A higher ranked Evolver!.

He was a MR2 evolver with spying abilities, which included camouflage. He could sense up to PR2s and some Pseudo-R3s if they were still not that high up.

So, for the person to be completely invisible to him. They had to be someone really strong. Someone who could probably kill him without him even noticing it. He was so scared he couldn't look.

"It's rude not to look at someone when they are talking to you. And why are you so scared when I'm just here to give you a reason to return? You should be thanking me instead. I even have a message for you to deliver to your boss. Tell him that I'll be visiting him sometime soon, okay?" Muku spoke again.

The man still didn't move an inch to look. Muku couldn't help but wonder why such a chicken was doing such work if he was so scared. It seemed that sometimes one would get abilities that weren't in line with their personality.

Even more unluckily for the spy. Someone saw the potential in those abilities and likely threatened him to do whatever that person wanted.

"You really should consider a different line of work, man. Let me help you get on your way," Muku spoke, then picked the spy up by his neck.

The guy was so scared he actually wet himself. Muku gave him a slightly disgusted look. Then flew away with him at high speeds. His destination was the NL Base. He left the scared-stiff spy less than a kilometre away from the base. Then he left after telling the spy not to forget his message.

The spy stayed like that for a few minutes. Completely still. It was almost like he thought Muku was still lurking around. Which wasn't true. Muku had really left. He had a beauty waiting for him after all.

Only after some time did the spy feel safe enough to move. The strength that had left his legs had also returned. He then ran back to his base. He, without a doubt, would tell Abel everything.

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Back at the mansion...

"Is it taken care of?" Audrey asked as soon as Muku entered the room.

"Yeah, we can get to the important matters now", Muku replied with a gentle smile on his face.

Audrey smiled back. A slight blush on her face as they looked into each other's eyes...

Chapter 194: Inner conflict...

A while later...

As some might have guessed, Muku's plan was to get Audrey some beast blood.

While she rarely used it, or needed to, because of Hope. Audrey could heal by drinking beast blood. It only worked with beast blood, too, apparently. As was seen from her "fun times" with Muku.

She also couldn't use the blood she had "corrupted", which she manipulated. That blood was no different from her own blood in the sense that it had no effect on her when drunk.

Of course, Hope wanted to come along after noticing them. It took some coaxing from Muku before she agreed to stay back.

Other than Hope, the only one who saw them go out was Elsa. She didn't care too much about what they were doing. She only gave them a slightly curious look after greeting them. She then returned to doing her business.

It was impractical to take her along. After all, they'd have to explain to her why Audrey needed the blood. Which would make the whole endeavour pointless. Not to mention the private talk Muku wanted to have with Audrey...

"So..." Muku spoke stiffly. He couldn't even finish what he wanted to say.

"I'm not aborting! I don't think that's even still an option anyway!" Audrey exploded into a fit of protest.

"Huh?!... Oh, shih!" Muku was confused for a bit by her words. Then he realised what she was talking about. His face went pale in an instant.

So many things had happened soon after their activities. To the point that he hadn't even thought about it. He hadn't thought about such an obvious thing after everything he did so fearlessly.

What gave him the courage to do such a thing? Over and over, too. Was it so hard to pull out? He didn't even do so once!

How was he going to deal with the girls when Audrey's belly starts growing?! Emily would probably burn him alive!

Not to mention his strength. Was he even strong enough to raise a family yet? He didn't think so. The seemed to be getting more and more dangerous. They were discovering one dark secret after another. He couldn't help but feel a slight headache coming in.

"It seems I assumed wrong. Anyway, don't get so stressed about it. It might not even happen. Just know it's a possibility for now. But... You dislike the idea of it that much?" Audrey spoke softly. His reaction made her feel a little sad.

She might have been wrong about his awareness of the situation at the start. However, his reaction wasn't one she wanted to see. She hoped he would be as happy about it as she was.

She knew that he had some worries that were keeping him from that. However, she still hoped he'd be happy still. Such was the chaotic way of thinking that plagued humans.

"No... No, I don't dislike it. I was just caught off guard, that's all. The idea of having a little me or a little you running around sounds great. I just don't think I'm strong enough yet..." Muku replied while hugging Audrey, who looked sad.

"Oh... I guess you're right. Sorry for jumping the gun. After hearing your words, I also think it's not the right time yet," Audrey replied while still in his embrace.

She had realised that she was really overlooking a lot of things. No matter how much she wanted to have a baby, she could raise it from scratch. Which she couldn't do with Layla. She couldn't ignore timing...

"Well, if it happens, it happens, though. We'll just have to work harder and get stronger quickly. Should we start coming up with names? I was thinking Muku Jr if it's a boy, and Audrey Jr if it's a girl. You?" Muku got into a joking mood after seeing that she was no longer feeling sad.

"Hehe. You're such a goof. Let's put that on hold until it's actually confirmed whether there's a baby or not. And how terrible is your naming sense for you to think of only that?! Hahaha. I'm definitely not letting you name any of our future children. Hahaha," Audrey spoke in between her laughter.

She found his words so funny, her eyes even got teary from laughter. She didn't even notice how she let it slip that she wanted more than one child.

"What? No fair! Where would I put my face as a father without naming even one of them? Wouldn't people think I'm henpecked?!" Muku protested exaggeratedly.

"Hahaha. Fine, I might let you name one if you can think of something good," Audrey replied while still laughing.

It was clear that she was having the best time. Muku couldn't help but smile. Seeing her happy also made him happy. The two kept at it as their journey continued. At the end, they quietly held each other, enjoying the others' company.

Muku even considered giving up on the plan if the future and just focus on Audrey. However, she seemed to have read his mind.

And with a smile on her face. She denied the idea before it was spoken. Her reasoning being, he had already travelled too deep onto the path even without the physical element.

Backing out would shatter the team. Most of the members would probably leave and never return. Likely leaving nothing but destruction in their path. Which she didn't want to see.

Even if the others were involved. The two of them would still get their moments. Which was enough for her.

Hearing her words, Muku almost proposed on the spot. As well as confess his undying love. He managed to save himself by kissing her on the lips instead.

While it was a bit petty. He didn't want to be the first one to confess. He seemed to be quickly losing that battle though...

A few kilometres away from Muku and Audrey. A girl with a pair of glowing green eyes and twitching cat ears looked on. There was a conflicted look in her eyes. She was jealous, annoyed, happy, thankful, with a whole bunch of other emotions.

The girl was, of course, Jade. She really wanted to hate what was going on with Muku and Audrey. However, she just couldn't do it. Especially after what Audrey said.

... Not the pregnancy thing. She felt like murdering Muku after hearing that one. However, as someone who isn't even supposed to be there. She held herself back. She did promise to make Muku pay one day, though.

