

Chapter 308 - Dance of Death

A miraculous underground space, and the goddess and monsters reflected within. The goddess holds up a big wand, and the wand reacts by releasing dark flames from its tip.

The black flames whirl once around the wand, and transform into a huge bee clad in dark flames. That bee possesses a tail end made out of the same black flames, and the monsters touched by the bee explode.

That huge bee heads for the space reflecting the underground world watched by us. As if looking through a magnifying glass, there's a zoom-up on the bee, and alongside a roaring, abnormal noise, the bee crosses through the space.

——Uwaaah!

For it to be able to manifest on the surface... The bee deploys its burning, black tail end to the front, instantly releasing a wave from it? We suffer some kind of blow.

A mental attack by the bee, huh? The oscillating wave, which seems like it'd drive everyone within its range mad, feels like fear turned substantial enough to cause a physical pressure.

But, if you've got to deal with darkness, you use light.

I create five identical small instances of <Chain Spear of the Ray System> on the tips of my left hand's fingers, and make them head for the bee with trails of light in their wake.

The bee enters a defensive stance by bending its tail, trying to block my light spears, but the rays pierce through its tail, turning it into a donut.

"The power of a kin of light, huh?" The goddess murmurs in a voice as if being utterly bored by the show.

The light spears penetrate through the tail of the barrier-like black flames, and stab through a part of the actual bee, heading for the torn space that allows a peek at the underground world.

Thereupon, Galroh moves instantaneously, reminding me of the Spirit World Knight Crazy-Eye, as if to protect the goddess. He closes the distance to the light spears, and fluently brandishes Dueminas with both his hands.

The light spear in the lead gets bisected.

While advancing by alternatively stepping diagonally forward with his right and left foot — wielding Dueminas like a pinwheel — Galroh freely swings Dueminas around. As the light spears are cut apart within Dueminas' trails, they disperse into faint light effects.

In the blink of an eye, all of the light spears have been cut to pieces. The huge bee clad in dark flames has vanished after getting penetrated by the light spears.

If the light spears had plunged into the underground world just like that, they might have turned the goddess' forehead into a beehive, but...still, I'm astonished by Galroh's swordplay.

And yet, Dueminas is also an amazing weapon, seeing how easily it broke the light-based attack. It's probably at a Mythological level. Lezalaysa also mentioned that it had slain demi-gods deep underground.

"You surprised, Spearmaster? You see, for the very same reason I recognized the magic spear owned by you as a special weapon." Galroh comments with a laugh.

But, Magic Halberd Baldok is the creation of Zaga and Bon, and thus I'm honestly happy about the praise. It's a masterpiece by my great friends. And according to the classy Suloza shopkeeper, it's Legendary...

『Okay...it seems to contain enchantment magic of a scale you don't see often, and is powerful on the whole. It has a gimmick of possessing contradicting elemental attributes with the tip being fire attribute-based, and the butt end with the gem water attribute-based. Moreover, the red spear and the ax blade will be automatically repaired through mana, but I can see traces that it absorbed various kinds of mana, or rather, had the mana driven into it. Thanks to that, it appears to have been endowed with an effect of increasing the sharpness.』

That's the explanation he gave me back then. Because it has cut and drilled through countless monsters, including Evil God Steertop, Baldok has grown as well.

"...Mortal believer of light infesting the surface world, thee shall atone for having pierced through my darkness with death. Therefore, I shall punish thee. It is time for thee to meet the darkness bees from deep within the ground——" Goddess Rolga haughtily declares in her underground world.

She holds up her wand while releasing a strongly echoing voice. In response, many black bees are summoned from the bee decoration at the wand's tip. The bees also look like dark flames at first, but this time the flames turn into swarms of small bees.

And once again, those bees are crowding towards us from the underworld domain. But okay, if light doesn't work, I guess I'll give darkness a try.

I invoke <Beginning of Dusk>. The dusk oozes out of my body as if to intrude the underground world. With me as the point of origin, the twilight turns into a bundle of black wings, almost as if beating Shadow Wing at its own game. And then it deploys in a fan shape like a black peafowl that's spreading its wings widely. Two jet-black wings grow from its back.

