

I'm Strong But Only If I Stay Lewd

Chapter 16: I Mean, no Man Could Kiss This Softly and So Sweetly

"N-No!" Hanako blurted, stepping forward. "We're not with the heroes, I swear! We just want Rin-chan to join us and have fun enjoying his youth. Isn't that true, guys?" She looked desperately at the others.

They all avoided her gaze, awkward from her sudden denial.

Chris adjusted his glasses. "Well, if that is the case, shall we start?"

He stepped back, sizing up the line of half-naked students.

"Please me sexually. Or at least try to. If you show promise, I will allow my master to consider himself one of you. However, if even two of you fail to satisfy me... I will destroy you."

The threat landed like a boulder. All six of them flinched and instinctively clenched their fists, as their throats swallowed hard again.

"Of course," Chris added, almost gently now, "that was only a jest. My master has forbidden me from manslaughter, ineffectively so. But the consequence remains: failure means he stays away, understood?"

In the minds of Naoya, Shiki, Nagumo, and even Hinata, it went like this: "We don't even want Rin here THAT much."

But in the minds of Akane and Hanako: "Alright. Let's do this thing and claim our prize. This is a matter of life and death."

So yes, the majority wanted out. Yet... for reasons none of them could quite explain, they could not say no to the beautiful butler standing before them.

Akane and Hanako locked their eyes across the cramped clubroom, like a silent skirmish. The air even carried the faint musk of sweat and the sharp edge of awkwardness.

Both girls opened their mouths at the exact same moment. "Let me start first!"

They then growled at each other in unison.

Akane stepped forward first, with her fists clenched. "Hey! You just appeared out of nowhere and now you're trying to drag Rin away from me? Back off!"

Hanako lifted her chin haughtily, her long black hair shifting over her shoulders.

"Rin-chan is not a product or an object. He has the freedom to choose who he wants. Though, as promised, I will get you both together."

"While being the most dangerous threat to the relationship?! Hell no!"

Their voices rose, overlapping in sharp bursts. Akane jabbed a finger toward Hanako's chest. Hanako leaned in, her eyes narrowing. Their bickering filled the small space like stagnant waters.

Behind them, Naoya had already moved. He stepped up to Chris without hesitation, his green eyes hard with disgust.

"Does... Rin know about what you're doing to us right now?" he asked, with a low voice.

Chris met his gaze composedly and emotionlessly.

"Rin-sama has left me in charge of deeming if you all are worthy." He rested, then added, "If you feel that you are above my master, then walk away."

Naoya felt the words settle in his chest like poison mist.

Something cold and unknown pressed against his ribs; certainly, a danger he couldn't name but could very well feel in his bones.

He swallowed once, then leaned in and kissed Chris. The kiss was rough, hurried, and mean.

Naoya's lips crashed against Chris's, their teeth grazing, and his tongue pushing in without preamble. His hands gripped Chris's coat lapels, pulling him closer as if the force alone could prove something.

Chris did not move. But neither did he reciprocate or respond.

After several seconds he placed one hand lightly on Naoya's shoulder and pushed him back.

"You fail in flying colors," Chris said calmly. "In order to please my master, you need to be tender and affectionate. Because he himself lacks those qualities. Allow me to demonstrate."

Before Naoya could react, Chris cupped the back of his neck and drew him in again. This time the kiss was slower and deliberate.

Chris's lips brushed Naoya's once, then twice, and after that, parted them gently.

His tongue slipped inside, stroking with elegant care, tracing the roof of Naoya's mouth, and teasing the underside of his tongue.

He grazed Naoya's lower lip with his teeth, a soft bite that pulled a startled gasp from the boy's throat.

Naoya's eyes fluttered open mid-kiss. Chris's face was close. Too close. And his golden hair was framing those calm blue eyes.

For a second Naoya wondered, 'Chotto, is this person really a guy? For all I know, they might be a woman acting like a guy. I mean, no man could kiss this softly and so sweetly.'

The thought made heat flood his face.

