

Chapter 3

A Miraculous Meeting

☆ Prism Cherry

After training time, the Pure Elements returned to the briefing room. Everyone sat on chairs surrounding a table. Tempest sat shallowly, Inferno squatted on the chair. Quake braided her knees.

Breaktime is free time. Each person did their own thing. Of course, there's also the rule that you couldn't annoy other Magical Girls that they haven't broken.

Quake was immersed in her handheld video games, Inferno was reading a Shonen manga, Deluge was watching Inferno's manga beside her. Tempest was opening her notes and math textbooks, with Prism Cherry advising her.

Tempest folded her arms while looking down at her notes. She frowned her mouth, and furrowed her eyebrows. Prism Cherry pointed out the calculation formulas from the side.

"Don't forget to carry this over."

"Oh, so carry the 10"

"Close. Not that one."

"Ah, the other one? Oh, I get it. This one!"

"Yep, that's right."

Princess Tempest used an eraser to erase her mistakes, then blew away the eraser crumbs left over. She then wrote over them.

Confidently, she pointed at the new formula with her pencil.

"So we use this one, right?"

"Yep! That's right."

“Yeah! Next one, next one.”

Prism Cherry, who was watching Tempest head on to the next question like it was a challenge began to smile. Cherry didn't have any brothers or sisters, but would having a sister feel like this? She didn't really have a lot of skills in studying, but she could help with lower grade elementary school homework.

Quake placed her handheld on the table and chuckled.

“Didn't you forget to do your homework before this one? You should remember next time.”

“Hehehe, it's undignified for a Magical Girl to be too for homework.”

Inferno was able to joke around without even keeping her eyes off her manga.

“Wait a minute, why're you looking at *me* when you say that, Tempest?”

“Inferno, what were your grades on your exams again?”

“Hey now, middle school exams are way worse than elementary school ones.”

Inferno nodded when Deluge backed her up with those words.

“Waaay more difficult than the ones kids have to take.”

“You're acting like you're an adult, Inferno.”

“Inferno *is* an adult.”

“Mhm, what Quake said. I'm an adult.”

“Being able to have more exams than anyone else is pretty awesome. Kids can't possibly do it.”

“Mhm, normally there's no replacement tests eith... hey wait a minute.”

Surrounded by walls of white, the girls in the neurosis-inducing room began to sound their laughter.

Tempest laughed too. She clicked on her mechanical pencil as she laughed, but no lead came out. She shook vertically, but she didn't even hear the lead inside.

"Huh?"

"What's up, Tempest?"

"I think the lead's out."

She opened her pencil case, and tilted her neck, afterwards she started looking for it in her backpack, but she only found textbooks and notebooks, no erasers or highlighters at all.

Tempest grumbled. It looks like she'd have no pencil. How'd she lose something so small anyway?

"Can I borrow a pencil?"

"Quake's pencil's too dark. It'll stain your notebook."

"Huh, luxurious."

"Mkay, guess I'll find one back home. Cherry, mind waiting for me here?"

"Wait, wait. You're heading off early?"

"Get back soon, okay? You won't finish before breaktime's over, otherwise."

"I know. See ya later!"

☆ **Lady Proud**

She followed the smell of blood gradually in a snail's pace, one by one, careful not to miss the smell while keeping pace, soon she began objecting to Umbrain's tiredness, they'd spent the last two days following a trail to a factory. It didn't feel like a lab, but this wouldn't be a bad place to disguise and hide a facility underneath.

"The scent ends here."

"Are we *finally* there yet? We wasted enough time."

She didn't mind taking the blame from Umbrain, since she knows she'll never stop if she started to mind. A Magical Girl's strength could forcefully destroy this, but people who would use the lab would probably use a separate entrance and exit.

Umbrain turned right, Lady Proud turned left, circling the factory halfway, finding a backdoor installed on it. The lock had already been broken, the door wasn't even fully closed.

"So this is where you come out?"

"I don't sense anything, but..."

Creak, the door made a horrible noise, it was opening.

There was no one inside. Though, there was also no dust on the floor, even if you stroke it. It's cleaned on a regular basis. If the owner of this factory treated it importantly, then they'd prioritize locking the door before cleaning the floor.

This is unnatural. It's worth some investigating.

The walls suggested that this factory had history, thanks to the papers stamped on it, it seems to have originally been a frozen food producer. They probably sold all of their machines in case they ever went broke. There was nothing in this place, even though it's not that wide.

Since it was so small, the traces of the factory, the toilet, the rest rooms, the hot water supply, simply investigating them means there's nothing more to investigate, not even Magical Girls who had their expectations high could find anything but loose ends. There's nothing of interest.

Umbrain stared at the spider's web in the corner of the room.

"What are you looking at?"

"The spider's web has raindrops rolling on it, it's beautiful."

"Are you even seriously looking?"

"Honestly, not really."

She didn't really bring her along to help her search, but the least Umbrain could do was work. Though, if she forced her too, she'd probably just go home, which would be troubling for Proud. Whenever there was an emergency, she depended on Umbrain.

They searched the factory time and time again, then they searched again, when she thought there was nothing more to search, she looked for Umbrain and found her, as always, staring at a spider's web.

The scent of blood ended here. What was being done here? There *has* to be something. If this wasn't some kind of Magical Girl, she wouldn't even took interest in this blood scent, let alone if it were humans.

She clicked her tongue, sitting down in the tatami at the restroom, her cloak touching the ground.

Lady Proud wasn't a Magical Girl who was specialized in searching. Only the Examination Division's Investigation Team had that kind of skills, or maybe Freelancer Magical Girls who were specialized in finding people. But she couldn't exactly ask those Magical Girls for help. Her text told her that she had to keep this a secret, more importantly, the Foreign Affairs Division tend to want to monopolize their prey.

Umbrain was more than just non-cooperative, it felt like she was messing with Lady Proud, barely investigating at all. With a tragic resolve in her mind, Lady Proud once again stood up to investigate, then she heard the sound of something being dragged and stopped moving.

Looking out into the factory from the restroom, she saw Umbrain hold her umbrella open. The direction Umbrain was looking at was a crane, whose operating device had been moving and sliding.

“What the-”

“Quiet!”

The operating device stopped moving. A large four-sided hole in the floor opened up. From there, someone’s head popped out.

A Magical Girl.

Her hair was tied in two, golden hair ornaments scattering her. Large laurels on her back. With a look of surprise, the Magical Girl pointed her finger at Lady Proud.

“AAAH!”

Then she pointed her finger at Umbrain.

“You guys again!? There’s *more* of you!?”

Then she pointed at the ceiling.

“There’s even one way up *there*!?”

Lady Proud looked up at where she pointed. There was someone sitting on the beams near the ceiling. A clown. A masked girl with a clown motif, this was probably a Magical Girl, looking down at them.

“You guys can’t just do whatever you want!”

The girl popped out halfway from the hole. There was a large blade-shaped weapon on her hand. Lady Proud hurriedly hid behind Umbrain’s back.

“Hold on! We’re not trying to fight you!”

“You can’t trick me!”

The girl threw her weapon. That large ranged weapon unintentionally grazed everything. In the direction that it was thrown, from walls, unsold goods, factory equipment, all of them were cut as it spun through them until it passed near the ceiling.

The Clown Magical Girl hurriedly escaped through the window, the trajectory of the weapon turning again until it headed in this direction, Umbrain turned her open umbrella towards the weapon.

Umbrain's umbrella was a magical umbrella. No matter what attack hits it, it'll bounce off lightly. The furiously spinning blade twirling in the factory was lightly stopped and fell down to the floor. The weapon fell down with a clank, before disappearing with a whoosh.

Umbrain turned around as if to say *Ha!* But the Magical Girl from the hole had also disappeared.

"She got away?"

"She got away."

They were interested in the Clown Magical Girl too, but the hole was more important than her. Where did it lead?

☆ **Fal**

The searched in S-City had entered its third day.

Snow White jumped from the billboard of the prep school to the top of the telephone pole, from there she moved to the roof of the post office to a traffic light, then she jumped three times in succession of building walls, *jump, jump, jump*, in a good tempo.

In the middle of the night, the number of cars that came downhill were declining considerably. However, that doesn't mean there's no people. The entertainment district was still full of rowdy lights, and similarly rowdy men and women were similarly rowdily getting drunk, with salarymen leaning on lighting signs and younger men glaring at people all around.

Snow White continued moving along while occasionally intervening. Helping people is a Magical Girl's job, but if the local Magical Girl saw her, she might accuse Snow of

ignoring territory. Snow White would shrug off any complaints made, but if they report to the higher-ups, it'll be annoying.

But she's never met the local Magical Girl. She moved quite flashily, running around as Fal's radar detected no Magical Girls.

"...Who's the person in charge?"

"Person in charge?"

"Her name and Magical Skill."

"Hang on, Pon... Her name is Princess Cherry, her powers are *To change any image reflected in mirrors*, Pon. Her area of responsibility is the whole of S-City, Tanai Town, Abi Town, Ainari Town, and Tonoe Town."

"Thanks."

She jumped from building to building, running along the rooftops. Fal wondered if Snow White was interested in the local Magical Girl. But now's not the time to ask her. Despite moving around, Snow White was not interested in meeting the local Magical Girl.

Fal talked to Snow White while watching his radar.

"You're moving sloppily on purpose aren't you, Pon?"

"I don't intend to move sloppily."

"Then I should say you're moving *boldly*, Pon."

She wasn't keen on meeting the local Magical Girl, which was fine, but it's almost equal to wanting to cause a dispute. Even if Snow White kept quiet about the whole thing.

"You're getting quite bold on your opinions yourself, Fal."

Snow White muttered.

"Well the Princess who refrains from speaking gains nothing, Pon."

He was joking, but Snow White didn't register any reaction. Meaning, she really was using herself as bait. This would be fine if the prey was someone Snow White and Fal could handle, but he didn't know how long she would be able to keep this up. Fishing up small fishes are fine, but if they keep going and catch a whale, the fisherman's life would be in danger.

Snow White was, unsurprisingly, indifferent about her own personal safety. She'd never listen to Fal. Was she desperate because Ripple wasn't here anymore? He wanted to ask her that, but he feared what her response would be, how much pain did Snow White endure? Thinking about this, Fal decided not to ask.

She received a text from Ripple's Magical Phone, she believed in Ripple's survival and acted. Since she was acting to reunite with Ripple, naturally she'd have to consider her own safety. At least Fal hoped so.

"Can you slow it down, Pon?"

When Fal voiced that, there was a simple large electronic sound that rang. It was probably not a nice sound to hear. If they didn't pay attention, they wouldn't even have time to register the danger. A Magical Girl had appeared within 200 meters. When Fal wanted to accurately check her position, he heard a crashing sound, but Snow White had already made one backflip and landed on the iron fence.

There was a Magical Girl there. Her face was smiling as if something was funny. Her overall color scheme was poisonous, there was a large flower on her head, her hair was the color of autumn cherry trees.

Fal's original Master, Keek, loved Magical Girls, she explored many Magical Girls to fulfill her image of the Ideal Magical Girl. She documented many Magical Girls in the process, all packed within Fal. A simple directory. Not just a directory, but personality, current job, it was a large amount of data.

"Marika Fukuroi. Ex-Mao School student. A Magical Girl who was classmates with Clamerry and Flamey, Pon."

"Oh! A Mascot Character! You're probably a Magical Girl with backbone!"

"She has a flower blooming on her head, Pon. It may look ridiculous, but it possesses mysterious magical powers, don't underestimate it, Pon."

Fal ignored Marika's reaction and continued his comments.

This Magical Girl, Marika Fukuroi, already attacked the instant she came within range of his radar. She moved with such full powered speed in a straight beeline to land a kick to Snow White it was almost admirable, meaning she's an enemy.

Fal was of course talking about himself to the enemy. He's trying to say everything out loud, in order to say "I know everything about you!" Yet the enemy seemed to laugh with joy at Fal knowing all her confidential secrets.

Despite suppressing his feelings of irritation, Fal continued on.

"Even among the Mao's School, she was expelled due to her ferocity... she wanted to fight tanks, so she went to South America to fight with all the drug traffickers, she's nothing but a battle-crazy person, Pon!"

Of course, Fal himself belonged to a Magical Girl who stopped many wars in the Middle East, but let's leave that aside for now.

"I don't see any of them on my radar, but... She might have allies, Pon. They have the philosophy, which really isn't a philosophy, of seeking out battle, acting as Magical Girls to do so, pon. Mao's School students Amy and Monako, they won battle after battle and graduated the Mao's School, Pon. Styler Mimi's not from the Mao's School, but she *is* a good friend of Marika, Pon. It's said that Mimi even manipulates Marika from behind as a handler, Pon. Of course, her fighting ability is something we have to determine, Pon."

Marika casually tapped her foot. Snow White's back was blocked by an iron fence.

Fal had dared to explain at length. In a battle between Magical Girls, even if you know their powers, there are times where you have to make immediate decisions if you believe your enemy exceeds you in power, personality, and compatibility. The importance of information is high. Saying "I know this much about you" can make them wary, and should cause them to run.

"Be careful, Pon. Snow White. She's-"

"Snow White? ...Oooh, I get it! The *Magical Girl Hunter!*"

Marika's smile just turned even wider. As if she was drunk with happiness.

