

Death Guns 281

Chapter 281 - 276: A Short Confrontation

At the same time, Maria's group departed to search for the next floor stairs below them; it is to say on the lower floor Sera disguised as Five people in black surrounded Zero.

Looking at those men in black, Zero (Sera) smirked and said, "So you lot wish to stop me, keep me here as you go after the girls? Among those four, who are you after?"

Silence!

"Are you after Maria? Luna?"

Still, no response, those men in black were vigilantly staring at Zero (Sera); they seemed to be waiting for someone.

Not bothered by the fact that only silence was the answer she got for her questions, Zero (Sera) continued; she wasn't expecting to get them to talk; she was after something else.

"Sakuya? Or perhaps Gracier, Alexander's sister?"

Another silence, however, Zero (Sera) smiled.

"I see, so that is it."

While does who knew Zero was aware of the fact that she excels at the Darkness element, there was another element in which she excels; even though it wasn't to the extent of the darkness element, she was pretty good at controlling the wind element, and when she was raising these questions, Zero wasn't looking at the men in black faces, but instead, she was looking at their heartbeat, checking them through what she calls 'Wind Sense'; and when she said Gracier's name, one among the five heartbeats quickened, even though he only for an instant, it was all it took for Zero to get the answer she was after.

"You really like seeking trouble. Those siblings are not something you should target. If you and the one behind you want to leave long, that is."

Zero spoke in an icy tone. Her voice made the five men in black bodies tensed up, making their bodies freeze for a second; it was all it took for three of them to lose their life.

Zero disappeared, and when she reappeared, she was amidst the five men in black holding two black daggers; three men in black bodies fall into the ground a hole punched through their hearts, instantly crushing it.

Just as Zero was about to finish the remaining two men in black and go to the rescue of Gracier, she was forced to unsheath the sword at her waist and defend against the claws of her attacker.

Clangs!

Even though she was surprised to be pushed back after unsheathing her Gift, Zero glared at the person in front of her; no, it couldn't be called a person as the thing skin was utterly black, long black hair, almost dark eyes if not for the little green inside them.

"So, it's you again. I wonder what you are." Zero said she remembers this creature; it was the one she fought and got injured a few days ago, on Alex's date.

Naturally, the creature didn't respond to Zero's; she withdraws her claws before sending a deadly strike toward Zero using her tail.

Swoosh! Clangs!

Zero was able to block the blow perfectly. Suddenly, Zero let go of her sword, startling the two men in black who were sneaking away.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Pui! Pui!

Two daggers found their way through the poor men's throats, holding their throats, the men in black fell lifelessly on the ground, disbelief written over their faces, until the end, they couldn't believe why Zero didn't let them go even though she was fighting against 007, the monster.

Bending her body back to dodge 007 claws before rolling on the ground, Zero vanished; she made use of the shadow inside this floor to move and attacks 007 from different directions.

Even though she was receiving attacks from all sides, 007 was unfazed; using only one hand, she deflected all the attacks.

Clank! Clank!!!

Zero, hiding in the shadow, quickly erected a shield made of wind around her body.

"Screechhhhh!"

007 emitted a banshee-like scream that shook the whole floor; numerous cracks appeared on the dungeon's hall before being instantly healed.

Even though Zero had deployed numerous windshields around her body, most of them got broken by 007's scream.

"Ugh!"

A sudden dizziness assaulted Zero; she almost let go of her sword; however, her instincts warned her of instant death if she ever let that sword go.

Sending a sword strike towards her back, it happens to clash against 007's claws.

Zero was blasted away, using her black sword to reduce her fall; Zero held the hand of her sword to spin and send a kick toward the incoming 007; the latter was forced to cross her arms to defend against Zero spinning kick as it was aimed at her head.

007 got pushed back; she clenched her fist until they made a cracking sound before sending a deadly punch at Zero, who was planning to vanished again.

007's punch seemed to break space apart and locked Zero in place, giving her no room to escape.

Looking at the incoming fist, Zero hesitated no more; thrusting her black sword forward, she mumbled the name of her skill, her special ability, her most deadly ability.

"Dimensional Slash!"

Then something astonishing happened, Zero black sword was still floating in the air; however, the blade was gone as if it became invisible, and something more astonishing happened, 007 vanished, cancelling her attack, when she reappears again, she was on Zero's left, strangely they were a black blade piercing through her body.

Unlike last time where 007 injuries got instantly healed, this time it was healing at a slow speed. 007 couldn't help but spurt a mouthful of blood; even so, she still looked behind her back as if to check that everything went well.

"Good girl, you did well coming at my rescue; it was a timely intervention, as expected of our most successful creation."

A sudden voice could be heard, one that wasn't present previously. 007 showed no emotion even after receiving praise, neither did Zero; she sheathed her sword and glared in 007's direction, no, more specifically behind her back.

"Now, now, don't glare at me like I'm your mother murdered MS. Zero, the most deadly weapon Elseria have ever created. As expected of her strongest weapon, that last attack even I, couldn't do anything against it, if not for my lovely tool here, I might have died. How scary!"

The same voice that talked earlier and praised 007 spoke again; only the voice could be heard, a male voice, no presence could be felt. This made Zero further raise her guard against this invisible enemy; it was due to her sharp sense that Zero managed to catch the invisible enemy location; she expected to injury the latter with a surprise attack. Unfortunately, it didn't work. As for the man words, Zero wasn't surprised, so she showed no reaction whatsoever in front of the man taunts, calling Elseria's creation was to make her furious so that she may recklessly attack him. Unfortunately, Zero had seen through the invisible man plot.

Seeing Zero showing no reaction to his words, the invisible man sighed, "How boring. We shall temporarily retreat Ms Zero, hope next time you won't interfere as we do not wish to fall out with that monster, at least not yet."

Chapter 282 - 277: Brewing Storm

When the man hiding in a special space saw Zero showing no reaction to his words, he let out a sigh.

"How boring. We shall temporarily retreat Ms. Zero, hope next time you won't interfere as we do not wish to fall out with that monster, at least not yet."

"007, let's go." the man ordered before his presence completely vanished. 007 gave Zero one last glance before her body started vanishing; she left a word behind, startling Zero, who never expected her to be able to speak.

"Der? What does this mean? Some code? Or it's a name?" Zero mumbled when she recalls 007's words; she only said one word, 'Der'; as for what this word means, Zero had no idea; she was too tired to think about it now; therefore she decided to do it later.

While sitting on the ground, Zero (Sera) heaved a long sigh.

"I dare you to call her monster in front her, and the next day she will erase your organization to the ground. She hates to be called a monster. I don't know what you wish to accomplish by going after Alex's sister, but there's no way I'm going to sit and watch you do that. The moment you targeted those two (A/N: Well, technically it is only Gracier, but it counts as targeted Alex as well.), you have already made Elseria your enemy and knowing her, she will spare no effort in dealing with you no matter who you are or where you hide, she will hunt you down. If you knew about us, you should know that Elseria is not someone you can provoke."

"To think that you are experimenting on living humans. What is your goal?"

Zero came to this conclusion after today's battle; the words that man said also contributed to this speculation; 007 was the living proof of Zero's speculation.