I imagine a fallen angel creating a world of dusk, encroaching the surface world's environment. A world of darkness like an abyss frozen in ice for eternity. But for me, this darkness, where you can't even see the hand in front of your face, feels very comfortable.

Countless <Dusk Stakes> rain down like a downpour in the dusk world that's expanding three-dimensionally extending in all directions. The <Dusk Stakes> reach such huge numbers that they form a wall. With terrifyingly grating sounds, the stakes offset the goddess' countless bees by crushing them.

This dusk world is also a darkness domain devouring the mind of its opponents. That's why I've paid attention to not swallow my friends and the members of Bloody Long Ears within.

While releasing the <Dusk Stakes>, I have <Beginning of Dusk> head for the torn space created by Galroh.

At that point, I focus on my Finger-Catiza to become a new arm. Catiza transforms into a small, gold caterpillar, moves from my right hand up to the elbow, and embeds itself with flesh roots.

Next I activate <Magic Hand guided by Thought>. After having its crooked mana hand grasp the steel hilt of Murasame, I make it move above my head. I don't know yet whether I'll use Murasame against Rolga, Galroh, or the unnatural crows soaring in the sky.

"It's His Excellency's darkness! His eyes have become red and mesmerizing!"

"Spirit-sama, the lightning whip will..."

I can hear Helme and Viine as they talk while fighting Lalay. Helme is apparently looking away.

The movements of their opponent, Lalay, look lively, like those of a magic warrior. Her reflexes seem to be excellent as well. Lalay manipulates a stand-alone, lightning doll with magic lightning strings connected to her ten fingers. At the same time, she handles a layered magic crest shield produced by her eyes while unleashing lightning attacks. She offsets all the ranged attacks such as <Throwing>, arrows, and wind bullets, hurled at her by the leaders of Bloody Long Ears.

Lalay possesses a terrific skill in magic. You can imagine her as a Greater Wizard specialized in group combat. Now that she's rivaling my first Lucival bloodkin and a spirit, she's earned my respect as an awesome opponent. Moreover, her canary-like, charming voice is nice, and she's a beauty. Her boobs seem to be on the smaller side, but they also seem to be reasonably soft. She's a woman who's apparently endowed with plenty of personality and individuality.

However, unfortunately I've met her as an enemy. Well, for now I should focus on what's going on in front of me.

"...Gunuuuh." A muffled voice reaches my ears from the torn space that spits out the swarm of bees.

Meanwhile, my <Beginning of Dusk> keeps encroaching upon the space created by Galroh. Galroh himself has disappeared, engulfed by darkness.

"And now it's an overwhelming power of darkness...just who are thee...?" A ghastly, echoing voice thunders out of the torn space which continues to be stained by darkness.

The torn space shrinks down to a small, round hole in the air. However, my darkness can't encroach through that small hole. The hole itself gives me the impression of possessing a huge mass, like a black hole. The power of darkness inherent to the <Beginning of Dusk> is obstructed by some kind of force.

"What, is that power..." Galroh mutters while scared.

It looks like the darkness world created by <Beginning of Dusk> has gone beyond his expectations. Or maybe he's already taken mental damage? No, I don't think it should have influenced him that much yet?

Or rather, everyone except for my friends has been surprised by my space of darkness.

At that point, I stop <Beginning of Dusk>, making it disappear. I won't use my blood chains either. I've exchanged a vow of being sworn friends with Lezalaysa, but it's not like I can afford to expose all my cards to Bloody Long Ears.

...Besides, I'm a spearmaster. I've got my pride of being an authentic spear user who has inherited Master's techniques. Well, those teachings of Master are just the groundwork, though.

"...Who knows."

Without relying on <Blood Chains Banquet>, I invoke a series of 《Frozen Snake Arrows》 as a restraint, resulting in a swarm of arm-sized ice arrows manifesting in mid-air. Like a ship enshrouded in a white corona, the swarm of arrows heads for Galroh.

