HUNTER ACADEMY: REVENGE OF THE WEAKEST

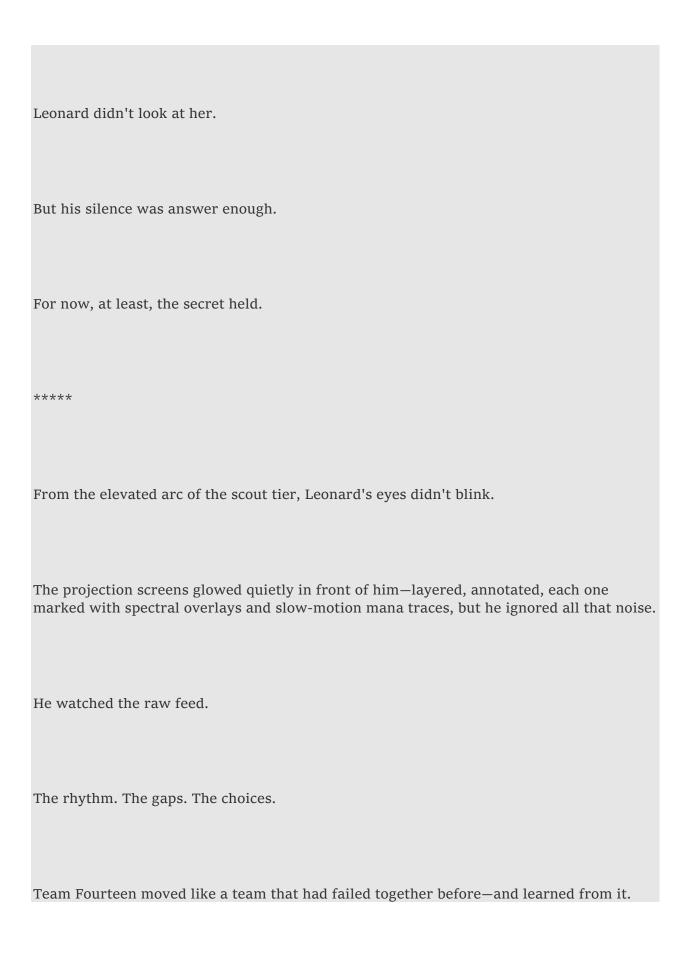
Chapter 1041 246.5 - Sister

"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.

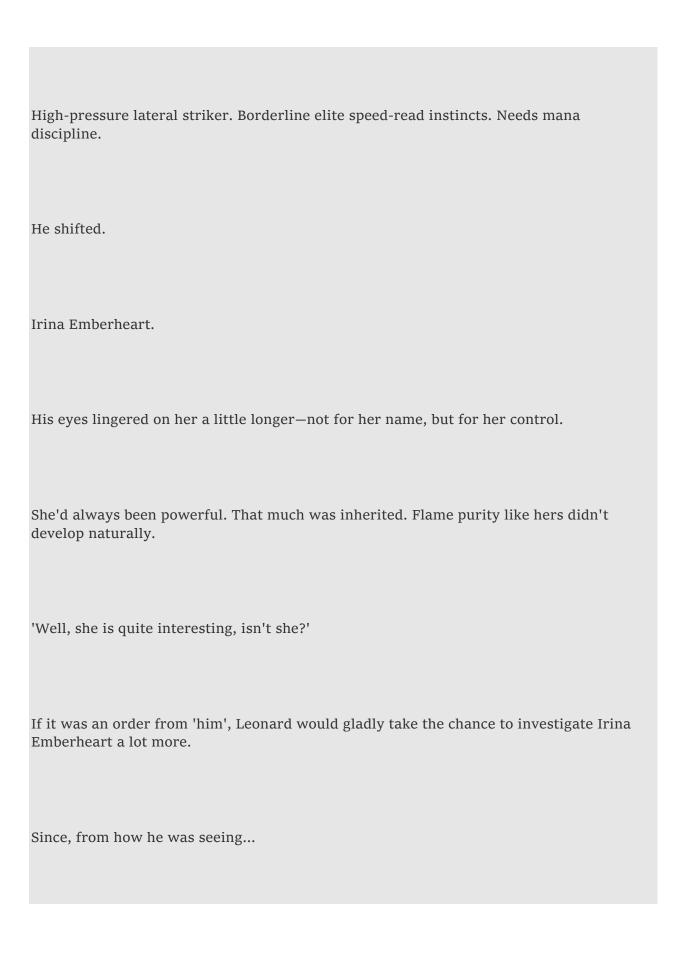
But Sylvie
Even if she didn't mean to, even if her control was better than most—there was bound to be bleed.
And if Velvetin could read energy flows at the depth he suspected she could—
Then yes.
She knew.
Or she thought she knew.
Either way, Leonard couldn't afford to confirm it.
Not here.
Not with 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."

