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Chapter 1171 A shocking battle erupted at the Drake family's ancestral ground, which ranked first in the eight prominent families.

According to information provided by the Drake family...

The ancestral ground where their elders lived had been attacked by a group of blackrobed people. These people were extremely powerful, and they utilized extremely bizarre methods. Although the Drake family had managed to drive the attackers off, the elders were all suffering from injuries of various degrees.

At the same time, the Drake family had requested the return of their core senior members, who were situated in various parts of the Royal Region.

The Royal Region erupted into a frenzy when the news went public.

The Drake family's power was different from the others. After all, they ranked first amongst the eight prominent families. The other families' powers were nothing when compared to the Drake family. Moreover, the Drake family was the only one among the eight prominent families that had backup warriors who were Infinity Rankers.

They had such immense power, so how did anyone even dare attack them?

Instantly... Everyone in the Royal Region went on high alert. Things had started with the Grim family getting quietly eliminated, and then the head of the Callisto family had willingly given up his place and allowed a youngster to take over. Now, even the Drake family had been attacked.

It had taken only about a month for these three major events to happen in succession at the Royal Region. The Callisto family's events could be easily explained. After all, it was something that had occurred within the family. However, the Grim family's elimination and the Drake family's attack indicated a high chance of a major change occurring in the Royal Region. Meanwhile, the Milky Way Empire had not even made an appearance. It caused some people to begin forming theories.

Many were even speculating that the Empire was behind these incidents.

However, that assumption seemed wrong once they delved deeper into the theory.

If the Empire was behind the incidents, there was no way the Drake family would have survived. They would have vanished without a trace just like the Grim family had.

Moreover, the Empire had no reason to attack the Drake family. Even so, if the Empire was not the mastermind behind the scenes, why had they not stepped forward?

After all, the Empire was the most powerful body within the Milky Way. They had full power to control and maintain order within the Milky Way. When citizen planets were destroyed in the past, the Empire would send people over to conduct investigations even if the planet was not within the Royal Region. However, this time, everyone noticed that something was amiss.

The Empire had not done a single thing.

There were only three possible explanations. The first was that the Empire was behind the incidents, or they had given tacit approval to another organization to carry it out. The second was that the Empire was maintaining its silence because they were up against another organization that held more power than them. The third was that the Empire was preparing to deliver a fatal blow.

However, no matter which one of those possibilities was true, what had happened to the Grim family and the Drake family had already caused panic to wash over the Royal Region.

The powerful organizations began reducing the territories they presided over.

Additionally, they requested the return of their higher–ups and ensured everyone was gathered together on their main planet.

This way, it would also be easier for them to deal with any sudden incidents. What if they were the black-robed people's next target?

No one could tell for sure.

The entire Royal Region could sense that something was about to happen. Even the trading planets, which were usually bustling with noise and excitement, turned quiet. The people next—in—line to be heads of the prominent families had all been asked to return home.

Many money–squandering establishments boarded their doors shut after losing their biggest customers, opting to wait until the storm passed before they made their next move.

An economic depression began taking shape in the Royal Region. Many planets even closed their borders and refused entry to travelers.

This domino effect was a result of what had happened to the Grim family and the Drake family.

The Royal Region and Planet Royal were the core of the Milky Way Empire. Planet Royal was also the largest living planet in the Milky Way Empire. At that very moment, in a lavish mansion situated upon Planet Royal...

Princess Astrid looked bored as she stared out the window.

Life after returning to Planet Royal was so dull.

Princess Astrid missed the days she spent listening to David tell stories of his explorations. If she ever got the chance...

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Chapter 1172 She truly hoped for a chance to go on an expedition with David. If that ever happened, it would definitely be a thrilling and unforgettable experience.

However, her identity meant that her wish would never come true.

Things had been slightly better when she had first returned to Planet Royal.

Every day, the older boys dropped by to have a chat and spend time with her.

However, they had gotten busier over the past few days, and did not have time to accompany her anymore.

