

At the wide open-spaced courtyard of Radiant Garden's grand castle, a light blue-haired, brown-eyed, 17-year-old girl by the name of Glacies was practicing her keyblade combat attacks and spells on a wooden dummy. She had bobcut hair style that reached down to her shoulders, pale skin that was almost as white as snow, and wore a pink sleeveless undershirt underneath a purple corset with an open white casual blazer over it, blackish-blue capris, and tan sandals with red straps. Glacies held the ice blue snowflake-designed keyblade, known as Ice Storm, in her left hand and swung it repeatedly and rapidly at the dummy to get some combo hits onto it. She swung Ice Storm down in a diagonal manner from top-left to bottom-right and hit the dummy across its torso. Then she quickly swung the keyblade horizontally from right to left at the dummy's chest. After that she brought her arm up to the center above the dummy. "Yah!" Glacies cried as she did her final move by slashing downwards at the dummy from the head to the stomach as if she were splitting a tree in half. Once her keyblade combos were done, Glacies hopped backward to put some distance between herself and the dummy. Then she aimed her keyblade at the dummy as heat and magic energy started to build up inside her body before making its way to the left arm. "Fire!" Glacies shouted as a fireball shot out of Ice Storm and hit the wooden dummy to set it on fire. Glacies smiled at her work as she watched the small flames dance around on the scarred dummy. Then Glacies looked over at her friend to see how well he was doing in his training.

A 15-year-old boy in silver and black clothes was at the top of a high spot on one of the few trees, but high enough that if he didn't land correctly, he'd only get a minor sprain. He jumped off the branch and summoned his keyblade as he fell towards the grass. Halfway down, the boy pointed his keyblade at the ground and cried, "Aero!" A gentle, but yet powerful, gust of winds appeared out of nowhere and softened the boy's fall as he started to slow down upon coming into contact with the Aero spell. The boy descended gracefully until his feet touched the ground. Happy with his little experiment's success, he exclaimed, "It worked!"

Glacies clapped and smiled at the boy as she praised, "That's really great for you, Zephyr! It's really amazing how we can use spells like Aero for convenient uses other than just for fighting." Magic was an essential part of a keyblade warrior's life; it can be used to defeat one's enemies or, as Glacies mentioned, be used for convenient uses. For example, the Fire spell can be used to start a campfire to cook food on or keep warm, the Thunder spell can be cast to power up electric generators, or the like how Zephyr did it, Aero can be used to soften one's fall. But of course, not everybody uses magic though. It was mostly the warriors and wizards that learned to use magic as it was generally seen as a combative force and a little bit difficult to learn, but a few civilians may be able to use them. But there were harmless, but helpful, spells like Cure and Esuna that healed people's wounds and diseases. It was called white magic and it was mostly taught to doctors and healers to help their patients, but others were able to cast them as well.

Zephyr said, "Thanks! I'm trying to come up with as many ways possible to use any of my commands to my advantage!" He was starting to think of another one. Zephyr had been Glacies's best friend ever since the day they entered as apprentices of Master Leohart about two years ago. He was a friendly and cheerful boy with spiky blonde hair, light olive skin, and brilliant blue eyes that were as bright as the ocean. The two friends had trained together, hung out with each other, shared interests, and

participated in fun activities after their master's lessons.

Glacies giggled and said, "Trying to be creative there, huh? I should get creative, too! Like, I could freeze an enemy with my Blizzard and then zap him with my Thunder spell." Then she thought the unoriginality of it and frowned with embarrassment as she said, "No wait, that's not creative at all."

"No... No, it isn't!" Zephyr said with a laugh. Then he suddenly thought of something and said to Glacies, "Hey! Fire a blizzard at me!" The boy got into his battle stance to ready himself for the attack spell.

Glacies wondered what her best friend was up to as she asked, "Huh? Why?"

"Just do it," he told her.

She was a bit hesitant at casting a spell at her friend as she was afraid of accidentally harming her friend if his plan goes wrong. But Zephyr did want it and judging by the confident expression on his face, he knew what he was going to do and that he was going to be fine. So doing as her friend requested, Glacies pointed Ice Storm at Zephyr and felt the freezing cold energy charging up into her keyblade. "Blizzard!" she shouted. An ice ball came out of the keyblade and flew straight towards the blonde boy.

Zephyr watched the spell carefully with patience and waited for the right time to make his move before he whipped up his keyblade above him and cast, "Aero!" Violent winds, with a slight control to it, blew around Zephyr and sucked in the Blizzard spell. Then the winds carried the ice ball around until it threw the ball out in a random direction and smashed it into a nearby wall, turning the Blizzard spell into crystal shard-like pieces that fell onto the grass.

Glacies was amazed by the Aero's effect and said, "Wow, your Aero spell's really something, Zephyr. I never knew it could counter spells as well."

