

Few Wives 481

Chapter 481 Ten versus One

"I should have known that it was you ants that got in my way... If you know what's good for you then you'd let me go..." The body snatcher threatened in an annoyed tone.

Raya had limited its senses and vision to only a few metres around itself so it hadn't been able to see the girls and everyone else before.

"Umm, Jade. Is this guy a relative of yours?" Emily couldn't help but tease.

"Tsk" Jade didn't entertain her this time. She knew that Emily was making fun of her for speaking like that, so she didn't know what to say.

"Who are you and what are you doing in my hus.. in our leader's body? And we aren't stopping you from leaving... Just leave his body and we'll let you go" Audrey being the only true adult in the group spoke to the body snatcher.

"I am Nightmare. You don't need to know anything else. And I am not leaving this body behind. I will not repeat myself, so get out of my way right now" Nightmare replied.

It still didn't know its name, but since Muku called it its fragment, "Nightmare armour" it figured it might as well call itself Nightmare.

Who cared if Muku also used the name? There was no law against two people having the same name so...

"Well, it seems we can't come to an agreement. I guess there's only one way to settle this then..." Audrey spoke seriously while they inched closer.

"I guess there is..." Nightmare spoke calmly. Then...

All the girls suddenly jumped back from where they were.

As soon as they did, huge pitch-black mouths appeared and snapped at the air like when Hope's spell was eaten.

If they had been a second late, they would have lost a limb at least if not their lives...

"Well, this changes things... we were under the impression that it couldn't deal with all of us at the same time. But I guess it is..." Chloe commented.

Out of everyone she was the least moved by the sneak attack due to her speed but she had to admit it was a dangerous situation.

"Yeah, but again, this is for the best. I don't want an easy opponent" Jade added.

"I wonder when I'll be able to do such a thing. Effortlessly dealing with nine people... wait nine?" Elsa spoke in amazement then realized that there was something wrong.

If Muku was on the opposite side, shouldn't they had been eight people on their side? Where did the extra one come from?

"Umm, I think you forgot about me..." Lisa spoke in a slightly disgruntled voice.

Which was understandable. After all, she had been there from the start. Yet it seemed that her presence was so low that someone didn't even know she was there.

"Oh... right. Sorry," Elsa apologized awkwardly.

She tended not to pay attention to people. Especially new ones, so it was an honest mistake. But Lisa probably thought it was intentional.

"Ladies... can we save the talking for later?" Layla couldn't take it anymore and spoke up.

She felt that the others weren't taking things as seriously as they should despite the danger.

Maybe they were subconsciously letting their guards down because they thought they were facing Muku. Which would be the wrong mindset for the battle that could get someone injured?

After that, everyone stopped talking and finally locked in.

She didn't know if she was hallucinating but she felt like Nightmare gave her a grateful gaze. Like it was glad she had made the others finally take it seriously.

The look appeared and disappeared so quickly that she wasn't sure if it happened at all...

Anyway, as if waiting for this, Nightmare made a move again...

BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

This time it was something different, it sped its way toward Lisa it deemed the weakest.

Everyone was caught by surprise as they were expecting more creepy mouths in the air.

Anyway, as a battle veteran who always fought uphill battles and also someone who had her guard fully up, Lisa managed to react in time...

A huge mouth appeared from the ground and bit at the approaching enemy.

It was that one auto spell that the others were jealous of.

Fortunately, Raya had quietly exposed the ground beneath them so she could access the soil.

BANG!

Nightmare thought that it could break through easily so it kept on going. And that was a mistake as the high mouth actually managed to stop it for a second.

And those who know the girls would know that they could do a lot in a second.

In that second, Lisa moved out of the enemy's path and the rest unleashed different spells at it.

All of them weren't too big, but they were compressed attacks. So their energy was even greater than their usual bigger forms.

All of them hit dead center on the enemy.

BOOOOOOOM! BOOOOOOOM! BOOOOOOOM!....

Multiple explosions rang out at once. The Nightmare was buried in them until it couldn't be seen.

However, in just a second, all the obstruction was blown away.

And an uninjured Nightmare was revealed.

Around it was an invisible barrier they could only sense...

"So it really has access to Muku's abilities huh? This is gonna be hard..." Jade commented. Though the smile on her face got wider as she spoke.

The others quietly rolled their eyes as they recalibrated their plans.

Before it was just an assumption. Now it was confirmed. So they had to think about everything Muku could do then figure out how to counter it.

As for his telekinesis barrier? Well, that was simple...

They started spamming strong attacks left and right while dodging the [living nightmares].

In about three hours, the barrier finally came down...

This was because it was powered by mental energy and if one used it too much, their mental energy would be drained and they wouldn't be able to do anything else.

Honestly lasting for hours under their combined assault was probably not something even Muku could do.

So they had to admit that whatever Nightmare was, it had a humongous mental energy pool.

What they didn't know was that its mental pool was in its worst state.... If it were in its best state, they could attack for eternity and still not break through.

Then again, it was a Monarch, one of the strongest ones. So such a result was to be expected.

While they were celebrating their small victory, Nightmare changed tactics.

It had actually been passive in the battle up to that point while trying to figure out how to escape. The mental energy barrier was a perfect cover for how it was snooping around with its mental energy.

But it had come to realise that there was no way out.

So it came to the conclusion that it had to kill all the girls to get out. And that's what it was going to be working toward now...

Its first move in that direction was...

Mithril of course...

And unlike Muku, it almost instantly created it. The color was different though.

Muku's was a mesmerizing grey while its Mithril was pitch black like everything else about it.

The thing it created was a pitch-black saber then...

Whoosh!

It swung it horizontally once. And the energy wave immediately flew in the direction.

It was so strong and quick that the girls would need a little time to gather enough energy to block it. Something they obviously didn't have.

So they were screwed. Fortunately, Jade, Audrey, and Chloe were the ones in the direction the wave was sent in. With their superior bodies, skill, and speed, they managed to dodge in time.

If it were people like Emily and Hope, they might have been cut down already.

And that almost happened as the next wave was sent their way.

As expected they were a step too slow to dodge.

However, they both disappeared and appeared a distance away from the wave.

"What?! Who did that? Come out you rat!" Nightmare was furious. It was about to get rid of two of the pests and relieve the pressure on itself but then a new hidden opponent appeared.

It was suspected that there was another player in the mix due to the space element domain that was definitely not created by the girls it was facing as they didn't have the element.

But now it's definitely sure.

Unfortunately, it still couldn't locate the opponent.

It suspected that the extra didn't have sufficient offensive moves so they hid, which was a little consolation.

And so, the battle continued after no one appeared.

It did get more annoying though as the annoying rat kept on saving whoever got in trouble.

By the ten-hour mark, it had killed all of them at least twice... at least that's what it would have been like had they not been saved every time.

And to make things worse, it was running out of mana.

The only good thing was that it wasn't the only one. Its opponents were also running low. So it wasn't in any danger of getting bombarded to death anymore.

And the fact that it took nine of them... in fact, it took ten to keep up with it was really a flex.

That is if it were a human. Which it wasn't. It was just a Monarch trying to get away and dominate the world after regaining its strength.

Was that such a bad thing?...

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Another hour later....

At that point, everyone was almost completely exhausted in terms of mana.

That's when other methods of fighting began to emerge.

Obviously, this meant the use of the Force technique as well as martial skills.

And to no one's surprise, Audrey was the most threatening to Nightmare.

And surprisingly, Nightmare couldn't use the technique despite having access to everything else in Muku's body apart from his bloodline power.

No one could explain why that was, so they just assumed it was because Mrs. C hadn't given permission.

Which was actually true. That's how far-reaching her power was. You couldn't use anything related to her without her permission.

Hell, she probably could stop you from using your own abilities if she wanted to.

Anyway, Nightmare was definitely not happy about this. But it didn't make a scene because of it. It had enough problems already.

And for some reason, it felt that cursing out whoever made the technique wouldn't be good for its health. So it didn't.

While its memories were fragmented. Its instincts were completely intact.

Another thing, the reason why it didn't know about Raya was that it hadn't constantly kept watch on Muku. Something it couldn't do anyway.

And whenever it peeked, Raya was either chilling doing nothing, or cursing Muku left and right. So it didn't know anything about her power unlike the other girls who were super active around Muku in their subconscious need to impress him.

Which was to be expected. After all, if it knew about Raya who was a legit R6. It probably wouldn't be struggling so much or would have long used more drastic methods to get away.

The way it completely overlooked Raya due to various reasons and situations was a bit weird actually. Almost like it was because someone made it so behind the scenes in preparation for that day...

But hey, no one thought about such things, nor would they ever.

Anyway, the battle continued.

Even without the Force technique, the physical strength, skill, and defense of Nightmare made it possible for it to keep its advantage even in such a situation.

The one having the worst time in the battle was actually Lisa.

When they were using mana, she was at least useful in providing defense and attacking whenever possible.

However, now things were different.

While Muku had also taught her the Force technique at some point with Mrs. C's permission of course, it hadn't been that long.

So she wasn't as effective in battle as the others.

