

Chapter 03 – Speed and Power

In the center of the courtyard, surrounded by the initiates, two groups of two were clashing into each other. One side was all about speed. The other, raw power.

Over at Enfys's side, both Katzix and Enfys had clashed into each other with their weapon in hand. Knife vs handblade. Strikes after strikes. High slashes, low slashes. Both attacks clashed and deflected each other blows after blows. Although Katzix was slightly faster, it did not offer much advantage. The speed advantage was greatly diminished when two extremely fast people fought it out. When two slow people fight, a slight increase in speed can easily amount to about 10 or 15% in increment. However, in this case, he was probably 2 or 3 % speed faster at most.

Clank! Clank! Swoosh!

The attacks were getting faster and faster. As blows were getting deflected, sparks would fly out from the impact point. Stabs were being dodged at hair's breadth. The small fries were in awe just from watching the fight. This was completely different from when they were being toyed with.

"BOSS! YOU CAN DO IT! YOU'RE THE BEST!" They shouted and cheered for their boss.

"Stop... blocking... my... attacks!" Enfys complaining as the attacks clashed into each other.

From yet another high slash chained into a downward swing. The force from the parry would then be used to change the blocked downward slash into a spin that continues right into an upward slash. Both sides were not giving up.

"I guess I should praise you for keeping up this far, nya."

"Let's us go with a different approach then."

This time, right as the attack was blocked, Enfys gathered a small amount of energy into his right hand. Instead of chaining the attack into another swing, he released a small flame blast from flying directly toward Katzix.

"IGNITE!" he shouted.

Katzix, surprised by the mystic attack, slightly backed off with a small jump. In the same moment, Enfys too jumped backward and with the bow on his left hand, he began shooting a huge amount of magic arrows toward Katzix.

"Quick fire!" released from his bow were barrages of magical arrows, flying directly toward Katzix. There were too much for him to deflect, so Katzix quickly ran to the side and rolled to dodge all of them. Enfys took this moment to create more distance.

"To be honest, I didn't expect a spell that I only learned to keep me warm during the Season of the Night to be this useful." The Eckgo people were known to have low cold tolerance. As an Agilis, he was lucky that Ignite, a low-level fire spell, was enough to keep him warm during the coldest season else he would have to start wearing thick fur winter clothes.

"An archer that fights like a thief at close range and even possess a low-level invocation. An Agilis, nya?" Katzix got up from the ground and looked at his opponent, trying to predict what was about to happen next.

"Eh, I never intended to be an archer type ranger to begin with. I don't like long-distance relationship that much. I prefer more of a close-and-personal type. Range advantage sure is nice to have though."

"I hope you're prepared for the consequence for that move just now, nya."

There're a total of 5 classes. Fighter, Ranger, Mage, Enchanter, and Agilis. You can invest in to 2 of them with some restrictions, 3 if you invest into the Agilis tree as well. Each class has their own strengths and weaknesses.

Fighters are strong and tough, but are very slow and vulnerable to magical and range attack.

Rangers are very fast and are excellent at providing range support, but they are very fragile.

Mages and enchanters are very strong overall but require protection all the time.

Agilisia, on the other hand, are very versatile. They can learn almost every low-to-mid-level mystic and combat art. However, they have the lowest stamina pool out of all classes, limiting them from being active for long. Although it looks good on sheets, stamina is the most important status, combat wise. It greatly affects the overall stats. If the Agilisia invest into stamina training, they will just be a walking pile of stat with no real defining power.

Keeping those in mind, Katzix had a plan. All he had to do was keep the battle going at this pace for a while and Enfys would fall off due to lack of stamina. He just had to be prepared to deal with the tricks Enfys had hiding in his sleeve.

"Looks like you have a plan in mind now" having exposed his real class to Katzix, Enfys knew something was about to come his way.

"This battle will soon be over, nya."

"Sadly, I have the right idea on how to deal with this."

"What do you have in mind, nya?"

"It's simple. I run." Having said that, Enfys turned around and ran toward the crowd, heading into the area with the tents. Seeing Enfys running directly toward them, some of the small fries were scared and backed off, creating a path. Some tried to stand in the way.

"Hoppuru! Steppuru!" Enfys shouted and jumped up. With his left foot, he landed right on to one of the small fries blocking his path's face and used him as stepping stone and leaping over the rest of the crowd.