Everyone in the Royal Palace seemed to have a nervous look on their faces. Princess Astrid had not seen her father except on the day she returned home.

She knew that everyone was busy with the Sangruil Sinners.

The Sangruil Sinners had made an aggressive appearance this time, and there was no doubt of a massive war between them and the Empire.

Her father, brothers, and uncles were all busy coming up with ways to deal with the Sangruil Sinners.

To be honest, Princess Astrid was grateful for the Sangruil Sinners' appearance. If they had not appeared, she would never have met David. If that were the case, she would still be peacefully journeying through the different planets before she returned to Planet Royal and continued living life as she always had. Now, after David's entrance into her life, it felt as if someone had thrown a rock and created ripples in her previously calm life.

She initially had nothing to look forward to in her life, but now she did.

She hoped David would fulfill his promise as soon as possible and visit her at Planet Royal.

However, her gratitude had limits.

Princess Astrid did not want the evil Sangruil Sinners to win, nor did she want her father, brothers, and uncles to get hurt. She hoped her father would drive them away as quickly as possible, and that the people of the Royal Region could live in peace once more.

After staring out the window for some time, Princess Astrid got up and walked to another room. She sat in front of a dulcimer, placed her hands upon it, and began plucking the strings with her nimble fingers.

Melodious notes rang out.

Sadly, there were no people other than a few servants nearby.

Which meant only a few people got to hear the beautiful melodies she created.

After all, Princess Astrid was the Harp Fairy.

She had not been given the title simply because she was a princess. It was because the melodies she created with the dulcimer were truly enchanting and enthralling Princess Astrid did not get up after she finished playing the piece. Instead, she recalled the piece she had performed for David. Besides her father and brothers, David was the first man who had gotten to watch her perform in private. Yes, that probably counted as a first!

Unfortunately, there were so many other firsts that she did not have enough time to dedicate them all to David.

She wondered when he would have time to visit Royal Planet again.

'He promised me.

"So, he'll come, right?

'He will come.

'I'll never forgive him if he doesn't come. 'I'll get Father to arrest him and make him his son–in–law. 'But will that displease him?

'Who cares, he can be displeased for all I care!

'He refuses to come to visit me anyway.

'I don't care if he's happy or not!'

Princess Astrid thought to herself.

When the sounds of Princess Astrid's playing stopped, a servant appeared at the entrance. Upon seeing Her Royal Highness staring into space... She did not dare interrupt her and merely stood nearby waiting. Her Royal Highness had begun staring at nothing ever since she returned from her trip. Often, she would spend entire mornings staring into space. Sometimes, she would even laugh out loud. Her Royal Highness had never acted this way in the past. Her friends were all wondering if Her Royal Highness had been cursed.

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Chapter 1173

Shades of red immediately appeared on Princess Astrid's face when she returned from her trip down memory lane and noticed there was someone at the door.

Upon noticing the princess was no longer lost in thought, the servant said respectfully, "The Empress requests your presence, Your Royal Highness."

"Mother wants me? Alright, got it, you may leave!" Princess Astrid answered.

"Yes, Your Royal Highness!"

The servant left after she finished speaking.

Princess Astrid stood and walked toward the Empress's quarters.

She arrived at another luxurious building after making her way through beautiful gardens and corridors.

"Your Royal Highness!" the servants standing at the building's entrance said as they bowed in greeting

"Where is my mother?" Princess Astrid asked.

"The Empress is fish–watching, Your Royal Highness! I will escort you to her right now."

"That's alright. I can go on my own!"

Princess Astrid did not wait for a reply before she made her way through the building and arrived at a man-made pond.

An elegant–looking woman was feeding the fish inside the pond.

Upon taking a closer look, one would see that the woman's features were similar to Princess Astrid's.

However, her older age made her seem more mature and seductive.

Meanwhile, Princess Astrid seemed more youthful.

However, if the two were to stand side—by—side, they could easily pass as sisters.

The woman, who resembled Princess Astrid in appearance was the Milky Way Empire Emperor's first wife – Gamora Libra.

She also held the title of "Mother of Planet Royal".

