

The recipe for success in the Trios Tournament always seemed to be chemistry. Everyone seemed to have caught onto that matter of fact. That was common sense. Even someone lacking in straightforward thinking as Magical Cosmic Princess, YUYO understood the premise that if she wanted to win, she needed to work together with her unlikely foes. Since the return of the Trios Tournament was announced, Yumi worried about who would be selected as her partners; she was even concerned she would be selected at all. And when her name appeared on the bracket alongside Glory Braddock's and Gavin Taylor's, she didn't exactly know what to make of it. Meowkazawa explained these two veterans had won the tournament before and knew what it would take to do it again; however, they seemed like real stiff to Yumi.

Yumi summoned them. She even went as far as to include fancy invitations to join her in her court. Of course, having a traveling profession meant her court moved from city to city. They only really holed up in hotel rooms for the most part; however, given the significance of the Trios Tournament, Yumi decided to go the extra mile and rent out a local wrestling school's gym for the day. The walls closed in on a wrestling ring. They consisted of grey cylinder blocks. There were a few motivational posters, including one with a cat holding onto a tree branch while saying hang on there. Yumi disapproved of the site being her base of operations, but she needed a ring. Without the ring, how could they try super cool combos?

Yumi stood on the apron, waiting for their appearance. She strapped into her ring attire, suiting of a Shining Maiden. Oh yes, she sported her frills and purple sparkles. Along the side of the wall was a rack of clothes--- all suitable for a Shining Maiden in a pinch. That was right. She deemed Gavin and Glory too regular for them to have any success. They needed to go supernova; by that, they needed to become Shining Maidens. She didn't discriminate against gender, nationality, or height. They would be accepted as honorary members. A very generous offer from Yumi, if Yumi said so herself.

When Gavin Taylor entered the gym, he immediately dropped his duffle bags. He wore a pair of red gym shorts and a white tee. There was nothing All-Star about his outfit; he seemed down for business. Gavin glanced at Yumi. Then he scanned the ranks of the Shining Maidens that stood behind her. Meowkazawa stepped in between the staredown. Gavin Taylor probably wondered what he walked into. A bunch of waifus stood around, armed with staffs and the like; he just hoped he wasn't a pinata.

"Welcome, GATA. We've been waiting for you," Yumi announced.

"GATA? Are you talking to me? My name is Gavin Taylor. You know, the All-StarAll-Star, the Franchise Player, the Best Wrestler in the Universe. I can go on. You must know of me; I'm famous throughout the multiverse and stuff," Gavin said. Meowkazawa nodded, believing Gavin did his research on YUYO and her mannerisms. Yumi appraised Gavin, crossing her arms as she scanned up and down.

"YUYO doesn't know if you're worthy of being on her team of destiny!"

"YUYO. Your Highness. If there is one thing I excel at, it's being a team player. I'm the best team player ever. You know how they say there's no 'I' in 'Team,' where I am so awesome that I put the 'I' in 'Team.' That's how good I am. I am the glue that held the greatest Trios Tournament Champions, Team SUP. Ever heard of us? We were fantastic! All-Star all around. I made it work even though the Gods gave me an old, cranky bastard and a psycho queen. You and Glory, this team is an easy task for this dog whisperer," **Gavin boasted. He went to tilt his baseball cap but realized he didn't wear it to the training session. Gavin settled on leaning to the right and crossing his arm. That was right. Be amazed, little princess.**

"Did you just call Yumi a dog?" **Neko asked from behind.**

"Oh, I love dogs!" **Sakura followed up.**

"No, that's not what I meant. YUYO is definitely not a dog—unless she wants to be referred to one, in which case, by all means, I won't interfere. I'm a champion of gender equality and all of that stuff. But don't fret, YUYO, you're in good hands. Glory might be a little rough around the corner, but we're lucky to have her. We'll make a good team." **Gavin waved his arms to ensure he didn't upset the Magical Cosmic Princess. Yumi dropped down from the apron to the floor. She glided to her would-be tag team partner.**

