

## **Chapter 221 - Conclusion with Rulizeze**

I summoned the Magic Halberd into my right hand while Rulizeze was coming at me. However, she's sure a tough woman, that Four Eye Rulizeze. A normal enemy would have been crushed by that mana fist.

Seemingly intending to make use of her jumping speed, she bent her knees even while sacrificing the reach and trajectory of her arms, and swung her blade somewhat in line with the swing of a pendulum as if to sweep off my head. The speed of her slash was faster than the previous ones. I temporarily canceled the Magic Combat Style while following her sword with my eyes. Even after lowering my own speed, I was able to trace the vermilion sword in her right hand. I caused the halberd's red spear to clash with Rulizeze's curved sword, which was approaching from the side, by swinging it in a motion following the number 8 in shape. The red spear flicked the curved blade outwards, looking as if a crimson tiger had opened its mouth and bit at the blade. While the crimson traces remained in my visual field, I thrust the red spear out towards Rulizeze's chest.

Without any delay she performed a circular motion through footwork even while being injured, and at the same time as she pulled back the repelled blade towards her chest, she evaded my thrust. Rulizeze moved to my left side, kicked off the ground, and thrust her sword towards diagonally below while slightly floating in the air. The point of her vermilion blade had a trajectory as if to gouge out my chest. However, the speed of her thrust had dropped by a level compared to before. Rulizeze's movements might have become unstable, or it was the influence of her injuries.

I performed the lowest necessary evasive movements, using my toes as an axis. While dodging the approaching sword thrust at a distance with enough leeway, I unleashed a <Thrust> at her belly while twisting my right hand, which I had pulled back earlier, forward.

The spinning red spear's <Thrust> would penetrate Rulizeze's abdomen. The moment I believed so, she displayed a nimble movement not suiting her large build. As if designating the spinning red spear as bar in a pole vault contest, she splendidly evaded the <Thrust> by jumping and screwing her body above the magic spear while at the same time extending her right hand which was grasping her curved sword.

——Wow, you have my admiration.

She landed while crouching and her center of gravity being lowered.

"Final Awakening <Demonic Pliability - Thunder>." Right after she muttered this, mana gushed out of her entire body like a green aura.

And then she kicked the water's surface, causing water to fly into the air, as if shaving off the lake's surface with the tips of her toes like a ballerina.

I steeped even deeper into the lake with my feet, which were already beneath the lake's surface, kicked the lake's bottom, and jumped, avoiding her kick in the process.

I will answer a kick with a kick!

At the same time as I dodged her water surface kick, which crawled along the ground, by jumping, I focused on a simple version of the kicking technique which Evil Domain Monk Kire had used. I twisted my waist in midair, and released an upper rotational kick at Rulizeze's head.

Rulizeze's face was bloodstained and swollen on the left side, but while revealing a smiling face which looked as if she was fully enjoying this, she easily dodged my kick by pulling back her back like a bow.

As expected, the edge is still lacking. [efn\_note]Another pun on the name Kire and the word kire represented in edge here[/efn\_note]

Apparently having boosted her physical abilities, she quickly fixed her posture from having bent

back her body while clad in an aura of green mana. Then she revealed her demon-like, sharp teeth. While a peculiar scornful laughter of "Kuhaa" spilled out through the gaps between her chipped teeth, she swapped the sword into the hand of her left upper arm with a quickness as if performing a knife trick.

Did the blow against her left face by my <Magic Hand guided by Thought> only cause slight, superficial damage?

Rulizeze unleashed a swift series of thrusts with the sword point of her curved blade at my chest as such a question popped up in my mind. Her movements while being clad in the green mana were fast. The sword point grazed my cheek, and dug into my shoulder.

I felt pain as my blood continuously spouted out, but I maintained the circular movement, avoiding as if dancing. And then I reactivated Magic Combat Style in my legs again. The Magic Combat Style supported the blood flow as if spreading the blood of <Blood Acceleration> until the ends of my nerves. I powerfully kicked the sandy soil after increasing my speed, and switched from a circular movement to a movement at a right angle, shortening the combat distance to Rulizeze.

Immediately after she entered my spear's range, I stepped in sharply, and then performed a normal red spear thrust towards Rulizeze's chest, but she pointed the blade of her curved sword upwards. The sword blade hit by the thrust-out red spear, which approached the sword blade with a smooth spear blade trajectory, as if running alongside it, and repelled the spinning red spear to the outside as if being pressed aside by a finger. The thrust had been easily parried.

