

Multiverse 17

Chapter 17: Chapter 61-65

Chapter 61: Passing These Two Trials

Asterisk—Sirius Dome.

Today, the Sirius Dome was more bustling than ever.

Although the venue had been lively throughout the Phoenix Festa, from today onward, its excitement would reach its absolute peak, becoming the focal point of attention for the entire world.

The reason was simple: from this day forward, the Sirius Dome would be the only battlefield used for the Phoenix Festa matches. The other ten arenas had completed their roles and were now retired.

Today marked the fifth day of the official tournament—the semifinals were about to begin.

On this day, two matches would take place in the Sirius Dome, one in the morning and another in the afternoon.

These two battles would determine the final two victorious teams among the Top Four.

And those two victorious teams—would face each other in the championship match tomorrow.

In other words, only three matches remained before the Phoenix Festa came to its grand conclusion.

Very soon, the first of these three battles was about to begin—deciding the first team that would advance to the championship.

With this anticipation in the air, the atmosphere in the Sirius Dome was more electrifying than ever. The audience packed the venue, reaching an unprecedented peak since the tournament had begun.

Even those who couldn't attend in person had gathered in every corner of Asterisk, opening virtual screens to watch the live broadcast.

Under the watchful eyes of countless spectators, the first semifinal match was about to begin.

... ..

"Is it starting?"

Inside one of the contestant lounges in the Sirius Dome, Irene Urzaiz murmured.

"Onee-chan..."

Priscilla Urzaiz stood beside her, one hand clenched against her chest, looking at Irene with evident unease.

"Don't worry so much." Irene reached out and patted Priscilla's head, wearing her usual carefree grin. "It's just another match. We'll go through the motions, just like before."

Irene had never told Priscilla about the real reason she was participating in this tournament.

Not just this time—every single one of her past assignments had also been kept a secret from her younger sister.

As a result, Priscilla knew nothing, though she had vaguely guessed that her sister was involved in something shady.

But she was a considerate girl—she understood what should be said and what shouldn't be said.

If her sister went gambling on Pleasure Street, she could scold her as much as she wanted.

But when it came to matters like this, she never asked questions.

Irene had lost count of how many times she had felt relief because of her sister's understanding. As such, her head-patting motion became even gentler.

"...Is this really going to be okay?"

Although Priscilla never pried into things she wasn't supposed to know, she still couldn't help but worry.

"Our opponents are Seidoukan Academy's Rank One team—both of them are Rank Ones. Onee-chan, you're going in alone—"

Before she could finish, Irene interrupted her.

"I'm not alone." Irene looked Priscilla straight in the eyes, speaking seriously. "The two of us are fighting together, aren't we?"

As she spoke, Irene reached into her coat and pulled out a handle-shaped Activator, switching it on.

"Vmm—"

A blood-red scythe instantly materialized in Irene's hands, its blade vibrating slightly.

"This is a power that only the two of us together can wield."

As she said this, Irene's eyes turned crimson, and her fangs lengthened from her lips.

"... .."

Priscilla silently pulled back her collar, revealing her snow-white neck.

Irene stared at the soft, pale skin, the delicate nape, and her eyes gleamed an even deeper red.

"Ah..."

Priscilla let out a soft gasp.

Irene pulled her into an embrace, and in the next instant—her fangs pierced into her sister's neck.

The faint scent of blood spread through the lounge, and Irene's throat moved greedily, swallowing mouthful after mouthful.

"Vampire"—a word that had once been used as an insult against Irene in the Redevelopment District—now became a literal truth.

As Irene continued draining her sister's blood, the Blood Scythe of Supreme Collapse, Gravisheath, vibrated even more violently—almost as if it were trembling with excitement.

The feeding continued for over three minutes.

By the time Irene finally let go, Priscilla's complexion had visibly paled.

"Sorry." Irene's voice carried guilt. "The opponent this time is tricky. I went a little overboard."

The more blood she consumed, the longer Gravisheath's power would last—and the stronger it became.

To defeat her opponents and complete her mission, Irene had no choice but to push herself.

"It's okay, onee-chan." Though Priscilla was visibly pale, she still smiled and said, "I'll recover soon anyway."

As she spoke, the wounds on her neck began healing at a rapid pace, disappearing within moments.

Regenerator.

That was Priscilla's true ability.

Like Julis, she was a Strega, but her power was not combat-based—it was healing-based.