It was when Audrey dissuaded Muku from focusing only on her. When it was clear he was thinking about it. That Jade managed to calm down.

She even considered turning back. But after thinking about it. She had already come a long way. She might as well continue, right?

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Some time later...

"Look! A LR3 Boar! We can not only get the healing over with, but we can also get the best meat!" Audrey exclaimed excitedly.

"Careful, you're starting to drool, you foody. I almost forgot that Jade isn't the only foody in our group because of her sheer loudness that makes everyone else seem saintly," Muku spoke. He teased Audrey as well as mocked Jade for whatever reason.

"Hey! How rude! Who says that about a lady in her face? Aren't you afraid you might die alone due to your mouth?" Audrey replied while pouting.

She only loves meat because of her class, okay? It was out of her control. Yet, Muku bullies her because of it. So unfair! Whether Layla would agree with Audrey's thoughts on only liking meat because of her class. That's unknown.

"Well... I don't think I have to worry about dying alone with you here. And don't even think about getting away from me. In this like and every other. You'll always be mine! Anyway, let me take care of that so we can get you healed up," Muku spoke jokingly at the start. Then got serious when his gaze fell on the boar.

He was still a newly ascended R3. The boar seemed to be a fairly seasoned R3, so he wasn't certain how he would match up against it. Especially after Iris told him about the importance of domains in battles between R3s.

If the boar's domain was a lot better than his. His domain would get overpowered, rendering his element unusable.

"Mmm", Audrey made a slight sound in reply as Muku flew off the platform.

He didn't notice how embarrassed she looked. The lady lost her head when he said, "You'll always be mine" Steam was practically coming out of her head. She didn't even hear clearly what he said after that.

A stupidly happy smile had appeared on her face. Which would have frozen Muku in his tracks had he looked.

Unfortunately for him, he had to face the boar. And Iris' words had rung true. His domain was instantly defeated by the lone boar's.

It seemed his domain only seemed special before because there was no other domain acting upon it. Of course, after he gets stronger and master's it. He'll definitely have a domain stronger than most.

Anyway, his luck was terrible. He met a cautious boar. The beast instantly deployed its domain the moment it saw him.

The domain covered close to half a kilometre. So, even Audrey was enveloped by it. However, as someone who was at the very edge and wasn't participating. It didn't affect her too much.

As for Muku, he couldn't form any of his metal element spells. This made the battle a bit more dangerous.

Luckily, the boar had no element like the ones they encountered before. So, its domain only had the effect of element suppression on its opponents.

"Okay, big guy. You don't want me to use my element, it seems. I could still use my telekinesis, which is still usable for whatever reason. However, I want to show off a bit to my girl. So, let's brawl!" Muku spoke hot-bloodedly to the boar.

The 15 metre tall creature gazed annoyedly at the little human that was bothering it. The little creature could barely cover the gap in-between its teeth, yet it dared come to bother it?

The human deserved death!...

Chapter 195: Fighting the Lone Boar...

"Oooink!" The pi...boar oinked madly, then charged at Muku.

It wanted to crush the little human as quickly as possible, then return to its business.

"This is going to be fun... Hahhh!" Muku spoke, then charged forward as well.

He wasn't going to wait for it to arrive. It was a lot more fun to clash in the middle.

BANG!

A loud bang sound was heard when the two parties collided. The boar's large head should have been able to slam Muku into the afterlife.

Surprisingly, such a scene didn't occur. A comical scene occurred instead. Muku actually managed to hold back the boar without even being pushed back.

It was quite comical since he wasn't even as large as the boar's head. He couldn't even properly reach the creature's knees. Yet he managed to stop it.

The scene looked quite dashing to Audrey. She practically had stars in her eyes as she looked on. Muku, who managed to steal a glance at her, was happy. It seemed his plan was working.

He was almost regretting having to kill the boar. Such a good wingman even when it wasn't even trying to be. However, it tasted too good and Audrey came first anyway.

"Haaaah!" Muku pushed himself further. He started screaming as he pushed the boar backwards.

Which shocked the boar a lot. The creature's anger had already decreased a lot when he managed to stop it. However, pushing it back was something else.

If it were one of the rare intelligent R3s, it would have definitely turned around and fled. For it was clearly outmatched.

Unfortunately for the boar, it wasn't that smart. After being pushed back a bit. The boar's anger was reignited.

"Ooink!" The boar oinked angrily again. Energy began gathering in its mouth.

"Woah! I thought we were doing it physically only?!" Muku exclaimed while flying up.

Which he had to do instantly. After all, the boar was about to...

Booom!

Release a non-elemental breath attack! He barely made it in time before the attack hit. In normal cases, he could probably tank it.

However, that's not something he could do with a domain-charged attack. Especially when he couldn't use his metal element. His telekinesis alone would be too risky. The attacks of R3s weren't a joke after all.

The boar didn't even charge up the attack for long. Yet it left a hole almost as big as the boar on place the attack hit. Which forced one to think about how deadly a full-power attack would be.

Muku gulped down some saliva as he looked on from above. He realised that the situation wasn't as relaxed as he thought it was.

He needed to be a lot more serious with the boar. Lest he accidentally loses his life to it.

The moment his state of mind changed. Even the air around him changed. He was trying to fight back against the boar's domain with his own metal domain.

Of course, he lost completely. Not even managing to make the boar's domain ripple. However, his domain improved a little from the experience.

Which allowed him to deploy it around his arm. It was around a metre and a half long, with a width of around fifteen centimetres.

Compared to the boar's half a kilometre. He should be too embarrassed to even show it in front of Audrey. But...

"This is enough..." Muku spoke to himself softly. As his words fell. A single blade that completely filled up his trash domain appeared on his right hand.

It might be big in human standards. However, to the boar, it was no better than a toothpick if it knew about those. For that reason, it didn't take notice of the little blade.

Unlike normal boars found on the planet. The beast boar could actually look up. So, it had been sending one breath attack after the other toward Muku while he was trying to stabilise his domain.

If Muku was still a newbie who associated beasts with the creatures they resembled too much. He would have definitely gotten hit.

Luckily for him, he wasn't one of those unlucky souls. Many had actually lost their lives because of that very reason of assuming something based on their old knowledge. Like a dude who saw a beast that looked like a giant cow with spikes on its back.

He assumed that it was safe to pass by it, as long as he didn't bother it since it didn't eat meat. However, he was wrong. The creature had actually never eaten plants a day in its life.

When it opened its mouth as it roared at him. He was met with the sight of a mouth full of razor-sharp teeth that were well acquainted with meat. Like they soon became acquainted with his meat.

Fortunately, he didn't die... For no reason. Some of his comrades who survived the spiked cow learned from the experience. "Never use your planet's common sense on alien beasts!" Hell, even normal cows eat meat sometimes.

