

野生の

ボス

が現れた!

2

炎頭

Yahako



A WILD LAST BOSS APPEARED

– Yasei no Rasubosu ga Arawareta! –

- VOLUME 2 -

-AUTHOR-

Firehead

-ILLUSTRATOR-

YahaKo

[Hand of Vecna]



wild
final boss
appeared!

Illustration:Yahako





※味方
です。



野生の

ファイヤーヘッド
炎頭

ILL.
YahaKo

ラストボス が現れた!

2



person
登場人物

ディーナ

ルフアスの参謀として行動を共にする美少女。転移魔法が使えて頭も切れて何かと有能だけれど、何故か影が薄い。

『牡羊』アリエス

ルフアスに仕える霸道十二星天の一人。100mを超えるモンスターだが、擬人形態では男の娘。穏やかで心優しい性格。

俺(♂)

オンラインゲーム「エクセート・オンライン」でルフアスをマイキャラとして作って遊んでいた人物。創世神アロヴィナスに「新たな役割を与える」と言われ、気付いたらゲーム内の彼女に憑依していた。

ルフアス・マフアール

世界征服の寸前まで成し遂げ、「黒翼の霸王」と恐れられる女傑。200年前に封印されたはずだったが、ひょんなことから復活し、旧友である『七英雄』と自分の配下『霸道十二星天』に出会うために旅を続けている。

▲擬人形態

マルス



魔神王に仕える七曜の一人。属性は「火」。

ガンツ



魔法大国スヴェルで国境警備を務める傭兵。

『賢王』メグレズ



ルフアスの旧友であり、七英雄の一人。魔法大国スヴェルを建国したエルフ。

これまでに出会った人物

これまでのあらすじ

story

人気オンラインゲーム『エクスゲート・オンライン』で仲間とともにユーザー発案の一大イベントを開催した俺。

それは、有史以来初めて人類をひとつの勢力圏にまとめあげた

黒翼の霸王ルファス・マファール(俺)から、

勇者たちの手で世界を取り戻そうというもの。

そうです、俺は完全に悪役です。

そこで勇者たち率いる光の軍に敗北した俺だったが、

イベント翌日に**創世神アロヴィナス**が現れた。

どうやら俺に『新しい役割』を与えてくれるらしい。

何それ、楽しそうじゃん？ 俺は、迷うことなくその提案に乗った。

——そして、気付くと俺はゲームの中のルファスに憑依してしまっていたわけ。

もうね……全然わかんない。

ひよんなことから出会った参謀の少女**ディーナ**曰く、

俺を倒した『**七英雄**』は、公式ラスボスの『**魔神王**』に敗北。

そのせいで、ここ二百年のうちに人類は**魔神族**によって追い詰められていた。

しかも、俺の配下だった『**霸道十二星天**』の一部は

七英雄への逆恨みから魔神族に力を貸しているのだとか。

何やってんだよ、あいつら……。

人類に危機が迫っていると知った俺は、

早速、七英雄の『**賢王**』**メグレス**が建国した魔法大国**スヴェル**へと向かい、

そこで侵略行為を繰り返していた**十二星天**『**牡羊**』**アリエス**を止めた。

そして、残りの十二星天の居場所に関する情報を手に入れた俺たちは、

次なる目的地『**黒翼の王墓**』へと向かうことになったのであった。



Chapter 20

Libra Blocks The Road Ahead

Several men were traveling along the dark, stone-paved road. Torch in hand, sword at the waist.

The men behind were equipped with staves or bows. From their orderly movements, it was obvious that they were veterans who overcame a lot of hardships. However, fatigue was evident on the faces of such robust men. Numerous scars were left on their armors. A man in the center, who seemed to be a wizard, was missing an arm.

It had been hell up until this point. In the past, Ruphas Mafahl mass-produced golems—each considered to be comparable to the Sword Saint of today—for the final battle. These golems wandered around, attacking them in multiple ambushes.

A large party of more than fifty men had now been reduced to merely ten survivors.

This was the place where the treasures of the overlord were kept. This was the Black-Winged Royal Tomb, whose soul slept through the ages according to legends.

Seeking the hidden treasures, the tomb was infiltrated at times by treasure hunters, invaded at times by tomb robbers, and at times entered by soldiers like these men, who were dispatched in the hope of reversing the dire situation facing the humanoids.

However, this place was a merciless hell. Intruders would lose their lives and be slaughtered mercilessly. Even if there was only one golem, it would still be a threat. In a head-on battle, they would be instantly killed. Therefore, they avoided combat and escaped from traps, losing companions constantly along the way until they reached the top floor.

"A bit more... A bit more, and we are there!"

"Ah. Everyone's sacrifices wouldn't be in vain... We must bring out the weapons here."

Honestly, they did not have the strength to challenge this tomb. In this current world,

only the Seven Heroes were powerful enough to challenge this tomb. Despite this, they came anyway because they hoped to achieve victory for the humanoids. They sincerely hoped to end the darkness of this world, no matter the sacrifice. This was for the sake of the children and for their families and loved ones.

These ten men overcame their fear of death, abandoned their self-preservation, and moved forward.

But reality was unforgiving. The unavoidable, unpassable, and biggest obstacle waited at the top floor.

"—Intruders confirmed... Warning... Leave this place in ten seconds. Non-compliance or hostile behavior will be—*gak gak*—met with elimination by force."

The treasury on the top floor was guarded by one of the Twelve Heavenly Stars. As the most powerful golem in history, this merciless guardian was Libra of the Scales.

Her appearance was that of a lovely girl. A hairband adorned her shoulder-length, light brown hair. Her maid dress was torn and had deteriorated over the years. The girl herself exuded a sense of ageless youth and her eyes were like emotionless glass orbs. Her sleeves were torn, exposing her arms as if to show that she was an inhuman construct. Her stained joints were squeaking and cracked.

As the men confirmed her identity, they got into position.

"This is... Libra of the Scales!"

"Please wait, Twelve Heavenly Stars! We are not here for a fight! Please listen to us!"

"Starting countdown... ten... nine... eight..."

"I beg you, please listen! Currently, humanoids are being cornered by demons! To escape this fate, we had to come here!"

"Seven... six... five..."

"For the humanoids' victory! The Black Wings' legacy here is absolutely necessary!"

"Four... —Stopping countdown. Clarified intruders' goals... Acknowledged as foreign

enemies after master's treasures. Elimination condition met..."

"!!"

The countdown stopped, but the men realized that did not mean the end of hostility. Instead, the other party had judged that countdown was no longer necessary! Her "elimination condition" had just been met!

"Wait..."

"Proceeding with elimination—Program selection. Brachium, activate!"

Everything was stained white.

That was the last sight of the world seen by those men.

In the end, they vanished from this world without leaving a speck of dust behind.



The camping car (Tanaka) traveled for approximately two days, arriving at our second destination—my tomb. It felt surreal to be visiting my own tomb. If someone was crying before the tomb, I would definitely sing, "I am not there."

"I think around here would be nice. Tanaka is too conspicuous, so let it stay in the nearby forest."

"Okay~"

"I understand."

"YES, BOSS."

I told Tanaka, who replied in English for some reason, to stop at the forest and await further orders. Otherwise, this car would automatically follow behind. Then, I alighted along with Dina and Aries, and aimed for the place where there might be a tomb. I said "aim," but it could already be seen right before us—a huge pyramid.

I heard about it from Megrez previously, but this was really unnecessarily big. Even

with alchemy, it was impressive that a structure of this size was built and still stood unbroken today. Although the Tower of Mafahl would not lose in terms of its ridiculous architecture, only someone like Mizar could have built something like this.

...Oh. Actually, both structures belonged to me, although I didn't know about the tomb previously.

"Why is there a village around the tomb?"

"Oh—Well, this is tourism... Adventurers and treasure hunters gathered here to raid the tomb, so merchants gathered here to make a profit out of them. Population increased over time, and eventually it became a village."

"...My tomb is practically a tourist attraction."

"It is actually a tourist attraction. The tombs of world famous people usually become tourist attractions in later generations."

Hearing Dina's explanation, I helplessly replied with an "Ah". I supposed it was not surprising that my pyramid would become a sightseeing spot in this world.

Even though I was still here, I had a tomb, and it even became a tourist attraction.

Ah, this... this was pretty disturbing.

"Ruphas-sama, leave it to me!"

"Hm?"

As I considered this, Aries pounded his chest enthusiastically for some reasons. However, because of his facial features, he looked like a determined maiden instead of a resolved man. This nearly brought on tears.

"Let me kick these people away! It's outrageous for them to gather to raid Ruphas-sama's tomb!"

As he said so, Aries enveloped his entire body in flames.

Hey, stop it, you fool! Surely you don't intend to become a giant sheep here!?

You are the outrageous one, you stupid sheep!

"Stop it, Aries. There's no need for a pointless disturbance."

"But, but..."

"There's no 'but'. Besides, since I'm still here, that cannot be my tomb. I feel bad for the people who built this... but that is merely a structure that I do not know of. It doesn't matter even if such a place is raided."

I had to calm Aries down and avoid causing a disturbance.

That was dangerous... Despite his appearance, this guy became really reckless when it was something that concerned me. Surely not everyone in the Twelve Heavenly Stars were like this?

I appreciated the devotion, but this was giving a headache.

"So... what now, Dina? Should we infiltrate as traveling merchants again?"

"Of course. Since this is a tourist attraction, it's not unusual for merchants to come here. Well, you can leave all the negotiations to me."

Well, this adviser was still reliable as usual. Nothing went wrong so far when I left things to Dina, so let her handle it this time as well. Or rather, if Dina was not here, I would be seriously stuck.

The first thing I noticed when I entered the village was temporary shelters like tents deployed everywhere. These probably belonged to merchants or traveling adventurers. There were wooden houses too, which were probably the homes of full-time tomb raiders or people providing service support. Inns and taverns existed as well. The liveliness here did not seem like it was next to a tomb.

If I was really dead, it would be impossible to rest in peace here.

"Now then, I will find the agent to acquire a trading permit. Ruphas-sama, you—yeah, that inn looks quite nice. Could you get a room at that inn? I will go there after I'm done."

Dina ran off without waiting for my reply.

She sure was energetic. Well, if she was so confident, there shouldn't be a problem.

"Ha—Dina is amazing."

"Yes. She's surprising useful. Why was she so stealthy two hundred years ago though?"

I wondered what race Dina belonged to. She did not have elven ears, so she couldn't be an elf. She did not have wings, so she couldn't be a flügel. She had no fangs, so she couldn't be a vampire. Since she remained youthful after two hundred years, she couldn't be a human, dwarf, hobbit, or beastman.

She also could not be a demon due to her skin color.

Then again, there were many ways to conceal one's features, such as how I hid my wings. Therefore, I shouldn't judge only by appearance. Currently, her most likely race would be an elf with her ears concealed. If she was a flügel, she would be disgusted by my black wings. If she was a vampire, she couldn't walk around in daylight.

But this begged the question, "Why did she conceal her features in the first place?"

—... Well, whatever.

There was no doubt that she was helping me, whatever she might be.

This was simply unjustified suspicion.

"Let's go to that inn Dina mentioned. I hope there are vacant rooms."

Ideally, there were three vacant rooms. Firstly, I was mentally male, so I couldn't stay with Dina. But since my body was female, the same would be true with Aries. Likewise, Aries couldn't stay with Dina due to their different genders. Therefore, the ideal would be to have three rooms.

As I pondered this, I opened the inn's door and entered. There were four men, who appeared to be adventurers, talking with another man, who appeared to be the innkeeper. Upon seeing me and Aries, the innkeeper jumped over the counter and

came forward.

"Oh, welcome, ladies! I'm honored to be visited by such beauties! If you want rooms, they are available and are very cheap!"

"Eh? But, uncle... currently, we have room reservations..."

"Later!"

This innkeeper seemed like someone who stayed true to his desires. He was truly "manly" in the sense of ignoring the customers who came first in order to prioritize us. Well, this must be what was meant by "beauty always wins." When you actually experienced it yourself, it was somewhat uncomfortable.

"Well, cheap is good. Innkeeper, do you have three rooms?"

"Three rooms... Aren't there only two of you?"

"There will be one more coming later."

"I see... Of course, there are!"

Oh, there were vacant rooms? That would be nice.

As I thought so, the four adventurers yelled angrily, "Hey!"

"Hey, uncle! There are only three vacant rooms now, right? If you let her have three rooms, what about us!?"

"Lady first. Give up."

"You bastard!?"

"Between four men who delayed payment and a beautiful woman, anyone would choose the latter. I'm no different. Blame yourselves for delaying payment."

"Like I said, we already paid!"

Anyway, I finally understood the situation as I looked on the men who were still

arguing. These adventurers frequently delayed payments, and were about to reserve the rooms again after paying.

At that moment, Aries and I arrived, so that uncle prioritized us.

It wasn't like I couldn't understand their feelings. After all, I used to be a man. Even now, I intended to remain male mentally, so I could understand them. However, the order was important. Since they came first, they should get priority.

Then, what would be a good solution...

...Well, it wasn't like there were none.

"Innkeeper, do you have a moment?"

"Oh, lady. Please wait a while. I will drive them away now."

"Concerning this matter, I feel bad about depriving the people who came first. Since it couldn't be helped, we will take only two rooms. How about this?"

It couldn't be helped that it became like this. Since there were two rooms, Dina would get one, while Aries and I would stay in the other. Aries probably wouldn't assault me and probably wouldn't get in heat. Although it was not ideal, it should still be the better choice.

...I hoped Dina wouldn't complain later about being left alone.



In a room that could not be described as wide.

People were sitting by a seven-sided table inside. The seven sides symbolized the main elements of this world—fire, water, wood, metal, earth, sun, and moon. Only demonic commanders, who were given titles of the associated element, were allowed to sit there.

There should have been seven people, but only six were there now. The one who should have been sitting at the Seat of Fire was absent.

"...What happened to Mars?"

The man at the Seat of Wood said with dissatisfaction.

They were usually at odds with each other. Despite being comrades sitting together, there was no trust between them. Each individual was plotting to kick someone else. Since the remaining others became deterrents, nobody could anything.

Under such unstable equilibrium, the Seven Luminaries were formed.

Now, he was anxious that they were still waiting for the one who was supposed to their equal.

"Who knows? He's probably dead, right? The monsters following him were gone. Aries was also gone. I doubt he is still alive."

The woman at the Seat of Earth said happily. There was no lamentation or indignation in her voice regarding the possibility that her comrade died. Instead, there was delight as if saying, "It's better if he's gone."

"Was he killed by Megrez... or attacked by Aries? In any case, it became like this because he tried to manipulate the Twelve Stars without understanding his own capabilities."

"Ha! He is the weakest among the Seven Luminaries. It is a disgrace to all demons for him to be killed by the Twelve Stars."

"Hey, stop it, idiot. That line is somewhat tasteless."

The man at the Seat of Water speculated about the cause of death, while the ominous woman entitled "Gold" made a joke as if she was waiting for the opening. The man at the Seat of Moon quickly stopped her.

"Anyway... Mars was probably killed by someone. Aries of the Twelve Stars also disappeared... This is a very serious situation."

Finally, the male leader entitled "Sun" spoke softly and looked at the others. He was not angry at the death of Mars, but if there was someone who could defeat one of the Seven Luminaries, the matter could not be overlooked. If it was the Twelve Stars or Seven Heroes, it might still be acceptable. But what if it was someone else?

...That would be a threat that could not be disregarded.

"Venus, you should be in Svalinn then. Did you see the killer?"

"Of course."

"Oh. Who was it?"

"I don't know. I felt that I would be killed if I came too close. However, I remember she has beautiful black wings—It was a female gorgeous enough to mesmerize onlookers."

Regarding the Man of Sun's question, the woman named Venus smiled pleasantly, while the surrounding people were far from smiling.

A beautiful, black-winged female who could kill the Seven Luminaries.

There was nobody here that wouldn't think of "her" upon hearing those words.

But... but it was impossible. She should have died two hundred years ago.

"Could it be Ruphas Mafahl...!? Is she still alive!?"

"Impossible! She should have been killed by the humanoids two hundred years ago!"

Ruphas Mafahl.

That was a name more frightening to the demons than "Hero".

That was a tyrant who dominated the entire world and successfully unified the humanoids.

Her fighting ability was greater than those of comparable heroes and was considered among the best in the world. More importantly, her existence embodied fear itself. It didn't whether one was hostile or not, whether one was a demon or not, she would kill everyone.

As if to crush the enemies' fighting spirits, she impaled their heads on spears and exposed them to the sky. Begging for mercy was useless. Combatants who pleaded

"Please spare me for the sake of my family" had their skulls crushed under her feet. She caught fleeing enemies by their heads and pulled them out along with the spinal cords. She crushed absurdities with extreme absurdity and shattered unreasonableness with extreme unreasonableness. She dismembered invaders into eight pieces. She was the invader of all invaders.

—The black-winged angel was a terrifying nightmare to demons.

Everyone was afraid of coming into contact with her. There would be no escape and no help forthcoming. If anyone encountered her, it would mean the end of his life. There were no exception. There were no demon who survived entering her line of sight.

Fortunately, Ruphas' extreme cruelty provoked the fear and backlash of her fellow humanoids. She was eventually put to an end by the heroes, but she already slaughtered countless demons by then.

If she was still alive, the situation between demons and humanoids might reverse itself. The possibility that this fear-incarnate might still be alive made the place turbulent.

"The black-winged queen, the only one whom the Demon King would avoid a direct battle... If she is still alive, we should be discussing about the crisis facing the demons instead of the Seven Heroes. Venus, do you know her current whereabouts?"

"Yes, she is currently at the Black-Winged Royal Tomb."

"Good. You continue to monitor her. Report to me immediately as soon as you find anything."

"Certainly."

The girl, who was entitled "Metal", acknowledged the order from the leader of the Seven Luminaries with a single word.

Illuminated by the light shining in from the windows, her respectful bow somehow seemed like an act—

—And her smile seemed to ridicule everything.



※ Author's Notes: Black-Winged Royal Tomb

Known as the most difficult dungeon in the world, this pyramid has one hundred and eight floors. It is impenetrable from the outside. Golems, mass-produced by Ruphas Mafahl two hundred years ago, patrol the interior. Even the weakest one is as strong as the Sword Saint.

