

## ~ Day 123 ~

After a grueling week of training and battling, Bob and Mia were finally facing off in the last fight of the follower battles and the second stage of the tournament.

Opposing them up on that stage, were the familiar but arrogant figures of the lizardmen nobles, including that one dragonewt. I still had not found out exactly why this 'Draz'ag' had reached this point of power as I quite vividly recall and believe this monster to be the very same odd goblin I once afflicted with my **Sanguine Plague** just after evolving into an Azde.

But as to how in the seven hells that he had managed to not only evolve three times since then, but also change into an evolutionary lineage entirely different from that of a greenskin, into one a lizardman, that was still left up for debate. However, I did have my suspicions.

But if they truly were to be proved correct, I honestly wasn't sure how to handle or take that.

The sudden clangor of something hard impacting one of my blood puppets finally brought me out of my wandering thoughts. The fight had already started, and those leering lizardmen with arrogance and hatred tainting their slitted reptilian eyes clearly told of their intent to win.

The grudge that they held against us clearly hadn't been forgotten in the few days of the tournament, and they must've been eagerly waiting for this opportunity.

Unfortunately for them, Bob, Mia, and the trio of blood constructs were no weak group.

Rather evident as the kroxigor who had attempted to pin down Bob so that the dragonewt could get past and attack Mia directly head-on, quickly found himself unable to restrain the juggernaut that was the ten-foot-tall and hulking draugr.

Like almost all of the previous fights, all the enemies quickly realized that the only true avenue of victory they could take was to neutralize Mia as a threat first. But then again, her powerful control magic and the three blood puppet wholeheartedly protected the drow was arguably even more troublesome than the unstoppable force of nature that was Bob.

Besides the massive kroxigor and the dragonewt who made themselves known in the test of might, the opposing party consisted of rather lack-luster monsters. Just another two similar but slightly weaker kroxigors, and one decently skilled duelist lizardman of seemingly the same race that higher-ranking of the noble house was.

There was one problem though, the enemy had taken clear precautions.

Whereas magical items and objects were forbidden in the first stage of the tournament, the second stage allowed certain magical items and artifacts within a specific guideline.

This quickly showed as Mia's enthralling and mind-controlling magic failed to take hold of the enemies, being warded off by a multitude of amulets and trinkets. They had prepared exactly for her magic.

Although rather petty of course, it was within the rules of the tournament.

So as Mia's magic had very limited effect other than disorientating and interrupting certain actions, the enemy team was hard at work dismantling the defense that was the blood puppets' durable bodies.

It was the dragonewt, especially who proved to be a threat, as each of his mind-boggling powerful kicks tore chunk and cracked the constructs bit by bit.

The amount of force contained in that rather small and athletic body was such an odd sight, but nonetheless a reality.

Seeing that Mia's defenses were quickly dwindling in the face of the dragonewt's formidable destructive power, Bob reinvigorated his efforts to escape the kroxigor's desperate attempts to halt his progress and the other weaker kroxigor that had joined to help.

But Bob was too late as one of the blood puppets was destroyed, the two other heavily damaged as they were caught up with their own opponents.

However, in the hail of my destroyed construct's remains, dozens of crimson strands could faintly be seen shooting towards the dragonewt charging the small and hooded figure of Mia.

He didn't even have time to react to the crimson tendrils as they shot towards with lightning speed, some impaling themselves in his limbs while others snaked around his body; completely restraining him.

Seeing this and the obvious painfully shocked expression on the dragonewt's face, I smiled.

She was finally using her new weapon.

From underneath her black cloak, you could see the many strands and tendrils of crimson extending out from both her arms. It was both a chilling and an awe-inspiring sight as the dragonewt, although very physically powerful, stood utterly helpless in the face of Mia's weapon.

He could only look on as he was roughly thrown into the stage and then outside the bound, effectively rendering him both unconscious and disqualified.