Anyway, after creating the sword, Muku gave up on the idea of brawling it out. After all, the boar wasn't playing fair at all.

Where was it getting the mana it was using for breath attacks anyway? Aren't such moves supposed to be used like once or twice, and that's it?!

Muku quickly figured out how it was doing it, though. The boar was getting powered by its domain! To think a domain could be used as a better source!

Jade, who was looking on from a distance, felt extremely jealous of the boar. After all, she could only use her breath attack three times at best before she ran out of power. Of course, that's when she uses the stronger versions of it. The weaker versions wouldn't even be able to tickle an equally ranked opponent after all.

However, the boar was using the very weak attacks she disdained. And the attacks were as strong AF! How could she not be jealous?

She had been feeling too lazy to work on her domain seriously. However, after seeing the boar. She was instantly motivated. It would be the first thing she focuses on when she gets back. Maybe with a good domain, she can beat Muku up for a change, instead of always getting beaten up...

Muku started circling the boar while dodging its attacks. He'd slice at its neck whenever he got the chance. With the size difference between the weapon and the target. It seemed quite pointless.

The boar didn't even feel pain or bleed. So it basically ignored the attacks. It continued firing at him nonstop.

After a while, its domain began fading. Which was the drawback of domains. They drained one's mental energy. No matter the rank. No one has been able to use them indefinitely, nonstop.

Which is a good thing because some creatures practically become immortal when they deploy their domain.

Of course, such creatures are usually bullshitly strong anyway. So, they might not even need to use their domains. Or you won't be able to last until their domain time runs out, as they have absurd levels of mental energy.

So, whether burning through mental energy is a drawback or not. It's subjective. Fortunately for Muku, the boar might have been a beast, but it wasn't anywhere near being anything like those creatures...

Muku made his move when the beast's domain finally faded into nothingness.

"I've let you have your fun while I trained my domain... I guess it's time we end this..." Muku spoke.

Snap!

Then he snapped his fingers like a certain purple legend who shaved with a rake. The moment he did. The boar felt a sudden pain in its neck.

It tried to roar, but no voice came out. Before it could do anything else. Its giant head fell to the ground. Landing in a giant metal dish, Muku created below it. The boar's body also had its own dish that it fell into. The blood that was gushing out was also collected by another dish... It was rather a dish-filled sight.

The battle was a success. Not only did he get some meat and blood for Audrey. He also got to train his domain for a bit. It was no longer as flimsy as before.

While he could only deploy it a few metres around himself under the boar's domain suppression. It was already a massive improvement.

He proceeded to take a small bowl of blood to Audrey. Which felt rather weird and quite cult-like to him. However, it was the apocalypse and his woman was a vampire, so... It was acceptable, right?

Audrey accepted the bowl with a smile but frowned a bit while looking at it in her hands. She might never get used to finding blood appealing. It was a weird feeling she didn't like. Unfortunately, it was already a done deal, she closed her eyes and gulped the blood down.

She didn't want to taste it, but she wasn't quick enough. So, she did, and it tasted great. She ignored the taste and focused on the healing process she could clearly feel in her body.

A worry of hers was put to rest. She was worried that her healing would return her to her virgin state. Which would mean she'd have to constantly feel that pain every time they... Anyway, it wasn't so. It seemed, once one's virginity was gone. It was gone for good, no matter what..

"Thank you for..." Audrey was thanking Muku for being so attentive. When she was interrupted by a voice which made everyone's hearts almost jump out of their chests...

[Mana has reached a sufficient level. World Evolution will commence in 24 hours]

Chapter 196: Detailed ice sculpture?

"Oh, shih!" Muku cursed out.

Which was something he rarely did. When he did do it, however, something significant would be happening. The world's second evolution was definitely worth it.

They had barely reached rank 3 and now even stronger beasts were going to show up?! They really couldn't catch a break, could they?

Fortunately, everyone had a little more time to prepare compared to before. This didn't change the fact that they were all still screwed though.

PR3 beasts could pretty much dominate wherever they went in the current world. Humans could not do anything about it. Which had caused a lot of deaths in the past.

Iris had mentioned how R4s are in a completely different league compared to R3s. The gap in ranks will keep on increasing the higher in rank one goes. So, even miracles might be off the table. A toddler cannot defeat an adult no matter what.

The happiness Muku felt about the boar instantly faded away. How could he be happy when creatures he couldn't even resist against, will show up in twenty-four hours?

It might have initially been the same with R3s and such. However, the feeling never got better no matter how many times he had gone through it. No one likes knowing that they are practically an ant after all.

"We should hurry back and prepare" Audrey spoke after a moment of silence. She had also been processing the situation.

For such a thing to occur just when things were starting to look up for them. It felt rather unfair to her... Then again, life was a bih anyway. You either adapt or it will eat you up and only leave bones behind. She chose to adapt like they always do.

"Yeah, you're right. Jade, come. We need to return quickly" Muku acknowledged Audrey's suggestion then called Jade out softly while looking in the direction she was in.

Jade instantly felt a chill go down her spine. She realised from the way he spoke that he had been aware of her presence for a while at least. As for how long. She didn't know...

"If you keep on hiding then we're leaving you behind" Muku spoke after seeing no movement from Jade.

"No! I'm coming!" Jade who had stayed still hoping that he was just bluffing called out as she ran forward.

Of course, she was too far away for Muku to hear her. However, he could see her waving in the long grass as she ran toward them.

He sighed in fatigue. He was wondering why the girl always lived up to what you'd expect from her while also being unpredictable at the same time. It had to be some kind of gift right?

"H... How did you know that I was there? I'm certain I hid my presence well. There wasn't any form of intent as well" Jade asked the moment she reached them.

"Did you know that even an average person who isn't even an Evolver can sense when they are being watched?... Anyway, now is not the time for that. Let's go back home. You can tell me everything there" Muku spoke in a dismissive voice.

Jade just nodded quietly with a sad expression on her face. The issue of her selling him out to Emily hadn't yet been dealt with. Yet, there she was creating another issue for herself.

For those reasons, she didn't argue. She listened to a did whatever he said in hopes of reducing the punishment. Whether it worked, it was something for the future. There were more pressing issues to take care of.

The trio then packed the boar up then blitzed back to the base. While they still had close to a day to prepare. Every second counted toward their preparation. So, moving faster was for the best.

In a little time. The trio had reached the mansion. What met them was the sight of a newly ascended R3 Layla standing in front of a very detailed ice sculpture. She stood outside the gate.

Which was odd. If she wanted to do something like that as a way of celebrating. Couldn't she do it in their yard?

It was only when they got closer that they realised that it wasn't an ice sculpture. It was actually a human. One who had been frozen ice-white by Layla.

"What's going on here?" Muku asked curiously. There was an important issue to discuss but that can come later.

