

~ Day 116 ~

BOOM

Another air-shuddering explosion of force resounded out across the plaza grounds. Just now, a behemoth of a Kroxigor had stock one of the mana-infused rocks with all its might, causing a ripple of small cracks to spill out from where he struck with his cudgel. A new record amongst all the other monstrous contestants to be certain.

He was asked if he wanted another try by the judge, but he simply snorted and turned to face the large figure of Bob who was standing in the row just over. The clear disdain and challenge in this slitted reptilian eyes were palpable for all to see.

It wasn't surprising that the Sinlore noble house was attempting to find trouble with us even here as they too had heard of the ultimatum we were given by the Executrix Lana and by extension the city lord - Nosferas. So by all means, it was clear from the get-go that they would do anything in their power to ensure that we did not succeed in placing high in the tournament.

Which was also evident by the jeers and hatred-filled stares we were shot by the group of Sinlore nobles just a few booths over.

Ever the hot-head that Mia was when being disregarded or badmouthed, she was gnashing her teeth in hot fury. But of course, that little shit-talk wouldn't incite her to actually lash out. Besides, Mia was confident in Bob's ability, so after a clear exchange of intent through a gaze, she finally piped down, reclining back into her seat.

Bob had just gotten instructions as clear as ever, so he squared up his posture when it was finally his turn. After the brief and obligatory explanation given by the judge of what he could and couldn't do, Bob, surprisingly enough, laid his massive Destroyer up against the weapon rack that groaned under the weight.

Seeing this, I couldn't help but smile. Usually, when it came to fighting and combat, any hint of goofiness and playfulness would disappear from the big brute; replaced with complete focus and seriousness. However now, that he had been so blatantly challenged and then encouraged by Mia to make those overgrown lizards eat dirt - he was going to make a damn show out of it.

Watching the lumbering Draugr put away his oversized weapon, the lizardmen were at first slightly stunned by this but only before bursting into a fit of ruckus laughter. They clearly didn't hold Bob in their eyes.

But wholly uncaring of the jests and jeering thrown at him from the sidelines, Bob squared up his stance, widening his shoulders and clenching his fist tight.

With a deep intake of air, Bob suddenly twisted his hip, using his feet on the ground to draw friction and momentum, then allowing that force to travel up and swivel to his shoulder through his torso.

Like a meteor, his fist blurred as the force traveling along his arm and into his fist was so great that the ordinary eye would be unable to perceive it at all.

The bang that resulted from his fist abruptly landing on the hard abyssal-black surface was arguably even louder than what the lizardman had produced with his weapon and caused a swoosh of air to billow outwards. This momentarily stunned the noblemen into silence, as well as the surrounding crowd of the plaza.

When he removed his fist, however, an even more subdued silence stretched out to suddenly be broken by the now much more hesitant laughter of the lizardmen nobles.

A crack, barely even perceptible was the only thing that had been left behind from Bob's attack. While the attack had appeared much more powerful than the Kroxigor's attack, the result was clearly much worse. Even the blue radiance of mana that had been given off by the rock was less than the lizard's.

But even so, Bob seemed utterly satisfied when his attempt as he inspected his knuckles with a contented smile. At this, I could only shake my head with a sigh at his theatrics. I knew exactly what he was doing and what he wanted to accomplish with that first swing.

Without missing a beat then, Bob walked back and picked up the massive weapon that had almost collapsed the weapon rack under its immense weight. Not needing affirmation, the judge simply got out of the way with a nod of his head.

Still laughing their heads off, the Lizardmen couldn't help but disdainfully ridicule the large grey monster. Of course, his punch had been impressive, but simply using a weapon couldn't possibly bridge the gap between the Kroxigor's result and his. Right?

That notion though was thoroughly destroyed though as the abyssal testing rock too was utterly destroyed, shattered into large fragments and shards that flew everywhere.

The suddenly wind-up and swing of Bob's massive weapon had completely decimated the rock that up-until now had stood firm against most other attacks. Although some of the many rocks lined up had been switched out for new rocks in more pristine conditions as the continuous attacks wore out the material even with the mana-infusion activite, none had as of yet managed to be actually destroyed.

