

乙女ゲーム六周年、 オートモードが切れました。

Auto mode off at Otome game 6th round. by Soratani Reina



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アリアンローズ
新人賞
受賞作

破滅を避けたい けど…この遭遇率!

悪役令嬢として味わった破滅エンドを回避するため、
マリアベルの奮闘が始まる!

六周目にしてようやく自由になった悪役令嬢の未来向上ストーリー

Otome Game Rokkushuume, Automode ga Kiremashita

*On the 6th Playthrough of the Otome Game, the Auto-
Mode Broke*

Arc 1

by Soratani Aina

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Prologue

A sound that resembles the dazzling gleam from ornamental lighting reverberated in my ears.

This is the fifth time already so I am already well accustomed to it.

I unconsciously furrowed my eyebrows, bit on my lips, and painfully clasped my hands together. I'm sure anybody who sees me now would be overwhelmed with humiliation and profound grief.

In reality, I feel not the slightest sorrow, and really feel that it has finally ended.

“Why..... Why has this happened!!”

While thinking, I released an unexpected hysterical scream. Wow, I didn't know that even I had such an amazing hot-temper. My mouth started to move against my will, murmuring “why” repeatedly, despite the air that was filled with happiness, it gave off an ominous feeling. So horrifying.

“..... Mariabell”

Mariabell. That is my name.

A handsome boy with slightly long platinum blonde hair and golden eyes looked at me and opened his mouth.

“Mariabell, my apologies. I like Karen.”

“Ugh.....!!”

There is 3 more seconds before the shocked me would run away from here. And it would be another 7 seconds before everything takes a turn for the worse.

+ + + +

“LinaLia” – the title of a romance fantasy Otome game. This world is a swords and magic world, where various trials have to be overcome to build romantic relationships.

The setting is at the Avant Thor Magic Campus. This super celebrity school is

for people such as those with royal blood, the son of an artist or rich people. The game starts from the transfer of a rural plebeian heroine with a rare talent to such a school.

There are 5 targets for capture. One is a teaching staff, two are Senpais, another one is a Douhai and the last one is a Kouhai, so that it is more fun due to the balance of romance targets to choose from. Of course, all of them can be considered attractive. Their 2D specs are simply too sick.

The story unfolds with the romance between the heroine Karen Fleur with the disgustingly high-specs princelings.

The golden straight bob, the marine eyes that gives the impression of the deep sea and transparent-like white skin. This beautiful girl is unquestionably the epitome of cuteness.

She was kind and quiet, a girl that was cheerful and positive but was slow in matters relating to romance and can be considered an extinct species. In addition, she has a rare ability of “Reinforcement Magic”, and can hold the title of a heroine that gives a sense of relief and stability.

The characters in “LinaLia” seem to be very common and even the targets share a common romantic theme.

Even the title LinaLia is from the languages of flowers.
“Please be aware of this love.”

It might be a bit difficult to understand so I would explain it specifically and clearly. This game’s romantic theme is “One-sided love that is not allowed”.

There are individual routes for the 5 different capture targets and it is possible to become a fiancée after getting approval from parents.

The fiancée’s name is Mariabell Tempest.

She has a soft, violet and wavy long hair. She also have pastel purple eyes and eyelashes that seem to extend such that they form a continuous border on her face. Her smooth white skin that is likened to be white porcelain, her tiny face and her delicate and lovely curves from her silhouette. She has used all the 2D heroine privileges without holding back and has become a divine beauty I think.

This heroine's sweet face is loved by all but really, it is a 120% evil face and I wonder if this story would be told from her perspective.

Well then, I have spoken for too long and it is time to get down to the main topic. I think it is likely that a huge majority of you all can predict how this will start out.

I am now in the world of "LinaLia".
As the villainess – Mariabell Tempest.

Chapter 1: Good afternoon, baby

In any case, the first round was surprising.

When I first opened up my eyes, I found myself abruptly in the senior high school entrance ceremony, furthermore the building for the ceremony was luxurious and gorgeous and I doubt any human can keep up with such a development. The confusion inside of me went past the stage of madness, but thinking back now, my expression and actions back then were still acceptable.

If the truth about me was discovered, I'll probably be given the nickname of degenerated woman. I hate that.

In the second round, I was earnestly praying that all this was a dream but my heart knew the chance of my wish not coming true is 99.9%. I cried while time flew by.

From the third round onwards, it had become real serious.

After all, no matter what actions I do, even if I dislike it, I am still unable to achieve anything. It is all because I can't move and talk according to how I want to. This is what it means to be in auto-mode.

I had obtained this completely automatic body before I even knew what was going on. Not cool.

And now, the fifth round is coming to an end.

I could no longer hear anything; my eyes weren't close but my vision became all dark instantly.

Several seconds later, I opened up my eyes and saw the same old scene – the senior high school entrance ceremony.

“.....?”

The vision that reflected into me as I opened my eyes was the pastel pink ceiling.

Wait, what? I should be in the gymnasium right now according to the current development.

“Maria-chan, have you woken up?”

“.....”

The voice that reached my ears while I was still in bewilderment was not a cheeky male voice, neither was it the calm voice of a female. It was a lovely and gentle female voice that I was very familiar with.

Next, I saw a hand holding on the handrails near me. From gazing at her well-trimmed fingernails, I slowly shifted my vision upwards.

A pair of pastel purple eyes. Big and round eyes that gave a childish impression. The elaborate hair accessories that were on her casually plaited golden hair were a perfect fit for her. The score for her face would net incredible ratings and while this might be a mass produced 2D face, it makes her a super cute girl.

But..... who is she? I haven't seen this person in the five rounds I have experienced.

“Maria-chan, start changing your clothes once you have fully woken okay?”

“.....!!?”

As she said that, I realised my hands were full. While I was still in chaos, I had slowly lifted myself up, and understood where I was.

From the colour of the ceiling, I had guessed that the walls would be pastel pink in colour too. The windows leading to the balcony had a roundness that made them cute. There was a cabriole table with a white design giving it a refined and high class feeling. And of course, the baby crib canopy.

Yep, a “baby” crib canopy.

Of course that was where I was sleeping on earlier.

Chapter 2: In a pinch all of a sudden

I am Mariabell Tempest. I have become 3 years old.

This development is too fast? There is nothing much to talk about of an infant's daily life ... or more like there is a full load of things I don't want to say. You got a problem with that?

Two days in and I was yearning for the automatic life so much so that my heart broke. I fully understood that humans can't die from shame. If I had the abilities to wound myself due to shame, there is no mistake I would've killed myself. Rather, I am 80% serious about that.

The inside of me is a person that has gone through life all the way to 2nd year high school student 5 times, totaling that up would mean that I am already an Obaa-san. I'm only given 1 year every round so that adds up to 5 years only though. My mental age is independent of my age so, I have the exact same circumstances with a certain you-know-who primary school kid detective. Not happy.

And I have did not take into account other factors. I did not voice any objections. As a result of being unable to assert any and everything, I have perfected my ignoring skills. Not happy.

Let's return to the story. The first thing the three year old me did was to start writing and recording as much as I can remember.

Now that the auto-mode function is no longer active, making careless mistakes would either destroy (dead) me or kill (dead) me. What kind of stupid game kills me all the time, god damn, I wanna sell this shit game right now.

The title of this game is "LinaLia" and was named from the language of flowers. It is an Otome game where you can have fun building a relationships with partners and get married. There are 5 capture targets in total.

Now for the cast of the game, members of the Avant Thor magic academy, the second prince of the Craine Kingdom, "Runa Vi Leonova".

"Sashia Dorothy", a thoroughbred who has the world's best flame wizard as his grandfather.

"Tuvalu Miranda", the son of the Miranda marquis who is currently acting as the prime minister of the king.

"Niel Juliano", the youngest child of Count Juliano who works in foreign affairs.

By clearing the four of them, the lock on the secret character, school staff "Greyest Fannie Sandria" would be unlocked.

Of course they are all beautiful ikemens on parade. They are at the top of the pack, and can make a living just by standing. Your eyes would be crushed if you even dare to directly look into their eyes.

The only information about "Karen Fleur" that I have is that she comes from a humble background and that she uses reinforcement magic. Racking my brains over the past 5 rounds, I still can't recall any other information apart from the fact that Mariabell hated her a lot.

And now, "Linalia"'s main villain. A heroine, shouldering one of the most important roles and introduced alongside with the characters, it is I, Mariabell Tempest.

The only daughter of the duke of the Craine Kingdom. I have yet to have spoken about information relating to her mom, so anyways, when Mariabell was around 5 years old, her mom broke up with her dad, and it seems like the father took child custody. As the only daughter and not having a mother around her, to ensure that she does not become too lonely, her father showered her with love and pampered her. She was treated as though she was the only sunshine of his life. My heart couldn't help but be drawn in to that.

To be doted upon by a father that would go through hell and high waters for her sake, venture into the deepest abyss, there was absolutely no way Mariabell could grow up to have a decent personality.

"Not interested because they are plebs" said the Heroine. That borders on a crime wait, crime? What shit can you do if the traces were erased? This is the mind-set needed to defeat bullies (TN: or helpless victims). When "The

person I like has arrived", she would freely use her father's money, connections and authority to become married to that person. The selfish, self-centred and unscrupulous lady is complete. To fall in to ruins (dead) or to die (dead) is just getting the deserts she deserves. When I was in complete auto-mode, I was literally rolling up in laughter and that it serves her right.

However, to the current me, this is a matter of life and death. Bullying, is a no-no. An engagement without love is rejected too.

Under the current circumstances, I have to be careful. I won't bullying the commoners. Even if I really like a person, I wouldn't force the person into it.

But, what if my auto-mode returned?

Even if I can move and speak, there is no guarantee that this will remain so. Considering that the past 5 rounds were all auto-mode actually.

What happens if she is pampered, gets carried away and starts acting all selfish again? What's waiting ahead is simply her destruction (dead) or death (dead), there is no live (alive) route after that in this shit game.

And then what if, in her vilest moment, the auto-mode is switched off again?

While noting down the possibilities at length, I became more aware of what could go wrong.

The thing that I need to do first is to crush the flags and not prepare for life after getting rekted.

「..... I need to change the family and living environment or else!」

In the event that I'm back to the auto-mode, Mariabell will not be on the path of ruining her life, not becoming a distorted soul, and be close to a heroine..... ok, it doesn't need to go that far, just an environment that ensures she picks up the basic moral values.

I shall nip the buds of why Mariabell Tempest ended out to become a selfish, self-centred and unscrupulous lady.

That is the number one thing that I have do, now that I have finally regained the ability assert myself.

To improve the environment, the first thing to consider is the problems of her parents.

Mariabell became selfish because her father spoiled her, and the cause for that is her parents' break up, is the first problem for me.

Why, did the two of them break up in the first place?

For the past 5 rounds, I believed the reason for divorce was her mother.

Reason being that her father loved her mom very much.

Her father named her "Mariabell" based on the names of "Virgin Mary" and her mom "Belldelia".

One of the reasons for Mariabell being excessively pampered was the divorce. Nevertheless, her father doted on her because Mariabell had the identical facial features with her mom, such as her pastel purple eyes. In my opinion, the spoiling is inevitable since his daughter had similar characteristics to the very person he loved.

Apart from ensuring that his daughter was not lonely after the divorce, maybe he himself wanted to alleviate his loneliness by pampering his daughter.

Naturally, such a father couldn't have initiated the divorce.

Therefore, it is highly probable the person to have suggested the divorce is the mother. So I deduce without concrete evidence though.

「..... Umm, Okaa-sama is」

「Madam is tired now」

「..... I see」

The maid replied bluntly.

Yet I was given nearly the same reply every day for this week. It seems my Okaa-sama is considerably busy. By the way, Otou-sama, who should be the head of the family, comes in to say Ohaiyou daily without fail though. Why the heck would the wife be even busier than the backbone of the family.

Despite the maid taking care of me and handling the household Okaa-

sama, do you have a lot of hobbies? That's bullshit.

「What's happening man (or woman).....」

Is meeting with your mom even such a difficult task? When was the last time that she interacted with Mariabell I wonder there are really so few though!

As soon as I weaned off breastmilk, the maid became the one to take care of me. From then on, the interactions with Okaa-sama decreased significantly, even now I can't meet her nor converse with her. Can't even see her face once in the entire weekare we even parent and child?

Despite gaining my freedom and being able to walk on my own

Before the both of them break up when I am 5 years old, would I be able to find the reason behind it and resolve it?

No matter what, I am just a 3 years old toddler. "Please don't break up –!" I could make a racket with that and could possibly achieve something but, making my move without understanding the symptoms, the furthest I can go is to get them to break into laughter.

「The current situation is far worse than I initially thought.....」

"I have my 5 rounds of memories and I surely can work something out."
Should I really be that optimistic? Ahh, I'm already yearning for auto-mode.....

Chapter 3: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing is not easy [1]

Well, my optimism in life was destroyed in a few days, I could not move forward without struggling.

In the greenhouse where the colorful roses are in full bloom, I sat while agonizing.

I noticed.Rather than ignoring it I wanted to pretend not to see, but I was working hard in front of them to my very limit.

Although they probably only see a normal three year old child, unfortunately I am not a normal, straightforward and pure 3-year old infant.

So, thank you very much. I would've been happy if I did not notice it, but I did.

I....I do not like being avoided by the servants!

The damage dealt to me when I realized it was great. My heart was devastated.

By the way, in the ending, Mariabell Tempest was hated by all the school students, those who were once were with her, had all turned against her and felt she got what she deserved.....It was funny since at the time I was fully automatic, but if it were to come to me it would be completely intolerable.

Moreover, she was clinging onto the captured target.....shame on top of embarrassment.

It is a "dark history" I would not like to recall.

That was the overall story. Anyways, I am disliked by the servants.

However, mentally I am an adult but I am only three years old (in terms of looks), there is no way that I have any ill intention nor any ill-intent.

You will be fired.

That father who showers his daughter with love is unlikely to be silent.

Then why did you notice? Why?

""Ano, some water —""

"Please wait a moment ojōsama"

".....Thank you"

And?

"The hair is a little..."

"I will tie it now, ojōsama"

And?

"Ano — —"

"What is it, ojōsama?"

And?

There are many other things, but the problem is that they do not have any expression.

As expected, all the servants are beautiful because they are from an Otome game, but they are the scary kind of beauty.

Moreover, since they are monotonous in their tone, it is unnecessary. What are they all emotionless?

Besides it is not only that.

"Ano, Okaa-sa—"

"Ojōsama, Madam is busy right now"

Every time I try to talk to Okaa-sama, every time they get in the way!

Saying she is busy is a lie isn't it? Normally she would be in her room! Stop getting in the way of Parent-child communication!

".....Hard"

Why do you have to make it such a pain to talk with Okaa-sama.

I must speak with Okaa-sama soon and I have to find out the cause of the divorce!

".....it should've been easy, yet"

Before when I was still an infant, the Okaa-sama who took care of me was kind and was pretty and came to love me in an instant.

I remember when she made me laugh, the anger and tiredness within me would fade.

Well, the meal times were something close to torture, but...Yes, lets not remember.

The reason that mother and father divorced.

The reason that caused the person who loved her husband and daughter to have left the House.

I cannot imagine. No, I have no idea at all.

"What could the reason have been when there was nothing wrong?"

The circumstances of the house, the circumstances of the couple, but none of them makes sense because information on the characters is too little.

In the past five rounds, Mariabell was completely indifferent to her mother, so there is no info on her mother in the game and even her name is not mentioned.

Of course, because there is no character design, I knew the face of Mariabell's mother for the first time in my sixth round, or actually now my mother's face.

In other words, I have no preliminary knowledge like capture targets, heroines, and my father who actually participated in the past five rounds.

In order to stop the divorce of my parents who can be said to be the first barriers, information on only the father's side is insufficient, or rather if there is

no information on the mother side, it cannot start.

So at any rate I would like to talk to my mother and get information.

"Or I would to say, but I cannot meet you!"

Back to the drawing board. Un, it does not start till I meet you after all!

I though out loud unintentionally. It is about time that my stress is reaching it's limit.

As a Duke's daughter, you should not do inelegant things like raise both hands and shouting in frustration, but this is okay.

This rose garden is a place I found walking around the mansion after I got tired from the day to day etiquette and decided to take a stroll.

At the beginning I was nervous if there were any "nōmen[2]" maids perhaps hiding around in here somewhere, but nowadays I am use to the place and just sit on chair in "Taiikuzuwari[3]" style.

When I think about it, It would be sad to allow it to continue disturbing me.

".....my ears, they hurt"

"What ...?!??"

Like I said it is not necessary to mind because there is only me here.

But there was a person. This is bad. Currently I am completely relaxed.

How long have I been sitting on the chair like this?

Technically speaking I am full grown woman with all the feminal appeals but now I am a 3-year old child. This situation is too surreal.

"E~a...from now, since when ..."

"I was here first"

"Well, that...."

In other words, I was seen from the beginning.

And for the grand soliloquy.

I shifted in my chair from a “Taiikuzuwari” style to an “Indian style”.

May I cry?

"....I showed you an unsightly sight, I am sorry, again"

There is no meaning even if I keep it up now, but there is little information to assume a defiant attitude.

First.....who is this boy?

I am the sole child in Tempest House, as for the servants they are single, and for those that have children have already left the household.

So there is only one child, or suppose to be one child in the household.

But there is a child seemingly the same age as me currently in front of me.

An angelic-like boy with brown eyes and smooth wavy royal milk tea hair. He looks familiar to me from the eye and hair color, but that smooth straight hair makes me feel a little jealous.

Is it weird to say that I would like to dress him up in a maid outfit. The effect would be outstanding.

But...anyways who is this?

It is at least not one of capture target. Both the hair and the eyes are different in a color.

"I am Mariabell Tempest, the daughter of this house. Who are you and what are you here for?"

To declare myself in such a fashion is rather impertinent of me if I do say so myself. Hardly the remark a 3-year old child should be making to someone in their first meeting.

But I want you to excuse me. I am Mariabell Tempest after all.

I don't mean as a villain, but I am in a position where the corresponding behavior is obligatory, whether as I am Mariabell Tempest, a young lady of the

Tempest family even if I am only three years old.

Even though, I have been living in auto-mode all the time. My ego has already been established in the auto-mode even though I am now Mariabell.

I cannot become the duke's daughter by just saying my heart and soul is Mariabell now. I will appeal with personality denial if compelled.

Of course, even so, I do not think that I can pass the responsibility or abandon it either.

I am not really being hypocritical as I did play as Mariabell five times in the past enough to have her personality down to the pat.

Although it is a bit problematic for me to be able to impersonate her personality so well. It was a little late to notice now though.

"I want to be alone now. Can you leave?"

Please, do not let me increase my "dark history" any more.

"..... A strange way of talking"

Thank you for the straightforward remark.

Children are honest.

But you will not be popular if you tell a girl she is strange!

"You did not speak normally, it was normal when you were alone"

"....After all, I heard you"

Though I had the faintest hope, it was crushed into a thousand pieces.

"You couldn't see, anyone? "

"....."

"Anyone? "

Do not be so frank; this child.

It will not be such a thing of much interest.

Though I should show it in a manner when I did not want to answer, I have given in to a boy without so much of a fight" Children's ""Why?" Attack" is too pure and difficult to avoid.

"..... mother"

"Mother is it yours?"

"Yes, my mother. We can hardly talk because she is too busy"

It is quite doubtful whether she is really busy. When I went to see her again today, the "nōmen" maids once again got in my way and I was not able to even see mother's face.

"..... is it possible you do not want to see me"

Perhaps my mother does not want to see me.

It was something that I knew in the corner of my heart all the time but had been continually looking away.

We cannot meet because the other person does not want to meet. It would be most natural to think so.

I had tried to visit her many times to no avail, I thought of many other possibility, but in the end the obvious conclusion was that my mother will not see me.

Neither the servants nor father are busy or tired, but they will not let me see you.

And my mother will not come to see me.

I believe the relationship between a mother and her single daughter is important, I only want to see you, and I will go see her.

Though presently I want to meet mother for an important purpose, but in reality....even if it is the real three-year old Mariabell, I'm sure she is missing her mother.

3-years old is an age where one wants to be spoiled by both the mother and father a lot.

No matter how much my father loves me, for a daughter, her mother is a special existence and I want a clear love from my mother.

"It may be that it is only me who wants to meet"

The more I think about it, the more it seems like a fact. It is only me that wants to see the feelings of parent and child. I cannot help but think so.

I wonder if her gentle look was just my illusion. I'd like to think that it is not so, but I do not have any basis for my judgement.

I, so to speak, have come to a deadlock. Although it is a hurdle I need to overcome, I do not know what lies ahead of it and how it will change.

I felt a sinking feeling in my stomach.

What surfaced was a voice that was all too blank.

"Then you should just ask and it'll all be good"

"Huh...?"

"You should just ask your mother whether she likes you or not"

[1] 猫かぶり "Nekokaburi" Essentially means Wolf in sheep's clothing. This is a Japanese term so there is not really a direct translation, I had to make title from a very literally meaning.

[2] sitting on the floor grasping one's knees (as in a gym class)

[3] Japanese noh mask

Chapter 4: There is no such thing as difficult in the beginning

It is such an easy task, his eyes seem to say when he looks at me. Rather yet his eyes seem to say why not do so in the first place.

If I don't know then ask. If I do not understand, you can tell me.

The suggestion was such a simple concept, yet I did not think about it at all. Even though it is simple..... No, as it was easy, the answer that could not be derived from a normal sense of values.

I am not exaggerating when I say it is quite serious. This is essentially a possible death flag!

"Fu fu~tsu"

"..... what's with you"

I was delighted and unintentionally let out a smile which made the boy edge back as if saying that I was weird.

Though I was surprise by it, judging from his reaction I do not think it was a good idea that I laughed so suddenly. However, because I am glad right now I will let it slide.

"Thank you"

"..... ?"

"Okay! Then I will be going"

"Farewell boy! "

"E—"

The world seems a little clearer to me now I wonder if it is because the tension was going up.

I could hear the boy saying something in the background, but I picked up the hem of my dress a little and started running, the graceful Duke's daughter

Mariabell was nowhere to be seen.

Before being the Duke's daughter, I am a little 3-year old girl.

While holding the hem of my dress in my tiny hands, I dashed desperately at the full speed my short legs could carry me.

The direction? That is, of course mother's room.

× × × ×

"Anne, mother's room?"

I ask one of the "nōmen" maids 'Anne' who suddenly appeared from nowhere about mother's room.

Of course prepare both the dress and the hair a little before attacking, right?

I don't exactly know where and how Anne suddenly appeared from, but I do not care because I have other matters on my mind.

If you care or mind about it, you lose, so the best option would be to ignore it.

"Yes, that's rightojōsama, okusama is.."

"I do not mind"

I interrupted Anne's answer and knocked on the door of my mother's room.

I can imagine what Anne will say from my past experiences. I am busy or I am tired, whether it is a lie or not will be used to keep me away from here for reasons that I do not know.

In fact, the knock actually made her "nōmen" expression change for the first time.

I guess it was unexpected, that the voice of the young ojōsama sounded so impatient.

There was feeling.....No, I guess it is natural, but I was doubtful of the long unpleasant silence.

"Mother, it is Mariabell, may I come in?"

"... Maria-chan?"

"I am coming in"

"Ojōsama—"

I opened the door quickly before Anne could stop me.

There were some manner issues regarding my conduct just like before when I knocked.

But I have to act quickly before I can be stopped.

If I don't push forward now then I will not be able to proceed, the plan that I got from the boy even if it is a little rough around the edges is my best option and chance right now.

As I opened the door and entered inside, I saw a woman with a surprised expression on her face sitting on a chair near the window with a book resting on her knee.

It's been a while..... though it is a little strange, she is my mother.

The room was gorgeous and luxurious but at the same felt slightly mismatched, it is more accurate to say that it had a neat atmosphere rather than refined.

The eyes of pastel purple which looked around at me were the same as the ones from my memories.

"Pardon my intrusion, okāsama"

"Maria-chan ...what is the matter?"

She seems to be considerably surprised by the sudden visit.

From a parent-child relationship view that is a problematic reaction, but it is a normal reaction if I think about our exchange up till now.

I picked up the hem of my dress lightly and lower my head.

It is the minimum courtesy that should be shown for someone who just forced herself into the room without approval.

Although I am not in a position to talk about courtesy at this point, I am still going through that part.

I am only a small little three-year old, and I plan to use my young age to my advantage.

Though it is difficult to say what I want to say.

But I will go for it, even if it kills me. I must try my hardest and use my advantage to the maximum.

I cannot be hesitant if I make up my mind to do so. I stared at the eyes of mother, and opened my mouth.

"I, have a question to ask okāsama"

"Ma~a....I wonder what it could be?"

"Okāsama.....do you dislike me?"

"What ...!?"

I said it. I bit my tongue a little, but I suppose it counts as a pass.

Since I am a three year old, there is no problem even if the words cannot be pronounced smoothly. The contents are heavy this time so it is more important that I got them out than having messed up a bit.

From being asked such a sudden question from her daughter...my mother stared wide-eyed at the remark A look of surprise and sadness from what I can tell, it was that kind of expression.

Judging from the expression, I am not disliked ... right? If that is what your expression means, it is a nice result for me

"Why.....I do not dislike you, to say such a thing"

"If not, then why did you not come and see me?"

Yes, just to not get ahead of myself and get my hopes up.

Even if I come to meet you, you will not see me.

Even if I cannot meet you, you will not come to see me.

Apparently I seem to have been more stressed than I realized myself.

It was unexpected, but it hurt my heart more than I imagined, my mother's expression makes me very frustrated.

If you do not dislike me, why will you not see me?

You will not come and see me.

Do not make such a sorrowful face, do not look so sad, I did not do anything.

To try and meet, to try and talk, you did not try to do any of these.

Only I became so desperate, while you were only waiting. Even so, stop looking like you are in so much pain by yourself.

"It was more painful for me, much more than you!!"

"Ma-, ria, ... Maria-chan"

"It was lonely and painful, but it was only me, Maria¹ worked so hard, and was so hurt, but okāsama did not notice at all!"

What a terrible tantrum.

Considering my mental age, it is a violent sight, but because I am a child it can be tolerated.

To the me who justed cried out, mother seems about to cry too.

To cry to release my pent-up feelings, to make mother understand, that may have been my "real intention" all the time.

For me I realized for the first time... No, it's 'Mariabell's' intention.

The feelings of myself and the 3-year old Mariabell, who is the true owner of this body are mixed, and it turns into one voice and steadily flows out from my mouth.

"Maria, loves okāsama so much....there are so many things I want to tell okāsama....but, when Maria thinks okāsama might hate her, it was so hard and painful"

Do not avoid me, do not hate me because I love you.

I wonder if these were the feelings of the real three-year old Mariabell.

In the same way as me, you were being avoided by your mother.

And so, I could not help but also feel your unease.

Because unlike me, the original Mariabell was a genuine three-year old child.

She was worried and felt uneasy, but surely Mariabell did not confess it, and her mother without worrying about her daughter's anxiety.....chose divorce.

I do not know the reason, perhaps my mother did not want it.

But for Mariabell it is a decisive event that transforms her insecurity into confirmation.

I was hated.

My beloved mother did not love me.

It was painful and sad but she was disliked.

With nowhere to turn to and without thinking she chose to become indifferent to the matter.

I had always thought why there was no information in the past five rounds. But the fact that it was the most sad reason was not within my expectations.

It seems the cause for her future evil personality was not just being plain spoiled.

Because it is not a pretty sight to be tolerated, so it could only be thought as "It serves you right" for the past five rounds.

"That feeling, I also thought..."

"What....."

"..... Sorry, Maria-chan"

My breathing out of sync from excessive crying, and a watery nose.

As a young lady, and a girl before that, I was desperately trying to suppress my runny nose, but then I was surrounded by a soft feeling.

