**Upon The Throne**

BAM! BAM! POW! POW!

At the Golden Nile Agency, on the fourth floor, The Goddess was working hard on her training for her upcoming match. Having climbed to the number one contender in Sonachi, that meant that her title match against the Sonachi Champion was coming soon.

For this training, she was having her servants use rubber balls attached to chains that they were going to throw at her. The jackal was going to use her True Goddess Sight to predict the attack angle and the right timing to strike. She was being attacked from four balls at the same time. Not only did she need to decide which ball she was going to strike, she had to come up with the perfect strike to hit the balls so that she could transition into an attack to hit the following balls.

The jackal’s entire body was used for striking. Her hands hit with punches, palms, chops, wrists, and edges. For her kicks, she used the sole of her foot, her toes, her heel, the ball of her foot, the top of her foot, the edge, her leg, and knee. Every part of her body was a weapon to be used against Evelyn Nydelig.

*She’s strong,* Nubia thought as she kept attacking and defending against the rubber balls that her servants were throwing at her. *Ran and Keiko wouldn’t have put up with her if she wasn’t strong. I can’t underestimate her because of her attitude. She might be the strongest opponent that I’ll face so far.*

“You are improving faster than ever,” Eskel pointed out as he saw Nubia defending herself from all directions.

“Not fast enough,” Nubia told him. “Increase the tempo of your attacks. Also, try to change the timing a bit to avoid making a repetitive pattern.”

“Yes, Goddess!” Nubia’s servants told her.

“And I want you to go to the next picture,” Nubia told Eskel.

“How the hell is checking costume ideas going to help on your training?” Eskel asked angrily.

“This is the most important match of my career so far,” Nubia told Eskel. “I am having my first title match. If I win, I will become the Sonachi Champion. As such, I want my costume to reflect on that.”

“And what if you lose?” Eskel asked. “I think that you should make the costume change after you get the belt.”

“I want my costume to reflect my evolution as I made my way across the ranks,” Nubia dodged a rubber ball from behind her and then elbowed it backwards. “Win or lose, it will show that I became strong and that I won’t lose my way.”

“But why do you choose to do this in the middle of training?” Eskel asked in the middle of training. “This is an instance where multitasking is a very bad idea.”

“I am training my focus by learning to use my visual prowess for different things and having my mind and body react differently,” Nubia explained.

“This is the fifth design that you rejected,” Eskel showed Nubia a picture of herself in bandages that looked like a mummy.

“Too obstructive,” Nubia shook her head as she dodged the balls with a flip. “Don’t you remember Nyarai’s match against that bunny. She got her bandages stripped out of her, nearly leaving her naked had she not had the foresight to wear a bikini underneath.”

“And that’s not counting Muko tying her up shibari style to choke her unconscious,” Eskel winced, imagining the damage to her reputation that Nyarai must have received after the Cookie Crumble Match.

“Exactly,” Nubia focused on her dodging abilities rather than striking. “Bandaging offers protection while preventing self-injury from throwing a strike with poor form. However, it gives the opponent something to grab on. And it covers most of my body, so I won’t be able to provide fanservice with it.”

“How about the other four that you rejected?” Eskel showed Nubia the previous four costume sketches that he had tailors draw for her.

“The pharaoh one is too regal,” Nubia stated. “It’s not meant for fighting. Maybe if it was for a presentation, I would consider it.”

“How about the priest one?” Eskel suggested. “That fits with your goddess motif.”

“It fits,” Nubia admitted as she dodged an overhead attack with a split. “But it has long robes that prevent me from moving perfectly.”

“How about guardian?” he proposed. “You’d be wearing some golden protection in your arms and legs.”

“Too heavy,” Nubia countered. “And I don’t want the fans to think that I am cheating by using something like an armor to give me an unfair advantage over my opponent.”

“And the leotard?” Eskel reminded her. “The leotard gives you free space for the arms and legs while still keeping your colors.”

“But it removes the mysticism of my attire,” Nubia countered.

*She’s very selective,* Eskel thought with a groan. *It’s like my first time going shopping with her. I spent hours just buying a few attires because she couldn’t figure out the right attire that she wanted to wear.*

“You are seeing this the wrong way,” Nubia raised a hand to gesture her servants to stop the training for a little while. “Rather than change my look, I just want you to update it. I want to make it more practical while still keeping the key elements.”

“Let me check something,” Eskel eyed every concept that was sent to him. He got dozens of them to see, but he only focused on the ones that were similar to Nubia’s original outfit. “I think that I can narrow it down to less than ten choices with this parameter.”

“See?” Nubia smirked at him. “It wasn’t that hard.”

“I think that we could make a choice in a few minutes if you reviewed this picture with me,” Eskel told Nubia. “You already trained enough. Take a quick breather and help me choose your attire so that you can fully focus on your training.”

“I suppose you are right,” Nubia stood alongside Eskel as he was checking the designs. The cat put the concepts that she rejected on a table alongside those that didn’t fit her vision. He was now holding a smaller number of concepts that fit her criteria.

“I think that making a choice will be hard,” Nubia stated as she and Eskel eyed the remaining concepts. “I believe that we will need about an hour or so to come up with a decision.”

“Should I reserve the attire selection for after your training?” Eskel asked as he rolled his eyes in frustration.

“Yes,” Nubia sighed as she sat down on a reclining chair. She closed her eyes a bit as she relaxed and let the oxygen return to her body.

“Hard to believe that you are going to become a champion,” Eskel pointed out. “It was so long since you started.”

“Me too,” Nubia looked contemplative. “I chose to be a Combagal because I had no other life skills that I could apply to live. The only job that I had was being the woman of Hudergan. All I had to do was look beautiful and stand by his side.”

“But you chose to make something of your life after you cut ties with him,” Eskel reminded her with a proud smile. “I never thought that you knew how to fight. But you used those skills to make something of yourself.”

“They were very eventful years,” Nubia smiled as she remembered her first year of furry fighting. “I had like 52 matches to build up my career. I even better that I wouldn’t get hit on either of them or I would consider it a defeat.”

“And you didn’t get hit once on your first year,” Eskel laughed. “You built a reputation and did a lot of savings.”

“Do you remember when Golden Nile Agency was just an abandoned gym that you bought with what little money you had from your sumiguza days?” Nubia asked with a wistful smile.

“Indeed,” Eskel grinned. “Never thought that the first floor would turn into a restaurant or that it’d get three more floors above it.”

“Should we get another floor after I win?” Nubia proposed with a smirk.

“I’d rather we get a basement,” Eskel chuckled.

The jackal and the cat laughed together. It was as if the match with Evelyn was already done and they were celebrating.

“Ms. Nubia!”

The two of them were interrupted when Samaria entered the fourth floor. Normally, the Combagals of Golden Nile Agency were not allowed to enter the fourth floor without receiving special clearance. However, Samaria had proven to be a reliable underling. As such, she was one of the few Combagals in training that Nubia allowed to enter her private chambers.

“Is there something wrong, Samaria?” Nubia asked patiently.

“There is a mink on the first floor,” Samaria informed her. “She entered without reservation and threw a couple of Combagals into the walls hard enough to knock them out.”

“A mink Combagal?” Nubia asked, having already figured out who was the assailant.

“Yes,” Samaria nodded her head. “She said that her name was Evelyn Nydelig. She said that she was the Sonachi Champion and that she wanted to talk to you.”

“The nerve of that woman!” Nubia stood up angrily. “How dare she come into my agency to injury my Combagals and eat my food?”

“She told me to tell you that she has an offer that you shouldn’t refuse,” Samaria bowed her head at Nubia. “I didn’t want to obey her, but I was scared.”

“You did the right thing, Samaria,” Eskel patted her shoulder. “But you should stay here while Nubia and I take care of this.”

“Thank you, Mr. Eskel,” Samaria bowed her head to him.

Feeling their good mood soured, Eskel and Nubia angrily went down the elevator to reclaim at Evelyn for her behavior. The peace was gone now. The war was just getting started.

*Of all the cheekiest insults I’ve ever received, this is the biggest one!*

Nubia said nothing as she descended down the elevator. She had her arms crossed angrily and was breathing through her teeth in frustration. Eskel was giving her a shoulder rub to calm her down. It was a daring move considering Nubia’s hatred for being touched, but he needed to comfort her to prevent her from resorting to violence.

