

Strongest 131

Chapter 131: Who Do You Think Will Win?

After lunch, William decided to visit the stables to see his Mama Ella. Kenneth, on the other hand, had nothing to do since he had already unpacked his belongings in the dormitory room. Since that was the case, he decided to follow William to the stables to meet the red-headed boy's second mother.

"Meeeeeeh!"

"I missed you too, Mama."

"Meeeeeh."

William hugged Ella's neck while the latter rested her head on his shoulders. Kenneth was surprised when he saw this scene because he was very sensitive when it came to sensing the feeling of beasts.

He could tell from a glance that Ella loved William very much. The same could be said for the boy who was hugging her.

Because of this, Kenneth's good impression of William increased inside his heart. For the boy to show so much love and care towards an ordinary goat, made the gray-haired boy think of William as a very good person.

"Mama, let me introduce you to my new roommate," William said as he reluctantly took a step back from hugging his Mama. "This is Kenneth, my new roommate. Kenneth, this is my Mama Ella. I hope the two of you get along well."

"Meeeeeh!"

"Hello, nice to meet you too, Ella."

After the two exchanged their greetings, William took Ella out to take a stroll. He didn't ride on her back, so that Kenneth wouldn't feel out of place. Instead, he just walked by her side as they took a tour at the various facilities of the Martial Class Division.

"Will, are you interested in becoming the Head Prefect?" Kenneth asked while walking beside him.

"To be honest, I'm not really sure," William replied. "I'm the type who doesn't want to take orders from anyone. If the Head Prefect were to order me to do something that goes below my bottomline, I might not be able to take it and hit him with my wooden staff."

Kenneth giggled when he heard William's reply. Frankly, he, too, didn't like to be ordered around by anyone. However, he had a feeling that he really wouldn't mind taking orders from this red-headed boy who had grown up tending goats in the countryside.

"Well, if you don't want to take orders then you can only do your best to become the Head Prefect," Kenneth said casually. "You still have three days to think about it before the competition starts."

"Mmm." William nodded his head. "How about you? Are you planning to participate?"

"No." Kenneth shook his head. "I don't think I'm capable of becoming a Head Prefect. Let's just say that I get lucky and become the Head Prefect, do you think the students will listen to me?"

William turned his head to appraise the delicate boy from head to toe. Although Kenneth wasn't lacking in the "good looks" factor, he didn't seem the type that would make people follow him. However, if someone were to ask if there would be people willing to protect Kenneth, the answer would certainly be Yes.

The boy was too cute for his own good. William was certain that even the hearts of the brave girls in the Martial Classes would feel overprotective of him.

"Well, a Head Prefect might be too high of a goal," William agreed. "But, being the Martial Class Mascot is not impossible. In fact, the moment I raise this proposal, I'm sure that you will get the landslide victory."

"D-Don't you dare do that." Kenneth immediately grabbed William's arm. "I hate being surrounded by people."

William unconsciously patted Kenneth's head. For some reason, Kenneth reminded him of his cousin, Eve. Although Eve was a thousand times cuter than Kenneth, the presence that the gray-haired boy emitted was similar to the adorable girl back in Lont.

"Fine." William chuckled. "However, I'm sure the girls will raise this issue by themselves. When that happens, don't come looking for me, do you understand?"

Kenneth pouted as he let go of William's arm. "As long as you're not the one who initiates the proposal then it's good."

The two had almost finished their tour in the Martial Division when they noticed a crowd in front of them. They could faintly hear the sound of a quarrel. As the two drew closer to investigate, they noticed a pair of boys glaring at each other while holding their weapons in their hands.

The two boys were standing in what seemed to be one of the battling arenas that were scattered along the premises of the Martial Class Division.

"Give it up, Drake," A cool looking boy with blonde hair and blue eyes chided. "The one who will become the Head Prefect will be none other than me."

"Keep on dreaming, Spencer, " a boy with above average looks snorted in reply. His dark-brown hair and hazel eyes looked at the boy in front of him with disdain. "As long as I'm around, you can forget about becoming the Head Prefect. I can't wait to see you bowing your head as you follow my orders. Hahahaha!"

"Why wait until the test starts? Let's just decide this, right here, right now."

"Sounds like a plan. I don't want to waste too much time kicking your as* when the test officially starts."

Both boys readied their weapons and prepared to clash with each other. The crowd got rowdy and started to cheer them on. William observed the two combatants with anticipation. He wanted to know the level of the freshmen that were currently enrolled in the Martial Class Division

Kenneth, too, was looking at the two boys with a serious expression. He was also curious about how strong the students were in the Hellan Royal Academy.

"Excuse me," William patted the shoulder of the tallest boy in the crowd. "Can you please tell me the identity of the two combatants?"

"Are you not familiar with them? They're quite popular in the Hellan Kingdom," the tall boy replied.

"Sorry. I came from the countryside," William gave a refreshing smile. "This is my first time in the capital."

"Ah... that explains it." The tall boy nodded in understanding. He then pointed at the two combatants who were busy duking it out against each other in the arena. "The cool looking boy holding the spear is the fourth son of the Duke of the Armstrong Duchy. His name is Spencer Armstrong.

"The one holding the greatsword, is the third son of the Duchy of Craig. His name is Drake Vi Craig. Both of them are well-known among the young generation for their incredible fighting skills."

"Thank you," William nodded his head in thanks. He then returned his attention to the two combatants who were currently in the midst of battle.

'Are all sons of Dukes this hotheaded?' William thought. He could still remember the magic swordsman, Kingsley Rhodes, who had challenged him in Lont four years ago. That boy was also a son of a Duke and he seemed to be very happy to use his background to throw his weight around.

Even so, he had to agree that, like Kingsley, Spencer and Drake had the ability to back up their words. The two were very proficient in their weapons and their attacks could easily blow away those who had abilities weaker than them.

Kenneth silently walked beside William and tapped his arm. "Who do you think will win?"

William pondered for a bit as his eyes focused on the two individuals in the arena. "Hard to say, but if I were to really choose between the two, I'd choose Spencer."

"And the reason?"

"Because he has better technique."

William had observed the battle for a while now and managed to gauge the battle prowess of both combatants. While Drake had more explosive power than Spencer, the cool looking boy's technique was very refined.

Each block, each thrust, and each swing of the spear was perfect. There were no wasted movements, which greatly impressed William. Of course, if the red-headed boy was going to be perfectly honest, he would simply say that his own technique was two to three levels above Spencer.

After all, he trained with the best fighters in Lont. Even a complete amateur like William would improve during those four long years of sparring. Not to mention, the martial arts he had learned in his Martial Job Classes were honed to the very limit.

William's War Arts with the sword, bow, and hand to hand combat were only at the basic level. Even so, we're talking about the basic level of the strongest War Arts provided by the system. These "Basic Level" War Arts could be considered Intermediate Techniques to the people of his current world.

As for the staff and the spear, they were in the Intermediate Ranks, which set them on par with the Expert Techniques in William's new world. How did this become possible? It's really simple.

When William used the Millennial-Grade Beast Core to max out his Disciple of Thunder Job Class, he immediately ascended it to its advanced class which was the Prince of Thunder.

William pooled all the exp he could during his dungeon expeditions to help the Prince of Thunder Job Class reach level 10. That way, he could unlock the "Lightning God War Arts (Intermediate)" and learn the more advanced moves of this particular War Art.

Also, let's not forget about his movement technique which was the Heavenly Phantasm Movement Technique (Basic). After getting his skill points, William pumped them into this movement technique and upgraded it to Heavenly Phantasm (Intermediate).

With constant practice, William had made these techniques his own. If he and Kingsley were to fight again, William was confident that he would send the arrogant little prick packing. Of course, this was on the condition that Kingsley wouldn't use magic during their duel.

Right now, William's Martial Skills, when using the wooden staff, spear, and lance, were enough to contend with most experts within the Silver Rank of the Martial Classes. His movement technique would also allow him to escape most tricky situations.

(A/N: The rankings for the martial classes are Copper, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, Mithril, Adamantium, Black, and Saint.)

After the battle with Kingsley Rhodes, William swore that he would dedicate his time and effort in learning Martial Skills while he couldn't use his magic powers.

Chapter 132: Is Goat Milk Really That Good?

The two combatants came to a standstill as they panted for breath. Both sides weren't willing to use their trump cards this early in the game. Although they had used their most standard abilities to the fullest, it wasn't enough to declare a winner between the two of them.

