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OVERLORD

In 2138, a Dive Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game, YGGDRASIL, was about to be closed out even though it became the predominant once before. One of the players, Momonga, who enjoyed his prosperity with his guild members, was waiting for the last moment. However, he didn't log off even though the scheduled ending time passed, and all of a sudden, NPCs started to act on their own. Out of the guild, Momonga found a totally different world he'd never seen before. In the real world, he was a guy just lonely and uncool, but now becomes one great wizard with a skeleton look. Here comes the ruler of death dominating the world!!

Overlord [WN]

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Chapter 1: Prologue | Part 1

DMMORPG (Dive Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game) [Yggdrasil].

In 2126, it was released by a local Japanese producer and is a sensory-based MMO.

By using a sensory-based dedicated console, you could link up your five senses and play a game in which you feel as if you are in reality.

This system was born in 2079.

The first aim was the military, and then it was developed for the field of medicine, but the cost was high. It was then simplified after 10 years and now every home has it.

Although techniques created by net shops and tourist sites were used to lower the development costs, it still took 15 years before the first DMMORPG was born.

One of the reasons why the DMMORPG, Yggdrasil was better than any other was because of the amount of data.

The choice of characters diverged from the basic Humanoid races of Humans, Elves and Dwarfs. You can also be a Goblin or an Orc which both are part of the Demi-human race that boasts better abilities than the Humanoid races although their appearance are unsightly. Lastly, races that possess a variety of monstrous abilities but suffered from penalties in other aspects, the Heteromorphic races. In total, there were 420 of such races.

In addition, the number of classes, both basic and advanced, can be summed to about 880.

Naturally, the basic classes made up half of those, it was that large of a quantity.

And if you satisfied the basic conditions, you could have a taste of multiple

ones. The classes could only go up to level 15 and the maximum limit was level 100. No matter what race you were, you could choose more than 7 of them and pile it up.

If you wanted, you could have 100 classes. However, you'll be weak.

Basically it was such a large amount of data that it was impossible to create two identical characters unless it was intentional.

It was at a level where you could still make it more elaborate. By using the creator tools sold separately, you could customize the appearance of weapons and armour, your own appearance, and the settings of your own dwelling.

For example, say you have killed a dragon. Money and experience drop as per normal DMMOs. However, this is different. The dropping of money and experience does not change. However, in place of items, crystals containing data are dropped.

It was this type of data.

Length: +1, Weight: 40, Physical Damage increased by 5%, Special Effect: Additional Damage/Fire+10, Special Effect: [Martial Arts] Rush+1,

Although there are actually more details in the data, you already have the general picture.

You could tinker with this data by using the creator tools and make original items. You could also buy appearances within the MMO.

By doing this, you could make an unlimited variety of original items.

Also, if you were a Necromancer, you could turn the corpse of a Dragon into an undead monster. Alternatively, if you were a berserking warrior, you could bathe in the corpse's blood and gain a bonus. Classes that could turn Dragon Bones into Golems existed, as well as those that could turn it to medicine.

If this was a normal DMMO, the body would disappear immediately after death, so this would provide many advantages to the players.

For example, you could make a Golem out of Dragon Bones due to the data. By playing around with this data with the creator tools, you could create your own Golem. In addition, you could add your own AI to use for gate keeping and

for transportation.

It kickstarted the creator souls of the Japanese, resulting in the following.

You could distribute your own data on 2channel or the official homepage. From there emerged people called God's Craftsmen. They could do things such as a partnership with the illustrator and make a present of a special appearance.

Some used AI to strengthen their creations, others created cat AIs as cute pets.

[Yggdrasil] had changed the way that DMMOs had been up til now, from focusing on battles to explorations.

As expected, when comparing a sword made of clear crystal and a sword comprised wholly of iron, the amount of data needed for the exterior is completely different. The amount of data is determined by the resources of the item, such as minerals.

So the goal was not only to destroy monsters, but also to search for resources and to explore for new discoveries. Players enjoyed calling themselves adventurers to do such things.

Those players seeking unknown knowledge and unseen lands had a large map waiting for them.

Asgard, Alfheim, Vanaheim, Nidavellir, Midgard, Jotunheim, Niflheim, Helheim, Muspelheim. There were 9 worlds, each with their own particular traits, each were 2 to 3 times the size of Tokyo.

It was common not to meet other players at the frontier for a week.

A DMMO that promised unlimited enjoyment.

The creators made a famous remark, [A DMMO where strength is not everything] which perfectly embodied the game.

With such explosive popularity behind it, it had reached a level of acclaim where Yggdrasil and DMMOs were considered as one and the same in Japan.

However, that was from a time long past.

The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

It was a large tomb with 8 floors, an infamous dungeon.

Once, there was a union of 6 Guilds with players and NPCs totaling up to 1500 people. It was the first time in the server that such a large group of people aimed to get to the lowest floor. Then, they were all wiped out. It was a place where such a legend was born.

However, the level of monsters were not particularly high.

According to the rules, at best the monsters were at level 30. The level cap in [Yggdrasil] was 100, and since a third of the 1500 people were at that level, they should not have been much of an enemy. On the contrary, they should have been able to tear through them like paper.

However, the characteristics of the undead that appear there—can heal by negative damage, and get damaged by positive energy. They are also unaffected by instant death attacks and mental attacks as well—It is a strategy that takes advantage of it.

The negative damage spread across the floors—by about 1 point—and reduces the area effects on positive energy while still allowing recovery magic.

In addition, there was a transportation trap system that could divide a party. That wasn't the only trap as there were many other types strung up all over the place. Traps that blinded people and ones that poisoned the air, all for the sake of blocking the path of the adventurers.

Also, coupled with the typical undead of zombies and skeletons, original monsters could be used and is one of the major factors of the crushing defeat.

While having the appearance of a bloated zombie, the Plague Bomber detonated itself and dealt negative damage and healed nearby undead.

The Ghost could pass through walls and had a specialisation in hit and run tactics to touch you with their weakening touch and deal damage.

The Screaming Banshee had the ability to instantly kill anyone who heard it or deal mental damage.

The Deathborn Totem had the appearance of tens of skeletons merged

together and could attack multiple times.

There were tens of other undead races that waited elsewhere, all were capable of sending chills down your spine.

Of course all the enemies were comprised solely of undead, but it still was not easy to cope with them.

Elementals, Demons, and Devils appeared more suddenly frequently than Summons. Summoned monsters could be specifically chosen to be disadvantageous to the opponent. In a nutshell, you could choose those with fatal special abilities.

Naturally, the deeper you go, more difficult monsters would appear.

It was a wall of monsters so thick that you could not even imagine how much resources were spent for it.

Now, according to what was currently known, the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick had 8 floors. The intruders merely thought that they just had to get through 8 floors.

There were actually 10 Floors in total.

When you enter the 9th

Floor onwards, the scenery of the tomb changes. It becomes similar to that of a white castle.

Countless chandeliers, that emitted light, hanged from the ceiling, furniture suitable for kings and nobles were placed around. The marble floor was polished and sparkled.

For those that were clueless, would they even believe their eyes?

Wouldn't it be natural to think that way?

This Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, in the DMMO [Yggdrasil], was the stronghold of the guild standing at its peak, [Ainz Ooal Gown].

On the 9th

Floor of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick—

The marble passage was without a single speck of dust, and a set of large

mahogany doors were opened.

In it, a giant round table made of obsidian was placed, and surrounded by 41 gorgeous chairs.

However most of them were empty.

The once-full seats were now only occupied by two people.

Sitting in one of the seats was a humanoid figure clad in a jet black robe fringed with gold and purple.

It was not a normal human. It had a close resemblance to a dried-up corpse, with skin covering a little bit of its bones.

A dark red light flickered in its empty eye sockets.

Another one was a lump of black mass making a “doro doro” sound. It made you think of coal tar and it was constantly moving around. It was impossible for it to hold the same shape for more than a second.

The former was an undead that was pursuing magic—an existence that was the strongest amongst the Liches, an Overlord. The latter was an Elder Black Ooze. An existence that had the strongest acidic abilities amongst the slimes.

Their figures occasionally appear in the hardest dungeon, their names infamous among the adventurers.

The first of the infamous figures, the Overlord, spoke. Of course, its mouth never moved.

“Really, it has been a while, Herohero-san.”

“It really has been a long time.”

“Um, I believe it was since you transferred jobs?”

“It seems so. Actually even now I’m in the middle of a death match.”

“Uwaa. That’s terrible. Are you okay?”

“My body? It’s in tatters.”

The Elder Black Ooze prodded its arm, looking very much like a strange dance.

“I had no time to rest at all. I’m being whipped like a slave at my job.”

“Uwaa”

“It’s really terrible.”

Their conversation turned to complaining about their jobs.

To join [Ainz Ooal Gown], you had to satisfy several conditions. One was that you had to be a functioning member of society. Another was that you had to be of the heteromorphic race.

Their conversation went on for a while and stopped.

It was a silence caused by them wondering what should happen next.

“Oh no, sorry for having you listen to all that.”

“What are you saying. I’m very happy that I could meet with everyone after such a long time.”

“Hearing you say that takes a lot off my shoulders.”

“Maa, I really want to stay until the last moment, but I’m too tired.”

“Ah. That’s true. Take a good rest OK.”

“And what will the Guildmaster be doing?”

“I will be here until the end. Someone else might come.”

“I see. Thanks for everything up to now, Momonga-san. The reason why this game was so fun was all thanks to you.”

Momonga, as the Overlord, made a large gesture in reply.

“That is not true at all. It was because everyone was here. I didn’t really do anything special.”

“I believe that it’s not true.....Thank you. I will be taking my leave now.”

“Right. Thanks for everything.”

Just like that, the last of the 6 people to visit the guild disappeared.

Momonga gazed at the seat where Herohero just was. Making a gesture like he was shaking off something, he slowly rose to his feet.

In the direction he was facing, there was a staff.

It had the motif of a Caduceus, with 7 snakes entwining around it. In each of the snake's mouths were different coloured gems. The grip was made of a clear crystal that sparkled a blueish white light.

Anyone could tell that it was a first class item, it was a guild weapon of which a guild could only own one, a the symbol of [Ainz Ooal Gown].

Originally the Guildmaster was supposed to own it, but it was decorating this room instead. The reason was because it was none other than the symbol of the Guild.

It was for the sake of making this weapon that everyone cooperated and spent their days on adventures.

The teams separated and competed to collect the materials, everyone argued over the appearance, pushing for their own views and making it one bit at a time.

That was the golden age of [Ainz Ooal Gown] —- a story from that time.

While reaching out his hand, he stopped in mid-motion.

He stopped at this moment as, the staff that everyone made—this brilliant piece of his memories, he felt that he was about to throw it to the ground.

But, he should not leave it here in the end.

There were people who came despite their bodies tired from work. There were also those that gave up their family time, causing them to have a fight with their wives. Also, there were those who laughed while saying they took a paid leave.

There was a time where they would just talk about it for one whole day. Lots of stupid ideas were made. They planned adventures to collect treasures. They also ambushed an enemy guild's castle and conquered it. There was also once when they brought down the strongest class of boss monsters. While they were defeating monsters, they were also attacked by other players.

Now, everyone was gone.

Out of the 41, 37 had quit. Momonga could not remember the last time the

other 3 had came.

It was a guild in ruins, but it had its golden age.

It was the crystallisation of that sparkling lustrous time. And that was why he did not want to pull it into the current remains of that.

However, he was thinking of the opposite.

[Ainz Ooal Gown] respected the use of majority vote. He, as the Guildmaster, merely did the clerical work of communicating with everyone.

And that was probably the reason. He wanted to try out the power wielded by the Guildmaster for the first time.

Hesitating—

He reached out with his hand, and took the staff, the Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown.

The moment his hand touched the staff, it released a wavering blackish red aura. Sometimes, an anguished expression of a human appeared and crumbled a moment later.

“.....We really added too many details into this thing.”

The supreme staff that he had never held even once after its completion finally fell into the hands of its intended owner.

While feeling the drastic increase in his status, he felt lonely.

“Shall we make a move, symbol of our guild. No—Let us go symbol of our guild.”

Chapter 2: Prologue | Part 2

Momonga exited the room.

Originally, when the Guild members enter the game, they would appear at this round table. So waiting here for someone would be the best idea.

However the reason for leaving this room was as the possibility of another person coming, as he had said to Herohero, was low. He knew this.

He would not be coming back here a second time.

He began walking.

Following his footsteps, the strike of the staff against the floor rang out.

Momonga turned pass several corners and saw a woman walking towards him.

Her long rich blonde hair flowed down her shoulders, her face was extremely beautiful.

170 cm tall, the black and white parts contrasted with each other greatly on the snow white maid clothes, a pair of hills were struggling to push themselves out.

TL: I have no idea what the last part means.

ED: (I think it was indirectly speaking of the bossom or the buttox. LOL)

On the maid uniform, the apron was large and the skirt was long. The combination of the two gave the maid an impression of a refined lady.

As their distances narrowed, the woman faced him and greeted him with a deep bow.

He raised his hand lightly in reply, and stopped walking.

He gazed at the maid's uniforms.

It was made with extremely fine detail. The apron had fine embroidery sewn on to it. It was at a level of detail such that you could tell that the creator knew

what he was doing.

Even when she slowly raised her head, Momonga kept silent and gazed at her.

Even with the impolite gaze the woman's expression did not change. It was the same as earlier, a warm smile.

The maid was a NPC (Non Player Character). Characters that moved according to their programming. No matter how detailed the original programming was, expecting them to respond was a fool's errand.

However, there was a reason why he could not just act casually around them.

There were 36 maids in this castle, each made by a different illustrator from scratch.

One illustrator currently had a series in a monthly serialised manga magazine, and at the time had eaten the other illustrators for not being up to standard. The person who wrote the movement AI programme was Herohero.

The illustrator who drew them was a man that said "Maid clothes are my justice!", and made the details extremely minute, causing the person in charge of the outer appearance to scream.

Basically the maids were made from the cooperation of the Guild members, treating them casually would make him feel bad towards his friends.

Thinking about it, the heroine of his series wore maid clothes. While thinking that, the maid tilted her head to one side as if asking if something was wrong.

If a certain amount of time passes and someone is nearby, she takes this pose, huh. Momonga searched his memory and praised Herohero's detailed programming.

There were other hidden poses. As it had been a while he had wanted to see them all but was pressed for time.

Momonga sent a glance to the metal plate that was wound around his wrist, looked at the semi-clear timepiece and checked the time.

There really was no time to relax.

“Follow.”

With the maid following behind him, Momonga began walking.

With a set of footsteps following behind him, he turned a corner, a set of stairs on which could fit more than 10 people on it appeared. Stepping on the red carpet, he walked downwards towards the floor below.

The 9th

Floor was organised into parlours, reception rooms, the Guild members' rooms, and guest rooms. In contrast, the bottommost floor, the 10th

Floor was the central part of the Guild. It had a library, treasure room, *etc.* It was where the important parts were gathered.

The bottom of the stairs was a large hall, within contained several shadows.

The first one he saw was an old man wearing an orthodox butler outfit.

His hair was completely white, his beard as well. However, his posture was firm, and resembled that of an iron sword.

His Caucasian face had many wrinkles in it, similar to cracks. He also had a gentle look, but had a sharp gaze, much like a hawk searching for its prey.

And then behind the butler, there were 6 maids accompanying him.

Their weirdness was obvious at a glance.

Silver, gold and black metal greaves on their hands and legs, seemingly easy to move in. They were covered in armour straight out of a manga. Each of them were a different race.

They gave off the image of a warrior or guard, and there was a reason why they were maids.

The type of armour was unclear but they had the motif of a maid. Also, in the place of a helmet was a white brim.

They were similar to the maid soldiers or maid warriors you could find in

manga.

Their armaments were also different. Japanese-style, Caucasian-style, African-style, *etc.*

They had varied hairstyles. Chignon, ponytail, sidetail, plaits, side up, evening party roll? They were quite diverse.

They were all extremely beautiful. Well, if beauty encompassed voluptuous, healthy and Japanese beauties.

(TL Note: When I say healthy, I mean slightly muscular, look up this on google images:健康美)

If he had to say it in one sentence, they were like the entourage of a raid boss.

In [Yggdrasil], Guilds with a base of a castle or larger had a special option available to them.

They were the NPCs that guarded the base.

For example, guards and knights guarded a castle. These NPCs spawned limitlessly but were only up to level 30. Even if they were defeated, it would be at no cost to the Guild. However, they were extremely weak and would get torn up like paper if another Guild attacked.

In addition, you could not change their appearance or AI.

However, you could make NPCs that could actually fight. If a Guild had a castle, they had 500 levels to freely spend on NPCs.

Since the max level was 100, for example, 3 level 100 characters and 4 level 50 characters could be created.

In addition, you could play around with their backstory, appearance, AI and armaments.

Of course, you could also make non-humans.

There was a Guild that occupied a castle—The Great Cat Kingdom—And they had all their NPCs as cats or as cat-related species.

TL Note: I want this to be translated as The Great Neko-sama Kingdom, but it

was already written like this so. Yeah.

“Fumu”

Momonga placed his hand on his chin and looked at the butler and maids who had their heads down. He did not come here that often and he felt nostalgic.

Extending his hand into the air, he clicked a floating icon.

Names floated over the heads of the butler and maids.

“So this was his name huh?”

Momonga chuckled. While he was laughing about the fact that he forgot, he also vaguely remembered the time when they were arguing over his name.

The butler’s role was the Land Steward of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. The text log should have his role described in extreme detail, but he had no intention to read it all. There was not much time left.

By the way, the maids and the other NPCs had a lot of detail in their creation as [Ainz Ooal Gown] had a lot of members who enjoyed making detailed settings.

In particular, it was thanks to the work of many illustrators and programmers that their outer appearance could be made.

“Follow.”

The butler and the maids simultaneously raised their heads and lowered them again, confirming that they had heard their command.

Originally the butler and maids were the last line of defense against any intruders. Well, they probably would not be able to fight against the players that make it this far, but at least they could buy some time.

Even if that was true, moving them from here was different from what everyone else had intended for them. [Ainz Ooal Gown] was a Guild that placed heavy emphasis on majority vote. Doing things for one’s own convenience was unacceptable.

But, there were no players who had managed to reach here, and so they had always waited here.

The NPCs feeling sad was a stupid act. Momonga thought so. They had no emotions and were nothing more than data. Even if they had emotions, they would follow that of the AI programming.

However as the Guildmaster, he had the authority to move them.

While being swallowed in his own thoughts, he began walking.

While being followed by several footsteps, they walked a wide path.

They arrived at a large room.

It was a large room in the shape of a round dome. The ceiling had crystals of 4 different colours emitting a white light. There were holes in the walls, inside were statues.

The statues all had the shape of a demon and numbered 67.

This room had a name on its name tab—Lemegeton.

The statues had the motif of Solomon's 72 Demons, and were Golems made of a rare magic metal. The reason why there were not 72 was simple. The creator got fed-up halfway through.

The 4 coloured crystals on the ceiling activated when there were intruders and summoned high ranking Elementals of Earth, Water, Fire and Wind. At the same time, monsters would send a barrage of magic attacks.

This was the final line of defense. It had the firepower to wipe out 2 Level 100 parties.

His destination was one room beyond that.

Passing through the room, he stood in front of a large door.

On the right side of the 3 meter tall door was a statue of a goddess and on the left was a statue of a demon.

As expected, this door did not move, but it seemed probable that a trap had been set up.

".....They won't move right?"

Momonga felt a bit worried and touched the door with his hand. Naturally, he did not have a complete understanding of everything in this labyrinth. It was

possible that someone left it as a parting gift before they quit.

Mostly because there were 2 people who would do that sort of thing.

In the end, there were no traps and the door was opening by itself—
However, the massive doors, befitting their size, slowly opened.

Beyond it was a wide and tall room—.

A room which could comfortably fit hundreds. A ceiling so tall you had to stare upwards to see.

The Throne Room.

It was the most important place inside the whole the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. It was also the most elaborate of them all.

The walls were white with gold worked into them.

Several gorgeous chandeliers hanged down from the ceiling and were made from gems of 7 different colours. They released a mystifying light.

The walls had large banners hanging down from them, reaching the floor.

The centre of the room was made with lavish amounts of gold and silver—a large banner of Ainz Ooal Gown was sewn onto a red cloth and was positioned at the top of a flight of stairs.

Just before that was a chair cut out of a giant crystal.

It was—A throne.

Momonga walked through the large room.

“You can stop here.”

The footsteps behind him continued.

Momonga gave a wry smile. They would not stop moving with the earlier command.

Once again, he said an order. This time he did not get it wrong. After all, NPCs are just programmes. They could not respond to an order outside of their programme.

“—Standby.”

The footsteps stopped.

He climbed the stairs in the middle of the room and slowly sat down in the throne.

Beneath him, the butler and maids stood at attention. Having them do that in this room made him feel a bit lonely.

Such a command existed, Momonga uttered a command he saw once before and while saying so, made a downwards motion with his hand.

“Prostrate.”

They immediately dropped down on one knee and took a respectful position.

This was good.

Momonga raised his left hand and checked the time.

23:55:48

It was the last few moments.

Today was the last day of [Yggdrasil]—The day when all service would stop.

About now, the Gamemasters would be broadcasting and setting off fireworks.

As to why he was isolating himself, Momonga did not understand.

Momonga rested his back back against the chair and slowly stared at the ceiling.

Boasting the position of the strongest dungeon, he thought that there would be some parties to challenge it.

He waited. As a Guildmaster awaiting his challengers.

Even though he sent mail to all of the Guild members, only a handful came.

He was waiting. Waiting to welcome his friends.

“Relics of the past, huh—-”

Momonga thought.

Although his body was tired, being here until now was fun.

Moving his eyes, he looked up at the banners hanging from the ceiling. They totalled 41.

“That’s right, it was fun—”

Excluding the monthly fee of 1,500 yen, Momonga spent more than 50,000 yen on Yggdrasil. He spent 100,000 yen on the lottery in hope of rare items. It was not because he was rich. He simply did not have any simple interests, and did not have any other things beside Yggdrasil to spend his money on.

Well, as [Ainz Ooal Gown] was comprised of members of society, everyone spent money on the game but Momonga was in a class of his own.

They stood at the top of the server.

But that was not just it. Going on adventures was fun but beyond that, playing with his friends was more fun.

He had no parents, and mostly no friends. If he had to put it, this Guild [Ainz Ooal Gown” was the crystallisation of the golden age he spent with his friends.

Gripping the staff, the ending time approached.

The time reflected in the corner of the field of vision read 23:57. The server would shut down at 0:00.

There was not much time left.

The world of fantasy was coming to an end, and the ordinary everyday life would return.

Of course. A person could not live in a fantasy.

Momonga breathed a sigh.

He had to wake up at 4:00 tomorrow. He had to go to sleep once the server shut off.

23:59:35, 36, 37.....

Momonga began counting down.

23:59:48, 49, 50.....

Momonga closed his eyes.

23:59:58, 59—

Counting down the time towards the ending of his fantasy—

For the eventual blackout—

0:00:00.....1, 2, 3

“.....Hm?”

Momonga opened his eyes.

He was not back in his familiar room. This was the Throne Room inside Yggdrasil.

“.....What’s going on?”

The time should have been correct. He should have been forcefully logged out by now.

He checked the time.

0:01:18

It had definitely passed midnight. In addition, the system clock was definitely not wrong.

While being bewildered, there were no reports being shown. Earlier, when he closed his eyes, nothing had changed. He was still in the Throne Room.

“Has the shut down been postponed?”

Possible.

Something could have postponed the shut down. If that had happened, there was a chance that the GM was currently explaining it. Momonga panicked and tried to open a line and stopped.

The System Commands were not working.

“What is.....?”

It was not just the System Commands. The system that gave you an overview was also not appearing. Momonga frantically tried out other functions. Shout, GM Call, System Forced Termination Input. None of them had

any response.

It was like he was completely removed from the system.

“What is going on!”

Momonga’s bellow echoed in the wide Throne Room and disappeared. Originally, he did not expect any of the 8 figures to respond. Yes, it was true up til now—.

“—Has something happened, Momonga-sama?”

It was the first time he heard this old man’s voice. While Momonga was dumbfounded, he looked towards its source.

It was the butler who was raising his head.

Chapter 3: Pondering

“Has something happened, Momonga-sama?”

The old man repeated his question.

Momonga was dumbfounded and his thoughts were in disarray, but he slowly returned back to reality.

Well, it was good that he had returned but it was still a completely confusing situation.

“.....No, nothing at all.....Nothing at all.”

His words “Nothing at all” were repeated several times. They were NPCs, there was no need to act respectful around them.

While frantically being swallowed in his thoughts, excess panic and shock were forcefully suppressed. Nonetheless, it was important to collect information, even if it’s just a little, and digest it. However, he had no good ideas.

Inside Momonga’s head was an image of a hamster running in a hamster wheel, and somehow he calmed down.

“More importantly, what should I do now?”

“What do you mean?”

“.....The GM Call is not working.”

“I am afraid I do not know about this GM Call, but what would Momonga-sama like me to do? If Momonga-sama orders it, I shall immediately rectify it.”

They were having a conversation. When he noticed the truth, his body stiffened.

Impossible.

No, they were not alive. That situation could and would never happen.

The NPCs were talking. No, the AI could also do that. However, it was

impossible to have a conversation. There was no way that it could have a response for his every word.

At first he thought that they were moving based on their constructed programming. He wanted to confirm this and so started a conversation but—.

If it had come to this, then it was better not to have done anything. Now all of his thoughts were pessimistic.

Momonga felt that something was out of place. It originated from him and from the butler.

To identify the origin of the feeling, Momonga closely inspected the butler.

“—What is wrong? Have I done something to offend you?”

“.....Ah!”

Momonga had identified the origin of the feeling and became speechless.

His facial expressions were changing.

His mouth was moving, and he could hear his words—.

“.....Im.....possible!”

Momonga was panicking and placed his hand on his mouth. And then let out his voice.

—His mouth was moving.

It was common sense in a DMMORPG that such a thing was impossible. The mouth moving to talk that is.

The expression on one’s outer appearance was fixed. The only way to do it was to create a macro with specific expression tabs. By registering it, the appearance can change in accordance to the expression.

ED Note: The word MACRO(マクロ) is said here. I searched it in google and it means “a single instruction that expands automatically into a set of instructions to perform a particular task.” I don’t know if this is right. Can I hear a second opinion?

You could make 5 patterns in which they could talk and have changing expressions. But it was difficult to make the words and the mouth movements

match. Also, only the mouth could move, the face remained static and could not be changed.

Assuming that the butler had such a macro, then what about Momonga, himself? He did not have this. In addition—His movements seemed alive.

“Impossible.....”

A long time had passed since he came and he could feel his common sense shattering. And at the same time, he suppressed an urge to yell.

“What should I do.....What would be the best thing to do.....?”

It was a situation impossible to understand, even if he got angry no one could help him.

The first thing he should do was—.

“.....Information. —Sebas.”

“Yes.”

The butler—Sebas lowered his head.

Is giving orders fine? I don't know what's happening but can I assume that all the NPCs in this tomb are loyal to me? Or is it only Sebas?

Anyway, taking into account the others apart from Sebas, there was no one else he could send to go outside.

“Leave the Great Tomb, and examine the surroundings. If you encounter any intelligent beings, invite them back here. Comply to the demands of the other party if needed. The search radius is 1 kilometre. Avoid combat if possible.”

“Understood, Momonga-sama.”

Is it possible to leave the Great Tomb?

Momonga mumbled in his heart. More importantly, understanding the current situation was priority.

“Take one of the maids with you. If you get into a fight, immediately retreat with the information.”

“—It shall be done.”

That's one objective down. Now, what should I do next?

While gaining knowledge was indispensable, there were other necessary things apart from that.

Momonga let go of the Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown.

The staff did not fall down. In fact, it hovered in the air as if it was waiting for someone to pick it up. It was a spectacle that completely ignored the laws of physics, to Momonga, however, it wasn't surprising. In Yggdrasil, even low quality items had this effect.

Sometimes, anguished faces of humans appeared in the ever-changing aura, the pitiful remnants of which Momonga collected in his hands and ignored.

He was used to it.....Or not. However, even with those macros, Momonga had a wry smile on his face. He then snapped his fingers and drove those thoughts away.

Momonga collected his thoughts and pondered.

The next thing was—

“.....Contacting.”

Whatever was the case, it was important to contact the GM. The person who would know the most about what had happened would be the GM.

How should he contact them.

Originally, you could Shout or use a GM Call and immediately contact a GM. However, both were currently unusable.

Other functions. A spark of inspiration appeared in Momonga's mind.

“<Message>?”

It was a magic that allowed one to contact others.

Originally it could only be used under special situations or in specific locations, even now it probably could not be used. However, it was a magic that allowed you to contact other players, so he was not too sure if it could be used to contact the GMs.

“.....But.....”

Could magic be used in this situation as per normal. Anyway, it was important to confirm this fact. Momonga was a Magic Caster. If he could not use magic, his battle abilities were chopped down to a 1/3 of his original.

Although the current situation was unclear, it was of utmost importance to check if magic could be used.

If that was the case, then a wide area would be needed. There was one place that could suit his needs. Once there, he could investigate various things.

There was one more thing. It was to confirm something similar to his own power.

It was to confirm his own authority.

Whether or not the authority of the Guildmaster of Ainz Ooal Gown was maintained.

All the NPCs he had met up til now had loyalty towards him. However, there were 5 other existences in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick that could rival him. He had to confirm their loyalty.

Firstly was to check if the Legemeton's Golems only listened to his orders to secure a safe place.

Then he had to check the loyalty of other strong NPCs.

But if that was the case—.

Momonga looked down upon the kneeling figures of Sebas and the maids.

Was their loyalty still unshakeable? If the boss did stupid actions, his subordinates would immediately lose confidence in them. This would probably stay true here. Or maybe if he re-entered their loyalty, they would not betray him.

If their loyalty had changed, what should he do to reclaim it.

Maybe rewards? There were a lot of valuable treasures located inside the Treasury. He should still have quite a bit of Yggdrasil currency. Of course, he was not sure about their salary.

Or maybe the superiority of their ruler. However, he was not sure what

ED Note: (I prefer the Goshuujin-sama *raises right hand*)

“You.....Will stay here. I will give you your instructions later. —Now go!”

Sebas and the battlemajids rose as one and walked out.

He watched them go out and picked up the fallen staff and descended down the stairs.

And then he stood in front of the kneeling maid.

He felt the gaze of the maid in his direction.

“Stand.”

“Yes.”

The maid timidly stood up and extended her hand.

It was a thin hand. And when he took it—.

“.....Nn.”

“Hmm?”

The maid made a face as if she was in pain. Momonga panicked and instantly let go.

Exactly what just happened. It was worse than a feeling of disgust.

After thinking about all the possibilities, he arrived at the answer.

The prerequisite of being an Overlord was to be a Lich. As Liches levelled up, they gained a skill when they touched someone—They dealt the person negative energy damage.

It was probably that.

But there was an obvious problem.

In Yggdrasil, the monsters and NPCs in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick were affiliated with Ainz Ooal Gown. Whenever those within the same Guild tried to deal damage to one another—They would not receive damage from friendly fire.

Were they not affiliated with the Guild?

Or possibly, friendly fire was now possible?

—The chance of that was high.

Momonga thought so.

Then, how should he temporarily stop an ability that was always active.

Pondering—

—Momonga suddenly thought of the way to stop it.

Explaining how to do it was close to impossible. This was part of an obvious action.

He raised his hands as if grabbing a cup in front of him. He could not explain why he had to do this. His order came from his brain and was transmitted by his nervous system, he could not explain it. This method would also probably stop the negative energy damage. His order was transmitted from his brain by his nervous system. That was probably it.

An Overlord had control over several abilities. To Momonga, doing this was as simple as breathing to a human.

“Fu.”

Unknowingly, being stuck in another world, Momonga could do nothing but laugh. If this strange situation continued, he would never stop being surprised. Being used to something is truly terrifying.

“I am going to touch you.”

“Ah.”

Stretching out his hand, he touched the maids thin hand. He wanted to feel her pulse.

—It was there. It was beating. It was natural for a living creature to have it.

Of course if it was a living creature.

He let go and looked down at his own palm.

It was bone. With a little bit of skin. He could not feel his pulse. Yes, the Overlord was an Undead. An existence beyond death. There was no way he had

one.

His gaze left it and headed towards the maid. Returning it, the maid got flustered and hesitantly lowered her gaze.

“.....What is this.”

This was an NPC, was not it just data? But it seemed to be alive. What sort of AI could make this possible. It really seemed as if this world was real.

Thinking that, Momonga believed it was impossible. There was no way this fantasy could exist. However, however he thought of it, he could not simply let the idea go.

“.....Raise your skirt.”

“.....Eh?”

The atmosphere froze.

She looked as if she could not understand what he was saying. It was natural. Who would make that sort of order.

She was tormented by her shyness, and seemed to need it repeated. Momonga steeled himself and opened his mouth again.

“Raise your skirt.”

“.....Ehh!”

“What is wrong?”

“But, that’s.”

The maid seemed as if ready to cry. She was not data, she had emotions—A human.

Momonga felt that he was doing something demonic, and felt crushed by the weight of his guilt. But, this was necessary. His words even made himself feel frantic though.

“.....It is an order.”

“.....I, I understand.”

The maid trembled and raised her skirt. She looked like a frightened small

animal, Momonga felt a sadistic pleasure and felt disgusted with himself, but he stiffened it. He had no intention to act on it.

Snow white.

Those words floated about in his head. Momonga averted his gaze and began looking around at the surroundings..

There was no change. Why was there no side effects caused by this behaviour? Was he allowed to go that far?

Momonga hesitated and decided to stop.

Tears were collecting in the maid's eye.

"You can lower it now."

"—!"

The skirt was lowered vigorously.

Momonga had 2 possible reasons for the current situation.

One was that this was a new DMMORPG. Basically, after Yggdrasil had ended, Yggdrasil 2 had started immediately after.

However, after this the chance of that being true got extremely small.

Yggdrasil had a ban on 18+ actions such as touching. Even 15+ actions were restricted. A violation would result in the violator's name being exhibited on the company homepage and his/her account would be shut down.

There was a possibility that he who had just performed an 18+ action would be recorded on the log and legal action would be taken against him.

If this was the game's—Yggdrasil's world, such actions would be impossible to do and measures would be taken. Firstly, if the company had seen this, they would have stopped him. However, that did not happen.

In addition was the DMMORPG laws, without getting the consent of the user, forcing them to play the game was considered as kidnapping. If they were forcing players to play the game, then they would immediately be reported. It would not be strange for them to be taken to prison if players could not log out.

In addition, it was mandated to record a week's worth of events onto the

console causing the developers to be easily caught. If Momonga did not come to the company, some one would come looking for him, and the console would be handed over to the police.

Would they even do such a criminal act if there was evidence available?

While it was true that if this was Yggdrasil 2 or a patch it would be a grey area, there were no merits for the company in doing such a dangerous thing.

If that was the case then the current situation was—

—Not a product of the game company, he could not think of any other possibility. Even if he changed his way of thinking, he could not think of any other possibility.

The problem was that everything was unclear. But there was one other possibility left.....

.....The possibility that the game had turned into reality.

Impossible.

Momonga believed so. It was absurd, and irrational and could not possibly exist.

However, the longer he thought about it, the more it seemed that it was true.

And then—

“I am sorry.”

“.....”

Momonga lowered his head.

This was a human. What exactly happened he did not have a clue but he understood one thing. The NPCs had emotions.

You could say that she was very similar to a human. Or maybe—She was a human.

“.....No, no. Momonga-sama must have had his reasons.....*Sob*”

The tears were falling. It was natural.

If he himself received this sort of order he would probably do something similar. Momonga collapsed in his self-loathing.

But, how should he stop her tears. He could act like his old superiors and he would be able to desperately apologise. He even felt that prostrating himself would be appropriate.

But he could not do that. Until he fully understood his own position he could not show anyone weakness. When he lowered his head earlier, the maid made a slight commotion. Anything more would be bad.

“Don’t cry. You can go.”

“—Yes.”

The maid lowered her head and her footsteps slowly left the room.

While watching her figure, Momonga breathed a tired sigh.

Chapter 4: The Arena

The Ring of Ainz Ooal Gown.

It was a ring on Momonga's right ring finger, a magic item that all members of Ainz Ooal Gown owned.

The ring did not have any strong abilities. Out of all Momonga's other equipped rings, it was extremely weak. When compared to a ring that would allow you to revive at the base when the player dies instantaneously without penalty, it was lacking.

However as for why he was wearing it, under certain conditions, it was the most frequently used of the group.

It had the ability to transport the user anywhere with the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. Apart from certain areas, other convenient transport magic would be obstructed within the Great Underground Tomb.

The only place you could not access using it was the Throne Room.

In addition, you could not enter the Treasury without the ring.

After confirming that he had control over the Lemegeton Golems, he readied himself and activated an item.

The world blacked out for a moment and the scenery changed. It seemed that the item usage check was a success.

He was used to it as he saw it often enough in Yggdrasil.

The place Momonga teleported to was a gloomy passageway, just in front of him was a closed lattice door. From there, a white light shown through.

Momonga walked though the wide and tall passageway. The passageway was lined with torches, causing shadows to dance around the walls.

As he approached the lattice door, it raised itself upwards. Momonga passed through it and reflected in his vision was an area with spectator seats several stories tall but empty in the centre.

This was the Coliseum.

188 metres long, 156 metres wide and 48 metres tall, it was based on the Roman Empire.

There were countless guests sitting at their seats, but they were not moving.

The magic Continual Light was cast at various locations that lit up the surroundings with a white light. It brightened the area like it was midday.

The name of this place was the Amphitheatre. The performers were the intruders, the audience were Golems and those sitting at the VIP Box were Ainz Ooal Gown members. Naturally, the play was a slaughter. Actually, apart from the attack from the 1500 people alliance, this was the final area that the intruders had reached.

While heading towards the centre, Momonga looked up at the sky. A black night sky stared back down at him. Of course, you could change it according to the time of day, but it was a fake sky. In addition, Momonga's outer appearance was different from what he was inside, a human.

Nonetheless, he could not let the time pass without doing anything.

Next, Momonga thought about what to do and looked at his surroundings, and then at the VIP Box.

"Toa!"

In response to his gaze, a shadow said something and jumped from the VIP Box.

The shadow that jumped from a structure about the height of a 6 story building, spun around in midair as if it had wings and landed softly on the ground. That was not by the usage of magic. It was simple pure physical skill.

The shadow completely absorbed the impact of the jumped with just its legs, and showed a prideful expression.

"Pui!"

Both of her hands made a victory sign.

The person that jumped down was a young girl. She looked about 10 years

old.

Just like the sun, those words fit her cute smiling face perfectly.

Hair like golden silk that went up to her shoulders, glittered as if bathed in sunlight. Her heterochromatic gold and purple eyes shined like a puppy.

Her ears were long and pointed and she had blackish skin. She was a close relative of the Elf, a Dark Elf.

On top of her skin armour was a lightweight armour made of jet black and crimson dragon scales, on top of that was a white vest with golden embroidery. At her chest was an Ainz Ooal Gown Guild Emblem.

At her hip and right shoulder was a whip and on her back was a large bow —The handle, rim and grip were all decorated.

The young girl was the Guardian of the 6th

Floor of the Great Tomb of Nazarick. The Beast Tamer that can control Mythological and Magical Beasts—Aura Debay Fiora.

She closed the distance to Momonga with quick and small steps. Although they were small, her speed was that of a running beast.

The distance between the two closed in an instant.

She braked hard with her feet.

Her shoes were plated with Mithril and made a za za za sound as they kicked up dust. Momonga reckoned that the cloud would not reach him and he admired the scene.

“Fuu.”

Although she was not perspiring, she acted as she was and wiped her forehead. She smiled just like a puppy.

“Welcome Momonga-sama. Thank you for coming all the way to my floor.”

Her face was a smile and he could not feel any hostility. Sense Enemy also had no response.

Momonga let his gaze leave the band around his right wrist, and removed the power collecting in the staff in his hand.

If he had gotten into a fight, he planned to retreat immediately, but it seemed that it was not necessary.

“You seem healthy.”

“I am healthy. But, I have had too much free time on my hands. It has been a long time since we had any intruders.”

Momonga slightly narrowed his eyes in front of the laughing Aura.

When the 1500 people alliance came, they had invaded until the 8th

Floor. Basically all of the Floor Guardians died, what happened to their memories of that time.

While he could believe that she was not scared of death, he wondered what she thought about it.

Yggdrasil simply caused you to level down whenever you died. While it was the game’s setting to have you forfeit your levels, the current him would definitely feel a loss. But, if the player character was level 10 or below, the level down did not occur, which was different from the beta test, where you simply died.

In addition, using the magic Resurrection and Raise Dead would cause a decrease in level. Also, using expensive cash items could reduce the level down penalty.

It was even simpler for NPCs. The Guild just had to pay for their revival and their level would not be affected.

This way, the level down gave players who loved to rebuild their character a way to do so.

While it was true that if this was a game which relied heavily on experience, going down 1 level would be an extreme penalty. However, in Yggdrasil until the latter half of 90 levels it took a short time. And for that reason it was not that terrible to lose levels.

This was not fearing the level down, causing the barbaric land to not be reclaimed, if you had bravery, you could awaken the engineering side in you.

TL Note: I have no idea what this means. Any opinions?

But, if this world was real, if they died, it would be the end.

Was the Aura here different from the Aura that died in the battle, or was she revived afterwards.

He wanted to confirm it, there was no need to beat around the bush. Aura had no hostility, and he wanted to conduct an experiment. More importantly, she was a NPC creation of a member of Ainz Ooal Gown.

It would be good if he could hear all of her problems.

Also, there was a chance that death in this situation and in the past could be completely different.

This way to verify the facts was good, he could not confirm others so he left them for later. Firstly was to check the degree of how much the programme froze.

In the end, the Yggdrasil that Momonga knew, how much has it changed in the current situation. It was important to find out.

“A break because there are no intruders?”

“—Ah, No. Um, it’s.”

“No, I am not scolding you. I want you to answer me truthfully.”

“.....Yes, a bit of free time. There is no one here who can last for more than 5 minutes in a fight with me.”

While playing with her fingers, Aura looked upwards and replied. As a Guardian, Aura was naturally at level 100. There were not many in the dungeon that could rival her.

“If so then I do not mind if you fool around for a bit?”

“Uwaa. Momonga-sama, I am the Guardian of this floor. I properly guard it, I cannot fool around.”

While swelling her cheeks, she took an angry pose.

Her expressions really were changing.

“I see.....Then what about making a farm in the jungle? You could rear man-eating plant monsters there.”

“No, I do not have any pets that can do that.”

Each of the floors in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick had its own characteristics.

In the middle was the 5th

Floor, a jungle. It was a huge area that could rival the Haneda Airport. It was the largest part of the dungeon.

“In addition, I want to properly guard this place.”

“I am happy that you are properly doing your job but you can also go down you know. It cannot be helped if the guys below get more time off right?”

“Well, there’s that too.”

Aura sighed with a “haa”.

Accompanying it, a sweet smell began to permeate through the surroundings. Momonga remembered her ability and took a step back.

“Ah, sorry, Momonga-sama!”

Aura noticed it and began to wipe the air away with a pata pata sound.

Aura’s breath had the ability to change feelings and thoughts. Her breath was dispersed into the surroundings with a radius of several metres, depending on the situation it could go to tens of metres. This way, she could control her beasts and send disadvantageous effects to the enemy.

“Umm, it’s fine now. I stopped it.”

“I see.”

“.....But Momonga-sama is an undead, you should not be affected by status changes right?”

It really was like in Yggdrasil.

Undead could not be affected by any status changes, whether good or bad.

“.....Am I in your area of effect?”

“Eh.”

Aura thought he was scolding her and shrunk away in fear.

“I am not angry, am I inside?”

“.....Yes.”

“What sort of effect is it?”

“.....Fear.”

“Fumu.”

He could not feel anything like fear.

Momonga was wearing magic items for the sake of being unaffected by status changes, he removed any resistance holding equipment on his hand. Basically, he was seeing the basic resistances of the Yggdrasil system—He was checking the effects of the status changing effects.

“Could you try other effects?”

“Eh?”

It was a voice of a puppy that was being scolded. Without thinking, Momonga began caressing her head.

It felt like he was touching silk. Every time her head was rubbed, her expression was ecstatic.

“I have something to request. I want to run several tests and I need your strength.”

“Yes, I understand! Momonga-sama, please leave it to me.”

He stopped Aura who was about to roll up her sleeves.

“But before that—-”

He gripped the staff. It was the same as earlier. It was the same as when he used the ring’s power, he collected power in the staff. Momonga commanded power into the staff, he was using just one of the gems embedded in the staff. He used a small fraction of its power.

—-Summon Moonwolf.

Using a summoning magic, 3 beasts appeared from the air. They were Siberian Wolves that were releasing a dim silver light.

Summoning monsters using magic had the same effect as in Yggdrasil. This was why he did not act surprised.

This wolf was transportation speed was not complete, it was an essential member of a surprise attack, a level 20 class monster. It did not have any particularly strong abilities, but it was suitable for his current objective. On the contrary, it needed to be weak.

“A Moonwolf?”

“Yes. Add it into the effect range.”

“Eh? Is it okay?”

“I do not mind.”

He was overbearingly pushing forward with the uncomprehending Aura.

If he could not enter the area of effect, he would not be able to guarantee the accuracy of the results of this test.

This problem of this test was that Aura’s ability would not start up. To avoid that, he used a third party to at the same time receive the effect. For that purpose he used a Moonwolf.

Aura released her breath into the air, Momonga did not feel that he received any changes. Midway, he turned around and relaxed as there were no effects whatsoever. The Moonwolf which was also within the range was affected, as there was no way that Aura’s ability would not work on it.

Anyhow, it seemed that Momonga did not receive any status changes. That was basically due to—

Yggdrasil had had special rules for when heteromorphic races summoned monsters, and would gain abilities much like that of monsters. The monster abilities Momonga had as an Overlord were—

High class undead creation/ 8 per day, low class undead creation/ 12 per day, Negative Energy Touch, Desperation Aura, Cold, Acid, Electric Immunity, High Class: Damage Immunity, High Class: Magic Resistance, Wave of Death,

Impure Protection, High Class: Retreating Resistance, Physical Damage, Reduction in Strengthen Magic.

TL Note: This is what happens when you do not give names to skills in katakana. A very confusing mess.

Also, he had his class levels as well—For example, Momonga had his Master of Death instant death strengthening magic, his True Necromancer's Undead Ruler and Undead strengthening skill.

Undead had special base abilities. Immunity to critical hits, immune to status change, food and drink unnecessary, poison, sickness, sleep, paralysis, instant death immunity. Death magic strengthening, oxygen unnecessary. Ability cost damage immunity?, energy drain immunity, recovery with negative energy, nightvision. And there was more.

Of course, he had weaknesses. Frailness against Light or Holy Damage, Fire Damage Increase. Naturally, he could remove these with items.

—These were the basic abilities of being an Undead, he could also gain them from levelling up as well.

This was quite useful information.

“.....My thanks.”

“Yes, it was not much of a job though.”

“—Return.”

The figure of the 3 Moonwolves disappeared similar to how they first appeared.

“Long ago, I thought that Aura's abilities did not affect those from the same Guild.”

“Eh?”

Watching Aura's surprised face, Momonga understood that it was not the case.

“Was I wrong?”

“Yes. I can only change the area of effect at will. You have probably gotten it

confused with that.”

Friendly fire was now permitted. He could not let this become a painful experience in which he could the way Area of Effect Magic worked.

Momonga mumbled to himself and thought about it, the quiet Aura was fretting and eventually opened her mouth.

“Umm, why did Momonga-sama come to my floor for?”

“Hm? Ah, yes, no it’s different. I came today for training.”

“Training?”

Aura’s eyes almost popped out of their sockets.

What was a Magic Caster of the highest class, the leader of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick and Aura’s master saying. Momonga got that feeling.

“Yes.”

At Momonga’s reply, he lightly hit the floor with the staff, and Aura understood. Momonga felt happy that everything went according to plan.

“Understood. That staff of legends? Is it really okay for me to see it?”

“Ah, I do not mind. However, you can only sit and watch, then you can observe the power of the strongest magic.”

Aura became happy.

What sort of powers did a legendary staff have, Momonga posed the question to himself.

If there was a difference in perspective, it could become troublesome. He had to be careful to not make any problems.

“.....One more thing Aura. I have summoned all of the Guardians to assemble here in an hour.”

“Eh? Then, then I have to make preparations to—-”

“No, there is no need. Just wait here until they arrive.”

“Really? Hm? All of the Guardians?—-Then is that girl is coming too!?”

“All the Guardians.”

“.....Haa.”

Aura took a deep breath and sighed. It seemed that they did not have a good relationship. What exactly happened.

It looked like there would be many more difficulties to come. Momonga muttered under his breath.

Chapter 5: Magic

Magic casters, to say in the least, are extremely bothersome. It was a class where you had to plan extensively into the future, is what some Yggdrasil players said.

Firstly, magic in Yggdrasil had a ridiculously large number of spells that could not be changed or made by the creator tools.

There were 3000 of them.

Of course it was impossible to use all of them. They were separated into 4 types.

Those that call upon god's miracles are the <Clerics> and <Priests>. Placing heavy emphasis on their faith stat, magician—<Wizard> and secret arts user—<Arcaner>.— Prioritizing on their magic power stat—the Talismancer and the Miko. They placed heavy emphasis on their mental strength stat*. Lastly were those that placed heavy emphasis on other stats.

*TL Note: If you have any ideas for what I should replace this with, please write in the comments below.

ED Note: Instead of emotional strength, how 'bout mental strength? And the (秘術) means secret arts? I'm not sure.

For each class, different spell lists were available.

A wizard could use Tier 1 spells of a certain type, and could go up to Tier 2. However, Arcaners could use Tier 1 of this type but could not go up to Tier 2.

G.S: Are Tiers and Ranks different? They use Tier in the LN.

TL: They are the same, I just wrote them differently, so I can change them later.

G.S: Noted~

This way, when the players level up along with their chosen class, they can choose 3 new spells from the class' spell list. Hence, level 100 players could use

300 different spells.

However this has been counted as a separate system and the stacking of classes are different from the level of magic one can use. And for that reason level 100 characters who had bad faith series classes and could use only up to the 4

th

Tier of magic when they could have gotten up to the 6th Tier.

Simply put, having a level 60 wizard and a level 40 cleric would not let you use the highest 10th Tier magic of the faith series.

And the most number of spells the highest level—level 100s could learn was 300.

Whether this was few or many, magic casters could only accept it. But it was extremely few. At least, when compared to the total number of spells that could be learnt.

Firstly, in order to learn magic, you must first fulfill the prerequisites. Selected classes, special events, using certain items, *etc.* And then—Being able to use the selected magic type.

Similarly to how one learns a language, you need to learn the prerequisite magic.

And for that purpose, there were players who devoted 1/3 of their total magic to the prerequisites, and there were players who tended to give up learning as they could not clear the prerequisites.

In addition, and for those who were becoming specialists, there was a problem about what to choose. It was extremely common that the magic that they wanted to learn was not within their field. It was not rare to die and recreate one's classes. Also there was the tricky problem of handling the stats.

For example, the magic <Fireball>. Its attribute was considered magic. So, if your magic power was high, you could perhaps deal more damage with it or maybe your range would increase when compared to other high levelled

players.

Let us assume that a player who specialises in the faith series cast <Fireball>. Their spell would not be as strong as other classes which focused on magic power.

Then what would happen when such a class cast <Fireball>?

The damage and distance would be inferior to those that focused on magic power.

This was the decision tormenting the minds of Yggdrasil players.

If the magic casters were just planning to fulfill a certain objective, then 300 was a sufficiently large number.

There were magic casters who wanted to just fight monsters—Many ordinary DMMORPG players chose to specialise in using buffs and attacking.

Solely dealing damage to the enemy was the way to go. Magic casters were also looking for a way to handle multiple scenarios. If you were hoping to simply destroy strong monsters with overwhelming strength, then you could not do that.

However due to the overwhelmingly large number of spells that you can learn when compared to normal DMMORPGs, unlike regular DMMORPGs that only have magic for battle, there is magic that can be used for a variety of situations.

For example, metal detection magic from the lower to the higher tiers existed, it could also refine and purify it. Magic that let you peer into the ground, and magic that let you turn dirt into low ranked metals.

There was countless transportation magic. Long range transportation with a chance of missing, long range transportation with no chance of missing, transportation which caused a flashy effect for no meaning whatsoever, transportation that swapped the position of two objects, transportation that gathered all the party members. Transportation that brought you to the closest town, short-ranged transportation that could be cast for an unlimited number of times within a certain time period. There were many others.

Another would be sensory magic, sensing of nearby enemies, detection of enemies who had erased their presence, sensing of the enemies magic casts, knowledge of special items, sensing of opposing magic, there was countless magic that gave you sensory abilities.

By using one's head to cast the attack magic, there were countless magic that made it easy to change the flow of a battle.

For that purpose, learning 300 individual magic, if you thought about dangerous situations, you could not feel that it was a lot. In fact, you would feel that it was too few.

In addition, in order to make the choice of choosing your magic rare, when you levelled up and chose your magic, even though you chose it, you could not cast it that often. Also, there was a large amount of data on the Yggdrasil wiki that was also easy to understand.

Momonga, thanks to his cash items, had learned 100 more spells. In addition, due to his repeated PKs<Player Killer>, and participating in special events, another 318 more. In total, he had learnt 718 spells.

Instead of simple destruction spells, he had a specialisation in binding magic and death magic. In addition, he chose a class that matched them, boosting the abilities.

And for that reason, he would lose to a battle-focused magic caster in terms of damage, and the destruction level was also a problem. Conversely, investigation and searching magic were very important but there were few of those so it could not be compared.

Momonga slowly pointed his finger towards the scarecrow that was set-up in the middle of the arena.

Momonga's many death magic spells did not have much of an effect on non-living organisms. A simple explosion spell would be best here.

He sent a sidelong glance towards Aura.

Her eyes were sparkling with curiosity.

On her two sides were huge monsters.

Their giant bodies over 3 metres tall reminded one of an inverted triangle.

A skeletal structure that appeared to be the mix of human and dragon, with thick and sinewy meat covered it. Covering that was a set of scales that were harder than steel. In addition, a dragon's face and a tail that made you think of a tree. While it had no wings, it looked similar to a dragon standing upright.

Dragonkin—They were monsters with the title [Close relatives of Dragons].

With arms thicker than a man's torso, and a length that was half of its body —It was holding a weapon that could have been a sword or a shield.

Sacrificing her own battle power, she gained the highest position as a Beast Tamer. With her servants, her battle abilities would go up to 2.25 of their original. She had 100 of them.

And the 2 at her side were cleaners of this amphitheatre.

“Fuu”

Momonga breathed softly.

If she was that excited about it, it would be difficult.

The current goal was to confirm if he could successfully use magic.

The reason why he let Aura attend this experiment was so that before the other Guardians came, he would let her know that having him as an enemy would be a bad idea. Currently, he did not see any intention of betrayal, if Momonga lost his magic, he was not sure if he could keep their loyalty, he could just not believe it.

While it seemed that Aura had no such intentions, this was the first time he met an equal. While it was true that her character was created by collecting ideas from everyone in the guild. However, having this intelligent existence, she must have other sides to her apart from what was imputed. Would this side to her would cause her to tire of a weak ruler. If it would not then everything was fine. But if she would try to stand on top of a ruler that showed weakness...

There was no need to think any further, but it would be a foolish decision to simply trust her.

Look before you leap. Under this situation, this was Momonga's natural

thought process.

TL Note: This translates into “Hitting the Stone Bridge before crossing it”.

Could he actually cast magic, it was important that he alone affirmed the results of that experiment. If he could not cast magic, he had to act casual and ask someone. If he really could not use magic, there was a chance that he simply could not understand how to use it.

Aura did not know a lot of magic but she could use magic of the highest tier. If there was a problem, maybe he could ask her.

Temporarily, it was fine even if he could not cast magic.

As for why, it was because he came to check the power of the staff. Since he came to check the magic item, he had several excuses that he could use.

Momonga memorised 718 magic spells.

Which would be the most suitable one here.

Firstly, area of effect magic could not be used due to friendly fire. If that was the case—-.

It would be great if it was the same as in Yggdrasil where you clicked icons. But currently there was none, something else had to be done instead. He had a grasp of it.

The ability was embedded in himself.

It was the same as isolating your senses and focusing your consciousness. It was like the icon was floating in the air—-.

Momonga laughed.

<—Fireball>

A ball of fire swelled up from Momonga’s finger and was released.

It hit the scarecrow without a single error. The ball formed by the flamed burst apart upon impact, releasing the heat that was trapped inside.

The resulting flames licked the surrounding areas of the tomb.

All of that in a single moment.

Nothing was left. Only the charcoaled remains of a human scarecrow.

“Fufufufu.”

“?”

Aura sent a strange glance at Momonga who was suppressing a laugh.

“—-Aura. Another scarecrow.”

“Ah, yes, right away! Wait, wait.”

The Dragonkin replaced it with another scarecrow. At the same time, he cast his magic.

<Explode>

Its top half burst apart and danced in the surroundings. The head that was blown off landed directly on the body of the Dragonkin right next to it.

The Dragonkin made a faint cry and sent a sharp gaze to Momonga.

Now that he could cast magic, there was no worries of strong opponents. He was confident that he could one-hit a Dragonkin. Anyway, there was a need to apologise to its owner. Thinking that, Momonga turned to face Aura.

“.....Sorry. I should have held back.”

“—-Eh? I do not mind if you destroy the scarecrow.”

Without being affected in the slightest seeing magic cast right next to the Dragonkin, Aura did not show any signs of surprise or worry. She waved her hands and became flustered when Momonga apologised.

The goal of the magic was to test if it affected another target. Was that what she believed? It was like she did not care if the Dragonkin lived or died.

Anyway, he had confirmed whether he could cast magic. Thus, he could conclude that he had the game abilities he had in Yggdrasil.

Now he should use a magic to try and contact the GM but he should not get his hopes up.

Momonga activated another magic.

<Message>

The first one he should contact was the GM.

He heard a sound similar to when he had calls on his phone when he was in Yggdrasil, if he was not in a certain locations, the sound would not be made and the call would be immediately cut.

This time how should he say it. Putting it in words would be extremely difficult, it was like extending a string of sorts and he felt like he was searching for something. However, that feeling continued and the effect of the magic ended.

It was expected yet disappointing. Both emotions swam strongly through his head.

Momonga recast the same magic. His target was not the GM. It was other members of Ainz Ooal Gown.

However, you could say that so it was like that, or perhaps you could say it was natural. No one answered.

Momonga breathed softly and stifled his feelings and moved on to the next item.

It would not be bad to try to contact Sebas, but anyway for now—.

Power collected in the staff and was released.

<Summon Primal Fire Elemental>

He stabbed the staff forward and formed a large ball of light, in the middle of which held an extraordinary whirlpool of fire. It increased in speed and size with a diameter of 10 metres and a height of 15 metres.

There was a large blast of purgatory flame and blistering hot winds swirled through the surroundings. The two bodies of the Dragonkin held Aura, guarding her from the hot winds. Momonga's robes fluttered with the heat waves. It would not be weird for heat on this level to cause burns but Momonga had absolute flame resistance and thus it had no effect on him.

The tornado of flame ate up the atmosphere and grew larger, and released a shine like that of molten iron, and took up a humanoid shape.

Primal Fire Elemental—An elemental spirit of the highest class. It was a

level 80 monster.

“Uwaa.....”

Aura’s voice was filled with admiration and looked up at it.

In front of the highest class of spirit that he had never summoned before, Momonga had the face of a child that had received a toy that it had always wanted.

“.....Do you want to try fighting it?”

“Eh?”

Aura was bewildered for a moment, and then put on an innocent smile. Maybe it was a bit too much to call her a chi—No, she was quite warped.

“Is it okay?”

“I do not mind, even if you defeat it it will not be a problem.”

Momonga shrugged his shoulders. The staff was an existence that allowed him to summon this monster once again tomorrow.

“More importantly will it be fine? You are bad with those who use pure power right?”

“Mm. It will be okay. I can make myself immune to fire, I should be able to do something.”

Half listening, Aura began her preparations. She was probably coming up with a strategy in her head.

“.....If it is impossible, do not push yourself.”

“Yes!”

A spirited reply. Aura had decided to fight and signaled the two Dragonkin at her side to move away. She was probably going to fight alone.

“Primal Fire Elemental—-” The wavering mass of fire began to move. “Defeat Aura. If you do, stop there. Return.”

The giant of fire made a mass of fire in the shape of a fist and quickly closed the distance between itself and Aura. Aura held her whip with both hands and

readied herself for the fight.

While giving Aura a sidelong glance, Momonga had a thought fluttering around in his mind.

It was what should I do now.

The problem was that he had used a bit too much magic. He still had some left but since he was not sure what would happen from her on out, he needed to recover some. If he could, he would like to go to a place where it could recover but.....

Magic had tiers, they were from 1 to 10. And then there was <Over> magic which surpassed that.

The consumption of MP became extremely important at this tier and was consumed from this tier alone.

Assume that a magic caster has 100 MP. He could use tier 1 magic 100 times. However, he could only use tier 10 magic not more than 10 times.

Overlords were another exception.

Also, there was strengthening magic—For example, chantless magic, magic strengthening, magic conversion—If you used these, the MP cost would increase.

The time it took to completely recover your MP was 6 hours. Basically, if you only used the highest tier, you would soon run out of gas.

Incidentally, the base MP was the level times 10. And then there were stat bonuses, special achievements, equipment modification and class modifications. Momonga currently had 1980 points. This was mostly due to the Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown and the fact that he was a top class magic caster in Yggdrasil. Since most level 100 players have 1300 points, it is simple to understand the magnitude of the capacity.

In regards to recovering MP, there were no such convenient things as MP recovery potions. The only way to recover it was the passing of time.

Then how do most solo magic casters save their MP?

There were scrolls, staffs and wands.

These all had magic inside of them, scrolls could only be used once, staffs and wands were predetermined—They were items that allowed magic to be cast until the charges were finished.

However, the strength and duration of magic was unchangeable.

Let us say that a Level 10 magic caster used a protection spell which had a duration of 10 minutes, and that a scroll of the same magic was used, the duration—The effects of such spells would be about half the duration. In this situation, 5 minutes.

Similar to how the duration was shortened, the effect also weakened.

It could not go past half but the damage was $\frac{3}{4}$ of the original.

There were other items that had limited daily charges but did not consume MP.

The Primal Fire Elemental that Momonga summoned was a result of such an item, and another example would be the band on his wrist that could cast a certain magic a certain number of times a day. However, these items were expensive and could not be used at a moment's notice.

And compared to wands and staffs, scrolls were cheaper and were used more commonly.

In the end, money is spent purchasing items.

Due to that, most magic casters try to use only their MP. Staffs, wands and scrolls were preserved.

As a result, and as time still passes when you are logged out, solo magic casters logout when they run out of MP and return the next day to play.

However, there was no time. Momonga sent his gaze towards the band on his left wrist. There were 20 minutes left until the other Guardians got here. He had until then to investigate. He had no time to replenish his MP.

—He had to investigate it later.

The tests for magic and item activation were over. The remainder was his personal items.

Momonga owned quite a few scrolls, wands and staffs. He was the type of person that hoarded everything. Even when he was facing the final boss in a video game, he did not use them. It was more miserly than carefulness.

Just like that, Momonga hoarded his items. In Yggdrasil they were in an Item Box, but now where were they?

Momonga extended his hand into the air. It was nothing but bone.

He recalled what happened when he opened the Item Box—.

It was like extending his hand into the surface of a lake. The middle of Momonga's hand was swallowed up and disappeared.

It was like opening a window and Momonga moved his hand in a large sliding motion.

Countless staffs were lined up neatly. It seemed that this was Yggdrasil's Item Box.

Moving his hand, he scrolled through the Item Screen-like thing. Staffs, wands, scrolls, weapons, ornaments, gems, potions.....There were innumerable magic items located inside.

Momonga smiled.

He felt safe.

Now even if the whole of the Great Underground Tomb became his enemy, he would be able to confirm his own safety.

While watching the fighting Aura, Momonga recalled all the information he had compiled up til now.

Firstly, were the NPCs he had met up til now programmes?

No, they were the same as sentient humans. There was no way that such minute details could be included in the programming. They should be treated the same as humans and not as simple programmes.

Next was what was this world?

Unclear. It was reasonable to believe that the existence of magic was similar to that of the game, but he could not believe that it was the same as the game.

If that was the case, then a world with magic.....It would be reasonable to think of it as another world right?

Just how should he prepare himself?

He had confirmed that he could use his Yggdrasil abilities. Therefore, if you thought about the base data, there were no strong enemies that could become a threat to the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. The problem was were there any threats which was outside of Yggdrasil. In any case, if there were stronger people out there—the gravity of that situation—He had no other options.

What should the plan be from now on?

Data collection. Aspects of this world was still unclear and to put it simply, they were ignorant pilgrims. Carelessness could not be afforded, data collection was of the utmost importance. He had some hopes for the information that Sebas would bring back.

If this was another world, should he try to return to his original?

He was not sure. If he had any lingering regrets, he would say a third.

If he had friends, he should do his best to go back.

If his parents were alive, he would look for a way until he died or went insane.

But there was no such thing.

Going to the company, doing work, returning home to sleep. Until now he had returned home and entered Yggdrasil, making preparations should his friends return, but now even that was gone. Even now, he had not gone for a single day without thoughts about the company.

Was it worth it to go back to go back to that world?

But, if he was going back, he would do his best for it. There were not many choices he could make. If the outside world was like hell, the possibility was high.

“What should I do now.....”

Momonga's self-directed words went into the surroundings and disappeared.

Chapter 6: The Gathering

“Everyone should be arriving soon.”

While wiping the sweat off her face with the towel, Aura says.

The fight with the Primal Fire Elemental ended in Aura’s victory. The Primal Fire Elemental had incredible destructive power and stamina. It damaged the surroundings with flames just by existing. However, to Aura, who was demonstrating spectacular evasion abilities, it would seem that it was just a giant target.

If Aura were to take even a single hit, she would lose a considerable amount of stamina. So that such a thing wouldn’t happen, she had to cast several defense magic in response. To the magic caster Momonga, it was a spectacular fight.

“—That’s right.”

Momonga let his gaze drop onto the watch wrapped around his right arm. The scheduled time had yet to arrive and there probably will not be any Guardians that would come late. It would not be strange if a lot of time had passed.

“Puu”

Breathing heavily, Aura began wiping the sweat accumulating on her throat. The ones that she missed formed into balls and rolled down her dark skin.

Momonga silently opened his Item Box.

From there, the first item he took out was a magic item, Pitcher of Endless Water.

The pitcher was made of a crystal clear glass and it was soon filled to the brim with refreshing water. Because of the coldness of the water, numerous water droplets condensed on the surface of the pitcher.

He then took out one glass.

Into the glass, that was no way inferior in quality, Momonga poured in some refreshing water.

“Aura. Have a drink.”

“Eh? That would be being rude to Momonga-sama.....”

While Aura was waving her hands in rejection, Momonga gave her a wry smile.

“Don’t worry about it. You have always worked hard. I am simply thanking you for it.”

“Fuwaa”

To the awkwardly blushing red-faced Aura, Momonga presented the glass.

“Thank you very much, Momonga-sama.”

This time, Aura did not reject and hanged the towel on her shoulder. With her two hands, she accepted the glass and emptied it in one breath.

“Puhaaa”

“Need another glass?”

“Yes please!”

The glass, which had been emptied in one moment, had water poured in from the pitcher. The water in the pitcher never depleted and poured out the same quantity of water as earlier.

Aura had calmed down, and this time drank slowly.

While watching this, Momonga placed his hand on his own throat. It felt like there was still some skin.

After obtaining this body, he could not remember ever feeling thirsty. It was the the same with sleeping. He could understand that as an undead it made sense that he would feel as such.

Momonga’s now empty hands began to touch his own body.

Compared to when he was a human, the feeling was a bit dull. When he touched something, it felt that there was a thin cloth in between. On the other

hand, his senses greatly improved and his vision and listening skills were extremely good.

A body made of bones would seem to easily break however, his were all harder than steel.

Even though he expected it to be different after coming here, he felt satisfied and fulfilled with his body. This was probably why he was not scared.

“Fuuu”

“Need another?”

“Umm. I’m not thirsty anymore.”

In response to the smiling Aura, Momonga took back the glass and together with the pitcher and placed it back into the item box.

“I thought Momonga-sama would be scarier.”

“Really? If that is the case then I wouldn’t mind but.....”

“Eh? The current you is much better! Definitely much better!”

“Then I’ll stay like this.”

Seeing Aura’s vigorous answers, Momonga was bewildered but still managed to answer.

Momonga had no choice but to put on a performance. The current him was the Guildmaster of the highest ranking guild, Ainz Ooal Gown and he had to play his part. He must not show any form of embarrassment whatsoever.

“Would, would I be the only one you’re this kind to?”

Momonga did not say anything to the mumbling Aura but instead placed his hand on her head and started caressing it.

“Ehehehe”

Aura was surrounded by an atmosphere similar to that of a dog in front of its favourite toy. At that moment.....

“Oh, would I have been the first to arrive?”

With a voice as sweet as candy—A shadow appeared.

From that shadow, a woman appeared.

Her entire body was clad in a soft jet black ball gown.

The skirt bulged largely outwards, and felt like it had a considerable volume. It was also very long that it completely hid her legs. Frills and ribbons were attached to her Bolero Cardigan which she wore. Her breasts and shoulders were not exposed. In addition, she had on a pair of fingerless gloves, causing most of her body to be hidden.

One of the parts that was not hidden was her face. It was extraordinarily beautiful and would make even a first class work of art feel embarrassed. Her white skin—You could not call it healthy but it was as white as wax. Her long silver hair was held in a ponytail and flowed down her back.

She looked about 14 years of age, possibly younger and could not completely hide her childishness. A combination born between cuteness and beauty, a beautiful gem.

Her chest did not fit her age and bulged upwards.

“.....We were told specifically not to use Gate.”

A disgusted voice from Momonga’s side was heard. No trace of Aura’s previous puppy-like atmosphere could be seen and her voice was as cold as ice with open hostility.

The girl, who had used the highest ranking teleportation magic, ignored the killing-intent released by Aura. She shuffled towards Ainz and stood in front of him.

The perfume she applied had a wonderful smell.

“.....Stinks.”

Aura murmured silently. She was an undead but was not rotting.

Although the girl could probably hear Aura’s voice, nothing changed. Her eyes, like deep crimson rubies, were drowned in bliss.

“Aa, my lord. The only precious one I cannot control.”

Reaching out for Momonga’s neck with her hands, she hugged him.

Her red lips parted and her wet tongue was visible. The tongue that circled her lips seemed like a separate entity entirely. A fragrant smell escaped from her mouth.

While this would suit a bewitching beauty, she was too young to have such a charm, most people would smile at this. She was too short. Rather than looking like she was hugging him, it looked more like she was hanging from his neck.

Not being used to women, this was completely overwhelming to Momonga. He wanted to take a step back but decided to just stand there.

She was actually like this? That thought did not disappear from his mind.

Shalltear Bloodfallen.

The Guardian of the 1st to 3rd

Floors of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, the True Vampire leader of the undead.

“It’s been long enough.....”

With a heavily low voice directed towards her, Shalltear finally responded and gave Aura a mocking smile.

“Oh, Chibi-suke, you were here? I failed to notice as you had failed to enter my view.”

Aura’s face stiffened—

“Shut up Fake Boobs.”

—and dropped the bombshell.

“.....Why do you know!”

Aa, her persona crumbled.

“You can tell from a glance. It’s bulging out weirdly. How many did you use?”

“Uwaa! Uwaa!”

As if trying to erase the said words, Shalltear waved her hands around in refusal. She had on an expression matching her age.

“You don’t have any. At least I have.....quite a bit there!”

At that moment, Aura grinned broadly, causing Shalltear to take a step back. Aura casually lifted up her hand to her chest.

“I’m only 76 years old. I still have lots of time. On the other hand, being an undead with no future must be tough right? They don’t grow.”

Shalltear groaned and stepped back. Speechless. That was the sort of expression she made. Confirming it, Aura raised a crack-like smile.

“I’m quite satisfied with what I have—- Puu”

“You Bitch! I’ll make you eat those words!”

Momonga heard a “snap” sound.

A black mist spilled out from Shalltear’s gloved hands.

Aura readied her whip that she had used earlier.

Momonga returned from his shocked state and took a deep breath in preparation to stop them.....

“How noisy.”

It was a voice that was impossible for a human to have. The warped and rigid voice immediately stopped their fight.

From where the voice came from, who knows from when it was there, a strange being stood there and while releasing cold air into the surroundings.

It made you think of a 2.5 meter tall insect walking on two feet. If there was a demon that was a crossbreed between a preying mantis and an ant, it would be like this. Its tail, that was more than twice his height, had numerous spikes that were sticking out. It also had a jaw that looked as if it was capable of snapping a human’s arm with ease.

Two of its arms were holding a silver halberd, the remaining ones were holding a black aura releasing mace and broadsword.

The sparkling silver and hard bone armour released a cold air into the surroundings. Countless particles fell out, glittering like diamond dust.

The Guardian of the 5th

Floor of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, the Ruler of Glaciers — Cocytus.

He hit the floor with the halberd's blade, causing the surroundings to slowly freeze.

"You are playing too much in front of our lord....."

".....This little girl was rude to me."

"Actually—"

Once again, Shalltear and Aura gave each other fearsome glares.

"Shalltear, Aura. Do not disappoint me."

Surprisingly, their bodies jerked upwards, and simultaneously bowed their heads down.

""I apologise for my actions!""

"Aa."

Momonga calmly nodded his head in agreement and faced the demon that just appeared.

"You came, Cocytus."

"I shall come immediately when summoned, milord."

A white breath escaped from his mouth. In response to that, the moisture in the surrounding air froze with a "paki paki" sound. It was a cold that rivalled with—no, beat the flames from the Primal Fire Elemental. Just by being nearby, your body temperature would drop to the point where you would be injured.

However, Momonga could not feel anything. In fact, everyone here had resistances or countermeasures for the flames, cold and acid.

"Since there have been no invaders recently, you must have had quite a lot of free time right?"

"That is true—"

His jaws rattled together. He was probably laughing, right?

“Actually, I do have things I must do, and so, I cannot relax.”

“Oh. What do you do normally?”

“I spend my days training. It comes in handy anytime, anywhere.”

While it is difficult to tell from his appearance, Cocytus is a born and bred warrior. From his personality down to his concept design.

If everyone in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick were rated from their weapon skills, he would be the first.

“Oh—- For my sake? Good work.”

“You honour me.—-Oh, Demiurge has arrived.”

Following Cocytus’ gaze, there was a shadow walking in from the entrance of the Coliseum.

When it had reached a certain distance, the shadow elegantly bowed and opened its mouth.

“I apologise for making everyone wait.”

Standing 2 meters tall, and with a lustrous red skin. Cut to perfection, his jet black hair flowed downwards with a radiance.

Red eyes sparkling with intelligence and countless wicked plots whizzed around in his head.

From his temples grew horns that would remind one of a goat, and his back sprouted a set of giant jet black wings, one would be able to tell that he was not human.

In his sharp clawed hands was a sceptre, and his body was clad in a majestic crimson robe, full of a king’s dignity.

A demon releasing flickering dark flames, Demiurge.

The Guardian of the 7th

Floor of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, and created as the Commander of the NPC Defences.

“And with this, everyone has gathered.”

“Momonga-sama, Gargantua has still not arrived yet.”

A voice with a depth that could slip into people’s hearts and draw them in could be heard.

Infused into Demiurge’s words was an ever present spell. It’s name was Domination Mantra. It could turn those with weak hearts into his personal puppets.

However, none of the people present had been affected by this. To be affected, they must be Level 40 or below. It was natural that it had no effect on the high level Guardians.

To them, at best it was a comfortable voice.

“You know about Gargantua?”

“Of course. The Guardian of the 4th

Floor—-Strategic Siege Golem, Gargantua. Everyone present here knows this.”

Gargantua was a golem created by one of Yggdrasil’s rules. It was not created from scratch by Ainz Ooal Gown.

It could be used during sieges. However it could never be used to protect the base. It was just that its text tag was configured to say that it was the Guardian of the 4

th

Floor. There was a problem with storage and so it was just kept submerged at the bottom of the underground lake of the 4

th floor.

“It is not a Guardian. It simply a golem given the responsibilities of a Guardian.”

“So it was like that. I apologise for my ignorance.”

“.....My friend has not arrived yet.”

Apart from Cocytus, everyone else froze.

“.....About, about that, he is always protecting my floor and we shouldn’t bother him.”

“That’s, that’s right.”

Shalltear flashed a stiff smile while Aura quickly agreed with her.

“.....Kouhukou you say. He is not a Guardian but..... It would be better for him to know. I will leave it to Cocytus to contact him.”

“Understood, milord”

“Now, my lord. All the Guardians have gathered. Please order us to your heart’s content.”

At Demiurge’s words, everyone knelt down as one.

“So..... Firstly, thank you all for coming.”

“We would offer anything up to Momonga-sama. This much is only natural.”

Demiurge acted as a representative and replied for them all. There appeared to be no sign that the other Guardians wanted to say anything. Demiurge was the Guardians’ unanimous representative.

“I am happy with your loyalty. As much as I would like to talk about how happy I am, I gathered the Guardians for a different reason. I do not completely understand it myself and there are several things I do not understand, but I would still like you to listen.”

Momonga breathed in and looked from the band on his right arm to the Guardians.

“Right now, the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick has become embroiled in a strange situation.”

“.....And this strange situation is.”

“Honestly I have no idea as well. However, I have felt an unusual event occur. So, I have gathered you all here. Have you noticed anything?”

Taking a quick glance at everyone’s faces, Demiurge replied as a representative.

“No, I apologise but we have noticed nothing.”

“Is that so.....”

“What sort of feeling did you receive?”

“Explaining it would be quite difficult.....”

Momonga closed his mouth and stopped talking. Although he noticed that the Guardians were waiting for him, he needed to describe it with suitable words.

“.....A shaking, probably.”

“A shaking you say?”

Once again the Guardians stole glances at each other, then Demiurge opened his mouth.

“It appears that we have not noticed anything. Was this caused by magic?”

“Everything is unclear. Have there been any strange occurrences on any of the floors?”

“There have been no strange occurrences on the 7th Floor.”

“The 6th Floor too.”

“The 5th Floor as well.”

“The 1st to the 3rd Floors have had no strange occurrences.”

“Momonga-sama, I believe it best to begin investigating the 4th Floor.”

“I leave it to you.”

“Then I will handle the outside.”

“.....Wait. I thought that he would come back in time but..... Sebas is currently in the middle of investigating the outside.

The atmosphere shook.

One that was strongest in a barehanded fight, an existence that even Cocytus could not match. It was puzzling that such a man was sent out on such a simple reconnaissance mission. Another thing was that since a man of Sebas' abilities was sent out, it showed just how much caution Momonga was giving

this new world and how dangerous he thought it was. There were countless other people Momonga could have chosen from as well.

However, from Momonga's point of view, he could not choose anyone else but Sebas.

Firstly the world that they were in had undergone a large change, Momonga saw his loyalty.

Next, with this situation where they have no information, those with the best combat capabilities—sending those that can come back alive is only natural.

In addition, Sebas' appearance was that of a human and he had no desire to get into an unnecessary fight. Demiurge and Cocytus had a low chance of this. While Momonga could apply illusion magic on them, if it was discovered, the fact that they were lying would damage relationships. And more importantly, it was not clear if such a magic would even work.

It was because of the above that Momonga believed Sebas was suitable.

"I think that it is about time that he returned but....."

As if his words had raised a flag, Momonga sent his gaze towards the entrance of the Coliseum where Sebas had just appeared.

While a specific time was not arranged, he came back when he was needed. As expected of a first-class butler.

"I apologise for my tardiness."

"No problem, I do not mind. More importantly, tell us more about the surroundings.

"__"

Sebas sent a quick glance towards the kneeling Guardians. Momonga calmly consented.

".....Extreme circumstances. Naturally, the Guardians of every floor should hear this report.

"Understood. Firstly, the surroundings within a 1 kilometer radius are

grasslands.”

The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick was located in a poisonous swamp. Why would it now be in grasslands? Several of the Guardian had faces that seemed to ask if that was so. However, no one asked such a pointless question. This was because they believed that Sebas would never lie to his master.

“I saw several groups of small animals. However, I did not discover any humanoid creatures.”

“About that, were the small animals monsters?”

“No, it was a being similar to that of a Prairie Dog, a living organism with no fighting strength.”

“Would it be wrong to describe it as farmland?”

“Farmland you say.....It is mostly flat plains. There is nothing special about it.”

“Is that so..... Thank you for your hard work.”

While it was unclear where we were transferred to, it was best to raise the vigilance to the maximum. If we transferred to a person’s land without notice, they would probably be angry. If they were normal, that is.

However, in such a situation, we must not fight. We do not know their strength and they do not know ours. It will be troublesome for such a thing to happen.

“Shalltear.”

“Yes”

“Guard every floor with strict vigilance. However, do not kill any intruders and instead capture them. If you can, do not injure them at all. If the intruders come, inform the respective Floor Guardian. Also, try to not let the Guardians receive any damage.”

“Understood.”

“Demiurge.”

“Yes”

“Send out several scouts to make a detailed report. The goal is to collect information not to fight so choose those that are able to keep their heads. You are forbidden from personally going out.”

“[The reason why we are not moving is because we should not antagonize possible negotiation partners], can I think of it as such? Basically collecting information via interrogation is forbidden.”

“That is so. We are definitely the strongest. However, if this area has things that are a hundred times stronger than us, what can we do? This situation may be impossible, but should we still press forward based on our common sense?”

“No, it is just as Momonga-sama had explained. It is important to maintain caution. We will use scouts that we can trust.”

“Aura.”

“Yes!”

“Make a house where humans can stay on the 6th Floor.”

“.....Umm, why is this so?”

“We can put prisoners there.”

“It is just as Cocytus has said. I do not want to enter the 9th

Floor, and the other floors have other problems. The 6th Floor is the most suitable.”

“That is true.”

Remembering the other floors, Aura nodded in agreement.

“It’s like a internment camp for prisoners. We will be able to monitor them from there.

“Understood.”

“Afterwards, treat the guests well. Also, do not make it look like a shack.

“Yes. Build a house that is evidently sturdy from a glance. How many people

should it be able to hold?”

“Ah, yes.....about 10 people will do. Cocytus.”

“Yes.”

“Take your most elite servants that can be trusted and send them to the 9th

Floor to guard it. Make any necessary arrangements with Sebas.”

“Yes! Leave it to me!”

“Sebas. Send the maids to the 10th

Floor to defend it. Pay close attention to the defense of each floor together. Work together with Cocytus’ servants.”

“Yes, understood.”

“To the Guardians and your servants, you are permitted to enter the 10th

Floor. If anything happens, immediately report to me.”

“Lastly, I was thinking that I should change my name.”

The air fluctuated.

Momonga was the name of Ainz Ooal Gown’s Guildmaster. It was a guild that placed heavy emphasis of majority rule, commanding everything based on only his opinion was definitely unacceptable.

If that was the case then he would throw it away.

“I will inform you of my new name later. Now, let everyone’s respective operations begin—-”

Hearing Momonga’s orders, the Guardians began moving as one. Their movement was full of power and dignity, almost as if you are unable to touch them.

In front of such a spectacle, Momonga trembled with emotion.

Because they obeyed his orders? Wrong.

Because he was strong? Wrong.

Because he was beautiful? Wrong.

It was because the NPCs made by his comrades from Ainz Ooal Gown were this amazing. That golden brilliance was still here. The crystallisation of everyone's opinions and feelings was right in front of him. Momonga was truly happy for that.

Chapter 7: Flames of War | Part 1

Carne Village

Founded 100 years ago by Thomas Carne, it was a village part of the Kingdom.

The mountain range that runs through the border between the Empire and the Kingdom—The Azerlisia Mountain Range. At its southern base was a large forest—The Great Forest of Tob. It was a small village just apart from it.

The population was about 120. A village with 25 families was not that rare in the Re-Estize Kingdom.

The distance between it and the fortress city, E-Rantel was about 50 kilometers. It was a distance that would take 2 days on foot.

Harvesting the blessings of the forest and agricultural produce were their main sources of income.

Excluding the merchant that comes thrice a year to buy the herbs the villagers harvested from the forest, the tax collector only comes once a year. People mostly do not come, and the words stopped in time would suit the village perfectly, and such a thing was common in the villages of the Kingdom.

Enri Emmot had lived in that village for about 16 years.

The mornings were early. She woke up at roughly the same time that the sun rose. Unlike large cities where there was magic lighting, such a scene was commonplace in this village.

The first thing she did was to draw water from the well near her house. Water drawing was a woman's job. When she filled up the large pot in her house with water, the first job would be over. Her mother would be finished preparing breakfast around that time, so the 4 of them would have breakfast.

Breakfast would be an oatmeal of barley or wheat. There would also be cooked vegetables. Occasionally there would be dried fruits as well.

Then her father and mother would leave for the fields. Her 12 year old sister would head to the forest to get firewood and then help out in the fields. In the centre of the village—The bell in the plaza would ring at about noon. Then they would stop their work and break for lunch.

Lunch was black bread that was baked several days prior. There was also a soup that had scraps of dried meat added inside.

Afterwards was more fieldwork. When the sky begins to redden, she would return from the fields to prepare dinner.

Dinner was the same black bread that she had for lunch. Along with some bean soup. If they had some meat from a hunter, there would be some meat in it as well. And while talking with her family in the light of the kitchen, she would stitch fraying parts of her and her family's clothes.

Her bedtime was about 6pm.

That sort of daily life.

She thought that it would continue indefinitely.

On that day, Enri had welcomed the morning as always, and had went to the well.

Pulling up a bucket of water, she transferred the water to a small jar. It would take 3 trips to fill up the pot they had in their house.

“Okay.”

Enri rolled up her sleeves and carried the jar. Although the jar would become considerably heavier when water was added, she found it quite easy to carry.

While thinking that it was fun, Enri began to return home.

At that moment, she heard something and turned in that direction. The atmosphere was tense and she got goosebumps.

—It was the sound of wood breaking.

And then—

“A scream—?”

While it sounded like a strangled bird, it was different.

It sent chills down her spine.

It couldn't be happening. Just my imagination. I'm wrong.

Words of denial flashed through her mind.

Panic spread through her body. The scream came from the direction of her home.

She let go of the jar. There was no way she could hold such a heavy object.

Her long skirt got entangled with her legs, but fortunately she maintained her balance.

Once again, she heard a voice.

Enri's heart pounded in her chest.

Screaming. She was not wrong.

Running. Running. Running.

She did not remember ever running this fast before. She ran at such a speed that she almost entangled her legs with one another.

The neighing of horses. The screams of humans. Crying voices.

They were becoming louder.

In Enri's vision, she saw a man wearing armour swinging a sword at a villager from afar.

The villager screamed, and then collapsed. The sword that was about to pierce him stopped.

"Molga-san."

Everyone knew everyone in such a small village. She knew the dead man well. He was occasionally a bit noisy but he was still a good person. He did not deserve to die like this. She was about to stop but—She grit her teeth and put more strength into her legs.

The distance which she usually never noticed, was now extremely long.

She began to hear roars and jeering. In the midst of that, her house finally

entered her vision.

“Otou-san! Okaa-san! Nemu!”

While yelling the names of her family members, she swung the house door open.

There she saw 3 frightened faces with a pouch in one hand. Those faces disappeared when they saw Enri and changed into a look of relief.

“Enri! Are you okay?!”

“Ah, Enri.....”

Her mother’s warm hands held her in a hug.

“Now, Enri’s here. Hurry and escape!”

The current situation of the Emmots was quite bad. As they were worried about Enri and did not leave for fear of passing her. They did not know when she would return and they could not just abandon a family member.

And so they lost the time to escape, and now danger had arrived.

They were about to leave when—A shadow appeared at the entrance. Sunlight glinted off of the back of the knight’s platemail. His crest was that of the Baharuth Empire. His clenched hand wielded a sword.

The Baharuth Empire—The neighbouring country to the Re-Estize Kingdom. It occasionally went to war with the Kingdom. However, the war usually only took place in the walled city of E-Rantel, they had never extended their reach her.

However, that eternal peace was broken.

From the gaps in the helm, Enri felt a cold gaze counting their numbers. Enri felt his gaze licking her, it was very unpleasant.

The knight gripped the sword tightly, causing the grip to squeak.

He was about to enter the house when—

“Arrgh!!”

“Umph!”

—Her father tackled the knight who had entered. The two of them tumbled out of the house together.

“—Hurry up and go!!”

“You bastard!”

Blood rolled down her father’s face. He probably got cut when they were fighting.

While her father and the knight were fighting, they fell to the ground. While her father was stabbing with his knife. And while the knight was stabbing with his short sword.

While seeing her family’s blood, Enri’s head completely blanked out. Would it be better to help her father, or would it be better to run away.

“Enri! Nemu!”

Her mother’s cries pulled her back to reality, and her mother pulled a bitter face.

Enri gripped her sister’s hand and pulled. She resisted the sudden pull but, they needed to get to the great forest as soon as possible.

The screams of horses, shouts, the clashing of metal. And then—A sour smell.

The places around the village—They dived into Enri’s nose, ears and eyes. Where were they from? While experiencing this, they ran. When running through a wide place, you should make yourselves as small as possible. With this in mind, they kept to the shadows of the houses.

Her body was frozen by fear. Her heart was pounding in her chest. It was not just from the running. The small hand within hers was moving as well.

—Her sister’s life.

Running slightly in front, her mother was about to turn a corner when she stiffened, and then quickly retreated.

Her hand gesturing at her to run.

The moment she realised the reason, Enri’s mouth narrowed, and she stifled

her crying voice.

She gripped her sister's hand and ran away. She did not want to see what happened next.

The edge of the village got closer.

The running Enri heard the noisy sound of clanging metal. It was a constant sound.

She prayed and looked behind her. It was just as she had thought. The worst case, a single knight was chasing after them.

Just a little more. She suppressed her feelings which she wanted to throw up. She could not waste effort on them.

She was breathing heavily. She felt that she could collapse at any moment. If she was alone she would probably have stopped a long time ago. The presence of her sister gave her the strength to move.

She took a glance back.

The distance between them had not changed. Even while wearing armour, there was no decline in his speed.

Sweat dripped down her body and she felt cold. If this continued.....She could not escape with her sister.

—*Let go.*

Enri heard those words.

—*If you're alone you might escape.*

—*Do you want to die here?*

—*It might be safer to escape alone.*

“Shut up, shut up, shut up!”

Enri grit her teeth while spitting out those words. She put more strength into her grip.

She was a terrible sister, thinking about these sort of things.

“Hurry, run!”

“Ye, yes.”

Why did her sister who about to cry not do so?

It was simple. It was because she believed in Enri. She believed that her sister could get them out of this.

“Ah!”

Taking large strides to match her own, her sister lost her balance. Enri was also pulled down by her.

“Quickly stand!”

“Yes.”

However, a lot of time was lost.

Enri heard the creak of a chain right next to her. The knight had stopped to catch his breath. The sword in his hand was wet with blood. It did not stop there. His armour and helmet also had bloodstains.

Enri shielded the back of her sister and glared at the knight.

“If you stop resisting, I won’t make it painful.”

There was no kindness there. Just mockery. Even if you run, I will still kill you. He used such a tone.

Enri flared up. What was this person saying?

Enri faced the knight, who slowly raised his sword. It was about to move downwards and slice through Enri—

“Don’t look down on us!!”

“Urgh—”

—Enri hurled her fist at the knight’s iron helmet. Her body’s anger and the desire to protect her sister were kept in her fist. There was no fear in her punch. It was a punch that had the power of her whole body.

The sound of broken bones could be heard, the momentarily delayed pain ran through her whole body. The knight reeled heavily backwards from her punch.

“—Quickly!”

“Yes!”

Ignoring the pain, Enri was about to run when—She felt a red-hot pain on her back.

“—Urgh!”

“You Bitchhhhhh!!”

Being beaten by a girl he was underestimating was humiliating. It caused the knight to lose his composure.

Although Enri was alive, the knight had lost his composure. Since they had tried to escape, it was normal for him to be swinging his sword at them. They were not lucky. Enri was wounded and the knight was furious. There was no way out of this alive.

Enri understood fully. The chance that they could escape was very low. There was still quite a distance between them and the forest. She did not think that they could escape from a knight on horseback. There was also the option of going back home and hiding in the hidden basement. However, he probably would not allow that.

She was sorry for dying, but the important thing was to protect her sister. She would try to replace her sister’s life with hers.

The burning pain on her back throbbed in rhythm with her heartbeat. A sticky substance was flowing out.

—But she still ran.

Enri grit her teeth, and distanced herself from the kni—

Then she saw despair.

There was darkness—.

It was the embodiment of death. An undefeatable existence.

Clad in a jet-black robe, it looked like darkness had spilled over from another world.

A face of nothing but bone, his empty eye sockets held a shimmering red

flame, as if searching for prey.

Divine and yet terrifying, the staff he was clutching had collected all the beauty in this world.

The air froze.

In the presence of the ruler of despair, even time itself froze.

Enri forgot how to breathe.

It would kill herself and her sister. That was why she could see it, the figure of an envoy appeared from another world.

Enri thought that. At least until the movement of the knight behind her stopped.

“Kah.....”

She heard the breath of someone who could not even scream.

Who had urinated?* It could have been herself, or it could have been her quivering sister, or maybe it was the sword-wielding knight. She no longer felt any pain. In fact, she could not feel anything apart from fear.

TL: Is there a better way to phrase this. I cannot come up with anything right now.

Slowly, the fleshless bony fingers moved—It extended past Enri and as if to grab something, formed a splayed hand at the knight. She wanted to avert her gaze, but she could not move due to her fear. If she looked away, it seemed that something even more terrifying would happen.

“Ah.....”

The sound of metal and screaming combined to make a harsh sound. Her heart was beating too fast, it seemed that it would stop at any moment.

<Grasp Heart>

At the moment when the embodiment of death made a gripping motion, a sound of clattering metal could be heard from behind her.

Moving her eyes away from [Death] was indeed scary, but she lost to the small curiosity in her heart and sent her gaze to the knight sprawled on the

ground. The knight was no longer moving.

Dead.

Yes, dead.

The danger that she was running away from had left this world so simply that it was laughable. However, she could not enjoy it. Because [Death] had changed its shape, becoming thicker.

[Death] moved. It faced Enri.

The darkness in her vision grew larger. It would consume Enri wouldn't it, those thoughts floated around in her brain.

Enri hugged her sister tightly.

The idea of escape was no longer in her head. If the person was human then she could at least have a fleeting hope and still move. But, the existence in front of her simply blew away such hopes.

An instantaneous death. That was what she wished for.

Her sister was hugging her waist and shivering in fear. She wanted to save her, yet she could not. She could do nothing but apologise for her own powerlessness. At least she would not be alone when she died.

And then—

“Eh?”

—Enri let out a dumbfounded voice.

[Death] had walked right past her.

Chapter 8: Flames of War | Part 2

While sitting in a lavish chair, Momonga watched a one-meter-tall mirror. However, it was not reflecting his figure.

Plains. The mirror was like a television, showing a different scenery.

He extended his hand, and shifted it to the right.

Like a camera, the scene slid with his finger. The staff would be a bother so he put it back in the Item Box.

The Mirror of Remote Viewing.

In Yggdrasil, this item was used to peek at places that were packed with people, such as castles and towns, an item that allowed the user to choose the best time to shop. However, it had now changed to an item that could reflect scenery.

Looking down on a scenery that seemed like it came straight out of a movie, it spread out before him.

The current one was the morning. The morning dew on the grass beautifully sparkled in the morning light.

“Fumu”

Momonga drew a circle in the air, causing the scenery to change.

It had been an hour since he had noticed the function of this magic item had changed. He had to test a lot of things, but there was no way that a lone human could do it by himself.

Honestly, he was sick of it.

Since he became like this, he had no desire for sleep. And so he was constantly finding Wally, but it was lame how the scenery was always plains.

How the heck do you change the viewing distance. While thinking about how great it would be to have an instruction manual, Momonga repeated his

actions.

“Oh!”

After a bit of experimenting, he finally got the hang of it. The happiness he felt was like that of a programmer who had just worked 8 hours overtime and finally finished. By repeating his actions several more times, he finally got it to his desired height.

“Haa, I’m tired.”

While enjoying himself, he turned his head.

“Okay, next.”

As if gaining a new toy, Momonga moved to a bird’s eye view. He tried to extend it as large as possible.

First he would try to see his own base, the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

In Yggdrasil, they were located in the middle of a swamp, but Sebas had said that they were surrounded by fields.

The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick was 300 metres wide in all four directions.

It was enclosed by 6 metre tall perimeter walls, with two entrances of the front and back gate.

The grounds were kept clean, and was quite beautiful, but the giant tree in the cemetery gave the entire place a gloomy atmosphere.

There was no pattern to the tombstones, and the combination of the clutter and the cut grass gave off a discomforting feeling. There were lots of statues of goddesses and angels dotting the cemetery, some of which could have been regarded as art.

And then there were 4 mausoleums at the 4 cardinal directions with a large mausoleum in the centre.

The surroundings of the central mausoleum, which served as the entrance to the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, held 8 10 metre tall armour

wearing figures

It was a sight he was used to seeing. But seeing it from above made it feel refreshing.

Originally, they were supposed to be Skeleton Soldiers-like Older Guards here, but they probably retreated and he could not find them.

Being satisfied with what he saw, and Momonga began looking for a place with humans.

A bit of time passed, and a village was reflected in the mirror.

It was about 2 kilometres southwest of Nazarick. It was near a forest, with wheat fields dotting its surroundings. The word pastoral would fit it perfectly.

Momonga zoomed in on the village and felt uncomfortable.

“.....A festival?”

It was morning, and yet people were entering and leaving their houses, and running around. They were all rushing around.

Expanding his view, Momonga frowned.

The people who he thought were villagers were dressed shabbily and there were people dressed like knights waving swords around.

An “ordinary” scene. Every time the knights swung their swords, a villager would fall. The villagers could not mount a resistance. They just desperately fled. And then the knights would chase them down and kill them. The horses the knights were riding were in the fields, eating the wheat.

This was a massacre.

Momonga felt like vomiting.

“Tch!”

Spitting out his disgust, he was about to change the scene. This village has no value. If he went, he would only see corpses. Then there was no point in watching further. He did not gain any sick pleasure from watching murders.

Momonga was not an ally of justice.

His level was 100, but this world's normal level might be 10,000, just like what he had said to Demiurge. He could not recklessly charge into such a situation. If Sebas or Demiurge was here, he could have sent them, but the only one in this room was Momonga.

In addition, the knight might have some reason for killing the villagers. Illness, crimes for example. He could think of many others. If he repelled them, he might make an enemy of the country the knights were from.

There was too little information. If there was information, it might have been worth it to go and save them.

However, there was no worth in saving that village.

The price of life varied with the location. In present day Japan, the price would be high. However, if you go to Africa, it will drop significantly.

To those that do not know a world where all life is equal, there is only one sentence that can be said. Between an important person and a complete stranger, who would you save?

It is very easy for your life to be stolen. This should be kept in mind at all times.

Yes—

—Momonga was not an ally of justice.

Although he had maintained a facade of calmness, he was actually quite angry. He moved his hands, and a different part of the village was shown.

There, 2 knights were trying to separate a knight and a villager. He was forcefully pulled away and made to stand with his hand restrained. In front of Momonga, the villager was stabbed with the sword. Once, twice, thrice— He was stabbed repeatedly by the angry knight.

Then, he was kicked and sent flying. Blood sprayed everywhere as he rolled on the ground.

That was of course, a coincidence.

While in Yggdrasil, no one could detect the user of the mirror.

—The villager and Momonga's eyes met. It might have been just him but —.

While blood filled his mouth, he forced his mouth to move. His vision blurred and he probably did not know what he was looking at. But he still clung to life, and forced the words out.

—Please save my daughters.—

Again, Momonga was not an ally of justice. He would gain nothing out of this, he would not help those who were not even his acquaintances. Benefits were not everything, but it was more than half.

However, that was—

If there was a benefit—It would be the very act of saving them.

"I would have needed to investigate their fighting abilities anyway."

Who were those words for?

Murmuring, Momonga took a bird's eye view of the situation. He looked closely for places where some villagers were still alive.

When he found one, one young girl had just knocked back a knight. And she took the hand of another smaller one, probably her sister, and were about to run off.

He opened the Item Box, and took out the Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown.

In that period, the girl's back was cut. Momonga's face distorted in disgust. Momonga instantly chanted a spell.

<—Greater Teleportation>

His view changed, and changed to the place where he was looking at earlier.

There were 2 young girls.

The older sister probably, the older one had hair that extended all the way to her chest. Her tanned and healthy skin, was dyed white in fear. Her black eyes had tears in them, and if her face was not a terrified one, she would be considered quite cute.

The younger sister had her face buried in her sister, her frightened body was

trembling. She was probably terrified.—No, it was natural. It would be weird if she was not.

Passing over the 2 girls, he sent his gaze towards the knight behind them.

He was probably surprised by Momonga's sudden teleportation. His hands were trembling.

Momonga had been living a life estranged from violence. The closest was fighting in Yggdrasil.

Although he had never experienced a life and death situation, he was currently extremely calm.

His empty hand splayed itself—And reached out.

<—Grasp Heart>

It was a magic of the 9th Tier. A magic where you grip and crush the opponent's heart. If it was resisted, the opponent would be temporarily stunned.

It was one of the instant death spells that Momonga used well. Especially since there was a beautiful corpse—data left behind.

The knight collapsed. His resistance was too low. So he died.

Momonga gazed coldly at the collapsed knight.

The unexpected thing was—He did not feel anything from killing a human.

The beauty of an undead body? Or maybe the rage against the knight?

—No, it was something different. Momonga did not know what it was. Coming this far and yet not being able to take the last step, he felt such a frustration.

Momonga began walking. Since he had killed the knight, the girls would have been afraid. So he went right next to them. At that time, the older one let out a bewildered voice. Momonga did not know what it meant, but he felt no need to find out. Anyway, he should first confirm the safety of this place.

He looked at the back of the older one with her torn clothes, and saw blood flowing down her back. While doing so, he hid them behind himself. And then

he glared at a knight that had just existed from the side of a house.

The knight noticed him as well. Frightened, he took one step back.

“.....You can chase down girls and yet you can’t against a different opponent?”

While mumbling, Momonga thought about the next spell he should use.

The earlier one was quite a high tiered spell. And thus he could not confirm how strong the knights were. What sort of effect did his magic have on the knights.

The strength of this world—This was a good chance for him to find out.

“—Finally, although I feel bad about forcing this experiment on you, won’t you be so kind as to play along?”

<Magic Arrow>

10 balls of light were created, and rushed towards the knight creating an afterglow. The first blew him away, the second lifted him into the air. The remaining floated around the lifted knight. And then, like in a fighting game, combo’ed him.

Like a broken doll with its limbs outstretched, the knight fell to the ground. Naturally, he did not move.

Momonga had prepared himself for another round, but was perplexed.

Magic Arrow was a 1st Tier magic—The lowest tier. While it was true that the number of arrows increased according to the level, and the magic was quite convenient, but it was difficult to one-shot a level 10 monster.

Then these knights were below level 10 in Yggdrasil.....

.....He could not think of anything else.

Power left his body. Too weak.

Of course, it was possible that only these 2 were weak. But, it was still difficult to regain his earlier worry.

Anyway, if it became dangerous, he would immediately cast a transfer magic. It could also be that their defenses and body strength was non-existent

but their attack power was extremely high. Momonga could possibly be instantly killed. These thoughts flooded his mind.

In Yggdrasil, if you hit the neck, it would be counted as a critical hit, and the damage would greatly increase, if it was the real world you would surely die.

Momonga's lost worry had changed into caution. If he was careless, he would die like an idiot.

Firstly, he should investigate their abilities.

Momonga cast his special ability.

—High Tier Undead Creation: Death Knight—

Momonga created one undead monster due to his special skill. It was possible for him to create a strong undead, but he created an undead that was used as a convenient wall whenever he went solo.

The Death Knight was the best one of those undead monsters that he could use as a wall.

Its level was 35, but its defense was equivalent to that of a level 40 monster. However, its attack was that of a level 25 monster. When Momonga adventured out, it would be instantly killed by a powerful monster, but the fact that it could endure one hit was enough for a magic caster like himself.

And so the monster he would create would be this—Momonga decided.

In Yggdrasil, the moment he summoned a monster, it would cause the air in the surroundings to boil and then appear.

But, it seemed to be different in this world.

A black mist oozed out of the sky, and fell on and wrapped around the knight who had his heart crushed.

The mist swelled—And swallowed the knight. And then the knight, which could no longer be thought as human, jerked, and while staggering, stood up.

It made a “gobori” sound, and a black liquid flowed out of the gaps between the knight's helmet. It was probably coming from his mouth.

The flowing sticky substance, wrapped and covered his entire body. It made

one think of a human being eaten by a slime.

Once the knight was completely covered in darkness, its shape began to change.

After a few blinks, the darkness flowed down to the ground, there stood an existence that would be called the spirit of a knight.

It was 2.3 metres tall. Like its height, its body was widened considerably. It would be closer to a beast than a human.

A large shield on its left arm covered $\frac{3}{4}$ of its body—A tower shield, and its right hand wielded a flamberge. Originally, its two hands should be holding a 1.3 metre cutlass, but this giant could wield one easily with one hand. The sword blade had a reddish black aura emanating out of it, and it pulsed like a heart.

Covering its giant body was a black full-body armour. Blood vessel like crimson patterns ran all over it. In addition, unlike the earlier armour which was designed for functionality, this one was the embodiment of violence, and thorns sprouted from all over.

The helm was like that of a devil, the face could be seen. In there was a rotting corpse of a person. Inside the gaping eye sockets was a hatred of the living and a desire and expectation of slaughter.

With its jet-black cloak fluttering in the wind, the Death Knight awaited its orders. Its imposing attitude seemed appropriate for an undead knight.

“These knights in the village—” Momonga pointed to the corpse of the first knight who he had killed with Magic Arrow. “Kill them.”

“OooaaaAaaaaa——!!”

A roar——

Anything that heard it got goosebumps all over its skin. Its thirst for blood was choking, and the air fluctuated.

It was the starting signal of a different massacre.

The victims had changed—They had become prey.

The Death Knight began running. Just sprinting. Without hesitation, it was like a bloodhound that had found its prey. An emotion humans could not understand—The dead's hatred of the living was powering it.

Momonga watched as the Death Knight grew smaller in the distance, and compared the difference with Yggdrasil.

If he could pinpoint it, it would be the degree of freedom.

Originally, the Death Knight was supposed to stay at its summoner's side, and receive damage from monsters. They would accept the order in that manner and not move of their own accord. As it was the way the AI was built, it cannot be helped.

It would be good if it did not get in his way but..... When he thought that he knew something, he had made a large mistake. A mistake born from preconceptions. Everyone makes mistakes, but the current situation could result in fatal consequences for Momonga.

Momonga narrowed his eyes, and cast the magic he had stored in the band on his right arm.

The magic he had activated was <Sense Enemy>. There were no enemies in the surroundings.

“Now.....”

Momonga turned and looked back. The earlier two girls noticed Momonga's gaze and shrunk their bodies away, even trying to hide themselves. The reason probably was the figure of the Death Knight that had appeared. Or maybe it was due to its roar.

That was well.....As the one who had killed the knights before their very eyes, he could understand their fear.

Convinced as such, Momonga faced the older one and extended his hand.
I will heal your wounds. An action with that thought in mind.

.....As a person who was familiar with the game Yggdrasil, Momonga was not surprised by the appearance of an Overlord. Even if he stood in front of other players no one would be scared either.

It was because everyone knew that it was a game, and they had information that such appearances and monsters existed.

However. Just imagine. What would happen if the person did not know? What if it was the real world? What would happen if a monster that could easily kill a human extended its hand towards you?

There was only one reaction.

The space between the older sister's legs were wet. The younger one as well —

“.....”

There was a pungent smell of ammonia in the surroundings. Waves of fatigue, which should not affect him, crashed into him. Momonga had no idea what to do.

“.....But they seem to be hurt.”

However, as a member of society, Momonga used the skills he had honed. While pretending not to see anything, he opened the Item Box, and took out a bag. Named the Infinity Haversack—it could carry up to 500 kilograms of weight.

Although the Item Box allows you to store an infinite amount of items, when items were placed inside this bag, a shortcut could be used to activate the item. However, the Item Box does not allow this.

Put the items that you want to instantly use inside this bag. This was a fact that even a greenhorn in Yggdrasil knew.

Momonga held one of such an Infinity Haversack. There should be a potion inside there somewhere.

He put his hand inside and unhesitatingly took out a red potion.

Minor Healing Potion.

Recovering 50HP, it was a medicine that was often used in the beginnings of Yggdrasil. However, this item was useless to Momonga. As for why, it was because this recovery potion had positive energy, and would deal damage to the undead Momonga. A poison.

The only reason why he held on to such a thing was as when he went on adventures with his friends, his party members would use them.

“Drink.”

Momonga thrust out the red medicine, causing the older one’s face to be filled with fear.

“I, I will drink it. So let my sister—-”

“Onee-chan!”

The younger was about to cry and was trying to stop the older one. The older one was apologising and was trying to take the potion.

Were they mistaking it for poison or human blood or something?

“.....What, is this?”

Although people were still dying and being killed. Although Momonga was an understanding person, what sort of comedy was this. Rage boiled up inside of him.

“Hurry up and drink. While I’m playing around here, other villagers are dying you know.”

As a response to those words, the older one widened her eyes, and drank it all down in one gulp.

And then, she showed a surprised expression.

She touched her right hand, and then her back. She was surprised by the lack of pain.

“No way.....”

She probably could not believe it, she was touching her right arm over and over.

If the healing potion has been drunk, effects will appear, Momonga engraved that information into his memory. Then the next question was born. What would happen if applied directly to the wound? Further testing will need to be done.

“Is the pain gone?”

“Ye, yes.”

The older sister made a blank face.

If it was just this level of wounds then a Minor Healing Potion would have worked, huh.

Momonga moved on to the next question. This was an unavoidable question. Depending of the answer, everything could change.

“Do you know about magic?”

“Eh?”

“Have you seen humans that can use magic? I am asking you that.”

“No, I have not seen any.....”

Momonga clicked his tongue and stifled his annoyance. It was fine if magic had remained a remained a secret. However, make no mistake. If Momonga and the others were the only ones able to use magic, then it would be troublesome.

If that was the case then he would have to limit his use of magic. Having to suppress an advantage he had did not make him happy.

The older one looked like she was about to say something, and so Momonga used his jaw to signal her to continue.

“.....But.”

“What?”

“I have heard that there are such people in the towns.....”

“.....I see, then this will be quick. I am a magic caster.”

Feeling relieved, Momonga chanted magic.

<Anti-life Cocoon>

<Wall of Protection from Arrows>

Like a spider web, crystal clear threads, with the sisters at the centre, formed a 2 metre dome around them. Subsequently, although invisible, the air flow changed. Originally, this magic would be perfect if he chanted it. However,

as how magic worked in this world was unclear, he did not. If there was a magic caster, it would be unfortunate.

“A magic that blocks out living creatures, and a magic that blocks out arrows. Unless the enemy uses poison gas or magic, you should be fine.—However, it is easy to leave it. But, if you do that stupid thing, know that I will not save you a second time.”

After simply explaining the magic to the surprised sisters, Momonga began to walk away. He recalled the overall shape of the village.

“Um, excuse me—”

“—What is it?”

—He was about to walk away when he was stopped by the older one. Momonga swallowed his desire to yell. They were victims. They might have lost their family. Probably their acquaintances too. How could he vent his frustrations on them.

“Yo, your name.....” The girl gulped and asked. “Would you please tell us your name?”

He was about to introduce himself but then shut his mouth.

How should he introduce himself? Momonga was the Guildmaster of Ainz Ooal Gown. Now, what was he? The master of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick’s name was.....

Momonga thought.

My friends—

What would everyone think of monopolising that name? Would they be happy? Or would they frown?

Since he came here, he wanted to say it. *That name cannot be used for one person.* He immediately composed himself.

That name reflected the existence at the highest peak. If it went to ruins, then he would again make it a legend.

I will turn our guild into a legend.

“—I am the ruler of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, Ainz Ooal Gown.”

Chapter 9: Despair

There, the hunters became the hunted.

“OooooaaaAAAA!!”

The air shook. In accordance with it, the monster in front of my eyes—The Death Knight advanced.

I unknowingly took two steps back.

My armour trembled, and the harsh clattering sound entered my ears.

The tip of the sword I was holding shook. Of course, I was not alone. Surrounding the Death Knight, 18 others did the same.

No one was trying to escape. Was it because of their courage?

No, that was not it. They are afraid to divert their eyes even for a second. The moment their eyes get diverted, it would swing its sword. That was understood by the intuition that every living creature possessed.

The sounds of teeth clattering with each other could be heard.

Londes Di Granp cursed his faith in god. He had probably cursed him many more times in the past few minutes than he ever had done in his lifetime. If god had truly existed, he would probably have descended and smited this evil. Why did he have to ignore a faithful believer such as Londes?

There is no god.

Only a fool would sing such a stupid thought, but Londes wasn't the foolish one right?

“HiyaAAA!”

A high-pitched scream echoed throughout the surroundings. One of the knights in the encirclement gave in to his fear, fleeing whilst showing his back on the enemy.

Some kind of line was cut, as though a tension of a bow was snapped at one

stroke. The scream should've snapped their mentality likewise. Normally, that would be the case. However, among the men within the encirclement, no one dared to escape.

A black wind swept into a corner of Londes' vision.

The escaping knight was about to make his third step, when he made a horrible sound as his body got split into two.

His right and left sides separated, and fell to the ground. The existence that sliced the knight was bathed in blood. The sour stench of entrails spread throughout the surroundings, and the pink organs spilled onto the ground.

"Kuuuh."

The flamberge was swung downwards. The blood-drenched Death Knight narrowed his eyes, and growled loudly.

A voice of joy—

It was enjoying the process. Killing Londes' companions, bathing in their blood—

Even though its face was rotting, it could still be read like a human's. The Death Knight was having fun.

An absolute existence beyond theirs—The slaughterer stood there.

Seeking salvation, Londes moved his line of sight.

They were in the middle of the village. An open space, where 40 weak villagers cowered in fear from watching Londes and the knights. Children were hiding behind a wooden pedestal, which was slightly taller than them.

Several were holding wooden sticks, but did not move. They could not grip their weapon properly due to their fear.

When Londes and the others attacked the village, they rounded up the villagers into the centre of the village.

After the houses were emptied, they were burned down with alchemical oil. After all, hidden underground rooms were quite common in this kind of village.

Around the village were four mounted knights wielding bows, patrolling. If

anyone escaped to the outskirts of the village, they would surely be killed. Of course, there would be villagers who would think of escaping into the troublesome forest, so two knights were placed there.

Although the massacre had ran into some slight problems, it had progressed smoothly and they managed to get all the villagers in one place.

Gathering them, killing them and allowing a few to escape—It was supposed to be like that.

Londes remembered that moment.

That scene which left a deep imprint in his mind.

One of the villagers was about to escape, and the knight that was about to slash him from behind—Elion—Danced in the air. What happened? The insanity of the situation made it impossible to comprehend.

Full body armour, even with magic, was still 10 kilogrammes. A knight that was a full grown male would weigh 80 kilogrammes. But the knight of about 90 kilogrammes in weight was thrown through the air like a ball.

Elion flew 7 metres into the air, fell to the ground, and did not move a muscle.

At where Elion was, was a black giant. The giant shield that had blown Elion away was slowly being lowered.

That was the beginning of despair.

At first someone slashed at it while panicking

However due to the armour that covered its body, even if the knight had managed to get past its shield, not even a scratch was made.

In addition, the Death Knight was not using its sword, and it was waving its shield around like it was playing—No, while playing, it had blown away the knights. Using a degree of strength such that they won't die.

Londes, too, was blown away with a single hit. Every time he breathed, pain shot through his stomach.

The Death Knight swung its sword a second time.

At the location where a knight was attempting to flee.

The one who tried to escaped was Rilick. A good-natured man—-But when drunk, a terrible one. His limbs and then his head flew off his body.

A gale accompanied the great attack, and they understood. Not with their heads, but with their hearts.

If the Death Knight became serious, it could chase down and kill everyone.

They could do nothing but die.

Although the insides of their helmets are not visible, everyone was thinking the same thing.

Crying voices reverberated throughout the surroundings. Grown men were sobbing like terrified children.

“Oh God, please save us.....”

“Oh God.....”

He could hear cries from several others. If he let down his guard, he felt that he would kneel and send a prayer to god.

“Y, you guys! Hold down that monster!!”

TL Note: He says “kisama” which is better translated as bastards. But context.

A panicking voice could be heard. It was a harsh voice, one tainted with madness.

It came from right next to the bisected knight—-From a knight standing beside the Death Knight. He initially could not discern the knights identity from the voice, but there was no one else that would say those lines.

..... *Captain Belius.*

Londes frowned.

If he could describe him in one word, it would be scum.

When a girl was trying to escape, he chased after her with his low-life feelings of lust. Her father tried to save her. When they were pulled apart, he

stabbed him mercilessly with his feelings of rage.—That type of man.

However, as a wealthy person in the country, he was just added to the unit of knights, but the words captain didn't befit him. He was hated within the unit.

"I will, escape! I am not a person that will die here! You guys, buy me some time! Buy me some time to escape!"

There was no way anyone would move. It was natural, they would do anything to not get targeted by the Death Knight, and they kept their heads down like they were avoiding a storm. Especially since it was a man that no one liked.

"Hiiii!"

The Death Knight slowly turned to face Belius.

It would be natural as he was standing quite nearby.

Was he hiding some guts? Londes regarded that heedless thought.

"Money, I'll give you money. 200 gold coins! No, 500 gold coins!"

It was a lot of money. However, doing that was the same as surviving a fall from a 500 metre cliff to receive the money.

No one moved.

No, there was one person. Half a person moved.

"Ovovoooooooo....."

The right side of the knight that was split in two moved, while spitting out blood, and grabbed Belius' ankle.

"—OgyaAaaa!!"

Belius screamed. The bodies of the surrounding knights, and the villagers who saw this, their bodies stiffened.

If it was Momonga—Ainz, he would not be surprised.

<Squire Zombie>

Dying by the hands of a Death Knight would make you into its eternal servant. In Yggdrasil, the moment a Death Knight killed a monster, an Undead

of the same level would spawn at the same place.

Those that knew the game Yggdrasil, it would be nothing to care about. But to those who did not, it would look like an act of the devil.

Belius' screams stopped, and collapsed like a puppet with its strings cut. He had probably lost consciousness. The Death Knight simply walked up to him, and stepped on his chest with its body armour.

You could understand the force behind that leg just by looking. A clasp split open, and the metal creaked.

“—O, OaaaAaaaaa!”

The screams of Belius who had just regained consciousness from the pain.

“Sabe, sabe me! Plevse! I'll do avythind!”

His two hands tried desperately to remove the leg, but it would not budge from his chest.

“Money, Oaaa, I'll gibe yu monay, Oeeee, sabe bee—”

The screams of metal stopped, and the sounds of branches cracking reverberated, and blood flew into the air. Belius' screams, naturally, stopped —.

“.....No, no, no.”

“God!”

The screams of the knights, which had at one point stopped, began again at that scene. The moment you try to escape you would be killed. However, it is a fate worse than death. Such thoughts circulated, and their bodies did not move.

“—Calm down!!”

Londes' roar cut through the screams. Silence came upon them like time had stopped.

“—Withdraw! Send out a signal to the mounted knights and archers! The remaining will buy some time for them to blow the horn!* To those about to die, I'm sorry. Begin operation!”

TL Note: This is written as flute, but horn sounds better.

The knights began at once. Depending on whether orders were inputted into their blank brains, they could think and perform perfectly. They would not be able to repeat if they failed after all.

Originally, the number of knights that were holding the horn to contact the others numbered three. Currently, there is only one remaining. They had to protect him.

The knight several steps away threw down his sword, and started to take out the horn from the backpack he was carrying.

“OooooaaaAaaa!!”

The Death Knight started running as if in response. —It’s aim was the knight with the horn. It understood what they were doing, an action that showed its intelligence.

The jet-black bullet closed in as if flying. It was a bullet that would kill those that would dare to block its path. This was reflected in everyone’s eyes. However, the knights still attempted to block it. A feeling stronger than fear forced them to move.

With the wave of a shield, one knight was blown away.

A sword flashed, and the top and bottom halves of another knight separated.

“Dezun! Mollet! Hurry and cut the necks of the people killed by the sword! If you don’t they’ll turn into monsters!”

The knights whose names were called frantically headed towards the corpses.

Once again, the shield was swung, and another knight was blown away, and the sword that was received from above cleaved a knight in two.

Londes awaited the jet-black storm to claim his own death as a martyr.

“Ooooh!!!”

And then, the flamberge was swung, and Londes’ world spun around—

He had lost his head, and his body collapsed beneath him—

At the same time, the sound of a horn echoed—

In a corner of the village, Ainz heard the horn and raised his head.

He was engrossed in his experimentation. While reflecting, Ainz removed the sword lodged in his abdomen. He felt no pain.

The part of his body that held the sword had no blood. It is as good as new.

This was high rank damage invalidation—When attacked by a weapon with little data or a low ranked monster, the damage he was supposed to take will be invalidated. In Yggdrasil, it only applies to monsters level 40 or below, and thus was a useless ability, it was different in this world.

“I used to say that I was envious of that ability to reduce damage by 10 points.”

It was a cash item. Maa~, it could be said that he was also that type of person.

Ainz looked down at his bony hand which still had a bit of skin, and put it inside the Item Box. He then took out a mask. It was the type that covered the entire face.

The mask seemed like it was crying, or maybe angry, it had too much decoration. It looked like a Bali mask or maybe a baron mask.

Despite of its strange appearance, this item had no magic power. On the contrary, it was an event item in which you could not put in any data. What event was it? Christmas? Valentine’s Day?

The name of the mask was Mask of Envy.

Had the creator gone mad? An entire article had been dedicated to it on the Yggdrasil Thread on 2ch. He wore it.

Next was the gauntlets. They were quite rough and boorish, and had nothing worth mentioning.

It’s name was Iron Graber. A member of Ainz Ooal Gown made it while playing around. It was a simple pair of gloves that increased physical strength.

There was no particular reason as to why he chose these items. They only

serve one purpose, and that was to hide his bony hands.

Originally, he could have used illusion magic yet he chose to hide it using items, but as those that can use illusion magic could see through it, there was no way that they will be tricked, thus a simpler method was used. If that happened and they saw his true appearance, he would have to come up with an excuse.

Of course, this kind of trickery is nothing but sophism. Those who were tricked and those that are not have their own opinions, with their varying personal point of view. Sometimes however, such sophisms can protect you..... although lots of people would hate you for it.

Anyway, with this, this was a level down from an evil monster to an evil magic caster. —-Probably.

He was lost on what to do with the staff, so he just kept it like this. It was not much of a bother.

Now, how should he hide his figure?

Ainz's way of thinking was wrong.

To Ainz who was already used to the game Yggdrasil, the figure of his was not scary. However, to the residents of this world, he was the embodiment of fear.

Since he was used to it and he did not notice the sentiment, it was a blunder. Honestly, he was a definite idiot. Why did he not notice that.

It was fortunate that only those girls saw him.

“However if you pray to god, then you probably shouldn't kill people.”

He was only able to spit out such words since he was an atheist, and looked at the praying corpse.

<Fly>

Ainz lightly danced into the air. And then—

—*Death Knight, if there are knights that are still alive, do not kill them. I have a use for them.*

He transmitted it with an accepting feeling.

He was able to order his personally created undead mentally.

He flew at high speed to where the horn was blown. Wind pressed against his body. He was probably moving at about 90km/h? A speed impossible in Yggdrasil. The robe stuck to his body.

He looked down at the village from midair, and saw a large part of an open space that is turning black, like the water being absorbed by soil. There were several corpses lying there. Along with several shaking knights. And lastly, the standing Death Knight.

Ainz breathed in and exhaled, then counted the number of knights that were still alive although with moving difficulties. They numbered four. More than necessary, maa~ it does not matter.

“—Death Knight. That is enough.”

That voice in that place, it was completely too lackadaisical. A casualness like that of visiting a store, and asking the clerk for that thing you wanted. No, Ainz could not do any other but that..

He had commanded it to kill them, but quite a few were beat up. If it was just to kill them, Ainz could do it easily. Anyone's words would have become lighter.

Ainz who was released from the chains of gravity, slowly landed on the ground.

He looked at the surviving knights. Their lives were spared from a dangerous situation—But they did not understand, rather could not understand why. They were quite light headed.

“Hello gentlemen. I am Ainz Ooal Gown. The master of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.”

No one replied. They did not have the courage to do so, nor the energy. Ainz waited a little, and continued to speak.

“I will guarantee your life if you surrender. If you still wish to fight—-”

A sword was immediately thrown on the ground. More followed, and before

long, four swords were quickly thrown down.

“.....Hm, you look tired. However, in front of the ruler of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, your heads are a bit too high.”

The knights had no energy to resist his words. They quietly kneeled and bowed their heads. That was not the figure of subjects, but of prisoners.

“I shall permit you gentlemen to return. And then, tell this to your superiors —-Your masters.”

Ainz walked, and using the hand not holding the staff, knocked off the helm of one the kneeling knights, and sternly stared at his tired face. While paying attention such that no one else can see, he moved his mask slightly, such that his skeletal face could be seen.

The knight's eyes were muddled with fatigue and they wondered what they were looking at initially. Then they turned to surprise.

“Two kilometres North-east of this village is a plain, there is a place called the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick there. I am its master. Therefore, the surrounding areas belong to me. If you make more trouble, I will massacre everyone in that bastard country of yours.....Understand?”

The knight's shaking head nodded repeatedly.

“Go. And remember to tell your masters.”

The knights immediately broke into a sprint and fled. Even if it's one second, they want to get away from there, their thoughts were obvious.

“.....Haa~ Acting is tiring.”

Ainz said as he watched the figures of the knights grow smaller in the distance.

If the villagers were not watching, he would have rotated his shoulders. Such a performance was quite troublesome for a member of society like Ainz. Especially since he did not have much dignity, he had no choice but to fake it. Meeting the face of the knight was also a part.

His personality is impossible.

However, his performance was not over yet, and he had to put on his mask again. Ainz began walking towards the villagers while wanting to sigh.

He wanted to refuse to stand in such a bloody place, the smell will probably stick. Even though he did not feel anything from killing people, he still hated the smell.

The fortunate thing was that the villagers did not make an issue of allowing the knights to escape.

—Clean up the Squire Zombies.

While commanding the Death Knight in his mind, Ainz closed in on the villagers.

Narrowing the distance, the faces of the villagers became confused and frightened. Their timid eyes wandered, and looked to and from the Death Knight.

The reason they did not raise an objection was because of such a scary existence,

Huh.....

And moving closer seemed to have the opposite effect.

Thinking that, Ainz stopped, opened his mouth and spoke in a friendly tone.

“Now, are you okay?”

“You are.....”

A human that seemed to be the village representative opened his mouth. In the middle of it, the Death Knight behind him did not let his gaze leave him. It was quite an astonishing scene. Ainz laughed under his mask and replied.

“This village had seemed to be under attack, so I came to help.

“Oh.....”

Buzzing. However, there were still people that still harbour suspicion.

“.....Anyway, it’s not for free. I want money for every villager saved.”

The villagers looked at each other. They were poor, their faces showed it.

However, their suspicion had died down. The typical aim of saving lives for money, it cleared up any doubt. It was because people could open their hearts to things that they could understand.

“S, since the village is in this situation—-”

Ainz raised his hand to cut off those words.

“Could we please have this discussion later? When I came earlier, I encountered and saved a pair of sisters. I will bring them here so wait, ok?”

The two did not wish to close their mouths.

Without waiting for the reply of the villagers, Ainz began slowly walking.

Chapter 10: Negotiations

The village chief's house was located right next to the village square and it was where the negotiations of the price of saving the villagers, is taking place. Naturally, what Ainz wanted was not money but information. Even so, asking for information directly would be too suspicious.

While it was true that receiving information from this small village was not a problem. The problem was afterwards. As long as there was not any information blockage, many people would learn about this incident. The chance of a powerful figure knowing this was, therefore, 100%. And when Ainz gets contacted by such a person, he'll know of Ainz' ignorance, which can be used against him during a negotiation.

Is it foolish to be vigilant because of a mere-unchecked possibility? Of course not. That was like crossing a road without checking first. That is how accidents occur.

Strength is relative. Ainz is the strongest in this village. However, there are no evidences to prove that he is the strongest in the world. Hence, pre-caution must be taken. There might be beings that would be able to kill Ainz. Why, Ainz Ooal Gown is a guild that knows no defeat. He could not let the guild name be thrown into the mud.

The sunlight that filtered in from the windows chased the shadows into the corner. Ainz moved his gauntlets on the shabby table and moved his arm like he was blocking out the sunlight. The table rattled, showing its poor quality.

He placed the staff in the corner of the room to prevent it from being a bother.

He recalled the surprised faces of the villagers.

He did not think that it was good to stand out here. Because he did not rectify his Yggdrasil common sense, he had committed many blunders today.

"I have made you wait."

The man sat in the chair opposite. Behind him, a woman stood.

The chief was about 40 years old. He was a man with wrinkled skin due to years under the sun.

His build was very solid, and it was clear from a glance that he had worked hard in the fields. He had a lot of white hair, about half of his head was painted white.

Probably the past ten minutes had aged him more than his entire life, not that it was useful in any way.

His clothes were made from cotton and were dirty and shabby, but they did not stink.

Behind Ainz was a woman about the same age as the chief. She was probably a beauty when she was younger, but long years in the field had damaged her looks. Freckles spotted her face, and she was now a thin and skinny middle-aged lady.

Her black hair was up to her shoulders and was frayed. Being tanned by the sunlight, she had a dark atmosphere surrounding her.

“Please.”

The wife placed a shabby cup on the table. Steam rose up from the water—And danced in the air, but Ainz raised his hand in rejection.

He was unable to recall the sense of thirst, and there was no way he could remove his mask. However, he still felt guilty about rejecting it. He wanted to apologise for causing her to do such a troublesome thing.

Why, it was because of the process of boiling the water.

Firstly, she had to strike a flint, and begin from starting a fire. And then stacking thin pieces of wood on top of the small flame, until it grew larger. And then move it to the hearth, and start the fire. It took a while until steam appeared.

“I apologise for having you prepare this.”

“I-it was nothing. Please raise your head.”

Surprised at Ainz who was lowering his head, the couple panicked. It was unbelievable that the owner of such monstrous strength would lower his head to villagers such as themselves. To Ainz, it was completely natural. While it was true that he was strong, they were negotiation partners. He could threaten them, but he judged it best to get on friendly terms with them.

Naturally, because he had obtained information via magic, he had cast the highest tier memory manipulation magic on the two sisters. However, that should be a last resort. If he used it often, his MP would eventually be consumed.

So that was MP consumption?

He felt fatigued like he had lost something. The weight he felt was still heavy in his chest. Ainz grimaced.

By altering his equipment with gauntlets and a mask, changing tens of seconds of memories felt like half of his MP was used. A huge loss.

TL Note: I think he is saying that without his usual gear, his MP consumption rate increases.

Looks like I need to investigate the effects of magic.

“.....Now, I apologise for the suddenness but shall we begin the negotiations?”

“Yes.”

The chief gulped. Ainz worked his head at a high speed.

Because the villagers were watching the knights he could not use it, but if no one was around, he would have enjoyed using magic like <Charm Person> to answer his questions. However in the end, it was impossible. So, he needed to gain information straight from other people.

—-Troublesome.

“....I will get straight to the point, how much money can I gain?”

“Well, since the village is like this.....Most of what we can give you will be copper coins.....”

“Copper coins!” He raised his surprised voice. “...That’s a bit little”

“.....But.....Silver coins will be impossible.....”

I see.

Ainz nodded without saying anything. Copper and silver coins. These two were the foundation of the village’s economy.

The problem was the worth of a copper coin. How much would they be worth in Japanese Yen? If he did not find this out, he would face a lot of troubles. When he went to towns and such, not knowing this would prove to be a huge problem. But if there were shops, he could check it out and face no problems.

Even if he went to the city, he would still need to know basic information beforehand.

“What about silver coins? There should be some right?”

“N, no.....We do not have any gold coins in this village!”

He had guided the conversation here, but the story conveniently unfolded before him. This man was quite fit to be the chief of the village. Or maybe the work of a village chief did not really exist. The image of a CEO which he had built up over a lifetime, had just crumbled in Ainz’s mind.

“.....However, what if I buy stuff from you?”

“It would have to be in copper coins. Gold and silver coins are.....”

The chief went silent and shook his head.

“.....Then, what should we do? I am in no way a philanthropist.....”

While acting like he was in deep thought, Ainz opened the Item Box.

Inside was the coins of Yggdrasil, and he took two of them out. The first coin had the face of a woman engraved on it, the other a man’s. The former was implemented with the supersized update “The Loss of the Valkyria”, and the latter was a coin from before that.

The value was the same, but the sentimental values in each coin were different.

The former was collected ever since Ainz had been in Ainz Ooal Gown, and quite a lot of the coins were accumulated. When the guild was at its peak, the update came and by then, the guild members had already been used to tossing them the old coins into the Item Box.

Henet: Does he meant that the old coins has been toss into storage?

Frostfire10: Yes

Ever since he was a Skeleton Mage, several pieces of coin floated in the air whenever he had defeated a monster. He had also entered a dungeon alone, and was attacked by an active monster and had gained a mountain of coins while frantically retreating.

He shook off his nostalgia.

Ainz finished playing with the old coin, and picked up the new one.

“.....I shall change the topic for a bit. If I want to purchase items using this coin, how much can I get for it?”

He placed the coin on the table with a clink. The chief and his wife both widened their eyes.

“T, this is.”

“A currency from long ago. Can I not use it?”

“I believe you can but.....Please wait a moment.”

The chief left his seat, and went into his room, and brought out something.

If he could say it in one word, it would be a balance-scale.

They took out a history book. From there, they tried to guess what coin it was. They somehow compared the sizes. Satisfied with that, they then placed the coin on the scale, and a weight on the other side.

What was it again? Was it coin weighing?

Ainz searched his memory for the processes happening before him.

Firstly, they probably compared the size of his coin with the country's and then checked the weight.

While watching, the side with the coin went down, and the weight went up. The couple placed another weight on the scale, and then the two sides seemed to balance.

“It weighs about twice as much as a normal coin.....Ma-may I scratch the surface for a little.....”

“Idi-, you! Do not say such rude things! I truly apologise. My wife had made such a disrespectful.....”

Enraged, the chief reprimanded his wife. Ainz understood the reason why he reproached her so strongly.

I see, she thought that it was gold plating

. He did not let his thought that he had learnt something more important leak into his surroundings.

“I do not mind. Depending on the situation, I am fine even if you smash it apart.....However, you will have to compensate for it.”

Making deals is naturally worrying. It is logical to check the goods in question.

“No, we truly are sorry.”

The wife lowered her head and returned the coin back to Ainz. She did not have to apologise to that extent, and Ainz felt a bit guilty. He recalled his own mother. A bit gloomy—A quiet mother. Because of that, he thought. He was a bit kinder towards her.

“It is fine. This is natural when you are making a deal.”

“No, but. To the person who had saved our village.....”

“I am not a person that would save a village for free. Basically, I am a trading partner. And so I do not mind.”

The eyes of the two showed their relief. It was not at the level of trust, but they seem to have opened up to him a little.

“After seeing the gold coin, what do you think of it? It is like a work of art right?”

“Yes, it is really beautiful. Which country was this from?”

“Now it is gone—-Yes. It was a country that has long disappeared.”

“I see.....”

“Would it be fine if I think of one of these is worth more than two of your gold coins?”

“That maybe so..... But I am not a merchant, so appraising this work of art is a little.....”

“Ha ha ha. Ma~, that is true.”

While laughing, he returned the coin back to just before his eyes. The chief and his wife had the same stiff smiles that they had since the beginning. Ainz made the decision to move on to the next step.

“I actually have several of these coins, and could I use them as if they are worth 2 gold coins?”

He took out several pieces of gold coins from his robes, and dropped them onto the table, and a clear sound rang out.

In the middle of that, Momonga was not looking at the table. Instead, from beneath his mask, he was watching the couple’s expression with a serious look.

“I should be able to use these immediately—-Ma~ I just need to make change. Buying stuff with gold coins is quite painful. Naturally, feel free to inspect them (as you please). Please—-”

“No, thank you for your offer, but unfortunately we cannot afford such.....”

“.....Understood.”

His satisfied gaze left the troubled face of the village chief, Ainz put the coins in his hands, and returned them into his robes.

“.....Now, let us return to the reward. I shall speak frankly and get to the point. How much can you give me?”

The same question as earlier. However, the reply was returned more smoothly than before.

“.....Ainz-sama, honestly this village has lost most of its workforce. While it is true that we can give enough money to satisfy you. However, we have to worry

about the season changes, and so it will be difficult to prepare much.”

“How about supplies?”

“Supplies will be the same. Well, as our population has decreased, we are currently shorthanded. It is probable that if we give you supplies now, in future, we will become extremely poor.

“Fumu.....”

Ainz acted like he was in deep thought. Everything up to here was fine. He could only pray for what happens afterward. He let a bit of time pass, and replied.

“I understand. I do not require a reward.”

“Oh.....”

Due to the chief and his wife’s surprise, their eyes widened. Ainz raised his hand, in an appeal to continue.

“.....I am a magic caster of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick located about 10 kilometres north-east of here. Recently, I have come out.”

“Oh, was that the case? However, I thought that that was mostly plains?”

“By my magic.”

“I see.....”

The chief leaked out a voice of admiration. Next to him, his wife nodded her head. He let his negotiation partner come to a selfish understanding by leaving parts left unsaid. But, there was a possibility of doing a bad job and make it troublesome, but nothing else could be done.

“So, your appearance is that of a magic caster?”

“Yes, ma~, something like that.”

While touching the Mask of Envy, Ainz spoke vaguely. Did the magic casters of this world really have such suspicious appearances? Or did they think so because of ignorance. Ignorance is really convenient. He took advantage of it.

“Has the chief seen magic casters apart from me?”

“Yes. Long ago, when I was a child. When the village was visited by some adventurers, there was one robed figure among them. I believe he was called a magic caster.....”

“Hou, then have you seen magic such as mine?”

“No, while it is unfortunate, I have not. They immediately left the village afterwards. It seems that they came for the rare medical herb in the forest.”

“What about my mask?”

He spoke in a way that could have been mistaken for a laugh. The chief made an expression that he was recalling the past. It was almost like he wanted to forget about the present.

“No, I have not seen such a mask. However, it gives off a strange atmosphere. I remember feeling fear like from when I was a child.”

“I see. Fear is a good tool. When everyone saw my subordinate, they thought that as well right?”

The chief and his wife redirected their line of sight towards a latticed window. Ainz sets his sight there slightly later.

From the cracks in the window, several residents were putting away the corpses in the village square and standing rigidly further away was the figure of the Death Knight.

In Yggdrasil, the Death Knight should disappear after 100 minutes, however it was still standing there, Ainz felt a little doubtful, but he put it aside.

“Although I said that I do not need a reward—” He watch their reactions. “—Magic casters use a lot of various things as tools. Fear, knowledge. It is, so to speak, tools of our trade. However, I currently have a lack of information. And so, I would like to acquire such information.. Furthermore, I would like the fact that I am buying information to be kept secret. I will take this in place of a monetary reward.”

I do not need anything. No such convenient words exist. It just means that nothing expensive will be requested.

People are scared of things they do not understand. During negotiations for

the reward for saving the villagers, money is not necessary—- Even not the sharpest of people would feel something off about it. If that was the case, it was fine to sell something which could not be seen. Basically they were selling tools of his trade to Ainz.

If they thought that it was an equivalent exchange, no one will feel suspicious. And they would feel relieved that they are equals.

The chief and his wife took up serious expressions and nodded.

“I understand, I will not ever reveal this to anyone.”

“I as well.”

“I shall believe you.”

He extended his gauntlet-clad hand. The chief made a startled face, changed to an understanding one and gripped his hand.

Ainz was relieved that there were handshakes. If he saw eyes that asked what he was doing, he could do nothing but cry.

While there was trust, it was not serious. If this was a business, information would flow from business and flow from human nature. If the chief keeps his promise, then no information would be leaked from him. If it did then he would do this. The next time he came to the village, he would make an effective card to play.

