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“Izuku?” Rias questioned as she turned around and saw the *fury* in her boyfriend’s aura. From this far away, she only caught the faintest of stirrings of it on her Kenbunshoku.

Her friends and Peerage members turned as well, before looking at her quizzically. “Is something the matter?” Seekvaira asked, frowning when she saw nothing.

“He’s *furious* about something.” Rias muttered softly, which caused alarm to cross Lavinia and Ingild’s faces as they looked to their master. “I didn’t think he even could get this mad.”

Ingild frowned, “He looks fine?” She said, though it was more of a question than a statement.

“Are you sure, Rias?” Sōna asked as she peered in his and Sairaorg’s direction. “Sairaorg looks more upset than he does.”

“I can feel it.” Rias replied softly.

“Astaroth was just there a moment ago.” Koneko said flatly. “I saw him heading over a few minutes ago.”

Lavinia frowned, “Do you think they had an argument?” She peered over at her boyfriend, “Or do you think it was... *that*?”

“*That*?” Seekvaira questioned, looking confused. Even Sōna was lost.

“He’s way too mad for it to just be an argument.” Rias sighed and stood, “Perhaps we should call it an early night.” She said to her own members and Izuku’s as well.

“What a shame.” Seekvaira sighed, “But I suppose there will be another dance tomorrow.” She said with a dry smile.

“Itching to be back in his arms, hmm?” Sōna asked with a smirk all over her face. Seekvaira’s cheeks reddened just a tiny amount before she hushed their friend.

They all got up and made their way over to Izuku and Sairaorg. “You ready to go, Izuku?” Rias held her hand out.

Izuku looked at her in surprise, “Already?” He accepted her hand and got up.

“*Your mood’s been ruined. Though I’m not sure by what.*” She said to him telepathically. “Yes, I think it’s about time.” She smiled at Sairaorg, “We’ll see you tomorrow after your victory, cousin.”

Sairaorg laughed, “Yeah, I guess you will. Have a good night, everyone. I suppose I’ll head on out as well.”

Izuku said his goodbyes to Sōna and Seekvaira as well, who asked what had happened. Izuku sighed and muttered, “All I’ll say is you didn’t beat Astaroth hard enough, Seekvaira.”

“Seek-chan.” She mumbled, before her cheeks pinked a bit as he raised an eyebrow. “You and Rias both.”

He chuckled, “Alright then, *Seek-chan*.” He responded, “I’ll see you both tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow.” Seekvaira agreed. A moment later, they were gone, and she turned to Sōna. Sōna was giving her a very *Serafall* smirk. “Shut!” Seekvaira said, her cheeks reddening even more.

“I didn’t say anything!” The bespectacled girl giggled for a moment before they left as well.

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“What happened, Izuku?” Rias asked, before her eyes widened and she let out a gasp as Izuku growled and pounded a fist into one of the pillars they were standing near. The entire thing cracked.

“Holy shit, Izu!” Koneko gaped, “What the fuck happened?” Lavinia nodded her head rapidly, her eyes wide as she fixed the pillar in moments.

Izuku cracked his knuckles and shot his Bishop a thankful look. “*Astaroth*.” He hissed hatefully. “Come on.” He teleported them up to Asia’s room and knocked on the door.

“Oh no.” Ingvild muttered, realization striking her as Asia called for them to come in.

“Good evening, big bro...ther.” Asia realized something was wrong almost immediately and ran over to them. She hugged him tightly, sensing how upset he was, “What’s wrong, big brother?”

“Part of me doesn’t want to tell you this,” He squeezed his little sister with protective fury. “But I think you need to know, no matter how much this is going to hurt.”

“Fucking shit.” Koneko started to swear like a sailor as she too cottoned on. Akeno’s face was suddenly carved from stone and the temperature in the room began to decrease as a faint smell of ozone filled it.

“Wh-what happened?!” Asia asked as she pulled away.

“Astaroth...” Izuku hissed out the name, “Straight up told me that he was the Devil you healed.”

“Wh-what?” Asia gasped as her mind whirled. “N-no, y-you don’t mean...”

“He didn’t come out and say it.” Izuku said softly, wishing that there was *something* he could do to spare her the pain. “But at this point I’m a hundred-percent confident that *son of a bitch* engineered your fall from grace so that he could *collect* you for his sick pleasure.”

Asia started to tear up, and he pulled her into his chest. Full, wracking sobs burst out from her and she began to cry.

“Seek-chan should have burnt his face off!” Rias’s voice sounded deeper than usual and there were hints of scales starting to grow all over her. Everyone quickly surrounded the two and joined in the group hug, providing the nun with all the love they could.

“Why?!” Asia sobbed, “Why?!” He had stolen everything from her! She had gained so much more, true, but right then, at that moment, all that she could remember was what she had lost. “He- He was *so* b-badly hurt! H-his entire chest was t-torn up! H-He *faked* a-all that?!”

“Most likely...” Rias said, pain in her voice. “I’m so sorry, Asia.”

The former nun simply continued to sob until she was so exhausted she could hardly stand. Izuku gently picked her up and got into bed with her, holding her until she fell into a fitful sleep. “Sorry girls...” He said softly as he snapped his fingers and switched his clothes out for some silk pajamas, “I don’t think I’ll be joining you tonight.”

“Don’t be silly.” Rias snapped her fingers and the bed expanded. Another snap and she was ready for bed, joining them on Asia’s other side. She even wore something... even if said something was a barely-there negligee.

Kiba and Gasper flushed and quickly ran from the room as the other girls began to get into sinfully comfortable nightclothes as well, joining them in bed. Ingvild was the only hold up, who fidgeted before Izuku beckoned her closer. Flushing, she molded to his side and Lavinia got in behind her.

Asia would be quite shocked and embarrassed when she woke up, but she could not deny it was the most loved and safe she had ever felt.

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In the end, Sairaorg vs Zephyrdor was... just flat-out anticlimactic. The arrogant, hateful little man proved himself every bit the inferior heir everyone had claimed him to be. He had the complete misfortune of their Rating Game being a Board Collapse... which just quickly pushed him and his men towards Sairaorg’s Peerage.

In the end, Zephyrdor and his band of delinquents didn’t manage to knock out a *single member* of Sairaorg’s Peerage. Worse, once it was just him left, he called out for a desperate ‘winner-takes-all’ final gambit against the enemy King. The kind of thing that Sairaorg would have looked like an absolute *fool* for accepting...

If he hadn’t damn near killed the enemy King with a single hit. He defeated Zephyrdor so badly that by the time of his victory party, there were already rumors that the delinquent was jumping at shadows and had completely lost his will to fight. They would have felt bad, but frankly, *no one* liked the guy.

Asia put on a strong face for their appearances later that day, but it was clear she was still feeling despair over what she had learned the previous night. Rias and Izuku again left the victory party early, this time under the pretense of finalizing their plans for Rias's Rating Game the next day.

"Do you think you're ready?" Izuku asked as they all relaxed in Rias's sauna.

"As ready as we can be." Rias said affirmatively, "I know Sōna pretty damn well, I'd say. So I know for a damn fact that she and her Peerage have been training hard. I also have no idea *how* strong her Devil Fruit actually is."

"We each have our advantages and disadvantages." Kiba said bluntly. "They barely know what we can really do, but the same goes for us."

Akeno giggled, "Forcing us to Retire before we even had a chance to move against Riser was particularly inspired, Rias. No one got to see a thing we can do."

"That said," Izuku said dryly, "You both are friends and have worked together, so you *do* know *some* things about each other's skills, regardless."

"You could always tell us what you worked with them on." Aika grinned cheekily.

"No." Izuku and Rias said bluntly. "I was curious about Seek-chan because we weren't facing her and would see most of what her Peerage could do anyway. I won't accept help against Sōna." The redhead said, crossing her arms below her prodigious chest. Izuku smiled at her approvingly.

"Was just kidding, don't worry." Aika shook her head.

"What we can expect is to see Sōna attempt to out-think us more than out-fight us." Rias said, "Her tactical prowess is phenomenal, and I have little doubt she has plans upon plans waiting for us."

"Neither of you have complete Peerages." Izuku said bluntly, "And we still don't know what form the Rating Game will take tomorrow. Sōna is excellent at planning ahead, so there's little you can do to diffuse that and there's little point in speculating. That said, I *do* believe there will be a special rule implemented tomorrow."

"Oh?" Rias raised an eyebrow. "What?"

"I believe they'll ban Gasper from using Forbidden Balor View." Izuku said and Gasper let out a squeak.

"What?" Koneko furrowed her brows, "Why?"

"Because it would be boring." Izuku chuckled as Rias facepalmed.

"Damn it, you're right." She groaned, "He probably won't be able to freeze Sōna, but I very much doubt he'd be incapable of freezing the rest of her Peerage. He could all but end it in an instant, by himself. They're banning it for sure."

“Awww...” Gasper pouted. And after all that effort that he had put in to get it under control, too!

“Don’t worry, Gaspy!” Aika laughed, “As long as they don’t ban you drinking my blood, we can still have Super-Gaspy!” They all laughed as Gasper made a face of extreme distaste.

“Honestly, they better not.” Rias was the only one not laughing and looked incensed, “Sōna doesn’t need her hand held, and I know damn well she wouldn’t want to win solely because of rules that affected only her opponent.”

“She would be pretty insulted.” Akeno agreed after a moment. “It would be like Glasya-Labolas-san winning because the rules were that Sairaorg could not move his feet and needed his hands tied behind his back.”

“Sai would still win.” Izuku smirked and everyone burst out laughing at that.

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“I still can’t get over this floating city.” Izuku grinned as they took a vertical riser up into the sky.

“Ufufufu, maybe you’d like to lift our eventual palace up as well.” Rias giggled as she rested her head on his shoulder.

Izuku chuckled, “I’ve little doubt you could get it into the air yourself.” He said playfully, “Your flame clouds are at least as strong as Kaidō’s.”

“Let’s *not* have our home not flying under its own power.” Koneko said flatly.

Asia was marveling at the sights. “I... can’t say I wish Astaroth hadn’t done what he did...” She said softly, “But wonders like these... I never would have seen them if he hadn’t...”

Everyone smiled to see the young lady looking happy and animated again. Even when she had put on a brave face the previous day, it was clear she was still hurting from what she had learned.

“Izuku, what’s today’s schedule like?” Gasper asked softly, fidgeting in place. “Are you facing Lord Bael immediately after the conclusion of Rias-sama’s game?”

“That’s right.” Izuku nodded, “As we agreed yesterday, we’ll be watching with Seekvaira and Sairaorg since there are so few of us. Once you guys are done, I’ll be teleported to the arena myself.”

“Such a pain.” Rias groaned, “There’s people supporting you and others supporting Lord Bael. They’ve all but turned this into a political showdown between Sirzechs and the Bael family.”

“Politics are such a pain in the ass.” Aika groaned. “We’re here fighting for our own dreams. The upper class has to chill out.” Everyone chuckled at the annoyed Pawn.

“At least we knew that was likely going in.” Izuku said, “I’m just glad Sirzechs told me about it before we even went to the gathering so I could prepare.”

“In any case, at least we know one thing about our matches today.” Kiba smirked slightly, “Our Game against Sōna-Kaichō won’t be a One Day Long War.” Everyone started to laugh before they arrived at their station.

They were met with a limo outside and quickly brought to the venue, where all the important guests were arriving. When they got to the lobby, they were quite surprised to see a group there to greet them. “Hello there, Rias-chan! Midoriya!”

