

The World 102

Chapter 102: The Battle At The Black Market, Part 2 (5)

Thick, ominous clouds blanketed the sky, casting a shadow over the entire area. Within the swirling mass, thunder boomed, its echoes resonating with foreboding. Drop by drop, rain began to fall, each droplet drumming against my cheeks before cascading down to the earth below.

"Who the fuck are you?!" Norman's voice pierced through the gloom, his fear palpable.

The man's gaze swept across the scene before settling on Norman, who visibly flinched under the weight of his stare.

"I am..." The man's pause hung in the air, a chilling silence that sent a shiver down my spine. His voice, cold and commanding, cut through the darkness. And then, he spoke his name, "...Mephisto."

"M-Mephisto...? So you're the one he's talking about! I haven't done a damn thing to you, so what the hell do you want from me?!" Norman's voice quivered with fear, his vulnerability laid bare as he pleaded for mercy from the man hovering above us.

The atmosphere crackled with tension as the man remained silent, his presence looming ominously against the backdrop of thick, swirling clouds. Each passing moment felt like an eternity as he descended, his movements deliberate and menacing, casting a shadow over Norman's fate.

"H-Hey! Stay the fuck back!" Norman's voice rose to a panicked shout, his desperation growing as the man drew nearer. He looked to his subordinates, who, like us, remained kneeling, seemingly paralyzed with fear and unable to intervene. "Hey, you useless pieces of shit! Do something!"

The subordinates finally snapped out of their stupor and sprang into action, their movements swift and menacing as they closed in on the man. With a terrifying synchronicity, they surrounded him before launching themselves at him in a unified assault. But in a blink of an eye, an obsidian arc sliced through them, cutting them down with brutal efficiency.

A single blow was all it took to send all of Norman's lackeys to their gruesome demise.

"T-This can't be..." Norman's eyes widened in disbelief, his voice trembling with shock. It was truly astonishing. Despite never seeing the man, who called himself Mephisto, draw a blade, all the men, who I'd been battling earlier and knew to be skilled fighters, were now split in two, their bodies sprawled lifelessly on the ground.

"S-So this is The Playwright..." I murmured, my voice barely above a whisper as the realization sank in. True to the rumors I'd heard, he was a force to be reckoned with, his power transcending mere mortal limitations.

Norman attempted to rise to his feet but failed miserably.

"Stay kneeling," Mephisto commanded as he approached. As he neared Norman, he came across Shredica, who lay on the ground with pale, purpling skin, a clear sign that the poison was taking its toll. Despite the agony, she fought to remain alive.

I moved to stand and help Shredica, but Mephisto's gaze bore into me, sending a chill down my spine, and I found myself returning to my knees.

"Stay kneeling," his voice reverberated with an undeniable authority, sending shivers down my spine. He then turned his attention back to Shredica. "Phosphoros."

"Yes?" A mysterious figure materialized behind Mephisto, cloaked in darkness and adorned with a mask mirroring his own.

"Do something about this woman," Mephisto commanded.

"As you wish."

With a nod, the figure moved towards Shredica, their actions shrouded in mystery. I could only hope it was for the better. Meanwhile, Mephisto resumed his advance towards Norman.

"H-Help! Is there anyone?! Anyone who can take him down?!" Norman's desperate cries echoed through the rain-soaked air.

But the only response was the relentless drumming of raindrops. The Leader and I heard him, of course, but we remained silent. There wasn't a soul present who dared to challenge the man who had bested the underworld's strongest.

The rain intensified, transforming into a torrential downpour as massive droplets cascaded from the skies.

"Tsk! You're not gonna off me!" screamed Norman, his voice laced with panic as he activated his skill.

In response, Mephisto casually reached out and seized the air beside him.

"Huh?! How?!"

Before anyone could react, Norman's head was ensnared within Mephisto's grasp.

With effortless strength, Mephisto lifted Norman into the air as if he weighed nothing more than a feather. Norman thrashed wildly, desperate to break free from the iron grip. Meanwhile, the air around them seemed to warp and bend in resistance.

