

## **Few Wives 401**

Chapter 401: John's time to shine...

Nine racers bolted off in their fastest swimming speeds. Water created mini waves behind them like there were m

However, one remained behind, watching the rest go with a grin on his face.

"What's John doing?!"

"Maybe he expected a gunshot to start the race"

"I don't think he's that dumb. Just look at that creepy smile"

"How certain are we that John wasn't a serial killer before the apocalypse?"

"What are you talking about? You literally grew up with him!"

"Yeah, so? When has that ever stopped people from being serial killers?"

"... True. But you're a terrible friend"

"Come on. Everyone knows that best friends are terrible friends. I'm just doing exactly what I should be doing"

"Everyone shut up. Look! He's finally doing something..."

"TIDAL WAVE!" John shouted out a spell name just as someone announced that he was doing something...

A wave rose in front of the nine who had gone ahead of him.

Before they knew it, they were getting pushed back as they fought against it.

As they did that. A smaller wave rose behind John, propelling him forward.

"Later losers!" John shouted as he passed his struggling opponents...

"Can he do that?"

"Well, he's not harming them. And it's a relatively minor spell so..."

"Well damn! I hope I don't face him and his Aqua Soldier class..."

"Me too"....

Soon enough, the race ended. As expected John won. The others had tried to fight back. But their abilities just didn't stand a chance against a water mage in water. Especially when the spells couldn't be lethal.

A few more rounds came. Then a few more...

Muku and Klaus enjoyed everything with stars in their eyes while laughing together when someone used a clever spell.

Soon enough, the semi-final came.

It was made up of John, a few other water elementalists, a plant elementalist and Scarlett. All together they were 8 in number.

They could have been nine but Chris the party pooper refused to participate.

His reasoning was that as a Barrier Master. His intent when creating a barrier was to make it unbreakable. And the only person in the group who could break his barrier in the group was Klaus. So if he used his barriers, the others wouldn't be able to do anything.

As for creating weak barriers? That was out of the question! He wouldn't disrespect his craft like that! If the barrier is to be broken, then it must be broken because the person is worthy!

Scarlett tried to convince him by telling him that he could cancel the spells himself when he's far enough but he refused that too. And so, he sat beside Klaus who was completely ignoring him as he had fun with Muku.

The semi-final was the most entertaining one yet. For obvious reasons. After all, it was made up of the best.

The action was explosive from the get-go.

John unleashed his "tidal wave" from the get-go. And it was twice as strong as the first time he used it.

Yet, it didn't take seconds for it to be neutralised by the others.

Like him, the others also used the spells that had got them wins before and they were all cancelled out.

Ten minutes into the race, the racers hadn't even reached the halfway point.

"Sigh. I guess I have to use my trump card right here if I want to be in the final" John spoke to himself then...

"Whirlpool!" He shouted.

A huge whirlpool appeared behind everyone and began pulling them back.

They all tried with all their might but they couldn't swim forward.

John was also struggling since he was personally controlling the intensity of the whirlpool instead of letting it loose. After all, it was only supposed to be an obstacle and not an attack. Which it could easily become if he didn't control it well.

"Hehe. Seems this brother and I had the same plan... Well, why don't we cooperate and see what happens then..." Scarlett spoke with her signature seductive voice then...

"Whirlpool!" She cast a spell similar to John's.

Just that hers was a wind spell cast underwater.

It was then combined with John's spell and made it even more powerful. So much so John stopped trying to proceed altogether just to keep it from getting out of control.

Hell, now he was trying to cancel it. But with Scarlett's mana mixed in, it wasn't so easy anymore.

The other water elemental decided to create their own whirlpool in the opposite direction.

This was a genius plan since the pull from John's whirlpool was no longer as strong and they could proceed forward.

Scarlett and the plant elemental quietly followed along leaving John alone to soothe the raging monster on his own.

And John could only cry about it as they left. After all, if he stopped, getting away was impossible....

Fortunately for him, he managed to cancel the spell after a while. However, at that point, the others were already returning...

At that point, he could choose to disrupt them again or focus on himself.

For once, he chose to focus on himself and not play tricks. Which was understandable after the major failure of the last race.

However....

"VINE GARDEN..." A loud feminine voice was heard.

And before John could get anywhere, he was pulled back.

He released a water blade and cut what was dragging him back into two...

However, before he could proceed. Another one grabbed his legs.

This kept on happening until he took a look at what was below the water. And what he found shook him to the core...

Everywhere he looked were green vines just barely before the water level.

And he wasn't the only one struggling with them. The others were going through the same...

They cut and cut, but the vines kept on coming...

While they did that, the plant elemental lady pulled away.

"I've had enough of this!" Scarlett shouted after being troubled by the vines for close to a minute.

Wind surrounded her and separated her from the water then...

BOOOOM!

She cleanly sliced through the water heading for the finish line...

The wind around her rotated so quickly it cut the vines before they could even get close...

"Umm, is that allowed?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, she is technically not swimming at this point..."

"As long as she's still in the water. Then it's okay!" Klaus replied to the randos speaking in the background for the first time.

"Thanks for defending her. She wasn't sure if people would be okay with this, which is why she didn't use it before..." Chris thanked Klaus for defending his wife.

"She's my sister in-law, so of course I'd defend her. But there was nothing to defend hear. Nobody said it was strictly swimming... As long as you're travelling in the lake, then it's okay. Right friends?..." Klaus replied.

"Yeah. It would be too boring otherwise after all" Muku replied merrily.

"Whatever stinky man. All I care about is racing the best..." Raya replied after him.

"Great. See there aren't any problems here..." Klaus said to Chris.

"I'm joining the next race then..." Chris replied.

"The more the merrier..." Klaus replied. His eyes didn't move from the race though.

After all, it was about to come to an end. And interestingly enough, it was the two non-water elementalists who were leading.

Scarlett was about to catch the plant elementalist lady.

But the lady wasn't going to lose without a fight.

Huge vines rose and blocked Scarlett's path.

They waved from side to side in a line trying to confuse Scarlett...

But it didn't work. That's because...

BOOOOM!

Scarlett was in a bulldozing mood. And so, she bulldozed right through without caring to avoid the vines.

This startled the vine elementalist enough to the point of giving up on trying to get in Scarlett's way. She was close to winning. So it was best to just focus on winning the race since she was almost there...

"Scarlett!"

"Genevieve!"

"Scarlett!"

"Genevieve!"

"Scarlett!"

"Genevieve!"

"Scarlett!"

"Genevieve!"...

The names of the two leading ladies were getting called by the spectators as they approached the finishing line...

Then...

It was over...

"Wait... Who won?"

"I think it was Scarlett"

"No, it wasn't. It was clearly Genevieve"

"No, it was Scarlett!"

"Genevieve!"

"Everyone shut up!... Let experts judge" Klaus intervened just when the situation was about to take a turn for the worse.

He himself had seen everything clearly but he figured it was better to have the two who didn't have any ties to anyone judge.

"Well, if you don't mind me calling it then I will. It was a draw. I can see why you all saw things differently though... The chaos from their actions made the scene quite chaotic and difficult to see clearly for most. But I can assure you all. It was a draw" Muku spoke as clearly as he could.

"Oh, so it really was a draw huh" Klaus spoke after him.

"Well. I guess a draw isn't bad"

"Yeah. And besides. This isn't the final anyway..."

And just like that. The semi-final was settled... Since only numbers 1 and 2 were advancing. Scarlett and Genevieve were the two who were proceeding to the final with Klaus, Chris and Raya...

It was definitely going to be a fun race...

Chapter 402: Finals

A while later...

Scarlett and Genevieve were given enough time to rest then the final race was set up.

The racers took their positions. Raya, Klaus, Chris, Scarlett and Genevieve.

John could only look bitterly from the sidelines thinking that if it weren't for his miscalculation, maybe he would have been in the race too.

Unfortunately, there was nothing which could be done now...

"Okay everyone, since this is the final race. I think it would be better to race four times instead of two. So you'll go and come back, then do it a second time to make it four and finish the race. Does anyone disagree?" Muku suddenly adjusted the race structure from the side.

"No, it's fine. I personally don't mind. It seems fun" Klaus replied first.

"Whatever," Raya replied brattily after that.

The others also agreed.

Gosh, I wish I could participate too. But unfortunately. With my current abilities, winning would have to be brute forced instead of properly swimming with little assistance from my abilities... Oh well. There's always next time" Muku spoke to himself then...

"Three.... Two... One..."

BANG!

He started the race by firing the makeshift gun he had created, which was heavily supported by his Telekinesis and mana to function. So it wasn't really something he could have made for anyone else...

Anyway, the race began properly. No one through a spell at anyone. They still had ample time for that. They unanimously decided to see who was the best pure swimmer among them without relying on tricks in the first swim or two.

Since everyone has calibrated their natural abilities to match their weakest member physically, who was Genevieve. Getting ahead of the others completely relied on technique instead of natural capabilities.

And so, the one with the best technique was soon revealed and it was surprisingly Raya!... Well, it was surprising to Klaus's group.

Muku completely understand it. She had learnt about various swimming techniques from his obscure memories of when he saw swimming competitions(Olympics) on TV a few times.