“Lord Phenex! Lady Phenex!” Rias blinked in shock at seeing the family she was meant to be engaged to.

Revan chuckled, “I see you’ve grown even stronger.” He eyed them both carefully. “This should be an excellent set of matches today.”

Leylana agreed, “Indeed. Though this will likely be your toughest challenge yet, Izuku Midoriya. Lord Bael may be no Sirzechs Lucifer, but he is plenty powerful in his own right.” She smiled at him. “Are you up to meeting it?”

Izuku smiled back at her, “We’ll just have to see, won’t we?” He looked at them curiously, “I don’t see Riser. Is he quite alright?”

“Indeed, we will.” Ruval nodded. “I’m afraid my brother was rather demoralized by his loss against Rias here.”

Ravel sighed, “He barely leaves his room...” She mumbled. “At least he still has his Peerage, who love him.”

Izuku and Rias shared a look and sighed too. “Whatever bad blood there was between us, I consider in the past and wish to keep it there. I’d rather he learn and grow from his mistakes than languish.” She said softly.

“The renegotiation helped.” Leylana replied. Rias had been quite uncompromising on one aspect of the deal: the Phoenix Tears. They were just *way* too valuable to give up, and they actually hadn’t been the part that Leylana and Revan had expected to have to push her on. With *how* much bad blood existed between the two, they had expected to have to give up quite a bit to get Rias to drop the other demands. In the end, Rias had acquired two batches per month for House Gremory rather than the agreed-upon one in exchange for dropping all of her other demands. Riser had been allowed to keep his Peerage, and they had been a lifeline for him these past few weeks. “We never thanked you enough for being so reasonable.”

Rias shook her head, “Honestly, I worked out most of my anger against him during the Rating Game. I never had a problem with your family as a whole and didn’t want to be the reason for one to develop. I didn’t intend on *traumatizing* him...”

Revan chuckled, “We know. Hopefully we’ll be able to draw him out of his funk sooner or later.” He shook his head, “But we didn’t actually come here to make small talk. Ravel, dear?”

Ravel fidgeted and stepped forward, “Izuku-sama, before Rias-sama’s Rating Game with my older brother, mother forced him to trade me to her. She does not participate in the Rating Games, so right now I am a Free Bishop. I would very much like to join your Peerage if you’ll have me.” She wiggled in place bashfully.

Izuku had to hide his balking over an ojou-sama like Ravel calling *him* ‘sama.’ He was caught completely flat footed, “May I ask why?”

Ravel blushed and Rias had to hold back from rolling her eyes. “You went from a complete unknown to an Ultimate-Class Devil in mere months. Rias-sama has also grown extremely powerful, and I think I could learn a lot from her. I think I have the best chance to grow stronger and become a splendid King myself one day if I’m by your side.” Which, of course, was totally dodging the real reason, which was her crush on him.

“Hmmm...” Izuku rubbed his chin.

“Unfortunately, it’s not possible for Izuku to take you.” Rias said, making Ravel’s face fall. “Both of his Bishops have already been claimed.”

“O-Oh...” Ravel sounded crestfallen.

“How unfortunate...” Leylana sighed.

“However, I *can*.” Rias said, smirking at the younger girl. “Not today, obviously. We don’t have the time to work on team synergy or even find out how strong you are. But if you wish to join one of our Peerages, I can make it happen.”

“That would be wonderful!” Ravel was all smiles again.

“Hmm, there’s one thing I could try as well.” Izuku muttered. He and Rias shared a look, “*Think it’s okay to share that I’m essentially the Soul King with them?*” He thought at her.

“*Wait, you don’t want to try...*” Her eyes went wide and the four Phenexes looked at them bemused.

“*Yup, I could try to remove her Bishop to return it to Lady Leylana and then use one of my Pawns. I’ll have to try that anyway once we find Kuroka. Might as well see if it’s even feasible before I get Koneko’s hopes up even more.*” Izuku replied.

She snorted, “Alright Izu, we can try that. Not here, though, and only if Ravel agrees and Lord and Lady Phenex approve.” Rias turned to the confused set of nobles, “Please accompany us to the waiting room.” She told them.

“Ohoho, are we about to see something fun?” Leylana smiled as they all set off towards the waiting room for the Game. They still had at least an hour to go, so it was fine for now.

They arrived at the Team Gremory quarters in a few minutes, and Rias was quick to set up privacy wards once they were inside. Their Peerages let the nobles talk, with Akeno hurrying to put some tea on for them to try. “Okay, so Izuku wishes to try something with Ravel.”

“Well, this is certainly intriguing.” Revan chuckled at their precautions. “What is it, young man?”

“First, what do you think my power is?” Izuku asked them.

Ravel blinked in confusion, “Is it not that strange medical skill you possess? The one you used to dice up Yubelluna-chan without hurting her and wake up Misla Bael?”

“Nope.” Izuku smirked as *Ace* appeared next to him. “That ability belongs to my sword.”

“Be...longs to your *sword*?” Ruval sounded incredulous.

“**Yup!**” Indra commented, making Ravel squeak as she backed away from the sword that suddenly had a face. “**Room!**” He declared, “**Shambles!**” And Ruval and Reval switched places, making them both twitch. “**Izuku can just use my abilities!**”

“How?” Leylana asked incredulously.

“Because *my* power is the manipulation of souls.” Izuku said, “*Ace* here cannot speak and use abilities because it is a magical sword, but because Indra, one of the manifestations I created out of my own soul, resides within it.”

“By the Burning Fields!” Ravel gasped and had stars in her eyes as Indra exited the blade and stood majestically in front of them.

“My word, he’s gorgeous!” Leylana *really* wanted to pet the Kirin.

“**Thank you!**” Indra said happily.

“How utterly *fascinating*.” Revan looked at him calculatingly. “And based on this, I think I know what you wish to try.”

Rias giggled, “And what is that, Lord Phenex?”

“You want to try to see if you can isolate the Bishop Piece in her soul so you can remove it, allowing you to use one of your own Pieces.” Revan said, his eyes calculating. “That would be... *quite* the accomplishment, if it proved viable.” Especially if doing so did not remove the gift of Devilry from whoever had the procedure done.

“Correct.” Izuku smiled at the man.

“Will it be safe?” Leylana demanded of him.

“This is entirely uncharted territory, Lady Phenex. I’ve never attempted it before.” Izuku replied, “However, with your clan trait, *if* there’s an issue, I’d say Ravel has a very good chance of

coming out unscathed. And in any case, if I feel it is not working or damaging her soul, I will stop anyway.”

“Hmm, I’m not sure I like the idea of my sister being a test subject.” Ruval growled lightly.

“I would like to try.” Ravel said, before turning big, gleaming eyes toward her parents. Leylana sighed and Revan shook his head. “Which Piece would you give me, Izuku-sama?”

“Please just call me Izuku.” He deadpanned, “And I would give you a Pawn. I don’t think Rook or Knight would fit you very well, based on what little I know of your fighting style.”

“Not your Queen?” Leylana teased him, though there was just the tiniest hint of disapproval in her voice.

Izuku chuckled, “I hope you don’t take it badly, Lady Phenex, but I would only use my Queen on someone who is either like *me* in that they can be a Knight, Bishop, *or* Rook at the same time, or on someone all my other Pieces fail to reincarnate.”

“Pragmatic.” Revan said, nothing in his voice giving away if he was feeling one way or another. “Well, if Ravel wishes to try, then I suppose I give my permission.” Leylana sighed and agreed as well.

“Ravel?” Izuku beckoned her closer, before closing his eyes and putting his hand on her chest, just over her heart. Everything else melted away as he beheld the flaming wonder that was Ravel Phenex’s soul. It was actually pretty amazing to see how it blazed a brilliant gold. And in the center of the mass, he could sense the Evil Piece inside her. ‘*Hmm...*’ he thought as he got a bit closer, feeling the warmth lick at him but not harm him. He put his hand on the Piece and his magical circle appeared on the back of his hand.

The Bishop was entwined closely with her soul. Very closely, in fact, with thousands of little connections. However, he could feel that they weren’t very strong connections. He wasn’t sure if that was because she had been born a Devil, or if it was something else. In any case, he felt he could quite easily unravel them.

He opened his eyes with his hand glowing green with his magical circle floating behind it and behind Ravel as well. She let out a gasp, arching her back, before her chest started to glow. Izuku pulled away gently, and a flaming, mutated Bishop emerged from her chest.

Ravel sank to her knees, gasping for breath. “Ravel!” All three of the older Phenexes knelt by her. “Are you okay?!” Leylana demanded at the same time as Izuku.

“I-I feel like I just spent all day sparring with Papa...” She muttered tiredly. Magical circles surrounded her from all three and Rias as well.

Revan sighed in relief, “Just exhaustion.” Leylana let out the breath she had been holding as she helped her daughter to her feet.

“Lady Phenex, I believe this is yours.” Izuku said, holding out the flaming Bishop Piece to her.

“It’s more Ravel’s than mine now, but I suppose I will accept it back.” She took it from him and looked at it curiously. “It mutated.” Leylana said as she rotated it gently in her hand. She chuckled, “This feels like a waste. As Ravel said, I don’t participate in the Games.” She looked at Izuku, “You’re unbelievable, you know that?” She said, amusement all over her face.

Izuku rubbed the back of his head sheepishly as *everyone* that didn’t have the last name ‘Phenex’ droned out, “*He knows!*”

He blushed, “Ravel?” He asked, summoning his Evil Pieces.

“What in the world?!” Ruval gasped as his other three family members went stock-still in shock, “Are they *all* Mutation Pieces?!”

“No.” Izuku shook his head, “They’re unique because Ajuka-sama made them *specifically* for me. He created a ‘King’ Piece whose only purpose was linking the set to me. This is what they became once that was done.”

Rias smirked, “The Queen *is* mutated, though.”

Ravel giggled weakly, “Even *I* wouldn’t want you to waste a *Mutated* Queen Piece on me!”

Leylana’s eyes narrowed as she thought of something, “Wait... if the ‘King’ Piece was only meant to link the set to you... how did you become a Devil?”

Izuku grinned, “Let’s just say Ravel here is going to get a bit more than she bargained for once she accepts my Pawn.”

Ravel’s eyes glimmered, “Let’s do it now!” She had recovered a bit already and was bouncing on her heels in excitement... which was doing *interesting* things to her chest in the red dress she was wearing.

Izuku chuckled as he grabbed one of the free Pawns. “Let’s.” He held it out to her, “Ar-”

“Wait!” Rias called out. Everyone blinked and turned to her in confusion. Slowly, a very *impish* smile grew on her face. “Lady Phenex, are you particularly... *attached* to that Bishop Piece?”

Leylana blinked and looked at it. She had yet to dismiss it. “Not particularly. Why?”

Rias walked over and whispered in Izuku’s ear. His eyes went wide. “Okay, there’s no way *that* would work!” He said, looking at her incredulously.

“Why not?” Rias grinned, “You already delight in breaking a bunch of ‘rules’ we thought ironclad.”

“Oi vey.” Ravel giggled as she watched Izuku wearily pinch the bridge of his nose. “Lady Phenex, might I have the Bishop for a moment? I’ll give it back once this doesn’t work.”

Leylana giggled, “Oh my, I’m about to be down a Bishop, aren’t I?”

“He did tempt fate quite spectacularly, yes.” Revan agreed with an amused smile on his face.