Although—-

He somehow felt that he would not be betrayed. There were reasons of course. If they are greedy, then they would jump at the chance to exchange stuff for the gold coins. Secondly, when he dropped originally the large amount of :the two gold coins on the table, they had a surprised look, but their eyes were not blinded by greed.

In addition, the chief's wife was very much like his dead mother—-

“A mother-con huh.....”

Troubled, Ainz smiled from behind his mask. However, no one was able to see his smiling face which was a bit of a waste, also ever since he came to this world, he was kinder than before.

—Although skeletal.

“Even so, it is strange that you would still choose to associate with someone who has a monster like me.”

“.....Magic casters make fear into weapons. I have heard that before. and one of the people among the 13 Heroes is a Necromancer. That person really is terrifying.....”

“Hou, the 13 Heroes?”

Power burned in Ainz’s eyes. He had heard another important piece of knowledge. He needed to learn more in detail. Ainz wrote that in the memo in his heart, and closed it.

Chapter 11: Knowledge

“What the hell was that?!”

“! What is it? Has something happened?”

“Ah, no, something personal. My apologies. I have bothered you.”

Immediately, Ainz who had just made the sudden outburst, returned to his usual facade. If he had a human body, he would probably be perspiring.

The chief looked bewildered, and then immediately returned to his former expression.

Already, inside the chief’s head, magic casters are strange people—Or maybe he had become slightly different from one. Was that unexpectedly fortunate? Ainz thought about it.

“Shall I prepare more beverages?”

“Ah, no, I am fine.”

He raised his hand in rejection of the chief’s question.

Steam no longer rose from the cup of hot water which the chief’s wife prepared earlier. Ainz had not touched it with his mouth nor hand, if she had prepared any more he would have felt bad.

The wife was not inside this room. She had work outside—Various cleaning to do and left.

There were only the chief and Ainz inside this room.

After placing the Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown inside the Item Box, the first thing he heard about was the surrounding countries.

And the answer to that was the names of countries he had never even heard of.

At first, Ainz felt various feelings of discomfort, as he was still basing things on the world of Yggdrasil. Because he could use magic of Yggdrasil, it was the

natural thing to do.

However, he had learned about places of which he had never even heard of.

Names are like the Baharuth Empire and Re-Estize Kingdom were not found in Norse mythology which were used in the game of Yggdrasil.

His vision spinning, he grabbed the table with his gauntlets to support his body that was about to collapse. It was possible to understand, but it was still difficult.

And then the shock was bigger than he had thought.

Ainz calmed down, and recalled the surrounding countries and geography that he had learned.

First was the Baharuth Empire and the Re-Estize Kingdom. They were separated by a mountain range. South was a large forest that cut through the mountain range. And where it ended, was this village and a fort city. A fort city, which was built to withstand sieges. Actually, the Empire seemed to have a skirmish several times in an attempt to capture it.

Actually, the Empire was building a position near the fort city. There were rumors that a war might occur again soon.

And even further south of the fort city was another country.

The Slane Theocracy. Explaining the territories of the countries, if you drew a circle, they would form an inverted T-shape. On the left was the Re-Estize Kingdom, the right was the Baharuth Empire, and the bottom would be the Slane Theocracy. There were other countries, but that was the limit of the chief's knowledge.

In addition, the chief of such a small village would not know anything about their military might.

Basically, that was—

“A failure.”

—There was a chance that the knights earlier were from the Slane Theocracy. It was possible that their strategy was to incite a war with the Kingdom by causing trouble in the villages bordering the forest.

He was wrong to let all of the knights go. He should have captured several of them to extract information. He had calmed down but not thinking that far was stupid of him.

While thinking about the Slane Theocracy, he should do something about the Empire.

Ainz thought.

What would happen if he was the only one that came to this world.

If there were one or two Players, there would be no problem. The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick had enough battle potential to rival 30 level 100 Players. If he included his cash items, Ainz could probably fight two or more.

At first, it is good to think that fighting would be dangerous. However, Ainz was not that childish so as to act without thinking about the worst possible case, it is best to think about the problem and the solution from the start.

If relations were good then he need not think of ways to prevent this. He would think about the countermeasures when the time comes.

The problems were the guild with Asgard's flying castle, the guild with the frozen palace in the deepest part of Helheim, and the guild that owned the field which spawned Fire Giants in Muspelheim. These 3 guilds rivalled Ainz Ooal Gown.

If this guild came, it would be beneficial if they began a friendly relationship.

However, if that was not the case?

He did not know how many guild members were left. And there were several people who could easily rival himself. It was important to behave such as to prevent any future hostilities. On the other hand, knowledge of their war potential needed to be gathered.

If there were Yggdrasil players in large quantities, whether united, or separate due to their personal interests. It would be good if he was able to get along with other Japanese players. At that time, he would also want to join them. If they had no relations to "Ainz Ooal Gown", he could assist them without limit.

The problem was if that group saw him as an enemy. While he thought that it was impossible, he could not say that the possibility did not exist.

Firstly, they could be targeted by other players by their sense of justice or for righteousness. To avoid this, Momonga himself needed to avoid antagonistic actions—For example, attacking the surrounding areas. If he massacred people or made bad decisions, there was a chance that it would upset other players. Of course, there may be other reasons to form an alliance with him. However, it may be for something like assisting in the capture of villages like this.

Basically, as long as their actions from now on were for a good cause, it would be convenient. Basically “although I did not want to do it, I had no other choice”.

Next was the possibility that they held a grudge against Ainz Ooal Gown. They would probably not be able to avoid a fight. Defensive measures will be necessary. This is a problem for later.

And there was the choice of shutting himself within the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

It is not difficult to imagine how stupid it would be to conduct a siege without reinforcement.

“.....So I was not wrong, huh.”

“Did something happen earlier?”

“No, it was nothing. I just thought that things were a little different. I apologise. More importantly can you tell me about coins.?”

“Yes, I understand.”

The chief placed several copper coins on the table.

“Trade of Currency—Trade, the symbol of the god of business is a wheel, and so one side is a wheel. The other side has the carved symbol of the merchant guild.”

While they had no gold coins, he had let Ainz see the copper coins. Ainz flipped the coins over to see if there were any engravings.

And going back to an earlier topic, the conversion rate of the coins.

As an abbreviation, let us call them gold coins. This was the most trusted expensive coin by the merchant guild in circulation.

It weighed 10 grams. Weight matter more than the size to the price, but its diameter was 30mm.

Coins were separated into copper, silver, gold and platinum, and about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the copper coins were made from brass. Platinum coins were rarely used. And the chief and his wife had never seen one in their entire life. Basically only merchants and nobles used them.

The conversion rate for the coins was 1000 Copper = 100 Silver = 10 Gold = 1 Platinum

If you converted the price of a copper coin into Japanese Yen, it would be about 1000 yen. One gold coin is equivalent to 100,000 yen.

It was the basic wage of 1 day of work for a craftsman, about 1 silver coin. Farmers would earn less, about 6 copper coins.

That means prices are expensive. A cup made of ceramic would cost about 2 copper coins. On the other hand, food is cheap.

When primary industries are cheap, secondary industries are expensive.

Ainz was relieved. His feelings of being a financial burden were relieved.

Yggdrasil currency of 1G would seem to be about 1,000,000,000. It seems that there was no need to touch the treasures that his friends have left behind.

While it may seem that 1 gold was a lot of money, top class weapons in Yggdrasil's player shop were at least 100 million. And if something was Over Enchant Data, not even 1 gold could buy anything. Several of the items that Ainz was using were worth more than 1 gold.

Monsters also existed. Numerous magical beast exists in the heart of the Great Forest along with Demi-Humans such as Elves, and Goblins. The demi-humans had made a country of their own.

There were people known as Adventurers that repelled monsters. It seemed that quite a few were magic casters. Of course, the chief have not see them in person, and he had only heard of their feats from visiting merchants. However,

if Momonga himself went to large cities, he would be able to find them in the Adventurer Guilds.

And so he wanted to learn more about the fort city.

This fort city. While the chief did not know the exact figures, the population of the walled city was quite substantial. Since the city is situated in an area which is bordering three countries, it was build to withstand sieges and the city never changed hands till this day.

If they were collecting information, this was probably the best. Ainz decided as such.

And lastly, it was something to laugh at, but—

If this was the world of Yggdrasil, it would not be strange if Japanese existed. This was because it was a Japanese game. Therefore in a completely foreign world, it was weird that Japanese language could be easily understood.

And so, Ainz watched the mouth movements of the chief, but the funny thing was that he was not speaking Japanese.

The movements of the mouth, did not match the sounds coming out of it.

From that he wanted to perform several experiments. At first the chief had made a dubious face, but when told that the magic experiments were harmless, he agreed.

In conclusion.

This world had eaten Translation Konnyaku. No one knew who had fed it to them.

Rather than using a language, it would translate the words to the partner's own language automatically.

For example in net terminology, there are words such as wktk*. Old men that do not use the net would probably not understand it right? No way they would. However, in this world they could.

It was because it conveyed the essence of words. It was not an exaggeration to say that it is the implication of words that is conveyed. It felt like at the same time as the mouth speaks, the meaning will be conveyed telepathically.

If words are recognised as words, humans would probably be able to communicate with animals. For example, dogs and cats.

The problem was that why the heck was it happening.

And then it was not something strange to the chief.

That was completely natural.

—Basically it is one of the world's laws. If you thought about it calmly, magic—The rules of entropy completely did not exist in this world. In fact, it would not be strange if the world functioned on completely different laws.

The problem was that only Ainz did not know much of the laws that govern this world.

For example.

It is a hot midsummer day, and you were about to enter a McDonald's, and the man in front of you bought a Coca Cola. And then he left the building. Your ice melted, would you notice it?

There is no way that you will notice it. That was a natural occurrence which guided by the rules of nature.

And so if a magic caster goes out into the world that hid his ability for a month, and Ainz goes out, who would pay attention? There was no way anyone would. Why? It was completely natural.

It was a stupid reason but understandable.

In addition the important thing is that if there was no such thing as common sense, mistakes would be made.

The current Ainz was lacking it. He had to do something. However, he had no good ideas. Should he bring back someone and get them to spit out all of their common sense? Reckless.

There was only one way to get it.

“.....Looks like I really have to go to the city.”

He needed a lot of good examples to learn about common sense. When in Rome, do as the Romans do. It was something that humans of the past can fully

appreciate.

He needed to learn about this world's relation with magic.

There were still a lot of things that he needed to find out.

While Ainz was thinking, the sound of soil being stepped on came from the direction of the thin wooden door. It did not seem too far away. The man probably was not in a hurry.

The same time that Ainz had faced the door, a knock echoed through the room. The chief looked towards Ainz for his response. He had no reason to refuse.

"I do not mind."

"My apologies."

The chief lightly bowed his head, stood up, and walked to the door. When the door opened, a single villager was standing there. He looked first at the chief, then at Ainz.

"Chief. While I understand that you are with a guest, but preparations for the funeral are completed....."

"Oh....."

The chief sent his sight towards Ainz as if requesting for permission. Naturally, Ainz made no signal to stop him.

"I do not mind."

"Thank you very much, Tell everyone that I will head over immediately."

"Understood."

As the village left and shut the door, the chief faced Ainz and lowered his head.

"I truly apologise. I have to handle the funeral, so please give me a bit of time."

"I understand.....I have something to request of you. But I would like to discuss it with everyone in the village.

In the end, he did not learn about anything related to the 13 Heroes.

*Henet: wtkk is an abbreviation for wakuwaku tekateka. It means excited trembling for a future event.

Chapter 12: Departure

The mass funeral was held in the cemetery, at the outskirts of the village. There were no gravestones. Only boulders with the deceased names etched on them.

The chief led the funeral by reciting prayers for the dead. His prayers were to the names of gods that was not found in the game of Yggdrasil, wishing to them to allow the departed to rest in peace.

Due to a shortage of available hands, not all the corpses were buried. This was the first round of funerals.

Ainz stood away from the villagers and watched. Among the village congregation were the figures of the two sisters that he saved—Enri and Nemu Emmott. They had a sort of calm and relieved look on their face at the end, they were probably recalling their parents' faces.

That man huh—

Ainz was grasping a 30cm long wand underneath his robes. The wand was made from elephant tusk and the front end of the wand was gold plated. The remaining portion was the grip and it was decorated with numerous runes. Overall, the wand gave off the feeling of a holy artefact.

—-<Wand of Resurrection>

The wand is an item that possesses the ability to resurrect the dead. Naturally Ainz did not own just one. Even after resurrecting all the villages, he will still have quite a lot of the wands remaining.

However, the village chief mentioned that there is no magic that can resurrect the dead in this world. If Ainz uses the wand, he would most likely make a miracle.

The funeral approached the end of the prayer session and Ainz slowly returned the wand back inside his Item Box.

Ainz can easily resurrect the dead. However, he did not do so. This is not because of any religious sentimentality. But because he thinks that there is no benefit to it.

A magic caster that can bring death and a magic caster that can revive the dead. It won't be hard to imagine which one will bring more troubles to him. Although he could have requested the villagers to keep his ability a secret as per-terms of resurrection, he doubt that this can be kept a secret for long.

The power to resist death. It was something that everyone would yearn for.

If there are any changes to the situation, he might do it but there was currently too little information.

Basically he was watching lives that he could save being thrown away for his sake.

Underneath the mask, Ainz displayed a ridiculing smile. He saw Nemu and Enri crying loudly.

Ainz was walking on the small path that leads to the outside of the village. The Death Knight followed him from behind.

Although he was interrupted by the funeral ceremony, he had used quite some time to learn more of the common knowledge of this world and news about his surroundings. By the time he had left, the sky was darkening.

"Now, I will be leaving."

"Ainz-sama. Please come to the village again. This time we will properly thank you."

"No, that will be unnecessary. If Chief-dono still has some stuff and brings it to my place, it will be a lot of help. Naturally, next time it will be money."

"Understood. Then until that time."

The smiling village chief shook hands with Ainz by grasping his metal gauntlet. It seems that he had already warmed up to him. Ainz was content by the village chiefs warm hospitality and began walking.

Leaving the chief's house, there was a villager with a determined look on her face. Ainz's eyes widened beneath his mask. He did not think that this girl would

come again.

There was Enri Emott.

“.....Is it fine?”

“Yes.”

“Have you ridden a horse before?”

“Yes.”

At the corner of the village square were two of the captured horses from the knights. One of the horses were carrying luggage while the horse was armored.

“.....However, why are people with riding experience plentiful in this village?”

“Long ago, someone from this village participated in a war. As a reward for good service, many goods were provided. Among them were horses. He taught the children how to ride them. Thus many children in this village are capable of riding horses.”

When he asked the chief, he immediately responded.

I see. From among several people gathered, he had chosen her.

Although it was harsh to hear, she was chosen because her death will not affect the village the most. Men could be used to rebuild the village, when compared to a young girl who lost both of her parents, there was a difference.

“Then as promised, 200 gold coins.”

Ainz gave a leather sack, given by the chief, which contains gold coins to Enri. The sack weighed four kilos. Enri opened the sack to confirm the contents before passing it to the chief.

“Please do.”

“Okay.”

The chief solemnly nodded and Ainz opened his mouth in continuation.

“Please rest assured. If you do not return, I promise that I will bring you to see your sister about once a year. Chief-dono—That is acceptable right.”

“Yes. Understood.”

200 gold pieces. It will be a huge sum to the villages if it reaches 400 gold pieces. To a pair of orphaned sisters, the sum was required for their long term living maintenance. Of course the sum will be a bit much if the elder sister dies, leaving behind the growing younger sister. This is worrisome to the Ainz, who greeted them. he breath a sigh of relief and Enri’s shoulders relaxed.

Ainz put the goat skin parchment written by the chief into the scroll case

“I will be in your care.”

“Yes.”

Enri received the scroll case and placed it on her hip.

“Then, I will be leaving.”

“A lot of thanks for various things, chief-dono.”

“No, I as well, thank you very much. Ainz-sama. No one in this village will forget what you have done for us.”

The chief bowed deeply as he waved goodbye, and Ainz responded. At that, Enri bowed her head in a panick.

Enri walked towards the two horses.

“That is ma~, not much need for that.”

The two arrived in front of the horses. Ainz took out two small horns from his Infinity Haversack. These were magic items that were previously prepared during the return from the funeral.

It had no distinguishing features, normal horns.

However, each horn has magic that is capable of summoning a Goblin Troop.

It was an item that could summon 12 level 8 Goblins, 2 level 10 Goblin Archers, 1 level 10 Goblin Mage, 1 level 10 Goblin Cleric, 2 level 10 Goblin Riders and Wolves, and 1 level 12 Goblin Leader, a horn that was easily for sale.

Since they were weak yet numerous, they would be a bother while hunting, and so it was not used. Since it was dangerous, it was listed on 2ch as a

dangerous item.

“This item, when blown, summons monsters for about one hour. If something occurs, you can give orders to the monsters summoned from this horn. If your work is finished and you still have not used it, you can keep it if you like.”

“Thank you very much.”

Enri examined the items several times, then place it within her pockets. Then she observed Ainz with a strange expression.

“.....What is it?”

“Y, you really are the one that came to save us, right?”

“.....What do you mean?”

“U, um.....”

“It might have been a different person with the same mask.”

Ainz only inserted the memory of him appearing in a mask and gauntlet when he modified the sisters memories. The remaining portion were left untouched, but.....

Ainz made a weird motion with magic, and made a face like he missed something. However, he felt lethargic when he heard her words.

“That tone of voice is.....”

“.....Hah. It is basic to change your way of speaking when talking to different people, normally.”

He used the same scary voice as earlier and Enri jumped in shock.

“I, I truly apologise!”

“Ah, it’s fine. I’m not particularly mad.”

Ainz grasped the bowing Enri and forced her up. Many villages that were waiting at side were hoping that Ainz will forgive Enri.

The hand that was grasped by the gauntlets probably hurt. Enri rubbed the part of her hand that Ainz had grasped.

“I will be praying for your safe return.”

“Yes.”

She was heading towards one of the Empire’s stronghold within the region. The chief mentioned that the Empire constantly attacked the village. The reason Enri was headed there was to convey the foolishness of the Empire’s actions and to announce the annihilation of the knights by Ainz.

It was to inform the Empire about the existence known as Ainz.

One was the issue of the knights that he spared.

It is likely that because of his own decision, news of him will undoubtedly spread around in the nearby areas. However, he felt that it is better for him to regulate the news of him that was being spread. Since he had saved several knights, he might be able to get a favour. However, it was not clear which country the knights were from.

Why was this so? It was because it will be hard to suppress the spread of information about him.

Without information about this world, it will be dangerous for him to act rashly. It might be a better tactic for him to hide himself and covertly gather intelligence.

However, he had saved the village, and so he could not do it.

Even if I annihilate the attacking knights, the country that sent them will most likely send someone to investigate the matter. Like the scientist from my world, they might be capable of using investigative magic.

Even though there might not be strong investigative magic, an investigation on the surviving villagers will bound to happen. By then, how will the Kingdom think of him?

Considering the assumption to reduce information leakage, it might be a good idea to bring all the villagers back to Nazarick. But from the Kingdom side, this can be considered as a kidnapping.

How about being saved by a travelling magic caster? A magic caster that can easily kill off the knights. What will be the evaluation of him by each country then?

No matter which side, if they investigated Ainz, they may reduce the his punishment if he surrendered himself voluntarily.

Among the three countries, Kingdom, Empire, Theocracy, which one should Ainz choose to hide himself?

If a Yggdrasil player is present, information of him or her will surface. Ainz will need sometime to gather information. Of course, if he wanted to go into the town, they could brainwash people into thinking that Demiurge is a merchant.....However, the risks are abundant. There was a chance of making needless enemies. And so joining a country for information contains the most merits.

And for the sake of preserving the autonomy of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, it would be good to have a shield of authority to hide behind. Ainz did not look down upon the strength of a country. This was further spurred on by the fact that they did not know the limit to the strength of an individual. There was a chance that there was a person stronger than Ainz in the three countries.

If it comes to a battle which both sides having similar strength, he will not desist. If there was an existence that was level 10,000 in one country, then another country should have someone that can rival him.

Which country should he choose? It would be a decision that would bring both many demerits and merits. The problem was what sort of position he should take.

He would like to destroy the slave-like positions if there were any. Also any black-hearted companies.

And so he would like to appeal for an existence with lots of influence. He would support the most suitable person.

This is common knowledge in the working world.

Originally Ainz going there himself would be faster.

However, it was not known how the talks would turn out. And the war potential too was unknown.

The one that accepts the job knows that risk of the task is high. They must prepared to face their own death.

That was Enri's job.

With that 200 gold coins, he had bought the life of Enri.

"Ainz-sama, thank you for saving us."

".....n"

Enri bowed respectfully to Ainz.

Ainz wanted to vomit because of his disgust of gambling the life of a cute young girl. If it was Ainz, he could maybe use transportation magic to escape, but other magic probably would do. Back to the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick and bring out monsters.

However, that was because the opponent was not being cautious. The only reason why he sent a young girl was because it would be easier to read the opponents.

".....Are you.....Really fine?"

"?"

"If you go, you may not be able to come back. You understand that right?"

"....."

".....There was the option of having no one go. I was not really forceful, so why?"

"Without money we have no way to live."

Enri replied calmly. Ainz fought hard to suppress his invisible tears that is welling at the corners of his eyes.

".....n"

"Because my two parents have died, and the village is in this situation. It would be terrible if you saw us as troublesome. And so Ainz-sama's words.....To us they were a saving grace."

"I may not have to do this, but I may not be able to carve out a living using

only what my parents left behind.”

“That may be so. Or maybe not.”

If you own a sum of money of 200 gold coins, then you should be fine, right?,

an outsider would probably say that. Ainz would do the same. However, seeing the girl’s eyes, a human that could say those words did not exist.

Ainz understood the urge to prove that she is worth every penny paid . This is not a game. One cannot see the gold pieces as a game currency anymore. People are willing to risk their lives just for a small sum of gold.

Feeling light headed, Ainz put strength in his legs.

She understood that her life did not mean much.

Ainz reminded himself to cast aside his doubts. His action of extending a helping hand to the adorable children was the right option.

Ainz moved his sight. Under the shadow of one of the houses in the village square was Enri’s younger sister—Nemu.

The farewell had ended but she was staring at her sister with a lonely expression. This could be her last farewell to her sister. Under Ainz observation, he knew that she is trying hard to carve this memory into her mind.

Why won’t she cry? Why won’t they say farewell at a closer distance? Why will she not hate Ainz that is sending her sister on a dangerous mission.

Ainz does not know.

But—

“.....Take this with you.”

Ainz took out a scroll from the Infinity Haversack.

“This is?”

“It is a scroll that allows you to return to a specific location. Once invoked, you can directly return here. However, its function is yet to be confirmed. It might not work at all. If you face any complications that you are not able to overcome with the horn, use the scroll.”

“Thank you!”

“After the completion of the task, do visit my home. I will prepare a feast for you.”

“Yes. Will it be alright if I bring my sister along??

“Of course. I will be waiting for your arrival.”

I am sure my friends will understand.

The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. Entry is forbidden to any outsiders. As Ainz watches Enri’s departure, he silently hoped that she will be the first guest of the tomb.

At the same time, his heart is thinking of something foolish.

What are the most important things to him, do not make a mistake on that. Think, think clearly.

It is just like a curse.

Chapter 13: The Warrior Captain of the Kingdom

Ainz watched Enri as she left the village. With that, everything he needed to do here has been completed.

The spoils of armor and swords had been collected and placed inside the Infinity Haversack. Nothing was left behind. Anything that happens after this will be the village's problem. Only the dead and the injured remained, precaution will not be needed because it is bothersome. But, what should he do about her sister.

The best thing to do would be until she comes back, he should leave some monsters nearby. It will be best if he would contact and discuss this with Demiurge. His underlings are best suited for this type of work.

Ainz decided that he needed to say some parting words to the chief, and so looked for him the the village square.

At one corner of the square, several surviving villages seems to be discussing something with serious expressions. Ainz felt that some of them have decided on several decisions. As Ainz walked closer, he felt the sense of foreboding getting stronger.

The atmosphere changed, and felt tense.

".....Has something happened? Chief-dono."

"People that seem like warriors are currently approaching on horseback....."

"I see....."

The village chief looked at Ainz with a pleading expression. It was the same from the other villagers.

Ainz understood the meaning behind their actions. He raised his hands gently to calm the villagers.

"Please leave it to me. Please assemble the remaining people in chief-dono's house. Chief-dono and I will be at the open space."

The bell sounded and villagers gathered at the chief's house. Ainz ordered the Death Knight to stand guard nearby.

Ainz tried to smile at the nervous chief. Obviously due to the mask, his smile went unnoticed.

"Do not worry. This time will be special and I will save you for free."

The chief smiled bitterly. But, his trembling had lessened considerably. He might be hungry too.

Soon, a number of riders appeared at the central road leading towards the square. They fell into formation and moved into the square silently.

"Fumu....."

Ainz developed a sense of foreboding after looking at the knights' equipment.

The previous knights bearing the Empire's emblem have matching sets of equipment. Although the new arrivals were armored, the sets of armor doesn't match after comparing them to the former. There is a huge difference with some wearing leather armor while others bear metal armor.

Some do not even have helms. The similarity of each helm is that the face of the wearer is exposed.

Each of them held various weapons, a sword with a common design, others carried bows, a one-hand spear, and even maces.

If you say it nicely, they can be considered as a group of veterans. On the other hand, they can be called a group of mismatched mercenary group.

Not long after, all of them reached the village square. A total of 14 riders.

A few of them were wary of the Death Knight. They formed a perfect line in front of Ainz and the chief and one of the riders moved towards them.

There were no phrases to describe his strong physique. His build was like steel. He looks young, approximately 30 years old. With a stone-edge face, he might be older than expected.

The hair was trimmed neatly and he radiated a strong sense of danger.

The man's gaze swept over the chief and stopped at the Death Knight. After confirming that it was not moving, he switched his sight to Ainz.

The air seems to simmer with a violent tension. But Ainz seemed to ignore him nonchalantly. He displayed the air of an expert.

Of course, this is not because Ainz cannot detect the intense gaze directed at him.

I haven't felt the sense of fear ever since I had this body. Or is it because I can use my abilities in Yggdrasil that I am confident?

“—I am, from the Re-Estize Kingdom, the Kingdom's Warrior Captain, Gazef. Receiving orders from the king to repel knights from the Baharuth Empire that are causing trouble here, we have been patrolling the villages.”

The voice that is deeper than what was expected from his looks, reverberated in the square. A commotion seemed to have broken out from the chief's house.

“The Kingdom's Warrior Captain.....”

Ainz leaned towards the chief and whispered quietly into his ear.

“.....What sort of person is he?”

“I have heard from merchants. It is a position obtained from winning the Kingdom's tournament, the person in command of the best warriors of the king.”

“Hou.....Is this true?”

“I do not know. I do not know about him except from stories.”

Ainz observed the group of knights, the Kingdom's crest was carved on their chest. it is the same as what the chief described. But still, not many were convinced.

“You must be the village chief.” Gazef's line of sight moved to the chief. “I would like you to tell me who the heck is the person right next to you.”

“.....”

“Nice to meet you, Kingdom's Warrior Captain-dono. I am Ainz Ooal Gown. A

magic caster that came to save the village when it was attacked by knights.”

Before the chief can reply, Ainz introduced himself ceremoniously. followed with a slight bow towards the Warrior Chief. In reply, Gazef lowered his head.

“I do not have words to express my gratitude for saving this village.”

“No no. Actually I saved this village for a reward, so please do not mind.”

“Then please excuse me but, what sort of people had attacked the village? I would like to hear about this in detail.”

“I do not mind but, what about chief-dono?”

“No, I do not mind as well.”

“Then let’s hear it.”

“I do not mind but, it would be good to explain fully, but it cannot drag on. Shall we take a seat and talk?”

“Fumu.....There’s a reason but.....”

“Most of the knights were killed. By my simple opinion, it is likely that they will not attack here again. I would like to make this clear.”

“I see.”

As Gazef went into deep thoughts, his gaze once again paused at the Death Knight.

Did he smell the faint traces of blood?

“That is?”

“A subordinate that I had created.”

“Hou.”

Gazef’s sharp gaze observed every inch of Ainz carefully.

“Then that mask is.”

“Something due to my position as a magic caster.”

“Could you remove it?”

“I will have to refuse. That—” He pointed to the Death Knight. “Will be bad if

it rampages.”

The chief made a worried face as he knew the power of the Death Knight. And then Gazef heard the voices of the villagers inside the chief’s house. He felt their expressions change quickly, and so he nodded.

“I see. It would be best not to remove it then.”

“Thank you very much.”

“Then—”

“Before that. I apologise but the villagers were just attacked by knights from the Baharuth Empire, and so I think that the villagers will recall their fear from the fact that everyone is carrying weapons. And so I believe that it would calm everyone down if you could leave your weapons in the centre of the village?”

“.....That is logical. However, this sword was bestowed upon me by the king. I cannot remove it unless it is the king’s order.”

“—Ainz-sama.”

“Chief-dono.”

The chief nodded towards Ainz. That is something irrefutable.

“I truly apologise for that. Asking you to remove it.”

“No, Ainz-dono. I believe that your thoughts were extremely correct. Had it not been given to me by the king, I would have happily put it down. Now, let us take a seat and talk about this in detail.”

“Understood. To my house then.”

“Umu. Then all you guys help out around the village.”

“Ha!”

The soldiers lining up behind agreed.

After the villagers left, the trio which consisted of the chief, Ainz and Gazef went inside the house to discuss the details of the incident.

The warriors went to work each on their own, time for them to get busy. There are many things that needed to be done. For example, one of families

were completely wiped out. Any remaining scenes from that tragedy was not permitted to linger. Hence, alchemical oil will be used.

The dismantling work was necessary. Henceforth, it is required that all the belongings in the house to be remove first. The work required quite some effort.

The warriors had to remove their armor, before using their limited individual strength to remove all the valuables. The job will proceed faster if they just chuck the valuables. But, these belongings is to be shared among the survivors as their owners are deceased. Hence, careful treatment is required.

They worked diligently. Several houses needed to have their valuables transferred.

Fresh graves needed to be dug in order for the funeral to proceed. Demonic presence might infect the corpses if left unattended, allowing for undead to rise.

Undead—

They were monsters that move although their they had lost their lives. They were quite common at battlefields. However, they may also appear in various tragic scenes from bodies that were left unattended. Zombies, Skeletons and Ghouls are the more famous of them.

The early completion of burials is vital to prevent such a phenomenon from occurring.

The village had its own funeral rites. They first dug a hole, and could do nothing but leave the body inside.

As everyone was busy with work, the Death Knight that was standing guard beside the chief's house was being examined by three warriors.

“Like, this guy is huge.”

One of the warriors touched the Death Knight. The leather which separates the metal portions of the armor is cold to the touch.

“From the talk of the villagers, this guy killed many of the Empire's knights.”

“Wow. Really? But, since it's huge, it's movements should be slow.”

“That’s true.”

“But, does it really move? Looks like nothing but a corpse to me.”

“Who knows. Ma~, it looks good enough as a shield.”

Pointing towards the large shield on the left hand, the warriors began to laugh. That the due to their self-confidence.

As a matter of fact, within the Kingdom, the 180 people that formed the corps of the Kingdom’s Elite Knights were the cream of the crop. They were the most trusted group of the king. Their ability enabled them to go one on one with the knights of the Empire and gain an easy victory.

“Warrior-sama, if you anger it you might die.”

A teenager of the village told them from afar. The three knights looked at each and other and laughed again.

“Haha, it’s fine. It’s fine. We are the elite warriors of the Kingdom.”

“Don’t stand so far away and come here. Even if it rampages we will protect you.”

A red fire seemed to appear within the one of the empty eye sockets of the Death Knight, staring at the warriors. The young boy who saw it ran away immediately.

“Oi, what’s wrong bouzo*?”

“Awa.”

The youngster pointed towards the Death Knight and the knights followed the child’s finger. There was no red light. Only a sleeping corpse remained.

“What happened?”

The knights looked at the direction of the youngster, whom had already ran away. Looking at the youngster that decide the flee and hide at home, the knights laughed.

“It really is scary, this huge thing.”

“Yup.”

“It’s appearance really looks scary. And that face.”

“However magic casters that can use necromancy, one was a part of the 13 Heroes.”

“What’s that?”

“Don’t know. They were amazing heroes from the past. I heard it in class, but I forgot their names.”

“Fu—n. But it’s impossible for that weird mask guy to be a hero.”

Once again, the laughter of those three spread around the square. Still, the Death Knight remained dormant. It was indeed scary.

“—I see.”

After taking a gulp from the cup of lukewarm water, Gazef opened his mouth. He remained quiet and nodded occasionally as Ainz and the chief recapped the events.

“I said it earlier but, Ainz-dono. You have my gratitude for saving this village.”

“No, I have said it earlier but I was searching for a reward.”

“If modesty goes too far, it sounds like sarcasm.” Gazef sent a beast-like gaze towards Ainz, and then faced the chief. “Could you let me see the armour that the knights were wearing?”

“Sure.”

Noticing the meaningful gaze from the chief, Ainz opened the Infinity Haversack. He took out a piece of armor, one which had the least damage. He placed the section with the emblem closer to Gazef so that he can examine it. Gazef was momentarily taken aback by how such an armor can be taken out from such a small bag, but immediately rectified it.

“Chief-dono, is this the right one?”

“Yes, there is no mistake.”

Nodding grimly, Gazef received the armor with both hands. He examined it closely, flipped it, and also gave it a slight knock. Not long after coming to his conclusion, he placed the armor on the table.

“This really is the Empire’s armour.” Looking closely at the design of the armour, he continued. “But wearing it does not give much protection in the middle.”

“So?.....”

The chief did not comprehend the meaning of those words, he looked puzzled.

“There is a chance that the Slane Theocracy acted as the Empire’s knights.”

“Why would they?!”

“To worsen the relationship between the Empire and the Kingdom. Probably. It’s quite obvious.”

Ainz took a sweeping glance at Gazef but remained silent. Based on the body language, he wanted to say something. The village chief was deeply shocked by such a revelation. Then, Gazef began to speak in a serious tone.

“.....Any way the Death Knights that swepted up the knights, that is Ainz-dono, how many do you have?”

“This is the only one.”

“.....Could you make another one if you had time?”

“Yes.”

After hearing Ainz’s answer, Gazef slowly closed his eyes. It was hard to discern the color of his pupils.

After a few seconds elapsed, he opened his eyes again.

“I did not think much of it in the centre of the village but.....It would seem to be my misunderstanding.”

“.....”

The expression underneath the mask did not change. But even so—

“If it is from the Kingdom’s strongest, then it is natural.”

Ainz smiled underneath his mask and spoke casually. Gazef looked at Ainz for a moment, then changed his view to the armor after losing his interest.

“.....Now, I apologise but I would like to take this back with me.”

“I do not mind if you are simply buying it.”

Ainz and Gazef exchanged sharp glances. Of course, because of the mask the assumption could be flawed.

“.....How much is it?”

“This armour feels quite light. Magic was probably casted on it. And so the price increases. It’s like that.”

The atmosphere was heavy. The chief was barely able to handle it and timidly observed both parties.

“Currently, I do not have much, a few days.....Yes, Nazarick was it? Do you mind us bringing it there?”

“.....That will be troublesome. Even if you come, there is a chance that I am not there.”

“Then what about if we meet at the town?”

“.....It is not bad but.....” Ainz looked up at the sky, thought and opened his mouth. “I have to return to Nazarick and prepare various things, and so I will have to refuse.”

“Fumu.....Then what about payment in a different form?”

“What sort of form?”

“That is why I am asking you.”

The tension was building up.

Between Ainz that wanted to sell it higher and Gazef who wanted the magical armor. There was a conflict of interest, cold wind seems to blow.

“Then.....What about this. Have a bout with my Death Knight.”

“Wha-?!”

The chief shouted out in surprise. Gazef was silent as he took another drink of water. No, it was just to the extent of wetting his lips.

“The difference between my subordinate and the one known as the

Kingdom's strongest. I want to know it."

"But, Ainz-dono!"

"—Understood."

The chief was anxious but he kept his lips shut however, a voice, that sounded like he was burnt, echoed throughout the room.

"Wh."

This time the one leaking a surprised voice was Ainz. After hearing that, Gazef shows a predatory smile.

"What is wrong, Ainz-dono. Were you just acting? You look surprised?"

"N, no, but, I believe that Gazef-dono will not walk out unscathed."

"I do not mind. I will properly deliver my own to your subordinate."

Ainz was surprised by Gazef's suggestion. Achieving a mutual agreement with this uncouth person was still possible. He might also want to investigate the extent of his strength. Based on this suggestion, Ainz himself might learn more.

Hence, this is a good chance.

The Death Knight was not an important pawn of Ainz. Comparing the time to summon another Death Knight and the price to learn about the strength of the Kingdom's Strongest, it was cheap.

Under the gaze of both the warriors and the villagers, both combatants, the Death Knight and the Warrior Captain Gazef stood at the middle of the square facing each other.

"Then, as per our promise, no matter which side wins, or if any injuries arise from the fight. Neither side can pursue the matter further."

Ainz was appointed as the temporary referee. Many warriors voiced their opinion that they should handle it but all of it was silenced by the Warrior Captain.

Ainz took back the flamberge from the Death Knight, and replaced it with a broadsword that was loaned from one of the warriors. Seeing this, Gazef

showed an expression that wanted to say something but he kept quiet it the end. Ainz noticed but ignored it.

Ma~, whatever I say will just be another excuse.

“Now, both sides, please get ready.”

Is it fine to have this sort of atmosphere before the fight?

Ainz seemed to sweat as he spoke to the two combatants.

The Death Knight was armed with a tower shield and a broadsword. While, Gazef was dual wielding a pair of Bastards swords. Gazef was in no way short, there was a difference in height by about 50 centimetres between the two. Just like a child and an adult. Just by looking at that, there seems to be an overwhelming difference in strength. Can Gazef win? That was on the mind in many of the onlookers.

—Death Knight. Instead of attacking, focus on defending.

“Then please begin.”

The Death Knight slowly advanced while performing a series of stabs with the sword. Gazef dodged the stabs effortlessly. This was the opening signal.

The clash of swords started.

A tempest and a river.

Which was which?

Their fight could be described as that.

The swords gleamed. As they clashed, it was as if two beams of light were crossing each other.

The swords from both sides contained traces of magical power which release magical sparks.

The sound of metal clashing were constantly released from each strike.

Some warriors were getting suspicious, while others were fearful, while others were stunned.

It was that amazing. There was no way they could protect him. The fact that

there was no hostility saved them. That sort of voice could be heard from among the warriors.

They had never seen the fight of humanity's strongest. Now, they can spectate it with their own eyes. The warriors unconsciously clenched their fist. Even during training, they never truly saw the true extent of the Warrior Captain's strength.

An upward slash. But the deflected sword came back once again at angle that was aiming for the opponent's head. The Death Knight swung its head backwards and the sword only grazed the helm and the shoulder armor.

The Death Knight possessed a special skill that allows the sword to bend like a whip. It blocked Gazef's sword and continued to slipping past the sword to swipe at Gazef's shoulder.

It will be impossible to evade. Anyone would think that way. But——
——He let go.

Everyone was shocked. Gazef let go of his own swords.

Before the Death Knight's sword reached his shoulders, Gazef caught the sword with both his palms.

The scene was just like a sword dance. What will happen next? It was unimaginable.

Gazef swung his sword and the Death Knight evaded. Next, the Death Knight swung its sword and Gazef evaded. Without leaving any room to breathe, the swords clashed again.

If you called it a sword dance, everyone would agree. If it was practised prior this should be possible. He wanted to think that way.

Dozen of strikes were exchanged but none hit the body.

Between the two, who was the stronger one? Many of the warriors were getting alarmed.

What are they doing now? They fainted four times? No, five? The warriors tried to explain what they saw but they could not keep up with the moves. The villagers stopped thinking about anything after witnessing such a fight.

The Death Knight's sword manage to cut Gazef's cape. Gazef bent his upper body to evade that strike.

A few strands of hair danced in the air. The already short hair was further shortened. How close was Gazef to being hit?

—At that moment.

It seemed to be the right time.

Having barely avoiding the sword seemed to be a situation in Gazef's favour. This was as the sword was now swung too far, so even the Death Knight with its strong arm should not be able to return a sword that had performed an overcut to its original position.

However, his opponent happened to be undead.

If a normal person suddenly did that then several muscles would easily tear. A backhand side-slash. The sword that would have normally bisected a human cut through thin air.

A gale blew past Gazef's head.

Ducked—Did he already predict that? Gazef avoided it by squatting.

Like that, Gazef's sword sort out the legs of the Death Knight, and stabbed —

The Death Knight leaped. He instantly jumped backwards to avoid the sword.

It was like a cat. It was both graceful and violent. An weightless-like elegance, it slowly landed on the ground.

Gazef slowly stood up, and the Death Knight once again readied its sword. The late cheer echoed in the village square.

"Fu!"

Gazef breathed heavily, and dashed with a bullet-like speed.

A sword flashed.

A volume that made you want to cover your ears. That sound occurred at the space between the tower shield and the bastard sword. The Death Knight's

body received that, and lost its balance for just a moment.

“Oooooo!!”

Gazef swung his sword at the tower shield with a roar. The Death Knight drew back its tower shield in an irritated manner, and swung at Gazef. Gazef then jumped backwards in retreat.

It was such a light movement that you would think that he was not wearing armour.

The wind born from the impossibly fast movement of the tower shield created a cloud of dust in the surroundings. Matching it, the two broke into a dash.

The sound of metal.

The two figures within the dust cloud came out unharmed. Gazef was the first to retreat backwards. Was he blown back? Or was it his own decision?

At this point in time, the surrounding spectators were simply protecting the silence.

Already, hearts understood when this battle was at human limits. Ainz looked at the the warriors that were about to take a breath and widened their eyes, and looking like they had forgotten something. The villagers had a gaze that showed that they did not understand much, except for the fact that they were watching something amazing.

In the midst of the amazing match, only Ainz was examining it with cold eyes.

His heart was wondering whether the opponent displayed his full strength, it will be perplexing if it is. He maintained his cool in contrast to the boisterous onlookers.

Ignoring Ainz's inner thoughts, the swords continued clashing.

The warriors and the villagers' faces reddened, and clenched their hands tightly. If they mistook the timing even slightly they would die, somewhere in their brains could recognise this, and that probably would fail.

There was something that they would never reach, a longing for the highest

peak.

The stiff sound of metal clashing rang, rang, rang, rang—

The speed of sword strikes both from both sides had gone beyond the limit.

The matching sounds sounded completely like one drawn out sound.

—In the end, Gazef's sword slid and left a wound on the Death Knight's face. The thought that it was nothing but a lucky strike was in everyone's eyes.

With the sword that scored a light hit due to luck.

And then Ainz's voiced echoed.

“—Let's stop there.”

The sounds of loud cheering erupted. It was a beautiful match. The band of warriors were celebrating their captain's victory.

“.....As expected of the Kingdom's Strongest. Gazef-sama.”

His breathing ragged and his face red, Gazef smiled at Ainz whose back is towards the crowd. Gazef showed a terrifying smile as he walked towards the unsurprised Ainz.

“I wonder if you let me win, Ainz-dono?”

Gazef took out his personal towel to wipe off his sweat. Killing intent leaked out from the gaps of the towel.

“No, it was not that complicated.” Ainz took a another step closer, and in a voice such that no one else could hear. “If I won, a lot of problems would arise.”

“—Hou.”

The atmosphere tensed. And Ainz took it calmly. Gazef wiped away his sweat, and placed the cloth in his pocket.

“I will remember that.”

“I left a set of armour in the chief-dono's house. Please feel free to bring it back with you.”

Observing the back of the departing Gazef, Ainz smiled lightly.

At least I found out the strength of the strongest warrior in the Kingdom.

It might be known that he had bought the fight. However, it is likely that Gazef will report to the King. He was not the type of human that will prioritise his own emotions over intelligence gathering. He should be deeply loyal to the King. This was determined when Gazef was asked to remove his weapon earlier, he rejected the suggestion to remove the sword granted to him by the king.

No matter how it looked, this transaction did not cost him.

A very satisfied Ainz looked at the Death Knight. When the heck will he disappear? That was the question in his mind.

*TL Note: Bouzo means boy or lad.

Chapter 14: Various Countries | Part 1

Re-Estize Kingdom, the royal capital. In the centre-most of it was the large Ro-Lente castle. Surrounding it was a protective wall and every 800 metres, were 20 circular giant towers.

There was Valencia Palace.

Within the palace itself, there was a room build for beauty instead of practicality.

A royal meeting was currently being held there. The contents of the meeting were unintelligent, and the words spoken were rather like unpractical dreams.

“This time we defeated those people from the Empire, let us keep up the momentum and bring the fight to them.”

“True, I had it with these constant harassments by the Empire.”

“Looks like it’s time to show our terror to those fools of the Empire.”

‘Well spoken. It is just as the Earl said.’

The laughter from these well dressed men echoed around the room.

Even when facing such a scene, the Kingdom’s Warrior Captain, Gazef, could not even show his worries. Gazef can only be exasperated by their speech and behavior.

Since returning from Carne Village, he intended to report the existence of the great magic caster, Ainz to the king. But instead, he was dragged into a moment like this, a meeting that only served to increase his mental fatigue. The constant fatigue only served to increase his weariness.

The fight between the Empire and the Kingdom will mostly result in the Kingdom suffering greater losses. The Kingdom mainly relied on conscripting villages to be soldiers. While the Empire trained a professional army and granting knighthood to deserving soldiers. From there, it is obvious who was the weak and who was the strong.

The Kingdom's army were mostly simple peasants. Even though they had managed to hold the Empire at bay near the borders of the fortress city. The strength of the Kingdom was slowly reduced after each battle.

The basic strategy of the Empire was to reduce the national strength of the Kingdom.

This was by the High Nobles, something that they could not understand.

They only believed that their authority was everlasting.

“—That magic caster should be caught and for sent for interrogation.”

“—That region has been a part of the Kingdom for a hundred years. How can we allow that magic caster to stay there.”

“—Please hold on a moment.”

Gazef spoke loudly to change the flow of the topic. Many of the nobles did not bother to hide their displeasure and showed a disgusted expression.

Gazef relied on his swordsmanship to rise rank by rank to be the warrior captain. To the nobles with a long family history, Gazef was just a newbie and the nobles hated him. The hatred was intensified by Gazef's unrivaled skill in sword.

The thought of letting a lowly peasant to sit equal with them nauseated them.

“I believe that magic caster displayed a friendly disposition to the Kingdom. If we tried to treat him high handedly—”

“—He could be a member of the Empire. It is important that we summon him to the capital and question him in detail.”

“—Furthermore, the such a situation developed because the Warrior Captain believed the magic caster easily.”

After hearing Gazef's words, several nobles stood up against him. Many more agreed with them.

“That's correct.”

“How can the Warrior Captain easily trust a suspicious masked man? After

hearing this, how can we think that he is not suspicious?”

“The so-call magic caster known as Ainz is unheard of. Even the well established National Magic Research Institute does not have a record of him. His background is absolutely mysterious.”

“It is likely that he is a human from the Empire.”

“From this perspective, the Warrior Captain has to be responsible for letting such a person escape.”

“.....che.”

“.....Enough. I do not think that the warrior captain’s decision was wrong.”

“Muu.....”

“If his majesty has spoken....”

The king on the throne let out a sigh. The nobles accepted it and withdrew their mocking smiles at the warrior captain.

Gazef raised his head and sent a look of gratitude to the figure that had his undying loyalty.

The king accepted it and nodded lightly.

The king of Re-Estize Kingdom. Lanpossa III.

White hair, his body was not healthy and his face was sickly.

The hand holding the royal scepter was as thin as a shrivel twig. The crown looks heavy on him

In power for 41 years. 62 years old. He was considered as some of the oldest in the country and should have abdicated the throne to a successor.

Problem was that there was no suitable candidate.

No, there was a prince.

However—He was not someone that was talented and could only serve to become the puppet of a the noble families.

“Your highness, we hear and obey. However, we cannot leave such a suspicious magic caster unattended.”

“But!”

“Anyway, we should send someone to bring him to the Kingdom forcefully and interrogate him.”

“.....But that sorcerer has a servant that is stronger than me. Forcefully detaining him will most likely.....”

“Fun. Warrior Captain-dono. Is your arm getting rusty?”

“Maa, it has been four years since the end of the tournament.”

Gazef clenched his fist to suppress himself. The opponents are the nobles, who wanted to infuriate him.

Three parts of the Kingdom's territory was under the king's power, with the high nobles occupying another three parts. The remaining four parts were divided amongst the lesser nobles. By this structure was Re-Estize Kingdom formed. The high nobles were eyeing the king's authority. By suppressing Gazef, they aimed to reduce the Kings authority.

However, using that magic caster as a tool for power struggle is very dangerous.

Underneath that mask, his identity was a mystery and he exerted an inhuman aura. If the mask was taken off, Gazef would not be surprised that the person was non-human.

And that Death Knight.

What would have happened if the flamberge was not exchanged with the broadsword? That was still not a serious fight. If it went all out it could probably match Gazef.

He also recalled that Ainz had nodded when he asked if more can be created over time. It was probably not simple to create an existence of that caliber, and it would probably be difficult to control multiple.

“Send the knights of my house, it should be easy to capture a mere magic caster.”

“No, it should be my house.”

Why? Why they would be suspicious of a magic caster who helped a village to the extent that they want to detain him? Wouldn't it be better to invite him to the capital instead?

He seemed like a sensible person. But it is unlikely that he would keep quiet from the treatment that he would receive.

Gazef looked at his own hands. He still recall the numbing sensation when he had received strikes from that corpse—the Death Knight.

“Please wait! Since it has been decided, please let me have the task of bringing him in.”

Hearing this, several of the nobles laughed.

“I believe this is not the job of the Warrior Captain?”

“I agree, this action goes beyond your authority—”

“Anymore and we will consider it rude.”

“True, it is just as he said. Absolutely rude.”

The nobles laughed again. The king showed a tired face.

“.....Warrior Captain, it is regretful that I cannot let you perform this mission. It is likely when you are out, that another band of Empire knights or other imposters might attack the villages.”

“If so, please seek the help of adventurers to protect the village—”

“Adventurers! Did you hear that everyone?”

“Yes, I heard it clearly too. The Warrior Captain is leaving the task of protecting the villagers to other people.”

“Such an unbelievable speech!”

“.....Ah. Let's just send a royal messenger. The meeting for today will be adjourned.”

Cacophony erupted.

Treating a nameless magic caster as an important person. The decision of the king was unacceptable to many nobles who openly showed their

displeasure. However, they did not have the gall to openly oppose the king's decision, hence they could only hide their anger while bowing in acknowledgement.

Gazef felt unease should the Kingdom viewed Ainz as an enemy.

The power struggle stemming from every single royal conference greatly tired him. Using his last remaining strength, he moved in the direction of the king's room within the palace.

He must advise the king not to underestimate nor treat the sorcerer, Ainz, lightly.

He saw the king's room. Standing next to it, soldiers were guarding it.

The sentries remain emotionless, but no friendly emotions could be felt. It was likely they were the lackeys of one of the nobles.

"I am here to request a meeting with the king."

"The princess has just entered the room."

".....Then I shall wait in the hall, please inform me when the king is ready to meet with me."

"Understood."

Under the escort of the sentry, Gazef arrived at the waiting hall. There, he saw someone that he expected.

There stood a male at the border of teenagehood and adulthood. The impression he gave off was like a strong fire.

He had sharp seppuku eyes and thick brows.

His body oozed out his iron like determination. Although he was expressionless, but one can see his seriousness in his sun-burned face.

The reason why he cut his hair short, was because it was convenient when moving, and so that it does not get in the way on the battlefield.

His whole body was fitted with a set of magical armor that radiated a white glow. There are no decorations on the scabbard that held a magic enchanted sword. The form indicated a battle ready stance. No matter what happens he

would be ready for battle.

The teenager sent a respectful look to Gazef and lowered his head. Gazef returned his salute with a slight bow.

Time past without a word between them.

Gazef found it difficult to interact with him, but he does not hate him. Instead, he actually admired the youth. However, the atmosphere in the room is rather heavy.

Both of them waited in silence until the sentry called them—30 minutes afterwards..

“You have waited long, Gazef-sama.”

“Ah.”

“And—Climb-sama, please follow along too.”

“Understood.”

Following Gazef, a hoarse voice that did not match with the owner’s appearance could be heard. To the boy, his voice was a thing of embarrassment, but to Gazef it was one worthy of pride. It was because he had practised until he had broken his voice.

With the sentry leading the way, the duo enters the King’s room. Naturally Gazef was in front.

“Pardon me.”

Gazef just entered the room and saw the king and another person. The figure of a beautiful woman.

Renner Theiere Chardelon Ryle Vaiself

She was the Kingdom’s third princess, who inherited the sparkling beauty of her mother, Renner. 17 years old. An adult, and an age where it would not be weird to be married. A point which the nobles constantly brought up.

She was truly beautiful. No, the words beautiful could not describe her. It was to the extent that a painting could not capture her.

Her long golden hair drifted behind her gorgeously. A smile flirted onto her

pale but healthy pink flower-like lips. Her deep blue eyes were like sapphires.

The detailed white dress really suited her, and a golden necklace dropped down from her neck.

“Pardon me.”

A rough voice could be heard from behind Gazef.

Renner’s smile brightened further.

“Climb.”

Renner spoke as she stood up. The escorting sentry left the room and returned to his station.

Climb was a soldier that served Renner. His skills as a soldier can be considered as one of the best in the Kingdom.

Some sweets were placed on top of the table the king and princess were sitting at. And there were two porcelain cups with a bit of red tea left inside. They probably had a fun talk.

Gazef felt remorseful for interrupting the Kings relaxation time. He opened his mouth.

“My King—-”

“I know this is about the magic caster.”

“Yes, Ainz-dono is an exceptionally skilled magic caster. It is dangerous to take him lightly.”

“Of course I know that, a person having a servant that can fight on par with you is not to be underestimated.”

“Then—-”

The King raised his hand to stop Gazef.

“Please understand. Sending the royal messenger is the best compromise under these circumstances.”

“.....”

“To fight against the Empire’s invasion, I need the strength of the noble

faction. If I blatantly refuse them , the Kingdom will fall apart without the Empire having to do anything.”

The Empire’s target was the fortress city within the king’s territory. Henceforth, the King required a large amount of military expenditure. The nobles of course would pay for part of it, but the amount paid is less compared to the amount that the king had to fork out.

Trying to secure fundings from the nobles faction though taxation was a dangerous move. It was expected that they would oppose the move strongly. It was likely that they would seek to replace him with the prince that would serve as their puppet. In fact, they were currently planning it.

Because of the situation, Gazef could not say anything else. The subtlety of politics was not his strong point. The king’s biggest compromise was to send a royal envoy.

“How I envy the Empire.”

Hearing this, Gazef chose to remain quiet.

Up to three generations ago, the Empire was building itself. But, the authority of the nobles were reduced. The process sped up after the current Emperor took the throne, creating an totalitarian country.

The current emperor. Reminiscing the emperor’s appearance in the battlefield. The figure of him that invited Gazef to be one of his subordinates.

He was like a natural born Emperor.

“Is he that powerful, that magic caster?”

A voice as lovely as a crystal wind chime sounded out. Sitting next to the silent Climb was Princess Renner who was listening to the conversation of the two at the side.

“Yes, his ability is beyond imagination.”

“More powerful than the Palace Magic Caster?.....”

Gazef recalled the figure of the royal magic caster. He himself can easily overwhelm him. However, he cannot picture himself overwhelming Ainz, instead a mental image of him being overpowered by Ainz came to mind easily.

“It is likely that a huge gap exists between them.”

“Mah.”

Lenner’s finger immediately grasped Climb’s sleeve. It was probably an unconscious action but, Climb’s expression hardened more than earlier, and became something like diamond.

“Kukuku.”

Seeing this, the King laughed. Gazef also let out a chuckle but stopped immediately.

“Climb is proficient in his sword skill. He always maintains a perfect form to protect the princess.”

“It will not be a problem when it comes to Climb. He is one of my knights.”

Baseless words. But, the fact that they were spoken by the princess would bring it to attention.

“—Since it has been decided as such, Otou-sama. Why don’t we send an extra person to go together with the royal envoy.”

““__””

Gazef and the King exchanged glances.

“Climb, what would you do?”

“.....”

Climb opened his mouth and then firmly closed it.

“Climb?”

After being asked another time, Climb gave up and responded. Some blood appeared from the previously clenched lips.

“.....A messenger that is ranked higher than the royal envoy. If it is our intention to let the other party know that the royal family holds him in high regards, sending a member of the royal family is more effective. But looking at the current situation—-”

“—There is a possibility that it is a sole decision made by someone seeking to

undermine the King's orders."

".....Yes."

It was just so.

The ambassador with the highest authority is someone within the royal family, and it was someone with a direct line to the throne.

Within the Kingdom, the only person in the royal family that was the most suited as an envoy was Princess Renner.

The Golden Renner. There is another reason for her name. She has proposed many ideas and new laws that were highly effective, and her personality was sparkling.

Many of her suggestions were primarily for improving the status of the civilians. However, it was not through directly helping them, but, through providing ideas and option to them instead. This did not only improve the living condition of the civilian but also raised their loyalty towards the royal family, and at the same time, increased their productivity.

However, most of the plans did not come into fruition as the nobles who did not want to see an improvement in civilians status disrupted those plans.

Renner did this not only out of kindness alone but also seek to improve the country's benefit. Only she can take on the role as a Royal ambassador.

However, the king had already decided to send a royal envoy. Renner's suggestion went against the royal decree. The king cannot show his weakness in front of the nobles. Hence a situation where the ambassador going against the king was not allowed to happen.

If the king was strong, he might have been able to protect a messenger. However, the current noble faction was stronger, and so he was unable to do so. They may also think of dealing a punishment. If Renner was used, the nobles may use her for whatever purpose they deem suitable.

Climb understood the situation. Who knows how the nobles will use Renner.

"I cannot do that."

The king's voice was sharp like a sword. Hearing this, Renner bowed. Climb

also bowed deeply.

“I have spoken too much. Please forgive me, father.”

“I still have things to discuss with the Warrior Captain. You two please leave.”

“Yes, father.”

Renner pulled the expressionless Climb out. Seeing the two of them forgetting the royal manners, the king smiled at them. In fact, he was smiling at them with a smile that he had lost long ago.

After the two left, the King's expression changed.

“.....As a king, I should not feel pity about this.”

Climb's status was lower than Gazef. To be more precise, he was a peasant of unknown birth.

He was someone picked up by Renner in the city. Then, he was small, thin and dying. Now, to protect his savior, he had worked hard. No, the words worked hard were not enough to describe it.

He did not have talent in the sword or magic. His physical strength was not exceptional as well.

However, he still overcame his weaknesses with his own effort.

For those humans that are born with talent, and those not, there is an impenetrable wall. However, that can be crossed. Climb was a good example.

But there are things that cannot be surpassed. Status, and authority. And worth

A princess such as Renner would be worth a lot. Such to the extent that Climb could never reach.

“My sympathies.”

“Ah..... Earl Litton has been noisy.”

“The princess, is that so?”

“Yes.”

The king stared into space. It was like he was looking at someone there.

“Only saying the right things is a bother. In the end, I should not make my daughter unhappy.”

Gazef was not able to say anything on this matter. Only someone with a same standing as the king can understand his pains. That was not Gazef.

The two remained silent, and time slowly passed.

Chapter 15: Various Countries | Part 2

There were the words splendid.

If one was asked what would be the physical embodiment of the word, this room would be the best fit.

The softness of the red carpet spread out on the floor made it feel that you were sinking up to your ankles.

The countless furnishings placed around the room were the embodiment of the word splendid.

In the middle was a sofa made for two people, and high class wood had the French Rococo style engraved on it, And black genuine leather was covering the seat, and gave off a slight luster.

On that sofa was the figure was one man who was spread out his feet, and hung it on the sofa.

Handsome. There were no other words that could describe that person better. His figure had no faults.

His silver hair seemed to reflect the light of magic, and shimmered like the stars. His long slit purple eyes held an intense colour.

And more than his appearance was his atmosphere. It was something that could only be born if the owner was of a high rank of absolute dominance.

He was Jircniv Rune Farlord el Nix.

Age 22, the emperor of the Baharuth Empire, enticing fear from the nobles and respect from the people, the most successful emperor.

Excluding the young man, there were the figures of four other men in the room, and none of them were sitting. With ramrod straight figures, they could have been mistaken for statues. When lower ranked people were taking care of the uppermost position, that was the correct posture.

Attendants.

Everyone had their limbs wrapped in flexible and slender steel, luxurious, but not flashy.

They looked young.. In the first half of their 20s. However, how much training did they go through? Their hands had hardened, and the grip of their swords seemed to have their hands imprinted on it.

Jircniv let his eyes leave the parchment for a little, and fixed his gaze into empty air. He also had a blackboard, and wrote his thoughts down.

“.....Then, that village girl?”

“Ha.” While standing at attention, one of the attendants opened his mouth. A quiet but heavy voice rang. “She seems to have just left.”

Hmp, Jircniv snorted. It was a snort with elements of mocking and interest. And so then he threw it on the ground, and a woman picked it up and read it. And once again his eyes turned hollow.

The silence went on for a little while, and the early attendant could not bear it opened his mouth

“.....Should we investigate?”

“Fine.”

Jircniv threw out a word. His hollow gaze did not move from its location.

A rounded hand was raised, and bit his lip such that it was hidden. Those purple eyes flashed while being filled with various feelings. And then his lip rose.

“Isn’t it interesting.”

What conclusion was born in Jircniv? A small and quiet laugh could be heard.

The attendants did not react. The emperor thinks and floats the paper in the air, and wrote down several of his thoughts, and chose. The entourage of the attendants knew that he hated it if you interrupted him.

At that time—

—The door opened without knocking.

At that discourteous conduct, the attendants simultaneously lowered their hips and sent hostility towards the opening door. However, the attendants confirmed the identity of the person entering, and in a similar manner simultaneously stood back at attention.

The one entering had a long beard that was half of his height and was an old man with a head full of white hair. His hair and snow were both white, but was not as thin.

His wrinkled face was due to age, and his eyes held a wealth of knowledge.

A necklace of several crystal balls hanged down from his neck, and many rings decorated his fingers. A comfortable pure white robe drooped his body and looked to be made of a soft cloth.

When the old man entered, the room was filled with the blue smell of herbs.

“—How troublesome.”

The old man entered the room slowly, and opened his mouth, the voice that came out was an unsuitably young sounding voice that spit out those words. Jircniv’s face, which was filled with interest, did not move his mouth but instead instructed with his eyeballs.

“What’s wrong, Jii?”

“I have investigated, but many of my foolish disciples had their minds shocked, and it was probably due to some obstructions, and so we ended it there.”

“Basically what does it mean?”

“.....My dear emperor. The reason why magic exists in this world. In order to master knowledge—”

“Ah, I know. I know.” Jircniv shook his hands in disinterest. “Your explanations are long. Get straight to the point.”

“.....I estimate that his ability is about equal to mine. Or possibly even more powerful.”

Excluding the emperor and the old man, a feeling of panic was born in the

room.

The most powerful magic caster in the history of the Empire. They could not believe their eyes that there was an existence that could rival the chief court magician, the great sage Fluder Paradyne.

“I see. You seem happy, Jii.”

“Of course. Someone the same as me, or possibly a more powerful magic caster. I have not met one since 200 years ago.”

“You met one 200 years ago?”

The emperor’s voice was full of curiosity, and the chief court magician’s gaze turned towards a distant memory.

“That’s true. The legendary 13 Heroes. One of them, the necromancer Rigit Bellus Carla. A benevolent person. Ma, there were other magic casters that were good. The remaining four were a dark mage, a magic swordsman, a cleric and a priest.”

“Then what about now?”

Fluder’s eyes looked far into the distance.

“Unclear. I feel like it is about half.....”

Contrary to the words that were spun while stroking a long beard, the feelings conceived a sense of confidence.

Jircniv noticed this and had a wry smile, and selected a scroll among several from his sofa, and threw it to his feet.

“Read.”

One of the followers went forward and picked it up.

“This is.”

“Information from the Kingdom.”

The face of the attendant who was reading it sharpened. From an image on the blackboard in the air, Jircniv drew out the contents.

“Hmm. The Warrior Captain seemed to have had a battle with the magic

caster's servant." His following words shocked everyone standing there. "And it seems that he had victory given to him."

The air shook. The Warrior Captain Gazef was the most well known person of the Kingdom in the Empire. His sword arm was of a degree such that he could fight the several people from the Empire equally. There is no one who can beat him. And to give him victory.

They had to suppress the surprise of the fact that there was an existence that had a subordinate that could beat him from showing on their faces.

"And it is an undead servant."

"Hou."

It was the first time that Fluder had his interest peaked and he made a sound. It was considerably difficult to have control over a corpse. In the case of using magic to investigate, the opponent would be thought of a powerful magic caster.

None of the attendants could not remember Jircniv and Fluder's earlier words.

"Now about the legendary 13 Heroes. Did the necromancer Rigrit Bellus Carla have undead familiars that could rival the strength of a man like Gazef, Jii?"

".....Now. According to legend, creating a powerful existence, and controlling it, its credibility is unclear. When I met her she did not bring any high class undead."

"Then what about Jii, can you control such an undead?"

".....The difficulty of control to summon or create such strong beings like undead and demons—Depends on the strength of the creature. From what I have heard of Gazef-dono, a undead of around his strength, one would be easy."

As expected, to the words of the man stroking his beard, the surrounding attendants had a sense of admiration.

"Then the second would be difficult?"

"Fumu.....This is quite a difficult decision. If you can add in measures via

magic.....you might be able to control many. This is as after the second body, the degree of difficulty increases. That person, Rigit-dono was extremely good at that. She could summon and control 20 Ghosts at the same time, something impossible even for a high class magic caster.

Like he was developing a method, Fluder continued.

It is not unusual to make secret the magic theory and magic forms that one has made, and pass it down their generation. Fluder himself, if he gets the magic theory of Rigit's, he might be able to control the same undead. Regrettably, controlling 10 Ghosts at the same time is his limit.

"Basically even Jii can't do it. Ainz Ooal Gown.....Could he be one of the 13 Heroes"

No one held a reply. Fluder only moved his eyebrows.

Fufu. Isn't it interesting? So, you have probably been aware of the place called Nazarick."

"Ha." One of the attendants took one step forward. "It has already been investigated."

"What sort of place is it."

"Yes. The place known as the Underground Tomb of Nazarick, is in the middle of plains and is in a 300 metre wide square. And it is surrounded by 4 metre walls. They seem quite tough. When we peeped through a lattice gate, it seems to be a graveyard. We are currently in the middle of investigating from which period it appeared, and information from the Intelligence Agency has not been received so I cannot report more than this."

"....."

Jircniv jerked his chin in a manner to indicate him to continue, and another attendant took a step forward.

"Several knights are currently in the middle of preparations for a search team."

"—Fine. Do not do anything that would gain their hostility."

"My apologies."

“Jii. Can you collect information using magic such that the opponent does not find out? Assume that he is a high class magic caster.”

“It should be impossible.”

“Really.....”

Fluder was overwhelmed by the sudden words, but the silence emanating from Jircniv was cut when he opened his mouth.

“.....It is true that there are existences known as adventurers.”

“Yes. I believe that they also exist in the Empire.....”

The attendant made a perplexed face as he replied.

“Send the highest class adventurers to the Underground Tomb of Nazarick to investigate. Naturally, do not let on that the Empire is involved. If it is unknown information, Ainz Ooal Gown the magic caster too should not be able to gain it.”

“Understood.”

“Also, kick the butts of the Intelligence Agency. Jii, help with those who ask too much with your magic.”

“Several will die.”

“So?”

Towards the emperor that had a weird expression on his face, Fluder lowered his head.

“—Understood.”

“Now, we’re getting busy.” Jircniv snapped his hand. And had a complacent smile. “From now on we can exterminate the Kingdom.”

The Slane Theocracy revered six gods. This religion differed from the surrounding countries.

The religion the surrounding countries believe in are the Four Elemental Gods.

They were Earth, Water, Fire and Wind. There were respective Gods that created and governed the world. And then there were smaller gods that dotted

the surroundings.

In comparison, the Slane Theocracy had additional gods, and ones even higher, the gods of Light—Life and Darkness—Death.

In the beginning there was light and darkness, and from them the Four Great Gods were born. And so, not praying to the gods of life and death and instead praying to the gods below them as the most powerful, and so they had a very bad affinity to the religion of the Four Great Gods.

Religious difference has always been an underlying quarrel in any world. However, the relations between the surrounding areas and the Slane Theocracy was not that bad. Even a straight on battle had not happened for tens of years.

If you want the simple reason, it can be expressed succinctly.

There was a difference in base military power.

The Theocracy's power was strong in the middle of the surrounding countries. And there was a certain which more than anything that had an implication, and agreed that they were strong.

Conversely, if they wanted to invade other countries, it was because it would be due to a situation where since the religions were different, and so could surround them. There was another reason why the Theocracy was like a board.

And basically the Theocracy did not recognise other groups besides humans. This was an extremely deep rooted thought born from religion. And so depending on the other non-human groups, the neighbouring Elf Kingdom, the Demi-human Legislation and the Dwarf Kingdom occasionally caused problems for them.

More than any reasons, the Theocracy was a country where humans ruled and without a basic enemy—And their next goal was to finish the suppression of the Demi-humans but, those things were happening under the surface.

In that Theocracy.

It was not that small, but not to the extent where you could call it large, it was a weird size for a room.

While not letting sounds from this room escape, it was somehow properly ventilated. This was an extremely high class room, and so it was natural that those who had permission to use it were humans in extremely high positions.

There were several men.

Three priests were clad in white robes with golden embellishments. The priests clad in black robes with silver embellishments numbered two. The number of men clad in red robes and had a magic sword hanging from their waists numbered two. The clothes that the men were wearing were plain, but in no way were they of poor quality. No, it should be said that for such a simple thing, they were prepared quite delicately.

The first priests clad in white were those who believed strongly in the god of life—Alah Alaf. And in opposition, the priests clad in black worshipped the god of death—Sulshana.

And lastly was the commander of the Theocracy's Religious Armed Forces, clad in a priest robe—He was in a position similar to that of other countries' Corps Commanders.

In the middle of the room was a table. On it was a giant sheepskin parchment with something drawn on it, it was something that everyone in the Theocracy knew about.

The god of death—Sulshana

Giving eternal rest to those with life, the god that gave an everlasting despair.

Written in the scriptures as stronger than both the god of life and the other four gods, as humans could not escape the scythe of death. And that was more than life, a god that absolutely exists.

The god that can control fear, death and disease, normally he would be considered an evil god. Most of the smaller gods he had as subordinates would be quite wicked. But, weirdly he fell to the earth, and was not a god that would freely spread vice. If anything, it was more like the smaller gods belonged to other gods.

The reason why the people of this country worshipped this god which could

be called an evil god, was as to beg him to not bring down his power of vice on them.

And then the image of this god being the problem, was the reason why several people had assembled in this room.

“Then, we are still saying that it is like this?”

“Yes.....”

“However you only saw one person right?”

“The number is not the problem. The problem is what is this person.”

“It is just as you say but.....”

The men clad in priest robes exchanged their various opinions. As they believed in the same religion, the discussion continued smoothly. One did not look for the ideas from an individual, but instead got them from the entire group.

And so to get unified contents, the need to search for everyone’s ideas with good questions was recognised by everyone.

And time passed, one thing seemed to have been decided. The meeting which had reached its climax had returned back to its original calm state.

“.....There is no need to panic. There is a chance that he has adopted a figure similar to that of our god to confuse us.”

“The possibility is high. What a terrible guy.”

“Then we don’t mind the first thing we do being collecting information.”

“Umu, I do not mind.”

Everyone’s head nodded simultaneously.

“Sending agents into the area around the fort city—-”

“Don’t be stupid. We can’t leave any traces behind.”

“Then a retreat should be ordered.”

“However.....The Empire should have grasped this movement? Then it is not bad to continue to cause more commotions isn’t it?”

“Then only one part of the Kingdom.”

“No, If done poorly, there is a chance that information collection would not go as well. The Empire’s Information Agency and our Intelligence Bureau have already faced one another in the Kingdom. Any more and it will be rude to our Intelligence Bureau.”

“Should we request to cooperate with the mikos of the Astrology and Oracle Bureaus?”

“Not bad but only our problems would disappear. More or less it might be over the top.”

“Fumu. Then first it will be necessary to make some temporary decisions regarding this job.”

“Then, I will—-”

Once again they began to combine details.

The painting of Sulshana was left on the tabletop.

The avatar of death was drawn with a skull as a base. And a figure with very little skin stuck to it. Its jet black robe was like a large body of darkness, and held a sparkling staff in its hand.

That was the figure of the strongest god that everyone in the Theocracy knew.

By the time the various countries had made their move, Ainz had already left the village for 50 days.

Let us return to the present, and continue the story—-

As it had rained the previous day, the road the man was walking on made a splashing sound.

As there were not many stone pavements in this town, if it rained, the ground would turn muddy, various places would have puddles.

The man avoided the puddles, and silently walked along the road. Everytime he stepped over a puddle, the dirty sack on his back would jump slightly, and a sound of metal could be heard.

Passing through the front of several stores, the man stopped in front of store with quite a large structure.

The man climbed the multiple steps lining the front of the store, and pushed open the door that was made of wood.

Being the Guild's receptionist meant that one had some free time.

Dangerous occasions often happened. —But up until now, none have occurred.

Lastly saying so, the Guild's receptionist—Ishpen Ronblue suppressed a yawn while sitting at the counter, staring into space.

Free time.

There were no new requests. There were also no adventurers. She had finished organising the request book two hours ago. Leaving her seat was the same as quitting her job, there was no way she would do so. She also had just went to the toilet 30 minutes ago.

To comfort herself, she read the sheepskin parchment spread out on the counter. She had already read this six times, and had most of it memorised. Lined up behind her seat, were shelves of books—Her brain was wondering whether should she kill some time by reading the adventurer records, or should she do something else.

At the peak of her boredom, the door creaked, and slowly opened. There was a difference in the intensity of light between the inside and outside, and so Ishpen's eyes narrowed. On the contrary, one man stepped into the Guild.

The man slowly raised his frayed hood. And then he removed the dirty sack from his back. While it was unclear what was inside, the sack rattled.

When he removed it, a metal sound had made its way to Ishpen.

20 points.

Her heart spoke. To become her lover something about 60 would not be enough. This was out of 100 points.

There was a man who could not be described as anything but slightly below average.

A medium build. Looks were 3rd, maybe 4th rate. Black hair and eyes. He seemed to have just entered his twenties.

The clothes he was wearing was also not of a good quality. They were like the uncouth cotton clothes that villagers wore. It was something far from what the typical adventurer wore. His leather soles were dirtied with mud, and reminded her of yesterday's rain.

A request? Or maybe an application to be an adventurer?

But, the quietly observing Ishpen slightly widened her eyes.

The man's chest had a slight silver glow. And every time his body moved, there was a sound that would remind one of chains. That was proof that he was wearing chainmail.

And the sword hanging from his waist—The broadsword was a good item. Magic might have even been casted on it.

And so he gave off the air of a merchant.

“Welcome, to the Adventurer's Guild.”

The man's gaze met Ishpen who had on her business smile, and said the usual greeting.

He had probably noticed Ishpen. He closed the distance, and stood in front of Ishpen.

The commonplace stench of the countryside—The smell of animals or manure was not there. He was unexpectedly clean. +5 points. While thinking that, Ishpen gazed at the man. He was not well built. And his sword did not seem that special.

“I have come here to become an adventurer.”

“Yes. You can perform that here.”

Ishpen smiled.

It was not rare. The story where a commoner picked up a sword and armour on the battlefield, and aimed for the rank of an adventurer was quite common. The job of an adventurer with money and fame from swinging a sword to kill

monsters from the perspective of an average villager. And it would put a dull life to an end and replace it with a life of adventure.

“Firstly, to enter the Guild, a payment of five silver coins is needed. Will that be fine?”

“There is no problem.”

The man fished in his pockets, and took out a small leather pouch. Putting his hand inside, he took out five silver coins and placed them on the counter. Ishpen took one and looked at the faces. Slightly scratched, but the imprint of a wheel was properly engraved on it. Then there was no problem.

“Yes, payment has been confirmed. Then firstly we have to write quite a bit.....Would you like me to write for you? Or would you prefer to write for yourself? If you would like me to it will cost an additional five copper coins.”

“Please write for me.”

The man once again placed a silver coin on the table. This too was not rare. Most of the people who could read and write in the Kingdom with a less than 50% literacy rate were nobles and intellectuals. Ishpen returned five coppers to the man, dipped the feathered quill in ink and spread out a sheepskin parchment.

“Then could you inform me of your name so that I can record it?”

“That is right.....”

The man stopped and looked up into empty air and spoke.

It was a weird scene, but Ishpen did not really think much. When one became an adventurer, it was not rare for people to hide their names. No matter what name they change to, as long as they worked as a proper adventurer then there was no problem.

Of course, stuff like wanted lists and police bulletins would be examined. But talking out loud would be bad. And slightly scary.

The man finally decided on a name, and opened his mouth.

“Then, please call me Momon.”

Chapter 16: Adventurers

Writing the important information on the sheepskin parchment, Ishpen fanned the ink with her hands. While waiting for the ink to dry, she was free and spoke to the man in front of her—Momon. Of course it would be better if he was a bit happier that he was talking to her, but the man in front of her, his face was regrettably bad, but he was not a bad person.

“Would training be good after this?”

“Training?”

Momon made a weird parrot-like reply.

Ah, it would be bad if I don't explain that huh.

Ishpen cradled her head in her arms, but fortunately today was a lucky day when she had no work. It would be good if she could end the explanation quickly.

“Training. In short, being an adventurer is a dangerous job. That is why we give proper explanations, such that people are unable to complain about the death of others to the Guild.”

It was natural that humans that could not understand such a thing would be surprised. And so the Guild took responsibility and responded to the wills of others, and gave a basic explanation to lower the death rate. And it became a system such that if adventurers gave up on the training, the official papers would not reflect it.

“Is that so?”

“Yes it is.”

“Then what do you do in this training?”

Ishpen felt a discomfort in his tone, but she continued on without understanding where it came from.

“Basic adventurer information.”

“So you don’t want to test my swordsmanship skills then?”

“No, if you go adventuring with poor sword skills, the risk is entirely on you”

“That’s true.”

Seeing Momon nod in understanding, Ishpen’s face twisted into a wry grin.

Adventuring was a profession which was very much at-your-own-risk.

While it seemed that Momon fully understood the situation, there were a lot of mis-informed fools out there. There were those who believed the guild would provide training. Certainly you could find schools for that sort of thing and if you could pay, instructors were always available. But nothing is ever free.

The Guild will never entrust newbies with important assignments and that certainly helped to keep the attrition rate down.

In any case, the Guild was not big on wasting resources to develop newbies. The Guild preferred to save that for the wheat that appears from the chaff.

Basically adventurers who had just registered like Momon go through a large sieve.

“Training just imparts simple knowledge about the Guild. For example, knowledge about request difficulties, and rewards”

“Eh~, is that so.”

It was the matter of teaching the common knowledge of adventurers from the start.

Having confirmed that the ink had dried, Ishpen deposited the parchment with Momon’s details in a nearby box. The other staff members would retrieve the contents of the box later.

“Well now, how shall we do this? This will not take very long, but if you’d like, we can take a seat in a different room.”

Ishpen directed her gaze meaningfully towards the door leading to the next room.

The Guild was a four storey building, the first floor had a reception office for important guests or rooms for requesters. And if you climbed the stairs to the

second or third floor, there were a lot of rooms for books or rooms for security guards. There were also rooms for staff. The fourth floor was the Guildmaster's office, safes for important documents, and similarly, rooms where important information was stored.

The room next door was a waiting room for meeting adventurers, and meeting rooms, and rooms for the inspection of various documents. Fortunately the meeting room and waiting room were empty, and there were no adventurers using them.

Then using the meeting room next door would be good. It had been a while since she had done documents with one hand.

It was not that trainings could not be done at the counter. In fact most occurred at the counter. Most people could not even afford the small amount of time to guide adventurers.

Basically, Ishpen's suggestion stemmed from a desire for a change in scenery.

But it was not to be.

"This will be fine."

"I see."

For not being able to take a woman's hint -5.....No. -10

While it was a pity that she could not leave her seat, but she opened her mouth to end the training earlier.

"Then let's start with payment."

One deep breath.

"The Guild takes a 20% cut upfront for work done in investigating the request. This is for the sake of investigating the request. If it is a monster subjugation request, the type of monster that appears and their number have been scouted out by the Guild."

"On the other hand, if you report any errors in the Guild's information, part of the 20% will be refunded. However, the chance that a different monster appears after the Guild has investigated, so please take care."

“In the event that the Guild is unable to collect sufficient information due to special circumstances such as an urgent request, the Guild’s cut is 5%. The actual details, can be negotiated with your client.”

“If you accept a job not through the Guild, you can report it later. In this case, the Guild will not provide an investigation or act as an intermediary.”

“And that is the end of my explanation of rewards. Do you have any questions?”

Momon’s eyes goggled in shock at the torrent of words that flew from Ishpen’s mouth. Such was the speed of her explanation, it seemed like she was reading it off a list.

Ishpen had explained this countless times. It was unthinkable that she would stumble or make a mistake.

There had been a time when she read from a parchment and stumbled when asked questions. However, the current Ishpen was invincible. She was confident that she could trade blows from every angle.

Not only that, she enjoyed watching the adventurers’ confusion. Her colleague found her schadenfreude to be in very bad taste but Ishpen was addicted to it.

“.....Probably not.”

“Umm, in other words, the Guild takes a cut because it does the investigative work, so we’ll just have to bear with it. In the event that the work is not through the Guild, you’re on your own. Is that right? ”

Ishpen’s perfectly manicured brow moved as a small smile appeared.

“It is just as you say, Momon-sama.”

Then wouldn’t it better to be faster?

Without letting out an inch of her true thoughts, Ishpen made a decision like a challenge. In contrast, Momon kept his peaceful expression.

“Next we have the penalties for failing a request.”

“If an advanced payment has been made, you will need to pay a sum equivalent to 1.5 times of the payment. If one has not been made, you will have to pay a sum equivalent to 20% of the value of the assignment (Guild investigation fee included). In other words, you will have to return the Guild’s investigation fee to the client.”

“This for when the request fails and time has been lost. Basically the fine from this goes towards increasing the reward to hire higher ranked adventurers.”

“I recommend you not fail in the first place. Of course there are assignments of both types, so you can confirm the details of your assignments with the Guild in the future.”

“Incidentally, since the Guild makes an effort to properly investigate its requests, up to now there have not been any instances where a client asks for something impossible of the adventurer. But as mentioned earlier, if this is a job without Guild involvement, you’re on your own.”

“Sometimes, there are double bookings or other slipups and you are unable to execute the requests, and in such a thing no fines will be issued as they are exceptions. There are other exceptions and so, if you report to the Guild and depending on the circumstances, the fine might be waived. However, please do not expect much.”

“And that is the end of my explanation regarding fines. Do you have any questions?”

“No, none.”

Ishpen looked at Momon to see if he was following her explanations. To find out she read his expressions. But—

I can't read him.....

Ishpen unknowingly ground her teeth.

She could not say anything except that he was different from a normal villager. A formidable opponent.

What was a strong enemy? For a reason no one but someone like Ishpen

would understand, she recognised him.

A strong enemy that was recently rarely seen in the countryside.

“Then next is the explanation regarding the level of adventurers—Classes.”

“Basically, people like Momon-san are novices. They can attend promotion tests after completing five requests to gain benefits. This promotion test is to guard a merchant caravan, while visiting several slightly dangerous locations. Basically there is a higher chance of encountering monsters. Naturally there is the chance of not meeting any. And so about $\frac{2}{5}$ of people do not encounter—”

“Question.”

In response to Momon who was raising his hand in an effort to interrupt, Ishpen closed her machine gun mouth. The feeling of not expecting to be interrupted enveloped her body.

“Even if I can get benefits, is it fine if I refuse?”

“Yes.”

Momon’s question forced Ishpen to move forward some of the explanations which would normally be left until later. She mentally level-up’ed Momon from formidable opponent to the next level of existence.

“However, if you refuse you will remain a novice, and cannot accept a large number of requests. Basically you cannot accept the profitable requests.”

“There are people who take up requests involving fighting monsters in order to gain experience, but I think that’s not a very good idea”

Ishpen suddenly stopped.

“I’m not trying to scare you but ... for ex-normal villagers who take up the combat assignments, 50% die as novices, 25% quit and 15% of the remainder die within a year.”

“Is the chance of dying during a promotion test high?”

“There are cases. Out of the 50%, 30% are so. The rest take on monster requests beyond their abilities, or are sometimes assaulted alone by monsters.”

From what Ishpen gleaned from adventurers, in a life-or-death struggle with

monsters, village hicks who rely on brute strength don't have a great survival rate. Something else is needed, something that most villagers lack.

Did the man, Momon, in front of her have that? Unfortunately to the office worker Ishpen it was unclear.

"I shall return to my earlier explanation. This is only relevant after you have graduated from a novice, but--"

"There are things known as classes for adventurers. This is to meet the level of the adventurers with suitable requests. Please think of it such that you cannot choose a request of a higher difficulty level than your current class."

"Difficulty 1 to 10 is F Class. Difficulty 11 to 20 is E Class. Difficulty 21 to 30 is D Class. Difficulty 31 to 40 is C Class. Difficulty 41 to 50 is B Class. Difficulty 51 to 60 is A Class. Difficulty 61 to 70 is A+ Class. We basically do not have anything more than this but there are rumors of A++."

"There are promotion tests for the sake of raising one's class. This promotion test is different from the time as a novice, even if you fail there are no effects and is only for accepting top class jobs from the Guild. In addition, if you fail the promotion test, you will be unable to take it for half a year."

"Of course, as your class goes up, the rewards and danger shoot up."

"That is the end of my explanation on classes. Do you have any questions?"

How about it?, Ishpen awaited Momon's reply.

".....The knights of the Baharuth Empire, what class would they be?"

"Eh?"

Ishpen let out a wild voice. She had never imagined such a question, let alone been asked it. For a moment, the question of

Was this a question made just to confuse me?

filled her mind as she gazed at Momon, but concluded that it was not.

"That.....will be difficult. Adventurers pride themselves on the strength of their team. For example, if you fight the knights individually, you may lose. However, I believe that if it is a team fight, victory will be possible. Etto, do you

know about magic casters?”

“Yes.”

Then this will be quick.

“Adventurers have a basic four man group—A party. There are occasionally ones of five or even six people, but as the number increases the more difficult it is to unite the opinions of the group, so an average leader would have a limit of four people.”

In a life-or-death struggle, a delay in making decisions or relaying those decisions to others could have fatal consequences. And so, the members of parties were like a single living organism.

“4-man parties generally comprise of a warrior, magic caster, healer and the vanguard. Compared to a band of four knights, the basic party may seem like a mixed bag but it has a far wider tactical repertoire. To adventurers, this is more important than anything else. The warrior and vanguard could block the attack of the knights, if they are injured, then the healer or the magic caster can use a large attack on the battlefield. Multiplying the strength of a single person, and unifying their aim. Alone, Momon-san is not that strong. However, with companions, your strength can be multiplied several times.”

Roles were allocated. And depending on them, there were several measures that one could take depending on the situation. Conversely, if you grouped together people of only one role, they might be perfect at one measure, but could do nothing else. What adventurers sought was not one point, but a multitude of solutions.

“In the end, do you know?”

Ishpen’s expression was about to change, but she suppressed it.

This guy ... I thought I had dodged that question quite neatly too. He’s not going to let it go.

“Probably about D Class. However if they are the knights of the Baharuth Empire, then they should have good weapons, so depending on the situation about C.....About any further would be impossible.”

“Then what about the Warrior Captain?”

“.....About A+?”

He was the warrior called the Kingdom’s Strongest. If he was not about A+ then it would be bad in various ways. However, why did he compare the Baharuth Empire knights to the Warrior Captain?

Ma~, familiarity is familiarity. Since he came here to this fort city.

She had heard about the incident about the Baharuth Empire knights rampaging nearby. It might have something to do with it. Then it would be bad to ask anymore about this.

With that, Ishpen looked at Momon and felt a magma-like evil resided beneath under that calm exterior.

Ishpen agreed with her thought, and cut off her imagination. And to return to the explanation, tried to recall where they had reached. She was sure that it was just when the explanation on class had ended.

“Do you have any other questions relating to classes?”

Even if a weird question came up, she would not escape. That was a rule that Ishpen had decided for herself. Yes, even if the opponent was an overwhelmingly strong enemy.

“No, I do not have any.”

She unknowingly breathed a sigh of relief. And then Ishpen became astonished.

About when she had felt relief from not receiving questions during trainings, how long ago was it? It was so long ago she forgot, it was when she still had not become the Guild’s receptionist, it was that long ago.

Ah, that’s right.

Ishpen had the smile of a spring wind on her face.

“You are a person that is written as ‘strong enemy’ but pronounced ‘rival’, aren’t you.”

“?”

Momon slightly widened his eyes at the friendly voice that he heard. Ishpen had the smile of a goddess as she watched the change in expression.

“—Then, next is the explanation regarding the difficulty of requests.”

“Naturally there are various request difficulties. Request difficulties are rated by comparing the request against previous requests handled by the Guild. You may consider the rating to be highly accurate. For hunting assignments, ratings depend on factors such as the hunting grounds and the rarity of the item. For scouting assignments, ratings depend on factors such as time taken and the target. This information varies depending on the location and the rarity of the thing there are searching for, and the time needed and the target also changes.”

“However, in the case of a basic monster subjugation, you may use the difficulty rating the Guild has provided. In the case of multiple monsters, the monster with the highest difficulty rating +a will be used.”

“And regarding the important thing about subjugation difficulties, is that the difficulty of subjugation is an average, please never forget this.”

“For example there is a 80 centimetre long wolf. Would the difficulty be the same as a 110 centimetre long wolf? And so please remember that this is an average. There is a range of about plus minus four. Basically when you accept monster subjugation jobs, please estimate it to be higher than average. If you’re unlucky, a difficulty 32 monster may appear in a hunt for a difficulty 28 monster.”

“And that is all on my explanation of the difficulty of requests. Do you have any questions?”

“No, I do not.”

“—I see.”

I’ve estimated. If it’s you then this difficulty should be okay.

Not a word escaped Ishpen’s mouth and instead she had a face of a saint. On the other hand, Momon’s face said that he was looking at something

strange.

A gulp could be heard from Momon's throat.

"Lastly is the way to accept requests but, please come to the counter, and we will prepare a member card for you tomorrow. Based on the class noted on your card, find the list of assignments you are eligible for and browse through them. If you cannot read please inform us, but please know that this is not free. It is 1 copper per 10 minutes."

"The member card that proves that you are a guild member, if tomorrow is not free you may come another day and we will pass it to you. Please keep your card with you at all times. It takes a long time to renew it. In addition, if you do not have it you will be unable to take on any jobs."

"And so the training has been completed. Congratulations, Momon-san. We the Adventurer's Guild officially recognises you as an adventurer, and prays for your success."

Ishpen unconsciously stood up and extended her hand over the counter. She had not done such a thing up till now. She just felt like she wanted to thank him.

The troubled Momon hesitated, and made a fist like he decided on something. The two of them lightly shook their hands. No, it might just have been Ishpen shaking.

That Ishpen had an unexpected thought cross her mind.

It was unexpectedly soft. She had expected it to be harder.

Eventually, the two separated their hands, and Momon asked a question.

".....By the way, is it possible to select a request now and receive my member card tomorrow?"

"Eh?"

It was true that Momon was already a adventurer. Without a member card, one could not accept requests, but it was possible to select them in advance. However, before that there was something she had to confirm.

".....Did Momon-san come alone? Is there anyone that will accompany you as

an adventurer?”

A short confirmation. If they existed then he would not have come to the Guild alone.

“There are none.”

“And Momon-san probably does not use magic, or have any tracking skills, right.”

“.....That is so.”

When she was writing on the sheepskin parchment and asked various questions, one part was, whether one had special skills. Unfortunately, Momon replied “none” to that question.

“If that is the case then you are a warrior type, but not having companions from the start is fairly bad. In many cases, people and mixed and matched, but the end result cannot really be called a party.

Healers and clerics have no problems, and magicians that can use magic are popular. Next are thieves and rangers or people that can collect information or investigate. Lastly are warriors.”

“However.” She continued in a calming voice. “Of course excellent warriors are popular. Warriors that can prevent enemies from penetrating the back, and buy time to defeat enemies. Frankly, an analytical mind and the ability to think on one’s feet are essential for warriors. That is why warriors act as leaders in many parties. They decide where to attack or when should magic be cast. That is why there are many warriors in the ranks of heroes.”

However, a newbie warrior’s options are considerably limited.

While there were jobs that the Guild could recommend.....Ishpen stared at Momon’s appearance.

A medium build. She could not think that it was above average. It was quite difficult to believe, but the possibility was there. And he was Ishpen’s rival. Nothing should be beyond him.

Enveloped by a desire to check, Ishpen extended her finger.

“Could you please lift up the luggage over there please?”

In the direction where Ishpen was pointing. Near the wall was a large bag—A bag with its insides bulging out was placed. A belt where it could be easily gripped extended from it. Inside the clean reception room of the Guild, this bag stood out a lot.

Momon nodded, and went up right to the bag, and grabbed the belt with his two hands.”

“Hmp.”

“Eh!”

The bag which most people could not lift alone, was easily lifted by Momon.

A considerable amount of weight hanged on Momon’s hands, and the belt bit into them. However Momon’s expression did not have an expression of pain. In addition, he gave off the impression that he could handle more.

Ishpen was surprised. She had not expected that of a man with such lean muscles. Was he wrapping and restraining his muscles? If you looked closely, it was possible to think that the folds of his clothes might be hiding his muscles.

While this was a small experiment, but with this she could find several jobs. Especially jobs that were suitable for adventurers exploring. As expected of a rival.

While admiring him, Ishpen’s head was filled with various jobs—

“Must I still hold it?”

Momon’s slightly troubled voice could be heard. In response to that voice, Ishpen made a gesture to put it down.

“I truly apologise, I remembered that we might have a suitable job.”

“I do not mind.”

Momon lowered the bag with a loud clang. Momon returned to the counter where Ishpen was waiting, and she said a job that she could request of Momon.

“Momon-san, you’ve come at the right time. We have openings for porters.”

Momon had a face that showed that he knew absolutely nothing about what he had just heard.

That was natural. It was not a job that you would hear about if you lived in a village. However, if one lived near a mountain or forest, it may sometimes be heard.

“The living creature known as a horse can unexpectedly fall sick, or go on a rampage when encountering a monster. War horse or magic that can strengthen them do not exist, and purchasing them requires quite a large sum. And so one can employ adventurers to carry and transport their luggage. As a porter, an adventurer forms a party and carries their luggage as a replacement for a horse.”

“Fuun.”

“And more than anything, making acquaintances with other adventurers will help in the future. In fact, many people begin from porter jobs, and the Guild recommends this to those starting out.”

“How heavy is the luggage?”

“About 40 kilogrammes. It should be about the same as the earlier luggage you lifted.”

“Then please do so.”

“There are porter jobs that you can immediately accept, I remember.”

Ishpen stood up, and from the book shelves behind her, she took out one book. Inside this book which was written on precious paper, was the data of various adventurers.

Flipping through several pages, she looked for her target. Referring to the data which she had finally found, she read out the detailed request that was written near it.

“The requester is Peter Mork. According to the registration card, he is the leader of his party the Axe of Cyclone. Etto, the class of the Axe of Cyclone is E Class. The details of his work is to subjugate the monsters in the surrounding areas. The weight is about 40 kilogrammes. The contracted pay is one silver per

day for six days. There is no down payment. After the contracted six days, the rate is 1.2 silver per day. Food and drink will be provided by the party.”

Reading up to there, Ishpen looked at Momon’s face.

“I believe it is a basic porter job.” Ishpen flipped to the next page of her book. “Etto, have no ex-convicts or any deaths. I believe that their party has no problems with credibility.”

“Then I will accept this job.”

“Understood. Then will it be fine to accept this request tomorrow? Then I will call the Axe of Cyclone members to meet tomorrow morning at 6:00.”

“Yes. Please do.”

She became slightly busy. Ishpen recalled the location of the Axe of Cyclone off of the sheepskin parchment she read earlier.

When the conversation ended, Momon was about to walk outside, but stopped midway. Then he turned back to face Ishpen, and spoke with a troubled expression.

“.....Since I do not have an inn, could you please introduce one to me?”

Momon closed the slightly squeaky door to the room. At almost the same time, a door behind Ishpen opened silently.

Another receptionist had just came out of the door leading to the middle and other floors of the Guild, she was a good friend of Ishpen.

The woman closed the door she had just left from, and looked at the empty room.

“.....Just now, who came?”

“Eh, my rival.”

“Ha?”

A puzzled voice was raised.

Ma~, this feeling is something no one but a fellow companion on a battlefield

can understand,

Ishpen thought. When an adventurer fights a monster to the death and regrets death, she had heard this often.

Why do you kill each other

, she wanted to ask that, but Ishpen then understood something.

This was—-That.

“Nothing, just talking to myself.” Then, what about you?”

“Eh? Aa, un. Some people want adventurers to be hired as night patrol.”

“Night patrol? Are you saying the guards only are not enough?”

“N~. Hora, recently there have been rumours in the town. About people seeing a monster.”

“The ones who were drunk?”

“Yes. A monster like a shadow.”

“.....I do not believe that they can enter the city. Maybe it’s just a strangely dressed thief?”

“Probably, I think.”

A tone that was filled with unrest.

Ma, hearing that monsters could be within the city limits, there was no one among them that could remain calm. Because they were the Guild’s receptionists, they have never once swung a sword, a normal person.

However—-

“But there are no causalities. At most it’s just cases of wallets disappearing right?”

In any case it was not what monsters would do. Since there were nothing but missing wallets, and those that know the value of wallets. Then it was safe to assume that humans were the closest answer.

“Meh~”

To calm down the woman mixing her words, Ishpen smiled.

“Ma, the difficulty will be decided by the ones above, we just have to do what we have to do.”

“True.”

The women laughed, and Ishpen’s earlier interrupted hands began moving. The first thing was to locate the Axe of Cyclone.

Chapter 17: Rooms

The fort city E-Rantel had three walls, and the space between them had their own specialities.

The outermost space was used for the Kingdom's garrison, and had equipment prepared, and there was quite a distance between that and the city walls. In addition, there was stone pavement, allowing for fast travelling.

The innermost section handled administrative stuff. And provisions were stored here, making this the most heavily guarded districts.

The remaining middle section was the section with various things for everyone. This section would best fit the image that came up when you heard the word "city".

The squares with open air were filled with the particular noon air and people shouting in healthy loud voices were stopped.

Aged men were talking to merchants while searching for good food, and the men were attracted to the smell of roasted meat, and others were threading meat on skewers. Various vegetables, and food that had finished cooking. Stuff like that mixed together, and the air held their scents.

While looking left and right in that atmosphere, Momon walked along the squared paved with stone. Occasionally he would stop the shouts of the children asking him to buy stuff. While refusing by lightly waving his hand, he pushed apart the crowd, and never hit anyone.

Those footsteps were not lost. Momon went towards the inn he was informed off.

He had already left the square and the open air was cut off.

From there onwards was the district with lots of shops.

Momon passed through. The remains of ruts had puddles in them, and they reflected the light of the sun. His speed was quite bad, but when compared to

the congestion of earlier this was much easier to walk in.

This was mostly due to the lack of people.

It was true that there were people entering and leaving the shops. Right in front of him were an old man with a horse carrying goods discussing with a man who was probably a shopkeeper. And if he looked to the side he would see various artisans wearing aprons carrying luggage.

However those were quite sparse. You cannot find shops with those types of people from where Momon is.

Naturally this was different from the regular shops or restaurants. And then there were differences in time slots.

None of those signboards that had what Momon was looking for, instead he was looking for a signboard which he had memorised.

Finding his targeted signboard, Momon's legs became faster.

While removing the dirt from his leather boots, he climbed up the stairs to the second floor, Momon then pushed open the western door with his two hands.

The skylight was the only source of light so the inside was dark, and humans who were used to the light outside would find themselves in pitch darkness.

The room was larger than he had thought, about 15 metres wide and 20 metres long.

The first floor was a bar. In the middle was a counter. Behind it was about two rows of shelves, where several beer bottles were placed. In addition, if one opened the door, there would probably be a kitchen behind. Several tables dotted the place with chairs placed on top, implying that this was not working hours.

In the corner of the bar curved, and there were stairs leading up. From what Ishpen said, the second and third floors were rooms.

In the middle of the room, one man stared openly at Momon.

In his hands was a mop which he was using to wipe the floor. His thick arms were covered in scars that were from beasts or swords.

His head was completely shaved, not a strand of hair remaining.

His face was tough and held features like that of a beast. And his face had multiple scars

He looked more like a mercenary than a store owner, no matter how you look at it.

“We aren’t serving any alcohol.”

A hoarse voice which reminded one of a cracked bell spoke towards Momon.

“I would like you to give me a room. This place has been recommended by the Guild receptionist.”

“.....An adventurer.....An unknown face, and the Guild’s Nee-chan recommended. A novice.”

“It is so”.

“A shared room is five coppers per day.” The owner bluntly said. “Meals are oatmeal and vegetables. If you want meat, then one more copper. Mah, there might be bread instead of oatmeal.”

“If possible may I have a single room?”

“.....This town has three inns for adventurers. Mine is the worst. Do you understand why the person at the Guild recommended this place?”

“?”

In front of the curious Momon, the owner’s shoulders moved to a dangerous angle.

“Think a little! Or is your age useless!”

In front of a voice with rage that would make the stomach churn, Momon did not break his peaceful expression. It was a face that an adult would make when faced with a child’s temper.

Hou, the owner breathed a sigh of slight astonishment.

“.....You’ve got good nerves.....The reason why she introduced this place to you, is because most people here are F or E Class adventurers. If you meet

people of the same class, you can form a party with them. My place is great for finding suitable people for your party.”

The owner’s eyes moved.

“I don’t mind giving you a single room, but without contact you can’t make friends. The point of large rooms are for people like you. You sell your face there. I’ll ask one last time, shared or single, which one?”

“Then a shared room please?”

“Ah.”

It was natural. The owner did not say anything to Momon who replied immediately, but nodded in a way that suggested that he understood.

“Then pay upfront.”

“Yes.”

Momon casually reached into his chest, took out a pouch, and took out five copper coins. And he walked into the middle of the shop, and dropped them into the open hand of the owner.

Without counting the number of copper coins in his hand, the owner dropped them into his trouser pockets. And then he walked into the middle of the shop, and took out one key from the counter.

“Climb the stairs, first room on the right. Put your luggage inside the chest connected to your bed. This is the key.”

He handed Momon the key.

Momon caught the small key that drew a parabola in the air without any problems in the dark room.

“I think you understand without saying, but don’t go close to the other chests. Even a misunderstanding will be terrible. I don’t care to stop your fights. Your arm might break. Mah, you want to sell your face so you know, you probably won’t be killed.”

When the owner finished talking, his back turned to face Momon. There Momon called to stop him.

“Could you possibly wait for me?”

“An?”

“Etto, I heard that if I went to the inn and asked the owner, the basic adventuring tools would be given to me. There is a high chance of not using them in this job, but it will be necessary in future.”

“You already have a request?”

“Yes, a porter.”

“Hou.” The owner looked closely at Momon’s body. His head tilted like he did not really understand. “Mah, I don’t believe the tests of the Guild to be wrong, but can you be a porter with such a body? Mah, fine.”

His eyes glanced over the sack Momon was carrying, and then to his clothes. His atmosphere was slightly different from a person that was going to criticise him.

“.....The first thing is to buy clothes that adventurers need. If the shoes don’t work then sores can appear, so you can’t use them so put them aside. Then leather pants, leather shirts, and a set of gloves. Buy these for the future. There should be a little slack. They might stop an unexpected sword or fang. I’ve seen many guys who had their lives saved.....This set is about five coppers. Mah, your current clothes look fine, so save those for later.

So the first thing should be a mantle.”

“A mantle?”

The owner was about to voice his surprise to the curious Momon and opened his mouth slightly. However, he closed his mouth like he understood anything.

“What, from which village did you come from?”

“You really know your stuff.”

“Ah, there are no travellers that don’t know the importance of a mantle. Then a guy who doesn’ travel. Then a guy with a figure like yours should be from a village.”

“Absolutely correct.”

Instantly, the owner made a face like he was thought of as an idiot, but understanding that Momon did not have a hidden meaning behind it and his shoulders dropped. He then waved his head several times to drain the feeling.

“Mah fine. Mantles are, when you lie on the ground it steals heat. This thing simply steals your energy. Even if that is avoided it’s better to be used as a bedroll. But there is a price, it’s heavy and so I don’t recommend it on your first porter job. So substitute it with a cloak. And” The owner continued. “Mantles can be used as cover from the rain. Heat will be stolen from your body when you get wet. So buy it to avoid that.”

“How much is it?”

“Three silvers. Later there is silverware but mah, it’s convenient but if there’s one crockery then it’s enough. Anyway, if you’re a porter then it’s like that. Later the weapons and stuff are not with me, but go ask the guy selling them.”

“Then one mantle please.”

“Ah, I hand it over during dinner. Prepare the money by then.”

“Understood.”

The owner waved his hands, and entered the middle of the store with the mop in one hand.

Momon watched his back, and when his figure disappeared completely, he climbed the stairs.

When he climbed, there were several windows open to let the light in, and it was completely different from the first floor. Momon gripped the doorknob right next to him and turned.

The door creaked as it opened.

Inside were eight shabby beds made of wood. Since the window was open, the outside air and light entered.

The frame was made of wood, and on top was a thin layer of straw. In place of a mattress was straw, and so to prevent bugs, it should be thrown away after usage. Because wheat was the staple here, acquiring straw should not be that

difficult.

And on top of the straw were sheets. Rather than white, they were dirtied and were a grayish colour. Momon brushed his hand against it. It was a rough feeling. It was probably hemp.

Several strands of straw fell onto the floor.

Inside the room of eight beds, six chests were shut tight.

Momon went towards a chest with its lid open. Mah, it was beautiful. You would not believe that there were insects living in it.

Momon took off his shoes and climbed onto the bed. The bed creaked under his weight and he could feel the hard surface of wood through the thin layer of straw.

Even if you wanted to praise it, it was not a good bed. If he slept here, his body would be sore the next day. The soft beds of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick was greatly missed. But it cannot be helped. This had to be done.

Momon casually took out a ring from his bag, and wore it on top of his hemp gloves. Without closing his bag, he placed it on top of his chest.

Then, a faint sound was heard through the door.

Then there was an indication of the stairs being climbed. Numbered one. The human's size was large.

Momon put himself on guard. His sense of caution was raised. While thinking this was unacceptable, he focused his attention on the door.

The door squeaked while opening.

Standing there was a woman. She could not be older than 20. Her red hair was cut short for ease of movement. Even if you wanted to look at it favourably, it was not evenly cut. It looked like a bird's nest.

Her face was not bad, but her eyes were sharp, and he felt that not even a shred of makeup was applied.

In one hand was a wooden pail.

The leather armour she was wearing had a thin strap of metal attached, a thumbtack was hammered to it. Because she had no money or because it would not hamper her movement, a large iron plate was stuck. A sword hung from her waist.

That woman thought that no one was around, and noticing Momon her eyes widened slightly.

But that was the end of it. Without talking or observing, she walked straight into the room towards one of the beds.

The smell of sweat and her body odour mixed, and the particular smell made its way even to where Momon was sleeping.

The woman dropped her waist onto what was probably her own bed. A loud thump was made as the bed raised a voice in protest.

Ignoring it, she unfastened the armour strap at her side, and removed her armour. Letting it down quietly onto the floor, she casually stripped off her hemp clothes. Being very cramp, her well rounded breasts were crushed.

Momon was watching and she probably noticed, but she continued to remove them.

If one evaluated the half-naked woman's body, rather than a woman she was a warrior.

While there was a bit of fat under the skin, most was muscle. Her abdominals were completely split into six.

Because she had probably trained her chest, a large volume hanged downwards, and thrust forward strongly. It was about there, so the woman felt it.

Ignoring Momon's gaze, the half-naked woman took out a bag and a bottle from her luggage.

Her body was covered in bruises, and looked like she was made out of them. There were many scratches and bruises. She took out a moist towel from the wooden bucket, and began wiping her body with it.

Her chest seemed quite soft and shook.

While Momon was aimlessly watching, the woman who had finished wiping then opened the bottle.

When she opened it, the smell from the inside painted the air.

Momon had a face of disgust at the strong smell. It was probably the smell of crushed herbs, and the strength of it stung one's nose, and make tears well up.

The woman lifted out a green viscous fluid from the bottle, she covered her bruised body with it.

Momon had a worse face on.

The woman did not notice it, or maybe she ignored it. She then began to apply a bandage to it.

Momon made a completely disgusted face, pinching his nose, and watched the woman. The hands of the woman stopped once she finished applying first-aid.

"Excuse me—"

The woman turned to face Momon. And her full chest shook with a considerable volume.

"So you saw something good?"

The woman thrust her naked chest while smiling.

Her smile was like that of a predator. If he said something weird, he could easily predict what would happen afterwards. And he understood that it was not something he would enjoy.

Momon was food in front of the predator.

Naturally, the only one thinking that was the woman in front of him.

Even if she thrust out her chest, if Momon were to be honest he would be troubled. He did not have much interest, and she was telling him to compare. But he did not think that there was much difference.

"It stinks."

".....Eh?"

“It’s probably medicine but it stinks. My nose stings.”

While being bewildered at Momon’s reaction being different from what she expected, she exposed her face through the gap. Without looking at her, Momon reached into his bag and drew out a potion.

“Here.”

“What.....Is that?”

“Drink this, and then please wash the smell off with water?”

He placed the red bottle of potion of the bed near him, and turned his back to the woman and lied down.

The woman’s anger had vanished and so while being amazed, she examined the potion. Her adventurer knowledge of was not much, but even in her experience, she had never seen this before.

A fleeting thought of poison crossed her mind, but poison is also quite expensive. She could not think of any reason to do so here.

The man would profit by her drinking this. What would happen afterwards was unclear.

She removed the seal, and picked it up and smelled it. There was a citric smell.

She stuffed her finger inside and swirled it, causing the liquid to be stuck to her finger. She then put it to her mouth.

“Oh, it’s unexpectedly delicious?”

A citric taste filled her mouth. Her tongue was entranced by all the flavours. The woman glanced at the man, placed her hand on her hip and drank everything in one gulp. When everything was in her stomach, she became surprised.

Instantly, she felt the wounds on her body heat up. And she became really surprised in the next moment.

The bruises she had until earlier completely disappeared. Even the scratches that felt hot, and the sprains as well.

The pain of her body completely disappeared.

“Is this.....A healing potion?”

She knew about magic potions that instantly healed a person. But what she knew was only the name and effect. As knowing how to handle money was not required by adventurers, she had neither used nor thought about it. What the heck was that man who would simply give such a thing?

While the woman was bewildered, she was lost as to whether to speak to the man. However, when she saw the back of the man and felt that it had become an impenetrable wall, she closed her mouth.

She had thought that she needed to rest to let her body heal, but fortunately she could move immediately. Anyway she should do as this man said and wash off the smell of medicine. If she did not, the man might get angry at her.

While imagining what would happen if she angered him, she shivered.

“I’ll go wash my body.”

With a voice that would not anger him, she took out a towel from her chest, along with other things that she needed for changing.

“Fu~”

The woman breathed a sigh of relief when she left the room. While thinking why would a man that would willingly give out potions be in the worst class inn.

Hanging a guild card that proved that one was a guild member should be the norm in the bar. However, there were many adventurers that hung their card while in their room to identify the strong ones.

The man earlier did not hang it. And so his rank was unclear.

A human that would willingly give away that sort of potion. At least D Rank, no, maybe even C Rank. Would a B Rank even be living in this sort of place?

“Why, am I sharing a room with that guy?”

While rank was not everything, sharing a room with a person that was a higher rank than herself weighed on her.

“Forgive me.”

The woman breathed a deep sigh.

Chapter 18: Categorical Imperatives

It was a hard bed, but if you try to sleep, you will.

She recognised that lucid dream. That particular scene in her dreams made her happy. It would be a good dream if it was able to let her indulge in that moment of happiness again.

There were no presence of enemy nearby. She was confident that she can switch her attention towards them even if they appeared.

Just a little, I shall enjoy my dream—

The throne room. Ainz who had arrived late walked slowly.

Separated left and right, the Guardians, the combat capable maids, and the servants that the Guardians had specifically selected had their heads bowed

Not even one person moved, and there was a silence where not a breath could be heard. The only sounds were made by the owner of this room—Ainz's footsteps and the sound of the staff hitting the ground.

He climbed the stairs, and sat on the throne.

“Raise your heads.”

In response to Ainz's words, everyone's heads raised without a hint of disorder. Their movements were perfect, like they had practised beforehand. Ainz felt a sense of satisfaction.

At the head of the right side was Demiurge. Behind him were Shalltear, Aura and Cocytus.

Sebas was at the head of the left. Behind him were the combat capable maids. And after a gap, the subordinates of the Guardians were arranged in rows.

The first were the subordinates that Demiurge brought.

Their staunch figures were covered in black hardened scales with large bat-

like wings sprouting from their backs. A dark malevolent aura permeated from their bodies. Their bodies were supported by a devilish whip-like tail. Sharp fangs protruded from their mouths, with razor sharp claws that cuts like a katana.

On their heads were pairs of long and twisted horns, on their backs were similar but shorter horns. Their faces were covered with scales, making them look like a twisted hybrid of men and insect.

They were the image of a demon. They were not the highest level, but they were high class level 80 Abyssal Lords.

The next example was Aura.

If Demiurge brought one type, demons, then hers was variety. Various monsters assembled.

With squirming tentacles and multiple heads, Arendagrost.

The Tsuveck Priest Lord was holding a decorative scepter which emitted a golden radiance, and was a pinkish frog-like creature that wore in a classy cleric outfit. Most of the time, the creature would wear a crown, but under the presence of Ainz, the crown was placed on its side.

Others like Sphinx Lord where the sph 3nh* was enshrined sat next to it.

*This is a real thing.

Next was Cocytus.

His entourage were a group of warriors with armors that radiated a platinum gleam. Some placed their katana on their side, some held long spears, some even carried bows on their backs and they carried a variety of weapons.

Underneath an armoured body like Cocytus. Swordmasters of the Beetle Race.

They did not wear armour in Yggdrasil, but in this world they can and so he gave some to them. They were a race that possessed a high chance of critical strikes and had the special skill known as <Vorpal Beheading>. They were the most feared vanguard even when not fully equipped.

Lastly was Shalltear, and her subordinates were one race.

Their skin was like white wax, with no visible traces of blood vessels and their eyes shined like red rubies. The parting of their crimson lips revealed the long canines teeth beneath. Each of them were blessed with the charm of an adult women.

They were all vampires.

Their bodies were only covered by a thin layer of lace gown that revealed their ample cleavage. Underneath the thin gown were luxurious jewellery that emitted a golden light. Their clothes did not hide the figure of the wearer, so one could almost see through to the skin underneath the semi-transparent dress, as if they were naked.

Their appearance suited the desire of the perverted Shalltear, who was designed to have fetishes of necrophilia and big breasts.

Including Sebas and the combat maids, all the subordinates who were allowed to enter the throne room were all present.

“Firstly, I would like to apologise for acting on my own.”

Ainz expressed his remorse to all those present, but no hint of regret was detected. The apology was a just a superficial gesture, but the act itself is important to Ainz. Ainz acting alone was his sole discretion, the apology was meant to prevent any loss of confidence from his minions and also to banish any thoughts from the underlings that Ainz was not confident in their abilities.

Fully understanding his intentions, none of his subordinates voiced out any concerns. Ainz continued to speak.

“And I will change the name I informed you of. Instead of Ainz Ooal Gown—Ainz is fine.”

The Guardians and Sebas’ eyes widened.

Even Demiurge had a face of surprise. However, it changed to one of understanding.

“We have received your name.”

—His answer represented all whom were present. All of them bowed simultaneously. Ainz nodded his head and beckoned them to raise theirs before

continuing.

“As a result of my self experiments, I have received information, that the humans surrounding us do not pose a threat.”

The minions assembled before Ainz were highly confident in their own abilities, none showed any changes in their expressions even after Ainz’s declaration. They believed that their superiority was natural, but it was slightly worrying.

This was due to a lack of information.

It was true that the Warrior Captain had that sort of power. Even if he did not go all out, he had the ability to defeat a Death Knight. Thinking that there were better people than him was difficult. And based on the Kingdom, they should not be called the weakest of the surrounding countries.

However, the information they had was only from one part of this world.

“Still the information I have gathered is not sufficient to light up the night-sky —It is weak as embers. To illuminate the world like the sun, I must grasp more information about the world. I hope to choose people to gather this information but—My original intention was to allow Demiurge’s underlings to achieve this goal, but I do not think that this is enough. Looking at it from all angles, we must infiltrate a human occupied city to gather our intelligence..... Now Demiurge, among your subordinates, who is the most suited for this task?”

“It should be impossible. It could be possible to steal information but, we do not have any subordinates that can mix among humans.”

“—I see. Then what about using illusion magic.”

Among the 50 underlings gathered, only a single hand was raised. Ainz did not expect much from his gathered subordinates. The reason was that in Yggdrasil, monster special abilities were limited to six. This did not even include the usage of magic.

Most of the abilities were centered on roles for recovery, attack, defense, and support purposes. It was extremely rare for them to have other types of abilities.

The only ones who were able to utilise the vast variety of magic in Yggdrasil were none other than players.

In addition, most fairy type monsters could use illusion magic, but there were none within the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick

“.....If we include “that” and myself, then three people.”

That number was extremely small.

Should I take that out?

While it was guarding an important place, that place was impregnable inside the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. Leaving it there would be to just let a treasure rot away.

But, moving that was something that he wanted to avoid.

Choosing not to move that this time, the next time something occurred then it would be fine.

“Then it cannot be helped. It might be slightly dangerous, but we have too little information. And so we must learn some. Sebas—”

“Yes.”

“Lend me one of the maids.”

Sebas did not reject. Although he had no intention of waiting for Sebas’ reply. Sebas himself had no intention to say anything else. Any form of rejection would be just be conducted on the surface.

Ainz moved his gaze towards one of the maids standing at the front. Standing there was a woman in her late tens or early twenties.

With a face that would remind one of a Japanese, she gave off a graceful atmosphere. Because of that, although her chest was big, no lewd thoughts could be made.

Her bright and smooth porcelain white skin reflected the brightness of the magical light. Her dark hair was rich and moist, and her obsidian black eyes sparkled.

Out of 1,000 people, 999 would turn their heads to marvel at her beauty

again.

“.....Gamma. I have a very important mission for you. Pay attention to a lot of things, and once it is over, return immediately to my side. I will say it now. This is a job to collect information regarding adventurers. This is an extremely important mission, do you understand?”

“—Yes. I shall respond to your will.”

Although Ainz could not remember her name, he remembered her call sign and he commanded her.

Did the maid feel happy from receiving his order, her face reddened. Her side tail wavered in the air.

At that figure, the fire in Ainz’s eye sockets wavered, but without voicing his emotion he continued his order.

“To Sebas I have a different mission. First collect information of the countries’ weapons. Next, find out about how developed the level of technology and magic are. What can and cannot be done. The technology takes precedence. You will have to come up with countermeasures according to the situation.”

This was a fantasy world. It was likely that unimaginable things might happen, things that go beyond the boundaries of the information at hand— Magic or things related to it.

Currently, they must place great importance upon matters related to magic skills. Especially those skills related to information gathering.

For example: The spell to communicate with the Divine: Oracle, the spell to perceive the past: Retrocognition, or the spell to detect the location of an object: Locate Object, and other such types of magics. One could not really be certain that such spells did not exist. And the stronger the unknown spell, the more unprepared one will be when its existence becomes known.

“The next matter of priority is the discovery of talented individuals of high combat ability. As mentioned earlier, we can presume the combat ability of soldiers serving each country to be relatively low. But there may be other unknown talents within the country that are free agents. We need to find out how our strength compares to these free agents. In other words, we need the

kind of information that I've ordered the earlier maid to collect, except from another source or angle."

Monsters, adventurers, the 13 Heroes. If you thought about it, there were a handful of existences of unknown strength. And it was unclear whether there were other players. Even if the strongest person in the Kingdom was weaker than himself, it did not give him a sense of safety.

This might be akin to the thoughts of a madman, fearing the sun would come crashing down.

Ainz even wanted to know what the sun was made of. He would only be satisfied when he is absolutely sure that the sun will not fall on his head.

"Understood, Ainz-sama."

"Ah, inform the maids the same thing. If possible, I would like you to live in the town, and gain common sense and information. Consider the Kingdom."

"Understood."

There was no particular reason why he chose the Kingdom. It was just the place that he could safely ignore.

"—Next is Aura. There is a large forest nearby, scout the area. If the forest is safe, build a resupply zone and emergency refuge. Its purpose is to transport material to Nazarick during emergencies. It will also serve as a rendezvous point in case of an emergency evacuation of Nazarick."

The faces of the guardians looked shocked with a hint of fear mixed in. What sort of attack could penetrate this impregnable fortress? They were alarmed when their master had already considered the possibility that the Great Tomb of Nazarick would be taken down.

The purpose was to increase the vigilance of the guardians, and to prevent them from approaching the task clumsily.

"I am the embodiment of Ainz Ooal Gown. As long as I remain, it will still be our victory. The Great Tomb of Nazarick is nothing but a vessel. As long as it remains within my hands, it will never failure. Do you understand the importance of this assignment, Aura?"

“Yes!”

The reply was brimming with confidence. Aura’s determination could be felt from her voice, and Ainz nodded like he was satisfied.

“Nothing is absolute, you must observe things carefully. We are unsure of how strong are the monsters in this world. Collect the information of those monsters as you encounter them.”

“Yes!”

“According to the circumstances, we may use that area for food production. Do take note of the surrounding areas.”

“Understood. Go to an unexplored area to expand the territory. May I create dummies?”

“Either way is fine. I will leave it to your own discretion.”

“Understood.”

Aura bobbed her head.

Moving his line of sight, Demiurge was next. Ainz was hesitant to give his next set of orders. This order would mostly likely lead to the suffering of many humans.

“.....Demiurge.....Although the task is also possible for Cocytus. But I think you are more suited for this task. Henceforth, I will give you this responsibility.” Ainz sighed during his moment of hesitance. “.....Bring your servants and take control of one country. Use them for open action, but control matters in the back, do not reveal your existence to others.”

“.....Should I take it that the lack of information about current magic and the strength of adventurers is considerably dangerous? Should I wait for Sebas-dono?”

“It is so. Your words are correct. However, around when I, the figure known as Ainz, appears, a Demon King is born, many annoying vermin may seek to slander me. Thus I shall send you.”

“I will use my own methods to gather information while moving among the shadows.”

Ainz nodded his head slowly.

If one used combat capability as the sole criteria, Cocytus was the best choice. If Ainz wanted to dominate a country forcibly, Shalltear would be best. But this task was rather complicated and delicate. The ability to adapt to the situation through some strategic thinking would be more useful than combat ability.

Then there was no one else to send but Demiurge.

“.....Then when we dominate them, will the [Great Hero of Justice] Ainz Ooal Gown arrive to repel those subordinates?”

“.....Yes.”

“Understood!” Demiurge charmingly smiled. “Please let me take on the role as the Demon King for this assignment. I shall adjust the plans accordingly to allow the Hero of the Empire to take center stage.”

“In moderation. But think before you massacre people.”

The smart devilish face of the Demiurge twisted from astonishment.

“Please allow this embarrassed one to ask a question. Why thus? A massacre will certainly invite the wrath of the people. I think that this method will certainly be a good strategy to increase the notoriety of the Demon King..... or is it we should be alert for the appearance of heroes? I think it is only those fools who self-appoint themselves as heroes, whom will appear like moths to a flame.”

“Just as you say.”

Ainz clicked his tongue when Demiurge turned his head. He thought that he could let one of Demiurge’s servants be the Demon King and take the reckless position of the hero.

Then according to the situation, he could be used to lure out any potential Players. But, it would be better if Demiurge act behind the shadows. Hypothetically speaking, if a player was present, it was undoubtable that they knew the true form of Demiurge.

“A cornered mice will bite the cat. There are things that I need to be careful

with.”

There are not many things that Ainz needed to be on alert for. Basically, it was the unknown that he needed to be cautious with.

To Ainz, the most feared thing was the unknown. The concept was like moving in the dark while using his limbs. No matter what, there has to be a certain sense of caution.

Different from the earlier thought, Ainz was also cautious about something else as well.

“—I ask the Guardians. We are the strongest. Then is it possible to become even stronger?”

The Guardians looked at each other for a moment. It was a question they had not considered. If their master posed such a question to them, they could not give a suitable answer.

“.....I do not think so. We are the strongest, but it is a strength that cannot increase. I will ask another question. Will the weak always be weak?”

“Are you perhaps saying that they are not?”

In response to Demiurge who was representing everyone else, Ainz nodded.

“Yes, Demiurge—And the Guardians. I believe that their weakness is a weakness that can be improved. Do not ever make light of that. You must be cautious of strong contenders arising from areas not under our observation..... Although I did mentioned not to simply conduct a massacre, you may do so once you have deliberated the matter with me. Demiurge, I believe you work with these conditions?”

“—Understood, Ainz-sama. I shall take your words to heart and complete the orders that you have given me,”

“If you encounter any talented individuals, find a way to bring him into our group. Could you do that?”

Demiurge expressed an evil smile, and bowed deeply.

“Now, when Demiurge is not around, the responsibility of the first to seventh floors will fall to Shalltear. Similarly when Sebas is not around the responsibility

of the ninth and tenth floors will fall to Cocytus. Inform your subordinates of this. However, Cocytus will be in charge of guarding the tomb. Shalltear might act as my limbs. Do you understand?”

“Aye.”

“Ha.”

Accepting Shalltear and Cocytus’ replies, Ainz nodded.

“Ah Yes, summoned beings will continue to exist unless they were told otherwise. He must be more careful when performing summoning magic. As I recalled, summoning creatures were separated into non-permanent and permanent summons. With magic summoning producing the former while special skill summoning creating the latter. I must spend some time for research on this topic.”

Ainz recalled the Death Knight that was waiting for his orders outside of the throne room. He muttered a few words.

“I believe Kouhukou has the ability to summon an unlimited number of his race.....”

“.....Ah.”

That sentence alone disrupted the quietness of the throne room. Ainz cupped his face, and activated a quick messaging magic. Without a doubt, the receiver was Kyohukou. There was a strange sensation as if a long line that extend into the distance was connecting to something.

And then—

“Kyohukou!”

—Ou, It is Momonga-sama, you sound live—

“B, before that I need to find out something from you. Can you return the monsters that you summoned—”

—Yes that. I too am currently facing a problem—

In truth, he did not really want to hear it, but he could not avoid the topic.

“.....What seems to be the problem?”

—The room that is under my charge is filled by my brethren and it is getting crowded. If it continues, the occupants of the room will burst out. Should I leave the matter as it is? Please rest assured that I have ordered the undead serfs under Shalltear-sama not to eat my kin. Hence—

“Enough-!”

The shoulders of Aura and Shalltear trembled in fear. They could guess what would happen from Ainz’s shout. Cocytus as an insectoid could not understand the meaning behind those expressions, and continued facing front. Sebas remained expressionless while Demiurge looked like he found something interesting.

“.....Shalltear.”

“.....Aye.”

“The room is full, right?”

Shalltear’s body shook as if the ground was moving beneath her.

“Buck up!”

Aura supported her in a panick. Shalltear mumbled about something while her gaze lingered in the air. That particular room was spacious till the point that it could be consider a floor. A situation where the room is completely filled to the point of bursting. It was something unimaginable. No it was something that one never wanted to think of.

“In short, open up the other areas of the floor while creating a new quarantine zone. Do not allow them to spread.”

“Understood, Cocytus. May I requesteth thy assistance on this?”

“Fumu. I. Do. Not. Understand. What. Is. There. To. Be. Feared. But. Since. You. Requested. My. Assistance. I. Shall. Oblige.”

The problem should be solved. Ainz considered the next step.

There was nothing left, all instructions have been delivered. The remaining matter was to discuss the minor details with the instructed parties.

Then should he end this?

No, there was one more thing. The most important thing was left.

An existence that would not change anything. When people felt that, they would look for a relationship

Then what was Ainz's situation?

Work could be done by anyone. Even if he was not around there would be no problems. He had no parents. And no friends. And no lover.

The funny thing was that to Suzuki Satoru—Momonga, there was nothing but [Ainz Ooal Gown]. And even though his companions had their own reasons and left, they would never betray Ainz.

He sent his gaze towards the Guardians and their subordinates.

In truth, would the NPCs that were created by his friends in Ainz Ooal Gown swear loyalty to him even when they do not have the full picture of the situation?

Yes—He was nothing but [Ainz Ooal Gown]. Then—

“I shall give you the highest order!” Ainz paused for a moment. He saw the expressions of his servants stiffen. “Let the legend of Ainz Ooal Gown be eternal”

His right hand grasped the floating Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown. At that moment, as if responding to his will, the numerous jewels that decorated the staff, started to emit different colored lights. The surrounding air swayed with it.

“No matter how many there are, we will wipe off all the existing heroes. Ainz Ooal Gown is the only true hero—”

Ainz Ooal Gown stood at the pinnacle of Yggdrasil. Completing numerous famous quests. To protect its name was the greatest return that he could offer to his past comrades. This world would not be exempted from it as well.

Suzuki Satoru—Momonga would not betray [Ainz Ooal Gown] again.

“Let all those who exist know! If they are those whom are more powerful, we shall use methods other than force. If it is someone that has numerous magic casters as his underlings, we shall employ other strategies. Currently, we are at

the stage of preparation for grand show that is to come. Let the world know the glory and might of Ainz Ooal Gown!”

Ainz’s voice was full of ambition, and it spread from the throne to all corners of the throne room.

At hearing the voice of their lord, the occupants of the room simultaneously lowered their heads, directing their utmost respect to the Leader of the Supreme Beings.

Ainz physically felt the undying loyalty of his subordinates as he thought.

He felt a strong sense of nausea for giving those instructions to Demiurge earlier. In the future, many innocent humans would be tortured as an outcome. However, he did not regret his decision. No, it was something that he should not even feel regret for. To make Ainz Ooal Gown a legend, he should not dwell on those sacrifices.

Ainz was a but a mere salaryman. He did not have any natural talent nor strong will, not to mention that his confidence was low.

There were parts where he was lost. There were also painful parts.

He could do nothing but proceed.

For the sake of people able to face his friends—

Chapter 19: First Request | Part 1

The days of an adventurer starts off early in the morning. No, it would not be weird to say that the humans of this world all got up early.

People used to start their day with the rising sun and prepared for bed with the setting sun. This was simply due to the fact that, unlike in modern times, an economical source of lighting was unavailable. Creating a flame capable of serving as a continuous light source required a considerable amount of resources. The basic lantern consumed large quantities of oil as fuel. So much so that households without a certain level of wealth would find it difficult to use on a daily basis.

Because of the aforementioned reasons, basically when it became dark, they could not do anything, and so it became a rest time.

Then what about the inn where Momon was staying? If you considered the fact that the first floor was a bar, it should open until late, right?

It was true that it opened until late.

However, when compared to a current day bar, the hours were quite few. On average it will operate until 8pm. Afterwards the shop will be closed, but it was not strange for excited adventurers to throw a few punches at each other.

If they wanted to get rowdier then they would head to a different bar.

However, this was not how the rooms of the adventurers were at all.

Momon was staying in the cheapest inn available, the adventurers there did not have a lot of money. There were also quite a lot of adventurers that could not pick jobs they liked. According to the rules, they were the first to wake up and head towards their given jobs—Especially physical labour. And for that reason no one wanted to make noise, even if there were they would go to a different bar.

A return from the deep darkness.

Momon's consciousness floated up and crystallized in an instant. At the same instant, a wet sigh escaped his lips.

The Great One, the last of the 41 supreme beings, who in his mercy, remained in this world. The highest existence and the central figure of the 41 supreme beings.

Seeing the great one, even if it was only through a dream, gave Momon heartfelt joy.

Having received his orders, Momon pulled himself from the dream with the greatest of reluctance. No matter how pleasant it was, one couldn't stay in a dream forever.

In any case, Momon was already blessed with joy. Joy which one could not obtain from any dream. Just the fact of having received a direct order from the Great One caused great happiness to spring forth from his heart and filled his entire body to the bursting point with bliss.

Thus, to fail a direct order is unacceptable. Any failure would be an insult akin to smearing the Great One's face with dirt. Of course, knowing the Great One, in his great mercy, would probably just move on to the next operation without punishing anyone. It is Momon himself who would rather die than fail his master.

Even so, Momon would not kill himself to atone for any failure. That was not his decision to make.

Momon—Naberal Gamma's body belonged to the Supreme Beings, even her mind and spirit.

Momon's sharp senses completed his awakening as he became aware of his surroundings. The sound of his breath and beating heart, both of which had faded in the background during his slumber, leapt back into his awareness.

Now, what should I do? Momon thought.

He had an appointment with the Guild at 6, but it was still too early in the morning. Momon peeked through barely opened eyelids at the windows. There was no sign of sunlight hitting the shutters. He could sneak out unnoticed into the darkness but Momon was pretending to be a villager who had just taken up

adventuring. Such a person walking confidently in the dark might attract unnecessary attention. In any case, what would his room-mates think if he suddenly disappeared from the room without anybody noticing?

If so, then doing it when everyone woke up would not be a problem. Afterall, she could think of no merits to rushing it.

Leaving a sufficient amount of time, when Momon opened his eyes, most of the adventurers had changed and were preparing to leave. Naturally, he had simply closed his eyes.

Momon maintained a sharp situational awareness even though his growth was focused on his mage level.

“Did you need something?”

Momon called out slowly to the somewhat ill-equipped female adventurer. Momon had already confirmed the identity of this stuttering woman who was trying to communicate with him.

“A, um, about that.”

The one stuttering was the woman from yesterday.

Her attitude had changed so much from yesterday, she seemed like an entirely different person altogether. Momon kept quiet and waited for her to continue.

“Um, the medicine you gave me.....”

Momon nodded, and even moved his neck to tell her to continue.

“I do not know much about the potion, but if it is possible could I please purchase one?” She frantically waved her hands and continued. “How much do you have in stock? I have heard about the price of a regular potion, but I have the money to purchase one. If that potion is stronger than that.....I think.....”

Her confidence seemed to get weaker and weaker as she continued.

“I am currently working as a city guard and may face mercenaries-turned-bandits as part of my work. And I think your medicine would come in handy.”

The woman continued with her head hung low in an ingratiating manner.

Even as Momon maintained an expressionless mask on the outside, inwardly he was getting more and more exasperated by the current turn of events.

Momon had a highly sensitive sense of smell.

Because of this, he had found the pungent odour of the healing herbs the woman had been using hard to take. While he could have put up with the odour, but Momon was grimly certain that he would have sacrificed his sense of smell in doing so. Fearing a future where he had to face opponents with a crippled sense of smell, Momon had given the woman his potion in a desperate attempt to get away.

Now this mistake had come back to haunt him.

The price of being ignorant of the ways of this world had started to show. Momon was becoming worried about his ability to successfully carry out his master's orders, but there was no point in crying over spilt milk.

Then what should be done?

Due to the fact that the price of a potion is unknown, a suitable price cannot be given. Underselling should be cautioned against, depending on the situation people might become curious.

Then if he tried to reject just how should he?

Plan A : Refuse by claiming that the potion given yesterday was his last one. However, giving someone your last potion just to get away from a smell seemed like a ridiculous reason no one would ordinarily give. Plan B: Refuse by claiming that he had only one potion left. For the same reason as Plan A, this would seem strange.

In that case, why not give the potion as a way of buying favor? After all, the objective was to gather information on adventurers. It wouldn't be a bad idea to have the woman indebted to him. And if she wanted more in the future, she may prove to be useful—

“.....I do not mind.”

“R, really!”

The woman's face lit up in an instant. She must have been quite worried about her work as a city guard.

"From your experience with the healing properties of the potion, you are, of course, aware of how precious this potion is, are you not?"

The woman nodded repeatedly. She did not appear to be aware as to the actual qualities of the potion, just that she was impressed by its effectiveness.

"But, this time I will specially hand it over for free. Even though it is the last of the two bottles I have."

Said Momon as he reached into the Infinity Haversack cleverly hidden in his leather bag and retrieved a potion of the type he handed over yesterday. One out of 10 such minor healing potions.

"No, no, it would not be right to get this for nothing. I can pay up to a certain amount."

Hurriedly, the woman plucked out a small satchel from her front. The faint metallic clink of a modest number of coins could be heard.

Momon was not hard up for money.

The arms and armor Ains captured from the Empire were enchanted and they fetched a high price. Momon received a portion of the proceeds as mission funds and was reasonably well off. That being said, for the simple villager that Momon was playing, showing off such wealth would certainly attract suspicion and so was limited in the amount he could spend at one time.

Momon weighed the pros and cons of accepting/not accepting the offer of payment rationally. Of course, the merits of being owed a favor as well as the utility of using the potions as bait won out.

"No, that's fine. Take it as a token of my goodwill."

"Thanks!"

Momon avoided the woman's attempt to shake his hand and stood up. His illusion had its limits and if she touched him, she might notice something was amiss. Momon did not think that the woman would be able to understand just what was wrong, but it was better to be safe than to be sorry.

“I’ve to go.”

“Ah, then my thanks.”

As Momon watched the woman carefully slip the potion into a sturdy leather pochette, he asked.

“I am called Momon, and your name is?”

“♪~”

She tap-danced down the steps of the inn. The steps groaned and squeaked like it was about to break as it always had but, today they sounded like music from the heavens.

Struggling in vain to keep a straight face, the woman reached the bottom of the stairs with a goofy grin. A number of adventurers were quietly having their breakfast in the common room. Interrupted from their porridge, they stared at the source of the intrusion. There was a pitying expression on their faces, one that was usually directed at the village idiot.

But she really couldn’t give a damn on what they thought.

No, in fact, she was in such good spirits, she mistook the looks of pity for admiration.

“♪~”

Humming a tune, she slouched at an empty spot at the bar, her body lightly dancing in time with the strange rhythms inside her head. The woman was in a world of her own, entirely oblivious to the looks directed at her.

“You’re in a good mood.”

The Innkeeper’s deep voice and the slam of a wooden bowl filled with porridge, hitting the counter-top broke the woman’s daze and successfully forced her back into reality.

“Itadakima~su”

With a quick nod of thanks to the Innkeeper, she lifted the wooden spoon buried in the white porridge and smoothly poured the contents into her mouth.

“Hahii!”

At that moment, the woman felt a burning sensation spread all over her mouth. That was, of course, the natural outcome if one stuffed hot porridge into one's mouth without cooling it first.

Swallowing not being an option, she pursed her lips, frantically attempting to suck in cool air. It didn't work. Tears welled up in her eyes as she huffed and puffed desperately, her mouth continuing to burn.

"Here."

He placed a wooden cup on the counter, and she frantically picked it up, and drank it in one gulp.

"Ha~"

"Calm down a little."

"Hahi, master. Sorry."

"What the heck happened, you're out of it? Is the current job that good? Baniara"

"No, that is~"

Baniara's face broke into a proud smile like a child who was given a particularly awesome toy. Seeing that Baniara was about to break into a some long winded brag, the Innkeeper turned away abruptly. He brought out some chopped meat from the kitchen and tossed it into Baniara's porridge.

"Go on, eat up. Here's some leftovers – on the house."

The Innkeeper started clearing up the tables, ignoring the accusatory gazes directed at him from the adventurers in the room for this blatant act of favoritism. Having lost a person to brag to, Baniara stirred her porridge disinterestedly, blowing into the still-steaming porridge.

Having finished breakfast, one by one the adventurers left the room. Baniara wasn't a slow eater. It was just that on top of a late start, the Innkeeper had given Baniara a double portion of porridge.

A double portion of porridge was a lot to swallow, but Baniara was a warrior first and a woman second. Baniara attacked her porridge quietly in the common room, eventually draining the contents of the wooden container.

“Fufu...”

There was a satisfied expression on her face as she patted her stomach. It seemed a little silly as she didn't have a pot-belly to pat due her active lifestyle, but she did it subconsciously anyway.

“.....Now you were talking earlier about the reason for your high spirits? ”

“Eh?”

A momentary tinge of confusion seeped into Baniara's face as the Innkeeper addressed her from out-of-the-blue. Having understood what the Innkeeper meant, she calmed down and laughed. The Innkeeper started to clear away Baniara's empty wooden bowl.

A more perceptive person might have discerned the reason for the timing of the Innkeeper's question. A full stomach tended to lower one's ability to think.

