

H. Academy 883

Chapter 883 Integrating Into

"Hey, have you gotten out of Silver yet?"

Irina stiffened.

Julia noticed instantly.

Her smirk widened. "Oh my god."

Irina's fingers twitched, her flames sparking at her fingertips. She had tried. She had really tried.

And she should have ranked up already. She was better than this.

But no.

Because every single game had been filled with inters.

Teammates running it down.

Supports wandering off to jungle instead of protecting her.

People AFKing at the worst possible moment.

Absolute brainless morons ruining her matches.

And worst of all—

Julia knew.

"Puahahaha!" Julia burst out laughing, doubling over. "You're still in Silver?! Oh, this is too good—"

FWOOOSH!

A blast of fire shot straight at her.

Julia yelped, barely dodging as a scorch mark sizzled on the ground where she had just been standing.

"Whoa—hey!" she laughed, still grinning. "That's not my fault!"

Irina huffed, crossing her arms. "It is your fault for bringing it up."

Julia wiped fake tears from her eyes, still cackling. "No, no—this is amazing. Irina Emberheart, top combat cadet, future heir to the Emberheart family... still hardstuck Silver!"

Irina glared daggers at her, flames coiling around her fingertips.

Julia took a step back. "Alright, alright, I'll stop—before you actually set me on fire."

Irina let out a sharp breath, shaking off the pure frustration that was bubbling up inside her.

But then—

A thought clicked.

'Right?'

She was in a bad mood. Furious, irritated, on edge.

But that didn't mean she had to waste it.

Julia was still grinning like she had just won something. But Irina wasn't losing again today.

Her golden eyes gleamed as an idea formed.

A way to use this sour mood for something productive.

She smirked, stretching her arms.

Julia's grin faltered, her sharp blue eyes narrowing.

"Wait a second," she said, crossing her arms. "Why are you smiling?"

Irina rolled her shoulders, golden eyes practically glowing with something dangerous. "What? Can't I be in a good mood?"

Julia scoffed. "No. Absolutely not. You were just ready to explode a minute ago, and now you're smirking? That's suspicious."

Irina exhaled through her nose, a lazy smirk still lingering at the corner of her lips.

"I just got an idea."

Julia stared. "...Okay. I hate that. What kind of idea?"

Irina tilted her head, clearly enjoying this. "Wouldn't you like to know?"

Julia blinked. Then, slowly, she leaned in, her gaze piercing.

"You're plotting something," she accused. "You never let things go, and now you've decided to be calm?"

Irina shrugged. "Maybe I just realized I can use this mood for something."

Julia hated this.

Because Irina being pissed? Normal. Expected.

Irina being calm and scheming?

That meant someone—**probably Julia herself**—**was about to suffer.

Julia was about to push further when the sound of footsteps echoed down the hallway.

Both girls turned, their conversation momentarily interrupted as more cadets exited the locker rooms.

From one side, Ethan and Carl walked out, still mid-conversation.

From the other, Lilia, Sylvie, Jasmine, and Layla emerged together, their expressions shifting the moment they spotted Irina and Julia.

"Yo," Ethan greeted, nodding toward them. "You guys still here?"

His hazel eyes flickered with mild curiosity, as if trying to gauge what exactly they had been discussing.

Julia, still wary of Irina's newfound calmness, waved a dismissive hand. "Oh, you know, just talking about important things."

Carl, as usual, remained silent beside Ethan, his expression unreadable. He barely even acknowledged their presence, simply standing there like an immovable wall of quiet indifference.

Lilia, standing a little off to the side, had her usual composed air about her. Her long green hair cascaded over one shoulder, catching the soft hallway lighting just right, complementing her effortlessly cool beauty. Her sharp red eyes surveyed the scene with a detached sort of awareness, but she didn't comment, simply watching as if she had already analyzed everything of importance.