"Should I follow or not, nya?" Katzix had to think fast. He could join the fight with Junon now and make it a 2 v 1, or follow his opponent to prevent any element of surprise. Enfys was, after all, very unpredictable and had to be dealt with as soon as possible. Knowing his opponents, 2 v 2 wise,

he could easily single out Enfys with Junon's help and finish him quickly as a grappler could nullify any agile fighter. However, with that speed and the element of surprise advantage, Enfys could easily sneak in for a surprise attack like he did and it would be very fatal. The most idiotic case would be him really running away and abandoning his friend, but that shouldn't be the case because Volfram wasn't shouting and insulting Enfys for running. Quickly glancing over at Junon's side, it appeared that Junon wasn't struggling. With all the shouting, he was actually doing really well.

"He's fine, I see. I should give chase and finish the lizard as fast as possible then, nya" with that, the decision was made. If he continued the chase and got the fight going, he would win in the end. The trickster must be put down. The small fries nearby had no idea what to do seeing Katzix running after Enfys. Both of them were too fast to follow.

"GO BIG BROTHER!" One of them shouted and ran toward where Junon and Volfram were fighting. The rest followed. None of that could catch up to Enfys and Katzix anyway so might as well enjoy the other one.

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At the same time, Volfram was fighting with Junon. Volfram was a lot faster as he had spec'd into the Nimble Fighter route to suit his style more. Junon, on the other hand, was more of a bruiser.

"DORIYAH!" Junon shouted as he launched a punch directly toward Volfram with his right hand. To Volfram, the punch was very slow and was easy for him to dodge. However, he had something else in mind. Having been with Enfys for a long time, these two could almost read each other's mind when it comes to fighting. Enfys probably had a plan or two to deal with Katzix and it was required that Volfram did not show off his true power yet. Instead of dodging, Volfram decided to block it and was launched back by the blow.

"AOOOOOOOHHHHHHH!" The crowd roared as the attack landed.

"ANIKI! ANIKI! ANIKI!" They shouted and cheered.

"What the hell is up with the cheer squad?!" Volfram thought to himself as he recovered from the blow and ran back toward Junon.

"USUKO!" Another war shout came from Junon as he launched another punch. However, this time, Volfram decided to dodge it and slightly side-stepped to his enemy's side. Before his enemy could recover from the attack, Volfram landed a swift kick on to Junon's back. However, he made sure to make it much weaker than usual to not deal too much damage.

"TOO WEAK!" Junon shouted as he turned around to attack with his fist. Volfram had to jump back to avoid it.

"BIG BROTHER IS THE TOUGHEST!"

"BIG BRO! BIG BRO!" The crowd continued the shouting.

"SHUT THE FUCK UP!" Volfram finally snapped and shouted.

"BOOOOOOOO!"

"ANIKI! ANIKI!"

"BIG BRO! BIG BRO!" The shout did not stop.

"Why the fuck do I have to fight a celeb? This is bullshit!" Volfram shouted again as he pointed toward Junon who was standing proudly in the middle of all the cheering.

"That's because we are a family and when you mess with one of us, you mess with all of us! RIGHT, EVERYONE?!" Having shouted that, Junon raised his two hand high into the sky.

"ABSOLUTELY!"

"YES!"

"AOOOOOHHHHH!!!!" As the crowd roared, Junon got into his battle stance again and charged toward Volfram.

"DORIYAH! YUSUO! HIE! DEH! TOH!" As he shouted, Junon would launch punches after punches toward Volfram with his full strength. Of course, to Volfram, it was very slow so he easily dodged all of them. However, on his last punch, Junon began charging right toward Volfram and grabbed on to him.

"Shit! Fucking grappler!" Volfram shouted as he was being carried by Junon. He had to do something quick. This time, with his actual strength, he tried to break free from the grip. A small gap was created from his excessive force, creating just enough space for him to use his right knee. Putting in as much power as he could, as Volfram was lifted into the air, he shoved his knee right into Junon's chin, knocking Junon back and breaking the grip. Quickly, Volfram recovered in the air and backed off. Glancing over at Enfys's side, it appeared that both Katzix and Enfys were gone. ***"Time to make this worth all the pain!"*** he thought to himself.

Recovering from the blow, Junon spit blood into the ground. He was tough enough to not be knocked out in a single blow from that strike like most people would.