"GATA is your princess's name. GOBA is Glory's. Consider yourself lucky that YUYO set aside the trials and tribulations that are required of those selected to enter the Shining Maidens. You're an honorary member! I will consider myself as one throughout the duration of the tournament! Even though you lack sex appeal," **Yumi declared. She forced him down onto his knees and knighted him with his staff. There was ducktape wrapped around where the Shingami Foundation broke the staff.**

**Gavin shrugged her shoulders. "I'm not sexy?"**

"Before we proceed, you need to change into something befitting your status. YUYO refuses to acknowledge you while you wear your pajamas to training. We're a hardworking crew and have standards, GATA," **Yumi stated. Gavin eyed her, imitating the Doge meme, unsure what Yumi was implying. The Shining Maidens left the ring with the staffs, surrounding Gavin. He expected such intimidation from the Hells' Angels, not the Shining Maidens. Didn't they fight for love and justice? He gulped, not sure what situation he found himself in. All he wanted to do was to win the Trios Tournament again. Why was he paired with little Miss Delusion?**

"Um... Gavin, why are you wearing a tutu?" **Glory Braddock asked.**

"Look, no comments from the peanut gallery," **Gavin Taylor said. He refused to look in the mirror, believing that looking dead on and not glancing down at his attire would preserve his dignity. His outfit adorned sparkles and looked like a cross between a Disco Queen and a Ballerina. He didn't know why he didn't resist? The Shining Maidens all rooted him on as he tried different outfits. He swallowed his masculine pride for the sake of the tag team. Having subjugated one team member and turned them into a temporary Shining Maiden, Yumi turned towards Glory.**

"I'm all for you to be a team player, Gavin. But don't you think she's bullying you?" **Glory asked.**

"YUYO's not a bully! YUYO welcomed GATA with open arms!"

"GATA? Who the bloody hell is that?"

"He's GATA. You're GOBA!" **Yumi informed her. The magical cosmic princess strutted up to Glory Braddock. Glory, too, wore her exercise clothes: an elegant tracksuit that Meowkazawa guessed had to be designer. Professional wrestlers and their money. Every wrestler he met in SCW appeared to be filthy rich without worry. Meanwhile, the Shining Maidens struggled to afford a San Diego townhouse. Part of that was their insistence on takeout every night. They were only afloat due to merch sales surging for YUYO and the Shining Maidens.**

"How cute. You gave us code names to go along with your friends. I appreciate the gesture, Yumi, but GOBA makes me sound fat. Reminds me of one of those enemies in Mario," **Glory responded.**

"You're not fat! You're skinny!" **Yumi pointed out.**

"I appreciate the compliment, I think?"

"They're not code names. They're princess names. To team with YUYO, you must become a Shining Maiden. New name. New outfits. YUYO, feeling charitable, decided to waive the application fee and the written test for you two! " **Yumi explained. Glory Braddock took one long look at Gavin and shook her head. What had she signed up for? Glory knelt down to look Yumi right in the eyes. Their differences in height were staggering.**

"Normally, I would be honored to be part of your group; however, I have my own friends and destiny. For now, we fight together as allies. We don't need nicknames---"

"Princess names."

"We don't need princess names. We don't need to dress alike. All we need to do is to get on the same page. You hear wild stories of teams where one partner kidnaps and tortures the other. Crazy tales of training exercises. But we don't need to get fancy. Yumi, you brought us here to

train together, and let's skip the bullshit and train," **Glory suggested. Yumi seemed to have a hundred things to say in response but struggled to get a single word out. Her face turned red. Glory threatened to foil her grand plan!**

"But I am the leader! The leader decides what to do!" **Yumi managed.**

"Okay, you're the leader. Good leaders take the advice of their subordinates," **Glory responded coolly. Her quickness to oblige Yumi seemed to flatter Yumi, sating some need inside the girl. Glory patted her on the shoulder while Yumi tried to process Glory's words.**