Izuku sighed and accepted the Mutated Bishop from Leylana. Rias set up diagnostic and recording spells around him, knowing Ajuka would definitely want to see this. He held the Pawn and Bishop together and focused before... almost dropping them as his Pawn immediately absorbed the Bishop. The black Pawn lined by forked, emerald lightning marks immediately changed once more, ghostly green flames erupting from the Lichtenberg figures that crisscrossed it. Izuku gaped, “Are you fucking kidding me?!”

Rias burst out into laughter as she ended her spells. Everyone else was quick to follow. He pinched the bridge of his nose, “I swear, I’m going to give *myself* an aneurysm one of these days.” That just made everyone laugh harder.

“Th-there, there, big brother.” Asia patted him on the back even as she tried to hold back her tears of laughter.

Izuku let out a sigh, but even he started to chuckle. This was just going to be a *thing*, huh? “I’m sorry, Lady Phenex. I *really* didn’t think that was going to work. It’s not like the thing is an actual *soul*!”

“But it *is* soul *magic*.” Leylana said simply, shrugging slightly. “I’m not bothered... and I think at this point, you can call me Leylana, Izuku. I suspect we’ll be getting to know each other quite well.” She giggled

“Indeed.” Revan agreed, “You may call me Revan as well.”

“Thank you.” Izuku sighed with a grin at them, before putting the Pawn against a still-giggling Ravel’s chest, “**Arise.**”

Ravel’s giggles cut off as she gasped. Her wings of flame burst from her back as more power than she had ever felt erupted from her. She was able to control it before it singed anything, but her family *did* have to back away. “Wow...” She gasped, looking at her hands with new eyes.

“Oh I see,” Leylana teased, “When your Mama turns you into a Bishop, it’s just a normal day, but when *Izuku* does it...”

“MAMA!” Ravel shrieked, her face turning red. Izuku swore he saw steam rising above her head.

Ruval chuckled with the rest of them. “Was that what you meant by Ravel getting more than she bargained for?”

Izuku smirked at him and leaned in closer to Ravel, whispering in her ear. She blushed at first, before she gasped and backed away, looking at him in complete shock. “You’re *joking*.”

“Try it out.” Izuku said, still smirking.

Ravel swallowed, before her flaming wings erupted from her back again... before they solidified and turned into black feathers. Ravel summoned golden fire that *quite clearly* possessed the Holy element and marveled at it.

Revan, Leylana, and Ruval nearly swallowed their tongues. “What the ***fuck?!?***” All three of them yelled in shock.

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That set off another round of explanations for the dumbfounded Phenex Clan, and it took up the rest of the time they had. The three elders left them to it while Izuku took his own Peerage to their viewing room. “Izuku! You’re late!” Seekvaira said as she stood to greet them. “We thought you weren’t coming for a moment.”

“Wait, Ravel Phenex?” Sairaorg stood as well, greeting his friend as they always did.

Izuku chuckled, “The newest member of my Peerage.” He introduced her officially. “And also the reason we weren’t here earlier.”

“Hello everyone.” Ravel curtsied with a smile on her face.

“Hello Ravel.” Seekvaira greeted her with a small hug. “It’s good to see you again.” She then frowned at Izuku, “How did you pull that off? I thought you already had both your Bishops.”

Izuku smirked smugly, “Soru Soru OP, pls nerf.”

Sairaorg snorted *hard* as Seekvaira gaped at him. “Bwahahaha! You just love giving Ajuka-sama headaches, don’t you?”

“He loves it.” Izuku grinned, before turning to someone he hadn’t expected to see. “Oh, hello Mislal.” He greeted Sairaorg’s mother. “I figured you wouldn’t have been with Venelana and your other friends.”

“Ufufufu, but you’re facing my husband, Izuku. I could hardly not be here with Sai for us both to cheer you on.” Mislal giggled primly from her seat next to Kuisha.

Izuku chuckled, “Well, we’re happy to have you, I’m sure.” With that, they set off on the meet and greet, since not everyone knew everyone else. By the time that was wrapped up, the countdown to the start of the match had already begun, and he settled between Seekvaira and Ingvild. He had an arm around his blushing Bishop, who was snuggling into him happily. Asia was on Lavinia’s lap beside Mislal, and Ravel was pouting slightly to see Izuku surrounded by other girls. Clearly, she had a lot of ground to make up already.

Soon enough, it was time.

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“Gooooood afternoon, everyone!” Rias let out a small breath as the announcer, Naud Gamigin started the festivities. *“I will be the commentator for this match between these two great clans! The arbiter for this match will be none other than Rudiger Rosenkreutz!”* Cheers erupted from every corner of the stadium.

Rias turned and looked at her Peerage. “Thank you for accompanying me this far, everyone.”

“We’ve got you, Buchou!” Aika grinned, flashing her a thumb’s up.

“And now, to introduce our competitors, give it up for Rias Gremory and her Peerage!”

They all turned and exited the tunnel, waving up at all of their fans. Rias blushed brightly when she suddenly saw Indra racing across the sky with a massive banner of her draconic form behind him. *‘Oh that man.’* She felt her heart skip a beat as Akeno and Aika both grinned brightly as well.

“And her opponent: Sōna Sitri and her Peerage!” Naud shouted as Sōna exited on the opposite side of the stadium, waving at the crowd. *“Excellent! Truly excellent!”* The cheering continued unabated as the two peerages made their way to the elevator that would put them above the field and sat on the comfy couches.

Rias looked over and her eyes narrowed slightly upon seeing a complete unknown in Sōna’s Peerage. *‘Hmm, he seems like an older man... and I can feel his power from here. He’s almost the size of Izuku and Sairaorg too... Good work, my friend. What powers does he have, I wonder?’*

“And now, to showcase your battlefield!” Naud declared and the arena between the two Peerages erupted, showcasing a brand-new area. It was a thick, dense forest. The crowd murmured as both Rias and Sōna’s eyes narrowed slightly. *“So what Game will we be playing today, hmm?”* Naud continued to play it up for the crowd. *“Why, none other than Scramble Flag!”*

“Oh dear.” A wide smile rose on Rias’s face. “This should be *interesting*.” She said. It was a sentiment being mirrored in Sōna’s box as well as in the crowd. Seekvaira even repeated it word-for-word in their viewing room.

“Now, for those unaware of the rules of Scramble Flag, I will explain!” Naud declared, *“This Game is not like the normal ones! Quite the opposite, in fact! There is no direct, tangible benefit to eliminating members of the opposing team! Even eliminating the opposing King will not end the match!”* Murmurs ran through the stadium, *“Yes! You heard me right! In fact, no Piece can be permanently retired from the field! Once their wounds are healed, they are sent right back to their home bases after a small waiting period!”* Naud chuckled, *“So how does this game work, you might ask? It is simple! We shall have two halves for this game, with a three-hour time limit and a small intermission at the halfway point. All members of each team will enter a vast battlefield at the same time and will deploy in an attempt to collect these!”*

The viewscreens changed to show different colored flags. *“We have five types of flags, each worth a different number of points. Yellow is worth one, blue is worth three, green is worth five, red is worth ten, and black is worth a whole fifty points! Dozens of them will be deployed periodically throughout the three hours that this game will take up, in various random locations throughout this vast forest! This will be as much a test of your reconnaissance abilities as it will be of your strength and endurance! The goal of each team is to collect these flags and take them back to their home bases!”* The screen changed again, revealing one base that looked straight up like the ice castle from *Frozen*, while the other was a replica of Rias and Izuku’s home in the human world. *“Once a flag enters each castle, the team that collected it will earn the points the flag is worth! At the end of these three hours, your winner shall obviously be the team with the greatest number of points!”*

The crowd cheered, starting to get hyped up for the game. *“But I know all of you are looking for some blood, dear fans! That is where battles come in.”* Naud grinned as his face filled the screen once more, *“First, neither team will know how many points a flag is worth until it is touched, for it will originally be white!”* There was a loud ‘ooooh,’ *“Once any member from either team touches one, it will fill with color. At any point, the flag may be passed on to another member of your team, but of course, it can also be **stolen** by any member of the other team! And you cannot seal it in a pocket dimension or teleport it in any way. It must be hand-delivered! Your goal, my dear combatants, is to prevent the other team from scoring at all costs!”*

The stadium was actually *shaking* from the excitement. *“And there is one final wrinkle! While injuries will be healed, your energy will not be restored before you are sent back in!”* Naud grinned, *“So if you see an enemy with a yellow flag... well, perhaps discretion will be the better part of valor! This is as much a contest of endurance as it is a race to rack up points! If you see a black flag, on the other hand?”* He chuckled brightly, *“Well, then it might be a good idea to drop everything you’re doing and either defend the carrier or race to steal it, for black flags will be few and far between!”*

Rias rubbed her chin, “Hmm, this kind of throws strategy out the window. Each member is equally valuable because we don’t know how many points each flag will be worth until we have it in our hands.”

Akeno agreed, “Normally, we would leave our strongest members for last so that they are fresh for the most dangerous fights, but if we do that and Sōna-Kaichō herself manages to get a hand on a black flag, I doubt we could stop her from scoring points.”

Aika giggled, “It would almost be better to send Buchou to Sōna’s castle, that way she can prevent them from scoring.”

They all chuckled before focusing on Naud. *“Now, for match-specific rules! First, we are using tier three protection spells for this game!”* The man declared, and Rias almost choked. For most Rating Games, there was still the possibility of heinous injury. Tier one protective spells could

minimize injury, yes, but something like a decapitation could only be fixed if the healers were able to immediately reattach their heads. That was what Seekvaira's game against Diodora had been under, and what she had faced Riser under. Tier two was what most middle and high-class Games were under, and short of getting your head crushed, you could survive almost anything. Tier *three* on the other hand, was reserved for only the most dangerous of Games, where there was a legitimate worry of someone getting reduced to atoms. It was incredibly energy intensive and required over a dozen extremely proficient spellcasters to monitor. They were rarely, if ever, broken out because of how resource intensive they were. This in and of itself was a statement of how dangerous the higher ups believed this game could be.

"Furthermore, there will be no promotions in this Game!" On both sides, each Kings' eyes widened in shock. *"Point in fact, you will be unable to enter the enemy's territory at all! Each King has additionally been provided with a sheet of paper that will detail the penalty times for a retirement. Please read it through carefully."*

A flash of red appeared before Rias and she grabbed it. Her eyes widened, "By the Lightbringer! If I'm forced to retire I'm out of the game for a full hour!" She clenched a fist, "And Aika will be out a full forty-five minutes. We must be careful, everyone! Unless the enemy is carrying a black flag, try not to get eliminated."

"Yes!" They all declared, before Akeno sighed, "And we don't even know how long *they* will be eliminated for. If Aika is worth forty-five minutes and she ends up in a mutual kill with someone worth fifteen, we'll be at a disadvantage for a full thirty minutes."

"And with that, we are ready to begin!" Rudiger declared, *"Please enter your teleporters, everyone! Each time will have ten minutes to strategize once you arrive in your castle!"* They all stood and did as they were bid, vanishing from that dimension in a flash of light.

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"Quite the interesting matchup." Sairaorg commented.

"Indeed." Seekvaira said, "It makes planning for specific matchups outright impossible."

Misla giggled, "It must be a new type of Game. One I've never seen."

Kuisha patted her on the shoulder, "It's a pretty rare one still. The first one was over five years ago, if memory serves. Maybe this match will drum up more excitement for it."

