

## ~ Day 112 ~

"Master, are you sure we shouldn't try and escape?" Mia asked, her voice tinged with worry.

I sighed, reclining on the lavish furniture as I watched Bob hungrily feast on the wide array of dishes laid out before us.

"I already told you," I shook my head. "It's not like we have any chance to do so, but I can at least be confident that our lives shouldn't in danger."

"All of this," I gestured to the large and opulent room we had been *confined* in. "It's clearly orchestrated, but for what purpose or end, I haven't the slightest idea."

"I-I know... but I just can't feel uneasy by all of this..." She said, drooping sadly.

Seeing her worry, I pulled her in to comfort her, laying her head on my chest.

"This regent has somehow found interest in us, and whether or not he had a finger in our situation from ever since we had entered the city or later on, he's going to an awfully a lot of trouble to have us here," I explained, running my fingers through Mia's silky locks. "This means he has rules of his own that he has to play by, giving us some leverage. We just need to figure out what that leverage is..."

"Don't worry Mia, Bob will smash all who want to harm us!" Bob suddenly proclaimed, lifting a leg of meat high in the air and splattering meat juices everywhere on the table.

Although the assurance was quite brutish and messy, Mia perked up from her gloomy mood with a giggle at his antics.

"Okay - okay, Bob, you're making a mess..." I chuckled with them.

But the atmosphere quickly died down when the sudden opening of a door on the far side of the room caught our attention. Bob and Mia grabbed for their weapons as they hadn't been stripped of us even though we were technically captives.

The tall figure of one of the heavily armored guards just outside the entrance was opening the door for a much smaller and plumb creature who was outfitted in what looked to be a scholar's clothes. The sight was quite amusing, and I supposed he was some kind of gremlin.

-Appraisal-

Appraisal - Iawick					
Information		Attributes		Traits, Titles, and Skills	
-Name-	"Iawick"	STR	12	Skills	8
-Race-	Grendor	VIT	20	Traits	???
-Sex-	Male	AGI	32	Titles	???
-Rank-	E-	DEX	45	Resistances	
-Level-	28/35	INT	68		
Health	132/132	CHR	8	Physical Resistance	6
Stamina	41/41	WILL	6	Magical Resistance	4
Mana	0/0	MAG	4	Mental Resistance	4

"A Grendor... huh," I muttered, watching as the amusing creature with a monocle and a handful of scrolls waddled over to us.

Bowing awkwardly as a smile twisted his less than pleasant gremlin-like face, the Grendor put the scrolls on the table after clearing bits of food from Bob's unrestrained and messy feasting.

"Greetings, sir." He finally spoke up, his voice raspy and pitchy. "I've come here to both inform you about all you need to know regarding the tournament and also document your entry into the contest."

Unfolding one of the scrolls, he pulled forth a quill and looked expectantly for any form of affirmation.

With a glance at the two still wary and alert Mia and Bob, I made waved them off, causing the tension in the air to drop immediately as they both fell back into silence.

Nodding, I let out a grunt.

"Alright then, sir. I will need the names of yourself, and those you wish to enter the contest with." The gremlin-like asked cordially.

"How many will I be able to enter the contest with?" I countered with an answer, still not quite up to date about all this tournament stuff.

"The format is in leader battles so five fighters and then yourself, for a total of six contestants." He replied immediately.

Hearing this, I frowned.

Not only was I short on fighters with only Bob and Mia since the twenty other orcs and mounts who have also been taken into custody were hardly up to par, but the fact of the matter remained that if just anyone could enter the contest, wouldn't it mean we would be facing C-rank monsters? If not entire teams of C-rank monsters?

"Are there any limitations to those who can join?"

"Yes, a leader's followers cannot have been forced into servitude by any means to fight for them and they have to be under the C-rank of power whereas the threshold for a leader is a C-rank monster at the most."

I nodded, but still not too pleased to hear that I was possibly going to be going against C-ranked monsters.

"Wait... I heard there were necromancers in the city - how does this servitude rule apply to them if they were to enter?" I asked, curious about this piece of information.