"You are....everything to me. I love you from the bottom of my heart from now... to forever and forever on, Mariabell"

I am hugged.

As soon as I noticed something in me came overflowing.

It is me and at the same time not me.

Perhaps something very important for "Mariabell"?

Neither my father nor the nōmen maid could provide.

I was able to obtain what I was always missing, what I was always craving, in the warmth of my mother.

I think "happiness" is the correct word for this moment.

"O, kā.....-sama, o kā,-sama"

"I am sorry for making you feel so lonely. As Mariabell says, it was mother's fault"

"U , a..... u ā ā a..... tsu"

A gentle hand stroking her hair, a soft smile, a loving voice to spoil her, was something Mariabell had for the first time.

I know. I remembered the perfect life and conditions given to me ever since I was a baby, having received ever thing I had ever wanted.

But for Mariabell.

I do not know how Mariebell grew and lived her life up till now.

But I couldn't help but have expectations for the gentle smile and sweet voice calling my name.

Mariabell now knew all of that for the first time.

In that case....can't help it then.

I will let you fully feel the love and warmth of a mother and the affection that wipes away all of our unease and anxiety.

Even if later I am hit by the shame and embarrassment of having cried like a little child and want to hide away in a hole.

¹ It seems she starts referring to herself in third person a little starting here.

Chapter 5: Between forward and backward

"*Tsu....., zutsu*"

"Are you alright?"

"Yhes..."

No, it is not all right. I feel so embarrassed and ashamed that I want to be buried right now.

By the time I stopped crying it had already been about ten minutes, the cool mind that should have been synchronized with “Mariabell” was completely filled with shame.

..... What was that all about a while ago.

It is similar to auto mode, but at the same time completely different in a way.

Both the tears and the words that came out were beyond my control; it is certainly my.....Mariabell’s true intentions.

It was different than auto mode which does not allow me to move, and it was still part of my will.

But the tears, that is the behavior and thoughts of the “original Mariabell”.

I am myself, and at the same time not myself. It was a mysterious feeling, almost like myself and the original Mariabell are slowly completely becoming one.

It was a phenomenon that I never felt before, neither in auto mode nor in my current life for the past three years.

"— chan ... Maria-chan, what’s wrong? Is it painful somewhere after all?"

"E... a~, no it’s all right"

I quickly shook my head to mother who had a panic expression on her face.

This won’t do, now I have no time to think about other things.

If you miss this window of opportunity, what little chance you might have had

might forever be gone and you might never get another opportunity again. From there things will only get worse.

You have to pick the picking buds.

"I am sorry to have shown you such an unsightly appearance"

"NoI should be the one to apologize. I didn't even notice my own daughter's feelings"

Iya, ma~a....it may have been some of my mother's responsibility in the past five rounds.

It was a period that would make any three-year old child feel lonely.

But this time it's not 'Mariabell' but instead the older me. It's not like I didn't feel any loneliness, I was sad when I thought I might be hated, but I am an adult after all.

I was able to hide my inner feelings and laugh.

I cried a little while ago so I may not sound convincing, but I would like to point out that was beyond my control.

"..... Let's talk. From now on, there will be plenty of time"

"Ah-..Yes!"

The gently laughing mother is the same as the one I saw a few years ago.

I am now 3-years old. If it is as the original, two years from now those two will get divorced, I do not know if there is any cause or whether it will emerge from now, but it is a fact that I made a step forward.

I was able to finally step forward.

x x x x

"Hmmm..."

Today I had a cup of tea in my mother's room, we talked until dinner time..... and when I noticed it was dark outside I returned to my own room but was worried about a new problem.

Waiting for us as we headed from mother's room to the dining hall was an

deadpan father who could not express any feelings.

Anne was next to him, so he probably heard from her about how I had brashly charged into mother's room.

Father always doted on me, but I thought this time for sure I would be scolded for my actions..... or that is what I thought, but my father only said: Because Beruderia is tired, do not push yourself too hard. "

It was said with a bitter expression.

Depending on how you interpret it, it can sound like he does not want me to be involved with my mother.

In fact, judging from mother's face it seemed like she was on the verge of tears.

Even though dinner is suppose to be a time where family can gather together happily around delicious food, it can't just only be me who felt like we were at a funeral.

"Somehow... it is different from what I thought"

I opened my notebook and updated the data written in it.

Even though today's things are supposed to be surely moving forward I wonder why it does not come together nicely. Just like a certain feeling where something feels out of place.

It seems like I mistook something fundamental.....

".....First of all I have to ask my mother's story"

Yes, that is my primary goal.

After thinking it over and over that was the conclusion I came to. If it comes to nothing while I am at a loss, I may cry. I will definitely cry.

Will it be a walk in the ballpark or will it be like walking on a tightrope without a lifeline.....it all depends on me.

Some daredevil may choose the tightrope walking, but unfortunately, I am not reckless or a masochist.

I am an ordinary girl with a healthy sense of values. It is not a joke to go ahead

through the steep way by oneself.

"Let's visit mother tomorrow"

After all it will not be possible for me to think alone.

"If you do not understand you should listen" It is useless as it is troublesome because it is a skill to obtain through interpersonal skills.

I put the notebook away in the depths of the drawer so it would not be seen, and I go to bed.

Chapter 6: Keito Eirisu

I succeeded in interacting with my mother and I am progressing smoothly. is what I wish I could say.

My excitement from the feeling of progress is starting to wane. I wonder why I am worrying about that problem now? Today I have a more important event than that.

"Maria-chan, are you alright? There are a lot of people around so are you tired?"

"E... a~, no it's all right. Do not force yourself mother."

Somebody praise me for worrying about my mother even though my own heart is pounding from fatigue and tension.

Facial muscles are complaining of pain. I believe this is a symptom called Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness.¹

Why do I have to endure such pain? Although I could avoid this by using the excuse that I am a child, this would neither be the appropriate time nor place to do so.

Because the main character today is me.

"Mariabell-sama, congratulations"

"Already four.....children grow up quite fast"

Today is the party celebrating the birth of the Tempest Duke's only daughter.....That is my "birthday party".

It is quite natural that the scale is not a cute thing like a regular "birthday party".

My parents, and a lot of non-relatives at my 4th birthday....wow, is everybody that free?

I am satisfied if I just get a birthday gift, but I can't open them till after the party.....I have not been here even an hour yet and I already want to return.

The delicious dishes and sweets are lined up in front of my eyes, but the dress is so tight I doubt whether anything would be able to reach my stomach.

The greetings that come in lieu are all really directed at my father, in reality father is the reason why nearly everyone is here.

But the thing that annoyed me the most was when a lady came over.

"Mariabell looks really like you Duke, I am looking forward to her growth in the future"

"Well, really though I wish the eye color would have been like mine too"

It is the "mother's eyes" the lady's eyes seems to say so.

Even fools would be able to tell the eyes are not friendly.

Even if I was a real four-year-old, I would have still been able to feel the unpleasant atmosphere.

Like my father's copy, I also look alike to my father.

My face will change as it grows, if memory serves then ten years later Mariabell will turn into a beautiful girl who inherited the cold beauty of her father.

The only place that is similar to mother is the color of the eyes – a pastel purple. It is hard to notice the eyes because of the similarity to father.

I wanted to resemble my mother.

Pastel colors seems unusual even in a fantasy world where a wide variety of colors are allowed.

It would have been the perfect thing to say to that sarcastic lady from a little while ago.

I myself like it because it matches the violet hair of my father. Though if you ask me there is no big difference between pastel colors, and other colors like blue and green.

""

"... Mother, are you all right?"

"E-, I'm alright ... Maria-chan, are you not hungry? You have not eaten the cake yet?"

"Eh..... ? "

"Mother is doing the greetings, so if there is anything you want to eat go ahead"

The usual gentle smile wavered, and there was an atmosphere where I could not say whether it was a bitter smile.

Maybe because I'm still a child, mother did not want to let me see the ugly side of adults. Otherwise there is no reason for that gentle mother to have such a forced expression.

"..... Yes. I will have some cake"

I am worried about leaving my mother, but I can not do anything even if I am there. No, rather, if I am there it will only harm her.

When I thought so, it made it harder to resist, I just could not leave the spot.

x x x x

".....Tired"

As my mother told me, I went around the party and ate cake or anything ... I was exhausted.

Like I believed, everyone's aim was my father, the atmosphere around him was awfully sweet.

My father, Duke Asta Kirua, head of the Tempest, just looking at that status only you can tell he is high ranking aristocrat, the Tempest family name is among the highest in the country it can even be said that it is only second to the royal family.

Of course it can change if you take into account various positions and circumstances. With my knowledge further explanation is impossible so I will give up. In other words, it is a very great house.

And I am the only girl in such a house, moreover, I am doted upon by my father very much, anyone under those circumstances would become very

special.

No, it is very annoying.

Moreover, I am only a 4-year old brat. Regardless of the inside, it is essentially giving a child diamonds.

The father who is oblivious to this...is happily greeting guests. Those guests with their impure motives, children with parents like those are likely to grow up to be like their parents, and their children like them and so on and so forth.

Human insincerity is unbelievable.

The ulterior motives that they hide scare me.

I was relieved when I came to the secluded backyard, here I could finally relax.

"I'm so full and my feet hurt....."

This is just once a year I want you to forgive me. Do diplomacy in another place.

"I wonder if it will finish soon ..."

"What will? "

"What ...!??"

It's deja vu.

No, it isn't deja vu, is it deja vu? I do not care any more.

In other words, it is familiar. Why do I feel like I saw you before.

Ah but surely when you say deja vu it's supposed to be something like "You never experienced it, but you feel like you have experienced it", correct? Then this is not deja vu.

I had let my guard down because I thought there was no one around.... this was something I had experienced before.

Let 's make my motto "Hunter and hunted" tomorrow from now.²

"Can you hear me?"

"I do not want to hear it, but I can hear it"

While looking at the source of the voice while holding my head, the person who this voice belongs to is as expected.

"You again....."

The boy from before was standing right there. What is this encounter rate? Are mob character appearance rates that high? This is the most disgusting pattern to meet when you do not want to meet.

"I was here first"

"Is that so..."

Once again? Am I not looking around enough? No this boy is just too shadowy. I do not know whether I am just making up excuses.

"So, why are you so tired today, isn't today your birthday, isn't it?"

"Ewhy do you know"

"“Today is Mariabell-sama's birthday” that is what my father said"

"father?"

An unpleasant sweat flows down my back.

From the tone I had thought he was a commoner, even if he was a nobleman, I thought that it was a lower rank.....what if he is actually a very important child. If you were invited to my birthday party, there is no way you would be a commoner.

If so, this is very bad. Because I am a ojōsama.

"The flowers at the arch in front of the the entrance, and around the manor. My father raised them"

"....."

Hmm? Arch? Flower?

"Keito Eirisu, my father is doing his best taking care of the garden"

"Wait a minute....."

Garden, guarding...guard?³

No, no, it is completely different. It is alright, calm down.

"Garden.....your father does garden care?"

"Isn't it easy to tell?"

Is that so...

But I do not want you to look at me as if asking "What are you talking about". It is painful for children to be stupid.

"Ah ... so that is why you were in that rose garden that day"

"I was bored until my father's work was over"

I see. And I am relieved.

This time and even last time, I have revealed my true nature to this boy. You might think it's not a big deal, but it is a suicidal act to do in the upper class ... it is plain foolish.

Otherwise the meaning of receiving a gifted education from a young age as a child of nobility disappears.

Me? I use the past five rounds (Mariabell's) experience and the degree of manners I need for a 4 year old child is perfect.

Although my time as a child will come to an end, but ... I think the foundation is at least complete.

Positive thinking.

"So... Eh, boy"

"Keito"

Hmm? What was that?²

"Keito Eirisu, I am five years old so I am older than you"

"E-...is that so"

To be frank, even if he is five I do not consider him older than me. In fact. Please consider my mental age.

No, even so, this is reality now isn't it? Keito is definitely older than me since I am four years old today. He is five so he would be older.

"Keito-kun, what are"

"Keito is fine Suddenly calling me with –kun feels weird."

"...Keito, what are you doing here, are you not going to join the party?"

"Because a gardener's son attending the party would be troublesome in many ways, I heard that the head did not mind, but the eyes around me were.."

The child was a little direct...but I agree.

"You are today's spotlight, what are you doing in such a place"

".....I appreciate that everyone went out of their way to attend my party tonight and are having so much fun, regardless of any ulterior motives, but it can be a little tiring not to be able to say what is on your mind, whether you are frustrated or tired, so in other words"

"It was annoying and I ran away"

Even if people were going around conducting underhanded business, you can not say it easily. In fact, I say it is better to "turn a blind eye" ...is that how you use it?

"Everyone is overreacting just because I am four years old. There are more important things to me ..."

"Is it what you said that time?"

".. Yes, thanks to Keito, I am on good terms with my mother, so thank you."

"Oh, did I do something?"

"..... I am thankful, so that's fine"

If anything.....this child moves at his own pace. I say that the pace is a bit perturbing.

Are all five year old children like this? I wonder if I can interact with

"But, I am suffering from a new problem again..."

"Your mother? "

"No, my father"

1. *Delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS), also called muscle fever, is the pain and stiffness felt in muscles several hours to days after unaccustomed or strenuous exercise. So in her case I suppose smiling too much?*
2. *Original line was 油断大敵 essentially meaning "The most frightening opponent is to relax yourself and carelessly"*
3. *Original line was にわし、二驚、鰯.....? (Ni washi, ni washi, iwashi.....?) Japanese wordplay so I changed it since it wouldn't make sense in English.*

Chapter 7: A stone bridge that cannot be broken¹

Yes, my father is preventing me from making progress.

I had initially thought that mother could manage to do something for me.

I was naive.... I thought for a moment that it would be an easy victory.

"Your father...is the head"

"That's right"

My father, Asta Kirua · Tempest.

It seems that he was the only son of the Tempest family and succeeded after the predecessor, my grandfather, retired.

He was the only son and originally had excellent taste, so he did not have any objections from his relatives.

Perfect family social standing. Lucid mind.

These are two elements that make him a prime target for those woman whose aim is to marry into a wealthy family. But aside from that there is another factor.

To put it bluntly, it is his appearance.

Well, he is the father of an otome game's beautiful villainess after all.

But my father seems to be very cool even from a daughter's perspective.

Dark deep blue eyes and violet hair. It is so beautiful that it's actually quite blinding, but the eyes are cold like Mariabell. As expected of a parent and child. They are definitely alike.

With those three combinations it's no wonder father is so popular.

Even then women would compete against each other and would target him like a capture target and try to become his wife and have his children, I wonder if actual victory exists in a harem.

However, even with those array of powerful weapons at his disposal, my father did not play around and fall in love and chose to live a serious school life, he married early at the young age of 23 and worked as a former secretary.

By the way, in the same year, he also later on become the head of the Tempest family at the age of twenty-three.

What to say those are some scary specs. But I knew.

This will be Mariabell too.

Although because her father is better than most men and because he dotes on her it cause Mariabell's ego to become higher than Mt. Everest.

But if that ego is eliminated then it will not become involved in any love affairs.

"What, are you hated by the head this time?"

"No you are wrong"

Please do not damage my heart and spirit so lightly. If you were really worry about it, it was a fatal moral injury.

"My father loves and dotes on me very much, he is my kind and respected father"

"Respected.....?"

"Father is a great person after all"

It is not strictly different, but if you explain it properly it will be unnecessary to know.

"Hmmm.....then, what were you thinking about now?"

"It's not really a big deal"

Why is this child so interested in me.

No, if you see someone troubled in front of your eyes, you would be worried. It is common among girls, is not it? Although it would appear something is wrong but when you ask "What's wrong" the response back is "It is nothing" even though it is obvious that something happened.

I dislike it, but ... if I do not answer here it will be the same thing.

In the end guess I will talk about it.

"Not me, but my mother. Somehow they do not seem to be getting along well"

Both my father and mother are very kind and gentle to me.

I think that it is a good parent-child relationship, such as reading my picture book by my father, eating a snack with my mother, talking with my father, taking a nap with my mother. They both care for me very much and I also love my parents.

But that is about parentage relationship, not marital relationship.

The relationship between a married couple I think that it is honest dangerous.

My mother is no problem.

It would seem that my latest dark history that made me hide in my room worked and everything that happened before seemed like a lie. It also became a good laugh, now I am the idol of the mansion that is liked by all the servants. My mother is too cute.

The problem is my father.

It would seem that as mother's mood rises father's mood seems to drop proportionately to the amount mother's mood rises.

I am anxious about a wrinkle appearing on the middle of my forehead soon.

Lover's ruin.

Originally father is not an amiable person. In actuality he is rather bad.

Just that beautiful look will do wonderful work without a smile. There seems to be no doubt that he can call it a talent and that his personality has never become a hindrance in terms of his work.

However, that is only a matter of work.

The husband-wife relationship does not go smoothly like his work.

"Father seems cold towards mother somehow"

"The head....?"

"E ~e, I feel like my father is being avoided by the servants..."

Or at least that is what the general atmosphere feels like.

I am hesitated to declare it in front of a 5-year old child, even though I am only 4-years old myself. Considering what I am saying it it would be bad if in any case it was leaked to someone "The head is kind to me though"

"He is also very kind to me"

"I know right?"

"But he is cold towards my mother for some reason"

When my mother left the room, that was not the case. Rather than that, the couple's conversation itself was zero.

If anything.....any hope I had was shattered at dinner on the day I first got angry and talked with my mother.

And the severe attitude towards mother seemed to cause distrust with the servants as well, and father gradually lost interaction with with many of the servants.

In other words, being avoided.

Now the there are only a limited number of people that talk to my father, perhaps the number of people can be counted with one hand. Of course, including me.

My father is alone like Mariabell, the similarity between the two is downright uncanny. I don't like it.

"They do not interact with each other, the two are essentially never together....as a matter of fact I have never seen them going out together"

"Bad relationship? "

"....."

That is what it seems like right.

Anyone who would hear about their relationship would probably think that. I am not pleased at all. It seems that I was not wrong in my review.

"Yeah ... I think so too"

"I think that if their own child thinks that too then isn't it plainly obvious?"

If this was a manga there would be many arrows stuck in my body.

In a sense this child is great. You are only 5-years old and you already know how to attack the vital spots of a person, it makes me anxious about your future.

"So, what shall I do?"

"No, I know the rules for this time"

"..... ?"

"Just go for it, if it fails ..."

In that case there is no choice but to proceed fully forward.

One year after five years old they will divorce. I do not know the exact date but it should have been around when Mariabell was 5-years old. I wonder if I can cheat and deceive until then.

Baby? Chicken? Call me anything.

Because I was in Maria Bell, I did not think anything about bullying, originally I am a person who "hits and strikes a stone bridge and finally finds other roads".¹

If possible, I want to avoid dangers and annoyances in my life.

"If I fail it might become a bigger problem than before"

".....right"

Yes, that is a problem.

What to do if I don't make it in a year....what is more, there is no guarantee that the two people will not divorce after all beyond five years. Even if my recollections are correct, and things go according to the game I cannot affirm things will go accordingly since my auto mode was turned off.

Also, it is not surprising that my mother dislikes father as it is now....father will

not lack a candidate successor even if they divorce. In the game, it was a father-in-law family, and maybe there is no problem to remarry even if there are children.

".. what shall I do, it is only me who will be troubled"

The prevention of divorce between these two people is essential insurance for me to live.

I feel uneasy when auto mode is turned off again but when I return to auto mode I absolutely dislike it. In such a stress-filled life, I think that it is more healthier to just hide indoors so that I do not even meet the heroine and the capture target.

So it doesn't resort to that, I would like those two to be in good relations.

".....Nothing but to do it"

"Do what?"

"Now that it is decided, I must prepare If I ask Anne..... "

"So, what are you—"

"Keito"

I block out Keito's voice of suspicion, and laughed.

Although I think even of myself of someone who is able to adapt quickly to changing situations, but still when I think about what I've decided, I again feel troubled and anxious.

I'm a baby and chicken, and I still think I should just avoid danger and trouble. I am a human being who strikes the stone bridge and finally searches for other roads.¹

"You will also be cooperating"

If there are no other paths, then you just have to find the courage to cross right through the middle of the stone bridge.

1. *Title drop and essentially means giving up or trying alternatives if the going gets rough or the issue becomes too complicated.*

Chapter 8: Sink or swim

Do not rush when in a hurry. When you are trying to do things in a hurry take a safe and secure detour rather than a short cut containing danger.

Our ancestors often said. I feel like I thought something like this before, but now is not the time to look back on the past. I cannot turn back now. Strike while the iron is hot.

"Mother, father"

"Maria-chan, where have you been?"

By the time I finished discussing the plan with Keito, the party was already over, and only my parents who were waiting for me and the servants who were cleaning up were left.

Originally I suppose it should have been the leading role of today to dissolve the party, but it is only a birthday party of a 4 year old child after all. There will not be people waiting for the child who went out to play.

Besides, it is more convenient this way.

"Did you eat some of the dishes and cake? You suddenly disappeared midway through the party..."

"E ~e, I was resting outside because I was so full from all the food"

"Is that so, then that's fine"

Mother who was looking tense let out a sigh of relieve after hearing my words.

Apparently it seems that she was worried when she could not find me at the table where all the dishes were lined up.

She sure is a worrywart, I thought for a moment. You would feel uneasy if your daughter who just reached 4 years old today suddenly disappears from your view.

Even if the child is not a daughter, having a little child wandering outside

alone is dangerous. Even if it is within the premises, the inside of the premises of such a large mansion is practically the same as the outside. Of course security is perfect, but that is not the problem.

"Today must be tiring, the bath is ready, so you should rest early tonight"

"Thank you mother"

A little bit behind mother, father is talking to the secretary Orsseine-san.

Un, I did not see anything.....

While carefully checking the distance of father, I cup my hands over my mouth. Understanding from my motion that it was a secret, mother brought her ear to my mouth.

"Ano ne, Maria, I have a request to ask of mother"

"Request?"

Being as childish as possible, as cute and young at the heart. This is an innocent wish of a child, I do not have any other will.

Is it really a good idea to use this plan, essentially this plan is just capitalizing on the fact that I am a four year old child.

I will forsake logic and reason and hope this time luck is on my side.

"Ano ne, tomorrow —"

So that no one.....especially my father could not hear, I whisper my request in a voice so quiet that only my mother could hear, and my mother nodded with a gentle smile as usual.

At the noon of the next day, I carried a big bag on my back and led mother by the hand.

"Maria-chan, there is no need to panic so much"

"Though I am not upset, I must hurry"

"..... ?"

My mother tilted her head puzzled but did not say anything, and I continued leading her down the corridor.

What children are capable of doing, is something adults should not take lightly. It is wonderful because any unforeseen circumstances can be explained with "Because it is a child."

For me now my greatest advantage is being a 4 year old child.

"Over here, mother"

"Did you want to come to the courtyard?"

The destination is a courtyard surrounded by four sides. There are a lot of large and wide courtyards at our house, but this time I selected the smallest place in the center of the house among them.

The reason? Because it is easy to escape? It is disadvantageous if it is wide and there are no obstacles.

I strongly pulled my mother's hand to the person who is sitting on a bench in the courtyard.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, father"

"Maria ... you"

"Kirua-sama.....?"

My parents stared at each other unable to hide their surprise.

They seem to be surprised so much just to have met each other even though they live in the same mansion Are you two really couples? Well I was born, no really.

"Maria-chan, this is ..."

"Father, mother"

While my mother was surprised, I let go of her hand and withdrew behind step by step. Once I withdrew to the entrance way I said clearly to the two people watching there.

"Maria will be running away from home"

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Yesterday, in the bath which is too big I was not able to relax as usual. But because of nōmen maid's assistance, it is extra large.

Children 's hands are small, I hate it. It is better if I compare it with the sense of shame from when I was a baby.

A small head suitable for a small hand is washed, in addition the body was washed, after being wrapped in a fluffy towel, I was wearing silk pajamas that were unfit for a 4 year old child ... and now.

I am not at my own room but at my father's secretary's room.

A voice replying "Yes?" was returned after several knocks, and the owner of the voice who opened the door looked around several times before glancing down.

Sorry for being small.

".....Maria ojōsama?"

"Sorry for intruding so late, Orsseine-san"

Father's secretary, Orsseine • Eric.

A slim figure and orange hair, with bright eyes the same color as the hair, and a black eye patch over one eye emphasizes a mysterious youthful appearance.

Apparently also a childhood friend of my father.

To be truthful I do not need to address him with any honorifics.... but I cannot bring myself to do so after all he is my father's friend and classmate.

I guess it would be possible to brush it off as the innocence of a four year old child, but I cannot adapt to that. I'm sorry.

".....For now please come inside. You must not catch a cold after taking a bath. "

"Yes"

Good, I was not turned away.

I was a bit worried because I was a ojōsama and the other a servant, but if I think about it carefully isn't it even worse for the other party.....?

A rumor like inviting a four year old girl into their room could spread.

If a rumor spreads that Orsseine-san is a lolicon that would be bad.....actually

the appearance of Orsseine-san is rather childlike or youthful so it should not be a problem.

A women's ikemen filter is amazing.

"Because I only have coffee, would you like to get something else to drink"

"It's fine ... because I only came to talk"

".....understood"

He leads me to the sofa and stoops down so that his eyeline matches mine. He is skilled with the handling of women.

His soft and thin orange eyes are kind and gentle.....for ordinary four-year-old girls he would be like a prince that would make their heart throb.

I am an adult just mimicking a 4 year old child, so I don't feel any of that excitement.

"I came to make a request to Orsseine-san"

"Yes"

"Please make father take a day off tomorrow"

"..... Yes? "

A request from me, that is to make my father's schedule empty tomorrow.

Actually I did not want to limit it to just tomorrow, but.....my father is the head of our house and he is a great person. I cannot wait for my father's holiday because I do not know what time it will be.

It would be fine if the situation does not move while waiting, but the possibility of the situation worsening persists. My heart is not durable so far.

".....I'm sorry if I was letting you feel lonely Maria ojōsama. I will coordinate with Kirua and adjust the schedule so until then -- "

"I will run away from home tomorrow"

"Eh..... ? "

"Father and mother should talk. The two of them will not talk without me, but they will still not let out their feelings even if I am there"

The two people talk through me, but because it is through me they will not talk heart to heart. Of course you would not be able to tell your 4-year-old daughter the conversation between a couple.

Then, it is best for me to leave home.

"I asked by my friend. Do my parents not get along with each other?"

I felt like saying I was asked rather than I was told.

"I also thought so"

They do not talk, do not go out, their eyes do not even meet.

Couples are suppose to be close, and their exchanges is even lower than that of acquaintances let alone a couple.

"My father and mother are close". Is not something I, let alone a real four-year old child can even say. At this point I would say it is a good time to escape from reality.

"I would like the two people to talk by themselves, so I will only tell Orsseine-san that I am running away, so would you please help me?"

Please assist me.

With that in mind, I lowered my head. Because Orsseine-san was below me It may have looked like drooping though.

How long has it been? Because I was awfully tense it seemed to me like a long time had passed, even though it was actually a few seconds.

".....I understand"

The voice was gentle and my eyes meet the orange eyes.

"I will work hard to make up for Kirua-sama's share from the day after tomorrow. I was also concerned about those two..... to make Mary ojōsama worry like that as parents is definitely a problem now isn't it?"

"T...thank you very much!!"

"Not at all"

I feel a gentle sensation on the back of my head as my hair is stroked and

when I slowly raised my head.

My head is patted.

If I was a high school girl, it would be –kyun point, but now it is not so much.

"Well....could you tell me what strategy Maria ojōsama has in mind?"

"Yes! "

Anyways, I was able to get a reliable ally. Based on my plan, Orsseine-san will prevent the escape of father and mother, covering all the information of father I did not know.....it is safe to say that the strategy including information is perfect.

If this fails, there is no choice but to give up.

Chapter 9: Safe Haven

In this way, the “Battle between parents and parents ~ and daughter running away from home” was decided.

