

CHAPTER 5

KEYSTONE WEAPONS

Slowly and steadily, a few days, week and months passed. Everyone kept attending lectures and adjusting to their new life on the planet SP1. Yash was thoroughly enjoying this time.

His routine involved waking up in the morning and rushing to school with Prathamesh and Gojo. Yash had a habit of waking up late, so Prathamesh was always the one to wake him up—sometimes gently, sometimes roughly. Yash was a bit childish and had many immature habits, while Prathamesh was mature and disciplined. Their opposite natures made them perfect complements, embodying the adage that opposites attract.

Upon reaching school, their first task was to check their schedules. With a large enough circle of friends, Yash always managed to gather some of them for each lecture, making every class ending with some chattering friend.

Lunch was a highlight of the day, where everyone gathered at their regular table in the canteen. Whenever Utkarsh's team shared the same lunchtime, they joined Yash and his friends, creating a lively, larger group.

After school, they sometimes visited the nearby gardens or simply returned to their hostel. Back in their rooms, they had fun, playfully fought, engaged in mischief, and shared enjoyable moments that strengthened their bonds of friendship. But Gojo had a habit of being late to hostel sometimes.

In the evening, Yash dined with his and Utkarsh's teammates, discussing the day's events. After dinner, they often gathered in one of the rooms to spend more time together. The year gap between Yash's team and Utkarsh's team quickly faded, as they became close friends.

Life on SP1 was settling into a delightful routine, filled with camaraderie and learning for all the students.

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As usual, Yash arrived at school and checked his schedule. His next lecture was Weapons Theory in room WB-1. On his way, he noticed Srushti walking up the stairs toward the class. Most of the buildings housing classrooms were located to the west of the central library, and WB was similar in architecture to the PB building.

"Srushti!" Yash called out, hurrying to catch up with her.

"Hey Yash! Looks like we're in the same class today. Let's go," Srushti said with a smile.

Both Yash and Srushti found seats together on a bench.

"Ugh! But this Weapons Theory teacher is so boring! He's such an old guy. Can't this school hire some hot, young teachers?" Srushti complained, her voice full of exasperation.

"Hahaha! Well, you could always check out some of the hot guys sitting around. Or, you know, the guy sitting right next to you isn't too bad either," Yash replied, waggling his eyebrows playfully.

"Sure! But I'm freezing even in the presence of your so-called hotness," Srushti teased, giving Yash a playful nudge.

"Haha! Very funny," Yash said, grinning.

Suddenly, the old professor entered the class. After the students greeted him, he began his lecture on Weapons Theory. Despite Srushti's initial complaints, both she and Yash settled in, ready to absorb whatever knowledge the teacher had to offer.

The teacher began, "Let's first review the keystone weapons we learned about in the previous class, then move on to lending weapons."

He continued, "Elemental sources like fire, water, and other natural forces surround us, but we cannot control these elements with our bare hands. We need a conduit that connects our bodies to these elements, enabling us to harness and manipulate them. This conduit is called a Keystone. The origin of keystones is still a mystery, but each one possesses the basic elemental ability to control one of the five primal powers: fire, water, air, earth, and lightning."

"Keystones are unique in that they cannot move on their own but are very much alive, similar to trees. We do not choose which type of keystone we want; rather, they select us based on our worthiness and affinity for a particular elemental power. When a keystone deems us capable of wielding it, we can bond with it and harness its power. Upon bonding, the keystone transforms into a weapon uniquely suited to its user. This transformation takes into account various factors such as weight, length, and overall design to ensure optimal compatibility with the wielder. The resulting weapon could be a sword, bow, spear, or even a form that hasn't been named yet. The type of elemental power—fire, water, air, earth, or lightning—depends on the elemental affinity we develop through training or inherent talent."

"To summarize, keystones are conduits that enable us to control elemental powers, and in rare cases, even enigma powers. When we bond with a keystone, it transforms into a weapon suited to our body and elemental affinity. However, this relationship is reciprocal. A keystone will only bond with us if it deems us worthy, and it can also leave us if it believes we are no longer worthy to wield it."

The room was silent as the students absorbed this critical information, understanding these mysterious and powerful keystones.

Yash whispered to Srushti, "It's almost as if each weapon has its own emotions."

"Perhaps," she replied softly.

Taking a deep breath, the teacher continued, "Now that we've covered keystone weapons, let's delve into lending weapons. You've likely encountered lending powers in your Power Theory class."

A murmur of uncertainty rippled through the classroom as students exchanged glances, indicating that not everyone was familiar with lending powers.

The teacher banged his palm on the board to silence the room. "Quiet! It seems not all of you have covered the lending power chapter in your Power Theory class. I'll provide a brief overview."

"A weapon wielder, or someone with a keystone, can not only use their own powers but also share them with another person wielding a weapon. For example, if I possess fire powers and my friend has water powers, I can share a portion of my fire power with them. This shared power synchronizes with their weapon, allowing them to wield fire powers alongside their own water powers. However, the amount of power I can share depends on various factors such as my own strength, stamina, and whether I'm actively using my own powers. This process is known as lending powers, where I lend my abilities to my friend."

The revelation left everyone in the classroom astounded.