It got so bad that at some point she was too embarrassed to continue and backed out on her own. She was just getting in the way at that point.

The others felt bad for her but none said anything. She had made the right call after all. And they didn't have the time to console her either.

And so, the battle continued with Audrey, Elsa, and Jade being the main force as the best in terms of the force technique.

Audrey and Elsa were good due to talent while Jade used her instincts to push through and be more effective than Elsa who was more talented in that regard.

The rest weren't bad but they chose to take on a supporting role instead. Which was just as important.

Besides, unlike before when it was mostly a battle of long-range spells. It was not a close-quarters battle. So everyone couldn't attack all at once without getting in each other's way.

Just like that, the girls pushed back against the overwhelming strength of Nightmare.

The best thing about the force technique was that as long as they kept on getting hit, they'd always have force. And they were getting hit quite a lot.

At some point, all of them had black eyes, broken ribs, and arms. But thanks to Hope who kept a little mana for such situations, they managed to heal from those injuries and continue fighting.

So as long as they don't mentally break down and still have stamina, they can fight for as long as they need to.

After a few hours, the tide of battle started shifting. It was leaning on the girls' side for the first time since it all began.

At that point, Hope was out of power so injuries had built up on all their bodies. But that didn't stop them.

As for why Raya let them get hurt?... It was because of the strategy actually. After a while, they had realised that the only way of hurting Nightmare was by trading injuries.

Of course, they only tanked the bearable attacks.

If it was too much, Raya would step in.

Because of that, all their injuries had a corresponding one on the giant they were facing.

Its body was now riddled with cracks.

That's right, the strong armor they couldn't even dent at the beginning was actually starting to crack after being hit countless times for hours.

However, they couldn't celebrate for they noticed that despite the cracks and internal injuries, Nightmare's lifeforce was actually getting stronger.

And it was only a matter of time before that improvement transferred over to its body and strength.

At that point, they will definitely be defeated even if they were in their best condition.

So they had to beat it before that...

And so, a plan was silently formed between them.

That was rotating who fought Nightmare while the others used beast cores to recover.

Of course to make it believable, whoever went to recover had to take an attack from Nightmare, fall into the distance then quietly recover...

The first to go was Hope for obvious reasons.

And she took a strong punch to the gut that almost knocked her out as well as vomited. But she managed to suppress both with sheer willpower as she fell unmoving into the distance.

There she took the beast core Raya secretly sneaked over to her and began recovering her mana while pretending to be knocked out.

This plan actually worked until five girls managed to recover then they were caught.

But it was okay as that should be enough to win the battle.

And so, Hope healed everyone since there was no need to pretend anymore.

Then...

"Phantom chains!" Layla who was among the ones who recovered screamed, and shadow chains popped up from the ground.

They flew toward Nightmare at super speed. But the former Monarch managed to react in time and jumped out of the way...

However, Layla wasn't disgruntled. She wasn't aiming at it in the first place.

The chains flew at Nightmare's shadow and dug in.

"Aghhhhh!!!!" Nightmare screamed in pain from the sky.

Then it quickly realized that it was completely stuck and couldn't move.

That's right. The chains not only caused physical pain on the target by stabbing the shadow, but they also locked them in place...

It was a move Layla didn't use in her matches before. Not because she didn't need it. But she wanted it to be her trumpcard until the very last moment. She would have definitely used it against Chloe.

It might have even given her the win if it worked out...

"Now!" Layla screamed at Chloe.

The girl understood what she meant. She then used a move she also hadn't used so far.

Though hers was well-known already. And that was her hidden characteristic [Unbounded] that could break through anything.

She gathered lightning in her legs and fist. The lightning in her fist was different from the lightning on her legs. It was a few shades darker and felt ominous to Nightmare.

But it didn't have time to react as everything happened way too quickly.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Chloe exploded forward with her fist ready to strike. It looked like a simple move. But all who looked at it knew how devastating it was.

In no time at all, she had reached Nightmare who was still struggling in the sky. Then...

Crackle!

BANG! BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

She hit it with all her might right in the chest.

Nightmare was thrown into the distance. Completely breaking free from Layla's binding.

This made Layla narrow her eyes a bit as if she had confirmed something. But that was all. She and the others immediately ran after Nightmare.

They couldn't help but worry due to the devastation they saw in the path to Nightmare. After all, it was still occupying Muku's body. So killing was off limits.

Chloe was the most worried. After all, she didn't know what she would do if she took Muku's life by mistake.

Which was very possible as she had forgotten that it was Muku's body at the end and put all her strength in the punch.

"Hehe... Hahahahahahaha Yes! This is like those times in a forgotten age when I lived on the battlefield. You didn't hold back at all! If I were anyone else, I might have died. Hahaha. Now let me show you what I've got..." Nightmare spoke while laughing like a maniac as it got up.

The armour was completely destroyed in the chest area. Even the face was destroyed a bit which exposed Muku's beaten-up face and soulless pitch-black eyes.

It looked like it was about to do something big.

But it was a step too slow as someone acted first...

WHOOSH!

BANG!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Nightmare was punched into the distance again. This time by a black icy fist...

That's right, Layla had quietly prepared her own attack...

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If it wasn't Muku's body, it would have been a spear instead of a punch. And Nightmare would have been killed on the spot... probably.

The combo didn't stop there. Hope also made her move. She summoned all the grey poison she could and formed a huge serpent with it then...

WHOOSH!

It charged forward without waiting for Nightmare to get up and smashed hard into it.

Since she didn't have Emily's unique control, she didn't dare cover Muku with the poison, instead she made ut avoid him completely at focus solely on the armour. Something that was hard but doable.

And it managed to deal further damage to the already ruined armour.

Audrey made her move after. She summoned a humongous blood fist in the sky. Then...

WOOOO!

BANG!

It smashed directly on top of Nightmare who was struggling to get up. Then it disappeared into nothingness.

The last one who regained her power was Jade. Her method of attack was way more straightforward.

She charged forward and began throwing a barrage of punches on Nightmare's(Muku's) already battered and bruised face while huge Beast Aura arms locked it in place.

This went on until it fell unconscious from the head trauma.

The face was so swollen it looked like a pig's head.

The others couldn't help but look at Muku's destroyed face with sympathy in their eyes. Then they glared at Jade.

"What? I took care of the enemy. Isn't that what we set out to do? So why are you looking at me like that? Besides wouldn't we all look like this had Hope not healed us?" Jade defended herself.

She even felt betrayed. After all, she didn't say anything when the others were throwing killing blows but they dared to judge her? Where was the world's equality?

"Oh no, it's not that we..." Audrey who also couldn't stop herself from glaring at Jade was about to say something when something interrupted her.

Jade immediately jumped back and looked at Muku's unconscious body with the utmost seriousness along with everyone else.

They could feel an unprecedented danger coming from it... Then....

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

A thick black smoke exploded out and covered all of them even faster than Raya could react. Something that shouldn't have been possible.

But they were dealing with a Monarch after all. So maybe over-generalizing by thinking that it would be limited by common sense was a mistake.

Anyway, the smoke didn't last long. It almost disappeared as quickly as it appeared.

But that didn't mean that it had done nothing.

When Raya looked at the girls. All of them were frozen in place with their eyes wide open.

At first, she couldn't tell what was wrong with them. That was until she looked into their eyes.

All of them including Lisa who had caught a stray from the sidelines had their eyes wide open. And nothing but pitch-black darkness could be seen in their eyes as they stood there unmoving.

It was the same with all the spectators who had somehow been affected despite the space barrier put in place.

Raya was instantly worried. This wasn't supposed to happen.

And so, she had no choice but to come out from the pocket space she was hiding in.

She appeared just as the almost completely decimated Nightmare struggled to its feet.

"Hahahaha. Fools! You thought you actually stood a chance against me? A legendary Monarch? Hahaha. You're not even worthy to kiss my feet!" Nightmare spoke and laughed like a maniac at the same time.

"Big talk for someone who just got beat up... But to think you were actually a Monarch all this time. How surprising. Then again, when have we ever had a significant problem that wasn't linked to you idiots? Its almost like you have nothing better to do than bother us" Raya's calm voice was heard from behind the Monarch.

A chill instantly went down Nightmare's spine as he hadn't felt her presence until she spoke. Hell even as she spoke, it still couldn't sense her...

"So its you! The space rat who has been getting in my way all this time. Are you here to accept your fate and join your comrades?" Nightmare spoke arrogantly after remembering that the space brat was actually "weak with no offensive capabilities"

"Yes, sure. First, tell me what you have done to them? Is this the legendary [Nightmare] spell?" Raya asked.

"Tsk tsk. I guess you're a knowledgeable brat after all. But no. This isn't that. It's better. This one not only makes one love through their worst nightmares over and over again. But even if they conquer them, they won't get out unless I allow it. Which I won't. Instead, I'll take my time cutting them all up, until they are mincemeat. The best part is that they'll feel the pain but won't be able to free themselves until they die. How I can't wait to experience their despair" Like the generic, overconfident and outdated villain it was.

Nightmare became very chatty as soon as it got an advantage and someone asked a question.