"Ah! How troublesome, the demon continent aside, there's another enemy to be wary about. Sincerely, I wish to quit and live an ordinary life."

Suddenly Zero thought about a certain boy when she thought about having an ordinary life; she couldn't help but chuckle as she doubted she would live an ordinary life if she stayed beside him. Strangely, Zero (Sera) wasn't against it; she was even thrilled to know what kind of life she would have standing beside him.

Ba-dump! Ba-dump!

"Hehehe! I'm feeling strange all of a sudden. My heart started to beat faster when I imagined what kind of life I will have with you, how strange, this is unlike me; however, I don't dislike it." Zero (Sera) declared before her expression turned serious.

"I hope the next time I will see you, you will have reached the goal I have set. Even though you don't, at least I hope you won't be too far from that level. I shall take care of your sister and lovers."

After declaring this, Zero (Sera) stood up; her destination was to join with Maria and others, like that she would protect them, especially Gracier, whom the unknown organization was after.

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At the same time, elsewhere inside the dungeon, in a room that looked like a treasure room, it would have really looked like one if not for the numerous tube containing monsters, half-human bodies. This room looks more like a laboratory than a treasure room.

And currently inside this laboratory were two persons; one wore a lab coat doing some experiment while the latter wore all black.

"How did it went?"

Without turning back, the man in lab coat asked the person in black.

"Well, it's a failure."

"I see." said the man in a lab coat, too focused on his experiment.

"I say, Maddog, that habit of yours when talking with you and keep ignoring me piss me off. I expect a bit of respect; I'm your superior. Do not forget that." The Man in black warned Maddog, the scientific.

Maddog sighed before putting a stop at the experiment he was doing.

"My bad, so can you tell me what happened?" He asked politely as he could; Maddog didn't wish to become enemy with the arrogant little lass.

The man in black removed his mask, his golden hair and beautiful face became visible, this man was the same man that spied on Maria and others when they were trying to train outside, inside the forest, it was the same man that talked to Zero (Sera) a moment ago.

"Ah! An unexpected rat sneaked in; no, she is bigger than a rat; I guess I should call her dog. One of that woman's subordinates came." the golden-haired young man said.

Maddog raised an eyebrow.

"Elseria?"

"Yeah, it's none other than her. It's the famous Zero that was sent. I almost lost my life because of that girl. I heard she was strong, deadly; however, hearing it was one thing, but experiencing it was another. I couldn't even move; I don't even know how she knew I was present; the artifact I'm using should have completely hidden my presence as I hide in that special space to watch the fight, and yet I was spotted and attack. An attack that could transcend space, I feel like it could transcend time as well; however, it wasn't perfect if not even 007 couldn't do anything but watch me die. Just by imagining such a possibility send shivers down my spine."

"I see, that's interesting. I want to study that Zero girl." With a twisted smile, Maddog said this.

The golden-haired young man chuckled when he saw Maddog's state.

"What do we do now? With the presence of such a strong opponent, things have gotten complicated. Should we cancel the operation? I meant postpone it for another time?" Maddog asked after a moment of thinking.

The golden-haired young man did not immediately answer; he stayed silent for a moment. What Maddog said wasn't wrong; things had become complicated with Zero's (Sera) presence, however, when he thinks about canceling everything, the young couldn't bring himself to accept it as he desired Gracier's golden-eye, with that eye, the young man was fifty percent sure to realize his greatest wish, that is to surpass his father, to stand above him, to take his place.

Thinking about everything he would get if he managed to have that eye, the golden-haired young man decided.

"No, we shall continue. We will wait for few days and observe how things are going before striking for good this time. I order you to bring more men, even though those defective tools are not good as 007, we shall use them as cannon fodder. Do you understand what I mean?"

Even though Maddog didn't wish for this plan to be carried until the end, he couldn't only nod his head when he thinks about getting a valuable sample.

"I shall follow your orders," Maddog said.

"Good, let's wait for a while."

The golden-haired young man said before starting whistling, thinking about the day he would step on his dad, ordered him like his subordinates.

'Hehehe! Just wait, father, you will see that I'm not worthless as you think.'

Thus the second day passed, both Alex's group continued their exploration, unaware of the brewing storm.

Chapter 283 - 278: The Bet

Alex and his group spent their second night on the 21st floor. Unlike the previous floors, this one was a mix of forest and mountain.

"Morning, Alex."

"Morning, Artemia." Alex greeted Artemia back; there was a towel around his neck.

"I've found that every morning you do that thing," Artemia remarked.

While wiping away the sweat on his face, Alex asked, "What thing?"

"You know what I'm talking about. I'm talking about your morning workout. Especially that thing you do consisting of going up and down. I have never seen nor heard about such exercise. Maybe it's something from your world." Artemia explained while looking at Alex remove his drenched top; she must say Alex had great muscles; she almost had the impulse to run her fingers over them, she quickly shook her head to discard such a thought.

Obvious of what was going through Artemia's head, Alex put on a new top.

"You are right; these set of workouts are from my world." He confirmed Artemia's words before starting looking for Isabella; having not found her, he asked.

"By the way, where is Isabella?"

"Ah! She went to on the other side of this mountain to take a bath." Artemia explained as she sat on a chair she summoned.

Doing the same, Alex asked, "I see. What is the plan? How are you planning to deal with that skeleton?"

Artemia stayed silent for a moment before saying, "We will use the next floors to get stronger quickly. If I can reach middle Rank 9 before we reach that bastard floor, I will have a chance dealing with him."

Alex didn't say anything after hearing Artemia's plan; he looked at her with an amused grin on his face.

"What with that grin? Are you surprised that I could also curse someone?" Artemia asked, annoyed.

"No, I haven't said anything. Don't jump to conclusions on your own." Alex replied with a smile.

"Hmph! Say what you want." Artemia harrumphed.

Alex couldn't help but chuckle; he found her current behavior cute; it was different from her usual self where she acts dignified all times. Well, now wasn't the time to be thinking about these things; they had something more urgent to do.

"We will do as you said. Soon I will reach the next Rank; you better work hard, or else I will surpass in no time." Alex told Artemia with a provocative smile.

Although she wasn't surprised by the fact that Alex was almost reaching the next Rank after all the monsters he killed, what he said at the end, Artemia couldn't let it pass.

Wearing a provocative smile, in turn, Artemia declared, "Try me if you can. Shall we make a bet?"

"Oh? What kind of bet?" Alex immediately asked as he was interested in the bet; his eyes were shining gold.

[[Master, master, master]]

Suddenly, Silveria called out to him, annoyed as he could guess what she wanted; Alex was forced to respond to her; if not, she won't stop bugging him.

'Yeah, Sil, what it is?'

[[Fufufu! Master, I shall help you, ask for her hand, I mean to tell her that if you win, she will become yours-]]

'Shut up, you lecherous spirit. I knew nothing good would come out of that mouth of yours; you should have said to aim for a great treasure such as Sleipnir.' Alex admonished Silveria.

'So, in your eyes, Sleipnir is more important than Artemia? If she knew this, Artemia would cry tears of blood.' Silveria almost said; however, she didn't say anything and stayed silent.

