

Throughout the history of the cosmos and mankind, moments appeared that popped into the history books as turning points: the Big Bang, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Stock Market Crash, and YUYO winning the SCW Adrenaline Championship. All moments will be seared into the annals of history. YUYO's performance at 2024 Taking Hold of the Flame battle royal served as the precursor to her ascension at Rise to Greatness XXI. Everyone laughed when she proclaimed herself as the third-best in SCW today. Nobody was laughing except for YUYO and the Shining Maidens after Rise to Greatness. Each victory they secured fulfilled the grand prophecy, promising that the Shining Maidens would take over Supreme Championship Wrestling and the wrestling world. The princesses of the cosmos claimed the crown of fate by taking the day. The Adrenaline Championship victory encapsulated their power move. Now, SCW trembled before the might of the Shining Maidens!

Sakura traced the thunderbolt on the front plate of the SCW Adrenaline Championship. She tilted her head forward, letting her pink hair fall over her eyes as she imagined winning a wrestling championship. Her dream became within the realm of possibility after becoming YUYO's apprentice. Her entire life, she dreamt of becoming a champion. She German suplexed pillows on her bed and raised cardboard belts over her head. Yumi deemed her unprepared for a singles career, but Sakura didn't care if she was regulated to the tag team division. Having a partner by her side in her matches helped build her confidence. Sakura rubbed her thigh underneath her khaki shorts. She brought the cloth and polished the gold of the Adrenaline Championship. Sakura knew Yumi wanted the belt to sparkle brilliantly underneath the lights during the coronation party.

"One day, you'll be a champion. You'll be a tremendous champion—one of the bestest champions. You want to know why? Because YUYO trained you to be the ultimate warrior princess," Yumi said. Sakura jumped, realizing she had been admiring the championship belt for a long time. The more she rubbed the title, the more she pretended the belt to be a genie in the bottle; perhaps soon, with Neko, they would lay claim to the SCW World Tag Team Championship.

Sakura turned towards Yumi, and her jaw dropped. Despite the heat in San Diego, Yumi donned a full dress. White lacy ripples broke the purple dress in the skirt, cascading down to her leather boots. The sleeves became fluffy at the shoulders, reminding Sakura of feathery wings. Yumi's light brown hair towered over her head in a stack of silver pins. The thick white makeup fitting of a geisha covered her face. Sakura wanted to ask her if Star Wars inspired her for the outfit. Yumi was definitely as cool as Natalie Portman.

"You did it, master. Yay!" Sakura clapped her hands together and bounced. She went to glomp Yumi, but Yumi stuck her hand out to stop her from proceeding with the tackle. "Mhmmhmm--- of course, YUYO did! Your fearless leader had to close out the weekend! What else did you expect?"

"But you had the most challenging opponent! I was so scared that you were going to lose! It was so close."

"Ha! That was all part of the plan! Naive Sakura, do you think for a moment that YUYO was in trouble? Sure, Bree Lancaster was a worthy rival. But she was a pawn in my game of transdimensional chess! If YUYO easily dispatched Bree, surely the populace would have been robbed of a match worthy of starting the show! By coming back from where all hope was lost, YUYO stole the hearts of nonbelievers! Now they saw another miracle from their Magical Cosmic Princess!" **Yumi explained, wagging her finger. She kept her chin up high, her nose stuck up. That was when Neko came back with a drive-by bop on the head. Yumi squatted, wincing, while she held her head from where Neko's fist impacted her skull.** "Ow! Don't you hit your leader! RESPECT HER! WORSHIP HER!"

"You are such a sore winner, Yumi," **Neko commented.**

"YUYO is not sore! Okay, I'm just a little bit sore. Bree did get in a few good hits."

"No, I'm saying your attitude is trash. Don't you think you should show a little more grace in victory? Bree gave you all you could handle. You squeaked by. Let's not pretend that you had this dominant victory. A win is a win, and you outwrestled her in the end, but it could have been a little more of a statement," **Neko responded. Yumi huffed and puffed at the statement. She stepped up to Neko. Neko didn't dress up for the occasion like Yumi. She had on a pair of black gym shorts and a red tank top. Neko placed her hands on her childhood friend's shoulders.** "Hey, since you're concerned about winning over the fans. I just am giving you some pointers."

