

Re:Zero - Starting Life in Another World
Arc 6 - Chapter 80: "Death of Spirit"

Ley can smell fury.

The smell of anger, fragrant and mellow and pure. Ley found it irresistible, stirring his thin little body and pushing it to greater heights.

Ley : [Haha.]

Facing each other up and down the spiral staircase, Ley sneered gruesomely at Ram.

The girl with strong emotions in her light red eyes. Ley breathes in a sight full of rage, hatred, and murderous intent that she is directing towards him, and Ley felt ecstatic.

For lack of a better word, it's no exaggeration to say that he lives for this one breath.

Ley: [Nice! Good! Great! Excellent! Fine! Perfect! Fantastic! Stupendous! Come on, I don't usually have people who give me that angry look. It's a very precious feeling. You know what I mean? Do you understand how happy I am right now!]

Ley licks his tongue as he steps up the staircase. Yes, this encounter with this emotion is something that the usual Ley can never hope to have. The 'memories' and 'names' taken away by the Authority of Gluttony are stripped away from the world and no one but Roy and Louis can even recognize them. The grief of losing a loved one, the anger of deprivation, the empty sense of loss, everything is completely gone and there is nothing you can do about it.

Ley: [So of course it's normal. So I never really paid attention to it, but...]

If you operate as a member of the hated Witch Cult, you will meet many times with people who direct their hatred towards your affiliation. However, there was no one who knew what Lye Batenkaitos had done, who harbored hatred for Ley Batenkaitos personally, and who aimed to kill Ley Batenkaitos.

Such that a natural order, a natural unwritten rule produced by the Authority of Gluttony could be overturned.

Someone who could not be influenced by the Authority of Gluttony, had emerged.

Ley: [Natsuki Subaru]

Murmuring the name of the man Louis was obsessed with, Ley gets a sweet tingle in his thin chest. He hadn't been inspired by Louis. She had known him before that.

She had felt for him, much stronger and deeper, long before Louis.

It was

Ley: [You understand, don't you, Sister?]

The cause of this sweet tingling in my chest and the girl looking down at me is deeply connected. No, it's not even close to being deep. It's no wonder that they are one and the same, one irreplaceable person.

Ram: [I told you, I told you to die screaming like a pig!]

Ley: [Oh!]

Ram lunges down the stairs, landing a kick that sends Batenkaitos flying backwards.

He ducked back quickly, the tip of Ram's foot had been aimed precisely at his right eye. If Ley had pulled his head back too late he would have had his brain ripped out of his skull.

Ley: [You're relentless, sister! If I'd eaten that, I wouldn't have been able to do anything but squeal like a pig and I would have died!]

Ram: [I'm having second thoughts. It wouldn't do the pigs any good to be mimicked by a lesser pig.]

He flew down the spiral staircase, his landing delayed by the steps. Ram continued her onslaught with a cold killing intent. Turning her slender body, Ram unleashes a kick, aimed at Ley.

Ley: ['Haha! Scary, scary! I'm scared, come on!]

Ley laughs as he dodges Ram's attack without hesitation.

Ram is strong. She is relentless, and it's not afraid to kill. But even so, Ley can still avoid Ram's attacks with ease. Why? It's easy to see why.

Ley: [I know my sister is even more impressive than that.]

Numerous "memories" are stored inside Ley . One of them is a passionate one, in which he adores Ram as his sister and is amazed by her infinite potential.

Ley: [A sister with no horns is nothing more than a pseudo-sister who can be replaced by Rem.]

Ram: [...]

Ley: [Oh, you're mad? Are you mad at me? If you're going to get angry, it's okay to get angry at me, sister. Come to think of it, I've never had a proper sisterly quarrel before.]

Ley flaunts Rem's memories as his own. Ram's cheeks hardened at Ley's words and actions, but she did not relax her attack.

Ley: [I'm so grateful for the miracle of finding this delicious food.]

A dance of murderous intent, mixed with love and hate, played out on the spiral staircase. Savoring it to the fullest, Batenkaitos was grateful for Ram's presence.

Ram: [Shut up!]

Ley circles around Ram's left side with his dagger outstretched, aiming for Ram's neck. Ram turns to her left to face Ley.

Sensing something, Batenkaitos interrupts his attack and dodges to the right with a sideways leap. However, his cheek feels a gust of wind and blood spurts out of it.

Ley: [...]

Tracing his hand over his roughly torn cheek, Batenkaitos coughed slightly.

