

H. Academy 907

Chapter 907 Good morning

Irina huffed, crossing her arms, trying to ignore the way her heart refused to calm down.

"Hmph. Acting all cheeky now, are we?" she muttered, narrowing her eyes.

Astron barely glanced up from whatever he was reading, completely unbothered.

"Am I?"

Irina twitched. This guy...

Without a second thought, she reached for his side, slipping her fingers under the hem of his shirt and pinching the skin beneath.

Astron didn't react.

Didn't jolt. Didn't even flinch.

Instead, he simply turned a page in his book, completely indifferent to her attack.

"Trying to retaliate?"

Irina gritted her teeth. "I swear, you're impossible."

Her fingers lingered against his bare skin longer than they should have, and that's when she felt it.

The heat.

Astron's body was warm.

Warmer than she expected, almost too warm, like he naturally radiated heat. The firm, solid feel of muscle beneath her fingertips sent an unwanted shiver down her spine, but she quickly masked it with another pinching motion—just so she wouldn't dwell on it.

Astron still didn't react.

Just let her do as she pleased.

Irina exhaled sharply, muttering under her breath as she finally pulled her hand back. Damn it. That was a mistake.

She stepped over to him, shifting her weight, curiosity flickering through her mind as she caught sight of the glowing screen in front of him.

"What are you even reading?" she asked, placing a hand on his shoulder and leaning slightly over him to see.

Astron turned the screen slightly, revealing the contents of the book he had been reading.

Irina blinked, her eyes scanning the title.

It was the same book he had been reading recently—the one on psychic magic and the mechanics of the mind.

She frowned slightly. He's still reading this?

"You're really into this stuff, huh?" she muttered, shifting her weight as she sat beside him.

Astron didn't look up, merely turning another page with the same composed patience. "It is necessary."

Irina tilted her head. "So... have you been getting better?"

Astron nodded, the movement subtle, almost absentminded. "Indeed."

Her eyebrows lifted. She hadn't expected such a direct answer. "Oh? So you've actually figured things out?"

Astron's fingers tapped against the edge of the screen, his gaze calm as he flipped to a specific section in the book. "Quite a lot, actually."

Irina squinted at the page. Dense text. Complex diagrams illustrating neural pathways, psychic flow, and magical resonance within the mind.

"You figured out the basics?" she asked, already knowing the answer.

Astron turned another page before answering. "Both the basics and higher-rank techniques."

Irina stiffened slightly.

Not because she was shocked.

But because she knew exactly what that meant.

Psychic magic was delicate. Intricate. It wasn't the kind of thing you just picked up like swordplay or elemental casting. It required control, an innate understanding of the mind's mechanics, a steady balance of mental energy.

She knew this.

Because she had learned the foundations of it.

Her own psychic magic was decent—good enough for practical use, good enough that she could cast Mind Whisper without issue.

But that was it.

She had never wanted to go further. Never felt the need to refine it beyond the bare minimum.

Because at the end of the day—

She was a fire mage first.

That was her strength. Her focus.

Her psychic magic was just a tool—nothing more.

Yet Astron—

Astron had already moved past the basics.

Her fingers twitched slightly. "You mean to tell me," she said slowly, "that you've already moved past the basics?"

Astron simply nodded.

She stared at him for a long moment. "...Can you cast spells?"

Astron leaned back slightly, adjusting his position against the couch. "Casting third-rank and higher spells is troublesome right now," he admitted. "But I can cast second-rank spells without much difficulty."

Irina narrowed her eyes. "Second-rank?"

He nodded.

She huffed, crossing her arms. "Alright, then. What are they?"

Astron finally looked up.

His gaze met hers. Calm. Steady.

"Would you like a demonstration?"

Irina snorted, rolling her shoulders. "Please, I know what these spells are."

"Do you?"

Her eyes twitched. "I know them, I just never bothered learning them properly. Waste of time."

Astron didn't argue. He merely exhaled and leaned forward slightly.

"Mind Whisper."

Before Irina could react, she felt his voice.

Not through sound.

Not through her ears.

But directly in her mind.

"Can you hear me?"

She jerked, her body stiffening instinctively.

Her head snapped toward him. "Excuse me?!"

Astron blinked. "It worked, then."

Irina scowled.

"Oh, real impressive," she muttered. "I can do that too, you know."

She didn't even need to try hard.

She flicked her fingers, focusing just slightly on him—

"Yeah, yeah, I can hear you. You don't need to flex."

This time, it was her voice inside his head.

Astron exhaled, nodding. "Good."

Irina rolled her eyes. "Tch. That's basic. If you didn't know that one by now, I'd have laughed in your face."

Astron didn't rise to the bait. Instead, he tilted his head slightly. "Would you like to see the others?"

Irina hesitated.

She knew what the other spells were. Had read about them. Had even practiced them once—long enough to understand the fundamentals before deciding she had zero interest in going further.

Still—

Curiosity burned inside her.

"Alright, fine," she muttered, shifting slightly. "Show me what you got."

Astron raised a hand.

"Psyshock."

A pulse hit her mind.

It wasn't painful—more like a sharp jolt, a sudden moment of disorientation that made her vision wobble slightly before stabilizing again.

Irina clicked her tongue, shaking her head. "Oh, that's annoying."

"It disrupts focus."

"No shit," she grumbled, rubbing her temple. "It's a pain to deal with, too. Got hit with that once during training. Almost threw a fireball into a wall."

Astron nodded, as if filing that information away.

Irina shot him a suspicious glance. "...You better not use that on me during sparring."

Astron hummed. "Noted."

That was not a yes.

She narrowed her eyes but motioned for him to continue.

He did.

The air shifted slightly—just enough for her to notice.

Then—

Whispers.

Right next to her ear.

Irina whipped her head around on reflex, looking for the source.

Nothing.

No one.

Just an empty room.

A chill ran down her spine.

Astron remained completely calm. "Phantom Echo."

Irina glared at him. "Damn you. That's so much worse than Psyshock."

"It serves its purpose," Astron said smoothly, flipping another page of his book.

Irina scowled, rubbing her arms. She hated that spell the most. It wasn't direct like Psyshock. It wasn't practical like Mind Whisper.

It was just unnerving.

And she refused to let him know how much it creeped her out.

"Fine, fine," she muttered. "Last one."

Astron glanced at her.

And then—

She felt it.

Not words.

Not a voice.

But something brushing against her mind.

Not pushing.

Not forcing its way in.

Just... touching the surface.

Like a flicker of awareness passing over her thoughts.

Irina froze.

She knew exactly what that was.

"Thought Snag."

Her heart slammed against her ribs. "You—"

Astron tilted his head slightly. "Curious."

Irina stiffened.

Her mind raced.

He had caught a surface thought.

Which meant—

Which one?!

Astron studied her reaction, then calmly said, "His body is warmer than I thought."

Irina's soul left her body.

Her face exploded in heat, horror slamming through her as realization crashed over her like a tidal wave.

"YOU—"

Astron flipped another page.

Irina grabbed a pillow and slammed it straight into his face.

"YOU BASTARD!"

Astron, still unbothered, let the pillow hit him before setting it aside.

"You were thinking it," he stated.

"I—THAT'S NOT THE POINT!"

"You asked what I could do," he replied, perfectly calm.

Irina buried her face in her hands.

She was going to die.

And then kill him.

And then die again.