

OVERLORD

The Undead King Oh!

Special

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特別描き下ろしショートストーリー

アインズの野望



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AINZ'S AMBITION

The regular maid stood in front of the door. As usual, her back was ramrod straight, her posture immaculate, with no signs of crumbling. In truth, he could not shake the notion that she had used some kind of spell to freeze herself in position. And then, her eyes were trained directly on Ainz.

Ainz sighed in his heart. This has become a part of his daily routine, and not seeing her there made him feel a little uneasy. Even so, he felt like he was being watched over.

The same went for the Eight Edge Assassins who were always clinging to the ceiling. It only served to intensify the feeling Ainz had of being watched.

This constant observation — even though it was not enough to overcome the ruler of Nazarick — was like torture for Suzuki Satoru, who was but an ordinary man.

More to the point, they were even monitoring him all the way to his bed. When would Suzuki Satoru be able to find relief?

And there was one more thing.

The maids were given one day to rest out of every 41 which they worked. Still, these utterly unethical and torturous conditions had not been imposed by Ainz himself.

The maids had strongly opposed the rest scheme he had initially proposed. *Instead, they said, we'd rather continue working.*

Ainz had awarded them those rest days for their hard work.

That had taken a lot of bargaining.

Still, Ainz had to consider things from the maids' point of view.

In YGGDRASIL, one could negate bad statuses like fatigue with items or skills, and removing them with spells was hardly a big deal. These maids who adored him so possessed items like that.

Still, he had his doubts over whether those items retained their effects in this world. In addition, he wondered if their mental exhaustion remained, even if their physical fatigue had been eliminated.

There were too many things he did not know.

It was not Ainz's intention to cruelly use them. Thus, he had loaned them the undead he had created in order to lighten their burden. Even so, that did not decrease the workload the maids had to shoulder throughout the sprawling 9th Floor and the 10th Floor.

Moreover, while he had thought lending them the undead would be a good idea, the maids had not taken more breaks. Thus, Suzuki Satoru's heart craved time to rest.

Of course, he could simply order the maids not to enter any room he was in. However, that would be doing them a disservice. Ainz was very happy that the maids were working so hard for him.

Isn't there something I can do which won't make them sad...

As he idly pondered that problem, his eyes fell to the report in front of him.

The reports which Albedo submitted were very difficult to understand. He could still understand balance sheets, income statements and cash flow calculations, but all he could do was go "hmp" when faced with a national-level budget.

Well, if Albedo and Pandora's Actor signed off on it, then the estimates shouldn't be too far off. Which means putting my seal of approval on it shouldn't be a problem.¹

¹ (TL note: the JP term is hanko 判子, or chop/seal used for signature)

The fact was that he rarely looked through the documents that he stamped.

In the instant that Ainz raised his stamp, a devilish flash of inspiration raced through him.

“Holidays – ahem!”

As the word slipped unconsciously from Ainz’s mouth, he panicked and tried to cover it up with a fit of coughing.

“Ainz-sama! Is something the matter?”

The duty maid for today flew into a panic as well and stepped up.

“No, nothing’s the matter. Ahem! Just having a bit of trouble with my throat.”

Surely something was very amiss if a skeleton could have throat problems.

“My sincerest apologies! I will adjust the humidity right away!”

“Ahh, it’s fine. Nothing to be worried about. Although, I wonder if someone’s been talking about me....”

“Is that alright? In that case, if you permit it...”

If he attributed the sneezing to being caused by someone speaking about him, then the maid would not blame it on the humidity, and that would be the end of it.²

After watching the maid return to her position in front of the door, Ainz refocused on the flash of inspiration that had popped up in his mind.

That’s right. How about implementing a block of holidays in Nazarick? Three days would do...

The arcology megacorps handed out holidays for summer, and Ainz’s company typically gave three days of block holidays.

² (TL Note: the old Japanese trope of people sneezing when others talk about them)

We could make a calendar for Nazarick, and then mark off holidays from there. That said, it kind of frightens me to lose defensive strength, so I'll probably need to rotate the rest periods for each Floor... Hm. How about bringing back the wage system I scrapped in the past? They'll need something to use for recreation if they have days off...

Ainz felt a thrill of delight as his plans came together.

The dream he had once had, the plan for making Nazarick an ethical organization which he had to discard as unworkable, once more surged to the forefront of his heart.

And if there's a holiday, maybe I should send the maids on a trip. ...Hm, maybe I should set up a tour agency... E-Rantel Tours, maybe... Come to think of it, there aren't many tourist spots in my country. Looks like I'll need to consider this for the future; should I discuss the matter with Albedo? No, no... that's right...

As he pondered the matter Ainz noticed that there was something different about the maid standing in front of the door from just now. She had been alert and at attention just now, but currently she was even more so. It was as though she was tensed up in preparation for a battle.

"What, what is it? Is something the matter?"

"No, I simply thought you wanted to give me a command, Ainz-sama."

"Oh? Ah, so that was what you thought. No, don't worry. I was simply thinking about the future of Nazarick."

Ainz rubbed his face. He could not feel anything from his unmoving features. Still, had something changed there?