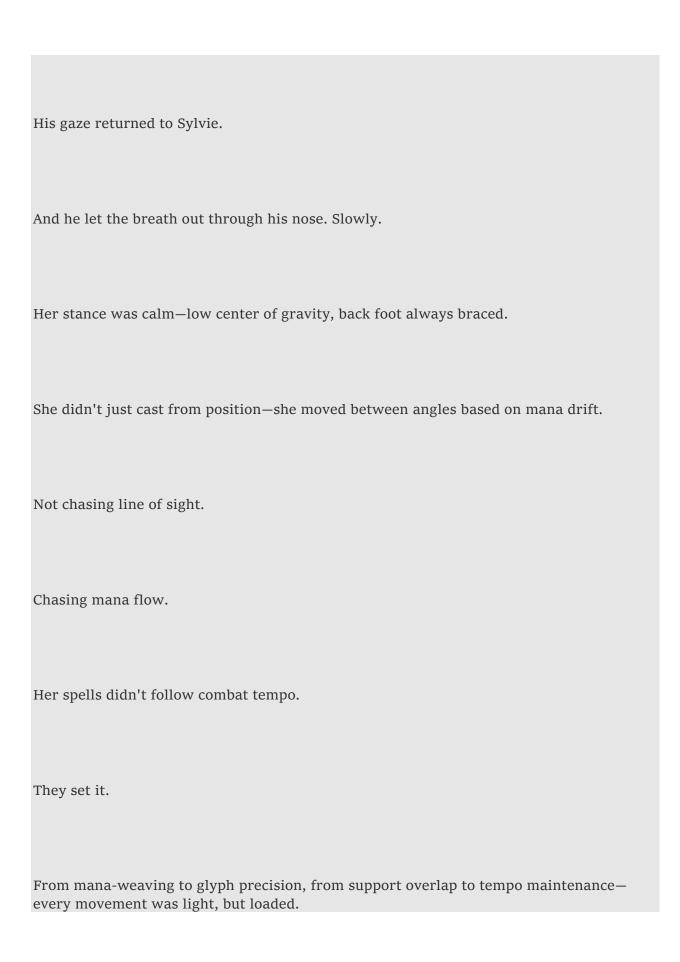


They didn't cover for each other.
They anticipated each other.
Leonard's gaze tracked each member one by one—slowly, precisely—building profiles in real time.
Layla.
Her shield was an anchor—not a wall.
Her positioning was never reactive. She shifted with tension cues, adjusted just slightly before monsters 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.