Pleased with Silveria's reaction, Alex waited for Artemia to announce what kind of bet they would be making.

"I'm currently Level 79," Artemia announced.

"Level 69." Alex also disclosed his level.

"Great, the bet I'm talking about is the first to reach the next Rank first can ask the loser anything. Nothing perverse, though."

"Good for me. Let's start immediately." Alex said and stood up, ready to go on a killing spree.

"Calm down, will you? The current you is quite scary." Artemia tried to stop Alex, whose eyes were literally burning; it was like the eyes of a hungry treasurer hunter; it was terrifying, she felt goosebumps rise all over her body; for a moment, Artemia felt like she was going to become broke if Alex wins.

"My bad, I was overexcited. Let's wait for Isabella."

Alex sat back and said.

"I thought you'd have asked how that thing knew about my goal, but you didn't," Artemia said after staring into those green and blue eyes.

"Well, obviously I was curious, but you know people don't have one thing in mind. I am busy think about my problems, so I forgot. Now that you bring the matter up, I want to hear it." Alex said.

"There must be a traitor among us, one of our comrades that fought alongside us six."

"Why not among you six?" Alex couldn't help but ask this.

However, Artemia shook her head to dismiss that idea.

"Apart from us three still alive, the others have really died, so I doubt they would be the traitor. Not everyone was lucky to come back to life after death; let's not forget that you first must possess that artifact we got. I talked about luck previously because it takes a lot of luck for the artifact to trigger after its wearer lost their life."

"I see; you spoke like you have done some experiment to come to this conclusion," Alex said and observed Artemia's reaction.

"Well, forget what I have said," Alex said after seeing Artemia not offering any response.

"At the moment, I don't know who the traitor is, but I will find out, and once I do, I will kill him/her." Artemia declared while emitting killing intent; her killing intent was so dense that it almost twisted reality.

This made Alex question how many people this smiling goddess had killed. A question he dared not to voice out as he believes it would do him no good.

Silveria, on the other side, chuckled; no matter how many people or monsters Artemia might have killed, she could never surpass the siblings even when they were alive; let's not even talk about now.

"What's up with this atmosphere?"

Isabella, who just came back, asked this as she could feel the heavy atmosphere in the air.

"Nothing, Alex and I, have just make a bet," Artemia explained; because Isabella wasn't privy to the fact that she was a reincarnated human goddess, Artemia saw no need to tell her about the fact that a traitor is on the enemy side.

"A bet between your highness and Alexander? I want to know." Curious, Isabella asked, and Artemia told her about their bet.

Chapter 284 - 279: Phantom Snake 1

After learning about the bet between Alex and Artemia, Isabella wished to participate as well, but she knew that now wasn't the time to be capricious; therefore, she shut down that desire.

The group advanced through the mountains to arrive at what they believe to be a town previously established by past adventurers. Because no other adventurers had made it this far, this became a ghost town; not even monsters tried to occupy this empty town; well, it was probably due to almost dead monster repelling barrier covering the town.

"Let's leave," Alex said after giving one last glance at the ghost town.

Artemia and Isabella silently followed after him, and soon they appeared in another forest; this one was a little darker than the last forest; it was eerily quiet.

Stepping on dead branches that makes a cracking sound, Alex launched one of his throwing knives on his left.

Pui! Thud!

The thing hiding there was instantly killed; however, Alex didn't have the time to rejoice because, in the next instant, numerous pairs of red eyes appeared all over the dark forest.

"Kobold? Interesting!" Alex muttered and readied his knives. Thanks to his right eye, he was able to identify the monsters hiding.

Swoosh!

Faster than Alex, Artemia moved; a blue bolt of lightning was dancing around her feet as she moved between trees harvesting kobold's lives as if they jokes.

"Not gonna lose," Alex muttered before kicking off the ground and launched himself in a pack of kobolds who came to understand that these intruders were better not to be provoked.

Unfortunately, it was already too late by the time they realized this; Alex beheaded two kobolds; as their heads were dancing in the air, still confused about what just happened, Alex kicked another kobold hard in the stomach, instantly crushing the latter organs, he finished the kobold with a knife in the head.

Stepping over the same knife, Alex launched himself into the air to dodge arrows fired by a kobold archer; before the latter could understand how Alex could know that arrows were coming toward him, it had lost his life with a knife piercing through its right eye.

This makes the fifth kobolds Alex killed in less than two minutes; however, he was happy because Artemia was already on her eighth kill.

Using a tree branch to propulse himself into the air, Alex threw his remaining knives at the fleeing kobolds before two guns appeared inside his hands as he started free falling.

〔Let's teach the little lass a lesson.〕 Silveria shouted, and Alex ignored her before starting his killing spree.

BANG! BANG!!!!!!!!!!

Bullets rained down on the poor kobolds killing them in one shot; some of them had their heads blow up, some their hearts crushed. In the span of five minutes, thirty kobolds lost their lives under Alex's bullets. Never, in their wildest dreams, would these kobolds have thought they had provoked deaths, gods. They couldn't flee in peace; either a bullet would claim their lives from the back, or it was lightning bolts.

Before long, the once silent forest regained its calm, but this time corpses were littered the forest ground.

Alex and Artemia looked at each other with a smile, both declared at the same time.

"70"

"80"

"Tch!"

"Tch!"

The two clicked their tongues simultaneously and went on their separate ways like boxers that decided to decide on the winner in the next round.

At the side, Isabella had her mouth wide open as she watched everything unfold. From start to finish she didn't make any move, not that she didn't wish to do it but because she was slow, by the time she moves her spear, everything was over, the two monsters killed more than a hundred kobolds in less than fifteen minutes, unbelievable, if she was present that is.

"Seriously, it's great that you two are having fun, but you should at least let the other person partake. If not-"

Before Isabella couldn't finish her complaint, she got stopped by Alex and Artemia's glare.

"Nobody told you to be slow as a turtle." the two said in unison.

Isabella opened and closed her mouth repeatedly, unable to come up with a rebuttal.

"Let's move to the next floor." Alex declared as he started to walk deeper into the forest.

However, it had not taken his tenth step before he crossed his arms in front of his chest.

By the time the other could ask him why he suddenly stopped, they found him back; he crashed against a tree before rolling on the ground.

Wiping away the blood around his mouth, Alex declared, "Let's call for a truce until we deal with this enemy."

Artemia nodded her head and stared at the gigantic monster in them. The group instantly knew this was not going to be an easy opponent.

It was a giant black snake of twelve meters. This monster goes by the name of Phantom Snake; from the record, it is said that this monster could perfectly blend its presence, making it hard to detect, not until it attacked. It was probably why Alex couldn't know that he was stepped into the monster's territory; the reason the phantom snake didn't completely wipe out the kobolds sharing its territory was simply that it would be starving itself to death if he did that.

When you could allow these weak monsters to use your territory in exchange for periodically eating some of them, why bother wiping them out? Such was the thought of the Phantom Snake.

This thought was proven to be right as it became harder for adventurers to descend to this floor, meaning a drop in the quality of meals. While monsters wouldn't die if they do not eat as they could sustain themselves using ambient mana, they would be weakened if they don't eat monsters and others creatures periodically.

