

Multiverse 15

Chapter 15: Claudia's Invitation

For the next few days, Kaiser and Kirin Toudou stopped going out.

Aside from their matches, the two remained in the academy, spending their time training together or simply enjoying their break. Their days were productive.

For the other participants of the Phoenix Festa, even on their off days, it was difficult to truly relax. Unlike Kaiser and Kirin, they lacked absolute confidence in their abilities and had to constantly worry about elimination. Every moment was spent in preparation—pushing themselves harder to avoid being knocked out.

But for competitors like Kaiser and Kirin—powerful, self-assured, and widely considered championship contenders—there was no such pressure.

Under the arrangements of the Tournament Operations Committee, strong teams were not matched against each other during the preliminary rounds.

As a result—

For top seeds like Kaiser and Kirin, there was zero risk of elimination in the prelims. Their opponents were destined to be far below their level.

And the results proved it.

In the second round, Kaiser and Kirin faced students from Allekant Academy.

These opponents ranked even lower than the Le Wolfe thugs they had fought in the first round. Their only notable trait was their use of new-generation Lux weapons, which were somewhat impressive.

But—

Against Ser-Veresta?

Even the most advanced Lux would be shattered in a single strike.

Victory was effortless.

In the third round, they faced students from Saint Gallardworth Academy.

Their rankings were higher—one was Rank 22, the other Rank 27. Their swordsmanship was respectable, and their abilities were far superior to the thugs from Le Wolfe.

But—

Kaiser never even needed to step in.

Before he could act, Kirin had already taken them both down.

She didn't even use Renzuru.

Another flawless victory.

And just like that—

Kaiser and Kirin became the first team to advance to the Round of 32, officially entering the main bracket.

To them—

The prelims had been no challenge at all.

They weren't the only ones.

Ayato Amagiri and Julis-Alexia von Riessfeld also progressed without a hitch, securing their spot in the Top 32.

All of the strongest teams that had been under close watch also advanced without incident, making it into the main event.

On the sixth day of the Phoenix Festa, the Round of 32 was finalized.

With this, the preliminary stage came to an end.

The weekend was designated as a rest period, with no matches scheduled.

But come Monday, the true battle for the Phoenix Festa championship would begin.

Everyone was looking forward to the upcoming battles.

Especially those eager to face strong opponents.

Those who had made it this far were all elite warriors of their respective academies.

There was no chance of anyone backing down.

Perhaps some were nervous.

Perhaps some were uneasy.

But fear?

Not a single one of them felt that.

And Kaiser—

Was already prepared.

However just as he was ready to quietly wait for the main bracket to begin an unexpected invitation arrived via text message.

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Phoenix Festa, Day 7 – Weekend

Today, Kaiser was not with Kirin—the partner he had spent almost every moment with lately.

Instead, he left the academy alone, heading toward Sirius Dome.

He had taken precautions this time.

Wearing a mask and a baseball cap, he had disguised himself slightly.

There was no choice.

At this point, he was too well-known.

If he didn't want a repeat of his last experience—where he had been mobbed by fans—some level of camouflage was necessary.

With this setup, he blended into the crowd, slipping into Sirius Dome unnoticed.

He made his way through the internal corridors, eventually arriving at a VIP box near the stage.

This private suite was not large and had limited seating.

But it offered one of the best views of the arena.

A premium location.

When Kaiser entered, there was only one person inside.

"Welcome to the Seidoukan Academy Student Council's private suite."

Claudia Enfield greeted him warmly, her usual smile radiant.

She had clearly been waiting for him.

As Kaiser pulled off his mask and hat, he returned her smile.

"Feels like it's been a while, President."

Since their last conversation in the Student Council Office, Kaiser hadn't seen Claudia.

By now, it had been nearly half a month.

From a certain perspective, it really had been a long time.

"Well, you needed to focus on your matches, and I had my own responsibilities. It wouldn't have been right to disturb you." Claudia responded with her usual elegant demeanor.

"But even so," she continued, her smile deepening, "it took a lot of resolve for me to invite you here today. I hope I didn't interrupt your training with Kirin?"

"Of course not."

Kaiser took a seat, settling into one of the front-row seats.

"Tomorrow is the main bracket. At this point, last-minute training won't help much. It's more important to rest and recover, so Kirin and I decided to take the weekend off."

This was a strategic decision.

Unlike the prelims, the main bracket would be relentless.

The tournament would run for six consecutive days.

Day 1: Round of 32 → Round of 16 (16 matches).

Day 2: Round of 16 → Quarterfinals (8 matches).

Day 3: Break day (The only chance to rest).

Day 4: Quarterfinals → Semifinals.

Day 5: Semifinals → Finals.

Day 6: The Championship Match.

No rest between the final three rounds.

Knowing this, Kaiser had decided to stop training, ensuring Kirin could recover before the storm.

Originally he had planned to spend the weekend relaxing in the academy, before discussing strategy with Kirin later in the evening.

But—

Claudia's invitation had changed his plans.

"When does the drawing start?"

While gazing at the arena, Kaiser asked casually.

Today, Claudia was here for the official match draw.

In the main bracket, matchups were not prearranged by the Operations Committee.

Instead, each academy's representative would draw their placements.

Right now, the drawing ceremony was taking place inside Sirius Dome.

"Not for a while," Claudia replied, settling into the seat beside him.

"The drawings come last. Before that, we have to sit through speeches from important figures, followed by a recap of the preliminaries. It's going to take a while."

At the moment, Sirius Dome's main stage was hosting an event similar to the opening ceremony.

Figures from the Tournament Operations Committee were giving lengthy speeches.

Politicians—like the Mayor of Asterisk—were analyzing the tournament's progress.

Comparing it to previous Festas.

Debating whether this year's competitors were stronger or weaker.

The arena was packed.

But—

Most were here just to see the match draw.

No one cared about the endless speeches.

Many looked bored out of their minds.

"So we're in for a long wait." Kaiser sighed.

"I agree. It's tedious." Claudia chuckled, her tone light.

"But... since you accepted my invitation, I'm actually quite happy. At least I won't have to endure this alone."

As she said this—

Kaiser turned his head.

Their eyes met.

Claudia, with her usual grace, simply held his gaze.

She had no intention of looking away.

A strange feeling stirred within Kaiser.

"...Something's off."