

## Fairy Tail 185

Chapter 185: Vs. Trinity Raven; Part 2

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Caelum, Unnamed Island.

September, x784.

While Elicia and Cana were happily destroying everything they came across while climbing the tower, Erza was in a daze as she climbed.

Though she defeated the dark wizards who attacked her and advised the members of the cleaning staff to escape when she ran across them, it was clear to anyone who saw her that her mind was somewhere else. The most obvious indicator of this fact was that Erza had yet to cause any serious damage to the tower.

Eventually, just before she reached the top floor, Erza came across a rather wide bridge.

Standing in the middle of the bridge was the last member of Trinity Raven, Ikaruga. Looking absolutely serene, it was clear that Ikaruga was waiting for anyone who might reach this high up on the tower.

"Erza Scarlet, I assume." Ikaruga said, pulling Erza out of her daze.

"I am." Erza replied as she tightened her grip on her sword. "And who are you?"

"My name is Ikaruga." Ikaruga replied, bowing her head slightly as she introduced herself.

"A dark wizard from Death Head Caucus, huh?" Erza said, looking over Ikaruga's posture. "You're a member of Trinity Raven, are you not?"

"Indeed I am." Ikaruga replied. "And I am here to bring you to Master Jellal."

"I see." Erza replied with a nod. "Then lead the way."

"Very well." Ikaruga said with a nod. "Then, I would ask you to leave your weapons here. Naturally, that includes all of your stored weapons, as well."

Hearing that, Erza frowned slightly. Other than that, however, she showed no other reaction to Ikaruga's request.

"And why would I do that?" Erza asked. "As a swordswoman yourself, you know what it means to ask me to disarm, do you not?"

"I do." Ikaruga replied with a quick nod. "But I must insist."

"And if I refuse?" Erza asked, lowering her stance.

"Then, I will have to ask once again... with force." Ikaruga replied as she placed her hand on the hilt of her long bladed katana. "[Yasha's Empty Flash]."

With her spell chanted, Ikaruga unsheathed her blade and swung faster than most average A-Class wizards would be able to follow with their eyes. Naturally, Erza did not fall into that category. So, it came as a surprise that Ikaruga swung her sword from such a long distance.

A moment later, however, she was made painfully aware of the reason behind Ikaruga's actions when her sword and armor were cut into small pieces and she was sent flying back to the side of the bridge she came from.

'What was that?' Erza asked herself as she picked herself up from the floor. 'She doesn't need to make contact with an object to cut it?'

Storing that bit of information in her mind, Erza started walking towards Ikaruga once again. As she moved forward, she was covered in the yellow light of her [Requip Magic]. When she reappeared, she was donning her [Black Wing Armor], one of her armor sets that augmented her speed the most.

As soon as her new armor had been equipped, Erza spread her armor's wings and flew forward at break neck speed. Then, once she was in range, she slashed horizontally at Ikaruga's torso.

Reacting quickly, Ikaruga pulled her sword from her back and placed the end of the sheath on the bridge. Then, she partially unsheathed the blade to defend against Erza's slash.

Unfortunately, Ikaruga had not factored Erza's supernatural strength into her calculations, resulting in her being sent flying just as Erza had before.

Although she was sent flying, Ikaruga manage to land on her feet after flying to the other end of the bridge.

"You're much stronger than I expected." Ikaruga said with a smile in a tone that clearly praised Erza. "But it will take much more than just strength to defeat me."

With that, Ikaruga vanished from where she stood in a burst of speed.

In response, Erza turned to her left and raised her sword horizontally.

\*Clang!\*

"It would seem your reaction speed is impressive as well." Ikaruga said, praising Erza once again while their blades were pressed against one another. "but how long will that last?"

Once again, Ikaruga vanished. A moment later, she appeared behind Erza with her blade swinging down at Erza's unprotected back. In response, Erza made a quarter turn to her right while using the momentum of her turn to swing her sword at Ikaruga's flank.

Completing her slash, Ikaruga's sword cut into the bridge before she stepped back by half a step to avoid Erza's slash before twisting her wrist and slashing upward at Erza once again.

\*Clang!\*

Erza, on the other hand, used the momentum from her previous slash to reposition her blade between herself and Ikaruga's sword.

\*Cling!\* \*Clang!\* \*Cling!\* \*Ting!\*

From there, the two continued their high speed clash with the sound of colliding weapons echoing across the bridge.

During one of their clashes, Ikaruga, though she was unable to land a proper sword strike, took advantage of the fact that Erza's defense had been slightly over extended, landed a kick on Erza's abdomen and pushed them both apart slightly.

Before Erza could react and shorten the distance once again, Ikaruga quickly sheathed her sword and unsheathed it once again.

"[Garuda Flame]." Ikaruga chanted as she once again slashed at high speed from a range that her blade would never reach.

This time, instead of a simple invisible slash, a compressed blade of [Fire Magic] was fired from Ikaruga's blade.

Reacting quickly, Erza was once again covered in the light of her [Requip Magic]. This time, donning her [Flame Empress Armor], she was able to get her sword, which was covered in flames of its own between herself and the incoming flame slash.

To Erza's surprise, however, her sword was knocked away before her armor was struck.

Unlike last time, Erza's armor did not shatter due to Ikaruga's attack. However, there was a deep gash left on the sword she held in her hands. Still, she was sent flying backward, just not as far.

