

## **Few Wives 451**

Chapter 451: Dragon Goddess!

It was soon after Klaus's group left that Muku came out of his retreat. A smile beamed on his face. It seemed the retreat was a success.

Without even saying anything to anyone, he headed outside confidently. The others curiously followed.

After that Muku closed his eyes and his aura changed... Well, it wasn't that his aura changed. It was just eclipsed by another aura that originated from his body.

Everyone who mattered immediately identified the aura. It was Raya's. While it was familiar, it was unrecognisable at the same time.

It was way stronger, more brutal and the pressure alone was suffocating. Very similar to the Eagle-Rex from a few months back...

Despite feeling completely suppressed, everyone smiled happily. After all, the wait was over. They finally had a R6 on their side!

They could finally stop living like scared mice and go back to their old way of life. Maybe not completely, but it would be better than the last few months.

As they had those happy thoughts, a blinding white light appeared around Muku and consumed him whole. Then....

"ROOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOAR!"

A draconic roar so loud that it almost burst everyone's eardrums resounded in the area.

It was a roar which signalled the descent of the dragon goddess as a certain dragon girl liked calling herself. And the t cleared out the white light.

This allowed everyone to see Raya who had come out with the light.

While they could see her.... They could only see her belly when they looked up.

Which was understandable because the current Raya was completely different from before. Not only was she a lot bigger than before, but she also looked very different from before.

Firstly her size.... She was now around 500 metres in length with a propositional thickness.

That's right, she was even bigger than the Eagle-Rex and was effectively half a kilometre big. It seems the Eagle-Rex was on the smaller side of R6s despite being so much bigger than R5s.

Or maybe Raya was just an exception. But considering that beasts don't start out at their max size when they reach a rank, which meant that Raya was going to get bigger... The Eagle-Rex was probably a runt.

Again, knowing Raya, it was probably both. Like she was likely an exception and the Eagle-Rex was a bit small. Though that didn't mean it would be weaker than other beasts in battle. Size doesn't determine much in a world of magic. It just made one look more intimidating that's all...

Anyway, Raya's appearance had changed from white with black fur on her back to pitch black with greyish fur on her back and a white underbelly.

And she had regained a serpentine-like figure. For reference, think of Shenron from DBZ/S.

It seemed she had finally passed her infancy state... In terms of body anyway. With how she was putting on an unnecessary show, it was obvious that she was still very much a child inside.

"Shut up you noisy dragon! And restrain your aura, do you want to kill us?!" Muku shouted angrily with a pale expression on his face.

Containing an R6 as an R5 wasn't easy. Bringing out that R6 was even harder. So the current Muku was completely spent. This meant that he could barely take Raya's aura.

If the girls weren't shielding him, he'd be on the ground with the weaker people.

Raya who had finally stopped roaring tilted her head slightly and looked directly at Muku. She immediately got the urge to bully him.

Unfortunately momma Audrey was right there, so she couldn't ruin her reputation.

{Tsk} With a mental tongue click only heard by Muku, she restrained her aura and was enveloped by a black light as she took on her human form.

Muku mentally cursed her. The brat dared to be so rude to him after all he did for her! He provided mana and time he could have used to advance himself yet this was the thanks he was getting?

He swore never to let her advance first next time. And they were definitely going to fight it out the moment he advances!

He completely forgot how he had bullied her for the last two months when she couldn't do anything.

"Hello everyone! How've you been? Did you miss me?" Raya greeted everyone after transforming.

However, no one said anything, they just looked at her with wide eyes...

"What's wrong? Why are you all looking at me like that?" Raya asked.

Snap!

Elsa snapped her fingers and water as reflective as a mirror appeared in front of Raya.

Raya's eyes were immediately drawn to it and they widened as well.

After all, the girl who appeared in the reflection looked almost nothing like she did before.

Long black hair with white endings and a grey in-between. It almost looked like a gradient effect had been applied to it.

Burning yellow eyes with normal pupils instead of the usual slit. A face that looked around sixteen with features so perfect they'd catch up to Audrey in a few years....

That's right, Raya who had looked ten or less for years had finally had a growth spurt... And it was huge.

She had literally gone from ten to sixteen!

Fortunately, her clothes had a resizing feature or it might have been ripped off her body. Even if it wasn't, it would have been an act of public indecency with how short it would be.

The little doll now looked like a gorgeous young lady who would make everyone turn their heads.

"Oh my god! You're so beautiful!" Finally, Audrey reacted and before anyone could react, she was already hugging Raya so tightly that one would think she was trying to absorb the girl into her own body.

The scene was quite comical but everyone kinda understood because Raya was that pretty.

The other girls couldn't help but feel a bit jealous. Sure, they were all drop-dead gorgeous. But they were still a bit below Audrey. And now, they were below Audrey and Raya. Maybe not currently, but when Raya reaches full maturity, she'll definitely be on Audrey's level at least, if not beyond.

That's when they remembered something... Raya's body was "designed" by Mrs C, Muku's mysterious mother. A final-boss level being. So of course she'd be unreasonably beautiful.

While that thought didn't actually change anything, it did make them feel better. And so... They joined Audrey in hugging and punching Raya happily.

Raya who was initially happy about her advancement and upgraded look was immediately thrown into depression by what was happening.

For the longest time, she thought that if she no longer looked like a pinchable little kid, then the girls would stop treating her like their cute toy...

Unfortunately, things didn't go according to plan. Her updated look just made them more enthusiastic.

What made it worse was the schadenfreude she could see clearly on Muku's face as he looked on from the background. She decided to make him pay for that later...

And so, both were planning on making each other pay later. Something pretty common at that point really...

After that, everyone went inside. They couldn't discuss outside after all...

.....

Inside....

"Congratulations on your advancement Raya. And to answer your question from before, of course we missed you" Audrey was the first to speak.

After all, Muku was so spent he didn't want to speak. If the girls hadn't stopped him, he would have gone to sleep already.

Of course, there was no way they'd let him leave so easily after a two-month-long separation. It was a bit selfish but oh well...

"Thank you mamma" Raya replied with a little blush on her face.

She didn't move away from Muku though. She still had her guard up against her overly affectionate momma Audrey and the other girls.

Seeing her reaction, Audrey smiled wryly. But she understood the little girl.

In fact, she didn't want to be so affectionate with Raya, but she was so cute it was hard to hold herself back. So it really couldn't be helped.

After that, everyone congratulated Raya. Even Lisa who was awkwardly present did so. She didn't want to be, but Jade and Freya dragged her along.

For whatever reason, Jade had grown to like Lisa a lot. Maybe it was because of her great showing in that great battle from before...

Anyway, after that, they all got to business.

The main question was...

"What's next?" Audrey asked Muku on behalf of everyone else.

"...That's easy. I'm next. But first, I'm going to sleep. I've been up for over two months to consciously monitor this brat, so I need rest. Wake me up in a week. You can have her help you reach the peak in that time. It should be easy enough for her now..." Muku spoke after gathering himself.

Without waiting for anyone to say anything, he got up and left. L

This time, no one stopped him. They could see that he really needed the sleep.

In normal situations, he could have done even six months without sleep with his strength. But, he had to constantly manage the energy going to Raya for maximum results, so he was mentally spent.

And so, as Muku slept, the girls did as they were told. With Raya's help, they charged for the peak!...

Chapter 452: Believers...

A week later...

Raya was currently trying to bribe everyone to be her believers with politician-like benefits.

She had literally gathered everyone. And so, more than four thousand people stood on an open ground while listening to her bullshit. They could tell that she'd never actually do things like protecting them personally until they're strong enough, teleporting them wherever they wanted, and so on.

However, they continued to listen for three reasons. The first was that leaving before she was done would probably get you beaten up. The second reason was that she had helped them all at some point, so they could at least listen to what she was saying. Lastly, the solid benefit she mentioned was enough to make anyone want to stay.

And that was getting the ability to teleport once every six months. Sure, it seemed extremely restricted, but it was clearly a peak-tier lifesaving ability.

In fact, Raya knew that she only had to say that to make them stay but she just wanted to pretend to be an unscrupulous politician. And so, everyone could only entertain her.

The girls were also present, they were interested to know what she wanted to say. Plus, she had spent the last week helping them reach the peak, so they couldn't be absent.

Besides, the experience offered them insights into how R6s operate.

Muku had briefly talked to them about the R6 believers' system, but he hadn't been too clear since it was second-hand info.

Now that they had an R6 of their own, as aspiring R6s themselves, of course they had to listen in.

Though Raya wasn't going into detail yet. She did promise to do that when they were done with getting believers though.

And so, after a while of spouting random stuff, Raya finally got to the point everyone was waiting for.

This was accepting her power absorbing some of her blood essence. Fortunately, just a little drop was enough for everyone present or she wouldn't have had enough if everyone needed a drop.

Anyway, the essence will enter the person's body through their forehead.

For this to work, they had to be willing. Which they all were.

There was another method of willingly submitting oneself to someone, but that only works when there are strong feelings between two people. Which were absent between Raya and most of the people present.

That method did work on the girls though. They all loved Raya a lot. Which should be obvious from how they immediately start pinching her every chance they get.

Another thing, this method had no limit on how many people a person could believe in. The blood essence could only be used once on a person.