"Enough," Drake said as he sheathed his blade. "We will settle this inside the Enchanted Forest. At that time, you will not be as lucky as you are now."

"My words exactly," Spencer replied. "I can't wait to see the look on your face when you bow your head in front of me."

The two boys snorted at the same time and left the arena. Seeing that the fight was over, the peanut gallery had also started to disperse.

William was reluctant to part with Ella and the latter felt the same way. When Kenneth saw this tear-jerking scene, he decided to clear his throat and offer a solution.

"You know, as long as both parties sharing the dormitory room agree then bringing Ella to our room is not a problem," Kenneth stated.

"Really?" William immediately grabbed Kenneth's hand which made the delicate boy flinch. "Oh! Sorry, I forgot that my rough hands can hurt you. However, can I believe your words when you said that Mama Ella can stay in our dormitory room?"

"She can, but you have to take proper care of her," Kenneth replied after regaining his composure. William's action was so quick that he was caught by surprise. "Also, make sure to tell her not to go over to my side of the room. I don't want Ella to start munching on my precious herbs."

"Don't worry, Mama Ella wouldn't do that." William patted his chest in assurance. "Isn't that right, Mama?"

"Meeeeeeh!" Ella bleated in acknowledgement.

Kenneth couldn't help but smile as he watched this exchange between the mother and son pair. When Ella entered the dormitory building, the guard guarding the gate gave her a weird look, but he didn't stop her from entering the Solaris Dormitory.

Ella walked along the hallway, climbed the stairs, and followed William's back like a tail. The students living in the dormitory looked at this scene with amusement. Since Ella was not in her War Ibex Form, her height was only a meter tall, and her body length was only over a meter.

Also, her coat was so white and fluffy that the girls who saw her were tempted to give her a hug. Of course, they didn't dare do that and only stared at Ella as if she were a walking plush toy.

When Ella was safely inside William's room, she obediently went to the side that contained William's bed and stood beside it.

William took out a small wooden bowl from his storage ring and crouched beside Ella. He then started to milk her.

"I haven't had a drink of your milk today, Mama, and it is making me feel uncomfortable," William said as he filled the wooden bowl in his hand.

"Meeeeh." Ella bleated softly as if reprimanding William for not drinking his milk on time.

"You really are a shepherd." Kenneth looked at the two with interest. 'I haven't drank goat milk before. I wonder what it tastes like?'

After filling up his bowl, William thanked his Mama before drinking it slowly.

"Mama, your milk is really the best," William praised as he finished his bowl of milk.

"Meeeeh." Ella bleated as if saying "isn't this a fact?"

The familiar notification sounded and a row of words appeared on William's screen.

< Daily Quest: Drink Milk has been completed! >

< Rewards: 6 Exp Points. >

< Additional Reward: 2 God Points >

"Um?" William rubbed his eyes and double checked the notification. 'It's really there!'

William didn't know what kind of sorcery was happening to the notifications, but he would be lying if he said that he wasn't secretly happy for the additional reward from drinking his Mama's milk.

Somewhere in the Temple of Ten Thousand Gods....

"Are you sure about this?" Gavin asked. "Isn't this too much of a freebie?"

"It's fine," David replied. "Even if he drinks milk for a year, at most he would only get 730 God Points. This isn't a big deal, especially with you, Issei, and Lily giving him Special Quests from time to time."

"So you say, but you were the one that gave the two hidden quests last time." Gavin pointed out.

"Well, since it was proposed by Ella and William decided to listen to her, I decided to add those two quests on a whim," David admitted. "I don't regret it though. William performed spectacularly in that fight. His four years of training hasn't come to naught."

Gavin nodded his head as he gazed upon his follower, who was being displayed in a large crystal ball. He wanted William to be safe and happy, but the world he chose was different from the one Gavin had envisioned for him.

God Points: 2

William opened the God Shop and confirmed that he had indeed received God Points from drinking his Mama Ella's milk. His brain started to calculate the amount of points he could get over the span of a year and it made him realize that it wasn't that much.

It was not even enough to buy an Elemental Arrow with the necessary add-ons.

"Even so, I'm still thankful," William muttered.

Kenneth heard William's mutter and thought that he was thankful for drinking Ella's milk.

'Is goat milk really that good?' Kenneth's curiosity had been piqued. However, he was too embarrassed to ask William if it was possible for him to have a taste of Ella's milk.

Three days passed swiftly and there was only a day before the battle for the position of Head Prefect of the Freshmen in the Martial Class.

Excitement and determination could be seen on some of the faces of the students who intended to try their luck and win this prestigious position. As for people like Kenneth, who weren't interested in joining the event, they were just waiting patiently for the results.

After thinking things through, William decided to join the competition as well. His reason for joining was quite simple.

"If I become the Head Prefect then no one will say anything about Mama Ella staying inside the Solaris Dormitory!"

That was what William thought. Although he wasn't too sure if he could win, he would still do his best in order to gain the rights to have Ella stay by his side in the Royal Academy. He didn't want her to spend her days in the stables, while he went to his Martial Classes.

Chapter 133: Enchanted Forest [Part 1]

That morning after breakfast, the Martial Class' Instructors brought everyone to a special building located at the very center of the Martial Class Division. This building was called the House of Heroes. A place that was heavily guarded because it contained the entrances to four special domains that belonged exclusively to the Martial Class Division.

Domains were small worlds that had their own set of rules and laws. Some of these domains were filled with important resources that were useful in advancing cultivation. Others were used as training grounds to raise expert fighters, and some were used to breed rare creatures and plants that were very hard to encounter in the wilds.

One of these domains was the Enchanted Forest. This forest had been used as a training ground for the students. In some cases, it was also used for special events like the choosing of the Head Prefect that would represent their grade.

Right now, William, alongside all the freshmen who chose to participate in the Prefect Battle, stood in front of a huge Copper Gate.

"Are all of you ready?" Grent asked.

""Yes!""

"Remember, only one of you will be chosen," Grent stated. "Goodluck to all of you!"

The instructors raised the emblems pinned on their chests and activated the door. The Copper Gate slowly opened revealing a green portal at its center.

"All of you will be teleported to random places inside the Enchanted Forest," Andy explained in a carefree manner. "This will prevent you from engaging in combat right away. However, remember that you can only stay inside the domain for three days. If in three days, there are still survivors inside the domain, the person who has eliminated the greatest number of people will become the Head Prefect.

"Make no mistake, this is a battle to the death. The only way for you to eliminate someone is to kill them. Don't worry, none of you will really die. Anyone who gets eliminated will be ejected by the domain and transported back to this hall. Are there any more questions?"

William raised his hand and Andy nodded his head in acknowledgement.

"What if we kill someone who has killed many people?" William inquired. "Will we get their points, too?"

"Good question! The answer is that you will only get 'half' of the overall points that they have accumulated," Andy replied. "At the end of three days, the one with the most points will become the Head Prefect. Are there any more questions?"

A skinny boy raised his hand and Andy once again nodded his head to encourage him to ask his question.

"Are we allowed to form alliances?" the skinny boy asked. "Is it fine for us to form teams?"

"Of course." Andy nodded his head. This was not the first time this had happened in the Prefect Selection Event and the instructors had already expected this to happen this year as well. "Feel free to form teams and alliances. In the end, only one Head Prefect will be chosen."

The reason why the instructors encouraged forming teams was because Martial Classes worked well when they were in a team. This also helped them form strong bonds, which were beneficial to their growth.

Some of the students smiled, while Drake and Spencer snorted in disdain. The two believed that the strong should fight alone and not rely on external help. Only weaklings would gang up together and fight.

Because this was an individual battle, the instructors didn't allow Ella to enter the premises. They had already seen her capabilities during the second part of the exam, but what they wanted to see was William's own ability.

They wanted to know if this boy, who had fought tooth and nail with the Ruler of the Forest, was just as impressive without his animal companion.

"All of you, enter the portal," Grent ordered. "May the odds be in your favor!"

One by one, the students entered the portal. All of them had determined expressions on their faces. William was the last to enter and all eyes were watching his every move.

Meanwhile, outside the Domain...

Those who didn't want to participate were gathered just outside the building where several viewing crystals were enshrined. With these crystals, they would be able to watch the battle unfold in real time.

