

Guardian gods 56

Chapter 56 Destination

While Ikem would typically also charge towards the lion, this time he stood his ground. The lion, nearing, initiated its first attack—a scorching breath. Ikem instinctively shielded himself with the construct shield, only to realize that it wasn't the optimal choice, requiring additional output of mana to prevent dispersion from the fiery onslaught.

Without hesitation, Ikem bellowed, "Brix, shield!" In response, Brix swiftly positioned the floating circular rock shield to intercept the fiery breath, allowing Ikem to evade by leaping backward.

Exploiting the small distraction, one lioness seized the opportunity and charged. Instead of engaging in close combat, it ignited the small ember on its leg, unleashing a flame-infused claw that materialized in the air, poised to strike Brix.

Ikem, quick to react, hurled his shield construct toward Brix. Catching it just in time, Brix defended against the fiery assault. Meanwhile, Ikem dashed towards the lioness, intent on eliminating one of the threats. Sensing the ineffectiveness of its breath attack, the lion ceased and turned its attention to Ikem, who was now closing in on its queen.

A fireball materialized at the lion's mouth, aimed directly at Ikem. Bara, always vigilant in defending Ikem, unleashed a wave of blood roots that intercepted the fireball. The roots, effective in warding off the flames, were, however, singed in the process.

Without glancing back, Ikem tossed his sword at the charging lioness. Although the lioness skillfully evaded the sword, Ikem grinned as the weapon suspended in mid-air before swiftly returning towards the lioness, who sensed the impending danger.

Reacting swiftly, the lioness swiped its tail at the sword, attempting to knock it away and buy time. Yet, Ikem anticipated this move; the sword halted just as the lioness's tail approached, causing the swipe to miss. The sword then resumed its trajectory, deftly carrying the lioness's tail with it.

As Ikem closed in on the lioness, poised to strike the decisive blow, the pain from losing its tail triggered a deafening roar. In response, a massive wave of fire erupted in a circle around the wounded lioness.

Ikem, unprepared for the sudden wave of fire, released a muffled breath as it pushed him back. A growing sense of danger gripped him from behind. Opting not to look back, he dispersed the shield enveloping his body and concentrated his mana energy on his back, summoning a substantial shield construct to ward off the impending threat.

Meanwhile, Aqua struggled against the advancing lioness. Determined to keep the threat at bay, he hurled a floating water ball in its direction. The lioness retaliated, swiping its flame claws at the swiftly approaching water ball. The collision resulted in a burst of steam, obscuring the lioness momentarily.

Capitalizing on the momentary cover, Aqua seized the opportunity to create distance. Two water balls spun rapidly at his palm, and just as a pair of fireballs shot out from the dissipating steam, Aqua threw the spinning water balls. The water effortlessly sliced through the fireballs. A detonation sounded out at the same time.

Immediately hearing the detonation sound, the remaining water ball converged in front of Aqua, capturing a red streak of light which turned out to be the lioness. Astonished, Aqua barely had time to articulate his surprise. He only recalled sensing the fire elements gathering at the lioness's feet and the ensuing explosion that propelled it in front of him with claws poised to strike. Reacting instinctively, Aqua narrowly avoided a potential laceration.

With the lioness ensnared in his water, a sharp gleam emanated from Aqua's eyes. Extending his hand toward the captive lioness, a surge of mother water gathered, ready to submerge and drown the threatening creature.

The lioness, sensing Aqua's intent, panicked, its limbs flailing. However, Aqua's expression soon shifted as the lioness's skin heated up, causing the water to boil and steam to rise. The clash of opposing elements strained Aqua as he fought to maintain the water prison ensnaring the lioness.

Suddenly, Brix's horrified scream shattered the air "Young master!!!". Aqua's attention split as he witnessed the colossal lion dangerously close to their young master. Its flaming claws struck the massive shield Ikem had conjured for protection.

At the moment of feeling the impending threat, Ikem made a split-second decision. He dispersed the armor enveloping him, focusing all his energy on defending his back—the origin of the danger. The claw attack connected, and the first thought that crossed Ikem's mind was, "It's heavy."