If it wasn't for that, most people wouldn't have accepted Raya's offer. Even if it was great, they'd rather believe in their loved ones than Raya. Even the girls might not have accepted since it affected a person's chances of advancing beyond R6...

Anyway, after that, some idiots couldn't wait to test if they really could teleport now. And so they did after being told how...

Some teleported onto tree tops and others into their houses. After that they joyfully celebrated with others... Then they were reminded how they couldn't use the ability again until six months later.

While they cried others rejoiced and laughed at their misery. It was just human nature to enjoy the suffering of others after all...

As that happened, Raya enjoyed the feeling of having a new and mysterious power in her body.

She couldn't directly use it and could only feel it in her body. However, she could feel it slowly improve her mana.

For whatever reason she felt that it was doing more than just improve the mana quality. She felt like there was a change happening. But it was still vague, so she ignored it for the time being...

As that happened, she was dragged inside by the girls who couldn't wait to hear more about what being an R6 felt like.

After all, it wasn't too far from their current PR5 rank...

.....

Inside the castle...

"Sigh, I wish this had happened before my brothers left. I would have felt a lot better about them being out there with your ability to rely on if things went south" Jade was the first one to speak for once.

And it made sense considering how much she was worried about her brothers. The others were a bit surprised though. Not that they thought she was heartless, but she rarely showed that she cared, and when she did, it was never so straightforward.

"Umm, sorry big sis. Why not call them back? Muku should have given them phones right?" Raya replied.

She didn't feel particularly bad about it, but for Jade's sake, she at least had to pretend to care. Plus she'd get four more believers, and that was never a bad thing. Something told her that the more believers one had, the better...

"Yeah! You're right! I'll go do that!" Jade replied feeling a bit better after hearing Raya's plan.

Fortunately, Muku had gifted Klaus a phone. He couldn't gift too many since they were limited. But one was enough for contacting a small group of four traveling together...

Everyone waited for her to return since it wouldn't take long. After that, Raya finally started speaking... Well, she was about to when a familiar voice was heard...

"Well now, y'all holding meetings without me now? Is this the legendary coup? And to think that it would be my closest allies who'd do this. Ohhh the travesty!" Muku immediately began blowing things out of proportion as he walked down the stairs.

"Oh shut up and come take a seat! I knew you were about to wake up" Raya replied while rolling her eyes. She knew she shouldn't have been nice enough to wait for this drama queen.

"Okay, sorry, geez. And I thought I'd lighten the mood," Muku replied while taking a seat beside Hope, who had "graciously" pushed her friend Chloe to the edge of the couch to create space for Muku in between them.

Chloe was about to settle scores when she was calmed down by Muku, who sat in between them and put his hand on her shoulder, then looked at her with a little smile.

That smile made her feel like her whole body had turned into jelly as he melted in his embrace.

The others put on a knowing smile. It was clear that Muku had subtly defended Hope while diffusing the situ... Nope, he just wanted to feel up Chloe.

It was kinda obvious from his touchy hand that had to be slapped away by Layla for him to finally behave.

"Cough, so, what were you all talking about?" Muku coughed off the embarrassment... Though honestly, it was debatable whether he was embarrassed or not.

Of anything, everyone else was embarrassed for him.

At the same time, they couldn't help but give each other knowing looks. As someone who rarely kept things from them, he had told them about how his bloodline was messing with him.

Since he had never been so blatant before, they figured that it was the reason. So none held it against him.

Hell, a competitive spirit even rose within some of them. They wanted to be the one to satisfy him. After all, it had been a while for those who had done it with him and had been beyond long enough for those who hadn't done anything yet.

Only Freya and Lisa had faint blushes on their faces from the weird vibe they felt in the room. Raya was clueless as usual, and Elsa had mixed feelings, but it didn't show on her face.

"Well, I was about to tell them about what it's like being a R6. Before you rudely interrupted. Anyway, since I'm a nice dragon, I'll repeat what I already said before. And I'll be more detailed too," Raya replied.

Muku nodded in understanding as well as signaling her to continue.

"Well, you know the general idea already right? Reach R6, get believers for a small price of mana and blood essence since when they use the ability, you lose mana. What they give you is belief energy, which feels indispensable in moving forward. And there are two methods to get it, a genuine belief from close ones, and through blood essence connection from normal people. Anyway, what I didn't tell those randos was that there's another energy one can get. And that energy is hate energy. That's right, being hated actually has benefits now. However, it seems it's not as effective as belief energy. Likely because it's easier to be hated than loved, so the Heavens had to balance the two. But hey, at least one doesn't have to be a people pleaser if they don't want to right?" Raya paused as she let her words sink in.

She had actually put the worries of some of the girls to rest. After all, humans were simply too hard to please. Not to mention their dwindling numbers.

And getting beasts to believe in you was rather preposterous. Not even Raya, a genuine beast, could do that.

Sure, she probably would be able to do it if she tried, but it would take a lot more time than getting humans to believe.

Humans sometimes believe in kindness, but beasts mostly believe in strength. However, their belief in your strength doesn't mean they'd be willing to believe in you.

Hell, it practically puts a target for conquering on your back.

So yeah, the hatred energy was definitely a good thing despite sounding bad and requiring a lot more of it than belief...

Chapter 453 Iris joins in

"Well... Is it just me or does it seem like it would be better to gather hate than belief? It will require a lot of bad deeds, but it's still a more manageable and stable option. After all, you can't depend on someone to always believe in you, but you can depend on them to hate your guts no matter what. Hell, they might hate you for no reason at all" Jade spoke gleefully.

She could already see herself bullying beasts left and right for their hate.

The others looked at her quietly.

"What? Is it that surprising? I mean, I don't remember giving any of you the impression that I wouldn't do such a thing," Jade spoke in confusion.

"No, that's not why we're looking at you like this. Actually, I don't think any of us disagrees. You make a great point even. I think everyone is quiet because they didn't expect to be on the same page as you" Muku replied.

"Hey!... HEY!" The first "hey" was for Muku and the second was for everyone else since they didn't deny his words.

"Are you all calling me dumb?" Jade asked angrily.

"No, not dumb but definitely belligerent" Muku corrected.

"Oh, so you're saying I'm prone to violence?... Well, I guess I can't deny that" Jade admitted with no hesitation at all.

After all, she was self-aware.

"Umm, sorry to burst your bubble, everyone, but... The disadvantages of hate energy go beyond just that. There's also the suppression effect that belief energy has over hate energy. From what I understand, one needs at least ten times more hate energy to resist any amount of belief energy..." Freya's voice suddenly sounded.

However, from the way she spoke, her aura, and the green colour in her eyes, everyone could tell that it was no longer Freya who was speaking. Iris had taken over at some point.

Of course, it was with Freya's permission.

"What? Really?!" Raya was the first to exclaim in surprise.

She had gotten some belief energy from thousands, but it was still not enough, and it would take a long time to build up enough. So she had decided to get herself some hate energy as a supplement.

But now that plan was no longer viable.

She was someone who prides herself on being the best and only using the best. So if hate energy was actually inferior to belief energy then she didn't want it.

But wait...

"Even if it's inferior. What does that have to do with anything? Won't its use end the moment I reach R7?" Raya asked before Iris could say anything else.

"Yes and no. Yes in that it really won't help you in anything after ranking up. No in that it shapes your R7 energy. After that, no matter how strong you get, you'll always be weaker in terms of energy purity when compared to anyone of the same level. Actually, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that what you do as an R6 will shape your future. It decides whether you'll be someone who matters or not. It's probably why that Spikes fellow Muku decided to go with the believers' route, even though it meant aligning himself with humans, since beasts are harder to deal with," Iris explained.

For whatever reason, she seemed a bit more generous than usual. After all, in normal times, she wouldn't speak without being asked or explain so clearly even when she answered.

"Oh, so that's how it is huh? Well, I guess I can only patiently wait for the belief energy to build up. After all, looking for more humans for this sounds like something I don't want to do. Besides, I doubt I'll reach PR6 anytime soon" Raya thought about it and quickly accepted Iris' words.

After all, with so many believers, she was probably doing more than most R6s on the planet.

"Well, at least someone is happy" Hope spoke in a depressed voice.

And she wasn't alone. She and most of the girls had mostly kept a superficial relationship with both Klaus and Lisa's groups. And since the blood essence route has been claimed by Raya, they could only rely on the actual belief route.

Something which felt impossible based on the lack of attachment between them and the people. And like Raya, they have completely turned on the hate path.

They also wouldn't accept being inferior to anyone for the rest of their lives.

This left them with a big problem. And that was... How were they going to get belief energy?

Well, no matter what, they had to get it. They just had to come up with a plan on how. Interestingly enough, they all turned to Muku as they thought this.

"What? Why are you looking at me like that? Oh.. Ooooh, you think I'll come up with a plan for you? Hahaha. No. I personally don't need such a thing after all. Not only am I well respected in Lisa and Klaus's groups but there's also Jake's group. For that reason, I probably only have to say the word and I'll get all the belief energy I'll need. So you're on your own ladies! Haha!" Muku laughed at the ladies while being of no help at all.