Although she could only heal herself, Priscilla's regeneration ability was immensely powerful.

Not only could she heal wounds, but she could also replenish lost blood.

This was the highest-tier form of regeneration—exceedingly rare and highly valuable.

And it made her the perfect match for Irene and Gravisheath.

The greatest drawback of Gravisheath was its insatiable demand for blood—so extreme that no ordinary wielder could satisfy it.

But with Priscilla by her side, Irene could bypass this weakness and unleash Gravisheath's full power.

This was why Irene had risen to Rank Three in the notoriously brutal Le Wolfe Black Institute.

Some even believed that if she were in Seidoukan, she could contend for Rank One.

For this reason, the Phoenix Festa—a two-person tournament—was the perfect stage for these two sisters.

"Don't worry." Seeing her sister's gentle smile, Irene smiled as well—a rare, soft expression that no outsider had ever seen.

"It'll be over soon."

"Mm." Priscilla nodded, then closed her eyes and rested against her sister's embrace, saying no more.

At the same time, in another lounge...

"It's about time, Senpai."

Dressed in her academy uniform, Kirin Toudou was fully prepared, her Senbakiri secured at her waist.

She looked at the young man sitting before her—Kaiser.

"Is it time?"

Kaiser was idly spinning his black Activator in his hand. Hearing Kirin's words, he rose to his feet.

"Once we win this match, there's only the finals left."

For some reason, Kirin looked at Kaiser and murmured those words.

"Yeah."

Kaiser seemed to understand what she meant. He smiled and said,

"If we win this match and the finals tomorrow, we'll be Phoenix Festa champions."

"At that point, your wish will come true. You'll be able to rescue your father."

Hearing this, Kirin nodded firmly.

Then—she suddenly stepped forward and hugged him.

"Hm?"

Kaiser froze for a moment.

"Are you feeling nervous?"

"No."

With her head buried against his chest, Kirin whispered:

"As long as Senpai is with me, I'll never feel nervous."

"I just... wanted to thank you, Senpai. Thank you for bringing me here."

Hearing her words, Kaiser hesitated—then slowly wrapped his arms around her.

"It's too early for thanks."

Kaiser chuckled.

"The next two matches will be our real test."

"Yes."

Kirin lifted her head and looked into his eyes.

"We will pass both trials."

Kaiser didn't reply.

He simply smiled and nodded.

...

"OOOOOOOH—!"

A deafening roar erupted in the Sirius Dome, igniting the atmosphere.

"Ladies and gentlemen! Thank you for waiting!"

The announcer's excited voice boomed through the stadium.

"At last—the Phoenix Festa semifinals begin!"

"The first match—Kaiser & Kirin Toudou from Seidoukan Academy vs. Irene & Priscilla Urzaiz from Le Wolfe Black Institute!"

"Who will seize victory and advance to the finals?"

"Let's find out—now!"

Chapter 62: I'll Get a Bit More Serious

"Boom!"

Above the stage of Sirius Dome, the nameplates of both competing teams expanded into floating screens, accompanied by dazzling beams of light that illuminated the entire battlefield.

As the crowd roared, the two teams emerged from opposite sides of the stage, stepping out from the contestant tunnels.

Throughout this grand entrance, the live commentators' voices echoed non-stop across the arena.

"Now entering the stage—on our left, we have Kaiser & Kirin Toudou from Seidoukan Academy! And on our right, we have the Urzaiz Sisters from Le Wolfe Black Institute!"

"Both teams are powerhouses in this year's Phoenix Festa! From the preliminary rounds up until now, they have advanced with absolute dominance—not once have they shown any signs of struggle! Even after reaching the intense official rounds, they have continued to sweep through their opponents effortlessly, securing their victories with overwhelming ease!"

"In contrast, the other semifinalists, Ayato Amagiri & Julis-Alexia von Riessfeld, have fought through an incredibly arduous path—each of their battles has been a brutal struggle. They have sustained numerous injuries and accumulated exhaustion along the way. Compared to them, today's two competing teams have had a much smoother journey to the Top Four!"

The commentator's enthusiastic narration further intensified the cheers from the audience.

However—inside Seidoukan Academy's exclusive VIP lounge, a certain man and woman both twitched at the corners of their eyes.

"Excuse me, we're watching a match here—why did you have to drag us into this?!"

Sitting in the front row, Julis frowned, an irritated expression appearing on her face.