Ella and Kenneth were standing in front of one of these viewing crystals. These crystals allowed someone to view all the candidates that had entered the Enchanted Forest. Naturally, it also had the option to allow the viewer to choose only one candidate to spectate.

As William entered the portal, his image appeared on the viewing crystal. Ella bleated softly as if to cheer for William and wish him luck. Kenneth, on the other hand, was looking at William with a serious expression.

'Please show me the extent of your true power,' Kenneth thought. 'I want to know if you are worthy of that person's bloodline. Please, don't disappoint me, William.'

When William opened his eyes, he found himself inside a lush forest teeming with life. The sounds of birds singing, the roars of beasts, and even the subtle noise of the insects reached his ears. For some reason, it made William feel a little homesick.

This place reminded him of the forest near Lont. Although the Fauna and Flora were different, it still reminded him of home.

'I wonder how Gramps and the rest are doing?' William thought as he immersed himself in the sounds of the forest. 'Does Eve think of me as well?'

Suddenly, he heard a very subtle buzz in the air. William chuckled internally as he exaggeratedly jumped backwards. As he did so, he saw two arrows flying in his direction. The arrows harmlessly pierced the tree beside William with a thud, which reminded the boy that he was participating in a Battle Royale and not a field trip.

As an archer, who had been trained by two experts in Lont, it was very easy for him to lock onto his attacker's position. However, he didn't make any move to charge in that direction. Instead, he circled away and left the area.

Although the instructors had said that they would be teleported to random places to prevent immediate combat, it was very different when dealing with archers. They had the ability to attack from great distances, and only those with keen senses would be able to sense their sneak attacks.

After gaining sufficient distance from his attacker, William decided to find an elevated place where he could observe his surroundings. However, before he could do that, two wild boars came charging towards him from fifty meters away.

It seemed that William had unknowingly stumbled into their territory and they had taken it as an act of aggression.

William didn't want to fight with the two boars, because there might be other students around who might take advantage of the battle. Even though he was not afraid of dealing with them, he didn't want those who were watching him to know his abilities.

As William was about to make a run for it, two boys appeared in front of him wielding swords and spears. Clearly, they intended to prevent him from escaping.

With two boars behind his back, and two boys blocking his path, William decided to play a trick on the students who thought that he was easy prey.

The red-headed boy waited until the two wild boars were only a few meters behind him before he activated his movement technique, Heavenly Phantasm.

William easily passed through the two boys like a phantom and escaped. Before the two boys could even react, the wild boars were already in front of them. Since the two boars had lost their original target, they shifted their attention on the two boys that were wielding weapons in their territory.

Chapter 134: Enchanted Forest [Part 2]

Faced with the sudden change in their circumstances, the two boys remained calm and engaged the wild boars in battle. They wanted to end it as soon as they could in order to prevent anyone from taking advantage of them.

William didn't bother to sneak attack the two boys, because he wanted to find a safe place to make his base. He was not in a hurry to collect points, since it was only the first day. What he prioritized first was his safety.

When William left the scene, two arrows came flying from somewhere in the forest and struck the backs of the two boys who were busy dealing with the wild boars. Although they had already heightened their senses, in order to escape being ambushed, the two arrows still managed to avoid their detection.

The two boars didn't miss this opportunity and continued to charge at the two wounded boys. The impact of their charge sent the two boys rolling across the ground which aggravated the injuries they had received from the arrow.

The archer fired two more arrows which landed in the two boys' necks, ending their lives and turning them into particles of light. The two red orbs that emerged from their bodies flew towards the archer who was hiding a hundred meters away from them.

After receiving her spoils of war, she left the scene in search of easier prey to kill. If possible, she wanted to eliminate the red-headed boy first, but he was as slippery as an eel. As an archer who took the second exam, she had watched William's battle against Psoglav through a telescope.

She was one of the first to arrive at the flag during the second exam, which gave her plenty of opportunities to observe the other candidates.

Although she couldn't see the entire battle unfold, she was still able to see how the boy fought fearlessly against the Ruler of the Forest. Because of this, she had marked William as the greatest threat in this competition instead of Drake and Spencer, and wanted to eliminate him early.

Unfortunately, she failed on her first try, and wasn't able to get an opportunity on her second. In the end, she decided to just hunt the small fries and farm points until it passed the hundredth mark. After that, she would hide somewhere inside the forest and wait for the competition to end.

William encountered several more students as he continued to look for a place to hide. He avoided them like a plague and refused to engage in battle. Earlier, he had climbed a tree and surveyed the terrain. The forest extended for miles in all directions. All that William could see was a sea of trees without end in sight.

'This is going to be tricky,' William thought as he extended his senses. Aside from the candidates who were aiming to become the Head Prefect, William had sensed some other threats inside the forest as well.

Although they were not as powerful as Psoglav, they were in the same league as his Mama Ella in her War Ibex Form.Â

'At most, Threat Level D's and C's,' William rubbed his chin with his fingers. 'They are scattered quite evenly. I guess they have already established their own territories.'

After pondering for a while, William decided to ask for a second opinion.

'System, any recommendations?' William inquired.

< To answer the host's question, I will not participate in this event. That also means that I won't be helping the host in any way aside from changing Job Classes. Also, I have already disabled the mapping function. Host will not be able to take advantage of seeing his enemies on the map. >

'Why the sudden change?' William asked back. 'What happened to the promised friendship between the protagonist and his system?'

< Host. You must remember. Always depending on external help will not be advantageous to your growth. I believe in the host's power. Compared to the difficulties that you have encountered in the past, this measly test is nothing. >

'I don't know if I should be happy or not, but you do have a point.' William sighed. 'Fine. Please change my subclass to Cavalier Class.'

< Understood. Changing of Subclass has been completed. >

'Thank you.'

< Goodluck. >

William hurriedly climbed down the tree and headed in a certain direction. With the passive skills of the Shepherd Class, he had found a way to use the terrain to his advantage.

"Wait! Why don't we team up?" a skinny boy proposed. "You be the boss, and I'll be your underling. It's a win-win for everyone, right?"

"Your offer is good," a cool looking boy said with a smile. "However, what I need right now is... your points!"

Spencer took a step forward and traversed four meters in a single step. His spear stabbed forward and a scream of pain reverberated in the forest. Soon, the body of the skinny boy changed into particles of light as a red orb floated in the air.

The cool looking boy grabbed the red orb with his right hand. As soon as he touched it, the orb disappeared and the back of his hand glowed showing the number 12.

'Contrary to his looks, he was very capable,' Spencer thought as his points increased by four. 'Now, time to gather more points.'

Spencer walked towards the depth of the forest where the other candidates hid. He walked with confidence, for he knew that only a handful of people could threaten him in this battle for the title of Head Prefect.

'Wash your neck, Drake.' Spencer sneered. 'The next time we meet, I will not hold back.'

Two red orbs appeared in front of Drake as he sheathed his greatsword.

"Bunch of weaklings," Drake spat on the ground. "It seems that only that bastard, Spencer, is the only threat in this competition."

With a wave of his hand, the two orbs flew in his direction. The number twenty appeared on the back of his hand, which proved that he had killed more than Spencer had.

The total number of candidates gunning for the position of Head Prefect was less than three hundred. It was around two-thirds of the First Years in the Martial Class Division. After making his initial estimate, Drake knew that he only had to kill over a hundred and the position of Head Prefect would fall in his hands.

"Don't let me see you, Spencer," Drake muttered as he set his sights on his new target. "I'll make you regret enrolling in the Royal Academy."

"I see plenty of rough gems in this year's competition," Grent said with a smile. He was looking at Spencer's and Drake's battles and he was very satisfied with their performance. He had also discovered the archer girl who was sniping people from afar. "Perhaps we don't need to wait three days in order to see who the winner will be. What do you think, Andy?"

"I think those two brats are overestimating themselves," Andy replied in a lazy manner. "As for the hunter girl, she holds promise. I might take her as my apprentice if she gets a good rank in this competition."

Grent snorted. "You're still hung up on that boy, William."

Grent looked at the shepherd who was currently inching his way towards the depths of the forest. He had seen how the red-headed boy had escaped from his pursuers and Grent was very dissatisfied with him.

Naturally, he was hoping that the boy could bring him another surprise. After all, he was there when William fought against the Ruler of the Forest.

"Just wait," Andy said as he sipped a mug of ale. "I'm sure that he won't disappoint the two of us."