Before now, no attempt had managed to transcend more than merely creating a large web of cracks onto its surface though.

There was more to this than just Bob being able to produce a lot of physical might, of course. One of those points being that he had, in fact, compromised the rock's integrity with his first unassuming attack. That initial punch had done a lot more than just smacking force into an object. And seeing as Bob was quite literally considered; The Destroyer, as appointed by the System itself, then including his already destructive passive skills, any of his attacks would sunder and rattle all they strike.

Once the crowd finally managed to come out of their stupor, they exploded into cheers. Even though these first tests were very basic in nature, any monster should be able to find joy in the basest things such as a might display of power. So it wasn't surprising how pumped-up the spectators were already.

However, one particular set of monsters definitely weren't all that jubilant, down-right shocked into incredulity. One of those damned lizards even attempted to reproach the judge in charge of that test, protesting that the weapon which Bob used, his Destroyer, was a magical artifact lending him power or some other nonsense.

This was a long stretch of course as all weapons had been thoroughly tested before being allowed to test with, but since it was a highly regarded noble house protesting, the judge could only assent and get Bob's weapon re-checked. But unsurprisingly so, the weapon came out completely valid for use and within the rules guidelines. Although created by magical means, it withheld not external power other than just its material value.

Shunned into silence by the jeers of the crowd now directed at them, the lizardman begrudgingly backed into silence in their booths, casting scathing glares at us whenever they got the opportunity.

While Bob held the record for a while, that didn't last as the contest went on. Before long, another challenger, this one a very powerful great orc, produced almost the same result as Bob. However, the last one was the contestant who took first place who came just after that great orc was the one who shocked everybody the most.

Effortlessly, the monster with a single kick had annihilated the testing rock. Although it was hard to estimate how much more power that was in that single kick, it was unquestionably more than what Bob and the great orc had managed to produce with their attacks.

But the most surprising factor here was that this was not the result of some overly powerful, on the cusp of C- rank, rather it was the meek D- Dragonnewt and supposedly former goblin's result.

While it was understandable that Bob with just his D- raking of power could produce his result when factoring in all his advantages, the fact that another monster of the same rank could even best him was mind-boggling.

Seeing as this was apparently one of the Sinlore's members or lackey, they finally broke out of their silence to once again jeer disdainfully at us. However, it definitely hadn't escaped my

notice that these Sinlore noblemen had been just as shocked by the results of this Dragonnewt as I, which only reinforced the idea that this Draz'ag was no official part of their household or at least very new to it.

These revelations reaffirmed that I had to investigate more into this curious monster as they were way too many unexplained mysteries about it.

Next up, was the test of Agility. This time, we didn't have any challengers for the category so we only watched on as the large obstacle course was put set-up in the main plaza. With the combined efforts of hundreds of monsters, it was quite a fast process, and within the hour, everything was ready and set to go.

Split up into different groups, large swathes of the challengers would attempt the course simultaneously. They would have to reach the end in the quickest time possible without being stopped altogether by the many monsters stationed to try and halt their progression, but also avoid the other contestants as they were allowed to attack and hindered each other's progression.

The entire show was quite interesting, and the top three fastest of the hundreds of challengers were quite a curious bunch.

One tribal patterned leopard lady, a tall plant-like creature of that mysterious Mandrake noble house, and what I supposed was a skink variant of the lizardman race.

Sleek and slender, this lizardman was quite different in appearance from the rather brawny and predatory look standard to lizardmen.

While the leopard beastkin came in third by having an innane amount of power and dexterity in those firm but slender limbs of hers, the plant-like monster came in second by using tendrils of roots and plants to hinder his competition and sling him along the course effortlessly.

The skink, however, was like a bolt of lightning as it flew through the course ahead of everybody else. Able to walk and crawl along any surface like it was the ground beneath,

then coupled with the fact that it had a mindboggling agility attribute of one-hundred-and-seventy-five, it was fair to say the little lizard was a fast bugger.