"Well... to be fair, our path to the semifinals really was difficult."

Ayato Amagiri gave a wry smile, acknowledging the truth.

There was no helping it.

Their challenging progress wasn't just due to strong opponents—Ayato's own limitations had played a major role as well.

After the fourth round, his Prana Seal had been completely exposed.

Because of this, the fifth-round battle and the quarterfinals had been exceptionally difficult for him.

Fortunately, they had persevered—not only securing their place in the semifinals, but Ayato himself had also undergone a major breakthrough.

Now, his seal was no longer a significant problem. Compared to when he first entered the Phoenix Festa, his power had improved dramatically.

"For our academy, having two teams in the semifinals is a truly historic achievement."

Sitting beside Julis, Claudia Enfield smiled as she spoke.

"For years, Seidoukan Academy has struggled to perform well in the Festas. But now, in this year's Phoenix Festa, we have not one, but two teams in the Top Four. Just from this alone, our academy's overall ranking this season will see a significant boost."

"If both of your teams win today and advance to the finals... then for the first time in years, we won't have to worry about Seidoukan's standing among the academies."

Indeed—this topic had already sparked heated discussions online.

Although the Phoenix Festa wasn't over yet, the fact that two of the Top Four teams belonged to Seidoukan Academy was undeniably a remarkable achievement.

Some believed that Seidoukan Academy—after years of mediocrity—was finally making a comeback.

Others, however, saw this resurgence as a threat and began undermining Seidoukan's success, publicly siding with their preferred academies.

Yet—none of this changed the reality.

The fact remained: Seidoukan Academy had the upper hand this year.

That was why so many people were eagerly anticipating the results—waiting to see whether a Seidoukan Academy team would make it to the finals.

"That is... if they can first defeat the Vampire Princess of Carnage."

Julis folded her arms and said this in a serious tone.

In the afternoon, her own battle would take place—against their old enemies from Allekant Academy.

For her and Ayato, another grueling battle awaited them.

Even so—they had come to the arena today to watch this match with Claudia.

Because if they won their match later, then whoever won this battle would become their final opponent in tomorrow's championship.

"I hope Kaiser and Kirin win this."

Ayato spoke sincerely.

"That won't be easy."

Claudia focused on the two teams standing on the stage, her eyes narrowing slightly.

"After all... their opponent is the Vampire Princess."

However, her gaze was not on Irene Urzaiz herself.

Instead—her attention was locked onto the Orga Lux in Irene's hands.

Gravisheath.

Seeing that the weapon had already been activated, with its scythe blade more crimson than ever before, Claudia's expression became grave.

"...She's already replenished a great deal of blood."

It was clear—this battle would reveal Gravisheath's full, unrestrained power.

The true might of the Blood Scythe of Supreme Collapse...

On the Stage—

Both teams had stopped at their designated positions.

"It's finally time."

Irene Urzaiz rested Gravisheath on her shoulder, her crimson eyes locked onto Kaiser.

"Are you ready to be torn apart, Blazing Star Swordsman?"

Her tone—her demeanor—was that of a predator staring at its prey.

Facing Irene's hostility, Kaiser's expression remained unreadable.

Without a word, he activated his black Activator.

"Zing—!"

A brilliant crimson glow erupted from the Urm-Manadyte core, igniting a wave of heat that condensed into a sword of flames.

"Vmm!"

Kaiser raised Ser-Veresta, then swung it lightly to the side—releasing a searing blast of heat into the air.

Within the fiery currents, the sword's blade gleamed with a dark, purplish-black hue.

"Ooooh! Everyone, look at Kaiser's Ser-Veresta! The blade that was once pure white is now turning black!"

The commentator's sharp observation caused an uproar among the audience.

"This guy..."

Irene's pupils shrank, her menacing attitude slightly faltering.

"Tch. So you're getting serious from the start, huh?"

To prepare Irene for this fight, Le Wolfe Black Institute's higher-ups had provided her with detailed intel on Kaiser.

From this information, Irene had learned:

Ser-Veresta's pure white blade was actually a sign of low power output.

The darker the blade, the higher the power level.

Once the sword turned completely black, that meant its output had reached its peak—unleashing Ser-Veresta's full might.

Most previous wielders had never reached that level.

And up until today—Kaiser had always fought with the sword in its white state.

Now, for the first time, he was revealing a glimpse of its true power.

This meant—he had no intention of holding back.