“Didn't I say it yesterday? I got a potion from the guy sharing a room with me.”

“Ah, you did.”

Surprised by the request to appraise the potion from out-of-the-blue, the Innkeeper could recall that incident quite clearly.

“Today, I asked, and got one.”

It didn't really seem like something to be worth being so happy about. Maybe she got a good deal on that potion? Convinced that that was the case, the Innkeeper's interest waned considerably. However, since he was the one that started the conversation, he felt compelled to keep it going.

“Hmp. How much?”

“About that~”

She had a broad grin. The owner smiled at the scene which he saw earlier.

“I got it for free.”

“Hou, a gradual recovery-type potion is quite expensive. I can't believe it..... What?”

Baniara had a weird face as she asked a question.

“No, the one I got immediately healed me?”

“Immediately? Impossible.”

The Innkeeper muttered under his breath, convinced that Baniara was mistaken.

Potions that had a healing effect were generally categorised into three groups. The first type was simply increasing the body’s natural healing. This was used with recovery magic or emergency treatment, it did not have much of an effect alone. It was cheap, costing between two to three silver. Its main ingredients were herbs.

The second one was the type that gradually healed the drinker. It requires several minutes for the effect to be seen. Although the recovery effect is low but it still cost at least 15 gold pieces. Its ingredients is a mix of both herb and magic. It is not an item that could be afforded by new adventurers. However, it could not be denied that the potion will vastly improve the adventurers’ odds of survival.

The last type of potion is one that produced instantaneous healing effects. This was quite expensive as it was made with a high leveled magic caster using alchemy, even one with the weakest effect would cost no less than 30 gold pieces.

Yesterday, the price he had told her about was for the gradual healing potion as he felt that a newcomer does not require such an expensive item. But the situation is far different from what he thought.

But she was saying that that was not the case.

“Impossible.”

Again, the Innkeeper found himself denying the truth of Baniara’s words. She has to be mistaken. Where in the world would you find someone who could be bullied into giving up potions worth 30 gold pieces? There was simply no way.

Maybe someone who didn’t know the value of the potions?

The Innkeeper recalled the man who had noiselessly descended the steps to

the common room earlier. It was roughly around the time Baniara was doing valiant battle with her double portion of porridge. Waving away the offer of breakfast with one hand, he slipped out of the Inn like a ghost.

A trickle of cold sweat ran down his back.

“That guy...”

He did not even know about mantles, and he said he was an ex-villager from the sticks. I wonder if that was the truth. Rationally speaking, was it even possible to descend those squeaky steps without a sound? It had been noisy in the common room earlier and the sound of the steps might have been drowned out. But...

The image from yesterday of a country bumpkin had totally been wiped out. Replaced by the image of an ethereal ghost.

“Are you alright?”

Baniara expression looked mystified. It was a stupid looking expression. And not just because she was ignorant of the value of an instant-heal potion.

Hey. If what you got was an Instant Heal potion, did you realize you couldn't get one for anything less than 30 gold pieces?

“.....” *What are you saying?*

The look of mystification cleared as Baniara's mind comprehended what the Innkeeper was saying and was replaced by a look of stunned surprise.

“OEEEEEE!”

The Innkeeper winced at the loud exclamation of surprise, his brows furrowing.

“UE! Why? Wait!”

“Well you know that the cost of an item jumps significantly if it is enchanted right?”

“Well yeah, of course. But can two of those potions really buy a set of full platemail?”

The full-body armor <Full Platemail> is famous for being the armor with the

best defensive capabilities that one can commonly purchase from the market. There are no warriors who do not admire it. Whatever your rank, wearing a suit sets you apart from other adventurers.

Baniara's head slumped as she realized just how valuable the potion she had so casually drunk really was.

"Well that's just based on an estimate. You realize that the actual value also varies based on the amount of health recovered? If we take a relatively high ranking adventurer's wounds as a basis, an Instant Heal potion that can heal wounds which would normally take over a month to heal would cost around 30 gold pieces. A potion that can bring someone from the brink of death to full health would probably fetch 270 gold pieces. Above that would be about 480 pieces. I'm pretty sure potions worth 480 pieces aren't common in the market. It would have to be custom ordered and it would take 1 month to make. But of course weaker adventurers would only need potions worth 30 gold pieces to have the same effect."

Open-mouthed with surprise from hearing about how valuable the potion could potentially be, Baniara now felt more confident about the value of the potion.

"Are you going to sell it?"

"No way!"

Baniara, her face set, secured the pochette at her side.

"If you want to assess the healing strength of the potion, you can get it done at the adventurer's guild for 3 silver pieces. You should do it."

"I understand"

"Well, I've never heard of an Instant Heal potion worth anything less than 30 gold pieces."

The two of them let out an unconscious sigh.

"To think that it could be worth so much..."

"Well that's because those potions are really incredible. If you lost an arm and were in great pain, even the cheapest one would kill the pain immediately and

your lost limb would start growing in front of you.”

Subconsciously, the Innkeeper rubbed one of the scars on his face

“Hah.”

“Well, whatever you think of it, keep it safe. It’s quite literally a life-saver.”

The bar area remained silent. Having made up her mind, Baniara broke the silence.

“Hey, who do you think the guy is?”

“I’ll like to know too.”

Once again the pair let out a sigh that spread out over the empty bar.

Chapter 20: First Request | Part 2

There was a difference in the atmosphere of the adventurers' guild when Momon visited the guild yesterday. Inside were several well armed adventurers, a warrior in full plate mail armor, an archer with light armor, a priest in holy robes and on his hands was a staff with a holy sigil. The last person was a magic caster with his magician robes and staff.

They were choosing their next potential job with the receptionist, and were discussing among themselves about the details of the job listed on the parchment. Their aura of vitality befitted the members of the adventurers guild.

As Momon walked into the building, the gazes of all the adventurers were directed at him. The gazes moved away as quick as they came, the owners lost interest. In other words, the subject did not reach a status befitting their attention. None the less, there were those with keen observation skills, like several people dressed like thieves outfit, whom were monitoring Momon's actions closely. Their action did not meant that they were hostile, it was the normal behavior of a thief, whom generally act as the team's eyes and ears. It was in their habit to maintain a minimal sense of vigilance.

While acting that he did not notice anything, Momon headed to the counter.

As luck would have it, the discussion ended pretty fast. Although there were several girls manning the counter. The spot in front of Ishpen was empty.

"Good morning."

They greeted each other. Momon was slightly annoyed in contrast to Ishpen. However, he was able to hide his feelings behind his smile. Ishpen examined both of Momon's arms. But quickly redirected her gaze, as she did not have any lingering doubts.

"Etto, the Axe of Cyclone have just arrived."

"Is that so. Even though I intended to arrive earlier."

There was still another 30 minutes before the appointed time. But the members of the Axe of Cyclone have already gathered. As such, it is not acceptable for Momon, who held a lower status, to be late.

“Then, please allowed me to lead you. This way please.”

Ishpen stood up from her spot, and moved behind the other receptionist, and exited from the side of the counter. She took out a small bronze piece that could be easily hidden inside her palm.

Momon followed Ishpen into one of the guild rooms.

There were several set of doors inside the room, probably rooms for meeting individuals.

The doors were made to be sound proof, but if Momon concentrated, it was possible to hear faintly, allowing him to gain a slight understanding of the contents.

On the door that Ishpen had guided him to, there a plate etched with words hanging on the door. While it could not be read or understood, by looking at it, one could tell it meant that the room was occupied. Currently, this plate was hanging from several doors, and all of them indicated the presence of people.

“Before that.”

Ishpen held a thin metal plate and handed it to Momon.

“Your member card.”

The member card was a small brass metal plate with alphabets and numbers carved on it, and it was likely Momon’s name was also written on it. To those who were more conscious about it, they would think of them as dog tags. At the corner of the members card, a small hole was present.

Recalling the adventurers that were previously at the counter, there were a lot of them but they all had this hanging from their neck. This hole was probably for threading a chain through.

“What is this?”

“This is the item that I have explained simply to Momon-san before. This is the number assigned to Momon-san, if this number is given, it is possible to

search quickly.”

“Hmph.”

“The materials for a novice and F are brass, E is bronze, D is iron, C is silver, B is gold, and A is platinum. And the highest A+ is mithril. Well, the A++ Rank is honorary and is made of the rarest metal Adamantium.”

“Hmph.”

“Ah, thread this through the hole, and please hang it from your neck.”

Ishpen took out a short chain from her pocket, and threaded the chain through the hole at the side. She looped it around Momon’s neck. Momon then directed his cold look at the brass member card.

“.....Has any magic been applied?”

“No? It has nothing inside.”

“Has the Guild or anybody ever told you to treat the card like a magical object?”

“I have not heard about the Guild doing such a thing.”

“I see.....”

The existence of a member card enchanted with information gathering magic, which pinpoints the owner’s location was not something impossible. As Ishpen was not aware of it, Momon was arranging his thoughts quietly. That type of magical knowledge was one of the things being investigated by Momon’s superior, Sebas Tian. Should he wait for Sebas’s investigation to complete? Or should he initiate the investigation himself? For this problem, it was best to act according to the situation.

Then should I behave until the investigation is over? Or should I investigate as well? I should adapt to the circumstances.

Momon bowed to Ishpen, and placed it in his pocket.

After Ishpen confirmed that everything was in order, she stood in front of one of the doors and knocked it a few times. She announced to the people inside.

“Apologies, I am a Guild receptionist.”

Without waiting for a reply, Ishpen opened the door.

“I have brought Momon-san.”

Inside the room were four men. Bronze member cards hanged down from their necks. Everyone seemed to be younger than 20.

But, their age did not match the grim aura exerted by the group. Momon noticed, although they seemed relaxed, but underneath they still maintained a sense of vigilance. They had put their weapons aside. But still, their equipment was conveniently placed in a way for them equip themselves at a moment's notice.

The behavior was likely to have been molded after experiencing certain death countless times.

Of course, if one compared the four with Momon, whose ability far outstripped them, their behavior was akin to child's play. Their grim expression was just to impress others.

Weaklings. Momon suppressed his urge to narrow his eyes.

From Momon's perspective, their combined strength was as thin as a piece of paper. He held little expectations for E-class adventurers, placing them on par with garbage. If he used his magic ability, he could slaughter them in seconds.

Of course, Momon did consider whether they were hiding their capabilities just like him. If they were actually masking their ability, Momon was confident that he would be able to see through it. At this moment, he knew that they were not hiding anything. He could sense that they did not have any exceptional ability.

The possibility of their abilities far surpassing Momon or even the Floor Guardians was not completely zero. However, Momon thought that the likelihood of it being truth was akin to an asteroid dropping from the sky at that very moment.

These were E-class adventurers. He must use this chance to gather vital

information, no matter how long it would take. Should he break character as a simple villager? As Momon thought about it, he refused that idea.

Avoid any action that garners attention.

Momon was given such an order when he was summoned to the private room of his master. A maid that disobeyed her master was garbage. Then there was no need for Momon to consider anything for himself.

Momon smiled, and lowered his head towards the people in the room.

“I am Momon. Nice to meet you.”

Following Ishpen, Momon entered the room.

This narrow room was four metres wide in all directions.

There was a small round table in the centre, and surrounding it were six chairs. In addition, several chairs were placed in the corners of the room. There was a considerable large shoiko placed against the wall. It was probably for Momon to carry.

There was a man with an air of a warrior wearing a hauberk upon which interwoven strips of thin metal bands were held together by leather – <Banded Armour>.

Wearing Soft Leather Armour that seemed easy to move it, the thief like man left his bow and quiver at his side.

A man with a delicate face was wearing something that looked like what the Innkeeper called a suit of leather armor but seemed a little too light to be called armor.

And then there was a seated man that was dressed in leathers much like the thief except reinforced with additional layers of leather <Hard Leather Armor>.

The four adventurers looked up and down at Momon in appraising manner. What drew their attention the most seemed to be the soft gauntlets Momon was wearing.

“I am late this time, my deepest apologies.”

Momon said as he stood at the entrance with his head lowered.

“Don’t worry about it Momon-san. We had a bit of a rough morning ourselves.” A pained smile floated across his face. “It’s just that we were woken up early by some woman throwing a tantrum near our rooms”

With that, it was as if a bag had broken open as the other adventurers started voicing their displeasure.

“And to think we had chosen the highest class of Inn just so that we could get a good rest! Getting up woken by some dumb broad early in the morning really pisses me off”

“We don’t know which rich merchant it was, but to have a daughter like that must be quite a handful. The butler seemed to have a terrible time too...”

“Well, thanks to the tantrum, we got to enjoy a luxurious breakfast. Let’s be generous and forgive her”

“—Anyway, take a seat please. For now I’ll like to start with a self-introduction and then talk about the nature of the request and details of the job at hand.”

How unexpected.

Momon was a little surprised by how different they were from his expectation.

He had expected to be treated more like a subordinate, but thanks to the good nature of the adventurers, things progressed smoothly. Ishpen hardly needed to be there.

Momon chose an empty seat and sat on it—

“Then I will be taking my leave.”

“Ah, thank you very much.”

—Ishpen closed the door, and left. She stuck up her thumb, and smiled wryly like a man.

“Interested?”

“What.....”

The remaining four adventurers gazed at Momon. The warrior like man then

stood up as their representative.

Black hair, black eyes. An ordinary face with no outstanding features. A deep scar running down the right side of his face. The nicks and dents on his armor stood in mute testament to the number of fights with monsters this man had survived.

“Anyway Momon-san, nice to meet you. I am the man acting as the leader of the [Axe of Cyclone], Peter Mork. Anyway, I was thinking to give a simple introduction from everyone here.”

“Then, he is the ranger acting as our eyes and ears, Lukeluther Volve.”

The swashbuckler in leather dipped his head lightly in acknowledgement. A slender man, his long hands and feet made him look like a spider. Rather than giving an impression of weakness, his slender form was lean and powerful.

His eyes and ears were black.

And then our magic caster, the knowledgeable one. Ninya—-[The Spellcaster]”

“Nice to meet you.”

Ninya was probably the youngest of the group. Not quite an adult with an overly boyish smile, he bowed lightly.

Blond hair and green eyes. Skin pale in contrast to the sun-bronzed complexion of the other adventurers.

He was also the most handsome of the group. Not handsome in a manly way, but Ninya had nice regular features. His voice was also a little high pitched for a man.

However, the slight smile that appeared on his face seemed pasted on like a mask. His smile wasn't exactly fake, but to Momon it seemed a little too perfect. It was, however, a minor point and Momon dismissed the matter.

In contrast with the armor clad forms of his companions, he was the only one who was dressed in little more than a leather outfit. Instead, various strange and unusual items could be seen hanging from his belt. Things like

strangely shaped bottles and wood carvings and other knick knacks.

“However, could you please stop that embarrassing nickname?”

“Eh? Isn’t it fine?”

Seeing Momon being curious, Lukeluther opened his mouth to comment.

“No, this guy is a genius magic caster and quite famous.”

“Heh.”

“Is it a talent that allows shorten a person’s time to master magical skills from ten years to four years instead? I am not a magic caster myself, so I am not sure how useful it is.”

“I actually have a dream. So I’m frantically working hard.”

“Your way of thinking is not wrong, having talent is important too.

“Mah, I can’t deny that.....”

Overall, the team appeared strong. But if they were judged by using Momon as a reference, all of them were unmistakably weaklings.

“The last person is our nature worshipper or <Druid>, Dayne Woodwonder. He is highly proficient in healing and nature’s magic. He is quite knowledgeable in herbology too. If you are feeling unwell, just look for him. He has some effective medicine dealing with stomach pain.”

With an unkempt beard around his mouth, and a strong body, the man with a savage-like impression nodded. But his appearance seemed to be younger than Momon. There was a slight scent of grass in the air. Its source was probably from the bag hanging from his waist.

“Them, I am Momon. This is my first job. As I will do my best to not be a burden please take care of me.”

“Yes, we’ll be in your care too. I apologise for ending our introduction early as we would like to return to the main topic, the job we took. Erm, did the guild tell you any details about our work?”

“Yes, subjugating the monsters nearby and protecting our cargo transportation.”

“That is the gist of it. Our job this time is to hunt down any monsters in the areas surrounding the city.”

The ranger—Lukeluther opened his mouth.

“After the monster hunt, the guild will reward us according to how strong the monster was. Hence any adventurers not taking any jobs will go around hunting monsters.”

“It is for our sake of our rice bowls that we took on jobs like this.”

The druid, Dayne interjected quietly from the side.

“To us, it might be a source of income. It still reduces the danger for those staying around the area. Merchants can travel safely while the Kingdom benefited from the extra taxes gained. Everybody stands to gain from this.

“Any country that had a guild had enacted such a policy. Surprisingly, the policy was not implemented until five years ago.”

The magic caster, Ninya added. His teammates nodded in support of his statement.

“Completely agree.”

“Long live the princess.”

“It was initially proposed that adventurers would be exempted from taxation. But it did not come into fruition.”

“Oh, to think that they would give much preferential treatment to adventurers.”

“I should further add that some view us as mercenary group with no loyalty to the country. Other times we are being treated as enemies. Even the Empire would not treat us that well.”

“The princess is very wise, for her to proposed that many beneficial plans.....Sadly, many were rejected outright.”

“I want to marry a beauty like her~”

“Then what about working hard to become a noble?”

“Ah, totally impossible, im-pos-si-ble. I cannot accept a life with so many

restrictions.”

“It is not a bad idea to gain nobility status since the country has no law against the nobles for suppressing the plebeians. I can just do whatever my heart desires.”

Other than Momon and Ninya, everybody’s expression stiffened. Lukeluther tried to followed up with the conversation by talking casually.

“Ouch, your mouth is sharp as ever. Looks you still hold those nobles in contempt.”

“I know that some nobles still maintain a sense of chivalry. But my elder sister was taken away by that pig. My hatred for all nobles stem from there”

“.....We’re straying off topic. I don’t think we should be discussing this matter in front of him.”

Dayne wanted to put the original topic back on track, as Peter faked a cough.

“Ahem, Ahem. Mah, we will explore the surrounding areas. Since the areas were considered developed zones. Hence, there will not be any strong monsters, please do not worry.”

“Since this is Momon’s first job, hence.....”

Peter unfolded a parchment on the table, which is a map of the surrounding area. On it were symbols for nearby villages, forest and river.

“Basically, we will be exploring the southern region.”

His finger traced the map, beginning from the middle and moving south towards an area bordering the forest.

“Our prey will be monsters occupying the forest bordering the Slaine Theocracy. We will use range weapons to attack enemies at the rear. Most of them will be goblins. Mah, the difficulty of the goblin is 10. So, we do not have much to worry about.”

“Bah, taking down weak monster like this, our rewards are at most will be one silver coin.”

Understood.”

Towards their confident act, Momon harbored some doubts.

From Momon’s personal knowledge, there was a big gap in the strength of goblins. For example a Goblin Leader, there is a chance that it could be considered a boss level monster. But they think that goblins were pushovers.

Are they sure something like that will not exist? Or that in this world, the goblins strength is that little?

The weakest goblin that Momon knew were Level 3 goblins. For those goblins to be opponents, even this group of people could defeat them.

However, confirming the information about goblins race was better.

“.....Will they be any chances for exceptionally strong goblins to appear?”

The members of the Axe of Cyclone looked at each other. As if they came to an unspoken consensus, they replied Momon’s answer in a manner to allay his fears.

“Don’t worry, it is true that there are strong goblins. But they will not appear in the forest we are headed. This is because those strong goblin are leaders that control their tribes. It is unlikely that they will mobilise their tribe.”

“Goblins are familiar with territories under human occupation. Hence, they know that attacking en masse will be troublesome for them. Especially those highly intelligent strong goblins that acted as leaders.”

“I see, I understand. However, could you inform me of the monsters we might encounter, such as their difficulty levels?”

The members of the Axe of Cyclone simultaneously looked at Ninya. Accepting it, Ninya adopted the expression of a teacher and began his explanation.

“Firstly, the goblins we will likely encounter have a difficulty level of 6. Wolves are 10. There have been no records of other beasts we could encounter reaching the later half of the 20s. The highest is the first half of the 20s. The most dangerous thing we could encounter in the plains are level 20 Ogres.”

“I have been hearing about this since earlier, but are we not going to enter

the forest?”

“Yes. We are avoiding it purely because the danger level is quite high. We can still manage the Jumping Leech and most large insect type monsters. But the Hanging Spiders that spits its webs from the trees, and Forest Worms that attacked from underground by using its large mouths are monsters that are at the upper ranges of difficulty level 20, will be trickier to handle. Hence, we will not enter the forest. If we enter the forest, our difficulties will rise sharply.

I see

. Momon nodded. It was just hunting monsters within the boundary of the forest to the plains.

“And so please do not worry, Momon-san. We will definitely protect you.”

Momon expressionlessly faced Lukeluther, who was trying to dispel Momon’s unease through jesting. However, the way that he talked to him, Momon’s mind is ablaze with dark flames of anger. He tried hard to suppressed it.

The feeling of being assured by lesser beings.

What was worse was that they honestly thought that Momon was weaker than them. A subordinate of Sebas, one that is given the honor to guard the last floor at heart of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, Momon or her true identity as Narberal Gamma, was being perceived as a weakling.

Momon slowly but repeatedly inhaled and exhaled, to dispel the heat within him.

“Then, Momon-san. There do not seem to be any more questions, and we want to make preparations, and I think it will be fine, but could you carry that shoiko?”

“Ah, yes. Understood.”

In the direction Peter was pointing to stood a shoiko.

Momon walked there, and lifted the shoiko. Everyone there was shocked, and let out a voice of admiration as they saw that he did not use much power to lift it up.

“That’s more than enough, Momon-san.”

“Ah, lifting it that easily, I’m surprised. Your outer appearance is completely different from your abilities.”

“In the village, I have carried this type of luggage before.”

“I see. Peter. We will be fine.”

“Yes, that’s right. Everyone please take note. Momon will stay behind us in case we have to fight. There is a metal plate affixed on the portering carrier. We can use it as a shield as the arrows will not be able to pierce it. Moreover, prioritise your own safety even when we might fall into dangerous situations.”

“Understood.”

“Then shall we make a move—-”

Chapter 21: First Request | Part 3

Many people would think that travelling below 30 kilometres in one day is not a big deal. However would they understand if there was no road, having to monitor one's surroundings, and on top of that, having to lug around a large weight, and having to prepare for a variety of situations.

In addition one day's movement was until 3 pm, depending on the situation, ending earlier was basic.

One of the reasons was because time was needed to make camp.

Amongst them, finding a location took the most time. Avoiding routes that animals would take, having a ground that would be fine during rain, and having protection against night attacks from nocturnal monsters. Due to this, finding a wide area to set up camp was an extremely troublesome job.

Especially while in a plains where the difficulty level rose significantly.

And so before the sun set, time was used to prepare the camp.

While it was possible to cut down wood from the forest nearby to make a temporary camp, but having little numbers would make it quite dangerous. The larger the camp was, wild animals like beasts and magical beasts would stay away, and heteromorphic races like Goblins and Kobolds would not attack. On the contrary, a small area had a risk of being attacked.

Heteromorphs and magical beasts had night vision, and so a night battle was accompanied with quite some danger. And so, the current camp was located a distance of two kilometres away from the forest, guaranteeing a slight level of safety.

"Then, stick this wood in."

"Yes."

Holding the wood he was given, Momon pierced them into the ground surrounding the tent. The area was about 20 metres wide. After four were

placed, a thin black cotton string was tied around the four. Lastly, making a knot in the middle of the string, from there he pulled it until the front of the tent, and hung a large bell there, completing it.

This was the creation of a warning network.

It had already been three days and Momon had become used to it. Completing the clapper, Momon returned.

“Good work.”

“It was nothing.”

The ranger—Lukeluther gave words of gratitude to Momon without looking. He was not fooling around. Since earlier he was using tools to dig holes, making traps. The magic caster—Ninya was walking around the surroundings, and was chanting some kind of magic.

There was a warning magic called <Alarm>, but it could not cover a wide area, probably as an extra measure.

Momon chased that figure. Collecting knowledge on detection and warning magic was not Momon’s role, but he understood that he should still have some.

The motion of the magic was the same as Momon’s. Chanting or other elements were not necessary. Then what should one do to acquire magic, and could he make it his own.

Ninya noticed Momon’s gaze, and probably because he was more friendly than when they first met, he had a smile on his face as he returned.

“You are always watching, is it interesting?”

“Yes. I want to become like Ninya-san and use magic.”

“Oi oi. Magic is not a thing that you can learn in a day or two, Firstly it seems that a guy that does not have a connection to the world can’t do it, and those guys have latent geniuses hidden inside them.

Lukeluther raised his head from the trap and commented. Ninya wiped off his smile, and faced Momon with a serious face.

“Is that so?”

“Ah, Momon-san. Please do not be that disappointed. I think that Momon-san has the ability. Something that feels different from a normal person.”

“.....Is that so?”

“Mah, he easily lifted that impossible baggage.”

“It’s something different. Mah, if it is a magic caster better than me he may be able to understand something. The highest magic casters are able to detect their opponent’s magic ability better.”

“.....What does that mean?”

“Ah, we magic casters have something like a magic aura made by our magic power, and it surrounds our body. The better one becomes at magic, the ability to sense it also increases. That and controlling the amount of magic power.”

“.....Heh”

Restraining his deepening voice, Momon replied with a not suspicious normal voice. It seemed that Momon did not have that ability. He could not feel anything of the sort from Ninya. No, was it possible to even feel it?

“And so. Using this magic power detection ability, it is not rare for magic casters to turn people with high magic power into their disciples.”

That was how I was picked up. Ninya continued.

“Is that so? Then if I want to use magic, what should I do first?”

“Let’s see. Firstly you need to find a good teacher?”

“After?”

“Afterwards? Mah, you cannot proceed without a teacher, but afterwards you should carve a contracted medium.”

“A contracted medium?”

“Eh. A special medium which you have contracted with, and engraved with special magic equations. You can use the magic from the your force of will.”

“Is Ninya holding one?”

“Eh. Mine is a grimoire.”

He pointed at the bag he was carrying.

“.....Can that grimoire be used by anyone?”

“Ahaha. It’s impossible, Momon-san. The person that can extract power from the medium, is only the one who has formed a contract. And so Momon-san holding my grimoire cannot use it.”

“Is that so, a pity.”

Momon resisted the desire to click his tongue.

“Mah, there are many people that steal the magic inside the medium though.”

“Is that so?”

“Eh.”

“.....If that is the case then I have no choice but to steal magic?”

“That is not true.” Ninya replied to Momon’s dangerous words with a smile on his face. “You can buy scrolls with magic inside the Guild. And you can use them to transfer mediums. And if you search, you can find adventurers that would sell them at reasonable prices. Occasionally, adventurers have a chance of holding onto rare or recently made magic rather than the Guild.”

While preserving a face that showed interest, Momon thought about what to do. The merits and demerits of killing this party and stealing the grimoire. The answer appeared immediately. There were naturally more demerits.

Anyway was it possible to gain magic in this world? Paying money for scrolls were probably the safest method. However, the problem was what to do if the price of scrolls were too high.

A pain.

If Momon had received permission to move freely from Ainz, he would have killed them and stolen it. However, he did not receive that permission.. That would be the same as ignoring an order from his Supreme One.

Momon breathed a sigh in his heart.

A troublesome problem. Not being able to use brute force to solve

everything was very irritating.

“—How many spells one can inscribe depends on one’s magical ability. I can use 35 spells. I have learnt 20 from my master and have bought 15 others.”

“.....For example becoming Ninya’s disciple?”

“Yes. Of course it would be better to get someone more skilled than I am. However, there are only private schools in the Kingdom and they mostly accept only young children with flexible minds. In comparison, the Empire has some very established academies with a solid curriculum. The Theocracy boasts a very advanced standard of research but only in regards to Divine magic.”

“I see. Can I enter the Empire’s magic academy to learn magic?”

“I think that would be hard. The Empire’s magic academy is considered as part of their country’s national education body. Only citizens of the Empire are allowed to study there.....”

“If it is like this.....”

“Hey there, sorry to disturb your lively discussion. But the rice is almost done. Can you call out to the other two?”

“Ah, let me go.”

Momon walked towards the nearby tent, where two people were sitting on the ground while working.

The fighter, Peter, and druid, Dyne, were carefully servicing their weapons by applying oil to prevent rust forming on their swords, while checking the weapons for any signs of bending.

Today’s kill consisted of 12 monsters. Peter got six, Dyne got three, and Lukeluther got another three. But the most important was that no one got hurt. But this did not mean that their armor and swords were not damaged during the fight.

Fresh slash marks appeared on the armor, while the sword bared signs of being used to fend off goblin weapons. Measures like this were a matter of life and death. Both of them were so absorbed in their work that they were hesitant to return the greeting.

Of course, if that was from a normal person

“Looks like, it’s time for our meal,”

“Ah, it’s time already?”

It was about 4pm? The sun was slowly sinking towards the west. Probably it would be another one and a half hours before it completely disappeared over the horizon. The time for dinner was a bit early. But that sort of thinking belonged to those who were unfamiliar with travelling.

“Let’s go immediately.”

The repair must have had reached a satisfactory level. Dyne’s moved his sight away from the sword, and began to store the equipments away. After a moment, Peter began to follow suit.

“Please wait over there.”

“Ah.”

“Understood.”

Momon left the two behind while he returned to the campfire. The contents of the pot, hanging over the fire began to boil.

It was easy to build a fire.

Toss a cloth soaked in animal fat into the stove—sometimes a torch was used instead—and start a fire with flint. After that, the only thing left to do is to place thin strips of wood among the thicker logs to keep the fire going until the logs catch fire.

Such was Lukeluther’s skill, that the logs always catch fire before the wood strips burn out. And with easy speed, the fire built up rapidly and soon it was burning merrily inside the stove.

Having placed the pot on the stove, the sound of cooking stew could soon be heard and soon an appetizing aroma settled in the area.

It would be near impossible to eat foods that used water on a normal trip.

That was because of the weight of the water. A grown man needed two litres of water a day. Momon and the rest needed at least ten litres. Basically it

meant that one needed to carry ten kilograms of water per day. Any more would make one unable to carry anything else, and it became difficult.

And so a normal trip would make one's head be filled with thoughts of resupplying, but until now Momon and the rest never resupplied. Even though it had already been three days since they had left the town.

This was rented from the Guild, and they were using a magic item that could store 20 litres of water. And so there was quite an excess, and so stew could be made.

When the stew was cooked, he passed it to Peter and Dyne who had just finished cleaning.

Lukeluther added bacon stew to their personal bowls, along with the toasted bread, and various preserved fruits and nuts, that made up their dinner.

Salt was added to replenish the amount lost through sweating. To Momon, the meal was low class, but it passed when came to the purpose of replacing their nutrients.

The members of the Axe of Cyclone laughed as they ate. Momon would occasionally join them in their mealtime conversation, but there still a divide between them. But he did not feel lonely.

And they had a good relationship. Although they were adventures that protected each other's lives, was this normal?

Momon who was interested, asked.

"—Every seems quite friendly with one another, were you together from your birthplace?"

"No. We met at our first promotion test."

"Although we had heard rumors about Ninya."

"Yup. He's a genius. Actually, because Ninya was here, everyone could return safely."

"I don't think that is true. I couldn't do it alone. Lukeluther's early warnings against monsters helped a lot."

“Hm? Really? For me it’s thanks to Dyne’s healing. Breathing was difficult when there was a goblin’s arrow stuck in my chest. I thought I was going to die.”

“At thank time, the one engaging the goblins was Peter. If he wasn’t here I would have been a bit late with my healing magic.”

“That was thanks to Ninya’s protection magic. My arms were really tired facing two of them. It was a big help to engage the third.”

To treat each other with such humbleness and respect. It was certainly a good party with strong bonds. Bonds were formed from entrusting each other with their own lives. Momon could not understand such emotions. It was certainly different from the relationship that the Guardians of Nazerick had with each other. The maids followed the same master and were moving towards the same goals. In essence it was not a bond of emotion but a pact of logic. If anybody moved in a different direction, they would probably wind-up killing each other.

“Is it normal for adventurers to have such good relationships?”

“Probably. We are protecting each other’s lives after all. Not understand what others are thinking, or not knowing where one has gone are dangerous. To prevent that, at some point in time, the relationship improves.”

“That’s true, our party doesn’t have any women. If there were then we might argue.”

“And don’t we have a proper goal as well?”

“I think so as well. Having everyone focused on one goal helps a lot.”

Peter and the others nodded their heads.

“.....Is that so. I apologise for changing the subject, but where did the party name Axe of Cyclone come from?”

Currently, no one used a weapon like an axe. Peter used a long sword, Dyne used a mace, Lukeluther used a composite longbow. Ninya, well, used magic. Of course those were the main weapons, and there were substitutes, but no one used an axe.

And there was no way that they would make a disassembling axe as their party name.

At Momon's question, the four of them looked at each other. They were surprised at the fact that Momon did not know.

".....Ah, this is that. So you haven't heard about it, the magic weapon known as the Axe of Cyclone."

"The name Axe of Storms might be more well known."

Seeing that Momon did not have an expression of understanding, the four of them once again were shocked. Well of course they would be shocked, it was a weapon so famous they named their group after it.

"It's a weapon that one of the 13 Heroes used in legends. It's a weapon that when swung, created a storm."

"Finding it has been our main goal. Well, there are lots of weapons that are legends, but this is one that is well known even among them. Mah, it's not known if it still exists though."

"Well, in the end our goal is the 12 Legendary Swords, this is a step before that."

"But we are of a rank that doesn't allow us to look for the Axe of Cyclone, but we intend to rise until we can't be laughed at."

"Ah, seconds? Momon-san."

"It's fine. I'm already full."

Momon smiled. Without a doubt, he would developed any sense of camaraderie with lowly beings like humans.

The campfire was out long ago and the charred remnants of the wood were getting cold.

Even with the campfire out, the surroundings did not become pitch black.

The night was illuminated by the moon and starlight, and was sufficient to see through the grasslands. Although there was a thin layer of clouds, it did not disrupt the light.

The world was dead silent except for the sound of the rustling grass as the winds blew through the plains.

Dyne popped a herb into his mouth and bit into it. A sharp feeling of coolness spread through his nose and his heavy eyelids suddenly popped back wide open. It was herb commonly used by adventurers to maintain alertness. It was cheap and probably half the adventurers in the field used it.

In the field adventurers commonly took turns to stand guard in the 11 hour long period of darkness. While not having Lukeluther's sharp senses, in the vast flat expanse of the grassland, it was impossible to miss seeing anybody approaching.

Dyne looked back calmly towards the sound of rustling grass behind him.

"Were you awake?"

"Eh."

The person Dyne predicted—Momon had an expression without a trace of drowsiness.

"We will walk quite a lot tomorrow. It's best to rest properly."

Dyne, however, wasn't worried about Momon. Momon appeared to have extraordinary physical stamina and constitution. Since he also had incredible physical strength that belied his appearance, one could say that he was a person of amazing physical capabilities.

There was a little something off about Momon. At first Dyne thought it was the extraordinary strength but that was not it. Momon's knowledge was also strangely skewed. Momon claimed to have lived in a village, but appeared to be ignorant of basic knowledge that a villager should know. His table manners were not that of a villager and here and there Momon showed signs of possessing a high level of education.

Ninya also appeared to have noticed the same thing, but would not give voice to his suspicions.

Among adventurers it was understood that asking a fellow adventurer about his past was rude. Even in this party there were members who were silent

about their past.

That being said, sometimes Dyne felt Momon's unusual calm a little unnatural. For example he maintained a calm expression even after today's battle with the goblins. Dyne was certain that as a novice adventurer he would certainly not be able to stay calm in a battle.

Maybe it had something to do with a part of Momon's past?

"Yes. But I've woken up."

"Really.....I think that it would be fine if you remove your gauntlets."

He made a wry smile at Momon who was again wearing his boorish gauntlets.

"I can't calm down if I don't have them. Then I will be in the surroundings for a bit."

"Do it within the camp."

"Yes. I understand."

Watching Momon's retreating back, Dyne recalled Lukeluther's words. Lukeluther evaluated Momon's walking stance and said that Momon had a talent for the thief class.

"The spirit of genius?"

Ninya mentioned that Momon had a talent for magic while Lukeluther said that he had the talent to be a thief. In addition, he also possessed the strength necessary to be a warrior. From his looks, Momon appeared to be in his very late 20s. It was a pity to think that a man of such talents was up till now stuck in a village.

If only he had begun adventuring earlier. By now Momon might even have become a legendary adventurer.

But Momon right now was only an ordinary man.

Momon left the tents, and lied down slowly on the plains. The pale white light danced from the sky painted the green grass white.

If one looked up at the stars that filled one's vision, they shined so brightly

that one would think that they could just reach out and grab them. One could imagine it. Filling one's vision, the scene of countless treasure chests sparkled. Even if it was covered up, one could not look away, it gave off that sort of impression.

However, Momon was in no way impressed by the scenery before him.

It was not because he was used to such a view, but because he was preoccupied by an important task. Admiring the view ranked perhaps second or third place in importance.

Sharpening his body's focus, Momon checked his surroundings.

Even from behind him, he could not feel any suspicions. Confirming that, Momon continued to the field and like he was sleeping, activated the <Message> magic.

On the other end was his highest master Ainz. There was a need to immediately inform him of the information he had just learnt.

He contacted Ainz, and informed him of the information Ninya gave him.

If someone saw his figure, they would think that he was a dangerous human that talked to thin air.

—I see, I understand. It will be fine to think that the Guild contains a large amount of magic.—

“I think that is the case.”

—I would like some magic to compare to something. The first thing to do would be to buy it. And it is necessary to become a disciple of a magic caster. I should think of changing the plan. I will send over some additional funds, and so investigate how to buy it—

“However, it will not be that expensive, would it be fine if we change a part of my background?”

—Ah, that's true, the setting of you being a simple villager. If so then leave it to Sebas. Now is it fine to end this report?—

“Yes. This is all the information I have gained.”

—Understood. Continue being an adventurer that does not attract suspicion. I will send over a Shadow Demon so take the additional funds. If you want to use it for other work, I do not mind no matter how much you use. I have already ordered the Shadow Demon with these instructions.”

“Yes.”

—Thank you for your good work, I really be relying on you, Narberal—

“Y, yes. Thank you very much!”

Ignoring the fact that there was no one in front of him, Momon unconsciously bowed his head. The voice of his absolute master disappeared, but the echoes of his voice of gratitude still reverberated within Momon’s body.

Among the other maids, there was probably no one that could talk to their master that much. That sense of superiority boiled up from the depths of Momon’s heart.

While he tried to suppress his smiling face, he did not do it well.

Unable to do anything else, Momon hugged his face with both his hands. And burned up will all his might.

If he were alone, he might have raised a cry of joy. His master—Ainz had called out his name.

However, he did not want to fail at the responsibility that Ainz gave to him, and thinking that, controlled himself.

“Hah~”

He breathed deeply several times as if to release the heat that had built up inside of him. But he had already returned to his calm expression.

“Now.”

Momon stood up, and began walking towards the tent.

He would have to work together with them for the next three days. He could not do anything suspicious. Recalling Ainz earlier voice and kicking it into his memory, he maintained his calmness.

Returning to a space near the tent, Momon received a question from Dyne about what he was doing when he suddenly bowed his head over there, while controlling his memories which felt like they were about to revolt.

Chapter 22: First Request | Part 4

Humans and monsters alike shared a deep connection with the forest. On one hand the forest represented a place blessed with richness and on the other, a wild and dangerous place. Unlike in modern Japan where electrical lighting was common, light sources were highly valued in this world. In the dark places where the light of the world could not reach, the monsters reigned. In the dungeons, in the caves, at night and in the forests.

This was one of the reasons why monsters saw better in the dark. Humans fumbled blindly in the dark while monsters ... not as much.

If humans encountered monsters, combat was inevitable. As such one should understand just how dangerous it was to enter a place of darkness.

Even in daylight, the trees of the forest blocked out the sun and created darkness in many places. Because of that it was more dangerous in the forest compared to the grasslands. In lightly wooded areas one was relatively safe, but in the primeval forests where the sunlight did not penetrate, it was a place of eternal darkness.

Because of this, the adventurers kept their distance from the forest, walking in a single file in the wide grasslands. Well you could call it a grassland, but the grass was at most 15 centimeters in height, it was not a difficult terrain to traverse.

The ranger that lead the way, Lukeluther, scanned the grassland around him for tracks and other signs of creatures as well as keeping an eye on the forest. As the group was scheduled to complete its hunt today and return to the city, the ranger was more alert than usual.

The other three companions, the mage—Ninya, the fighter—Peter and the druid—Dyne in comparison, were far more relaxed as they trusted Lukeluther to keep them safe.

Under the scorching sun, the adventurers trudged on silently in single file. It was late in the morning and all was quiet save for the slight squishing of sap as boots crushed the grass underfoot.

Only god knows how long this continued.

“Get down!”

Suddenly, Lukeluther’s voice cut through the silence. It wasn’t loud, but one could hear the tension in his tone. Immediately and without question, the group obeyed, dropping flat on the grassland. As the eyes of the party, Lukeluther’s warnings had absolute authority.

<Grow Plant>

As Dyne activated his magic, a row of plants grew rapidly, hiding the presence of the prone party.

Close-up, the row of plants would certainly look suspicious, but from a distance, it would be difficult to notice anything out of ordinary without a remarkable sense of awareness. Momon laid prone and laid his shoiko horizontally next to him.

“What’s the matter?”

Pushing aside the green blanket of plants, Peter crawled forward and settled next to Lukeluther. Ninya, Dyne and eventually Momon joined them.

“That.”

Momon pushed aside the plants and peeked through a gap in the direction that Lukeluther was pointing. A line of monsters had appeared from the forest at a distance of approximately 200 metres.

A dozen child-sized monsters flanked by two giant monsters.

The child-sized monsters were ones they had encountered and battled two days ago.

These were the demi-humans known as goblins.

A deformed face with a flat nose, a wide mouth with two upward thrusting fangs. Bright green skin with thin black hair stuck stiffly out of its scalp as if held

up with cream.

The creature wore roughly treated animal skin as armor on top of rags which were either dyed in brown or were just plain dirty. In one hand it carried a wooden stick <Club> and in the other, a small shield.

The creature looked like an experimental mix between a human and an ape with a dash of evil as a topping. That was the monster a goblin looked like if the experiment failed.

The giant monsters were between 2.5 to 3 meters.

Large heads with heavy brows and a look that suggested that nothing much was going on inside.

A back that was hunched over like a frightened cat, their long muscular arms resembled large trees dangled down, almost touching the floor. Carrying a club that looked like a tree that had been simply ripped from the ground, the monsters were wrapped in what seemed like raw animal skins. The stench that drifted from their bodies was noticeable even from a distance.

Green warty skin with thick and powerful torsos, just from appearances, one could tell that these creatures had enormous strength.

All in all, the over-sized duo resembled a pair of demented shaved chimpanzees.

Observing their surroundings, the group of monsters stepped out of the forest and into the grassland. Almost every monster carried a bag made of rags, as if prepared for a long journey.

“12 goblins and two ogres”

“Are they strong enough to threaten the party?”

Evaluating a monster’s strength was not as simple as it sounds. The party wiped out the goblins they encountered two days ago without a scratch. But this time there were also two ogres.

As mentioned before setting off, this was a difficulty level 20 mission, but in Momon’s eyes the opponents were so weak, the ogres and the goblins appeared to be about the same difficulty.

Just like humans who measured in terms of metres, a difference of a millimetre or three would be barely perceptible.

Not quite sure how to answer Momon's question, Peter smiled at Momon, brimming with confidence.

"No problem. They look like regular monsters. We can handle them easily. Just in case, please wait in the rear with Ninya."

".....Understood"

Momon backed slowly to where Ninya lay prone.

"Do you require support magic?"

"Yes!"

".....The forest is close by, they would be troublesome to chase down if they fled into the forest."

"Then shall we use our usual tactics?"

"Let's do that. But looks like it would be a little tough to handle two ogres at the same time....."

"Right, Dyne, keep them pinned. Ninya, cast defensive magics on me and then focus on casting offensive magics and keeping Momon safe. Lukeluther will handle the goblins. If the ogres break through, keep blocking them. In that event, Ninya should take out the goblins first. "

Nobody contested Peter's instructions. The adventurers looked at each other and wordlessly agreed to the course of action with a nod of the head. The tactics discussion proceed smoothly, as if the group were of one mind.

Momon was most impressed by their solidarity.

If Momon was free to use all his strength, a single area of effect spell would have ended the battle. But of course, the group could not do that and so had to do things in their way. Evaluating the adventurers' group tactics is the most important thing that Momon hoped to accomplish on this journey.

Lukeluther broke away from the group and drew his <Composite Longbow>. With the bowstring drawn to its limit, he released it. The arrow flew through

the air in a straight line and struck a spot ten metres in front of the goblin.

The goblins were the ones who were surprised..

Lukeluther noted that the goblins were confused by the sudden attack and a smile appeared on his face. A single shot from a lone archer and a missed shot at that. Of course, the goblins were not capable of hitting a target 200 metres away either but that fact completely slipped their minds.

Even if one was only being polite, you could not really describe the goblins as smart, and on top of that they were many compared to the lone Lukeluther. The innate violent nature of the goblins rose to the front and with a shout, they charged ahead towards the ranger with the ogres following closely behind.

In a frenzy of bloodlust, the group charged with neither formation nor defensive measures like holding up their shields. It seemed like they had forgotten everything except moving forward.

Seeing that, Lukeluther could not help but smile.

“Te!”

Another shot at 140 metres. The next arrow penetrated a goblin head. The goblin tottered a few more steps and toppled backwards. Obviously, dead.

The monsters were now closing the remaining distance rapidly. Lukeluther nocked another arrow without any hint of fear. The ranger knew that his comrades would protect him.

<Reinforce Armor>

Behind Lukeluther hidden in the grass, Ninya casted the defensive spell. The ranger nocked another arrow.

90 metres. A goblin bit the dust..

40 metres. Another goblin was shot through the head and collapsed on the ground. Peter stood up.

While the goblins were faster, the ogres had a larger stride and so there was not much difference in the ground they covered. Having said that, the group had just crossed 200 metres over open grassland and there were gaps opening up between each monster. Not too many monsters were entering Dyne’s area

of effect. However, Dyne's primary task was to first stop one of the ogres.

<Twine Plant>

Dayne activated his magic skill. Plant vines started snaking up the leg of one of the ogres. The whip-like plant began to wrap the ogre. Although the plant body was thin, with the combined strength of hundreds of twines, the effects was like being wrapped around by metal shackles. The ogre let out a panicked cry. Within the magic's area of effect were also three goblins, they were similarly binded. The twine did not show any interest towards the others.

Peter unsheathed his longsword and brought up his shield, to face the onslaught of six goblins and an ogre. The first goblin to reach Peter only saw a flash of the sword, before its head flew into the air. Passing through the fountain of blood, Peter closed his distance towards the next goblin.

"Take this!"

The goblin opened its mouth, revealing a set of yellow teeth, a muddled sound escaped its mouth.

The goblin attacked as if by swinging a baseball bat, but the attack was stopped by Peter's shield. Another goblin attacked from his flank, but the hit was blocked by the magically enchanted armor. A deep vibration resounded when the attack was deflected.

Peter's gaze was focused on the ogre that appeared moments later. From the earlier attack, he decided that he would not suffer much injury from the goblins.

"Come!"

"Die!!"

The ogre understood what Peter was shouting, and proceeded to swing its club towards him. Peter managed to dodge it at the last moment. Luckily, as he was surrounded by goblins, he would not be facing a sweeping attack from the ogre. The ogre lifted its club which left a depression on the ground. Looking at that, if he decided to take it head-on, it was likely that he would die from that single attack.

<Magic Arrow>

The last to stand up was Ninya, who fired two shots of magic, which directly hit a goblin. That goblin was about to attack Peter from the back. But after taking the hit, the goblin slowly crumpled to the ground.

The five goblins who surrounded Peter, switched targets and aimed for the three at the back. It seemed that they think that the ogre alone was sufficient to handle Peter.

Lukeluther kept his longbow and took out his short sword. At the same time, Dayne drew out his spiked mace. The two of them readied themselves while keeping a distance from Ninya, to give him opening space to attack. Ninya was covering their rear.

The five goblins were evenly matched against Lukeluther and Dayne. The fight was progressing slowly but at least one of the goblin was taken out. At the same time, one of Lukeluther's arm was fractured by one of the goblins attack. While withstanding the pain, he was able to find the chance to plunged a dagger into an opening of a goblin's leather armor.

Dayne was clubbed several times. His actions began to slow. Luckily, he did not take any fatal hits.

Ninya was observing the battle closely while trying to conserve his mana. Although the other ogre was restrained by the vines, from the looks of it, Ninya may have had to face it alone.

Peter was in a deadlock against the other ogre.

[Fortress!]

Peter shouted while lifting up his shield to block the ogre's blow. A loud crashing sound was heard.

Momon who was lying flat in the grass was playing with the weeds as if bored. His pupil dilated after witnessing the fight between Peter and the ogre.

—The ogre's attack was completely blocked off.

Peter was still standing there with his shield raised, he did not bulge at all. It looked like the shield was able to completely negate the ogres attack.

“Martial arts.....”

Momon recalled the magical weapon skill that was used by her fellow maids. If it was a non-magical job classes, a skill could be obtained once the job class reached level five. Those skills contained a variety of effects.

The skill that Peter used, seems to be able to neutralised the impact sustained by the shield.

The shield blocked off the continuous attack coming from the ogre.

“Let’s do this! Peter!”

<Flash>

A blinding flash exploded in front of the ogre’s nose. The ogre squinted its eyes while retreating. Peter strengthened the grip on his sword, steadying his blade.

[Smash!]

Peter released a deafening war cry.

While, focusing all his strength in this single attack, a slashing attack that was above the cutting power of the sword was released. It easily cut through the ogre. A large amount of blood gushed out from the ogre’s wound, followed by its intestines.

Needless to say, it was a fatal blow.

The club dropped from its hand. With its intestines hanging over its belly, the ogre fell.

<Light Healing>

Dayne activated his magic to heal Lukeluther’s wounds. At the same time, the fight with the goblins turned into a one sided slaughter fest. Lukeluther killed the goblins in a single blow.

Peter picked up a bow and started to attack the surrounded ogre. Looks like he did not intend to use a sword against the goblins.

—How boring.

To Momon who yawned while watching the fight, an even fight was very

boring. It would be more interesting if any one side crumbled. However, Momon did not intend to secretly release the bounded ogre. This not a matter of morality, but to understand the fighting prowess of an E-class adventurer party. Objectively speaking, an E-class facing off against two ogres was a highly precarious scenario. If luck was not on their side, the situation turned dangerous for them.

In truth, to be able to observe the usage of martial arts by the humans, was a great outcome.

I will report to Ainz-sama tonight immediately.

While thinking about it, Momon heard the sound of footsteps coming towards him. When he lifted up his head, he only saw a lone figure of panicking goblin trying to escape.

“Ah, don’t run towards this direction.....”

Momon complained silently. While lying down, he pulled out his short sword.

“Move! Move! Move!”

The goblins cry were more like screaming of agony. Momon scornfully looked at the goblin, who was swinging its club wildly. The goblins gaze met Momon’s and proceeded to charge towards him.

“Momon-san! Run away quickly!”

Nina gave out a panicked cry, while preparing to activate his magic.

Momon wanted to retort angrily after considering the whole situation. He quickly suppressed the urge before the angry words came out.

By Momon’s opinion, Nina’s reaction and judgement ability were shockingly weak. Momon was unsure of the magic that Nina is going to cast, but from this distance, the goblin was going to reach him first. Although running was an option, the worst case scenario was the goblin catching up and turning him into a hostage.

—Looks like there was no other way.

At the same time that Momon made his decision, he dodged the goblins

club and stabbed out his sword.

There was a dull sound when the short sword pierced through skin and flesh. Momon felt a comfortable sensation coming from his hand as he cut through flesh, broke the bones and destroyed the organs. The goblin at the same moment, only noticed the short sword that pierced his belly. His face was that of terror, the fear when he knew that his life was robbed off. Momon gripped the sword handle, and moved the sword. The sensation of the sword cutting through the goblins body was felt again.

This was followed by two magic arrows hitting the goblins body.

Momon moved towards the side, avoiding the collapsing goblin.

“Are you alright! Momon-san!”

Ninya approached Momon while parting or stepping through the long grass. his panicked strides and speech conveyed his sense of worried to Momon.

At the same time, Momon was savouring happiness from the act of slaughtering the weak. He tried hard to suppress the urge to smile. It would be unsettling if he were to made such an expression. Momon faked a panicked expression while he stood up slowly. He released a weak sigh.

“Ha—although it was scary, luckily nothing bad happened.”

“I see.”

Expressing relief, Ninya’s shoulder relaxed. Momon flipped the goblin who fell and retrieved the short sword that was still piercing the body. Blood poured out from the wound, dyeing the grass in red.

The white of its eyes was already showing, however, the soft body retained some residual warmth.

That was the moment where the life was slowly draining out, leaving a vacant expression—That was Momon’s second most favourite expression. Momon retained this fond memory.

“—Thank you for the meal.”

Momon whispered a voice of gratitude directed to the goblin that even Ninya could not hear.

Ninya approached the body of the goblin that was stabbed by Momon's short sword. He proceeded to use his dagger to slice off an ear. If he were to pass this to the guild, a bounty would be given. Of course, it was not necessary for it to be ears only, as long it was a part of the monster that was suited to verify its identity. It was just that the ear was commonly used to identify goblin and ogres.

Ninya handled the body proficiently as he was quite experienced. However, he found something interesting. This was driven by his sense of curiosity.

Ninya rolled up his sleeves and began to move his hands towards the goblin's wound. Fresh blood is still pouring out. His arms did not stop moving as he felt the blood that was still warm to the touch. He inserted his arm into the goblin through the wound.

A metallic smell wafted out as more blood gushed out. Ninya stopped moving his arms deeper as he moved it inside the body.

There was a lively sound that was hard to describe.

Then—

“!”

Ninya immediately removed his arm and looked towards Momon.

At that moment—their gazes locked.

Before that Momon was staring towards a different direction. As if waiting for that right moment, he looked at Ninya expressionlessly. That was the usual expression when Momon looked at others.

The eyes were like glass ornaments. Ninya developed the impression for the first time that the eyes he looked at several times before were like luxurious treasures.

Ninya replied with a smile.

It was an act that he was used to. However, it felt heavy this time and his face started to freeze up.

“Momon-san, the ear, I have cut it off.”

“Thank you very much.”

Momon bowed his head hurriedly to express his gratitude. As if losing interest, he moved his gaze away from Ninya, towards Peter and the others whom were working nearby.

I must have been placed under suspicion.

Ninya’s heartbeat quicken. He forcefully tried to stop his own panicked breaths.

There was a large hole in the goblins abdomen. Other than the skin and flesh, the rib cage and the shoulder bone, and even the leather armor was cut open. Indeed, there were rumors of people with the ability to cut everything in half with just a swing of the sword. But for a person lying in a position that was hard to exert any strength, to stand up suddenly and pierce the enemy while creating a wound like this. Was it possible?

Although the possibility was not entirely impossible, it was also likely that the short sword might have used the goblins momentum to pierce the goblins body. Even the goblin should not have made such an obvious mistake. This was also a place where it is hard to run very fast.

It was hard to imagine any tremendous strength from his outer appearance.....

Ninya maintained his fake smile as he thought. At the same moment, his body shook as if it had been exposed to cold air. It was a sense of instinctive fear of the body when facing off against an unknown monster.

.....Impossible. It was unachievable just by solely relying on the arm’s strength. If it was some high-tier weaponry like magical swords, it would be plausible. Considering this possibility, who was Momon exactly?

To unravel this, a deeper investigation might be needed—

“.....Curiosity, even killed the cat.”

Ninya muttered to himself.

He smiled again towards Momon who was staring at him again.

Chapter 23: First Request | Part 5

Night began to set in when they reached the streets.

Magical light began to illuminate the main street, releasing their white radiance in the surroundings. The composition of those walking in the mainstreet began to change. The number of young ladies and children began to dip while the number men who just completed their jobs began to increase. Sounds of merrymaking drifted out from the shops lining both sides of the street.

Among the street was a luxurious coach pulled by four horses that moved past Momon and the others. There was still a coach moving towards the main gate at this hour. Many people were surprised by it. However, they soon forgot about the scene and continued towards their respective destinations.

The passing of the stagecoach was like a cue for Momon and the rest to stop moving.

Several people walking behind them displayed looks of displeasure. However, they were not that brave to voice their complaints towards adventurers.

“Good work.”

“Good work.”

Matching Peter, Momon bowed his head.

“In short, the task request will end here. You must be tired as well. We’ll go our separate ways here. We will deal with matters related to the guild.”

“Really? Then thank you very much.”

“But about the reward.....”

A gold coin was placed in Momon’s hand. Momon looked at it with suspicion. It was completely different from what was agreed upon.

“Isn’t this a lot?”

“The bounty for Momon for defeating the goblins was one silver per goblin. The reward for transporting the goods was six silvers in total. An additional bonus was added to congratulate you on your first successful mission.”

Momon developed a brief apprehension towards this, but pocketed the gold piece into his coin pouch.

“.....I understand. If that is the case then I will accept it.”

Momon returned the luggage rack to Peter while taking the gold coin. He gave a brief glance towards Nina—

“Then, I will make a move.”

—Bowing his head, Momon began to walk away.

The Axe of Cyclone watched as the back of the figure receded and without a sound. When he had mostly disappeared from sight, the first one to talk was Peter.

“So that was a bit unexpected.”

“Completely. I can’t think of him as a villager who just started his adventure.”

Responding, Dyne nodded his head. That was simply a complement to an outstanding adventurer.

Lukeluther was about to mention Ninya making a slightly displeased face, but words did not leave his mouth. However, a different topic was said.

“Did anyone forget anything they wanted to give to him?”

Peter and Dyne shrugged their shoulders in a weird way. Reading the intention, Ninya shook his head.”

“No one forgot. And I think it would be best to stop.”

“Really? How should I put it, there were no cracks in his figure from behind, right.”

Peter and Dyne just managed to understand the conversation and wore bitter smiles. There were people with pasts that they did not want to touch among the adventurers. There was no need to stir up a nest of hornets.

“Let’s stop. And he might have received some training?”

“Peter. Think a bit more about other stuff. Other stuff right? While he might have received some training, I think that there are some obvious stuff we don;t know?”

“Cracks.....What about him being a villager with search skills like a ranger or thief?”

“Ah, it’s possible but.....”

Scratching his face, Lukeluther let out an uncomprehending voice. There was something he was thinking about as the same ranger.”

“Because Peter thought so, he paid more for the reward right?”

“Well, he seems excellent, and if possible I want a good relationship with him.”

“And so really. Should we investigate? If we use our connections we should be able to gain some information.”

“—It would be best to stop.”

Ninya completely sliced apart Lukeluther’s suggestion. He was about to tell them about the suspicions he felt, but he swallowed his words.

There were many times Ninya’s knowledge saved them.

Everybody recognized that expression on Ninya’s face. It implied that Ninya knew something that the group did not.

“That’s true—We should really stop.”

Ninya’s muttering was barely audible but the weight of his warning settled heavily on the group, his faint trembling sent chills down the back of their spines.



Momon was not heading to his inn. Entering an alley, he walked to the end and slipped into yet another alley, his surroundings getting darker and quieter with each turn.

It was the slums.

The slums was a maze of alleyways, a mess of bedraggled tenements and

tumble down shacks pressed into the already narrow paths. The pathways, littered here and there with potholes and stagnant pools of water, were in a state of disrepair.

One couldn't really call these hovels a proper home. They were merely wooden frames roughly put together. Some time ago, someone probably wrapped cloth around the frame and called it home. But at this moment, it was merely a clothless skeleton of one.

In the midst of a smell that was like a dog kennel that was long overdue for a cleaning, Momon continued.

The light was not strong. However, there were people that had campfires a distance away, but it was just enough to see. In the mostly dark and narrow street, Momon was not lost nor had any hesitation in his step.

There was starlight in the plains, but being hidden by the occasional tall building, it did not reach the ground.

Far behind, the distant din of the main street could still be heard in sharp contrast to the dead silence of the immediate surroundings.

Momon walked wordlessly.

On the nth time he turned, Momon had a disordered pace and he slowed down.

That was as the alley was releasing a light. A red flickering light. That was not magic, but a normal campfire or a torch.

The path curved into an alley, and Momon peaked inside.

It was yet another narrow and filthy alley with low-rise buildings and a smell of rotten food in the air. A fire was set in a corner away from the path, its flickering light partially illuminating the area around it in a mix of darkness and light.

A log was thrown into the fire, and sparks danced upwards.

He could not see the figures in the surroundings.

"So."

Peering at the surroundings, Momon coldly laughed.

There were no figures of people. Yes, they did not enter his vision. But, there were signs. And Momon's magic reacted.

One, two, there were four in total.....

It was like they were ambushing him. No, it was an ambush. Then, who was the one that thought it up?

Momon had considered the possibility that his attackers were his employers, but dismissed that as he had not done anything to give his true identity away.

There was too little information. An impulsive decision was bad.

In conclusion, there as a need to leave someone alive to talk.

Brows furrowing slightly as he gathered his thoughts, Momon paused for an instant. And almost immediately, he sauntered forward once more with an unhurried and casual pace.

Continuing along the alley, Momon approached the fire.

As he got very close, the figures hidden in the shadows started to move, a net spreading out as it descended on Momon.

If one was caught by the net, one would certainly be unable to move. At the same time, men with clubs moved out from the shadows, as if springing forth from the flames. There were three of them.

Basically throwing a casting net at him to stop his movements, and after mocking him, steal his belongings.

Momon understood, and laughed.

Momon had been worried about acting without sufficient information. But this turned out to be a very simple situation. At least one of them should be captured alive for interrogation. Piece of cake.

The net spread out and over Momon's body, trapping him inside.

That was what should have happened, but it did not. The net slipped through Momon's body and fell into a pile on the floor---

“Too bad.”

On top of the gauntlet, Momon held on to a ring he was wearing.

Ring of Freedom. A ring that could negate all binding, paralyzing and any other movement obstructing effects. Ainz had been most worried about Momon being captured. He had given her this ring just in case. As such, the net had absolutely no effect on Momon.

The three men were surprised at the fact that the net did not work. It was natural. A situation that was outside of their little common sense to think about was happening in front of them.

The shock of seeing something totally unexpected stunned them, and they were no longer capable of continuing with their plan.

In any case no matter what they did, it was game over for them. It could be said that the moment they had decided to attack Momon, it was all over.

<Mass Targeting>

<Maximise Magic – Magic Arrow>

As Momon activated the spell, six missiles of light flew from his hands, dancing in the air.

Two headed for the roof of the house from which the net had been dropped. There was a heavy thud of the missiles striking skulls, noise as the bodies fell, followed shortly by a dull splat.

The remaining four split off and struck two shadows hidden deeper in the alley. With a dry snap, the two figures clutched their stomachs as they crumpled slowly onto the ground.

Stunned by the suddenness of the attack, the sole survivor turned around and ran for his life. It seemed that he had finally understood his situation.

“Hah.”

Momon let out a sigh to the pitiful man.

Running was useless, there was no way he was going to get away. Momon sighed at the silly waste of energy.

<—-Extend Magic – Charm Person>

Momon released a strengthened magic at the man. And then he spoke.

“Wait, my friend.”

The feet of the man desperately escaping, came to a stop. And he looked back at Momon with a frightened look.

“Please wait, my friend.”

Momon repeated his call as he walked casually towards the man. The face that turned back to face Momon was one of ease, the ease of a man greeting a friend he had not seen for a long time.

“What, so it was you—-”

“Yes.”

The man’s shoulders relaxed. Seeing that, Momon smiled and approached him casually. It might have been a smile of contempt or derision, but the man seemed not to notice.

With a distance of having a friend that one trusts from the bottom of one’s heart in front of him, the man stood.

Momon walked casually towards the man.

As he approached the charmed man, he walked past the two men that had been hiding in the shadows. They were sprawled on the ground, fresh blood pouring out of their mouths. Here and there you could see blood on their clothes too.

At their sides, ugly clubs lay where they had fallen.

It was obvious the pair had suffered extremely, their faces frozen in a rictus of pain. There was, however, no signs of movement.

The illusion school spell <Fox Sleep> could give a man the semblance of death but in this case, there was no sign that such a spell had been used. The spell <Detect Life> showed no sign of life. In that case, the two men were truly dead. There was similarly no sign of life coming from the pair on the roof.

The man moved closer and conveyed his dissatisfaction.

“That’s cruel, these guys all died.”

“Well you attacked me first did you not?”

“Well even so, killing everybody.....”

Facing the sky, the man continued mumbling his complaints.

Well it can't be helped, he's not going to accept what just happened—I'll just have to work with his dissatisfaction intact.

The spell has caused the charmed man to see Momon as his best friend. And as his friend, Momon’s words had a certain amount of effect on him. However, since this was only a low-level charm spell, it could not brain-wash him. Having seen Momon commit murder, as a friend, he would probably try to persuade Momon to give himself up to the authorities.

In summary, the man’s response was that of someone just finding out their friend killed somebody. Although there was a sense of guilt, that feeling was not particularly strong.

Momon observed his surroundings and decided not to remain here for long. Plus the bodies need to be cleared. There will be patrols from the local law enforcers although this was the slums, leaving the bodies here will bound to attract unwanted attention

While the current charm spell would last twice as long as its normal duration, it was not a permanent effect. He would need to clarify the reason behind the ambush while the charm spell was still active.

“It is dangerous here. Please follow me..... Friend.”

“Ah, I know.”

The man followed Momon after responding to him. He kept chatting to Momon as they walked. But Momon ignored him mostly. The man did not mind no matter how cold Momon’s response was. This was due to the effects of the enchantment.

Less than one minute later, they reached their destination, which was a rundown house.

The house was quite big.

However, it looks as if it had not been attended to for a long period.

The layer of paint on the wall had begun to fall off because of age. It was not able to withstand the effects of weather. More than half the window sills had rotted away. Same thing could be said about the roof. The wooden structure had started to decay and remnants of the decayed wood spread all over the floor.

Of course, there was no source of lighting in the house other than the moonlight that seeped in. None the less, it is still brighter than the alley.

Momon entered through the large gaping hole in the wall.

The interior of the house looked abandoned with weeds growing from the floor. Seeing that, Momon pondered. He would leave behind footprints if he stepped on it. The man behind walked into the house calmly, and left a trail of footprints behind.

The rotted wooden flooring gave up on supporting Momon's weight and crumbled. From the damaged roof top, a ray of starlight filtered in, illuminating Momon like a stage light. Momon closely observed the surroundings.

The man following behind Momon entered cautiously.

"Hey hey, is this fine?"

"No problem, friend. The place here is safe."

"Is it? Mah, if you say so."

"Then, next will be?"

Momon turned around. From the beginning, his magic has been activated to look for signs of life.

There was.

Other than the man, there were three people within the surrounding area. All three were inside the house. Momon used his heightened senses and was able to confirm the same number presences.

"Then, you are given one minute to immediately bring the three bodies back here."

The shadows around Momon suddenly moved towards the direction he was pointing towards. This was not a metaphor. But two dimensional shadows that really moved.

“Eek!”

The man released an incoherent scream, like a small animal while looking at the shadows surrounding the place. Of course, no matter how he looked, he was not able to tell them apart.

“Then, since we have time. Let’s begin my questioning.”

“Huh, what?”

“Simple. Why did you attacked me? Who ordered you to do so?”

If it was a request from someone, then the matter would be rather complicated. After hearing the man’s answer, Momon let out a sigh of relief.

“No one did. We did it just for the money. Of course, if we knew it was you, we wouldn’t do something like this. Trust me, I am someone who treats my friends gently.”

“Hmph”

Momon already heard what he needed to hear.

Momon let out a smile. He moved in a way that would not leave any tracks in the overgrown weeds, heading closer towards the man. The distance between them was so close till both of them felt each other’s breath. He took off his gauntlet and placed a finger on the man’s chest before invoking his magic.

<Drown>

The man’s eyes dilated, and he clasped his mouth. Water came out from the corners of his mouth.

<Drown> was a magic that infused the lungs with water. It was a magic that progressed in a countdown. It was useless towards those that had the ability to breath underwater. There was a long delayed before it was able to cause the death of the target. In Yggdrasil, it was not a terrifying magic, as there were ways to counter it.

Due to the attack, the man's enchantment was lifted. He was shocked by the magic's effect and his fear started kicking in when he was unable to breathe, and he started clutching his throat. At that moment, Momon spoke to him gently.

"It's pointless. You won't be able to spit out the water. You may try to swallow it but it will still accumulate in your lungs."

The man turned and fled after understanding Momon's words. Of course, Momon did not allow such an act. Momon casually slipped out a leg and tripped the man. He fell onto the wooden flooring of the rundown house with a loud crash.

Momon placed his foot beneath the body of the man. With a quick motion, he flipped the man around. He then placed his foot on the man's stomach while increasing the pressure of his foot.

Instinctively at some level, the man understood what was happening to himself. He tried to push Momon's foot aside, but it would not move. No matter how he twisted and writhed, it would not move an inch.

As if he understood the extreme difference in their strength, the man clasped his hands in front of his chest with a pleading expression.

Fear, appealing, pain.

The man's expression continued to change. Momon silently watched as the man grabbed his foot with a panicked expression. The man pushed with desperate strength as his face turned bright red from being unable to breathe. He probably pushed harder than he had ever pushed. In times of great danger, people were capable of great feats of strength, like pushing aside pillars to escape from a burning building. But even strength born from desperation had its limits in front of Momon's overwhelming strength.

The man's body flapped uselessly as Momon looked expressionlessly at the man's crimson face.

The corners of Momon's mouth turned ever so slightly upward.

Eventually, the man's eyeballs rolled upward and water poured from his

mouth. His body flopped bonelessly to the ground unmoving.

“Humph”

With a slight snort, Momon lifted his foot from the corpse, his expression faintly bored like a child that had gotten sick of a toy.

Momon turned towards the returning presence.

“Thank you for the good work”

As if setting down some luggage, with a casual movement of a single hand, three bodies tumbled forth. The presence was shrouded in darkness, its shape and figure indiscernible. However, Momon’s <Detect Life> spell had reacted to it.

“Now, shadow demons, please show yourself”

Shadows without thickness expanded from the darkness. It was as if something two dimensional had gained a third dimension.

Emaciated humanoid figures with bat wings attached to their backs, their fingers ending in sharp claws.

The figures were pitch black, as if created from darkness itself. The only other colour were the eyes, a sickly glowing shade of yellow. The name Shadow Demon certainly suited them.

[We would request that you show us your true form as well]

“?”

[We would like to confirm that you are whom that our great lord has ordered us to serve]

“Well in that case.....tell me the name of your master first”

[Our master’s name is Ains Ool Gown. The Supreme One]

“Understood”

Momon’s form started to twist and shift.

The form that Momon settled into was no different from the one she normally took in Nazerick. Her clothing however, remained the same, making

the chest stick out slightly.

“Will this do?”

[.....We cannot properly verify your identity. We repeat. Please show us your true form.]

“.....Alright, it can't be helped.”

Scratching her head lightly in embarrassment, Momon hesitated. She finally nodded with an expressionless face worthy of a noh mask and the outline of her face twisted and melted.

The form that her face settled into, was quite simply, not human.

Her head was like a pink egg, its bald top gleaming with nary a strand of hair growing.

There were no protrusions at all at the spot where the nose was supposed to be. The area was as flat as a field. The areas belonging to the eyes and mouth were simply empty holes. Eyeballs, lips, tongue and teeth were totally non-existent. The face was akin to the drawing of a child's doodle using a black pen. There were changes to the body as well. The well endowed breasts shrunk like a deflating balloon that was pierced by a needle.

She dropped the hemp sack on the ground, and the five beautiful fingers on her hands, were replaced by four weirdly long fingers. The fingers wiggled like stick insects and on one of the fingers was a ring.

Doppelganger.

That was Momon's—Narberal Gamma's true form.

By raising the level of the race doppelganger, it was possible to gain one more form, but Narberal's doppelganger level was stopped at one, and 57 levels were focused into her magic. Thus she could not change into anything besides her maid form, but it was possible to use illusion magic to change her appearance. This was why she was suitable for infiltrating the town as an adventurer.

There were none but two NPCs from the human or demi-human races in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

The maids were homunculi, and Narberal and the others, the maids with combat abilities were like that as well. A camouflaging beetle-like race, a predatory slime, a lycanthrope, dullahan, and an automaton.

The sound was like wind passing through a tunnel.

The strange voice was a mix of both a male and female tone.

“Have you confirmed it?”

[We have confirmed that you are Narberal Gamma that has orders from Ainz-sama. We will become your subordinates from here on out.]

Narberal, without a word, changed her body. The repulsive figure of a doppelganger disappeared, and the one standing there was a beautiful woman. It was like the earlier figure was a complete lie. She picked up the sack that fell on the ground, and again placed it on her back.

“Reveal yourself, shadow demon.”

Resuming her usual tone of speaking, but within it was a feeling like an impending storm that was absent before. As if detecting the changes in her tone, from within the shadows, another two shadow demons joined the first and knelt in front of Narberal. Narberal moved towards the first shadow demon.

“Nee, why must I show my real figure?”

Lifting her leg, she kicked up the stomach of the shadow demon. If it was one of the members of the Axe of Cyclone, if it was done improperly, an impressive force would rupture their internal organs.

Ripping sounds of kachi kachi were heard. The shadow demon’s body bent into a shape like the kanji for nine(九), unable to withstand the pain, moans escaped its mouth.

“If it was for checking the ones born from the hands of the Supreme Ones, I can understand. But as my subordinates why must you see my real figure? The figure of this woman was made by the Supreme Ones for me and is special.”

Maintaining her poker face, Narberal delivered several more kicks.

She was not slacking off. Narberal was a magic-type. As expected it would

take a while to kill a about level 30 shadow demon with pure physical ability. Was that understood, or was that not understood?

Once again, she kicked.

The other shadow demons made no indication of stopping her.

Jet black fluid escaped the mouth of the shadow demon and its body started to convulse non-stop. Only then, did Narberal stop kicking.

“—Fu~. I believe that this is the words of Ainz-sama, and since you are the reinforcements from Ainz-sama I won't kill you.”

She lightly wiped off the sweat that accumulated on her brow.

“Now, dispose of the bodies and trash. There should be a place with zombies and skeletons we control—-”

The order was directed towards the remaining one that was spared. At this moment, Narberal was staring a specific spot on the wall. A place beyond the point of the wall surfaced in her mind and she closed her mouth.

—She began to think.

Although it was beneficial to have an increased number of minions, however there were cons as well. Her master sent minions from the servants serving him. This might cause some discomfort among the servants. This was as if saying that her strength was insufficient.

An action that would cause Ainz to frown will not be good.

“—There were none, so dispose of them.”

[Understood]

A different shadow demon from the one who was scolded lowered his head deeply.

“Afterwards, I learned several things from the adventurers party so watch their movement. If you observe strong adventurers you should learn useful information.”

[Hah]

The information obtained by joining a low level adventurers party was

minimal. The information obtained mainly pertained to basic knowledge.

“Escape if you are discovered when monitoring them. You are allowed to kill them, but you are strictly forbidden from massacring every single one to the point of stopping the flow of information. This will be all, begin your operation.”

Letting her gaze leave the bowing shadow demon, Narberal looked up. Even further above the barely remaining scaffold, the stars were sparkling.

<—Fly>

Narberal's body flew into the air. Completely negating gravity, it was like a balloon that floated upwards.

<Invisibility>

After the invoked magic completely wrapped around Narberal's body, an invisible barrier was formed around her.

Passing through the damaged roof, an invisible Narberal flew towards the sky. Before exiting the damaged house, she used magic to confirm that there were no observers nearby.

She had climbed about 300 metres.

The stars above her sparkled, and from there, she saw the countless lights illuminating the streets.

“Hah.”

Alone, and surrounded by fresh air, Narberal breathed deeply several times.

The job that was given to Narberal, was something worse than she had thought.

Jobs to kill or to break were fun, but to her, smiling at lower existences was extremely tiring. However, if she did her job well, she understood that Ainz would enjoy it so she had to do her best.

“Ah. Hah, I want to kill them.”

Just like responding to the numbness of her shoulders, she stretched her neck. Narberal eliminated those thoughts from her mind. There will be chances in the future. For now, she had to endure.

“Hah.”

Sighing one last time, the effects of the flight ended, and she began to descend.

A rumbling could be heard from the rushing of the air. Her sidetail and clothes fluttered in the wind.

There was a need to look for a different job tomorrow. Before that she had to inform the shadow demons looking for strong adventurers of various things. The things she had to do were like a mountain.

“I have to do my best—-”

Chapter 24: Butler

“What the heck is this food!”

A shrill and hysterical voice was heard, followed by the sound of crashing utensils in the hall.

The eyes of the several people in the dining hall faced the woman that was making a scene.

The face of that girl, to be described by using the word ‘beautiful’ would be an understatement. Her looks rivaled that of the Kingdom’s beloved royalty, whom the people called the [Golden Princess]. Although her face was twisted with fury, the appearance remained beautiful.

The lady was showing her displeasure towards the dishes displayed in front of her. She flipped her long hair, and annoyingly stroked the ribbon tying her hair. Although her cuteness was enhanced by the slightly droopy eyes, her displeasure was obvious at a glance.

The table was fully occupied by dishes of food.

Fresh bread from the oven were lined up nicely on the bread basket. The smell of well-seasoned meat stimulated the appetite. A salad was made from fresh vegetables that retained its crunchy texture. While the salad dressing on top emitted a sweet and sour smell.

Fortress City E-Rantel’s most luxurious inn, The Golden Pavilion, where the cooking was made by ingredients enchanted by the magic <Preservation>. The dishes could only be tasted by royalty and rich merchants. Anyone would be satisfied by it, except for the girl who was highly displeased. While most people were shocked, many were also curious about the dishes that she ate usually.

“It is not delicious at all!”

Hearing this voice, anyone would have a shocked appearance. Only the butler standing behind her did not display any emotions.

Hearing such words in a shop that served the most luxurious dishes, made from the highest class cooks. Several were shaking their heads left and right as if doubting what they heard.

“Ah, I do not want to stay in this town any longer, immediately prepare for us to leave!”

“However, ojou-sama. It is already ni—-”

“Keep quiet! I have said that we are to leave, so we will leave!”

“Understood.”

“Hmph! Get to work Sebas!”

The girl threw the fork from her hand which let out a soft clink. She stood up from her table, while maintaining her displeasure. She left the dining hall in footsteps that hinted her anger had not fully subsided.

Quiet returned to the dining hall just like the calm after the storm.

“I deeply apologise, everyone.”

He returned the chair that fell after the lady stood up, back to its original position. The butler slowly bowed his head to everyone in the dining hall. The well mannered apology attracted many sympathetic looks.

“Dear proprietor.”

“Yes.”

“I truly apologise for ojou-sama’s behaviour. And so as an apology, I would like to pay for the meals of everyone here in this dining hall.”

Hearing this, several people were not able to suppress their smiles. People would spend quite a sum to dine in this top class inn. To have their meals paid, many chose to forgive the racket earlier.

On the other hand, the proprietor was not surprised at all. He was used to the same scene unfolding daily since the arrival of this lady and butler pair.

“Sebas-san is in quite a pinch.”

A middle-age man in the middle of his meal, spoke to Sebas. As a response, Sebas could only give a brief smile.

Then, Sebas's sight moved towards a corner of the dining hall, where a man was wolfing down his food. Noticing the gaze, the man with a poor appearance stood up and walked quickly towards Sebas.

Comparing the man and the patrons of this establishment, his appearance did not match the atmosphere. Firstly, his looks did not give the impression that he was someone that could be trusted. He was like an oddity that stood out in this environment.

The only saving grace was that his uniform matched the clothing of the other patrons. However, he gave out the air of a clown wearing a well made suit.

"Mr Sebas."

"What is it, Zack-san?"

The man known as Zack spoke with a false sense of servitude. Hearing this, several other patrons could not help but frown. The speaker was unmistakably trying to curry favor.

However, Sebas' expression did not change.

"While I have been hired, wouldn't it be good to rethink leaving now?"

"It is because it is difficult to control the carriage at night?"

"Well, there's that, and I can't make preparations as well."

He scratched his head. It was washed cleanly, but something seemed to fly into the surroundings. Did the people on which it landed realise it, or did they not? The scratching speed gradually increased.

"I see. However, ojou-sama's words take precedence, and I do not believe that she will take an interest in my suggestion of leaving in the morning."

Sebas' steel will could be seen to have a chink in it, and he showed a strong smile.

"And so, I truly apologise, but we have to make our departure."

"However, yup."

Zack's eyes moved left and right, unable to think of what to say next. His

face began to twist with frustration.

“Of course, it is not immediately. Time is necessary for some level of preparations, and I believe you need it as well?”

Sebas ignored the cunning gleam in Zack’s eyes. The seedy-looking man’s resistance appeared to be merely a front. A front to cover the fact that the departure fitted neatly into his plans.

“Then when should we leave?”

“That is true. Shall we place it roughly in two hours time? Anymore and the town would be hidden in darkness. I believe that is our limit.”

Once again, the man’s eyes were hinting his terrible thoughts about his scheme. Sebas tried hard to ignore it. After using his tongue to lick his lips, Zack once again opened his mouth.

“Hehe, then there might be no problem.”

“That is fine. Then shall we begin the preparations?”

“Hehe, understood. I will immediately prepare, so please wait a bit.”

After seeing Zack leave the spot, Sebas performed a brief gesture as if to discard the air surrounding his skin. This was because he felt the lingering sticky sensation from a filthy presence.

While keeping his unchanging smile on his face, he repressed the desire to sigh.

Honestly, he could not like lower existences. The type of people like the Guardians Demiurge and Shalltear, could enjoy turning such people into toys, but Sebas desired no such thing.

Although he disapproved of this particular hobby of Demiurge, he did not particularly pick on it to preserve Nazarick’s unity.

Anything that did not belong to Nazarick was a lesser being. That was the consensus of those that dwelled there.

Sebas had his own opinion on this matter but seeing a wretched creature like Zack, he could not help but agree with that way of thinking.

Of course, it would be foolish to generalise everything. Furthermore, there were no interactions that were able to get Sebas to develop a sense of respect so far.

“Really really.”

Sebas used one of his hand to stroke his neatly trimmed goatee. His thoughts moved on to the next event that was to come.

The plan was proceeding well.

Still, there was a need to confirm the progress.

“That’s quite the pinch.”

When Sebas was in his thoughts, a single well dressed man talked to him.

His age was estimated to be around the late forties. His beard was trimmed neatly. His hair remained black although there were a few strands of white hair mixed in.

His belly bore unmistakable the cumulative signs of age and prosperity. His polite manners, and luxurious clothes gave the impression that he was a noble.

“This is Bardo-sama.”

Sebas lowered his head slightly. The man—Bardo quickly stopped him.

“Ah, no no. There is no need to be that humble.”

Bardo Louvre.

He was the merchant that controlled most of the food trade in this particular region.

In this walled city that served as a rallying point during times of war, he was someone that held a strong influence among all the numerous food traders within the city.

When the number of soldiers reached ten of thousands, a large amount of time must be spent on replenishing the food supply of the soldiers and also the complicated bureaucratic procedures. Thus, hence it was a simple strategy for the Kingdom’s soldiers to bring minimal supplies during their marches as they were able to replenish their food when they reached the city.

Henceforth unlike the other regions in the Kingdom, food and weapons merchants held considerable influence here.

For someone like this, it was unlikely that he started the conversation for the reason of being in the same restaurant. In this highly unusual circumstance, it was likely that there was a reason to it.

Sebas thought that such an interaction did not stem from that person's altruistic belief, since they never met before, but instead from their piqued interest towards an unknown rich traveler.

Another reason for this could be the attractiveness of the lady under his care.

"Sebas-san, that is not good."

"That is?"

For the first time, Sebas changed his expression to a smile.

He replied calmly with a tone that understood the meaning that was conveyed.

"That person is not someone that one can trust. Why did Sebas-san hire someone like him? I cannot understand."

Sebas brain worked at fast speeds. He was trying to find the most suitable answer.

There was no way he could say the reason for hiring him.

However, if he said that he did not know why, he would look bad in Bardo's eyes and his evaluation of Sebas would drop.

While it was confirmed that they were leaving this city, he wanted to avoid such a thing if possible. He might have some use in the future.

"That may be so. However, there were no others selling himself like he was. His evaluation may be devalued to many people, but ojou-sama evaluated him and liked his earnest personality."

The merchant smiled bitterly. His evaluation of her probably dropped even further.

Well, he came here because of personal concern regarding the situation, a sense of helplessness developed on the merchant's side.

"This may be disrespectful and overstepping my bounds, but would it not be best to remonstrate your master?"

"It may be as you say. However, when I think of my gratitude to my master....."

"I believe that loyalty is important....."

The merchant mumbled, and prevaricated his previous words.

"If so then I can lend you some trustworthy people from my side?"

"We cannot accept that."

Behind those gentle words was a strong will of rejection. As if understanding the will behind those words. Bardo put on another suggestion from a different angle.

"Really? But I think that it's better to have recognised bodyguards. It's quite a distance from the capital. And the public safety is nowhere near good."

"However."

"I can also give you some guards with a certain level of trust?"

The administration of highway patrols fell under the jurisdiction of the nobles, who controlled the land wherever the highway passed through. They had the right to collect road tax on those highways under their control. In reality, they were in it for the money only, as security in many stretches of those roads remained lax.

And so there were often cases of mercenaries becoming bandits or thieves, attacking travellers on the highway.

To solve this problem, the 'Golden Princess' proposed to set up highway patrols at the lands directly under the King's control. However, their numbers were too few and yielded little results. This was mainly due to the interference of those nobles who feared that their interest might be severely affected.

There were no lack of guards that could be hired in the cities. Only a small

number were genuine adventurers while a large portion were bandits masquerading as bodyguards, which led to the occurrence of bodyguards turning on their employers. These incidences were not uncommon.

Hence many travelling merchants hired adventurers or trustable mercenaries to serve as their guards.

Among these merchants like Bardo, who held significant influence, would know experienced and reliable mercenary groups. Unfortunately, his goodwill had to be turned down.

“Possibly. However, ojou-sama does not like to be surrounded by people. I cannot do anything that would gain her displeasure.”

“Really?”

Bardo’s face frowned with concern. The look of worry on his face was akin to the expression of an adult that was unable to handle the tantrum of a child anymore.

“I apologise for rejecting your kind offer.”

“Please don’t mind. To tell you the true, I want to buy favour. Well, if I can’t go that far, I want to at least sell my face.”

Bardo laughed cheerily. Sebas responded with a smile.

“No, I will definitely convey your kindness to my master.”

“.....”

A weak sparkle appeared in Bardo’s pupils. But was hidden immediately, and normal people would not be able to detect the minute changes. However, it was more than enough for Sebas.

“—”

“Then, I apologise, but ojou-sama is waiting, and so I will make my move.”

Aiming for the moment when Bardo opened his mouth, Sebas moved first.

The empty Bardo looked at Sebas’ face like he was investigating him, he opened his mouth that was mixed with a sigh.

“—Hmph. Then there’s no helping it. Sebas-san, if you come to this town

again, come meet me. I'll welcome you."

"Yes. Then I'm looking forward to you at that time."

Knocking several times, Sebas entered the room bowing his head and saying "excuse me".

"Sebas-sama."

Meeting Sebas who had closed the door and entered, was a woman with her head deeply bowed. If there were people from the dining room here, they would be be wonderstruck. The woman who was bowing and welcoming him was the woman making a ruckus.

An expression that would make one think if the earlier hysteric display was a lie. And that behaviour that would be suitable for meeting one's superior. However, the strange thing was that one eye—Her left eye was closed. When she was in the dining hall, it was not closed at all.

"Hmph. There is no need to lower your head, it was a result of work after all."

Sebas looked at the extravagant and wide room.

The best rooms of this inn were separated into three, this room was made for bodyguards and was made with simple materials. Naturally, it was a room for large nobles to stay in. It was a room that normal people would not see and was extravagantly made.

In the corners of the room were several luggages that were already lined up, and waiting for their departure. Sebas did not do it, and so the one who collected it could only be one person.

"Even though I was about to do it."

"What are you saying. Letting Sebas-sama work anymore than this."

The woman who raised her head—Solution Epsilon tilted her head.

"Is that so? Although, I have become your butler."

Sebas' face warped greatly.

On Sebas' wrinkled old man face, a childish smile could be seen. The fact that the smile until now, compared with this, was a smile of arrogance could be

understood.

Accepting the smile Sebas gave from the bottom of his heart, Solution broke the expression of a troubled smile she had from the start.

“That is true. Sebas-sama is my butler. However, I am Sebas-sama’s subordinate.”

“That is also true. Now, your job is over. As after this is my job, please rest here.”

“Yes. Thank you very much.”

“Now, I will also convey it to Shalltear-sama.”

Sebas lifted up the largest of the assembled luggage lightly.

“By the way, is he working well?”

“Yes. He really is working quite well.”

Solution pushed down onto her closed eyelids.

“What is the situation now?”

“Yes—He is meeting a man with a filthy appearance.”

“That is excellent.”

“Will you be hearing what they are saying?”

“No, there is no need. I will be transporting the luggage. Please listen in my place. Ah, it will be sufficient for you to tell me the important points later.”

“Understood.”

“Yes yes. Can you contact Narberal?” Sebas spoke to the surprised Solution in an admonishing tone. “While it is an undercover operation, it should be difficult to converse, but with your reconnaissance magic I believe there will be no problem to collect information.”

“Na-chan—My apologies.”

Solution’s cheeks reddened slightly and she hid her mouth with her hands.

“It is fine to not mind. I do not mind if you call her what you usually call her.”

“Yes. Eh, just that Na-chan is carrying out Ainz-sama’s orders. And so I do not want to do something like distract her.....”

“Is that so?”

“Within the 41 Supreme Beings, Nishikienrai-sama who made Na-chan has been in hiding for a long time. And so I believe her loyalty is also towards Ainz-sama. And since she received a direct order from Ainz-sama.....”

Sebas nodded. That was truly amazing.

However, the figure of Narberal as an existence of Nazarick was extremely proper, when Sebas himself was ordered he did not make any expression but he felt the same joy and pressure.

“What about Solution? You do not seem to be feeling the same pressure that Narberal is feeling.”

“I am Sebas-sama’s support and I am excited. Of course, I will do my best to carry out Ainz-sama’s orders.”

Solution spoke with a clear and strong will.

“The 41 Supreme Beings.....Did they go into hiding?”

The existences known as gods in Nazarick, the existences that controlled everything in Nazarick.

The 41 Supreme Beings.

There were currently none but one, but the remaining person—Ainz received a loyalty of the same standard as all 41 of them, it was already a regime of worship and admiration.

“Sebas-sama—They are people who will one day return.”

“That is true. I have made a mistake.”

Suddenly, Solution’s face warped slightly.

“—Anyway Sebas-sama, I will change the subject.”

A killing intent that seemed it would freeze even the atmosphere could be felt. That sort of stiff voice leaked out of Solution’s mouth.

“What is it, Solution?”

“.....Once you are finished with that man would it be possible for me to handle him?”

Sebas placed his empty hand on his beard, and pondered while touching it.

“—That is true. If Shalltear-sama does not mind, I do not mind if you do as you like. In a comforting manner, Sebas spoke to Solution whose eyebrows knitted together in disappointment. “It will be fine. If it is at the level of one person.”

“Really, understood. Please tell that to Shalltear-sama.”

Solution had a satisfied smile on her face. Her earlier expression was nowhere to be seen. It was a smile that was bound to enchant anyone that saw it.

“Understood. By the way, what did you say?”

“I am extremely looking forward to it. And so at least I will enjoy it.”

Solution’s smile became even stronger.

Looking forward to what would happen later, a childish innocence could be found.

Chapter 25: Orders

Sebas descended the steps.

He had to stuff the luggage he was carrying into the carriage parked on the street.

Sebas looked down at the huge piece of luggage he was carrying with both hands.

It appeared to be 20 maybe 30 kilogrammes. Sebas could have lifted that weight easily with just his little finger but one never knew who was watching. His unnaturally sharp senses did not detect any signs of detection magic but Sebas knew that his senses could be fooled.

Being wary of prying eyes, he pretended to be encumbered by the luggage like any ordinary human would be and walked quietly through the inn. As he quietly walked—

Sebas walked quietly through the 9th floor of the Dungeons of Nazerick. Behind him followed his direct subordinates, the battle maids Naberal Gamma and Solution Epsilon.

The wide passage of the Dungeon was clean and beautiful and very well kept. Here and there along the path, the elite soldiers of Cocytus stood guard.

These were the bodyguards known as <Guardian Knight>. With forms resembling horned beetles, the Guardian Knights wore their uniform crimson surcoat and held in each appendage, a crimson spear that gave off a pulsating aura. In addition, in place of armor, each knight possessed an incredibly tough exoskeleton.

These were the sturdy soldiers that patrolled the level with vigilance and in perfect formation.

Sebas admired the neat formations of the guards from the corner of his eyes

as he twisted and turned along the countless passageways of the dungeon until he reached his master's quarters.

On either side of the door, two anthropomorphic hercules beetles stood at attention. They were nearly two metres tall and possessed solidly built bodies. Each beetle wore a loose fitting surcoat of platinum. These were the <Royal Knight>. Even though the Knights' levels were only in their 70s, their defensive capabilities were unparalleled. Taking into account their endurance, magic resistance and weapons-damage resistance, even level 100 players would find these knights troublesome.

The Royal Knights held a gigantic glaive in each appendage with a beautifully embellished long sword the size of a great sword hanging from their waists. Each glaive gave off a platinum aura of high class enchantments.

These guards stood as still and silent as a rock.

As beetles, they possessed compound eyes and had a wider field of vision than humans. They probably tracked Sebas' every movement.

And in fact, Sebas could feel the guards' questioning eyes on him. He could tell they were uncomfortable. Of course, a good part of their discomfort stood from being aware of a potential intruder, but there was also an element of discomfort stemming from having to treat Sebas specifically as a potential intruder.

Such was the high position that Sebas held as the Land Steward of Nazarick. Sebas was the civilian equivalent of the highest military leader in Nazarick. Even highly ranked subordinates of Cocytus felt uncomfortable having to challenge him.

Sebas accepted the guard's challenge as a matter of course.

Anybody who acted suspiciously would be attacked no matter who that person might be. Even if that person is Sebas. Sebas acknowledged the guard's right and duty to challenge him.

Sebas stood before the pair with a faint smile.

Then he straightened and knocked on the intricately decorated door three times.

Moments later, the door opened slowly and a maid appeared. It wasn't one of Sebas' battle maids, but a homunculus—a maid without combat abilities.

"I wish to have an audience with Ainz-sama."

"I understand. Please wait for a moment"

The maid closed the door in a slow respectful silence, her presence fading as she moved away from the door.

The maid had gone to inform the owner of the room of his request. Slowly, of course. For the owner of the room is the Supreme Master, the person with the highest authority in Nazarick. One should certainly be expected to wait.

After another few moments of waiting, the door opened once more and the same maid appeared.

"An audience is possible, please come this way"

The maid stepped away from the door and allowed to Sebas to enter.

"Please excuse us."

The trio bowed their heads before entering the room.

The scene in the room was one which he was familiar with. All rooms of the supreme 41 shared identical layouts. Even their leader's room was unchanged.

Sebas stepped into the room and onto a carpeted flooring so thick and soft he could swear that he sank slightly into the carpet with every step.

On the right side of the room was a king-sized canopied bed with a closet door next to it. On the left, a gigantic ironwood executive desk dominated that side of the room.

On one side of the wall a bookshelf that reached to the ceiling was packed with books.

In the centre of the room was a circular table with a few books from the bookshelf stacked neatly one on top of the other.

The room was setup in a such a way that depending on how one viewed the room, one could say that it was a simply furnished room or crammed with treasures.

However, each and every furnishing was a treasure in of itself of peerless value. Each work of art was protected with preservative magic to prevent deterioration.

And of course, works of art gain value with time, so one could say that the value of the items in the room was even higher than the face value.

Sebas was unable to see Ainz from where he was standing.

None the less, Sebas was still aware Ainz's location in the room. In the middle of the room, there were two maids standing, one to the left and the other to the right side of a circular table. The maid whom welcomed them at the entrance, stood with an elegant posture.

In other words, within the room, there were only three maids.

From his current position, Sebas deduced that Ainz's would be sitting on the chair, flanked by two of the maids. His figure was hidden behind a pile of books.

None the less, a puzzling thought came into Sebas's mind—

—*Was the number of maids too little?*

This was Sebas' thought.

The place belonged to the supreme beings, hence it was required that they maintained a proper level of cleanliness that befit its status. To have only three maids present in the room of the Supreme of the Underground Tomb of Nazarick, was highly inappropriate.

It seems that there is a need to discuss this matter further with the head maid

. Sebas kept a reminder in his heart.

“—Good, you all have arrived.”

The pile of books moved slightly. Ainz figure was discernible among it. Sebas and the rest put a step forward on the carpet and bowed towards Ainz. At the same time, his gaze was directed towards the ceiling.

There were several presences detected on the ceiling—

Although his gaze was directed there, he was not able to determine the

exact identity of those mysterious beings. He was slightly disturbed by their presences.

This might have been the work of magic or special skills similar to that of <Invisibility>.

Sebas did not have the ability to see through invisibility. But his sense of detection was exceptional. He sensed a total of seven figures with no hostile intentions, but instead were observing the situation here carefully.

To be able to enter this room, their level must be considerably high.

“Don’t mind them, Sebas.”

Ainz spoke to Sebas who was observing the ceiling with his hawk like gaze.

“Above the ceiling are Cocytus’s underlings, placed there to be on alert for potential assassins, the Eight Legged Assassins? I believe. Although their presence is slightly distracting, you do not have to pay them much heed.....But still, I still think that there is no need to place 15 of them here, which equal to half the population of his underlings. Their presence is a bit restrictive. ”

To Ainz who had the ability to see through invisibility, it was depressing to see the numerous presence of those posted here appearing and disappearing at will, to the point that he had to speak sublimely. He resigned to tolerate it as their presence were for his own safety.

The master was having a hard time.

Sebas murmured to himself, then redirected his focus from the ceiling towards Ainz who was sitting at the round table.

“I have kept you waiting, Ainz-sama.”

“No, don’t mind it, have a seat.”

Ainz gestured briefly, for the three of them to take a seat. The action was not deliberate but more of an subconscious gesture, but it caused Sebas and the rest to develop a sense of worry. Narberal and the others tried hard to hide their stunned expression while suppressing a scream that tried to escape their mouths.

Undoubtedly, there were several chairs beside the table, and there were no indications that those spot were exclusive to the masters. To them, sitting in equal position to their master was something that was not allowed. However, obeying the master's order was absolute.

Sebas himself was unsure of what to do next.

Seeing the strange action of the three, Ainz's expression stiffened.

"If it's like this, it shouldn't be a problem over there."

Ainz raised himself while silently berated his own error. The maids that were stationed here followed from behind. They were headed towards the heavy set of office desk. As Ainz sat on the soft leather chair, a sound was heard.

"Now, come."

"Yes"

With Sebas leading Narberal and Solution, they assembled in front of the desk in a triangle.

"I thought to inform you of the details of the order I gave you in the throne room—"

Ainz looked at their three faces, confirming that they had nothing to say, continued.

"Firstly is Narberal. You will infiltrate the town as an adventurer. As for the reason why I selected you for your illusion magic, is because I do not want you to stand out. I would like you to stealthily gather information. Firstly I will explain why I want you to collect information related to adventurers."

"Yes!"

"I understand that the current Kingdom's Warrior Captain war potential is not high. However, there is a chance that there is a person that holds high abilities but is not affiliated with the Kingdom. And the highest possibility of that is found within the adventurers."

While it was unclear how the system of adventurers worked, if one infiltrated lots of information could be gained. At worst one could gain an understanding of the abilities of the general adventurer.

“Next is the reason why I want you to not stand out.”

Ainz stared at Narberal’s face while continuing.

“We know too little about the Adventurer’s Guild, about its combat effectiveness, its organization. If the guild becomes aware of our spying activities or capture our spy, they may use that as a bargaining chip during negotiations in the event we come to hostilities. In addition, we do not know how close a relationship the guild has with the Kingdom.”

“And this simple matter. With a strange magic caster known as Ainz appearing nearby, and a curious adventurer arriving, would it not be strange of people to see a relationship? If so then there is a chance we would be suspected.”

“I’ve said this before countless times and I’ll say it again. At this point of time we have no clear knowledge of our opponent’s power. As such, without a good reason, we must not become involved with the Kingdom’s affairs. Is that clear?”

“Yes! Narberal Gamma will carry out her mission even if it costs her life!”

“.....Ah, there’s no need to get so dramatic”

Ignoring Naberal’s blushing face, Ainz gestured at Sebas with a sweep of his hand. Having read his master’s intentions, Sebas reassured the maid with a tilt of his chin.

“That’s right Naberal. Nothing good will come out of such dramatic gestures. Don’t talk about things which are impossible. If you carry out the mission with a cool-head, there will be no problems.”

“I understand!”

Already unsettled by the importance of the mission entrusted to her, Ains and Sebas’s words caused Narberal’s shoulders to stiffen with tension. Seeing his plan to calm Naberal backfire caused Ainz to become a little flustered himself.

“Relax. It will be ok Narberal. You can do it”

Ains stood up slowly and rounded the desk to stand in front Naberal, gently placing a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

“I have faith in you. You are the creation of my friend Nishikienrai. As a half

golem, he had incredible strength. Among the 41, the damage caused by a single sweep of his great sword was without peer—”

For a moment, Ainz’s gaze drifted off into the distance, lost in the fond memories of an old comrade, his mind seeing what no others can see. Then he turned towards Naberal, his eyes fixed onto hers with burning intensity.

“—If I cannot trust his creation, then who can I trust? Well, avoid using magic, don’t do anything to stand out and you’ll be fine. You can do it.”

Nodding his head, Ains chuckled reassuringly. Naberal’s gaze steadied, reflecting the strength of her master’s faith in her.

“Without fail. I will live up to Ains-sama’s expectations!”

“I’ll depend on you Naberal. One last thing, we have no information on the kind of powers the adventurers possess. It is possible that someone could be strong enough to see past the illusion. In that event, make something up to obscure your true identity as an agent of Nazerick. If necessary, you are authorized to use some of your power. Do as you see fit.”

“.....What should I do if my true form becomes exposed?”

“Hmm? Right, you are a Doppelganger are you not?”

“Yes”

“.....It could be troublesome if they get that far. In that event, you have permission to retreat. If things get difficult, retreat. It’s better to be safe than be sorry. However, if you feel you can handle the situation properly, use your judgement.”

“Understood”

“Alright. Now Sebas, tell me why you have brought Solution along.”

Ains walked away from Naberal and returned to his seat. He leant back into his chair.

“Naberal will investigate their individual combat capabilities. Sebas, your task will be collecting information from the matters we discussed about earlier, all the weapons of a country, and their related information. The strength of man as a living being is not high, but this is compensated by the relevant techniques

they possessed. In this world, there are multiple races existing, henceforth, it would not be surprising that different countries have their unique techniques. The difference in their techniques and ours, that is what I would like to find out.”

Man’s body was fragile, but still possessed weapons which were much more terrifying than other creatures, that was man-made tools. Although their core strength revolves around magic. Weapons with strength that rivaled nuclear weapons, or missiles that can penetrate underground, weapons like this cannot be missed out.

When it comes to scientific knowledge, it would be easy to estimate their combat abilities. Whereas, magic contained many unfamiliar aspects to Ainz, and he had to pay more attention to it.

In contrast, a completely different idea popped out in Ainz’s head, which was the conclusion he obtained after meeting the Warrior-Captain in Carne Village. Nonetheless, to maintain the guild’s undefeated status, it was vital to do things step by step, and tread carefully as if on thin ice.

“What is their level of scientific and magical knowledge? Where is the limit of their strength? Prioritise the usage of information gathering skills. Act and respond accordingly to the different scenarios.”

“I see, understood..... If such why is she summoned along with me?”

Ainz nodded. His unrestricted gaze moved towards inspecting Solution. As if confirming his thoughts were not wrong, he nodded a few times.

“Solution will masquerade as a rich merchant’s daughter. Sebas, you will act as her butler. This is the plan.”

Solution displayed a puzzled expression, to this Ainz gave out an apologetic laugh.

“If Sebas is alone, it will be weird for him to masquerade as a villager, not to mention, as an adventurer too. These disguises will not work. Hence, being the butler is the most suited choice.”

As Ainz spoke, he observed the changes in expression of both Sebas and Solution.

“Solution shall infiltrate the royal capital as a rich merchant’s daughter. As the young lady, you will not invite any suspicion if you acted as a tad too generous with the money. The best disguise is that of a noble, but it is unlikely to work. Use the disguise well, your work will be using money to obtain the necessary information. It will not be a problem to gather some attention. I’ll look forward to your performance in the future.”

“Shall we head directly to the capital?”

“No, there is another task waiting before this.”

Ainz shifted his gaze and placed crossed his hands on the table.

“Solution will act as a spoiled young lady, to attempt to reel in some prey, hook, line and sinker.”

“What would the prey be?”

“.....Prey that will not be missed, especially those that possess knowledge about the world and military affairs. In other words, bandits. There will not be a lack of such people near the fortress city.”

During the Empire’s war, only the knights were professional soldiers. The Kingdom hired a large number of mercenaries to fight against the Empire. Once they disband, most would revert back to being bandits.

In reality, the area around the border fortress-city El-Rantel was not what you could call safe.

More than half of the merchants that travel the roads take some kind of security precaution.

Incidentally, the reason why the villages around E-Rantel were never attacked was because food was plentiful in the region. Most of the bandits in the area were looking for money not food and thus ignored the villages. Food wasn’t worth much especially once you split it up. In addition, the villages around El-Rantel were important food suppliers to the city. If one was unlucky, an attack on the villages might provoke the formation of an anti-bandit force lead by the local merchants.

In addition, many of the mercenaries guarding the villages may have

themselves been bandits. In order to avoid a fight among former comrades, you could say that there was an unwritten understanding to avoid the villages.

And of course, even in the Kingdom, slavery as an institution never really existed. So raiding a village for slaves was not profitable as one could not resell the slaves around the Kingdom.

“Bandits?”

“Yes, they must surely have some information on the military situation in the area. And maybe some information on E-Rantel’s underworld of organized crime. Either types of information would be good. What’s more important is that the disappearance of some bandits would not provoke a hostile response from the Kingdom. Surely nobody in the Kingdom would be curious enough to investigate the reason behind the disappearance of bandits?”

“In that case would it not be better to look for information outside the city?”

“The bandits would come running to you if you acted like a rich fool on the streets”

“I see”

Having accepted the explanation, Sebas’s brows furrowed as he considered the situation.

Even if one was talking about bandits, Sebas didn’t like randomly attacking people.

In that case, they should watch the streets to hunt bandits. There was a high possibility that some kind of intelligence network was present.

Act as bait by playing the fool and wait for the network to bite was what Ains was basically saying.

Now what should be done then?

“I’ll leave that up to you. Now, I’ll give you some healing potions. We’ll also have to think about preparations to handle diseases and poisons. Then precautionary measures against binding effects and psychic attacks. Then other little details—”

The memories poured out, as he returned to his current thoughts, he had already arrived at the inn's entrance.

Sebas let out a wry smile, before pushing the door open while carrying the luggage.

The reddish evening sky began to dim.

If it gets darker, the bright magical light installed around the compound of the inn will light up. Hence, it will not be an issue even to walk around at night.

Sebas was heading towards the stables that was within the confines of the inn.

His destination was a horse drawn carriage.

He stopped near the carriage—Or the coach as it was called as a magnificently crafted carriage.

Sounds of clothing rubbing on each other was heard from the carriage. Sebas's sensitive hearing caught the stirring sound of a viscous fluid, mixed with feminine passionate breathing and moaning. The sound was able to escaped the layers of wooden and metal plates.

Sebas let out a single breath of sigh.

He took several loud deliberate steps forward as if to announce his presence. As he neared the door, he tapped a few times on the door gently but in a crisp and clear fashion, before announcing his presence.

"Shalltear-sama, please conduct yourself with dignity while outside your quarters.

The sound of tongue clicking was heard, the figure was slowly readjusting her dishevelled robes.

A unknown amount of time passed, it was unsure whether such a duration could be considered long or short to average females. The door then slowly opened, revealing a stunning figure.

The skin was white as wax and looked bloodless, the wet deep red irises showed lustful expression. A pair of fangs were part revealed from the side red moist lips. Their white ceremonial gowns was of a brave design, that showcased

their well endowed breast.

Those two were Shalltear's subordinate vampires. Both of them radiated a unique stink as they stepped out. Following them at the back, was the figure of a <True Vampire>.

The light from the magical illumination was reflected by the silvery hair.

Wearing a pitch black blouse with matching cardigan shawl and long sleeve glove of the same color. Almost no skin was shown at all.

About 14 years of age, the figure possessed a perfect blend of innocent and mature-like attractiveness. As if this was the crystallization of the most beautiful being in existence. In front of such a beauty, the brightness of the precious stone that decorated her fingers and chest paled in comparison.

"Thou art late."

A pair of slender beautiful eyes looked upon Sebas.

As if intentional, the lips parted, a bright red tongue came out from the honey jar like mouth. The tongue moved like leeches across the lip.

It was a figure possessing a sensual beauty that did not match her age, one of the guardians of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, Shalltear Bloodfallen.

Chapter 26: Carriage

Such a distasteful existence.

Those were the thoughts of Zack as he jogged through the alleyways. Life was meaningless.

Within the Kingdom's villages, the residents lived a life that was far from being called happiness.

They worked hard, farming their lands, but the fruits of their labor would then be taken away by their master. If 60% were collected, they would still manage. They could still survive on the remaining 40% although they may starve, but they will find a way to survive.

The problem came when up to 80% of the crops were taken. To survive on 40% of the crops was the lower limit, and it was not an easy life. Needless to say, to survive just on 20% would be impossible.

The outcome would be harsh.

One day, Zack returned home after working at the fields. His sister, who made his weariness disappear had gone missing.

Back then, he was still young, he did not understand what happened. His cute little sister was gone and his parents did not even lift a finger. Now he understood what had transpired, she was sold. Although the Golden Princess had prohibited it, back then the buying and selling of slaves were common.

Hence during the times when he went whoring, every time he passed by them, he would look for her. It would be unlikely that he could find her again, but he did not stop.

Besides living in harsh and poor conditions, he was further burdened by the conscription.

To counter the Empire's consistent military campaign, the Kingdom gathered all the villages' able bodied young men and ordered them to head

towards the battlefield. Losing one month worth of labour strength from the young men, drastically altered fortunes of the village. However, there are also those who viewed this development in a positive way.

A drop in the number of people meant that individual household food consumption would be reduced. There were also those who led a good life after becoming soldiers.

In the fight for their lives, there were those who were rewarded for their outstanding performance. No, some had achieved similar results but were not rewarded. Only those who were selected could receive the accolades.

After he returned to the village, due to the stalled work from the lack of hands, the yearly harvest plummeted despairingly.

Zack was drafted twice.

During his third tour,

The battle ended as usual, once again Zack survived due to his luck. He stopped during his journey back to the village. A sudden thought came to him as he looked at the weapon on his hand.

Instead of going back to the village, why should he not start a new life.

However, as a simple Villager with only the bare minimum of military training, Zack did not have much of a future in front of him. Even his weapons and armor were temporarily loaned to him by the kingdom. And of course, he did not have any special powers. His knowledge was limited to what anybody who worked the earth for a living knew, like what kind of seed to plant during which season.

What Zack did was to desert carrying with him his only advantage, his weapon.

Of course it was not that easy to desert the Kingdom. You could say that he was lucky enough to meet people who could help him as fled.

Mercenary Group

Of course, as an ordinary villager, Zack did not have much value as a mercenary. It was just that this particular group had suffered heavy losses due

to wars and was simply looking for bodies to fill its depleted ranks.

During times of war, they were mercenaries, at other times, bandits.

Zack's life in the band was not much to talk to about.

It was certainly better than nothing though.

He would steal to avoid being stolen from.

He avoid the life of tears by forcing those tears on others.

That was the kind of life Zack led.

He never considered what he did as wrong. He certainly had no regrets.

And that was because he believed that his victims weren't innocent either
—

Zack walked hurriedly into the corner shack of a row of similar small shacks near the slums.

The evening sun bathed the surroundings in blaze of fiery red, and was slowly replaced by a creeping darkness that stained everything black.

The danger level in the slums always spiked up at dusk, just before the sun set. However, for those who were used to its dangers, getting around was not much of a problem. Generally as long as you had got a knife up your sleeve to handle any trouble, you would be fine.

Zack looked quickly around him to make sure he was not being followed.

Although he had checked countless number of times on his way here, he made one last pass.

He held his breath in front of the door, and knocked several times. Leaving a gap of a few seconds, he knocked again. It was the proper way to do things.

There was a creaking of wood as the peep slot on the door opened. A pair of eyes belonging to a man stared out at Zack and recognized him.

"You huh, oh, wait fer a little."

"Yup."

The board that had covered the peep slot moved back in position. There was

a heavy clink of keys being retrieved and the door opened up slightly.

“Get in.”

The fetid sour reek that wafted from inside the room promised an environment very different from the hotel that Zack had come from. Hoping that his nose would soon get used to the smell, he slipped into the house.

The small room was dim and narrow.

The door he had entered opened directly into a dining room cum kitchen with single a table. A lone candle stood on the table. The man who opened the door lit the single candle, its weak radiance soon filled the room.

The man looked back at Zack.

The man gave off the menacing aura of a man that made his living from violence. He wore clothes that fitted snugly around his form, designed for easy movement in combat. Here and there you could see knife scars on his arms and face.

The man pulled out a chair and sat down.

“Oh, Zack. What’s wrong, something happened?”

“The situation changed.....The prey is about to move.”

“Haah. Now?”

“Yup.”

“What...at this time? Impossible”, mumbled the man as he brushed his hands through his unkempt hair.

“Can’t you do shit about it?”

“That is difficult. It’s her idea?”

Having heard Zack complain many times before about the woman, the man’s face twisted in resignation.

“The idiot’s a problem.... How about sabotaging the wheels of the carriage?”

“It is impossible. There are too many people moving luggage and doing preparation work around the carriage to do anything to it.”

“Then all you need to do is to wait until just before setting off to strike.”

“If it were that easy I would have just gone ahead and sabotaged the wheel even before the preparations have started don’t you think?”

“Well yeah....”

The man stared off into the air deep in thought.

It was not easy to gather the men but if they were to contact them immediately, perhaps they could still be in time to carry out the attack.

“When are they moving?”

“Bout two hours time.”

“You gotta be kidding me, so little time. What to do.”

The man fell deep in thought, calculating the time needed to carry out each phase of the attack with his fingers. Silently looking on as the man made his calculations, Zack looked down at his own fingers.

“Those rich people really piss me off...”

Those beautiful hands.

They reminded him of the hands of the overseers in the fields. Hands which only those people who have never seen manual labour had.

While people who worked the fields had their hands cracked and split by cold water, develop calluses swinging their hoes and even suffered from misshapened fingernails.

He had always known that the world was unfair but—

Zack’s lips twisted as he bared his teeth in resentment.

“That women, let me have some fun with her too.”

“You can. But I’ll be first.”

A lecherous grin appeared on the man’s face. As if driven by lust, the man stood up.

“Contact the boss.”

“Got it.”

“About ten men will be waiting at the usual place. We will move into action as soon as you arrive in four hours. If you aren’t there in four hours, we’ll come to you. In meantime, lull our prey into a false sense of security”

The border fortress receded as a lone carriage sped away under the pale moonlight.

It was a large carriage. One large enough to fit 6 people and then some. The carriage was drawn by four horses of such quality that one could mistake them for being military horses.

A large full moon hung low in the night sky casting beams of pale-white onto the ground illuminating the surroundings with surprising effectiveness. However bright the moonlight may have been, travelling in the open countryside in a carriage in the dead of the night was rather stupid if you were human. Assuming that you wanted to survive the night of course. If one was forced to spend a night in the open, the correct precautions to take were to strike up a camp, set up a large fire and post guards.

Humans did not have any influence over the world at night. No, perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the world of humans ended where light ended. Because the risk of being attacked by nocturnal beasts and demi-humans with their superior night vision was extremely high in the darkness.

And no matter how the map was drawn, the human kingdoms really only exerted control over large cities, the villages and smaller settlements around the cities and the highways which bound the cities together. Monsters populated the enormous gaps in-between, albeit in small groups. As soon as groups of monsters got large enough to be visible, they would be hunted down and driven off. However, in the deep forests and valleys where humans would not go, the monsters built large tribes.

In any reasonably large forest, a lone human could wander randomly in any direction for 20 minutes and expect to encounter something. It could be squirrels or foxes, it could just as well be wolves, other large beasts or demi-humans like ogres or goblins. That was how dangerous a place the forest is.

And that was why adventurers could always find gainful employment.

And so it was on a night full of dangers previously described, the carriage sped along the highway. Despite its speed, the occupants of the carriage barely experienced any rocking.

The stability of the carriage wasn't due so much to the quality of the spring suspension in the carriage as much as the paved roads over which it ran. There were, of course, both paved and unpaved roads in the Kingdom, but this close to a city directly administered by the crown, the roads were properly paved with cobblestones.

The paving of the roads had originally been proposed by Princess Renner, but at this point in time, only a portion of the highways connecting crown administered cities and the lands held by Marquis Raeven had been paved. The other nobles have hindered the project by claiming that making the roads easier to travel only made invading the Kingdom easier.

In addition, the cost of the project also complicated matters. Renner had proposed to have the merchants defray some of the costs, but the nobles objected fearing the loss of their road privileges.

And with that you have the explanation for the current wretched state of the Kingdom's roads.

Suddenly, the carriage started to clatter as it ran along, shaking the occupants inside.

The shaking brought to an end a conversation that was going on inside the carriage.

Shalltear sat on one side flanked by her vampire servants. On the other side sat Sebas, and beside him, Solution. Zack was, of course, driving the carriage.

Silence descended on the carriage for a moment before Sebas opened his mouth .

"I have always wanted to ask you something."

"Hmmm? Me? What?"

"You don't seem to get along with Aura-sama."

"...Actually I doth not bethink mine own relationship with Aura is lacking

valor”

“...Actually I do not think my relationship with Aura is that bad.”

Replied Shalltear in a soft whisper, as she idly inspected her pinky fingernail.

Shalltear’s pearly white fingernails were two centimeters in length. She held a nail file in one hand but it did not seem to be of any use as her nails were already perfectly manicured. Shalltear probably felt the same way as she passed the file to a vampire servant.

And with both hands free, she started to reach out with each hand towards the bosom of the vampire servants seated next to her but thought better of it as she noticed the awkward expression of the people seated in front of her.

“Doth thee not bethink so?”

~~“Do you not think so?”~~

Shalltear’s face twisted in a grimace as if she had bitten into something bitter.

“Is this something yond the Land Steward hast to worry about?” A moment’s pause. “....Mine own creator Peroroncino-sama madeth me this way. Mine own bickering with aura. Perhaps Aura hadst been did createth by Bukubukuchagama-sama to doth the same. ”

~~“Is this something the Land Steward has to worry about?” “My creator Peroroncino-sama made me this way. My arguments with Aura. Maybe Aura was made by Bukubukuchagama-sama to do the same.”~~

Shalltear fluttered her hands in the air with a bored gesture as she directed her gaze at Sebas. For the first time, she locked eyes with Sebas.

“Well, mine own creator Pereroncino-sama and Aura’s creator Bukubukuchagama-sama art siblings. In a way, Aura and I art eke siblings.”

~~“Well, my creator Pereroncino-sama and Aura’s creator Bukubukuchagama-sama are siblings. In a way, Aura and I are like siblings.”~~

“Siblings, so it seems!”

“Longeth ago, I overheard a conversation between Pereroncino-sama and two

other members of the 41 Supreme Beings—Luci★fer-sama and Nishikienrai-sama at which hour those gents visited mine own leveleth of the dungeon.”

~~“Long ago, I overheard a conversation between Pereroncino-sama and two other members of the 41 Supreme Beings—Luci★fer-sama and Nishikienrai-sama when they visited my level of the dungeon.”~~

Shalltear’s eyes misted over with wistful longing as the memories of her escorting the great ones in the walk through the dungeon floated in front of her.

“T appears yond Bukubukuchagama-sama hadst an occupation hath called Seiyuu (Voice Actress). The lady wast so popular yond her voice appears in many games. Pereroncino-sama hadst been very depressed because of this. That gent couldst not enjoyeth his did desire games because his sister’s visage hath appeared in his imagination every timeth that gent hath heard her voice.”

~~“It seems that Bukubukuchagama-sama had an occupation known as a Seiyuu (Voice Actress). She was so popular that she appeared in many games. Pereroncino-sama has been depressed because of this. He could not enjoy his much desired games as his sister’s face appeared in his mind every time he heard her voice.”~~

Shalltear continued recalling the conversation even though she had no idea what it was about. Sebas also cocked his head quizzically at Shalltear, a mystified expression on his face.

“A seiyuu....I do not possess any knowledge of such a thing.”

They looked at each other and silently agreed that this “Seiyuu” was probably some word of power that nobody except the Supreme Ones understood.

“Who is’t is the one guarding the eighth floor?”

Sebas blinked in surprise at the sudden change in topic but regained his composure almost immediately.

“...As I recall, at which hour those daws yond crossed the Supreme Ones invaded in force, the 8th floor wast the lasteth line of defence wast t not? In yond case, the 8th floor shouldst be very well did guard”

~~“...As I remember, when those people angered the Supreme Ones and invaded in force, the 8th floor was the last line of defense. In that case, the 8th floor should be well guarded.”~~

~~“ ...”~~

“Haply one of Ainz-sama’s creations?”

~~“Maybe one of Ainz-sama’s creations?”~~

Among the denizens of Nazarick, one’s place in the pecking order of the hierarchy was determined by whether or not one was created by the 41 Supreme Beings. This was so, whether be it ordinary homunculus maids directly created by the 41 Supreme Beings, Kyouhukou, the Chief Librarian or the Head Chef.

And of course even the Guardians created by the 41 Supreme Beings.

Sebas’s creator was Touch Me, Demiurge’s was Ulbert Alain Odle, Cocytus’s was Blue Planet, and so on. However, Shalltear had no clue as to the identities of Ainz’s creations.

It was hard to believe that there were none.

Since the 8th Floor was unknown to Shalltear, it was therefore logical to guess that Ainz’s creation resided on the 8th Floor.

“...No, that probably not the case. I’ve only heard a little about this but Ainz-sama’s creation is named Pandora’s Actor. He is as powerful as I am or any of the Guardians and guards the deepest part of the Treasury”

“There wast yond sort of person?”

~~“There was that sort of person?”~~

Shalltear’s brows furrowed at the unfamiliar name.

Even though the Treasury could not be reached without the Ring of Ainz Ooal Gown, it would be strange for such a place to be unguarded.

The deepest part of the treasury.

The treasury was where Ainz Ooal Gown’s most powerful of Magic Items were enshrined. It was ground so sacred that even the Guardians were not

allowed entry. Of course, Shalltear had no idea what kind of Magic Items would reside in such a place, but the treasury held the highest class of Magic Items also known as Artifacts. And beyond the Artifacts it was rumored that there were also a few of the unique World Class Items. There were only a grand total of 200 of these one-of-a-kind items in this world.

This included the many taken by the large army that had, in the past, invaded Nazarick, as well as the ones currently still in the treasury.

In that case, probably only the creation of Ainz, the head of the 41 Supreme Beings, would be worthy enough to guard this place.

Shalltear's heart could not help but to be a little hurt at not being able to guard that holiest of places.

However, being the guardian of the three levels that would face Nazarick's enemies first was a responsibility of the highest order.

"Eh. Do you happen to have an idea about what Ainz-sama is doing right now?"

"Of course. that gent is currently in the treasury experimenting with magic items as well as performing tests on various magics and spells."

"My subordinates accompany Ains-sama when he retrieves the magic items from the treasury."

"Hm."

Having lost interest in the conversation, Shalltear gave little more than a noncommittal grunt of acknowledgement. Sebas, however, did not seem to mind.

"In conclusion, the 8th Floor remains a mystery...."

"Yes. We do not have permission to enter, so there is probably something there."

"What doth thee mean by something?"

~~"What do you mean by something?"~~

"Perhaps something that will attack even us?"

“Nay. Yond is not lacking valor but.... What about death traps that doth not differentiate?”

~~“No. That is not bad but..... What about death traps that do not differentiate?”~~

“Well I doubt anybody powerful enough to penetrate the other floors of Nazarick would be defeated by traps....”

“Shalt we taketh a peek?”

~~“Shall we take a look?”~~

Shalltear grinned impishly like a child with a prank on her mind. In contrast, Sebas’s smile was his usual. An enigmatic smile that seemed to have some kind of deeper meaning behind it.

“Do you plan to disobey Ainz-sama?”

“Lies, lies. Simply a jest. Prithee don’t maketh such a terrifying visage.”

~~“Lies, lies. Simply a joke. Please don’t make such a terrifying face.”~~

“Shalltear-sama, remember that curiosity killed the cat. If Ains-sama had meant for us to know what resided on the 8th floor, he would have told us. Until then, we will just have to be patient.”

“I supposeth so. I wonder if it be true the prey hast taken the bait?”

Again Sebas adapted to the sudden change in topic with nary a word of protest.

“Yes. Hook, line and sinker. Now all we need to do is pull the fish out of the water and it’s ours.”

“Yes.”

Shalltear licked her lips. Her red eyes had a crimson light flash in them.

“I have something to request Shalltear-sama about.”

“.....What is it?”

Shalltear raised an unsatisfied voice when her enjoyment was interrupted. Sebas continued in a soothing manner.

“Currently, the man driving the carriage, could you possibly give it to this girl?”

“...An underling?”

“Yes, little more than a messenger I think.”

Shalltear closed her eyes as if deep in thought, considering all possible implications of granting the request.

“Well tis fine. I don’t bethink yond fellow wouldst taste very well, be it. ”

~~“It’s fine. I don’t he would taste very good.”~~

“Our heartfelt thanks for Shalltear-sama’s generosity of spirit.”

“Our deepest gratitude, Shalltear-sama”

“It’s fine. Don’t worry about it.”

Shalltear gave Solution a smile of such friendliness that would make one doubt its possibility. From there she sent only her gaze to Sebas.

“I am sorry about mine own jest earlier. Desire this maketh us coequal.”

~~“I apologise for my joke earlier. I hope this makes us equal.”~~

“Understood....In any case, I never believed from the beginning that Shalltear-sama would ever seriously consider doing such a foolish thing. I understood your words were meant in jest.”

“Aye, the bethought of thee taking mine own gest the wrong way never did cross mine own mind either. ” Shalltear laughed. “I supposeth if ‘t be true thee didst misunderstand, thee wouldst keepeth a gaze on me quietly. At the first signeth of betrayal thee wouldst cutteth off mine own arms and legs and bringeth me backeth to Ainz-sama.”

~~“Yes, the thought of taking my joke the wrong way never crossed my mind.” “I suppose if you did misunderstand, you would keep an eye on me. At the first sign of betrayal you would cut off my arms and legs and bring me back to Ainz-sama.”~~

“I would never do such a thing Shalltear-sama”

“Thee wouldn’t? Wouldn’t refusing cast doubteth on thy loyalty?—Surely

thee wouldst doth t?”

~~“You wouldn’t? Wouldn’t refusing cast doubt on your loyalty?—Surely you would do it?”~~

Shalltear and Sebas laughed. A shared laughter that came from the bottom of their hearts.

“Well, I didst has’t a thing for cute girls. After Ainz-sama wast done, perhaps that gent couldst giveth me Solution. Yond wouldst be fun—-”

~~“Well, I do have this thing for cute girls. After Ainz-sama is done, maybe he could give me Solution. That would be fun—-“~~

“—What kind of orders did Ains-sama give you?”

Sebastian tried to change the topic to refrain from furthering the discussing.

Before setting off, Sebas had received a magic message from Ains stating that Shalltear would be joining him in the bandit hunt. Sebas had a vague understanding that Shalltear was specifically chosen for this mission.

But he had no idea as to the deeper motivation behind her selection.

“...If ‘t be true there art people yond can useth weapons or magic, Ainz-sama shall not mind if ‘t I biteth those folk and maketh those folk mine own slaves, but I must capture those folk. If ‘t be true there art people yond understand the state of the world or can square, those gents wilt not escapeth. Those art the main points. Well, though there is the option of investigating one on one, I wouldst nevertheless biteth all of those folk. ”

~~“If there are people that can use weapons or magic, Ainz-sama will not mind if I bite them and make them my slaves, but they must be captured. If there are people that understand the state of the world or can fight, they will not escape. Those are the main points. Well, the is the option of investigating one or one, but I would just bite all of them.”~~

Sebas nodded his head in understanding.

“From my personal point of view, Demiurge-sama would be a better choice. Similar to Aura-sama’s breath, he can control the will of others freely.”

Sebastian muttered meekly.

Demiurge had the Domination Curse special skill, which was a powerful mind control technique that is able to control a target's action. For a mission that required the capture of the target like the current one, it would be exceptionally effective.

"...Huh?"

Shalltear suddenly made an unbelievably low pitch sound.

The air in carriage became heavy, a air so cold that could pierce the skin started to descend inside the carriage.

Even the horses that was pulling the carriage felt it, causing the carriage to shake violently. The vampires seated on both sides of Shalltear turned even paler while Solution, who was besides Sebas, was shivering. Even Sebas who was on the same level as Shalltear felt goosebumps.

A wave of crimson spread out from Shalltear's red pupils, dyeing her eyes completely in red.

"Sebas, wouldst thee liketh to sayeth again one more timeth? Or wouldst thee liketh to turneth into thy dragonic form?" The crimson pupils stirred. "And square to the death?"

~~"Sebas, would you like to say that one more time? Or would you like to turn into your dragonic form?" "And fight to the death?"~~

"I have greatly misspoken. Please forgive me."

"...."

The only reply towards Sebas apology from Shalltear was silence.

A few seconds passed, before Shalltear took several deep breaths.

The atmosphere of the carriage started to warm. At the last heavy breath, Shalltear's pupils reverted to her usual look that oozed a sensual hunger.

"...In short, those gents shall be turn into slaves after we sucketh their blood, so yond wouldst be much simpler. There is nay need to bringeth those folk backeth alive, Ainz-sama hath brought up this issue before."

~~"...Basically, they shall be turned into slaves after we suck their blood, so that~~

~~would be much simpler. There is no need to bring them back alive, Ainz-sama has brought this up before."~~

"Certainly it was true, please forgive me for my shallow understanding."

Vampires could turn their target into a low-tier undead with absolutely obedience by completely sucking all their blood. Vampires were only able to create lesser vampires with intelligence far below their own, as for Shalltear, she could create vampires with an intelligence on the level of a human.

Since the status of the prey, being dead or alive did not matter. Shalltear could still be considered an excellent hunter for this job, although there was a limit to how many vampires she could create.

Then, there was a strong shake on the horse carriage, followed by the neighing of the horses that pulled the carriage.

"...Looks liketh the carriage hadst ceased."

~~"...Looks like the carriage has stopped."~~

"That's right."

Shalltear smiled like a little girl bent on mischief. Sebastian gave out a light smile while stroking his beard.

Chapter 27: True Ancestor | Part 1

The ten men that stepped out of the nearby forest surrounded the lone carriage in a half circle. The men wore a wide variety of different equipment. Their equipment may not have been top quality, but it was certainly not trash. It even seemed like they had put in some effort towards maintaining their weapons.

The mens' weapons glimmered under the moonlight.

They were nearly all equipped with light armor called Chain Shirts.

At that moment, the men were having a discussion on things like what to do with their prey or their position in the queue. They seemed utterly relaxed, and this was not because they were careless, but because they were highly experienced. Having robbed so many carriages, it would certainly be stranger if they were showing signs of nervousness.

Zack leapt from the driver's seat and jogged towards the men.

Naturally, to forestall any attempts of escape, he cut the reins attached to the horses and bound shut the door of the carriage on the side facing away from the men.

Believing that the people in the carriage could see them, the men flashed their weapons in a silent warning: "If you don't come out quickly, things could get bad for you."

The carriage doors slowly opened.

A beauty appeared under the moonlight. The vulgar laughs and lust-filled eyes of the gathered mercenaries and bandits were drawn towards the girl, their delight at what they expect to happen next written clearly on their faces.

There was only one man among them that was shocked.

Zack.

To describe his shock in one sentence, it would be "Who is she?". That

mysterious person, he did not recall seeing her in the carriage. In his moment of confusion, Zack was not capable of saying anything else.

After seeing another similarly dressed girl appearing, the others began to display a shocked expression. According to their information, their prey was a naive merchant's daughter and her old butler.

Their thoughts were soon wiped away by the appearance of a young girl.

Her silver hair shined under the moonlight, her crimson pupils sparkled like fireworks.

The bandits could not even uttered a single word of alarm under the presence of such a beauty. Instead, they let out a relaxed sigh of praise to such a beauty. Shalltear smiled lustily as she walked towards the group of men.

"Firstly, I would like to thank everyone for gathering here. Now then, I would like to find out who is the strongest amongst you. Let's negotiate."

The bandits were all then directed at one person. Shalltear deemed that she had all the information she needed. Other than the target, the other humans were not required.

"W, what are we negotiating for?"

As if his wits had returned from the shock of Shalltear's beauty, a person that looked like the leader of the band came forward.

"My, my. My apologies. The part about negotiating was just a joke to obtain the information I need. My sincerest regrets."

"You all are...."

Shalltear turned towards Zack, who was mumbling to himself.

"You must be the one called Zack. You will be given to Solution as agreed, can you step further away."

A few of the bandits looked at each other to grasped the situation. At that moment—

"For a little brat, you seemed to have some nice goods."

One of the bandits who coincidentally stood in front of Shalltear, reached

out a hand towards Shalltear's bust, larger than those belonging to girls who is of her age. Then, the hand dropped to the ground.

"Do not touch me with your dirty hands."

The man was in a daze as he was looking at his missing arm. There was a delay before he started screaming.

"Aaaargh! My, my hand, my hand isss!!"

"You do not have to scream so loudly with losing a mere hand. Do you consider yourself a man?"

Shalltear spoken softly before waving her hand once, with that simple gesture, the man's head dropped and rolled on the ground.

The bandits started to a panic after seeing the delicate beautiful hand performing such a monstrous feat, not to mention, that person was not holding any blade. The mental shock fogged up their minds. But they soon regained their wits after witnessing the terrifying scene that came next.

Blood gushed out from the open wound of the corpse, as if guided by an external will, gathered above the head of Shalltear, like a spherical ball.

The skill was unhuman-like. Those were the thoughts of the ignorant on this situation.

"Spell Caster!"

Spell caster, it was a general title to anyone who used magical abilities.

They comprised of a wide range of existences.

The clerics and priests that performed the miracles of the gods, wizards and arcaners that bent the rules of the world, and the druids that were able to harness nature's power were all spell casters.

The type of magic used differed between job classes and the outcomes would be vastly different as well.

If there was someone more knowledgeable among the group, the warning would be more specific. With such a general outcry, it was obvious that these group of people had a negligible level of magical knowledge.

Shalltear who recognised the situation as such, boringly looked upon the bandits, who were unsheathing their weapons in haste.

“This is pointless. Clean them up excluding that man and Zack....Understood?”

“Yes, Shalltear-sama.”

The vampire servants behind Shalltear advanced as she casually lashed out at the bandit who had presumed to swing his sword at her. The man spun in the air as he burst like a balloon, blood and innards alike spilling outwards in an fantastic explosion of crimson.

The gory display signaled the start of the festival of pain and suffering that would soon bring Shalltear such joy.

Zack looked on at the slaughter before him, his face a contorted mask of fear, his lips stretched taut over his face in a rictus grin.

It was a hideous sight to behold.

The scenes of cruel slaughter and the thick scent of blood in the air was enough to send any man retching.

Limbs flew about in the air like so much confetti, a head was caught between two hands and exploded like an overripe pomegranate.

One unfortunate bandit was caught in an embrace by a pair of arms. He struggled desperately as the arms squeezed his torso with explosive force sending his guts flying out his mouth like a tube of toothpaste. And yet, somehow he remained alive. An unfortunate reminder of the remarkable resilience of humans.

A man rolled on the ground in a desperate attempt at escape, white bones peeking out of the mangled mess of flesh and skin that used to be his legs. Even in his current condition, his hands worked furiously grasping the earth to move himself away from the horror, to survive.

A maiden of unearthly beauty looked down at the man prostrated at her feet begging for his life. She began to laugh. It was off-pitch with an oddly discordant, almost ear-wrecking quality.

How did it come to this....

Zack thought furiously. He was not going to just tamely accept his hideous fate.

No way in hell was he going to accept being slaughtered so cruelly. But what could he do? By luck it seemed that nobody had attacked him, but if he was going to make a run for it, he had better make sure his escape plan was a good. There would be no second chance.

Zack put his hand to his chest and felt the shape of the dagger hidden under his clothes.

Why the hell was it so small? You couldn't even cut off a man's arm with this.

Zack did not think about what he was doing. He didn't think about what he was going to do about that monster.

Zack tried to hide as best as he could. He shrunk into himself, his arms hugged tightly around his body, his teeth chattering away loudly and rhythmically in fear. As if drawn by the chattering of his teeth, that monster started walking in his direction. Zack tried desperately to calm himself, but the chattering defied his best efforts.

He had no idea what those monsters were.

As he was thinking —

“Zack-san. Please come here”

—Suddenly, a bright cheery voice, which seemed oddly out of place in this hideous scene of slaughter, called out from behind him.

Zack looked back fearfully. It was his employer.

The expression on her face was nothing like the normally arrogant and haughty master he was used to. If he had been rational, his danger sense would have warned him something was wrong. But in this bizarre world filled with the smell of blood, Zack could not sense it at all.

“What are those things?!”

Zack shrieked in a high, off-pitched voice of panic.

“If they were there, then say something about it!!”

Shalltear glared at Zack’s back as Solution passed over a map. Shalltear accepted the map with a grudging nod of acknowledgement.

“Come on say something. It’s all your fault!”

Zack grabbed at the front of Solution’s dress, as if trying to shake an answer out of her.

“...I understand. Please come here”

“W, will I be spared ?!?”

“No. I will be entertaining you”

“What ?”

“Sebas-sama doesn’t really like this but I have permission to do this. Let’s go over there away from him.”

Zack did not have a clue what she was saying, but being the only person to be led away from this slaughter might mean that he could possibly be spared. Hope appeared on Zack’s face as he grasped at this last straw of a chance for survival. Solution’s smile never changed.

“Please don’t be too rough”

Solution whispered as she led Zack to the other side of the carriage. She reached backwards and started to unfasten her dress. Zack was stunned by this utterly bizarre turn in events. He wondered what the girl was trying to do as he stared at her in amazement like she was some kind of strange animal.

“W, what are you doin?”

“What indeed.”

Solution slowly let down the bustier around her chest.

Like they were waiting for that instant, the twin peaks that were seemingly crushed bounced out. With a cone-like shape, the moonlight reflected off her white skin.

Zack unconsciously gulped at that scene.

“Go ahead.”

She thrust her bare chest outwards towards Zack

“What are....”

Zack thoughts were charmed. It was the most probably out of all of his thoughts.

“Is it standing up?”

Still exposing her chest to the air, Solution lied down.

Beautiful. More beautiful than the body of any woman Zack had seen until now.

The most beautiful of the woman he had embraced was, the woman that was in the carriage they had once assaulted. When his turn had come, without moving, she just opened her legs like a frog. However, she did not lose her beauty.

However, the woman in front of him was even more beautiful, there was no way that he would not react like back then.

A flame of lust burned in Zack. His nether region became hot, and while trying to control his excited breathing, he also crawled down. Until the coldness of the earth was comfortable.

While breathing like a dog, he slid his hand across Solution’s skin.

A cloth made of silk—That sensation.

Zack was unable to control himself, and squeezed Solution’s chest.

His hand sunk in.

Was it so soft that my hand just sank in? Zack’s first thought was probably that. However, he moved his gaze to his hand, took a sharp breath and instantly realised that his thoughts were wrong.

His hand, just as it was said, was sinking into Solution’s body.

“W, what, is this!”

Facing a situation he could not understand, raising a scream, and attempting

to retract his hand. However, it did not move. On the contrary, it was like it was pulling him in. Solution had multiple tentacles inside of her, and they grasped his hand, and pulled.

Solution's expression did not change. She just watched Zack quietly.

"Hey, stop! Let go!"

Zack made a fist with his free hand, and hit Solution's face with all he had.

Once, twice, thrice. Each heavier than the last. Even though she received blows that could shatter bones, she had a calm face. On the contrary, the blows Zack gave reverberated back to his spine.