"Fuck! Why can't I teleport?!"

That's when it dawned on me. Norman had been trying to activate Portal Creation, but his attempts were futile.

"Does his glove... have some kinda power dampener?" I speculated, the thought naturally occurring to me. Power dampeners were often used to suppress the skills of detained individuals, rendering them powerless within prison confines.

But such devices were as rare as a virgin in a brothel, crafted from a metal so scarce that only a thousand power dampener cuffs were said to exist in the entire world. They were reserved for the most dangerous individuals, those whose skills posed a threat too great to ignore.

Encountering someone wearing a power dampener was truly shocking, given the circumstances.

"Fuck! Get off me!" Norman spat venomously, his desperation driving him to lash out with his dagger. But his efforts were in vain as a shimmering barrier materialized before Mephisto, deflecting the blade with ease. "What the hell are you?!"

Mephisto silently clenched his fist and aimed it at Norman. A barrier enveloped his fist, then in the blink of an eye, his fist vanished. Next thing I knew, Norman was sent hurtling across the area, crashing through a nearby wall.

"Gah... Cough... Ngh." Half-buried in the wall, Norman convulsed and spat out a mouthful of blood. His insides were probably turned to mush from that punch, and most of the bones in his upper body must've been shattered. Mephisto must've held back a bit, which was likely the only reason Norman hadn't kicked the bucket right then and there. Though, I couldn't fathom why he showed him mercy...

or why he intervened in the first place.

I just prayed he wouldn't turn his attention towards us. Unlike Norman, who we might have stood a chance against, I doubted we'd even stand a chance against this guy.

Norman's POV

What the fuck was happening? Why... What the hell was going on?

To be honest, I was clueless. It was frustrating not knowing what the hell was going down. Did I fall for 'his' trap? Was I sent to that bar to deal with some monstrous dude? I thought I was just gonna handle a couple of bitches, but now I'm knee-deep in this shit?

Mephisto approached me silently, his aura dripping with menace. His bloodlust, aimed directly at me, was so thick and suffocating that I felt like I might piss myself. This dude was terrifying. He was right when he said I shouldn't mess with him. Or even look him in the eye, for that matter. I knew better now.

I tried to stand up, but failed miserably. The pain he inflicted on me was so intense that it knocked me out cold, only to wake me up again. I groaned incessantly, the agony rendering me completely immobile.

I still had a trick up my sleeve, but pulling it off would mean certain death. And I sure as hell wasn't ready to kick the bucket. So, for now, my only option was to escape. But how the fuck was I supposed to do that in this situation?

Summoning a fireball in my palm, I hurled it at him. Mephisto didn't bother dodging; instead, he just let it hit him. But instead of making contact, the fireball was met by a barrier.

I recognized that barrier—it was similar to Gabrielle's Guardian, the one she used when she was still a Magic Knight. Which meant this guy's barrier was nearly indestructible as hers.

"Fuck this..." I muttered, gathering mana to teleport myself far away from there. But I knew my teleportation was limited—I could only create a portal where my eyes could see. Still, I should be able to escape if I deleted my presence as soon as I teleported. With that in mind, I activated my skill and vanished. It seemed like a success...

...Until I felt another punch slam into my face, the impact just as brutal as the first. It was coated with the same damn barrier. I was sent flying again, crashing through another establishment and piercing through the walls.

How the hell did he predict where my portal would appear, or where I'd end up after teleporting? If he could pull that off, it meant I was practically checkmated...

"Gah... Cough... Cough... Fuck..."

If teleportation wasn't the answer, what the hell was I supposed to do now? Did this mean I was gonna bite the dust right here? That was impossible. Unacceptable! I refused to go down without a fight.

That's when I made the decision to take the ultimate gamble.

"If I'm gonna kick the bucket anyway, then I might as well take this bastard down with me..."

I reached into my breast pocket and pulled out a pill, swallowing it whole.