Chris pulled back slowly. "That is the kiss my master deserves. I will screen you at another date. Allow another candidate to come forward."

"It's my turn now!" Akane and Hanako shouted together.

"Hey, back off!" Akane snapped.

"This is a battle of love," Hanako replied. "I cannot possibly back off. But I promise, I will get you together with Rin-chan."

"Can you drop the deception already?!"

Their argument flared up again, with their voices rising.

Hinata moved before either could take another step. She stepped up to Chris quietly, wiping off her dark green bangs from falling into her eyes, as she looked up at him.

"If we 'please' you," she asked, her voice anxious, "are we allowed to leave?"

"Indeed," Chris answered. "I only want to know if at least two individuals in this gathering have the necessary skill needed to handle my master's sexual tension."

Hinata took a big sigh, then rose on her toes and brought her lips to his.

The kiss was tender... loving, affectionate, with just the right edge of hunger. Her mouth moved slowly against his, with soft presses of their bodies that deepened gradually.

Her tongue brushed his in shy invitation, then retreated, as if persuading him to follow her lips. One hand rested lightly on his chest, as her fingers curled into the fabric of his coat.

Chris watched calmly, but allowed it.

After several long moments he nodded once.

"Excellent," he said. "It is almost as if you loved me. I like it."

Hinata pulled back, glaring at him through her glasses before looking away.
"Whatever."

"So... What more do you have for me?" Chris asked. "My master is not going to be assuaged with just good kisses."

Hinata immediately stepped closer again.

I'm Strong But Only If I Stay Lewd

After several long moments Chris nodded once.

"Excellent," he said. "It is almost as if you loved me. I like it."

Hinata pulled back, glaring at him through her glasses before looking away.
"Whatever."

"So... What more do you have for me?" Chris asked. "My master is not going to be assuaged with just good kisses."

Hinata immediately stepped closer again.

She tilted her head and began kissing the side of his neck; soft, open-mouthed presses that trailed down to his collarbone.

Her fingers worked the buttons of his shirt, as they opened one by one.

Chris's pale skin soon came into view, smooth and impossibly flawless. His pink nipples stood out against the expanse of his chest; small, sensitive, and hardening slightly in the cool air.

Below them lay the faint trace of abs; the subtle definition that spoke of strength hidden beneath elegance.

She closed her mouth over one nipple, sucking it gently, as her tongue circled the peak. Her other hand slid into his golden hair, her fingers threading through the strands, tugging lightly.

Chris, however, remained stoic and observing, watching every movement and technique she used on him.

Hinata's hands moved lower. She unbuckled his belt with composed fingers, pulled the zipper down, and let his cock spring free.

It stood thick and hard, flushed at the head, with delicate veins prominent along the shaft.

Hinata's face—and everyone's face, actually—flushed crimson at the sight. She stared at it for a heartbeat, then leaned down and took him into her mouth.

Her lips sealed around him. She sucked leisurely at first, with her tongue swirling over the tip of His cock, tracing the ridge beneath.

Then she sank deeper, her cheeks gouging as she took more of him. Wet sounds filled the room—soft slurps, the occasional gag when he nudged the back of her throat. She bobbed steadily, with one hand stroking the base while the other cupped his balls, rolling them gently.

After several minutes she pulled off with a wet slurp.

Like she was desperate for it, Hinata immediately brought a chair for Chris to sit on.

She immediately reached behind her back, and unhooked her bra, letting it fall off. Her moderate breasts spilled out without restraint; supple, round, and the nipples already tight.

She pressed them together around his cock, sliding them up and down the shaft in long-winded strokes. The friction was warm, tight, and slippery from her saliva.

Then she stood up, and straddled him.

She shifted her panties to the side with one hand, then grabbed and guided Chris's cock to her dripping pussy. She sank down slowly, taking him inch by inch until he was buried inside her. A soft moan escaped her lips, as her face flushed harder.

"Wai— Hinata, are you serious?!" Shiki yelled, his voice cracking, but with a face scarlet red. And a visible bulge straining against his briefs.

Hinata did not answer him.