It was a wound he was not supposed to receive. At least, if you follow the 'memory' in Ley, the being who knew the prodigy Ram best - there was no future for him to receive this wound.

And yet ...

Ram: [I told you to squeal miserably, but it is hard to hear your unseemly voice. I can't bear to listen to it anymore so I'm going to kill you!]

Ley : [Sister, this is]

Ram : [If you were relying on 'memory' to evaluate Ram, then you're still underestimating me.

Ley [You thought you had uncovered the extent of Rem's knowledge? That'd be hilarious. The possibilities are endless for Ram. Because,]

Ram [...]

Ley : [You're Rem's sister.]

A baseless rant, which resonated with unusual conviction, because the 'memory' inside Ley, which if nothing else, perceived his sister's existence as such. Recognizing this fact, Ley's smile disappeared and his cheeks twisted in an abhorrent manner. It's not fun. It's not fun.

Ley: [Anger and hatred are both spices for delicacies, you know. But if the spices taste too strong it will ruin the dish. Do you think that is not a very good example for someone who doesn't cook?]

Ram: [Not really. For what it's worth, Ram's specialty is steamed potatoes.]

The 'memory' that vividly recalled it came back to him, and his stomach rumbled. Deliberately ignoring that hunger, Ley abandoned his playful mood.

Ram had yet to show the true value of her power. That only meant that she hadn't revealed everything to even her one horned sister.

In other words....

Ley: [You can't even trust your sister, that is the ultimate in individualism.]

Ram: [..... That's a shallow way of looking at things. I don't know how many human lives you've tasted, but those people don't come to mind either. They're trivial, except for Rem.]

Ram's light red eyes narrowed as she dismissed Ley's view of food.

And then she stroked her own thin chest.

Ram: [Hang in there, Basaru.].

She called out to the boy who wasn't here, with a cold expression of ruthless resolve on her face.



Subaru pulls his scarf up to his mouth and takes a deep breath. He doesn't want to breathe in any dust or sand. Subaru would really like to get some goggles, but that's unfortunately a tall order. He can only continue to stare into the depths of the sandstorm, preparing for grains of sand to fly into his eyes.

Subaru: [Beako! Meili! Hold on!]

Crossing the desert, in Subaru's hazy field of vision is a vicious being clad in a jet black shell.

If he were to allow it to get close and attack him with its giant pincers, it would be fatal. If they keep their distance then a fatal beam of light would fire from the scorpion's tail. There are a large number of other ways to die as well.

There are more conditions for defeat than you can shake a stick at.

Subaru: ['However, that's just the way it's always been:!']

Battle for Natsuki Subaru had always been a balancing act.

What makes it difficult is that even knowing what comes next, thanks to "Return to Death", is that the abilities he has are so out of proportion to the strength of his opponents. He is always short of cards to play. He has to trust in everyone's strength and expect them to win, Subaru struggles to live up to everyone's expectations.

Subaru: [This isn't so much my fight as it is mine and my merry band of friends!]

Meili: [This is not the time for that. Good job, Hungry Horse King!]

Hearing Subaru's futile cries of futility, Meili, who was running alongside him, commanded a pair of demonic beasts, Hungry Horse Kings. The pair of demonic beasts screeched as they carried Subaru with Beatrice on his lap and Meyli, respectively, while running through the sandy sea at full speed.

Coming from behind was a large scorpion attacking at them while charging through the desert while kicking up sand.

Subaru: [Urg.]

Compared to defeat conditions, the victory condition was to distract the demonic beast horde and the large scorpion and prevent them from invading the tower. The idea is to wait for Emilia to complete the trial on the first floor of the tower and rewrite the rules of the tower.

As a matter of fact, it wasn't even determined if that was possible, but.

Beatrice: [If we can't do that, then it's not right that it's part of the rules of the tower in the first place.]

Subaru [That is exactly, Beako. If you go out of your way to say, 'You can break the rules,' that means that these rules are supposed to be broken.]

And if that was possible, it would be like a reward for the conqueror of the tower. If you think of it that way, it's a right that can only be given to those who have cleared it through legitimate means.

I'm really glad that Emilia made it through Reid in a straightforward manner. If she hadn't won, the means to save Shaula may not have been possible.

Subaru: ['I'll never forgive that guy for sexually harassing Emilia-tan, but!]

It was an infuriating event to think back on, but taking revenge on Reid would have to be left to Julius. Hoping that Julius would defeat that violent man, Subaru kept the long watchtower in view and resigned himself to the struggles of Beatrice and Meili.