Raya couldn't help but roll her eyes as well as look down on Muku for letting such an idiot take over his body even if he was completely detached from it at the moment.

"Oh? So the only way to get them out is to take you out huh?" Raya asked for confirmation.

"As if you can take me out... Now die!" Nightmare replied for the last time then attacked.

Even if it was overconfident. It wouldn't chat the whole day. That would be too dumb even for it.

And so, the same black smoke rose again. This time it was all aimed at Raya who was now facing Nightmare.

However, it all stopped in front of her like there was an invisible barrier in the way. Of course, it was a result of her space manipulation.

"I got careless before and your spell worked because Chloe's troublesome characteristic poked holes into the domain. But that's no longer a problem. So don't expect it to work on me. Now I'll ask you nicely... stop the spell before I destroy you" Raya spoke calmly.

"N..." Nightmare was about to refuse arrogantly.

Which was to be expected with their size difference. After all, she was so tiny compared to its seven metres that taking her seriously was impossible.

As for why it couldn't sense her rank? That was just a space element party trick...

Well, that's what it thought anyway. But in fact, it was simply a higher rank being denying a lower-ranked one access to their rank information.

She wasn't even suppressing her strength beyond the norm. But that was enough to completely block Nightmare from seeing through her.

Anyway, just a Nightmare was about to say no...

BANG!

It was punched into the distance without even registering what had happened.

That's how different their power levels were Raya wasn't even serious at the moment.

And she didn't stop there. She continued beating it up for the next ten minutes until it couldn't even get up after all most of the body's bones were broken.

If it were a normal human body, it would have died a long time ago.

"What about now?" Raya finally spoke again.

"Hehe. You think this will scare me? I know you don't dare kill this body... And there's nothing else you can do to me" Nightmare spoke arrogantly despite being barely able to move its mouth.

"Sigh... I really wanted to give you the easy way out. But I guess you wanted hell instead..." Raya spoke caring again then instead of continuing the beating. She actually closed her eyes.

Something that surprised Nightmare greatly. But it wasn't complaining. It actually welcomed it.

The more she acted weird and delayed things, the more it recovered. This way, escape wasn't completely out of the picture.

But that celebration didn't last long. This was because it felt something immediately rise in its body soon after Raya closed her eyes.

And that something scared the hell out of it. For it was Muku's consciousness.

Something that shouldn't have happened with how it had blocked him off completely from the outside world. So to him, nothing was happening with his body at all.

That was until then when he violently broke through the blockage.

{I hope you don't regret your decision} Raya's voice was heard in Nightmare's mind which shocked it greatly.

How was that possible? Did she have psychic powers or something?

But before it could think of anything else, a manly voice was heard.

{Hello friend. Maybe I ask what you're doing in my body?} The voice was very calm. So calm that it was scary. So calm it felt like it was hiding a storm beneath it. And that really might be the case.

For it was the voice of the body's owner. Someone who wouldn't appreciate not only having their body stolen but also being used to beat up their women.

{I ah...} Nightmare didn't know what to say as it was overwhelmed with fear.

And this wasn't without reason. It was because its current soul was severely weakened and could possibly be destroyed by Muku should they clash as he had the homeground.

Everyone knew that Monarch souls were indestructible for the most part right? Except for a few extreme methods that could get rid of them.

But that didn't mean that they couldn't be consumed...

Chapter 484 Muku and Nightmare...

What is meant by "consumed" is getting absorbed by another being turning them into part of that being's soul strength.

Of course, most beings couldn't do this. But Muku being himself could probably do it.

Nightmare had scanned his soul. And he definitely had the capability. Which was why it hadn't acted rashly...

{Don't bother. I think I understand what is going on... In fact, come here for a second and let's talk it out...} Muku spoke again.

Then without waiting for Nightmare to say anything he dragged it into his mindscape.

And just like that, in a vast clearing with green grass and a grey sky, Muku and Nightmare appeared.

Muku's soul looked exactly like how he looked physically.

However, Nightmare looked quite different.

Instead of the threatening giant that terrorized the girls, it looked... even worse...

Its height reached beyond the clouds. If Muku had to say, it was probably thousands of kilometers tall, for he could only see its huge foot that looked like a huge mountain to him.

"Well, this won't work..." Muku spoke calmly then Nightmare's huge size began decreasing until it was only as tall as Muku.

He could finally see what it looked like. And that was a humanoid creature with obsidian black skin, eyes that somehow looked blacker, wearing heavy armour without a helm. It also had long hair, and long white fangs that peeked out of its mouth, which seemed slightly out of place as everything else was black.

If he had to say what it looked like, he'd say an evil antic vampire knight or something like that.

There was something that stuck out to him though. And that was the many many cracks that covered the body.

Some parts were so cracked he could see inside and all that was there was more darkness.

Well, whatever the case, it was clear that the creature's soul was gravely injured. If it were anyone else's, including his own soul, they would be dead and gone.

He had suspicions before, but it was only then that he figured out that it might be a Monarch. After all, to his knowledge, it was only those cockroaches that could continue living with such injuries to their soul.

He did wonder who or what caused the damage. After all, without his erasing gaze he wouldn't have been able to do anything to the Monarch he destroyed back then.

And he was certain this damage wasn't done by some all-powerful power. It was simple brute force that almost overcame immortality.

It was both impressive and scary...

But after a few seconds, he put such thoughts aside. They were none of his business after all...

"Now Mr Monarch, can you tell me what you're doing in my body? And who permitted you to use it to fight my girls?" Muku addressed Nightmare again.

"Just do what you want to do. Don't think I'll go down without a fight though..." Nightmare replied while getting ready to fight.

I wasn't surprised by how Muku knew that it was a Monarch. It had seen and heard enough to know that they had encountered at least two Monarchs.

It hadn't seen any of the encounters but that didn't matter.

"Hmm. A smart one I see. I like you more than Ares. Anyway. Let's get it over with. I'm sure you'll be more cooperative after a beating..." Muku replied calmly.

"Haaaaaaa!" Nightmare didn't say anything else as it charged towards Muku at full speed.

Pitch-black mithril blades appeared in its arms as it did so.

Muku just stood there unmoving.

In no time at all, Nightmare reached him and stabbed forward.

A sinister smile appeared on its face as it could already imagine its blade in Muku's chest. Which will definitely injure his soul enough for it to escape.

And it was all his fault for being so arrogant...

However...

Something so freaky that it made even it, as a Monarch freeze from fear happened.

Its target actually changed from Muku to itself. And the blade cleanly pierced through.

The moment it did it felt its chest getting stabbed and a hole appeared on the same side as the blade appeared...

The "Nightmare" it stabbed looked up at it smiled eerily then disappeared but the wound in the original Nightmare's chest didn't disappear.

Muku then appeared behind Nightmare's body and...

"Why would you stab yourself like that? Are you crazy?" He whispered.

Nightmare reacted by stabbing behind it.

Then the familiar feeling of being stabbed appeared again.

It looked in front of it. There was another Nightmare looking away from it that had appeared.

That "Nightmare" was stabbing behind it as well... right into the real Nightmare's gut.

"Aaaaaaargh!" This time Nightmare couldn't help but scream both in pain and fear. Then began backing up instinctively

As it did, it felt a huge shadow cover it from the front.

It looked up and was met by the sight of a huge leg coming down on it. Then...

BANG!

The huge leg stepped on it. Causing it more pain.

And again, it was another Nightmare.

When it realised this, it tried to stop itself from stepping back, but it couldn't. And so, it became the first being that existed to step on its own body like an ant...

After that, the huge Nightmare disappeared. Leaving an even more cracked original Nightmare writhing on the ground in pain...

"Oh come on now. That couldn't possibly be enough to make you give up. We are just starting..." Muku's voice was heard from beside Nightmare.

"My... I didn't know you were such a ruthless man. You're practically making this guy kill and torture himself since he can't die..." Raya you had come along to watch the show commented in surprise.

Though the glee in her eyes showed that she was actually enjoying the show.

As for how Muku was doing what he was doing... No it wasn't a new power. It was just him using the mindscape's power. For in the mindscape, he was the supreme existence.

Anything and everything he wanted was possible. And that happened to include making a person step on themselves.

As for what Raya said, he paid her no mind.

Nightmare had made the girls experience countless nightmares right? So of course he would make it go through the same.

Fortunately, its nightmare spell was undone when he dragged it into the mindscape so the girls were free. But he wasn't done...

He wanted Nightmare to experience what a real nightmare was...

And so, he moved on to the next step.

That was... insects.

A true classic. Having countless insects eat someone alive.

In normal cases, the person would die after.

But in Nightmare's case... even if it is dismantled, it will gather back together eventually.

And so, Muku made them eat it up until there was nothing left. The screams were almost unbearable for Raya, but she just couldn't leave. She didn't want to miss anything...

After they finished eating, the insects pooped it out.

The poop gathered together until Nightmare was formed again.

Normally the process would take many years. But in Muku's mindscape. Time moved a lot faster. So in no time at all, Nightmare had reformed.

After that, it was burned, drowned, thrown into acid, beheaded, electrocuted, and many more...

Muku did everything he could.

Then finished up by rearranging its body into all kinds of weird shapes...