"Oh, yes. The minions of necromancers are creations of their own power so they do not befall under the enslavement rule." The Grendor explained. "But... if they do submit any undead minions to their follower roster, they would have to be completely autonomous monsters as the leader is not allowed to interfere with the battles of their followers in any shape or form."

"I see..." I muttered, realizing that I might not just be as short-handed on fighters as I initially thought.

"Then, could I submit these as followers for the tournament?" I said, extending my hand to form a crimson sphere that landed to my side, quickly taking form to a small featureless humanoid figure.

At this scene, the Grendor's demeanor of professionalism and friendly calm finally cracked, his jaw hanging open as he stared with incredulity at the blood puppet.

"While I can control them as they're are constructs of my mana, they can also act completely autonomously if I order them to," I explained.

He quickly tried to regain his composure, straightening out his clothes and re-adjusting his monocle with fidgeting fingers.

"I-I... yes, I suppose they might..." He stammered, still not completely back to his mask of professionalism. "But I w-would have to assign a mage overseer to make sure you do not... t-tamper with the fights in any way..."

I nodded with satisfaction as I needn't be worried about being short-handed on capable fighters anymore.

"Oh yeah, and about that no killing or maiming rule - how are we to take that?" I asked curiously. "My regenerative powers are... decent, so an attack that would normally maim wouldn't necessarily be a problem for me. There are also many herbs, tinctures, and magical items that can heal otherwise crippling wounds; then how would this rule apply?"

"Any wound considered lethal and/or crippling at a permanent level during the fight is prohibited." He explained, managing to calm considerably. "If you were to face an opponent that could, for example, innately regenerate an entire limb were it to be destroyed, that would not stop the fight or penalize you. But for something like your constructs, they would be considered free to be destroyed. This rule is a bit vague and is mostly determined by the judges of the fights, applying the rules as best they can to properly take into account all the contestant's powers and abilities."

I nodded.

"Alright, then you needed the names of all those who are going to participate under me, including my own?" I asked.

"Indeed, then we can get registration out of the way," Iawick replied. "Other than that, I'm just here to answer any questions that you might be harboring about this tournament."

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Reclining back onto the furniture with a couple of grape-like fruits, I let out a sigh.

After the initial registration of our group into this tournament, I had voiced a couple of questions and had then summarily answered. Mia had also pitched in, asking about things I hadn't thought of, but there wasn't much more information about this tournament than just the general stuff.

Noticing a prompt awaiting my attention in the corner of my mind, I pulled it up.

[Language - **Cauldric**, has been learned 75%]

[Skill - **Language Adaptability** has reached LVL: 5]

[For having a tier-1 skill reach the maximum level threshold, you've received 1 skill point]

"Hmm, I suppose acting like a translator really helps with this skill..." I muttered as I had progressed much faster in the skill when translating the monster common tongue for Mia so she could speak with the Grendor, Iawick.

I had also initially been quite surprised at the fact that the language, Common Tounge, which all the monsters in Ebongrave use is actually called Cauldric.

Even after asking our guide from the resort back when I initially picked up on the language, he claimed that he didn't know there existed another 'official' name for it.

It could just have been because it's not a widely known fact as the pattern of those who lacked power consequentially also lacked information as a result remained true wherever you went in this world. Even basic information could be out of the reaches of most simply because they lacked the capabilities to obtain it which made for an odd dynamic when trying to find what you wanted to know from others.

As I lazily lay in the soft padding of the furniture, I absentmindedly watched as Bob went on with his usual wood-figurine carving hobby. Honestly, the brute had gotten pretty damn good at it. Before he was reasonably good, but I could swear that those figurines got ever more life-like and detailed.

As for Mia, she was indulging in a small mountain of books, not only attempting to learn how to read, but also learn the other languages of the monster races, such as the common tongue. I had given her an initial introduction of the basics of how to read and write, but ever as the intelligent woman she was, she quickly picked up on it all and now wanted to try it out on her own.

While they all had things to do, I sighed expansively as this confinement of ours really put a damper on the things I had wanted done.

These were going to be a long four days...