

The World 103

Chapter 103: The Battle At The Black Market, Part 2 (6)

Leon's POV

Norman's aura underwent a drastic transformation. It was like a switch had been flipped, and suddenly, his power surged threefold. Before, his magical energy had been steady, but now it raged around him, almost out of control. Veins burst with blood, muscles tore, bones shattered, yet his body healed instantly. He defied the physical limits of a human form, hosting an immense amount of magical power.

Ordinarily, a human with that much mana would succumb to mana overload and die, but it seemed the pill he had taken somehow prevented that fate.

I'd heard from none other than Gabrielle that the underworld was researching ways for people to enhance their strength and surpass their body's limits. She'd even fought someone like that before. It took several dozen magic knights just to subdue them. And now, here was Norman, standing before me, embodying that very concept.

Gabrielle had referred to this as "awakening" in the underworld. Once someone assumed this form, there was no turning back. But in exchange... they were granted Herculean strength. That meant this was Norman's last resort.

"This is such a damn pain..." I grumbled to myself. The sheer magnitude of Norman's mana now eclipsed mine. The energy surrounding him was wild, almost chaotic, overflowing with mana being forcefully generated. His skin, eyes, and hair even took on a different tint.

"Aaaaaaghhh!" Norman's roar echoed like thunder before he vanished into thin air.

The resounding thud of impact reverberated through the air, followed by a sickening crunch as I was flung mercilessly toward the wall. With lightning reflexes, I kicked off the surface, twisting mid-air to land deftly on the ground. Damn. I didn't even register the force of his blow. Amon's suit was proving its worth.

I tried to regain my composure, but Norman relentlessly pressed his assault, each strike propelling me further back.

"Ha ha ha! Too sluggish! Too frail!" he jeered. "You're nothing compared to me now!"

With another thump, I was hurled backward by Norman's relentless assault. His strikes were swift, heavy, and unforgiving, driven by his overwhelming power and force.

"Ha ha ha! Is this the famed power of the man from the rumors? What a fucking letdown!" he taunted.

One punch connected, slamming me into the ground. Norman then straddled me, raining down furious blows with his thick, massive, purpled arms.

"Think you're a big shot just because you took down the best of us all?! You're nothing but a bug to be squashed by me! Pathetic!"

His punches packed a punch, no doubt. They were fast, too, but they did jack shit against me. My suit absorbed the force of his blows, and I employed Guardian to block his assaults. He couldn't lay a finger on me.

"The only sorry excuse here is you, Norman," I said in the coldest voice possible.

Norman's eyes widened in shock, his assault grinding to a halt. "W-What?" he stuttered.

"Your power is nothing but a façade, a sham bolstered by doping," I continued, my words laced with disdain. "Yet you have the audacity to flaunt it as if it's genuine. You're nothing but a fraud, undermining the very essence of fair play and integrity in combat.

You spit in the face of everything a true fighter stands for — the relentless pursuit of excellence, respect for adversaries, the spirit of camaraderie, the glory of victory, and the humility in defeat. You're nothing more than a pitiful, contemptible loser, a stain on the honorable art of combat."

"Who the hell cares about fighting ethics now?!" Norman spat back, his frustration palpable.

"That's the problem, Norman. You always resort to underhanded tactics," I retorted, my voice hardening. "You rely on dirty tricks like this every damn time. But perhaps it's time I showed you what true power looks like. Before you meet your inevitable demise."

"D-Don't you dare fuck with me! You'll be the one begging for mercy!" Norman growled, his anger boiling over.

I unleashed a torrent of bloodlust, saturating the entire area with its menacing presence.

Norman wasted no time in using his Portal Creation to escape from my wrath. As he vanished, I rose to my feet, my resolve unyielding.

"This is what true power looks like," I declared.

Norman's POV

The pill he had given me had indeed augmented all of my stats, just as he had promised. It shattered the limits of my body, granting me superhuman strength, enhanced reflexes, and heightened physical prowess and dexterity. Coupled with an almost limitless pool of mana, courtesy of the pill, I was a force to be reckoned with. But it was just a prototype, meaning my awakening wasn't flawless.

Swallowing the pill came with a steep price...death. However, since death was already looming over me, I decided to go out with a bang by facing off against this monstrous man.