She began to move, in slow rolls of her hips at the start, then faster bounces.

Her breasts jiggled with each drop. The naughty wet sounds echoed, as their skin slapped against each other, and the slick glide of him inside her accelerating.

She leaned forward, bracing her hands on Chris's shoulders, and continued riding him harder.

After several minutes she stood up and turned, presenting her back. She sank down into his cock again in reverse, her ass pressing against his hips as she bounced.

Her back arched, as her head fell back. Her dark green hair swayed with every movement. Her breaths came faster, louder, and sharper.

Finally, her body tensed up, her thighs trembling. Then she orgasmed with a muffled cry, her walls clenching around him like a baby's mouth to their mother's breast.

She soon slumped against his chest, breathing hard against his chin.

Chris adjusted his glasses and nodded.

"You pass in flying colors." His voice remained stone cold. "With you, Hachimot-san, and this other woman who shows palpable desire for my master, his sexual tension would be well taken care of."

Hinata lifted her head to him, still twisting her hips with his cock still penetrated.

She looked at him for a long moment, then leaned in and kissed him again; more intensely this time, as if she meant it.

"Hey, what's the rush?" she murmured against his lips, "I have m-more to show you, you jerk. L-Let's play some more."

Chris studied her face earnestly. "I might be wrong, but have you taken a liking to me?"

"O-Of course not!" Hinata snapped, her cheeks burning. "Just because you're strong and cool and beautiful, you think you can order us around. I actually hate your guts!"

"I thought so too," Chris said lightly. Then he eased her back, letting his cock free, so he could refasten his shirt and slacks. "Channel that passion for my master, and he will be in good hands."

Before leaving, Chris turned to the boys, disappointed. "Please, ladies, teach them what to do so they do not embarrass your group. As for the other one hundred seventy hidden members of the Occult club—"

The five club members shuddered as he named the exact number of their entire group. Palpable shock rippling across their faces.

"—I will personally screen them at a leisure time. But with these three ladies, my master would thrive here. All that remains is that he still has interest to become a member."

"About the Void Keeper he mentioned..." Nagumo spoke up quietly. "About Thyúiwre... He was kidding, right? He wasn't referring to the Titan of the spirit borders, was he?"

"Naturally." Chris smiled. "My master is what you might call a 'chuunibyou.' He does not seriously mean the things he says. He only wanted to play with video games, that is all."

He straightened his coat one final time.

"Dress yourselves," he said. "I will inform Rin-sama of the conditional approval."

Chris unlocked the door and stepped out without another word.

The six students stood in stunned silence, half-dressed, with hearts pounding.

Akane looked at Hanako, and Hanako looked back. Both of them were smiling.

CLAP!

Then they gave themselves a high-five.

"Success!"

They had succeeded in keeping their bodies for Rin alone, as per their hidden agreement, just after Chris suddenly ordered them to undress.

"Uh, Hinata?" Shiki nervously called the breathing mess on the ground, "Are you alright?"

Nagumo had already started to get dressed again, then he looked at the group.

"I don't know about Akane..." he said coldly, "But if you guys observed the way this Chris controlled his magic power... He can't possibly be a human, right?"

"He... He's a true beast."

"Shut up for a second, Oka-san," a blue vein popped on Nagumo's forehead.

Chapter 18: Where Are We Relieving Your Sexual Stress?

(Note: to better pronounce Thrúiwre, just imagine "Theory," but with a "r." like "Theory," it is the closest to the fictional word).

I walked away from the Occult clubroom with my hands in my pockets, as the hallway buzzed with lights over my head like they always do in this place.

I had Thrúiwre to think about, sure. But my mind couldn't stop drifting back to Hanako-chan.

I'd groped her ass twice now; that time in front of Akane and Naoya, and just now—because the GoG decided to threaten my Lewd Meter at the worst possible second.

«Notice: if master is choosing to proceed with the incoming battle, the Lewd Meter had to be replenished»

Okay, okay. I get it!

