

Chapter 383-385: The War Game

The next two days flew by in a breeze. No monster hunting in the dungeon was allowed. Asahi took Astraea and Alise on dates in Maya's world. Kaguya also nagged him, calling him dear and showing off her 'engagement ring.' In the end, Asahi relented and promised to take her out later.

Maya got a deserved break from her academy. She explored Orario on a date. Saya also introduced herself to the Orario gang. Her fiery demeanor and her bloated belly became a hot topic among the adventurers of Astraea Familia. Shizuka had the easiest time mixing in with the adventurers with her casual, easygoing aura. Leme got the most attention with her Diva origin and her beauty. Yuriko only said a few polite words to the adventurers before she returned to her store. The woman had her priorities set for the moment, none of which related to the fantasy world of Orario.

Not now at least.

The daybreak signaled the arrival of the fated day. The War Game everyone waited for finally arrived. The city was brimming with excitement. The arena had yet to open, but the crowd jam-packed the space outside. The stalls set by merchants kept the adventurers and commoners from breaking into the arena. The seats were limited, and everyone wanted to be the person inside the arena. Hermes and other deities had taken the task to broadcast the match throughout the city with the 'Divine Mirror' spell. So, everyone could watch the War Game.

The VIPs were allowed to enter the arena through the backdoor. That's where Asahi and his group ran into Freya. She was alone this time, her face glowing with energy.

“Ready to be my tour guide~?”

Asahi grinned. “Ready to serve me?”

He had put the matter of Syr behind him. He couldn't care less if she wanted to live a 'normal' life as a waitress. He wasn't going to reveal her secret as long as she didn't do anything to Ryuu.

Freya suspiciously averted her eyes. “My children will win.”

“We shall see,” Asahi said with a shrug. “Let's get this started.”

His lovers cheered him up before taking their seats in the VIP section of the arena. The adventurers from Astraea Familia were absent from the bunch as Alise had taken all her savings to the bar. They were going to watch the match from the bar.

Asahi made his way towards the corridors, his instincts guiding him on the right path. He arrived before a closed giant door. The waiting room for the combatants. He could feel Ottar and other 'strong' presences behind a similar door.

(My love, let's chat until you are called.)

'Of course.'

A temporary stage had been set up in front of Guild Headquarters. The amazoness sisters Tiona and Tione beamed at the crowd, clutching a voice amplifier in their hands.

“Yahoo, everyone! Good morning~, it’s Tiona Hiryute from your favorite goddess Loki’s Familia! I’m gonna be giving insights into the fight today!”

Tione rolled her eyes. “This girl ain’t qualified for this job.”

The crowd burst into laughter.

“Hehe, I am more than qualified to talk about fights. Today, we are here to witness an event that will go down in the legends of Labyrinth City. It’s a battle none of us saw coming. One man standing against the greatest Freya Familia could offer.”

“Isn’t it Ottar against Astraea Familia?” an adventurer asked with a puzzled face. “We were duped?”

Everyone in the crowd had the same concern. Most left their job just so they could watch the King crush the entire gang of Astraea Familia including Asahi.

“You guys are in for a treat~.” Tiona winked playfully. “A big treat.”

“Let’s not waste any time. Hermes-sama, if you please.”

Hermes, who was standing near the stage with Asfi, nodded his head.

“Well then, Ouranos, do we have the permission?”

“You may,” Ouranos’ response spread throughout the city, each word stirring people’s hearts.

With the permission to use Arcanum, Hermes and other deities got to work.

People gaped in amazement as hundreds of screens emerged in every part of the city. The excitement level doubled, perhaps quadrupled at the divine power of the deities.

Asahi entered the arena and grinned at the crowd. His smug face immediately got loud jeers from the male side of the crowd. His reputation was already at the bottom among the male. It became even worse when people realized Asahi will be fighting against the entire Freya Familia.

“That, our friend, is Asahi Marikawa,” Tiona introduced Asahi to the crowd. “The Noble Rookie, the Charming Prince of Far East, and Lux Lanceam. He goes by many aliases.”

“The fastest adventurer to level up in Orario’s history.” Tiona took over in a neutral, almost cold voice. “Never underestimate him or his lovers. It’s my advice to everyone.”

“And entering from the other side is Ottar! The King! The Level 7 everyone is excited to see today!”

Ottar threw his Supreme Black Sword over his shoulder. He only gave a glance at the crowd before focusing his gaze on Asahi.

Four small figures came out of the giant door. A bronze armor and a helmet were worn by the four identical pallums. The first brother wielded an axe, the second a hammer, the third a spear, and the fourth a greatsword.