"So this is what destiny feels like! How's Flamey, huh? Satisfied? Betcha you aren't! I'm *much* more meatier for you! Careful though, I'm poisonous too."

While slightly tilting forward, Snow White tried not to move. Marika took one step forward.

The alarm sound that resonated once further rang again, Fal saw a shadow flying from behind Marika.

☆ **Styler Mimi**

"What are you doing!?"

Marika was speaking so loud it wasn't actually hard to guess what she's doing. She was trying to start a fight. What she's *trying* to do is tell her not to shout so loudly and restrain her.

Not to mention she rushed over here as fast as she could. She wanted to make her opponent see that Mimi was trying her best to stop Marika. On top of that, Marika Fukuroi also made a mess, on top of *that*, Mimi was unable to stop her despite her utmost efforts. That'd be troubling if that happened.

"Please just, stop making such a ruckus!"

"I haven't even *started* yet!"

Marika Fukuroi didn't even hesitate. Mimi resisted the urge to knock her on the head to give her a hint.

Only Magical Girls who were able to dodge Marika Fukuroi's surprise attacks had the right to fight her. Marika's excuse was trying to find someone tough enough that they're either able to dodge, endure, or counterattack against it. Naturally, only *after* that would she challenge them straightforwardly, fair and square.

Every time Mimi tries to tell her that she's got the order wrong, she ignored her.

Even now, it was like that. Marika rushed at full speed according to her theory towards the Magical Girl in the rooftop that she discovered, Mimi tried to stop her only for her hand to grab onto nothing, then she tried chasing after her, but somehow Marika's surprise attack failed. It had failed.

An overall white Magical Girl. A school uniform being the main point, further tightened with decorations of armbands and flowers around her. Her boots had their textures pop out. The flower on her headband had slightly opened, which could appeal to the eyes of any viewer, but it also reminded her of who she is.

The bag that she had wrapped on her waist, that wasn't part of her original costume. That was the only thing that stood out. Perhaps it was a magical item. She stared at it but couldn't figure out its use.

The girl kept her line of sight to Mimi and Marika, but she also didn't neglect her surroundings. She understood that the girl didn't fall for Marika's surprise attack, but she had extensive fighting experience and mastery over her Magical Skill.

Even veterans that have been veterans for half their lives have been known to panic and be afraid if suddenly attacked. Meanwhile, this Magical Girl seemed to be sarcastically relaxed. Mimi couldn't see any openings in her attitude.

"Styler Mimi, Pon!"

A strange way to end words and a childlike synthetic voice. She heard something talking out of the white Magical Girl's breast pocket. It was then she realized that this Magical Girl had a Cyber Fairy Mascot Character. A Magical Girl with a Mascot Character, does that mean she has high authority? Does that mean she has someone watching her back?

There were plenty of cases to be made for why it would be bad for Marika to have her as an opponent.

She opened her palms, then raised them high to show it to her opponent.

"Listen, I'm sorry for how rude that idiot's acting!"

"Hey, who you callin' an idiot!?"

Mimi didn't react to the idiot's voice and continued on.

"This is all just a *big* misunderstanding and she may have accidentally smashed herself, but we *really* don't want to fight you! We humbly apologize!"

"Are you kidding!? Of *course* I wanna fight her! She's the Magical Girl Hunter for cryin' out loud!"

—*Magical Girl Hunter?*

The white school uniform costume, the Cyber Fairy Mascot Character, the bag on her waist, and the uninnocent attitude. *Oh, I see*, she thought as she finally understood. It seems she looks just like the rumors said. Of course someone with the name Magical Girl Hunter could endure Marika's surprise attack.

She arrests famous Rogue Magical Girls, some of whom could make criminals tremble when their names are spoken.

While Mimi kept her hands up, she retreated three steps. *How long is this going to keep happening?* She wondered. How long will this Magical Girl who has a tendency for violence to even her colleagues be forgiven?



She remembered the phrase 'It's time to pay your dues'. It was just a saying, but looking at the situation now, it seemed fitting.

Marika was being hunted.

She was only a rude unlikable person who'd bother others, the incarnation of violence, when others approached her, she'd bite them like a mad rabbit, she was shunned by the Mao's School, but this was just pathetic. *Goodbye Marika Fukuroi*, thought Mimi, saying her farewells.

Marika probably didn't know what Mimi was thinking. Without keeping her eyes off Snow White, she raised a question of doubt.

"What, you're not gonna stop me?"

"No. I won't stop what I can't stop."

"Whoa, what's with the sudden change of heart. Man, I wish you were *a/ways* like that."

Marika advanced a step further while sliding her feet, her distance to Snow White was approximately 5 meters. Just standing behind them would be dangerous. Mimi stepped two steps to the right, this time Snow White moved. Was the Magical Girl Hunter finally about to hunt?

Snow White's posture changed, she went from forward leaning to standing upright, also raising a palm.

"I'm not going to fight you."

"What?"

"Why?"

The one who said "What?" was Marika, who replied seriously confused. The one who said "Why?" was Mimi, who was hiding her disappointment. Before Snow White could answer, they were interrupted by an electronic beep, Mimi looked at the building to her right.

She felt something moving abruptly. She wasn't fast. It's just that by the time she noticed, she was already there. On the other side of the wire fence was a clown shrugging her shoulders.

☆ **Fal**

Fal trembled for three reasons.

The first is that a Magical Girl showed up *just* when his radar reacted. Marika and Styler Mimi's speed were frightening, but they still had a delay of half an eyeblink, they were jumping vigorously here, so they had to generate energy for it. That Magical Girl—The one who had a mask with a caricature face, right eye closed, left eye open with a tear mark rolling down her face, obscuring most of her face—the one that looked like a clown, had no sign of movement, she was just *there*.

The second reason he was nervous is the fact that the clown was standing where there were no footholds. The building rooftop was surrounded by wire meshes in all four sides, there was nothing beyond it.

The clown was standing on nothing. There were some Magical Girls who were able to fly in the air, sure, but clowns had no general means to do so. She was standing on stilts. It was like a bad joke.

The third reason was because Snow White seemed upset looking at the clown. Snow White can get angry sometimes, she can even be happy sometimes. Though she'd never show it to people, she kept herself closed off.

Fal can tell Snow White's inner emotions with the slightest change of her expression. Ripple had once told him where to look specifically. This time Snow White tried to step back, but her heels were already touching the wire mesh, so she couldn't go back any further. She quickly checked behind her then once again looked in front.

She was upset, flinching, yet she was unable to hide it. She hasn't done something like this before.

Marika Fukuroi faced the intruder, Styler Mimi hung her mouth open in disbelief. The two of them weren't expecting her either, and it didn't look like they knew her.

The clown jumped from the stilts and landed on the wire mesh. She grabbed the two stilts with her left hand. It was quite long, so the weight would be substantial. The edge of the wire mesh bent, distorted, but she still had her balance without collapsing.

The clown placed the stilts she held with her left hand onto her sleeves. It was about at *least* 20 meters or more, yet it disappeared as soon as it entered her sleeves. Marika Fukuroi whistled out. Was this the Clown's Magical Skill?

This was a Magical Girl that he's never seen or heard of before. A Magical Girl that wasn't in Keek's database could only mean that she's a considerably recent Magical Girl, right? But for a newbie, her movements were above them. Not someone that the three of them would easily be able to outdo.

The clown opened both her hands, then suddenly closed them. *Clap!* It sounded as she clapped and shook it in the air. When she opened her hands again, there were tiny flags in a row all together.

"So, who are you?"

The only one of them that voiced her confusion of the clown was Marika Fukuroi. The Clown Magical Girl tilted her head, *boing*, she kicked off from the wire mesh and jumped to the air. She kicked off the wall of the next building, then using that momentum, she did a half-flip and kicked on the electronic sign of a sex shop, the neons went dark for a moment as she placed her hands on an iron fence.

Not only her outfit, but her movements were also clown-like. While she was jumping and jumping, her hands were spread wide and her shoulders shrugged, as if she was moving quite humorously, it looked like she was dancing with pom-poms with the night sky as her background.

The clown turned around this way, raising her right index finger, pointing behind her, *boing*, she hopped and ran.

Behind her, becoming ever so smaller as she kept running, Marika Fukuroi shouted out "Hold up!" but the clown didn't stop. Marika ran as well, "Oh please don't start causing *more* trouble!" said Mimi chasing after her, Snow White soon followed. The 4 Magical Girls were running above the Red-Light District.

Snow White returned to her usual self. Bold, uninnocent, unmoving no matter what happened. Even when thrown into the frying pan, she'll find a way out.

—*Why was Snow White upset?*

“Hey, what did you see in her, Pon?”

“What do you mean?”

“I can't find any data on her, Pon. It might be that she's just very recent, but if not...”

One possibility went towards them. A Magical Girl who's not in the database, her behavior was that of a veteran, which Magical Girl would it be?

“What if it's one of those underground Magical Girls, Pon?”

What if it's one of those dirty working Magical Girls like Rain Pou in B-City? As they weren't officially registered, these Magical Girls could easily fade into the shadows. He wondered if the clown was one such Magical Girl, but-

“I don't think so.”

Snow White instantly denied it.

“No? I thought I'd be dead on, Pon.”

“That girl doesn't have a guilty conscience.”

“...Ah”

Snow White used her Magical Skill of hearing the voices of people in distress. Normally, she didn't just use it to find people in distress, but it would also work when people were thinking “I want to do this (but if things go wrong, it'd be bad)” she'd be able to hear even to the depths of their subconsciousness.

When she also raised her hand when Marika Fukuroi faced her, she probably used her power too. Marika Fukuroi thought that people who'd rather not fight rather than fight would be bad for her. Even Fal understood that, and he couldn't even *read* minds.

“You heard her heart, Pon?”

“She’s not a bad girl, but something’s off. She’s too pure.”

“...What do you mean by that, Pon?”

“I don’t know. This is the first time I’ve heard someone like this. She has an objective, but I can’t hear any enthusiasm on carrying it out.”

☆ **Prism Cherry**

“Quake’s pencils are for drawing”

“Oh right, you said I can see some of your sketches right? How’s that going?”

“It’s not going anywhere, I told you from the start.”

“Huh? What sketch?”

“Hey, please don’t eat over there.”

The bulkhead doors began to open, and everyone looked towards it. Only Tempest would be coming back now, but she was far too early.

“This is bad, this is bad! This is *really really* bad!”

Tempest kept on panicking. She flew off to her house to get a pencil because the lead was missing, so why was she in a hurry to get back?

Not to mention she was abnormally fast.

Even for the fastest Pure Element, Princess Tempest, this was far too fast. Not to mention, she still hasn’t gotten a spare pencil lead.

“Guys! Something *huge* just happened!”

She was still in a hurried panic, seemingly unable to wait to open the briefing room's bulkhead, even hitting the bulkhead with her shoulder since she was moving so fast.

"Why are you freaking out so much?"

Inferno asked her while still reading her Manga, Tempest tilted her head. Inferno looked up from her Manga at Tempest.

"What?"

"I said we have *trouble! Big trouble!*"

At that exact moment, a large beeping sound echoed in the room, Prism Cherry's heartbeat jumped up. She looked around her, the Princesses kicked their chairs off like bullets and looked at the monitor.

Prism Cherry, who lagged behind, followed shortly. She looked at the monitor over Quake's shoulder to see the entrance of the laboratory. Several people were shown.

Two people, one with a fantastical looking cape, and another with a large umbrella.

Her heartbeat jumped up once again. These were Magical Girls.

"See! We have enemies! There's a clown, a cape person, and someone with an umbrella all raiding us at once! I'm serious! I'm not lying, see!"

"Calm down, Tempest. We never said you were lying."

"Enemies again?"

"They're persistent, aren't they?"

"Aren't they different than the ones we saw before?"

"*I'm* fighting them this time!"

"You wanna fill yourself up that bad don't you, Inferno?"

"Can't let Tempest have all the fun."

“Ladies first, now”

“But everyone here’s a lady.”

While talking in a light tone, the Princess’ expressions tightened with no hesitation.

Prism Cherry held down her chest. Thinking what’ll happen next is making her chest feel painful. She knew what she *should* do. She’s decided. Prism Cherry is a member of the Pure Elements. She had to act to protect the Pure Elements.

☆ **Fal**

Tracking the clown wasn’t too difficult. She wasn’t being disturbed by Marika Fukuroi or Styler Mimi, the clown wasn’t attacking them, they all kept pace without leaving each other behind, as if the clown was conscious of what’s behind her.

“What do we do, Pon?”

“We follow, for now.”

Marika Fukuroi and Styler Mimi were also talking about something while running. Styler Mimi’s expression was insecure, while Marika’s was that of a smile.

Still, Styler Mimi closed up to talk to Snow. Her uneasiness when she was talking with Marika disappeared, she had the expression of an apology instead.

“Um, Snow White... I can call you that, right?”

Snow White nodded as she ran.

“Did you perhaps also came here because you got some weird text?”

She said ‘also’, which means she’s admitting that she’s gotten one as well.

“Did you also get one, Styler Mimi?”

“Well, you could say I’m a plus one, or an attendant, actually it wouldn’t be an overstatement to say I’m a victim of a kidnapping. The one who got the text was the idiot over there.”

She pointed at Marika Fukuroi, still smiling as she ran.

“She told me that she’d go just because she’d find some strong opponents.”