"YUYO doesn't need pointers! YUYO is magical! Everyone loves magic!"

"People respect those who are humble. You don't see Amelia Blythe or Deanna Frost, or any of the other champions acting like an ass. Right, Sakura?" **Neko countered. Sakura jumped at the mention of her name. She frantically looked between her two teammates, feeling that she was suddenly caught in a game of tug-of-war.**

"Well, SAWA?" **Yumi pressed.** "Tell NEMO that she is misguided!"

"Eck! Why do you two always fight? I think there's no problem with celebrating a big win! Especially a title win! Yumi's first of her SCW career--- but Neko might have a point. You might want to be a little nicer to the wrestlers you defeated and all," **Sakura said. Yumi's nostrils flared as she watched her apprentice betray her. Yumi reached forward, grabbing Sakura by the shoulder. Yumi proceeded to shake her apprentice to express the full extent of her fury.** "Stop! Stop!"

"You're a sore loser, too," **Neko commented.** The remark prompted Yumi to cease her manhandling of Sakura. Yumi flattened out her dress before marching to the SCW Adrenaline Championship.

"Maidens, we are on the eve of something special. My Adrenaline Championship is only the first scared relic to be brought to our possession! Soon, you two will capture the Tag Team Championship, bringing another division under our ironclad grasp! I will rule supreme!" **Yumi shouted, raising her hands before her with the palms facing the ceiling. Still recovering from the violent shaking, Sakura watched her master act more like a maniacal villain than a pure-hearted maiden. Yumi even indulged herself with a sinister, over-the-top laugh.**

"That is the plan. No matter what, Sakura and I will not stop until we win those titles," **Neko said.**

"It is improper that YUYO is the only Shining Maiden wearing a gold belt around my waist. YUYO wants you all to match her! It is not only a fashion statement but crucial to our attempts to stabilize the chaos of the cosmos! Each sacred relic holds power that governs the universe! YUSA is going to capture the Underground. You two, the tag team. And I will go on to capture the United States and the World. And once we control all of the relics, there will be no one that can defy us! FOR JUSTICE!" **Yumi shouted. Her hands rubbed the Adrenaline Championship while her eyes remained wide like Gollum. Those present swore they spotted slight drool leaking from the corner of Yumi's mouth. The championship belt enthralled her.**

"That is definitely very--- ambitious!" **Sakura commented.**

"Careful not to bite off more than you can chew. I've heard of double champions before, but you're talking about being a---" **Neko started.**

"A triple crown princess! Yes! I like the sound of it; it is very fitting. Very manure," **Yumi interrupted.**

"It's demure. Not manure. And while that would be a historic occasion, to say the least, you will have a hard time figuring out how to hold onto your Adrenaline championship and then earn --- and win the shots at the United States and World. That's almost impossible. That's greedy. You're being greedy," **Neko explained. She crossed her arms and shook her head in disbelief. Yumi tasted triumphant for the first time in SCW, and it appeared to have gone right to her head. Neko watched as her friend's ego became so inflated that she could take off from the ground at any moment and float away into the outer atmosphere like a weather balloon.**

"Greedy? Sakura nailed it. I'm ambitious. Not to be confused with ambitichous because that is so lame and trademarked. But YUYO admits you have a point. YUYO already tried to phone the boss man and get a title shot against Frost or Hudson, and he rudely rejected me! But I learned

about this special occasion, where the planets align, and the grand tournament winner wins a contract, allowing her to do anything she wants! So take that Heartbreak Geezer. I will win your stupid tournament and claim my shots!" **YUYO placed her foot on the table beside the Adrenaline Championship. She almost knocked over the incense that burned. She hammered her chest before turning towards her compatriots.** "Are you with YUYO, my Shining Maidens?"

"YEAH!" **Sakura yelled.**

"If you're talking about the Trios Tournament. Yeah, that's random. You don't get to pick your partners. They randomly assign you to a team."

