

## The World 63

### Chapter 63: The Battle At The Black Market, Part 1 (3)

The blade inched closer and closer, not aiming for my vitals, indicating he wasn't trying to kill me with this attack. Still, it was evident that things were about to get really bad. I didn't particularly care if I met my end here, but the mission weighed heavily on my mind. Failing it meant disappointing Lord Mephisto. I had nothing in my arsenal to counter this impending attack.

Apologies, Lord Mephisto, but it seems I'm about to let you down. However, I vowed not to let this man lay a finger on me. If he made a move, I'd bite my tongue without hesitation.

As the blade neared my shoulder, an unexpected twist unfolded. Someone leaped in front of me, blocking the impending strike with a handgun. It was a woman with flowing purple hair.

"Silver Blades?! Why the hell are you here in my territory?!" Norman exclaimed, jumping backward. He seemed visibly flustered by the unexpected appearance of the woman.

The woman didn't bother responding to Norman. Instead, she turned her gaze toward me.

"Run now. I'm stepping into the ring with him," she declared, a fierce determination in her eyes. "That girl won't make it if you don't hustle her to a skilled healer soon."

"Hey, are you fucking serious right now? You really think I'll let them walk away with just you standing in my way?" Norman scoffed.

"I don't," the woman responded with an unwavering calm. "That's why I didn't come here alone."

Suddenly, four shadows materialized, encircling Norman like vengeful spirits.

"You've really done it now, Shredica," remarked another woman with a fiery orange mane. "Why dive headfirst into a fight with him in his own territory? Maybe dial down the battle hunger a notch?"

"It's just Shredica being Shredica," added another woman with a playful, pink short-cut hair. "That's what sets her apart, you know? I've never seen her shy away from a direct confrontation. It's just her style."

The other two males stood in stoic silence, their gaze unwavering on Norman.

Norman sneered confidently, "You think a few extra bodies will make a difference? I can handle all of you."

"Let's put that claim to the test," retorted the woman with vibrant purple hair.

Sensing that these individuals were providing my ticket out of this perilous situation, I decided to make a run for it. Scooping up the still-unconscious woman, I held her in a princess carry, hastening my escape. Yet, a sudden force gripped my foot. Glancing downward, I beheld a hand emerging from the ground, firmly clasping my ankle.

"Do you really think you can escape from me?! Fat chance!"

It seemed that this was Norman's skill—a manipulative ability allowing him to traverse space. It was as if he created two portals, entering one would lead you out of the other. This must be how he carried out his kidnappings. It also explained why the bullet I shot almost hit me—he manipulated portals to redirect the bullet toward one and sent the other behind me, ensuring it struck me.

I attempted to free myself from the unyielding grip of the hand, but it clung to me tenaciously. No matter how hard I kicked, it refused to budge—an immovable restraint, like an unbreakable shackle. Strangely, I felt myself sinking towards the ground, the hand exerting a downward force.

Glancing behind, I witnessed the five individuals facing a similar fate. Hands emerged from the ground where they stood, pulling them down as their weapons were forcibly kicked away. What transpired in that fleeting moment when my attention wavered?

"Kekeke! Do you really think you can beat me?! Four people won't be fucking enough!" Norman's triumphant voice echoed, his arm raised, but his hand concealed within the portal he created. How did he achieve this? Ah, I understood now. It wasn't merely a matter of making something enter and exit through another portal.

He could multiply the entered entities by creating additional portals for their exit. This explained how he effortlessly abducted numerous people in such a short span.

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"Tsk! What the hell is this hand?! Is this his skill?" Miss Neith exclaimed in frustration.

There's no other way to explain this twisted phenomenon except for it being his skill. If that's the case, then this was likely the sinister skill he unleashed during those abductions.

Norman Amarathea's wicked grin widened as he gloated, "Behold, my dark prowess—Portal Creation! This skill grants me dominion over spatial manipulation. But it's not just confined to space; it's a gateway to duplication! For instance, when I toss an object, like a gold coin, into one portal, it emerges twofold from the other if there are two alternate portals for it to exit through!"