So, when the Phantom Snake saw high-quality meals after such a long time, he didn't mind them killing the sheep he was rearing as the Phantom Snake believe that by letting them think they have managed to clear up this floor after slaughtering these kobolds before killing them would make Alex and his group far tastier.

So, the Phantom Snake finally moved to harvest quality meals after patiently waiting.

Chapter 285 - 280: Phantom Snake 2

Alex looked at the girls for an instant before vanishing, and when he reappeared again, he was in the sky descending toward the Phantom Snake; Isabella was surprised she almost shouted to ask if Alex could fly, only Artemia and the Phantom Snake were able to see what happened. Alex accelerated for a moment before using a tree as a stepping stone to jump high in the sky; everything happened in an instant.

Just as the Phantom Snake was about to spit his poison at the foolish human that thinks he could challenge him, the monster stopped, the Phantom Snake was confused, his body became lighter all of a sudden, by the time he realized what was happening to him, the Phantom Snake found himself in the air, at the same place that human used to be. If the Phantom Snake could make a human's expression, he would have put on a surprised expression; unfortunately he couldn't.

Alex, who used Shadow Shift on the Phantom Snake, aimed at the floating snake and fired.

BANG!

A Phantom bullet was fired at the free-falling monster, and at the same time, as if Artemia could see the invisible bullet, she threw one of her glaives at it; the weapon was transformed into a bolt of black lightning before combining with Alex's Phantom bullet, a dark spear was created going straight toward the Phantom Snake; however, the Phantom Snake was not too be underestimated either, coiling around itself, he used his tail to strike the air to further propulse himself into, by doing this the Phantom Snake was able to dodge Alex and Artemia combined attack.

Before the Phantom Snake could take a breather, the next attack was already upon it in the form of a gigantic water snake not losing to him in terms of height.

Hissssss!

Being made fun of, the Phantom Snake hissed furiously before opening its mouth so wide that it appeared as if he wished to swallow the incoming water snake; however, instead of doing that, the Phantom Snake spurt a huge poison that clashed against Isabella's Water snake.

BOOM! Rumble!

A big explosion occurred when the Phantom Snake poison clashed against Isabella's Water snake, creating a rumbling sound that shook the forest. The explosion was so big that the Phantom Snake was swept into it.

"Have we won?" Isabella couldn't help but ask this; Alex's plans were pretty simple, he would first attack the monster, attract its attention before using his skill on him to switch place it before the second plan would begin, if the monster succeeds in even coming out unscathed of the second plan then Isabella

would strike using her strongest attack. When the trio communicated via Silveria's channel (what the person herself wished to call it), they decided on these plans.

Alex and Artemia were focused on the sky, thus didn't have the leisure to answer Isabella, their sights were blocked, Alex's Divine Sense range was huge enough to cover the sky, let's say he couldn't direct it toward a specific location, and he didn't wish to rely on Silveria's Divine sense, he couldn't have the time to hone his skill if he were to do that, unconsciously he would start to always ask for her help, that is something he doesn't want.

When Alex was lost in thought, he heard Silveria's warning.

〔Master, careful that monster hasn't died yet he is planning-〕

Silveria's words were cut short because, at that instant, Alex saw a small black snake (less than one meter) flying toward Isabella's neck, its fangs and tail ready to tear apart the latter neck.

Artemia finally noticed that something was amiss; however, she couldn't move in time even if she used her lightning.

"Isabella, watch out."

Alex shouted before aiming his gun at Isabella.

"What?" Isabella shouted when she saw Alex pointing his gun at her; she felt an ominous feeling, the feeling of death coming close; this didn't come from Alex, but from behind her, even though she wished to turn around and confront the enemy, her body froze feeling heavy burden, it was the small Phantom Snake domain, it was for this exact reason Silveria refused that Alex uses Shadow Shift on Isabella, he would die as when using Shadow Shift for a brief instant Alex would be vulnerable, so imagine what would happen if he was in that snake domain? He might lose his life; therefore, Alex opted for another solution, a radical one.

Just now, he shouted Isabella's name to draw her attention, more accurately to draw out her body instinctual reaction when she would see a gun pointed at her; Isabella unconsciously raised her spear even when under the Phantom Snake domain, and then,

BANG!

A bullet left the silver gun and tore through the air; simultaneously, the Phantom Snake's fangs and its tail were about to pierce Isabella's neck; however, the bullet was faster than the Phantom Snake; the bluish bullet struck Isabella's spear.

"Ugh!"

Isabella vomited a mouthful of blood and was sent flying by the bullet recoil when it clashed against the spear shaft; her body collided against the frozen snake that didn't think Alex would strike its comrade; it was thanks to this momentarily pause that Alex's goal was achieved.

He hoped to save Isabella's life by striking her spear shaft; he was sure that the monster would be surprised as he first thought Alex would bluff and shoot at him in the end.

Even so, the Phantom Snake still lived to its name; after being sent flying alongside Isabella, who fainted halfway through, the Phantom Snake twisted its body midair before spitting a poison needle at Alex.

Pui!

Everything happened too fast; Alex couldn't dodge in time; his left shoulder was pierced and became paralyzed, forcing him to drop Silveria.

At the same time that this was happening, the Phantom Snake regained its original form and tried to finish Alex off; however, like a Lightning Goddess, the furious Artemia clad in black lightning descended from the sky and struck the Phantom Snake in the back.

Hiss!

The Phantom Snake hissed, however this time, it was of pain; Artemia was surprised that even her strong attack managed to injure the snake slightly.

Suddenly, she frowned because, from the injured Phantom Snake's back, its black blood started to transform into a mist that tried to invade Artemia's body through her pores; she knew it would be a bad end if she let it succeed, therefore she jumped back.

At the same time, Alex made a move; he was extremely pissed right now, irritated that half of his body was paralyzed; using his death's eye to momentarily froze the Phantom Snake, he used Synthesize.

BANG!

The super bullet blew the Phantom Snake head off before he couldn't even understand what happened.

Thud

At the same time when the Phantom Snake body headless body touched the ground, Alex followed.

Chapter 286 - 281: Short Rest

At the same time, when the Phantom Snake body headless body touched the ground, Alex followed.

After quickly treating Isabella's bleeding, Artemia rushed toward Alex, turning him around. Artemia feeds him a Poison recovery potion.

[[Master, you should have used this chance to have Artemia mouth feed you. How can you let go of such an occasion? It's how I have raised you?]]

If Silveria was in front of him at the moment and he wasn't paralyzed, Alex swore that he would have taught that old hag a lesson, not that he dared to call her that.

Alex completely ignored Silveria and thanked Artemia after he recuperated.

"No need to thank me, if not for your intervention, Isabella would have lost her life; however, I would have appreciated if you have used a gentle method; she has four broken ribs, even though I healed her using a high-grade Healing potion, she would need to rest, her skull almost cracked crashing against several trees."

"I see, my bad, however, at that time I couldn't only think about that only solution." Alex scratched his nose while explaining.