"I like it!" Izuku grinned, "And they even decided not to ban Forbidden Balor View like I expected them to. I think it's a great way to make it so that power is not the only thing of importance."

Seekvaira nodded with a small smile. "Indeed. I don't wish to underestimate a dear friend, but with Rias's fearsome new ability, I can't say Sōna wouldn't have been at a great disadvantage in a normal battle." Lavinia and Asia started to giggle. Seekvaira blinked and looked over at the

blonde duo, before her eyes narrowed. She turned to Izuku, who was smirking widely and had his eyes glued firmly to the viewing screen. “What did you do?”

“Moi?” Izuku said, a cherubic look of innocence on his face. “I have no idea what you’re talking about, Seek-chan!” He said as Sairaorg put his strongest privacy barrier around them. If anyone was trying to spy on them, this would fix it.

That in combination with Izuku’s words made Seekvaira’s eyes bulge in shock. “By the Burning Fields! I should have realized it before! *You* gave Rias that power! But how?!”

Izuku laughed brightly. With a snap of his fingers, the Devil Fruit encyclopedia popped into his hand, and he spun it on his finger like it was a basketball. “I wonder?”

Seekvaira *swore* she felt her heart skip a beat as she read the title. “A-Are you serious? You can just *give them out*? How?!”

“Long story.” Izuku chuckled as he put the book back where it belonged. “And not one that I’d discuss here, with the match about to start.”

Seekvaira let out a *very* uncharacteristic whine. This was going to eat away at her for the *entire* game!

Izuku grinned widely, “Looks like it’s starting.” He said as everyone turned to the screen. ‘*Oh hell yes.*’ He thought as he beheld the girls, who had changed from their Kuoh Uniforms along with the male members of their Peerage. Each and every one of them was wearing a brand-new RAID Suit as they exited the castle. And as he drooled over Rias, Akeno, Aika, and Koneko, he had one thought, ‘*Best. Creations. Ever.*’

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It was certainly time for her and her Peerage to debut their combat uniforms. As much as Rias *liked* the Kuoh Academy uniform, she hardly thought it would be appropriate a few years from now, once they had all graduated. Izuku might not have been anywhere near as good of an engineer as Germa 66 or even Hatsume Mei from his home world, but he and Katsuki *had* created the original versions of his own RAID Suit.

Rias was wearing an armored bodysuit so tight it may as well have been painted on. She hoped Izuku was drooling as much as he had been when she first had the idea. Koneko was in a full Yoruichi cosplay, sans the orange jacket or sash; Akeno was wearing a black-and-white, sleeveless, qipao-style dress that exposed most of her hips; and to Rias’s complete lack of surprise, Aika was wearing a completely shameless ‘little black dress’ with a v-cut neck that went all the way down to her navel. She was well aware that only magic kept it from being both a tripping hazard and a one-way ticket to being exposed live on Deviltube. Gasper was in full Astolfo cosplay, and Kiba had *really* leaned on the whole ‘white knight’ theme with a full-on Lancelot cosplay.

The thought that he was a Devil and used demonic blades made Rias giggle. But right now, she needed to focus. Counting herself, she only had six Peerage members. All of them were powerful and capable, but in pure numbers, she was outmatched by Sōna, who had eight total members at the moment. She took a deep breath, “Everyone, you know what to do.” Rias declared.

“You got it, Buchou!” Aika yelled as she transformed, her larger frame filling out her dress and lifting the hem from the ground before it vanished entirely, leaving her clad only in her flames. “**Boost!**” She declared as every one of her Peerage members had their speed doubled.

Not that Koneko needed it. The silver kitten transformed into a beam of light and shot into the trees. Gasper dissolved into a horde of bats and started to flood the forest. Everyone else raced off in a fanning pattern from the castle.

Gasper had one role for the early part of this Game: find out what Loup Garou’s powers were. The cloud of bats that contained his consciousness kept low inside the tree line, shying away from the light even if it didn’t harm him. Fortunately for Sōna, there were not an overwhelming number of them. Not enough to cover the whole forest, at least.

The bespectacled girl on the other end of the battlefield also had her peerage fan out, though her orders were a little different from Rias’s: take out either Rias or Aika as soon as possible to remove them from the board for at least a period of time. To that end, everyone but her two Rooks and her Queen were supposed to flee from either of the two on sight. Her newest Rook was authorized to face Aika if he was confident that he could take her down early. Both him and Tsubasa, however, had orders to immediately **castle** with her if they came across Rias.

“*The first wave of flags are appearing!*” Naud shouted out, and Sōna had the good fortune of having one appear in a tangible wave of magic not a hundred meters from her. She switched directions and headed straight for it, smiling when she could not sense anyone around her for at least a kilometer.

“Let’s see what you are, hmm?” She grabbed the flagpole and lifted it from the ground with one hand. To her pleasure, the white flag immediately filled in with a deep red color. “Excellent!” She spread her wings and took off for her castle. Only for her eyes to widen as she cast a barrier technique to her left. Even with that, she let out a grunt as Koneko appeared nearly out of nowhere and slammed a kick into it. ‘*F-Fast! So fast!*’

“Hello, Kaichō.” Koneko smiled at her; her body wreathed with light that strangely did not burn Sōna.

“Koneko.” Sōna still sounded surprised as she blasted the Rook with a high-pressure surge of water that battered down the trees in front of her palm. Even as she did so, she was forced to form a barrier of water behind her back. Koneko had somehow appeared in another flash behind her. “Since when did you become a Knight?” She couldn’t quite keep the incredulity out of her voice.

Koneko smirked as they landed, “Sure you can keep defending that flag with only one hand, Kaichō?”

The little kitten had a point. Unfortunately for all of them, the flags *had* to be transported by hand. But with her new speed... Sōna bit back a growl, ‘*Son of a- Izuku must have given her the Pika Pika no Mi. Damn that man!*’ That had been quite outside of her expectations. She never would have assumed a Rook would pick something that would not only allow attacks to slip through them, but something that would increase their speed so massively.

Still, she wasn’t without options herself. Sōna turned her palm to the floor and gallons upon gallons surged out, forming into a series of magical circles around them which plunged the both of them into total darkness.

Koneko hissed, “A darkness spell?” A blinding flash of light erupted, and Koneko squeaked in pain as the darkness had *instantly* given her an extreme case of night vision as part of the magic. “This won’t actually hurt me, you know!” She growled as she rubbed her eyes.

“It’s not supposed to!” Sōna grinned as she turned around and threw the flag like a javelin with all her might. And with her Zoan strength, that was *quite* a bit of might. The black dome of eternal night dropped, and Koneko’s heckles rose when she realized the flag was gone. “Sorry, Koneko-chan.” Sōna said insincerely.

“*And it appears that Sōna Sitri strikes first! Ten points for an excellently-thrown flag. That was pure strength, people, and an excellent demonstration of rules-lawyering!*” Naud cheered from everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

Koneko hissed, “Damn it!”

Sōna grinned at the kitten, “Would you still like to dance now that I can give you my full attention, Koneko-chan?”

Koneko smirked back, “You may have won the first round,” She dropped into a combat stance, “But if I can knock you out of the game for a few minutes, we’ll still be ahead.” And before Sōna could blink, the Rook’s foot buried itself into her gut.

She was practically folded in half before she crashed through thick tree after thick tree, crying out in pain. When her momentum finally cut out, she crashed onto the forest floor and rolled a few times before hitting another tree and stopping cold. She growled as she stood up, staggering for a moment as she held her belly in pain. ‘*By the Morningstar, if she had hit me like that before Izuku gave me my fruit, she may actually have killed me.*’ She shook herself and patted her belly a few times. ‘*I need to update the rest of my team.*’ She cast a communication spell, hoping the silver kitten wouldn’t hit any of them first.

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Gasper smiled as he spotted his first flag. His bats started to congregate as he grabbed it, frowning when he saw it was green. It was worth a decent amount of points, but he had hoped for something better. He dispersed into bats once more, a couple dozen of them flying the flag away as he continued to scout for Rias. It only took him another thirty seconds before he saw something worth revealing himself for.

Sōna's Knight Tomoe Meguri, a pretty young lady with wine-colored hair, was carrying another green banner. She was moving speedily through the forest, the trees whizzing by her, before Gasper descended on her. She was ready though, and her sword flashed as she attempted to cut down the bats. Gasper's speed and awareness had been greatly increased through Izuku's training, so he was able to dodge the blade.

But Tomoe was even using the flag itself like a weapon, dual wielding like it was a sword itself. Gasper wasn't going to be able to get anywhere near her like this, and so he used his Sacred Gear. His eyes flashed as Forbidden Balor View activated.

"Oh no!" Tomoe managed to get out before she was frozen in time.

The world around seemed to go a bit greyscale as time froze around them. Gasper quickly gathered the flag and started to fly towards the castle just above the tree line, keeping a moving sphere of his Sacred Gear's influence around him. He knew none of his own Peerage members were near him, so he felt confident in doing so.

Only he didn't quite prepare for Sōna's Rook. "WAAAAA!" He screamed like a girl as Sōna's newest piece leapt from the trees, claws extended to slice into him as though Forbidden Balor View wasn't even active. "O-Oh no!" Gasper felt nothing but dread as he determined *what* the Rook was. "W-werewolf!"

"Hello, little Dhampir." Loup Garou greeted him. "I believe that flag belongs to us."

"N-No way!" Gasper started to fly away with his full speed as Loup transformed into a giant, misty-looking silver wolf that started to bound *on top of the trees* after him. "***R-Rias-sama! Kaichō's newest servant is a werewolf!***" The rest of his Peerage gasped in his ear, "***A-And he's strong enough to ignore my Sacred Gear!***" A series of expletives met his ears.

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"That is so fucking cool!" Izuku cheered, beaming at the screen. "That's nothing like what I thought!"

"A werewolf!" Seekvaira marveled, "And a strong one too!"

Sairaorg laughed, "I wonder if he'll be willing to trade workout tips!"

Kuisha pinched his cheek, "You're already more beef than we can handle, master." She said dryly.

“Ufufufu...” Mislá chuckled as Sairaorg’s cheeks pinked.

“Loup Garou, hmm?” Seekvaira looked up his info, now available for them to peruse on a provided tablet.

“Wait!” Lavinia looked incredulous, “The *werewolf* is named *Loup*?” Everyone burst out laughing.

Seekvaira shook her head once she got her giggles under control, “What did you mean by ‘*not being what you thought?*’” She asked Izuku.

He winced, “He’s uh, not what I thought a werewolf would be like. I only have movies to go off of.”

Seekvaira eyed him and noticed him sweating lightly. She pouted, “If you don’t want to tell me, it’s fine, you know?”

Izuku slumped, “Just a lot of my backstory that hasn’t been shared yet, Seek-chan.” She shook her head in amusement in response. “But yeah, I kind of figured werewolves would be like the hulk, except wolfy.”

She giggled at the mental image, “Like that old *Van Helsing* movie?”

“Yes!” Izuku started to laugh, “*Exactly* like that, actually!” Seekvaira had no idea the *memory* she had just unlocked. That movie had been old centuries before he was born, back in his old world.

Sairaorg smirked, “Wrong *Hellsing*, my man.”

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“***Koneko!***” Rias ordered urgently.