Raya wanted to comment a few times but the current Muku scared her a little despite being stronger...

She thought that if she spoke too much, he might cook her alive too when he catches up and tricks her into his mindscape.

That sounds a bit too exaggerated considering their relationship but then again, she didn't know he was capable of the brutality he was inflicting on Nightmare. So it was better to be safe than sorry...

"Phew! That was tiring... I guess we can move on to the next step... how do I absorb you again?" Muku suddenly asked something that made Nightmare freeze.

It had thought that it just had to suffer for a bit then be locked up until it finds a way to escape.

After all, Muku couldn't kill it (to his knowledge) and he shouldn't know how to absorb it.

But from the way he spoke, it seemed like he only knew about it because it told him. But it didn't remember doing such a thing. So what was going on?

"What's going on is that I know everything about you. Everything you think, I will know... Now I understand why Mom likes reading minds so much. This is so fun and quite addictive. Sigh, I never thought there would come a day I'd understand her. I don't know if it's good or bad..." Muku replied to Nightmare's thoughts which scared the Monarch even more.

After all, even the Monarchs at their peak couldn't read minds. So it was a creepy thing to experience.

Speaking of which, what was this eerie domain it had been dragged into? It definitely didn't exist in its time. So what was going on?

"What's going on is that the next generation will always be better than the last. Now talk to me. I don't have all day. People are waiting for me..." Muku replied again.

To his words, Nightmare remained silent as well and forcibly stopped itself from thinking about anything in hopes that it would save its life.

"Hmm. I actually wanted to make this easier for you. But okay... SOUL SEARCH" Muku spoke as calmly as ever then...

"Arghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh" Nightmare started screaming like a pig getting slaughtered...

Chapter 485 Universe embryo?

As some might have guessed. Muku was forcibly searching through Nightmare's soul for the information he needed.

This was of course extremely painful to Nightmare.

And it wouldn't have been possible if its soul wasn't as damaged as it was. Even if it was trapped in Muku's mindscape. Unfortunately, it was hurt enough to allow for such a thing to happen.

In no time at all Muku was done with the search. He didn't learn anything else because he ignored it not wanting to learn things that could complicate his life like he always does.

After that, he pulled out and looked at the weakened Nightmare with a smirk on his face then...

He opened his mouth wide. It also grew in size as he did so until it was around five times bigger than it normally was.

This was of course only possible because it wasn't his physical body he was using so there were no physical limits.

After that, a strong suction force started coming out of it. Then Nightmare began getting pulled into his mouth.

Of course, the Monarch was horrified and started struggling to break free. Unfortunately just as it was weak against him in battle, it was also weak now.

It couldn't do anything other than watch itself getting sucked in.

Raya couldn't help but feel sorry for it. While it was an enemy that undoubtedly would have killed them if they were weaker than it. In the end, it hadn't done anything apart from being an arrogant sparring partner. So the hard feelings weren't too great.

Muku on the other hand didn't think of it like that. He felt that he was simply taking out an enemy like any other. It wasn't even the first Monarch he was taking care of so...

Anyway, in no time at all, Nightmare was completely consumed.

After that, Muku stood still for a moment. Then...

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

A strong soul energy exploded out of him. Raya was completely unprepared and she was swept away by the wave and then kicked out of the mindscape...

All that was left was Muku and an open landscape that was increasing in size by the millisecond.

In no time at all, it had expanded by more than a thousand times. That's how much soul power Muku got from an injured Monarch soul.

And that wasn't all....

[Individual has gained Metal Monarch authority]

[Individual has gained Nightmare Monarch authority]

[Individual is vastly incapable of wielding even a single authority. Hence for protection, both authorities have been sealed until further notice]

Muku's mind which had never felt clearer before froze...

He had gained two Monarch authorities? Sure he was too weak to use either but that was still great news!

But...

"What the hell is a Monarch authority?" Muku asked no one in particular.

[Monarch authority can be said to be the VIP card for elements that can only be used by a single being at a time. It gives the user absolute control of the element. Including stripping or imparting the element to any being and more...]

Unexpectedly, the IA actually explained things to him for the first time. Even if it was a trashy explanation, it was still better than nothing.

It meant that he was practically the god of those elements and could do whatever he wanted with them.

Now that he thought about it, was that how Nightmare could summon "nightmares" that should only exist in people's minds?

Yeah, he also got snippets of Nightmare's memories when he consumed its soul.

The more he thought about it, the more it made sense.

After all, no matter how strong one was, they shouldn't be able to give physical forms to mental attacks... Well, that is if they didn't have a Monarch authority apparently.

And it was likely also why the nightmare armour couldn't be seen through by anyone. It had been made not to release any energy signature at all. Something that should be impossible for something made with energy.

After all, no matter the level, all energy has traces, even if it is minimised to the extreme.

But the nightmare armour was a contradiction to that rule...

Thinking about it, Muku couldn't help but celebrate even more. After all, he could already think of many things he could do with it.

But that was for the future. For now, he had other things to take care of. The first one was...

Whoosh...

Raya and the girls suddenly appeared in his mindscape at the same time. And surprisingly, so did the Castle.

Even more surprising than that, his very own physical body appeared too.

Before this, only Raya could enter completely. But now... It seemed, everyone and their mother could also be brought in.

Everyone was shocked...

After all, they were just recovering from the countless nightmares they experienced. Now they were standing in an open field in a place they didn't know.

For a second they thought that they were trapped in a nightmare again. But the moment they saw Muku's smug expression that thought was put to rest.

After all, they were quite familiar with the expression. And they had experienced so many nightmares that they could tell when they were in one.

"What did you do?" The impatient Jade asked.

The others also looked at Muku for answers.

Raya was practically holding herself from prying open his head for answers.

She knew what had caused this. But the effect was way too exaggerated.

As a R6, she was certain that Muku's current soul power was way beyond her's as an R6. It was R7 at least.

But even then, was that enough to do so much?

Was the Monarch soul so beneficial? Should she have snatched it for herself?

As she thought this, Muku finally spoke.

"Welcome to my mindscape" He said while spreading his arms wide.

"Impossible!" Suddenly a shocked voice was heard.

It was Freya's voice... But it wasn't her who spoke. It was Iris.

When they were pulled in, Freya had switched places with her so she could recover in her mindscape while not missing anything.

The others were quite jealous of this, but if they entered their mindscapes their bodies would slump to the ground.

Something they couldn't allow before Nightmare's matter was taken care of.

Anyway, after the exclamation, everyone looked at Iris questioningly.

After all, it was obvious that she was about to lay down some surprising news...

"What do you mean?" Muku asked.

"What I mean is that this is impossible! No matter how much one improves their soul power and mindscape, they should never be able to do this. Not even Monarchs could do this. The fact that the dragon child could come in here was already an impossibility, but because of your soul link, I could accept it. But this... This is too much. Unless... No" Iris spoke in a voice that sounded like she was barely holding herself back from breaking down.

"Unless what?" Muku asked.

"I once heard that there was a rare chance of a mindscape developing into a universe. But it's so rare that it's said to have only happened once trillions of years ago. And even that case cannot be verified. So everyone thought of it as a mere fairy tale... I thought so until now" Iris explained.

She sounded like she wanted to deny the situation but couldn't because the evidence was pressing down on her throat.

"Pfft. You're crazy. How can I possibly create a universe in my brain? And what universe is so small?" Muku laughed it off.

He knew that he had a mysterious background and could do a lot of things. But being able to create a universe?

He wasn't even the strongest being within his team. And he figured someone who could create universes had to be the strongest or at least Monarch level or something. In fact, he felt that only his mother was worthy of such a task with her galaxy-like eyes.

In fact, she probably had a few universes lying around.

Anyway, the point was, he wasn't qualified for such a grant task and he knew it...

"Tsk. Of course, I know this isn't a universe. After all, it's still tethered to the universe we live in. If I had to say, I'd say this is an embryonic universe. An embryo in its early stages. Even then, it shouldn't have been possible. But it is. I'll just accept it like I accept the other crazy things your group does..." Iris clarified.

She sounded way calmer now. It seemed she really had decided to accept the situation.

"Why do you always get the coolest things? Wheresy embryo huh?" Jade immediately complained.

"Why are you asking me? You also have a mindscape, whose stopping you from turning it into one?" Muku replied smugly.

He wasn't completely sure about what was going on, but as long as he could make fun of Jade, then it was all good.

"You know I can beat the current you up right? Your body is so broken I wouldn't even need to put much effort into it..." Jade spoke with a deadpan expression on her face.

She wasn't at one hundred percent but Muku's state was worse.

Nightmare's transformation was undone after he took back control. But the damage was left behind.

It was actually a wonder how Muku could stand and not even grimace in pain.

"Huh? Oh... This. Let me fi... Argh!" Muku who finally took notice of his body wanted to fix it in his mindscape.

Which should be easy as he was the world's "god" but not only did not get healed but he fell to the ground screaming in pain.

"Idiot..." Iris spoke.

Just because you can do anything you want in here won't magically give you the energy you don't have...

Chapter 486 Universal?