As I was saying; the both times I had squeezed Hanako-chan's ass, she squeaked and blushed and leaned into it like it was the best thing that ever happened to her. She never complained, and ever pushed me away.

She never even appeared angry. You know, like how Akane gets when I mess with her.

And... that bothered me more than it should.

She's too nice. And too willing to let me get away with everything.

If someone slipped their hand into MY pants without warning, I'd probably break them apart literally.

But Hanako-chan just giggles and blushes. And who's "Rin-chan" supposed to be? Me?

She says it like it's normal, though I only knew her a few days ago.

Anyway, she better learns to stand her ground more. Unlike the peace loving old me, people can be really dangerous if they can slip a hand in your panties.

At any rate, I had left them to Chris now. He'll handle the assessment to see if their worth my time. If they turn out convenient, then fine, I guess.

If they don't, I'll respectfully decline. Or just disrespectfully decline, I don't care.

I hope he doesn't scare them though; Chris can be a little too serious for his own good.

Well, I had a bigger goal right now: Thrúíowre.

For about eight years I've been looking for ways to beat Thrúíowre, the Void Keeper.

He's not a god, and he's not exactly a titan. Just something slightly above it.

He took it upon himself to guide the spaces between realms, without salary or anything. He is the embodiment of boredom, always so serious.

Either ways, I love getting mischievous around him. I think it makes his boredom of immortality feel less heavy or something.

Finally, I reached the far edge of campus; behind the old science building, where the grass grows long and no one ever normally walk around here.

It was, as usual, empty right now.

Perfect. Now, just to summon then:

"Inferna, Munganda," I murmured, "I need you."

The atmosphere answered me: the space in front of me rippled, then a deep purple outline began to tear open like torn paper.

Two seconds later, my maids stepped through, and the space tear sealed behind them with a soft hiss.

Inferna wore her usual black-and-white maid uniform; short frilled skirt hugging her wide hips, with the low-cut top straining over her broad breasts, and a white apron tied neatly at her waist.

The fabric gripped to her tanned skin, outlining every curve she had without compunction. Her long red hair hung loose, framing her usual poker face.

Her golden horns curved back from her head, with the crimson tail swaying slowly behind her, and her yellow eyes with those red slits fixed on me immediately.

I don't think about it much, but Inferna in human form was a real beauty, wasn't she?

As for the other one; Munganda's uniform matched Inferna's:

The black satin stretched tightly across her generous, but not as dramatic as Inferna's, chest. Her short skirt barely covering the tops of her pale thighs, as sheer stockings clipped to garters.

Her beautiful long black hair cascaded down her back, and her black eyes with white slits gazed at me calmly. She was also a beauty, now that I look at her again...

But you know, something about that eerie, petrifying smile of her... it never quite seems like she meant it. Or rather, I think she finds it difficult to fully hide her inhuman nature with it.

It should look like a normal curve of her lips, but keep staring enough and you'd soon feel like your life was in danger.

"Forgive our lateness, Master," Munganda apologized, bowing deeply. "We were a second late to heed your call."

Inferna stepped forward with her typical serious expression, her neck turning around the silent area. "So, Goshujin-sama, where are we relieving your sexual stress? Right here in the open?"

Hentai.

I shook my head. "That's not why I called you."

They both made deep gloomy sighs from my declaration.

Then I began to crack my knuckles. "I want to have my 285th battle with the Void Keeper. And yes, I was counting."

"Eh?! M... Master, if I may be so bold," Munganda's face suddenly twisted in concern. "I must persuade you. Thrúíowre is too dangerous. He grows stronger with every passing moment, more aggressive with every breath we draw."

"Please you have to reconsider, Goshujin-sama." Even Inferna's usual blank mask broke open. "The last time you fought him was two years ago. He must have grown even more dangerous and even keener on you for your relentless challenges. It is not exaggerating to think he already has special preparations for you."

"Hehe. Hehehe. HAHAHAHA!" I laughed in a low and dark tone, with my hands on my chin like some one-dimensional villain.