"Fine! YUYO decided there will be no more silly business and that it is time to get serious. Gavin, stop messing around and change out of that ridiculous outfit. You're no Shining Maiden; you're a Jedi! How could you forget that?" **Yumi barked. Gavin's shoulders dropped. He suffered through embarrassment for nothing?**

"Why did you listen to her? Not me?" **Gavin needed to know.**

"Gavin, it was a test. You passed. Your dedication to the cause is admirable," **Yumi decided. She nodded her head approvingly. Gavin went to his duffle bag and left for the restroom to change back into his exercise clothes. Glory already headed towards the ring, rolling in underneath. Meowkazawa applauded her silently for handling Yumi's madness. She bore some savviness required to contain Yumi's and her eccentric behavior.**

"Let's start from the beginning," **Glory decided when Yumi joined her in the ring. Glory stretched out her hand. "I'm Glory Braddock, and together, we will win the Trios Tournament. Gavin might be an idiot but knows how to work these tournaments. Together, we'll end up winning. Don't you worry!"**

"You seem nicer in person than on television," **Yumi said. She accepted Glory's handshake. Yumi peered over at Meowkazawa and gave him a thumbs-up. All the worrying she had done was for naught. They didn't seem so bad. They accepted her. And she accepted them. So what, they weren't eager to be Shining Maidens? That was a calling that few had the willpower to answer. She understood if they were not up for the task. As their leader, Yumi understood she needed to accept them for their faults and to take them to the next level. In this case, the next level was the next round of the Trios Tournament.**

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**Gavin and Glory left after a good training session. Once the formalities were over, they got straight to business. They practiced moves, and they talked about strategy. Yumi hit the showers to wash off the accumulated sweat. She returned to the gym in a white mage's robe. Yes, she wore underwear underneath, but the only thing that stopped her from exposing herself was a purple stash tightly tied around her waist. Yumi kept the**

hood over her wet hair as she approached the Shining Maidens and Meowkazawa. Sakura and Neko participated in the drills and tried to serve as training partners. Yuna had her own business to attend to and declined the invitation to join her. Yumi doubted she would have spied for her team; however, maybe it was for the best that Yuna didn't place herself in that position. Peer pressure sucked.

"Are you feeling better about your team?" **Meowkazawa** asked.

"They're alright. Servicable," **Yumi** responded.

"Don't let them hear that vote of confidence. I think they're a good lot for you, Yumi. Seasoned veterans who know the ropes. Open your mind and learn from them," **Neko** suggested. **Yumi patted herself on her partially exposed chest. She forced a laugh as she kicked back her head, the hood falling down to reveal her purple-tipped raven hair.**

"You forget that YUYO is a veteran too!? She is a sage wizard of the ring in her own right! But honestly, YUYO wishes you two were in her corner. That's all. Compared to the Shining Maidens, everyone else seems underwhelming," **Yumi** commented. **Neko sighed and whacked her upside the head. Such thoughts were futile. While they discussed, Meowkazawa finished setting up the phone on the tripod. They had unfinished business. Neko and Sakura retreated to the ring while Meowkazawa and Yumi appeared before the camera.**

**[REC]**

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am Mister Meowkazawa. I have the distinct honor of being the royal council, the chancellor for Your Highness--- the Magical Cosmic Princess, YUYO! By all accounts, I am the sage advisor for all matters relating to her career. I speak on her behalf!" **Meowkazawa started with his now signature introduction. He dug his hands into his pockets and stared into the camera with tired eyes.** "This is a crucial week in YUYO's storied career. The Trios Tournament is upon us. Do you know what that means? Chaos. But within that chaos, there's the opportunity of a lifetime!"

"We have seen the byproduct of the Trios Tournament. The insanity and the splendor that comes with the fabled contract. Winners have conjured up matches that placed every championship on the line in a single night--- one match that forever changes the course of this company and the sport. People have walked away as the SCW World Champion because they weaponized the Trios Contract. It is a destroyer of worlds, powerful enough to bring down regimes. Whoever holds the Trios Contract controls their own destiny. They can make their mark in whatever way their imagination dictates. And let's just say that my client has a rampaging imagination. Bree Lancaster knows firsthand the power of my client."