Styler Mimi, who seemed to be blaming the responsibility on others, seemed rather hopeful. People who wanted protection are easy to control. People who don’t care about ruining themselves like a runaway train are troubling.

So which one is the Clown that’s running about 10 meters ahead of them? Despite them clearly not making their best effort at running since they’re talking as well, the clown wasn’t leaving them behind. Meaning she wants to be followed.

“Snow White. Do you think she’s luring us, Pon?”

“Looks like it. She doesn’t want us to not follow her.”

“So isn’t that bad, Pon? It won’t be funny if we just fall for her trap, Pon.”

“Well she’s not worried about us not setting off a...”

The clown’s sharp pointed shoes landed on a neon sign, *crash*, it broke and fell towards Snow White, which she casually brushed off with her right hand. The clown turned around, then bowed her head.

“...Trap. At least it doesn’t look like it.”

The alarm rang. There were multiple Magical Girls that were detected. Or rather, that the clown Magical Girl was pointing towards.

“Snow White, multiple Magical Girls at our destination, Pon!”

Styler Mimi grumbled a hateful “Ugh”, while Marika shouted out a “Yahoo!” Snow White didn’t stop at all, continuing to chase after the clown.

Fal's radar was at max 200 radius. As the Magical Girls ran, from building to building or from somewhere to somewhere else, that radius moved swiftly with them.

Before Fal could even tell anyone to stop, the clown Magical Girl hopped from the roof to a factory-like building, then smoothly entered through a broken window.

The name of the building was engraved on a sign covered in red rust, there's nothing legible written there anymore. The tin plates were also just as corroded and rusty.

Since the clown dressed in a fairly light looking outfit, she was able to land quite gracefully. For those who were not that light, the corrugated roof boards would be too brittle, unable to have the strength to support a body landing from above.

After the clown, Snow White, Marika, and Styler Mimi landed alongside her, as they tore off the corrugated board and got inside without so much as directly entering from the broken windows.

It was a sudden accident, but Cyber Fairies wouldn't panic due to that.

Magical Girls that were leading battles were sturdier than tanks, faster than the fastest felines. There was no need for Snow White to worry about falling down from the rooftops. The same goes to Marika and Styler Mimi. If their combat skill is half what the rumors say, they'll only passively get bothered by this.

There were other things that Fal was worried about. The dust and red rust dancing in the air, and the confined space they're in have reduced his radius to around 50 meters. Now the Magical Girls that he once could only detect can be traced to their positions with centimeters of accuracy.

However, their blocked viewpoints were the same for their enemies too. Without magic, they wouldn't be able to detect their precise positions, and that was a huge advantage.

But once he thought of that, he realized something. If he wanted to tell Snow White where the enemy was, he'd have to speak, but Fal's high-pitched voice would also let the enemy know where Snow White was.

"Fal, calm down."

Snow White said out loud. Red rust was still dancing in the air.

Is it okay to even speak? Fal worried, but afterwards he decided to reply.

“...What do you mean, Pon?”

“They’re not enemies. This isn’t a trap.”

Not enemies. Meaning, their enemi-wait, non-enemies, really *did* cause an accident? Fal’s search marker didn’t move, nor did it change positions. Perhaps they were looking at Fal’s group’s movements.

The red mist cleared. Snow White narrowed her eyes and covered her mouth. Standing upright with no weapons on hand, unafraid of anything.

Marika Fukuroi and Styler Mimi were standing back to back. Meanwhile, Snow White was always wary of her surroundings no matter what stance she took. Styler Mimi held out her scissors in her right hand, her left hand grabbing onto the nape of Marika’s neck, as if telling her “Don’t charge in.” Marika opened both her palms and placed in in front of her chest.

Despite the large cloud of red rust, there were no injuries. As he thought, all of them were perfectly safe, thus he was relieved. He didn’t really have a reason not to be relieved.

They can see the Magical Girls that were in this plac too.

A Magical Girl with a bat-winged cloak.

A Magical Girl with an umbrella pointed in front of her as if she was protecting herself.

Fal looked at both their data.

The bat was Lady Proud. The umbrella was Umbrain. These two belonged to the Foreign Affairs Division. They should be the ones in charge of things, not the ones who’d go out to do things. However, he had no doubt that their combat ability was excellent.

Including Snow White, Styler Mimi, and Marika Fukuroi, everyone here is a professional at violence and combat.

They were all gathered here. Why were they gathered in the first place? Did they have the same objectives as Snow White? As Snow White said, it wasn't a trap, they weren't enemies. Then what should they do?

Fal was confused. Normally, he'd read out their names, and explain their powers and affiliations too. People who were told that he knew everything about them wouldn't usually fight back, unless they were weirdos like Marika Fukuroi.

But if these weren't enemies, he'd just be acting hostile, which would be counterproductive. If someone tried to pull the wool over Snow White when she said that she didn't want to fight, at worst it could lead to a fatal injury. Fal didn't know how.

He wanted to consult with Snow White, but that's also difficult. If Fal spoke out, then they'll know that a Mascot Character is here.

If the Magical Girls gathered here were doing underground business, then the appearance of a Mascot Character, which usually signified an official, would be very bad. They may just try to seal their mouths just so Fal wouldn't speak out about their illegal activities.

Fal was confused, Marika tried to step in front, but Mimi restrained her, the other Magical Girls didn't make a move, quietly examining each other.

They heard a gentle sound from the ceiling. She was looking at everyone while also not neglecting her surroundings. Fal's Magical Girl radar sounded. The clown sitting on a beam waved her hands, then hopped down.

On her right hand, she held as many balloons as she can, because of the buoyancy, she softly landed on the ground. She grasped the balloons with one hand, but once she landed, she released it as the balloons began to decompress to nothing.

The clown walked around with funny exaggerated motions, approaching Snow White and taking her hand. Fal held back his sudden desire to shout out "Hey!" for fear of the other Magical Girls discovering him.

Yet Snow White didn't move. The clown, with greatly exaggerated movements, shook her hands up and down, then hugged her shoulders.

Then she went to Mimi, and without the slightest look of concern, shook Mimi's hands while Mimi was still holding onto the scissors, and hugged her shoulders.

She approached Marika too, but since Marika looked like she'd bite if you even touched her, she hurriedly gave a little tap on her shoulders.

The clown Magical Girl took out some cards from her sleeves and began juggling it, probably trying to throw it, the Magical Girls all catching the cards being thrown.

Snow White examined the card she was given. There, the words "Stuntchika, at your service" was written. It was too simple a card, with no contact or address.

Lady Proud breathed out a large sigh, as if wanting everyone to hear her.

"So you're Stuntchika?"

The clown nodded with exaggerated movements.

"And these three, they're your friends?"

The clown gave a thumbs up. Fal could feel the tension loosening. Marika Fukuroi clicked her tongue, Styler Mimi scolded her with a small "Be nice."

☆ **Princess Quake**

Of the ones that were initially introduced to the facility, the one that became the most excited was Princess Inferno, the second was Princess Tempest. A secret base. A hideout. An underground facility. Those were the kinds of words that would excite a young heart. To the elementary schooler Tempest, and the high schooler, but still child-at-heart Inferno, those words were very attractive.

And honestly, it was an interesting place. 5 training rooms were prepared specifically for them, with settings available so that they could train under any kinds of circumstances. You could even observe the training rooms to the utmost detail.

Unlike elementary, middle, or high schoolers, the miserable life of a college student actually saves some flexibility in time. Princess Quake—Chiko Sato, would often go to

the labs for leisure time, or walk around the training rooms, or the hallways, or sketch in the briefing room when she wasn't doing anything else.

Magical Girls. Magic. They were neither fantasy nor fiction. They were real, and she was living in a world of fantasy. These things existed, and she was also wrapped around it, becoming a Magical Girl herself.

Though, these underground bases didn't really seem Magical Girl-ish. The old woman who told her of this place, Professor Tanaka, said that this was a laboratory. Used to train Magical Girls so that they can train to capture Disruptors, who were trying to destroy the world, and once they did, they'd take these Disruptors here to be studied.

To that extent, she didn't see any researchers, but she was taught that "The researchers would pull the data externally so that they could be safe."

This really did seem to look like some sort of lab if she thought about it. The training rooms were of many variations and was white colored, with no dust covering up anywhere. The closest thing she's seen to this was the hospital that Chiko always visited.

It had nothing that didn't serve its main purpose, which was understandable. Though having glittery and sparkly girls in a very dull uninteresting facility certainly did seem quite surreal.

Chiko Sato never dreamed of things like gatherings, she liked to see reality.

When there were gatherings, she would see the truth through it. If it was just two people, her best friend A and herself, that meant they were good friends, but three, four, five, ten, twenty people? Then most of the time these people wouldn't have personalities that fit with each other.

In club gatherings, then the normal thing to do is to talk about their shared interest of whatever the club they're in, in the case of classmate and student council forced gatherings, they weren't even natural gatherings to begin with.

She's also seen plenty of times where A and B badmouth C, but when B isn't in the room, A and C would badmouth B as well.

She was amazed that they could do things like that, she'd probably be out of place since she didn't do any of those things herself.

Chiko thought it was ironic how the girl who couldn't form a lot of human relationships was chosen to be part of a team of Magical Girls ranging from elementary, middle, high school, and and a college student. If she couldn't make this work, she thought she'd just sit around and sketch, but contrary to her beliefs, she was surprisingly good at this.

Princess Inferno and Princess Tempest weren't two faced, they were assertive. If there was something funny, they'd laugh, if there's something sad, they'd cry, if something was annoying, they'd complain.

Princess Deluge was the kind of person who'd coordinate everything based on people's wants and needs, so her relationships were well-rounded, and Professor Tanaka always smiled.

Was Princess Quake useful as well or no? She thought to herself while self-evaluating. For example, when Tempest would fly indoors and crash her head to the ceiling, before she fell, Inferno would try to catch her, and if they tangled together, Inferno could never just honestly laugh.

Inferno was wrapped in her own appearance, which was quite complex, and she did envy the others' looks.

Princess Quake was different. As long as she knew people were okay, she'd be able to laugh. She knew that she herself looked beautiful, but the other three were beautiful as well. She had nothing to be jealous of. Rather than looking at them from below, she saw them eye-to-eye, in equal standing.

The new member that Princess Deluge brought along, Princess Cherry, was also a cute girl. As the Pure Elements became 5, they began thinking up a pose together, they began thinking up names for their finisher moves on a whiteboard, she's never had this much fun in her whole life.

Chiko continued to draw pictures of Magical Girls smiling and chattering in her sketchbook, even Princess Quake was there too.

Princess Quake was the one that had the most fun out of anybody there.

And now, an intruder had appeared in Princess Quake's paradise.

It wasn't just one or two Magical Girls that entered the laboratory. A girl with a flower on her head, one with a white school uniform, one with an umbrella, one with a cloak, one that looked like a clown, so many variations. They weren't like the Pure Elements, who looked similar.

Inferno and Tempest were tilting their heads, wondering why there were this many. Deluge asked "What should we do?" with a nervous face. Quake looked at Prism Cherry. Cherry had lost all of her expressiveness, just staring into the monitor while shaking.

Prism Cherry had told them that she was a Magical Girl who did her activities elsewhere. Even now, she wasn't exactly doing the same activities, looking at monitors instead.

"We'll need to contact them for now."

First, Quake told her opinions. She was the oldest of the group, so she assumed the role of Leader. Was the society of Magical Girls built on seniority? For a world of dreams and magic, it sure seemed pretty realistic.

"Contact them *how*?"

"Face to face, ask them what they want. We'll tell them they need permission to enter the facility, or else they'd be trespassing. I think that'll give them a message that we're forbidding anyone unrelated to us."

"Seriously? Trespassing?"

"Yes, and our Professor told us that they can't do that. I'm sure their mothers have too."

This was a paradise. She won't let anyone take it from her.

She drew a map of the laboratory in her head. As they cross the hallway from the entrance, they'll break off into two separate halls. On the right hand side was a training room with plenty of trees. Further along was a rocky training room. If they went left,

they'd arrive in a desert training room. Further along was a water training room. The 1st and 4th training rooms were connected to the briefing room, all in all it was structured like a circle.

They had to keep the routes closed from intruders outside. They have no idea what the intruders plan to do if they only closed off one side and they took the briefing room.

"I told you we should've set a password at the entrance."

"It's annoying to change them every now and then, and it wastes time."

Quake stood up and gave instructions.

"Prism Cherry, you wait in the briefing room, check the monitors, if something happens, contact us. Inferno and Tempest, you're going to the western entrance, Deluge and I will head to the eastern entrance and contact our guests. We'll find out what they want. Don't get too close to them, we don't know their intentions just yet. Lower all the bulkhead doors."

She wanted to contact Professor Tanaka, but since they didn't want any information to be leaked, no radio signals can reach from the underground base. If she could contact her, she'd know she was safe.

"Safety is the priority. If anything happens, you retreat. No Luxury Modes."

First time I'm actually acting like a Leader, huh? She thought to herself, feeling pretty good about herself.

☆ **Fal**

As the Magical Girl Hunter, Snow White was a very fearsome Magical Girl. Capturing Magical Girls in the west, only to rush to beat down Magical Girls in the east. The Magical Girl does not forgive Rogue Magical Girls.

She doesn't hate Magical Girls in general, but she doesn't love Magical Girls in general as well, thinking about it made Fal himself not understand. She wasn't devoted to Magical Girls like Keek, nor was she lustful for battle like Clamberry.