Without any time in-between, I moved the Magic Halberd as if drawing an arc from below. I targeted Rulizeze's buttocks with the Magic Dragon Gem at the halberd's butt end, but she moved her curved sword as if drawing a semi-circle once again. Just like the red spear moment's ago, the Magic Dragon Gem was pushed away through the trajectory of the sword blade which completely reminded me of a willow's branch.

The balls-crushing Magic Dragon Gem attack was blocked by a soft swordsmanship that seemed to use my power against me. Rulizeze was coping with my speed boosted by Magic Combat Style and Blood Acceleration.

Just as she had muttered before, I guess this is the power of her Demonic Eyes <Demonic Pliability - Thunder>'s final stage. She moved as though her power, speed, and technique had all gone up by one degree.

Obviously capitalizing on the different reaches of the three arms holding no swords, she unleashed high-speed straight punches causing gusts of wind.

I dealt with it using spear kumite. I tried to arrest her arms, but Rulizeze smoothly used foot techniques as well. Her gold-dust-like droplets of sweat bounced and streamed down along her legs. While feeling her deep breaths and sweat from close-by, I countered her ankle bone, ankle, shin, and knee strikes, performed as if dancing, with strikes against the same leg parts, sealing her magnificent footwork at once.

But, since she was also moving her vermilion sword blade like a totally different entity, I had to fight by making sure to keep the combat distance while avoiding and repelling the blade with the magic spear.

The ebbing and flowing exchange of blows continued. As each of us unleashed give-and-takes of techniques within the span of milliseconds during this struggle that might have killed several dozens people, I couldn't land a fatal blow with the Magic Halberd.

However — the equilibrium started to fall apart. I blocked a sharp sweep targeting my nape with the top part of my red ax blade, and forced it back with power in reverse. I was proud that the quality of my Magic Combat Style, which was praised by Master as one of a kind in the past, was growing even further. The battle techniques and mana manipulation skills of the great Divine King rankers Riko and Rave Kuzeguile, the short study of movement, swordsmanship, and manipulation skills from Kaldo, Yui, and Viine, and the mana manipulation skills and kicking techniques I learned in

the battle against Kire a little while ago; I used all of these experiences as my nourishment. As if instructing my own body with those experiences, I delicately changed the Magic Combat Style distribution cladding my body.

After throwing Rulizeze's timing faintly out of order, the Magic Halberd's thrust motion headed directly for her chest, poking her lightly. My poking spear was lightly brushed away, just as I had assumed.

At once Rulizeze tried to stab my chest with her sword while charging forward.

I pushed the halberd, which I held in both hands, out in front, letting the vermilion sword's point clash against the violet middle staff part. Afterwards I applied Riko's technique, and moved the halberd to the side little-by-little while swiping away her sword by trying to hook it. At the same time, I strengthened the mana in my whole body which I had faintly altered before, while rotating my body sideways with my toes turned into the root of my feet as axis.

I didn't shake my torso overly much, and while picking up enough speed to exceed the gyration of a spinning top, I swung the Magic Halberd through almost as fast as lightning from the right to the left.

Rulizeze, who had her balance disturbed with her sword being pulled to the left, couldn't cope with this great speed at the instant she could sense it.

I succeeded in cutting a part of her upper right hand with the red ax blade. Simultaneously, I drew the right hand, which grasped the halberd, towards my chest.

"Kuuu—" A pained voice escaped Rulizeze's lips as she donned an anguished expression.

I pressed her with attacks afterwards. I aimed at her legs with a lower foot chop charged with the mana I had distributed there in advance.

Her right hand had been cut, but she still reacted immediately. She kicked the ground with her body clad in green mana, jumped like a ballerina, and avoided my kick.

I activated <Darkness Drill> with the image of creating a twisting vortex through my right hand with the Magic Halberd towards the airborne Rulizeze. The red spear and the red ax blade had a black fog coil around them as they spun as if being wrapped up by a wind.

I had planned to riddle Rulizeze's torso with a hole as it still floated, but while twisting her own body, which was wrapped up by the green mana, sideways, matching the halberd's spin, she gently made her curved blade clash with the red spear, which was engulfed by the dark mist, and repelled the spear upwards. The Darkness Drill had been invalidated.