"You've made your own preparations, haven't you?"

Kaiser briefly glanced at Gravisheath.

His authority over weapons allowed him to sense its augmented state—it was far stronger than before.

"In that case—let's be fair."

Kaiser lifted his blackened Ser-Veresta and smirked.

"I'll get a bit more serious, too."

Hearing this, Irene's expression darkened.

"Onee-chan..."

Priscilla's voice trembled slightly.

"It's fine. Trust me."

Irene didn't look back.

"Step aside."

Priscilla nodded, quietly retreating.

"Shing..."

At the same time, standing beside Kaiser—Kirin Toudou unsheathed her blade, Senbakiri.

Both teams had fully entered battle mode.

A tense silence filled the stage.

"Time's up!"

With the commentator's shout, the badges on both teams' uniforms flashed red.

"Phoenix Festa Semifinals—First Match!"

The mechanical voice echoed above the battlefield.

"Match—START!"

"Boom!"

In the very instant the match began—

Three figures exploded forward, charging at full speed.

A storm of Prana surged across the stage, scattering brilliant motes of stardust into the air.

And then—

Amidst the deafening cheers of the crowd, the battle erupted in full force.

Chapter 63: A Power Far Greater Than Before

"Clang—!"

At the very center of the thunderous stage, a loud, resonant clash of steel rang out, echoing across the battlefield.

In that instant, sparks and stardust exploded into the air, resembling a cascade of fireworks.

A purplish-black sword and a blood-red scythe slashed through space, colliding in a violent clash.

The Mana-forged energy from both weapons clashed fiercely, creating a devastating force upon impact.

Neither Kaiser nor Irene Urzaiz held back in that moment—they had both struck with full force.

After a brief deadlock, both warriors quickly separated.

"Haah!"

Taking advantage of that fleeting opening, Kirin Toudou darted forward.

With Senbakiri flashing in her hands, she executed a sharp, cold arc, slashing straight toward Irene.

"Get lost!"

Irene's crimson eyes remained locked onto Kaiser—she had no patience for Kirin's close-range assault.

As soon as Kirin stepped in, Irene immediately swung her scythe, knocking aside the incoming strike.

However—

Rather than being repelled, Kirin's blade followed through, adjusting mid-air to redirect the force—and came back even faster toward Irene.

"Clang!" "Clang!" "Clang!" ...

The sound of metal clashing rang out repeatedly.

Each time Irene knocked away Senbakiri, the sword would rebound at an even greater speed, attacking from a different angle.

Like a compressed spring, the more resistance it met, the faster it rebounded—relentlessly pressing Irene back.

Kirin remained perfectly composed, executing a relentless barrage of sword strikes, chasing Irene down with precise, lightning-fast slashes.

"Ohhh! Irene Urzaiz is being pushed back by Kirin Toudou!"

"Is this the famed Renzuru?! The ultimate technique of the Toudou Style!"

The commentators' excited voices reverberated across the stadium, igniting a wave of cheers from the audience.

The Toudou Style was one of the most widely practiced sword disciplines in the world, with disciples spread across countless regions—including Asterisk.

Now, seeing their style's ultimate technique displayed on the world stage, and witnessing it overpower the wielder of Gravisheath, the spectators couldn't contain their excitement.

"I told you to get lost!"

Irene's frustration mounted.

She had never been good at dealing with fast, precise swordplay.

Now, she found herself trapped in a net of slashes, unable to break free from Renzuru's continuous flow.

In that moment, her crimson eyes gleamed menacingly—and she suddenly twisted her scythe's handle.

"Boom!"

A flash of violet light erupted.

A distortion rippled through the air, accompanied by a deep, ear-splitting hum.

Gravisheath's ability activated.

The gravitational force in the area increased exponentially, crushing down on Kirin like a falling mountain.

However—

As if anticipating the move, Kirin instantly withdrew, retreating at the exact moment before the gravity shift took full effect.

"What?!"

Irene's expression changed.

Just then—

A purplish-black blade came swinging straight at her.

"Clang—!"

Another thunderous clash echoed.

Ser-Veresta's ferocious downward slash collided against Gravisheath's blood-red blade.

Irene barely managed to raise her scythe in time, blocking the attack—but the impact sent sparks flying in all directions.

"Shhh..."

A strange, unsettling noise followed.

The blade of Ser-Veresta sank slightly into Gravisheath, as if threatening to cut through it completely.