The ladies looked at him quietly with dark expressions on their faces. After all, there was nothing they could do. And he was speaking the truth.

Though they did feel disdainful of how he literally only remembered Jack's group because he needed their help.

Such a politician-like move from someone who said he hated politicians.

"Come on, stop looking at me like that. It's not like it's something urgent. There's still some time before any of us even need the believers. I'm sure you'd have thought of something by then. For now, focus on moving from actually reaching R6. Fortunately for all of us, R5 is a consolidation stage. We literally just have to improve our mana quality and control up to a certain stage then advance. Though it's really not easy to improve mana we have already improved to our perceived limits, but it should be doable since it's a requirement. Think of it as breaking our limits. Isn't that fun?" Muku hyped up the girls.

The girls relaxed a bit after hearing his words. After all, he was telling the truth. They really didn't need to stress about R6 yet. They first needed to break their mana purity limits then advance. And it wasn't as easy as Muku made it seem.

"Now that that's done. What do you want plant fairy?" Muku's gaze looked in Iris' direction with a serious expression on his face.

The fairy still hadn't retreated into Freya's body. This could only mean that she wanted something.

"Fufu. It's great to deal with smart people. Though I still hate you. Anyway, I feel it's about time you pay up for all those favors you owe me. After all, your strength should be sufficient. Of course, I'm reasonable enough to let you reach the R6 first," Iris replied smilingly.

"Tsk. I should have known when you were so generous. Fine, what do you want?" Muku replied in an annoyed tone.

Though it was just an act. He was no longer annoyed by Iris after all that happened. But he didn't want the fairy to realize that since she'd probably take advantage of him because of it. After all, as she said, she hated him. Maybe not enough to want him dead, but definitely enough to want to make his life harder.

"Hehe. It's good that you're a man of your word. And what I want isn't anything too troublesome actually. I just want a hundred R6 beast cores from plant-type beasts" Iris revealed with a sweet smile on her face.

"So that's all you want huh? Well, that's simple. Let me get on that right now... Is that what you thought I'd say? Bullshit! You want a hundred plant-type R6 cores?? Not only have we only come across fewer than ten plant types since the apocalypse began, but you want R6s only? Even if Raya and I team up after ranking up, I don't think we'd take on that R6 that passed by us back then. That thing was definitely at its peak. I wasn't sure at the time, but I was sure from the moment I felt Raya's aura. The feeling from the two was about equal and yet its aura was suppressed while Raya's was released. Do you think we can fight such beings? Sure, they shouldn't all be that strong, but I don't think any R6 will be easy to kill," Muku snapped.

He should have known that this damned fairy would never ask for anything reasonable.

"Sigh. Of course I know that my request is rather troublesome. But I'm only saying it because I know you can achieve it. Trust me, I know more than anyone about rare plant-types are. After all, they have a harsher natural selection process than most. However, let me finish speaking before coming to a conclusion. You see, the truth is as you said, one can't possibly expect to find so many in this world at this time. But it should be manageable in the beast world right?" Iris spoke calmly.

It seemed she was serious as she even put aside her playfulness.

"What do you mean?" Muku asked seriously. His heart beat even increased a bit.

From what he observed so far. Reaching the peak of R6 might not be possible on the Blue Planet before the next evolution. So, whatever Iris was on about might be worth looking into.

"I mean that I know how to get to the Beast World," Iris replied calmly...

Chapter 454: Confused Lisa

"..."

Nobody spoke after Iris dropped the bomb. That's how shocked they were.

After all, they had figured that there were only two ways to get there. The first was being dragged there by unknown forces, similar to what happened to Muku. And the other was through portals from which beasts came. Of course, that method had never been tried; they just figured that it probably worked.

But who was dumb enough to try it and confirm it? Like, not only would they have to go through waves of beasts, but they'd be more beasts waiting on the other side with Monarchs looking on. So yeah, assuming that it worked was all anyone was willing to do.

Lisa was mostly confused by what was happening. From how Freya seemed to be possessed to the whole Beast World thing. Sure, every person had obviously figured out that beasts were coming from somewhere. But they didn't know where. However, these people were speaking as if they were very familiar with the other side.

Something which surprised her despite already thinking highly of everyone present. And she wanted to also them to explain in detail what was going on...

But of course, she didn't dare. It didn't seem like the time. Nor was she familiar enough with them to casually ask such things. Of course there was Freya... but she seemed out of commission for the time being.

So Lisa could only look on quietly in confusion while trying to piece together whatever she could.

"What... not gonna ask anything?" Iris added teasingly.

"... How do you get there and why didn't you say so sooner?" Muku finally spoke after a little silence.

"Well, you never asked so..." Iris replied with a shrug.

"Don't give me that bull!" Muku lightly snapped at her.

"Tsk. As expected of humans. Blaming others for their shortcomings. Well, whatever, I didn't think much of you anyway. As for how to get there, it's part of the reason why I didn't say it before. The reason is simple. You were too weak to do anything about it even if you knew. In fact, you're still too weak. You'll need at least 7 R6s to barely have enough energy to use the method. Something which you clearly don't have. I'm only saying it now because I see hope. I thought at least half of you would be dead by now, so I didn't see the need to say anything," Iris explained in more detail.

She was so brutally honest that her own hand rose up and pinched her cheek. It was obviously Freya who was listening in and giving her a warning.

"Oh, so that's how it is. Well, if that's the case. I totally understand. We'll talk more about the matter when everyone has ranked up to R6. For now, we still have some other matters to worry about" Muku replied seriously.

"So, you agree to my proposition?" Iris asked. It was important to confirm when talking to a fickle person like Muku after all.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. You'll get your cores if it works out. But just know that it's not something I'm willing to risk my or my group's lives for" Muku replied.

"Fair enough. Would be weird if you were willing to go that far" Iris accepted without hesitation.

It was the best she would ever get from Muku after all.

"Now, on to other matters. Everyone, I'm sure you already know what to do. So before we lock in, I'd like to day... last one to advance is a rotten egg!" Muku made a childish joke which earned him eye rolls from all the girls.

Even Lisa was starting to realise that this "godly" fellow she admired so much was as human as any other human. Hell, he was even a docky human at that.

"Aren't you forgetting something?" Jade suddenly asked. Completely ignoring Muku's dumb joke.

"Hmm? I don't think so..." Muku replied confusedly.

The others also looked at Jade with confusion in their eyes.

"Sigh. Now I'm going to seem like the crazy one for saying this but whatever. Aren't we going to have a tournament this time? I mean, we did say we'll have the next one when everyone reaches the peak. And here we are. We even have a new player and many spectators. I thought you'd be going crazy about wanting a tournament by now..." Jade spoke.

The more she spoke, the brighter Muku's eyes. So much was happening that he had forgotten about something so important.

Honestly, if he wasn't sure she'd dodge, he'd have tried to kiss Jade on the spot. Shamelessly not caring about the onlookers.

But wait...

"Won't it cause a commotion we can't afford, unlike before? I mean, PR5 strength isn't something to mess with easily. And R6s should be able to easily pick up on it" The party pooper but also, the voice of reason, Layla spoke.

"Don't worry about that. I've got you. I can completely isolate the space with my space element. It's a lot better at hiding aura than Mana barriers. And I can easily tank all your attacks even if you attacked at once with my higher rank..." Raya replied before anyone else could.

Muku's eyes, which were losing their light, lit up again. He had completely forgotten that Raya's space element could be used that way.

Fortunately, the dragon girl was influenced by him to the point of also loving tournaments.

When he looked at Raya after she spoke, she didn't seem as disagreeable as before. Maybe he will cancel that revenge he was planning... Nah, that's too much. The best he could do was tone it down a bit. That should be enough.

"Oh? Well, then I guess there's no problem" Layla no longer opposed.

After all, she was also interested in seeing the best among them. She was just worried about their safety. Now that it was guaranteed, everything was okay.

It seems Muku had rubbed off on them all. After all, none of them ever turn down a tournament no matter how much they complain.

It was also because they were curious to see the current best since it was never one fixed person every time. Well, Raya and Muku were pretty much guaranteed to be above everyone else. But after that, nothing was guaranteed.

So, knowing who was the current best among them before ranking up was always great. It gave them the motivation to keep pushing on until the next tournament to either maintain their position or take first place.

The current champ was obviously Audrey after dominating the force tournament. So she felt the most pressure as everyone would be after her and her spot.

Plus the fact that mana wasn't allowed last time made her win controversial.

After all, it was pretty obvious that she won because she was more talented than the others when it came to the force technique. However, on paper, when it came to mana, they were all the same. So it was anyone's game on who would come out on top.

Just thinking about it made everyone's blood boil.

Everyone but Lisa of course. She was still behind on the last few topics and now they had moved on to another topic she didn't understand. She even felt a headache coming on from how hard it was to keep up with this eccentric group. And no one could blame her.

The way they switched topics was so casual and carefree that you'd think they weren't in an apocalypse.

"Now that that's covered. Does anyone object to the tournament?" Muku asked the others.

"I object to you shamelessly partaking. While we're technically in the same rank, we all know that it's not that simple" Emily spoke up.

The others nodded in agreement.

You'd think it was something that didn't need to be said, but actually. Muku really was capable of doing such a thing.