"You're stronger than I thought." He complimented his opponent for being able to break free from the grip that could easily end the fight. ***"But you're going down!"***

"Play time's over. I'm going to beat the shit out of you now." Volfram said as he got into his battle stance again. He was in his defensive stance throughout the whole time with his palm facing down purely for blocking attacks. This time, he had his claw pointed at Junon. ***"Time to disappoint the crowd."***

Charging in, Volfram was a lot faster than before. Junon could barely see Volfram coming in.

"WOAH!" Junon shouted as he lifted up both of his hand to protect himself from Volfram's incoming punch.

"Devastating Force. Qi Gong." Volfram activated two of his offensive traits at once, going in to finish this as fast as possible.

With Devastating Force active, the punch easily breached through Junon's defense. Junon had no choice but to let go to prevent Volfram from breaking his arm.

"SHIT!" Junon shouted as his defense was broken through so easily.

"IT'S NOT OVER YET!" with Qi Gong active, Volfram recovered from his initial strike extremely fast, allowing him to chain into yet another attack.

"BRAWL!" Using one of his signature combat arts, Volfram performed a quick uppercut that lifted even someone as heavy as Junon into the air. As Junon was sent flying, he was grabbed by his leg and smashed right now back to earth and rolling.

"Ompf!" Junon started to feel the pain now even with the Pain Suppression trait. As Junon tried to get up and recover from the blow.

"Choo choo motherfucker! The pain train has no break!" Volfram shouted as he pointed toward Junon who was heavily injured and struggling.

"ANIKI!"

"NO!"

"BIG BROTHER! PLEASE GET UP!" The crowd was shouting again. Some even began crying as their idol was being kicked around like a sandbag. None was brave enough to go in and help as Volfram was being serious now. They were fearing for their lives.

As Volfram slowly approached the helpless Junon, Junon was starting to panic.

"Shit, am I going to die right here? Why the hell is my opponent so strong all of a sudden? Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! I can't die here. I can't lose! If only I wasn't so weak. If only I was as strong as Katz and Sean. If only I have more power!"

Wishing for power, Junon suddenly remembered that he still had one choice left. Although he made a promise with Katzix to not use it, a promise could not be kept if he was dead. With no choice left, he decided to use the ring. The ring that granted him all the power he had wanted during the Caravan raid.

But before he could manually activate it, the ring had already begun working on its own. It was feeding off the dark energy. It was feeding off his greed and desire for power. It was consuming Junon's mind and soul.

"ARGHHHHHHH!" Junon was shouting in pain and agony as his body was slowly being consumed and transformed by the darkness starting from his left hand. The shout could be heard throughout the camp.

"Wh-what's happened?"

"Ahhh! Someone! Help!"

"BIG BROTHER!" The crowd began to panic as well as their big brother was screaming and shouting. They had no idea what to do.

"Volfram!" Liel called out from her communicator.

"Liel, what's going on?"

"Get away from there! The Sier reading is off the chart!"

"It must be that ring he's wearing on his left hand. Is there anything we can do?"

"It's too late for him. Find Enfys. We need to regroup quickly. We're going to need to..."

Before Liel could finish her sentence, she detected yet another source of Sier energy heading directly toward where Volfram was. "Be careful! Another source of Sier energy heading your way!"

"Shit!"

"Volf, we're heading there now. Let's move, Liel" Gwenette spoke before she cut off the communication.

Amidst all the chaos and confusion, a lone figure in a green dashed into the middle of the fight

"Thanks for everything..." With his sword, the ground was showered in red.

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Katzix was chasing Enfys over into the deeper part of the camp site. Spotting Enfys running into one of the tents, he followed.

However, Enfys was nowhere to be found. There was no cut on the tent or anything to make way for him to go. Something did not feel right. It was then that Katzix's instinct kicked in.

Clank!

Using his instinct and reflex, Katzix turned to block the surprise attack coming from behind just in time.

"That reflex sure is annoying" Enfys remarked as he appeared out of thin air.

"What was that just now, nya?"

"Eh, just me and my friend, Camouflage-kun"

Continuing his aggression advantage, Enfys pushed his hand blade to the side, carrying Katzix's knife with him. Quickly, he turned to perform a quick round kick right to Katzix's side. After all these time, an attack finally connected.

"Hmpf!"

"Laliana!" Enfys decided to use one of his combat arts right away. After the round kick had connected, he used the force he gained to perform a swift whirlwind kick.

Katzix tried his best to recover from the attack. He backed off and successfully dodged the first kick. However, the second kick had already come in before he could recover, resulting in a direct hit.

"Nyow!"