After that, it was only a matter of time as Bob simply overpowered his opponents, and Mia doing the same with the stragglers as she did with the dragonewt, Draz'ag.

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"Couldn't you have used it before one of the blood puppets was destroyed?" I sighed. "You know they're tedious to reform when I have to reconstruct their cores from scratch..."

Although a very simple and inexpensive process, before I could store the premade blood golem cores in my body, I had to inscribe them with a great amount of focus and attention for quite a while.

"I had to take him off-guard, and it wouldn't have had as a dramatic effect if I just did it to start with." Mia grinned. "Besides, I'm still learning how to control it properly, I actually messed up quite a few times with the control during that fight."

As she said that, her hands lifted to show the gauntlet-like armaments I had made for her. Fitting her small hands like biker gloves, there were ten whip-like tendrils extending from each of her fingers.

Using her **Blood Magic** and superior magic control, Mia was able to manipulate the weapon crafted directly from my blood and **Blood Shaping**.

This of course was an extraordinarily complex and difficult weapon to wield with all the divided attention and magical control needed, but with Mia's talent and ability, she turned it into a deadly efficient tool.

Even if I were to try, I doubted I would be able to use it at even a quarter of the efficiency that she could, and that was with her barely having trained with it for a week and her being a newly evolved 4th-tier monster.

Controlling all of the ten tendrils, she smiled teasingly at me, right before making one of them swat me with a lingering sting.

"Hey!" I mock chuckled, bringing her into my embrace. "You little show off."

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After another few days of training, the third and last stage of the tournament had finally commenced. And as all the powerful monster, both peak D+ ranked monsters and even god's damned C- ranks fought, I felt my own blood boil anticipation.

Having watched Mia and Bob fight so many times had really got me riled up as most of the training back at the Menethil household had rather been beatings and meditation to get a better grasp on my magic, the only thing I was regretting now was the fact that there weren't many rounds to this single-elimination stage.

By now, this was the last day of the tournament, all the individual fights being held on a massive stage that had been set up in the plaza. Although none of the previous days had seen as many spectators as the first day with the opening ceremony, today the plaza positively filled to the brim.

Crowds were roaring as the first battles had already begun after a savory spectacle of music, dance, and various other entertainment had been put on display.

When the large ogre on stage finally won against a much smaller troll-like monster, both very capable fighters, it was nearing the end of the first round and was now finally my turn.

"Now!" Tahl, the minotaur, took the crowd's attention. "Zev'vev Sinlore versus Xavier!"

This of course caused a lot of commotion as not only was the Sinlore noble house widely acclaimed in Ebongrave, but I myself was one of those unknown dark horses.

And who didn't like an underdog?

Hearing who my opponent was, I couldn't help but scoff loudly, looking towards the booth of lizardmen who were radiantly leering and guffawing at this sudden revelation.

"Well, I guessed this would happen sooner or later." I mused to myself, not entirely putting off the chance that something behind the scenes might've been manipulated for this to happen so soon.

Walking up on stage, I was faced with the tall and very much similar figure to that of the lizardman noble scion that I had killed. Adorned in the same ostentatious jewelry and sharing the same regal demeanor.

"We told you that you would regret ever crossing our house." Zev'vev hissed. "Although I can't kill you, I'll make your life miserable at any opportunity, starting today."

"Sheesh, you sound like another overgrown reptile I accidentally stepped on a week ago, you wouldn't happen to be related?" I feigned ignorance as I of course already knew that this Zev'vev was the brother of the lizardman that had accosted me in the Abyss and who was summarily killed by me.

The effect of my taunt was immediate, and before Tahl had even announced to start, Zev'vev transformed into the same hulking form as his deceased brother from the get-go, activating that trump card skill that must have something to do with either his family house or race.

"You'll regret ever being born into this world." He hissed, tiles cracking underfoot as he launched through the air towards me.

"Yeah, we'll see about that..." I muttered.