She doesn't speak with the tone of an adult. Fal, who was supposed to be her partner, didn't even understand what she was thinking.

Snow White usually works alone, but sometimes she'd work with other Magical Girls, and she won't be uncomfortable with it.

She won't say not to Lady Proud being a director, and she stares when Stuntchika does her robotic movements. She's always a lone wolf, she wasn't a very simple person either, despite being a loner, so Snow White easily blends into a group. Seeing that made Fal soften and relax.

From the secret passage, they entered a hallway. That was probably around 20 meters underground. There's no reason for a factory to dig this deep. Furthermore, there's no lighting this far in. Since there's no switch around, it can only mean the lights weren't automatic. Just passing through it was dark, so dark that ordinary people wouldn't be able to see. Meaning this was never meant to be used by ordinary people in the first place.

This was a passageway meant only to be used by Magical Girls and Mascot Characters. They reached the bottom. Before their eyes, they saw a large door. It began to sound like a huge mill that was grinding as it slid. Seems this was a self-weighting door.

Snow White saw her palm. Her white gloves weren't dirty. None of the rust that was built up by the ladder had come down here. This wasn't old. Rather, this was well-maintained. The automatic door was also smoothly opening and closing, seems like it's used on a daily basis.

The stretched aisle ahead of the door soon divided up into two branches. They were about three meters both in length and width, similar to linoleum. Snow White had stepped on the floor many times, but the floor did not bend or creak. This really was meant to be used by Magical Girls.

"We should split up. We'll go into the groups we discussed. A Team, head right. B Team, head left. Keep in touch."

"Are you sure it's okay to spread our strength thin?"

"If you return the minute you see danger, you should be fine."

Lady Proud coughed out and continued.

"Styler Mimi, Marika Fukuroi, and Stuntchika will head left. Lady Proud, Umbrain, and Snow White to the right."

Marika muttered out "I don't care, hurry up!" Mimi dragged her along. Stuntchika was rolling on a ball, balancing herself while juggling knives, Umbrain saw her while standing next to proud, clapping excitedly.

Snow White listened to their directions at a distance, she spoke to Fal as quietly as possible.

"I can't contact the outside, Pon. No internet here either, Pon."

"Ever since we went underground?"

"No, ever since we went inside and the door closed, Pon."

No matter how many times he tried, he can't communicate underground.

"I can't either."

"You can't what?"

"Ever since we went underground, I couldn't hear the voices of people outside."

Even Snow White's powers were shut out.

"What do we do, Pon? Should we go out for now, Pon?"

As if to respond to Fal's question, Snow White looked at the entrance.

"What do you plan to do if we get out?"

"What do you mean..."

Contact people. Find Magical Girls they can trust, get people from the Examination Division, the Land of Magic, Mages. Those people.

But the text said that they couldn't speak of it, if they do, their memories will be erased. He didn't know if that was true, but Fal had analyzed the text, and it was a fact that he couldn't find out if it was enchanted. Fal's analysis ability was undeceivable by even the most top-notch magic.

Snow White walked, and followed the team heading left.

☆ Filuru

Filuru, Uttakatta, and Kafuria were three freelancers that were running across dark streets. First to an abandoned shop. Then after they passed through an abandoned residential area, they went to a farmland with an abandoned house. Once, this was probably used as a place to store farming equipment. Filuru opened the locks with her threads, then was surprised by the amount of dust flying at her.

"It seems no one's been here for years."

"Nothing but a piece of junk. Probably too dangerous to enter. I can see just fine from outside."

"You should've told me that *before* I went in..."

"I was just too awed by its brilliance."

"It certainly *is* brilliant. It feels like this could feed thieves."

She brushed off the dust and left. It was clear on her costume due to it being mostly white. Kafuria and Uttakatta's costumes were mostly black, so shouldn't *they* be the ones getting all the dirty work? But if she asked, they'd just glare at her. In the end, it falls to Filuru to shoulder the burden again.

She just kept thinking that she's getting a real good deal when this is all over, as she headed to the second location.

The second abandoned factory was locked as always. It was bigger than the first one, it was also tightened with some chains. Once again, it's Filuru's job to open it.

Please let there be no dust she thought as Filuru tried to open the lock, before Uttakatta's hand stopped her.

"Wait a minute."

"What's wrong?"

In the evening dusk, among the tall weeds that were growing, there was a clump of weeds separated from the rest with shoe marks stained on them.

"These are footprints."

Kafuria moved towards them, then promptly returned.

"If these are boots, there's at least 3 to 4 of them. It's possible that only some of them are boots. The rest are high heels. Their age seems young. Would a young woman wear high heels to go to a factory?"

"Perhaps we have one greedy girl entering. However... These aren't men's shoes, no hiking marks either, but it's unnatural for there to only be women walking this way, would it?"

"Have we done it?"

"Hitting the jackpot after two days is only thanks to our daily virtuous searching."

Filuru was impressed. She was close to being emotional. Their skills of observation, just looking at them made them feel professional. It seems they've just shown her exactly why they're called Freelancers.

She had to show them that she's just as useful as well.

With two sewing needles, and one waiting needle, she searched, waited, then pulled. *Click*, the door opened smoothly.

It was similar to that rusted door they found before. It'd take more than one normal human to push it open with full strength. In addition to being a large heavy door, it was also tainted in red rust. She opened the door while also taking in the red dust, in the end she *still* had to get dirty.

"My"

"Oh dear."

There, they saw people that arrived before them. Two Magical Girls.

One of them was the Queen of Hearts from Alice in Wonderland, the other was a card soldier of Alice in Wonderland. The Queen of Hearts was sitting in some kind of throne, the card soldier was crying with tears on her face.

"Now where and who is she?"

"I didn't think someone else would come before us."

Uttakatta and Kafuria began talking to the Alice in Wonderland people. Filuru followed along behind them, entering the factory while checking her surroundings.

The inside was terribly rough.

It wasn't the kind of roughness of something that hasn't been maintained because they owner owed a debt to the landlord. The walls had slashes on them, the floors had glass that crashed down, a crane was hanging limply.

This was far too flashy for a human to cause. A Magical Girl probably fought here.

Just like the two with her, she slightly entered as she set her emotions straight. Uttakatta and Kafuria also paid attention to her. They were casually gazing their eyes. There was a rectangular hole that opened on the floor. Was it set up like that? The hole went on and on.

"Did you find this? My, this is a big discovery."

Uttakatta kept on smiling, not showing any hostility. Filuru didn't know what she was thinking. It's not just a matter of the circumstances they're in, Filuru wanted some assistance, but now look where she is now that she's gotten some.

While sitting on her throne, the Queen of Hearts didn't look this way.

"Are you looking for the Man-Made Magical Girls, too?"

"Off with her head."

Instant reply.

Off with her..... what...? Head...?

She sounded serious, which made her scary, maybe she was in a bad mood. The card soldier in a panic tried to say something, but they couldn't understand a word she was saying. All they could hear were *Kiii Kiii* cries like a tiny animal.

Uttakatta retired half a step. She pulled Filuru's sleeves, causing Filuru to look towards her. "We're just going to have a talk" said Uttakatta to the Queen of Hearts as she pulled Filuru and Kafuria's sleeves and went outside, she whispered so that her tone of voice couldn't be heard.

"That was dangerous now, wasn't it?"

Filuru also lowered her tone to a whisper.

"Dangerous how?"

"She's part of the Land of Magic's Homelands Division. So I thought 'hey, that means she's in charge of information'. I've met a Mage before that told me about that card soldier once. Then there are those runes in the Queen's throne. I don't know what they say, but I know that they use the same runes in the Information Department."

"And how do you know this?"

"I've worked with one of them before."

"A Homelands Division... in charge of information? Wouldn't that make them a VIP?"

“Well, they’re certainly not ordinary.”

Filuru felt like she just overshot her target. Uttakatta knew a VIP, which isn’t out of the question. Filuru’s *met* VIPs before, but there were certain limits.

Foreign Affairs, Examination Division, those kinds of VIPs were many. But a Homelands Division VIP was too much.

Foreign Affairs and Examination Division Magical Girls were all Magical Girls working within the human world, just separate divisions. Homelands Division Magical Girls, especially in the Information Department, handled way more than just the human world.

She’s heard stories of the Head Mages going “Why did you overlook this?” towards Division heads. To Homeland Mages, even the Division heads were people they’re in charge of.

The Homelands were filled with these VIPs. People from the heavens looking down at people on the ground.

If the analogy of them is that they worked in City Hall, they’d be the Great Galactic Empire.

“So what do we do? Go home?”

“No. We’ve come so far for that.”

“It’s a bit spiteful if we leave, since the effort we’ve made so far is because of my bubbles, though.”

“I also don’t wish to go home, but it’d be a difficult thing to outsmart them now, wouldn’t it?”

“Can’t we outsmart her by offering a cooperation?”

“Ah, that might work.”

Uttakatta gazed at the factory at a glance, then continued.

“Those two don’t look like they’d do well in a conflict.”

“Certainly not. They don’t exude an aura of strength.”

The Queen of Hearts and the card soldier suddenly encountering strange Magical Girls might catch them off-guard. They’re not prepared. There was no evidence of it. As if there was no fighting experience at all.

“But if they were out to capture Man-Made Magical Girls, then wouldn’t fighting experience be necessary?”

“I see. Of course they’d use combatants to capture the enemy.”

“It’s not a bad plan, but... how should I put this, since we’re dealing with a VIP, if we don’t take advantage of them, we may as well cry ourselves to sleep.”

“We’ll leave the negotiating to you.”

“You’re alright with that, yes?”

“It’ll be so relieving.”

Filuru thought for a moment.

She could go it alone, or she could ask a VIP for a helping hand. Which one would be more efficient? If she handled this well, obviously the latter. If they had the cooperation of someone from the Homelands, not even Human Resources could complain. Filuru could aim to get hired with a feeling of righteousness.

No, there may be more than that.

If the Queen of Hearts saw Filuru’s great success, she may even hire Filuru into the Homelands Division. If that happened, Filuru would bow her head repeatedly as she’d finally become a *VIP* Magical Girl. It’s a dream come true.

“So can you negotiate?”

“Yeah, I’ll try”

“She doesn’t seem like someone we can communicate with though.”

“She’s babbling nonsense, there’s a trick to it, you see.”

The three of them went back into the factory. The Queen was sitting on the throne as usual. The card soldier looked like she was scared to death. Uttakatta went ahead with a smile. The other two followed with the best smiles they could put on.

“Greetings. I’m Uttakatta. These two are Kafuria and Filuru. We’re Freelancers working for the Land of Magic.”

“Off with her head.”

“I’ve heard that our information networks have found the laboratory of some Man-Made Magical Girls. If that’s so, we’d like to report it to the Land of Magic and conduct an investigation.”

“Off with her head.”

“Actually, we’ve wanted to do so since yesterday, but we were blessed with the opportunity to engage two Man-Made Magical Girls. It’s unfortunate that they’ve escaped our clutches, but we plan to capture them today, so I thought we could lend each other a hand.”

“Off with her head.”

“Well, I’m not one to brag, but they are very powerful individuals. I know one such as yourself won’t lose, but if you’d just accept our help, losing would be impossible.”

“Off with her head.”

“If you allow us to help you, we won’t allow any losses to happen. We’re quite easy to utilize, it’ll make capturing the enemy far simpler.”

The Queen of Hearts nodded.

“Off with her head.”

“We appreciate your kindhearted words. Uttakatta, Kafuria, Filuru, a fine group for assisting with violence.”

Uttakatta lowered her head, then retreated back.

“Is it over?”

“Wait, did you even talk?”

“Well, it certainly flowed well.”

While Uttakatta was talking to the Queen, Kafuria was exchanging pleasantries with the card soldier. The soldier just went *kii kii* as she nodded, objected, and tapped on her shoulder, before using a handkerchief to wipe away her tears as she talked with her.

“The Queen of Hearts is Grim Heart, the card soldier is Shufflin.”

“Huh? They told you their names? How?”

“I told you, the flow of conversation.”

She didn’t understand any words, she wondered if Kafuria shared a common culture with her, or that she was just so used to speaking to someone suspicious that she understood instantly what they were saying. She said it’s due to the flow of conversation, but maybe there was some technique she was using, but since she didn’t tell them it probably really was just flow. Freelancers had to protect their skills carefully, after all.

“Then let’s keep the flow going.”

“And let’s not throw it away.”

“She said everything’s okay, so we’re good, right?”

Grim Heart lifted her throne, then pushed the Shufflin inside the dirty bag that she had. Volume-wise it shouldn’t fit, but it shifted in naturally, and the bag showed no signs of increasing weight or size, then it must be magical.

Uttakatta blew a large scaled bubble, and Filuru pushed her thread through it. Since Filuru's thread did no damage at all, the bubble wouldn't break even if she could pierce it.

The bubble was sucked into the hole, and Filuru held onto the thread sticking out of her hand.

This was one of the collaborations she considered back at the hotel. Uttakatta's bubbles and Filuru's threads could combine to make a tool to detect enemies. The bubbles would travel on the air, and the vibrations of the air would be transmitted through Filuru's threads.

First, the bubble dropped down the hole, then Filuru, Kafuria, and Uttakatta followed behind in that order. Shufflin and Grim Heart followed from behind.

"Earlier, the order has changed ever since we met Shufflin and Grim Heart."