The number of golems increased as one ascended the floors. Frequently, Level 300-400 golems appear in groups. A Level 600 gatekeeper stands before the stairs leading to the 107th floor. After defeating (or avoiding) it and somehow reaching the top floor, Level 910 Libra of the Scales awaits. A defense-ignoring attack with fixed damage will be initiated.

No matter how you struggle, it will be game over.

※ Foot Notes

"**I am not there**" is derived from "Do not stand at my grave and weep / I am not there. I do not sleep.", which are the opening lines of the poem *Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep* by Mary Elizabeth Frye. The poem was translated into Japanese and composed into a song called 千の風になって ("Become a thousand winds") by Man Arai.

Chapter 21

A Wild Golem Appeared

I received the keys to the two rooms and entered one of them.

Aries and I were in Room 202, while Dina's room was Room 204. The room in between, Room 203, was occupied by the adventurers from before, so we were somewhat separated from Dina.

The room itself was... well, not bad. The wooden room was fairly wide, and the beds were solidly built. There was a bathroom too. There was nothing for me to pick on. No. Actually, it was not uncommon to find inns without baths in this world. This was only natural in the game world. I was impressed by the advancements made in the last two hundred years.

The cost of lodging was also cheap, merely thirty eru. Ninety eru for three persons was such a reasonable price. Dina had a good eye for selecting this inn with just a glance.

"Well, let's wait for Dina."

"Yes, Ruphas-sama!"

Although we waited for Dina, the latter probably wouldn't have much opportunity for action. Everyone other than me would die when facing Libra.

Although Aries was one of the Twelve Heavenly Stars like Libra, their compatibility was the worst. Aries specialized in endurance battle using his abundant skills, but Libra specialized in annihilating the target with maximum penetrating damage upon initial contact. Therefore, unless his HP exceeded 100,000, he would die instantly without question.

After the target took on that attack, Libra had no way to heal herself, so she was the easiest to defeat among the Twelve Heavenly Stars. However, that attack was simply too violent. I finally recruited Aries, but unfortunately, he had to stay behind when fighting Libra.

"Aries. Do you know what the other Twelve Heavenly Stars are doing?"

"Well, yes... I was concentrating on destroying Svalinn, so I'm not sure about the details. But... I was invited by Aigokeros the Goat to go with him to the demons' lair, so Aigokeros should be supporting the demons."

Aigokeros... His race was lord demon—what was this?—that appeared like the devil.

Goat and sheep... He was completely unlike Aries. He had the body of a man and the head of a goat. Bat wings sprouted from his back. This was the classic image of the devil.

Well, frankly speaking... He was someone who had no discomfort consorting with the demons. Or rather, he was more demonic than the demons themselves.

"Hmm... who else?"

"Who else... I'm sorry. I don't know."

"I see, so the Twelve Heavenly Stars are not completely aware of each other's movements."

I thought I could find the others after finding one comrade, but it seemed to be impossible. For now, I could only depend on Dina's information. Until she returned, I could just relax.

—As I thought so, there was a knock on the door.

"Ah, I can open it, right?"

"Yes."

Aries took the initiative and opened the door. It wasn't Dina standing there, but the four adventurers who were arguing with the innkeeper earlier. Today was definitely the first time we met them, so what could they want? They did not seem hostile. Since Aries was at a loss for words, I came over to the door.

"I remember you are the four people who argued with the innkeeper earlier. What is it?"

"Ah, we just want to thank you. Thanks to you, we do not have camp outside."

The reply was made by a brown-haired man, who probably was the leader. Short, trimmed hair stood on ends. One could tell with a glance that this was a man who trained his body well. His sharp eyes were reminiscent of a carnivorous beast and were filled with brimming confidence.

"Oh, is that all? I don't mind such things. You are really one who sticks to the rules."

"Even if you do not mind, we do. We will return our gratitude. This is our way."

His thug-like appearance did not match his sincere, honest personality. Considering the increasing number of modern people who would not even give thanks, anyone would wish a young man like him to stay this way. By the way, I should emulate that too.

"We will be staying in this village for some time. Please rely on us for anything you need. Well, then."

The adventurers left after saying this. It seemed they really came to thank us. Dina showed up to replace them and entered the room.

"I'm back!"

"Oh, you are back. How is it?"

"Success. I got the permit to explore the royal tomb. By the way, who are those adventurers I just passed by?"

"Just some rule-abiding adventurers."

Dina's return signified we could openly enter the tomb in the name of exploration. Exploring your own tomb should be a valuable experience. Let us relax for today, and plunge into things tomorrow.



"—Get in."

"Can't."

The second day, we stalled in front of the tomb. A lot of people were crowding at the gate, so it was impossible to move forward. They were arguing about something, while blocking the entrance. Honestly, this was very annoying.

"Ah, I'm sorry. Did something happen?"

Dina came close to a man and asked. Brown hair that stood on ends, and a muscular body... Oh. This guy was the adventurer from yesterday?

He confirmed our appearances, and said, "Oh."

"You are also here to investigate the ruins? Ah, this blue-haired nee-chan is the companion you mentioned yesterday?"

"Yes. I'm the traveling merchant, Dina. So what happened here?"

The adventurers considered her question and frowned. It seemed to be bad news.

"Ah. A special investigation team was dispatched from Lævateinn two months ago. However, today's regular contact has not been made. They were near the top floor yesterday. Everyone is happy about the progress, but..."

"Maybe they are just a little late?"

"At first, everyone thought that too, but it has been five hours. It's too strange that they did not send any communication magic after so long."

Hearing the adventurer's reply, Dina looked over to Aries and I. We nodded silently and moved away from the crowd into the nearby shadows.

"What do you think, Ruphas-sama?"

"They probably got hit by Libra. She's definitely on the top floor."

"I think so too. They probably got hit by Brachium upon reaching the top floor."

The investigation team that lost contact must have consisted of talented individuals. I did not know the difficulty level of the tomb, but it should not be too easy by today's standards. However, it was unfortunate that they were skillful enough to get to the top floor. An encounter with Libra meant inevitable death for people of this era. I was sorry to say that their efforts were in vain, but as long as Libra guarded the top floor, there was no chance of victory.

But there was a weakness.

Brachium could not be fired in rapid succession. If they sacrificed someone at the start to waste the shot, the remaining members could challenge her with Brachium sealed off.

But they did not know this. If they were all wiped out at the start, nobody would discover this weakness of not being able to fire repeatedly. If they survived all the way to the top floor, it was only natural to challenge Libra, the last guardian, with all their strength. Dead men tell no tales—They could not pass on any information since they were all dead.

This weakness was known only to Mizar and I. Nobody else knew about it. I only came to this world a few days ago, while Mizar had already passed on. The Twelve Heavenly Stars might know this too, but they would not pass this information on to the humanoids.

Thus, nobody knew about Libra's weakness, and the mountain of sacrificial victims built up until today. But even if they knew about it, I would still say "NO" to their chances of victory.

Indeed, Libra had no means of healing herself and could not raise her base statuses. However, her Level 910 was the highest among the Twelve Heavenly Stars, so she was very strong even without Brachium. Therefore, it would be impossible to challenge her, except for the Twelve Heavenly Stars, the Seven Heroes, and the Demon King.

...No. Only about half of the Twelve Heavenly Stars had HP above 100,000. Since the Seven Heroes were weakened, they probably could not make it. Given the shortage of manpower, it would be impossible to challenge Libra.

"The number of victims would increase if we don't recover her soon."

It was fortunate that she did not aggressively attack countries like Aries. It would be troubling if the number of capable adventurers continued to decrease. The humanoids' combat power was already low and could not afford to be reduced further.

I must recover Libra before anyone else ventured to the top floor.

"Okay. Let's go, the two of you."

"Yes!"

"I can't handle Libra, but please leave the small fries to me!"

Bringing Dina and Aries along, I pushed my way through the crowd to the entrance of the royal tomb. I elegantly ignored the voices of people trying to stop us. However, just as I was about to enter, someone caught my shoulder.

"Wa—Wait, nee-chan! Are you really going in!? You heard what I said earlier! It's too reckless! The investigation team consists of fifty veterans recognized by the country. It was impossible even for them!"

He must be a nice guy. From his perspective, I must be an air-headed woman who was trying to enter the tomb without understanding the dangers. He could have just ignored us, but he went out of his way to stop us instead. Therefore, he must be a good person.

However, I was entering with the full awareness of the dangers involved. Or rather, nobody else in this world knew Libra better than me.

"Thank you for your concern, but it is unnecessary. Please let go."

The hand on my shoulder reluctantly lifted, and I entered the royal tomb.



As expected, the interior was a passage made out of bricks. The surroundings were dim, and it faded into darkness further it was from the entrance. Even so, this was not

a problem as long as there was light. Aries held out his palm and created a flame in his hand, illuminating the area.

Deeper and deeper, we pushed forward. As expected of the first floor, all the traps were already triggered. Without any obstacles, we easily found the stairs to the next floor.

After proceeding to the next floor, a silhouette appeared before us. It was a simple golem constructed out of solid rock. Checking with Observing Eye skill revealed that it was Level 150, despite looking like this.

This was just a small fry to me, but it might be different for other people.

"Oh, a golem?"

"Yes. This was something mass-produced by Ruphas-sama for the final battle with the Seven Heroes."

"Oh, I see. It is my golem. No wonder its level is high despite the crude construction."

When I was fighting the Seven Heroes, I mass-produced these golems to make up for inadequate fighting strength. However, multiple golems normally could not be produced at the same time. It was limited to one golem per person. Even if several bodies were made, only the golem at the top of the item list would appear. All the others remained inert.

Furthermore, if the golem was destroyed, the next golem appeared only after the battle. Thus, the mass use of golems was prohibited. In addition, the highest AI level for golems was set at 5. Golems with high AI level required a long production time, thereby making it impossible to mass-produce high-performance golems.

But many loopholes could be found in the game.

If high-AI golems could not be continuously produced, then it implied that low-AI, shoddy golems could be mass-produced. After mass-producing such golems, I could simply distribute one golem to each member of my faction, allowing me to utilize them all.

I exploited this and suddenly boosted my fighting strength by letting the low-level faction members use a low-AI golem. Well, even so, they were just small fries before a

high-level player. It seemed a large amount of those shoddy golems from back then were left behind to wander about in this tomb.

"Hmm. Although it is something I made, I could sense its hostility."

"It's because the golem's thought routine is to indiscriminately attack any creature within detection range, except for living creatures belonging to Zodiac and golems. Since Ruphas-sama's country is no more, we would be attacked too."

"...Oh. These golems are idiots that always attack the nearest target first."

A low-AI golem was less intelligent than a monkey. It was simply a shoddy golem that indiscriminately and repeatedly direct normal attacks against the nearest target. Even if it had skills, it would not use them due to its low AI. It wouldn't consider the conditions of allies as well.

At AI Level 2, the golem would use skills, chosen at random, without considering the situation. Thus, it was common sense that a minimum of AI Level 3 was required for actual warfare. From a certain viewpoint, my golem mass production tactic was contrary to common sense.

...The result was staggering. Common sense was important.

Oh, by the way, Zodiac was the name of the country I built.

"Well, I suppose we should just destroy it."

Crack.

I cracked my finger joints and aimed at the golem. If the shoddy golems I made were causing inconvenience after two hundred years, it was my responsibility to dispose of them.

But just as I was about to collide with the golem, someone came between us and blocked the golem's sword-fist.

"Oops! I won't let you! A man who never forgets kindness shown to him, Jean the adventurer! And the other three members of adventurer's party—Hawkeye! In the name of righteousness, let me help you, nee-chan!"



An adventurer with brown hair and three other men suddenly interrupted...

—Honestly, this was unwanted help.

※ Author's Notes: Some Settings

Q: Why didn't Megrez mass-produce golems?

A: I did, but Aries destroyed them all.

Q: Instead of raiding the royal tomb, why didn't Megrez create weapons?

A: Actually, I did, but Mars raided them when I tried to export them to other countries. So they were kept in domestic circulation. Once the soldiers were equipped... whether they work or not is as stated in this volume. Since the meddling of Mars ceased, these weapons and armors will be on sale for a while. Perhaps the wealthy people will buy them for self-defense or other reasons.

After all, it is money.

※ Foot Notes

Eru (エル) is the currency used in the world.

Aigokeros (アイゴケロス), meaning "Goat-Horned", is the Greek name for the astrological sign of Capricorn. His description closely resembles that of Baphomet. His race is given as ロード・デーモン (lord demon), which I was tempted to translated as "demon lord". But I refrained from doing so to avoid confusion with the Demon King (魔神王).

Lævateinn (レーヴァテイン) is a weapon that could kill the rooster Víðópnir in Norse mythology. It is sometimes identified with either the sword of Surtr or the sword of Frey. In this novel, the name is given to the city where Ruphas was first accidentally summoned in Chapter 1.

Chapter 22

Enough! Return, Adventurer!

"Hah!"

Adventurer—Jean, according to what he said himself.

He swung his sword and slashed at the golem. However, it did not even break the golem's rocky shell. Unable to feel pain or fear, a golem's thought process was extremely simple, determined only to hit the opponent in front of itself. Free from fear and dread, even its mechanically repetitive attacks were a threat. Jean took a step back immediately to avoid that straight punch, but his face made it clear that he was nervous.

"Ah, such an outrageous punch! If you take one hit, you'll be in trouble!"

Correction—Although it looked like a straight punch to me, it was not like that to them.

Two adventurers stepped forward before the golem to cover for Jean. Their weapons were two swords and an axe. Was it so that one would emphasize speed, while the other would emphasize power?

One man slashed at the golem multiple times with his swords, while the other delivered a heavy strike on the golem's arm. The man in the rear continued to shoot with his bow, covering for the three vanguards.

I felt that it was not a bad combination, but...

Jean

Level: 38

Race: Human

Class: Fighter 38

HP: 2747

SP: 110

STR (Strength): 135

DEX (Dexterity): 90
VIT (Vitality): 95
INT (Intelligence): 70
AGI (Agility): 85
MND (Mind): 72
LUK (Luck): 31

Ricardo

Level: 35
Race: Human
Class: Heavy Fighter 35
HP: 3090
SP: 130
STR (Strength): 142
DEX (Dexterity): 80
VIT (Vitality): 150
INT (Intelligence): 50
AGI (Agility): 77
MND (Mind): 42
LUK (Luck): 44

Nick

Level: 35
Race: Human
Class: Light Fighter 35
HP: 2100
SP: 145
STR (Strength): 110
DEX (Dexterity): 101
VIT (Vitality): 90
INT (Intelligence): 72
AGI (Agility): 102
MND (Mind): 50
LUK (Luck): 62

Shu

Level: 36
Race: Human
Class: Archer 36
HP: 2110
SP: 36
STR (Strength): 120
DEX (Dexterity): 115
VIT (Vitality): 80
INT (Intelligence): 82
AGI (Agility): 70
MND (Mind): 45
LUK (Luck): 108

Mass-Produced Golem

Level: 150
Race: Artificial Life-form
Class: None
HP: 9087 / 9100
SP: 0
STR (Strength): 305
DEX (Dexterity): 100
VIT (Vitality): 355
INT (Intelligence): 9
AGI (Agility): 108
MND (Mind): 15
LUK (Luck): 70

...This was impossible.

It might be possible with magic attacks, but these guys were all physical types. They could not penetrate the golem's defenses and shave off its HP. Despite their desperate attacks, the golem probably took only 2 or 3 points of damage per hit. Actually, the golem only took a total of 13 points of damage so far. On the other hand, if they were hit once by the golem, it would be "Amitābha!"

It couldn't be helped... I felt bad about helping those who came to help, but it was better than just watching them die. I sighed and glanced at Aries.

"Aries, help them."

"Yes, please leave it to me!"

Aries happily answered my instruction, kicking off the ground to approach the golem. He agilely passed through the gaps between the adventurers who were in the way. A flaming fist crushed the head of the golem and blew off the body with his momentum. The golem struck the wall, falling into pieces and never moving again. It was just a small fry to Aries. One hit was enough against something with HP 9100.

"....."

The golem that they were struggling against was instantly destroyed. The four adventurers watched with their mouths agape.

Oh, as I thought, did this hurt their pride?

As I thought so, they started cheering like kids.

"Aw... Awesome~!! Awesome, awesome, awesome! Did you guys see that!? That was so cool! Little girl, how did you do that!?"

"Eh? Eh?"

Oh, that was a fairly favorable response. But that surprised the wide-eyed Aries, who was tripping over his words. I did not expect such a reaction, but for now, I needed to separate Aries from the men surrounding him.

"Calm down, adventurers. I know you are excited, but you are troubling Aries. Also, Aries is a boy, not a girl."

"O—Oh, sorry... eh, a boy?! I thought he is a girl!"

This man called Jean was overly noisy.

As I thought so, his companion, the light fighter, knocked him from behind.

"Shut up, Jean. You are a bother to others."

At least someone here was quiet and easy to communicate with. Honestly, I did not like people who were overly excitable. How should I say this? It was too stressful for my ears. Well, this was a game, and I was a player.

"Ah, ah. I get it. Uh, well... Even though we came to help, we were helped instead. Thank you."

"It doesn't matter. I'm thankful for the good will."

I tried to console Jean, who seemed slightly depressed. He tried to help us despite his lack of ability. I felt that such manly behavior should be praised. In the blink of an eye, his face was dyed red. Such a simple man.

"I—I see. You are such a nice person."

Nice person. I wanted to laugh at this description. Certainly, the current me inside this body was not a scoundrel. I did not commit any crimes. I was just an ordinary person... but Ruphas Mafahl invaded the world two hundred years ago. She was truly a villain, or even a villain among villains. Being addressed as a "nice person" was somewhat embarrassing.

"Oh. I haven't introduce myself. I'm Jean, an adventurer and a fighter."

"Light fighter, Nick. Our party leader has caused you trouble. Apologies."

"Me, Ricardo. Class, heavy fighter. Nice to meet you."

"Archer, Shu."

The four introduced themselves. I thought that this party was too unbalanced. Three out of four were fighter-type vanguards. There was neither arcane magic user nor healer. There was no ranger as well.