It was like hitting a bag filled with water. This was definitely not human. Forgetting his arousal, the scene of this hell flashed through his brain.

Zack stifled his scream.

He finally realised. The woman with her skin showing was a monster.

"Did you finally realise? Then shall we begin?"

What. Before he could respond, the feeling of several hundred needles piercing through his arm swallowed his arm.

"Aaaaah!"

"I am dissolving you."

He heard those cold words in the midst of his pain. He could not understand them. This had diverged from the world that Zack knew far too much. The current information was overflowing from his brain.

"I, like to watch things as they dissolve. Zack-san wanting to enter me, I thought it was perfect."

"Giiiiiiii! Shitting monster! Die!"

Ignoring the pain, Zack spat out those words and drew the sword at his chest. He then fluidly stabbed it into Solution's face. Her body jumped.

"Die shit!!"

Now, would stabbing a sword in a lake change anything?

At most waves would be created. In conclusion, that was what happened.

With the sword stuck in her face, Solution's eyes gazed at Zack and she quietly spoke.

"My apologies. I have a complete resistance to physical attacks, and so this cannot hurt me. Anyway I will dissolve it."

An irritating smell was made, and the blade of the sword was dissolved in a few seconds, and the remnants fell off her face. Underneath was, as she had announced, a completely unharmed beautiful face.

"What are you, bastard."

The pain from his arm, and the fear born from Death in front of him, Zack whimpered from his half-crying face. Solution replied calmly.

"A predator slime. There is not much time left, so I will swallow you up."

Zack's arm was instantly swallowed in Solution's body. Crying, screaming, begging for his life. However, Solution's pull remained as strong. A strength that humans could not resist was pulling his arm and shoulder.

"Eleina!"

In his final moments, he cried out that name, and was swallowed by Solution's body. Zack was swallowed like a snake eating its prey--

In the short time of a few minutes, there was no movement there. However, the smell of blood irritated one's nose. Only the man whose head was stepped on by Shalltear and licking her shoe was left.

"I did not kill you. Just as promised."

Shalltear sent a moved gaze to the figure of the groveling man whose face was filled with fear. He quickly bowed his head, and expressed his gratitude. To the dog-like man, Shalltear had the expression of an affectionate mother. She then snapped her fingers.

"Suck him."

What did those words mean? The man finally understood

While watching the life of the man being extinguished with a sidelong

glance, she talked to Solution who was walking from the carriage.

“My, done already?”

“Yes. Everything has been completed. Thank you very much.”

Solution hid the disorder of her chest.

“It’s fine. After all, we are all companions in Nazarick. By the way, did Zack-san have his fun?”

“He is in the middle of it. Would you like to see?”

“Eh? Is it fine? Then please show me a little.”

Suddenly, an arm of a man came out of Solution’s face. Matching it, an irritating smell filled the area. The source was that arm. It was inflamed like it was soaked in strong acid, and smoke rose out of it.

It was like an arm reaching out of a lake, desperately trying to grab on to something. Every time it flailed, the fluids covering it flew into the surroundings.

“I apologise, to think that he would be this energetic.”

With a face that showed that she was in no pain from the arm sticking out of her face, she blushed slightly. She then casually pushed it back. Once the flailing arm was fully back inside of her, she smiled again.

“That is marvellous. Being able to completely swallow a person without affecting your own appearance.”

“Thank you very much. The reason is because my body is hollow, and due to the effects of special racial magic.”

“Hmm, it may be too much to ask, but when will he die?”

“That is true. I can instantly kill him by secreting a stronger acid, but since he wanted to enter me, I want him to enjoy it for a day or so.”

“In addition, you cannot hear him scream.”

“Yes. I am blocking his mouth and so no one but myself can hear him. Also, the stench is also blocked.”

“Predatory slimes are amazing.... Yes. Would you care to play with me?”

“I do not mind but....What shall we do for toys?”

Solution let her gaze fall onto the vampires behind her with a smile. Shalltear noticed and playfully smiled.

“These girls are not bad, but I want to request them of Ainz-sama as a reward for repelling intruders.”

“Understood. At that time, please call me. It will be interesting to swallow them up to their chest and leave the rest hanging out.”

“Fine. Doesn’t your words fit those of the torturer?”

“The arts of that person, unfortunately does not fit me.”

Shalltear was about to open her mouth in reply, but a voice from behind stopped it.

“Solution. My preparations are done. We will soon make a move.”

Sebas had replaced the reins and spoke from the coachman’s seat.

“Yes. I will immediately come over.”

Watching Solution enter the carriage, Sebas looked up from the coachman’s seat.

“Then, this is where we will separate.”

“I see. It seems that you have found the lair of those bandits.”

“Yes. I will attack them and search for men who hold information Ainz-sama is looking for. It seemed that this was a failure.”

“Is that so. It was a pleasure working together with you, Shalltear-sama.”

“Thank you. Until we meet in Nazarick.”

“Yes, then we will make a move—-”



Sprinting through the forest were two shadows. They were Shalltear’s subordinates, the concubine vampires.

The vampire running in front was holding Shalltear with both hands like she was a treasure, the vampire behind was dragging a dried up stick of a human.

In the forest, there was no footpaths, and occasionally, thin branches blew across.

However, in the darkness, their clothes were not dirtied, and they advanced with such a speed seemingly impossible for high heels.

Suddenly, the vampire in front stopped like something had caught her leg. Matching her, the vampire behind stopped as well.

Shalltear moved. She then gently landed on the ground. Her high heels touched the ground, and her dress soon followed, hiding her legs.

She brushed her long silver hair in frustration and tilted her head. She then looked down upon the vampire that was following her.

“Exactly, what happened?”

She asked the reason why her subordinate had stopped.

The reason that Shalltear did not run was simply because it was a hassle. That and she wanted to avoid her shoes getting dirty.

And so she would not forgive someone who was bringing her and yet stopped without her signal. Normally it would be a severe scolding. That intent was placed into a question.

“Please forgive me. I have been caught in a bear trap.”

One could see that the vampire’s thin leg was caught in a metal trap. It was not made for humans, but for animals—Bears. Even with armour, it was at a level where it could snap a human’s ankle.

However—A vampire was different from a normal human.

The teeth of the trap did not even pierce the skin. Without harming it, it was stopped by the skin.

Vampires had resistances to physical attacks and they would not be harmed unless it was made of silver or special metals, hold a certain amount of mana, or was made specially for undead. With that, it was impossible to harm them with mere metal.

However, the bear trap had another effect.

It was doing its job of restraining movement well. It was connected by a thick chain to a nearby tree.

Just from the fact that poison had not been applied to the trap clearly showed that the person who set the trap had not meant to kill his intended target. The trap was simply meant to hinder, a deadweight to restrict the movement of its target.

“...Haaa” with a resigned sighed Shalltear shook her head “Get rid of it”

“I understand”

In response to Shalltear’s orders, the vampire extended her slender arms, gripped the jaws of the trap and pulled without any sign of effort. The trap unable to withstand the overwhelming strength of her arms, released its prey.

It was a surreal sight, a seemingly normal beautiful girl opening a bear trap. Of course to those who know the true strength of a vampire, it was hardly surprising. It was easy enough for a vampire. Of course, Shalltear’s strength as a True Vampire was of a different level altogether.

“I’m surprised to see a trap here. Maybe we are still a little ways from our destination”

“I understand. Please wait for a moment”

The vampire following Shalltear threw an object that resembled a withered branch on the ground.

It wasn’t a withered branch. It was a withered mummified corpse, totally devoid of moisture.

The dessicated corpse fell to the ground and began to move.

Razor sharp claws extended from limbs resembling withered branches, a red glow shone from its empty eye sockets. The same glow that vampire possess. Sharp fang protruded from its slack half opened mouth.

Lesser Vampire. That was the name of this monster.

Those that were bitten by a vampire would turn into a monster. This was a remnant of the earlier bandit.

“I will ask. Are we close to your base.”

The Lesser Vampire nodded deeply to his master, and let out something like a scream.

“And so it seems, Shalltear-sama.”

“Yes. Why are there not any more traps?”

They should have encountered more alarms and traps if they were close to the bandit’s base. However, try as they might, they could not find any more traps. After a brief moment of consideration, Shalltear looked around her.

There was no sign of anyone concealing themselves, then—

“Well, it’s fine.”

There was no point banging one’s head on this. They’ll just have to accept the risk of encountering hidden traps. It was impossible for Shalltear, who had no skill in disarming traps, to locate any and it was too troublesome to use magic for this purpose. It was probably easier to just accept the situation.

“It might have been better to borrow that girl.”

Shalltear recalled Solution who had just departed. Solution was an assassin, and quite a powerful one. If it was her, she could discover traps. They could enjoy it together, she held back those words.

They eventually arrived at the Bandit’s hideout. The trees in the forest gradually grew more and more sparse until it opened abruptly into a wide plain.

The area appeared to be a land feature called Karst topography.

An opening could be seen at the bottom of a bowl-like depression. A faint light leaked out from the opening. Light escaping from the entrance could only mean that the path behind the opening was a relatively gentle slope.

On each side of the opening, there was something that left no glimmer of a doubt that humans were present.

That something was a barricade that reached up to a man’s stomach. That being said, the barricades weren’t much to look at. Just something roughly cobbled together with some logs. However, two guards stood on duty. One

behind each barricade.

The log barricade covered the lower half of the guards' bodies. If they were attacked by bows, they would probably take cover behind the barricade and sound the alarm. Even though any enemy who attacked had the advantage of height and arrows could fly further, it was still no mean feat to kill someone through the barricade with one shot. Covering one's head with a shield would most likely nullify the height advantage.

In addition, there was a big bell hanging at roughly shoulder level to the guards. Even if one managed to silence the guards, there was a chance that the arrows could also hit the bell. Thus raising the alarm.

It seemed like a well thought out defence.

If one were to attack normally, a surprise attack from this distance would allow enough time for reinforcements to appear.

The stealthy approach was equally difficult since all possible cover such as large rocks had long been cleared away.

However, in this world there was something that could achieve what physics dictated to be impossible.

That was magic.

If one thought of those methods then there were several one could take.

Killing someone after using <Silence>. Infiltrate using <Invisibility>. <Charm Person> to entice someone was fine as well. Or one could destroy the bell using <Item Destroy>.

Which would be the most fun? Shalltear was enjoying herself until she realised that she was missing one piece of important information.

"Is there only one entrance?"

The Lesser Vampire nodded his head in reply.

"I see. Since we have come to this point, there is no longer any need to hide. Anyway this stealthy business—I don't like it."

"Shalltear is a glamorous existence."

“Pointing out the obvious is not flattery. If you want to flatter me, put more thought into it.”

Ignoring the vampire bowing her head in apology, Shalltear reached out, and grabbed the Lesser Vampire.

“I give you the honour of being the first spear. Now go.”

She swung her arm, a sound of the atmosphere being broken could be heard as the Lesser Vampire was let go of towards one of the sentries. They smashed into each other, and were blown apart in an unbelievable fashion. The sentry’s head was split apart, and blood painted his surroundings. The other man could not believe what he was seeing, and he had a shocked face upon watching his comrade’s death.

“Strike”

“Amazing, Shalltear-sama.”

The two vampires were clapping their hands.

“Hmm, only one left.”

Shalltear’s gaze flickered between the two vampires and then they hurriedly gave Shalltear a fist-sized rock.

“Good.”

Shalltear was holding the slightly large piece of rock before throwing it at an unimaginable speed. The outcome was as expected. Shalltear cheered for the outcome.

“Strike Two”

Another round of applause.

The sentries inside heard the chime of the warning bells and started to shout about intruders. The cave gradually came alive with commotion.

“Now go. Climb a nearby tree and make sure that no one escapes. There might be a hidden escape route that the small fry did not know about.” Shalltear faced the remaining vampire. “You will be the herald. However, if there are any strong ones it will be my time to have fun, be sure to tell me.”

“Yes, Shalltear-sama”

“We’ll depart from here.”

The vampire bride in front of Shalltear approached the cave entrance silently in a stride—

— and disappeared.

The ground collapsed, no, it did not collapse. It was a pitfall.

Shalltear would have been able to evade the trap before it was sprung. But for the vampire with their strength, they would not be able to get away when their footing was lost.

“Uh.”

Shalltear could not help but sigh in disappointment. She then smiled.

It was not a gentle smile, nor was it filled with good intentions and shyness.

If one thought about it carefully, it would be obvious that there would be traps in front of the entrance. The feeling of foolishness for not foreseeing it and anger for being tricked, rose up in Shalltear’s mind. She expressed her emotions with a smiling face.

“I am going to kill you. Get up now.”

Making a large jump, the vampire appeared at the edge. Apart from her dirty clothes, she was not hurt in anyway.

“Do not continue to disappoint me.”

“I truly apologise—”

“Fine so move. Or should I toss you over?”

The vampire yelped and showed her understanding and dashed into the hole. Shalltear walked freely into the cave, following her.

Chapter 28: True Ancestor | Part 2

The sounds of a commotion reached his ear. Sitting in his personal room, his hands that was maintaining his weapon stopped. He pricked his ear.

From the source of disturbance, he caught the sounds of hurried footsteps mixed together with cries of pain.

It was easy to conclude that there was an attack. But the number of enemies and their strength cannot be confirmed. In the usual drills, they would have shouted out these crucial informations.

It was not that he could not hear anything. Afterall, the room was situated within a cave. The entrance to the room was just perpendicular to the main passageway with only a piece of cloth covering it, acting as the door. He passed through the thickset cloth, the commotion was more audible.

The mercenary group [Death Spreading Brigade] had roughly 70 members. Although none of them were as strong as him. But there were still a few strong veterans that survived several battles.

It would be impossible for a few attackers to cause such confusion among such a group. To cause such a commotion, they should be quite a number of enemies. Unable to hear any sound from their attackers, he could not catch any hint as to their number.

“Adventurers huh.”

If there was a strong fighting force that fight in small numbers, he understood that these would be the likeliest case.

The man slowly stood up, fasten the weapon around his waist and put on a layer of chainmail. He did not need long to put it on. He placed several ceramic bottles around his leather belt and checked his buckle. He had equipped his necklace and rings enchanted with defensive magic prior. His preparation was all set.

He lifted up the flaps of the curtain and proceeded towards the main tunnel

entrance.

Several pillaged magic light were placed within the cave <Eternal Light>, at fixed intervals along the wall. The light they emit almost hide the fact that this was the inside of a cave.

A mercenary that reached his side was already displaying a victorious smile.

“What happened?”

“An enemy attack, Brain-san.”

He grimaced before speaking again.

“That I know. How many are there? And who are these people?”

“Yes! There are two enemies. Both women.”

“Women? Somemore only two of them?”

Brain shook his head and sighed once and headed towards cave entrance where the sounds commotion was still continuing.

He fully appreciated the thought that women should not be underestimated. The idea that women were weak stemmed from the thought of male supremacy. In truth, the Kingdom’s strongest adventurer team were formed by five females. Brain once encountered and suffered defeat under the hands of an old lady magic caster. Then, he also heard that the Empire’s top assassin was a girl as well.

Although a gap exist in their physical strength, the presence of magic could surmount it. Undoubtedly, someone with strong physical strength, possessing strong magical abilities would be unbeatable.

Brain’s body was bristling with excitement. He developed a sense of respect towards the small number of attackers. He was overcome by the hunger to fight with opponents, whom were as strong as him.

“Hey hey, no need to follow me. Just improve the defenses inside.”

Hearing this, the mercenary nodded and headed towards the deeper part of the complex.

Him—Brain Unglaus.

Medium build. Underneath the chainmail was a body as solid as steel. His physique was the result of actual combat rather than muscle training.

His black hair was cut out to a suited length roughly and simply grew in all directions. His sharp black pupils was directed towards the front. The side of his mouth curved into a cold smile.

Many viewed him as a beast instead of a man. He was a man that gave the impression that he was a beast king.

Originally, he was a simple farmer. But he was borned with a god-given talent. As long as he held a weapon, he would never lose. On the field of battle, he never experience any injury worst than a graze, a true fighting protege.

He would be undefeatable.

That was everyone's thoughts and he never even doubted himself. What changed his mind was a tournament held in the Kingdom.

He joined initially not to seek victory, but to let the Kingdom witness his strength. Instead he experienced something unimaginable.

Defeat—

Yes, since he was born, with a weapon at his side, he never tasted defeat.

The opponent who defeated him was Gazef Stronoff.

The fight was legendary.

Until then, the fights of them had been concluded in an instant. However, the lost time was given back in the last long deciding fight. Gazef had turned from a nobody to the Warrior Captain, and that fight narrated it.

Victory glittered above Gazef, the friend of luck.

Although a narrow defeat, the life that Brain had until then was completely shattered. He refused the invitations that several nobles gave him, he enclosed himself in his own world for a month, and began searching for strength.

Seeking martial strength, he forged his body.

Seeking magic, he raised his knowledge.

A genius was working hard. Defeat raised Brain to a new level.

Working for mercenaries was for earning money. He did not work for nobles as he did not want his arm to rot. To learn techniques, opponents were necessary. He did not learn for entertainment. It would be good for the work to have real battles. There were no other choices than a mercenary.

Out of all the groups that called out to him, he chose this one, Death Spreading Brigade. There was no problem no matter the group. For Brain's choice of weapon, he could sneer at everything else.

Magic weapons were expensive. However, what he wanted, was not a simple magic weapon.

The weapon Brain used—Was a weapon more than 60 centimetres known as a katana.

A town far south of the Kingdom. From there, is occasionally a sword with an exception ability. Even when not enchanted, it was far better than ordinary magic weapons. It was also extremely expensive, until a person's eyes would pop onto the ground. That was what he was looking for.

Spending time and money, he finally got the katana—with the property of [Godly Sword].

The current Brain was strong. He believed that he could easily beat Gazef in a fight.

Also, he did not only work hard, he also fought beast kings that were looking for strength.

Walking to the entrance of the cave, the smell of thick blood reached Brain's nose. Since there were no more screams, the other 15 people were killed. It was two or three minutes.

The ones blocking the entrance were given orders to defend it, to buy time. But they were defeated too early,

“Basically they are as strong as me.”

Brain smiled.

While walking lightly, he took out a potion from his belt and drank it. The bitter liquid flowed down his throat, and collected in his stomach. Along with

another one—.

A heat spread out from his stomach, and reached the corners of his body. Responding to that heat, the sound of his muscles expanding could be heard.

The reason for the sudden strengthening, was as the bottles contained magic medicine.

The first magic medicine was <Lesser Strength>, and improved ones muscles by about 20%. The next one was <Lesser Dexterity>, and improved ones sensitivity and reaction speed by 20%.

The effect would still activate even if he did not drink it and just spread it on his body. However, Brain felt that drinking it made it more effective. Of course, it might just be a placebo, but thoughts could bring unbelievable power.

The next thing he did was to draw his katana and apply oil to it. The oil left a faint light on the blade, was absorbed and disappeared.

The name of the oil was <Magic Weapon>. It temporarily increased the magic inside the blade.

“Activate 1. Activate 2.”

Responding to the keywords, his ring and necklace released a faint magic around his body.

Necklace of Eye. It was a necklace that protected the wearer’s eyes when activated. Resistance to blindness, night vision, light filtering. There was no meaning to a warrior that could not hit his target. The basic tactics of adventurers was to hinder one’s field of vision or making distance and hit from afar. Before he gained this necklace, he was done in by adventurers using those tactics.

And the ring—<Ring of Magicbind> A low class magic was infused into the ring, and it could be activated at anytime. The magic inside this ring was the <Lesser Protection Energy> which reduced elemental damage. Of course once he used it, it would be a normal ring until magic was casted in it, but if there were few enemies attacking, the current preparations would be sufficient.

If he activated it without an actual need, then there was no helping it.

This was the end of Brain's preparations.

He released the heat from his body in several breaths.

The current Brain with his strengthened body was probably at the peak of humanity. With absolute confidence in his body, something like a ferocity floated in his mind, he proceeded slowly.

This is it. Let me enjoy this.

Continuing forward, the smell of blood got stronger—

There were two human figures.

"Hey, hey. This seems fun."

"It is not that fun. No one is strong, and they are not gathering here."

In contrast to Brain's sluggish figure, Shalltear responded without a trace of caution. That was probably because she had already noticed his presence. He had no intention of hiding either so it was quite natural.

Seeing the invaders, Brain shrugged his shoulders.

He had heard that there were two women, but one was a kid. However, the instant he thought that he noticed that above the peerless girl's head was a sphere of blood.

"A magic caster, dangerous."

"I am a Priestess. I revere the first bloodline, God Cainable."

"God Kainaberu? Never heard of him. An evil god or demonic god?"

"Somewhere along those lines. Well, the Supreme Beings defeated him. It seems he was a small easy mini-boss."

His gaze moved away from the girl who spoke softly earlier, like a highborn and shifted towards the one that was following from behind. She was also a beauty. Her large bust radiated a sensual atmosphere.

The gown was stained with traces of blood. Likely, she was the advance guard.

Brain stiffened his shoulders, placing one hand on the blade on his waist.

“Well, it don’t matter. I’ve finished my prep. If you all aren’t ready yet. I will give you some time. How about it?”

The young girl had a shocked expression as she observed Brain. From the corners of her mouth, he detected the hint of a quiet smile.

“You seem brave. But can you handle us alone? I wouldn’t mind if you call your friends along.”

“Hmmp. Numbers wouldn’t help much if they are all a bunch of weaklings. I alone is more than enough.”

“It cannot be helped then, if you are unable to comprehend the distance of the stars. The wishful thinking of touching the stars with your own hands. Such a thought would be fine for kids like Aura. For a grown up like you to act in such a way disgusts me.”

Brain pointed the tip of the blade towards his opponents’ eyes. After receiving such a reply, the little girl’s attention returned from staring at the ceiling from the lost of interest. Then—

“Go.”

The little girl casually pointed with her chin and her servant dashed out.

The movement was like a gale. But, if it was the wind, Brain could still slash it.

“Cheh!”

Concentrating all the might in his body, he raised his katana high, and brought it in a downward cut. That single move could easily bisect a warrior and a strong gust was formed from its wake.

“Gu!”

“Cheh, too shallow.”

Brain attacked his enemy directly. The female leaped back while pressing on to her shoulders. A cut was clearly seen, from her left collarbone to her chest.

Brain frowned, and locked his sights on the opponent.

He was unable to kill her with a single attack. She was a strong opponent. It

would not be a laughing matter to think that blood should have gushed out like fountain from such a wound. But not a single drop of blood could be seen from the slash wound.

Magic?

That idea came and but disappeared soon after.

The wound that was being pressed upon healed slowly. Although, he heard of fast healing magic before, but what he saw did not seem to be it. Then, there was only one answer.

They were not humans but monsters. Although they may look the same as humans but they were monsters with a regenerative ability, and with fangs showing. Their crimson pupils radiated a sense of animosity.

Thinking that, Brain arrived at the monster's body.

"A vampire....huh."

He clicked his tongue.

Vampires were quite a high ranked existence. C Ranks and above could defeat Lesser Vampires, and B Rank adventurers had a chance against Vampires, for a confirmed victory an A Rank or above was needed. It was a monster that could easily destroy a small town alone.

However—It was an enemy he could defeat.

"A vampire's abilities....Rapid regeneration, bewitching magical eyes, life drain, drinking blood to form lesser vampires, weapon resistance, resistance to cold? I feel like there's more....Well fine."

He would kill it anyway.

Breathing deeply, he gripped his sword tightly.

The woman's eyes opened widely. The crimson eyes grew larger.

At that instant, Brain's head was filled with fog. A comfortable warm feeling. However, he shook his head and the fog easily cleared.

"Huh. Magic eyes? Think of turning me tender huh."

Brain drew his sword, his mind was as sharp as the blade he was wielding.

The normal charm attack was easily dispelled.

The vampire revealed her fangs to intimidate him. But underneath that facade was a weary opponent. If the enemy knew that she was stronger, she would not do anything else other than attacking. Since the vampire did not attack but remained cautious, it is likely that she viewed him as a strong opponent.

“Quite smart. Mah, the beast nearby had the same idea as well.”

Brain started to move forward, slowly getting closer to the vampire. In contrast, the vampire retreated slowly.

Hmmph.

Brain laughed at how boring it was. As if responding to his provocation, the vampire stopped moving backwards, and move to the front slightly.

The distance between them was approximately three metres. To the vampire, it was a distance that she could cover instantly.

<Shock Wave>

As the magic activated, the shock wave traveled towards Brain. On a direct hit, the magic could easily dent a full plate armor. To Brain who was just wearing chainmail, the blow would be fatal. If he did not die, he would instead be severely injured.

With this single hit, the battle could easily turn in her favor, owing to the differences in their physical capabilities.

However—The Vampire was shocked, and her eyes opened widely.

“If you want to laugh, do it while we are fighting, if you do not want to reveal your moves.”

—No injuries.

Easily dodging the invisible shockwave, a beast-like smile was etched on Brain’s face. The vampire, shocked, took a large step back. The enemy should be a lower lifeform that she could trample easily. A peculiar expression dawned on her face.

Whereas, Brain remained expressionless. He was considering the need to renew and improve his next attacks. The gesture that cast the spell was sudden. He never expected his opponent to have the ability to use magic.

The result was a stalemate where both sides would not give in to each other.

The girl watching was unhappy.

“Hah, switch.”

The girl snapped her fingers. The vampire’s body trembled. Panicking, the monster looked at its master.

It was an action that completely ignored Brain. Basically it was an excellent chance for an attack, but Brain did not attack. He shifted his gaze from the Vampire to observe the girl.

A thin body.

Clerics were well verse in melee, while Priestesses were good at magic, and that was not a Cleric’s body. It fit a magic casting Bishop. However, since she was switching, she believed that she would be fine without a vanguard. Then— Brain smiled lightly.

What was he thinking.

Monsters could not be judged on their appearances. The master of vampires being a human, anyone who heard it would laugh.

It could be see that the girl was of a higher rank than the vampire.

Then maybe she was the legendary Vampire Lord. As it destroyed a country, it was known as the [Country Destroyer]. It was said that it was destroyed by the 13 Heroes. Basically it was not something he could be an opponent of.

Brain put power into his hand.

“Brain Unglaus.”

“?”

The girl made a strange face. Brain asked the girl who did not understand.

“...Your name?”

The young girl tilted her head, and spoke words in a fun manner.

“Ah, yes. You wanted to hear my name. If it was Cocytus he would do it, I do not see much of those types of people so I was late. My apologies.”

She picked her dress, and curtsied like she was being invited to a dance.

“Shalltear Bloodfallen. Allow me to enjoy this.”

Chapter 29: True Ancestor | Part 3

<All Appraisal Magic Item>

Brain kept quiet, watching Shalltear release her magic.

Letting a Spellcaster cast a spell first was a suicidal action. It was the equivalent to letting a warrior draw his sword and take a swing. Interfering with the activation of magic was the proper thing to do.

Especially a warrior such as Brain, the magic that Shalltear was activating was one that he had never seen before. He knew the famous magics, but not the one in front of him.

However, due to several reasons he did not attempt to interfere.

If it was a damage dealing magic, the feeling of his skin crawling—Hostility or such was not existent was one reason. He also had confidence in being able to dodge. Alongside with the feeling that his opponent was playing, she was not using a fatal magic.

On the contrary, even if it was a damage dealing magic, if it was not fatal, he would not mind receiving it. This was as if he received it, the opponent would become even more negligent.

Shalltear slightly shrugged her shoulders, and opened her mouth like she was looking at something pitiful.

“Godly Sword, Holy Attribute, Low Magic Effect, 20% increase in physical slashing, physical damage 5% increase and 10% for a limited time, 30% damage on non-real entities, 5% critical chance increase. Evaluation....Interesting.”

Hearing such foolish words about his beloved blade, Brain could feel the heat in his head rising. He swallowed his anger and let it rest deep within himself.

This was not the time for him to erupt.

“However please do not worry. As there is a Holy Attribute I will receive

instant damage. However the following damage will not make it through as I will regenerate.”

“Huh. I know about a Vampire’s regeneration. So, I won’t give you any time.”

“Then I am relieved.”

—That lackadaisical attitude, you will regret it.

Brain directed his sharp eyes at Shalltear, with a look would even scare veterans of countless battles.

The pride of the strong. The one weakness of monster whom naturally physical abilities that surpassed humans became one of mankind’s weapons. Brain used that weakness many times to kill off monsters which are stronger than him.

Compared to these two, he would laugh after he struck them down.

“Won’t you kindly use Martial Arts?”

Martial arts.

When warriors trained, they will be able to perceived it, that special ability. Till now, they were not able to explain the exact conditions and situations for obtaining that power, also known as the weaponry magic.

Brain possessed at least seven martial arts that were above the run of the mill martial arts used by other warriors.

Facing a large enemy with difference in body-size, [Fortress] could cancel off the shockwave from the attack of a large opponent, to the point that the user could stand toe to toe with such an enemy.

If he infused his blade with chi, he could perform a strong strike, [Slash], that would defeat a strong opponent in a single blow.

When facing an armored opponent, it would be best to use the martial art with bashing effect [Heavy Blow].

Some martial arts like [Boost] allowed for the temporary increase in physical strength, vital for grasping victory when there was a gap in basic physical strength.

It was vital for a warrior to be prepared with different types of martial arts when facing a myriad of the aforementioned conditions. Such a trait was further emphasised among adventurers who faced different forms of adversity.

Then how would he react—

“Hah. There’s no way that I won’t use it on you.”

His answer for Shalltear’s aforementioned query, was an obvious lie. His purpose for answering in that fashion was to make Shalltear face him seriously.

Brain breathed slowly and unlocked his knees, and returned his sword to its sheath.

He prepared to draw his sword.

His breath was thin and narrow.

His consciousness was focused on a single point, as it reached its limits. From that point onwards, his perception expanded. He reached a state where he could perceived his surrounding from the sound, air and movement fully. It was the first martial art he learned—-[Field].

With him at the center, Brain could perceive everything around him within a radius of three metres. If there were a thousand arrows flying towards him when he activated [Field], Brain was confident that he could strike down all the arrows and survive without a scratch. Furthermore, he could cleanly bisect a single grain of wheat.

Then—

A quick strike that could slash the vitals for all living opponents. He just needed to sharpen this technique.

Instead of becoming a generic slash, it transformed into his special move.

Faster than the opponent, dealing a fatal blow to the enemy.

The process gave birth to, something that no one ever learned, his own martial art.

A martial art—Instant Slash.

A single high speed slash that could not be evaded. Still, he did not stop

training.

His follow up training was not a normal routine. He trained his “Instant Slash” repeatedly, reaching ten of thousands, no, hundreds of thousands times, to the point that callouses were forming on his sword hand and the hilt of the sword was part of his arm.

These were the results of him trying to surpass his limits, a new martial art.

Due to its speed, not a single drop of blood would be found on the blade even after striking an opponent. An attack that reached the realm of the gods, hence he named it [God Slash]. Once unleashed, it would be impossible even for him to grasp the attack.

Combining these two martial arts, he could released the ultimate one-hit kill attack that could not be evaded.

The slash was aiming for the opponent’s vitals.

The neck.

Hence, the secret sword, Mogaribue

A skill that derived its name from the sound of blood gushing out from the neck when victim was beheaded.

Against a vampire, even if an undead did not bleed, separating its head from its body would render it immobile. In other words, victory.

“Are you ready yet?”

Shalltear shrugged in a bored manner, breaking the silence as Brain started taking sharp breaths repeatedly in preparation for the battle to come.

“I think you’re ready, so I’m going to just start. If there is a problem, speak up now.”

A moment’s pause—

“—I will begin to trample you.”

Shalltear declared in excitement as she advanced.

What foolishness. Go on, leave yourself open. You can talk all you want after I lob your head off.

Brain thought silently, as if the effort of giving voice to those words would somehow detract the effectiveness of the single strike he was preparing.

Shalltear simply walked towards Brain. With neither drama nor warning, she casually advanced with light-hearted footsteps, as if she was on a picnic.

Brain mentally quashed a snicker at that decidedly un-warrior-like movement.

He could not think of her as anything but foolish.

Brain, was not about to give her any chances though.

He was waiting for Shalltear to enter his [Territory]. That instant when she enters within reach of his blade. Monsters who thought themselves invincible were generally stupid that way. Of course, human

were

relatively weak creatures compared to monsters. The strength of their bodies were inferior and they had no special capabilities.

However, Brain would be teaching this monster just how dangerous it was to underestimate humans. Men created Martial Arts to enable them to fight toe-to-toe against monsters that far outclassed them.

—One strike, one kill.

There was also one other complication when fighting vampires. Those arrogant monsters generally were not above acting dishonourably if they felt threatened. Vampires could summon other vampires if not dispatched swiftly. A one on one duel could quickly become two on one. And even for Brain, it would be a tough battle.

Ergo, it had to be One Strike, One Kill.

Brain kept his face expressionless even as he mocked the advancing vampire's seeming incompetence internally.

From that casual walk, it seemed like this vampire was unaware that she was headed for the chopping block.

Three left, two.

....One.

Then—

—I have your head!

Brain shouted mentally as he put everything he had in that single strike.

“Shii!”

His breaths were sharp and short.

His sword left his sheath, and it headed towards Shalltear’s head while cutting the air.

If he had to compare this speed, it would be lightspeed. By the time they notice the reflection of light their head had already dropped—That level of speed.

Got it.

Brain checked.

At that attack—Brain unconsciously gazed in wonder.

Brain could have accepted it if his slash had bit into empty air. An imaginably formidable opponent dodging his best strike was something he could understand.

But—

Shalltear had stopped it.

—That one attack. The attack at light speed.

She held onto his blade gently, as if it were the wings of a butterfly.

The air froze.

Brain repeatedly breathed heavily.

“...I, impossible”

He leaked a gasp.

Brain’s trembling body put up with his eagerness. He could not believe what

he was seeing. However, on the blade of his sword, were two of Shalltear's pale fingers—Her thumb and index finger.

It was not grabbed from the front, but from the back, causing her hand to be bent at 90 degrees.

It was like she was not putting any power into it at all, but Brain used all of his power, and he could not retract it. It was like he was chained to a rock with a few hundred chains.

Suddenly, the power on the sword increased, and Brain felt his posture crumble.

“Hmm. Cocytus has several swords as well, but when there is a difference between the wielders, there is no need to worry.”

Shalltear brought the sword closer to her eyes and gazed at it.

Brain's head was painted white.

It was a feeling of despair that denied his entire life.

Impossible.

However, he could do nothing but admit it.

It was a fact that she was easily pinching his sword that was swung at god speed.

Shalltear frowned at the surprised and panicking Brain. She then sighed in disappointment.

“Anyway, do you understand? I am not an opponent that you can defeat without martial arts. If you finally understand, try again with everything you have, please?”

He heard those heartless words. In response, Brain unconsciously leaked out a response.

“Monster—”

Hearing that, Shalltear had a pure smile on her face. Like a blossoming flower.

“Yes, so you finally understand? I am a cruel, cold-blooded, inhuman, sweet

little monster.”

She let go of the sword, and made a large jump backwards. It was her original location. It was probably not even a millimeter off.

“Have you finished your preparations?”

Shalltear had an excited smile on her face. The repeated words lit a fire in Brain’s head.

Up to where will I be made fun of.

However, being able to make him feel like an idiot that easily, caused his fear to rise up.

Should I run?

Brain placed importance on staying alive. If he could not win, then it was fine to run and fight again. Staying alive, and winning later was good. This was as Brain felt that he still had room to become stronger.

However, even if he retreated, there was a large difference between their physical abilities. Then he should avoid the range of her hands and cut her legs. Then he could escape.

Brain made his decision, and kept his gaze at her neck while returning his katana to his sheath. With [Field] active, even if he closed his eyes, he could hit his target. Then he should make a feint with his eyes.

“—I will begin to trample you.”

She once again calmly walked out.

Earlier he had hoped that she would enter [Field]. But now it was the opposite. If he could, he did not want her to come.

His heart had weakened. Brain furiously scolded himself, but no matter how hard he tried to reignite the flame in his heart, it was to no avail. It was like a fire with no fuel. He clicked his tongue and watched Shalltear’s walk.

Three steps, two steps, one—

—She entered.

Keeping her neck in his sight, Shalltear made a mocking face.

—His goal was a point. Her right ankle that she had just put forward.

He swung his katana downwards, and used his weight to add to the speed.

I can do it!

He swung his sword towards her thin ankle that was peeking out of her dress—

—When the sword slipped out of his hands.

The detection ability of [Field]. He noticed his favourite sword that tumbled to the ground, and the high heel that was stepping on it. Basically the reason why it slipped out of his hand, was due to the high heel that hit it from above.

If he reached out his hand, he could easily reach it. At that distance, Shalltear gazed at Brain with a cold and demeaning gaze. Brain felt that a heavy pressure was forced on his head.

Brain breathed roughly in and out.

Sweat poured down from his body, and he was attacked by a revolting feeling. His vision shook. There were many deaths in gambling rooms, and it was a place of death. However, did Brain know about a person that was truly death?

The high heels left the blade, and Shalltear wordlessly jumped backwards.

“—Have you finished your preparations?”

“!”

The words that he heard for the third time made his despair even deeper. Next was

I will begin to trample you, but before that, different words hit Brain.

“Is it possible....that you cannot use martial arts?”

He did not say anything.

What could he say.

I already used it but it was easily smashed apart

, might be good. Brain bit his lower lip and picked up his katana.

“...Are you by perchance not very strong? I had thought that you were stronger than the ones guarding the entrance....My apologies. I can only measure strength in units of metres. I cannot tell the difference between one and three millimeters.

“—Ahhhh!”

Shouting in rage, Brain attacked Shalltear. She made a strange expression watching Brain attack with all his strength—And all of his weight.

Seeing Shalltear not attempting to avoid it and just gaze at it, Brain thought that he would hit.

However, it was the opposite. That thought was denied by the impossible scene in front of him.

And it proved that his prediction was correct.

A stiff sound reverberated, and Brain once again saw something unbelievable.

Shalltear’s left hand moved at a high speed, and her nail on her pinky finger —A two centimetre nail reflected it. And it could be seen that Shalltear did not use much force. Making a gap in her fist, her pinky finger bent slightly.

That blocked Brain’s full powered attack.

The blow that could cut through full plate, break swords, and tear apart shields—

He used his fractured will, and pulled back his trembling hand towards his body—

That—Was casually blocked by Shalltear.

“Fuaah”

Shalltear yawned. She hid her mouth behind her empty right hand. Her gaze was also directed at the ceiling. There was already no sign of her being Brain’s opponent.

But.

But, Brain’s katana continued to be blocked.

Using her left pinky finger—

“UoOOOOh!”

A roar was born from Brain’s throat. No it was not a roar. It was a scream.

Side slash—Blocked.

Diagonal slash—Blocked.

Straight slash—Blocked

Diagonal slash—Blocked.

Vertical slash—Blocked.

Side slash—Blocked.

Each and every attack had been deflected. It was as if his sword was drawn towards Shalltear’s nails. In that instant, Brain finally understood just how wide the world was.

Then—The truly strong existence—

“Hmm? Are you tired?”

Brain’s sword arm stopped.

Could any blade hack down a mountain? It was an obvious impossibility. Even children in their wildest imaginations could not picture such a thing. Then is it even possible to beat Shalltear? The answer was clear, no matter who was facing her in battle.

He could not win.

Against an opponent whose strength was beyond human comprehension, humans could not possibly win. Only superhumans could hope to fight toe-to-toe against such a creature. Unfortunately, even Brain, a warrior who had reached the highest levels of achievement, was only human.

Brain heaved mightily seeking to catch his breath, as despair settled in. Despite the surprisingly cool temperature within the cave, his sweat trickled in a continuous stream from his forehead to his chin before dripping onto the floor.

His limbs felt like they were being weighed down by boulders.

Taking a moment to bring his breathing under control, Brain called out to Shalltear.

“I would like to make a deal....”

“Eh?”

Ignoring Shalltear’s surprised voice, Brain continued.

“I will give you what you want. So let me go.”

Shalltear blinked as she gave a slight smile of amusement. Hoping that Shalltear’s change in expression was a good sign, he waited for her answer. Negotiation was like a game of catch. If you’re going to throw the ball, it would be best not to give the catcher any warning by making unnecessary movements. Waiting silently without offering additional information was the right thing to do.

“...Firstly. Is there anyone stronger than you inside?”

There was none.

Answering truthfully was easy. However, she was probably hoping for a No as an answer. Then, was there any demerit for saying there was? Shalltear would probably lose her interest in him thus, he would lose his bargaining power.

“There is. And I can tell you who it is.”

Shalltear said that she could not tell if anyone was strong or not. Then this information had value.

Please fall for it. Brain wished, he could easily betray anyone.

“...You are lying. If it was so then there would be people buying time for time. If so then why is no one coming.

“...He is guarding the place as a watchman.”

“That is a lie. If not then why are you buying time with conversation?”

“He’s wondering if I betrayed them.”

Shalltear smiled. On top of having that power, Brain could not think of it as anything but beautiful.

“Well, then I will take what I want? If so then I do not particularly mind letting you go?....However, promise me. If you refuse, I will kill you.”

“Ok. I promise.”

“What I want is....Someone strong, even a bandit like you.
AhahahahhaaaaaAAHAHAHA!”

Shalltear made a smile that reached up to his ears, and laughed like tens of bells that were off key. Then, for the first time, Brain understood that he had made a terrible mistake.

—-Little Girl?

—-Monster?

—-Apparition?

All of them were wrong.

That was an existence that was the personification of terror—-

The smell of blood that hit Brain’s nose felt so thick that it almost had colour.

Her eyes turned from a mixture of colours, to a complete crimson.

Shalltear’s teeth, perfectly white and even, suddenly became hypodermic needle-like sharp. More and more such teeth appeared in rows until her mouth resembled a shark’s. Shalltear’s gums glistened in a gross manner as drool spilled out the side of her mouth.

“AhahahahhaAAA Hahaha. What isssss that face, scaarrreeeddd!
Ahahahhahahhaa Ahaha!Since I came here I heard about who was stronggggggggggg. AhahahahhahhaaaaaaAaaa.”

There was no trace or remnant of that peerless beauty. Standing there was a nightmarish princess hungry for blood.

The feeling of his will being broken, this was the first time he had felt it.

“It’s no point continuing your act. I can’t stand it anymoreeeee.....I want to eat you now!”

He reached for the hidden dagger at his waist. He drew it, and instantly ran it towards his throat.

He did not want to die. However, he felt that if he did not die, a worse fate would be waiting for him. He waited for the pain to come—

<—/—>

—There was a giant mouth in front of him. There was a stench of blood that he had never smelled before.

“AhahahahhaAaa, thhhiiisss iiisss ffuuunnn. Ddddiidd yyyyouu ttthhiinkkk ttthhat yoooouuu wwooullddd diieeeee. Sssttuuuppiidd.”

Shalltear bent over backwards as she gave a loud screech of laughter. At some point, the dagger that Brain had been grasping disappeared. No wait, *Shalltear’s playing with it!* With a loud snap, the dagger broke.

He did not remember the dagger being stolen.

Although Brain’s [Territory] was no longer in effect, it should not have been possible for his weapon to be taken like that. The dagger seemed to have magically disappeared from his hands only to magically appear in Shalltear’s. It was as if everything that happened between the two events had been erased.

What the heck did he do.

He did not know about such a monster.

Brain’s pride was already completely broken.

“H, help me, I’ll do anything, anything—No. I’ll give it to you! So—”

“Yoooouu caaaannnnnooot doo thhatt, itt’ss beeeenn aa whiilllee siiinnccce I drrankkk aanytthinggg.”

Shalltear’s mouth which reached from ear to ear opened. It was large enough to even swallow a human head whole.

No one here knew about it.

The monster True Vampire that appeared in the DMMORPG Yggdrasil was an ominous monster. Their mouth reached up to their ears and made a semicircle, and their two canines reached their jaw. The colour of blood glinted in their eyes, and attached to their dried up limbs were ten centimetre sharp claws. They moved hunchback, and attacked in leaps.

That body.

Vampires existed as a hybrid between man and bat. The high-tier ancestral vampires possessed bizarre appearances. The traditionally beautiful vampires existed in the form of Shalltear's vampire brides

Shalltear's appearance was custom made for her, selected from one of the concept arts drawn by one of the members of Ainz Ooal Gown and successfully digitized.

Shalltear's current appearance as a vampire was her true form. In essence, her usual appearance was just a facade.

"Hii."

Brain felt a hot tingling sensation deep within his throat. His ear caught a sound as if dozens of straws were sucking out an empty drink, forcefully extracting its contents.

"A, a, ah....aaaa...."

"AhhDDDDDEEEELLIIIIICCCCIIOOOUUUUSSSS."

The sound was unclear due as the mouth was biting down on the neck. With that voice, Brain's consciousness gradually faded away.

Chapter 30: True Ancestor | Part 4

A cold wind blew threw the hall.

There, everyone gathered there stayed silent, and stared at the entrance—The direction of the cave.

The mercenary group [Death Spreading Brigade]—Had 42 members remaining.

That was the number of people holding a weapon in the hall.

The hall was their mess hall, where they usually ate because this was the widest space in the cave complex. Now, it became a hastily constructed temporary stronghold.

Within the bandit's crudely constructed base, the mess hall was located at the deepest part of the cave complex, which was at the end of the tunnel. With the mess hall as the centre, there were numerous small caves around it that were used for weapons or food storage. They intended to make their stand here, as the mess hall could serve as their final defense line.

While it was called a stronghold, it was not made of sturdy materials.

Firstly, they overturned the crudely made tables, together with the wooden boxes, they constructed a simple barricade. At the area between the entrance to the mess hall and barricade, several pieces of ropes were stretched out to trip any would-be attackers. They would still be able to defend themselves even if the invaders rushed inside by delaying them from reaching the barricades.

After the encampment was completed, all the members were hiding behind the barricade, arming themselves with crossbows, and arranged themselves into the left, center, and right flank.

If they enter into a ranged battle, judging from the difference in area size between the entrance and the mess hall, the faction that control the center of the mess hall would have the advantage in terms of attacking numbers. Normally when trying to storm a place, a diversion would be conducted from a

different direction, there will be a need to separate their defending forces, allowing the attackers to gain the advantage.

Although their defensive strategy was simple, it could win against a numerically superior attacking force.

The cold wind blew in.

Taking mind of it, several bandits shivered from what seemed to be the cold.

Naturally, the temperature within the interior of the cave was lower, they could still live comfortably even during summer. But the chill that struck them was not something that they were familiar with.

Firstly, the laugh that spread out from the entrance of the cave. Due to the echoes from the cave walls, they could not determine the gender of the voice, yet they could still be make out the shrill nature of the laugh.

The sound of that laughter gave them all chills. Before that, the [Death Spreading Brigade's] strongest member, Brain Unglaus, went out to meet the attacker. Everyone was confident that there was no need to prepare their defenses. But that laughter convinced them otherwise.

The voice they heard was not Brain's. And it was laughing while facing him.

There was only one following thought.

A conclusion that they reached easily but none dare to speak it out. Hence, they could only keep quiet.

Brain was defeated by the enemy during his counterattack. It would be impossible for someone like that to exist.

That was what everyone thought.

In truth, Brain's strength was beyond common sense. Even the knights of the Empire were not that strong. The same could be said of the monsters. He can kill an ogre with a single attack. He single handedly massacred a goblin group like mowing grass. It was likely that he would be able to behead every member of the Death Spreading Brigade in a direct confrontation. It would not be wrong to consider him as the strongest.

Then that sort of man lost. What meaning did that have?

As the panicked feeling rose—

The sound of steadily approaching footsteps reached the ears of the bandits. Although the footsteps were slow, they were clear.

One of them swallowed a mouthful of saliva. The gulping sound was audible throughout the mess hall, followed by silence.

They quickly loaded their crossbows, the sound of cracking from the loading was continuous.

A figure of a man appeared at the entrance of the hall where the bandits had focused their gazes.

“Brain!”

The head of the bandits—The leader of the brigade raised his voice. Following that, an explosive laughter rose heartily.

Tapping the person next to him, there were voices of praise for Brain.

Brain’s name was repeated endlessly.

It was the sound of happiness at the defeat of the intruders.

As Brain stood at the entrance, he was basked in praises, while closely observing the faces of the bandits. That look, as if he was counting down their numbers, was scary.

Due to the influence from Brain’s unusual response, the cheering was slowly died down.

“—I. I found the master that I should be serving.”

The words of praise echoed through the silent mess hall. What was displayed on Brain’s face was the expression of someone indulging in a sweet dream, an expression that the bandits never saw once before on Brain.

It was common knowledge that Brain single mindedly sought the way of the sword. In a sense, he was someone that is highly disciplined. When comfort women was delivered to him, he rejected all of them from the lack of interest. He did not even take a single drop of pillaged liquor.

The only thing is that that he is hungry for any chance of improving himself.

The wealth he amassed was used to purchase strengthening items. Everyday, he would spend the time to swing his blade, and slowly inspect his weapon.

That manner of speaking did not fit his personality.

“....Are you OK? Your face looks kind of weird.”

Did he hit his head, the brigade leader thought so as he spoke.

It was true that Brain's face was white. It was not at the level of losing blood. It was like a corpse—That colour.

“Huh?....Was Brain-san's eyes always red?”

It was unsure who uttered that phrase. Following that, everyone's gaze was focused on Brain's eye. It was red as if it was dyed in blood. Was it a blood rush? That was everyone's thought.

“They are here! Master. Everyone, look. Here is my highest master!”

Brain turned around and made a face like a child expressing his love to his mother, before taking a step backwards as if opening a path. .

Behind Brain, there was a figure visible.

A weird hunchbacked figure. Its two hands hanging limply from its sides, and its face bend downwards. Its long hair touch the ground, but it did not care and slowly entered the space. Its black dress seemed to be made of darkness.

No one said anything.

That figure was sort of weird, and the chill that seemed like it would stop hearts.

Slowly, the head moved. The face was totally obscured by silver hair. But deep within the mass of hair were a pair of shining crimson lights. The lights slowly dimmed.

....Laughing.

Who said it, those sort of whispers could be heard.

—Aa, yes.

—That was laughing.

Everyone understood. No—-They accidentally understood.

The thing they never wanted to understand—-

“Hey hey, what sort of stupid face are you making. This is my master—- Shalltear-sama. Ah....so beautiful....”

Brain’s monologue did not reached their ears. Their attention was stolen by the abomination that stood at the entrance.

It was an existence so horrifying that they were unable to move their gaze away from it.

Don’t raise your face.

Don’t look here.

Go away somewhere.

There were plenty of those panicked thoughts.

However, like it was laughing at those thoughts, the hunchback figure stood up, and its beautiful silver silk-like hair flew back behind her, revealing its hidden face.

There was a splitting smile, plastered onto a princess from a nightmare.

“Ahahahahaahahahhahaaahahahahhaa!!”

Laughter—-

The hall’s air shook as screams rose. It reverberated strangely due to the location being inside of a cave. It was like the atmosphere could not endure, and was chorusing the sounds.

“UwaaaaAA!”

Raising a scream, one of the bandits was filled with fear and fired his crossbow. The bolt cut through the air and found its way deep into Shalltear’s chest. Receiving it, Shalltear staggered slightly.

“—Attack!!”

Having received the orders from the leader, the bandits swung into action, resisted their fear and fired their crossbows

The noise from the firing of the crossbows were just like rain. The bolts pierced Shalltear's body.

There were a total of 40 bolts flying towards their target, only 31 found their mark. Every single of them buried themselves deeply on the target's body. The outcome was expected, at this distance, plated armor could be pierced easily.

Furthermore, the head was pierced by 4 of the bolts. Even now the target is still standing. If it was a human, the wound would be fatal.

Yes, if it was human——

“We did it....”

Someone whispered.

That was the representative of everyone's thoughts. That was now a hedgehog of bolts. According to common sense, that should definitely be dead. However, while their heads thought so, a corner of their hearts did not believe.

The bandits moved on a sixth sense and frantically prepared their next bolt.

“Master. Me too....”

Brain stopped his sentence midway, kept quiet and stood rigidly, as if he sensed something, a sensation of fear mixed with a hint of sweetness.

Shalltear moved——

Like a conductor waving a baton, she opened her two hands. The bolts that were supposedly piercing her were slowly spit out of her body, and fell to the ground. There was no a single drop of blood on the bolts that fell. The arrowhead was not damaged. It was brand-new.

Even seeing that, *ah, that's right,*

everyone there could not think of anything but that.

Shalltear laughed.

A smug smile would be the most fitting to call it.

“UwaaaAAAAA!”

Cries could be heard here and there, then once again countless arrows cut

through the air, and pierced Shalltear.

The bolts pierced her eye, throat, stomach, and shoulder. It was like being blasted with a rain of arrows, but apart from an annoyed feeling, Shalltear had no reaction.

“It doesn’t wooorrrkkkk. You wwwooorrrkkk sssooo hhaaarrdd.”

A step forward. Then—A leap.

The ceiling was about five meters up. With a leap that could easily reach the ceiling, she landed elegantly behind the barricade. Her high heels clacked on the floor. Then the bolts fell from her body.

Twisting her head, she looked at the crossbow-wielding bandits behind her.

A step—And a hit. Without using her waist, it was a punch where she simply thrust out her hand. However, that speed was superhuman, and had a massive destructive power.

The fist easily went through the bandit’s body, and hit the barricade. With a large explosive sound, the wood that made up the barricade shattered, and the pieces scattered into the surroundings.

Silence.

The sound of wood chips hitting the floor reverberated through the hall.

The shocked bandits stopped loading their crossbow, and gazed at Shalltear.

Shalltear used her index finger to penetrate the ball of blood above her head, and removed it. With the string of blood that followed, a word formed in front of her. It was a magic word like a sanskrit character or a rune.

That was her Blood Pool. It was a special ability of one of Shalltear’s classes, Blood Drinker, that collected blood from her victims, and created a ball that could be used for a variety of purposes. One of those was—Magic Strengthening.

<Penetrative Implosion>

Rank 10 Magic—With the activation of the highest rank of magic, the heads of 12 bandits swelled up.

At the next moment—An explosion like a balloon popping could be heard. There was no time to even scream. However, there was time for them to look down at their expanding bodies, understand that something unnatural was happening to them and make a terrified face.

“AhahahhaaaaahhahahahaaaAAhaha! Firewooorrrkkkss! Sssoooo prrrreeettttyyy—!”

Pointing towards the blood spray, Shalltear made a mocking laugh and clapped her hands. Brain who was standing by the entrance followed her and clapped his hands in an intoxicated manner.

“Uooooo!”

With a shout of anger, an estoc stabbed through Shalltear’s chest—and went through until the back, going through where her heart should have been. It then moved up and down in an effort to widen the wound.

“Go to hell!”

The following longsword split her head in half, and her left eye was cut open as the blade stopped there.

“Continue, bastards!”

With voices raised in a mix of fury and fear, 3 bandits swung their swords and chopped down at Shalltear. Over and over again. But the monster standing there with a broadsword stuck in her face seemed to have hardly noticed their efforts.

When their arms grew too tired to swing their swords, they used their hands to punch and their legs to kick, as tears of despair and desperation ran down their faces. However, Shalltear remained as immovable as a giant boulder.

Shalltear looked at the bandits, her head tilted slightly in thought. Then as if having found her answer, she clapped her hands together in a loud slap.

“HaAAaaaaaaaAaaaa.”

Shalltear let out her breath in an explosive puff. Almost immediately, a thick scent of blood swirled around the area.

Calmly, Shalltear pulled out the broadsword stuck in her head. Even as the

sword left its gruesome sheath, there was no visible wound or indeed any sign of injury.

She started to swing the sword but stopped as the broadsword started to rust and crumble into nothingness in her hand. It seemed that her bloodlust had drawn out the disadvantage of one of her classes Cursed Caster. Disappointedly, she tossed the ruined sword aside and swung with one delicate arm.

Three heads tumbled to the ground.

“Run! Run!”

“We can’t win against that monster!”

“That’s bad news!”

Shouted the bandits as they attempted to flee. A pair hands appeared behind one such bandit. He was running as fast as he could, all thoughts of resistance blown to the winds. The hands squeezed in sudden burst of force as the skull tore apart with a sound like a bug being ripped from its shell. Brain fluid sprayed everywhere as the head crumbled.

A man tumbled in front of Brain who was enjoying the scene.

“Help me, Brain-san! Please! I won’t do anything bad from now on!”

His face stained with stears, one of Brain’s former comrades tugged at his feet, begging for his life.

“While it would be good to save you....”

“Let me first ask master.—Master, what should I do with him?”

“—Bbbllllloowww hhiimmmm aaawaaayyy.”

“Understood. Then, let us go.”

“Stop! Please stoppppp!”

The man desperately hanged onto Brain’s leg, but Brain grasped his back and threw him effortlessly. The strength of his arm was monstrously strong when compared to the man who hugged his leg.

Towards Shalltear who was more than five meters away, the man drew an

arc in the air as he screamed. Naturally, if it was the previous Brain, this would not be possible. Even if he used both hands, this would be impossible. Changing into a vampire gave him unnatural physical strength.

“BaaaaaaaaaaaaAAann.”

Before the man was able to kiss the floor, Shalltear picked him up again, did a turn before chucking him towards the ceiling. A stomach churning sound as if something torn apart was heard, followed by the bloody remains of the bandit dropping. Before the blood reached the ground, it was absorbed by Shalltear’s Blood Pool.

Shalltear smiled at the escaping bandits.

“Ttthhheeeerrrrreeeee’sss ssstttiillll aaaa llllllootttt llleeffftttt.”

Countless screams, criess of anger and hate, and tears of despair filled the hall—.

Inside the hall where nothing moved, Shalltear smiled and stood up. The ball of blood above her head grew larger. However, it was still smaller than her head.

“Fffffffuuuuuuuuuuunnnnnnnnnnnnnn.”

“Having fun is most important, my great master.”

“Aaarreee ttthhheeeerrreee aaannnyyy mmmoorrrreeee?”

“Then—.”

“—Shalltear-sama!”

Interrupting Brain’s words, a woman’s voice echoed.

The vampire dragged back the vampire stationed outside into the hall.

“Some people are heading this way.”

“Ehhhh? Remnants of the BBaaannddddiitttssss?”

“—Ah.”

“SssppppLLLLeeNNNdddiiddDD, this is just too ggood.
AAAHHAHAHAHAHAHAHA.”

Chapter 31: True Ancestor | Part 5

Shalltear leaped upwards in the dark like a bird taking off and landed on the barricade of logs at the entrance on one leg. The other three vampires followed her slowly up to the entrance.

Shalltear smiled as she looked contemptuously at the target before her.

A small party was standing at the cave entrance in proper formation.

Three male warriors standing shoulder-to-shoulder formed the vanguard. The quality of their equipment varied with the worst equipped member of the trio wearing a hauberk of heavy overlapping scales <Scale Mail>. A drawn weapon in each hand and a large shield on each back.

And behind the men, stood a red-haired female warrior clad in banded mail.

Bringing up the rear and protected by his comrades in front was a man in light gear holding a staff in his hand. Probably a mage. Beside him was a man clad in a cleric's robe that was draped over armor. A holy symbol in the shape of a flame hung from his neck.

Despite being taken by surprise by Shalltear's sudden appearance, they did not panic and their guard never wavered. This spoke volumes about the party's experience.

"Oh this will be goood"

Although Shalltear had no objections to slaughtering the weak and helpless, a little bit of resistance certainly helped spice things up.

A smirk appeared on Shalltear's face as her red eyes lit up in anticipation of the entertainment to follow. Suddenly, the mage started in shock, as if he had noticed something about Shalltear. However, he wavered only for an instant as his face tightened with tension.

"Presumed Vampire! Only silver and magical weapons effective. Victory impossible! Fighting retreat! Don't look in their eyes."

The mage's voice rang out loud enough for the entire cave to hear clearly.

The man's instructions were terse and to the point. Instantly, the others reacted. As one, the warriors reached over their backs for their Large Shields. Taking a defensive posture, the warriors took cover behind the shields they had pushed forward. Avoiding eye-contact, they kept their eyes on Shalltear's torso.

At the same the time, the female warrior took the vanguards' weapons and applied something on them.

Shalltear's nose caught the scent of an unpleasant odour.

That was alchemical silver.

This was a special application produced by alchemists. A magic preparation that was applied onto the striking surfaces of weapons like grease. This gave the weapons properties similar to ones made of silver.

Generally speaking, silver weapons were expensive and softer than steel weapons. They were also unsuited for long-term use. Because of this, most adventurers purchased this preparation which costs one-tenth the price of a silver weapon. It is used as necessary, giving any weapon the same effects as a silver weapon temporarily. It is, however, effective only for at most 5 minutes and thus encounters requiring the use of the application are usually resolved one way or another very quickly.

Glints of silver flashed as the group waved their temporarily imbued weapons , trying to ward off Shalltear as they retreated in a single line. Even their retreat was impressive. The group moved in unison like a single entity as they retreated.

"My god, god of fire—"

"Don't do useless things! Use protection magic."

Stopping the cleric who was about to chant, the magic caster began to cast magic on the vanguard. Following him, the cleric began to do the same.

Most clerics could summon the power of gods to repel, control or destroy undead, demons or angels. However, that was only if they were weaker existences. Basically the cleric tried to cast magic on Shalltear, but the magic

caster decided that the cleric was not strong enough to do any damage, and so should use his efforts to do something different.

<Anti-Evil Protection>

<Mind Protection>

They cast the magic sequentially on the warriors in front.

A feeling of admiration was born in Shalltear's pleasure-muddled head. The magic used was the lowest level—Rank 1 magic, but it suited the enemy. It was completely different from the rash attacks of the bandits, or the idiot warrior who came alone.

However—Useless was useless.

However, they held no meaning with such a gap in strength.

Shalltear stepped.

It was extremely light.

A lightness like she was about to take a step. However, the movement caused a strong gale.

She swung an overarm.

Piercing the shield, tearing through armour, ignoring the magic defense, cutting flesh, gripping the beating heart, and in one stroke—Crushing it. In front of the drooping warrior, a reddish-black lump formed within Shalltear's hand. The woman raised a small scream, and the cleric made a detested face.

Smiling at the scene, Shalltear activated a magic.

<Animate Dead>

Slowly, the warrior who lost his heart stood up.

Under the circumstances, it was nothing more than the lowest rank undead monster, a zombie. Shalltear casually threw away the heart, and slipped her hand into the mass of blood floating over her head. From there she took out a crimson mass—A pulsating mass of blood. It was a caricature of a heart.

She gave it to the zombie.

The mass of blood writhed like a worm, its shape twisting and deforming as it dug its way slowly into the body of the zombie. The zombie twitched and spasmed as it slowly started to change.

The gaping hole in its chest started to reverse itself as if time had started to go backwards like a rewinding tape. At the same time, as if water had totally evaporated from the corpse, the zombie became desiccated, its skin resembled tree bark.

“That’s impossible! I’ve never heard of a vampire that could use such high-level magic so effortlessly.”

“It’s happening in front of you. Calm down! Deal with it calmly!”

“But!”

“—Retreat is impossible! Attack!”

“Ou!”

As the Cleric attempted to create a distraction, the others read his intention and reacted. One warrior slashed at Shalltear while the other faced their former comrade turned Lesser Vampire.

“Oh my God of flame. Banish the unclean!”

An invisible ray of Divine power shot out from the Holy symbol that the Cleric clutched tightly in his hands. Such a pathetic attack had, of course, no effect on Shalltear.

“AAhaaaaaaAAAAhahahahhahahaha!”

The warrior facing the Lesser Vampire had managed to sink his blade into the undead being. That was probably because the Vampire had been bound by the Cleric’s divine powers. Granted that the Vampire was newly created and unstable and as such, vulnerable, Shalltear still felt slightly insulted that any creation of hers could have lost to such petty divine powers.

Deflecting a warrior’s downward chop with her pinky nail, she glared at the offending cleric hiding behind the warrior.

“A bbbboooottttthhhheeerrrr!”

With a casual swing of her right hand, the warrior lost his head, blood spraying in a gory fountain as the corpse collapsed slowly onto the ground.

<Lesser Strength>

Strengthening magic had been cast on the lone remaining warrior. Up until now, the warrior had been at a slight disadvantage. With the binding placed on the vampire and the strengthening magic on the warrior, the tide was slowly turning.

Well, they seem to be enjoying themselves. Cutting in would be impolite. In any case, there was still prey to be had.

Shalltear's brain, still thirsting for blood, considered this briefly before turning towards to the cleric.

The female warrior came in from the side and confronted Shalltear with a sword. It was an ordinary steel weapon.

How cute. Quivering in fear, and yet still holding that sword as if meaning to put up a fight.

It was like the last ditch resistance of a small animal against a predator. Shalltear melted in a joy so intense, it felt like her nether region had heated up in excitement.

I wonder what kind of scream she would make if I bite off her fingers?

Maybe I should cut her ear off and make her eat it.

No, before that I should sip on her blood. After all, she's my first female prey from my first excursion.

"I ffffoooooouunnnddd dddeeeesseeerrrrtttt."

A leap.

Leaping over the woman, towards the magic caster and cleric.

With a movement faster than the cleric, Shalltear crushed the cleric's hand along with the holy sigil that he was holding onto.

"GuwaAaa!"

Hearing the cleric's cries of pain, Shalltear smiled satisfactorily and decided

to give him mercy. She ended his suffering with her hand, She nodded with enjoyment after seeing the blood accumulating in the sphere above her head.

Someone used all their might to ram into Shalltear from the back. But she was unaffected and remain still like a large tree. But the tip of the sword sticking out from her chest was annoying.

“Unbelievable.....No effect! It’s silver weapons. This!”

The sword protruding from her chest, beautifully pierced the position where her heart should be. Yet, Shalltear disregarded this and started to move, making the female warrior scream.

The girl did not bring any silver weapons. Likely, it was taken from the male warrior.

Some of what the mage said was right. But some was also wrong. The only weapons effective against Shalltear were either silver weapons enchanted with magic of a certain strength, or weapons with special innate properties. Plain silver weapons were incapable of damaging her.

Shalltear ignored the woman behind her, and gazed at the surprised magic caster.

< Magic Arrow>

In a desperate display of magic, two beams of light flashed and hit Shalltear, only to disappear without a trace.

That was due to Shalltear’s special ability – Mid Tier Magic Damage Reduction. Although damage was only reduced not negated, if the damage done is smaller than the reduction value, no damage was done at all. Such was the obvious difference in power between the two.

“Bbbboooooorrrriiiiiinnnnnnngggg!”

The head of the magic caster easily fell to the ground.

Looking away, the lesser vampire was having a good fight with the two warriors.

Shalltear casually picked up the heads of the two by the hair. Bored, she then threw them towards the two. The weights of about six kilogrammes flew

at a tremendous speed. There was no need to say the result. The two slowly fell to the ground.

Shalltear had been run through by a sword several times, but gave no sign of even noticing the damage. Even the holes in her clothes (being magical), had closed up.

Shalltear turned towards the female warrior. Finally realizing that she was the only person still alive, she retreated in fear. Fumbling desperately in her belt pouch, she was fishing for something.

Shalltear gazed at the crimson scene around her. Curious as to what the warrior was doing, she waited.

Finally, the woman brought out a bottle and threw it at Shalltear. Maybe it was holy water, or maybe it was a molotov cocktail. Either way, it was useless against her.

Shalltear caught quick glimpse at the thrown bottle and snickered.

What a pitiful resistance.

Yes, first Shalltear would slowly suck some blood from her. Not enough to kill her of course. Then she would do all kinds of things to the warrior, taking care not to draw blood.

Having decided, Shalltear swatted aside the incoming bottle casually. On impact, a red liquid splashed out of the opened bottle and leaked onto Shalltear's bare skin.

Then—A small pain ran through her body.

Shalltear's mind went blank in an instant, her blood lust suddenly driven away by surprise.

Shalltear stared at the spot which was pulsing with shock and pain. It was the hand that had brushed away the bottle. Where the liquid had touched skin, it gave off a foul stench and a slight wisp of smoke.

Shifting her view, she looked down at the ground beneath her. A bottle lay open before her, giving off a light pleasant scent. And suddenly she realized the shape of the bottle looked familiar.

That was—A potion bottle that was the most commonly used in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

Inside of it was probably a Minor Healing Potion. Undead received damage depending on the healing item. It was the reason why Shalltear's chest melted slightly.

The wound itself had healed immediately. The wound on her beautiful white hand had, of course, disappeared. However, Shalltear's surprise remained.

“Impossible!!”

A shout that shook the atmosphere.

“Capture that woman without harm!”

In response to Shalltear's words, the vampires that were previously standing behind and watching moved. They captured the woman, who took Shalltear's shock as an opportunity to flee, and gripped her right and left arms.

The woman panicky resisted, but there was a basic difference in the strength of humans and vampires. She was easily brought back to Shalltear and thrust before her.

“Look at my eyes!”

Shalltear grabbed the woman's chin and forced their gazes to lock, of course, taking care not to exert too much strength. After all, She wouldn't get anything useful if she tore the woman's chin off. And while Shalltear could cast divine spells, as an undead, healing spells were beyond her.

Having being forced to lock gaze with the vampire, the woman's eyes filmed over, her expression, once full of hostility and fear only showed friendliness. The charming effect of her magic eyes was starting to take hold. Once confident that the woman was fully charmed, Shalltear let go of her.

She had many things that she wanted to ask. However, there was one question that needed to be answered first.

Shalltear picked up the dropped potion bottle, and thrust it in front of the woman's eyes.

“This potion! From who and where did you get it!”

“There was a man called Momon.”

“M, Momon? Could it be....No, but then....but....”

The woman’s tone showed her surprise at how big a reaction Shalltear was giving to that name.

Shalltear was so shocked, she felt the world around her shake. Momon— That was certainly a name that could shock her into confusion.

Momon, and that familiar bottle. Only one face came to mind. No, one person could possibly come to mind. The head of the supreme 41, the sole remaining—The person formerly known as Momonga.

People could use similar names by coincidence. One couldn’t dismiss that possibility. In the same fashion, Nazarick’s potion bottle design by some freak happenstance could also be commonly used in this world.

Shalltear thought up to there and shook her head. It was too unbelievable.

It made more sense that Momon was an alias that Momonga was using.

Rather than that, the problem was why this woman had a potion. Why did she receive it? Did she get it for no reason?

“Could it be.....”

Was this girl given a directive? Or it was a reward for her?

Shalltear was unsure of the places that Ainz visited. If he went out alone from the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, Shalltear would know. Unless he changed his name and gave it to Baniara during their encounter. She could reason it out like this, but the scenario was highly improbable.

“Why are you here? What are your intentions?”

“Yes, our main job is street patrol, but a few days ago, we received a report about bandits appearing in the forest and we came to investigate. On our return after disabling all the traps in the forest, we stumbled upon the bandit’s den. After detecting some abnormalities, we decided to split the team into two. My team came here to scout out the area.”

“The team split into two?”

“Yes, we do not know the number of thieves. Hence, my team was to create a commotion, and lure them into an area filled with traps, set by the other team.”

“Another team, huh.”

Another problem cropped up, Shalltear clicked her tongue.

“How many people were there in the group that came here?”

“With me included, there is a total of seven people. Then,.....”

“Wait a moment, seven people? Not six?”

Shalltear’s gaze fell on to the surrounding dead bodies. Three warriors, one cleric, one magic caster—And this woman. The numbers did not match.

She faced the woman with a suspicion filled gaze as she replied.

“Yes. There is a ranger who went back to E-Rantel for reinforcements in case things went South.”

“What did you say....”

The voice of the magic caster earlier was unnaturally large. It was not a mistake, the voice he made could be heard all over the basin.

“Ku!”

Shalltear’s pupils dilated, with a speed faster than a gale, she shot up to the highest point around and surveyed her surroundings. Shalltear possessed night vision but her sight was unable to penetrate the thick vegetation of the forest. The pricked her ears, only the rustling of the trees and grass due to the blowing wind was heard.

Shalltear did not know of any magic that rely on the sensory organs. On such a circumstance, it would be impossible to look for someone in the forest.

“Damn it!”

The person managed to escape. It was utterly humiliating.

Her teeth gnashed together.

“My Familiars!”

The shadow at Shalltear’s feet stirred, several wolves squirmed out from the

shadows, different from the usual run-of-the-mill wolves. With Jet-black fur that blended into the night, crimson light emitted from their red pupils, displaying their malevolence and intelligence.

These were the Vampire Wolves, Level 7 low tier monsters.

Summoned using one of Shalltear's abilities. Shalltear could summon various types of familiars, but only these fellas were suited for chasing down her enemies.

"Chase. Devour and kill the humans in this forest!"

Ten Vampiric Wolves dashed into the forest once Shalltear howled her commands.

As she observed the distancing shadows, Shalltear concluded that the chances of killing the escapee was low. The one acting as a sentry should have methods of evading any pursuers.

In other words, she should plan for contingencies if the enemy managed to escape.

Shalltear clenched her fist as she turned around, intending to further interrogate the female captive.

"Tell me. What are the chances of the ranger meeting up with the other team?"

"None, in a situation that our team was wiped out, he will abandon the other team and return to the city. He is our best chance for survival.

Return to the city and gather reinforcements. If they made such preparations, then the chance of this was higher than forcing a smaller team to perform a rescue. Well, that was assuming that they would not be killed if they surrendered.

Smart move.

A well thought contingency in case they lose. Clearly, they had planned out everything before acting. Grasping this, Shalltear began to panic.

The knowledge about the vampires would be brought back to the city. Likely, Shalltear's appearance was revealed. Considering a human's ability to

see in the night, Shalltear did not think that the ranger was able to observe everything that happened in the depression clearly.

“Shit!”

Shalltear cursed and dug into her thoughts.

The order obtained from Ainz was—

The current prey now are criminals, nobody would miss them.

Criminals, especially bandits that can use magic and martial arts. It matters not that you can suck them dry and turn them into your slaves, as long as you capture them. Among the bandits, anyone who are knowledgeable when it comes to matters about the world and combat tactics, must not be let go off. If they raised a ruckus, us, it will raise the infamy of Nazarick leading to unwanted hassle.

—As above.

The current situation still lay within the spectrum of her directive.

Allowing the news of vampires to be brought back, would not lead to the discovery of her name and the existence of Nazarick. In other words, there were no means to link the vampire attacks and Nazarick together. If city officials considered the situation by the evidence at hand, they may conclude that everyone here and the bandits were wiped out by attacks from feral vampires.

Naturally, there were lots of holes, but any more and she could not come back.

Shalltear sighed with relief before immersing once again into the maelstrom which was her thoughts.

The next problem was, what to do with this girl?

People under the effects of hypnosis will not lose their memories completely. For safety purposes, it would be best to execute her. But the problem lied with the one called Momon and the bottle of potion.

Assuming that there was a reason or purpose that the potion was given to this girl, killing her now would disrupt Ainz’s action, an act that was very terrible.

What would happen if she returned alive? The ones that hired her would be bound to raise questions as to why she was the only survivor. Various information would be leaked, especially Shalltear's physical appearance. It may not present itself as a problem now, but who could tell in the future?

What would happen if I dispose of her?

If Ainz has any plans, he would have to give up on it.

The ideal solution was to directly contact Ainz. But Shalltear did not know how to utilize the magic, <Message>.

How about bringing this girl to meet Ainz after teleporting back.

The situation was delicate because the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick was protected by defensive magic that prevented any intrusion. Only those that possessed the Ring of Ainz Ooal Gown could teleport at their will. Sadly, Shalltear did not have one. The only way to travel would be through the designated portals that will waste time. Travelling by this method would use up to three hours, although it might not be a problem. But the only Floor Guardian left within the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick was Cocytus. Henceforth, the current level of alertness disallowed any immediate activation of the teleportation gates. Shalltear could use her own magic if she was transported to the arena, but the places that she could fly was severely limited.

It would not be prudent to waste time like this.

As Shalltear did not know when the rescue team would come for this girl.

By killing her, it would not raise any foreseeable problems. But if she choose to bring her back, the important information that The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick was operating covertly would be found out. During those moment, Ainz would have no choice but to modify her memories.

If returning her alive just like this, it would raise questions from those who hired her. Without the ability to mindwipe, those people might choose to pursue this matter. Releasing her like this would cause a bigger problem in the future.

Should she use the excuse that she accidentally turned that girl into a familiar?

Shalltear could create up to 10 familiars. Other than Brain, she could not find any suitable candidates to be her familiar, hence she still had sufficient space to make more. But looking from this angle. she was the one that made a decision that would disrupt Ainz's goal. Knowing about it but still choose to do it.

Then what should be done—

“I'll be scolded by Ainz-sama....”

With a small voice that could not be heard, Shalltear hung her head in her arms.

It was obvious that the encounter with the girl was coincidental.

Why didn't she retreat earlier?

It would be best to just end things just by withdrawing. But how to handle this girl? Undoubtedly, it would not be possible for her to escape from being scolded. Then, what should be her next step in order to obtain forgiveness?

Worse rather than worst.

Shalltear thought, and thought, until there was smoke coming out of her head, and got her conclusion.

Rather than killing, releasing that girl would be more beneficial. Shalltear cannot salvage the situation by killing her. She could at least do something by sparing that girl.

Shalltear decided so. No, it was no different from panicking and tricking herself though.

“Your name is?”

“Baniara.”

“Got it....OK, I remember, that name that resembles a weird candy! Wait there!”

—Disperse! My familiars.—

Shalltear, as if connected to her Vampiric Wolves by a thin thread, ordered their immediate withdrawal.

Unsure of whether it was a lucky or unlucky situation, the wolves encountered the other rear guard team. The connection ended with the return of the wolves.

Once this was completed, she let that Baniara girl stand at an appropriate spot. She gathered her vampiric familiars that stood further away from her spot.

“Anyway clear this place up. We’re withdrawing.”

She did not know how long it would take to clear up the place, this act could generate the impression that they were looking for something. At the minimum, they needed to leave behind signs of their search efforts.

“What should we do about the women, master?”

In response to Brain’s question, Shalltear’s gazed at the standing Baniara.

“Leave her like this.”

“No, the other women.”

“...Huh? Other women?”

“Yes, master. There are women they have captured to relieve their lust, what should be done?”

Shalltear’s face cramped.

What was that.

“...Why, did you not say anything?”

“My apologies. I tried to inform you.”

Embers of anger began to fan in Shalltear’s head, she wanted to dice Brain into pieces. However, she strongly suppressed that urge. She cannot do anything to Brain before bringing him in front of Ainz and collecting the relevant intelligence from him. She tried to cool herself, and gaze around. The gaze did not have any physical effects. But Brain who received it, backed away for a few steps.

Shalltear once again shook her head.

As long as the girl never saw her face, throwing her here would not cause a

problem. That should be the right move. It should be clear why that girl was left alive. However, considering that, it would be suspicious as to why Banaria was left alive.

Shalltear wrapped her head in her arms.

“Wh—”

“Ah? Why would I know!”

Who can tell me what to do next?

That was Shalltear’s current expression. She was clueless as to how to follow up on this matter in order to justify her actions. Knowing what to do next but proceeding forward without her master’s approval was a blatant act of treason to her.

“I don’t care. I don’t know! Leave them. Let Baniara handle them.”

“Is it fine?”

“Good or bad, I don’t know, shit! Shut up for a bit!”

“My apologies, Shalltear-sama.”

“We are withdrawing! Get to work.”

The vampires lowered their heads, and began working. Shalltear slowly held her head in her hands.

“....I’ll be scolded....What should I do....”

Chapter 32: Preparations | Part 1

Shalltear silently walked through the 9th floor of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

Behind her was Brain. Occasionally he glanced at the surroundings with deep interest, watching Cocytus' subordinates standing guard and gazing at them. His changes in expression showed his awe and amazement towards an existence beyond his imagination.

However, his figure that was looking around restlessly, when viewed from an observer's point of view, was slightly embarrassing, and did not fit a subordinate of Shalltear. Originally, it would drop the standing of his master Shalltear, but Shalltear kept quiet and tolerated it.

No, it was simply that Shalltear did not have the ability to react to his behaviour.

Shalltear, who was walking silently down the corridor, was not wearing her usual black dress, and instead wore a sparkling white dress with matching jewelry adorning her. While the golden tiara with gems embedded inside released a brilliant sparkle, it was not extravagant. Three thin platinum necklaces were laid on her neck. Accompanied by gloves made of white sparkling silk, she looked like a princess.

Brain had his own extravagance, but he wore a simple yet well tailored black suit, covered by a regal armour. Various small ornaments adorned the armor, and these were not run-of-the-mill replicas. Their values were obvious at a glance. On his hips were two swords, the first sword was the one that followed him till now. The second sword was given to him recently.

The reason for Brain's attire was obvious, which was to prevent someone that looked like a common bandit from entering this floor. However, Shalltear had more pressing matters in her mind right now.

As they approached their destination, Shalltear's footsteps slowed down. Her

face started to twitch.

After Shalltear returned to Nazarick, she went to her private quarters to refresh herself. If she used too a long a time to prepare herself, it would be considered disrespectful.

Shalltear naturally accepted such a principle. But the several things in her mind hindered her resolve.

Shalltear sighed for the nth time, and faced reality.

She knocked on the door in front of her. The beetle race Royal Knights on her left and right did not say anything.

After several tens of seconds passed, the door opened slowly. The figure of a maid was visible. It was a normal maid that was working in Ainz's room.

"...Please tell Ainz-sama that I would like to meet with him."

"...Understood. Please wait for a bit."

The maid noticed the awkwardness in Shalltear's tone and faltered for an instant, expressed her understanding, and slowly, without any sound, politely closed the door.

"Ah, I want to run away...."

When Shalltear sighed, the door opened again slowly, the maid from earlier stood behind it.

"Please go ahead, Shalltear-sama. Ainz-sama is waiting."

The first thing that Ainz thought was that Shalltear's expression was hard, and dark, and assumed that she had failed her mission. However, the Vampire standing behind her did not exist in Ainz's memory. Then she should have completed the minimum requirement of her mission....

Considering that, Ainz tore apart his thoughts.

No point deducing it. His questions would be eliminated after listening to Shalltear's report. In the end, he decided that he just had to listen to Shalltear's report closely.

Shalltear, leading her minion, approached the front of Ainz's desk slowly,

while maintaining her silence and keeping her head bowed. The underling at the back hastily bowed his head as well.

“...I have returned, Ainz-sama.”

“...And so you have, Shalltear.”

Ainz’s eyes narrowed slightly.

Shalltear was not using her weird pattern of speech. In other words, she was mentally agitated due to unknown reasons.

The report might have a positive outcome, Ainz concluded. His thoughts shifted towards the possible negative outcomes. This way, he would be able to nonchalantly accept the results, no matter how terrible it could be.

“...Then let me quickly hear your report.”

“Before that....I have performed a mistake, and cannot talk to Ainz-sama with my head raised.”

Shalltear responded as she was about to bend the knee. But—

“—Shalltear.”

A strong voice with an imposing will was heard. Shalltear stopped her actions and hastily looked at Ainz.

“Shalltear. You are one of the strongest pillars of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, a Guardian. If you are to bow within the sight of others not for the reason of respect, do not bow so easily. The report has not even started? Your apology is a bit early—Everyone, leave.”

Ainz lightly waved his hand, and ordered everyone in the room to leave. Receiving his orders, the regular maids began walking to the door. Ainz watched them as they walked and then moved his gaze upwards towards the ceiling.

“You people as well.”

The minute his voice reached them, the air began slowly quivering, and several figures appeared, hanging on the ceiling. They were creatures that were about the size of a man and were spiders wearing ninja clothes.

They were the Eight Edge Assassins.

They could freely move while remaining invisible. Each of their eight legs that allowed them to stick to the ceiling, and was attached with a razor. The moment they leapt towards their prey, they could launch eight simultaneous strikes. The scariest thing was their ability to kill their prey with a single blow to the head.

Seven Eight Edge Assassins dropped to the floor, silent as a bird. The one seems to be the leader started to speak.

“However we have received orders from Cocytus-sama—-”

However, Ainz did not allow even that.

“—My words are superior to any order. I will not repeat myself. Leave.”

“Hah, understood.”

The Eight Edge Assassins simultaneously bowed. They crawled on the floor and followed the maids out. After the last one left the room, Ainz turned towards Shalltear.

“Sorry, Shalltear. Then please start your report. Firstly, the the male vampire over there your thrall?”

“Yes, that is so.”

“Ah, my greetings, Ainz-sama?”

Suddenly, Brain flew away with a kick. Brain’s body flew through the air as if carried by the wind before hitting and bouncing off the wall.

That single hit could easily shatter all the organs in his body. Although he did not bleed after being turned into an undead, the ability to feel pain was not completely gone. Hence, Brain was rolling on the floor while moaning in pain.

Shalltear approached Brain in an instant after sending him flying with a kick and continued to attack him a few more times.

Why?

Due to the sudden deterioration of events, Ainz cannot help but suppressed his urge to escape reality and find a spot to hide, while observing the current situation from afar. After turning into this body, it was a plus that instances like

this would not be shown on his face.

“Why is a subordinate like you opening his mouth in a familiar manner to the supreme one—Ainz-sama? Did I give you permission, oi! Just be an idiot and answer only when spoken to. Do not think of talking to Ainz-sama without permission.”

“Ah, tank yu wery muh, masuter.”

Although he was kicked by Shalltear, Brain still gave out a look of pure ecstasy.

“Anyway, don’t look down. If you hurry up and say it then I will scold you less. Anyway, your loyalty towards Ainz-sama is quite low, right.”

I see.

Ainz nodded.

However, due to this, there would be two problems.

Firstly, Shalltear’s response pattern. Shalltear’s underlings fostering a sense of complete loyalty towards Ainz should not be a problem. But Ainz’s plan involved recruiting talented humans forcefully, to smoothen their intelligence gathering network. Looks like this plan would have to be abandoned.

Secondly, under the influence of loyalty towards only Shalltear, discord might spread within Nazarick. It was not entirely impossible that they may develop a sense of hostility against the other Guardians from any future bickerings.

The problem will be only be Shalltear’s. There was a need for experimentation.

“Shalltear—”

“Yes!”

Shalltear’s demonic face changed in an instant, to that of a innocent sweet young girl. Brain’s face that was swollen from Shalltear’s kicks turned into a look of joy. Ainz developed a sense of unease after looking at both scenes.

“....Punishment will be given in the room later. But....Shalltear. I am happy

that you respect me. However, there is no need for excessive respect. You are also one of the treasures left behind by my comrades in Ainz Ooal Gown. You are an existence made by my friend, Peroronchiino. Basically, I feel my friend behind you. Receiving such a deep respect from you makes me feel uncomfortable.”

Shalltear’s eyes begin to glisten. Her crimson pupil was directed at Ainz.

“—My gratitude.”

Two times, three time the mouth tried to open, but no words came out. Shalltear was struggling hard to find the right words. Then slowly,.....and deeply she bowed. This was the posture of a priestess receiving the divine revelation of god.

She directed her prayers and worship towards the gods.

The current Shalltear was acting as if she was giving her offerings to the gods.

“Then return. Shall we begin the discussion.”

Hearing the report, with Brain occasionally adding information, Ainz slowly crossed his fingers together.

“I see....Baniara....”

“Yes....Did Ainz-sama really give that woman a potion?”

“Hmm....”

The person who gave the potion—Momon.

Ainz had heard that name extremely frequently.

When Narberal went to register herself as an adventurer, she sent a message requesting suggestion for a suitable name. He told her to use any appropriate name for herself. When Ainz was asked which name was most suitable, he gave the answer, Momon.

No matter how he considered it, that name and potion, the one who gave it must have been Narberal.

Suppressing the desire to hang his head in his arms, he quietly stared at

Shalltear. Shalltear cowered in fear and waited for Ainz's reaction.

Ainz felt troubled because he did not receive any report about this matter from Narberal. Furthermore, Momon was acting on his discretion. He was conflicted whether he should reveal to Shalltear that Momon was Narberal.

If he revealed the truth, relations between Shalltear and Narberal will deteriorate. Such a thought flashed across Ainz's head.

This time Shalltear's mission had several misses, but it would not be a problem to say that it went well. If the woman Baniara did not come, then it would simply turn into information about rampaging vampires. Not much was known about Shalltear's appearance. However, if Baniara returned then Shalltear's appearance would be known to the guild. On the contrary, if there was information that Baniara was captured, and the ranger that escaped reported it, there were both pros and cons, a zero-sum equation.

However, whether or not Shalltear could understand it was another question.

It would not be surprising that Shalltear would think that she was a hindrance. Then what would Shalltear think about such an existence? Would it turn into a problem that slowly tipped the balance of Nazarick.

Since he received the information from Narberal, was it not Ainz in the wrong as he had not informed his subordinates, so he might end it with an apology. However—No, it really should be Ainz to roll in the dirt? If he did not tell the truth then it might become a problem.

A stiff sound rang—

That sound was made as Ainz's finger hit the table while he was lost in thought.

"Ainz-sama. If this is confidential...."

"No....I will allow it. That woman is actually connected to Naberal. I heard about it, but I forgot to inform you. Sorry...."

Ainz bowed his head, almost to the point of touching his table.

"It, it is not even absurd. If I did not get caught up in the moment, this would

not have happened. Please raise your head!”

“Thank you for forgiving my mistake.”

“Your words are wasted on me.”

Ainz raised his head and went into deep thought.

If he did not clear up the mess between Narberal and Shalltear, likely it would become a problem in the future.

In Yggdrasil, Ainz was one of the top players when playing as a necromancer with instant death spells . But this type of magic user could be countered easily. Comparing with the others players, Ainz’s ranking would be at the middle of the top 50% players. If he fully equipped himself with magical items and also the items left behind by his comrades, his strength would reach those at the Top 25% ranking.

Basically there were several existences stronger than Ainz.

Furthermore, there were many job classes that Ainz was not able to attain.

The World Items called Balance Breakers. The natural enemy of Ainz and the strongest magic caster class against Undead [Holy Banisher], the magic caster class that focused on attack [World of Disaster]. Players with those classes were dangerously strong.

Ainz recalled the glorious time.

When 1500 people attacked the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, his friends were there.

There were people with the World Guardian class, and was an existence known as an official cheat, and had no more than 10 top class warrior users. By putting these powers together during [Ainz Ooal Gown] glorious period, they were at the pinnacle. Also the invaders were repelled, they were separated and dealt with individually, which was why they could win.

However, currently none of his friends were here.

If 100 of the Top 500 players of Yggdrasil invaded, the likelihood that Nazarick would be breached is quite high. There is no need to even think when 150 Level 100 players decide to attack.

If Ainz activated the strongest force in the tomb, all the members within Level 8, it would be impossible even for 150 players to win. But the price would be too high, hence he cannot simply use it.

Even though he may be unmatched now but he may not be the strongest yet. Before he could completely grasp the situation of this world, he would have to act behind the scenes.

Any action that antagonises Yggdrasil players must be avoided.

This was due to him not being able to throw away his human consciousness even though his appearance changed. There was a chance that seeing his weird change, his mind would change as well and can accept this, but if human-like races like elves and dwarves killed innocents, he would react and most likely be filled with hostility.

That was why, he moved, looking for a reason.

They were attacked first. They had to kill to help others. They had to listen to orders and so it could not be helped.

If such excuses could be made then there was still room for discussions.

In conclusion, they should not be an evil that must be attacked, or attacking them was a just cause. Something that the ones who congregate under a banner would not find it difficult to forgive.

It would be fine as long as it was not exposed. Demiurge could move without exposing it. On the contrary, if it was exposed, then they would be in an extremely unfavourable position.

Did he understand that?

“I don’t understand.”

In response to his unconscious whisper, Shalltear’s shoulders trembled. Ainz raised a question towards Shalltear who was cowering in fear and watching Ainz’s expression.

“—Basically Baniara is a survivor, the ranger escaped. And there is a separate group of adventurers.”

“Yes.”

“Hm....Baniara was the only one that saw you....”

“Should I kill her?”

“Don’t say stupid things. No one saw your face but her right? Even if they try to make a montage, that woman’s testimony will be the best proof. Then the important thing is to edit her memory well. If we kill her, it will be added to the montage. That will be a pain.”

“Af, afterwards, actually....”

“...I don’t mind. Say it.”

“There are women....”

“? Apart from Baniara? Why did you not say so earlier? What does this mean!”

At Ainz’s angry voice, Shalltear trembled.

“...Sorry. I went overboard.” Breathing heavily repeatedly, Ainz opened his mouth. “...There is no need to hide it, Shalltear. Tell me everything. Understood?”

With Ainz’s sharp gaze piercing into her, Shalltear’s face hardened and repeatedly moved up and down, and she began again.

Once Ainz heard the full story, he clapped his hands together, no it would be more accurate to say that his bones clacked together.

“Amazing. Shalltear.”

Shalltear made a strange expression as she could not understand why she was being praised.

“Shalltear, you are kind. You saved those women right?”

“...Hah?”

“The women were playthings. Learning that, you saved them. And so you ran into the adventurers. Right?”

Shalltear’s face flashed with understanding, and deeply bowed her head.

“It is just as you say.”

“Based on that, can you tell me about it?”

Ainz faced his hands towards Shalltear with her mouth open, and the quiet Ainz continued his words.

“—You just happened to be attacked by bandits when riding the carriage, asking about the captured people, and you heard about the woman. As a woman, such a thing would be unacceptable, so Shalltear attacked the base?”

“Yes, as you say.”

“Then you managed to save the women, but then the newcomers came. Feeling anger at what was done towards the women, you forgot yourself and killed all of the adventurers. It is a common tragedy. Quite sad....However, Narberal’s favour—This is important. Depending on if she gave it to this woman with it, we will take a step back, and acknowledge our failure.”

“Just as you say.”

“Originally apologising would be the correct action, but if we say that it is a tragedy-like situation, she may not believe us, and fear us and run away....If we don’t handle the last part well, it will be like this, right.”

“Yes, everything is just as you say.”

“So, you have finished your report.”

“Yes. Everything has been reported.”

Ainz deeply nodded his head.

“Ok, I got it. The problem should be solved.”

“Is it fine?”

Ainz spoke in an admonishing manner towards Shalltear.

“With the conversation up to now we have only gained a basic justification for our actions. Yes?”

“Yes....I believe so.”

“....I am afraid—That the ones we are observing are only our equals. In the case that they hear what we said, they might label us as evil. And they may try to eliminate us. However, if they hear our justification, what do you think they

would do?”

“Would they stop the action to eliminate us?”

“I honestly don’t know. However, they will want to avoid losing their lives if they fight with us. Basically they will not think of fighting us seriously. Then if they listen to us, they might retract their spears? More or less, there will be some difficulties but they should understand. It would not hurt them to attack those who are perpetuating evil, if it is the opposite and find out that their opponent has a justification—And came with good intentions and gifts, what would they do? They would be lost about fighting, right?”

Ainz gazed at Shalltear and continued.

“Of course, punishment—A reduction of funds is possible but—I might give it to you, this is not that serious. Coming to the masses, and making unreasonable demands, then pushing them aside, then it would be fine to get in a fight. They’ll regret scorning us.”

While declaring that to Shalltear, Ainz of course, did not think that the talk would not have gone that well.

However, even if there were Yggdrasil Players, they should be scared of death. Even if there were revival items to revive themselves, they would probably not want to test it out.

Any players that reached Level 100 would be an unmatched entity in this world. Whatever they want, they will get it. The driving power of lust, money, power and hunger are not to be underestimated. Such desires would undoubtedly led others to attack Nazarick.

Ainz was cautious about enemies driven with such desires.

Firstly, The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick will be labeled as an evil existence, the attackers will style themselves as the righteous warriors. No one would blame them if they decide to pillage the place. They would even be labeled as heroes for taken down the place. No other scenarios could fulfill their desires as much as this.

If there were two mountains of wealth. One defended by enemies and the other defended by allies. Which one will be chosen as target? Obviously, it

would be the one guarded by the enemy.

Mah, likely they were those who would cheat their allies off their mountain of wealth. But they should be in the minority. If people like this were to gather allies, chances are high that their alliance would not last long. Hence, there was nothing to worry about. He just have to be alert about when they will fracture internally and take that opportunity to eliminate them.

Exemptions might exist when it comes to dealing with those with heroic ideals, it would not be a problem after negotiating with them. Ainz had already considered such a possibility.

Special cases are still special cases in the end. It would not happen after all that pew pew pewing. (This was actually what it said)

“Now Shalltear, I understand what you are saying. In addition my decision—my miss is huge. Shalltear, I will forgive your mistake. You have brought back a source of information and gain a lot, and so this is in a forgivable range. To prevent things like this from happening again I want preparations to be made for the sharing of information.”

“However it is still my mistake. I must receive a punishment.”

“Hmm.”

Ainz hid his troubled face behind his entwined hands.

Giving a punishment to Shalltear. Actually, such a thing was extremely difficult and so he tried to dodge the question. Shalltear was an existence made by his friends, and Ainz Ooal Gown. When he thought of giving her a punishment, he felt a bit reluctant.

However, Shalltear said so herself so it could not be helped.

Then what sort of punishment would be suitable.

Solving it by money was not possible as there was no supply of it. If he lowered her position, the only ones he could reliably give the Guardian position to were Sebas and Pandora's Actor. Both were not suitable. House arrest might be the most suitable, but letting one of the most powerful people available play was a bit wrong. Whipping? Please no.

As a normal person, Ainz did not know what sort of punishment would be the most suitable in this situation.

The fact that there was no precedent was also dangerous.

Basically if he gave a punishment in a company setting, it could be thought that precedents were law. Nazarick did not have any specific laws, and naturally no precedents. If done improperly this may become a precedent. It was not something he could decide on a whim.

Then the first thing was—

“...I see. Then I will inform you later. Step down for now.”

—To buy time.

Shalltear and Brain left the room.

As the door closed, Ainz hung his head.

“My head hurts.”

The fighting ability of this world was actually nothing much. They might be powers hidden from the surface, but the thing they should watch out for would be similar Yggdrasil Players.

If there was any problem, it would be the minions representing the Guardians being overconfident of their own abilities.

This time Shalltear made a mistake. If she attacked them after luring them out of the cave, the problem would not arise in the first place.

Narberal was the same. He had ordered her to not do anything suspicious, but from what the vampire Shalltear brought back, a potion was an extremely expensive item. Simply handing one over and not being suspicious was a selfish story. The most digestible story was still suspicious, but Narberal did not seem to notice it.

Especially overconfidence in the title strongest.

Even if he said to be cautious, it would still be quite difficult.

In addition, Shalltear's class had a penalty [Frenzy of Blood] and had a special ability. He had thought that if it were Shalltear she could bear with it,

but he did not predict her to enjoy herself.

He really simply did pick the wrong person.

Aura seems to be able to complete her mission well, it was a prayer for his lack of understanding towards the different personalities of the guardians.

Ainz noticed. If he spent some time learning about the basic thought process of this world, it should reduce the amount of prayers needed for situations like this.

However, he should quickly settle the issue with Narberal who infiltrated the city.

Considering this, it might be a good chance to cancel off the effects of Shalltear's blunder. In other words, it would be hard to disguise as a simple villager, better work on a new disguise for the next infiltration.

Thinking until there—

“Hah....Bothersome.”

—Ainz lay facedown on the tabletop with a slam.

An ordinary person like Ainz did not have the august aura of a leader. It would be unbecoming of him as the leader. All of Nazarick's NPC accepted him as their master. Hence, Ainz should behave in a manner that befits a master.

Consequently he changed his voice to one of panic, he had the intention to do it seriously, and so a tired feeling was left in his spirit. Of course as an undead there was no bad status known as fatigue, and so it was only to the extent of believing it was there.

As the highest authority, Ainz was constantly surrounded by many. This was due to the increase in Nazarick's level of alertness. Furthermore he was particularly conscious of the shadows flickering at a corner of his vision

Of course, due to the order earlier, all personnel were currently outside the room. However, leaving his underlings to labor on by themselves while he took a rest was not something that he was brave enough to do.

The result, he felt his body was getting heavy. The tiredness began to assault him.

“If I get used to it, it might get fun.”

There was a sudden knock on the door.

Ainz jumped at the sound, and adjusted the robe he was wearing.

“Excuse me, Ainz-sama.”

The door was knocked again, and slowly opened with the kind voice of a woman filtering in.

A figure entered the room.

If that humanoid simply described itself, it would be a female Shetland Sheepdog with glamorous brown and white fur that walked upright. And it was wearing maid clothes.

Its round eyes held wisdom and compassion, and with an expression that looked like a manga artist drew a Shetland Sheepdog with, it had the smile of an affectionate mother.

A sweet fragrance like a perfume wafted from its body every time it moved.

Behind them were the three maids that were chased out earlier. And the invisible bodies of the 7 Eight Edge Assassins also followed.

Ainz talked to the creature that should be called a dog-person who was walking at the front.

“Pes, so you arrived.”

“Yes. I have brought several things for discussion. Ainz-sama.”

Pestonya Wanko

Since the Land Steward Sebas was not around, the one in charge of the daily managing of Nazarick was the head maid. Her level was considerably lower when compared to a Guardian, but she could easily use the highest ranking holy magic.

Her nickname was Pes.

Somehow from the maid clothes, a brown tail wagged. There was probably a hole open in the maid clothes, but was it really so? A bit of curiosity was born in Ainz’s heart.

“Simply things are best.”

While hiding his curiosity, Ainz began talking to Pestonya who stood in front of his desk.

“Yes.”

Pestonya smiled, and suddenly made an embarrassed face as if she had recalled something.

“My apologies. I forgot.”

What?

Just before Ainz could voice out his question, Pestonya continued her words. No rather than words, it was something different.

“—Woof.”

“.....”

As Ainz blinked in surprise, Pestonya smiled in satisfaction.

“Is something wrong, woof.”

Ainz recalled Pestonya’s settings, and recalled her creator, and did not say anything. He was a person that mostly named things based on food and tried to name her Pescatore. After saying that being a fisherman was pitiful as expected, it got changed.

“...No, nothing. More importantly let’s settle the reason you came.”

“Yes. Understood, woof. First thing is from the vice head chef, woof. The remaining number of potion bottles number 3000. He asks about the supply, woof.”

“He used it that much. How many per day are produced.”

“Yes, woof. It depends on the type of potion, woof. Which potion would you like me to respond with, woof?”

“I see....”

What appeared in Ainz mind was the potion that was discussed with Shalltear.

“Minor Healing Potion.”

“Yes....From the vice head chef alone, the output is 464 bottles daily....woof. Ainz-sama may also know this but, this is with a six hour rest to fully restore MP, and time needed to make the potion excluded, woof. Basically we can repeat it four times, woof. Actually since there are rest times and production time, it is even fewer than this, woof.”

“With those calculations, what about the highest grade potion?”

“20 bottles, woof.”

Magic existed until the 10th rank, but the rank of magic that could normally be attached to a potion was the 5th rank. If one had a special class, the 6th rank was possible, but that was an exception. Normally with the simple calculation, the amount of MP needed for the highest rank, a 5th rank potion was about that of casting the magic 20 times.

Considering only that, the amount of MP needed would definitely be felt, but to those who could not use magic, this was cheaper than using methods to activate magic, and was convenient. Even if MP was used to make it, the large amount of money paid would make it worth it.

“If Pes works together with him would it not increase?”

“Yes, woof. According to the earlier calculation, the daily output of Minor Healing Potions would be 1332 bottles, woof.”

Ainz thoughts was revolved around pitching the sale.

Brain should have some idea regarding the structures involved in the sale of potions. To start this business, it would not be a bad idea to request the assistance of the adventurers guild.

However, doing this might create many problems. Although they could forecast for the many contingencies through discussions, It would be easy to think that many issues would be created if a large amount of potions were to suddenly enter the market.

It was heartening to find a mean to obtain funds.

A bottle if minor healing potion was worth 50 gold pieces. If converted to

Yggdrasil currency, the amount of gold will be cut in half, into 25 gold pieces. If the gold pieces were to be converted into Japanese Yen, it would worth ten thousand yen. Producing 1332 bottles per day would generate quite an impressive amount of funds.

“How about the other raw materials other than the bottle?”

“It would be fitting to say that there is an uncountable amount of Yggdrasil gold coins, and it would be fine to also say that there is an unlimited amount of Zolue Solution, woof.”

To make a Yggdrasil potion, firstly, the Zolue Solution must be added into the bottle. The potion brewer will then activate their special skill in order to infuse their magic into the bottled solution. During that time, Yggdrasil coin will automatically disappear as payment for cost of production.

There were special potion solutions, but those were basically Event Items, and so normally nothing but the Zolue Solution would be used.

“First, we must use other alternatives to replace the potion bottles. I heard about the matter from Shalltear’s underling and thought of something. Let’s halt the production of the potion bottle. Pass that potion bottle over to me.”

“Understood. Woof.”

“The next thing is also from the Chief Librarian about the scrolls of sheep parchment—-”

“I shall ask go to him myself. I will hear it firsthand.”

“Understood. Woof. Then the next matter.....come in.....Woof.”

For a brief moment, Pestonya forgot her speech quirk, as she was overcome by anxiety.

One of the maids slowly moved forward, carrying a silver serving tray that was covered.

As she slowly walked to the front of Ainz, Pestonya reached out her arms and placed various utensils in front of Ainz.

“Erm....”

As Ainz looked at it, he moaned.

In the middle of the plate was a blackened piece of unknown object, about the length of two fists. An aroma of charcoaled burned smell was wafting from it.

Ainz did not say anything as he picked a knife and started cutting it. The insides was totally blackened. From the outlook, it would be impossible for someone to do something as terrible as this.

“This....is a sirloin steak from a dragon?”

“Yes. Woof.”

With much trepidation, Ainz used the knife and fork he was holding to cut into what he ordered. The two collided, and a sharp sound rang.

“...Then tell the maids who made this to continue studying cooking. Ask the head chef as well.”

“Understood. Woof.”

“Is there anything else?”

“None, that’s about it. Woof. I would like to report that Aura-sama just returned to Nazarick. She’ll be reporting in shortly. Woof.”

“Aura, is it?....Understood. Before that I will head to the library, I do not need any escorts since I will be teleporting there directly.”

“Understood, woof.”

Chapter 33: Preparations | Part 2

Ainz placed the Ring Of Ainz Ooal Gown, which could limitless teleport its wearer anywhere within Nazarick, onto his finger. His destination was the large library on the 10th floor of Nazarick.

There was a blackout for an instant, and the scene changed like a TV channel.

There was a large dome-shaped room, and two large doors were enshrined where Ainz was facing.

Those doors were only rivaled by the doors to the Throne Room, and were flanked by three metre tall Iron Golems.

“Open the door.”

In response to Ainz’s words, the Iron Golems slowly placed their hands on the doors and opened them. The heavy sound rang and Ainz proceeded past the doors which could now fit several humans.

Rather than a library, another term suited it far better—Like a museum. The floor and bookshelves were decorated, and the books inside the bookshelves were like part of the design itself.

Not a single speck of dust could be found, and the cleaned floor had a wooden mosaic work engraved onto it.

The top was an atrium, and the second floor had a balcony thrust out of it, and it surrounded the countless bookshelves and peaked at them. The round ceiling had a fresco on it, and was made so skillfully that no cracks could be seen.

Within the room were several glass display cases, and within it were several books.

Although there were numerous sources of light, the light emitted was not too bright. The intensity was at a level that will make people frown when

exposed to light in the dark.

The room's width cannot be determined with a single glance. No, it was more accurate to describe that the room was the view was blocked by multiple book shelves, stopping anyone from surveying the entire library immediately.

In the midst of a silence that suited a library, the doors behind Ainz slowly closed. As the light from the entrance disappeared, the insides got darker. With a silence that made it possible to hear the slightest sounds, a strange atmosphere accompanied it.

Of course, Ainz had eyes that could pierce through the darkness and so everything seemed to be as bright as day, and so did not feel the strangeness.

Ainz faced the inside, and quickly proceeded.

The room he was currently in was the [Room of Logic]. This library was separated into the [Room of Wisdom], the [Room of Magic] and individual small rooms—personal rooms. Considering that, his destination was a bit far.

To the left and right of Ainz—Were countless rows of bookshelves containing books.

Books in Yggdrasil existed for different purposes.

The first was monster data to summon mercenaries.

Nazarick's monsters were separated into three groups, the first being NPCs created by Players. Next was the automatically generated POP that were monsters below level 30. And lastly were the mercenary monsters that were up to level 80.

To summon the mercenary monsters, the book's specified ritual must be performed, and gold must be used that corresponds with levels. And so if there are no books, the summoning cannot be done.

The next was Magic Items.

Certain data crystals can only be imbued into a book-shaped object. Items shaped like books usually tended to be single use magic items. The difference between a scroll and a book was that while scrolls can only be used by certain classes, anybody can use a book.

And Event Items.

To change classes into special ones, it was not rare for the needed item to be in the form of a book. To change from a Skeleton Mage to a Lich, Ainz needed the [Book of the Dead]. There were others like the [Martial Arts Research Book], and the [Strange Report of the Four Great Spirits.

Lastly was appearance data.

They were books that had the data of swords, shields, and armour were inputted in. They had blacksmithing skills, and with the proper materials, the appearance could be made.

Most of the books found inside the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick were of the first kind. Of course there was no need to collect up to this much.

Actually even if all the funds of Ainz Ooal Gown was used, not even one hundred thousandths of the monsters here.

Even if he used all the materials available, he could not even use 1/10000 of it.

The reasons for this were not for using them, it was a result of his Guild Members getting carried away.

Ainz gave a sidelong glance at the books.

And as if to block his way, suddenly, a ghost-like figure came out from between the gaps in the bookshelves.

With a jet black hood and robe that seemed to hold the darkness of the library. A wand hung from its belt and was embossed with gems, and orbs hung from a string.

The face below the hood—A skeleton with small thin pieces of skin, yet having a face that was as white as a mirror. The hand was also made of bone and skin. Every time it moved, the darkness covering it moved slightly.

That was a famous undead spellcaster, a Lich. However, within Yggdrasil the commonly named White Lich was a Level 31 monster and was the second from the bottom within the Lich-type monsters. There were other similar but differently coloured Liches such as the Red Lich and Black Lich also existed.

However, what differentiated it from normal Liches was the band wrapped around its left arm.

The words [Librarian J] were written on it.

“Welcome, Ainz-sama.”

With a harsh husky voice, the Lich slowly lowered his head. He then placed his hand in front of his chest.

“Ah, lift your head.” He confirmed that the lich had did so before continuing. “Today I have come to meet the head librarian. Which room is he in?”

The Lich seemed to be deep in thought, and opened his mouth.

“The head librarian is currently making scrolls, and so is in the manufacturing room.”

“Got it. Please guide me.”

“Understood. This way please.”

The Lich walked ahead.

Of course, it was not that Ainz did not know where the room was. However, it would be weird for the ruler to be walking alone.

On the way there, Ainz gave a sidelong glance at the Liches and Caster type undead as he walked.

The room he was guided to was originally made quite large.

However, currently all four sides were occupied by large bookshelves, and lots of things were placed around.

There were countless catalysts in the bookshelves—Ores, precious metals, elemental stones, gems, various powders, and various animal organs were cleanly placed. In addition, there were countless bundles of parchments, wrapped and unwrapped. Various types as well.

This was all of the resources being used.

Of course, this was not everything in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. The treasury had resources that matched hundreds of this amount.

In this room were the items collected for the usage of making scrolls immediately. Actually it was queer that gems were needed to make scrolls. Most scrolls would not use them—Out of 3000 magic spells, only 3 would need them. And so, more than needed were placed here.

A large manufacturing table was placed in the middle of the room, and on top of it was a parchment.

And standing before it was a skeleton that seemed to be made of a mixture of human and animal.

Its height was not too high. About 150 centimetres.

Two demon like horns grew out from its head, and it had four fingers on its hands. Rather than its legs being extended straight, it extended directly. Its feet were warped.

A saffron coloured himation—Old roman clothes—hid its strange body. And with one clothe of its hood positioned that it would not break on one horn, and a another was wrapped around his body. He was basically wearing three of them.

With a platinum bracelet with gems of seven colours, a golden ankh cross hanged from his neck, his bone fingers had several rings, and the himation wrapped around his waist was embedded with gems. They were all average magic items.

With a sword hanging from its waist, several scrolls hung from there as well.

With his appearance and equipment unchanged, it was a Skeleton Mage. The first undead race. The class before the earlier Lich.

But this Skeleton Mage was the head librarian of this library—Titus Annaeus Secundus.

With no remarkable fighting abilities, an existence that a former member of [Ainz Ooal Gown] made to specialise in crafting.

Since there were no investments on his racial levels, hence his magical job levels were high. In truth his total level was way above the lich earlier. But his combat potential was insignificant.

Beside the workbench was a small desk. Titus extended his bony arm towards it. In front of his hand was a small mountain of glittering gold—Yggdrasil coins.

Suddenly, the gold coins on his hand turned into liquid. Then, the liquid moved along the scroll as if it had its own will.

Moving like a golden snake, it slowly spread all over the scroll.

In a breath, there was a golden magical circle on the scroll. The magical circle appeared delicate and complicated. .

The magic activated.

Originally that meant the scroll was complete. Ainz did not feel any admiration towards the sight he was used to.

Until that moment—

A crimson colour.

A colour that should never happen on this workbench.

As Ainz felt surprised, the scroll started to burn, as if it was splashed by alcohol. Still it burned itself out within a short moment.

Like the earlier scene was an illusion, the traces of the burnt parchment had mostly disappeared from the room. There was not even a burnt smell.

However the proof that the incident did occur was left on the desk.

The remains of the parchment—Ashes.

With a calmness like he was expecting it, Titus faced Ainz.

“I have shown you an unsightly scene. Ainz-sama.”

To the cold man’s voice, Ainz waved to signal he did not mind. There was a more important thing.

“Why did something like that occur?”

“For the sake of preserving our own sheepskin parchment, I make a conjecture that it was due to the usage of this world’s most used sheepskin parchment. Of course, the current situation is bad—But, probably, is what I

would attach to the end of my statement.”

There was a variety of sheepskin parchment. As to why, it could be explained by their obvious differences in quality.

For example, a simple parchment could be made into a scroll that could hold Rank 2 spells, but it could not be made into a scroll that held higher ranks. On the contrary, if the highest quality parchment, Dragonhide—The skin of dragons was used then a scroll could hold up to Rank 10 spells.

Of course, Dragonhide was a first class good that could not be gotten except by hunting dragons.

Henceforth, the members of Ainz Ooal Gown was conducted massive hunts to capture dragons. Of course, this was during the days in Yggdrasil. Before they were able to confirm the existence of dragons in this world nor the other creatures that they used to encounter, they would have to be prudent when using the existing stock of sheepskin parchment.

It would be foolish to exhaust their current stock before they were able to replenish it. Hence, they would reserve their usage in moments when they really need to use it.

“Are you saying that this world’s sheepskin parchment is not suitable to make scrolls with?”

Ainz looked at the ashes.

“I believe that this possibility is extremely high. The spellcasters of this world should be using the same type of sheepskin parchment but....Of course it is difficult to think that the from among the countless Shadow Demons, all have brought back especially inferior goods.”

“However, you cannot say that it is due to the sheepskin parchment from one failure?”

Although Ainz once quite confident that the reason this time was due to the sheepskin parchment.

The other possibility is that, after coming to this world, there were irregularities to the scroll creation method. Due to previous experimentation,

their magical skills, equipment, and item creation skills were not affected and could be used as usual. Considering this, the chances of irregularities occurring would be very low.

“I have performed multiple experiments with the Sheepskin Parchments that have been brought, but all have the same result—They end in flames. It is this one’s humble opinion that it is due to the parchment being unable to hold the magic power.”

“...However, the Spellcasters of this world use this parchment....Is it a different in manufacturing skills? Have they become skillful at utilising inferior good?”

“The possibility is extremely high. If you permit it....”

“Ah, it will be fine to capture one or two people to investigate the manufacturing method.”

“If I can do so, it will help me to take a step towards using this world’s parchment to make scrolls.”

“Hmm....”

Ainz thought about whether to give permission for abductions and continued.

“If I combine it with what I know, I would make nothing but quick discoveries about the parchment.”

“...Understood. The ones usually in charge of distribution are Sebas and Narberal, and I can leave it to others like Aura and Demiurge to quickly search. There might be special monsters that exist in this world.”

“Then Ainz-sama, with the meaning of preserving parchment for scrolls, should the experiments be frozen?”

“There is nothing else that can be done.”

“Understood.”

Titus expressed his allegiance and Ainz turned on his heel.

Without using his ring to teleport, while walking out of the library door, Ainz

was deep in thought.

He recalled the things he had to do.

Firstly was while listening to Aura, he had to order her together with Demiurge to search for parchment.

Next was to listen to Shalltear's new subordinate, and consider kidnapping. And he had to exhibit the effects of the undercover operation which he had gave to Narberal.

There were lots of things he had to think about. Thanks to his undead body, he did not need to sleep and so fortunately had lots of free time.

"No, am I unlucky?"

What was more unfortunate than anything, was the problem that there was no one else but Ainz who could handle organisational matters. Currently, he was providing suitable various jobs, but it resulted in results that people would tilt their heads at.

And within the organisational management, currently, the most important thing was the handling of information, and he could not imagine leaving it to Shalltear to bring him the result he would hope for. Would a giant dragon pay attention to the ant walking on its foot, he was worried to that extent.

From among the countless amount of information, looking for those with value, something similar to searching for treasure. However, even if Shalltear found treasure there was a chance that she could not recognise it as such.

"Why did we not make an NPC that was good at organisation...."

Even if he complained about his friends, there was no helping it.

Ainz fixed his mood, and thought of methods.

Several ideas floated into his head, and the best one was to simply hire people.

However, there was a problem about being able to trust the hired person. He needed to think about the possibility that enemies would send spies to collect information. If there was an enemy that one could not defeat, than you need to collect information that can defeat them.

If Ainz made an enemy of an organisation like Nazarick, he would make preparations to defeat them. Basically he would invite people like Shalltear and Sebas to join him. Seduction or money was fine. Basically use their desires to make them betray Ainz.

And so information about domestic affairs was necessary.

Basically on top of that, if he did not clear the background of that person, he could not hire him.

Basically there was no replacement for the troublesome things.

Ainz thought up to there, and noticed something.

“Wouldn’t it be fine to manipulate memories and brainwash....Then where should we get enemies to experiment on. Firstly why not that vampire....?”



To his left and right were catacombs, riddled with holes, and corpses wrapped in cloth was piled three layers high. A torch-like light flickered in the darkness, making shadows, and so it seemed that the corpses were moving.

The air reeked of mould and the occasional smell of rotting meat. Amongst that, the sighs of the dead cursing the living, the desire to consume the living, and the longing of warm flesh mixed in the tunnel.

Amongst the undead who seemed to be able to attack at anytime, Brain walked casually.

If a normal person was walking through this world, they would stiffen with fear every few steps, even adventurers would have their nerves worn down. However, after Brain had become a vampire, a feeling similar to being in paradise bubbled up in him.

The feeling of death that wrapped around him. The chill of the tomb that seeped into him. The air was submerged in an atmosphere of death.

He could not get enough.

Brain released a long breath. Of course, being a vampire who was undead made breathing unnecessary, there was no meaning to the breath. It was just a human-like feeling.

On the way, the undead moved, Brain gave a sidelong glance to the existences that had a lower or higher intelligence than him and faced his destination.

The appearance of undead beings were absolutely hideous. They were just some rather troublesome dead bodies that were controlled by magic casters. That was Brain's past knowledge.

That was the ultimate beauty

He learnt of it after his body changed.

"Ah, master...."

He let out a sigh unconsciously. As Brain thought about that figure, he became absent minded, his mind wandering to a different dimension.

Eyes, hair, nose, ears, mouth, fingers, voice, clothes, smell. All were exquisite existences.

Shalltear Bloodfallen.

The incarnation of the world's beauty.

The most beautiful, sweetest elegance. The ultimate symbol of beauty was his master.

As one of Shalltear's newest familiars, Brain's heart was entranced and occupied by this sense of superiority. Before this, Brain regretted his existence as a lowly, meaningless human. If he was born into a different race, that possessed physical abilities that surpassed humans, how strong a swordsman he could have become?

Now he thought it all out, he was born as a human, to serve his master, Shalltear, the crystallization of the world's beauty.

Hence he did not develop any sense of aversion towards the level under the control of his master.

It was true that the 9th Floor was amazing, Brain admitted that.

This was a world that possessed a luxury that cannot be replicated by any royal family. Comparing this with the royal castle of the Re-Estise Kingdom,

where he once visited, the royal castle would appear rather woeful. It would not be an exaggeration to call this place as the pantheon of the god after witnessing such a scenery. Numerous art pieces decorated the hallway, Every single one of them would no doubt fetch an eye popping price.

The sentries guarding the place was not any normal existence. Comparing them with all the creatures that Brain encountered till now would be laughable. If he fought one on one with them, and using all the tools at his disposal, his chances of victory might slightly go above five percent. Monsters like this stood in formation, patrolling the corridor. Looking at such a scene, Brain could only felt his futility.

At both corners of the room, stood two large insect-like sentries, their strength way surpassed Brain current ability. The gap between them was too wide, Brain could not imagine how strong they are.

The master of the room guarded by sentries.

The ruler of this great underground tomb.

The king that preceded even over his own master.

A magic caster that was the embodiment of death.

Releasing a whirl of power into his surroundings, that sort of existence.

The absolute—Ainz Ooal Gown.

An imposing and almighty figure sitting on the throne like the legendary sorcerer king in the mythical stories.

His body was covered by luxurious long robe. The price would rival the annual budget of the largest country in the world. The accessories on his body simply surpassed any known divine items.

Moreover, after talking with him, Brain noticed that there was a berth in his common knowledge compared with people in this world, as if he unsealed himself after a long period. He shivered.

The world was huge. It was a truth everyone knew.

But now he estimated that one a single person understood this fact other than himself.

Just a few of these monsters could simply crushed an entire city. In this place, their status was just a lowly serf, surpassing anyone's imagination.

With his master, Shalltear as head. There were several other existence that could single handedly defeat any opposing countries. As a member of this army that could take over the continent, Brain felt immeasurable joy from his heart.

He looked down at the new sword at his waist.

From the appearance, it was a first class item. The aesthetics, no matter how inexperience one could get, would still make them jump with excitement. .

This was a replacement for the sword he used previously. It was a gift from his supreme master. Although there was only a slight difference in terms of length and weight, he was still not used to the blade.

Brain unsheathed his sword.

The sound was crisp like the chime of a bell, a cold air stirred the surroundings. He examined the blade in front of him, as if his soul was stolen. During that moment, he could observed the greenish hue of the cold air.

It was a magic sword so amazing that he could not imagine how much money he would need to buy it. The value of his previous sword was five thousand gold coins. However, this sword would be at least several tens of thousands of gold coins.

Recalling the grandeur of his master as she gave him this sword, Brain's body trembled.

"Ah, I feel like coming...."

Knocking down the wall between the 2nd and 3rd Floors, named the [Well of the Dead].

It is a rounded hollowed depression with a diameter of 150 metres and 45 metres in depth. Above it was a crossing that is 15 metres wide, separated into two lanes.

Brain excitedly looked down.

Countless corpses were piled upon each other. Decomposing corpses, drowned bodies, skeletons, crushed corpses, occasionally wriggled causing the

mountains to collapsed and new mountains were made. That hell was spread out before him.

Here was where the low class undead were born. There were none being born currently, but depending on if intruders depleted them, new weak undead would be given fake life.

As Brain walked across the bridge, he looked at the bottom. After passing a certain distance, he arrived at a T-junction. He turned right, heading towards a door which was his destination.

The stones were different from the boorish ones he saw up to now, the door was made with stone, but was nicely decorated.

The knock repeated.

The door finally opened with a heavy sound.

From the door, the head of a vampire popped out. Brain did not recognise her. Since she could freely access the room, he deduced that she was one of Shalltear's servants. Her status could be same as him or above him.

"I have finished the rounds that Shalltear-sama has requested of me. Please announce it to her."

"...Shalltear-sama is currently in the middle of her bath."

The vampire replied with a mostly expressionless but cold and mocking gaze.

"The announcement...."

Brain asked himself if he was an idiot.

The vampire's gaze got one level colder. No, it probably actually became colder.

"...Shalltear requested to me to inform you that if you returned, do not let anyone enter this gate."

"Ha! Understood, I will not let anyone through at the cost of my life—Until my body cannot move."

"...Then please do."

The vampire closed the door.

Enjoying the fact that his highest master had given him an order, he made a decision to not let anyone through. The desire to be praised if he protected it with his life burned inside of him.

Brain continued to not move.

It was probably about 30 minutes.

Suddenly, the air in front of Brain wavered.

“Mu!”

His hand ran to his waist, and his knees bent slightly. He placed the right half of his body forward slightly, a position where he could attack at anytime.

Instantly, the wavering space went back to normal. However, there was a humanoid that was standing there that previously was not there.

A whip hanged from her shoulders, with clothes that seemed easy to move in.

Standing there was a young dark elf girl.

Dark Elf.

With dark skin, there were the close-kins of the elves. It was common knowledge that their age surpassed that of humans. Their royalties were like an eternal existence. But their appearance were like that of the humans, it will change with age. Considering this, the girls' age matched her looks.

Elves had the same sense of beauty as humans, and so had extremely beautiful appearances. That girl had an extremely beautiful appearance among them.

Of course, she could not beat his master, the absolute beauty, Shalltear Bloodfallen.

“Ou, stop there.”

He did not prepare an attack as he did not sense any hostility.

Although he did not hear of such a person in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, however, since she could walk around freely, he could deduced

that she was a member of this great tomb. If not, she could have been killed by the monsters on her way here.

The dark-elf was directing a romantic childish-like smile towards the ring on her finger. After she heard Brain's words, she became unhappy.

"Umm, who are you?"

Her first words were those, but Brain understood that it was natural. He had become Shalltear's subordinate today. It was natural for the dark elf to not know him.

"I am Shalltear-sama's loyal subordinate. And this Brain Unglaus has received an order to protect this door with my life."

"Haa."

The dark elf replied without any energy.

"I, well. I received Ainz-sama's orders to see this idiot. Understand?"

Reacting to the words idiot, he suppressed his feelings to swing his sword. This person might be his master's friend. If he killed her she might get mad.

"Understood. But, my master has said not to let anyone pass."

"Hmm. Stopping me who was ordered to deliver Ainz-sama's words....Did the idiot finally go crazy? Or can she not manage her subordinates?"

Hah. The dark elf made a deep sigh from the bottom of her heart.

"....My name is Aura Debay Fiora. The same Guardian as the idiot. Can I go in?"

A name that he had never heard before. Brain tried to remember, but he had never heard her name.

Then this person was probably an eminent person within the tomb. In addition, she was a Guardian, the same as his master. Of course, he would not recognise his master as an idiot.

However, if that was the case then he probably should let her through.

Brain hesitated, and made his decision.

“Sorry, but just as I said earlier. My master said not to let anyone through, so I will not let anyone through.”

Like she was looking at something she could not understand, or a madman, Aura’s eyes opened wide. Her mouth opened slightly but no words came out. Perhaps the word speechless would be the most suitable to describe her.

“Serious? Then....that idiot....Taking me as an enemy....Ah, then it will be fine to pass via force.”

Facing Aura who was beginning to walk towards him, Brain slowly exhaled and reached his hand towards his sword.

He prepared to draw his sword.

His breath was drawn out slowly into a threadlike state.

His consciousness was focused on a single point, as the point contracted past its limit, Brain’s sensory organs expanded. He perceived it all, the surrounding, noise, air, and breath, as if reaching a new world where he senses could detect everything. This was one of Brain’s martial arts--[Field]

No, that was the past.

The effective radius of [Field] was only three metres. Now, it had increased by twofold, into six metres. Furthermore, it could detect the presence of life. This [Field] had surpassed the old [Field].

“In other words [God’s Realm].”

“Ah, really?”

Aura reply nonchalantly towards Brain’s mumbling.

“If you take another step further, I’ll have no choice but to leave you with only one of your four limbs.”

Of course, he had no intention to kill her. However, his opponent was a strong one. Then he would give a blow that would not kill her. With his body strengthened to this point, his [God Speed] had also improved beyond [God Speed].

“This is.....[God Speed 2 (temporary name)]”

To Brain who had not thought of a good name. Aura was looking at him with this question in mind;

What is this fella trying to do?

There was not a single sense of alertness.

Brain surmised that Aura was not capable of seeing through his god flash.

“Come on.”

“Yes yes, just make your move already.”

Aura was portraying her usual laidback demeanour. In contrast, Brain was troubled and asked.

“Are you ready?”

“Come at me.”

What are you trying to do?

That was Brain’s question.

Aura who heard the answer tilted her head as if looking at a situation that she could not understand. Of course, for someone not knowing the sword slash technique, this would be a rather queer behavior. But if you entered the striking distance of your opponent, one should know that the situation is akin to putting yourself in a situation where you could be ambushed by wild beast at any moment.

Plus, this is a punishment for the rude words directed towards my master.

With this, carrying such thought—

Both sides were probing each other, then Aura made her move.

Fool.

The one who made the first move will be at a disadvantage. This was because that there was chance that their actions will be predicted by their opponent. Moreover, sword draw was a sword technique specifically used for opponents who acted first. Not knowing such a thing fitted someone like Aura, who was just like an inexperienced kid. Might as well cut her some slack with this strike, just to give her a scare.

As Brain made such a decision, he weakened his killing intent.

As for Aura, with a inconceivable look, activated her magic.

It ran counter to Brain's expectation, he thought it would be a melee combat. Before he managed to panic, the magic activated.

<Various Magical-Beast Eye Of Catoblepas>

Aura's eyes turned into something akin to a magical beast—

“.....What was he trying to do?”

—Aura did not know what to make of this. Those were her last thoughts concerning the petrified Brain.

Aura walked inside casually as if she was familiar with the place, although she never once stepped inside before. The vampires inside received her panicking. But Aura rejected them with a look.

Within the second level of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, Shalltear's quarters was located in one of the rooms there. Its decoration did not fit the overall theme of the tomb. The room was like a noble's house, luxurious, bright and the air within was scented.

The rooms was not connected by a single corridor. Their arrangement theme was rather unique.

One of the rooms contained a peculiar bed that could accommodate up to tens of people. The vampires brides lying on top of it were naked. Another room was decorated by various mysterious tools which their use was undetermined in a single glance. There were also rooms that were stocked with weapons as such.

After passing through several peculiar rooms, Aura arrived in a rather humid room.

Within the room were numerous stark naked vampires, Aura found her target amongst them.

At a place that seemed like the changing room, there were countless make up tools and a large mirror.

“Why are you here?”

Shalltear asked Aura. She was wearing a white bathing robe while sitting comfortably on her chair.

Her tone was a mix of surprise and reprimand. Hearing this, Aura frowned. Although, it was herself that declined the invitation. From Shalltear’s perspective, it would be akin to someone barging into her quarters. On this matter, Aura expressed her understanding.

If there was someone barging into your personal room, one would question them about the reason for not waiting in the guest area.

“Hmmpf, since you are still capable of lecturing others, you don’t seem quite depressed.”.

Shalltear’s eyes began to narrow in anger. But returned to normal quickly, Seeing the change in Shalltear, Aura thought about incident earlier which she had not revealed yet.

“Those were some bold words. Undeniably, it was my own fault.”

The words was not directed at Aura but Shalltear was mumbling to herself.

“I was shocked. Among the guardians, there would be someone to make such a huge mistake. Thinking about this, I cannot bear the pain in my head.”

“.....Order them to withdraw first.”

After listening to Aura, Shalltear ordered the surrounding uneasy vampires to withdraw,

“Then why are you here for? If possible, please keep it short. I would like to take a bubble bath soon.”

To Aura who preferred showers, she did not understand the joys of immersing oneself in a hot tub. None the less, after hearing her next words, would she be able to maintain her leisure?

“Furthermore, I met a rather strange sentry.”

“Ah, that toy was it?”

As if hearing the name of something troublesome, Shalltear’s face twisted

with malevolence.

“What’s the story behind your new toy?”

“That toy was a human that I caught, under Ainz-sama’s order, sometime during yesterday. Originally I intended to kill him since he was very annoying, but he seemed quite knowledgeable. Hence I brought him back according to Ainz-sama’s order. However, I don’t really want to see that face of his and ordered him to stand guard.

“Since he is a sentry, it would be better to provide him with a better weapon.”

“Mah, as you see, it would be a waste of my time if I go digging for it. Might as well that I simply throw one to him. Truly, his pre-existing sword was simply too terrible.”

The smell of garlic would permeate around if one kept swinging that little toy. Shalltear chuckled. But she felt something was wrong after noticing that Aura was looking at her with a cold expression and she shut her mouth.

“...Then, there is also that issue with that sentry. After I announced Ainz-sama name, that little joker did not permit me to enter.”

Aura was staring down with a frigid look. Seeing such an expression, Shalltear froze momentarily before she started to panic. Her mouth was moving but no words came out.

Aura was reaching towards the whip hanging on to her shoulder.

The action was obviously readying for a fight. Understanding the meaning behind her actions, Shalltear’s expression froze.

“.....Truly?”

“Truly.”

“Please accept my sincerest apology.”

Shalltear stood up abruptly from her chair and bowed deeply towards Aura.

“He did not draw his weapon, only place it on his shoulders while maintaining a rather rigid post. So I just petrified him.....Did you really really train him?”

“I have no justification for this.”

“Since he became a servant just today. You should have at least gave him the most basic education. Giving the sentry position to that fella with such an attitude. If the one who came was not me but was Ainz-sama instead. It would become a big issue.”

“It is as you said. I can’t believe that fella could be so inflexible in thinking. I’m sorry.”

Haah, Aura sighed deeply once again before she kept her wip, rolling it and hoisting on her shoulders. She continued her barrage of questions like machine gun fire, towards Shalltear who was lowering her head.

“Aren’t you being too carried away?”

“Yes, my apologies.”

“Geezz, how could such a mistake like this happen? Are you underestimating the task that you were given?”

“Please forgive me.”

“You are a guardian. How could you repeat such mistakes?”

“Yes, I fully apologise.”

“If you made a mistake, shouldn’t you work harder on other things to make up for it? In end, what were you doing?”

“Yes, I was unconscious of my own actions”

“You said taking a bath takes precedence?”

“No, there is no such thing.”

“Then, what happened to that fully composed look earlier when I arrived?”

“Yes, those shameful words were uttered from my own lack of judgement. I deeply apologise for disrespecting the esteem messenger, from Ainz-sama’s.”

“Although you have given me your verbal apology, but have you comprehend your mistake?”

“Yes, I have fully recognised it.”

“...Hmm.”

After looking at Shalltear, who was nodding like a mortar, Aura let out a sigh. At least she let out all her earlier frustration, it is time to pass on Ainz-sama's order. If she was too focused on lecturing Shalltear and forget to pass on the order, it would become a problem.

It was better to finish up here quickly and return to her own level as there were new minions to instruct.

"...Now, let us go back to our original topic."

"Yes."

"Ainz-sama's order is as such."

"I listen and obey."

"Shalltear shall prepare low level.....level 2 and below undead army. Once ready, prepare to send them off for an assault."

Shalltear raised her head and looked at Aura. Aura's message, in other words—

"Time to attack."

"...The commander is?"

"Cocytus."

The simple answer eliminated the small but brief hope that dawned from Shalltear.

"His humble servant understands. Please pass this to Ainz-sama. If permitted, please let me ask this simple question. Where are we attacking?"

"Ah, about this—"

Chapter 34: Preparations | Part 3

Pinison Pol Perlia was troubled.

No, troubled was a light expression. As for why, she was currently facing a danger to her life.

Even though, troubled was the most suitable words for her feelings.

To her with her natural body, life and death, stealing and being stolen from —The survival of the fittest was a part of the natural world, and so she could not do anything but accept it.

But, this did not mean that she would gladly accept death. She was still young— from a human's perspective, she would be 30 years old. Among her own race, she was still just a child. They were not a type of being that would accept death at such a young age.

Then why was she not resisting?

It was true that even if she could not win she could buy some time. However, one of the reasons she was not doing was as, in a way, being controlled by a sense of defeat.

Firstly, there were no races that she could ask for help. She may be able to buy some time but there were no places to get help from. Moreover, there were no means to communicate as well.

Of course, there were those from her race near her.

Sadly, there was no way to chase away the existence that would rob her of her life. Considering its strength, they would not win in a battle, the conclusion was easily reached. Their lifestyle highly emphasized on the circle of life. They have no choice but to accept the notion that the strong prey on the weak.

And so there was no existence that would save someone like her.

Basically her life was like a torch led by the wind.



The borders between the Baharuth Empire and the Re-Estise Kingdom were demarcated by the Azerlisia mountain range. At the southern end of the mountain range was a large forest, the Great Forest of Tob.

The area of the forest was sufficient to cover up to one fifth of the Kingdom's territory.

The forest was vast. The humans only occupied a small part of this area. The main reason was that humans mostly confined themselves to the plains.

It was a lucky situation as the human's territories did not overlap with the territories of strong monsters.

—No, it was for this reason that the ancestors of humanity restricted themselves to the plains.

Simply put, humans were weak. And so they grouped together, and made weapons and magic to protect themselves.

Furthermore, most of the magical beasts and races were much stronger than humans.

With skins and claws as tough as steel, magic like special abilities and superior physical abilities. Being like this, they preferred to stay in areas where there were plenty of hiding places and few enemies where they could simply run away after spotting other creatures. Some also prefer places where the sunlight did not reach or places with plenty of concealment. Hence it was rare for such monsters to appear in the plains.

In short, it was in areas other than the plains.

Isn't it easy to distinguish the territories of humans and the magical beast? Humans that enter the magical beast territories were professionals, or simply put adventurers.

When it comes to humanoids, the elves and the dwarfs are a different matter.

Now returning from the useless information, the Great Forest of Tob.

Hunters and herb gatherers would enter the outer edges of the forest, but it was rare to see people entering the hinterlands. It would be even rarer for those that enter the hinterlands to come out safely. Such is the nature of this place.

Numerous ore veins lay dormant within the Azerlisia mountains. People willing to cross the dangers of the forest to reach it were almost non-existent. Furthermore, the forest only enveloped the southern edge of the mountains. To reach there, it would be a simple matter to just approach the mountains from the north.

It was hard to traverse this ancient forest by foot, the visibility was poor as well. It would be easy for some unknown creature to ambush them from an unknown direction. Hence, the need to maintain constant vigilance. Adventuring in this ancient forest would easily sap their mental strength.

Due to this reason alone, few people would go adventuring inside the forest, leading to a lack of information regarding the layout of the forest.

There were a small proportion of adventurers that repeatedly entered the place, to seek their own romance and the hidden treasures within. In the annals of history, no country had ever resolved themselves to launch an expedition.

It was hard to find valuable herbs within the forest. A balance could be reached if one placed their lives and the money on each end of a scale, but they might as well head to other places, like previous known but not fully explored ruins.

Hence those adventurers who accepted the request and went inside of the forest were described as brave or entirely clueless.

Within a realm where no men ever reached, in a death circle where monsters fought with each other daily during the twilight hours.

That southern part.

Entering the Great Forest of Tob, it would be 30 kilometres as the crow flies. From the

Azelrishia mountain range flowed a river that could not be named. The river flowed into a lake, and three kilometers east of it was the Baharuth Empire.

In the corner of a giant tree was Pinison's tree.

Pinison Pol Perlia.

Race, Dryad.

As a race of forest spirits, a wood spirit. With an appearance of a human or elf, her skin had the gleam of polished wood, and her hair was fresh green leaves. It was like an extremely first class figure that an artist carved out of wood.

With a deep relationship with her tree, she could not go far from it. The further she got from her tree, the weaker she got, and it would eventually lead to death. If her tree was cut down she would die, and she placed a deep importance on her and other trees, preventing any attempt to harm them.

She did not have a brave figure, but it would be suitable to call her race the watchmen of trees.

To Pinison, happiness was being bathed in sunlight, getting water from the ground, and listening to the sound of the wind rustling the leaves of her tree.

How much time had past.

To dryads, time did not have much meaning. As existences that lived for several centuries, the period of several years did not mean much.

She then became worried.

This was probably the first time that she had been troubled since she had gained sentience. Time to her was mostly told by when the sun rose and dropped, and so she did not know how long it had been and she could not answer. She did not count the number of times the sun rose and set.

The origin of that worry—Was the ivy stretching out towards her tree.

<Garrote Ivy>

Wrapping around trees, it was a plant that slowly made them useless. However what made it different from normal ivy was that it was a plant that was a monster.

The Garrote part of its name was not as it strangled the tree. It instead got its name by strangling animals.

As it stretched and wrapped around a tree, it hung down from the tree branches it would catch animals that got entangled. It then strangled them, and stole their nutrients. It was a plant monster.

The reason for wrapping around trees was naturally, to steal its nourishment and make it its own. When it cannot get nourishment from corpses, it stole it from the tree. And so the tree would eventually dry up.

That monster was stretching out from a nearby dried out tree, and reaching for Pinison's own tree.

While like this, it would wrapped around Pinison's tree, and slowly stealing nutrients.