But, the arrows are met by a swarm of black flame clusters that have appeared from Galroh's armor.

Well, "I don't give a flying damn," about something like that.

I activate the Blood Magic's <Blood Path - Open Third Gate> and <Blood Acceleration>. Powerfully kicking off the dark floor with the soles of Arzen's Boots, which are drenched in blood, I charge in a forward-bent posture. With agile movements like that of a swallow in flight, I close the distance to Galroh in no time.

Surprise dyes Galroh's eyes.

Immediately after I enter the range of my spear, I unleash a <Thrust> at Galroh's chest with Baldok's red spear after twisting my waist while focusing on my trunk. He deals with my suddenly quickened movements while still baffled.

Galroh clads his whole body in Magic Combat Style mana, including his two, bulging arms. Using Dueminas with a slanted hold, he easily thwarts my <Thrust> by letting it slide off to the left.

The surprised look was fake? But then again, his bulging arms might be a skill similar to that of Takebayashi. Galroh has a handsome face, though.

He glares my way across the couched blade of Dueminas. The power of Demonic Eyes dwells within his eyes as well, making me sense an unwavering, firm resolve. It gives me a slight shiver.

Is he concentrating on defense because he's wary of my quickened attacks? Well, let's give a bastard, who glares at me like that, a little present, shall we?

While faking for my movements to look sluggish, I focus on the blue eye of my shoulder dragon. Ice pebbles are shot out of the eye like a machine gun, heading for Galroh's head.

But, Galroh makes black flames rise up from his arms to in front of his face, blocking the ice pebbles.

—Wow. So it's also capable of serving as a physical barrier, huh?

While admiring his skill, I swing Baldok, which I've pulled back, from the left, trying to land a hit against Galroh's flank. But the Magic Dragon Gem, which leaves a fan-shaped blue trail in mid-air, doesn't reach his flank.

Galroh turns his hands grasping the cross-shaped hilt downwards, parrying the gem with Dueminas' blade. Fickle sparks combining blue and black colors scatter from Baldok's Magic Dragon Gem and Dueminas. Soon it develops into a contest of strength.

Dueminas' blade and the dragon gem grate against each other with screeching sounds. I push Baldok, but Galroh forces it back.

Not bad, man.

Galroh might have a high physical ability to begin with, but it looks like his power has grown even further. He manages to oppose my strength.

"I already anticipated that we'd dance with each other in a dance of death like this when I spoke to you for the first time." Galroh blurts out across his blade with a weird voice as if something has been extracted out of him.

"Oh really? Dance of death sounds a bit cynical, don't you think? But, that's the reason why you laughed back then, huh?"

"Hah, indeed. Anyone would turn down such a casual, one-way invitation."

I see. I guess he simply met me to take a look at my power through his Demonic Eyes. But, I wonder what he'd have done if I had readily consented to become his comrade...

"Anyway, I'm not Kary, but...I also seem to have more of a fondness for burning through blood and flesh than expected."

Kary? Ah, him. The perverted dagger user I fought a long time ago. He isn't here, though... Is he possibly hiding somewhere? I didn't see him on the first floor.

"...Hee, you do have some °nasty hobbies°. Though I've felt something similar as well."

"Hah, nasty hobbies, you call it...even you have confidence in your own actions, right?"

"Of course. Conviction is worthless unless it is converted into action."

"After all it's said that one's actions are the mirror of someone's character. Spearmaster, you're special. No matter what preferences one might have, there's no reason to despise them, don't you think?" Galroh answers with such an obvious joy appearing on his face that he can't suppress a smile showing on his lips.

"Counselor Galroh, I'm not special. I'm just a simple, training maniac, loving spearmanship."

"Kaunshelor? A spearmanship freak, and an extraordinary spearmaster, huh? You're a weird guy, but your character doesn't match your appearance. I'll let you, as the special man you are, witness the <Flame Armor of Darkness Bees> I received from Rolga-sama alongside a blood name——"

Galroh shifts from his rock-solid stance, twisting Dueminas' broad blade around to break the struggle of strength apart, hooking onto Baldok from below and flicking it away upwards to the side.