"Nothing much, this idiot seems to have an ability that messes with one's mind in some way. He tried to use it on me after coming here. I sensed it instantly. While I didn't feel any danger from it. I figured it was better to be safe than sorry. So, I froze him" Layla who was a lot more willing to talk in the last few days explained.

She seemed even more chatty that day though. Which was probably happiness from reaching R3. The girl really didn't like being left behind after all.

"Can I try putting that into my Shadow Pocket? The space I have has increased by quite a bit. Maybe it can fit..." Layla continued after explaining.

It seemed the poor fellow she froze wasn't worth her talking more about him. Which was rather sad for him.

"Sure, go ahead and try. And congrats on ranking up." Muku replied while bringing the boar closer to her. He also didn't care much about the frozen fellow it seemed.

"Hey! Can we focus on the frozen man first? Is he dead?!" Audrey exclaimed. Ever the voice of reason.

"Oh, right! Almost forgot about him. Is he really dead?" Muku asked in a nonchalant voice.

"Close to it, but no. His totem must be a cockroach or something" Layla replied. Subtly making a joke.

"Hehe, Hey! Where are your manners?! How can you say that in front of me?" Audrey giggled a bit before reprimanding her daughter. One must always have respect for human life afterwards.

"Right. Sorry for that. I think I've been around Jade too much recently" Layla spoke, randomly dragging Jade into the matter.

"Yeah, you're right. Jade really does have some issues" Audrey replied while nodding her head in agreement.

"What did I do?!" Jade exclaimed in surprise. She had just been standing there innocently. Yet, she ended up getting dissed.

"Hehe, sorry about that. Anyway, can you unfreeze him"? Audrey apologised for the little joke then they moved on to something more serious.

The joking was to lighten up the mood a bit. Everyone seemed a little gloomy. So, Layla took it upon herself to make them feel a bit better. Which worked wonders for them.

Layla did as she was and unfroze the man. Soon after, a man shivering like crazy while clutching his body closely stood.

It was surprisingly Abel! The same Abel from NL Base and the one who sent the spy from before.

To think he'd actually turn up on his own. Especially when it hadn't even been that long since Muku took the spy back to the base.

What was his purpose there?

"Mr Abel? What are you doing here?!" Muku asked, a surprised look on his face.

He was also genuinely surprised. Abel gave him the idea that he was a snake that would always lie in the background. Never showing its face as it manipulated the actions of others. So, for the snak... Abel to show up like that. It definitely was a surprise.

"H... He... He...llo. P...please d...on't misunderstand me. I'm not here to seek trouble. I came to apologise for overzealous behaviour when I sent a spy to monitor you. Which I accept full responsibility for. I wanted to make friends with you so much that it clouded my mind. I thought it would be easier to do if I had some information on you. Which was wrong. For that reason, I deserved to be frozen. I just hope we can still be friends though." Abel replied.

His voice was shaky at the beginning as he tried to shake off the cold feeling he felt. Which he managed to do after a little bit of mana circulation. His control and technique when it came to mana impressed everyone present. It also showed that Abel was a strong and skilled individual.

While his mana intensity was that of a Psuedo-R3, Muku and the girls could tell that there was definitely something underneath. They didn't know what that was though. It wasn't really any of their business so they weren't too interested in what he was hiding. Their reaction to the discovery was to increase their guard a little bit more around him.

Which Abel sensed. Making him narrow his eyes for a split second before they returned to normal. He thought it was too brief to notice. However, everyone noticed it. They just didn't care enough to react. They could already tell that he was a snake after all.

Another thing about Abel was his non-elemental mana. Remembering the words Layla said about him trying out some weird mind-targeting ability on her. The others instantly realised that his power was likely linked to the mine like Muku's Telekinesis.

They weren't too moved, however. After all, they didn't sense any threat to him and could take him out easily enough if they wanted to.

"Oh, is that so?" Let's go inside and talk" Muku replied while gesturing toward the gate behind them.

"Sure..." Abel spoke while smiling happily.

It seemed his plan was working out. They'll probably be calling him "best friend" after he is done with them.

Chapter 197: Abel's ability

"Well... What a nice home you have here. Though this isn't what I was expecting when you said, inside" Abel spoke with a strained smile on his face.

He was fuming inside. The "inside" Muku was talking about turned out to be the freaking backyard! On top of that, he didn't even offer him a seat. So, he, a visitor had to sit on the freaking lawn!

The only thing that was holding him back from exploding, was his plan. Speaking of which. It seemed he had to try a bit harder than usual with them.

Muku's group had to be pretty capable for them to be able to kill such an imposing-looking beast. Speaking of which, he hadn't been able to see how they transported it since he was frozen at the time. Which was something he was very curious about.

Well, everything should work out for him eventually. To that end, he subtly increased his spell output.

The thing about Abel was that he had one of the most unique and dangerous abilities out there. That was mind control! While the ability didn't have much growth potential, it was still very deadly. After all, its few capabilities were all one could ever need to dominate the world if the right conditions were met.

His class was called "The Puppeteer". It was just one level below Pseudo-Legendary classes. Which showed how powerful it was.

He could almost instantly take control of anyone weaker than him no matter their class. Of course, there were some exceptions like in everything else. He could possibly take control of those stronger than him if he could weaken their mental state first.

He can program a person's mind to make them think they are operating on their own free will. When in fact they are completely under his control. As long as he gains control of your mind. It's almost impossible to escape, no matter how far you go.

The way he did it was through one spell... Controlling haze. He was a rare existence that only had one spell in their arsenal. However, that spell kept on getting stronger and stronger. So, he didn't hate it at all. It was the best ability he could ever wish for.

When he activates the spell. Transparent energy is released from his body into the surrounding area. The more one is exposed to it. The higher the chance of being controlled increases.

It was not something that could be viewed as being harmful. For that reason, almost no one's danger sense picks it up before it's too late.

He had tried it with Layla when he arrived. However, the girl was so in touch with her state of mind that she noticed it instantly. He was frozen before he realised what was going on.

He was really starting to think that he was going to die there unless he made a move and exposed himself. Which would have ruined the plan. Fortunately for him, Muku arrived before that happened.

While he had to review himself a bit while he explained. He still felt the situation was still in order. Unlike the mistake with Layla from before. He was a lot more careful not to be discovered this time around.

Which seemed to be working by how no one had made a move against him. Which was why he could bear the obvious contempt he was facing from Muku's group.

It was so obvious it was laughable. How could Muku say he could only create enough seats for four people with his poor control? Which he, Audrey, Layla and Jade occupied. Leaving him to sit on the lawn.

He was a freaking R3! How the hell wasn't he able to create one more seat?! He could also create solid objects that didn't need a constant mana supply from him the moment he reached R2! Even if they weren't friends or anything like that. They weren't enemies either, so wtf was up with that treatment.