Pinison could use several different types of magic. However, there was no magic that could affect plants among them. Pinison's abilities were charm or confusion, both effects that affected one's spirit. Unfortunately they had no power over plants.

She would request the assistance of any humanoid being if they passed by. If they displayed any hostile intention, then she would use magic to chase them away or fight them with her parasitic vines. Then again, humanoids passing by this dryad only occurred once every few years.

Unfortunately Pinison did not see any humanoids of the sort.

And so, she slowly became ruled by defeat.

Until that day.

Normally Pinison would be sleeping inside of her tree. Of course, a spirit such as her would actually be half dreaming and half awake.

An existence perked her knowledge.

Pinison instantly switched to her awakened state and examined her surroundings from her tree.

People observing the scenes from the sides would see a strange scene where a sapling with a human face was sprouting out from the ground.

From the slits of the trunk, she could see four peculiar beings approaching.

They measured four meters in length and two meters in height. Their lower body looked like a lizard or a crocodile. Their upper body was made up of a solid well build humanoid that looked like a hybrid of man and insect.

The best explanation would be a reptilian centaur.

Each of them were holding a two meter long well forged metal halberd in one hand. Their bodies were covered by hardened metal like scales, further reinforced by armor designed for cavalry use.

Their bulging muscles radiated a strong sense of toughness. Their elaborately tailored weapons and armor display skilled craftsmanship. Underneath their rough appearance belied a keen intelligence.

They were the strongest existences that Pinison had ever seen before.

A race that Pinison had never seen before.

That race was known as a Dracotaur in Yggdrasil.

Among them was a monster known as a High Warrior. Its level of 38 was not high but it had a skill called Weapon Break, and it caused players wielding swords to break down and cry.

The one leading was the Dracotaur High Warrior.

Those eyes moved, and captured Pinison.

Pinison hid back in the tree in a panic.

Did he see me, no he couldn't have.

While filled with uneasiness, she looked out from her tree like it was glass.

The lead Dracotaur High Warrior changed its direction, heading directly towards Pinison. The three at the back stayed behind and were looking toward her.

Of course, it would be impossible for them to see Pinison herself. But the sharp eyes gazing towards her were terrifying.

After the Dracotaur High Warrior came to the tree, he looked around and pushed his hand out while tilting his head. His hand with four fingers was large enough to hold Pinison's head.

He touched Pinison's tree, and rubbed it.

This must be a feint to make me drop my guard.

Suddenly, one of the vines twisted like a whip, wrapping around the neck of the Dracotaur High Warrior. The parasitic vines that wrapped around the tree were normally used to hunt unsuspecting preys.

With the sound of 'puchipuchi', the vines were easily ripped off.

After that, a few more vines came forward. Moments later, the outcome was the same. The vines were ripped off within the blink of an eye. With all the vines gone, all forms of hostility ceased.

During those moments, the lead Dracotaur High Warrior was fighting with one of its eyes close. Simply put, the situation was like a walk in the park for him.

If it is that monster it can save me.

Pinison was filled with confidence. However, how should she ask it.

Pinison's gaze moved to the Dracotaur High Warrior's halberd. It was a weapon that could easily slice through her tree.

If magic was cast it would be fatal. Then she could do nothing but make a request.

However, is it fine? Pinison was lost. If she did this incorrectly the monster might cut apart her tree.

However, if he left, miracles may not happen again.

Pinison hesitated, and decided.

—-*Umm.*

Pinison waited.

The Dracotaur High Warrior earlier received certain orders from its master, which was to form a squad and recon the area. Now it is in contact with its master to determine whether to help her or not while Pinison is patiently awaiting for the outcome.

After a single sunset, followed by the sun reaching its peak again. Pinison noticed a small figure walking here.

Behind that leading figure were many others. They were creatures other than the Dracotaur High Warrior. The way they walked in formation gave the idea that they were acting as escorts.

Then the little figure in front must be the master. Pinison deduced.

That shadow was a dark elf.

Pinison was surprised, and her eyes opened wide. It was natural as she was seeing something from stories right in front of her.

Dark elves. They were a close kin of the forest elf. While the elves dwelled in the forest. The dark elves prefer to stay in caves or underground. They were a race that did not clink towards the notion of absolute good nor evil. Unlike their close kin which maintained a code of honor, they tended to be more flexible.

What was more shocking was that the girl still looked like she was in her early teens.

“Hmhmhmmm.”

The dark elf girl was humming a song as she was approaching. There was a total of eight creatures standing about 20 meters to the back. The little girl raised her hand as she stood in front of Pinison’s tree.

“Hello.”

—*Hello.*

Pinison left the body of her tree, and raised a hand like a mirror. She then repeated the greeting. The girl made a surprised face, but it then changed to a smile.

“Could you tell me about anything that’s bothering you?”

Pinison remained silent. Spirits like Pinison were different from elves. The body of dark elves match their age. In short, their body changes as time pass. Hence, she was undoubtedly a kid with her current appearance. She could not bring herself to say anything as to expose such a young child to danger.

As if sensing Pinison’s inner conflict. The dark elf girl smiled happily.

“It’s fine, I’m not alone.”

Pinison made her decision with those words.

In fact, if one thinks carefully, those magical creatures followed the girl here. Although it might be troublesome for the little girl. The task could be given to those creatures and they could take care of things easily. Pinison shifted her attentions towards those creatures at the back.

—*Can you save me?*

“First let’s hear you out. It might be an impossible request.”

It is.

Well it might be an easy victory from what she could tell from the previous day.

Pinison nodded and began talking. She talked about her own situation.

When she finished, the girl nodded and smiled.

“I see, got it. Just nice. I’ll do something about it.”

—Really?!

The girl nodded, and Pinison continued.

—I’m save—

Speaking up to there, the girl thrust her hand out to stop her.

“Umm, I can save you, but can I ask for one thing?”

A reward was natural. She would be fighting with monsters.

—What sort of thing?

“Yup. I come from a place called Nazarick, can you move there? If you can I’ll save you.

—....Eh?

“Umm, I can bring you to my floor though?”

Pinison imagined the place where the dark elf lived, and replied with a troubled face.

—A place without the sun, wind or water is a bit....

The girl smiled cheerfully in response.

“It’s fine! We have a fake sun, can make rain with magic, and can control wind as well so there’s no problem.”

Pinison was surprised.

Magic casters that could control the power of nature. Pinison heard that there were druids that were able to control the weather.

In truth, Pinison could to some extent use a few spells that could control nature. However, there is a great disparity when comparing the spells she used to those employed by the druids.

She was afraid that those were the stuff of bedtime stories, myths and legends.

And to think that such a thing existed.

—....Will you do it?

“Hm? No, a magic item.”

Pinison was surprised at the existence of such a magic item, and did not hear the rest of the dark elf’s words. No, perhaps it would be correct to say that she let the words—Of course, I can do it too— slide.

—Amazing....

“Really?”

—-Amazing, that magic item!

“Hmm.”

She thought that it might be good to explain to the girl how amazing such an item was.

That item was probably the highest class of magic item known as an artifact. She was probably thinking that this item, which would be the prized possession of anyone, was not that amazing.

Ignorance was not a sin but there are times that one will lose face. She should teach her in a way that would not embarrass her.

Pinison shook her head as she was filled with a desire to teach someone like a little sister.

Anyway, this was not important right now. If she moved, then she would teach her.

—-But is it fine for you to decide this by yourself?

Pinison did not want to end up like a flower picked up from the roadside only to be discarded after being discovered by angry parents. Would she understand that agreeing to being transplanted meant that she is staking her own life in this.

“It’s fine. I have permission. And I’m quite powerful.”

—-....Really?

“Unhmp.”

The girl’s face was full of self satisfaction. But after seeing the suspicious gaze from Pinison, she puffed up her face angrily.

“Don’t believe me?”

—-Yup, sorry. Quite a bit.

“Boo.”

At Pinison's instant reply, the girl bulged her cheeks in dissatisfaction. If her figure was seen who would think that she was important.

"Mah, I'll just let this go. It would fine just by you understand my greatness after the transplantation. Or that is not alright with you as well?"

—-What will I do after I move? I don't want anything bad to happen to me.

"Nothing like that. You will work under me as a subordinate."

—-Work?

Recalling the monsters she saw earlier, Pinison was filled with a desire to reject. She would be troubled if she was put together with those monsters. Fighting was not her strong point.

"Don't be so worried. I won't order you to be violent."

—-Really?

"Oh, it's true. As one of my subordinates, you will only be required to protect and manage the forest. Now, we are preparing various amenities for human habitation. The forest is only suited for trees to grow. Hence, I would like your help to cultivate and select the proper trees."

Cultivating trees for humans use was an interesting proposition. But, there was one strange matter.

—-People? Not dark elves?

"Yup"

Pinison was quite familiar with humans. But a question popped out in her mind, she was unsure whether they had a friendly relationship with dark elves. Mah, she did not understand the reason behind it. But it cannot be denied they required her skills on this.

—-Are there scary monsters?

"It's fine. If you're my subordinate they won't attack."

—-....There are.

As the girl laughed, Pinison's resistance to the idea quickly disappeared.

If she thought about it, it was not bad.

The problem was the replanting. If she did not like the soil or if her roots were damaged, she could die. But if she stayed here it would be asking for a slow death.

As if she read Pinison's unease, the girl laughed.

"It's fine. When you are being dug up or replanted we will use healing magic. And if you want to return, we will bring you back here."

—You can use healing magic?

"Of course!"

At this stage, there was no point to further resist. As Pinison did not intend to die, she reached out her hand.

She only felt loneliness after departing from the place she stayed in this time. But going to a completely new place raised her curiosity.

Pinison nodded and expressed her understanding.

—I look forward to working with you. Master.

"OK, leave it to me."

The girl hit her own chest with a thump.

"Now—My name is Aura. Aura Debay Fiora. Your name is?"

—Pinison Pol Perlia. Would it be fine to call you Aura-sama?

"Nope. It's fine, you will not be that kind of subordinate. But there are a few things I want you to protect. I will explain later. First we have a lot of things to do."



"Hmm. And so you transported them?"

"Yup. Together with Pinison's dryad acquaintances"

"What about the others?"

"Leave them be. A slaughter is not part of our objective. Ainz-sama instructed us to look for creatures that could coexist peacefully with humans and bring

them to the sixth floor. Next, we are going to negotiate with the treants.”

Why were they inviting weak races into Nazarick. Was it not for monitoring captured prisoners?

Shalltear wanted to understand the reason behind it and asked Aura, who was standing next to her. She wanted to speak but decided to keep quiet in the end. Aura was happily surveying the countless undead below. With such an innocent expression, she would have lost to it.

Shalltear decided to switch her gaze towards the group of undead.

Shalltear and Aura were currently located in the first level of the tomb, standing on an elevated flat platform. Originally the platform was used by skeletal archers and liches to attack their enemies. But the position of the platform was shifted and was now used by Aura and Shalltear.

It was a mystery as to why they were collecting weak undead.

Within Nazarick, the average level of the undead would be around level 16. They could not understand the reason why a large group of undead was gathered up. If they understood the logic behind Ainz-sama thoughts, they may be able to perform better.

As Shalltear went into the labyrinth of her thoughts, Aura who was next to her took out something.

“My reward for completing the task involving Pinison, tada!”

“What’s that?”

Aura took out a silver wristband in front of Shalltear. Something protruded out from it as it was worn on the wrist. It was an item that functions as a watch, quite common in Yggdrasil. It should not be something that Aura should be proud for.

But this was different as it was a reward given by Ainz.

The loss of her composure and Aura’s success caused a strong emotion to surface in Shalltear’s heart.

Shalltear was not someone that would show her emotions easily like a child. Only that she might answer in a colder fashion.

“That is?”

“Hm hm hmmm.”

Not knowing whether she caught Shalltear’s question, Aura started fiddling with the cuff. Suddenly, the cuff emitted a female voice.

[Nine, O’Clock, Eighteen Minutes]

“Could it be that the owner of this voice is....”

“This is amazing! The voice of Bukubukuchagama-sama!”

One of the 41 Supreme Beings, the one that created Aura, was not present anymore. She is also the sister to Shalltear’s creator, Perorocino.

An item that allowed one to hear her voice anytime, was priceless. An item brought from the 41 Supreme Beings, it could be said that no one would not want that item.

A desire burned within Shalltear. She wanted that item to every extent.

However the approximate percentage chance of Aura not giving her the item was 100%.

It was natural.

An item that allowed one to hear the voice of their creator at anytime, there was no one in Nazarick that would willingly let go of such a thing. In fact, the opposite would be true. However, a slight feeling of hope would be a small selfish request.

As Shalltear decided to get a word from Aura, she sensed the defensive magic activated from a teleportation spell. As she turned around, she saw the figure of Ainz standing there.

Ainz raised his hand to stop the two from kneeling. He arrived at the platform they were standing on and surveyed the undead before him.

“It seems the number is good enough.”

“Yes. It is according to your orders. 2500 zombies, 2500 skeletons, 900 ghouls, 400 undead beasts, 200 skeleton archers and 120 skeleton riders.”

“...Seeing this many undead grouped together is a beautiful sight. The numbers are good as well.”

Ainz confirmed the soldiers gathered in the hall.

Skeletons and zombies below level 1. Level 1 ghouls. The undead beasts ranged from level 1 to 20. Lastly were level 2 skeleton archers and riders.

It was not enough for an overwhelming force. If this was used then a difficult battle would occur. However, the problem was with the ghouls.

Making an analysis about the ghouls joining this experiment, Ainz immediately gave out his answer.

“...Good work Shalltear. However, lower the number of ghouls. Their paralysis poison may be a bit troublesome.”

“Yes!”

Hiding his desire to talk more, he moved his gaze away from Shalltear. Facing Aura, he smiled as he watched her fiddle with the band.

“You seem interested.”

“Yes!”

“I see.” Ainz deeply nodded and said enthusiastically. “Then did you find the hidden voice?”

“Eh? What’s that?”

“So you did not find it. Then....Activate it 10 times quickly in succession.”

Aura quickly played with the band around her arm.

[Nine, O’Clock, nine, nine nine nine, nine nine nine nine nine—]

Suddenly, the voice cut—

“Huh! Don’t press in succession bastard!”

—A female voice was tinted in anger and said threateningly.

“! My deepest apologies, Bukubukuchagama-sama!”

As if struck by lightning, Aura jumped, landed on her knees, lifting the ring up with both hands and bowed repeatedly. Shalltear was also surprised, but not to the extent of Aura. She looked at Ainz with a shocked expression.

“What was that....”

“Ah. Sorry, I did not mean for her to be so surprised.”

Ainz did not think that Aura would show such an expression, and apologized from the bottom of his heart, and the kneeling Aura stood up.

“That was one of the 10 hidden voices. If you have time you can search for them.”

“What sort of voice are the others?”

“Hmm? Um, I believe it was....” Digging up his old memories, Ainz whispered out those words. “People saying Onii-chan with a loli voice—-!”

Ainz movements suddenly stopped, and with a movement that a stiff screeching sound would match well with, he faced Aura.

“What is it?”

Hearing Aura’s childish response, Ainz had a troubled face.

It would be inadvisable to retake a reward that was given out. But is it proper to let such a young child hear about those things. Her loyalty might drop after hearing it. No no no, in this world there were no such adults here, it should not be a problem....

Ainz could only withhold his complaints towards Bukubukuchagama for putting those types recordings as a joke. He never expected that a thing meant as a joke would become a troublesome matter now.

Within a moment, Ainz had made his decision on what to do. He raised his voice slightly.

“Now Aura. This is an order that you must obey at any cost.”

“Y, yes!”

“...Do not listen to the alarm at 0721 and 1919. Do you understand?”

“Y, yes. Understo—-”

“—A, and so are the any other things?”

“Yes. There is the talks with the dryads Aura brought back.”

Ainz was grateful to Shalltear for suddenly changing the topic. Ainz turned around and answered.

“Ah, that. —You seemed to want to ask something, Shalltear.”

“Yes....Why are we assembling weak monsters? It is true that Nazarick does not have any spirit type monsters. However they are not strong enough to repel intruders that make it to the 6th Floor. I am asking if there is any meaning in inviting them.”

Ainz looked at Shalltear silently before beginning to speak.

“These are preparations to show that we can coexist with others in this world. If we meet an enemy that cannot be defeated by brute force, we must show that we are capable of acts of good. Creating this place is not an act of evil. They may form such a conclusion.”

Even if they were doing evil acts, they could simply not show it and blunten the opponent’s spear heads, and make discussions possible and let them think that they were kind.

The 1st to 3rd floors were catacombs, the 4th floor was the giant lake, the 5th floor was a frozen hell, the 7th was a burning hell. The most suitable floor on Nazarick that could be made into a paradise would be the 6th floor. It was also the largest one.

“Is it going well?”

“Who knows. However, the peaceful existences that were gathered, are proof that we are kind individuals. I am not hoping for anything more. One more thing. Having various types of subordinates is not bad. So I was thinking of integrating them with the monsters that were here.”

“I see.”

Seeing Shalltear finally understand, Ainz’s heart was filled with a painful thought. Aura did not seem to be the same, but Shalltear had the tendency to only think with strength.

She might be a good general at the forefront, but using her in the current predicament would be bad.

However, it was true that there was no room to half forgive a Guardian for their failure.

Basically Ainz could do nothing else but hold the reins.

Why did he have to use his head to this extent. The boss of his company should be a comfortable existence. Or did he use his head more than he showed.

The dissatisfaction flashed through his head, but he ignored the thought. He was a guildmaster, the absolute ruler. He would protect the glory of Nazarick and Ainz Ooal Gown. The difficulty should be expected.

If he thought that these difficulties came with the path to greatness, he would be happy.

....Of course, it was a lie.

As Ainz made his resolve, Shalltear asked another question.

“That is all Ainz-sama, but this may be impertinent of me, but I would like to ask you a question.”

“—Permission granted.”

“What is the reason behind the clash between the undead here and that race of people? If it is for victory, a more powerful army would be a more effective strategy, is it not?”

This was an obvious question. From the perspective of the guardians, undead at such levels even though there were 5,000 of them, would only need minutes to take care all of them. Even with the Death Knight as an opponent, taking two down would only require one second. Hence, they need around

2,500 seconds to settle all of them. Using them against, opponents that does not have any area wide attacks was not too bad a strategy to delay them.

They were only effective in delaying for time. Hence what was the need to gather all of them.

“Aura, what do you think?”

“I agree with Shalltear. Gathering weak ones, I believe that there is a connotation to this, but as to what it is....”

“Is it purposely to send them to attack in waves?”

Weaker monsters tend to spawn faster. Monsters like zombies and skeletons tend to spawn very fast.

.

“Sadly, both of you guessed wrongly. This is all for the sake of experimentation. If it proceeds as I have foreseen, then I shall tell you the meaning behind all of this.”

Shalltear and Aura sensed that Ainz was going to end the conversation. They lowered their heads in understanding.

The experiment might fail. Hence, he did not want to give out too many assumptions. But the two subordinates seemed to think otherwise.

They were looking at Ainz with eyes filled with admiration and expectations. They seemed to think that their master had a sense of profound consideration and judgement. Ainz however seemed to regret acting high and mighty.

What if it is a matter that is not worth mentioning. Then, he would have to prepare a different set of speech.

“...Shalltear, when this is over, I will make preparations to give you a Ring of Ainz Ooal Gown. I hastily gave you orders, but I look forward to you acting suitable.”

“Yes!”

“And where is that vampire? Brain was it?”

“...Yes. He is now in my private quarters.”

“Hmm....Then let’s go.”

“There is no need for Ainz-sama to go. I will call him here.”

“No, there is a lot of things to do....Are you hiding something?”

He raised the leading question at the quivering Shalltear.

“Ah....Currently....He’s petrified.”

Petrified? Ainz unconsciously sent a suspicious gaze at Shalltear. Why was it that not only Shalltear, but Aura was also avoiding his gaze.

Did something happen again.

A string of unexpected events happened, Ainz felt like kneeling on the floor and scream as he hugged his head.

Administering the organization was a tough job. It was a matter of fact that the bosses of such organizations in the world receive such high remunerations.

He would feel better if he screamed it out. But it would be impossible to do it within Nazarick.

Ainz instantly regained his mental equilibrium.

Petrification was just one of the many type of physical status and could be healed. Then he could only quietly accept it. Deciding his course of action, Ainz quickly carried it out.

“....I don’t know what happened but, well fine. Clean up....No fine. Go together”

“Yes!”

“Now Aura. Teach the dryads about the common knowledge of Nazarick.:

“Yes. Understood.”

“Then, let us start the operation.”

Chapter 35: Preparations | Part 4

A happy sound reverberated from the house.

The house made of logs was not wide. It had one large room, and two small rooms adjacent to it. Of course, there was no second floor or loft. However, everything was made large. It was like it was designed for beings larger than humans.

On one side of the small room were two simple bunk beds, and reminded one of a room of a dormitory. The other side was completely empty.

A giant mirror was hung from the wall. Its frame had the glitter of gold, and rune like characters were engraved into it. The mirror had no imperfections on it, like the surface of a perfectly frozen lake. Apart from that, it was a normal mirror.

It was quite difficult to live here, the log cabin gave off such an impression.

Inside of the hall was a large table. Surrounding it were six chairs. They were made of wood and were not extravagant. It was more for practical purposes.

Inside of such a hall, were two maids.

Since both were exquisitely beautiful, they did not match the house or its atmosphere. And so a weird feeling was born.

One of the people sitting down was the owner of healthy brown skin, and her laughing face suited a bright and happy woman. She looked to be in her twenties. Her hair was tied into braids which suited her active look. If she had a tail it would be wagging energetically.

And as if to contrast the woman, was a human with a calm atmosphere. Among the existing maids in Nazarick, she could be thought to be older with her height and atmosphere. She was probably past her mid twenties.

Her soiree knotted hair matched her atmosphere perfectly.

The former maid's name was Lupusregina Beta. The latter was Yuri Alpha.

They were part of the battle maids under Sebas' direct command.

Lupusregina reached out for the wooden plate on the table.

She lifted up a potato chip, made with thinly sliced potatoes fried in oil. She moved it to her mouth with a crunching sound.

"It's so good that I can't get enoughs."

"It's delicious?"

"Deliciouss. It's terrible that Yuri-nee can't eat."

There was no ill will in the girl's bright smile. The woman called Yuri flashed a pained smile towards the eating girl.

"You will get fat if you eat too much?"

"It's fine. I am not the type to get fat from eating."

"Really? Then please eat my portion as well. It would be rude to Pes otherwise."

This food—Fried Golden Potato Slices as they were called in Yggdrasil—was brought and made by the Head Maid herself. And it was made especially for Yuri.

At that friendly tone that indicated their closeness, Lupusregina tilted her head slightly.

Deciding that this was the best chance to solve the burning question, she opened her mouth.

"Does Yuri-nee have a good relationship with Pestonya-samas?"

Within Nazarick, the position of Head Maid which Pestonya had was higher than that of the battlemaid Yuri, and her level was higher. It would be impossible to call her in an informal way. If Sebas found out, they would be scolded.

If she only removed the suffix when he was not around, Yuri's evaluation would instantly drop, but Lupusregina knew that this was not the case.

They existed on mostly the same floor, but they had no contact due to their positions. No, there was some connection with Lupusregina as fellow clerics,

but then why.

“Ah, it might be because of the relationships between the Supreme Ones. Yamaiko-sama, my creator, and the one who made Pes and A-chan were women and so they had a good relationship. And so do we.”

“...Who’s A-chans?”

“Aura.”

“I guessed its! Isn’t it bad to not attach honorifics for the Guardians!”

“It’s fine. I make sure to do it when appropriate such that I will not get scolded.”

“Thinking about its....I have seen Aura-sama jump into Yuri-nees.”

Lupusregina recalled Aura jumping. While thinking that it seemed painful to her chest, her gaze flitted to Yuri’s nearly excessively ample chest.

Yuri made a troubled face as she thought about where Lupusregina was looking.

“They’re huge. Melon....Suicas? It sort of makes me hungrys.”

“What are you saying.”

Yuri shrugged her shoulders with a sigh.

“If they’re that huge why don’t you try being a musicians?”

“I have no intention of doing so right now. What do you think about him following the rules, isn’t he unexpectedly upfront?”

“Hah. Then its fines....He’s not nices.”

“It cannot be helped. Chagnars as a race have not had good attitudes. But I believe that there is an upfrontness there.”

“Well they understand that it would be bad if they make a pass at Nazarick’s residentss.”

“Probably.”

Yuri made a pained smile.

“...I am more fearful of Shalltear-sama. She is watching me with weird eyes.

Like a predator.”

“Well, Shalltear-sama is like that....”

“She is not a bad person, but her habits are a bit too much.”

The two looked at each other and smiled. Of course, rather than ill will they were speaking the truth.

“However, I’m really free. Can’t invaders come sooner?”

She smiled at the figure of Lupusregina doing something like a yawn.

“It seems a flag has been raised.”

“Hmhm?”

“Here.”

In the direction Yuri was pointing, past the glass window, was a shadow heading towards the cabin.

It was a cart.

It was wobbling on its way. The woman holding the reins wore the clothes of a commoner but the two horses had a fine coat, and exquisite bodies. Since they could pull a cart on a roadless plain told them that much.

A commoner and fine horses. The gap brought about a dissonance.

There was still quite a bit of distance, but every time it shook, several somethings could be discerned.

“*Crunch crunch*....What is it? They don’t look like invaders?”

Eating the last potato chip, Lupusregina raised an eyebrow.

Lupusregina whispered out that they might be merchants bringing food to the town. However the horses were too high quality. It did not mix with the poorly dressed girl.

It might have been that it was borrowed from her master. However, there was too little information to discern anything.

“True. But we should meet them as friends.”

Yuri said so, reached out her hands, and picked up her head that was on the

table. She then placed it on top of her neck, and hid the separation with a choker.

As a dullahan, Yuri could attach and detach her head at will, but with humans, it would be an extremely bad conduct.

Checking twice or thrice that nothing would drop, she stood up.

“Shall we make a move.”

“Got its.”

Lupusregina got up with a pyokon and walked to the door together.

The sunlight was surprisingly strong.

Yuri brought her hand up to block the sun.

The surprisingly cold wind blew through the plains, and the sun shone in a way that did not lose to it, but it had not reached its peak. It seemed that it would get hotter.

Yuri faced no difficulties in regards to temperature, but she did not like strong light. The log cabin was just made and so nothing could be done.

The log cabin which they had left was for another entrance for the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. It could be said that it was a checkpoint.

While it would be fine for them to die even if they tried to enter the building, they would be at least given a warning first according to Ainz. Of course, it was not kindness. Since Ainz did not have a grasp on the circumstances, an appeal of friendship should be done. The building was here to use the excuse ‘we had warned you’. Ainz himself was the believer of getting one’s just desserts if they trespassed into another person’s property.

However, if a clueless child enters and dies, there was no way that they would feel nothing. It was the sadness of seeing a friend lose something precious.

And so these two maids were chosen for this role.

While covering herself, Yuri narrowed her eyes, and looked at the approaching cart.

The cart was large but had no cover, and so was for everyday use. Behind the girl holding the reins were several presences inside the cart.

Yuri took a deep breath, and concentrated on finding signs of life.

The Monk-type class, Ki Master had the special skill [Presence Search]. It was an ability that could tell the user the numbers and difference in strength. If there was too large a level gap, an undead or construct, it could not be used. But it could detect invisible presences, and was used often.

“I see.”

Yuri whispered softly, and moved her gaze to the plains behind the cart for an instant. She then returned her focus on the cart.

“It seems they noticed us.”

“Yes.”

Yuri nodded in response to Lupusregina’s confirming words and replied.

“More importantly your tone.”

“Yes, understood, Yuri-san.”

“Yes. Well done Lupusregina.”

Smiling, Yuri adopted an expression that suited one to receive guests with. Next to her, Lupusregina was doing the same. If anyone saw them, they would think that they were sisters that did not look like each other.

The cart finally came close, and slowly stopped. Before the girl at the coachman’s seat could get down, several goblins came down from the cart.

Yuri and Lupusregina did not move.

When the cart came close to them, Yuri confirmed the figures of multiple goblins, instantly readied herself for battle, thought about the appropriate action, and rejected it.

And so, if the goblins displayed any sign of attacking, they would be dealt with and killed.

This was because, from her knowledge, they brought nothing but existences who would take no time to clean up.

Yuri made her decision as the 15 goblins descended. It was a number that made her want to praise the cart.

Basically in Yggdrasil, goblins were the lowest level of one, but various types, like spellcasters or lords, separated by race, special traits, or class, and so a goblin would have a name that suited its type, and it would change its level.

In addition, the level could be determined from the quality of the weapons, and the extravagance of the clothes. This was a well used element in RRG games where the colour was the same but the appearance was slightly different, indicating different strengths.

Most of the goblins, 12 of them, had the appearances of small fry and were the weakest goblins, but they were well equipped.

Chain shirts and round shields, a machete hung from their waists. Below the chain shirt was a brown short sleeve shirt and shorts. And leather shoes. There was a pouch hung from their waist where they could put small trinkets.

Small but well defined muscle protrusions could be seen from where the armour failed to cover them.

Yuri decided that they were probably level 8 goblins.

Those twelve goblins were holding the reins, checking the handle and rod of the horse and connected cart, lowering the girl that was on the coachman's seat and working frantically. The ones standing there numbered three.

The first one to get off was a goblin with a large build.

It would not be too much to call him a warrior. He had a tall figure that did not match his goblin status. A rustic breastplate covered him, and a well used greatsword hung from his back. While sending a sharp gaze into the surroundings, he slowly began walking.

On the right was a goblin spellcaster that was wearing a human-type skull.

It was holding a shabby wooden staff that was taller than itself. Weird ornaments decorated its body, and its chest was slightly swelling out. If one looked closely, they could see the cuteness of a woman. Why were there such differences between men and women, a question was raised silently.

The left had a cleric-like goblin. Rather than an intellectual he had a smart face. He was wearing a better chain shirt than the level 8 goblins, and had a morning star at his waist.

Goblin leader, goblin mage, goblin cleric. Yuri thought in her head.

The goblins' clothes were dirty, but not that much. There was no smell coming from them.

The goblin leader was in the centre and watched the group's movements.

Mercenaries. That was the most suitable word.

And lastly two girls were politely guided down from the coachman's seat and cart by the goblins.

The girl at the coachman's seat had chestnut hair that was braided down to her chest. With a healthy tan and black eyes, she had quite a cute face.

The other was like a smaller figure of the girl at the coachman's seat. Probably her little sister. The two were not well dressed, and had the figures of farmers.

Looking around unsure, they looked at Yuri and Lupusregina with surprised eyes. It was like they could not believe such people wearing that would be here. They felt baffled and overwhelmed by them.

In front of Yuri and Lupusregina, suddenly, the goblins got into positions surrounding the women.

It was a strange pose. Unknowingly, Yuri and Lupusregina's eyes went wide.

And like they were matching a timing, the goblins looked at each other, and all broke out into a chorus.

"We are, Enri-neesan's bodyguards!"

The two girls in the centre seemed embarrassed and made a strange pose, but immediately gave up and faced the ground with red faces.

A silence descended on the scene. The goblins' cheers echoed.

Yuri unintentionally left her mouth open. It was completely out of expectations. An existence like Yuri needed time to process what had

happened.

In contrast the goblins were in high spirits.

“Hyahha. It’s decided, siblings!”

“The preparations took a day. It would be bad if it was not.”

“Our hard work was rewarded!”

“Ou. You in love. Love.”

“But it’s bad. Saying that while we still have Enri-neesan.”

“Refusing would be bad.”

The goblins slapped each other’s backs as they spoke. The girls in the middle of the ruckus were still looking down with embarrassed faces and made no attempt to move.

Her ears were red. Yuri thought that it could not get redder.

“Enri-neesan seems to be moved! Seeing your face red with emotion makes us happy.”

“Yup, Boss is the best. Beautiful and amazing, the embodiment of compassion, you’re brave Boss!”

“And the pose with Enri-neesan in the centre emphasizes it. Yup, the leader of who thought of it really is a genius!”

“Right? It is suitable for Enri-neesan to do. It took me three days and nights without sleep to think of it.”

It was amazing. It was like an upside down frog*. It would be best to call out to the girl called Enri. Yuri thought up to there.

It was the guest that Ainz had spoke of.

“...Could it be Enri-sama?”

They could have felt something from the words “Could it be” and the girl called Enri replied yes in a soft voice. Her sister hid behind her with a red face.

If there was a hole, the two of them would certainly jump into it.

“Ah. Umm welcome. Ainz-sama sends his greet—-”

“Wrong! Enri-neesan is my wife!”

“Even if you are the leader I won’t forgive that!”

“Hah. Isn’t decided that I will be getting Neesan! My life plan is all ready. The first thing is to return—”

“I....want Imouto-san....”

“.....Lolicons are absolutely bad.”

“Yes, Lolita. No, touch.”

“Umm, if you want to—”

“No, I am the only one that can bring Enri-neesan happiness!”

“Hmm.... I cannot leave Enri-neesan to a bunch of existences like you who can’t think with anything but their muscles. My god has said this, thou, shall make Enri happy. Sparkle.”

“Disgusting! I have never seen anyone say ‘sparkle’ out loud before!”

“Anyway, your god is an evil god right!”

“Well being macho is everything. Women love buff men! I can’t leave it to a weakling like you.”

“....Some women might like it....”

“No, none.”

....These bastards are annoying.

While keeping her smile, Yuri’s brow started twitching. What should she do. When she thought that—

“Buhahahahahhaha! This is greats. So interestings!”

—Suddenly, an explosive laugh came from next to Yuri. The goblins stopped talking as if it blocked them.

“—Lupusregina.”

While receiving Yuri’s rebuking words, Lupusregina did not lose her smile.

“But, it’s greats. Anyways, welcomes, you twos. Ainz-sama sends his

greetings.”

“Eeh. Enri-sama and your sister Nemu-sama. We and Nazarick have been waiting.”

“Ah, Yes. Umm, I look forward to it.”

Enri bobbed her head. She spoke as if she wanted to hide her words.

“Nemu!”

Stopping Enri who was trying to drag out the girl behind her, Yuri looked at the goblins who were discussing who would be Enri’s husband.

“And who are these goblins?”

“Yes. Umm—-”

“We are Enri-neesan’s body—-”

“I am not asking you.”

Yuri cleanly cut him off, and the goblin leader’s shoulders dropped.

“Umm, they are people who came when I blew the horn given to me by Ainz-san....sama.... Umm, they have been protecting me.”

“Is that so.”

Now what to do? Yuri thought.

There was not a problem inviting someone like Enri, but it would not be good to have too many people without loyalty to Ainz. Especially existences without manners.

Contact Ainz, and make decisions based on that.

Then the order. First was to invite Enri and Nemu to Nazarick’s drawing room, and discuss with Ainz about the goblins. She should proceed like that. Of course, that was if Enri and Nemu did not have any objections.

“Then first I will bring Enri-sama and Nemu-sama. Should I ask for permission from Ainz-sama to bring them in later?”

“Ah, that is fine. We will be waiting here.”

“Is that so? Enri-sama, is it fine to act upon his words?”

“Eh? Eh?”

Enri threw a gaze towards the goblin leader, telling him to save her.

“Ah, please do not mind it. Enri-neesan. We are quite bad at being formal and so we will wait here.”

“And so, Enri-sama, Nemu-sama. Let us go.”

Enri was confused and brought along slightly forcefully by Yuri. Nemu followed with one hand gripping her sister.

The three of them entered the log cabin.



“So, why didn’t you follow your sister?”

“N? Well, if Yuri-nee is going then I won’t. —Anyway, how serious were you.”

Lupusregina had the smile of a predator. Meeting it, the goblin leader had the smile of a seasoned veteran. The surrounding goblins talking trash were now moving their mouths, and were focusing on Lupusregina. With the feeling that she was being met with wariness, Lupusregina’s smile got wider.

It was a creature that resembled a beast before a hunt.

“What are you talking about?”

“You weren’t serious? That ruckuss.”

“What....”

The goblin leader stopped talking. He understood that it was useless.

“Ha. It’s simple. You are far stronger than us. If you had any intention of killing us, it would take a second to kill one of us. However, if you thought we were idiots then it might have gone up to three seconds. We will do anything to buy more time for Enri-neesan and Imouto-san.”

“Haan. And so you would cut the rope connecting the horses and the cart when you get off.”

“Eh, yes. If it is just Nee-san and Imouto-san, we might be able to buy time for

them to escape on the horses.”

“And you have several people behind rights.”

The goblins faces changed for the first time. Wariness and fear was common.

“...You can tell that much?”

“Well. Two riders? There are two beast smells. And another two. What are they....If they did not come here then ranged....Archers?”

“Correct. They are archers.”

“Could you call them heres?”

“...Oi.”

Hesitating for a moment, he jutted his chin towards one of the nearby goblins.

That goblin took out a mirror, reflected light, and sent a signal behind him.

“No, you really are monsters.”

With the phrase that implied, “so you noticed them from her”, Lupusregina laughed.

“Well gatewatchers can’t be small fry right?”

“I agree. I thought you would have more cute points, but it seems I was wrong. So is the person known as Ainz-sama inside the log house?”

“No ways.”

“You are right.”

The goblin leader had a pained smile.

“There is an item known as <Mirror of Gate>. It is a magic item that can allow two points to be connected and limitlessly travelled to. Well there are small things like armies can’t use its....I don’t knows.”

“That’s an amazing item.”

If one considered the item’s effects, one could easily guess how desirable such an item would be. The would probably be no one who would not want it.

The goblin leader could think of countless uses for it. If it was sold, the amount was more than the worth of a small country.

“So, is there any problem waiting here?”

There was a hidden side to those words. Lupusregina noticed it and said nothing, but stared expressionlessly at the goblin leader.

“Not really. But if something bad happens can you save the lives of Enri-neesan and Imouto-san?”

The goblin leader bent his knees slightly. And so did the surrounding goblins. Lupusregina calmly expressed her desire to continue even though she was surrounded. The goblins understood, and unrest spread through them.

Basically, Lupusregina was straight out telling them that they were not worth being wary against.

“Why did you not take them and run away?”

“Simple. Two were extremely bad. We thought that we should lower the numbers. Were there any inside, we were idiots who thought that.”

“Why did you think that bad things would happen to them?”

“Sealing their mouths shut, removal of evidence. I have heard about Enri-neesan having a request made by the master of this place, but I cannot understand why existences like you would have a use for a simple farming girl. If it must have been a human of that village, why. Was it for some kind of success. Did they want her to come back alive. We have those sort of questions.”

“If you noticed that it was dangerous, wouldn’t have been fine to not come?”

“Hah. If we did not come and made a mess of things, it would be troublesome. If we came here we felt that there would be less damage. Well, Enri-neesan’s individual life is worth more than any of the other villagers.”

“Did you tell her?”

“No way. We heard about what Nee-san was thinking about. And so we came here prepared.”

Lupusregina looked at the surroundings. Was it to see how she would react while they were watching her. It would be natural for her to assume hostility if they drew their swords. However, only words were spoken and so none could be detected.

Basically they were unsure of her. What would she do. Would she do something to them. Should they try to do something to her. That was why they had a level of vigilance such that it would not be openly hostile to her.

Lupusregina made a smile of admiration, and made a serious face.

“...Goblin. Ainz-sama said to welcome them as guests. Then their safety is obligatory.”

Then that serious face collapsed.

“Aaand so, you as well are guestss. Well, it would be bad to talk to guests with this tones. So forgive mes.”

The goblin leader looked at Lupusregina’s face for a while, then deeply nodded.

“...I’ll believe it, Beautiful Maid-san.”

“I wanted you to attach Extremely but I’ll refrains. If something happens to her, I beg for her life.”

“Please.”

Lupusregina had a childish smile on her face as she looked at the bowing goblin.

“I like yous. Those who have loyalty.”



Ainz was currently attending to some things, and so he wanted them to wait in the guest room. Enri felt despair.

Enri lightly sat down on the chair.

Rather than being hired, it was like she was an animal that was taken from its nest, and she scanned the room in a panic. Next to her was Nemu. As expected, she was looking around the room like her sister.

They knew that Ainz the magic caster was an amazing person. That was why he stayed in a tower different from regular magic casters, or so they thought.

However, coming was different.

It was like she was a princess in a story, a world of a beautiful dream.

It was a not a world for her.

Above the fireplace, was a glass work of a bird about to take off. If she broke one, she doubted that even if she worked her whole life, she would not be able to pay it back.

The sofa she was on was beautiful, to the extent that she was worried about her own clothes dirtying it.

In all of Enri's 16 years of life was a magical light coming not from torches, lanterns and candles, but from a chandelier.

The items here had an extreme elegance, to the point that most of the items here could become the definition of the word exquisite. Especially was the black lacquered table in front of Enri. Even to her who did not know the price, she knew that it was impossibly high.

The decorated picture of a beautiful woman was also imprinted on it.

She was worried that she would get scolded if she dirtied the carpet. While sitting, she slightly lifted her legs up, and focused on doing her best.

Enri was about to collapse from her nervousness. While Nemu was young, she could still understand. She did not display curiosity one would expect from a child.

A worry that made her stomach hurt attacked her. The air got tense, and she wanted to run away somewhere. Left alone for a few minutes like that, it would not be strange for them to fall unconscious.

—At that moment, a knocking came from the door.

“Hii!”

Her shoulders crouched, and reacting to that, Nemu's body trembled a bit as she hugged her sister.

“Excuse me.”

Entering was a maid pushing a silver service wagon. A beautiful set of maid clothes that was without any flaws and seemed extremely expensive was worn by a beautiful woman. She had a kind smile. However, when she looked over at them with a tinge of exasperation, Enri began even more worried.

“I have brought refreshments.”

“I, it’s fine!”

The maid was taken aback at the uncanny speed of Enri’s reply.

“...Ah, are you worried?”

“Y, yes.”

She probably could tell by Enri’s worrying shivering and the tearing eyes of Nemu. She put a genuine smile on her face, said excuse me, and sat next to Enri. She then placed her hand on Enri’s shoulder which had frozen with worry.

“Enri-sama. Please do not be worried. Enri-sama and Nemu-sama are guests. It will be fine if you do not mind and wait.”

“B, but....If I break anything....”

“Please do not worry. Everything here is not important to Ainz-sama. If it is broken, then Ainz-sama would at most raise an eyebrow.”

“R, really. Everything here?”

From Enri’s point of view, the price of anyone of these items would make her head hurt. And to think that this was not important.

“Yes. Ainz-sama is extremely wealthy.”

“Y, yes I know.”

He was a person that gave out that much rewards. She knew that wealthy was a shallow description. But not to this extent.”

“Then please do not worry.”

“Even if you say so....”

“Then please drink something. It might put you at ease.”

“But....”

Her eyes ran towards the cup on the silver wagon. It was a delicate craft made of white porcelain, lain with gold. The underside was a deep beautiful blue hue, and a pattern or drawing was engraved on it. She was terrified of it breaking while she was holding it.

“—”

Before Enri could reject, a knocking came from the door. The maid’s eyes instantly moved from Enri and she stood up and walked towards the door. She opened it slightly, and confirmed the outside person.

She then faced Enri and said the name of the one at the door.

“Ainz-sama has arrived.”

“I have made you wait. Welcome to my Nazarick.”

The maid who opened the door retreated to the side, and a man with a weird mask that seemed to absorb any light and a set of extravagant black robes entered. It was the magic caster that had saved the village, Ainz Ooal Gown. However, he was more calm than before.

Following was another maid.

Ainz sat on the sofa opposite Enri and Nemu. And noticing that there was nothing placed on the table, she called out to the first maid.

“Did you not bring out the drinks?”

“My—”

“—I rejected it.”

Noticing that her words had a tinge of rudeness, Enri closed her mouth in a panic. Ainz replied with I see, as if he were forced back by her words.

“Thank you for coming. Enri and Nemu was it. Before the promised food, I would like to ask a few questions. It might dry your throat. How about it? A drink?”

“You are not calling me ‘omae’?”

“...That time was complicated. And this is my home, a place to welcome

guests. I do have to keep up appearances.”

That was a time of chaos when they had first transferred. However, ten days had passed, and the feeling of making [Ainz Ooal Gown] a legend was born in him. Then he would have to stop talking like that at some point. He had to work on getting a dignified and pressurising voice.

—Problems occasionally occur.

Ainz whispered in his heart.

“And so. I’m not a different person.”

While laughing lightly, Ainz replied to Enri with a hearty tone.

So basically that was what worried her. Enri’s shoulders lowered slightly.

“If you do not want drinks, can you hear what I want to say?”

Closing his mouth like he was deep in thought, Ainz began talking again.

“First was to go to the Empire’s campgrounds and give the parchment. Was there any problems?”

“Yes. The Empire was huge....I went to a large campground. Then four figures with the armour of those who attacked the village came. They asked me what they came here for, then I told them about the attack on the village, and handed them the armour and parchment.”

“Was there any special action made by them?”

“No. Not anything special. Once they took the parchment and armour and I left.”

“I see....”

Then, the likelihood it was not the Empire that attacked the village was very high. Although it was not 100% sure but the probability was close to it.

“When you called the goblins with the horn, was there any danger?”

“No, at night. I heard the sound of far off beasts. I thought it was dangerous....”

“I see....Hm? I passed it to you with that intention, I won’t think anything of it

if you use it.”

“Ah, it’s like this.”

Enri looked relieved.

Ainz considered for a moment before deciding there was nothing else to enquire about. There was nothing new. Things that he would like to find out piled up like a mountain. But the things that she does not know should be more. In the end, she managed to complete her task as a messenger properly.

“Thank you. I have finished all the question that I wanted to ask. Then, if you think of anything during meal time, feel free to tell me.”

“Yes, I want to return these to you.”

Enri took out a scroll and a horn from her unimpressive bag and placed it on the table. Those items, stronghold teleportation scroll and goblin summoning tool were given to her by Ainz before she departed.

“No, these belong to you now. It is in your best interest to keep it. Mah, I will recover the scroll.”

The teleportation scroll was not an expensive item. But stronghold teleportation scroll is a different matter because that type of scroll cannot be produced via normal means.

“That, ano.....Goblin-san they all.”

“Eh? Ah, since you did not bring them over, I can arrange for someone to entertain them near the entrance.”

“Ah, no. I don’t mean it that way.....”

He did not understand what she was trying to convey.

Ainz felt surprise as he gazed at Enri. He remained silent. After a while, Enri began to speak.

“Then, can I take them away?”

“.....You mean them?” Ainz nodded after understanding the situation. “.....I heard from one of my maids that they swore their loyalty to you. I have thought of accepting them...Mah, would it be a problem for you to take charge of

them?”

He received information from Lupusregina, about the goblins not having any loyalty to Ainz. Then, there was no need to recover them. Although, if he recovered them, should he killed them off as future test subjects?

There were differences when it comes to magical summoning by tools or by ability. Ainz was testing the effects of beings summoned for a long time. However, there was currently no difference between long term and short term monsters. That experiment was useful.

In short, he was using the people from this world as test subjects to compare the effects of the summoning.

“Eh....”

Looking at Enri who was silently in thought. Ainz added a helpful suggestion.

“.....If you are not able to support them, I can provide you with unlimited support in terms of food.”

“No, that.....” she looked like she had trouble finding the right words. “Due to the decrease in the number of villagers, if the goblins worked for us, everyone would be happy.”

“I see.....”

Because of the goblins’ level, they may appear short in stature, but their physical strength surpassed that of ordinary humans. Considering the situation now in the village, their strength was well-needed.

This is good.

Ainz felt the luck showering from the top of his head.

The goblins mixed well with the villagers. Due to their actions, they received the villagers’ trust. Ainz who gave them the item to summon the goblins had his standing improved as well. Since he was the savior of the village, he could easily act within the village when he needs to promote anything beneficial.

Well, about that, it might be necessary to keep the public order and safety of the village in mind, but that was a permissible range.

“Is it? The situation is not so bad. Since I never met them, I do not know whether they have a good or bad personality. If they seriously swore their loyalty to you, then it would be embarrassing for me to take them away from you. Please forgive me.”

“Erm, the goblins seemed very happy.”

“Nemu!”

Enri scolded her sister for suddenly barging into the conversation. Ainz waved his hand to show that he does not mind before turning towards Nemu.

“If it is like this. Goblins, like humans have both good and bad ones. It is just nice that this group of goblin are a bunch of good guys.”

“Erm.”

At the sight of the nodding Nemu, Ainz shook his head.

“Remember to appreciate them.”

“Erm.”

Ainz gaze met Enri's. He stopped the topic there.

“Then, the food preparation should be completed by now. Children would be bored by now. Shall we go?”

“No, no need, it is fine that we do not have to stay for meals. Since we are here is such a magnificent place....”

Enri shook her head rigorously.

“Erm..... Mah, it won't be good if I force you to stay.....But it is not easy to prepare dragon steak as main course.”

“Dragon?”

Dragon. Enri only heard of them in stories, be it the antagonist or as the friends of justice. But in each story, they were immensely powerful beings. Such an existence was used as food?

Impossible. He must be joking. But Enri got the feeling that the magic caster in front of her was telling the truth.

“I have sweet things too. Have you eaten a food called ice cream?”

After listening to Ainz, Nemu shook her head vigorously. The only sweet thing they had was fruits. If they travelled to the streets of the city, they may experience a variety of sweet food. But it would be impossible to them who had spent their lives in the village.

“It’s ice cold..... And very very sweet. As you put it inside your mouth, it will melt. Just like sweet tasting snow.”

Enri and Nemu could not help themselves but to swallow a mouthful of saliva.

“It would be good that you could try it once in your life. Now then, what are the contents for today’s meal?”

One of the maids answered in affirmative and began to explain explain the dishes for the meal.

“For today, we plan to start with one of the two hors d’oeuvres. The first will be a dish of Piercing Lobster, which is a form of Noatun seafood, in a velouté sauce.

“The second

hors d’oeuvres would be Poiret’s foie gras of Víðópnir.”

“For soup, it will be Alfheim-style cream of sweet potato and chestnut soup.”

“For the main course, it will be a meat dish. Marbled frost dragon steak from Jotunheim as suggested by Ainz-sama.”

“Last for dessert, we have Golden Apple compote, served in white wine and topped with yogurt., and golden red tea ice cream.”

“For drinks after dinner, we have already prepared coffee. But I thought that Ruesshu peach water might be a better choice on my way here.”

“That is all. If there is any desire to change, please inform us.”

What was she saying.

Enri and Nemu was staring at the maid, as they were amazed by her. Was she chanting magic? Those were their thoughts.

Luxurious oatmeal porridge and soft fluffy white bread. That was the limit of their imagination. There was a huge gap in their expectation.

“Hmm....Do you like foie gras? I do not think children will. And it is such an oily menu. Is there anything else?”

“Yes. Then the hors d’oeuvre will be scallop salad, and plum confit.”

“Yes.....compared to the menu earlier, Isn’t this one better?”

“Eh? Me?!”

Enri who was suddenly asked a question, answered hastily. She surmised that it would not be proper to simply reject without understanding the meaning behind those words.

“Ah, ano. N, no, please do so.”

“Truly?”

She managed to utter a sentence after wringing her brain as Ainz continued to converse with the maid regarding the matter about food.

Ainz continued to talk rapidly like an expert. Hearing this, Enri felt the difference in their worlds between herself and the great magic caster. .

Humans who could use money to buy luxury goods were naturally rich. Amongst it was food, even if you eat it and it disappeared, one would still put importance on it.

Abode, knowledge, power. The magic caster had it all.

A simple peasant like Enri could not match up to him. At least someone like a king or people from the heavens could rival him. The masked magic caster was awe inspiring.

Saved by such a person.

A feeling of respect surged within the heart of Enri.

“That....”

“Erm? What is it?”

“Thank you very much for your help.”

“Thank you very much.”

Nemu bowed with Enri to convey their deepest gratitude. For a moment, Ainz did not understand what they were trying to convey, a question mark appeared above his head. Then, as if he caught on to the situation, he waved his hand.

“Don’t mind too much about it. If I noticed the situation earlier, people who were important to you would not have died. Both of you were saved because of your own actions.”

“Even though,.....if a magic caster like you did not reach us on time,..... I, much less my younger sister would have been killed. I am truly grateful to you for saving us.

Ainz quietly shrugged his shoulders.

“Mah, it’s fine if you think about it that way. As I said earlier, those were the fruits of your own labor. Then, let us go for dinner.

Ainz stood up slowly, before heading towards the door. Enri who stood up late felt someone tugging the corners of her dress.

“Onee-chan.”

Nemu was pulling the corners of Enri’s dress as if she wants to say something. From her looks, Enri knew what she wants to say.

“Erm, since I was saved by such a powerful person. I must let the others know.”

There were many people in the village who wanted to know who Ainz was. The reason for this was simple. Controlling a knight like that—Death Knight was a ordinary magic caster, no one would think like that. Since he was her savior, he should be one of those heroes that appeared in the legends.

In her poor environment, such a powerful being appeared, those were her own thoughts.

Until now, several confirmed facts appeared in the eyes of Enri and Nemu.

Enri was looking at Ainz’s retreating figure.

“Legends are true....They’re not stories....”

Chapter 36: Investigation | Part 1

While climbing up the stairs to the 4th floor of the Guild, a man was breathing heavily.

His build was good. No, it would be better to say his body was obese. A layer of fat covered his stomach, and there was some underneath his chin as well. Depending on the amount of fat, it might be possible to say that he had the face of an unattractive bulldog.

His hair was thin, allowing light to reflect off it, and the remaining hair was a white colour.

However, his clothes were amazing. He wore a velvet jacket that a commoner could probably not wear. His rings and clothes were quite good items. It quite obviously displayed the depths of his wallets.

Since E-Rantel was under direct control of the Kingdom, the ones running the city were appointed by the king. And the mayor of the town would be their head. That was him, Panasolei Gruze Vauna Rettenmaier.

In contrast to his appearance, he was not useless. He was a person in the useful category.

Since the city was at the forefront of the war between the Kingdom and the Empire, various items and their groundwork needed to be taken care of. It would be sufficient to leave it to merchants, but the one who rejected it was him. It was a job that required one to have sufficient knowledge to prove whether it was the right decision or not.

He was breathing heavily.

“Are you okay?”

The one who spoke to Panasolei was the receptionist of the Guild, Ishpen Ronble. But it was a question that skillfully hid the fact that she was tired having to help him here.

“Puhii. Puhii. I’m not okay. Puhii”

Was his nose blocked, his breathing reminded one of a pig.

“How should I put it. Puhii. Since there is someone old like me, puhii, with a rich build, puhii wouldn’t it have been better to meet on the first floor. Puhii.”

Was he oinking or talking. Ishpen lowered her head as Panasolei’s words caused her to think such.

“My apologies.”

“Puhii. Puhii. Well, there’s no helping it. Puhii.”

Panasolei began walking and took out a handkerchief to wipe away the sweat on his brow.

“Puhii. I can go by myself from here. Thank, puhii, you.”

“Yes. Excuse me.”

After sending Ishpen down the stairs, Panasolei started walking.

If he had turned his head to see her, he would have seen her staring at him while walking down the stairs.

However, Panasolei did not turn back.

He wiped his sweat while walking, and stood before a door. He was about to open it, but hesitated.

The fourth floor of the Guild. On it were the Guildmaster’s office, safes for important items and rooms for talking about important information. The room in front of him was a meeting room. It was made for important meetings about the guild or about things that affected the city.

The talks that occurred here were mostly unpleasant.

The later he opened this door, the happier he would be. But the people who could laugh at Panasolei and had knowledge about the complicated job of running a city did not exist.

Wiping his face with his handkerchief for the last time, he straightened his back. His stomach shook.

He did not knock. While the ruler of this city was the king, it was actually Panasolei.

“I made you wait, puhii.”

As he opened the door, he spoke to all of those present.

He took a step in, and looked at the room.

It was not a large room. About six meters in length, or a bit larger. There was a table in the centre, with six chairs. As there was no windows, it made one feel claustrophobic.

There were several papers scattered on the table. Without paper or cardboard, gaps would occur in the serious information of the Guild. However, it felt like the papers were left there after the last person read it.

Several cups and two bottles of drinks were placed there as well.

Those sitting on the chairs numbered four. Two he knew and two he did not.

One of the faces he knew belonged to a masculine man.

With an outfit of long sleeves and long pants, he seemed to be able to move freely. A light, or magic light, glittered from the sleeves and his collar showing that it was endowed with protection magic. The scabbard at his waist was an exquisite decoration. The long sword was also well made. This too had the glimmer of magic.

He had jet black hair and moustache. His build was fairly large, giving the impression of a tightly wound body, with prominent bulging muscles, that could not be hidden by his clothing.

A warrior. The word was suitable, and the man was the definition of it.

Another face he knew was a thin man with extremely highly strung nerves.

His age was about to enter the late thirties.

He wore a deep green robe. The tall ebony staff he always carried was lain against the wall, its magic crystal embedded in its tip. He wore three rings. In addition a Blazer protected his arms. All were enchanted with top quality magic.

His thin hair was golden and his deep blue eyes carried a sharp gaze. If he

had a bit more muscle he would be considered a beauty, but currently he looked like an emaciated man.

One of the unknown faces was the only woman in the room. No, should she even be called a woman.

She was an extremely aged woman. Wrinkled face, wrinkled hands. Her white hair fell to her shoulders in a mess. Combined with her hooked nose, she looked like a witch out of a fairy tale.

Her clothes were work clothes for commoners. It was originally white but it was spotted with green stains, and smelled of grass. The fact that she was called here while wearing that stated her importance.

And the last person.

Shortly cut hair. A square face. A man with warm expression but a will of steel.

He had an atmosphere of being well into his late thirties.

His clothes were like that of a commoner, but it was made of good thread. His neck had the symbol of the Four Great Gods hanging from it. It was simple, but it did not feel lacking. The words clean suited the cleric.

He had a good body, but it was not built to the point of a warrior. However, he was the tallest and everything about him felt big. To the point that it felt like his hands on the table could cover the face of a man easily.

Panasolei said nothing and walked forward, and sat down in an empty chair. He then wiped the neverending sweat with his handkerchief. If then took a cup no one was using and poured water into it.

He emptied it in one breath.

The water had the taste of fruit mixed inside. His cold throat felt a faint sweetness, but it felt refreshing and the feeling spread to the rest of his body.

Again, when he poured in water, one of the men he knew opened his mouth.

“I apologize for calling you. Welcome, Panasolei-sama.”

“Puhii. Ah. Is it another dangerous thing? Guildmaster.”

The warrior-like Guildmaster—Pluton Ainzack—had a cynical reply and had a pained smile.

“It is as you say.”

“I see. Puhii....And these people are?”

“Yes. These are people who I feel have the necessary knowledge about this event. Firstly—

Panasolei lifted his hand, and stopped Pluton’s introduction.

“Hmm. Nice to meet you, pharmacist-dono. I believe your name was Lizzie....Lizzie Bareare-dono was it?”

Panasolei and his acquaintances made faces like it was expected. The two he did not know made surprised expressions.

Panasolei finally registered on the faces of the two he did not know, he felt that he was lowly evaluated from them.

He liked this change in atmosphere.

While wiping his sweat, he hid his smile.

Panasolei’s appearance was extremely unattractive. Rather than being liked by the opposite sex, it was more common for him to be ignored, even at his debut in society, he stayed mostly by the wall.

It could not be helped, and he himself had given up. However that appearance helped at times. Such as first meetings. The fact that his head was different from his body was outside of his partner’s expectations, and he could use it as a good card for negotiations.

This time, he used to raise the two’s evaluation of him.

“So you did know.”

“Of course, Pluton. There is no way that I do not know the woman that is the best pharmacist in this city.”

“Hoh. To know an everyday worker such as myself. You have my admiration.”

The old woman bowed her head politely. Panasolei calmly waved his hand.

“No, the potions you have made have saved the lives of the Kingdom’s soldiers. I believe that I do not need to explain that the Empire will attack in several months. At that time we will be relying on you.”

“Understood. Even if I have to get all my disciples, we will prepare the necessary amount.”

“I thank you for your words. Then shall we discuss this another day.”

“Of course, I shall wait for that day.”

“Then please do, Bareare-dono.”

“Got it. Mayor-dono. And you can call me Lizzie.”

“I see, my gratitude.”

It was like saying it was worth it to come.

The problem that eventually had to be solved had preparations that made Panasolei give his admiration in his heart. His face that looked towards the unfamiliar cleric.

“Now, you are the highest priest working here, Gignal, Elshai-dono, yes?”

“Yes. This is our first meeting, mayor-dono. Please call me Gignal.”

“Thank you.”

Lowering their heads slightly, they exchanged greetings.

“You have saved many soldiers with your healing magic. Allow me to express our thanks in place of the king.”

“Please do not mind it. It was after that war afterall.

“Indeed.”

While he still said that, Panasolei naturally knew. Paying for rewards was normal.

“The funds we receive are used to run the facilities. The one who must express his gratitude is I.”

“No, no, it is appropriate recompense for your work.”

“We, the ones who work for god, would like you to remember that our doors are always open.”

“Got it. My doubts have been cleared just by your words.”

Panasolei then looked at the last person he knew.

“And....it has been a while? Magician Guildmaster—-Theo Lachesil.-dono”

“Wasn’t it only a month? Mayor. Please drop the dono.”

“Really? Then I’ll do so.... Can you tell me why so have summoned the highest powers in E-Rantel to this room? I do not want to hear that I was hurried summoned for a dangerous thing?”

Making a decision that the information was recorded on the papers on the table, Panasolei picked up the thrown papers and read them.

They informed him of the woman Baniara, and what happened to her comrades.

The summary was that they were attacked by a monster, and the party was wiped out, but it was not rare for that to happen to adventurers.

However the problem was the monster was a vampire. And so the report contained lots of information about the questioning that she received.

For example, the massacre of the bandits in the cave. It showed a crack of the destructive power it had. The more he read the more he thought that the vampire was extremely strong.

Reading it several times, it implanted itself in Panasolei’s head.

Including the fact that Lizzie and Signal who he did not know were called in, Panasolei nodded as he gained a vague understanding.

“I see....Now, I do not know much on this subject. Can you spell it out for me?”

The Adventurer’s Guildmaster, Pluton, and Magician’s Guildmaster, Theo, were friends from the same adventuring party. And so they could get the nuance of each other’s thoughts just by looked at each other’s faces.

They looked at each other, and Pluton opened his mouth.

“Panaselei-sama. A Vampire has been spotted near E-Rantel.”

“Hmm....”

It was quite close. However, was that something to be worried about. While thinking that, the mayor Panaselei did not voice them.

Monsters were close to the world of humans, but there was a boundary. There were occasions where, Goblins Orcs and Ogres came to attack or Griffons, Manticores, or Cockatrices hunted for food. However, there were also cases with monsters apart from those encountered humans when, they were being chased, migrating or other exceptions.

However, undead were different.

Undead with for the death of the living, and were born from unclean places. Such as battlefields and ruins. And they appeared near the land of the living.

It was natural for undead to appear in cities. No, it was rare for none to appear. And so the cemeteries where death was common, was defended from attacks from the inside, and rules were made so that no one could enter at night when undead were common.

They were used to seeing undead, and they were monsters that often came up in conversation.

Vampires had quite the strength among undead.

As Panaselei was not an adventurer he was not too clear on it, but he knew at it was the top five among the undead.

However, it was not an undefeatable existence.

“That is terrible. We must hire adventurers, and calculate how much they will cost.

While Panaselei spoke like that, it was a result that only made him raise an eyebrow.

The rest looked at each other, and made bitter expressions. No matter how one looked at it, it was not good.

“.....Can you tell me why.”

Towards this question, the people at the table looked at each other before deciding on a representative. It was the head of the Magician's Guild, Tio.

"The problem is that the vampire used <Reanimate Dead>."

Silence descended upon the room.

It was a silence that the mayor could not grasp. The vampire used a strange magic. Originally, a vampire was a race of undead that could utilise numerous magical skills and this was where the problem started.

The mayor was looking at the report which he read. Indeed, the important information about the vampire was emphasised, yet he failed to understand its importance.

Although the mayor could not understand the meaning of it, the people in this room had no problem grasping the severity of the situation.

"This is extremely dangerous as it knows magic."

"Basically?"

"<Reanimate Dead> is a third tier magic."

"So?"

"There are ten ranks of magic, from the first to the legendary Tier 10. Well there are legends of something above that, but it is baseless. We shall not touch it."

Theo shook his head gently as he faced the mayor directly, before he continued to speak.

"Now, do you know who is the current strongest magic caster?"

A meaningful glance was dished out but no answers came back immediately. Not considering the circulating myths and legends, only one name came to mind when considering a serious answer.

"The Empire's magic caster. Fluder Paradyne."

From the mayor's answer, Theo nodded as if agreeing with the answer given.

"Now, do you know what level of magic the great magic caster Fluder-dono

can use?”

“I do not....”

“Tier 6. While you may not think it is amazing, but the most recent case of being able to use it was 200 years ago. The ones known as the 13 Heroes....Do you understand? The existence of the Tier 10 is unclear, so the highest rank that humans can use is Tier 6. Well, the ones who fought the 13 Heroes, the evil gods could use Tier 7 though....”

“Hmm....”

Towards the vague explanation, the mayor seemed to develop an understanding. He began to wipe his sweat.

“Basically please do not think that Tier 3 is just a rank that is faster to count from the bottom than the top.”

“Got it. Basically, being able to use it is quite an accomplishment?”

“Yes, correct. Now for the main point.”

Theo continued his explanation, with a manner like a teacher addressing his students.

“The basic difficulty level of a vampire is 60. This is the perfect strength of an A class adventuring party. Depending on the composition, even B ranks can handle it, but it also depends on the preparations. Added to the fact that it can use Tier 3 magic, even without tests to determine it, at least B class adventurers are needed.”

The mayor frowned as he began to grasp the gist of what was spoken here.

“Basically you want to say that a monster that rivals an A class party has the strength of B class.”

“Yes.”

“Hmm—”

“Theo, let me explain the rest of it....” Pluton continued Theo’s explanation. “For A Class adventurers, their population is approximately two percent of the entire country’s adventurer population. The total number of adventurer’s

registered within the Kingdom is 2,000 people. In other words, the number of A class adventurers is about 40 people. Needless to say, A Class adventurers are rare.”

“I see.”

Panasolei let out a breath that resembled a sigh.

“I have a basic understanding. I want to hear your evaluation. Is it dangerous?”

“Extremely.”

“No mistakes.”

“Not wrong.”

“Extremely dangerous.”

“Hmm....Then what would you suggest doing?”

“There is but one answer.” Pluton had a strained face. “At least a combination of A+ rank parties would be suited.”

“T, that is impossible! For too impossible! Where can we find such adventuring parties!”

“Two in the Kingdom, two in the Empire so we borrow one. So three parties. And in the Agrand Council Alliance has four, so—-”

Panasolei had wide and surprised eyes. He narrowed his mouth to oppose.

“Are you serious? Pluton. Moving parties from the Agrand Council Alliance within the Kingdom? Are you seriously saying that?”

“Yes.”

The mayor’s eye widened further, as if it was going to pop out after looking at Pluton, who nodded gravely. Then he closed his eyes tiredly and collapsed on the chair, weakly shaking his head.

“Impossible. This is the king’s territory. Obtaining permission for that country’s adventurer’s to move freely....It would create all sorts of problem.”

“After all, they are a group of people that could potentially aggravate those

people in the Theocracy.”

To Pluton who reviewed that fact easily, the mayor was staring at him with eyes filled with resentment. Still Pluton reviewed a nonchalant expression. The mayor clicked his tongue, staring at Pluton with the eyes intend to kill him.

“...Are there any others? Apart from the Agrand Alliance.... Like Calsanus City-State or Roble Kingdom?”

“In Calsanus City State’s Guild, the highest is an A Class, and Roble Kingdom only has one. They will not let go of them and they may hate us for it, but we can do nothing but contact the party directly. I predict a painful conclusion.”

“Then what about combining three parties?”

“Impossible you know, Mayor.”

The mayor turned his intention towards Lizzie, who voiced her opinion for the first time.

“If the opponent is a vampire that can use Tier 3 magic, then it would be a good fight with two A+ Class parties. But, you know, Mayor that is thinking if the highest magic the vampire can use is Tier 3.”

What they wanted to say and what they were all being cautious of, Panasolei was finally able to understand it and his face paled.

“At most....Basically....”

“Yes you know. At most. If not, then it will be a nightmare within a nightmare. In the case of it being able to use something higher than Tier 3, the words dangerous don’t begin to describe it you know.”

“...We believe so. If Tier 4, four A+ Class parties, if Tier 5 then at least 10 will be necessary.”

“Hence under the condition where we can not determine the strength of our opponent, sending only three teams would just be wasting their lives.”

“Impossible....”

To judge an adventurer’s team solely by their strength, the strength of a team would be equal to 1,000 men. This is due to a particular incident where

2,000 soldiers surrounded an adventurer's team. When only 1,000 of the men were facing the adventurers, the situation ended without any casualties to the adventurer's team.

But.

If it was the case that three parties were too little then what was that vampire.

Fully comprehending the dangers of the situation, the mayor picked up a cup and slammed it on the table.

"Then what about collaborating with Gazef-dono?"

Gazef Stronoff, the Kingdom's strongest warrior. A human with strength beyond that of an A+ adventuring party. An existence the Kingdom should thank.

"It is true that there is no warrior that can defeat Gazef-dono. However, should a four man adventure party fight Gazef, the winners will probably be the adventurers. Gazef-dono has an amazing sword, but he is different from a warrior with slightly blunted swords, a shield, armour and medicine prepared. The party has multiple paths they can take—They can do four times as many things as Gazef-dono. When fighting monsters, this makes a large difference."

"Hmm...."

"Mayor. It is currently only in the vicinity, if it makes its way into E-Rantel retreating will be difficult."

"Ugg."

Accepting Pluton's words, Pansolei raised a pained voice.

He understood what they wanted to say. On top of there being no A+ Class adventurers in E-Rantel, they could do nothing but human wave tactics, and the undead needed no rest or sleep. Then they could do nothing but hit it until the sun rose, the results would obviously be bad.

In addition, even if they were not destroyed up to that point, retreating was quite difficult as well.

"If we cannot find A+ Class parties, there are no other options. Even if we

search the vaults of the Magician's Guild, we will probably not find anything that can be effective on a vampire of that strength."

"It's a great disaster you know. We can't do anything but cover our heads and wait for it to pass."

"I will not hide my displeasure as a cleric, but throwing away lives is a foolish action. However, if there are innocent sacrifices then we clerics will become shields."

"If it reaches the city, I want to faint at imagining the number of sacrifices you know."

If they could not assemble them, they could do nothing but tremble. This was the opinion of all those present. However, accepting the fact was not fitting of the position of Mayor.

If they could not be assembled, then find other methods that could lead to a better ending no matter how slight.

Then first was information. When Panasolei was about to open his mouth in agreement, water was poured on him from the side.

"It's not such an easy problem. Lizzie-dono."

A flash of bitterness ran across Pluton's resigned face as he laughed.

"If 4th then the city's scope, if 5th the Kingdom, anything above that it is on the scale of surrounding countries. This is."

Theo and Pluton made painful smiles. Lizzie and Gignal made faces expressing their surprise.

"It's that much of a problem? Certainly it is a strong enemy, but!"

"The opponent can rival the army of a country. At it can move by itself as well. With sentience, and magic, it can predict our movements."

"The fear of an existence that can rival military powers suddenly appearing....I don't want to imagine it."

If it was several tens of thousand of soldiers, their traces of movement could easily be found anywhere. In addition, a large volume of food would be needed

to support them, and a prolonged battle would be difficult.

Then what about an individual? What about if it used invisibility magic, and was proficient in espionage?

It was probably possible for it to fly and infiltrate the city, or disguise itself as a traveller and pass through the front gate. It did not need food. In addition it hated the living. That sort of monster was nearby.

From the understanding of a powerful monster, Lizzie and Gignal hung their heads in pain as the understanding changed to recognition that it was an extremely dangerous existence.

A heavy atmosphere hung in the room, and silence dominated. It was to the point that one could hear the others' throats moving.

"Hah....The worst."

At Panasolei's whisper, everyone expressed agreement.

"I have heard the weaknesses of a vampire are the light of the sun and the cleansing of the clerics, can we not attack it using those."

"Firstly it is impossible. An existence that can use magic of that level and not have any counters for sunlight is quite difficult to believe."

Panasolei looked to Gignal for help.

"I truly apologise, but magic that can obliterate an undead instantly will probably not work in this situation. Even the Six High Priests of the Slane Theocracy, the three directors and six mikos would find it impossible."

In the nearby country, even their highest priest could not cleanse an existence beyond A+. It made one feel the meaning of an undead most deserving the word powerful. Panasolei was about to wipe his sweat away, but he noticed that none was flowing.

"...Theo, why did such a monster appear here? What legend did it come out of? Any information?"

"No, such a legend does not exist."

"Is such a thing possible? Undead which bear hatred for the living, hiding in a

corner of this world. I, myself am not familiar with aspects of third tier magic especially whether it is something that could be learned easily.. But Theo, as the head of the Magician's Guild should have a clear idea on my question. Is it something that she could learn herself?"

"...Impossible."

Theo's sharp voice broke the silence within the room.

Magic at this stage could not be self-taught. Then, this could serve as evidence that a figure acting as a teacher existed. Likely the teacher is a dangerous character worthy of investigation.

No one could discard this rather uncomfortable idea.

".....Maybe it received backing from a country? Could it possibly be controlled and trained secretly?"

Then, we could just negotiate with that person as there is no way to talk with an undead, which harbor a deep hatred for the living. However, the mayor's idea had to be discarded.

"That situation is highly unlikely. A country that could control a vampiric magic caster is unheard of. Furthermore, by referring to the vampire's personality, it would be impossible for a vampire to have a cordial working relationship with the living."

"What about a magic caster that had his blood sucked out and was converted into its familiar?"

"According to the information collected by the Magician's Guild, having one's blood sucked out by a vampire would only results in being turned into a lesser vampire. It would lose its qualification to be a teacher."

"If it's like this, someone could have betrayed humanity....This is the most logical conclusion. Like a cult or something similar. On those incidents where the adventurers encountered cultists, it is not uncommon to face with the worshippers of the undead."

"Or...." Based on the Gignal's personal knowledge, it was the best situation to spread the notoriety of that famous undead." The worst possible situation, the

one playing the role of teacher....Landfall.”

Once again the room fell silent.

Landfall was considered to be the most powerful vampire lord. She had sufficient power to destroy any country, turning it into an undead paradise.

Legend says that she was destroyed in the end by the 13 heroes. Just that for the past 200 years, occasional rumours sprouted about the discovery of the magical items or treasure maps that belonged to Landfall.

That undead teacher is The Undead.

No one could stop themselves from sighing.

“Landfall’s disciple? It’s the worst possible scenario.”

“Landfall is capable of using Tier-5 magic. If that vampire possessed such strength, without the skills of the 13 heroes, we could not hope to defeat it.”

“It was said that the 13 Heroes have passed away, then again, some of them may still be alive.”

“The Elven King is still alive right?”

“There’s no way to verify the authenticity of such news. It seemed to be a rumour that originated from the Theocracy.”

“...We seem to be dragging on with small talk.”

Sensing that the mayor was tired after his speech. The room once again descended into silence.

“I hope to get some consensus on this. Firstly that vampire is a rather strong enemy.”

“Yes, indeed.”

“Are you saying that if we cannot assemble A+ Class adventure parties, we can do nothing but hug our heads?”

“I hate to admit it. But it’s the truth of the situation.”

“Was there any communication from the nearby villages?”

“At best, we could only assign patrols to search for the undead camp as soon

as possible.”

“Erm....although we may find it, we could never defeat it. This is no laughing matter.”

Nobody could answer those words of irony. Everyone there was rather depressed. Then, Pluton muttered something.

“...However before this. We should collect more intelligence at the spot where the vampire appeared.”

The mayor’s brow twitched.

“About the existence of that vampire, was the matter confirmed? Is there any possibility that it was an observational error?”

“No, there is no chance for error in this. We have investigated this matter thoroughly.”

“So it seems....I do have one question....Why leave the girl as the sole survivor? There’s no reason to leave her alive.”

The mayor read through the report several times. He tapped his fingers on the table as he queried.

“We had such a question in mind as well. After considering everything, I came out with a possible explanation.”

The majority of undead had a strong hatred against the living. But there were also those with strong intelligence, they would not simply kill the opposite party. Instead, they would enact plans such as causing the enemy to go into a spiral of self-destruction, act by using their minions or a third party.

The possibility that all of this was just to satisfy its sadistic tendencies. To imprint its horrifying form on its victims.

There is one more point—

“The vampire received more than expected damage from the potion. But there are some out of place aspects in that situation. If it received unexpected damage, the vampire should have killed any witnesses to stop the spread of information.”

Everyone in the room crossed their arms as they immersed themselves in their own ideas. Their long discussion did not result in any plausible explanation.

At this moment, the mayor had a sudden idea.

“How about the idea that the person circulating the potion was releasing his fishing line?”

The atmosphere in the room stirred, the few people inside tried hard to think of facts that could refute the mayor’s assumption. But nothing came out.

If there were a sufficient number of A+ ranked adventurers, then they would be able to fight on par with the vampire. The vampire seemed like it was afraid of someone.

A short moment passed before Pluton opened his mouth.

“The probability of it is very low but it is not entirely impossible.”

“.....Lizzie-dono, could you concoct a potion that could defeat a vampire?”

The questioned pharmacist made her face even more wrinkled.

“Undoubtedly that healing potion is capable of hurting the undead. It’s hard to tell based on the situation at hand. Because to concoct a potion that is capable of repelling a vampire is not something, me, my pupils nor anyone I know is capable of.”

“That healing potion is unheard of even within the Magician’s Guild.”

“Then, how about the potion known as Amrita which can be found in the Theocracy? Rumours said that it contained the power of the gods.”

“...Priest-dono, even us in the Magician’s Guild do not have any records about a potion that could match the potency of the healing potion that is one of the most guarded secrets of the Theocracy.”

The person that gave Brita the potion had his name recorded in the report.

“Momon is it? Did you summon that person here?”

Yes, we made an appointment today. But, there’s still some time left.....”

“Is it?.....we might as well discuss it. I am curious about the type of potion

that managed to defeat the vampire. As to the identity of the person who owned it, I am looking forward to meeting him.”

Panasolei poured water into his cup, and drank. This throat was parched from the talking, and a pleasant cold flowed in.

“...Hah, about the reason for the encounter at the cave, do you have any hypotheses?”

“As discussed before I can only make predictions on our prior assumptions, sunlight weakens vampires.”

Theo highlighted several districts on the map as the mayor silently observed his workings.

“Basically, vampires prefer places where the sunlight does not reach. Plus, vampires have developed a rather twisted sense of superiority over the living. Hence they would not dwell within cities with prey aplenty, nor would they hide deep within the sewers, they prefer a luxurious underground abode. A situation where they would stay in a roughly built cave is non-existent”

“In short, it incidentally managed to find the hideout.....is that it?”

“Yes, other than this there is no other possibilities. The destruction was thorough and there were no signs that they were looking for a magical tool.

“So it seems....”

The matter about the vampire, we have a rough understanding of the situation. About Momon, as a last resort, let’s use this opportunity to investigate thoroughly.

About the other matters, let us complete it within the allotted time.

“Then, before Momon arrives, I have some question that I would like to ask....especially to the Adventurer’s Guild head and the Magician’s Guild head.”

As he looked at the faces of the four, the mayor spoke.

“Among all of you, has anyone heard of the name Ainz Ooal Gown?”

The four people looked at each other with looks of surprise before shaking their heads. Acting as their representative, Pluton opened his mouth.

“The name is unheard off. Who is that person?”

“Erm....I am not too sure. I only heard of the details from Gazef-dono.”

The mayor remained quiet as if he thought of something. After a short moment, he continued talking.

“I heard tell of several incidents involving people masquerading as knights of the Empire, attacking villages near Re-Lantier. But those knights were killed. That is the name of the magic caster who settled the knights and saved the villagers.”

“Hoh.”

It was unsure who let out that sigh of admiration.

The Empire’s knights were exceptional in terms of both equipment and training. The Kingdom cannot match either of the aforementioned. With that large number of knights defeated by a single person, it would suffice to say that magic caster is highly skilled, Mah, although he may have purposely feinted his weakness, his ability should be comparable to the Empire’s knights.

“The magic caster did not take the field himself, rather it was the work of the monster that he controlled. During that time, Gazef-dono confirmed the strength of the monster by his own sword. Although the outcome was a draw, the opponent did not bring out its full potential.”

“...This is the first time I have heard something so utterly ridiculous in this room.”

Theo’s announcement was agreed by both the potion master and priest as they nodded in agreement.

“In essence, magic casters mainly control monsters weaker than themselves. If they held a large ceremony, concentrated numerous spells, or through the help of exceptionally powerful magical tools, a different outcome could be produced. But,.....such a situation is unlikely.”

“In other words, the strength of that magic caster is comparable to the warrior that fought with Gazef-dono.”

When that was said, Lizzie had a pained smile.

“No matter how you think about this, it shouldn’t be true right?”

“Mah, it would be more prudent to assume those were Gazef-dono’s flattery or he simply overestimated his opponent’s capabilities.”

“Mah, as you said.....”

Controlling a monster that is stronger than Gazef.

Assuming that is true, then the strength of that person and Fluder Paradyne is on a similar level. No, there is a possibility that his level is higher. Using the current common sense, people would feel that such a matter is not possible.

“The main issue is this....the connection of the people discussed. A vampire that possessed unimaginable power and the mysterious magic caster that saved the village.”

Silence. They were all locked in the maelstrom of their thoughts. The first to break the silence was Theo.

“.....The situation might be coincidental but it is too perfect.”

“Moreover, on one hand, he is saving the village, on the other, he is murdering people. These two matters contradicted themselves.”

“Then—-”

In this moment, there were many opinions. Most of the opinions contained many contradictions. The trust in its validity was rather limited. Soon after, the priest started mumbling to himself.

“How about we consider this from a different angle? That vampire detected the presence of that magic caster?”

“If that is the case, how much does it help?”

The mayor let out a lonely grimace as he answered.

It would be good if the matter was as such. But the truth may not progress so smoothly.

If one was filled with too high an expectation, the shock from betrayal would be higher. Hence it would be more prudent to expect the worst case scenario. That was the personal opinion of the mayor.

“We can only make use of our imagination due to the lack of facts. We’ll leave the matter about Ainz Ooal Gown as our next topic of discussion.”

“If it is like this, regarding the matter of information gathering, the Adventurer’s Guild will extend all the help we can provide.”

“I’ll leave everything to you, Pluton. You do not have to worry about money issues.”

“Understood.”

“Then, let us get some rest before Momon arrives. Excuse me, Pluton. Could you give me all information regarding Momon?”

“Understood, let’s continue the discussion in my room.”

Everyone stood up and went out of the room at their own pace, But the figures that exited the room numbered seven.

Chapter 37: Investigation | Part 2

Noon at the Guild—Was not that busy for the reception on the first floor. It was also because adventurers did not meet at this time.

Basically, adventurers that left the city due to work, left a bit of time before dusk and left early in the morning. Well, this was common sense of travellers.

And the refreshing of quests typically happened in the morning. So people looking for jobs came early to the Guild.

Thus noon was mostly empty. Of course, this was E-Rantel, if this were the Kingdom it would be flooded with a variety of jobs, and was a different story.

The receptionist—Wina Halshia, was stiffening her yawn to prevent others from noticing, and stared blankly at the door. This yawn was the tenth in three minutes.

Feeling tired after lunch was an inescapable fact of being human, but there were occasions where one felt sleepy on an empty stomach. Of course, the blankness was not on purpose.

She did not have much work today, and so finished most of it by then. Basically she was currently extremely extremely, to the point where this should be emphasised, bored.

Moving her head slightly, she looked enviously at her coworker who was talking to an adventurer leader who came late. Being too busy was bad, but sitting down on a chair with nothing to do was bad as well.

She moved her bottom, which could be said to be suitable for childbirth, Wina adjusted her position slightly on her chair. And stifled the eleventh yawn.

While listening to her coworker and adventurer talking about repelling monsters that appeared near the Great Forest of Tob, and giving up—.

The door opened slowly.

A man with the sun at his back slowly entered. Apart from the exquisite

sword at his waist, he was an unattractive man that had nothing special about him. His clothes, while not poor or dirtied, they were not something that attracted one's attention. It suited a new adventurer. However, the boorish gauntlets were loose, but adventurers were those types of people.

The brass Guildmember card hung from his neck and followed his movements, jumping to and fro.

Basically a novice or F Class adventurer. Wina understood, and looked at his movements.

The man looked at his surroundings, matched Wina's gaze like he was scanning her, and walked towards her counter.

With a 'Gatan', reacting to the sudden sound from her side, Wina looked at her coworker who was explaining.

—Their eyes met.

Ishpen's eyes were spinning, looking at Wina. The adventurer in front of her was looking down at the paper in his hands, and did not notice, but it was an extremely disrespectful action.

What is she doing.

At the weird action, she was about to unconsciously speak out her words, but stopped. As the man that just entered was now standing right in front of her.

“—I apologise. I have come later than the expected time.”

“Um.”

“Ah, I am Momon. I was called to the Guild today to meet the Guildmaster.”

At those words, Wina recalled the words from her boss.

Today, I have called a novice adventurer called Momon, when he comes, show him to the meeting room on the fourth floor.

The time was—Thinking up to there, Wina noticed that more than 30 minutes had passed since then.

“Momon-san was it? I have confirmed it. Then I shall guide you to the meeting

room on the fourth floor, could you please follow me?”

“Yes, please do.”

Wina strongly ignored Ishpen who was waving her hand under the counter. She probably wanted to talk to him.

But, *Focus on the adventurer in front of you.*

Though imperfect, she had to do her job as a receptionist. What would she do if she did not focus on the adventurer.

While thinking of telling her that when she returned, Wina stood up and walked ahead.

Opening the door behind the counter, Wina who was guiding Momon to the fourth floor was thinking about why she was guiding a novice adventurer to a meeting room on the fourth floor, which had the heaviest guarded secrets.

In addition, today the meeting room was occupied by the most important figures in E-Rantel. Thinking about the figures attending, she wondered why Momon would be there.

And thinking about Ishpen’s strange actions, she recalled something she said.

“Ah, a rival....”

“Hah?”

At the words she unconsciously muttered, there was an immediate response from behind her. At the words that she thought no one but her could hear, her ears turned red from the embarrassment of being heard. Looking over her shoulder, she waved her hand and made an excuse in a panic.

“N, no, it’s nothing!”

“Really?”

Wina moved her gaze from Momon whose face was saying,
I can’t say there is nothing.

So embarrassing. It’s so embarrassing. I will hit Ishpen later.

While having such thoughts, they both said nothing as they climbed the stairs, and she brought Momon to the meeting room.

“It is here.”

“Yes, thank you.”

Knocking, Wina left after confirming that it was fine to enter.

What greeted her when she returned, was the face of Ishpen biting her lip with an unpleasant expression.

“...What’s with your face.”

“Even though I was thinking of guiding him.”

Ishpen inflated her cheeks and replied. It was like a girl in love—.

“Your interest?”

“No way.”

It was cut apart in one phrase.

“That person cannot be. I have predicted that he is my fated rival. Even though this time I thought that he would finally tell me....”

“What are you saying.”

In front of Ishpen who was making a weird face, Wina sighed.

Ishpen was not a bad person, but she had one quirk. But without it she would be a great friend.

Thinking that, Ishpen’s curiosity filled eyes gazed at Wina.

“—W, what is it, those eyes.”

“What happened?”

“Hm? About Momon?”

“Eh. Being called to the fourth floor where a novice normally does not go, and called together with the Mayor, it’s quite a bad problem?”

“Probably.”

“Well, I think that he was called because he is my rival—.”

“—Your thoughts are weird.”

If one thought about it normally, calling a new adventurer to the fourth floor was an unprecedented situation. The more she thought, the more her head with with ideas.

For example, a great noble hiding his identity, or a warrior with amazing strength....Thinking that, Wina shook her head in rejection. No matter how one looked at him with a favourable light—Excluding Ishpen—He was not that much of an adventurer.

“Then why was he called?”

“This is because he is—”

“I said this earlier, but your thoughts are weird.”

While lightly replying to Ishpen, it was true that Momon had raised Wina’s curiosity. To the extent that she thought that she should ask someone—



To the man that entered late—Momon, Pluton, the Guildmaster, acted as the representative and introduced everyone. The Mayor Panasolei should have been the first, but according to the man’s wishes, his turn was moved to the last.

This was as he wanted time to examine the man called Momon. It was true that he got a broad sketch of the man from Pluton, but seeing was different from hearing.

While Panasolei made a pig like face, he examined Momon.

The first thing he thought was that he probably had a reason why he did not remove the gauntlets inside the room.

But, there were strange people among adventurers. To the problem that he did not touch the Guildmaster Pluton, asking what type of people touched strangers would be bad.

Deciding that, Panasolei kept silent, and looked at the details.

His expressions and manner, and his air, but he did not feel anything

surprising. Basically he was a normal person. However, to an extent, his posture and movements were beautiful. Panasolei thought that Momon had originally received a high class education.

Actually, the third sons of nobles often became adventurers. Of course, most lost their lives on their first adventures, and none succeeded.

In summary, Panasolei's evaluation of Momon was he was of high birth, but he still raised some questions. Unfortunately he could not grasp more than that.

What surprised Panasolei more, was that Momon was extreme relaxed.

The impudence to make the Guildmaster and the key position holders of the city to wait for 30 minutes. On the contrary, he was projecting an atmosphere that had a strange pressure, as if asking what was wrong to making them wait.

Adventurers were basically strict with time. For promises or contracts, they would definitely never betray it. So to Panasolei, this Momon was a strange person.

Was this because he was a beginner.

Panasolei who was not familiar about adventurers decided so. No, he did not. As expected, he did not think that Momon would think himself to be more important than anyone else.

“—And lastly, since the order was jumbled, the Mayor of E-Rantel—
Panasolei Gruze Vauna Rettermaier-dono.”

“Puhii. Nice to meet you Momon-kun. Puhii.”

“Nice to meet you, Mayor-dono.”

Momon lowered his head slightly.

Panasolei really raised an eyebrow at that.

Scorn, apprehension, bewilderment, disappointment.

He was extremely used to receiving stares like that during introductions. However, what he never experienced before was the feeling that he got from a quick flash in Momon's eyes. This was something he was sensitive to from meeting lots— a thousand mountains and seas worth of people. The proof of

this was that no one in the surroundings felt it.

What was that strange feeling. Panasolei thought, and hit upon a person with extremely similar eyes.

Well there was one noble in the Kingdom. A great noble that was hated even by the shadows and snakes.

It was like being looked at like a test subject, those wide pupils greatly resembled him.

He once again looked at Momon's eyes, and Panasolei was attacked by a chill. But why, he could not express how cold it was.

If they based their impressions on his appearance, no matter how they appraised him, it was a normal reaction. They would never let Panasolei feel this chill.

However, why—He could not be careless. This was an impression that was important—.

Thinking so, Panasolei straightened his expression.

The change was conveyed to everyone in the room.

It was natural. At worst, the pig face, suddenly changed to that of a Mayor.

“N!”

As if to cough out what was stuck in his throat, Panasolei's voice reverberated through the room.

“—Shall we begin, Pluton.”

“Yes Mayor.”

As if pressured by the words of the attending Mayor, Pluton began talking to Momon.

“The reason why we called you is actually not that important. While a female adventurer was adventuring, she received a large wound. And used the potion you gave her, and said that it had an excellent effect. And so, we would like to see this potion.”

Suddenly, ‘Pan’ would be the best sound, the sound of a hand hitting

something reverberated in the room. Pluton who was pressurised by it closed his mouth. The gazes of everyone gathered towards Panasolei who was making a stern face.

“Now, Pluton....Do not hide anything. We should tell the truth.”

“That is Mayor....”

Pluton raised an eyebrow. It was natural. If it was an adventurer they trusted strongly, it would be understandable. But this was a newbie to the Guild. Letting the information of a strong vampire near E-Rantel, classified information, leak was too dangerous. If this information was leaked, it would become a huge problem. Then it would be best to use a suitable lie to cover it up.

And Theo, Lizzie and Gignal agreed. They were raising their eyebrows as well.

“...Momon-kun. We evaluate you highly. And so we will tell the full story, so can you keep it a secret?”

“Of course.”

A reaction like a beat. However, the most unbelievable answer was right in front of them. However, it was someone the Mayor evaluated highly. And so it became difficult to make a direct rebuttal.

Pluton, Theo, Lizzie and Gignal—The four of them looked at each other, wondering who would speak up, but no one picked up the bomb.

Pluton leaked out a breath that resembled a sigh.

“Understood. Then—firstly is the miscellaneous items. This might be weird but it has entered our ears, and we would like you to understand that your position is a bit bad and listen.”

Do you not mind? Pluton spoke to Momon with an expression wanting to say that.

Momon moved his chin to indicate the rest to continue despite receiving a stare with the pressure of a former A Class adventurer. At that bold and brazen attitude, Pluton instantly swallowed. No, the ones who swallowed was not

Pluton alone. All the ones excluding Panasolei and Momon, swallowed their saliva in surprise.

“—Understood. If you are prepared I will speak.” Pluton then took a breath and continued. “Just yesterday, a party of adventurers patrolling the surroundings of E-Rantel was destroyed by a monster. The monster was a vampire. And since this vampire can use magic, we believe that it is far stronger than a normal one.”

“It is as Momon-kun knows, a monster with skills is dangerous.”

“To what tier of magic it can use, even if we know not much will change. Currently what we want you to remember is that the vampire that has skills is a dangerous monster you know.”

“Even an A Class like me cannot cleanse an undead of this level, please understand.”

The mouths of the other three moved to support Pluton, and spoke to Momon simultaneously. At that act as if to hide something, Momon raised an eyebrow. And then Momon spoke out his thoughts.

“—Basically you did not want me to know its strength. Am I correct?”

“!”

Identifying the point they wanted to hide, someone groaned.

“If one thought about it the reason is easily—”

“—That is enough Momon-kun!” Pluton raised a single hand, and cut off Momon. “This time the reason we called you, I am sorry but it is not to hear you!”

With Pluton’s voice infused with his rough feelings, he demanded silence.

Momon and Pluton stared at each other, and said nothing. Everyone in the room felt the fireworks exploding in the space between the two of them.

No—Momon was still calm.

At that scene, Pluton was trying to release a pressure towards Momon, but it was failing. Originally Pluton was a strong person with actual strength, and

comparing himself to Momon a weakling, it could not be thought of as anything but a praying mantis raising its arms.

“...Is he....really a novice....”

Theo whispered. And Lizzie and Gignal unconsciously shook their heads, and expressed their agreement.

While old, his opponent was an A Class adventurer, but he did not step back. It was not like he was a person of great talent, but something else was felt.

The one who sighed at the scene and watching it quietly was Panasolei.

Panasolei himself, could not hide the feeling of trouble that this man Momon had a strange feeling, and for some reason was a strong person that was a novice. However, compared to the other four's predictions, his spiritual shock was lesser.

“...Well Pluton. This Momon is not a person that can have ordinary methods used against him. As I said earlier, can we tell him everything?....Pluton, leave the rest to me.”

Even without saying it, Panasolei had begun talking with a strong will.

“...So. Only one adventurer returned. It was a woman, and one that received a potion from you and threw it at the vampire. So Momon-kun. We called you in in order to see that potion.”

Momon's expression moved. While paying caution to the change, Panasolei chose his next words carefully,

“Of course, we understand Momon-kun's suspicions. The price of a low grade potion is 50 gold coins. This time we promise 100. Could you sell it to us?”

It should not be a bad talk. However, this was if this potion was made by Momon—and he had several. If he found it in a ruin or for some reason only has a few, there was a chance that he would reject. If Momon was not related to the creation of the potion, the prediction that he was related to the vampire would have its chances drop drastically.

“...Understood.”

Momon nodded lightly, and took out a small bottle from the bag he

brought, and placed it casually on the table.

The bottle was made of glass, and had extremely fine details on it.

It was to the extent that Panasolei wondered if he had mistaken it for a perfume bottle for a great noble. Even though it would break easily in battle, there was no need for it to be this finely made. If there was, if it was broken, its owner would have to be quite a rich person.

The liquid inside was red. By appearance, it seemed to be no different from a normal potion.

Everyone's eyes left the potion, and went to Lizzie.

"Then, excuse me."

Lizzie reached out with her wrinkled hand, and pulled the potion bottle towards her.

At that instant, the colour of her eyes changed. A light danced in her eyes, and her eyes suddenly sharpened, her cheeks reddened, and the vigour she gained seemingly made her younger. The one there, was the figure of the pharmacist that everyone in E-Rantel knew.

"Hmm....Hmm."

Lizzie took a magnifying glass out of her pocket and seriously examined it. While checking for sediment by looking at the bottom, and checked the surroundings for any solids.

While whispering words that were not words, she seriously checked its effects.

The cap of the bottle was loosened, and its smell was fanned towards her and sniffed. Her sharp eyes got sharper. Lizzie hesitated, and then immediately dropped some of the potion on to her fingers and licked.

"tsh...."

Did she notice something. Strained breaths left Lizzie as she covered the lid, and chanted magic.

<Appraisal Magic Item>

Lizzie activated appraisal magic, and saw the effects of the potion. And did she know something, her face changed to one of shock as she activated another magic.

<Detect Enchant>

Casting the two magic, how much was Lizzie's shock. Her body shook, and —

“Ku!”

—Collapsed on the floor.

“What is wrong! Lizzie-dono!”

To be worried was normal. Signal who was nearby ran towards her. It could not be helped that it looked like a poison.

“What!”

“What is wrong! Is it really a healing potion?! What did you give to Lizzie-dono!”

In the midst of the chaos—

“Kuku....Fuafuahahaha!”

—Suddenly, a broken laugh reverberated within the small room. Lizzie slowly lifted her head. Plastered on it was the smile of a broken madman. Everyone—Excluding Momon—Was pressured by her sudden change, and could not lift a finger to speak.

“Kukuku! Look at this! Theo-dono! This, this is the completed form of the potion you know! We, the pharmacists and alchemists, the people related to making potions, cannot reach the level of the ideal potion right in front of us you know!”

Lizzie's face was flushed with excitement, and took quick and shallow breaths. And as if to express that she would never let go of it, she thrust the potion bottle she was gripping tightly to Theo.

“What happened? Lizzie-dono.”

Lizzie's wild eyes moved towards Signal who was speaking normally. Her

wide eyes seemed to be able to drop out of her face.

“—Potions degrade right!”

“...Wh, it is natural. Isn't it common sense?”

As part of making potions, a special solution made using alchemy was necessary. This solution was made of herbs and minerals, and had to be processed by several methods.

Of course, using herbs caused the potions to have a shelf life, and degrade. This was common knowledge.

“That's right. It's rightly so! Potions use a special solution depending on if it is made using alchemy or chemistry. And it is natural as time passes that it degrades! So we use <Preservation> magic.” Taking a moment to pause, the conclusion left her mouth. “Until now.”

Everyone's eyes gathered on the potion. They understood what she wanted to say.

“This is! Do you understand youngsters! This potion, this potion is! This does not degrade, basically the completed potion you know! Something no one could make!”

Lizzie faced Momon with bloodshot eyes.

“Youngster, where did you get this potion? Or did you make it?”

“I made it using my knowledge.”

“The method?!”

“...Of course, I know it.”

A strong excitement filled Lizzie, causing her lips to tremble. And Lizzie's voltage went up even further.

“Then teach me the method of making the potion. The reward is 30,000 gold coins.”

“!”

Everyone was surprised.

The amount Lizzie said, was an extraordinary amount. The amount a normal craftsman could make a day was one silver coin. Basically this was a craftsman's 300 000 days, 821 years worth of money. To the Mayor Panasolei, even he could not think of this as anything but a broken amount of money. It was an amount that only Panasolei's entire fortune to rival.

And Momon's reply to that was cold.

"—I refuse."

"Then double."

Lizzie suddenly promised double. Interestingly, 60 000 gold coins was more than Panasolei had in his safe by far.

"—I refuse."

"Ah, right. This is something that cannot be taught with money! This is one of the highest knowledge that no one could reach!"

Lizzie glared at Momon. They were eyes that one had when facing an enemy. They were not eyes good for talking to someone whom they invited.

While looking at Lizzie with cruel and cold eyes, Momon covered his mouth like he was thinking. There was no one that could confirm that his mouth moved slightly.

Behind the cover, the mouth said "The first part of the plan has failed."

"When I was 10, I entered this world. The world of pharmacy! And I worked hard you know! For making an inferior potion for years! Do you understand! Youngster! Hard work upon hard work, research upon research for the idea potion I could never reach! The answer is right here! The answer everyone related to potion making desires! The answer to that we have been researching non-stop to reach you know!"

She glared at him.

"And so what is wrong with wanting it. For the answer, even becoming a criminal is cheap you know!"

Lizzie stretched out a finger that looked like dried out wood, and pointed it at Momon. There were pale streaks of electricity writhing around her finger,

and the ones watching did not mistake it.

“What!”

“<Lightning>. Are you seriously using attack magic! Lizzie-dono!”

Excluding Panasolei, everyone who had confidence in their strength stood up. Signal who was next to Lizzie, was about to move to become a shield for Momon, but Theo stopped him.

Lightning was a magic that attacked in a straight line. Humans could not become walls, and if blocked, those behind would also receive its effects. It would be better to prepare to use healing magic.

Pluton slowly got closer to Lizzie, and was going to close the distance.

“You who are no pharmacists shut up! Youngster! Tell me how to make this potion! What herbs or minerals does it use. Or does it not use it. Does it involve the organs of animals!”

When the room had the feeling of panic run high—Momon’s coldly calm voice reverberated. Ignoring if the Lightning magic proceeded one more step it would be activated towards him, Momon calmly remained sitting, and had a fun smile.

At that scene, Panasolei’s eyes opened wide.

Lizzie was quite agitated, and depending on how it goes she might cast magic. But Momon was not readying himself or underrating her. It was like he had confidence if he was hit. Panasolei understood.

Panasolei already had his conclusion on Momon.

There was no way he was a novice. This man. At worst, he was quite the adventurer.

“Zolie Solution—-”

“What the heck is that! A reagent!”

Accepting Lizzie’s rage-like cry, Momon coldly spoke the names of items like he was chanting a spell.

“Ryunks Stones, Vievul Dragon Stones, Gold Nostrum”

“Those things—-”

I never heard of them. Lies.

Lizzie wanted to say it but bit her lip to the extent that it would bleed.

If she took Momon’s words to be lies, then they had to reject everything about the man. In order to discern if it was a lie, there had to be a reagent that could be rejected. Even if she bluffed, and ended it while laughing, she estimated before she did it. Then to identify the truth, she had to find it through the cracks in it. However Lizzie knew nothing about the names he was saying.

Basically should Lizzie believe everything, or doubt everything.

Doubting was simple. It was fine not admit it. She could ignore everything Momon said.

But what was more terrifying, that made Lizzie’s body shiver was—If Momon was telling the truth.

“Have you heard of it? Ryunks Stones have an effect of strengthening the effects of healing, and Vievul Dragon Stones have the effect of strengthening elemental damage.”

Lizzie said nothing but stared at Momon’s cold smile as if to bore a hole in it.

Lizzie’s years of experience were screaming at her. This man was speaking the truth. Then—-

As if she did not want to hear anything more, weakly shook her head. The only one that could understand Lizzie’s sudden pale change and feelings was Theo.

Theo once again braced himself against the fear he felt.

Momon laughed with his nose, and spoke out the last words.

“You said that you have walked on this road since you were ten. Then please tell me. While you seem to know nothing.” Momon had a crack-like smile. “—What have you done, for all your years?”

Lizzie said nothing, but breathed hard. A denial of her entire life. Being pierced with it from the front, and something that did not allow for rebuttal. It

was natural. Because it was true.

She was laughed at from the peak she could never reach no matter how hard she tried. She tried and worked hard, but those words cut into her vitals.

“—I apologise. Potion making is not something that can be explain to someone with not even a shred of knowledge.”

He had nothing to teach to the ignorant.

While speaking with words that had that meaning, Momon politely bowed to Lizzie. At the same time Lizzie slid down to the floor like a puppet with its string cut.

There was none of the earlier worry. The only thing left was a painful silence.

Lizzie hid her eyes with one hand, and did not try to do anything. She matched her age, no, she instantly gain a few years.

“....Mayor. Currently, about using magic within the town, there has been a violation.”

“Hmm....”

Theo who understood Lizzie the most, exposed her to Panasolei. A crime where magic was activated in front of him. He could understand why she got angry, but as the Magician’s Guildmaster he could not keep silent.

And Panasolei was in between a rock and a hard place.

Of course, the law had to be upheld.

While attack magic was not fully activated, it was the truth that it was threatened to be used. And in front of the Mayor himself. Then according to the law she had to be punished.

However, while the Empire was planning to attack them, giving a punishment to a proficient potion maker, Lizzie, would result in the deaths of several soldiers of the Kingdom in the future. Honestly, if Momon was not the person that was threatened against, he would use some reason and end it with a fine.

Panasolei knit his eyebrows, and Momon opened his mouth as if expecting that.

“Please wait. I did not get hurt. And so I will not mind if we ignore everything that happened.”

“...I see.”

Should it be that I owe him a favour. No, should I express my gratitude.

Panasolei thought so, and bowed lightly to Momon

“Then, Momon—I shall add dono to it, I shall use my authority as Mayor to ignore this. Theo, any problems?”

“No, none.”

“Then Pluton.”

“None.”

“Then it shall be. Everyone, return to your seats.”

Theo, Pluton and Gignal who stood up to stop Lizzie returned to their seats.

“Now, Lizzie-dono, let us hear the conclusion. Does this potion have the ability to chase away the vampire.”

Lizzie turned to look at Panasolei with her red and bloodshot eyes, and nodded ambiguously.

“...I do not think that its effects are not that different from a healing potion....And so it is difficult to think that it ran away from its damage. But it might have ran away after realising what potion it was....”

“Basically?”

“It feared the potion maker....It was the viewpoint of the Mayor you know.”

The eyes of everyone then stared at Momon. Just earlier, when they first met Momon, it was something that they would have laughed at. However this was different. The man in front of everyone, was probably holding something that they could not even imagine.

While everyone was silent, the small sound of a chair moving was heard.

It was the sound of Lizzie standing up.

“Sorry. I am a bit tired. I would like to rest but...”

The one they were looking at, was a wrinkled old lady. Not a trace of her earlier rigor could be seen.

Panasolei had several soothing words, and that he would like her presence to be here, but they never came out.

“...Hmm. Lizzie-dono, thank you for telling us about your information.”

“I am sorry, Mayor. And everyone.”

Lizzie lastly faced Momon.

“Momon-dono, please forgive me for earlier.”

Lizzie deeply bowed her head. It was not something one would do to someone their grandchildren’s age. It was an apology towards someone completely above themselves. Momon watched it with cold eyes, generously shook his head, and expressed his acknowledgement.

A younger person was conducting himself as a high ranking person to an elder. From an ignorant third person perspective, this was a terrible action, but from the eyes of the four people who saw the earlier scene, it was nothing but something natural.

“So, an immediate payment. This will include the apology for my earlier outburst, so one bottle is fine. Could you sell it to me?”

Lizzie deeply bowed her head. If one had to describe it, it would be a posture of deepest respect. Her sincerity was present. However, if one thought about the earlier occurrence, Momon would probably reject. However, Momon pleasantly accepted.

“Go ahead.”

“Oh! Thank you!”

Her eyes sparkled, and she was probably going to investigate the potion. Her vigour appeared. Lizzie fished a small bag out of her pocket. Opening it, the contents spilled onto the table.

Several sparkling objects fell out. They were four gems.

“Avenchulin worth 55 gold coins, Fire Ageet worth 17 gold coins, Blue Quartz worth 25 gold coins, and Jilcon worth 48 gold coins you know. Take it.”

Momon said nothing, took Lizzie’s bag and gems, and put it in his pocket.

“Then excuse me.”

Lizzie left the room. As if the sound of the door closing was a signal, Panasolei started the conversation again.

“Hmm. Momon-dono, originally we would end this after we asked a few questions, but please attend this talk. What we want to ask is about the vampire that appeared near E-Rantel. Pluton, give him the paper with the description of the vampire.”

“No, it’s fine. I do not mind explaining it.”

After Pluton described the vampire, Momon lightly nodded his head several times.

“Do you know about it?”

At Panasolei’s question filled with expectation, Momon’s reply was very simple.

“Yes.”

The room quietened in an instant. Everyone, currently, could not believe what they were hearing.

It was natural. Who would think that the information that the city’s Adventurer’s Guild and Magician’s Guild did not know, would be in the hands of the lowest ranked adventurer. No, it was the opposite, everyone understood. That it was not strange for the one called Momon to know.

“So you did know.”

Theo’s reply was normal. And due to Momon’s light nod, the room was filled with sighs.

“Hmm....Can you tell us?”

“ ... ”

Momon kept quiet.

The silence indicated to Panasolei that he wanted something of equal worth—Something obvious. And so he smiled.

“Of course, I will pay. And depending on the accuracy of this information, I promise even further rewards.”

Momon opened his mouth when the conversation turned to money.

“—A vampire named Camila. From what I heard she is one of three disciples of Landfall.”

“What!”

The surprise leaked from the four people. It was one of the points raised when Momon was not here. It was the voice of surprise that a person appeared who could confirm such a deadly truth.

“What are you.”

Pluton spoke.”

“You are not a nobody. Yes, I cannot think of you as anything but amazing. I shall admit that. No one here in this room can deny it. However, why is such a person a novice adventurer. Why are you not a prominent one?”

“Do you want to ask that?”

Those who received Momon’s gaze—Everyone in the room nodded. It was natural. There was no way someone who did not want to know existed.

“....I am from a village Camila destroyed. And so I tracked her down for revenge.”

“What....”

“Then do you know how strong it is?!”

“Of course. When I was a child it could use Third Tier magic. It might be at Fourth right now.”

“Hmm....”

A vampire that could use Third Tier magic. What was he chasing after it.

While no one said it, they all had the same question.

It was natural. Before Momon came to the meeting, to defeat Camila, they came to a conclusion that several A+ Class adventure parties would be needed. And he could do it alone. Something that even the strongest warrior in the Kingdom could not do.

“I will ask directly. We predict Camila is strong. But do you have any methods to defeat her?”

At Panasolei’s question, Momon laughed softly. It was the smile of understanding that it was a needless question to ask. And actually, they predicted Momon’s answer.

“—Of course. If there is none I would not have chased her.”

“—Oh!”

A voice of excitement unconsciously left everyone’s mouth. A despairing situation where a extremely strong vampire appeared near E-Rantel was broken apart by the appearance of the one in front of them. And it was not their intention.

Asking them not to be happy was impossible.

“Oh God. This is the path that you have given us.”

It was to the extent that Gignal was praying to his god. However Theo maintained his calm and ask Momon to sate his curiosity.

“...But how are you going to do it? Using a potion? Or a magic item?”

“I cannot tell you. It might leak out somewhere.”

Theo was disappointed when Momon firmly stated it, but if one thought about it, it was correct. Vampires had enchanting magic eyes as a special trait. Using a person that heard about the method, and then if they talked, the chance of Momon losing would increase.

“Then we shall immediately inform Momon-dono about any information regarding Camila.”

“I have no problems with that.”

In response to Panasolei's suggestion, Pluton replied for everyone. There was a way to solve this dangerous problem. When Panasolei was controlled by his feeling of safety, he recalled something else he wanted to ask.

"Then about Ainz Ooal Gown...."

"He is my master."

"What!"

It was too quick. Momon replied to Panasolei's question without trying to say anything else.

"Gown-dono—"

"—It should be Ainz-sama."

While his expression was smiling, there was pressure in there. Panasolei felt the strong loyalty Momon felt towards the one named Ainz, and adjusted his words with a strained expression.

"Exactly how much power does Ainz-sama have?"

"I do not know."

Momon stated and shrugged. He then released a bombshell.

"Probably an expert at the Sixth Tier."

Everyone took a breath. Then they started shouting.

"What is that! Since you used 'Probably', are you saying possibly even higher!"

"Hah! To know nothing about such a person. Are you saying that he is hiding somewhere! Maybe the 13 Heroes....No, impossible!!"

"Oh my god!" (Written in English)

"Matching the Empire's Court Magician, amazing."

A feeling of dissonance between Panasolei who could not fully grasp how amazing it was to use Sixth Tier magic, and the ones with experience as adventurers and felt the ranks of magic strongly, Pluton Theo and Gignal. The three of them were staring at Panasolei. Panasolei felt panicked by the stares.

“W, what is it, looking at me like that.”

“No, I was just thinking about how envious I am.”

“It is so, I am envious of Mayor-dono.”

“Theo, Gignal-dono. To humans who cannot use magic it is just a story. It can’t be helped.”

“Well, that is true.”

“Completely.”

The three of them sighed in unison.

A loneliness like he was being isolated attacked Panasolei. While it was true that he did not have the common sense of adventurers, but was this not too cruel. It was to the extent of feeling worthless.

“But Ainz—-sama is amazing. And so is his disciple Momon-dono.”

“Well, I can use up to the Third Tier. But the reason Camila ran was probably due to fearing my master, Ainz-sama.”

“I see.....Then we normally don’t do this but, shall we hurry and begin the rank up test?”

“Is it fine?”

Momon recalled what Ishpen said, and asked Pluton.

“An exception” Pluton laughed. “If we fight Camila in the future, there might be a need to go to the front lines. We must raise your rank.”

“Then why don’t we raise his rank to B immediately? Since he can use the Third Tier.”

“We cannot do that, Gignal-dono. Basically, the Adventurer’s Guild have their own rules in each country, but there are common ones. The test being necessary is one of those rules. If we fake it, I cannot say that it will not come to bite Momon-dono in the future.”

“So the Adventurer’s Guild and Magician’s Guild are both bound by rules huh.”

“It can’t be helped, Theo. Rules are such things. But—From what I heard and investigated you did a job as a porter, so I thought you would be a warrior, but a spellcaster is....”

“Ah, that. If I may, it was due to this magic item working.”

Momon removed his gauntlets, and slowly placed it on the tabletop.

“These gauntlets are Iluan Graybell. This is one of my treasures that Ainz-sama has gifted me.”

“Hmm....It is boorish, but has no damage....Exactly what sort of magic does it have?”

“Ah, it simply increases the user’s strength by a large amount.”

“Hoh. Can I investigate it?”

“Ah, please.”

“Then I will be borrowing it.”

With curiosity flashing in his eyes, Theo picked up the gauntlets and activated magic.

“<Appraisal Magic Item>

Theo’s eyes widened, and he stiffened. His body shivered like it was in the cold. His lips were trying to get out words but, they shook.

Relating his quick change to Lizzie’s earlier, Pluton and Gignal looked at each other, and while sitting, moved their chairs slightly.

In the midst of it, swallowing his saliva, Theo finally spoke.

“.....This is.....The highest magic item.....Artifact level.”

While Pluton and Gignal took the same pose as Theo, they stared at the gauntlet. Theo, like he was touching something precious, picked it up gently and returned it to Momon.

“Ainz-sama is....a very generous person....”

Momon replied to that with a smile.



While looking at the door that Momon left through, the ones in the room slackened and weakly sat down in their chairs.

One's spirit weakened when they conversed with their superiors.

While Panasolei and the rest were supposed to have the pressuring values of connections, rights and money within this town, it was shown clearly that the adventurer novice called Momon had hidden valuable items behind him. It was to the extent that if they could not defeat the Vampire called Camila, they could not protect the town without Momon.

And the one called Momon, was bottomless. The person himself said that he could use the Third Tier of magic, but was this true. It would not be surprising even if he could use the Fourth Tier. In addition, the terrifying figure behind them.

The magic caster Ainz Ooal Gown.

The ability to make a potion beyond the capabilities of the current alchemy and herbal knowledge. The strength that could make an anomalous vampire run away in fear. A wealth that allowed him to give away an item with an overwhelming magic.

It was certainly someone worthy of holding the loyalty of Momon.

Panasolei hugged his head.

He felt that his balance was toppled by several powers today.

Signal who woke up his body, spoke words like he was living in a dream.

"...That was an Artifact that humans cannot make, huh. It was my first."

Artifacts were the names of top class magic items. It was impossible to create them via human hands, and could not be made except by existences like gods, high rank dragons, demons and angels. Their magic power was huge, and unbreaking. According to one legend, they were items that could even bring one back from the dead.

It was the class of items that the 13 Heroes used several of, and there were many adventurers that made it their dreams to find.

It was rare to the point that Signal, an A Class adventurer, had never seen

until just earlier. Depending on the person, it's value in coins changed. But it was at least 100 000 gold coins.

"...However, I thought that it would be more grand."

"But that was amazing. As a warrior, it was well made with no damage. If it was important, most adventurers would have filled it with gashes from horns and claws. And so it was probably made with extremely damage resistant materials. While plain, it is a good item."

"This was my second time."

"The one I saw was the treasure of the Kingdom, the Kingdom sword, and it was exquisite."

"Oh, Mayor-dono. The treasures of the Kingdom, I want to see them once. Well, it's probably impossible."

"You can see it at the award ceremony, but audiences are a bit, well they won't come, sadly."

Panasolei stretched his body. Everyone else who saw that did the same, and took listening figures.

"Then, what do you think?"

"The current information is too little but....Thinking about it, there is no discrepancy or contradiction."

"Do you think the information was very good?"

"Meaning?"

"It was information we wanted. The identity of the vampire, and Ainz Ooal Gown, and the potion Momon had...."

"Are you saying we were played well?"

Panasolei kept quiet and considered. It was like he did not understand his own thoughts.

"No....It is just my worry. It is as Theo said, there are no discrepancies or contradictions. It would be fine to think of it as truth."

While saying it was fine, Panasolei's expression did not clear. Pluton raised a

suggestion as if to support him.

“But, shall we begin acting within the shadows.”

“....I see.....Could you do it, Pluton. I will give you the necessary funds later.”

“Understood, Mayor-dono.”

Receiving Pluton’s gaze, Theo understood and nodded.”

“And I want to ask....Is it possible for information from this room to leak?”

While Panasolei said it, he decided that his words were impossible. There was no trace of the meetings that happened here ever leaked.

As to why, this simple looking room, was covered in lead plates, and only one entrance. Anyone who tried to enter would be extremely obvious. There was no place to hide. If invisibility was used, it was impossible to hide their presence and existence in this small room.

“Firstly, it is impossible.”

The owner of the room, Pluton, stated with pride. However, Theo, who continued, made a depressed face.

“Completely....But if the one called Ainz can used the Sixth Tier, I cannot say that with complete confidence. Honestly, the Sixth Tier is in the territory of one’s imagination. There might be magic to peer into this room....”

Theo then shook his head. The realm of one’s imagination. If they suspect it, they had to suspect anything.

It was so, Panasolei understood. If they suspected anything, they had to think about if there were several intruders that entered the room. However, entering the room without letting anyone know was impossible, and if they could where would they hide in this small room.

Panasolei looked at the room. Below the table and the ceiling were impossible. If they could, unless they could blend into the shadows, it was impossible.

While recalling that it was said that the assassination group Ijaniya could do it, Panasolei shook his head. It was ridiculous, without a trace of logic.

If there were thinking about it, they had to think about the existences that came up in legend like Shadow Dragons and Night Stalkers.

Panasolei sighed, and clear his mind of those thoughts. What he had to think about was not legends and fairytales.

“Now, Pluton. On top of turning this into information that will not make a ruckus, report it to the Adventure Guilds of the nearby cities.”

“Understood. What about information regarding Ainz-dono and Momon-dono?”

“Hmm. If we do it badly, I feel that this information will have dangerous information, and cannot feel good about it. Hide it to the best extent.”

“Then, I shall do so. I will send it using <Scroll of Report>.”

“The Magician’s Guild will send it.”

“Please Theo. And I will report to the King about Camila. If I leave now....About 15 days?”

Signal made a strange face as if Pluton and Theo were strange.

It was 280 kilometres to the capital. Using horses, one day was about 42 kilometers. Using simple calculations they would arrive in 7. The number Panasolei said was twice that. Was it not too long.

“Why is it just that?”

Signal unconsciously asked. Even though they are bringing important information, why are they not hurrying. In contrast, Pluton and Theo who knew the reason had painful smiles. This would turn into a conversation about the sensitive parts of the Kingdom. Actually, Panasolei was also smiling painfully.

“There are lots of reasons, Signal-dono.”

To Signal who could not understand, Panasolei kept his painful smile and continued.

“I think you know but, there are rules and privileges in the Adventurer’s Guild. To avoid being absorbed like in the Slane Theocracy.”

“The issue about Camila should not be subject to the same things right.”

“The upper echelons of the Kingdom is currently separated into a power struggle. If it is found out that the King’s faction is helping the Adventurer’s Guild....It will be extremely bad. If done improperly, the Guild will be split into two.”

“But something....”

“....Signal-dono. This is dangerous. Even though the Kingdom is already separated, the Adventurer’s Guild does not want to give it another reason.”

Continuing for Panasolei, Pluton’s words were kind, but had the intention of rejection. Signal probably felt his will, and changed his attack.

“Then what if I negotiate with God, and I hire adventurers with fast horses.”

“I the Mayor to use adventurers to contact the king? Basically I have no better subordinates. Can such a Mayor be trusted?”

“Then if a monster appears on the way.”

“Then the nobles in the nearby cities will take responsibility? Or will Princess Lanner make more roads? If it is found out that there is no remains of a monster attack, I will be finished as a Mayor. And it will fall to the King who had the responsibility of picking such a Mayor.”

“That is....”

A false accusation. Signal then understood the depth of the separation within the Kingdom.

“If there is a dangerous monster like Camila, in the end she cannot evade facing humans. If there were no Empire to send troops to face us, we would fall apart faster, and divide.”

Those words left a heavy silence in the room.

“....Do you understand why I said it?”

“I got it. I should not run by myself right?”

“It is so. You may not understand, but I believe you do. Now, shall we end this meeting.”

“That’s true....”

Looking at Pluton, Theo and Gignal, who refused to understand, Panasolei ended the meeting.



“Ku, hahahahahahaha.”

Ainz laughed.

It was a laughed that The Absolute would use to mock and pity weaklings.

“Basically, there is no strong person that I should be cautious of in the surrounding countries. Now, now, now, what should I do. What would be best.”

Ainz laughed shallowly, and felt the necessity of the success of the earlier plan. The weight he was carrying instantly lightened, and he felt relieved.

But, it did not completely disappear.

For example what if a similar Yggdrasil Player existed, and so it was important to make connections to quickly find such a person. Then what should be done to fulfill that.

Currently, he was using Demiurge as a decoy Demon King. After that, since Yggdrasil Players are definitely stronger than this world’s strongest existence, he should use the fact that they stand out as part of his plans.

Standing up from his chair, Ainz began walking within the large room.

He began talking to space where no one was. Of course, there was no one there using Invisibility. He was simply talking to himself.

“Opening a fighting tournament would be interesting, but impossible in the current situation. Then what about opening a dungeon to attract adventurers? Opening a section of Nazarick....Interesting but it is dissatisfying. But, it seems to be effective. To attract Yggdrasil Players who want to return to their original world, should I spread this rumour....”

Speaking so, Ainz shook his head left and right.

“No no, there is no need to be flustered. I can wait for the motions in the Kingdom and Empire. The situation might change then. And there is a chance that the Yggdrasil Players blended well into this world.”

There were benefits in doing so. It was the plan to strengthen Nazarick that was being implemented. There might not be a need to increase their battle potential, there was a need to get existences that had good heads, and were suitable for negotiations.

“The annoying things are left. Oi—-”

Ainz spoke to the waiting maids behind him.

“Call Aura and Shalltear. Tell them that I have a lot of information about the plan to tell them.”

“—Understood.”

While watching the the two maids leave the room, Ainz leaked a mocking smile that he could not hide. There was a need to look at races other than humans. And so he should pray that Cocytus’ experiment goes well.

“Fuu. This has become easy.”

While slightly rotating his shoulders, he looked at the door. While thinking about what he should do next—-.

Chapter 38: Promotion Test | Part 1

Momon arrived at the outside of the Adventurer's Guild. It was afternoon now, the streets were getting busy from the people who stopped their work. The crowd was busy with people searching for a place for lunch, many of them entering and exiting the nearby restaurants.

Momon was one of the many people walking on the main street. He could not help but express a cold smile, which he hid with his hand. At a place filled with numerous pair of eyes, he could not simply express his sense of glee. Of course, Momon doubted that anyone would pay attention to him, still there may be a pair of hidden eyes somewhere else.

As he thought about those people dancing to their schemes, he could not help himself but smile.

Momon bit his lip, suppressing his urge to smile, as he walked at a leisurely pace, a pace that looked as if he was enjoying the sunshine.

On the journey towards the inn, there was no suspicious movement. With a single look to the back, there were no followers as well. He shifted to a more relaxed pace.

If he was ambushed, undoubtedly Momon would fully suffer a blow while walking like this. Still, Momon proceeded forward.

Taking the role as a magic caster, Momon, could detect the presence of several pursuers and prepare his defenses. On a personal level, he knew that using his terrifying arsenal of magic, would put him in a spot. Hence, he had to rely solely on his physical strength. He would not fail when it comes to hiding his true job skill. Regretfully, he was not confident that his facade could be maintained at such a busy place.

Because of this, all the Shadow Demons on loan had been dispatched.

There were deployed by Momon to be his sentries, prioritizing his own safety.

But still, being alert while using a rather foreign job class would still result in a sense of unease. Those were Momon's thoughts. Hence, he had to be on full alert.

Passing through the street filled with the afternoon crowd, Momon arrived within the vicinity of the inn that he was staying at. In this area, he could still observe the people going into the inn for their meals and rest. Momon could only frown at the level of noise. As soon as reach the inn, he diverted his course sharply to the side.

In front was a small street.

Walking, turning. Not long after, he arrived at a secluded corner. There, Momon placed his back to the wall. He scanned his surroundings roughly. There were no signs of pursuers nor the people whom Momon met with earlier.

Momon pouted his lips as if not satisfied about something. At that moment, at the spot where Momon's back connected to the wall, the shadow suddenly stirred.

[By your presence, Narberal-sama.]

The Shadow Demon's rather harsh and cold voice reached Momon's—Narberal's ears, as if someone was standing directly behind her.

Shadow Demons possessed the special ability to teleport at short distance between shadows. One directly appeared behind Narberal through its 'Shadow Warp' ability.

As implied by its name, Shadow Demon could morph into shadows, it was a monster that excelled in stealth.

However, the scene of a two dimensional shadow morphing into a three dimensional being, would cause a sense of unease for any observers. Thankfully, there were none.

Narberal was covering her mouth in a way as if appearing in deep thought. Needless to say, it was to prevent others from reading her lips.

"The surrounding alerts?"

[We've checked the area. We did not find those who came to visit.]

“And so what was the meeting like after I left?”

[For the most part, after Narberal-sama left, the meeting ended immediately. As for its contents—-]

Hearing it, Narberal nodded. Anyway she had a job for this Shadow Demon.

“Now go. Follow the Adventurer’s Guildmaster and gain information.”

[Understood.]

The shadow wavered again. Narberal looked at her surroundings, and contacted her master. She activated <Message>.

“—Ainz-sama.”

[Ah, Narberal. Good work.]

Why was her master’s voice extremely happy?

Thinking about it, Narberal understood that it was due to herself skillfully leading the other party.

“No, I did nothing.”

This time, Narberal did absolutely nothing. Before she was called, she simply edited her backstory with the existence of Camila. But it did make her late for the appointed time.

“Everything was as Ainz-sama planned. I have great admiration for the part about the gauntlet.”

[Hmm....Well, as long as the results are fine.]

While Narberal received the gauntlets, Iluan Graibell, from Ainz, was when Ainz was simply planning to increase her physical capabilities. They became strong because of the gauntlets, and were preparations for lying. One more point was that Narberal’s illusion magic is not perfect, and so the chance of people noticing when they touched was high. This was to avoid such a thing.

He did not think that they would be things that raised the evaluations of Ainz and Momon.

Gengareric: the above paragraph is a bit confusing, but I am not sure how I should rephrase it.

“However about the fact that this is known as an Artifact.”

[I’m troubled.]

Ainz seemed to have a pained smile on his face.

[It is as they have no such great Magic Items.]

Ainz then laughed with his nose. An atmosphere like he was satisfied floated in the air.

[And more importantly, by selling the name of Ainz Ooal Gown, an invitation from the Kingdom should be evaluated pretty highly....Killing two birds with one stone.Yes, yes.]

“As expected of Ainz-sama. Even though I have never did anything, everything proceeded as Ainz-sama planned.”

[No, that is not true, Narberal. If you did not work earlier, it would not have gone well up to this point. Now, the next thing to do is to collect information about the potion crafters.]

“Yes. Will it be fine for the Shadow Demons to work on it?”

[Ah yes. How are the Shadow Demons being utilised currently?]

“Yes. The Mayor, Adventurer Guildmaster, and B-Class adventuring parties are being tailed.”

[Then there are not enough.]

“Unfortunately.”

[Then it cannot be helped. Send me the number you need. Preparations require some time, so contact me using <Message>.]

“Understood.”

[Now, about the actions after this—]

Various orders from Ainz. As expected it was about collecting information. However compared to what was given previously it was extremely detailed. Basically stage one of the plan was over, and meant that the second stage had started.

The feeling of working towards the plan of her master.

To Narberal Gamma, it was more enjoyable than anything. No, it was the enjoyment of Nazarick. And among them—

“—I got a lead from everyone else.”

[Hm? What did you say?]

“No, It was nothing. Ainz-sama.”

[Hmm. I see....]

Expressing it, Narberal had a small smile at the image of Ainz who was tilting his head.

Leaving the alley, the first one he met after returning to the inn, was the sullen face of the owner.

He looked like he had something he wanted to say, but Momon ignored it. If he wanted to say something then he could say it directly. He would not become a target of inspection.

Climbing the creaking wooden stairs, he pushed open the room door.

That instant—

“Momon-san!”

A woman jumped from the bed. It was Baniara.

“Thank you very much!”

Baniara ran forward in a panic, and prostrated herself at Momon’s feet.

“The potion you gave me saved my life! Thank you. Thank you very much! I cannot say what exactly happened but—”

“No, no. It seems quite bad. I heard about it from the Guildmaster.”

Momon flashed a kind smile, took the hand of the prostrating Baniara, and got her to stand gently. Baniara’s eyes watered, and gripped his hand tightly. But due to his gauntlets, Momon could not feel her hand.

Then, Baniara’s eyes widened as she noticed something.

“The Guildmaster? Did anything happen?”

“Ah, it was not important. I was called for the potion.”

“My apologies!”

She once again prostrated herself.

“When I was asked about the event, I told them about the potion Momon-san gave me— I apologise for the trouble!”

“Ah, please do not mind it.”

Momon once again took Baniara’s hand, and got her to stand up.

“I see. I thought that I would die. I threw the potion, and it seemed scared. Thank you very much. You saved my life.”

Baniara wiped away her tears. It was probably related to the fact that she saw her comrades dying in front of her. She was also prepared for herself to die. If one had a narrow escape from death, they would also understand the extent of her emotions.

“Thank you very much. Truly thank you very much.”

Momon laughed at Baniara who was bobbing her head.

Having to face the inferior Baniara with such a smile did not clear his anger. However, he had to do it.

Amongst the orders Momon received from Ainz was to gain a good relationship with Baniara. Momon thought that to control information on Camila, it would be better to kill an eyewitness, and proposed as such. But Ainz’s response was different.

It would be better to not kill, but instead manipulate her memories to make the false information better. And so he said.

Of course, those were the aims. Momon could understand it, and had no reason to question his master’s orders.

“Ah, so please do not mind it.”

Momon again got Baniara to stand. He then reached into his bag.

“You used it right? Please take this.”

He took out the same Minor Healing Potion. And he placed it in Baniara's hands.

Baniara made a strange face as she stared at the potion she received.

"Then, you said you had nothing but two—"

"Ah, I made more since then."

"Eh!"

Baniara was not an experienced adventurer. However, she clearly felt the value of the potion on her earlier adventure.

In addition, she had seen potion workshops, and knew how difficult it was, and was surprised at the words of the unappealing man before her. Especially his light tone that was like he was scooping up water.

"What is wrong?"

"Ah, no, ah, I see."

The fact that she completely understood something showed on her face.

How amazing the man before her was. From the conversation with the owner, she got a light understanding, but she now understood completely.

There was no way that a man who could offer a 50 gold coin-worth, or more, potion for free was a normal person.

—The world was different.

While small, a cold wind blew threw Baniara's heart.

Baniara admired heroes. Saving people in fairy tales, defeating dragons, saving towns. That was her happiness when she was younger. Probably due to her then alive mother reading them to her at bedtime. The feeling of bitterness when a monster destroyed her village, if a hero was there they might have been saved.

However, it was simple admiration. As to why, she had never thought of becoming one.

For example the warrior known as the strongest in the Kingdom, Gazef Stronoff. He had talent from a young age. And according to rumors, the warrior

known as Brain Unglaus as well.

The existences close to heros, had extreme talent.

However, Baniara did not have such talent. She accepted it as fact. She did not know if she would succeed as an adventurer. However, she could not become a hero.

She was a human that could not keep up with them if she tried. An existence that could easily climb the steps that she considered to be giant walls. Such a thing was standing in front of her.

“—A person that can become a hero, Momon-san is one.”

Momon made a weird face.

A sense of envy, admiration, and jealousy filled Baniara.

“I’m envious. I do not know, but probably, you are extremely strong.”

A troubled look appeared on Momon’s face. He did not understand why she was saying those things. Actually, not even Baniara knew why she was saying such things.

“What does it feel like? The feeling of looking at an inferior person. An overwhelming sense of pride? Or sadness?:

What was she saying. She did not understand, but did not stop. Baniara was swallowed by the black feeling in her heart.

“I’m envious! To those that have it! I want your ability to become a hero!”

As her emotions reached their peak, tears flowed out of her eyes.

Watching Baniara, Momon’s eyes turned cold and sharp. And it transmitted a fierce rage to Baniara. To the extent that it was similar to killing intent.

Baniara’s words were stuck in her throat.

It was natural. While giving out such kindness, it was natural to be angry when receiving hostility. What scolding would he give. Baniara scrunched her shouldered, and waited, but Momon’s expression changed.

It was a surprised expression like candy was falling from the sky. Changing to an unsatisfied face, anger once again flared, changed to apathy, and dejection.

Making those faces, it ended in a slightly discontent face.

And Momon's words were extremely calm.

"Ah, you—No. Umm, you survived right?" (First you was omae, second was anata.)

Momon faced the puzzled Baniara and continued.

"Umm, you said the ability to become a hero but, I believe that a hero is doing something that people cannot do. In addition as a part of it saving many people might be necessary. Does it require ability?"

Momon replied in a fluster. Baniara's eyes unconsciously widened.

"Eh, by surviving and returning, the Guild learned detailed information about the vampire. And so, the Guild could make lots of preparations. While it is unclear if the world will be destroyed or not, they can now lose less lives in the process. Then, while not actually being a hero, is it not a hero-like action?"

"But that was, due to the potion Momon-san gave...."

"Momon....no. I may have gave you the potion, but the one who threw the potion was yourself right? I did not throw it. Am I wrong? You decided and you chose. Is it not? Many people may have said this, but if you allow me to say my own opinion, if you can save one person then you are a hero."

He's comforting me.

Baniara thought so. His words were shoddy. However, why. She felt that a part of her heart was warming up, as if his panic was being transmitted.

"And—"

Momon raised an eyebrow. It was like he had to say something unbelievable.

"...If you work hard as an individual, you can become strong, I believe that you are amazing...."

"Are you comforting me?"

"...I'm serious."

It was like he was reading out from a script. It might have been something

that Momon heard from someone in the past.

Baniara thought.

She could not become a hero that saved lives. She had no talent. However, at Momon's words, she thought that she could, just a little, save a life, and become an adventurer that was not a hero.

Baniara's tears stopped at one point.

Ending the conversation, Momon walked to his own bed. Baniara then spoke.

“—Umm, Momon-san. —Thank you very much.”

Momon made a discontent face, shrugged his shoulders, and faced his bed.

Is he shy?

Baniara thought that about Momon who lied on the bed.



Two days afterwards—

Momon was called and entered the door of the Guild.

The time was early morning. Preparing his equipment, he was ready for a day of work. It was as he was called by the Guild. The space beyond the door was filled with the atmosphere of a marketplace.

In front of the posted parchments, people talked to their friends. Along the wall, the other party members were talking to others. And some grabbed the parchment faster by a fraction of a second, tore it down and brought it to the counter.

Momon weaved his way through the bustling crowd.

Ishpen who was sitting at the counter quickly found Momon. Even though it was only her line of vision moving rapidly, considering that Momon would definitely be coming, it would be correct to wait.

Momon noticed, and did not go for any of the other counters, and headed straight for Ishpen.

Momon himself did not want to, but receiving Ishpen's straight invitation, he could not go anywhere else.

"I am Momon. I was called here."

"Welcome. The Guildmaster is waiting."

The atmosphere changed. It was due to the surprise, but whose was it.

It was natural. A person with a brass plate hanging from his neck being called to the Guildmaster's room was impossible. It was so if one thought using common sense. What points in common would the Guildmaster have in common with the lowest class adventurer. They were the top and bottom respectively. Amongst the adventurers here, not one was ever called to the Guildmaster's room.

There, Ishpen was the only one that said 'as expected', made a face that showed that it was normal and clapped her hands in the confusion. Basically something that one was supposed to do as the Guild's receptionist.

Ishpen then laughed.

"—I shall guide you."

"Ah, I know so it will be fine."

At Momon's strict and refusing words, while still smiling, Ishpen's expression froze.

"Eh?"

"No, I already know so there is no need for you to guide me."

What?

Breaking her frozen smile, she had an expression that said those words.

"..."

"Then."

"Ah, please wait! It will be troubling if you are walking in the Guild alone."

"Then I will follow behind you."

"...Yes."

She thought in a panic, but no suitable words came. Already, Ishpen had a refreshed look on her face. What was it, it was something like a smile that one sent to a strong enemy when they won.

Momon followed behind Ishpen, and left through the door to the fourth floor behind the counter. As the door closed, the silence where one could hear footsteps though broke, and the hustle and bustle returned.

However, it was different from those who were earlier looking for jobs.

Just who was that man Momon, the voices asked.

They looked at each other, and searched for one with information.

Many people would think that adventurers would have drunken talks at bars, and receive requests from the owners of the bars. Those were the dropouts, and were often known as hunters.

However, they were different from actual adventurers.

When they were at bars, they traded information. Such as the strength of nearby monsters, prices of magic items, and information and rumours of other adventurers. A vigorous information gathering.

It would be fine to say lazy adventurers had a low return rate.

If they had knowledge on monsters, they could prepare tactics against it.

The prices of magic items. If they could find a definite period to buy it, they could strengthen their loadouts.

And when they knew about other adventurers, they knew who to be cautious against, and who to look out for.

To adventurers, information was the first step to countering monsters. Taking this made a huge difference in the chance of returning alive.

Those adventurers looked for information on the anomaly known as Momon, and it was extremely normal for them to look for knowledgeable people. No, it would be unnatural if they did not.

“Maybe a fine?”

“If it was a fine then there would be no way that he would be called to the

Guildmaster's room."

Someone from one of the parties spoke out their thoughts, and someone from another rejected it. They raised other ideas, but they were instantly rejected. That continued—

"As expected."

The first floor returned to silence, and a whisper of understanding could be heard.

Their eyes gathered. Just who was the one who spoke.

There was the party known as the Axe of Cyclone. E Class was the most common rank, but they rivaled the D Ranks above them. In addition, one of their members, Ninya had C Class abilities.

As everyone's eyes gather, the members of the Axe of Cyclone made an 'oops' face.

"Oi, is he someone Peter knows?"

An adventurer with friendly relations to the leader of the Axe of Cyclone, Peter Mork spoke.

"Ah."

They talked, and expressed their desire to escape, but with the surrounding gazes Peter knew that it was impossible. With an accepting expression, he talked about the time they hired him. Of course, not everything. Only the main points.

However, as fellow adventurers, they felt the strange differences that the man Momon had. The feeling that he did not have much experience. And so—

"The treasure of the Guild or something?"

"Possible."

Someone whispered, and someone confirmed.

Yes. Since he had no experience, he should have been trained as a genius somewhere.

They met people from the Magician's Guild who had huge egos. From the

adventurers that worked together with them, got the same cold feeling from Momon.

“Did he come from the Kingdom’s Magician’s Guild?”

“No what about the Empire’s magic academy?”

There were guess that he came from the best magic school in the Kingdom, and there were guess that he came from the best magic school in the Empire. But still, half of it was a joke. It was possible, but nothing past the level of a rumour. This time, Momon was nothing more than a Brass plate holder. A rival that they had to watch out for. That was their evaluation of Momon.

However, the last bomb, blew away all of their thoughts.

“Ah, but that person, was called to a meeting with the Mayor.”