Meili: [Brother! I'm trapped here! I think it's easier to handle all of these demonic beasts if we keep running from the tower!]

Subaru: [I see your point! I know, but I can't! I can't leave the tower. Any further away and we will definitely lose!]

Dismissing Meili's appeal, Subaru grabbed his chest and bit his back teeth.

The effects of "Cor Leonis" were still active, and even now the whereabouts of the companions in the tower were within Subaru's sight as faint lights. However, there are still many unknowns in his authority, and it is not known what will trigger it to come undone. The most obvious effect of the authority is probably distance. In fact, Subaru can't even sense the whereabouts of its companions outside of the Augurian dunes. If that was due to distance, how far away from the watchtower could he be?

But the biggest problem is more than confirming their safety, it's that he won't be able to shoulder the burden. Emilia and Julius, the ones who jumped into hard battles, are strong, but more troublesome, is Ram, who is about to go all out against the Archbishop of Gluttony.

Subaru was confident that he had placed his companions in the best place, but it was expected that Ram's battle would be the toughest of all. That's because her opponent is Ley Batenkaitos - the one who afflicted Rem with the 'Sleeping Princess' condition. Without Ram being at 100% strength, Ram would not be able to compete with Ley Batenkaitos. And Subaru wanted Ram to beat Batenkaitos to her heart's content. In order to do that, it is necessary for Subaru to shoulder the burden that is constantly tormenting her.

That's why--.

Subaru: [We can't just leave the tower! Sorry but stick with me!]

Meili: ["What! That is absolutely, positively, terrible!]

Her lips knotted at Subaru's plea, a red-faced Meili shouted at the Hungry Horse King's back.

As it was, the girl stared at the sky and clapped her hands to the beings circling the high, high azure sky.

Meili: [Come on!]

With a high-pitched command, a small shadow flying around in the sky swoops down into the sandy sea. Seeing it aim at the great scorpion on the sand, Subaru raised his voice.

Subaru: [Beatrice I need that beast to come over here!]

Beatrice: [I know, I know! "Murak"]

Sensing Subaru's aim, Beatrice raised her small palm to the sky.

The magic is activated, but its aim is not towards the great scorpion, but towards the winged mole that was descending with an eye on the great scorpion.

In the path of the winged mole, a circle of light appears, the moment the winged mole dives through the circle, the small demonic beast accelerates, covered in light.

With the piercing impact piercing the outer shell of the great scorpion, a violent sound roared out.

Up to this point, the great scorpion, which had previously received the winged mole's attack like a gentle breeze, stopped as the power it was now struck with could not be ignored.

Meili: ['That was Beatrice, what did you do?']

Beatrice: [I suppose I made the demonic beast you control heavier before it hit. It won't be as fast or hard, but just making them heavier will change the outcome.]

Beatrice replies to Meili's surprise.

That's the answer to the background of the winged mole's sudden strengthening--the power is a combination of weight and speed.

The winged mole that dived through the soil with its strong horns, the life-threatening assault of the demonic beast, dared to stop the great scorpion with its unbelievable destructive power.

Although the great scorpion's ability to respond was brilliant, it was not able to respond to the first attack in full. Subaru turned his head to the fullest.

Subaru: ['I'm sorry for the demonic beasts, but it's a trade off between life and time. The number and variety of demonic beasts that can be used, and with Beako's assistance, the possibilities are endless.! This way...]

I can do it, Subaru curls his hands into fists and grips Beatrice's drills.

Beatrice : [I protest it hurts, I suppose!]

--that was the moment.

Subaru: [... oh?]

Subaru's voice leaks out as he looks up at the watchtower.

Beatrice : [Subaru?]

He turned around, but he couldn't answer.

Subaru's consciousness was taken away, not from the outside where the watchtower was visible, but from the inside - inside the tower, where he could feel the faint lights in various places, and the reactions of his friends.

His friends, who were probably all engaging in fierce battles, one light had disappeared from him, heading to the top, Emilia's light.

Subaru: [...]

A moment later, Subaru's heart exploded.

The fact that Emilia's light was gone, confused Subaru terribly. There was no way that Emilia had lost, that there was no way that could be...

Subaru: [Easy, easy, now.].

It's too soon to despair. Subaru should have more faith in the ability of "Cor Leonis". Even if it comes from the worst man in the world, this power is on his side, no matter how new it is.