"That better be the case. I have a lot of expectations for him."

"How about we make a bet?"

Andy grinned as he proposed the stakes to his superior, "Half a month's salary if we can guess who will become the Head Prefect for the First Years. What do you think?"

"Do you think of me as a fool?" Grent asked back. "My salary is six times your salary. I have nothing to gain if I make a bet with you."

Andy clicked his tongue because his plan to earn easy cash went down the drain. As he returned his attention to the red-headed boy, who was currently running away from four forest wolves, Andy felt as if his blood was boiling.

It was not boiling from anger or rage, but in anticipation. He didn't know where his blind faith was coming from. However, when he saw William's performance in the forest, he had a feeling that this boy would change the way the other Divisions looked at their Martial Class Division.

For the past few years, the Martial Class Division had always been looked down upon because there weren't many promising talents who were able to fight against the representatives of the Magic and Spirit Class Divisions.

Andy had long accepted this fact and buried his complaints deep inside his heart. However, every night, after the exams had ended, he would always see a shining banner fluttering in the darkness when he closed his eyes to sleep.

Andy saw a boy, with flaming red hair, holding a golden banner in his hand. He rode on top of his Angorian War Ibex, while his other hand was holding a lance that seemed to emit a light of its own.

Andy recalled that one glorious moment when the boy raised his lance up high as if to challenge the world of darkness by himself. He watched in awe as the boy thrust his lance forward.

With that single thrust, light illuminated the world. That scene was so beautiful, so surreal, that even someone as numb as Andy could feel that all hope was not lost.

'Perhaps, this time around, a miracle will happen,' Andy thought as he stared at William with an almost fanatical gaze. 'Little shepherd, may you pierce through the darkness and illuminate the world. That way, people like us will be able to raise our heads up high and regain the honors that we have lost long ago.'

Chapter 135: Bruiser of Ancient Power

Est, Ian, and Isaac made their way towards the Martial Class Division. It was not only them, but several others from the Magic and Spirit Class Divisions were walking in the direction of the House of Heroes.

Every year, the nobles belonging to these Divisions would look for capable subordinates that they could recruit under their wing. This had been a tradition in the Royal Academy, and the instructors allowed it.

Most of those who belonged to the Martial Class were commoners. Some of them wanted to be employed by nobles in order to live a better life. Since that was the case, the Royal Academy didn't prevent this recruitment from happening.

The only thing they could do was to ensure that the ones recruited from the Martial Class would be treated well by their employers.

"Isn't that Ella?" Isaac asked as he pointed at an Angorian Goat standing beside a delicate looking boy with silver-gray hair.

"That is indeed Ella," Est agreed. "Let's go."

The three boys walked towards William's second mother with curious faces. Ella had noticed their arrival and bleated softly in greeting.

"Hello, are you looking after Ella?" Est asked the gray-haired boy beside the goat. "We are William's friends and we came here to see if he participated in the competition for the Head Prefect. My name is Est, Est Wells Newmont."

Est extended his hand for a handshake. The silver-gray haired boy looked at the offered hand and reluctantly raised his own.

"Kenneth," Kenneth introduced himself. "Kenneth Xin Ashleigh. I am William's roommate."

"Nice to meet you." Est nodded his head and ended the handshake. He then appraised the young boy in front of him.

"Please, don't stare at me too much," Kenneth said as he took a step back. "I feel uncomfortable when people stare and crowd around me."

"Sorry if I offended you." Est apologized. "I was just curious because you are William's roommate."

"I-I'm not offended." Kenneth averted his gaze. "It's just that, this was the second time that someone took the initiative to shake my hand. My first time was with William."

The atmosphere immediately became awkward because Est didn't know how to continue the conversation. In the end, he decided to look at the viewing crystal in front of him and see what the red-headed boy was up to.

"What is he doing?" Ian asked as he tilted his head in confusion. "Why is he sitting on a log and whistling using a leaf instead of collecting points? Doesn't he know that you need to collect points in order to become the Head Prefect?"

"Perhaps he is waiting until the last day before he makes his move?" Isaac proposed. "A day inside the Enchanted Forest is equivalent to eight hours out here in the real world. The competition has just begun, so there is plenty of time for William to make a comeback."

"Even so, why is he looking so carefree?" Ian frowned. "It makes me want to punch his face."

Est, Kenneth, Isaac:

"Meeeeeeeh!" Ella lowered her head and pointed her horns in Ian's direction.

"I-It was just a joke! I was just joking, Ella," Ian immediately pacified William's second mother. He had forgotten how overprotective Ella could be when it came to the annoying red-headed boy.

"Meeeeeh!"

"Okay, I won't mention it again."

"Meeeh." Ella raised her head and returned her attention to her baby.

Ian patted his chest in relief because he knew how deadly Ella's horns could be in a real battle.

The Angorian Goat had spent a lot of time with William and knew what he was thinking. Although the four children around her didn't know what his plans were, Ella realized it the moment William sat on the log and started to use the leaf to whistle.

Ten minutes later, the "four boys" noticed a single deer move towards William's location. It sniffed the air as if trying to smell if there was any danger that lurked around it. After confirming that there wasn't anything that could threaten it around, it walked unhurriedly towards the boy that was sitting on the log.

This deer was one of the White-Tailed Deer that inhabited the Enchanted Forest. When it was only four meters away from William, it started to make mewing sounds as if talking to him in their language.

To the children's surprise, William made the same mewing sounds as the deer. They watched in amazement as the two conversed with each other.

William conversed with the deer for two minutes before he stood from the log he was sitting on. The White-Tailed Deer then started to walk towards the Eastern side of the Enchanted Forest and William followed behind it.

After half an hour of walking, William arrived in a clearing surrounded by lush grasses beside a river. There were hundreds of White-Tailed Deer grazing upon the grass and all of them raised their heads when they sensed the new arrival.

William's eyes fell upon the giant white deer at the center of the herd who was looking back at him with a calm countenance. The giant deer was over four meters tall, and its majestic antlers shone like a sharpened blade as the light of the sun fell upon its regal splendor.

The red-headed boy then used his appraisal skill to understand more about this proud creature who was an Apex Beast within the Enchanted Forest.

< Spire >

-- Noble Creature

-- Bruiser of Ancient Power

-- Threat Level: C (High)

-- Can be added to the herd.

-- Success Rate: 20%

-- The noble protector of the White-Tailed Deer. This creature is gentle by nature. However, when someone or something threatens the safety of its herd, it will charge head on with the intention to kill.

-- It has the ability to make its antlers as sharp as blades to cut through any foes who stand in its way.

-- The Spire has the ability called "Eternal Guardian", which has allowed it to double its size and increase its power threefold for a short period of time.

-- The Spire also has the ability called "Call to Arms", which increases the strength of its herd by 50%

-- This creature has no known weakness.

'As expected. It is strong,' William thought as he read the description of the Spire.

The sea of white-tailed deer parted as the Spire walked towards William. The Alphas of the herd walked alongside it. Although these Alpha Deer's threat levels were only at the D Grade, William didn't dare underestimate them because they had the advantage of numbers.

Even so, William wasn't afraid. He didn't come here for a confrontation. He came to ask a favor.

'Speak, what is your reason for coming, Shepherd?' the Spire said in a commanding tone. It was talking to William using telepathy and this act caught the red-headed boy by surprise.

'You can talk? You also know that I'm a shepherd?' William asked. 'How?'

'I don't always try to 'talk' with humankind. However, I made an exception just for you. As for your other question, do you really not know, or are you just pretending that you don't know?' the Spire asked back. Its tone was laced with disbelief.

'You, who have been touched by the Eternal Guardian God of the Herds, should know why we are having this conversation. If not for this, I would have already killed you.' the Spire added in a firm manner.

William scratched his head. He was unaware that his Shepherd Job Class wasn't as simple as he thought it was. He already had his suspicions when he saw that certain creatures that belonged to the herd category could be added to his own.

After he heard the Spire's comments, he now believed that his hunch was spot on.

'I will ask you again, Shepherd,' the Spire lowered its head and stared William straight in the eyes. 'What is your purpose for coming here?'

William decided to come clean and state his purpose for coming. 'I came to ask for a favor.'

'A favor?'

'Yes. there is something that I need to ask from you, Mighty Guardian.'

The Spire eyed William before reluctantly nodding its head. 'Speak. I want to know what kind of favor you would ask of me, Shepherd.'