The bomb that Wina released caused all of the adventurers to explode.

The room returned to silence, and everyone looked at each other.

“Is he promoting?.”

“Ah. But alone?”

“If so....”

With such a connection, it might be worth it to take him as a comrade.

The adventurers looked at each other. About whether or not to investigate the man Momon to the extent that it would not be bad.

“Thank you for coming, Momon-dono.”

Momon knocked, and was greeted with the smiling face of the Guildmaster. Extreme pleasantness, like their first meeting was a lie. The Guildmaster—Pluton opened his hands lightly, and posed so as to display his welcome. Pluton stood up from the sturdy stable where he was sitting until now, and guided him to the sofa where four people could sit.

“Now, come in.”

The room was not large, but it was magnificent.

A carpet decorated the 15 metre long square room, and several scrolls were

filling the bookshelf by the wall. The middle of the room was taken up by the sofa and table. Glass was fitted in the window, but thin curtains were put there to block out light.

The items in the room, rather than extravagant, were instead focused on their practicality.

Momon sat on the sofa, and Pluton took out a decanter and a porcelian cup.

“Do you want a drink?”

The liquid inside of the glass decanter had no colour. Was it water, or flavoured water. There was no need to accept it, but it was fine to accept it. In addition, the Guildmaster said it purposefully. Accepting it would be the proper thing to do.

Thinking about inferior people, meant that he himself was being more well rounded.

Momon was satisfied by his growth, and nodded his head. Pluton then poured the liquid in the decanter into the cup, and placed it gently in front of Momon so that it would not make a sound.

While this was how a chief of an organisation should act, this was not the attitude that one should take against someone far below oneself. The reason why Pluton acted this way, was due to him acting for the city and how Momon was evaluated.

Momon took up the ceramic cup placed in front of him. To Momon who did not take out his gauntlet, Pluton did not utter a single complaint. Of course, in terms of etiquette, the action itself is considered rude. But the item in question, was deemed as god's Artefact by the Magician's Guild head, Theo. Considering this, he understood the feelings of an adventurer not wanting to take off their prize possession.

Momon brought the cup to his lips—

Perhaps, Momon for the first time arriving in this city, felt surprised, his eyes dilated. The reason for his sense of surprise was simple. They had the ability to induce such a level of coldness.

“It’s cold.”

To Momon’s muttering that seemed like a question, Pluton’s eyes briefly showed signs of unease. He quickly nodded in understanding.

“Ah, this is a magic item known as a <Decanter of Refrigerate>, and so the drinks are cold.”

“I have seen something larger, but I did not know about a decanter, this is the first.”

“Is that so? I have not seen anything larger....”

“How much is it? This.”

“This is....I believe it is about 150 gold pieces. It might be different though.”

On his return to Nazarick, he should purchase one. Considering such an idea, Momon placed the cup to his lips, the liquid within contained a faint smell of spice as it glided down his throat.

As Momon placed the cup on the table, Pluton sat on the sofa in front of Momon.

“The reason why I asked you to come, was as the contents of the promotion test have been decided.”

“I see.”

Just as expected, Momon pressed Pluton to continue with the topic earlier with the expression of his eyes.

“This time, the job that Momon-dono will be doing is the patrol the graveyard.”

“A graveyard....”

Momon’s stay in this city was not long. However, due to nature of his task which was to infiltrate the city and gather information. Most of these matters were familiar with him.

E-Rantel was a city that played the role as the battlefield during the war with the Empire.

Hence, a lot of its features were different in comparison to other cities.

Firstly, the city was protected by three layers of walls. Many blacksmiths who specialised in weapons forging took up positions here. Apothecaries managed by pharmacists were denser as well. Many of this was closely link with the war effort. Well, even the whore houses were aplenty.

And there was one more point.

There was one encased within walls in the outer district.

There, a large cemetery was established. Taking up to 1/4 of the external wall, almost the entire western wall was used to segregate the cemetery from the rest of the city.

In this world, allowing the dead to remain in the battlefield was not something permissible. This was because of the existence of the undead. A common sense in this world.

The undead welcomed the living when they met their end. It was often that such places spawned these unholy monsters. Battlefields and ancient tombs. Although it is a place where the living resided, they were monsters that appeared nearby. Especially for those who died a horrible death, their deaths were not mourned. The chance of them coming back as the undead was high.

Henceforth, a large burial ground, a place for people to mourn the dead was a necessity. To this, the Empire was in agreement with them. Even in times of war, together they would held a ceremony to mourn those who died because the undead was the common enemy of the living.

In those wars where countless lives were lost. Burying the dead in a massive grave was unmistakably the best course of action.

In actual fact, the occupancy of the cemetery reached 100%. There was no more room for fresh body to be buried. But what were their plans if dead bodies turned up? The key to this answer lied within the concept of life and death within a country.

The human soul required a vessel. Facing a skeletal body that lack its original flesh and blood, nearby countries had the same consensus that such an act is like destroying the old vessel of the soul. The way of thinking was similar to that of the Empire. The only country with a different opinion was just the Slaine

Theocracy.

In others words, they needed to dig up old bodies....or bodies that were turned entirely into bones and proceed to break them into pieces.

During those moments between digging and crushing up the bodies, occasionally there are those skeletons that moved.

Hence they hired adventurers, they often acted as the cemetery's guards during those times. No, it would be more accurate to say that all adventurers residing within E-Rantel did this rather mundane job at least once.

Momon rejected such a thought about having such an easy task for his promotional test. In contrast to outsiders, Momon was just a low tier adventurer. Many would consider that setting a promotion test with such level of difficulty would be possible for him to handle.

In such a case, Momon himself could become the trump card that this city sorely needs. The itineraries for this promotion test was ideal to fulfill their intentions to silence any external criticism.

"I see, understood."

"But is it fine to be alone? Due to the relationship of this promotion test, I can understand that you do not want adventurers above Novice rank to participate."

"Eh, I do not mind."

"More importantly, is the only one participating in the promotion test myself?"

"Ah, yes. Are there any problems?"

"Eh. This will be easier as I cannot control the range of my magic. Then can I hear the details?"

Pluton looked daunted for an instant. As a warrior who worked with his friends before, it was not a good conversation.

"Then it will begin at 1700 today and ends at 0600 the next day. The loops required are three. The first will end at 2000 today, the second tomorrow at 0100, and the last at 0500. I believe it will take about 30 minutes to 1 hour to

complete one round. The places you basically need to be alerted about are basically the grave keeper's building which you can use."

"Since you said basically, there will be times that I have to improvise I assume."

"Of course. I hope that you will act in a manner appropriate as an adventurer."

Pluton raised an eyebrow, and looked at Momon like he was examining him.

"If numerous monsters with high difficulty appear, please prioritise information gathering. It would be easier to focus on retreating like this....If it is Momon-san, there's no need for such thoughts right?"

"Affirmative, there's no such need. What sort of monsters would appear?"

Seeing that Momon's mood did not shift, Pluton released a single breath of relief. Idle chatter that could reduce Momon's evaluation of this city was something he intended to avoid. .

The reason for this was that the only people that had the calibre to stand face to face against that monstrously strong vampire, Camila, was Momon, who was sitting in front of him and his master, Ainz Ooal Gown. Nobody else had such similar capabilities. If both of them resided in neighboring countries, undoubtedly they would have to rush there to seek their assistance.

As luck would have it, this person Momon arrived in E-Rantel. They could not afford to lose such a talent.

"Normally....the promotion test would start off with intelligence gathering....Well, it does not matter now. Since it's Momon-dono."

Pluton reminisced of his past as he rearranged his thoughts.

"Mostly, you will encounter zombies and skeletons. After a skirmish, you would meet armed zombie warriors and also skeleton soldiers."

Strangely, some soldiers died without their weapons, and when they raise as undead, they were equipped with different types of weapons. The most convincing argument that the weapons were the representation of their will, possibly due to the interference of magic as some surmised.

“The others bodies would turn into Ghouls or high-tier Ghouls. On rare occasions, creatures immune to physical attacks, Ghost and Lace, have appeared before. Parasitic Maggot Mothers would lay their eggs there and produce Giant Deposit Flies. The unholy manifestation Voids will also appear there due to the congregation of death.”

“So it seems.”

Especially when Momon did not mention any particularly strong opponents that he needed to be wary of. Such a thing would not be problem, no, there was no problem in the first place.

Momon with his preparation completed, decided to leave after saying his goodbyes to Pluton.

“Ah yes, the mayor decided to form a friendship bond with you. It would be a casual meeting, you do not have to do anything. How about it?

“No, I have no interest in such matters.”

“...I’ve heard the place has quite a number of beauties there, from the biggest melons to the flattest plains—”

“I do not have any interest.”

What is he saying all this while? Momon stared at Pluton with a cold gaze.

“...I, I see. This is now the promotion test. What am I saying.”

Hahaha. Under Pluton’s dry laughter, Momon looked at him coldly as he stood up from his chair.

“If the conversation has ended, I would like to depart now.”

“I’ll be in your care then, Momon-kun.”

They lightly exchanged handshakes. Momon was still wearing his gauntlet. Then, he left the room.

As he looked at the departing figure, Pluton’s first plan was a failure, still the thought of disappointment disappeared instantly.

With such a casual invitation, yet Momon still rejected it.

He has no interest in women is it?

Pluton kept this important piece of information in his mind.

No, well, when it comes to men, the lower part of the body and the brain are two entirely different matter altogether, they would not get till that moment arrives.

If it's those women who would fetch tens of pieces of gold, a few of those top class prostitutes.

Delivering them secretly to Momon was it. Pluton was contemplating such a move as he looked at Momon's retreating figure. In truth, the plan to retain Momon was agreed to by the mayor.

Be it money, women or power, no matter what Momon needs, he shall receive it, as long as it is to keep him within this city.

"How about we intoxicate him, and push a few ladies at him."

But those are prostitutes, Pluton lamented as he returned to his desk.

Chapter 39: Promotion Test | Part 2

Gravekeeper's Building.

The name was exaggerated, it was a shabby wooden shack-like building. To be described in a word, it was a hut.

The size of the place was at least 10 square meters. The corner of the room had altars featuring 4 Gods. Another corner had a fireplace with firewood stacked as fuel. Near the entrance were tools for grave digging. If the tools were used—dirt would be visible.

The wall made up of wood had gaps where in the subtle warmth of air drifted into the room. It would be hard to stay here when it was winter but for now it was still summer so there was no need to worry.

But insects came in, so it was dissatisfying.

In the shabby building, in the light of a hung lantern, Momon lied down on the mat on the floor.

In the surroundings of the lantern, insects were attracted by the light, and amongst them were large flies, causing a small ruckus.

Momon's promotion test.

The contents of the test was to spend a night in the cemetery and patrol as a night watchman. And if an undead shows up at night, the task is to defeat it, Of course if no undead were to appear, the job as a watchman was finished. However, in a place such as a graveyard, there was no way it would have such a good ending.

The huge cemetery was separated into four parts, north, south, east and west, by partitions. The partitions were imbued with holy magic so if a large mass of undead surfaced, the sections would close-in on them, allowing each individual to easily fend off the undead. Such was the wisdom gained from experience in a past failure.

Furthermore, there were shelters in each section which can be used as an escape route in times of emergency.

If one heard about it they would understand, in order to repel undead, a graveyard was considered a given. This was a place where the war dead were buried, a place where death gathered.

The words were bad, but it was a cursed ground.

Momon boredly stared at the bugs that surrounded the lantern.

The task was to patrol three times. First was at 2000, second was tomorrow at 0100, and the third and last at 0500. The patrol time was roughly 30 minutes to 1 hour. It was impossible for one to sleep.

The time now was probably around 0000. He had already patrolled once, and it ended without problems.

No honestly, it all ended up to be one sided attacks.

According to the guarding cleric, the eastern section of the graveyard was being dug up. If he wanted to repel undead then he should focus there. He found four skeletons.

Four small fry skeletons, there was no need to use magic. Momon casually entered the premise. He swung the still-sheathed sword four times.

Since then, no undead were found. With that, the first patrol was successfully completed.

The Guildmaster had said it, that the chance of strong monsters appearing was extremely low. Momon remained lying down and yawned boredly.

To fulfill this request, he had temporarily borrowed various items from Ainz, but the chance of using them were low.

—When he thought that, Momon slowly got up. He then walked to the badly supported door and opened it. As the door opened with a screech, the air of the graveyard flowed in.

Looking through the silent world, Momon looked outside.

A small smell of death.

As to what sort of smell it was, would be difficult to explain with words. It was only felt by the ones entering the first to third floors of Nazarick, and it would be fine to call it the air of death.

“There’s something....”

Momon’s eyes narrowed, and looked through the darkness.

Even with eyes that could see through the darkness, nothing moved in the graveyard. His ears were the same.

He could not feel it from there, and could not confirm any moving shadows. However, in the darkness, he felt the presence of a born undead. However, its presence was not strong. It was at the strength such that it was lucky for Momon to notice it.

Was it around the level of a weak undead, a skeleton or zombie?

While whispering that, Momon hung his sword at his waist, and prepared to leave earlier than expected.

Momon patrolled the graveyard for ten minutes. At the eastern section, two torches wavered. And the figures that the light shone on were not few.

Seeing that, Momon stopped his footsteps, and hid himself in the shadows. He briefly considered lowering his body but decided it would not be sufficient and quickly hid behind one of the tombstones. Momon did not bring any torches with him, and this area did not have any light source. Hence, it was unlikely that he would be noticed here. However, magic could be used to raise a person’s sensitivity towards the presence of life. He could not be careless on this.

The scene reflected in Momon’s eyes as he peeked out from behind a tombstone was the figures of the people the torchlight shone on.

First was the two skeletons holding the torches leading. Behind them was another person, and three pairs, making a total of seven.

The one leading was a man wearing a black robe and walking in an impressive manner.

His sickly white skin reflected in the torchlight, and seemed to be sparkling.

Not a single strand of hair could be seen on his head. It was to the point that one would suspect if he had any other hair on his body. His disgusting figure reminded one of a reptile.

With an arm that seemed to be made of bone and skin, his filthy yellow nails were attached to a hand gripping a black staff. Rather than a human, he looked more like an undead.

Apart from the leading man, the rest had the same appearance.

Their bodies were hidden by the black robes. The colours were bad and there were patches of discolouration on them. No matter how one appraised it, they were not good items. Their heads were covered with triangular hoods which blocked their eyes.

In their hands was a similar staff. The tips had differing patterns inscribed on them.

Their heights varied, but from their body outlines they were all men.

Looking at such a scene, Momon was troubled.

From their appearances alone they were extremely suspicious, and he should probably attack them. They raised the question about what they were doing here this late at night. Even the ones leading and holding the torches were skeletons.

However if it is a special ceremony that Momon did not know about, it would be bad to fire an area of effect magic at them.

It has been 15 days since Momon had come to the city. He had collected various information, but he did not know everything about the city.

If something happened in the city, they might have had to bury the dead for a reason.

While looking at the slowly walking men, he thought.

The contents of this request was the repulsion of undead. There should not be a problem as it did not exclude living humans. While coming up with an excuse, he had to improvise.

“If it’s an accidental shot....”

Momon sighed lightly.

Of course, such a thing was not possible.

According to his own feelings, he wanted to kill them and bury the bodies. However, he had received Ainz's orders and could not fail his mission due to his own emotions.

"Ah, hah, annoying."

As Momon made eyes that looked far away, he began slowly walking. As he could not have hostility when he faced them, he should at least get information on why they came here, and get the minimum necessary information.

It would be fine to kill them in the end.

Momon followed behind, and walked to a corner of the graveyard. There, they showed no sign of noticing Momon.

They seemed to reach their destination, and began something at the graveyard. As if something was recently buried, the smell of earth filled the air.

They made a circle, and whispered something.

Riding the wind, chant-like whispers reached Momon's ears. Sometimes high, and sometimes low. Their chorus sounded like they were praying.

However, it was not a reverent and solemn thing for the dead. In fact, it seemed to be desecrating and did not have such a good feeling, and reminded him of an evil ritual.

Then would it be fine to attack.

As expected, Momon did not know.

"I do not like this magic though."

Momon chose the magic he would activate, rather than using escape magic. Although he had several spells that he could perform, he preferred to use flashy attack magic. However, this magic was too simple, just sufficient to achieve the outcome he wants. Compared to an unknown spell, Momon had to maintain a minimal level of alert. For attacking purpose, this is the most suited magic for the occasion.

Do not hate humans.

It was a line that Ainz often used. Momon did not understand it, but he understood enough. As there was not a single fool in Nazarick that would defy the words of the most important existence.

If Ainz said that white was black, it was black. If one did not recognise it as black, they would be forced to. It was something that one who devoted their loyalty to Ainz should do.

“Then, I should go.”

Momon whispered softly, and activated his magic.

Khajiit chanted a curse. Rather than a curse, it should be a prayer.

A wish to death was contained within, an existence that could shake life.

The surrounding darkness got thicker. It was the feeling of death getting stronger. In the tepid air, their skin was slowly swallowed by it. The thing that filled the graveyard—Was something that Khajiit was extremely used to.

Khajiit Nolife.

It was one of the names of the top brass of Zuranon. He could use up to the third tier, and was skilled at making undead monsters, and had strong authority as one of the ten leading members.

While paying not a small price, he brought powerful people to walk calmly through the graveyard of the city.

The people with Khajiit forming a ring, were Khajiit’s disciples that he had raised. They could all use magic better than the average magic caster.

To Khajiit, this city was extremely amazing. He wanted to give it a gold star.

But there was a reason why Khajiit was in the strongest graveyard.

Many undead spawned within the vicinity of the city, due to the difference in location, many undead spawned due to their lingering resentment towards the war. Hence, they built this graveyard to bury the dead. During burial, the temple held numerous holy prayers. But due to the scale of the graveyard, the many souls whose resentment lingered upon this area, causing the negative life

force to converge together, no matter how many times the mass prayers had been performed. In the night, the place looked as if it was transformed into a different realm.

There were no other places that were this suited to birthing undead.

Although it was a suitable venue for Khajiit, most of the spawned undead consisted of low tier undead. But with his presence, he could store all the negative life force, in order to create a birthing place for high-tier undead.

This time, they were furthering this goal.

He had repeated this process multiple times. He went and all of them ended without problems. This time as well.

“—So, what are you doing there?”

Suddenly, a light voice reached Khajiit and the rest.

Interrupting their chant, the disciples turned to face the owner of the voice. There in the darkness was a contour. From the shape it was a human man.

From entering this graveyard multiple times, meeting a third party for the first time made them unsteady. In front of the calm man.

“—Khajiit-sama.”

“Do not be flustered.”

Khajiit replied to the questioning voice by his disciple with a low heavy voice.

“Who are you?”

“Just an adventurer. I was patrolling this graveyard.”

Khajiit surveyed the surrounding area. Other than the man, there seemed to be nobody else. It was unlikely that he came alone. Then how should he drag out those in hiding? But why though? What did he see and what was he trying to accomplish here?

The more he thought, the more he could not fathom the man’s intentions. Khajiit was troubled, and made a signal with his fingers for his disciples to watch the surroundings.

“Just you? Where are the others?”

“It’s just me.”

“Alone? What are you doing alone?”

“That is my line. What are you doing in this place? Khajiit-san?”

Khajiit looked at the face of the foolish acolyte who simply uttered his name, who upon realising his own mistake raised both his hands gesturing wildly. Khajiit then moved his sight away from the fool, who would be punished upon their return. Realising this, the man dropped his shoulders.

“—Your name?”

“Momon.”

He never heard of this name. Basically, he had gathered all the intel about the high-tier adventurers within this city. Momon’s name did not appear within the list.

Who are you exactly? Are you using a false name?

Considering that, Khajiit cast away his doubts. No matter what, there is only one solution, which was to kill him.

“Your companions?”

“I said I was alone.”

“...What are you doing here?”

“Patrolling. So what are you doing?”

How could this man answer simply? Since his replies were too easy, no one would believe it. Khajiit activated <Dark Vision> and <See Through Invisible>. He used his enhanced vision to check his surroundings again. Yet, he could not detect anything.

Since this man was an idiot, what should be next.

Khajiit decided to do something about Momon.

“Are you....an idiot?”

Words straight from the depths of his heart. Momon made a strange face.

Without replying, Khajiit made an order.

“Skeleton. Throw a torch to that person.”

Matching his orders, the two skeletons threw their torches in Momon’s direction. They did not reach him, they brightly lit him up.

And since they were out of the reach of the light, the far darkness returned to them. Matching it, Khajiit’s coldly composed voice rang.

“—Kill.”

Within moments, Khajiits and his men began to chant their magic unhesitantly. They were chanting magic arrow. Khajiit fired three arrows, while his men fired two each, bringing a total of 15 arrows. Directing it towards Momon who was rooted to that spot.

Hit by the magic arrows, Momon’s body was blown far back. While falling out of reach of the light, he lifelessly fell to the ground—

“Watch the surroundings.”

Khajiit activated a skill to detect for any signs of life, trying to see if there were many movements within the area. His acolytes formed a circle around him, wary of their surroundings. Within the darkness of their surroundings, there was no activity at all. Khajiit even used his ears to listen to any source of sound. But the cemetery remained quiet.

“...He really is an idiot. Coming alone.”

Confirming that he was not moving, he made a smile at Momon. His disciples hearing it, laughed in a similar manner.

“Now, if he did not die I will use him as a sacrifice. Investigate.”

Moving his chin, one of the disciples walked quickly to Momon.

Momon’s body rolled over like a thrown rag doll. His limbs were lifeless and unmoving. One of the acolytes arrived at the spot where Momon’s body lay, checking the face of the owner.

Due to the darkness it could not be clearly seen, but he seemed to have coughed out blood, and his eyes turned white. From the side he looked dead.

Furthermore, the acolyte placed one of his hands around Momon's throat. A hint of residue warmth could still be detected, but the heartbeat was totally absent. Tens of seconds later, the heartbeat did not return.

Returning, he looked at Khajiit and nodded.

"...He is dead."

"So....What was he?"

"As he had said earlier he is probably an adventurer." The disciple looked at Momon and continued. "Class is....Brass."

"Brass?" Khajiit laughed. "Hmm. Brass adventurers are idiots."

Khajiit laughed from the bottom of his heart.

The acolytes that he brought over were all users of Tier 2 magic within his organisation. With that level of concentrated magic arrow, even a D-Class adventurer would not have survived. Not to mentioned a brass-level adventurer.

Overkill.

He did something unworthy of the man.

"What about his belongings?"

The gaze of his acolyte was directed at the gauntlet. Khajiit shook his head. To a magician, his magic is his weapon. Swords and armor, arm guards are totally useless to them. In essence, if one considers it carefully, a low tier adventurer would not possessed anything that would interest Khajiit and his ilk.

"Idiot. Leave that trash alone. Perform the ceremony. Quickly return."

"Ha! Master, my apologies."

The far disciple picked up the nearby torch, and returned. Momon's body was swallowed by darkness.

"From the actions of trash, the ritual was interrupted. Put everything to complete the ritual."

The voices of acknowledgment from his acolytes broke the quietness of the surrounding. Khajiit raised his skeletal like arms within a torch light, drawing out

a powdery substance from a leather pouch. At that moment, a crimson fiery red changed to a dark green.

From the lights of the torches the skeletons were holding, Khajiit entered the circle and spoke.

“Now, collect it in the Supreme Artefact the Pearl of Death.”

As Khajiit spook, his other hand that was not holding onto his magical staff was holding onto the magical artefact, with that he reached towards the sky. Numerous shadows swarmed around him, different from those shadows formed by the torch light.

The graveyard returned to silence.

The darkness coiled in the surroundings.

With a myriad colored flame, a magical illumination permeated the entire area, mixed with the smell of burning beast fat came from the torch, produced a scene that looked as if it came out from a fantasy setting.

The surrounding disciples were about to enter a trance—

“Basically you are all enemies—”

—A bothering voice could be heard.

Khajiit and his disciples turned to look at the direction of the voice. And then they raised voices of surprise.

In the midst of the thin darkness that the torches somehow reached, Momon who should have died had a calm face.

Magic Arrow is a tier-one, lowest form of attributeless attack magic. Its advantage was its high accuracy. Once released, it was almost impossible to dodge it. Due to its attributeless property, it cannot be countered by defensive magic. Taking 12 direct hits from that magic, a brass level adventurer could not have survived it.

However, being able to stay calm in front of them meant that he could use some method to defend against them. But there was only one way to defend. That was to use third tier magic and complete negate any damage.

But, there was a contradiction.

There was no way that a brass could use 3rd Tier magic.

His disciples panicked, and his gaze flew to the one that was panicking the most. It was the man that checked Momon's death.

Yes, he confirmed that Momon had died. Then he was not an undead, but had revived.

"Impossible! You should have died earlier!"

"There is no way I would die."

Momon spread his arms gently. The shocked acolytes directed their gazes towards their teacher, hoping to receive guidance on how to proceed from here. The action was not wrong as part of underling etiquette. But in a life and death situation, such actions would result in their early demise.

"Now, since you have attacked, I assume there will be no problem to kill you?"

From the palms of Momon's hands, small balls appeared. It was a magic they knew well. It was one their master used. When they noticed this, they immediately casted magic. They understood that if that magic was cast, the chances of them dying were high.

Some tried to cast defensive magic. Some tried to cast magic arrow. Some tried to cast charm spells. Some tried to cast magic to lose strength. Some were trying to blind him. Some were trying to release arrows of flame. The two skeletons were running, trying to throw their torches at him.

—However, Momon had begun earlier, not allowing any actions to stop him to be taken.

<Twin Maximise Magic Fireball>

From Momon's open palms, two balls of fire twice the normal size burst into life. He released them.

—Impact.

A fire burned in the range of the spell, and for an instant, the graveyard

burned with light. Fire born from magic died in an instant. However, its destructive ability was absolute.

The six disciples all fell to the ground. The skeletons were destroyed, and their bones turned to ash, and was blown away by the wind.

Amongst them, was one shadow standing.

“Oh. You endured it. <Energy Immunity Fire> maybe?”

Asking that, he noticed the burn wounds on Khajiit’s face.

Then it should be a defensive magic at a level below <Energy Immunity Fire>, <Energy Protection Fire>.

In order to defend himself against this level of fire power, what’s the amount of mana he poured into it?

Momon was feeling impetuous because he could not finish all of them in a single blow. Well, he comforted himself by thinking that the outcome fell within his margin of error. In truth, it would be rather dull if he annihilated them with a single blow. It rekindled his desire to inflict a painful despair upon them.

“Not a simple power, an idiot that can use the third tier!”

“...An idiot? By a human....”

Momon frowned.

“I will not die simply?”

“That is my line! My preparations are complete! Enough death has been collected, by the power of the Supreme Pearl!”

Khajiit raised the orb in his hand.

It was a crudely made pearl, emitting a black metallic radiance. The surface of the pearl looked as if it did not undergo any form of polishing to smoothen its surface. Hence, its shape seemed ambiguous. It would be more accurate to describe it as a piece of ancient rock.

Suddenly, the six disciples burned by the fire slowly stood up. It was not the movements of the living. It was the movements of one controlled by death.

They shabbily stood between Khajiit and Momon. At that, Momon looked

on with a strange face.

“Zombies? That is my opponent?”

“Fuhahahaha. Yes just so. But, that is fine! Attack!”

Zombies, the lowest rank undead, could not use magic. The ex-disciples attacked with their claws. Momon watched boredly, and cast magic.

<Fireball>

The flames from the second round of fireball engulfed the bodies of the acolytes. As the fire dimmed, their bodies collapsed on the floor. Momon’s face displayed a gloomily expression as he finished them off in a single strike.

<Animate Dead> could not change multiple bodies to undead multiple times. Then what was he doing.

Momon looked at Khajiit, who was holding onto that black bulky artefact. He was not bluffing. Likely, that was the ability of that item, to grant the user, the ability to control multiple zombies.

Was not using the word Supreme not fitting of such an effect.

The word Supreme was only fit for Ainz and the other 40. Not Momon, but Narberal thought so—

As if answering Momon’s question, Khajiit’s cheer could be heard.

“Enough! It absorbed enough death!”

The orb in Khajiit’s hands absorbed the surrounding darkness, and it reflected some like. It was like a beating heart.

Suddenly, the earth moved.

—It was something huge trying to move.

Then the earth cracked.

—As if something huge was trying to come out.

From the broken ground, something white slowly came out.

It was a three meter tall mix of bones. Dragging countless bones, it was a beast with a head and four legs, a dragon. Its tail made of bones lined up

together, hit the ground once with a bang.

It was a monster called a Skeletal Dragon.

By its level, it was not a strong monster. It was weaker than vampires. However, this Skeletal Dragon, had one thing that made it dangerous to Momon.

Momon was surprised, and then irritated.

“Fuhahahahaha!”

Khajiit’s broken laugh reverberated through the area.

“Now, a Skeletal Dragon with absolute magic resistance. To spellcasters it is an enemy that cannot be defeated!”

It was just so.

A Skeletal Dragon had the abilities of skeletons, and had a resistance to magic. Basically, Momon’s magic would have no effect on it. Then—

Momon drew his sword with its sheath.

Tying the sheath and sword together, he made it difficult for them to be separated.

“—Hit and destroy it.”

Momon took a step.

He elegantly dodged the swipe from the Skeletal Dragon’s front leg. His hair danced around from the displacement of air caused by the Skeletal Dragon’s attack. He rushed towards the chest of the Skeletal Dragon.

A full swing with all of his muscles.

The three metre tall Skeletal Dragon flew backwards.

Slightly later, the sound of the impact shook the area.

“What!”

The surprised one was Khajiit.

Not only was he not a magic caster that could use the third tier, he also had the strength of a warrior to send a Skeletal Dragon flying. He had never seen or

heard of such a person. What level of talent would one need to accomplish that.

Especially that strength.

Since the Skeletal Dragon was made of bone, it was lighter than it appeared. However, just more than it appeared. Pursuing the study of magic day after day, a magic caster's muscles was not sufficient to do such a thing.

While making panicked movements to hide behind the Skeletal Dragon, Khajiit screamed.

“—W, what are you bastard! An A+ Class adventurer! Did you hide your name!”

“No no, just a novice.”

“Don't lie! No one apart from A+'s cannot do such a thing! There should be none in this town, but did you chase me!”

While spitting his saliva out, Khajiit glared at Momon with hatred.

“Why are you so irritated. Calm down.”

“B, bastard!”

Spending two months on a ritual to summon a Skeletal Dragon. And that was losing to an unfathomable man. Khajiit bit his teeth and tightened his lips.

The Skeletal Dragon slowly stood up with creaking sounds. It's chest area's bones were cracked, and the skeleton was about to crumble.

<Ray of Negative Energy>

The black ray shot out from Khajiit's hands and hit the dragon. Carrying negative energy, it healed its wounds quickly.

“While it has absolute resistance to magic, it is strange that it can heal with it.”

Ignoring Momon's disruption, Khajiit used magic.

<Reinforce Armour>

<Lesser Strength>

<Undead Flame>

<Shield Wall>

Khajiit continued casting magic to reinforce the Skeletal Dragon.

The Skeletal Dragon's body hardened and its false life force increased. A dark flame that could erase the essence of life wrap itself around its body. Lastly, an invisible barrier seemed to enveloped its body.

"Then I as well."

<Reinforce Armour>

<Shield Wall>

<Protection Energy Negative>

Momon also used defensive magic.

The two with complete magic defenses matched their timing and slid into battle.

Momon swung his sword.

While he hit the foot of the Skeletal Dragon, his brows wrinkled.

The earlier strike went well, but the situation was bad. Firstly his weapon.

The Skeletal Dragon's body was constituted from bones, hence it could negate any damage from piercing weapons. The most effective weapon would be a bashing type weapon, which Momon does not possess. So, he had to forcefully rely on his sword. Although, Momon currently had the advantage, but his balance when swinging the sword was not that good, preventing him from dealing any significant damage to the Skeletal Dragon.

Since his sheath was attacked, when he swung his sword, his sense of balance was thrown off slightly.

As a warrior he might have been able to keep his balance, but Momon was a spellcaster. He could not do such a thing.

The Skeletal Dragon's front claw passed above Momon's head as he squatted down. The black flame that covered the Skeletal Dragon's body, entwined itself over Momon's body after he dodged the Dragon's attack. Due to

the defensive effects of <Protection of Negative Energy>, the black flame dissipated.

If he could not defend but avoided, he would take some damage.

<Ray of Negative Energy>

With a ray of magic, Khajiit healed the wounds of the Skeletal Dragon.

This was the main reason that caused Momon brows to narrow. No matter the amount of damage he dealt, Khajiit who was controlling from the back would heal its wounds. Then, how about a plan to attack Khajiit directly? Momon and Khajiit were standing at a straight line against each other. The Skeletal Dragon in the middle would act as his shield.

If using a piercing magic like <Lightning>, with the Skeletal Dragon's absolute resistance against magic, could have easily blocked it. The area of effect magic <Fireball> would be useless based on the defensive magic that Khajiit used earlier.

Then what about spiritual magic, if he could get past its resistance and get a magic in—

<—Charm Person>

<—Mind of Undeath>

Momon and Khajiit simultaneously cast magic. Momon used a charm magic. And Khajiit used a spirit canceling magic.

The result—Khajiit had a winning smile. Momon clicked his tongue.

He was probably pissed by Khajiit's smile. A shadow passed by Momon's face.

A white figure filled Momon's vision.

—Evading was difficult.

Suddenly, Momon made a decision, with the tip of the sword place on his shoulders, he stood while using the blade as a shield. As the blade touched his shoulders, a numbing force spread out, Momon's tall figure flew into the air.

He was blown away by the Skeletal Dragon's tail attack that was aimed at

his face.

“To, ttotto.”

While maintaining an excellent posture without losing his balance, Momon stepped into the ground to endure it.

While it was a good chance, the Skeletal Dragon did not attack. It was as if it was protecting Khajiit and could not leave him. While watching the Skeletal Dragon, Momon’s hand shook, as if to shake off paralysis.

This time, a shadow appeared from the back of the Skeletal Dragon—

<—Acid Javelin>

<—Lightning>

The green javelin that flew out from Khajiit’s direction directly hit Momon. The javelin had the ability to cause corrosive damage. However, the magic was dispelled centimeters away from touching Momon’s armor. At the same time, Momon’s lightning was blocked by the Skeletal Dragon standing at the front, completely negating it.

Khajiit and Momon both clicked their tongues.

“Did you cast defense magic.”

“Can you come out and not hide behind it?”

“Why, must I do it?”

“The one that will suffer from a drawn out battle is you though?”

“ ... ”

Momon hit the mark and Khajiit stared sharply at Momon. In contrast, Momon calmly laughed.

“...It can’t be helped.”

As if he decided something, Khajiit again clutched the weird ball. He then raised it to the sky.

“Then listen! Did you think there would be only one! Watch! The power of the pearl of death!”

Momon's body shook. It was the proof that, once again, the ground was shaking.

The earth once again split, and the figure of a dragon made of countless bones appeared.

"...A second."

"Hmph, it is a pity that I have to use the result of a half of years worth of labor intensive large scale ceremony. But if I can kill you, and proceed to spread death all over the city. At least I can recoup the used energy."

At Momon's unmoved appearance, Khajiit raised a cry of anger, bafflement and other stuff, and mixed it with a cry of victory.

"Hyu."

With sharp breathes, Momon ran. He ran with a speed that normal people would find absurd. He ignored the look of shock on Khajiit's face.

The Skeletal Dragon tried to hit Momon with its front leg when it entered his range.

Momon bent his body, and aimed a blow at the Skeletal Dragon on the right. However, the Skeletal Dragon on the left was waiting and sent a tail whip close to the ground.

Momon jumped backwards. Before him, the air trembled as the sound of a giant tail swept through. Suddenly, it changed its movements, and jumped upwards. It was heading towards the retreating Momon.

Momon evaded left to avoid the hit that could shake the earth, but the Skeletal Dragon stopped and hit him with its foot.

"Gu!"

He stopped the forceful foot with his sword. It was using all of its weight, but Momon normally received it, and was instead pushing back. The attacking Skeletal Dragon took a step back, and a blank space was born in the battlefield.

"...What are you? Defending without martial arts....How did you get such a strong body!"

“I trained normally.”

“Are you taking me for an idiot!”

“You snap easily. You make a great pair with that woman....I’m sort of angry.”

Momon stared at Khajiit with animosity. Khajiit felt a chill, and took a step back from the gaze.

“Do it! Skeletal Dragon!”

Once again, the two Skeletal Dragons kept close to Khajiit and attacked Momon.

Avoiding the attacks of the Skeletal Dragon, and about to step in, but due to the attack from another one, he lost that chance. That battle repeated onwards. While it was possible for that battle to continue until the sun rose, a decisive factor occurred.

<Acid Javelin>

Momon unconsciously tried to avoid the magic spear that was thrown at his face.

It was quite a blunder. If it hit, it would have no effect. However, he avoided a projectile shot at his face on reflex. This had no direct damage, but as a spellcaster it was a blunder.

The result of the miss was huge.

Momon’s vision sharply changed with a slap. It suddenly turned.

He tasted weightlessness for a second. Then he hit the ground. He received a blow from the Skeletal Dragon’s tail from his left side. Rolling, he could not tell how he was doing.

He rolled multiple times.

Momon finally stopped rolling and as he was protected by multiple protection magic, he felt no pain. However, the two Skeletal Dragons in front of him raised their front feet.

A desperate situation. If thought normally.

“If you beg I might save you?”

Khajiit held confidence of victory, and waited for Momon's reply with a sadistic smile.

Of course, even if he begged, he had no intention of saving the one who wasted six months worth of congregated power. However, after he begged, he wanted to see what expression Momon would have before he died. It could not be helped that Khajiit was excited.

Momon's raised top half changed to an expression of fury.

"...ikes....mans....ash."

"...What?"

As Momon was too far away, his voice did not carry. As the graveyard was dead silent, he could faintly hear it.

Momon glared at Khajiit. It was an extremely unhappy expression. While he should be looking down on him, it felt like he was being looked down upon.

This time Khajiit could hear. It was—

"The likes of humans should not open their mouths, trash."

"—What?"

The likes of humans.

Khajiit was thrown into confusion by Momon talking as if he was not human, but he decided that he could not take things easily, and gave out orders.

"Destroy, Skeletal Dragon!"

While two feet moved, Momon laughed in amazement.

"...Anyway....Did you think you could win?"

The Skeletal Dragon's bone leg was about to step on the sprawled Momon. But there was a moment's pause, and Momon activated his magic.

<Teleportation>

Momon's sight instantly shifted.

Momon had moved 500 metres above the ground.

Of course, without wings Momon plummeted to the ground. Without air

resistance, he would take about ten seconds to hit the ground.

In the world of darkness where one could not tell up from down, a strong wind blew. If a normal person was there, they would be trapped with fear, but Momon calmly laughed.

<—Fly>

His fall slowed down, and he came to a stop mid air. If he looked down it would be the earlier battle. Khajiit and the two Skeletal Dragons. They were surprised at the fact that Momon disappeared, and they looked wildly at the surroundings.

Momon looked at the graveyard and its surroundings. He looked for humans other than Khajiit, but he could not confirm. However, there was no such thing as being too careful.

<Detect Life>

From the magic, he knew all of the life in the vicinity. As a result, he confirmed that there were no large life forms like humans nearby. Then—

“....Should I stop being Momon, and return to being Narberal.”

Chapter 40: Promotion Test | Part 3

“...To be able to use <Fly>.”

Towards the sound of Momon slowly descending from the sky, Khajiit maintained his level of alertness. It was a mistake to underestimate someone that could use the same tier of magic as himself. It was not unimaginable that Momon would use the magic <Fly> to escape, especially during the encounter with the Skeletal Dragon. However, Khajiit could not grasp why he did not retreat in the first place.

“Hmph, do you have any chance of victory? Facing off against Skeletal Dragons which have absolute resistance against magic.”

“Well, but there are numerous ways to achieve victory here.”

“What?!”

That smug face caused Khajiit to develop a sense of fear. He immediately ordered the Skeletal Dragons to attack. The two Skeletal Dragons approached Momon at a surprising speed. The humongous claws, formed from countless pieces of bones, swiped downwards. The moment before the swipe connected, Momon’s magic activated.

<Dimensional Move>

“Again!”

Momon’s figure disappeared once again.

Khajiit focused his gaze upon the sky, looking for Momon who disappeared. He assumed that Momon used the magic to achieve the same tactic by moving around the sky. But where did Momon run off to? A sudden sharp pain gave Khajiit his answer.

“—Gyaa!”

Khajiit’s cries of pain resounded around the cemetery. A burning sensation spread through Khajiit’s left shoulder. The pain felt like he was beaten all over

the body, seeming to spread with every beat of his heart.

Khajiit was surprised as he looked towards his left shoulder, he noticed something sharp protruding from it.

“—Gaa, Gaa!”

The next moment, the sword was slowly withdrawn, causing further excruciating pain. It felt as if the bone was cut deep inside, combined with the pain from earlier, it further increased Khajiit’s discomfort. The viscous blood flowed out from the wound, wetting his black robes.

Saliva came out from Khajiit’s mouth as he could not bear the pain. He panically swung his head around, looking towards his back.

Momon with an inconceivable expression was standing there.

‘Is it that painful?’

“——?!”

Momon asked him as he played around with the blood stained dagger. In contrast, Khajiit could not even utter a single word due to the excruciating pain.

Magic casters did not usually head towards the frontlines. Furthermore, Khajiit was used to people serving him. Other than dishing out pain, he had never experienced the sensation himself. Hence, his tolerance towards it was rather low.

His forehead sweating profusely, he ordered the Skeletal Dragons using his mind. Facing the approaching Skeletal Dragons, Momon swiftly backed away as if he wanted to avoid them by using the mobility of <Fly>.

Using that momentary gap between the two Skeletal Dragon, Momon slipped away.

Khajiit retreated behind the Skeletal Dragons. Once he confirmed that he was at a safe spot, his brain began to regain a certain level of calm and he began to grasp the magic used by Momon. That was—

“Teleportation magic.”

<Dimensional Move> was classified as a Tier-3 magic. Magic casters who

practise this magic, usually used it to enlarge the distance between them and their opponents in order to escape.

However, that was for those magic casters with weak physiques. If they were to use that magic to make a warrior admit his defeat, it would be classified as an attacking magic instead. No a magic that could overcome an opponent's defences, it would be more effective than a cumbersome attacking magic.

Khajiit pressed on his shoulders as he glared at Momon.

"I see, your trump card was to kill me by using teleportation!"

Undeniably, this trump card was rather troublesome, Khajiit thought. If magic was totally useless against Skeletal Dragons, killing the summoner would be the best move, a logical choice of tactics. If he could utilize teleportation easily, Khajiit's overall chances of stopping it was very low.

However, Momon gave a casual reply.

"No, no, it's not like this."

Khajiit for a brief moment did not manage to grasp the meaning behind Momon's words. He began to scowl. As if elaborating his mind, Momon began to move.

"Well, it would be too easy to kill you. This is just a performance."

What was he saying? With a carefree attitude, Momon sheathed his sword.

Suddenly, Khajiit did not know what to say as he remained clueless. It was natural. He was the one pressuring Momon. But he was now on the receiving end. With such an overwhelming advantage, having that ability to swiftly move around yet abandoning it. That was the work of a madman. No, impossible....An idea came to him. Khajit shook his head to abandon that thought. It was impossible.

"...Bastard, are you mad?"

"Do you really think that way? Or is it....that you choose not to admit it?"

Momon smiled coldly. Under the influence of that smile, although it was brief, Khajiit's body shuddered.

It was not due to anger. But, fear itself. He met an enemy that should not be provoked in the first place. That discomforting thought passed through Khajiit's mind. It was too late now. Khajiit was staring at Momon.

Momon happily accepted that look. His smile widen. This was the finale.

"It seems that you are absolutely confident about the Skeletal Dragon's ability to repel all magical attacks. Let me enlighten you, then you can die."

The sound of a single clap was heard.

Momon relaxed both his arms. That moment, between both his hands, was a single white electrical arc. The electric arc looked like a twirling dragon as if it had a life of its own. The surrounded area was illuminated by that bright electrical energy.

Momon looked as if he was surrounded by a dazzling brilliance.

"...Ka."

Khajiit's eyes widened. No words came out from his opened mouth. That was a magic that was beyond his understanding. The only thing he could see, within that brilliant white radiance, was Momon smiling lightly.

Khajiit managed to regain some of his composure.

Because he looked down on others, he was made a fool. Now he was about to receive his just deserts.

The Skeletal Dragon's large body completely blocked off his view, thinking about it, he tried to summon his own pride.

"—Ah! Foolish person! No matter how strong your magic is, you can never defeat the Skeletal Dragon's magical resistance. Go! Kill him!"

Khajiit's sharp command was unable to conceal the fear in his voice. The two Skeletal Dragons on his left and right began to move. As the twin humongous bodies approached, Momon was smiling calmly like a teacher giving his foolish pupil a lesson.

"Absolute resistance against magic? But of course, Skeletal Dragons possessed absolute negation against any magical attacks. But it is only applicable to Tier-6 magic and below."

The Skeletal Dragon swiped using its front paws. At the same time, Khajiit did not comprehend the meaning of those words.

“—In other words, it cannot negate any magic above that level, ol’ foolish one.”

<Twin Maximise Magic Chain Dragon Lightning.>

In each of Momon’s hand, a lightning with the shape of a dragon burst forward, the lightning, thicker than a person’s arm, arced separately against the two Skeletal Dragons.

Receiving the large lightning magic with its body, the bodies of the white Skeletal Dragons shook.

The lightning dragons wrapped around the Skeletal Dragon, and burned the corpse that was imbued with false life.

The outcome was instantaneous.

Skeletal Dragons which possessed immunity against magic, used their bodies to blocked the magical lightning arc. Their body collapsed into pieces as if they aged by hundreds of years within a single moment.

Although the Skeletal Dragons were completely disintegrated, the lightning attack did not dissipate. The two separate arcs of dragon lightning raised their heads in search of fresh prey, and flew towards their last target.

The shocked Khajiit had his entire vision covered by the lightning’s blinding white radiance.

There was no time for him to even beg for mercy nor to scream in agony.

So insignificant. Ah, He could only mumble those last words as his body was completely swallowed by that attack.

His muscles spasmed, making it look like he was doing a weird dance. In the end, his body keeled over and twitched.

With his body rapidly burned, the lightning attack disappeared. The smell of flesh burning permeated the air. Khajiit’s body lay on the ground unmoving.

The smell of burnt meat filled the area, and Khajiit no longer twitched.

Momon loosened his shoulders. He spoke towards the Khajiit's body as it lay on the ground. The body was curled up due to muscle contraction.

"Hmm, the burned meat smells good. Or you are using <Fox Sleep> like I did earlier?"

Momon snorted out a laugh. It was impossible.

"Now, before I bury the body, I need to act like an adventurer and check for treasure."

Momon heard a lot of information, and took the appropriate action as the victorious party.

Basically, when a human was your opponent, the Guild would endorse the belongings if you presented it to them. With the endorsement, you could sell it as you please. However, if you did not go through the Guild, and you stole it poorly, there was a chance that suspicion would fall one's way. And so most adventurers would go through the Guild.

Of course, Momon was thinking of going through the Guild. It was to avoid standing out too much. But if there was anything rare he would not mind stealing it, and take it back to Nazarick.

There was nothing surprising among his belongings, and if sold into this world's currency, he might be praised by Ainz.

With a small feeling of excitement, Momon chose to activate magic.

The first one to investigate was Khajiit, and while it was troublesome a rough search would suffice.

<Detect Magic>

With the search magic, the surrounding magic items were differentiated.

In Momon's vision, the items with magic auras sparkled. The ones with reactions were the robes of six people and Khajiit's, Khajiit's staff, and his ring. And the last one was the pearl that left Khajiit's hand.

The one with the most magic was the pearl.

Momon walked to the pearl, and casually picked it up. An unshapely magic

item, he did not see much value in the item, but if magic it would be different. After finding its true value, if it was not worth being taken back to Nazarick, it could be sold.

At that moment—

—*Obey.*

A voice rang in Momon's head. It was a strange one neither male nor female. It was like a non-human was forcefully speaking human words.

—*Obey me.*

Momon's view shook. It was the feeling of being pulled into the orb. It was a type of spiritual attack.

—*Obey me and spread death.*

"Ah annoying."

Momon glared at the orb. It was unclear what it was thinking, but this level of spiritual attack could not control Momon. Just by shaking his head slightly, he could clear its effects.

But an Intelligent Item.

Momon opened his eyes in shock. He destroyed the notion of breaking the item. An item with intelligence was something Momon did not know about. The expectation of Ainz enjoying it floated in his head.

—*Impossible. Resisting this one's control. Are thou truly human?*

"Now."

—*No. Thou are not human.*

Momon's eyebrow twitched.

—*Bring death to the humans together with me. That is the fate of those who hold me. Spread death.*

"Annoying."

—*Obey. Obey me and spread death.*

The voice repeated 'Obey' over and over in his head. Momon narrowed his

eyes.

Momon took in an audible deep breath. As if to send wind into a furnace in her heart.

“—A thing like you has no knowledge to understand, I was a fool to think that showing Ainz-sama a low class item like you would make him happy.”

A screech could be heard from the orb. The strengthening effect from Iuan Graybell was activating.

The feeling that made it possible—Anger.

It was the name of the emotion filling Momon.

—!!

“—Listen, idiotic rock. I am Narberal Gamma. I pledge my loyalty to the 41 Supreme Beings. Myself being controlled by a Low Class Magic Item? And to obey it? Listen trash. I am to only offer my loyalty to the Supreme Beings. If you understand shut it. I will not say it twice? Do not do anything to make my feeling of idiocy at thinking that Ainz-sama would be pleased to receive you increase?”

—....

“Hmm.”

Momon placed the orb inside the bag he had received from Lizzie.

“Now. If you say the same thing again I will destroy you, so sorry.”



“...What the hell.”

As if to not let anyone hear, a small voice whispered. He was trying to chase away the scene of the blinding lightning seared into his eyes.

“...I can't believe it.”

He did not believe it, but it happened right in front of him.

He was an adventurer comrade of Gignal Elshai. The same A Class adventurer, a spellcaster thief. Bebei Autumn stifled his surprise, and thought

about the thing he had to do next.

The reason he came here was to test the one called Momon. Calling an A Class adventurer like Bebei to judge the promotion test of a novice was impossible according to common sense. This time, Bebei himself thought that he was being made a fool of. However, hearing about the situation from Gignal, he understood the reason for the request.

This was not a judging, but was an examination.

Investigate the mystery known as Momon. Just that.

Getting near a dangerous and evil magic caster that could employ <Animate Dead>. Momon encountered such a monster.

He unveiled this person, Momon's capability. Then, that unbelievable scene happened.

Blowing away a Skeletal Dragon with a sword.

Then, he did something unforeseen, using an unknown magic to destroy the Skeletal Dragon which had absolute immunity against magic. This part was the most unbelievable.

Bebei himself could use certain low-tier magic. Hence, he fully understood the raw power exhibited by Momon's magic, not seen in 3rd-tier nor 4th-tier magic. It should be a higher-tier magic, 5th-tier, no, possibly 6th-tier. It is possible that it belonged to those legendary higher-tier magic.

"...I really can't believe it."

Once again, he spat out his personal thoughts. Bebei slowly began to move from his hidden spot.

If he brought this information back, not only the city, but the whole country would be shaken, like an earthquake. But if Momon intended to hide his true capabilities, then it would relate to one bad news they obtained. .

If he knew that he was being investigated, Bebei would be killed.

A cold breeze passed through Bebei's back. Bebei's opinion of getting his predictions spot on was rather high.

Immediately retreat.

Bebei moved his body carefully. It was best not to let Momon notice his presence. The thought of encountering the undead on his way back surfaced in his mind.

From his hiding spot, he slowly inched forward—

“That was a Tier 7 Magic. From the magic Narberal can use, it is the second from the top....Should I explain about magic?”

Suddenly, the voice of a third party—A man’s voice caused Bebei’s movements to freeze. It was right behind him. It was not too far a distance, yet not too close either.

Bebei, who was a thief sensed that he could not allow the owner of that voice to get near to him. He had to retreat at full speed. Bebei bit his lips as he could not move as he intended.

Seeing his unmoving limbs, his surprise went up by a level.

A hand was reaching out from darkness. It was not human. It was a monster’s claw. Amongst his jumbled thoughts, he assumed it to be an ambush Momon prepared.

Keeping quiet. At the same time, his mouth and his limbs were fully immobile.

“Now now. It seems that you are returning, but you cannot go immediately. Please let me have some of your time.”

The hand that extended from the darkness, clamped down on Bebei’s arms, legs, and mouth. He could not move no matter how hard he struggled.

How much strength does it possess?

He tried to move his eyes. He could not obtain a shred of intel on the person behind him. His movement was completely inhibited by some type of magic.

He tried frantically to reach the scroll hidden in his sleeve. Although he might die here, at least, he should deliver the information he gathered so far.

However, a mocking laugh was made at Bebei’s frantic actions.

“You seem to be taking out something....<Message>? It’s useless. I have used a magic that blocks all divinations and investigative magic in this area. So <Message> will not work. But anyway, you have been seen by Narberal.”

Was it the truth or was it all lies?

Doubt surfaced in Bebei’s heart. Under such circumstance, his options were limited. He decided that it was a lie and struggled to reach the scroll. It was only a few centimeters away yet it seemed so far.

The ears of the struggling Bebei, caught the sound of footsteps belonging to the mysterious individual. The footsteps were slow but getting closer and closer to Bebei.

At it arrived directly to the back of Bebei, he once again struggled with all his might. Yet, his body remain unmoving.

“There is no need to worry.” A bony hand was calmly placed on his head. “I won’t kill you. I promise that you can go home safely. Now, relax.”

Then—

“Really.”

With his memory modified, seeing the departing Bebei as he returned to the mayor with the information at hand, Ainz dispelled the magic <Perfect Unknowable>. This was a Tier-9 magic, capable of eliminating the traces of scent, body warmth, vibrations, prints and various other stimulus that could trigger the enemy’s detection.

“Well, there should be no problems on Narberal’s side.”

It seemed like Narberal did not commit any blunders this round. During the finale, the thief, Bebei, would not have been discovered if not for Ainz’s <Detect Life> skill. If it persist, he would have used the skill <Message> to deliver intelligence regarding Narberal—that he could perform the Tier-6 magic <Teleportation>, leaking the information to others.

“...Well, just a possibility.”

If he was not capable of using that skill. There would not be any other option left. Firstly, the modification to Bebei’s memory would not be detected.

At least, they could keep their cards hidden.

“But....”

Ainz looked at Bebei’s feet.

“Adventurers cannot be made light of....”

If he did not look into his memory, even Ainz would not have noticed it. Bebei who had both his arms and feet restrained, was forcefully able to leave a hidden message using the coded words of the Thief language.

When facing an overwhelmingly strong opponent, if one did not use any hidden techniques, mostly they would be pursued ceaselessly. This alone was able to reignite Ainz’s cautious behavior.

“Then....” Ainz faced towards the direction in which Narberal departed. “It was supposed to be an easy job of delivering some items to Narberal, why do I have to purposely come here to verify the nature of the task? Well, could it be considering the perils of an enemy territory, this is the result of my absence?”

He did not want to make the wrong move. The truth was closer to that, possibly, there were no better people more suited than Narberal for this task. Ainz was confident of this. Other than this, there was an alternative, Pandora’s Actor.

However, what he wished was, that they, Nazarick, would be thought of as the strongest. However, he also wished that the inhabitants of this world would throw away their thoughts of hating them.

However, that was—

“...Difficult huh.”

Ainz believed so. This was a difficult problem that troubled the Absolute Ruler Ainz that could not be solved even if he ordered it. As long as this world could not bring defeat to the existences of Nazarick, that fact would never change.

In other words, Ainz needed to give out orders when he is around.

“Hah. This is annoying. However, this world’s magic that can summon a Skeletal Dragon cannot be underestimated. Even I can only make 12 Low Class

Undead per day. I would like a Skeletal Dragon summoning magic.”

Ainz lightly shrugged his shoulders.

“Now, can you say something? I feel lonely just talking to myself. And if you have any important viewpoints it would be good to share them with me.”

“No, Ainz-sama. I think that this was a perfect action, and so I have nothing to say about it.”

Behind Ainz, the figure of Shalltear slowly appeared as she removed <Perfect Unknowable>. Only Shalltear was there.

“...So you really cannot find a candidate for Camila here.”

“Yes. As expected, there might be a weird connection with this city.”

“I see....Then shall we retreat to Nazarick.”

“Yes....By the way, would it be fine to not say anything to Narberal?”

“Ah. If she knew that I had come, she would suspect her own abilities.”

“I do not believe so. On the contrary she would probably be moved to tears.”

I would do the same. Ainz pulled back a bit and replied to Shalltear.

“No no, I would be troubled. Well, let’s return with the information at hand. There are several places that need adjustments. Like before, we’ll use <Message> and be the puppeteers of the marionette show.”

Shalltear raised a question after she noticed something.

“If we decided to do that, Ainz-sama. Why do we have to erase the memory of the battle with the Skeletal Dragon?”

“Hmm. If we changed up to there, if there is something we overlooked, it would be dangerous if there was a discrepancy in the magic. And so repelling one Skeletal Dragon is within an acceptable parameter right? The current problem is that 7th Tier Magic was used.”

“True. If it is repelling an undead of that level, it would be simple for adventurers. Well, it would be difficult if they faced a vampire.”

Hearing Shalltear’s response, Ainz recalled something and placed his bony

hand on his face.

“...That’s right. They would have a difficult battle with a vampire. Was it bad? A Skeletal Dragon would be a strong enemy....”

“I honestly do not know. I believe that the adventurers in this town are not weak but....”

“...I agree. An annoyance. Why are they all so weak? Will my common sense not work here....”



“That’s a lie.”

The Magician’s Guildmaster Tio’s response to Bebei’s report was that sentence.

He suspected the information from an A Class adventurer, Bebei. It was the same as suspecting Bebei’s actual ability. Theo who uttered something akin to an insult, sat down, Bebei’s fury could not be seen. The one that was in the same team of Bebei, who had underwent so many hardships with him, after hearing Theo’s words, nodded. He could not believe what Bebei had seen.

“I will ask, ask once more. Did Momon-dono, by himself, fight a Skeletal Dragon?”

“Ah.”

“And he won?”

“Ah.

“—It’s a lie right?”

“...No, it’s the truth.”

Theo shook his head to the left and right with a sigh and spoke.

“Skeletal Dragons are monsters that have perfect resistance to magic. The nemesis of Spellcasters? How did Momon-dono defeat it?”

“He hit it with a sword.”

The room returned to silence.

What was this guy saying. The feelings that he tried to hide but could not floated upon Theo's face. Bebei noticed it and said nothing. If he was Theo, he would have the same reaction.

"...No, it is possible." While moving the subject along, Theo had a pained smile on his face. "The power of that artifact."

"Oh, I see. That artifact."

Following the situation, Gigal could only smile wryly, as if trying to say that such a situation was impossible. But what the two of them were thinking were obvious at a glance.

"Then, what if there was no Skeletal Dragon?"

The owner of the room, Pluton opened his mouth.

"...We did not mistake it. We cannot mistake a Skeletal Dragon. Right, Gigal?"

Due to Bebei's testimony, a rather painful memory surfaced, Gigal could only close his eyes.

"...During our time at the Katze Plain, we encountered one of that monster, formed from the bony remains from hundreds of people, a body that is contaminated by the essence of death. It is impossible for me to make a mistake on identifying that particular undead! Especially after that undead killed two of my comrades!"

The room became quiet. If what Bebei had spoken was the truth and he had not made a mistake—

"Skeletal Dragons have a difficulty rating of 48. It is at a level B Class adventurers can do something about. To defeat it alone—" As if he were speaking the impossible, Theo took a deep breath and continued. "He has a strength that rivals A Class. And being able to use Third Tier, and has a sword arm equaling A Class. How, I have have never heard of such a spellcaster! Isn't he a warrior that can use magic!?"

"—Theo, calm down. No one here has heard of such an adventurer."

Theo was asked by Pluton to restrain himself. He used his hand to tidy up his

hair, that had turned into a mess due to all the excitement. While glancing sideways at the figure beside him, Pluton told the other remaining three people, what was on his mind.

“It is just as Panasolei-sama has said, we should think of him as someone that cannot be imagined by normal people.”

The three of them shook their heads. Those who listened to Bebei’s report, who thought that Momon was a normal adventurer would suspect him and think that his head had collapsed. If it was a person that knew even a little about adventurers, this would be natural.

“If someone saw the 13 Heros, they might have the same feeling.”

After listening to Pluton’s monologue, no one could raise a single word of protest. This was due to the fact that it would not be stretching it to call Momon a hero, that possessed unimaginable strength. Although he might self-proclaim himself as one of the Thirteen Heroes. No one is confident enough to refute it. In opposite, they would have voiced their recognition.

“He is already someone with strength we cannot understand.”

Bebei was surprised.

Actually, with the strength of an A Class, Momon’s strength knew no bounds. If even they knew Bebei watched it, they could only think that it was expected.

“Since I met Momon-dono, I felt that my common sense has been slowly destroyed.”

Everyone agreed with Theo’s evaluation and sighed. And a feeling of exhaustion filled the room.

“But, I cannot stop my words of gratitude. We really have been saved by Momon-dono. If a B Class party met a Skeletal Dragon, they would be massacred.”

“...However, doesn’t it feel that the undead monsters near this city have been getting stronger?”

“Is the source that vampire?”

Dodging Pluton's sidelong glance, Bebei did not say a word. He had caught bits and pieces of it from Gignal, however, he did not hear it directly from him. He should not reveal it in such an atmosphere.

"No, I do not think so. The documents of the Magician's Guild have not recorded undead being pulled towards the existence of a powerful undead. It should be a coincidence."

"I see."

"...Now, Momon-dono is now a F Class adventurer."

Everyone in the room laughed. It was a smile that said,
that was an F Class?

"Isn't it fine to promote him to A+ already? It is hilarious how that is F."

"Really. It's just as Bebei says. However, if he is that strong, how amazing is his teacher?"

"What, Gignal. Does such a person even exist?...Wouldn't he be able to use the Seventh Tier already?"

As everyone smiled bitterly, no one objected to overall consensus on Momon. This was due to them being occupied by a sense of powerless which they did not hate.

"Momon-dono will be after this right?"

"Yes. It would not be weird for him to arrive by now."

"Then we will—"

"Yes, Gignal-dono and Bebei-dono please move to the next room."

Receiving their understanding, the two moved to the next room.

After 30 minutes had past, Momon knocked and entered.

"Good Morning Momon-dono—"



After the promotion test, the first thing Narberal did when she returned to the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick was to change her clothes into

something proper.

Of course, proper clothes meant her maid clothes.

Wearing maid clothes. It was not an overstatement to say that as a battle maid, this was the uniform one should wear.

Exchanging greetings with the other battle maids, Yuri and Lupusregina, Narberal went down to the 9th Floor.

What greeted Narberal when she came down to her master's room to report were several individuals. Apart from the owner of the room, it was the first time so many people had come to the room.

The first on the list were the Guardians Shalltear and Aura, followed by the Chief Librarian, Titus Annaeus Secundus. And a mostly naked female demon with bat wings were assembled in front of Ainz. She was probably Demiurge's subordinate.

Behind the sitting Ainz was the head maid Pestonya and two powerless maids. The existences on the ceiling were exempted from the count.

Narberal instantly looked around the room, understood and was about to lower her head. However, Ainz was faster and stopped her.

"Welcome back, Narberal. I was thinking of hearing your report later. Line up first."

"Ha, understood."

Ainz turned perpendicular to his table, and pointed at the head of the line. Narberal deeply lowered her head, and stood next to Aura.

"Now, Chief Librarian. How was the combination result of the parchment Demiurge got?"

"Yes. The results are that it can hold a first to third tier magic with no problems, but anything higher fails."

"I see....However, this solves the problem of making low level scrolls."

"Yes, there are currently no problems, and so I believe it will be the correct decision."

“You worked hard, Chief Librarian.” Ainz’s gaze moved, and faced the prostrating demon.

“You worked hard as well. Tell Demiurge he did well.”

“Understood.”

“Now, about the parchment Demiurge discovered. This is different from what is normally used right? What type of sheep was this taken from?”

“Aberion Tar.”

Receiving the instant reply from the demon, Ainz’s eyes sparkled, and nodded several times.

“Hmm. I see....Aberion Tar....Does it have any special abilities?”

“It is a simple animal from the tar race. I believe it does not have any special abilities.”

“I see, got it.”

With an expression as if he understood everything, Ainz ended the topic. But, Ainz himself knew that he could not have known about this species of sheep, Aberion Tar. A question mark remained in his heart.

It should not be a problem as it would be a little embarrassing for him to reveal his cluelessness in front of his subordinate. Although he might not have known this species of sheep, he considered that since this task was given to Demiurge, there should not be any problem.

To not let others notice this, he looked at the surrounding subordinates.

Ainz is all knowing, that is what was in every one of his subordinate’s thinking. Honestly, please let me go. Ainz was only acting all regal and absolute. His non-existent stomach began to hurt.

Ainz personally wanted a subordinate that was not instantly ‘As expected of Ainz-sama’, could notice that he did not know, ask about the object and indirectly teach Ainz. However, there was no such subordinate in Nazarick.

As the price for their absolute loyalty, a smart mind was almost non-existent. Likely, he had to rely on Demiurge to figure out something....

Ainz sighed quietly. He then turned towards the female demon.

“For that Tar, you have to be careful when raising it. If they go extinct, it would be hard to obtain another source of scrolls.”

“Understood. I will relay this message to Demiurge-sama.”

Ainz nodded. He then raised his hand to wave at the succubus to convey his message. The demon once again bowed deeply before leaving the room quietly.

“Then, next, I shall hear Narberal’s report.”

“I obey.”

Narberal from where she stood earlier, took the spot that the succubus previously occupied somewhere not far from Ainz’s desk, a place where the person who was sitting could still see an entire kneeling figure. She then began her report.

Ainz quietly listened to all the details in Narberal’s promotion examination. The report was detailing what he already knew. However, he did not interrupt Narberal, displaying a clueless demeanor.

As she reached the end of the report. He raised his voice as he laughed.

“I see. It should not matter. Drinking a glass or two of celebratory wine. If you are equipped with any anti-poison equipment, you won’t be able to get drunk you know.”

“But....”

“They’re trying to get some information on our end, hoping to forge a connection. You have to be careful of the former. About the latter, we prefer to avoid them if possible. Of course, I do not want to force you if you do not like it.”

“Understood, Ainz-sama. I hoped to be treated well by them.”

“I’ll leave it to you, Narberal. But, remember not to kill those people on a whim? Those people are those that hold power within that city.”

“There’s no problem, Ainz-sama. I am beginning to learn more about human society. Now, I’m more confident than before.”

Ainz was observing Narberal closely before moving his gaze away and replying mildly.

“...Is it? If you are feeling like it, then let’s proceed with this....”

“Yes!”

Narberal’s was filled with confidence. Her eyes were squinted as if looking at a dazzling Ainz.

“Then, has the report ended?”

“Yes! Ah! There’s one more thing. But there’s nothing impressive about it. Just that it is a curious new artefact obtained when adventuring in the city. I hope you will find it to your satisfaction, Ainz-sama.”

“Oh?”

Narberal took out a leather pouch from her sleeves. Seeing that, Pestonya gave a directive to the maid standing beside her. The maid was carrying a silver tray as she approached Narberal. However, she was motioned to stop by Ainz with a raised hand gesture.

“I do not mind. Narberal. Bring it over here.”

“Yes.”

Barely able to suppress the bursting happiness in her heart, the blushing Narberal stood up.

In the proper way, a third party was suppose to retrieve the item before delivering it to Ainz. Like before, although the previous visitor was Demiurge’s underling, she also placed the contents she brought on top of the silver tray, carried by the maid standing behind her. The scrolls were then delivered into Ainz’s hand. However, if he disregarded the steps before, he was hinting to the others nearby about Narberal’s position and the level of trust placed on her.

In other words, at this moment, Narberal was as if told by Ainz, ‘I trust you, bring it over.’ Several pairs of envious eyes were directed at her. However Narberal did not take notice of it.

That is because she heard the words, ‘I am your creator. For I am the representative of all the supreme beings. Towards the maid who devoted all her

loyalty, Narberal. I shall be generous with my trust. Originally this is not something permissible. But I shall allow this to be delivered to my side, the supreme existence. I shall overlook you for giving me this insignificant object.'

Just like leaping, Narberal arrived at Ainz's desk. She carefully placed the sack there.

She cared not for the contents but the act was a mark of highest respect towards her master.

Seeing that she returned to her original position, Ainz withdrew a black pearl from it, placing it on his palm before examining the pearl by turning it around. He then activated his magic.

<All Appraisal Magic Item>

"Wow. This is rare."

Ainz nodded as if moved.

"Similar to a Level 40 item..... Hmm....Within our own Nazarick, the item level is around Level 80. The levels of those placed within the treasure vault are higher. In contrast, it seems that we do not have any Level 40 items. My collector's soul is fired up. Furthermore, an Intelligent Item?"

Ainz spoke quietly to himself. He tilted his head as he did not hear anything. As if convinced about something he nodded several times.

"Narberal, this an amazing gift."

"Ha! Thank you very much!"

"For this job, I have to give something in return. First, since I received a Level 40 Magic Item, I will give you Iluan Graybell. And more rewards will follow."

"Thank you very much!"

Several people faced Narberal with envious gazes. The one with the strongest was Shalltear, and the weakest one was Aura.

"Now, how to make this item speak. Well there are more important things to do, I should first place this in the treasury."

At that whisper, Ainz was about to place the pearl on the table—

—Please wait, the great Lord of Death.

Ainz stopped his movements. He was surprised at the voice he heard for the first time. However, all of his subordinates looked at Ainz's hand, and understood who spoke.

"Hmm. An Intelligent Item."

Ainz lifted the pearl in his hand, in front of his eyes, examining it closely. But there was no sign of any ability to talk.

What is going on? Ainz thought. Or should I start with this?

"I allow you to speak."

—My gratitude. The Great Lord of Death.

The guess was correct. Ainz refocused his attention on the talking pearl. At that moment, the voices of Shalltear and Aura drifted into Ainz's ear, expressing that the word 'Supreme' should be added after 'Great'. Their quiet voice questioned whether the Pearl overlooked it.

—Firstly, please let this one express its sincerest respect and worship for the supreme ones deathly aura.

"Well, you are forgiven."

—My gratitude. In this world, there's nothing else stronger than death. To be able to meet such a supreme existence, this one is grateful for all the death in this world.

Ainz felt that the flattery was excessive, as if a sudden itch appeared at his back, he straightened his back.

"Other than this, what else do you have to say?"

—Yes, this one regrets its own blasphemous outburst. Please I beseech the great one to help this one achieve its dreams.

"What is the matter?"

—Yes, all this while, this one thought that spreading death in this world was the sole purpose for this ones existence. However, after meeting thy, the Supreme King of Death, this one was enlightened.

“Hmm?”

—I was born into this world to serve you.

“...Oh”

—O’ Great King of Death, please receive this ones pledge of fealty. For this one hopes to be one of thine loyal subjects. Please grant me a place at your side.

If the pearl possessed a head, it would be bowing now. It sounded serious with its request. Ainz placed his left fist by the side of his mouth as he began to think. The pros and cons of accepting him as a subordinate, and whether itself could be trusted.

The Supreme King of Death finally decided.

Narberal herself joined in, ignoring the loud chatters of Shalltear and Aura.

“.....Good. Shalltear!”

“Ha!”

“I’ll give this to you. The item’s ability to control the undead is suited for you.”

However, Shalltear only displayed a rather apologetic expression. She asked Ainz.

“.....My apologies. I am truly happy that Ainz-sama is bestowing a magical item to me. But for a Level 40 magical item would be damaged by my [Destruction of Low Level Item] curse due to my ability as a Cursed Caster and Cursed Knight.”

“Hmm....True. I will give this to you, Narberal.”

“Eh? Can I?”

“Small matter, this is something that you obtained. Use it when the occasion calls for it. Just like the iron gauntlet, think of it as I am lending it to you.”

“Yes!”

“It matters not?”

—I have no objection nor rebuttal on this matter. I only hear and obey.

“...What would you like to be called?”

—*The name does not matter, o' great undead king.*

“...If you insist, then I shall call you the Pearl of Death in lieu of the magic you possessed.”

Ainz lifted the pearl in Narberal's direction.

“Narberal, take this.”

The flying orb drew a parabola as it was thrown, as if falling into a predetermined position, Narberal's hand.

“Then, Narberal, is this all you want to report?”

“Yes!”

“Is it, Narberal? You may excuse yourself. For any future intelligence, I will leave it to you.”

“As ordered!”

Narberal exited the room. After the door closed behind her, she heaved a big sigh as if she was emptying all the air remaining in her lungs. She slumped her back and her limbs appeared lethargic.

If someone was to put a title on that posture, it would be ‘Freed from Tension’.

If the one standing at the Pinnacle of Nazarick, the last remaining supreme being, Ainz was to be perceived as someone arrogant. It would be difficult not to feel nervous, standing in front of a being whom they dedicated their all.

During that moment, being praised greatly moved Narberal who felt as if she was soaring through the sky.

With her tension released, Narberal immersed herself in that happy memory of being praised. One of her hands was holding onto a throbbing pearl.

—*Narberal-sama, for not knowing your loyalty towards such a great person, please forgive this one for his previous ranting.*

Narberal was slightly uneasy by the pearl, which repeatedly praised Ainz after it regain its self-semblance. However, that unease disappeared as it came.

“Well, if you did not grasp the greatness of Ainz-sama, take a look, left and

right in order to understand your surroundings.

—*Truly grateful.*

Narberal was overlooking the pearl on her hand. She was trying to figure out where to put the pearl in terms of hierarchy within Nazarick.

Ainz did not say anything on this. Was it ok to place him at a position similar to someone directly created by the 41 Supreme Beings? This was a rather tough question. Now then, who should she ask for guidance.

—*Narberal-sama, as a servant to the great Ainz-sama, please use me. I will be in your care.*

“Understood, then I shall enlighten you about the hierarchy within Nazarick itself.

As Narberal spoke, she was displaying a rather proud-look.

Chapter 41: War | Part 1

The mountain range separating the Baharuth Empire and the Kingdom of Re-Estize, the Azellerisia Mountains,

The Great Forest of Tove covered the mountain range's southern foothills.

Entering the forest, one would walk for about 30 kilometres in a straight line towards the mountains. There, was a giant lake that flowed from the mountains that no human had named.

This enormous lake had a radius of approximately twenty kilometers, and was shaped like an inverted calabash, divided into the upper lake and the lower lake. The upper lake was relatively deep, hence large creatures gathered there while the lower lake was inhabited by smaller creatures.

At the southern part of the lake.

At the southern end of the lower lake was a large region where the lake and the wetlands blended into each other, was where lizardmen dotted the lake.

Lizardmen were beings which shared human and reptilian characteristics.

They were regarded as demi-humans along with goblins and orcs, and were not as civilised as humans, with a lifestyle considered barbaric to others. However, it also could not be denied that they have a culture of their own.

Adult male lizardmen had an average height of about 190 centimeters and were proud of their strong muscles, weighing over 110 kg with little body fat. Their bodies were rife with muscles, and if compared to the average of humans, it would be about 1.4 times as much.

A crocodile's tail extended from their waist. It was used to maintain balance, but in battle it was a 1.4 meter long weapon.

Since they were called lizardmen, they might but thought of as lizards, and their heads were similar.

Evolution caused them to have webbed feet for ease of movement on the

wetlands. It was also because of this that land activities were slightly inconvenient, but this posed no problem for their general lifestyle.

Their dark green and charcoal grey scales were similar to those of a crocodile instead of a lizard's, and they were harder than the low-end defensive equipment used by humans. If this skin was turned into armour, it would not lose out to even plate armour.

Their hands had five fingers just like humans, but with short claws growing at their tips.

The weapons wielded by both hands were basically very primitive items. Since it was impossible for them to discover ore in the wetlands, their weapons were mainly spears crafted from magical beasts' claws, or akin to blunt weapons with stone bound to them.

Lizardmen had a strict class society, with the tribal chief as the leader of the tribe. This position was not determined by blood, but elected by the tribe for being the strongest individual. This election for tribal chief took place once every year.

Assisting the chief was the council of elders made up of elected elderly lizardmen. Below them were the warrior class, followed by general male lizardmen, general female lizardmen, and lizardmen youths. Their society was structured this way.

Of course, there also existed those who did not belong to any of these categories. The priests that acted as druids, the rangers that made up the hunters. Of course, they could not make actions by themselves, but they listened to the words of the chief.

First were the druids, who were led by the elder druid. They aided tribal life through the use of magical cures and weather forecasts to predict dangers. Rather than a special god, lizardmen worshipped their ancestors, and the druids used magic to preserve their living environment.

Next were the hunters, whose ranks consisted of rangers, responsible for fishing and hunting, but since ordinary lizardmen would also assist in this aspect, their most important job were forest activities.

Lizardmen were omnivores, but their staple food was a species of fish around fifty centimeters long, and they did not consume many plants or fruits.

The hunters entered the forest and sometimes brought back meat, but this was a rarity. The reason why they entered the forest was to collect wood. Since the land was not a safe environment for lizardmen, members with specific skill sets had to be chosen to chop and collect the wood.

Lizardmen therefore had an explicitly paternalistic society with division of labour done according to jobs.

However, there were also those outside the jurisdiction of the tribal chief.

Those were travellers.

Hearing about travellers would evoke the impression of foreigners, but this was impossible in lizardmen society. Lizardmen had a closed society, and a situation where an outsider was accepted into the tribe was exceedingly rare.

So, who were these travellers?

They were lizardmen who wished to see the outside world.

Basically, unless something drastic like a shortage of food occurred, lizardmen would not leave their hometown. However, there was a small chance that a lizardman who wanted to see the outside world would appear. Those were travellers

When travellers decided to leave the tribe, they would have a special insignia engraved on their chests. This was proof that they had left the jurisdiction of the tribe's control upon leaving the tribe.

They then travelled the outside world.

However, most of those who left the tribe never came back, died during their travels, found a new place to call home, or encountered a different fate.

But on rare occasions, they would return to their hometown after having seen the world. Travellers who returned were evaluated highly because of the level of knowledge they had gathered. Although they were individuals detached from the power hierarchy, they were still prominent within the tribe.



Within the range of the southern part of the lake.

Should it be called this area. There, countless buildings were built on the wetlands. The floor of the houses was the wetlands, and from there legs were extended to support the house. It was like a scene from a riverbed.

It was the residence of the lizardmen.

Lizardmen were not warm blooded animals. By dipping in the water they could maintain their body temperature, but staying in there for a long time would cause it to drop. So, it was normal to prepare a location on land. Basically, the lizardman residences were to stretch their legs while they were on land.

The figure of Zaryusu Shasha appeared from one of the buildings.

The sky was a clear blue, the sun had already risen to mid-air, and a small amount of thin white clouds were in a combed pattern in the sky. It was a good weather, with the distant mountain range clearly visible.

The lizardmen's field of vision was wide, and the sun's blinding glare could be seen even without moving the head. Zaryusu squinted and walked down the stairs rhythmically.

While doing so, Zaryusu scratched the burnt mark on his chest with his claws. It was not irritating but it had no meaning to it. It was a habit that he had developed after it was branded on his chest.

When descending from the lowest stair to the wetlands' surface, his favourite weapon holstered on his waist collided with his scales, creating a clicking sound.

It was a blue and white blade with a dim glow. The shape was a bit peculiar. The wide part of the blade curved sharply at the end, and became something like a scimitar. In addition, the blade and the grip were one piece, without a guard. So, it was like a weapon that was naturally formed by the ice that froze on the lake.

There were no lizardmen who did not know of this weapon. All the surrounding lizardmen tribes referred to it as one of the four treasured magic items: Frost Pain.

Walking around with such a weapon was not something unusual. For example in a village, it was common for monsters to attack and so it was natural for lizardmen who lived in such a dangerous area to equip weapons.

Zaryusu started to move.

He had two different destinations. The gift which he intended to bring to one of those destinations was currently carried on his back.

It was a one meter long fish. It was one of the large fish which served as the staple food of lizardmen. Walking as he carried four of these fishes on his back, the stench which entered his nose did not cause any discomfort to Zaryusu. On the contrary, it was a smell which made him feel very hungry to the point that if he did not pay attention he would eat it.

After puffing out wind several times out from his nose, he expelled this desire. Like this, Zaryusu pattered as he walked without stopping through the Green Claw tribe village.

The tall reeds were nicely cleared with the countless residences in the centre of the open space. It demarcated the area of the Green Claw tribe.

Children, who still had their bright green scales, ran around and let out 'sha sha' sounding laughter, but stopped as they noticed the objects on Zaryusu's back. Healthy growing children peered towards Zaryusu from under the shadows of houses— no, it was because of the fish that they gathered together. Their mouths were slightly parted, even drooling. They stayed a slight distance away, but their eyesight was still locked on, with gazes like children who craved snacks.

Zaryusu smiled wryly and pretended to not notice as he continued walking. He had already decided who to give them to. It was regretful, but they weren't meant for the children. Zaryusu felt happiness from the fact that the children could make such expressions.

It was a scene that could not have happened five years ago—

While feeling unwavering gazes, Zaryusu enjoyed them but continued one without turning back.

He passed through the residential area and arrived at the hut that was his

destination.

This area was not connected to the village. Going a bit further, and it became dissimilar to the wetlands which were the general depth of the lake. This hut, which was sturdier than it looked, was built on this subtle border and was larger in size than Zaryusu's home.

The strangest feature was that it was tilted. Because of this reason, approximately half of the house was submerged in the water.

With the splashing of water Zaryusu closed in on the hut. Water was already encroaching on it. He soaked the fish in the water for that purpose, but there was no need to further mind it.

However, while he walked, he did not drop his guard. It would not be weird if monsters or aquatic beasts appeared. Well, if the owner of the hut ignored them that is.

Zaryusu got closer to the house

The sound of a snake could be heard from the house as if it had smelled Zaryusu. There was a bit of sweetness in the sound.

With a squeak, the head of a snake with deep brown scales and amber eye-pupils appeared from the window. after confirming that it was Zaryusu, the neck extended and coquettishly twisted around him.

"Good, good."

With a habitual hand movement, Zaryusu stroked the snake's body. The snake comfortably squinted using the eye protection membrane. Zaryusu also thought that the scaly snakeskin felt fine.

This creature was Zaryusu's pet, called Rororo. Since Rororo was raised from young, it was as if it could actually understand language.

"Rororo, I've bought food. Be good and eat it okay?"

Zaryusu chucked the brought fish through the window. 'Dang' and 'Pluck' sounds came from the inside.

"I really want to stay and play, but right now I really need to attend to the fish . See you in a bit."

It probably understood the contents of the speech, and let out a reluctant noise and slowly released Zaryusu before returning inside the house. Afterwards, a chewing sound could be heard from inside.

It was eating healthily.

Having confirmed that Rororo was in good health, judging by the spirited manner of eating, Zaryusu left the hut.



After Zaryusu left the hut, he was heading towards a location slightly further from the village. He was solid ground, and would be suitable to be called a shore.

Zaryusu silently pattered along the forest. Swimming in the water should be much faster, but his concerns of ‘whether any problems would occur on land’ had fostered his habit of monitoring the land path. It was just that the trees would obstruct his line of sight while walking, therefore to Zaryusu it could also be considered a matter which consumed his concentration quite a bit.

Finally he could see his destination from a gap in the trees. Zaryusu let out a sigh of relief since no obstacles had arisen along the way. With only a short distance left to travel through the forest, Zaryusu quickened his pace.

As Zaryusu pushed apart the branches, he opened his eyes in shock. There was someone there he did not expect to see.

A lizardman with black scales.

“Older brother...”

“...Oh, it’s you.”

The lizardman with black scales turned his head around and looked welcomingly at Zaryusu. This lizardman was the current tribe chief of the ‘Green Claw’ tribe; Zaryusu’s elder brother Shasuryu Shasha.

He won the competition to be a chief twice in a row, and retained his position without needing to fight this year. His body was amazingly huge. When he stood next to Zaryusu, who was of an average build, he made him look small in comparison.

There were legends that if lizardmen grew up they would become dragons, but Shasuryu made it seem possible.

There was a single long, white and old scar on his black scales. It looked like lightning piercing through dark clouds.

This fellow who carried an enormous sword on his back, was close two meters in height and was huge and plain. The steel sword—proof of being tribe chief—had magic which increased its sharpness and prevented rusting.

Zaryusu and his older brother stood next to each other on the lakeside.

“What are you doing here?”

“...Older brother, that should not be your line, but mine. This is not the kind of place the tribe chief would need to visit personally.”

“Muu-”

Lost for words, Shasuryu muttered his catch phrase, then turned to look at the lake in front of them.

This was a strange place. Sticks stretched out from inside the lake, surrounding the area. Being carefully placed, there were very fine mesh nets between the sticks.

Their purpose was obvious with a single glance.

It was a fish farm.

“Could it be... stealing a meal?”

Hearing Zaryusu’s words, Shasuryu’s tail jumped and flapped against the ground with a flopping sound.

“Muu, there is no way that could happen. I am only here to check up on the breeding conditions.”

“...”

“Younger brother, do you see your older brother in that kind of light?!”

Finishing his statement with a strong intonation, Shasuryu slid one foot forwards. The pressure he gave off felt like a wall pressing down on Zaryusu. Even Zaryusu, who was an experienced traveller and veteran of many battles,

felt the urge to take a couple of steps backwards.

However, he had the perfect retort.

“If it’s only to inspect the breeding conditions, then it also means that you don’t want them. Such a shame, elder brother. If they were raised well, I was thinking about giving some of them to you.”

“Muu-”

The flopping sound stopped, and the tail appeared dejected.

“So very aromatic too. They have become nicely fattened because of the nutrients diligently fed to them, even more plump than hunted fish.”

“Oh-”

“If you keep them in your mouth, some really good tasting juice will flow out. Biting down with a crunch will also make it seemingly melt in your mouth.”

“Muuu-”

Once again the cocked tail gave off a flopping sound, and it was even more intense than before.

Half of Zaryusu’s attention was transfixed on that tail, the other half was directed to addressing his elder brother in an almost teasing manner.

“Sister-in-law has also mentioned this before. Elder brother’s tail is just too honest.”

“What? That horrible person, making fun of her husband. Say again, which part is honest?”

At the figure of his older brother replying while looking at his tail, Zaryusu wondered what reaction would be good, and replied with a dry answer. Thinking about his younger brother, Shasuryu made an excuse-like reply.

“Huh. That horrible person... If you have a woman... then you will understand how I feel right now.”

“I won’t be able to marry.”

“Hmm. No. Is it due to that mark? If the elders say anything just ignore it. Besides, there are no women in this village that hate you....But marriage would

be a different thing.”

In a joking manner, he continued despite his brother not saying anything.

“Of course it is fine for someone with your personality... except, don’t you dare mess around. I do not want to butcher anyone over some silly matters. Speaking of which, you also ought to realise the pain of being married. It’s just not fair that I am the only one.”

“Hey, hey, elder brother... I’ll tell sister-in-law.”

“Ugh... this is one of the pains of being married. Even me, your elder brother and tribe chief, can be threatened.”

Boisterous laughter sounded out by the peaceful lakeside.

After the laughter stopped, Shasuryu looked at the fish lake as he voiced out some words of frustration.

“But honestly? It’s just too great. Your...”

Zaryusu came to the rescue of his elder brother who fell silent.

“Do you mean the breeding farm?”

“Right, right, that’s the one. In our tribe’s past we have never had an individual who would do such a thing. Furthermore. many people already know of its success. In the future, more and more people will feel envy at the sight of your fish and copy your ways.”

“It’s all thanks to elder brother. I know elder brother has said all kinds of things about me to everybody.”

“Younger brother, talking to many people about reality does not count for much. That kind of stuff is merely recounting anecdotes. If it weren’t for your hard work in nurturing such delicious fish from this breeding farm, those words would have been meaningless.”

The initial breeding farms were constantly failing. This was expected, since they were built solely based on the impressions from talks during his travels. Just the construction of the fence was met with constant setbacks. After a year of trial and error, although the fish lake was created, there was still more work to be done.

Fish could not be left alone without being looked after. It was necessary to obtain fish feed.

The fish in the fish lake had died out many times by experimenting with a wide variety of food for the sake of finding out what kind of feed was best. There were also instances of the surrounding nets being broken by monsters, freeing all of the fish.

There were some who criticised him behind his back for ‘treating fish captured for food as toys’. There were also those who said that he was nothing but a fool.

However, the results of his efforts finally bore fruit.

The shadows of enormous, swimming fish were reflected on the lake’s surface. Comparing its size to hunted fish, it would be in the very large category, and no lizardmen would believe that these were fish that had been completely reared from birth, apart from Zaryusu’s elder brother and sister-in-law.

“...Simply amazing, younger brother.”

Seeing the same sight, Zaryusu’s elder brother said this in a low voice at the same time. His words were filled with emotion.

“This is also thanks to elder brother.”

The younger brother who replied also conveyed such emotions in his tone.

“Huh, what have I done?”

Truthfully, elder brother—Shasuryu did not do anything. However, that was just the official stance.

During times when the fish health deteriorated, druidss would suddenly show up here. When collecting materials to build a fence, there would be many individuals who came to help. When captured fish were separated and allocated, there would be live fish. In addition, there were also fruits brought back by the hunters to be used as fish feed.

Those fellows who came over to assist all refused to reveal who they were doing this favour for.

However, even the dumbest person would realise who was pulling the

strings, even if the person was adamant on not disclosing the name.

Because it was not appropriate for the tribe chief to look after travellers, who had seceded from the tribe hierarchy. So, he knew that this was all he could do for Zaryusu.

“Elder brother, wait for them to grow a little more larger, then I shall take some to your place first.”

“Hum. Then I’ll look forward to it.”

Turning around, Shasuryu took a step away from the place, then said in a low voice.

“I’m sorry.”

“...What are you saying, elder brother. Elder brother has not committed any wrong.”

These words may or may not have been heard. Zaryusu merely looked silently at the back figure of Shasuryu moving away from the lake shore.



After checking the farm, Zaryusu returned to the village and felt a weird feeling, and looked at the sky. It was empty. It was a blue sky, and the north had clouds over the mountain range.

When he thought that it was nothing, he noticed a weird cloud in the sky.

At the same time, the air in the village centre wavered, as a black cloud blocked the sunlight.

Everyone was surprised, and looked at the sky.

This was as the druids had forecasted that today would be a sunny day. The druids were supported by the use of magic and years of experience and had an extremely high accuracy rate. Everyone felt that this was the first time it failed. By the surprised would start from after that.

But, the strange thing was that the size of the black cloud was not large, and that there were no clouds except from the one in the village. It was like someone summoned it on the village.

Something even stranger happened as everyone was thinking.

Whilst the clouds swirled with the village as the epicentre, they also expanded in range at a constant rate. It was as if the sandwiched sky was being invaded by the terrible momentum of the ominous dark clouds.

A strange situation.

No one had seen anything like this before.

Warriors all around scrambled to be on alert. Children escaped by rushing back into their homes. Zaryusu bent down, observing the surrounding while reaching towards his scimitar.

The dark clouds completely covered the sky, and blue sky could still be seen in the far distance. It was as if the dark clouds were targeting this village.

From there, a clamour arose in the village centre. The wind carried over a high-pitched sound produced by lizardmen's vocal chords.

That sound was an alarm, one which signaled that there were formidable enemies and advised others to evacuate according to the situation.

Zaryusu who heard this sound bolted along the wetlands at a speed which was fast for lizardmen.

Run. Run. Keep on running.

Moving in the wetlands was extremely difficult, requiring use of the tail to act as counterbalance. At a speed unattainable by humans—although lizardmen feet were more suited for this environment—Zaryusu reached the source of the alarm.

At that place, Shasuryu and the tribe's warriors had formed a circular formation, staring at the village centre. Following the object in their line of sight, Zaryusu also glared at the same place.

For there, was a monster.

Everyone's eyes were focused on a monster which looked as if it were created from dark mist.

Within the dark mist, numerous terrified faces would appear then quickly

vanish. Although faces of various races appeared, the one thing they had in common were expressions of agony.

Carried by the wind were sounds of sobbing, resentment, painful lament, and dying gasps melding together to form a chorus.

He shuddered.

Zaryusu felt a chilling hatred emanating from the monster. If Zaryusu felt unnerved at it, the others would be trembling.

Diverting his attention slightly, he noticed that the majority of the lizardmen present were all taking short and sharp breaths, as if they were scared like little children — despite all of them being of the warrior class

The monster stood at the village centre and made no movement.

After some time had passed, whilst maintaining a tense atmosphere and aware that only a tiny disturbance would trigger off the escalation into a fierce battle, the warriors slowly narrowed the distance. They resisted the mental stress and moved into action. Using his peripheral vision to confirm that Shasuryu had drawn his weapon, Zaryusu also swiftly and silently took up his sword.

If it became a fight, he intended to launch a surprise attack faster than anyone else.

The tension in the atmosphere thickened.

Suddenly, the sounds of resentment stopped. The warriors stopped their movements as if their shoulders had holes in them.

The noises emitted from the monster mixed together, forming one sound different to the intelligible cursing earlier. It had a definite meaning now.

[Listen well. I serve as the messenger of the Great Being and I came here to announce his decree.]

Everyone looked at each other. Only Zaryusu and Shasuryu did not break eyesight.

[Proclaiming your death sentence, the Great One has sent his army to exterminate you. In his leniency, he has granted you mortals time to put up a

meaningless resistance. Eight days from now, the lizardmen tribe of this lake shall become the second sacrifice.]

Zaryusu grimaced, revealing sharp teeth and issuing an intimidating sound.

[Resist stubbornly, mortals. Allow the Great One to relish in your demise.]

Like smoke which constantly changed shape, the monster also gradually deformed and floated into the sky.

[Do not forget. Eight days—]

As if there were no obstruction, it flew in the sky towards the forest, with its departing back figure watched by many lizardmen. Zaryusu and Shasuryu were silently looking at the distant sky.



The biggest hut in the village — the assembly hall — was rarely ever used. Clan leaders had absolute authority on all matters and assembly only happened once in a blue moon. There was no real value to having the hut.

But on this day the inside of the hut was filled with strained clamor.

Many lizardmen had gathered, causing the spacious hut to feel narrow and stifling: the warriors, the druids, the hunters, the elder council and Zaryusu, who was a traveler. Everyone sat cross legged, facing Shasuryu.

This was the format of the meeting.

Basically it was the respected chief Shasuryu borrowing the knowledge of various people. There was no one here who did not understand the strangeness of the situation.

Acting in his capacity as clan chief, declared the start of the meeting.

The first to speak was the elder druid.

She was an aged female lizardman with strange white symbols written on her body. These probably held meaning, but Zaryusu did not know them. Probably only those who were married, specialised in magic or were aged would know. He did not know much about the other stuff, like attending rituals or locations.

“You all remember the black cloud that covered the sky?” She then stopped and looked around, allowing everyone to recall. “That was magic. It is called <Control Weather>, a 6th tier magic. This is also a spell that only a powerful magic caster can cast. We would be fools to stand against such a foe.”

Behind the Elder Druid, the similarly garbed druids nodded their heads in agreement. Although Zaryusu understood how powerful 6th

tier magic was, the other Lizardmen did not and their voices of doubt filled the surroundings.

“Hmm....you there.”

Not sure of how to explain, the Elder Druid showed a perplexed expression before pointing at a Lizardman. The one being pointed at showed a confused expression, pointing at himself as well.

“Yes, you. Can you defeat me?”

The Lizardman slowly shook his head.

He might stand a chance if both sides were using weapons, but if you included magic, the odds of winning were really low. Or rather, it was nearly impossible for a mere warrior to win. It was through the magic of the Elder Druid that they had repelled various monsters.

“Well, I do not know how strong you are. But, I cannot win against that creature and I can only use up to the 2nd tier.”

“So to say, he should be thrice as strong as you?”

While sighing at the person’s question, the Elder druid shook her head slightly.

“It’s not that simple. Faced with magic of the 4th

tier, even our Clan Leader would be easily killed.” She ignored the surprised and continued. If someone can use 5th tier, then they could win against all of the warriors. Then do you understand the level of the 6th tier?”

“Although it’s not absolute” added the Elder Druid speculatively then closed

his mouth.

Finally understanding the terror of 6th tier magic, the room became silent. At this moment, Shasuryu started talking.
“In the end, what the Elder Druid means to say is...”

“Fleeing would be the best course of action. Even if we fought, there would be no way to win.”

“What are you saying!”

With a loud and deep roar, a large lizardman stood up. Just by his body he could match up with Shasuryu. His body was dotted with thin scars, and was filled with muscles.

It was the head warrior.

“To flee without even putting up a fight! Running away when facing just that level of danger is intolerable!”

Several people raised voices of agreement. They were the voices of hot blooded young warriors.

“Are you intending on fleeing from that level of provocation!”

“— What is in your head!? It would be too late if we are to start fighting!”

Glaring at the head warrior, the elder druid stood up. The two were agitated, and each were exerting a pressure. As everyone thought that this was an explosive situation, a cold voice reverberated.

“...That’s enough.”

With faces like being woken with cold water, the two of them turned to Shasuryu and seated themselves as if in apology.

“Head Hunter, let us hear your point of view.”

“.....Elder Druid and Head Warrior’s opinions are both understandable, they both make sense.”

To answer Shasuryu’s question the skinny Lizardman opened his mouth. Although he seemed small in size, it was not for a lack of muscle, but rather that

his muscles were densely packed.

“That is why since there is still time. We should examine the situation. Supposedly, they are sending an army. There ought to be signs of construction for a forward base and such, therefore we should observe first and decide afterward.”

Without any information, saying this or that would be completely useless. A number of people expressed their agreement.

“—Elder.”

“There’s not much to say, all of the opinions are correct. All that’s left is to leave the decision up to the Clan Head.”

“Muu...”

Letting his gaze wander, Shasuryu met Zaryusu’s eyes, who was sitting among the crowd, and gave him a nod.. Zaryusu felt as if he’d gotten a gentle push on the back — whether the road ahead was dangerous was unknown — still, he raised his hand to show he had an idea.

“Clan Head, please allow me to speak.”

Someone raised his hand.

At this time, the focus of all the Lizardmen gathered on Zaryusu. Most of them wore expectant expressions, but others showed discontent.

“This isn’t the place for a ‘Traveler’ to be speaking. You should be grateful we’re already allowing you to attend!”

An elder raised his voice. Along with it, several voices of agreement followed. However, it was a small number amongst those gathered. In fact, they were looked at with glances of depression.

“Step down right—”

A tail hit the floor with a bang. It cut through the words of the elder like a sword. The elder looked towards the source and swung his tail weakly. Who made it? Everyone knew and kept silent.

“Silence.”

Giving off a dangerous vibe, Shasuryu's voice carried the guttural sound that Lizardman made when riled up, the tension in the room increased sharply as the heated atmosphere from earlier cooled down.

In this atmosphere, an Elder opened his mouth without paying attention to the gazes around him who were warning him "Don't do anything unnecessary."

"But Clan Head, to receive special allowance just because he's your younger brother is not good. Besides, Travelers are—"

"I said to be silent. Didn't you hear me?"

"Geh"

"Presently, all who are seated here possess wisdom. Why not hear the idea of the Traveler."

"Travelers are—"

"—The Clan Head has spoken and you still refuse to comply?"

When those words were spoken, the elders were confused as to how to respond. The reason why they obstructed the words of the traveller, Zaryusu, was as it did not match the societal customs. But if they ignored the chief, it would also go against customs.

Moving his sight from the silenced Elder, Zaryusu looked at the other Heads.

"Elder Druid, Head Warrior, Head Hunter, do you also think there's no value in listening?"

"Zaryusu's words are worth listening." The Head Warrior spoke first. "What kind of warrior would disregard the words of Frost Pain's wielder."

"I agree, there's definite value to listening."

Then the Head Hunter spoke followed by the Elder Druid who shrugged.

"Of course we have to hear. Refusing to listen to a wise man is something that's only done by fools."

Receiving the intense mocking, some of the elder council's members pursed their eyebrows. Shasuryu nodded to the three Heads and let Zaryusu continue his speech. Zaryusu sat still and opened his mouth.

“To flee or to fight, if we had to decide we must choose the latter.”

“What is the reason?”

“Because it is the only choice.”

Normally, if the Clan Head asked for the reason one must explain clearly. But Zaryusu didn't continue and closed his mouth as if he was finished.

Shasuryu cupped his chin and sunk deep into thought.

“Is it possible to win?”

“Of course we can win!”

Head Warrior shouted as if to disperse the feeling of unease, but the Elder Druid only narrowed his eyes. It was obvious that he was not thinking so.

“...No, in the current situation the odds of success are very low.”

Zaryusu directly opposed the head warrior. Everyone was confused by the contradiction of having to fight despite losing.

“...What exactly are you trying to say?”

“Head Warrior, the opponent should already know about our side's fighting force, otherwise they wouldn't approach us with such a belittling attitude. If that is the case, then it is impossible to obtain victory with our current fighting power.”

It was a thought everyone could understand.

According to what the monster said, it probably included what Zaryusu's idea was. Then, what to do. Everyone was trying to ask. At that moment, Zaryusu opened his mouth.

“That's why we need to disrupt the plans of our enemy”

Shasuryu voiced his agreement. He had read his brother's intentions. However, he was perplexed as to why it was spoken in front of everyone. Zaryusu just watched as the lizardmen in the hut digested his speech.

“... Does everyone here still recall the previous war?”

“Of course.”

Someone replied.

Even those with dementia would be unable to forget the last war which took place several years ago.

In the past these wetlands had been inhabited by seven lizardmen tribes: Green Claw, Small Fang, Razor Tail, Dragon Tusk, Yellow Speckle, Sharp Edge and Red Eye.

However, now only five remained.

It was a war which claimed the lives of many, and wiped out two tribes.

The reason for this conflict was the bad harvest of the staple food, fish.

There was a change in the water that year, and the fish caught were low in number. And so the hunters spread their hunting range. Of course, the other tribes did the same.

And then conflicts over hunting and fishing spots amongst the hunter classes arose. Since it concerned food resources necessary for the survival of the tribes, it was impossible to make concessions.

Quarrels soon turned into fights, and it was only a matter of time until these fights escalated into carnage.

Next, in order to support the hunter class, the warrior class also took action. A fierce battle was sparked because of the food shortage.

Five of the seven existing tribes were embroiled in the fighting and ended up in a three vs. two situation: Green Claw, Small Fang and Razor Tail against Yellow Speckle and Sharp Edge. Apart from the warrior class, other male lizardmen and even female lizardmen were mobilized to fight for their tribes.

After several large battles, the side with the three tribes that included the Green Claws emerged victorious, leaving the defeated two tribes so destitute they became unable to sustain themselves and were forced to scatter. These remnants were then absorbed by the Dragon Tusk tribe who didn't participate in the war.

Ironically, since the number of lizardmen had been greatly reduced, the food shortage which had originally sparked the conflict had been solved as well.

The staple diet of fish could now be distributed to everybody.

“What of it?”

“Think about the words which that person left behind. He said that this village was the second, which also means that he has left a similar message at the other villages.”

“Ah.”

Numerous voices that agreed with Zaryusu’s words arose.

A portion of the lizardmen expressed their gratitude towards Zaryusu for saying what they wanted to say. But they did not. Even if they were warriors, their position was the lowest.

“It means we need to form another alliance!”

“Could it be that...”

“Yes, we should form an alliance.”

“Just like in the previous war.”

“In that case, perhaps we may yet win?”

The small mutterings between the Lizardmen soon evolved into a big commotion. The entire hut was discussing Zaryusu’s opinion, yet Clan Head Shasuryu maintained his silence. The chief’s eyes looked as if he was gazing into the depths of his heart, rendering Zaryusu unable to turn his face to him.

After allowing ample time for discussion, Zaryusu spoke again.

“Don’t be mistaken. The alliance I spoke of includes all of the tribes.”

“What?”

At that suggestion, the second person to understand its meaning was the Head Hunter, who let out an astounded sound. Zaryusu’s eyes locked onto Shasuryu and Lizardmen in his line of sight subconsciously parted to either side.

“Clan Head, I also suggest forming an alliance with Dragon Tusk and Red Eye.”

A large uproar occurred.

It was a thought that no one thought of. It was like a bomb was dropped in

the meeting.

The surrounding erupted in an enormous commotion, as if a grenade went off in the room. They had no communications with Dragon Tooth and Red Eye who did not take part in the war. Furthermore, Dragon Tooth took in the remnants of Yellow Speckle and Sharp Edge, the refugees of their enemy tribes.

To form an alliance with those two tribes.

If that were possible then it might be possible to win. Everyone held this faint hope.

While an unconcealable enjoyment leaked out, Shasuryu opened his mouth.

“Who shall be the representative?”

“I will go.”

Shasuryu was not surprised by Zaryusu’s immediate answer. The surrounding lizardmen reckoned that it was because he understood his younger brother’s character and had anticipated this response. Letting out sounds of empathy, they also thought that there was no candidate more suitable to be selected. However there was one who was of an opposing opinion.

“—Sending a traveler?”

It was Shasuryu. His ice-like gaze pierced directly through Zaryusu.

Being pressured, the surrounding people could not bring themselves to speak. However, they prayed that that gaze would not fall on them.

However, those that knew Shasuryu’s intentions were different. Those that knew the true feelings in that gaze.

“—That is true, Clan Head. However we are at trying times. If the other side is unwilling to listen to my words merely because I am a traveler, then they have no worth as an ally.”

Zaryusu easily repelled the cold stare. After the two glared at one another for a brief moment, Shasuryu let out a lonely smile. It was either because he gave up, or because of his helplessness in stopping his brother, or perhaps internally ridiculing himself for agreeing. It was a smile without gloom.

“Bring along the seal of the Clan Head.”

That had the meaning of being the Clan Head’s representative. Several elders which wished to express the view that ‘this is not something a traveler should possess’ were silenced under Shasuryu’s powerful glare.

“My extreme gratitude.”

Zaryusu bowed.

“...I shall select the representatives who will head to the other tribes. First is —”



Cold wind blew at night. Because it was the wetlands, high humidity and the summery heat combined together to give people excruciating pain, however at night this heat mellowed and the gusts of wind would even be considered freezing. Of course for the lizardmen with sturdy skin, this hardly registered as a significant change.

Zaryusu stamped along the wetlands, his target being his pet Rororo’s hut.

Although there was still some time, it could not be said for certain that nothing unexpected would suddenly happen, and more so it was not known if the enemy would abide by their declared schedule, or perhaps hinder Zaryusu’s movements. With all these considerations, riding through the wetlands on Rororo was still the most appropriate.

The stamping footsteps slowed down and stopped. The bag on his back which was filled with various items also shook. The reason for stopping was because the moonlight illuminated the sight of a familiar lizardman leaving Rororo’s hut.

And his gaze mixed with someone else’s

It was not a large distance between them, about 10 metres. As Zaryusu tilted his head, the black scaled lizardman closed the distance.

“—I reckon that you are the one more suitable to take the mantle of Clan Head.”

Those were the only words of Shasuryu who had approached to within two

meters.

“...What are you saying older brother.”

“Still remember the previous large war?”

“Of course.”

Since Zaryusu had raised this question during the meeting, there was no way he would not remember. Of course this was not the main point of Shasuryu's question.

“...After the war you became a traveler. At that time when you had the insignia burned upon your chest, you have no idea how much I regretted it. Even if I had to use my fists, I should have stopped you.”

Zaryusu fiercely shook his head. His brother's expression at that time still remained a thorn in his heart.

“...It is all thanks to older brother's permission that I was able to learn the ability to raise fish.”

“If it were you, even if you remained in the village you would be able to come up with that method. Such an intelligent man as you should be able to be the supporting pillar of this village.”

“Older brother.”

The past was the past, therefore any hypothetical discussions starting with ‘what if...’ were pointless. The past was already set in stone, but to ponder over such events were these two men's weakness.

No, not exactly that either.

“...Not as Clan Head, but as your older brother, I cannot tell you that things will go smoothly if you go alone. Come back safely, don't try to be brave.”

In response to this remark, Zaryusu replied with a haughty smile.

“Of course I will complete this mission with perfection for you to see. This task is nothing to me.”

“Huh.” Shasuryu's face broke out into a wry smile. “Then if your mission were to be a failure, the fattest fish that you have raised shall be mine.”

“Older brother, that kind of thing is nothing amazing, and not something you ought to be saying at this moment.”

“...Muu.”

Both men silently laughed.

And then exchanged serious looks.

“So is your objective really just that?”

“...What are you saying? What do you mean?”

Zaryusu’s eyes narrowed slightly. Although he was planning on keeping it a secret, from the strength of his older brother’s gaze, his actions were bad.

“...I heard you in the hut. Why did you not explain it simply from the start. It was like you were drawing out their opinions and hatred.”

“.....”

“...The cause of the previous war was not solely due to the dispute between tribes. A substantial increase in the population of lizardmen was also one of the reasons.”

“Older brother... Let’s not talk about this any further.”

Zaryusu’s grim tone seemingly confirmed Shasuryu’s statement.

“So... it was that.”

“...It can only be that, in order to prevent a recurrence of the previous war.”

These words that Zaryusu spat out implicitly contained his own detestable thoughts and plans. It was simply too foul, and if possible he did not wish for his older brother to know about them.

“So then if the other tribes refuse to form an alliance, what then? Because those who are only willing to provide support and those who wish to flee from the outset would surely refuse.”

“In that case then... The only option is to exterminate them.”

“Starting with wiping out your own tribe?”

“Older brother...”

Hearing the tone of persuasion in Zaryusu's voice, Shasuryu smiled almost inappropriately.

"I understand that your concern is correct, and I also agree. As the guiding figure for the tribe, since it concerns the survival of our tribe, of course I would have to consider this. That is why you need not be reserved, younger brother."

"I appreciate those words. Then shall they be brought to this village?"

"The main battlefield will be the first village. We will go ahead as much as possible and prepare our defenses. I might not be around, and will inform the remaining ones."

"Please, older brother. Then what about the first village I go to is number 1?"

"Then the warriors will assemble there. Depending on your return, we will depart."

"Understood."

"Then I assume that there will be no problem if we draw out rations for the soldiers from your farm?"

"Of course, but spare the juveniles. It was not easy to get them where they are now, and even if we were to abandon the village it would eventually come in handy."

"If you say so then it is. Got it. I will take it. Then how much is it?"

"...If we are talking about dried consumables, around one thousand tonnes should not be a problem."

"If it is that... then in the short term there will be no problems."

"Ah, I leave it in your hands then. So, older brother, let me go ahead... Rororo."

As if responding to Zaryusu's voice, a snake head peered from the window. Its scales reflected the moonlight, and beautifully sparkled.

"We have to depart. Can you come over here?"

Rororo seemed to stare at Zaryusu and Shasuryu, but ducked its heads. The sound of something heavy walking in water could be heard.

“Hmm....Yes.”

Suddenly, Shasuryu talked as if he had just remembered something. It was like he was speaking about the point he was suppose to be talking about.

“...I said to the chief hunter to find a place to take refuge.”

“Please, brother. Then what about the numbers, did you make any predictions?”

Shasuryu seemed to hesitate, but replied instantly. Although it was an expectation, it seemed to pain his heart to say.

“...Ten warriors, twenty hunters, three druids, seventy females, a hundred males, children... that’s about it.”

“...Are you not leaving the children? Will they not burden us?”

“There is a stronger opposition and we cannot decide. To quell the dissatisfaction we should bring the,.”

“But will there not be arguments over which to choose?”

“There won’t. It would be fine to pick the children of those chosen.”

“But not just that right?”

Shasuryu gave a tired smile and Zaryusu remained silent. A sudden loud water noise broke the silence. Both men observed the direction where the water noise came from, and smiled out of nostalgia.

“Hmm....It began bigger. I was surprised when it entered the house you know?”

“Ah, older brother, me too. I did not expect it to grow so big. When I picked it up, it was so small.”

“I also find it hard to believe, it was already quite large when you brought it back.”

The two men reminisced about the past Rororo. Then four snake heads surfaced on the water a short distance from the hut, all four using the same action in splitting the water and heading towards Zaryusu.

Suddenly the snake raised its heads and the figure of an enormous body

could be seen inside the water. The beast had four reptilian heads connected through long necks to the enormous four-legged body.

Hydra

It was the name of Rororo's species.

With an unexpectedly fast movement unbefitting of its large body that spanned five meters in length, it arrived beside Zaryusu.

Zaryusu climbed onto Rororo's back as nimbly as a monkey.

"You have to return safely. In addition, it's more your style not to use your brain like you did in the past when you shouted "not even one person shall be sacrificed"."

"...I have also matured, that is what happened."

To Zaryusu's words, Shasuryu snorted.

"The kid has grown into a man now... Well, alright. Don't get into trouble. If you do not come back, the first target to be attacked will be determined."

"I will return safely. Just wait for me, older brother."

After some time passed, they exchanged gazes filled with emotion and without warning, the two drew apart.

Chapter 42: War | Part 2

It had already been a day's journey riding on Rororo through the wetlands.

Zaryusu had not encountered any enemies he was concerned about, and arrived safely at his destination.

In the wetlands, there were several residences with houses constructed in the same fashion as those of the Green Claw tribe, surrounded by sharpened spikes facing outwards on all sides. Although there were wide gaps between the spikes, it was sufficiently effective in obstructing large creatures such as Rororo from invading. Although the number of houses was less than that of the Green Claw tribe, individually, each one was larger. Therefore it was not clear which side had a larger population.

Every residence had a flag attached to it billowing in the wind. The flags all bore the Red Eye lizardman mark.

Correct, this was Zaryusu's first intended destination— the settlement of the Red Eye tribe.

After surveying his surroundings, Zaryusu sighed in relief.

This was because, fortunately for Zaryusu, their place of habitat was in the same patch of wetlands, consistent with previously obtained knowledge. He originally reckoned that they could have moved away as a result of the last war, in which case he would have to begin searching for their tribe.

Zaryusu looked back in the direction which he came from, and although he couldn't clearly see it, just narrowly outside of his line of sight was his own village. Right now, his village should be vigorously making various preparations. Although he left with anxiety, he could be fairly certain that the village would be safe from attack for the moment.

The fact that Zaryusu was able to arrive here safely was proof.

He was unable to determine whether this was a flaw in the Great One's plan, or whether his own actions were also within its calculations, but in any

case the opponent did not currently intend to go back on its word, and did not attempt to intervene in the battle preparations.

Of course, even if the so called Great One moved his hand to interfere, Zaryusu could only act to implement his beliefs.

Zaryusu leaped down from Rororo and stretched his body. Although riding Rororo over long distances made his muscles stiff, stretching his back made the fatigue seem rather pleasant.

He raised a hand against the sun's rays, and then hid in the shade.

Following this, Zaryusu instructed Rororo to remain at this position to wait for him, then took out some dried fish from his backpack for Rororo, to serve as its breakfast and lunch. Honestly, he wanted it to forage its own meal from around here, but refrained from giving the order due to the possibility of disturbing the Red Eye tribe's hunting grounds.

After petting each of Rororo's heads several times, Zaryusu set off by himself and proceeded forwards.

If he brought Rororo with him, the other side could feel apprehensive of the hydra and be unwilling to come out. Zaryusu was here to form an alliance, and did not wish to appear high-handed.

He advanced whilst making splashing water noises.

At the corner of his vision, Zaryusu could see several Red Eye tribe warriors walking in a single file around the inner edge of the spike perimeter. Their equipment was exactly the same as those of the Green Claw tribe, not wearing armour and holding wooden spears made from sharpened bone attached to the tip of a wooden staff. There were also people holding ropes used for rock slings, but since these were not loaded with rocks, it should indicate that they had no intention of immediately attacking.

Zaryusu tried as much as possible to avoid stimulating the other side.

After moments of walking, Zaryusu came to what looked like the front gate. Judging from the size of the village, the scale of this tribe seems to be slightly smaller than the green claw tribe.

Well, numbers are not everything.

Zaryusu looked around and he directed his gaze to the watchful lizardmen and raised his voice.

“I am Zaryusu Shasha of the Green Claw tribe. There is a matter I wish to discuss with your tribe chief!”

As proof that his voice could be heard, several warrior class lizardmen rushed forward. Zaryusu did not move from his spot. Even when the multiple lizardmen in his view went back into their homes, and even when more warriors congregated at the gate.

While it was not short, the time passed was not long and an aged lizardman with a staff appeared. Behind him were five strong lizardmen. The aged lizardman had his body painted entirely white with symbols.

Is this the Elder Druid?

Zaryusu thought so welcomed him with confidence. He could not lower his head. Even when the druid confirmed the mark on his chest, Zaryusu protected his unmoving figure.

“Zaryusu Shasha, of the Green Claw tribe. I have come with a matter to discuss.”

“...Although I cannot say that you are welcomed, the leader of our tribe is willing to meet you. Please come with me.”

This strange rhetoric confused Zaryusu.

Why was he not the chief. In addition, he felt it strange that they had no problems with a traveller like him and let him speak to their chief. Travellers did not have high positions. That was why he borrowed his brother's proof, but the fact that he did not have to show that was the source of his troubles.

However saying anything at that moment could upset the other party, and that would spell trouble. Although he felt that something was off, Zaryusu silently followed behind the line of lizardmen.



He was brought to a beautiful small hut.

It was even larger than Zaryusu's older brother's. The walls were dyed with a rare pattern, proving that the owner of the house was of nobility.

What concerned him was that it had no windows, only a gap for ventilation. Lizardmen could see objects clearly in the dark, but this did not mean that they enjoyed darkness.

Then why would anyone want to live inside such a dark hut?

Zaryusu had many doubts but couldn't turn to anyone for answers.

Looking behind him, the druid and warriors who led the way earlier were all gone.

When those who led the way had told him that they were leaving, he felt that they were being too careless. He almost let his doubt slip.

The one Zaryusu came to see was the chief, the ruler of the tribe. How could members of the tribe do something like this.

But when Zaryusu heard that this was the wish of the leader, of the tribe's acting chief, his opinion of the person waiting inside the hut rose.

Although he had promised his brother that he would return safely, Zaryusu was already prepared for the possibility that he would be unable to fulfill that promise. As such, surrounding him with armed guards to pressure him would prove ineffective. In fact, it would only make him feel disappointed by the fact that this was all they could muster.

However, if they were doing this from their hearts, then the talk should be quick, as if he himself would be the one stalling it.

Ignoring the hostile presences of those peeking from afar, Zaryusu walked to the door and casually opened it.

The interior was as dark as he had imagined.

Despite having night vision, the difference between the inside and outside confused Zaryusu.

The air in the room had the scent of....herbs, plant matter mixed with it. He wondered if there was an old lizardman inside. Then his thoughts were betrayed.

“Welcome.”

A voice spoke out from within the darkness. It sounded fairly young. Finally accustomed to the change in light, a lizardman appeared in front of his eyes.

White.

This was Zaryusu’s first impression.

Snow white scales, a spotless purity. Round, bright red eyes like rubies, and slim limbs that did not belong to a male, but to a female.

Her entire body was covered in red and black patterns, meaning that she was an adult, able to use a variety of magic and was... unmarried.

—Zaryusu had once been stabbed by a spear in the past.

In that moment, Zaryusu felt his body burn fiercely as if it had been pierced by a hot iron stake and likewise his heart also accompanied this by beating rapidly, both combining to produce a feeling of pain shooting across his entire body.

There was no pain, but then—

Zaryusu was lost for words as he stood motionless.

Having interpreted his silence in her own way, she merely gave a self-deprecating smile.

“It seems that I am a strange sight even for the wielder of one of the four treasures, Frost Pain.”

Albinos in nature were exceedingly rare, partially because they were too conspicuous. It made it difficult for them to survive.

The somewhat civilized lizardmen had a similar tendency Weak to sunlight, bad eyesight, they have not reached a level of civilization where such feeble individuals could survive. Therefore it was extremely rare to come across an albino adult. There were even cases where they were killed at birth.

It should already be considered fortunate if albinos were seen as detestable existences by ordinary lizardmen. There were even some who saw them as a kind of monster.

In actuality, as he had red eyes she would be worshiped, but not as a fellow lizardman, but instead as a symbol of the tribe.

There was no one who treated her as a friend among the lizardmen. Even her own tribe. Then it was easy to predict how those from other tribes would react.

And that was the reason cynicism leaked out, and was not replied to.

“...What is it?”

While still standing at the door, Zaryusu did nothing, and the female inside questioned his suspiciously. He was far too surprised at her appearance. Did something happen. She was troubled—

—Without reacting to the question, Zaryusu let out a tremolo cry.

His cry held on a high note and was a vibrato. It was to the point that the vibrato’s variable width would be audible.

Hearing this sound, the female lizardman widened her eyes and opened her mouth, in surprise, confusion and in embarrassment.

That cry had a message.

It was a courtship cry.

Zaryusu came back to his senses and realised what he had done. Just like how a human’s ears would turn red, he flicked his tail repeatedly in agitation. It was as if he wanted to destroy the floor.

“Ah, no, wrong, wait not wrong, not that, this isn’t what I...”

Zaryusu’s frantic movements caused the female lizardman to calm down, and she smiled, making Zaryusu puzzled.

“Please calm down. It’s troubling if you move so violently.”

“Ah! Sorry.”

Zaryusu hung his head, made an apology and then entered the room. At the same time the female lizardman’s tail drooped as if she had finally relaxed. However the very tip of her tail was still fluttering, indicating that she was not entirely calm.

“Please come over.”

“...My sincere gratitude.”

Entering into the home, Zaryusu saw that the area where she was indicating had a cushion woven from an unknown plant. He sat on it, and she sat opposite to him.

“This is the first time we have met, I’m a traveler of the Green Claw Tribe, Zaryusu Shasha.”

“Thank you for your courtesy. I am the acting chief of the Red Eye Tribe, Crusch Lulu.”

After the introductions were over, the two observed each other as if to guess each other’s intentions.

The hut was temporarily submerged in silence, but this could not be allowed to continue. Zaryusu was a guest, therefore it should be the host Crusch who should say the first word.

“First, mister messenger, I believe there is no need for us to be so formal. I would like for us to speak freely, so please make yourself comfortable.”

“I am truly grateful for that, since I am not accustomed to speaking with a serious and formal tone.”

“Then do you mind sharing the reason for your visit?”

Although she asked, Crusch already had a rough idea.

The mysterious undead which appeared at the centre of the village. Magic that controls the weather, 4th tier magic 「Control Cloud」. And now the male lizardman from a different tribe, one who could even be called a hero. From here, there could only be one expected answer. As Crusch pondered on how to deal with Zaryusu’s reply—she felt all of her expectations shatter.

“...Please marry me.”

———

———?

———?!

“—HaaA?!”

For an instant, Crusch doubted her ears. Rather than betraying her expectations, it was like she was listening to the words of another world.

“Actually, this was not my original purpose for coming here. I fully know that this should wait until after my objective is completed. But I can’t lie to my heart. You may laugh at this foolish male.”

“A...a...ah... ha.”

These were words which she had never heard since the moment of her birth, and ought to have no relevance to her. Her thoughts were torn to shreds in a turbulent storm, scattering all over the place and as such she couldn’t organize them.

Towards such a flustered Crusch, Zaryusu revealed a forced smile and continued to speak.

“I apologize, I don’t know what to say, we are currently facing a contingency. Your response can wait until this is over.”

“Uh, ha...haha.”

Finally able to piece together her psyche and successfully resume her thoughts, Crusch regained her composure. However upon immediately recalling Zaryusu’s words from a moment ago, her thoughts once again slipped into disarray.

Zaryusu focused his calm to control his feelings and his tail. The two of them once again, slipped into silence.

Finally, after enough time, Crusch was holding her heart back after being seriously troubled. As she recalled what happened, she had to suppress her rampaging emotions.

Yes. She had to ask why Zaryusu came.

Crusch was about to ask for the reason of his visit, when she recalled his words from earlier.

—Just how do you bring that up!

With a bang, Crusch's tail hit the ground. Looking at it, Zaryusu became embarrassed at his actions. Thinking he upset her, he chose silence.

Crusch opened her mouth to break the silence.

"Since you are not fearful of my body, perhaps it is not surprising that you are a hero?"

"?"

Zaryusu had an expression of 'What is she saying' in response to Crusch's cynical words.

"?"

Crusch once again wondered what he was thinking about.

"Not afraid of my albino body, I mean."

"...It's like the white snow that covers the top of the mountain range."

"...Eh?"

"...A beautiful colour."

Of course, she had never heard this line once in her life.

In front of the confused Crusch, Zaryusu casually reached out his hand to touch her scales, and ran his hand along them. Zaryusu's hands moved across, the beautifully polished, and somewhat cold scales.

And as they realised what was happening, their bodies shivered. Why did I do it, and why did I let him. Questions formed, and a confusion followed. Their tails hit the house repeatedly with a strength such that it seemed the house was shaking.

Then their eyes met, noticed each other's tails, and stopped moving to the point that time seemed to stop.

"....."

"....."

Should it be called heavy. Or stressed. Silence fell and they looked at each other.

“...Why did you... all of a sudden?”

Zaryusu understood what Crusch wanted to say and replied simply.

“It was love at first sight. Besides, death may result from the war this time, and I do not wish to leave any regrets behind.”

This simple honesty, his words that hid none of his emotions made Crusch momentarily lost for words. However, there was a part that she just could not relate to.

“...Even the wielder of that famous Frost Pain is prepared to die in battle?”

“Correct. The opponent is an incomprehensible enemy, one which cannot be taken lightly.”

“That strong?”

“...Have you seen the messenger? The monster had this kind of appearance.”

Crusch received the drawing of the monster from Zaryusu and nodded.

“Yes. It was the exact same monster.”

“Do you know what kind of monster that was?”

“No. Including me, no one in the tribe had any idea.”

“Is that so... actually I have come across that kind of monster once before...”
Zaryusu spoke up to this point and paused to observe Crusch’s response as he continued “...and I fled.”

“—Eh?”

“It was impossible to defeat. No, to put it nicely, it was a fifty-fifty chance of dying.”

Crusch then understood that the monster was such a terrifying undead, and heaved a sigh of relief that her decision to stop the warriors back then was the right decision. Zaryusu did not notice Crusch’s state and continued.

“It can emit a scream that causes mental confusion. Not only that, it has an ethereal body therefore it is almost entirely immune towards attacks with weapons which are not magically enchanted. Using numbers will not work.”

“Amongst the magic which our druids use, there is a kind of magic which can temporarily imbue magic on swords...”

“...Is it able to defend against mental attacks?”

“It is able to strengthen the resistance, but protecting everyone’s mental state would be too much and our strength would be insufficient.”

“So it’s like that... are all the druids able to use that magic?”

“If it is strengthening resistance, almost all of the druids are capable of it. But I’m the only one in this tribe who can shield the mind from confusion.”

Zaryusu recognised that the position was not simple given to this woman. Basically she was the strongest magic user in the villages.

Then straightly asking her would be faster.

Zaryusu did not hide anything, and spoke to Crusch.

“...Which number was the Red Eye tribe in order of the tribes that were attacked?”

“The opponent said we are the fourth.”

“I see... then, what are your plans?”

Time passed by.

What she was asking was what merits were there. Green Claw chose to fight. Zaryusu came here to ask for an alliance to do so. How would it benefit Red Eye.

Red Eye tribe originally did not intend to form an alliance. Their opinion was to choose to seek refuge. However, was it fine to speak truthfully.

Thinking so, Zaryusu narrowed his eyes at Crusch and talked as if he were by himself.

“Let me tell you what I truly think.”

Having no idea what Zaryusu was about to say, Crusch looked at him with unblinking eyes.

“What I am worried about is what happens after seeking refuge.”

“?”

“Do you think that after moving away from a familiar environment which you are used to living in, you will be able to maintain the same lifestyle as the one right now?”

“Impossible... no, it would be rather difficult.”

If they were to leave here and establish a new place of habitat, they would have to fight with their lives on the line — they would have to win the fight for survival. The reality was that lizardmen were actually not the only occupants of this lake, and they had obtained this piece of wetlands after many tiresome years of warring.

For this kind of species, it was not possible to easily set up a new habitat in unfamiliar environments.

“There’s also more than enough chance that there wouldn’t be enough food.”

“Probably so.”

Crusch, who was unable to understand what this male lizardman standing in front of her was getting towards, replied with a sharp suspicious voice.

“Then, if the nearby five tribes seek refuge at the same time, what do you think will happen?”

“That...!”

Crusch fell silent, because she already figured out the true meaning behind Zaryusu’s words.

Although the size of the lake was quite vast, when a tribe would choose a certain area to serve as a place of refuge, that area should also be the place that other tribes would want to obtain. It would not turn into anything but a terrifying situation. Like the past war.

She then reached a frightening answer to Zaryusu’s proposal.

“Don’t tell me... the reason you want to fight even though we might not win...”

Zaryusu laughed at the fact that she gave the same answer as Shasuryu.

“...That’s right. With the other tribes combined, I’m considering how many less mouths we can feed.”

“For something like that!”

That was why he wanted to form an army. So even if they lose the battle, there would be less lizardmen to feed.

In a war for survival, it would be extreme but understandable to think that everyone aside from the battle-able warriors, hunters, and druids were expendable. No, in the long-term it may be better if the rest simply died.

Less mouths to feed means less food required to survive. In that case, even coexistence may be possible. It was better than having all five tribes run.

Crusch frantically tried to think of reasons to reject his idea.

“You don’t even know how dangerous the new location will be, yet you want to start from the beginning with reduced numbers?”

“Then I’ll ask you this. Let’s say we easily win the battle for survival, what then? If our fish dwindle, will the five tribes fight one another next?”

“We may be able to catch more fish!”

“And if we can’t?”

She could not answer in the face of Zaryusu’s chilling barrage of questions. Zaryusu worked based on the worst case scenario. She was thinking about the best case. If something bad happened, her choice would lead to ruin.

However, Zaryusu’s idea was not like that. And even if they were to be defeated and the number of adult lizardmen decrease, they will have died a glorious death in battle. It would not turn into cannibalism.

“...If you refuse, we will have to attack the Red Eyes first.”

At Zaryusu’s dark voice, Crusch stared at the man in front of her.

It was a declaration that they will not allow only the Red Eyes to flee to a new land with their members intact.

After having their numbers culled, there was the danger of being destroyed by the Red Eyes who had their lizardman warriors, there was no way to avoid it

but that. As one trusted to look after the tribe, this was a natural thought.

“Even if we lose the war, I believe that allying with us will lower the chance of there being bloodshed between our tribes in the new habitat.”

Crusch, unable to understand what he meant, showed an honest, confused expression on her face. Zaryusu explained himself so that his real intentions would become clear.

He was claiming the possibility that tribes that spilled blood together will not be so quick to war against each other if food becomes scarce.

But her own ideas and experience caused her to doubt.

With her face slightly lowered, as soon as she was about to fall into deep thought, Zaryusu posed a question.

“By the way, how did the Red Eyes overcome that period?”

Before she herself realized it, Crusch jumped up. It was a reaction to Zaryusu’s question.

Crusch narrowed her eyes and stared at Zaryusu. Her gaze was so sharp that it seemed like it would pierce a hole through him. Unable to understand the reason for her glare, she saw how it made him feel helpless.

“—Is there a reason that I need to tell you?”

She spat out her words, tone brimming with loathing. The change in Crusch made him doubt whether he was talking to the same person. But Zaryusu could not back down. It might contain the answer that will let everyone survive.

“I would like to hear it. Was it a druid power? Or was there another method? Therein could be our salvation...”

Zaryusu stopped there and closed his mouth. If it really did hold the answer, there was no way that Crusch would look as pained as she did now. Zaryusu was filled with the desire to hit his past self. If he had thought about it, this should have been expected.

As if she read his mind, Crusch snorted like she was ridiculing everything, including herself.

“You’re right. That is no salvation.” After a pause, she wore an exhausted smile and continued. “What we did was a war of fratricide— we ate our children.”

Zaryusu was attacked by an impulse that rendered him speechless. And Crusch was filled with anxiety about talking about this thing she wanted to keep secret. Why was she talking about it.

Crusch herself could not understand why she told him.

She knew well how much scorn this would invite from the other tribes. So why—

Like she decided something, or something flipped. Crusch began talking.

“That day, when a different tribe started the war, our tribe also had serious food shortages and were in a dangerous situation. But the reason our tribe did not participate in the war was because we were composed of many druids and few warriors. Our druids were able to create food through magic.”

“But the food our druids made just weren’t enough, not if you were to compare it with the size of the tribe as a whole. The only choice left to us was to walk the path of gradual destruction. Then one day, our tribe chief brought back food. Bright red meat.”

Crusch grinded her teeth together.

Zaryusu wondered if Crusch held hostility to him. He thought and then rejected it. Her expression was not consumed by hatred.

“Everyone vaguely knew what kind of meat that was. Even so, we all closed our eyes and ate in order to survive. But something like that could never last very long.

“When we started to take fish, the dissatisfaction exploded.” Crusch laughed. “The fact that we ate it, we ate it while understanding. Really, it really is a joke.”

Zaryusu said nothing. He had no right to. Without expressing any special reaction to Zaryusu, Crusch continued.

“...Please look at my eyes. Our tribe the Red Eye, sometimes has people born with my eyes. They have something they are amazing it, in my case it was the

power of a druid. And so we have the authority of the tribe chief....but we gathered and revolted.”

“So the numbers decreased and there was enough food.”

“Yes.”

Crusch affirmed it. Her gaze was firmly fixed upon Zaryusu, but her heart was recalling the past.

“...I still think the chief was right. In the end, the food was divided up evenly, as a result our tribe managed to survive. During the rebellion— that time, the tribe chief never surrendered. He died with countless injuries. And when he received the final blow, he smiled at me.”

As if she was coughing up blood, Crusch continued to speak.

It was the pus that slowly coalesced in her heart, ever since she killed the tribe chief. The pus that she could never reveal to the members of the tribe who trusted her and fought against their chief, Crusch was just barely able to confess it to the one named Zaryusu. That was why her words did not stop, like water emptying out at the bottom.

“They were not the eyes of someone staring at their killer. No hatred, jealousy, hostility, curses, none of it. It was such a beautiful smile! The chief always faced reality directly and acted. And we... we acted on our ideals and hostility. Maybe the one who was in the right was the tribe chief! That’s what I always think about! Because the chief died— the one who was regarded as the root of all evil, our tribe was able to unite as one once more. And what’s even worse, since our numbers were smaller, we even got the gift of no more food problems!”

This was her limit.

With a cry, tears like those of living beings did not drop, but she was like a crying girl. She then drew closer to Zaryusu who lightly hugged her.

“—We are neither omniscient nor omnipotent. We can only choose our course in the moment. I may have acted similarly had I been in the same position. But I don’t wish to console you. Just where would one find an answer that is wholly correct this world. We merely walk forward, the soles of our feet

bearing countless wounds from our regrets and suffering. You as well, your only option is to move forward. This is what I believe.”

After some time passed, Crusch removed herself from Zaryusu’s body.

“I’ve shown you something shameful... do you scorn me?”

“Why?” Zaryusu sincerely asked.”What is shameful. And do you see me as the type of foolish male to scorn someone getting up and walking forward through the pain and suffering? You are beautiful.”

“—! —!!”

A white tail repeatedly slammed against the floor.

“...This is bad.”

As Crusch whispered, he did not ask about the meaning of those words, and raised a different question.

“Anyway, does the Red Eye tribe cultivate fish?”

“Cultivate?”

“Right, it’s raising the fish that will become food.”

“We do not. Fish are nature’s blessing, after all.”

“That seems to be the druid way of thinking. Would you not care to compromise? Raise the fish with the sole purpose of eating them. The druids of my own tribe agreed.”

Crusch recalled the druids of her own tribe, and nodded her head.

“...Possible.”

“Then I will teach you how to cultivate fish. The important part is what you feed them. You can give them the fruits created from the druids’ magic. That’ll greatly enhance their growth.”

“Is it really okay for you to share that?”

“Of course. There’s no use keeping it hidden. It’s more important that many tribes survive using this method.

Crusch deeply bowed her head. Cultivation did not exist in lizardman

society. It's worth was evident. If he was offering it, then it would be insufficient no matter how many times she bowed.

"Thank you."

"Your gratitude... there is no need. In return, I wish to ask you again."

It finally came.

Looking at Zaryusu's serious face, Crusch confirmed the question she wanted to escape from.

"What will be the Red Eye tribe's course of action regarding the upcoming war?"

"...From the consensus of yesterday's meeting, we will be fleeing."

"Then I will ask Crusch Lulu, the tribe acting chief. And today, is the decision unchanged?"

"..."

Crusch did not answer.

With her answer, the fate of the Red Eye tribe would be decided, she had no confidence she could make a good decision.

However, there was nothing for Zaryusu to do here. All he could do was smile awkwardly.

"... It's your decision. The reason that the previous tribe chief smiled at you was probably because he was leaving the future of the tribe in your hands. Then now is the time for you carry out your mission. I have said everything there is to say. All that is left is for you to choose."

Hearing that, Crusch smiled.

"I will ask as the tribe acting chief. How many refugees are you planning to evacuate?"

"For each tribe's refugees I'm considering ten warriors, twenty hunters, three druids, seventy males, a hundred females, and a few children."

"...And the rest?"

“—Depending on the situation, they will die.”

Hearing what she expected, Crusch silently looked up at the ceiling. She then whispered.

“—I see.”

“Then tell me your decision, Red Eye tribe’s acting chief, Crusch Lulu.”

“...”

Without replying, Crusch silently thought. Zaryusu did not interrupt her, but quietly waited for her answer.

Crusch devised countless ideas.

Of course, killing Zaryusu was also one of the possible choices. She personally did not wish to kill him. But acting chief Crusch was different. What if the whole tribe fled after killing him? She discarded that idea. It’s future was too dangerous. Also, there was no guarantee that he really did come alone.

Then what about promising him before fleeing. This could also become a problem. If things went wrong, it would set off a war between them and the Red Eye tribe. In the end, if they refused, Zaryusu would bring back their answer, and send troops to destroy Red Eye.

However, not knowing if Zaryusu had realised, there was one loophole. In the end, the food problem wouldn’t be resolved.

“I see....”

Crusch suddenly smiled.

From the beginning the talk was skewed. The point he was asking for. The action of forming an alliance with Green Claw. There was only one path of survival for the Red Eye tribe, that was to form an alliance with the others and participate together in the war. Likewise, Zaryusu should have understood this reasoning.

Even so, he had to wait for Crusch to personally respond. He probably wanted to discern whether Crusch who was in command of the tribe’s lizardmen, had the qualifications to become an alliance partner.

All that was left was whether she wanted to voice out her decision.

Except, after declaring that decision, there would definitely be many individuals who would lose their lives. However—

“Let me first make two things clear. We are not going to war for the sake of sacrificing lives, but to obtain victory. I have perhaps said many things which have made you feel unsettled. However, we want to be the ones with the standing and laughing victoriously. Please do not be mistaken on this point.”

“Secondly. They said for us to show our worth. Then are we running. I am worried by running that will be the worth we are showing them.”

Crusch nodded to express her understanding.

This male lizardman really was kind. With such thoughts, Crusch voiced out her own decision.

“... We, the Red Eye tribe shall cooperate with you, because I do not wish to see tribe chief's smile become meaningless, and also because it will grant Red Eye tribesmen a chance at survival.”

Crusch lowered her head in a deep bow.

Countless words were formed inside of him. However, to her words with her strong will, there was but one answer.

“—I am extremely grateful.”

Zaryusu bowed his head as well.



Early morning.

Zaryusu stood in front of Rororo, looking towards the main entrance of the Red Eye tribe.

He could not resist opening his mouth wide and yawning. Last night he was a guest spectator at a Red Eye conference until late at night, therefore he was currently a little fatigued. However there was not much time left, and it was necessary to visit another tribe within today.

—Sleepy

Zaryusu yawned again. It was uncomfortable but he felt that he could sleep on top of Rororo.

After taking a glimpse of the yellow sun which had just risen, Zaryusu turned his gaze back at the main entrance, and then felt some confusion.

This was because a curious object had just run out of the main gate.

It was a bundle of grass.

There were weeds grown on top of a clothing which was sewn together from many long strips of cloth and threads clothes. If one were to lay on the wetlands and observe it from a distance, it would look like a bundle of weeds.

Ah, I believe I have seen a similar monster somewhere before

—

Zaryusu was just recalling a sight he had seen during his travels as a traveler when Rororo behind him let out a warning low growl.

Of course Zaryusu understood who that bundle of grass actually was, and it was impossible to be incorrect because her white tail was slightly visible.

As he was staring blankly at that excitedly swaying tail whilst at the same time reassuring Rororo, that bundle of weeds had already arrived beside Zaryusu.

“— Good morning.”

“Un, good morning... looks like you unified the entire tribe without a hitch.”