With this power coursing through me, I could easily obliterate an entire village with a single spell. In fact, with the overwhelming energy pulsating within me, it felt like I had transcended mortal boundaries, surpassing even the mightiest warriors and mages of human, elven, beastmen, and dwarven descent. I believed I could take down this man too.

But I was dead wrong.

A chilling sensation gripped my insides like an icy claw, slowly twisting and freezing me from within. The air thickened with palpable pressure, as if gravity itself had intensified in the vicinity under the weight of his thick bloodlust. Beads of cold sweat formed on my brow, mingling with the already soaked fabric of my clothes as I unconsciously took a step back.

No, no... Why was I retreating? I possessed the power now. I could bring this man to his knees. I would ensure he went down with me. If he didn't, then swallowing that damn pill would have been all for nothing.

My knuckles, once pulsing with purple energy, grew white as bone beneath the strain.

Locked in a stare, he uttered, "Your power may have surged, but it's nothing compared to mine. Yours is a crude imitation, while mine is the genuine article."

"Heh, genuine, you say...?" I chuckled darkly, a smirk dancing upon my lips. "Your so-called genuine power lacks luster in my eyes. Sure, it may be genuine, but it's a mere shadow of mine! Allow me to unveil its true majesty!" With a flourish, I conjured a plethora of exit portals alongside a singular entrance portal. Through these rifts, I could multiply my presence manifold.

"Now, with a hundred of me converging upon you, you're utterly defenseless!"

To my astonishment, Mephisto remained unfazed, his demeanor dripping with disdain. "Do not dare elevate your feeble power to the status of almighty. It's an affront to those who truly command power."

"You fucking bastard!" I and my clones thundered in unison, our voices resonating with fiery fury. With each duplicate sharing my consciousness, they mirrored my indignation and resolve. "I'll fuck you up!" I snarled, and all of my clones surged forward.

Confident in the overwhelming numbers and enhanced strength granted by the pill, I anticipated their onslaught would shred him to pieces. But...

Mephisto drew in a deep breath, his gaze focused, and then pointed his finger downward with deliberate intent. "Submit to gravity..."

With that command, an invisible force slammed into all my clones, driving them mercilessly to the ground. Though I remained unaffected physically, I could sense the immense pressure bearing down on them, each clone forced into submission by the oppressive power.

"W-What the...? What sorcery is this?" I muttered, my confusion mounting. It was unlike any magic I had encountered before. It felt as if... yes, gravity magic, a rare and potent skill wielded by the elusive skyfolk. But how could Mephisto possess such a formidable ability?

"Do you grasp it now? How utterly feeble your counterfeit power is against the genuine?" he sneered, his voice dripping with disdain.

"W-Who the fuck are you?!" I yelled, my heart pounding in my chest. "What the fuck do you want from me?!"

"I've already told you who I am, haven't I? I am Mephisto," he stated icily. "And what I desire from you is simple: your demise."

At his words, I caught a glimpse of a silver streak out of the corner of my eye. Then, a sickeningly loud thud reverberated through the air, as if something heavy had crashed to the ground.

"Huh...?"

I turned to my right and horror washed over me as I realized... my right arm was missing.

"What...? Wh-Where is my arm?! What the fuck happened to it?!"

And then, another gleaming streak sliced through the air with a chilling swiftness, followed by a heavy thud. My left arm was abruptly ripped from its socket.

"Aaaagh! My arms!" I howled in sheer agony, the pain coursing through my being like a relentless tide.

Another silver blur streaked toward me, and another, until I found myself collapsing to my knees, the ground beneath me slick with blood. But it wasn't a voluntary act; my legs were severed, leaving me sprawled in a grotesque heap.

"Ahhhhh! N-No! Have mercy!" I pleaded, my voice raw with desperation, each word a cry for reprieve from the impending doom.

My body crumpled further, my face pressed into the muddied earth. In this pitiful posture, I found myself prostrating before my assailant, a humiliating display of surrender. But in the face of certain death, pride was a luxury I could ill afford.

"P-Please, spare my life! I-I'll give you anything! Wealth, women! Whatever your heart desires! Just spare me from the abyss!"

Even though I knew I was doomed from the moment I swallowed that damned pill, I couldn't accept my impending demise. I still had so much left to do, so much left to experience! I wasn't ready to die yet. I wanted to live! That's why I found myself pleading desperately for this man to spare me.

Begging was all I could do in that moment, a desperate plea to cling to life for just a little longer.