His excuse would be something like, "There isn't much difference between us and I'll hold back".

But honestly, no matter how strong a person holds back, their perception will always be superior, along with other underlying qualities.

So, even if they use the same level of energy as their opponent, it won't be fair. And the girls knew this, so there was no way they'd let him participate.

"Tsk. Fine. I like watching more anyway (Pervert!). I'm not a pervert okay! What's wrong about looking at what I'm being shown?! Anyway, I think I said something about a Royal Rumble-type match last time.

But we don't actually have enough people. Plus I want to see avatars clash. For that reason, I feel the best tournament to have is a one-on-one qualifier until the last two remain. We could have you all draw lots for the first round. How does that sound?" Muku first defended his owner then explained how he thought things should go down.

"Hmm. Okay, that makes sense. And I don't think we've actually had such a straightforward tournament despite all the ones you made us have..." Jade was the first to agree and the others followed after.

In this type of competition, the winner should be a lot controversial.

As for why they wouldn't be completely undeniable. It was because of elemental suppression.

Like how water suppresses fire, fire suppresses plants and earth suppresses lightning.

So if a person meets their suppressor, they might lose. Only for their suppressor to lose to someone they suppress. So it wasn't completely indisputable.

But it wasn't anyone's fault. They can only blame their luck in such a situation. And besides, among the strong, the suppression effect can be canceled out if they are skilled enough...

Chapter 455 Drawing Lots

"So when are we holding it?" Chloe asked.

"Hmm. We certainly can't hold it today since it would be too random. But we can't take two long either. So we'll hold it in two days. That's enough time to properly prepare and take care of whatever else might need taking care of" Muku replied.

He was so excited he wanted to do it right there and then, but he knew how to be patient when it was necessary...

"Great. My brothers should be back by then. I want them to experience my greatness" Jade spoke with a happy smile on her face.

After that, everyone left to prepare. One can never be overprepared in such situations after all.

Lisa dragged Freya away to get a more comprehensive version of what just happened. From the very beginning, up to the tournament she was now apparently a part of.

She didn't even want to think about it for the time being. After all, the girls were practically her heroes. So the fact that she now had to fight them felt unreal. As he did, she even had a chance?

She can be said to be the more experienced party, having lived through two apocalypses and developed many fighting techniques as a result. However, the girls probably saw more battle in one life than she did in two.

After all, most of her battles were those she couldn't avoid. She wouldn't fight if she could run away. On the other hand, the girls literally sought out battle. Not to mention the crazy events they had lived through, along with the tournaments they had been in before.

So yeah, no matter how she looked at it. Things didn't look too good for her.

But was she going to give up? Of course not! Even if she lost, it would still be an invaluable experience.

That's why she needed Freya to clear all her confusion before the day came so that she could be as clear headed as she could when the day comes...

....

Two days later...

Everything was ready. The arena, Jade's brothers, and the combatants.

Now all that was left was to draw lots and see who would be fighting whom.

The girls all stood in front of Muku as he held the lots.

Audrey, Emily, Jade, Layla, Chloe, Hope, Elsa, Freya and Lisa...

Clearly, there was now one extra. And so, Muku came up with a way to fix the situation. And that was holding the competition for multiple days.

The reason for this was simple. Everyone will draw lots. Eight will fight on that day while one will advance without fighting anyone.

The four losers of the first round will draw lots then fight each other until there's only one left. That one will then fight the lucky one who advanced without doing anything to see who will advance.

After that, they'd still be five people in round two. So the first four will fight, leaving two losers. Those two losers will fight leaving one. That one will then fight the extra. Then one would advance.

After that, three remain. And again, two will fight for the finals. The winner will advance while the loser will fight the extra. The winner will then fight the first winner to decide the final winner.

It was a bit complicated but the girls liked the idea. After all, in a way, everyone got a second chance.

Hell, the runner-up to the first two to advance might get a second chance at the one who beat them and turn the tables around. Who wouldn't want such a great comeback?

And it was a lot more interesting, too, than the bland one-on-one, where if you lost, you'd be done for good.

None of the girls were one hundred percent sure they'd win on the first try, so the second chance was very much appreciated by all...

Anyways, the spectators were screaming in the stands. Placing bets left and right with excitement in their eyes.

Muku had realised that this was actually a good chance for the girls to gain future believers. After all, fans believed in their icons right?

And so, he even added commentators to the mix. Of course, he himself was one of them. The other ones were Klaus and Raya.

Of course, it was supposed to be two. But Raya threatened not to put up the space isolation barrier if she didn't get a commentator spot, so Muku could only increase the slots. There was no way he was removing himself or his good brother Klaus after all.

With the two of them on commentator duty, it was almost guaranteed that they'd make a few "Stans" among the spectators. Well, maybe not as murderous as Eminem's Stan, but definitely as dedicated.

And so, the time to draw lots had come. The lots weren't different sizes. They were the same size but with different numbers from one to nine. Number one will fight two, three will fight four and so on... Of course, number nine will be the lucky lady who'll get to fight someone they've scouted already.

The one who held the lots was Raya because no one trusted Muku. At least not in this situation.

They all felt that the biased bastard would somehow give Hope the number nine lot. Which wasn't an unreasonable suspicion actually...

Anyway, the first to pick was actually Hope. There was slight hesitation in how she did it, but she'd rather get it over with as quickly as possible.

While she wasn't too keen on fighting, she would do it to show her brother how much she had improved. This was already a step in the right direction from how she didn't want to do it, even for Muku, in the past.

Maybe she had some tricks hidden up her sleeves. Everyone was curious to see how she will do in the upcoming battle...

"Looks like I got number 9... I GOT NUMBER 9! YEAH!!! THIS IS FOR YOU BIG BROTHER!" Hope excitedly shouted after seeing the number at the bottom of the lot.

Sure she was okay with anything, but getting advantages was never a bad thing.

What made her happier was how the others forbade Muku from participating because they thought he'd rig it. Yet, there she was, holding the very reason they didn't want him involved. Which was why she said it was for him.

Muku smiled from the commentator's stand some distance away.

Speaking of which, Raya's space element domain, which she had used to create the isolation ground, was amazing.

The spectators didn't seem to be too far away from the ring, and yet, no matter how fast or how long the girls tried to fly their way, they wouldn't reach.

This was my only for the fans but the girls as well. This way, the girls can go all out without caring about stray attacks hitting the spectators since even fifty kilometers would be too tiny for beings that could cover more than half the huge planet with their power.

But fifty kilometers would be too far for the spectators to effectively enjoy the action. So, Raya did the unthinkable, she warped space so that the spectators could be close enough and far enough at the same time.

This act alone got Raya a huge wave of belief energy. It was just that impressive after all.

Anyways, after Hope came Jade, who could barely contain herself. Her lot had the number three. It was okay but she wanted one or two so that she could be in the first round. But whatever. To her, it was way better than Hope's number which meant she'd fight the next day after her opponent recovered completely...

Then came Emily who got the number 1. And she didn't know how to feel about it. After her was Layla who got 4. This meant, Jade versus Layla was locked in. Both couldn't wait to show the other party who was better.

After that was Chloe who drew number 8. Then Elsa who drew 2. Which meant Emily versus Elsa was locked in.

Emily had a weird expression on her face, not knowing how to feel about the situation. However, Elsa was the complete opposite. She had wanted to fight her sister for the longest time. But she had been either too weak or the time wasn't right. Finally, she was getting her chance! A beautiful smile blossomed on her face as she thought about it.

She could finally realise her dream of being her sister's protector. The first step in that was beating Emily. After all, one can't possibly protect someone stronger than them right?

It was a weird way of thinking but oh well. That's how Elsa thought and no one was changing her mind...

Next was Audrey who drew number five. Then, Freya, who drew number six. This meant that, not only was Audrey versus Freya locked in. But Chloe versus Lisa was also locked in automatically with only one lot left.

And so, the match cards were like this:

Emily Vs Elsa

Jade Vs Layla

Audrey Vs Freya

Chloe versus Lisa

And lucky Hope who will only watch on that day...

Sparks flew among the girls as everyone stared down their opponent.

The spectators were going crazy. Some were even adjusting their premature bets after noticing that some girls were going against their counters. Namely Emily and Chloe.

Everyone knew that water beats fire and earth beats lightning. So things weren't looking too good for those two girls.

But neither of them was scared, though. After all, they knew what the spectators didn't. And that was... among the truly strong, nothing was absolute!...

Chapter 456: Emily vs Elsa

"I'm just realizing something. We don't know the abilities we're using and which we aren't. Or maybe it's a free-for-all?" Elsa suddenly spoke.

"Oh, right. Almost forgot about that. It doesn't matter what you do as long as you're within your avatar. While this is a tournament, it's also practice so that you all learn how to use your avatars better..." Muku's voice boomed in the surroundings as he answered Elsa's question.

"Oh, okay. That makes sense. Then I guess I might as well summon it" Elsa spoke.

As she did, mana exploded out of her body and her avatar was quickly formed around her.

In less than a minute a behemoth around 150 meters in length appeared. That's right, the beast was larger than most R5 avatars and beasts.

Along with its appearance that resembled a cross between a megalodon, a blue whale, and a mosasaur. Its scary look and large size really inspired fear in all who looked at it.