Laliana did not end there. While Katzix was still trying to recover from the last hit, Enfys used the force gained from using the whirlwind kick to perform a complete 360 axe kick as a finisher. Landing this would pretty much seal the deal.

But the daefi reflex once again kicked in. Just as Enfys's axe kick was right above Katzix's head, his body began moving on its own and dodged right to the side, causing the axe kick to miss by a hair's breadth.

"The reflex really is dumb and annoying" Having missed the attack, Enfys quickly backed off to prevent any counter attack. *"That Nyow was cute though."*

"Cheh, I guess prolonging the fight isn't a choice anymore nya." Katzix, having recovered from the attack decided to be the first to rush in.

"Erendil!" This time, it was Katzix's turn to use his signature combat art. Utilizing his speed, he started off with two vertical downward slashes.

"Fancy!" Enfys blocked both of them with ease.

Right after the slashes, Katzix rushes right at Enfys with a low horizontal slash. Enfys swung his hand blade down to block it.

But that was just a feint. Katzix did not finish the horizontal slash. Instead, he used the initial speed to rush through the gap and stopped right behind Enfys.

"SHIT!" The thought quickly came to Enfys as he was fooled by his enemy. Getting backstabbed by a thief would be fatal for him. Just as Katzix swung his knife forward to attack him, Enfys leaped forward to reduce as much damage as possible. It was a direct hit, but it did not go in deep enough to finish Enfys's shield and kill him.

"ENFYS!" Liel, who was observing from afar and monitoring their condition shouted right into the communicator.

"LIEL! ARE YOU TRYING TO BLOW MY EARDRUM?" Enfys was struggling a bit as he got up from the ground.

"You're lucky my shield was still active. What the hell were you doing? The shield strength is down to only 15%."

"He only got me by surprise."

"It's time for you to take this fight seriously. Anymore of that and you're dead."

"Okay, Okay. Sheesh..." Enfys turned off the communication before facing Katzix.

"Great job with that. I will have to learn that later. Sadly, the kid gloves are off now."

Having heard that, Enfys's face went from smiling to a much more serious looking. Whenever Enfys became serious, it meant shit was about to go down. Katzix, having seen that, took his guard. The lizard still had tricks up his sleeves, and he knew they wouldn't be funny this time.

Enfys pointed toward Katzix with his right hand. He then proceeded to make the "you're dead" pose. As he pointed down to the ground with his thumb, a burst of energy was released from him. Red, blue, green, yellow, orange, purple and sky blue aura were emitting out of him. Katzix could easily recognize what they were.

"All the 7 boons, nya?!" Katzix knew he was in some kind of serious shit now.

The buffs in the Enchantment tree are very strong but costly to use. Enchanters are often the only one using all their resources in order to keep as many buffs as they can up for their allies. Enchanters can easily keep the boons up for hour or so depending on how many boons were active at once. They can also spend more mana and stamina into focusing on a certain boon to make it much stronger.

"I have to hold out. With all these buffs up, he's going to run out of stamina soon in less than 2 minutes." Katzix thought to himself as he prepared for any incoming attacks.

Enfys knew he did not have much time left and using all of his stamina and mana resources on this was a huge gamble. The fight would have exhausted all his resources anyway if both of them had it going for any longer. He even spent extra amounts on certain boons.

"Ignite!" The same fire spell was casted once more. However, thanks to the Int Up boon, the flame was much faster and stronger. As it's a flame blast, Katzix had to dodge it. This was anticipated and as Katzix dodged to the right, Enfys already made his way there.

"Fast, nya!" Thanks to the Agi up, Enfys was a lot faster than he was. He was already very fast to begin with and now, he's exceeding even Katzix's speed by a considerable amount, likely to reach the possible cap for a non-demigod being.

"Wild fang!" Starting off with a leap, he flew right into Katzix with a kick who tried to block the attack using his knife. The extra Strength gained from Str up helped in breaching the defense as Katzix's strength wasn't much higher than his to begin with. Instead of finishing the combat art with a downward swing of his hand blade, Enfys chained it into another combat art.

"Drop Dive Kick!" Enfys continued the attack with a dive kick on to Katzix who was now vulnerable with his defense down. The direct blow was then continued by a swift axe kick, knocking Katzix down and bouncing on the ground. As the axe kick was finished, Enfys stopped it instead of chaining into the finisher and turned off the buffs before he was completely exhausted. He probably had less than 20% of the strength that he used to have left. Luckily, Katzix was right in the spot that prevented him from reacting.