He turned his gaze towards the Red Eye tribe's residence. Since early in the morning, the gathering area had already been palpitating with murderous intent. Many lizardmen were frantically running around. Crusch also stood on one side facing the same direction and replied.

“Yes, no problems have arisen. Today we should be able to arrive at Razor Tail tribe settlement.”

“Then Crusch, why would you want to come to our side?”

“The answer is very simple, Zaryusu, but before I give my reply, first tell me one thing. What are your plans?”

After yesterday's meeting which took place from evening to early morning, the two individuals felt no reservation even when calling out each other's names.

"Coming up next, I plan to visit another tribe... the Dragon Tusk tribe."

"If that is so... then, it is still better for me to go with you."

"— What?"

"Is it so strange?"

The weed pile made a small movement, and let out a faint whispering noise. Because he could not see her face, he could not know what her intent was.

"I don't mean to say that it is strange... but it would be very dangerous."

"Is there still a place that is safe now?"

Zaryusu stayed silent. He was calmly thinking, bringing Crusch with him would be beneficial in many ways. However as a male lizardman, he still had reservations against bringing a female lizardman, whom he had feelings for, to a knowingly dangerous place.

"—I really am not calm enough."

Although Crusch was hidden inside the grass, and her expression could not be seen, she almost seemed to smile slightly.

"... Then, let me ask you another question. What is with your appearance?"

"Does it not look nice?"

The question of whether it looked nice or not was a strange one. However, wouldn't it be better to give a little compliment? Zaryusu did not know how to respond, but replied

"...I should say that it looks good... right?"

"How can that be possible."

Crusch steadfastly rejected this. Zaryusu felt his strength drain from him, that couldn't be helped.

"It is solely because I am weak against sunlight, therefore when I head

outside, I almost always dress like this.”

“So that’s why...”

“Ah, you haven’t given me your answer. Will you let me travel with you?”

Any further discussion on this would probably not sway her mind. From the point of view of forming an alliance, bringing her along should be advantageous for obtaining this objective. She also thought along the same lines, which is why she probably made this suggestion. With that being said, there was no reason to refuse her company.

“...I understand, then please lend me a helping hand, Crusch.”

Crusch was delighted from the bottom of her heart as she replied.

“— Understood, Zaryusu. Leave it to me.”

“Are you already prepared for departure?”

“Of course. My backpack is already filled with all the various necessary items.”

After hearing this, Zaryusu subtly assessed her back region and discovered that there was a slight lump on the surface of the grass.

Zaryusu understood, and climbed up Rororo’s back. Crusch followed soon after. Rororo glared at Zaryusu for the strange itch of grass, but he pacified the hydra.

“Then let’s go. If you do not feel safe, hold on to me.”

“Got it.”

Crusch hugged Zaryusu’s waist— the prickly feeling of the weeds gave Zaryusu a bit of an itch.

“.....”

The difference in the actual feeling and what he had imagined it to be like, made the corners of Zaryusu’s lips curl.

“—What’s wrong?”

“No, nothing. Let’s depart.”

“Eh, I look forward to working with you. Zaryusu.”

What was it that made her so jubilant?

Hearing Crusch's enjoyed voice, Zaryusu ordered Rororo to depart.

Chapter 43: War | Part 3

Dragon Tusk Tribe.

From among the seven tribes of the lake, it was one of the tribe that did not take part. They believed that strength was everything, and had the most strength among all of the tribes.

It was the tribe whose cooperation was the most needed for this war.

However, since they had no communications with the other tribes, no one knew what sort of tribe it was. Who was the current chief? Since there was no information on such matters, going alone was extremely dangerous. In addition, since this tribe took in the remnants of the two destroyed tribes, the danger increased.

As the village came into sight, Crusch looked on in shock at the face of the male with his hand glued to his weapon. His expression was the same as they first met, a serious face.

“Do you really wish to directly charge inside?”

Crusch questioned the sanity of the male sitting in front of her.

“Ah, this will be different from your tribe. From what I heard, they place emphasis on strength. If we get off of Rororo, there will be problems trying to reach the tribe chief. And....They already have lots of reasons to be hostile.”

At Zaryusu’s confident answer, Crusch erased the countless questions she had. Since he knew more about the world than she did. She would not come to such a tribe without any information.

Then all she could do was trust.

They approached the village still on Rororo.

Several warriors noticed Rororo and readied their weapons, and glared at Zaryusu without hesitation. If they got closer, then a fight would occur. As the atmosphere tensed, Zaryusu stopped Rororo and got down. Crusch soon

followed.

Several warriors' sharp gazes were directed towards the two individuals. Zaryusu took one more step forward.

Using half his body to shield Crusch, he shouted out loudly.

“— I am the representative of the Green Claw Tribe, Zaryusu Shasha, and my visit here is to discuss matters with the tribe chief!”

“I am the Red Eye Tribe's acting chief, Crusch Lulu, and likewise I have come to visit the tribe chief.”

At that moment, the air moved. It was like they were being attacked by the weight of the emotions.

Each of Rororo's four heads did a somersault. Opening its jaws, it let out a threatening roar in all four directions as it shook its heads and glared angrily. As the gigantic hydra's sharp growl emanated, fear seemed to permeate the surroundings as the atmosphere tensed up.

However, countless hostile eyes failed to waver from the two. It was Crusch's first time experiencing such hatred. Her stomach churned. She was probably slightly shivering as well. Her clothes shook, and the grass rubbed together noisily.

Zaryusu then moved in front of Crusch.

The meaning was obvious.

“... There was no need to protect me from something so trivial.”

“I did not intend to protect you, because you came of your own volition. However, I am the one who allowed their entire tribe to perish, therefore it ought to have been only myself to shoulder their hostile gazes.”

Crusch looked at the male that stood in front of her without a word and had an incomprehensible expression. Of course, underneath her clothes, no one could see it.

“I repeat! I am Zaryusu Shasha of the Green Claw tribe. This person is the representative chief of the Red Eye tribe Crusch Lulu. We would like to speak to the one who commands this tribe!”

The warriors gathered more than expected, but there was no signs of a chief-like lizardman appearing. Zaryusu did not break his unmoving stance, but prepared himself to move if something happened. Crusch behind him was also ready to cast magic at a moment's notice.

Apart from Rororo's cries, the scene was quiet. The lizardmen did not let down their guard. Then—

“!”

—Zaryusu's gulping sound could barely be heard. Crusch looked in front of him, and swallowed as well.

To simply put it, that lizardman's appearance was simply bizarre.

A lizardman with a body of over 250 centimetres in height slowly but surely came towards them. The word bizarre might not be suitable, but the expression was correct.

Firstly—His right arm was huge. It had an appearance similar to that a fiddler crab. No, his left arm was not thin, it was the same as Zaryusu's. It was simply that his right arm was huge.

His left arm's ring finger and pinky were completely gone.

His mouth was parted far backwards, perhaps as a result of a cut injury, and his tail was squashed quite flat, not like a lizardman's but rather more like a crocodile's.

Crusch thought that he was stranger than her.

However, even when compared to these, the most striking feature was—the insignia seared on his chest.

That lizardman looked at Zaryusu and her—

—And let out a sound that sounded like the crackling of dried branches. It suited the strange lizardman. The sound was probably a laugh.

“Welcome, wielder of Frost Pain.”

“This is the first time we have met. I am the representative of the Green Claw tribe, Zaryu—”

The lizardman waved his hand indicating that introductions were not necessary.

“Just the name will do.”

“... I am Zaryusu Shasha, and this is Crusch Lulu.”

“That person cannot be... a plant monster? However, since you already bring a hydra here, bringing along a monster to be its food shouldn't be too much of a surprise.”

“... That is not the case.”

Towards Crusch who was about to shed her weed costume, the strange looking lizardman once again waved his hand to indicate that it was not necessary.

“Don't treat my joke for real, how troublesome.”

“— !”

Feeling uninterested, the strange looking lizardman gave a brief glance at the bundle of weed which was Crusch before once again turning his gaze towards Zaryusu.

“Then, why have you come?”

“Before that, would you please give us your name?”

“Ah. I am the tribe chief of the Dragon Tusk Tribe, Zenberu Gugu..”

Zenberu revealed his teeth as he smiled. Although it was within expectations, the fact that a traveller was also the tribe chief still came across as startling news. But then on the contrary, this was also the most acceptable answer. It was impossible that such a powerful male lizardman was merely a traveller.

While Crusch was understanding, Zaryusu continued with a calm voice.

“You may also call me simply as Zaryusu. Then, Zenberu, please let us know if there has been any unnatural monster which has visited your village recently.”

“Un, that Supreme One person.”

“Since the opponent has been here, the matter to discuss becomes much

simpler—”

Zenberu raised his hand, interrupting Zaryusu’s speech.

“I can roughly guess what you plan to say. However, we only believe in strength. Unsheathe your sword.”

The burly lizardman standing before Zaryusu — the Dragon Tusk tribe chief, Zenberu Gugu — smiled revealing a mouth full of teeth.

“What!”

“... This method is simple, Dragon Tusk Tribe Chief. It keeps the judgment brief, and wastes no time at all.”

“Kakakaka—-”



Selecting the strongest as the tribe chief— for lizardmen this was a natural and ordinary matter. However, for a problem where the subsistence of the tribe was at stake, was such a simple method of determining an answer appropriate?

Crush thought as such, then realised how coming up with this idea was incredulous.

Her thoughts were not those of a lizardman. A normal lizardman would not have found Zenberu’s words strange. Actually, the surrounding warriors seemed to understand.

Then why?

Did she get attacked by magic. No way. She had confidence that she would not lose in magic among the lizardmen. The confidence made her think that she did not get attacked.

Thinking it was strange, Crusch looked at Zaryusu.

Zaryusu and Zenberu.

The two lined up looked like a child and an adult. Zaryusu was in no way small. It was just Zenberu was too large. And his muscles were not normal. He was completely different from Zaryusu.

The size of one’s body was in no way the deciding factor. Crusch knew this.

But, as she saw their difference, a feeling of unwillingness filled her heart.

Something she hated?

It filled her heart, the hand of her consciousness reached from that strange feeling. Why was she feeling unwilling. No, she had a guess.

Then Crusch laughed quietly.

—I am a fool. Falling this simply

— No people who wanted to protect their tribe would also do this.

Crusch laughed again, and tapped Zaryusu's shoulder.

"Are you missing anything in your preparations?"

"Nothing. There are no problems at all."

Once again Crusch tapped his shoulder.

His powerfully built shoulders.

Leaving her hand there, she thought that. When she touched a male, it was to cast magic. Through the clothes, she felt that the time she touched Zaryusu for was longer than all the other males she touched since birth.

"... What is it?"

Feeling strange from Crusch still not removing her hand, Zaryusu asked.

"—Eh? Ah, that... this is a druid's blessing."

"This... will your ancestral spirits still assist me even though I am of a different tribe than Crusch?"

"My tribe's ancestors are not so narrow-minded. Good luck."

Crusch withdrew her hands from Zaryusu's shoulders, and prayed in her heart for her ancestors' forgiveness.

A small distance away from them, Zenberu held a 3 metre long copper halberd

. Normal lizardmen would need to hold it using two hands, but he held it with one with that bizarre arm strength.

Then he casually gave it a wave.

The lateral sweeping motion generated a gust of powerful wind, such that Crusch, who was a distance away from that sweeping motion, also felt it.

“Will victo... no, is everything alright?”

“About this... I will adapt to the situation as necessary.”

Crusch originally intended to ask whether it was possible for him to win, but she did not speak out. Zaryusu knew he was facing a battle where defeat was not an option. Then this male lizardman could not possibly lose.

They had only familiarised over their half-day journey, and had only met since one day ago, but Crusch understood.

“Then, are your preparations complete? Bearer of Frost Pain... ah, Zaryusu.”

“No problem.”

Zaryusu coolly turned to have his back facing Crusch, and walked into the perimeter of the fight zone.

Crusch exhaled one breath. The reason was that she could not resist gazing back at his figure.

Crusch’s hand was in contact for a very long time — actually it was not that long — and the warmth left on his shoulder was already slowly disappearing.

The upcoming battle would be simple, similar to the one used for determining tribe chief. Because it was a one versus one fight, therefore the involvement of third parties by adding magic enhancement was a violation of the rules.

When the warmth left his heart shaken, and Crusch did not remove her hand, he thought that she applied protection magic. However, there was no sign that she did.

Then, even when the other side had clearly not used enchantment magic, why did he currently feel so fired up inside?

Was it because he himself was a male, and wanted to put on a good performance in front of a female?

While thinking that his opponent would be that strong, he laughed.

He understood that he was a male. Older brother once said that he was too dense... but this phrase seemed to be untrue now.

Zaryusu entered into the circle made up of lizardmen and swiftly unsheathed Frost Pain. The sword responded to Zaryusu's command and gave off frosty white mist.

The surrounding lizardmen burst into clamour.

They were those that knew the previous leader of Sharp Edge who was the owner of Frost Pain. And those that knew Frost Pain's power.

Seeing the ability which only the true owner of Frost Pain could bring out, Zenberu's hideous facial expression turned into one of delight, revealing his teeth as he growled deeply, just like a wild beast would.

"I do not wish to kill you you know?"

With Zaryusu's words of challenge, the animosity of the surrounding warriors instantly shot up to another level. However-- the instant an extraordinary spray of water splashed, the silent calm returned. Zenberu had used the spearhead to hit the ground.

"Oh....Then lose to me. Then are you....satisfied?"

"...Fine. You really do run this tribe."

"Oh... then let me taste defeat with satisfaction! Hear me well! If I were to die in this battle, he will be your tribe chief! There will be no objections to this!"

There was no way that he understood. However the surrounding warriors raised no voice of opposition. In fact if Zaryusu killed Zenberu, they would grit their teeth and obey him. One could tell Zenberu's charisma just from that.

"Even though I am a traveller....?"

"It is no matter. Our tribe believes in the strong. Even if you are a traveller or of a different tribe. So try to kill me. I will be the strongest opponent you ever faced."

"Indeed... understood. Then, if I were to die by your hands--"

Zaryusu's gaze slightly shifted backwards towards Crusch.

"Of course, I will let your woman return home safely."

"... Not 'mine' just yet."

"Ho, looks like you really do wish to chase that weed monster. Is that female lizardman that good?"

"Extremely so."

Zaryusu ignored the Lizardman squatting with her hands covering her face.

"That I really wish to see for myself. If I win, just before I let her go, why don't I cut her open first."

"... It seems like I now have a reason for me to absolutely not lose. I will not let a fellow like you see Crusch's face.

"You really do like her to the point that no medicine can save you."

"Yes, that is how much I like her."

Several female lizardmen spoke to the crouching lizardman, and she then shook her head.

"Ha!"

Zenberu delightedly laughed out loud.

"Then defeat me! If you were to pass away, it would all amount to nothing!"

"That was my intention all along."

Zaryusu and Zenberu's exchange of words concluded at this point and they looked at each other.

"— I'm about to make my move."

"— Bring it."

A short reply. However, none of them moved.

When the watching lizardmen grew agitated, Zaryusu first began to close the distance. As it was a wetland, there were several spots with water, but he moved so as to not make any sound.

But Zenberu kept his unmoving figure.

When Zaryusu reaching a certain distance, the sound of air flashed in front of Zaryusu. It was the sound of Zenberu swinging his spear.

There was no technique involved; it was just a simple swing. But that was why it was so shocking.

Zenberu took a stance with his halberd as he prepared to attack Zaryusu again. With just his right hand, Zenberu was able to wield that giant halberd. After each tornado like swinging action, he was able to immediately resume his original stance.

Zaryusu was lost.

How should he attack.

The answer was simple. Attacking after avoiding. The theory was understood. However, the implementation was difficult. Spears had a long range. If he intercepted with that then Frost Pain's special characteristic will not work

Then—

Zaryusu slowly moved in. The spear swung towards him with its accompanying storm of wind.

He stepped in again, and received the spear with Frost Pain. An extreme impact ran through Frost Pain and to his hand. Then, Zaryusu's body floated.

An adult lizardman, a mass of 110 kilogrammes, was blown away by the strength of a single arm. It was an exceptional arm strength.

— Excitement.

When the warriors saw their Chief display unrivalled arm power, they roared loudly.

Zaryusu swayed his tail to regain his balance as he retreated.

He shook his numb hand as he squinted.

Zenberu was like a child waving a stick with no skill involved, However, with that body, a simple swing could have such destructive power.

As it was simple, breaking it was difficult.

Checking his body, he could not move due to the impact. It was not a good situation.

Then according to the original plan, he had to jump in. If he missed, at best he would be rendered unable to fight, worst, death.

However, a three meter distance was far. Until he reached a distance where he could attack, he would give Zenberu plenty of time to attack. Even with the centrifugal force, should he step in to attack a moment late, being closer meant that it was harder to evade. Even if it was not the axe like part that hit him, there would be plenty of damage even with the copper body. With that strength, it would become fatal.

Zenberu who did not move since the start of the battle suddenly laughed.

“Well? You are not going to use Frost Pain’s ability?”

He challenged Zaryusu with a smile.

Zaryusu did not reply.

“I was defeated by the wielder of Frost Pain in the past.”

Zaryusu remembered, he knew who Zenberu was referring too. That person was the chief of ‘Sharp Edge’, the one who was killed by Zaryusu.

Zaryusu eased his focus on Zenberu slightly and observed the surrounding.

Among the hostility he felt around him, the ones with the strongest killing intent should be the survivors from ‘Sharp Edge’.

“The two fingers on my hand are like this because of that fight.”

Zenberu showed his left hand which was missing two fingers to Zaryusu.

“If you use the power that guy unleashed to defeat me, you might be able to win.”

“Is that so?”

Zaryusu answered calmly, extremely calmly.

Indeed, that ability was strong.

And because that ability could only be used thrice a day, he had a great chance of winning if he were to utilize that ability. Zaryusu only defeated the previous owner of Frost Pain because the ability had been used up. If he had used that ability, Zaryusu probably would have died.

However, was he saying that he knew because those that knew had informed him of Frost Pain's power?

Zaryusu raised his evaluation of Zenberu up a level. He was not an opponent he could defeat without going all out.

Zaryusu prepared himself and jumped.

He was attacked by the halberd at that extreme speed.

Zaryusu did not evade, but blocked with Frost Pain. Everyone who saw expected him to be blown back again. However, there were two who thought different.

One was Crusch,

She did not think that Zaryusu would attack without any meaning. He was a male that thought things through. Even though only a short time passed since they met, she completely understood this.

As Frost Pain clashed with the halberd—

[Fortress!]

—A martial art was activated.

Zaryusu, who was expected to be blown away, did not move. He was like a fortress.

Zenberu opened his eyes with shock— no, it was admiration.

At the same time, Zaryusu charged towards Zenberu— giving him no time to withdraw the halberd to defend. Even if he had that kind of muscle, it would take time to pull the deflected halberd back. That was enough time for Zaryusu to close in.

The next instance, Frost Pain slashed towards Zenberu's body—

[Iron Natural Weapon]

— Blood splashed out.

A loud cheer erupted and a soft cry could be heard.

The one who was bleeding and retreating wasn't Zenberu. It was Zaryusu who was bleeding from the two cuts on his face.

Contrary to his tactic so far, Zenberu took large strides towards Zaryusu to attack with his weapon, not letting him get away.

That weapon was— claws.

Frost Pain and the claws clashed with a crisp metallic ring. After that, the sound of the halberd falling into the water could be heard.

The claws of lizardmen were harder than humans, but not so tough that they could emit such metallic noise. That's right, this was the result of hardening the body parts— such as claws and fangs. An ability known as 'Iron Natural Weapon'.

If one used the words suitable to describe his affinity with the spear, the repeated chops stepped into his area of expertise.

Yes.

Zenberu was not a warrior, but a monk who uses his own body as a weapon by utilizing special skills.

The two of them exchanged blows.

Zenberu attacked with his claws while Zaryusu slashed with Frost Pain. They evaded each other's attack and lept back, pulling away from each other.

“— Hahah, you are still alive!”

Zenberu licked the blood and meat on his fingers.

Similarly, Zaryusu stuck out a tongue that was longer than that of a human's and licked the fresh blood flowing out of the wound on what humans would consider to be their cheek.

Zaryusu barely avoided the chop that was aimed at his eye. And the wound was not deep. He could still fight.

“Speaking of which, you seem to be holding back by refusing to use that

ability.”

Zenberu clenched both fists and repeatedly beat his chest.

“My apologies, but I have no intention to use that move.”

“Eh? Then don’t complain after your defeat that you did not use your full strength.”

“After exchanging blows with me, you still think I am the kind of person who would say such a thing?”

“... No, I don’t think so. Sorry, I have said too much. However — if you do not plan not use that move, then it’s my turn now!”

If one were to use a blade to block an attack by flesh, the attacking party would be the one to be injured, this much was common sense. However, martial arts could turn around common sense.

[Iron Skin]

Activating a martial art that hardened one’s body to the point of iron, a thick leg kicked Zaryusu with a thud.

As it hit Frost Pain, a metallic sound reverberated,

Zaryusu opened his eyes in admiration.

He waved his magic sword.

Just how much did his abilities increase by, and how long could he maintain [Iron Skin]. Zaryusu was surprised at the extent of both.

Zaryusu had learned several martial arts, and mastered several. [Whirlwind] which was an area of effect attack, and [Eyes in the Back] which could notice attacks outside of one’s field of vision.

He did not have any martial arts that would be effective against such a large enemy. In comparison, Zenberu had one that could increase his own capabilities.

If it was unfair then it was unfair.

However Zaryusu remained confident that victory was within his grasp.

Multiple pressuring attacks.

Kicking and punching.

Zenberu relied on his body's ability with each strike, which was not only fast but also heavy. Facing such an enemy, even Zaryusu had to drop his offence to maintain his defence.

Continuous attacks were followed by even more continuous attacks.

If he were to forgo defending against the enemy's crushing attacks, Zaryusu would no doubt be defeated. The surrounding lizardmen believed that the tribe chief who was launching continuous attacks without stopping had victory in his grasp and were shouting out encouragements.

However, the two fighting, and one watching, understood exactly who was winning.

Occasionally Zenberu's claws reached Zaryusu's body, and drew blood. From the side, it seemed that Zaryusu was being pushed back, and was in a pinch. However, Zenberu felt that his chances of victory shrunk with every hit, and his panic grew stronger to the point that he could not suppress it.

The blade of Frost Pain harboured cold frost which stacked frost injuries for every cut it inflicted on enemies. In addition, it had an effect where any enemy coming into contact with the weapon would suffer some frost injuries. In other words, merely by exchanging contact between the blade and flesh, Zenberu was slowly being eroded by the frost.

With both hands frozen and both legs numb, his movements became more and more slower.

It was precisely because Zaryusu knew that the item had such an effect that he chose to stick to defence — Rather, that was why he would choose this method as it was able to guarantee causing harm to the opponent. It was because of this that he did not evade Zenberu's attack..

This choice was the most certain path to victory.

It was flawless. For the current Zenberu, it was the greatest enemy.

Towards Zaryusu who leaped over, Zenberu released a powerful punch.

If this move were to be blocked, Zenberu's chances of winning would plummet. As he attacked more, he still did not accept the provocation. He then, without hesitation, chose the safest method of winning.

It was like a lone warrior challenging an unbreakable fortress.

He recalled the memory of going by himself to pick a fight with that male lizardman. Since then, he had become much stronger. Still, he could not reach the lizardman who was at the height of his chest. Of course, he could say that he lost due to Frost Pain.

However, he had to desire to say such a detestable thing.

This male really did kill him.

Without stopping his consecutive attacks, a calm part of his brain praised Zaryusu for blocking his attacks.

Being hit, hit again and again.

As their chief's attacks reached more often, the surrounding lizardmen raised cries of pride.

Actually, Zenberu's limbs had become stiff. Zaryusu was still on the defensive, without any hesitation.

Zaryusu was strong.

Crusch was confident in this conclusion.

Almost all of the lizardmen relied on their strong and robust bodies, using brute strength to fight, but Zaryusu... no, even Zenberu as well... relied on technique to fight, and Frost Pain was merely a supporting asset.

Hypothetically, if one were to give Frost Pain to an ordinary person to use, would that person be able to deal with Zenberu like this? The answer was probably not. The weapon was indeed powerful, but Zaryusu who was able to beautifully utilise the the weapon's ability was likewise a first class warrior.

More than anything, was the head to read the battle and find a way to win.

Evading the attack that occurred when Zenberu threw his spear away, was as Zaryusu read his attack without hesitation. And not activating Frost Pain's special ability.

Leaving with the mark of a traveller on his chest, what did he do to come back.

“He really is an outstanding male lizardman.”

Finally, it was unclear how much time had passed. To the watching lizardmen, it was not long. However, how long did it seem to the fighting two.

Time passed, between Zaryusu who was covered in blood, and Zenberu who was without a wound.

The surrounding lizardmen praised Zaryusu’s unending battle spirit.. They had not seen their chief fight up to here before.

Then, Zenberu dropped his stance.

As the surrounding lizardmen swallowed wondering what happened, Zenberu raised a large shout.

“It is my loss!”

The crowd murmured.

They did not understand. Many lizardmen made such a face. However, one ran into the circle.

It was Crusch.

“Are you alright?”

“No mortal wounds... It won’t affect any future battles.”

“... Good, I will heal you with spells.”

Crusch made a rustling sound with her grass attire and revealed her face. Zaryusu felt a soothing warmth over his wounds, different from the searing pain he suffered earlier.

Zaryusu immersed himself in the magic and turned his head to face Zenberu who fought a deadly duel with him.

Zenberu was surrounded by his tribesmen as he explained what exactly happened and what Zaryusu’s tactic was.

“That should do.”

After casting her spell twice, Crusch announced the treatment to be complete. Zaryusu looked down at his own body.

There was still dried blood on his skin, but the wounds had healed completely. Zaryusu could still feel tightness when he flexed his wounds, but it doesn't seem like those will rip open.

“— Thank you.”

“You are welcome.”

Crusch smiled brilliantly, she looked beautiful showing her pearl white teeth. And so Zaryusu spoke his true feelings.

“— How pretty.”

“Ah...!”

The two of them fell silent.

Crusch was silent because she was baffled by how casually this male lizardman said these words. For Crusch who was not used to compliments, it was not good for her heart to hear Zaryusu say them too often.

On the other hand, Zaryusu didn't understand why Crusch didn't respond. Could he had made some mistake— such a feeling of unease flashed across his mind. Actually, he had always felt his life would have nothing to do with female lizardman, so he didn't knew what kind of reaction to make. Unexpectedly, Zaryusu was also at a loss.

As the two were troubled and wondering what to do, a voice saved them.

“Hey hey hey, you are too enviable you bastard.”

The two of them looked towards Zenberu.

Zenberu was dumbfounded momentarily when the two of them reacted the same way.

“Eh~ white one, can you heal me?”

Zenberu was unmoved even after seeing Crusch's albino face. When Crusch recalled her impression after seeing Zenberu's appearance for the first time, she understood Zenberu's lack of reaction.

“Alright... But would it be a problem not to let your tribal druid to heal you?”

“Yeah, it doesn’t matter. Don’t talk so much, I’m hurting right now, can you hurry up?”

“You are the one who want me to do this.”

“Yes, I am the one forcing you, so please.”

Crusch sighed and started her treatment.

“Was it fine?”

“Hm?....Ah, they got it. Why I lost.”

Zaryusu and Zenberu. The gazes of the lizardmen focused on them.

Zaryusu felt the number of hostile gazes had fallen, and looks with good will had started popping up.

“Okay, I’m done.”

In contrast to Zenberu, Crusch had to cast magic more times on Zaryusu. It was not apparent, but it was quite deep.

“Oh, your skill is better than the druids from my tribe.”

“Thank you. I will accept the compliment”

“Well, our injuries are mended, let’s go into the main topic for today okay? It is a bit too rush for you?”

“Oh! Let’s hear what you want to say— Although I wanted to tell you that...” Zenberu paused when he reached this point, and then said with a smile: “But let’s have a drink first!”

Zaryusu and Crusch—Both of them had no idea of what was said, and made strange faces. Zenberu looked at them and spoke in such a manner so that even a child could understand.

“Troublesome formal matters have to be discussed in a banquet, you understand?”

“I don’t get it...”

Zaryusu made an astonished face and replied softly. A banquet after a life or

death battle, having it immediately after was not disjointed, and was not wild. However, he only celebrated after something amazing was accomplished, and made himself understand this.

Crusch gazed at Zaryusu, the first male she saw. To avoid her curiosity filled gaze, Zaryusu made a face saying that he gave up and agreed.



A fire pit almost two meters wide was set up on the ground, the flames almost searing the sky. Its red glow fended the darkness of the night away.

Near the fire pit was a giant pot more than a meter high and about 80 cm in diameter, the scent of alcohol lingered in the air.

Dozens of lizardmen took turns to scoop the liquid from within, and the liquid refilled itself.

However, no matter how many times it refilled, it never seemed to run out.

Like Zaryusu's Frost Pain, this was one of the four treasures, 'Giant Pot of Wine'.

The taste of the never ending wine was bland and would make anyone who appreciates alcohol frown. But for the lizardmen, this was delicious wine.

That's why they kept coming back for more.

A short distance away from the wine pot was a very quiet place. As for why, it was because of the drunk lizardmen lying motionless here.

They tumbled, and did not move. No, their chests moved up and down as they breathed, and their tails twitched.

The lizardmen who had blacked out from the alcohol were all dumped here.

There, Crusch had removed the clothes that caused her to be called a plant monster, and her tail moved like a completely different animal, and she walked carefully across the ground.

This was the first time she showed her albino body to a large group of people. It surprised some of the people, but since their chief also looked like a mutant, she mixed in with the others in no time. Well, currently there were

eyes that focused on her strangeness, but it was at an unnoticeable level.

Her heart felt light.

It was a liberating feeling.

Crusch carried the food with both hands and walked with brisk steps.

She came to the place where Zaryusu and Zenberu were sitting cross legged and drinking with each other.

The two of them used something like a coconut as a cup. Inside was a transparent fluid, but the whiff of alcohol was strong.

Raw fish was placed right before them to complement the wine. Zenberu greeted Crusch who walked over with a smile.

“Ah, plant monster.”

“... Can't you change the way you address me?”

She already took that attire off.

But this male lizardman insisted on calling her that.

He was probably planning to tease her like that forever. Crusch who realized this fact decided to stop her futile resistance.

“Have you finished your discussion?”

Zaryusu and Zenberu glanced at each other and nodded.

“For the most part.”

“So what sort of conversation was it?”

They wanted to talk man to man, so they asked Crusch to give them some time alone. They already made it so clear, so she had no choice but to leave and collect the food, despite wanting to take part in their dialogue. If they wanted to discuss the upcoming battle, she would be involved too.

She wanted to know the essence of things while avoiding the awkward details.

“This is a talk between men.”

Zaryusu comforted Crusch who looked down and spoke.

“It was no different from what I said at your tribe. About having enough food for this tribe.”

“Ah.”

It was a talk that Crusch also had an interest in. She wordlessly emitted a pressure to get him to tell her, but it was not important. Zenberu’s body language seemed to say so.

“Originally our numbers were small. So until we took part in the war, it was fine to not look for food. Well, personally I wanted to join and fight. It was a plan I did not tell the elders.”

But you did not tell me anything,

Crusch thought. Zaryusu made the same expression and nodded at her.

“So what are your plans? Form an alliance and fight together?”

“Ah? Ah, I already said it to Zaryusu but—-Oh, of course we will fight. Even if both of you had not come, we would still fight.”

“You are really a battle maniac.”

“Don’t praise me like that, I will get embarrassed.”

I’m not

. Crusch said so in her mind. Zenberu did not mind, or did not notice, and asked for her help.

“Oh right, plant monster, can you help me convince him? No matter how I beg him, Zaryusu still wouldn’t become our tribe chief.”

Zaryusu also showed a resigned and fatigued expression. Crusch could tell from that tired look that when Crusch wasn’t around, this question had been repeated countless times.

“Our tribes are different, and I am a tra—-” He was about to say that he was a traveller, but then recalled that Zenberu was the same “Why did you became a traveler?”

“Hah? Ah, I lost to the previous owner of Frost Pain.”

The two wondered if it was some sort of rule. Zenberu then softly said.

“Huh? Oh, losing to the owner of Frost Pain was a huge blow to me, so it was only natural for me to want to leave and visit different places and become stronger right? So I became a traveler.”

With an aim completely different from his, Zaryusu’s shoulders dropped. It was the feeling of having lost someone who empathised with him. Crusch gently placed her hand on his shoulder to comfort him.

Zenberu did not see all that and continued saying happily.

“I thought that there must be powerful guys in that mountain since it is so big, learned a lot from the guy I met in my travels and got that spear. I didn’t want it at first, but since he said that was a memento of our meeting, I had no choice but to accept it.”

“... So that happened, that’s great.”

“Yeah, thanks.”

— Sarcasm didn’t work.

Zaryusu drank more alcohol. His throat became hotter, and the heat spread from his throat to the rest of his body. Then he spoke extremely softly. A voice completely different from his usual atmosphere, to the point that no one would have recognised that it was him.

“So, do you think we can win?”

While watching Zenberu’s face, Zaryusu considered thoroughly and replied.

“... I don’t know.”

“Yeah, I guessed as much.”

There was no absolute victory in war. And so no one could say that they could absolutely win against an enemy they had no information against.

“But....From what they are aiming for, they will not kill everyone.”

“Ah, what that monster said right.”

In comparison to Zenberu who did not understand what Zaryusu was saying, Crusch responded immediately. She then faced Zenberu and took the tone of a teacher.

“Do you remember what that monster said?”

“Sorry, I was napping then.”

“... Someone must have heard it right?”

“Hmmp, I forgot because it is a hassle. Anyway, the important is they attack us, we hit them back, right?”

This guy is hopeless— Crusch gave up explaining with such a face.

“... They said, ‘Resist stubbornly, mortals and show how you can be useful subjects’.”

A dangerous expression appeared on Zenberu’s face, his features scowled into a sneer.

“How maddening, looking down on us from the very beginning.”

“There is a possibility that they are gathering soldiers to break our resistance, and destroy it with an overwhelming force. But if they are aiming to rule us, then they will not kill everyone.”

“Don’t bullshit me!”

Zenberu raised a dangerous cry. He did not have such hostility even during his fight with Zaryusu. He was just that furious.

“... But we will crush the arrogance of our foes. We will unite the five tribes and show them the largest force we could assemble. We will strike them down head on, and tell them we are not defenceless weaklings.”

“Hmmp, not bad, that’s a simple way of putting it. I like that.”

As the two male lizardmen was discussing passionately on how to fight, Crusch poured cold water onto their plans.

“It won’t do us any good to wound their pride too much. We just need to show them our worth, correct?”

“Hey hey, you want us to bow our heads to those annoying people?”

“Zaryusu... I understand the danger in evacuating, but I think keeping our lives is more important than losing our freedom.”

Crusch said her piece softly.

Even if they refused it, they did not make fun of the idea of slavery. Those that could were either arrogant, or could not think of the future.

No one wants to be dominated, but being enslaved has more future than losing their lives. If they have a future, there will be endless possibilities. For example, if they taught the fish farming technique to everyone, they might be able to abandon their current homes and run away.

If one was to give up on this possibility and order everyone to die, he has no right to be a leader.

“Listen to this.”

After hearing what Zaryusu said softly, the three of them perk up their ears and listened to the laughter being carried here by the wind.

“We might not be able to have fun like this after being dominated.”

“Maybe we could, right?”

“Maybe. But, they are evaluating us. It seems that we cannot avoid it.”

Crusch nodded in agreement.

She understood completely. It was an unavoidable war. However—

“What I want to say is... please don’t die.”

“— I won’t, not before I hear your answer to that question.”

“— !”

Crusch and Zaryusu gazed into each other eyes under the cool night sky.

And made an oath.

— Completely ignoring the disgruntled Zenberu.

Chapter 44: War | Part 4

“Oh, I can see it.”

Zenberu who was seated at the very back of Rororo looked to the front and smiled.

They could see the tribe that was designated as the first to be destroyed several hundred metres ahead— Razor Tail Tribe. Their size was about the same as Green Claw, but the number of lizardmen running about was much larger.

The warriors had split up into groups, and were practicing swinging their weapons. The males were sticking stakes into the village’s perimeter and were busily working. The females were bringing something into the centre of the village.

They were preparing for war.

“What an irresistible atmosphere.”

Zenberu made a loud breathing sound, smelling the taste in the air. Zaryusu smelt the air as well. It was similar to the time of the previous war.

It was a scent that made one hot blooded.

Crusch who probably hadn’t smelled something like this before thought differently.

“Isn’t it dangerous for us to ride in on this child?”

They could feel the high tension from such a great distance, which made Crusch who was dressed like a vegetative monster voice her uneasiness. She was afraid that the Hydra would draw the wrath of the bloodthirsty lizardmen.

The other party probably knew about Zaryusu, but they might not have seen Crusch or Zenberu before. And not all the Razor Tail tribesmen knew about Zaryusu either.

It was probably natural for that worry to be born. Zaryusu kindly answered to relieve Crusch.

“Wrong, the opposite is true. We won’t be in danger if we ride towards them on Rororo.”

She had a baffled look, it wasn’t visible, but that was the feeling Crusch gave. Zaryusu made a simple explanation.

“My older brother should have arrived, and he definitely would have told them that I would be riding on Rororo. News of us coming on Rororo should have been reported to my older brother.”

As Rororo traversed the wetland, the figures of a black lizardman and several warriors could be seen. Zaryusu recognised the lizardman, and waved his hand vigorously.

The black lizardman said something to the surrounding lizardmen, and they let him go. He then, with his arms akimbo, and waited for Rororo to arrive and took a daunting pose.

“That’s my brother.”

“Heh.”

“Ho.”

They responded in unison, Crusch was simply curious whereas Zenberu felt like a beast who found a strong opponent.

As Rororo closed the distance between Zaryusu and Shasuryu, they were finally close enough to make out each other faces. The two brothers stared at each other.

The two of them were only apart for two days, but because they had already steeled themselves to the fact they might not meet again, their emotions were really strong.

Shasuryu laughed. Zaryusu made the same expression. Disregarding the distance that separated them, they talked in loud volumes. They could not contain themselves otherwise.

“It’s great that you returned, younger brother!”

“Ah, I bring good tidings, older brother!”

Shasuryu shifted his gaze to the two behind Zaryusu. Zaryusu could feel the hands of Crusch that was hugging onto him stiffen from nervousness.

As they closed the gap completely, Rororo came before Shasuryu and stretched its four necks towards him affectionately.

“Sorry, I didn’t bring any food with me.”

The moment Rororo heard this, it withdrew its four heads as if it was throwing a tantrum. The Hydra couldn’t understand the language of the lizardmen, but it could tell what Shasuryu was saying through their understanding similar to that of family members. Or it simply didn’t detect the scent of food from Shasuryu.

“Well then, let’s dismount.”

Zaryusu said to the two behind him and agilely lept off Rororo. He then grabbed Crusch’s hand and assisted her in getting down. Shasuryu looked at Crusch in surprise.

“What is that Plant Monster?”

Getting this sort of reaction made Crusch a little depressed, but she didn’t retort. This was probably thanks to Zenberu’s constant teasing. But the next stunning blow made her stiffen.

“She is the female I like.”

“Ohh.”

Shasuryu sighed. He then stared at the stiff Crusch who was still holding hands with Zaryusu.

“Muu... I just want to ask one thing, is she a beauty?”

“Yeah, I am thinking of marrying— Eh!”

Suddenly, a sharp pain ran through his hand, causing Zaryusu to stop talking. This was as the person whose hand he was holding had pinched him with her claws. That was surprising. Shasuryu watched the two with an astonished expression. Then, he spoke the words that was stuck in his throat.

“I see... So you are picky about the appearance... And you kept playing cool,

saying ‘I can’t marry’. You just haven’t met the right one yet... Alright, back on topic, I am the chief of the Green Claw tribe, Shasuryu Shasha. Thank you for agreeing to ally with us.”

Shasuryu wasn’t trying to confirm this fact, but was absolutely sure of it. But Zenberu and Crusch won’t be shaken up because of this small matter.

“We should be the one thanking you. I am the acting chief of the Red Eye Tribe, Crusch Lulu.”

Everyone had thought that Zenberu would respond after Crusch, but surprisingly, Zenberu’s voice could not be heard. While everyone was confused, Zenberu scanned Shasuryu several times, and rudely looked at him.

Satisfied, Zenberu nodded and spoke with a feral expression.

“So you are the one, the warrior who could utilize the power of the druids, I have heard about you.”

“I am surprised that even the Dragon Tusk knew about this”.

A greeting that was not a greeting. Zenberu had the smile of a predator, and Shasuryu responded in kind.

“I am Zenberu Gugu, chief of the Dragon Tusk Tribe, until the day your brother agrees to take over.”

“Thank you for coming. ”

“So, want to have a match? Shouldn’t we find out who is stronger?”

“... That’s a great idea.”

Zaryusu had no intention to stop them. To lizardmen, words must have strength behind them to back them up. If the two fought, the discussions might proceed more smoothly, so he would let them duke it out until they were satisfied.

However, the conversation did not head towards the fight. This was as Shasuryu raised his hand and erased Zenberu’s fighting spirit.

“—I agree with you, but this an awkward timing.”

“Why is that?”

Shasuryu smiled at Zenberu's unhappy face.

"... The scouts we sent out are about to return, we should be able to obtain detailed intelligence about the enemy. We can fight after hearing their reports, right?"



A small house was used as the conference room of the chiefs.

The chiefs of the gathered tribes and Zaryusu were gathered here, a total of six.

Zaryusu, the one who killed the previous 'Sharp Edge' Chief, bearer of Frost Pain was famous and all the chiefs knew of him. He was also the brave one who convinced Red Eye and Dragon Tusk to join the alliance, so no one was opposed to him taking part in the conference.

While it was natural for Shasuryu, Crusch and Zenberu, the other two chiefs did not oppose. This was as they knew the male that was the previous owner of Frost Pain, the chief of Sharp Edge.

In addition, he was the hero who got the Red Eye and Dragon Tusk tribes to agree to an alliance, so having him was natural.

In the small house, the six sat in a circle. When the other three chieftains saw Crusch's white scales, they were surprised, but had already regained their composure.

He was petite compared to other lizardmen, but his limbs were as strong as steel. Originally from the hunter group, his ranged attack skill was the best among all lizardmen in the vicinity of this lake. In fact, during the fight to decide the position of chieftain, he settled each of his matches with just one precise rock throw.

In order to determine the position of the enemy troops, he mobilized all the hunters to reconnoiter.

"The enemy numbers five thousand five hundred.."

It was a number that surpassed the number of lizardmen.

No one raised voices of surprise. There was no one here that was surprised.

“... And the leader of the enemy?”

“I can’t say for sure, there are monsters that looked like giant mass of red meat in the middle, but it’s too difficult to get in close.”

“What about the make up of the army?”

“An army of undead, mainly skeletons and zombies.”

“The undead of lizardmen?”

“It should be human types, I didn’t see any tails.”

“Can we launch a surprise pre-emptive attack?”

“That would be difficult, the other party is using an open space cleared out from a corner of the forest. How long did they take to clear the trees? It is strange that the felled trees are nowhere to be found— Ah, I digress. Anyway, they are in the forest. Leaving whether we can succeed aside, it would be very hard to bring warriors along.”

“What about a sneak attack with just the hunters?”

“Spare us, Ms. Crusch. There are roughly twenty five hunters, how could we defeat the undead army of more than five thousand? We will just get wiped out.”

“Hmm... What about using the power of the druids?”

Several of them nodded in agreement to Shasuryu’s suggestion and their eyes fell on Crusch. But the one answering was Zaryusu.

“No, let’s not do that.”

“Ah? Why?”

“The other party had kept their words so far, but they won’t do so if we attack them.”

“Indeed. We should avoid initiating the attack before we gather all the tribesmen.”

“So we will prepare for a defensive battle?”

“Defend, hard.”

The lizardman who spoke with a strong slur was the chieftain of the Razor Tail.

He was covered in white armor that was shining in a different manner from metals.

The armor was emitting a soft magical gleam. That was one of the four treasures of the lizardmen, White Dragon Bone.

It was a set of armor made from the bones of a white dragon that had resided in the Azellerisia Mountain. Armor made from bones — even that of a powerful dragon — would not be imbued with magic. But that set of armor was enchanted with magic without anyone knowing when.

The problem was that the magic could possibly originate from a curse.

This was because the White Dragon Bone converted intelligence into defence power. If an intelligent lizardman wore it, it would turn harder than steel, matching mithril and even the legendary adamantium.

But even if you removed the armor, the intelligence would not recover. That's why there were some who said this magic was actually a curse.

Originally amongst the lizardmen, when he, who was known for his intelligence, wore this armour, it's hardness could deflect Frost Pain. And even though this stole most of his intelligence, he could still keep his sanity.

This was why he was selected as the chief.

"Here, swamp, weak foundation, wall... easy break down."

"I see, so we should initiate the attack?"

"Yeah, why not, attacking is better than defending, each of us just needs to take down three to four foes right? We just need to defeat them, piece of cake."

The others in the conference looked at each other after hearing what Zenberu said. In the end, Crusch changed the topic.

"Anyway, I believe that our walls will easily be broken down. So we Red Eye would like to cooperate to strengthen them."

The other chieftains nodded in agreement, even the depressed Zenberu did so.

“In short, we need to prepare our defences and set up a command structure.”

“First of all, we should leave the druids to Crusch, their command would be left in your hands.”

Amidst the agreement of everyone present, one person raised his objection.

“The chieftains should form a special team.”

The gaze of everyone fell on Zaryusu who had spoken.

“I see...”

“I see....You say we make.... elite team?”

“That’s right. The enemy outnumber us, if we don’t take out their commander, we might lose. If the monster that visited all the villages shows up, we can’t win by numbers, and have to destroy it with a small group of elites.”

“Wouldn’t our forces be leaderless then?”

“From the warriors... choose... choose leader... will do.”

“Even if there is no commander, they just need to charge the enemy right...”

“... The special team will command from the back, and will only move out if we discover the enemy commander or if the battle is not going well. Is that okay?”

“Will it go well?”

“It must.”

“That should be fine. Well then, including Zaryusu, how about the six of us forming one team?”

“No, we should form two teams of three.”

Splitting up meant they could fight on two fronts, but their force will be spread out and weakened. They recognised that it was a disadvantageous position, and wondered what merits it would have for Zaryusu to bring it up. Understanding what everyone was hoping for, Zaryusu answered.

“One team will attack the enemy commander, the other will be in charge of the defence.”

“That....Attacking the guards will be extremely dangerous.”

“It, it cannot be helped.”

“Then we three chiefs, and Zaryusu and those he called will split into those groups. We can change the composition if needed.”

“Yes, that is great. Any problems, Zaryusu?”

“I understand. Any objections, Zenberu, Crusch?”

“I have no objections.”

“Me too. It’s a pity I can’t fight as I please, but I will follow the will of the victor.”

“Well then, there is still four days before they attack us, right?”

“Correct.”

“Are there anything we need to prepare for?”

“We need to stock up on throwing stones and strengthen the walls. Also, we need to interact with the other tribes and set up a chain of command, ensuring that all of the tribes can function as one.”

“As for the allocation of work, we, the ‘Small Fang’ tribe wish to leave that to Shasuryu like before.”

“We... okay with that...”

Crusch and Zenberu nodded in agreement too.

“Then I will take over the command.”

Shasuryu looked at everyone again, and confirmed that no one disagreed. Not a single person did so. Shasuryu then nodded.

“Next, we will decide the details of all the work we need to do in the next four days.”



After the work for the day was done, Zaryusu walked silently in the noisy

and lively village. Several lizardmen greeted him with respect when they saw Zaryusu's mark on his chest and Frost Pain on his waist.

It was a bit irritating, but in order to raise morale, he had to answer them. Zaryusu thus answered them with a serious, proper and confident expression.

With such an attitude, Zaryusu headed towards the outer wall of the village. There, Crusch was in a pinch, rushing the construction of the walls.

Several lizardmen were working.

They planted wooden stakes and a plant in between. Then they poured saturated mud from the top. The druids cast some sort of magic, and it hardened, and a somewhat cracked wall could be seen. They then repeated this on the other side as well.

Zaryusu did not understand what was happening, looked at the surroundings, and searched for someone who could explain it.

"Crusch!"

A lizardman wearing plants responded to Zaryusu's voice.

"Aa, what is it, Zaryusu?"

"Nothing, just wondering what you were doing."

Walking with splattering noise in the wetland, Zaryusu made his way to Crusch and pointed at the work that was being repeated in front of them.

"What is that?"

"Mud wall."

Crusch parted the head section, and replied.

"We don't know what type of enemy will be coming, but I wanted to make it hard for them to move in... But there is no time, we are not even half done."

"Is that so... But isn't it easy to destroy things made from mud?"

"....."

Crusch remained silent, and Zaryusu panicked in his heart, wondering if he had said something wrong.

“No problem. If the mud is thin, it is easy to break it. But thickening it will make it tougher. Because this is a rushed job, and there’s shortage of sufficient materials and it will weaken if it rains. But it won’t break down so easily.”

That is true, no matter what material it is, it would be hard to destroy if it was thick enough.

In front of Zaryusu who was thinking about that, dozens of lizardmen were working as fast as they could, but progress was as slow as a tortoise. Even if they worked on it for three days, it wouldn’t be much wider. But it was better than nothing.

“For now, the parts the wall couldn’t reach would be covered by fence that would be hard to tear down.”

In the direction Crusch was pointing at—

The stakes over there were pulled out, and planted some distance away, forming a triangle with the two other stakes besides it. Between the stakes were vines loosely bounded together, forming ropes blocking the passage between them. Zaryusu thought for a moment, and recalled that the fence around the ‘Red Eye’ tribe looked like that too. He could ask then, but currently it would not be a problem.

“What is that?”

“By placing something heavy there, the fence won’t fall even if it were being pushed or pulled. As for the ropes, they are meant to prevent enemy from getting through. If the ropes are pulled taut, it would be easily cut by swords or knives, that’s why we left some slack on it.”

At Zaryusu’s question, Crusch enthusiastically replied. She was happy that she could teach Zaryusu something. One reason was that she was always the one being taught until now, and another was due to a certain feeling.

“I see... it is harder to destroy it that way.”

These impressed words made Crusch felt proud.

Zaryusu nodded deeply.

It was quite a pinch, but the transformation into a fortress was going well. It

was certainly far from what humans or dwarves could make. However, in the wetlands where footing was bad, anything more was impossible.

“By the way, Zaryusu, did you tell the warriors—”

As Crusch was saying that, the cheers of the warriors were carried by the wind into their ears. It was an intense and hot blooded noise.

“What is happening?”

Crusch faced the direction where the sound was coming from, but unfortunately the source was blocked by the buildings. However, it was a roar of enjoyment.

Crusch recalled hearing something like this before, dug through her memory, and Zaryusu answered for her.

“Ah. Zenberu is fighting, I think? Now, my brother is fighting him.”

“Yes. This was the sound when Zaryusu fought.”

As Crusch understood, a new unease was born.

“But can he win? Would it not be terrible if your brother loses?”

The highest ranking leader of the alliance was Shasuryu. If the person giving orders were to lose, the situation might become extremely bad.

Lizardmen placed strength first. They were a race that could not trust the weak. And so it was rare for the winner to obey the loser. Orders might not be transmitted well. Dragon Tusk, Zenberu’s tribe might especially not follow Shasuryu’s orders.

It was natural for Crusch to worry after seeing Zenberu’s strength. However, Zaryusu was not worried.

“I don’t know, but my elder brother is strong. If he had the chance to use his druid powers, he will become even stronger, even I might lose to him.”

Shasuryu who casted several buffs on himself was very strong. He would probably refrain from using offensive spells in a mock battle, but if he does, Zaryusu won’t be a match without Frost Pain.

The reason why the original owner of Frost Pain didn’t use its special ability

that could only be used thrice in one day against Zaryusu was because he had used it up during his fight against Shasuryu.

“That’s great...”

Zaryusu thought that Crusch, who was still worried, should be brought to seen his brother fight. Then before them, several warriors walked and stumbled.

“...What it that? Are they sick?”

“...Ah, that is the result of drinking Zenberu’s wine.”

“What! Even though we are all busy!”

“Don’t say that. It is because bridges between the different tribes are being built.”

While saying that, Zaryusu recalled that Zenberu was probably not thinking about this. However, Crusch showed that she understood.

In her memory was the sight of the banquet at Dragon Tusk. At that memory where relations became deeper, her image of it became better.

“It cannot be helped.”

“...Yes. It cannot be helped.”

Crusch sighed and kept quiet.

Zaryus did not speak any further. He just waited. Finally, Crusch spoke.

“Are the preparations for running away done?”

“Ah, yes it’s going well.”

All the tribes had their chosen members in one place. They were waiting to leave.

“Is it progressing well over there?”

“I’m not too sure. All the lizardmen might be erased from this lake.”

Zaryusu decided to say the one fear that was in his heart. Having not voiced his thoughts until everything was decided was quite a cowardly behaviour. Of course, Zaryusu understood. But he did not want to hide anything from the

female he was in love with, and he could not stifle his strong desire.

“I am worried about one thing—”

Hearing Zaryusu’s anxious voice, Crusch smiled. That was a deliberate smile, something that was not her style — an expression that didn’t fit the situation — stopping Zaryusu from continuing. The one who spoke in place of Zaryusu was Crusch.

“— You mean that thing you didn’t bring up during the conference right? If the enemy already anticipated this, and was waiting for us to form an alliance.”

Zaryusu fell silent, she was right.

The enemy gave them time, and told them to show their worth, they would kill all of the lizardmen in one fell swoop. Then they might not have the ability to chase after the refugees. But then that had its own problems.

Crusch already knew it, and said the result of that choice out loud.

“But, in the end, the food problem will still be there.”

“...Ah.”

In the end, the problem of food came up with the evacuation.

“There are lots of things to be worried about. It is the fate of people like you Zaryusu. But, shall we focus on winning first?”

“I don’t think that they will stop after one time.”

The enemy’s strength or aim, or true form were all unclear. They simply reacted from the information. However, if their evaluations missed the mark, and considering the worst outcome, they could not do anything but take the safest course of action.

Without replying, Crusch—

“Look—”

Crusch extended her arms toward the empty space before her. But Zaryusu understood that she was referring to the entire village.

“Look at all the lizardmen from the various tribes working towards the same goal.”

Indeed, the lizardmen from all the tribes were advancing together as one.

The image of the five tribe banquet surfaced in Zaryusu's mind. The tribes were interacting harmoniously together without reservation. It would be a lie to say the survivors from the two destroyed tribe bore no grudges. But they displayed the will to swallow their grudge in the face of this incident.

The irony.

Zaryusu muttered. He always thought their divided worlds would carry on forever, he never thought the appearance of a mutual enemy would allow him to witness the unity of the lizardmen.

"We need to protect the possibility of our future, Zaryusu. The alliance of all the tribes would promote our development."

Crusch moved her head towards the wall.

A skill that Zaryusu had never seen before. However, this was made known to the other tribes. Then this wall could be used by all the lizardmen tribes. With this, the number of monsters that could enter the village would drop to zero.

"Let us obtain victory, Zaryusu. It is impossible for us to know what happens in the future, maybe everything would be over after this battle. If that is so, we can start developing a wonderful world without food problems and the need for lizardmen to kill each other."

Crusch smiled. Zaryusu suppressed his emotion, if he allowed his feeling to run loose, he might not be able to reign in it; but he had something he had to say.

"You are an excellent female lizardman— After this battle is over, please tell me the answer to that question I asked when we first met."

Crusch smile became even more brilliant.

"I understand, Zaryusu. I will tell you my answer after this is all over—"



When you prepare for something with a deadline, you would feel that time passes by in a flash.

The promised time had come.

That day, the burning sun crawled up in the sky as slow as a tortoise, the sky was blue and devoid of clouds.

There was no sound from the wind, the world seemed so quiet that you could hear a pin drop.

The tension was so thick that you could cut it with a knife.

Some of them gulped, others breath in deeply.

An unknown amount of time passed since the gathered lizardmen had turned silent.

Suddenly, a dark cloud that seemed to appear from a hole in the sky spread speedily across the blue sky just like it did before.

However, the lizardmen below gave no signs of surprise or awe. They only looked towards the front.

As the black cloud completely covered the sky, and a thin darkness fell when the sun was blocked—

In front of them, they slowly appeared from the boundary of the forest and wetlands, a countless number. As they were covered by the trees, their number could not be grasped. However, they came out in what seemed to be an infinite number.

Attacking was 2500 zombies, 2500 skeletons, 400 Undead Beasts, 200 Skeleton Archers and 120 Skeleton Riders.

A force of 5720 not including the commander and its guards

Opposing them was the five tribe alliance of lizardmen.

Green Claw had 103 warriors, 5 druids, 7 hunters, 124 males and 105 females.

Small Fang had had 65 warriors, 1 druid, 16 hunters, 111 males and 94 females.

Razor Tail had had 89 heavy armour warriors, 3 druids, 6 hunters, 99 males and 81 females.

Dragon Tusk had 125 warriors, 2 druids, 10 hunters, 98 males and 32 females.

Red Eye had 47 warriors, 15 druids, 6 hunters, 59 males and 77 females.

In total, 429 Warriors, 26 Druids, 45 Hunters, 491 Males and 389 Females.

A force of 1380 not including the chiefs and Zaryusu.



In the world after, the name of the Overlord, the Supreme Emperor Ainz Ooal Gown would be known by all. The first war the great existence of the God King took part in, was when he had direct command of Nazarick's forces during the massacre of the Katze Plains.

Even when the military strength of two countries took part, it was not called a war but a massacre, the Supreme Emperor Ainz Ooal Gown with his immense powers, birthed the dead from the opposing army. And due to that might, it was most suitable to not call it a war, but a massacre.

And after that, there were few battles that could come close to be called wars when Nazarick moved.

However, a war that was not recorded in history—Before the massacre of the Katze Plains, was one small battle.

Lost in history, an extremely small war.

—Now, the curtains for it were slowly opening.

Chapter 45: War | Part 5

It was a house made from wood.

There were no decorations, the wooden structure was plain to see and the design was as plain as a cabin. But the ceiling was five meters from the floor while the length and breadth were more than fifteen meters either way.

There were barely any furniture inside. So it was obvious at a glance that this was not a room meant to be lived in. No, but there was one giant mirror laid against the wall.

In this extremely empty room, normally it would be quite bleak, but these past few days were not so.

Within the room were countless figures.

In the room—At the table in front of the mirror.

As it was made sturdily and did not fit with the atmosphere of the log house, one would have wondered where it came from. On top of that strange table, were countless scrolls, all lined up.

All were scrolls imbued with magic.

“These are teleportation scrolls.”

On top of the table, another scroll was placed on the table.

The one who took out the scrolls was a human female in maid attire.

With an extremely noble face, she was like an adult, but her eyes were stiffly bound, and could not be seen. Her mouth was closed to the point that it seemed that she disliked talking. Her wet black hair, had a gloss that made it seem that it was a different creature, was held up in a Sideup hairstyle

Her skin was black too.

Her clothes were black as well. However, they were far different from normal maid clothes.

Her armour that protected her limbs went up to her elbow, comprised of gauntlets, cooters (someone please find out what this is, Japanese pronunciation is kuutaa), vambraces and rerebraces, were made of a black material with gold embellishments and had purple symbols engraved inside. Her high heels seemed to be a mix of sollerets, riebe and poleyn, and had the same pattern.

The skirt part of her maid uniform had a magical defensive plate made of a black magic metal on top of the cloth. In addition, it was three plates of magically transformed metal, adamantium, a mix of mithril and beliad, and a magic metal known as galvon. Her chest armour also used this as well.

Of course, the magic added was top grade. Data crystals that only players that are over level 90 could get were used.

If one thought about its defensive properties, rather than a maid uniform, it was more like full plate armour.

That was the same as her co workers, the maid uniform of the battle maids.

Draped around her body, around her neck, her throat was completely hidden. A sword hung from its scabbard at her waist.

She was one of the battle maids, Entoma Vasilissa Zeta, working under Sebas.

“And, this are the ‘Message’ scrolls, but there are a lot. Could someone please tidy up the table?”

Entoma talked to one of the figures that were gathered. It then slowly nodded its head.

“Do it.”

An, extremely hard to listen to voice spoke to Entoma.

The pronunciation was like scraping a hard metal, and trying to turn the sound into words—Something impossible for humans to do.

Actually, the owner of the voice was not human—

It made one think of a giant 2.5 metre tall bipedal insect. If one mixed a praying mantis and an ant together, it would probably look like this. A tail

longer than itself held countless spikes. Its jaws could probably easily cut through a human's arm.

With a sparkling platinum exoskeleton—He was the existence known as Cocytus.

And those surrounding the table.

They were strange creatures whose figures resembled those of insects. Those that looked like praying mantises, and those that looked like ants. And there were those who did not seem like insects at all.

Everyone had strange appearances.

However, they had two things in common. One was that they were all Cocytus' subordinates. And secondly, they were part of Nazarick.

"Understood."

Entoma deeply bowed. Receiving it, the surrounding insects moved so as to not disturb the maid.

Cocytus made a face saying as if this was natural, Entoma made it as well.

It was an extremely natural scene from those in Nazarick. The positions of those directly created by the Supreme Beings like Cocytus and Entoma were completely different from the subordinates.

After confirming that the tables had been cleared—

"Well then, please accept this, Cocytus-sama."

— Entoma said without moving her mouth, picking up the bag by her feet and fished out several scrolls of parchment.

"These are <Message> scrolls. These are from Ainz-sama. Due to the work of Demiurge, his worry of the scrolls running low has disappeared, and so he does not mind you using them."

"I see....I have to thank Demiurge then."

From among the scrolls offered, he picked several up using one of his four hands.

"Demiurge has pulled further ahead."

Cocytus said to his subordinates with a wry smile. When his subordinate heard that, they smiled along too.

With the parchment in his hand, Cocytus fell into deep thought.

He had heard about the stock of low level magic scrolls being diminished gradually. However, Cocytus was ordered with the defense of Nazarick, and could do nothing. It was natural. While defending, how could he go out.

And the one who solved the problem was Demiurge. He, without any problems, had discovered parchment that could be used.

His comrade completed his duty.

It was something to be celebrated. Cocytus had actually felt happy. However, he could not completely stifle the flames of jealousy that burned from the bottom of his heart. His comrade, had been of use to the Supreme Being Ainz—discovering parchment—, and he could not stop feeling envious.

Of course, Cocytus understood that, Cocytus who could not go outside, and Demiurge who was out on missions and had freedom.

His mission was to defend Nazarick.

This was probably more important than any other order given to any other Guardian. It was natural. Coarse people had no place stepping into the location of the Supreme Beings.

However without invaders, there was no way to prove Cocytus' loyalty and hard work.

For the Guardians, aiding their master would bring strong sense of joy. Cocytus wanted to taste that happiness too.

And that chance was right before him now.

Cocytus turned his head and looked at the scene reflected in the mirror and tightened his grip on the scroll.

What was shown wasn't indoors, but a location somewhere in the wetlands. That's right, this was from the Mirror of Remote Viewing.

It was the reason why Cocytus was holed up for two days in this wooden

house built by Aura.

This war—No, this experiment's conditions were that Cocytus himself could not appear on the battlefield. Of course, this applied to his subordinates.

The issue had to be solved with the troops that were allocated.

If he were to succeed, Cocytus could then display his loyalty to his glorious master.

“Thank you for your hard work, please relay my thanks to Ainz-sama.”

Entoma once again gracefully bowed.

“And so... Will you be going back?”

“No, I received orders to witness the battle here 'til the very end.”

So she was here as an observer.

Cocytus concluded, and felt hot blooded thinking about the heavy responsibility bestowed on him. Then, it was time to begin.

Cocytus activated ‘Message’ and issued an order to the undead commander.

— Advance.



Two bonfires on elevated platforms illuminated the surrounding with flickering light.

Normally it would be too early for the light to brighten the surroundings. However, with the thick cloud in the air casting its shadow, it was not strange.

On the stage stood several lizardmen, comprising of the tribal chiefs and key figures. Before them, were countless lizardmen arranged in the area below.

The lizardmen were abuzz. Unease, worry and fear. Even if they tried to hide it, they still had a commotion.

It was natural.

A war would occur after this. Their lives hung in the balance. Their friend next to them could become a corpse at any moment. The one that falls to the ground might be themselves.

They were heading towards such a battlefield. As they met this day, they were of course prepared. However, it would be strange for someone not to feel fear when facing such a place.

To cut through that commotion, one of the chiefs came forward.

There was no lizardman who did not know him. He was the leader of the five tribe alliance, Shasuryu Shasha.

“All lizardmen, listen up!”

A dignified voice spread across the area and it quieted down.

All the lizardmen did not make a sound. Shasuryu’s voice reverberated across the quiet open space.

“I know that we face a great number of foes.”

No response, but the uneasiness could be seen clearly in the eyes of all present.

Shasuryu paused momentarily and continued loudly.

“But do not fear! For the first time in history, we the five tribes have formed an alliance. After this alliance, we are now all of one tribe.”

So what.

Accepting the looks of suspicion, Shasuryu spelt it out.

That’s why, the ancestral spirits of the five tribes will watch over us.”

The ancestors were spirits that would protect their own tribes. No one had heard of them protecting those from other tribes. As if they had heard something impossible, they turned their gazes to Shasuryu.

Ignoring the gazes of doubt he received, Shasuryu raised his voice.

“Head Druid of all tribes!”

Taking the cue, Crusch led the five head druids of tribes and stepped forward. She removed the dress covering her and revealed her white scales.

Seeing her albino scales, countless lizardmen made unhappy expressions. However, Crusch remained calm and smiled slightly.

“Leader of Head Druids, Crusch Lulu!”

In response to Shasuryu’s introduction, Crusch took another step forward.

“Let our ancestors descend!”

“—Listen, children of this large tribe!”

What was this new tribe?

Crusch spoke with determination. Her voice was tense at times, calm at others; alternating between a mighty roar and the melody of song.

In the beginning, almost everyone was disgusted by Crusch albino appearance, but seeing how she present herself confidently, the feelings of dislike faded away.

Crusch’s body swayed gently during her speech. The white scales sparkled brilliantly under the light of the bonfire— The reflected gleam made it look as if the ancestors had descended onto Crusch.

Everyone’s face started to show signs of adoration.

Confirming the expressions of all the lizardmen there, Crusch continued the ceremony.

“Now, our five tribes are now one, that means the ancestors of the five tribes will watch over all of us! We are all witnesses! All lizardmen! Behold the countless ancestors— descend by our side!”

Crusch spread her arms out with a grand gesture, pointing to the sky. The gaze of all present followed, but what they saw was just the cloudy sky with no signs of miracles descending. But someone said something softly.

He said— there is a tiny beam of light.

The soft voice gradually became big, several other lizardmen said: “I see them.” Some said they were small beams of light; some shouted they saw lizardmen descending; some uttered that were large fishes; some screamed these were children; some even uttered in disbelief those were eggs.

As if inviting the rest, the other lizardmen began to see things as well.

All the lizardmen had the same thought in mind— the ancestors really

descended.

The ancestors are here to protect us!

It was only natural for them to shout something like that.

“Feel this! Feel the power flowing into your body!”

Crusch’s voice reached the heart of everyone, the sound seemed so far, yet so near.

Led by that voice, the lizardmen felt some sort of energy surging into their body.

“Feel it! Feel the strength bestowed onto you by the ancestors of the five tribes!”

All the lizardmen present definitely felt it.

They felt that surging power. The feeling of their hot blood flowing washed away all their unease, their body started heating up as if they just drunk alcohol.

This could be taken as the best proof of their ancestors descending.

Crusch looked away from the revel faces of the lizardmen and nodded to Shasuryu.

“Lend me your ears, lizardmen. The ancestors have descended onto us. We cannot match the enemy in numbers, but will we lose?”

“No!”

The lizardmen intoxicated in the atmosphere responded to Shasuryu in unison, shaking the very air.

“That’s right! With the ancestors upon us, it is impossible for us to lose! Defeat the enemy, and present victory to our ancestors!”

“Warrghh!”

The lizardmen were in high spirits, no one felt uneasy anymore. There were only lizardmen who had morphed into warriors as they headed toward the battle that was upon them.

They were not charmed by magic. It was the drink that all the lizardmen drank before the battle ceremony. It was a special drink that made the lizardmen feel intoxicated, happy and saw illusions for a short period of time.

They had received the effect of a type of meditation.

Crusch's speech was just buying time for the herb to take effect.

Once the truth was known, it wasn't much. But for those who saw the effects with their own eyes— the lizardmen who witness the ancestors descending, it was a ritual that brought out the courage in them.

"Well then, we will hand out the paint to everyone. It used to be one colour for each tribe, but right now the ancestors from all five tribes are among us, so use all the colours to paint yourself!"

Several druids carried pots and walked through the lizardmen crowd in response to Shasuryu's voice.

The lizardmen took paint from the pot and started drawing war paint on themselves. They believe these were the drawing of the ancestors who had descended onto them, so they allowed their fingers to move freely, painting patterns on their body.

With the ancestors from all five tribes descending onto them, many of the lizardmen covered their whole body with paint. But the lizardmen from 'Green Claw' didn't draw many war paints on themselves. This was because Zaryusu, Shasuryu and the elites of the tribes didn't draw any.

Basically the ancestors of those two were descending. Many thought so, and did not paint as much. It could be considered the thoughts of a fan imitating their idol.

After surveying the crowd and confirming that everyone had finished, Shasuryu drew his greatsword and pointed at the main gate.

"Move out!"

"Wargghhh!!"

Countless piercing roars shook the surrounding.



The forces of the Great Tomb of Nazarick were roughly divided in two.

From the view of the lizardmen, the zombies were on the left while the skeletons were on the right. Skeleton archers and riders were positioned behind the skeletons.

Undead beasts were situated behind as the core of the army.

The lizardmen army had a smaller force and were divided into two groups as well. Facing the zombies were female lizardmen and hunters, while the warriors and male lizardmen were set against the skeletons. The Druids were placed inside the village protected by walls.

The lizardmen formed up outside the village because there was nothing to be gained from a defensive battle. They had no incoming reinforcement and the walls weren't really sturdy. On the other hand, the undead army didn't require any provisions or rest.

With such a disadvantageous position, a defensive siege battle would be foolish.

But after both sides set up formation, the difference in numbers was clearly shown.

One lizardman had to fight against five, ten against fifty, the ratio remained the same. But the difference was prominent when it was a thousand against five thousand. Just lining up five thousand undead was highly intimidating.

The difference in numbers was enough to possibly lose the desire to fight even before the war started. Even so, the lizardmen did not show any fear. With their ancestors descended amongst them, numbers were not a problem.

Moments later, the undead army started advancing slowly. The first to move were the zombies and the skeletons. The skeleton archers and riders remained in place, therefore they were probably conserving their forces.

The lizardmen army started their march too.

“Warrrggghh!”

Deafening roars covered the entire wetlands.

It was then followed by the splashing of water. The mud flew everywhere

and the water splashed.

Although the zombies and skeleton moved forth at the same time, their pace was different. This was because the zombies were slow and stiff while the skeletons were agile and fast. Most important of all, they were in the wetlands which affected mobility.

The movements of the stiff zombies were obstructed by the mud, slowing them down. But the light skeletons were not affected much.

Hence, the first to clash were the skeletons and the lizardmen warriors.

The lizardmen did not have any formation, simply charging ahead to engage the enemy, with no stratagem to speak of.

Leading the way were the five warrior captains from each of the tribes. For the commanders to be in the frontlines could be considered foolish in some ways. But they were the highest ranking combatants, so the morale of the lizardmen would plummet if they didn't lead from the front. Thanks to their effort, all the lizardmen were highly motivated.

Right behind them were the 89 'Razor Tail' heavy armor warriors. Wearing leather armors and shields, this group had the highest defence among all the tribes.

With their shields raised, they formed a wall that was charging into the skeleton army.

An intense collision— the vanguards of the skeletons and the warriors smashed into each other.

In that instant, countless bones flew everywhere as the lizardmen unit crashed a hole into the skeleton formation.

Angry roars accompanied the cracking sound of bones. There were occasional moans of pain, but the bone cracking sounds were overwhelmingly louder.

The lizardmen gained a staggering advantage in the first clash.

If it were a human army instead, the result would be reversed.

Because the skeletons were made up of bones, piercing weapons were

ineffective and they had resistance towards slashing attacks too. Hence, for the human army with swords as their primary weapon, it would be difficult to deal effective damage against the skeletons.

Then were skeletons strong? No. While they were strong against piercing and slicing, they were weak against blunt attacks.

The lizardmen mostly used ill crafted weapons maces of stone. Whenever a lizardmen swung the weapon in their hand, the bones of the skeletons shattered easily. Even if they survived one hit, they would be crushed in the next attack. On the other hand, whenever the skeletons attacked with their rusty swords, it got deflected from the tough scaly skin of the lizardmen. Some of them were hurt, but no one suffered mortal wounds.

The very first clash.

The shattered bones of six hundred skeletons littered the wetlands just like that.



The image reflected in the mirror stunned Cocytus.

It was nothing more than the first clash, but the abilities of the lizardmen were higher than expected. They could last for more than five minutes against the Skeleton Archers and Skeleton Riders.

As he watched, another skeleton fell. The skeletons and zombies would serve no purpose except for wasting their energy.

In that case, the effective forces would be the remaining 400 undead beasts, 200 skeleton archers, and 120 of 720 skeleton riders. They were outnumbered instead. However, if they slowed down and slowly destroyed them, there would be no problems.

Cocytus started calculating in his heart.

The undead were strong in battle, especially in a drawn out fight. The undead didn't feel anything, and wouldn't feel neither fear nor pain. They didn't need rest or sleep.

The advantage these characteristics brought were evident with no need for

any explanation.

For example, most creatures would fall from a powerful hit from a mace to its head. Even if they didn't die, they would bleed profusely and feel pain. The one who got hit would lose all will to fight. Some warriors who were trained to resist pain might be able to stand their ground, but most people would lose the will to fight.

This was natural for living beings.

But what about the undead?

Simple. —If the damage was not significant, it would keep coming.

Smash its head? It would keep on attacking.

Break its arm? It would stab at you with its stump.

Take out its legs? It would crawl at you.

Yes, the undead would continue until their false life ran out. They would not lose their fighting spirit like humans would. This meant that the undead was in a way, the perfect soldier.

In terms of individual strength, the lizardmen obviously had the upper hand. But that could change.

Cocytus' raised his evaluation of the lizardmen by one level and acknowledged that they were not enemies that could be defeated easily. What he needed to do now was to turn this into a battle of attrition.

"How about retreating for now and observe the situation?"

"I believe this is a wise move, my lord."

"Sending out the skeleton archers and riders might be a better option, master."

"No, I think we should press on with the attack and sap them of their stamina, my liege."

"How would waiting for them to tire help? If we can't destroy the enemy's base camp, they would be able to rest and recover right?"

"Indeed. Our foes had strengthened their defences with just a fragile wall.

How about taking that village and routing them?”

After hearing the response from his underlings, Cocytus picked up a ‘Message’ scroll. He glanced at Entoma from the corner of his eyes and observed her expression.

Entoma kept her eyes closed, and faced the mirror. There was no expression on her face. It was weird, like she was wearing a mask. Cocytus recalled her true body, and chided himself for trying to read her face.

— Wrong, that expressionless face was just a decoration.

Yes, there was no way she could express emotion on that face.

Cocytus gave up trying to read Entoma’s thoughts from her face and used the scroll to issue the instruction to the commander.



“Are they looking down on us?”

Zenberu mumbled. He wasn’t loud, but it was enough for everyone surveying the enemy from on top of the mud walls to hear.

“Hmm....Are the skeletons and zombies the only ones moving?”

“Their archers and riders are still held in reserve, I think they are underestimating us...”

“That’s right, I thought the enemy would charge at us at one go...”

“Fight with zombie, smooth.”

There were only 45 hunters fighting the zombies. Using hit and run tactics by throwing rocks at them, the hunters were luring the zombies slowly away from the skeletons. The female lizardmen moved slowly to the flank of the skeletons.

“Aren’t their movements rather queer?”

“... Indeed.”

Instead of being lured, the zombies were focusing completely on the hunters. Was the commander agreeing with this? No, there was no way any commander would accept this, but in actual fact, that was how the zombies

were moving. Then, what is the objective of the enemy?

“I don’t understand why they are moving this way.”

“Ah....”

No matter how they thought about it, there doesn’t seem to be any purpose in the zombies’ action.

“Maybe there is no commander?”

“N? Zaryusu what saying.”

“No commander...? Ah, you mean the undead are just following the very first instruction they received?”

“Yes, correct.”

Amongst the undead, zombies and skeletons were the bottom of the hierarchy and so had no intelligence. Normally a commander would give orders, but if there was none then they would follow the last order they received.

Basically, it was the idea that they were without a commander and were simply following the order of killing any nearby lizardman.

“That is to say our foes thought they could win against us if they have the numbers... No, could this battle be just an experiment to see how well the undead fight without a commander?”

“That may be so.”

“Damn it! What kind of joke is this?”

Shasuryu spat out those words. As expected, even Shasuryu could not take it. They were risking their lives, but the other side was simply taking this as an experiment.

“Calm down Shasuryu, it might not be so simple.”

“Ah, my apologies... It is a good thing that we have the upper hand.”

“You are right older brother, we have to use this chance to diminish the enemy’s’ numbers.”

The fatigue from battle was heavy, the mental strain would be enormous in

a chaotic fight. Without knowing if the enemy would come from the front, back, left or right, just swinging your weapon under such conditions a few times would be much more tiring than normal.

But the undead wouldn't get fatigue and would fight without rest.

The difference between the living and the undead would become more prominent with the passage of time.

Time was the enemy for the lizardmen.

"Tch, I want to take the field too."

"Endure, Zenberu."

If the skilled Zenberu was to join the fray, they could level the skeletons in no time. But that would mean revealing their own trump cards. Zaryusu and the other five were the ace in the hole. They had to show their ace if the situation called for it, but before the strongest foe shows itself, they must not show their hand.

"But wouldn't it play right into our hand if the enemy doesn't advance?" Zaryusu said to the others. The others agreed with him, and Zaryusu asked Crusch who was beside him: "How are things on your end?"

"... Yes, the ritual is going as planned."

Crusch answered as she looked inside the village behind them. The group of druids were performing a ritual inside the village that could become another ace for the lizardmen. It usually took a lot of time, but with all the druids of all five tribes gathered here, the progress was sped up and it could be used in this battle.

"... Teamwork, what an amazing thing."

"Yeah... That's true, we did share some information after that war... But there are so many more things I want to do after the war now."

At Shasuryu's words, the other chiefs nodded. With this fight, they could develop themselves for the first time. Zaryusu smiled as he looked at the five of them.

"What's so funny?"

Crusch saw Zaryusu and asked him with doubt in her voice.

“Nothing, it is just that despite being in such a situation, I still feel really glad.”

Crusch understood Zaryusu’s thoughts immediately.

“— Me too, Zaryusu.”

Seeing Crusch smiling brilliantly, Zaryusu squinted his eyes as if he was looking at something bright. Both of their eyes were filled with admiration and love for each other.

They separated. It was natural. Lizardmen were currently dying. As they understood this, they could not let their true feelings show in their behaviour. However, Zaryusu and Crusch’s tails moved as if they were different creatures, and touched and left each other.

“Muu...”

“As the older brother, how does it feel?”

“They are in their own world.”

“How passionate.”

“In conclusion... It’s good to be young. Their future is bright.”

The four older lizardmen nodded in unison as they watched their cute juniors.

It was impossible for Zaryusu and Crusch to miss that. Although their tails were twitching about, they still kept their poker faces.

“Elder brother, the enemy is moving.”

Shasuryu and the others smiled wryly as Zaryusu shifted gears so suddenly. They looked towards the enemy formation and saw the skeleton riders flank the battle in front of them before advancing.

“Hey hey, are they charging for us?”

“With skeleton riders? Are they planning to bring down our morale by striking at us?”

“No, they are probably flanking to the rear of the warriors and male lizardmen

to surround them.”

Not good.

Everyone came to the same conclusion that the mobility of the skeleton riders was a threat.

If the skeleton riders were deployed at the start of the fight, the lizardmen could exterminate them first. Right now, the warriors and male lizardmen were in a chaotic fight, the hunters were luring the zombies and the female lizardmen were throwing rocks from the flank of the skeletons, there were no available forces to stop the skeleton riders.

“I think we should take action.”

Accepting the proposition from the chief of Small Fang, Shasuryu nodded in agreement.

“The problem is who we should send.”

“If they come here then everyone would have to do it, right?”

“Yes. We just have to do it well.”

“The lizardmen in the hot blooded battle can’t move, should we have the females go?”

“We have no other choice. But, if we can....”

“Then it will be our turn, we will show our strength, and preserve Zaryusu and the rest?”

“That sounds good. Do you mind, younger brother?”

“Ah. No problems here.”

“Then let us use one of our cards.”



Skeleton riders.

They were skeletons that rode bone horse, and wielded spears. They were existences that had only high mobility, but here in the wetlands, that movement ability was showing its effects. As they were bone, they did not sink,

and could move with the speed of horses.

The 120 Skeleton Riders circled behind the lizardmen. Their aim was to destroy the lizardmen from behind.

They could see three lizardmen running at them to the left of their advancing route — which was the direction of the village — but the skeleton riders ignored them. Without any orders, they would ignore anything if they were not attacked. That was the kind of monster the unintelligent undead was.

They almost reached the rear of the lizardmen army when the skeleton rider leading the charge suddenly tumbled. The skeleton rider was flung high into the air before it fell heavily into the wetlands.

A human would be confused and wouldn't be able to act immediately. But the unintelligent undead skeleton rider moved instantly in order to carry out its instructions.

Recognising that it had fallen from its horse, it immediately got up. It was blown quite a distance, but as the wetland below it was soft, it could safely get up. However, since it was blown quite fast, it received some damage.

Then another skeleton rider was hit.

The bones of two skeleton riders were blown to the grounds.

It was happening everywhere.

—Those were traps.

Using wood, holes were dug in the wetlands. There, the skeleton rider's horses had their feet trapped, causing them to fall hard.

As the scene spread, the skeleton riders continued to fall one by one.

Originally, they should have dropped their speed. However, the skeleton riders did not do so. This was as they were not ordered to do so.

Maintaining their speed, they seemed to be committing mass suicide. And so they fell.

However, those traps did nothing but stall them. While it was true that they gave a bit of damage, it was not enough to defeat the skeleton riders.

Yes.

Those traps did nothing but stall for time.

Then the sound of a hole opening in the air could be heard. Then the head of a skeleton rider fell to the ground.

Hostile actions.

Noticing it, the fallen skeleton rider looked around at the surroundings.

Then, another skeleton rider's head was shattered like glass.

It then noticed.

The skeleton riders discovered three lizardmen about 80 meters away from them. They could also see them using slingshots, shooting rocks to snipe the head of the skeleton riders——

The skeleton riders started moving and at the same time, the fight with the skeletons was changing.

With the sound of bow strings releasing, arrows rained down on the battlefield.

The 200 skeleton archers fired arrows at the skeletons and the lizardmen simultaneously. It wasn't just one shot, but two, three...

This was an unexpected assault for the lizardmen.

Several lizardmen were hit and fell. They couldn't defend against the arrows while they fought against the skeletons. Of course, the skeletons were hit as well. However, they received no damage. It was natural. They had resistance to piercing attacks, and so the arrows just bumped against them.

Placing the skeletons in the front and the skeleton archers firing from the back was a great combination. With the time needed to defeat 2,500 skeletons, this tactic would be enough to wipe out the lizardmen.

But the problem was that this tactic was implemented too late. If it was used at the very beginning, the lizardmen would definitely be in a dire state. The skeletons would then overwhelm them with numbers and earn a decisive victory.

Ignoring the dwindling skeletons, the lizardmen charged at the skeleton archers. Receiving the attacks from the warriors, males and females, the exterminated skeletons could no longer hold them back.

The arrows from the 200 skeleton archers fell like rain, downing several lizardmen onto the mud, but it was just a small number. With the thick skin and hard scales of the lizardmen, their defence was on par with humans wearing leather armor. Even if arrows pierced their skin, their tough muscles might be able to stave off fatal injury.

Another reason for the minimal casualties were the weak arrow shots. The magical strength didn't have enough power to kill the lizardmen.

So in comparison to the number of those hit, the lizardmen that fell were few.

The lizardmen roared fearlessly as they charged. The lizardmen crossed their arms to protect their head, braving ahead.

Once again the arrows flew and lizardmen fell. Within the storm, they guarded their bodies and dashed forward.

On the third wave of arrow attack—

This was the limit of how fast the skeleton archers could shoot. If they had intelligence, they would probably retreat. If they moved back and regrouped with the surviving undead army, they could be utilized in a better way.

But the skeletons did not have the mental capacity to store such complicated instructions. They didn't receive any other orders, so they simply executed their original mission— Even with the lizardmen closing in, they could only fire arrows at them.

With a roar, the skeleton archers were swarmed by the lizardmen. At this distance, archers lost their advantage and could only be attacked one-sidedly. They fell one after another.

Just the army of zombies was left, with almost all the skeletons had fallen into the wetlands.

Finally, some things began to move.

They were Undead Beasts. Undead created from wolves, snakes, cobras and all sorts of animals. A monster that combined the tenacity of zombies with the agility of animals.

The undead beasts rushed at the lizardmen. The fast moved fast, the slow travelled slowly, an assault with no formation to speak of.

The attack coming from down low was unexpectedly hard to evade. The undead beasts will gnaw onto the feet of the enemy. After immobilizing them, it will deal the killing blow, a style similar to wild beasts.

For the lizardmen who were getting more and more tired, this attack was difficult to fend off. Several lizardmen whose movements had dulled got their necks torn apart by the undead beasts.

The Head Warrior fought in front, but reinforcements were coming for the tired lizardmen.

Suddenly, the wetlands rose up. There was a figure of a existence of mud. It was about 160 centimetres in height. Shorter than lizardmen. And it had no hands, legs or hands, just a blob of mud.

It's figure was like a child that wore a sheet, pretending to be a ghost.

It suddenly moved.

It moved smoothly even though it was without legs, it headed towards the Undead Beasts. No sound of water was made even though the ground was wetlands, proving that it did not use any legs to move.

Suddenly, whips that were longer than its height emerged from where its shoulders should be.

That was the second of the lizardmen's ace in the hole.

The Swamp Elemental summoned through the combined effort of all the lizardmen's druids.

Originally, this would have taken enormous amounts of preparation time, but with the number of people able to perform the ritual, it became possible to activate it in this war. Of course, after this ritual most druids would have fainted from exhaustion.

The Swamp Elemental charged into the midst of the undead beasts.

The elemental flung its whip like tentacles to grab the enemies. The undead beasts engaged it ferociously with claws and fangs.

It was a battle between creatures without fear. But the wetland fairies had the advantage due to their superior combat power. It was the proof that the ceremony that took the combination of 26 druids to complete was powerful.

This fact revived the courage of the lizardmen and they renewed their attack.

An intense battle ensued. Unlike the fight with the skeletons, the lizardmen also suffered casualties. But the scale of victory was tilting towards the lizardmen who had the advantage in pure numbers.

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He was going to lose.

Cocytus understood this fact.

He had no undead that had intelligence. But for them to be this weak.

Cocytus was bothered by his shallow thinking. There was a way to turn the tide under such a situation, but it wasn't a good method as taking such a step was equivalent to admitting his loss.

On the other hand, how could he report this failure to his master? Cocytus picked up the scroll. Who should he contact at such a crucial moment—

“... Is this Demiurge?”

[Yes my friend. For you to actually <Message> me, something happened?]

An extremely composed deep voice rang in Cocytus' head. Yes, he decided that Demiurge, who apart from being a Guardian was also the head of Nazarick's defences, could give him good insight.

If asked if he would feel a bit of regret asking a rival-like existence for help, he would reply yes. However, this was something where failure could not be tolerated. So, he could not feel regret bowing his head.

“Actually—”

An explanation of the current situation.

After using several scrolls, Demiurge who listened quietly gave a troubled sigh.

[And what do you need from me?]

“I wish for you to lend me your wisdom, the battle will be lost if this carries on. I can accept it if it was my personal fight, but I do not wish for Nazarick and the Supreme Beings to be disgraced by this.”

[Does Ainz-sama truly wish for victory?]

“What do you mean by this?”

[I am talking about why Ainz-sama formed an army from such lowly serfs.]

“Hmm....”

Cocytus also had doubts about this. He couldn't fathom why they had to form an army from the lowest servants in the Great Tomb of Nazarick. But then, to have such a composition....

“He must have been aiming for something” No, he could think of nothing else. “Then, what was his aim?”

[... I can think of several possibilities.]

As expected of Demiurge.

Cocytus didn't express this out loud and kept his respect for the demon in his heart.

[Let me ask you... Cocytus. You had been in this place for several days now, shouldn't you be gathering intelligence on the lizardmen before the attack?]

“Mm....”

Demiurge was right. But—

“But Ainz-sama ordered me to defeat them with the forces given.”

[That might be so, but I want to think about it carefully, Cocytus. The important thing should be Ainz-sama's objective. If the objective was destruction of the village, you would need to consider the best way to go about it, correct?]

“Mm....”

Cocytus couldn't answer, Demiurge got right to the point.

[Ainz-sama must have considered all this when he gave those serfs to you.]

“... You mean Ainz-sama intentionally gave me forces that wouldn't be able to win the fight?”

「The possibility is high. If you had gathered enough information, you might have realised that your troops were not sufficient to bring down the village. If

you had done so, you could have reported it to Ainz-sama. Was that not Ainz-sama's aim? This was why he had spoke so. For you to wonder if your orders were absolute, or if you could immediately tell if the completion would be difficult.]

Which meant that Cocytus had to understand the true intention of his master and react based on that.

That was what Demiurge was trying to say.

[This was Ainz-sama's method of changing our way of thinking. But he seemed to have another objective as well...]

"What else is there?"

Cocytus asked Demiurge in panic. He had already made one mistake, he did not want to risk another one.

[Ainz-sama sent out messengers to the villages, but did not mention Nazarick by name. He also forbid you from taking the field. This means—]

Cocytus gulped and waited for Demiurge to carry on. But Demiurge didn't continue.

[Urg! Cocytus, my apologies, I have an urgent matter to attend to. Sorry but I need to go, may you obtain victory.]

Suddenly Demiurge had cut off. And the magic <Message> had disappeared. Cocytus panicked, and looked at the others in the room. There, Entoma casually dropped a torn apart scroll from her hands.

That was the proof that it had been used. Basically—

It stated the reason for Demiurge panicking, and why he had cut off the magic, Cocytus thought deeply. Should he deploy his ace. It was the ace that his master told him not to deploy until he was about to lose. However, was that truly Ainz's aim?

Cocytus, for the first time, thought about Ainz's aim. However, he had but one conclusion.

Cocytus activated the <Message> spell.

“— Lich Commander, I order you to attack. Show the lizardmen your true powers.”



An old and luxurious robe covered its body of skins and bones. One of its hands was holding a twisted staff. Its rotting face was just a skin covered skull with evil eyes full of intelligence in its sockets. The emitted negative energy covered his body like a thin fog.

It was a magic caster of death.

It was—A Lich.

It was an extremely evil monster that was born after an evil magic caster was born and his body was filled with negative energy. Different from the brainless undead until now, the intelligence inside was about the same as a regular person.

The undead obeyed Cocytus' command and looked at the wetlands. He then issued orders to the Blood Meat Hulks standing behind him. They were undeads with fresh red muscles and fats, made by the Supreme Being just like him.

[Kill those three lizardmen.]

The place he was ordered towards had three lizardmen, and the two Blood Meat Hulks walked forward. They had beaten the Skeleton riders, but the Blood Meat Hulks were stronger.

Blood Meat Hulks were muscular undead with blood red skin.

Instead of sweat, a blood-like liquid flowed down their skin. With each step, their meat bounced up and down.

Although Blood Meat Hulks were low-tier undead that could only attack with brute force, they had regenerative abilities. If they were facing physical attack on the same level as them, they would be able to stall for time.

As a magic caster, the Lich was not good in melee battles, so having the Blood Meat Hulks close to protect him was the orthodox way to fight.

However he couldn't use such tactics.

The order he received was to ‘show the lizardmen your true powers’. Hence, he had to take the base camp of the lizardmen alone with his overwhelming power.

As the Lich advanced, his terrifying face laughed softly.

He felt this was too easy.



After the lizardmen had killed the undead beasts, they dropped their shoulders in exhaustion and breathed a sigh of relief. Many wounded had appeared. They had to transport them without being able to rest.

The ones able to fight were all tired to the point that they wanted to sit down. Their bodies were dull, and it was exhausting to lift their weapons. However, they had to clean up the zombies.

The Head Warriors commanded.

They said that those who could still fight had to oppose the zombies.

Then—

—A blaze erupted. With that one blast, the spirits had become half broken. Then, another hit.

After the second, the spirits crumbled and disappeared.

What happened?

The lizardmen couldn’t suppress their confusion and looked around. When they saw an undead in the distance, a fireball was shot from its hand once again.

The fireball that was the size of a human head flew through the air and blast into the lizardmen unit taking point.

Normally, fire would be put out when it come into contact with water, but this fireball was a magical phenomenon and ignored such common sense. The moment the fireball hit the water surface, it exploded as if it had collided with solid ground, creating a tornado of fire.

A crimson battery fire engulfed the lizardmen.

They 5 metre radius balls erupted and disappeared.

An illusion— it disappeared so fast that this was the feeling it gave. But the smell of burning flesh— from the lizardmen that laid on the ground motionless was definitely not an illusion.

The undead slowly approached. Should they move like they had done against the Skeleton Archers? As the lizardmen hesitated, another ball came flying.

It exploded, and stole the lives of the nearby lizardmen.

It was an overwhelming power. Even though their ancestors had descended, several lizardmen were swallowed by fear.

Several tried to attack, but were intercepted by the fireballs.

“Run!”

A spirited roar sounded out, shocking the lizardmen like lightning. It was one of the Head Warriors.

“That is a strong enemy. The fight will be different from that until now!”

Yes. The figure of just one person approaching.

Every lizardman could feel an overwhelming pressure from it.

“Run back and report to the Chiefs and Zaryusu.”

“Let us buy some time!”

Yet another fireball exploded, felling several lizardmen.

“Run! Report to them!”

The five Head Warriors ordered the lizardmen to escape as they gauged the distance between each other. They spread out with the blast radius of the fireball in mind, their goal was for one of them to reach the enemy. It was a suicide formation for this sole purpose.

The five of them of them looked at each other after spreading out and sprinted at full speed.

The distance was about two hundred metres. It was a hopeless distance, but

they still charged in with all their might. They knew even if they fell while rushing in, it would leave clues for the chiefs and Zaryusu who were watching from behind.



The pressured lizardmen continued to run.

Zaryusu coldly watched the scene. No, the moment the strong enemy appeared, he had paid attention to it.

Fireballs came flying from the single undead. It's actions were different from the brainless undead until now.

It was probably the commander.

The moment a lizardman was within range, it welcomed them with an AoE <Fireball>. There was no one who got up after being hit. The Head Warriors who tried to attack, were all killed en route.

The distance was 200 metres. Nothing more. However considering that it was wetlands without cover, that distance had changed to a hell.

The lizardmen's projectile weapons were slings. It was an impossible feat for it to fly 200 metres and hit its target. In addition, some high ranking undead received no damage from unenchanted weapons. If the approaching undead was one, it would just serve to anger it.

Now, it was strolling towards them with ease. Trying to poorly attack was a fool's errand.

Zaryusu thought of attacking with numbers.

He could see that attacking an existence that could use large area attacks would only result in death. Then only the elite should challenge it.

However, that was the problem.

Zaryusu and the others could take a couple of hits from fireball, but they will suffer more than a couple of attacks before they close the gap. And the real test begins after reaching the target. It was easy to see that taking the attack of the fireball from the front will kill them.

The chance of them being killed en route like the 5 Head Warriors was high.

While Zaryusu was watching, the last Head Warrior was swallowed by flames, and fell to the wetlands.

“Such a despairingly long distance.”

“Ah....”

Zaryusu’s group thought about how to reach the enemy without injuries—or with minimal injuries.

“How about tunneling through the wetlands?”

“Even for the powers of a druid... that would be difficult. It would be great if we could use ‘Invisibility’.”

They could sneak close immediately using ‘Flight’ after casting ‘Invisibility’. But these were not among the spells a druid could learn.

“How about making a shield while we advance?”

“Making a shield will take too much time.”

“What about dismantling... a house?”

Zenberu smiled wryly as he knew the proposal he just said wouldn’t work. The enemy was attacking with fireball explosion, even if they could protect one side, the heat would still get in from the side. There was no time to craft a full body shield to protect against the heat.

Like this or that, Crusch and Zenberu who were discussing noticed Zaryusu’s cold face murmuring.

“What is it, Zaryusu?”

Crusch was slightly taken aback and asked fearfully. While the male Zaryusu was making a blank face, she felt uneasy.

“No... I just... found a shield.”



It was progressing smoothly. The two Blood Meat Hulks were still battling, but he was making good progress towards the village.

There were several foolish lizardmen who wanted to charge him, but they seemed to understand the futility of their action after witnessing the power of fireball. The five that spread out before the assault had the best record right now.

But they only made it to one hundred metres.

The Lich moved through the empty wasteland silently. However, there was no hesitation. There might have been people hiding using invisibility magic or hiding beneath the mud. The Lich did not forget to check for anything strange.

There was not much of a distance till the village.

However, the lizardmen did not want it to arrive. So a counter offensive was imminent.

As it thought, the Lich looked at the village.

[Hmm]

It seemed to be the ace. One figure of a hydra was visible. It was slowly heading towards the Lich.

If that was the ace of the lizardmen, he will crush it with overwhelming strength and sap their will to fight. That would make the destruction of the village simpler.

The Lich prepared itself for when the hydra would enter its range.

When it just about did, the hydra began running. Yes, towards the Lich.

[Fools, you think you can cover this distance of 200 metres? Beasts will just be beasts.]

The Lich sneered, and made a <Fireball> in its hands.

It then released it towards the hydra.

The fireball flew straight and scored a direct hit on the hydra. The eruption of flames engulfed the hydra. It was as if the hydra's body was a torch.

Although the hydra staggered, it continued to advance. It carried on charging even though it was on fire. No, the flames dissipated instantly, that was just the imagination of the Lich. The scene before the Lich conveyed the

exemplary determination of the hydra.

The Lich frowned with displeasure.

It withstood one of its magic. From that, the Lich's pride was hurt. It did seem that the hydra had protective magic that defended against energy attacks on it. However, while it was not high class, its own magic could not completely erase it.

The magic beast hydra was filled with vigour. Then it was natural for it to endure one hit.

Yes, the Lich decided so and comforted itself.

Then, it faced the approaching hydra with a cold gaze. It felt that its magic was being made light of.

Eating one hit, it seemed that it did not understand pain. It was running to its death.

[... How unpleasant, die!]

He fired a fireball once more, engulfing the hydra in flames again. It even gave the illusion of charring flesh from such a distance. The wounds might not be fatal, but it would make it hesitate from advancing further.

But—

[— Why isn't it stopping? Why is it still coming?]



Rororo ran. It might be huge, but it had a speed matching the lizardmen since it was traversing the wetlands. Ripples splashed everywhere with loud splattering sounds.

Its amber eyes turned white from the high temperature, two of its four heads had lost its strength.

Despite that, it ran.

Another 'fireball' struck Rororo squarely in the body. The heat inside the 'fireball' exploded in an instant, penetrating Rororo's entire being. It felt a pain equivalent to being punched all over its body, its eyes were dry as the fiery air

burned its lungs.

With burns all over its body, the feedback of pain that came nonstop from its body warned Rororo: it will die if it was hit again.

Even so— it ran.

Ran.

And ran.

It did not stop and continued forward. It was an unbelievable action.

The high temperature peeled the scales away, warping the skin underneath it and blood gushed out. Despite that, it still ran.

—Rororo was a type of monster called hydra.

There were all sorts of monsters, with those that surpass humans in intelligence, and those that were no different from animals. Rororo belonged to the latter.

Rororo only had the intelligence of an animal. Then was it not strange for it to be on the brink of death and yet running towards the Lich which was tormenting it? Was it not unfathomable for it to not turn but instead continue onwards?

It was strange.

And unfathomable.

In fact, even its enemy the lich was baffled, and suspected Rororo was being manipulated by magic.

But, it was different.

Yes, it was different.

The Lich would probably never understand.

Rororo who only had the intelligence of a beast— it was running for the sake of family.

Rororo didn't know its parents. This was not as hydras abandoned their babies at birth. And neither did they die after Rororo was born.

Rororo was a premature baby. Normal hydras were born with eight heads. Over the years this would increase to at most twelve.

However, Rororo had only four. It might be rude but, the natural world was not such a sweet place to say that such a birth defect was fine. So, Rororo's mother naturally left it behind.

Its mother was not being cruel. It was a normal scene in nature.

A hydra was just born without its parent's protection. Even if it became a strong existence in future, it could not save itself while young. Its life was now a race against time.

If it wasn't for the male lizardmen who happened to pass by and picked it up.

If that lizardman had not ignored the dwarf companions he was with and picked him up.

If that lizardman had not explained to the dwarfs and said that he would feed it himself.

— And so, Rororo got a family that was its father, mother and close friend.

Why was its body so big? Why did it have so many heads? It thought about this when it looked at its foster parent.

And Rororo held a belief from old conclusion.

Several of its heads would fall off and it would look like its parent.

Then—-what should it do. It might be nice to sleep together for the first time in a long while—-

As if blowing away such thoughts, a flame covered Rororo's vision, and another round of pain hit its body. It raised a small cry. There was no longer a place where it could run and be safe. A safe warmth was transmitted from behind it, but compared to the flames surrounding its body, it was extremely weak.

Rororo felt pain as if countless hammers were smashing into it.

It was far too painful, to the pain that it could not think.

Its legs became limp, it was telling Rororo to stop.

However—

However—Did Rororo stop its advance?

—No

Its legs did not stop. Rororo continued. Its steps were slowing. It was being burned by fire, and its muscles seemed to be tearing. There was no way it could continue with the same speed.

Just taking a step forward was hard.

It was hard to breathe and it hurt when it inhaled, its lungs probably being damaged by the heat.

However, its legs did not stop.

Only one of its heads could move, the others were just a burden now. The image of the undead conjuring a fireball from its hand appeared vaguely in Rororo's murky eyes.

Its instinct as a living being told it one thing.

If it was hit again, it will definitely die. But Rororo was fearless as it relentlessly braved ahead—

Rororo frantically, with all of its strength, staggered a few more steps as a crimson ball of flame flew from the Lich's hand.

It would probably burn all of Rororo's life. It could not resist any further.

Death awaited it.

This was the end—

If—

That's right— if that male lizardman wasn't here.

Will that male lizardman allow Rororo to die before his eyes?

Watch such injustice unfold in front of him?

That was impossible!

“— [Icy Burst]!”

Zaryusu who was running behind Rororo lept out to the side and shouted as he swung his magic sword.

The air before his sword seemed to freeze instantly, forming a white wall of mist before Rororo. That was an extremely cold wave of air. It was a flow of cold air created by Frost Pain.

One of the abilities of Frost Pain.

A powerful skill that could only be used thrice a day— [Icy Burst], it could freeze everything within range instantly and deal heavy damage.

The wall of cold mist blocked the incoming ‘fireball’ as if it was solid barrier. The fiery ball and chilly wall— according to magic theory, it was wise to counter one with the other.

It hit—

The ball burst into flames, struggling mightily against the white mist.

Both sides were like a white and red snake struggling and devouring each other. After pushing back each other for a moment, the two energies disappeared.

<Fireball> and [Icy Burst].

The two disappeared as if nothing had happened.

While they were close, it was still quite far—-There, the Lich was surprised, and could be seen panicking. It was making the most suitable figure for one that had its magic erased.

Yes.

There was still some distance between the two groups, but they were close enough to make out each other’s expressions— and actions.

An impossible distance was covered thanks to Rororo’s effort and determination, bringing the three lizardmen this far with no injuries.

“Rororo...”

Zaryusu didn’t know what to say. How should he put it, what was the most

suitable words to say to Rororo. In the end, he chose a clear and simple phrase from the millions of expression in his mind.

“Thank you!”

Spitting out words one would say to their childhood friend, Zaryusu ran forward without looking back. Behind him, Crusch and Zenberu followed.

In its blurry vision, Rororo raised a small cry towards the leaving figure, knowing that its role was done.

That was a cheer for one’s family.



The thought of how could this be.

It’s magic was erased.

What did they do. The Lich thought.

[Impossible!]

Lich cast ‘fireball’ once more. He was not willing to acknowledge that the lizardmen rushing at him had dispelled his magic.

The released fireball was aimed towards the three lizardmen and ran through the air.

It was blocked by a wall of mist conjured by the leading lizardmen with his sword, and it disappeared together with the wall. That’s right, it was the same situation as before—

“Try all you want! I will block all your attacks!”

The angry roar of the lizardman projected over.

The Lich had no choice but to accept the fact that there was an existence that could erase its magic, and unhappily clicked its tongue.

The possibility of his magic <Fireball> not making it through was extremely high.

However, contrary to what the Lizardman said, it guessed that blocking all was impossible. The Lich was not that much of a fool to fall for that bluff.

As for why, it was as if this was true, then there was no need to hide behind the hydra. If they had to do so to get close, then there were limits.

However—If he could use it ten times, and it just decreased his stamina with every use, if he recovered then he might be able to use it infinitely.

The Lich could use <Fireball> about 150 times, but it could not decide if what Zaryusu said was a bluff.

The Lich and the lizardmen. The distance between the two parties was not very far.

A distance of 40 metres.

The lizardmen charging in seemed to be warriors and as an undead magic caster, the Lich wanted to avoid melee combat.

He couldn't use fireball in this situation. The Lich wasn't dumb enough to confirm how many times they could block his spell. If they didn't hide behind the hydra in the beginning and had closed the distance, the Lich might test it out. But that chance had been destroyed by that damn hydra.

[Curses... just a mere hydra.]

After spitting out these words, the Lich decided his next course of action.

In the game Yggdrasil, monsters that could use magic only had up to six different types. Of course, boss monsters were exceptions.

So the Lich had the same ability to use multiple magics.

[— Well then, how about this?]

It just so happened that they were running in single file. Then—

Facing the three lizardmen who had closed the distance, the Lich pointed its finger at them. That finger was covered in lightning.

[Taste my 「Lightning」!]

A white flash of lightning emerged and—

They could confirm it even from this distance. The white light from the Lich's finger, lightning. Frost Pain's [Icy Burst] could defend against fire attacks. However, he had no confidence that it could guard against lightning attacks.

However, he had to try. Or should they disperse and limit the damage.

Should they try their luck, or spread out to minimize the damage they will take?

Zaryusu gripped Frost Pain tightly.

The air was buzzing with static electricity, proving that a lightning attack was imminent.

“Leave this to me—!”

Zenberu made his judgment before Zaryusu did and jumped forth with a shout. The spell was casted at the same time.

[—-[Lightning]!]

“Warrghhh— [Resistance Massive]!”

The moment the electricity was about to pierce Zenberu’s body, his muscles pumped up.

A small moment passed, and the electricity which was about to pierce Zenberu and hit Zaryusu and Crusch, was dispersed by Zenberu’s muscles.

[Resistance Massive.]

It was an ability of monks, a martial art that reduced magic damage by emitting ki from their bodies. This was what Zenberu had learned on his trip after he lost to Frost Pain’s trump card [Icy Burst]. Even if it was a ranged attack, if the magic had damage, it would be reduced.

A shaken voice was heard from the Lich, and Zaryusu and Crusch. However, compared to the Lich, the two of them believed in Zenberu and so their surprise was small. So they were able to close the distance even further while the Lich was shocked.

As Zaryusu ran, he finally figured something out.

During that one battle, if he had used [Icy Burst], it would have been blocked and he would have instantly lost when Zenberu took advantage of the gap in his defense.

“Haha! Too easy!”

Zenberu's casual voice made Zaryusu smile. However, his face tensed the next moment. A small, extremely small, aspect of Zenberu's voice had pain in it.

A male like Zenberu could not bear all the pain. Then there was no way that the damage was small. And if that skill was perfect, he was not a man to agree to let Rororo run in front of them.

Zaryusu stared in front. The distance was not far. About 25 metres.

A distance of 200 metres. That long distance was finally reduced to this.

The distance closed, and the Lich judged them to be the strongest enemies so far. It praised them for being able to defend against its magic. Of course, he had other methods of attacking, but it had to consider defending itself.

The Lich looked down on the Lizardmen. However, he did not have the complacency that accompanied it.

The Lich was not a fool.

The Lich activated his magic with a smile.

<4th Tier Summon Undead>

The wetland bubbled and skeletal bodies with four hands holding round shields and scimitars emerged to protect the Lich. They were undeads known as Skeleton Warriors, much more powerful than normal Skeletons.

There were other undead that it could summon, but the Skeleton Warriors were chosen to avoid cold attacks. Liches and other skeletons made of bones had complete resistance to cold.

While being protected by soldiers it summoned, the Lich made some distance and looked down upon them. That was the attitude of a king facing against challengers.

The distance had been closed.

There were just — 10 meters left.

There was nothing else but that. Yes, nothing else. Zaryusu confirmed that the Lich was not immediately attacking, and looked back.

They had broken through 190 metres.

A 200 metre land of death with nowhere to hide. Rororo, Frost Pain, Zenberu and Crusch. It was a distance impossible to cover without any one of them. An impenetrable distance. It was reduced to almost nothing. The remaining distance could be covered if they stretched their hand.

They overcame this distance.

Behind them Rororo was behind brought away, but Zaryusu suppressed his slightly relieved heart. There were ten metres remaining. They understood that this was the largest challenge. Zaryusu reigned in his heart, and glared at the Lich.

Zaryusu admitted that it was a terrifying existence.

The monster before was truly terrifying. Magic to conjure fire, magic to pierce with lightning, and magic to summon undead. Not just that, since it could use more unknown magic, his fear went up another level.

If he had not met it under such circumstances, Zaryusu would have definitely ran away already. It was that much of any enemy.

Just facing him caused his tail to tense, his body wanted to run away. Crusch and Zenberu stood at his sides had their tails tensed, but they looked at him from the corner of their eyes.

The two were thinking the same as Zaryusu. Yes—they were suppressing the desire to run away and were standing in front of the Lich.

Zaryusu moved his tail and tapped their backs.

They looked at Zaryusu with faces that showed that they had released the built up tension.

“We can win.”

That was all that Zaryusu said.

“That’s right, we can win, Zaryusu.”

Crusch moved her tail and rubbed the part that Zaryusu tapped while answering.

“Hah, things are getting interesting!”

Zenberu answered with an arrogant smile.

And the three of them covered the final stretch.

— Eight meters apart.

Zaryusu's group who had sprinted all this way was out of breath and the Lich had no need for breath.

The two groups locked eyes and the Lich spoke first.

[I am the magic caster serving the Supreme Being, the Lich. If you forfeit now, I will grant you a painless death.]

Zaryusu could not help smiling. He could tell this Lich knew nothing at all.

Forfeit? Don't say such stupid things. It had no idea what thoughts Zaryusu had while coming here.

The Lich did not show any displeasure to Zaryusu's behaviour, and continued.

[You came this far. You have shown enough worth to be saved. I have chosen you. Bow.]

"—Then let me ask something. What about the rest? My comrades behind us?"

[—I don't know. Useless existences will not be allowed.]

"I see—Then there is but one answer."

Zaryusu laughed from the bottom of his heart. Zenberu and Crusch did the same.

The Lich gazed upon them with doubt. Why were they laughing. It would be weird for them to go crazy from fear. Its thoughts were only at that level.

[Let's hear your answer.]

"Haha, you really need one..."

Zaryusu raised Frost Pain tightly; Zenberu lifted his fists and took a stance; Crusch didn't do anything, as she felt the mana deep within her, prepared to cast her spells any moment.

"I will give you an answer then— fat hope!"

Deciding that the answer had plenty of hostility in it, the Skeleton Warriors hid their bodies behind the round shields, and raised their scimitars.

[Then, welcome death!]

“That’s what I want to say, go back to hell undead! Lich!”

At this moment, the battle that would decide the outcome of this war began —.

Chapter 47: War | Part 7

“Get him! Zaryusu!”

Zenberu who dashed out faster than anyone else stretched his giant arm and attacked the Skeleton Warrior.

He didn’t care when the Skeleton Warrior blocked it with its shield, using brute force to press them back. The shield was dented, and the Skeleton Warrior staggering back collided with the other Skeleton Warrior and lost its balance. At the same time, Zenberu used his tail to swipe at another Skeleton Warrior, but missed.

The formation of the Skeleton Warriors was broken and Zaryusu used this chance to slip through.

[Stop him!]

Two Skeleton Warriors slashed at Zaryusu after hearing the Lich’s command.

It was possible for Zaryusu to dodge; he could also use Frost Pain to block if he wanted to. But Zaryusu did neither of these. Dodging would mean he was slow.

Zaryusu didn’t want to make any unnecessary moves in front of the Lich.

And more importantly—

“<Earth Bind>!”

The earth moved like whips, binding the two Skeletal Warriors. The whips made from mud were like steel chains, restraining the movement of the two Skeleton Warriors as Zaryusu charged into the gap in their formation.

That’s right.

—Crusch was present too.

Zaryusu wasn’t fighting alone, he just needed to trust his comrades.

Even Crusch’s magic couldn’t seal off their movements completely. The

scimitars of the Skeleton Warriors still grazed Zaryusu. But that was nothing, his boiling blood made him impervious to this pain.

Zaryusu ran.

He charged at the Lich who was pointing his finger at him. Even if he got hit by a spell, Zaryusu had to endure it and charge the target. He moved with iron willed determination.

[Fools! Know true fear! <Scare>!]

A fear like something had grabbed his heart attacked Zaryusu.

His vision shook, he could not understand where he was standing, and he felt uncertain, like something in his surroundings was about to attack him.

His legs were slowing down to a stop.

His legs could not move from the effect mental magic attack <Scare>.

Zaryusu, Zenberu and Crusch were strong. However, the Lich was stronger, they had fully understood that fact. Their bodies were screaming at them to run away. However they were chosen as part of this special group as they could suppress it with their will. Their originally suppressed instincts received reinforcement from the Lich's magic, and stole their right to control their body.

Their hearts screamed at their legs to move. However, they did not.

“Zaryusu! <Lion's Heart>!”

The moment Crusch shouted, his fear vanished instantly and his will gushed out from within stronger than before. The Lich glared unhappily at Crusch and pointed a finger at her.

[Annoying! <Lightning>!]

White lightning dashed at an angle where no one was—

“Hyaa!”

Crusch screamed.

Zaryusu who started running again was almost consumed by hatred, but got hold of himself in the end. Hatred could be a good weapon sometimes, but in the face of a powerful foe, it could get in the way instead. What he needed

when fighting a strong enemy was fiery heart and an ice cold mind.

Zaryusu would never turn his head.

The Lich attacked Crusch just now, but that meant Zaryusu could use this chance to close the distance.

Dismay could be seen on the Lich's face and it knew it made a mistake.

This reaction made Zaryusu, whose beloved female was harmed, sneer mockingly.

[Tch! <Light...]

“Too slow!”

Frost Pain that sliced in from the side knocked away the Lich's finger.

[Ugh!]

“I will let you know your spells are useless now!”

Zaryusu narrowed his eyes at the feeling transmitted to his arm. It was different from the feeling of cutting something. This meant that the Lich had some sort of resistance to weapons.

But it wasn't invulnerable.

That's right, if he had resistance against damage, Zaryusu just needed to deal more damage.

What he needed to do was to keep on slashing.

Of course, it was easier said than done. Zaryusu understood that. However, the warrior Zaryusu could do nothing but that.

[Don't look down on me, lizardman! <Silent Magic Arrow>!]

Three arrows of light suddenly flew towards Zaryusu from the Lich's body. The arrows of light that appeared without any preparatory actions or signs made Zaryusu block them with his sword on reflex, but the magic arrows went through the weapon and hit Zaryusu's body, inflicting dull pain.

Silent Magic didn't require any preparatory actions, so it could not be disrupted from being casted.

“Ku!”

Not only that, Magic Arrow was also a type of spell that could not be evaded, so Zaryusu couldn't dodge it either. However—

[Ku!]

Zaryusu gritted his teeth and cleaved at the Lich with Frost Pain.

Magic Arrow might be undodgeable, but its damage output was low too. For someone who had gone through tough training like Zaryusu, he was not so weak as to be rendered unable to fight from this bit of magic damage.

[<Silent Magic Arrow>]

Magic Arrows struck Zaryusu once again, the pain pierced through his heart and will. Zaryusu endured the excruciating pain and struck back.

After several exchanges, Zaryusu's movements became dull. The sharp pain prevented him from making agile movements, which was contrasted by the undead who knew no pain.

The Lich and Zaryusu who understood this point made entirely different expressions.

However, Zaryusu's heart was calm. To the point that the winning Lich was saddened by it.

Compared to Zaryusu, the Lich was strong.

The weak fall and the strong prevail, that was the natural law of the world. The result of the one on one duel between the two was obvious.

But it was also a fact that the unity of the weak gave them a chance to fight on par with the strong.

“<Middle Cure Wounds>!”

Zaryusu's pain disappeared with this voice and he regained his vitality once again. The calm Lich was angered by the healing spell that came from the back and shouted.

[Damn lizardmen!]

Zaryusu was fighting together with companions he trusts. Crusch, Zenberu

and—

“Rororo... I will not lose!”

[Imbecile... How could I, a creation of the Supreme Being lose?!]

The Lich glared at the three lizardmen with his venomous eyes, focusing on Zaryusu.

The Lich did not fire magic at Crusch. He recalled the earlier mistake. It thought that it would be better to destroy Zaryusu in front of it.

It didn't use any summoning magic as the undead he had summoned earlier were still around. As long as those undead were still around, he could not raise new ones. Hence, the Lich continued casting Silent Magic: Magic Arrow while Zaryusu slashed away at the Lich's body— this monotonous fight kept repeating.

It felt as though this battle would never end.

In that case, the duty of breaking this stalemate rests on the ones behind them. When one side receives reinforcement, the match will be settled in an instant.

Both Zaryusu and the Lich were sure about that.



Enduring the pain of the lightning attack coursing through her body, Crusch pulled through and casted.

<Summon Beast 3rd>

With a 'dong', a giant crab about 150cm big appeared— a crab with a large right claw. It appeared as if it had been waiting under the wetlands the entire time, but it was actually a nature beast summoned by <Summon Beast 3rd>.

It was called out by magic. Of course, it was not a normal crab. One could understand just by looking at its advancing figure. The nature beast advanced to Zenberu's side and hammered the Skeleton Warrior with its oversized claw.

Zenberu who received unexpected reinforcement smiled.

For Zenberu who had to endure the attack coming from all sides and protect

Crusch, he was glad to receive help.

She surveyed the battle, regulating her breathing with deep breaths.

She had been casting defence buffs and healing magic on Rororo when they charged here.

In addition, with the summoning magic, Crusch's body wavered. She could no longer stand due to excessive mana exhaustion. She could not heal her wounds due to this. She had no breathing room to do so.

Even so, it would make Zaryusu and Zenberu who were fighting in the frontlines uneasy if she was to fall. Blood dripped from the corner of Crusch's lips as she bit the inside of her mouth to keep herself conscious.

"<Middle Cure Wounds>!"

The healing spell flew towards Zaryusu. Her vision wavered. She could feel the sensation of cold water all over her skin. Crusch couldn't understand what was happening, why and when did she fall into the mud.

She had probably fainted for an instant, and fell into the mud. She didn't force herself to stand. No, she didn't have the energy to do so, so she decided to conserve her strength. In her blurry field of vision, she looked at her companions.

Zenberu who was fighting the four skeleton warriors and Zaryusu who was enduring the Lich's magic attacks were covered with wounds.

Crusch adjusted her breathing and casted her spell.

"<Middle Cure Wounds>!"

She cured Zenberu's injuries.

"<Middle Cure Wounds>!"

She healed Zaryusu's wounds.

"Huff, huff..."

Crusch panted hard.

But her breathing was still rugged, she felt the air wasn't coming in even though she was breathing so hard.

This was probably the symptoms of mana exhaustion. She felt tremors of violent headache. Even so, Crusch worked hard to open her eyes.

They had sacrificed so much for this battle, how could she be the first to retire from the field.

Crusch used all her effort to open her eyes and chanted.

“<Middle Cure Wounds>!”



Zenberu bashed the skull of a Skeleton Warrior with his clenched fist. The sensation of him making a slight dent turned into the feeling of the skull shattering. And so, he killed off a Skeleton Warrior.

“That’s the second one. Huff... Hah.”

He expelled the air from his body in an attempt to push the fatigue out along with it, and glared at the remaining Skeleton Warriors. The crab summoned by Crusch was nowhere to be found. Zenberu only managed to defeat the other two thanks to it fending off two enemies.

He only hung on because of Crusch’s support. Two more to go. After that will be the Lich.

“Ha!”

Flexing his thick right arm, Zenberu confirmed that it could still move.

His left arm was wounded badly and couldn’t exert power. Zenberu had used his left arm as a shield a little too eagerly. He stared at his limp right arm.

“Never mind, just think of it as giving them a handicap.”

Zenberu glared at his annoying foes. He attempted to move his left arm, but the pain coursing through his body was not what he expected from moving his fingers.

This is nothing. A comrade continued charging even after its heads became burdens. I, Zenberu Gugu, don’t want to be mocked by them.

“Fu....”

Just how strong were the Skeleton Warriors? With just two, they could

match Zenberu, no they were better. That was their level of strength.

Fighting four at once was an impossible task. Even if he fought them one on one, he would be exhausted midway, and his defeat was certain.

Despite that, Zenberu was still standing.

Zenberu himself thought that this was strange.

No. He understood why. Zenberu looked beyond the Skeleton Warriors, at Zaryusu's back. The figure of a man would not back down against such a pressurizing existence.

"That back is really broad..."

Really—.

His body grew dull due to his accumulated fatigue, but Zaryusu was fighting in front of him, and Crusch behind him.

"Hey hey Zaryusu, you are wounded all over. Aren't you in worse shape than when you fought me?"

Zenberu sent a Skeleton Warrior flying with his large arm, and used his left arm to block the scimitar of the other Skeleton Warrior. But he failed to parry the sword, which made another wound in his abdomen. That was the place Crusch had healed with magic.

"Isn't Crusch's voice coming from a lower place than usual?"

His wounds healed from Crusch's magic again. He could not look behind him, but her voice was near the water surface. He could guess what position she was casting magic in. However, she was still using magic.

"... That's a good woman."

If I ever get a wife, a woman like that would be great.

Zenberu expressed his respect for Zaryusu's eye for women.

"I don't want to be the first to fall and be the laughing stock."

Feinting with his large arm, he attacked with his tail. Zenberu laughed.

I am older than those two.

The two Skeleton Warriors hid their body behind shields and closed in. The shields blocked the view of Zaryusu, evoking strong emotions from within Zenberu.

“Don’t block the way! I can’t see the back of the awesome man like this!”

Zenberu roared and charged forth—



Just how long had it been repeating?

The Lich and Zaryusu’s even match was still continuing. The undead poker face of the Lich suddenly twisted horribly. What happened next froze Zaryusu’s mind and body.

He heard the sound of water splashing behind him. Someone fell.

[Look! Your companion is down!]

He couldn’t turn back. It might be true, it might be false. Thoughts that made his scales stood on end also surfaced, but the enemy before him had overwhelming strength. He didn’t have the luxury of turning his head to find out. The moment he turned his head, the fight would be over. Zaryusu didn’t fight this long just to lose for some stupid reason.

If the Lich was telling the truth, it would be bad if he didn’t dispose of the enemy reinforcements soon.

Zaryusu was steeling himself to take the next magic attack when he heard the sound of someone getting up from the water and bones cracking.

“Zaryusu! We settled this side! The rest— is up to you!!”

“...<Middle Cure Wounds>!”

Zenberu roared in great pain and the sound of him falling into the water reached Zaryusu.

The moment Crusch’s hoarse voice was heard, Zaryusu’s wounds got mended.

[Muu—!]

Displeasure creased the Lich’s face. Without looking back, Zaryusu knew the

two of them completed their task perfectly. What's left was—

“My turn!”

The Lich used his staff to parry Frost Pain that was coming at him.

[Ku ku ku... I am the Lich, don't look down on me just because I am not proficient in melee combat!]

However the Lich's chance of winning was low. Only one out of three blows was deflected. The other two tore at its body. Even though he had resistance toward slashing weapons like skeletons, the situation was dire.

Especially the last healing magic. The flow changed due to that.

Summoning magic needed time. Performing it in front of an enemy was difficult.

It would lose if this went on. The Lich decided to show his final hand. It wasn't a great plan— Depending on the circumstances, this might doom it, but that was the only choice it had left.

It suddenly turned around and ran. While Zaryusu was surprised, but he still took the chance to cleave at the Lich's back. The Lich who took a hit on the back staggered, but did not fall. Zaryusu clicked his tongue at the Lich's seemingly endless health, and sprinted to catch up with the Lich who was pulling away.

The Lich turned back to show his undead face filled with wrath.

Then—

—A red sphere of light appeared in the Lich's hand. It was <Fireball>.

Using wide area spell at such a range? He wants to kill himself

— No!

Realizing the lich wasn't looking at him, Zaryusu was filled with fear. The Lich was looking behind Zaryusu. It was focusing on Crusch and Zenberu who were lying on the ground.

What should I do!?

If he threw the two away, he could stop the Lich. This was quite a large gap. The Lich and Zaryusu did not have much strength left. If he let this chance get

away, the chance of victory would get lower.

To defeat the Lich—That was why they had come here. Then he should sacrifice the two of them. They will definitely forgive him.

— Even so.

Zaryusu wasn't someone who would abandon the comrades fighting alongside him.

Throwing away his comrades, he could not make such a decision.

Then—Save the two of them and then destroy the Lich.

I just have to choose that!

“—<Icy Burst>!”

Zaryusu created a barrier of cold air on the ground near his feet.

“Gaarrgghh!”

Inside the whirlpool of cold, Zaryusu's body instantly froze over. The words sharp pain could not begin to describe the pain that assaulted him.

Struggling to remain conscious, Zaryusu endured the pain while glaring at the Lich.

While the screaming continued, Zaryusu and the Lich were swallowed by the fog of frost as it spread around them.

The Lich smiled as things went just as it planned.

Ku ku, you could have won if you had abandoned your comrades.

Liches had complete resistance to cold and electricity. That was why it could remain calm even in this flow of cold air. It crushed the fireball magic in its hand. If it was released, it would coil around it and explode as it contacted the white fog.

It could deal the final blow to the other two after the fog dissipated. More importantly, it needed to put down the lizardman that was still standing. As it looked around, the Lich's face scowled. It miscalculated something.

[...Well then, where is he?]

What it missed was the fog that concealed everything from sight.

The Lich had the ability to see through the darkness with its eyes, but couldn't see through objects that obscured its sight like this. It had no idea where the enemy was.

But that wasn't a big problem. With how the lizardman was shrieking just now, he seemed to have suffered great injuries. He shot out the cold air to counter the 'fireball', so he must have suffered damage on the same level as taking a 'fireball' hit.

With his previous wounds, this was at least a fatal blow. Even if it did not find him, he could not move. Then it could crush him.

Leave this foggy place first? After considering it, the Lich decided not to.

— If it moved now, he would be giving his position away.

The important thing was to summon undead guards. With a meat shield, victory will be won even if that lizardman was still alive.

The Lich who was about to cast his spell heard the sound of water rippling.



— One of the four treasures of the lizardmen, Frost Pain.

A weapon made from ice extracted from the lake when it froze that one and only time. It harboured three magical powers.

Number one, the sword was imbued with cold energy, dealing additional ice damage to the enemy it attacks.

Number two, the powerful skill that could only be used thrice a day, Icy Burst.

Number three—



The sound of air being sliced echoed out.

Before understanding what was happening, the Lich saw the tip of a sharp object.

The Lich's head was hit by a powerful strike.

The sword lodged into the Lich's right eye rattled wildly.

[Hyaaa! Why! Why are you not dead!]

The Lich screamed.

Frost Pain pierced deep into the Lich's right eye socket, it could feel his health falling drastically—

In front of the Lich who was standing unsteadily with a sword lodged in its head was Zaryusu who was covered in frost.

The Lich couldn't understand why Zaryusu was still standing after taking such a powerful ice attack.

The third ability of Frost Pain.

Granting the user with resistance to ice damage—

Even though Frost Pain offered resistance to the cold, it couldn't completely negate a powerful skill like Icy Burst. The damage from the cold chilled Zaryusu to the bones. He was on the verge of collapsing, his breathing ragged and his movement dulled. His tail drooped weakly into the water. It was almost impossible to fight on when you even had difficulty just breathing. That strike wasn't aimed carefully, but a blow thrown out by instinct using all his might.

It was a lucky hit.

Zaryusu struggled to keep his eyes open.

He gave everything he had to deal this final blow to the Lich, and he could feel that it was a fatal hit.

Zaryusu who had no energy left to fight looked at the Lich with a glimmer of hope.

The Lich was wavering.

It couldn't keep his body intact as the skin fell off its face and cracks appeared on its bones. Even its clothes were rotting away. It was a matter of time before it would fade away. The moment Zaryusu was certain he was victorious—

A bony hand covered in skin grabbed Zaryusu's throat.

[I... I am created to serve the Supreme Being... How could I be... vanquished like this!]

The Lich wasn't even holding him with much force and Zaryusu could break free easily, but—

“— Ahhhh—!”

— Zaryusu wailed as an intense pain permeated his entire body.

Negative energy flowed into Zaryusu's body, robbing him of his vitality. Even Zaryusu who was trained to endure pain couldn't withstand the feeling of the pain caused by the cold that seemed to be injected directly into his veins.

[Die—! Lizardman!]

Pieces of the Lich's face had dropped off, disintegrating in mid air.

The Lich's life was deteriorating as well, but his intense loyalty towards its master made it cling on to life desperately.

It would not be defeated by time. If they continued Zaryusu had no chance of winning.

Zaryusu was struggling with all he had, but he was overcome with fear as his body refused to move as he wished.

Zaryusu didn't have much health left. The negative energy the Lich was injecting into him was draining his life force away.

Zaryusu's gaze wavered and his vision blurred. The world seemed to be covered by a thin fog.

The Lich who was clinging to consciousness mightily had a victorious smile as it watched Zaryusu slowly lose his strength to struggle.

Kill this lizardman, as well as the other two behind him. They should be the elite of the lizardmen. Killing these lizardmen would be the best gifts it could offer to the Supreme Being— its creator.

[Die!]

His body was not reacting to him as he could feel his body temperature

dropping as if a poison was spreading through his body.

He could hardly breathe, and his mind was the only thing that was clear.

He couldn't die yet.

Rororo who sprinted with all its might.

Zenberu who shielded him.

Crusch who exhausted all her mana.

Not just that. He was shouldering the burden of all the fallen lizardmen.

While he was desperately thinking of ways to win, a small sound made its way into Zaryusu's ear.

— The gentle voice of Crusch

— The hearty voice of Zenberu

— The playful whimpers of Rororo

Sound that should be impossible for him to hear.

Crusch had lost consciousness and Zenberu should be knocked out. Rororo should have been taken far away from here.

Were they voices that Zaryusu imagined due to his half dead mind? The words of his comrades he did not know even a week ago? The cry of his pet?

No.

No, it was different—

Everyone was here with him—

“—Ahhhh... Ahhhhhh—!”

[—?]

A roar emerged from the half conscious Zaryusu.

Zaryusu moved his eyeballs, and looked at the Lich. His eyes, which he could not make meet with the Lich's, suddenly were full of energy.

“Crusch! Zenberu! Rororo!”

[—!]

Just where was he hiding such strength. An impressive amount of negative energy should have eaten up all of his life force. Indeed, Zaryusu's four limbs were heavy, and his body was frozen.

Even so, Zaryusu felt warmer with every name he shouted. This warmth didn't originate from his life force.

It came from within his chest— his heart.

The sound of muscle tensing erupted. It came from Zaryusu's right arm, his clenched fist. He was gathering all the strength he had left in it right now.

[Impossible—!]

The Lich stared at Zaryusu, not believing that he could even move.

This was bad.

The Lich had goosebumps. If it did not pump in more negative energy it would lose. It would not accept it. It was the Lich. The leader of these troops from the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarrick.

And more importantly, it was an undead created by the great king of death — Ainz Ooal Gown.

It cannot permit itself to lose this fight—

[Die—!]

“It's over you monster!”

Zaryusu was a step faster.

That's right, his strike with all his might was an instant faster than the Lich's injection of negative energy.

The tightly clenched fist hit the hilt of Frost Pain—

Zaryusu's fist bled. After taking such a heavy blow, Frost Pain that was lodged into the left eye pierced all the way through the Lich's brain.

[Oooowwwwww!!]

The Lich was an undead that couldn't feel pain, but— he could still feel his negative life dissipating.

[This... this... impossible... Ainz... sama...]

The Lich's eyes reflected his understanding of what failure was. When Zaryusu's body fell like a puppet with its strings cut, a huge splash could be heard—

[... Please... Please... Forgive... me...]

The Lich's body fell as it apologized to its master. It had fought against time, but it crumbled and disappeared, like an instant in time—



The room was silent. The scene reflected in the mirror was unbelievable and no one said a word.

Except for the maid— Entoma. She transmitted her master's orders.

“Cocytus-sama, Ainz-sama has summoned you.”

“— Understood.”

Cocytus who had lowered his head turned slowly to face Entoma. Basked in the worried gaze of his subordinate, he gritted his teeth in shame. At the same time, he wanted to compliment the lizardmen.

A magnificent battle.

An 8% chance of victory.

That was the probability of the lizardmen winning that Cocytus had calculated. This was based off of a simple close combat battle. They had begun from a distance where a magic caster would have an overwhelming advantage and had to grasp victory. That calculation could of course dip below 8%.

The lizardmen overcame this huge obstacle.

“Spectacular....”

Cocytus looked back at the mirror for the last time, and voiced his words of praise towards the scene.

Chapter 48: War | Part 8

Zaryusu felt his body being lifted out from the darkness. It was not an ill feeling, but was really comfortable.

Opening his eyes, a blurry world greeted him, similar to the one he sees whenever he wakes up.

Where am I?

Why am I sleeping here?

He had many questions, and at the same time realized a weight pressing down on him.

— White.

Zaryusu stared at that white colour, that was the first word that came to mind in his sleepy mind. As he became more wake away, he understood what that was.

That was Crusch. She was sleeping on top of him.

“Ah...”

Crusch is alive.

Zaryusu felt relieved and almost said that out loud, but held it in. He couldn't bear waking Crusch who was still sleeping, suppressing his urge to touch her. Even though her scales were beautiful, he couldn't caress the scales of a female lizardman so thoughtlessly.

Zaryusu pushed the thought of Crusch out of his mind and thought about other things.

There were many things he needed to consider.

First of all, why was he here.

Searching his memory, he tried recalling what happened. After seeing the

destruction of the Lich, his consciousness was cut off. He wasn't captured and was still lying here, meaning his tribe probably won the war.

To avoid waking Crusch, Zaryusu sighed softly. He felt the burden he shouldered recently lightened. But thinking over it calmly, there were still some worries. They still didn't know about the enemy or what their goal was, there was a high chance their foes will strike again... No, they will definitely do so.

He allowed his mind to rest. Zaryusu felt the warmth from Crusch's body and sighed again.

After this, Zaryusu lightly moved his body. His entire body could move with no problems. He thought he might be maimed, but luckily he was fine.

Feeling relieved from his luck, Zaryusu looked around him. Finding his belongings near the wall, he noticed that this was the house he was staying in the past few days.

There was no other lizardman except for Crusch. This room had nothing but small items. There was nothing else. Then what happened to Zenberu. Contrary to his worry, a feeling of 'A man of that level' rose in his heart.

Crusch seemed to be waken by Zaryusu's movement and stirred, as if a soul had been injected into her supple body. She should be waking soon.

"Hmm..."

Crusch made a cute sound and moved her dazed eyes to look around her. Shortly after, she noticed Zaryusu under her and smiled happily.

"Muu—"

The drowsy Crusch wrapped Zaryusu in her hands, and rubbed herself against him. It was the action of animals trying to leave their scent.

Zaryusu froze while Crusch did so.

Her albino scales felt nice and cold. In addition the smell of grass calmed his thoughts. Zaryusu wondered if he could hug her too.

When he couldn't stand it any longer, Crusch's eyes focused and looked at Zaryusu right in the eye.

— And froze instantly.

Facing Crusch who didn't move while hugging him, Zaryusu wondered what he should say. In the end, he chose something he thought would not be a problem.

“— Can I hug you too?”

No, it not being a problem was a lie. As a result, Crusch made a menacing growl and her tail moved side to side. She then rolled away from Zaryusu's side until she hit the wall.

A small voice could be heard from Crusch who was lying on her face. It said 'Stupid stupid me'.

“... Well, I am glad you are safe, Crusch.”

Crusch had calmed down, raised her head and smiled at Zaryusu.

“It is great that you are fine. I believed that you would be after the druids cast magic, but I was still worried.”

Noticing that her words had some information in them, Zaryusu asked.

“Do you know what happened after I blacked out?”

“Yeah, more or less. After you defeated the Lich, the enemy retreated. Your brother also defeated the monsters and saved the three of us... That was yesterday.”

“Zenberu isn't here...”

“He is fine. He had stronger recovery speed than you and regained consciousness after receiving healing spells. He should be settling the aftermath of the battle. I seemed to have blacked out from exhaustion after hearing all that...”

Crusch got up and sat down beside Zaryusu. Zaryusu wanted to get up too, but Crusch stopped him.

“Don't push yourself, you have the most serious injuries out of us all.”

She was probably recalling the scene that time as her voice grew softer.

“It's great that you are okay, really great...”

Zaryusu caressed Crusch who was looking down and consoled her.

“I will not die before hearing your answer. I am worried about you too.”

Answer. As Crusch recalled the question, she faced Zaryusu with a serious expression. It was the figure of a female about to talk from her heart.

Then they said nothing and a silent time was created.

Crusch moved her tail slowly, tangling Zaryusu's tail. The black and white tail entangling together looked just like two snakes mating.

Zaryusu looked at Crusch quietly, and Crusch was looking at him too, their reflection could be seen in each other's eyes.

Zaryusu uttered something softly. No, it wasn't words, but a cry. That was the cry he uttered when he first met Crusch.

— A mating call.

Zaryusu didn't do anything after the cry. No, he couldn't do anything except letting his heart beat intensely.

Moments later, Crusch made the same sound— a cry. The same emotional cry while shaking her tail, that was— the cry to accept the mating call.

An indescribably seductive expression appeared on Crusch's face, Zaryusu could no longer pull his eyes away from Crusch. Crusch pushed herself onto Zaryusu, the position was similar to the one they had while sleeping.

There was almost no distance between their faces, their warm breathing mixed together, their heartbeat synchronized through their chests that were touching, and two of them became one—

“Oh! Getting busy!?”

The door was opened strongly and Zenberu charged in.

Crusch and Zaryusu froze like ice sculptures.

Zaryusu was surprised at the fact that he completely could not sense a male like Zenberu getting close. However, more than anything this was a completely unexpected development.

Zenberu tilted his head and asked those two, Zaryusu who was on top of

Crusch.

“What, you haven’t started yet?”

They did not understand his words. When they did, the two silently parted. They slowly stood up. They faced the ground so Zenberu could not see their faces. No, it was good for him to not see. Yes, the bad thing came afterwards.

The two kept silent and stood before Zenberu.

Zenberu looked down at the two of them confusedly and leaned forward.

“—Gahhhh!”

He took two punches to the stomach. After exhaling, Zenberu’s giant body collapsed onto the floor.

“Wooo... What powerful punches... especially Crusch... Gahh... that really hurts...”

Leaving Zaryusu aside, the punch of wrath from the female lizardman could even win against Zenberu.

That wasn’t enough to vent their anger, but no matter how much they beat Zenberu up, that atmosphere would never come back. The two quickly realised that and gave up.

They held each other’s hand and asked Zenberu.

“I heard some of it, but could you tell me what is the situation right now?”

Zaryusu and Crusch were holding hands, but they were touching nowhere else. Even Zenberu could not see the level of interest. To him, it was a natural thing so they naturally calmed down.

“Don’t you know? All the tribes are having a victory party.”

It was the ceremony to return the spirits of their ancestors to their original locations. Performing it meant that the war ended. Zaryusu breathed a sigh of relief.

“My older brother is hosting the party?”

“That’s right. Anyway, the hunters scouted the region and did not find any signs of the enemy, and no traces of reinforcement or ambush. It would be

difficult to hide such a large army. We are still on alert, but your brother has already declared victory. I am here on your brother's orders."

"My brother's orders?"