The blonde boy explained, "I mostly use Aero as a counter but this time it's not countering a physical attack from the person themselves but a spell casted from afar!" Then he smiled with an idea in mind and said, "And I think I have an idea of a combo move we could do using Fire and Aero."

"Want to try it out?" Glacies asked as she allowed her body to warm up with fire energy as she prepared herself to do a Fire spell in case Zephyr decided to try out the combo now.

Zephyr replied, "Sure! Just aim at a target and cast your Fire spell at it." Then he asked, "You know how air makes fire stronger?"

"Yes, I do," the light-haired bluenette gave a short nod as she replied.

Zephyr said, "That's what I'm trying to do, I cast Aero and then you use Fire to make it go through the Aero and then it will get stronger and bigger!" He ran up to get next to his friend.

Glacies smiled as she liked the plan and said, "Great idea, let's do it!" So the girl aimed her keyblade at one of the bulls-eye targets and waited for Zephyr to cast Aero so that she could cast Fire next.

"Aero!" Zephyr called out. Winds started to appear and stir around the blonde boy before he moved them forward for Glacies's Fire spell to go through.

Glacies followed up Zephyr's spell with hers as she shouted, "Fire!" A fireball shoots out of the tip of her keyblade and flew through the Aero spell. Upon contact with the winds, the fireball grew double its size and it bombarded the bulls-eye target that was hanging down from the tree with a big blast of flames. "Wow!" Glacies cried out in amazement at how the combo, Zephyr came up with, made her Fire spell powerful and set the target on fire with big flames ablaze.

As he watched the target burn in big flames, the boy said, "That worked better than I expected!" Then he became concerned about the fire destroying the target and said, "I think we should put the fire out now."

"Right," Glacies agreed. Then she went up to the blazing target and pointed her freezing cold keyblade at it as she cried, "Blizzard!" The ice hit the flames and melted into water to douse them out. Glacies stared at the water-soaked wooden target as she wondered, *'If cast a Thunder spell on it now, would the target get destroyed?'* Water did have a thing for conducting electricity and it's possible that a Thunder spell on something wet could cause even more damage than normal.

Zephyr looked at the target and said in curiosity, "I wonder if cure works on inanimate objects..."

Glacies said, "I don't know, let's see." Now that she thought about it, whenever the apprentices left the training ground for a while after damaging some targets and dummies, they would return her later to find new ones in their place. Glacies wondered if Master Leohart just replaced them all quickly or just used a cure spell to renew them.

"Cure!" Zephyr cried as he cast the spell the target. A few moments after the green light faded, the target looked exactly the same damaged state it was in before he casted the spell. "Looks like it just works on only living things then." Well, it was worth the shot anyway.

Glacies said, "So the cure spell can't fix broken things then. Oh well, at least Master Leohart can always just get another one on of those." Then she thought about trying the Thunder spell on the wet target, so she raised her keyblade into the air as electricity coursed up into it and shouted, "Thunder!" A lightning bolt came down and struck the target into pieces.

Zephyr clapped his hands and applauded at his friend's destruction of the target. "I wonder if he has a room just to store targets in." He felt very curious about the place where all the targets were stashed. So with a mischievous grin, the boy said, "Let's go sneak around and see!"

The girl said with a smile, "Ooh, being a naughty today, Zephyr? Okay, sure! I like to see that place as well." She found her friend's nosiness amusing. She had really like to see where their master kept all these targets as well. So, the two teens went over to the door of the storage area. They went inside and walked through the hallway.

Zephyr looked to Glacies and whispered to her, "We need to be very quiet." Glacies nodded in response to say that she understood. But soon after he said that, he accidentally knocked over some strange metal things off the stand. As the things fell, Zephyr gasped while Glacies covered her open mouth as they both feared the things breaking onto the floor. Master Leohart would sure be upset if he found out his apprentices had snuck into the storage area and broke some valuable things. Zephyr he quickly summoned his keyblade and whispered, "Aero!" The wind slowed down the fall of the metal objects until they softly touched the floor with barely any sound.

The light-haired blunette let out a sigh of relief as said, "That was a close one."

"Yeah," Zephyr sighed in relief. "Let's keep going," he said before taking the lead again. They continued down the hallway until they saw two corridors in sight. Zephyr pointed to the one on the right and said, "Umm... Let's go this way, I guess."

Glacies asked, "Think we'll find something there?"

The boy confessed as to how he chose the corridor on the right, "Dunno... I used eenie, meenie, miney, moe."

"Oh, so that's how you picked that one."

They kept walking through it until they got to a dead end. Zephyr sighed in disappointment, "My mother lied... She said this was the very best one."

Glacies understood how he felt as she said, "No kidding! My dad told me to use it too at the fair one time where I had to match the rubber ducks with the right color circles on the bottom and I ended up losing because of it."