William took a deep breath before saying what was on his mind.

'I humbly ask that you allow me to...'

Chapter 136: Night Raid Inside the Enchanted Forest [Part 1]

'Sorry, but your request is impossible to grant,' The Spire said after it heard what William had to say. 'Even if I agreed, we will gain nothing from it aside from the hostility of the other creatures in the Enchanted Forest.'

'How about I add this to the equation?' William showed something to the Spire that made its eyes widen.

'... Well, with that then your request doesn't sound too bad,' the Spire admitted. 'However, it is still not enough. Although it will give me some advantages, my herd will still have to risk their lives, no? This is something I cannot accept.'

'True.' William crossed his arms over his chest. He understood that the overprotective Guardian really cared about its herd. This was something that William admired and he didn't want to make things difficult for it.

'Then how about we change the conditions a bit?' William proposed.

'What do you have in mind, Shepherd?' the Spire inquired.

'How about we do this instead...'

Contrary to what the instructors had expected, the majority of the candidates didn't choose to wait for the last day of the competition. Some of them formed parties and hunted down those who had less numbers than them.

Even Drake and Spencer had a hard time fighting them off. Although they were stronger than the candidates, fighting against six of them at the same time still posed problems for them. Since there was no hope of victory, they chose to decisively retreat.

Ironically, these two boys met when the sun was about to set. Both of them vowed to fight against each other the moment their paths intersected, but right now, they were not in the mood for a battle.

Both of them had suffered some injuries due to the united front of some of the students that formed teams. There were even teams that formed alliances with each other which made the slaughter of their rivals one sided.

In the end, the two decided to form a non-aggression pact with each other due to their current circumstances.

"I didn't think I'd see the day when the two of us needed to fight side by side," Spencer spat on the ground in annoyance.

"Do you think I want to either?" Drake snorted. "The weaklings really know how to band together. It's so annoying to deal with them."

"Then, what should we do? The way things are going, we won't stand a chance even if the two of us team up together."

"I'll think of something. For now, let's just rest. I am tired from all that running."

Spencer nodded his head. They were not in the condition to fight with anyone at the moment. After drinking some healing potions, the injuries in his body were healed, but his exhaustion still remained.

Somewhere in the forest...

A beautiful girl with long black hair leaned against the tree branch as she surveyed her surroundings. The bow and arrow in her hands rested over her lap. As soon as she felt that something was amiss, she would immediately take her battle stance and notch her arrow on her bow.

Her name was Priscilla. She was the archer who attempted to kill William when the competition had just started. On the back of her hand, red numbers appeared forming the number 30. Yes, she had killed 30 candidates all by herself. Although she was still far from her goal of a hundred, she was not in a hurry to hunt for more.

Right now, she was resting and conserving her strength. Night had just fallen, and it would be too dangerous to move around in the darkness.

It was then when she felt the forest start to vibrate. She immediately stood up on top of the branch as she extended her senses to investigate what was happening around her. The ground, the trees, and even the wind seemed to tremble.

Priscilla knew that this was not a good sign, so she climbed to the top of the tree she was resting in and erased her presence. She had a feeling that this was going to be a long and dangerous night.

"Conrad, with this you are only a step away from becoming the Head Prefect," a boy wearing glasses flattered the boy who sat on a log in front of the campfire.

"It's still too early to say that we've already won the battle," Conrad replied. "We should only let our guard down once the announcement has been made."

The boy named Conrad had very sharp features. His eyes were like those of a hawk, but that didn't affect his good looks. His reddish brown hair, and hazel eyes, made him a very attractive boy. Born in a family of Marquees, Conrad had known at an early age that he must grasp every opportunity that would enable him to become stronger and increase his rank.

His first step was to become the Head Prefect and use his position to form connections with "profitable partners" that would help him rise up in the ranks of nobility. He was not satisfied with being the third son of his family.

He wanted his own lands, authority, and power. Because of this, he had polished his social skills and managed to convince these people to work under him. On the back of Conrad's right hand was the number twenty.

His subordinates had helped him deal the last blow to the candidates so that their points would belong to him. The number of people in his party was ten. Right now, they were the biggest faction within the Enchanted Forest, and a favorite of some of the instructors in the Martial Division.

As he was talking, one of his subordinates stood up and scanned the surroundings.

"Did you hear that?" a chubby boy with dark-brown hair asked as he continued to remain vigilant.

"I didn't hear anything," the boy wearing glasses replied. "Why? Is there something wrong?"

"I heard distant rumblings coming from the center of the forest," the chubby boy replied absentmindedly. "If my hunch is right, something is happening and it is definitely something big."

Everyone in Conrad's group stared at the chubby boy with serious expressions. They didn't doubt his warning because the chubby boy was an excellent scout. He was always the first person in the group to detect the position of the students that they had hunted down earlier in the day.

"Do you think it poses a threat to our group?" Conrad asked. His hazel eyes looked at the chubby boy and waited for his answer.

"My hunch tells me that it is so," the chubby boy replied. "I'm afraid that we need to increase the number of the night watch just to be on the safe side."

"Very well." Conrad agreed. "We will follow your advice."

Conrad was about to say more when he heard a scream in the distance. The sound of beast roars and howls followed suit as the scream died down like a fleeting dream.

The entire group immediately stood up and readied their weapons.

"Dave, take us immediately to a place that you deem as safe!" Conrad ordered.

"I'm afraid that it's already too late." The chubby boy licked his lips as he scanned his surroundings. "There is no more safe place inside the Enchanted Forest."

Another loud scream pierced the night and all the remaining candidates felt the hairs on the back of their necks stand on end. The number of screams were becoming more frequent and each scream was laced with fear and desperation.

Drake and Spencer were running in the opposite direction of where the screams were coming from. They knew by instinct that those poor souls had encountered a tragedy and it was not caused by human hands.

"I've heard in the past that the Beasts inside the Enchanted Forest would occasionally attack the students that appeared inside it," Spencer said as he continued to run. "However, this is something unheard of!"

Drake gritted his teeth as he forced his legs to keep pace with Spencer. He was more of a fighter type, and specialized in strong attacks instead of mobility, so he was having trouble with being forced to run for long periods of time.

"This is no longer a raid that we can handle on our own," Drake replied with a grim expression. "This can already be compared to a Beast Tide!"

As Drake finished his sentence, the loud howls, roars, and shrieks of the creatures in the Enchanted Forest reached their ears. Another scream resounded in the forest, but it was soon snuffed out like a dying flame.

This night is no ordinary night. For this was a night where everything was going to come to an end.

Chapter 137: Night Raid Inside the Enchanted Forest [Part 2]

"Don't panic! They're just Grade-D Beasts! Hold your ground!" a boy wielding two short swords ordered as he fought against an Alpha Forest Wolf.

His group had hurriedly retreated the moment they heard the first dying scream. However, they were forced to engage the Beasts that had lunged at them from the shadows. It was then when they realized that they had already been surrounded.

More than twenty Alpha wolves leapt out from the trees and engaged them in battle. The skirmish was fierce as the students and Beasts collided in a deadly battle to the death.

What the students didn't know was that all the Beasts within the Enchanted Forest were well-versed in fighting with humans. This was after all, one of the training grounds where the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Year students came to train their martial skills.

Naturally, their opponents were these same beasts in the forest. As time went on, the Beasts had learned how to fight against humans and had become more proficient over the passing of time. Even if the Alpha Wolves were only Grade D Beasts, they were more than enough to deal with First Year Students who were still wet behind the ears.

The most powerful student in the group unleashed a flurry of strikes towards one of the Alpha Wolves which almost ended its life. When the deathblow was about to connect, a wolf paw appeared out of nowhere and struck the boy in his chest.

The students tried to regroup, but the wolves blocked their path. It was at that moment when a large wolf eyed them as if they were the most delicious delicacies in the world. The three-meter tall wolf with

a silver horn on the middle of its forehead howled. It was the one who attacked the strongest student in the party and protected its subordinate.

"Long Horned Timber Wolf!" the boy wielding two short swords cried out in alarm. "That's a Class C Beast! Everyone, run!"

The Long Horned Timber Wolf bared its fangs and bit down on the injured boy that it had just attacked. The boy was too injured to fight back and immediately turned into particles of light, which brought despair to the rest of his group.