A beguiling multiplication of possessions, a wicked twist on the laws of reality. This technique facilitates swift kidnappings and ensures my every plunder is amplified. Witness the power of my dark arts! Ha ha ha ha ha!!" he laughed maniacally. "And the reason why you can't break free from my grip is that I've damn well trained myself to have this unyielding grip!"

I've mastered the skill so damn much that I'm practically invisible with it!!!"

Him spilling the secrets of his skill left me utterly perplexed, "Why are you blabbing about your skill? Aren't you worried we'd uncover it? No one has had a clue about it until now."

Norman Amarathea locked his intense gaze onto me, his grin stretching so wide it almost reached his ears. "Why do you think no one has ever cracked the mystery of my skill until now? The damn obvious answer, you clueless bitch, is that those who faced my skill didn't survive to share the tale," he sneered. Then, he fished something from his pocket and hurled it toward Mr. Seria, Mr.

Herks, and Miss Neith. As those items approached, they erupted into explosive chaos. "Ha Ha Ha Ha!!!" he cackled maniacally. "Consider that a vivid demonstration! Now, as for why I singled out those three, they're mainly men, and that chick over there isn't my type with her short hair. I don't fancy boyish women.

"But you two," he licked his lips, eyes filled with insatiable lust as he scrutinized me and Miss Arianne, "look like something worthy of adding to my collections..."

I've heard whispers about Norman's penchant for kidnapping, an unsavory pursuit driven by his desire to amass a harem of women turned into mere possessions, enslaved to serve as prostitutes. As time passed, his notoriety elevated him to the position of a prime supplier in the Black Market, dealing in both human goods and the flesh of beastfolk.

His illicit empire flourished, crowning him with the notorious title of the Don of the Black Market.

Yet, if he believed this encounter would unfold seamlessly, he was sorely mistaken. That's because...

"You bastard..." a guttural growl echoed through the veil of smoke spawned by the explosion. "You won't get away with doing that to me..." It was Miss Neith. Her once serene blue eyes now blazed with a fiery red intensity. This was her skill, Frenzy – the more she bled, the more potent she became.

"She can still move after that explosion?" Norman clicked his tongue in frustration. "Well, it's not like you can slip away from my grip," he sneered.

He was wrong about that too. Miss Neith could now break free from that grip.

"W-What the...?!" Norman must have sensed Miss Neith slipping away from his grasp. I could feel the hold on my ankle fading too. It seemed like whatever he felt on one end, he could still feel on the other. I reckon he refrained from multiplying himself because it would make him more vulnerable. Each copy he made was a potential weak spot. So, even the hand gripping me could harm him.

"Something like this won't stop me!" Finally, Miss Neith managed to break free from his grip. All the hands that had restrained us ceased their hold. We were free to move. I swiftly grabbed my pistol, ready to engage in battle with him.

Miss Neith closed the distance, her fists a blur of furious strikes, yet Norman danced between them with uncanny skill, evading each punch effortlessly. My barrage of bullets seemed relentless, but Norman countered by manipulating portals, redirecting the projectiles back toward me. However, with a flick of my wrist, I harnessed the power of wind magic, stopping the bullets mid-air.

Simultaneously, Miss Arianne faced a similar challenge, her arrows returning to her after each shot.

"Fighting him in marksmanship is getting us nowhere, Shredica," she said. "I guess it's time for us to shift gears and engage in close combat." A press of a button transformed her bow into a sleek metallic staff, and she charged at Norman, determination radiating from her gaze.

Norman, the Don of the Black Market, proved to be a formidable foe, skillfully defending against the relentless assault from both of them.

I glanced at Mr. Seria and Mr. Herks. Unfazed by the explosives, they readied their weapons, joining the confrontation. After a quick dust-off to rid themselves of clinging gunpowder, they entered the fray against Norman.

Holstering my pistol, I approached the battlefield bare-handed. The battle between the Silver Blades and the Don of the Black Market had commenced.