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Chapter 11: Chapter 51: Tomorrow's Match?

"Match over."

"Winners: Ayato Amagiri & Julis-Alexia von Riessfeld."

As the mechanical announcement echoed through the live broadcast channel, a deafening wave of cheers erupted once more, stretching on without end.

"...I see. No wonder you said Ayato-senpai and his team are the toughest opponents."

Watching Ayato and Julis high-five in celebration on stage, Kirin Toudou wore a serious expression.

"Ayato-senpai is really strong... Maybe even stronger than me."

At least in terms of physical ability and Prana, Kirin was certain—she couldn't match Ayato Amagiri.

"Right now, he probably is stronger than you."

Kaiser didn't deny it. Instead, he simply nodded in agreement.

In the original storyline, Ayato had once lost to Kirin in a duel—but that was because he had struggled to wield Ser-Veresta properly.

Ser-Veresta's immense size had posed a major drawback in agility, limiting Ayato's swordsmanship and preventing him from utilizing his full potential. That was the primary reason he had lost to Kirin back then.

At the time, rather than aiding him, Ser-Veresta had actually been a burden.

Now, however, Ayato no longer had Ser-Veresta. Instead, he wielded Wole-Zain, a weapon of the same caliber. Though Wole-Zain wasn't exactly small—certainly larger than the traditional katana Ayato was most proficient with—it was still smaller than Ser-Veresta's default form.

In other words, though both weapons belonged to the Four-Colored Magic Swords, Ser-Veresta had hindered Ayato far more than Wole-Zain did.

With Wole-Zain in his hands, Ayato was undoubtedly stronger than when he wielded Ser-Veresta.

If he were to duel Kirin now, he might not lose as he had in the original timeline.

After all, so long as his swordsmanship wasn't excessively restricted, a Four-Colored Magic Sword-class Orga Lux would be nothing short of an immense power boost for him.

"Wole-Zain's ability is related to space, right, Senpai?"

Kirin turned to Kaiser, asking while her cheeks subtly reddened.

She had just realized how close she was to Kaiser—so close that certain prominent parts of her figure were pressed against his arm.

"Yeah."

Kaiser, however, was too engrossed in watching Wole-Zain in Ayato's hands to notice. While replaying the moment Ayato activated the weapon, he absentmindedly answered Kirin's question.

"Although each of the Four-Colored Magic Swords has a different ability, they all share one defining trait—they cannot be conventionally defended against."

"For example, Ser-Veresta can burn and sever all things. No matter what weapon the enemy tries to block it with, their weapon will be cut apart alongside it."

"The same goes for Wole-Zain. It can sever space itself along a designated coordinate axis, slicing through anything within that space."

A magic sword capable of cutting space itself—there was no need to explain how terrifyingly powerful such an Orga Lux was.

"Ayato has only recently obtained Wole-Zain, so he probably can't fully unleash its potential yet."

"But even so, an ordinary Lux weapon would have absolutely no chance of blocking Wole-Zain."

"Unless the opposing weapon is an Orga Lux of the same caliber, Wole-Zain—just like my Ser-Veresta—is an attack that cannot be defended against."

Kaiser paused the replay, enlarging the image of Wole-Zain in Ayato's hands.

"If you ever have to face Ayato, remember—don't try to block Wole-Zain with your Senbakiri. Understand?"

"...Yes."

Without looking back, Kaiser issued his warning.

The response he received was a tense, flustered voice.

That was when he finally realized—this girl was practically pressing herself against him.

"...You know, you don't have to stick that close."

"I-I'm sorry!"

Kirin practically jumped away in a panic, her face so red it looked like she was about to start steaming.

"Ahem." Kaiser cleared his throat theatrically, suppressing a certain indescribable feeling inside him. Then, he changed the subject. "Ayato and Julis make for a strong team, but the other teams aren't to be underestimated either."

"Let's take this chance to analyze the rest of today's matches."

At his words, Kirin naturally had no objections and eagerly nodded.

And so, the two of them proceeded to watch the battles of the other noteworthy teams.

For some reason—perhaps due to intentional planning by the Tournament Operations Committee—many of the top-ranked teams from each academy had been scheduled to compete today, despite the first round spanning four days.

For example:

Saint Gallardworth Academy's Rank 11, "Armored Magus" Doroteo Lemus, and Rank 12, "Radiant Blade" Elliot Forster.

Jie Long Seventh Institute's Rank 9, "Illusory Genesis" Li Shenyun, and Rank 10, "Phantom Mist" Li Shenhua.

Queenvale Academy for Girls' Rank 7, "Water Dragon" Sandra Segur, and Rank 47, "Battle Card Witch" Nina Achenwall.

These were the three teams Claudia had labeled as the strongest representatives of their respective academies—and all of them were competing today.

It was clear that Claudia hadn't singled them out for no reason.

Though their rankings weren't particularly high, their true capabilities were far beyond what their rankings suggested.

Doroteo Lemus, the "Armored Magus", was a university student already over twenty years old. This was his third time participating in the Festa. Though he had never won the championship, there was no denying that he was a veteran warrior, honed through countless battles.

Elliot Forster, the "Radiant Blade", was his complete opposite. Just like Kirin, he was a student from the elementary division—extremely young, yet exceptionally talented in swordsmanship. In terms of pure potential, he was at least on par with Kirin, prompting her to pay particular attention to him.

These two may have only been at the bottom of Saint Gallardworth's Page One, but if they had been Seidoukan students, both would have been top-five contenders—comparable to Julis in strength.

With the two of them teaming up, they were undoubtedly strong candidates for the Top 8, or even the Top 4, in this year's Phoenix Festa.

Similarly, Li Shenyun and Li Shenhua from Jie Long Seventh Institute were no weaklings either. Not only were they individually strong, but as identical twins, their coordination was unrivaled. Their teamwork was likely the most seamless among all competitors—a level of synergy far beyond what Kaiser and Kirin could achieve in just a month of training together.

As for Sandra Segur, the "Water Dragon", she had delivered an equally outstanding performance.

Because—she, too, was an Orga Lux wielder.

Just from her title alone, "Water Dragon", it was clear—her Orga Lux granted her control over water, and she had demonstrated this ability impressively in battle.

If she were to face Julis one-on-one, then in a pure duel, Julis would be guaranteed to lose.

There was no helping it. The elemental counter was simply too severe. For a Strega who wielded fire, Sandra Segur was the ultimate natural enemy.

"These three teams are almost certainly advancing to the main bracket."

After watching their matches, Kaiser made his assessment.

Each of these teams had won their first-round matches cleanly and effortlessly, completely overwhelming their opponents. Their performances were just as dazzling as Kaiser & Kirin's, and Ayato & Julis'. Their online popularity and support were just as high.

"Too bad none of Le Wolfe or Allekant's strongest teams competed today."

Kirin flipped through multiple live channels but couldn't find any other noteworthy matches. Neither Le Wolfe Black Institute nor Allekant Academy had fielded their top contenders yet.

Kaiser pondered for a moment before pulling up the match schedule.

"Tomorrow, huh?"

After checking a certain team's match time, he made a decision.

"Kirin."

He looked at her and spoke.

"Tomorrow, let's go watch the Vampire Princess."