I thought that Ricardo and Nick should become wizard and cleric, leaving Jean as the well-balanced fighter. Shu would have been better as a ranger instead of an archer. Archer wasn't bad, but narrow spaces like this limited his abilities. It was usually better for the rear-guard to be magic-type classes. For example, enemies with high physical defenses and low intelligence—such as the golem earlier—required magic-type classes.

"Traveling merchant, Saphur. My class is... ranger."

Actually, I had multiple classes, but that would be too abnormal for the current standards of this world. Therefore, I chose one that appeared to be most helpful in the current situation. Unarmed combat was the specialty of the grappler class. A ranger fighting with his bare hands would just be considered a weird ranger. However, if a grappler used ranger skills, that would obviously be abnormal. Thus, I decided to call myself a ranger.

"Also a traveling merchant, Dina. My class is ranger."

Having never once used a ranger skill, she must be just saying whatever came to mind. There were many mysteries surrounding Dina, but I would leave it for now. Still, I preferred she chose a class different from mine.

"Oh. Also a traveling merchant, Aries. My class is... ran—ranger? I think."

And finally, Aries. He definitely did not understand, simply copying his lines. What should I do with this? A party with all three members being rangers. We became a team that was clueless about party balance.

Sure enough, Jean was amazed, composed himself, and said:

"Such terrible party balance... Are you people really okay?"

The leader of a party with mostly fighters was worried about me.

What was this? This indescribable feeling of humiliation.

This was awful. As a matter of fact, I could explore this low-difficulty dungeon all by myself. Only a dungeon such as the Goddess' Sanctuary would require a party of five or more Level 1000 players. Oh, and one of the five players (Megrez) was taken down in one hit by the gatekeeper.

"Don't worry. Our levels are high."

"Brute force with high levels?... Such an elegant-looking party, yet filled with muscle-brains."

What was this muscle-brained leader of a party filled with fighters saying?

What should I do? I had an urge to smash his head in with an over-sized boomerang right now.

What did he just say? I wondered if he came here just to distract and stress me out.

"Well then, your fighting strength will be insufficient. Okay, I owed you yesterday, so we will go as your bodyguards!"

Eh. No thank you.

Uh, they were just a burden earlier. They couldn't even shave off HP 100 from the golem. Why were they so confident?

"Thanks, but n—"

"Is it alright? Then, please take care of us!"

—no thanks. Dina covered my mouth before I could finish and accepted them without my permission. I removed her hand and stared at her in reproach, but Dina merely smiled and said:

"Isn't it fine, Ruphas-sama? Let's have a little fun before we get to Libra-sama. Since they are offering to come along, why not use whatever is available?"

"...You... are really black-hearted at times."

Dina smiled and said, "Let's use them as shields." I shuddered at her words. It seemed she was more rotten on the inside than I imagined. For now, it was fortunate that her rottenness was directed at my enemies. Or perhaps, I just didn't notice when it was directed at me.

"Well, we just have to support them without going too far."

If we left them be, they would be slaughtered by golems. If we went all out, their confidence would be shattered. Therefore, we could only pretend to cooperate to defeat the enemies, even though Aries and I would be the ones really doing the work. In short... We could only secretly use them as shields like Dina suggested while we proceeded forward.

"Oh dear."

I sighed. I glanced at Dina to reproach her for her selfish behavior, then moved forward. The four adventurers followed with Aries and Dina trailing behind. Well then, let's get to the top floor when Libra was.

We advanced in the unnecessarily wide tomb. The only positive thing about the tomb was that the area became smaller as one went up the floors. Its pyramid shape implied that the journey would be easier towards the top. The problem was that the golems' levels went up as well.

A sound echoed as golems clogged the passageway. I checked and found the golems here to be Level 300. It seemed high-performance golems would start appearing. At this level, the adventurers would die with one hit, so it was really bad. We must destroy the golems before they attacked the adventurers.

"Jah!"

The golems gave a strange cry and attacked the adventurers. As I intercepted their attacks, the golems stopped for some reasons. Aries also went in between another adventurer and a golem, that golem stopped as well. What was going on?

They did not merely stopped attacking, but also backed off when facing us. In the end, they mysteriously chose new targets, and even aimed for Dina, who was in the rear.

Was it possible... that they recognized me and Aries as allies?

Impossible.

When it came to golems of this level, I would have made them with higher AI. These golems were smarter than the ones in the previous floors. It wasn't surprising that they could recognize me and Aries, even after the country was destroyed. Otherwise, they would attack even Libra.

.....

...Eh? Why was Dina being attacked?

"Hey, wa—wait a moment! Why is it only me!? Saphur-sama, please help me!"

Looking at Dina being chased by golems, I felt somewhat sad. Aries also looked at Dina with sympathy.

Dina, you...

...your presence was so weak that even the golems forgot about you...

❖ Foot Notes

Amitābha is a celestial buddha in Mahayana Buddhism. He is said to appear before those who call upon him in their moments of death. Conversely, calling upon his name is sometimes used to imply death.

Chapter 23

A Wild Libra Appeared

I lightly parried the fists of the golem and ordered it to wait in a soft voice, then blew it away to make it look like it was defeated.

It was fine to destroy the low-AI golems on the lower floors. They neither recognized me nor obeyed my orders. They were broken machines that relentlessly attack whatever was in front of them. It was the correct decision to destroy them.

However, the golems on the middle floors and above had higher levels and could understand simple commands. I did not want to destroy them since they could recognize me and Aries to the point of stopping their attacks. Therefore, I pretended to defeat the golems from the middle floors, leaving them unscathed.

"Wow. Saphur is amazing. Another golem was sent flying."

"Is she really a ranger...?"

Jean and Nick were getting suspicious, but it should be fine as long as my wings remained hidden. It had been some time since we entered the tomb. Currently, we arrived on the 106th floor. Since the tomb had one hundred and eight floors, we would reach the top after another two floors. It took the previous investigation team one month to reach here.

After hearing the news, I felt respect and pity for them. Considering their levels, even one golem would be an enormous threat. Truly, they were excellent explorers to have come so far despite their low levels. Such a pity. It was a heavy blow for the humanoids to lose these people.

"Everyone, back off."

I warned as I saw the entity at the stairs leading to the 107th floor.

What? Something like this was left behind?

At twice the size of the previous golems, it was an enormous metallic guardian of ten meters (tall). By using the expensive material mithril, the most powerful that I could create by myself without using cash items was Level 600.

Before the decisive battle back then, I used the best materials available to create several golems for the defense of strategic bases. Although they were not as good as Libra who was created by Mizar, they were the highest level golems that I could create by myself.

Even so, it would probably lose to Levia, who was created out of the water in the entire lake. It wasn't strange for it to be used for national defense. In the current era, it should be the strongest golem.

Well, well. The investigation team actually broke through this thing.

Most likely... they left some comrades as decoys and ran past it.

Gatekeeper

Level: 600

Race: Artificial Life-form

Attribute: Metal

HP: 105 / 45,000

SP: 0

STR (Strength): ????

DEX (Dexterity): ????

VIT (Vitality): ????

INT (Intelligence): ??

AGI (Agility): ???

MND (Mind): ???

LUK (Luck): ???

...Tsk. I couldn't see the full status. This implied that it did not belong to me.

Unless the creature was an ally or the checker had twice as many levels, the status would only display name, level, HP, SP, and attribute.

I supposed its AI level should be 3 or 4, and yet it couldn't recognize me? Should I try? There was no reason for it to be missing something other golems possessed.

"...Do you know me, gatekeeper?"

I walked towards the gatekeeper casually. Jean shouted, "Danger!" and was ignored.

So, how was it? Could it recognize me?

"...approach... intruder. e—... e—e—elim... elim—elim—eliminate... Ru—rururu—ru..."

I dodged its extended fist. I knew for sure now. I had a bad feeling the moment I saw its reduced HP. It seemed I was spot on. This one was already broken. Although it was still functional, it could no longer recognize me. Sorry, there was no other choice but to destroy it.

Since the other golems could still move, its current state was not merely due to deterioration over time. An enemy that could reduce its HP to this degree... hmm, there could be none other than the demons. One or two raids probably wouldn't be enough, given the strength of the Seven Luminaries. However, its HP would be reduced if raided repeatedly ten to twenty times.

Considering this, I was surprised that it was moving at all.

"Saphur!"

"Don't worry. It can't do anything to me in its current state."

I responded to Jean's concerned voice and stepped forward. Side-stepping the gatekeeper's attack, I went straight into its bosom.

—One hit!

I penetrated it with a knife-hand strike, reducing its remaining HP to zero. Purple electrical sparks flew as the metallic parts that composed its body scattered across the ground. Light flashed in one of its eyes before it collapsed on the floor.

"Ah—Ah... gah... intruder... elimin... e..."

It was so humorous and pitiful as it repeated the same words like a broken record. I shook off the metallic fragments on my hand and passed through the side of the gatekeeper. With this, there was no more obstacle. All that was left was to stop Libra. As I was about to go on to the next floor, a voice mixed with noise was heard from behind.

“...Wel... co... back..... Rupha... -sama... Wel... co...”

I could barely hear the whisper. But I heard it, definitely heard it.

I stopped and glanced at the fallen gatekeeper. As if blessing my return, its broken form reached out a hand... to me, who just destroyed it.

“...You've worked hard. Good job until now... Enough. Rest well.”

“...Ah...”

Finally, the voice stopped. A sound leaked out as if it was relieved, and the gatekeeper ceased functioning.

...This was somewhat unbearable.

I knew there was no alternative but to destroy it. Still, I just couldn't take it.

Strange. My heart was aching as if I had committed a terrible mistake. I should not have interacted with it before. Wasn't this the first time we met?

It was a golem, a tool that moved only as ordered. So why was I feeling so terrible?

“...Only the 107th floor and the top floor remain. Stay here.”

There was no doubt Libra was ahead. The party was temporarily disbanded for now. I must go alone.

Jean, however, shouted in opposition.

"Wa—Wait! You are going alone!?! That's absurd!"

"No. It's for the best. Nobody other than me can withstand Libra's first shot. Her Brachium skill will erase you thirty times over if you come."

"...!"

Jean took a deep breath and looked at me suspiciously. His eyes did not doubt my words. They questioned my very existence.

"You... What exactly are you?"

"....."

"I'm a fool, but I'm smart enough to notice your exceptional strength. Around midway, you crushed the golems so we did not have to fight them... You were unfazed even when facing the previous golem's fist... You talked as though you know Libra personally... You, exactly..."

"...There is no need for me to answer you."

I refused to reply and turned my back to them. If the question was directed at Aries and Dina, Dina should be able to come up with a better lie than me. I could not reveal my identity. At least, not now.

Even though it was just one golem, I was unnecessarily shaken. I did not know why I would lack calmness so much. I really could not understand... If it was the real Ruphas, perhaps so. But I was different. I had no reason to feel sorrow, right...?

Ah. What was this? What was wrong with me?

I climbed the stairs and arrived on the 107th floor. In that instant, everything before my eyes collapsed, revealing a cracked, wide, inorganic space.

In the center was a girl with a maid dress—No, a golem that imitated a girl.

The clothes I gave her had signs of patching in some places. However, it wasn't enough, so some parts remained torn. The joint was exposed along with her arm. If examined closely, fine cracks could be seen running through her body.

An artificial life-form created by Mizar, using the materials that I (Ruphas) collected two hundred years ago. She creaked as she turned her face towards me.

"—Intruder confirmed... Warning... Leave this place in ten seconds. Non-compliance or hostile behavior will be met with elimination by force."

She must have repeated this many times. A warning that seemed to be derived from a template.

I did not respond. Without advancing, I let down my hair.

"Ten... nine... eight..."

I took off the spectacles and reached behind my back to remove the bandage given by Megrez, gradually revealing my wings.

"Seven... six... five....."

The countdown stopped.

Without caring, I completely removed the bandage and unleashed my wings.



Despite being expressionless, Libra was motionless as if shocked to her core. The countdown did not continue. I found this a little funny and spoke to her with a smile.

"It has been a while, Libra. What's up? You have a face like a pigeon struck by a peashooter. Have you forgotten my face?"

"...Ru... phas... -sama...?"

I silently watched Libra as she stood there motionlessly.

Firstly, I should wait for her conclusion. If she recognized me and interrupted her attack, that would be fine. If she fired Brachium, I needed to overcome it and stop her movements. Her damage did not seem as severe as the previous gatekeeper. It should not be too late for repairs.

"Matching... biometric data, found... Probability of being the real Ruphas Mafahl, 99.99989965%... Inferring from situation... Survival rate from the battle, less than 1%... Overall probability... conclusion, impossible... impossible... con—conclusion... con—clu—sion, con... impossible, impossible..."

"Hey, no need to over-think this."

This was bad.

She was getting confused by the unprecedented scenario of a dead person showing up. I wondered if this would happen normally, but she must be getting faulty like the gatekeeper. Even if that wasn't the case, she had been left to guard this place without rest for one hundred ninety years. Well, it couldn't be helped if her judgment was faulty.

"I will come over and repair you now. You need to rest."

"—! Warning! If you continue to approach, the elimination condition will be met!"

"I don't mind."

I ignored Libra's warning and stepped forward steadily.

One step, two steps!

Libra couldn't decide to attack or not. Meanwhile, I was getting closer.

"There, I have moved. Aren't you going to stop me?"

".....Program selection!"

Libra's eyes shone and her entire body glowed. Firstly, there was a film of light that covered the surroundings. It was an isolated space for Brachium skill to prevent the enemy from escaping and avoid unnecessary destruction. In the center, the white glow converged on Libra and shone like a star. A vivid brightness expanded and pulsated.

Now then, this would be the first massive damage I received since coming to this world.

Honestly, I wasn't confident of withstanding the damage, but... why? At this moment, I very much wanted to be attacked. I didn't really understand it myself.

"—Brachium, activate!"



wild
final boss
appeared!

Illustration:Yahako

And the star exploded.

The entire room was filled with intense white light. An impact that I never felt before struck my entire body. The light was raging like a storm, while colorful particles danced and scattered in the space. Everything inside was severed, trampled, and destroyed.

It ignored defenses. It ignored resistances. Ignoring even skills and divine magic, it forcefully penetrated the body to deal the maximum fixed damage.

Crap. It hurt.

And it was hot.

It felt as if my whole body was scorched by the stinging heat... or rather, it was actually charred. I knew my HP was decreasing at a rapid rate.

"Ugh...!"

A muffled sound escaped from my clenched teeth. But I insisted on forcing my way forward in this light. Honestly, I wanted to roll down the stairs and escaped to a safe place right now, but I couldn't afford to do that. It was too uncool. Or rather, I couldn't do it at all. Once Brachium activated, it would be better to think that escape was impossible until it finished.

One step, two steps, three steps.

I advanced through the glow and shortened the distance with Libra. Meanwhile, the light stabbed into me without mercy, continuously draining my HP. This was really tough. However, it wasn't unbearable to me.

"—!"

"Good grief. I finally arrived."

Libra moved as I came before her. The weapon that was stored in her left arm—a bluish white blade of light—appeared. I dodged the blade by a paper-thin margin and grabbed her left arm to stop her movement.

And I activated the alchemist's skill, All Repair.

It was a skill that would fully restore HP, provided the target was a golem. This skill was really inefficient, and not all golems could be repaired. Only the ones owned by the user could be affected.

Unlike the gatekeeper, Libra should be a golem still owned by me when I fell in battle. I decided to test if my hypothesis was true. It seemed to have passed without incident. The cracks along Libra's body vanished and her HP was restored.

"I'm sorry I kept you waiting for a long time. I have come to pick you up, Libra."

"...Situational evaluation... Probability of being Ruphas-sama herself, 100%... Ruphas-sama's identity, confirmed... Terminating the task of defending the royal tomb."

Libra said and closed her eyes as if relieved.

I gently embraced the girl who could finally rest after her task was finished.

※ Author's Notes: Brachium

Originally planned to make it like Mega Man X2's Giga-Crush skill, but it was suddenly changed due to the question, "Could the royal tomb withstand it?" So it was modified to a skill that shoots after using an isolation field specially for Brachium.

Ruphas: "It has been a while, Libra. What's up? You have a face like a pigeon struck by a peashooter. Have you forgotten my face?"

Libra: "...Ru... phas... -sama...?"

Libra: "You are a fake using Ruphas-sama's name! Well! Well—!"

Ruphas: "!?"

\ "dan, dan, dan" /

※ Foot Notes

Mithril (ミスリル) is a fictional metal that resembles silver, but is lighter than steel. It was first introduced in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

Knife-Hand Strike (手刀) is a martial arts attack that uses the edge of one's hand like

the blade of a sword.

Divine Magic, along with arcane magic, are the two types of magic in this novel. This setup is reminiscent of the magic types in Dungeons & Dragons RPG, so I decided to adopt the same terms—divine magic for 天法 ("heavenly arts") and arcane magic for 魔法 ("magical or demonic arts").

Chapter 24

Libra, Get!

After I calmed Libra down safely, I worried about what to do next. Jean would definitely be suspicious if I returned with Libra like this. Particularly, if I tried to take Libra along, they would object. In the worst case scenario, they might demand that Libra be destroyed.

Of course, I did not wish for Libra's destruction, but this would set me in opposition with them. Although Jean and his comrades were no match for me, I would rather avoid unnecessary trouble. Yet I couldn't think of any good excuses. Hmm~ In the worst case scenario, I could knock them unconscious and run away... There didn't seem to be any other way. Thinking about this, I felt a bit depressed.

"Oh, Ruphas-sama."

"Welcome back. You seem to have secured Libra without incident."

As I descended to the lower floor in a bad mood, Aries and Dina welcomed me with a smile. In contrast, Jean and his comrades were motionless. Their eyes stared blankly ahead.

"Dina, what happened to them?"

"Oh. It would be troublesome if they report us after returning, so I gave them a little suggestion."

"Suggestion?"

"I just planted some fake memories... so they think that they never met us at all. Also, I decided that they are the ones who cleared this dungeon, so it should shift people's attention away from us for a while."

The outrageous things Dina just said made me smile.

Ah, right. She could manipulate memories. How convenient and yet terrible. I seriously thought it was good for an ally though. My greatest concern was gone with this.

