

After The End 20

The Beginning After The End, Chapter 20: Proclamation

Xyrus Academy, an institution hailed as the most exalted sanctuary for any of the would-be-mages privileged enough to have both the background and talent to enter. There were several other academies scattered throughout the Kingdom of Sapin, but needless to say, the level between those second-rate schools and Xyrus was insurmountable.

That was the kind of titan Xyrus Academy was. Those who qualified to graduate from this academy were guaranteed a prosperous future and life. It was rumored that the top graduates could even become honored guards, instructors or military leaders for the Royal Family, for the King of the entire race of humans on this continent. Of course, some choose to go the more humble route and focused on research by joining one of the mage guilds. However, it wasn't an exaggeration to say that students of Xyrus Academy were hailed as the true elites, even among nobles.

Now, here I was, standing in front of the said academy's Director. Normally, any eight-year-old—hell, any person—would be ecstatic to be in the presence of someone so affluent, but I couldn't help let out an expression of annoyance at the unexpected guest.

She was a very tall lady, standing around 1.7 meters, well above the average for the females here. She held herself in a very upright, poised manner. She wore a simple, yet elegant robe of navy blue, laced with gold threading. She sported a conjurer's hat, an accessory that looked like an oversized traffic cone that amplified the absorption rate of the surrounding mana but oftentimes came with other functions. Strapped to the side of her robe was a wand that was a crystalline white color with a fluorescent gem attached. Even my ignorant eyes could tell that this wand was extremely valuable. Surprisingly, her face had very soft features that reminded me more of a friendly grandmother next door than an all-important figure of power, but the aura she had around her made her seem fairy-like; her wrinkles unable to mask the attractive face that she had. The crow's feet etched on the outer ends of her brown eyes actually amplified the attractiveness of her smile when she introduced herself.

"Nice to finally meet you, Arthur," She said holding her hand out.

What was I supposed to do in this situation? Was I supposed to shake it or is someone of power like her expecting me to kiss her hand or something?

I just went with the safe route and shook her hand.

"Err... Nice to meet you too, Director."

The Director seemed a little taken aback by my introduction.

"Arthur! You're being rude! I'm so sorry for my son, Director Goodsky. He just returned home and is ignorant about formal customs." My mother pushed my head down with her hand while bowing herself, getting on one knee.

Apparently, when meeting someone of high standing, it was customary to get on one knee and shake the hand, while bowing.

How stupid.

“Kukuku, no it is quite all right. No offense taken at all. And please, Arthur, call me Cynthia.” She let out a polite laugh with her free hand covering her mouth.

“I’m sorry to intrude on you at such a late time but unfortunately, the only free time I could make was after my meeting tonight. I hope you don’t mind,” she explained, looking at my parents.

“Nonono, we’re thankful that you’d be willing to take the time out just to visit our son.” My father was the one to speak this time.

By the amount of formality I had started wondering if this granny could compare to Grandpa Virion.

Director Cynthia nodded at this. “True, it isn’t very often that I take a house trip to visit a potential student. Otherwise, even with a hundred bodies, I wouldn’t be able to fit the time.”

“However, Vincent is a good friend and has contributed greatly to Xyrus Academy. So when he had excitedly come up to me about a prodigy that is living in his home, I couldn’t help but get excited as well. I must say that my curiosity got the best of me. Do you mind leading me to an open space so I can see a demonstration?” She continued on, her gaze fixed at me in an assessing manner.

“Can I at least eat din...Ouch!” My mother slapped me in the b**t before I could finish my sentence.

“Of course! Please follow us, Director Cynthia.” My mother ushers me, leading Director Cynthia while the rest followed.

My dinner...

Sylvie, who had been hiding underneath the dinner table from the unfamiliar human, trotted behind me, causing Director Cynthia to raise an eyebrow.

“Oh my... What a lovely mana beast. I assume it is your contracted beast, Arthur?” she asked me inquisitively while kneeling down to get a closer view at Sylvie.

“Yeah, she hatched a few months ago. Her name is Sylvie,” I simply responded, my mother’s hand still grabbing onto the back of my shirt to keep me from escaping.

“I have to say, while it is common for nobles to buy beasts to contract, I have never seen a mana beast like yours.”

Shrugging my shoulders, I explained, “I’m not exactly sure what she is either. Her mother seemed to be some sort of scaled wolf like creature. She was already gravely wounded when I stumbled into her nest. She was protecting her egg.”

She reached to pet Sylvie but she scampered away and climbed on top of my head.

“Sorry, she’s a bit shy around strangers.”

