



Chapter 23

Mentor and Disciple

After noon on the day we left Rinnal.

We hadn't reached the royal capital, nor had we reached the next city, but we were getting ready for the famed sleeping outdoors.

Right, I thought we could go on further, but Till said stop so we did.

Well, even if I say sleep outdoors, we had prepared a tent beforehand, so it doesn't feel that uncomfortable.

Besides, I had learned how to put up a tent back when I went to a summer camp, so there was no problem either.

There was a nice place right below some trees, so that's where we put it up.

There was a lake nearby, but even if it should rain a lot, we'd probably notice before the water level rose enough to submerge us.

We made the entrance face downwind, properly fixed the ropes with pegs and preparations were complete.

Well, more or less.

"Good work, Ilya."

"You, too, Alice-sama. I would have made it alone, too."

"It's fine, it's fine."

I don't hate moving my body... originally.

However, it's nice that there's a lake nearby. I can go wash up later.

"Do thou have a moment, Alice?"

While I was taking a breather from putting up the tent, Till came over.

She'd taken care of the horse, but had disappeared along the way.

I wonder what she'd done?

"Yes, what is it?"

"Hm, could thou show one thy Status?"

"Ahh."

Come to think of it, since meeting we haven't had the time, so we hadn't done that kind of self-introduction.

Even though, I should say, she's my proper mentor.

There's no reason for me not to show her.

"Sure. This is it."

Name: Alice

Race: Halfelf

Age: 15

Gender: Female

Class: Mage

Level: 3

As told to by Till, I revealed my Status to her.

Thinking about it, this is the first time I've showed it to someone other than Shion-san in this much detail.

"——W-what? ... a half, thou say?"

As she confirmed my Status, Till's expression hardened as if she'd seen a ghost.

"Whose... child are thou?"

"Eh? Ehh..."

Crap!

Halfs are cool, aren't they?

And riding on that feeling alone, I'd made the setting to half an Elf. But Elves themselves seem particular here, what the hell, this is bad!

I stepped on a landmine!?

"Is it Estoria? Are thou Estoria's child!?"

"Wawa."

Till shook me by the shoulders.

"Honored mentor, please compose yourself."

"Mng..."

Softly rebuked by Ilya, Till awkwardly let go of my shoulders.

Ilya, good job!

I mean, there's nothing I could tell her.

If anything, I'm the child of god.

"I'd known thou were an elf... but a half of all things..."

How should I put it, if Till gets so surprised by it, I start feeling uncomfortable myself.

"Till, isn't it fine now? It's not particularly pleasant having that topic dragged up."

"Apologies. Thou are right."

It's not that it's unpleasant, there's just nothing I can say.

Sorry, Till.

"Anyhow, I also want to know about you, Till. Because there's nothing I know about elves."

"...is that so. Understood."

Name: Tillbell Aynshaura

Race: Elf

Age: 287

Gender: Female

Class: Sage

Level: 275

"... haa?"

I reflexively stared at Till.

"Hm?"

The way her lovely, pointed ears twitched was extremely cute.

And red as apples, well, I guess I should call them rinnals?

Red as rinnals, her springy cheeks made you feel better just looking at them, like she were some pet animal.

Not one strand of her blond hair, tied in twintails, was dull. You could tell its vibrancy at one glance.

There was not a crack in her cherry-blossom pink lips and not one impurity in her eyes blue like the deep sea.

———in other words.

"A Legal Lo-... crap, crap. I mustn't say it out loud. I mustn't."

"Hey, stop it! Do not pet one's head!"

Till brushed my hand away like it was a bother.

"Ah, I'm sorry, my mistake."

By mistake, I poured my affection on her.

By mistake.

"A little girl having not even lived a hundred years will not treat one like a child."

That's an amazing line.

You'd never be able hear that in my former world, would you.

"Are elves that long-living, after all?"

"Did thy mother not——no, that's right. Elves are fundamentally long-living, but people with strong mana are particularly so."

"Hee, then Till can reach an amazing age."

"The village chief is over a thousand."

"A thousand!? Elves are..."

No, wait a second.

Elves with strong mana are particularly long-living?

Then... what about me?

"Alice, thou will probably live more than a normal human's life span."

"I... see..."

Till had replied like she'd read the question off my face.

At the moment, that life span is a fact that hasn't clicked.

"..."

"Ilya...?"

Somehow I got the feeling that Ilya started feeling depressed.

Life span.

From our talk about life spans?

I knew Ilya's Status.

During my business talks with the Firm, it had been shown to me.

And to begin with, now I could operate Ilya's Status myself.

On the other hand, Ilya couldn't operate her own Status.

That was proof I was her master.

In this world, if you couldn't operate your Status, you basically couldn't get a job.

Falling into slavery seemed pretty harsh.

Anyhow, I checked her Status once more.

Name: Ilya

Race: Dragonkind

Age: 16

Gender: Female

Class: Apprentice Lancer

Level: 7

What surprised me when I first saw this Status, well, it was the Apprentice part of her Class.

Because she was that strong, I'd thought she'd been experienced in combat, but apparently not.

Bertrand-san hadn't lied or anything.

She hasn't fought with monsters, but maybe dragonkind was originally blessed with an instinct for combat.

Besides, apparently she'd done practice.

Then, there was Ilya's pure body.

Ilya's pure body.

That's important, so I repeated it.

The guys at the Firm hadn't raped her.

A written pledge from the auntie looking after the Firm's female slaves confirmed that.

They told me to check it myself if felt so inclined, but there's no way I could do that.

No, well... well?

"I want to... live the same time as Alice-sama."

While I was having bad thoughts, Ilya revealed her thoughts on the topic.

So was it really about that?

By the way, elves and dragonkind.

Which were rarer in this world?

Honestly, are they possibly both super-rare?

Ilya is young, she has those looks, and she's strong to boot!

With that combination, the price I bought her for feels cheap instead.

I didn't especially ask the Firm the reason, but...

"Dragon lass. Why don't thou just live the time? It's not that there is no way."

"Honored mentor... please, say no more."

"Although your precious meeting might have been a kind of fate."

"Honored mentor!"

"Hmm?"

Somehow the two had started speaking about something I couldn't follow.

Not that it matters, but could you please stop driving me out of the conversation and heat it up on your own?

But a precious meeting, huh.

Which reminds me, how did Ilya fall into slavery?

And dragonkind... they're not like that Ice Dragon, but human-looking?

As always, Ilya was full of mysteries.

Although, as my slave, I think she would tell me a lot if I ordered her.

But that's a little... it's not how I roll.

"Well, don't get so angry. From one's position, your meeting feels akin to fate," Till admonished Ilya with a gentle look on her face.

Ilya in turn avoided her gaze in perplexity and met my eyes.

"——!"

She immediately looked away.

Uhhhm.

Is she bullying me?

And then, my training under Till already started.

Apparently that's why we stopped while the sun was still high in the sky.

"Alice, how high is thy proficiency with Thunder?"

"Yes. Right now... it's 13."

"Hm. Then get it to 99 before the sun sets."

"Haa...?"

Eh?

Had I misheard?

"Get it to 99 and come back."

"I could hear you!"

I just couldn't believe it!

You don't have to laugh with such a mean look!

"The monsters on the mountain that way are just right for you. I checked it out earlier," Till pointed at the mountain beyond the lake.

So that's why she'd disappeared earlier...

"Proficiency with Attack Magic doesn't go up unless you fight enemies of higher levels or simply strong foes. The basis of everything training while you're young and efficiency is high."

"That's..."

But thinking of Till's scary level, does that mean that Till's not going to get any stronger?

Well, at this point I cannot see the limit to her strength though...

"No need to worry. To begin with, one's level doesn't rise that easily, and it rises no higher than one's age. In thy case, it will stop at 15."

A shocking truth.

Is that how it works?

Well, from seeing Till's level, I'd understood that the limit wasn't 99.

...

Ah, I see.

That reminds me, both Shion-san and Uncle had trained raised their levels almost to their ages, but they hadn't passed them.

That explained it.

"...and if I don't finish by sunset?"

"Hehe, then you don't need to come back."

"Ri—ght?"She's not soft, I see. But this not-soft attitude reminds me of the time I was pushed during club activities.

It's not a bad thing, I think.

"Let us do our best, Alice-sama. Of course, I shall help you."

"One is going to sleep."

This person really is my mentor, right?

At least ask me to stay safe!

"It's fine, I understand! I'll show you!"

My legend begins now!

The time for me and nobody else to become the world's strongest has come!

Get ready and wait for me, Tillbell Aynshaura!

Right, intending to chase her, I'll never catch up.

I have to aim to overtake her! I defiantly looked at Till.

"Hehe."

"Hiii."

Her daunting smile gave me a little scare.

Well, I don't have to antagonize my great senior... maybe.

I can just become my generation's strongest.

I'm sure that's right!

"... thou are so cute."

Till let out another big yawn and walked over to the tent.

Now then, if I waste time, I really might not make it.

"Ahh, one forgot. Make sure to come back to make dinner."

"Are you a demon!?"

And this time, Till really got into the tent while carelessly waving her hand.

"... let's go, Ilya!"

"Yes, Alice-sama!"

Ahh, that immediate affirmation felt so good!

And that marked the beginning of a sleepless night for Ilya and me.

... not in the dirty sense, alright!

Chapter 24

Training

"Huhhh, huhhh..."

"Alice-sama, are you alright?"

While gasping for breath, I raised a hand to signal Ilya I'm alright for the moment.

After going around the lake, while going up the mountain, the limit of my endurance had come.

In the first place, there were only not-quite-paths like animal trails.

Add the slope and it's tough on the current me.

"Till went straight over the lake, didn't she... such an unfair shortcut."

That magic to run through the air.

She created footholds out of ice in the air and produced propulsion by exploding them, is the conjecture I made from seeing it a number of times.

The point is the following:

Isn't that a consecutive application of Blizzard?

Isn't she repeatedly creating Blizzards with regulated power in midair?

"Just imagining it, it's awe-inspiring..."

If I'm right, the difference in ability is beyond words.

Does that mean that, during the fight with the Ice Dragon, Till cast high-class magic while running through the air with repeated Blizzards?

I already know that Till can Double Cast.

But still...

"That wall is so high..."

If the current me repeatedly cast Thunder without waiting for the cooldown, I feel I'd collapse after the fourth one.

But even if I could repeatedly use it, I might not be able to run through the air due to the attribute of my magic to begin with?

Of course, it's probably impossible with fire magic, too.

Every attribute should have some special feature, so I guess I don't have to be pessimistic about it.

"I think your mana rivals that of the honored mentor, Alice-sama. I believe in you more than anyone."

"Ilya... you're such a good girl."

I'm the type that improves when praised, that's right.

Ahh, with my current age, she's one year older than me.

But she doesn't seem to find it unpleasant if I talk to her like that.

She answered me by smiling gently.

Still, I remembered while toying with the bracelet around my left arm.

Till had warned me.

I normally shouldn't use it, she said.

In other words, should I just shoot my magic with my right hand?

Certainly, if I use the bracelet, the mana consumption is enormous.

"——Alice-sama, they're coming."

Ilya protectively stepped in front of me.

She took a stance with her iron spear.

Ilya's equipment was that Iron Spear which we had received as service from the Firm and a spare Leather Robe from Aunty.

I was wearing the leather robe that Aunty had fixed and remodeled by adding Uncle's mantle as something of a pareo.

Its defensive properties seemed quite high.

Level 13 Killerwolf

I checked the enemy Status.

Wolves.

Still, after experiencing the fight against the Ice Dragon, I'm comparatively calm now.

But this time, there were more than one.

Four in total.

My first combat against a group.

Come to think of it, I've heard that wolves are good at hunting in a group.

With that thought in mind, suddenly not just the enemies in front of my eyes, but the thicket to the side started bothering me.

—aren't there some still hiding?

"Learn that you will not harm a hair on Alice-sama's body!"

Nonetheless, the enemies before us came first.

With a swipe of her spear, Ilya held the wolves at bay.

What's with this sense of security.

Not being alone is wonderful!

"—Thunder!"

Without chanting, I sent them an instant, preemptive attack.

Shooting out from my right hand wasn't the pentagram-strengthened magic from the fight against the Ice Dragon, but my usual magic.

However, there was no problem with its power.

Catching them off guard, my magic hit one of the wolves and toasted it.

With one of their comrades defeated, the wolves stopped probing the situation and jumped at us.

Ilya stopped all of their attempts through skilled handling of her

spear.

Ilya may have low agility, but she was good with her weapon.

How she made use of the spear's reach to zone out the wolves was extraordinary.

I see, this weapon is great for Ilya.

I dare say Ilya isn't suited for swords.

To go at it at close range, you needed agility no matter what.

Although she had the form competing with the bandits, but of course it's better to play to your strengths.

Well, leaving that aside, she really was the best shield for me.

She didn't dodge, but took it all.

And so that the enemies didn't get to me, she zoned them out.

On the backline, there was nothing as reassuring as such an ally.

In that case, I decided to make a somewhat reckless experiment.

I thought I'd repeatedly cast my magic like Till did.

"Thunder!"

The second.

I'd ignored the cooldown.

The second wolf turned into a splendid toast.

I could still go on.

"... Thunder."

The third one.

I hadn't aimed properly and it was dodged.

Was it a problem with my concentration?

I felt dizzy and staggered.

Hmm... was this the limit?

"Thun-..."

"Please stop, Alice-sama."

At the same time as she spoke, Ilya stepped forward and skewered a wolf.

However, maybe the enemy's defensive power exceeded Ilya's attack power, it was no lethal wound.

They repeated such exchanges a few times before Ilya finally defeated that wolf.

As for myself, the world was spinning and spinning and I thought I was done for.

I focused on recovering.

That right there was the nigh insurmountable difference between Level 3 and Level 275!

... no, well, that's a matter of course.

But I can recover from that much dizziness in a bit.

I think I've solidly grown stronger.

"Thunder!"

After recovering, I defeated the first wolf Ilya had driven away.

With that, the proficiency went up by 3.

Uhhhm.

Still, I cannot believe that the difference between Till and me is only in our levels.

Her repeated casting came from the difference in how we used our magic.

Right, so... I need to regulate the output?

"——Alice-sama!"

When Ilya called out to me, my body moved right away.

A wolf had jumped out of the thicket lining the animal trail that had bothered me in the beginning.

I somehow dodged the wolf lunging for my throat by crouching down.

——and, at the same time.

It was a momentary decision, a complete coincidence.

From below, I thrust my palms into the unprotected belly of the wolf whose attack I had dodged.

There was no strength behind it, so it did nearly nothing.

Thus, I hurriedly added my magic.

"——!"

It was an momentary, unstable activation, a Thunder lasting only an instant.

It couldn't defeat the wolf, but...

"This is..."

This idea...?

"I am deeply sorry. Are you alright, Alice-sama?"

Ilya cautiously killed the wounded wolf and came to check up on me. However, it wasn't the time for that.

"Ha... hahaha! Just you wait, Till!"

I had definitely grasped that sensation.

——I think it's human nature to get elated over such insights. I really do.

"..."

"So, what is it the dragon lass is shouldering? A corpse?"

"No, ehm... how should I put it."

By evening, the battle with the wolves on the mountain and the round trip on the originally harsh way had completely brought me to the limit of my endurance.

On the way back from the mountain, I collapsed and ended up being carried by Ilya all the way to the tent.

I carried Ilya's spear and Ilya carried us both.

Come to think of it, Ilya's Strength was nothing special, but her Endurance was excellent.

Still, how pathetic of me...

Till's half-closed eyes pierced my heart.

There was nothing I could say.

"No matter. Quickly prepare dinner, Alice."

"Demon!!" I shouted from Ilya's back.

Oh, hey, I could still speak...

Alright, what should I make.

Tomorrow we're going to stop by the nearby town once, so I can probably use up what we've brought with us.

Freshness is important.

That being said, we've only brought non-perishable food like bread or jerky anyway.

Well, I individually had packed some vegetables.

For lunch, I'd had Aunty's sandwiches, but my pride didn't allow me to make the same as her...

I have brought spices, too.

"Right. I've felt unsatisfied because all I've had is solid food."

Fortunately, we've brought lots of water.

Our trip wasn't hurried or anything, so it should be alright to use it for something other than drinking.

"Alice-sama, what should I make?"

"Let's see... I'm going to use the camping pot, so can you put together a hanger?"

She just needs to bind together some of our firewood with a rope, so it probably won't take that long.

For the cooking fire, we had a portable Fire Crystal, so there was no problem.

The portable Fire Crystal, unlike those at home, are throwaway items usable once.

If you traced the cavity in the stone looking like the character for fire, it would gradually heat up and ignite.

I've heard in this world with a low absolute number of magi, they were used for military purposes, too.

Well, military-use Fire Crystals probably didn't give off cheap, weak flames like this one.

"The camping pot? Are you going to stir something? Or did you want cook rice?"

In fact, the camping pot could also be function as a frying pan. It was such an excellent portable cookware, but I was not going to make anything fried.

And just like Ilya's confused expression said, we had not packed any rice.

"I'm going to make a soup," I answered and dragged the ingredients and flavorings off the carriage.

I had Ilya build the hanger for the camping pot, heated everything up with the Fire Crystal and firewood and made a simple soup in the camping pot.

As expected there was nothing handy like a ready-made soup base, so I used the consomme I had used for cooking the other day, too, and salt for flavoring. With beans and cabbage, the ingredients were simplistic.

I tried tasting it, but my tired body was penetrated by the saltiness.

I beat the jerky a bit to soften it and used it for sandwiches along with the salad I had brought.

We would use up all our vegetables in a day, but whatever.

They wouldn't get any better.

But it really helped that the foodstuffs were just what they looked like. There was no need for me to hesitate when cooking.

"Ohh, this is good!"

The soup accompanied by sandwiches was met with a favorable reception.

That one line was the real pleasure of cooking.

"Really... and it makes the bread so easy to swallow, too."

With only solid foods... right?

Besides, we were outdoors, something to warm us up was great.

"I am sorry, it really should have been me to prepare it... but Alice-sama seemed to enjoy herself so much..."

"Eh? D-did I?"

No, well, certainly cooking is great change your mood.

"One has taken a liking to this, Alice! Well done!"

"No, uhm... thank you."

Somehow I'm only being praised for things outside of training...

Still, damn she's cute when she's gobbling up a sandwich.

Not that I would ever say it; she'd kill me.

"So, how far did thy Proficiency rise?"

"Until 51."

I worked quite hard.

"Hoh. Then it shouldn't take much longer."

Nono, I just finally came back.

This is the place for 'It'll really take until freaking dawn', you know?

"If thou have exceeded 50, thou should already be able to target an area with it. With thy mana, one strike should still suffice for the likes of the enemies there."

"Area!?"

I hurriedly checked Thunder.

Thunder (Proficiency 51) No Cast Time, 10s Cooldown, Area possible

Oh...Area... possible?

"In that case, it really might not take all night."

"It doesn't hurt getting used to nocturnal combat, either. Alice! Thy eyes can see, too, right?"

About elven eyes, huh.

"I can. As I thought, you too, right, Till?"

"Yes. And the dragon lass should be skilled at reading presences. It's good to further train it via nocturnal combat."

Ilya strongly nodded.

Ahh, that wolf's surprise attack still bothered her.

Although for me, it had been a fortuitous mistake.

Thanks to it, I had noticed a neat little trick.

"Then do thy best. One is going to sleep."

"You really sleep a lot."

Just like the child she looks like!?

As if drowsiness had shown itself the moment her stomach was filled with sandwiches and soup, Till rubbed her eyes.

287, huh?

"... come on, Till. Please sleep properly in the tent."

I took Till's hand who had started dozing off right then and there.

Her steps were uncertain, too.

By her hand, I guided her to the tent.

We entered and right after I pulled the blanket over her, she fell asleep.

"She has the sleeping face of an angel, though..."

Sheesh, I wanted to sleep, too, but as the disciple, I couldn't do that.

For the moment, I decided to clean up after the meal, take a little bath and go out again.

When I came back to Ilya, she had finished dinner, too, and had begun the clean-up.

"Ilya, when we're done cleaning up, I'm going to bathe a little in the lake, so please give me just a little bit of time for that."

"No, Alice-sama. During the bath you are the most unguarded; we have no idea what danger might lurk there. I shall accompany you."

"... eh?"

She'll come with me?

"Uhm... your clothes?"

"Even without wearing a single shred, I shall not fall behind any enemy."

"I-is that so."

Well, she can stop a sword with her bare arm.

But, no, that's not where the problem lay.

"Now, let us go."

"Ah, wai-"

While talking, Ilya quickly finished cleaning up and now pulled me by the arm.

She took towels from our luggage and dragged me along.

You're so strong, Ilya!

I was no match at all.

I had already resigned myself.

And embarrassingly, my eyes worked really well at night...

Chapter 25

Their distance

This world had two moons.

One blue, one red.

The way the blue moon seemed to chase the red moon around in the sky, like they were close siblings frolicking around, made me smile.

"The twin moons Klayne and Krysna. I find them very beautiful tonight, without any clouds.

"Yeah, it's calming my heart..."

So they were named Klayne and Krysna.

Well, put frankly they were moons.

Somehow it seemed like there'd be a story behind it.

But it really was a mysterious scenery.

When I had moved to the city, I had slowly forgotten to look up to the sky because I hadn't been able to see the stars anyway, but this world's nature is really mysterious and wonderful.

No, well, that's the same in my former world, but it depended on where you were.

In that sense, where I am right now really is wonderful.

"Alice-sama, doesn't——your neck hurt?"

"A little."

Unnaturally looking up at the sky for a long time did make my body feel uncomfortable after all, it seems.

I understood Ilya coming closer from the sound of the water.

"W-why are you coming closer, Ilya?"

"Well, my movements are not quick, Alice-sama, so I thought I should be as close as possible to become your shield."

Ilya... you're such a good girl!

But right now, I don't need your concern!

"This lake has few stones and the soft sand feels nice. Is the water temperature alright for you?"

Come to think of it, it really was nice how there was no sludge on the ground.

I'd thought it would suck to accidentally cut my leg, but like this, it might be okay to walk around a bit.

"It's not that cold, so I'm fine. Wanna go under a bit? Like, splash?"

I'd finally had enough and turned around to Ilya to mess with her a bit.

My eyes were locked to her face, though.

Still, Ilya wet from the lake water made an amazing picture.

Illuminated by the moonlight, it wasn't too much to called her a faery.

"You are so very beautiful."

"...eh?"

"The word may be used a lot, but Alice-sama, I feel there is no necessity to use other words."

"T-thank you."

Suddenly being told the word that had gone through my head made me feel like she'd read my heart.

Ahh, she'd surprised me.

Something about Ilya gave you the impression she might.

"But I shall dare say it."

...you are?

"Your bewitching hair glittering in the moonlight is beautiful like the silver flowers blooming in the village of the faeries. I could lose myself in your clear golden eyes are the very jewels of amber, which they say was brought from the savage lands by the god-dragon. In addition to the alluring strength in those eyes, your face is so fair that it fascinates me, of the same gender, as does your well-balanced body. Alice-sama, you are akin to a goddess sent by the gods."

"...i-is that so? Somehow, sorry."

Sorry, for cheating.

What's this, her praise makes my heart hurt.

Furthermore, digging up legends handed down in this world to praise me, that's embarrassing!

"——but the most beautiful aspect of you, Alice-sama, is your beautiful heart."

"..."

"My, you do not believe me?"

Seeing my dumbfounded face, Ilya laughed impishly.

I was pleasantly surprised.

I'd only seen her refined conduct, but she could also smile cutely like that, befitting her age.

"It is as clear as day to me. It may be boasting, but——that is my magic."

"——Ha-hahaha!"

What is this. Ilya is polite, beautiful, reliable, docile... and just a little bit distant.

——of course, if I had to say if I liked or disliked her, I like her.

Even more than before.

"Ilya, that's what you're like?"

"Yes, that's what I'm like."

"Hehe."

The somewhat proudly smiling Ilya was so funny I couldn't hold in the giggle.

"Ahh, this feels so nice. Alright, time to go splash."

I let myself fall backwards into the water just like that.

There was a little splash, but my body seems really light, so it really wasn't that big.

"Cold!"

However, submerging my whole body in the water really was a bit chilly.

"Then, me too."

Next to me, Ilya let herself fall just like me.

Ilya didn't make that big a splash, either, but because she did it right next to me, I got the full brunt of it.

"Wawa, you're getting water all over me! Come on...ahaha!"

"I got caught up in the moment just a little bit. Hehe, I'm deeply sorry, Alice-sama."

The two of us floated in the lake, under the light of the moon.

With this sensation of becoming one with nature, no impure thoughts came up.

"Ilya, be honest with me. ——do you want to be set free?"

"No, not at all."

Her reply was instant.

"Are you being considerate?"

"Do you think I am?"

"I might be."

"My? Hehe, Alice-sama, you are not reading the mood."

"Let's say I can't and am troubled by it every day?"

Mood? What's that?

"I really want to live with you forever, Alice-sama," Ilya replied with just a little bit of seriousness in her voice.

"As the honored mentor said, I want to believe that my meeting you was my fate, Alice-sama. That is my answer, including my lowly personal desires."

That talk, that she had with Till.

I see.

"So you have ulterior motives?"

"Yes. Are you disillusioned?"

"No, I'm rather relieved."

Isn't that much more human, rather than being the object of a loyalty for unknown reasons?

Being with me has some kind of merit for Ilya.

—Or it might in the future.

That's how it is. "I think having human flaws is important, you know?"

"Alice-sama..."

I hold out my hand, as if to grasp the moon.

Human hearts are vague and difficult to grasp. But forcing it, or not trying it at all, are both no good.

Well, finding the right measure is difficult.

But in that respect, reading the mood is not all there is to interacting with people.

"I am really glad to have... eh, this presence!?"

Ilya's whisper turned into surprise and she jumped up.

I looked around for what had surprised her, but there was nothing.

Only the sound from the water as Ilya had jumped up penetrated the silence.

And still, Ilya warily looked around.

Was she reflecting on the event at noon?

Sheesh, Ilya, you're so serious.

"Ilya?"

The moment I tried to get up, too, someone grabbed my arm.

Hm?

Who?

"...?"

I looked at my stretched-out arm.

Something like an squid's arm coming from the water surface was wrapped all around it.

"Hiiii!"

Disgusting!?

"Alice-sama!? My carelessness!!"

The moment I noticed it, I was dragged away from the shore with incredible force.

Ilya who had been right next to me had quickly grabbed my other arm and was dragged along.

"Wa-, just when we were at the good paaart!"

Forget the emergency situation: Read the mood already, you damn squid monster!!

In no time at all, Ilya and I were drawn near the middle of the lake and then under water.

"Uwah! It's under water!?"

"Take a deep breath, Alice-sama!"

As per advice, I took a deep breath before my face was submerged.

I could hear the water like a buzz in my ears.

Underwater was like yet another world.

It had yet another stillness than silent air.

This silence made the ears hurt, but that might be my eardrums bursting from water pressure!

If we got drawn too deeply, it'd be bad!

Level 15 Lake Sepia

My elven eyes found the enemy lurking at the bottom of the lake.

Even with little light, I could see it.

It looked like an archetypical invertebrate with a number of tentacles.

Its leg which was wrapped around my arm had suckers and no matter how much I tried, I couldn't pull it off.

The two protruding eyes with which it stared at us left no blind spots.

Its appearance was just like that thing.

You know...

It's a squid!

Such a naming fraud!

No, well, at the moment nothing of that matters though.

If I didn't do something quickly, we'd drown before the enemy could do anything to us.

"——!"

Ilya was still trying hard to separate the tentacle from my arm.

I also didn't feel like dying, but the bigger my trouble became, the more danger I'd expose Ilya to.

But it would still be foolish to shoot Thunder here, under water.

It might be alright since it's magic lightning, but I really didn't want to electrify myself.

But the longer I hesitated, the more time went to waste.

The tentacles dragged us towards the huge mouth opening at the bottom of the monster's belly.

... come to think of it, golden cuttlefish were carnivores, weren't they?

Apparently I was calm enough to think something so unimportant.

Well, I could only test it in a situation leaving no room for failure, but I wasn't unable to do it.

I had grasped the sensation.

And I had no intention of obediently becoming squid food.

"_____"

I tapped Ilya, who was still grappling with the tentacle around my arm, on the shoulder and shook my head.

And with my free arm, I pointed above.

——surface before me.

It should have gotten across.

Ilya was grimly shaking her head, but no, no.

I'm not the way anymore I was against the Ice Dragon.

I gave Ilya a serious look.

She looked perplexed, but after hesitating for a few seconds, she strongly nodded and began rising to the surface.

Alright.

Now I only had to...

"——NGG!"

Hurts!

Certainly there was no time to waste on composure.

I grabbed the tentacle wrapped around my left arm with my right hand.

I had limited the way I was using too much to begin with.

The first culture shock that had overturned that had been that magic of Till's.

A single idea held a bunch of possibilities.

So I'll show you what I can do with it! Eat that!

"——"

I activated magic from my right hand and directly poured it into my enemies body.

A cornered rat with bite that cat.

The monster, which had looked down on me as simple prey, raged under my attack.

But regulating it was still difficult for me.

But that could be my homework in the future.

Like it was throwing me away, the monster let go of my arm and I quickly started surfacing.

"Ng, ng!!"

Crapcrap!

The moment I relaxed, the anguish suddenly doubled.

Quickly!

The surface! Quickllly!

"Haaaah!"

I broke through the water surface with speed and sucked the air into my lungs with all my strength.

Just how delicious can air be!

"Alice-sama!" Ilya called out to me in relief and swam over.

Alright, next!

"Ilya, grab on to me!

"Eh? O-okay!"

She didn't seem to understand my plan, but it's wonderful how well she could respond to changing situations.

And your body feels wonderful, too... Ilya.

Nono!

The monster wasn't defeated yet, so if we stayed here we'd only repeat what happened earlier.

And there was no guarantee that the monster would be as negligent the next time it attacked.

In that case——I'd jump all the way to the shore!

"Watch my magic! Till!!!"

I suddenly challenged my mentor.

Putting my right hand on the water surface, I regulated my magic.

——that being said, of course I couldn't do minute adjustments.

We just had to fly all the way to the shore!

"——this is?"

Ilya peeked at the light of mana gathering in my right hand full of interest.

It slowly got stronger and——

"GOOOO!"

Like it was exploding, it turned into propulsive power.

From the repellent force, Ilya and I were flung out of the water.

With rather amazing force, we flew through the sky towards the land with our tent.

"T-this is amazing! Alice-sama! We're flying!"

"Right!? Right!?"

Although to be exact, we'd only been thrown into the air...

"Do you know of the electric jellyfish?"

"Jellyfish?"

"Well, don't mind, then."

It had been quite the repellent force.

Ilya cocked her head with just a bit of wonderment.

And then, she looked like something had clicked for her.

"Ehm... By the way, how are we going to land?"

The air seemed to freeze.

The very hard-looking ground came closer and closer.

Crap, at this rate it's a direct course to minced meat for us!

I could try the same trick one more time to cancel our descent, but right now, I decided to go with a better bet.

Right, I decided to call for my final trump.

I'd decided to do so since the beginning, okay?

With a composed smile on my face, I looked at Ilya.

"I leave that to you, Ilya."

"Hehe. *Yes, Milady.*"

Changing our posture, she held me in the princess carry I had gotten completely used to by now.

Our high momentum was dangerous, so I laid my arms around Ilya's neck and held on tight.

And then, our eyes inadvertently met.

There was nothing artificial about it.

And Ilya somehow felt closer to me than before.

"_____"

While we were caught in each other's eyes, Ilya broke into a little smile.

Then she whispered something and we were covered by a green light.

That was... what she had done against the Ice Dragon?

I looked down, and there was the ground.

"!"

As expected, I stiffened.

But.

Contrary to my expectation, the shock wasn't that strong.

Although we had landed with amazing momentum.

Or I should rather say, we had crashed.

Usually, we'd had enough momentum to end up dead for sure.

Was it thanks to the green membrane?

In fact, the ground had been gouged out a few meters by the light orb around us.

"Are you alright? Milady?"

"Y-yes... just surprised."

In this world, people don't die when they fall from the sky.

I learn something new every day.

The green light disappeared and I had Ilya put me down.

And not a second later, water rose by the lake shore and the squid showed itself.

"And here I went out of my way to let you off!"

If it wanted it that way, I wouldn't go easy.

This time the tentacles didn't come to capture, but whipped through the air to smash us to pieces.

Ilya stepped forward and stopped them cold.

"——Split the heavens and become a ray of light, to strike my enemies! Thunder!"

With chanted magic from my right hand, I pierced the squid.

The reaction was enough.

Like foam, the squid melted and disappeared.

There was a drop item.

——Squid Ink.

"...what natural enemies does it have in a lake?"

The mysteries of fantasy kept deepening.

——The following is a certain other event from such a night.

"——well done, stupid disciple."

Somewhat happy-sounding like that, someone said praise into the night.

The thoughts of the mentor watching everything from beginning to end from the skies above the lake.

The two people who had dried themselves off to not catch a cold and were having a friendly chat while warming up at a fire noticed nothing of it, though.

"Now then, time for one to sleep for real."

With a long yawn, she began moving through the sky like going down the stairs.

Suddenly, she looked at her own magic.

"One's own magic, huh. Sheesh, that greenhorn."

Contrary to her words, her heart was elated.

"Hmm, what punishment should one give her if she can't raise the proficiency to 99 by morning..."

Those exceedingly happy words disappeared into the night sky.

Chapter 26

Rufin

The sun rose again after that all too eventful day and it turned noon.

Finally we reached the town we'd stop by.

Size-wise, it might be the same as Rinnal?

Being closer to the royal capital, it seemed livelier from the distance.

I wonder how much of the way we have behind us?

Yesterday, we've traveled from morning until after noon.

Today, we've traveled from morning once more until noon.

It was only the three of us on the carriage, so even with our luggage we should've been quite fast.

We'd mostly stuck to the main roads, too.

But from looking at it, we're still lucky if the carriage makes ten kph. Well, if you also consider the breaks...

We've come for about a hundred kilometers.

A hundred, huh...

I spontaneously turned around on the carriage and looked in the direction we came from.

"Onee-chan..."

What is this, I wonder, there's this strong pain in my chest...

When I am strong...

Strong enough to not lose to anyone on my own, strong enough to protect everyone, is it okay to return to that town?

"Haha, even when coming to another world I didn't feel homesick..."

"Nn... Alice-sama."

Ilya, who had been lightly sleeping against my shoulder, woke up.

She'd fallen asleep there before I noticed it, so I'd just left her like that.

It had consoled me a bit, too.

"Ah... I am deeply sorry."

Grasping the situation, Ilya straightened herself in a fluster.

"Don't mind it. I know being rocked like this makes you mysteriously sleepy."

I had thought the ride would be more uncomfortable, but it really didn't shake that much, this carriage.

Besides, we'd been up all night...

"But while you are awake, Alice-sama..."

"I... was thinking a little."

"How disappointing of me..."

Ilya is serious, so she's awkward about this.

Would it be my job as her master to scold her here?

Alright~

"Then I'll punish you."

"Y-yes."

Why does she look a little bit happy?

"Show me your forehead."

"?"