"Order? What order?"

"The goodbye order. Meaning the first person who we'll have to say goodbye to."

That's right, Kafuria could use that kind of magic. The information was quite unsettling, and made Filuru's mood go down.

☆ **Fal**

The bifurcated road seemed to be leading further away from each other, looking around, you wouldn't be able to see the other fork. Furthermore, as they proceeded further, it curved to the right.

When they reached the corner, Snow White took out her weapon from her bag, Lady Proud and Umbrain felt nervous. Snow White pointed her blade forwards, using the reflection she saw to check her corners. The road just continued. There was nothing other than that.

Snow White proceeded in front whilst wielding *Ruler*. Her powers could detect ambushes, but not mechanical traps. That part was Fal's responsibility. The ceiling,

floors, walls, not to mention in front and back, Fal continued to search in six directions and kept looking for traps. Snow White moved at Fal's sensing pace, which slowed her walking speed down.

Just having Lady Proud's heels hit the floor made a resonating sound.

These halls had no one in them, after a while, they ended up at a wall. It was a wall, but it looked more like a shutter. In its flank was a panel that was installed. It looked like if you pushed it, the shutters would open.

Then they'd continue marching. The sense of tension tightened, they found another shutter, but this time, before Snow White could press the panel to open it, or rather *just* before it...

...the shutter moved upwards.

Before she could even push the *open* button, someone on the other side had already done the same. She saw feet, ankles, thighs, then a waist, the figure on the other side was slowly revealed. Naturally, the other side would see her like this as well. Both of them hurriedly retreated.

Fal was unexpectedly surprised.

On the other side of the shutter was not another passage. It was room. There were trees growing within this room. Not just on a level that you'd have by growing them indoors.

Their roots were real. On the base of the tall trees, there was also grass growing. It was like a forest. If it weren't for the pure white ceiling and the fact that they were underground, it could easily be thought of as one.

And in this room, there were two Magical Girls standing.

"This facility is forbidden to anyone without permission!"

The Magical Girl that was declaring loudly was wielding a trident. She had fish scales on part of her legs and was wearing a swimsuit-like costume. She had brilliant blue hair reminiscent of the sea. Her tiara's gem was also shining blue.

“If you don’t leave, we’ll have to use force!”

The one that said that was a Magical Girl with a ridiculously huge cubed hammer. The sharp horns at the tips of the hammer gave off a murderous intent. She had a tail similar to a reptile. The gem on her tiara was shining a bright yellow.

The tiaras designs were similar other than their colors. Could this be a characteristic of Man-Made Magical Girls?

Lady Proud began talking to the two of them with a slightly stiff voice.

“You two. Are you Man-Made Magical Girls?”

“Man-Made? What are you talking about?”

They weren’t acting. They really didn’t know anything about Man-Made Magical Girls, but are they truly not them? The hammer Magical Girl raised her weapon.

“No more talking. Leave or surrender!”

The trident girl took a step forward.

“What she said! We don’t want to hurt you!”

“Wait.”

Snow White said that.

“We don’t intend to fight you.”

“Yes we do!”

That was Umbrain. She denied Snow White’s statement, moving forward with the umbrella on her shoulder.

“They say you can get to know someone better by fighting them.”

The hammer girl brought her giant hammer down, but Umbrain’s umbrella was faster.

The hammer was brought down to Umbrain's umbrella, but it didn't crush it, instead it bounced off lightly. The hammer girl had a look of surprise, then swung down her hammer again, Umbrain slid under her while still holding her umbrella and entered the room.

"If it's a fight you want, I'm all for it."

The trident girl swung her weapon, but as expected, it just bounced softly when stopped by the umbrella. However, upon contact with the umbrella, its surface became frozen. Umbrain hurriedly stepped back, and when the trident girl took chase, a small red bottle flew towards her.

She swung her trident at the small bottle, probably trying to freeze it like she did Umbrain's umbrella. However, just before she made contact, the bottle exploded.

No sooner that the bottle had exploded, anything touched by the liquid had its surface turn into white smoke, the trident girl smelled its repugnant smell and had a disgruntled face as she retreated, the hammer girl following along.

Lady Proud herself went inside the room to support Umbrain, Snow White brought her Magical Phone close to her mouth.

"Stop this."

They instinctively looked at her. She had power in her voice, despite how small of a tone it was.

"Stop what?"

"I'm not going to use my blade against someone who's not an enemy."

She wasn't glaring. She wasn't scolding. Her face had no indication of her bursting into anger, yet her strong intention was conveyed. Fal instantaneously guessed what he was being asked for, making a caution sound at max volume.

"Three Magical Girls detected! Too much! We need to retreat and regroup, Pon!"

Lady Proud and Umbrain stopped at once. When they turned around to see Snow White, she was already running back into the halls, pushing the panel on the shutter.

The Foreign Affairs Division are combat experts. If they knew they were inferior in numbers, they wouldn't push an impossible fight. After checking that Umbrain and Lady Proud were retreating, Snow White dived back into the hallways.

☆ **Princess Inferno**

Mysterious Magical Girls have attacked them. Though they didn't take aggressive action, it was fitting to call it an attack. The whole thing sounded super interesting.

Running around at full power as a Magical Girl was exciting, but the Disruptors had no teeth, they were boring. That's probably because they were all fighting as a group of Magical Girls. She wanted a bit more fun.

Quake prioritized safety above all. Quake was a Leader, so she had to say stuff like that. No one at the top would say "Safety is nothing compared to exciting battles!" as it wasn't fitting.

As a Leader, she had to make sure her instructions were interpreted and followed by her subordinates.

Leaving the first training room, the water field, they passed through the bulkhead and the aisles, arriving at the third training room, the desert. There seemed to be no one there. Walking while keeping an eye out for the suspicious Magical Girls at the entrance, she spoke to Tempest.

"What do you think, Tempest?"

"What do i think of what?"

"Isn't this fun?"

"You're asking me if an emergency is fun?"

"Nonono, this is strictly off-record. Be honest."

Tempest closed her mouth, she looked at the ceiling, twirling her body as she headed up. Her tied up hair fluttering around as she sighed out.

“.....Honestly, this is kinda fun.”

“Right!? I think so too!”

“But isn’t this a little scary? This is different from my last fight. There’s so many of them.”

“What’s wrong Tempest, scared?”

“I’m *not* scared!”

“Don’t worry, nothing can be a match for Magical Girls.”

The desert area had a rough scenery. In the rocky area, it was built for good athletic fun, and the trees area was good for climbing. The water area was cool and was Inferno’s favorite. This wasn’t like a normal desert either, there’s a ceiling instead of the sun. While it was wide, there were boundary walls, and there, adjustments were made to keep the room warm. It didn’t have a homey feeling.

No cacti or camels, no flora or fauna unique to deserts. There really was nothing here. Thanks to the sandy hills scattering the area, there was also no good spot to get a good view of the location.

The bulkhead behind her closed. Inferno could only hear the sound of her boots hitting the sand. She felt her legs sinking into the sand. She wondered if she could easily pull it out. She must’ve gotten so excited that she stepped too hard.

“Hey listen, even if you think this is fun, don’t do anything rash, ‘kay?”

“You’re quite young to be the moralist. Didn’t you say you thought it was fun too? Or did you forget that you were boasting about how you *easily* drove them away?”

“Age has nothing to do with it! You’re still acting like a kid, Inferno! So I gotta be the adult here.”

The bulkhead opened. Not the one behind them, but the one in front of them, just as they were walking across the sand and talking. In front of them, they heard footsteps approaching closer, but they couldn't see thanks to being hidden behind a sand hill.

The pace quickened. She didn't know who it was, but because she's come all this way, her heart was beating fast. *Come on, focus*, she thought to herself. She can't make a game face as her Magical Girl if she broke.

There was no hesitation in their footsteps. They didn't hesitate coming closer to them. Inferno held her breath, but Tempest breathe out. She couldn't handle the stress from the tension, balling her fists and placing them on her feet.

Was Tempest trying to release her own tension, or is it because she was relaxed? She didn't really know.

The Magical Girls they saw from the top of the sand mountain were quite different from the Magical Girls that Tempest said she saw.

There was one with a large flower growing on her head. She's probably seen that flower before, but since Inferno doesn't remember any flowers' names, flowers are just flowers to her.

The Magical Girl looked at Inferno and Tempest. "Oh," she smiled.

The happy flower Magical Girl, a hairdresser, and a clown. There were many types, though none of them were matching. *We win that one*, she said in her heart.

"You're forbidden to just come in here! We don't know what you wa-"

"We don't care"

The flower Magical Girl interrupted Tempest's shouting. The hairdresser wanted to put her hands to stop her, but the flower Magical Girl already took a step forward.

"Ain't this *fun*?"

It's impossible to get them to back off now. Inferno also stepped forward. She gulped, swallowing all the tension with it. Being afraid was not her personality.

“If you think it’s fun then come and get me!”

“ALRIGHT!”

The flower Magical Girl shouted out in pleasure, then ran, but when Inferno simply thought of her running, she was already in front of her. Her speed was so fast it was almost funny. The hairdresser followed, and Tempest shouted.

“See, *this* is why you’re like a kid, Inferno! You big IDIOT!”

“Nothing wrong with that!”

She started out with a warning shot, thrusting her blade towards the flower. Then she heard a metal clang, and the feeling that she felt, this wasn’t an ordinary flower.

She stepped back and swung, but it was parried, so she decided to swing downwards, but it was parried too. If attacking from above means the flower will guard her, then an attack from below should work.

She retired back then slashed from the bottom, but her blade was stopped.

The flower Magical Girl grabbed the bladed part with her right hand, her left hand holding the handle. Inferno tried to pull it away from her, but it didn’t move. Despite gritting her teeth and using her full strength, it didn’t move at all. Not even the biggest Disruptors had strength like this.

The hairdresser began slashing with scissors, and the clown began kicking. Their movements were sharp. The crescent sword was thrown, and as it rolled and scattered in the sand, Inferno retreated backwards and managed to avoid their attacks somehow.

“Why’d you have to *provoke* them!”

She was being scolded by an elementary schooler.

“...Uh, well, it was just the mood, y’know?”

“Your *mood* is more important than your *life*!? Idiot!”

Inferno touched the Princess Jewel with her finger. She called back her sword, and gripped it tightly.

“Luxury Mode, On!”

Her enemies were faster than Disruptors, and had enough strength to grip the blade, they were stronger than Inferno. It'd be arrogant of her to underestimate her enemies now.

Magical energy coursed throughout her body, it was a power so big that you couldn't suppress its emission.

After twirling her blade three times, she pointed it at the enemy. It was a show of intimidation. She was also sending a message to Prism Cherry in the briefing room.

Inferno shouted, and attacked at the same time.

It was an attack that was made without a care for her opponent. A blow filled with vigorous spirit. If they were hit with this, there's no way they were coming out of it safely.

The flower Magical Girl blocked the attack with her head flower, then clamped her feet down in an effort to pursue, but then she stopped. The flower she used to block the attack had withered away.

Princess Inferno had the energy of fire dwelling inside of her. If she unleashed it all by fighting with Luxury Mode, her crescent blade will burn to a high degree, a single blow will burn the enemy. The swung it once, then twice, the flower Magical Girl dodging and weaving as she retreated.

Princess Tempest threw her boomerang from above, the clown tried to throw knives to stop it, but they were sliced away and fell to the sand. Without changing orbit, the boomerang went back to Tempest's hand.

Princess Tempest had the energy of wind dwelling inside of her. Her boomerang was able to cut through anything, and while it slashed everything apart, it'll always return back to her hand.

Then, black goo began oozing from the ground, forming into humanoids. This was the work of Prism Cherry, that Inferno had given a signal to.

When Disruptors were recovered, the Pure Elements would use them as training. They'd activate it from the briefing room, and spawn Disruptors in the training rooms. However, this time, it was for repelling the intruders.

The hairstylist shouted out "What on earth is that?" and jumped back. Training Disruptors can be set to find out who they thought of as enemies. Prism Cherry knew this as well.

The hairstylist swung her scissors to slice off the Disruptor's arm, but it wasn't something that would be fatal to them. The moment their attacks were blocked, they heard the energetic voice of other intruders.

"We're here to support you!"

It was a voice from the entrance. A bubble straw wielding Magical Girl, a thread Magical Girl, and a mourning Magical Girl, just like Deluge and Tempest said.

Behind them was also a card soldier. This one, they didn't report. When the card soldier saw Inferno's eyes, she shuddered and fell down on the sand, and because of that, sand clouds flew up, obscuring her.

"You guys! You need more disciplining, huh!?"

"My my, you already feel like winning, don't you?"

Since Tempest was showered with laughter from mourning girl, her face became fully red with anger.

"You stupid crow! This time you're not gonna be able to stop me!"

She flew as she activated Luxury Mode, flying low above the sand just as the mourning girl did. It seems to be a divide and conquer strategy using provocation.

Tempest really is a hothead.

The card soldiers took out a spear smoothly from their bag. On the tip of the spear was a spade mark-

Wait? A spade mark?

The card soldier she saw last time was a heart mark. It was a 3 of Hearts, but this time it became a 3 of Spades. The spade soldier used her spear and swiftly disposed of the Disruptor. The way she swung it felt skillful. She was trained. It wasn't just her movements and her suit, her expressions were completely different. When she was a heart, she was frightened and fell, this time she quickly closed in on her enemies.