The Urm-Manadyte core within Gravisheath flickered, emitting a faint, eerie screech—as if in pain.

Irene's face stiffened, and she immediately leaped back, breaking away from the clash.

"It seems..."

Kaiser's golden eyes glimmered, and a smirk appeared on his lips.

"Even in this state, Ser-Veresta can still damage an Orga Lux of the same class."

At that moment, his Prana surged, wrapping around his entire body like a celestial light—and in a burst of movement, he charged forward.

"Tenfold Ruin!"

Irene's eyes flashed red, and she swung her scythe fiercely.

Instantly—dark orbs of gravitational force materialized around her, floating ominously in the air.

These were Gravisheath's gravity spheres—formed from Mana compression, capable of warping space itself.

"Go!"

With a sweep of her scythe, the black spheres shot forward, hurtling toward Kaiser.

They weren't fast—but wherever they passed, even the air and space itself distorted.

Touching them directly meant instant annihilation.

"Schwing!"

Yet—Kaiser did not hesitate.

With a swift flick of his sword, he sliced straight through one of the gravity spheres.

"Schwing!" "Schwing!" "Schwing!" "Schwing!" ...

Each swing of Ser-Veresta effortlessly cut through the orbs, causing them to disperse into nothingness.

"He severed gravity again?!"

Irene gritted her teeth—but before she could react—

Her instincts screamed a warning.

She abruptly dodged to the side.

"Shing!"

A silver-white blade flashed by—just inches away from where her chest had been moments ago.

The attack had nearly struck her badge, narrowly missing a decisive victory.

"Keen-Edged Tempest...!"

Irene's eyes twitched, her face darkening.

Standing before her—Kirin Toudou had returned once again.

The young girl's grip tightened around her sword, her eyes calm and razor-sharp.

"...What a pity."

Kirin's voice was quiet but firm.

"If that strike had landed... you would have lost."

She spoke with a deadly composure, her aura sharp like a honed blade—a stark contrast to her delicate appearance.

Standing just a few steps away, Kaiser lowered Ser-Veresta, smiling faintly.

"Ooooh! That was incredible! Kaiser and Kirin's perfect coordination!"

"Seidoukan Academy's past and present Rank One attacking in unison—even Gravisheath is struggling!"

The commentators were practically shouting, and the crowd erupted with cheers.

But to Irene—it was nothing but noise.

She glared at the two warriors standing before her, frustration evident in her crimson gaze.

"Taking on both of them at once... is really pushing it, huh?"

Reluctantly, she admitted the truth.

She had always known that her opponents were strong.

But facing them directly, she finally understood just how strong they were.

Especially Kirin Toudou.

She had underestimated the girl, focusing too much on Kaiser.

But now, she had no choice but to acknowledge it.

This thirteen-year-old girl was a swordsman on par with her.

And with Kaiser's presence as well—handling both of them alone was impossible.

"In that case..."

Irene clenched her scythe tightly.

She discarded hesitation.

She abandoned any thoughts of underestimating them.

And she decided—

To unleash Gravisheath's full power.

"Boom!"

A surge of Mana erupted as gravity twisted violently across the entire stage.

Kaiser and Kirin's instincts flared—they instantly leaped away.

But—

The gravity continued to expand, covering the entire battlefield.

"Ah...!"

Caught off guard, Kirin faltered, her body slamming against the ground.

"...!"

Even Kaiser felt the overwhelming pressure, his knee dropping down.

On the battlefield—

Gravisheath's Urm-Manadyte core pulsed with ominous light.

Its power—far greater than ever before—was finally revealed.

Chapter 64: A Stage Turned into a Furnace

"They actually got caught?"

Inside Seidoukan Academy's exclusive Student Council VIP lounge, Julis-Alexia von Riessfeld leaned forward slightly, watching the match unfold.

"Why is the range so much larger this time?"

Beside her, Ayato Amagiri looked equally surprised.

It was well-known that Gravisheath's ability was area-based.

However, according to past battles and recorded data, the effective range of its gravity field had always been limited—certainly not wide enough to engulf the entire battlefield.

Yet now, both Kaiser and Kirin had been caught in its grasp.

This clearly contradicted the previous understanding of the weapon's limitations.

"Because she has an ample supply of fuel right now."

Having already deduced the cause, Claudia Enfield spoke calmly.

"Priscilla Urzaiz, the younger sister of the Vampire Princess of Carnage—even though she has been present throughout the entire tournament, she has never participated in combat."

