

After returning to Olympus, I was able to confirm how useful it was to be able to communicate with other Keepers, even while descended. Being able to communicate with the others certainly made things more active, though there wasn't much for me to do in my world aside from training.

Like that, several more days passed, until I finally received the notice of my next opponent, though the name on the notification surprised me. *Bellarose*? I thought in astonishment, remembering my recent deal with this Keeper. Additionally, I was on the receiving end yet again.

When I checked the system, it looked like Bellarose was fighting another Keeper this month, and so he wouldn't have learned about my match with him until after that. I considered letting him know in advance, but ultimately decided against it. There was still plenty of time, so I was content just knowing that my next opponent wasn't going to try to obliterate everything that existed in my world.

On Ashley's front, she was making great strides with her new game, saying that she was ready to enter the testing phase. Given that most of the game was created from their code, there was the chance of potentially 'game breaking' bugs. And, when the game was an entire universe, such bugs could be apocalyptic.

For that reason, her entire development team was tasked with testing the game, trying every conceivable combination of systems to ensure that there was no clash. Unlike online games in the mortal world, there was no such thing as a patch that would be able to resolve these issues after it was sold. One bug could lead to the entire game being a waste of time and points.

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"Establishing a resonant field, connecting to the mana core." Treisha called out, sitting before a large console while rapidly flicking switches. "The synchronization rate is at ninety-five percent. Shall we open the gate?"

When she asked that, she turned back to look at Chelsea and James, the latter of which had long since completed his energy fusion without the disaster system stopping him. His eyes shined, lifting one hand as he peered through the possible futures. Treisha held her hands over two buttons. If he gave a thumbs-up, she would immediately solidify the portal. If he gave a thumbs-down, she would abort the entire sequence.

His hand clenched, and his thumb was pointed upwards. Right away, Treisha followed suit, hitting the button beneath her right hand. Along the wall was a circular contraption, a dark blue portal forming within it.

Ryone, having decided to attend this experiment with interest, pushed off of the wall, eyeing the portal. "So, that is the gate to this world's mana core?" She asked in curiosity, to which Chel nodded her head.

“That’s right. Once we’re inside, we’d like your help studying its internal structure. We need to know how much outside interference is possible without disrupting the laws of magic in the world.”

Ryone blinked at that, before nodding her head. “I see. In that case, I will continue to monitor things after we enter. If I sense any fluctuations, I will let you know.”

As she said that, she began to walk towards the portal. Chelsea followed behind with James, placing a hand on Treisha’s shoulder. “We’ll take you with us next time. For now... we need you to stay on this side to keep the portal stable. If anything goes wrong, it won’t be easy for us to get back. Well... I’m sure Ryone will have a way to do it, but just in case...”

Treisha nodded her head with a firm expression, understanding her task. “Got it.” She said, nodding her head to let the group enter. The only ones not present were the twins, who were working to finally stabilize their new energy.

Ryone’s body passed through the portal, causing it to briefly flicker and shimmer, doing so once again when Chelsea, and finally James passed through. On the other side, Ryone’s eyes widened, standing within an endless, blue mist. Runic symbols and geometric patterns hovered through the air.

There was neither a ground nor sky, nor any sign of anything other than the endless stream of magic. When Chelsea entered, she tapped her foot down, noticing that the space below her feet felt solid. Out of curiosity, she lifted her foot and stepped forward, imagining placing it against a wall. Sure enough, she felt physical resistance.

Afterwards, imagining that this ‘wall’ was the ‘floor’, she felt as if the orientation of gravity had changed, and she found herself standing horizontal compared to the other two. “As expected from a microverse composed only of mana.” She gave a small grin, returning to the same orientation as the others.

Lifting one hand, she launched a fireball spell into the distance, keeping her attention on Ryone. However, Ryone shook her head. “No change.”

With that confirmation, Chelsea became emboldened. She stretched her hand out, using the Digital Conversion system to produce a multitool. The item appeared in her grasp, and Ryone once again shook her head. “If even this doesn’t cause any fluctuations... we can begin setting up the equipment.”

James nodded his head, and the two of them began to use the Digital Conversion system to create some large-scale equipment. Given that there was no ground to bolt the equipment to, they even created an entire building to use for convenience. Throughout the entire process, they

both kept their attentions on Ryone, waiting for any indication that their actions were causing abnormal fluctuations in the world's mana.