"This is an ancient and honorable punishment from my birthplace."

"I-is that so?"

"Indeed, prepare yourself."

"Yes."

Ilya closed her eyes and turned her forehead toward me.

Forgive me, Ilya.

I bent the middle finger of my right hand, laid it against the thumb and pushed outside."

Take this——Forehead Flick!

With a snapping sound, my attack hit Ilya's forehead!

I didn't flick her too hard, did I?

For a moment, I felt I had overdone it.

But this is also a master's duty.

They're bitter, these acts of evil...

"Ehm... are you going to do something?"

"...eh?"

"Eh?"

Not knowing what had happened, Ilya opened her eyes after hearing my brainless reaction.

What... did she say?

Is the wall I have to overcome so high it doesn't even allow for little pranks like this?

The separation between Strength 0 and Protection 5!

"...you are already reflecting enough. Only a fool would add a punishment on top. That's how it is."

"Alice-sama..."

I tried to interpret it a bit coolly.

Ilya stared at me with innocent eyes.

"——damn fool."

"..."

There was a person who had seen through everything on the coachman's bench.

Leaving the carriage at the outskirts, we checked into the inn first.

It was a typical inn, a three-floor building with a combination of dining hall and bar on the first.

I think it's going to be alright, but if they're noisy at night the third floor would be good.

When I told to old guy from the inn, he laughed carefreely and accepted my request.

A three person room came at 450 Rook.

150 Rook per person.

Well, it came with food so the price was appropriate.

We paid with five silver coins and got fifty copper coins as change.

Every place had a special frame for change. You threw coins in there and it had markers for ten coins, twenty coins, thirty... Like that, you could easily count the change.

A coin counter.

Well, you obviously couldn't count the coins one by one.

Even without paper money, doing it like this came with surprisingly little discomfort.

Still, did the royal capital have not enough influence to make paper money?

Or was it a problem of technology?

Anyhow, after smoothly checking in, we fetched our luggage and went up to the third floor.

And after getting into our room and putting down our stuff...

"One will be heading out. We will be staying three nights, do as you like in the meantime," Till said, so we saw her off.

And what about my practice?

For now, my Thunder had reached proficiency 99.

As for what's changed, the cooldown has halved.

That meant I could use it with more energy efficiency.

Whether its power has changed, I don't know.

It's just, lately I've keenly felt just how important that energy conservation actually is.

If I start panting every time I fight someone a little stronger and it draws out a little bit, I can't ever be the strongest.

"Now then."

I took a good look at the three beds next to another.

The room was wider than expected.

That being said, due to the three beds it still ended up narrow.

Still, hotel rooms with three beds had been rare in my original world, too.

In tatami rooms you could spread out futons and give any number of people room for the night, though.

But well, let's leave the impressions of the room for later.

"For now, let's sleep," I declared to Ilya and decided to honor Till's instruction.

Free time, YAY!

When I woke up, the evening sun was alright shining in through the window.

When I looked around the room, I noticed Ilya had put a chair next to my bed and was sitting there motionlessly.

"Ilya?"

"You have awoken, Alice-sama?"

Don't tell me, all the time she's been...?

When I looked at her curiously, she returned a cheerful smile.

"Sorry, Ilya, I should've told you you're free to do as you like, too."

I had clearly intended to do so, but I suppose for a slave is a problem if the the master leaves it at the intention.

"Hehe, I could watch your sleeping face forever, Alice-sama. I considered pinching your nose a little."

"So you are angry."

"I wonder?"

"Come on..."

She was quite the mischievous slave.

"I was joking, Alice-sama."

But when she laughs like that, she's cute.

"But during your sleep-talking, I was a bit jealous."

"Eh?"

Had I said something?

Ilya formed a troubled smile and shook her head, saying it was nothing.

For the time being, I got up and stretched.

My sleep deprivation was gone and I felt refreshed.

"Till?"

"Has not returned yet."

What was she doing?

She had quite a lot of secrets.

Oh, well.

"It looks like it's just the right time. Let's go have dinner."

"Yes."

Ilya was a slave, but she slept where and ate what I did, of course.

I've already told her so.

For example, what if I kicked her out of this inn for the three nights and some strange man attacked her?

No... uhh, leaving the result that she'd take him apart in return aside.

What I want to say is that if that happened, it would just increase my mental burden so it's pointless.

It's important for Ilya to be by my side, so I'll not unnecessarily treat her like a slave.

In the beginning she did show reserve, but as a result of my persuasion, she relented.

It was fine like that.

"By the way, how's this town called?"

"We are in the town of Rufin."

Rufin, huh...

What was it this time?

Going out would be annoying, so we decided to do the quick and easy thing and get food in the dining hall on the first floor.

We could always go for a walk after dinner.

Seeing the special of the day we ordered, I couldn't help but think of

fried chicken.

Seeing the salad coming with it, I thought they should stop putting the dressing on beforehand, I like it better without.

While getting those impressions, I enjoyed dinner with Ilya until——

"YOU BASTARD!!" someone shouted loud enough to make the bustling dining hall fall silent. Two men were having a fight.

What? What?

At a closer look, they were boys rather than men?

They seemed younger than Blackie, which made them around my age, maybe?

Their fistfight began escalating while a girl, again around the same age, tried to stop them.

"A love triangle, huh..."

"They are that age, Alice-sama."

After arriving at that conclusion in an instant, we started eating again.

We didn't care.

But speaking of which, just how would my love affairs turn out?

Is it okay for me to like girls?

Is it not?

If it's not, then...?

"...the thought gives me goosebumps. Thank god, I'm still normal."

"?"

I'll protect it, this mindset.

"You! You said you loved Cyra! And yet you want to hit on that woman? What's wrong with you!"

Oh, he totally pointed at me.

"The fight's spreading, Ilya."

"It cannot be helped, Alice-sama. It is your fault for being too beautiful."

But even if Ilya tells me so...

"——hold it, boys," a man sitting at the counter, apparently drinking alcohol, called the boys to a stop. His voice rung awfully clear through the noise.

It sounded impressive enough to suddenly gather the eyes of all the eaters.

The man looked like an adventurer with the longsword on his back.

When I turned around to him, he was rather handsome.

While I was just observing the events, our eyes met.

He winked at me.

Ahh, like a foreigner.

Although we're in another world.

Just let me eat my fried chicken.

"Before you punch it out in a bar like this, booze is the perfect appetizer! How about it! If you're men, show some guts already!" the man heartily slammed the mug he had drunk from onto the counter and smiled daringly.

Challenging minors to a drinking bout, is this guy going to be alright?

Although there might be no such regulation in the first place.

And when do you become an adult anyway?

"Hm, fine. I grew up in this town! If it's a drinking match with lufin wine, I can lose even less."

"...no objections from me. If I win, I won't let anyone interfere with who I fall for."

The surrounding people had changed into spectators in the blink of an eye.

They easily went with the mood.

"By the way, Ilya, what is lufin?"

Eh?

That's what her face said. Ilya pointed at the dessert coming with the food.

"These fruits. They are this town's special product. If you press the fruits and ferment what you get, you get an alcoholic drink."

"Isn't that..."

...grapes!

Waitwait!

How can you move a hundred kilometers from the town of rinnal and get to grapes as a specialty product?

Or is the difference in altitude big enough to make that work?

Just what's going on with this world's climate...

"Bring on the big mugs!"

On the other hand, the other guys were getting fired up more and more.

Come to think of it, I don't know if I can take my liquor or not.

That needs finding out.

"Ilya, may I drink something, too?"

"I think it will be fine. I think you will be very cute when you're drunk, Milady."

"No... I wonder."

Isn't this the time when I have to display a manly drinking manner?

Shouldn't I assert my manliness sometimes?

Well, in the worst case, even if I get smashed I have a reliable partner by my side.

"——I'll treat you!"

At some point, the handsome guy had put down the big mug he had just ordered on our table.

What's with this natural and mature consideration?

When I looked up at the man loitering next to me, I got a good smile in return.

His teeth were pure white.

Hmm...

"You're not going to make me drink alone, are you?"

"What, you're game?"

The handsome guy used his free hand to imitate drinking from a mug.

The corners of my mouth lifted.

"You're on."

Like this, we lit the fuse to a match a man definitely couldn't lose.

Chapter 27

Tipsy

Lufin wine was sweet and easy to drink.

Its fresh fragrance tickled the nose, it reminded a bit of pure fruit juice.

But it had a good amount of alcohol, blending that adult taste into it.

It appeared to be extremely popular among women, and yeah, with that taste I could really understand that.

And as a fruit wine, it didn't have the bitterness of beer, either.

"Ahh, this is pretty good," I splendidly emptied my mug in one go and ordered another from the staff.

"You're good yourself, missy, but I can't let you beat me."

Seeing me drink, the handsome guy increased his own drinking pace to catch up to me.

So~~mehow I can see ulterior motives there.

Don't think you can do whatever you like with me even if I get smashed!

"Would you not say drinking while judging the state of a lady is unmanly? ——or did you have some inappropriate thoughts?"

With quite an amazing smile, Ilya warned the handsome guy.

Ah, a beauty glaring at you is intense...

"Heh, don't rush me, we're just warming up, right, Misses?"

The handsome guy was rather bold, it seemed.

Please look after me, Ilya.

"—still, a match is a bore if we don't bet something, like those boys over there."

I could see a vein pop on Ilya's temple.

She was still smiling, but...

"...what would you have in mind?"

"Heh, nothing much. If I win, the miss here and I spend the n-woah."

"Hahh? Did you say something?"

Ilya-san, if you stab knives at people's hands, you might cut off some fingers, you know?

Ilya was smiling after she stabbed the knife from the food between the handsome guy's fingers.

Nono, that's scary, okay!

"Wow, that's scary, blond Miss."

Indeed.

"Well, calm down. I like the women, but I'm no monster. A date in the evening is all I want. How about that?"

That show-off winked again.

It looked quite catching, so I couldn't laugh.

"I refuse."

But it looks like it didn't work on Ilya.

"You're a tough one! Hey, how about you, silver Miss? We're talking about you here?"

While they were talking, I had emptied another big mug.

This is so nice...

"Ahh~, this might be delicious.... eh? Ah, a date? Ah, having fun, right? Sure~"

"Alice-sama!!"

I wonder what she has, I'm in a great mood here...

"Hyahaha, you get it, Miss."

In high spirits, the handsome guy also ordered his second mug.

"Then if I win~, you're going to settle the bills for everyone here tonight, okay~"

Whooooooo, the people around us cheered.

I answered by waving back.

What is this~, I'm in a good mood~

"H-hoh? You sure know how to play the game, silver Miss? Sounds fun, I'm in!"

With the terms clear, the handsome guy's eyes turned serious.

His cheek muscles seemed to be twitching, though.

Anyhow, he looked motivated.

His eyes were glittering.

We daringly glared at each other.

Next to us, Ilya seemed upset for some reason.

"...hey, blond Miss."

"Yes?"

"Humans can smile like that?"

"It would seem so."

Next to me, Ilya and the handsome guy were talking.

What is that all about?

"Ahahahaha! What's with you, you keep your hat on even inside? Ahahaha!"

"This is my style! Hey, silver Miss, aren't you drinking too much!? Are you alright!? Uargs"

With a pale face, the handsome guy held his mouth.

Wimp. He should've had two mugs less than me...

"Well, ignoring who is more smashed, the match is decided, is it it not?"

"Ridiculous, this is... I... against such a Miss? Uargs."

"Is it not?"

Pressured by Ilya, the handsome guy nodded while he kept moaning.

"Urg... a man doesn't go back on his word. I just need to pay, alright? Alright?"

"Ahahaha, have you heard that, guys~~?"

Whooooow, the cheers rose again.

"You heard the lady! Eat more~! Drink more~! Today, everything's that dude's treat!"

It turned into a hearty revelry.

Ahhhh, what is this, I feel really good...

Wait?

Ilya, what's with you? You look so kyeewt...

"Ilya, come on~ you're not gonna drink with me~?"

"If I drink as well, the wolves around us will get wrong ideas."

"Hmm? I don't really get it, but well, alright."

Still, this is boring~

Having nobody to drink with is boring~

Ah?

There's someone good~

Let's go~

—The case of Takeshi

"Damn, my head's killing me... shit."

"Don't drink with such a depressing face."

First, I headed to the boy who had lit the fuse to the drinking matches.

It looks like he's drunk quite a bit, but he's lost to the other one over there.

I think the other one said he'd chat me up in case he won, but the girl was considerately keeping him company.

Hah, this is beyond hope...

"Woah, who are you!?"

"Oh shut up, Takeshi. You sure you're alright with losing to him?"

"Who's Takeshi! I've never even heard the name!?"

Apparently getting talked back to with a frown comes with some pressure.

"Who cares about names."

"That's way too arbitrary! Ouc-, shit, my head rings..."

"Pathetic, you're really pathetic. Won or lost, you're beyond hope. Are you stupid? You think that's cool?"

I think if Takeshi had won, he'd have gone out with that girl, was it?

Oh, well, who cares about the details..

"Shaddup. What would a woman know of my feelings!"

"Hah, you can't win, drown your worries in booze and bother strangers with them. Of course she won't look at you then."

"Damn you!"

He vigorously reached for my collar to draw me up—and stopped as Ilya lay her knife against his throat.

"Whoa!?"

Ilya's so cute~~

"If you have this much energy, then direct it at her."

"What?!"

"Have you ever told that girl your feelings?"

"...but... Cyra likes him..."

Takeshi visibly faltered.

I took a big gulp from my mug.

Ilya's face looked a bit displeased.

"But you still like her, don't you?"

"!"

"There's no guarantee. But it'll never be over like this, will it? Your love."

Ah, come to think of it, back when I was in the soccer club, I get the feeling I'd been asked for advice like this a lot.

I'd listened to people's worries so much it had tired me out.

I still couldn't leave them alone though.

"Have some courage. And if it's still no good... I'll join you when you drink your worries away again."

I made an encouraging, good smile.

"Sis..."

Sis?

Oh, who cares.

——The case of Kenji

When Takeshi had formed some sort of resolve, the other boy had shaken off the girl and moved to a seat at the counter.

"You drinking, Kenji?"

"Kenji...?"

He looked at me quizzically when I sat down next to him.

"Oh, you..."

"Weren't you going to chat me up if you won the match?"

"..."

"Heh, I know, you used me as an excuse. You're also quite the pussy."

"What would you know about it!"

He hadn't done anything in particular, but Ilya was warningly knocking her knife's grip against the counter.

It made a pretty good sound.

The faces of the staff cramped, though.

"Dunno. You think keeping quiet and running away is manly?"

"!"

"Are her feelings or your feelings ever going to settle if you're acting that vague?"

I ordered the next big mug from the old guy at the counter.

Ilya seemed about to cry.

"I'm an outsider, so in the end whatever I say is irresponsible. If I were in your shoes, I'd probably be lost, too. But you know," I stopped for a moment and smiled at the boorish Kenji. "If those two are important to you, then treat them with your utmost sincerity. Otherwise you'll regret it."

"You're..."

Kenji looked like a weight had been lifted from his shoulders.

"Sorry.... you're right. You're a good woman, Sis."

Sis?

"Have a good love, Kenji."

I raised the mug in my hand for a toast.

...hm?

By the way, what am I doing here?

When I returned to the table we'd been at in the beginning, I patted the handsome guy sitting there with his head hanging, on the back.

"Owouch! Wait, no? Wait, what are you doing, silver Miss!"

"Why so gloomy? Thanks to you, at least those two boys' mood has cleared!"

"Hahh? And your tone...?"

The handsome guy quizzically looked at Ilya.

Ilya shook her head in exasperation.

"Sometimes, relaxing like this is fine, too..."

"S-sure?"

I took one coin from the leather bag hanging at my waist.

I flicked it onto the table.

"It's been a blast. If this isn't enough for everyone's tabs, you pay the rest."

"A g-gold..."

A noticeably loud cheer arose around us.

Without turning towards them, I say bye and waved as I left, my back toward them.

Instead, Ilya made a proper bow, though.

"Sis... you're so cool."

Sis?

I left the dining hall in a pretty good mood.

—The next day

The moment I woke up, I was assaulted by a furious headache.

"My head hurts... what's... going on..."

"..."

Ilya looked at me with a difficult mien. Why is it you don't answer me!?

"Did she do something, dragon lass?" Till, who had returned at some point, looked at me through half-opened eyes.

Just what had happened to me!?

"It was nothing of importance, but... I believe it would be better for Milady to abstain from drinking."

I didn't catch the latter half properly, but Till nodded exasperatedly.

"One will head out again. You at least make the dragon lass's class-up," Till said and strode out of the room.

Her harshness kinda makes her cute, that Till...

"Mmm... I wonder when we have to checkout. If we stay another two nights in this room, maybe we should make reservations already."

I took the coins from the leather bag on the shelf.

"Hm? Isn't there a gold coin missing...?"

"...you are imagining things, Milady."

"I-I do? If you say so, Ilya."

This is weird...

Anyway, my head hurts and I can't think properly.

"Sorry, Ilya. May I lay down for a while?"

"Of course, Alice-sama. Should I bring you some water?"

"Yes, please."

"Hehe, as I thought. I like this Alice-sama."

"Eh?"

"But that one really is..."

For some reason Ilya blushed. Then she quickly got up from her chair to get water.

"That one?"

I don't really get it, but there's a lot for us to do today.

As Till said, Ilya's class-up is indispensable if we're thinking about the future.

We need to quickly find the Ruins around here and get it done with.

If it's Ilya and I as we are now, there's no way we can't make it.

Also, I want to take an easy job from the Guild here.

Have to pay traveling expenses.

Besides, leaving aside whether I buy it or not, I need new

equipment.

I picked up the Lightning Rod at my bedside.

"Since it's cracked, I guess I can't use it anymore..."

In fact, when I had recklessly gone out on my own and thrust it into the mouth of that bear, it seems the lightning jewel cracked and it doesn't give off lightning strikes anymore.

With that, in combat it's nothing but a wooden stick.

No matter how much I mainly fight with magic, it's still harsh.

"But I still don't want to throw it away..."

I gently put the rod back and sighed.

Either way, there's a lot to do.

It wasn't the time to remain in bed.

But thinking really made my head hurt...

"Here, Alice-sama."

Ilya came back with just the right timing.

"Ah, thanks."

While being healed by Ilya's smile, I took the glass and drank.

Chapter 28

Escort Quest

After booking the room for the following nights, too, it was afternoon when Ilya and I finally went out.

It turned so late because my headache just wouldn't get better.

We headed out after I had a light lunch in the dining hall on the first floor.

...now, that lunch.

I don't know why, but when I ordered some of the customers seemed scared and some people looking like regulars cheered. There was no end to the mysteries, but Ilya didn't say anything so I decided not to think anything of it.

Actually, the customers weren't afraid of me but Ilya?

Really, what happened there?

"Ilya, speaking of yesterday..."

Hmm?

I remember dinner, but nothing thereafter. Whatever happened there?

I have some fuzzy memories of someone starting an argument and that handsome guy mediating, but...

"Uhm... didn't I do something weird?"

"No, Alice-sama, you were beautiful as always and very cool."

"Cool...?"

What?

That's the first time I was told that since I was reborn into this body.

...oh, well.

I'm busy today, it's not the place to keep mulling that forever.

"Let's head to the Guild first."

For now, we should work.

On the way to the guild, I got the feeling that this Lufin was prospering more than Rinnal after all.

By carriage, they were only a day's travel apart, but if you looking at a map, Rinnal was certainly remote and no halfway point to some place further out.

In short, if you didn't have business in Rinnal, you didn't go there.

In comparison, this Lufin connected the royal capital in the south, Rinnal in the north and towns to the east and west to boot. You could call it a blessed town, location-wise.

That's why there were many travelers of all kinds of races.

Actually, when I spotted a girl with dog ears, I stared for a while.

Ilya admonished me for it, though.

Yes, you must not undress people with your eyes.

All those went through my head while I looked at the map leaning

against a wall in the Guild.

To be honest, if the map were a little bigger I could've found out more about this world, but it was a local map so what can you do.

"Looking at this, it's about 3 days by carriage to the capital? That's a bit far, isn't it."

"Indeed. We need to settle your business today, Alice-sama, and use tomorrow to prepare for the journey."

Preparing for a journey, huh.

It seems like if I don't properly calculate our expenses, we're going to run into some huge problem midway.

But even saying so, well, it's only three days so I guess it's nothing to get that nervous over.

Speaking of which, I looked at Ilya.

We were about to head out adventuring, so she had equipped her leather robe and her iron spear, but Ilya apart from this and the one set of service clothes she had worn at the Firm, she had no clothes.

I had easily gotten changes of clothes from Aunty and bought what I lacked in Rinnal.

Not thinking about Ilya then was my fault indeed.

Won't I be a failure of a master if I leave it like this?

"Ilya, let's go shopping for clothes tomorrow. For you, of course."

"There is no... no, thank you very much, Alice-sama."

She almost declined, but after seeing my face she apparently

reconsidered and nodded.

Her smile was a little sheepish.

Crap, I may have looked a little bit sulking.

But I mean, isn't it a bit lonely if people are that reserved?

From Ilya's point of view, that's how slaves are in this world.

But for me, Ilya is my comrade I'm traveling with.

"In fact, I did find myself wanting underwear."

"Underwear...?"

I-I see.

Certainly, she might need more than just a change of clothes.

As far as her clothes go, for now she can swap between her casual clothes and the Leather Robe.

But, underwear!?

Does she mean I'm going to buy it with her?

Considering how we arrived at the topic, it's a bit difficult for me to tell her to buy it on her own.

The memories of when Shion took me shopping came back to me.

"It's not weird. There's nothing weird. I'm a woman. I'm a... woman. Maybe."

"?"

When I stop having this inner conflict might be the end of me.

Be strong, me!

When we asked the guild's receptionist about the ruin's location and if there wasn't an easy job around there, they told us there was just one job of escorting someone through the ruins.

Literally two birds with one stone.

The reward was fifteen silver coins, 1500 Rook.

Apparently we could depart right away, so it was just right for us.

It would cover our hotel fee in this town.

But thinking about it, owning your own house really would change a lot.

If we stayed in inns all the time, any amount of traveling funds would run dry sooner or later.

Let's buy a house in the capital.

I began mulling such a dream just a little.

"We're accepting this request."

"Understood. Please sign this form, then. Also, if you either forfeit or fulfill the request, please hand in a report."

"I see."

I signed something like a contract and received some documents.

Speaking of which, Shion-san had also signed something.

"Dear customer, is this the first request you accept?" the receptionist

asked after checking my registration information.

"Yes, that's right."

"Would you like me to give you an explanation of working for the Guild?"

"Ah yes, please do."

Come to think of it, I never had the leisure or always left it to other, so I have no idea about my job.

"Understood. Basically, jobs from the Guild come with a rank. S-Rank, A-Rank, B-Rank, like this jobs are classified until E-Rank. The request you just accepted is categorized as E-Rank, a job that any and all adventurers can accept.

"Heh, I see."

If you can earn 1500 Rook with an E-Rank request, then adventuring pays quite well.

Well, it might also cost you your life, so if the compensation is little or much is rather difficult to decide.

"To take on higher-ranked requests, you need to clear ten requests of a lower rank. If you forfeit a job, as a penalty it is subtracted from the achieved requests. If you have no achieved requests for that rank and you forfeit, it is still counted as a minus, so please take care, okay?"

I see, so you can go into the negatives, too.

I nodded that I understood.

"Rank mainly denotes danger or difficulty. Of course the rewards increase along with the rank, but please don't forget that so does the danger to your lives," the receptionist bowed earnestly.

If you actually work at the Guild, aren't adventurers dying an everyday occurrence?

Like during the bandit extermination just the other day...

"Requests have a time limit. If you pass it, it will automatically be judged as forfeiting."

She didn't say it, but this rule was for when you couldn't make the report yourself.

In other words, in preparation for you losing your life and thus your ability to report and such, that rule had been established.

Looks like you couldn't rise in the ranks that easily.

"Also, the Guild will purchase any drop items you gain if you fight monsters, generating additional income for you. Please bring whatever you get, okay?"

Come to think of it, wasn't there something like that?

Medicinal herbs, Bear Ears, Squid Ink?

What are they going to do with bear ears...

Well, that doesn't matter now.

"This, while simple, is the initial explanation. Whenever you have

further questions, please ask any time."

"That was very informative. Thank you very much."

Was Elenore-san doing this in Rinnal, too?

If adventurers she knew had lost their lives in the incident the other day... that'd be a shock, huh.

"Then I will envelope this introduction from the Guild for you. Please make your way to the client yourself. The term for this request is four days, including today. Please make your report during the Guild's business hours before the four days are up. The details are written in the materials I just passed you. Good luck!"

I politely returned the bow to the polite receptionist and left the guild behind.

I cursorily checked the documents I've been passed and headed to the client's house as depicted on a map.

I was glad to be given a map, but it was still trouble in this unfamiliar place.

"Alice-sama, is this alright?"

"Hm, what's wrong?" I tore my eyes from the documents and looked at Ilya.

"Yes, it not not be my place to say, but fundamentally, requests like escort and the like that involve other people are dangerous and you should be careful when choosing the job."

"Eh? Why?"

Was escorting people that dangerous?

We were only going to the Ruins, right?

"Not to doubt the client, but there are also people who catch adventurers off guard like that and rob them. No matter where an adventurer loses his life, the militias and knight orders won't move a finger.

I see, in that case the Guild will just file it as a failed request.

Magic won't be a problem if we're in the same party, but that didn't work with physical attacks.

Just like Shion-san had said some time, they could literally stab me in the back... something like that.

"Besides, even if that doesn't happen, guarding someone unused to combat is more difficult than you'd think. You'll never know what unexpected actions they'll take."

"It's difficult, isn't it, in all kinds of ways."

Come to think of it, a fight to protect, huh.

So far I've always fought while being protected, so fighting to protect will be a first.

Thinking about that, I tensed a bit.

Another's life rested on my shoulders.

But Shion-san has done a good thing training a weakling like me.

That's my Onee-chan!

"But I am your shield, Alice-sama. No matter where Milady goes, I will follow. That has not changed."

"Thanks. You were worried, weren't you? ... this body's weakness is the one thing I can't do anything about."

It's paper, after all.

Someone gets a lucky punch in and I'm done for.

It's too late now, but the way I spent my points really is for pros, huh.

I have ways to bring down anyone and anything, but there's a chance for anyone to take me down, too.

I really want to live long, though.

"I suppose 'a woman you grow wanting to protect' refers to people like Milady."

"...what a sad fat. I won't cough up blood, though——," I set on to say myself when I inadvertently looked at Ilya.

She had her never-changing, cheerful smile.

"Ilya, your body... is it alright?"

It suddenly bothered me.

I cannot pretend ignorance forever, leaving it alone.

"Alice-sama... ahh, all because of the honored mentor."

"Ilya."

Ilya tried to jokingly play it down, but there was somewhat of an edge to her voice.

"I am very sorry, Milady... but it is nothing that changes over a day or two."

"Then... in a year?"

"..."

"Can I take your silence as the answer?"

"For now... please let me keep it a secret a little while longer."

"It's... not an illness, is it?"

"It is not."

I had somewhat guessed that.

So, the problem really lay with me, huh.

I still lacked something, didn't I?

Something to make Ilya resolve herself to 'something'.

Shit~. But Till hadn't told me anything yet, so I think it's okay for now.

Those two just had that atmosphere of a silent understanding between the two of them.

And, while I was sorting my emotions, we finally arrived at the client's house.

I checked the map again, but it was probably here.

"Smithy Lute" was written on the sign.

"Alright. We'll continue this some other time. Now we have work to do."

"Yes, Milady."

From the outside, smoke rose from the chimney as it did with smithies.

As expected, they were using fire.

Could they also change raw materials into weapons like with magic, as Tailors did?

Well, asking couldn't hurt.

"Excuse me, we're here for your request at the Guild," I knocked on the door. I felt someone inside rush to the door.

It opened right away.

In the door appeared a petite girl wearing a hat.

Seeing her stained apron, this girl might be a Smith.

Her hair was light-brown and reminded vaguely of Shion-san, but the atmosphere around her was completely different.

Adorable would be a good word to describe this girl.

Maybe because it would get in the way of work, her hair was gathered behind her head and flowed down her back.

And, wait...?

This girl?

"Ah!" the girl voiced as she saw me.

"Ehm... the one who requested an escort...?"

"Yes, that's me. I'm Cira. Please come in."

Ahh, this might be fate.

Anyhow, my first job.

Refocusing myself, I followed Cira's invitation.

Chapter 29

Smith

After being led into the room, we first sat down around the table and had some tea.

When you invite people, you treat them to something.

Whether in Japan or in another world, that doesn't change, does it.

"Once more, I am the one who accepted your request at the guild, my name is Alice. This is my companion, Ilya."

"It is a pleasure to meet you."

"And this is the letter of introduction from the guild."

When I was done introducing us and handed over the sealed letter of introduction, Cira did open her eyes wide in surprise.

She had probably thought we were some representatives or errand girls to hear her story.

We're not though, not that.

"You're so young, but already adventurers..."

Her hat twitched once.

Frankly, I couldn't help but be intrigued by that more than anything else.

Take it off.

I want to take it off!!

What's hidden below there!?

"Hehe, Alice-sama?"

"Hah!?"

While Cyla had lowered her head to read the letter of introduction
——I had unconsciously reached for the hat.

"?"

Before Cira raised her head again, I was drinking tea again, okay?

I was holding the cup in my hand acting thus.

"Is there a problem?"

"No, this tea, it's delicious."

"You're exaggerating, it's not that ameow... amazing."

Ameow...?

W-what, Ilya?

I'm not going to point that out or anything, okay?

Ahh, I'm making a pointless fuss.

Time for reflection.

Oh, and Ilya?

That smile, it's scary.

"Ehem. So, about the request: If you are uneasy with us taking it on, we will of course accept a cancellation."

Because of the circumstances of escort missions, cancellations are possible if the client feels uneasy.

It's even written among the main points.

Obviously.

"No, if you are adventurers, then you've gone into Ruins before, right? Besides... personally, ehm, I can trust Alice-san, or should I say..."

For some reason she was looking at me with a blushing face.

Hah?

"Last night, I was also in the bar. I remember you really well, Alice-san."

"I-is that so."

I on the other hand remember hardly anything~

But, well.

Worrying won't help you any if you can't remember.

If it doesn't turn into a problem, it's all right.

It won't turn into a problem... will it?

"We can depart any time, so once you are ready, Cira, give us a call any time."

"I'll also be ready right away! I'll change into some other clothes, so please wait a moment," Cira said and hurriedly disappeared into a room further into the house.

In the room next to ours... or rather, in the smithing area I could catch glances of, there was a big furnace with a fire burning inside.

We've been hearing louding noises of iron being hit for a while. Was somebody working there?

The owner, maybe?

"Sorry I took so long. Let's go."

Before enough time to call it "waiting" had passed, Cira had returned.

Even after changing clothes, you're not going to take off that hat, are you?

Cira was a level 10 Apprentice Smith.

We formed a party and headed to the town's Ruins under Cira's guidance.

While chatting about this and that, we found out Cira's business there was the same as ours.

Hearing about it, it was obvious. In this world, there were classes

suited to combat and those that were not. Smithes and Tailors and classes like them didn't earn experience and level up by defeating enemies, but by improving their skills.

In other words, Cira had practiced enough and reached the level to become a proper smith, but because she couldn't fight, she had made a request at the guild.

"Heh? So after you become a proper smith, you want to have your own store in the royal capital?"

"Yes, I cannot rely on my teacher's kindness forever after all."

"Eh? He's not your father?"

"No... I was a refugee."

Cira smiled dejectedly.

Damn my insensitivity.

I really should abandon my peace-addled thought processes, I think.

"...I'm sorry, Cira-san."

"Ah, no! My teacher has been really good to me... it's embarrassing, but, like you said, Alice-san, I think of him as a father just a little meowt... bit."

Is that how it meows...?

"But if you're aiming for the royal capital, then you're going to the same place I am."

"Eh? You want to go there, too, Alice-san?"

"Yes, we will only stay in this town until tomorrow before we head on to the capital."

"That's so nice... I know I keep talking about it, but I don't know when my dream will ever come true."

"Hmm..."

A smith, huh.

A connection to a smith.

Shouldn't I treasure this?

"Cira-san, do you have regular customers?"

"Y-yes. In this town, there is someone I'm receiving some favors from. But as I'm only my teacher's assistant, the inscriptions are all in his name."

Her embarrassed actions are so cute.

Somewhat girlish.

Maybe I should use her as a reference?

Anyhow, that aside it means she's a good smith, doesn't it?

"Unless there is a problem with it, you could ask Cira-sama to show you her Attributes?" Ilya suggested from behind us.

Does looking at her Attributes tell us something about her skills as a smith?

"Ah, yes. I don't mind."

"Really? Thank you. Could you show me, then?"

"Yes!"

Strength 1, Endurance 1, Protection 1, Agility 2, Smithing 5

Hm?

"Until my teacher picked me up, I had no idea I had a talent for smithing... embarrassingmeow... -ly."

That... what is that all ameowt?

"That is a wonderful talent."

I'm a little lost as to what it exactly means, but I understand that much.

I'll just ask Ilya the rest later.

But with an Attribute at 5, as far as I know that makes her a monster!

Well, maybe I should use another word.

Genius should work better.

Be it Onee-chan, be it Ilya, Till... I haven't asked Till, but I guess that goes without asking.

I... might not be able to let Cira go.

"... do you have connections in the capital?"

"None at all..."

"I might become your patron in the capital."

"EH!?"

Cira looked at me with sparkling eyes.

So radiant.

"I'm an adventurer, so I'd be really glad about being close with a good smith. And if it's a golden egg like you, I think that's something to look forward to."

If she won't have a place to live in the capital, I won't mind offering her one.

Of course first I'll have to get my own livelihood in the capital going.

"A golden egg, you're embarrassing meow... me."

Even if you say that, I won't let you escape, you kmeow?

This girl might be a good enough smith to cause rumors even if I leave her alone.

That I've met her now while she's still an apprentice could be my luck.

Her inscriptions haven't started circulating, either.

Hmm.

If possible, I want to monopolize her.

And I want her to produce order-made equipment for me.

"My dream is to open a shop in the capital, or rather, to find one, right person among the many people there and become that person's exclusive smith. Becoming exclusive is every smith's dream!"

"Mine! Become my smith!"

Ah, I didn't mean to say that out loud...

"I-I couldn't... Alice-san... embarrassingmeow..."

Ahh.

This cuteness that makes me writhe inside, is it that kind?

The cuteness of animals?

I'm also certain what's hidden under that hat, Cira.

"Sorry, I got ahead of myself. If I don't show power worthy of you, there's no point talking about it, is there? Please use this escort mission to judge meow skills."

I don't mind.

Who would willingly become the personal smith of someone weak?

Cira must also have the pride of a craftsman.

I'll have to show her my power.

Enough power to shock her heart.

—I'll show her my new magic.

Level 5 Petite Panther

"..."

On a hill outside town, on the way to the Ruins, we encountered a formidable foe.

Ahh, I see.

Outside town, the enemies don't suddenly become strong.

I mean, no beginning adventurers would go to such ruins.