I had expected it to some extent, but I was still slightly shocked. However, my real attack was what followed next. While pulling back the hand holding the Magic Halberd, I slightly bent my knees, and while focusing on adopting a compact posture, I rotated the halberd atop my palm vertically. And, at the same time I poured subtle amounts of mana into the Magic Halberd. The mana ripples on the surface of the Magic Halberd, which was revolving in my hand as if being a professional pen turner's performance, heading towards the Magic Dragon Stone in my visual field while being transparent were dazzling. The instant the mana poured into the Magic Dragon Gem, the small, spherical polar body located in the center of the Magic Dragon Gem shone brightly as if having obtained a soul, and as it shone blue, a blue, broad ice blade was created.

The Magic Halberd, which had stopped rotating, was now upside-down with its top part facing the ground. However, since the blue ice blade, which was maintaining a faint, white mist on its surface, grew straight out of the Magic Dragon Gem, the red spear and the red axe blade were visible on the halberd's opposite end.

Rulizeze saw the hidden blade (Ice Claw) with her four eyes and was surprised, but she was too slow. Given that she repelled my spinning red spear clad in darkness with her soft swordsmanship, her vermilion sword, which she handled with one arm, currently was in the opposite direction.

And thus I activated <Thrust> without waiting for a single moment. The spinning hidden blade caught onto Rulizeze's defenseless solar plexus and pierced into it.

"——Gyaa!" Rulizeze screamed in pain.

The rotating blade penetrated her special black leather armor in a clean circular shape, blowing her away with her body adopting the spin. Rulizeze crashed against the huge rock in the center behind her, back first. Due to the recoil that destroyed the rock, she slid down onto the shallow lake's surface, and stopped moving with her face looking upward.

Ripples of blood spread atop the lake's surface, dyeing the water crimson. The green aura, which had enveloped her body, had vanished as well.

I don't expect that she will get up again. Normally I would think that she has died, but...since she isn't normal anyway, that part is still unclear.

It's definitely not like I was careless, but I canceled the Magic Combat Style at this point. I stopped the release of blood as well, naturally shutting down the Blood Mana's <Third Gate>.

"Was the match decided? Or rather, I was quite panicked here, okay? It was the first time for me to have watched your legs being severed. So, that means you're not perfect either, Shuuya." Rebecca commented.

"Even though Master possesses high capability as lancer, there will be close fights against unknown, strong warriors." Viine replied to her.

"Yeah, I know. But, still, it's bad for my heart..." Rebecca muttered with an expression that seemed to be on the verge of crying.

Sorry. But, as Viine says, strong people are truly powerful.

The demon Rulizeze, and the evil race Kire were great warriors. I killed Kire, but the quality of his movements deserved respect. He seemed to be a quad sword master like Rulizeze, but his beautiful foot techniques were deeply impressive...I think he will remain a strong memory like Oze of the Silver-Blue who owned the Sword of Rendil and the Shortsword of Yazekapos.

"My body froze for a moment there as well... But, since she was a swordswoman possessing wonderful techniques with her four eyes, mana manipulation, and quad sword techniques, I was naturally drawn toward tracing her movements with my eyes, and not Shuuya's."

It's because Yui is a swordswoman as well.

"Martial arts are truly deep..." Rebecca folded her arms and nodded at Yui's remark.

She had a serious expression for a change.

But, true, martial arts are deep. At the same time it reminds me of Master's words,

『...Let me give you an advice at the end. While it may be true that you mastered the techniques of the demonic arts, that doesn't mean that you're a warrior boasting of absolute strength. Be careful because incomprehensible things always happen in this world. And, I pray for your safe journey, Rollo-sama, Shuuya. Ra Kelarda!!』

Ra Kelarda!

Master, it was just as you said. There are countless strong people out there. And, the 20th floor of the labyrinth is another world called a different continent. It was full of people I wouldn't have been able to understand if not for my translation skill.

"Yes, there's no end to martial arts...especially her sword technique after switching over to a one-handed sword style was worthy of special mention. She deserves to be respected. Master, you won against such a respectable opponent. I'm very proud." Viine said.

"Nn, in the middle he was blown away with a bam, and after the battle resumed again, it developed into a fierce clash. He raised the spear with a swoosh, and then swung it down with a whoosh. Amazing!" While agreeing with Viine's words, Eva put her utmost effort into trying to replay the battle with her tonfa.

Somehow I feel like her acting is gradually becoming more skillful.