From then, she had been practising them almost every day.

So it only made sense for her to pull ahead of the others who only knew how to swim in the most basic of ways and hadn't even swum at all in a long time before that day...

Following behind her was another surprising person. It was the quiet plant elemental, Genevieve. This was also understandable actually.

After all, everyone had calibrated themselves to match her strength. Which meant that they didn't feel as natural in their bodies at the moment as much as she did since they were holding back.

Honestly, she would have been first if it weren't for Raya's uncommon situation.

After her was Scarlett then Klaus and Chris who were swimming side by side. The spectators couldn't help but smile wryly. After all, they all thought that the men would lead... And yet they were getting dominated!

The two brothers were losing aura every second that passed by...

It was quite funny how they were fighting each other to avoid last place and ended up both being in last place.

A spectator couldn't help but jokingly comment that "it's expected if twins"

Though honestly, whether number two or in last place. They were all getting dominated by a child, so none were too happy.

Fortunately, there was still hope after the first two swims. From then on, all bets were off. They could use all the tricks they wanted to use. So who cares if they are losing face now and will definitely lose more of it when they target Raya later on? As long as they won, everything else could be discussed!...

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Two swims later...

"And now it begins..." Muku who was watching from the sidelines spoke to himself in a low voice. Then...

BOOOOM!

The first trick was used. And the user was Scarlett. A familiar spell appeared around her and she shot forward. However....

She didn't get far before she started feeling heavy and eventually her spell was broken off by the pressure and she could barely swim forward no matter how hard she tried. Soon she actually began sinking...

And she wasn't the only one... Everyone else apart from Klaus was also going through the same thing.

At that point, Klaus whose eyes were closed as usual was swimming forward with a little smile on his face.

There was a vague white light leaking out of one eye and a black light leaking out of the other.

Soon enough, I was comfortably in first place...

"Hmph!" Raya made a pissed off sound as she looked at Klaus creating distance between them. Then..

Inky black darkness began leaking out of her. Soon enough she was completely covered by it...

A dragon tail then grew on her human body and...

Whoosh!

With the tail's power, she blitzed forward and soon caught up to Klaus before surpassing him again.

Klaus was startled by what happened. He confusedly looked at her figure about to disappear in the distance wondering why she wasn't being impeded by his power like the others...

Then he noticed it... Though it was rather hard not to notice. Anyway, he noticed the inky black darkness surrounding Raya.

It looked quite ominous and seemed to absorb the surrounding light completely. And that wasn't its only effect. It was also eating his spell the same way. So of course it no longer affected Raya. She was destroying it with that darkness before it reached her.

And Klaus was extremely impressed. It was also a very enlightening experience.

After all, he always thought that the only way to fight against his power was to overpower him. But Raya was showing him that real powerhouses didn't need to put in that much effort.

It was clear that she could have completely dispelled it if she wanted. But she was choosing to use him as an obstacle for the others instead. And that gave him mixed feelings.

He had just used his freaking trump card only to be some else's tool. Though he had used it in a much much weakened state, it still sucked how things turned out...

{What is that darkness? Could it be the darkness element? But I've seen the darkness element in action before and it wasn't so inky. And why do I feel threatened by it so much? It's not even getting directed

at me offensively. Sigh, yet another black and ominous energy to deal with} Klaus thought to himself absent mindedly.

It was something quite common among top Evolvers when something piqued their interest. As long as there was no immediate danger, they'd almost always let their minds wander...

While Klaus was suck in thought while swimming after Raya. Three people passed him by from underwater.

Chris, deployed a barrier that blocked Klaus's pressure and assisted the two ladies.

Scarlett propelled them forward while Genevieve smothered their auras. So, the preoccupied Klaus didn't notice at all. Hell, by that point he probably forgot he was in a race and was just swimming forward on instinct...

Soon enough, Raya reached the finishing line. Chris and the two ladies arrived soon after her when they suddenly emerged in front of Klaus.

Before Klaus could make sense of what just happened, it was all over. He had completely lost and came out in last place.

"Hahahaha. The leader lost! Hahaha"

"Finally! He always wins these things!"

"Look at his face. He looks like he just swallowed a fly. Hahahaha"

"Hahaha. He really does look like that"

"Though I'm kinda disappointed. I expected a lot more from this race. But it seemed so tame compared to the races before..."

"Yeah, I think so too"

"The reason for that is quite simple actually. That little lady probably looks down on everyone present. So she likely disdained doing anything to them. As for our leader, if it wasn't because he got distracted, maybe the race would have been more chaotic. And the others chose to work together and jointly take second place instead of fighting it out. We can just say, overall these people are experts. So of course they wouldn't completely go all out in winning like those randos from before" John gave his view on the matter.

"Hey! Who are you calling randos?!"

"Yeah, John! You're literally the one who used the most tricks out of everyone present!"

"Hell, you even lost due to your own trick!"

"Be that as it may. I reached the semi-finals! How can someone who came so far be a rando? Just accept the truth you randos!" John shouted back.

"Okay, that's it. Come here John, you and me. Let's fight it out!"

"I also want to fight it out!"

"Me too!"

"Me too!"...

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"Congratulations little Raya. You won" Muku congratulated Raya while patting her head.

He completely ignored the rowdy background.

It was part of the fun after all. It's only natural for fans to be noisy after their chosen players lost and such...

"Tsk. Don't touch me. There's nothing to celebrate. My win was guaranteed from the start. Your congratulations are insulting if anything. It's like you didn't think that I'd win. Hmph!" Raya replied while slapping Muku's hand away.

Muku smiled back without saying anything. He could tell from their soul-link that she was actually quite happy right now and she enjoyed the pat.

The little girl was just a little tsundere.

"Now, Brother Klaus. Why don't we get to business?" Muku spoke as he turned to the man who had just walked up to them.

There was a slight yet knowing smile on his face...

Chapter 403: Talking business...

"Whatever do you mean Brother Muku? I'm just here to congratulate the young Ms here..." Klaus replied feeling a bit embarrassed that Muku called him out like this before he could say anything. Now he felt too embarrassed to say anything...

"Oh come on now Brother Klaus. I thought we were closer than that. There's no need to be shy with me. We both know that there's no one free enough to organise a tournament for a stranger without requiring anything..." Muku replied with an unchanging expression.

"Be that as it may brother. Couldn't you let me speak first before saying anything? Now I'm embarrassed... But fine. Since it has already come to this. I might as well speak lest I make a bigger fool of myself" Klaus gave in to Muku's directness.

Though honestly, he didn't dislike it. It showed that the other party was at the very least not opposed to what he was about to say if they started the talk themselves. Well, it could also mean that they just wanted to get it over with as soon as possible but hey, thinking positively was always better than negatively right?

Muku just nodded to what Klaus said and waited for him to speak as he sat back down. Klaus did the same...

Chris directed the noisy group in the background away. After all, their leader was about to get into serious talks which affected their future. So there was no room for the noisy distractions.

"You see. My group is at odds with an organisation called Tactoa. The organisation is led by a Monarch. If it were anyone else. I would have probably explained more or not bothered to tell them about this. But I have a hunch that you understood everything I said so far. I mean, you didn't even flinch or look confused... Anyway, with the assumption that you know about Tactoa. I'm going to continue. We managed to ward them off and got rid of the spy leading them to us. But they left us a problem in the form of a creature we couldn't identify. That creature had been using us as Tactoa bait until you two scared it off when you got here. For that reason alone, I'm forever grateful. And I shamelessly ask you to accept us as your ally. We might not seem like much right now. But I promise you, in the future, you'll definitely be glad that you made this deal with us..." Klaus laid down his cards on the table.

"Tactoa huh? Sounds troublesome. But I guess it's nothing too troublesome. On the other hand, I'm confused. If the immediate problem you were facing has been taken care of. Why still seek an alliance?" Muku asked with an intrigued look on his face.

He clearly knew why but just wanted Klaus to say it himself.

This made Klaus smile wryly. But he understood why Muku did this. The terms had to be clear so that his side doesn't get cocky later on. He would have done the same if he were in Muku's shoes.

Hell, he had done the same with some of the people in his group before they officially joined his. He felt it was quite funny how life was so unpredictable. He was a king yesterday and a peasant today...

"I'm glad you asked. The thing is that we need an umbrella to guarantee our safety while we grow stronger. It shouldn't take too long. But the world is getting more and more dangerous. So betting on our luck like before isn't as reliable. In return, when we do get stronger. As long as it isn't obvious suicide or self-harm. We'll be yours to command. But of course, since we aren't applying to be your soldiers, we will only do so three times. After that, we'll have to get into talks about compensation. So what say you?" Klaus spoke his terms and put the ball in Muku's court...

"I say... Glad to be doing business with you Brother! Those terms work just fine for me. There's only one issue now..." Muku accepted Klaus's deal.

He wasn't losing anything in the deal since he had long decided to help Klaus after they got along so well. So the deal was pure benefit.

He was slightly intrigued by this creature Klaus spoke of. He wondered if it was Legion or another being with similar characteristics. After all, Tactoa had the means to make more such creatures... And it was interesting how this seemed to be stopping more from being created...