Yepyp.

I agilely avoided the formidable foe's charge.

"Alice-sama? You're not going to blow it away?"

"Eh?"

Blow it away?

Ilya, who I had asked to protect Cira, was curiously cocking her head.

Monsters are monsters, so having her switch from protecting me to protecting Cira didn't need much persuasion.

"...where I am from, there were people who could communicate with

monsters. That's what I want to try right now. That's how I feel."

"You can do that? That's amazing, Alice-sama."

"Do your best!"

With their encouragement, I kept sidestepping the formidable foe's charges like a matador.

Heh, I've already seen through your attacks.

They won't work on me!

"Huhhh..."

I took a deep breath.

This animal is attacking me because it's scared.

They are scared, those animals.

That misunderstanding is the tragedy here.

Can we allow that to go on?

No!

It's wrong!

When we give up because we can't understand each other, that is the real end.

Even if everyone else gives up, I won't!

"See... I'm not scary."

I crouched down and stretched out my hand towards the growling

formidable foe.

I could tell Ilya and Cira were watching over me with bated breath.

The formidable foe looked at me with its round, adorable eyes.

"...?"

It looked at me somewhat dubiously.

"I'm not scary..."

"..."

The formidable foe and I stared at each other, and when my hand was finally about to touch its——

"——WOAH!!"

...didn't touch.

The moment I was about to get bitten, I pulled back my hand.

"How is this possible... It was still scared of me."

I quickly built up some distant.

The formidable foe looked straight at me.

What indomitable will rested in those cute, adorable eyes!

"...I see. It is my duty to answer that will, is it."

I formed the image of my magic activating.

My body became hot.

Light gathered.

"——Blade of Light descending from the Heavens, become my Sword and split the Darkness! ——Lightning!"

The middle-class magic I had recently learned mercilessly pierced the formidable foe.

The formidable foe... quietly fell forward.

I walked up to it and embraced the fallen formidable foe.

"This is the only way..."

While the soft body in my arms faded, I shed a tear.

Farewell...

"...Alice-sama."

"...What?"

"Just now, was that magic necessary?"

A lion uses its full strength even to hunt a rabbit, they say.

You're still too naive, Ilya.

Today the sky is so clouded, it looked to be almost crying.

The sky is crying for you, too.

Rest in peace, my friend.

Chapter 30

In the dark

After conquering the Ruins without problem, we returned from the Ruins to earth by once again stepping on a magic circle.

By now, the sky really looked about to let loose, and a forced march back to town was maidenly impossible.

We would indiscriminately get drenched down to our underwear without a doubt and I didn't want to shame Ilya in town.

...Well, myself, neither.

That being said, waiting out the rain in the monster-infested Ruins would be tiring, too.

When I looked around for a better solution, I spotted a hollow in the cliff rising nearby.

It wasn't enough to call it a cave, but deep enough to weather the rain.

After retreating inside for the moment, we took a breath.

"Cira-san, are you in a hurry?"

"No, I'm fine. Let's wait until the rain lets up."

Thus, that's what we did.

We'd finished what we'd come for, so there was no need to rush.

Both Ilya and Cira were no longer apprentices, but fully qualified.

A happy occasion.

Name: Alice
Race: Halfelf
Gender: Female
Age: 15
Class: Mage
Level: 6

We'd done nothing but fight in this place, and still I was only Level 6.

But, well, thinking about it differently, that might be an amazing speed.

My limit was 15 after all.

But then again... Till's class was Sage, wasn't it?

An advanced Class, I guess?

Therefore, I'd probably get reset to Level 1 after the next class-up.

Not that worrying about that now helped.

Attack Magic: Thunder (Mastered), no Cast Time, 5s Cooldown

Attack Magic: Lightning (Proficiency 2), No Cast Time, 20s Cooldown

Support Magic: Heal, no Cast Time, 20s Cooldown

Support Magic: Lightning Enchant, no Cast Time, 10s Cooldown

Skill: Cast Time Reduction (special)

Weapon: None (Broken Lightning Rod)

Armor: Improved Leather Robe (High Quality) (Inscription: Adele)

Accessory: Sylv Faeria

That were my current options.

Instant mid-class magic made me feel the awesomeness of Cast Time Reduction (special).

Also, I learned that support magic had no proficiency.

I mean, I've used Heal so much so far.

Still, the burden it put on me was considerable. It was more exhausting than using the mid-class magic Lightning.

Furthermore, depending on the graveness of the wound, I might collapse afterwards.

But that didn't mean I could do without that magic.

Then there was the other support magic, Lightning Enchant.

Till had shown the kind already, so I knew what it did.

It would probably cover a weapons in light, granting them the lightning element.

"Alice-sama, are you not cold?"

Come to think of it, my skin felt a bit chilly.

I had gotten a little wet from the rain.

"Nothing to worry about."

"If you say so. But it would be bad if you caught a cold," Ilya said and huddled closer.

So warm.

So warm, but what was this.

"Woah..."

Cira was staring at us with wide eyes, blushing.

Ahh, well, yeah.

The dilemma where a scene feels wholesome to oneself, but looks decidedly not so from the outside.

"A-anyway, Alice-san, your magic is amazing. You defeat every monster with one hit. And the color is so beautiful."

I wonder, alone with Ilya I'm not that self-conscious, but with a third party around this is extremely awkward.

Let's not overdo it, okay, Ilya?

But while thinking that goes through my head, I don't think I'll stop her, either.

...not that I'm going to say way.

But more importantly now...

"The color? Isn't it the same for everyone?"

"No, Alice-sama. A magic's color shows your personality. It differs from person to person."

Was that how it was?

Of course, I had only seen only my own lightning magic, so I'd thought it was normal.

Come to think of it, I forgot because I'd been too desperate at the time, but the ice magic used by that bandit felt different from the one Till uses.

I don't remember the bandit's anymore, but Till's is a a deep, deep blue.

"Alice-san's lightning is silver and very beautiful. I've never heard of a magic colored like that before."

"Really?"

Well, when it comes to lightning, I'd think of something gold or blue or so.

So I can't say I didn't think 'Hmm? Silver?'

"But shouldn't we talk about you now, Cira-san? Congratulations, now you're a proper Smith."

"Y-yes. I'm so happy. With this, I can carve my own inscriptions. I'm kind of embarrassedmeow..."

Ahh, she's so shy~~

At that point, Cira fidgeted and looked at me with upturned eyes.

Hmm? What?

"So, ehm, Alice-san. About what we talked about before we entered the ruins, that is..."

"——? Sorry, you two. Didn't you hear something just now?" Ilya apologetically interrupted our talk.

After she pointed it out, Cira and I listened carefully, too.

What we heard was the sound of the rainfall getting stronger and stronger.

Frankly, I couldn't hear anything else.

But Ilya kept listening intently.

Hmm...?

"This is... a landslide!"

"Eh!?"

Now that she'd mentioned it, the ground may have rumbled a bit...

No, shit!

If we stay here, we'll get buried alive!?

"We have to get out of here!"

"Going out now is even more dangerous! Alice-sama!"

I see, the landslide would hit us directly?

"!"

As Ilya had said, not a moment later earth and sand came falling from above.

The rumbling was dreadful.

I was getting chills over the thought that our shallow cave might

collapse.

I couldn't remain standing anymore.

The noise of the avalanche was ear-shattering.

I bodily felt how a thunderous roar alone could fill people with base fear.

Seeing the earth and sand rush down the slope, our only luck was that it didn't enter our cave.

That relief only lasted until our view from the cave was completely covered.

Just how long had the three of us waited with bated breath?

Finally, the rumbling died down.

No, conversely now we even stopped hearing the rain like it was moving to a far away world.

...just how deep had we been buried?

We were covered in complete, total darkness.

My heart was beating like a warning bell.

As quietly as possible, I took a shallow breath.

"...are you two alright?"

"Yes, Alice-sama."

"I-I'm meowkay... okay."

For the moment, relief washed over me.

I had felt them right next to me so I'd thought they were alright, but hearing them say it still gave peace of mind.

But buried alive, huh...?

"This... if we dig wrongly, more earth will come falling from above?"

"Maybe. It's all loose from the rain."

"We... cannot get out, can we?"

I couldn't give her an immediate answer.

It still felt unreal.

Not monsters, not humans... but nature was going to kill us?

Well, in front of nature's fury, both man and monster might be nothing but trash.

But still...

"... It's too early to give up. If we dig from as high up as possible, the rubble might be thin there, so let's carefully try that," I said and pointed up. But.

"Alice-sama. We don't know up from down."

"Indeed."

Ahh, I see.

The others couldn't see?

What's with my eyes granting me vision even in this darkness?

Are they shooting sight-beams or something?

"Can you grasp my hands, you two? I'll lead you where I think we

need to go."

"Alice-sama..."

"Alice-san..."

Don't be anxious, me.

Collect yourself.

Calm down.

Don't panic.

If you don't spend encouragement here, then what are you for, my heart.

"Don't worry, there's no need to give up. It might be unexpectedly easy to get out."

Since the two couldn't see, I grasped for their hands.

I wasn't giving up.

"Right, Ilya?" I added with just a little tease in my voice.

"...hehe, if that Alice-sama says so, I cannot remain idle, can I."

"?"

It was funny how Cira inclined her head in wonderment.

Alright, let's do this.

Like hell I can die in this pointless place for a pointless reason.

"Hah, hah."

Carefully digging out way outside with the three of us proved to be difficult.

We had nothing like a spade on our hands, so I was digging with the grip of my Rod.

Maybe Ilya had judged it dangerous to dig with her spear, but she had put it in the bag of the cave and was digging with her own hands.

I'll have to examine them later, they might have been scraped bloody.

Later, huh.

Cira was holding a Wooden Stick and using it the same way I did to dig through the earth.

By the way, that Wooden Stick was Cira's proper and true weapon.

Getting hit with it hurt.

Although I guess it wouldn't work on Ilya.

"...I can't... work anymeow..."

A little while after we began digging, Cira dropped out first.

"Sorry... sorry..."

"Hah, hah, it's fine. Don't apologize? It's our job to protect you, so please rest for a while, Cira-san."

While gasping for air, Cira drew back into the cave with her head

held low.

Her steps were uncertain. Did she not fall over along the way in this darkness due to some animal instinct?

"Alice-sama, please take a short rest, too. I shall make more progress in your place."

Am I... still doing okay?

Don't act tough, me, collect yourself now.

Now isn't the time to suddenly fall over.

I was thinking at myself.

"...okay, I'll rest a little. But Ilya, you don't force yourself either."

"Yes, *Milady*."

She would force herself. I knew that, but I couldn't tell her to stop.

Sorry, Ilya.

Please let me rely on your right now.

I gave the Rod I'd been using to Ilya and rested my body.

"I'm sorr... ry... sor... don't...!"

"Cira-san...? Are you alright!?"

After I stepped back to the end of the cave and sat down next to Cira, I noticed her change.

Her breathing was erratic?

It was too shallow, too fast.

This was... hyperventilation?

The oxygen!?

From what I saw, the space we were in was definitely not wide.

But I wasn't having that much trouble breathing yet.

I looked at Ilya, but her breathing seemed stable, too.

I see... mental anxiety had caused Cira to panic.

It's understandable.

"Agh! Ngg...!"

"It's alright, Cira-san... It's alright, so calm down? Take a slow breath. Don't be impatient?"

I talked to her as gently, calmingly as I possible.

I held her hand and told her she would be alright.

If I wasn't mistaken, I had heard dealing with hyperventilation the wrong way had the opposite effect and could be dangerous.

But most important was calming down the patient and make him feel relieved.

"There's nothing to be scared of. See? Take deep breaths. Slowly. See? It's all right."

I gently held her hand.

"——"

Cira's hand flexed and I felt a pain like a cat's scratches.

Her nails might be poking me.

"——See? It's not scary, you see? You don't have to worry about anything. Take slow breaths."

Her hand slowly relaxed.

Her breathing, too, calmed down.

It was fine. As long as she calmed herself, she'd get better right away."

"...o... cha...?"

"Eh?"

With dilated eyes, Cira was looking at me.

There were tear tracks there.

Even in the darkness, I could see those clearly.

"Calm down?"

Thinking about the meaning of the murmurs I'd just heard, I leaned towards Cira and whispered near her ears.

"Cira————leave the rest to me."

With a really quiet voice, I whispered so that only Cira could hear me.

"___"

Once, her body stiffened like something had surprised her, but then she relaxed like she was calm now.

For a short while, I looked at her condition like that.

Her breathing had stabilized.

"She's asleep...?"

Come to think of it, the battles she wasn't used to and the fear of being shut it must have pushed her to her limit.

I felt a bit reluctant about it, but I slowly unfastened her hand that was still holding mine tightly.

"Now then."

Don't want to become a liar, do I.

How much time had passed since we'd been buried?

I had no feeling for that whatsoever.

It could have been a whole night, even.

On the other hand, I did feel that that guess was a bit long.

"Ng... the air is getting a bit thin."

With three people in this closed-off space, the oxygen wouldn't last that long.

And yet the digging was progressing only slowly.

The more we dug, the more earth took its place.

The fear of it all pouring into the cave sent shivers down my spine.

"Ilya... you can still go on, right?"

"Of course, Milady."

Of course she couldn't be alright.

She hadn't even taken a single break.

Although she had borrowed Cira's Wooden Stick, what had happened to her hands in the long time she had dug barehanded?

Regret almost crushed me when Ilya replied like nothing was wrong.

Digging would probably get us nowhere.

I didn't know how much earth we were buried behind, but without enough power to blow all of that away, this was nothing but a waste of effort.

But, what to do then?

There was magic, but my lightning magic was not made for something like "blowing stuff away".

There was too much earth, too.

And even as a repellent force...

No, I could only go for it.

"GOOOO!"

Pushing my hands against the earth, I concentrated my magic on my right hand and accumulated it.

The trick was the same I used at the lake.

But——

"——ugh!!"

You could call it the natural outcome, but what was blown away was me, not the earth.

I heavily crushed into the wall in the back.

"Alice-sama!"

"...I'm... fine."

That worked...

My body wasn't tough enough to do that again and again though.

But I could only take my chances with what I had.

With no losing option, I tried what I could.

"Split the heavens and become a ray of light, to strike my enemies!
Thunder!"

I shot lightning into the earth.

But, as expected, it only "pierced" and didn't blow anything away.

When I'd shot it into a wall for the first time in those Ruins, it hadn't destroyed the wall, either.

I'd known that, but...

When I lowered my gaze, I saw Cira still sleeping.

But, it was a fact that the air was getting thin.

There was no time.

"...there is one last thing I can do, Alice-sama."

"There's no need."

"Eh?"

Hearing my immediate reply, Ilya made a dumbfounded face.

"I don't know what you're intending to do, but it would kill you, wouldn't it?"

"——"

"That's why you don't have to do that. I'll break through this. I won't give up——!"

Mass.

Right. Because it has no mass, my magic cannot blow stuff away.

Then I'll have to find a replacement for that.

I looked at the Lightning Rod in my hands.

It was broken and didn't work adequately anymore.

But... if that was the case.

Onee-chan, I will use this to save people.

"——Come, Lightning Spirit, become my Blade! Lightning Enchant!"

With the added lightning element, the Rod shone silver.

I had one chance, and I had no clue what this one attack would do to the ground.

We might get buried alive completely.

But at this rate, the time limit was nearing.

I didn't want to regret without doing everything I could.

"I will blow the earth away. Ilya, hold on to Cira and me and defend us with your Field in that moment."

"Y-yes, Alice-sama."

I would blow the entrance open and before new earth came falling, I would jump us out of the cave.

Using magic at maximum output, consecutively, and skillfully.

I could do it. No, I *would* do it.

I brandished my left hand holding the Lightning Rod.

"——Blade of Light descending from the Heavens, become my Sword and split the Darkness!"

The pentagram spun.

My maximum output.

But I wasn't just going to shoot a lightning.

I would make the rod a projectile and shoot that.

That's why I had enchanted it, for the magnetic repellant force.

Pushed forward by the lightning, it would even break the sound barrier and——

"Lightning!!"

One strike, the silver torrent from my left hand catapulted the Rod forward like a bullet.

"Urgh——!"

Activating mid-class magic with my left hand.

My power left me all at once.

But I couldn't complain about the firepower.

The flash blew the entrance open and shot all the way up through

the rain clouds before disappearing.

I could see one ray of light from between the clouds.

And then—the vibrations.

Bear this!!

"Now... Ilya!"

"Any time, Milady!"

Ilya laid her hand around my waist.

Cira was on her back.

The vibrations got stronger and stronger.

Control the activation of my magic, create a repellant force below my legs, and—

"Fly!!"

The moment before the entrance was buried again, we flew out of the cave.

We were almost crushed by the avalanche of earth and rocks, but that much was expected.

Protected by Ilya's Field, we broke through the pouring ground and escaped into the sky.

The feeling of freedom was refreshing.

"... what is this."

"Alice-sama..."

Ilya hugged my waist stronger.

"Nn... it hurts, Ilya."

"Please bear it, Milady."

Yeah, yeah, bear it, right.

"..."

in the air, I'd spontaneously looked to the top of the cliff.

I'd only thought about checking out the landslide. The trees and rocks on the plateau at the top of the cliff had collapsed and only the part with the landslide was completely bare.

That, that was a natural phenomenon, right...?

I'd only seen a fear-induced illusion, nothing more.

I wanted to laugh it off.

—and still, the thought that I'd seen a woman with red eyes on that plateau made my whole body shiver just a little.

Chapter 31

Intermission: Remembering a Shooting Star

I these days, the times that I have been absent-minded have been often.

There wasn't the desire to go adventure, or handle any requests nearby, return and pass the time doing nothing.

When I felt like it, I would go out on the plain, past the forest, and go to the ruins.

These few days, I would really do just that.

I held the expectation in my heart that she was really there.

That suddenly coming, showing off, holding a laughing while crying face girl.

As if she were a shooting star, passing in front of me.

Thus, I reached the plains in the midafternoon, and looked at the field of flowers without meaning.

“Is it time yet, like this.....”

She who I had embraced, was really delicate, far too delicate to be an adventurer.

Just one mistake and they could die, it made me so insecure that but there was nothing else to hold on to.

“Well, the chibi Elf and the Dragon girl are with her”

Especially, the chibi Elf was fathomless.

The fight with the ice dragon was absolutely not serious.

After all, right at the end before the ice dragon used its breath, she chanted an outrageous magic spell.

Because the dragon girl moved, that’s how it appeared.

“Fuu, it’s not like me. Let’s go back”

Looking at the view in front of me, I found 4 Syracuse flowers.

To find 4 lucky flowers, just by chance while walking through the plain remembering.

I returned to town, it had only been a few days since then, and the town had returned to its former self, I felt everyone’s enthusiasm around me.

The spirit around here, makes me proud to have been born and raised on this town.

Rinnal is a rural area but, it was built from an expedition to the North in an unexplored region, an adventurer’s town.

It wasn’t one that would lose heart over something so trivial.

It mourned those that perished, the following day after the event, everyone including me cried a lot, and then we held a service festival to send our brothers off back to the goddess’s arms.

Then, we feel sad when we feel sad.

And then the next day, we live at our best.

That is the town that I was born and raised in.

That girl, I want to see that blue faced girl once more.

Anyways, in a manner of speaking, the this town has become independent from the capital and those guys on the council were enthusiastic, after handing over the 50 gold coins they were used for revival and development, after is just to move on I guess.

In the dark green forest where none have tread, there is said to be a fairy village.

To reach there, is said to be the dream of the adventurers in this town.

“I’m home”

“Oh my, welcome home Shion. A friend just arrived”

Chatting in the living room with mother, a girl with red hair sitting on a chair turned around.

“Aa, Shion. Welcome home”

“Eleanor huh?”

You couldn’t really call this town big, she was completely the same age childhood friend.

Is it because her family manages the service trade shops, she had a natural smile on her face, she was someone that could make you feel at ease.

“Nene, Shion. You’re free today aren’t you?”

“Well, it’s not that I’m free.....”

“What is this child saying, spending everyday just wandering around”

From mother’s perspective, it really looks that way to her.

Che.

“I came because I have a request for Shion”

“Request? You went out of your to specifically nominate me?”

“Un, because I don’t know adventurer more wise or reliable than Shion”

“You’re sure piling on the praise aren’t you?”

I let out a sarcastic laugh at the mind reading Eleanor

“To tell you the truth, I was thinking of going to the Royal Capital to open my own shop there. Because I want to go to the capital and do a preliminary inspection I want to request Shion as my guard.”

“Royal Capital.....”

The Royal Capital you say?

“The dream you were talking about earlier.”

“That’s right! Not someday, right now at this moment is what I thought. Because those things happen in this world.”

Eleanor's eyes were shining.

The eyes of people with will power are different, I looked at my reflection in the window pane.

"I see. I'll do it. When will we leave?"

"After I finish preparing, after about 3 days? You'll accept it? I'm so glad"

"Dummy, of course I'll go with you. People that are about to do business shouldn't waste money."(tl; Meaning 'Don't waste time asking something that has already been agreed to')

"It's an investment. While you're my childhood friend, you're also a promising adventurer."

"Fufu, it's a welcome thing. Alright, see you in three days."

"Thanks, Shion!"

While thinking about Eleanor's dazzling smile, I was only a little depressed.

That evening, while preparing for the journey, my father entered the room.

"You know, you really shouldn't enter your adolescent daughter's room suddenly, I always say that."

"I don't remember having that kind of sensitive daughter"

"Yeah yeah, so, what did you need?"

"Shion, you're going to the capital?"

As close as always this married couple.

Did you tell him immediately, mother?

“That’s right. As Elenor’s guard, we’ll just go and come back though.”

Dad lets out an exaggerated sigh at to my answer.

“Even though it’s the capital?”

“.....yeah, and?”

“What are you being strangely obstinate for, my unworthy daughter?”

Obstinate, huh?

“No, Dad. It’s not that.....”

I suddenly remember, tears start to fall.

“She didn’t say it”

I couldn’t stop.

“That girl..... She didn’t say, come with me together!”

Remembering that evening, my chest felt as if were about to burst.

“Well well.....you understand why the little miss didn't say that don't you?”

“In my heart, I can't accept it.....”

What kind of face I should show, I don't know if I can meet her.

“Your mother, for the first time since you've been born, it's the first time she's worried about you, it's a fairly late adolescence”

Gahaha, my dad cracks a laugh.

Adolescence huh? It's unbecoming of an elder sister right?

“Hey Shion. Even if you set aside what you think about the little miss, what do you think her reason was?”

“Me?”

“Don't you think that is important? Feelings are something that if you don't put into words they won't be understood. You aren't God.”

Did I say it?

Take me with you?

.....

I see.....I didn't say it huh?

“Shion, when you let a shooting star pass by, you won’t become happy you know”

A shooting star huh?

She really shows off.

Haha.

“Did you break something? You’re starting to get up there aren’t you, Dad?”

He still has some good muscles, I’ll give them a punch.

“Ogu! Geho, that hurt! Unlike the little miss, it’s heavy, Shion’s is”

“Naturally, the power behind the feelings I got from you are heavy, there’s no way they’d be light”

“Fu-n, I’m not finished yet”

“Fufu, we’ll see who reaches the fairy village first, it’s a race”

“Yeah, I look forward to it. Bring your little sister with you when you come.”

The two laughed with each other.

Looking through the window outside, there was no shooting star conveniently flying by.

Naturally.

The shooting star, had already gone by.

“Don’t be late”

Wait for me.

I’m going to be there soon!

——Alice!

Chapter 32

Shopping

「Ok, the only thing left after this is shopping for clothes.」

「I see, Ojou-sama. Fufu, I- I'm looking forward to it.」

「Is that so? You're looking forward to it?」

After seeing Ilia's smile, picking out clothes is fun after all. Picking them out with someone is fun too...

After saying that, I guess I'm expected to go along too. Even picking out underwear...

So we went over to Rufin Third Street this afternoon.

After completing the escort and ruin exploration request from yesterday, we had brought Saira, who was fast asleep, home and completed it safely.

We walked to the blacksmith's forge, the 40 year old blacksmith master came out from inside the workshop and took Saira in his arms and went back into the workshop.

As he did that, he stopped momentarily and said

「Sorry bout that」

Simply saying, the master carried Saira inside just like that with a somber expression.

Because the signature for the request completion had not been received, we thought we were going to come back to the blacksmith shop after buying clothes.

It was painful to wait and see.

Because we were exhausted, we went straight back to the inn that day, and slept immediately.

I was woken up in the middle of the night at the sound of odd rustling, for some reason Til had found her way into my bed.

She was incredibly cute, I wondered what I should do, but there was nothing to be done.

Regardless of her age, she looks exactly like a child, it's calming.

Especially her sleeping face could be called innocent.

Holding her just like, I completed my Til-pillow and slept soundly until morning.

Then the following morning, I was awoken with an unjustified chop from Til and told to prepare for tomorrow's journey.

The distance was 3 days travel by wagon however, not knowing what might happen, I went to purchase 5 days' worth of supplies.

Things like a tent for sleeping in the open, and various tools of that kind were available in Rinnal, basically the main things this town held were ingredient related.

Of course, not forgetting the fodder for the horses that do their best pulling the wagon.

The pair of fawn-colored horses were pulling the carriage, Til would frequently tell me, that they listen well.

When we rested along the street, I gave some rinnals to the horses, They were really happy and nuzzled against me.

That cuteness isn't just for show.

I got carried away and wiped their sweat with a towel in one hand and almost got stepped on.

We don't need that trap, horse-san.

As not to be careless, we left the horses at the hotel.

There was a service along with the deposit, but three people in a room was a pretty good deal.

Anyways, including the horse's supplies, I finished purchasing all the little every-day items this morning, and after finishing the meal, in another meaning we arrived at our current situation.

「Let's start by choosing from the clothes from before. I'm fine so, let's buy Ilia some.」

「Ok. I am pleased to receive clothes chosen by Ojou-sama」

「.....no, Ilia. Please chose the things that you like today. I think you have something you like」

I want you to stop trying to test my sense of women's clothing.

「Is that so? I would be very pleased to receive the clothing chosen by Alice-sama.」

「Well, someday」

Maybe I should study about females a little more?

No no, what do you mean by learning a little more about females.....

「——Nee-san!」

After receiving a map of the city outside the guild, while drawing near to the clothing store, a man who shouts at me as if it were a joke while approaching.

Somehow, being overly friendly with me.

Apparently not having mistaken me for someone else, without a doubt he has business with me it seems, he makes a bee-line for me.

「Um.....」

「I'm following nee-san's advice, I'll show my courage and try confessing to Saira!」

「Eh!? Saira!?!」

Why are you confessing to Saira thanks to me!?

.....Aa! This guy, he was one of the pair that was fighting at the bar!

I see, now that I think about it the name of the girl from that time was Saira.

「You have to make a decision after all, you can't move forward or backwards otherwise」

You're saying that with a good smile but, who the heck are you?

I wonder about moving backwards though.

「I see.」

「I see?」

Why is he looking at me with that strange expression?

「I mean, that's right. Who are you?」

「Eh!? It's me onee-san, Takashi!」

「Takashi!? Japanese!?!」

「No no, what are you talking about!?!」

What are YOU talking about?!

I never thought I would hear that name in a different world!

「.....Eeto, Takeshi-sama. Ojou-sama is about to go shipping」

For some reason Ilia answers like it's a headache and puts her hand on her head as follow up.

「A, aa! Sorry nee-san, I'm holding you up. Well, see ya!」

「E, eh.....Good luck?」

Leaving while still not knowing what was going on, the boy was seen off.

Just what happened.....

「Nee-san」

「Again.....?」

After going with Iria to choose clothes and leaving the shop, another man calls out to me.

「Eeto, are you going to go confess to Saira too?」

I ask him casually.

「Geez, that means that guy already came?」

Fu, the man laughed clumsily

「That guy seems to have misunderstood but, I don't think there's any way that Saira would like me. Just because you spent a lot of time together with someone.」

「Haa.....」

Why am I listening to other people's love affairs?

「But, I love Saira, thanks to nee-san it's become clear to me」

「I, I see.」

Saira, you sure are popular.

That kid, she seems a little younger than me..... which reminds me how old am I?

I mean, just what have I done?

A doppelganger?

「No hard feelings, welp, I'm going too」

「A, please wait a moment!」

「?」

「What is your name?」

The boy's clumsy smile widens and answered

「It's Kenji」

His dashing retreating figure is pointlessly cool.

I should have asked if I should sing the Japanese national anthem.

Now, although such strange coincidences happened, today's main dish has yet to end.

Moving to a different clothing shop, standing in front of the shop, we've finally arrived.

「Because it's such a rare chance, I'd like for Ojou-sama to choose for me. Please, by all means.」

「Me, here!?!」

If that was going to be the case, wouldn't it have been better to choose the clothes earlier!?

What a blunder!

「Um..... Is it too much to request after all?」

「No! Please don't make that face, Iria!? I really think that Iria is really important to me. So you are prohibited from putting yourself down ok?」

I do not wish to see such a gloomy face.

Which reminds me, recently she hasn't shown me that kind of face, which makes me feel even worse.

「Ojou-sama.....I am unworthy of your words」

「No. I am the one that's sorry..... there are a few circumstances」

There, for some reason Iria looks at my chest.

Then looked at her own chest.

And once more looks at my chest.

「Compared to me I Ojou-sama is more lovely.....」

「I'm not worried about THAT what-so-ever!？」

What do you mean by misunderstanding.

I should have packed in more dreams.....(EN: If you don't get it, Iria was comparing bust sizes. And Alice meant she should have made them bigger)

There are more than I thought, although it is very rude to this world, the clothing, even the underwear, it can't be compared to my former world, is the impression I had looking around the shop.

As expected there wasn't anything you could consider as Japanese modern clothing but, it was fantasy like, there were a lot of likable designs too.

It's good that these aren't cosplay.

They can be worn openly.

By the way, my everyday clothes are high-laced work boots and black knee-socks.

Along with a mainly pale green, short sleeve one piece, and a slightly orangy-white overskirt.

A limp leather sack rolled into a belt that hung at my waist, it was refreshing.

They were the clothes that Onee-chan had selected.

Onee-chan recognized me as being part of the cute group right, that's right.

And returning to reality——

Inside of the store, lay the tempting lingerie.

I haven't even done anything wrong, why am I being blamed?

「.....By the way, apart from the designs, I don't understand sizes」

That's why it's better to choose it yourself?

I path was cutoff and I hit the counter.

「I see, well then Ojou-sama. Would you measure my size?

「.....Eh?」

Would you measure my size?

How strange. Does this conversation happen often between men and women?

I don't want to be a criminal.....

「Fufu.....」

「Eh?」

「No, it's just that Ojou-sama's troubled face was so cute. It was really hard to restrain my laughter just now.」

Ha?

「Since just now?」

「More accurately, ever since we started shopping today」

A devilish smile floated on Ilia's face.

What, did you say...?

「It was a plot wasn't it?」

「Yes my lady. Fufu.」

There are no feelings of respect at all!?

「Ojou-sama is so very pure. Even I'll become shy.」

「There are some things called unavoidable circumstances」

「Is that so? Fufu」

Ilia was a bad girl, was the story.....

After that, she chose her own underwear.

And they lived happily ever after——

「Shall we choose Ojou-sama's now?」

「I'm fine for now thanks!」

「Fufu, next time someday.」

「.....」

How strange, what is Ilia to me.....?

Well, whatever.

Anyway, we're setting off for the royal capital tomorrow.

It's mainly for safety and to escape, well it's also to have fun after all.

It's the Royal Capital after all.

There's also the tournament too, but the reason for entering has disappeared but I'm still interested.

Shall we consult Til?

Thus the 3 days in Ruffin ended.

After that, I think all that is left is to see Saira.

Chapter 33

Towards the Capital

Once the shopping was done I had went to meet up with Saira but Blacksmith-san told me that Saira has gone somewhere/elsewhere.

But because he signed as a proxy, the job was completed.

Although I have a little feeling that he felt a little annoyed.

「Damn, It 's all Takeshi and Kenji's fault.」

「Karma circulates, Ojou-sama」

「What kind of punishment is that!？」

What do you know, Ilya !?

「It's a joke 。 I believe Ojou-sama actions are very kind 」

「Hearing about what I don't remember from someone else is scary...」

「That's true That is the wrong way to go about it」

Why is she blushing?

「Ahh, whatever. After dropping by the guild let's head back to our inn. After all we are leaving early tomorrow.」

Although it is a shame, I don't have any regrets.

Although it was only for a little while, I was able to visit Saira while doing our errands.

Ilya and I left the Blacksmith forge.

See you later Saira.

When we returned to the inn, a nude child was just exiting our bathroom.

As she had let down her usual twin tails, I couldn't immediately recognise her.

That deep ocean blue eyes and lovely pointy ears.

Rinnal-like cheeks with lesser dreams packed in the chest than me.
(TL: Author specifically said Rinnal-like cheeks so I chose to follow instead of using Rosy cheeks)

If you see these features, it becomes very obvious.

「Wh... What! water is still dripping off you! Please don't make the room wet! Til!」

「Hmm..... ? 」

With the towel hanging from her head, without properly wiping her body, she left the bathroom, dripping water all over the room.

Moreover, walking around the house like that!

Ahh, what's this. This is getting on my nerves!

「Ahh, enough! Please! Do not move away from the mat!」

「He..Hey! Can you stop?」

I forced the wet culprit back to the mat and snatch her towel off her and quickly dried her head. For now I'll just wipe down her body and I will dry her hair one more time.

「Mou.....Please do not act like a child, Til」

「Tsk... Fussy lass」

How should I say, I cannot see you as anything else but a child.

It seems I forgot to keep my behavior in line.

「Umu. But it's not bad」

In resignation, Til relaxed and left her body in my care.

「Ok Ok、Please be patient and do not lean against me. My clothes are getting wet」

I carefully dry her hair.

She has really beautiful hair and because of the length, caring for it must be a little difficult.

I fully understand her pain for I also have difficulties with my hair.

Furthermore, Til is a sloppy person.

「Later we will use a wind crystal to dry you, otherwise you will catch a cold, Okay?」

「I will leave it to you」

As the name wind crystal suggests it is a magical stone which creates wind.

Although fire and wind crystal are originally are made using magic crystal, due to alchemist's refinement, methods to produce various effects have been invented.

It's possible to say that an Alchemist is similar to a Scientist as they share similar goals of seeking the truth after thorough research.

..... Truth/ reality

Those words remind me of that woman.

「——Libra, who is she?」

「——」

Til stiffened.

「It does not concern you. Don't you worry 」

「If she is taken care of, I will be happy.」

I recalled yesterday's landslide.

Did I think too much?

Did I see an illusion?

Whether it is the truth or not, I don't know.

But I am feeling uneasy

Hasn't she already set her sights on me?

After thinking about it, I shivered.

How long have I been targeted?

Was it a coincidence?

Even Til does not seem to worry too much about where I came from. But why did that woman...?

「Are you afraid of her? Alice. Looking from your perspective, you are not to blame. If I were to battle with her, you got to run away at full speed.」

「Running away.....」

「Right now, you can't possibly defeat her」

From Til's point of view, there is a power difference between me and Libra.