Umu, I don't get it. Well, that's fine, I guess. More importantly, there's my idea from earlier... even if I drew up a list of sightseeing spots, the plan would be doomed to failure... for starters, I ought to think about the How-To-Get-The-Ordinary-Maids-To-Take-A-Break-For-A-While Plan. Still, how should I do it?

If he told them to take a vacation straight to their faces, they would flatly reject it, and if things went poorly, they might end up crying.

"Do you not need us, Ainz-sama?" they would say. No—

—There ought to be a better way than that. The worst thing would be if they swallowed their feelings and harbored them inside until they finally exploded. That would be scary.

In his former friend Herohero's company, there had once been somebody who committed suicide by jumping off a building. Herohero had once mused that maybe things would not have gotten to that state if only he had the chance to blow off steam earlier. As Ainz recalled those words, his body trembled.

The concept of fear was alien to the undead, but the dread he felt from inside him refused to go away.

I need to institute a system of taking holidays which the maids can accept. No, would that be too much to ask for? How should I phrase it to them? As a reward for good service or something?...It won't work. If I only pay attention to the maids, then I won't know what the Floor Guardians and the Area Guardians are thinking. Should I conduct a test here with relatively low stakes?

Umu, Ainz nodded.

The important thing was for them to understand that this was not a punishment.

The regular maids, who hated resting, would not be able to accept that. Therefore, he would have to change the maids' way of thinking at the same time.

Similar thoughts had come to him during his days as a salaryman.

It would be strange for someone to take a day off if nobody else took a day off as well.

However, if many people were on vacation, then it would be hard to take a vacation day as well. Therefore, he had to pay attention to who would be applying for a holiday. That said, he could not force any of the maids to do so.

The subordinates ought to be more willing to take a holiday if they see their superiors openly doing so. In this case, their superiors are Pestonya and Sebas, and...

“—And me. Maid!”

Ainz rose from his seat and turned around. The regular maid listened attentively, her eyes wide open...

“I will be taking a long holiday of three days. Call for Albedo!”

“Yes! I shall summon her right away!”

As he watched the maid hurry off, Ainz nodded.

Taking a holiday out of the blue would incur dissatisfaction. One had to inform the others ahead of time. For that reason, it was important to arrange for a replacement to cover your duties in the meantime.

While going on holiday for too long would mean that nobody would be able to fill the gap he had left in the organization, going on holiday for about three days or so ought to be acceptable.

Fufu. Being able to take a three-day holiday on any occasion other than the New Year shows what a big shot I am. Still... even with a holiday, what should I do?

In the past, he would have just spent it all on YGGDRASIL. He could not do that now.

Ainz thought about the matter. However, he could not think of any other interests he had other than YGGDRASIL.

If he went strolling around Nazarick, that would be like the boss of a company going on a walk around the office while he was on vacation.

Should I go shopping? Watch a movie? Read books? Listen to music? None of that really interests me... As I thought, there was nothing else for me in life other than YGGDRASIL...



All the maids were gathered in one of the rooms of the 9th Floor. This was an emergency.

For starters, being Ainz's duty maid was a very important task. The regular maids of Nazarick valued that duty above everything else, as did the person assigned to that role. Therefore, the fact that Ainz's duty maid was present as well meant that they had abandoned their duty.

Naturally, the person who had gathered them here was none other than the Guardian Overseer Albedo; in other words, the second highest ranking person in Nazarick. As the boss of their boss, it only made sense that they would obey her orders, but even so, Ainz's duty maid had refused the summons. That only made sense, because serving Ainz Ooal Gown, the absolute ruler of Nazarick, took priority over everything else.

Thus, when they saw the duty maid, the other maids all froze in shock.

She was the maid who was on break today.

She was not alarmed by the fact that she had been called here. In the days before taking on the role of Ainz's duty maid, she had thoroughly prepared and composed herself. Normally, she would not be around, but she could not refuse Albedo's orders.

"...Hey, what's going on? Isn't Etoile the duty maid today? This must be something really big..."

"That's true. All the other maids are gathered here too, so who's accompanying Ainz-sama today?"

The maid who asked the question looked over at Pestonya, who would be standing beside Albedo.

"Even Pestonya-sama is here... I'm getting a little worried."

Talking among themselves was strictly forbidden when they were gathered on orders. That said, they were free to speak until Albedo arrived, or until Pestonya told them otherwise.

Neither were those maids the only ones to do so. There were other maids speaking here and there, and some of the manservants were talking among themselves as well.

Still, it would seem the two of them had been overheard. Etoile approached the two maids who were talking to each other.

“It’s fine. Today, Yuri-neesama is taking my place by Ainz-sama’s side.”

“Eh? Onee-sama?”

The topic seemed to have garnered everyone’s interest. Snippets of startled, whispered conversation came from all around.

The Pleiades were maids, but they were combat maids. As battle maids, they were not assigned to the same duties as the regular maids. That was why the Pleiades had little contact with the regular maids.

“If Yuri onee-sama is on the job, then she’ll perfectly cover our duties... so does that mean she’s taking our jobs?”

