

Chapter 3 Part 6

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After their conversation in the dining hall, Rufus quickly made her way back to her room. Taking a moment to catch her breath, she reached for the drawer in her desk. Inside was a small magic communication device.

She took it in hand and drew a deep breath—

"—Teacher! I've got something I need to ask!!"

The moment she raised her voice, a rattling sound, like something crumbling, emanated from the device. Silence ensued for a while before a voice responded.

'Ouch, ouch, ouch... This voice... it's Rufus-kun, right?'

"Yes! That's right!!"

'You sound very lively... Did something good happen?'

"Err, I lost in a mock battle, and my mother scolded and hit me!"

'That's a bit too heavy a topic for me, just waking up...'

But then, the teacher's tone changed slightly.

'If you're using this magic device, it must be an urgent matter, right?'

"Yes. You told me I could only use it once, so I shouldn't use it unless I'm really in trouble... but I just really, really need to ask you something."

With that preface, Rufus posed her question to her mentor through the magic device.

"I want to learn how to handle the 'Guardian Dragons'."

'...Do you mean you want to be able to command it in its complete state?'

"Yes. If I can't do that, I'll never be able to defeat Elria-chan."

Rufus was acutely aware of the difference in their strengths, having actually fought her. Not just in simple magic, but in the coordination with summoned magical beasts, and the tactics and judgment that utilized them... In all aspects, Rufus was overwhelmingly inferior.

In that case—what was needed was an overwhelming power that could surpass everything.

In the harsh natural environment of Serios, the power of the magical beasts stood at the pinnacle of the natural order.

Without the ability to wield that power, one couldn't even stand alongside it.

"That's why I at least want to be able to fully command one of them."

'Well... even if you manage to command one, I doubt that will be enough.'

"But! If it's with the 'Guardian Dragon'——"

"Ah, sorry about that. In that case, I guess I'll change it to *"There's absolutely no way to win"*."

The Teacher spoke in their usual manner.

'The opponent you're trying to fight is not just someone you can defeat by summoning a 'Guardian Dragon'——she is an 'absolute' being. If the 'Guardian Dragons' you contracted with are at the pinnacle of magical beasts, then she is at the pinnacle of everything.'

After saying so much, the Teacher murmured *"Oops"* quietly.

'Sorry, sorry. I didn't mean to dampen your spirits, but it's better to be aware that she's that kind of opponent.'

"But then... does that mean I can't win?"

'Ah! Sorry, sorry, please don't cry!! I'm weak against that sort of thing!!'

In a flustered voice coming from the magic device, the Teacher cleared their throat.

'It's okay, I think there's definitely a possibility that you can win.'

"...A possibility of winning?"

'That's right. All you have to do is command all four 'Guardian Dragons).'

"A-All four...!? But that's impossible!! Even when I tried controlling one, it got angry and started rampaging——"

'Because that's the *'current'* Rufus. As I said before, in the future, you will be able to fully command the 'Guardian Dragons'. They know this too, which is why they've agreed to contract with you, even though your current magic power is insufficient.'

Pausing for a moment——

'——Therefore, you just need to borrow power from your *'future'* self.'

And with that, the Teacher told Rufus.