Certainly, just being stared at by that pair of red eyes, I get the ominous feeling of being possessed by a shinigami.

「Do you know her well, Til? 」

「.....Sigh. Even if I were to hid it, it's for naught. That lass is my first disciple, Alice. Your sister.」

Disciple?

Til's disciple?

The person chosen by the kind Til to be a disciple did such a thing?

When I recalled Rinnal's incident, I become nauseous.

I felt sick just remembering what happened in Rinnal.

「As you can see, It's due to my misconduct that it happened. Therefore I will end it.」

「Finish it huh...」

Does she plan to kill her?

Even her own disciple?

「.....Til, are you sure?」

「It's neither good nor bad. Nevertheless, it's all in the past, and it's something I have to do. That's all there is to it.」

I don't doubt her.

It's probably obvious.

It's because, Til is different from a novice like me.

However.....

「Your eyes seem sad.」

I dropped onto my knees in front of Til and matched our eye level.

Within that deep sea of blue, hid some flickers of uncertainty; I immediately understood.

「You fool! You greenhorn. Don't say cheeky things about what you don't understand」

The comforting look Til gave me after saying that made my heart hurt a little.

Say, Til?

Am I that women's substitute?

However, I did not say those words out loud.

*

The next day, Til snuck into my bed again half-asleep making me feel complicated. So I hugged her tightly and went to sleep. As usual, I was awakened unreasonably and went to prepare for the journey

We quickly put our luggage into the carriage and left Rufin before dawn.

Although I am worried about not being able to meet Saira one last time, it is also rude to turn up so early in the morning.

「Let's depart.」

「Yes, please.」

After spreading straw on the floor of the carriage, there is nowhere more comfortable to sit.

By all means, please.

Til pulled the carriage reins and we departed toward the royal capital.

Farewell, Rufin

I had lots of fun.

「———Alice~~~~ San. Please! Bring me along!」

We heard a voice as we were leaving.

Before, we left the street.

Saira, who was out-of breath, ran through the main street while carrying a large amount of luggage.

「Oh dear oh dear」

Although she answered without energy, Til did stop the carriage properly despite her lack of enthusiasm.

I alighted from the carriage and waited for Saira to catch up.

The luggage on her back seems really heavy.

It is not like that she does not appear to be running away from home

Well I never. So it is that sort of things huh...

「Haa Haaa、Alice-san、I want you to take me with you.....」

「Saira, is that okay?」

「Yes, I had properly told Master yesterday. 」

As she catches her breath she looks up at me, her eyes are brimming with determination.

I guess I don't have to ask questions about her resolve from now on.

「I understand. Likewise, I want you to lend me your strength, Saira.」

「Yes ! In order to become Alice-san 's strength, I will try my best nya!」

Her hat moves as if it's jumping when she gives her energetic reply.

I guess full of vitality best describes her.

Our travel companions has increased by one

However, it will be bad if I don't protect her.

She is different from Til, Ilya and Onee-chan.

「I will protect you. From now on, please take care of me」

「Uuu, I am happy nya...」

I tilted my head when the blushing Saira carelessly forgot to add in desu.

Speaking of which, I wonder if Takeshi and Kenji are fine.

I wonder what had happened after that but it's rude to ask.

Saira is a bad girl.

「In that situation, who is crueler?...」

Ilya murmured beside me.

Ehh? It's not... Saira??

Name : Saira

Race : Beast Tribe/ Beastman

Gender : Female

Age : 14

Occupation : Blacksmith

Lv: 1

I confirmed Saira's status.

As expected, there are no astonishing information obtained.

Speaking of which, in Saira's stats. Instead of having intelligence. she seems to have 5 points in blacksmith.

In the carriage, I enquired Ilya who was sitting on my left.

Saira who was on my right, look at me passionately.

How should I put it, why am I surrounded?

There is still extra space in the carriage, so it would be better to sit comfortably.

If we stick that close together, I will get a little *dokidoki* (TL: Excited)

「Those who have combat skills points, if they put 5 out of 10 attribute points into intelligence, they will be shunned. For those people who like Saira who are looking towards being a crafter, it

depicts a situation where 10 points is not enough.]

「Oh, really?」

In short, like this huh....

Strength 1 Stamina 1 Defense 1 Agility 2 Intelligence 0

「Although it will be difficult for these people to specialise in combat, they may excel in occupations other than combat. In Saira's case, it's Blacksmithing. 」

「Yes, I am embarrassed.」

I see. If you change into another class other than the combat class, the intelligence will disappear and the class's unique attribute will be added.

However, it is impossible for Saira to retrieve those attribute points again.

In order to be able to do smithing, I will buy a house in the royal capital. In addition, I will buy tools too. Basically, it looks like Saira will concurrently be the caretaker of the house.

Well, if I hesitate, Saira will not be able to do smithing.

「Yeah! At the royal capital, our most important objective is to work and buy a house 」

「A house huh. An excellent goal, Alice-sama」

「Thank you. It will be inconvenient if we do not have a house to stay together.」

「Even if just a little, I want to be useful」

Saira responded in a depressing manner.

I see. If you do not have an environment to practice smithing, there is nothing you can do.

Unexpectedly, it is an urgent problem

We will release Saira from her anguish.

I can imagine the pain of not being able to do anything she has to go through.

Ahh, let me see..

「Ilya, has the rewards for the tournament been announced?」

「Hmm. I heard you get a sizeable monetary award. You will also obtain a slave as an extra prize.」

「Ahh, I remind you of some unpleasant memories. I am sorry.」

「Fu Fu. Ojou-sama. Please do not mind me too much. Ojou-sama has her own position. 」

「Although that's okay」

「You can't. Although I do get carried away sometimes, I must abide to our master~ servant relationship.」

As I thought, Ilya is serious.

After thinking about why I say such things again, I believe it is to let Saira to understand the current situation.

Whatever....

Ilya, so stoic.

We continued chatting till evening and reached today's campsite. It is on the coast of a big river.

As I had planned the journey with Til in advance, the place look just like the map.

Just as planned.

「Okay, Let's camp here. Alice, today I will train you today.」

「Til will? 」

「Yes, on top of the river.」

The place she pointed to is the calming flowing river.

Ehh?

On top of the river?

「Ehh, in-water combat?」

「Don't speak nonsense, obviously it's on top of the water!」

On-water combat... If that's the case..

I am aware that I could not calm down as I thought about the master who talks about such high level stuffs again.

In short...

I wanted to show Til my good side.

(TL note: Previously Til's dialouge are all translated to *shakespeare* English. Her way of speaking is like an loli-baba. I did not follow it this time round. But do let me know which do you prefer.)

Alice's training with Til

Chapter 34

Glimpse

Til was standing still on the water and closed her eyes waiting for me.

She was standing on water hardened by blizzard.

Ice magic has more practical use than I thought.

Can I do it?

If I can adjust it well, it's not like I can't do it with lightening magic.

Right now, I'm not releasing all my powers in one go to fly. However, it seems that I could do it too if I were to regulate my powers carefully.

Although I cannot make footholds in thin air, if it's on the water...

「It's okay. Before the right leg sinks in, you have to step out with your left leg」

What the. Isn't it easy?

.....

Is it easy?

「Alice sama, Please try your best!」

「Do your best!」

Voices of encouragement can be heard as I was hesitating at the river banks.

Their encouragements cheered me up but also added more pressure on me.

I unintentionally tried to turn my back towards them.

「.....」

「Alice-sama?」

「Alice-san, is something wrong?」

Curious expressions surfaced on their faces.

After looking at both of them, my stiffened face relaxed.

I felt the burden on my shoulders lessen.

Therefore, it's amazing.

I think I can do my best.

I stared at Til who is standing on the water once again.

「Alri~ght!! I am coming, Til!」

After proclaiming to Til, I stepped out my right leg

I regulate Thunder on my feet and gently stepped on the water.

It's before my battle with Til, therefore I felt my nervousness reach its peak.

After stepping on the water, I carefully applied my weight on it.

——I can do it?

Once I felt that it can withstand my weight, I took my next step in 1 go.

「Wah wah!」

As I thought, maintaining your balance is difficult!

My feet are unsteady.

As my body falls , I naturally stepped out my left leg.

And I put in too much magic power.

I stepped forward as if I was jumping.

In panic, I stepped forward again with my right leg.

This time round, it was too weak.

I felt that I was sinking.

Therefore, I hurriedly step forward with my left leg again.

「Teh, I will simply run with all my might!!」

However, I cannot stop.

Once I stop, I will sink

「Til!! Let's start the test!! Immediately!! Now!!」

As I ran towards Til who was standing quietly on the water, trying to appeal her to start the test.

It might just end before the test starts!

「Thou are a noisy lass.—— Blizzard」

「Wai- ! 」

Oh my!!

It becomes too much all of a sudden?!

As Til sleepily chants the spell for blizzard, my surroundings began to hail.

That range!!

The blue ice became sharp bullets and bombarded the area around me.

But, is it still in the range of lower class magic?

Thanks to my magic defense, I can withstand it.

「——tsu」

Immediately, I received a strong feedback and jumped back.

I retreated out of the AOE as the attack was too strong.

I had moved according to my instinct.

The opponent isn't a thief....

「What's wrong? Aren't thou far away?」

Tillbell Einsaura (TIn: This makes the most sense)

The witch of ice and snow huh...

「.... I will say it frankly. My body is not listening to me. It's terrifying.」

I tried saying it frankly.

Well, it really is like that.

As usual, I confess while increasing the distance by running away from Til.

「Thou art honest. However Alice? Thou art going to be working as an adventurer, dost thou not believe thou shalt not meet an opponent stronger than thyself?」

「That's.....」

「As thy opponent is me, it's impossible. After giving up, will thee turn thou back to me? Sure enough, it is just a forgivable rosy situation no?」

「Certainly.....」

Once more, I face toward to the river bank.

During the crucial moments, I hate myself for being unable to protect the people I want to protect.

「Will it be okay if I go at you seriously?」

「Kufu, Thou art afraid I might die?」

「It was a foolish question」

I kicked the water surface and jumped.

During the duration of the flight, I invoke my offensive magic.

Like Til, as I am unable to double cast, it is inconvenient.

「Descend from heaven a blade of light!! Become my sword and tear the darkness ! Lightning ! 」

From my right hand, I release my intermediate tier magic at Til.

Hesitating against Til is ridiculous.

「——Blizzard」

In my lightning's line of fire, Til erects countless walls of ice.

My lightning was stopped by that wall and disappeared before it could reach Til.

「Hou?? You destroyed eight of them huh...」

After looking at the shattered ice walls, Til called out to praise me.

—— However, I was too preoccupied to listen to her.

My strongest attack.

「Careless of me.....」

My attack has been blocked.

Blizzard?

My attack has been block by Blizzard?

That low-tier magic...

No no. Although it is my impression, but it can also be use for defense. What an all purpose magic.

「Watto」

I paid attention to my landing and used magic to reduce my falling speed and stand on the water.

Refocus

I thought to myself as my legs stabilized

「It's cold, it's cold!!!」

Before I was aware, the water surface froze completely and my legs has been lodged in the ice!.

「This time, try receiving my magic.」

I am unable to run away?!

What an S!

「Blizzard」

This time, a single aim!

That amount of power must be huge.

It's bad!

As long as it's similar to the previous AOE, I do not have the confidence to endure it.

I can only rely on simple magic to defend..... *Stabbed*!

「I hate pain!!」

「What the.. If you are a girl, things like this will happen. 」

So you endure it?!

I mean, this has nothing to do with that!

Let's go let's go says Til whose magic is still dancing in her palms as she threatens to proceed attacking me.

So skillful!!

「In the worst case if I don't heal up —— Instant death」

and so I try to surrender

「-ait, wait wait!!」

My pleas were in vain and blizzard was released.

What a slow speed.

For now, let's use this chance?

My opponent has not even moved a single step and she cannot escape from my attack, but even my strongest attack has been blocked.

Despite the hopeless difference in ability, must I move forward and fight?

「——The answer is YES!!」

It's just that my stance looks uncool.

I can only try what I can only do.

Til's Ice magic is terrifying.

However, I have a feeling that my magic is able to break her defense

I gazed at the looming Ice hammer and adjusted my breathing.

「*Break the limit* Light Enchant!」TL: I really want to put bankai

On Til's ice sword, I forcefully enchant it with thunder element.

「——Hou?」

This is my last trick!!

「THUNDERRR ! ! 」

My thunder magic struck the ice bullet.

The ice bullet which was struck by my thunder magic slowed down quickly

However, do not think that that's the end, Til!

「GOOO!!」

I will force back Til's magic!

It's heavy!

clenched one's teeth

Link to the expression

<http://dic.nicovideo.jp/a/%E3%81%90%E3%81%AC%E3%81%AC>

This is the place I will win!

「——Kuhhh.. LIGHTNING!!」

Consecutive invocation

Thanks to the ice foothold, there is no need for double cast!!

My intermediate tier magic has been unleashed and finally the bullet was repelled and was heading toward Til.

However, Til did something like a jump and the bullet was easily avoided.

Til who was floating in the air.

「This much of a chance is over! 」

At any rate, I have such great admiration for Til, no matter what amazing thing Til does is more than I can imagine.

If that's the case, she can naturally cope with such unexpected situations.

「THUNDER!!」

I did not just attack in a straight line.

I caste Thunder around Til who is escaping in the air.

However, I must try my best against Til who can build ice walls in any direction.

It's not over yet

The image I have of Til, will not lose to this kind of standard!

As I could not remove my feet from the ice, I fly towards Til together with the ice.

「How about close combat! Til!」

I clad my palms with lightning and thrust towards Til forcefully.

Thunder palms. TL: wtf.

Let's use my trump, I thought to myself. Once

「——Kufu, I don't hate it.」

「Ha——？」

The smiling Til struck my arm from below as I was thrusting out my palm and diverted the strike.

My stance was destroyed perfectly

Leaving that aside, consecutive invocation has caused me to use magic beyond my limit and I went headlong into the river. Til was really not holding back.

「O guard huh? Wake me up before the preparations of dinner」

Conversely, I was fondly struck by Til's palm in the stomach and lost consciousness.

「Uuuu.....」

「Alice-sama? Have you awakened?」

「This place is.....」

I dazedly confirmed that I regained conscious.

It appears that I am in the tent.

I more or less understand the situation.

For some reasons, I was sleeping on Ilya's knees.

「Haaa.... How long did I sleep?」

Til is too strong.....

From my experience, I felt that no matter what I did, it will be fruitless.

「Because it is just after the sun set, it hasn't been that long.」

「I see. Where are Til and Saira?」

「Oshishou-sama has set out for a bit. As for Saira, she is preparing the meals.」

I see, I must thank Saira later.

Even though the practice had begun in the evening, it's as they say, it really didn't take that long.

「Umm.....」

「？」

Ilya tilted her head curiously as I called out to her.

Ilya is cute.

「Did I look uncool?」

「Kusu」

She laughed!?

「Did you not notice? When Oshisho-sama and ojousama were fighting, she was very happy from beginning to end. 」

「Ehh? 」

It wasn't the case of me being too desperate.

「Additionally, when we saw Alice-sama our hearts burned with expectation. That Ojou-sama will definitely succeed Oshishou-sama someday. I strongly hold that belief.」

「Ilya.....」

「I do not have thoughts like Ojou-sama being uncool and so on.
Please have more confidence, my lady.」

「Uuu.. Such smooth words from Ilya made me troubled.」

「Oh? FuFu, is that so?」

「Yes, it is.」

As I am someone who can be easily cheered up, this is troubling.

However, I myself want to try to live up to that expectation.

I want to be a disciple that Til can be proud of.

I do not want to make Til regret.

That much, I strongly swear in my heart.

Chapter 35

Twin Moons

It was the 2nd day after leaving from Rufin street.

The closer we got to the Royal Capital, the more maintained the highway appeared.

The vegetation was removed, and stones are used to pave the road.

I began to worry about the burden on the horse's legs.

However, the carriage was moving well.

「Thank you, Oji-san. Your vegetables really saved us.」

「It's okay. I received payment for it. During a journey, we need to give and take. 」

There are many carriages moving towards Rufin from here and I had just bought some vegetables from the merchant Oji-san.

Because the merchant uses Ice crystal to preserve the vegetables' freshness and move around, even if it's on the highway, the vegetables stay in stock.

Incidentally, Ice crystals are expensive.

Even cheap ice crystals are around 3000 rook.

The expenses for the journey to the Royal Capital from Rufin causes us great pain, so I will purchase them later.

To some extent, preserved food for journeys are the norm.

For this reason, a different merchant is highly regarded.

「Do you not worry about bandits? Judging from appearances, you look just like a member of the pretty Ojou-chan group.」

Are the legendary people also mixed into the group?

Such folklore.. *Fuahh* made me yawn loudly.

Even if these people get attacked by bandits, they will definitely not do anything.

Something along those lines.

「Yes, Thank you very much 」

「Oh, Ojou-chans, you girls will be headed to the Royal Capital from now on? 」

「? Yes, we are.」

We tilt our heads towards the Oji-san who started whispering to us..

「Anyway, there are rumors flying around saying that recently, the western republic has shown signs of imminent military actions. Before you girls get caught in the war, it's probably better to escape to the countryside.」

「War....」 「戦.....」

War huh... 戦争？

TL: Although it's the not really the same, I believe War is the best

word for both of them.

I know nothing about war except historical records and footages.

The term doesn't feel familiar to me.

「Is that so. Okay, we will be leaving. Oh! Since Ojou-chan is so cute, this is an extra service.」

I smiled as I received a Rinnal from him.

「Th... Thank you」

I bowed towards the sociable Merchant-san and waved at his departing figure.

Speaking of which, do people who bow exist in this world?

Oh my, perhaps it's different here?

「Ilya, is my greeting normal?」

「No it's not. They will believe that it comes particularly from Ojou-sama's village. 」

I see. I look at Saira.

Ping Ping As usual, her hat is moving.

I can't be surprised by the little things she does,

「So... What about the greetings from Ilya's birthplace ?」

「——Let me see.」

As Ilya speaks, she knelt on one knee in front of me.

She placed her own hand on her propped knee, reversed it and took my hand.

TL: *knight kissing a princess*

And ——

「——huh ? 」

TL: *Chuu*

The back of my hand was kissed.

「WAAHH.....」

I could hear Saira's voice from somewhere.

Til, as usual was sleepily rubbing her eyes.

My face reddened.

「This kind of feeling.」

Ilya whose lips separated from my hand, took my hands and grinned at me.

「I... I see. 」

Yes, I know.

I know that!

THAT IS NOT A NORMAL GREETING!

「Alice-sama looks so cute that I'm troubled」

「.....」

I know.

I was played like a fool.

That was one act from the otherwise quiet journey.

That night, while everyone was sleeping peacefully in the tent, I suddenly woke up.

When the number of people increase, I felt the tent became a little cramped. But there are no problems for 3 people to sleep together.

Everyone is so slim.

While I'm at it, because we didn't prepare quilts/bedcovers for three people, Til and I are sleeping together.

How should I say, the person sleeping with Til has already been determined.

My body size... TL: 身体のサイズ的に.....

The next shortest person is Saira. As one would expect, I cannot request her to sleep with someone who she is not acquainted well

with.

Therefore, I have to do it.

It's nothing more than that.

There is no ecchi meaning to it.

「Although it is okay to hug me, but drooling on me is a little.....」

She seems to be sleeping very well.

I gently separate from Til and sneak out of the tent.

After I casually looked into the tent, I notice that Saira is not there.

Ilya is sleeping.

Well, although those two are sleeping soundly there is no danger.

In order not to wake both of them up, I quietly sneak out of this tent also.

The twin moons that seemed to be called Crane and Krisna floated in the night sky.

Saira who sat at a nearby rock gazed at the twin moons.

「Saira」

「Ahh.... Alice-san」

As I quietly called out to her and approached her, *Ping* her neko ears jumped.

Ohh , she removed her hat.

Although she even sleeps with her hat on.

Saira with her uncovered neko ears is more cute than usual.

Tied with a light blue ribbon, *Fuwa Fuwa* her ponytail looked really fluffy.

Compared to her working attire, this is more like her standard hairstyle.

But, it suits her.

「May I sit next to you?」

「Please. Uu, I am embarrassed nyaa.....」

Why...?

Come to think of it, since when was I able to naturally sit next to her? How should I put it, I am already used to it.

I thought as Saira made space for me to sit.

The rock we sat on was perfect in size.

Without holding back, she let me sit beside her.

「Unable to sleep?」

「Yes, I was worried about what Merchant-san said this afternoon.」

「War?」

Her Neko ears *potan* drooped.

Cu..Cute!!!

No no, Serious talk, Serious talk...

「My hometown is on the outskirts of the republic. In a countryside district.....」

「.....I see」

「Yes.... You may know, but the beast tribe has been discriminated in the royal capital. However, if it's the republic, I feel ashamed.....」

「.....」

The expression on Saira's face as she looked at the moon, looked downcast, just like her neko ears.

「Therefore, when the war starts... The ones being forced to stand at the front lines are definitely my kin.」

「.....」

「Ahh.. That!! It's not like it will be okay if the humans are in front! That.... How should I say it?」

「I know. It's because I know. 」

Ponpon I brushed her head.

「A... Alice-san. Are you not concerned about my... ears?」

Is she wondering if I discriminate?

To ask someone like me from the parallel world; I believe the beast tribe is something refreshing to me and it's impossible for me to discriminate against them.

So that's the reason why this kid has never removed her hat.

Master-san is a really magnanimous person.

Just what did you do to make Master-san not get upset and allow you to become independent and join me to go to the Royal Capital?

「I think you look super cute. To be able to become my imouto, I am also super happy.」

「Ahhh.....」

I am sorry, Saira

My eyes are good so your blushing face is completely visible

「That... I didn't meant to hide it.However, after so long, I was able to spill my troubles out completely... My troubles... 」

「FuFu, Please don't worry. My decisions will never change. Just like what I had said to you previously, I want you to become my smith.」

「Alice-san.....」

As Saira hung her head in shame, I on the contrary looked up to the moon.

I ignored the weeping sounds that can be heard and continued to *ponpon* caress her head.

「There is no need to fight against evil, for I will shoulder everything.

This is because Saira is already like my family member.]

I do not intend to console her.

I will definitely not turn back on my words.

I will take responsibility for those words.

「Uuu, Uuu」*crying sounds*

Are there really no evil intents?

I really can't see those kind of eyes. I want to crush that depressed feeling.

「Uuu, *Zuhii*, your clothes, I am sorry 」すびっ~ *sniff* うう~ *cry*

「Ahh, It's okay. It's okay.」

Clinging and crying on me. For the sake of protecting her honor, I allowed her to cry on me..

However, my clothes had already been dirtied by Til's drool.

It has been a long time since I let someone do as one pleases.

After a significant amount of time has passed, Saira finally stood up and laughed as she rubbed her teary-red eyes.

「It's... It's embarrassing nya.....」

「Fufu, probably..」

「Uu.....」

She felt a little better, I guess?

「Ahh, speaking of which, there should be someone who likes Saira, right? 」

「EH!?!」

I remembered Takeshi and Kenji.

Once again, Saira's face reddened.

「Th.. that... From when I was younger, I got along with someone. And he was gentle with me... I was really happy. But... 」

She did not want to bother them huh....

How should I say, I understood her later words.

「You worry too much. 」

Unfortunate.

Takeshi, Kenji

Your actions were definitely not useless

At least, you guys definitely protected Saira's heart.

Ahhh. in this world, there are not many handsome guys.

I must not give up.

「nnhh？」

Hmm?

So, why did Saira come to me?

But as I do not want to annoy her, I kept to it myself.

As I looking at Saira curiously, it seemed like she had something she wanted to convey to me.

She was in a fluster, shaking her head and wringing her hands.

「Er...erm, Th.. That... Alice-san.. In the den.」

「Den？」

About the landslide?

Although in an unexpected life-and-death situation

「.....Because you are like my Onii-chan」

「——」

My heart raced.

「It's.. It's different! Alice-san. You are definitely not tomboyish!! I swear! Not even a single particle of you is manly nya!」TL: if you wish, you can change particle into part.

「I know, therefore please calm down!!. Either way, I feel depressed」

Man, what should I do...

If I throw away my identity, it's also troublesome that way.

「Erm.. The atmosphere is...」

「？」

「Nothing... I like the moons very much」

After changing the topic, Saira once again look up at the night sky.

「Twin Moons？」

Being attracted to it, I too look up at the sky.

「My close siblings seemed really happy chasing after me.If I ever get depressed, I will always look at the night sky to cheer up.」

「I see.」

Not bad, Moon-san

「However, from now on, I will also be here from you. Don't you forget, kay?」

「Yes! Alice-san!」

A fruitful night where I got to know a little more about Saira.

Even though it was a quiet day, that incident was quite special

We are almost at the Royal Capital.

FIGHTING!

Chapter 36

Royal Capital Sentoria

On the fourth day in the afternoon, we reached the Royal Capital

Although we had reached our destination in three days, we arrived late at night and the day was unfortunately over. Especially, as it is said that no one enters the city in the middle of the night.

Nevertheless, the Royal Capital is splendid as expected.

Even the gate stands out from the road.

The huge fortified city is being surrounded by castle walls as far as I can see.

This doesn't mean that the residential areas in and out of the city walls are completely divided.

Those people staying out of city walls seem to be those who work primarily in the agricultural sectors or the primary sectors.

There is not much worth in sightseeing in the rural landscape other than the moving waterwheel and the feeding livestock. If you see the scenery as you travel towards the castle walls, you will understand. The residential areas out of the city walls are also surrounded by a wooden fortress. It's not really a complete castle wall though.

But, it resembles the towns I have visited.

By the way, it is possible to travel to all the way outskirts of the castle walls for free. However, if you wish to pass through the castle walls, it is a must to pay the passage fee.

It costs 100 rook per person.

It seems to be under the pretence of the castle walls' maintenance.

We received the 1 month free entry coupon,

I better make sure not to lose this, little by little our expenses are....

「Ojou-sama. This is the Aluceid kingdom royal capital. Sentoria」

「Ehh?」

As usual, Where am I?

As if she expected my question, she explains to me without me asking anything.

As expected, the origin of the name comes from a special product.

As expected, the red light district is still flourishing.

The streets were filled with the largest crowds i have ever seen in this world

The neatly lined up buildings, made of stones and bricks, many of them are of refined and graceful taste.

Even so, as I thought, building made of wood makes up the majority of the buildings though.

But, the street is laid firmly with rocks.

「Alicee, Choose that lodgings over there. I will go and sell the horses and the carriages.」

Til pointed to the lodging signboard as she speaks.

「Eh!? You are selling them?」

「Aren't we going to be setting down in the royal capital for a little

while? If that's the case, it is better to have lesser baggages. In addition, taking care of them is going to be troublesome.」

「I... I see.」

I unintentionally look at the horses.

It's round eyes seems really cute.

「I see. The next owner will also love you too.」

I caress the two horses whom I have made friends with.

After which, I gave each horse each one of the remaining rinnals.

munch munch as the horses stuff their cheeks.

「You seem really lively. Tarou, Jirou」

「.....They have names now?」

「I just gave them.」

「That's right. Ojou-sama's naming sense is very unique.」

TL: this is a very polite sentence from Ilya.

Although it is regretful, I took only the necessary luggage from the carriage and sold the rest.

「Don't you worry.I will not mistake the selling place.」

Til smiled bitterly at the worried-looking me as she answered.

「Yes.....」

I am really okay, I guess?

I clasp my hands together to wish for the well-being of the horses who are being pulled at the reins by Til.

So after that, I immediately chose the lodgings and brought the luggages into the room.

As one would expected there are no rooms that can fit 4 person. Therefore, I chose 2 twin rooms.

The lodging expenses is 200 rook per person.

Well, the Royal Capital is a little more expensive as compared to Rufin. But, it can't be helped.

The segregation of the rooms is me and Saira.

Ilya and Til.

By the way, how's everyone relationship going?

When we were resting in our room respectively, I suddenly became concerned.

「Say, Saira? How do you find Til?」

「Oshishou-sama?」

Oshishou-sama?

Since Ilya calls her that, it become like that huh.

「She is an elf. Although this is my first time seeing, I am really thankful for it.」

Saira whose eyes were sparkling answered lively.

I see. It seems like there are no problem at all.

「So, what about Ilya?」

「Ehh!? Erm... Sometimes she looks terrifying nya.. The cutlery in the bar... 」

TL note: Ilya stab through the gaps of the guy's fingers in the bar when he tried to pick Alice up.

「Cutlery?」

Did such a thing happen?

「Terrifying?」

「It's.. It's different. Really different! I find that she is a great person. However, I find it difficult to approach her. She is just too perfect.」

Ilya, hard to approach huh..?

Certainly, she has the feeling of a flawless beauty, however...

「Fumu. Certainly, that girl has her malicious moments. Therefore she probably needs some scolding..」

「No. I believe that's is only reserved for Alice-san. Basically, Ilya is kind.」

「EHH!？」

What's the meaning of this malicious intents primarily targeted at me.

「Eto.. Ummm. Alice-san.. I... love you nya.」

「.....」

Hu... Huh?

It seems like I am being confessed by a girl....(ED: beginnings of a Yuri harem?)

「I.. I see. Thank you. I am really happy. 」

However, when I was cooling off my head a little from the girl-to-girl relationship. But to say that you hold some feelings of attraction to me.

No matter what, by my guys's feelings, I am completely captured so I am not trouble.

「Em.. Embarrassing nya. 」

「Although there is nothing to be shy about.」

I caress her head and her neko ears.

What a blissful touch.

After I enjoyed that feeling for a while, I finally released Saira.

Saira collapsed onto the bed faced down and completely hid her head under the pillow.

I guess I played with her too much.

For now, I sat down on the chair in the room and tried taking out the money from the leather bag.

Even though buying a house is unreasonable, i must lease a house for lodging fees are expensive.

Within the 8 gold coins I posses, there are some bronze coins.

It seems like I have spent almost 3 gold coins.

Travel expenses and clothes are purchases that are necessary, therefore, it can't be helped.

However, we have become a large family so just like that 1 gold coin seems to vanish.

In a family of 4, it's normally unreasonable to spend 3 gold coin in a year.

Circumstances have been fairly tough.

Hypothetically speaking, with your own house, if one does not travel a lot, and not eating out everyday and save by having home made meals... Well, personally, I do not dislike it but ... now it has become a must.

Of course, luxury goods are unjustifiable.

Also the loss of 1 gold coin is painful but as expected if I have 8 gold coins, it will be alright for now.

Let's go and save it up in the guild.

Otherwise...

「Tournament.....」

If I were to win, I will gain a sizeable sum of money.

From what I had heard the opening period is about 1 week.

During that period, I must gather information.

Firstly... the guild??

「Saira, I will be stepping out for a bit. Saira can also move around freely till evening. 」

Okay!

「Are you carrying money?」

「I am okay. i am carrying a bit」

「I see, let's meet up at this room in the evening. 」

「Please take care! Alice-san」

I lightly wave back at her and left the room

Okay! What shall I do now?

After being with me for a while, Ilya is also tired and wishes to stretch out in the bed.

As I knocked on the next door, Ilya immediately came out.

「Ojou-sama , where are you going? 」

「I am thinking of going to the guild. Although I had told Saira, but Ilya is also free to move about till evening.」

「If that's the case, I will also be with Ojou-sama. Is there anything

you don't understand?」

N..No.

I think I seem awfully unreliable.

No less than than Onee-chan's excessive care?

One thing or another, as Shion-san let me go out to the street alone.

「It's okay! I am also Til's disciple. I will not be defeated easily. 」

「No, It's not about that. I say that Ojou-sama has a little too much openings... Thanks to your feminine charm, I am worried for you.」

「It's about that!?!」

「There are various kinds of danger in the city, Ojou-sama.」

「It seems like you are preaching to a kid!?!」

My self awareness of being a female huh...

If my feminine side grows, my masculine side weakens. Therefore my spirit seems to be collapsing.

「At any rate, I am moving alone today. Is that okay, Ilya?」

「くすっ、イエス、マイ、レディ」

「*Kusu*, yes my lady」

TL:*short laugh*

I guess she was alerted and quickly concedes to my request.

「... Is Ilya going anywhere? I will pass you some money in advance.」

「I see. I guess I wish to check out the current situation of the royal capital. On the way here, there are some troubling reports. 」

About war huh..

It certainly cannot be disregarded.

If Ilya checks for me, it will be a great help.

「As I don't have any loose change, I will pass u a gold coin in advance.」

「Ojou-sama trusts me too much that it's dangerous.」

Ilya smiles bitterly at me as she took the coin.

「If anything happens, my eyes will get cloudy. Please help yourself.」

「.....Ojou-sama, sometimes you say things that made me startled」

I reflexively reach out my hands towards the slightly blushing Ilya's beautiful face

I cupped her glossy cheeks with my outstretched hands.

「.....If you betray me, I will punish you, you know? 」*love*

「I am looking forward to it a little.」

「Baka」

Although it's regretful, she replaced me and left the house.

After that small incident, the atmosphere seems to become weird.

————— and the incident escalated quickly after I left the left the room moving towards the guild

Ahhh, Ilya is going to be mad....

「Hora!! Please hurry! THE THIEF IS ESCAPING!」

「Ehhh.. Okay.」

Why is it that even though I was not requested, I still chase the thief.

I reach out to the girl wearing a expensive looking dress with a eye catching characteristic pink hair.

Her hair done in a bun to the side.

How should I say. From my one-sided knowledge of present times, that girl certainly.. a noble?

This development is indescribable.. but for now.

「Hey. i am Alice. May I know you name?」

「I am sorry. My name is Francesca Will.. Ahh, No. It's Francesca 」

....Suspicious.

More suspicious than a thief.

「Francesca sama? Nice to meet you.」

「It's okay to address me normally, Alice. Well, please take care of

me]

As it is, I can't understand the situation at all. In order to chase the thief, we ran through the back alleys of the royal capital.

At that time, curiously I felt that it is not a smart move...

Chapter 37

The Capital's Darkness

Moving back time a little.

After I left the room and jogged down the street looking for the guild.

I know it's good if I slow down and walk and look around but as for now there are tons of shops around.

Restaurants, General Stores, Clothing shops, Arms and Protector stores, blacksmithing.. If I enumerate the list, it is going to be endless.

From daily living to adventures, they have everything. That kinda feeling.

However, to take for example the weapons shop, there are countless of them. Trying to compare them is also probably going to be interesting.

But, how can we tell which stores are for beginners?

Is there any building that looks like the guild house?

I can't recklessly enter the buildings as well.

「~ng?」

The incident happened while I was strolling aimlessly trying to find

the guild.

On the street right ahead of me, three guys crashed through the crowd and ran with hats concealing their faces.

Behind them are a bunch of people brandishing their weapons chasing after them.

The escaping suspicious people and the chasing troops of knights?

A large scale round up in broad daylight?

「Step aside!」

Brandishing their knives, the three man group forces the crowd to scatter, paving a way for them.

The crowd parting like Moses' miracle was a strangely spectacular sight. (ED:Moses parts the red sea in the Bible)

Me doing nothing about it is uncool/terrible.

However, raising such a ruckus right here in the middle of the town, where the heck are they planning to run away to?

Approaching the corner, this one time I let it slide.