"That is the entire point, clueless followers of mine. I left him for two good years because he never managed to even wound me the last time we fought. He was too strong, sure, but he still couldn't definitely defeat me. He must be powerful enough now to give me that long-forgotten fear of death, right?"

For no reason at all, Munganda ran forward and hugged my left side, pressing her body against me. "No! I don't want Master to die!"

"Goshujin-sama is my very precious Goshujin-sama!" Inferna mirrored her on the right, her arms wrapping around my waist. "I don't want to see you hurt."

I sighed and made an exhausted face.

"Uhm, you girls. I know you are just using this opportunity to grind your crotches against me. Perverts."

They winced, but still continued moving, slowly now.

I'm Strong But Only If I Stay Lewd

For no reason at all, Munganda ran forward and hugged my left side, pressing her body against me. "No! I don't want Master to die!"

"Goshujin-sama is my very precious Goshujin-sama!" Inferna mirrored her on the right, her arms wrapping around my waist. "I don't want to see you hurt."

I sighed and made an exhausted face.

"Uhm, you girls. I know you are just using this opportunity to grind your crotches against me. Perverts."

They winced, but still continued moving, slowly now.

"And hey, I thought you both would be happy about this." I exhaled, exasperated by the seriousness they used in openly grinding my body, "You know, if I fight someone like Thrúíowre, my Lewd Meter is sure going to plummet."

""!!""

They suddenly stopped and looked at each other, then pulled off from me, becoming more solemn now.

Munganda breathed out. "Master, we should move quickly. Time is not on our side."

She then raised her hand, and the space before us tore open in response, with deep purple edges flickering like liquid on a vibrating surface.

Inferna straightened up, with a suddenly serious face. "Victory awaits you on the other side, Goshujin-sama. Let us go yonder."

"Hehe. Kono hentai." I laughed. "I knew that'd get you pumping."

I started with light exercises; twisting my arms, rolling my shoulders, and cracking my neck.

I was currently wearing my dark pants, with a white collared shirt under a blue unzipped hoodie. It was casual and comfortable.

So everything was ready.

"Let's go irritate that asshole. I'm sure my Lewd Meter will render me into some animal after this... Ah, but are you girls good with bestiality?"

"Whatever form Master takes is still Master." Munganda answered without hesitation.

Inferna nodded once. "Goshujin-sama is Goshujin-sama, whether frog, or slug, or maggot, or bacteria—"

"You can stop dissing me now," I cut in, stepping toward the tear. "After all, I'm the one involved in bestiality with you two... Or rather, monstiality?"

They followed me through without another word, and the purple light swallowed us.

Standing still, with they're hands on the hilt of a sword that stood too, was Thrúiwre, the Void Keeper.

In truth, no one ever requested Thrúiwre to do what they have been doing since time immemorial. It just became canon one day that a Titan among titans had taken the mantle of monitoring and policing the spaces between realms, maintaining balance.

And no one knew why they decided to do it too.

The duty was not granted by decree or claimed through conquest; it simply started to exist, like the slow turning of galaxies or the inevitable collapse of stars.

No one thanked Thrúiwre, but likewise, no one questioned them. The void has never needed gratitude, and so Thrúiwre also did not require it.

Around Thrúiwre was complete void and pitch darkness, twinkling stars and the vast expanse of nothing.

The darkness was not just empty; it was so dense, and so tenacious, a type of black so complete that light itself seemed reluctant to linger.

The stars were very distant, unfriendly, and scattered like forgotten jewels across an endless carpet of space. There was no up, no down, no horizon... only the subtle certainty that nothing existed here, and yet everything exists because of it.

Regardless of all this, the silence was piercing, broken only by the faint, almost imperceptible tinkle of the Titan's armor, as if it was breathing in time with the cosmos.

However, the peace and silence was about to be disturbed: a small tear occurred at one corner.

The tear was modest in the beginning: a thin violet slit no wider than a blade of grass. Then it widened with a soundless stretch, as light spilled through the abyss like spilled honey; warm, bold, and utterly out of place with the darkness there.

A scent of cherry blossoms and faint human sweat drifted into the void before anything living did, an intrusion so casual it bordered on insult now.