Although the way it floated midair, as if it were in water, was rather majestic.

Just as everyone was mesmerized by the leviathan, they were blinded by a golden light. If it wasn't for Raya's protection, they might have been assaulted by an intense heat wave as well.

Their attention was instantly stolen by the light. However, when they looked at the source, they couldn't clearly see anything yet due to the golden light.

With a loud "Scree!" The golden light disappeared and what stood in its place was a majestic-looking humongous bird that looked like it was made out of golden flames with no real flesh.

Sure, avatars were mana constructs so obviously they wouldn't have flesh. However, other avatars looked like they were real creatures with flesh. However, Emily's phoenix was different. It looked like a flame elemental bird.

Anyway, despite being a bit smaller with a wingspan of around 110 meters, the phoenix was as attention-grabbing as the leviathan...

And so, with both combatants ready, all that was left was for the match to start as the sisters looked at each other through their avatars' eyes.

Emily was just as motivated to win as Elsa was. After all, she was the older sister. So there was no way she'd want to be defeated by her younger sister...

....

"So, brother Klaus, who do you think will win this one?" Muku asked Klaus who was sitting next to him as they looked at the girls transform.

"Hmm. I have had the good fortune of observing both during that last battle. And from what I saw, the younger sister seems to be a battle genius in how she moved and adjusted quickly. Of course, the older sister isn't a slouch either. Just that she isn't as battle-oriented and her element is also not a good match for her sister's. So, I'll go with Ms Elsa. What about you?" Klaus replied after giving it great thought.

"That makes sense. However, I'll go with Emily. As for why... well, I've known her for a very long time and know that she is someone one should never bet against" Muku replied truthfully.

Sure, he was also getting himself some brownie points at the same time in case Emily was listening. But he really believed in her.

The Emily Klaus observed was only part of the Emily he knew. If her craziness comes out, who knows what the result will be? Of course, he'd never say that out loud.

{Hehe. Should I tell her that you think she needs to go crazy to win?} Suddenly Raya's voice sounded in Muku's head.

{Who the hell... Oh. Brat! Get out of my head! And do you think she'll believe you after I complimented her so openly?} Muku was confused by Raya's more mature voice for a second since he wasn't used to it yet and it was the first time he heard it in his head.

{Tsk. You're right. That one really is too crazy about you} Raya begrudgingly agreed.

{So, who do you think will win?} Muku asked her curiously.

{Mmm. I don't know. I feel it will depend on luck or who makes the first mistake. These two know each other too well after all} Raya replied.

{Makes sense} Muku acknowledged then they refocused on the girls who were now staring down at each other as they waited for him to start the match.

"3...2...1...Fight!" Muku shouted to start the match...

.....

"...Fight!"

"ROOOOOOOOAR!"

"SCREEEEEEEEEEEE!"

The moment they heard "fight", the girls who had the same idea roared and released breath attacks.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The water beam and the fight beam met at the center and exploded upon impact. Steam rose and covered up the two avatars completely with a "Tsss" sound.

However...

"Screee!" With a scree. Emily burned away all the mist. Instantly clearing up the area.

"ROOOOOAR!" As if expecting her sister to do that, Elsa was already charging forward with her large mouth wide open. Clearly intending to bite a piece off Emily.

She was upon Emily in less than a second despite the size. Her speed was so fast that if Raya wasn't slowing everything down for the spectators, they wouldn't have been able to keep up.

Things didn't look too good for Emily. However, she wasn't a pushover. She was someone even more experienced than Elsa after all.

And so...

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

With a boost from her flames. She successfully evaded Elsa.

After all, there was no way Elsa would be as fast as her when Emily had so much explosive speed.

Even without that, Emily's avian Phoenix was obviously faster than Elsa's aquatic Leviathan even if the Leviathan could float mid-air as if in water.

After all, the air wouldn't propel it forward as much as water would.

Anyways, Emily didn't stop at just evading, she created countless flaming harpoons in the sky and shot them toward Elsa at the same time hoping to catch her off guard.

Unfortunately, Elsa seemed to have been prepared for failure as the moment she missed Emily, a huge water barrier appeared around her as she repositioned herself to face Emily.

For that reason, the harpoons were neutralized. Though they managed to also weaken the barrier extremely.

Emily saw this and at her top speed, she charged at Elsa with talons out. Then...

Slash! Slash!

One leg destroyed the remaining barrier and the other one slashed at the avatar leaving large wounds.

"ROOOOOOAR!" The Leviathan roared in pain as it was basically Elsa's body when activated.

If the avatar wasn't made of mana, blood would have been flowing freely from the wound from the deep slashes.

It was at that point that everyone realised something. Emily was basically a bird while Elsa was a fish. So, if we ignored their elements and looked at the base... Emily actually had an advantage over Elsa...

"Sorry sis!" Emily's voice was heard from the Phoenix's mouth.

But they didn't mean that she'd stop...

She came back for a second round wanting to take advantage of the opening...

However, this time things didn't go according to plan...

Just when she was about to slash Elsa's back again... the leviathan spun around and two legs somewhat like those of a crocodile grabbed Emily's phoenix legs and...

Whoosh!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Everyone went silent for a moment after the leviathan threw the phoenix to the ground.

After all, they were sure it didn't have those legs before. So what the heck was happening?!...

....

"Umm, Brother Muku... Can you explain?" Klaus asked with a shocked look on his face.

"It's simple really... I have no idea" Muku replied.

"Tsk. A couple of trash commentators. And to think you didn't want me here. Well, let me explain then. What happened was nothing surprising. The Leviathan always had those legs. However, it can retract them into its body. It's probably an evolutionary quality that helps it swim faster by retracting them. It's nothing special among beasts. Elsa probably just didn't know how to take them out before. That or she specifically kept them hidden until this point. Though honestly, you all should be ashamed. Like how did you not realize that a creature with a tail instead of a tail fin would have legs? Didn't humans study mosasaurs? Those creatures had legs right? So what's the problem?" Raya explained while insulting everyone present.

But none were offended. They were long used to this rude young miss. Plus she was pretty. Pretty people can get away with anything.

"Oh, so that's how it is? Well, color me impressed. It seems Emily's winning strategy that was about to take shape is no longer on the table..." Muku replied.

After that they all refocused on the battlefield again.

For some reason, Elsa did do a follow-up attack. She let Emily recover from what happened while looking on from a distance....

....

"Well, that was certainly unexpected..." Emily commented from inside her Phoenix.

"Yeah. I didn't know about it either. I did suspect it though. I even tried it before and nothing happened. Maybe I need pressure..." Elsa replied.

"Hmm. So what you're saying is that our avatars might hold secrets we don't know about huh?" Emily responded.

"Yeah. And sorry to say this sis but I don't think you're winning this..." Elsa said confidently.

"Well, aren't we confident? Interestingly enough, I wanted to say the same to you..." Emily replied as the two monsters looked at each other.

Sparks flew in between them as the second round was about to begin. As for who was going to win...

Chapter 457 Emily vs Elsa (final)

"...."

"..."

The sisters looked at each other silently for a moment then...

"Water Cage!"

"Eruption!"

The girls shouted simultaneously.

Emily's avatar was instantly trapped in a huge water sphere. Obviously, Elsa wasn't trying to strangle her as that would require days. Instead, the water turned and twisted like crazy in the sphere trying to rip the avatar apart.

On the other side, golden flames exploded from under Elsa's avatar.

It wasn't just one explosion but five. One for each leg and a huge one at the center. Emily was obviously trying to take out the leviathan's troublesome legs while also doing significant damage to its bottom region.

Unfortunately, because both had to defend themselves immediately after attacking, their attacks weren't as potent as they should have been so both managed to escape with little damage.

"STORM!" This time Elsa beat Emily to the punch as she exchanged more damage for a chance to cast another spell.

Dark clouds immediately covered the sky. Oddly enough, there wasn't any lightning or thunder in them. Then again, there wasn't any water in Chloe's clouds so it was understandable. After all, the clouds were an imitation made from mana, not the natural version.

However, looking at the clouds made Chloe wonder something... What would happen if the two of them joined hands? What would happen if they added a wind elemental in the mix?...

Well, she didn't have time to linger on the thought. After all, the storm was about to do its work...

Soon after Elsa's voice boomed in the area, which honestly sounded weird, as it looked like the huge and terrifying leviathan had the voice of a youthful girl.

Anyway, heavy rain began pouring down from the sky covering the whole arena.

The thing about the rain was that each drop was strong enough to take out even the strongest pseudo R5 with ease. If caught off guard, a few of the drops could take out LR5s. Add a few thousand more and you could take out MR5s with weak defenses.

And now, Emily was being bombarded with millions. As one can imagine, a Phoenix, being an elemental being had weak defense. So Emily definitely didn't want to face the onslaught of the drops for too long.

So, even if it cost her a significant amount of mana, she had to cast one of her big spells...

"Burning heavens!"

With that booming voice, the dark sky started to quickly get taken over by a golden light until...

Tsss...

All the clouds along the water that contained in them were destroyed. What was left of them was mist that was also destroyed immediately after.

But Emily wasn't happy. After all, she has used at least twice the mana Elsa used in that exchange.