My stance gets slightly thrown off balance, but Galroh doesn't use that chance to attack. However, it looks like I can copy his movements just now...

I don't think it's his reaction to me having revealed a smile at my own deliberations, but Galroh makes his jaw stand out as gnawing on his molars. Has he activated some kind of skill?

Immediately following, black flames vigorously surge out of the torn space, which has still remained as a small hole at his feet, like an erupting volcano. His body gets completely enveloped by those flames. That doesn't mean that he's set himself on fire, though.

As if creating a new armor on the surface of Galroh's body, the black flames coil around him with spots such as joints and protrusions. A meticulous design has automatically been applied to the armor layer, too. It imitates a person's hand and a bee.

I think the shape and quality is completely different, but...is it something similar to the magic girl dress Veronica changed into through the power of Magit?

"By the way, even my friends over at Shadow Wing don't witness this power often."

Right after saying so, Galroh, whose body is clad in a layer of black bee flames with an ambiance of being shrouded by dark clouds, closes the distance to me with an explosive acceleration while his two eyes shine glaringly.

Galroh delivers a low kick with his black-flame-clad foot, trying to trip me up. In a hurry, I jump up, avoiding his kick. At that moment, while still airborne, I'm assaulted by Dueminas' blade and a swarm of black bees originating from the dark flames around Galroh's body.

I can't dodge these. I simply focus on the attack of Dueminas which has been hammered out with a speed as if performing a two-handed <Thrust>. Matching his blade's tip by holding Baldok out diagonally, I succeed in repelling it while causing sparks to scatter.

However, the hot stingers fired by the plethora of bees shower my body alongside a ferocious, parching dry wind, making it hard for me to breath. I experience such intense pain that I almost feel like barfing.

"Guuaaaaeoo."

"Rolga-sama is yelling at me to make you kneel."

Who's gonna do what that bitch wants anyway!? Ouuuchh...

I think the defense of the Gatrance Form is rather high, but it got torn and penetrated all over the place by the bullet-like bee stingers. Blood gushes out from all those holes. It unbearably hurts, but the instant I land on the floor with Arzen's Boots in preparation of a follow-up attack, I extend Baldok to the front, counterattacking.

Galroh uses the broad blade of his sword as shield, blocking the red spear lunging straight at him and stopping his feet within my spear's range. He peeks at my state while slanting his eyebrows.

"Manipulation of blood? No, a regeneration skill, huh...?"

Obviously he has noticed it. I believe it's impossible to distinguish Lucival from vampire species, but the sight of a body recovering while blood that has flown outside naturally streams back inside the body isn't anything you can observe with any other race, I think.

Galroh stares at the blood flow with keen interest.

At that moment, the perfect time, the stingers of darkness that assaulted my body surface back up from within my body with squishy, wet sounds. A sinister mana is contained within the dark red, swollen clumps with their pointed tips. Moreover, small larvae are squirming in tiny, uneven cavities of the lumps.

It's possible for me to absorb them if they are of the darkness attribute, but these...are nothing I'd want to absorb in the first place. Dark red clumps and bee larvae are a no go for me. Once I confirm the pointed tips by sight, the Gatrance Form naturally repairs itself as well.

"...It fills me with awe to see that your protective clothing is special as well. You possessing items that clearly exceed the level of what's sold at the Underground Auction makes me jealous. Moreover, the poison of an underground goddess doesn't work on you either? That's troublesome."

Galroh exchanges looks with the members of the Shadow Wing Brigade. I aim at that opportunity.

"The troublesome part starts from here on out——"

Immediately following, I implement my initial, preparatory move. At the same time as I summon Ganghis into my left hand for the first time today, I launch a <Darkness Drill> at Galroh's chest with the divine spear, using no motion.

"——Wh-!?" Galroh screams out in surprise.

However, he still blocks it despite me expecting that he might be unable to after seeing it for the first time. He parries Ganghis' moon-shaped, darkness-clad fangs with Dueminas' broad blade.

