

That voice is as clear as a bell. Its pure, dignified sound doesn't mesh with the bloody mask-wearing warrior at all.

A demon who has suddenly manifested without a trace of a sound or presence. Yes, the one and only person who can handle this weapon.

"...Shea, you've come at the perfect time. I've just finished the last adjustments."

It's certified huntress and cursed tool user Shea.

"These guys are already at their limit as well. They won't even be able to peel an apple anymore."

The two kitchen knives in Shea's head have reached a state of being on the verge of crumbling apart with cracks running all over their blades within this short amount of time. Just how many undead has she cut down for them to deteriorate to such an extent...?

At the very least, I wouldn't want to eat an apple peeled by these two.

Shea tosses those knives away, removes her Bone-Breaking Mask which has become so dirty that you can't even make out a clear color anymore, shakes her silver hair free. Only her beautiful face has no blood on it as it had been protected by her mask.

"Elemia and Nao have withdrawn."

"That's a proper assessment. If you judge that things are going south, you escape, even if it means abandoning your comrades. As expected of those who have formed a party with me."

"Haha...unfortunately it looks like I've been late in getting away, though."

...They've already gotten very close, so close that I don't even need to check the situation outside through the window.

The sensation of the hair on my nape tingling standing on end is a clear and powerful warning signal by my instincts. About the approach of an overwhelmingly powerful foe that's going to prey on me...

One of the Six Calamities in the borderlands, the Undead Dragon, is right nearby. Even the screams of death agony have already disappeared. Just the trembling by the dragons trudging is gradually becoming louder and stronger.

"Now that it has come to this, I guess you've got no choice but to pin your hopes on my victory."

Even under these circumstances, Shea's voice remains indifferent and level-headed. As if she's talking about someone else's problem.

"By the way, how is the chance for you winning?"

"That depends on the quality of your work, Teo." Shea replies, and returns her eyes to my latest piece of work.

A black aura thickly billows up from it. At this point I can't really see its body anymore as it's hidden from my eyes by a black fog. I can only confirm its silhouette. However, Shea seems to be able to clearly grasp its existence.

She decisively thrusts her dark brown arm into the black fog, and once she clasps the hilt of <Corpse Eater>, she swings her arm once, blowing away the fog.

"It sure changed drastically in the short time I haven't seen it."

"For it to become like this, it's beyond my expectations..."

Small blades densely crowd the blade of <Corpse Eater> all around. They line up in rows along the blade's edge, looking as if chains made out of blades have been twined lengthwise around the blade.

And ever since Shea has grasped the hilt, those blade chains have started to slowly and yet ceaselessly rotate.

—<Corpse Eater> - Mode: 'Black Dog Chain Fangs' (Chain Saw).

Assuming I added an inscription, it'd have probably been something like that.

"I can already tell from just holding it. Teo, this is your best work."

"Oh, how unusual for you to praise me without restraint."

"It's only natural, if you make something like this, no? That's my partner for you." She says with a broad grin.

"Haha, I suppose having you say something like that makes my bloody piss tomorrow worth it."

"Teo, can you move? This is gonna be the end. So ascertain the result of your work with your own eyes!"

She shoulders the new <Corpse Eater>, puts her mask back on, and breaks into a run. Chasing after the back of Shea, head outside through the door.

Beyond this point, there's nothing I can do. Rather, the danger is only going to increase. But, I cannot help but want to see the outcome of my own work.

Outside the smithy, a world I see for the first time in a while, the morning sun has already started to rise. The corpses of hunters are strewn across the area. All alone, Shea stands among them.

"Teo, stick close behind me. You'll be in danger if you stray away from me."

Shea senses my presence without the need to look back. But she's right. A weak civilian like me has no other choice but to do what she's said.

I keep walking behind her while maintaining a reasonable distance. Us two are the only living

beings out on a limb. The other hunters have already run away, or were killed...

"Mr. Gaston!"

I spot the clothes of a man I'm familiar with. It's the field smith Mr. Gaston who's been working with me until a little while ago. He's lying face-down in the dirt. Still, I feel like his fingers have twitched just now. Is he possibly still breathing?

"Uuhh."

Hearing him groaning weakly, I rush over in a hurry, "Are you alright?"

"Uuugh, aaah..."

"Oh, wonderful. Do you want some water?"

And then, at the moment when I'm about to reach for the water flask at my waist,
"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!"

All of a sudden, Mr. Gaston jumps to his feet.

"Whoaaaa!"

Unfortunately, the Field Smith Gaston has already passed on. His neck twists far beyond the limit of its joints. He bares his teeth, clearly touting his hostility.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!"

He leaps my way while screaming at the top of his lungs like a little child.

"Move aside, Teo!"

My body is being hurled away out of Mr. Gaston's way. With his prey gone, what was formerly Mr. Gaston loses its balance.

Just as it tries to fix its posture, its head is blown into smithereens.

One blow by the new <Corpse Eater>. The blades, which have instantly upped their rotational speed with a zing, were driven into the upper part of its skull.

—Splatter!

The head bursts open the instant it comes in contact with <Corpse Eater>. A wet sound as if a watermelon has exploded. And then the torso collapses with blood gushing out of its neck.

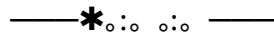
Shea looks down at the corpse which has once again stopped moving.

"I'll be able to do it with this."

She's satisfied with the power <Corpse Eater> packs. For her to have used Mr. Gaston as a test dummy...

Although she's done so to protect me, I somehow end up feeling apologetic. However, Shea doesn't feel a shred of guilt. She gets rid of the blood by swinging <Corpse Eater> once, and starts dashing again.