While my parents were surprised and unable to react to my sudden declaration, I quickly turn around and run.

After my declaration, I would run to the safe haven, that was my role.

Although I was the planner I had fewer jobs.....if I interfere too much it will be the same as before. They may hide their true feelings as they are in front of their child.

I endured my desire to look back and sped up.

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Although I call it a runaway, my destination is within the premises.

The place is a building where the servants live, the appearance is a fashionable apartment, with one room in it.

Reaching for the doorbell, “kankararān”, the bell sounded. I am glad that it was light outside now.....if I heard this sound at midnight it would probably mean that one of my neighbor’s house was on fire.

"Y—es.....?"

"It's Mariabell"

The response was a child’s voice, it was as expected Keito when the door opened.

"You're early"

"Thank you for your help"

My safe haven is Keito’s house. Of course, I got approval from Keito’s father with some help from Orsseine-san.

I have reported execution and whereabouts, I am a very reasonable runaway.

"My father is still at work, so feel free to relax"

"Pardon my intrusion"

I take off my shoes properly at the entrance, though there are no slippers.

The room is white with a country-style interior decoration, and it is more modest compared to my lavishly decorated house. However, this is what I was looking for. It is quieter and is all right ideally.

Simple is best, nicely said.

Since I started in my room the interior decoration was not familiar to the eyes, I thought whether it is the standard decoration of this world, but it is different.

What a relief, let's have a make-over if the couple makes up.

"Is that all your luggage?"

"E ~e, it's only for a day so I do not need to bring much"

I said that to the Keito who was surprised that all I had was the bag I was carrying on my back.

He seemed to think that I would have brought more baggage because of my position as an ojosama.

Well if I were an adult.....there may have been more luggage the size of around a carry case, but I am a 4-year old child, neither cosmetics nor hair straighteners are necessary.

No, as a person suffering from a natural perm, a hair iron is essential ... but I would not be able to use it no matter how hard I try since I am only four.

"I thought that someone will help you bring it, stuff such as dresses"

"Because I am running away from home for the time being, the only person who knows I am here is Orsseine-san"

"Running away?"

"Because my parents does not know that I am here"

A mug appeared on the table while I was setting down my bag, were you preparing that?

It is unexpectedly nice. Until now you have been pretty rude, so I will reevaluate you.

"Thank you"

"There is only tea though"

"I love tea"

After telling me that, the taste of tea which I drank was a taste I liked after all.

In this world, the mainstream of noble drinks is black tea. Therefore my search for various kinds and brands does not stop. I always drink milk tea before going to bed, and apparently various brands are used. But I never knew the difference.

On the contrary, tea is also popular among commoners. But the types and brands for them are limited and the taste is also average, as it is mass-produced goods. Normally this taste would not suit the luxurious tongue of an ojosama.

But I like this cheesy taste.

"This calms me down. Good things are delicious, but I am sick of it"

"You are an ojosama, aren't you?"

"It's because I am an ojosama"

You must care about manners and must take in differences in taste delicately, you cannot help but feel it is troublesome. Especially in regards to taste I am quite particular.

There are some things that even if they are high-class foods I still think they taste bad, and things like even though it is junk food I still think it tastes good. It is due to easy-to-understand seasoning, while delicate high-class dishes are honestly difficult to understand.

There would not be such a problem if it was Mariabell.....but it is not something that I can handle.

"It must be hard to be an ojosama"

"I cannot complain because I have it easy"

I will have no trouble with money, I will spare no investment for my future.

The background that can become a pressure if it is an adult is the strongest support for a child.

In order to do what is necessary to break the death flag, to build an insurance against the capture target, and to study to gain the knowledge that is necessary to profit afterwards, the current situation is serious but by no means is there dissatisfaction.

"..... Afterwards it's hard to say whether father and mother will make up"

"It would be nice if they could solve everything by today"

"They will! Definitely!"

I will be troubled if you say that!! Because I could only clear my father's schedule for today.

Orsseine-san, thank you very much for your efforts.

The next day the anxiety in my heart was settled.

I was greeted by two people lined up with a smile and I was convinced of my success when Orsseine-san who stood behind them nodded.

Chapter 10: The moon you see is always beautiful

"If you want Maria ojōsama to return please talk properly. It is alright, I am keeping track of Kirua-sama's schedule and I am also keeping track of where ojōsama is located. Do not worry about your four-year old daughter"

While suffering from Maria's runaway declaration, Orsseine threw only what he wanted to say and went away. It is not my imagination that the last words were said in a much lower voice than the others.

Both of us could not leave and we sat down on the bench just before we were told to talk. Although they are next to each other, Bēruderia is close to the edge and there is no word exchange.

Complete silence.

If we interpret the words Orsseine just said, Maria is worried about us and said that she would run away after that.....

In my heart, there are countless possibilities.

Between myself and Bēruderia there is a high rock wall. Of course Bēruderia does not feel that way. Even if I do not correct the original, I am the one who is at fault, and it is no exaggeration to say that Bēruderia is a victim.

She became my wife because I chose so.

That day, I found her.

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When I was just 23-years old there was a party held for my father the previous Tempest head. I forgot what the party was about, though I guess it probably was not a very important one if I don't remember.

Though at the time I was not yet the present head of the household, it was certain that I would become the next head. Therefore not only those for business purposes but also those for marriage purposes gather around me.

Such party venue was honestly tedious and cramped, but I could not always feel depressed.

That's why I remember it vividly.

A gaze that does not change. A conversation that does not change. What surrounds me does not change as usual.

Except for one person.

Only Bēruderia was different from everything I knew.

Neither dress nor adornment, even makeup is not gaudy. The appearance like abandoning herself as inferior to other participants was overwhelmingly, it was far different from the image of "young lady" I knew.

— I thought it was beautiful.

I admired a person for the first time in my life.

I do not know why even if I am asked. I want to know.

Why was I so intensely attracted to her?

Why can I not keep my eyes off her?

Two days later, my childhood friend taught me the reason. With the same lightness as blowing air, rather, as to why I did not understand why.

The next day, I found out her name.

Bēruderia · Wimbuto, the eldest daughter of the Earl.

And then three days later I would meet her again.

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How long did the silence last?

Her whole body is tense and it is easy to tell that she is nervous. I was the first to break the silence.

"Do you remember the day when we first met....."

"O-...of course. At the marriage meeting—"

"Wrong"

"Eh..... ? "

"A week before"

After hearing my words Bēruderia seems to be flustered and her eyes wander around.

I guess it was just according to my memory. I am not wrong if going by my memory. But no matter how much I remember, there is no point. The correct answer for Bēruderia would be her previous statement.

Just for me. The correct answer for me.

"The party the week before, that was where.....I first met you"

"Party..."

"A~a That's why I wanted to talk with you"

"..... Eh? "

"I wanted to marry you, so I nominated you"

Even though I was twenty-three years old, I had neither a lover nor a fiancée. The Tempest house never objected to the marriage I had hoped for, and there was no reason why the Countess of Wimbuto would refuse or could decline a marriage proposal from the duke's family, so our marriage got together.

Just one person whose feelings were left out, Bēruderia.

".....I am sorry"

Standing up, I lowered my head in front of her.

An atmosphere that Bēruderia was puzzled surfaces.

"Kirua-sama....."

"Although it was what I wanted, and I was given the highest priority, but I.....I did not think about your feelings"

Ignoring everything that should be avoided, I just prioritized my feelings and covered the things to see.

Taking care of any issues, pursue it with power, push the marriage that should have been mutual love one-sidedly.

"I think that it can not be helped if I apologize now. What I did was....out of line"

With a marriage forcibly pushed, I pushed hard without thinking about her feelings. It is a despicable action.

I cannot be liked. There is no help for it even if I am avoided.

I know. I understand it properly.

"But even so, I still like you"

x x x x

"....."

I am shocked, did I hear correctly?

Kirua-sama's words are spinning through my head with such force leaving me in complete shock.

I like you...he said he likes me.

It is neither a delusion nor a hallucination, it is certain he likes me.

".....r-really?"

My voice trembles. Not only my voice but also my fingers which are cold and lost color and temperature. I grasped both trembling hands together, I realized how much I was upset.

It's not a lie? It's not a dream?

As I was thinking that Kirua-sama is staring straight at me.

Beautiful blue eyes.

Some people are scared of those eyes, but I was anxious to see his eyes.

It's not a dream.

It's not a lie.

It is not a delusion.

It's no illusion.

This is reality.

"... I thought that I was hated"

Married at the age of 19, became a couple, Maria was born. It may look good on the surface, but the reality does not proceed so beautifully.

Though I knew the figure and name, we never really talked, that was the relationship between the 19 year old me and Kirua-sama. A marriage proposal came and could not be avoided, I got married, but a question that I could not ask anyone was circulating around my heart.

Why choose me?

I am plain and not special. I have eyes of a peculiar color, but I was despised because of it. I can never become the princess whom a prince would fall in love with at first sight.

So, I thought. It is a political marriage.

Surely Kirua-sama did not want to marry me. In fact, it is decided that women who are more beautiful and intelligent are better. Like the beautiful daughters of other nobles that surround him endlessly before and after marriage.

Once that thought took hold of me, I could not speak well with Kirua-sama..... even though I was afraid of him, he was kind to me.

Before I noticed it, I had lost most of my relationship as a couple.

"I was lost and hesitant, I could not accept you who tried to conform well ...I wondered if you regret getting married"

Even though you were gentle, even though you took good care of me, I turned all of it down. I told you that I wasn't ready, but it is painful if I think of what you lost there.

The number of times to talk decreased, the number of meetings decreased....before I noticed it came to a point where I could not turn back.

"Over and over again, I thought I had to talk. But every time I did not know how to proceed so I stopped....this was the feeling I had.

It was always Kirua-sama who tried to compromise. It was arrogant to assume he would continue when I kept turning him down.

I just stood there and did not act. My over-optimism for myself made Maria uneasy.

My beloved 4-year-old daughter.

I was spoiled by both my father and my mother and allowed her to worry, a child's only job should be to smile while growing up.

And this is the last chance Maria gave me.

If I do not take it, I am not qualified to call myself Maria's mother.

"It is true...at the time of the marriage meeting, I thought it was only with political thinking, a marriage with only doubts, and no romance anywhere"

"....."

To my words, Kirua-sama's expression does not change. Of course, that is natural. Only the eyes narrowed sadly a little.

Words that hurt him like a blade. A certain fact that must be said. My honest feeling at that time.

A person who stands above others, whose appearance and family's social standing are superior. A person who receives love and envy from a lot of people. He is not good with love. But that's why others love him so quickly.

I certainly did not love him at the age of nineteen.

"But those are the feelings of me when I was nineteen"

From that day, the moon has flowed.

My 19 year old self has disappeared with the past.

"Right now, I do not regret marrying Kirua-sama"

At the age of 19 years old, it would be a lie to say I did yearn for you.

Today, at this moment, at this time, I do not regret anything.

"I.....I also like Kirua-sama"

I am sorry to believe that I was hurt without noticing that you were also hurt. For meeting, thinking and yearning for me, thank you.

Everything and everything, I wished I had told you sooner, I cannot help

saying.

On that day, we knew what each other was thinking for the first time in our six year marriage.

Chapter 11: One misfortune went away, and ten more came up

Our parent / child relationship changed dramatically after returning from the runaway that ended on schedule as planned.

Of course, in a good direction.

"Kirua-sama, isn't it about time to go to work soon?"

"Orsseine-san, I will be ready soon"

"Take a rest today—"

"Hurry up and go foolish head"

The most strange one was father.

Before there was always a cold atmosphere around him, now there is nothing but a sweet look. For me he does not seem too different, but for mother the difference is like heaven and earth.

He changed too much...there are rumors flowing around like "Kirua-sama is broken" among the servants who thought that Father was cold-hearted. Orsseine-san was amazed from the bottom of his heart.

I had Orsseine-san tell me what happened after I ran away from home later.

It seems...the cause was a misunderstanding in thought. Although they were in love with each other, they seemed to have misunderstood that they were hated by the other.

Father who regretted having married without thinking about mother's feelings.

Mother who had convinced herself that it was a politician marriage.

Father had cut off mother because he thought she hated him, and mother misunderstood that she was disliked because of father's attitude.

I was avoided by mother because I looked like father and reminded her of

him.

A splendid mistake.

This content is fitting for a shojo manga, but this isn't a shojo manga it's an otome game.

Two people went through a vicious cycle that would always end in divorce up to the fifth round.

But I do not need to worry about anything this time. I stopped the vicious cycle and the family and couple relationship were also good.

The servants who were watching father and mother who were acting "deredere" in front of me seemed to have changed their opinion of him, it seems the gap in his marriage and between him and the servants have disappeared after taking my advice.

I played with my mother, was watched by the servants, spoiled by my father, scolded by both my mother and father In such days, before I noticed, I had reached my sixth birthday.

The past of "Villainess Mariabell" where her parents divorced when she was at the age of five has changed. And I was able to break through the first barrier which was the most important to me.

To this fact, I was delighted heartily.

With this, the distance between the game and the character can be taken as far as possible, even if I cannot become completely irrelevant to the matter, I should be able to build a social relationship that seems to be gentle on the surface.

If I am not there, there will be no one that can act as the beautiful rival.

I will not stand out or interfere, and will just watch their love unfold from behind. At an ideal distance to listen to rumors again.

Simple.....I once thought. Yes, it is past tense.

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The educational background of this world is a little strange. it is not unusual

for nobles and commoners to have a difference in academic background due to their difference in status and wealth.

In this world, nobles are unlikely to go to primary school. Every primary school age noble has a private tutor, and learns everything from studying to manners at "home". And from junior high school students' age they will go to Avuantoru Academy to learn magic.

On the contrary, the commoners and low aristocracy attend primary school, and in most cases it will be the final academic record.

And I will be six years old, and if I am a commoner, I am at the age of going to primary school. Children of nobility do not go to school, and it is said that one should "hire an exclusive tutor during the period from the age of six to seven," so it is not strange that they may hire a family tutor soon.

I was preparing myself for this soon.

But, still, however! The person selected is...!?

"It is a pleasure to meet you for the first time, Maria ojōsama"

Platinum blonde hair and golden eyes. Still only someone in his early youth, nevertheless a beautiful boy is kneeling down in front of me.

"I am Greas ▪ Fani ▪ Sandoria"

I know.

One of my most recent memories, the person who broke Mariabell's heart.

In other words, the capture target.

Why is this man here?

"From today I am supposed to serve as a tutor for Maria ojosama. It will be a pleasure to work with you"

".....Aa, yes"

I quickly shifted my expression and managed to smile, but my inner heart.

Someone please help me.

Or may I cry?

Chapter 12: I write as temple and read as shelter

Greas · Fani · Sandria.

The hidden character of 『LinaLia』who is unlocked when you clear four capture targets. The Saint attribute magic teacher of the Avuantōru Academy. Loved by females, a marvelous genius magician even though he is from humble birth.

Refer to the characters page for commentary.

And was the person whom I did not want to engage with the most.

The hidden character “Greas” whose route is unlocked when you clear four other capture targets, is definitely suitable for a hidden character as the difficulty is quite high.

It will be easier to understand, if I explain that in his route if even one option is mistaken it will be guided to the bad end without question.

And I think that is enough to be able to understand what I want to say.

The possibility of bad end is also the possibility that my life will end as well.

If possible, I would like to eliminate all involvement, but there are a lot of activity scenes proportional to the degree of difficulty. His route is a mass production source of dark history and death flags, that will destroy you.

The only salvation is that Greas is a teacher in charge of Saint, and I am a student whose attribute is “darkness” a complete opposite.

If I am careful, there is no reason I will be involved with the other party.

The person I don't want to get involved with the most, should have no reason to be involved with me.

I thought so, I was at ease.....

"Maria-sama, were you able to do it?"

"Aa, yes....."

In my room, I'm looking into my hands, I have to accept the reality which is "the person who I did not want to be involved with the most" is here.

By the way, Greas-sensei is a family tutor and it has been one month already.

The antique-like hard cover notes, which are not likely to be suitable for study, are lined up with the calculation formulas just taught. The newest letter is the problem the sensei issued which I solved already.

"Un, Yes, it's done. Maria-sama is quick to understand"

"You are good at teaching"

I smiled like a child, but it is natural that I understood.

The notes written in my notebook are " $7 + 2 = 9$ ", " $9 - 4 = 5$ ", " $4 \times 3 = 12$ ", " $9 \div 3 = 3$ "....a calculation formula for adding and subtracting fills one page.

The subject is 'math'. It is not "mathematics" nor "arithmetic", but just simple math It is certainly a suitable problem for 6-year-old me.

But my brain age is a high school X five times.

Although there is some stuff that I forget, "Math" is not one of them. I can do math in my head it's an easy victory.

Maria-sama is good with Math.....language is also excellent, it's better to raise the overall level.

"Ahaha.....I will leave it to you"

In the past month, I made a new discovery.

Greas....or Greas-sensei now, I would like to avoid being involved with him even now, but rather than that it is tiring to "learn" primary students coursework.

Tiring and painful.

But if I do not raise my level properly in order, I will surely start to digress, and one day my brain will not be at the level it's suppose to be. Even so, if a six year old child begins doing high school level problems it may become a fuss.

“A child prodigy” then turns into “abnormality”.

"It seems that there is no problem even if I hand out other subjects in this case. Is there anything you would like to learn?"

"U n....."

Because I do not like studying itself so much, I do not want to answer honestly when asked what I want to learn, because I will answer “physical education”.

However, I cannot say that I do not want to study to the family tutor, or physical education either. If I order it, I might be able to play something like tag, but mother will surely scold me.

"You do not have to think about one right away. I will think about various things also myself"

".....Yes, thank you very much"

The gentle smile by Greas-sensei is definitely suitable for a teacher. He also has an air around him that relieves people and is also good at handling children.

Surprisingly though it is rude to say, but my image of him is 24 years old. In my experiences, in ten years from now, this gentle oni-chan will grow up to become that sexual harassment teacher.

I think that in auto mode I was hurt to some extent when I was rejected by the teacher in front of me.

That much.....he is a good person, this person.

I decided to take as much distance as possible and it has already been a month. In the present situation he is a good person, a good oni-chan, that I cannot bear anything against him, and the call of Greas-sensei is completely fixed.

If he at least wasn't good at teaching, I could say that I wanted my father to change my teacher, but Greas-sensei is also very good at teaching. I guess I already knew that part though.

Really, what is the matter with me?

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"— and that's the situation. What should I do"

"No, I do not know"

As a matter of fact, Keito broke off my words. From the time we cooperated with my parents' reconciliation, I had retained my relationship with him.

Keito feels that my acting like an ojosama is weird, and I am tired of acting like an ojosama. More than anything, there is no fear of nobles. Because Keito moves at his own pace, no matter what I say, there is no flattery and the likes. There are many rude remarks to that extent, but as for me I was more comfortable with that.

Keito, the commoner, attends primary school. It is our daily routine to wait in the rose garden and talk with each other until Keito's father comes to pick him up.

Most of the time it's me doing the talking though.

"Greas-sensei, right? We have talked, but I think he's a good person"

"I know. That's why I am troubled"

"Sorry, I do not understand your meaning at all. He is a good person and he is also good at teaching. What more can a tutor do?"

".....right"

As Keito says.

I do not want to become involved because I know the hypothetical future. But if I did not have to worry about the death flag, I would have been obediently gracious to Greas-sensei.

"Maria is thinking too much, even though you are stupid"

" I study though?"

"Un, that's why you are just stupid and not an idiot"

"Guu....."

As expected, though it is only because you witnessed my stupidity when I first met you. A choked-off voice appeared, but I cannot retort.

"I do not know what you are worrying about, but I think Maria is stupid, even if you try to think of something it is impossible because it is stupid. Because you are stupid"

"Do not keep saying stupid!"

He said it three times.

Even though I say important things only two times, he said it three times!

And to Keito do I really seem that stupid? I have too much memories to remember.

"It is useless even if you think about it, so try doing it as you think"

".....Un"

I think whether it is that easy to clean up the life and death concerns.....
Indeed I will be with both my father and mother, I thought about it and let's just attack it head on.

Regardless of whether it works on Greas-sensei.....although I am suffering now from it, the actual damage comes out ten years later.

Also as a premise, the heroine does not always choose Greas-sensei. It will be the worst if she chose that, but there are four others, probability is one fifth.

..... Un, I feel like I managed to do something.

"Thank you, Keito. I will forgive you for calling me stupid"

"It's not necessary to forgive because I just said the truth"

"Well then, I will tell you a new subject this time, but what shall I do?"

"Listen to other people when they speak"

I know? Social skills are an important skill to have.

Especially for the villainess daughter of an Otome game.

Chapter 13: Just a small mistake

Three days after talking with Keito, I confronted Greas-sensei
Though I say that, it is not a big deal as we were only talking about newly taught subjects

"Magic, is that it?"

"Yes.....ano, is that a no?"

What I chose was "magic".

Professional teaching will be taught by teachers who are in the higher level of Avuantōru Academy, while the secondary level you can also be taught by a private tutor Magic history, magic theory, magic usage, and magic tools. Besides, Greas-sensei is going to graduate from Avuantoru Academy to become a teacher after this. I thought that there is magical knowledge to some extent even at the present age though.

"It's not a no ... but I am an amateur about magic. I do not have enough knowledge to teach Maria-sama"

"E....."

I did not expect this. It is a lie.

I was doubtful of the Greas-sensei who had a bitterly sorrow smile that said "I'm sorry", but I vaguely felt that it was not a lie.

"If I was an ordinary tutor, I could have taught you about magic, but....due to my past history, I am not in a position that I can teach it to Maria-sama who is a noble's daughter"

The real intention of those words lies in his past which becomes clear as you advance his route.

Greas the capture target is supposed to be a commoner in fact, he "Greas · Fani · Sandria" is a son of a former duke, so in other words a man of a former upper aristocracy.

And what that "past history" means, during a certain dukes time, the Tempest family and the Sandria family seemed to have a deep connection with that

same duke, although there was no blood relationship. Details are not specified in the game, but Mariabell met with Greas because of that past history. Hostage of a political marriage.....bad personalities has no end. Something I am not fond of.

Un, I do not care about countdown memories for such a sad death. What shall I do, magic. I thought that Greas-sensei would say okay, so I did not think of a second subject.

"Anyhow.....is there something else?"

"Let's get another tutor!"

"Eh..... ? "

I thought of thinking about other subjects though. It's not that I am not keen on magic, it's just I do not want to fall behind when I go to the academy.

"No, it is not necessary to get another tutor for a single subject"

"Instead of getting another one, I'm firing you and hiring a new one"

N? Why did I say that?

"I did not tell you but originally I was a noble, anyone can study....you can be taught even if it is not me. Maria-sama learns very quickly and I think that it would be better for you to find someone more capable instead of me"

"....."

To be honest, that is something I do not desire. Originally I thought about the relationship with Greas-sensei, and Keito had said that I should try to do anything. None...though.

"... What will happen to Greas-sensei?"

"I.....cannot become a tutor for other nobles without any relations, so I will look for other jobs"

Because noble households usually hire tutors, the job is pretty high paying. Besides that, Greas-sensei is not just a commoner but a former noble. How difficult is it for a former noble to find a job as a commoner I can

understand having lived as a noble for the past five rounds

There are not many people who have a bad impression on the nobility, but for a “former noble” one has to wonder what cause them to fall.

Even though he is a talented person, if not for that reason he would not have so much trouble.

"..... Ano, Greas-sensei"

"Yes?"

"I would like Greas-sensei to tell me"

"... .. Maria-sama, let's take a break – –"

"No, I am serious"

No, I certainly bothered somewhat. But it is not a lie that I want Greas-sensei to tell me. It is my sincere real intention.

"Learning magic is a good thing, I just thought that I could prepare before going to middle school. If I want to study seriously in the future, I will ask another teacher. That's why ... do not tell me that you will quit"

"Maria-sama....."

".....Of course, if Greas-sensei wants to quit regardless of magic, I cannot stop it"

It is awkward to say that after telling me. Though it may be permitted even if I assume a defiant attitude because I am a “6 year old child”, but I could not mentally do so.

Faced down, I heard a voice filled with emotions while holding my hands. It seemed joyful, but it was a little suppressed.

".....No"

Before raising my face to the voice, Greas-sensei took a knee and looked into my face.

I am wrapped by both hands while he was laughing.

"Thank you very much, Maria-sama. I am very honored that you feel that way"

"Then.....!"

"I am sorry about magic though I do not want to quit, either"

"T-thank you!"

"It is my pleasure"

Greas-sensei who laughed and laughed, and I was caught, and at the end the two of us were both laughing.

The lesson of the day was "national language" as usual rather than a new subject. I hope the level has gone up a bit It was a very simple thing to me.

x x x x

At night, when I was alone, I took out the note from the drawer. It is an information note of the characters.

After meeting Greas-sensei, it also plays a role like a diary.

"I'm tired today....."

Of course I did not open the notebook to write such a thing.

The pen tip is writing different words from the voice.

『It is impossible not to be involved with Greas-sensei. You should toughen up』

This is extraordinary, but I cannot write anything else. If you make a choice that does not really matter, it is the other way around to stay therein truth it is actually reversed.

When Greas-sensei told me he would quit, there was a possibility that if I let him I will not get involved.

But I could not do that.

I know how hard it is for a former noble to find a job as a commoner, and I could not do that to him. Because he has absolutely no fault.

Learning magic and his job. It is obvious which to choose if you compare it. Even with the death flag you do not know if ten years later it will be the same.

Afterwards there is also a small possibility that if I make a friendly relationship now, I can reduce the flag a bit.

"It was exactly as Keito said"

In the end it seems acting while thinking is most suitable for me.
Keito's prediction rate is amazing. He must be an Esper or something along those lines.

Chapter 14: Magic trick? No, it's magic

I opened up a few days after I decided my resolution. Greas-sensei continues as my private tutor. It is natural because I said "Do not quit" and Greas-sensei agreed to it.

And one of the reasons is "magic", but I got to learn it.

"Magic is divided into six attributes. Fire, water, earth, wind that is said to be four major attributes. Plus saint and darkness, six of them in total"

It is not Greas-sensei who is teaching in front of me now.

"There is a user of『Reinforced magic』specialized solely for reinforcement, but ... this is rare among the rare so I will skip the explanation"

And this place is not my usual room.

This is my place of relaxation, you guys know it as the "Rose Garden". On a round table made by mimicking plants, normally would be sweets and a vividly colored tea set.

But now what is on the table is a study tool for two people.

Yes, for two people.

It is Orsseine-san who is teaching in front of me right now. And now, taking classes with me ... Greas-sensei.

How did this happen? Of course it is not my fault, not to mention.

It seemed that Greas-sensei talked to father. Greas-sensei who thought that I wanted to learn magic, crushed himself, talked with father as a result of adding to my resistance, Orsseine-san uses time between work ... to teach Greas-sensei and me magic.

I cannot keep up with this development that is too overnight. First of all, why Greas-sensei is receiving classes next to me ... because my father was anxious about Greas-sensei's future work. Qualifications and professional skills are important for finding employment! I want you to do in a place I do not know if possible!

"Do you have any questions so far?"

"No, I am....."

"Me too. Orsseine-sama's explanations are very easy to understand"

"Fu fu, Thank you very much. So far we are only in the Intermediate section, so it's not a big deal"

It is said like it is nothing, but Orsseine-san's explanation is really easy to understand.

Father seems busy....it is only the third lesson so far so if I do a bad job, father's workload will increase, Orsseine-san would be able to earn a lot even as a home tutor, if he were to ever quit as secretary.

Although Orsseine-san no longer working for our house, such a future is rejected because it would cause many issues.

"Let's end it here today, next time.....three days later, we will have lunch at the end"

"Yes, thank you very much"

"Thank you very much"

Today is about thirty minutes, the lesson is over.

Since it is a schedule assembled based on Orsseine-san's schedule, the time is different and the date is not fixed.