They were still able to defend each other due to their group's strongest warrior, but now that he was gone, their formation easily crumbled into pieces.

More screams resounded in the night followed by a powerful wolf howl. The other creatures in the forest who heard the Timber Wolf's declaration roared in reply.

What the Timber Wolf had said caused a frenzy among the other creatures who were busy hunting down the students in the forest.

They would not allow the Timber Wolf to get ahead of them and gain the rewards that were promised by the red-headed boy.

'Excluding you, there are only fifteen more humans remaining in the forest,' the Spire stated as it raised its head to look at the moon. 'I've been in this forest for a very long time and this is the first time I've seen such an event. I guess this is to be expected of the one chosen by our Eternal Guardian.'

'Spire, don't be too overconfident,' William reprimanded the beast. 'Never underestimate humans. They are the most cunning and vicious species on the planet. Although we might be winning now, it is too early to tell who is going to have the last laugh.'

'True,' the Spire admitted. 'Even so, this is already a good result, no?'

'Indeed.' William nodded his head. 'To be honest, this is already better than I expected.'

The spire turned its head to look at the boy riding on its back. 'Anyone would be moved by the rewards that you have offered. Only fools will reject this kind of opportunity to become stronger.'

'So you say, but, didn't you reject the offer I gave you earlier?' William teased. 'If you agreed, wouldn't you have become the dominant Beast in this Enchanted Forest? How come you didn't grab hold of that opportunity?'

'You don't understand, William.' The Spire shook his head. 'We are creatures of the Herd and the deer of the forest are pacifists. We don't like to fight, but prefer to spend our lives living in peace. Even if I become stronger than the others then what of it? It will just disrupt the balance that has been maintained for more than a century.'

William didn't try to persuade the Spire because he knew that it was a noble and proud Beast. He just told it to come and find him if it ever changed its mind in the future.

The red-headed boy and the Guardian of the Herd had created an equal pact with each other. Spire became a member of William's Herd, but he couldn't summon it to fight with him in a casual manner. The Spire told him that it would remain inside the Enchanted Forest and protect its herd like it had done over the years.

However, if William were to truly need its strength, it would answer to his call but he could only ask for its help thrice.

After that, Spire would leave William's herd, as agreed upon in their contract.

'Only twelve remain,' the Spire said in a soft voice. 'Also we have found the target you asked us to find. Shall we go?'

William summoned his bow and quiver filled with arrows before nodding his head. "It's payback time."

Drake and Spencer were fighting back to back against the Titanic Blaze Bear and the Tattooed Killer Serpent. The threat level of both of these creatures were in the upper ranks of Grade C.

The two geniuses were having a hard time dealing with their powerful attacks because the two beasts were very sly. They had already unleashed their trump cards in order to prevent themselves from dying, but they still had underestimated how cunning their opponents were.

Using the powerful body of the Titanic Blaze Bear as a shield, the Tattooed Killer Serpent would spray its acid venom at their blindspots. Although they were able to react in time, they were still unable to prevent themselves from receiving the Titanic Blaze Bear's powerful attacks, which hit as hard as a charging bull.

If not for the high-grade armor that they wore, both of them would have already died during the encounter.

As the two beasts performed a series of attacks, the two boys began to lose ground and focused all of their attention on defending. Because of this, they didn't hear the whistling sound of the wind until it was too late.

Two arrows struck their backs and pierced their armor, which caused both of them to curse internally. The Bear and the Snake didn't miss this opportunity and finished both of them off. Drake and Spencer both had unresigned faces before their bodies turned into particles of light.

Never in their wildest dreams did they think that they would be eliminated from the competition in this manner.

When their bodies disappeared, two red orbs shot towards Priscilla who was busy making her escape. After killing Drake and Spencer, she was no longer in the mood to hunt for other students.

She had already decided to hide until the competition ended. Priscilla jumped from branch to branch with expert movements as if she was used to moving in this manner. Suddenly, while she was still in mid-air, she heard a subtle buzz from behind her.

The girl immediately summoned a round silver shield from her storage ring and curled her body up behind it.

A loud clanging resounded in the night as the steel arrow collided with the silver shield. Priscilla immediately used the whip hanging at her waist and lashed out at a tree branch. The whip coiled around the branch preventing her from falling directly on the ground.

Another whistling sound pierced the air and the whip she was hanging by was split in two.

Priscilla gritted her teeth and spread her arms wide. Her clothes were specially made with a built-in gliding feature that allowed her to glide for short distances. Two wing-like devices extended from under her arms up to the clothes on her waist.

As the black haired girl landed safely on the ground, her clothes returned to their normal state.

She then raised her head and stared into the distance that was covered by darkness.

"I should have focused on eliminating you earlier." Priscilla sighed. "Now it's too late for that."

A giant white deer appeared out of the darkness and stared at the girl with a calm expression. William, who was seated on its back, had already notched an arrow on his bow.

"Are you feeling unresigned?" William asked. "Right now, only you are the last remaining candidate in this Enchanted Forest. Everyone else has been dealt with."

The black-haired beauty held the bow in her hand firmly and gazed back at William with an unwavering expression.

"I, Priscilla Nerelle Grandfall, challenge William Von Ainsworth to a duel," Priscilla stated with a serious expression. "Do you dare to accept?"

The girl's brown eyes turned golden as she waited for William's answer. She knew that the red-headed boy had no reason to accept her challenge because the creature he was riding on was more than enough to end her life.

Even so, her pride as an archer, and a member of the Order of Graywind, wouldn't allow her to simply surrender.

William gazed at the beautiful girl in front of him. The color of her hair reminded William of his own hair color when he was still alive on Earth. To be honest, he never expected to see a girl with the same features of those who had lived in his own world.

"Very well, but on one condition," William replied with a smile. "If I win, you will become my Vice-Prefect."

"And, if I win?" Priscilla asked back.

"If you win then you will allow my Mama Ella to live in my dormitory room," William answered. "Also, you are not allowed to order me around. This is something that you have to agree to or I won't consent to this duel between the two of us."

Priscilla frowned. She didn't know who this Mama Ella was and William's offer didn't give her any advantages, aside from becoming the Head Prefect. Even so, this was an offer she couldn't refuse.

Either accept or die. That was William's hidden ultimatum and she would be stupid to reject the olive branch that he had extended.

"Fine, I accept your conditions." Priscilla agreed.

"Swear upon the God of Oaths that you will honor your promise," William ordered. "Although you may not believe it, the God of Oaths and I are pretty close. If you break your word, prepare yourself for eternal suffering!"

Somewhere in the Temple of the Ten Thousand Gods, the God of Oaths sneezed. He then rubbed his nose and looked into the distance.

"A pretty girl must be thinking of me right now," the God said with a confident smile. "Why was I born handsome?"

"Have you no shame, you old fart?" Lily asked. "Stop saying nonsense and pay up! Three dozen lollipops and three boxes of chocolate eclairs. That will be 100,000 God Points!"

"Lily, we are good friends," the God of Oaths said with a smile. "How about you give me a little discount?"

"Hmp, fine." Lily snorted. "95,000 God Points"

"Deal!" The God of Oaths hurriedly paid the Loli Goddess. He then walked away while whistling a happy tune. The God of Contracts bought these sweets as a gift to his sugar babies. What many didn't know was that the God of Contracts was a simp that cared for the cute young ladies who had become his devout followers.

Priscilla took a deep breath and swore upon the God of Oaths. This was the first time she'd heard of this kind of God and she thought that William was only joking with her. Even so, since this was her last chance, she could at least pretend to follow the procedure for a chance of survival.

"Good, now I'm giving you exactly two minutes to run away," William gazed at her with a calm expression. "After two minutes, our one-on-one battle will begin. Don't worry, the Beasts will not hinder or attack you during this time. This will be a one-on-one battle, just like you wanted."

Priscilla nodded her head and ran in the direction opposite of where William sat. She needed to distance herself from William so that she could fight to the fullest using her bow and arrows. For the first time since she entered the Royal Academy, the black-haired girl felt her blood boiling due to anticipation.

She had fought with many archers in the Kingdom of Freesia, but this was the first time she would be fighting against someone in the Hellan Kingdom. The Kingdom of Freesia specialized in archery skills. It was the kingdom where the best archers and arcane archers were born.

Deep inside, she was thankful that William agreed to her unreasonable challenge. Even though she still didn't understand why the red-headed boy agreed to her request, she didn't think much about it.