This was because of the elemental suppression. Her Phoenix even deemed down a bit...

However, she didn't think all hope was lost yet. There were still cards she hadn't played yet like...

WWWWWWHIZ!

Suddenly laser beams came out of the Phoenix's eyes and in less than a second they hit the leviathan on the chest as it was floating above it... Well, that's how it was supposed to go but the leviathan managed to block with its leg just in time.

It used that chance to pivot its body out of the way. However, it wasn't without cost as the leg was pierced right through by the concentrated flame energy.

"ROOOOAR!" The Leviathan was made to cry from pain again.

Its eyes immediately became even more fierce than before. Then...

"FLOOD!"

Before the Phoenix could fly high, it was slammed into by a body of water that reached more than five hundred kilometers into the sky.

That's right, Elsa had put a little extra into that one.

And so, the phoenix was washed away. Before it could react...

"WHIRLPOOL!"

Elsa mercilessly cast another spell with the flood water then the phoenix started spinning as it got dragged deeper into the water.

At that point, everyone, including Muku felt that Emily was done for. They could tell that Emily's control of the phoenix was still stiff and a little outside interference would throw her off. So being subjected to the whirlpool was the worst thing that could happen to her.

Getting out seemed to be out of the question. Sure, she could use the previous strategy of more for less to cancel out the spell. But would she have enough mana after that?

After all, the spells they were using against each other were concentrated ones that drained not only mana but also mental energy in maintaining them.

So, even if she still had mana, with a dizzy mind, it would all be useless as she wouldn't be able to fight effectively or cast spells like that.

And so...

"I surrender..." Emily's voice boomed in the surroundings just before she was completely enveloped by the water.

Her voice was loud but calm. If she threw all caution to the wind, she'd probably come out on top despite the current situation. However, she didn't want a win that could be called a fluke. So it was better to give up now and come up with a better plan for the future.

After all, unlike Elsa who was always studying her and trying to figure out how to beat her, she had never looked at her sister like that. She didn't need to... But now it was different, she was confident that the next time they faced each other, things would be different...

Hearing Emily's surrender, Elsa canceled the spell. Though she wasn't too happy about the win since she knew Emily hadn't gone all out, hell she probably still had way over half her tank in power still left...

But a little smile still appeared on her face, after all, she had taken a step in the right direction. After that, they both withdrew their avatars.

What was left was the two sisters looking at each other at the center of the ring and both huffing slightly, Emily a bit more than Elsa.

The crowd was screaming loudly in the background. Of course, it was only the ones who had bet on Elsa. Which happened to be the majority, hence the loud noise.

"Congratulations. You beat me fair and square" Emily was the first to speak.

"Please don't mock me. We both know you were barely trying" Elsa replied calmly.

"Well, if you don't know what you want me to say. All I know is that you won and it's the only time you'll never win. So you might as well celebrate it right?" Emily replied haughtily.

"Interesting words from the one who lost. But fine, we'll see who will win next time... I hope it's not this disappointing" Elsa spoke without changing her tone.

Though beneath the calm she felt excited because she could tell that Emily was definitely going to take her seriously next time. If she can defeat her, then all her training would have paid off.

After that, the two sisters left the arena. Since they were done fighting, Raya's restriction didn't stop them...

....

"Well, if I didn't expect such an abrupt ending, did you?" Muku asked the others.

"Nope, neither did I. I mean, I thought she'd win, but I also thought she'd work for it some more" Klaus replied first.

"From what Emily said, it seems she doesn't take this as a loss. Just a wake-up call. Maybe she plans on winning the second chance and challenging Elsa again somewhere down the tournament" Raya gave her thoughts.

"Oh... That sounds amazing. The big sister loses the first fight only to make a comeback by fighting taking out many capable warriors for a second chance at her sister. Sounds like a movie. I can't wait!" Muku excitedly said.

"Yeah well, it might not be possible. After all, none of the others are easy pickings" Raya reminded Muku of Emily's terrible odds.

"Can't you let a man dream?" Muku indirectly agreed with her.

"So you don't believe in me?" Emily's voice suddenly sounded from beside Muku.

"Nooo, of course I believe in you. I just think it would be too biased to think that you'll defeat everyone. That's all..." Muku replied in a slightly cautious manner.

"Tsk. Watch me..." Emily replied in an annoyed tone since she couldn't find any fault in his words. She then went to sit down as the next combatants stepped arena...

It was now Jade versus Layla. Basically, everyone was screaming for Jade. After all, she was basically the most active among the group.

While she didn't interact with anyone outside of the group, she was famous for her battle junky nature.

On the other hand, Layla was basically a mysterious ice beauty. And that's all they knew about her.

So supporting Jade was only natural. Plus to half of the spectators, she was the younger sister of their leader.

Even then, there were a few who supported Layla. She just seemed cool to them...

....

"Even though I know your answer. I will ask anyway. Who do you think will win?" Muku asked Klaus.

"My sister obviously. And as you can hear, I'm not the only one" Klaus replied with a proud grin on his face.

"Hoho. Is that so? Well, I think Layla will take it" Muku spoke.

"I think that also" Raya agreed with Muku.

"Hahaha. Let's watch and see then" Klaus replied...

Chapter 458: Layla versus Jade...

"Hehe. Finally, I get to put you in your place... And it's in front of thousands. I couldn't be happier" Jade taunted gleefully.

"Careful. People who talk too much usually end up getting embarrassed" Layla replied as calmly as always.

Thought internally she felt as fiery as Jade. Not to mention that her personality wouldn't let her lose easily.

Especially considering the rivalry between the two of them. It had been years since they started clashing. But Audrey was always there to stop them from going too far. Not to mention their dire situation along with Jade's condition at the time.

But now, nothing was holding them back. They could finally decide who was the better one between them. And they were both confident in winning...

"3...2...1...Fight!" Muku's voice was heard, not wanting to make them wait any longer.

Unlike Emily and Elsa who summoned their avatars before the battle officially began, Layla and waited until it started.

Despite always being at each other's throats, they were quite in sync when it came down to it. Like now, they agreed to see who would summon their avatar sooner without verbally saying it...

Unfortunately for them, they both finished summoning them at the same time.

It was actually one of the main problems they had with each other. No matter what they did, the other would always be able to match it.

Jade had pulled away from the others when she successfully got her red Beast Aura under control. But not only did Layla catch up, but the others did as well.

After all, it wasn't that she was better than the others. Just that her energy became more potent after awakening. The others didn't need to awaken theirs, they just needed to steadily improve their understanding to catch up.

Interestingly enough, Jade wasn't bothered by the others catching up. What bothered her was Layla catching up, especially when she was the first.

So yeah, she was kinda biased in her dislike, but that was life.

Maybe it was because Layla was the exact opposite of her. Not in terms of elements, but in terms of personality. She was flame hot while Layla was ice cold.

For that reason, they were rarely on the same page even if they could work extremely well together when necessary.

Anyway, Jade was replaced by a crimson tiger with saberteeth, standing around a hundred meters tall.

In Layla's place now stood a 130-metre-tall Hydra. Its whitish blue skin had black patterns all over it that looked like ancient runes.

This was the result of Layla's effort in combining the two elements into one. Of the avatar's six heads, half had pitch-black eyes while the other half had white eyes. It was obviously a representation of the elements the heads controlled.

And the order of the heads was ice then shadow, then ice... until the end. Instead of the first three being all ice and the other three being all shadow.

While the tiger was significantly smaller than the hydra, Jade wasn't deterred. Nor was Layla emboldened, after all, both knew that size didn't mean anything in battle. Especially when the opponent had planetary-level power when judged based on the current planet...

"What? Not gonna attack first?" Jade asked.

"Isn't that more in line with your personality" Layla shot back.

"Tsk... ROOOOOOOOAR!" Jade didn't know how to retort so she released a breath attack instead.

The breath attack was fast but Layla who expected it was faster. An ice barrier appeared in front of her shielding her from the blast.

The blast tried to break through, but the damage was getting mended as soon as it appeared so Jade gave up on it...

BANG! BANG! BANG!...

Jade changed her tactics, if an energy blast couldn't break through, then continuous earth spikes would work right?

BOOOOOOOM!

And they did. After tens of earth spikes bombarded the barrier, it finally broke.

As for how she could use Earth Spikes? Well, if you forgot, Jade could copy the abilities of any beasts after consuming their beast cores. It wasn't limitless, but currently, she could copy ten abilities from each element.

This made her the most diverse member of the group in terms of attacks. Even if she could manipulate the shapes of the attacks or change them into anything else.

Anyway, she didn't stand around to celebrate after successfully breaching the barrier... She jumped right in getting ready to fight it out with Layla, that's when...

Stab! Stab! Stab!...

Countless spikes rose from the ground beneath her. And the thing about the spikes was... they had black tips...

That's right, the black parts were shadow charged. This meant they'd ignore the tough exterior of the tiger...which they did.

"ROOOOAR!" Jade roared in pain as more than ten spikes stabbed her before she retreated.

It wasn't that she had expected Layla not to do anything when she charged. But from how Layla seemed to be watching her without doing anything, she expected something like a breath attack or something. And she was prepared for that.