Her destination is the origin of the Shadow Tsunami, the Undead Dragon—



There was no need to even look for the dragon. The earthen tremors are clearly telling anyone its location. However, normally anyone would try to get away from that noise as far as possible, and not run towards it...

Shea keeps advancing without any hesitation. As I follow her, the vibrations and noises are gradually becoming louder and stronger. And so does the putrid stench of death assailing my nose.

Even a layman like me can tell that it's over there, very close nearby.

"We'll wait here. It has no choice but to pass through this area if it wants to exit the village to the south."

Shea has chosen the food storage next to a water mill as the spot to wait for the enemy. All the villagers have evacuated, and have left the buildings behind without even locking them up. Same can be said for the food as they apparently didn't have the leeway to escape while carrying it. The wooden boxes in the storage are filled to the brim with potatoes, onions, broccoli, and freshly harvested wheat. It's an accumulation of precious food.

"I'll aim for the moment when the dragon has passed this place. Teo, you hide in here."

"Okay..."

Afterwards, Shea and I wait silently. The morning sun dyes the roads in a violet glow. The water wheel gently follows its rhythm as it turns.

And then, cutting through the morning mist, a huge dragon becomes visible. Its entire body is festered with decay, and its bones are exposed at several places. While rotten flesh drips down like thawing snow, its four legs continue to pass in front of the water mill with an air of composure.

Its size exceeds the mill, which is the biggest construction in this village, by several leagues. The blades of the rotating wheel hit the dragon's shoulder, breaking with a loud cracking. However, the huge dragon doesn't seem to have even taken notice of it.

A dragon, the strongest race in this world. Moreover, its body feels no pain as it's already dead, which means it doesn't flinch from damage to its body anymore either. While obeying its insatiable hunger, it devours all living beings it finds.

Its huge frame that keeps rotting while repeatedly regenerating slowly passes.

"Should I die, get out of here."

Leaving those words without looking at me, Shea jumps out of the food storage. On the other side of the door waits a wall of decaying flesh completely filling out my field of view - the Undead Dragon's rear.

Shea plunges straight at it. Jumping high up, she slams <Corpse Eater> down at the flesh wall. The instant its blade touches the target, it begins to rotate violently.

—<Corpse Eater> - Mode: 'Black Dog Chain Fangs' (Chain Saw) has been activated.

The fang of Black Dog bore into the flesh, ripping and tearing it apart. Chunks of meat fly up into the air, accompanied by a nasty, sappy sound.

Each time Shea brings down <Corpse Eater>, flesh bursts from the dragon's body like fireworks, getting blown away.

And finally, even the thick headed dragon perceives Shea's onslaught.

—GOAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Its furious roar causes the storage's walls to rattle. Once it bends its long neck and catches sight of Shea, it fiercely slaps its massive tail down at Shea. A severe, peerless blow.

And yet, it resulted in only the Undead Dragon taking damage. <Corpse Eater>, held up by Shea over her head, digs into the tail, pulverizing it.

—GAAAAAA!

Grounded meat, pouring down like rain, soaks Shea's shoulders with a reddish-brown goo. The dragon's flesh pops off, on the verge of being torn to pieces. Be that as it may, the dragon doesn't falter.

Without even trying to protect its tattered tail, it uses it for a side sweep next.

However, Shea dodges it, and continues her attacks from behind.

The dragon turns its body around, trying to face Shea from the front. It wriggles its massive frame while blowing away the buildings around it. But, Shea is fast. While evading the fragments of the buildings, she constantly remains right behind the dragon, continuing to work its tail and thick hind legs with <Corpse Eater>.

And, each time <Corpse Eater> hits, minced meat sprays into the vicinity like a fountain.

The Undead Dragon usually ignores attacks by normal swords and arrows, but the destructive force of her every blow is abnormal. It fiercely tears away the thigh muscles, completely throwing the

dragon's body off-balance.

The dragon grandly tumbles over, squashing several houses in the process. Bricks are whirled into the air.

The masked warrior jumps as if weaving her way through the opening between the airborne debris, nimbly lands on the Undead Dragon's back, and drives <Corpse Eater> down. The blades rotate with a sickening splatter sound inside the dragon's body, ransacking the flesh and blood.

"Oooooohh!"

With <Corpse Eater> still stabbed in the body, Shea runs up towards the dragon's head. Once she's cut all the way up to the base of its neck, she pulls out the blade in one breath.

—GYAAAAA!?

The dragon lifts its head, screaming.



That's what Shea has been aiming for. She jumps once more, and strikes the back of its head with <Corpse Eater>. With the blade deeply penetrating its head, the chain blades rampage within while churning its brain.

"Haaaaaaa!"

With a war cry, Shea uses all her strength to cut through the head with the blade of <Corpse Eater> still embedded deep inside. Then she pulls it out once, and slashes left and right next.

Pink-colored chunks of flesh fly off after being ripped apart in a cross-shape. A gooey mass similar to cod milt blended with blood juts out like a thick sauce.

Shea grabs that with her bare hand, and roughly tears it out.

That's its brain. Due to the overly large quantity, it doesn't really feel real, but Shea has started to pull out the brain from within its skull.

—GA...AA.....

The Undead Dragon stops moving, and its head feebly drops to the ground.

"Yahoooo!", reflexively escapes my mouth.

No matter how undead it might be, even for a demonic beast this is going to be fatal. The power of Shea and the new <Corpse Eater> have overwhelmed the Undead Dragon!

I leave the storage hut which is on the verge of collapse from the battle, and try to run up to Shea.

"Shea! You truly...."

"Stay away!"

While loudly commanding, Shea begins to run my way at full speed.

"Shea...guheee!"