Well, whatever the case. He didn't care much. Whether it was Legion or another creature... If it got in his way, he would put it down.

He was different from the last time he faced Legion. This time he was ready for such a being...

"Great!... And what could that issue be?" Klaus was glad Muku accepted even if it was to be expected from his body language.

He felt a little uneasy about this "issue" Muku mentioned though.

"I have to leave soon. My team is currently going through a mass breakthrough so I can't stay away for too long lest danger appear and disrupt the process. So your group will have to come to where my base is. This should take around 3 to five days for you considering your strength and possible danger on the way. But the place is easy enough to find. Just head East until you come across a stone fortress..." Muku explained.

"Oh... That's the issue? I was scared for a moment there. If that's all, don't worry. We should be able to manage that. We've come this far, so a little more distance isn't bad..." Klaus replied while sighing in relief. He thought there was some significant issue. But it turned out to be something so simple...

"Wait brother, I'm not done. In normal cases, it really wouldn't be an issue. But right now. It's difficult to say..." Muku spoke.

"Please explain brother" Klaus replied. This time he felt that Muku was about to say something which should be categorised as being a lot more than just an "issue".

"I've got information from a credible source that the next World Evolution will happen at any moment from now. And it will be way more chaotic than all the previous times combined" Muku finally dropped the bomb he had been hanging over Klaus's head for a while.

"Oh... Well, I say that's definitely more than just an issue... That's a disaster! No wonder I've been feeling anxious recently..." Klaus replied as his expression grew paler.

"Yeah... I reckon most experts feel that way right now. As one grows stronger, their sixth sense does the same. Unfortunately, those like you and me who can feel that something is about to happen are quite rare. So the death rate this time will likely be as high as the previous times despite the strength improvement. After all, most people can't even check portals anymore since they aren't as common to see as before. We've travelled so far and haven't yet seen even one when we would have seen multiple before..." Muku spoke more on the matter.

"Yeah. But now, this really leaves my team in a bind. We might not have the time needed to make the journey to you. It would be bad to be caught off guard midway..." Klaus spoke with furrowed brows.

He didn't question Muku's source since everyone had their secrets and means. Muku's group might have had someone who could see into the future or predict disasters...

"Don't fret yet. I have a suggestion. I have no control over whether it will work out or not though..." Muku spoke just as Klaus was falling deeper and deeper into the pits of despair.

He was certain that he personally would survive, but he wasn't sure how many of his comrades would do the same. His group was formed just before the Second World Evolution. They lost many people when it came. Then they lost even more when the third came. So who knew how many wouldn't make it on the fourth which was said to be the most brutal one yet...

It was guaranteed that it would be brutal. After all, more invaders were coming, so brutality was a no-brainer. Which means that for someone to specifically mention it, it had to be something extraordinary.. something beyond imagination...

"Please Brother Muku, don't hold out. Advise me" Klaus practically begged Muku.

He personally saw no way out, so if Muku had a way. Even if it was tough. He was willing to accept it. The lives of his comrades were worth more than a tough time.

"You can have this girl teleport you there. However, that's entirely up to her. So it's up to you whether you can persuade her or not..." Muku replied.

"Oh! That's right!" Klaus was reminded of how Muku and Raya came there. He'd completely overlooked it in his panicked overthinking.

And so, he immediately turned his attention to bored-looking Raya.

"No, I don't help stinky people" Raya refused to before Klaus could say anything which left him frozen with his mouth wide open.

"Please hear him out for me... I'll owe you a favour for it" Muku intervened after seeing that Klaus was at a loss for words and didn't know how to proceed.

"At this point. If I cashed in all the favours you owe me. I could probably buy your life... But fine. I'll hear him out. Favour recorded btw" Raya replied.

"Thank you" Muku replied with a wry smile on his face.

After all, Raya was speaking the truth. He really did owe her way too many favours...

Chapter 404: What makes a good leader...

Klaus looked at Muku gratefully. After observing the two, he had long figured out that Muku looked at Raya as an equal, rather than a child or subordinate.

As for why that was, he had no idea. But that didn't change anything. What mattered was that he could tell that the exchange between the two was staged. Muku really had done him a favour.

With what he had observed from Raya. She really wouldn't have helped him without Muku intervening. He was curious why she kept calling him "stinky," but it wasn't the time to ask that. There were more pressing matters to take care of...

"Why are you just standing there for? State your offer. What are you willing to give me as payment for the transportation?" Raya confronted Klaus after noticing that he was cautiously looking at her.

"Ah. Right. The only thing we have right now which could interest you is beast cores. How about a R4 beast core per person?" Klaus made his offer.

After the many close encounters they had with Tactoa. Their core reserves kept on decreasing since they didn't have a chance to restock. At this point, they could barely cover the amount he stated. After which, they'd almost have nothing left. Which would mean, for a while, most would have to rely solely on their natural capabilities when recovering mana. Even in tough situations. But there was nothing that could be done. The deal had to be made...

"Hmm. Willing to give up most of your stash huh? You might be stinky but I guess you aren't bad. But seriously, you should bathe more. Anyway, sure I'll accept your deal. And since I like your sincerity, you don't have to pay now. I'll give you two months to gather the cores. If I take what you have with what's coming. I'd probably be sentencing some of your people to death and I don't want to gain any unnecessary hatred because I'd have to wipe out all of you after that. Which would be hard with Muku covering for you but not impossible. And trust me, he might be angry for a while, a very long while even, but eventually he will forgive me and you will be forever forgotten..." Raya accepted Klaus's deal. Though with a lot of unnecessary things that could have and should have stayed unsaid by whatever...

"... Thank you Young Ms I promise to bathe more. And I assure you, even if you took the cores now and some of us died. We wouldn't feel resentful towards you. After all, the deaths would only be because we weren't capable enough. But we greatly appreciate the favour you've shown us. For that reason, when the time comes. We will pay with interest which will depend on how much we gather. Even one hundred percent interest isn't off the table" Klaus replied after organising his thoughts for a second.

After all, Raya literally showed him kindness, dissed and threatened him all at once. So a moment to think was only natural... But hey, everything worked out in the end at least. He was so happy that he personally gave himself interest.

Chris and Muku who were listening in almost slapped their foreheads because of what the idiot said. Like who even does that?!

It's like a bank gives you an interest-free loan which is something that never happens. Then you apply for the interest yourself?? Like wtf?! Only Klaus would do such a thing.

But at the same time, they couldn't help but be impressed with his ability to go all out when he wants to.

One had to know that he was a significant figure in the apocalypse with strength most could only dream of. And yet, he was willing to lower himself so much for his comrades.

No wonder everyone loved him so much. This is what a true leader should be like. He shouldn't only seek the benefits of the position but also seek to benefit those who follow him.

Muku was glad to have made such a good friend..

"Whatever. As long as I get what I'm owed. Everything else is up to you" Raya who did particularly need beast cores since she could easily get them herself replied nonchalantly.

She only requested them because it was the only thing Klaus had which was relatively useful to her. Doing it for free was an option but they were nowhere near familiar enough with each other to do such a thing. Even if Muku begged for that, she would refuse. So yeah, whether Klaus paid exactly what was agreed upon or more, she didn't care.

Maybe if it were R5 cores she'd be a bit more interested...

"Well, I guess that settles everything. Mr Chris. Can I trouble you with calling everyone here so we can depart? I've been away for quite some time now..." Muku spoke and urged Chris to call the others over.

Chris nodded and went to call the others. For whatever reason, he didn't like Muku. The man didn't do anything to him and he was certain they had never met, and yet, he felt like punching him in the face.

Fortunately, he had great control of himself otherwise he might have long done it and the situation would have deteriorated from then on. Which would have been extremely bad considering the benefits they got from being friendly with Muku. Information on the World Evolution and protection are the most important benefits. And generally, just knowing stronger people is never a bad thing.

He was quite amazed that there were even people like them. After all, despite the Tactoa pursuit. Their group was definitely not weak. Especially Klaus.

Begin meeting Muku and Raya. He actually thought that Klaus was among the strongest, if not the strongest human on the planet.

And that included his sister's group. Those girls were monsters, but Klaus seemed to be even more monstrous...

But then again, he hadn't met the girls for quite a while. So maybe even before meeting Muku and Raya, Klaus wasn't the strongest person he knew.

Anyway, everyone was quickly gathered over. They might have been rowdy, but they weren't children who were hard to control.

In fact, there wasn't even a single child in the apocalypse. Sadly, the survival rate of children in the apocalypse, especially in the earlier days was extremely low. So in the current world, meeting children is quite rare.

It was actually pretty impressive that Lisa's group had so many of them. Even though there were fewer than twenty...

"So, how are you going to do this? Are you going to transport people two-by-two until you're done since you have to touch the person you teleport with? I mean, that's how you teleport with me after all..." Muku asked Raya curiously.

"Tsk. Can you shut up and let me work?" Raya snapped at Muku then...

Everyone was suddenly consumed by a hazy darkness then... They were gone.

Less than a second later they appeared some distance away from Lisa's fortress.

It was only natural to appear outside. After all, the fortress wasn't theirs. And even if Lisa didn't mind, there was a chance of appearing on top of people if they appeared inside...