“I know that you are aggravated by Evelyn’s audacity,” Eskel whispered into Nubia’s ear. “But you cannot let her drive you into her pace. She’s trying to get inside your head.”

“I am aware of that,” Nubia clenched her fists angrily.

 “I’ll be there to support you,” Eskel promised. “I also have my own beef to settle with her.”

 “Thank you, Eskel,” Nubia would have smiled at him if she wasn’t so pissed off right now.

 The elevator stopped at the first floor. She stormed into the restaurant where she saw Evelyn sitting comfortably on a chair. She was drinking a glass of wine and eating spaghetti with squid ink, humming in delight.

 “My apologies, Goddess Nubia,” a waiter bowed to her. “But we saw the way that she easily beat up two of your Combagals. We couldn’t bring ourselves to say no to her.”

 “I will take care of it,” Nubia promised. “I want you to get the other chefs and waiters out of here while I talk to her.”

 “Yes, ma’am!” the waiter ran to the kitchen.

 Nubia stood there, angrily glaring at Evelyn, who didn’t recognize her presence. Her ears twitched as she heard the chefs and waiters leaving the restaurant in panic. She was only going to talk to Evelyn once they finished evacuating.

 “They’re gone,” Eskel declared with finality. “You are free to go all out on her.”

 “You have a lot of nerve to go into my agency after what you tried to pull off at that party of yours,” Nubia walked angrily at Evelyn. “Not only that, you went as far as to force entry to my restaurant and beat up my Combagals.”

 “It’s a pleasure to see you again, Nubia,” Evelyn’s voice was sweet, but the sarcasm was clear as day. There was a waiter next to her who was too nervous to leave her side. “Mind sitting down so that we can talk? Just because this is your restaurant and agency doesn’t mean that you should forget your manners.”

 “If you had any manners, you would have called out to make a reservation,” Eskel spoke in Nubia’s turn as he sat down first. He gestured at Nubia to sit down, letting her know that she was only sitting because he did and not because Evelyn told her.

 “I would have, but I didn’t want this street rat to rudely reject my petition,” Evelyn took a sip of wine, ignoring Nubia’s anger at the insult. “I already invited her to my home once and she had the gall to insult me and my wine. Toilet water, you say? The wine I drink is still better than your wine category, you self-righteous street trash!”

 “Maybe if you didn’t try to ask Nubia to give up on her champion road, she would have acted a lot more civil,” Eskel defended his Combagal, hoping that his words would calm her down enough. “How are you even a champion anyway?”

 “My mother was a model who got attacked once by a crazy stalker,” Evelyn admitted nonchalantly. “She had me and my little brother learn judo. And I was a natural at it. I choose furry fighting because it lets me show the world my beauty and power.”

 “For a coward, you have a big ego,” Eskel told her.

 “I *did* win my fights against Keiko, Ran, and my predecessor fair and square,” Evelyn countered, offended at Eskel’s accusation that she was all bark and no bite. “I only did the bribing because I’d rather not waste effort trying to keep something that I already have. I am satisfied with what I obtained.”

 “Enough with the exposition,” Nubia growled at Evelyn. “I want answers. What are you doing here, Evelyn?”

 The mink giggled haughtily. She spent a few more minutes focused on her pasta before she continued her conversation after a sip of wine.

 “The people of Sonachi are calling out for our title match,” Evelyn informed her. “As a resident, I am bound by the need to entertain my fans. I am more than happy to do it contrary to your wrong expectations about me.”

 “And what’s the catch?” Nubia asked, knowing that Evelyn wasn’t as honorable as she tried to act in front of her.

 “Believe it or not, I am a businesswoman,” Evelyn puffed her chest vainly. “This allowed me to have more funds than the average Combagal.”

 “Are you sure it’s not an allowance from your mother?” Eskel taunted.

 “Stopped getting those after I became an adult,” Evelyn didn’t bat an eye to the taunting. “But I did some good investments that allowed me to buy my house before I started my career. Everything in that house was by my own merit.”

 *And yet she can’t keep her belt on her own merit,* Nubia thought with a mixture of anger and curiosity. Was there something else about Evelyn? Or did fame and glory changed her for the worst? It didn’t’ matter anyway. All that she saw was the worst kind of enemy that she could have.

 “What do you want?” Nubia asked Evelyn.

 “Not much,” Evelyn shrugged her shoulders. “I’ll give you a title match against me for one condition. You have to sign majority control of your assets and personal over to me when you lose to me.”

 “What?” Nubia narrowed her eyes at her.

 “I always wanted a larger building and more Combagals under my control,” Evelyn mused thoughtfully. “I think that my position in the belt will be guaranteed if I were to take control of your agency. Maybe I can show your Combagals how to actually win matches rather than train all day without advancing their careers.”

 “You’re out of your mind,” Nubia snarled at her.

 “You’re quite arrogant to come us and demand those terms,” Eskel glared at Evelyn with disgust at her cavalier attitude towards them.

 “And for a second-grade sumiguza and a trophy wife, you two are full of yourselves,” Evelyn countered, surprising Nubia and Eskel.

 “What did you say?” Eskel asked.

 “I dug some dirt on you after Nubia made the mistake of disrespecting me at my party,” Evelyn pointed out. “It was much easier to do after Nubia went to that organization who supported people who’d been subjected to sexual assault. All I needed to do was do some digging around and discovered that you two served under a sumiguza named Hudergan.”

 “Are you blackmailing us?” Eskel asked. He was horrified and disgusted that Evelyn would do something so low to keep her belt

 “I wish I could,” Evelyn rolled her eyes. “It would have been a lot easier had Nubia not admitted her story first. So I had to resort to this strategy instead.”

 “And why should I agree to bet my agency to you?” Nubia asked angrily, gritting her teeth at the amoral mink.

 “Because, unlike you, I am the one who has a final say on WHO gets to fight me for my title,” Evelyn boasted as if she was invincible. “And I can be VERY patient. I will only fight you if you agree to my terms.”

 Nubia clenched her fists hard on her legs.

 *I feel like I am under Hudergan’s thumb again,* Nubia thought angrily. *A long time ago, I would have been afraid. But now I am angry. I will never let anyone hold that much power over me ever again, especially a coward who doesn’t want to fight me fair and square.*

“And what will happen to me in this scenario?” Nubia asked. “If I don’t agree, I will be permanently stuck in the number one rank. If I agree, I either win or lose. So what do you think will happen to me?”

 Evelin’s smirk went from civil to malicious in less than a second. She stabbed the last meatball of her squid ink spaghetti and took a bite out of it.

 “That face that you gave me is your real face,” Nubia coldly told Evelyn.

 “My real face?” Evelyn asked with a giggle. “I have no idea what you mean.”

 “You like to show up with that baby face of yours to make people think that you are a sweetheart,” Nubia pointed out. “But you are nothing but a vain and greedy woman who only cares about the top but doesn’t like to put any effort on it.”

 “I didn’t come here to hear your opinion about me,” Evelyn rolled her eyes. “I demand an answer from you.”

 SLAM!

 Nubia slammed her hands on the table, leaning forward. Evelyn gently placed her hands on the table and mirrored Nubia’s approach.

 “The only thing that I want from you is your belt,” Nubia growled.

 “It’s a deal then,” Evelyn growled back. “I will see you in two days from now.”

 “Two days?!” Eskel sputtered. “But that’s not enough time to prepare for the match.”

 “A future champion should have no trouble preparing in such a short time,” Evelyn teased sarcastically as she stood up and made her departure.

 The cat and the jackal glared at the mink as she made her departure. Once she left the building, Eskel begun to panic.

 “What are we going to do, Nubia?” Eskel asked.

 “I will train hard during the next two days to face against Evelyn,” Nubia’s tone was one that sounded like she was giving an obvious fact.

 “But she only gave you a time limit of two days,” Eskel pointed out. “That’s not enough time to prepare for a match. It’s much less when you take into account that we are having a title match against a champion who bested two of your former opponents easily.”

 “Maybe if she and I had met before she became the Sonachi Champion, she would have been the kind of enemy that I would have never been able to defeat,” Nubia pointed out. “But she’s nothing more than a shell of her former self.”

 “What are you talking about?” Eskel asked.

 “She fell into depravity,” Nubia answered simply. “She’s not the Combagal that she used to be in the past. That means that I have a chance.”

 “But you still have only two days to train,” Eskel reminded her again.