"From all the data we've gathered so far, I'd say it's safe to assume that she lacks any direct combat abilities."

"Most likely, she is a support-type ability user—someone who helps solve Gravisheath's most critical weakness: its insatiable demand for blood."

Claudia's logical deduction made both Ayato and Julis shift their gaze toward the back of the stage.

There, Priscilla stood silently, watching the fight unfold.

Her face was filled with worry—especially when Irene was on the verge of being overwhelmed by Kaiser and Kirin.

She looked deeply anxious, yet even then, she did not step forward.

For someone to be this distressed yet not take action, there was only one possible explanation—

She wasn't refusing to fight.

She simply couldn't.

"Then, that means..."

Julis murmured.

"Right now, Gravisheath is stronger than ever."

Claudia confirmed without hesitation.

That was why Gravisheath's area of effect had expanded so dramatically—covering the entire battlefield.

"Oh wow! The range of Gravisheath's ability has drastically increased!"

"Has the situation reversed? Now it's Kaiser and Kirin who are being suppressed!"

The commentators skillfully roused the excitement of the audience.

"Haha!"

On the battlefield, Irene's crimson eyes glowed brighter than ever, and she let out a wild laugh.

"You didn't expect this, did you?"

"As long as I have enough fuel, Gravisheath can unleash this kind of power!"

With those words, Irene lifted her blood-red scythe high.

"This is the end for you, Blazing Star Swordsman!"

"Ten Thousandfold Ruin!"

Once again, purple light filled the air.

Countless gravity spheres materialized around Irene, their numbers far greater than before—covering the entire stage.

With a downward swing of her scythe, the massive barrage of gravity spheres launched forward, raining down upon the kneeling Kaiser.

"Senpai!"

From where she lay pinned to the ground, Kirin struggled to rise, but the immense gravity kept her down.

Meanwhile, Kaiser remained unnervingly calm.

"Black Furnace!"

Gripping his black Activator, Kaiser channeled a massive surge of Prana into it.

"Vmm!"

Instantly, Ser-Veresta trembled.

Its Urm-Manadyte core shone brilliant crimson, greedily absorbing Kaiser's Prana.

Dark patterns swirled across the sword's blade, flowing like living tendrils before being fully absorbed into the core.

Then—

The blade turned jet black.

The moment the transformation completed, Kaiser resisted the gravitational force, and with a single, powerful swing—

"Schwing!"

The purple energy binding him was sliced apart.

"Boom!"

At the same time, an immense wave of heat erupted from Ser-Veresta, surging outward in a fiery shockwave.

In that instant—

The onslaught of gravity spheres disintegrated before they could even touch him.

With the flames of Ser-Veresta surging around him, Kaiser became a streak of fire, shooting toward Irene.

"Hundredfold Burial!"

Sensing imminent danger, Irene's pupils shrank—her instincts screamed.

Her body reacted on its own—she swung her scythe in desperation, releasing a chaotic tidal wave of gravitational energy.

The sheer force of Gravisheath's gravity blast was enough to shatter the reinforced arena floor beneath them.

Yet—

Even as gravitational streams twisted and lashed out like spectral waves, Kaiser remained completely unfazed.

Without any hesitation, he raised Ser-Veresta once more.

"Schwing!"

The black blade slashed forward.

It carried a tidal wave of flames, searing through the air, and—

"Boom!"

The gravity surge was obliterated in an instant.

"Shit!"

Irene gritted her teeth, immediately pulling back—

As she retreated, she continued swinging Gravisheath, sending wave after wave of gravity surges to disrupt Kaiser's advance.

"Schwing!" "Schwing!" "Schwing!" ...

But Kaiser slashed through them all—each swing of Ser-Veresta burned away the gravitational flows.

The gap between them closed rapidly.

Irene narrowed her eyes, twisting midair to change direction—

Her body moved unnaturally fast, a violet aura distorting the space around her.

She had adjusted the gravity surrounding herself, allowing her to accelerate beyond human limits.

Just like Kaiser, she was using her Orga Lux's ability to amplify her own speed.

By lightening her own gravity, she could move with unbelievable agility, covering vast distances in a single bound.

She also used chaotic gravity waves to disrupt Kaiser's momentum, forcing him to constantly cut them down, preventing him from closing the distance.

"She's doing this on purpose?"