Not to mention, when Layla creates her shadow-charged attacks there's always a commotion. So she didn't even watch out for that, expecting it to announce itself like always.

And normal icepikes would have been deflected.

To think Layla could now use shadow-charged attacks quietly! Jade's wariness instantly increased.

The most dangerous card in Layla's arsenal had become more dangerous after all.

"Since when?" Jade asked curiously as she suppressed the pain with her guard up.

"Very recently. This was actually the first time I tried it out. And it was an unexpected benefit I got while working on my avatar. It's still not too good as you noticed. If it was, this match would have been over from that move alone..." Layla graciously replied.

Her voice sounded calm but anyone could tell that she was gloating.

On the sidelines, the fans along with Klaus who were merrily supporting Jade suddenly turned solemn. After all, they didn't know about this ability of Layla's. In fact, even now, they didn't understand what exactly had happened.

Why was that ice black? Why did it so easily pass through Jade's avatar's defence?

Klaus even asked Muku about it. He had a hunch but dared not think it was true. After all, it was too terrifying and unfair!

Unfortunately for him, Muku only smiled and said, "Watch and see. Maybe the ability will appear again. The match is still just starting after all"

This line made Klaus's lip twitch but there was nothing he could do about it. He could only be that one commentator who didn't know what was going on so was shocked by everything. It sucked but that was all he could do when Muku didn't want to say anything.

Asking Raya was out of the question. There was no way she'd reply. He'd long noticed that while she didn't dislike him, she also didn't like him. The best he'd get from her was recognizing his existence. He was too weak for anything more.

It's something he had noticed from how she looked at him. Like she was looking at an ant. And he couldn't even feel mad about it. Especially not after seeing her in action a few times.

She was countless times stronger than him before ranking up, let alone now...

Anyway, Jade moved again. This time she was prepared for Layla's black spikes.

However, unlike before, Layla didn't just watch.

She charged forward too. And around her, ice javelins formed and flew towards Jade. On the ground, ice spikes rose as they made their way toward Jade as well. In the sky ice meteorites were forming.

It seems Layla was finally serious. Not that she wasn't serious before, just that she was testing her luck. And if her shadow-charged ice was a little bigger she might have won already.

The spectators were horrified by what they were seeing. They could feel their money(Beast Cores) slipping away with every attack Layla added.

They felt complete despair when above the meteorites, a stalactite bigger than the meteorites formed...

Jade saw all this and her heart couldn't help but skip a beat.

But she wasn't scared, just surprised. If anything, excitement started rising inside her.

Which was to be expected from a battle junkie.

On her size, a rocky armour appeared around her body. Red earth spikes rose again, flame arrows, metal javelins, and huge fireballs appeared.

She had more of course, but she figured fire would be the best in the situation, so it was her main attack force.

Everyone held their breath and stopped blinking, not wanting to miss anything as the myriad of attacks came closer and closer. Then...

BOOOOOOM! BOOOOOOM! BOOOOOOOM!...

One explosion after the other rang out. Dust, smoke, mist, and ice particles consumed everything including Jade and Layla.

Suddenly everything froze in place before exploding into ice particles then disappearing on one side of the arena. On the other side, it was all consumed by a red flame.

The combatants were revealed again. Neither was even scratched.

However, the stalactite was still hanging in the sky. Silently threatening Jade...

Jade immediately noticed it. The thing that was now at least five times her size. Calling it an upside-down mountain wouldn't be an exaggeration...

"...Bring it" And so, she snarled as she taunted fearlessly...

Chapter 459: Layla versus Jade(final)

As if listening to Jade, Layla immediately let the stalactite fall.

The tiger's mouth opened wide. Then...

"ROOOOOOOOOOOOAR!"

A red flame breath attack was released. It met the stalactite midair and instantly began turning it into mist...

Unfortunately for her, the stalactite was too huge to destroy before it reached her. Layla had made it with compressed ice after all.

But Jade didn't panic.

To the amazement of everyone present, Beast Aura exploded out of her body then... it took on the form of two large hands that shot into the sky and held the stalactite up as she burned it away.

It was something no one expected her to be able to do in her avatar form. After all, it required a lot of control and attention. Something that could hardly be spared while controlling the avatar.

What they forgot to account for was that she was years ahead of them when it came to controlling foreign bodies. So she could spare the attention.

It was actually a trumpcard of hers she was forced to reveal too early...

Anyway, as she did that, Layla didn't wait around for her to finish. She channeled her mana for another spell. Then...

"Blizzard..." Her calm voice was heard.

Yet the result of the calm voice was anything but that.

A monstrous Blizzard that reached the skies rose from behind her and charged at Jade who wasn't yet done with the stalactite.

From what people saw, Jade was going to get buried and frozen soon. Some were already crying for their money...

However, something unexpected happened. Jade's eyes turned away from the stalactite to look at the hydra then...

A crimson flood rose behind her. It immediately charged forward, avoiding her on its way to clash with the approaching storm.

And that it did...

The two big brothers of natural disasters clashed and the crimson water was frozen solid. However, the blizzard was also completely sucked in.

This meant that the spells had canceled each other out.

Neither could control the resulting crimson ice block due to the presence of the other's element in it.

At that point, Jade was done with the stalactite.

The two then attacked the red ice at the same time and it exploded. The dense particles covered the whole area darkening it significantly...

Suddenly Jade's eyes widened in surprise. Before she could do anything, multiple beastly roars were heard as the hydra appeared from below her. All six heads were aimed at her lower body with the intent of biting her.

Three successes before the tiger's extra arms hit the ground and propelled it into the sky out of the jaws of the hydra. It hurt a lot as huge chunks of its body were beaten off. But it was better than getting entangled in a close-quarters fight with the six-headed hydra.

As for how the hydra suddenly appeared below the tiger? Obviously, Layla had used [omnipresence]. Something no one expected her to use with such a large body.

Fortunately Jade reacted quickly or she would have been defeated right then.

And what pissed her off the most was how it was the second time she almost lost.

Things weren't looking good for her. What was happening wasn't anywhere close to the domination she expected.

Well, she didn't actually expect to dominate Layla, but she thought she'd be the one in an advantageous position because Layla's best attacks should be out of commission either due to preparation time or size. Yet there Layla was, casually proving her wrong.

But it was the last time. From then on, she'll assume there was nothing Layla couldn't do in her current state.

Anyway, she was still midair as she thought this...

She then happened to notice the hydra's eyes light up...

Her heart skipped a beat as she knew what was coming next.

"ROOOOOOOOAR!"x6

Six breath attacks shot up at her. Sure, she could make the tiger fly... but it would be too slow for blasts. And Layla knew this.

She could see it in the hydra's eyes that Layla thought that the battle was almost over. After all, it was clearly checkmate. Not just Layla thought that, everyone else thought the same.

They could already see Jade getting blasted off then finished off if that didn't finish her.

But did Jade think the same? No! To her, things were just getting interesting.

And so, with a little smirk from inside the tiger, she used a move that made everyone's eyes pop out...

The tiger suddenly grew wings, dodged the energy blasts then turned completely into a bird...

And not just any bird, but a Phoenix. Also not just any Phoenix, but one that looked exactly like Emily's. Well, except for the red color. But that hardly mattered to anyone as they watched Jade surf the sky like a pro. Then...

She divebombed Layla as soon as the breath attack stopped.

Even more shocking was how she turned into Elsa's leviathan before she reached the hydra. A creature even larger than the hydra.

Everyone was so shocked they almost fell off their seats..

What the hell was happening?? Was Layla fighting just Jade or were Emily and Elsa also in there with Jade??

Some couldn't help but look at the sisters. And they were met with shocked... borderline horrified looks. The looks immediately proved that the sisters knew nothing about what was going on.

And they all understood too. Who wouldn't be horrified if you suddenly saw someone else using what was supposed to be unique to you? Even if it was an ally, anyone would be unsettled.

Everyone couldn't help but wonder if Jade could also use their abilities...

But they soon realized that she couldn't...

The water barrier that was ever-present around the leviathan when Elsa summoned it wasn't around Jade's leviathan. Even her Phoenix was dimmer and a lot less ethereal-looking than Emily's.

Clearly Jade could only make Temu versions. But even then, everyone was still impressed.

After all, it looked like she was about to bite Layla in half with that Temu version Leviathan.

Layla looked at the approaching leviathan calmly...

She was shocked as much as everyone else but she didn't lose her calm. This was because....

[Omnipresence]

BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The Leviathan crashed into the ground... Layla had disappeared at the last moment.

How she did it was the most interesting part. She actually used Jade's shadow to use her ability. And she appeared immediately after the leviathan hit the ground standing on top of it.

Then...

"Frost chains, prison, spikes, binds..." She calmly spoke.

Firstly chains appeared and tied the leviathan down, then, a huge cage, followed by spikes and clamp-like binds.

And these firmly locked the leviathan in place.

Jade struggled to break free and it looked like she'd break free in seconds. Which wasn't enough time for Layla to create anything to quickly end the fight... that is if it was purely an ice attack.

Or even a large chunk of shadow-charged ice. However, creating small chunks was doable. And that's what she did.

She created a black spear that could be considered a thick nail when compared to its size. However, for what she wanted to do, it was more than enough...