—— But.. when I saw a kid fall down after being pushed by the crowd, I started to rethink. .

「....To pointlessly injure people, even if there is a reason it's not

something I can accept now is it.]

Using my magic is also bad.

There might possibly be an accomplice hidden among the people in the street.

If that's the case...

I manipulate my magic and kick off the ground.

With my starting agility, the effect is amazing in combination with thunder magic.

In an instant, I caught up with the group of three.

As the path was opened, there were no obstacles. So it was easy.

With that force, I rammed into one of them from the back.

「Guah!!」

In the midst of running away at full speed. the suspicious guy ended up being rammed defencelessly from the back and tumbled spectacularly.

With just a fleeting glance, the remaining two of them quickly ran past him.

“What should I do?”, I thought to myself. But the suspicious guy who tumbled stood up holding a knife. Therefore, I can't move off from here.

I immediately strike his back with my palm.

...Coated with thunder element.

「Gii!？」 TL: SFX

Although I tried my best to go easy on him, he fainted.

I see. Well, something like a stun gun, i guess.

I don't quite understand it and not killing is just perfect for me.

(ED: Alice did not realize the thunder she was using to move would also act like a stun gun)

If I use 「Thunder」 to attack, even if I go easy, I get the feeling that I will kill him.

And thinking about it over and over again, as expected, Thunder attribute suits my character.

Using the image of thunder circulating through your body, you can lower the consumption rate.

(ED: Athletes use visualization, seeing the action in their mind, to better their performance. Same thing here)

It is economical.

If I become proficient in regulating my output, looks like I will be able to cope with drawn-out battles.

What the.. it's easier than expected.

「.....As expected, the opponent during the journey is too tough

huh..」

Completely unable to compete with me huh..

If you were to consider him as standard, I have a feeling I will be able to deal with most issues

「——You! Are you okay!?!」

「Ahh....」

During the time he was stunned, we are surrounded by the chasing party of knights.

From the atmosphere, my eyes happen to meet the girl's in pink hair who seems to be leading those knights.

The colour of her pupils are purple.

Hanging on her eyes, in particular, below her left eye, there is a black mole.

It strangely fits her...

Somewhat erotic~ish.

「This..... Are you the one who did this?」

「Ummm... it was just a coincidence... When I took my leg out it got caught.」

「.....」

「.....」

Such an excuse is not accepted at all?

Not accepted at all huh...

「Restrain this suspicious person and send him back to the guardroom. I will chase after the rest with this person.」

「Ehh!?!」

Although I was surprised, the knights were more surprised than me.

「Hime-sama!?!」

And also, I was even thinking and hoping someone would just blurt it out.

「Let's go!!」

「Wa~!!!」

ED: Shortened form for wait.

I whose arm was pulled, was unable to refuse her. In addition, I was

unsure of the current situation and was added to the hunting party.

And we arrive to our current situation.

「Proceed without hesitation to the back alleys after...those thieves」

Immediately after the capture of that person, we begin the delayed pursuit of the remaining two into the alleys of the royal capital.

Different from the main street, the dim street we are currently in is narrow and surrounded by buildings.

There are not many people but, the tired-looking guy in tattered clothes was huddling in a corner, the poor looking guys in a group whispering with their backs to us. A place which made me super tense.

In front of me pulling my hand is a girl who is worthy of being called brave.

Although Francesca's running speed is not slow, but neither is it fast as well.

Probably, Agility 2?

We will never catch up that way.

Also, no matter how many times you say, running long distance is impossible for me!

「Fr.. Francesca! Please hold on! We will catch up in one shot!」

「Ehh? What do you mean?」

Explaining is hard, therefore, I embraced her.

「Kyaaa!! Buuu. Impolite....」

Before she could finish her words, I used my magic power and jumped.

Due to the sudden lack of footholds, Francesca felt insecure and hugged me too.

It's helpful.

My strength is non-existent, therefore jumping while embracing Francesca is frankly tiring.

For the sake of the girl's honour, she is slim and by no means fat.

ED: Women care about weight hence honor but it's essentially saying she is heavy and carrying her is tiring.

Somehow or another, we have suddenly decreased the distance between us and the thieves.

「Awesome... desuwa~」

Despite not being able to hear her murmur, the thieves turned back to verify the situation. When they saw us, they frantically escape into the side street.

Or rather, isn't that a 90 degree corner!

Drawing close to us is a huge stone wall.

Oh no. There is no reason to be crashing!!

I do not want to experience Til-tono's special training!

「~ey!!!」

I regulate the magic power on my feet and immediately decrease my speed. Like a ninja, I experienced landing on the wall.

And I re-regulate my power again and jump off one more time!

CHECKMATE!

We jumped over the thieves.

「——Now!! Descend, Alice!」

Without waiting for my reply, Francesca jumps off in mid-air to land in front of the thieves.

Landing in a splendid manner, the girl quickly draws her sword.... is that thing what they called a rapier?

She drew out her sleek sword.

「 You have come this far desuwa~! Surrender quietly,if not.... 」

Before Francesca could finish her words, both of them resolved themselves and rush in to attack.

I who doesn't know her true ability, felt a little chill in the guts. But...

「Look and experience the pain!」

Francesca without rushing, calmly took a stance.

And she stepped in earlier than a thief and stabbed his weapon hand!

That accuracy of the stab!

「Gyaaaaaaaa!」

Therefore, without stopping, Francesca rotated her body smoothly like a river while drawing her rapier.

ED: drawing it out of the guy's hand

In a flash, as if she was dancing, she attacks while dodging the attack from the other thief. Making use of her centrifugal force, she visits a strike on the thief's head with the solid looking hilt of the rapier.

Anyway, the opponent's level.... That movement, the accuracy of her judgement.

Francesca.... I am not mistaken.. She is strong.

「Fuu」

The way she lightly swings her rapier and sheathes, it is magnificent.

Is that the knight's conduct?

What a different atmosphere from Shion-san and Ilya.

「Do not shout. Facing me with your weapons, do you regret it desuwa~? Am I wrong?」

Francesca declared coldly to the writhing thief whose hand was pierced

I who landed slightly away from the scene, approach the girl's side after the dust has settled and looked at the thieves.

The thief who fainted after getting hit on the head and the thief whose hat was forcefully removed.

On that head...

「..... The beast tribe.」

Ears that resembles a dog.

As if looking at something unpleasant, I look down at that thief with complicated feelings

During that night, I returned to the room after having dinner and gazed out of the window gloomily.

In the end, I did not go to the guild.

After that, we hand over the two thieves to the knights who were delayed and the round up has finished for now.

Although I was also on the verge of getting interrogated...

「——Inviting you to be a collaborator is rude of me. Alice, thank you for your assistance. 」

——Because of that girl saying so, I became a “no touch” to the knights

What kind of person is she....?

「Alice-san...? Are you feeling down?」

「.... Saira」

Saira saw that I was looking worried, sitting motionlessly at the window.

... On that head are her cute neko ears.

「Say, Saira? Will you come close to me?」

「? Okay.」

The girl who was curiously walking up to me....

「——Captured.」

With a surprise attack, I hugged her.

「Waaa!」

「Fufu, Saira sure is cute.」

Different from Ilya, times when she has an opening are cute.

She seems cuter than her actual age.

「A...Alice-san.... It's embarrassing nya...」

I captured the embarrassed Saira and gently caress her head.

Saira is also feeling good for as it is, she was leaning on me.

Finally she rested her head on my knees as I sat on the chair. It was

as if I was embracing a real cat.

Race does not matter, It is dependent on the person.

I recall the strife in the afternoon.

Eventually, what kind of disturbance was that, the reasons behind it are not understood..

There are probably no words spoken between the different species.

However from the viewpoint of the truth, there is.

.... that's my reason for straining myself to chase after *them*.

Saira is a gentle kid.

And Saira is blessed greatly from the people around her.

However, what if she were to receive ill-will constantly like them?

Anyone would want to return the pain they receive.

That's normal

That's human.

For we are not gods.

Erm... Alice-san. Today, I want to sleep in the same bed as you.

Timidly, Saira inquired

In that upward glance, a nervous expression can be seen.

「——Saira, so pampered. Okay, I am good. 」

「Really!? Alice-san, I love you nya!」

I smile wryly at Saira who is clinging onto me.

This kid looks too much at people's countenance.

I somewhat understood that.

Even if it's a little, I want to let her have peace of mind

.... And, tomorrow I was invited to have a meal with Francesca.

I was given a map and address.

As there was that incident, bringing Saira along is somewhat uncomfortable. But If I were to bring my party members along, I was told to bring all of them..

I have also conveyed the number of people.

Though we have circumstances, as the party was invited, I do not want to leave anyone behind.

In addition, if I cannot bring Saira along, from now on she will be spending a lot of time confined at home.

..... It will be alright.

Saira has no relations with them.

「Saa, Saira, shall we sleep now?」

「Yes, Alice-san!」

「Fufu, I am too excited so I have no more mood to sleep now.」

「I am too happy.... Embarrassing nya.」

TL: *Ilya in the other room*

<https://andthegeekshall.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/fate-kaleid-liner-prisma-illya-2wei-episode-2-21.jpg>

As I stick close to Saira who was being embraced and we move to the bed.

I entered the bed first and roll up the quilt. After which, Saira entered the bed like a small animal.

I didn't experience anything like*dokidoki*

「Good Night, Saira.」

「Sweet dreams, Alice-san」

.....

.....um?

Suddenly, it dawned on me the smooth words that came out of my mouth.

—— Captured?

——So pampered?

「.....」

Hey, am i okay?

The words coming out naturally from me, is not bad.....

As that was a little ecchi, it resulted in an uneasy night for me.

Chapter 38

Speculations

Morning, after breakfast at the dining room in the lodge, we gathered in one of the rooms.

I was invited to a meal by Francesca in the afternoon so I was quickly instructed not to depart for the unfamiliar streets.

The me now, is now combing Til's hair.

「.....And.. Til isn't coming? 」

「No, I'm not. From your words, that person is some sort of a noble? Lining their own pockets, forgetting about their responsibilities, making their citizen impoverished is their raison d'être(reason of existence). Aren't humans just rotten creatures. I am disgusted with them.」

「But Francesca herself has a noble atmosphere around her has nothing of that sort.」

After finishing combing her hair I started tying her hair into her trademark pigtails.

By the way, am I her disciple?

or her maid?

「Nay, tis not I, from what thou sayeth, thy person thou describes is of noble bith? Lining thy pockets with riches not of thee, doing not they duty, for they raison d'etre to gift despair to those of common bith. Tis not a man, nay bt a foul creature to be disgusted with!」

「However, today we are not particularly going to talk about politics.」

It seems like an informal social meeting to show gratitude for the other day.

As it is grandiose, I thought of refusing but refusing the invitation from that kind of person is also rude.

「Tis a girl with high-spirit, putting thought upon the reason of thy invite. Such a maiden witnessed thy power and chose to use it as if her own, yes?」

「Yeah.... After listening to Til's words, I will probably develop a distrust of humans」

「Kufu, for sure」

I do have my own self awareness....

「Well good Dragon lass, do thou understand?」

「Yes, Oshishou-sama. I will protect Alice-sama.」

You are that worried about me??

Speaking of which, Ilya, in order to find out about the ongoing rumors circulating in the royal capital, went to inquire along the streets and buy information from the information broker yesterday. As expected, it seems that the current situation is pretty tense.

Just like what the merchant Oji-san had said.

The friction with the republic has *bore fruit*, or discrimination, which is the reason for the tense situation.

As the republic is a country which insists on freedom and equality, it seems like one is able to choose the reasons as they like for their official stance.

(ED: they pick a cause and fit the reasons behind it. Think United States politics)

As I thought, the point is the beast tribes huh..

Due to that, the extent of comparing the freedom in Western Republic to the discrimination faced in the royal capital made the beast tribes feel ashamed.

Putting the cart before the horse is also a good thing i guess but that's not a reason.

(Ed: the cause of the friction is the discrimination, because of the friction there is discrimination. A "self fulfilling prophecy" so to speak.)

As Saira warily disguised herself with a hat yesterday, it seems like she did not receive any harassment.

「However, wearing the hat... everywhere... is somehow or another suspicious.」

I glanced at Saira who is still wearing her hat now.

「About that, Ojou-sama. From the money I was entrusted to, I had used it to purchase Saira's hairband. I think it's somewhat necessary. 」

After speaking, Ilya took out the wrapped item from the desk and passed it over to me.

As the same time, she passed me the remaining change from yesterday.

After breaking the gold coin, it became a huge amount of silvers and copper.

To what extent did she go to persuade someone to write a handwritten memo.

「I think you are too forward but....」

「Ilya... Magnificent!」

As expected, I want to hug her, carefully and gently.

But due to the public gazes, I will not do it.

「Saira, try using it?」

「Y..Yes.. Is it okay?」

I peek at Ilya's expression and timidly move closer to Saira.

「Ara? I think it's perfect for Saira ? i wish that you will try wearing it.
I chose it for you.」

Ilya smiled kindly at her.

She is really ... kind?

Well, even if it is not said, we know that she is kind.

But she is definitely mischievous.

「Saira , will you stay put? I will tie it for you.」

「Ye...Yes.. 」

Sparkling as she comes over, I unwrap and took out the hairband to tie her hair up.

The tinge is a warm light brown so the embroidery is cute.

It's a cloth type headband.

If it's attached, will be it become a turban?

(Ed: meaning the ends are left to dangle down the neck/back rather than tying them up into the headband)

As it is wide, it substituted as a hat to cover Saira's ears.◦

The appearance of her ponytail unexpectedly suits her.

I can feel the girl power of Ilya!

「Ho.. How is it?」

「It suits you! You are cute!」

「Ehh, it fits you really well.」

The headband substitute for the hat really fits her well.

Different from the unfashionable hat used to cover her ears, it looks truly fashionable and it will not stick out like a sore thumb from the crowd.

However, strictly speaking, wearing nothing and entering in naturally is the best option.

In any case, with this, our preparation is done.

「Well, shall we go? What about Til?」

「She is sleeping」

「Throughout the day!?!」

Talking about it is useless.

This is called living in luxury!

And I had just tied her hair up nicely!

「...Well , it's okay. So we are only left with the formalities of tonight」

「Umu」

With three in a company, we face out back towards Til who is yawning loudly.

「——Alice, do not be used.」

「Eh?」

When I turned around, Til has completely slipped into the bed,

If I were to say as I thought it to be, it would be so, but...

Using the map received from Francesca, the place we finally arrived at is a magnificent mansion.

Or rather, the place we are now, we can see everything else except the gate.

When we pass the invitation letter from Francesca to the doorkeeper, it was immediately conveyed *to her*

TL: there is no subject. it just says immediately conveyed.

After being guided around the huge garden, we reach a chalk-colored building.

The garden is being well maintained and there are multi-coloured flowers blooming in the flowerbed.

How to say, I have been invited to such an inappropriate place.

Ilya's usual calm atmosphere remain as it is.

Saira followed close to me nervously.

Umu, this is where I can do nothing else but imitate Ilya.

For example, my heart is jumping like a rabbit for now.

「——Please wait for a while. Likewise for Alice's companions」

*Do note that these are servants talking. They talk in a very polite tone.

In the guest room is where Francesca is.

But naturally, she is not wearing a sword now.

Due to her figure in a sparkling dress, she immediately transforms into a noble from yesterday's *battle shoujo*.

「Francesca. Thank you for inviting me today. Ahh, noo, Francesca - sama」

As I was being glared at by a supposedly expired butler, I corrected myself.

Butler-ish

Excessively beautiful but for that reason, the grim face is terrifying

Ikemen ?

Is the butler a Ikemen?

「Alice, I had told you yesterday no? It's okay to address me without any honorifics.」

「Ye...yes」

Even if you are okay with it, it seems like there are many characters who do not think it's nice, no?

「Alice」

「Fr...Francesca.... sama」

The honorific, the honorific!

Francesca and the honorific!

That butler please.. by any means!!

With a glance that can kill people, looking at me!

「Muu! How old are you, Alice?」

Francesca who is puffing her cheeks inquired.

「15 years old.」

「Maa! I am also 15 years old desuwa~」

With a sparkling expression and rushing into approaching me, the girl was gently restrained by the butler.

「Hime-sama, the preparation for meals/lunch has been completed. Please proceed to the table.」

「Muu... if it's that sort of pal.」

With the exception of the person herself, I was not welcomed.

..... I am getting tired.

It is a soiree which requires table manners

But, as for me who was well-informed with miscellaneous knowledge, I did not say that this set-up is easy!

Regarding information, my heart was pounding hard as I partake in the meal.

Frankly, things such as taste is secondary.

「How is it, Alice? Is it tasty?」

「Ye...Yes. It is really tasty.」

Each time being asked for my thoughts and so on , I broke out in cold sweat.

I am getting tired.

I am not able to resist my respect for Ilya's prim and proper face.

Her manners are also perfect.

The problem is Saira.

For some reason I have a feeling that I am unsure if it's good. When I look at her, she looks like she can't bear to be here.

「Saira, is that your name? Do not mind, please eat the food as you like. The long awaited lunch, if each and everyone of you enjoy it, it will be good. 」

Francesca followed up so it's was really helpful.

Yeah, personally, as expected, this girl has a likeable personality, i guess.

But the butler standing behind gave a twitch.

Well, it's preferred rather than being told about his unnecessary disagreement.

That butler view me as something like Ilya, i guess?

「Well now, There are also other reasons to call out for Alice. I have a small request for you.」

Once everyone has finished ...the meal, we are having after lunch tea? A little early?

For the time being, while the red tea was being served, Francesca

began to talk.

「Judging from what I saw/witnessed. Alice skills are outstanding」

From that words, I saw Ilya's eyes narrowing beside me which made me understood.

I knew that, at those words, Ilya, who was sitting besides me, narrowed her eyes and looked at me

「But I do not have any recollections of doing anything」

「Humble desuwa. Who else is able to use magic in that manner ? As far as I know, only a handful bunch is able to use magic at will. “Ice and snow” or “Magic flame” to that extent, just to say desuwa~」

Ooo, at such a place, my master name is.....

When the person who I like was being praised, why did I become happy?

However, I were to give a single comment, I believe I do not have the level to match with them.

However, i do not know who “Magic flame” is

Yes.

The application of magic is not normal?

If that's the case, I was too careless.

For Til did not even say anything.

....No, Ilya did not say anything as well. This is due to me lacking in general knowledge. Well, I didn't believe that I do not understand that sort of thing. That kind of pattern huh?

「.....」

I secretly look at Ilya.

Her face is full of smiles.

——Ojou-sama, didn't I say it before?

Such an eye-contact.

「.....We...well. As I do not have that amount of ability that you have proclaimed exaggeratedly, that little flattery is making me embarrassed. 」

It can't be helped if my secret is out.

The way of *hiding my claws* is uninteresting

I want to live carefreely in this world.

「Alice has a likeable personality desuwa~. Ever since the time I saw you, I felt that it was fate. 」

「What a ter..terrific simple fate...*Hiih*。」

I should stop saying unnecessary things for I am being stared to

death.

That butler has a ferocious impression.

Francesca smiled bitterly and in order to control her subordinates, she raised her hands.

The butler's expression dulled.

..... What the, she knew?

Francesca is also unexpectedly shrewd.

「Speaking of the favour, Alice. I want you to take part in the battle tournament. As my representative」

「Battle Tournament?」

I don't think I will answer that here.

「Aye, to tell the truth, I'd rather participate myself, but I have almost no freedom of choice on my life 」

As if she is tired, Francesca shrugs her shoulders

I can see the displeasure from the butler who is restraining himself at the back.

「.....So it's come down to a representative. Rather than me, whom you know from just yesterday and today, shouldn't there be other capable people closer to you? 」

「Strictly speaking, I am not able to conclude who is able to receive my confidence or not. If I take time, I might be able to do so, but it's one week to the battle tournament.」

Hmm?

Such strange words.

The battle tournament is not something that takes place unexpectedly today or yesterday.

Moreover, she was unable to prepare accordingly for the event.....

In short, recently, a sudden change in event?

..... Suspicious.

「The butler behind me who is too rude is worthy of my trust but he will not leave from my side.」

Francesca added in a bitter manner in some way..

But the butler did not change his expressions even once.

「In the battle tournament, either way I do have some interest but.....」

I cannot make a judgment now.

「Alice, I understand your anxiety. This is also me with a one-sided request. If our positions were reversed, I will not be able to agree obediently as well.」

The troubling thing is this.

Francesca who totally knew all the weird conditions to it upon making the request.

I dare say, immediately after my rejection, she have another plan no?

Because of that those unrelated people have hardships. In addition, they will have a guilty conscience.

..... Crafty.

「——Excuse the impertinence of an unrelated party」

*Ilya is saying very very very politely.

When I was lost, Ilya who was keeping silent until now opened her mouth.

In addition, Francesca did not even get angry and was waiting with a small smile.

「You are called Ilya?」

「Yes, I am Alice Ojou-sama's aide. Please pardon my intrusion into the discussion.」

「I do not mind desuwa~」

Francesca seems to nod in a happy manner.

It seems like from the start, she has also placed her sights on Ilya.

「First of all, Alice Ojou-sama originally has planned to take part in the battle tournament. Will there be some merit to be Francesca-sama 's representative?」

「Such fitting words. If Alice were to be my representative, I will prepare one platinum coin. That is not limited to winning the tournament. It is just solely her agreement desuwa~」

Platinum coin!?

What the!

「I see, It is increasingly becoming more suspicious.」

Ilya's terrifying pleasant smile was directed at Francesca.

..... Oi Oi

The butler is also become terrifying too?

「I am preparing the reward that matches the risk desuwa~」

「Then, second point. Can you enlighten us about the specific risk pertaining to it please?」

「That is a secret desuwa~ . I want you to understand that that ambiguity has been included in the reward」

additional rewards for the ambiguity

「FuFu, I see.」

Don't give a completely understood look, Ilya!?

Moderately, Moderately!?

「Third Point, in the first place, may I inquire about this request's rough objective ?」

With this question, Francesca gave a single clap.

With the cold look which Ilya is giving during the exchange, the expression of the girl who is answering in a happy manner turn somewhat serious.

「In order to grill the Republic 『Dog』 desuwa~」

Saira *bikuri* shivered.

And then she directed a cold gaze at Francesca.

This person.....!

「.....I see, I have considerably understood your 『Objective』. It seems like you know that Ojou-sama is 『Someone's』disciple 」

「That person has no intentions to hide herself, no? 」

Francesca calmly replied.

Ahh~ , certainly

Certainly....

As long as her ears are not hidden.

Well, that sort of thing is in the same direction as my objective, carefreely living.

There are also immigration checks when we enter

I understand that my looks and appearance stands out from the rest.

In addition, yesterday's incident.

If it doesn't not leak out, it will be strange.

「Alice,I have a strong interest in you. That successor to Einshaura has appeared. What sort of event has happened?」

TL: this is very vague. It literally meant. That sort of something has happened.

「 ? 」

Til's family name?

..... No?

Is there some special meaning to it?

「..... Even if I was baited, Til will not stir. As she is as always sloppy.」

「Fu, Fufufufufu! That ice and snow.. that sort of.....」

It seems that for some reasons I had struck a point.

Does Francesca know Til?

「Sorry for my rudeness desuwa~. Fufu, however Alice, after talking until this point, I may not be able to gain your trust. But it is true that I find Alice herself very likeable desuwa~ 」

「But you have just met me

「Things like meeting amiable people are really non-existent. I do not have that sort of time no? To entrust trouble to someone in advance is hard but, I want to be friends with you. Isn't that shameless of me? 」

「Friends.....」

あれ？

Are?

(ED: read Ar-eh || implied meaning like Ehh?)

I, in this world have friends?

Onee-chan is Nee-chan.

Ilya is somewhat different.

Saira is like my imouto....

Oya....?

「That sort of Alice is very desirable desuwa~」

「Friends.....」

For some reason, Francesca laughed strangely.

Ilya gave an astonished expression.

「Well... I understood. For friendship, just this once, I will listen to

your selfishness.」

The butler returned my answer with an intense stare while Francesca on the contrary is sparkling.

Ilya gave a small sigh.

「Alice! I am really honoured desuwa~」

Leaning forward his body, even now from the opposite side of the table. As expected, I am being warned not to do something by the butler.

「Just this one time.」

Oh dear oh dear....

You will never know what might happen

Although I do not quite understand but, the remuneration is definitely enticing.

The Battle Tournament, I will do it!

Chapter 39

The beginning of Hope

「Is it okay, Alice-sama? It was not necessary to undertake her request. 」

「Well.. as I understand. So, please do not show such a grim face, Ilya.」

On the way back, it takes a while to get back to the lodge so Ilya draws close to me.

Calm down Calm down.

Francesca's desire is to have her own representative getting well-known in the limelight.

In short, it is that sort of thing.

If that happens, it will be a power struggle in the battle tournament.

Perhaps, the influential person who Francesca is battling against is also planning to send in their representatives.

「This country is probably rougher than I thought. Do you have yesterday's report, Ilya? 」

「.... Certainly, I am hearing information that several influential people are aiming at the next regent seat 」

「I am certain that the king has passed away several years back and now the young prince is in his place or so?」

「Yes, Prince Dioru. The regent is Romasu-tono. As he is a senior, the trust from the late king is deep and in addition he is a devoted retainer. 」

「Francesca is that Romasu-dono granddaughter, I am not wrong right?」

「Francesca Wilmington. There is no mistake that she is Romasu Willmington's granddaughter」

I do not think that you alone have a capable right-hand man, Francesca.

Well, by no means, it's only me till now who has not thought of using my free time to collect information.

Ilya's too cool

The memo's news material, saying what was happening concisely.

Thanks to that, I felt at ease for not being a clown dancing in Francesca's palms.

.... Well, but i cannot guarantee that our movements over here will be grasped by them.

「She is one of the big three families right?」

「Yes, Austria Family, Sacramento Family, Wilmington family. Presently, the situation is that they are fighting for power in the kingdom. 」

The decayed royal family huh...

Til has sharply talked about it but I sort of trust her a little more

「The guy behind Francesca?」

「I am really sorry. I do not know him.」

「It can't be helped. It's only 1 day after all.」

That's far as Ilya is concerned, I am sure.

Although she is like a ruffian, now she is good.

「Francesca's house is the moderate faction against the war with the republic. That is the truth, am i right? 」

「Even if it's a little, that seems to be Romusu-tono's will.」

「That Romusu-tono is bowing down due to illness. but this is the current situation given」

Ilya nodded her head.

「Autria family are belligerent die-hards. As for Sacramento family's current situation, I do not know much.」

「However, both head of the families are healthy 」

「Yes. And the Wilmington Family. Francesca-sama's parents died several years back due to an 『accident』」

「Francesca's motive.... revenge?」

「There is a possibility.」

This is an extreme display of power.* and strongly disapprove it *

Even if you think about that, it is no wonder. But....

Compared to that, I am worried about the last few words that Francesca talked about just now.

「.....The republic dog. Ah! I am sorry, Saira,. I do not have any detestable meaning in my words!..」

「No! I understand, therefore I trust Alice-san nya.」

「Thank you, Saira.」

Saira who is walking opposite of Ilya, shook her head forcefully.

TL: I am not sure how to say about this. it is something like this
*Ilya*Alice*Saira*

In order not to betray this trust, If there is something I can do then I must do it?

I do not want to see the beast tribe bearing the full brunt of the war etc.

No, in reality it does not stop with just that.

「If the republic spy enters..... the Austria family?」

「If there are premises of the republic starting a war.」

「Premises huh....」

If the republic were to start a war, do they think that they will win?

There is such an overwhelming difference in power?

I had just came into this world, therefore, I do not quite understand relationships between the countries.

「I am still lacking of tons of knowledge.」

Literal TL : he is full of holes le lacking of things he doesn't know.

Trying to poke around the bush takes efforts too. 「Ojou-sama. Are you really taking part in the battle tournament?」

「The surface power struggle, I will take part. Francesca's battle will

be the other side no?」 TL: The author uses 表 and 裏 which can be depicted as both sides of the coin, namely heads and tails. It can also be describe as front or back. Therefore, in this case, Alice is trying to say she will be the one out in the open while Francesca will be in the shadows.

「I understand what you had said. However, in the first place is that lady a trustworthy person?」

「Fufu」

「? 」

Ilya tilted her head at my laughter.

「I am sorry, well? Probably Francesca had also said the same thing.」

That butler indeed seems to have said that.

「Wilmington Family is one of the big three. That young lady is Francesca. I do want to avoid the war. Using this chance is effortless no? 」

「If Ojou-sama were to say so. 」

By chance huh. But just because it's a coincidence, I can't just not

worry. The uproar caused by Francesca is a little hard to fathom. When you think aboutThe flip side of the flip side and so on, to some extent you will become someone like Til who do not trust humans.

「As for now, I am Wilmington's representative. I will exemplify the power * on the light side*. Trickeries on the dark side will be taken care of by Francesca.」

「But, Ojou-sama should also reconsider skirting around danger.」

TL: the author uses consider in a very polite manner.

「You will protect me, Ilya?」

「It's probably worth doing, I guess.」

Ilya smiled bitterly.

At most, I will make use of the 『Free』status I have in my palm,

TL: Alice is not a slave, a free person. she is talking about using her free status to become a slave when facing defeat.

So It's mutually beneficial

Well, that platinum coin sure is very fascinating/ enticing.

「And, in this current topic who are the people you are worried about?」

「There are two people.」

「Fu~n 」

Francesca?

Or....

「Ojou-sama too」

「Ojou-sama too. is unexpectedly a terrifying person. I thought so today.」

Fufufu~!

Tremble more in fear and you might as well respect me! Ilya!

「Ah, no . As expected it is probably your imagination.」

「..... desuyone.」

TL :I see(In a dejected manner)

By the way, as I am participating in the battle tournament, I want to win.

I do not plan to say something like...either victory or defeat is fine by me.

I will mow down lined-up enemies.

Besides, preparations for the event is important.

For those people who neglect preparations, the victory goddess will not smile at them.

And then the number one thing I lack as of now, is—

Weapons!!

Let's go back to the lodge quickly and *try to* start the strategy meeting

To check my condition, i slammed my hands on the desk.

It hurts badly!

「Ow, Ow..」

Only Saira moderately approve.

As for the remaining two.

「Oshishou-sama, my apologies. I am attaching.*probably her pigtails*..」

「It bothers me not, thy girl has doeth as I hath expected. It shall at least not bore thee.」

「Ehhh. About that.」

「Over there! I can hear you from here!」

Please do not boldly gossip bad things about me behind my back!?

Til who is lying on the bed, for some reason is lying on Ilya.

..... This person is really sleeping the whole day?

「.....Anyway, Do not look back at today's important incident. Even if you look back at it, you will not receive anything. 」

「Is that right?」

「.....」

Ilya is cold.

「*cough* Sorry for the interruption. Ojou-sama, please do not give such a depressed face. I am Ojou-sama's shield The words that I swore to you is never a lie.」

「Will you come with me?」

「Of course.」

「Even if it's to do stupid things?」

「You will look cute desuwa~」

「..... If I were to say you are dark?」

「I am dark. My lady.」

Naturally, her hands move towards a chest, as though she was taking an oath while proclaiming this to me.

Even if I make enemies in the world, I feel that I can still live on.

「Ehh.... We are sticking out? O-Shishou-sama....」

「Leave it. Thou will get use to it.」

「I.. I see.?」

Thanks to Saira's bewildered voice and Til's yawn, we returned back to reality.

No No, but I do not plan to lose track and followed with the flow.

「(SFX: cough), At any rate, I am making the job of finding weapons my first priority. According the info I am having now, the weapons in the battle tournament are one's responsibilities no?」

「Yes, quite so.」

I must visit every weapons store tomorrow to get my weapon, but....

I look at Saira

*Pikon*Her ears jumped.

Already used to Ilya and Til or not, Saira is wearing neither the hat nor the hair band in the room.

「Saira, if there are no facilities for the blacksmithing, is it impossible to do anything?」

「No! It's not. More than that, the raw materials are an important factor.」

「For instance, if only you have the raw material in this room, is it possible?」

「It's possible nya!」

As it is one's field of expertise, Saira's eyes are sparkling.

「Eee, So the types of facilities we saw at rufin street, what are those?」

「Those are stoves meant for mass production. He also does kitchen

knife, machete and so on. 」

「I see..... Those lining up in the weapons store with no inscriptions, perhaps they are?」

「Yes! We use that furnace to do mass production! Of course, if there are no raw materials, it is impossible. Therefore, there are limitations.」

I see i see.

「Certainly, if I were to have a furnace, I am able to contribute to Alice and co's revenue, but.... 」

「Ng~. Well.. about that. Let's think about that first. As for current situation, I want Saira to build our weapons and armour and so on.」

「Ye... Yes! Please give me an assignment! 」

She seems really elated.

I become attracted to her smiling face.

「Alice-san, what are you using now? As expected, is it a rod?」

「As i do not have strength, heavy items are impossible for me....」

However, it's like that.

I have to think about it.

Chapter 40

Preliminary Preparations

I entrust the matter of gathering raw materials to Ilya and Saira and I have things I want to investigate.

As I do not have time, I must walk in an efficient manner(I must go quickly). * I must not dilly dally.

Thinking about that, in the neighborhood just slightly out from the main street, I turned up at the slave firm.

In regards to buying and selling of slaves, it is considered, for the time being, a respectable business.

Therefore, it is not built alongside the brothels in the side streets.

At the nearby reception after entering, I tried to inquire whether or not Betrand-san is around.

Just as I thought, he is in his room.

Therefore, I requested to have my name conveyed over to him. I was led into a room bigger than the one in Rinnal a while back——

「Well well. Ojou-sama. It's been a long time.」

「Betrand-sama. It has not been a long time.」

「Fu, that's true」

After returning an appropriate reply, I sat on the opposite couch.

As usual, Bertrand-san with his eyepatch is full of vigour, I reflexively look around at the surroundings.

「Salt-san's job has finished. As he was requested as an escort to this street, if you search for him, I believe you will be able to meet him.」

Fu~n Is Kuro Zukume also here? Kidal translated him as black but well, the literal translation is Kuro Zukume which is completely black.

「And, may I know your official business? Is that useful to you?」

Giving me with a scheming look with his eyepatch on, I pulled myself together.

「If it's Ilya, she cannot be more useful than what she is now. I am not here for such dull businesses like customers complaining and so on. 」

「Is that so. I am sorry for my rudeness. Ojou-sama」 「No, The things I want to ask are the inside stories of this royal capital. Bertrand-sama, don't you seem to know a lot about this neighbourhood? 」

「Business related stuffs, I plan to grasp an understanding in it.」

The way of a snake is to talk to a snake. I am not particularly looking down on him.

「Recently, your beast battle slaves are not selling that well, aren't they?」

「Fumu....」

He bowed his head in assent and his eyes are covered with the eyepatch. Same as usual, this Ossan who is difficult to read.

「That direction, if possible, I look forward to hearing from you.」

「Since before, it is said that trust is an important point when doing business.」

「I remembered. 」

「Something like confidentiality, I believe you can treat it as an imagination?」

Can you treat it as an imagination?

I believe that you can imagine what's called obligation of keeping secrecy?

Although the things I am doing now is vicious, this is a sense of duty.

