

Aqua was still holding herself and shivering when they walked toward the gate out of the city when Kazuma heard it. "He's mine!"

"No, he's mine!"

"Take it back!"

The voices, he knew those voices, the two scantily clad girls that worked with another reincarnated 'hero'. *'If they're here...'* Kazuma thought and tried to covertly glance around both for him and for a way to avoid *him*.

He had no such luck. "M'lady! What's wrong?! Are you alright?! Why are you shivering?!" Kyouya Mitsurugi made his presence known first by his shouting, second by the way he charged into the street as soon as he exited the shop he'd been in, dropping his bag and brushing past his teammates to bar Kazuma's way.

"Can I blow him up this time?" Megumin muttered.

But, still sore over earlier, Aqua turned on the waterworks with her loud wailing cry. "Kazuma... he used his magic on me so I couldn't move... then in the bath... I was so helpless... bwaaaahhhh!"

Kyouya's face turned red. "You monster!"

"Woah! It wasn't like that!" Kazuma shouted, his fingers tensed at the unbelievable stupidity playing out around him. His eyes darted over to Kyouya's teammates.

"Pervert!" They said at once, finally in agreement, they crossed their arms in defensive disgust.

Aqua had already stopped her crying and tugged the lower half of her eye down before sticking her tongue out at him.

*'Is she more childish than stupid or more stupid than childish... I can't tell anymore...'* Kazuma briefly wondered, but he didn't get to say anything before the heavily armored warrior made his demand.

Kyouya's sword came down in front of him, "I demand a duel! If you win, you can demand something from me, *when* you lose, turn Lady Aqua over to me!"

"Seriously dude... did you forget what happened last time?" Kazuma asked and shrugged his shoulders with his palms up.

Kyouya's red face lost none of its angry color. "You caught me off guard that time!"

"Yeah, and you've got an expensive top of the line gear and a magic sword, what do I have, seriously, you want me to fight you *and* fight fair? No thanks, I'll pass. There's nothing I need from you that you can afford to give up. Come on girls." Kazuma said and made to brush past him.

Aqua pouted, but they made to follow until Kyouya's hand fell on Kazuma's shoulder and he squeezed, stopping the smaller adventurer in his tracks.

"I cannot accept this. Fight me." Kyouya demanded.

"I will fight you. As a crusader and a member of his party, I can act as a substitute." Darkness approached and put her hand on that of Kyouya's and slowly, steadily removed it whether he wanted it off or not.

"We're... not going to be able to just leave, are we?" Kazuma asked and glared at Aqua behind them, she had begun to whistle with her hands behind her back and found the sky 'very' interesting to look at all of a sudden.  
'*Damn her...*'

"No, you will not!" Kyouya pronounced, then pulling his hand away from Darkness, he nodded. "Fine, a holy knight is an excellent opponent. But no cheating! You absolutely can't use those skills of yours on me or my team!" He insisted.

"Fine." Kazuma mumbled, "Just get it over with, we've got somewhere to be."

"Lady Aqua! Will you please start the duel for us?" Kyouya asked in his over the top tone while the pair took position and a crowd began to form.

"Uh..." She skipped over to the middle, "Start, I guess." She said, and skipped out as fast as she'd come in.

"Come at me! Hit me! I dare you!" Darkness shouted, already breathing hard, she charged, her sword swinging like mad. Kazuma closed his eyes.

Her sword swings missed by a mile, hitting air all around his body but with such poor aim that he likely wasn't even close enough to feel the air stirring past him.

Kyouya's sword struck her, hitting her in the guts and sending her into the air. "Gyahhhh..." He shouted and jumped after her, smacking her several more times all over her body, and then as she fell, repeating the process until they landed on the street with a thunderous crash that shattered the pavement. Rocks flew outward, shattering windows and doors, and Kyouya stood up alone.

"I win." He said, standing over Darkness.

Kazuma leaned backward to address Aqua with a whisper, "Hey what's up with this guy? That's crazy strong...?"

"Oh, his weapon and armor boost all his stats, he's basically a super powerful monster right now, plus he was pretty strong when he was alive in Japan too." Aqua explained.

*'And I got a useless goddess... damn.'* Kazuma thought.

Kyouya was turning around, "Now, Kazuma, hand over-"

Kazuma pointed behind him, "It's not over yet, dude."

Darkness was rising on her feet, she was breathing hard, gaps in her clothing were plentiful, bruises on bare flesh that should have ached, seemed to mean nothing. "Oh you vicious brute... exposing my naked flesh

only to bruise and abuse me... my thighs, my womanly curves, you want to *hurt* them all... oh yes, you *know* what you're doing... don't you... but I will *not* relent! I am a crusader!" She shouted and charged again at the open mouthed Kyouya.

"What's *wrong* with you?!" hHe shouted at her and brought up his sword to stop her, the ground shattered again under the pressure, sending rocks flying about and forcing the watchers to lie down to protect themselves.