The more Abel thought about it. The more he cursed in his mind. He couldn't wait to gain control of them all and then rape the girls while Muku watched. He already had a plan. He would keep Muku's mind state clear but order him not to move. Then he will ravage the girls while he watches in tears.

It wouldn't be the first time he would be doing something like that after all. The thought of it made him feel so excited that he could easily take the horrible treatment.

"Sorry for that. The mansion is so dirty I'm embarrassed to let anyone inside. Maybe another time. Anyway, what did you want to talk about again"? Muku replied perfunctorily and then moved on to the purpose of their meeting.

"Right, I can see that you're eager to deal with other things. So I'll make it brief. The reason why I'm here is because I want us to be friends, as I stated before. As you know, it's really hard to survive in the current world without the help of us. For that reason, I'm always looking for anyone strong to become friends with. That way, with each other's assistance. We can both be a lot more assured of our collective safety. We can start by forming an alliance first then see where that leads... So, what do you think?" Abel spoke the words he had spoken an unknown number of times before.

A confident smile was on his face. He was certain that they would agree. After all, no one had refused him before. No matter how much they disliked him. His words made a lot of sense after all. The current world does not allow people to live in a carefree manner. So, making alliances and knowing someone had your back was the closest one could get to living a worry-free life in most people's cases.

Not to mention that Abel's ability makes people more willing to agree with him. Even when they have not been taken over yet. Just the exposure was enough for that.

"Hhm, that sounds quite appealing. It's definitely worth considering. However, I'll have to discuss it with my people first. Can you give me a little more time to think? Anyway, I'm sure you have something to run back to like we have things to do here. I'll show you out. Please greet your leader for me" Muku replied while getting up.

Which prompted Abel to also get up subconsciously. He hadn't been able to speak before Muku was already walking with him out of the mansion.

"Wait, wait! That's it?! We can talk for a little more time, right? Even if it's not about the alliance. We can get to know each other a little better" Abel protested when they were already close to the gate.

That's when he managed to get a word in. Muku could be really pushy if he wanted to be. Abel couldn't afford to leave just yet though. He still hadn't gained control of anyone. He was far from it. The worst part, was that if he left now, the next time he'd have to start from scratch.

Which would be a lot harder without a credible reason to meet like now. After all, Muku's group didn't like him for whatever reason. He was starting to wonder if William said something...

"The days are long Mr Abel. We'll talk someday" Muku spoke as he kept on pushing Abel out.

"Fine... Just know that you have until the day after tomorrow to decide. A situation where you will have to give me a clear answer will appear then" Abel spoke a little more before he was completely pushed out through the gate.

He also couldn't take the treatment he was receiving. So, leaving was the only choice at that time, even if it reset his progress. He might explode in anger if he stayed.

"Yeah, sure. We'll talk then. Have a safe journey" Muku replied nonchalantly then slammed the gate in Abel's face.

Abel turned around and walked away with a strained smile on his face. His patience was really getting tested to the max by Muku's actions. Especially when he didn't know why he was being treated like that despite showing his sincerity.

He was wondering why they didn't ask about him trying to get into Layla's head though. Maybe they didn't think that he was a threat because he couldn't do it? Could that also be the reason they disliked him?

Well whatever, if they didn't join him. They will have to face the consequences when the time comes. No one says no to him and lives!.

Abel thought to himself as he walked away...

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In the mansion gate...

Muku kept track of Abel's mana signature for a while until Abel was a significant distance away.

"Phew! That almost got bloody. Now, Jade, what the hell was that? Don't tell me the idiot's constantly attempting to invade our minds was enough to piss you off so much? You know that we can't take the aggressive path without knowing the full story yet right? Not to mention, fighting this close to the mansion is forbidden. Are you so eager to get into more trouble" Muku spoke in relief then began rebuking Jade.

What Abel who mostly focused on Muku and was constantly getting angered didn't notice was Jade's actions. The girl's eyes hadn't left his body the moment he arrived.

It was almost like a switch had been flipped in her head. The way she looked at him was that of a person who had seen their worst enemy they hated with their very soul.

She had been able to control herself initially. However, toward the end, she actually almost lunged at him. Muku had to suppress her with his Telekinesis Domain. Which was undetectable to most, including Abel.

He had to lock Jade in place with it. However, she seemed to be getting crazier and crazier the more she looked at Abel. So Muku had to send Abel away quickly. Like he said, it wasn't time to make enemies with anyone when they weren't clear of what was going on.

He didn't particularly mind being rude to Abel though. After all, the idiot had been trying to invade their minds from the start. Which was really annoying. Who says they want to be friends while trying to get into your mind?

"Sorry about that. I'm not sure what came over me. The moment I saw him and smelled his foul scent. I just felt like attacking him and ripping him apart" Jade replied with her head lowered. There was also some obvious confusion in her tone.

There was only one thing to do after hearing that... Go see Iris-pedia!

Chapter 198 I just confessed...?

Muku and Jade went to see Freya while Layla and Audrey stayed to deal with the boar. It had been left outside the mansion as they had to deal with the Abel matter.

Something odd happened when Muku and Jade reached Freya's door. The girl opened the door after hearing a knock. However, she immediately shut it when she noticed that it was Muku and Jade.

This was of course weird to Muku who couldn't think of a reason why she would do that. Jade on the other hand narrowed her eyes a little bit.

She then told Muku to give her a little privacy with Freya before they spoke to her about the Abel issue. Muku felt a little confused but saw no reason to refuse. So, he let Jade call out to Freya through the door.

She'd say things like "I know, so open up and let's talk about it". Which Muku didn't understand. However, he didn't think about it too much. Maybe it was just girl talk.

Freya opened the door instantly after Jade said those words. She then pulled the Jade into the room before shutting it back up in Muku's face. Muku felt that it was rather rude, but didn't say anything. He just stood by patiently.

He had to know what was up with Jade. He had a hunch that it might shed a bit more light on what was going on in NL Base.

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Inside Freya's room...

"W... What do you mean you know? I have nothing to hide. So what are you talking about?" Freya asked Jade with a nervous and panicked expression on her face.

She grabbed Jade very tightly as she did so. If Jade was someone weak, she might have been seriously injured by what Freya was doing.

"..." Jade just looked at her without saying anything.

"Come on! Say something!" Freya panicked even more. To the point that she began shaking Jade all over the place.

"Huh?... I'm making it obvious that I have something to hide?... What do you mean by I must confess to reduce the embarrassment?! Of course, you don't know about it. Why should you know about everything that goes on in my life?!" Jade silently looked on as Freya spoke to herself like a crazy person.

Of course, it was because she knew that Freya was talking to Iris. It was also rather funny to see someone looking so guilty and then confessing without even noticing that they were doing so. She found Freya cute at that moment. Maybe that's why Emily liked her so much.