"Concerning Libra, she would be already badly damaged when they arrived. The story is that the previous investigation team dealt some extensive damage. This should divert some attention away from Libra."

"Did you intend this from the beginning when you allowed Jean's party to accompany us?"

"Why else would we take the trouble to bring along a burden?"

"...You are such a frightening woman."

"For the sake of Ruphas-sama, I will become a demon. This is who Dina is."

Ahem. I shivered slightly and wiped away the cold sweat as Dina puffed her chest in self-satisfaction. Well, whatever. I should take some of the things stored here. After all, I promised Megrez to leave some unwanted things behind. For example, equipment that adds +100 to attack power could not be sold since we did not have the proper sales channels. Such equipment would be better left behind for others.

"Okay, let's go to the top floor."

"Yes~"

"Y—Yes."

We departed for the top floor, leaving Jean's party behind on the 106th floor. The top floor was an elaborate, fancy room. The ceiling, walls, and floor were all made of gold. To say that the eyes were blinded by the golden glitter was a form of flattery. It would be difficult to feel settled here. Jewels and gold coins were simply piled up. Swords and daily-use items were beautifully arranged.

No. This was not a tomb, no matter how you looked at it. If this was my tomb, I would hate it, since it would be impossible to calm down and sleep.

It should be like this... but why did I feel so excited about seeing this room? For some

reasons, I had a sudden urge to take away all the glittering things here.

"Ruphas-sama, please calm down."

"I'm calm... I should be calm, yet I could not calm down. What's going on?"

"Oh. Ruphas-sama, you used to love these shiny things and had collected them in large quantities."

I stiffened at Aries' words.

Eh, seriously? I did not remember a setting like that?

I collected shiny objects because I loved them. Was I a crow!? No, certainly my wings were black.

"Let's take the necessary weapons before Ruphas-sama gets distracted."

"Dina. Getting distracted is out of the question. I can still distinguish what we really need."

"Well then, how about putting away all the unnecessary gold lumps in your hands?"

After being pointed out by Dina, I finally noticed that I had a mysterious, shiny gem that I did not know what to use for.

...Oh crap. I was doing it unconsciously.

Well, yeah. I was not really interested in such gold lumps. I did not have a taste for money either. I preferred things that were chic and darker in color.

"Aries-sama, Ruphas-sama is just a crow now. Let's choose what we need."

"Yes, I understand!"

Eh? Not only was I useless, but I was also getting in their way?

Even as I thought this, my hands were picking up some strange items.

Ugh, I could not stop myself.

My body naturally moved towards the shiny objects.

"Ruphas-sama! That is just a ceremonial object for the looks! It does not do anything! Throw such things away!"

"Ruphas-sama, that is a shiny item to look nice!"

"Ah, hmm."

After making Dina and Aries angry, I dejectedly went to the corner of the room.

Ugh... It should not be like this. I should be searching for weapons seriously, but my body would not listen. And then, I realized that my hands were once again holding some items of unknown utility. Dina and Aries squinted at me as they gathered the weapons that I previously used.

Spear, greatsword, knife, halberd, jamadhar, tonfa, pile bunker... It seemed that I was flirting with all types of weapons. Incidentally, my favorite weapon was the whip sword.

"I guess this is enough for now. The others seem to be weapons used by Ruphas-sama in the past, but they probably won't be used anymore, so let's leave them here. They should still be valuable in the current world."

"What about the golems?"

"Ah, I will bring the golems to the tower as well. Ruphas-sama, can you gather all the golems that were not yet destroyed?"

After loitering in the corner of the room, my turn to act finally came. Even so, this was fairly hard work to gather all the golems that were not destroyed. However, if I did not do so, there could be more victims in the future. There was no choice but to comply.

"I understand, but it will take some time."

I was useless here anyway. So I would do whatever I could do.

...This time, I had no dignity.



In the end, it took a long time to gather all the golems. This tomb was simply too large. Who built this thing?

For the time being, I entrusted all the high-AI golems to Dina, along with all the weapons. It seemed she could transfer any inorganic matter, so everything was moved to the Tower of Mafahl. Aside from that, I also destroyed all the idiotic golems that automatically attack people.

"Okay, let's go"

"Is it alright to leave Jean's party here?"

"No problem. They will awake after a while, thinking that they came here all by themselves."

After waking, Jean's party would become the lucky heroes who cleared the Black-Winged Royal Tomb. Although they might embezzle some of these treasures, it would not be my problem. The wealth that I could not bring with me would just be a bother, so they could do whatever they want with it. It was enough for me to recover the weapons, golems, and Libra.

Still, this was meant to be my tomb. My feelings were somewhat complicated when I thought of this place becoming an empty ruin. It was the same on Earth, where treasure-laden tombs were excavated and robbed. Using prevention of tomb robbery as an excuse, the scholars would claim the discovery of important historical relics and display all the corpses in the museums. However, museums were simply unsuitable to serve as tombs. If I really died, I would prefer to be buried in a plain tomb that would not attract anyone.

We left the tomb and returned to the forest where we left Tanaka. I created a new set of maid outfit for Libra with alchemy. Next, I needed to polish her dirty body and change her clothes. Hmm. The task of polishing her and so on would be left to Dina instead.

After that, we waited for a few hours. Since Libra would not move without orders, I

gave an order for her to get up. Libra promptly opened her eyes.

"...Visibility good, checking each part... No abnormality. Starting up."



Light shone from her eyes as Libra slowly raised her body. When she saw me, she stood up and bowed elegantly. Well then, I should take a look at Libra's status.

Twelve Heavenly Stars, Libra

Level: 910

Race: Artificial Life-form

Attribute: Metal

HP: 120,000

SP: 0

STR (Strength): 5,500

DEX (Dexterity): 4,900

VIT (Vitality): 5,020

INT (Intelligence): 300

AGI (Agility): 4,100

MND (Mind): 350

LUK (Luck): 600

Hmm. She was exactly as I remembered her.

Having SP 0 was a common trait for all golems. Golems did not expend SP when using skills. Instead, their skills were limited to a specific number of times. The usage frequency would not reset until twenty-four hours later.

Therefore, Brachium could only be fired once. It would be pointless even if SP-based skills were learnt. On the other hand, a golem's HP could be considerably higher than other characters, given the appropriate materials. If the material was really good, the HP of such a cheat golem would be close to that of a boss monster. However, a golem could only be healed by alchemist's skills. Since it had high HP, it was not necessarily a drawback unless it was struck really hard.

For example, Aries had less HP than Libra, but since he had an automatic HP recovery skill, Aries was surprisingly difficult to deal with. But if the two of them were to actually fight, Aries would be killed off in one hit with Brachium before the endurance battle could start.

"Good morning, my master, Ruphas-sama."

"Hmm. Does any part of your body feel strange?"

"No problem. I appreciate your concern."

It was a fluent and gorgeous voice, unlike the voice mixed with radio noise when I fought her earlier. She seemed to be fine, so that was a relief. Libra then saw Aries and bowed to him as well.

"It has been a long time, Aries. As before, your appearance and gender do not match."

"That's the first thing you say after two hundred years!?"

Aries fled in tears after suddenly being teased about his appearance. Libra bowed again gracefully.

"Nice to meet you, stranger. I apologize for the inconvenience I caused this time."

"This pattern again!?"

Hmm. It was as expected. When the other golems in the tomb did not recognize Dina, I already expected the same of Libra. Both Aries and I, who also forgot about Dina, now shared a strange affinity with Libra.

"Libra. This one is my adviser, Dina. Although her presence is weak, she was there with us two hundred years ago."

"...!!?... What...? She has a stealth mode that could avoid being recorded in my memory...!?"

"No matter what, my presence cannot be that weak! I'm going to cry soon!?"

Dina was almost in tears. She grabbed Libra by the shoulders and brought her face closer.

"Look, it's me! Please look carefully! If you look at me like this, there should be an impression in your memory, right?"

"...No, the corresponding memory does not exist. But I found some corrupted data from two hundred years ago that was deteriorated due to age. Perhaps memory about Dina-sama is stored there."

Hmm. I secretly thought that since Libra was a golem, she would remember Dina. However, Dina was really unlucky. Her memory data just happened to be corrupted. Maybe her data was entered into the "hated" memory section.

"Recovery is possible, but it will take a few months. Until then, Dina-sama will be recognized as a temporary adviser."

"Temporary!?"

Dina was increasingly traumatized by Libra who did not mince her words. However, Libra did not seem to care. Or rather, since Libra was expressionless, we did not know what she was thinking about. Even so, I could not doubt the loyalty of someone who guarded the tomb so staunchly. Beneath that icy metallic mask, there must be a hot soul... should be, probably.

"Libra, do you know anything about the other Twelve Heavenly Stars?"

"I'm sorry. Since I had been guarding the tomb the whole time, I do not possess information regarding the outside world."

I asked Libra the question, but her reply was as expected. Since she was focused on the tomb, it was unlikely to have information about the outside. Fortunately, there were still four out of the six people in Dina's knowledge, so there was no rush to collect information.

"Then, Dina. Where is the next member of the Twelve Heavenly Stars?"

"The next one... That's right. It's a bit far. Parthenos-sama of the Maiden lived hidden in a village at the foot of the mountain two thousand kilometers west of here."

"Village?"

"Yes. In a forested region with weak monsters, a defensive barrier was erected against outsiders. She is living there peacefully."

Oh, that was really mild. It was wonderful since this would not bother anyone. Although I was a bit concerned about her becoming a shut-in, perhaps this could be postponed? Unlike Aries or Libra, even if we left her alone for a while, there wouldn't be any victim.

"Oh, yes... That mountain is Ruphas-sama's birthplace. All the flügels who originally lived there had been driven away. She now occupied it as an uninhabited, holy sanctuary."

I took back what I said.

I knew it, there was trouble.

※ Author's Notes: Weapons Of This World

For the most part, weapons of the real world exist in this world. Fictitious weapons, such as whip swords, are also common. Also, since gunner is the advanced class of archer, there were probably a lot of firearms two hundred years ago. (This would be very expensive now.) A firearm with good performance is fundamental to a fantasy world.

Jean: "This is amazing. I got the strongest sword!"

Holy Magic Sword—Lucifer Blade Ecthelion Ω [Attack +150]

A sword made by Ruphas in the past when she was drunk. It is very embarrassing to use as its name must be shouted out loudly when attacking. But by the standards of the current era, it would be considered a famous sword.

In terms of design, this sword looks like what you might see in souvenir key-chains. As a child, I always wanted to buy those key-chains with a dragon encircling the sword. In fact, I have a key-chain in the shape of 真魔剛竜剣 (Translator: uh, a sword in Dragon Quest game, I think). The only sword on the ground that could withstand the power of a dragon knight!

※ Foot Notes

Jamadhar (ジャマダハル) is a kind of punch dagger from India, now commonly and erroneously referred to as katar.

Tonfa (トンファー) is an Asian weapon consisting of a stick with a perpendicular handle attached a third of the way down the length of the stick.

Pile Bunker (パイルバンカー) is a fictitious, weaponized pile driver featured in Armored Trooper VOTOMS and later anime series.

Whip Sword (蛇腹剣) is a fictitious kind of sword that can be extended and used like a whip. The closest real-world approximation is the Indian urumi.

Parthenos (パルテノス) is the daughter of Apollo, who died a maiden and was placed in the heavens to become the constellation of Virgo. It is also the Greek name for the astrological sign of Virgo.

Ecthelion (エクセリオン) of the Fountain is a high elf and one of the greatest warrior of the First Age in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*.

Chapter 25

Libra Soars Through The Sky

"You did it; it was a success!"

The kingdom of swords—Lævateinn.

Its center, the royal capital, was itself centered on the audience hall of the royal castle.

It was normally forbidden to make a fuss in the audience hall of the king. However, that place was currently engulfed by continuous cheers of delight. At the center was a black-haired youth in his mid-teens. He was confused by his current situation.

How did it all begin?

The youth, who lived in Japan, was following his routine after school, participating earnestly in his club activities and then going on his way home. However, his ordinary life was interrupted by a voice calling him to the extraordinary.

"Whoever can hear us. Please help us."

It was a call for help. The caller's identity was unknown. The situation was unknown. Even the kind of help required was unknown. Normally, there was neither duty nor obligation to respond, especially when the voice eerily echoed inside one's mind.

A normal person would feel fear and suspicion more than a sense of justice. He could not be blamed even if he ignored it and ran away. After all, people feared that which was unknown. It wasn't a bad thing even if he was afraid and escaped.

However, he was such a nice guy that he could be considered sick. His screws were loose, or perhaps his hoop was off. He wanted to help whenever someone was in trouble. He wanted to reach out whenever someone was lost. This was virtue and benevolence.

The wish to help others unconditionally and without hesitation, or the spirit to help

others without the slightest suspicion, was the quality of a hero. But in terms of his own security, it was a reckless and thoughtless reply. Or rather, he had given up thinking at all. Therefore, the summoning, which required a heartfelt acceptance, was established and he vanished from Japan.

—The hero summoning succeeded.

This news immediately spread throughout the country.



It was a dark place.

No light existed in the darkness, as if the surroundings were completely sealed off. Even so, I could unbelievably see in the darkness. I could see my hands and feet clearly. I walked on without hesitation. So I thought, "Oh. This must be a dream."

As I walked on in the darkness, a familiar room eventually appeared. It was not like what I saw recently in the world of Midgard, but rather it was the room of a house in modern Japan. Surrounded by white walls, this common room was littered with daily items all over the floor, while comic books and light novels lined up on a bookshelf.

Certainly... yes, this was "my" room. The arrangement of the furniture, the computer on the table, everything matched my memory.

But—why?

Why did I not feel a sense of belonging in this room?

It was not nostalgic. It was not familiar. It was not comforting. I certainly knew this place, yet it was severely discomfoting as if I was visiting the room of a stranger.

Strange. I wondered what was going on.

Even though I felt nostalgic when I saw Aries, why did I not feel the same for this place where I lived?

I looked at the computer that was still on.

X-Gate Online... The screen of the game I knew so well was displayed. But it was strangely hazy and odd... as if it was forcefully placed on a completely different game, losing all sense of familiarity.

That was not all.

It was displayed on the window. I was absorbed in it without a doubt. But looking at it again... —

Suddenly, something grabbed my shoulder from behind. There were thin white fingers. The grip was chillingly strong and irresistible. It was too late when I tried to resist.

Time ran out the moment it was discovered. I would just have to wait for the next opportunity.

And so my consciousness was forcefully "pulled up" from the dream.



"—phas-sama, Ruphas-sama!"

...And I woke up.

The first to enter my vision was Dina, who was shaking me. Next were Aries and Libra, who were standing by the side.

"Ah. Please get up already, Ruphas-sama. Aren't we going to Vanaheimr?"

"...Oh. That's right."

Hearing Dina's words, my hazy consciousness became clearer.

Oh, right. That was the next destination.

I felt that I was sleeping quite deeply.

"Sorry. I had a strange dream. I apologize for not waking up."

"—What was your dream?"

"...Oh, that... Ah, what was it... Sorry, I can't remember. It seems to be a strangely important dream, but I can't remember it at all."

What the heck. I had an important dream, but I couldn't remember it.

Well, I knew dreams were like that. Humans would forget their dreams in about five and a half minutes after waking up. This dream seemed quite important to me. Then again, it was not really a big dream, so maybe it was nothing to worry about.

Traveling in Tanaka, our destination was my hometown—Vanaheimr.

This was a small nation in the mountains where the flügels, self-proclaimed people of heaven, lived in small numbers... Rather than a nation, it was more like a settlement. My setting was such that this was also my birthplace. Even though my black wings...

It was just a minor detail, so I didn't think too much about it back then. It wasn't hard to imagine being persecuted for it though.

In the game, besides my black wings, there were wings of diverse colors. Now, that would be the subject of persecution (2). There were even those who changed the colors one feather at a time to create a picture. I was considered rather plain by comparison.

"It's almost night. Let's stop here for today."

Tanaka had no driver's seat. It would move by itself even if nobody attended to it. However, it sometimes moved in a strange direction or attacked monsters along the way. Thus, I needed to control it. That was the reason Dina woke me.

It looked like a car, but it was actually a golem. It should not be overlooked that it was basically a machine that would automatically attack enemies. Golems with AI level 5, such as Libra, would obey orders with fine details like "avoid unnecessary combat". However, care needed to be taken when dealing with AI level 4.

Simply put, it was like the priest of a certain RPG who persistently used instant death magic on an enemy that was immune to it. After knowing about such fools, it should be easy to understand my reason for caution.

"By the way, Ruphas-sama. There is a country ahead."

"Country?"

"Yes, or rather, we are already within that country's borders... The capital city of Gjallarhorn is a little further ahead. One of the Seven Heroes, the Sky King, Merak, founded this country. Most of the flügels live there."

One of the Seven Heroes who still lived.

Indeed, it was my goal to meet them and recover the Twelve Heavenly Stars. However, I was hesitant upon hearing that it was a country of flügels founded by Merak. A country of flügels... I would be left out the moment I entered.

Of course, there was no way that I would be captured or killed. Since Aries and Libra were here, any aggression by the country would only result in a counter-attack. Regardless, I did not like causing a disturbance.

Anyway, one of the Twelve Heavenly Stars had occupied their original home. No matter how I pondered, I would be considered a landmine to the flügels. But even if I postponed the trip, nothing would change and I would still go.

In addition, I must cover my entire body with the cloak again.

The flügels had a long life-span. Many people would still remember my face.

"I understand. Let's stay there tonight, even though I'm not too keen."

Only three of the Seven Heroes survived. There was no way for me to avoid them. Feeling like a criminal facing the gallows, I eventually saw the kingdom Dina mentioned as Tanaka continued to move forward.

The first impression was—a strange country. Those words alone sufficed.

Firstly, the buildings were white. The pure whiteness completely ignored color balance and appearance. It was impossible to differentiate the private housing from the other buildings. It was just a plain, featureless whiteness.

Next was the location. Somehow, all the buildings were built on cliffs. Or rather, they were forcefully built to cling into the cliffs. Even though there was a flat plain nearby, where was the fun in building in such a place?