Inferno didn't get it, but she knew that it's the kind of Magical Girl she's dealing with. It was like Prism Cherry's ability to change images in a mirror, a special kind of power that didn't just need energy. A power that changed abilities and other things based on card suits.

The hairdresser, the card, and the clown all fought Disruptors. The mourning girl avoided boomerangs as she ran, and Tempest was chasing after her.

Inferno's opponent was the flower Magical Girl. While everything around her was moving, she didn't lose her momentum of attack. Three of her flower's petals had already withered, parts of her hair was burnt black. She had long eyelashes, and the ends of them were shriveled, and parts of her costume had burnt.

Inferno's attacks weren't the kind where if you didn't get hit you'd be fine. Simply being in close proximity should burn you with high intensity heat. There's no way they could avoid it by even a paper width length.

Yet the flower Magical Girl was smiling happily.

"Not bad, not bad!"

She smiled happily, tied up all the burnt hair with her fingertips, and threw them away.

"Your power and speed are so-so, on the line at least. Your powers though are awesome."

"Thanks for the compliments. Now would you please surrender?"

"Who do you think you're talkin' to, stupid! Try asking that to me again, c'mon!"

Inferno instinctively swung her sword in response to her words. However, the flower Magical Girl lowered her head and tackled her, succeeding to get inside her opening, but that's not all, she was trying to grab Inferno's legs. That's when Inferno placed power into her legs.

With a blast, Inferno's entire body bursted with an explosion that sent the flower Magical Girl flying, after which she rolled off in the sand. Her movements were fast, but Inferno could still see some damage. She was more burnt than before, her body covered in white smoke, the tips of her hair were still burning.

"Why don't you try *not* forcing yourself?"

She huffed out as she twirled her crescent sword.

If anything approached her, they'd burn out. Grass-Types are always weak to Fire-Types in games, even the flower Magical Girl hates fire.

Hurry up and surrender, she thought as she charged in towards her, swinging, swinging, continuously slashing towards her feet, and when she kept doing that, the flower Magical Girl kicked her leg up.

Inferno didn't stop it in time, the thing that the flower girl kicked up was the sand in her feet. Inferno backed away, it's said that being scared of sand was quite childish, but this was effective enough to stop her.

Before the sand swelled up, Inferno changed her position and went to the top of a sand mountain. She gripped the handle of her sword.

She won't let herself be surprise attacked. If she stays vigilant, not even sand should surprise her. If her opponent's options are narrowed, her movements should be readable.

This is what she learned from Professor Tanaka. While Inferno wasn't good at things she learned at a desk, she'll never forget the things her body learned.

The sand dust cleared up. The flower Magical Girl moved 3 steps from her original position. She was opening her palms and crouching down with a beast-like posture. As Inferno thought, her fangs also looked beastly.

Ever since she was younger, she had an interest in animals and insects, but not for the ones that would bare their fangs at her. Inferno pointed the tip of her blade at her enemy.

“So, not keen on surrendering?”

“Y’know, Flamey kept saying that too, in the end she just cried and begged.”

Inferno gazed at the flower girl’s eyebrows. The flower on top of her head had changed from before. The once withered flower had become full of life again. That wasn’t all. It was also different.

“You’re just like her too! Just like Flame Flamey! You can’t be approached, you burn up people that try, you’ve got powers that are *boring* to fight against, all long-ranged, and you look down at people just ‘cause you can do it! You’ve got a bad mouth there.”

The flower petals opened wide in a large circle. Only the tips of the flowers were dyed in thin purple, the rest were completely white. Inferno had no interest in flowers, so she didn’t know their names or types. However, she could feel a tingling sensation in her spine.

As the girl bowed down and turned her head flower towards Inferno, Inferno moved as well. She held her crescent blade straight in front of her, putting herself in a form that’ll fall on her back.

There was a beam of light, and the bladed part of her sword flew through the air.

...A beam!?

The beam continued to shoot. The place Inferno was standing before had sand smoking in its place.

Only the handle part of the blade remained. It had been cleanly cut, losing the bladed part. It couldn’t be melted with heat, nor could it be shattered by shock. This was the first time she’s seen this happen.

The Pure Elements’ weapons were especially crafted. Even if a Magical Girl smashed it, it’ll never get broken. Even if Inferno grabbed it, the handle will never burn, nor will the blade melt.

Generating enough energy to cut off the blade was not an easy thing to do. Then a third beam was fired, creating more dust smoke.

She regretted that she lost out in strength, but she won't lose in fighting spirit. Was her spirit broken now? Self-assessing herself only made her confused.

Since she couldn't approach her, the Magical Girl had changed tactics. Having powers with that much flexibility made Inferno feel that the flower girl was on top.

Not to mention, being hit with that beam means death. She shot without hesitation. There's no mistaking that the power of that beam is something that could kill her. If not, at least serious burns, not simple injuries.

The sand cloud dispersed. Inferno noticed that the beams have stopped. Afterwards, she crawled up towards the sandy mountaintop, imagining the vivid image of the flower girl. There, Inferno sprinkled the sand that she was tightening with her fist. While standing up, she kicked the sand up at full power, then ran away at full power.

Inferno was covered from head to toe with sand. In her mind, she imagined being shot with the beam from behind her. She wanted it to go away, but it didn't disappear.

She reached the training room bulkhead. As she desperately tried to push the open button, she was still covered in sand. Then, as soon as the door slid up, she ran across the halls until she reached the briefing room, her breath panting nonstop.

She could feel the magical power in her body decreasing. She took the medicine in the drawers and ate one, placing her mouth under a faucet to drink it down. Because she opened the drawer so vigorously, its contents spilled to the floor. She drank a bit more, coughing out, only then was she finally relaxed.

The medicine made her heart calm. It removed any nervousness from Pure Elements when facing Disruptors, and gives them courage.

She straightened her body and placed her hands on the desk. Prism Cherry looked frightened and looked at her. As if something bad had happened.

"I'm sorry, a lot of things happened, but I'm fine now..."

“Um.....”

“Yeah?”

“Where’s Tempest?”

As soon as she noticed the meaning of those words, Inferno ran back.

☆ **Styler Mimi**

Right in front of her eyes, black humanoids were wriggling. She’s seen these things before, and remembering it gave her goosebumps. Mao Pam’s wings. If they were on the same level as them, and if they can just as freely transform, then she couldn’t see any future other than defeat.

She avoided their attacks with a feeling of hopelessness. However, they seemed to be different from Mao Pam’s wings.



Their speed and reflexes were good, but it was at a range where Mimi could fight with. She was careful of the sharp claws that came out of their large arms, but they had enough openings that she could avoid them. She'd swing her scissors, kick them, then hop backwards, swinging back and attacking them from behind. This was her way of fighting.

The black humanoid's arm fell, and its back was slashed, yet it was still struggling. More black sludge was about to bury the wound that was made. Regeneration was a trait of Mao Pam's wings, but this speed was different from Mao Pam's wings, it was weak enough that you could potentially slice it up before it could fully regenerate, and gets weaker the more you damage it. The second slash took several seconds longer than the first to fully heal.

She'd better concentrate her attacks all at once. However, if they still don't fall down, she'll have to think again.

Stuntchika was throwing knives while avoiding attacks, sometimes she'd kick, sometimes she'd punch, doing what she can to hurt to black humanoid.

It looks like there's room for movements like that. Ridiculous and fancy motions. Flips and dodges that were meaningless, conscious of how weird she looked.

It seems like the card soldier was a bit inferior to them. Her combat abilities have increased compared to when she was a Heart, but she was still desperately fighting the black humanoid.

A collaboration between bubbles and yarn allowed those two to fight multiple black humanoids. They blew in bubbles like a storm, used them as shields, as a smokescreen, and sometimes they'd use them as stepping stones. Those two were particularly strong. Perhaps it's good that they were allies that say they wish to help. Right now, they're engaged in battle.

Magical Girls that seemed like they had no composure would be Marika and the mourning girl. If you tried to poorly help Marika, she'd bite back, but she'd actually like it, the ones who could be finished off quickly would be the card soldier, then the mourning girl.

Styler Mimi shouted out to Stuntchika.

“We need to focus on attack power!”

Stuntchika nodded, and took out a hand axe from her sleeves. She threw it in the air, and the second one, and the third, once she threw the fourth one, she began juggling. A clown juggling hand axes. It looked more like a horror movie than a circus performance.

Mimi held a large razor blade with her left hand, on her right hand was her scissors, she used them to slice her enemies. Sometimes she'd work together with Stuntchika, attacking the enemy's blind spots while also dodging the enemy's claws, repeating several times until the black humanoid was nothing more than black sludge. Excitement began to fade away. It seems like it's over.

Stuntchika and the two other girls fought the remaining humanoids, and soon they went to help the card soldier, making it a 3 on 1 beatdown.

The card soldier and Stuntchika, and the two other Magical Girls using bubbles and threads ran towards the mourning girl after defeating the black humanoid. Marika Fukuroi must've seen their situation as she casually walked by.

“She got away.”

The flower on her head withered. When she got here, she had autumn cherries, but the withered flower was a daisy now. She must've discarded the autumn cherries and used the stronger one to fight with, and she also said that her opponent escaped.

“Was she strong?”

“She was. She's still got some tricks up her sleeves too. Looks like it at least.”

“It's rare for someone to run off when they still have some secret moves left, huh?”

“Maybe the situation's just not right, or there's probably another reason for it.”

Marika annoyedly rolled her eyes and looked at the ceiling.

“There's no sun but it's so *hot*. I hate fighting with fire in this heat.”

A desert environment wasn't suitable for growing flowers. Fire was also not friendly to plants. Marika's flower can last longer if raised and bloomed properly, but if she forcefully bloomed it, it would also wither faster. Being roasted by the desert heat means its lifespan was just as quick as it bloomed.

Also, rather than "She got away" she probably meant "I missed my chance".

There wouldn't be any opponent who was both hiding a secret technique while also trying to run away if they wanted to fight for fun *or* fight at full power. Marika Fukuroi's senses regarding finding a way to win were like a bloodhound.

"You guys spent so much time on those Demons."

"Demons?"

"They're creatures made of magic. Mages use them for escorts or servants. Magical Girls make 'em too sometimes, but that's a rare case."

"Wait, why do you know that?"

"Cause I know things, duh?"

She really wanted to talk back to that. Styler Mimi placed her hands on her hips and spat on the sand.

"They just remind me of Mao Pam's wings is all, that's why I got scared."

"Well yeah. Mao Pam dominates them, that's why it's Mao, a Demon King. Get it?"

"Oh, that's why she's called that."

"Okay, that's not *really* why. She just likes to say that. Clamerry fought one back when she became a Magical Girl in her test. That one was a big one, too. You guys really need to get up on her level when killing those things."

"Don't compare me with the Forest Musician!"

"Of course I should! You're supposed to be Marika Fukuroi's partner, after all...
Anyways"

Marika moved her line of sight to the sandy hill on her left. The mourning girl should be there, Stuntchika and the card soldier running off to help her.

“She’s a quiet one, but looks like she’s all good.”

She looked quiet. However, she wasn’t silent. She fought without any fierce battle noises, all they could hear was the sound of her feet trodding through the sand.

From the sandy hill, they saw Stuntchika appear again, followed by the card soldier. It seems like the card soldier was trying to tell them something with her *Kii Kii* noises, but since she didn’t say anything, they had no idea what she said. Stuntchika was also trying to tell her something via gestures, which made communication difficult.

“Huh? Mourning girl isn’t here?”

“Wait, how do you know what those two are saying?”

“It’s obvious if you just listen.”

The thread and bubble girl were shouting out while searching. It seems they disappeared somewhere.

Despite being called a desert or how large this 100 meter square room was. In the end, it was only just a room. Even though they were obstructed by sandy hills, there was still a limit. With 6 people searching, they should’ve found her, yet the mourning girl didn’t come out.

“Think she’s under the sand?”

“Don’t you think she’d come out by herself if she was? She’s a Magical Girl.”

“Meaning?”

The sliding door opened up, everyone looked there, the card soldier ran along scared and hid behind the bubble girl. Somehow, she changed back to a Heart again.

The Magical Girl appearing behind the bulkhead was one of the earlier ones. A scorpion tail with a crescent sword, her hair tips being on fire. She was looking at all the Magical

Girls in the room, as if she hated them all. What's she thinking? Marika waved her hands, yelling "Oooy!" The Magical Girl ignored it and closed the bulkhead.

Marika grumbled out while putting her hand on her chin.

"Looks like your friend's been kidnapped by the enemy"

"Seriously...?"

"My my, that's quite troubling."

The thread Magical Girl's expression seemed to be serious. The bubble Magical Girl seemed strangely calm.

"Perhaps so... But who do you mean by 'our' friend?"

"Goodwilled Magical Girls of course."

Stuntchika placed her hands on her head with exaggerated movements.

☆ **Fal**

They returned to the T-Junction, in order to meet up with the other group that split up. Fal's team only reported encountering 2 Magical Girls, but the other group reported something even more revolting.

Marika Fukuroi claimed that whatever it was, they had to fight, and Styler Mimi vouched for her. The flower on her head was brown and withering. She said that she used up the last of her energy in a fight with a Man-Made Magical Girl that her flower had withered, and it really did seemed like it had died.