"This will be her first taste of action since she has won the SCW Adrenaline Championship--- Rise to Greatness; YUYO claimed her spot as the rising star of this company. The Adrenaline

title is bestowed on workhorses, blue chip players, and others. Many legends have used the Adrenaline Championship as a stepping stone to bigger and greater things. But to YUYO," **Meowkazawa raises a finger. He points towards YUYO, who stands beside him. She takes hold of the SCW Adrenaline Championship and undoes it from her waist. Yumi lifts it into the air.** "She sees that being a champion, regardless of the name attached to the belt, is the perfect test. YUYO wants to prove to all the doubters who believe she isn't ready for the big time. Her message is loud. Her message is clear. She is here. And with the Shining Maidens of SCW, they are taking over."

"To them, the Trios Tournament is a quest. Two Shining Maidens are on a mission to add to their arsenal. YUYO and YUSA know what a boon it would be for the cause if they had that contract. It is all part of the master plan. With that great power, the Shining Maidens will be undeniable. It opens up a world of possibilities that would take months- maybe even years- to create organically, and all of it can be done over the course of the next two weeks. But we can't pretend that this grand undertaking isn't challenging. The Shining Maidens have been forced to go rogue. YUSA is on the other side of the bracket, but there is a good chance that YUYO's team might clash against YUSA's for the ultimate prize," **Meowkazawa stated. Yumi stepped in front of him now; she stabbed her staff into the floor. Her hands gripped to hide the wad of duck tape holding it together. Despite her best "You Shall Not Pass" Gandalf impression, Yumi seemed slightly bothered.**

"YUSA, fear not! YUYO is merciful as your fearless leader. YUYO will accept nothing less than your best if our paths cross in the finals. For we are extraordinary beings of might, and what's an occasional duel between two magical princesses? YUYO has given you her orders. The contract must be ours! We cannot expect our teammates to have our best interests at heart! There are mutha-flopping snakes everywhere on this mutha-flopping plane! They want to bite us. Inject our righteous cause with venom! They want to stop us from defending justice, love, and peace! But who are we? We're the Shining Maidens of SCW! We are walking-talking miracles! You wish upon a shooting star? We are the shooting star!" **Yumi cried out. Meowkazawa knew that this was part of Yumi's bravado. She really didn't want to face YUSA. Furthermore, she really didn't want to lose to YUSA.**

"Cut your teammates some slack. You have a good team, Yumi," **Meowkazawa said.**

"Of course, I have a good team. YUYO has the best team to have ever entered a Trios Tournament! YUYO thinks they're trustworthy. Maybe not Gavin. But Glory Braddock is pretty cool! Fun fact of the day! Both of them have won Trio Tournaments before! That means YUYO has a two hundred percent chance of winning. No one knows how much time we spent developing secret techniques to use in the tournament! No one knows all the special combos we came up with! Double teams? No, triple team extrangazana! All the other teams don't know what hit them! As their leader, YUYO promised them victory! YUYO will deliver victory! The day shall be ours!" **Yumi proclaimed, raising the staff high into the air. She then turned the staff towards the camera. Her dark eyes narrowed.**

"There are a lot of scary people in the tournament. There are people who are willing to break my sacred objects. There are jerks. There are judgemental idiots. There are plain fools. There are monsters. But we will have the power of teamwork on our side! You could be the SCW World Champion! YUYO doesn't care what kind of champion you are or were. All YUYO cares about is that you're trying to deny her birthright! My ascension didn't stop at Rise to Greatness. No, Rise to Greatness was the beginning. The Trios Tournament is a continuation of my rise to the top! Doesn't matter who you partnered YUYO with. Doesn't matter who you throw in YUYO's way. Love will always prevail. For Justice!"

"For justice!" **Sakura shouted from inside the ring.**

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