"Huh? Aren't I the "god" of this place? Doesn't that literally mean I should be able to do anything I want?" Muku asked from the ground getting healed by Hope.

"Didn't you hear what I said? I said this place is just an embryo. So the power you use doesn't come into existence just because you want it. You fuel it. You might not have noticed it. But when you were dealing with Nightmare, your body was almost completely sucked dry because of whatever you were doing. In fact, it was out of power from the beginning. If I had to guess, it was the dragon girl's power that was getting used" Iris explained again while holding herself back from smacking the idiot.

This was the problem with humans. As soon as they felt that they were in a position of power they always became reckless.

"Oh. So until this place is a self-sufficient universe, I will have to use my power to do anything in here? Oh well, I was doing that up to this point anyway. But wait, does it mean that at some point I'll have a universe's worth of mana when it is fully formed?" Muku was disappointed but not for long.

"Yeah, as unfair as it is. That's exactly what it will be like. But don't get cocky for anyone can have that much as well if not more as long as they are talented enough... though I don't know if anyone has ever done it..." Iris immediately wanted to put him down with the fact that Evolvers and beasts technically didn't have a limit as long as they were talented and lucky enough.

After all, at some point, R3 was the maximum anyone could reach. But now it was nothing but a starter rank.

However, what she said wasn't something she was well informed in.

She didn't know how strong Monarchs were but she doubted they were universal. Then there was the mysterious Mrs. C. The lady who seemed to dislike her since she had never acknowledged her presence at all.

Anyway, from what she had heard about the lady, she might be universal. So her words to Muku weren't simply theoretical.

"Really? That's even better. That means if I reach that level of strength I'll be twice as strong as everyone else. Hahaha. I can't wait!" Muku didn't look at it as a bad thing that people without the universe could reach the level. And he gave his reason why.

Iris finally gave up on him. It was clear that she wasn't going to bring him down that day...

The girls also rolled their eyes.

That was except for Hope. She was happily healing Muku.

She had been shocked when he tried healing himself. She felt threatened by his new ability that could replace her. Fortunately, it seemed unnecessarily wasteful for now.

So her job was safe for the time being.

Even if she was more than a healer, especially recently, when she had developed many dangerous fighting methods. She was used to being a healer as her base job.

Something that set her apart from the rest.

After all, even if she could kill uniquely. Everyone else could do the same so...

Anyway, after that everyone checked out the surroundings a bit.

That's when they realised that while they could breathe and everything. Their mana wasn't recovering. Which was because the embryo couldn't generate mana yet.

So for now, they couldn't rely on it for such things. However, they had beast cores so it was fine.

And honestly, this couldn't have happened at a better time.

They could finally relax a little in the dangerous world when they could hide away in a base completely cut off from the rest of the world.

Sure they had Raya but she wasn't omnipotent. She could get tired and be unable to protect them when things turned tough.

But now, even if that happened. They could just pop into Muku's world.

They could also sleep with their guards completely down after a long time. Hell, it would probably be the first time most of them had done that ever since the apocalypse began.

While they could function normally with how they were living, people always worked better when they were completely rested instead of partly rested.

As they did that, Muku argued with Raya about how she cut him off when he wanted to heal himself without warning.

To which she said, "I'd rather die than help you impress people"... of course she said it in his head.

Outside she said, "I don't know what happened. Maybe I subconsciously cut it off because the mana going out was too much. I'm sorry"

She said it with such an apologetic look that Muku might have believed her if she wasn't laughing and cursing him out in his head.

The dambled two-faced brat!

He couldn't even say anything about it because she seemed like a saint to the others.

Now he understood what that retarded MCs in Chinese short dramas felt like when they got gaslit left and right by their evil sibling.

Anyway, after checking everything out. They waited for Muku to recover some mana before taking them out...

...

In the outside world...

Klaus and the others were panicking greatly trying to figure out what had happened.

They thought that the evil creature that had taken Muku's body had done something.

Like taking them into a dream realm to torture them personally or something.

For that reason, they could only hope for the best while waiting for them to return. Which really sucked. It made Klaus grit his teeth so much that blood came out...

It reminded him of how weak he really was. Being with Muku's group had given him the illusion that everything was actually not that bad and could be managed.

But now he realised that it was Muku's group that had earned the right to think like that. Not him or his group...

They still had a long way to go. For that reason, he made a serious decision on the spot. A decision that might get many killed, but it was guaranteed to make experts of anyone who survives.

As Klaus was having this mental battle with himself, Muku and the gang appeared.

Contrary to what he thought and expected they all looked clean and well rested... which was because they took showers and changed clothes while in the embryo.

Time there moved in accordance with how Muku wanted it to. And he made it move quicker after recovering a bit.

This made it so that the few hours they spent inside were ten minutes to the outside world.

So to Klaus and the others. The group disappeared emaciated then appeared rejuvenated.

This raised everyone's eyebrows at the very least.

They wanted to ask. But didn't do so in the end. Klaus and Chris chose to wait for when they are told since what was happening wasn't clearly something out of the ordinary even for Muku's group.

Which was a good thing because Muku's group decided not to publicize the information randomly.

After all, this was the kind of information that got one hunted down by Monarchs. Just like Muku's bloodline. So yeah, randos weren't eligible to know.

Of course, there was a need to make up a lie. And what they came up with was... they were taken to a nightmare realm where they finally defeated Nightmare with luck.

And out of nowhere, they were rejuvenated by a holy light from the sky and chose to wear new clothes since the ones they had had been destroyed.

After that, they were kicked out. Unfortunately, their castle was lost in the fight so they were now homeless.

The tale sounded rather tall... But it was the apocalypse. Anything was possible. For that reason, everyone believed them. It made sense if one thought about it long enough after all... right?

Well, whatever. The matter passed.

Lisa with the help of some earth elementalists made a new residence for the group in place of the castle.

Of course, it was nowhere near as good. But it was better than nothing... it wasn't like they'd live in it anyway.

It was just a cover-up to sell the story.

After that, the "higher-ups" gathered for a meeting.

And it was simply Muku, the girls(now including Lisa), and Jade's brothers.

It wasn't actually Muku who called for the meeting but Klaus instead.

He didn't waste time with empty words as he went directly to the point. And that was...

"I'm taking my people and living tomorrow. We've imposed for way too long" Klaus spoke seriously.

Everyone including Chris were surprised.

After all, it was rather sudden. They had decided to go after a week or so. Only for Klaus to suddenly change his mind out of the blue...

Although he was surprised. Chris actually supported the idea. He also thought the same way after Muku's group disappeared back then.

He wanted to bring it up later to Klaus. But to think his brother would be faster. Well, whatever as long as he got what he wanted right?

"Why so sudden? Aren't you going to finish the tournament at least? There's only one more match left from my understanding..." Muku replied.

"I'd have loved to. But I feel it's not something we should be enjoying yet. After all, despite being my group's leader. I actually couldn't even qualify for the said tournament. Besides, my sister has already lost and cost me a lot of beast cores. So...(Hey!) Anyway, I will not change my mind..." Klaus replied and threw a little shade in Jade's direction...

"Well, if you've made up your mind. I wish you luck brother Klaus and brother Chris. I know you'll definitely achieve your goals" Muku decided not to try and stop them.

They were grown men after all. They knew what they needed to do...

Chapter 487 Plans for the future...

"What? Not gonna say anything?" Muku shifted his attention to Jade.

"Why should I? They already made their choice. And it's something that was gonna happen soon anyway.

"Ouch. So heartless. Can't you pretend to be sad at least?" Klaus spoke with an exaggerated expression of hurt on his face.

Though honestly, he expected the reaction from her. She was never the overly emotional or attached kind. At least not with them.

It was reserved for their mother and Muku apparently. But whatever, they were used to it. After all, she cared deep down... Probably.

"Just go already and don't forget to look for mom. I'll kick your ass if you don't have any results the next time we meet for giving me false hope" Jade spoke dismissively.

"Fine. We'll get out of your hair you heartless brat" Klaus said.

After that, he and Chris left to rest for the night. They'd be leaving early in the morning after all. So they needed to be well rested when they had the chance for they were stepping into a dangerous situation where even simple mistakes could cost lives....

.....

The next morning...

Muku and the girls were standing at the edge of their territory waving off Klaus's huge group.

Everyone had said their goodbyes before they set off.

Honestly going out with such a big group was a bad idea.

Which was why Klaus told everyone the truth about how dangerous it was and gave them a choice. They could choose to either go or stay with no punishment at all.

After considering the danger. An expected result occurred. And that was all of his group members agreeing to go with him despite the danger.

As for why it was expected... Well, they all idolised Klaus to the point that they were willing to follow him even if it meant death.

This made Muku feel that Klaus really might be able to unite all of humanity under one banner. After all, he clearly had enough charisma....

Anyway, after Klaus's group left it was time for Muku's group to make a decision on something important.

And that was...

"What's our next course of action?" Chloe asked....

"Simple really. We will finish the tournament first. After that, we will focus on ranking up. This will be done in the embryo so it won't take long. After that, we'll set out to my old friend Jack's base. I wonder how he is doing these days. It has been more than two years..." Muku spoke calmly.