Her position in the empire was high, and she had a lot of power as well.

Additionally, Gamora had been born in Lunar Palace, which housed one of the two most powerful families in the Milky Way Empire.

Her mentor was an elder who was at Peak Infinity Ranker.

Thus, it could be said that Gamora Libra was the most powerful woman in the Milky Way Empire.

"Mother!" Princess Astrid called out happily after seeing the woman.

"Astrid, you're here! Hurry over," Gamora said, smiling as she looked up.

Princess Astrid hurried over, and upon arriving next to Gamora, asked, "Mother, how did you find the time to feed the fish today? Has Father left the premises?"

Lately, the emperor, Nimbus had gone into seclusion.

Which meant Gamora had been in charge of making decisions that concerned the Milky Way Empire.

Although the various institutions of the Milky Way Empire were up and running, there were still plenty of decisions that required the emperor's sign—off.

Since the emperor was not present, it was up to Gamora to fulfill these responsibilities.

This meant that Gamora had no time to accompany Princess Astrid because of how busy she

was.

"Yes! Your father has left the premises, and he's currently in a meeting with the princes and ministers. I can finally catch a break. I've been exhausted recently, and have neglected you, Astrid. Now that your father is in charge of overseeing the empire's affairs once more, I can spend more time with you," Gamora said, a loving smile on her face as she took Princess Astrid's hand.

"It's alright, Mother! I understand you have important matters to attend to, I'll be alright."

"I'm a woman and have no interest in getting involved with men's affairs. I merely had no other choice when your father went into seclusion, but since he's back in action, I can withdraw and watch from a distance."

"Mother, has everyone been preoccupied with the Sangruil Sinners recently?" Princess Astrid asked.

"That's something for your father, brothers, and the ministers to worry about, Astrid. You don't have to worry about them. The Sangruil Sinners are a bunch of clowns who can't accomplish much," Gamora said comfortingly.

"I was just curious! The Sangruil Sinners haven't done anything for several hundred years, which means they must have made ample preparations before their sudden appearance in the Milky Way. I think there's an ulterior motive behind their return and that Father and everyone involved should proceed with caution."

"They might be prepared, but the empire has not been resting on its laurels for the past several hundred years. Besides, he's your father, so what do you have to worry about? Everything will be taken care of with him here. All we need to do is cheer him on from the sidelines," Gamora said.

"Alright! I understand, mother. I'm sure father will drive these evil Sangruil Sinners out from the Milky Way." Princess Astrid began feeding the fish in the pond after she finished speaking. These fish were no ordinary fish. Each one was as colorful as a rainbow, and they looked gorgeous.

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Chapter 1174 The rainbow fish were not just eye candy.

Their value was in their flesh. Not only was it fresh and tender, but consuming it was helpful for cultivation.

Whenever rainbow fish were seen at auctions, countless people would go crazy trying to purchase them, and they would always end up being sold at an exorbitantly high price.

Meanwhile, there were over a hundred of the aforementioned rainbow fish in the pond.

Princess Astrid was focused on feeding the fish and did not notice the sad look that had briefly appeared in Gamora's eyes.

She had only been trying to comfort her daughter just now.

Her daughter was right. The Sangruil Sinners had made ample preparations and were making aggressive advances.

Many massive incidents had occurred in the Royal Region recently. The Grim family's downfall and the Drake family getting attacked all indicated the Sangruil Sinners were making a return

This time, it would not be as easy for the empire to win as they had expected.

Most importantly, Gamora's husband, whom she thought was invincible, had been gravely injured by the Sangruil Sinners' king.

Although Wilfred was assisting in his healing, he still had not fully recovered even after more than a month.

The Sangruil Sinners' king had sustained injuries that were even more severe, but Gamora did not view that as good news.

In Gamora's eyes, her husband, Nimbus Barlowe, was the most powerful person in the Milky Way. He was invincible.

Even so, he had been gravely injured. This meant the empire would not be able to get rid of the Sangruil Sinners easily. They were well—prepared, and they would be going head—to—head against the empire. Gamora could not help but worry for her husband's safety after he had been so gravely injured.