"I know, I'm blaming you; I'm just feeling frustrated because I couldn't do anything when you two are in danger only because of my weakened Gift." Artemia sighed; she then sat on the ground in the lotus position.

"Don't worry, soon it will be complete again. You don't have to blame yourself, just know that everyone has a moment of weakness. You-"

"Alex, I never knew you were so good with words. It's almost as if you are trying to win some points with me."

Artemia had recuperated enough and even teased Alex. The latter rolled his eyes at her.

Seeing this, Artemia couldn't help but become curious.

"Even though I'm joking, you don't have to react like that. Say, I'm that unattractive in your eyes? Considering that you have such a beautiful Master, I can understand."

"Please stop right there. I would be a lie if I said you were not attractive, that you made me want to conquer, have you for myself; however, unlike most males, I know how to keep myself in check. I don't go after all women that stir my heart." Alex explained and afterward stayed silent.

Observing Alex for a moment, Artemia's mouth lifted into a smile.

"As I thought you are interesting. You are different from other males that would use various methods to win my heart is not talking about the present but the past. You showed a total disinterest in my person; some might say it was another way of winning me; by doing this, you will attract my attention, making me curious about you; curiosity will give birth to something. However, I know you don't have such intention; you don't have an interest in making a move on me; you just want to maintain a good relationship with me. I can see that through your eyes."

[[Master, quickly deny it, tell her that-]]

'Shut up; since when did you become a matchmaker?' Alex shouted at Silveria; the latter shut it as she could feel her master's anger rising if she continued any further.

Wanting to change the subject, Alex asked,

"Excuse my bluntness, but why did you bring Isabella with you? I don't mean to say she's weak, but it would have been faster if it was just the two of us."

Facing Alex's harsh words, Artemia didn't immediately answer; she first affectionately caressed Isabella's hair, looking at her as if she was looking at her sister; Artemia finally spoke.

"I understand what you want to say; however, I couldn't let her stay at home because she wouldn't accept, and I feel at ease knowing her beside me. I may be a reincarnated goddess, lofty in the past, but Isabella is like my sister; we grew up together. She was there when nobody could play with me, there when I was lonely after my mother's death."

"I see." Alex looked at Isabella in a new light; he had never thought there was such a deep bond between her and Artemia.

After a moment of silence, Alex decided, "Let's wait for one to let her recover before continuing."

"Thank you, Alex."

Alex waved to dismiss Artemia from thanking him.

Seeing him act like this brought a smile upon Artemia's face; she was extremely grateful for this offer, touched. After resting for one day, Isabella would have perfectly recovered.

Leaving the two alone, Alex decided to go patrol, Silveria appeared beside him.

Looking at her master's side face, Silveria chuckled.

"Why did you do that? We could have continued; the faster we finish here, the faster we will check on the girls. I kept having this nagging feeling that something bad would happen."

"Sigh! How could I not know these things? I'm well of that. However, while I wish to check how the girls are doing immediately, I can't be hasty. I need to think about my party members. Let's suppose if I urged them to continue and the next floors Isabella lost her life because she hasn't completely recovery? Maybe it will be more due to her blunder. So, after long consideration I decided to propose this solution, don't forget that I'm the employee, even if I don't say anything, Artemia might suggest for us to take a short rest. However, when I'm the one to propose it, she will feel grateful, and from now on, she will leave decisions to me as she knew I have the wellbeing of the team in head, I can make better decisions. It's what I wish for."

After listening to Alex's explanation, Silveria understood what he was after. Alex was done yet, he added.

"Also, let's not forget that I have stationed Sera on the girl's side. With such a powerful ranker there, I don't think that anything will go awry. She is strong after all; while I don't know where this nagging feeling of incoming calamity is coming from, I believe that Sera will not be easily taken down. By the time it happens, we would have finished here, and I will be going over there. Well, if something were to happen over there, that is."

"I see. You have thought that far. I have forgotten about Sera. Let's hope that nothing bad happens." Silveria said after recalling that Alex had asked Sera alias Zero to protect his sister, by extension the others in the shadow.

Suddenly, as she remembered something, Silveria turned to look at Alex in the face and asked.

"By the way, what is your current Level, Master?"

"Level 71, almost 72." Alex proudly declared. That Phantom snake was generous, giving him a lot of XP.

As if she hadn't heard anything noteworthy, Silveria said.

"Oh! Same with that girl."

Alex almost fell face first. He knew Silveria did that intentionally; the same goes for Artemia, letting Silveria know about her strength; it was to tell Alex, 'You haven't won.'

"Interesting, bring on."

Alex said with a devilish smile; he was sure of his victory; the same goes for Artemia.

Thus, their third day passed.

Chapter 287 - 282: Isabella

The next day Isabella woke up feeling refreshed.

"Finally up? You sleepyhead." Artemia teased Isabella.

"Your highness?"

Isabella was surprised to see Artemia here.

"What are you acting for? It's natural to look, my sister."

Artemia's words moved Isabella to tears; she hugged Artemia tightly, afraid to let her go.

"There, there. I'm here. I'm not going anymore, but you should thank a certain someone, if not for him, you would be dead by now."

Artemia's words brought the image of a certain handsome boy to Isabella's mind.

At that time, the serious Alex armed with his silver gun looks like a prince in shining armor coming to her rescue. Recalling his face as he pressed the trigger to rescue her made Isabella deeply flush; her heartbeat quickly increased. She recalled everything that happened since their first meeting; it was him that made her slowly change her mindset. Thinking about all of these things made Isabella's heart,

Ba-dump Ba-dump!

'What happening to me?'

'Why is my heart beating so fast? And more importantly, why I can't get off that image from my head? All I can think of is Alexander.'

Isabella became quickly lost in thought; she was so focused that she didn't hear Artemia calling her numerous.

Noticing Isabella's unusualness, Artemia flicked the latter forehead.

"Ouch! That's hurt."

"You should thank Alex," Artemia ordered, and when the name of Alex was brought, Isabella froze; her eyes started darting left and right before she finally managed to squeeze some words.

"I go- got it, I will go see him. He should be back by now after completing his morning exercise."

As if running from a crime scene, Isabella disappeared, leaving a dumfounded Artemia who looked at the running Isabella's back before bursting into laughter.

"Eh? How unexpected, how interesting. I wonder how you will this with this Alexander."

From Artemia's words just now, she seemed to have understood something from Isabella's behavior.

After collecting the tent, Artemia decided to check on Alex and Isabella; however, she was sauntering as if she wished to enjoy the morning breeze.

•••••

One kilometer from Artemia's current position, there was a waterfall. Alex had just taken a bath, so he was only dressed in his pants and was topless, a towel wrapped around his neck as he started to walk back to their camping location.

Just after taking his twentieth step, he heard the sound of a branch cracking.

Sighing, Alex asked, looking at where the sound came from.

"I say, Ms. Isabella, what are you playing at? Can you stop hiding?"

Isabella's body trembled; she didn't think she had been spotted already. She didn't want to hide, it just that the moment he was the topless Alex, her face got hot as if it was on fire, her heartbeat accelerated so much that she feared that from afar people could hear it, it why she decided to hide until it calms down.