“I see. Well enough about her. Let us see if what Vincent said wasn’t just exaggeration. He didn’t tell me much except that you’re an augments, saying the rest would be a surprise.” She let out a wry smile, making Vincent blush.

We had arrived at the backyard and everyone took seats, giving us enough space, Sylvie struggling to escape the grasp of my little sister, whom I entrusted her with.

“You’re not going to use your wand?” I started stretching.

“It isn’t very fair of me to be using a weapon when you yourself are empty handed as well, right?” She gave me a wink.

She made a solid point.

I stomped my right foot into the ground and a piece of the ground the size of my body thrust up. My hands are lazily in my pocket so I kicked the rock at Director Cynthia’s direction.

A wind wall appeared instantly in front of her, knocking up the rock I had just kicked high into the air.

Ooh, Insta-casting.

I guess she wasn’t just a director that sat in front of her desk signing papers.

Her brows raised in surprise by the sudden attack I threw at her, but she quickly composed herself. I could tell she hadn’t been expecting an elemental attack from me, especially since she knew I was an augmenter.

I willed a gust of wind underneath my feet and propel myself to her.

Her expression grew even more surprised as I easily jumped up three meters into the air with the help of my wind attribute skill as a swirling whirlwind enveloped my right fist. Using the boulder that had just been knocked up by the Director as a foothold, I kicked off it to gain enough momentum to hopefully break through her barrier.

The collision of her our two spells created an erratic current of wind, forcing the audience to cover themselves.

The collision blew me back, but Director Cynthia remained steady on her feet. Before I was able to recompose myself, the director had already finished her next move as gusts of wind swirled and shaped themselves into four twisters the size of small trees. Without even a visible command from her, the twisters shot themselves towards me.

Gathering wind attribute mana around me, I will a small tornado to form around me, spinning the opposite direction of Director Goodsky’s spell. Using the centrifugal force generated by my cyclone, I began spinning along with it, using my hands to create blades of wind.

The clash between the four twisters and my cyclone created a small crater but otherwise didn’t do me any harm besides making me very dizzy.

“Impressive. It seems like I will have to take you just a bit more seriously.”

Instantly I’m knocked back, my ears ringing and my vision unsteady.

She was a deviant... a sound mage at that.

I steadied myself, taking a glance at my opponent who was staring back at me with a mildly impressed expression on her face.

My head began spinning, trying to think of different possible moves I could take to win, but she had me in a checkmate. Suppressing my pride and stubbornness, I took a seat on the ground, admitting defeat.

“That should be enough for a demonstration, right, Director?” I rubbed my temples.

“Yes... That is quite sufficient,” she muttered. There was a long pause as she began studying me with a newly found interest.

She regained her senses and made her way towards me when I hear my father’s voice.

“A-Arthur... You know how to use earth and wind attribute spells as well?”

“What do you mean, ‘as well’?” Director Cynthia interrupted, her composed look turning into a look of confusion.

My mother continued on for my baffled father.

“H-he, my son, we thought he was a fire elemental. He’s a deviant as well that can use lightning magic!”

I could hear Director Cynthia’s breath turn short, and for the first time, her expression of someone truly in shock.

“S-surely you jest... you mean to say that he is capable of controlling three elements?”

“Four actually. I can control all four,” I cut in. Everyone was going to find out anyway. This wasn’t something that I could, nor wanted to hide.

“Earth and wind are my weakest elements. I’m a lot more adept in controlling fire and water. I also happen to be deviants in both those elements, although I had just began training in them.” I got up to my feet, shaking off my dizziness from the previous attack. I wasn’t expecting a sound user so I didn’t bother enhancing my ears. The director was quite cruel, though. If my body hadn’t gone through assimilation, my hearing would have been quite damaged.

No one responded back to what I had just said, the only sound nearby being the clichéd chirps of crickets. It was understandable that they’d be this surprised, but I was getting tired of the shocked expressions.

The noble figure that controlled the most prominent school in the continent, stumbled forward, barely making it to a chair. Then, unexpectedly, she began laughing. She started off with a low chuckle, but that soon escalated into a wild laugh of what seemed to me like sheer joy.

Finally, turning back to me, she said, “Arthur, If I may repeat, you are a quadra elemental capable of controlling two higher elements, correct?”

I’m also a Dragon Tamer, but that’s about it. I wonder how they would react if I told them that.

“Correct,” I immediately answered, not bothering to elaborate.

“Please demonstrate.” Director Cynthia’s eyes grew menacing and the once friendly grandmother now had the look of a veteran killer as she raised her hand, the mana around her fluctuating.

Suddenly, a vacuum of wind began sucking me towards her as a visible sphere of wind formed in her other palm.

This woman...