 “She may have been sarcastic about it, but she was right,” Nubia pointed out. “A champion should always be ready to fight regardless of the time limit.”

 “Are you sure that you can do this?” Eskel asked. “There’s a lot at stake here.”

 “I am,” Nubia admitted. “I’ve been training for this match since I defeated Keiko to be the number one contender. But this isn’t the time and place to discuss it. We are going back to my penthouse to further discuss on what needs to be done.”

 Nubia stood up and left the restaurant. Seeing that he had no choice, Eskel stood up from the restaurant and followed his Combagal, hoping that she’d have a solution to this problem.

 The elevator stay was tenser than it was a few minutes ago. Cat and jackal were both feeling tense over the confrontation with the mink.

 *This feels worse than when we heard that she was at the restaurant,* Eskel thought with frustration. *Sure, I wasn’t happy at Evelyn entering our agency and hurting two of our Combagals. But this match is the kind of match that Nubia is not allowed to lose.*

“Are you worried?” Nubia asked Eskel as they were on the second floor.

 “Damn right, I am!” Eskel couldn’t contain his frustration. “That woman just came to our agency and forced us into a gamble if we want the belt. What kind of coward does that?”

 “She fell prey to the depravity that the top provides you,” Nubia stated. “We are not allowed to let ourselves think that we are invincible. If we do that, we are dooming ourselves to failure.”

 “This woman reminds me a lot of Nyarai,” Eskel muttered.

 “You are wrong,” Nubia corrected him. “Nyarai may be aggressive and arrogant. But she’s still a Combagal to the core. She’s always looking forward to the next match and she never backs down from a challenge.”

 “She does have a bit of an anger problem,” Eskel recognized as they reached the third floor.

 “But she’s a pure Combagal despite her personality flaws,” Nubia admitted proudly. “Despite everything, she would never resort to such dishonorable means.”

 “And do you think that you can handle her?” Eskel asked Nubia. “We are not allowed to lose this time. You can’t settle with a rematch. We’ll lose the agency and we may never get another chance of making a comeback.”

 “We beat worse odds,” Nubia told him. “Do you remember when we left Hudergan? We were going to start from scratch. And look where we are right now? I am the number one contender of Sonachi. And the champion of that district thinks that I am a threat. I have all the right in the world to feel confident despite the odds.”

 DING!

 The elevator reached the fourth floor. Samaria was waiting for them there.

 “Are you okay, Goddess Nubia?” Samaria asked.

 “I am okay,” Nubia nodded her head. “Evelyn just wanted to give me a declaration of war.”

 “A declaration of war on which the spoils are our agency and assets,” Eskel reminded her, too tense to notice that Samaria was there.

 “What?” Samaria asked, shocked upon hearing about the gamble.

 “Eskel!” Nubia admonished her manager for speaking out of turn.

 “Oh, I’m sorry,” Eskel apologized to Nubia and Samaria. “I am feeling so stressed out about the gamble that I didn’t think right.”

 “What gamble are you talking about?” Samaria asked, trying to process what was going on around her.

 “Evelyn refuses to fight me until I agreed to a contract,” Nubia explained. “She says that, in exchange for agreeing to a gamble for her belt, I have to give her my agency and assets if I lose.”

 “Needless to say, I am very stressed out about it,” Eskel admitted. “Evelyn gave Nubia a two-day time limit for the fight.”

 “Only two days?” Samaria asked. “That’s not enough time.”

 “It is for me,” Nubia declared as she focused on the sketches that Eskel prepared. “I’ve been training to master my True Goddess Sight long before she issued the challenge. If she said that the match was going to take place tomorrow, I was going to accept right away.”

 “But what happens if you lose?” Eskel asked.

 “I’ll bounce back on my feet,” Nubia declared. “I will try to join another agency. I am sure that Shun Gonfano will be more than happy to let us enter the Cyclone Crushers if Evelyn were to win the match.”

 “And what about our Combagals who will be serving Evelyn?” Eskel questioned her.

 “Then I will quit the agency,” Samaria intruded, surprising them. “I don’t want to serve someone who’d injure my friends or who’d blackmail the belt from the Combagal that I admire. If you leave Golden Nile, then I will leave as well.”

 “Are you sure about this, Samaria?” Eskel asked.

 “I will let the other Combagals of the gym know,” Samaria promised. “I will not follow someone like Evelyn Nydelig even if my career depended on it.”

 “Your loyalty is appreciated, Samaria,” Nubia smiled at the leopard. “But it’s not needed. I will win the match no matter what.”

 ‘You are?” Samaria and Eskel asked with doubts in their eyes.

 “It’s not a problem for me,” Nubia admitted. “Besides, I refuse to lose to a woman like her. In the meantime, I need to focus on the perfect costume design.”

 “How about this one?” Samaria took a sheet and gave it to Nubia. “If you add a bit of jewelry, you can make it perfect.”

 Nubia stared at the sheet for a moment. Then she imagined the change that Samaria suggested and nodded in approval. She then handed the paper to Eskel, who stared at it.

 “That’s the design that you want?” Eskel asked, surprised that Nubia managed to find the answer so quickly.

 “I want this done immediately before my match,” Nubia ordered. “I don’t mind if it’s done by tomorrow or if it’s delivered on the morning of the match. I want it done so that I can make my presentation to Sonachi as its future champion.”

 “But why this design?” Eskel asked. “It looks mostly the same as your current one.”

 “And that’s the main factor of why it was chosen,” Nubia smiled at Samaria for showing her the sketch. “The design leans into my aesthetic. It’s practical too while still offering style. And it doesn’t constitute much in the way of changes.”

 “I guess there’s no other way,” Eskel sighed. “Besides, we have more pressing matters than your costume choice. We need to cram as much skill into you in the next two days.”

 “I’ll be back in the ring,” Nubia prepared to resume her training.

 “Are you sure that dodging those balls is going to work?” Eskel asked. “I know that living in splendor may have weakened Evelyn, but we are not sure of that. And even if she were weakened, she’s still feared by Ran and Keiko. I am sure that she’s not someone who should be underestimated.”

 “Then I won’t underestimate her,” Nubia replied simply. “I’ll do my best training to prepare myself for the match.”

 “And how would you do that?” Eskel asked. “Training equipment is different from fighting a real person.”

 “I am aware of it,” Nubia sighed. “That’s why I was planning on leaving this for later. But since the match is going to happen sooner than expected, I will have to rush.”

 “What are you planning on doing, Nubia?” Eskel asked.

 “Do you remember Kellie Kardigan’s karate tales?” Nubia asked, remembering how the Leurdean cat shared anecdotes of how she got her black belt in karate.

 “Yes,” Eskel stated, blushing as he thought of her. He turned around to prevent Nubia and Samaria from seeing his blush since he did have a crush on her.

 “I’ll do the hundred foe kumite,” Nubia told him.

 “The hundred foe kumite?” Eskel shouted in horror.

 “What’s the hundred foe kumite?” Samaria asked.

 “It was a test of ultimate skill where a karateka fought against one hundred foes at the same time,” Nubia explained, remembering the story perfectly because it was a measure to measure Kellie’s fighting prowess in case she ever had to fight the Cyclone Crusher.

 “It’s also a very dangerous test,” Eskel added. “We can’t risk a single injury to reach. Plus, our agency doesn’t have a hundred Combagals.”

 “But we do have over a dozen and many aspirants,” Nubia smiled before facing Samaria. “I need you to call out everyone here, Samaria.”

 “You want to face all the Combagals of Golden Nile agency at the same time?” Samaria asked a bit fearfully. “But you were barely able to handle five at the same time when you were training for your match with Keiko.”

 “I’m a lot stronger than I was when I trained to fight Keiko,” Nubia gave her a confident smile as she pointed at the elevator. “Go out there and call all of the Combagals and students in the agency. We are all going to reach new heights after this.”

 “¡Yes, Goddess Nubia!” Samaria nodded her head and went down the elevator.

 “The next few days are going to be hard for you, Nubia,” Eskel sighed as he prepared to go with the tailor to have her produce Nubia’s new costume.

 “I can’t really become the Sonachi Champion if I don’t take a risk,” Nubia winked at Eskel as she got on top of the ring and waited for everyone to arrive.

 Not wanting to see his Combagal getting beat up, Eskel left the fourth floor to visit the tailor.

 A few minutes later, Nubia saw as Samaria arrived with as many Combagals and trainees as she could gather. They were all staring firmly at Nubia.