Darkness was breathing harder.

Her mouth was practically drooling, "Go on! What more about me can you abuse for your dark pleasures! I will endure them *all* to protect my party!"

"I'm not a pervert!" Kyouya insisted, pushing back against her so that they both flew apart by a dozen paces and briefly slid along the stone. "I'll end this now...!"

"And defile me in public view! Oh you monster! Do it!" Darkness cried and charged toward him again.

Kazuma raised his hand, pointed it at Darkness, and said, **[Steal]**. A brief flash of light, and she flushed a brighter red than the freshest strawberry, stumbled, avoiding Kyouya's sword, and smacked him in the face with the flat of her own.

"K-K-K-Kazuma! How could you steal my panties in the middle of a fight?!" Darkness stammered when she saw the white silk garment dangling from his fingers.

Kyouya said nothing, save for a groan as he stumbled back, landed on the ground, hit his head, and fell unconscious.

"Ch-Ch-Cheater! You promised you wouldn't use your skills!" Kyouya's teammates insisted.

Kazuma glanced over at the two idiots he privately declared to be 'green idiot, and red idiot, based on their hair. *'He gets two love interests, I get*

*these... explosion fetishist, pervert girl, and useless goddess...* Admitting this wasn't his finest moment, he persevered anyway and tossed Darkness' panties over his shoulder toward the blushing crusader. "No, I promised not to use anything on him, or you. I stole from Darkness, she's one of *my* team members. Yes, it made her stumble, fall, made Kyouya miss and made it so for once in her life she could hit something... but I didn't *cheat* according to Kyouya's terms."

"B-B-B-But that's-" Red idiot was shaking with rage in her white cloak and orange little skirt, but she stopped speaking when Kazuma's hand stretched out toward her and his fingers started their dreaded rhythmic curling.

"Now listen here, we had a deal... and he's going to keep it when he wakes up... eventually. But the first thing you've got to do... is pay for all the damage *he* caused to this area of the street, windows, and shops. I've got things to do and if you try to get in the way instead of taking care of that... you'll feel a draft real soon... get me?"

*'God I feel dirty...'* Kazuma shuddered, and so did Kyouya's strumpets.

They cringed back from him with a frightened 'almost whimper' of disgust.

They then caught sight, after finally paying attention, to the angry residents looking around at the damage Kyouya's duel had done, the holes in the street, the broken pavement, shattered windows and damaged goods.

"You're still a cheater!" Green haired idiot balled up her fists, leaned forward, and shouted it toward him twice more.

"Nope, just stronger, when we use a little creative teamwork." Kazuma insisted.

Darkness still had her blush, but having now understood his intent, when Kazuma started walking, stepping over the unconscious Kyouya, before Megumin and Aqua stepped 'on' him, she followed.

Further protests by the idiot pair were drowned out when the crowd surrounded them.

“What are you going to do about my shop?!”

“My fruit ended up getting turned into mush!”

“That stall was expensive!”

“If he hadn’t demanded a duel everything would have been fine so now he’s got to pay for it!”

Kazuma caught a glimpse in a bit of glass of the pair of women raising their hands to placate the crowd, and pulling out coin pouches to start to pay for the damages.

Kazuma began walking with a spring in his step, and kept it for the rest of the way to the gate.

“You are in a good mood.” Darkness pointed out from his side.

“Yeah well, you did alright in that duel... and I liked the way we got that started on this one.” Kazuma answered.

“That’s right!” Aqua said as they walked out and approached a stable to rent a horse and cart.

“What’s that?” Megumin asked while Kazuma handed over a few silver coins to a thin old man out front before stowing his coin pouch away.

“Well, we already got the big, dangerous duel out of the way, right?” Aqua said, raising one finger on her right hand while she made her point.

Kazuma felt the ethereal sense of dread rising in his gut. *‘Don’t say it! Don’t say it! Don’t say it!’* He mentally cried out when he took the reins of the simple wooden cart and the rest of the team climbed in behind him.

She didn’t say it.

"That's a good point." Megumin agreed as she made herself comfortable and Kazuma cracked the reins, starting the carriage moving and taking it away from the town.

"That's a disappointment." Darkness chimed in, "That was a thrilling duel."

'*Don't say it.*' Kazuma mentally commanded and looked over his shoulder toward the city.

She didn't say it.

Kazuma breathed a sigh of relief.

"We should have no other problems for the rest of this quest, even if it did come from a dirty, stinking demon!" Aqua said with childlike innocence and clapped her hands together with finality.

'*Mother fuu-*' Kazuma mentally swore and turned to look behind him. "Stop triggering flags!" He shouted at his useless goddess.

Argument was stifled however, when Darkness pointed behind them to a dust cloud rapidly approaching. "Kazuma, what is that?!"

"A signal for us to move faster!" He shouted, and cracked the reins again, kicking the horse off at a dead sprint.