

## The World 98

### Chapter 98: The Battle At The Black Market, Part 2 (1)

It had been an hour since Norman entered the pub.

By now, he had already downed five mugs of beer. Two women were kissing him all over while a third woman was under the table, engaging in who-knows-what with him.

This was it. The moment of reckoning. Norman had finally let his guard down.

Leader rose from her seat, and I followed suit. We readied our daggers to strike. Norman's back was turned to us, so without him noticing, we could approach unnoticed. I utilized my Stealth skill, and Leader, a battle-hardened veteran, could make her presence disappear.

Silently, we crept toward him. Even the patrons around us remained oblivious to our approach. We could do it. We could end Norman's life. It might spark a war between the Black Market and us, but the consequences seemed inconsequential in this moment.

Time seemed to slow as we closed in. My hand, clutching the dagger, trembled ever so slightly. In my mind, I replayed the memory.

I remembered the deaths of my comrades. Their bodies never returned to us. We searched for them, but they were gone. All that was left was to seek revenge. To kill the one who took them from us. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

We would end him.

Our leader was mere inches from him when she lunged, her daggers aimed at his neck. But then, she vanished.

"Huh...?" I uttered in confusion. Our leader had been right there, poised to strike Norman, and then... gone? Why?

"Do you really think I'm stupid?" Norman taunted, downing a full mug of beer before slamming it back onto the table with a loud thud. He didn't even glance in my direction.

Men gathered around me, their lustful eyes fixed on me.

"Don, can we have a turn with this woman?"

"She looks pretty tasty...!"

I brandished my dagger, swirling it around to ward them off. Despite my efforts, they kept advancing. I aimed my blade at one, only for others to close in. It was like a game of cat and mouse, and I was losing.

Checkmate.

Norman rose from his seat, swaggering toward me with his pants nowhere to be seen, his manhood dangling. He licked his lips.

"I'll be the first to taste her. Rest of you, wait your turn," he commanded.

He then approached me. I aimed my dagger at him. However, he didn't even flinch or stop moving forward. He kept moving, as if I wasn't a threat to him.

"You're one of the women who got away from me, huh? What luck! I was itching to fuck you," he said, licking his lips as he drew closer, until the blade was mere inches from him.

I shot him a glare, which only seemed to excite him more as he edged nearer, the blade pressing against his neck. I refrained from slashing it, knowing it would only end with me getting slit in the neck instead.

With the blade so close, he reached out to touch my cheek, his tongue darting across his lips. The way he did it reminded me of a predator toying with its prey before the kill. It was chilling, to say the least. I'd faced death in many forms, but this was perhaps the closest I'd come to it.

"You're so fucking cute," he growled, his voice dripping with malice. "I'd love to add you to my collection. But what I really crave is that purple-headed bitch. Where is she, huh? Is she with you?"

"Fuck off!" I spat, fury coursing through me as I attempted to push him away with my free hand, delivering a forceful palm strike to his chest. But he merely snatched my arm and yanked me closer.

As he drew me in, I tried to slash at his neck, but I halted when I felt the sharpness of my blade against my own cheek instead. He'd used Portal Creation to redirect my slash onto myself. A sharp sting followed, blood welling up from the wound. In the blink of an eye, he released my hand and delivered a vicious punch to my stomach.

"...Ugh!"

The blow knocked the wind out of me, leaving me gasping for air and struggling to remain upright. The blade slipped from my grasp, clattering to the floor with a heavy thud.

Norman leaned in close, his hot breath brushing against my ear, sending shivers down my spine. "Now then, be a good girl and spread those legs for me," he whispered, his voice dripping with sinister intent. "Don't even try to resist. The red-haired woman won't be showing up for at least an hour or two, and nobody will be able to save you in that time frame. I suggest you don't struggle.

It'll only make your pain worse," he sneered.

With a cruel grin, he tore apart my clothing, tossing the scraps to the floor. I was left with only my bra covering my upper body. I instinctively backed away from him, but before I could escape, strong arms grabbed me from behind.

"No...!" I cried out, attempting to push him away, but his larger, more muscular frame overpowered me. In a desperate move, I leaped into the air and delivered an overhead kick.

"Urgh...!" he grunted as my foot connected with his face.

One man swung at me with his thick arm, the width of a massive pole. I ducked just in time to avoid the blow. He was huge, even bigger than the man who had grabbed me earlier. I backed away, readying myself for whatever was coming next. If I was going to die here, I'd make sure they remembered that Silver Blades weren't to be messed with.

I knew my chances of survival were slim, but if there was even a glimmer of hope...

The man charged at me, fists swinging with deadly force. I swayed my upper body left and right, narrowly dodging his blows. Meanwhile, the man who had grabbed me before was closing in from behind, reaching out to grab me. I crouched down, avoiding his hands as they reached for my face.

I created some distance between myself and the two attackers. It was two against one, and the odds were stacked against me. I knew it was likely game over, but if there was even the slightest chance of escape, I'd seize it.

The two men advanced, kicking up dust as they closed in on me. Their four arms, thick as tree trunks, reached out alternately, each grasping for me with deadly intent. I knew that if they found even the slightest opening, it would spell doom for me. I continued to dodge their grabs as I backed away.

But then, I made a mistake.

I glanced down at my foot, which had been ensnared by a hand jutting out from the floor. Looking back up, I met Norman's sneering gaze. His arm stretched out towards the ceiling, but his hand was nowhere in sight. He'd used Portal Creation again.

As I turned my attention back to the two attackers, I saw one of them launching his right leg straight at me. I attempted to block his attack, but to my horror, I realized he wasn't alone in his assault. Just as I intercepted the first man's leg, the other one swung his left leg at me, connecting with the side of my torso.

"Nghhh!" I cried out in pain, a sharp jolt shooting through me. If it weren't for the hand holding me in place, I might have been sent flying backward from the force of the blow.

But then, the first attacker who had kicked me recovered from his previous motion and launched another attack. Still reeling from the impact of the first kick, I couldn't evade or block the incoming blow. It struck me squarely on the other side of my torso.

"Nnnghhh?!"

The force of the kick was enough to finally release me from the hand that had rooted me in place. I went flying backward, overwhelmed by agonizing pain. Tears threatened to spill from my eyes as I struggled to maintain consciousness.

With my arms rendered useless for defense, all I could do was brace myself as I crashed to the ground, rolling along the floor two or three times before slamming into a wall.

"I warned you, didn't I?" Norman sneered. "Don't struggle. It'll only make your pain worse."

"U-ur...k...!"

I reflexively clutched my right side where the man had kicked me, squeezing my eyes shut against the intense pain. It felt like my spirit was shattering into a million pieces in an instant.

"Still planning to fight?" Norman sneered. His two lackeys loomed over me, their eyes filled with a sinister lust as they cracked their fists and licked their lips.

I felt like giving up completely. The dream of seeking revenge against the monarchs of Milham seemed like nothing more than a fantasy now. My father would be devastated to learn of my death, but at least he would still be alive. I just hoped he would abandon his thirst for revenge and live out the rest of his days in peace.

With those thoughts swirling in my mind, I pressed my tongue against my teeth, preparing to bite down and end it all. But before I could go through with it, I heard two silenced gunshots pierce the air, followed by two sharp crunching sounds.

I raised my gaze upward and beheld the gruesome sight: two gaping holes in each man's forehead, tendrils of smoke curling from the smoking wounds. With a sickening realization, I watched as their lifeless bodies crumpled to the ground. And there, standing behind them was a woman with flowing purple hair, a pistol clutched in her hand, the barrel still warm from recent use.