“***I’m already there!***” Aika yelled as she intercepted the wolf with a trio of meteors. As the smoke and fire cleared out, she gasped. “Holy shit!” The wolf was full of holes, but he wasn’t bleeding anywhere. Mist seemed to be leaking out of his wounds, which were closing up rapidly. Gasper made his escape as Loup turned to her.

“The Sekiryūtei.” Loup said as he eyed her ethereal form as he turned back into his huge human form, “You’re not what I expected.”

“And I didn’t fucking expect *Hellsing*!” Aika snarked back. ‘*Fucking Logia! He didn’t even eat a fruit to be able to do that!*’

Loup didn’t grin at her words. “I believe Hirano-san had dealings with the supernatural.” He said informatively.

Aika blinked. And that was all it took for a boot to bury itself into her ribs, the misty werewolf displaying the insane amount of speed that he possessed. She hit the back of a tree and retched, before rolling out of the way of a kick that cut the damn tree in half! “Why you-” Her chakram started to whirl as she sent it at him. Loup and Aika both flinched as the spinning blade of death cut him in half, but the mist just reconnected the two halves. “Oh, fuck me jogging...”

Loup didn’t even have the decency to indulge her in a bit of bantering. He wasn’t really one for words. He transformed into his giant wolf form once more and surged at her, his razor-sharp teeth taking out a huge chunk of another tree as she dodged. “**Star Blaster!**” She declared after a round of boosts from her Boosted Gear. A colossal explosion that took out an entire section of the forest engulfed them. Even she was blown back a little bit, and she was proud of just how much power she had been able to put into it.

And yet she did not hear an announcement that Loup had been retired. The wolf barreled out of the crater, his body covered in mist and healing wounds. Aika *praised* Sun Wukong as she dodged a swipe from his claws that would have taken her head off even two weeks ago. She cartwheeled as a giant ghostly limb erupted from the ground and crashed into the wolf’s jaw. She blinked as actual blood from shattered teeth rained down, and smirked. “Ehehehe...” She giggled ominously, floating away from him as his jaw wrenched back into place with his regeneration. “Looks like Senjutsu works on you, wolfy.” She said, wisps of energy floating around her. A quick spell shared the information with the rest of her Peerage.

“So it would seem.” Loup replied, his eyes narrowed, his voice very growly as he stood before her. “It appears I was taking you too lightly. My apologies.”

‘*Oh fuck.*’ She only had a moment to swear as the wolf was on her once more, his jaws latching onto her arm. Her chakram split apart and sliced into him repeatedly as she kicked him in the side. Blood poured out of both of them as her left arm fell limp by her side. “Shit.” She said as a palm strike with a ghostly limb put Loup through a tree. A heavy stomp threw up a cloud of dust as she cradled her injured arm.

The fight turned into a chase, with Aika doing her best to both keep his attention on her as well as stay *away* from him. She cast spells, used her phantom limbs, and did everything she could to delay until the Boosted Gear was able to boost again.

“**Boost!**” She chanted as she prepared her next spell. She *could* fight with hand-to-hand, sure. Especially after her time with Sun Wukong, which had definitely saved her bacon the past four minutes. But it certainly wasn’t her strongest suit. “Time to drop the *fuckin*g sun on him!” She yelled as she held her hand up and a gigantic fireball that just kept getting bigger appeared.

Loup looked up at her as she threw it, the smallest of smirks crossing his face. Blazing fire erupted around him as well as he proved to be just as capable of magic as some Bishops. Fire swirled around his fists and strength-enhancing magic powered him up even further as he threw himself at the fireball, punching it and *detonating* it. Aika screamed as she dodged away from

him, her Chakra carrying her away speedily. “Damn it! **Boost!**” She yelled as gestured towards him. “**Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost!**” As for the second time that fight, she used her trump card. It was a miracle she had been able to delay long enough for it.

Loup grunted as he felt the force of gravity multiple on him dozens of times over. His movements slowed and he started to strain under her spell.

Aika sighed in relief, “Stay put there for me, wolfy!” She flew forward, ready to lay into him with some Senjutsu.

Only a fanged grin crossed his face when it was too late for her to do anything about it. Silver mist engulfed him as he moved *way* faster than she expected. He *buried* a fist into her gut so hard that she coughed up blood and *slammed* her into the forest ground. She hacked in agony. “See you when I see you, Sekiryūtei.” Loup said before punching her in the face hard enough to break her jaw. She was out like a light in an instant, her azure skin melting back to regular human flesh as she shrank.

“And it looks like we have our first elimination! Rias Gremory’s Pawn Aika Kiryū has been forced to retire!” Naud commented, to groans and cheers alike from the spectators. *“What a fantastic bout this has been so far! And to those too enthralled by the action, the score is currently sixty-three, forty-seven to Sōna Sitri!”* And now Rias was down one of her strongest pieces too. Things were looking grim for Team Gremory.

Loup leapt up, ready to get back on the hunt. He only had a moment to register the twinkle in the air before the hardest punch he had ever taken in his life smashed into his cheek. “That was our precious Pawn you just retired.” Koneko hissed, Senjutsu whipping around her.

Loup spat out a tooth which instantly grew back in and got to his feet, already transforming. But his speed was nothing compared to the speed of light. Koneko seemed to split into thirteen different kittens, and every single one of them barreled into Loup, pounding his misty body with Busōshoku and Senjutsu alike. Even his Rook-given durability mixed with his werewolf physiology wasn’t capable of withstanding *this* pounding. Not with him already tired from his fight with Aika.

He was barely able to defend himself for a minute before he slumped to the forest floor, unconscious. His body vanished as the Naud announced the second Retirement of the game.

Kilometers away, Rias wasn’t any happier when it was revealed that Loup would be allowed back in ten minutes earlier than Aika would. That Pawn of hers was going to get *such* a spanking for deviating from the plan!

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Akeno sighed as she landed before Tsubaki, Reya, and Momo. Kusaka Reya was a pretty brunette with a modest chest, while Hanakai Momo had hair as white as Koneko’s. “I didn’t

expect so many of you to be grouped up. This paints a huge target on you three, you know? Whatever shall I do?" She licked her lips as she eyed the two red flags the Bishops were carrying.

Tsubaki giggled, "This is a bit too arrogant, even for you, Akeno-chan." The three Devils on Sōna's side of the field started to unleash their auras. Tsubaki also summoned her naginata, twirling it expertly and pointing it at the enemy Queen.

"We'll see." Akeno said as her own electric aura started to crackle around her. Time to see if all her hard work and effort would pay off.

Reya and Momo held their hands out, casting barriers around the area. What seemed like a red cube formed around them all. "Now no one will be able to interfere!" Reya grinned, "You shouldn't have tried to face us all at once!"

"Ara, whatever shall I do?" Tsubaki sprinted at her, and Akeno readied herself like she was going to dodge. And then the naginata passed right through her, leaving a trail of crackling electricity running along the blade.

"What?!" Tsubaki gasped as a *viciously* grinning Akeno smacked a hand into her belly and sent her flying away with an electric burst.

"Tsubaki!" Momo gasped as she got out of the way, not wanting to be hit as well.

"Grrr!" Reya cast a spell that blurred her mouth and prevented any noise from being heard. There were already censoring spells for the Game itself, but she didn't want any chance of there being a private recording. "You ate one of those stupid, broken fruits too!" She pointed at Akeno angrily, hoping the other Queen would talk. That would give Tsubaki a chance to recover herself.

"Ufufufu, did I?" Akeno cast the same spell, "I'm afraid you're quite mistaken, Reya-chan." Akeno said, her eyes lidded. "It certainly gave me the *idea*, but I didn't want to *waste* one of his gifts like that. Not when I already had the *lightning* within me." Her smile widened as the two backed up in shock. *'That said, it is tricky to pull off, and I'm no master. It might take me years before I can do it as automatically as Koneko-chan can. But they don't need to know that.'* She licked her lips again, "Now sing for me, my darlings!" She declared as a huge bolt of lightning erupted from her right hand. "**El Thor!**" She declared as the skies above crackled with electricity before a titanic bolt descended on the two Bishops.

"**Mirror Alice!**" Tsubaki flew above them and a large, ornate mirror appeared before her, pointed at the sky.

"What in the world?!" Akeno gasped as one of her most powerful attacks was *eaten* by the enchanted glass. And then Tsubaki pointed the glowing mirror at her. "Oh dear." She mumbled before the mirror blasted an even *more* powerful bolt directly at Akeno. The blast of electricity

cut a ten-kilometer-long furrow into the forest, and to Tsubaki's horror, eliminated Ruruko, one of their fellow Pawns.

They were all covering their faces when the light died down, and Tsubaki was shaking a bit in horror over what she had inadvertently done. Her mirror cracked and shattered before vanishing. It would be on cooldown for at least half an hour, the longest it ever had been. It was only pure instinct that allowed Tsubaki to feel the hair on the back of her neck stand on end and dodge. Akeno crashed down where she had just been, a trident that seemed to be made of pure gold in her hand.

She hit the ground and the tines of her trident sparked before discharging electricity into the ground. "Ufufufu, Tsubaki-san, you've almost done more to help us than we have." She taunted the enemy Queen.

Tsubaki flinched before barking out, "Momo, Reya, enhance the barriers to keep both of us here and get those flags to base! Now!" She stabbed at Akeno with her naginata, confident that she was far more skilled than the other Queen, who had been a pure spellcaster only a few months ago.

And she was proven correct, though not nearly as correct as she had hoped. Akeno seemed to be one step ahead of her at all times, even if her parries and counterattacks were nowhere near as polished. "Ufufufu, sacrificing yourself, hmm?"

"The objective isn't to defeat you." Tsubaki said evenly, perfectly happy to catch her breath. "It's to score points."

"I agree." Akeno said, grinning widely. And then she turned into lightning and flashed behind Tsubaki in a burst of speed she could barely keep up with, even with the training Izuku had provided in **Soru**. She blocked Akeno's stab with the shaft of her naginata, her fellow Queen jumping back when Tsubaki tried to spin her weapon to wrench *Akeno's* weapon out of her hands. "Ta, ta!" Devil and Fallen wings appeared behind Akeno, and she blitzed out of the area, slipping through the barriers the two Bishops had left like they weren't even there.

"What?!" Tsubaki gasped, rushing after her fellow Queen, before grunting in pain as she smacked right into solid air like a fly on a windshield. "What is-" The symbols on the barriers flashed, replaced with a different set of characters as the barrier turned violet. "Oh no! How did-" She suddenly saw a bunch of small ofuda on the trees. "When did she-?!" She hurriedly tried to break out of the barrier Akeno had usurped and trapped her in, growling. *'How could I have forgotten that she's a Himejima!'* She castigated herself as she hurried to try and unravel the other Queen's techniques.

...

Reya and Momo were flying as fast as they could, "We're almost there." Momo said.

“It’s really too bad you won’t get there.” A sibilant voice said before Reya shrieked in pain, which was masked by the sound of lightning.

“No, Reya!” Momo gasped out as her fellow Bishop retired, the flag she had been carrying spinning through the air and landing right in Akeno’s open hand. “Stay back!” She cast more barriers, trapping Akeno in a small, burnt-orange box.

“Ufufufu, you seem a little afraid, Momo-chan.” Akeno bit her index finger and allowed it to bleed, before using her blood to write a character on the barrier. It flashed and shattered into pieces. “Be not afraid. This will only hurt for a moment.” She said ominously, her violet eyes glimmering and nearly making Momo pee herself as the darkness of the forest shadowed her face.

Momo screamed as lightning struck.