"I thought so since the time of your training, but...master, your spearmanship has extremely refined spear motions, hasn't it? Even I as an amateur understand. It's a somehow naive question, but why are you so "damn" skilled with the spear?" Mysty asked. [efn\_note]The "damn" is Mysty's usual "shit," but that doesn't fit the sentence here and the Japanese kanji has various meanings anyway[/efn\_note]

"He mentioned it a little while ago, but Shuuya has a spearmanship master." Yui explained before I could answer.

"Ah, it's a story about influence and so on, eh?"

"Yeah. In the past, when he spared my life, Shuuya told me that his master is respectable and great. He cheerfully recounted how he was taught spear techniques while being beaten black and blue." Yui proudly talked about Master Achilles to Mysty.

"So there's a foundation to his delicate and lively spear techniques..." Mysty looked as if she could agree with it, and started to jot down notes into her memo book made out of scraps of parchments once again.

At this point, her scribbling is definitely a kind of a habit for her.

"It's something I heard not too long ago." Viine nodded lightly.

"I wonder whether sensei is doing well..." Eva revealed a sorrowful expression, apparently recalling her past.

I'd like to meet that sensei who educated her.

"...I'm certain that he must have been a great spear master." Kaldo murmured as a martial arts practitioner.

『Since I have lived in your butt, I don't know the details either, Your Excellency. In the first place, butt education——』

A tiny Helme-chan manifested in my visual field. She talked while folding her arms and nodding her small head several times. But once she started to speak about her weirdly, extensive knowledge related to butts as usual, I shut her out.

Given that the girls were talking about Master, I recalled him...whether I wanted it or not. I wonder how Master is doing right now. Is he still doing his daily spearmanship training? It might be time for him having finished the bow for Leifa. He might be drinking wine together with Raglen...working on the fields, making medicines, smithing, or creating those shogi-like pieces, just to mutter "This is a bad move" all by himself. Back then, everyday was full of grueling training, but...it was really fun to constantly discover something new.

How nostalgic...it might be fun to go back to meet him. Should I jump on Rollodeen (Huge Lion), cross the mountainous region while taking a detour through the place where the elven country is located, and head for the plateau area of the Mahaheim Mountain Range?

However, I don't have the map Master gave me anymore. I still remember the location to some extent, but if it comes to searching for the exact location of the Goldiba village...

I guess it would take quite a bit of time. It's an area of nature with swamps, cliffs, forests, mountains, and many impasses.

"...Shuuya, that monster is still moving!" Rebecaa pulled me out of my reminiscence with her shrill, womanly voice.

"So she's still alive, as expected, huh?"

Rulizeze was bleeding from her eyes and mouth. A rock pierced her left chest. Her solar plexus had a hole because of the hidden blade. She was frantically trying to get up, but her legs and arms apparently didn't move as she wanted them to while trembling.

I approached that fallen Rulizeze.

"Rulizeze, I won, right?"

"Gu...guaah." When she tried to talk, she intensely coughed up blood.

A rock fragment had pierced through her armor into her chest at the place where a normal person would have their lungs.

"My, loss, gufaah!"

"Don't speak anymore——"

I took out several high-grade healing potions from my item box.

It's the result of a mortal combat, but it's enough now. I naturally took actions to save her.

"...It will hurt at first, but bear with it, okay?"

I grabbed the rock that stabbed into her with my right hand, and swiftly pulled it out. Then I poured the healing potions over the screaming Rulizeze. Then I forcibly wrenched open her pinkish lips that resembled those of humans with my fingers, and after taking out several broken teeth, made her drink a potion by pouring it into her mouth, making sure to slant the cup-shaped part of the potion bottle.

"——Gohoo gohoo gofah!" She had a coughing fit, but since the bleeding from the hole at her solar plexus and her left breast had stopped, the wounds should have closed up.

Just in case, I silently cast the advanced spell 《Water Cure》. A spherical, transparent cluster of water, a water sphere, was generated in front of me. That sphere burst softly, turned into small fog particles, and rained down while converging on Rulizeze's entire body. Since the wounded places had been mended by the potion, this spell might have been unnecessary, but I cast it just to make sure. Her coughing stopped.

"...You saved me?" Rulizeze said awkwardly with a low voice while hectically moving her four eyes around.

And then she slowly raised her big frame.

"Yes, I did. Even if you're a demon or some other unknown race, potions or healing magic should work on you."

"...As long as it's not based on the light attribute, anything will work. However, I lost after having released my Demonic Eyes <Demonic Pliability - Thunder>? And I was saved on top of not being killed...what a humiliation. But, I feel great with my heart being mysteriously serene..."

She had a refreshed expression.