It was like a Greek town I saw in a photo once, except that it was far worse. There were stairs everywhere in consideration of visitors, but those stairs seemed to be rather difficult to climb. The city was obviously built on the premise that one could fly.

What was even stranger was that there were more cliffs on the other side of these cliffs. The other cliffs also had buildings similar to these cliffs. However, all the buildings there were black in color. As before, they were built on the premise that one could fly. It was really inhospitable to people who could not fly.

And at the top of the mountain, a white palace with an imposing presence stood sandwiched between the two towns.

"What is this? What a terrible capital city."

"It seems really difficult to walk around here..."

The two towns sprawled on each side of a large mountain. This was a very intriguing city to me. Similarly impressed, Aries had a shocked expression.

Well, it was fine to have different colors. This was no problem in design. But it was too extreme. One side was pure white, while the other side was pure black. It looked like a different city when viewed from the side.

What was this Merak guy thinking about in this country?

"Dina, what is the situation here?"

"Hmm... It seems this country is currently divided into two factions in the midst of a civil war."

"Factions?"

"Yes. Firstly, there are the 'White Wing Supremacists' who held onto the traditional beliefs that pure white wings are the pride of the flügel and that other colors were unacceptable. Opposing them are the 'Mixed Wing Advocates'. Originally, the flügel

had white wings, so those with discolored wings were oppressed and persecuted, as you already know. However, after Ruphas-sama was gone, this trend intensified."

As Dina explained the situation, I felt that I was breaking out in cold sweat.

Oh, was this struggle happening because of me?

Were the flügels persecuted because of a dangerous character like me?

"When Ruphas-sama ruled, discrimination and persecution based on the color of wings were forbidden. But after Ruphas-sama was gone, the white-winged faction began to re-assert the ideology that they were superior. On the other hand, the people with discolored wings—the Mixed Wing Advocates fought for equal rights. For nearly two hundred years, both sides have been struggling with each other."

Damn. This was totally caused by me.

What was the ban on discrimination and persecution? I didn't remember issuing such an order.

In the game, there were flügels with wings in all sorts of colors. It was no longer surprising to the point where nobody could be bothered with every single one of them.

This was completely different from "me". This was a different world where the actions of "Ruphas" could be witnessed.

"What is Merak doing?"

"Merak's stance is neutral. He seems to be trying to stop the conflict, but it is impossible to control the people."

"...That guy is a man with a heavy burden..."

"He's useless."

"Libra, don't say things like that."

In the game, I remembered Merak as an attentive person who could read the mood and never offend anyone. At least, he was not as useless as Libra claimed. If even he

could not suppress it, the conflict must have been considerable.

Therefore, as long as I was the reason for this conflict, there was no way I could just pass over this.

"So, where are we going? White or black?"

"...Black first. It probably belongs to the mixed-winged faction."

"Understood."

I felt that I would cause a disturbance if I ventured into the white-winged faction's territory. Therefore, I chose to visit the mixed-winged faction first, since they might be a little more accommodating.

Of course, there was no danger of exposing my identity, but there was nothing wrong with being cautious.

"Master supports the black faction... saved to memory. Next underwear selection, black."

"What is this person saying?"

Libra said some weird things expressionlessly as usual. For the moment, I should just brush it aside. Was she serious or just joking? This could not be discerned from her expression. You would immediately know it when Dina made a joke. Aries was a just novice, so he was blushing with just this statement.

"Of course, I should select master's preferred color. Or would it better for me to wear something that could barely be seen with slight adjustments?"

"...No, it is fine."

"I see. White faction. The popular standard."

"No, I didn't say I particularly like that."

"...!? Could it be... no panties...!?"

Hey, this one was still broken. I speechlessly smacked Libra's metallic head.

Are you really okay, you degraded tool?

Those were some really strange thought processes. She was supposed to be AI level 5. I wondered if Mizar taught her those strange things. Aries already could not keep up with the conversation, wasn't it?

It was high time to add someone with common sense so as to put her in her place.

Wanted: Someone to fill the role of countering Libra.

"Anyway, let's visit the black town first. Tanaka, hide yourself in the shadows of the nearby rocks!"

"Yes, master."

After we alighted, Libra directed Tanaka into the shadows of the rocks. Then, Libra covered it with a large cloth from somewhere and returned.

Hmm. She was very competent when she properly performed her tasks. Anyone could have done it, but her actions were fast and steady.

"So how are we going to the town? There's a stairway, but..."

Dina said as she pointed agonizingly at the stairway. There was a stairway leading up to the town. But it was long, unnecessarily long. There were hundreds, even thousands of steps. If we used the stairs, dawn would break by then.

"Please be at ease. I will carry you all. Program selection. Skill, Sky Jet, activate."

As Libra spoke confidently, her back opened and deployed a jet pack. It was a mystery how her body managed to contain something like this. Apparently, she could fly in the sky.

Well, the Sky Jet skill was a general purpose skill for golems. Items that allowed golems to acquire skills were sold for 200,000 eru in the game. I had Libra learned a lot of skills. However, this skill was so science-fiction themed. Where was the sense of fantasy...?

Libra held me with her right hand, carried Aries like a barrel with her left arm, and grabbed Dina's neck with her left hand. Dina made an unfeminine sound "Gue", but Libra was unconcerned. The vernier thrusters blasted off with a roaring sound that would confuse anyone nearby. And so we flew into the sky.

Wait... stop, stop! You will wake everyone in town!

Libra, stop! Stop—!?



※ Author's Notes: About Gjallarhorn

Gjallarhorn

The citizens of Gjallarhorn are the flügels who excelled in battle. The terrain is also advantageous to them. Therefore, even without a guardian deity like Levia, there is no way for the demons to take actions. Even he was weakened severely, Merak's Intimidation skill would always make small fries of Level 250 or less to be unable to move. So it is pointless no matter how many small fries there are.

If one of the Seven Luminaries attacks by himself, he will be killed by Merak. If two or more cooperate, there may be a chance for victory, but the Seven Luminaries do not cooperate with each other usually. Therefore, the stalemate continues until now. However, this balance would easily collapse if one of the Twelve Heavenly Stars joins in. Or perhaps, it will perish as a result of a civil war.

Relations With Other Nations

It is a country that is somewhat closed to foreign contact, so relations are not that good. However, they do have a minimum amount of trade. Svalinn is an allied nation, but due to flügel's nature, Gjallarhorn is not in sync with the arcane nation of Svalinn. They did not rush to the aid of Svalinn because the mana that fills the region causes the flügels great discomfort. The flügels who had been to Svalinn always say that it is a place that stinks of *surströmming* and durians.

Relations Between Kings

Merak and Megrez are former comrades-in-arms. They are close friends, but do not have direct contact for two hundred years. Merak tried many times to contact the Vampire Princess, Benetnash to form an alliance, but he was always ignored. His thoughts and actions are aligned. A true hero.

Tanaka's Size

Q. Tanaka has bathroom and kitchen, so how big is it actually?

A. It weighs twenty tons, and is ten meters long with a height of two to three meters. Its width is about the same as a road lane in Japan. It's a rather troublesome size if used on an actual road. It could become bigger if the number of companions increases. A terrace could be set up on the roof of the second floor.

※ Foot Notes

Midgard (ミズガルズ) is the world of man in Norse mythology. In this novel, the world of X-Gate Online is also called Midgard.

Vanaheimr (ヴァナヘイム) is the world of the Vanir, the deities of fertility and wisdom, in Norse mythology. In this novel, it is the original home of the flügels.

Gjallarhorn (ギャラルホルン) is the horn of Heimdall in Norse mythology. It will be blown to herald Ragnarök. In this novel, Gjallarhorn is the country of flügels founded by Merak. The Greek "town" mentioned in this chapter may be referring to Meteora, where several monasteries were built on top of rock pillars.

Merak (メラク), also called Beta Ursae Majoris, is a star in the constellation of Ursa Major and the Big Dipper asterism. In this novel, Merak is the flügel member of the Seven Heroes, also known as the Sky King (天空王).

Vernier (バーニア) Thrusters are rocket engines used on spacecrafts for fine adjustment of altitude or velocity.

Surströmming (シュールストレミング) is a lightly-salted, fermented herring from the Baltic Sea. Salt is used to prevent the raw herring from rotting. A fermentation process of at least six months gives the fish a characteristic strong smell and somewhat acidic taste. A newly opened can of *surströmming* has one of the most putrid food smells in the world.

Benetnash (ベネトナシュ), also called Eta Ursae Majoris or Alkaid, is a star in the constellation of Ursa Major and the Big Dipper asterism. In this novel, Benetnash is the vampire member of the Seven Heroes, also known as the Vampire Princess (吸血姫).

Chapter 26

Ruphas Sleeps

"—So, what is this situation, Libra?"

"We have safely arrived in town. I judge that there is no problem, master."

"Are you joking? This is a big problem."

Libra safely delivered us to the country of Gjallarhorn. Indeed, we arrived, but the mode of travel was a problem. She brought us here with the movement skill Sky Jet, but it was currently late in the night. At a time like this, she chose to move with a roaring jet propulsion. It wasn't hard to imagine people being woke from their sleep by the noise. As a result, we were currently viewed with suspicion by the people who came out of their residences.

Ah, seriously. It is so late now. Sorry about that.

"You can't do this, Libra. If you make that kind of noise at a time like this, you will wake the people who are already sleeping."

"No problem, Aries. According to my analysis, the fighting strength of the people who got up is not a threat. I can handle it alone. They are not an obstacle to master."

"No, it's not like that..."

The dialogue between Aries and Libra made me want to hug my head. What should I do? This maid golem had no concept of being a nuisance to others. Was it because there was only fighting in the game, so her judgments were all related to combat power and threats? If it was a game, whatever happened was just an in-game event. No matter how much noise was made in the night, the NPC would not wake up. It seemed like Libra was lacking in experience.

"Ah, who are you...?"

A man in his late thirties spoke as we became the center of attention in the surrounding. Longevity was a trait of the flügels, who remained in their primes for half of their lives. This one was probably an old man close to one thousand years old. His wings were slightly dull gray, so it would not be considered beautiful. And not just him, everyone in this street so far had mixed color wings. There were none like my jet black wings, but there were others close to blue or red. This was really the town of the mixed-winged faction.

"Ah, sorry. It's already so late at night. I'm the traveling merchant, Dina. We were stopping by this town and woke you up by mistake. Sorry for the inconvenience. I deeply apologize."

"Also a traveling merchant, Saphur. Sorry for the bother."

"Hmm. Traveling merchant, Aries."

"Golem escort of these three, Copernicus IV."

We introduced ourselves to the flügel uncle and apologized. This mouth that spewed forth arrogant words even at a time like this was a little hateful.

And Libra, without reading the mood, arbitrarily set herself a strange job and a pseudonym that sounded like the straight man of a stand-up comedy. Well, it was still better than using her real name. Unlike Aries, Libra's appearance did not change, therefore using her real name would expose her identity. But she was not Copernicus.

"Oh, you are merchants? This is an innovative way to enter the town."

Uncle, you do not need to try so hard to compliment us. We are aware that our entry lacked common sense, so it is fine to be angry with us.

But he greeted us with a smile, devoid of anger.

"You must be tired after a long trip. My house also runs an inn. If you don't mind, please stay over."

Hearing the uncle's gentle words, Dina and I shared a look. Despite being disturbed by our nonsensical behavior, he introduced an inn with a smile instead of getting angry. What a nice person. As I was strangely impressed, I followed the uncle and entered

the inn.

This inn... was made of marble?

No, not just the inn. Every building in this city was made of marble. They were beautifully mottled with unique gloss. It seemed that the art of marble construction was progressing well in this country. Perhaps, there was an alchemist with good craftsmanship.

"How much for one night?"

"Twenty-five eru for one room."

He answered Dina's question with a very scrupulous price. Twenty-five eru was equivalent to five thousand yen. That was surprisingly cheap, considering there were four people. We paid the fee without hesitation and were brought to our rooms.

"This is your room. Please take your time."

The room was surrounded by marble, so it was somewhat uncomfortable. But it was not without consideration of the customers. A soft carpet was laid on the floor, while a vase was arranged casually. We should be thankful that it was not sparkling in an omnidirectional 360 degrees.

"Let's consider meeting Merak tomorrow. Let's just sleep tonight. Aries is dozing off already."

"Ah."

It was very late already. Even though I was the one who flew with an explosive noise at such a time, it would be better to go to sleep now.

Regardless of Libra the golem, Dina who slept at an unknown time, and me the gamer who played through the night, Aries was already very sleepy. But since he could not sleep before me, he was struggling to stay awake. This was really tear-jerking.

It wasn't like I mind if he slept before me. Was it necessary to force himself to stay awake because of our master-follower relationship?

"Well then, good night."

"Ah, good night."

Dina and I slipped into our beds and closed our eyes. The mattress was a bit hard, but that was what a fantasy world would be like. Libra did not feel like sleeping, so she stood in a corner of the room. Well, golems had no need to sleep anyway. She even guarded the tomb for one hundred ninety years. Still, it was fine for her to sleep if she could get sleepy.

I thought so as I drifted into slumber.



—Who? Someone was screaming angrily with an unpleasant voice without a trace of kindness.

A white-winged man, the father of blood relation, was angrily shouting at a young girl. A parent got angry at a child. This was nothing special, as most people would have experienced it themselves. But normally, there would be no actual rage when one thought of the child. No matter where it was, even if there was some resentment internally, the parent would not act upon his selfish anger.

"You! The neighbor's children said that you hurt them again! Didn't I tell you!? Don't injure others!"

"But, dad, they were the ones who did it first. They threw stones at me. I just, I just wanted to protect myself..."

"Shut up!"

The shrill cry echoed. The young girl understood that this was the violence brought on by the creature known as "father". It was always like this. This man never listened to the story of this side.

He acted like a father disciplining his child, but he was really just thinking of himself. So if he felt like it, he would lay hands on her. Words that comfort a child would never leave his mouth. It was all about his self-image. If the young girl did something, his own reputation would fall. That was why he always scold and scream like an idiot.

"I do not remember raising you like that! Have you mistaken my teachings again!? Huh!?"

In agreement with the man's piercing voice, the young girl thought, "That's how it is."

I do not remember being raised by this man.

The only thing she ever received from him was scoldings and violence. Mistaken his teachings? Hah, it was full of mistakes. Or rather, there was no memory of him ever doing the right thing.

"There are no parents who do not love their children."

This was just a beautiful saying passed on by someone who was the center of parental love and knew nothing of things elsewhere.

There were plenty of parents who did not love their children.

Because they were unwanted, annoying, or noisy.

And because her wings were black—

Love was gone for such simple reasons.

At least, this girl never received love from this filthy thing called "father".

"...Liar."

One word muttered, and the girl ran out of the place.

I do not want to hear that man's voice anymore. There is no meaning in conversing anymore.

That is someone else.

It is just someone else who happened to share the same bloodline.

That's why it is not sad, it is not painful.

These water droplets flowing along my cheeks are definitely not tears.

She ran.

She did not know where she was running, but she ran as far as she could.

There was no place for her in this village.

The black wings of anathema—Just because her wings were black, she was alienated, estranged, differentiated, and discriminated.

Even though they were not contagious, rocks were thrown at her. If she defended herself, she would be blamed instead.

Her only ally was her mother. But her mother was sickly, so she did not want her to worry unnecessarily. Even so, her mother was her only salvation. If not for her, she would have been gone from this place a long time ago.

—Why do I have to experience this? Just because my wing color is different. Why?

Besides her, there were other flügels whose wings were not white. In a place devoid of the sun, a place like a dirty slum... people of the same circumstances lived together.

It would be different if she stayed here. But if she left the house, that creature called "father" might do something to her mother. Perhaps, his violence would be directed at her instead.

—Why is the world so unfair? Why do I have to be so unfortunate?

She could not help but curse the gods.

What great god of creation? What goddess of love?

If there was a merciful god, why was the world full of inequality?

Prayers were meaningless.

There was nobody who would reach out to her.

—Nobody will help me.

Even as a little girl, she stopped relying on people. Nobody would help her, so she had to manage by herself. As long as she lived in the house, the minimum amount of food would be provided. But it was uncertain how long it would last. Besides, more than anything else, she did not want to live like this.

Therefore, I must become strong. I must become strong enough to overcome the inequality and irrationality in the world.

I'm still weak and immature now, but surely someday... I will take my mother and walk out of this miserable life.

The black-winged girl—Ruphas Mafahl swore strongly in her heart.



"...What? It's just a dream."

I placed my hands on my forehead and opened my eyes.

It was a strange dream... yes, a really strange dream.

Perhaps it was Ruphas' past. At least, this was something that I did not remember. I did not recall configuring such a setting. Nonetheless, if Ruphas lived in this world and not in a game, she must have parents. Being persecuted for her wings was also easily predictable.

This was what I thought.

Before I became Ruphas, there was the real Ruphas. This body did not belong to me. The soul of the real Ruphas should have been in this body.

But currently, I was here. I was the only a player, who knew nothing of Ruphas' past.

Then, where was Ruphas?

Had she been expelled because of my presence?

Or was she asleep in this body?

...Or she was still sealed in the hyperspace. Perhaps the current me was simply a fake.

But if I was a fake, why would this body have Ruphas' memories?

Ruphas' father whom I saw in the dream should just be a stranger... so why did I feel so angry?

Why was I so angry about the absurdity and irrationality of the world?

How should I explain this raging waves of emotions?

"...Ruphas-sama? Your heart rate has increased."

"Libra."

The only one who wasn't sleeping, Libra, asked in concern.

She appeared emotionless, but surprisingly, I knew she knew she had the stirring of emotions.

She wasn't emotionless. She certainly had a heart. She would cherish and worry about me. Strangely, it felt like we had been together for many years.

"No need to worry. I just dreamed of the past."

"Dreamed of the past?"

"Oh. I just woke up like a little girl having a nightmare... It's nothing to worry about."

I could not tell her.

I was not Ruphas... I might just be a fake.

...and so, I kept silent.

※ Author's Notes: Seven Attributes

The various attributes are generally classified as follows.