The claw hit the shield, blocking it then the second wave of attack came resulting in a colossal explosion upon impact. The shield shattered, and Ikem was sent flying into the forest. Brix seeing that roared in anger, causing the ground to quake. Magma, concealed beneath the earth, erupted, adding chaos to the already tumultuous scene. This at the same time created a distance between the lion's and Brix.

Brix wanted to act on his anger but prioritizing his young master's safety, Brix, after creating distance, turned and sprinted into the forest, following the path of burnt trees. Seizing the opportunity created by Brix's earthquake, Aqua further destabilized the already conflicting elements, causing an explosion of water that threw him and the lioness apart. Quickly regaining his bearings, Aqua dashed into the forest, tracing Brix's footsteps.

Deep in the forest, Ikem lay in a small crater, screaming in pain and turning in discomfort. Bara, wanting to aid, wrapped itself around Ikem. Slowly, Ikem's screams subsided as he lay within the cocoon. The burning sensation on his skin gradually eased. The attack proved more formidable than anticipated; while he might have endured the heavy claw, the unexpected explosion shattered his protective construct.

"Young master!!!" Brix's anguished cry echoed through the forest as he raced to the crater. With great care, he carried the red wooden cocoon containing Ikem out from the crater.

"It's alright, Brix. I'm not heavily wounded, but the fire did a lot of damage," Ikem's spoke out as he reassured Brix of his safety from within the cocoon, prompting him to calm down.

Brix clenched his fists, his gaze fixed on the volcano. His fury was evident, but it shifted as he noticed Aqua approaching. "Quick, help the young master," Brix urgently called out, passing the cocoon to Aqua.

Bara, sensing the healer's arrival, slowly unwrapped itself from around Ikem. A hissing sound emanated from both Brix and Aqua as they laid eyes on Ikem's burnt skin. Without hesitation, and with an expression of pain crossing Ikem's face, Aqua covered him in a soothing green water bed, stabilizing his condition.

Feeling Ikem's situation was now under control, Brix declared, "I'm going back to kill that lion and his companion."

"Don't bother doing that. Unless you can move them away from the volcano into the forest, there's a little chance of winning," Bara advised Brix in an attempt to calm him.

"I agree. You should have also noticed the intelligence and power shown by these lions. The excess mana that appeared doesn't seem to benefit us alone; it's affecting many of these animals," Aqua added, his gaze fixed on his hands.

The excess mana in the atmosphere had caught the attention of the two treants during their journey with Ikem, as out of nowhere they felt the abnormal increase in mana. They experienced accelerated growth, now towering over Ikem. The surplus mana also played a role in the escalating danger posed by the local fauna.

A coughing sound drew the attention of all three, and they turned to see Ikem in the floating healing water bed. "Leave those creatures alone for now. They greatly suppress us with their element and surroundings. Next time, I will meet them on my own terms when I get stronger. For now, we should head back on our journey."

And so, that was how they arrived at their present moment. Gazing beyond the forest, Ikem pondered what awaited him on the other side, as he drew closer to meeting his mother's family. During the journey, he delved into the book his father had given him, feeling a sense of anticipation as he considered applying the knowledge he had gained.

Observing his traveling companions and the sun descending, Ikem suggested, "Let's head to bed. We all have a big day waiting for us tomorrow." With that, Ikem approached a tree, placing his hand on it. The tree responded by opening up like a door, revealing an empty hollow space. Walking inside, Ikem disappeared into the tree, and it closed behind him, leaving no trace of the entrance. This skill was learned through his journey, allowing him to find solace and rest within the dangerous and protective embrace of nature.

The night passed in its usual rhythm, with nocturnal predators hunting undisturbed. Ikem rested peacefully within the tree's protective embrace. The tree opened as the sunlight spilled into the dark space, and Ikem's eyes squinted against the morning light. Brix stood outside, announcing, "Time to wake up, young master."

An excitement that had momentarily faded during the journey surged within Ikem as he leaped out from the tree, exclaiming, "Let's go quickly, we are so close." Sprinting forward, Ikem led the way toward the ape's territory.