"Wow! Look at that impressive fortress! We've really teleported!"

"It was so quick I missed it when I blinked"

"Truly an expert move!"

"I wonder if one day I'll be able to do this"

"Oh shut up, do you think this is something randos can do? Besides, do you even have the space element? No you don't, so shut your ugly mug up!"

"Geez man. I was just speaking without real intent. Is there a need to be so harsh?!"

"Oh, sorry. The teleportation got me overly excited"

"No, no. I think you've long wanted to call me ugly and just never got the chance. In fact, say it clearly so that we can fight it out and get it over with"

"Cough, cough. There's no need. You're thinking too much"...

The crowd got rowdy again. Two people were close to exchanging blows in less than two minutes since they arrived...

.....

"Truly impressive. Is that your base?" Klaus asked curiously.

While the fortress looked impressive. It seemed a bit underwhelming to him. Almost like someone like Muku should have something more grand...

"No, no. That's just a friend's base. We came to visit... My base is off limits for now. But don't worry. It should be accessible soon enough." Muku replied calmly.

"Oh okay", Klaus replied understandingly.

He didn't know what was going on with Muku's base or even have an idea. Of course, he was curious but he didn't pry. They might call each other "brother" but they weren't close enough to speak so freely yet.

"In a normal setting. I'd usher your group into the fortress. But the ladies in there have a dark past with men which basically made them despise all men, so taking you in wouldn't be too good. If you have earth elementalists. You should be able to create temporary homes right?" Muku explained the situation to Klaus.

"Oh no. It's fine. Even if they were willing to accept us. We wouldn't want to impose too much. So staying here is okay. And yes, we have earth elementalists capable of doing that" Klaus replied reassuringly.

He wanted to ask whether Muku would stick around or not. After all, they couldn't see any other structure around...

"Great. And don't worry, my base isn't far from here. In fact, I should be able to see everything that's here from there. So if any trouble crops up, I'll be here before you can even blink" Muku explained the situation as if he had read Klaus's mind...

Chapter 405 Return...

"Oh, okay. Then I won't hold you back. I've troubled you enough and I'm sure you have other things to take care of" Klaus replied without asking how Muku knew what he was thinking.

He attributed it to Mukus' keen observation skills and intelligence. Which was spot on.

"See you soon then. Oh and, the leader of the fortress is going through something, so I can't introduce you right now. I'll see if it can be done tomorrow if she's free," Muku explained why he didn't even introduce the two groups.

After all, even if the other party disdained men, they should be okay with introductions at least. They were dealing with Muku so their disdain couldn't be overly extreme...

"Oh, okay. That's understandable" Klaus replied.

With that Muku and Raya disappeared from the scene...

....

On the fortress wall...

Mukus suddenly appeared in front of Lisa's deputy. She and a few others stood on the wall, looking out at the large and noisy group outside.

Their expressions were all tense. Which was understandable considering that the group had more than a hundred and fifty individuals with strong auras.

If it wasn't because of the order from Muku not to disturb Lisa. They would have long started banging on her door. She had been in there for over five hours now. And now unidentified people appeared out of nowhere. So they had all the reasons to disturb her.

But after experiencing the "nightmare", the last thing they wanted to do was go against Muku's orders. They were so mentally scarred that they'd rather face the unknown without their leader than go against his orders.

Muku didn't know whether that was a good thing or not after finding out... But then again, even if they wanted to disturb Lisa. There was no way they were gonna be able to do so with his barrier in the way...

"Don't worry about them. They are with me. I'll bring their leaders to see Lisa tomorrow. Ignore them for now..." Muku spoke as soon as the women noticed him then left for Lisa's office.

He didn't wait for a reply since it wasn't necessary. Hell, even if he didn't explain anything and just appeared before walking back to Lisa's room, the women would still have relaxed their guard.

After all, having him around was objectively, countless times better than having Lisa around....

....

Inside Lisa's office...

"Truly a lady worthy of being a returner. Such a strong will" Muku complimented Lisa again.

"I guess she's okay" Raya added while looking at Lisa who was shaking nonstop.

At that point, the pain she was going through was more than obvious. Her blood vessels were bulging all over her body. On top of that, they were wiggling around with the faint cracking and snapping being heard from Lisa's body.

It was obvious her body was going through a change along with her core. A rather painful change. One she had to fully experience if she wanted the maximum benefits...

"Will she really upgrade her class to Pseudo-Legendary if she perseveres for a day?" Raya asked skeptically. It just seemed too miraculous despite the obvious harsh requirements Lisa was going through.

"Well, it's what mom said" Muku replied with a shrug.

He wasn't certain either. His mother was both reliable and unreliable at the same time. So she was hard to read.

Sure, he doubted she'd play around with Lisa like this if there were no benefits. But again, she was the lady who withheld information left and right even when she knew it could save him from going through life-threatening events. And he was her son while Lisa was mostly a random person so...

But hey, it wasn't like Lisa was dying right? So whatever happened, the current process will temper Lisa's will. That's always a good thing...

"Oh well, I guess we'll know tomorrow. I'm going home" Raya said as she prepared to teleport away...

"Take me with you" Muku spoke as he held out his hand for her to hold.

Raya rolled her eyes at his laziness but still took him along. If anything, they were both lazy since they could have easily just flown to the mansion which was super close by.

...

"Home sweet home" Muku spoke while he threw himself on the couch immediately after arriving.

The furniture was all reinforced by Freya's magic. So being a little rough with it was no problem...

"How I wish I had the space element. It's so convenient! Also, you never told me you could teleport with a whole group..." Muku brought up something which surprised him.

"Have we ever needed to teleport in a group? No. Have you ever asked? No. So can you stop bothering me with stupid questions? In fact, peace!" Raya replied like a grumpy teen who's getting troubled by their annoying parent.

She disappeared immediately after replying. She probably went back to her room to watch anime or something...

{Eish. Is this what being a teen's father feels like? But then again, she's not even ten... Does that mean it will only get worse? Oh my! Should I consider putting her up for adoption?} Muku thought to himself tiredly while lying on the couch.

{Can you shut your mind up? Stop thinking like you're my father! And if you even think about actually putting me up for adoption. I promise you, we will fight to the death and I'll tell momma Audrey} Raya's annoyed voice suddenly sounded in Muku's mind.

"Sigh. I don't even have my own mind myself now. Well whatever. I might as well nap and improve my avatar" Muku gave up thinking about Raya.

He could block her from reading his thoughts as she does him with her's but he was too lazy and saw no point in wasting the mental energy on such a trivial matter.

Of course, he blocked her when he was doing things with the girls. But in normal situations he just let him listen in if she wanted to.

He couldn't help but blame his mother for how willing he was to let others read his thoughts. After all, she had made him get used to it to the point that it felt natural.

As for how he could nap and practice at the same time? Well, it was pretty simple actually. It was possible due to his slightly advanced mindscape.

Firstly, he'd fall asleep. Then enter a lucid dream, which was pretty easy for any high-level Evolver. After that, his consciousness would leave the dream and enter his mindscape.

Doing it that way leaves his body in a sleeping state. If he directly enters the mindscape. The best his body can do is enter a meditative state. Which is good for resting and whatnot but actually sleep was better.

Muku didn't need to sleep. But he felt that the coming times would be quite trying. So getting as much sleep when he could wasn't bad...

And so, he did just as that. His body slept and his consciousness began training in his mindscape.

A person's mindscape can be anything they want it to be. And the size is equal to the person's mental energy and soul strength.

Muku's mindscapes were quite vast compared to most people. Which was only natural when his Telekinesis kept on pushing his soul and mental energy to advance and get stronger.

Though he kinda felt that it was a bummer that even when he was weak he never got nosebleeds when he overused his Telekinesis like in the movies. But then again, such things were rather cringey if you thought about it.

Telekinesis was different from purely mana-based abilities. It was still just an ability like the rest. So if a fire user didn't singe their fingers when they used their abilities to the max, why should they short-circuit their brain and bleed?

Anyway, Muku's mindscape was an open grassland stretching into the horizon. A gentle breeze blew across the plane and created a rather serene atmosphere.

If the girls knew what it looked like, they'd be surprised. After all, it's a place he could literally do anything and create anything in.

Shouldn't there be cars, dirty stuff and so on in there? That's typically what girls expect to be in the heads of men after all... And honestly, they weren't wrong. There was no way Muku wasn't going to try some Sus stuff in there. But unfortunately, there was a child on board.

As in, Raya, apparently, it was tougher for beasts to create their own mindscapes. Even for super-talented individuals like Raya. So for the time being, he was sharing his scape with her.

And he gave her full access at any time. So, he could only hold himself back for now. He didn't want to corrupt her mind after all. Well, honestly, Raya wasn't an angel, but she was a lot better than those internet babies just before the apocalypse who probably knew more about dirty stuff than adults...

With that said, Muku summoned his avatar... Unlike the gigantic form known to the outside world. What paper was a majestic grey Western dragon with similar coloured flames burning from its mouth and back.

Muku felt that it was a shame that this creature couldn't see the light of day for the time being due to that cursed armour.