Snow White slowly stood up and approached the bulkhead. Stuntchika tried to follow her, but Snow White stopped her with her right hand. Why did Stuntchika follow her? Fal felt like that was kept a secret. Stuntchika used exaggerated movements and sat down where she originally was.

"Where are you going?"

“I need to speak with my Mascot Character. I’ll be back in 30 seconds.”

Replying to Uttakatta’s question, Snow White opened the bulkhead and entered the forest room. Snow White activated her Magical Phone, Fal projected himself in a stereoscopic form and started the conversation.

“I don’t really want to ask this but, why’d you tell them the truth, Pon?”

“It’s better to tell the truth. I’m the only one separating from the group, there’s no other reason for me to. If I lie, things will just get worse.”

Uttakatta was certainly sharp-sighted over the others. Contrary to the scared movements of the others, even now she was the one who called out to Snow White when she got out. Other than Uttakatta, there was one more, Filuru. Both of them had data that was published that Fal could see.

The Magical Girl with overalls was named *Uttakatta*. Her profession was a *Freelancer*, meaning that she’s a mercenary who’s able to be hired wherever the money was. Naturall, she’d often be used for battle, it wasn’t a way of life for the weak.

The Magical Girl with the threads was *Filuru*. Why was an American Magical Girl like her, who worked as a prison warden coming all the way here? Not even Fal understood. She was in charge of security, preparing for both raids from the outside and desertion from the inside. In short, she was also a combatant.

Both of them received the same text that Snow White did and came to this city because of that. They encountered the Man-Made Magical Girls last night, and though they did fight them, they missed them. Then, they said they teamed up with the mourning Magical Girl *Kafuria* to find this facility.

According to Snow White’s Magical Skill, the two of them weren’t lying.

“Those two, huh?”

“What do you mean, Pon?”

“I haven’t heard the voice of Kafuria’s heart.”

Adding to Uttakatta and Filuru, there was also the Queen of Hearts and a card soldier Magical Girl. Those two didn't have any data posted for Fal either. According to Uttakatta, they were from the Land of Magic's Homelands Division, which means they must not have let their information leak out to Keek.

Homeland Magical Girls were annoying. Even though Snow White was an honorary member, she didn't actually live in the Land of Magic. Even if she wanted to live there, she wouldn't be permitted.

Their pride was high, so they'd clash with people who were only dreamers like Keek, and they'd simply vent their frustrations. The cause of Keek's incident was due to the Land of Magic's constitution, and they weren't exactly favorites of Fal either.

Grim Heart used a 4D bag, the same as Snow White, a throne, a canopy, bookshelf, books, and a hairy carpet with magical seals on them, she took out some other furniture and placed it in front of her. Shufflin was shivering slightly.

"What do you think is distressing those two, Pon?"

Snow White placed her hand on her chin, she was thinking for a while.

"I can't hear Grim Heart's heart."

"What? Nothing at all?"

"Nothing. She's either using some kind of Magical Skill or some kind of defensive item. I'm not sure."

When Snow White's Magical Skill couldn't figure out if she could trust her opponent, it brings with it a strange effect. Of course, this is assuming her powers were working properly.

"But it doesn't look like they're thinking *that* hard..."

Grim Heart would point at Shufflin muttering "Off with her head", while the Shufflin would reply with the same degree of communication that they couldn't understand.

Uttakatta and Filuru said that they were like this since they met, even Stuntchika was better since she at least used gestures.

“We should be careful then, Pon. What about Shufflin, Pon?”

“She doesn’t seem to be thinking much. Actually I don’t even think she’s thinking at all.”

“Ah... So you think she’s an Animal Magical Girl or something, Pon?”

“Similar. Either way, she’s not thinking of anything bad about the situation for now.”

Even though their group was pretty huge, the Magical Girls still kept coming. As Snow White was mostly a lone wolf, this much people in her group was unprecedented. However, she’s still fine with it. Writing the report for this would be worse.

Their enemies were *Demons*.

They weren’t creatures that Magical Girls would use. Beings created by magic lacking a will, simple synthetic organisms known as *Demons*. These Demons were given such a monstrous name, but its original designation was *Homunculus*. However, since no Magical Girl or Mage ever used this name anymore, it became defunct.

The Forest Musician Clamerry had fought an extremely powerful Demon during her Magical Girl test due to the Demon rampaging, if misused, these Demons could cause a huge catastrophe. They had to be used in the field with permission, prepared and monitored accordingly with a supervisor present.

He didn’t think there’d be a facility with enough monitoring equipment to be able to check up on them. Although the Land of Magic has a specific way of checking on people, Demon operations were completely different. Since they were originally created by Mages, not many Magical Girls had interest in them. Meaning, these Demons were obtained without permission.

Even reporting this would be an excuse for enforcement, or at least it should, but no one’s going to do it. It’ll be easy to guess that everyone will have their own reasons not to.

They’d think of the most profit, finding a way to give their own selves merits, that was just the kind of self-interest based circumstances that exist. Even Snow White hasn’t acted yet, though this time it may be due to there being a hostage situation.

Kafuria fell into the enemy's hands.

According to Uttakatta and Filuru, Kafuria's Magical Skill is the ability to tell who will die first, which doesn't sound very pleasant, not to mention she apparently said that "I'm not next, so don't worry" as well.

When she was with Uttakatta and Filuru, she said "I won't die next" but when she added Grim Heart and Shufflin into the equation, she said "The order's changed."

Even in Fal's data, Kafuria's Magical Skill was written as "To be able to see who will die the earliest". There would also be no reason to lie about not dying next herself. If she said that, most people would be more panicked, but to Filuru and Uttakatta seemed to be more relieved right now.

She won't be the first to die, yet she did go missing when engaging with the enemy. Meaning she must've been held hostage. She disappeared in the desert room, but no matter how much they searched, they couldn't find her. Doing that gave them bad feelings on what happened to her.

If the enemy gave requests using Kafuria's body as a shield, then the Magical Girls will have to act obediently. He didn't think this place would be filled with Magical Girls who'd give their lives for someone they just met. Even though Filuru and Uttakatta called her their friend, they only just met yesterday.

Lady Proud and Umbrain, who belonged to the Foreign Affairs Division, would also prioritize their own Division's concerns rather than human emotion. That's how organizations should be handled.

As for Marika Fukuroi and Styler Mimi, it'd be a bit strange to wonder if they had such a thing as sympathy. Beasts who enjoy fighting won't care whether it's friend or foe when a fight happens, they'll bear their fangs regardless.

Grim Heart, who only said "Off with her head" barely moved. Actually, Fal had no idea how she'd react when something happens. Shufflin, who always followed her orders, was the same.

Stuntchika was less an unknown factor and more of a person who Fal didn't know what to think about. He didn't think she was seriously not afraid, but there was a language barrier with her since she only communicated with gestures.

When lives are at stake, Snow White will prioritize saving those lives. The one thing she dislikes more than anything else is disregard for lives. Even Fal prioritizes lives. If possible, he wished that all Magical Girls would have this kind of mindset.

But the reality was different. If it comes to negotiations, what would happen if everyone but Snow White said “It’s too bad that Kafuria got captured, but there’s no room for negotiating.”

Snow White wasn’t the kind of Magical Girl who’d keep her opinions silent. But this won’t be solved just by complaining and debating.

Magical Girls are strong. Breaking or compromising is equal to defeat for them, it wasn’t just Keek who thought that way.

They still haven’t talked it out this far. Fal worried when they’ll actually reach this topic.

“I don’t think they’re as bad as you think they are, Fal.”

“Who said they were, Pon?”

“No one here’s thinking of abandoning Kafuria, but...”

Snow White turned her eyes across the bulkhead.

“I don’t know what Grim Heart’s thinking, but when she gives orders, I don’t know how Shufflin’s mind works, so we’ll need to be careful.”

Before leaving the bulkhead, Grim Heart rolled out a bulkhead while yawning. Fal didn’t know what to look out for, but he can see why Snow White said that she couldn’t read her mind.

“Also, this isn’t just about the Magical Girls here”

“What exactly... do you mean by that, Pon?”

“This concerns every Magical Girl in this underground base.”

While holding onto the Magical Phone, Snow White opened the bulkhead. Grim Heart, who was lying down raised half her body up, her face all red. The Shufflin in front of the sofa was trembling on the floor. Wonder what happened.

Regardless, Snow White went back into the passage anyway, passing through Stuntchika and Grim Heart's sofa, standing just where everyone was gathered. People who were staring at Grim Heart were now facing Snow White. Shufflin was stuttering but also looked up at Snow White.

"We need to negotiate."

It was an abrupt proposal, Marika Fukuroi looked at Snow White with suspicious eyes. Although the others weren't as extreme as Marika, the look on their eyes was similar.

"My Magical Skill lets me hear the voices in people's hearts."

Other than Grim Heart, everyone had varying looks of surprise. Fal had no function of changing expressions, but if he could, he'd be the one widening his eyes and mouth more than anyone.

In a battlefield, Magical Girls shouldn't reveal their own powers to each other. Doing that would be similar to putting your neck down on their feet, even if these Magical Girls were allies now, they could be enemies tomorrow.

Besides, this was a rather abrupt gathering, it wouldn't be strange for them all to become enemies tomorrow.

Snow White revealed her own powers to these people. By saying she can read minds, she's declaring that she knew everyone else's powers as well. Not just powers, but objectives, personality, secrets, she told them that she knew all of those.

Marika Fukuroi let out a loud laugh. Her head was rocking, the petals of her withered flower falling off.

"Oooh I get it! That's a tough power to use! It's gotta be fun winning with that! I getcha I getcha!"

Styler Mimi had a disgusted look on her face, Lady Proud glared at Snow White, Filuru's cheeks became red as she looked down. Stuntchika scratched her head, Uttakatta caressed her lips like a sarcastic smile.

"What Fukuroi said was right, it's rather interesting to have a power like that. Well, how is your mind reading connected to all this?"

"I don't *read* minds. I *hear* them."

"Oh, my apologies. Again, how does *hearing* minds help us?"

"Because I can hear the thoughts of *them*. The Magical Girls that own this facility."

"Oh?"

"They don't want to fight us. They want to negotiate."

Lady Proud's face loosened.

"...If they wanted to do that, they should've negotiated in the first place. Did you forget who drew their weapons first?"

"They never wanted to fight us at all to begin with."

Snow White ignored Lady Proud's question and continued on. Fal's never seen Snow White talk this much when she was transformed as Snow White. Right now, Snow White was talking seriously. It's indescribable. She chose her words very well.

Snow White dislikes conflict. During Clamberry's test, she was the only one who didn't kill anyone to the very end. She used her nickname of the Magical Girl Hunter to good effect, to scare people, to make them afraid, to avoid meaningless conflict.

"Off with her head."

"Look at it from their point of view. We're the intruders. If we came in here looking for a fight, *they'll* be just as prepared."

Styler Mimi nodded at Snow White's words.

“That’s true, actually. My idiot over here provoked them. Of course they’d follow along. Without her, I’m sure things would have gone over peacefully.”

“Hey, who’re you calling your idiot?”

“At the very least, if they captured Kafuria, they’re willing to negotiate.”

“They also didn’t seem to be actively fighting back then.”

“I do certainly feel that way to.”

“But... then...”

“Off with her head”

“Wait a minute!”

Lady Proud spread out both her hands. She looked left and right, front and back, and up and down.

“Where’d Umbrain go?”

With that large umbrella that stood out, there’s now way she could hide while shielding herself behind that. Everyone looked around, but no one could find her.

“Where did Umbrain go!? Has no one seen her!?”

Lady Proud’s face turned pale as she looked towards Snow White.

“I... can’t hear her thoughts.”

Snow White was upset. She didn’t notice as the amount of voices she heard before and after she left the bulkhead were so many. Fal checked the surroundings, but they were one head short. Before Snow White left the bulkhead, Umbrain was here.

If Snow White was upset, Fal had to act. That was a Mascot Character’s duty.

“Before Snow White went outside, Umbrain was talking to Lady Proud, Pon.”

Lady Proud looked back at Fal as if she took a punch to the gut.

"I... That's right... Umbrain and I. We talked, we wanted to know what to do, if we should write a report. We were consulting with each other."

"When Snow White came back, Umbrain was gone, Pon."

"I think... I think that's what happened."

"What happened while Snow White was gone, Pon?"

Lady Proud looked at Grim Heart, then changed her point of view to Shufflin. Grim Heart kept acting like she's not involved and muttered, but Shufflin shivered hard and once more placed her head on the floor.

"Grim Heart... she ordered Shufflin to... grab a pen..."

One by one, she tried to remember what happened.

"Shufflin took out a pen from the bag... then she dropped it. The pen rolled... she picked it up, but Grim Heart got angry... and Shufflin prostrated..."

The pen had rolled towards the sofa. The bag that Shufflin was carrying was placed somewhere else. It was consistent with what Lady Proud was saying. Styler Mimi nodded, "That's what it seems like." No one else denied her.

Fal asked a question with a small voice to Snow White.

"Do you think the person who did something to Umbrain is here, Pon?"

"Hmm. If someone did do that... then they'd be distressed just knowing it, but no one I can hear is thinking that."

The only person whose mind couldn't be heard was Grim Heart. But if Grim Heart did something, there had to be someone who would have noticed her. She could've made a fuss, then in the distraction, Umbrain disappeared.

"Oh, did anyone try to get out of the bulkhead alone?"