Thankfully, Ryone gave no such indication. She was focused entirely on the mana around her. The many geometric patterns seemed to come alive in her gaze, and she felt as if she had stepped into paradise. There were symbols that she had never seen, but she could identify after cross-referencing them with the knowledge that she had. On the other hand, some symbols were far beyond her realm of understanding.

*If I were to conduct my magic research in a place like this, how much would I be able to accelerate my studies?* She thought to herself, before forcing herself to dismiss such thoughts. Such a path would surely lead to irreparable changes to the world's magic, and may even result in the destruction of an entire universe. After remembering just how much James had suffered from similar scales of destruction, Ryone knew that she couldn't afford to take any risks like that.

Even still, just standing at the epicenter of all the world's magic was proving beneficial to her, and she absorbed all of the information that she could while the other two worked. All too soon, however, they called out to her, signaling that they were done.

Ryone practically deflated, realizing that she would need to leave this space now that the work was over. When she walked towards the portal, Chelsea smiled. "Would you be able to ask Scarlet to join us next? We're going to be opening the portal to the Ki core in about half an hour, and having her there would help to ensure a smooth trip."

Ryone sadly nodded her head, before giving it a bit of thought. "But... what are you going to do for the natural energy world? We don't have anything like a purely Nature deity."

Chelsea shook her head. "I was going to ask Bihena, Ashley, Accalia, Tubrock, and Tryval for help there. Each of them represents one of the core elements that can be found in Fyor's natural core, so between them and the world spirit, it should be fine."

Ryone couldn't help but blink at that. "But... Dale never made the World Spirit for this area, right?" She asked in confusion, causing Chelsea to pause.

"...Adding that to the to-do list." Chelsea said with a strained smile, mentally kicking herself for not having already created that spirit. "Regardless, the five of them together should be able to fill the same role as you or Scarlet. As for the spirit core... if I'm not mistaken, that should simply be a passage to the Underworld. We'll test it to be sure, but Irena will be our guide for that one."

Ryone nodded her head in understanding. "Well, if you have to do any more tests in that place, be sure to let me know!" She said in a firm tone, before vanishing. Chelsea merely grinned, realizing how special that location should have been to Ryone.

Now that Ryone was gone, Chelsea turned to look at Treisha. "It looks like things are going well. Power the portal down to idle mode, so we can maintain the data collection. Afterwards, get ready to activate the next gate."

Treisha nodded her head firmly, carrying out Chelsea's instructions without delay. It would take time to slowly power up the portals meant to open a gap between the completed world and its 'miniverse', hence the deadline that Chelsea told Ryone.

Thankfully, it didn't take long before Scarlet appeared. Chelsea had slightly relaxed the defensive measures around the lab to essentially create a backdoor for Aurivy to bring people in and out. After all, she was aware that they would be playing host to multiple gods during this event.

Scarlet leaned against the wall of the lab, curiously eyeing the dim portal that connected to the magic core. As she did, she noticed the red portal starting to light up, signaling a connection to the Ki core.

Once the portal was secured, she began to walk forward, feeling as though something was amiss. When she stepped through, the portal rippled as if it were made of liquid, a few droplets landing on the floor beneath.

On the other side of the portal, it felt as if she had been submerged in an ocean of blood. For a brief moment, she felt almost intoxicated by the intense ki, before a pulse of energy surged out from her. "I see..." She lifted her head, sending a fierce look to the area above. She had created a dome, holding back the tide of ki.

When Chelsea and the others arrived, they were surprised to feel such an ominous power bursting out of Scarlet. The crimson goddess turned to face them, speaking in a strict tone. "From now on, none of you are permitted to enter this place without me, is that understood?" She asked, causing the eyes of the others to widen.

"What's going on?" Chelsea asked, taking a step forward.

"My disobedient child seems to be living quite happily here." Scarlet answered, her eyes turning upwards. "Ki is the energy of life. I rushed in first, expecting there to be mindless monsters made of ki attacking everything that entered. However... it seems that he's already eaten all of them."

Chelsea followed Scarlet's gaze, but she couldn't see anything, aside from the dense red mass above Scarlet's barrier. A moment later, something seemed to click for her. "Your child... the True Martial Spirit?" She asked, and Scarlet nodded her head.

"When he was created, he was absorbed into the world's ki laws. I thought that just meant that it was a natural effect, but it seems that wasn't the case. They've been living in the ki core all this

time.” Scarlet’s gaze pierced through the red blood-like substance, seeming to lock onto a malevolent will hiding beyond. She could feel it hunger, but knew that killing it wasn’t an option. As it had become a part of this world’s laws, killing it would mean destroying the concept of the Martial Will from this world.