- Fire Attribute = literally fire, disinfects filth!
- Water Attribute = literally water, including ice.
- Wood Attribute = controls nature, controls wood and wind as well.
- Metal Attribute = mysteriously produces metal or steel. Something like the magic of (シャインセイバー) in *Summon Night* (サモンナイト) series. It can also produce huge rocks.
- Earth Attribute = literally earth. It can manipulate the ground if it's soil, but not if it's stone. Also includes gravity.
- Sun Attribute = simply put, light. It's similar to fire, but slightly different.
- Moon Attribute = simply put, darkness. Shadow is generally included.

When Tanaka was moving: drowsy → woke by Dina → arrived late at Gjallarhorn, sleep again.

Slightly overslept...?

Character's Underwear Colors

This appeared in my imagination, so it's time to reveal them. The underwear of the characters are as follows:

- Megrez: Blue Brief
- Merak: White Brief
- Gants: Red Loincloth
- Jean: Black Trunks
- Mars: I only need a leaf.

※ Foot Notes

Copernicus (コペルニクス) could be referring to the astronomer who formulated the heliocentric model of the universe. He was the youngest of the four children in his family. Or maybe it was referring to the Robotic Theater of Copernicus Science Center in Poland, where robots performed in plays including some that were amusing and funny.

Yen (円) is, of course, the Japanese currency. As of December 2018, XE Currency Converter states 5000 yen = 44.03 USD. Based on this chapter, this makes 1 eru = 200 yen = 1.76 USD.

Chapter 27

A Wild Aigokeros Appeared

“Well, let’s go sightseeing today. Visit the capital as you please, but don’t cause any trouble.”

In the early morning, I told Dina and the others that we would be staying in the capital for a while. I was curious about the country founded by Merak. I was also concerned about the mixed-winged faction which was in the same situation as me.

Most importantly, I needed to confirm what was inside Merak, so we could not leave too early. Since learning that Megrez was a resident of this world, I had partially given up, but it was not like I felt there was no possibility.

The question was how to contact him... Unlike Megrez, I needed to consider the fact that he had not abdicated his throne.

After all, this was a country of flügels, whose lifespan was different. Unlike Svalinn where there were many different humanoid races, this country was completely composed of flügels. Unless there were a lot of antipathies, there would not be a change in political regime in merely two hundred years. In other words, he was harder to contact than Megrez who had retired.

“Solo action... There is no problem when considering combat power.”

“Sightseeing... Where should I go?”

Libra and Aries had no particular objections, seemingly enthusiastic about sightseeing. No, I couldn’t tell if Libra was enthusiastic or not. On the other hand, Dina was easy to read. A joyful expression was evident on her face.

“Sounds good. I will check out the situation with the white-winged faction. I might find something interesting.”

It was difficult for me to check out the white-winged faction, so it would be of great

assistance for Dina to do it instead. Solo action would disperse our fighting strength, but there should be no need to worry about these people even if they encountered a bit of danger.

Even if the Seven Luminaries attacked, they could easily repel them. Libra and Aries had such combat capabilities. As for Dina... I did not know her strength, but she was smart enough to keep herself safe, so there was no need for concern. Besides, she could teleport, so she could just teleport over to me when in danger.

“Then, dismiss for now. The meeting place will be this inn.”

That said, I left the inn. Dina left soon after for parts unknown. Aries ran off in another direction as well. Libra... oh, she was flying with jet propulsion again. I told her not to use that since it was too noisy. I really didn't know what to do with her.

Now then, should I look around this town?



I left the inn and wandered around the town. I did not feel like I was attracting a little attention from the surroundings. However, wearing a red cloak that covered my whole body, it was natural to attract some gazes, so I gave up. It would be nice to have a slightly better disguise than this.

Considering Ruphas was female, I should wear men's clothes instead. I was actually male anyway, so it probably wouldn't seem too unnatural. Hmm? Oh, that was a surprisingly good idea. I should create a set of men's clothes with alchemy later.

“...Hmm?”

After walking for a while, I saw a building reminiscent of a Greek temple surrounded by pillars. Although it looked like a temple, its color was completely black. The pitch-black temple gave me an ominous feeling, but my curiosity got the better of me. So I stopped by the temple and decided to visit it.

I wondered if they worshipped an evil god or something. This was strangely exciting.

Concerning the deities of this world, Alovenus was the goddess of creation and also the only deity in this world. Although the demons claimed the name of divinity, they

had nothing to do with the goddess. They probably used the name of divinity out of rebelliousness against Alovenus.

There were also five dragons that governed the attributes other than Metal and Water, which were governed by Alovenus. They never appeared in the game though. Online version aside, even TRPG and console games did not have them. They were phantom characters who only had setting pictures publicly released.

Well then, what was being worshipped here? Was it an independent religion? Or perhaps this wasn't even a temple?

As I passed by other worshippers and entered the temple, I saw the idol within.

Hair that reached her waist.

Jet-black wings.

A unique fashion sense involving a coat over her dress.

This was undoubtedly me—Ruphas Mafahl. I was strangely looking at my own statue...

“This statue...”

“Oh, how rare. Are you a traveler?”

A gentle voice spoke to me, who was staring dumbfounded. When I turned my gaze towards the voice, a smiling youth with reddish-black wings stood before me. His face was neither beautiful nor ugly, somewhat average I guess?

Unlike the beautiful elves, flügels usually had ordinary looks and generic faces. It wasn't that the flügels' beauty standards were not high when compared to humans, but there were still ugly individuals as well. However, since the flügels' beauty standards were based on wing color instead of facial features, nobody would pay an individual's face much attention unless it was overly ugly. In such a situation, the youth with a generic face and reddish-black wings... well, he must have a difficult life.

“You are quite surprised to see this statue, right?”

“Yes, I'm surprised. Does this temple idolize the notorious overlord?”

Upon hearing my reply, the guy with the generic face looked grim.

What? Was he unhappy because Ruphas was criticized? I was just telling the truth about myself. It was somewhat funny for him to be upset about it. When I thought so, a weird laughter nearly burst forth.

“Indeed, to the outside world, Ruphas-sama was an evil invader. But to us, she was a savior.”

“Oh... Tell me about it.”

Somehow this country... or rather the mixed-winged faction’s impression of me was different from the rest of the world. I wanted to hear more about his story. I thought that it could help me understand more about Ruphas.

“Do you know that the flügels are concerned with the whiteness of their wings?”

“Oh, I know it well. Since flügels claimed to be descendants of angels, white wings are considered to be the unique pride of the race?”

“Yes. However, not every flügel is born with white wings. There are those, like me, who have wings of different colors.”

The beauty standards of the flügels were dominated by wing color, then followed by wing shape. Face and body are considered secondary, so people with wings of different colors were discriminated against.

Nonetheless, completely pure white wings were unheard of. Most of them were slightly gray, using white with a low lightness as the standard. Perhaps, light gray was considered passable.

Conversely, the darker the color, the more one would be estranged. Of course, my jet black wings were out of the question. Also, wings like his that were mixed with other colors were automatically out as well.

“Our situation was terrible. Currently, we have a town to live in and a certain quality of life, but it used to be really terrible. Other flügels do not even think of me as a comrade. When I walked down the streets, I was pointed at and mocked. People with

similar conditions stick together. I was living miserably in the slums. Can you believe it? Because our wing colors are different, we could not get jobs and had to starve.”

What he said was not unique to flügels. People discriminated against others over minor things, thinking that they were justified because of group psychology.

When one was in a superior position without the constraints of reason, even kind people could easily become evil.

The twenty-one subjects in the Stanford Prison Experiment were randomly assigned as guards or prisoners. As a result, the guards who were in positions of power went out of control and abused the students serving as prisoners, beyond the call of duty. In the end, after merely six days, the experiment was aborted because of a prisoner-student becoming psychologically traumatized. The student seemed eager to continue, claiming “It is different from what was agreed.”

This was despite the fact that they knew the prisoners were innocent and that it was just an experiment. In other words, when men believed their superiority was justified, even kind people would become evil. Everyone had this quality in them.

As a result, discrimination intensified according to the easily noticeable difference in wing colors. There was no exception among the flügels who claimed to be descendants of angels. Whenever I heard this story, it felt overwhelming.

The descendants of angels... Hearing this was enough to stupefy me.

“We lived in fear every day, hiding in shadows. It was miserable... Those days were really miserable. But she was different.”

He raised his head and spoke with a strong yearning.

“Her wings were black, but she was more beautiful than everyone else. Unlike those of us who could only curl up in fear, she proved the value of her existence with her own power. Then, she dominated the nations, forbade discrimination of the flügels under her rule, and treated us like people.”

Ah, yes. Truly, when you were praised before your eyes, your back would itch.

I did not dislike being praised, but it would be uncomfortable if it was too much.

“Thanks to her, we were able to regain our pride. We are not a miserable existence... We could take pride in being flügels with wings of different colors.”

“Isn’t this over-exalting her? Have you forgotten that the Twelve Heavenly Stars under Ruphas took away your homeland?”

“I have not forgotten. Rather, I think we reaped what we sowed. Betraying Ruphas-sama, subjugating her, then foolishly allowing the demons to make a comeback. I think it is rather merciful that we aren’t all killed.”

...Ah, this was rather bad. I could clearly sense the hate overflowing from this hot-blooded man. It was enough to make him reveal his dissatisfaction to a suspicious traveler.

Yet I still had to listen.

To his... no, to the rage brewing in the hearts of the people of this town.

“Those words could be considered an insult to King Merak... What do you people think of your own king?”

My question stunned him. In the next moment, his eyes turned sharp and cold with an icy rage. It was ice because there was no outlet for the anger. However, if the subject was before him, it would easily burst into flames. The man replied without hesitation.

“He’s the lousiest foolish king... Being called a hero or whatever, it makes me laugh.”



Aries was walking alone in the dark streets. He had neither a clear destination nor something he needed to investigate. Because there was nothing in particular for him to do, he was just pointlessly strolling around the town.

In the first place, happiness to Aries meant serving his master. Currently, doing what was useful to his master had a higher priority than anything else. For the master that he did not see for two hundred years, he wanted to do something to show his filial piety. He would not mind going the extra mile for that.

That was why he wasn't really interested in strolling around the town. He would much rather return to his master now.

But I don't want to get in the way.

Ruphas was obviously very interested in this city. However, Aries could get interested in a city founded by the hero who betrayed Ruphas. On the contrary, he would rather burn it all down right now. But since his master wanted a stroll, he would obey without causing trouble.

Therefore, there was not much that Aries could do. At most, it would be to avoid disturbing his master's sightseeing and to eliminate the things that would likely get in the way.

Specifically, the Seven Luminaries of the demons. They were probably setting up something in this town. Or rather, they had no reason not to do so.

The survivors of the Seven Heroes—Megrez, Merak, and Benetnash—were the strongest combatants among the humanoids. The demons could not dominate the world because of their existences. That was why Mars of the Seven Luminaries manipulated Aries to attack Svalinn. Therefore, it was impossible for them to leave this country alone.

And so, here we are.

Aries strongly sensed that someone was following him from behind. No, was that person intentionally revealing his presence to let him know of his existence? Either way, he probably wanted to have a one-to-one conversation. In that case, he might as well go along with this invitation.

Aries walked along the streets to find an empty spot. Eventually, he came to an abandoned plaza.

A park...?

Normally, there would be children playing here, but there was nobody now. It was not late at night, so there was no reason for people to avoid this place.

An anti-encounter barrier?

Among the seven attributes of this world, the moon attribute included magic that could prevent encounters. It was a simple yet convenient magic that allowed one to avoid encountering unwanted opponents. This magic was treasured by adventurers.

Two hundred years ago, Ruphas often grumbled about how nice it would be if she could use it too. Even if she could not use it herself, there were the Twelve Heavenly Stars around her that complemented her lack. This was especially true for the magic that she was not proficient in, which was supplemented by the Archer, the Maiden, and the Goat.

The Archer was in charge of offensive magic, while the Maiden was in charge of recovery and support magic. Finally, interference and disturbance magic were what the Goat excelled in.

“Come out already, Aigokeros. It is you, right?”

As Aries spoke, the empty space began to waver. Immediately after, a devil-like being appeared like a heat haze. It was a heteromorphic monster with a goat’s head, a human torso, and bat wings. Its lower body was fluctuating, as if it had no real substance.

One of the Twelve Heavenly Stars—Aigokeros of the Goat.

As the man that legends considered to be the devil personified, his dark eyes shone eerily to confront Aries.

※ Author’s Notes: Difference Between Dragons and Dragons Wyrms

Dragons (ドラゴン) of this world are mostly like the western dragons (竜). There are two types—flying dragons and ordinary dragons. They are the strongest magical beasts. They originated from dinosaurs that did not become extinct in this world. Mutated by mana, these super-strong dinosaurs became magical beasts. It was natural that they became uncontrollable monsters.

The level depends on the source of evolution. A dragon evolved from T-Rex would exceed Level 700. Even the demons leave the king of monsters alone. However, their population is small, numbering less than one hundred. They are an endangered species. When encountered, it is necessary to be prepared for death. If more than half of the people have black feathers, the dragons would flee. Lives could be saved by avoiding a confrontation.

Wyrm (龍) are the oriental, long-bodied dragons. These were created by the goddess herself. There were only five of them, each controlling an attribute other than Metal and Water, which are controlled by the goddess herself. Their levels are unknown, but 1000 is assumed to be reliable since they govern the system of the world. The guardian deity of Svalinn, Levia the water dragon, was an imitation created by Megrez based on these legendary wyrms. Of course, since water is governed by the goddess, there is no water wyrm per se.

Dinosaurs (恐竜) are not even monsters, just normal animals. Despite this, they are very strong. Even without skills or magic, they could kill demons. Their intelligence is low. They are dangerous creatures that would attack anything before them, regardless of humanoids, demons, magical beasts, or even other dinosaurs. However, their numbers declined more than two hundred years ago. Now, only a few are living somewhere. For some reasons, they would not prey on black birds, even fleeing from them instead.

Crow: “Even dragons and dinosaurs are afraid of us, are we the strongest?”

Black Dove: “That’s right.”

※ Foot Notes

Demons (魔神族) in this novel are literally called “demonic god tribe”. Since Alovenus is the one true deity, the demons are more like false gods.

TRPG (tabletop role-playing game) is a form of role-playing game (RPG) in which the participants describe their characters' actions through speech according to a set formal system of rules and guidelines.

Lightness (明度) of color, also called value or tone, is a representation of the variation in the perception of a color or color space's brightness. The lower the lightness, the closer the color is to black.

Stanford Prison Experiment (スタンフォード監獄実験) was a 1971 social psychology experiment that attempted to investigate the psychological effects of perceived power, focusing on the struggle between prisoners and prison officers.

Heat Haze (陽炎), also called heat shimmer, refers to the inferior mirage experienced when viewing objects through a layer of heated air.

Dragons (竜), in this translation, refer to the western dragons, usually depicted as four-legged, winged, fire-breathing creatures. These dragons are evolved from dinosaurs.

Wyrms (龍), in this translation, refer to the oriental dragons, usually depicted as four-legged, wingless serpents. These wyrms are divine creations of the goddess herself. Technically, both 竜 and 龍 are usually translated as "dragons". But since this web novel used the words differently, another word is needed to differentiate the two. The word "wurm" is also used in Dungeons & Dragons RPG for the most powerful dragons (usually called "great wyrms").

Chapter 28

Libra, I Choose You

Libra flew in the sky, watching over the entire white town. She was one thousand five hundred meters above the town. Even the flügels could not reach this altitude. As such, she was in a position that would never be discovered first. Even at this distance, Libra could clearly count the number of hairs on every flügel in the white streets.

Libra recognized the white-winged flügels as her virtual enemies. They were proud of their white wings and would excommunicate her master for her taboo black wings. In other words, they were her master's enemies, and her master's enemies were her enemies.

Libra had taken no action so far because Ruphas did not give her an order to attack. However, if they showed even a bit of hostility, she was ready to target the entire town with Brachium. There would be no forgiveness and no mercy.

Her top criterion was whether something would benefit Ruphas or not. If it was something beneficial, she would provide protection and assistance. If it was something harmful, she would kill even a newborn infant. The only exception was her creator Mizar, but he was not around anymore.

“Breathing, actions, gazes, speech... Currently, the number of flügels who discovered master's identity has been judged as zero. No unnatural aspects found... Attack, unnecessary. Continuing observation... Maintaining standby..”

With an icy, emotionless, mask-like face, the automatic doll continued observation from the sky. In case of emergency, the physical data, facial features, and habits of everyone were saved in her memory.

Then, she observed Dina, her comrade who also came to the white town. She was pacing back and forth at the clock tower in the center of the town, seemingly waiting for someone. Her memory data regarding Dina had been lost, so the details were unclear. However, she seemed competent at gathering information and was familiar with various places. Perhaps, she was acquainted with someone in this town.

“—!”

Through her observation of the entire town, Libra's sensors detected a suspicious character. He was a handsome man with green hair and sunglasses. Since he had no wings, most people would assume he was a human visitor. But Libra would not make such mistakes. A single glance penetrated his human-like disguise with mechanical efficiency.

“...Confirmed irregularities in skin color peculiar to mimicry. Confirmed teeth from the raising of the upper lip. Confirmed vertical pupils peculiar to demons via the gap of the sunglasses. The probability of a demon in disguise, ninety-eight percent. Completed enemy recognition... Speculating. Judging from his walking angle, his line of sight, and the pathway, the probability of reaching the clock tower, eighty-seven percent. Determined Dina-sama is in danger of contact. —Elimination conditions met.”

Libra's lifeless eyes shone ominously as her skirt billowed in the sky. Two machine guns appeared mysteriously from somewhere and were equipped by Libra without hesitation. Guns were weapons for the gunner class, an advanced class of archer. Two hundred years ago, this weapon was exceedingly common, but currently, it was considered an expensive item.

With a relentless steep dive that ended with a shockwave and an explosive noise, Libra landed before the suspicious man. The descent of the metallic humanoid crumbled the ground and threw up debris. Libra walked out of the dust cloud, obstructing the man thought to be a demon.

“Why... is there a golem in this town?”

“Warning to the demon ahead. If you come closer, I will eliminate you by force. In that event, please understand beforehand that your life will not be guaranteed. You are strongly urged to retreat.”