 “I take it that Samaria told you everything about my next match,” Nubia sated the obvious, which earned her silent nods. “Then that means that I need your help to become strong. Will you help me become the Combagal that I am destined to be?”

 “Yes, Goddess Nubia!” the army shouted in unison.

 “Then let’s get to work!” Nubia declared as she took a fighting stance.

 An hour later, Eskel returned from the tailor. He was surprised to see the fourth floor was a mess and that Nubia was standing around a bunch of defeated Combagals, Samaria included.

 “You missed out on the fun, Eskel,” Nubia panted with exhaustion as she was barely bruised from the combined might of her Combagals.

 “Did you just defeat all of the Combagals and students on your own?” Eskel asked.

 “Kellie had all the right to brag,” Nubia panted. “Even with my True Goddess Sight and being the strongest Combagal in the agency, the hundred foe kumite is no joke. Facing a numerical disadvantage is quite a hard feat to accomplish.”

 “Did it work?” Eskel asked. “Did you get stronger by completing the challenge?”

 “Yes,” Nubia admitted as she clenched her fists. “And what about you? Did you deliver the sketch to the tailor?”

 “She told me that she was going to have it ready tomorrow night,” Eskel repeated the words that the tailor told him.

 “Excellent,” Nubia smiled with satisfaction.

 “What are you going to do now, Nubia?” Eskel asked the black jackal, wondering if she was going to continue her training.

 “So far, I am going to do the kumite tomorrow,” Nubia declared. “There are still some kinks that I need to iron out before I can truly master the True Goddess Sight.”

 Seeing the defeated Combagals on the floor, Eskel said the first thing that came into mind.

 “Great work, girls,” Eskel told them. “Take a break. We’ll be doing this tomorrow.”

 The cat only got groans from the females on the floor and annoyed glance from Nubia. Feeling a bit tense, Eskel took the rest of the day off, hoping that he’d feel better in the morning.

 *Nubia may be a logical woman, but she can act illogical when she feels like it,* Eskel thought as he left Golden Nile. *But then again, I am sure that this is the type of moments when you are supposed to have faith and try everything to make everything work out.*

The cat remembered the day that Nubia beat Hudergan within an inch of his life. The boss that he’d feared since he’d been put under his employment was no longer a threat to him. But it wasn’t him who beat him up. It was the jackal that he treated like a little sister.

 She was shaken up from the sexual assault, but she was still going strong. Even with the trauma she endured, she wanted to make something of herself. She never wanted to let another man treat her like a piece of eye candy.

 “How about you become a Combagal?” Eskel offered. “Combagals are female athletes known for their beauty and strength. I am sure that you can make a career out of it if you use your martial arts to step in the ring. I can be your manager.”

 It was a hard start for both of them. Eskel had to sacrifice most of his life savings to start his agency. But he was right. Nubia won her first match easily. Since she had no injuries, she made sure to have a match once every week. With each victory, the winnings were piling up. And then the Golden Nile became an agency worthy of respect.

 A smile spread across Eskel’s lips.

 *She can do this,* Eskel thought with faith on his Combagal. The cat drove all the way back home and fell asleep, feeling confident that Nubia was going to win the match.

 The next two days were filled with hundred foe kumite. Several of the Combagals and students of the Golden Nile were bringing in every fighter they knew. Nubia appreciated this since it provided variety to her sparring matches.

 So far, she fought striking and grappling specialists. She fought boxers, wrestlers, martial artists, brawlers, and the occasional weapon user. The sparring matches were intense for Eskel, but he grew to see how strong Nubia truly got.

 Not only did she predict the movements of her opponents with her Goddess Eyes, but her True Goddess Sight allowed her to see the right way to move. It let her know when to dodge and duck and what kind of technique she should use to minimize the risk of damage. That being said, there was a limit to how much the True Goddess Sight worked when she didn’t have the physical attributes to fulfill her visions.

 It didn’t matter how strong Nubia was, she always managed to get hit at least once or twice during the matches. Being a perfectionist, she didn’t appreciate those slights and trained hard to surpass her limits.

 Eventually, the day of the match arrived. She went to the arena in Sonachi and waited for her match to start. In the meantime, she was already dressed and wanted to show off her new costume to Eskel.

 “How do I look, Eskel?” Nubia stood proudly in front of Eskel.

 “You look incredible as always, Nubia,” Eskel complimented her.

 She wore gold metal snake bands biting their tails on her upper arms. Her forearms had ornate looking gold bands with the Ankh depicted on them.  Around her neck was a good Egyptian choker with a blue sapphire in the center of it.  The tassel strips that she wore on her shorts were gone. The hieroglyphs that she had were now embroidered in black along the gold trimmings of her top and shorts.  She also had wraps around her palms now to include with her leg wraps. To finish the look, she had a large golden cape that was accompanied with a matching gold headdress.

 “I take it that you’re not going to fight with the cape and the headdress,” Eskel observed with a smirk. “You are not the type of woman who’d fight at a disadvantage just to show up.”

 “I am not,” Nubia laughed. “They are just for show when making an entrance. I can assure you that I will remove them when I finish my entrance.”

 “The match will happen in five minutes,” Eskel informed Nubia as he checked his phone. “I am feeling tense about it.”

 “Me too,” Nubia admitted. “I may not show it behind my anger, but I am worried about the outcome of this match.”

 “You fought hundreds of opponents at the same time,” Eskel pointed out. “I am sure that you are in a different league than before.”

 “Yes,” Nubia smiled. “But it doesn’t make the fear of losing from not being present.”

 “You have something to protect by winning,” Eskel told Nubia by cupping her cheeks gently in his hands. “You have Samaria, the agency, and us. Evelyn has nothing. All that she has is a title that she doesn’t really need to be rich and famous. She’s just a vain woman who can’t deal with a blow to her ego.”

 “And what will happen if I lose?” Nubia asked. “Are you not afraid that I may have to change agencies? Are you afraid that you will no longer work at the Golden Nile?”

 “Yes,” Eskel admitted. “But my loyalty is to you. I don’t mind if Shun becomes your new manager and I work as a waiter at Club Nighthawk from now on. As long as I am with you, it will matter to me.”

 “And what about the girls?” Nubia asked.

 “I wrote recommendations to different gyms and agencies to deprive Evelyn of the satisfaction of owning them.” Eskel told Nubia. “Even if she wins, all she will be getting is an empty building.”

 “I don’t think Evelyn would mind that much since she cares more about possessions and status that she’ll have if she wins,” Nubia corrected him.

 “But if you fail, then you can face her again as a Cyclone Crusher,” Eskel pointed out. “She can’t say no to the most influential furry fighting team in Botaun. And she’d have more to lose this time.”

 “That does make losing not sound that bad,” Nubia smiled, knowing that she’d have Eskel and Shun to help her climb her way to the top.

 “If you fall down, I’ll help you to get back up,” Eskel promised. “Now it’s time for us to make our entrance for this title match.”

 “Let’s do this,” Nubia opened the door and walked alongside Eskel to the ring.

 “And now The Goddess makes her entrance!” the announcer spoke. “With eyes that allow her to see the future, Nubia makes her entrance. She’s showing a new costume to signify her first step into the championship match.”

 The crowd applauded Nubia’s look. The jackal removed her headdress and then her cape, giving them both to Eskel as she rested on the ropes.

 *I made a perfect entrance,* Nubia thought with a smile. *Once I win the belt, I will have to replicate it from now on.*

“And in the following corner, we have the Marvelous Mink! The Sonachi Champion, Evelyn Nydelig, makes her entrance to the ring for the first time in a long while to defend her title!”

 Evelyn was sitting in a throne as a ramp elevator was carrying her.

For her Combagal costume, she wore a black brassier and wrestling booty shorts with sequins.  She also wore barefoot black sequined kick pads that were complemented with black fingerless gloves. On top of her Combagal costume, she wore a VERY ostentatious sparkly dark indigo and black sleeved robe with a furred neck and trim with her name embroidered along the back.

 The mink was sitting indolently on her throne. As if she was bored with Nubia’s presence and didn’t consider her a worthy foe. Just to prove her arrogance even further, the Sonachi Championship belt was affixed on the headboard of the throne rather than being tied up around her waist. It was as if telling the world that the belt belonged to her and will remain with her as long as she wanted it to be rather than defend it like a champion should.