"Yo, lonely Titan! I've come to play!"

It was their only frequent visitor; the mortal, Kiyoshi Rin. A truly aberrant one too, considering how elusive he could be.

He stepped through the tear as though crossing a doorway rather than breaching the membrane between existence and non-existence.

His casual outfit was noticeably smart and straightened, well pressed white shirt under blue hoodie, and his sneakers pressing nothing as if there was ground beneath him.

His blue hair caught the daylight in faint gleams, from the opened portal. He carried no weapon on him, and his aura wasn't visible...

But only that infuriating grin that said he knew exactly how unwelcome he was and found the fact delightful, shone brightly.

Two figures had followed him, now standing half a step behind: Inferna—the Great Red Dragon of the Elemental Dragon Dynasty, and Munganda—The Legendary Black Serpent of Destruction.

They emerged in perfect silence, with their maid uniforms very pristine despite the journey through hollowness.

Inferna's golden horns glinted under the daylight from the portal, her crimson tail swaying once before calming.

Munganda's black hair floated slightly in the nonexistent currents, her white-slit eyes fixed forward. But both of them, out of remarkably respects, closed their eyes the moment they fully crossed the threshold, with their expressions carved from stone.

They would not interfere with their master's visitation. Whenever they were here in this void, they never did.

"Kiyoshi Rin..." Thruíowre glanced at Rin, with a sparkly red glow inside the helmet they wore. "I had nearly begun to disremember you, believing you had at long last learned to behave yourself."

The voice rolled out like thunder trapped inside a deep, shuddering cavern; carrying the weight of eons.

The helmet was not mere metal; it was a fragment of dark, condensed space, with two horn-like shapes curving upward like frozen comets.

The red glow within shifted slowly, and almost indolently, as though the Titan were regarding an unruly child who had once again wandered into the wrong room.

Compared to Rin and the two maids with him, Thrúíowre was a hill;

Rin was barely the height of their knee, and Thrúíowre was quite gigantic; wearing thick dark armor that shifted like living space and shadows, and their helmet protruding those two horn-like shapes at the sides, Thrúíowre almost give the impression to be worse than a devil.

The armor plates did not clank or grind; instead, they flowed, with subtle waves of darkness mushrooming across its surface as though the void itself had been poured into shape and hardened. And it may as well had been.

Each subtle shift seemed to send faint gravitational whirlpools outward, tugging at loose strands of Rin's hair and making the maids' skirts flutter minutely before settling again.

"Ara? It sounds like you clearly just missed me," Rin laughed, then sharply locked his blue eyes on them, "let's fight, Thrúíowre."

I'm Strong But Only If I Stay Lewd

Compared to Rin and the two maids with him, Thrúíowre was a hill;

Rin was barely the height of their knee, and Thrúíowre was quite gigantic; wearing thick dark armor that shifted like living space and shadows, and their helmet protruding those two horn-like shapes at the sides, Thrúíowre almost give the impression to be worse than a devil.

The armor plates did not clank or grind; instead, they flowed, with subtle waves of darkness mushrooming across its surface as though the void itself had been poured into shape and hardened. And it may as well had been.

Each subtle shift seemed to send faint gravitational whirlpools outward, tugging at loose strands of Rin's hair and making the maids' skirts flutter minutely before settling again.

"Ara? It sounds like you clearly just missed me," Rin laughed, then sharply locked his blue eyes on them, "let's fight, Thrúíowre."

Rin's laugh was bright and palpably reckless, cutting through the oppressive silence like a thrown stone into still water.

His sharp, bright blue eyes met the starry red glow of Thrúíowre without panicking. There was no fear there, only anticipation, the same gleam a gambler gets before rolling the dice with loaded odds.

"But... with every battle we start," Thrúiwre spoke, their voice deep and shuddering. "you always flee halfway."

The words didn't seem to carry anger or resentment, only statement of fact. Each syllable of his vibrated the area, making it appear as though the distant stars were flickering in response to Thrúiwre.