Raising her alertness so she can attack anytime, Libra issued her final warning while remaining vigilant. Meanwhile, Libra's eyes collected the opponent's data in order to measure his strength. Search Eye, one of Libra's skill, had the same effect as Ruphas' Observing Eye. This skill revealed that the opponent was Level 320 and had HP 25,000. Unless she was reckless, Libra would lose to him. Still, by today's standards,

his level was extremely high.

“What is this about being a demon? As you can see, I’m just a simple traveler who stopped by here for sightseeing.”

“Eyes behind the sunglasses, slightly raised upper lip, irregularities in skeletal structure, differences in flesh quality... These posit that you are a demon using mimicry.”

“...I see. My disguise has been seen through. Well, that makes it easier.”

Without waiting for his words to finish, Libra sensed a slight movement in the man’s muscles. Next, she sensed his feet straining and his knees bending. Concluding that this was preparation to kick off the ground and lunge, Libra immediately raised her alertness and switched to combat mode.

Immediately after, the ground erupted and the man’s fist was blocked by her arm. The fist was imbued with a force beyond humans, but the blocking arm had a hardness which was beyond humans as well. A metallic sound rang out and the man’s fingers broke.

“—!?”

“Confirmed hostile behavior. Switching to attack mode.”

She swung her arm to push him away and adjusted her line of sight to a point slightly further away. Then, both of Libra’s eyes shot lasers that pierced the ground.

That man... was not there!

He moved around to Libra’s blindspot with agile footwork and made a sneak attack from behind. However, what counted as a blind spot for humans did not exist for Libra. Libra bent her arm in an angle impossible for humans and defended against his fist. She turned her head one hundred eighty degrees and fired lasers at the man again.

“Whoa!?”

As the man quickly dodged her attack, Libra pursued further. She reverted her arm and head to their original positions, reversed the direction of her body holding the

machine guns, and go on full automatic fire without hesitation!

One thousand rounds per minute. It was a ridiculous rate of fire, which was beaten only by using two guns for a total of two thousand rounds per minute. Naturally, her guns were not equipped with silencers, so thundering sounds echoed through the streets, disrupting the peace of the town in broad daylight.

The man desperately dodged the bullets, kicked off the wall of a building and jumped. But he would be unable to dodge in mid-air, so Libra aimed at him again. She immediately equipped the next armament to shoot down the defenseless man.

“Skill selection. Unlock limiter on right arm. Zubenelgenubi (The Right Scale), release!”

Simultaneously as she declared, her right arm was literally released. The fingers, palm, and forearm were reassembled, making hard, metallic sounds. In just one second, her arm transformed into a one-meter long cannon.

“—Fire!”

In that moment, the window panes of the houses around Libra shattered. What shot forth was a torrent of light. The white flare surged forward through the sky, accompanied by purple lightning. The man in mid-air clenched his teeth.

Just as the man was about to be hit, a sudden gale blew him sideways, avoiding Libra’s blast. That was not all. He turned direction in mid-air as if he was riding on the winds, launching an attack at Libra. Libra shot her machine gun to intercept him, but all her bullets moved past the man.

“Got you!”

“—!”

Libra used her machine gun to block his repeated knife-hand strikes, but her gun barrel became notched and then broke in two. This was no ordinary knife-hand strike. That man had an invisible blade, which broke the machine gun. In that instant, Libra understood that it was caused by wind and concluded that the man could control the wind to cut metal.

“You can manipulate the wind freely... I see. Isn't this Wood attribute?”

“To think you could see through it. That is praiseworthy. I wield the power of nature—Wood, one of the seven attributes. The one among the Seven Luminaries who can freely control Wood, Jupiter is my name. Give me your name, doll. You should not be a normal person.”



Without being asked, the man declared his name and revealed his true form. His human-like skin turned into an ominous blue. With his sunglasses removed, his green eyes had vertical slits.

Although there was no obligation to declare one's name after the other party did so, this concerned the dignity of a female follower. Since the other party introduced himself, she should return the gesture. This was her preference as a maid and the honor of being Ruphas' follower. Therefore, Libra reverted her arm back to its normal form and carefully lifted the edge of her skirt.

“Greetings, Jupiter-sama. I am one of the Twelve Heavenly Stars, Libra of the Scales. And so, it's nice to have met you.”

“Oh. The Scales that was said to have the greatest firepower among the Twelve Heavenly Stars. I heard you were destroyed in the royal tomb, but it seems to be just a rumor.”

Jupiter laughed in amusement and readied his knife-hands. It looked like ordinary knife-hands, but they should be enhanced with invisible wind blades.

Wood attribute—literally controlled wood, along with wind which counted as part of nature.

In terms of attribute compatibility, Wood would overcome Earth and would be overcome by Metal.

On the other hand, Libra's attribute was Metal, which excelled in reinforcing physical substance. Her body, weapons, and equipment could all be enhanced to become metal-like in order to crush her enemies. This attribute was somewhat similar to alchemy. In fact, it was most compatible with alchemists. In terms of attribute compatibility, Metal would overcome Wood and would be overcome by Fire.

In other words, whether in terms of level or compatibility, Libra had the advantage. Analyzing this battle with few disadvantages, Libra calculated her chance of victory as ninety-nine percent and above. But she must not be reckless or merciful. Libra kept her machine guns and extended her left arm.

“Skill selection. Unlock limiter on the left arm. Zubeneschamali (The Left Scale), release!”

As if it was a declaration, her left arm transformed. Her left hand disappeared into her arm as if it was sucked in, replaced by the bluish-white glow of a light blade. If the Right Scale was the main gun for range combat, the Left Scale would be the main weapon for melee combat. With this, the protection of the wind made no difference. She could just slash it all away.

“I’m coming.”

The emotionless doll declared. The vernier thrusters on her back blasted off and she flew towards her enemy.



Normally, this was a park bustling with parents and children. But now, there were only two people present. The two comrades faced each other within this mysterious barrier that compelled others to avoid this place. Serving the same master and being part of the Twelve Heavenly Stars, they were the powerhouses in this world.

One of the Twelve Heavenly Stars, Aries of the Ram.

And also one of the Twelve Heavenly Stars, Aigokeros of the Goat.

The atmosphere did not feel like a meeting between the members of the Twelve Heavenly Stars and long-lost friends. Neither side was currently making an attack, but both sides were ready to do so if the other party made a suspicious move. They were resolved to unleash killing blows without hesitation, even against their former comrades.

“Aigokeros... why are you here?”

“You know very well why I’m here. I wanted only the lives of the Seven Heroes. You should already know this.”

Aigokeros answered Aries in a deep, murky voice. It was a creepy, reverberating voice as if many people were speaking at the same time. His mouth, which should have been used to speak, did not move at all. Instead, the sound penetrated directly into the ears, causing discomfort even to close associates. People with average mental fortitude would be disturbed just by talking to him. His voice always caused physiological discomfort like a nail scratching a piece of glass. His presence, his confrontation, and his words were enough to drive the other party insane.

He was the highest among the numerous demonic beings. Was the nauseating aura of the lord demon still active? Aries narrowed his eyes.

“For that reason, you are willing to submit to the demons?”

“Naturally. I make use of them, while they make use of my power. We have the same objective in the current situation.”

Aries noticed something dangerous in his expression as he replied. He did not intend to talk about defeating the Seven Heroes. It was a shared perspective among the Twelve Heavenly Stars to see them as hated enemies and desire their deaths. But that did not mean they should join forces with the demons.

Aries had a cooperative relationship with the demon Mars, but he did not technically become one of them. They merely had a common interest. He definitely did not become part of the demonic army.

“Aries. I will ask you again. Come with me and help me send the Seven Heroes to my homeland, hell.”

“...Sorry, but I refuse. I would rather die than to become join the demons. My one and only master is Ruphas-sama.”

“It’s the same for me. I won’t swear heartfelt allegiance to them. Just think of it as using them.”

“Even so, I refuse. Even if it’s pretending, I won’t lower my head to the demons.”

Aigokeros and Aries confronted each other in this hair-trigger atmosphere. Aigokeros considered using brute force to make Aries join him. However, he was one of the Twelve Heavenly Stars too, so it wouldn’t be easy to win. When he considered the pros and cons, there seemed to be more demerits. Therefore, the current stalemate persisted. Despite the situation being on a hair-trigger, strangely nothing would have happened.

At this moment, Aries cast a stone in the still waters.

“Especially now that our true master has returned, I cannot do such an unsightly

thing.”

“...! Then, the one who defeated Mars...!”

“Yes, it was Ruphas-sama. She did not die.”

His master was still alive. Hearing this news, Aigokeros was shaken. Then, Aries sent an invitation.

“Now, it’s my turn to ask you. Cut your ties with the demons and return with me to Ruphas-sama’s side. It’s time to reassemble the Twelve Heavenly Stars.”

“...I cannot do it now.”

“Aigokeros!”

“Reunion with the master... that would be nice. But if we do not defeat our hated enemies, the past would just repeat itself. I will present myself to our master after sending the hateful heroes to hell.”

Aigokeros did not accept Aries’ invitation. No, he could not accept it now. The hateful heroes were not dead yet. The fools who hindered his master’s supremacy had not been killed yet. If he turned back now, the past failure would happen again. He could return to his master’s side only after crushing all the hateful enemies!

“My clouded heart is clear now! Look carefully, Aries. I will take Merak’s head and let this country sink into a chaotic hell. Hell, death, and the grief of those fools will be a tribute to our master! I will destroy the demons from within and offer them as a sacrifice to our master!”

If Ruphas heard this, she would have stopped him and said, “Stop it, you fool.”

However, after hearing that his master was well, Aigokeros did not overlook it in the heat of the moment. No, perhaps he did not overlook it, but he believed killing the heroes was for the good of his master. Therefore, he could not stop, he must not stop. Following the bloody thought process unique to demonic beings, he believed that annihilating all the enemies was the best contribution he could make to his master.

“Farewell, Aries. Watch with our master from that special seat as I paint this country

with madness, blood, and death.”

After speaking his mind, Aigokeros faded away. Aries had no intention of stopping him. Killing the Seven Heroes was the common wish for the Twelve Heavenly Stars. Aries had no reason to stop him. After watching Aigokeros vanished, Aries thought about whether he should tell his master about this.

“Ruphas-sama did not like excessive slaughter and attack on civilians... If I tell her about this, she would surely stop it... but those people in the white town of this country persecuted Ruphas-sama...”

Aries pondered. In any case, he should observe the people in the white town for now. Then, he would decide depending on their personalities and way of thinking.

If they were different from the past, if they were no longer so fixated on wing color, if their unsightly discrimination was diminished, he would tell his master about this. Then, his master, who disliked peaceful civilians dying for no reason, would surely stop Aigokeros.

But if they would still attempt to eliminate his master, at that time...

※ Author's Notes: The Left and Right Scales

The Right Scale, Zubenelgenubi

Libra's main range weapon. She transforms her right arm into a railgun to fire a long-range attack. Probably not an actual railgun, but something more in line with fantasy. If it hits Level 300 Jupiter, it would be instant death, or if he's lucky, he would be dying.

Q. Jupiter-san is doing his best, right?

A. Jupiter-san has a lot of avoidance skills. When he first saw it, he was like “Eh? She's weak, but what is with that attack?” Still, he survived because he is Jupiter. The other Seven Luminaries would have died.

The Left Scale, Zubeneschamali

Libra's main melee weapon. Actually, she used it in the fight against Ruphas. Her left arm transforms into a sword of light to attack the enemy. Its appearance is like a lightsaber (ライオセーバー). Because it has no physical substance, it does not become blunt and can cut steel like butter. If it hits Level 300 Jupiter, the latter would be split into two.

※ Foot Notes

Zubenelgenubi (ズベン・エル・ゲヌビ), also called Alpha Librae, is the second brightest star in the constellation of Libra.

Attribute Compatibility (属性相性) is about the relationship of the Five Elements (五行) in terms of creatively or destructively interacting with each other. For example, Wood overcomes Earth and Metal overcomes Wood. Wood generates Fire and Water generates Wood.

Zubeneschamali (ズベン・エス・カマリ), also called Beta Librae, is the brightest star in the constellation of Libra.

Railgun (レールガン) is a device that uses electromagnetic force to launch high-velocity projectiles, by means of a sliding armature that is accelerated along a pair of conductive rails. A railgun projectile can reach several times the speed of sound (343 meters per second or 1,235 km/h).

Chapter 29

Jupiter Escapes

The country of the flügels, Gjallarhorn.

Because of wing color, conflicts had continued from the past... This caused the capital city to be divided into the east and west districts. Currently, a non-flügel girl was standing in the white town.

A young girl with ocean-blue hair that reached her knees and eyes of the same color, Dina.

She stood in front of the clock tower in the center of the white town, crossed her arms, and pouted her lips.

“...So slow.”

She was waiting here to exchange information with a certain person. The necessary information had to be clearly acquired while hiding her own vital information and misleading the other party to think that he was the one who benefited. She repeatedly practiced going through the conversation in her mind, but when it came to the actual event, the other party did not appear.

“Seriously, making a lady wait for so long. That’s why this race is...”

Complaining, Dina walked off. It could not be helped if the other party did not come. She did not want to move recklessly, but now she could only go and find the person. While walking around the town where there was nothing but whiteness, she observed the people living in this country.

As a flying race, the flügel’s way of life was fundamentally different from humans. It was natural for buildings to have entrances on the second or third floor. Of course, there were also stairs or ladders on the outside. Although a misstep would send one falling off the cliff, the inhabitants did not seem to be bothered by it.

On the other hand, the walkways were unnecessarily wide when compared to a human town, since flügels were more likely to collide into each other because of their wings. Everything, both good and bad, began with the wings.

This was what made flügels flügel. There was actually a saying in the world that a flügel without wings is just an ordinary person. This was why they were so fixated on the shape and color of the wings, despising those that deviated from the conventional forms.

“...Oh?”

As she was observing the town, a strange figure came into Dina’s view. It was a suspicious person who was completely covered by a cloak, similar to what Ruphas used to wear. Although the color was completely white, the purpose of hiding his face and wings should be the same as Ruphas. After observing Ruphas for so long, it was evident that hiding the wings would make the cloak bulge unnaturally. Still, it wasn’t something that could be noticed with a glance. Only people like Libra could see through it with one look.

—Could this be an opportunity to get unexpected information?

Sensing the strangeness of the white-cloaked person, Dina’s beauty distorted with a mysterious smile. Although she was currently waiting for someone, the man was the one who failed to arrive on time. She was there at the prearranged time and place, so he would have no cause for complaints. Making her conclusion, Dina changed her goal to follow the white-cloaked person.

The cloaked person moved to a relatively deserted area, while Dina followed carefully to avoid being noticed.

No problem, there was no chance of being discovered.

To deceive, cheat, and infiltrate without being noticed were Dina’s specialties. She was confident that she could even deceive people like Ruphas Mafahl or the Demon King without being noticed. Therefore, it was not difficult for her to follow the white-cloaked person since he was an easy target.

The white-cloaked person entered a small, dusty hut. Dina moved in front of the hut and opened the door slightly. She narrowed her eyes and looked inside.

Besides the white-cloaked person, two, three, four... five people in all. Based on the clothes they are wearing, they seem to be of the upper class.

These six people were probably very influential and authoritative in this capital city. For them to gather secretly in such a place, wasn't this really suspicious? Dina placed her ear outside the door and concentrated on listening to the conversation within the hut.

"You are late, Reid."

"Sorry. The other meeting took too long."

It seemed the white-cloaked person's name was Reid. When he took off the cloak, white wings appeared as expected. He had a well-trained body and appeared to be in his mid-forties by human standard. He had a sharp look in his eyes that revealed his unusual presence. He was obviously not an ordinary citizen.

"So what did the king say?"

"It's no good. We cannot rely on that opportunist king as expected. He repeatedly ignored my advice. He just doesn't understand that those filthy wings would keep increasing if the situation remains like this."

Dina realized that this was a gathering of people who were dissatisfied with the black town. It was a faction that adhered to the traditional white wing supremacy and refused to acknowledge the other wings. They had no doubt about their own nobility and looked down on people with mixed wings. Therefore, it was unbearable for them when the mixed wings—or filthy wings, as they called them—built their own town as if they were peers.

"Then, as expected..."

"Yes. We would have to crush the growing filthy wings with our own hands."

While listening, Dina covered her mouth with her hand. This was a dangerous topic. For them to use the word "crush", it might be impossible to calm them down. It seemed the extended period of tolerance had reached its melting point.

“But that...”

“Of course, this would dirty our hands, but someone has to do it. Justice could not be defended with only pretty words. Even if someone has to become evil, we must complete our mission. Did we all not gather here today with that determination?”

Justice. This word was a joke to Dina. Apparently, these people were the self-indulgent types. In the name of justice, one could be forgiven no matter what was done. They must have thought that they were so noble to do what others dare not do and to dirty their hands to enforce justice.

Ah, how ridiculous. There was no evil as unscrupulous as those who would cloud their eyes with the word “justice”.

“Besides... We have information that the filthy wings are preparing for war against us. It would be too late for us if they attack first.”

Eyes clouded with justice, hearts filled with suspicions... This is getting serious, Dina thought.

They were convinced that they were right and that they would become victims of the other party’s attacks. They had become like a bomb on the verge of explosion. It was unclear if Merak was aware of this or not, but the fuse of this country’s destruction had already been lit.

“I have already called for our comrades who shared the same ambitions, forming a volunteer army. Everyone is of one mind. There is no difference in our concerns for this country.”

Reid’s powerful speech stirred the people here to raise their voice in cheers. If they were the minority, it might be possible to stop them. But if they were the majority, it would be impossible to stop. Group psychology could corrupt one’s normal judgment, causing the erroneous belief that one was absolutely right. And so it was the final countdown to chaos.

“In addition, we have an ally from outside. Although he belongs to a wingless race, Jupiter-dono agrees with us. In fact, the information provided by him has been a great help to us.”

Jupitar—Was this the criminal responsible for lighting the fuse?

Dina concluded thus, but it felt strange that the principal person was not here. For an important meeting like this, he ought to be here to urge them on. Yet he was absent. Was it really okay for him to stop at this point?

Well, whatever. She got some interesting information anyway, so there was no need to stay here any longer.