Anyhow I still have my own tutor, so my tutor is to have first priority.

To be honest, magic is more interestingrecently I finally started to do classes of the upper grade, but still "math" and "language" is unchanged.

On that point magic is knowledge that I did not know at all and I enjoyed it more than anything. It is very interesting to learn. For me, I want to get to the Intermediate section early, so much that magic was my favorite subject.

That's why I was looking forward to the next lesson.

I did not even notice that one leg was stuck between ignorance.

x x x x

What happened was about a couple of months since Orsseine-san started teaching us magic and about a year since Greas-sensei became my tutor.

"— Today marks the end of learning the basics of magic of the intermediate section. Of course, in the intermediate section there is still the『Reinforced Magic』I did not dig into and instead we will learn more about each attribute in more detail"

"Yes, thank you very much"

"I really appreciate you taking a lot of time while you are busy"

To Greas-sensei who deeply lowers his head, I feel that my thankful words are extremely light. Orsseine-san also has a facial expression that I am not sure whether it is a smile or a bitter smile.

But well, I do understand his feelings.

Unlike me who had the original right to learn, Greas-sensei was given the opportunity from my father. Neither my father nor I, and of course Orsseine-san think teaching Greas-sensei is “charity”, but...what he thinks is another thing.

Anyhow, It wasn't until today that I had Orsseine-san tell me.

"Anything beyond this point must be taught by someone with the resources and position to teach properly, not myself. Although it can be done to some extent if it is a practical skill ... "

Everyone in this world has unattributed magical powers when they are born. That magical power is polished at an Magic school and an attribute is determined. At Avantor Academy it will be divide into the Intermediate section and the Advance section, attributes are decided upon entering the Advance section and then learning specialized magic.

In other words, we are in a state of “no attribute”.

A magical enclosurement instrument “Magic tool”, can be activated with no-attribute magical power.....we are “children”.

What I am trying to say is basically attributeless does not mean that it is dangerous just inexperienced.

If possible I would have like Orsseine-san teach me the overall experience of “magic”

Whether ending a magic study or hiring a new person, I do not think there is anyone more flexible than Orsseine-san.

Although it is too casual that I do not feel uncomfortable, originally it would

have been impossible for Greas-sensei to be taking classes together here.

Unintentionally forgetting the place and being in a daze, Orsseine-san says『Open!』and hit my hands.

"Then for the end, let's try using magic once"

"..... Yes? "

Ah, your "yes" just now was the not affirmative yes, but the "what did you say" yes.

Eh, did you say use magic? I did not understand your current statement.

"Of course, attribute magic is impossible and magic tools are still early for the two of you. But would you like to experience magic if you can use it safely?"

Safely? I completely missed out on the meaning.

"Since this was something that Kirua-sama and I used a long time ago, let's bring it out"

Apparently my question seems to have not been conveyed to Orsseine-san, but I called the nearest maid with a clap, and she whispered the meaning into my ear.

What I was concerned about was immediately resolved and the maid retreated instantly into the shadows. Do the maids of my house receive ninja training?

"This is a simulated wand. Here you go"

What was offered to us is a black rod.

Of course it is not just a rod, it gradually becomes thinner towards the end so it is understood which one is the end and which is the tip at a glance. A ball-like marble sticks to the point of the handle.

It seems that the model was not a fashion type thing but a mock wand. Misleading appearance.

"This is actually a simulated wand used in the intermediate section. The two of you can use it because limitation magic is placed on it, so it can be used safely even if an attribute is unstable"

"E-....."

Although it is a missed reply, the inside is pretty excited.

Just being able to experience magic was bewildering enough.

"Well then, please be patient. Ah, you must not point it towards the mansion or a person"

Fireworks?

But as a beginner says if you do not do it will then you will really fail.

Explanation is important.

"Arm straight out..... yes, please hold it tightly. When you wave it do not hesitate"

As I was told, I firmly clasp the wand in my hand.

It looks like a person drawing something. Or Homerun declaration.

"Well then, Greas-san. Please wave the wand from the top down"

"Ah, Yes....."

Explanation became rough suddenly.

Greas-sensei also looked uneasy, but without swaying, he raised the wand, breathed deeply and then swung all the way down.

".....!!?"

Before swinging completely down, just in the middle.

From the tip of the wand, light blew out.

For a moment I thought that it was seriously fireworks. A light trick using water, such a feeling.

There is no sound like fireworks, there is no smell, the place where the glowing light has fallen is not burnt. It became small before the surprised Greas-sensei pulled himself together and he was breathed deeply, at the end it was sucked into the tip of the wand and disappeared without a trace.

"....."

".....amazing"

Greas-sensei stood stunned and stopped moving. I only barely muster out a voice.

I had started it but Orsseine-san seemed to be smiling from the bottom of his heart, or was it just my imagination? Either way I take it that you are happy.

Right now, I am too surprised to be able to play the hypocrite confidently.

Chapter 15: Abnormality brings chances

It was a few minutes later that Greas-sensei and I recovered from the shock. Greas-sensei started looking back at me and the body clock that had stopped started moving.

Two people just stare at each other and share surprises and emotions. You can believe only at this moment.

Simply put, magic is amazing.

"How was it, try using it"

Clap*Clap*Clap* Hearing the sounds of both hands clapping we finally saw Oresseine-san

I'm sorry, I completely forgot about you.

"A ano, I as very surprised...but something, I was impressed...."

"Fu fu, it was my first time, but it was wonderful"

I do not know what I want to say, but apparently Greas-sensei seems to have been extremely moved.

I grasp the simulated wand with both hands and my eyes sparkle.

Anyhow, for the first time Greas-sensei acts suitable to his age.....

Because I am still a young girl, Greas-sensei will not say anything about my behavior, but now I feel like a boy to suit my age.

"Well, next is Maria-sama's turn?"

"Ah ... yes!"

U~u, I am nervous...!

I can see that I am sweating gently in the palm holding the wand.

I wonder if I will miss the moment to wave it. To fail because of hand sweat rather than grip strength....that is a subtle line for a young lady.

"Su~ Hah..."

Breathe in through your nose and exhale through your mouth.

Take a deep breath. It's okay, I am normal. You can do it if you think you can. I

am a child who can do it by all means.

"....."

I made up my mind and swung down with all the momentum.

— What happened in that moment.

"Eh—"

Funny, it was too late when I thought so.

A shock I could not endure flowed through my arm with a flash of light and I let go of the wand and fell on my backside.

After letting go of the wand, it was like it had its own existence, Emphasis, it pulsed brightly as if saying that I should recognize it.

It's as if it were alive.

"Maria-sama.....!!"

Oresseine-san called out my name as I looked bad, but I could not react to it. I was impatient. I was scared. I was confused.

I could not understand at all what was happening.

Just a single thought, why? Only doubt is running around my head.

I should have done the same thing as Greas-sensei, why was the result different? If this was an individual difference I could have laughed but from seeing Oresseine-san's reaction, this seems to be abnormal, not individuality. The wand is repeatedly beating as if linked to my heart that gets furious.

"Maria-sama, here....."

Oresseine-san is reaching out his hand while approaching here. Desperately, me, to protect Greas-sensei.

However, faster than that, the light that gave pain to the eyes disappeared as if sucked in, and the beating stopped.

A momentary silence spread as if nothing happened, but there is no reason to be relieved.

Because it is always quiet before the storm.

"..... !"

A light is released that was too strong again, but I soon realized that it was not

only shining.

For example, the moment before a bomb explodes and then the shockwave after the explosion.

Ah ... this is a mess.

"Maria!!"

"Eh.....!?"

Someone called me before my body was attacked.

My body was warmed up by something warmer than when someone said that voice or reply.

Finally, my sight became dark.

Chapter 16: Difference between love and goodwill is one character after all

Part 1

The complicated thoughts is honest.

She.....she is a girl who is too small even to call a lady, but also she is too young to carry the name of a nobleman.

Even so, the girl named Mariabell was hard for me to deal with.

x x x x

The Sandria family collapsed and I suddenly became a commoner. My father does not tell me the reason for the downfall, even if it was said that the house that fulfilled the duty of Duke has fallen, I heard that a successor was decided immediately, I can only assume that the sweet father of mine was deceived.

Because the Sandria family was one of the nobility's shallow history, was that why we were picked on?

I could imagine many reasons, but it was all just a waste of time.

It does not cover the fact of our fall. As I complained that he was deceived, it is said that you were foolish and it is over.

More than that ... to me, the problem we had hanging in front of us was serious for our families.

A new home, a new job.

Our family borrowed a tattered unoccupied house to live in, without any other necessities other than a little cash which I kept at the house, and father begun to look for new work without any concerns.

It will be okay, I will manage somehow.

Now I think that way of thought was foolish. It was overly optimistic and naive. But at that time, I really thought so. Not only for their child but as my parents. You can be anything if you live, you can crawl up if you do your best.

Gentle parents who have hope and dream positive at any time, did not doubt and they believed that all the roads in this world were paved.

Even though there was no such thing.

My father's work was not decided at all, and my mother who was unable to open the house for child rearing also took me to search for work.

Running around while holding such a huge feeling, the work my father found was only a day job, my mother worked at a shop in the evening that also dealt in the night service business. Both are low-wage hard work, in a poor environment that does not think about people.

My parents who were born to aristocracy and lived as aristocrats and thought that only the inside of their beautifully decorated garden was the world, did not take long to suffer from heart problems.

And the year I was twelve years old, my father left this world. The cause was sleep deprivation, malnutrition, overwork, weaknessalthough I remembered many things, none had gone to the hospital so everything is only speculation.

Like my father, my mother's health drop and she became bedridden. Only me left, I started working to feed myself and my mother.

Although I say that even my hard working adult father could only be employed as a day laborer, there is no reason for a child like me to get a job to earn two people's worth of living expenses.

Every day I seemed to die little by little. I do not have any confidence to live. I can only do what I see with my fingers while I feel my life is being scraped day by day.

Such a life for two years.

When I was age fourteen, the story of the tutor of the Tempest family's daughter Mariabell came.

It was impossible. Is it a lie or a dream, or is there something behind it? To be honest, there was only doubt and vigilance, but it did not become a reason for not eating.

Private tutors get high salary. Regardless of whatever backing, it is the base that you own. It cannot be any worse.

The work which I challenged with that mental attitude can also be said as desperate.....it was a good rush.

"Nice to meet you, I am Beruderia. Greas-kun.....you look a lot like Anessa-sama"

Anessa.....the woman who spoke my mother's name, the color of eyes is unique, but there is no place special other than that. However, it was a person who had the calmness and restraint unlike the nobles.

I did not know what kind of connection she had with my mother, but my selection seems to have been because of her.

"You are Greas.....I will leave my daughter to you from today"

The man, Asta Kirua, had such a beautiful face that it would even fascinate a male. The power which reminds me of cold ice sculpture, a head with no weakness.

It is almost impossible to believe that my former father was in the same position as him, the head had this definite atmosphere around him.

And the daughter who shares the same blood of those two became my student.

"Nice to meet you, Greas-sama.....I am Mariabell Tempest. From today, it will be a pleasure"

A girl who has a small body that is only half my size lowered a small head that fits the body said that with a solid tone that cannot be imagined from the age.

Soft purple hair like violets, the ring of angels representing its glistening texture. Round and big eyes that rise beautifully, they reminded me of a noble cat.

The strange eye color would be from the mother, but otherwise she resembles the head very much.

From the top of the head to the tip of the nail, a doll that produced the beauty together.....that is my first impression of Maria-sama.

Even after I began teaching, there was no change in impression. As soon as I teach it she is able to do it. Even if not taught, she can still do it. Even so, she did not look down on me as a tutor.

Maria-sama was already very talented beyond her age.

To the extent that I do not need to do anything.

Surely this girl can grow easily without me. As much as I can teach, she can master it alone.

Judging from the level of the lesson, I should raise the difficulty of the lessons, I started to think so.

"The new subject I want to learn is magic"

Just a little more happy than usual, Maria-sama said.

Although magic is usually learned in middle school, there are also a few things that a private teacher teaches from preparatory to personal interests. Therefore all the tutors have knowledge on magic more or less. It is not compulsory or rules, but normally.

But I am not that normal.

"Is it not okay?"

"It's not a no ... but I am an amateur about magic. I do not have enough knowledge to teach Maria-sama"

"Eh....."

To my reply, Maria-sama looked surprised. If it was a tutor you would naturally think they have the knowledge. It is belief that is possible because it is a young girl, but unfortunately the result does not change.

"I'm sorry"

While apologizing, I was thinking about something different in my mind. In the end, I'll be fired. Not just imbalanced with the competence of the student, but even when I cannot teach what you want, I can say that my existence value is zero.

In that case, I will not have to wait for a declaration.

"Let's get another tutor!"

That's good. You should get appropriate talent for this excellent girl. Not through a connection or sympathy, but a person who can make their way here through ability. If the Tempest house is looking for recruitment, people

would come swarming.

It is a pain to be out of work, and finding re-employment will be like going barefoot on thorn roads again, but even with only this month's salary, I will be able to manage somehow.

It's fine, I will just return to my original work. And I cannot tell you how to operate as a nobleman or getting fired will be the least of my worries. So with that in mind, I will give up already.

"I would like Greas-sensei to teach me"

Initially I thought that my greed was a hallucination. Next, Maria-sama's concern, compassion.

But she denied it from the top.

"Learning magic is a good thing, I just thought that I could prepare before going to middle school. If I want to study seriously in the future, I will ask another teacher. That's why ... do not tell me that you will quit"

"Maria-sama....."

".....Of course, if Greas-sensei wants to quit regardless of magic, I cannot stop it"

The dignified attitude changed completely, Maria-sama who is twiddling her fingers while being small like before being scolded, this was more like a girl suitable for her age.

The area where the distinction between selfish and my wish is not connected, it seems that I can still grow up a little.

Surprised, impatient, then ... with a joyous laugh.

I thought it was cute. Pure, if you were my little sister is this what it would feel like?

Part 2

It was a great word and I was happy to be honest.

But it was heartbreaking after all that Maria-sama could not learn magic. She said that she wanted me to teach magic, because it seemed to be more fun. So I decided to confront the head.

"Ano..... toshu-sama"

"Nn?Greas? What's the matter?"

"Actually ... please, I have a request"

I want you to hire a magic tutor.

I could not deny the possibility that I will be fired, but, even so, I am hesitant to leave it. It would be best if you could hire a magic tutor in addition to me, but I immediately stopped because even if I imagine such a thing to ease my spirit the result would not change.

The toshu-sama who heard my request said "I understood" after I manage to squeeze out my request properly.

As a result, I never got fired.

There was no new tutor coming.

Instead, Oresseine-sama, the head's secretary, taught me the basics of magic.

Why, also me?

"There is no loss in learning the foundation alone"

That being said, the head prepared my share of the teaching materials along with Maria-sama's share. I am sorry for the trouble, at least I thought that it should be deducted from my salary, but I was told that "One or two makes no difference".

The only thing that is cool is the appearance, the contents are gentle and sweet. I was grasping to some extent that it may be because of okusama, but I never thought that it would be directed to myself.

Not only the head, but also the people of the Tempest family are gentle. Their legacy runs deep, and they are the noble family sitting in the position closest to

the royal family, and yet they are completely different from the nobles I am familiar with.

They do not look down on the fallen former aristocracy. There is no pity. I do not think sympathy was zero, but they will not try to impose excessive protection on me.

It was hard to deal with these kind of nobles. I did not bear a grudge. Even though the period was short, I was also one of the nobles. I understand that it is a helpless thing in the first place to bear a grudge. Still, I was not aware of what I felt for the "Tempest Duke Household". Nobility, and the family of the duke like the old me, I definitely should not like them.....or supposed to.

Okusama is the same as when we first met. The head could not be judged by his appearance. Maria-sama overturned everything I had once believed.

I was melted. I was changed. I was repainted. It is irritable and uncomfortable, but I do not dislike it. Complex state of mind along with complex feelings, and then it was the final magic lesson.

It will not be necessary to explain what happened there.

Just like me, Maria-sama waved the simulated wand but at that moment ...the air changed.

It is obvious from Oresseine-sama's reaction that the pulsing while emitting light is not a "good thing".

My crisis management ability sounded a warning tone. Maria-sama sitting with the wand on the ground should have recognized the situation that is happening. I have to get away, or. I have to do something about the wand. Whatever action she took, there was time to judge.

But the abnormal situation cuts off our wish as if laughing.

Suddenly the pulsing light, stopped. A momentary silence. To the "attack" that swelled out as if saying that it was the trigger, my body began moving according to my heart, not the brain.

"Maria!!"

I do not remember what I shouted.
Just the feeling of "What I must do" I pulled Maria-sama's arm and brought her to my chest.
Light and thin, small body. I recognized even more while embracing, a child's body temperature.

I have to protect you. To prevent you from getting hurt, I must protect you.
"— !!"

In preparation for the shock, I put my strength into the arms that hugged Maria-sama. Grit my teeth and close my eyes tightly. I made up my mind and kept waiting for the approaching attack.

".....h-, huh?"

Nothing came. An attack, accompanying pain, or even a shock.
I wanted to know the answer to the question mark around my brain, wanted to see what happened, and wanted security to say that nothing happened, I slowly opened my eyes.

I think the first thing I recognized was a bright orange color, Oresseine-sama's hair. Next gold color and violet color appeared side by side, did the head and okusama noticed the light and rushed over?
And the last thing is.....something transparent that surrounds me.

"Eh.....?"

What is this?

I see a rainbow from the reflecting sunlight through something like a film of soap bubble, but it looks solid like glass. It encloses me and Maria-sama who I was holding in my arms in a dome shape.

Looking at the ground, the grass was scattered around the dome wall and the soil was overturned.

"This....."

Protected me?

There is no concrete evidence. But I felt that both me and Maria-sama were unharmed and the scars remaining on the ground were the proof.

I slowly reach for the membrane. Although it was an act of unconsciousness,

before the fingers touched, the film flew away while emitting light. What remained was the scarred ground and the unscathed.....me and Maria-sama.

"-Maria-sama!!"

I look at Maria-sama whose body was in my arms. It is obvious that there is no consciousness, but I could not judge whether it is sleeping or fainting.

"Greas-san, excuse me"

"Oresseine-sa....."

".....It is fine, she is unconscious, but her pulse is normal"

Before I realized Oresseine-sama was in front of me and touched Maria-sama's neck, and smiled to the me who had an uneasy look. And then, he took Maria-sama from my arms in one swift movement.

"Just to be sure, let's have a doctor check up on her. Greas-san does not seem to be injured, but please also take the examination just in case"

"Y-,Yes....."

It seems that the situation is going to end, without knowing what happened. Stroking the shoulders of the relieved me, the head approached next.

"Greas, are you not injured?"

"Y-,Yes. I am fine....."

Okusama had accompanied Maria-sama, and her figure immediately disappeared.

Alone with the head..... to be honest, there is only tension. Even though I know the head is a gentle person, unlike his cool appearance, there is no way to say something anxious to the person who is a noble and my employer.

"Thank you. Maria was saved thanks to you"

"Eh... no, I just"

"No, it is thanks to you"

I have not done anything. I wanted to say so and the fact is right. It was not

me that protected Maria-sama, it was that transparent membrane, I just acted with emotion.

Although I wanted to deny it, the head interrupted my words with a serious look.

"Maria was protected, thanks to your power"

"Eh..... a, ano, what?"

"The one who did that, was you, Greas"

"Shield barrier"

The remarks that came up have crossed my mental capacity quite easily. I know that. I learned it in Oresseine's class. Literally, a shield that defends both magic and physical attacks.

But I cannot cast that.

"But toshu-sama, I cannot put out a defensive barrier. That is—"

"It is a magic that cannot be cast unless attributes are decided"

"....."

That's right. Defensive barriers are not magic that can be used without attributes. Characteristics belonging to attributes, as said in history books 『Attribute Magic』.

There is no way the head of a nobility cannot know.

Then why did you say such a crazy thing?

"Attributes are not decided unless you learn from the school"

"That is true.....but with the knowledge I learned, it should not be enough to fix attributes"

In the first place magic can also be taught by tutors, but knowledge to fix attributes is not so easily taught. Knowledge of all attributes must be acquired, if you cannot even handle non-attribute magic then fixation of the attribute is a dream within a dream.

What I learned from Oresseine-sama is the foundation of magic. It is impossible to fix the attribute.

"If a non-attribute fixed themselves to a specific attribute, it will be a story. If

it was originally fixed, the story is different"

"Originally.....fixed "

"It is a rare thing, but it is not unheard of"

What the head wants to say is about those who are born with attributes. Everyone is unattributed when born.....that is the basic knowledge of magic, but there are rare occurrences of those being born who have specific attributes. And I have that attribute.

"That defensive barrier belongs to the holy attribute.....there is no holy attribute in our house"

".....I"

A person other than the Tempest family who was in that placethat is only me.

I have an attribute.....I cannot believe it, it's too unexpected rather than to say I do not understand it.

"Of course we cannot be sure if you do not officially inspect it.....but, there is almost no mistake"

"Then, what...what Oresseine-sama said"

"He was worried about injuries, but ... including "that" is what he meant.

".....Is that so"

What should I say? In this case, no matter what I said, I felt it would be correct and wrong.

Confusion, puzzled, and a little terror.

I should have survived the hell, but now I cannot see ahead of that time. A sense of fear that cannot be imagined at all.

"Are you alright?"

"Umm..... t-, toushu-sama"

As a sense of unseen fear welled up inside me, a feeling of a big hand rested upon my head.

Gentle, slightly warm, the movement that strokes my hair calms me down.

The pair of eyes I looked up into are vivid colors reminiscent of ice coldness, but in the depths is an absolute sense of security.

"There is nothing to worry about, leave it to me"

"Leave it to.....but....."

"As a thanks for protecting Maria"

"Ah, that was me....."

I did it on my own.

Although I was lucky because I had an attribute, at the moment I just acted with emotion.

"Because Maria-sama.....is important"

To those words the head had a complicated expression, but still gently stroked my head.

Chapter 17: The bad feeling was right unfortunately

When I open my eyes, I am behind the canopy of a light purple bed. It was a very pretty room that was decorated in pink and white in the past but.....I am sorry, because I felt too restless from the girlish decorum I renovated it.

Now both my room and bedroom are based on a white accent color with diluted purple so it is not bothersome to the eyes, I think that it is a room that will not feel uncomfortable even if used by high school students.

Every piece of furniture accessories is elegant, but it is also refined, although the canopy bed I am using is neither normal or simple.

But it is within tolerance range than compared with before.

Anyhow, to escape from reality this much.

Why am I here?

"E—tto....."

How far do you remember?

Today was Oresseine-san's last lesson, I had attend class with Greas-sensei without any problems.

So then Oresseine-san had us use magic with the simulated wand and Greas-sensei succeeded so it was my turn next — —.

"Ah—....."

I remembered.....no, I did not forget it actually.

As soon as I shook the wand suddenly strange things happened, I thought that this was bad.....and fainted like that.

I did not think that such a thing could happen, but most of all the sense of delicacy of having fainted remained to me above all. Even though I fretted, I was not considerably injured.

".....Hmm?"

Or actually, why am I completely unscathed?

I do not understand what that phenomenon is either. But that certainly had some “offensive power”.

I could not have avoided it when I fainted.

"At that time....."

Everything was a blur and a shock, I remember thinking that it was inevitable death just before fainting.

I feel like I was called by someone.

Someone had called me, and I feel like I was caught in the arms.

The voice that remained in my ears, sounded familiar. It was the first time I had heard such a rushed tone in that voice, but still no mistake that voice belongs to.

"Greas-sensei.....?"

The voice was adult-like but much lower than my mother, and it did not have the dignified presence of father or Oresseine-san, it was still the voice of a child. The owner of that voice that protected me was no mistake Greas-sensei.....probably.

"The voice called Maria....."

I think that the last voice I heard was “Maria”.

But.....Greas-sensei calls me Maria-sama.

Even if I am his student, I am the daughter of a Duke whose is also the employer to Greas-sensei. So it was impossible to abandon, it was refused when I asked Greas-sensei about it.

Even at the beginning the compromise “Maria-sama,” was shown to be difficult. Initially it was “Maria ojōsama” and took a long battle before the compromise was reached.

.....So I suppose, it is not Greas-sensei? Or am I misunderstanding the words?

"Maria-chan! You're awake!"

When I looked towards the voice of joy, my mother stood at the door of the bedroom.

U—n, it seems that my mother came into the room while I was pondering inside my head. She thought that I was not wake up and did not knock. She always

does that when she comes to call me in the morning.

"The doctor said that you were all right, but I was worried. Does it hurt anywhere? Are you feeling sick?"

"I apologize for worrying you worry, okasama. It's fine, it does not hurt anywhere and I do not feel unpleasant"

"Good.....wait a moment, I will call your father now"

My mother touched my cheek and shoulders, raising only the upper body and gave me a kiss on the cheek before leaving the bedroom.

When I think of the beginning, it has got much brighter.....it seems like a lie that I could not meet you.

Mother who went out with light steps returned shortly, but in the back was father and Oresseine-san with expressions of relief, and why is Greas-sensei also here?

No, there is no problem with Greas-sensei? He is probably worried about my injuries, troubled about the situation, and wanted to apologize, but.....what time do you think it is?

When I was in the courtyard the sun was still high up and bright outside, but now the sky is pitch dark, the stars and the moon sparkling in the sky. In other words, definitely nighttime. Not evening, but night.

Do you not need to go home? Your parents, aren't worried?

"Maria, good.....I was worried"

"Complexion looks good, I feel relieved"

"Father, Oresseine-san, sorry for making you worry. I am all right now"

My father stroked my head and Oresseine-san gave me a light palpation. For some reason Greas-sensei is standing silently and keeping himself hidden behind the three adults surrounding me.

He will not talk and he will not move. I cannot see his face hidden behind father, but there was nothing that seemed to be injured on the body seen from the gap, so I felt relieved.

"Maria, are you really feeling all right now?"

"Yes, my physical strength has recovered as I was sleeping"

"Is that so.....then, there is something we need to talk about"

".....Yes, what is it?"

"It's not from me, it's from Greas"

Even though I thought that it was about the incident earlier and put on a serious attitude to show that I was listening.

I have become speechless to father who backed away plainly, and Greas-sensei cautiously came forward from behind my father's shadow.

Did you mean, I did something ...?

I think that Greas-sensei was the one who helped me. If you tell me that there is something from that person, I do not have a good feeling. Because I don't even remember what happened.

"Because we will take a seat outside, please tell me when it's finished"

"Yes, thank you very much"

"Eh, ano, wai-....."

Why do we have to talk alone? Don't ignore my opinion!

There was no way I could say those words, so in the end I could only watch my father and the rest as they left.

"Even though you're sick, I'm sorry"

"No.....it is fine"

Even though you say "sick" I only fainted. I am unscathed, I slept and I recovered a lot and my body is doing fine.

The mental aspect is reverse though.

"Ano.....what did you want to talk about?"

"I will quit my job as a tutor today"

Chapter 18: Being a gate

".....Eh ? "

Without grace or hesitation, the words thrown were too sudden to receive, I did not know what was said for a few seconds.

"J-, just now....."

"As of today, I will quit my job as a tutor"

The reality does not change after hearing it again. However, I just realized that I did not misheard him. I did not have a good feeling, but this is too unexpected.

"What ...why...was it my fault?"

"It is different"

Could it be due to today's situation? Did you get hurt somewhere? Did I became hated because of this? Did you feel responsible? A variety of bad thoughts flowed into my mind, but it was cut short by Greas-sensei's words. It was denied instantly. I was relieved.....but then why?

"It's not Maria-sama's fault, it's also not because I am dissatisfied with this job. The reason is me"

"Eh.....?"

Greas-sensei explained to me who did not understand without any trouble. What happened when I fainted?. The fact then became clear there.

"You have an attribute?"