Without that, his business will not succeed huh. The extent of my admiration is two-sided.

Professional huh. If I try to peek whether this person is stocking up or training, i will be experience something like a nightmare.

「Then, let's talk about business.」

With great interest, his eyebrows was raised above his eye patch.

「For now, I wished for some beast battle slaves. Sex and age etc does not matter. It must be a battle-capable beast slave. Do you have them on hand right now?」

「Fufufufu~. Ojou-sama is truly a terrible person.—The answer is no.」

As I thought. Well, you don't say. Elves and dragon tribes are rare. Not to mention, this is the royal capital slave firm. It's not something like the countryside in Rinnal. As far as it's concerned, I am not able to do some preparations.....

「Well, as the sales contract has been taken care of. Moreover, is there anyone who is fulfilling the shipping of slaves around?」

「.....If I were to say there are?」

「Negotiations with the direct purchaser, discussions of the possibility of transferring over of *ownerships*」 The wrinkles on his face deepens and smiled quietly. 「May I know the purchaser's name?」

「Ojou-sama, You are truly an interesting lady.」 「Your answer?」

「No. An act that goes against my virtue is without saying not beneficial. 」

「As expected Bertrand-sama.」

That eye patch is so good. My personal valuation of his character is soaring through the roof, on the contrary.

「Although you had spared your precious time to me,,it appears that I had inevitably spoken selfishly. 」

Fu, to respond to a ladies selfishness is part of a gentleman's ability/job.

「Ara? May I think Bertrand-sama as a gentleman? 」

「Now then.... speaking of which, just a few days ago, it seems that there is a person with good appearance who visit my business. Of course, with this sort of business, it is natural that those who come here are rich. However, this person by chance seems to a special class of customer. Ah, My heart is burning. 」

He twisted his head as if feigning ignorance.

「Fufu, I say your loose tongue will destroy you? Mister Bertrand. 」

「In that situation, it's cause of Ojou-sama's beauty. 」

「Really, you twist your tongue really well.」

I see however. After that, we chatted for a short while and I left the firm. Is the gathering of raw material going well? As Ilya is around, I believe they won't do something reckless. But if there aren't any in the street, they must go out to the nearby harvesting areas to harvest personally.

Well, Ilya is different from me, therefore Saira will probably not be exposed to danger. When I was in deep thoughts, I bumped into someone.

Or perhaps I should say, that person suddenly jumped out from the side alley so as one would expect, I couldn't avoid it.

The other party fell grandly and seems to have grazed her knees and began *wan wan*crying. A girl whose age is so young that I might be able to count her age with 1 hand. Pitch black short hair.

Her wet eyes are also black. This trait.... No no, more than that.

「Wawa, I am sorry!? I was looking away!」

「Onii-chan~~~ It hurts~~~ Eguuu!」

The surrounding people were gathering at a distance looking at her bawling. The place I am presently at is different from the main street. As it is a little run-down, there is few pedestrians traffic. Anyhow, I must treat her grazed knee. 「Pain pain go away~」

「Aaaaaah... A..re?」

When I crouched down to apply heal on her, the grazed knee healed at once.

With the wound healed in the blink of an eye, , the girl now have a incredulous face.

「Onee-chan.... Magician- san?」

Although there is no mistaking it, the nuance like word magician that the kid uses is like a fantasy where someone came out from a fairy-tale.

「Yes.. Onee-chan is a BIG magician. I am a disciple of a magician.」

Why am I saying such nice truth here to the girl

「Deshi? Onee-chan, Deshi, what's that?」

TL: Deshi is the romanji for disciple. That girl don't understand.

「It means nibbling here completely. ... yeah. That's Deshi.」

「Fueeee, Cool~」

Such a pure girl. Ahh, disciple is not particularly cool? It seems like I have provided her with wrong information.

「——Oi, what are you doing.」

「Ahh, Onii-chan!」 When a guy's voice rang out from the same road, the girl frantically stood up and jump towards him. I too stood up and confirm the owner of the voice.

「.... Ahh~ Ehhh. Even if you do not glare at me like that, _____」

「That's normal.」

「I see.」

As usual, the expressions on his eyes are bad. ——Kuro Zukume。

「It seems like this brat has troubled you.」

「Kyahaha」

Gushi Gushi as Kuro Zukume caress the girl's head gently and the girl happily smiled. It was an unexpected scenery.

「As for the collision, I am also in the wrong. So I am sorry?」

「No! Deshi is cool! Onii-chan!」

Deshi, it is established.

「By the way, Salt-san, what are you doing here? Kidnapping?」

「.... What the hell are you talking about?」

Are, was I mistaken? As I couldn't understand the relationship of this girl and Kuro Zukume at all, it's beyond doubt.

「Ehh.. That so called high-level play?」

「You.... what the hell are you talking about.」

Onii-chan is not a play?

「You don't understand me....」

「It's your remarks.」

When we are continuing our unproductive chatter, the girl rammed into me.

「Wa!! Quite a tomboy she is!」

Now, she is hugging my legs.

「Deshi ~, Onii-chan's lover?」

「Ehh? This person has an interest in humans?」

「Do you want to die, bitch.」

「Kyahaha, Onii-chan is angry~」

The girl hides behind me, using me like a shield Calm down.

「.....Such a cute kid. Your imouto?」

「.....Something like that.」

With a little sad look in his eyes, Kuro Zukume replied curtly.

「If this kid is with you, it's better not to chase after Libra.」

「It is not related to you.」

「Do you think you and Til will win against her in a battle?」

「.....」

「Perhaps, that level....」

If it's possible, I do not want to see it. For the reason, I ran all the way to the royal capital. However, in the Royal Capital, yet another trouble pop out. This is really... After Kuro Zukume sank into silence, I saw Francesca's butler coming out from the side street.

Yet to notice me here? If that's the case, I want to get through without him noticing! I pulled Kuro Zukume's hand and stuck close to the wall.

With my back pressed against the wall, Kuro Zukume who is in front of me pressed both his arms onto the wall in a bid to hide me. *Kabe don* With this, no matter what the butler does, I will be in his blind spot. I was under Kuro Zukume's arms, so it gently became like this.

「That person, what is he....」

Francesca is not present. Moving separately huh. The butler who came out from the side street nochantanly look around the area. Although he look over here for an instant, he glanced with uninterestedly and walk towards the main street. Nothing is exposed. I guess.

When I was observing the situation for a short while, a guy who wore a hat, thrust something into his pocket and rush out from the same street as if bursting out into the sunlight. That guy looks over here one more time and thanks to the inpregnable black wall, it seems like my existance was not leaked out.

For some reason when my sights were cut off, I was glared at by a so-called face who was about to erupt. Iya, somehow when I saw that kind of look, something comes to mind. When I couldn't see that guy anymore, I finally gave a sigh.

I was worried/nervous. I looked up to the place where the voice was coming from. A closeup face with a terrible expression. Not to mention since before, the looks on his eyes are bad.

「What is this about?」

This? I look at our current situation. With the back pressed against the wall, Kuro Zukume in a *kabe don* posture.

「..... What about it?」

Normally, a girl would *kya kya* and make a huge ruckus. Somehow or another, he seems happy. It seems like he does not good gentlemen education? TL: help plz. (Rumanshi: It seems as though he isn't educated as a gentleman well.)

「Are you tempting me?」

「Ehh? Salt-san, you have interest in females other than small girls? 」

「.....」

「.....Offended」

Before he completed burst out in anger, I quickly slip out from his arms. Unable to nurture friendships between the opposite sex? Although it's completely okay for me, the other party....

「You are offended....」

Now Kuro Zukume who began slashing at me. However thanks to him chasing after a female, he did not spring onto me. If you come, come! Policeman, this person! I just got to say this. But, well.. the worrisome job has been investigated, yet another troublesome thing has popped out.

It has already been 3 days so it's crucial. After hypothesizing about the possible scenarios, I will do my best to challenge them. 「Onii-

chan's. Offended~」 Ahh, it has been established. Sorry....

Chapter 41

The Battle Tournament

Concerning entry itself, Francesca seems to have already settled it. After we were done at the Colosseum's reception, I was quickly sent to the waiting room.

The waiting room is wider than I thought and it is perfectly suitable for the blood-thirsty opponents.

In the battle tournament, first the preliminaries are held, and then it moves into the final event.

Only 16 people will remain at the finals.

There will be selections from A block to H block and only 2 of them will win and advance in their respective block.

There are 10 people separated into each block respectively and those who can rise up to the final selection are truly the strong people.

Negligence is forbidden.

I was assigned by the reception to Block A with a Representative badge being attached onto my chest.

So, with this, I become something to grant Francesca's wishes but....

Not just the Battle Tournament, the danger around me and risk will

jump by leaps and bound.

After the preliminary rounds has ended, I will collect my advance pay.

「My Apologies, Are you Wilmington family' s representative?」

I turned around towards the voice.

A refreshing young guy.

With red hair with grey eyes.

A guy who has the airs of a prince?

「Yes. You are?」

「I am Reynold Sacramento. Was entered into the C block 」

Their family member came out in person!?

.... Wa, if I were to compare him with Francesca, the requirements are simple huh.

Other than being a girl, I have no other connections with Francesca.

「.....I am Alice. Francesca's friend」

「I see. Because of that girl's character, I thought she will come out

personally, but... I am relieved.」

Oh?

「You too should give up before you get seriously injured. Such a pitiful girl like you being sent off to the battlefield, I am troubled.」

「I am greatly obliged by your concern. But I am not here to play. I am here to show my power, as the girl's friend.」

「I see... Then, I will not hold back.」

After saying that, the prince places his hands on his chest in a knight manner and stands at attention as a polite greeting and leave.

The specialized weapon hanging by his hips is a knight's sword huh..

Sacramento huh....

The preliminaries are in sequential order.

As I am in the A group, I am part of the first group to enter the stage.

In the preliminary contest, we're split into groups of five, and the winners of the battle royales in their respective groups will advance. The process is very simple, yet savage.

If I was inferior, things like fighting against four people at once would

be terrifying.

Resigning myself, I enter the circular stage arena.

When the Colosseum's stand starts to become excited as the deadly event begins.

With an estimated diameter of 200 meters around structure, it can hold a capacity of over 30 thousand people.

As I survey the crowd, I see that there are banners flying around the Colosseum celebrating a full house.

My opponents are all stern males.

As for weapons, 2 of them carry Blades, 1 Lance, and the last one holds an Battle-Axe.

『The first preliminary round! Group A's match is about to begin! The rules are simple. If you fall off from the stage, you are disqualified! If you say you give up, the referee, me, will announce that you have been eliminated! If you die, also eliminated!』

From the stage who is magnificently announcing is a skimpily clad onee-san referee..

Using a magic stone as a megaphone near the mouth, her voice spreads all around the Colosseum.

『And for this preliminary contest a special rule ! Projectiles are forbidden!』

OI!

..... Thunder-like magic can't be used?

I thought I would definitely be able to show a magician-like appearance here.

There were cheers from the audience.

By chance, they aren't imagining me being stripped after I lose, right?

Sleazebags.

『Don't look down on me, really.』

I clenched my hands and bumped my gloved fists together.

They're weapons freshly made from raw materials gathered by Ilya and Saira.

Caster Gloves (Smelting) (Inscription: Saira)

Forged exceeding the highest quality.

With these weapons, I'll show off my hand-to-hand combat.

I don't have any blind spots since I studied the Fairbairn System.

[Fairbairn system \(defendu\)](#)

..... ... That's a lie, though.

『Okay. Please begin!』

Immediately after the referee Onee-san's announcement, 4 of them rushed towards me.

——As expected huh !

「Spirit of Lightning come to my side, become my blade! Lightning Enchant!」

Naturally, my glove becomes lightning enchanted.

I gazed at my opponents.

In front are 2 swords, behind them is the lance and the last one lagging behind is the Battle-Axe

TL: he just called them by weapons. Lazy Alice.

Getting surrounded would be bad.

If possible, the ideal situation will be fighting them one vs one.

If that's the case, I will aim the first one!

I insert magic power into my legs and jumped.

I jumped over the sword and lance.

My target is the lagging Battleaxe.

Slow response!

I reached his back in one leap, inflicting a blow to his side as he frantically turned around.

Although it has no strength in it, I hit it in with a intelligence five thunder magic.

Body convulsing, the Battle-Axe fell in the situation.

The arena went completely silent.

It is different from what the spectators had expected huh.

It's perfect. Using 1 of my opponent as a warning to the rest.

「I had also betting my life on this. I do not specifically plan to kill you people but... Therefore, I am saying this. I am not going out of my way to avoid killing you either. So do you have the resolutions to face me ?」

Narrowing my eyes, I tried to say it a slightly threatening manner.

I can perceive that a few of my opponents flinch from it.

I do not plan to let my opponents showcase their powers.

For if I were to eat an attack of the opponent, it will be the end.

It's due to my close combat is like tightrope walking

In actuality, I have no room for any doubt.

「——tsu ! 」

During the moment they swallowed their saliva, I drew a circle and used my magic to move.

Aiming to disappear from their sights, I struck the sides of the troublesome long reach lance.

This time I struck with my palms and during the instant of the impact, I detonated the repellent force.

I gradually become accustomed to regulating my magic power.

With my foothold firmly stuck to ground due the magnetic field I created to stabilize my body, I blew the opponent away who is heavier than me.

The spear flew and landed outside of the arena.

「The hell did she do!?!」

With this, 2 people remain.

I wish to seal my victory during the chaos.

I dived into the sword's chest and drive in my kick enchanted with Lightning.

——Kicks are actually my specialty.◦

But it's not martial arts though.

Landing my kick, I blew the sword out of the arena and slip into the last sword's chest.

As expected his timing is bad and the opponent's downwards swing of the sword is too slow.

From below, as if I am pushing up, I strike the sword's jaws with my lightning palm and knock him out.

「Fuu」

I have to take a chance with close combat.

I am still far away from Til's strongest moment.

With great pains, I had recently started learning the basics of close combat.

The palm strikes I received during training hurt greatly...

I unintentionally rubbed my stomach.

『Th... THIS IS COMPLETE UPSET!! Victory goes to the Wilmington family's Alice! 』

With the referee Onee-san's announcement, huge cheers broke out

from the stands.

「Alice! What a splendid effort desuwa~! As I thought, my eyes did not deceive!」

「Thank you, Francesca.」

During the duration of the Battle tournament, the country has arranged for exclusive high class lodging for the players. So I was moved to there.

As for the player's family, if you were to mention the number of participating members, they will let them stay together with you.

Therefore, I am together with Ilya and co.

While relaxing in that wide high class lodging, Francesca came.

「You are alone?」

「If it's that too rude butler, I made him wait at the room's entrance desuwa~」

That said, when I peeked out from the window, that hypocritical butler immediately stood up.

Turning my back towards the window, I face Francesca

「First of all,Alice . Even though I said it was good enough to just

enter and appear on stage for me, the conclusion is better than I had expected. I am thankful desuwa~」

「I will receive without reservations」

I received the platinum coin that Francesca passes to me.

Ooo, a platinum coin coin.

My motivation to work vanished, this heaviness.

Although I want to keep staring at it forever, with force of will, I stuffed the platinum coin coin quickly into the leather bag.

「——Alice」

「~ng?」

With a serious face, Francesca look at me.

「No.. I might not have the right to say it, but be careful.」

「Fufu」

This time round, Francesca tilted her head.

「As expected, I have a hunch that I can become friends with Francesca. 」

Being Wilmington family's representative, I understand that the risk from now on increases by leaps and bound.

Is it alright if I laugh whole-heartedly at the fools who were lured in by money?

I feel that there is an affinity somewhere.

「Alice... I will let you call me Fran」

With her face reddening, Francesca who was facing the setting sun is cute.

「I understand, Fran——」

——When I finished talking, there was sound of the windows shattering and approximately at the same time.

I felt an impact on my back.

「——Ah」

I have trouble breathing.

Due to the impact, I was thrown forward

I was being caught into Francesca's arms who was facing in front of me.

「Alice-sama!」

「Alice!」

Ilya who is nearby holding back and Francesca who is before me saw everything. Both of them paled.

What happened?

「——An Archer is it? Sneaky cowardly assassin.」

「Oshishou-sama! Use recovery magic on Alice-sama! Please!!」

「The arrow is stopped. My my, what a troublesome disciple——
That coward, is he only quick at running away? 」

Till looked out of the window and murmured unamusedly.

With that sudden attack, I lost my bearings but when I gently patted my back, I was not stabbed by the arrow.

When I look at it closely, there is a pinpoint ice wall on my back.

That is what made the arrow stop.

After I had confirmed that I am fine, I felt a chill in my body.

Now.... If Til is not around, I will die...?

My body shivered.

「Alice.....」

Francesca who caught the shivering me in her arms is distorting her face into a painful expression.

When one saw that, it shows back their true character.

This is the risk.

「——This kind of royal capital, you'll change it, right?」

「Alice, you.....」

「Fran」

「——Alice, I swear to be your friend desuwa~. By my name ,Francesca Wilmington, I will remake this rotten system again!」

I am being hugged strongly by Francesca.

I can understand the situation as to why I am being personally invited by Francesca.

Even if that's the case, I want to be with this kid.

I will be useful to her.

That feeling is mutual.

Therefore, more than anything else, it is likely that there are no lies hidden within those violet eyes.

—And thus, the curtains have raised to an act where risking my life is nothing but an everyday occurrence.

Chapter 42

Sniper

After the uproar, we changed our room. First of all, looking out from the windows there are no assassins and the weather seems great.

The previous room was on the other side, therefore it is out of the way from the streets for sure. But compared to this inn, the buildings are also taller.

The sniper was said to have shot from over there.

Although there is a little bit of a distance, it has certainly hit the unprepared opponent.

Francesca has already left for home

Now, I am in the midst of consoling Ilya.

「Errr, Ilya. There is no one who is able to protect someone from getting assassinated in ancient and modern times. From the history I know, anyone who gets assassinated will lose their life?」

「Even if that's the truth, I cannot forgive myself. That so called inexperience is disgraceful」

Standing at attention in front of me is Ilya with a dejected face continuing to curse herself.

It seems like not being able to protect me against that assassin is somehow unforgivable for her.

..... Well, there is someone behind me sleeping who has saved my life.

Even if you are to compare, the comparison is a little....

Okay~~~

TL: It means that Alice is getting exasperated.

I will be serious.

「Understood Understood. I will therefore punish Ilya.」

「Anything」

「Please kiss me.」

「Yes my lady.」

I, sitting on the edge of the bed, Ilya abruptly charge over and cling onto me.

「Wawawa! STOP! Without any hesitation?!」

I am really surprised!

「Why for some reasons when I thought that I am receiving rewards, it turn into a teasing style huh.」

Rewards huh....

For now, I push back Ilya's shoulders and straighten my posture.

「*Cough* Anyway, women should be a little more modest. You should be embarrassed about these things. 」

「Ojou-sama, what you are talking about are completely like delusions of a guy.」

「.....」

Delusions, all the guys in the world will cry....

「I..Ilya..... Ehh. Have you ever thought of who do you want to kiss?」

「.....Sometimes, I do have times where I want to unreasonably push 『Someone』down.」

Re.. Really?!

TL: For a moment, I thought Alice's eyes are sparkling.

To say that it's shocking is shocking itself, but Ilya is also of an appropriate/marriageable age.

There are times where you can't control yourself too.

「What a carnivorous declaration....」

「No, Ojou-sama is just too much of a maiden 』

If it is said that a girly girl like Ilya is a maiden, what can I do to be like her?

「And your denseness.』

「Why!?!』

「Please place your hands on your chest and think about it. 』

With that said, I tried touching my chest.

It's packed with dreams.

It's okay, A guy's dream, I will protect it!

With Saira safely coming back after being requested to do some errands, I felt a sigh of relief.

It's better to consider that even the streets are unsafe.

From now on, Saira must absolutely be with Til.

For, that is the safest place in the world

As long as Libra can be avoided.

Now I, together with Ilya, took an took an early afternoon nap in the park.

A park with a lawn which spreads out nicely.

There are also families and couples in the park.

At one corner under, a big tree, sleeping on Ilya's lap feels special.

Relaxing is important.

「Sleeping here, are there any sniping points?」

「There are 2 sniping spots. As usual, you do really like to expose yourself to danger huh. Ojou-sama. What a M you are huh?」

「Such a declaration ! ? 」

Am I a M?

No, I am not, I guess!?

「.....In any case, what Til said previously got stuck in my head.」

「Oshishou-sama?」

Ilya did hear anything about it?

——In which direction did I get assassinated from?

And that single word she mutter.

As a result, I got hit by an arrow.

However——— that frontage opposite me at the point of time?

「In addition, that arrow length ... exceeds 90 centimetres.____. Furthermore, if you think about the distance from the sniping point, it is a tightly drawn bow.」

If that's the case, the bow's weight will exceed 20kg?

So, the assassin is a guy?

「Erm.... Ojou-sama. Are you good at bows?」

「No? I can't shoot at all?」

In the first place, I can't draw the bow at all....

「In contrary, you seems very well-informed.」

「Well, it's just a little miscellaneous knowledge.」

The excessive time I had immersed in the infinite sea of internet.....

My memories aren't bad so for the better or the worst, my knowledge increased.

Goron As I turned over onto Ilya's knees and gazed at the garden.

As I turned my body, some of my hair got strewn onto my face which Ilya gently combed it back.

So comfortable....

When looking at the scenery of the park, there is a girl leading a huge number of children to play.

Her height seems to be a little shorter than me?

Asymmetric short hair with a blueish tint.

She seems to be really adored by the children for they are scrambling around her wanting to play with her.

A girl with a kind atmosphere around her.

As I was gazing at her a distance away, our eyes matched unexpectedly.

「？」

In an instant, the girl immediately started blushing and hurriedly turn to look away.

「Ilya? Those kids?」

「Judging from the clothes, I dare say that they are children taken care by the church. Those who have lost their parents or something.....」

Those kids with the only clothes they happened to be wearing which are unflattering.

「I see.... But they do look very contented.」

「That's what it is. That girl is probably the children's' Sun.」

In the end, the sniper did not appear.

If possible, I want to crush this bud of uneasiness ahead of time, but it did not proceed as planned.

That evening/night.

Once again venturing out, I reached the park where I was in the afternoon.

With no sense of human presence, the plaza floated a dark sinister atmosphere which is very different from before.

With just the moonlight, I stumbled to the tree where I rested in the afternoon.

Although I had confirmed just in case, there is no one in the trees.

And just like in the afternoon, I threw myself down under the tree one more time.

Onto Ilya's knees

「You aren't angry?」

「Compared to controlling Ojou-sama's action, I want to run along with Ojou-sama's hopes and protect to the end. That kind of thoughts.」

「Still doing something difficult.」

「Coming from whose mouth?」

「That could be so」

We stop our frivolous talks and became silent.

Tomorrow I do not have any competition.

Therefore, tomorrow's afternoon and night, I will come here.。

This is a written challenge.

——Try aiming me

The cowardly assassin.

What Til has said, a tightly drawn bow.

Even if it's in the night, there can't be no sound.

The insect's chirping, the bustling sounds of the people in the street and the sound of the wind.

Together with Ilya, both of us, as if dissolved into the ground and passed our time like that and conspicuously a strong wind blew past.

The huge tree rustled.

And——

In an instant, an ominous sound rang coming and that is coming towards us.

I can see it!

With unmatched accuracy, it is dead-on.

Actually the attack that I perceive, is being repelled by Ilya.

「——tsu ! 」

We immediately stood up.

And checked our surroundings.

As predicted earlier, it is one of the two spots mentioned.

「Are you okay, Ilya?」

「Yes, I am. But that attack is sharper than I had expected—— It just got surpassed.」

Ilya's field which has shown to be able to defend against the ice dragon's attack was surpassed?

Will the second shot come?

Or, he/she made a blunder and changing positions?

「Thunder!」

Although I am unable to grasp his location, I attack the general area with magic.

As the thunder hits the building's wall, for an instant, the area was illuminated and the darkness vanished.

「He/she is there!」

Nevertheless, there is no feedback from the Thunder.

For he is too far, it is not possible to aim the assassin accurately from here.

The second shot, despite it being set up, it has yet to come?

Nay——He is accumulating!

In a second, I perceived a weak shrilling sound ringing out.

「——Dodge it! Ilya!」

At my voice, Ilya immediately lie face down.

Just a split instant later, a high pitched shrill whistled past and the arrow pierced through the green field!

——Although we had imagined that scenario but it's unbelievable!

Defence 5, I dare say is Ilya's unique skill.

That it pierce through?!

「.....My guess but..」

「Yeah」

「Abandoning all of elements of battle except for one, the one most beneficial, a job which allows him to use purely『Strength』. That's ——」

Deciding the location, not moving, not allowing any chance of counterattack. That concentration and strength change him into a sure kill hunter (One punch man).

The opponent has Strength 5!

I cannot help saying that I had underestimated him!

I was under the impression that if Ilya is around, it will be a walk in the park.

What should I do?

I want to jump and close the distance, but is that also making light of my opponent?

If I were to jump~

The consequence...

「Thunder!」

I fired my magic at the area a moment ago.

Feedback—— None!

He is not at the same position at all!?

When I devote all my attention to sight, I can hear the dim sound of the bow firing again.

The dim shrill of the arrow and the reflection of the pale arrowhead reflected under the moonlight.

「This is bad——」

「——DO YOU WANT TO BE DEFEATED ! ! 」

Ilya, once again stood in front of me.

In no time, the sound of the arrow clashing into the field reverberate the area.

「I am Ojou-sama's shield. No matter who my opponents are, I will

simply destroy all of them!」

But, speaking of her yelling/fighting spirit, it seems pretty stupid.

In reality, this time round, Ilya's spirit exceeds the opponent's attack and she received the attack which seems to be stronger than the previous one.

The conflict between Strength 5 and Defence 5.

But, this exchange between attack and defence becomes in equilibrium.

On one side, the situation where Ilya is just receiving is getting worst and worst.

——I must do it.

「——Ilya, the fourth shot, Please take it no matter what it takes, During that moment, I will jump toward the opponent.」

「You can't. If the opponent focus on shooting based on speed, Ojou-sama's defence....」

「I understand. I do not plan to commit suicide. Believe in me.」

「..... Yes my lady!」

It's a contest.

I sharpen my senses.

I surround my body with lightning.

The fourth shot came!

「——tsu!!」

Once again, the clash of the arrow and the field.

As compared to before, it's even stronger!

From Ilya's mouth, some blood flowed out.

I am sorry, Ilya.

NOW——!

From Ilya's back, I jump out.

I kick the earth and tear through the night sky in a straight line.

From the assassin's position, he also knows the surroundings.

Therefore, for sure, one straight line.

Yes, directly towards him.

Such a thing, if the sniper comes into view, it's the norm.

Read the signs

I must move first.

From my leather bag, I pinch out the required item and concentrate.

During the time I came close, with my elf eyes, I caught sight of the opponent's shadow.

The counter-attack——I am too late!

Now for sure is the time to shoot!

During that time, there is no need to aim.

——The opponent believed that it is a sure kill and fired her arrow.

「——I WILL NOT LOSE!!」

I inserted with all my strength the repellent force into the coin that I was holding in my hand,

That strength with the twisting of my body, created a gap within the straight line.

A slight movement.

However, the opponent jumped and aimed at me with my head as the target itself

A slight mistake will determine my life and death.

The arrow skimmed my leg.

It's hot as if it's burning.

However, that—— is just a graze!

Jumping and hitting the spot shows how terrifying the opponent's ability is. But it's already too late.

The Silhouette I gazed at is completely not in a panic. On the contrary he lowered his bow as if he gave up.

Finally, I who jumped onto a building, in a flash/ without hesitation force him to eat my lightning at full power.

More than I thought, she has no resistance.

Agility and Intelligence are also very low huh.

Without negligence, I reach the vicinity.

There is no presence at all.

He is alone?

I cautiously confirmed the fallen opponent.

Finally, I will repay the frightening sniper with 1 arrow.

And thereupon, I saw . That face ——

「——Eh? 」

『Girl』with a face she may have while praying, stretched out as if sleeping.

Since some of the best 16 of the arena's tournament mysteriously resigned , my best 8 have been decided.

That opponent, with her overwhelming bow skills has completely won at the preliminary contest.

「Ilya, my chest hurts.」

That afternoon, I once again came to the park and gazed at the children who are coming in from the park gate to play.

And, that 『Girl』appearance isn't there.

The children also seems to be in low spirit.

「For some reasons we do not know but in this world, it's just that sort of thing.」

「Yes.....」

「But you must not mull on this. Because——」

I place a finger on Ilya's lips to silence her.

In exchange, I continued the exchange of words.

「For, we are still living. That's right, isn't it.」

That sort of words is extremely bitter.

We did nothing and just gazed at them.

The children sometimes frolicking around and bustling around the garden lively.

Chapter 43

Lightning VS Fire

Best 8.

From now on, there is no one else remaining except the truly strong ones.

At the hotel room with two double beds placed together, in the middle of the bed, we validate the competition table distributed by the tournament administration.

The width of the bed is satisfactory but as usual, I hugged TII and brought her closer. Therefore, she had already given up and left it as is.

Such high body temperature you have, Til.

..... A kid?

I reorganize my heart and look at the chart on hand.

This Battle tournament seems to have taken place in the past and the military power displayed here will affect both inside and outside the Royal Capital's situation.

Therefore, if the influential princes respectively find a representative, the royal capital's name will rise in fame.

Of course, The political world is not that simple to be using just that to determine the shifting of powers completely.

Therefore, it can be said that I am in the open while Francesca is

behind the scenes.

From the competition's chart given by the tournament administration, my next opponent is—— Éclair.

「What is this? This sweet looking name.」

備考欄に、ステアード家名代と書かれてある。

According to the annotation, she's Steard's family's representative.

It's not one of the big three families.

Incidentally, I have also overlooked another name.

I had found Reynold Sacramento.

If I defeat the opponent I will get through the top 8 and reach the top 4

For the sake of Francesca, I do not want to lose.

しかし、決勝までの間に俺の側の組み合わせでは、もう一つの名家とは当たらない。

However, due to bracket assortment, I won't clash with any other big family until I reach the finals.

Viewing the other bracket.

In the other bracket, I found the name I am looking for.

In the remarks, Austria's representative is written on it.

「.....アミナス」

「.....Aminasu/ Aminase/ Aminase」

TL Note: Decide whatever you want.

An Alias?

Or perhaps, it might have a different meaning in the alternate world no?

No....In order to let me understand the meaning, it seems to have been translated for me.

If that's the case, I guess I will take it literally.

Could it possibly be a proper noun, it's just too much for their parent to name her that.

Granted that, with such an openly playful opponent, I must not lose to the family who allowed it.

——I sense an ill omen.

Although I did not look at the other battle opponents' information first hand, I listened to what Saira had scouted about them.

That so-called Aminasu opponent seems to win by massacring his opponent.

In addition to that, according to Saira, during the battle, there is no particular way of fighting and he clearly enjoyed killing.

At present, the person I do not want to lost to the most is Austria.

However, there is no other way to stop that other than stepping forward in the finals

I have no problems if this Aminasu gets defeated before reaching the finals but such a convenience could not possibly happen.

Because, listening to Saira's words, it's said that he is overwhelming.

However, that massacre.....

「.....Well, when it comes to that, be prepared to give in to my cuteness!」

「It will come to nothing, Ojou-sama」

「You woke up!?!」

From the nearby bed, Ilya called out with her eyes closed.

And the appointed day of the match arrived.

Being allocated to a private waiting room to use for the final tournament, I worked on my gloves till the time my match commence.

「Is this okay?」

As I fix her bed hair, she is working for my sake.

That person, although it's in the afternoon, she had just woke up a while ago.

There is no room for doubt that she is the strongest but her fuel consumption is really bad.

No.... She is just a lazy person huh.

「Yes. Thank you very much, Til. It won't be foul play, am I right?」

I look at Ilya who is reading the tournament regulation.

「Weapons and armour are one's responsibilities. Regarding those unique skills, they are allowed. There is no problem at all.」

「That's good.」

I inserted my hands into the Caster Gloves.

As it's completely custom made for my sake. it fit into my hand completely as if it's part of my body.

「My heart is going *dokidoki*.... If I made a mistake.... More than that, if it broke....」

Saira who brought to me the weapon she created before my eyes is unable to settle down.

Her ears are standing and drooping.

「You worry too much, Saira. You had experimented it many times. In addition, it's unlikely to just spoil in the middle of the competition. You are also doing the maintenance as well. 」

I do not need such a miracle.

「The weapon you made for me is splendid/ magnificent. As expected of my smith.」

「Alice-san... It's embarrassing nya.」

As I stroke Saira's ears who is embarrassed, it allows me to divert the tension before the competition.

Mass produced goods have no quality and it's different from the

custom made goods.

Well, how should I put it. The mass produced goods having no quality at all, that's normal.

In short, that's normal quality.

Above those are high quality.

High quality.

Again above those are smelting

Super Quality

Yet again above those are perfect.

Perfect Quality

And there are weapons spoken in the legends

Those are of the highest quality, Rare quality.

TL Note: All these are in Katakana. It sounds really weird but do bear with it.

「Someday, it's my dream to make the best weapon of the highest quality for you！」

前と夢が変わったんだ。

Your dream has changed from what it was.

[the 前と establishes a comparison with the past state, in this case, her past dream; んだ is a copula that establishes a fact or a reason, which can also appear as のです, んです and のだ; I believe I remember that formerly her dream was to open her own shop]

「I will be waiting.」

「Yes nya!」

She replied in a lively manner.

Although I do admire her sewing, her smelting is also very cool.

Using raw materials as a base, giving birth to new weapons like magic.

With hands hovering over the materials placed on the table, with a dazzle of light, new weapons are borned.

Incidentally, after making those, she got exhausted. So in reality, she is probably using magic.

「Ojou-sama. It's almost time.」

「Yes. So I will be going.」

Upon Ilya's urging, I stood up.

「Try your best!/ Fighting!」

「Thank you!」

Lastly I stroked Saira's ears.

Funya, her face leaked an expression.

「Alice yo, Today's opponent is a magician? 」

「It seems so.」

「I will not allow you to lose in the same arena. If you lose, it will be

special training throughout the night.]

With a sinister smile floating on her face, my master proclaimed.

「.....I will engrave it into my soul」

For, this person will really do it.....

Motivating myself/pshyching myself up, I crossed the waiting room's door that Ilya opened for me.

『Saa, They have arrived! For today's second match, both contestants are both females! And they are mutually good in magic!』

Accompanying the referee cum announcer Onee-san announcement, the spectators cheered too.

Stepping up onto the circular battle arena, stood directly before is a girl who seems to be of the same age as me.

It's definitely... Éclair.

On the 2 side up deep crimson hair with light blue eyes.

Randomly flashy.

With fairly the same height as me as well, with hands on her hip and a fearless smile on her face, she seems to be looking down on me.

How to say, a girl with a unyielding spirit.

「You use magic?」

「Yes, I do.」

「Let me, Éclair teach you whose magic is the strongest.」

Ahh, there is there is.

A kid who calls herself by her first name.

「Éclair is a fire magic user?」

As I was affected by her relaxed atmosphere, I unknowingly called her without any honorifics.