'What is happening to me? This isn't the first time I have seen Alex topless, yet I can't control my heartbeat. I think it is going crazy; yesterday, images of him gallantly saving came rushing back. What should I do?'

Swoosh!

Isabella, who went into monologue mode again, was surprised to find Alex suddenly appearing right before her; she almost tripped and fell back; fortunately, Alex could catch her properly. Unfortunately, this made things difficult for Isabella as her heartbeat accelerated once more.

Ba-dump Ba-dump!

"Are you alright?" Alex asked in a normal voice.

However, in Isabella's, he had asked with a concerned face; this made our maiden blush.

In reality, Alex frowned when he noticed Isabella react like this; he rapidly concluded why she acted like that.

On the other side Silveria who was watching everything smiled.

[[Hehehe, my Master is such a dinner, to think you will have conquered this girl in just short three days, you amaze me.]]

Ignoring Silveria's ramblings, Alex helps Isabella up before saying in a serious tone.

"It's good that you are fine, but I want to clarify something. That feeling that started budding in your heart, you better crush it because it will only harm you. Nothing will happen between us; the sooner you discard it, the better it will be, and you won't get hurt."

Alex's merciless words stabbed deep into the young maiden, heart-crushing the budding love; Isabella stood rooted on the spot; a single tear escaped from her eyes.

At that moment, Isabella understood what was happening to her, Alex's rescue triggered something inside her, and if this continues, she will fall in love with him.

[[How cold of you, Master. It would be best if you had phrased it nicely, no need to be that rude.]]

Silveria complained, she was disappointed as she had hoped to see something interesting, she wanted to see what kind of expression Artemia would make once Isabella became Alex's woman, she may no show any at first, but someday she will, Silveria was sure of it.

'Sorry to crush your expectations as I know what you are thinking.'

[[I dunno what you are talking about.]] Silveria started whistling.

'Fine. Forgot it. I don't have time to entertain you.'

Alex said before looking at Isabella, wiping away the tear on her face.

"Sorry, Mr. Alexander, I must have shown you something unsightly; I hope you will forgive me. And thank you for saving my life yesterday. I shall repay you someday." Isabella said before lowering her head; she then turns around to depart.

"No need to repay me as I did what a comrade should do."

"Comrade? Huh! Thanks, Mr. Alexander." Isabella said one more time before leaving, going back towards the location where they spent the night.

After Alex watch Isabella leave, he turned his head in a certain direction.

"You can come out now, eavesdropping, princess."

"Fufufu! As expected of you. To think you would find out so soon."

Artemia came out from her hiding place,

"Why didn't you announce that I was spying on you?" She asked as she was curious why Alex didn't say anything.

"Isn't what you wanted?"

Instead of answering her question, Alex fired back a question; Artemia couldn't only helplessly shrug her shoulders.

"You are too cruel. To think you would say these words to a maiden experiencing her first feeling of love."

[[That right.]] Silveria agrees with Artemia.

While buttoning his shirt, Alex declared.

"If you didn't wish for that, you should have deal with it before sending her my way."

"And how can I do that? I don't have any experience in the matters." Artemia declared with an innocent smile.

Looking at Artemia with an expressionless face, Alex declared before leaving,

"Thanks for the unnecessary information. Let's depart."

"How cold," Artemia said before chasing after Alex. Even though she said that she was smiling, she found Alex truly interesting as most men would have jumped on the chance of making Isabella, a close friend of her, their woman, and yet Alex never plans for that.

Chapter 288 - 283: 24th Floor And The Winner

After that little episode, Isabella smiles less; however, after Alex told her that he wishes to be friends with her, even rival, Isabella regained a bit of color.

Artemia looked gratefully at Alex; the latter only nodded his head.

The group quickly left the 21st floor and stepped into the 22nd floor; however, to their dismay, they found no monster attacking; this floor looks no different from the first floor, while no monsters came out no matter how long the group waited, Alex detected the existence of a trap, the one once you trigger it would send you into a random floor.

After the group disarmed the trap, they descended toward the next floor, floor 23; here as well, there was only trap, lots of traps, such as flame spurting from the walls, the ground suddenly split opening, lances shooting out from the ceiling.

With Alex and Silveria's help, Artemia and Isabella successfully left for the 24th floor.

The twentieth-fourth floor was a desert, stretching as far as the eyes could see; the temperature was so hot that Alex and the girl's skins started to redden, obviously the visible part of their skins as they armors had a cooling effect.

"Seriously, what with this dungeon? It has sun, forest, mountains, and now desert."

Isabella said while looking around. As expected, there was nothing but desert.

Looking at the same scenery, Alex asked,

"I heard that there is only one Desert in this world, and it's on the demon race continent."

"Yes," Isabella confirmed his question. However, Artemia corrected them.

"While it true that there a desert on the demon continent, it is not the only desert of Mysthia's world, there's another one, just that people tend to forget about it. The black desert on Arda continent."

Artemia had a guilty look on her face when she uttered that name, the name of dwarves continent, long lost in that brutal war that wiped out an entire continent.

"I see; thanks for the information. Let's cautiously move forward; I have the feeling that this floor isn't going to be easy. Finally, we might be able to fight some monsters, and I will be-"

"To crush you." Artemia finished Alex's words.

Looking at Alex and Artemia still thinking about their bet, Isabella quietly shook her head before reading her weapon.

The group cautiously moved through the desert; for the first hundred meters, nothing happened; however, just when they passed the 150 meters, monsters jumped out from the sands and surrounded them.

It was a black scorpion of 2 meters of height; their stings pointed at the group.

Under normal circumstances, one should be feeling scared being surrounded by more than Ten Black scorpions; however, Alex and Artemia were smiling; for them, these Black scorpions were only XP, nothing more. XP that would help them win the bet.

"Hehehe!"

"Fufufu! The winner shall be decided here." Artemia declared.

"I agree." Alex nodded his head.

Both wore a confident smile on their face.

Looking at this scene, Isabella twitched the corner of her eye.

At first, those black scorpions were annoyed to be ignored after making such a grand entrance; however, for an unknown reason, they retreated after seeing the smile on Alex's and Artemia's faces; it was the smile of a butcher.

Swoosh!

Zila~

Both Alex and Artemia disappeared simultaneously; the first one poured MP into Sleipnir to increase his speed to a terrific degree while the black lightning covered the latter feet.

Crack!

After crushing a black scorpion by stepping on it after making a high jump, Alex did a backflip using the recoil of impact after crushing that scorpion to deliver a phantom bullet at two black scorpions standing together.

Boom!

Even though after killing two killing black scorpions, the phantom bullet still created a big hole on the ground that caused an explosion.

When Alex looked in Artemia's direction, he found her smiling at him; she had just killed her third black scorpion.

Smiling, Alex tried to move to his next target; the same goes for Artemia; however, before they could, they were forced to jump back as a gigantic water dragon swept through the area, crushing all black scorpions on its passage.

After Isabella's Water dragon eliminated the remaining Black scorpions, Alex and Artemia glared at her; the eyes seemed to convey, 'Do you have a death wish?'

"Oh! Scary~ scary~."

Even though inwardly scared to the point of trembling, Isabella still smiled at Alex and Artemia.