"I also did an examination, there is no mistake. I have a holy attribute"

"Holy attribute....."

Certainly, the capture target Greas, who became a teacher has a holy attribute. It is not surprising that he has the same attribute like the him in the

route.

But, I did not think it would become clear here.

When he became a tutor, I did predict the possibility of a different development from the time of auto mode....but this is another unexpected development.

"Since my attribute became clear, I decided to enter Avantor Academy. If I use the special enrollment system and scholarships, even I can attend without any problems.....toshu-sama has already completed the procedures"

".....So, then tutoring"

"Yes. When I go to the school, in my case I will live in the dormitories.

Although Avantor Academy gathers students from all over the country, the Craine Kingdom is large. Yet the transportation methods are full of holes, there are trains and airships, but the number is small and the price is high. If you belong to the nobility you have a dedicated transportation method, but the commoners who enter as a special student does not have those.

Therefore, Avantor Academy is equipped with dormitories.

Of course not only commoners but also nobles can live in the dormitories, and although it is not a boarding system, most new students seem to prefer a dormitory every year.

I saw it when I was in auto mode, and it is a gorgeous facility. The eyes were cold, but Mariabell seemed to like it. It seems that you cannot judge one's person reaction from just their body.

The story diverted. In other words, Greas-sensei is saying that he will quit his job in order to attend school. If you live at the dormitories you will only be able to come back during the weekends and you will not have time to be a tutor. If that is the case, it cannot be helped. I do not intend to protest, I will not say anything once I hear reasons that are too legitimate.

"Is that so.....it is a little disappointing, but it is a good thing. Congratulations Greas-sensei"

".....Thank you very much"

Whether he was nervous or not, Greas-sensei's facial expression which was serious from the beginning relaxed. The same as usual, the face of a small child. I wonder if he thought that I would lash out at him. If it is the Mariabell before, I

do not know, but I will not do such a thing.

".....Maria-sama"

"Yes?"

"I'm really thankful to you"

Lowering his head and words of gratitude for the second time. To me who kept my mouth closed because I did not know what it was for, Greas-sensei did not worry and kept on speaking.

"Thanks to Maria-sama, I got the chance to learn magic"

If you actually think about it, that's not the case.

Disappointing.....may be bad to say, but certainly those words should not be directed to me.

"That is.....incorrect It is not myself, but Greas-sensei's own power. I have not done anything"

The "cause" that revealed his holy attribute is because of me, but I should not be thanked by Greas-sensei for that.

"I am the one who was helped in that dangerous situation. I'm really thankful to you"

If Greas-sensei was not there, I do not know what would have happened to me. There are many unknown things about that phenomenon, but without Greas-sensei, there is no doubt that I would not be intact.

Besides, Greas-sensei is a key character next to the hero, who is a capture target and a hidden character. Even if it was not revealed this time, it would probably be revealed somewhere else. Though I can't say that to the actually person.

And, as far as the emotional appreciation chapter is concerned. I still have one thing to worry about.

"Greas-sensei, I still have one thing I am worry about"

"Yes, what is it?"

"When you helped me in the courtyard ... did you call me by my name,

Maria?"

"Eh.....?"

Did you think I do not care?

It is definitely a trivial thing and I am not too bothered by it myself, but if he quits as my tutor, I will not see him for a while so I asked him now when I still had the chance.

Even if it does not matter much, just a bit, I heard a noise behind but before I turn could around I had fainted.

.....Who else could it have been.

"At that time....it was very chaotic.....I do not remember well"

He replied while avoiding my stare and his gaze wandered around, maybe he really does not remember. And I am impatient about him not remembering. The reason.....I imagine. Is because he declined once already.

".....I am sorry if I did something rude but I really do not remember—"

"That is not it"

I managed to stop myself from holding my head, and interrupted his words. Maybe I did possibly misheard or maybe not, and if not he possible could feel bad about breaking formalities.

But he does not need to apologize because I am not angry.

What I want to say is not that kind of thing.

"It's not like that....while we are on the topic, I thought if you could call me that way from now on"

"Oh ... that ..."

"Will you call me by just Maria?"

He once refused, I would like you to call me "Maria" instead of "Maria-sama" if possible.

Honestly, ojosama or Maria-sama and the likes.... I am not good with them. Because I do not have enough consciousness as a noble daughter, it is not easy to get accustomed with it, and if that person is older I just cannot get use to it.

Even though I was with Mariabell for the past five rounds, most of the time was

spent bullying the “unworthy” noble daughters, and afterwards from an oppressor to the one being oppressed.

There was not a chance to learn the qualities of a noble daughter. If there was one thing I learned from Mariabell, it is that there is such a thing called “divine retribution”.

As expected, Oresseine-san and Anne and the rest of the maids will not abandon the [formalities]. It seems that it would affect their work over there. In comparison, I prefer Keito or anyone who does not get caught up with the formalities so much. Also Keito’s father calls me “Maria-chan”.

"But.....that is"

"Furthermore, you are no longer my tutor, correct?"

I am no longer the child of his employer, as my father is no longer Greas-sensei’s employer. I feel that gratitude has something to do with it, but that part is already through.

In truth, I should respect Greas-sensei who taught me as his “student”.

"Is it not okay?"

"....."

I am troubled. I feel guilty feeling that I am interfering with something really embedded in his conscience. I had no intention of doing that, but Greas-sensei seems to have deep feelings of gratitude towards me.

How long has this silence continued? In the end, it was Greas-sensei who broke it.

"Ma.....ri-a....."

".....!"

"Maria....."

It was barely audible, but it was certainly my name that I heard.

I am happy, I held my breath, one more time to confirm. The second time I heard it properly, Greas-sensei himself is feeling confused. Although it did not make a sound, the mouth was moving “sama”.

But that’s acceptable. Compared to being downright denied, there is nothing wrong.

".....I am happy, thank you very much!"

"No, it's not a big deal, but.....it did feel somewhat strange"

"Ufufu"

Although he was a bit troubled, Greas-sensei smiled happily along with me. I am somewhat lonely, but I know that this is not a goodbye. My dark history will only increase if I cry and play the part of an emotional separation. Calmly, but not coldly, he said, with an amiable feeling like going on a trip.

"Take care, Greas-sensei" .

".....I'm going, Maria"

And in the end, Greas-sensei left for the school. After I parted with Greas-sensei, I know the next time we meet we will have a lot to talk about.

Chapter 19: This is the future festival

After the refreshing farewell with Greas-sensei, I had regained my peaceful days.

The incident that made Greas-sensei awaken his attribute, no matter how much I used or examined my magical power, I did not know the certain cause. However, as a result of examining my magical powers, it turns out it was different from normal magical power, it may have something to do with the constraint on magic, this reasoning seems to be the most plausible.

Actually there are rarely those who have some mutation in magical power, and in those cases it is more difficult to control magical power than usual. Such a person “seem to say”.

I myself thought that the cause is due to the fact that auto mode was disabled, but...I cannot say such a thing.

After all, I did not understand the reason clearly, I decided to begin with magic control, using a special magic tool.

The tutor that was hired in place of Greas-sensei was an aging woman named Linda Works.

The sunlight illuminated the hair and soft eyes of the oba-sama, and combining the generosity that comes from experience and the mother-peculiarity of women. She seems to possess immense knowledge not only in magic, but also in “Special magical powers”, she seems to be the ideal person to teach magic to me.

Even in her classes, she is good at teaching and has a wonderful personality.

If I were to raise one difficult point.....it would be that she praises me way too much.

She praises me excessively for answering any questions correctlyI am unable to be happy though. Because everything I solve is primary school level materials.

As I said over and over, my mental age is essentially 5x a high school student. Even if you can calculate two figures, read short stories, even if you are praised just by remembering the history of the country.....it is hard to be joyful. It is

rather painful.

She's a nice personsomething like a sweet aunt to her niece. Though you can also say she is grandmother who is sweet to her grandchild, but she is not actually that old.

But this is trivial.

If you think of comparing this to death flags, I rather accept the exaggerated compliments from my aunt.

Now, apart from Greas-sensei, there is little fear of my death flag.

After my peaceful days were restored, several years passed.

Before I noticed, I was nine years old.

x x x x

"It is so peaceful that it's scary—....."

"Do not say things that do not make sense, hurry up and finish"

"Y~es"

I was dismissed immediately by Keito and I turn around to my notebook once again.

We are at the usual rose garden again. Like back then when it was Greas-sensei and me, I take out my writing utensils and am currently in the middle of a study group.

Even though I say that, Keito is only here to keep me company.

"Why do you always call me"

"Because if I did it by myself, I would not be able to focus"

"I do not understand why me being here would help you focus"

"Keito is just here so I don't feel lonely"

"I am leaving"

Even though he says that, he is actually a pretty nice guy whom keeps me company while saying mean words. The face is also beautiful, I think I will be motivated if he would be more friendly and give words of encouragement.

Oops, this is bad. I'll be scolded again if I think of bad things.

Recently Keito has become able to read my thoughts. I don't mean in an Esper

sense, it seems it is easy to understand from my attitude.

How easy is it to understand the thoughts of a child who hasn't even reached 10-year old yet?

"... Maria, the hands have stopped"

"Ah ... I'm sorry"

"If you are tired, should you do other things? Do you have any?"

".....Something like that"

Although I am not really tired..... to avoid being caught that I was thinking unnecessary things, let's keep it together.

I put away the writing utensils and took out a crystal ball that fits in my hands. Of course it is not just a crystal ball but one of the magic tools.

".....Ah, I forgot the pedestal"

"Stupid"

"Noisy!"

Keito has on an expression of disbelief, but I do not mind because I can do without it. I was called stupid by a child, but I am older than him, I do not care at all at all!

Breathe in greatly then breathe out, and put power in the two hands with the crystal ball. When there is a pedestal, I will hold both hands to the crystal ball, but now I do not have it, and to be honest this way is easier.

With a few seconds, the center of the crystal ball begins to shine dully.

OK, I will succeed today!

".....! "

When you put more power into it, the brightness also grows along with it. A little longer.....!

"H-.....huh?"

When I thought I was just about to succeed, the light suddenly weakened and eventually disappeared.

".....Failed, right. Don't mind"

"I thought that it was good—!!"

Even though I struggled with all I could, the result does not change. This ritual that has been going on for half a year has ended again in failure today.

Since I knew that I had different magical powers, I began to learn magic thoughtfully. Beginning from the foundations taught by Oresseine-san and also about my "Special magical powers".

And six months ago, Linda-sensei gave me this crystal ball as the final exam.

This Crystal Ball is a magic tool used by a human who have different magical powers like me ... to learn control is it better to say magic teaching material?

By putting magical power in this crystal ball, I gradually learn control.

And if you perfectly acquire control, this crystal ball deforms as proof. If that happens, I will graduate from studying control, and I can start practicing magic in the open.

"I thought that I will succeed today ..."

"Un, it was regrettable"

"I want to succeed before I go on to middle school....."

"Isn't it fine? Linda-sensei also said that Maria is a quick learner"

"That's right With no-attribute magic I can practice with Keito. It's boring to do it alone"

".....Why does this involve me now?"

"That is that, this is this"

"Stupid, foolish, cat-like reijo"

"Wait a moment, where did you learn such words"

Has your mouth been getting worse year by year? Are boys like this? Even so, Greas-sensei was kind. These are violent words to be throwing at a young girl. We exchange verbal insults. I say the same insults like stupid and foolish, there is no reason to carelessly hurt the other party because of such trivial matters. I ended it at a suitable place and we began conversing normally again.

"Maria-chan, are you there— ? "

It seems that there are rare visitors today.

".....mother?"

"Delia-sama ? "

"As I thought, you were with Keito-kun"

The rare visitor who appeared smiling as usual was mother. Delia-sama, it is the nickname Keito calls my mother by. At the beginning he called her okusama, but my mother told him that she was fine with him calling her auntie, in the end it was finally settled on Delia-sama.

"I thought you would be here at this time. I am sorry that I interrupted your study"

"No, because it's over"

"Because Maria couldn't concentrate anymore"

"Keito!"

Do not say unnecessary things! Close your mouth!

"Fufu, you two really are good friends. Maria-chan there is something I want to talk about though"

"To me?"

That is unusual.

It is not unusual to talk, it is unusual for mother to go out of her way to visit the rose garden to talk.

There is a rose garden at our house, the person who maintains it is Keito's father, and the owner is my father, but my mother seems to like the courtyard better than here and comes only when we are with someone in the rose garden.

As we will have dinner together, even if she has something to say it could just be done there.

Is it urgent? She does not appear to be in a hurry then ... what is it?

"What is it?"

"Actually, the date of the second prince's birthday party was decided"

"Eh....."

The second prince I found blood clung to that word.

The second prince, the number two prince, the second in line to succeed the throne. Such a person, there is only one person in our country. I know, I remember, I'm a person who wants to forget it.

I cannot help it because I want to close my ears to my mother's words. I do not want to hear the words that follow.

The peace that I regained is threatened once I hear it.

I know, I understand.....that I cannot ignore it.

"It's next week, but Maria-chan is going to join us as well because they invited you!"

"Is that so....."

While making a smile only at my mouth I thought at that time somehow I need to find a way to fall sick by next week.

Sorry to say but I am scared. I will apologize so come back peace.....!

Chapter 20: Dona, Dona

There is a main hero in this Otome game. Like in any anime or manga likewise the same in this game, from the plenty of capture targets and individual routes, the story is made up of multiple routes of each person, finally, at the end is the extreme satisfaction of winning for the heroine. He is drawn largely on the promotional arts, or introduced as a character second to the heroine. The prince who has the absolute perfect and flawless specs. That is the main hero of this Otome game. See the cf. of Mariabell Tempest for more info.

And the main hero of "LinaLia" is Runa Vi Leonova. The person with the second highest succession rights in the Craine Kingdom, in other words yours truly the second prince

The thing that I want you to remember here is the birthday party of the second prince, which I will attend next week.

Second prince's birthday party.
The second prince, Runa Vi Leonova.
The main hero "Runa Vi Leonova".

The mere thought of him nearly reversing the contents in my stomach, please keep that a secret.

x x x x

After speaking with my mother, my study session ended because I couldn't focus anymore. I sat on the sofa in my room and remembered the death sentence I just heard.

"The 10th anniversary party celebrating the birth of Prince Runa....."

In short it is a party commemorating Prince Runa's 10th birthday. I hate how they have to talk in such a roundabout way. What's with the 10th anniversary part? Do that when you are 20 years old at least. You could celebrate adulthood.

"Ojosama, it's about time for dinner soon"

"Ah, yes, I'm going now"

I think that the Anne who speaks to the me who is muttering darkly under my breathe without any hesitation is a strong person. From the side it probably looked like something straight out of a horror movie.

Well it is a mystery whether she even has the feelings called "fear".

There is a new fact that I learned from my magic studies.

The total number of servants in this house is 23 people. There are seven men including Oresseine-san, and the gardener Keito's father, five women including Linda-sensei.

And all the remaining ten are classified as maids, but they do not have the concept of gender.

The ten people are not human beings but are magical tools.

At first glance they do not look any different from humans, but when they remove their clothes there was an indirect joint like an mannequin, when I first saw it I cried unintentionally and embraced my mother. Like a moving mannequin straight from a horror movie.

They wear dressed in maid dresses, have the same power as men, and can do the work without sleeping. Of course since it is a magical tool, if the magical power runs out, it will cause the battery to die.

And all of them are terribly beautiful, but also terribly unsociable.

Even if it looks human, there is no muscle or internal organs, in other words there are no facial muscles.

Do you remember when I thought that I was disliked by the servants in the past? Because the nomen maids kept crushing all opportunities to meet mother.

The reasons is because of them.

The three maids currently accompanying me "Anne" "Du" "Torowa" They would not fold no matter what I did and broke my spirit many times.....I will never forget the day I learned about them from Oresseine-san. It is trauma rather than memories.

However, I was glad that I could prove that I was not disliked. Above all, when I understood that they would overlook eccentric conducts.....I was relieved from the bottom of my heart.

These girls, they are good at hiding their presence. The ability of appearing and disappearing unexpectedly.

When I thought that they were ordinary nomen maids, I could not voice any complaints even though it was in my room.

But now it is nothing even if I grumble about in my room!

..... It is better if there is no content to grumble about.

"Mother, father, I kept you waiting"

It seems that my father and mother were already in the dining room waiting for me.

They may have waited a long time since I took refuge from reality and it was quite late.....

"Fufu, I just arrived here as well so it's fine"

"The food will not run away so there is no need to hurry"

"Yes, thank you very much"

The two smiled back as I sat down on the seat.

The dishes arranged on the table are as usual, everything seems to be delicious.

"Well then, let's begin"

"Itadakimasu"

"Itadakimasu....."

I put both hands together and start eating. Ever since my father and mother reconciled, dinner has always been very pleasant.

Today, it sounds like the devil 's voice inviting me to hell.

"By the way, Maria, did you hear about Prince Runa's birthday party already?"

It came—!

".....Yes, I heard"

That's right, so this is where the talk will be heading, but I apologize father because I will divert you with my full power.....!

Although it was impossible to do such a thing, so while crying on the inside I nodded with the pretense of serenity.

"So you want to go after all. I was going to wait till dinner to tell you, but

someone ended up telling you in advance"

"B-because.....I wanted to tell her as soon as possible"

What a heartbreaking thought.

Mother, thank you for always being so kind. But this time I am not pleased at all.....!

"At the time of Soreiyu-sama's birthday party, Maria-chan could not go because of her physical condition. That's why I thought this time....."

Eh, sorry, what time are you talking about? Let me try to remember.....Un, no memories.

Falling sick and being unable to attend Soreiyu-sama's birthday party this is the first time I have heard of this.

Soreiyu-sama is Prince Runa's older brother, the first prince. By the way he could be a source of destruction for me, he is a cautionary person equivalent to the capture target.

In Runa's route, Mariabell collaborated with Soreiyu and tried to tear up the relationship between Karen and Runa. Soreiyu who had his eyes on Karen's reinforcement magic tried to make her his bride and Mariabell who wanted Prince Runa for herself.

Accomplices with aligned interests, they formed a plan, the plan was carried out and their destiny sealed.

After they did so, Mariabell was exiled from the country along with Soreiyu, and then in end she would be betrayed by Soreiyu, and what awaits her next is death. Whatever happens I only have a one-way ticket to hell available.

I think it is only because I became Mariabell, but isn't this too brutal for an Otome game? Or is it because of Mariabell's excessive personality? Either way I am not hateful.

"Three years ago there was a ten-year anniversary party commemorating Soreiyu's birth. But Maria-chan ended up getting a cold.....I felt sorry that you couldn't go, so I did not tell you"

"That's right"

To the me three years ago, good job. Although I did not know it was still nice timing.

Ah, is it possible I used up all my luck that time? So this time it is flowing in the direction of attendance?

In terms of not wanting to be involved, I do not want to be involved with Soreiyu, but that doesn't mean Runa is within tolerance level either. I do not want to meet either.

"Ano, mother I—"

"What would you like to do for your new dress? Maria-chan also grew bigger and I think we should make it feel a little more mature this time"

"I will leave it to Belldelia. We can talk to Oresseine, so we should make arrangements tomorrow"

"Yes! "

They seem to be having a lot of fun. I cannot say I do not want to go. Imagining my mother's face the moment I say.....my heart dies. While imagining the design of my dress, to the mother who is laughing happily more than usual,"I do not want to see Prince Runa because I do not want to go!"I do not have the heart of steel to bring myself to say that. In the first place if I had such mental fortitude, even if I met Prince Runa I would be able to manage somehow.

My heart is not glass, but it's only about the strength of plastic.

"It will be fun right, Maria-chan!"

".....Un, that's right"

For the first time I felt that I understood the feelings of the calf in Dona, Dona. *(ED: Dona, Dona is a Yiddish song about a calf being led to slaughter)*

Chapter 21: Encounter Rate

I want to catch a cold. Though I was being serious, there is no way it could go so well. More than anything, I'm pretty durable. As long as there isn't some sort of epidemic going about I can run around with full energy.

I thought about pretending to be sick for an instant, but before a doctor.....I need to be able to get past Oresseine-san first. It is easy to tell from my face, and Oresseine-san is surprisingly sharp.

While thinking about what to do, time went on, and before I noticed the party was on the next day.

Right now I am with mother in the middle of a final check of the dress and accessories which my mother chose.

"Maria-chan, are you alright?"

"Eh.....?"

"You seem to not be very well these days, did you get into a fight with Keito-kun?"

"No, that's not the case"

Rather than fights, I give complaints one-sidedly.

I do not want to go, I do not want to see him, I cried out "I don't want to go but I have to go" then came back, even though I was able to voice my opinions I still couldn't avoid it.

If there weren't any difficulties, I would do it!

"If so, that's fine.....If you feel sick, tell me right away"

"Understood"

It is not a physical condition but I feel absolutely horrible!

If I actually mention this, I will not have to go tomorrow. Mothers will definitely allow it if I do not like it, and I understand that.

But I cannot say that. I know what I should and should not say, because I am a noble after all.

As an upper aristocracy, and as a daughter of the Duke Tempest, I cannot help

but to attend the commemorative birthday party of the royal family. Moreover, because this time I also received a direct invitation with my name, it is even harder to avoid.

I am not happy about celebrating about people I have never even met before.....royalty and nobles are definitely troublesome.

".....Un, it looks nice. Is it not too tight?"

"It's fine"

A gray dress close to white that complements the color of the hair. The thick ribbon wrapped around the waist is pretty, but just the design itself I feel is probably the most mature dress I have worn thus far. There are few frills and laces, but there is no volume on the long skirt.

Un, this seems easy to move in.

"Let's tie your hair higher on the day. Because there will be a lot of people, it should be cooler"

My hair is easily brought together and tied to the top of the head. Suddenly having nothing obstruct the back of my neck, a cool air brushed against it. The temperature itself is not hot yet, but if it is the royal birthday party it can easily be predicted that a large number of people will come. Moreover, this time is the 10th anniversary, it will be bigger than an ordinary birthday party, alongside me other noble children being invited is highly likely.

.....Hmm?

It seems like I just noticed something extremely critical that I did not want to notice—

"Ah.....!!!"

"Ah, did it hurt?"

"N-no it's fine"

"Well, this should work for tomorrow. Good job, Maria-chan"

"Y-,Yes. Well then, mother, I will go take a bath"

Alright.....well then the dress for Anne"

"Excuse me!!!"

I held the hem of my dress aside and jumped out of my room without listening to my mother's words.

The other side is not the bath but my room.

"Ojosama, are you going to take a bath?"

"Later!"

Anne who was pursuing my suspicious behavior, because right now I am not in the bathroom.

I entered the bedroom and pulled out the side table drawer next to the bed and start rifling through it. The objective is my precious information notebook.

Flipping through the notebook to the name and information written on the pages, I lose strength in my legs and collapse to my feet.

What I wrote was two people's names and information.

Tuvalu Miranda, the son of the Marquis

Niel Juliano, son of the Count

"I knew it....."

All remains of hope collapse. The name and the family's social standing are the basic information that I wrote down before, there is no mistake.

Why did I not notice sooner?

If I had noticed sooner I would have tried to get sick with all my might.

The Royal family, a party to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the birth of the prince.

If the party is at the scale where the Duke's daughter is invited by name, then there are no reasons why the other capture targets would not be invited.

Chapter 22: Hope is easy, reality is lunatic

It will be such a thing to say that I am shocked. Prince Runa and Prince Soleil and now the other capture targets, my head hurts.

Tuvalu and Niel, both of which are capture targets, the contents of their route are the complete opposite.

Niel, the youngest child of the Count, his character setting is dark. A typical example of a bullied child who is always nervous, weak and easy to understand. A character with fluffy moss-green hair down and round emerald green eyes, a cute and good-looking bishonen, but hides behind his long bangs and thick glasses giving him an overall impression of a gloomy character.

The reason is because of his parents. His two older brothers who have already debuted in society are very talented, and Niel who was originally shy, grew up always being compared to them.

You are useless, completely worthless, a disgrace.

Being doused in abusive language almost everyday, Niel's heart was broken apart and he lost all confidence.

Under those circumstances the heroine comforts him, cheers him on, and Niel gradually regains his brightness.

So far it seems like a bitter-sweet romance story of a tragic bishonen and a bishojo who healed his heart.....but now enters the infamous villainess Mariabell you are all familiar with.

Seeing the beautiful appearance of Niel which became apparent after his restored confidence, she disliked the closeness of the two people and tore them apart.

Just about that time, Juliano succeeded in securing a relationship with the Tempest house.....Un, Mariabell absolutely did something, the timing is too good.

And soon Niel married the heroine afterwards, breaks away from his parents and succeeded as a novelist and achieved a happy ending. And they lived happily ever after. In the bad end, Niel was torn apart from the heroine, and throws himself into the sea after he was forced to marry Mariabell.

Me? In the happy ending, my downfall is announced in the epilogue, in the bad ending, Niel's older brother places various criminal charges on me and I am executed.

It is the set end path of a villain. But I do not remember feeling a sense of impending crisis for Niel.

It is true that her ending is not bright as usual, but his game route is somewhat gentler compared to others because of his personality. Though it was also said because she appeared the least in his route

And then Tuvalu's route goes in the opposite direction.

To be honest, his route is really scary. I thought Greas-sensei was the one I did not want to get involved with the most, but let me correct that. He is the one I do not want to get involved with the most.

If Niel's route is white, then Tuvalu's route is black. No, it may be red.

Because his route is said to die the most, or have the most deaths. Of course, including me.

Tuvalu Miranda is the son of the marquis, or is considered to be the only son. Actually, however, he is even lower than a commoner, so essentially a slave. Tuvalu's mother is a prostitute whom Marquis Miranda kept, and she gave birth to a girl two years after she gave birth to Tuvalu. The father of course is Marquis Miranda.

However, Marquis Miranda threw out Tuvalu's mother as soon as the daughter was born. Parent and children who were thrown out of the household and abandoned on the roadside, their social position drop down to slaves. Forced to live in the slums, his mother died and his sister was also sick from the harsh conditions.....in such a situation, an incident arise that the sole heir of Marquis Miranda died.

Only one successor, his only son. Then Marquis Miranda remembered. The existence of a boy given birth by a prostitute, Tuvalu. Tuvalu was his son, so he tried to make him his heir.

Of course, Tuvalu hated it.

Even if I can become a nobleman, I do not want to live with the culprit that caused us all this suffering.

However, Tuvalu has a sister who was sick.

In exchange for medicine for his sister, Tuvalu will enter the Miranda household.

And thus the Marquis' son, Tuvalu Miranda, was born.

It is already pretty dark so far. And thus Tuvalu who was good in the past, became a twisted character.

What was it called.....Yandere? I have never seen the "dere" part of a yandere but that's just my impression.

After entering the Miranda household, he became something like the childhood friend of the prince, his meeting with Karen is also because she was originally a woman involved with Prince Runa.

Just because you are the prince, do you need to go that far because of your childhood friendship? I would not do such a thing for Keito.

I think that you understand that Tuvalu's "affection" is heavy at this point.

Incidentally, Tuvalu's route is derived from the route of Prince Runa. Because she is associated with Prince Runa to a certain extent, she appears like a sister-in-law to Tuvalu.

And from that point trying to capture Tuvalu.....yes, it was a pleasant surprise.

Just when Tuvalu and heroine start to become close, Marquis Miranda orders him to be engaged with Mariabell. I absolutely dislike this idea, but only this me.

In Tuvalu's route, Mariabell is jealous of his sister and plans to kill her and Karen. Although I did not believe she would, you seriously did it, Mariabell.

In the happy end the assassination failed, and Mariabell was arrested for attempted murder. In the bad end the assassination is successful, and she is murdered by Tuvalu who was taken over by revenge at the lost of the heroine and sister.

Really scary. I am scared of both the happy and bad ending. Even in auto mode there was still fear.

Besides, how did I forget such a troublesome guy.....!