Zephyr said humorously with a grin, "Now we know not to trust our parents." Glacies grinned and chuckled along with her friend. He said, "Okay, now the other corridor!" The teens retraced their steps until they got back to the fork of the hallway and took the left corridor this time.

This corridor was narrower than the first one they went through as it was only wide enough to fit a single-file line of people. Glacies felt like she was trapped between the two walls and said, "Jeesh, I'd never thought I'd see a corridor this tight!"

Zephyr said, "Yeah, especially in a castle this big that there shouldn't be a need for it." They reached the door at the end of the corridor, where Zephyr tried to turn the knob. To their surprise, the door opened. He explained, "The door's unlocked!" They went inside the room and saw that it was full of replacements for all the training equipment. "Guess we were right."

Glacies viewed the room and asked, "Wow, so this is where he keeps them. But why in a room where the corridor is so narrow here? Won't he have difficulty getting them through here, especially with the dummies?"

"I don't know," Zephyr said.

Glacies went to one of the targets and touched its brand-new surface. *'It's definitely new,'* she thought. Then when she went to touch one of the dummies, its wooden sword started to swing down at her. "Whoa!" the girl cried out as she caught sight of its attack and quickly moved away before she got hit on the head. She guessed, "Must be an attack dummy, I think." The regular dummies and the attack dummies were so similar in appearance that Glacies could not tell which was which unless somebody told her.

Zephyr noticed a spot on the wall ahead of him and asked, "Hey look! You remember that spot in the wall where it looks like a secret door might be there?"

Glacies looked there as well and replied, "Yeah, why? You're going to see if there really is a door there?" Now that she thought about it, there was something a bit suspicious about that spot on the wall and it really intrigued her. What exactly was the meaning of this spot on the wall?

"Yeah," Zephyr replied as went up to the spot on the wall and started to inspect it carefully. He noticed a small button on the wall's spot and murmured, "Let's see if I'm right." He pushed the button and just like that, the secret door opened to what look like some kind of elevator. Glacies dropped her mouth in surprise at the discovery Zephyr had made. The boy went into the secret elevator before turning his head to look at Glacies and ask, "You coming?"

The girl nodded and said, "Yeah, I'm right behind you!" She went into the elevator and looked around inside. She said inquisitively, "I wonder what this elevator is for."

Zephyr guessed, "I think this might go up to the weird wall in the training zone." He soon found a button and pressed it. The wall closed up leaving them in pitch black darkness and the elevator slowly started rising. They waited to see where the elevator would take them to.

Glacies wondered aloud, "I wonder if that's how our master brought all these targets and dummies from down there." Soon, the elevator's doors slowly opened up to reveal the training grounds at the exact spot they thought the wall was suspicious. "Wow Zephyr, you were right. This elevator does take us to this place."

The boy replied, "Well we solved that mystery." Then he looked at the few other buttons on the elevator and said, "But this goes up a few more floors. Wanna check it out? But then again, we might get caught." He was trying to decide whether to go or not.

Glacies was pretty confident that they could make it through without getting noticed by Leohart and said with a smile, "Oh course! Don't worry, we'll make it back to the training grounds in time before the master finds us gone. After all, he is running an errand right now." She thought that as long as Master Leohart was out, the two could explore all the floors the elevator takes them to.

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Meanwhile in the middle of Radiant Garden, Master Leohart finally got into the central square of town. He asked no one in particular, "Why was the castle built so far away from town again?" he asked no one in particular.

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Now back to the apprentices at the castle. "True," Zephyr said. "Let's do it!"

Glacies pushed one of the buttons to go one floor up. The doors closed and the elevator started to rise until it reached the next floor. But when the doors opened, they saw to their surprise, a solid wall right in front of them. She exclaimed, "What the heck?!"

"Is this some kind of trick?" Zephyr asked as he poked at the wall. "I think they made a mistake when building this." His guess was that they forgot that the elevator was being built here.

Glacies said, "Or they could have been trying to play a joke on us. Either way, it's kind of funny when you think about it." She found the idea of the wall in front of the elevator quite an amusing prank to pull. She'd be laughing too, if she pulled something like that off on unsuspecting people. Suddenly, an enormous bang sounded that made both teens quickly throw their hands to their ears to cover them and block out some of the sound. After the noise quickly died out, they dropped her hands and the girl asked, "Whoa! What was that?"

Zephyr responded, "I don't know." Then they saw a portal in front of them on the wall. It showed an image of a black-haired, brown-eyed man in a black steel armor with a torn cape flowing from behind and another image, which was bird's eye view, of a reddish-blond-haired man fighting a blue-haired woman.

Glacies stared at the stranger looking back at them and the two combatants in the portal. She asked, "Zephyr, who are these people?"

"I have no ideaaaaah!" Zephyr said before he screamed in shock when the portal started to pull them both in strongly. Glacies was screaming as well as she got pulled into the portal. The portal closed and disappeared off the wall.