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“Akeno-chan is so scary!” Ingvild moaned as Rias’s Queen took out both opposing Bishops. Asia nodded rapidly, a little blue in the face.

Sairaorg chuckled, “She got lucky.”

“What?” Ingvild gasped, “How?!”

“Sairaorg is right.” Izuku chuckled as Seekvaira nodded, “Lavi-chan?”

Lavinia giggled, “Of the three she faced, only Tsubaki was an actual threat. Neither Momo nor Reya seem to possess any actual offensive magic, only their barriers. Something Akeno-chan was able to counter quite handily.”

“It was quite the poor team-up between them.” Mislal agreed, “They’re young. Plenty of time to improve.”

“To be fair, they encountered each other and grouped up for safety, rather than doing it on purpose from the start.” Seekvaira mused, “It was a good plan. One that merely needed more varied skillsets. I’m surprised Sōna recruited two barrier specialists and didn’t train either of them in offense.”

Lavinia piped up, “To be fair, not everyone has talent for all kinds of magic.”

“Indeed.” Mislal chuckled, “The less said about my attempts with fire magic, the better.” Everyone chortled, “Looks like we’re about to get to half-time.” She said as she eyed the score-screen. “Despite the setbacks, Sōna has done well. She’s ahead of Rias.”

“By a good amount too.” Izuku said, eyeing the score. “She was lucky to get that black flag. Rias was too far away to contest it.” He smiled, “Plenty of time for her to make up the gap still.” He

said as they hit halftime and all contestants were immediately returned to base, their flags dropping wherever they had been.

“That’s unfortunate for Rias-sama.” Ravel chimed in, “Some of those flags will be closer to Sōna than to them.” She shook her head, “I can’t believe Gasper-san retired just because of a little garlic. He won’t even be available to start the second half.”

Ingvild winced, “I mean... he is a Dhampir...”

“Yes, and garlic doesn’t actually *hurt* them either.” Izuku deadpanned, “Rias is *not* going to be happy.”

Asia poked her fingers together, “...Is it bad that I can see Aika tying him up for... umm... exposure therapy?”

Izuku snorted, “She would.” He said fondly as Sairaorg burst out laughing.

“That’s if she can even get him before Rias administers punishment.” The big man cackled.

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Rias was, indeed, having to refrain from spanking her poor Dhampir. She was standing before him, arms crossed, and tapping her feet. Gasper still looked vaguely green from his Allium adventure. Unluckily for Aika, she was also sitting seiza beside Gasper. Both of them had dunce caps on. “What part of ‘*try not to get eliminated*’ was hard to grasp, my Pawn? We planned for situations like that!”

Aika had crocodile tears leaking down the sides of her face, “I got too cocky after training with Sun Wukong. I’m sorry, Rias-sama.”

Rias let out an exasperated sigh, “Unless you manage to score at least a hundred points yourself, your punishment will be no Izu time for a week!” She pointed at the brunette, who turned all white and seemed to have her soul try to escape out her mouth. That was going to be a *hard* ask, seeing as she’d been missing for half the first round and had only managed to put fifteen points on the board. “We’re lucky Kiba, Koneko, and Akeno have been able to do so well.”

All of them still had gas in the tank, but Akeno had used a fair bit of power already and Koneko was also pretty tired. “What’s the plan?” Kiba asked, glad for the rest they were getting.

“That damned black flag has put Sōna pretty far ahead, but she’s been smarter about her flags too.” Rias said, “We have almost a hundred points to make up, and that means we can’t keep ignoring the lower point values.”

“Reya-chan and Momo-chan will be out for at least ten minutes. We have all of our Pieces.”

Koneko said. She was sitting cross-legged with her eyes closed and drawing in natural energy to try and replenish herself. It was a hard task, what with the world’s hatred, but tutelage from Sun Wukong had helped her a great deal.

“Our goal should be to eliminate her Rook Loup as fast as possible.” Rias said, biting her thumb. “We need to take out their speedsters. Kiba, I want you to target Tomoe-chan. Gasper, I need you to find Sōna or Loup as fast as possible and alert me when you do. Koneko, I want you to target Tsubasa-chan. If you come across Sōna, you are to **Castle** with me immediately. I think it’s about time I dance with my rival.” She laid out the beginnings of her plan. “We need to eliminate as many of them as we can so that we have free reign over the flags. Once your targets are eliminated, you are purely on flag duty. Aika, Akeno, I don’t want either of you fighting unless it’s for a high-point-value flag. You two are purely on collection duty. If anyone finds a black flag, we must get it at all costs.” Everyone nodded, “If anyone else has any ideas, I’m all ears.”

They chatted away the remaining time, refining the plan for the second half. It was time to put up or shut up.

...

The second half started with a bang. The Gremory team ignored all flags in their territory in favor of hunting for their targets and flags in the Sitri territory. Kiba came across Tomoe Meguri almost immediately. “Sorry about this, Meguri-san.” He said evenly as he attacked her with a demonic blade.

“It’s okay!” Tomoe grinned eagerly as she defended herself with her katana. “I’m not exactly a slouch, you know?” Their blades clashed and clanged with hyper-fast flashes of light. Tomoe was indeed very skilled, and definitely Kiba’s equal. Even in speed, they were matched, with Tomoe having been the only one of Sōna’s Peerage to have figured out **Soru** thus far.

The two dove and ducked, slashed and parried. They cut down tree after tree in their deadly dance. It was actually a bit astonishing, just how skilled the wine-haired woman was. She was keeping even with Kiba’s demonic blades with only her enchanted katana. Kiba chuckled good-naturedly. “I’d say you’re more than just ‘*not a slouch*,’ Meguri-san.” He said during a break in the action. “You’re one of Sōna-Kaichō’s strongest assets, aren’t you?”

“Flattery will get you nowhere.” Tomoe giggled as she charged again, her katana clashing against his demonic sword. Only Kiba did something she did not expect in the slightest when he parried her. “Yipe!” Tomoe squeaked as Kiba continued his motion and threw a half-moon-compass-kick at her... with his *leg* becoming a sword. She dodged back and yet he still managed to score a small cut on her chin, and a small bundle of her hair fell to the forest floor. “My hair!” She yelled as she backpedaled rapidly.

“I’d be more concerned with my chin, but that’s just me.” Kiba chuckled as his leg turned back into flesh.

“Grrr!” Tomoe growled, suddenly aware she was going to have to be *far* more careful if he could turn his body into a blade.

“Sorry, Meguri-san, but while I’d love to spar with you any day of the week, Rias-sama needs me.” Kiba said, jerking his right leg, which turned into a straight sword that crackled with lightning. He leapt into the air and somersaulted, crashing down right where she had been standing with a blade that sent electricity in every direction.

“*Shoot!*” Tomoe cried as some of the lightning got her. She brushed it off, stabbing for his head with her blade.

Kiba turned his arm into a short sword that burned with fire. He blocked her sword and slid his arm down the blade, a hellish screech ringing out. Tomoe was forced to lose her sword in her hurry to get away from the explosive flames.

She cursed, “His whole dang body is a weapon! No fair!” She summoned her blade back, cursing again when he smacked it out of the air. “Oh no!” She barely had time to try to dodge before he scored a deep gouge in her thigh. Blood flared for a moment before freezing solid, leaving her with a chunk of ice impeding her movement. She let out a cry of pain and fell to one knee.

He held a blade to her throat, “Checkmate.”

“Shoot!” Tomoe glared at him. “Sorry Kaichō.” She whispered before being whisked away.

Kiba sighed and raced off, ready to find more flags.

...

The game continued apace, with both teams scoring points and with Rias’s team making up ground. However, the one thing she wanted most, Sōna seemed reluctant to give her. She had seen neither hide nor hair of her rival, and she was getting antsy because of it. Rias *wanted* to fight Sōna and prove herself. But the most she had been able to do was eliminate Tsubaki for a juicy red flag. She had taken a page out of Sōna’s book and started *chucking* the flags so that she wouldn’t have to return to the castle. She was really grateful for the Sitri heir’s rather *inspired* idea. All it needed was some magic to aim and brute strength.

She sighed as she appeared in front of Loup, “You know, something tells me Sōna is avoiding me. That hurts, you know?” Loup said nothing, transforming into a wolf and trying to bite her. “Not much of a talker, huh?” Rias grabbed the jaws with a grin and held them open. “What now, wolfy?” He went fully intangible, unable to be harmed, but also unable to harm Rias. He passed right through her and turned around, trying to claw her back.

She dodged with a burst of **Soru**. Her fist was engulfed in destruction as she slammed a fist into his back, sending him crashing through a tree with a groan of pain. His rather deep wound healed over as his regeneration kicked in. He rushed at her, his fists engulfed in flame. He was *very* skilled in hand-to-hand. Definitely Koneko’s equal, in that regard. Unfortunately for him, Rias had something even better than Rook-given toughness. He was hitting her more often and he was hitting her *hard*.

Rias had one response to that: **hit him harder**. Every blow she landed knocked him for a loop, crushing bones and burning him. With her practice with Busōshoku having finally borne *some* fruit, she even surprised him a few times when he went intangible and she hit him anyway. She wasn't breathing particularly hard, though her heart rate was up, and she had a massive grin on her face.

He was panting and his regeneration was starting to lag. "S-Sorry, Kaichō." He grunted before he began to glow.

Rias realized he wasn't retiring just a moment too late. He vanished, and Sōna stood in his place, magic absolutely pouring out of her. "**Advent of Okeanos!**" She yelled, and Rias knew pain as millions of gallons of enchanted water smacked into her all at once. Trees were torn from the ground, roots and all, as Sōna hit her friend with enough water to drown a shark. The small valley they were in contained the water, creating a brand-new lake in the area. "Did that do it?"

The water darkened before Rias burst from the depths, laughing, "**Ahahahaha! There's the rival I know and love!**" The dragon rose from the water, coiling through the air. "**You'll have to do better than that though, Sōna, dear.**"

Sōna sighed, "Wishful thinking, I **guess**." The last word was much deeper than her regular speech as her body grew and grew and grew. Rias was huge. Over a kilometer long! But even she was dwarfed by the sheer scale of her rival.

"**Hehehe**." Rias's draconic mouth formed a smirk as she beheld her several-kilometers long rival. "**Let's hope you can actually fight like that, Sōna! You better not have been slacking!**" She threw herself forward as Sōna hissed and lunged as well. The two titanic beings crashed into one another so hard that a shockwave blew parts of the forest away.

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"*I can't believe my eyes!*" Naud chanted through the audio system, but it was almost impossible to hear him. The entire *stadium* was roaring at the sight of the giant dragon and even bigger snake clashing.

"Holy shit man, they're causing a damn earthquake." Sairaorg said as their seats quivered.

"It's a good thing that we're isolated here, otherwise we would be part of the rest of the people in need of healing for the hearing damage." Mislā still looked tempted to conjure ear muffs.

"By the Burning Fields, what the *hell* did you give Sōna?" Seekvaira asked Izuku. He chanced a glance at Ravel, but she was too busy *gaping* at the titanic duo.

"Jörmungandr." He murmured to her.

She pouted, "No fair..."

Izuku chuckled, “Oh, don’t worry, Seek-chan.” He leaned his head towards her and whispered in her ear. He took note of how she shivered, “I have some ideas for you too.”