This would be a good present for Ruphas.

Without messing up her gentle smile, Dina vanished like a fog from that place.



Jupiter unleashed blades of wind at Libra's face, arms, legs, and chest. But she remained unharmed. As a demon of the Seven Luminaries who threatened the world, Jupiter was attacking with all his might. However, Libra continued to advance expressionlessly as if it was just a light breeze.

It might be possible to scratch the machine guns a little after they were deteriorated over two hundred years. However, Libra's body was fully repaired by Ruphas. In her current state, she did not receive a single scratch.

It was a tornado that could uproot huge trees, yet she ignored the wind bullets coming from all directions as if she didn't even know they were there. His most powerful skill, which reduced his own HP to use, could not even move her one bit.

On the other hand, Libra's attacks were all instant-kill. If he was hit, Jupiter would surely die. A scattershot of instant-kill attacks was no joking matter. And the accuracy was rising as time went by. She was learning her opponent's movements and making adjustments to compensate. Even so, this fragile balance was maintained only because Libra was not going all out.

If she activated Brachium, everything would be over in an instant. Yet, she did not do so because Libra decided that Brachium should be kept in reserve. In other words, there was no need to use Brachium because the gap in their abilities was too wide.

Everyone in Gjallarhorn, including the king, could become Ruphas' enemies. Libra

always thought so and prepared herself to respond accordingly. In other words, if she activated Brachium, it would be targeting the entire country of Gjallarhorn instead of Jupiter. If they became her master's enemy, she would instantly target the capital city with Brachium and erased the entire country.

For that reason alone, she kept Brachium in reserve so she can activate it when necessary. Of course, there was probably nothing they could do when if the people of this country became her master's enemies. They were on completely different levels in the first place. However, reality sometimes exceeded expectations. There could be unexpected strength when the masses were united.

A one-in-ten-thousand chance. Libra was already familiar with such unreliable and unreasonable reality two hundred years ago. Therefore, she would not make the same mistake again. She would not let such one-in-ten-thousand chances happen again. If it began to germinate, she would immediately pull it out by the roots. Therefore, she did not activate Brachium, allowing Jupiter to hang onto his life by a thin thread.

"This is unacceptable. Our compatibility is terrible."

Jupiter smiled like a wild beast enjoying a fight as he murmured calmly. His body was full of injuries. The injuries were light, but they were accumulating. The attacks did not hit him directly. He fully utilized his evasion skills and dodged the attacks perfectly. But even so, the shockwaves alone were enough to damage his body.

On the other hand, Libra was hit directly several times, but she merely poised without taking any damage. It was as if she was saying that she did not even need to dodge.

Metal—in other words, steel.

A body as hard as steel. A blade that could cut down trees. A heavy weight that could not be moved by the winds.

Steel could be melted by fire, but never hurt by the wind. Against Jupiter, Libra was a natural enemy that would not be damaged and could kill him in one hit.

However, only Jupiter could have continued fighting until now. Among the Seven Luminaries, he was the best in terms of evasion and movement. Besides, he could still make attacks of his appropriate level. If he was one of the other Seven Luminaries, such as Mars, he would be a corpse already. Even so, being good at fighting was not

the same as victory. At most, he could continue to fight, but his chance of victory was basically zero.

“I can’t win this. Although it’s frustrating, I will have to retreat.”

“...!”

Hearing that the enemy intended to retreat, Libra withdrew her left arm and readied her machine gun. If the enemy continued to attack, she would defend with her steel-like hardness and defeat him with the Right Scale. But if the enemy escaped, flight would be required.

Libra’s maximum flying speed could reach Mach 5, but this was provided that she moved in a straight line and only after sufficient acceleration. In other words, her initial velocity was not as fast and she was not as maneuverable as someone who could control the winds freely.

If he intended to escape, it would be very difficult to catch him. It would be impossible to pursue and capture him. Therefore, it would be better to switch to long-range attacks and shoot him down from behind the moment he tried to flee.

“Unfortunately, I’m more familiar with this town than you!”

In cold sweat, Jupiter ran towards the exit of the city. Libra immediately gave chase, but the buildings in this city were too densely packed. This inconvenient situation was due to the flügels assuming that people wouldn’t be walking along the streets. This became a maze for Jupiter to flee and hinder Libra’s pursuit.

He fled into the corners, hid inside buildings, and got lost in the crowds. The tight corners were advantageous to Jupiter, who had high maneuverability. In addition, Libra had not acquired information regarding this capital city. Given the difference in speed, it was impossible for Libra to catch up.

For example, an Olympic gold medalist, who knew nothing about the city, would have a hard time catching a kid, who was very familiar with the city streets, in a game of hide-and-seek. This was known as a geographical advantage.

Further pursuit was a waste of time—based on their speed and maneuverability, her calculation determined that the chance of a successful capture was abysmally low.

Without sufficient information on the city, further pursuit would only end in failure. It would be more meaningful to bring the information acquired from this battle to her master quickly. Libra thought so and terminated her pursuit.

“.....”

Chink.

A metallic sound was heard as Libra moved her head. She could hear the sound of a pebble from two hundred kilometers away. She searched for Ruphas' voice and breathing sound and located her. As for Jupiter... it was useless as he was blocking sounds with wind walls. It would be impossible to track him with sound.

“Current location, black town... temple.”

Libra discovered the location of her master, who did not seem to be in a battle for now. She listened for other voices to check if there were hostile people.

Yesterday, her master woke up at night with an irregular heart rate. Libra did not really understand, but she knew people could have dreams. This was her master organizing her memories. In some cases, one could remember some painful memories. Based on her master's reaction... Libra thought that she probably saw some unwanted dreams.

As expected, this country had bad influences on her master.

Thus, she concluded that she must eliminate all obstacles to her master while they remained in this country. Libra could not be affected by emotions. She would not be influenced something as surreal as dreams. She would not lose her normal composure. She was essentially a tool. Her existence was meant to benefit her master and remove any obstacles.

The enemy's appearance and combat style were recorded. He was a low-level, troublesome opponent who used evasion to run around everywhere. She would not lose. A victory would be easy if she had a reliable method to capture him. Unfortunately, he escaped this time, but the next time would be different.

She had to prepare weapons and strategies to deal with his speed, so she could reliably deal with him in their next encounter. She could eliminate him with Brachium, but she thought it was unnecessary. At the most, it would be enough to use it as a bluff and a

threat. There was no need to fire.

As a doll who regained her owner, Libra pondered.

Weapons to defeat the enemies, methods to eliminate them, and actions from the previous battle.

She reviewed, calculated, and repeated simulations, searching for that which would benefit her master most.

This was the meaning of her existence as a doll that was created.

※ Foot Notes

Dina's Hair-Length is specifically mentioned to reach her knees (海色の髪を膝辺りまで伸ばし). The images from the light novel show her with chest-length hair though, so maybe it's a difference between web novel and light novel, I don't really know...

Conspiracy... When you are meeting for a conspiracy, lock the damned door! Fools! ㊦

Jupitar is an alias of Jupiter. The name the flügels know him by is ジュピター, while his name used among the Seven Luminaries is ユピテル. Both ジュピター and ユピテル are different renderings of ユーピテル ("Jupiter"). Think of it as an alternative spelling.

Mach is a number indicating the ratio of the speed of an object to the speed of sound in the medium through which the object is moving. The speed of sound through air is 343 meters per second, so Libra could fly up to 1715 meters per second (Mach 5).

Chapter 30

Gjallarhorn Accumulates Power (for Civil War)

This country had more problems than I thought. I felt this deeply as I sat on the sofa in the inn. Firstly, the mob-like guy I met when I went to the temple alone—ah, I did not ask his name. For now, I should call him Mob Red (Provisional).

The resentment towards King Merak that he spoke of was probably not limited to him alone. After all, such a temple as this was built with a statue to publicly honor me, the most reviled person in the world. This alone was a public expression of a treason against the king.

I understood that discrimination from the white-winged faction was really extreme, but doing this was merely adding oil to a fire. I wasn't really in a position to say this, but part of the cause for discrimination from the white-winged faction was the mixed-winged faction itself. However, it did not seem to be the entirety of the problem.

“—So it seems that the white town is currently preparing for civil war.”

Currently, we were meeting in the inn, exchanging information we gathered today. The first to start was Dina, whose topic was like dropping a bomb. It was the unexpected information that the paranoid people of the white town were preparing for civil war with the mixed-winged faction. They even formed a volunteer army.

Hey, Merak. What are you doing? It's a countdown to civil war already, no?

If this continued, it would be the end of the country. There was no need for invaders.

“From their conversations, it seems the person called Jupitar is fanning the flames of the white faction. Well, it's probably a fake name.”

“...Hmm. You have worked hard at collecting information, Dina.”

I put my hands to my forehead. Good work, Dina. If we knew about the mastermind, maybe it was still possible to save the situation. Perhaps, there was a way to stop the

conflict... Even so, it was doubtful if a situation that was so heated up could be stopped.

“Reporting. Today at 13 hours 23 minutes 42 seconds. I encountered Jupiter, one of the Seven Luminaries, in the white town and engaged him in battle.”

And Libra dropped another bomb. It seemed she fought a demon when she went to the white town today. It was rather unpleasant to hear that this country, which would collapse even if it was left alone, was consorting with demons. If we left without doing anything, this country would surely perish. In that event, the balance maintained by the three heroes would collapse, resulting in a massive invasion by the demons.

“Based on my combat power and compatibility, my chance of victory is not lower than ninety-nine percent. However, if the opponent flees with all his might, it would be difficult to capture him. In order to detain him in our next encounter, I am requesting homing bullets and the maintenance of guns.”

Homing bullets... They were ammunition with a high degree of accuracy used by the gunner class. I did not have levels in the gunner class, but I could still create them. Libra did not have levels in the gunner class either, but golems and monsters were fundamentally different from players. The problem here was that Libra did not have the ammunition.

“...I remembered they were not that expensive. Do you not have them?”

“I used them all in the defense of the tomb.”

“.....”

Oh, right. She did not leave the tomb for two hundred years. In that case, she might be running out of other ammunition as well, not just the homing bullets. Well then, I should just replenish them all. It was easy to buy ammunition in the game, but it might be very difficult to get them in this world. It would be best for me to make them myself. And for the machine guns to not be broken after two hundred years... as expected of something created by Mizar.

“Write the missing ammunition and weapons down on paper. I will make them later.”

“Thank you.”

Libra did not expend too much ammunition, probably because her Brachium was too powerful. Even so, it made a difference whether she had ammunition or not. I should maintain her full combat potential. Next would be Aries.

“Did anything happen to you?”

“.....”

“Aries.”

“Oh, no! I have nothing worth reporting to Ruphas-sama...”

Hmm. It seemed there was no issue on Aries’ side. I was a little concerned about his stuttering, but I suppose everyone would have their own things to think about. Well, I should be glad that there were no additional problems right now.

“And finally, it’s my turn. In this black town, there was a bronze statue of me in the temple for some reasons. This is just provoking the white faction unnecessarily... There’s no doubt we are seeing the countdown to civil war.”

“Well, isn’t this a nice city?”

“Master, I propose we fully support the black town during the civil war.”

“I think that’s fine too.”

“...You people...”

When I raised the problem of the black town, this idiotic trio became favorable towards the black town for some reasons. No, it would be best to prevent the civil war. What were we supposed to do with one side?

No, we would probably win. I generally studied the levels of the people in this town. The highest level was around Level 50. Even if there were tens of thousands of them, it would be impossible to win against any one of us. Well, Dina might be the exception. But if I did that, it would be a return to being the overlord of terror. I would be wanted all over the world by tomorrow.

“Well, jokes aside. The problem of this country should be solved by Merak. It shouldn’t

be worrying Ruphas-sama. Let them wipe their own asses.”

Dina made a level-headed proposal, as I pondered how to stop the conflict. In fact, when I thought about it, I had no obligation to help this country. In the first place, I was recognized as the world’s villain. Things could become troublesome if I got involved haphazardly.

“Dina-sama. In that event, the balance formed by the three heroes would collapse, leading to an invasion by demons. It will be disadvantageous for us if the Demon King’s army continued to grow... It is necessary to let the heroes and the demons be opponents, at least until we recovered our former strength by gathering all the Twelve Heavenly Stars.”

Oh. Libra gave an unexpectedly good opinion. Although it seemed like she intended to profit from their fighting, it was at least better than Dina’s proposal to do nothing. This was what I thought, but it was overturned immediately.

“Therefore, I suggest that we support the black town and wipe out the white faction, uniting the country in the process. It is not a favorable situation for the country to be divided. The possibility of them sabotaging each other should be resolved quickly. In addition, when the black faction comes into power, Gjallarhorn will become a chess piece for Ruphas-sama to use.”

Hey, Libra. You are rotten at the core.

In other words, she wanted to eliminate the obstructing white town and let Merak and the demons finish each other off. It was certainly better than letting the people sabotage each other, since whichever faction seized power, they would be united to repel the demons’ attack. But wasn’t this a bit too extreme?

Next would be Aries... but he did not seem to have an opinion. Well, he was not self-assertive to begin with, so he was probably leaving the decision to us.

But what should I do? Dina and Libra seemed cold, but they were not irrational. However, it was impossible for me to simply destroy the town. I could not be that cold-hearted. At least, the current me did not bear a grudge against Merak and his country. I would prefer to just eliminate Jupiter and Jupiter along with any other demons, then leave things to Merak.

“...Now, as Libra said, it would be disadvantageous to us if Merak and this country were defeated. Even so, I do not want to simply crush one faction. Anyway, let’s first capture Jupitar and Jupiter. If things go well, we may be able to stop the civil war... Or rather, could they be the same person?”

“Well, I think so too.”

Jupitar and Jupiter. Given the current situation, they were likely the same person. Dina thought so as well, while Libra and Aries nodded their heads in agreement.

Firstly, if Jupiter was not stopped by Libra, he would probably have met Dina given his route of travel. Then Dina followed a suspicious person (seemed to be called Reid) from the clock tower and learnt about the plans for civil and Jupitar.

Given some thought, it would seem Jupiter’s destination was not the clock tower, but the hideout that Dina discovered. Furthermore, Jupitar did not arrive on time to the meeting with the suspicious people. It could be inferred that he was absent without notice due to his encounter with Libra and was forced to withdraw. Therefore, the conclusion was that he was Jupiter in disguise. When Libra first encountered him, he changed his skin color to disguise as a human.

This was getting too obvious. We could safely conclude that Jupiter and Jupitar were one and the same. In the first place, there was no merit for humans in bringing civil war to this country. Why would anyone want to eliminate one of the heroes who served as guardians in a time of crisis? But if it was the demon Jupiter pretending to be a human, I was convinced that there would be sufficient reasons to do so.

“Well, let’s focus on catching Jupiter first. Perhaps the situation would improve after capturing him.”

“Can we not kill him?”

“If possible, capture him alive. I want to drag him out and make him testify in public.”

In the current situation where the mood was on the verge of having a civil war, I felt that a scapegoat would be necessary to stop it. If we tried to stop it now, it would only draw both sides in. It was difficult to acknowledge one’s mistakes, even worse when it was an entire country. Such a situation could not be helped.

However, if it was caused by a third party, the responsibility could be shifted. “We were just being manipulated. Now, let’s get along with each other...” It was a cliched technique used in novels and comics. In other words, prepare an easily understood villain and blame it all on him.

I was aware that this was not a praiseworthy method, but...

“Recommendation is to capture him alive... Understood.”

“However...”

“...?”

“The top priority is your own safety. If it’s too dangerous for you to capture him alive, this order is cancelled. If you judge the situation to be dangerous, you may kill him. Also, you may retreat too.”

For the sake of Libra and the others, I surprisingly gave a simple permission to kill. For me, their lives were the top priority in this world. For the homeless me, Dina, Libra, and Aries were already my family. Thus, I gave permission. I would choose to kill others instead of letting them die.

My ethical perspective was getting weird. Where did my weak-willed self, who could not even face the corpses of dead small animals, go?

“Be at ease, my master. The previous chance of victory was no mistake. With the proper equipment, Jupiter will be definitely be captured.”

“How reliable. Then, I will work hard at transmutation to increase the chance of victory by a little.”

Anyway, I would believe in Libra this time. She already said she could do it. I could only believe her. Besides, only Libra knew how the enemy looked like, so she was the only one who could do it.

“.....”

I realized that Libra was watching me silently.

What? Was there something else to tell me? Or was she waiting for my command?

Honestly, I could not understand if she just looked on silently. Should I say something?... Well, let me say it properly.

“...My faithful subordinate, one of the Twelve Heavenly Stars, Libra of the Scale. I command you. Do not die and bring the demon in question before me. I await your fruitful result.”

“Yes, my master!”

I gave my order. Libra, who was waiting, immediately responded. Apparently, she was really waiting for an order. If I did not give an order, would she be staring at me forever?

She seemed to be a character who would be difficult to understand...

※ Author's Notes: Special Weapons in the Game

Bow: A long-range weapon that could be used even by non-archers. However, it is usually used by archers who have advantages when using bows.

Gun: A superior version of the bow, but a bow is still better if it is just a musket. It isn't that scary. It can be used by a non-gunner, but it still functions best in the hands of a gunner.

Log: Everyone, grab your logs and let's go!! The most powerful weapon that could be used by acolytes and priests. Using a mace is outdated. The mainstream weapon to fight monsters is a log. Its range and power are high, effective for dealing with groups of undead. The “log acolyte” will replace the “beating acolyte” as mainstream... No, impossible... This weapon is a log, damn! In fact, it is stronger when equipped by a vanguard character than an acolyte.

※ Foot Notes

Musket (マスケット) is a muzzle-loaded long gun that appeared as a smoothbore weapon in early 16th century Europe.

Log (丸太) is... well, wood; usually the trunk of a tree. As silly as it sounds, there are

stories involving characters fighting with logs, such as Hero of God Eye (神眼の勇者).

Acolyte (アコライト) is an assistant or follower assisting the celebrant in a religious service or procession. It is also a job in the MMO Ragnarok Online, which features a variant or build called “Beating Aco” (殴りアコ)... essentially an acolyte character that buffs himself and beats things up with blunt weapons.



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