“That worries me too...”

Several similarly-concerned voices could be heard as well.

“In any case, how are we going to proceed from here? Are we going to be reassigned?”

“The manservants are here too. And then there’s Eclair-sama.”

One of the manservants was holding Eclair as he spoke to Pestonya.

“Well, I can accept that for now... huh? Isn’t that human here?”

There was a human maid being trained in Nazarick for the time being. The regular maids had a strange relationship with her and none of them had spent much time with her.

“You mean the woman that Ainz-sama took pity upon? Isn’t she in a human city now?”

The maids giggled to each other.

They had many superiors, but only one supreme ruler.

That was the ruler of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, Ainz Ooal Gown. These maids would kneel before him, obey any order he gave, and dedicate their hearts to him, the one who stood over all the maids of the world. Therefore, it was truly pitiable for someone so close to him to not be allowed to work for him.

Just then, the door opened, and Albedo and Sebas entered the room. Tension filled the air in an instant.

The levity in the air from earlier was now gone.

After looking over everyone, Albedo explained the reason that everyone had been gathered here today.

“Ainz-sama will be on vacation for several days. You have all been gathered here to prepare for that.”

The assembled regular maids looked at each other. After that, one of them asked a question:

“A moment please, Albedo-sama. If that is the case, then the maid assigned to Ainz-sama—”

Albedo held up a hand to quiet her before she could finish.

“It is only natural that you should have questions. However, I would like you to listen to me before you ask them.”



This was the beginning of Ainz’s three days of vacation.

“So, Albedo, can I leave the rest to you?”

“Yes. I will manage Nazarick in your place.”

Albedo bowed her head deeply.

“Umu. In truth, I have always been fully confident that you could handle that duty, Albedo.” That was why he could rest easy in his role as a ruler. *If this*

goes well, maybe it would be a good idea to take regular vacations like this, Ainz mused.

“Thank you very much. May I know what you plan to do now, Ainz-sama?”

“Uh, umu. I was thinking of rolling around in my room for a while before going for a walk around Nazarick.”

“Indeed,” Albedo smiled.

Hm, does she think it's a boring way to spend one's vacation? Maybe Touch Me-san would spend his time with his family... So should I go somewhere with Pandora's Actor?

Ainz furrowed his brows. It was not that Pandora's Actor was a bad person, just that dealing with him was quite mentally exhausting. That said, he disliked how he would suddenly shout “ahhhh” for no reason at all.

Well, rolling around in bed is a good way of using one's free time. Fufu... Maybe I could spend a day practicing how to be a ruler. I've got all kinds of ideas I want to try out...

“That being the case... what's with those maids over there?”

There were 40 maids lined up in the room, and Pestonya stood at their head.

“Since we did not know how many maids you would need to help you out during your vacation, I felt it prudent to have everyone take part. I have entrusted the daily tasks to the various Floor Guardians and if need be, I can have key personnel dispatched to assist ~wan.”

“...?”

Unable to comprehend her meaning, Ainz tilted his head.

What on earth's going on? I'd like you to tell me. But of course, that was not in keeping with the image of Nazarick's ruler.

“Ah... surely there's no need for that, is there? I just want to roll around in my room...”

“I sincerely apologize for this ~wan. While I do agree with what you have said, we have calculated that this amount of people will be needed to provide the optimum assistance for your three days of vacation ~wan. If you wish to roll around in your room, then I feel we must ensure you move around in perfect comfort ~wan.”

“For rolling around?”

“Yes ~wan. We have already decided who will help move your body around ~wan.”

“...?”

“For instance, if you wish to roll on your back, we will have eight maids to turn you ~wan. In addition, if you wish to read a book, we will have one person hold the book while another watches where you look and turns the page ~wan.”

“...What did you say...?”

Ainz looked at Albedo in search of salvation, but the look he received from her was not what he hoped for.

“Ainz-sama. Will you not permit this? If we decrease the number of people allocated to you, then we will be disgraced in the one in a thousand, one in a hundred million chance that your rest is not as perfect as it could have been.”

As Albedo replied, Ainz’s brain worked furiously.

However, he noticed it.

Ainz — Suzuki Satoru — had many duties as the ruler of Nazarick. However, the maids and the other followers of Nazarick were bound to serve Ainz. Therefore, even when Ainz was on vacation, he was still their absolute superior.

It was just like how a company’s president continued to be its president even when he was on leave.

What... is this...

He could sense a tremendous pressure from the maids as they contemplated his three days of vacation.

...This is bad.

“I am grateful that you have accepted our goodwill. — Now then, maids. Let us not shame the kindness Ainz-sama has shown us! Let us ensure Ainz-sama is fully satisfied during his rest!”

The maids replied in unison, an overpowering force unleashed in response to Albedo’s words.

This forceful shout was one that he had never heard before.

And so, Ainz’s gut-cramping three-day vacation began. It felt like he was in a retirement home, and it was a hellish experience. At the same time, he decided to put the maids’ vacation plan on hold.

Still, Ainz did not give up.

He would make Nazarick into a kind, ethical world for his beloved children—

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