What was going on inside her head was the opportunity to see just how powerful the archers of the Hellan Kingdom were.

What she didn't know was that the Bow Arts that William used didn't belong to the Hellan Kingdom. It belonged to the System. The System had chosen the most suitable Bow Art it could so that it would be compatible with William's current constitution.

It was not only Priscilla's blood that was boiling. William could also feel his competitive spirit rising as he gripped the bow in his hand. Back in Lont, John and Trent had taught him how to wield the bow.

Trent was a Sentinel. A bonafide Dragon Slayer and the knowledge and techniques he had shared with William were priceless.

John, on the other hand, specialized in mounted archery. Riding his partner, Blitz, he was a force to be reckoned with in aerial combat.

These two masters didn't skimp on imparting their knowledge to William which made him improve by leaps and bounds. Although the System had given him the cheat to learn archery in a heartbeat, the proficiency that he gained during those countless days of training was not a joke either.

William practiced shooting his bow almost everyday. It had become a habit for him, just like how he went into withdrawal when he didn't drink his Mama's milk.

The reason he accepted Priscilla's challenge was because this was the first time he would be battling against another archer. He deemed that it was necessary to gain experience in a real duel because it might be helpful for him in the future.

Deep inside, he also wanted to prove to his two teachers that their days of teaching him were not in vain.

The Spire looked back at William and sighed. It couldn't understand why the boy decided to do something so foolish. William had no need to accept the challenge because the Spire could easily kill Priscilla with a single move.

'Humans never fail to astound me.' The spire sighed as it looked up at the moon. It knew that after this event, the Beasts inside the Enchanted Forest would never be the same again.

Chapter 139: An Archer's Pride [Part 2]

"Good! Good! Good!" Andy clapped his hands in happiness. "A one on one battle between archers. What a way to end the competition for the Head Prefect!"

Grent, who was sitting beside Andy, had a dumbfounded expression on his face as he looked at the red-headed boy in the viewing crystal. An hour ago, he was still monitoring Conrad, Drake, Spencer, and Priscilla in the viewing crystal.

However, the sudden intrusion of the Beasts had brought the competition to a hasty end. It was just as Andy said, only William and Priscilla remained inside the Enchanted Forest. The winner of their duel would decide on who the next Head Prefect would be.

Since Grent hadn't been paying attention to William earlier, he didn't see how the boy managed to convince the creatures in the forest to fight for his cause. He tried to ask Andy what had happened earlier, but the annoying Hunter only gave him a smug smile.

Clearly, he had no intention of telling Grent what had happened during the time he was not paying attention to William.

The students outside the House of Heroes had the same thoughts as Grent. They didn't know how and why the competition for the Martial Classes had turned out like this. All they knew was that the handsome red-headed boy and the beautiful black-haired girl had both agreed to a one on one duel.

As expected, the students from the Magic and Spirit Division Classes looked at the last two combatants with interest.

The boys were secretly cheering for Priscilla, while the starry-eyed girls were cheering for William.

The way the young boy sat on top of the Spire was truly a sight to behold. He was like a Prince from a fairy tale who had come to rescue the princess.

Est, Kenneth, Ian, Isaac, and Ella had watched William from the very start. They still couldn't believe that the boy had succeeded in convincing the Apex Beasts inside the forest using "bribes" that they couldn't possibly reject unless there was something wrong in their heads.Â

"Young Master, should we also use this strategy when the competition for Head Prefect in our dormitory begins?" Ian whispered.

"It's worth a try," Est replied after pondering for a brief moment. "Make sure to call Herman and make the necessary arrangements once William's competition is over."

"By your will, Young Master." Ian bowed.

Kenneth had a complicated expression as he looked at the handsome boy who was sitting on top of the Giant White Deer. Just like Est and the others, he didn't expect this kind of outcome. Part of him wanted to praise William for his quickwittedness and the other part of him wanted to nag at the boy for being too bold and daring.

Even so, deep in his heart, a seed of admiration started to sprout. Although what William did seemed quite easy, not everyone had the ability to do so. Even Kenneth had to admit that he wouldn't be able to do the same even if he was placed in the same situation.

This was also why he couldn't keep himself from being impressed by William's actions.

Two minutes passed and the sound of the wind whistling echoed in the forest. William and Priscilla had started their battle and it was truly a sight to behold. Both combatants were fairly skilled in using the bow that one couldn't tell who was getting the upper hand in their battle.

Priscilla notched a green arrow on her bow and took aim. The moment she released the arrow, a gust of wind made her black hair dance wildly behind her back.

William immediately rolled on the ground to evade the attack and the tree he was using as a shield exploded into pieces.

"Elemental arrow of wind," William muttered. "What a scary lady."

The red-headed boy propped himself off the ground and charged in Priscilla's direction. When he was only twenty meters away from her, he was forced to jump to the side to evade another elemental arrow that the girl had shot in his direction.

Contrary to William's expectations, the arrow exploded in mid-air and sent out a blinding flash of light which caught William by surprise.

His vision was covered in white as he hastily closed his eyes in order to prevent Priscilla from taking advantage of his current situation.

The black-haired girl knew that she had succeeded in her blinding attack and immediately went in for the kill. She fired consecutive shots towards William, and the latter dodged them by rolling on the ground until his head bumped into a tree.

The students who were watching the battle laughed out loud as William held his head in pain.

Even Est and Ian who had a serious expression earlier, were all smiles as they saw the arrogant and narcissistic boy suffering from Priscilla's brutal counter attack.

Ella simply watched with amusement. She was not worried about William getting blinded or anything. After all, they had suffered worse under Oliver's and Celine's hands during their training. How could she not know that William was only putting on an act in order to lower his opponent's guard?

She and her baby would often spend half of the day in eternal darkness and mastered the art of finding their enemy amidst the world that was painted black.

Priscilla was getting annoyed because none of her arrows were landing on her target. She was sure that William was suffering from temporary blindness, but it would only last for a few minutes. Out of desperation, she decided to move to close quarter combat.

She was not only proficient in using the bow, she was also trained to fight using short swords and daggers while she was in the Kingdom of Freesia.

To her surprise, William stood up from the ground with his eyes still closed and nocked an arrow on his bow. He then fired a point blank shot in Priscilla's direction which almost ended the battle.

Fortunately, Priscilla's heightened senses allowed her to dodge to the side as she closed the gap between the red-headed boy.

Sensing that his attack had missed, William twisted the bow in his hand and it miraculously changed its shape. Instead of a bow, the red-headed boy held two curved scimitars in his left and right hands. He then took a step forward and executed a deadly flurry of blows that almost blew Priscilla off her feet.

When William changed the form of his bow, he hurriedly ordered the System to change his Job Class to Fighter. Although he spent only one and a half months in training this Job Class with his Grandpa, it was more than enough for William to enhance his repertoire in close quarter armed combat.

The red-headed boy's series of attacks was like a deadly sword dance. This slashing maneuver was under the Dual Wielding specialties of his Executioner War Art (Basic) from the Fighter Job Class.

Priscilla gritted her teeth as she was forced to defend herself from William's overpowering move.

With a loud shout, she twisted the short swords in her hand and applied half of her full strength in an effort to disarm the shepherd. Her short swords, along with William's scimitars, flew an arc into the air and dropped on the ground behind them.

As a last resort, Priscilla used the disarming skill that she had been taught by her father, that was meant to be used for this exact situation. Using the strength in her legs, she closed the distance and prepared to deliver a straight punch to William's chest in order to turn the tide of battle.

It was at this moment that William opened his eyes and smiled. The effect of the flash arrow had ended and he had regained his vision.

"Crane Wing," William said as he took the Crane Style Stance and moved his body forward. Due to his movements, he dodged Priscilla's full powered strike that was meant to end the battle.

As the girl's body continued to move forward due to momentum. William used nimble body movements to close the distance. Priscilla hurriedly turned her body around to kick the boy, but was met with an open palm strike that hit her squarely in her stomach area.

The blow took Priscilla's breath away as her body bent down through reflex. William then moved behind her back and summoned his bow and adamantium arrow.

"Since you like backstabbing people so much, I'll let you feel what it's like to get backstabbed," William said before firing the arrow at point blank range. The adamantium arrow pierced behind Priscilla's back, and made its way to her heart.

Priscilla, the beautiful girl with black hair, fell down on the ground, and turned into particles of light.