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Koneko sighed as she crashed into Loup a moment after he switched places with Sōna. “What a drag.” She said as she held her foot against his throat, “When we have a chance, I want a proper fight. With both of us at our best.” She said, before stomping and knocking him out. With the amount of time they had left, she wouldn’t be seeing him again. She leapt to the treetops and spotted Akeno winging her way over.

“They’re magnificent, aren’t they?” Akeno said, beaming as her smaller King knocked the larger serpent over.

Koneko smirked lightly as their hair was ruffled from the blast of air that hit them even as far away as they were. “Sōna-Kaichō didn’t take full advantage though.” She said as Sōna slithered up and then crashed down nose-first so hard that the ground beneath lifted and started to form a large hill. “Come on. We have a job to do.” Koneko said, glinting with silver light and shooting off.

Every one of her Peerage locked in. They had the advantage now, and they weren’t about to fail Rias.

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Rias was far more skilled with her gigantic body than Sōna was. She was able to wrap her coils around the serpent and slam her, again and again before Sōna was able to fling her away. “**Come on, is that the best you’ve got?!**”

Sōna reared back, “**Not even close!**” She opened her maw and a *vile*, icy-blue fluid erupted towards Rias. It splashed on her and immediately started to *steam* against her scales.

“**GAHHH!**” Rias cried out as Sōna’s venom started to eat away at her. A pulse of the **Power of Destruction** destroyed the venom, but Rias was hurting. “**Oh yeah?!**” She growled, opening her own maw and roaring. A gigantic blast of fire smashed into Sōna and exploded, knocking her huge body back hard enough that she caused an earthquake when she landed. The sheer heat evaporated all of the water that Sōna had hit her with earlier.

Sōna slithered up, shaking her head and hissing at her blackened scales. She stood at least a kilometer of her body up until her head passed into the lowest clouds. A loud roar echoed as they darkened and then started to *pour* rain down on Rias. But it was no normal rain, no, these droplets were falling fast enough and hitting hard enough that it was like a million guns were shooting at Rias.

“**Ahahaha! This is so much fun, Sōna!**” Rias started to spin and coil faster and faster.

“**Tatsumaki!**” She roared as tornadoes started to howl around her, pulling the rain away and

crashing against Sōna. They weren't quite powerful enough to lift her massive body up, but the trees and boulders pelting her were doing quite a good job knocking her around.

“**Gah! Ah!**” Sōna cried out as a boulder hit her square in the face, barely missing her eye.

“**Damn it!**”

“**Also, you should probably rethink the rain, Sōna, dear!**” Rias yelled at her rival as she disgorged flame cloud after flame cloud into the sky. Lightning began to crackle in the dark clouds as Rias grinned. “**Judgement!**” Bolt after bolt hit Sōna, their energy racing along her wet scales. Sōna screamed in pain as the clouds spat out their punishment on her.

Rias raced forward, barreling into Sōna and knocking her over. Sōna grunted before her body coiled. Her massive bulk *smashed* into Rias and flung her away, her body digging a massive furrow into the ground. Trees were broken and knocked over as the earth dug up into almost a wall. “**Owww...**” Rias grunted as she got up, laughing when she heard Naud announce an elimination.

Sōna winced as her *poor* Pawn Ruruka got Retired a second time from completely out of nowhere. She was going to have to get her Pawn something *really, really* nice for her two eliminations. Especially for how well she had done! “**...Maybe they should give us a... bigger field next time.**” She sweatdropped, “**I’m so sorry, Ruruko-chan!**”

“**I’m down to spar whenever you are, Sōna!**” Rias yelled as her gullet started to glow, “**Blast Burn!**”

“**Hydro Cannon!**” Sōna was, apparently, as much of a Pokémon fan as Rias and matched her energy.

The two colossal elemental attacks hit one another and created an *insanely* large steam cloud. “**Tatsumaki!**” Rias yelled as she summoned more tornadoes to clear it out. “**Where are you?**” She grumbled, not seeing Sōna anywhere.

And then the serpent erupted behind her, sinking her fangs into Rias’s neck from the side. Her bite steamed and Rias howled in agony as the poison tried to course through her. “**GAH! DAMN IT!**” Rias yelled as she *clawed* Sōna down the side, making the other heiress scream as she let go. Rias immediately slithered herself and bit down on Sōna next, wrestling the bigger snake down. “**Having hands is so useful!**” She laughed through her mouthful of scales as her **Annihilation** destroyed the venom. They smashed into the earth and threw up another huge cloud of dust and dirt.

The entire area quaked under their might as they fought and fought and fought. Their Peerage members did their best for their Kings, but there was a good bit of friendly fire occurring. Kiba and Gasper were both eliminated inadvertently. A stray quake from Rias disrupted his footing just enough for Yura Tsubasa’s crushing fists to shatter his jaw. Aika managed to take out both of Sōna’s Bishops while holding two red flags, only for a giant tree thrown by Rias’s tornadoes to

knock her out of the sky and allow Tsubaki to take her out. Sōna's water drenched her Queen, and that made it easy for Akeno to electrocute her.

And in the end, only one of them could win. As Koneko ripped a black flag right out of Tsubasa's hands and returned it to their base, the point differential got so close that the contest became almost impossible to call. The two titans continued to fight, doing their best to take one another out and give their team the ultimate advantage...

Only in the end, neither won. ***“AND THAT’S GAME, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! THIS RATING GAME HAS CONCLUDED!”***

The tension had been so high between the two titans that when it was suddenly removed, both of them collapsed like puppets who had their strings cut. They crashed down to the earth, suddenly exhausted, and began laughing as they shrank. In the end, Sōna was lying on top of Rias, gasping for breath against her boobs. “I have to say... this isn't how I pictured out first official fight ending when we were younger.” Sōna groaned, “I feel like I got put through an industrial crusher...”

Rias giggled and ran her hand through Sōna's hair, “We told you to train harder. I'm just fine.” She teased the smaller woman.

“Ugh. I guess I really *am* going to have to.” Sōna grumbled, “I don't think you were even going all out.”

“Nah.” Rias agreed, “I didn't even use Busōshoku while we were fighting.” She murmured, using her privacy spells to blur her lips and hide her voice. “That was pure, unadulterated *‘Mythical Zoans for the win.’*” She giggled as Sōna grumped. “Now, who won?” The two got up, Sōna staggering and struggling to stay on her feet. Rias helped her.

Their response was being returned to their dimension, with Sōna slumping into her seat. Rias was able to sit down primly, smiling at her Peerage. “Well done, everyone. Let's see how we did.”

“After that incredible fight, it is a shame that there can be only one winner!” Rudiger announced, *“It was an incredible showing and as far as I'm concerned, both of these young heiresses have more than proved themselves, regardless of which of them will be getting the win! So is it team Sitri or team Gremory?!”* He yelled as the screen switched over, *“Here are the results! Sōna Sitri got out to an early lead and finished strong with a total score of four-hundred-and-twenty-nine!”*

Rias clenched her fists, knowing they had *quite* a bit of ground to make up the last she had seen the score.

“And proving that these two were born rivals, your winner, with four-hundred-and-thirty points-” Rias leapt up into the air in sheer glee as Rudiger finished his statement, *“Is Rias Gremory!”*

“WE WON!” Aika and Gasper cheered, leaping up and down.

Rias teleported over to Sōna and gave her a hug, “One-Oh, my rival.”

“Congratulations.” Sōna smiled in amusement, “I request that you get one less point next time so we can at least tie.”

Rias laughed gaily.

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“Congrats, love.” Izuku grinned as Rias threw herself into his arms and started trying to kiss the life out of him.

“Get a room, cousin!” Sairaorg laughed as the rest of Rias and Sōna’s Peerages shambled over to their seats in various states of exhaustion.

“Yes, I believe *you* have somewhere to be, mister.” Seekvaira sounded amused as she poked him in the side.

Indeed, Naud was still making his announcements, “*Now, we’re not quite done here, so don’t any of you get out of your seats!*” The crowds started to look confused, looking around at one another, “*Our gracious Maō have prepared an exhibition match for all of us to enjoy!*”

Izuku and Rias pulled apart, “Looks like I won’t have all that much time before we begin.” He said, before going over to Akeno, Aika, and Koneko and kissing all of them as well in congratulations.

“Don’t get too handsy with Aika! She didn’t get a hundred points.” Rias called out teasingly.

“Buchou?!” Aika cried out, giving her sad puppy dog eyes. “B-But we won!”

“You didn’t stick to the plan, Aika-chan~!” Rias sang, “I told you there would be punishment!”

Izuku chuckled as Aika slumped and laid down on one of the couches. Almost everyone started to laugh.

“Do you have a plan?” Seekvaira asked Izuku once they got their giggles under control. “Lord Bael is one of the strongest Kings of the modern day.” She cautioned him.

Izuku smiled as he remembered Sirzechs’s words during his visit the previous night. ‘*We don’t want you to just win. You need to show just how powerful and skilled you are.*’

He looked at Seekvaira, “You’ll just have to see for yourself, Seek-chan.” He winked at her before stepping onto the teleporter and vanishing from the room.

Rias took his seat and pulled Ingvild and Seekvaira close, “This should be *good*.” She breathed eagerly. Seekvaira smiled, happy for the chance to snuggle with her old friend.

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Izuku raised his eyebrow as he realized he was home. “They recreated Kuoh?” He mumbled in surprise as he switched into his own RAID suit with a thought.

“And here we are, ladies and gentlemen!” Naud announced, *“This match is between Lord Zytal Bael and Izuku Midoriya, newly promoted Ultimate-Class Devil!”* The stadium was rocking outside of the Rating Game dimension. They had *no idea* that there would be such a potentially amazing match awaiting them right *after* an already amazing match! *“And we’ve got quite the high-stakes wager on this Game too! If Izuku Midoriya wins, he will be confirmed as an Ultimate-Class Devil and will be named Duke!”* Gasps rang out from the crowd, *“But if he loses, he will be demoted back to Low-Class and have his current title of Margrave revoked!”*

And *that* made this match one of the highest-stakes Games in at least the past decade. *No Devil* wanted to be *demoted*.

“Yes, yes, it should be quite the show, everyone! I hope you’re all prepared!” Naud declared as Izuku walked outside of the replica of their castle. *“Lord Bael’s home base is the academy that our two heiresses from our previous match attend, along with their Peerages and Midoriya himself! Midoriya’s home base shall be a replica of the Gremory and Midoriya Castle in the same town. As this is a one-on-one match, there will obviously be no Promotions during this game. And as per the previous game, Tier Three protective enchantments are enabled, so go wild, gentlemen! Are we ready?!”*

“Of course.” Izuku said, though he wasn’t sure if he needed to. As soon as Rudiger declared a start to the match, Izuku’s eyes widened. His three sets of Devil wings (and he would be careful to keep it at that, for now) sprang from his back and he launched into the air. From his bird’s eye view, he was perfectly positioned to watch a *tidal wave* of destructive energy wash over the town. Everything it touched, it disintegrated, annihilating the whole city down to the bedrock. Izuku rolled his eyes, “How *petty*.” He said as the energy vanished, leaving behind a complete wasteland. “Was that necessary?”

“Nowhere for you to hide, *boy*.” Zytal replied as he flew up to the same level as Izuku. It was clear where Sairaorg got most of his looks, though Zytal’s features were sharper. He also wasn’t anywhere near as big or bulky as his son, sporting a reedier build. Izuku dwarfed him too, and the man was needing to fly slightly higher just to stay above eye level.