And that was...

Whoosh! Stab! Whoosh! Stab!....

ROOOOOOOOAR!

"Winner! Layla!"

The spear flew and stabbed into the leviathan's head over and over again as Jade screamed in pain.

However, she only managed to stab Jade three times before Muku's voice was heard and Raya destroyed the black spear.

This surprised Layla a bit since none had been able to touch her shadow-charged ice without permission before. But then again, not only was Raya higher ranked, but she also had the space element. Something she suspected could easily suppress her shadow-charged ice.

As for why the match was called even when Jade was technically not injured at all... Well, it was pretty simple. If it weren't Jade's real body instead of her avatar's head, then she would be dead. And Jade felt the pain of it all, like she was really getting stabbed in the head over and over again.

This was why Muku and Raya intervened. It was because they knew Jade wouldn't quit even when she was suffering such pain.

Not to mention that Layla could have targeted the place Jade was in if she wanted to. So it was Layla's win, and it was undisputed.

As soon as it was called, Layla recalled her avatar. Jade did the same... more of her couldn't sustain it with the headache she was now suffering from.

After that, the two girls looked at each other silently. Jade's hand was on her forehead massaging it.

Layla quietly looked at her.

"You didn't hold back at all huh?" Jade spoke.

"You wouldn't have held back either" Layla replied.

"True... Good fight. And I admit defeat. You were the better Evolver this time. But don't get too proud for I will win next time" Jade cockily added.

"Whatever" Layla said as she walked away.

Chapter 460: Audrey versus Freya

"Hey! Don't walk away from me!" Jade screamed as she ran after her.

It seems she was already recovering.

Soon they reached the others. Layla was congratulated while Jade was consoled... though it pissed her off. Especially when Emily did it too. Why was she feeling sad for her when she had also lost?

Anyway, the next duo made their way to the arena. And this duo was...

Audrey versus Freya...

Now this was going to be interesting... Like Audrey was strong but did she or anyone have a chance against Freya with her mountains of beast cores?

"I've decided not to use the mansion or beast cores for this battle. After all, it's an avatar battle and using those would be unfair..." Freya spoke as soon as they reached the arena.

"What? Why? I mean, those can be considered components of your full power so is it okay to cut them off? Are you worried about me? There's no need. While the battle will definitely be grueling, I think I know you well enough to fight back..." Audrey spoke in surprise.

She was really prepared to face Freya at full strength. As were the others. They had quietly taken her as the final boss of the tournament. Now she was nerfing herself??

"No. I know you would definitely give me a run for my money. But I personally feel that it wouldn't be fair. That's why I decided to do this. Even if I need those components to be at my best, the point still stands that they are external aids. If I were to win with them I wouldn't feel like I deserve it..." Freya spoke calmly.

"... Well, if that's what you want. But don't expect me to go easier on you..." Audrey replied with a little smile on her face.

She actually admired Freya's decision. Honestly, she would have done the same.

"I wouldn't want it any other way. In fact, I'd be mad if you didn't..." Freya replied with a smile.

At that point, she had long muted Iris who was protesting her decision. To Iris, not using everything at her disposal was dumb. So what if it wasn't a battle to the death? One should always strive to win no matter what!...

And so, the duo summoned their avatars. The blood red Manticore appeared. In the opposite direction stood Freya's humanoid avatar which was now a dark shade of green. Probably influenced by her plant control...

"3...2...1...Fight!" Muku didn't waste time.

As soon as he said "fight" the avatars charged forward.

Interestingly enough, neither used their elements. Almost like they agreed on it before the battle started. Which didn't happen. They both just both wanted to test out their physical capabilities, which luckily their opponent wanted to do too.

And so...

BANG! BANG! BANG!...

BOOOM! BOOM!...

The duo began exchanging blows. Freya obviously had better maneuverability considering her body type. But Audrey had more strength in her attacks.

Both avatars were around 110 meters tall. So neither had a height advantage in the close-quarters battle. This meant that the one with better fighting skills would win.

For the first few minutes, neither was getting the upper hand as their advantages were canceling each other out.

Freya almost got the advantage a few times before Audrey's huge spider tail pulled her back into the stalemate by attacking her when she was about to take advantage of openings.

Audrey also tried breaking the stalemate by flying off with her large bat wings, but Freya would immediately jump up and pull her back down while punching up with the other hand. So Audrey had to give up on that plan...

"Well, this is certainly entertaining. It reminds me of those Kaiju movies from the past. I mean, even Godzilla and Ghidorah would get ones oneshoted by either one of these girls. But the strictly physical fighting style is reminiscent of those movies" Klaus commented.

"Yeah. This is what I hoped to see when I suggested this tournament. After all, it also helps them learn how to control their avatars more than tossing a few spells around. Unfortunately, the combatants before them were a bit too excited..." Muku agreed.

"Hey! Are you dissing us?!" Jade's shout was heard from the side.

"No, besides. When are you going to tell us about how you copied those avatars?" Muku replied.

He was quick to bring up the matter that everyone wanted an answer to.

"Tsk. Better forget about getting the answer to that for now. Why would I explain such things when I'm still in the competition? Do I look dumb to you?" Jade replied.

"Hmm. Fair point... I can't wait for you to lose so that you can tell us" Muki replied. His words almost made Jade jump on him and fight it out.

After all, he was clearly cursing her to lose her redemption match.

"I could tell you if you want... While I don't know how she does it. I might know the drawbacks" Layla suddenly interjected herself into the conversation.

"Shut up Layla! Nobody asked you!" Jade snapped. She didn't know whether Layla really knew what she was talking about but she dared not risk it. The drawback was a huge one after all.

It might not have been too obvious the last time. But someone like Layla who was analytical as well as in close quarters to her might have noticed.

"No it's fine. Let's let the princess tell us herself when she's ready. Thanks for offering though" Muku replied to Layla with a smile.

Layla smiled back as they looked into each other's eyes with obvious tension. It was clear that they weren't too far away from "making it happen"

"It's Empress" Jade retorted but was completely ignored. Which obviously made her pout. But she didn't say anything after that. The battle was getting interesting again...

"Huff... huff..." Both combatants were huffing slightly inside their avatars after a thirty-minute-long intense fighting session.

Neither was able to get an advantage over the other even after fighting for so long. So they both decided to fall back and change tactics.

It was clear that fighting without mana in the mix wasn't paying off. So it was finally time to go all out.

Plants began growing around Freya. From huge fly traps to vines and straight up huge trees. This was the power she got from Iris.

On the avatar's body, guns began appearing everywhere. Arms, shoulders, and even on top of her head. Thin and long energy blades appeared on both arms. They looked like energy rapiers.

On her back, wings made out of mana appeared as well. She was clearly going all out. Ready for anything Audrey was going to throw her way while also getting ready to throw everything she could...

Audrey wasn't a slouch either. As someone who could freely create blood now, she wasn't limited by the blood she had gathered in her actions. In fact, she had long stopped keeping blood. She could handle it when it was necessary, but didn't like it. Which was understandable, only creeps and doctors like keeping blood. Though as a vampire, shouldn't she like it?? Well, whatever...

Around her rose a myriad of weapons made out of blood. Below her a bloody pool gathered, ready to be manipulated at any moment. A blood smell rose in the area.

No matter how much she didn't want to admit it... She kinda liked the smell. Due didn't want to, but it just smelled irresistible to her. She consoled her by thinking that it wasn't real blood, just mana copying blood's properties.

Anyway, they were both completely ready within a minute then...

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH!...

Countless blades, spears, rockets, and whatnot flew towards Freya. All of them were red in color as they were made out of blood.

As for why there were rockets?... well, obviously they exploded on impact. That's right, the legendary blood ignition she usually did while the blood was still inside living beings was now something that could be done like this...

Of course, Freya knew this. And so, she took to the skies while the plants she created rushed forward to meet the attacks. The target was to neutralize as many as they could. The rest that were locked on Freya would be taken out by her guns powered by her elementless mana.

Of course, the space between them wasn't enough to take care of everything before she reached. So she took to the skies while shooting the approaching rockets.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH....

PEW! PEW! PEW!....

BOOOOOOOM! BOOOOOOOM!...

And so, the sky and ground became a crimson war zone.

Audrey also took to the sky as she continued to shoot out blood rockets. Freya shot back in defense.

Strictly speaking, Audrey's rockets have way more power than Freya's energy beams. However, their weakness was also obvious. And that was the fact that only a little bit of external stimulation was needed for them to explode. And that's exactly what Freya's laser beams did...

However, that didn't stop Audrey... The reason was obvious to her but not to the others. Maybe some realised what was going on but none said anything. They just focused on the mesmerizing battle not wanting to miss anything.

The duo continued like this for over ten minutes. Each attack they released would take more than half of the mana R4s had. Yet they were throwing thousands upon thousands of such attacks.

This wasn't just because of their higher rank but peak classes that gave them unreasonably huge mana pools.

Anyway, at this point, whether it be the sky or ground, everything was covered by a blood-red mist. This was a result of all the clashes the girls had.

In normal cases, this was enough to blind anyone. But the girls had mana sense, so it barely mattered.

Suddenly Freya paused and her eyes widened. Internally she cursed herself for being careless...