"Forget it. Next time I will win." Alex declared after looking at Isabella then Artemia.

"Same here." Artemia declared.

They both are just a tiny bit away from stepping into the next Rank.

Kaboom!

Without warning, a massive earthquake sent Alex's group flying through the air; the three successfully managed to land on the ground.

From the ground, two gigantic snake-like things came out.

Alex and Artemia's eyes turned cold, they shouted at the same time.

"I hate snakes."

Even though Isabella, who was able to register the two monster's appearances, wanted to correct them, saying it wasn't a snake, but Desert worms stayed silent as the two had already made a move.

"Synthesize"

"Black Devourer."

Before the two Desert worms could fully emerge from the ground and avenge their subordinates, Alex's super bullet and Artemia black lightning dragon had already entered their bodies.

Half of the emerged bodies were torn to shreds, creating a gory rain of organs and blood.

After eliminating what the two thought to be snakes, Alex and Artemia turned to face each other and declared.

"Level 82"

"Level 72, half of my XP bar is filled."

"I see; I would like to call it a draw, but it's, isn't it. You win. What do you want?"

Unexpectedly Artemia immediately admitted defeat; she acted as if everything was fine. However, Alex could notice that it was not the case; she was gripping her glaives way too hard, proof that she wasn't feeling calm as she portrayed.

"Don't be hasty; you will know when the time comes. By the way, I'm always ready for a challenge; my end goal is to stand at the top, surpass me if you can."

Alex declared before leaving to collect the body of the monster he killed. His item box was about to be full with so many monster corpses put inside it.

Looking at Alex's back, he seemed close yet far; Artemia smiled; her fighting spirit was ignited.

"I will, Alexander, I will." She accepted Alex's challenge.

Isabella, at the side, smiled when she saw Artemia regaining her smile; she was afraid that Artemia would only show a forced smile after losing as she knew Artemia pretty well. Fortunately, Alex had the right words to keep Artemia motivated.

"Thank you."

Isabella quietly muttered before moving toward the other Desert worm.

Chapter 289 - 284: Ninth Form Vs Synthesize 1

After Alex collected the Desert worm's corpse, he decided to check his status; now that he became Rank 8, he used his newly gained SP alongside his BP.

[[Alexander Kael Touch]

Class: Magic Gunslinger

Age: 17

Male

Race: High Human

┌ Rank 8]

Level 72

Experience Value (XP): 20000/39100

Magic Power: 5140 (+ 30 (+30 BP) ► 5200/5200

Magic: None

Attack: 1580 (+30 (+50 BP) ► 1660

Defense: 1480 (+30) ► 1510

Agility: 1630 (+30 BP) ► 1650 (+200)

Intelligence: 1480 (+30) ► 1510

Luck: 1260 (+30) ► 1290

BP: 0

SP: 0

Gift: Two Guns * Semi-sealed*

Skills: [Advanced Appraisal Level 1] [Item box Level 2] [Swift Fingers Max] [Divine Sense Level 4]
[Throwing knife Level 5] [Dark Vision Level 2] [Dual Wielding Level 2] [Accel Level 3] [Knife Art Level 4]

[Link Level 3] [Gun Art Level Level 10] [Normal Regeneration Level 5 (+2 SP) ► Level 6] [Mana Recovery Level 5 (+2 SP) ► Level 6] [Synthesize Level 3 (+4 SP) ► Level 6] [Shadow Shift Level 1 (+2 SP) ► Level 3]

Special Abilities: [Language Comprehension][Danger Sense] [Overdrive] [Death's Eye] [Envisage] {Erase} {Magic Bullet} {Snatch} [Hellsing] [Xerox]

Titles: [Otherworlder] [The one who can't use Magic] [The one whose fingers are faster than Flash] [Goblin Slayer] [The Reborn] [Shadow Nemesis] [The Slaughterer]』

'I can now recover my MP faster and heal faster as well. As for Shadow Shift skill, its range increased to one kilometer; I can switch place with anything within my sight, the previous restrictions the skill has decreased. The thing that makes me most happier is my Synthesize is now Level 6, meaning six combined bullets; I wonder how stronger this bullet going to be?'

『Let's live Erase aside, this skill will be your strongest attack, even surpassing Phantom bullet.』 As if she could read Alex's mind, Silveria declared.

'I know; I want to test how strong this attack gonna be before moving to the next floor.' Alex said as he stood up and started walking toward the girls.

『Hehehe! I know what you want to do, Master.』

'Yeah, I know you know. How can you not when you see walking toward her?'

Alex replied to Silveria before stopping in front of Artemia; the latter turned to face him.

"It seems that you need something, Alex. What is it?"

"Fight me. I meant, let's spare."

This sudden declaration dumbfounded Isabella, and before she could open her mouth, Artemia had already responded.

"Sure, why not. I was itching to test out my new strength anyway. Let's go."

Under the still dumbfounded Isabella, Alex and Artemia put a good distance between them and stared at each other for a moment; neither of them moved, just staring at each other; however, only the two knew that in that moment of silence, their auras clashed numerous time, Artemia's Aura was beautiful golden black, while Alex's Aura a mix of silver, white and black. The final clash resulted in,

Boom!

The sand around them was blown away, the result of this final auras showdown. Isabella, who was watching, couldn't help gulp.

"These two are monsters! Can't hope to compete with them, but, at least I can be strong enough to stand beside them and provide some assistance."

While Isabella was making this decision, Alex and Artemia moved simultaneously.

Boom!

Boom!

The sand under their feet cracked, leaving a small crater as they moved.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Clangs! Clangs!

Alex perfectly blocked Artemia's glaives; the latter wasn't surprised; on the contrary, she had hoped for this.

Grinning evilly, Artemia said,

"Lightning."

Zila~ Zila~

Two dark blue lightning snakes were shot out from Artemia's glaives and tried touching Alex's knives, and both knew what would happen if he let these lightning snakes touch his weapons.

When the dark blue lightning snakes almost touched his knives, Alex let go of them and instantly summoned two silver guns; Silveria aside, it was pretty astonishing that Alex was able to insta-summon another gun through Xerox.

BANG! BANG!

Two bullets obliterated the lightning snakes.

In a split second, Artemia took a decision when she saw how faster he switched his knives to two guns. She joined her two glaives together through their butts; it became a short spear; spinning it, she deflects the following bullets fired by Alex.

BANG!!!! Clangs !!!

"Ugh!"

Artemia grunted in pain because a bullet grazed her shoulder when she was busy dealing with Alex's bullets. Alex had sneakily fired a Homing bullet at her.

Artemia jumped back, quickly putting some distance between her and Alex. Once again, the two stared at each other.

"You have gotten stronger; even your bullets became faster. I never thought that I would get hurt, even though I paid attention. Time for payback, don't you think?"

Facing Artemia's words, Alex readied his two guns.

"Great. Because my Gift is incomplete and I'm not Rank 10, it's hard to use this move; even so, I think you will like it." Artemia declared before suddenly let go of glaives.

[[No good, Master jump back asap]]

As if she understood something, Silveria shouted; however, it was already too late.