"What?... I just confessed without noticing it?! You! It's your fault! What if she was buying it before you got involved?!... Ahh! It's you who's making it worse for me. I don't have to deal with you right now. Bye!" Freya continued digging her grave deeper until she made the right decision to cut Iris off.

Unfortunately, it was a little too late. She then looked into Jade's eyes awkwardly. Her face reddened immediately from embarrassment. She then slowly let go of Jade and looked down with her eyes closed.

Her cute actions almost made Jade pinch her cheeks. How could an older girl have such childish charm?!

"...Just to be clear. I wasn't buying it. I already knew for certain after all. Though, you could have possibly denied it before. However, that's out of the question now..." Jade finally spoke after a moment of silence.

Hearing her words, Freya's blush got more intense. She was cursing Iris in her mind. Only if she didn't suddenly get involved. She was considering cutting her off from her memories for a week as punishment. She was supposed to be her helpful fairy. Yet she only helped in digging her grave deeper. What kind of fairy was that?!

"I only watched by mistake I swear! I didn't even look at them for long! Please don't tell anyone" Freya immediately blurted out pitifully as she got on the ground begging.

"Oh? So you not only spied on me and Muku but also on him and Audrey? You're a lot more daring than I thought huh? Freya?" Jade spoke while feigning surprise. She has already figured out that Freya knew a lot more than she thought from how she reacted to seeing Muku.

If it was just about seeing the time when Jade stole a kiss. Freya wouldn't have reacted so intensely to Muku who was a victim in the matter. Her reaction was of someone who saw more... A lot more. She confirmed herself without being asked.

Hearing Jade's words Freya's expression froze. She finally realised that Iris wasn't needed when it came to digging a grave for herself. She alone was enough...

"Don't take it so seriously. I won't tell anyone. I don't even want anything in return. Just do something about your weird peeping habit. Also, can you not be so obvious with it? In fact, can you give Iris control for a bit? We have something to talk to her about. You can also avoid Muku for a bit longer as you get yourself together" Jade continued after seeing that Freya was close to a meltdown.

She didn't have any interest in blackmailing Freya or anyone else for that matter. She just wasn't that type of person... Unless it was Muku she had to blackmail. It was his fault for being so dishonest...

"... Okay. Sure. Thank you for not making it hard on me. And I swear it really was a mistake... At first. Anyway, I promise to never do it again" Freya spoke with renewed life in her eyes.

She didn't expect Jade to be so nice. She was ready to face whatever twisted punishment Jade had for her to buy her silence. As for why she thought the worst of Jade? Well, Jade kinda gave off mean-girl vibes, which scared her a little. However, it seemed you really can't judge a book by its cover... Or its poorly thought of name. Cough, cough.

Since Jade was so nice, Freya didn't have any resistance to giving control to Iris. It also helped her avoid Muku like Jade said. As for the topic they wanted to talk about, she'd find out soon anyway. So, without further ado, Freya switched places with Iris.

"Huh?" Iris made a confused sound. Which was understandable since Freya didn't speak to her first before the switch. She had also been cut off so she couldn't see what was happening outside.

The brat was really taking advantage of the superior position she had in their relationship. She'd just do whatever she wanted, whenever she wanted. At least she kept to her part of the deal, so, Iris could endure it with gritted teeth.

"Hey, we have something to talk to you about" Jade spoke the moment she noticed the switch. Along with the air around her, Freya's eyes would change a little bit when Iris was in charge. Which was pretty significant to Jade's super senses.

Without waiting for Iris to respond. Jade went to open the door and called Muku inside.

...

A while later...

"Hmm... So she felt like attacking him the moment she saw him? She also feels a high level of unwillingness to go to that base?" Iris spoke.

She didn't take long to adapt. And like before, she asked for a future favour for her help. Which was credited to Jade this time around. Then she listened to what the duo had to say.

"Yes... Is there anything you can think of from that?" Muku asked expectantly.

"Hmm, beast girl, let me see your aura again" Iris didn't reply to Muku's question but asked Jade to release a bit of her Beast Aura.

"O...Kay?" Jade felt a little confused but did as she was told nonetheless.

Her body was instantly enveloped by her beast aura which had gotten thicker when she got to R3. One could easily feel the animalistic vibe that came from the aura.

"Hmm... Oh? Who would have thought... This is rather interesting. Very interesting indeed. The plot just keeps on getting thicker and thicker" Iris held her hand out at Jade's Beast Aura.

She closed her eyes as she felt it with her hand. She even used some of the vocabulary she got from browsing Freya's mind. Which seemed rather funny to Jade and Muku.

Fortunately for Iris, Jade identified her as an ally otherwise Freya's hand might have been lost. Coming into contact with a much higher rank energy than her own was super reckless. Especially an aggressive energy like Beast Aura.

After all, the difference between a R3 and a Psuedo-R2 was way too big. Jade could literally kill Freya by just releasing her Beast Aura without even needing to cast a basic spell.

"So, what's wrong?" Jade who wasn't known for her patience asked. It was also quite annoying having to control her beast aura so that it didn't lash out at Freya.

"Oh, nothing much. Just that you're most likely a descendant of a supposedly extinct once extremely powerful warrior tribe. Also, there's probably a Monarch in that base... So, should I start preparing for our departure now or?" Iris spoke nonchalantly.

However, it was still very obvious that she wanted no part in the NL Base matters. The fairy was literally packing up Freya's clothes like she was really going to leave.

Muku and Jade were speechless. They literally didn't know what to say. The information Iris dumped on them was way too heavy!...

Chapter 199: Jade's heavy background...

The room went quiet for a moment. The only sound that could be heard was that of Iris moving around while packing Freya's clothes. Until...

"Hey, explain what you said! Do you think scaring us is enough?! What ancient tribe? What did they do?! And what about the Monarch? How did you arrive at that conclusion?! Stop packing and talk to us. Freya won't let you leave anyway!" Jade exclaimed at Iris while holding herself back from going up to the lady and shaking her until she answered.

She was starting to think that maybe Freya should ban her from watching series. The once serious and dangerous fairy had turned into someone who was always trying to milk a cliffhanger out of everything!

"Sigh... You're right. I guess if I don't make you all understand how dangerous the situation is. I really will be stuck here and die an unfortunate death..." Iris spoke defeatedly as she stopped packing...

Not that there was much to pack anyway. Freya only had a few clothes she got from the others after all.

"Y... Yeah, explain what you mean" Muku who finally managed to get out of his daze supported the notion.

The news about Jade having some mysterious lineage didn't shock him that much. After all, he also had a weird bloodline. The way it was presented to him through a "reward" seemed rather fishy. However, that wasn't of importance at the moment.

