

Chapter 13: Chapter 53: Striking Without Warning

At the far end of the deserted hallway, two girls—similar in both age and appearance—walked toward Kaiser and Kirin Toudou.

Though they looked alike, the atmosphere surrounding each of them was entirely different.

The girl on the left wore the proper uniform of Le Wolfe Black Institute, her long hair neatly braided into twin plaits. She had a gentle expression, her entire presence soft and delicate—completely unlike the kind of student one would expect from Le Wolfe Black Institute.

The girl on the right, however, was the complete opposite. She wore her uniform sloppily, leaving her top boldly unbuttoned. Despite the scorching heat, she had a scarf wrapped around her neck, her entire demeanor fierce and unruly.

"Irene Urzaiz..."

Lying on Kaiser's back, Kirin softly murmured the name.

It was exactly the person they had come to see.

She had unexpectedly appeared before them—face-to-face.

At the moment, Irene seemed unaware of their presence. She had her hands on her head, looking exasperated as the girl beside her scolded her.

"Honestly, Onee-chan! Didn't I tell you not to sneak off alone after the match?!"

The younger sister, with her gentle expression, stood with her arms crossed, glaring angrily at Irene.

Her name was Priscilla Urzaiz.

She was Irene's biological sister, as well as her partner in the Phoenix Festa. Together, they had already secured a victory in the first round.

"...I wasn't sneaking off." Irene, clearly guilty, hesitated before making a clumsy excuse. "I was just... going for a walk. Yeah. A walk."

"Liar!" Priscilla exposed her immediately. "You were totally trying to sneak off to Pleasure Street again to gamble!"

Pleasure Street—a redevelopment district notorious for its underground activities and criminal enterprises.

It was a place where one could find anything illicit—gambling, black-market trades, backroom deals, and more. The entire district was effectively controlled by the underworld, a den of crime where law-abiding citizens dared not step foot.

However, for Le Wolfe Black Institute students, going there wasn't unusual.

After all, Le Wolfe students were often the ones running those illegal businesses in the first place.

And judging by Irene's reaction, she was a regular there.

Seeing her excuse exposed, Irene quickly put on a sheepish grin.

"I was just going to take a look! I wasn't planning to cause trouble."

Unfortunately, Priscilla wasn't buying it.

"That's exactly what you said last time! And then what happened?! You trashed an entire casino!"

"Uh... That was an accident..."

"I don't believe you! You always lie!"

"This time will be different!"

The two sisters continued to bicker, completely absorbed in their argument as they unknowingly approached Kaiser and Kirin.

Finally—

"...Huh?"

Irene suddenly noticed them.

Turning her head, her eyes locked onto Kaiser.

"It's you?"

For a moment, Irene's expression flashed with surprise—but it quickly sharpened, her gaze turning fierce.

"You're...?"

Priscilla also noticed them, her expression filled with confusion.

"Nice to meet you."

Still carrying Kirin on his back, Kaiser finally spoke. He cast a brief glance at Priscilla, then turned to Irene, smiling faintly.

"Didn't expect to run into you here, Vampire Princess"

It was an unexpected bonus.

"...I also didn't expect to see your face here, Blazing Star Swordsman."

Irene took a step forward, subtly shifting to place Priscilla behind her, a cold smirk forming on her lips.

Her eyes, though not overtly hostile, carried a sharpness that looked ready to cut.

"I thought your match was yesterday? What are you doing here today?" Irene narrowed her eyes, grinning wolfishly. "Don't tell me... you came here for us?"

As she spoke, a hint of hostility finally surfaced in her expression.

Yet, Kaiser remained unfazed.

"Do we look like we came for you?"

Kaiser shifted Kirin slightly on his back, causing her blush to deepen.

Irene, though still suspicious, glanced at Kirin's completely flustered face and found it hard to believe they would come after her in this state.

"Then why are you here?" Irene pressed. "Don't tell me you two are just here to flirt?"

At those words, Kirin's face turned even redder.

"What else? We came to watch the matches, obviously." Kaiser replied calmly, his expression relaxed. "Too bad we got here too late—your match was already over. Otherwise, I would've gotten a good look at Gravisheath and what it can really do."

At those words—

Irene smiled.

A dangerous smile.

"You want to see Gravisheath... is that it?"

A sinister gleam flashed in her eyes, tinged with a blood-red glow.

Her entire presence shifted—becoming far more violent.

She reached into her coat and pulled out a device.

A black hilt, embedded with a glowing purple Urm-Manadyte.

A weapon Activator.

"If you want to see it..."

The Urm-Manadyte glowed, pulsating with energy.

Mana surged violently, forming into a massive crimson scythe, its blood-colored blade humming with power.

"...Then I'll give you a good look right now!"

"...!"

In that instant—

Both Kaiser and Kirin sensed the immense danger radiating from Irene.

"Senpai!"

"Onee-chan!"

Both Kirin and Priscilla cried out at the same time.

But before they could react—

Both Kaiser and Irene moved!

Irene's eyes flashed red, a sharp fang peeking from her lips as she grinned savagely.

With no hesitation, she swung the scythe downward—a vicious, merciless strike aimed directly at Kaiser's head!

The crimson blade tore through the air, leaving behind a streak of red light as it descended toward him.

It was a sudden, ruthless attack.

Yet—

Kaiser was just as fast.

In an instant, he let go of Kirin, dropping her safely to the ground.

His hand flashed to his waist, drawing a pitch-black Activator from its sheath.

"Clang!"

A brilliant white-hot blade erupted from the hilt, materializing at blazing speed.

In a single motion, Kaiser swung upward, meeting Gravisheath's crimson arc head-on.

"CLANG!"

The sound of metal colliding rang through the empty hallway, sending sparks flying as the two weapons clashed.

Kaiser had blocked the strike.

His expression remained calm and composed.

"Senpai!"

Now freed, Kirin immediately reached for her sword, gripping Senbakiri, ready to draw at a moment's notice.

"Onee-chan...?!"

Meanwhile, Priscilla stood frozen, stunned by her sister's sudden aggression.

"Ho?" Irene raised an eyebrow, still grinning. "You blocked that so easily? Not bad—not bad at all, Rank One of Seidoukan."

"And you're as reckless as the rumors say." Kaiser's golden eyes remained locked onto hers, unmoved by the crackling sparks between their blades. "Striking without warning... You do realize you're violating the Tournament Committee's rules?"

If a Festa participant was caught engaging in unauthorized combat, the penalty was immediate disqualification.

And yet—

"I don't care about the rules." Irene's smirk widened. "If I finish the job here and now—then my work is done."

Hearing those words—

Kaiser's gaze sharpened.