“The Bringar!” Tiona shouted excitedly. “The Gulliver Brothers of Freya Familia. I once watched them fight an earth dragon. Their teamwork is so flawless and impeccable, I thought the four brothers were one unit.”

“They were wanted by the Guild years ago,” Tiona sneakily added a fact as she watched more combatants joining Ottar’s side. “The dark elf Dainsleif and the elf Hildrsleif. The White and Black Knights. The most brutal magic swordsmen of this era.”

“Ne, Tione, I heard a rumor that Lady Freya wanted them so badly that she caused a war between the White Elves and the Dark Elves. Is it true?”

Tione nodded her head. “Lady Freya is a scary woman.”

“These are all the adventurers Asahi will be fighting today. One against seven. The odds heavily favor Ottar’s side.”

“If he is a level 2 as his guild record says, the winner is already decided.”

“If is a big word, sister. Hehe, did I sound wise?” Tiona giggled.

The talk between the sisters didn’t matter to the male crowd, who happened to be more vocal.

Meanwhile, in the VIP section, Hephaestus and Astraea observed the arena with little to no emotion on their faces, but the brown-skinned woman besides Hephaestus was anything but silent. She was a woman with an eyepatch on her left eye and long black hair.

She tugged at Hephaestus’ shirt. As old as the woman looked, one would almost think she was a child by the way she gleefully smiled.

Tsubaki Collbrande, Cyclops, a level 5 adventurer from Hephaestus Familia. Strips of white cotton tightly wrapped her well-endowed chest. A simple red hakama covered her lower body.

“Hey, hey, my goddess. Is that cute boy really strong?”

Tsubaki’s clients had mentioned Asahi’s name more than a few times in the last month, praising his talent again and again. She didn’t think of it as a big deal until this War Game.

Hephaestus sighed. “You should watch his strength with your own eyes.”

“Then if that boy loses, you’ll hug me.”

Tsubaki was always around the scorching flames of the forge. It made her appreciate human warmth more. Hugging Hephaestus, who always carried a pleasant warmth, always made her giddy.

Hephaestus revealed a smile. "What if he wins?"

"I'll hug you." Tsubaki grinned. "Fair enough?"

Hephaestus' brow twitched. "You'll take a day off."

Tsubaki herself was more than aware of Hephaestus' concerns. She was in her late thirties, but there were no signs of her finding a partner any time soon. The half-dwarf Tsubaki was picky with only that aspect of her life.

"Challenge accepted," Tsubaki readily agreed with the bet.

At that moment in the arena, loud bells signaled the start of the contest.

As soon as the bells rang, Ottar rushed at Asahi with his greatsword, stirring clouds of dust behind him. His muscles bulged, and he smashed down his greatsword.

"Perish!" Ottar roared at the top of his lungs.

His massive sword once crushed Goliath's skull; now the same sword came down on Asahi's head like a roaring tsunami.

"Not so easy," Asahi said with a cheeky smile and grabbed the greatsword right before it touched his hair. His toned arms were like thin sticks compared to the massive greatsword.

The crowd awaited a gruesome death once the dust settled. Alas, the sight of Asahi blocking Ottar's stunned the entire arena.

“Heavens, he blocked it!” Tsubaki’s yell tore through the silence. “He blocked Ottar’s supreme black sword.”

Ottar’s usually stern face collapsed for a moment. Admiration was clear on his face as he observed his foe. “I underestimated you.”

He was always told that gods had feeble bodies, but their ability to use Arcanum put them beyond the realm of mortals. He didn’t expect Asahi to be that different.

Ottar fortified his stance and pressed down the greatsword on Asahi. “What are you waiting for?”

Ottar’s comrades sprang into action. The former dark elf king, Hogni Ragnar, immediately darted at Asahi. His sinister black sword slashed Asahi’s arm.

Hogni’s fingers become numb at the contact. Without showing much surprise, he performed another dozen slashes in the span of a moment. When that didn’t work out, the dark elf quietly retreated to Ottar’s side.

“Physical attacks cannot conquer this evil,” the dark elf whispered, his choice of words akin to a chuunibyou.

“You gotta be fucking with me,” cursed Alfrigg, the eldest pallum brother. “Darkie can’t hurt him. Brothers, let’s smash his pretty nose.”

“Aye!”

“Aye!”

“Aye!”

Four childish figures split the battlefield with their straightforward charge. A spear, a hammer, a sword, and a hammer respectively assaulted Asahi from four sides. If it was any other adventurer, they would be crushed

to death in that instant. Asahi, however, pushed back Ottar with a kick before snatching the weapons from the Gulliver Brother.