 *What kind of champion shows up with her belt tied up on an object?* Nubia thought with disgust as she watched Evelyn being carried to the ring. *The champion is supposed to wear the belt and show it to the crowd to show their willingness to fight for it. A recognition that they are betting the belt for the sake of proving their worth as champion.*

 The ramp elevator was put on the center of the ring. Evelyn daintily stepped out of her throne and removed her robes. She walked to the edge of her corner and gave it to some Sonachi Combagals who attended at her party.

 “This robe is worth more than any of you,” Nubia heard Evelyn whisper. “If you stain it or get it dirty, I will break your limbs one by one. Am I clear?”

 “Yes, Lady Nydelig!” the Combagals spoke.

 Nubia’s ears twitched when she recognized Kayru’s voice. The frog kunoichi was boxing to the mink alongside some Combagals that Nubia defeated in the past.

 Before Nubia could wonder what Kayru and the other Sonachi Combagals that she defeated were doing near the ring, she was awoken from her stupor by Evelyn. The mink was staring smugly at her. She had her arms crossed and smirked in anticipation.

 “Are you ready to face me, Nubia?” Evelyn asked cockily.

 “I am ready to face you and win,” Nubia told her. “After I beat you, I will take your belt, put it on my waist, and then sit on my throne as I relish on my victory over you.”

 “Nothing but cheap talk,” Evelyn snorted. “Also, I hope you don’t mind, but I bought a whole section of seats for some Combagals.”

 Nubia gasped when she saw a bunch of Sonachi Combagals sitting in front of her. Some of them she knew, others she fought, and others she didn’t get to meet. However, at the front row seats were the Sonachi Combagals that she defeated. The ones who were more interested in the match were Olympia, Ran, and Keiko. They were the previous ranking holders that Nubia defeated to earn the right to face Evelyn for a title match.

 “What kind of game are you playing?” Nubia asked.

 “I just want the audience to see you lose,” Evelyn told her. “I want the Combagals of Sonachi to know that I am the undisputed champion of this place.”

 “The only thing that you are going to show them is your dethroning, Evelyn,” Nubia told her. “I promise that this will be your last act of hubris as a champion.”

 “Whatever,” Evelyn waved a hand dismissively at Nubia. “I had my manager draw up the paper work for our little…arrangement. I promise not to break your dominant hand though. I need you to sign it after I beat you.”

 Nubia didn’t say anything. Instead, she just fixed a hard glare on Evelyn.

 *You will regret ever trying to look down on me as a Combagal and as a woman, Evelyn,* Nubia thought as she saw herself sitting on the throne. She was wearing the belt of Sonachi on her waist. And Evelyn was lying down at her feet in defeat.

 She snapped out of the vision, surprised at what she saw. Was she daydreaming? Or was it a premonition? Nubia wasn’t sure about it. All that she knew was that she needed to fight to make her dream into a reality.

 DING! DING!

 The bell rung. Both Combagals clashed at each other. Their hands were clasped as they engaged in a lock up. Nubia and Evelyn were trying to shove each other down. However, they were equally strong and skilled.

 “I know judo, but I am also trained in wrestling,” Evelyn bragged as she hooked a leg around Nubia’s leg and lunged to knock her down on the mat.

 “And I can see the future,” Nubia boasted as she wrapped her legs around Evelyn’s waist and squeezed hard.

 SQUEEZE!

 Nubia clenched her legs to squeeze Evelyn’s waist.

 “The fight starts with a lockup. Evelyn shows her wrestling expertise by tripping Nubia with a leg. However, Nubia counters with a scissor hold from her legs.”

 Evelyn took a deep breath and exhaled to make her body slimmer. She then slithered her way out of Nubia’s legs. She grabbed Nubia’s right foot and then wrapped both legs around her right leg while she used her hands to grab and twist her foot.

 “AAHHH!” Nubia screamed in pain.

 “How do you like my heel hook?” Evelyn told her. “It was a favorite technique of mine when I trained at furry fighting schools. I did it so many times that it became a trademark move.”

 “Evelyn slithers out of Nubia’s scissors and puts one of her legs in an ankle lock. The Goddess is screaming in pain from the pressure that Evelyn is putting on her.”

 “Break out of it, Nubia!” Eskel shouted in panic.

 Nubia lifted her left leg, raising it as far as she could and brought it down.

 WHAM!

 “AAH!” Evelyn broke the ankle hold as Nubia’s heel landed on her fingers. She broke the hold and started rolling on the ground.

 “That’s gotta hurt! Nubia counters the ankle hold by using a supine heel drop to crush Evelyn’s fingers. That’s one way to get out of the situation.”

 “You bitch!” Evelyn screamed. “I just had my manicure done. If I can’t play my piano after this, I will take your foot as my trophy.”

 The mink’s threats left her wide open for Nubia to sneak behind her. Nubia seized Evelyn’s sore arm and grabbed her wrist with the other hand. She then forced the arm behind Evelyn’s back, yanking it painfully upwards as Nubia sat on Evelyn’s back.

 “Nubia takes the chance to put Evelyn’ in a hammerlock. If this goes on, she may be able to defeat Evelyn in the shortest title match of furry fighting.”

 “For a champion, you were pretty weak,” Nubia told Evelyn. “You should have trained more rather than take your belt for granted.”

 “AAAAHHHH!” Evelyn screamed with agony. The sound caught Nubia by surprise as she lessened the strength of her hold.

 WHAM!

 Evelyn slammed the elbow of her other arm into Nubia’s diaphragm, knocking the wind out of her. Nubia gasped as Evelyn stood up, forced Nubia to stand up, slammed their hips together, and then she threw Nubia into the mat with a hip toss.

 “A reversal. Evelyn elbows Nubia in the diaphragm and then she throws her to the ground with a hip toss. If Nubia had kept the hammerlock going, she may have won the match.”

 *Something’s wrong!* Eskel thought. *Nubia made sure to practice every submission hold that she knew on me back when she was first training to be a Combagal. There’s no way that she’d mess up a hold when she was on the brink of being a champion. Something happened that made her hesitate at the last moment.*

BOOM!

 Nubia rolled out of the way when she saw the black padded sole of Evelyn about to land on her face. She stood up angrily as she stared at a disappointed Evelyn.

 “Why did you roll out of the way?” Evelyn complained. “Axe kicks are a good finishing move to make the audience cheer on their seats. Besides, I was going to use my sole rather than my heel to smother you unconscious.”

 “You played dirty,” Nubia pointed an accusing finger at Evelyn as they circled each other. “You pretended that your arm was broken to make me lower my guard. Is that what you call a tactic worthy of a champion?”

 “Some air popped into my joint,” Evelyn replied shamelessly. “I thought that I had something broken because of it. Besides, you are the one at fault for not knowing when you are breaking a joint or not.”

 *How can a champion be so shameless?* Nubia thought with disgust. *Is there no line that she’s not willing to cross to keep her belt?*

 “Diamond Dust!” Evelyn shouted as she dashed forward and pulled back her arm.

BAM!

She threw a palm strike to Nubia’s chin. The heel of her hand struck her on the jaw, leaving Nubia stunned from the blow. Despite her cowardly fighting style, Evelyn still had a decent strike that was worthy of a champion.

WHAM! BAM! POW! CRACK!

Evelyn moved with surprising grace as she struck Nubia with a flurry of kicks and elbow strikes to the face and torso. The soles of her feet struck Nubia’s nose with a front kick, her throat with a side kick, her stomach with back kick, and the back of her head with a roundhouse kick. The kicks were liner to ensure maximum speed while ensuring lots of damage. And to prevent Nubia from countering, Evelyn added some spin into her footwork. She threw elbows to the ribs, back, chest, stomach, and some jumping elbow drops on the shoulders and head.

 “The champion shows that she’s not going to give up her belt so easily. She’s using her Diamond Dust to beat up Nubia with a flurry of elbows and kicks. She won’t stop until Nubia’s been pummeled into submission or she grows tired of attacking.”

 POW!

 Evelyn struck Nubia’s stomach with a side kick that pushed her back. As Nubia lifted her head up, she saw Evelyn running straight at her with her arm outstretched.

 WHAM!

 A clothesline struck Nubia in the throat, knocking her down on the mat.

 POW!

 Evelyn’s foot stepped on Nubia’s head, pinning it to the ground. For extra dominance, she ground her foot on Nubia’s cheek.