However, these were grown-up matters, and there was no point in her telling Astrid these things when she was still young, and a girl at that. They would only make her worry even more.

Thus, Gamora did not tell her the truth.

Astrid tossed the fish food into the air, and a rainbow fish jumped out of the water to fight for the food.

The fish looked like carp leaping through the dragon's gate. It was a beautiful sight to behold. "Mother! Here, toss some too," Astrid said. The two began feeding the fish.

Soon after, Gamora said, "Astrid!"

"Huh? What is it, mother?" Astrid asked.

"I heard that you've been staring into space lately, and that you often spend entire mornings doing so." "Huh? Uh... no, when did I do that?" "What do you mean by no? Do you know what the people are saying about you behind your

back?"

"What are they saying?"

"They're saying that the royal princess has been staring dazed so much that it looks like she was cursed after her return."

"Those blasted girls. I'm going to teach them a lesson!" Astrid said angrily as she puffed her cheeks.

Although that was what she had said, she would not do anything drastic to her servants.

Princess Astrid's servants were so close to her that they were practically sisters. They knew Astrid well, which was why they dared gossip about her behind her back. They would never have dared do so if they were serving someone cruel. "So, tell me, what are you thinking of when you're zoning out?" Gamora asked, a smile on her face.

"N–nothing much, I was merely thinking of... the beautiful sights I saw on my trip. They were sights you'd never see on Planet Royal," Astrid answered nervously.

"Is that so?"

Gamora had a slight smile on her face as she gazed at Astrid.

"Y–yes, that's right!"

Astrid noticed Gamora staring at her when she finished speaking.

She sounded slightly nervous as she asked, "Mother, why... Why are you staring at me? Do I have something on my face?"

"No, you don't have anything on your face. But you have something here," Gamora said as she smiled and pointed at where her heart was.

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Chapter 1*17*5 "What could there be?" Astrid asked, a confused look on her face. "If I'm not mistaken, you've got someone on your mind."

"Who?"

"A man!"

Astrid was stunned. She looked down at her chest. "Ah!!!"

She let out a scream when she understood what her mother meant.

"M–m–mother, w–w–what are you talking about?" Astrid asked as she blushed furiously.

Her stuttering showed the nervousness she felt. "You're still denying it? You've been nervous ever since I started asking you questions, Astrid. I gave birth to you. Did you think I won't know what you're thinking of?" Gamora asked teasingly

"M-mother, I-I really am not..."

The blush on Astrid's face had traveled down to her neck.

"Astrid, you're at the age when you start having romantic feelings, and it's only natural for you to have a crush. I felt the same when I met your father. But I'm just curious, what sort of man has you missing him so much to the point where you spend half a day thinking of him? Can you tell me?"

"M–mother, I… I…" Astrid stuttered, unable to form a sentence even after a long while had passed.

Her thoughts were still muddled.

She felt extremely nervous and uneasy that someone else knew of the secret she had kept most closely to herself.

It was difficult for her to come to terms with it, even though that person was her mother, the person closest to her.

Of course, what Astrid was most worried about now was whether her mother would forbid this behavior.

After all, she had such a sensitive identity.

Meanwhile, David was an adventurer.

Astrid had been looking up information on David ever since returning to Royal Planet. However, there had been no powerful family with the last name Lidell in the past dozen years, and there was no one who fit David's identity either. Astrid knew David was probably from a less powerful family or organization, and despite his

powerful skills cultivated from his many years of exploration, he did not have enough power to support himself.. Astrid had been born into royalty, and she knew how powerful families functioned.

Their families had to be an even match if they wanted to get married.

Even her mother, the Empress, had been one of Lunar Palace's single women.

Thus, Astrid was terrified her mother would forbid what she was doing.

"Don't worry, Astrid. Your father and I will not stop you as long as it's someone you like. We aren't particular about the families being a good match either. After all, the whole of the Milky Way Empire is under our rule. Who else could be a match for that? But you'll have to at least let us know what he's like, don't you? You're still young, and we're worried you might get conned."