Sure, the armour was great. But he was a dragon fanatic, not an armour or knight one. So he'd rather shoot out a breath attack than swing a sword.

Alas, the world had other plans...

Chapter 406 Rest now...

The next day...

Muku had timed his training in a way that matched the time Lisa had left to reach 24 hours...

He didn't know whether she'd reach it or not. But he figured it was better to go there on time than early. Since going early could be pointless...

And so, he made his way to the fortress. The mansion was still invisible, so when he appeared in the sky. To those who managed to catch a glimpse of him, it just looked like he appeared out of nowhere...

Considering that it wasn't the first time he had suddenly appeared. Everyone saw it as being normal and just let him do his thing. After all, if he wanted to deal with them, he'd seek them out. And they didn't have any reason to call for him for the time being.

The fortress ladies continued with their dailies while Klaus's group also focused on improving the structures they put together the previous evening...

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Lisa's office....

"Well..." Muku was speechless.

Twenty-four hours had passed but Lisa was still holding on. Her body wasn't letting out those scary noises, nor were her veins wiggling. Everything was now calm...

The current Lisa looked a few points more beautiful than before. She wasn't at the level of the other girls yet, but that shouldn't be a problem in the future when she catches up...

While her body now seemed to be fine outwardly. Lisa was obviously still in pain. She looked like someone had poured a bucket of water on her from how damp her clothes were.

And she was still shaking... It seemed that she was holding on purely from instinct at that point. After all, if she was fully conscious, she'd have likely known that the time was up. At least, looking out the window and seeing the sun's very clear position would have been easy enough.

But she couldn't even open her eyes anymore. All her focus and energy were directed at keeping herself awake. Everything else, might as well not have existed...

Muku couldn't help but feel sad for her. Her current state was just too much. She was as pale as a ghost. Hopefully, it really worked out as Mrs C said it would. Otherwise, he really would be mad at her...

"Lisa. That's enough. You've succeeded in reaching 24 hours. Rest now..." Muku spoke softly after removing the sound barrier and all the other barriers surrounding Lisa.

Lisa who was going through hell suddenly heard a calm voice calling out to her name...

She couldn't remember who the owner was but she felt that they were trustworthy. She tried to listen to what they were saying, but it was hard to focus. All she clearly heard was, "Rest now"...

And that's all she needed. That's all she was waiting for. And just like that, her world completely faded to black. She had finally allowed herself to lose consciousness and put an end to the pain which felt like it had been going on for an eternity...

Without disgust, Muku held Lisa in his arms. Which stopped her from falling over. Then he carried her out of the room... Of course, it was after destroying all the sweat and dirt on her body with his mana.

If she was awake, a bath would have been in order. But she wasn't, so he could only intrude a little bit...

The fortress ladies were all startled when Muku came out of the room holding the unconscious Lisa in his arms.

Although he had cleaned her, it didn't erase the spent look on her face, nor did it make her pale skin any more rosy...

So, it was easy for anyone to assume that he did something wrong to her. At the very least, she didn't seem to be okay.

"Don't panic. She only looks like this because she pushed herself too much. She will be fine after resting for a while. Now point me to her room..." Muku addressed the ladies...

"Umm, the leader doesn't have another room. She said that the office was enough for her. After all, she barely sleeps and opts to meditate instead. You can take her to my room if you want..." The vice leader replied.

"Sigh. Okay. And there's no need. I'll bring her back when she wakes up then..." Muku replied to the lady then flew off with Lisa in his arms...

The women just looked on quietly. It's not like they could stop him anyway.

"Vice leader... Is that okay, letting him take her away like that?" A black haired woman asked.

She was one of the lucky few who hadn't been out under the effect of nightmare with the kids. So questioning Muku was still something she could do. Though she wasn't too inclined to do it after seeing what the others went through. She was only doing it now because Muku had left...

"Well, if you want to stop him. Go ahead. I won't get in your way. However, didn't you see that he treats her differently from the rest of us? There's a hint of protectiveness in how he treats her now. It wasn't there when he came. It only appeared yesterday. Which means, something must have happened between the two of them we know nothing about..." The vice leader replied.

"Then that means..." The woman from before was about to say something when she was cut off.

"We don't know what it means. What matters is that he likely won't do anything to the leader. All we can do now is wait. Hopefully she doesn't abandon us when she wakes up..." The vice leader interrupted the blacked haired woman.

The last part she whispered to herself... But of course, everyone was an Evolver, so the whisper was clearly heard by all... They just chose to pretend like they didn't hear it.

After all, they thought the same. Being favoured by Muku was probably the best thing that could ever happen to any of them in terms of a stable life where they don't have to worry about suddenly dying every day from a random attack due to their weakness.

And honestly, if it were them whom he favoured, they might have abandoned their comrades. It would be hard, but everyone could understand. The current world was just so cruel that being selfish wasn't as frowned upon as much as before. Self-preservation didn't just mean protecting one's interests anymore, it also meant protecting one's life. And who could fault someone for protecting their life? Certainly not warriors like them...

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Back at the mansion...

"Well now, this is interesting. You're even bringing her home! I can't wait for the show this will create!" Raya looked on from a couch as Muku entered with Lisa in his arms.

"Oh shut up. There won't be a show. After all, I have a good reason for her to be here..." Muku replied while passing by.

Raya just smiled back without saying anything. After all, she knew the girls well enough to know that sometimes, reason wasn't enough to appease them...

"Is that Lisa? What's wrong with her?"

Suddenly a voice was heard from upstairs...

Muku and Raya looked up to see who it was from. Of course, they knew who it was from the aura. But wouldn't it be rude to hear someone speak and not look at them even if you knew who it was?

"Hello, Big Sis Freya!" Raya was the first one to speak.

She was happy that someone came. Though she wished it wasn't the gentle Freya but the belligerent Jade instead. But all is well, women can act out of character when their interests are at stake, so who knows. Maybe Freya will give her the show she desired to see.

"Hello Raya" Freya replied to Raya's greeting with a gentle smile on her face before turning back to Muku.

"Yes, it's her. As for what's happening with her. It's a long story. Let me find a room for her then we can talk..." Muku replied calmly.

Of course, he was calm. After all, he had nothing to hide... At least not something Freya would be interested in knowing...

"Use my room. It's the closest one on the floor after all..." Freya replied.

It looked like she couldn't wait to hear what Muku wanted to say...

And so, Muku did as told then came back down...

.....

"So, what's wrong with her?" Freya asked again.

She didn't ask about how Lisa was even there since they were already coming this way before she and the others went off to advance.

"That's not too important right now. We can speak about that later. Let's talk about you first. Why aren't you going outside to finish your advancement process and evolve to R5?" Muku replied.

He sidelined Lisa's matter for now...

"... Okay. Speaking about that. I came across a problem..." Freya replied after a moment of silence.

She really wanted to know what was up with Lisa and why Muku seemed a tad too close to her all of a sudden. After all, from what she remembered, he didn't like her too much even if he no longer held negative feelings towards her.

So, one would think that he'd have used his Telekinesis to carry her if it had to be done... But anyway, her matter really seemed to be more urgent after thinking about it.

"A problem?" Muku repeated what she said...

"Yes. So, I did as you said. But no matter how much I dove into my memories and tried to resonate with the beasts I found... I couldn't be reasonable with any. I was even close to giving up and asking for the

Heavens' help. But then something clicked in my mind... I thought of our mansion and I resonated" Freya replied.

"What?!" Muku and Raya expressed their shock at the same time with a shout.

Could people have buildings as their spirit beasts?! But since when did builds become beasts?!

Chapter 407: Freya's unique situation...

"Yeah. I was as confused and surprised as you are when it happened. But something even weirder happened after that..." Freya continued.

"There's more?!" Muku commented.

"Yeah. The mansion began changing shape in front of me. It went from this form to something that looked like a poor man's golem" Freya explained.

"Pfft. A poor man's golem?! What's that? Hahaha. If the mansion had feelings it would definitely be fighting it out with you for saying that by now. Hahaha. Anyway, please continue. Can you explain its appearance a little more to me?" Muku couldn't help but laugh.

Even Raya giggled from the side. Freya really got them with that one...

"What I mean is that it turned itself into a humanoid creature with the rooms. You know, like a transformer... Just that it wasn't a car but a house..." Freya wasn't offended by the duo's laughter as she continued explaining.

"Oh, now I can vaguely see the picture. So what did Iris say about?" Muku replied with more clarity.

"Nothing. She was isolated from the start of the process for whatever reason, but I figured that she shouldn't be part of it anyway, so I didn't try to bring her in. Anyway, she's listening in right now. Let me hear what she has to say..." Freya replied and finally remembered that she had Iris.

It wasn't that she forgot about Irish. But she had forgotten that Iris was a hub of knowledge because she knew her a lot better than everyone else due to their relationship. So, while others mostly saw Iris as a very knowledgeable ancient plant fairy. She saw her as a naughty older sister. Her impression was so strong that she kinda forgot about Iris's past...

"Oh, okay. Go ahead..." Muku replied knowingly.

Only Freya was airheaded enough to forget to ask Iris something before coming to him. But of course, he'd never call her airheaded to her face.

