Interlude: Challenger Approaching

- *In which three different agents react to a rather surprising announcement.*
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- **Betas:** Edhelistar and eatpraylove.
- **SPOILER WARNING:** Readers are advised to watch the December 15 *Super Smash Bros.* Nintendo Direct before reading this interlude.

"*Another* rep from *Fire Emblem…"* Backslash shook his head. "Dear Bionis, why can't they give the other franchises a bit more love? I was hoping for the Inklings myself…"

"Hey, now, using the main character to promote the new *Fire Emblem* game's American release worked for Marth and Roy, didn't it?" Cupid replied, patting his shoulder. "And for the record, *Fire Emblem* isn't the franchise that's gotten the most publicity from *Smash.* It's just that people happen to love the warriors and princes, so cut them some slack, will you?"

It had been Backslash's idea to bring the angel to RC #88224646BA, initially to play a few rounds of *Super Smash Bros.* for the Wii U but, more importantly, to watch the final Nintendo Direct for the game, which they were doing right now along with Whitney. She wasn't particularly excited about, or annoyed by, the reveals that Cloud Strife and now Corrin, the protagonist of *Fire Emblem Fates*, were playable.

"According to a lot of people, that honor would go to *your* franchise," said Whitney, ruffling the angel's brown hair. "Or was that the other way around? I can't tell anymore."

"I just wish we got another cool female character by the end of this Direct," Cupid replied, blushing. "Then we can really call it *Super Bash Sisters* like Lady Palutena once did!"

"Understandable, though coming from you, that seems more like an excuse to drool over somebody else." She laughed dryly. "After all, you spent a full two minutes staring at me after I let you in. My eyes are up here, you know."

Cupid blushed, covering his face with one of his wings. "Y-yeah, that's *kinda* part of the reason."

"They're listing more Mii Fighter costumes now," said Backslash. "Are we going to get any new fighters or not?"

"We already *got* a new fighter, remember?" Whitney chuckled. "And I'm sure you'll have a lot of fun playing as both Cloud and Corrin. RPGs are one of your favorite gaming genres, am I right?"

"Well, platformers and rail shooters have a special place in *my* heart," Cupid replied, beaming. "And what about you, Whitney? Do you like fitness instruction games?"

She gave him a curious look. "Actually, I'm more fond of fighting games, personally."

"Oh? Like what, *Smash Bros.*?"

"I was thinking more along the lines of *Street Fighter* or *Tekken*. Much more macho."

Both boys erupted into helpless laughter, and Whitney, rolling her eyes, paid more attention to the direct than usual.

"It's been almost one year since we started creating additional downloadable fighters. However, this is finally the climax. Here's our last fighter announcement trailer. Please take a look at the final new challenger in Super Smash Brothers for the Nintendo 3DS and Wii U."

"Oh, here it comes!" cried Backslash. The agents all leaned forward with anticipation as they heard the familiar SCHWING designating the start of the new trailer.

Cupid's blue eyes widened. "Is that *me?*"

"You're different enough from the canon Pit that I'd have to say no," replied Whitney. "Still, does this mean a new *Kid Icarus* fighter?"

"Please don't let it be Medusa or Viridi," Cupid muttered under his breath.

"Don't get careless, Pit!" Palutena's voice reverberated from the speakers. *"A challenger approaches!"*

"It's gonna be Medusa, isn't it?" said Backslash.

"Oh! Another angel! Must've missed one!"

Cupid's jaw dropped. "Is that… It can't be…"

The swarm of bats flying onto the screen confirmed his expectations, and a moment later, the agents were greeted by the sight of a gorgeous female figure, clad in black from head to toe and armed with a quartet of ornate blue pistols, dropping onto the screen.

"Let's dance, boy!"

Bayonetta Gets Wicked!

The agents all sat there in dead silence. And then the floodgates opened as Cupid threw his hands up in the air, spreading his wings, and started screaming.

"AAAAAH! SHE'S IN! SHE'S IN!! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING SHE'S OFFICIALLY IN!!!"

Backslash covered Cupid's mouth with his hand. "Drunky, shhhhh! You'll make us miss the rest of the trailer!"

"Mph, mmph! Rrm-mmph!" ("Oh, right! Sorry!")

The agents watched, almost mesmerized, as the trailer showed off the Umbra Witch's numerous battle skills, with Palutena and Pit exchanging banter with her the whole time.

"This… Is… *Awesome!*" Cupid whispered. "They even used the Umbra Clock from the first game as a stage! And Gomorrah, too?! I can't believe I'm saying this, being supposedly one of the very creatures she persecutes, but… *I love her already!*"

"You don't say," Backslash replied. Cupid noticed that he too couldn't stop staring.

"Enough talk, goddess! Don't mess with a witch!"

With that, the trailer ended, and the Direct moved on to all the gameplay aspects of the new fighter. Cupid and Backslash squeed simultaneously.

"Did you see that?!" Backslash cried. "They even found a way to tone down her stripperiffic nature! This is amazing!"

"I know, right? This game really *is* shaping up to be like *Super Bash Sisters*, sort of!"

"Forgive me for being hypocritical about my taunts, but… *She's really feeling it!*"

"Oh, you *didn't.*"

"What? You *know* how she's like. It was only fair for me to joke that way."

"You've got a pretty low regard for clothes yourself, so no surprise there! Right, Whitney?"

They looked at Whitney, who hadn't spoken a word since Bayonetta's reveal. Her expression was unreadable at first, but then they realized that her eyelid was twitching just slightly.

"That *witch…* She *dares* to steal my position as the least expected fighter… Her beauty… Her skill…"

"Uh… Are you okay?" asked Backslash, waving his hand in front of her face.

With one swift movement, she slammed her hand against the table, startling the others to the point of faceplanting on the floor. "SHE'S GOING TO *BURN!!!*"

The male agents gaped at her, terrified. She turned to look at them with a mix of shock and embarrassment.

"Sorry… Lost it a little there…"

"Yeesh, jealous much?" asked Cupid.

"Admittedly, just a bit."

"A *bit?*" asked Backslash, chuckling. "More like a *lot!*"

"Okay, okay. A lot is fine. I'll be honest here: For so many reasons, I have a sudden urge to beat the stuffing out of her, and relish every single second of it."

"N-not for real, though, right?" Cupid laughed nervously. "She's a canon, after all!"

Whitney shrugged. "Well, thrashing her in *Smash* is fine. At least let us finish the rest of the Direct — I want to know how she plays. I want to fight her, and *win.*"

The agents shrugged, returned to their seats, and resumed watching the stream.

Once the stream ended, the male agents cheered. "Bayonetta's in! Bayonetta's in!! Bayonetta's in!!!"

Whitney rubbed her forehead. "Please stop, you two. You don't have to rub it in."

"Aw, but what's wrong with her inclusion?" said Cupid. "I know you've got problems with her, but she's so unique! For one thing, the Smash Ballot winner isn't a swordfighter!"

"Yeah, we've got too many of those," added Backslash. "I know you're upset about her now, but just give her a chance."

"There's no taking her out now that so many have voted her in," Cupid added. "Who knows? Maybe you'll even like her."

Whitney looked at the others for a moment, and then sighed. "I don't think I'll reach a point where I'll genuinely like her as a person, but I suppose I can't change what the masses want. And hey, there's still the option of fighting *against* her, isn't there?"

"Exactly! Speaking of which, you wanna play some more *Smash* with the two of us? C'mon, it'll be fun!"

She smiled and ruffled his hair once more. "Sure!"