What really shocked him was the possible involvement of a Monarch. They had barely escaped Ares. Now they were in danger of offending another one?! The world must be against them for sure. Most people didn't even know of a threat greater than R2 and R3 beasts. Yet they had to deal with Monarchs!

Also, because of the involvement of Chloe's father, they might not have a choice but to get involved. It was a tricky situation...

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. On the Beast Girl's matter. There was once an extremely powerful tribe that followed a certain being in the past. For that reason, they were enemies of most Monarchs. This was because they helped that being kill a lot of Monarchs. They bathed in the blood of Monarchs to the point that the energy they used changed from mana to Beast Aura. Even their descendants were born with Beast Aura..." Iris speedily told them everything. Taking little breaks in between.

"I suspected such when I saw you at first. However, I never personally came across the tribe's members, so I wasn't certain. Some other people managed to mimic Beast Aura with some secret techniques of their own after all. However, such Beast Aura was nowhere near the level of that tribe. It lacked many key functions, with one being, the natural aggression towards Monarchs. No matter how well hidden the Monarch is, or how weak the tribesman is, they would still be able to find them..." Iris kept on spilling more and more information.

"Your actions before were probably driven by sheer instinct embedded in your genes since you haven't completely mastered your Beast Aura yet. Oh, right! When I felt your Beast Aura, I found out that it was still in its dormant state. As for how to awaken it, I have no idea... Anyway, your dormant Beast Aura, which is already a higher quality than any of the copycats plus your reaction made me conclude that you're somehow part of that tribe..." Iris paused again so that the paragraph didn't become too long.

"Only their tribe would be able to do that. I'm not sure how the hell you exist when they should have been wiped out though... Anyway, from that, there is likely a Monarch there... As for what Monarchs are... I can't get into detail about them. Just know that they are beings you should never mess with. So, listen to me and let's go..." Iris came to the end of her explanation.

She didn't get too much into the matters of the Monarchs. All the ancient beings had sworn to not talk about certain things with people who didn't know. So it was really out of her hands. Just mentioning them to the level she did, was all she could do. Along with information on the being and the tribe. She couldn't tell anyone their names and such...

"Don't worry about the Monarch part. We understand. We're already well acquainted with Ares..." Muku replied while still in thought. He was still trying to make sense of what Iris just said.

Jade was in a much worse state though. There were times when she felt a little alien when she looked around her. She was wondering if that might have been why. That feeling only went away when she saw Muku for the first time. Suddenly, everything made sense. She hadn't thought much about it at the time but maybe...

"What do you mean you know about Monarch... And where the hell did you hear that name from?!" Iris exclaimed in genuine shock.

She tried to figure out how they might have learned about that information. However, she came up with nothing. It should have been impossible for them to know about that being. Yet, there they were, knowing him by name!

"That's not the problem right now. Since we already know about Monarchs. Along with the name of one of them. You should be able to tell us more right? Like, how to free someone from their control if they are under it and stuff like that?" Muku asked for something linked to Chloe's father. He didn't want a case like Mest's where his soul would be devoured and his body occupied.

"Umm, I guess I can tell you more if you already know that much. However, I think you should give up on that idea. Once a Monarch sinks their teeth into someone. That person is done for. They cannot be saved..." Iris who realised that she wouldn't be told anything no matter how she persisted, replied as truthfully as she could.

"Tsk... Useless" Muku spoke while looking at her with disdain.

"Hey! Is that how you treat me after how much I helped you?! You ungrateful and disrespectful brat! Do you know that I'm old enough to be your ancestor?!" Iris instantly lost it.

Not only did Muku not thank her for what she did. He didn't answer her question as well. Now he dared insult her as well?! If she wasn't so weak, she would have fought him to the death. Why was Freya so slow in improving her strength?!

"You're right, I'm sorry for that" Muku apologised on the spot.

"I... Ah... Huh?" Iris was stunned. She didn't expect him to apologise. Her mind stopped working for a moment.

"Anyway, we won't bother you anymore. We are going to digest what you told us. Oh, and thank you for your help..." Muku said more stuff that stunned Iris. He had always been rude to her after all.

After speaking, he grabbed Jade's hand and pulled her out of the room. She just let herself get pulled silently. Her mind was still working through the information she got. She was questioning her whole life even...

"Huh! Wait! You said they were a tribe of such people. Who had their abilities from birth, right?. I got mine from whatever the owner of that voice in our heads is. I can't be the same as them right?" Jade suddenly asked just when they were about to exit through the door.

"Oh, darling... I know this must be hard for you. However, you didn't gain those abilities from Messenger. You already had them in you. In a dormant state. Only those with Random Classes got them from Messenger" Iris replied. She was a lot more calm when talking to Jade. Feeling a lot more in control.

"Oh... Okay..." Jade accepted the answer. She then held Muku's hand tighter subconsciously. Her mind had gotten even more chaotic than before.

Muku felt the stronger grip but didn't say anything. He was certain that she must be thinking about something very significant. However, he didn't ask. She would tell him when she was ready if she felt he should know.

The duo then walked in silence while holding hands until they reached in front of Jade's room. Muku stooped, but Jade didn't as she was lost in thought. Which made her get pulled back suddenly.

"Hhm?" She looked at Muku in confusion and made a questioning sound.

"We're at your room... Why don't you go inside and lie down while you think? You can look for me later if you want to talk. I have to talk to the others about the World Evolution for now" Muku spoke softly while looking into Jade's eyes.

She seemed a lot more delicate and a bit lost at the moment. So, he felt the need to be a little more gentle. Which was the right move since Jade really didn't know what to do.

"Right... I'll do that. Thanks..." Jade spoke softly. She then gave Muku a sudden hug before opening her door and going into her room.

Muku just looked on quietly. He was burning to know what she was thinking about. However, he wouldn't push her to tell him. She already knew that he was there for her. Which was enough.

He then closed his eyes a bit to collect himself. Then he went downstairs. He could sense that the others had already gathered there. Including Freya who went down soon after they left her room.

It was definitely going to be one of their most serious talks. From the World Evolution, NL Base, to Jade's matter and the reappearance of Monarchs. There was also the "Messenger" issue Iris unknowingly revealed...

Chapter 200: Audrey's plan

In the lounge...

"Hello everyone. I'm glad you could make it..." Muku greeted everyone upon arrival.

"Hello. Umm, where's Jade?" Emily asked Muku. She had sensed them at the same location before.

"She won't be joining us right now. I'll tell you the reason why as we go on. I am not privy to all the information though" Muku replied while taking a seat.

"Oh, okay. I'll go check on her after this..." Emily replied. She felt worried for her friend. However, she had to be around for the important talk. Jade was a strong girl anyway, so, it was okay to delay a little.

"Yeah... Layla, what's wrong?" Muku acknowledged Emily's words and then moved on to Layla.