I willed water into my right palm and a condensed ball of fire in my left. She wanted to see so badly; I'd just have to show her.

Combining the two opposing skills together, I created a massive cloud of steam, completely enshrouding the both of us from everyone else's sight.

The cloud of steam didn't last long against the wind mage, but it did give me enough time for me to create a spear of ice. I quickly repositioned myself after throwing the spear of ice just as the steam dissipated. As expected, the director easily blocked my ice spear just before I was in range to land a fist encased in lightning. However, just like before, I was blown away by a powerful sound wave. Fortunately, I had reinforced mana over my ears, but there was no way for me to get near her.

"Whew! I must say that I'm thoroughly convinced! You pass, Arthur Leywin." She clapped her hands, breaking the silence.

Getting back up, I dust myself off. This demonstration had left me with a mixture of feelings. I was frustrated on one hand that there were figures I couldn't even touch, let alone defeat. However, for the first time, I began seriously considering the potential value of learning at Xyrus. If I could have a professor that was on a level near Director Goodsky, my magic would make leaps and bounds.

"Sorry for hiding this from you guys," I said, turning to my parents. I was a bit worried that that my parents might be angry for keeping this from them, but fortunately, my father took it pretty well.

"My son is the first ever quadra elemental!" He scooped me up by my armpits and swung me around like he did when I was an infant.

Suddenly, the traumatic memories began popping back up.

"Please Art, no more secrets." My mother just wryly smiled, concern still etched on her face.

I couldn't promise her that, but I'd like to believe it was for her protection, not for my convenience.

"Forget a quadra elemental, in this continent, there aren't even any tri elementals but you, Art..." Tabitha chimed in, her voice trailing into a sigh.

"Is Bruhder strong?" My sister chimed in, still clutching onto Sylvie.

Patting her head, the Director nodded. "Your brother has the ability to become very strong, little one."

"Heehee!" She had a proud look on her face, as if she was the one getting complimented.

Vincent's face was still a picture of disbelief as he still was in the middle of processing everything. As Lilia made sure her father was alright, she took a quick glance towards my direction with a mixture of astonishment and a little fear on her face.

I didn't blame her.

My father set me down and I turned to Director Cynthia, giving her a stern gaze, a gaze that I knew didn't fit an eight-year-old.

"Director Goodsky. There's actually a reason I didn't hide my capabilities today."

Picking up on the seriousness in my voice, she nodded in understanding. "I had a hunch that you weren't just brazenly showing off your skills, Arthur. You seemed too sharp for that."

Agreeing with her, I responded, "There are only a few benefits I can gain from attending your school. One is learning how to utilize my Lightning and Ice elements. However, that is something I can learn on my own with due time. No. The main reason I would attend your academy, if I chose to at all, is for protection. Right now, I'm not strong enough to protect everyone. However, you hold a position of power and influence that can provide safety for my family and I, at least until I can gain the strength to protect them myself."

"Arthur! You're being rude to Director Goodsky! How can you..."

"No, it's fine Alice." Immediately after she said this, the director mumbled a soft chant before speaking again.

"Arthur, I believe you hold the ability to make changes in this world. For that, if you're willing to attend Xyrus Academy and become a rightful citizen that will do anything to protect his land, then I will abide by any criteria you set." Director Goodsky's voice was clear and determined.

"Very well, I will learn what I feel is valuable from the classes your school offers and train my own powers. As long as you give me the tools and freedom to do so, as well as keep my loved ones safe, then I will consider you as an important benefactor," I promised.

Director Goodsky's lips curve up into a smile as we shook hands. At this, I'm suddenly able to hear the voices of everyone else again. Looking at the director, she gave me a wink.

By the confused looks of everyone around us, I could only assume that what Director Goodsky had done was make everyone else unable to hear our voices.

Clarifying for everyone who couldn't hear, I said aloud, "I will abide by our agreement when I enroll in your academy."

"Oh? Were you not planning on enrolling into my Academy anytime soon?" The Director as well as every other adult had looks of puzzlement on their faces.

"I don't plan on entering Xyrus Academy until I would be of a normal age to actually attend. No. I've decided to enter your academy on my twelfth birthday, a very average age for one to enter your Academy. I assume that will not be a problem?" I tilted my head.

"Goodness! That's in a little over three years. Arthur, do you have any plans on what to do until then?" I figured Director Goodsky wouldn't be so accepting on prolonging my education for over three years.

I turned to face my parents again, since it was up to them to allow me or not.

I looked up at the night sky, stars shining. Unlike my old world, the lack of bright lights truly made the star-glittered night beautiful. Turning my gaze back to where my family was, I answer.

“I’d like to become an adventurer.”