That Éclair who did not mind my question nodded in assent triumphantly.

「Yes, I am. Fire magic is for sure the supreme! The strongest offensive magic! My Master, Demon Flame is the proof!」

「Demon Flame ?」

Francesca has talked about it. The strongest magician at the top of pinnacle?

The person rivalling Til?

「ふふ！ 驚いた？ エクレアの実力を持ってすれば弟子入りなんて、簡単だったんだから！」

「Fufu! Surprised? If one has Éclair's ability, getting taken in as a disciple is easy as pie!」

I am also taken in as a disciple with 1 glance.

But, is that so....

Til has seen through my magic power but did that Demon Flame
seen through Éclair's magic power as well?

Intelligence... As expected 5?

I must not be negligent.

Having reached this far, how could I be negligent?

During the sniper's battle, I was pierced.

「In addition, Éclair... hates lightning magic.」

「Although your name is Éclair.....」

「Urusai! I hate that, you know! 」

Ah, did I stepped on a landmine?

「But Éclair sounds cute and I think it's a good name.」

「.....Re...Really? Fuun, You are rather promising, aren't you.」

「.....」

「Thank you」

Somewhat cute naaa, this girl is.

「Name」

「Ehh?」

「Your name, tell me. Éclair will specially remember it in advance as
Éclair's battle experience.」

「It's Alice.」

Look at the competition table, will ya.

During our idle chatter, it seems like the referee Onee- san has already finished her talk show.

I am being made to stand below the starting line.

「Alice. It's is not shameless to lose today desuwa. As you will be defeated by the future strongest magician in the world.」

Turning her back towards me, bold words came out from Éclair.

I am unsure to how amazing Demon Flame is to what extent, but among the strong people I recognised, Til is unparalleled.

As for the disciple me, falling behind here will be a big disgrace to Til.

In addition, I had also swore in my heart.

「The strongest huh... I will be not defeated.」

I had decided.

As we take our respective position, the spectators became silent as well.

『And——Please begin!』

With the referee Onee-chan's signal, both of us moved along the side as if we are mirroring each other.

If it's movement itself, I am faster.

If that's the case, it will be a gamble

A pre-emptive strike, Receive it!

「——Thunder ! 」

It hit!

I do not have naive thoughts that that will be the end or something.

First of all, I want to see to what extent is her magic defence.

「Fire wall!」

と、思ったが、エクレアは手を付きだして詠唱無しの魔法を唱えた。

And so I thought but, Éclair raised her hand and chanted a no chant magic.

In accordance to that name, the wall of fire block my lightning.

Compared to Til's ridiculous defensive mechanism, it is a decent protective magic... BUT!

Éclair who received my magic changed her expression.

「Na.. St... Stronk!」

The equilibrium of the flame wall and lightning lasted for a few seconds.

And Éclair with an appearance as if she had just tide over something breathe out some words.

「Alice, You....! Great! You are suitable as my opponent!」

It appears somehow or another she had determined my strength and nevertheless, she smiled fearlessly with her eyes glittering*Kirakira*.

When I look at the scene, I unintentionally smiled.

This is the first time I felt this happy fighting.

「And this time, I will be coming, Alice!」

At the same time, the weapon she was holding in her hands——the whip phantasmagorically swoop towards me

「Come to me Spirits of Fire and become my sword—— Fire Enchant!」

Furthermore, the whip was clad in flames.

Even if I dodge it, just by passing by close to me, I will take damage!

What terrific attack power.

「You sure are nimble!」

「That's my selling point!」

Somehow or another I handled all her attacks.

But even so, as the whips passing by close to me with force, I accumulated a little damage each time

「Thunder!」

During an interval of her attack, I instantly shot thunder towards the surrounding of Éclair.

「An AOE attack!」

Although she did not invoke the Flame wall, she received it with her magic defence.

But even though, as if she took damage to an certain extent, Éclair staggered a little.

「Really! Such an irritating Lightning!」

「As you don't understand the romance of Lightning magic, you lose! Éclair!」

「Urusai-wayo~! I had said so! Fire magic for sure is the supreme! I will show it to you !」

Interrupting my caustic words, Éclair set into a chanting aria.

It differs from the defensive magic and she is accumulating magic.

I can perceive the red magical particles that Éclair is gathering.

I had thought of using thunder to interrupt her but that seems to be too inelegant.

I stopped moving and clad myself with lightning.

「You aren't coming? Even if you come, I do have countermeasures but you won't be able to see it, Alice!」

「Battling with Éclair... is troubling, but I felt somewhat happy.」

「Excellent! Let me present to you the best hottest battle!」

Her character is really like the character/ avatar of fire magic.

The magical particles stopped gathering around Éclair.

「Are you ready? Please don't die Alice! If you die, I will be angry!」

「You are talking unreasonably. 」

It's certain that I am risking my life for this battle but, in some respects, I enjoy myself very much.

Be it studying or exercising, it appears that competing with her will be the most interesting.

Éclair probably thinks of me as the same way as well.

「Breath of Stars surrounding Mother Earth, converge as the Fiery crimson lotus that illuminates fiercely and cleanses thine sins! ——Star Flare!!」

The eruption of red flames.

A magic which bathe the whole arena in vivid flames like the sun.

That light's vividness, even the real thing can't compare to it.

That heat is a prominence for melting everything.

Even if it's tungsten, it will melt and run amok. That sort of supreme flame.

There is no mistaking it, it's one of the advanced magic.

If I eat it, it will exceed my level of magic defence.◦

Éclair naturally regulated her magical powers well. In addition, it brought forth nothing but damage to the arena.

It's possible to escape the flames but that will be out of bounds.

Therefore, there are two options. One is to jump directly ahead, the other is to bear with it.

If I were to jump directly overhead, I will not be able to change my direction at all.

Without exception, checkmate.

If that's the case, I will use the one least suited for me——To bear with it!

——I will use this !

「Cast Release!——Icicle Garden!!」

With glittering blue magic, an absolute zero ice wall burst forth in front of me.

To prevent it from getting blown off, I did not forget use lightning magic to magnetize the floor.

「What the!? Ice magic!?!」

With a loud roar. the towering Ice wall completely fusion with the red flame.

The conflict of magic resulted in a terrific blast, resulting in the spectators shrieking in shock.

Being wrapped with blue radiance, I started my aria.

This wall which can never be broken——

「Descend from heaven a blade of light, become my sword and pierce through the darkness! ——Lightning ! ! 」

Passing through the ice wall and red flame, a silver flash pierces through Éclair.

「——Ku, Ach ! 」

I broke through Éclair's red magic defence and she crumpled to the ground as if she was convulsing.

Several seconds later, the red, blue and silver magic fluttering around the arena scattered.

The queer silence after the tempest.

During that moment, I slowly move closer to Éclair who had fallen.

The referee Onee-san who had wisely stepped off from the arena in the midst of the fight gulped.

She probably thought that I will give the finishing blow.

「Éclair—— Today, I do not want fight with you more than this.」

Having said that, I extend out my hand towards Éclair.

「.....Now it's the probably time to withdraw、I understand.」

With a sullen regretful voice, a reply came from Éclair.

I unintentionally breathe a sigh of relief.

Éclair clumsily grasped my extended hand.

Her body is probably still numb from my lightning attack.

Although it pierced through 2 magic, Éclair is the first opponent to take my lightning attack to this extent.

My left hand to some extent is a foul play but my right hand is my true power.

But, she is definitely strong.

「The secret previously... that?」

Éclair turned her sights to ——the glove as she held my hand.

「Yes, that is my best smith. Isn't it cool?」

「I will not say it's cowardice. You had prepared to that extent... It's a pity but.」

Nonchalantly, I healed Éclair.

「You.....」

In order to move her body, Éclair stood up.

And she brushed off my hands and thrust her finger at me.

「Is that okay!? Don't think that this is the end! Not yet not yet, for Éclair is still going to get stronger! 」

「Fufu, Okay! I will be looking forward to it.」

Éclair whose face reddened to the point where it will not lose to her hair colour and look away.

「——I admit defeat.」

And with that declaration, the whole area burst out into cheers.

Chapter 44

The Winner's Privilege

「Fu,Fun. To boil or to grill, do as you like! For Éclair is not particularly afraid of it!」

After battling with Éclair and returning back to the waiting room, soon after, Éclair was being brought here by the tournament committee.

Hanging at the sides of her hips are her crimson red hair in a twin ponytail.

TL: SHANA IS HERE

Walking everywhere as if she is flapping her wings, with almond shaped eyes which are sky-blue rather than light blue.

Her double tooth protruding obviously and firmly from the sides of her mouth

This kid has full marks for charm, I guess?

Lovely...

「If you were to say that, those kinds of words do exist, I guess.....」

If one is to give in at the battle tournament, you ought to present something to the opponent.

That something itself is a vague expression but it can be said that in

short you have to present a tribute that is of equal value to your opponent.

Incidentally, even if you escape, you will be placed on the wanted list, so it seems pointless.

The battle tournament is terrifying in that sense.

「How should I put it, why is it that Éclair has to be responsible for this alone? Isn't it a fact that she is the Steardheart's representative?」

「That is my defeat nano. Things such as receiving backings, is forever my humiliation.」

「Did they abandoned you?」

「Yes, is it bad?」

It's not that bad per se

It's more like constricting the noose around your own neck.

「What do you think, Ilya?」

「If you were to pick up the abandoned goods here, you will be seen lightly. Please be a compassionate person. 」

「..... And that's what my right hand lady says. 」

「I-I-Isn't it obvious? In the world of competition, it's not that sweet after all. In addition, you had resolute yourself and decided to participate in the contest!」

Oi Oi。

She is shuddering like a fawn. So cuteee.

「Ec..Éclairs important thing. I will give it to you, Alice!」

「.....Huh?」

Eh?

.....EHHH?

「Im..Important things?」

「Important things are important things! Don't make me say it a number of times, Baka!」

Éclair, who turned bright red till her neck, avert her face with all her might.

——What has just happened, Alice?

Calm down

Stay Cool.

Think about it.

This is the deciding point of the conversation!

Éclair is cute.

A pretty girl (Bishoujo)

Such a girl's important thing?

Sweat flowed on my cheeks.

No no no, think about it in a fantasy setting.

For kids, their important thing is definitely their heirloom magic item, isn't it that sort of thing?

Not a chance—, if it's Alice-san, it's the lowest—.

In the first place, I am not a girl...

「.....Fellow females, what do you think?」

I tried asking really seriously.

「I-I am thinking about freedom in particular.」

Éclair's high pitched nasal voice tickled my ears.

Freedom

Am I said to be lagging behind?

Or, is this the world standard in the fantasy world?

With this, has our conversation concluded?

Chi, Read the mood!

I don't understand what is going on.

「——Ojou-sama」

「Hiik!」

TL: It's more like getting really surprised hii -ck!

A icy cold voice rang out right beside me.

「Wh..What is it, Ilya?」

What's with that look filled of scorn?!

No, I will blame it on the mood, or my persecution complex.

During the times when someone felt guilty in their heart, of their own accord they will project it out to others.

「If you ever become a slave, I believe you have an average value of one platinum coin. 」

「——Ehh, Slave?」

Slave?

「Kaka, I'm prepared! No matter what kind of bullying, I will not be daunted! 」

Ahh, that sort of thing?

That sort of thing?

「That important thing of yours is the status...?」

「I don't have on hand, so it can't be helped.」

エクレアが相変わらず、わんわんと吠えてくる。

Éclair as usual is barking*wan wan*

Isn't it great to be this lively.

「Ilya」

「Yes, Ojou-sama.」

「Getting defeated once, you ought to lose everything, isn't it?」

「It's a difficult question.」

「I do not think that way. I believe in having the chance to start all over again.」

「And?」

「Yeah, I do not want to place shackles onto Eclair. I believe Eclair flapping her wings freely suits her better. Don't you think so?」

「If that's what Ojou-sama says」

Therefore, I will not be sinned for the possibility of nipping a young bud.

I have mistaken!

I was lost in my greed!

I am despicable!

「With that said, Éclair.....」

「Alice.....」

With her glance as if our friendship is sprouting.

「——Become my slave」

「What is the meaning of your statement!?!」

My My—

I didn't decide this out of jest you know?

I want Éclair but being a slave beside me, there is something wrong about it

「Really... Although I did not offer a substitute for myself, please do not continue in the battle tournament. Don't you worry about it?」

「Fun~, I do not plan to lose you know.」

At the side, I felt a gaze implicitly asking “Did Ojou-sama said that?” but but I don't mind it

「Nee, Éclair. I don't say that I want you to stay by my side forever. However, I want to meet you again. I will only say this time, I am lonely without you.」

(Éclair)「Wh..What... But Éclair does not plan to let you escape while being ahead. 」

「That's great. So—— Good luck?」

With the winner's privilege, I forcefully entwined my pinky with Éclair's pinky.

「We are friends. Let's meet up someday again. It's a promise」

Once finishing my words, I did a pinky promise with her.

I didn't mind about Éclair not knowing about pinky promises and her bewildered expression.

Such an Éclair, after staring blanking at her own pinky, hurriedly stepped back forcefully.

「It's wrong! Alice! Éclair and you aren't particularly friends.」

That gaze of hers is really lively as her mood cleared up.

「You are Éclair's rival ! Therefore remember it please!」

TL: She is getting frustrated at the end

With such a lively declaration, the flame girl left the waiting room.

The battle tournament management committee also shook their heads and left the room without any issues.

And with that, peace return back to the waiting room.

At the corner are Til who went through it as if it doesn't concern her and Saira who is wearing her headband without fail breathe a sigh of relief.

Speaking of which, is Til sleeping? .. She is fast asleep.

And in addition to that, Éclair.

With just her around, it become dazzling like the sun.

Truly an epitome of the sun.

「I think she is too good for you.」

「Fufu, You think so? She being a slave, I hate it. That's what Eclair had conveyed to me. 」

「What about me?」

「As for Ilya, if you are not beside me all the time, I will be troubled.」

「——Fufu, Yes my lady.」

Thus presently, the formidable best 8 match has concluded.

As always, the world seems huge to me.

「The silver lightning spirit? 」

The next day afternoon.

I visited Francesca at her mansion to discuss about reaching the top four and the future, parroted out the two words that came out from Francesca's mouth.

Today, I had entrusted Ilya with other matters so therefore I am alone.

「I see desuwa~. Now, there is a huge rumor spreading in the streets? Don't you know?」

TL: Francesca started speaking in a honorific form. 1 level higher

than the normal in terms of respect.

Francesca elegantly brought her afternoon tea to her lips as she smiled sweetly.

Sitting in an elegant posture directly opposite me, with her butler standing behind her as usual.

Despite being of the same age, she have a somewhat fascinating seductiveness around her.

「.....This is the first time I am hearing this. 」

「Fufu, really? Then , on the way back to the hotel, try waving your hand at the passerbys? I am sure that everyone will be very happy desuwa~ 」

「I will be tactful」

Why am I requested to do such things...

「Even just looking at you from the side, Alice looks really beautiful. If there are no rumors around, then it will be more weird. In addition, you had just cleared Best 8 in a striking manner」

It's all Éclairs fault!!

TL: Alice is blaming on Éclair

!

She used her flashy magic ignorantly!

I dislike that kind of flashiness.

.... But I can't just escape from that.

「The opponent is also very gorgeous/ showy, isn't she.」

「Eh? Speaking of which, you had watched my match? Fran」

「.....」

「Fran?」

I tilted my head at Francesca who didn't respond.

「Ehhh? I definitely watched it. Fran had said so.」

With Francesca propping her face with her hands breathe a sigh of yearning.

「Eh? I had said that you can't?」

「No! What did you say , Alice! The things I said once, it's impossible to revoke it desuwa~! Therefore, from now on, you must call me Fran. 」

「E..Eh? I am strong you know, Fran. 」

Commoners can't understand the troubles of a Ohime-sama.

「I am sorry that I offended you. And you want to talk about Reynold, I guess? 」

「Yeah, as he will be my next opponent. 」

Francesca stood up straight and closed her eyes and started to think deeply

Reynold Sacramento

A knight with airs of a prince.

Out of the 3 Big families, if I remembered he would be called obo~chama since he is the sacramento's distinguished son. that would be the reason behind his ability.

TL: This sentence means that if you consider that he is the son of a distinguished family(Sacramento), aka he is Bocchan (which means son of the family if you read Nisekoi) , he will definitely is stronk.

Looking at the opposite block, as expected, Austria is also present.

It becomes like this eventually huh.

In the beginning, Francesca said that after entering, even if I lose immediately, she doesn't mind. Now, I understand the meaning of what she said.

After best 16 and best 8, there is no meaning if I do not defeat this opponent.

These matches, even the preliminary rounds as well as Best 4, the essence doesn't change.

The significance is that if you win through, there is no point other

than winning the overall competition.

「Honestly speaking, it doesn't matter to me if Alice pulls out from here.」

「Is it due to from now on, the risk will just increase steadily? 」

「If you look into that sort of eyes once, I think you will understand. In addition, I guess that even if it's a contest, it will be troubling, 」

「Therefore, I hope that you can provide me some news or gossips, my employer-sama.」

「You are too malicious desuwa~. But Alice... is it really okay?」

Even if I were to fall from here, I am pretty sure that Francesca will continue to fight alone,

However, I am sure that me winning will be a plus for her and there will no minuses,

「I don't feel like I have done a job that's worth a platinum coin yet. I mean, I feel bad.」

「Such honesty desuwa~」

「In addition, I being your friend, want to be part of your strength
—— Fran」

「.....You are conceited desuwa~」

I lightly brushed off the piercing glare from the butler behind her.

Fun, I have already gotten used to the bad glare from that guy.

「You better be prepared for embroiling me into this matter carelessly, Fran. I will be black-hearted if you are half baked.」

TL: Black-hearted/ mean the idea is to make her regret it.

On the forehead of the butler, a vein pops out.

Although he had drawn his sword from his hips, Francesca used her arms and pressed it down.

But her body was shivering.

「Kufufufu! I am really happy! Alice!」

As tear welled up at the corners of her eyes, Francesca smiled.

Using her own index fingers, she lightly brushed the corners of her eyes.

The sight of her weeping strangely looks really attractive and Erotic~ish

「Ehh, Ehhh. I am prepared!」

「It has come to that! Therefore, please teach me the secret plan of exterminating the red Oni.」

「The red Oni! Fufu!」

Francesca seems to have a sense of humor today.

Although we are separated by a table, we lean forward and happily gestured at each other while we chatted.

With such a splendid smile, it's truly appropriate for her age,

But, during that evening, we realized something.

Although we betted our life at the battle tournament, we are being viewed like nothing more than a source of entertainment.

Chapter 45

Riot in the Royal Capital

I was totally engrossed in my conversation with Francesca.

The sky outside is getting dyed in madder red as evening hour approaches.

The countermeasures for the battle tournament have concluded early and we are just chatting.

Her hobby is painting.

Being asked to model for it, refusing, insisting, refusing, insisting, just bickering like that.

She will without fail practice everyday the swordplay she learnt from her dead gallant mother.

When she was young, she met the so-called Persius wanderer by chance and chosen to be her attendant despite objections from the surrounding people.

And the interest in guys!

We are not alike in that regard.

There is a huge disparity between our thoughts.

「Alice. You dream too much desuwa~. Completely like an Ohime-sama.」

「.....If it's being said by Fran, that's all there is to it.」

The end result of me being called an Ohime-sama like this.

It's not about the talk about me beginning to like guys in particular but aren't those kind of guys okay?

To start off with it isn't about talking about me liking guys in particular but isn't that kind of guy okay

So we are nowhere in line.

「So, if I were to be a guy, will you fall in love with me?」

「Falling in love with Alice? For Alice to be a gentleman.... I cannot imagine it at all.」

「No way!?!」

「Why are you that surprised?」

..... Consequently, thinking about it, my acting must be flawless, isn't it?

If so, I should be happy.

There is no mistaking it.

「But, yeah desuwa~.... I think I will surely not hate Alice desuwa~」

With her reddening face being illuminated by the sunset, my heart jumps.

「Re-Really? I see...If I were to be born as a male, it will be good. 」

For some reasons, I am sad and wish for a sex change right here right now or something...

「Ufufu, Let's wait for the next world, Alice.」

I according to Til's words, will have a long life(This sentence has a tinge of implied sadness)

In the midst of the broken conversation, the attendant frantically enters the dining room.

Planning to tell her something in private, when he saw me, he stopped talking.

「It's okay. Talk here.」

With a single sentence from Francesca, the attendant talked despite being bewildered.

——There is movement from Austria.

After listening to that, Francesca immediately stood up.

「I can't wait till the battle tournament ends. Those undisciplined dogs desuwa!」

The exchange between Fran and the attendant, compared to before is not appropriate for her age.

Francesca Wilmington.

She is a commander with a lot of authority and duty burdened on her shoulders.

In a flash her attendants gathered and the messengers dashed off.

「Order for the knight company to evacuate the citizens.」

After listening to Francesca's instructions, the attendants dash out.

As for the others, after listening to general instructions from all sides, they left, leaving behind the person in charge.

「Advance party move out! Rear Guards, keep up with the pace. Communications relayers, tighten the network! 」

The girl is not fazed

Nay——With a leader who is lost here, you will be sorry for the citizens.

Francesca definitely understands the present situation.

「The soldier's preparations?」

「They are in the midst of preparation.」

「The royal army is not moving. They cannot create a gap for the republic to take advantage of. Wilmington's private army will be the ones deciding this.」

「I understand.」

The ikemen butler's flat voice.

He replied tactfully and calmly

Even I who was watching the development from the start had the worst thought floating up in my mind.

「Fran! Are we going to war?!」

Letting the army hear such words, I reflexively placed my hands on my mouth

And Francesca while receiving her own rapier from the butler, declared coldly.

「This is not a war———But Terrorism. Insurgent Suppression!」

The Royal big 3 families.

Austria, Sacramento, Wilmington.

Those 3 distinguished families, each respectively have their own exclusive huge residence.

The place Francesca is in now can be said to be like a holiday villa.

Because they are all aristocracy, ducal lineages.

In short, the head of the household.

Swearing their loyalty to the monarchy, they serve the king close by his side. However, they have their own citizens, their own land, and their own country

The power these 3 big families hold is huge. They set up a kingdom

in the middle of the triangle set up by the 3 of them.

As Romusu Wilmington works as a regent, so Wilmington family presently has huge numbers of garrison in the royal capital.

And now, at this point of junction, Francesca grasped the information that Austria has raised an army in his own country.

A statement has yet to be announced but having this information made him lose his initiative.

His intention is clear but uncertain. However, this is definitely an insurgence.

—And now, even the Royal Capital has been engulfed in a sea of flames.

「The battle between the royal kingdom and the republic has been averted but there is mutiny within the castle walls!」

While helping out the guidance of refugees in the bunkers, I looks towards the royal palace.

The skirmishes between Austria's normal soldiers and the knights battalion who had in one breathe taken over the inner citadels have unfolded.

Even on the way, the conflict between the knights battalion and the enemies can be seen here and there.

The knights in the knight's battalion have the kingdom's crest of the Sun and Lion engraved into their armour making them easy to be distinguished.

Equipment and teamwork are very important during a group campaign.

As it is not like there is no danger of friendly fire.

Francesca's correspondence and the knight's battalion movement are fast but the confusion of the citizens in the royal capital which has abruptly transformed into a revolt stage has reached its peak.

Both my conspicuous appearances and excessive name are useful for such a time like this.

According to what Francesca said, there are many people who know about my results in the Battle tournament and being Wilmington's representative, so they obediently listened to my directions

I guide the citizens to the evacuation site arranged by Francesca previously.

「Please excuse me, but I don't want to go through those feelings ever again! Even if it's just one person, I must save them!」

I remembered the incident in Rinnal Street.

I also want to do the things I am able to do.

I do not have time for Francesca.

This rebellion, is within and out of the royal capital. A double Whammy.

Although it is a must to quickly settle the chaos within the district, I am battling my life against 10 thousand Austria troops.

In comparison, the royal capital's troops aren't moving while her own

personal troops that are under her command number at 8 thousand.

That's some grave numbers.

The troops proficiencies.

The choice of tactics.

Either way , there are no room for any mistakes.

While it may be true, if the royal army were to move, the risk of losing the war will decrease.

But the tension with the republic can be said to be excessively fiery.

No, that just might be part of my opponent's plan

The girl's enemy is placing considerable pressure on Francesca's shoulders both in and out of the city.

As Romusu Wilmington is unable to take direct command, it's not an exaggeration to say that Francesca* has been currently entrusted as the kingdom's helmsman.

With the absence of the governing king, the regent being entrusted by the substitute young king does not work out.

With that gap in governance, the rebellion arises at the perfect time.

Arusento kingdom now is in the midst of facing tenacity.

I sent those troops who are setting streets on fire and swooping down onto the escaping residents to their graves with Thunder.

「The flashy representative in the Battle tournament huh... Certainly, it's a rising event and the citizens are rising in favour of you as well.
」

I didn't think I will be bewildered by Francesca but there is no mistaking that it's hard to be vigilant during the merry making festival.

With enemy soldiers within the district is the evidence for it.
Austria's stationary troops are truly troublesome.

There is also another matter I am worried about.

The information that I am in the midst of collecting while moving on my own.

「.....That ! 」

Before the street, a small girl lack hair and eyes fell.

Those enemy soldiers! Ruthlessly cutting her down!

「Why in the hell are you guys able to do this!!?」

Favoring accuracy over power with concentration rivaling that sniper,
I will pierce just the enemy troops.

「Thunder ! ! 」

The enemy troops with his sword raise overhead, fell over.

Converging my thunder into a thin line, it pierce through his
defenseless stomach.

The opponent loses his strength and crumples down.

I immediately ran forward and finally arrive by the girl's side.

「You! Where is Salt-san!? It's dangerous being alone!」

「Ehhhh, De-Deshi? Aaaah!」

The girl who recognised me, hugged me.

「Ehhh ! 」

「There there, it's gonna be alright? What happened to Onii- chan?」

Presently, I cuddle the girl and stroke her back to calm her down. She is terrified to the point of being unable to talk.

With that, the girl, slowly started weeping and squeezed out her voice.

「——ed」

「Eh? 」

Hearing the voice close to my ears, my thoughts stopped.

「Onii-chan DIEDDDDDDD!」

I dazed.

In that instant, I do not what to say.

——He died?

Who?

That Kuro Zukume?

「It... can't... be....」

In Rinnal's street, robbers were nothing to him.

The person I saw who was fighting with the Ice dragon... that Salt san?

「——Opps, thinking back about your appearances, aren't you Anego?」

I couldn't think properly.

With fog obscuring my thoughts, I raised my voice.

「You.....」

Lowering the long sword drenched in blood, he was wearing a conspicuous hat on his head.

At Ruffin street, having a drinking contest with me.. That guy!

「You have participated huh. Meeting in such a place. What a joke fate played on us.」

The gentleman left his blood drenched sword hanging by his shoulder guard while looking down at me.

The girl who saw that scene shivered violently, clinging onto me tightly.

「You ... have cut down people?」

「Well, since it is this time, it's obvious you know.」

Such a smile is strangely out of place, giving me the chills.

「Ahh~Detestable Detestable. I want to be a gentleman to girls, in particular since I had a good relationship with Anego.」

Contrary to such light words, he is not laughing at all.

Gradually, he walked closer to us.

「Hikkku, Deshi! That person! That person... O-Onii-chan」

「 ! ? 」

During the moment she cried, I dodge the sword which slashed in from the top by jumping backwards.

Hugging the girl I use the magic power to compensate for my loss in agility.

「Wow, Anego. The nickname Silver Lightning isn't just for show. Such movement while holding the kid. 」

「Did you slash?」

「An?」

「Did you... slash Salt-san?」

「Salt? Dear me, I do not know anyone about Salt. But if he is completely black, I had cut him a while back. Despite being a beastman, his movement is amateur. 」

With those words, the girl started crying loudly.

「Therefore, If I didn't chase after that missy, wouldn't it be cruel? Don't you think so, anego?」 [he means that the merciful thing to do after killing the older brother is to kill the little sister so that they both reunite in death]

「How... How could you do such a thing!?!」

While soothing the crying girl, I stared daggers at the guy who was laughing foolishly.

And he took off his hat which was on his head all the while.

On top of his head is a ears that are chipped ——Neko's ears

「Beast Tribe.....」

「Yeah, Anego. Do you know our living hell?」

The gentleman took his hat just like that and threw it away as if it's not necessary anymore.

「From the past, each time there is a small skirmish between the Kingdom and the Republic, we will be sent to the front line. I who was borned from the remote countryside in the Republic, with the carnage of death everyday, have no time to rest my soul. 」

As he speaks to me, the gentlemen slowly move towards us again.

「For the sake of the country never had I once thought about. However, for the sake of the brethren standing beside me, for the sake of my family back at the countryside, we will rampage through the battle as though we are abandoned pieces of shogi.」

「.....」

「And other than our lives what do we have when returning back from the battlefield? Sustaining considerable damage, and getting oppressed by being an outlet for humans dissatisfaction. We are slovenly so we became an avenue of torment for the humans, there are companions of mine who died after getting lynched by humans. 」

He let out a sigh.

「Therefore, I am already fed up. I am fed up with war. Thus, I plan to exterminate all of my foes. That's the reason I am here.」

Once again, the gentlemen stood before me

「If you are alone, you are able to escape. I do not happen to have a fragment of mercy to my opponent due to them being my enemies and my reputation.— How is it? Anego? Do you have any resolution? Such a pitiful me, will you be able to cut me down? 」

I gritted my back teeth.

With the girl's wailing, my awareness became clear.

The gentleman once again raised his sword overhead.

「——Nevertheless ! ! 」

This time, his stepping in is fast.

Carrying the girl as it is and jumping back is dangerous!

I have no choice but to stop the slash with the least amount of damage and heal it, huh!?

「————The sharpness of this strike ! 」

Before my eyes, jumping in like a gust of wind.

With a unique shaped sword —— Knife—— parrying away the opponent's decapitation strike. That dearly missed performance.

Chestnut colored short hair.

Wearing a light plate, an equipment which highly stressed on movement.

Ever since coming to the fantasy world, a back where I had seen many times which made me calm down.

「O-Onee-chan!!」

There is no confusion, It's Shion.

Chapter 46

Sacrificial Pawn's Hunting

Shion-san took a step back to avoid the slash aimed at her. Using the opening that appeared after the attack, Shion closed in on the enemy and launched a counterattack.

“Oopsie!”

The kind-looking man⁽¹⁾ evaded the attack in an instant.

Even if the wound was somewhat shallow, the blade had grazed him, and blood came out from the area around his abdomen.

“...Bastard. Didn't expect someone this frightening to appear...”

While still grinning, the man truly understood that the enemy in front of him was not someone he could take lightly. Becoming vigilant, he squinted his eyes.

“It seems that you're in the middle of bragging about your super unlucky life. How unfortunate, such talk is not to my liking. So sorry.”

Shion-san readied her katana in a relaxed manner, completely devoid of fighting spirit.

Calm and collected. Seeing her like this, a sense of relief washed over me.

Just by looking at her back, I could feel myself calming down.

I was struck with a sense of nostalgia. Nonetheless, the weight of the tiny life in my arms woke me up from this sentimental feeling.

“Good gracious. You’re probably the scariest person I’ve ever faced so far. Ah, what to do.”

He stroked his hair while appearing to be playing dumb. He was smiling one moment and serious the next. He kept changing his expression as if he was unstable.

According to his story, he was a veteran who had been wandering from one battlefield to another. A guy with a lot of experience.

“Scaring my little sister like this is not something I can tolerate, and finding a way to justify your wrongdoings is something that I hate even more. In other words, you’re no more than trash, right?”

“That’s so mean, you know? I was only telling the truth.”

“So? Do you now wish to be comforted by your arch-enemy, a detestable human? You should know that there’s no such thing as good or evil in war.”

“Well, I guess you’re right——!”

While saying that, the kind-looking man inconspicuously took his

hand out of his pocket.

——a throwing knife!

What's more, he's aiming for the girl I'm holding!! Dealing with an attack while being caught off-guard is definitely not my forte. The only thing I can do now is to turn around and endure the attack with my back.

“——Like I said, I totally understand.”

However, Shion effortlessly struck down the throwing knife before I could even make the slightest movement.

Even though she was still being vigilant, that exact moment was what he was aiming for.

Fearlessly charging at Shion-san, the kind-looking man slashed at her.

The speed was incomparable to before.

——Be that as it may, dodging is my sister's forte.

The man's attacks were by no means slow, but Shion-san managed to perfectly avoid all of them without receiving any damage.

“Seriously. I never heard that there was such a monster in the kingdom!”

“Hey, let me ask you something. Why did a little girl like this come running to my little sister? With her little legs, how was she even able to escape from you in first place?”

Shion-san began to ask questions while avoiding his attacks.

“Ah, that’s because she was bait. Have you ever heard of the sniper’s hunting method?”

The discussion was in no way an enjoyable one. Nevertheless, the expression on his face showed that he was having fun from the bottom of his heart.

“First you inflict a wound on someone that makes them vulnerable while they are inside your own range. Like shooting their legs for example. And then, the rest is simple. Their comrades who are overflowing with justice will come and try to save them even if it costs their lives. They will then deliberately jump inside your shooting range. That’s when you have your feast, and simply shoot them. Do you understand?”

“I see. As expected——— You piece of trash!”

Shion-san stopped evading and took the attack head on.

Their swords clashed and became locked together.

Shion-san’s strength is 3.

She is not an opponent that you would dare to lock swords with.

Onee-chan...is angry.

*Of course she is.
There's no way she wouldn't be!*

“So basically, you were planning to exploit the fact that she’s protecting someone because it would restrict her movements, and then cut her down just like that. Tell me, that’s what you were planning, isn’t it!”

“I applaud you. Well, truthfully I was just cleaning up those foolish knights. For that little girl to have conveniently shown up in front of the famous Silver Lightning Spirit after escaping, we can only blame her bad luck!”

The two continued to lock swords, pushing against each other as though to crush their opponent.

“Hey you. Did you kill the black guy using the same method?”

“Well, his movements weren’t bad. However, protecting a child during a battle, he was bound to lose. He was just an amateur who had no place in the battlefield.”

The swords were locked in a draw for a few more seconds. Then, as if repelling each other, the two jumped back to a safe distance.

I didn’t know what Shion-san was thinking when she suddenly sheathed her katana back into the scabbard.

She then slowly took a breath.

“——There’s no point in me wasting more time on you. I’m getting sleepy here. I’ll do the honour of sending you off.”

She gripped the katana’s handle with her hand and slightly bent forward, lowering her waist.

——Ah, I see. It’s lai!

By attacking immediately the moment the sword leaves the scabbard, in other words a quick draw attack, it gives the opponent no time to react. It is the fastest sword technique.

It is sometimes even called ‘close proximity firearms’.

Shion-san launched her lai strike, coated with level 5 agility.

This is...

“...This looks bad.”

The kind-looking man completely lost his composure as he let out a small groan.

Seeing his attitude changed like like this, he’s a veteran after all.

I watched the breathtaking battle intently as I held the sobbing little girl in my arms.

It was so intense that I almost forgot to breathe.