 “The Diamond Dust is the least of Nubia’s troubles. As soon as she gets knocked out of range, Evelyn send her down with a running clothesline. And then she steps on her head for good measure, establishing her dominance over the jackal.”
 “It’s not too late to tap out,” Evelyn leaned down, as if trying to convince Nubia that giving up was the right choice for her.

 Nubia didn’t say anything. For the second time in her entire life, she was too angry to say anything. It was the same kind of anger that she had when she beat up Hudergan for trying to rape her years ago. She was protecting her virginity back then. But now she was defending something else. She was defending her pride as a Combagal from someone unworthy of being called a champion.

 She hated everything about Evelyn. She hated how the mink was willing to do bribing and blackmailing to keep her title. She hated how she was willing to fake an injury to get an advantage. And she hated how she had the nerve of stepping on her face with that teasing foot.

 *This is the first and last time that I will let any foe plant their foot on my face,* Nubia thought angrily as she grabbed the mink’s ankle. *I will not let this fight end like this.!*

 “Let go off my foot!” Evelyn demanded as she tried to lift her ankle.

 WHAM!

 Nubia rolled out of the way and wrapped her legs around Evelyn’s ankle, putting her in the same ankle lock that Evelyn put on her during their initial exchange.

 “Vengeance is a bitch! Nubia rolls out of Evelyn’s hold and subjects her to an ankle lock. The mink screams in pain as she’s a victim to her own technique.”

 “How dare you use one of my trademark moves against me?” Evelyn growled angrily.

 Nubia would have told her that the ankle lock didn’t belong to the mink and that anyone who knew how to use it had the right to perform it. But the black jackal was pissed at the mink for exploiting her kindness to get the upper hand in the fight. She was done holding back.

 “Answer me, you bitch!” Evelyn shouted as she crawled back to escape the hold, slipping her slender foot and leg out of Nubia’s punishing limbs.

 “Shut up and fight,” Nubia told Evelyn as she glared at her with the Goddess Eyes.

 Evelyn charged at Nubia, using palm strikes and chops. She was using palms to easily transition into holds. And the chops used the principle of judo to use the whole body weight when making an attack as if she were swinging a sword.

 Meanwhile, Nubia was using her wushu to attack with punches, palms, kicks, and elbows. The exchange of strikes was of high levels.

 Nubia was the one who managed to give the most strikes since she was a striker. However, Evelyn’s strikes were not to be underestimated. Nubia was still on the defensive even as she attacked the mink. During the few times that Evelyn hit her, she did feel a bit of damage.

 *I have to hit her with Diamond Dust again!* Evelyn thought as she managed to land a palm strike to Nubia’s snout.

 *That Diamond Dust is strong, but it’s nothing against my Black Sandstorm!* Nubia thought as she powered through the palm strike and prepared to attack.

 “BLACK SANDSTORM!”

 “DIAMOND DUST!”

 The black jackal and the white mink clashed in a flurry of fists and feet. Their strikes landed on each other. Some times they were blocked. Other times they were countered. Another few times, they were deflected.

 “It’s a slugfest between Nubia and Evelyn as they use their combo moves to beat the stuffing out of each other. They are both equally match as they go full throttle. Oh! Look at that! They are slowing down! They are starting to lose fuel.”

 Nubia and Evelyn stopped in their tracks. They were panting with exhaustion as they tried to remain standing. The continued high speed attacks and the damage that they accumulated prevented them from attacking further.

 *What’s wrong with this woman?* Evelyn thought with frustration. *All of the Combagals I fought should have been defeated by now. But she’s still going strong.*

Then there was that glare. Throughout the fight, Nubia was glaring down at Evelyn, as if she were an obstacle. An insect that needed to be crushed beneath her foot. She was not going to tolerate such an insult from an inferior being.

 “I’ve had enough of you!” Evelyn shouted as she tackled Nubia. She smashed her hip on Nubia’s hit so that she stood sideways from her. Then she put her in a front face lock with one arm as she grabbed Nubia’s leg with her other arm.

“Have a taste of my Stamp of Disapproval!” Evelyn used her judo training to lift Nubia and then used a backwards throw to slam Nubia’s head to the ground.

BAM!

“AAAHH!” Nubia screamed as she cradled her head. The vision of herself standing on the throne changed to one of Evelyn remaining on that throne. It was as if her foresight was telling her that Evelyn guaranteed the victory with that throw.

“Evelyn uses the Stamp of Disapproval to slam Nubia’s head into the mat. Normally, this move is a knockout. But Nubia remains conscious enough to feel the pain.”

WHAM!

Evelyn followed with an elbow drop that knocked the air out of Nubia. She was choking from the pain and agony that she was enduring.

“And she’s not taking any chances! Evelyn follow with an elbow drop.”

The audience cheered for her. Evelyn stared at Nubia’s body. She wasn’t moving. Without waiting for confirmation, Evelyn turned to wave at her adoring fans.

“That’s it, my fans!” Evelyn sent kisses to the fans. She even winked at a couple of attractive males in the front row. “I am still your champion.”

“My eyes are behind you!”

Evelyn turned around to see Nubia cartwheeling towards her. The sole of her foot struck Evelyn’s temple. Then the other foot struck her chest. As soon as she landed, Nubia struck Evelyn on the stomach with a front punch and then knocked her down with a front kick to the face.

“Nubia recovers from Evelyn’s assault. Nubia uses Ra’s Judgment to land a combo the moment that Evelyn drops her guard. Should have waited until the referee declared the match over.”

“You little sneak,” Evelyn stood up angrily as she glared at Nubia. “I’ll teach you not to attack me from behind.”

The crowd gasped. Evelyn felt something wet on her temple, right where the first kick of Ra’s Judgment landed. She put her hand on the side of her head and was horrified to see blood leaking out of it. Nubia didn’t just hit her. She gave her a cut in her precious face.

“RRAAAAAHHHHH!” Evelyn shrieked as she advanced towards Nubia.

The mink used hands and claws in an attempt to claw Nubia’s face.

“How dare you cut my face?!” Evelyn shrieked. “My beautiful face is ruined! I’ll break you until there’s nothing left of you.”

“You shouldn’t be into furry fighting if you don’t like your face injured,” Nubia was able to dodge Evelyn’s swipes thanks to her Goddess Eyes.

“I’ll ruin those good looks, you ice queen!” Evelyn shouted as she threw a palm strike to the face. As Nubia dodged it, she spread her thumb in an attempt to do an eye gouge. She knew how much pride Nubia held in her eyes, so she was going to deprive her of them.

Nubia ducked down, making Evelyn’s thumb claw slice into her eyebrow. The cut was shallow, but it still caused a lot of blood to leak down into her eye, blinding it.

*She’s gone berserk!* Nubia thought as she panted. *If my True Goddess Sight had not given me a premonition, I would have lost an eye right there and then.*

The outcome of the fight was rapidly changing in front of Nubia. She saw herself sitting on the throne and then she saw herself at the feet of Evelyn. Either outcome was possible with the way this fight was flowing. The only way to win was to ensure that her victory was happening.

“Nubia and Evelyn are once again even. Nubia bloodied Evelyn’s temple with her Ra’s Judgment while Evelyn manages to perform a barrage that bloodies Nubia’s eyebrow. Either Combagal can win the match in the next few moments.”

“You are strong,” Nubia admitted as she wiped the blood from her brow so that she could see better. “It’s a shame that your skills are wasted on you.”

“What was that?” Evelyn asked.

“I studied your matches as soon as I defeated Keiko,” Nubia told her. “You are a gifted fighter, Evelyn. I will recognize that. However, your poor sportsmanship and your lack of competitive drive make your skills matter nothing. Whatever Combagal spirit you had died as soon as you claimed the belt and decided to settle there rather than continue your pursuit to be the best.”

“You don’t have any right to talk to me like you know me!” Evelyn shouted as she charged at Nubia. “I’m the Sonachi Champion, and no outsider will tell me how to act!”

“You sound more like a spoiled brat than a Combagal,” Nubia muttered as she charged at Evelyn, ready to fight her in a slugfest.

WHAM! POW! CRACK! POW! WHAM! PA! PA! CRACK! POW!

They were no longer using their martial arts. It was a bare-knuckle fight where all of their anger, hatred, and disgust for each other was showing up to the crowd. Everyone remained glued to the edge of their seats as they tried not to miss a single second of it. Nubia kept attacking. She couldn’t use her Goddess Eyes with blood covering one of her eyes. Relying on the prediction of one eye was going to mess up with her timing. She needed to fight blind to see who remained standing.

