

The World 74

Chapter 74: Joint Training (1)

Leon's POV

I stole a quick glance at my phone, revealing that the clock had struck 8 A.M., marking the official commencement of our joint training. Suddenly, a resounding bell reverberated through the air, its sound piercing enough to make me instinctively cover my ears. I wasn't the only one; the entire student body seemed equally affected.

As the resonating toll of the bell subsided, we instinctively followed its fading echo. The landscape opened up into a vast green plain, extending over a 300-meter radius of lush grass. Beyond this sea of green, towering trees stood sentinel. Our cabins were strategically nestled within this expansive radius.

Among the sea of about 1200 students, we aligned ourselves by year, and subsequently, each year further organized into distinct classes. Stepping onto a platform adjacent to the bell, a teacher emerged – a man boasting silver hair and glasses. He turned toward the assembled students, ready to kick off the day's activities.

"Good morning, esteemed students," he announced with a captivating smile that sent waves of excitement through the female crowd. Some couldn't contain their delight, producing exaggerated reactions, including feigned fainting, only to be caught and lifted by their classmates. "Today heralds the commencement of our annual joint training.

This isn't merely a routine—it's a vital element of your education, fostering interaction not only within your class but also across different classes and years. Mastery of the Magic Knights' craft demands more than sheer strength; it requires intellect, decision-making prowess, and the ability to collaborate seamlessly with diverse teams.

Throughout the week, you'll face various scenarios, and remember, this isn't exclusive to Magic Knights alone. Professors and healers alike can reap the benefits. Effective interaction is the linchpin for successful negotiations and deals, cultivating trust, clarity, and the art of influencing others through both words and emotions.

In essence, human interaction is the lifeblood of personal and professional development, providing physical, mental, and emotional nourishment—from forging a sense of community to constructing relationships that propel growth."

I yawned, unabashedly uninterested in the lecture, a sentiment shared by a considerable number of students. Yet, in the sea of indifferent faces, my attention was drawn to Charlotte Sierra. She was gazing at the man with a visible blush, evidently harboring a significant crush. Glancing at the man beside her, I detected a blend of sadness and jealousy in his expression.

On the flip side, the third contender for Charlotte's affection seemed to have thrown in the towel entirely. Instead, he was redirecting his efforts towards charming one of his classmates.

"For the week ahead, you'll immerse yourselves in various activities—intense training, spirited sparring, and more. You'll be strategically divided into 50 groups, each comprised of 20-24 students. The week will be spent bonding and training with your designated group, with the freedom to cross-train with others. While this won't sway your official ranking, its importance cannot be overstated.

Even if it won't alter your standings, I strongly advise full and enthusiastic participation."

After those words, the bell gonged again, sending a resounding shockwave through the air, causing all the students to instinctively cover their ears.

"With that, let the joint training commence!"

We embarked on a journey from the expansive, emerald-hued plain towards the imposing expanse of the colossal forest. A palpable unease gripped one of the boys in our group, his composure visibly shaken.

"Is it genuinely okay for us to venture in there? We could easily get lost. I can't see a thing inside."

His concern was justified. The forest was an impenetrable thicket, making it difficult to discern its depths. Towering trees loomed above us, their true height obscured from our view.

The lush, overgrown foliage of the forest enveloped us on all sides. As we ventured deeper into the jungle, glancing back only revealed an endless sea of trees. The farther we penetrated, the denser the vegetation became. Frankly, it was a welcomed relief from the scorching heat outside the forest. Despite the approaching quarter to 9 A.M., the sun's intensity was already blistering.

Well, that was to be expected, given that it was the peak of summer.

I clutched the neckline of my shirt, attempting to fan myself and cool down. The atmosphere was as sweltering as water poured over hot stones.

While fanning myself, a sudden jolt coursed through me as someone bumped into me with their elbow. "I'm thrilled we ended up in the same group," uttered a woman with luscious, long blonde locks and captivating blue eyes. Today, her usual cheerfulness seemed to have reached new heights. This was Titania Bethlan, a first-year student hailing from the prestigious gold class.

"I share the sentiment," I responded.

She chuckled, "Delighted to know you're just as pleased as I am. And congratulations to you. I heard you ascended from the depths of the bronze class to the 90th."

"I suppose gratitude is in order then. Although, I'm skeptical about holding onto that rank. Oh, and let me extend my congratulations to you as well. Moving from 70 to 68 is no small feat."

A blush painted her cheeks as she responded, "It's just a two-rank climb. Nothing worth celebrating."

"It may seem minor, but considering you're in the gold class, the ascent carries its weight. Climbing the ranks in gold class is no walk in the park, right?"

In response to my words, her face lit up with a radiant smile. "Enough about that," she dismissed the topic, leaning forward with hands resting on her back. "How about... when the day wraps up... you join us in our cabin tonight?"

"Your cabin? Aren't there ten people in there as well? And all women at that?"

"It's fine," she replied, her tone almost conspiratorial. "I doubt anyone would even bother confronting me for bringing a man into our cabin. They don't want to talk to me anyway. So, it's perfectly okay if you join. You could even stay the night."

"Staying might be pushing it, but count me in for a visit," I replied.

"Really? I'm glad," she said, looking relieved. I wasn't quite sure why she felt that way, though. "Oh? It seems we're in the same group as President Artemis."

"Oh... You're right."

I hadn't paid attention until now, but indeed, we found ourselves in the same group as Artemis. Her Mirage skill was active, concealing her long elf ears and rendering them indistinguishable from those of a human. Clad in a sleek black military uniform, she commanded an air of dignity, surrounded by a loyal entourage.

"I wonder if I could persuade her to spar with me. Do you think she'd agree if I asked?" Titania pondered, her gaze fixed on Artemis.

Hmm, an opportunity presented itself to expand Titania's social circle. But... Realistically, convincing Titania to view Artemis as a friend might pose a challenge. Titania holds Artemis in high esteem, making it a delicate task to establish a more casual friendship. Regardless, there's no harm in giving it a shot, right?

"Well, I think she will, if you approach her with kindness," I suggested.

"Really? Well, taking your word for it, I'll strike up a conversation with her later or in the coming days. We have a week, so I can save that moment for another day. But for today, I want you to be my training partner!"

"Are you sure?" I questioned. "I'm in the bronze class, and I don't have a skill. You might regret choosing me. There are others more closely matched to your abilities."

Titania pouted, resembling a disgruntled squirrel. "You're the one I want, Leon!" she declared with determination. "I don't care about others' opinions. Even if our skills aren't perfectly aligned, I can impart some tricks to help you maintain or even elevate your rank a bit next time."

She radiated an unmistakable determination to be my sparring partner. Well, why not? It seemed like an opportunity to share some training moments with her. "Well, take good care of me, I guess."

"Yeah, I will," she replied, her smile carrying a hint of anticipation.

After a considerable stroll, we reached a picturesque area boasting a clear, meandering river. The group finally came to a halt, and it was then that the surroundings began to command attention.

"This seems like a prime spot," Artemis remarked, her eyes scanning the surroundings. She gracefully approached the river, cupped water in her hand, and brought it to her lips for a sip. "The water is crystal

clear and safe for consumption. Alright, everyone. Is this the spot you want for our training?" She stood tall, addressing the members of the group. "If so, raise your hand.

If not, state your reasons for rejecting this place."

In response, hands went up unanimously, including mine and Titania's.

"Well, looks like it's settled," Artemis declared. "This will be our training ground from now on. During our stay, we'll engage in collaborative training. Let's strive for conflict-free sessions and ensure we don't cause harm to one another. A joint training that fosters growth and camaraderie."