As I gazed upon the battle, on the edge of my eyes was——

“——Eh?”

I was so taken aback that I unintentionally let out a dumb voice.

Shion-san seemed to have notice as well as she revealed a big smile.

“——Fufu! It seems that the one who will deliver the final blow won’t be me after all.”

Even though she was already on the verge of slashing, Shion-san let go of her katana.

Confused, the kind-looking man became wary of Shion-san. He saw my dumbfounded expression, and his gaze followed my line of sight. The moment he turned...

On the other side was...

“Isn’t that obvious————Don’t just kill me off like that.”

He dragged his feet forward while holding his flank which was overflowing with blood.

Being covered in wounds all over his body, he looked like he was ready to collapse at anytime.

Nevertheless, it was certainly the silhouette of a man standing on his own two legs, alive and still breathing.

“Solt-san!!”(2)

“O, onii-chaaaaaan!!”

“Uwaa, wait! You can’t go now!”

Hearing the voice of the formerly (thought-to-be) dead man in black⁽³⁾, the little girl was ready to jump out from my arms. Panicked by her movements, I hugged her tighter.

After seeing that the little girl was safe, he looked relieved.

How dare he make that face now?

After making a little girl like this tearing up...

Don’t make us worried, you dummy!

“Wow, how obstinate. Well, the guys from the Knight Order weren’t much of an obstacle, so it’s true that I couldn’t be stuffed checking whether someone was still alive after I cut them up.”

With the usual foolish remarks, the incorrigible man threw another knife at the little girl.

Shion-san quickly drew her katana and knocked the knife down once more.

Taking advantage of that interval, the man retreated.

“Anyhow, leaving you alive troubles me, but that onee-chan is bad news for me. So I’ll leave this place to you.”

If he decided to attack the man in black, that man would have probably been able to quickly finish him off.

However, Shion-san would just cut him up during that very moment.

Knowing whom to use (attack) in order to escape, how cunning of him.

But even if he were to escape, where can he escape to in this situation.

I thought so, but in reality, the entire city is currently in chaos.

Although, if he's doing reconnaissance for the republic, it's probably being backed by Ostia.

We're bound to meet again sooner or later...

“——We'll settle this on the battlefield.”

Leaving an inappropriate wink, as if trying to show off, the man promptly disappeared.

I didn't consider chasing after him.

I didn't feel like doing it.

More importantly, the man in black was about to collapse.

I approached him together with the little girl.

“Onii-chaan!”

He looked like he was about to collapse just from being hugged.

Trying to look strong has its limits.

“...To think that you would even try to chase after Libra, it's no joke. You're weak, far too weak!”

Furious at the fact that he'd be defeated and almost died so easily, that ended up being the first thing that left her mouth.

“Huuuh...”

The man in black looked away in embarrassment.

Rather, he looked like he was dying.

He was literally dying.

The girl seemed to have also realised it as she looked up at me.

“Disciple!^(3.5) That, do that! The one that makes pain go away!”

I briefly looked at the man in black's injury.

If it's the current me, I can somehow...

But...

“This is...without a doubt.”

I won't be able to use healing magic unless I can confirm that my surroundings are safe.

“Disciple!”

“Ah, yes, I know. It’s all~right. There’s nothing impossible for a magician like me.”

I brushed the head of the weeping girl gently and then turned around to look at Shion-san.

“Onee-chan.”

“What’s up.”

“I’ll be collapsing soon, so please take care of me, literally.”

“Fufu, got it.”

Seeing the world’s most reassuring smile, I psyched myself up and began the treatment.

I made the man in black sit, forcibly rolling up his clothes.

The cut wound was so gruesome that you’d want to look away.

Knowing that it would probably be something of this level, I had entrusted the little girl to Shion-san.

It would have become a big problem if she developed some kind of trauma after seeing how grotesque it was.

I drew my hand closer to the wounded area.

Now, prepare yourself.

“Stop. I didn’t ask for your help.”

The man in black should know that healing magic would be able to cure him instantly.

But——

“If you want to say that... Become stronger so that you don’t worry anyone else! Become stronger so that you don’t end up wasting anyone’s time! Honestly you’re a bother!!”

Without wasting anymore time, I cast my healing magic.

——As expected, the wound was deep.

I used up quite a lot of stamina.

I only managed to get by thanks to my greatly increased mana.

“——Sorry.”

“You should say that to someone else.”

Shion-san caught me in her arms as I fell, and at that, the little girl turned to look at her brother worriedly.

Seeing that, he forced a smile.

Smiling is important after all.

“——Sorry, Rin.”

The girl firmly shook her head.

Oh my.

What a stupid brother.

——It wasn't long before I passed out.

—

It felt like someone was holding my hand.

Feeling that, I woke up from my fairly long slumber.

“Uu...n...?”

I saw a dazzling light as I opened my eyes.

It wasn't the light of a magic crystal.

It was sunlight.

I raised my left hand and tried to stroke my face. Nonetheless, it felt like something was grabbing my hand so I couldn't.

It was a room I had no memory of.

The room was mostly white and looked quite luxurious. The curtains on the windows also looked somehow high class.

There was only a bit of light passing through the gap of curtain, nevertheless, to me, who had just woken up, the light was still a little too dazzling.

It seemed that I had been sleeping on the bed of that elegant room.

I more or less understood what had happened.

But, this isn't a hospital, right?

This is far too luxurious to be a hospital room.

Judging from the peeking light, it's probably morning now.

Did I sleep through the whole night?

At least, it doesn't seem like I ended up in a long slumber lasting several years.

“...Well, she's still a little kid, so it's fine I guess.”

I shifted my eyes to my left hand, or rather, my left arm.

Crawling under it was a tiny intruder.

Rather than grabbing my left hand, the little girl took ahold of my arm and hugged it while sleeping just like that. Seeing that, I let out a wry smile.

If I'm not wrong, the man in black called her Rin earlier.

But, seeing how calm it is now, has the chaos within the district been perhaps settled?

Is Illya not here?

By the time my head was filled with questions, I could hear the door being softly opened.

When I turned my head towards it, I saw a certain person walking in while carrying a tray.

And then our eyes met.

“So you’ve woken up, Alice.”

“Onee-chan...”

Because we were in battle before, I couldn’t waste my time being sentimental.

But now, seeing that the danger is gone and I’m able to relax, I can feel emotions welling up inside me just from seeing Shion-san’s face.

On top of that, I’m feeling weak because I had used up a lot of stamina.

Anyhow, I’m currently overflowing with emotions and sentimental feelings.

“~~Oneechan...!”

“Fufu, idiot. Don’t act so spoiled now. You’re going to wake her up with your weeping.”

Seeing me unintentionally let out a loud voice, Shion-san let out a wry smile.

She then put the tray onto the rack besides my bed and pointed at it.

“Is there anything you’d like to eat?”

There was fruit, a cup of water, bread, and some other trifling things

on the plate Shion-san carried over. It was but a light meal.

“Nn...I’m a bit hungry... By the way, how long was I asleep for?”

“It has only been one night since then. It wasn’t worryingly long.”

“I see...”

‘Are you fine with rinnal?’ As if saying that, Shion-san took a rinnal and showed it to me.

I nodded in response.

Shion-san then sat down on the chair by my bedside, picked up a knife, and proceeded to skillfully peel off the skin.

*Shion-san is really good at handling cutlery, isn’t she.
Even though she doesn’t cook at all...*

“Uhm, where’s this?”

“We’re inside a mansion in Wilmington. After you collapsed, I carried you on my back and asked the knights if there were any place we could rest at. Seeing us, I guess they were somehow moved and contacted the owner of the residence for us.”

“I see...”

This is probably Clansesca's⁽⁴⁾ house.

While talking, Shion-san cut the rinnal one by one into smaller pieces.

“If it’s about the situation outside, it has considerably calmed down since last night. Right now the knights are keeping watch, so it should be okay.”

“What about the castle...?”

“Obviously okay. The imperial guards are keeping the place in check. A riot of that level won’t affect them much.”

*I see. There are imperial guards there.
That kind-looking man is probably planning to join up with the Ostian Army later on.
He has most likely already escaped from the district.*

“If it’s about Solt, he’s currently sleeping in another room. Well, he ran out of stamina. What can I say.”

“Solt?”

Hearing Shion-san calling the man in black’s name without any honorifics, I blinked my eyes in surprise.

“Oh? You jelly, Alice?”

Once again, this sister of mine said something I refuse to understand.

“No way. Really, no way.”

I couldn't say anything else at that moment.

“Hmmm? Isn't he your boyfriend? That girl told me so.”

“Please don't take what a little kid says seriously.....”

Rather, I was worried that perhaps some kind of love had blossomed between them while I wasn't aware of it!

“Umm... is everything alright, onee-chan?...your chest for instance!”

“...Your habit of randomly saying weird things still hasn't changed, I see.”

*No no no. That man is very unsocial. What if it turns out that he has been looking at your chest the entire time!?(5)
I'm worried, very worried.*

Oblivious to all my worries, Shion-san skillfully served the sliced rinnal on the plate.

She then grabbed the fork and wondered what she should do.

“I’ll eat it. Please feed me. It’s common sense to feed a sick person.”⁽⁶⁾

‘Aaaan’, I opened my mouth just like a baby bird.

After all, you know, I couldn’t move because someone was tightly holding my left arm!

“You haven’t changed at all, really. Are you like this in front of everyone too?”

In front of everyone?

While talking, she sent a mouthful piece of rinnal into my mouth.

‘Nyam’, I stuffed my cheeks just like that.

It was delicious.

“Eh? There’s no way I can be childish in front of everyone, right?”

Even I know there’s a time and place for everything

“...Heeee? So you only act this spoiled in front me.”

“Spoiled? Spoiled...”

No way, but, I see.

Certainly I don't act like this in front of Illya and Clansesca.

Surely I don't.

“I see...so this is what motherly love feels like...”

“Yes yes. You're welcome.”

“What an indifferent response...”

I pouted exaggeratedly.

But whenever I see rinnal coming, I opened my mouth wide and ate it.

How can this be so delicious.

Could it be, because I was being fed while doing the famous 'Aaaan'?

...Hmm?

...Being fed? 'Aaaaan'?

“Ah, how embarrassing!”

“You're saying that now!?”

My sister was surprised at my sudden bashfulness.

Anyhow, the feeding still continued for a while until I finished about half of the sliced rinnal.

“You really don’t eat much, do you? Even though you haven’t eaten anything since last night, you can’t even finish a single rinnal.”

Doesn’t that mean I’m energy efficient?

Shion-san ate the remaining rinnal and the meal time ended~

...It was such a waste though!

I should have kept going for a bit longer!

“...By the way, where’s Clansesca?”

“Hm? You mean the young lady of this household?”

“Yes.”

“You strangely have a lot of connections, don’t you? Normally you wouldn’t even dream of being acquaintanced with a chibi elf or with the young lady of Wilmington.”

“I know right?”

I also thought it was weird.

“Well, it’s good in its own way. If it’s the young lady, she’s gone off to the frontlines since early in the morning.”

I was taken aback by her words.

“She’s gone to the frontline!?”

“Shhh, speak quietly——Even though they said frontlines, it’s probably the commanding sector. It’s not like she’s actually fighting on the frontlines.”

“But...even in the most unlikely scenario, if something were to happen to Clan, what would happen to this country...”

Even if we were to successfully repel Ostia for now, it would hold no meaning...

It’s true that Sacramento is still here.

However, one of Wilmington’s great three families will end up collapsing.

No, to begin with, what is Ostia aiming for?

——Just what, ahh, someone tell me already!

No, that’s not important for now!

I just don’t want anything to happen to Clansesca!

“——What about Illya?”

“It seems like you’re thinking about something stupid again. The dragon missy went out with the blacksmith kid, saying that they would gather some raw materials. I tried telling her to at least sleep for a bit though.”

“I see...”

*She must have been nursing me all night, that kid.
I'll tell her to sleep later.*

“On the contrary, the elf chibi has been sleeping alllllllll this time.”

“I knew.”

*It's something that is to be expected.
But, I see. Illya went out with Saira.
Her first errand is done, so she's now on her way to do the second one.
Now that Clansesca has taken up her position, when is the battle going to start?
I need to discuss this with Illya if I want to know more about the situation.
...Fuu, this is too much.
My body is still tired.
I guess I should stop thinking for now.*

“I’ve become a bit tired... I’m going to sleep again for a bit.”

“Ah, got it.”

Shion-san cleaned up the plate and was ready to leave.

——But, I pulled her sleeve before she did.

“Nn? What’s wrong?”

“...”

“Fufu, Alice, what am I gonna do with you.”

Shion-san smiled and sat on my bedside once again.

Seeing that smiling face really tightened my chest.

During last night’s incident, there was one thing that I truly regretted.

Even the enemy had his own circumstances.

But, because my head was only filled with such thoughts, I ended up not being able to do anything.

You can say that I’m just making excuses here.

That’s why, I’ll say this.

I want you to let me say it.

“Oneechan——please stay with me!!”

This is baaad, my face is burning with shame.

I tried letting her sleeve go and hid my face away, but she was holding onto my head with both of her hands so I couldn't.

She should have been able to see my face trembling.

Seeing her face head on, I could see her seemingly transparent, pretty eyes.

That face slowly came closer——

“Ouch!”

bam

She bumps her forehead to mine.

“Idiot——Say that earlier.”

With our faces so close that our noses are touching, I looked up at Shion-san with upturned eyes silently asking something.

“Then...”

“——I'll stay with you. Because you're my imouto aren't you, Alice?”

“Onee-chan...!”

“I’ll also say this——I will become your sword. I’ll cut open a path for you. I will become a sword and show it to you, Alice.”

“Yes...yes! Ehehe...Onee-chan also should have said that earlier——Ouch!”

She hit my forehead with hers once more.

We separated after that.

Shion-san took the plate from the shelf and promptly left the room.

“Idiot. You should’ve just stayed silent at times like these.”

Those words were the only things left behind.

...

Eh, ehh~~~~~?

She ended it just like that!?

How cool!

“——Disciple, is Shion-san your lover?”

”...Like I said~~~”

An angel appeared from the bedcovers.⁽⁷⁾

TL Note:

(1)The kind-looking man, or the seemingly gentle man : 優しそうな男。
He seemed gentle, but is actually not.

(2)Solt or ソルト(So-ru-to). Salt sounds like a spice to me, so I prefer Solt.

(3)The Man in Black is Kurozukume (黒ずくめ)
Kuro 黒 is 'black', and zukume ずくめ is 'to be clad in'.
You can combine it with anything, really.
Akazukume (赤ずくめ), Man in Red. Shirozukume (白ずくめ), Man in White.
Aozukume (青ずくめ), Man in Blue.The previous three don't sound good though, I'd probably translate them as 'the man clad in red/white/blue. But because there's the movie man in black, I just borrowed the term for fun.

(3.5)Disciple = Deshi (弟子)

(4)Clansesca or クランセスカ (Ku-ra-n-se-su-ka). Fairy Tled as Fransesca, well it's in actual english name ftw. I don't like changing the author's intended name though, if you still prefer Fransesca, tell the next Tler.

(5)Solt is not that much of a pervert. He's a only crude gentleman.

(6)Alice is so spoiled and cute, I don't see any trace of masculinity left in ~~him~~ her anymore. I think she had already forgotten the fact that she was once a guy since long ago.

(7)Alice is an angel.

Chapter 47

Sacrificial Pawn's Hunting

After all was said and done, I ended up sleeping the whole day.

My head feels heavy after sleeping so much. But there is no time.

Early in the morning I gather everyone in order to have a strategic meeting. The sun hasn't even risen yet. It was happening in the room Francesca lent me to live in.

Everyone carefreely placed themselves around the room as they pleased.

Ilya was sitting by the table right in front of me.

...Not like it matters, but it is more calming if you sit next to the person when you are talking to people rather than sitting face-to-face.

"Ilya, can you come sit next to me?"

"Certainly."

This is definitely not because I am antisocial or anything. It is just so we can talk more comfortably. Going around the table, Ilya sat next to me.

Her fluttering hair had a nice smell to it. Like always, she is a beautiful girl.

Now then, how should we do the meeting?

But before starting it...

“Ilya, did you properly go to sleep?”

“There won’t be any problems, ojou-sama.”

This is totally not an answer though...

After the war ends, have a full day’s worth of sleep!

Let’s order her that later.

...She isn’t the type to die if she isn’t doing anything like Maguro, right?

“It is fine for now... I want to save Francesca. Where do you think her troops are going to?”

“They are probably going through Arcenu wetlands. Considering the topography and the troops’ speed, I’d say there’s no doubt.”

“Can we still catch up with them?”

“It is possible. If we can borrow a horse, it will not take even a day.”

I see. Moving troops around is something that takes time after all.

Even if we need to catch up to them, having a few of us will be faster so we can make up for their head start and catch up right away.

“Alright. Then, let’s borrow a horse from someone from Fran’s family and let’s immediately depart.”

“——I will go too.”

“So will I~~~”

Violently opening the door of the room, Rin-chan makes her appearance.

Following after her was Kuro Zukume.

“It’s obvious you can’t go along.”

Go obediently sleep.

Being immediately declined by me, Rin-chan puffs up her cheeks, making them look like balloons.

“Mu~~~! Deshi!”

Rin-chan comes running from the door and throws herself onto me. I receive Rin-chan’s attack.

Even if you yell, it won’t help.

Ouch, ouch!

Don’t pull my hair!

I will become bald!

“Of course, I will be leaving Rin here.”

“Well, that doesn’t mean that I’m going to stop.”

I don’t care about it anymore.

For now let’s hug Rin-chan who only wants to cause mischief and

carry her on our lap.

As if that was enough for her to become satisfied, she stops acting mischievously.

My hair is safe now. Thank god!

“I... have a debt to you.”

While bluntly declaring that, Kuro Zukume sits down in front of me at the same place Ilya was sitting at a while ago.

“If you really think that way, then you must properly come back with us after that, ok?”

“I won't do anything reckless.”

“I hate men who are all talk.”

“Fu...”

Kuro Zukume laughed as if I said something funny.

And after that, the mood in the room became kind of weird.

Hm?

When I looked at onee-chan, who was standing by the window, leaning her back at the wall while having her arms crossed, I noticed she was smiling with a wistful look.

And when I looked at Saira, who is sitting at the bed, I noticed that her face is turning red.

Rin-chan is acting all cheerful on my lap.

Ilya, who is sitting next to me... I don't know. Her expression doesn't

really change.

By the way! Stop trying to make this kind of mood of your own accord!?

I'm definitely not into him! What do you want with me!?

"...Either way, if you really want to go, then go make your preparations."

"Alice-san, I will go too! I want to go together with you!"

"Saira wants to....?"

Changing her expression to one of seriousness, Saira suddenly declared.

I am surprised. It's obvious she can't go. She coming with us is much less acceptable than Kuro Zukume doing so. Saira can't fight.

Just a single mistake and she will be dead.

"Please! I... I don't want to turn my eyes away from all this... Not anymore."

Turning her eyes away from the fighting of the people of her race...?

"...I might have to kill some of them, you know?"

"I understand-nya..."

I didn't say [who] I was going to kill, but she should have properly understood the message.

Saira's head was hanging down and her ears drooped.

"Even if you look at things that you don't need to look at... I don't think it would do you good."

"...I finally understand."

"Eh?"

Even after I say that, Saira shakes her head.

"I... need to apologise to that person. I can't simply be waiting here!"

With her fists clenched, Saira declared.

With this much resolve, I can't say anything against it anymore.

"...Ilya."

When I looked at Ilya, she nodded at me as if she already knew what I was going to say.

"Yes. With my own body, I will protect Saira-san to the end."

"A-alice-san!"

"Listen to what Ilya says. You can't be unreasonable okay?"

"Yes...!"

Seeing the strong look in her eyes, I don't think there is anything left to say.

I believe that Salia will be fine as long as she stays close to Ilya.

"Then, I guess I will be the one protecting Alice?"

"Onee-chan, instead of doing that, I would rather have you rush into the front lines."

"I think you trust me a lot."(TLC: 信頼=trust. I'm guessing that they both feel that Alice sent her to the vanguard because of trust in her to succeed and not die.)

"Right?"

If it doesn't hit, there's no point after all.

Please use that saying to the fullest.(TLC note: this is directed to everyone in the story, as a kind of wish/hope.)

And after that, everyone's eyes gathered at a certain person.

"Mu?"

She is sprawled out on the bed, but she is awake!

It gave me a fright!

"Cough* Til... Please, can you go be Rin-chan's playmate for now?"

"Ahaha. Shisho~! Deshi's shisho~!"

Rin-chan gets down from my lap and dived onto the bed Til had been

sleeping in.

Children are so full of energy.

“Eei! Don’t hug me! It’s irritating!”

Til... She is really a kid, isn’t she...

Well, it should be fine even if I leave the two by themselves.

I don’t think Til will let Rin-chan get into danger.

“So everything is decided now, right? Then let’s borrow some horses and depart.”

“Ojou-sama.”

“What is it?”

“Ojou-sama, can you ride a horse?”

.....

“Ilya.”

“Yes.”

“I will bestow you the honor of escorting me.”

“Fufu, yes, my lady.”

In the end, the only ones that can’t ride horses are Saira and me.

I am riding on Ilya’s horse and Saira is on Shion’s.

Since my body is being hugged from behind by Ilya so she can hold the reins, thinking about what will happen from now on makes my body indiscreetly heat up.

I see, I am very normal. Now I am certain.

“Are you alright, ojou-sama?”

“My butt hurts...”

“Fufu, please endure it.”

So it was true riding horses is very painful if you are not used to it...

We ended up taking more breaks than we expected, so in the end, the day became night.

Since we have four horses carrying luggage like tents and other things, there aren't any problems.

Kuro Zukume was made to do the night watch duty outside.

That is only expected, isn't it? There are pretty much only women here.

We at least gave him a bed coat though.

We arrive late in the afternoon of the third day.

“!? What was that roar!?”

We were at a distance where it was already possible to feel the presence of the battlefield.

We still couldn't see the war itself since it was happening behind the

hill, but there was no

mistake that there was a war happening at that direction.

Because we can see the dust stirring up and hear the intermittent explosions.

In the midst of all those sounds, I heard a voice which I had the feeling of hearing it before.

“That was...? Sirius!!? How can this be!!”

“Ilya?”

Being unlike herself, Ilya is very agitated.

I turn my head to her to look at her face, but since she was holding the reins strongly as if she was hugging me, I am unable to look back.

“...It is a dragon... right?”

“ ... ”

Seeing how she is acting, I am able to understand that there is something ahead of here.

Sirius? An acquaintance? But that roar...

what would you normally think of when you hear ‘a huge beast’, It’s probably the same as the ice dragon I saw before.

What did she mean by saying “dragon”.

Then, what about the dragonkind?

——“there is one last thing I can do”

I’ve heard those words before. Then, the dragonkind are...

Could it be that Ilya’s hidden ace... was that?

Then, what about the dragon that is on the other side of this hill?

The ice dragon I killed with my own hands... wasn’t only a demon beast.

“...Ilya, can you fight?”

“...”

...It doesn’t matter. I will have her stay back.

She staying behind protecting Saira was what the plan was to begin with.

I can now feel for myself the stupidity of the idea of bringing someone who is hesitating at the front lines.

And then, we finally got to where the battle is happening.

After getting to the top of the hill, the battle that was happening wasn’t in the form of something that I could have only imagined; it has finally shown itself to me as something of reality.

It looks like their encampment was here. There were tents and other things of the sort here.

It is probably their headquarters.

There was a large number of wounded soldiers there.

From the relatively lightly-wounded soldiers that couldn’t fit into the

tent, to the heavily wounded soldiers you could see by peeking inside.

Their bandages are soaked in blood.

I can even see the extent of the wounds they have.

As to be expected, I am getting anxious about this.

I want to heal up all those people. However, now isn't the time.

There is no way I can afford to lose consciousness right now.

There are guards along the way, but because it seems like they already know who we are, they didn't come to say anything in particular to us.

However, while I could spot guards and medics in here on standby, Francesca was nowhere to be found.

“——What is it.”

“You... You are Fran's...”

I came across one of Fran's servants; a servant named Paru.

Is he the one in command here?

Why is it that Francesca isn't together with him?

“Where is Fran?”

“...”

“Where is she!?”

The butler silently pointed his finger to somewhere.

He pointed at the hill, as if to say 'see it for yourself from there'.

I followed him to where we could see the entirety of the war zone.

Here was the first time I saw it... The sight of a battlefield.

Only a part of it.

When I looked over that direction, I could see there was a giant beast there.

“——Dragon! ...A white, dragon!”

Could it be!?

The direction the butler pointed at was definitely that way.

“Did you let her go by herself!? The princess of your own country!?”

“That was hime-sama’s own will.”

“You rockhead! Since the old times, it is said that subordinates that won’t give good advice are clearly incompetent! Saira, get down from your horse!”

“Y-yes...!”

As if Francesca can defeat something like that by herself!

I jump off Ilya’s horse.

Saira is having a bit of trouble with getting off the horse, but with

some help, she is able to get off Shion-san's horse.

"Are you alright?"

"Y-yes... Sorry-nya, Alice-san."

No problem, I say as I pat her head.

Then, I jumped onto Shion-san's horse, taking Saira's place.

"Ilya, you stay here and protect Saira."

"Ojou-sama..."

"Your answer!?"

"Yes, my lady. I am extremely sorry..."

I don't mind. Really...

After all, I always ask too much of Ilya.

I look at Kuro Zukume.

"...Are you prepared?"

"I've already said before that coming here was my intention."

'Heal' doesn't go as far as to recover a person's stamina.

He should still not be in his best form, but...

Right now...!

“Onee-chan!”

I feel the warmth of my sister on my back.

After receiving courage from that, I finally spoke to my sister.

“Yes, let’s go.”

With the call of my gallant elder sister, we go riding downhill in full speed.

The scenery is passing through my eyes.

The battlefield is getting closer.

Other than the roaring of the dragon, there was also the angry yelling of people fighting each other getting mixed up with the sounds of battle.

There are explosions happening here and there, and the sound of metal hitting metal echoes throughout the place.

And the landscape... It is filled with fallen corpses——!

“Arrows incoming! Lower your head, Alice!”

Just as she tells me, I lower my head.

Shion-san takes the reins with only one hand and in a flash she deflects those arrows with her sword.

We are already in the middle of the battlefield.

Allies and enemies are already getting mixed up together.

Then, could this mean—that their formation was about to be broken!?

The two armies were jumbled together far too much.

Two moons and a falcon. That was the crest used by the soldiers of Wilmington.

I am barely able to identify that.

Even if I was to say I had come to give them support, firing my area of effect magic wouldn't do well.

There was no other choice but to quietly keep going forward...!

Before I could notice, Kuro Zukume had already got separated from us in the chaos of the war.

But even so, we could only keep moving forward.

If we were to stop even for a while, we would stop knowing where was left or right.

If we get caught in the chaos of the battle, we will only be wasting time in vain.

Controlling the horse with the reins, Shion-san continued to ride us through the battlefield.

She would take down arrows and she would also cut down knights that pass by her.

“Stoopp!”

In front of our eyes, there was a squad composed with heavily armored soldiers and archers.

Whether they believe we are an enemy knight, they start to move in an offensive formation

“We are forcing our way through!”

With a voice that was so loud to the point of it being able to make through all the yelling of the battle, Shion-san said in response.

Shion-san took down the arrows that were shot at us, and with skilled control of the reins, she dodged the spears that were trying to cut off the horse’s legs by having it jump over them.

Jumping over the heavy armored footsoldiers, we kept going in direction of the dragon.

However...

There is a big army of more armored soldiers ahead.

Even if she were to turn back, their numbers would still be too great for that.

There aren’t any gaps to maneuver through.

As to be expected, it was impossible to jump over so many.

But even so, to get to where the dragon was, there was no other way but to pass through them.

“...I will go ahead, onee-chan.”

“Alright. You are strong. I believe in you.”

“Of course. Onee-chan too, be careful!”

“That’s obvious. I won’t be dying in a place like this, you know?”

I’m still not sure if having her become involved in this was for the best.

But even so, Shion-san came together with me.

For now, all I want to do is to rely on those intentions.

One day, I will definitely pay her back for them...!

——Alright!

I stood up on the back of the horse.

Sorry for having to stand on your back.

I controlled my magic power.

While thanking for the horse’s efforts, I jumped with all the strength I could muster.

I flew to the sky.

Not being hindered by anything, I could clearly see down the battlefield from the sky.

But as to be expected, because I held back then, I couldn’t jump through the whole army.

Looking at the many soldiers down there, if I had to say, the allied soldiers were the ones being pushed back.

On this chaotic battle, I finally landed.

“——”

For only an instant, I caught the attention of the people that were near me. They became silent.

Here was the battlefield.

To fight here was different to fighting in a competition.

To fight—— was to do [that].

“Move aside.”

I firmly held onto the caster globe.

There were two reasons why it wasn't good for me to shoot my magic at them.

One of them was because I would get exhausted very soon, and the other was because the enemies and allies were jumbled up together far too much.

“How arrogant, you lass!”

The enemy armored soldiers immediately recovered their composure and charged at me.

I enchanted my weapon with lightning.

The soldier raised his great sword overhead and swung it down at me.

And then, on purpose—— I moved only my left hand to block it.

“——Ha? Eh?”

I glare at the dumbfounded enemy soldiers with a cold gaze.

“That is an iron sword, right? You won't hit me with something like that.”

I employed my thunder magic's special characteristic to full power.

Rather than using physical strength, I utilise the electromagnetic repellent force to stop the sword.

By using my magic, making a great sword like that one float is as easy as picking up a spoon.

“Ha!!”

With my right hand open, I hit his torso that was open to attacks by using the palm of my hand.

I wonder—Was he assuming the slender arms of a little girl wouldn't do anything against his body covered in armor?

“Gahaah——”

With my the power of the lightning enchant and the lightning enchant enveloping, I sent the armored soldier high up into the sky.. (TLC note: It states that the lightning attack was caused by the enchant, and the lightning covering Alice's body is a different thing)

(Lueyuhi: Isn't she stacking the powers? I put it like that because it felt like it made more sense, but you can change it later if it actually isn't the case ^^)

Both allies and enemies followed the soldier with their eyes.

From the resistance force I felt from his body, I believe the power of my attack had probably been at the level that he would die just by the first strike.

In addition to that, the height he was sent flying is way too far from the level a human would be able to casually land on the ground.

Amidst all the sounds of metal clashing against metal, I had the feeling I heard that certain unpleasant sound.

The soldier hit the ground.

He wasn't moving even a muscle.

I clenched my teeth.

“I will say one more time——Move aside.”

Not only the enemies, but the fewer allies that were at that place reacted to my words as well.

In a loud voice, they cheered.

——Hime-sama's friend.

——Silver lightning.

——Let's follow her lead.

The morale of my allies increased, and the enemy soldiers became hesitant in fighting.

But even so, coming to their senses, the enemy didn't choose to retreat.

Once again, the two armies were going to crash into each other.

——Even though I told them to do the opposite of it...!

In the middle of the battle that once again started, I kick the ground with all my strength.

Since I was already completely acknowledged by the enemy soldiers, they should start focusing their attacks on me now.

Facing me were five spearman in a fan-shaped formation.

A line of spears!

In this chaotic war, there is no path for retreat nor ways around.

There was no other choice but to attack head on.

In that case——!

There was no place to escape from the spears that were coming at me simultaneously.

But they won't —— escape from my power.

“Wha-! Why is my spear edging off from her!?”

The spears that are being aimed at me were repelled as if they are magnets that are being repulsed by another one of the same pole.

“Move aside!”

I move in and duck right below their chests.

I don't need physical strength.

In the way I expected, I send the two flying far away so that I can make space around me.

With that done, I take care of the two that are in front of me.

I then kick the third guy that was slightly away from those two.

There are two more people coming from behind.

“Thunder!”

I accumulate the thunder magic in my hand and fire it in succession.

With that, it was five people.

Without any hesitation, I move forward.

“A-Am I having a bad dream or something!? Shoot! Shoooooot!!”

The commander that is standing ahead orders the archers to shoot arrows in the middle of this chaotic war for some reason.

The enemy archers hesitantly prepared their bows.

Arrows, is it?... It will be dangerous if I rely too much on the repulsive force.

The fundamentals state that dodging is best.

From this distance, it will be too late if I have to spot which arrows are coming for me and think on how to move my body every time I had to.

Every single one of my reactions had to become similar to a spinal reflex.

Seeing, and then, immediately reacting.

I can't have anything in the middle of those two actions.

I can't be thinking of anything in between these two actions.

Increasing the reaction speed of my electrical signals, I can cut off a tenth of a second.

Flowing the thunder magic through my body, I boost my reaction speed.

“——っ”

The instant I see the arrows, my body reflexively jumped.

Because the reaction speed is too fast, my fragile body screams in agony.

“Wha—!”

But even so, I evade all the arrows that were in the trajectory of hitting me.

While dodging the arrows, I quickly shorten the distance and send the commander flying with a kick.

After confirming there were no allied soldiers nearby, I mow down the archers that are positioned behind the commander with an area of effect lightning.

Because of that, I was able to ensure an opening so that I can make my jump.

Right now, I am not on a horse, but standing on the ground.

I muster my magic to full power and once again soar to the sky.

It's there!

After jumping over most of the heavy cavalry, I spotted the noticeably giant figure of the white dragon.

Standing in its way is the golden princess general.

The elites of her soldiers that are next to her desperately protecting her.

“——Ray of light descending the sky, become our blade and tear through the darkness! Lighting!!”

From the sky, I shoot my magic at the giant white dragon.

Most of my initiative attack that was done as a greeting is erased by a yellow barrier that I had the feeling of having seen it before.

In a certain way, this is within expectations.

But even so, with the attack seeming to be good enough to be worth being a greeting, the white dragon roared due to the part of the attack that was able to reach him.

Then, I landed right in front of Fran's eyes.

“——Sorry for making you wait, Fran. I am here now!”

Because of the pain for having overextended her body and for using

magic too much, her stamina is worn out.

But even so, she is able to survive, and so we could meet with each other just like this.

“Alice!”

I wonder how many times she has fallen down to the ground.

How many times she had to narrowly make it through the attacks of the white dragon.

She is covered in dirt right now. That form didn't match well with Francesca.

Fran was very intelligent and has a scheming mind that would eat people up. She was a very attractive girl.

That was who Fran was supposed to be.

She standing here while nearly biting the dust didn't suit her.

“You're such a...”

If she wasn't being so conceited, that voice filled with emotions would have filled my heart with courage once again.(TL Lueyuhi: -> 自惚れでなければ、クランの感極まった声に、心をもう一度奮い立たせる。<- I changed this line because I felt like the translation the editor put was wrong. Not that I am trying to be pretentious 0.0 In fact, the line I had put before was wrong too ^^ Here the line the editor put here just in case: If I wasn't misunderstanding her true feelings, Fran's voice sounded full of emotion, filling my heart with courage once again.)

“This isn’t the first time I fought against a dragon. Let’s go, Fran!”

“Yes! Please, lend me your help, Alice!”

This is a war that will decide the future of the kingdom.

I am now facing a dragon together with Fran in the middle of this war that can be described as that without exaggerating,

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