He had already thought about it.

"I understand most of the things you said. But how is Jack significant enough to be part of the plan instead of maybe a side quest that's of no consequence if not done?" Chloe asked something that was on most of the girls' minds.

"Simple really. Have you forgotten that we all need belief energy? I'm not saying that that's the major reason we're going, but it should be enough for the rest of you who have no attachment to him right?" Muku replied.

"Oh. Okay..." Chloe accepted his reasoning.

Even if she and the others weren't as fond of the muscle-head as Muku was, they could never turn down the chance to get the much-needed belief energy...

"Hey. What about your bloodline thing? Were you successful or did Nightmare get in the way?" Emily asked worriedly.

After all, she knew how detrimental it was for Muku not to have his bloodline under control.

"Oh that... It can be said to be both a failure and a success..." Muku replied vaguely.

Before the girls could ask what he meant. He held out his fists then...

With no warning or sound at all, they suddenly ignited in a dense grey energy that made them all gulp down some saliva.

"So yeah. I wasn't able to get back the erasing gaze. But I did get erasing fists. It's clearly not as cool but it's better than nothing. Plus unlike before, this is something I worked for. It's completely mine. So there is no chance of me losing them even after a tough battle. And no, Nightmare didn't do anything significant to me. I was about to wake up anyway. For I can feel that this is as far as I can go for now. In fact, I might have let him live had he not messed with all of you..." Muku explained.

"Aww. So sweet... But we know that you wouldn't have let him live even if he had just existed in your body without doing anything. So don't think you can get brownie points from this" Emily expised Muku's plot.

But the glowing and pleased smile on her face showed that it worked despite her denial.

And she wasn't the only one it worked on. The others were either smiling too or doing their best in an attempt to stop themselves from doing so.

Seeing this reaction Muku smiled in satisfaction... Internally of course. Things might turn around if he dares to show his happiness. That's how quickly these chameleons changed their colours.

One had to know when to stop. Something he got to practice a lot from dealing with so many of them. It was a bit tiring but he didn't mind. The benefits were more than worth it...wink wink...

"Okay, fine. Can we go to the arena now or do y'all want to prepare first? I can't wait to see the final after watching a replay from Raya's memories. I'm especially impressed by Hope. I didn't know you had such an OP hidden card. I wish I were there to see it live. But oh well..." Muku changed topics to something he was rather passionate about...

"Hehe. Thank you Da... Big brother" Hope replied happily and almost slipped up.

Most took it as a slip of the tongue. Except for Audrey who knew what was going on and Emily who was extremely sensitive to such matters.

Audrey could barely stop herself from smiling while Emily's eyes narrowed a bit for a second before returning to normal.

If it had been anyone else, she would have pursued her suspicions but Hope was different. She'd never do such a thing with Muku... Well, at least that's what Emily thought not knowing that such a thing had already happened and would happen again every time the two of them got a chance.

"I'm ready" Layla spoke after Hope.

"And so am I" Chloe seconded her.

"Great! Let's go then... To make things interesting, why not do this in the embryo? That was Raya won't have to limit them with her domain and they can have all the space they need" Muku excitedly suggested something.

"Tsk. Like you are gonna take no for an answer even if they refuse" Jade commented while rolling her eyes.

The others nodded in agreement. It was well known that in matters involving tournaments, Muku would always have his way one way or the other. So it wasn't really up to them.

Even if he wouldn't force them. He was definitely not above bribing them into agreeing...

"I'm okay with it if your mini world can take it..." Layla spoke.

Chloe nodded to show her agreement.

Not only can it take it. But it can take all of Raya's power and beyond. After all, it was created with the soul of a Monarch. So while I need to expend my own power to do anything in it. The structure itself is beyond solid..." Muku replied confidently...

"Good then" Layla replied.

"What about my girls?" Lisa asked after taking a while to gather some confidence.

Even if she was now officially a part of Muku's closed circle. She wouldn't switch up on her subordinates and friends who helped her get to that point. That's not the kind of person she was anymore after the struggle in her "other life".

"You're really a great leader.... And don't worry about them. We're taking them with us. We need that belief energy after all. Now more than ever after the group was halved..." Muku replied while patting Lisa's head.

This made her mind completely go blank for she had never been in such a situation and didn't know how to act. She felt quite awkward honestly... Though she kinda liked it.

It made her feel weird but in a pleasant way...

Seeing her act like this made the other girls put on teasing smiles.

They remembered their earlier days when they would act like that. But they had since learned to be a bit more thick-skinned when dealing with Muku for he would make them blush all day otherwise.

In the beginning, they would have definitely felt slightly resentful had they witnessed this scene. But now, they had mostly accepted Lisa.

Plus she wasn't an immediate threat from the looks of things. So her presence could be said to be the safest out of everyone present apart from Hope(to those who didn't know)

Even Elsa was a lot more suspicious of them than Lisa. Which was something Elsa knew and felt extremely aggrieved about.

After all, Lisa was someone who was obviously interested in Muku while she barely showed any signs of being interested if any. What she might have thought didn't matter, what mattered was that she didn't show any signs.

"Okay. Now go gather everyone and meet us here. We'll go in all at once..." Muku directed Lisa.

"Okay", Lisa, who had been looking for a reason to run away acknowledged the command and then practically ran away.

It was rather cute actually. Muku had missed such reactions...

Chapter 488 Embryo invasion?

A while later...

Everyone was gathered in one spot.

After that Muku released his mental energy.

Everyone, including Raya, felt their minds being suppressed instantly. After all, the current Muku was mentally beyond all of them combined.

All thanks to Nightmare's soul.

Anyway, after that, they felt themselves getting lighter then they all disappeared.

Along with their fortress. Then everything appeared inside the embryo.

Muku figured that it was better to move everyone there. And he didn't particularly need to keep it a secret from the fortress residents.

After all, they were his people unlike Klaus's group.

And Lisa wouldn't be okay with staying safe in the embryo while they stayed outside. So it was unavoidable to take them along..

"Are you okay?" Audrey asked Muku inside the embryo.

His face had turned a few shades paler after bringing so many people and items in at once.

"Yeah. Just not used to it yet" Muku replied reassuringly.

Despite having the power to do what he did. He was still not used to processing things like that. So it would take some getting used to.

"Okay. That's good. Now let's go relax while watching the final match" Audrey replied while holding her hand out at him with a smile on her face.

Muku took her hand instantly as a smile also appeared on his face.

Just seeing Audrey's smile made him feel better.

"Yeah. Let's go" He spoke happily.

The others looked at the two lovebirds with no particular expressions on their faces. After all, they were used to such scenes.

If anything, they were secretly taking notes and would do what Audrey did the moment they got the chance. That had also happened a few times.

Muku was quite grateful that they weren't jealous of each other. They might be competitive but it was the good and fun kind.

If they hated each other then he would have been in for a hard time...

Anyway, after Lisa's girls made a reasonable fuss about what had just happened, everyone moved on.

They walked to the area which was around three kilometres away from the castle.

It could have been closer but Muku felt like putting it a bit further just because he could. And the whole embryo was a circle with over ten thousand kilometres between two opposite points so.... He really had the space to do whatever he wanted.

The fortress was also seven kilometres away from the castle.

No it wasn't because he disliked ladies. But they were the ones who weren't too comfortable with being too close to him and the girls.

They adored them but didn't want to be too close at the same time. After all, to the ladies, they were like demigods. And getting too close was always scary.

Especially after Muku made most of them experience those nightmares.

So, for their sake, he put them a little distance away.

And honestly, seven kilometres was something even an R3 could cover in less than a minute if they needed to. So it was fine.

Lisa actually appreciated his thoughtfulness because she had also noticed the problem.

This way, they were far enough to be left to their own devices while also close enough to be managed when necessary.

In fact, since she was transitioning into a part of Muku's group. She was planning on withdrawing from most of their affairs and leaving them to her vice leader.

No, it wasn't ditching them. Just making necessary changes as someone who was going to be busy with other matters.

After all, it would make no sense to be the immediate official while not being around most of the time. So yeah, it was the right move. Muku and Audrey supported it too....

....

Some minutes later...

Chloe and Layla were looking at each other again in the ring while everyone else looked on.

Unlike before. The arena was more than ten kilometres wide. Instead of just a kilometre getting stretched through space to minimise the chance of getting spotted by outside forces.

This was better for the participants as they didn't have to pay extra attention to the real distance between them and their opponents due to space stretching...

It was something that had played a significant part in the earlier battles.

As for the spectators, they didn't mind. After all, all of them were at least R3 after being pumped with resources. So seeing that far wasn't a problem.

The problem was the speed. Something they couldn't keep up with without the barrier Raya had created before.

But that wasn't a problem now either. After all, Muku had recovered and could do anything he wanted as long as the mana he had was enough to cover it.

And creating the same barrier Raya created before wasn't a problem...

He did it with just a thought. And so, everything was ready for the much-awaited final match.

At the same time, Muku noticed something.

The embryo actually started growing again the moment he brought people in. It seemed that having people inside it made it grow. Or maybe just any living being would do. Something which he definitely had to test out later on with trees and such...