Based on the reactions of "Cor Leonis" up to this point, the luminosity of the pale light and the intensity of the warmth of the light is an indication of the state of a companion. If they are intensely agitated, the color and intensity of the light will change. The opposite is also true. If so, does the disappearance of Emilia's light mean her 'death'?

Subaru: [If that's the case, the speed at which her reaction disappeared was too quick.]

Even if Emilia had encountered a horrible enemy that could instantly annihilate her existence, and even if she was in the hands of that enemy, Subaru doesn't think she would disappear without a fight.

As Emilia ran up the watchtower and headed to the first layer, something happened to her that took her out of the scope of the influence of "Cor Leonis".

Therefore, Emilia's light smoothly slipped out of Subaru's perception in an instant.

Beatrice: [Subaru!]

Meili: [Brother! This is not the time to be dumb!]

The two little girls call out to Subaru, who is biting lip.

Subaru: [I Know.]

Subaru responds to himself and to them.

Subaru: ['I don't know where or what you are up against. But I trust you'll come back Emilia.]



Far above them, at the same time that Subaru had uttered his words of prayer.

Even Subaru's imagination would not be able to comprehend Emilia's situation.

If the Witch of Envy is a symbol of fear, then this should be a symbol of hope and trust. A symbol of hope and trust, because this being had defeated a symbol of fear.

The name of this mighty and great being is...

Emilia: [The Divine Dragon Volcanica.]

Ruminating over the name that was given, Emilia felt her whole body quickly become cold.

Although it's hard to say this, Emilia has a constitution that is not associated with nervousness. Of course, when standing in front of people or having an important conversation, one may feel a little bit heavy, but once one actually starts talking, one can quickly forget about those effects.

Emilia used to be praised by Subaru and Ram for being confident.

But even with Emilia being confident, she was unable to move in front of the Divine Dragon. Even breathing was not allowed without the other party's permission.

Emilia: [...]

With a gasp, Emilia looked again at the Volcanica's entire body.

Its azure scales gleamed like jewels, and each one seemed sharper than a sword.

Its thick paws and hind legs were equipped with blackened, rock-like claws, and its face, much like that of an earth dragon, and had long-lived golden twin eyes. Its head has two large, thick horns that are as white as freshly squeezed milk.

The body of the Divine Dragon must be fifteen or sixteen meters tall. It didn't stand up, but instead folded its wings and tail and squatted down on the spot, so the exact size of the dragon was not known. But since it was so large in that state, it was only natural that it would not be able to fit inside the tower.

It must have been for Volcanica that one level was built in the open.

The third floor was the 'Sage', the second floor was Reid, and so the first floor was Volcanica.

Emilia: [Could it be that all three of the great old heroes are involved in the Tower's 'test'?]

Looking back at the contents of the 'test' up to this point, Emilia found a common thread.

The 'Three Heroes' - the three heroes who once worked to seal the 'Witch of Envy' and remained in the history of the Lugnica Kingdom. Shaula, Reid, and Volcanica.

However, Shaula actually said it was Flugel's achievement, Reid was very violent and foul-mouthed, and Volcanica was not a person, but a dragon.

Still, if all of them are related to this place--.

Emilia: [It's amazing how close you guys are after all these years.]

It seemed to Emilia that if promises, unity, and such things connected the three heroes together, it was something very nice.

Originally, Volcanica was the one who had made a 'pact' with the Kingdom of Lugnica, and in fact, it was on record that the Divine Dragon had wielded its power when it rampaged within Lugnica decades ago.

Emilia likes beings who value their promises as important.

She thinks it's very good to be able to keep her promises properly. She values and trusts Subaru very much, but she thought that he was no good at keeping his promises. What if Beatrice starts to imitate him at that rate? Emilia didn't want to scold the two of them, Subaru and Beatrice, for breaking their promises either.

Emilia: [Oh, I shouldn't think about that right now. I do not have time to think about that. You know what, Volcanica! I'm here to take the 'test'!]

Volcanica: [...]

Emilia: [I don't know what kind of hard 'test' you're going to put me through, but, but I'm asking you to hurry up! If I don't do my best, Subaru and the others will be in trouble. Come on, start the test now!]

Slapping her own cheeks with her hands, Emilia regained her cowering mind. Unintentionally, the thought of Subaru and Beatrice was the catalyst. Even if those two were to be scolded by Emilia for breaking their promise, that would be in the future after today.

In order to face that future, Emilia had to stand her ground here.