‘What a pathetic man.’ Izuku thought to himself over the power play. “Did you believe that was my plan? We don’t exactly have a time limit or a win condition other than defeating the other.”

Zytal sneered, “Who knows how you low-born scum think.” The **Power of Destruction** began to rise around him. “But I’m not here to banter with you, boy. I’m here to put you in your place.” He cast his hand forward and a beam of Annihilation surged towards Izuku.

He snorted. “**Shambles.**” The two of them switched places, and Lord Bael let out a yell as his own attack crashed into his back. His own power couldn’t *hurt* him, but it certainly blew the

clothes off his back and sent him flying forward. “You didn’t think it was going to be that easy, did you, *my Lord*?” He asked as he turned around.

Zytal was *seething* as he snapped his fingers and switched his outfit. He *wished* he had done what he had planned to do. If it wasn’t for the fact that he knew his nephew would *rip out his entrails*, he would have bribed the organizers to use the wrong tier of spells to ensure this *cretin* was erased. “That won’t work twice.” He said, casting a spell to spatially lock himself. Izuku wouldn’t be switching places with him again, any time soon. He cast another blast of annihilation at Izuku.

Who had an amused smirk grow on his face. He raised a hand and swiped it across the air, slicing it apart and revealing a portal. Another appeared above Zytal’s head, who dodged back as the beam erupted from it. Zytal’s knuckles were white with fury as he glared bloody murder at Izuku. “I sincerely hope there’s more to you than the **Power of Destruction**, Lord Bael.” He cracked his neck.

Zytal blinked, and Izuku was surrounded by his four Homies. “Your odd creations.” Zytal snarled, “I can assure you; it is a wasted effort. Your silly elemental attacks won’t work on me.” He said as his bloodline surged around him, forming a destructive shield.

“You really believe that power makes you untouchable, huh?” Izuku held out a hand, which started collecting black lightning from Indra. “**Gungnir!**” He yelled as he threw it. Zytal didn’t move, confident in his defense.

Or at least he was confident right up until the lightning *blasted it apart* and continued unabated. “GYAHHHHH!!!!!!!” He cried out as his nervous system flashed and he fell out of the sky. It lasted for only a moment or two, but left him smoking and he crashed into the earth below.

“The **Power of Destruction** is a sublime bloodline.” Izuku said idly as he floated above, “But it is only a tool, and no tool is unbeatable. You expected to come in here and effortlessly take me down with it.” His expression darkened, “So lazy and arrogant.” He declared to all the watching Devils as he grabbed Pele and allowed her lava to surge. “**Dai Funka!**” He yelled as giant meteors of lava rained down on Zytal.

A much more powerful burst of the Annihilation surged out, engulfing the meteors and slowing them down tremendously. The ground cratered beneath the force, literally undulating beneath the Lord Bael. “**ENOUGH!**” Zytal roared as the power collected into thirteen black and red balls above him, which started to fire much smaller lasers *much* faster than before.

Izuku and his Homies all began to dodge, their Future Sight more than able to keep ahead of the beams. Zytal extended a hand up and a massive claw appeared above his head. He brought it down on Izuku as though trying to swat a fly. ‘*Time to test this out.*’ Izuku grinned as he punched out at it. The shockwave that erupted from his fist split the hand in half, both sides passing harmlessly around him. He then twirled out of the way and grabbed another bolt from Indra. He

threw his attack at Zytal, though this time his barrier was strong enough that the attack evaporated before it could reach him.

“All I have to do is hit you *once*, **boy!**” Zytal snarled out as his beams kept erupting. “And you won’t even be able to *touch me again!*”

“Then I suppose I’ll just have to drown you.” Izuku grinned as Zytal’s snarl faltered for a moment and he looked quizzical. “Okeanos.”

The giant creature’s runes glowed, before a *world-ending* flood burst from its body. Zytal’s eyes widened as he *really* turned on the power, destroying the water before it could really hit him. But there was just *so much* that no matter how much he destroyed, it just *kept coming*. And he knew he’d run out of magical power if he kept at it. He was forced to teleport so high up that even the titanic wave couldn’t hit him. He watched as the world turned into an ocean. Water sloshed everywhere he could see. And he couldn’t see Izuku. “*Fool!* Did you take *yourself* out?!” If that was true, he would be utterly incensed.

Izuku rose from the water, an amused smirk on his face. He didn’t even look like he was wet. “I can hurt myself with my attacks no more than you can with yours, Lord Bael.” He said after appearing at level height with the man. “You sure you want to be this close to the clouds?” He asked, and Zytal twitched as the clouds darkened all of a sudden. They had been a light grey before, but now a spreading ring of darkness was blotting out the sun.

A blizzard erupted around them, with hurricane force winds and icy shards pelting the arrogant noble. “Gah!” He cried out, the winds battering him and the icy cold completely ignoring his potent defense. His hands and body started to ice over, forcing him to cast a fire spell to warm himself. Izuku grinned as Pele popped up beside him and inhaled. The fire coating Zytal surged towards her, ripping the warmth right out of Zytal’s bones. “You accursed-!” Zytal cut himself off as he *blasted* Izuku with the **Power of Destruction** once more.

“Such a one-trick pony.” Izuku taunted as he danced around the area. The force of Zytal’s beams of destruction were warping the air around them. “What will you do once you can’t keep that intensity up anymore?”

“**DAMN YOU!**” Zytal *lost it* as he started pouring more and more power into his attempts to *strip Izuku’s flesh off his bones*.

“**Tenman Daijizai Tenjin!**” Izuku yelled as the clouds started to crackle with lightning and then *disgorge* them. Bolt after bolt crashed down, forcing Zytal to quit attacking and start defending once more. He had *never* experienced such a frustrating fight before and the fact that a damned *newborn* was doing it was completely and utterly *incensing him*. Every enemy he’d faced in the past had fallen before the onslaught of his bloodline. His fights normally *ended* in minutes at worst. After all, he only ever *needed* one real hit. Even against a Phenex’s regeneration, his annihilation had always proved superior.

But he just couldn't *do it*. He couldn't *touch* this arrogant brat! Every attack he tried was countered. He even allowed himself the indignity of trying to *catch* the brat physically, but Izuku was so fast that he was forced to give it up after an altogether *annoying* chase through the skies. It felt like a biplane trying to outfly a jet.

And all the while, his accursed creation spat fire, lava, ice, water, and lightning at him. Multiple directions. Multiple attacks that *should* have burned and disintegrated on his Annihilation and yet kept catching him by surprise. Multiple chances that he had to end it, which just ended up being bait for another attack to hit him.

This fight had been going on for over half an hour already. It was forcing him to confront his stamina in a very unpleasant manner, as well as the fact that his **Power of Destruction** wasn't infallible. His noble poise had been shattered, and his appearance was becoming increasingly ragged.

Had this been Rias herself, he may actually have been *happy* to know such a powerful member of his bloodline existed. But Izuku wasn't a member of his bloodline. He wasn't even a damned *noble*. He was a Maō-cursed *newborn pup*! He expended a huge burst of power trying to blow away the cloud cover and sighed in what he would never admit was *relief* as the lightning barrage stopped. He turned to Izuku, and stopped short when he realized the boy was *stretching* while his constructs had backed off.

"Well, this was fun." Izuku said as he stretched his arms out. "They don't get the chance to play too often these days, so I have to thank you for the opportunity, Lord Bael. I'd say this was a good warm up, wouldn't you?"

Play? WARM UP?! Something inside Zytal *snapped*. "I'LL KILL YOU, YOU-" His words were cut off as Izuku's fist plowed into his gut. His eyes reddened as blood spurted from his lips. He flew back, his brain refusing to process just *how hard* he had just been hit. Izuku shot off after him and he hastily created his barrier around himself.

Izuku's fist blew through it as easily as his lightning had. Another fist crashed into Zytal's clavicle, before an uppercut caught him in the ribs. A left hook caught his jaw, and a jab bloodied his eye. Izuku's fists were moving at lightning speed, hitting the Lord Bael again and again and *again*. The man's brain could not even process the information it was receiving, leaving him almost insensate and unable to defend himself. Each blow crushed another bone, heralded by a bolt of black lightning as Haōshoku ravaged the man's body. Izuku even threw an open-handed *slap* to the man's face that sent him spiraling through the air.

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"**BEAT THAT MOTHERFUCKER HARDER!**" Sairaorg had completely lost his kingly cool and was on his feet, cackling like a madman. The rest of the room wasn't much better as they cheered Izuku on.

Misla giggled, “Well, I suppose the statement is *accurate*...”

“*Mother...!*” Sairaorg choked as everyone burst into renewed laughter.

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Izuku appeared in Zytal’s flight path and *folded him in half* with a kick that sent him soaring into the clouds above. ‘*That felt good.*’ He smirked as he remembered all the pain his friend had to go through because of that man and his prejudice. ‘*Now what will you do?*’

Go mad, was apparently the answer. “**I WILL DESTROY YOU, MIDORIYA!**” Zytal roared as he finally found his wits once more. The clouds all blew away, revealing Zytal holding a sphere containing every *bit* of his remaining magical power above him. It was so big that it blotted out most of the sky.

Izuku grinned as he clenched his right fist. “One final blow, huh? I’m game.” His muscles bulged and hardened as his body began to glow with the power of Tōki, empowering him even further.

The ball collapsed in on itself and compressed down. “**VOID WAVE!**” Zytal roared, sending a giant beam at Izuku.

Now, he *could* have just teleported it away... but this would be so much more fun. “**Galaxy... SMASH!**” He roared, pouring every bit of power that he had into it. The shockwave that erupted from his fist smashed into the **Power of Destruction** and *parted it* like the red sea. Zytal’s attack crashed around him, annihilating everything it touched. Everything but the one thing the Lord Bael *wanted* it to annihilate.

And then the shockwave hit him and every single bone in his body *shattered*. He was pulled away from the dimension and directly into the infirmary as Izuku’s punch split open the sky as far as the eye could see.

“**VICTORY!**” Rudiger roared, “**VICTORY FOR DUKE IZUKU MIDORIYA!**”

Izuku was returned to the field as the dimension collapsed, raising his fist into the air as the cheers and screams started trying to shake the stadium apart around him.

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Diodora Astaroth stared at the sight in complete horror. H-He couldn’t beat that. Not even with his secret weapon could he beat that! He clenched his fists in despair, knowing that unless he could find allies specifically for his quest, his precious Asia would be forever out of his reach!

He calmed himself when his Queen hesitantly put her hand on his shoulder. She absolutely did *not* want a repeat of last time he was furious. “P-Perhaps Katerea Leviathan would be interested in joining with you, my King.”

“Yes...” He hissed as he thought of *her*. The surprise Leviathan’s appearance had sent shockwaves through high society, and he knew *that* bitch was *fuming* over the half breed. Yes, that could work. “Good work, my Queen.” The silver haired woman smiled in relief.

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Welp, that last scene’s not going to have any consequences whatsoever. :evil:

Hope you enjoyed!

Had a lot of fun with Sōna vs Rias and was able to introduce Loup early! (And got rid of Saji. At least for now. Cunt.) Izuku has acquired a new ~~Bishop~~ Pawn and she’s a cutie. Oh, and he cooked a bitch. I suppose there was that too. LOL

I got one more Big Tiddy update coming next week, and then my muse took a *hard* detour into Chaos Gacha. Hoping to get back to Big Tiddy once the bitch calms down a bit since I had a lot more I was eager to write about before I put it down for a while.