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Inside Freya's mindscape...

"Look who finally remembered me. Oh wait, you didn't even remember me. It was that detestable man who did. To think that my enemies acknowledge my existence when my so-called closet ally doesn't" Iris spoke dramatically and hatefully as soon as Freya appeared.

She was sitting on a crouch while looking away from Freya with her hands folded.

"Oh please, we both know Muku isn't your enemy. If he were, you'd be dead. And I'm sorry. I was caught up in the moment. I swear it will never happen again. So please forgive me and tell me what's wrong with me. It's really eating me up" Freya apologised.

"While I feel that you think too lowly of me if you think that I'm so easily killed off. I won't get to that for now. You're lucky that I like you otherwise I'd be moving out right now. Hmph!" Iris replied while turning to face Freya.

"Thank you, thank you. I promise it really won't happen again" Freya thanked Iris for forgiving her.

"It better not. Anyway, what's happening to you is nothing weird. Isn't it only natural for a Unique Class to evolve uniquely? Anyway, it's not even that unique if you think about it. Your class is called "Domain Heart" right? And instead of an elemental affinity. You have domain manipulation. From what you said,

it's pretty obvious that your avatar is an earth elemental, which you so graciously called a poor man's golem. I don't know if I should be angry because elementals are the first forms of fairies, but whatever. It isn't surprising that an earth elemental is your Spirit beast... or rather, spirit elemental in your case considering how buildings are generally built with some form of earth... Anyway, since you aren't an earth elemental, the avatar adapted to your power like everybody else. That detestable man's avatar should be metal-like in its natural state and the rest will also have avatars powered by their elements... Anyway, you get what I'm trying to say right?" Iris began explaining.

(A/N: Changed "House Heart" to "Domain Heart"... The former sounds way too trashy. Hopefully no one confuses it with that domain everyone can deploy from R3 onwards since they are different)

"Oh! So because of my power. The avatar took on the mansion's properties? How wondrous. But I guess that makes sense. However, did you just say that fairies start out as elementals?! So you were a mass of plant-element energy once?!" Freya replied understandingly then curiously asked a question.

"Yeah. So it's nothing to worry about. You can continue with the process. Recreate that image in the real world. And you must know, you're quite talented in that regard. While others have to actively create their avatars. Yours created itself just from pure mental talent. And yeah, do you have a problem with that? Elementals are born when elemental energy reaches a certain level. Then when that elemental reaches a certain level, it will condense. If no fated person comes around to contract it, it will eventually break out of the shell as a fairy on its own. It's a simple process. But it has nothing to do with you. So I'm not telling you anymore or answering any questions. Now get out and go break through. I want to see how much bigger this place will get after you break through" Iris explained a few things then shoed Freya away.

If she could have kicked her out, she would have probably done so.

"Okay, thank you for the information Big Sis. See you later!" Freya thanked Iris and left the mindscape to share with Muku what she had learned...

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"Oh? So that's what she said? Well, this is certainly insightful. As expected if a Unique Class, I guess. You even have an elemental as your spirit beast even though it's not a beast at all!" Muku complimented Freya after she finished recounting everything Iris told her.

She even told him a out how fairies come from elementals. Even though it was completely unnecessary, Muku didn't mind that she told him. He was even happy that she did, it was an interesting thing to know about. And who knows, maybe it could be useful in the future...

"Hehe", Freya giggled shyly at the compliment.

So what if having the class was just her good luck? It still felt good being complimented no matter what. Especially by someone you liked...

"Okay, that's enough chitchat for now. We can always talk more after you break through. If you're familiar with the avatar in your mindscape. Then you came go ahead and create it in reality which will mark your successful transition from R4 to R5..." Muku reminded Freya that she was still not done for the day...

"Oh right... Let me familiarise myself with it a little more..." Freya replied in realisation.

Then after seeing Muku nod, she entered her mindscape again after sitting in a meditative position on the couch...

Ten minutes later, Freya came out of the scape.

"I'm done..." She spoke confidently.

"Great!" Muku replied with a somewhat forced smile on his face.

It wasn't that he felt that she came out too soon since a person could slow down the time in their mindscape. So Freya might have been in there for a few hours or a day depending on her skill in just those ten minutes. His expression was caused by something else.

"Umm... What are you d... Ahhhhhh!" Freya was confused by how Muku seemed to be trying his hardest not to look down but was failing.

And so, she asked while looking down and she immediately realised what was happening...

She had gotten used to sitting freely in her room. Which made her forget that when she sits in a meditative position, her underwear gets exposed since her dress wasn't long enough to cover everything in that position.

And so, from the time she went into her mindscape to now, Muku who was sitting directly in front of her was looking directly at her underwear.

As one would expect, that realisation prompted an embarrassed scream from the girl. Without thinking, she got up, slapped Muku and ran away.

"Don't follow me! I'll go break through on my own!" Freya shouted back as she exited through the door.

"There's no need to be embarrassed. I like your pink panties! They are very cute!... What the hell am I saying?!" Muku screamed as Freya disappeared into the distance.

He only thought about what he said after he said it.

Unfortunately, Freya had everything. Which was obvious from how the couch slapped him as Freya's speed of running away increased.

"Yeah, I was thinking the same. What a pervert. Even if you say you didn't think before you spoke. The fact that you could say that without thinking is even more troubling..." Raya who had witnessed everything suddenly spoke.

And her words cut so deep Muku felt like dying on the spot. But then again, he had long lost all face in front of Raya, so what was one more embarrassing event?

"What the hell are you still doing here? Go after her already. What if she comes across some trouble? You know she's not too strong without the mansion" Muku backed orders to Raya.

As for whether he was more worried about Freya or just wanted Raya to leave, only he knew.

"Tsk" Raya clicked her tongue in dissatisfaction but went after Freya immediately.

Chapter 408: Freya's breakthrough!

"Sigh. What's wrong with me? Has it been so long that my mind is starting to degenerate? Or is it because of that encounter with Lisa? Well, whatever it is. I need to get it together" Muku spoke to himself while slapping his cheeks.

Even though his thoughts were never saintly, they never overpowered him into saying them out loud before. So he really needed to get it together lest he be branded as a pervert...

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While Muku was trying to get it together. The fortress residents and Klaus's group witnessed something quite interesting.

A brown-haired lady suddenly appeared out of nowhere and flew into the distance with her hands on her face. Oddly enough, it looked like she was running away in embarrassment.

But that had to be wrong right? After all, who still did that in the apocalypse? And what could be so embarrassing?

Also, where tf did she pop up from?!

Just when they were still trying to make sense of that... A little girl appeared and went after the lady with a dissatisfied expression on her face...

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"Umm, was that Freya?" A lady asked no one in particular.

"Don't be absurd. That lady's aura was so strong and was nothing like that timid girl's aura. Even though she looked embarrassed, you could still feel the confidence hidden beneath. Besides, she had her face covered and flew away so quickly, so how could you possibly tell?" Another one replied.

"I guess you're right..."

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"Well now... What could possibly be happening up there? And it seems my conjecture that my brother's base is invisible might be true... That's so cool, I wish I had one! In fact, I must have one in the future!" Klaus spoke to himself while sitting on top of a newly built stone house...

...

Some distance away.

"Ahhhhh! So embarrassing! What if he thinks I did it knowingly? Won't he think I'm a loose woman then? Ahhh! I should clear things up later. It didn't seem like he disliked it. He even said he found them cute. Ahhhh! So embarrassing!"

And so, just like that, Freya began talking to herself and screaming in embarrassment for a few minutes.

Raya looked on speechlessly from a distance while Iris did the same from Freya's mindscape. Both of them felt that Freya was quite the weirdo. But she was kind of cute at the same time...

Anyway, Freya managed to gather herself eventually and focused on the reason she left the mansion.

Sure, she wanted to get away from Muku. But that was only a minor reason. The major one was breaking through. And doing it too close to home was no good. The phenomena could easily destroy the two settlements she saw below.

Of course, Muku could protect them with little effort. But it was an unnecessary expenditure plus she couldn't face him at the moment.

And so, she opted to do it out here...

She didn't have to worry about her safety either since Raya was around. As for how she knew Raya was there, the dragon girl released a bit of her aura to make Freya aware of her presence after Freya finished speaking to herself.

That made Freya feel a little embarrassed since Raya likely saw everything she did since coming there. And Raya was also present back then... But this level of embarrassment was manageable. Raya was still just a child after all. A super smart child, but a child nonetheless...

With that said, Freya closed her eyes and held her hand out then...

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

Her Peak Pseudo-R5 aura exploded out of her body. The advancement process was underway...

And a wondrous sight Raya had only witnessed once before began happening in front of her.

A "transformer" made out of mana with parts that looked like they came from a house began taking form...

One would expect that it would look like something from Minecraft like it did when Freya first laid her eyes on it. But no, it looked quite refined.

Freya hadn't just been familiarising herself with her avatar. She was editing it. After all, the initial form was made from pure instinct and talent without any conscious input...

Soon enough a nearly hundred metres tall golem-like avatar was formed. It practically copied all the elements of the mansion. That's right... That included Muku's metal element.

