

## **Chapter 12: Chapter 52: Just One of the Reasons**

The second day of the Phoenix Festa.

Today, Asterisk, the city of duels, was still packed to the brim with people attending the tournament.

The streets were densely packed, forming an endless sea of people. Cafés, restaurants, ice cream parlors, and street vendors were all filled to capacity. Many visitors had stopped in their tracks, opening holographic screens on the spot to watch the live broadcasts, causing the entire city center to become completely gridlocked. Walking through the crowd was almost impossible.

"I-I can't take it anymore, Senpai..."

Walking beside Kaiser, Kirin Toudou looked as if she were about to collapse. Her entire body swayed unsteadily, as though she might faint at any moment.

There was no helping it—the streets were simply too crowded. And with it being summer vacation, Asterisk was in the peak of summer. The artificial crater-lake at the city's center reflected the blazing sun, sending scorching heat cascading over the six-star metropolis. The heat was comparable to the waves released by Ser-Veresta. Kirin was drenched in sweat, her face flushed red from the heat.

And to make matters worse—

Neither of them were nobodies.

As top-seeded championship contenders, their popularity and support ratings were through the roof.

At least 80% of the tourists who had come to Asterisk were here for the Phoenix Festa. Many had already seen Kaiser and Kirin before and knew exactly who they were.

In this situation, stepping onto the streets was no different from global superstars walking through a public plaza—the commotion they caused was massive.

Along the way, they had been greeted, cheered on, stopped for handshakes, and even bombarded with autograph requests. Under this blazing sun, they weren't just fighting through the crowd—they were being swarmed by fans. It was exhausting.

"Sorry... I should've planned better."

Seeing Kirin on the verge of heat exhaustion, Kaiser let out a wry chuckle and reached out to hold her hand.

"If I had known it'd be this bad, I would've come alone. Now, even if I wanted to send you back, you probably wouldn't make it, would you?"

Given this crowd, if he let Kirin return alone, she might collapse on the way.

The Genestella were considered the next evolution of humanity, but at the end of the day, they were still human. Aside from Strega and Dante, who possessed special abilities, most Genestella weren't all that different from ordinary people when it came to heat resistance.

Which meant—

They could still get exhausted, and in this heat and congestion, heatstroke was a very real danger.

"Want me to carry you on my back?"

Kaiser offered casually.

Kirin visibly flinched, startled by the suggestion. She quickly shook her head.

"N-No, it's fine, Senpai," Kirin forced herself to stay upright, replying in a strained voice. "We're almost there... I just have to hold out a little longer."

Hearing this, Kaiser turned his gaze forward.

Up ahead, a massive domed building came into view.

It was one of Asterisk's three largest battle arenas, second only to Sirius Dome in terms of usage during the Phoenix Festa.

The first week of preliminary matches took place across one main stage, three large-scale arenas, and seven mid-sized arenas. However, once the main

bracket began in the second week, matches would only be held in the Sirius Dome and the three large-scale arenas.

By the time the Top 4 was decided, the Sirius Dome would become the sole battlefield, hosting both the semifinals and finals.

Kaiser and Kirin's destination today was one of the large-scale arenas that would be used until the semifinals—where Kaiser's person of interest was scheduled to compete.

However—

"At this rate, the match will probably be over by the time we get there."

Even Kaiser was getting frustrated.

Had he known this would happen, he might as well have used Ser-Veresta's power to fly over.

If not for the risk of the heat waves injuring civilians, Kaiser would've already done so.

"This is worse than just training at the academy like we originally planned."

Kaiser was starting to regret his decision.

Fortunately, no one had tried anything inappropriate with Kirin during the journey. Otherwise, Kaiser really would have regretted coming.

"Just hang in there a bit longer, Kirin." Kaiser sighed. "If it gets too bad, let me carry you."

"O-Okay..." Kirin nodded weakly, barely managing a response.

And so, at a snail's pace, the two of them inched forward through the crowd, taking over an hour just to reach their destination.

"We finally made it..."

The moment they stepped into the arena, the cool blast of air conditioning washed over them, making Kaiser feel as if he had come back to life.

"Uuuu... I'm sorry, Senpai..."

Kirin collapsed onto his back, wrapping her arms around his neck, her voice full of guilt.

In the end, she hadn't been able to hold out—Kaiser had carried her the rest of the way.

"It's fine. We're partners, aren't we? And as your senior, it's my job to look after you." Kaiser replied matter-of-factly. "Besides, you're light. Carrying you is easy."

If anything, it actually felt nice.

Feeling the soft warmth against his back, Kaiser suddenly understood why certain guys always slammed on the brakes while driving girls around.

"Too bad we still missed the match."

Carrying Kirin on his back, Kaiser endured the odd stares from passersby as he turned into a secluded hallway, sighing in resignation.

"We can watch the replay online, but not being there in person means we can't sense the Prana flow or catch the finer details of the fight."

Thanks to the air conditioning, Kirin had somewhat recovered. Still lying on Kaiser's back, she opened a floating screen, pulling up the match replay.

Onscreen, a boldly dressed girl was shown dominating the fight.

She wore Le Wolfe Black Institute's uniform in an extremely revealing way—her jacket tied around her waist, leaving only a swimsuit-like top covering her upper body.

In her hands, she wielded a massive crimson scythe, its blade larger than her entire body. Embedded at the base of the weapon's handle was a glowing purple Urm-Manadyte.

It was Gravisheath.

The only Orga Lux owned by Le Wolfe Black Institute.

And the girl wielding it—was Irene Urzaiz.

The Rank Three of Le Wolfe Black Institute.

The Vampire Princess of Carnage.

She was the reason Kaiser had come today.

But now, her match was already over.

Kirin carefully analyzed the replay, absorbing every detail of Irene's battle.

Her performance was outstanding. Her combat prowess was exceptional.

Despite Gravisheath's immense size, Irene wielded it with effortless control, swinging its massive blood-red blade with astonishing agility. Each sweep carved crimson arcs through the air.

Watching this, Kirin reached a conclusion.

"Defeating her... won't be easy."

"Senpai, is that why you were so interested in her? Because of Gravisheath?"

Kirin assumed this was the case.

But Kaiser shook his head.

"Gravisheath is only part of the reason."

He didn't elaborate.

Instead, he suddenly stopped walking.

"Senpai?"

Kirin blinked in confusion—until she heard footsteps.

Ahead, in the deserted hallway, two figures were walking toward them.

"That's..."

Seeing them, Kirin's expression tensed.

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