

The World 56

Chapter 56: Irene (3)

Before I knew it, I found myself outside, surrounded by curious spectators eager to witness the impending fight. Murmurs of "What's happening here?" filled the air, but the answers were consistent: "It's a duel, apparently." I was pretty sure this was far from a mere duel; it was shaping up to be a fight to the death.

The onlookers formed a circle around us. The man still had a firm grip on me, while Student Leon maintained a composed stance roughly five meters away. His calm demeanor in this perilous situation bordered on blissful ignorance. He needed to put an end to this absurdity before it spiraled out of control. I wished there was something I could do, but I found myself powerless.

The man holding me possessed a skill that countered mine perfectly, and I doubted any of my magical abilities could make a dent. While I excelled in swordsmanship, my confidence waned when it came to magic. In truth, my magical prowess was subpar, the reason I could only manage to graduate in the silver class.

"One thing," remarked Student Leon. "Can you please release her? I'm quite certain you don't want to engage in a fight with her in your clutches."

"Do you think I can't win because of that?" growled the man.

"I do. And I'd despise winning under those circumstances."

"Wow. You have a way with words, bastard. But fine. I suppose you have a point."

With a forceful motion, the man threw me to the ground. A surge of irritation coursed through me as I shot him a piercing glare. Yet, amidst the anger, more urgent matters demanded attention. I rose from the ground and sprinted toward Student Leon.

"Come on, let's make a run for it," I urged, seizing his arm. Attempting to pull him away, I found Student Leon unmoved. "W-Wait, why aren't you running?"

"Professor, don't you think it's a man's shame if I just run away after declaring I'll fight him? Imagine the embarrassment I'd endure."

My eyes widened, "H-How do you know I'm your professor? W-Wait! Not that! What do you mean?! Are you really not going to escape from this even though he's threatening to kill you just because of your pride?!"

"That's right."

"Is that really more important right now?! Can't you see how perilous the situation is? He's genuinely going to kill you, you know?"

"It'll be fine, Professor," he said. It was the first time I looked into his eyes, and a resolute determination gleamed. "I won't die here. You can rest assured of that."

Somehow, I couldn't shake the feeling that what he said held a grain of truth, even though I was well aware that he would face certain death if he went ahead with this confrontation. The young man standing before me had the reputation of being the weakest among the academy students.

I had observed him firsthand, and while he showed competence in both swordsmanship and magic, his skills were nothing more than mediocre. There was no visible dedication to improvement in either discipline; he was, in fact, one of the slackers in my class. I had even caught him dozing off with his eyes wide open.

He lacked any significant skill, and honestly, I believed he would remain in the bronze class for the entire four years at the academy.

Despite being fully aware of these shortcomings, I found myself releasing his arm.

"Promise me you won't die," I pleaded. It felt like I was uttering the words of a wife saying goodbye to her husband before war, but it was all I could muster in this situation.

"You can rest assured," he replied, redirecting his focus to the man.

"Are you finished with your farewell?" sneered the man. "If that's the case, let's hurry up and get into it already. I can't wait to defeat you and rape that woman in front of you before I kill you."

"Thanks for your patience. We'll be starting now," Student Leon replied.

The man licked his lips, "Let's start then." With a deliberate activation of his skill, his skin began to glow in a mesmerizing red-orange hue. Wisps of scorching heat emanated from his body, casting an ethereal glow that gradually unveiled his naked form.

Fortunately, the intense glow obscured the finer details, sparing the spectators, including me, from the explicit sight of the thing between his legs.

I took a step back and moved to the circle of onlookers. Student Leon, however, remained in place, doing nothing but standing there. What was going through his mind, putting himself in such a perilous situation? He had no discernible skill, and he was undoubtedly weak. No, that's not the question. The real question is, what am I thinking?

Why did I let go of him? I should have taken action and dragged him out of here, even if it meant rendering him unconscious in the process.