"What?" **Yumi's jaw dropped.**

"Yeah. That's how the tournament has been set up for years. This way, everyone booked is on an even footing. Plus, it makes things interesting if you know--- let's say you get forced to team with Bree," **Neko explained. Neko patted Yumi on the back as she stiffened at the thought of working with the great evil Bree Lancaster. The mention of that possibility sent chills down Yumi's back.**

"They wouldn't! They couldn't! After all, she tried to sabotage the galactic order of the universe through her conspiracy with the Shinigami Foundation. Why are they doing this to YUYO? Is SCW corrupt? Do we need to cleanse not only the roster but also management? Please have this make sense. Bree shouldn't be in any tournament and any position of power!" **Yumi cried. She seemed to be on the verge of hyperventilating over the matter. Neko knew this was a deflection from the real problem. All of this talk about conspiracies and corruption was smoke.**

"Let's be honest," **Neko paused for a moment.** "You're worried about who you'll be forced to team with."

"Yeah! If it is a traitorous cull!"

"The odds that you're teaming with Bree. Possibly, neither of you will be in the tournament. It's all random."

"But I NEED to be in the tournament. It's destiny calling and all of that jazz."

"Sakura might be in. I might be in. You might be out." **Neko stuck her tongue out at Yumi. She hoped this would distract her from focusing on the possibility of being forced to team up with complete strangers. Yumi clenched her fists, but she released her grip after a moment. She wrapped her arms around the Shining Maidens and pulled them into a huddle.**

"If YUYO is not in, but one of you are. You know the drill."

"What?" **Sakura didn't get what Yumi suggested.**

"Don't tell me. No. That's completely unfair," **Neko responded. Sakura looked questioningly over at her tag team partner. What was she talking about?**

"Come on. As your leader, we know it is YUYO's responsibility to be in this tournament to represent the Shining Maidens! Could you deny YUYO her right to exercise her duty? Would you embarrass her in such a way? All YUYO is saying is you'll swap out so she could take your place," **Yumi suggested. Neko rolled her eyes, pushing off from Yumi. The selfishness that Yumi showed at times amazed Neko. Neko started towards the door.** "Wait! Where are you going? Don't tell me you're turning the back to the plan!"

"I'm not going to give up my spot. If I get the opportunity to compete, I will do just that. I'm all for giving my all to the team, but I'm not sacrificing my career for yours," **Neko responded harshly. Here she was, trying to be a good friend and relieve her friend of social anxiety, but now Yumi was trying to sleaze her way into Neko's spot hypothetically. That didn't sit right with her.**

"Fine. I'm sure SAWA would be more than willing to do so. That's because she's a true Shining Maiden and not a self-centered--- err--- jerk!" **Yumi fired back. She turned towards Sakura, who was still in her grasp. Yumi showed Sakura the sweetest smile.**

"Well, if you really want the spot---," **Sakura started.**

"No. You're not giving up your spot, either. If we're drawn, we're competing as is. Stop this!" **Neko ripped Sakura away from Yumi. Yumi hissed. Yumi then proceeded to cross her arms and let out a frustrated cry. She always was the woman with the plan. And the plan was for her to be in the Trios Tournament and to win it so she could challenge for the United States Championship and the World Championship--- hell, maybe for all the championships! Why not!**

"Fine. Fine. But don't come asking me for any special favors when I do enter the tournament and then win it! YUYO won't be helping anyone out!" **Yumi issued her royal decree.**

The interior of the Shrine stayed dark. Sakura and Neko went out for dinner but haven't returned yet. The Adrenaline Championship remained on its altar, with glowing candles dancing around the title belt like witches at a black mass. Yumi stewed in the darkness. She leaned forward on the edge of the leather couch. Her dark eyes caught the reflection of the candles. Yumi cupped her chin and buried her face while in deep meditation. She forsook the dress she wore earlier, swapping her attire for her pajamas, a pair of deep

purple short shorts with white trim and a white tank top. Socks covered her feet. Yumi allowed her hair to hang down as she tried to shake off the emotions that plagued her. Stress barreled down onto her mind. She was a champion, gosh darn it! Why couldn't she be more steadfast? Yumi claimed to be their leader, but what kind of leader crawl into themselves when the going gets tough?