Volcanica: [...]

The silent Divine Dragon is staring at Emilia with its golden colored eyes.

It's the eyes that give you a sense of depth, without exaggeration, as if you're going to be sucked into them.

It might be close to a thousand years, but that pair of eyes have been watching the world.

Emilia didn't know how her existence would appear to the Divine Dragon. She doesn't know, but...

Emilia: [I'm used to someone judging me for it. There were people who hated me because I was half-elf, and there were mean girls like Echidna but there were also people like my knight Subaru, Ram, and Beatrice who have high hopes for me.]

As she spoke, Emilia touched the crystal stone on her chest with her fingers.

Even now, Emilia's precious family, who continues to sleep, are the first ones to affirm Emilia to accept Emilia

Starting with that family, there are friends in this tower who approve of Emilia.

Emilia: [So no matter how they look at me, I'm fine with it!]

The soul that was almost crushed by the difference in presence, the limbs that seemed to tremble and become small, and the presence of Emilia that was almost consumed by a being who knows the eternal history of time, would not be defeated.

Emilia: [I'll never lose.]

Volcanica: [....]

Clenching her fists, Emilia's amethyst eyes shone with authority.

With that Emilia's gaze on him, Volcanica blinked slowly. Then, Volcanica moved its dragon jaws majestically--.

Volcanica: [You have reached the top of the tower. You have reached the top of the tower, thou shalt tread on one level, petitioner of the Almighty.]

Emilia: [----]

Volcanica: [I am Volcanica. I am Vulcanica, and by the ancient pact, I challenge the aspirations of all those who would go to the top.]

Emilia: [..... Huh?]

Emilia, who had been holding her breath and bracing herself for difficult questions coming from Volcanica, listened to the grim words spat out from the dragon's mouth and tilted her head.

That's because the content of those words had a familiar ring to it.

Emilia: [The first thing that comes to mind is what you told me just now, right? I'm the one who came to the first floor and you are the Volcanica is that right?]

Volcanica: [...]

Emilia: ["..... Oh! Maybe it's because we haven't introduced ourselves? I'm sorry. I'm Emilia, just Emilia. Hey, a lot of people don't happen to remember me right now, so I'm in trouble if you ask me to prove it, but I'm Emilia!]

Volcanica: [...]

Emilia: [..... This is still not good enough?]

Emilia thought that skipping the greeting had caused displeasure, but even when she reiterated her greeting, Volcanica's reaction did not change.

If this was Subaru, he would have been pessimistic to the point of thinking he was disqualified from taking the 'test' for skipping the greeting, but Emilia did not think the same way.

Even if there is something wrong, Emilia thought that if you apologized, the other party won't be that ruthless. Therefore, she didn't think that her rudeness had bought Volcanica's silence at this time either. What Emilia considered was the possibility that Volcanica was not angry. Or, in that case, it could be even worse than being angry. Because--.

Emilia: [Could it be]

Staring back at the golden eyes, Emilia stared back at the golden eyes and stepped forward fearlessly.

She took a step or two and closed the distance between her and the Divine Dragon Volcanica. Emilia approached the majestic dragon.

Then, she gently reaches out her hand and touches the scales on the Divine Dragon's paw.

Emilia: [--Cold.]

The scales she touched were as cold as ice, or as cold as cold steel. How much time could one spend in stagnation to lose so much heat? It doesn't mean biological 'death'. It's not just physical vitality that prolonged stagnation deprives us of.

Volcanica: [Thou shalt reach the top of the tower. You have reached the top of the tower, you almighty petitioner.]

Emilia: [....]

Volcanica: [I am Volcanica. I am Volcanica, and by the ancient pact, I challenge the aspirations of all those who would go to the top.]

Looking down at Emilia, who is touching his paws, Volcanica repeats once more now.

A greeting that is repeated with a frequency that should be called reiteration. It was not intended to blame Emilia for her lack of greeting.

Volcanica, whose eyes that stare into the depths, seem to reflect Emilia but do not see her.

The reason for this was obvious.

Emilia: [Perhaps you're too old that you have forgotten about the 'test'?]

It's not the death of the body, but the death of the mind, which attacked the long-lived dragon as well.

And this is even more difficult for Emilia, who has to overcome the test on the first floor.

The Great Library Pleiades, the first floor, "Maia"

The time limit: "The survival time of my friends".

The number of challenges, 'Unknown'.

Challenger "One".

The content of the test is unknown.

BEGIN!