The stoic girl had basically been gazing at him intensely from the moment he arrived. Which was odd since she wasn't like that when they met before. He could sense a hint of anger behind her gaze.

"Hhm? Oh, it's nothing serious. We can talk about it after this. You can proceed with the meeting" Layla replied in her usual tone. If Muku hadn't seen her gaze, he wouldn't have suspected that something was going on.

"O... Kay? Anyway, everyone here heard the voice, right? We'll get to that and decide how we're going to deal with it. However, for now, I have a few things to say first..." Muku put aside Layla's issue for the moment.

He then proceeded to mention the prompt everyone got. Which led to everyone gathering. Chloe had to pause her ranking up process even though she was already close to a breakthrough. The others also stopped what they were doing.

However, Muku put that aside. He felt that the group needed to be on the same page in everything before making decisions about that. So, he proceeded to tell them about the information he got from Iris.

He first started by revealing that there was likely a Monarch behind the scenes of NL Base. Then he mentioned how that information was based on Jade's matter. Which was when he revealed the information on Jade's mystic background.

After that, he finished with the hypothesis which everyone might have already considered. Which was how Chloe's father, William, was probably under the control of the mysterious Monarch. Along with some, if not all of the base's residence. As for Abel's matter, it was briefly mentioned somewhere along the lines. No one really cared about it.

The mood in the room took a dip instantly. While everyone might have realised it. When Muku said it was still very impactful.

The reason why it was a tricky situation was because of William's involvement. If he wasn't there. The choice would have been simple. Pack up and leave. They had enough problems in their lives.

However, he was involved. If they left, it would be abandoning the only living parent of one of their members. Which was not an easy choice by any means. It would haunt them forever. It would likely create a division between them and Chloe as well. So, they were definitely in a tough spot.

"It's okay everyone, there's no need to stress yourselves thinking about it so much. I'm sure he willingly offered himself up to the Monarch. So, he doesn't need saving. No one needs to put their lives in danger for someone who decided to put themselves in that kind of situation" Chloe spoke with a reassuring smile on her face.

They might have bought it if tears weren't coming out of her eyes as she spoke. It was clear to see that she had resolved herself and made a tough decision. She had decided to give up on her father to keep everyone safe. A truly admirable but very painful decision.

"Tsk, so what if there's a Monarch there? I won't be scared off. I've already survived that petty a-hole Ares. So what's one more Monarch? There's no way they are physically here anyway. I can totally take out an avatar" Muku spoke soon after Chloe went quiet.

His words made his stance on the matter clear. He didn't say "we" since he wanted to give everyone the chance to decide for themselves. Though honestly, the fact that he decided to help kinda tied everyone down with him. If they didn't help they'd seem like shitty teammates.

It wasn't necessary to manipulate them like that though. After all, he knew them all well enough.

"I'll also join you. I refuse to be bullied by aliens!" Audrey spoke soon after Muku.

"I wonder if the Monarch can resist my poison" Hope also joined in.

"Put him in front of me, and I'll burn him away" Emily confirmed her participation as well.

"Anything for my little sister" Layla chimed in.

Elsa then joined in followed by Freya who had to tune out the protesting Iris. Iris felt like she wasted her time when she told them about the Monarchs.

Instead of demotivating them, they became even more fired up. How crazy was that? Is it what humans mean when they say ignorance is bliss?

That has to be it. If they knew the terror of Monarchs. There was no way they would have been so eager to get involved.

"You guys... Thank you. I really appreciate it. However, I refuse to go along with it unless someone comes up with a plan that keeps everyone safe" Chloe spoke emotionally.

She was moved by their willingness to help despite how dangerous the situation was. Though, she wouldn't put them in obvious danger just because they were willing.

"Do you have any ideas then?" Muku asked her. All he could think of was storming in through the front gate.

He had noticed that the stronger he got. The less willing he was to use his brain. It seemed way easier and quicker to just brute force your way to a desired outcome... Should be considered staying away from Jade for a while? She was probably the one influencing him to be like that.

"No, but... I'll stand by my words. No plan no action" Chloe replied. She wasn't in the right state of mind to make a plan. However, she still wouldn't change her bottom line.

"I might have a plan..." Audrey suddenly chimed in.

If it was the old days, she would have likely kept her thoughts to herself and let the others contribute. Which was because she had a slight inferiority complex at the time.

However, that changed after her time with Muku. It made her feel sufficient. Which she didn't feel like before despite hiding it well. So, she was more willing to be heard and contribute.

Which the others noticed. They also felt like there was something different about her. She also seemed a lot more beautiful as well.

No one disliked the change though. Just that a slightly sour look flashed on Emily's face. It was just a lingering emotion that was significant.

Layla was the happiest of all despite her facial expression not changing. What Audrey didn't know was that her daughter was constantly observing her. So, she's always the first to know when there's something different about Audrey.

Her lack of experience made her unable to understand most of what was going on with Audrey. However, she could still tell that Audrey seemed a lot better than day compared to how she had ever been before.

Layla's eyes then trailed to Muku. She narrowed them a bit before returning back to normal. There was a slightly conflicted look in her eyes.

"Sure, what is it?" Muku asked expectantly. He had always wanted Audrey to participate more in their meetings. So, seeing her finally doing so, made him happy.

"Muk... I mean, our leader here has a domain that can make one invisible right? Why don't we use it to sneak into the base? Blindside Chloe's father, knock him out and kidnap him? We can keep him unconscious until we figure out a way to free him from the Monarch's control... It's not perfect. But it's all I have" Audrey pitched everyone her plan.

After she finished speaking. No one said anything. The whole room was deathly quiet as they just stared at her. Which made her feel very self-conscious. She couldn't help but blush. Maybe her plan was really as dark as she thought it was in her head.

"... Audrey..." Muku finally spoke after a while. He only said Audrey's name then stopped.

"Yes?..." Audrey replied nervously. She didn't know what he was going to say next. Maybe he hated it so much that he was speechless.

"Your plan... That's the best plan I've ever heard! Hahaha, I didn't know you could also think like that. Boy was I wrong about you all this time! Hahaha" Muku started out low then exclaimed out loud. Expressing his agreement with the plan.

"Hey! What do you mean by that?! Are you indirectly cursing me?!" As Audrey exclaimed in protest. She felt like she lost face in front of everyone for coming up with the plan. Especially with Muku's exaggerated reaction.

"No, your plan is not bad. I also like it. I don't think there's a safer plan than that. We don't have to risk much as long as we're careful" Chloe spoke before Muku could.

Audrey's plan was the exact plan she was waiting for. If they executed it perfectly. Then everything would be okay. They wouldn't even need to fight.

"Really?" Audrey asked suspiciously. She was wondering if they were just being nice.

"Definitely!" Chloe replied.

After that, everyone expressed their agreement. They then moved on to figuring out how it was going to be executed.