"I will die tomorrow....."

Of course, I mean mentally rather than physically.

It passes overnight, and I'm in despair.

I thought overnight, but I could not think of Runa and Tuvalu countermeasures. Thoughts about Niel have already disappeared from my mind. Runa alone is difficult enough but now also Tuvalu.....it is impossible, I hope the difficulty level is easy!

"Maria-chan, are you ready?"

"Yes, please enter"

"Excuse me.....ma~a, as I thought it suits you!"

"Un, beautiful Mariabell"

Anne who changed my clothes and did my hair withdraws. After the knock, my father and mother came in when giving permission.

Both of them praise me very much, but from my point the two people are amazingly surprised.

Although it is a birthday party, the one being celebrated is the prince, the clothes corresponding to the level of the ceremony. Even the modest mother is dressed lavishly today.

Both of them do not seem to have a child of nine years old.

"Kirua-sama, the carriage is ready"

"I'm coming now"

I could not return a smile to father who said "Well then, shall we go". I wanted to cry at the recklessness of going to the battlefield unarmed.

Chapter 23: Does not cover the characters?

Upon arriving at the venue I had a nauseating feeling....to put it briefly, it was disgusting.

It is the royal family and as expected there is a castle. My house is a mansion because I am part of the aristocracy, but compared to royalty it is inferior. However, even so, I did not think that the venue would be wide to the point you couldn't even recognize from end to end!

"....."

Dumbfounded, dazed, startled. My current feeling can be expressed in those three words. As if pushing away reality, the glittering chandeliers are too dazzling to be seen in reality, Is this bullying?

My father and mother are busy with greetings, and it seems that the other nobles are doing the same. As I notice children are children, they were settled in a corner with desserts and juice.

It is a buffet style, but seemed to be tailored towards the older guests, it is difficult for children to reach the food and adults are absolutely necessary. Besides, children like sweets more than rice, maybe. At least I got attracted to the cake.

As of now, neither Prince Runa nor Prince Soleil, and neither Tuvalu nor Niel have emerged yet. The prince will be busy, although there are less children than adults, the children are also numerous.

.....Cake, is it okay to eat?

Sweet and gorgeous, the delicious cake in front of me was very hard to resist. Because, Mariabell is nine years old!

".....nnm"

The cupcakes I tried were very tasty. It was brilliant pink but....it cannot be judged from its appearance. I am the one who chose it though.

As is expected of a royal party, there seem to be no flaws.

Cookies, macaroons, financiers, cream puffs. Because I cannot eat so much, I take them all one by one and check the condition of the dish.

"Is there no brownies?"

I want to eat something chocolaty. If there are this many kinds of desserts, it has to be here somewhere.....I do not want to move around much if possible. Because I want to avoid the dangers I'm going to meet by keeping a low profile.

"It is really a strange eye color"

".....Hmm?"

My heart skipped a beat when I heard a voice nearby when I was looking for desserts.....maybe, I think that it was directed at me.

The voice came from a group of seven girls staring at me with their arms folded. Rather than saying all seven of them, there is a feeling that the child in the center is keeping the other six people remaining.

What to say.....it is a deeply familiar scene.

Mariabell, the high school student, also brought her followers around like this to scorn and bully Karen. It looked like a bad bargain sale. It is economical to say it is a bargain sale even though it is a noble. Of course it is ironic.

"Tempest household's reijo, Mariabell-sama correct?"

"Yes, but.....pardon me, who are you?"

The eyes of the surroundings rise to my words.

Eh, what, this is my first time meeting this person. Either way I am uneasy that she knows my face and name, do not miss the question mark!

"My name is Francia Cetone Tigerson, a branch of the royal family"

Branch.....is it like relatives of Prince Runa? The face is not very similar, and the hair color and so on are also different though.

Prince Runa and Prince Soleil have silver hair, but this.....Francia-sama is blonde. The curls do suit her well though.

Ah, the eye color is the same blue. But blue eyes are common, so it does not become a criterion of judgment.

The age may be older than me, no maybe even older than Prince Runa. It is difficult to judge from looks, but in terms of height, perhaps.

I thought quite carefully, but what does a royal branch family member want with me?

"I've heard about you. You contributed to the discovery of a natural-born attribute"

Natural-born attribute, the incident with Greas-sensei?
Attribute possession is rarely found before admission to middle school, I guess it can't be helped that there was some rumors.....I was the cause rather than making a contribution.
I feel like I'm being wronged.

"Not so.....rather, I was the one helped by him"

"Ara, is that so?"

That's right.

Rumors will not be entirely correct, at least it must be corrected for the amount heard directly. I don't really know how to explain it, even I can't make head or tails of it.

Francia-sama who listened to my words nodded many times as if she understood, and then laughed.

Somehow.....I know this laughter.

"Because everybody evaluated it very highly, but as I expected.....a rumor is a rumor"

Ah.....I remembered.

This expression, this tone, I also know it very well.

"After all, it is a person who draws blood from the Wimbuto family"

This is the expression Mariabell makes when she looks at the heroine, the tone of the expression when talking with the heroine.

When insulting and laughing at the person.

"It was someone who also has the same blood as the Duke, but I see it was wrong of me to get my hopes up"

From the center, Francia-sama approaches me one step.
Bending her waist slightly and aligning eyes with my mine, the mocking smile disappears, and a scornful look replaces it.

"Really, those are truly disgusting eyes"

Chapter 24: Perfect Skill

To those words, I remember words that Mariabell said to the heroine. Retribution, what goes around comes around, serves her right She had abused and mocked in front of my eyes, I knew that she was the worst villainous daughter, that Mariabell had brought herself to the lowest. In truth, she was doing such things very often.

"To expose such eyes in the public, If the blood of the Tempest family were inherited even a bit more, there would be no reason to show such things on Runa-sama's memorable birthday"

She has a sharp tongue. A person who has no problem belittling others, she looks exactly like Mariabell.

A child grows up looking at their parents. I have already grown to a certain extent so it doesn't really apply to me, but I guess they watched their parents. Those earlier words were directed at mother and the Wimbuto house. In other words, these girls.....No, Francia-sama's parents disapprove of the marriage between mother who is the daughter of the Earl and father, the Duke. These "eyes" of mine, I often carefully observe my surroundings with them and learn. Ma~a, I am a noble after all, though I think that the social status is annoying. Especially since father and mother have differences not only in their status but also in their appearances. I like mother, but if I think objectively she is definitely not gaudy and is very quiet. Because my father is showy, I can understand it very well.

However, to actually attack me.

Is it because she is a royal family branch.....so the duke house means nothing?

Ma~a, it doesn't really matter.

"I actually rather like my own eyes"

".....So your taste is also bad, how pitiful"

What kind of reaction did you expect?

I had neither started crying nor bawling, but on the contrary my face had not changed and it seemed Francia-sama was unsatisfied by that.

Did you wanted me to start crying or screaming, or did you want me to get angry? Anyhow, I think that she wanted to see some kind of reaction to her words.

But I apologize, I have lived five times as a villainess after all.

I do not know what you were expecting, but I will not break down from merely just that.

"Even if my eyes disgust Francia-sama, that cannot be helped. I cannot control how other people feel after all"

In fact, I think that it cannot be helped if I am disliked. If I did something I can apologize, but if you do not like my appearance, I cannot do anything about it. There is no way to change it, so there is nothing that can be done but to put up with her disgust.

This is not really a big deal if compared it to a death flag. I was surprised by her incomprehensibility, but that's all.

"Anyhow, if my eyes are unpleasant, that's fine. Please do your best not to put me in your sight"

Finally, I finished with a smile. With the meaning of saying this is the end. It will become a fuss if I do not finish it quickly. We are in the middle of where children are gathered, moreover, my eyes have started becoming sore because it is one to seven.

My only goal is to finish today without drawing attention, so why should I risk it over such a trivial matter?

"If that is all, please excuse me"

Moving lightly, I turn my back to Francia-sama and her party.

Elegantly and quietly, like nothing had happen.

The feeling of glares behind my back must just be my imagination.

Ah, I forgot to find brownies.....

x x x x

To avoid any gazes, I sit in one of the chairs lined up against the wall. In order to enjoy the snacks I picked, I chose a place not far from the gathering of children, but as unnoticeable as possible.

There is still space on the dish meant for the regrettable brownie, but there is not enough courage to return there.

Placing the dish on the side table, I start with a cookie, macaroons and financiers are also delicious.

As expected of a royal party, all of them are superb!

Since quantity and quality were not a problem I ate well, the last cream puff I ate was a double cream filled with custard and white cream.

It was delicious, there was no brownie, but it was still highly satisfactory.

But after eating so many sweets, I am thirsty.

"I wonder if there is any tea....."

If possible, crude tea is good, but that will not be here as that is said to be a commoner drink. Because juice was too high in sugar content, it seemed to make you even thirstier.

Straight tea would even be passably at this point.

"Here, please"

"Eh.....?"

I wanted to dispense the dish and was about to stand up while thinking so. At that moment I heard a voice.

Because I was in the process of brushing off my skirt, I raised my face.

First of all, a pure white tea cup was in front of my eyes. Only the rim was bordered by light blue, it was a simple but elegant design.

Next, water color.

A color reminiscent of water from the sky, the question of how my inner thoughts were known, had me at a loss for words.

"W-what.....?"

"Because it seemed like you wanted tea, if you do not mind"

"No, ano, that's not it.....!"

Why are you talking to me so causally?

It's the first time we met! And, if possible, it would have been better if we did not meet! Of course I meant for me.

".....Ah, I apologize, it was rude of me to not introduce myself first"

That person smiled and placed the teacup on the side table and brought his hand to his chest and lowered his head.

"I am the son of Marquis Miranda, Tuvalu Miranda"

Chapter 25: Is god the abbreviation for god of plagues

Explain, someone, now, explain the situation!

There is no one who will hear no matter how much I shout in my mind.

But how, there was no shadow or shape until a while ago.

Just because I was absorbed in sweets and did not notice? That's stupid.

".....Mariabell-sama, are you feeling alright?"

"Ah, yes. My name is Mariabell Tempest"

I was too agitated and had just stared at Tuvalu. Suspicious.....or rather, I was seen with a troubled smile but finally pulled myself together.

I am currently unsettled, but before that I am a noble and this is a social gathering. It is impossible for me to disregard him after he introduced himself.

In a hurry, I brushed my dress lightly and lowered my head.

"I know. You are the daughter of the Tempest house, and a very talented person"

"No, I am....."

"You also handled that previous incident well"

"....."

I thought whether he meant the same thing as Francia-sama. About contributing to the discovery of an attribute. So I tried to deny it, but I couldn't return anything to the next words he said with an ambiguous smile.

Did you saw what happen, a moment ago. I was aware of my surroundings, but I did not think that Tuvalu was nearby.

Maybe I should not count on my wariness so much.

".....Did you come to say just that?"

I do not know if it was in disgust or a praise, but if that is all hurry up and leave.

"No, I was just asked to play the role of mediator with you"

" Mediator.....?"

A mediator role. A person who acts as a go-between to resolve the conflicts of two parties.

.....I only have a bad feeling.

"Tuvalu, do not mind me"

"Runa.....I told you to wait until I called"

A silver-haired boy with blue eyes appeared from behind Tuvalu.

In a place called a party where people dress up and gather, a person shining above everyone else, the person everyone is giving their blessings to and also today's leading role.

Runa ▪Vi▪ Leonova "....."

As a noble, when there is a prince before your eyes, the proper actions to take in this situation would be to lower your head and give your blessings, but I'm sorry, my head has yet to return.

It feels as if the air has been drained from the surroundings.

However, there is no doubt that it is quite a bad situation in my assumption. While talking with Tuvalu, Prince Runa's eyes does not leave me, and if I turn my back and run away I will surely be killed. Killed for Lèse-majesté or something; probably.

"Miss Mariabell Tempest"

"Wa, yes!"

Do not call me so suddenly, it's bad for my heart.

"It seems one of my relatives said something rude a while ago"

"Relatives.....you mean Francia-sama?"

"Yes"

Tuvalu also, but how do you know? You were not near that time, were you?

"Those who were watching the scene told me"

What an unnecessary thing.....!

I almost clicked my tongue unintentionally. I didn't though.

In front of the prince, and I am a lady, there are many reasons why it would be bad if actually clicked my tongue.

"I apologize in place of Fran, I am sorry"

"No, it's not a big deal.....there is no need to bother Runa-sama over such a matter"

Or actually, I'm sorry but please do not do anything unnecessary. It would attract even more attention if I let the prince personally apologize to me.

.....no more attention please.

"It's not a big deal? But.....I heard that not only just Mariabell-sama, but also your mother was mentioned"

The person who reported to these two people, just how much did you say? Francia-sama's voice was not loud, but it was not small either, but she was aware of her surroundings though.

She is a branch royal family member, so even if she said some things it shouldn't be that much of a problem.....why bother to even tell these two people. Choose an adult, though it would have been much better if you had just forgotten about it.....!

Tuvalu and Prince Runa are turning their eyes in doubt....but this feels like it won't be resolved unless I say something.

".....I was told something about the color of the eyes"

Though I toned it down considerably it's not a lie. In truth the main topic was about the color of the eyes. Something about lineage....but to be frank I wasn't really paying attention.

"It is true that Mariabell-sama's eyes are an unusual color"

"Even so, it should not be condemned"

.....I wonder why, there is a great sense of incongruity when your targets of fear stand up for you. It is a nice thing, but somehow....it is surprising.

"I do not mind, so both of you please do the same"

"But....."

"Values differ by person. Whether you see my eyes as beautiful or as eerie, I will leave it to you. I myself like this color, so it does not matter what other people think"

So please do not object, to be honest it is annoying how blown out of proportion this is.

"Therefore, Prince Runa please do mind either"

Keeping up this smile is getting hard. At the same time, my throat is getting dry.

If I drink the tea you brought.....Un, I feel useless. It seems to exist for me, but it is something Tuvalu brought.

Everything is fine so please leave quickly.

"But—"

"Runa, how about leaving it "

The one who threw out a life ring, Tuvalu
It was unexpected, but good job!

"If word gets out that a branch family member made an absurd remark to the daughter of the Duke.....I do not know what kind of commotion it will make. Fortunately the King and other adults do not seem to be aware yet"

Good! Just like that! Put a stop to the feelings of Prince Runa!

".....I do not like leaving it like this"

"I know, however, if we continue it will be inconvenient for Mariabell-sama"

But do not mention me.....!

"Even if you judge Francia-sama's actions, it should be done with the consent of Mariabell-sama. But she does not want it"

".....I understand"

Although he did not seem satisfied with how the situation ended, Tuvalu seems to have succeeded in persuading Prince Runa.
Thank you, I feel like my positivity has risen a little. But because it was already

negative to begin with it now equals zero.

"Then this time we will leave it be due to the generosity of Miss Mariabell"

"Thank you very much"

I'm just lazy, not generous.

Francia-sama, even though she seems older than me, does not seem to be in high school yet. I think that she is about middle school level.

I will not be overwhelmed from the verbal abuse of such an opponent. It is cute if you think of it as something like puberty and rebellious stages.

"Tuvalu, I need to return to the greetings"

"Ah, I know"

"Good.....then Miss Mariabell, excuse me"

The mantle on his shoulder fluttered as Prince Runa turned away from me. I am glad that he gave up, but.....

".....Ano, is Tuvalu-sama not going?"

"I have nothing to do with Runa's greetings"

Next to me, there is still Tuvalu.

If it does not matter, why were you together.....I wanted to hear, but on second thought I rather not get involved.

Prince Runa, please take this person as well.

"A person like Francia-sama may appear again"

Apparently it seems he wants to be an escort.

Thank you, but for various reasons I would rather not be involved with you.....!

"The tea, won't it become cold soon?"

".....Thank you very much"

Chapter 26: Be an umbrella that shields against the rain

This person certainly moves at his own pace. The character setting is essentially an evil-minded boss, so maybe it is better to be my-pace. Or is he only a my-pace boss because he is still young?

"....."

Silence hurts. But I don't talk. I am concerned that I might say something unnecessary.

Although I tried to think of a good idea of what to do in this situation, in the end, I just decided to concentrate on the black tea before my eyes.

Iya—, it's delicious. It is very delicious. I am actually too tense and do not know the taste.

"It is unexpected"

Tuvalu who was sitting next to me in chair suddenly spoke up. Silence has its own pain, but also I do not want to be spoken to.

However, I could not ignore him, I placed the half-empty cup back into its saucer and then turned around to face Tuvalu.

"What is?"

"I was thinking that as a daughter of the Tempest family you would be more.....noble-like"

More noble-like. It is obvious that it is not a compliment. It was worded politely, but essentially he thought that I would be similar to Francia-sama. It is true that is the general face of nobility. Also my original character setting would be like that, so it is no exaggeration to say that it would be within my expertise.

"Francia-sama said some pretty unforgivable things. in truth, that was all she pretty much did"

In that case, why did you forgive her so easily?

This is what Tuvalu is trying to say. Even without telling everyone, there are a lot of thorns at the end of his words, I think that his words are practically a sea urchin embodied.

The image Tuvalu has on nobles is bad. Since I know the reasons, I think that it cannot be helped.

Indeed, many nobles are more or less difficult, including my parents, of course. On the front pure, clean and pure people who live in their own special world called nobility. Greas-sensei's parents are a good example.

Because they stand at the top, they are a type of human who cannot see the same things as other people. Even if they are good at using people, they are not good at caring for people.

Though Mariabell is an overstatement, even as a noble, there are not many people with the type of low character she has.

In actuality, most people hide it well, and they have a good distinction on what they should and should not do. Mariabell did not have that though.

So Tuvalu was surprised by my reaction to the branch family as someone from the duke family

It seems, usually nobles after being verbally abused like that would not stay silent.

If it is true, usually she should not be sympathetic towards someone who insulted her.

She would usually beat them to just beyond death. Even to the heroine who did nothing bad, she would torment and bully her unconditionally.

But the current me is not a villainess daughter, I am just simply Mariabell.

"I do not see the meaning in showing off my social position"

".....Ho~u"

So far Tuvalu had been looking at me with a soft smile, but after hearing my response his expression changed.

His mouth is still smiling but his eyes are not. It is an impression that comes from my memory, but that doesn't change its creepiness.

After saying that, I thought this is bad. It's already too late, but there is no point in regretting it now.

"As a noble, and someone from the duke's bloodline I think there are certain responsibilities. I must not forget the feeling of respect for the ancestors whose achievements brought about this position either"

I am part of the nobility right now, not because of myself, but because of the achievements of my ancestors and the successors who have protected the status so far.

One must not get lost in their own delusions.

But one must not also act as if it has nothing to do with them.

"One must not forget the responsibility and pride of living as a noble. But also, one must not use their social position as a shield and reason to look down on others"

As a person who stands at the top, do not forget about the ones below you. Do not forget that your position is higher than people. As a person standing there, do not forget the responsibilities.

Below the nobility are the commoners. Commoners are meant to be controlled. As a subordinate though, nobility should also be standing on.

But that does not mean they are disposable and should be made light of, that's not what they are meant for.

Nobles employ commoners. And when there is something, protect them as part of their responsibility.

Using their power as a shield to protect them, and acting as an umbrella to shield them from the rain.

As a noble, that should be the case.

"At that time, Francia-sama said that my eyes are unpleasant. That is her personal impression, a difference in values. It should not be used to judge nobles as a whole"

That is not an abuse, just merely a difference in values. It is not something to break over. Just because the social status are different, doesn't mean there is any need to respond violently.

.....Though actually. My true intention is "Do not touch that topic anymore"

Tuvalu is a childhood friend of Prince Runa, and there was a feeling that even Prince Runa himself felt that what Francia-sama did could not be helped, so it would be troublesome to think poorly of this person. So let's stop here.

"He~e....."

"....."

You were the one who started it, I just gave my opinion.
However, for an instant now for some reason.....I felt a chill.
I stiffened at the unpleasant feeling that ran through my spine, but then that feeling suddenly disappeared.
Tuvalu's expression is the same as when we met, the feelings are not transmitted but he is laughing.
Just now, was it only my imagination.....?

"As expected, Mariabell-sama is very talented. Your way of thinking is far beyond your age"

"Ah.....no, it is just something I learned from the adults"

"But, is that not evidence that you are learning properly?"

"T-thank you very much"

Did you misunderstand.....? I do not know, but I do not feel like talking back again.

Practically digging my own grave.

Although I was only nine years old, I said some difficult things and carelessly forgotten my age.

After that I tried not talking as much as possible, while answering only what was asked until the party ended.

Although I was just sitting, I was really tired.....I can hardly remember the contents of the conversation.

Chapter 27: After the fear I am overjoyed

A few months after the mentally exhausting birthday party of Prince Runa. I was worried about the involvement with Tuvalu and Prince Runa, but the situation has not changed in particular. Just that when a bouquet of roses were sent to me under Tuvalu's name, I felt shuddered, apparently it seems to be for the case of Francia-sama.

It was strange that it was not from Prince Runa, but it would actually be even more troublesome it was from him. When I think about it, perhaps it is better that it was from Tuvalu of the Marquis family.

Regardless of the giver, the roses are beautiful, and I left them to Keito's father who placed them inside a beautiful vase.

Let's place it in my room.....but I then thought of the other party and was scared, so I decided to place it in the Rose Garden which I frequented a lot.

".....That's a large amount"

"Oji-san counted ninety in total"

"Aren't there usually a hundred?"

I thought about it, but roses have a meaning depending on the number sent, a hundred would be a problem. I do not know if Tuvalu knows it.....but it would seem to me that he does.

A neutral and beautiful face, it seems that roses and flowers would match.

"But even so it is good, aren't you overjoyed to receive such a thing?"

".....Do not remind me"

Keito's words made me recall a fearful experience that I did not want to remember. Once remembered it will not disappear from the head.

"Okay Keito, say something funny"

"How unreasonable"

"If Keito had not reminded me"

"I did not know"

I heard an exasperated sigh as if he was tired.
I did not actually expect Keito to say anything funny.....but at least say something comforting. I am sad that my childhood friend is so cold.

".....Haa"

As I lowered my shoulders dejectedly, I heard a second sigh. Before I could respond to it, I felt a sensation on my head as my hair was ruffled.

".....!?"

"Good work, you did your best"

*washawashawasha (EDN: Japanese sfx for essentially ruffling one's head)

The hair was stroked as if he were stroking a dog, and my hair was ruffled vigorously.

The tone is blunt, the behavior is sudden and too rough, it is a failing mark for how to cheer up a girl.

Though it is high score for a reliable childhood friend. Even more because he does not usually cheer me up at all.

".....Keito, you've grown up"

"Shut up"

"Ouch"

Just when I was thinking that it was deeply impressive and nodded, I was struck on my head. I am against violence.

"Alright, you will do it today!"

It's rare that the volume of Keito's voice is louder than usual, but I saw it. Through the gap of Keito's hair his ears were red.

"Ufufu"

".....What?"

"Nothing at all, Okay! I will show you a success today!"

He would get angry if I pursue it so I changed the topic.
I took a deep breath and held the crystal ball I brought with both hands. I feel I will be able to do it today! There is no ground though!

As usual, when I put power on both hands quickly, the crystal ball starts to glow.

The light which flowed from the center gradually became larger and in my hand the crystal ball began shaking little by little.

Oh, is this.....perhaps I can do it?

".....!"

This is a much bigger response than ever.

My fingers had turn white from all the power I put in my hand, I thought.

Come, I.....! am already nine years old, and I want to learn how to use magical techniques already!

To do well in school, after learning practical skills to prepare for middle school.

To do that, this is essential.

"——!?"

"Maria....."

Suddenly the crystal ball grew hot.

I suddenly let go of the crystal ball without thinking.

The crystal ball drop to the floor with a loud sound, but does not break and even trembles with light.

Keito came over to me worriedly, but I could not take my eyes off the scene.

This sight resembles that time.

That one day where Greas-sensei's attribute was discovered.

"Keito watch ou-....."

".....!"

Watch out, I intended to say so.

I couldn't finish it, but I think it was transmitted properly. The expression of Keito changed to my voice, but...

the action taken by Keito was the opposite of what I intended.

I wanted you to stay away from the danger, but Keito pulled me into his arms and I was turned away from the light.

Like that time with Greas-sensei.

"Keito.....!?"

"Be quiet"

Keito pushes my face against his chest. The blue of Keito's clothes filled my sight.

But I understood. The feeling of the magical power increasing, the light is getting stronger.

Just like that time.

The difference is that my five senses are functioning normally, unlike that time when I lost consciousness.

So feel it, the size of the bulging energy.

Like a balloon, it bursts when it reaches its limit.

"___"

It's no use, it's the limit.

I felt it so intuitively, that I buried my face into Keito while he pressed against me.

Two people hugging each other tightly, waiting for the shock.....though.

".....Hmm?"

Nothing happened.

The bulging magical power keeps decreasing while maintaining the concentration, and it seems to be nowhere near the offensive power like a moment ago.

Keito also noticed, gradually loosening his grip, in the end he took his hands off my back and head.

"Maria, a little while ago....."

"U-Un....."

What just happened, we looked at each other with the same question on our face. For a while we were both still, but even if we stay here, we will not solve it.

Holding hands, we slowly stood up.

Walking lightly without making any sounds like a shinobi, we approached the crystal ball which caused the trouble.

But there was not a crystal ball.

"Th-This.....!"

".....Aah"

The place where the crystal ball fell, a dark blue color stick with a piece of the crystal ball.

In other words, a magic wand.

"I did it.....I did it! This is a success, right!?"

"Un, congratulations, Maria"

"Thank you, Keito!"

In a moment all the hardship of about a year finally came into fruit.
I can start practicing with this!

Chapter 28: I did not expect any turbulence

The practical lesson that I finally started was a lot of fun. Originally to begin with normal studies is already dull, but it is fun to learn things you do not know. It makes me realize that in a real fantasy world subjects other than magic are just unnecessary.

I begin with making flowers bloom from the tip of the wand, to releasing light, moving light objects, the feeling is more closer of thinking of ways of using the wand rather than just simply casting a spell on something, it was the first time I did anything by myself and it was fun.

When I was in Mariabell, I could only watch, besides Mariabell seemed to have not been very interested in magic, and her amount of knowledge was small. I am still not off the beginner's mark so it cannot be helped but it is at least fun for me, but what was Mariabell doing?Ah, she was preoccupied with harassing the heroine. Go study.

Magic is very interesting, so far my sole relationship with the capture targets is only Greas-sensei. I have not met with Tuvalu or Prince Runa since that day. I regained my peaceful days. The fear experience was like a lie, I have completely forgotten it.

They say that disaster comes when you forget it.

x x x x

It was on lunch one day.

".....Father, could you please repeat what you said?"

"Mariabell, I cannot believe it this is already the fourth time"

"Once again thank you"

Four times? What is that, this is the sixth time in my life, I will ask however many times until I am satisfied.

Because, it is impossible. Why such a rapid development? Where was the flag? If not then stop joking around.

"This is the last time.....Mariabell, you seemed to have been nominated as a

fiancee for Prince Runa"

"....."

Wait, what, why, and how does such a thing happen? I did not even talk to Prince Runa since that time.

More than anything, there was never such a development in the game. Originally we recognize each other properly since I started going to the same school.....no certainly there have been many flows outside the game, like the encounter with Greas-sensei. But Greas-sensei eventually went to school properly.....!

"But why so suddenly.....we have not started looking for a fiance for Maria-chan yet? Even so to go out of their way to nominate her for the prince"

"Ah, I am also surprised. It is usually suppose to be someone close to the royal family even though consultation is not needed"

It seemed that both my father and mother were surprised at the sudden circumstances. The usual sweet mother aside, even the usually calm father cannot grasp the intention today and seems to be puzzled.

Me? I am already in a state where the thought has frozen over in a single lap.

It is still in the candidate stage, it seems that there are several other besides Mariabell.....but it is said that Mariabell is to be brought at least once"

What will you do? Father asks with a gaze.