It was the outcome of a deadly struggle that saw grand martial arts, but feeling 'something' different from hatred was probably the same for Rulizeze, too.

But, "I feel great with my heart being mysteriously serene," huh? It's a perfectly fitting phrase. It's not 'something', but just as she said, I think. Now then, time to cut to the chase.

"...By the way, I will ask once more, but it's fine for us to use the magic treasure map here, right?"

"Hah, I don't mind. Do as you please. I want to watch the magic treasure map battle as well..."

"The battle? You won't interfere, right?"

"...I won't do anything so boorish, great warrior Shuuya..." Rulizeze said with her four eyes trembling.

She had been intently staring at my face.

"Got it."

After casting a smile at her, I turned on my heels, and walked over to my friends.

"She gave us the permission to place the magic treasure map. Everyone, get ready for combat."

"Oki, but, what will that four-eyed monster do? You saved her, but..." Rebecca asked.

"It looks like she will observe..." I answered while looking in Rulizeze's direction.

She was sitting on a rock chair protruding out of the wall.

"Can we trust her? I would hate it to have the number of troublesome enemies increase just when we're fighting against a guardian." Rebecca folded her arms while glaring with her blue eyes.

"I don't think you have to worry about that. That woman is the kind of fighter who tried to fight against me with two eyes and two arms at first because I have two arms. Contrary to her appearance, she seems to be a pure battle maniac who wants to have a real battle with both sides having as equal conditions as possible."

"What a considerate woman, and splendid battle race. She piqued my interest." Viine turned towards Rulizeze.

Rulizeze might have a good compatibility with those like dark elves who revere strong warriors.

"Her name is Rulizeze. A demon, cycluse race, or something like that. Anyway, I will put down the map, and just like the other day, I will handle the guardian. You guys will deal with the other monsters, okay?"

"Sure."

"...I'm not convinced! I will prepare my blue fireballs on the opposite side of where that monster Rulizeze sits." Rebecca acted defiant, although I don't know whether it's because she's scared or irritated by Rulizeze who had cut me earlier.

Well, she has four eyes, and Rebecca doesn't understand her language either.

"Nn, Rebecca, you worry too much. If she comes this way, my green emperor steel blades will riddle her with holes." Eva smiled like a death angel at Rebecca while making the blood vessels at the outer corners of her eyes surface, befitting a vampire species.

"O-Okii." Rebecca blinked her eyes in surprise, looking at Eva's face.

Without minding that, Eva transformed her magic wheelchair into its Eva Mk-1 version. She moved quickly by gliding with her rollers, reminding me of an invincible hero.

It somehow gives me the feeling that it'll turn into some kind of competition of breaking your opponent while gliding. [efn\_note]Pretty sure a reference to something, but too unspecific for me. Let's go with Code Geass' robot ground fights?[/efn\_note]

Stakes appeared from the metals at the soles of her feet, and she used those to spin around.

While feeling deeply impressed by Eva's maneuvers, I held the magic treasure map, and walked deeper into the shallow lake while having my leather boots that were soaked with water sink in.

The rock in the middle had collapsed and scattered because of my fight with Rulizeze. The magic treasure map's spot was here. Accordingly, I looked back, checking the state of my friends.

The simple, metallic golem manipulated by Mysty stood imposingly right behind me. On my left, the black Burning Knight as shield vanguard. On my right, the red Burning Knight with a tower shield and sword at the ready. In the left rear, slightly further away, the assault vanguard, Yui. On the right, slightly further away, Kaldo with his magic katana. In the middle, Rollodeen (Black Panther) eagerly waited for the prey that would soon spawn while making many tentacles float in the air. Next to Rollodeen stood Viine with her Jade Snake Bow ready to be shot.

In the rear, Eva who had transformed her magic wheelchair. She was releasing violet mana from her entire body. Like an esper, she floated in the air with her transformed wheelchair alongside many green metals. Mysty stood behind the floating Eva. She and the golem standing in front were separated by a bit of a distance, but it didn't seem to be an issue.

At the end of the line, Rebecca had created five spheres around her, burning brightly in a blue color, while holding Gulphon's Wand. She used the wand to play around, as if performing a new bean bag juggling game, by making a sphere float around the wand.

Rulizeze, who was vigilantly watched by Rebecca, sat on a rock chair, which had been cut out of the rock wall located in the opposite direction of us, and gazed at the situation over here.

Rebecca was worried, but I felt like she was friendly towards us, instead.

"Well then, I'm putting it down——"