“Why are you fighting so hard for this title?” Evelyn demanded angrily. “You are not even a citizen of Botaun. Why does it matter if I have the belt or not!”

Nubia deflected a punch from Evelyn as she lifted a leg and chambered it for a kick.

“You have no ambition or aspiration,” Nubia prepared to throw a high thrust side kick to Evelyn’s face. “I owe no explanation to you!”

CRACK!

Nubia’s foot collided hard with Evelyn’s mouth. It looked like half of Evelyn’s face was caved in by Nubia’s sole before she was knocked to the ground. Blood and spit flew out of her mouth. But Nubia saw something else. She knew what it was because she felt it crack beneath her pads. A tooth was flying in the air. It was a fang that was dancing on the air before it landed on the mat, right at Evelyn’s feet.

“It’s unbelievable. Nubia manages to win the slugfest by striking Evelyn in the mouth with a superkick. The impact is such that she knocked a tooth out of her mouth.”

The narration got Evelyn to stand up. The words of the commentator repeated themselves inside of her head. Her tooth was knocked out of her mouth. She stared down at her feet and noticed that it was a fang. Reflexively, she ran her tongue across her upper teeth. She had a line of perfect teeth that she brushed and whitened. She even made sure to eat meals with plenty of meat to ensure their shape and refused to eat anything that would hinder their shape. She felt a space in the right corner of her mouth. Her incisor was gone. She licked the space, feeling the edges of the other tooth and then the gum at the top.

 *My tooth is gone!* Evelyn thought as she teared up. *My perfect smile is broken! I can never show my teeth again in a smile when I pose for a magazine! She ruined my face!*

“EEEYYYYAAAHHHH!” Evelyn shrieked as she dashed forward.

 WOOSH! WOOSH! CRACK! POW! SLASH!

 The mink’s attacks were wilder than ever. She was faster and stronger. Even with Nubia predicting her attacks, she realized that the mink’s ferocity was more troublesome. Rather than seeing Evelyn sitting in a throne, she saw Evelyn wailing strangling Nubia’s prone body.

 *She’s going to kill me!* Nubia thought as she kept blocking the attacks, feeling pain for every blow that she blocked from Evelyn.

 CRACK!

 Evelyn kneed Nubia in the gut.

 POW!

 She crossed her arms and hit Nubia’s head with a hammer blow that knocked her on the mat.

 With Nubia lying down on the floor, Evelyn sat down on Nubia’s back to apply a hold. She grabbed Nubia’s wrists so that she could cross them under Nubia’s chin. She then pulled back on the wrists so yank the arms and choke Nubia with them.

 “Evelyn’s gone berserk! She’s using her Mink Jacket to strangle Nubia with her own arms. I’ve seen Evelyn use this move many times in her career, but this looks like the most painful version of the move yet. Just look at the expression of agony in Nubia’s face.”

 “You damaged my face and ruined my smile!” Evelyn listed the “crimes” that Nubia committed against her. “I’ll break your body so that you’ll never stand in the ring again. And I’ll maul your face off so that I can never see it again!”

 “Your vanity is sickening,” Nubia grunted as she resisted the pain. “If you don’t want your face to be injured, then it’s you who shouldn’t set foot on the ring.”

 “At least I am proud of my beauty!” Evelyn yanked Nubia’s arms to further strangle her. “I am proud enough of my looks to let men near me. You are nothing more than a frigid bitch who let one ugly dude deprive her of a good time with handsome men.”

 “Don’t you dare act like you know how it feels,” Nubia snarled as she tried to fight back. “You don’t know what it’s like to be touched by male and female and remember that night.”

 “Maybe if you let a man in your bed you wouldn’t be such a bitch,” Evelyn taunted. “I know that you are the only jackal in Botaun. I know that you have no parents or family. You were unwanted and alone. You should have left this city when you had the chance.”

 Evelyn meant to break Nubia’s fighting spirit. Instead, she did the opposite. She reignited Nubia’s desire to fight back.

 “I may be a rare breed,” Nubia growled as she was lifting her upper body with her waist, weakening the hold that Evelyn had on her. “But I have a manager who supported me at my darkest moment. And I have a bunch of Combagals who’d rather quit Golden Nile to support me rather than serve under you. I am not alone anymore.”

 Nubia used her legs to stomp the ground one at a time to take a horse stance. The stomps that she did allowed her to stand up and knock Evelyn to the ground.

 “AGH!” Evelyn shouted as her back collided on the mat. She tried to stand up, but Nubia mounted her and started strangling her with two hands.

 “Nubia uses a horse stance to escape from the Mink Jacket! She then strangles Evelyn with a two-handed choke!”

 Evelyn couldn’t breathe. She started to throw punches at Nubia’s sides and face. However, Nubia wasn’t damaged at all. She was snarling angrily at the mink for pushing her buttons throughout the entire fight.

 *She’s going to kill me!* Evelyn thought with desperation.

 “I’m sorry,” Evelyn squeaked out as tears were coming out of her eyes. “Don’t hurt me anymore, Nubia! It hurts!”

 Nubia froze when she realized that she wasn’t strangling Evelyn anymore. She was a younger version of herself. Nubia remembered who she was when she was serving Hudergan. She was drunk with power. She relished on the power that the sumiguza gave her. But deep down, she was scared and insecure. She enjoyed the privileges because she had a lifetime of suffering. She had a safe haven where she could grow. She didn’t realize the mistake she made until Hudergan made his move on her.

 The jackal reflexively let go of Evelyn’s neck. Once she was free, Evelyn’s fear turned into rage as she spun and hit Nubia with an elbow to the side of the head.

 BAM!

 Nubia was knocked down with the elbow impacting her temple. She was sent rolling on the mat as Evelyn mounted her and started wailing on her.

 “I’m the Queen of Sonachi!” Evelyn declared hysterically. “I’m at the top of the hill! I’m beauty and wealth made flesh! You are nothing but a street bitch who got lucky!”

 She kept pounding on Nubia, who was crossing her arms to defend herself. As she kept attacking, she noticed something different. Her fans were staring at her in shock, as if she was a different person than the queen that they admired.

 “What the hell are you looking at?!” Evelyn shouted at the audience, making them flinch as she stopped her attack on Nubia.

 “After being strangled, Evelyn manages to escape with an elbow to the side of the head. She whales on Nubia, but her onslaught makes her look like a madwoman. Every one in the arena is shocked at how different she looks.”

 SMACK!

 Nubia’s hands clapped Evelyn’s ears stunning her. The jackal waked from behind Evelyn and jabbed at her throat and jaw with finger strikes that stimulated pressure points that froze her in pain and left her stunned. A double palm strike hit her stomach and diaphragm. And then Nubia’s foot was obscuring her feature, suspended in front of her face without hitting her.

 WHAM!

 The inch between the sole and her face disappeared as Nubia hit her with a one-inch kick, sending her rolling to the other side of the ring. As Evelyn tried to stand back up again, Nubia got behind her and put her in a sleeping hold.

 “Nubia uses Evelyn’s outburst to her advantage. She uses Apep’s Punishment to pummel her and then puts her in a sleeper hold to choke her again.”

 “It is as I said,” Nubia whispered into Evelyn’s ear. “Your vanity is sickening. Your mask has been lifted and now your admirers and colleagues can see you for who you really are.”

 “Stop looking at me like that,” Evelyn croaked at them, not feeling any shame at all.

 “You are getting weaker,” Nubia informed her as she saw a vision of herself sitting on the throne with Evelyn on the floor. “You can still end this fight with dignity. Tap out.”

 “I refuse,” Evelyn spat out.

 Nubia narrowed her eyes and tightened the grip. In a few seconds, Evelyn was no longer resisting and Nubia shoved her to the ground. The mink was panting, seeing Nubia looming over her beaten form. The jackal’s eyes were full of pity and disgust.

 “End the match,” Nubia told the referee. “Evelyn is in no condition to fight.”

 “Don’t you turn your back on me!” Evelyn stood up and sprinted at Nubia, ready to continue the fight and avenge her dignity.

 CRACK!

 Nubia’s heel struck her in the temple, making her fall to the ground.

 DING! DING! DING!

 “The match is over, Nubia defeated Evelyn with a roundhouse heel kick to the head. We are now crowning the new Sonachi Champion!”