But, Divine Spear Ganghis is a special Mythological weapon which I obtained through the luck of the adventurer party Innocent Arms.

"——My magic sword..."

The vibrating fangs of Ganghis hollow out Dueminas with <Darkness Drill>. While oscillating as if to perform a song of joy over having rid itself of the obstacle, Ganghis heads for the upper part of Galroh's chest.

Just when I thought that Ganghis' fangs would pierce through, those cursed black flames of his block the charge by transforming into an additional armor part. It moves completely as if being made out of clay. The clay armor domes after catching Ganghis' blow while squirming with a squishy smacking. Moreover, the dark armor part covering Ganghis' spearhead like a scabbard pushes it out.

While feeling an abnormal heaviness from Ganghis' spearhead, I draw the spear back with my left hand. I thought about swinging Baldok from the side, going with the flow, but Galroh detaches the armor stuck to Ganghis, and spontaneously retreats out of spear range.

Given that gouged-out part in Galroh's black flame armor has disappeared, a hole remains at that spot now. The black chainmail he's wearing beneath is peeking out. But, the domed cluster of darkness, which covers Ganghis' spearhead after splitting off the armor, is still around. Has it gotten stuck to the spear now?

"To destroy Dueminas...and on top of that, a dual-spear style...I guess your name as spearmaster is not for show."

Galroh looks at me with a perplexed and somewhat scared expression. But, I doubt that he had imagined in his wildest dreams that me wielding one spear and all my movements following the Wind Spear Style so far were precautionary measures. And yet he managed to wedge Dueminas' blade in-between himself and Ganghis in an attempt to block Ganghis' spearhead. The blade part of Dueminas has been gouged out by Ganghis, but he's truly magnificent, seeing how he responded to a sudden spear attack using the moves of a dual-spear style.

Even my friend in the Martial Arts District, Quad-Sword Rave, the third rank of the Eight Divine Spear Kings, couldn't block it when he witnessed it for the first time.

It's no wonder that he's leading the Shadow Wing Brigade, which is trying to crush Bloody Long Ears, one of the Eight Lights. While honestly honoring Galroh's qualities as a martial artist, I shift to the next preparatory move.

I directly pour mana into Murasame's hilt held by the crooked mana hand of <Magic Hand guided by Thought> which I had deployed into the night sky above the inn's rooftop. For anyone unable to use Magic Observation, it should merely look like a shining katana floating in the sky. I put Murasame's blade on standby up in the air.

And then, I deliberately swipe Ganghis downwards as if sweeping with a broom. It creates a scar on the floor, but I manage to shake off the domed cluster of dark flame armor that was stuck around Ganghis' spearhead. It had no effect of sealing off a weapon after clinging to it once? Or is Ganghis simply special?

Well, I don't really care either way, but the cluster of dark flames vanishes from the floor as if evaporating. With Ganghis extended downwards, I place Baldok against my right shoulder, and

walk somewhat to the right while glaring at Galroh with half my body turned towards him.

As if overpowered by my menacing look, he keeps his silence. As I keep my eyes fixed on him, I extend Baldok downward to the right, letting its spear scratch along the floor with a light, metallic sound while turning the red ax blade to the side.

"Two weapons, huh? It makes a big difference between what one sees and what one hears."

"Now it's too late to regret it——"

Maintaining a forward-bent posture, I rush at him while roaring like a wild beast. I brandish Baldok to the front, trying to hit Galroh's torso.

Just before the ax blade manages to touch Galroh, I twist my left hand forward, aiming to stab Galroh's leg with Ganghis' <Thrust>.

Galroh blocks Baldok's ax blade with the punctured blade of Dueminas as a substitute shield. Ganghis' <Thrust> gets also blocked after the black flame armor's tasset part transforms into a long and thick plank.

Once again it defends automatically, huh?

Just like before, the black flame armor part is being ground down with a screeching by Ganghis' moon-shaped fangs as it protrudes out to enclose Ganghis' spearhead, but it doesn't change the fact that the <Thrust> has been fended off.