While it was just an imitation and not as strong as it would have been if it were Muku's metal of the same level. It was still a lot stronger than many people's avatar simply because she was a unique class. And that was equal to Pseudo-Legendary classes.

Someway, somehow, it came out looking like a female "transformer".

Since giant humanoid robots were a big part of anime. Raya had seen quite a few of them by that point. So she was awed by seeing one in real life and she was extremely jealous!

For a split second, she wished she were a human and maybe her avatar would be something like Freya's too. Then she remembered that she was a dragon. That's a billion times better than being a human and having that avatar.

Besides, she could properly talk Muku into creating one for her in future. As for how he'll do it, that wasn't her problem. He owed her enough favours to at least offer her something as unreasonable as that. And that would still leave her with many favours to spare...

While Raya was getting lost in her own thoughts, Freya continued her advancement.

The moment the avatar was fully created... She felt herself getting drawn to it. And without even trying to fly, her body was lifted off the ground by a mystical force and was flown towards the avatar's chest...

In no time at all, she reached it and was absorbed by it.

Then the synchronisation process began...

It was the final process before she successfully advanced. It wouldn't take too long. But during the process, she would be unaware of the outside world. Which made her extremely vulnerable to attacks if any enemies were around...

That's why she needed a guard. Of course, one can do without and succeed if they find a secluded enough spot...

"Hehehe. What luck! I was casually travelling the world and came across food about to get too strong for its own good. Well, I guess I will be nice enough to put it out of its misery..."

Just when Raya was sitting in a tree boredly. She heard a voice full of malicious intent clearly targeting Freya...

Her aura was perfectly hidden and Freya's aura was chaotically spreading in all directions. So the malicious voice's owner didn't sense her...

{Finally, some action. I was starting to get bored}... Raya thought to herself as she looked in the direction from which the voice came.

And her eyes instantly landed on a creature which could only be called a goblin.

After all, it really was the spitting image of a goblin. Human child-like height, green skin, pointy yellow teeth, and an ugly face only a mother could love... Actually, even a mother wouldn't love something that ugly, so forget that part...

Interestingly enough, this PR5 goblin just happened to be the first R5 to step on the planet. And it was so blood thirsty and cruel that it massacred all the living creatures on its path.

Considering that humans were now a minority compared to beasts. It mostly massacred beasts just for the fun of it.

But that didn't mean humans didn't suffer significantly. After all, it destroyed ten barriers since it came. And of course, all the humans in those barriers were killed.

So yeah, the goblin was definitely evil incarnate. As one would expect from a goblin really... Then again, it wasn't lustful at all unlike those anime goblins. So at the very least no one suffered a fate worse than death before being killed... That is, if we ignore the torture...

"You're pretty noisy for the weakest creature known to men! Oh wait, I guess you're stronger than slimes. But still, you're trash! Can you lie down for me and die already? I don't want to waste my time with you" Raya's arrogant and disdainful voice was heard just when the goblin was considering how to kill Freya.

There were so many ways it couldn't decide...

"And who are. Sniff, sniff. Hmm. Sniff. Sniff. I smell a high bloodline from you. And you're close to your ritual aren't you? Hahahaha. This is great! Today must be my lucky day. Firstly I caught a small fish, then an arrogant bigger fish showed up on its own! Haha. After consuming these two I should definitely break through into Pseudo-R6! Now patiently wait your turn while I take care of this sitting du..."

BANG!

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

The goblin was busy insulting Raya and Freya when a punch suddenly landed on its face from out of nowhere.

It flew into the distance like a broken kite and crashed into the ground heavily.

"As I said before, trash like you shouldn't speak too much" Raya spoke calmly then flew after the goblin.

{Trouble appeared. I'm going to take care of it. Come look after her. She's almost done though...} Raya spoke to Muku through their link as she flew after Raya.

{Yeah, I sensed that something was amiss. I'm already on my way. So don't worry about her...} Muku replied immediately after.

{Cool} Raya replied then refocused on the goblin which was now glaring at her like she killed her whole family after it came out of the big hole it created when it crashed.

Chapter 409: Raya Vs The Goblin

"You're going to regret doing th..."

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

The goblin when another punch came for its face. However, this time it wasn't caught off guard. So it managed to catch the punch before it hit.

The force generated was so much that it created an energy wave which spread in all directions and ripped out the closest trees from the ground...

"Hmm. Not bad. But...."

BOOOOM! BOOOOM! BOOOOM!...

Raya complimented the goblin then before it could react. She kicked it on its side and sent it flying again. It crashed and smashed through a few trees before finally coming to a stop.

"Still not good enough" She finished her statement while calmly looking at the goblin.

"Haaaaaah! That's enough! Die!" The goblin shouted angrily.

Greenish liquid suddenly appeared around Raya and collapsed on top of her from all directions.

It was so quick that even some relatively strong R5s would have been caught off guard... But was Raya a common R5?

"So your power is acid? Yeah, I guess it checks out for a creature like you... Simply toxic" Raya mocked the Goblin from behind it.

"You? But..."

BANG!

Again the goblin was punched before it could react.

BANG!

BANG!...

This time Raya didn't wait for it to regain its wit before punching it again. She kept on punching it left and right.

She'd disappear after punching it then appear in the direction it was flying in then punch it again.

This went on for a few minutes with the goblin being unable to do anything about it.

It of course tried fighting back by throwing acid attacks at Raya but the only damage it managed to do was damage to the ground and trees. Raya was just beyond its means.

"Sigh... This is getting boring. Is this everything you've got? If that's so, then I might as well kill you right?" Raya spoke after getting bored of punching the goblin all over the place.

She silently started lamenting about her strength like a certain bald and punchy single character who was too strong for fights to be fun anymore...

"You want to see my full power? Okay, I'll show you. But know that this spells your end! Haaaaaaaaa Haaaaaaah!" The goblin replied angrily.

It tried to look threatening but that was hard with its beat-up face and bruised body.

Anyway, it started screaming as it powered up. Which was rather interesting to Raya since it was the first time she had seen anyone with so little control of their power that they needed to scream to bring it out. Sure, it might have worked for DBZ/S but it was rather cringey in the world of mana...

What she didn't know was that the goblin's actions were quite common. Just that she usually killed off beings who did it sooner than they could even think about powering up.

Or they'd just return to their original form instead of holding on to their humanoid form.

But the goblin was different. It has long figured out that it was extremely outclassed. And the moment it returns to its original form will likely be the beginning of its end.

It was clear that this unfairly strong child was playing around with it. As for why she was unfairly strong... Well, in normal cases, if it couldn't win and was outclassed, it could just run away. After all, it had outstanding speed.

Unfortunately, the damn brat had teleportation. And she was literally in her rest state and was already so strong.

As for its power-up marking her death? Ha! That was bullshit! Its power-up marked the first step in its getaway instead!

It regretted acting so cockily before. It should have escaped the moment it smelled the high-level bloodline in the brat.

In fact, the bloodline was so high level that it didn't know how high it was since it had never come across anything nearly as imposing before.

In hindsight, that should have been another reason to run away. Unfortunately, greed blinded it.

It had been living so largely and freely since coming to the planet that it forgot the most basic rule from The Beast World. And that was, "It's not strength that leads to a long life. But it's caution instead!"

Unfortunately for it, it threw that rule out of the window since technically no one should be so much stronger than it to the point of bullying it without being able to escape.

Which was ironically covered by another rule. And that was, "Never be too sure of anything!"

For beasts with no organised society, they were still quite smart. So the fact that those rules still circulated in such a large world to the point that any beast with enough intelligence knew them, it only meant that they worked and should be observed...

After all, even when one follows them to a T, the chance of dying was still extremely high....

Anyway, there was no use crying over spilt milk. Now it needed to think about how to escape...

Obviously, flying or running away was a no-go. It would be caught before blinking. Which only left one other way...

The goblin's eyes looked at the ground for a split second before looking away...

"Haah!" The power-up was finally complete!

And in place of the scrawny goblin from before stood a much larger and more muscular version of it.

The first form was around 4,7ft tall. The new form was a towering 7,8ft tall!

"Oh! A hob-goblin! Or is it a goblin champion?" Raya excitedly clapped while looking on...

"Tell me, what is this goblin you're referring to me as? You're not the first being to refer to me as such. Though you're the first non-human... Speaking of which. Your humanoid form... Is it still humanoid or just human? How did you achieve that? No wonder you're so strong!" The goblin asked something which has always bothered it.

And that was how humans always called it a goblin before getting killed. And it was the same no matter which part of the world it attacked....

But of course, it was too proud to ask them to clarify. And it wasn't like they'd be willing to cooperate after witnessing everyone around them getting massacred... Anyway, it also finally took notice of Raya's humanoid form. And as it said, it was perfect.

Which was something that should be impossible, even if she studying humans for years before finalising it and breaking through...

What it didn't know was that Raya had some divine help from possibly the strongest being in existence... Yup, that's right, that being is Muku's unreliable mother, lil-old Mrs C.

But of course, Raya wouldn't explain anything. She had no reason to waste her time explaining anything to a soon-to-be-deceased goblin...

"Beat me and I'll tell you" Raya teased.