The two maids only stood back with closed eyes and passive expressions.

Well, it was only natural. Unlike their Master, they knew Thrúiwre was not something they could casually engage with. Even if it was only speaking to them.

Inferna's tail remained perfectly still, and Munganda's hands rested lightly at her sides, her fingers relaxed. To step forward, or even glance at the Void Keeper, would be to invite the Titan's attention in a way that even Rin avoided pushing too far.

At the moment, Thrúiwre was like God in his sphere of supreme influence... And all of them knew it: Thrúiwre had a thing against intruders, and more so, against intruders who assist Kiyoshi Rin.

"Of course I run away!" Rin waved one hand dismissively, the gesture seeming casual despite the stakes. "You're crazy strong. And my Lewd Meter gets to run down before I know it."

"Lewd Meter?"

The helmet tilted the smallest fraction. The starry red glow expounded once before returning, almost curious, or perhaps faintly wanting more explanation.

"Nah, just forget it. Let's throw hands already!"

Rin's hair began to change and turn crimson in the roots and the ends, leaving the deep blue hair in the middle like a stripe of preserved night amid flame.

The modification was smooth, even almost liquid; strands lifted as though charged with static. A low crimson aura bloomed around him, pushing back against the void's pull, making the darkness around his body look thinner, and less absolute.

The portal had closed, so now Rin was emitting his own light from his form.

His left eye turned a crimson color with a triangular sigil emerging in it. The sigil began to rotate, little by little, with lines glowing sharper and precise.

It was not mere decoration; it was like a key turning in a lock, a limiter sliding open. Rin's grin widened, with his teeth flashed, and his expression turning nearly feral.

And without a word more, Rin dashed like flashed light to Thrúíowre.

The movement was instantaneous to any eye that tried to track it; one heartbeat he stood still, the next he was a streak of crimson and blue slicing across the space of nothing.

The area rippled in his wake, folding around his passage like cloth pulled tight.

The maids did not move or assist in any way. They simply remained exactly where they were, with eyes closed, as though the entire confrontation were happening in another room.

"So be it. I shall discipline you yet again!" With a thunderous clash, Thrúíowre swung down the incredibly ornate and large sword.

The blade was ancient beyond naming—may as well be a part of Thrúíowre—its edge etched with moving patterns, the hilt was wrapped in bands of things that resembled captured nebula.

It descended with the weight of inevitability, carving a perfect arc through the void. The swing displaced darkness in slow rolling waves that bent the subtle light, and made the distant star flash.

Rin immediately materialized a golden short sword and blocked the massive blade incoming. The weapon appeared between one blink and the next—Nearly like purely condensed light given form, its hilt warm and steady in his grip.

CLASH!

He met the descending blade head-on, with his feet planted on nothing, and his body coiling, his knees bent to absorb the force.

But the moment their swords had collided, the atmosphere began to crack and tear.

Golden sparks flowed in slow motions down the length of their contact, mingling with starry black fragments that peeled away from Thrúíowre's blade.

Then the void itself shuddered; cracks spider webbed outward from the point of impact; jagged fractures of reality leaking faint, colorless light. Nearby stars dimmed as though irritated from the noise that wasn't quite sound.

Thrúiwre added more force with a deep grunt, leaning into the press. The armor plates across their arms flexed with a low resonant hum, like an engine older than planets shifting gears.

Then the space below them crumbled and shattered.

Massive chunks of imaginary space broke free beneath their feet, tumbling upward in slow dreamlike suspension before dissolving into pinpricks of nothing.

The unreal platform that had held them now simply ceased to be.

Rin's sneakers lost foothold from the accident; and he plummeted down the broken space below him with his maids.

Thrúiwre added more force with a deep grunt, then the space below them crumbled and shattered, the void giving way completely.

It was no slow descent, nor was it a dramatic fall; but it was sudden, like a merciless absence of foothold. Gravity—or whatever cruel imitation of it was there—seized Rin and his opponent, then yanked them downward.

The maids fell too, their skirts fluttering upward in the rushing wind that howled through the new dimension.