When Gamora finished speaking, she paused in thought for a while before she continued," Also, you grew up with your father and brothers present, and they were your role models. I'm really curious about what powers this man had to make you continue thinking of him even after your return."

Astrid heaved a sigh of relief upon hearing Gamora say that. She knew she would not be able to avoid this.

Thus, she decided to tell her mother the truth.

She told Gamora everything, beginning from when David rescued her to when they separated. When Astrid finished her story, Gamora remained silent for a while before

asking, "Astrid, how old is this David that you're speaking of?" "He looks young. I don't think he's over two hundred," Astrid replied cautiously.

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Chapter 1176 "To be able to so easily deal with the beginner Celestial rank Sangruil Sinners, he should have power close to that of a mid–ranker. To possess such combat power at this age, this David is indeed worthy of the title the Chosen One, even when compared to the rest of the Royal Region." "Really? Don't you think David amazing, Mother? I do as well," Astrid said happily. She was naturally delighted when she heard her mother praise her sweetheart. However, Gamora changed the subject then and said, "Except that, while David is good, there is still a certain distance between him and your father and the two older brothers. You are likely very are fond of him now because he had abruptly appeared to save you when you were at your most desperate. You will slowly forget him after a while."

The smile on Astrid's face immediately stiffened.

"Mother, David saving me is one reason, but what made me like him more is how I feel when I am with him. I like listening to his interesting stories from his adventures, I like playing the piano for him. I will not forget him no matter how much time passes," Astrid said solemnly.

Seeing Astrid's solemn expression, Gamora shook her head. Smiling, she said, "Alright, alright! You don't need to get so agitated, Astrid. I was just sharing a possibility. Since you like him so much, have your father introduce David to the Royal Region after the matter with the Sangruil Sinners has been resolved. If he dares not come, have your father bring him back in chains."

"Mother...you...you tease me," Astrid said shyly, covering her face. Gamora and Astrid continued to chat and laugh. There was, however, another thought in mind.

Could David's appearance be a setup?

A trap set up by the Sangruil Sinners.

With the purpose of breaking into the Barlowes.

They could collude with forces in and out to attack the Barlowes in one fell swoop.

If not, why was it such a coincidence?

That a powerful, young man would suddenly appear to save Astrid during her most desperate moments when she was facing the Sangruil Sinners.

Most importantly, this person had just returned after exploring the outside for decades. Not even the Royal Region could find out about his origins. This was rather intriguing.

Astrid was at an age defined by innocence, and she did not have the ability to discern anything.

The Sangruil Sinners could have had David appear at this time because they wanted him to exploit this fact.

Gamora felt that this was very possible after giving it some thought. It was just that she could not tell Astrid about it now yet.

Based on her display just now, she had likely been so thoroughly brainwashed that she would not possibly believe it. It might even affect their personal relationship. Goodness! It was hard to shelter a girl forever! Even so, she had to figure out something.

Otherwise, this girl might sink deeper and deeper into ther feelings. There was still a chance to save her since they had not been in contact for a long time.

To do this, she would have to get David to Planet Royal.

"Astrid, what is David doing now? Why don't you invite him to Planet Royal? He saved you. As your parents, your father and I would like to thank him personally," Gamora said. "Mother, I invited David, but he said he had something to attend to so he couldn't come for the time being. But he promised me that he would come look for me at Planet Royal after he was done with his business," Astrid replied.

"Is that so? Are you two still in contact now?"

"Rarely, also... and I'm afraid that if I chase after him every day, he will be annoyed with me, so I usually only talk to him for a bit after every few days," Astrid said with her head lowered.

Finished! They were finished!

When Gamora saw Astrid's appearance, she knew it was over. It was now crucial that David come to Planet Royal. This was so that they could determine his identity. If he was a Sangruil Sinner, they would not go easy on him.

If he was not, then he could join them.

Otherwise, who knew what fuss this girl would throw?