The teasing almost made the goblin give up on running away and fighting it out instead even if it meant death. After all, this brat was just way too annoying!

"I see...." The goblin replied then...

Whoosh!

It disappeared from where it was then...

BOOOM!

BOOOM!

BOOOM!

It appeared in front of Raya and threw its very first punch since the battle began. And of course, Raya blocked it.

But it didn't stop there. It threw one punch after the other.

To its surprise, it was actually keeping up with her now. It wasn't winning. But it was doing a lot better than before since it wasn't getting one-sidedly pummeled.

However, that didn't make it happy. Not even a little bit. It only emphasised their difference in strength.

After all, it was now using the maximum strength it could use without returning to its original state.

It was in its hybrid form which took the positives of its two forms. So, in a way, it was currently in its strongest form...

And yet, its strongest form was barely managing to draw with one of Raya's base forms.

It is even suspected that the child wasn't even using all of her strength from the base state. And that was quite depressing...

For the first time, it understood the plight all its victims went through. It was experiencing firsthand what it was like to be completely at your opponent's mercy. So much so that you couldn't even resist.

It was like it was an ant in Raya's palm getting played around with. And the moment it dared try to leave the palm, it will probably get squashed...

"Hahaha. This is so fun! However, I wish there were a few more of you. Then maybe I'd be able to let loose a little bit more...." Raya laughed merrily while blocking the goblin's desperate blows.

And honestly, it was the ultimate form of disrespect. Laughing merrily like that during battle. If she were laughing because she was enjoying the fight with a strong opponent, it would have been great. But she was laughing because she was simply having fun with a toy instead of an opponent...

The goblin's eyes reddened in anger from the disrespect.

"....." The goblin suddenly shouted the name of its strongest spell and everything within ten kilometres was instantly covered in acid.

It was so quick and sudden that even Raya was caught off guard...

Chapter 410: Raya Vs The Goblin (final)...

Back at Freya's advancement...

Freya was close to done under Muku's watch...

Muku suddenly looked in Raya's direction which was more than thirty kilometres away by that point...

"That brat... I hope she doesn't play too much with her opponent this time. It will get into trouble one day..." Muku spoke to himself before looking back at Freya.

He had sensed a rather strong attack... But he wasn't too worried. It should be something Raya can handle if she were even the littlest bit serious...

...

Back on the battlefield...

Only a deep hole more than five kilometres deep and ten kilometres wide was left for a place that used to be a beautiful part of the forest.

Hell, probably a few lower-rank beasts got killed off too. Actually, all the damage from their clash spanned more than twenty kilometres due to the energy waves.

And it was only so little because Raya was keeping it contained. Otherwise, who knows how much forest and how many creatures would have been destroyed...

Such was the destructive might of R5s when serious.

And this was only when they were using targeted attacks. If it were an all-out AOE attack, then thousands upon thousands of kilometres would have been destroyed. The destruction would have easily extended beyond national and continental levels...

And, this was in an improved world. In the "old world" before the multiple evolutions. A single R5 was enough to destroy the whole planet within a few moves...

They wouldn't even need to use AOE spells. Just a targeted attack aimed at the core would have taken care of everything. However, that was pretty much impossible for them to do in the current world. So there was no need to fear...

Anyway, that didn't matter right now...

"Ow ow ow! That hurt! When was the last time I've been hurt anyway? Gosh, if Muku finds out about this I'll probably not hear the end of it... Fortunately, there are no witnesses... Well, that is after I take care of you..." Raya spoke while grimacing in pain.

As Muku suspected, she had played too much and suffered because of it.

Usually, he'd be there to cover for her... So maybe, this wasn't a bad experience for her. She needed the wake-up call.

With that said, the goblin's ultimate move. Which was a concentration of energy capable of destroying countries was of course deadly even to Raya if she wasn't careful... Which she wasn't...

But fortunately, her instincts were the best out there...

So while her brain was lazing around and enjoying the fun. Her senses realised the danger of the situation soon enough to react at the last moment...

And that's what brought about the change in Raya's form...

The current her was no longer just a cute little girl... She was now completely covered in white scales from top to bottom...

There wasn't enough time for a complete power-up to her ultimate form she has never used before. So her defence was partially breached.

And that's why she was grimacing in pain. The acid was really quite painful.

If it wasn't because the clothes she was wearing were from Mrs C and could use her mana to strengthen their own defence. She would have been left naked.

And even then, they were eroded all over and would take a while before they recovered...

Currently, she was holding the completely defeated goblin upside-down with its leg.

The goblin's plan was to use its ultimate and very costly in terms of mana spell as a distraction to escape.

It knew that it probably wouldn't be able to get rid of her even with that attack. So it didn't put much faith in defeating her. It only hoped she was distracted long enough for it to disappear into the ground...

And the effect was even better than expected because the child played too much.

Yet even then, it was still caught...

And then came a shocking discovery when it laid eyes on Raya's partial transformation... It was messing with a freaking true dragon!

Sure, it was new that Raya had something to do with dragons from her draconic mana. But it thought that she was just a higher level of lesser dragons like a drake or something.

But the scale pattern and natural aura which became clearer when she showed her scales suggested otherwise.

Hell, even her natural aura has become a lot more suppressive without her doing anything. Which wasn't something lesser dragons could achieve passively.

It hadn't come across a true dragon before, and probably no one had for a very very long time. But the legend still reigned supreme.

They were about as well-known as Monarchs in The Beast World, and that was without being active in some way like Monarchs. This showed just how impressive they were.

And for that very reason, the goblin immediately recognised Raya for what she was.

With the discovery, its hope for escape was completely extinguished. Though it wasn't like it could do much now after exhausting more than 95% of its mana...

"Honestly goblin, if it was a while back. Your plan might have worked. But unfortunately for you... I experienced a somewhat similar incident before. I'm still not too sure whether the enemy really escaped or not. But I think they did. Anyway, it happened during a big attack... And from then on, I have been paying attention to the ground more than the sky when an opponent is cornered and is likely to escape. So... Tough luck kid. Better luck next time" Raya who felt that she had squeezed all the fun she could out of the goblin became chatty as she explained why the goblin's plan failed...

{So you're telling me that my plan failed because of something that might not even have happened? Like you're not even sure if the enemy escaped yet your so sensitive! How's that fair to me?! I think I should sue!"} The goblin complained to itself in its head but didn't say anything to Raya.

There was no need to say anything. Its fate was already sealed... As for trying to beg for its life? Ha! No true beast would ever do that even if they are tortured half to death.

Sure, there were some shameless enough to do it. But most wouldn't. And if it was to beg, Raya was definitely the type to agree then kill you suddenly just when you started celebrating with an innocent smile on her face.

So yeah, it was better to just quietly get killed off...

It had lived a rather fulfilling life despite the end. Though it regretted not being able to reach R6. Supposedly something interesting was waiting for it on that rank...

"What? Not gonna say anything? Tsk. Whatever, I guess I'll just kill you now" Raya was quickly bored by how the goblin wasn't saying anything and decided to end it.

The goblin closed its eyes waiting for death's embrace... And yet, it waited and waited and waited, yet nothing came...

"Oh? You thought it was going to be a quick death? With this thick scent of lower-level blood on you, which is clearly from the unnecessary killing of weak creatures. Do you really think you deserve a quick death? I mean sure, I'm in the past. I probably wouldn't care. But now... Well, let's just say my human corrupted me. So I suddenly feel an urge to self-righteously avenge the ones you've killed even though I'd have killed them too for the littlest offence... With that, let the torture begin..." Raya explained to the goblin why it wasn't dead yet then...

Inky black energy seeped out of her hand which was holding the goblin's large leg and entered its body then...

"AHHHH.... ROOOOOOAR!"

Not even two seconds in the goblin felt so much pain that it subconsciously changed back to its original form.

As for why it did that, when it wouldn't change anything... Well, as its original form, it subconsciously felt like the safest even though it was weaker in battle compared to the ultimate form....

But it wasn't without merit, since physically it was stronger... The ultimate was the strongest in that it had the best of its two forms, but it wasn't as extreme in terms of speed, strength or defence compared to just choosing one form.

There were beings with an ultimate form stronger than the two other forms, but the goblin wasn't one of those. It was part of the majority...

Anyway, maybe in its original form whatever Raya did to it wouldn't feel as painful...

In fact, simply calling it painful might be an understatement... After all, it felt like it was getting eaten very very slowly at the cell level... At the very building blocks of its being.

It wasn't happening on a large scale all at once... No, it was happening slowly and viciously so that it felt like everything.

Even with the levels of cruelty it had displayed in the past. It felt that Raya was way more cruel than it...

"So you were a giant toad all this time huh? It's rather fitting for an ugly goblin to be an even uglier toad in disguise... But unfortunately for you..." Raya acknowledged the news calmly then disappeared.

What followed was...

"ROOOOOOOOOOOOOOAR!"

And even louder cry of pain from the goblin... Or giant toad rather...

"Yup, it doesn't change anything. In fact, it just gives me more to work with..." Raya spoke as she merrily destroyed the giant toad with her darkness element.

"Hmm?" Raya suddenly sensed something then...

Whoosh!