Asahi spun the weapons around with telekinesis before crushing them. “Geez, kids shouldn’t play with these.”

The crowd only saw Asahi kicking Ottar. The rest was a blur to their low perceptive eyes. But Tiona saw it all, so did the high-level adventurers among the crowd.

“Asahi disarmed the Gulliver Brothers!” Tiona shouted with a red face. “He destroyed their weapons! They are stunned. What are they gonna do now?”

The Gulliver Brothers clenched their fists, their faces red under the helms. Not only did Asahi steal Freya’s attention away from them. Now, he humiliated them by calling them ‘kids.’

“You.”

“Are.”

“Asking.”

“For death!”

The four brothers had plenty of experience with hand-to-hand fighting. Filled with anger, they didn’t seem to realize the difference between their strength. By the time Ottar got to his feet after the kick, the brothers had already begun their assault on Asahi.

“It’s a fistfight!” Tiona continued her attempts to revive the dead silent crowd. “Completely unfair.”

No punches slipped past Asahi’s extreme perception.

The former white elf king, Hedin, adjusted his glasses and clutched his rhomphaia, a long staff with blades on both sides. It was first-class equipment that boosted magical power and cut through enemies.

“Fight eternally, indestructible soldiers of lightning!”

“Move!” Ottar roared his order.

The brothers tried to retreat. Asahi grinned and squeezed their delicate bodies with telekinesis. Hedin’s quick chant called numerous lightning strikes down on Asahi as well as the Gulliver Brothers. He endured the magical attack without any difficulty, but the same couldn’t be said about the Gulliver Brothers. The shock stunned them for a couple of seconds.

Asahi moved in and kicked Alfrigg, who was standing at the forefront. Each brother received a kick in the gut and flew back to the gate they entered from.

“Four down, three to go.” Asahi summoned the Spear of Leonidas and beckoned the three opponents left in the arena. “Come at me together.”

His arrogant words broke the silence, stirring the crowd in a not-so-positive way.

“A level 2 adventurer defeated first-class adventurers.”

“This is fake.”

“It has to be acting.”

“He is a level 2.”

The adventurers in the crowd refused to believe anything. The deities watching from all over Orario were equally shocked.

Of course, the uproar didn't come in the way of the fight. Hogni and Hedin shared a glance, coming to a mutual understanding.

"Ottar, Hogni, keep him busy," Hedin said as he prepared to cast another spell. They were fighting a monster who had absurdly high physical resistance. Magic spells were their best bet against someone like Asahi.

'I can't let my lady become a servant,' Hedin gritted his teeth. The goddess had shown him a path out of the elven kingdom. She made him realize he can live without being a tyrant. Now was the time to repay that favor and prove his loyalty.

Hogni pulled up his cloak to cover his face. "Unleash, king of the magic sword. Compensation of reason, offering of fresh blood. Until the end of the banquet. Slaughter."

Dainsleif, a magic spell that strengthened Hogni's aggressive nature. He rarely used it since it awakened the 'evil' within him.

Ottar and Hogni clashed with Asahi. The greatsword and the magic sword desperately tried to create a single wound on Asahi's body. Asahi blocked each attack with little to no effort as though trying to crush their hope with his sheer confidence.

The entire arena trembled as though behemoths were clashing instead of three adventurers.

'We have to win.'

Ottar recalled the day Freya picked up from the street. He was dying, but Freya accepted him and sheltered him. She had been essentially his mother since that day. How could he call himself a man if he allowed his mother-like goddess to become a maid?

“Take this.” Ottar pulled out every bit of strength his body had and swung his greatsword.

The impact staggered Asahi for two steps. Hedin’s devastating lightning struck at that moment. Hogni appeared behind Asahi and thrust his hand forward.

“By the power of the demon blade, bring eternal destruction. Burn Dain!”

An eruption of flame poured from Hegni’s outthrust right arm. It was a short-range explosive fire spell, but in exchange, it had been honed to have a destructive force capable of incinerating countless enemies within its area of effect. The black magic circle at Hogni’s feet caused the crimson blaze to flash even brighter.

If that wasn’t enough, Ottar also began to chant a magic spell. To overcome the monster stopping his goddess from spreading her wings.

“Silver moon’s mercy and the golden plains. I offer this body to the lord of battle.”

It wasn’t a spell that focused on harnessing the power of elements. The spell simply amplified his destructive power to its limits. His current strength could cripple a level 8 adventurer. With Crush skill amplifying his physical attacks, Ottar held his greatsword and brought it down on Asahi.