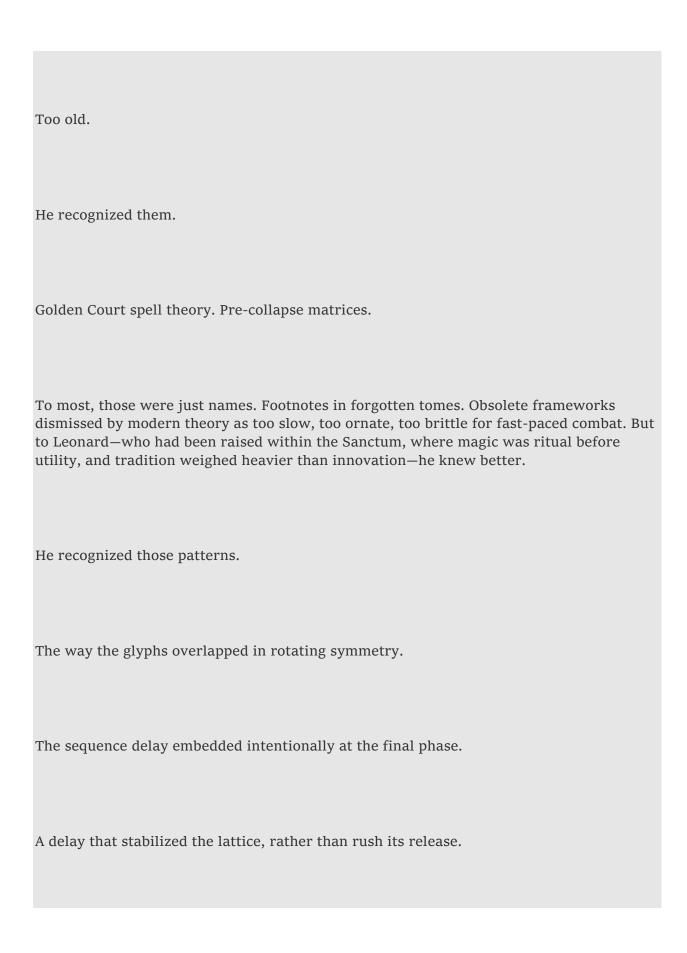
At least that is what he assumed, though this could just be a misconception. He was not a real scout anyway.
Though since she was Sylvie's friend, he still made a mental note: true vanguard, high-tempo compatible. Excellent for elite-team frontlines.
Jasmine.
Too sharp. Too wild. But not reckless.
Her 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.



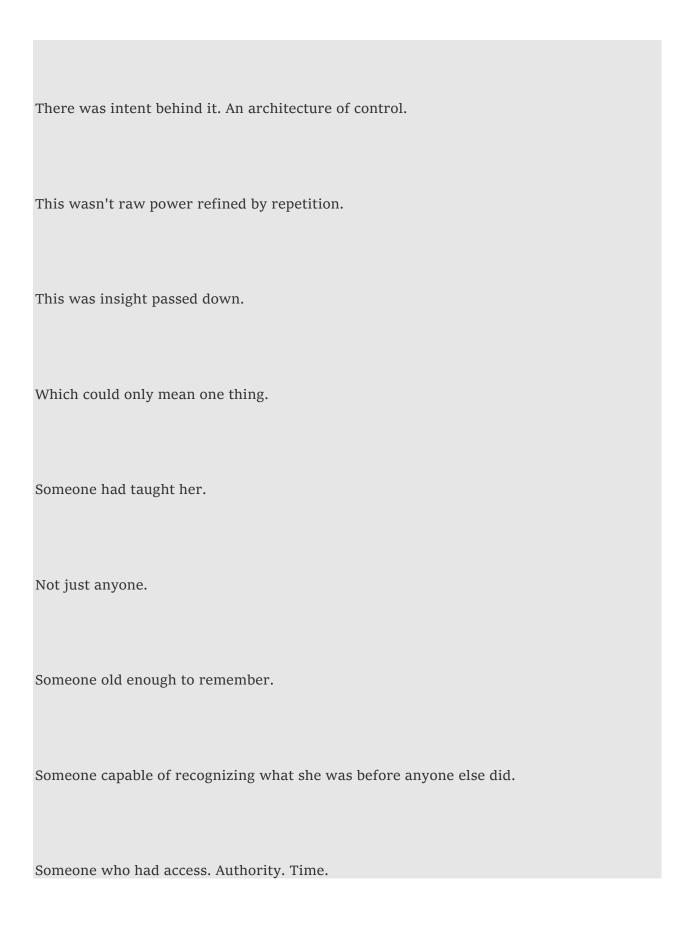
Her spellwork wasn't showy. It was measured.
She didn't flare. She condensed.
Didn't roar. She targeted.
Even her Solar Rend—once a crude engine of destruction—was now a tactical precision tool.
This was something that he didn't expect from her, as opposed to the knowledge that they had.
'Maybe someone 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—



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.



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.



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.