"How dreamy!" a girl exclaimed. "Oh! If only he was a prince, I'd definitely marry him!"

"You don't want him? I'll take him then!" her best friend declared from the side.

"You can't!"

"I can!"

Similar conversations were happening between the girls of the Magic and Spirit Class Divisions. They were very impressed with William's performance and all of them were planning to make him their subordinate.

Not to mention, William was a Half-Elf. Although his race wasn't rare, they were blessed with good looks and the red-headed boy was particularly dashing during the fight against the black-haired archer.

Even some of the boys felt like having a subordinate like William would increase their prestige. Some were already thinking of ways on how to bribe William to become part of their entourage.

"I do not wish for dominion, but there are things that I must protect no matter what," William said softly.

He then looked at the moon in the sky and sighed. Spire walked in front of him and lowered its majestic head. William lightly patted its head before telling it to properly distribute the rewards that he had promised to the beasts of the Enchanted Forests.

The girls who saw this scene were star-struck because Spire was a very noble and beautiful creature. Standing beside the boy made him look like a Hero that was just taking a stroll in the wilderness.

Some of the girls even thought of asking William to become their lover. With such a handsome and powerful warrior by their side, they would definitely be the envy of the other girls in the academy.

The red-headed boy was unaware of what the people outside the domain were thinking. He was just glad that the competition was finally over.

He then gave a meaningful glance to the Spire and the latter nodded its head in acknowledgement.

'See you later, Shepherd.'

'Take care, Guardian of the Herd.'

As if waiting for that cue, William's body turned into particles of light and he was ejected from the domain.

The battle for the position of the Head Prefect was over and William had won against all odds. With this, a new era would dawn upon the First Years of the Martial Class Division in the Hellan Royal Academy.

Whether this change would destroy the balance of the hierarchy that had been established inside the academy... would be found out in the not so distant future.

Chapter 140: I Fought For Love

The entirety of the First Year students lined up inside the Hall of the Martial Class Division. Since they were outsiders, the students of the Magic and Spirit Division classes stayed outside the premises and watched the viewing crystals in front of them

They were waiting for William's first speech as the Head Prefect of the Solaris Dormitory.

Soon, a handsome Half-Elf with hair as bright as flames walked towards the podium. His light-green eyes were clear and bright as he faced the hundreds of students who were looking at him with serious expressions.

"Good day to all of you. My name is William, William Von Ainsworth," William started his speech. "I am a shepherd that hails from the countryside of Lont."

The buzzing sound of murmurs spread across the hall when William gave his introductions. Even those who were watching him from outside were surprised when he said that he was a shepherd from the countryside.

"I came here today, to tell all of you why I joined the competition for the position of Head Prefect," William continued his explanation. He then looked at the entrance of the hall and made a gesture. "Mama, please, join me."

The door of the great hall opened and a white and fluffy goat, that was only a meter tall, walked forward with confident steps. The students watched her go up onto the stage and stand by William's side.

William lovingly placed his hand over Ella's back and faced everyone in the room with a smile.

"Mama, please greet everyone."

"Meeeeeeeh!"

The students looked at William and the goat with weird expressions, but the red-headed boy paid them no mind. Instead, he raised his chin in an arrogant manner and stated his reason.

"Yes. The reason why I joined the competition was to ensure that my Mama Ella would be able to stay by my side during my stay here at the Royal Academy," William said firmly. "Perhaps, some of you think that this is a very absurd reason. Others, may think that it was a stupid one. However, I beg to disagree. My Mama Ella is no ordinary goat. She was the one that raised me since I was a baby."

William's declaration brought another round of murmurs and even the instructors glanced at the goat with curious expressions.

"All of us have important people in our lives. People we care for, people we want to protect, and people we want to love," William was unfazed by the murmurs and continued his speech. "They could be our parents, our brothers, sisters, grandparents, neighbors, friends, lovers, and acquaintances.

"But, let me ask all of you, is your love greater than mine? Is the love you have for your lover greater than my love for my Mama Ella?"

When William asked this question, many people wanted to answer, but William didn't give them a chance to do that.

"The answer is simple, love cannot be measured," William said tenderly. "I will not tell you that the love you feel for your loved ones is less than mine, because like I said, love cannot be measured. Yes, the reason why I fought in the competition was for love!

"I didn't know how strong my opponents were, how cunning they were, and how determined they were to win. Because, in my eyes, these factors were not important. As members of the Martial Classes, there will come a time when we have to face opponents that are stronger than us, opponents that are way out of our league...

"When that time comes, our only choice is either to fight or to flee. I chose to fight, because my reason for fighting is for the one I love. Regardless of the consequences, no matter the price, I must win! And win, I did."

The girls who had become William's fans felt their heart flutter. The way he declared that he had fought the competition for love was so suave that they couldn't keep themselves from imagining that the person he fought for was not the goat, but them.

Kenneth, who was watching William from below the podium, looked at him with tender eyes. He had already known how much William cared for Ella, but he didn't know the extent of how much the red-headed boy loved his second mother.

Even Est had to admire that William's speech moved him. Ian and Isaac felt the same. They too had people they cared for and wanted to protect. William was right, love was something that could not be measured.

The great hall descended into silence, as the students unconsciously clenched their hands. They could feel that their blood was boiling because of William's reason for fighting. They had imagined themselves fighting against a foe that they couldn't defeat. The majority of them thought of only one thing and that was to run and escape with their lives.

Somehow, they felt ashamed and inferior to William. They could feel his strong determination to win. Even those who initially held grudges towards him, found themselves unable to hate him. Those of the Martial Classes respect the strong, even if they couldn't accept the outcome of the competition, they had to admit that they couldn't achieve what William had done inside the Enchanted Forest.

"Of course, I know that some of you are dissatisfied with me." William smiled and casually flipped his hair. "But, what of it? I admit that some of you may be stronger than me, but physical strength alone doesn't win battles. The fact that the one standing here is me and not you means that my determination to win is stronger than yours."

"If you feel that I'm not worthy of my position then feel free to challenge me..., " William declared. "But, only after you have defeated all of the candidates that participated in the competition. This is only right and proper, no?"

Excuse me? Do you think you can challenge the final boss without fighting the underlings first? Sorry, not happening!

Est, Ian, and Isaac smirked when they heard William's shameless words. He allowed the students to challenge him, but they had to fight everyone before they earned the right to challenge William.

William was not a fool. If they wanted to fight him then he would definitely make them suffer first. However, to ensure that they wouldn't do the shameful act of "not fighting against the challengers" the red-headed boy decided to throw in some insurance.

"We are martial students. If we don't even dare to accept challenges then we should just pack up and leave the academy," William said in a righteous manner. "As the Head Prefect of the Solaris Dormitory, I will expel any student who doesn't fight in a serious manner! Now, who wants to challenge me? Raise your hands!"

Drake and Spencer resolutely raised their hands. They were still unresigned by what had happened in the competition. Both of them knew that none of the First Years were their match, so they were not afraid of one-on-one battles.

William sneered internally as he gave the two boys a refreshing smile. "Since the two of you are bold enough to challenge me then I will grant you a battle you will never forget.

"I, William Von Ainsworth, hereby order that all the members of the Solaris Dormitory will fight these two brave souls at the same time. Yes it will be the Solaris Team vs Drake and Spencer! Anyone who performs exceptionally will be given the position of Vice-Prefect!"

All the students gasped in surprise. Vice-Prefect? Isn't that almost the same as becoming the Head Prefect? Under one person, but above hundreds of students, this was a position that could be considered as the next best thing!

Priscilla had agreed to become William's Vice Prefect in the Enchanted Forest, but she felt that she was undeserving of the role. This was also the reason why she talked to William to have their contract revoked. The red-headed boy admired the black haired beauty's resolution so he agreed to her request.

William felt that if he forced Priscilla to become his Vice-Prefect using the contract, it would just make things awkward for the both of them. Since that was the case, he planned to award the position of Vice-Prefect as a prize to the person who would perform exceptionally in this scheme that he had concocted.

All the First Years stared at Drake and Spencer as if they were the most delicious food that they had seen in their lives. Some of them were already itching to start the battle and become the Vice-Prefect of the Solaris Dormitory.

"Shameless!" Ian almost spat on the ground. "This fool really knows how to take advantage of his position."

All the admiration he had for the boy earlier had evaporated into thin air.