As for why he bothered with making it bigger when it was already big?

Well, it might seem big based on the old world's scale. But to him, it was quite tiny. He could probably run many laps around it in less than ten minutes.

It seemed even smaller when you compared it to a universe. If we used that scale. It was practically nothing. If not less than nothing. So he still had a long way to go. And he was planning on going as far as it took.

Like who wouldn't invest in their own universe if they could? It was a place he and the girls were completely safe in after all.

In fact, if it wasn't because of the lack of mana, limited size and being tethered to the outside world somehow. He would have completely ditched the outside world and lived happily forever with the girls.

As for how it would be forever? He could just stop everyone's ageing process. And even if he didn't stop it. With their current power level, living a few thousand years wasn't hard.

But he couldn't yet. Especially because of the tethering he couldn't sense. He figured that if there was a connection then some way somehow, there must be a way to force in through it.

Even if there wasn't, he would rather be safe than sorry. So being the strongest in existence was still his main objective...

Anyway, enough of that, it was time to start the ma...

Everyone suddenly looked up at the sky which Muku had turned blue to match the atmosphere...

"What now?" Muku asked as he saw a thin black line appear midair.

Before he or anyone could make sense of it, a hand came through it pulling the line apart.

Immediately after, another hand came through and pushed the two sides apart even further.

Everyone's expressions turned solemn. After all, what was getting pushed apart was literal space.

So someone was pushing space apart like it was paper or cardboard.

Something not even Raya the space elemental could do...

And what was revealed was the black void...

However, unlike before when it appeared. It wasn't rampaging but behaving like a tamed puppy.

Seeing this Muku sighed and brought his hand between his eyes and started massaging himself like he had gotten a headache.

While he hadn't gotten one yet he was sure that he would have one by the end of the day...

"Hey! That's not a nice thing to say about your mother!" Suddenly a displeased voice was heard from the sky.

"I didn't say anything. I just thought it and you invaded my thoughts you old thing!" Muku immediately snapped.

That's right. It was his mother who had made an appearance.

And like always, she had to be "unique" about it if we put it nicely.

"And what did I say about calling me that?! Boohoo. My son is a disrespectful brat. I should just die for I have failed this life" Mrs C's exaggeratedly sad voice was heard as she fell through the portal like a defeated enemy with her hands covering her face.

"No mother-in-law!" Audrey was the first to react as she flew up and caught the dramatic old lady.

The others wanted to do the same but they felt too awkward. After all, it was clear that she was pretending. And even if they let her fall, what could possibly happen to her? If anything, it's the embryo that might get destroyed.

Audrey was different though. While she also thought everything the others did. It didn't stop her from making a move.

All that mattered was what her mother-in-law wanted. Since she obviously wanted to be caught, then why not catch her and be dramatic too?

"Hehe. You can let go of me now dear... I have to say, out of all my daughters-in-law you're by far my favourite" Mrs C spoke a bit awkwardly as she wiggled out of Audrey's embrace.

She wasn't expecting anyone to catch her when she purposefully went out on a terrible show. But to think Audrey didn't mind thickening her face to match hers. It was truly endearing and a bit embarrassing at the same time.

"Thank you, mother. And welcome. I'm happy to finally meet you in person. I mean, we met you as souls before but this feels more real" Audrey replied respectfully and welcomed Mrs C.

"R-right. I'm happy we could meet like this too" Mrs C replied in the same awkward manner.

Honestly, Audrey made her unable to act in any way that wasn't proper.

She kinda missed her son who angered her but was fun nonetheless.

On the sidelines, Muku looked on with a schadenfreude-filled smile on his face.

He was enjoying her suffering. That's what she gets for trying to ruin his reputation in front of everyone like that...

Chapter 489 Layla versus Chloe(finally)

A while later...

After being countered by Audrey's calmness Mrs C was subdued. So she quietly took a seat beside Muku clearly intending to watch the match with everyone.

Of course, the match only continued after everyone greeted her.

Including Muku who didn't want to. But the glares from the girls were too much.

Then there was Lisa, who didn't know what to call herself when she greeted her.

After all, was she Muku's girl, his group member or just the captain of his small army?

She of course wanted to be his girl. But it felt too forward when it wasn't confirmed.

But she underestimated Mrs C, before she could introduce herself Mrs C spoke first.

"Ah! If it isn't Lisa. Hello, newest daughter-in-law. Is my son treating you well? If he's bullying you, tell me and I'll sort him out" Mrs C spoke in a happy and welcoming voice. She even pulled Lisa in for a hug, just as she had the other girls.

This left Lisa completely stunned and unable to react.

She didn't expect Muku's all-powerful mother to be like this.

She seemed like a normal mother overly happy about her son bringing a girl home.

Honestly, if she hadn't seen how Mrs C came or had been told a bit about her by Muku due to the class advancement thing, she would have thought that Mrs C was just a normal lady.

One with the most entrancing eyes in existence but normal nonetheless.

"N...no. He has been great. More than great even" Lisa spoke after realising that it would be rude not to say anything.

"Oh ho! I guess I can expect a grandchild soon" Mrs C replied with glowing eyes.

"No you can't! And are you just here to disrupt things?" Muku finally couldn't take any more.

"Tsk. Fine. I'll remain quiet" Mrs C replied like a hurt child as she let go of Lisa.

Finally, the situation quietened down and everyone could focus on the match...

"3...2...1...Fight!" Muku immediately started the match before she started her antics again....

.....

I'm the arena...

The two avatars finally took action.

They had held out for so long that they could barely take it anymore.

So much so they charged at each other instead of the usual elemental attacks.

It was quite a sight to see a huge hydra and a huge roc charging at each other.

The hydra was obviously a bit bigger and quite scary-looking with its many heads. But the roc was just as imposing with its crackling body.

BOOOOOOOOM!

An energy wave rose from their impact.

It was only after realising that pent-up energy did the two parties separate.

The hydra barely stumbled back while the roc was pushed back quite a bit. Which was understandable considering their body types.

But that didn't mean that Chloe was at a disadvantage. She used the momentum to take flight.

After that, clouds instantly formed in the sky and completely covered her.

Then...

Crackle! Crackle!...

BOOOOOM! BOOOOOOOM!...

Thick lightning bolts began raining down on Layla.

Layla didn't panic as she immediately covered herself with layers of ice defence that not only protected her but deflected the lightning in all directions.

So even if it broke through all the layers with how they acted, none would hit Layla on the ground.

But she didn't stop there. She also started to randomly throw huge ice spears into the sky.

This was because she couldn't pinpoint where Chloe was due to the lightning messing with her senses. And she couldn't see anything due to the clouds.

And as someone with the power to cover the whole place, she figured she might as well do that. And that's exactly what she did.

Through this, she figured out where Chloe was because of how her ice attacks were getting destroyed a lot more where she was.

But the problem was that she was constantly moving at high speeds. So hitting her was rather hard.

But that was fine. As long as she didn't have to worry about a Kamikaze. Everything could be discussed.

And if she couldn't hit her with a lot of small attacks. Why not one huge attack?

With that thought, a huge blunt ice pillar around ten kilometres wide appeared and shot into the sky.

This covered all of the arena. So Chloe's speed didn't matter.

But....

BANG!

Crack

BOOOOOOOM!

The pillar was quickly broken apart by one attack at its very centre.

This was why the girls seldom used such high-covering attacks in their duels. They were rather easy to neutralise.

But that wasn't a problem for Layla. It was exactly what she was hoping for.

After all, to destroy it, Chloe had to slow down a bit and expose her possi

With that done. The broken ice didn't fall to the ground. It actually turned into a cage and trapped Chloe inside..

Knowing how things would turn out. Due to the last time Chloe was trapped, Layla didn't relax. She moved on to her next move.

And that was turning the cage into shadow-charged ice. Something that should likely be able to combat that weird move Chloe had.

Though she wasn't sure whether it would work. But it also might. So it was worth a try.

In fact, Chloe thought the same. As soon as she saw the ice start to turn black, she fought harder to break free. It wasn't the time to believe in her abilities too much.

Such things could be tested during practice.

And so, she targeted the unturned ice and broke free.

After that, she flew into the sky. So high she also flew out of the planet.

A place she was relatively familiar with after doing it twice... Though unlike the outside world. She was in a "fake" world.

So outer space doesn't exist yet. What met her at the top was a barrier stopping her from going any further. But that didn't matter.

The height was enough for what she wanted to do.

That's right. She had decided to use Kamikaze.

She didn't want to use it in this fight. But she realised that Layla was a bit too cunning in battle so fighting her for too long wasn't a good idea.

So even if she had to use the very move that got her in trouble with Layla in the first place, she didn't mind. It will all be worth it when she wins.

After all, the winner is always right.

With that thought, she began her descent.

BOOOOOOOM! BOOOOOOOM!....

She broke the sound barrier a few times as she descended.

She had never committed to the move as much as she was doing then.

After all, even if Muku and Raya couldn't handle it, which was very unlikely. There was Mrs C who could take care of it in her sleep.

So there was no safer time than now to use the ability.