Maybe I should still do that. It wasn't too late for me to intervene and drag him out. A step forward, then another. But as I approached, he looked at me and smiled.

"Don't worry. I got this."

In that instant, my heart skipped a beat, a shiver coursing through me as cold as if my body had been jolted by electricity. The next thing that happened was my hair standing on end. What was that feeling just now?

"Still flirting right in front of me, huh?" growled the man. "Die then!" He surged towards Student Leon, his fist poised for a swift strike, moving with a breathtaking speed, even surpassing my own. Yet, I could

still track his movements with my eyes. Dodging his attack demanded only a subtle adjustment, well within my capabilities. But what about Student Leon? Could he evade it?

Then, it happened. Student Leon's face took a direct hit. I witnessed it clearly. He was done for. My eyes welled up at that stark realization. However, the man was suddenly airborne, just like the men before.

He hovered in midair for a moment before plummeting back down. What had just occurred? Unlike before when I had no clue due to a lack of focus, I saw it now. I saw it unfold before my eyes – the man had struck a mere afterimage, and the authentic Student Leon materialized from behind and delivered a resounding uppercut, propelling the man into the air.

"Wh-What the...?"

Student Leon was fast, even faster than the man. What he executed resembled the fighting style of Student Hereon, another bronze student, who possessed the skill Speed Boost – a unique ability that enhanced the speed of his body. However, Leon had no such skill. Skills were unique to individuals, ruling out the possibility of him having Speed Boost.

But how did he do it, then? He employed magic. Yes, he used wind magic to accelerate himself to a degree that mimicked the effects of Speed Boost. The idea seemed implausible, but I witnessed it firsthand.

The man, seemingly undeterred by the earlier blow, rose defiantly from the ground. A cascade of blood expelled from his mouth, staining his lips as he wiped it away with a fierce determination. Locking eyes with Student Leon, he spat out his question, "You bastard... How the fuck did you do that?"

"I used my skill," responded Student Leon coolly. "Unlike my girlfriend, who wields a water-based skill, mine isn't tied to any elements. It's more about enhancing my overall capabilities."

"So, your skill is all about speeding up, huh? What a stupid skill...?!" Abruptly, the man dropped to one knee. "Wh-What the...? What the hell is happening to me? What the fuck did you do?!"

"I might have put too much strength into that punch, jostling the little brain of yours inside your head. But don't worry, it won't kill you; it'll just render you unconscious. Though, I have to admit, you're holding up surprisingly well given the force I unleashed..." Student Leon approached the man, his smirk widening.

"If I land another blow, it would undoubtedly be fatal, but I'm not a fan of killing someone in front of so many witnesses. What should I do?" he teased in a singsong tone.

"D-Don't fuck with me!" he struggled to stand, only to collapse on his butt. "Tsk. What the hell happened?!" Confused and frustrated, he glared at Student Leon, who still wore that playful smirk. However, this time, I noticed a tremor in the man's gaze. "Wh-Who the fuck are you?! What do you want from me?!"

Student Leon's expression remained unchanged, and he continued to exude an air of nonchalance. So why did the man react so strongly upon seeing his face?

"I heard something about you..." Leon leaned in, his hand finding a resting place on the man's shoulder. Whispering words too soft for my ears, he straightened up afterward. The man's face contorted, and a guttural wail tore through the air, sending shivers down my spine.

"Waaaaaaaaah!"

Then, amidst his wailing, the man's skill deactivated, leaving him exposed in all his naked glory. Fortunately, his position spared me from an unsolicited view of his genitalia. Amidst the cries, I noticed a steaming pool of liquid forming where he sat – the man had involuntarily relieved himself. I recognized that familiar humiliation; I had experienced a similar accident in my childhood.

Whatever Student Leon had whispered had induced enough terror to make the man cry and lose control of his bladder. Amidst the man's disarray, Student Leon observed him with an entertained glint in his eyes. In that moment, witnessing that expression, my heart skipped a beat once again.