Freya’s strongest warriors launched their strongest attack at the same time, showing no mercy to the man who disrespected their goddess.

Ottar knew Asahi would dodge his attack, but he didn’t dodge the magic spells. Roaring flames scorched his back and the frightening lightning strikes fell on top of him.

The spectators and deities also believed the contest to be over.

“My clothes, damn.” As though living to betray people’s expectations, Asahi emerged from the smokescreen in nothing but ragged pants. “Luckily I made my pants more durable in the morning.”

The combined attack of two of the strongest mages in Orario had surpassed his expectations.

Nobody laughed at his current state. They didn’t dare utter a single word. Even though the ladies felt like some saliva was leaking from the corner of their mouths, they said nothing.

“It was my strongest spell.” Despair was written all over Hedin’s face. “Not a scratch.”

Hogni’s eyes sharpened. “Impossible...”

Ottar’s face was gloomy, but he said nothing.

‘How weak. How feeble. I can’t accomplish my goddess’ will with this pathetic body.’

He recalled the days the Empress used to beat him up for training him. Back then he wasn’t the strongest man in Orario. Even so, facing Asahi at his current status seemed harder than fighting Empress all those years back.

“I have no choice.”

Ottar tossed his blade aside and bent forward. His boar ears twitched, growing bigger. A feral glint arose in his eyes as his fangs grew to the point they protruded out of his mouth. His colossal figure expanded even more.

His status evolved further, putting an extreme burden on him. But he didn’t care about himself right now.

“I’ll take you down. Even if it costs me my life.”

Asahi acknowledged his opponent’s resolve with a nod. That didn’t put a brake on his determination to win.

“Well then, come at me.”

Ottar rushed at Asahi, his speed even faster than Ais. His wild instincts got the better of him in this state. A barrage of unpredictable, violent attacks came at Asahi. If Asahi had fought Ottar when he came to Orario a month ago, he would have lost. The force behind Ottar’s punch made him tickle, but that wouldn’t be the case for him a month ago. He would have a hard time predicting Ottar’s brutal wave of punches.

Though, he had no problems getting into a prolonged fight with Ottar.

“Beastification,” Tsubaki muttered in the crowd. “Ottar is serious.”

Astraea looked at Hephaestus. “We’re the good guys here, right?”

Hephaestus replied with a wry smile, “Your man comes off as evil... even though he is defending his freedom.”

Freya walked over to Astraea’s side, receiving a smile from Grayfia by Astraea’s side.

“We all know how this is going to end,” Astraea said. “Freya?”

Freya stared at Asahi. “If he is this strong, what’s his purpose in Orario?”

People rarely remembered that Freya was a goddess of war on top of being a goddess of beauty. With her keen eyes, she easily saw the disparity between Asahi and Ottar’s group. It wasn’t even a contest. Asahi had only

attacked a few times in the contest as though he was toying with hopes. Everything would end as soon as he went on offense.

Hephaestus put a hand on Freya's shoulder. "He came for monsters in the dungeon to improve... how he ended up adding Astraea and her Familia to his harem is beyond me."

"I don't know how this happened..." Astraea shook her head. "I'm just glad it happened."

Ottar's violent mind grew as the battle progressed. He was fighting for the sake of satisfying his feral urges. Freya knew that this battle would break Ottar's body, but she didn't put a stop on it. Ottar was determined to fight for her.

Before Ottar went full berserk, Asahi shoved his knee in Ottar's stomach before throwing punches that bloomed shockwaves in their wake. Even though his body hurt, Ottar held onto his consciousness, growling like a wounded beast.

The people of Orario were heartbroken to see their hero in this state. They cheered for him, hoping their words would give him strength to overcome the demon king. The demon king in question trampled on their dreams by knocking the daylight out of Ottar.

Ottar fell down and returned to his normal form. The immovable fortress had fallen. The Gulliver brothers dragged their bodies out of the gate and stared at Asahi with eyes filled with rage.

"As long as I have breath, I shall fight," The dark elf declared and tried to accomplish what his leader couldn't.

A punch from Asahi knocked him out. Asahi looked at the white elf, whose face was more handsome than most gods out there.

“You want some?”

His leader laid wounded on one side, his twin knight knocked out on another. The Gulliver Brothers were in no shape to fight any more. He himself used most of magical power in his last spell. Could his blade even do anything after what he had seen?

“It’s hopeless.” Hedin dropped his staff and fell to his knees. “I failed my lady.”

Alfrigg took off his helm and let it drop. The loud clang announced the end of the War Game.

“It’s over...” Tione said. “Asahi Marikawa has defeated the Pride of Folkvangr.”