Whatever I am told, is there even a right to veto? The other party is not another noble it's the royal family, furthermore I was even nominated. Though the reason this time is entirely different from the letter of invitation to me for the birthday party.

".....It is better to just go, isn't it?"

I do not want to go, but I also think that this is the fate of aristocracy. What to do I am too calm and normal right now. It is probably the pattern of returning to sanity after fainting in agony.

I grasp my skirt and look down. I hate it, but the feeling is to give up because there is no choice.

Even if I despise it, there is no choice but to go.....my stomach was in knots.

"You do not have to push yourself if you do not want to go"

"Eh....."

"There are other candidates, even if they do not have Mariabell, it will not hurt"

That being said, father laughed gently.

Socially, I can understand that it is not a good idea to refuse. If it was another noble it would be different but the other party is royalty, it is also an important matter regarding the Prince's engagement.

I do not think I can refuse. The stance is different if both sides can do anything, but if royalty asks you to do so, the nobles who are the "subordinate" cannot refuse so.

Especially the Tempest house whose relation with the royal family runs as deep as their history, it cannot be turned down so easily.

".....I will go"

"If you do not like it, you can refuse it?"

"No, I will go. I will go and talk to them to have me removed from the list of candidates"

Un, that's good. The flag of refusing a fiancée candidate will be even more terrifying if I wait until after entering school.

If that is the case it would be better to go and refuse it early.

It's alright this is not desperation, just positive thinking. Hmm, was that Japanese?

".....I understand, I will inform you of the date as soon as it's fixed. But if you really hate it you can still say it before then alright?"

"Yes"

When is it.....I would like to ask if I can do it before my energy fades away. Ah, the knots in my stomach are increasing even further.....

Chapter 29: Yandere Schemer

In the end the day arrived a week after the shocking notice. Both my father and mother came with me, but eventually they were stopped halfway and now I am walking alone with a guide down a long corridor.

I had also thought so at the birthday party, but now that I was walking through the corridor like this I was keenly aware of this castle's splendor. Although I am not dishearten by the vast difference between the royal castle and my house, it certainly does make one restless.

When trying to refrain from any unbecoming behavior, I arrived in front of one room.

The distance from other rooms is too much so I cannot imagine what is inside this room. Thought it is certainly terribly wide.

「I have brought Mariabell Tempest-sama」

「Enter」

After obtaining permission from the person inside, the guide said「Please go ahead」before leaving.

No I would not like to go ahead.

Eh, just me alone? With the prince as the opponent? I was most certainly not told about this.

I absolutely hate this and I am very tense but.....I cannot just keep standing here like this.

Making up my mind, I open the door in front of me.

「It has been a while, Prince Runa」

As soon as I entered the room and confirmed it was the prince I held the hem of my skirt and bowed. First strike initiative!Though something felt a bit different.

It's been a while since our encounter. But it's not our first meeting.

When I raise my head, the prince himself was seated in the middle of the large reception room.

A ten year old ikemen with a beautiful perfection not doing anything but just sitting on the sofa and staring at me.

Please say something, the silence is scary.

「.....Sit down」

「Excuse me」

A silent order. As expected of a prince, definitely dignified. But I cannot afford to get irritated from the tension.

Following the prince's words, I sat down in front of him. The feeling of tension is completely different than when with Keito, though that is needless to say.

Aah my stomach hurts.....because I didn't have an appetite I have not eaten breakfast yet.

「Since the birthday party」

「That is correct」

「.....」

「.....」

Conversation, not continued.....!

But I cannot think of anything to talk about. Because it's only been the second time, there is not really any good conversation topic from our first meeting.

Or actually, now that I am near him he really does have a beautiful face.

Sparkling silver hair with sapphire blue eyes, the face itself gives off a gentle and soft impression. Even as a person with the right to succeed the throne of a country, for a shoujo manga or otome game the appearance is still a masterpiece, he is essentially the classic example of a prince.

I cannot guarantee the personality though. I don't know about the player controlling the heroine but for me who is confronted with the ultimate choice of ruin or death, I see it as nothing more than appearance and family social standing.

Even if he is attractive for the majority, he is just a terror subject for me.

「I was surprised by the sudden situation」

「That is right, there was no fla-.....previous sign at all」

That was a close one, I almost said flag.

「Ah, I was not informed of anything at the time of my birthday party too, I dare say the talk practically emerged by itself」

Eh, is that so? I was wondering if the talk had long been in place.....and whether our meeting at the party ended up further advancing the talks. But from the reaction of the prince, apparently the prediction seems to be off.

「Ano.....then why? Nothing particular changed or happened after that party.....」

We met. Yes, there were various troublesome things. But I think that should not result in me becoming a fiancée candidate for the prince.

I have not heard anything about Francia-sama being punished, my father and mother did not ask anything either. I cannot deny the possibility of hidden factors.....but it could not have been confirmed without acknowledgment from my party.

In other words, that one incident was not conveyed to the king. But why would the King go out of his way to nominate me, there is no reason for the prince himself to choose me.

Then why, it is such a troublesome thing.

「Apparently Tuvalu.....who was with me at the party, he seemed to have said some things to my father」

It was him!!!!!!

Are you kidding me that yandere boy, he must have a grudge against me!

「She is such a wonderful lady, he said. Originally because Miss Mariabell is already very talented and after that was said you were made a candidate, apparently that's what happened」

「Is that so」

I am not happy, even if I was praised, in the first place I wasn't even happy to begin with.

I am absolutely 100% sure it was done with an ulterior motive! That last cold smile he gave only makes it all the more convincing!

「Also originally my fiancée is suppose to be someone we can strengthen our ties and social position through marriage. Although the Tempest family is certainly a perfect choice, it does not matter even if we do not get married due to our existing past history」

Even though I had on a very light smile my inner heart was filled with abusive phrases against Tuvalu, my thoughts stopped momentarily from Prince Runa's remark.

What.....I have a feeling that I heard something that is convenient for me.

「Certainly you are a candidate.....though do not expect too much」

「Etto....so in other words」

「It can be said it is unlikely that you will become an official fiancée」

To Prince Runa's straight-forward answer, I held my breath. Otherwise I might accidentally cry out in response.

Hooray—! Much appreciated!!

And probably get into a gut pose as well.

「I-Is.....that so, understood」

Ah, my voice is trembling. Without even meaning to my mouth automatically breaks into a smile. I try to clench my hands and tighten my mind but it does not go well.

Because, even though I was going to refuse I was prepared that it might be difficult, instead a refusal came from the other side!

While the likability for Tuvalu has dropped, the impression of Prince Runa is on the rise. I will refrain from the engagement with every effort.

「It cannot be helped, our fates just were not meant to cross」

「.....Sorry」

「Please do not apologize. Prince Runa has done nothing wrong, correct?」

Rather thank you.

I would like to thank you with a dogeza, but I cannot do that.

Chapter 30: I want to ban outbursts of anger

After that, with the conversation over I left the room. Apparently, there seems to be other candidates coming besides me today. Because of the situation I did not realize it before, but it was basically a slotted amount of time with the prince, so like a job interview? No not a job interview but a fiancée interview?

Anyways, my purpose was achieved. Thanks to Prince Runa, not me.

Let's share this joy with Keito when I return home. It might be good idea to make sweets with mother. But I wonder if I should let out my joy in my room first.

Imagining what to do from now, I was in a cheerful mood.

Until now.

「Mariabell-sama, it's been a long time」

It is none other than because of this yandere schemer.

「Tuvalu-sama.....why are you here?」

「I came because of my father. Today is the day Runa's fiancée candidates come」

In other words, he came to observe Prince Runa's fiancée candidates. He is such a loving person, wouldn't it be nice if he ran away with Prince Runa?

「Did Mariabell-sama also come to see Runa too?」

「.....Ee, just to give my greetings as a fiancée candidate」

Even though he knows he is pretending he doesn't, he really does have a twisted personality

I heard that I ended up in this troublesome matter because you decided to mention me for nomination. Though Prince Runa ended up cleaning up your mess!

「By the way, I heard that you recommended me to the king」

「Ee, As Mariebell-sama seemed to be the perfect example of a noble, I thought it would be an appropriate match for the prince」

With a calm tone, there is no thorn in the contents either. But it would end up exploding in my hands if I received it.

I should thrust him a mirror.

A mouth twisted into a distorted smile, at first glance the eyes look soft and clear but look a little deeper and it is murky and muddy.

Apparently I seem to be deeply disliked by this guy but I cannot investigate the reason. I do not know about the past five rounds, but this time I have not done anything bad?

「You are overestimating me, I am only a girl without any power」

「Ee.....you are just merely a sheltered girl」

「Eh.....wai-, that hurts.....」

I was about to return his provoking as nonchalantly as possible, or I was supposed to.

He was certainly smiling but the next moment that expression disappeared completely from his face.

I was surprised by the sudden coldness and lost my voice, and before I knew it I was grabbed by the wrist and forcefully driven into the wall.

Kabedon.....somehow my chest is not throbbing. Both casts are about ten years old, so the atmosphere is awkward. (*Ed: Kabedon in simplest terms, "kabe" (壁) means "wall," and "don" (ドン) is a loud noise. So, **kabe-don** is loosely, "hitting a wall."*)

I had closed my eyes from the shock but when I opened them Tuvalu's eyes matched mine.

「What you said before on what nobility should be like and how nobles use commoners without looking down on them, about how that's the right way of aristocracy」

The expression of Tuvalu is distorted. Grudge, resentment, jealousy, hatred, a

sneering smile mixed with feelings.

「But that's only just a beautiful dream, it is just a shallow ideal of a human who knows nothing, who only ever sees the beautiful side. A suitable thing to say for a clueless stubborn brat brought up in a greenhouse.....nothing more than a mere fantasy」

I do not understand the meaning of his words. I do not know what he wants me to do, what Tuvalu wants to do.

One thing is definite though.

「I want to force reality upon you, Mariabell-sama」

Apparently it seems that this guy wants me to get hurt.

I understood the cause behind Tuvalu's words. It seems that the contents I talked about at the birthday party incurred his wrath. (*Ed: This use to be "It seems that the contents I talked about at the birthday party **triggered him**" just thought I should mention that*)

Because I was in a position protected as the daughter of the duke, he did not like that I talked about an ideal as if I knew everything.

It's not like I don't understand his feelings. If a human who does not know anything starts talking as if they did to my face, it would make me angry too. If one were to touch upon an ideal without any experience, it is natural to be frowned upon rather than leave an impression. Furthermore I am still only nine years old, so it is unlikely that I have seen and experience reality.

So he tried to force reality upon me.

To me who displayed such beautiful logic, he tried to involve me in the matters of the prince's fiancée candidates. Tried to pit what I dreamed nobles should be like to what nobles are actually like.

What Tuvalu refers to as "nobility" against actual "nobility".

Because I know Tuvalu's past, I can understand that feeling. I can understand but I cannot convince him.

So essentially he is just venting his anger out on me.

「Stop joking around」

Chapter 31: If you want to act sick do it alone please

The aim is the toe, the little toe at the farthest is the best.

「O-.....!?!」

After a couple of exercises in the brain, I stepped on Tuvalu's toes with no hesitation.

It was light but since it was a heel it was good enough. Although a pin heel would've been more ideal, a nine year old cannot wear it. Instead of applying the whole weight I think just a sharp pain is about right.

Tuvalu staggered a few steps back after the impact standing on one foot with his other foot raised. It seems like I got the ideal damage so I am happy.

With the body that was cornering me having separated, I stepped forward one step front this time so that I cornered Tuvalu.

「Tuvalu」

「W-.....」

I put up my arms and dropped the honorific title to his name while Tuvalu glares back at me undaunted.

Un, the horrible expression still suits you. I saw it over and over, on your route. In my heart I was always scared.

Mariabell seems to have not noticed though, so maybe Mariabell is duller than the heroine in a sense.

Such dullness seems to have disappeared or was I becoming stronger? Perhaps the latter, now I am not scared at all.

Because I am angry.

I just want to live peacefully as much as possible, it's not like I particularly have a philanthropic spirit like a saint or anything.

「I know what kind of feelings you have towards nobles」

「Ha? Wha—」

「Listen to the end and do not interrupt」

Didn't you do something like this just a while ago? Next is my turn, do not interrupt.

「You dislike nobles and the reasons for it I understand to some extent..... however, I honestly do not care nor am I interested」

I think I feel sorry; Marquis Miranda's treatment is indeed the lowest and I believe that divine retribution will fall upon that unorthodox Marquis one day. But is that related to me? No, right?

In that case then why should I have to accept your outburst of anger. Compassion and tolerance are not equal; don't mess with me.

「What do you know.....!」

「Right back at you idiot」

Ah, my true thoughts.....well it's fine.

「What do you know of me, I wonder?」

The daughter of the duke, idealist dreaming of nobility.
Tuvalu's mind has those thoughts about me. Not only Tuvalu, I think father and mother's thoughts are not that different either.
The Duke's daughter, Mariabell Tempest.

From my perspective there are many places that are not normal but there are also many places that are normal.

A princess sleeping in happiness while being protected by the cocoon called the duke.

That is my container, shell, and from one side it is also a fact.

「You do not know anything, that's why my words seem like mere idealistic remarks indulged in my dreams that do not see the reality」

I thought about all those times I restarted over.
I thought about all those lives I had to experience without happiness repeatedly.

Even though I did not do anything, I also could not do anything, I thought about all those times I was abused by “you guys”.

「To see everything from one side and act as if you know everything, to be bent on running recklessly until finally venting out your anger」

The fear of the moment when I woke up for the first time.
The fear of noticing that there is no end.
The fear of knowing that there is no happiness on the other side.

「It is somewhat unsightly to a certain extent」

It is the respected truth that built me up.

「How you will accept my words is up to you, If you want to think that it's just mere hypocrisy, that's alright」

My thoughts that were cultivated through the many cycles.
If you do not receive it, that is still fine.

「It is easy to turn a blind eye towards matters. If you wish you can say anything you want regarding me, but.....please do that without me alright?」

Whatever Tuvalu will be, I am not interested in the least. Whether he clings to or is dumped by the heroine, it does not concern me.
So please do not try and involve me.

After dropping that line, I abandoned Tuvalu on the spot and left.

I joined my father and my mother and came home as if nothing had happened. I did not report the conversation with Prince Runa.

The interaction with Tuvalu.....there is no reason to report it.

Chapter 32: I am begging you therefore rise from regret

Humans, when they disregard their surroundings certain matters began to disappear. It is common that once you concentrate on one matter, you can start to neglect others. It is not particularly unusual, it is a natural phenomenon. And because of that it is inevitable that once you return to reality you also begin to regret; it is essentially a set.

「.....I want to cry」

「You can cry but I will not comfort you」

「At least lie and say you will comfort me!」

「From a while ago until now no matter what I say you continued to be depressed, there is nothing more I can say」

As soon as I finished meeting with the prince and came back, I directly ran into my temple of sanctuary. In other words, Keito's house in our premises. Usually it would be the rose garden, but I do not know when father or mother will come. It was just recently that mother came there to deliver terrible news. So it is has become customary to go to Keito's house when I do not want people to disturb me.

The contents of the story is of course about the violence inflicted upon me.

「Although if Keito was around you could've stopped him.....」

「I cannot go, I am only a servant's child after all」

That's true. Even my parents could not go let alone a servant. As for the child.....Un, I know that it's impossible. In the first place it's already over, so no matter how much I complain time will not turn back.

「Although I said it many times already, I do not think that you did anything particular terrible. Also wasn't it the other side that started venting their anger towards Maria?」

「Yes, but.....more or less there is still this and that between nobles」

「Even so, it was the other side that raised their hand first.....or actually, a man raising his hand towards a female is no good」

「.....Though Keito sometimes hits me」

He is saying cool things but is not really convincing.

「Maria has never saw me as a man, so it's all good」

「What is with that reasoning!」

That's right, but.....even though he also has never thought of me as a girl, it's unreasonable.

But even though I say that in front of me there is a cup of tea and sweets that Keito prepared for me, because he offers proper hospitality and keeps me company while also listening to my various complaints of sorts, he is actually rather kind.

「Anyhow I believe Maria had no faults this time, so do not worry about it anymore」

「U—.....」

I am very glad that you say that.....it is not easy to convince myself whether I dug my own grave or not.

Even though it was merely just resisting his outburst of anger, it was still bothersome until Keito reassured me.

But that is not what I am particular worried about.

「Why did I say such a thing.....」

At that time, I said unintentionally.

『I know what kind of feelings you have towards nobles』

This is bad, it is actually very bad isn't it!?

At that time my anger peaked and I flew off the handle, but that was too dangerous now that I think about it.

Because that remark makes it seem as if I know the secret of Tuvalu's birth and early life!

The secret of Tuvalu is something Marquis Miranda hid with all his power. I do not even know his parents, and if I recall from his route the King also doesn't

know about this.

A secret the top of the country doesn't even know, yet somehow a nine-year old girl knows would definitely be a talk.

「Keito, if it comes to please pick up my bones」

「Run away before you get reduce to bones」

I wish I could get away but.....it feels like it will be impossible with that yandere schemer. If civilization evolves, it seems likely to be monitored illegally using a GPS.

If it was that girl she might be able to erase all contact with that man, it would be like putting on a skirt for her.

That Yandere-san.

Although there are various circumstances, there is no doubt. In truth he is just an incredibly messed up person.

During Mariabell's bullying, in the beginning I was glad to rely on her and was silent.

The more I remember, the more he seems like a terrible yandere. What to do my worries are doubling.

「Alright, finish!」

「.....!?!」

While my mind was enveloped in unease I suddenly heard a *Pan, and with the loud noise I returned to myself while Keito was holding his hands in front of him.

It seems that the sound of his hands clapping recalled me from my thoughts.

「Time to switch, I said it before, Maria is haphazard but in a good way」

「.....I only remember being called an idiot」

「That problem lies with the memory of Maria」

「Are you trying to praise me or make fun of me which one is it?」

Such a rude fellow! But I suppose this is the consideration of Keito. This usual interaction makes me feel calm.

Let's see the situation for the time being.

If something does happen.....at that time let's just escape from the life-threatening challenge.

「Alright, how about a cup of tea?」

「.....I want」

For now let's just relax and drink Keito's tea.

Chapter 33: My guardian deity is definitely a god of pestilence

After that, about one month has passed since that violent assault. For the time being there hasn't been any problems.....or rather I should say, for the time being Tuvalu hasn't contacted me yet. In that regards I sighed a deep breath of relief. Though for now, I cannot completely rest assure yet.

I will erase Tuvalu from my mind for the time being because even if I worry about it I can't do anything in regards to it. Recalling the bad memory just makes it seem like his shadow might emerge out of nowhere.

Anyways let's just concentrate on the problem in front of me.

「I am Mariabell Tempest nice to meet you」

「.....I am Niel」

Even though the weak reply came from a capture target it doesn't bring any fear. Rather the voice was small enough to make one worry whether this person was alright or not, his self introduction proved that he is not good with self-assertion.

Fluffy moss green hair, thick glasses, the fingertips that can be seen from the long-hem clothing are white and thin. My complexion is generally white too, but that's not what I meant for person standing in front of me.....somehow, it's a sickly kind of white. It can be rephrased as pale.

The voice also emphasizes his weak appearance, and suspicious behavior. From then to now he has been repeatedly avoiding my field of vision.

No, I don't mean to say that he is being rude. Rather do I have to stay here? Can I go home?

You might have realized when he gave his name, but let me start from the beginning.

I am with one of the capture targets, Niel Juliano, the youngest child of the Count.

Moreover, in the reception room of his house.

The beginning of all this started three days ago.

× × × ×

On that day, I was in the rose garden waiting for Keito after finishing with Linda-sensei's lesson as usual.

As usual I was just idly thinking that he should be returning home soon but at that moment.

「Maria-chan, may I talk to you for a bit?」

「Mother?」

To be honest, at this point I already had a bad feeling.

When my mother comes looking for me in the rose garden unpleasant things always happen. But of course it's not my mother's fault.

「What's wrong?」

「Yes, actually a guest has come for Maria-chan」

「For me.....?」

At that moment I started sweating feeling this was very bad. A cold sweat ran through my back and forehead, I remembered my body temperature dropping in an instant.

Someone came to my house and visited, and furthermore it was for me and not my father or mother.

There is only one such person who would do that.

「It seems they would like to talk with Maria-chan, since they are currently waiting in the reception room do you mind coming?」

「Yes, I understand」

Although I appeared to be calm, on the inside I was actually secretly developing an escape plan. I was also letting loose my anger about Keito not

returning home.

Even though I asked you to pick up my bones.....! Although you didn't actually agree to it!

While gathering up complaints inside my mind, I slowly headed towards the reception room.

「Sorry I made you wait」

「Pardon.....me?」

I entered the room and gave a bow. It is courtesy and also a kind of custom. That's why I often go through it before I check who was in the room.

When raising your head, it's not entirely unlikely that someone different from the person you imagined would be in front of you.

But this time I had confidence that I was not wrong.

Because the only person that came to mind when I was told someone came to visit me would be a certain yandere.

「Maria-chan, these are the sons of Count Juliano」

「I am Rave Juliano」

「Likewise, I am Iria」

But there was not the light blue hair color that I imagined, but instead two men with moss green hair.

E—tto.....who are you two?

No, they've already introduced themselves and I remember the name of these two as well as the capture target's.....but why were these people visiting me?

I should be glad that it's not the yandere, but I am at a loss as to whether I should be saddened that a capture target was still concerned.

「Apologies, for the sudden visit」

「I intended to make an appointment.....but I wanted to keep this a secret from my father」

「No, I don't mind, just that because Kirua-sama is at work, is it fine to talk to me instead?」

「Yes, of course」

The talk was progressing very fast but I still haven't caught up yet. You shouldn't have accepted it so easily. That's because in Niel's route wasn't I convicted of false charges by these two people? That I had defamed and caused injury towards the heroine, that I had stolen my parents' assets and made money by illegal means.The first half is actually correct so it's hard to deny.

「Well then, let's immediately move on to the main subject.....」

I sat in front of them alongside mother as she encouraged them on. If possible I would like to retract that statement and say I am busy then run away, but that is impossible. I feel like I have been giving up more easily recently.

「To tell the truth, Mariabell-sama I'd like you to come to my house」

Eh, no way.

I am sorry for declining before even hearing your reason but I know I will still hate it. Because it's the house of the capture target an enemy territory! Going there, what kind of suicide action would that be?

「Eh, well.....what does that mean.....?」

Look, even my mother is troubled!

Though it's most likely for an entirely different reason from mine. Taking me home, if one took it the wrong way that might seem like a proposal. Doing that kind of thing even though I am only 10 years old, if it's a lolicon after declining please return home graciously. Although both of them are actually not old enough to be considered lolicons.

「We have a younger brother who is rather distant towards us, so I wanted Mariabell-sama to call out Niel as.....well, he won't ever come out of his room」

「Originally he doesn't like going out much to begin with because of his personality and it just kept getting worse as he became older, in the end he even stayed inside and refused to go to the Birth Anniversary Party of Prince Runa」

That is pretty severe. The invitation letter also had my name on it, so the invitation letter that came to the Juliano household most likely also had the

name of Niel.

For the nobles the party is an important social gathering, and for children it is an important place to study various manners.

Even ignoring royal invitations, it's not a good idea to abandon learning opportunities.

「I understand what we are asking for, but because it concerns private family matters I would like to avoid a detailed explanation.....」

「It's alright you don't have to say it if you don't want to」

「.....I'm sorry」

Mother seemed to have noticed that Rave-san was struggling for the right words.

Although I already knew the general picture, I didn't say anything. I learned, don't say anything unnecessary.

「That's why I want to get Niel outside somehow, at the very least for social occasions」

Rave-san seemed seriously down. Iria-san also held his hands and furrowed his brow.

Both of them felt Niel was very important, and were worried or that's what I thought.

But.....that's why I didn't understand.

「Is that so.....I understand the issue, but in that case wouldn't it be better to find a proper adult? Why Mariabell.....」

Exactly that. As mother says, Niel's case seemed quite serious, so I also thought that finding a proper adult would be better.

It may be difficult because there is also the issue with Count Juliano.....but even if you call me I won't be able to solve it.

Or rather, this is my first time meeting both of them. I don't recall ever meeting them before in the past, for these two people I should just be a regular young girl.

Is it really alright to leave their important little brother with such a person?

「We can't call any adults, because it will be refused if my father finds out.....」

Ah, so you did it once. I felt an already-experienced kind of tone.

「If it's children we can invite them into our house, furthermore if it's Mariabell-sama.....」

If it's me? No, I don't have any certification on counseling.

「The Tigerson household's daugh—」

「I will do it, please let me do it!!」

I raised my hands firmly with a loud voice to drown out Rave-san's words. My mother, and both Rave-san and Iria-san were startled to my sudden outburst.

Rave-san.....what were you trying to say just now?

Did you just say Tigerson?

What, have you come to remind me of that dreaded memory?

Thus, my visit to the Juliano household was decided.

It goes without saying that I went to vent out my anger on Keito after those two returned.

Chapter 34: Impossible Difficulty

Even though I said I would come to the Juliano house to meet Niel.....but to be honest I don't know what to do.

At that time I didn't want mother to hear any unnecessary things so I automatically accepted, and most likely Rave-san and Iria-san are just overestimating me.

I have no idea how to improve his withdrawal state.

「E—tto.....about me」

「I heard from Rave-oniisama」

「Is that so.....」

The conversation doesn't continue. To begin with I'm not really good with people.....or rather it's because of the people I get entangled up with. Such as Francia-sama or a certain yandere.

Why I wonder.....is it because of my face? It's true that facial expressions are getting tighter year after year, but since I am only 10 years old it should still be acceptable.

「I'm sorry.....」

「Hm？」

I'm sorry, I forgot you even existed for a while. He doesn't really have much presence.....or I guess it's actually because I was thinking about something else.

Hmm? I wonder why he apologized just now.

「B-Because of me.....you had to go..out of your way..to come here」

「Please don't mind it, because I accepted the request myself」

His voice kept on changing around due to fear, or is it just how he regularly is? If possible the latter would be better otherwise that would be troubling in it's own right.

Hmm.....should I change his way of speaking first?

I was asked by Rave-san to handle two issues.
One is improve his withdrawal state so he can participate in the higher society.
The other is to get him accustomed to conversing with others.

I thought that if I somehow managed to do the second one the first one would just naturally follow, or that's what I thought but.....first of all the second one was already extremely difficult.

「That's right.....first of all, Niel-sama do you not like going outside?」

「Eh.....?ah, um.....t-that sort of thing」

「Please tell me your honest feelings」

「T-To be honest I don't dislike it.....but.....I feel the most comfortable.....
inside my room」

If he didn't like going outside I was thinking of searching for a way to allow him to overcome it inconspicuously, but there is still room for improvement if that wasn't so.

His voice is small, he kept changing the way he talks but it can't be helped so I will just have to get use to it, and he kept moving his head around while his eyes kept jumping around from place to place.

Along with his suspicious behavior and his face being hidden underneath his hair and glasses, he could easily be mistaken for a suspicious person.

「Niel-sama, if you are unable to look directly into the other party's eyes you should at least look at their nose」

「Eh.....」

「From a while ago till now haven't you been trying to look me in the eyes?
But since you couldn't do it for a long time you kept looking away」

I can't tell for sure because I can't see Niel's eyes, but I think there were many times when he had tried to.

He had tried to look into my eyes, endure it, but was unable to bear it and kept looking away. That's why his head kept moving around and it looked like suspicious behavior.

It's true it's better to look directly into one's eyes when speaking with them

but there are just some people who aren't good at it. Because the eyes can also say as much as the mouth, it can make one feel like their mind is being read.

「If you look at the other party's nose, it will seem like you are looking at their eyes」

Well with Niel's case since his bangs and glasses covered his eyes you can't actually tell where he is looking at.