I quickly erase Ganghis from my extended left hand, and instantly move <Magic Hand guided by Thought>. Then I rotate my body sideways while focusing on my trunk with my toes as axis. While having my body revolve like a spintop, I summon Ganghis into my left hand once more.

Galroh closely observes my dual-spear style with its impromptu switches, causing him to be late in noticing Murasame's blade as it rushes down on him from above his head.

"From above!?" Galroh reacts with superman-like movements, trying to dodge the blade by slightly turning half his body.

But, the turquoise blade of Murasame bites into the top of black flame armored shoulder, melting its way down all the way from Galroh's shoulder to his flank. Murasame's blade, which manages to even dissolve a part of Galroh's leg, embeds itself in the floor with a buzzing. It also continues to melt the floor, but oddly Murasame's blade doesn't continue to the floor beneath.

"Guuaaah."

Alongside Galroh's scream, I can also hear an echoing scream from below. Since it looks like it's going to melt the floor sooner or later, I stop the mana supply to Murasame, and erase <Magic Hand guided by Thought>. Murasame returns to being a simple steel hilt, rolling on the ground.

At the same time, while continuing to revolve with my body being clad in wind, I move to Galroh's side, step in with my right foot, keeping my torso stable, while transferring the rotational power into

Ganghis. And then I invoke <Darkness Drill> with the image of thrusting it through Galroh alongside my left hand.

"Gufuuaa."

This time Galroh's black flame armor can't deal with the attack either. The <Darkness Drill>, teeming with darkness-based mana, pierces into Galroh's left chest, opening up a big hole. I can feel how his flesh and bones get shredded apart.

"We're not done yet. Feel how I act——"

Alongside those words, I summon Magic Spear Gudorl into the third arm growing on my right elbow.

"Guuhh!"

Using Gudorl, I invoke <Darkness Drill - Evil Destruction Lance>.

He tries to dodge by moving his body slightly to the right while vomiting blood. But I haven't the slightest intent to let him get away. I shoot <Chain> from my left wrist. At the same time, I activate <Tail of the Crushing Evil Spirit Tree>, entangling a very heavy tree around Galroh's leg. But, <Chain> is stopped by a part of the remaining dark flame armor.

Still, I've succeeded in rooting Galroh's leg. Moreover, something like a new, third arm should be completely out of Galroh's expectation.

Galroh has his right flank torn apart even further through the wound he's received through the spiraling, orange spear blade of Gudorl.

"...Guuoooh."

What follows right next is Destruction Lance Gladopalus. Gladopalus rotates with such a terrifying speed that you can't even follow it with your eyes. ——It's the drill of <Darkness Drill - Evil Destruction Lance>.

The huge dark lance, which vividly reminds one of a big drill tool, passes the orange blade, and hits upon Galroh's immobile body, swallowing up his upper body in its spiraling thrasher without giving him even the time to make a noise. Gladopalus very easily hollows out Galroh's upper body, passes through it, and plunges onwards through the air.

All that's left in its wake is Galroh's corpse which consists of nothing but his lower body half that's still entwined by the glowing tree. He somehow looks like a wooden sculpture adorned with smashed flesh. Topping this off, blood sprays out of the cut end at the waist, which looks like it's been torn to shreds by a giant's fist.

I partake in his blood without allowing any of it to go to waste. The meat sculpture, which used to be Galroh, collapses from the recoil of its blood ejection. Gladopalus vanishes without ascertaining that.

Alright!

I've succeeded in a three-spear-one-sword technique that used three arms and one crooked mana hand. I erase Baldok. Then I have my third arm quickly shrink down as well, returning it to its small caterpillar state.

"Pyui pyui." Catiza moves towards my palm along my arm with a small squeaking.

Then I hold up my right hand towards the place where the steel hilt lies, focusing on Murasame's blade.

"Come, Murasame!"

In the next instant, Murasame flies into my right hand with a speed as if being pulled over by a superconducting magnet. After rotating the hilt, which has returned to me through a mind force-like power, on my palm as if performing a gun spin, I store it into its exclusive sword belt attached to my hip.