

## HUNTER ACADEMY: REVENGE OF THE WEAKEST

### Chapter 1041 246.5 - Sister

"You guys look quite similar, though."

Leonard gave no reaction.

No flicker of acknowledgment.

No subtle shift in posture.

Not even a breath too sharp or too still.

But internally?

He adjusted the calculus.

She's sharp. Sharper than she lets on.

That comment wasn't idle.

Not entirely.

Anyone could make a lazy remark about resemblance.

But Velvetin didn't deal in surface-level observations.

If she'd picked up on it, then she hadn't seen resemblance—

She'd seen connection.

Or worse—resonance.

Leonard knew his own aura well enough. Knew how tightly he kept it sheathed. Knew how easily it could be mistaken for something else entirely when suppressed.

But Sylvie...

Even if she didn't mean to, even if her control was better than most—there was bound to be bleed.

And if Velvetin could read energy flows at the depth he suspected she could—

Then yes.

She knew.

Or she thought she knew.

Either way, Leonard couldn't afford to confirm it.

Not here.

Not with scouts everywhere.

Not with Thorne Halwick three tiers below and listening to every twitch in the conversation like it was a contract clause.

So instead—

He said nothing.

Held his focus.

Watched Sylvie adjust her positioning again, tightening Team Fourteen's lateral spacing just before the mist flared with pressure. She didn't need a signal. She just knew.

And then—mercifully—Velvetin let the thread go.

She leaned back slightly, her lips curving again as if the thought had already left her mind.

"Mm," she murmured, brushing a strand of hair from her cheek. "Doesn't matter. Some things are better left unspoken, anyway."

Leonard didn't look at her.

But his silence was answer enough.

For now, at least, the secret held.

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From the elevated arc of the scout tier, Leonard's eyes didn't blink.

The projection screens glowed quietly in front of him—layered, annotated, each one marked with spectral overlays and slow-motion mana traces, but he ignored all that noise.

He watched the raw feed.

The rhythm. The gaps. The choices.

Team Fourteen moved like a team that had failed together before—and learned from it.

They didn't cover for each other.

They anticipated each other.

Leonard's gaze tracked each member one by one—slowly, precisely—building profiles in real time.

Layla.

Her shield was an anchor—not a wall.

Her positioning was never reactive. She shifted with tension cues, adjusted just slightly before monsters committed. Her bracing was textbook, but the way she managed agro radius through proximity instead of force?

Learned. Lived. Bled.

She had been broken once—probably early in the year—and rebuilt correctly.

At least that is what he assumed, though this could just be a misconception. He was not a real scout anyway.

Though since she was Sylvie's friend, he still made a mental note: true vanguard, high-tempo compatible. Excellent for elite-team frontlines.

Jasmine.

Too sharp. Too wild. But not reckless.

Her motion was curved—angled to avoid blind spots, but not flashy. She didn't hunt kills. She hunted openings.

A flicker of insight.

She syncs with Layla's breaks.

One half-feint from Layla, and Jasmine followed through in under a second.

She wasn't the fastest. But she was one of the most responsive he'd seen this week.

High-pressure lateral striker. Borderline elite speed-read instincts. Needs mana discipline.

He shifted.

Irina Emberheart.

His eyes lingered on her a little longer—not for her name, but for her control.

She'd always been powerful. That much was inherited. Flame purity like hers didn't develop naturally.

'Well, she is quite interesting, isn't she?'

If it was an order from 'him', Leonard would gladly take the chance to investigate Irina Emberheart a lot more.

Since, from how he was seeing...



Her spellwork wasn't showy. It was measured.

She didn't flare. She condensed.

Didn't roar. She targeted.

Even her Solar Rend—once a crude engine of destruction—was now a tactical precision tool.

This was something that he didn't expect from her, as opposed to the knowledge that they had.

'Maybe someone needs to be sent here, regarding the information of the top talents.'

But her temper still flickered in her stance.

She leads from emotion. Strong, but dangerous under command friction.

And then—

His gaze returned to Sylvie.

And he let the breath out through his nose. Slowly.

Her stance was calm—low center of gravity, back foot always braced.

She didn't just cast from position—she moved between angles based on mana drift.

Not chasing line of sight.

Chasing mana flow.

Her spells didn't follow combat tempo.

They set it.

From mana-weaving to glyph precision, from support overlap to tempo maintenance—every movement was light, but loaded.

And then came Resonance Breaker.

Leonard watched it unfold again on slow repeat—frame by frame.

The lattice, the collapse pattern, the timed pulse—

It wasn't something taught at Arcadia.

It was something built.

Customized. Personalized.

And yet—

Some of the roots?

Old.

Too old.

He recognized them.

Golden Court spell theory. Pre-collapse matrices.

To most, those were just names. Footnotes in forgotten tomes. Obsolete frameworks dismissed by modern theory as too slow, too ornate, too brittle for fast-paced combat. But to Leonard—who had been raised within the Sanctum, where magic was ritual before utility, and tradition weighed heavier than innovation—he knew better.

He recognized those patterns.

The way the glyphs overlapped in rotating symmetry.

The sequence delay embedded intentionally at the final phase.

A delay that stabilized the lattice, rather than rush its release.

It wasn't Arcadian.

Not modern Arcadian, at least.

And certainly not something taught to cadets.

Leonard's eyes narrowed, his fingers tapping once against the slate's edge.

He had been watching students for days. Hundreds. From every track and tier.

And not one of them—not even the nobles with private tutors—had employed that structure.

No one.

Except her.

He watched again as the Resonance Breaker collapsed the field. Not violently. But perfectly.

There was intent behind it. An architecture of control.

This wasn't raw power refined by repetition.

This was insight passed down.

Which could only mean one thing.

Someone had taught her.

Not just anyone.

Someone old enough to remember.

Someone capable of recognizing what she was before anyone else did.

Someone who had access. Authority. Time.

Leonard's jaw tightened faintly.

"So. He's taken her under his wing."

There was no need to speak the name.

The Headmaster.

Jonathan.

The last living practitioner of Archaic Layered Casting. The one who had studied under the High Theorists during the final decades of the Celestial Compact. The one who had walked away from the political seat offered to him after the Collapse, and instead built Arcadia from its bones.

If anyone had the eye to spot what Sylvie was...

It would be him.

And in a strange, quiet way—it made sense.

Leonard could almost imagine it. The headmaster watching from behind those glass-laced windows. Spotting her not in grandeur, but in rhythm. In the way she breathed through spellwork, not just cast it. The way she corrected her posture mid-channel, the way she adjusted her spell without dismissing it.

Subtle things.

Things only someone ancient would recognize.

And in that realization, something clicked in Leonard's mind that he hadn't quite dared to place before.

This is how she caught up so fast.

Not just talent.

Tutorship.

Not just growth.



Deliberate cultivation.

A faint hum from the slate broke the silence.

New readings were coming in—the dungeon's pulse was rising. The final sequence would begin soon.

But Leonard didn't move.

He watched her.

And for the first time in this long, frustrating, spiraling search—he didn't feel like he was chasing shadows.

He felt like he was seeing truth.

He exhaled.

A rare thing stirred in the corner of his mouth. Not a smile.

But something close.

"So... he chose her."

That could complicate things a little.