She was already seeing her victory. A small smile even appeared on her face inside the avatar as she came down.

However, something unexpected happened.

No, it wasn't Layla building an impenetrable defence. That was something even Muku might not be able to do against Kamikaze. The move was just that strong without her special characteristics [Unbreakable] powering it.

So there was no way someone as smart as Layla would try to tank it or even think about tanking it.

What she did was definitely something Chloe should have expected from Layla.

And that was creating a pillar of thick ice so tall it reached the same height Chloe had reached when she started her descent.

Of course, with the lightning covering the whole sky, the pillar wouldn't last long. But Layla didn't need it to last long. She only needed it to create a shadow for less than a second.

Which was rather easy to do with blue lightning lighting up the whole sky.

So the moment the pillar appeared, a shadow appeared with it. Then...

[Omnipresence]

Layla used her infamous move and appeared above Chloe's Kamikaze.

The pillar of ice was destroyed the very next moment by the lightning. But did it matter?

Of course not, Layla was already safely floating in the sky above Chloe.

The move was so smart that everyone couldn't help but smile at the very least while the rest exploded into cheers.

After all, they had all thought Kamikaze was undefeatable until that very moment.

They thought that once Chloe used it against you, then you can only die calmly.

But Layla proved them all wrong.

There is no truly undefeatable move. Just people who haven't discovered the way.

Of course most of them, honestly, all of them still wouldn't be able to do anything against the move other than tank it if they are strong enough.

But still, the fact that someone broke it was enough. Everything else could be discussed.

On the other hand, Chloe was rather gloomy.

After all, she had completely committed to the move. Pumped in more than half her mana. But now her target was gone

What was she to do?

Was she supposed to smash into the group like an idiot?

Why did Layla always have to have an answer to everything?

Was it the power of big sisters?..

Chapter 490 Layla versus Chloe(final)

"Umm, aren't you going to do anything?" Mrs C asked Muku curiously.

"Why?" Muku asked.

"Isn't she falling to her death?" She asked again.

"Not with you here. All I have to do now is relax and watch the show. If she were in danger, you would have done something already" Muku replied.

"Sigh. I miss the earlier days when you wouldn't even think of replying to me like that" Mrs C lamented but didn't do anything after that.

Seeing this Muku narrowed his eyes. It seemed Chloe wasn't out of the game yet. With this realisation, he paid closer attention to what was happening.

He wanted to see just how she was going to get out of this one. After all, that kind of momentum wasn't something one could just ignore.

And she was too close to the ground to turn around and go back up.

That's when it happened.

Chloe's avatar started vibrating like crazy. It was so minute that barely a few people noticed it.

Then she reached the ground.

Most people couldn't help but close their eyes subconsciously.

But when they did, they didn't hear the loud bang they were expecting.

They immediately opened their eyes trying to understand what was going on.

And they were surprised to see Chloe flying back into the sky with no injuries at all.

Her momentum was still great but a lot more manageable.

Confusion immediately flooded their minds. What the hell happened?

Some who couldn't bear not knowing asked their neighbours.

Most of the neighbours had closed their eyes too. So they didn't know what had happened.

But a few had kept them open, it was they who told the others what had happened.

As they spoke, it seemed like they were trying to make themselves believe what they were saying more than the people they were telling.

And their words were...

"She passed through the ground like a ghost then popped up again from a distance away with zero damage or even dirt on her..."

As expected, not many believed these words.

It was only when someone reminded them of that time she managed to beat Audrey even though she shouldn't have been able to reach her with all the matter in between them.

But they weren't sure if it was the same thing. After all, back then, they only saw the result not the action...

Anyway, that didn't matter anymore. At least not now, what mattered was that Chloe was safe and was quickly making her way to Layla.

In fact, she had probably already reached her but due to the barrier that slowed everything down, they were basically seeing the battle's past.

Anyway, Layla wasn't just looking at Chloe coming at her without doing anything.

She again created many ice attacks and sent them down at Chloe. And again, they started throwing attacks at each other as Chloe tried to reach Layla while Layla tried to stop her.

But of course, with the destructive capabilities of lightning, it was hard to keep Chloe down.

So she soon reached where Layla was. But as she did so. Layla disappeared as a snowstorm covered the sky above them creating a huge shade.

Chloe's eyes widened immediately and a grave expression appeared on her face.

After all, the shade meant that Layla could use [omnipresence] to go anywhere now. She could literally appear as far away or as close to her as she wanted.

Sure she was quick. But she knew that she couldn't compete with instantaneous travel, at least not yet or anytime soon.

So, she did the only thing she could do. And that was...

A lightning barrier surrounded her like a deadly sphere.

Of course, it wasn't air-tight, she couldn't control lightning like that yet. It was like a ball of lightning threads flashing dangerously all around her.

But that was enough. After all, she wasn't trying to protect herself like that. She was simply trying to keep Layla away from her.

After all, if she didn't, nothing would stop the six-headed hydra from appearing above her and biting her into oblivion.

She had zero interest in knowing what it felt like to be beaten in six different places at once.

And considering that Layla didn't appear next to her. It could be said that her plan was a success. But she wasn't out of the woods yet.

After all, destroying a snowstorm of loose particles with lightning wasn't exactly easy.

She tried to do it anyway, but more snowflakes would just come in and replace the ones she destroyed. Which of course meant that the shade below would continue existing.

When she tried using stronger and bigger attacks that could potentially wipe out most of the ice at once, Layla would just use stronger defences.

As for attacking Layla herself, that was out of the question. She didn't even try. Again, she couldn't compete with [omnipresence] even if she pushed her speed to the limits.

She might be the fastest in the team but she wasn't the quickest. That was definitely Layla with her [omnipresence]

On the bright side, while she couldn't get to Layla, Layla also couldn't get to her. So for the time being they were locked in a good old stalemate.

And for her, it was better than the alternative. At least she had time to think about what to do next...

That's when it hit her. Would Layla's defence be able to stop her attacks if they included that weird characteristic of hers? The answer was a simple no.

That was something not even Monarchs could completely stop. Hell, even Mrs C had to put a little effort when she was dealing with it.

And what was Mrs C? She was a being who was likely Outerversal in power. So if she had to try, even if it was a little bit to stop her attack, then it was definitely worth noting.

Anyway, while she now had a plan she thought would work, there was still a problem. She didn't know how to activate it.

Well, she knew how to. She just had to become very determined to do something. While she was determined to win, it wasn't at that level yet.

After all, no matter what, she and Layla were like sisters. And they were sisters who obviously cared about each other. So even if she wanted to prove herself to Layla, she was still subconsciously incapable of pulling all the stops.

Something like [Kamikaze] was doable. After all, it was completely within her control. But [Unbreakable] was different.

She had to completely commit to using it.

So yeah, she was stuck.

On the other hand, Layla had no such problems.

Unbeknownst to Chloe, she was creating a huge shadow-charged spear behind the ice.

In the past, it would have been noticeable, but she had long mastered how to do it quietly.

Anyway, to make sure that Chloe didn't suspect anything, she didn't stop throwing smaller attacks at her.

She called them small but they were actually things like meteorites bigger than Chloe. But hey, she had to commit to make the act believable right?

After a while of the back and forth, Layla's attack was ready. It was an elegant-looking black spear that gave off a chilly air.

She called it, [Ragnarok spear] something which was an inside joke based on Chloe's class.

See, Chloe's class was [Zeus' descendant] and the attack Layla created was definitely going to end the fight if it hit.

Hence the name. It was rather cheeky and I expected it from Layla, but not bad.

Anyway, after she was done preparing the attack, she let it fly with no hesitation at all.

And it was aimed at the chest area. Right where Chloe was. As the avatar's heart.

Of course, this was something she only did because there were people who would stop the attack in time if Chloe couldn't escape. Especially Mrs C, with her presence they could be a little extra in how they fought with no worries. Like Chloe with a [Kamikaze] before.

And since attacking that area had a higher chance of success then why not do it?

The spear cut through the ice and air silently as it made its way towards Chloe.

Chloe didn't notice it until it was a few metres away. Too close to completely dodge.

But being herself, with her speed. She managed to move herself out of the way enough to prevent a serious injury.

But unfortunately, the spear still took her wing.

She was caught off guard and began falling to the ground rapidly.

It was only after a few seconds that she remembered that even without wings, she could fly. But her speed was extremely impacted.

When she caught herself and began hovering in the sky, she immediately sensed something.

She looked up and almost spat up a mouthful of blood. That's because a second black spear, even bigger than the first was coming down at her.

And unlike before, she really couldn't escape.

It was at the fight or flight moment that she finally managed to trigger her [Unbreakable]

The lightning around her turned darker and without her conscious decision, it flew up to meet the spear.

And...

BOOOOOOOM!

A huge explosion was heard as the lightning destroyed the supposedly unstoppable black ice.

It was definitely a moment for the record books.

However, the shockwave knocked her down.

But before she could get far. She was caught.

But the "catch" had a sting to it.

And that sting went through her avatar and lightly touched her real body's back. Chilling her body a little bit.

"You lose..." Layla's calm voice was heard from behind her...

The battle was over...