"Nyan-tan. You're completely right that we are weak and vulnerable to long and group fight. It was a mistake that you challenged me to a 1 v 1." With Enfys right on top of him and the handblade right by Katzix's throat, Katzix couldn't do anything in reply. *"I leave most of the jobs to*

my team. My role is to spend everything I have to finish off the most dangerous threat even if it means being a support or useless for the rest of the fight."

"Just get it over with and finish off, nya." Katzix was prepared. He made a huge mistake in his plan. It was completely his fault.

"Very well then" Having said that, Enfys went in for the finisher.

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SLAP!

Instead of slicing Katzix's throat, Enfys finished it off with a right hand bitch slap to the face.

"N-nya?" Katzix was completely surprised at just what happened.

"W-well. I never had plans to kill you anyway."

"Even with us trying to kill you, nya?"

"Errr... yeah"

"Then why exactly did you attack us, nya?"

"It was supposed to be just a sneak attack. You just had to be an idiot and rang the bell. All we really wanted was to retrieve what you took and leave."

"Then what about your daeni's friend, nya? Last I saw he was struggling, nya."

"Eh, he just played along. Your best friend and companions will probably have some broken bones, but it's kay they will live."

Having heard that, Katzix sighed and showed a face full of relief. Enfys smiled back.

"None of us had plans to really kill any of you. Not to mention that killing something as precious as you would be such a waste..."

"..."

"..."

Silence surrounded the area for a moment.

"... GET THE FUCK OFF ME YOU CREEP, NYA!" Katzix had to shout after hearing that.

"What the actual fuck?! Okay, listen here and listen well. I'm not the type to get into that." Katzix was trying to shake Enfys off so he had to lean down and held Katzix down on both hand. *"If I was, I would probably say something like 'shh only dream now' by then, dumbass."*

"Get off me anyway, nyow!"

"How adorable. Just promise me you won't stab me in the back."

"I won't, nya." Katzix let go of his knife that he was holding on to his right hand as a sign.

"Well then." After saying that, Enfys picked up the knife and threw it away. *"For insurance."* He got off Katzix and sat down nearby trying to recover some strength. Katzix, very annoyed by the knife throw, got up and went to pick up the knife.

"If you're only here for the item, then I guess I can return it to you, nya." Katzix said as he walked toward Enfys.

"Great! Well then, let's go and te-"

Before Enfys could finish his sentence, a loud roar could be heard.

"J-JUNON, NYA?" Katzix could easily recognize that it was Junon voice. **"You! YOU LIED, NYA!"** He grabbed on to the weakened Enfys and held him up with the knife by his neck.

"Oi Oi! I'm perfectly sure there will be some kind of explanation here, and soon." Enfys tried to calm Katzix who was about to kill him. It was sad that their nice and peaceful moment ended so quickly.

"ENFYS!" Gwenette contacted Enfys this time.

"Great! Gwen! Explanation, please!"

"We need to regroup, quickly. Two great Sier energy readings were detected right where Volfram was fighting."

"Sier?! Wait a moment" Enfys had something to confirm with Katzix.

"Why the hell does your base have two Sier energy readings? Are you hiding some kind of monster and dark relics here?"

"Stop with all the bullshit, nya. There's no monster or dar-" as Katzix was about to finish his sentence, he thought about the rings that was given to him by Sean. *"The ring, nya..."* Katzix had an idea what exactly was happening now.

"Great! May I suggest letting go of me and heading over to where our friends were fighting?"

"... You better not be playing any tricks here, nya" Katzix let go of the grip he had on Enfys.

"Okay Gwen, we're heading there now." Enfys contacted Gwenette again before turning off the communication. The two ran back to where the fight between Volfram and Junon was taking place again.

"Two readings... no... nya." Katzix thought to himself about what Enfys had said. Junon would probably be one because he had the ring on. The other one though...

As Enfys and Katzix were making their way to the scene, they could see a bunch of small fries running away from the scene, panicking. As they made their way to the center of the courtyard, they could see three figures in the center. One had his body pierced through with a long sword.

Drip... drip... drip

The blood came dripping down and coated the ground surrounding the body in red. It was no one else... but Junon.

"Junyaaann!" Katzix cried at the sight of his friend dying. The man in green was holding the sword.

"S-Sean..... How could you, nya?" It was none other than Sean himself.

"Well, hello there... Katz"