As Kaiser chased her down, he quickly realized what was happening.

"She's trying to force this into a battle of attrition."

Kaiser immediately understood Irene's strategy.

By now, she had already figured out his weakness.

She knew that Ser-Veresta's full power required an immense consumption of Prana.

As soon as she saw the blade turn black, she stopped engaging in direct combat and started stalling.

If she could drag the fight out, she might be able to exhaust him completely.

Honestly, it was a smart approach.

Ser-Veresta was indeed a Prana-devouring beast.

Even though Kaiser's authority over weapons had enhanced Ser-Veresta, and the sword itself had become more efficient, maintaining its full power still consumed energy at an alarming rate.

Even though his Prana reserves now rivaled Ayato's, he still couldn't sustain maximum output indefinitely.

If she managed to stall him long enough, she might actually succeed in draining him dry.

But—

That was only if she could actually delay him.

"Schwip!"

Suddenly—Kaiser stopped moving midair.

Instead of continuing to chase Irene, he reversed his grip on Ser-Veresta.

Then—

He stabbed it straight into the ground.

"Boom—!"

A deafening tremor shook the entire stage.

A massive burst of heat erupted from beneath the floor.

The entire battlefield turned bright red.

It was as if a volcanic eruption had just taken place beneath them.

In that moment—

The temperature of Sirius Dome skyrocketed, causing the entire audience to break out in sweat.

At the same time—

The gravitational force on the battlefield disappeared.

Even Irene's own gravity field was burned away.

"Shit...?!"

Irene's expression twisted in shock.

"You didn't expect this, did you?"

Kaiser's voice reached her ears.

It came from directly in front of her.

Just inches away.

"This ends now."

With that declaration—

Kaiser struck.

Chapter 65: The End of the Semifinals

"—!"

As Kaiser raised his jet-black sword, poised to strike from point-blank range, Irene Urzaiz's reaction was immediate and intense.

Her crimson pupils contracted sharply, her expression twisting into one of feral rage, like a beast on the brink of losing control.

Her blood-colored scythe vibrated violently, as if it too were losing its composure.

At that moment, the Urm-Manadyte core embedded in Gravisheath flared brighter than ever before.

"Ah!"

Just as Irene was about to completely snap, a short, startled cry reached her ears.

That brief exclamation snapped her out of her frenzy like a bolt of lightning, bringing her back from the brink.

"Priscilla Urzaiz, badge destroyed."

Before Irene could even turn toward the source of the voice, the automated system linked to the badges rang out across the stage, its mechanical tone announcing the result.

"Priscilla!"

Irene's gaze snapped toward the back of the stage.

There, Priscilla Urzaiz had collapsed onto the ground, looking visibly shaken.

The badge on her chest had been cut in half, the pieces lying on the floor.

And standing before her—

A silver-haired girl calmly sheathing her sword.

Kirin Toudou.

Freed from Gravisheath's gravitational suppression after Kaiser's flames burned away the gravity field, Kirin had made a decisive move—silently closing in on Priscilla, who had remained at the backline throughout the entire match.

To protect Priscilla, Irene had placed gravity barriers around her—

But those, too, had been completely erased by Ser-Veresta's earlier eruption of heat.

Kirin did not waste the opportunity.

With a swift, clean strike, she shattered Priscilla's badge, eliminating her from the match.

Then—

"Clang!"

At that moment, Kaiser's blackened Ser-Veresta descended upon Irene.

Having been forced to divide her attention, Irene failed to react in time—her blood-red scythe was slammed out of her hands, sent flying through the air.

The crimson blade spun through the sky, turning in midair before finally descending—

And landing in someone else's hand.

But—

It was not Irene's hand.

"Vmm—"

The instant it was grasped, Gravisheath trembled violently, as if it had been provoked.

However—

"Be quiet."

A calm voice murmured—one that only the weapon itself could hear.

"__"

Instantly, Gravisheath fell silent.

No—

It wasn't just silent.

It was terrified.

No one noticed—

But in that moment, golden markings began to glow across Kaiser's hand.

These golden lines were strikingly vivid, yet completely invisible to anyone else—

As though, if Kaiser willed them to remain unseen, then no one could perceive them.

The golden lines spread, flowing into Gravisheath, etching themselves into its core, and sinking into its Urm-Manadyte.

At that moment—

A weapon infamous for its ferocity—a weapon that had brought terror to many—

Now quivered like a lowly subject kneeling before a king.