From the corner of her eye, Sylvie was watching her. Just briefly. Just enough that no one would notice—except, of course, for Jasmine, who always noticed.

"Yo," Jasmine greeted, waving a hand toward both Ethan and Lilia. Her green eyes swept toward Irina next, her usual grin in place. "You guys sticking around or what?"

Irina crossed her arms. "We were just finishing up."

"Good timing, then," Jasmine said with a casual shrug. "We're heading out. Gonna grab something to eat."

Layla stretched her arms over her head before glancing between the group. "Yeah, no point standing around here forever."

Sylvie, still standing slightly behind Jasmine, finally shifted. Her gaze flickered toward Irina, then back toward Lilia—just a quick glance, but one filled with quiet observation. It was as if she was trying to compare something—though even she wasn't sure what.

Irina, for her part, had caught the look. She said nothing, her golden eyes glinting slightly, but the small smirk that crept onto her lips suggested she had definitely noticed.

Lilia, however, seemed unaffected, still standing there with an air of effortless coolness. If she had noticed Sylvie's glance, she gave no indication of it.

Jasmine waved a hand again, stepping back. "Alright, we're off. See you guys later."

Sylvie hesitated for half a second before following after her, while Layla fell in line beside her without question. As they walked away, Sylvie's gaze flickered once more—first at Irina, then at Lilia.

As the others disappeared down the hallway, Irina leaned back against the lockers, crossing her arms. A knowing glint flickered in her golden eyes as she arched an eyebrow.

"You guys were in the same training session?"

Ethan, who had been watching the departing group for a moment longer, nodded. "Yeah."

Carl remained silent beside him, his usual quiet presence unwavering.

Irina tilted her head slightly. "And? How'd that go?"

Ethan let out a short breath, shaking his head. "The teams were unbalanced as hell."

Irina raised an eyebrow. "That bad?"

"Lilia and Carl were on the same team."

Julia, who had been listening, let out a sharp laugh. "Wait, what?" She turned fully toward them, looking between Ethan and Carl as if expecting them to be joking. "Lilia and Carl? Together? Who the hell set that up?"

Ethan huffed a quiet laugh, still clearly annoyed. "No clue. But yeah, it was me, Layla, and Sylvie against them."

"Sylvie was in yours?" Irina repeated, a flicker of curiosity crossing her face.

"Yep. Sylvie, that girl Layla, and me were a team," Ethan confirmed. "And apparently, Lilia, Carl, and Jasmine were on defending."

"Wow," Julia deadpanned, nodding as if she had just come to a serious realization. "That is really unbalanced."

Ethan let out a dry chuckle. "Yeah. Tell me about it."

Carl, still silent, simply nodded once in agreement.

Irina smirked. "So let me guess—you lost?"

Ethan exhaled through his nose, glancing away. "Yeah."

Julia snickered. "Man, that's rough."

"Even with Sylvie?"

Irina raised an eyebrow, genuine curiosity flickering across her face. Unlike Julia, who was just poking fun, she actually wanted to know.

Ethan immediately picked up on it.

Irina already knew about Sylvie's talents. She had scouted her early on, after all.

"Indeed," Ethan admitted with a small exhale. "Even with Sylvie."

Irina's eyes remained steady on him, waiting. Expecting more.

Ethan ran a hand through his hair, still feeling the weight of the match. "Though I must admit," he continued, his voice quieter now, more thoughtful, "I could feel why you went for her immediately when we were picking teams back then."

Irina smirked slightly but didn't say anything.

"Her enchantments are really something," Ethan went on. "Her barriers, her support spells—her control over them is ridiculously precise. Even when I wasn't paying attention, she was adjusting her magic to fit my movements. And her cleansing ability?" He let out a dry chuckle. "That was beyond anything I expected."

Irina hummed in acknowledgment but then muttered under her breath, almost too quiet to catch.

"Well, you haven't even seen her 'talent' yet..."

After all, Irina herself knew the real talent of Sylvie.