The front door swung open. Mister Meowkazawa walked into the living room and flipped on the switch. He leaped, startled by the brooding Yumi. Mister Meowkazawa's yellow dress shirt stayed tucked in, pressed against his aging and burgeoning body. He held a paper bag in his hand. Yumi didn't react to Meowkazawa's intrusion or the flood of bright light. She sighed. Yumi continued to stare off into the distance. Her breaths remained short. Meowkazawa sighed and ventured over to the sofa. He claimed a spot next to his client and slapped his hands onto his knees, steeling himself for the labor he was about to undertake.

"What's wrong, Yumi? You are obviously upset about something. Did Neko say something again?" **Meowkazawa probed.**

"She always has something to say. But that's not what's bothering YUYO. YUYO is used to NEMO's poor attitude. In fact, YUYO plans on giving her an unfavorable performance review in the near future," **Yumi answered, lacking the usual spark in her tone. She planted her fist into the palm of her hand. Her chest felt tight. Her thoughts overwhelmed her. Why did she have to be so stressed out? Yumi stood up abruptly and walked to the center of the room, her fists falling to her sides.**

"What's the matter then?"

"YUYO... YUYO is nervous."

"Nervous? About what?"

"NEMO informed YUYO she might be paired with strangers. And that might even include enemies of the state! Imagine if YUYO has to team up with villains and the like! Not only will they be looking to stab YUYO in the back, but everyone will question YUYO's integrity as a crusader for love and justice!" **Yumi explained. Yumi pictured it now: two scary-looking dudes with scars jumping Yumi while she tried to wrestle. She knew how scum operated. She watched the Shinigami Foundation storm the ring and attack the Shining Maidens!**

"What is this all about? Stop. Start from the beginning. Why are you being forced to team up with strangers?"

"YUYO will be entering the Trios Tournament so she can win all the belts. It's random, Stupidzawa. Completely random! So random, the evil management might put bad actors on YUYO's team!" **Yumi said. Meowkazawa stared at her for a moment. He blinked a few**

times. He brought his leg up over the other before leaning back on the couch. Meowkazawa tried to process the dilemma YUYO perceived.

"Yumi, you don't even know if you're booked for the tournament."

"Destiny demands YUYO is booked!"

"And if you are selected to be part of this year's tournament, you don't even know who your partners are at this point. They could be anyone. They could be nice people."

"Or they could be very mean people who judge YUYO for being different! They could be totally jealous that YUYO's the chosen one! Or... Or!"

"Yumi, snap out of it! You're worrying about something that hasn't even passed. There's no point in stressing out about something you A) have no control over and B) don't know the outcome. Let's stay calm and collected and wait to see the brackets," **Meowkazawa tried his hand at easing Yumi. Yumi knew Meowkazawa had valid points; however, her emotions always got the best of her. She walked over to the altar to look at her prized possession. That always made her feel better. Meowkazawa continued:** "Hell, maybe you'll get lucky and paired with Neko or Sakura. Then you'd have a friend. Maybe this would be an opportunity to make new friends. You never know! This could be a good thing!"

"You're right! You're absolutely right! This could be an amazing opportunity for recruitment!"

"Wait, what?"

"More Shining Maidens! My would-be partners could be would-be Shining Maidens! You're a genius, Meowkazawa! Who says they have to be Japanese to be a Maiden," **Yumi said. Her face lit up like the Fourth of July with a broad smile that perked her high cheeks. She clapped her hands together. The idea of adding more to her following excited her. Yumi imagined the army she could wield.**

"Don't get ahead of yourself. What have I gone and said now?" **Meowkazawa immediately regretted his words. Instead of worrying about Yumi's stress for days, his concern shifted to her potential partners. If she was selected for the Trios Tournament, Yumi now set the expectations that she could convert them to the cult of Explosion! That could interfere with the team's dynamics. Depending on her partners, she could make enemies instead. Meowkazawa looked to warn Yumi, but seeing how she hopped in place, muttering herself--- he knew he would have no chance of reaching her.**