「I-Is that so.....」

「Because it looks suspicious if you move your head around too much」

「Y-Yes.....」

Even if he has a conversation in high society now it should at least appear polite for now. Only in appearance though. I can't guarantee anything more than that.

Even then.....how far should I take this?

To be honest, I know how to change him. Because I've experienced his route after all.

Cut the bangs, remove the glasses, and then lavish him with praises afterwards.

I might have summarized it a bit too much but the behavior of the heroine on his route is like this. Although from the surface Niel looked really easy to handle, the heroine must have tried so hard.....or at least that's what I thought.

But is it really fine for me to do this?

Because it's the heroine's job to make Niel confident.....more importantly I should actually be a person who doesn't know anything about his family matters.

Interfering in this poorly might bring the opposite effect and may actually corner Niel more.

But I don't want to be called over again. Also I don't know how it would be taken by Count Juliano if he were to find out.

What should I do.....

Chapter 35: I wonder if I can have one friend

Eventually a good plan for that day came unexpectedly. In the next five days, it seems Count Juliano will be traveling to other countries for business matters. That man is not really respected by his sons.....though it is self-wrought.

But more important than that, I have something I need to think about.

If I were to say it there is nothing I can do.

No, there is something I can do but it's not a route I can take.

I know his family environment due to the knowledge from the past five rounds, though currently I should be a human who knows absolutely nothing about Niel.

I know how to change him, but then I must also address the problems surrounding the Juliano House.

If I do it in the present state and try to change Niel he would surely doubt me and in the future his distrust for me will only grow.

That is a problem. I dislike prolonging things.

「Have Niel go outside and get him use to conversing with other people.....」

I thought of various methods but in the end practicing is the only way. Even with the knowledge sitting down and writing in my notebook doesn't bring any other method.

「U n.....」

「What are you worrying about?」

「Eh.....Keito! What are you doing here?」

As I sat on the sofa in my room worrying I then heard a voice and before I realized Keito was behind me.

This is my room though! And when did he come in!

「Delia-sama was showing me around, I knocked, but there was no reply」

「Uu.....I didn't notice」

「I thought so, you met the youngest of Count Juliano today didn't you? I thought you might be agonizing over it」

As expected of a childhood friend, he understands me well.

「Judging from your looks is it perhaps worse than I thought?」

「Rather than bad.....it's just I don't know what to do」

It would be ideal if I don't mention Neil's family environment and could still at least teach him how to converse with people.

Such a method, if it could only be so easy.

「.....That's it」

「Hm?」

「I thought of something」

A way for Niel to learn how to converse with people or at the very least get him accustomed to people.

Of course, I will not mention the matter regarding the Juliano House.

Yes, with this I can do it!

「Keito, will you cooperate a little?」

「I am fine with it but what are you going to do?」

「It's simple, I should just become friends with Niel」

× × × ×

Five days later, I called Niel to the Tempest house.

I thought that he would be a bit reluctant but surprisingly he simply accepted.

In the end Niel doesn't want to leave his room or go outside of his house, or to the party venue.....in other words where his family is at.

Sorry Niel, but that is not something I can solve.

It's a problem that only the heroine or his family can solve

「A-Ano.....why..me」

「Niel-sama, please become friends with me」

「Eh.....?」

Upon hearing my words, Niel was surprised and opened his eyes wide. Yes, it's quite surprising. I am even surprised at myself for saying so. I never thought the day would come where I would declare friendship with a capture target that I've been trying to avoid all this time.....I daresay I have become rather bold.

Perhaps it was because out of all the capture targets Niel can be said to be the least harmful. If it was Tuvalu even if heaven and earth were to be destroyed I still wouldn't say it.

「It's the fastest way to get use to talking with other people, it might be a bit sudden to ask to be friends but I thought this would also make Niel-sama feel more at ease」

Plus if I become friends with him now it might also be better off for me in the future. I thought it could be something similar as the time with Greas-sensei.

「That's why, let's go!」

「E-Ehhh!?!」

He seems unable to keep up with the current situation but I don't care. Because momentum is important with such things! I pulled Niel's hand and headed towards the rose garden that I am usually always at.

The courtyard or something would've also been fine but.....if too many people come around Niel might not be able to do it. Almost nobody comes to the rose garden, even if someone does come it usually is mother.

「Keito—, you there— ? 」

「I'm here, it was Maria who said to come here and prepare first」

「That's why I asked to see if you were ready」

「Can't you just say that then?」

When I entered the rose garden, there was the usual round table set I use along with teas and sweets for three. There are usually only two chairs but since

I ordered an additional chair in advance there are now three chairs.

「A-Ano I.....」

Niel was clearly confused when the number of people suddenly increased. He looked towards Keito, then at me, then looked down. He repeated it many times, it seems he was trying to think of what to say. He probably already thought of what to say but I guess he just doesn't know how to say it.

「My name is Keito, I am Maria's childhood friend.....Niel is it? I am two years older than you」

「Ah, etto.....I am Niel Juliano, Juliano's house.....youngest..child」

「Hm, understood, you don't have to be so formal. I am a commoner so like Maria you shouldn't worry about it.

「Y-Yes.....」

It seems he calmed down a little due to Keito's lax atmosphere, it was as if a relaxing aura could be seen flowing forth from his body. Just like I thought, calling Keito along was the right move.

With just me alone it would have been too uptight due to my social position. Above all with Keito here it's also more relaxing for me. With just nobles here the entire time we would only be able to think about minding our manners, but with Keito here he can act as a sort of buffer to that. Well I guess Keito's character itself can also be said to be very my-pace.

「Well then, both of you sit down otherwise the tea I went for the trouble of preparing will cool down」

Anyhow, we have broken through the first barrier.....I think.

Chapter 36: Cute is justice

At the beginning of the “tea party” the atmosphere around Niel was tense, though I think gradually with each word the atmosphere around him softened as he became more accustomed.

Or rather it seems he was just surprised by the interactions between Keito and me or at least that’s the feeling I get.

「Maria, it’s going to spill」

「Hm?」

「Here, aah, don’t wipe it with those hands」

It seems that there was cream on the edge of my mouth from when I was indulging myself with cream puffs. Keito tells me to wipe my own mouth but before I could wipe the cream Keito wiped it away with his finger.

I looked at my two hands after hearing Keito’s words, they were covered in powder and white cream.

Yes, thank you Keito.

「Niel would you like a refill?」

「Ah, no, I can do it myself.....」

「There is a lot so you don’t have to hold back」

「T.....thank you very much」

「Hm, you’re welcome」

..... Somehow, this is a good trend?

I am rather impressed with Keito’s my-pace attitude, at least he can now properly talk unlike before.

More than anything I can properly see his eyes.....and when I look at them. He is not moving his head around and I don’t see any suspicious behavior!

「Maria, if you space out it’ll spill out again」

「Eh? Ah, yes!」

I was too preoccupied with observing the two that I tilted the cup too much when I brought it to my mouth.....that was close too close.

「.....Ano」

「Hm?」

「The two of you, have.....you know each other..for a long time?」

Because he was mumbling I thought he had something he wanted to say, but instead it was an unexpected question. Well originally his way of speaking is confusing to begin with.

Me and Keito unintentionally gave a blank look for a moment.

「Hmm.....since I was four, so about six years」

「I guess you could say it's been long」

It's not so in terms of years but it's long considering our age. That's right, I've spent half of my life with Keito.

When I think about it I feel rather indebted to Keito. Including this time.

「Six years, is that right.....」

「Why did you ask?」

「The two of you seem very close.....just like I thought you've known each for a long time」

He gradually lowered his head with each word. Is he.....depressed? His default personality is depressed to begin with so I am at a loss.

「Hmm.....so what about it?」

「Eh.....」

「We've been like this since we first met」

Yes, that's right. In our six years of being childhood friends it doesn't really feel like our intimacy has increased but rather our time as friends. Of course the feeling of trust is much stronger now.

Or rather his attitude towards me is different now.

「Originally Keito had no respect towards me so my spirit was damaged」

He called such a hard-working kitten like me creepy, what a foul mouthed fellow. Though I was the one who revealed myself before that.

「I-Is that so.....」

「That's why you don't have to worry about it too much」

「That's my line」

But it's certainly right.

「It's true becoming friends made us more closer, but it's also true that we became more closer because we wanted to be friends」

When I look at Keito and me along with our six year history it's even hard for me to believe it. Certainly our relationship was built from the past six years but Niel is a different story.

「That's why don't mind it too much, first let's just start with what Niel wants and go with that. If you get angry or become sad or do something and apologize that is fine, if it turns out we aren't compatible and you want to leave that is also fine」

.....Why am I doing something like giving advice for making friends?

Aren't I deviating away from my original purpose?

It's true that I was planning to become friends with Niel, but somehow is it just my imagination that the reason changed.....yes, it's just my imagination.

Besides there is no other idea.

「For the time being please call me Maria」

「E.....Ehhh!？」

「Give it up Niel, once Maria decides on something she will not let up」

Let's first start with the appearance. If you change the way you call someone it will appear you are more intimate, it's a very important matter!

「E-tto.....Maria..sana.....?」

「Not quite, the sama is not necessary」

「No, no, that is.....」

「I call you Niel though right?」

「Uu.....」

He seems to be completely troubled.

Even so I will not concede.

I stared unwavering at him as if we were two people engaged in a staring contest. The one who laughs first loses, the one who breaks away first loses. The results were decided in a few seconds.

Of course, I am the winner.

「.....Maria-chan?」

Niel's face turned bright red as he shyly called my name in a small voice. What should I do.....it's super cute.

Originally his character classification is under the cute category. I know because I know what his really face looks like underneath the hair and glasses. More than anything else after that Tuvalu. My depraved heart heals after seeing Niel's cuteness. On the contrary the negative points of Tuvalu are doubling but he brought that upon himself.

Now that I think about it, I am almost never involved with anyone younger than me.....all the other capture targets that I've met so far are older than me, even Keito who is next to me is also older.

The more I think about it the cuter he becomes.....and at the same time, a little desire arises.

「Niel.....would you please call me onee-chan?」

「Stop now idiot」

Chapter 37: Just When I Forget it Comes

Back

The first tea party is a success.

Niel is still socially withdrawn, but at least he received some practice with talking to people.

I failed to get him to call me onee-chan.....but it will definitely come true someday.

Because Count Juiliano returned the second meeting was delayed, but thanks to Rave-san coming up with excuses our tea parties managed to continue. After two or three more times his visits ended up becoming customary, and today was once again the day where Niel regularly visits our house.

And today, counting from the one we had two weeks ago will mark the fourteenth tea party.

「We prepared macaroons today」

「Yesterday Maria suddenly said she wanted to eat them」

「So Maria-chan..likes macaroons 」

Fufu, Niel gave a light laugh compared to before his way of speech is a lot more smoother now. He sometimes will still get stuck but there is no weird pauses now.

It has already been more than half a year since I first met Niel and we have been holding tea parties at a pace of twice a month since. Should I rejoice in the fact that he has improved so much in half a year or should I be saddened that he has only improved to this extent after half a year?

He still stays holed up in his room but at least he now comes out to attend the tea parties. Rave-san gave his thanks to me. With such vigor too, I was actually a bit scared.

「By the way, is it true that Maria-chan will not participate in the party hosted by Marquis Milanda?」

「G-hou.....」

I thought I would spit out.....but I resisted it. The sudden Milanda remark shocked me.

It's already been a long time since I last met Tuvalu, I haven't seen him at all since then. I don't want to see him though. We almost ran into each other again at a party but I stuck close to my father and passed by him.

However, during this period an invitation arrived regarding the party Marquis Milanda was hosting.

I ended up screaming.

I seriously thought it was a curse letter.

I absolutely will not go, I couldn't say that as I was already obligated by the duty of nobles.

So I politely declined it.

But why does Niel know that!?

「I met the son of Marquis Milanda at another party.....he said it was such a shame that Maria-chan couldn't come」

Lies! It's a lie Niel! That schemer fooled Niel.

「I only decided to participate because.....I thought I would be able to go with Maria-chan」

「.....Sorry」

Niel's brows lowered and he had a regretful expression on his face so I quickly apologized, but Niel then hastily said「Please do not mind」and gave a laugh.

Yes, I'm really sorry. But even so no matter how much the cute Niel begged me I still will definitely not let up.

Meeting with that evil schemer is no joke.

When I think about how we had fought I don't know what he will do to me. I don't have a masochistic hobby of going to see my own fear subject.

Keito also said nothing because he already heard an earful from me regarding that subject.

「But I have never been to a party of a Marquis before.....」

Niel even skipped out on the royal family's birthday party so obviously he didn't respond to invitations from other nobles. It wasn't until recently that he finally started participating in parties and started to rehabilitate due to the small scale parties.

.....But to even participate in a large scale party like the Marquis household's. Although I am pleased with his growth, out of all people he had to choose Marquis Milanda.

It's a rather complex feeling.

「The scale may be bigger but the manners are the same, so don't be afraid and go as usual」

「Yes, thank you very much」

「But just one thing」

「.....？」

「.....Be careful of the schemer」

You must not let your guard down, ever. Because he is even more terrifying than horror itself.

「Schemer.....sama?」

I just give an ambiguous smile to the speechless Niel.
I am not going to name anyone but still do be careful.

Then as we were discussing the date for our next tea party, Niel told me with a smile that he had become close with Tuvalu. Every time Niel praised Tuvalu my evaluation of Tuvalu dropped even further lower.

If he drags Niel into the darkness with him I will absolutely never forgive him.

Chapter 38: Countdown

It all started with Greas-sensei, then I became involved with Runa, Tuvalu, and finally Niel. Runa is still within the safe zone but the other three.....especially Tuvalu the relationship is rather uneasy.

It's different from a simple quarrel, instead there is a bad feeling of all sorts. I am not sorry about it but I do regret it.

Even so, the reason why I was somewhat saved was because the relation with them was only a temporary thing that remained within "social gatherings". After enduring a few hours, the relation could then be avoid any number of times.

But even that will come to an end someday.

Before I realized it was already near the middle school entrance ceremony.....half a year later.

x x x x

「What should I do?」

I was crushed by the reality after seeing the calendar.

Because.....it's already been half a year? Half a year passed so quickly, from now on it would be six years of cohabitation won't it? Keito won't be there, and Niel is a year later, so it will be a triple-handicap against the fellow capture target classmates!

Because the Tempest House is far from the academy, I decided to live in the dorms. Yes, I was prepared since I had prior knowledge, I already experienced five rounds.

But before I was fine with it since it wasn't actually "Me" but now since it's my first time my heart is beating rapidly.

Of course, it's not from excitement but rather anxiety.

「.....For now, I suppose I should just get ready」

I should hurry up and prepare for the start of a new life.

Though since I am already prepared there is actually no need to hurry.

I don't need to worry about the school supplies since all of it will be sent over and everything else will also be prepared by ourselves. Including moving into the dormitory. If it was an ordinary school, I would have gone to school for measurements of uniforms.....but nobles are out of the ordinary in various ways.

「Maria-chan, the tailor has arrived」

「Ah yes! I am coming!」

Rather than coming, they came instead. Although I was surprised when I first heard that it would be custom-made, but because a tailor had come that time to make the dress too I ended up accepting it.

Well, normally one wouldn't think that the same would apply for school uniforms.

「Sorry I made you wait」

When I arrived at the drawing room, my mother and the tailor were already preparing.

A person for measuring, a person for designing, and a person for accounting.....four people aside from my mother and me. In the meantime, a sample cloth is brought out of a file. There were also some tools which I was unfamiliar with.

I checked again just to confirm, this indeed was a measurement for a middle school uniform. Just that it became this absurd because it was a noble family.

「Well then, please excuse me」

A woman who was young enough to the point where it wouldn't even be strange to call her onee-san wrapped me up to measure my body. I just stood there with my arms slightly spread.

Mother was talking to the person in charge of design during that time.

It's customary to wear the uniform for Avantor Acedemy during the ceremony, afterwards it's optional to wear if you like it. In other words, you can dress however you like.

The girl's uniform is a white frill blouse with a dark blue corset skirt, paired with

a white short cape, and an elegant navy blue ribbon.

Males are a white blazer with dark blue slacks, and a navy blue necktie.

By the way, this is the middle school uniform after going up to high school the skirt and slacks turns into a checkered pattern of navy blue and black.

However, there are few students wearing it as it is.

Even though it's cute enough.....since customizing is allowed, people tend to modify it to their own taste. Particularly nobles since things like『My own original』or『The only one in the whole world』are commonplace.

Usually they only change the cape and ribbon but.....I have seen a student of the high school division, aside from the standard uniform even the skirt was made from a pitch black fabric.

Truthfully I don't particular want to make it different than the standard uniform.....but since we can change however we want.

「.....Yes, it's alright now, thank you very much」

After a few minutes the measurements are over, so the design is next.

Sitting on the sofa and looking at the many different kinds of designs that were brought in as examples, the standard uniform plus the cape and ribbon.....along with cute socks and shoes.

「The skirt itself is cute and navy will match any color.....so let's make a variety of things」

Somehow my mother is more motivated than I am. It seems no matter what age it is, mothers will always like dressing up their own daughters.

「There are plenty of cardigans but it's not a problem, change the colors and patterns.....oh, this is cute!」

「It's a dolman sleeve」

Dolman sleeve, poncho, long cape, long cardigan. I take off one thing only to put on another as designs continued to come out one after another. My mother seemed to be even more pleased than me, adding this and that along with various other things.

Well I am a girl, so I do appreciate getting to wear all these lovely clothes.

But I do hope this will end sometime soon.....

.....Ah, I forgot to think of countermeasures for after I enter middle school.

Chapter 39: Never Say You Are Happy

As the time passed steadily, the preparations for enrollment were progressing smoothly.

After the uniform measurements are completed, three things are necessary afterwards.

Textbooks, have already been sent so there is no problem.

Simulated Wand, I already have so there is no problem.

Writing utensils, I also already have so there is no problem.

Incidentally other accessories like bags and purses were also left to the tailor along with the uniform. It feels like a waste of money because in reality up to now I have never really needed anything like bags or purses.

Although I have small ones for parties.....they are merely for decoration and not actually a bag. I don't really use them in my daily life. So it has zero functionality.

After asking the tailor to make them, preparations for enrollment will be perfect if the school supplies also arrive.

Next is the preparation for moving.

Upon entering the dormitory of Avantor Academy, the room will not change until graduation to the high school division unless there is a special reason. Because it's a rich school for nobles, a single room will be given to all incoming new students.

You are free to decorate the interior however you like. Thus many people bring their own favorite furniture but I will just use the ones provided by the school. Because there are many other things I have to do I can't be particular about furniture. I don't have any particular complaints as long as it's not too flashy.

That reminds me Mariabell had quite the lavish taste in decorations.....I couldn't even feel the slightest at ease.

My eyes spun quite a bit and I was rather doubtful towards Mariabell's tastes.

In any case, there is no problems with furniture. So it saves me the trouble of one matter.

Even if I go to the academy.....no, even so an appearance befitting of the daughter of a noble is required. Of course, attire is important, as well as etiquette.

Thus, different kinds of clothing must be brought.....though quite a large quantity of them are bulky.

Since I can return home during the weekends or long holidays I have to leave some clothes behind to a certain extent, so the last resort would be to make completely new clothes.

But why are there so many bulky dresses when they can't be worn casually?

The figure makes it impossible to fold, because I can't fold them I am also unable to put them with the rest, there are even numerous adornment items for the dresses.....why must I be swayed by something I may or may not only wear once a year?

Although normally one should have more casual wear so why do I see more dresses? And they're all bulky? Are my casual clothes the only reasonable ones? The designs were made simple by my will.....or they should be.

At least compared to the previous Mariabell.

By the time all preparations were finished, there was around a month left until enrollment.

「Haa.....」

「Your happiness will run away」

「Yes, it's running away this minute」

「That's not what I meant.....」

I felt alright when I was preparing. I was somehow able to face reality because I was too preoccupied with work.

But when I realized there was nothing more to do, each minute became more

and more painful as if I were slowly approaching hell.

「In the first place, I am currently working you know?」

「You are helping your father」

「As an apprentice」

Keito who was older than me already graduated from elementary school and is now helping out his father.

Someday he will become a gardener just like his father, but for now he is still just an apprentice. Since he has recently just finish his training his practical skills is still rather inexperienced.

「It's your lunch break, I heard the time from your father」

「Saying unnecessary things.....」

「Your food is ready」

「Yes-yes.....」

He prepared it while sighing, it seemed it was an unlucky lunch break for him but luckily for me my luck can't go any lower.

Incidentally, we aren't in the usual rose garden but instead in the corner of a garden full of flowers.

We set up a cafe space under a structure with a rounded white roof, a so called gazebo.

We prepared snacks, sandwiches, and three types of desserts. I would like to place emphasis on the word **dessert**. Girls are made of sweet and cute things, someone did say that after all!

「Hm, delicious」

「I know right ? I helped out today」

「That's rare, for the cook to permit it」

「Because.....soon it won't be possible to eat together like this anymore」

Within a month or so I will be leaving for Avantor Academy. When that happens, we can't eat lunch together like this or have tea parties in the Rose Garden anymore.

I won't even be able to hear his complaints anymore either.....what will I do if I get a hole in my stomach from stress.

「Even so, Maria knows how to cook?」

「The cook also helped me and I can make it if it's things like sandwiches」

「Usually normal nobles can't even make sandwiches」

When I think about how we are still able to talk this normally in the short amount of time we have left it's quite emotional. The speed of sandwich reduction also slows down.

It's lonely.....also I felt a bit at loss. I won't actually say that out loud because it will make me look stupid.

As I slowly eat my sandwich while thinking about such things, Keito had already finished off four pieces. Because his break is only an hour and since he also was talking to me perhaps he was unable to eat slowly.

Not that it really mattered, so I continued eating. I took the same amount of time as before and ate the same amount.

「Thanks for the meal, it was delicious」

「Sorry if it wasn't to your taste, Keito seems to be eating more recently」

「Is that so? Maria seems to be eating less」

「I have not changed」

Growth period? But I don't feel that he has particularly changed much.....though his face has matured a little.

It then struck me that we can't stay the same forever. Just like how Keito grew up by being with me, it seems like I also changed little by little by being with Keito.

The period of time I can come back from school is limited.....next time we meet, I wonder if we will still recognize each other?

When I thought about that it somehow became hard to leave, I couldn't bring myself to put away the empty dishes.

「Maria-sama, so this is where you went」

「Linda-sensei!」

Whether one is anxious or not, time will still move on as usual. While I was being slow, it seems that the time of my tutoring had arrived instead of Keito's work.

Judging from what Linda-sensei said as she came out of the mansion with slow steps, it seems she searched for me since I wasn't in my room.

「I am sorry, I was unaware of the time」

「No, I just arrived a bit too early」

Just like her footsteps, Linda-sensei's tone was slow so it seems she wasn't angry. I was thinking about how no one came to call me even though the teacher had already arrived, but apparently it seems I wasn't late.

「Today we will be practicing magic, so let's go to the courtyard. Do you have your wand?」

「Yes」

「In that case let's just directly head over to the courtyard」

I actually wanted to watch Keito work since I was still free and thought I'd rather have just done some self-studying, but in the end I eventually gave in and sighed.

I will be going to middle school soon so I wanted to keep learning as much as I still can.

「Well then Keito see you later!」

I tried being as bright as possible and stood up with a smile. He will also come to see me off when I leave home so I say this because it's not actually goodbye yet. I don't have much time left anyways, so I would like to keep on smiling till the end.

Being solemn doesn't suit me or Keito.

It's not like we will never see each other again.....or at least that's how it's suppose to be. I can't be certain because the place I am heading to is filled with my death flags.

No, I will do my best with all my power.

「Ah, hey, you forgot your wand!」

「Eh?」

As I was heading back with Linda-sensei, Keito's voice suddenly calls out to me just as I turned my back.

I looked back quickly upon hearing the words, I have my wand.....I looked at my empty hand which should have been holding the wand.

Keito uttered『Your always like this』because I wasn't paying attention I had carelessly left the wand I had brought along with me.....what a failure.

「You were just talking about it a while ago how did you forget it」

He seemed to be really exasperated as he said that and then gave a sigh. Uuu.....it's too harsh to retort. To even forget the tool that I needed to use now, I am even surprised at myself.

「Here, be careful」

「Sorry, and thank—」

Uu, it didn't come out. Or rather I was unable to say it. Keito had brought the wand over to me and as he reached his arms out to hand it over, at that moment.

The wand suddenly glowed, and the next moment there was a bouquet of flowers in Keito's hand where the wand should have been.

Pink and yellow statice in the middle, along with margarets, lilacs, and golden oxeyes.

It has zero unity.

There is also flowers that have vines around them, I think it's probably ivy. It's an aftereffect of being together with Keito whose father is a gardener and since he is familiar with flowers I also have some knowledge of flowers. I don't have as much confidence when compared to Keito though.

I had involuntarily concentrated on the flowers to avoid reality.....but it's about time I came back.

Keito is stuck in a position of presenting out flowers to me.

I also learned how to produce flowers from the tip of the wand, it's one of the basic magic skills. It also leads to attribute magic, it's essentially fundamental. But even so, it's only capable of making flowers bloom from the tip of the wand and couldn't produce such a bouquet.

「What..is.....this?」

「.....is this?」

Keito seemed to be completely dumbfounded from the situation.....but one thought came to my mind.

I learned about it in one of Linda-sensei's lessons, the ability to communicate with plants. It's said that even unknown plants can be produced if you have that ability.

But Keito shouldn't have that ability.

If I recall there shouldn't have been such an event.
That's right, when Greas-sensei was here.

「.....Linda-sensei, ano」

「I will call the head and his father」

As expected, Linda-sensei is calm, unlike me who was surprised and fled reality. She probably didn't want to leave us when we were both frozen in shock. Seeing that I had returned, with her usual smile she gave a bow and headed back into the mansion at her usual pace.

.....Eh, are you leaving behind Keito?
Well, it's fine anyways.

「.....Keito is your arm alright?」

「.....It's a bit hot and heavy」

「Right, let's sit down for the time being」

I received the bouquet and wand from Keito's hand and then handed the bouquet back to Keito.

Even after I took the wand from Keito and even after I removed the bouquet from the wand the flowers didn't wither, so I would say my prediction is likely accurate.

I pushed the still confused Keito into the gazebo and the bouquet was placed onto the table.

「Are you okay? How do you feel?」

「Oh, I am completely.....just a bit confused」

「It's no wonder, I was even surprised」

「.....This is that right?」

「Probably, it's likely what Keito is thinking」

Keito knows about what happened with Greas-sensei, because he also keeps me company he also has knowledge about magic. So he can probably guess what the previous matter was about.

「Linda-sensei said she is going to call both of our fathers, it cannot be concluded without doing an examination but.....probably, there is no doubt」

「.....Right」

「Your not.....fine are you?」

「No, I was surprised but.....that's all」

Isn't he sitting a bit too far?

I thought about whether he was just pretending to be tough.....but Keito's eyes didn't seem to contain any anxiety or doubt.

「Nature will take it's own course..... I learned not to worry about things from watching Maria」

「Give me back my concerns」

This person just made of fun of me a little didn't he? He trampled on my kindness. It's most definitely the usual Keito with his particular way of kindness.

「Don't worry, I don't mean it in a bad way」

「What's with that self-confidence?」

「Rather than shock, it's more important that I can go to the same place as Maria」

「.....We're still not sure yet though」

「I know」

It was an irritating laugh. He is definitely enjoying my reaction and laughing about it. I wanted to take revenge, but then his laughter subsided so I stopped.

After that, my father and Keito's father came and Keito was taken for an examination. I had class with Linda-sensei so I left.

I had insisted I wanted to go with him.....neither my father nor Keito's father had said anything but Keito had replied「I don't need you」so I ended up not going.

The result of the examination came out at night. Needless to say, we started hastily preparing his enrollment and move to the dormitory the next day.

Credits

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