 Nubia’s ears twitched as she heard the crowd cheering for her.

 “You did it, Nubia!” Eskel approached Nubia and hugged her to congratulate her. “How are you feeling?”

 “I am feeling better than ever,” Nubia raised a hand in victory and then she saw the throne.

 Without saying a word, Nubia climbed at the ramp and sat on the throne.

 “What are you doing?” Evelyn spoke, recovering from unconsciousness surprisingly quickly. She was staring at Kayru and the other Sonachi Combagals that she brought. “Don’t let that intruder take my throne. Only I am allowed to sit there.”

 Kayru and other Sonachi Combagals tried to stand up. However, Nubia turned her head around and glared at them with bared fangs. She was growling and snarling, threatening them with unmeasurable pain if any of them dared to get between her and the belt.

 To everybody’s surprise, Nubia was suddenly flanked by Olympia, Keiko, and Ran. The three contenders that she fought before were turning their back on the throne, defending it from Evelyn and the other Sonachi Combagals.

 “Nubia won the title match, Evelyn,” Olympia scolded. “Us Sonachi Combagals don’t have to listen to you anymore.”

 “And even then, you were an unworthy champion,” Ran was stoic, but the displeasure was evident in her face as she stared at the mink. “If you had bothered to remain the contender that you used to be, you would have either kept the belt or lost it with more dignity.”

 “Never truly liked you, Evelyn,” Keiko took a swig of her gourd. “You were always a pain in the ass and a spoiled brat. It was time you got a good spanking.”

 Kayru suddenly knelt. And this was followed by the other Sonachi Combagals. The only ones who didn’t kneel were Olympia, Ran, and Keiko, who already swore loyalty to Nubia.

 Without saying a word, Nubia removed the Sonachi Belt from the fixture of the throne. She then tied the belt around her waist and sat on the throne, looking like a goddess ruling over her domain.

 Evelyn was dumbstruck, trembling at the sight of Nubia wearing her belt. It was like she was denying and processing her loss at the same time.

 “Enjoy what comes next,” Eskel told her coldly as he pointed behind her. “You deserve it.”

 The mink stared at her male admirers. All of them shocked at her behavior throughout the match. She panicked and started to use her hands to groom herself. She even tried to put on her missing tooth back on her mouth.

 “You know,” one of the fans spoke. “You’re actually pretty ugly right now.”

 He removed his merchandise and threw it to the ground. This was followed by the other fans who got rid of the banners, shirts, and merchandise that featured Evelyn.

 “AAAAAHHHHHHH!” Evelyn wailed as she realized that her career was ruined. The paramedics rushed at the mink, trying to get her to the infirmary.

 And so, Evelyn Nydelig’s last day as the Sonachi Champion ended in a complete disgrace.

 Two days after the match, Nubia and Eskel were eating lunch with Olympia, Ran, and Keiko. The invitation was a display of gratefulness from Nubia for their loyalty towards her when she was crowned the Sonachi Champion.

 “Thank you three for the loyalty that you showed me during my match with Evelyn,” Nubia made a toast to the three Combagals who supported her at her coronation.

 “You helped me during my time of need,” Olympia remarked. “My manager is giving me more breaks so that I can rest and not be overworked. I was replaying a favor.”

 “I didn’t have the power to defeat Evelyn,” Ran admitted. “But you did have the potential. I am glad that I don’t have to serve her anymore.”

 “Evelyn threw kickass parties, but she had an attitude problem,” Keiko admitted. “I am sure that I can have fun with you. Do you want some of my brew? Made it myself this morning.”

 “No, thanks,” Nubia winced in disgust at imagining drinking something made out of the panda’s bare feet. “But I appreciate the offer.”

 The group was watching a news coverage about the Sonachi Champion. Because of the intense match between Nubia and Evelyn, the news reports were glad to describe the action.

 “They’re still going strong,” Keiko smirked. “Can’t turn my TV on without seeing you kicking Evelyn’s ass on the news.”

 “But there’s always something new to show based on the reporter who is telling the story,” Olympia stated.

 “And we are having some bad news,” Ran pointed a wing at the television.

 “Since her disgraceful defeat against Nubia, Evelyn Nydelig, the former Sonachi Champion, underwent a heel turn. She now goes by the name of Manic Mink Nydelig. And she already made her debut by defeating her opponent this morning in record time.”

 Evelyn was now wearing a black shredded prom dress that was outfitted with spikes and studs to look tough. The skirt was torn apart to expose her slender legs as she no longer wore kick pads to protect her feet. She had running mascara running down her face, the same mascara that she wore and ruined during her fight with Nubia. And she had a gold tooth on her mouth that she was flashing proudly. Furthermore, she also wore a collar with her original tooth on her neck. As the news report was showing Evelyn fighting, Nubia turned off the television.

 “I think that we’ve already seen enough of Evelyn for a while,” Nubia sighed, not wanting to think about the mink after the match that they had.

 “You should be careful though,” Ran advised. “Evelyn was a lot tougher when she was a challenger than when she was a champion. And now that she has a grudge against you and no reason to care about her image, she’s going to be more dangerous than before.”

 “Better look for her,” Nubia snarked, which made Olympia and Keiko chuckle. Even Ran gave a small smirk at the comment.

 “You beat her once and you can beat her again,” Keiko declared casually. “Besides, I’m sure that you’re gonna be much stronger than her by the next time you fight each other.”

 “Just remember that you will always have us to support you,” Olympia promised.

 “Thank you,” Nubia offered her glass of wine for a toast. The girls joined the toast and finished their meal as they talked about their matches.

 Once the girls were gone, Nubia returned to her penthouse with Eskel.

 “What are you going to do now, Nubia?” Eskel asked. “You are already a district champion? Are you going to focus on doing title defenses?”

 “I don’t plan on settling with just a title defense,” Nubia rolled her eyes. “I plan on doing more. I want to win the Botaun Championship to become the Botaun Champion and participate in the Queens of Fighters Tournament. I will not stop fighting until I reach the top.”

 “I had a feeling that you were going to say that,” Eskel smiled proudly at his Combagal. “Unlike Evelyn, you were never going to settle for Sonachi. You are going beyond that. But you will face some brutal competition in the future.”

 “I heard that there has been a revolution regarding championships since the Cookie Crumble Match,” Leona observed as she turned on the television and stared at the news coverage.

 The first thing that she saw was Leona Manehart, the daughter of King Regulus, having an interview about her most recent match against Layla Arslan.

 “How did it feel to fight against Layla?” an interviewer asked.

 “It was an intense fight,” Leona admitted. “Layla was an acquaintance, but I never realized how personally she took the rivalry of our fathers. I just hope that we can move past this rivalry and start from scratch.”

 *I see a woman who has lots of expectations as she struggles to forge her own story away from the legacy of her mentor and the legacy of her father,* Nubia thought as she used her True Goddess Sight to see what kind of woman Leona was.

 The next one was Loba Wolfwood. She was showing her Muay Thai to people and even giving lessons. The wolf Combagal looked different from her early days.

 “Muay Thai is a hard martial art to master,” Loba told the camera. “You need to endure pain to harden your body. And you still need to figure out what move to use like you use on boxing.”

 *I see that Loba has matured as a Combagal,* Nubia thought with pride about her prototype partner. *She’s no longer bound by her desire to fight. She wants to know the meaning of it as she engages in combat with her rivals and strives to better understand herself.*

The next one that she saw was Mina Cottonfield. She was doing a beach volleyball competition with her agency against the Combagals of another agency.

 *I see an insecure young woman who is trying to find her place in the world of furry fighting,* Nubia thought. *She’s a bit naïve, but she has the potential of becoming a great Combagal.*

The last report that she saw was Lugale doing a title defense. It was a flawless victory for the snake Kalandesian. Her opponent was severely beaten and traumatized.

 *I sense danger coming out of this Combagal,* Nubia thought as she felt more stressed out than what she felt when she fought against Evelyn. *If I am going to become the champion of Botaun, I need to be better to defeat her.*

“We have a lot of work to do, Eskel,” Nubia declared. “We have to prepare for the road head. It will be much harder than Sonachi, so I need your full support.”

 “I’ll always be there for you, Nubia,” Eskel promised.

Nubia smiled. She didn’t know what the future awaited for her. But, even without the True Goddess Sight, Nubia was aware of the challenges ahead of her. And she was looking forward to face them.