Meanwhile, Ikaruga's eyes widened slightly after seeing that her attack could neither completely destroy the weapon nor the armor. In fact, this was the first time that one of her [Sword Magic] spells did not destroy her opponent's weapon and armor.

"That is quite the impressive set of weapon and armor." Ikaruga remarked, once again praising Erza.

"Yes, my fiancé is quite the magic item crafter." Erza said with a gentle smile while caressing her armor.

"Unfortunately, he warned me that the weapon would not be as durable as the armor due to insufficient materials. \*Sigh\* I knew I should have gone out to get more sooner."

"Still, the chances of you defeating me with that armor is close to nil." Ikaruga said, radiating confidence and pride in her skills.

"I would have to agree." Erza replied with a nod.

A moment later, Erza was engulfed in the light of her magic for the third time. This time, however, she was not wearing a traditional suit of armor when she reappeared. Instead she was wearing a cloth outfit consisting of a white sarashi wrapped around her chest, a red hakama with golden flame patterns at the bottom held up by a white string, and a green hairband that ties her hair into a high ponytail.

In her hands, Erza held a pair of katanas with golden hilts and she wore no shoes on her feet, her quiet footsteps barely sounding out as she began walking towards Ikaruga.

Meanwhile, after seeing Erza's new attire, Ikaruga's expression changed from her perpetually calm state for the first time.

"Discarding your armor?" Ikaruga asked with a hint of anger in her tone. "Are you mocking me?"

"Not at all." Erza replied with a slight shake of her head as she continued approaching. "But having better defense will grant me no advantage against you. Although my [Flame Empress Armor] survived your attack, I can tell that it would only take a few more like it before it was destroyed. And I'd rather not have to ask Alfonzo to forge another set for me from scratch."

"No matter how you put it, it sounds as though you are mocking me." Ikaruga said in response. "Thinking that you can defeat me with no defensive ability is the height of mockery."

"\*Sigh\* No matter what I say, you will see it as mockery." Erza said, her expression turning resolute. "We are swordswomen, let our swords determine if my words are mockery or not."

With that, Erza increased the speed of her steps before beginning to jog a moment later. Then, after a few more steps, Erza was running before she was sprinting at her top speed a few steps later.

In this armor, or outfit, Erza foregoes all defense. Instead, all of her magic power is focused on offense. However, there is a caveat to this. If her heart is not clear, meaning if she doubts herself at all, then she will not be able to bring out her maximum offensive power.

'I will not be stopped here.' Erza thought to herself as she ran towards Ikaruga who was preparing to unsheathe her sword once again. 'I will find out what happened to Jellal and why he changed so much. And I will stop whatever it is that he's planning to do with this tower.'

As her thoughts raced, Erza channeled her magic power into the katanas in her hands.

As she drew near, Erza crossed the swords in front of her chest. Before she could reach her striking range, however, Ikaruga unsheathed her sword.

"[Yasha's Empty Flash]." Ikaruga chanted as she attacked.

In response to the incoming attack, Erza swung the sword in her left hand, intercepting the invisible slash. Then, without slowing down, she slashed the sword in her right only a split second later before she dashed past Ikaruga.

A moment later, Erza stopped her dash and both women stood in their post attack postures.

\*Shatter!\*

Erza's left katana shattered and she fell to one knee, supporting herself with her right katana.

"Ever since I heard that my guild was destroyed by the Steel Threads team of your guild, I knew that I would have to face Fairy Tail someday." Ikaruga said without turning around. "I never told Vidaldus and Fukuro about it though. Those two would have abandoned our current job to seek revenge. And I couldn't have that. Trinity Raven does not fail requests. However, I too desired revenge. So, I pushed myself to my absolute limits in training. Doing so, I far surpassed my previous standard. And yet... I still---"

\*Shatter!\*

\*Splash!\*

Before Ikaruga could finish, her sword shattered and blood sprayed from a long gash on her torso that reached from her left shoulder to her right hip. Then, she fell face first to the bridge, her own blood pool beneath her.

"\*Sigh\* As an assassin, I always knew this day would come." Ikaruga muttered as she closed her eyes. "Not only did I fail my first job... But I'm going to lose my life... as well..."

Hearing that, Erza used the sword in her right hand to prop herself up as she once again stood to her feet.

"For what it's worth, you were the most skilled sword wielder I've ever crossed swords with." Erza said without turning around.

Hearing Erza's praise, Ikaruga smiled as she lost consciousness, expecting that she would never wake up again.

Meanwhile, Erza began climbing the set of stairs Ikaruga was guarding. However, just as she put her foot on the first step, she stumbled before catching herself and regaining her balance quickly.

"I had to use more magic power than expected to cut through that last attack." Erza said while slowly climbing the last set of stairs. "Otherwise, she would have cut me apart along with my sword."

Meanwhile, in the tower's throne room, Jellal was still sitting on his throne.

"It would seem that they all lost." Jellal muttered to himself after feeling Ikaruga's magic power quickly diminishing. "Still, you did exactly what I expected of you. So, please allow me to thank you for your service."

With that said, Jellal smiled slightly under his hood.

"Now, Erza, it's time for our long awaited reunion." Jellal continued. "You have no idea how much I look forward to seeing you again. Especially since all the preparations are almost complete."

After that, Jellal looked out the window of his throne room towards the eastern horizon. There, he could see the sun just starting to rise and shine its light on the ocean surface.

"Now, let the dawn of a new era begin." Jellal said as he turned his attention back to the doors of the throne room where he could hear the sound of faint footsteps approaching.