“Not anyone here.”

Uttakatta pointed to Filuru who was right next to her.

“Filuru’s threaded both the entrances. If we’re attacked by the enemy while we’re all consulting, she’d make a big deal of it.”

She didn’t tell anyone about it, meaning she probably didn’t trust everyone. It’s not just people from the outside getting in, but she could also check for people on the inside getting out. When Snow White decided to go out, the only one who raised their voice was Uttakatta.

Filuru was doing something as she put her index finger in front of her thumb.

“I connected this thread to the entrance. If someone went outside, I’d detect it vibrating.”

Umbrain was able to disappear from this place so suddenly. She didn’t use the entrance, nor the stairs, she wasn’t spotted by anyone, and nobody that saw her was anyone involved here.

“Maybe it’s related to Umbrain’s Magical Skill?”

“That’s not how her powers work!”

Lady Proud loudly denied it. Her eyes swinging left and right with the walls behind her. Her cloak making big flapping noises as her back squeezed it towards the wall.

“No one’s done it, Umbrain wouldn’t have left alone, so it’s one of those girls that did it, isn’t it? And you said they’d negotiate! They don’t want to negotiate!”

“But that’s strange isn’t it, Pon? If they could do something like that, then why not quickly finish all of us off, Pon?”

“Maybe there’s conditions... I don’t know, something... a trigger...”

Lady Proud was obviously losing her cool, repeating words and biting her fingernails. She couldn’t handle the shock of losing Umbrain.

“See? This is why we need simpler solutions.”

A single person, leaning on the wall with a bored looking face, Marika Fukuroi, was smiling.

“Discussions, negotiations, who needs all that boring stuff. We beat em up until the last one stands, that’s clearly the best person. It’s so simple and easy to understand!”

She pointed at the bulkhead behind her with her thumb, as if saying “So let’s go already.”

Marika Fukuroi’s theory was inching ever so closely with Clamberry’s. Fal hated how Clamberry handled her tests, there’s no reason it wouldn’t make Snow White angry, as it’s still destroying her even now. Fal panicked and thought that he had to do something to calm Snow White down, but Snow White didn’t even react.

“It’s fine! We can listen to their reasons and stuff *after* we defeat them.”

Lady Proud clicked her heels as she went to the forest room, Marika did a *yeah it worked* face and followed, dragging Styler Mimi along with her.

Almost like BGM music, Grim Heart seemed to be telling Shufflin “Why aren’t you following them...? Your head will serve a good meal on my platter” as Shufflin jumped up and panicked.

Uttakatta approached Snow White and talked.

“What do we do about them?”

“We follow them. Make sure they don’t start any unnecessary fights.”

Snow White had no expression. She simply stared at Lady Proud’s group, walking towards the forested area. She didn’t seem very upset. In fact, she returned to being the usual Snow White.

“A wonderful idea. What should we do, however?”

“I told you. Follow them. If something happens, they’ll need help stopping it.”

“Roger that.”

Filuru and Uttakatta followed Snow White. Just afterwards,

“Is this okay with you guys, Pon?”

“Yes. Perhaps.”

Filuru’s answer was rather ambiguous, but she nodded. Uttakatta was the one who spoke at length.

“Earlier, we consulted with each other. Looking at all the merits and whatnot, since our life is on the line. Of course, I vowed to work where the money is, but life can’t be exchanged with money. Still, a job where you gamble your life like money is just something I do.”

After she said all this, she pointed at Lady Proud.

“Proud seems to have lost her cool. Fukuroi on the other hand is more than happy to throw away hers. In conclusion, following the most composed person would be best. So let’s go.”

This time, Filuru nodded firmly.

“I’ll cooperate.”

“Thank you. I can’t offer you a job, but Fal will find one for you.”

Filuru was speechless. She bowed her head without speaking a word. Uttakatta followed up Lady Proud’s group, running slightly ahead.

Fal was burning with anger, but he knew how to read a situation, so he kept it down and eyed Grim Heart instead. He spoke with Snow White, not really caring about lowering his tone anymore.

“Nobody noticed how Umbrain went missing, Pon. You shouldn’t be so worried about this, Snow White, Pon.”

“Why do you think I am?”

“Because you look a bit down, Pon?”

“And why do you think that?”

“Because that’s how I think when I see you, Pon. My previous Master always hated me, so I always have to learn how to read people, Pon. That way I can understand what they’re feeling, Pon.”

He’s never mentioned Keek as part of a conversation with Snow White before. But now, he felt like venting it out. Snow White sighed out.

“You’re like a stalker aren’t you?”

“Well, it’s not exactly the same, Pon.”

In an emergency, Fal was able to say what he could never say before. Keek’s words have always been delusions, but he felt that this was the right time to speak.

With Stuntchika following them on a unicycle, Snow White and Fal opened the bulkhead to the forest room.

☆ **Princess Deluge**

Inferno was trying to brush away the sand stuck on her hair and sand, sitting in the chair looking depressed. Quake was shaking her left knee. Prism Cherry was crying.

“I’m sorry... If only I looked closer...”

It seems like Princess Tempest had been kidnapped by the enemy. The reason why she thought that ‘it seems like’ is because they didn’t really know what happened.

Princess Tempest, who should’ve been fighting the enemy hasn’t returned, no matter how long they waited. She wasn’t hiding in the third training room, no matter how many times they checked the monitor, Tempest wasn’t there. The invading Magical Girls only came in once, but now they weren’t there.

She had to have been taken.

Princess Inferno blamed herself, regretting having escaped from the enemy alone just because she couldn't tolerate their melee attacks.

Prism Cherry blamed herself, regretting that she didn't completely check the monitors in the briefing room. There was only one monitor, and all she could do was switch to various different rooms at a time. It was impossible to see everything at once.

Princess Quake was completely worried, but if she showed her worriedness, then the other two will only blame themselves further. She knew that, so Princess Quake didn't voice her worries. She merely shook her knees.

Princess Deluge hated herself for analyzing them like that. Being the only calm one wasn't a bad thing, but she couldn't help think if being calm meant she didn't think much about Princess Tempest.

She looked at the monitor. If the enemy tried to attack them, they had to pass through the training rooms. There are cameras on the training room entrances, meaning they can always detect invasions.

She can't keep feeling that they won't do anything. Even *acting* like they're doing something would be better. Deluge noticed that she was folding her arms, which caused her to unfold them. She remembered the saying that folding your arms is like making walls for your heart.

Her stomach felt like it was about to burst. In the end, she was still the only one coldly being isolated. She knew she had to be the one comforting them, but she didn't do it. She didn't want to get into any bigger problems.

Inferno retreating was a good choice. Having both of them captured would be far worse. Immediately rescuing them wasn't the wrong decision either.

Prism Cherry also did a wonderful job. She knew how to handle these tools more than anyone. If Prism Cherry couldn't do it, no one could. Everyone was in the middle of fighting, so it's not like everyone could support the others all the time.

If Deluge said all those things, would the others blame themselves even worse? They should really be worrying about Tempest, but since they're too worried about what they've done, they couldn't act.

This chain of self-hatred only tied them up, this was just like before Deluge became a Magical Girl.

Deluge removed the bottle of medicine from the drawer, placing the tablet in her palm.

They were told not to consume too much before the day ends. She was sure that 'two times' isn't 'too much'. She washed her throat down with cold water, and she felt her magical power increase. Her heart calmed down. She placed the bottle on the table, Inferno and Quake silently consuming them too.

There were plenty of things they had to think about. When they looked at the monitor again, they sounded out an "Ah!" There were intruders in the second training room.

The flower Magical Girl, the caped Magical Girl, the scissors Magical Girl, the card soldier Magical Girl slowly moved forward as they watched their surroundings.

Inferno kicked her chair and got up.

"Those people! Where'd they take Tempest!?"

Prism Cherry moved the camera to see through the side of the forest room. However, there doesn't seem to be a Tempest-like figure, nor a captured looking figure of her.

"Can't see her. Maybe they have her kept in the halls?"

"Those bastards... If we beat em up, they'll probably tell us where she is!"

"Hang on, Inferno!"

Quake looked at Prism Cherry. Then they both looked at Deluge, Deluge nodded back. Everyone was thinking the same as Princess Inferno. Quake and Deluge will stand up to them, and Prism Cherry will be operating the panels.

"We need to pay extra attention to how we use Luxury Mode. In the worse case scenario, we'll need to use the two-man Ultimate Princess Explosion. We can't have allies involved there."

".....Understood."

While crying and turning her eyes red, Prism Cherry did what she could do the best. Inferno did the same, and even Deluge did as well. They can worry about worries later.

“Alright, let’s go!”

“Yeah!”

“Leave this to me!”

Interlude

The button laces and materials were arranged on the table. Ripple's documents had one profile with an attached photo on it.

Pythie Frederica had properly disciplined her, an excellent Magical Girl can only be formed by good faith and sincerity, Ripple was coming of age.

Although she had departed from the site of her education, the feeling of a student graduating is irreplaceable, it melted Frederica's body and mind.

She placed the crystal ball at the end of the table, then read her documents. For Frederica, who was known to others and herself as a Magical Girl maniac, this was the happiest time in her life, both her body and mind melting with pleasure.

Magical Girls tend to have a few habits. People who wish to become strong, people who already had strength and wanted a different power, people who wanted to rise to the top, or people who were uncontrollable, either way they were full of energy.

Occasionally, she'd put the documents down and drink her tea, or eat her rice crackers, then she'd pick up the documents again.

Previously, she had filled her collection with the hairs of Magical Girls. Though her valuable collection had been forfeited by the authorities, now she had the chance to make a new collection. Just thinking about that made her feel positive.

Regrettably, Ripple's documents didn't have any hair. That would make sense. These were all professionals, after all. They'd be far too alert to let anyone come close to stealing a piece of hair. However, there *were* ways to do so. Perhaps Frederica should teach them to Ripple sometime.

Drinking tea, eating crackers, looking at her crystal ball. She was multitasking.

There was a yukata being blown across the wind outside the window. She didn't dislike the view of laundry fluttering about.

She swept off the crumbs that were on her table and turned the documents.

Snow White. Her fearlessness was increasing. She was less naive than before, which was good.

Marika Fukuroi. She knew her face. Although she was far from Frederica's interests, she liked her purity.

Then, when she flipped the document, her hand stopped. There was a piece of hair attached to between some tape.

I see. Did she collect these pieces of hair by narrowing these targets?

Alert Mercenaries; a Hunter with sharp senses; and Magical Girls who belonged to certain Divisions, these would be unacceptable targets for stalkers like her, as they'd be aware of who was stalking them, so Ripple was to avoid them. Yet Frederica had never taught Ripple the ways to cautiously and casually collect hair by focusing on those who would barely notice her. Would that nature be inherent to Ripple? It was by no means a bad thing. At most, she'd appreciate that she was working so hard.

With her right index finger and thumb, she carefully peeled off the piece of hair.

For a while, she breathed out.

She placed it on her palm. Even without doing much, it sparkled with the light of the sun. There was no tendency. White, blue, purple colors were radiating in the hair itself.

She hurried and reviewed her materials, what kind of Magical Girl had this hair?

Frederica loved Magical Girl hair. However, this kind of reaction was very rare. Beautiful hair had stories to tell, or rather, each story always had beautiful hair involved.

The lifetime of Clamberry's gruesomeness.

Mao Pam's heavily strict way of life.

Snow White's bright future.

Frederica's had no light, only darkness, which is why she had the other Magical Girl's.

She tasted their hair with her eyes. She tasted it with her nose. She tasted it with her tongue. She pursued their life with it. Frederica loved fun Magical Girls with hair like those.

This hair was different. Before she even knew who's hair this was, a stake had been pushed into her heart. Indeed, no matter how much Frederica tried to escape, her body had been wrapped in chains. With such extraordinary hair, a story was unnecessary.

It was as brilliant as a jewel, was that not precious? If there was a precious jewel, then it's only right that you'd steal it. Frederica's Magical Skill was suitable for that exact purpose. This hair had a story beyond this world. That's how beautiful it was. It attracted viewers, taking their hearts.

She looked at it from above, looked at it from below, placing it on the table, smelling it with her nose. If she could, she'd eat it, but there was only one strand of it, so she can't. If she didn't leave behind her impulse to eat it, she'd never gain another hair as luxurious as this ever again. It's better to leave it this way.

If you looked at it from a different angle, you'd discover another form of splendor. The things behind it, the scenery that you could see, small things within it, just changing your angle gives her a new rush every time, she couldn't endure it so she fell on her back. She hit the back of her head on the tatami mat, laying down on the floor.

Oh right, she thought as she got up. It wasn't just hair, there was actually a photograph attached in the document. What kind of face gave birth to this beautiful hair? How was it arranged? Could she endure it? She had to see. Only part of her beautiful body was shown, but her whole body should be beautiful.

She hoped for a new impression as she rushed to see the picture, violently pounding the table. *Ah*, her voice leaked out. *Was this Magical Girl trapped in a city like that? And no one cares for her? The world truly is wrong*, she sighed out.

Just looking at this picture gave her such destructive energy. She may just *die* if she saw her in real life. No joke.

Frederica didn't want to die. She's fine with dying, but the world was so full of joy and happiness. She still wanted to taste it.

Yet Frederica couldn't stop herself.

Frederica held the edge of the hair with her mouth and wrapped the other end around her right finger.