"I was aware of powers and keystones, my father mentioned them to me once. But I had no idea about the concept of lending powers through our keystones," Srushti confided in Yash.

"It does sound like a remarkably useful ability," Yash agreed, his mind already racing with possibilities.

The teacher cleared his throat, garnering the attention of the students once more.

"Considering the additional time we spent on the prerequisites, I'll need a bit more time to cover the lending weapons chapter," he announced apologetically, preempting any protests from the students.

Despite a few murmurs of discontent, the class settled down, ready to delve deeper into the subject matter.

The teacher resumed, his voice steady and clear. "Lending weapons are designed to serve a purpose similar to keystone weapons, allowing individuals to harness elemental powers. Unlike keystone weapons, which are natural conductors between elemental powers and the human body, lending weapons are artificially created. They act as intermediaries, enabling users to access powers they don't naturally possess."

He paused to let the information sink in before continuing, "In the Andromir Galaxy, there exists a system known as the power lending system. This system, created during the legendary revolution period, stores vast amounts of primal powers and connects throughout the galaxy. Through this system, anyone with a lending weapon can access any type of elemental power, regardless of their innate abilities. For instance, if I possess a fire weapon but need to use rock power, the lending system can transmit that power to my weapon."

The students were listening intently now, the concept starting to take root.

"Now, what if someone doesn't have a keystone weapon at all? This is where lending weapons come into play. These artificial weapons are linked to the power lending system at Andromir. Even individuals without keystone weapons can use lending weapons to access elemental powers. However, these lending weapons are significantly weaker than genuine keystone weapons and have limited power usage capabilities. Still, they are crucial for those who haven't yet earned a keystone weapon or may never earn one."

The teacher noticed a few nodding heads and continued, "The main purpose of mandatory Phase 1 schooling in our dominion is to ensure that everyone can at least use a lending weapon. This ensures that all citizens can work efficiently using elemental powers, regardless of their ability to wield a keystone weapon. During your training, you'll rely on lending weapons until you prove yourself worthy of a real keystone weapon".

"In summary," the teacher concluded, "lending weapons are artificially created tools that allow users to access elemental powers from the power lending system. They provide a means for everyone to use elemental powers, even if they don't have a natural keystone weapon."

The room was silent as the students absorbed this vital information, recognizing the significance of lending weapons in their new world.

“With this explanation, I hope everyone now has a clear understanding of what we’ve covered today,” the teacher said, looking around the room to see the students nodding in agreement. “I apologize for taking up so much of your time. You’re now dismissed for the day.”

Keystone Weapons:

- **Control of Powers:** A person can control any power, whether primal (such as fire, water, air, rock, lightning) or enigma (such as time, mind, void, dark, cosmic), using a keystone.
- **Basic Power and Affinity:** Each keystone has a primary power but can also develop affinities for other powers through lending or training.
- **Transformation:** When a person obtains a keystone, it transforms into a weapon that suits their body type. Therefore, it is often referred to as a keystone weapon or simply a weapon.
- **Will and Worthiness:** Every keystone has a will. It selects a person as its master if it deems them worthy. Conversely, if it feels the master is unworthy, it can revoke its mastership.
- **Growth:** To gain additional powers or increase strength, the user must unite with their keystone and work together.

Lending Power System:

- **Location and Creation:** Located in the Andromir Galaxy, this system was created by five legendary figures during the Legendary Revolution.
- **Function:** It can lend any type of primal power to a person with a keystone weapon or a lending weapon.
- **Usage Records:** The system records details of how the lent powers are used, including user details (name, address, history), location of use, purpose, target, and cause.
- **Accessibility:** This system is beneficial for people who do not have a keystone weapon.

Lending Weapons:

- **Purpose:** These weapons are specially created to use powers lent by the Lending Power System or another keystone weapon.

- **Limitations:** Lending weapons have significantly less power storage and strength compared to keystones.
 - **Contract with System:** They are connected to the Lending Power System and can have records of power usage.
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The students began to gather their belongings, the room buzzing with quiet conversations as they processed the new information. Yash and Srushti exchanged looks, both intrigued and eager to discuss what they had learned.

As they walked out together, Yash said, "That was a lot to take in, but it's fascinating how lending weapons work."

Srushti nodded, "Yeah, but this just made me too tired."

As Yash and Srushti exited the WB building, they spotted Ram and Prathamesh heading their way.

"Looks like they had the same lecture today," Srushti remarked, her voice tinged with fatigue.

"Hey boys," Ram called out, waving energetically.

"Do I look like a boy to you?" Srushti shot back, feigning anger but with a playful glint in her eyes.

"You're just a girl by appearance, but inside, you're like a boy—teasing, punching, beating everyone up," Ram teased, laughing. "You guys should know, she's the Astarth of our room. If we don't do as she says, we end up getting hurt."

"Just cut the crap, Ram!" Srushti said, rolling her eyes. "Don't hear him, guys? Let's head to the canteen now."

“See how she’s ordering us around? Believe me, she’s as tough as any boy,” Ram continued, still laughing.

The group chuckled as they made their way to the canteen, their camaraderie growing stronger with each playful exchange. They knew they had found a unique bond in this new environment, and as they walked together, the promise of many more shared adventures and challenges ahead made them smile.