It submitted, trembling in absolute fear.

The golden markings seared themselves into Gravisheath's core, vanishing into its depths.

Kaiser's lips curled into the faintest hint of a smirk.

And then—

He casually discarded the scythe, tossing it aside.

From the moment Gravisheath was knocked away to the moment Kaiser let it go,

Less than two seconds had passed.

Irene—still frozen in her stance from losing her weapon—

Her dilated pupils stared blankly at Kaiser.

"Vmm!"

A low hum reverberated through the air.

And then—

Ser-Veresta's blackened blade descended once more.

Weaponless, Irene could do nothing to defend herself.

The flaming edge cut through her badge, leaving a magma-like crimson mark upon it.

"Irene Urzaiz, badge destroyed."

For the second time, the mechanical voice announced a defeat.

And immediately after—

For the third time—

"Match over."

"Winners: Kaiser & Kirin Toudou."

At that moment—

Thunderous cheers erupted across the Sirius Dome.

"The winners of the semifinals have emerged!"

"An instant counterattack! Kaiser & Kirin Toudou have successfully destroyed the Urzaiz Sisters' badges, securing victory in the semifinals!"

"The first team to advance to the finals has been decided!"

"And that team is—Kaiser & Kirin Toudou from Seidoukan Academy!"

As the commentators roared with enthusiasm, the entire stadium erupted in celebration.

Even in Seidoukan Academy's Student Council VIP lounge, Julis and Ayato exchanged glances—

Then, with relieved smiles, they clapped for the victors.

Beside them, Claudia Enfield also applauded, her expression warm and pleased.

"Senpai! We won!"

On the stage, Kirin—no longer wearing the composed demeanor of a warrior—

Instead, she beamed with joy, rushing toward Kaiser.

"..."

Opposite them—

The crimson light had completely faded from Irene's eyes.

Her gaze fell upon the shattered badge at her feet—

A look of emptiness crossed her face.

She had lost.

Even after all her preparations—even after giving Gravisheath more fuel than ever before, unleashing power far beyond anything she had ever wielded—

She had still lost.

And that meant—

Her mission... had failed.

"Tch..."

Inside Le Wolfe Black Institute's Student Council office,

A short, stocky young man sat in the dimly lit room, watching the live broadcast.

Clicking his tongue, he muttered—

"As expected... she failed, huh?"

But there was no disappointment in his voice.

No anger.

He had clearly anticipated this possibility.

His gaze remained locked onto the screen, observing the victorious swordsman.

The power Kaiser had displayed—turning the entire battlefield into a furnace, bringing Ser-Veresta's legend to life—

Had greatly heightened the man's wariness and caution.

His sense of unease had just reached its peak.

"...Well, at least I got something out of this."

Although the mission had failed, and the objective had not been achieved,

At the very least, they had gained crucial intelligence.

They now understood Kaiser's true level of strength.

They had witnessed firsthand just how much control he had over Ser-Veresta.

"For now... it's best not to act recklessly."

The man made his decision.

Given Kaiser's current strength, and given Ser-Veresta's overwhelming power,

Even he would need to bring out his trump cards to take him down.

And now that Kaiser had advanced to the finals, with the whole world watching—

Any suspicious actions would immediately attract attention.

That was not something he wanted.

So—

"For now, I'll just watch."

Having reached his conclusion, the stocky youth closed the screen and sank into the shadows.

Sirius Dome – Contestant Lounge

After winning the match, Kaiser and Kirin underwent a brief interview with the officials before returning to the waiting room to relax.

"Senpai, you worked hard."

Kirin, ever attentive, brought a cold drink and handed it to Kaiser.

"Thanks. You did great too, Kirin."

Kaiser accepted the drink, smiling.

Their moods were light—especially Kirin, who radiated pure joy.

"Now, there's only one step left, Senpai!"

She was both excited and nervous.

They had made it to the finals.

Only one match remained.

"Relax."

Kaiser patted her shoulder, sensing her excitement.

"The final match is tomorrow. For now, let's take a break."

"Yes!"

Kirin nodded enthusiastically—then hesitated.

"I wonder... who our final opponent will be?"

Kaiser only smiled.

Kirin did not know.

But Kaiser already had a strong feeling.

That match...

Would be against their strongest rivals in this tournament.

That afternoon, they watched the second semifinal match.

And—

As Kaiser had expected—

"Match over."

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