By the time Alex could jump, the tip of Artemia's glaives touched the ground and,

[Lightning Chains]

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Countless small blue lightning chains shot out from the ground and tried piercing Alex's body.

Alex hastily twisted his body left and right, before firing bullets at the chains; he couldn't dodge; astonishingly, the chains his bullet broke would soon regenerate once touching the ground, transforming into a new chain that would shot toward him.

Looking from afar, Alex seemed to be trapped in the middle of a huge lightning chains formation with nowhere to escape.

Alex started to have a hard time keeping up with numerous lightning chains attacking from all directions.

Artemia choose that move to declare,

[Nine Layered Chains]

Rumble!

The ground under Alex's feet rumbled, the lightning chains combined to form Nine Layered Chains that shot at Alex simultaneously.

"Ugh!"

For the first time since their battle, Alex received an injury, one of Nine chains pierced his left wrist, forcing him to drop the gun created using Xerox.

"Alex"

Isabella shouted; she almost rushed toward him when she saw him getting injured; however, Alex's voice stopped her.

"Stay back."

Chapter 290 - 285: Ninth Form Vs Synthesize 2

"Hahahaha! Good, now it's has become interesting."

After stopping Isabella from intervening, Alex laughed hard; his eyes were shining, filled with delight, a delight to fight against a strong opponent.

Seeing this, Artemia smiled in turn before declaring.

"Here I come."

She then flicked her fingers; the nine lightning chains shot at Alex again. Alex's injured shoulder was healed already; therefore, he created another gun using Xerox; closing his eyes, he decided to rely on his senses to detect where the chains would attack from; they were too fast for him to dodge.

'Wait! Why not use Sleipnir? Like this, I will be able to detect the chains. Even though they move at the speed of sound, they moved through the air, using the wind element I can sense them.'

From the moment Alex thought that he immediately poured MP into Sleipnir to go in that particular state where he feels one with the wind.

'There, and there!!'

As expected, the moment he used Sleipnir's unique ability, he sensed the aura of incoming chains, something he was previously unable to do, relying on his sense and Divine Sense.

Leaning slightly toward his right, Alex was able to dodge the first chain; shifting back to his previous position; he dodged the second chain before firing under his right armpit to deflect the third chain slightly from its initial target.

"I see, you have already come up with a solution."

Seeing Alex dodging her chains almost effortlessly, Artemia said before her, smiling.

"However, it won't be so easy."

[Nine Layered Chains Second Form: Sonic Chains]

The nine lightning chains abruptly change color, turning light gold.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Faster than before, the lightning chains tore through the air and arrived before Alex; even though he could sense them through the wind in the air, he knew he couldn't dodge this time.

"Shadow Shift"

Before the nine lightning chains could pierce him, Alex used Shadow Shift to switch place with Artemia, and it was then he heard.

"I knew you would do that."

[Nine Layered Chains Third Form: Lightning Punch]

"No good." Alex knew he had fallen into Artemia's trap, and before he could teleport using Accel, from the ground where he appeared, nine chains came out of the ground and transformed into a punch that struck Alex in the stomach.

"Guh! Ah!"

Alex was sent spiraling into the; he almost lost consciousness; somehow, a small amount of lightning got into his body, making his body spasms.

Gritting his teeth, Alex secretly threw a knife before muttering Accel.

Artemia, who was watching free-falling from the sky, suddenly sensed an immense danger, she immediately shouted.

[Nine layered Chains Fourth Form: Chains Shield]

Nine lightning chains came out from the ground and tried to form a shield made of chains in Artemia's back; however, faster than them, a small object passed through the gap in the chains.

Fortunately, at the last moment, Artemia tilted her head to the side, managing to dodge the small object; even so, she still received a small cut on her cheek.

At the same time, Alex fell to the ground; he rolled on the ground before standing up.

"Fufufu! As expected of you, I knew you wouldn't disappoint me. Even though you received such a heavy punch, not only are you almost unharmed, you were still able to attack me."

"Same goes for you; you didn't disappoint me. I wonder how many forms that new skill of yours has?" Alex said while dusting himself.

"As I said because my Gift is incomplete and because of my current level, I can exhibit this ability to its fullest; however, there's one final form, a special form I wish to test, be wary of it, you may become heavily injured. Are you ready?"

Facing Artemia's question, Alex's answer was obvious.

"Bring on."

"Good!" Artemia said before licking the blood on fingers. She looked devilish.

Both Silveria and Isabella sighed; the latter wondered if this still could be considered sparring.

Alex and Artemia stared at each other in the eyes for the third time before Artemia declared.

[Nine Layered Chains Ninth Form: Judgement Spear]

Rumble!

The fake sun inside the dungeon disappeared, replaced by a cloudy sky, golden lightning appeared before disappearing.

A huge magic circle appeared under Alex's feet, making him unable to move his body; from the sky, nine golden lightning chains appeared before combining into five meters long golden spear.

This spear was pointed downward, exactly at Alex. Then it was shot at him; everything happened so fast, from the time Artemia took to announce her Gift ability to the time the sun disappeared, and that golden spear appeared not even three seconds passed.

Alex couldn't watch as the Judgement Spear come toward him. No matter what he did, he couldn't move his body; the magic circle under his feet seemed to make his body unable to move. Artemia came prepared; she made Silveria pointed forward, not downward, as she feared Alex using Erase.

Even though Alex knew Artemia would stop the spear before he was greatly injured, that would mean he lost; just thinking about such a possibility made Alex angry; he doesn't want to lose.

'I mustn't lose, definitely not.' Alex bellowed; his body cracked as he tried to move his body forcibly but in the end, fail; he bit his lip until it bleeds.

[[Master, should I help, I need your authoriz-]]

'Do not even think about.' Alex refused Silveria's proposition before she couldn't even finish saying it.

Suddenly, Alex got an idea; he unsealed his right eye to lock onto the incoming spear, hoping to stop its movement, even though if it was for a moment. Unfortunately, it was a failure.

'Fuck! If only I can stop time, even if it is for a second.' Alex couldn't help but lament as he watches the Judgement Spear slowly descend toward him.

It was that moment something astonishing happened, Alex's right eye throbbed violently before a small clock appeared inside it, then,

Click!

This sound was heard by Alex, Artemia, Isabella, Silveria, and another person; this person smiled, something she rarely did.

[[No way, to-]]

Before Silveria could finish what she was about to say, as she knew what this sound means, time stop,

Even though Alex didn't know what happened, why he was the only one still moving while everything seemed to freeze, he pointed his gun toward the golden spear while fighting against the terrible pain assaulting him; his head was about to split apart.

Just he pointed Silveria at the incoming spear time resumed and,

[Synthesize]

Before Artemia and Isabella couldn't ask what just happened, they saw a pure white bullet clashing against Artemia's Judgement spear.

Kaboom!

When the two clashed, a mega explosion occurred that shook the 24th, almost creating a sand avalanche; a considerable part of the dungeon's ceiling was momentarily gone.

Thud!

Alex falls to the ground; Artemia stood there dumfounded before suddenly puking a mouthful of blood before passing out; in the end, she still did not understand what just happened. Why do their bodies momentarily stop?