"Yes, your brother said —'Shahaha, just let the two of them sleep together. They might already be getting it on, shahaha. It's a bit embarrassing to interrupt, but I am curious, shahaha'."

[Bullshit! What's with the shahaha?]

Zaryusu and Crusch. Receiving the roars of the two, Zenberu shrunk back.

"Oh... There wasn't any shahaha..."

"There's no way my brother will laugh like that, really..."

"I am just expressing it more vividly..."

"— You are the worst."

A chill that could match 'Icy Burst' came out from Crusch's mouth along with these words. That frightening voice even gave Zaryusu goosebumps. Zenberu who was being lectured shivered and stiffened.

"So, why are you here?"

"Erm, I am here to disrupt..."

"If you dare say you are here to be the third wheel, I will let you taste all the magic that you can think of."

Zaryusu and Zenberu were pretty sure that Crusch wasn't joking.

"Eh... I am here to invite you guys to join the party. We are the key figures in this victory, right? We can't miss the party. And we need to discuss about the future of the lizardmen too..."

"I see..."

After hearing Zenberu's roundabout explanation, Zaryusu smiled wryly after catching on what he wanted to say. Zenberu meant to say: There might be another battle, now was the time to display their strength.

"I got it, are you going too, Crusch?"

The unhappy Crusch puffed her cheeks, looking just like a Delmas frog residing in the wetlands. But Zaryusu thought she was much cuter.

“So, are we going?”

Zenberu casually asked Zaryusu and Crusch who were looking into each other’s eyes.

“A, ah. Yeah, let’s go.”

“Eh.”

“Alright!”

After the two of them acknowledged, the trio walked out together. When they walked down the stairs and stepped into the wetlands, Zaryusu suddenly disappeared from Crusch and Zenberu’s view. Something large suddenly knocked Zaryusu down.

— Bang voom voom splash. That’s roughly how it sounded like.

Zaryusu disappeared from their view, and was replaced by Rororo’s figure. Its four heads twisted around energetically, pushing their noses at Zaryusu who had fell into the wetlands.

“Rororo! You are alright!”

Zaryusu who was covered in mud stood up and walked up to Rororo, gently caressing its body and observed it. It seemed to have received magical treatment, all its burn wounds from before had been healed, it was as if it was never hurt in the first place.

Rororo whimpered as it entangled Zaryusu with all of its heads, almost covering Zaryusu completely in its tight embrace.

“Hey hey hey, stop that, Rororo.”

Zaryusu laughed as he restrained Rororo with his voice. Rororo only cried happily, but didn’t let go.

Splash splash splash.

Zaryusu suddenly heard this rhythmic sound of water splashes, and was baffled when he found the source.

It was Crusch. She was watching Zaryusu and Rororo with a gentle smile, but her tail was hitting the wetlands with a fixed rhythm.

Zenberu who was standing beside Crusch shuffled away slowly with a stiff expression.

Rororo stopped moving too. It probably sensed that something was wrong.

“What is it?”

“No, it’s nothing...”

Zaryusu looked at Crusch who asked him the question and was confused. No matter how he looked at it, Crusch was smiling and happy that Zaryusu and Rororo were reunited. But somehow, it gave him a chilling feeling.

“How strange—“

Crusch smiled again.

Rororo released Zaryusu and he regained his freedom. Zenberu seemed to be fearful of something. Zenberu probably couldn’t stand this strange atmosphere anymore and changed the topic in a hurry.

“Alright Rororo, you and I will move on ahead.”

Of course, Rororo couldn’t understand the language of the lizardmen, but it obediently allowed Zenberu to mount it and ran off with amazing speed.

After those two had left, a strange atmosphere fell between Zaryusu and Crusch.

Crusch hugged her head as she shook it.

“Ah~ really, what am I doing. It feels like my heart isn’t my own. Even though it is irrational, I couldn’t help myself. This is like a curse.”

Zaryusu understood how she felt. Because he felt the same way when he met Crusch for the first time too.

“To be honest, Crusch— I am very happy.”

“— What!?”

Splash, a loud sound of water erupted. Zaryusu then moved to Crusch’s side.

“Listen, can you hear it?”

“Hmmm?”

“The things we successfully defended are also the things we have to protect from now on.”

Sounds of rowdy laughter were carried here with the wind, they should be holding a banquet right now. The banquet was meant to bid farewell to the ancestors, celebrate their victory and to mourn the dead.

Wine was originally an expensive luxury. But they managed to have several banquets thanks to Zenberu’s tribe bringing one of the four treasures that supplied unlimited wine. And because all of the tribes were gathered here, they could enjoy this unbelievably joyous atmosphere.

Zaryusu listened to the joyous cheers and said to Crusch with a smile.

“This might not be over yet, that Supreme One person might still attack, but even so... we should relax for today.”

Zaryusu then put his hands on Crusch’s waist.

Crusch followed the flow and stuck onto Zaryusu, resting her head on Zaryusu’s shoulder.

“Shall we go?”

“Yeah...” Crusch answered and after hesitating for a moment, she called out: “... My darling.”

The two lizardmen walked together, disappearing into the noisy crowd—



There, the bell that brought the lizardmen to despair was about to ring.

The door slowly closed. The person who was previously inside had just left.

Ainz moved his gaze from the parchment in his hand to the closed door. He then raised just his index finger, and pointed it towards the ceiling.

“Eight Edge Assassins—-”

There were several presences on the ceiling.

Stuck on the ceiling, the spider-ninja-like monsters who had no presence until now, moved in response to the greatest one's words. Still facing the door, Ainz gave them orders.

"I have a mission for you. Come down."

"Understood."

With those words, they remained invisible and silently landed on the floor. Ainz finally looked at them.

Although the Eight Edge Assassins were invisible, from the viewpoint of someone who could see past invisibility, such as Ainz, they were easily visible. Shalltear and Aura had this skill as well. The Head Maid, Pestonya, and the librarian, Titus, and the rest of the high class individuals in the room could tell the existence of the Eight Edge Assassins as well, via the movement of the air, vibrations, or the ability to see through invisibility.

"Four of you tail Narberal."

Narberal had just left the room.

No one in the room had any opposition to Ainz's orders of tailing his own subordinate. This was as their master had decided it, and it was absolute. The Eight Edge Assassins only deeply bowed.

"...If she makes any strange moves, restrain her. Killing should be in moderation. I shall leave what qualifies as strange to you. However, when you cannot decide, report back to me. The observation period is until she leaves Nazarick."

"—Understood."

"Then go."

"Ha!"

As if sliding, four spider-like monsters moved. The remaining three returned to the ceiling. As the door closed without a sound, everyone in the room gazed at Ainz, waiting for his words.

However, Ainz did not speak.

He seemed to be glaring at the door that Narberal, and the Eight Edge Assassins had left by.

“By the way Ainz-sama, have you forgotten about my ability?”

Shalltear spoke to Ainz as if she had just recalled. In response, Ainz replied with a tinge of loneliness and familiarity in his voice.

Shalltear’s ability—An ability of the Curse Knight Class [Low Item Destruction Due to Curse]

In exchange for the bonuses of the Curse Knight class, penalties of a similar level were added. It was quite an unpopular class. Wondering why she would purposely have such a class, Ainz, no Momonga asked the creator Peroronchino.

The answer he received was quite a proud one.

Peroronchino’s prideful voice played in his head with “I have penetrated the backdoor of the production company!”

There was no way that Ainz could have forgotten that, those memories of the golden age.

“...There is no way that is true. On the contrary I was worried about what would happen if I passed it to you.”

Shalltear placed one of her icefish-like fingers on her chin and tilted her head. Her appearance was of a 14 year old beauty, and would be a beautiful painting. Her insides were another matter.

Feeling relaxed from Shalltear’s attitude, Ainz smiled and spoke his thoughts.

“...Do you have confidence of the loyalty of that thing?”

“Do you mean the jewel of death?”

The one who asked was Aura. In the world of the two talking, Aura spoke as if saying ‘Hey hey, I’m here too’, which made Shalltear extremely dissatisfied. No, the aggregation of blood in her crimson eyes were enough proof that she was angry.

However, Aura ignored Shalltear's changes and continued.

"Umm, I believe it but...."

It is natural to proclaim one's loyalty before the great Ainz-sama.

He is the Great Lord of Death....Well, one cannot expect a child to remember these things.

Right, Shalltear. Sorry.

....Well, I shall forgive you. However, please do not forget it again.

Ignoring the two, Ainz spoke to Pestonya waiting behind him.

"I do not believe it. So I gave it to Narberal who was leaving Nazarick."

"Yes."

Suddenly responding to conversation without a bit of awkwardness was the very model of a maid. However, noticing that they had went off topic, the two Guardians panicked and steered the conversation back.

"Basically considering that it might have been dangerous, we brought it away from Nazarick?"

"...Yes. Aura."

"However, then I should have broke it."

"...Shalltear. That is jumping to conclusions. That is one of your weaknesses. Breaking it might be simple, but we should think of it as losing something valuable."

Taking a breath, although undead did not need to breathe, Ainz spoke his thoughts.

"Intelligent items are outside of my field of knowledge, and we do not know a single thing about it. Breaking it would be a waste. It is simply that I feel uncomfortable being in the dark. It might be hiding secrets, and we have no methods of searching for such items. It also has controlling abilities."

"But then...."

Once Ainz spoke out the reasons why he sent the Eight Edge Assassins to tail

Narberal, everyone in the room agreed.

Considering that it might be a dangerous item, Narberal would carry it and be sent on a mission away from Nazarick. Not telling Narberal was to ensure that the item would not find out.

While mind control had no effects on existences like undead, they would work on Narberal.

Originally, it would be ideal to search for the perfect sacrifice among his subordinates. However, under those conditions Narberal was the best choice.

“It would be nice if nothing happens when she holds it for a while. If something does....”

“Understood. Please allow me to be part of the team to save Narberal if it occurs.”

Ainz nodded deeply to Pestonya’s suggestion since she was the best healer in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

“Of course. We shall assemble the best members then. Shall we have all the Guardians attend?”

With Shalltear and Aura as representatives, everyone bowed at once.

All of them comrades who were connected with a strong rope to Ainz, the 41 Supreme Beings that created them. While it was fine to sacrifice themselves for the 41 Supreme Beings, there were no other existences better suited for the job.

If Narberal were to be used by someone unknown, to erase their goal, they had to limit their usage of their power. As it would be troubling to search for the goal, it would be much easier to destroy them using a country’s power.

Not noticing that he was moving to such thoughts, Ainz lightly nodded.

He was moved by his subordinate’s unity and their friendship.

Then, a small knock came from the door.

The room was large to the point that if one did not have sharp sense, they would not have heard it. However since powerful existences had such a thing as

a foundation, several gazes fell on the door.

Slightly later, the maid next to the door opened it and checked the ones outside the door. Everyone guessed who it was. There was currently only one person who was called to this room but had yet to arrive.

As the maid confirmed their identities, she closed the door, and walked to Ainz. She then came right next to him, bowed, and spoke.

“Ainz-sama. Cocytus-sama and Entoma-sama have arrived.”

“Fine.”

Hearing the arrival of the ones he expected, Ainz nodded.

“Enter.”

“Understood.”

As the maid went to open the doors again, the room had a slightly tense atmosphere. They were worried about how Cocytus would face them after his failure.

In response, Ainz only smiled. A failure was perfectly within his expectations after all.

“Excuse me.”

“Excuse me.”

Cocytus entered the room. Behind him was Entoma. Once Cocytus walked to Ainz’s desk, he deeply bowed. Entoma was hiding behind him when he entered, but lined up with Aura and the rest at the side.

The figure of Cocytus kneeling before Ainz was one like a prisoner admitting his own sin and awaiting judgement.

“This instance was my failure, for which I offer my extreme apologies. Please —”

As Cocytus was about to continue, Ainz raised his hand to stop him.

“...Cocytus. How was the battle?”

“Ha! Even though I have received subordinates—-”

“—I do not want to ask that. I want to ask how you would have won.”

Cocytus made a slightly—He looked like an insect so it was not clear—strange face and only kept silent and thought about Ainz’s question. He then spoke.

“I underestimated the lizardmen too much. It is only prudent to be more cautious with my actions.”

“Yes, that is precisely it! No matter how weak the opponent is, they cannot be underestimated. I am glad that you can understand.”

Ainz then directed his gaze at Shalltear. Noticing it, Shalltear slightly hide her eyes. She was probably recalling her previous failure.

“Very good, what else?”

“Yes, there was also insufficient information. From this battle I now understand that in a situation where I am unfamiliar with the opponent’s extent of strength and the terrain, the chance of victory would certainly be diminished.”

“Hmm”

As Ainz nodded satisfactorily, Cocytus felt his heart lighten.

“Anything else?”

“Having an incompetent commander was also one of the problems. Because the ones battling were lower class undead, a commander should have been sent out who is flexible according to the circumstances and able to give out correct commands at the right times. Also, when taking into account the weapons used by the lizardmen, the zombies should have been used as the main force in carrying out the attack, exhausting the opponent, or alternatively have all of the forces attack together and not act separately.”

“Apart from that?”

“... I am extremely sorry, at the moment I can only come up with this much...”

“Yes. This is precisely it. Amazing. Of course there are other things, but Cocytus, you have learnt well. Why did you not do this at first?”

“I did not think of them. I only considered crushing them with pure force.”

“If it’s that... However, after sacrificing those undead, you now think differently right?”

Several people in the room looked dubiously at Ainz’s happy atmosphere. It was strange that Ainz was satisfied when the troops from Nazarick were defeated. Cocytus was the same. He thought that he would be punished. However, strangely, it did not seem that he would be given anything of the sort.

“Cocytus. You want to apologise, but is there a problem?”

“—Ha?”

“The skeletons and zombies were destroyed. But does that have an effect on [Ainz Ooal Gown] which made the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. If you think it does, then that is the problem.”

Ainz moved his gaze from the stupefied Cocytus to Shalltear.

“What will happen to Nazarick with such losses? Shalltear, when will the skeletons respawn?”

“Undead of that level will respawn in about one hour. I believe that new ones have already been born.”

“—So it is like that.”

“However, this does not erase my failure—-”

“Do not mind it, Cocytus. There is no problem even if you do not win. Failure was part of my plan in the first place.”

“So Ainz-sama truly did not consider victory?”

“I actually wanted you to realise without Demiurge’s help.”

Ainz gazed at Entoma, and stopped Cocytus when he understood and was to bow.

“I don’t mind. However, it would not have been it a problem even if you won. My plans would have proceeded no matter the outcome. Cocytus, I want to ask you if you have gained anything.”

“That is?”

Ignoring Cocytus, Ainz faced Pestonya.

“Bring that.”

“Yes.”

Pestonya walked to a corner of the room and brought that back. It was a silver tray with a cover. She placed it silently on the table.

“Look at this.”

Cocytus stood up, and gazed at the silver tray on Ainz’s desk. Pestonya removed the cover, and there was something in the middle. Cocytus wondered what it was as he thought for an instant. If there was no particular smell of carbon, Cocytus would still be wondering.

“...This is....What exactly. Could it be....ashes?”

“This is a steak a maid made after practicing for five days.”

It was a simple black mass. And he was saying it was a steak. Cocytus could not believe it and was at a loss for words.

“Cooking needs specialised skills right?”

“Yes.”

In Yggdrasil, cooking needed the right skills. Well, it gave temporary ability bonuses so it was natural.

“Maids do not have cooking skills. So they did not succeed after three days.”

Ainz cut the blackened meat with a knife. The centre had completely turned to carbon.

“Basically if we try to do something we do not have the skills for, it will end in failure....Actually, even trying to fry meat myself did not work.”

There was quite a commotion when Ainz tried to cook in the kitchen. Despite the common, the only thing he could make was the black burnt meat. His memories of what happened after he started were blurry. It was a brainless task. It was difficult to control the flame to what he wanted. But, he could not even fry it.

“...I wanted to know, Cocytus. Can one learn without skills.”

Basically Cocytus was an experiment to find out if already completed existences like Ainz could learn. If Cocytus could learn martial arts or war strategy, it would prove that Ainz and the rest could improve. The reason he set Cocytus up to lose was as losing would provide more places to learn.

The result was to Ainz's satisfaction. Cocytus' growth was possible.

Of course, learning martial arts and gaining knowledge were two completely different things.

Ainz was aiming for mastery of this world's special magic, if it existed. Ainz was still wondering if magic was a skill or knowledge. However, this was an experiment related to the growth in one's knowledge.

An even simpler experiment for knowledge was in Ainz's head. However, considering what was after this, martial arts and strategy were very important. Then the experiment would kill two birds with one stone.

"You have taught me that it is possible to mature. Good work."

There was the possibility of one being unable to change, but Ainz was satisfied.

Ainz thought.

When the strongest stopped trying to grow, they would stagnate. They would be overtaken.

Even if one had 100 year lead in military arts, they might be the strongest. However, if they stopped, they would drop from their position. They might be the strongest within the neighbouring country. However, how long can they sustain the title. Those that did nothing were simple fools.

"...Yes. Everything was as planned. You have done well Cocytus."

"Ha"

Cocytus was not fully absolved of his guilt and so he kneeled again and bowed to Ainz.

"Ainz-sama. What should we do with the lizardmen?"

"The experiment is over, their existence is not important. Shall we clean them

to prevent information from leaking?”

There was no sign that races other than the lizardmen were taking part. Then they could estimate that the world of the lizardmen was not large. There would be no problem in stopping the flow of information out of that small world. However, for Ainz’s peace of mind, he could not leave them alone. He might have to crush them in full force. Even if he had to use his trump cards.

As Ainz said so to Aura, he noticed Cocytus moving slightly in the corner of his eye.

“What’s wrong Cocytus?”

“Ainz-sama, can I ask one thing?”

“I don’t mind....”

“Killing them would be a waste.”

“Hmm....True.”

Ainz thought. It was true that his original idea was to subjugate the lizardmen.

Ainz gazed at Cocytus. He recalled Cocytus’ personality and understood his interest. He was the type to respect the strong. That strength was not pure power. It was something the eye could not see.

However, he could not simply rule them under the current circumstances.

“...I don’t mind if we destroy them, or ignore them....Or so I thought. I want to know one thing. How does it feel to be thought of as weak?”

Ainz looked at the Guardians. No one spoke, but the emotion in their eyes were enough to understand.

“—Aura.”

“Yes. It is very nauseating.”

“—Shalltear.”

“Defeat does not go well with [Ainz Ooal Gown].”

“Cocytus.”

“I believe we should teach them true strength.”

Ainz smiled.

“Then, shall we be a bit serious? Send orders to all the Guardians except Gargantua. We’re making a move.”

“Ha.”

The voices of the three Guardians were in harmony.

“Shalltear. I am going as well. Prepare the troops.”

“Understood. Then I shall prepare all of Nazarick’s 100 000 troops.”

“100....How long will it take to move all of them?”

Ainz voiced his refusal at the time Shalltear calculated.

“I am unhappy that the Lizardmen are currently thinking that Nazarick is not much of an enemy. I do not mind if it is only the troops that can leave immediately....Yes. Send out the Nazarick Old Guard.”

There were undead guards known as Old Guards.

Nazarick Old Guards did not exist anywhere else but the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, and were high ranking undead of the Old Guard. They had magic weapons of varying effects, wore magic armour and shields, and learned several battle skills. They were excellent guards.

Their level was 18. The Skeleton Warriors were level 16.

“How many?”

“All.”

“Then, how about 6000 of them?”

Ainz stopped for an instant. He was surprised that they had that many. However, he immediately hid it—

“Could you not hear me? All.”

“Yes. My apolog—- My apologies.” (She removes accent in second.)

Ainz calmly waved his hand at the bowing Shalltear.

“Then Shalltear. Use <Gate> and send the troops in one swoop.”

“I have a limit to what I can do alone.”

Ainz expected Shalltear’s answer and faced Pestonya.

“Pestonya. Support her. Pass your mana to Shalltear.”

“Understood.”

“If not enough call for Lupusregina. —-Aura.”

“Yes.”

“Choose your strongest subordinates to be my personal guard.”

“Understood.”

“Cocytus. You are now the vanguard. Follow my orders.”

“Ha. I shall return my earlier defeat.”

Ainz smiled and spread his two hands.

“Now. Begin the mission. Tell Demiurge to return as well.”

Ainz whispered a small sigh in the empty room.

“But....A failure. Should I have sent a stronger undead than a Lich?”

The commanding lich was made with Ainz’s Low Rank Undead Creation. It was one of the eight undead he could make everyday since coming to this world.

Low Rank Undead Creation.

It was an ability to create undead from level 10 to 24. High Rank Undead Creation was from Level 25 to 40.

Considering that he had lost the strongest undead he could make with Low Rank Undead Creation, he might have been underestimating the lizardmen.

“....How troubling.”

He ordered the messengers to not bring up the name Nazarick as a prevention against Yggdrasil Players. Lizardmen were one of the races in Yggdrasil. It was possible that they were in the tribes.

The reason they gave time was so that if there were Players, they could call their Guild or comrades, letting Ainz learn of them. However, when only lizardmen gathered, the chance of players existing was low, so they attacked.

Another thing to pull out Players was the existence of the commanding Lich. If a Lich, a strong existence that the lizardmen could not defeat, appeared, Players would come out and fight, but it lost to just the lizardmen.

In the end, the chance of them existing was low, but they could not run the risk. That was the biggest problem.

If Players existed, they would have made preparations. Ainz could not let them get away.

“That’s why I’m going.”

He was personally against it, but he had to confirm.

He could not leave it to the Guardians as he had no idea how it would end. He felt that several of the Guardians looked down on their opponent. It would be nice if the defeat changed that, but changing their mindset would take time.

If they cannot throw away their pride, and if they faced a player, depending on the level and numbers, the Guardians might get wiped out. He had to avoid that.

“But....If we fight, can I win?”

Ainz thought about the Eight Edge Assassins on the ceiling, and kept those words in his mouth.

Ainz’s strength as a Yggdrasil Player was doubtful. If they did not take extreme measures, he had cards up his sleeve to instantly kill any one of them. However, they were already on the wiki.

Since the guild [Ainz Ooal Gown] was of the strongest class, a certain level of information of each guild member was written in the wiki. If the opponent did not know, defeat was impossible. But if he did, it would be trouble.

“...Should I bring that out....”

Ainz recalled the largest scale trump card on the 8th Floor.

Most players would call it a cheat, and would rival the World Champion. And that was the reason why after 1500 people attacked, they did not regroup and try again. Did the time come to move it.

“But....How troubling....”

Ainz felt a heavy weight on his shoulders and fell into deep thought.

While thinking that he had to consider a lot of things.

Chapter 49: War | Part 9

The words danger perception ability existed.

It was an ability that allowed the thief-class adventurers to sense danger like reading a book, and it was extremely important.

This ability had two types. One was based on instinct (not deduction or investigation but sensing when something occurred) and the other on deduction and studies from experiences. If the former was noticing your heart beat when an insect got close, the latter would be seeing through any small change in the environment, small changes in smell or sound, to locate the enemy.

In the case of the latter, if one went to battlefields or on journeys, even if one did not train this ability, it would sharpen by itself. It goes without saying that it was born from experiences of walking the line between life and death. Even if one thought it was a safe place or failed in one's evaluation of the situation, as long as one was dancing with death, this ability was forcefully trained.

In addition, creatures like the lizardmen were far more proficient in this than humans. This was an ability of living creatures, based on the sharpness of the sensing organs of the creature, and from a harsh living environment. Humans would probably sleep in a safe place far from monsters. However, lizardmen lived next to such monsters.

With such an environment, it is understandable their danger perception was much better than humans.

Those Lizardmen.

Especially Zaryusu, would not fail to notice the change in the atmosphere outside their houses.

Feeling tension filling the air, he opened his eyes.

Before him was a familiar room— although he had only stayed here for

several days. Humans, even if they tried to, would not be able to make out details in this room which had no light source, but it was not that difficult for lizardmen.

There was nothing out of the ordinary in the room.

Zaryusu looked around, and after confirming that there were no strange objects, he gave a sigh of relief as he moved to sit upright.

He was an outstanding warrior, which was why even if he was sleeping moments ago, he was as awake as normal. There wasn't an issue of drowsiness, as he was even energetic enough to immediately enter battle.

This was natural for warriors trained to a certain level. This was also related to the fact that lizardmen were habitually light sleepers.

However, Crusch who was sleeping beside Zaryusu showed no signs of waking up.

Having lost the body warmth of Zaryusu, Crush merely sleepily let out a dissatisfied soft murmur.

It was a truly deep sleep.

If it were under normal circumstances, Crusch would also sense the change in the air and wake up, however this time it seemed as if she had not noticed at all.

Zaryusu felt some regret, whether or not he had allowed Crusch to shoulder too much burden.

He recalled last night, and came to the opinion that the burden on Crusch was perhaps greater than his. During the operation of defeating the powerful opponent, the lich, the female Crusch seemed to have suffered a greater burden than the male Zaryusu.

He himself wished that he could allow her to continue sleeping, but after listening carefully, he could hear the frantic movements of many lizardmen beyond the house doors. At these times when various emergencies had already occurred, not waking her up would might be more dangerous.

"Crusch, Crusch."

Zaryusu used a bit of force to shake Crusch several times.

“Mmm... Mmmm...”

Crusch curled her tail, then immediately revealed her red eyes.

“Mmm...?”

“It looks like something has happened.”

This phrase caused the drowsy Crusch to instantly widen her eyes. Zaryusu grabbed Frost Pain which was by his side and immediately stood up, and not long afterwards, Crusch was also out of bed.

For humans, they would have to wear clothes and do other things, but lizardmen had no need to do so.

Going outside, Zaryusu immediately understood the reason for the ruckus, and so did Crusch.

The reason was—The sky.

They saw a large thick dark cloud covering the air above the village.

Looking to the distance, they could tell within a moment that the dark cloud was completely different to ordinary dark clouds. This was because it was a clear cloudless sky for miles around.

That also meant that this was—

“It’s... back?”

Yes.

It meant that the hand of the existence known as the Supreme One had once again come knocking—

“Looks like it.”

Crusch agreed with this view. All of the lizardmen of the five tribes that had grouped together to fight could see the dark cloud in the middle of the sky, and were talking about it. However nobody had a look of fear on their faces.

That was because they were victorious under unfavourable circumstances in the previous battle, causing everyone to become more spirited.

“Let’s go.”

“Eh.”

Zaryusu and Crusch ran towards the main gate of the village.

The two of them ran towards the village, giving off a water splashing noise as they sprinted. They passed by several lizardmen who were commencing their battle preparations, and wasted no time in arriving at the main entrance.

Several warrior class lizardmen were looking outside from the gate. One of them was a deformed lizardman. One that had one huge arm—Zenberu.

In response to the harsh splashing sounds of the two approaching, Zenberu raised his hand in greeting, and immediately focused outside.

Zaryusu and Crusch ran to his side and looked outside.

On the far shore 250 metres away. Where the wetlands met the forest.

There, Skeletons had formed into ranks. It was quite the number. About the same as the previous battle, not maybe slightly less. They outnumbered the lizardmen.

“So they have come again.”

“Huh...”

Zaryusu responded to Zenberu, then clicked his tongue.

They had expected this. They had known that it was not the end.

However it was too fast. It was unexpected that they would not have time to fully recover their wounds, bury their dead or strengthen their defenses.

Zaryusu made a wry smile. He had underestimated his opponents.

The enemy had the ability to again send such troops even though they had destroyed a large number of skeletons and zombies.

“... However, these skeletons should be weaker than those summoned by the lich.”

These words had a hidden meaning. What Zenberu meant was that he believed that the current skeleton army was in fact stronger than the one which

invaded before.

Zaryusu also observed intently at the skeletons arranged on the shore of the other side. This was to size up the opponent's strength, to then carry out the appropriate defensive actions.

Their appearance was certainly one of a skeleton.

A body of bone that had complete resistance to slashing attacks. That was dangerous but, the most dangerous was that since no muscles were visible, one could not tell how strong they were. For outward appearances, the biggest difference was their equipment. The skeletons from before were only equipped with rusty swords. However, the skeletons this time had sturdy breastplates, wielded a kite shield in one hand and one of various types of weapons in the other. Their backs had composite crossbows attached to them.

They were ready for any type of battle.

There was a wide gap between them and the earlier skeletons. In addition, it could be felt their bodies were sturdier.

Zaryusu observed this much, and discovered a particular fact. He couldn't help but doubt if he had seen incorrectly, and rubbed his eyes several times. However that remained a reality.

"Eh... that can't be..."

"H-How is that possible..."

At the same time as Crusch's exclamation, Zaryusu who had discovered the same fact involuntarily spoke out in a pained low voice. This time, Zenberu replied.

"... Oh, you realised it too."

Zenberu's voice made it sound like he wanted to spit out blood. This was as he saw something unbelievable.

"Mmm..." Zaryusu was done with speaking, and remained silent. He did not wish to speak, because once words came out, he would be terrified. Yet it was impossible to remain silent. "... Their weapons seemed to be magic equipment."

Crusch by his side nodded solemnly.

—Yes.

The skeletons were holding various weapons. They were all infused with magic. Some skeletons had a sword with fire, others had hammers of blue lightning. Green lights emanated from the spearheads of some, while the rest had purple liquids dripping from their scythes.

Zenberu next words deepened Zaryusu's shock.

"Looks like that is not it. You two should also look closely at the armours and shields. Those... are also magic defensive equipment."

Zaryusu doubted his eyes when he heard Zenberu's words.

He then unconsciously moaned. He noticed that the shields and armour were not sparkling just from the sunlight, but also as they themselves were emitting light.

Just what type of existence could equip that number of skeletons with magic equipment. While if it was a temporary simple enhancement to the weapon, it would be possible for a large country. However, if they imbued magic equipment with various attributes, the situation changed.

Zaryusu learned a lot from the dwarfs he met in the mountains while on his travels.

Dwarves were a mountainous race which excelled in metalworking. During feasts, those dwarves would often talk about the legend of a particular hero—the King who established the great Kingdom of Dwarves, the hero who wore shining mithril armour and solo defeated a dragon, then becoming one of the thirteen heroes, 'Magic Engineer'. Even within the legends told by the dwarves, there were no stories which told of this kind of magnitude of magic equipment preparation.

Then, what was the scene before Zaryusu?

"... Is that an army from the myths?"

If this was not a story from mankind, then it must be a scenario from a mythical story.

Zaryusu's entire body was trembling. Because he realised that this exceeded

his predictions, and they were facing an enemy which absolutely should not be provoked.

However.

Was this not something they had understood. The opponent was probably extremely strong. They had came prepared to be annihilated. As the one who proposed this plan, why was he trembling. The enemy was far beyond his imagination. He understood that. So if that was the problem, what should he do?

Did victory weaken his heart?

If he recalled their words, the lizardmen had shown their ability to repel their first wave. Then, they at least would have some sort of negotiations. If he showed fear, their evaluation of him would drop.

Deciding so, his heart felt more vigorous, and Zaryusu stared at the skeletons.

As he tried to see which was the enemy commander—A cold wind blew. It swept around Zaryusu's entire body.

"The wind...."

Crusch is cold too.

While he hugged his body, he checked the situation of the sky.

Due to the thick clouds hanging in the sky, they blocked the sun and caused quite the chilling sensation. That was the normal expectation, and normally it would be entirely correct.

But that was not it.

The wind blew again, and a shivering cold attacked Crusch. Her body again trembled. Zaryusu with Frost Pain had some resistance to the cols and so would not feel it unless it was above a certain level. So Zaryusu hugged Crusch.

"Are you alright?"

"Eh....It's warm."

I'm cold too.

Zenberu spoke in his heart, but he did not enter the view of Crusch or Zaryusu who was giving her his body heat. They looked like two good friends hugging if seen from the side. Zaryusu then asked Crusch.

“Crusch. Have you heard of such cold winds blowing at this time of year?”

“No, none. However if they activated magic to control the weather, this cold wind would not be strange.”

Crusch again, spoke in a small voice so that no one else but Zaryusu could hear. Zaryusu frowned at her response.

“This is bad....”

“Eh? What is?”

“Oi oi, this is a bad atmosphere.”

Just as Zenberu said, due to this strange cold wind, the lizardmen all had expressions of uncertainty. There was not much left of the confidence that once filled them. They felt like scared children.

Zaryusu felt it too.

A cold wind that was impossible for this season—-basically an impossible change in nature. This caused the morale of the lizardmen to drop.

The lizardmen did not know magic, and had the experience that nature was something that could not be changed by anyone. Basically they had associated being able to change nature with someone who was far more powerful than them.

Yes. Just how powerful was the enemy they were about to face? This blowing cold wind eloquently told them the answer.

“A good move.”

While clicking his tongue, Zaryusu accepted the effects of this magic. He could say nothing but that a move to instantly lower the enemy’s morale was good. If they were aiming to lower morale, to make sure of this—

“Cheh, the opponent has begun to move.”

Yes. The skeletons began to move.

Zaryusu grit his teeth. He forced his unwilling tail to not make any large moves. So they were aiming for this timing to move.

The surrounding warriors began to waver. Some of them even raised cries, warning that they were coming to attack. Among them, Zaryusu knew that it was different.

That was not movement to attack. However, the panicking lizardmen thought only that they were attacking.

Just as Zaryusu and Zenberu were about to request aloud for the panicking lizardmen to calm down—

“—Calm down!”

A large piercing sound shook the air. That voice was not too loud. However, it was filled with confidence and dignity that no one could oppose.

All the lizardmen were entranced by the voice, stopped and looked at the direction it came from.

It was Shasuryu.

“I say again, calm down.”

In this silent space, only this voice filled with self-confidence and authority reverberated.

“Also, do not be afraid, warriors. Above all else, you must not disappoint the numerous ancestral spirits behind you.”

With calmness returning, he walked through the crowd of silent lizardmen to Zaryusu’s side.

“Younger brother, what action has the opponent taken?”

“Hmm, older brother, although they have begun to move... they do not appear to be preparing for battle.”

“Hmm...”

The five hundred skeletons which had begun to move formed into ten ranks.

“Just what are they planning to do?”

Zenberu's whisper reflected the thoughts of everyone. They were not just reforming ranks. Then, as if waiting for that question, the skeletons moved again.

Under perfect and precise commands, the legion parted to either side from the centre. What appeared from the gap of approximately twenty skeletons in width was... a figure.

That figure was not very large. Even if it was about two hundred and fifty centimetres in height, it was possible to see that the figure was shorter than Zaryusu. That person wore a pitch-black robe, in its hand was a black misty staff-like object.

It was an appearance similar to that of the lich yesterday. It was probably a magic caster as well.

Seeing that figure, Zaryusu felt his back getting the shivers.

He felt that it was far more powerful than the lich yesterday.

[... Oh, oh!]

The lizardmen which were nervously watching this Magic Caster let out a panicked sound altogether. At this moment, an enormous hemisphere-shaped magic array approximately ten metres in diameter expanded outwards with the magic caster at the centre.

A blue and white radiance floated on the surface of the magic array, with semi-translucent markings which looked like it could be words or symbols. Those semi-translucent markings were rapidly changing, and at any given moment none of the words were the same.

Since the sunlight was blocked, the lizardmen could clearly see that scene.

If a non-hostile existence was doing this, the lizardmen felt that this could be an illusion. The blue clear light changed its figure, and illuminated the surroundings.

However, under these conditions they could not be entranced by it.

Being unable to understand what exactly it was, Zaryusu felt confused.

When a magic caster used magic, they would not make such a magic array in

the air like this. What the other side was doing was something outside of Zaryusu's knowledge. So, he asked the most well versed woman in magic in this place.

"What exactly is that?"

"I-I don't know. I cannot figure out what that is either—"

Crusch's reply was a bit terrified. It looked like she was even more frightened because she possessed knowledge about magic yet was unable to understand that behaviour.

Just at the moment that Zaryusu was planning to comfort her...

Not knowing if the magic had successfully activated, the magic array broke apart, becoming numerous light particles flying towards the sky. In the next instant— like there had been an explosion in the sky, the particles spread out—



The lizardmen did not know

And the world did not know

This was the first time such a magic was used in this world.

This was on par with the highest magic from 500 and 200 years before.

One of the Overrank magic—A magic that could that the world.

Immediately it—



And the lake—

—Completely froze.

There was no one there that understood what had just happened. Yes, all the lizardmen there.

Shasuryu who was a tribe leader with outstanding qualifications; Crusch who had extraordinary druid powers; even Zaryusu the traveller who had seen much and had a wide breadth of knowledge. Even these individuals, who within lizardmen history could be considered to possess miraculous abilities, could not

immediately comprehend the current situation.

No way of understanding why their own feet were inside ice.

Before long— after enough time had passed for the brain to accept the situation before their eyes— a crying rang out—

Every lizardmen— indeed, everybody let out a lamenting cry.

Even Zaryusu was the same. Crusch and Shasuryu, and even the most courageous Zenberu, were no exception. As if terror crept out from the depths of their souls, everybody could not help but scream.

It was such terrifying truth. The lake will never freeze. It was a truth since they were born.

But, it was destroyed when the lake froze.

Ice was something within their knowledge. All the lizardmen thought that.

That fear was the equivalent of humans seeing the sun rising from the west.

The lizardmen frantically lifted their feet. Luckily the layer of ice was not thick, and broke immediately, but the broken areas immediately froze up again. A chilling cold vapour came from underneath, making it painfully obvious that this sight was not an illusion.

After Zaryusu agitatedly clambered up the mud wall, he immediately surveyed the surroundings, then was stunned into silence by what he saw from his widened point of view.

All of the lake within their vision was frozen—-That was the scene they saw.

The lake was about 20 kilometres in all four directions. All of it that they could see was frozen.

“That can’t be...”

Crusch, who had also climbed up, looked around and was lost for words just like Zaryusu. From her gaping mouth, she let out a despaired voice.

Like Zaryusu, she did not wish to believe that this scene she saw before her was real.

The lake that would never freeze. There was nothing that could make it

freeze. Yes. They could not believe the scene they were seeing.

Just how much power did one have to have to make such a thing possible?

“Get up here, quick!”

Shasuryu’s roar rang in the air. Surprised at it, Zaryusu and Crusch looked down at the bottom of the wall.

Several lizardmen fell down powerlessly. There were not many, but they dotted the surroundings. The ones that were still fine, mostly the warriors, worked together to pull the fallen lizardmen from the frozen ground.

The lizardmen that were pulled up all had lost colour in their faces. Their bodies shivered.

From what Zaryusu could tell, this was a result of their body temperatures dropping. The freezing temperatures was seeping their life force away.

“Older brother, I’ll go check on the others!”

Zaryusu who wielded Frost Pain could not be affected by this degree of influence from the cold air.

“No... Do not go!”

“Why, older brother?!”

“The enemy will probably start moving in a short moment. You are not permitted to leave! Grasp the overall situation, do not let any information slip! This is something which can only be entrusted to you who have wandered across the world and acquired various kinds of knowledge.”

“But we should preserve our magic power....”

“Fool! Do not mess up our priorities!”

Moving his gaze from Zaryusu, Shasuryu talked to the surrounding warrior class lizardmen.

“Right now I will be casting some ice resistance magic upon you all, ‘Protection Energy Ice’. Quickly go and inform every single person in the village, and avoid coming into contact with the ice.”

“I will also assist with casting the magic.”

“Please do!”

“Then, Crusch, let us act separately. If any individual is discovered to be in an emergency situation, immediately cast healing magic!”

Crusch and Zaryusu cast six lizardmen with protection magic.

Zaryusu stayed on the wall, and stared at their formation. The thing he should be doing was just as Shasuryu said. He sent the enemy a sharp gaze, not letting any movement by him.

Unease passed by Zaryusu’s brain. Was it fine to grasp this magic caster who could freeze the lake with normal eyes. Or would he break them trying to.

However, was it fine to say that he was too scared, and could not see the enemy’s movements. Could he make such an excuse? It was imperative to carry out the task given to him by his brother with perfection.

“Hey ho.”

Zenberu who had climbed up to Zaryusu’s side gazed leisurely at the enemy’s position.

“You need to relax a bit. Your older brother is looking forward to your wisdom right? Even if you miss something, he won’t blame you. The more important thing is to not be too hooked up in it, and end up narrowing your vision.”

Zenberu in his carefree voice had given Zaryusu a sharp warning.

It was just as he said. Zaryusu was not alone. He was fighting with his comrades. Every did what he or she could do.

Zaryusu shifted his gaze.

All the warriors apart from Zenberu climbed on the mud wall, and looked at the enemy.

Yes, he was not fighting alone. It seems that he who had witnessed that overwhelming power — magic — had been shaken.

Zaryusu exhaled one giant breath, as if to get rid of his internal worries all in one go.

“Sorry.”

“There’s nothing to be sorry about.”

“... That’s right, because you, Zenberu, are also here.”

“Ha, don’t look to me for matters which concern thinking.”

The two of them laughed at each other, then continued to observe the enemy’s movement.

“However, that really is a true monster.”

“Yeah! It is basically on a completely different level...”

The magic caster had the insufferably arrogant posture of a king, and pompously gazed in the direction of Zaryusu and their village. That supposedly quite small body seemed expanded by ten times its size.

“... He should be the one referred to as the Supreme One.”

“That ought to be pretty spot on. Furthermore, I really hope there are no others powerful enough to cast magic that freezes the entire lake.”

“That’s right, and I hope so too. In the eyes of that monster who is even able to freeze the lake, we lizardmen are no more than ants. Ah~ what a shame! We’re no different than small insects.”

“...”

Zaryusu had no words. Because Zaryusu was thinking the same thing.

“The words ‘resist’ seem stupid now.”

“...If they do not allow us to surrender, what should we do?”

Zenberu looked at Zaryusu in surprise. Then he smiled.

“Then we shall all commit suicide in the name of an ‘attack’. Well, this will be a good experience. Being the opponent of an existence that can turn the world upside down.”

“...You did not waver.”

“...Are you.... Praising me?”

“I....maybe?”

“By the way....They’re moving.”

“Ah, yes.”

The magic caster who froze the lake raised the hand which was not holding onto a staff, and gave a wave in the direction of the village.

As if answering, a troop of fully armoured, knight-like warriors came out from the forest. There were not many of them. They numbered forty.

They were about 2.3 metres tall.

Their left hands held a large tower shield that covered $\frac{3}{4}$ of their body, and they wore a black full plate armour. Vein-like crimson patterns ran around their body. Different from practical items, spikes sprouted on their armour and expressed violence.

In their hands was a six metre long spear. On the spear that suited lanced calvary, a cloth was spread.

They were flags.

They were clothed in a pitch black mantle, they flawlessly stepped into the wetlands. With the ice breaking at their feet, they silently marched forward.

With perfect movements, they made space in between them and crossed flags with the opposite soldier.

As the flags overlapped, and the 40 different patterns of the cloth lowered down, a path was made.

“... Is that a path for the king?”

Zenberu was correct.

The magic caster slowly walked on the frozen lake.

Several shadows followed behind him.

At the front, was the magic caster who froze the lake, and the one with bottomless power. Anymore and it made one wonder what should he be called. It was shorter than the average lizardman, but hidden inside was a despairing power, a monster.

On his body he wore a pitch-black changpao, so dark that it looked as if it had been cut from a piece of the night, and in his hand he held a staff which

radiated a black aura. That radiating aura seemed to form into agonised human expressions, which collapsed and disappeared.

Even under the hood was a skull, with vacant eye sockets which had a shining small red light in either of them.

The opponent wore innumerable magic accessories which were absolutely beyond Zaryusu's comprehension, and walked forward at a commensurate pace with the authority of a king.

Just behind the magic caster at his left and right was a dark elf girl and a silver-haired girl.

The dark elf girl had golden silk-like hair cut to her shoulder. Her heterochromatic eyes were gold and purple.

Her ears were long and sharp, and her skin was a light brown. It was a skin colour held by the close relatives of elves, the dark elves.

On top of her skintight armour, she wore black and red dragon scales pasted on it, and on top of that she wore a white vest with golden lining. Her chest had a symbol on it.

Her waist had a whip attached, and her back had a large bow, the handle, rim, and grip having decorations engraved on them.

The silver-haired girl was dressed in a soft pitch black ball gown.

The skirt portion was inflated, and had a large volume to it. The length of the skirt was quite long, and completely hid her legs. Her Bolero cardigan had frills and ribbons attached and it covered her shoulders and chest. Due to her wearing fingerless gloves, most of her body was hidden.

What was exposed was a beautiful face, to the extent that even a first class work of art would feel ashamed to be in front of her. She had white skin, a paleness that could be in no way healthy. Her long silver hair was bound to one side, and flowed down.

Even though lizardmen had no well established sense of beauty, the two of them were gorgeous.

And the last one was—

“He can’t be... a Demon?”

Zenberu had a question look in response to Zaryusu’s whisper.

Demon.

Demons were those who used violence to bring about destruction, and Devils were those who used their intelligence to bring about depravity. These kinds of otherworldly existences grouped together were referred to as demons. It is said that they are atrocious monsters which existed solely for the extermination of all sentient and good living beings. They were also synonymous with the word ‘evil’.

While in human society, this was something well known, but the lizardman society was different. In this case, Zenberu not knowing anything was the norm. Lizardmen who lived together with nature, the existence of demons was something located far from their themselves. This was due to a simple difference in culture, and because they were isolated.

Zaryusu had once before heard about demons during his travels.

He had heard how terrifying demons were. It was said that two hundred years ago, a being known as the king of the demons — the Demon God — had led demons under his banner, and had almost exterminated the entire world.

The Demon God had met his end at the hands of the thirteen heroes which vanquished him, and in a certain place it was still possible to see traces of that battle.

If undead could be described as creatures which detested the living, then demons were creatures which tormented the living.

That demon was two metres tall, and his skin was a sparkling red. His clean cut pitch black hair had a glistening luster.

His red eyes sparkled with intelligence, and front facing goat-like horns sprung from his temples, and pitch black giant wings grew from his back.

His sharply clawed hands grasped a scepter, and a red beautiful robe adorned him, and he had a king’s dignity.

They walked in silence, under the forty flags. The distance they walked was

160 metres. It was 90 more metres to the village. Then, they stopped.

Just what were they doing.

Several lizardmen looked at each other in unease. Then they asked the smartest lizardmen here.

“... Please tell us, what we should do, Zaryusu-san? Should we prepare for battle?”

“No, that will not be necessary. Think about the previous lich. Our opponent is a magic caster who is by far more superior to that lich, and making an attack at this distance should be child’s play for him. The most frightening thing is... what kind of words does he have for us.”

The lizardmen revealed an expression of agreement.

Without letting his gaze move, Zaryusu continued his observation.

At this distance, he could make quite detailed observations. Yes, it was the distance where they could look into each other eyes.

The magic caster standing at the front was looking here as well. Under these conditions, the dark elf surprisingly did not have any hostility in her gaze. The silver-haired girl had a mocking smile. The demon had some kindness, but it was terrifying.

Some time looking at each other passed, and the magic caster standing in front once again raised his empty hand. Responding to that, several lizardmen waved their tails in unease.

“—Do not be afraid. Do not put an embarrassing display in front of our opponent.”

Zaryusu’s razor-sharp rebuke made all of the lizardmen at the scene immediately raise their heads and straighten their backs.

And a black mist appeared in front of the magic caster without any relation to Zaryusu and the rest.

It numbered twelve.

While spiraling and becoming larger, the black fog eventually became about

150 centimetres. There were countless faces that were formed within the fog.

“That is....”

Zaryusu recalled. The monster that came as a messenger. And that undead monster he met on his travels.

Since it could use mental attacks, it was an ethereal monster that Zaryusu had a hard time fighting. Since it was ethereal, unless one attacked with magic weapons, certain metals or martial arts, it was difficult to damage it.

Even with the combined might of the lizardmen, their amount of magic weapons was small. So, defeating one was extremely difficult.

12 of such monsters. And they were so easily created—

“Impossible....”

A truth he did not want to admit was the truth. Zaryusu looked at the surrounding lizardmen. They did not understand the level of what the magic caster just did, and only showed some surprise at it. With a small sigh of relief, Zaryusu looked at the magic caster.

“Monster....”

He understood. But he could understand why such a powerful lich would pledge his allegiance to such an existence.

Zaryusu thought so as he despaired.

The magic caster whispered something, and waved his hand, telling them to leave. Then, the undead flew around the village.

They spoke in unison.

[The Supreme One transmits his message to you as such.]

[The Supreme One requests a dialogue. Will the representative please step forward.]

[Should you waste our time, it shall only serve to aggravate the Supreme One.]

However, what was even harder to believe was when the silver haired girl, who was waiting at attention at the back, forcefully used both hands to make a

clap once she received her instructions from the magic caster.

At the moment of the hand clap— those undead were exterminated.

“Ha!?”

Zaryusu, who had taken in a large shock, involuntarily shouted out.

Since that move was not to return the summoned monsters, but to exterminate them.

Extermination of undead. This was an action that priests could do. Normally repelling them took a lot, but when there was a gap in their strengths, it was possible to not only repel but to exterminate. However, when exterminating large numbers of undead, the difficulty jumped, such a level of power needed.

Basically the silver haired girl had that power.

And to just transmit a message, he used undead of such strength.

“Ku ku ku—”

Zaryusu unconsciously began to laugh. The surrounding lizardmen, Zenberu included, looked at him with suspicious gazes. Ignoring them, Zaryusu’s laugh became louder.

“W, what is wrong, Zaryusu?”

“N, no nothing—Ku ku.”

Zaryusu’s laughter did not stop.

It was natural. What could he do except for laugh. When shown a power gap of this magnitude—

“Younger brother!”

“—Ah, older brother!”

Reacting to the voice from the bottom of the wall, he saw the figures of Shasuryu and Crusch. The two climbed the mud wall, and looked at the magic caster and his entourage. Crusch forced her way in between Zenberu and Zaryusu. This caused Zenberu to almost fall off, but well, it was forgiven.

“Is that the enemy’s leader? The atmosphere around him is so strong that

merely looking at him will cause people's bones to chill. Although the appearance is similar to the lich which you defeated... but the strength of both individuals simply cannot be compared..."

"I know right. He's so small, but he is 100% a monster."

"It is just as Zenberu said. Older brother. The people behind him are also in another league."

"—Eh!? Is that a demon? He controls a demon? That magic caster?"

"So it seems, Crusch. He is not an existence that can be controlled by a demon."

"I can't believe it. What is the dark elf doing beside them? She seems human though...."

"She is not a simple human. The knights holding the flags behind are probably quite strong enemies as well."

"If we attack how can we defeat them?"

There was no one that could answer Zenberu's question. They could make some predictions, but if they were voiced, the morale of the surrounding lizardmen would plummet.

"...By the way, is my brother finished?"

"Yes, mostly. He heard the words of the messenger."

"I see, that's true."

The degree of priority of what the messenger said was much higher.

"...Yes. We have to do that first. What the messenger said....Zaryusu, can you come with me?"

"....."

Zaryusu looked silently at Shasuryu for a while, then nodded gravely. Shasuryu momentarily showed an anguished look, but immediately returned to normal, so fast that nobody had noticed his expression.

"Sorry."

“Don’t mind it, older brother.”

Shasuryu had only apologised before jumping off the mud wall, treading on the thin layer of ice coating the wetlands, and letting out splashing sounds.

“I’m off then.”

“Be careful.”

wetlands.

Zaryusu and Shasuryu treaded across the thin ice above the lake, moving forward together. After they walked through the main entrance, Zaryusu felt the magic caster’s group gaze intently at the two of them, as if their gazes carried actual pressuring strength. He desperately restrained his strong emotions telling him not to get away.

At this moment, Shasuryu spoke out.

“... Sorry.”

“... Sorry for what, older brother?”

“... If negotiations fall apart, the opponent may perhaps kill the two of us there and then.”

“Ah....”

Zaryusu’s response was short. That was why he hugged Crusch.

“You have a wife—-”

“... Considering the opponent’s numbers, I cannot allow older brother to go forward alone. If you were by yourself, the opponent would probably also form the opinion that we are not paying them enough respect.”

Amongst lizardmen, Zaryusu was indeed widely known, and extremely suitable to take part in negotiations. However, his identity was that of a traveller, therefore even if he were sacrificed, it would not affect the lizardmen group structure. From this perspective, his loss would not be regretted.

Even if the hero were to be killed, so long as there were other remaining tribe chiefs, the battle could be continued.

The two of them continued silently forward.

The distance closed, and they could clearly see their opponents. It was understandable, but the magic caster's entourage was calmly standing on the thin ice. It was not a problem that they were light, but were using some sort of magic.

The distance went close to zero, and became one that was suitable for discussions.

Zaryusu and Shasuryu's hearts beated sharply. It was with a force that almost seemed to make them jump out of their chests.

The reason was their worry.

How should they discuss in front of these pressurising strong people. Since that was unclear, they were under immense pressure.

Originally, it might have been better to depreciate themselves. However, that might cause the other party to lose interest and decide to kill all of them. However, what would happen if that was considered disrespectful.

What was correct, they completely did not understand.

It was like going barefoot in the dark with sharp weapons scattered on the floor.

"Our delegation has arrived! I am the lizardmen representative, Shasuryu Shasha, the strongest hero amongst the lizardmen!"

"I am Zaryusu Shasha!"

There was no response. The magic caster's entourage only gazed at them from above, and they showed no sign of making a move.

Even ignoring the fact they wanted a negotiations, it was a strange attitude. What was wrong. Zaryusu and Shasuryu looked at each other. Did they make a mistake.

The one who replied was the demon.

"Our master does not consider that you have not entered into a listening posture which demonstrates respect."

"... What?"

“[Prostrate].”

Suddenly, Zaryusu and Shasuryu knelt down, with their heads buried into the wetlands. Their actions made it look like these two persons thought it was only natural to do.

The cold mud stained the two persons' bodies, and the shattered ice blocks immediately froze up again.

It was impossible to stand up. Even if they used their entire body's strength, their bodies did not budge. As if there was an invisible giant hand which was pressing down on them from above, their bodies had completely lost all freedom of movement.

“[Do not Resist].”

The moment those words were said, Zaryusu and Shasuryu's bodies ignored their will and slackened.

The two unsightly prostrated in the mud. As if he were satisfied at the scene, the demon separated away slightly, talked to his master. Zaryusu could not see it, but he heard.

“Ainz-sama, their respectful listening postures are prepared.”

“Thank you for your hard work— Raise your heads.”

“[Permitted to Raise your Heads].”

Moving their head, which was the only part they could move, Zaryusu and Shasuryu looked up at the magic caster in front of them.

“I am... the master of the Great Tomb of Nazarick, Ainz Ooal Gown. First, I give you my thanks for helping me complete my experiment.”

Hearing the words without any actual sense of gratitude, a fierce anger welled up in Zaryusu's heart for an instant. A whirl of emotions flared up after feeling disgusted that lives of lizardmen were stolen due to an experiment.

However, he immediately suppressed it, and hid it completely.

It was natural. The existence in front of him had a power beyond his imagination. He could not even imagine what would happen if he displeased

the monster that could freeze the lake.

Death was bliss. A hell that would make them think that would not be strange.

But, they had no desire to excessively flatter him.

“The ones behind me are my subordinates, and since they have no particular relation to this I shall not introduce them. Now, the main point....Enter under my rule.”

Ainz the magic caster gently raised his hand, stopping Shasuryu who desired to speak out.

Knowing that insisting on speaking out would not be wise, Shasuryu could only obediently stay silent.

“— However you defeated us earlier, which should mean that you are unwilling to accept my authority. This is why we shall attack again four hours later. If you are still able to win, I promise to take no further action against you, and will even guarantee to support reasonable compensation to you.”

“... May I please ask a question?”

“You may, ask away.”

“The one who will be attacking... will it be Gown-dono?”

The silver-haired girl standing at the back raised her brow slightly and the demon smiled more deeply, possibly because they were unsatisfied with the dono title. However, they did not make any particular action, perhaps because the master did not say anything about it.

Ainz ignored those two people, and continued talking.

“How can that be possible. I will not be taking action myself. Instead, the one who will be attacking will be my trustworthy aide... furthermore I will only be sending out one person. He is called Cocytus.”

Hearing these words, Zaryusu felt a deep despair as if the world had ended.

If it were a large army that would attack, perhaps the lizardmen would have a chance of victory. This meant that, at first, he had believed that this time

could also be a continuation of yesterday's unfortunate battle which was called an experiment. If it were like that, then there should still be a miniscule chance of victory.

However, it was not going to be so.

The one attacking would only be one person.

The previously defeated army had once again made such a big declaration, but would only send one person this time. Unless it was a punishment, or there was some hidden meaning behind his words, he must have complete faith in that person.

A close aid that had the trust of the existence of such power.

That aid would also have such despairing power....To the point that the lizardmen would have no chance of winning.

"We choose to surren..."

"Losing without a fight is simply too boring. Do put up a bit of a fight, we would also like to have a taste of victory."

Ainz interrupted Shasuryu, not allowing him to continue.

So blatantly, he would make an example out of us, this bastard.

Zaryusu spat out those words in his head. However, he understood that making such a mask was correct.

Ainz did not feel the slightest rage from having the troops destroyed in the experiment. However, there was a chance that rule would not go well since there was truth of defeat. Especially when the lizardmen placed emphasis on strength.

That was why he had to show a pressurising strength.

What that meant was that in a moment the opponent would be carrying out a live sacrifice.

It would be a performance, eradicating the rebellious lizardmen.

"That is all that I wish to say. Then, four hours later, do your best to enjoy it."

"Please wait a minute— will this ice melt away?"

Regardless of who won or lost, with the lake frozen, the lizardmen would find it very difficult to survive. The ice was not thick, but the cold that accompanied it was fierce. Touching it was inviting death from the cold.

“... Ah, I almost forgot.”

He forgot. He replied in such a carefree manner. No, actually, Zaryusu understood that from Ainz’s perspective it was not important. It was natural. From the perspective of such a strong existence, a cold of this level was nothing much.

“I only wished not to dirty myself with the wetlands mud as I walked, which is why, after returning to the shore, the magic effect will be dispelled.”

“What!”

Zaryusu and Shasuryu swallowed in surprise.

What did this monster say—

He did not want to be dirtied by the mud so he froze the lake?

This was no longer at the level of being hard to believe.

The opponent’s strength was simply too overwhelming, even able to easily change the force of nature, and furthermore for such a silly reason.

So it turned out that they were opposing such a powerful being— Zaryusu and Shasuryu both felt the same fear as a child would being all alone.

“Until next time, lizardmen—”

After Ainz decided that he had said everything he wanted to say, he lightly waved his hand and turned around. He had no more interest. That was what his attitude said.

“Goodbye, Mr. Lizardmen.”

“Farewell, lizardmen.”

The two silent girls behind him, said so, and followed behind Ainz.

“[Freedom Granted]. Then, try to enjoy it as best you can, lizardmen.”

The demon left behind spoke kindly, and also turned his back and walked.

Zaryusu and Shasuryu who were left behind stayed in the mud, they no longer had any energy to stand. The extreme cold no longer caused any pain. The shock they received in their hearts was too strong.

However, they watched as the group of monsters silently left them.

“Damn it...”

Shasuryu cursed in a low voice, quite unlike his personality, and contained in it was a mix of many emotions.

The two were welcomed back by the various tribe chiefs who had climbed on top of the mud wall in order to avoid the cold gas. Zenberu, Crusch, the chiefs of Small Fang and Razor Tail.

There were no other lizardmen in the surroundings.

Possibly, this was arranged because they had already considered early on that there were some matters which needed to be discussed in confidentiality. Shasuryu roughly thought that this was the case, and that there was no need to conceal it any further. He then directly informed everybody of what he had gathered about the progression of that meeting that hardly could be called a proper negotiation.

Nobody had too much of a reaction, except for being slightly alarmed, towards Shasuryu's explanation which was said in a heavy tone. They were most likely like this because they had probably predicted the conclusion of the negotiation from a long while back.

“Understood... then the ice will melt, right? If it does not melt, then we won't be able to fight even if we wanted to.”

“Not a problem. The opponent said that the magic would be dispelled.”

“Was this an exchange brought about by the negotiation?”

Towards the question posed by the Small Fang Tribe chief, Shasuryu did not reply, but merely smiled a little. Seeing that reaction, and understanding what it meant, the tribe chief of the Small Fang Tribe shook his head disheartedly.

“When you were heading to the negotiations, we conducted an investigation... and discovered the shadows of enemies inside of the lake which

look like skeleton soldiers. We fear that they are in a formation surrounding us and awaiting orders.”

“I do not think... our opponent... plans to let us go.”

“The opponent was quite serious, so this means...”

“That is only speculation.”

The four who had not participated in the negotiations gave a long sigh. The conclusion that they had reached should also be a belief that what would follow was a live sacrificial ritual.

“Then what shall we do?”

“... Mobilise all warrior class lizardmen, and also... the ones here...”

“Older brother... can you permit only five people to participate?”

Out of the corner of his eye, Zaryusu saw the puzzled expression on Crusch’s face. He continued, appealing towards all of the male lizardmen including his older brother.

“If the opponent’s objective is to demonstrate his own powerful strength, then lizardmen shouldn’t be exterminated completely. Therefore, we need an individual who is able to lead, a central figure to bring together all of the survivors. If all of the people here were to lose their lives, it would be a huge loss for the future of lizardmen.”

“... That is a valid point. Isn’t that right, Shasuryu.”

“Hmm, Zaryusu... is correct.”

The two tribe chiefs alternatively looked at Zaryusu and Crusch, then both expressed their agreement.

“— There’s nothing unacceptable with that; I also agree.”

After the approval of the final tribe chief Zenberu, Shasuryu could not find any reasons to refuse his younger brother’s request.

“Our decision is thus settled then. I have also thought about it, that it is necessary to have someone survive to lead and bring together the tribes— Crusch should be very suitable to carry out this responsibility. Her albinism may

perhaps be a hindrance, but her abilities as a druid are indispensable.”

“Wait a moment. I also want to fight together!”

Crusch understood the content of the words and cried out. Why was she being left behind now.

She came here, decided to fight such an existence, and had prepared herself to lose her life. Then why.

Those thoughts caused her to shout out.

“Furthermore, if we were to leave one person behind, wouldn’t leaving behind Shasuryu be better? He is the most trusted tribe leader amongst us!”

“And that is exactly why we cannot leave him behind. The opponent’s objective is to demonstrate overwhelming force, probably in hopes that we will despair, so that we will submit to his authority easier. However, what would happen if there was someone amongst the survivors they could pin their hopes on, hmm?”

“And... amongst the tribe chiefs present, the one with the lowest popularity is Crusch.”

Crusch was speechless. It was an indisputable fact that she as an albino had the lowest popularity.

Knowing that nothing she said would convince them, Crusch fixated on Zaryusu.

“I also want to go together. When you called me here, you had already decided let me make my own decision, so why do you still say such words?”

“... Because at that time, everybody would very likely all be killed, but now we have a relatively large opportunity to allow one person to survive.”

“Don’t joke with me!”

The air was shaking as if it were echoing Crusch’s anger. Because of her agitated emotions, the sound of the mud wall being slapped numerous times could be heard as Crusch’s tail went into an uncontrollable frenzy.

“—Zaryusu, you convince her. See you again in four hours’ time.”

Shasuryu threw down these words before departing quickly with long strides, followed by the sound of shattering ice and splashing water. Three tribe chiefs jumped down the mud wall and followed Shasuryu. Zenberu also had his back towards the two as he waved his hand gently to give his regards.

After seeing them off, Zaryusu turned to face Crusch.

“Crusch, please understand.”

“How can I understand! And it is not a given that you will lose! If you had the support of my druid powers, perhaps you may win!”

This sentence was so hollow that even Crusch who said it did not believe in it herself.

“I do not wish for my loved female lizardmen to be killed. Please fulfil this foolish male lizardman’s desire.”

Crusch showed a pained expression, and hugged Zaryusu.

“You’re too selfish!”

“Sorry...”

“You might die.”

“Uh huh...”

Indeed, the chance of surviving was incredibly low. No, rather it could be said with certainty that there was no chance of surviving.

“In just one short week, you’ve already captured my heart, yet you still tell me to watch helplessly as you get killed?”

“Um...”

“Meeting you was my stroke of luck, but also my misfortune.”

Crusch who was hugging Zaryusu’s torso tightened her grip, as if she had no intentions of letting go.

Zaryusu made no noise.

What should he say? What could he say? His thoughts all along had been stuck on the same problem.

After a period of time, Crusch raised her head, with her expression filled with determination.

Zaryusu felt uncomfortable in his heart as he sensed that Crusch would be adamant about coming along. At this moment, Crusch spoke a few words concisely to Zaryusu.

“—Get me pregnant.”

“—Hah?”

“Come quick!”

Being pulled by Crusch, Zaryusu began walking.

Chapter 50: War | Part 10

Ainz's main base was the fortress that Aura was constructing— the place that Cocytus visited yesterday.

As there was the goal of making a fort, one was made there, however as time was lacking, there was not much progress. With the room Cocytus was in as the centre, several other rooms were made. If viewed from outside, it had the shape of living quarters but was quite shoddy.

Faint construction noises could still be heard in the distance.

As Ainz looked around the room, he moved his gaze to Aura behind him who was looking down.

To welcome Ainz, the room was decorated with things. He could feel the effort put into this. However, if compared to the 9th Floor of Nazarick, it was course extremely lacking.

Aura was probably embarrassed about that.

Well, from Ainz, who was originally a normal person, this was not anything important.

“My apologies Aura, for insisting on using this place. Do not mind the details, I have high praise for what you have accomplished. If this is made by you, then it is as good as Nazarick.”

“... Yes.”

Aura slightly widened her eyes. *She does not feel complemented huh*, Ainz thought. Since he could think of no better words, he looked at the surroundings to move on.

The smell of fresh timber still lingered here.

Normally, instead of this place that had absolutely no defences, returning to Nazarick was unquestionably safer. Without defensive magic, it was like a house made of paper in a way. But on the flip side, Ainz was using himself as bait to

lure in the big fishes.

There was a large distance between here and the lake, so the ones that could chase them here — if they existed — would be players from YGGDRASIL, or people at that level. This meant that the purpose of building this place was to bait the enemies targeting Nazarick to reveal themselves.

It was dangerous of course, but Ainz felt the risk was necessary to achieve this goal.

Ainz's gaze stopped on one white chair placed in the middle of the room. It was beautiful and white, and was a first class work of art. Its back was tall, and was quite massive. At this amazing workmanship, the room's evaluation went up.

"...That is?"

The chair placed in the room was 'that'. While he did not need to hear an answer—

"It's bit plain, but I have prepared a throne."

The one answering confidently was the subordinate following behind him— Demiurge.

That's what I thought

, Ainz said to himself in his mind and asked a further question.

"— What bones did you use?"

"Bones from all sorts of beasts. The best parts are from beasts like Griffon and Wyvern."

"... I see."

Yes.

That was a throne made from countless bones. It wasn't in the logistics list of goods they brought from Nazarick, so it was something Demiurge made outside. No matter how he looked at it, skulls from humans or demi-humans were definitely used too.

Sit on that,

Ainz hesitated slightly. But his subordinate had put in effort to prepare it, it would be difficult to reject it. Is there any reason he could use that won't cause complaints—

Ainz snapped his fingers after thinking about it.

“... Shalltear. I will give you the punishment for what you had done right now. That's right... I will punish you with shame.”

“Yes!”

Shalltear who was suddenly named was a bit surprised.

“Kneel with your head bowed over there, and put your hands on the floor.”

“Yes!”

Shalltear walked to the place Ainz pointed at— which was the middle of the room and did as she was told with a baffled face.

“Hmm.”

Ainz walked up to Shalltear and sat on her back.

“... Ainz, Ainz-sama!”

The surprised Shalltear could only made exhale while whispering ‘Hans-sama’. She was shaken and stiff from fear when Ainz sat on her back.

“You are now a chair, understand?”

“Yes!”

Ainz shifted his gaze from Shalltear whose voice was getting shrilled, onto Demiurge.

“— Sorry Demiurge, that's how it is.”

“I see! This is a chair customized specifically for the Supreme Master! As expected of Ainz-sama. I would never have thought of that!”

“Is, is that so...”

In the face of the glittering respect shown on Demiurge was expressing, Ainz averted his face, not understanding why he was smiling so brilliantly.

Shalltear suddenly fidgeted, adjusting herself for Ainz to sit more

comfortably. This made Ainz look down at the back of Shalltear's head with a strange sense of unease.

Her breathing was ragged.

It must be heavy for her.

Under Ainz was the slim back of Shalltear who looked to be fourteen. A grown man was sitting on the back of this young girl. Realizing how perverted, shameful and cruel that was, Ainz felt he might have gone too far.

Shalltear was a NPC created by his companion in the past. Even Peroronchino wouldn't abuse her like this. This action was akin to soiling the memories of his past comrades. It was foolish to think of this as a self-punishment.

"Shalltear, does it hurt?"

Ainz was planning to say 'if that is so, let's end this'. Shalltear looked up with a face blushing with passion, her expression full of pleasure.

"It's not painful at all! This is like a reward!"

She breathed out the strange heat that accumulated in her body, and her eyes reflected Ainz's face. Her glistening tongue licked her lips, and left a seductive luster. Her body squirmed like a snake.

No matter how he looked at it, flames of lust were burning.

"...Uwaa."

"—Ah."

Ainz slowly stood up. Shalltear had an expression of surprise when that pleasant weight left her.

The figure of Ainz drawing away drew a painful voice from behind him. Shaking that off, Ainz walked to Aura.

"Aura. Sit on that chair please."

"Eh? It's ok? Yes!"

With a cruel and childish smile, Aura ran. She plopped herself on top of the surprised Shalltear.

“Gu!”

While Aura’s body was small, with her equipment and speed, it was quite the burden. It was to the point that Shalltear had a small groan.

No more. While having such an atmosphere, Ainz faced the white throne.

“...Demiurge. I shall sit on your chair.”

“—Understood.”

Demiurge laughed happily. In comparison, Shalltear had an expression of despair.

“...Shalltear, I said that this was punishment. If you enjoy it, I will be fine.”

“I apologise! So, one more chance!”

While Aura was on top of her, Shalltear panicky begged. Ainz gazed upon his subordinate, feeling troubled from the bottom of his heart. He then whispered.

Peroronchino, what a perverted setting this is.

“Give up, Shalltear... Well then, let’s move on to the serious topic. Did we intimidate them?”

“I think it was perfect, Ainz-sama.”

“Exactly, just look at the lizardmen’s faces.”

At Shalltear’s, who was still sat on by Aura, with great despair, words, Ainz had a small smile. He could not read the changes of the lizardmen’s faces. While they resembled humans more than lizards, their expressions were different from humans. Of course, it could have been that their representatives were skilled in negotiations.

“Is that so. Then the first phase to awe them with might is a success.”

Ainz exhaled in relief.

As expected of an Overrank magic while could only be used thrice per day. It was one of the thirty that Ainz knew, <The Creation>. If they were not surprised at all, then he would be lost.

“Demiurge, how long would it take to find out exactly how large the frozen

area is?”

“We have already started to do so, but progress is slow as the area is wider than expected. Please grant us more time.”

“I see....I was too quick, forgive me.”

“Of course.”

Raising a hand to stop Demiurge who was about to knee, Ainz placed his bone hand on his chin and thought.

It affected a larger range than expected. Well, the experiment succeeded.

<The Creation> was an Overrank magic that could change the terrain itself. In YGGDRASIL, it was used to guard against the heat of volcanoes or the cold of freezing lands. Of course, it would be used to give damage like what Ainz did.

It was possible to show their might without using Overrank magic.

Unrelated to this deployment, Ainz had always wanted to perform this experiment in determining the area of effect. <The Creation> was a magic that had an amazingly large area of effect, and could cover the entire 8th floor in Ainz’s experiment inside Nazarick. But it wasn’t clear what effect it would have in the world outside.

In YGGDRASIL the spell effect could cover an ‘Area’, but how big would an ‘Area’ be in this world? Ainz wanted to find out. If it could cover an entire plain, that would be too big.

Similarly, freezing the entire lake was going overboard. Care should be taken when using Overrank magic. Ainz decided, and etched it in his heart.

“Aura, how is our security net?”

“Yes! We have deployed the undead assigned by Ainz-sama to secure a four kilometer radius area. But there has been no signs of anything special coming in so far.”

“I see... The enemy might be hiding from detection as they draw close, what about the countermeasures against that?”

“There are no problems. With Shalltear’s cooperation, we have sent out

undead proficient in reconnaissance.”

“Splendid.”

Being praised by Ainz, Aura smiled as she still sat on Shalltear. Her depressed expression was gone without a trace.

Moving his gaze away from Aura and fixing it in the air, Ainz breathed a small sigh of relief.

With such vigilance, they would not be hit by surprise attacks, like if they were suddenly hit by Overrank magic

Of course, even if they were hit by Overrank magic from afar, they would only attack if they could be wiped out from one attack.

Ainz thought until there, recalled one person who died, and looked in his direction. The receiver of his gaze was Brain who had become a vampire. He entered the room last, and stood in a corner, away from attention.

None of the Guardians paid attention to Brain. The existence of Brain did not enter any of the Guardians’ eyes—-Aura was weird though.

Basically, that was what his existence was worth to the Guardians. If he did not do anything rude, he would be left alone.

Wondering if it was fine to leave Brain like that, stopped thinking about such troublesome things.

“...Well, fine.”

Most of the information he had was gained. So, the current worth of Brain, was that he might be of help, but not much. The reason why he was brought this time was due to the expectation of knowledge as a resident of this world. If he died, he died. The end.

More importantly, he did not pledge his existence to Ainz. It was truth that he felt no need to care for Ainz.

Thinking that, a strange thing became mixed in Ainz’s gaze.

It was obedience.

Despite the object of his loyalty, Shalltear being used as a chair, he did not

make any special movements.

What was he thinking.

Ainz thought about that for a little, and immediately dismissed it. It did not matter.

“Then as part of the objective, should we clean up the lizardmen?”

“No, there is no need.”

At Demiurge’s question, Ainz waved his hand left to right.

Ainz did not particularly like harming people or killing them. It simply could not be helped if lives were lost, or were necessary sacrifices.

Since Ainz had no reason to kill all the lizardmen, he felt that there was no need to do so.

“However....Well, we should kill the strong to make it easier to rule them.”

“Then, Ainz-sama. Should we kill the ones who fought with the Lich and Blood Meat Hulks?”

“...Yes. They seemed to be strong.”

Ainz recalled the scene in the mirror.

“By the way, there was the white one among them right? A white snake is a good symbol, and white lizardmen seem rare. Let her live and capture her.”

“Understood. Then I shall order Cocytus to do so.”

“Please do. It would be nice if we could recover the dead bodies. The things made with and without bodies. I feel that the same Death Knights made using corpses were stronger. There might be a difference when using the corpses of lizardmen.”

“Understood. I shall make preparations to recover the corpses.”

“Then, my undead will do that.”

Shalltear, who was still Aura’s chair, proposed herself for the job.

“Hmm. Then I shall leave this to Shalltear. However, the recovery is for last. Stealing the corpses....It might be a nuisance and I apologise.”

“Yes. Then I shall make preparations.”

“Now. That is it.—Now, shall we take a look at them before we attack.”

Ainz ordered Brain to bring the mirror hanging on the wall.

While thinking that it was strange for Brain to be obediently following his order, Ainz understood that it was Shalltear’s orders, and faced the mirror.

The bird’s eye view of the lizardmen’s village appeared on the mirror of remote viewing, with tiny spots moving around.

Ainz reached out towards the mirror and gestured, changing the scenery on the mirror.

The first time of course, was to zoom in.

The sight of the lizardmen working hard to prepare for war was shown completely.

“Futile efforts.”

Shalltear, whose back was still being sat on by Aura, made a condescending voice at the scene. Demiurge looked at the lizardmen with kind eyes.

“Let me see, where are they. It’s hard to tell the lizardmen apart”

Ainz searched for the six lizardmen he had seen in the recording with a frown on his face.

If there was a large disparity in their appearance, they could be differentiated, but if there was only a small one, they looked the same. Especially when he only saw them for a short time.

“Hmmm— found the armored one. That’s the one that threw rocks, right? Next, the buster sword is here. The difference is too minute... Found the one with the prominent arm”

After observing that, Ainz kept shifting the image on the mirror.

“... I don’t see the white lizardman and the one holding the scimitar.”

“Erm... the one called Zaryusu?”

“Ah, right, that’s his name.”

Ainz recalled the lizardman who had come forth to negotiate at Aura's prompt.

"Could he be inside the houses?"

"Probably."

But the mirror of remote viewing wasn't able to see inside buildings. That was the case, normally.

"Demiurge, Infinity Haversack please."

"By your will."

Demiurge bowed and moved to the table in the corner of the room and picked up the Infinity Haversack. He presented it to Ainz respectfully. Ainz took out one scroll from within.

He then activated the magic within the scroll.

An invisible ethereal sensory organ was conjured. The sensory organ can't penetrate magical barriers, but it can pass through normal walls regardless of their thickness. If it couldn't get in, it meant that a powerful enemy they had to be wary of was there.

After linking the sensory organ with the mirror of remote viewing so the Guardians could also see, Ainz started maneuvering the sensory organ that looked like a floating eyeball.

"Let's take a look inside the house."

Ainz chose an old broken house nearby and moved the sensory organ in. Even if the interior was dark, it would show up as bright as day once the organ got in.

In that room, a white lizardman was being pressed down with its tail lifted up. A black lizardman was riding on top.

They didn't understand what was going on in the very beginning.

The next instant, that changed to confusion as to why they are doing that thing at a time like this.

Ainz then moved the sensory organ outside silently.

“...”

Feeling troubled, Ainz placed his palm on his face. The Guardians by his side didn't know what to say and looked at each other.

“—

What an unpleasant bunch. Cocytus will be attacking soon and they still have the nerve to do this?!”

“That's right, that's right!”

“Demiurge is right. Let's teach them a lesson!”

Ainz lift a hand to stop the chatter of the Guardians.

“... Forget it, they will be dead soon. If they understand this, then this is natural”

Ainz nodded to affirm his own opinion.

“You are right!”

“If it's only this much, we can let them off~”

“Right, right!”

“... All of you be quiet.”

After all the Guardians shut their mouths, seeing them Ainz sighed.

“...I sort of lost motivation. Well, there is no one to be wary of in the lizardman village, we can think that now. However, do not underestimate them. They might come at us. If anyone is caught in Aura's security net, all Guardians and myself will move out.”

“Understood. We have arranged with Nazarick, and if their numbers are few we shall attack. If there are more or equal, we shall use our subordinates to buy time while we retreat.”

“Hmm, yes. When we do not know the opponent's power, I do not want you to be hurt.”

It was a plan that he had hesitated on, but Ainz's plan was to use his subordinates and only fight if they could win. His order of 'should Cocytus fight

a person he cannot defeat, escape', was a part of this. Losing the Guardians was a foolish act.

If there were Yggdrasil players were there, then they would not keep the promise of washing their hands off the village. If they cannot become allies then they would be destroyed. Even if he had to use the 8th Floor.

Ainz brushed off the feeling of guilt from breaking the promise.

If it was for a more important purpose, lies were fine.

"...Now, when it times to watch the show, shall we enjoy the sight of Cocytus battling. Brain. Bring chairs for everyone. It is enjoyable to watch a fight with everyone sitting on chairs."

"Yes. Understood."

"...Do you know where the chairs are."

"I shall ask the ones outside."

"...True, then please."

Brain deeply bowed and left. Nodding his head slightly in acknowledgement, Ainz uninterestedly gazed at the mirror.

The lizardmen were frantically preparing.

Ainz smiled. At the scene of useless resistance, one could not be sure whether his thoughts were of sadness or affection.



Brain made sure to close the door silently. He focused this much for the first time in his life, so as to not attract the attention of the ones inside.

Closing the door, once the space was isolated, Brain breathed a deep sigh of relief. At the same time, his body lost its tension.

"Fuu."

The reason why he said nothing despite what was being done to the person he gave everything to, Shalltear. It was simple and clear.

It was fear.

Should he say that his abilities of a living being were extremely stimulated. This was as Undead mostly had no reaction to negative emotions like fear.

He understood that the existence that ruled the giant dungeon Nazarick was in no way weak. Even his master Shalltear, was a vampire, a superior existence that he could not even hit. The master of Shalltear could be in no way weak.

However, there was no one who could not fear when shown that large and wide-ranging magic.

That was more than a monster.

No, a monster was an understatement.

That was an existence that could be called god.

To Brain, the existence known as Ainz was just that.

Honestly speaking.

Brain Unglaus felt relief in his fortune. This was as he had moved from the human camp to the Nazarick camp. At the same time, he felt sad. A sadness that was directed at all of the living beings in this world, the existences that would be exploited.



Four hours passed in a flash.

The lizardmen warriors were already gathering in the front gate of the village— in the wetlands where the ice was melting. After the intense battle several days ago, there wasn't many lizardmen warriors left.

They numbered 316.

Lizardmen that were not warriors would not be taking part because Shasuryu said "The enemy is few, having too many people will only get in the way".

It seemed reasonable at first, but it didn't hold water.

Zaryusu stood far from the lizardmen, watching the gathering lizardmen warriors.

Everyone had warpaint representing their ancestors on them, their face

showed will as tough as steel. They seemed to think they wouldn't lose.

The lizardmen around them cheered the warriors on. In that group, expressions of unease could be seen clearly.

To keep the anxiety in his heart from showing, Zaryusu worked hard to show a poker face in front of the other lizardmen, keeping them away from the truth of this fight being a sacrificial offering to Ainz.

Yes. They had no chance of winning this fight. The hidden meaning in Shasuryu's earlier words was 'We have no chance of winning. So I want to end this with the lowest number of sacrifices'.

The ones who knew this were only the chiefs.

It was fact that in this battle, Ainz wanted the lizardmen to definitely face defeat. So the lizardmen had to act out a complete defeat. If they did not, everyone else might be killed. Basically, this was a necessary sacrifice. However, it was fact that if the chiefs were told that they were betraying the warriors, they had no words to refute that.

They believed that most of the lizardmen assembled would die. Zaryusu could comfort himself in the fact that the sacrifices were small. However, this did not clear the hesitation trapped in his heart.

Zaryusu averted his eyes from the lizardmen and glared at the enemy territory with sharp eyes.

The skeletons were in the same position as before, not a step awry. The figures of the fully armoured knights were nowhere to be found. They were probably hidden in the forest somewhere.

The existence known as Cocytus could not be seen. Neither could the figure of the magic caster, Ainz. However, he knew that they were watching from somewhere.

The sound of a large creature moving in the wetlands could be heard from behind the anxious Zaryusu—

“— Hey, Zaryusu.”

— Zenberu greeted nonchalantly as usual.

“Zenberu.”

“Yo.” Zenberu took a look around the surroundings, and asked Zaryusu. “Crusch does not seem to be here, but from your expression I can sort of guess.”

“...Well.”

“Then you persuaded her? It seemed impossible though.”

Zenberu changed the subject in a light hearted manner, but Zaryusu had no means to reply. At most it was a vague one.

“Various things....Yes, various.”

“Hmm.”

Zenberu made no further attempt to question Zaryusu who was staring out in the distance, but instead gazed at the lizardmen.

“Our morale seems to be at its peak.”

Zaryusu also gazed at the warrior class lizardmen.

The lizardmen had not changed from earlier, and were still waiting for the time, filled with confidence. These lizardmen who did not know what their opponent was.

“Yes it is, it will be great if it keeps at this level in the face of the powerful enemy, Cocytus...”

Zaryusu’s face changed at Zaryusu’s words.

“...We will be meeting Cocytus soon....What do you think he is like?”

“You mean his appearance....I can’t imagine it.”

Even when he considered the subordinates of Ainz, he could not picture it. He felt that a giant something would be suitable, but Ainz did not bring anyone large.

“I think he’s a dragon. What about it?”

“...Ah, I see. Possibly.”

Zaryusu thought that the strongest race, the dragons, was correct.

Normally having a dragon as a subordinate was in the realm of heroes, the monster known as Ainz could easily do it.

Even if someone told him that silver-haired girl was a polymorphed dragon, he felt that he would accept it.

“I know right. I have never seen a dragon before. Having him as my last opponent is not bad.”

Zaryusu was about to reply to Zenberu, he noticed the figure of a lizardman, and changed his words.

“—It’s brother.”

“Yeah. Oh? It’s time?”

Shasuryu appeared at the main gate, and all eyes fell on him and the two swamp elementals beside him.

Crusch was absent because she exhausted all her mana to summon the swamp elementals. After having cast several long time defensive buffs and summoned the swamp elementals, the intense mana toll made her immobile.

When the two of them left the room, Crusch already told Zaryusu she will lose consciousness from overusing mana, and that this will be the last time they see each other.

Zaryusu felt slightly lonely, and looked at the village. The target of his gaze was where he thought Crusch was.

“Oi, they’re about finished.”

Zenberu nudged Zaryusu’s ribs. At that, Zaryusu came back to his senses.

Welcoming the end of Shasuryu speech, the morale of the surrounding lizardmen was raised to the maximum, and they were filled with vigour.

“—It’s about time. Warriors, advance!”

Following Shasuryu and the two swamp elementals, the lizardmen began slowly walking.

They moved away from the village to avoid collateral damage to it.

Zaryusu and Zenberu were the rear guard.

Zaryusu turned back and looked at the village. At the lizardmen on top of the shabby mud wall, believing that they would come back safely.

Zaryusu made a small sigh. He believed that he would not be coming back.
And they began walking. To fight with Cocytus.

Chapter 51: War | Part 11

The lizardmen traversed the wetlands, forming up between the enemy skeleton army and the village.

There was no particular formation, the lizardmen simply gathered randomly as they waited for the upcoming battle. The only clear arrangement was that the various tribe chiefs, Zaryusu and the two swamp elementals were standing in front.

Among the lizardmen, there was the delicate atmosphere of tension in the air.

The skeletons suddenly banged on their shields and marched forward.

If the timing was even slightly off, it would just sound like random noise from a marching army, but the movements of the 5000 of them were in sync and the sound was as one. In a different setting, this performance would be worthy of applause and praise.

While the sound drew the attention of the lizardmen, to the rear of the skeletons— several trees in the forest fell.

The trunks of trees were not thin. They could be called large trees. Someone cut them down.

This caused a commotion among the lizardmen. The sensible and the quick witted ones were the first to notice.

As they couldn't see how it was done, it might be possible that this was a handiwork of several beings. However, the timing between the felling of each tree was too tidy. The feeling that this was the work of just one being.

In addition, there was no shaking of the tree, proof that a blade was cut into it, before it fell. It seemed impossible, but it was being cut down in one slice

Bisecting trees.

Just how strong did one have to be to make this possible.

The sounds of the skeletons banging on their shields and the sound of trees falling reached the lizardmen.

Anxious feelings welled up. This was expected, how could anyone keep calm in such a situation.

Even Zenberu, Zaryusu and Shasuryu were shaken.

Moments later, the one opening a path in the forest revealed itself. At the same time, the banging of the shields stopped.

It was a smooth blue mass. If not for the thick clouds, there was no telling how bright his reflection would be.

That large body of 250cm in height looked like an insect standing on two legs. The appearance was like that of an ant or mantis, a hybrid born of a twisted devil. His face also looked like the mix of an ant and mantis.

Its hard exoskeleton had a frosty air about it, sparkling like diamond dust.

It had a spiked tail that was twice its height and powerful jaws that looked powerful enough to chew off a human arm in one bite.

He had four clawed arms with shiny gauntlets gracing each one. He was not holding any weapons, so they wondered how the trees fell. The questions never ended.

A round golden necklace was worn around its neck.

The powerful being made its appearance.

So this is Cocytus?

Zaryusu's heart raced and his breathing became ragged.

Their instinct was rampant, telling them they were in front of something they could not defeat. That they should run away.

None of the lizardmen spoke. Their eyes were drawn to the monster that showed itself, unable to shift their gaze away. They understood that if they did, it would be the end.

Several unconscious stepped back. No, not several. Almost all the lizardmen did.

“Do not fear!”

Shasuryu’s shout of rage rang. Many lizardmen seemed to have electricity run through their shaking bodies.

“Do not pull back! Warriors! If we defeat that, it’s our victory! Do not fear and face forward!”

The lizardmen regained their fighting spirit. However, Zaryusu understood. There was a slight wavering of fear in his brother’s voice.

Cocytus drew near slowly.

He walked into the wetlands, passing the skeletons with swagger—

Cocytus stopped about thirty metres before the lizardmen, on top of a small knoll. Cocytus then moved his insect like face on his long neck. He seemed to be searching for someone.

Zaryusu felt Cocytus’ gaze rested on him for a brief moment.

“—Alright, Ainz-sama is watching, so show your might..”

Cocytus extended one of his arm, bending a thin finger, gesturing at them to come at him. Facing the taunt of the enemy, Shasuryu yelled at the top of his voice.

“Charge—!”

“Warrghhhh!”

While roaring from the bottom of their hearts, 321 people, (316 warriors, 4 chiefs and Zaryusu) ran towards Cocytus across the wetlands.

Cocytus looked coldly at the warriors charging him.

“...There are many. I should first cut down the numbers.”

Cocytus released his sealed aura.

[Frost Aura] was a skill of the Knight of Niflheim class. That enhanced extreme cold instantly covered a 100 metre radius circle.

From the extreme cold, the sudden change in temperature, the atmosphere screamed.

As if a shockwave occurred, the wall of air from Cocytus smashed into Zaryusu's body. The winds rapidly stole his body temperature, and an extreme cold covered Zaryusu's body.

A sharp pain assaulted Zaryusu.

There was not much physical shock, but the change in the air, the extreme cold caused a pain that could rival it. It penetrated through Frost Pain's cold resistance, and damaged him. To those without it, this place was hell.

The cold damage was not as bad as the ability of Frost Pain which could be used thrice per day [Icy Burst]. It could be described as half of that.

However, compared to Frost Pain's Icy Burst which was instantaneous, this extreme cold was like a poison covering their body every second. As time passed, having this cold penetrate their body would bring them close to death.

Then, attack or retreat.

There were only two ways to deal with it. And there was no way to retreat from the beginning. If they did, then everything would disappear.

“—Goho!”

Attack. Zaryusu was about to shout that, when the cold entered his lungs and choked him. The pain in his throat calmed Zaryusu down.

Zaryusu and the chiefs had already made their decisions. However they brought the ignorant lizardmen here. A strong sense of guilt attacked Zaryusu.

The opponent's goal was not to annihilate them. It was just to show an overwhelming difference in strength.

Then, just this should have shown that. If Zaryusu and the chiefs sacrificed themselves, it might be enough. It might be a naive thought, but the thought surfaced in Zaryusu's heart.

Originally he naturally understood that it would be wrong to leave Shasuryu behind to command.

However, Zaryusu changed the words he should have said.

Of course, this action was wrong.

He understood that this was sitting on the fence. He understood everyone gathered here, the village, were all sacrifices. That was why they were gathered. However, he did not wish for any sacrifices.

If there was the possibility of no one dying, he would have wanted to choose that one.

That was why, he said this.

“Retreat! Retreat back!”

—However, it was too late.

The lizardmen heard his words, and started to retreat away from the pain. However, the radius of Cocytus’ Frost Aura was 100 metres. It was not a distance weak existences could pass.

Several metres. That was the limit of the lizardmen.

Firstly, their movements were dulled, and they fell into the cold water where ice seemed to be able to form. They had no ability to move, and only froze to death.

The 316 warrior class lizardmen. All of them fell weakly. And they easily welcomed death.

Yes, even approaching Cocytus was not forgiven.

“Hmm. About this.”

Following Cocytus’ bored voice, the freezing cold disappeared. As if everything up to now was a lie. However, the corpses of the 316 was the proof that it occurred.

Only five lizardmen could still move.

They were the five strongest people among the lizardmen.

They immediately began moving as one.

A rock flew through the air. A lizardman in full body armor led the charge with two lizardmen following behind. The swamp elementals moved slowly behind the two lizardmen with their bodies that had cracked in the cold. The last lizardman at the back kept chanting spells.

The first strike was the rock aimed at Cocytus' throat. However, that attack was meaningless because—

“—The equipment on all we Guardians provides absolute resistance against projectiles.”

—An invisible barrier seemed to deflected the rock.

The leading lizardman followed next, wearing one of the four treasures passed down from generation to generation— White Dragon Bone.

It was tough enough to block Frost Pain which was also one of the four treasures, the hardest armor known to lizardmen.

Cocytus who was facing him drew a sword out of thin air.

As if the blade was already there.

The oodachi Cocytus drew was 200 centimetres in length, and the blade was 150 centimetres. It was the Royal Blade God Slayer. It was the sharpest of among the twenty one weapons Cocytus possessed.

He then slashed at the lizardman before him.

The blade that sliced through the air made the air howl— a calm sound. In a different situation, one might want to listen carefully to this clean sound.

After that sound, the body of the tribal chief split in half together with the armor, falling to the left and right into the wetlands.

Royal Blade God Slayer was not damaged after cleaving the hardest armor of the lizardmen.

The two lizardmen behind weren't fazed by the gruesome death of their comrade, attacking from either side with their weapons raised.

“Shyaa!”

On the right side was Zenberu's chop, powered by 'Iron Natural Weapon' and 'Iron Skin'. It was directed at full power towards Cocytus' face.

“Warrgghh!”

On the left side was Frost Pain, aimed at his abdomen.

This melee attack took advantage of the logic of long weapons being hard to use in close quarters.

And of course, that only applied to normal people.

Cocytus slightly turned and used his blade to block Zenberu's arm from the right. His movement was smooth and elegant, as if the weapon in his hand was a part of his body.

With the ability of 'Iron Skin', Zenberu was on par with steel in term of hardness. But the clash with the armor earlier showed how sharp Royal Blade God Slayer was.

The blade slid into his arm smoothly as if it was slicing through water.

As blood spurted from Zenberu's right stump, Cocytus' other hand was already pinching Frost Pain that was aimed at his abdomen.

"Ugghhhh!"

"— Oh, I see. This is a nice sword..."

"Tch!"

Zaryusu gave up on the Frost Pain that couldn't be moved and kicked Cocytus in the knee cap. Cocytus did not dodge and took the blow. In the end, it was Zaryusu who landed the blow that suffered intense pain.

It was the same sensation of kicking an iron wall with all your might.

"<Over Magic: Mass Cure Light Wounds>!"

After exhausting a large amount of mana, it enabled the use of higher tier magic that was not usually accessible— Shasuryu cast a mass healing spell boosted by magical enhancement.

"Fumu..."

Cocytus seemed intrigued as he stared at Shasuryu who used a spell modifier he did not know, but the two swamp elementals blocked his view. The swamp elementals moved in front of Zenberu, whose arm was regenerating from magic, and attacked Cocytus with their tentacles. Before their attacks even landed, Cocytus slashed at them impatiently.

As the swamp elementals crumbled into dust, Zaryusu's fist landed on Cocytus' solar plexus, abdomen and chest. And of course, the one injured was Zaryusu. The skin on his fist was torn and bleeding.

"Annoying."

Cocytus swung his spiked tail hard at Zaryusu's chest.

"Guuahhh!"

Zaryusu flew like a ball hit by a bat with a cracking sound, flying high and far before rolling onto the wetlands. He finally stopped after rolling on the wetlands, but the pain in his chest and the blood spilling from his throat made it hard to breathe.

The broken bones probably pierced his lungs, he couldn't breathe in even if he wanted to, feeling like he was under water. The warm liquid spilling from his throat made him want to throw up. Zaryusu looked at his chest and saw blood bleeding from his wounds that was gored by sharp spikes.

—Just one hit, he was in this state. If only took one hit. One hit caused him to be in a half-dead state....

Zaryusu felt like a fool for underestimating the sheer strength of Cocytus' existences. Zaryusu tried to breath with all his might glared with spirited eyes at Cocytus who might move in for the finishing blow.

"Since you still have the will to fight, I will return this to you."

Frost Pain was casual thrown next to Zaryusu, who was covered in mud. Cocytus ignored him, and faced the rest.

Shasuryu cast healing magic on Zenberu who had regenerated his arm but lost a lot of stamina.

Right before Cocytus reached them, another rock came flying at him to divert his attention— But it was in vain as it was deflected easily.

"— Irritating."

Cocytus mumbled and extended his arm at the 'Small Fang' chief.

"<Piercing Icicle>."

Dozens of icicles as thick as a human arm rained down in a wide area attack.

The lizardman who was within range was pierced by the icicles instantly.

One hit his chest, two hit his abdomen, one in his right thigh, all the icicles penetrated the lizardman's body easily.

The chief of 'Small Fang' — the lizardman with the best guerilla abilities fell dead into the wetlands like a puppet without strings.

"Waarrghhh!"

"<Over Magic: Mass Cure Light Wounds>!"

Zenberu rushed forth as Shasuryu once again cast healing magic. Zenberu was buying time for Zaryusu to recover.

He knew that this was rash and how insignificant he was before the might of Cocytus. Even so, Zenberu did not hesitate charging ahead.

When Zenberu got within range, Cocytus slashed with Royal Blade God Slayer casually.

That slash was faster than Zenberu's dynamic vision—

The speed was way faster than Zenberu's agility—

The sword easily cut Zenberu's body—

Blood gushed from the body of the decapitated Zenberu and he collapsed onto the wetlands. Moments later, the head fell onto the ground.

"... Well then, two left... I heard about your strength from Ainz-sama, so you two really are the ones to make it to the very end."

Cocytus, who had not moved a single step since the battle, looked at the remaining duo and swung his blade. White smog seemed to come out from the blade there was no blood on it. The movement was so graceful it seemed capable of ridding the world of everything.

Zaryusu who had recovered enough to stand up and Shasuryu who drew the large sword on his back. The two of them faced Cocytus with a pincer formation. Zaryusu took some blood that was bleeding from his wound and paint it on his face.

It looked like war paint that was used to summon the ancestors to descend upon them.

“— Little brother, how’s your wounds?”

“Not good, my injuries are thumping dully. I can still swing my sword a few times though.”

“Is that so... That should do right? Actually, my mana is exhausted, I will collapse if I am not careful.”

Shasuryu grinded his teeth, he was probably laughing. Zaryusu’s expression changed when he heard that.

“... Is that so. You are pushing yourself too, older brother.”

Zaryusu exhaled gently with a smile and relaxed his shoulder. His sword bearing arm drooped down.

In front of the strong Cocytus, this was a posture full of openings. The reason why he could do this, was because he believed that Cocytus would not attack.

Cocytus was strong. Because of this, he would not attack someone who was weaker than him.

This was the pride of the strong. And the arrogance caused by the strong.

Zaryusu took a deep breath, and looked at Cocytus. And he thought.

How strong.

He moved his gaze towards the decapitated Zenberu.

He felt nothing.

It was natural. When they fought with Cocytus, he believed that everyone would die.

Zaryusu and Shasuryu would die. In front of the absolutely strong, Cocytus, some level of strength had no meaning.

Even so—Zaryusu gripped Frost Pain.

An intense pain hit him in the chest, but Zaryusu tried his best to ignore it.

Don't ever give up hope until the very last moment— Zaryusu will keep wielding his sword.

From the very beginning, he knew there was no chance of winning.

Defeat was inevitable, but he couldn't just give up.

Giving up would mean conning countless lizardmen of their lives, lying to them that they would be victorious. Since there were lizardmen who believed this liar, he will not accept defeat.

Giving his all til the very last moment—

“I can still swing my sword!”

Zaryusu's roar echoed out loud.

The sound of Cocytus' teeth protruding out of his mouth clanking shut could be heard.

“A nice roar—”

Cocytus was probably laughing. That wasn't the sound of the powerful looking down on the weak, but that of a warrior acknowledging his equal.

“Very well, younger brother. Let's fight til the very end.”

Shasuryu laughed too. It was a laugh that was filled with pride for his brother, and one filled with the feeling of family.

“Okay... My apologies for keeping you waiting, Mr Cocytus.”

Cocytus merely shrugged in response to Shasuryu's words.

“Don't worry. Interrupting the last farewells of two brothers would be very rude. Prepare to die... Ah, it looks like you already did, didn't you?”

In the face of Zaryusu and Shasuryu who took a step forth, Cocytus swung his blade and said.

“I would normally fight with a weapon in each hand... I am not demeaning you, but you are not strong enough for me to do so.”

“Such a pity.”

“Absolutely right— Let's go!”

The two sprinted at Cocytus, splashing the waters in the wetlands.

The slight difference in the duo's timing made Cocytus puzzled.

The two did not come in at the same time, Shasuryu came in slightly earlier.

Did they mess up

, thinking that, Cocytus immediately rejected it. He knew that they were not that sort of people.

Suspecting the enemy had a scheme in mind, Cocytus waited eagerly for their attack.

The first to get into range was Shasuryu and Cocytus kept a close eye on him, wondering what he will do.

Shasuryu stopped right outside the attack range of Cocytus sword—

“<Earth Bind>!”

— He cast a spell.

Numerous chains made from mud flew at Cocytus and Zaryusu used this chance to charge. To make it harder for his enemy to gauge his attack range, Zaryusu hid Frost Pain behind his back.

Shasuryu announcing that he had exhausted his mana had been just a trick to deceive Cocytus.

No matter how hard Cocytus' exoskeleton was, Zaryusu should be able to break through by throwing everything he had behind a stabbing attack. Zaryusu who abandoned all defences in favor of offense will definitely yield a powerful attack.

Cocytus felt admiration for the bluff.

Normally, Cocytus might get constrained by the magical chains and be hit by Zaryusu who was attacking from behind.

However, they misjudged one thing.

Their opponent right now was the Guardian of Nazarick's fifth floor.

“... The spell cast by those with a level lower than mine won't break through

my defence.”

The mud chain bounced off before it could physically touch Cocytus, falling back into the wetlands like slabs of mud. Low tier magic couldn't penetrate Cocytus' magic defence.

<Icy Burst>

With a roar that came from behind his back, Cocytus was covered by a white fog around him.

Futile effort.

Cocytus, who was completely immune to frost attacks, simply embraced the gentle freezing breeze as he waited for Zaryusu and Shasuryu to get into range.

One breath later, the moment he was waiting for came. But Cocytus hesitated slightly.

He wondering if cutting off their heads was enough to stop them.

When facing Zaryusu who had abandoned his defense, decapitating him might not halt his attack. The image of a headless body charging him appeared in Cocytus' mind. If that was the case, he will take out the arms, then the head.

No, that is not a clean enough kill, I will finish him in one strike.

It was a mad rush completely ignoring Zaryusu's defenses.

To Cocytus, it was an extremely slow speed.

In the white fog, Cocytus reached for the black shadow, Zaryusu and Frost Pain which his fingers and pinched the blade. He stopped Zaryusu, and swung his sword.

And then, there was only one more left.

Cocytus who felt disappointed was about to swing his sword when he shifted his gaze.

I see.

“Warrghhh!”

From the cold air, a roar and a great sword came swinging down. It was a

strong blow that seem to blow away the fog.

Because it was a pincer attack, he needed to be prepared to be hit by one of them.

Cocytus needed to be wary of the stabbing attack from Frost Pain, but the threat of Shasuryu's cleaving sword was greater. This must be the true intention of the enemy, but—

“If you want to perform a sneak attack— you have to do it silently.”

On top of not hiding the sound of splashing, he did not hide of attack. Was there even a point in purposely getting damaged by the cold. Cocytus wondered. Or was it just useless floundering.

However, it was truth that the enemy had entered his attack range.

Since he was pinching Frost Pain, Zaryusu was not an enemy. Deciding so, Cocytus swung his sword.

One slash.

The greatsword and Shasuryu were cut into two.

And on the backswing, he aimed for Zaryusu—



When Cocytus was about to swing the Royal Blade God Slayer, he felt bored.

There were some among the strong that like to pick on the weak. Shalltear and Demiurge were two prime examples.

There were those who did not fight the weak.

And there were some that felt the weak were boring. Like Cocytus—

As Guardian of the 5th Floor, Cocytus was a warrior.

No, he was made as a warrior by the 41 Supreme Beings.

So to Cocytus, his joy was fighting. Yes, fighting. Her would never trample on it. He craved to be challenged, even if it was disadvantageous to him.

However, there was none. Of course, not much time had passed since he came to this world so it was too early to say there was none. However, seeing

that the human called Brain stood at the peak, Cocytus felt nothing but disappointment.

His movements were dull, his sword arm was bad, his weapon was trash.

How would one feel enjoyable fighting him.

This time, when he attacked the lizardmen village, he was first filled with expectation. However, when he was about to swing his sword for the second time, there was nothing left but disappointment. They were too weak.

Those that could satisfy Cocytus, were the Guardians like him, Sebas or his master. And perhaps the existences on the 8th Floor.

While filled with those thoughts, Cocytus used his cold eyes to see where his blade was about to cut off Zaryusu's neck.



Originally this battle should have ended.

Even if Zaryusu avoided Cocytus' attack, he should not have been able to defend himself.

However, the battle had not ended—

—At this moment, Cocytus' fingers pinching Zaryusu's sword slipped.

The surprised Cocytus checked his fingers, wondering why the sword that he pinched was sliding forth.

In the misty fog, Cocytus could see that his fingers and the sword were covered in a red liquid.

In an instant, Cocytus understood why his fingers slipped.

— *Blood?*

Cocytus was confused. When he tried to recall when this happened, he saw Zaryusu's face through the fog and understood.

The blood Zaryusu smeared on his face wasn't war paint. It was used to smear his sword. 'Icy Burst' wasn't meant to damage Cocytus or hide Shasuryu's whereabouts, it was to hide the blood on the sword. That was the reason he had hidden the sword behind his back too.

When Cocytus stopped Zaryusu's attack the first time, he used his fingers to pinch it. Zaryusu remembered that and bet on the slim chance it will happen again, setting up this scenario with all his wits.

—They of course had no intention of underestimating Cocytus.

However, if Cocytus had grasped the blade properly, this would not be possible. Even Cocytus could not completely hold Zaryusu's full spirited attack back with two fingers.

If the place he pinched it was slightly further away, Cocytus might have been able to do something, but at this distance, there was nothing he could do.

Cocytus thought.

Most importantly— this was not possible without Shasuryu.

Shasuryu probably didn't know what Zaryusu's plan was.

But the older brother trusted his younger brother completely and sacrificed himself. The meaningless sneak attack and roar was all in the hope of diverting an instant of attention away from his younger brother.

And it was really just an instant.

In that brief moment in time— as Zaryusu was squeezing Frost Pain forth with all his might— the lower jaw of Cocytus moved.

“Amazing—”

The sword slashing at Cocytus— was deflected easily. The body with a faint blue glow did not even have a scratch on it.

“— Sorry to say, I possess special ability to temporarily nullify the attack of low tier weapons. If I activate this ability, your attacks will be meaningless.”

Cocytus intentionally took half a step back, splashing the mud which soiled his beautiful blue body.

It was just a tiny step back.

A step back didn't mean anything, even moving back won't affect anything. Zaryusu was doomed and Cocytus would definitely prevail.

But this step back was the show of praise from the dominantly strong

Cocytus towards the weak Zaryusu.

Zaryusu resigned to his fate, and had a clear smile only those who had done their best could show. Cocytus slashed the Royal Blade God Slayer towards him

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“A splendid battle.”

Ainz happily sent words of praise towards Cocytus who was kneeling before him. This was as he had well achieved the goal of leaving his figure as the incarnation of despair in the lizardmen left in the village.

Now they could rule them without any problems.

The fact that there were no Yggdrasil players was another reason leading to Ainz’s good mood.

“Thank you.”

“Now, while we have control of the lizardmen village, we should choose a few and train them as warriors. I have an interest in how strong they can become.”

They had proven through experiments that existences from Yggdrasil, like Ainz and co. could not become strong—and could not learn any more skills. Basically, to strengthen themselves, they had to improve other factors.

Then, the next question was how strong the existences of this world could become. This was the natural follow-up question.

Ainz thought the following.

The strongest who did not seek to improve and just maintained, would one day be overtaken.

Even if they had a 100 year lead of military technology, they might be the strongest. However, if they stop there, they would one day fall from that title. They might be strong in the surrounding countries. However, how long could they maintain that fact. Those that did this would be simple fools.

If there was an existence in this world that could easily surpass what Yggdrasil could call Level 100, then it was necessary to take rapid action.

There was the pawn called Brain, who had received power from the Yggdrasil existence of Shalltear, the transformation into a vampire. So Brain’s

strength increased, but it brought about the question of was this normal in this world.

Basically, an experiment about the normal existence of this world, not connected to Yggdrasil, was necessary.

“I want to give the lizardmen a gifted education, but should I use Brain?”

He sent a gaze towards the unmoving figure of Brain in the corner. Cocytus raised his head and sent a question to Ainz who was mumbling happily.

“I will seek your advice when the time comes, Ainz-sama. May I ask how you plan to deal with those lizardmen?”

“Which lizardman?”

“Yes, the two lizardmen named Zaryusu and Shasuryu.”

The two who fought til the very end. Their corpses should still be in the wetlands. But what of it?

“I see. Collect their corpses, I will use their bodies as material when I create undead with my special ability. I have not used corpses of that level to make Death Knights. This will be a good experiment—”

“—That would be a pity.”

“Hmmm?”

Cocytus interrupted Ainz, which from the viewpoint of the Guardians was a rude behavior. In response, Ainz gazed upon Cocytus with interest for the first time. He then lightly raised his hand, and returned the Guardians’ furrowed brow back to normal.

“What do you mean? I thought they were weak....Do they have that much value?”

While Ainz was using the Mirror of Remote Viewing to view the battle, Cocytus was having a stunning victory. To the point that there was nothing of note. Did Ainz let something slip by?

“... They were weak, but I could see their warrior spirit and fearless resolve in the face of the strong. It is a pity to use them as materials.”

“Hmm....”

To be frank, Ainz didn't know what to feel when he heard the term warrior spirit. He came across the term killing intent in novels and mangas, but didn't think much of it. It was at the level of 'Oh that exists?' Similarly, the resonance among warriors was something Ainz didn't understand.

This was because Ainz might look like this now, but he was originally just a normal salaryman. If a normal citizen born in Japan understood warrior spirit, that would be dangerous. If it was the spirit of an excellent salaryman, he might comprehend a little.

He was that Ainz, but he had enough understanding that Cocytus was such an existence.

“I see... it is a waste indeed.”

“Ha.”

Even if you say it is a pity.

Such was Ainz's true feelings. However, it was better to shown that it was fine to take his subordinate's words into account.

After thinking about it shortly, Ainz remembered he had excellent subordinates.

He recalled the subordinates standing around him silently in a manner befitting a servant.

“...Demiurge, what do you think?”

“I think Ainz-sama is the most correct.”

“... ..Shalltear, and you?”

“I think the same as Demiurge and await Ainz-sama's judgement.”

“... ..Aura”

“Yes, I think the same way as everyone too.”

Their answer was as good as not answering at all, giving Ainz a headache.

After thinking it through, Ainz came to a conclusion— Maybe from the

standpoint of a Guardian, they didn't think there was any major issue. Which also meant there wouldn't be major impact no matter what decision he made.

That was also dependent on the circumstances of the Guardian. There might be problems if their situation changes.

Simply put, when a small group of people say a hundred million is a small amount of money, there will be the problem of how trustworthy that statement was. This was the difference in the perception of values.

A waste of breath—

With no other choice, Ainz had to weigh the pros and cons from his own standpoint.

“...We had decided to rule over the lizardmen, but do they have a suitable representative? Or a group that could represent them?”

“No, but they do have a suitable representative.”

“Oh? Who is it?”

“The white lizardman that Ainz-sama spoke of.”

“Oh, that one! Hmm, that could work...”

If it was her, she could be of use— Ainz thought. He could use her to spy on things.

“Very good. How long will you need to bring her here?”

“Pardon my impudence, I thought Ainz-sama will ask for her, so I ordered her to wait in a room nearby.”

“No no, well done Cocytus. Wasting time is foolish, your judgement is on point. Alright then, bring her over.”

“Erm, please wait!”

“What is it, Aura?”

“I don't think a shabby place like this is good enough. Even though we are hosting people who are submitting to us, it is too run down for Ainz-sama's status. I feel that the meeting should be done in the throne room of Nazarick.”

Shalltear and Demiurge nodded in agreement.

“...I apologise. I did not think that far, I beg for your forgiveness!”

“Ah....”

I did not even think about that. Ainz thought so, and considered what to do next. *Those words from that time. Then—*

“— Aura.”

“Yes!”

“I told you that this place you built— the place filled with your feelings and emotions, is as good as Nazarick right? I really mean it. Cocytus, bring her in. I will hold the audience here.”

“Ai-, Ainz-sama!”

“Aura, back down.”

“Demiurge!”

Aura protested with her face red, saying “Why are you stopping me?”

“...Anything Ainz-sama says is the law. Since Ainz-sama said this place is as good as Nazarick— “

“—It must be true.”

Shalltear continued.

“Aura. I will say this again. As my most trusted subordinates— one of the Guardians, this place you put in so much effort to build is on the same level as Nazarick. It is true even now when construction works are ongoing... Do you understand?”

“...Ainz-sama, thank you very much.”

Aura deeply lowered her head and the other Guardians did the same.

Why did Cocytus, Demiurge and Shalltear lower their heads. Ainz was slightly confused, but thinking that there was simply a reason, he ordered Cocytus.

“Well then, usher her in, Cocytus.”

“Yes!”

In a short moment, Cocytus brought a pure white lizardman into the room.

The lizardman knelt before Ainz and lowered her face to the ground.

“State your name.”

“Yes, Supreme Overlord of Death— Ainz Ooal Gown. I am the representative of the lizardmen, Crusch Lulu.”

What an incredible title.

He was curious as to who came up with this title, but Ainz acted like a calm king and said.

“... Hmmm, well met.”

“Yes. Gown-sama, please accept the oath of fealty from us, the lizardmen.”

“Hmmm...”

Ainz watched Crusch closely.

The scales were pretty. They shone brightly under the illumination of the magical light.

I wonder how they would feel like if I were to touch them.

, Ainz was academically curious.

Crusch’s shoulders shook due to Ainz’s silence. There was no external reason for this, it was an internal one—Fear.

If Ainz said that he had no interest in them, then all the lizardmen would be killed. So, she had to pay attention with every word. To Crusch who was under that soul grinding pressure, Ainz’s unnatural silence was a fearful experience.

Yes, even if the person was the one who had killed her loved one.

“...I see. Then accept it. You all, the lizardmen are now under my rule.”

“—Yes.”

“Now, a few requests.”

“Yes.”

Crusch's body trembled as she wondered what type of requests they were.

"Firstly I shall train several lizardmen as my soldiers. Choose the best."

"How many should there be?"

"True....About ten."

"Understood. They shall be quickly prepared. By when should they be ready?"

"In about two or three days."

"Yes, there are no problems. I believe you want the best."

"Yes. After is....I do not have anything in particular."

"Eh? Is that fine?"

Crusch who was facing down raised a surprised voice. She expected to be burdened with impossible requests, but for it to be this simple. Of course she was surprised.

"For now. Crusch Lulu. Your lizardmen will be ushering an era of prosperity now. Future generations of lizardmen will be thankful for being my subjects."

"We dare not, we are already thankful to the Supreme Being for granting us mercy even after we resisted with violence."

"Really?"

Ainz got up from the throne slowly. He walked to Crusch's side, squatted down and place his hand on Crusch's shoulder.

Ainz could feel a tremor coming from Crusch's body.

"I have a special task for you."

"As Gown-sama's faithful servant, I will do anything I can..."

"Not as a servant, I want you to do something for me— in exchange for Zaryusu's resurrection."

Crusch vigorously raised her head.

Her face was painted in shock. With a feeling of pride, Ainz continued his survey of Crusch.

Crusch tried to hide her emotions, but her movements were hectic. While since lizardmen were much harder to read than humans, at least joy, anger and sadness could be picked up.

“Something like that...”

“I am the one who controls life and death. To me, death is but a state of being.”

When he heard Crusch’s voice that was tapering off, Ainz answered.

“It is the same for poison and sickness, but I can’t extend the lifespan of mortals.”

“... What do you wish of me, your humble slave?... My body?”

Ainz was speechless.

“No, that’s a bit...” A reptile was a bit too much. Ainz wanted to back away immediately, but he pushed himself to play his role. “Cough cough! No. It’s simple, I want you to keep a close watch on whether there are ‘lizardmen thinking of rebelling’.”

“There are no such lizardmen.”

Ainz laughed at Crusch’s confident reply.

“I am not dumb enough to assume that. I am not familiar with how lizardmen think, but using the race of humans as example, betrayal is common. That is why I want an agent on the inside to watch over things.”

Seeing Crusch return to her emotionless expression, Ainz inwardly panicked as he wondered if the conversation had failed.

Since Cocytus said that they had that of relationship, she would want to resurrect Zaryusu, but reviving him without payment was suspicious, even more so when there were little merits.

So, he would turn Crusch into a spy, and make a merit.

“... Before you lies the chance for a miracle. But this chance won’t be here forever. If you don’t grab it immediately, it will be gone forever.”

Ainz stood up and continued.

“I can return the dead to their original condition. There are some that say that the dead cannot be returned back to normal or they lose their memories. However, from me, I believe that it because they cannot believe the ones that returned. If I said to those people that I could revive their loved ones, family, friends, and lovers, would they not believe it?”

Crusch remained expressionless.

While thinking that he failed, Ainz spoke out his strong emotions. He also wondered if it was better to leave this to Demiurge.

“Basically I want to say this. Do not mistake the important things, Crusch. To you, the important thing is Zaryusu right? Do you not want to make a family with the man you love?”

With a shiver, Crusch’s expression moved like a cramp.

“I am not going to use irritating rituals. Resurrection spells exist in this world right? That is what I am going to use.”

“That is the legendary...”

Crusch interrupted them.

She recalled how powerful the man was in front of her.

“Crusch. What is the most important thing for you? I want you to consider.”

Ainz gave Crusch some time to think. There were occasions to not give any time to think to wind her around his finger, but in this case he should give her time.

Noticing Crusch’s wavering gaze, Ainz decided to give her one final push.

Next, Ainz had to let Crusch understand this miracle was not a free service. Providing free service will make others suspicious, but they will be more receptive of it with a request for adequate amount of money.

“As I said earlier it is not free. I just need you to watch your fellow lizardmen in the dark. Depending on the circumstances, you might need to make hard choices. To prevent a betrayal, I will cast a special magic on the resurrected Zaryusu. If I think you have betrayed me, I will end him immediately. It must be troubling for you, but the resurrection of Zaryusu is not something you can get

in a fair deal, right?”

Actually, there is no such magic.

Ainz acted as if he had said everything and stood up slowly. He then opened his arms.

Ainz looked at the struggling Crusch.

“Oh, right, tell the resurrected Zaryusu this in my place. I revived him because he is of use to me. I promise not to mention your name”

While wondering if it went well, Ainz did not let it show on his face. Of course, expressions could not be made on a skeleton’s face.

“So, Crusch Lulu. Choose now. This is the last chance for you to get your beloved Zaryusu back. What say you? Yes? Or no? Choose.”

Ainz reached a hand out to Crusch slowly. At the same time, he said to the Guardians.

“Do not do anything even if she rejects— Alright, ready to answer now? Crusch Lulu?”



Fatigue permeated through his entire body.

As if his insides had turned into paste.

Then he felt abnormally tired. He had never felt this tired even after overexerting himself physically.

Zaryusu struggled to open his heavy eyelids.

Blinding light entered his eyes. Although lizardmen eyes would automatically adjust to light intensity, it could not do so instantaneously. Zaryusu blinked his eyes—

“Zaryusu!”

Someone was hugging him tight.

“C-Crusch?”

There should be no way he would ever hear this again, this female’s voice.

Zaryusu finally adjusted his eyes, and saw the female that was hugging him.

That was indeed his beloved female, Crusch Lulu.

Why? What was going on?

A flood of questions and unease rushed towards Zaryusu. His last memory was— the moment his head had dropped into the wetlands. He had most definitely been killed by Cocytus.

Then why was he still alive? Unless—

“—Was Crusch killed too?”

“Eh?”

Zaryusu opened his mouth to ask, yet his mouth seemed numb, unable to move properly.

What gave him his answer was the look of very confused expression on Crusch’s face. Seeing that expression, Zaryusu was a little relieved, knowing that Crusch was not dead. Then why was he still alive?

A hint was given to him by a voice to his side.

“Well. There is some confusion after resurrection. Reviving in the middle of battle will be difficult.”

Realizing who was speaking to him, Zaryusu looked with surprise at that direction.

Standing there was Ainz Ooal Gown. The magic caster with amazing power.

In his hand was a holy wand which did not fit him and was thirty centimetres in length. It was made of ivory, and the head was cast in gold, and it’s grip was adorned in runes, making it extremely beautiful. Zaryusu guessed that since the great magic caster was holding it, it was holding an amazing magic power.

And that guess was correct.

Zaryusu did not know this, but it was the Wand of Resurrection. It was the item that revived Zaryusu. Normally those that cannot use priest type magics cannot activate priest type items, but this type of magic item was a special case.

Zaryusu moved his gaze, and tried to collect even a little bit of information.

The scene from the shadow of Crusch who was hugging him. This was the lizardman village.

As if they were intending to surround the entire place, all the lizardmen were prostrating. Even more shocking was that they were motionless— that posture was one of worship towards an extremely powerful being.

“What is happening...”

After witnessing such power, prostrating was only natural. However, the surrounding lizardmen were not just showing respect, but something more.

Lizardmen did not have gods. Strictly speaking, their objects of faith were their ancestral spirits. The feeling given off right now by the surrounding lizardmen was like that of a reverence towards a god.

“Hm. Step down, lizardmen. Without instructions, nobody is permitted to enter the village.”

Those words.

Nobody objected to these words. More than that, it was accepted without a sound being made. The only sounds which were heard were of bodies getting up and the splashes by walking along the wetlands. Leaving them behind, the lizardmen departed from the clearing.

Their loyalty like they were brainwashed surprised Zaryusu.

“Aura, are all of them gone?”

“Yes, they are.”

The one who replied was the dark elf girl. Since she was standing behind Ainz, Zaryusu did not notice her.

“I see. Then first, a few words for you, Zaryusu Shasha. Congratulations on your resurrection.”

Resurrection.

Until he registered the meaning of this word, Zaryusu required a little time. Then after he understood it, he also felt a shudder throughout his body.

Resurrection— which meant that he was alive again.

Zaryusu's eyes opened wide, and his mouth agape. However, words did not come out. He only could breathe hard.

"What is it? Do lizardmen have some particular aversion to resurrection? Or have you forgotten how to speak?"

"Glug, glug... cough... y-you can resurrect the dead...?"

"That is true. What, you thought something of this degree couldn't be done?"

"Did you hold... a big ceremony?"

"Big ceremony? What is that? I have no problems doing it by myself easily."

Hearing those words, Zaryusu had nothing to say. It was possible to use resurrection via a large ceremony. Many priests had done it, one of which was part of the 13 Heros, but those that could were only left in legend.

An existence which could do that by alone.

Monster? No.

An incredibly powerful magic caster? No.

Zaryusu understood this completely.

Leading a mythical army, commanding demons.

Which meant, this— the existence in front of him was one who could rival the gods.

Zaryusu staggered up, and prostrate in front of Ainz. Crusch also frantically knelt down in the same fashion.

"Supreme One."

Ainz was a bit surprised, but seemed to immediately understand something and lightly nodded his head and replied.

"I pledge my life to you."

"So?"

Ainz asked Zaryusu with the nuance of asking what he desired.

"Please grant prosperity to the lizardmen."

“That is only natural, of course I will guarantee the prosperity of all those who come under my dominion.”

“My gratitude.”

“Good. Is your speech still not clear? Rest for a bit and you will get used to it. Rest for now. Afterwards there are various things which will have to be dealt with. The first thing would be the defence of this village that is under my dominion... for the details, discuss it with Demiurge.”

Ainz left after he finished saying this. However, before that, there was something which Zaryusu had to do, and had to do right now.

“Please wait. What about Zenberu and older brother?”

“Their corpses should be around the area”

Ainz, who was just about planning to leave with Aura, stopped casually gestured with his jaw in to the outside of the village.

“Can you please revive them?”

“... Hmm... I don't see any benefit in doing so.”

“Then why me? Zenberu and older brother are very powerful. They will definitely be useful.”

Ainz closely observed Zaryusu. Then he looked at Crusch.

“I will consider it... preserve the two corpses well. I will consider it later. And if weak people are revived, there is a chance that they will turn to ash. Well, I think it will be fine, but do not forget that. Then as promised choose the ten lizardmen.”

Ainz's robe fluttered as he walked away. Aura at his side said ‘That hydra is cute right~’ as they walked away.

Zaryusu finally broke his kneeling posture, and asked Crusch.

“Ten people?”

“They want to train ten lizardmen as their soldiers, so the first order I received was to choose them.”

“I see....”

Zaryusu talked as if he understood, however the questions never stopped.

While having such strong subordinates, why was he turning the extremely inferior lizardmen into his soldiers. And only ten. From the lizardmen this was a thankful thing, but without being able to understand the other party's intention, he felt a strong sense of unease.

However, having them not being interested in ruling them was an extremely fortunate thing. Having such a powerful force guarding them, it might surprising lead to the glory of the lizardmen.

Zaryusu felt the tension leave his body.

"I made it through alive... or rather, I revived..."

He did not know what kind of rule would await them in the future. However since the lizardmen's usefulness left an impression, it shouldn't be too bad.

"Crusch. Among the ten—"

"Eh. Zaryusu will be one."

Crusch nodded with the expression of it being as expected.

"Never mind about that. Worry about it later. For now just rest well and clear your fatigue. It will be fine, I can carry you."

"Ah... thank you."

Zaryusu closed his eyes and lied down. Just like in those days where he had overworked his body, he was eager to rest, and fell asleep once his eyes were closed.

Once again Zaryusu felt the touch of gentle hands stroking his body back and forth as his consciousness slipped back into the darkness.

Chapter 53: Invaders | Part 1

Baharuth Empire capital, Arwintar.

The city was located at the western side of the Empire's territory. At the center of the city was the Imperial Palace, home to the Blood Emperor, Jircniv Rune Farlord El Nix. Spreading out from the Imperial palace were the Imperial Colleges, the Imperial Magic Academy, and various buildings housing the different government administrative departments. Unsurprisingly, it was said that the capital was the heart of the Empire.

Now, the Imperial Capital, Arwintar was experiencing a buzz of activity and commotion brought about by years of reformation. Among the annals of Imperial history, this was unmistakably the biggest growth spurt. Many new developments were introduced, followed by the heavy influx of materials and talent. In contrast, the dregs of the old Empire were discarded.

With an atmosphere filled with high expectation towards the future, the citizen that dwelled here looked vibrant.

The Imperial capital also known as the crystallization of Imperial power contained many things that would surprise many. First among this that would surprised anyone who visited the Imperial Capital was that almost every road was paved with cobblestones or bricks.

One would not be able to find a similar trend at neighboring countries. Of course, not all Imperial major cities had such a development. But if one were to observe this in the Imperial capital, they would understand the underlying strength of the Empire, where even the emissaries of the neighboring countries could only let out sounds of amazement.

The central roadway.

Branched out from the center in an explosive pattern with smaller streets intersecting in between.

At the center of the roadway were numerous horse-drawn carriage. While,

pedestrians moved along the sides of the road. Although this was no different from any normal roads, but as the central roadway of the capital, it was different compared to other cities.

The difference lay with the designated pedestrian walkways.

A fence formed the border between the pedestrian walkway and the mainroad. Furthermore, there was a difference in height between both to ensure the safety of pedestrians.

Magical lights that would glow during the night were installed at both sides of the road at fixed intervals. Knights patrolled the streets regularly to maintain civil order.

A road under such conditions could not be found in any other countries even if one searched high and low for it.

Within the crowds that ply the pedestrian walkway, was a man.

With a height around 175cm. Age about 20 years old.

Blond, blue eyes, with a tanned yet healthy complexion. Within the Empire, the look was not uncommon.

Not the pretty type. But it could not be said that his looks was very bad either. Mixed within tens of people, he would not be easily distinguishable among the crowd.

Strangely, the man exuded a mysterious air that would attract others. It could be from the clear refreshing smile from his face or the air of confidence as he walked with his chest sticking out.

The man moved agilely at a speed that would not obstruct other pedestrians.

Everytime he moved his limbs, his beautiful wrinkleless clothes emitted a faint sound, a sound that was formed from the rubbing of chains. Those who were sensitive enough to notice would know it was the sound of chainmail.

A pair of swords hung on both sides of his hips. Their lengths were similar to that of shortsword. The hilt of the sword was completely covered by a grip guard. Although it looked relatively simple, it was not something cheap. Behind

his hips was a metal hammer suited for bashing. He does not look like an elite. The accessories were there as a precaution.

A single glance at the man would tell anyone that he was not an ordinary warrior.

Having one or two weapons was completely natural in this world. After seeing people walking the street often carry weapons, one would understand this. However, having three types of weapons that could pierce, slice or bludgeon was not so.

Basically, this was prepared for times when various weapons had to be used: when fighting monsters.

The first thing that would come to mind was that this man was an adventurer.

However, he was not an adventurer. Adventurers was something of a defensive job. His was a more aggressive one.

Adventurers had their work requested, investigated and given to suitable ranked adventurers by the Guild. Basically the Guild would first check if it was a suitable job. So dangerous jobs, like ones that endangered the lives of citizens or related to crimes would be rejected.

Jobs that involved the supplying of plants that could be used as narcotics would be firmly rejected by the Guild.

In addition, jobs that would destroy the balance of ecosystems would be rejected. For example, they would not kill a monster that stood on top of the food chain in a certain forest. This was to prevent monsters venturing outside of the forest after that monster was killed and the ecosystem affected. Of course, if that powerful monster left the forest and encroached on human territory then it was a different story.

It might be correct to say that adventurers were allies of justice.

However, it was not all perfect. There were some who want nothing but money. There were also those that would take jobs that would make people do a double take. There were those that like to simply kill monsters.

Instead of the adventurers standing in the light, they were the ones looking for the shadows. Groups of adventurer dropouts. They were [Workers] who were called as such.

And now, the man walking the street was one of them.

While walking, the man lifted his head as if he noticed something. Several people in the surroundings faced the same direction for a brief moment, but immediately looked away uninterested. Some of them began talking about it with their friends.

Once again from afar, a small cheer could be heard riding the wind. The shouts craving blood was similar to ones in fights.

The end of his gaze, and it was quite a distance away, was the coliseum.

As a worker, even if he did not go he would see plenty of blood. And since he had to interest in making money, it was a place he did not often go to.

The man moved his gaze after reaching his answer. However, he did think about the match that was planned for today.

While watching the knights surrounding one of the priests of the 4 great gods, he turned the corner. He felt the knights' gazes fall onto his waist, but they did not do anything.

Well, it was natural. He was not a fool to do anything that would attract their suspicion.

The empire's knights were soldiers, and also held patrolling responsibilities.

In addition, to those who have worked for over a certain period, they were given magic full body armour with weight reduction magic and a magic sword with increased sharpness and they were the cornerstone of the Empire's public order. To them, a man with several weapons was a target to be wary of.

He felt that as he walked, he drew the gazes of many knights. Sometimes they called out to him, and sometimes they checked his face with a list. One or two gazes was not to be worried about.

As he passed several shops, he saw the familiar signboard.

On it was written [The Singing Apple Pavilion].

This was a bar that was said to have started as a shop that bards that made instruments of apple tree wood gathered. The outside seemed old, but the inside was surprisingly well made. There were no drafts, and the floor was cleanly mopped. Staying here was quite expensive, but personally it was the store he recommended.

And—Most importantly it's food was delicious.

That—Was the inn that he and his comrades stayed.

He pushed opened the door while looking forward to dinner. If his favourite pork stew came out it would be great.

The voice that greeted him was not one of his friends thanking him for his work, nor was it a voice that welcomed him back.

“—So I'm telling you! I don't know!”

“No no, even if you tell me that.”

“I am not her go-between nor am I family. There is no way I know where she is.”

“Are you not comrades. Even if you tell me you do not know, there is no way I can that easily retreat, it's my job.”

On the first floor of the inn. There was a man and woman arguing in the middle of the bar.

The woman was someone he knew well.

Her golden hair was cut short. Her face with her fearsome eyes was without a trace of makeup. And the most attention grabbing part of her was her ears that extended far beyond that of a normal person. Yes, she was a half-elf.

Elfs of the forest tend to be much slimmer than humans, but one glance at her body could tell you that she was extremely slim. To the point that her feminine charms, her chest or behind were practically nonexistent. It was like a metal board was slipped in.

She wore leather armour. Her short sword hung by her waist.

She was the type of woman that you could mistake for a man even up close.

She was one of his comrades Imina.

The man facing Imina was a complete stranger.

The man was bowing to her, but there was no feeling of remorse in his eyes. In fact, it was mixed with a bad feeling. But from his actions, he was not brainless.

The man's arms and chest were packed with muscle, and if one stood in front of him they would feel pressured. However, if the man chose to use violence on a worker, it would be nothing more than a foolish decision.

As to why, Imina seemed frail, but she had enough ability to kill a man of the level of the one in front of her.

"And that's why I'm telling you!"

"What is going on, Imina."

Imina was the first one to recognise his voice and faced him. And her expression turned to one of surprise.

Imina seemed to have forgotten herself in the conversation and did not notice him entering. This showed how furious she was.

"...Who are you."

The man asked him with a threatening voice. His eyes were sharp, and it seemed that he would hit him at any moment. Of course, to him who had faced terrifying monsters, this was simply something to laugh at.

"...Our leader."

"Ooh, I see I see. Hekkeran Termite. The rumours are not enough."

The sudden change in the man's expression to a smile caused him, Hekkeran, to suppress his emotion of disgust.

He did not know why the man came here, but since he came to this inn, there was no way he did not know of Hekkeran.

The earlier voice and atmosphere was definitely to test just what sort of person Hekkeran was. If the man's air had any sort of effect on Hekkeran, he intended to continue the conversation with it.

The type of man Hekkeran hated.

It was true that in the business world, this would be done to get more favourable conditions. As the same colleague as Hekkeran, this was a natural negotiation technique.

However, Hekkeran did not like negotiations like that. He liked direct ones without hidden sides. It had no relation to it being troublesome.

“...How noisy. This is an inn. There are other guests, so we should avoid such noisy stuff right?”

There was not a single guest nearby. The figure of the inn workers also could not be found.

They were not hiding in any way. As to why, most of the ones staying here were the same as Hekkeran. This level of noise would not affect the taste of their alcohol in any way. The reason they could not be seen, was simply that they were not here.

Hekkeran looked at the man like he was glaring. If he was an adventurer, Hekkeran would be A rank and his gaze could not be ignored. For an instant, the man shivered as if there was a magic beast in front of him.

“No, my apologies. However, I cannot leave..”

While lowering his voice to a certain extent, the man showed his desire to continue. Being able to do so while bathed in Hekkeran’s gaze meant that he was involved in a job that needed strength, or violence.

Then what was he?

He was doing a gangster-like job, but Hekkeran did not know this man, and he had no memory of his attitude. He could not believe that he was here to request something of them.

The confused Hekkeran weakened his gaze, and used the simplest method to find out what he wanted.

“...What is it?”

It was simple. Directly ask him.

“Yes. I would like to meet Mr. Termite’s acquaintance, Ms. Furt”

There was only one person that appeared in Hekkeran’s mind when he said Furt

Arche Eeb Liliya Furt. One of Hekkeran’s comrades, and an excellent magic caster.

He could not imagine her having a connection to this man. Hekkeran judged after walking the line of life and death with her. This could be considered a threat to her.

“Arche? What happened with her?”

“Arche....Ah Yes. I usually use nothing but the name Furt and this confused me. Umm, Arche Eeb Liliya Furt”

“So! What do you want with her?”

“Yes yes, I have some things to talk about with her....It is confidential, so I would like to know when she will return—”

“How would we know.”

Hekkeran firmly cut off the conversation. This caused the man’s eyes to waver.

“Now, the conversation’s over.”

“It, it cannot be helped. I shall wait over here....”

“Leave.”

Hekkeran jutted his chin at the door. That figure again caused the man to become uncertain.

“Honestly. I don’t like you. I can’t bear having you in my sight.”

“This is a bar, so I....”

“True. This is a bar. It is also a place where drunkards get into fights.”

Hekkeran smiled at the man. “Don’t be so on guard. Even if you get into a fight and are wounded, we have a priest that can use healing magic. We’ll heal you for free.”

“Should he pay a little?”

Imina had an evil grin as she spoke out from the side.

“We’ll make it cheap.”

“—And that’s what’s going to happen.”

“If you plan on threa—”

The words coming from the man halted midway, because he saw the dramatic change on Hekkeran’s face.

Hekkeran took a step forward, all the way until the distance between their faces was a fist away.

“Hah?! Threats? Who’s making threats? Is it such a big surprise that bars have fights? What the hell, I give you good advice for living a long and healthy life and you say I’m making threats? Are you trying to start a fight?”

Hekkeran’s current appearance was something only people who had faced death could possess.

Confronted with the pressure coming from Hekkeran, the man took a step back. He clicked his tongue for a bit and then reluctantly walked towards the entrance. Although he wanted to hide the fact that he was frightened, one look at his back was all it took to confirm it.

As he reached the entrance, the man turned his and shouted at Hekkeran and Imina one last time.

“Tell that brat from the Furt family! Tell her the deadline is approaching!”

“Hah?!”

Hearing the iron in Hekkeran’s reply, the man quickly scurried away.

As soon as the man disappeared, Hekkeran’s expression quickly returned to normal. The change was sudden enough that onlookers might have thought that the entire scene had been nothing but an act. And then, Imina started clapping

“So, what that all about?”

“I don’t know. He only told me as much as he told you.”

“Damn, I should have listened more before getting rid of him.”

Hekkeran held his head in defeat.

“Just wait and hear it from Arche once she gets back.”

“...But, it isn’t good to pry too deeply into things.”

“Well, even though what you said is correct, you’re still the leader. Do your best!”

“In that case, I will use my authority as the leader to order you to ask her about it. It would be much better if a fellow woman like you were to ask her about it, don’t you think?”

“Come on, give me a break, I don’t want to ask either.”

Imina who was waving her hands and Hekkeran were making troubled faces.

There were a few rules in common between adventurers and workers, where certain things were simply not done.

It could not be helped for the famous ones, but one of them was investigating or asking about each other’s past. Why it should not be done was something that needed not to be asked.

The second would be to display excessive desire.

This was as there was the possibility that they would not be able to function as a team if one was too greedy. For example, could one trust a comrade to keep an important secret or go on well paying jobs if he/she constantly grumbled about money daily. If they said they wanted the opposite sex, could they sleep in the same room? This did not mean they had to be saints. It simply meant that they had to hide what they had to hide to function well together.

This meant that when the strange man came, there might be friction in the group. Arche’s reliability dropped. This was not a simple problem they could let slide.

To those doing life threatening jobs, leaving even a sliver of unease was unacceptable. Even if Hekkeran’s team was a strange team. Allowing a bomb to be held was unacceptable.

Hekkeran shook his head, while displaying his reluctance on his face.

“Looks like it can’t be helped, then. I’ll have to ask when she comes back.”

“I’m counting on you~.”

Hekkeran narrowed his eyes at Imina, who was smiling and waving her hand.

“Don’t think you can get away. You also need to come talk to her with me, yo.”

“Eh, eh hh...” Although Imina clearly wanted to refuse, she gave up as soon as she saw the determination on Hekkeran’s face. “Oh well, it can’t be helped. Hopefully it isn’t anything big...”

“Anyway, where did Arche go?”

“Eh? Ah, she is washing the back of that job.”

“The back of the client right?”

“That and the history and situation of the target area.”

“Ah. Then since she is not here, she should be with Roberdyck.”

“Yes. The two are doing quite a bit. So, how was it on your side?”

“There is nothing that sticks out, but they seem to be moving several parties. It seems that if we do nothing we will be left behind.”

“Hmm. Before that, the difficulty increased.”

“...Hmm. It would be nice if it was not related.”

As the two were talking, the sound of the door grating open reverberated within the bar. From the large open door, the shadows of two people could be seen entering the inn.

“—We’re home!”

“We have investigated it.”

The voices of a man and woman.

The first to enter was a very thin woman, of which the words ‘young girl’ would suit her. Her age was perhaps about the late teens.

Her rich hair was cut at her shoulders, and she had a fine set of features. Rather than beautiful, she seemed elegant. However, her stiff expression made her resemble a doll.

Her hands grasped an iron staff that was around the same height as herself. The surface of the staff was covered with symbols and runes that could have been words or pictures.

The girl wore a loose robe, and under that, sturdy clothes which offered quite a bit of protection. She was obviously a magic caster.

Following the woman was a well-built man.

He was fully decked in armour, but not a Full Face Helm, and on top of it was a surcoat with a holy symbol. A morning star hung from his waist and a holy symbol matching his surcoat could be found around his neck.

His brown hair was trimmed, and his neatly cut beard with his strong face was an invigorating sight. From his appearance, he seemed to be in his thirties. His conduct also added to the impression that he was the eldest there.

The woman in front was Hekkeran's companion, Arche Eeb Liliya Furt.

The man behind was Roberdyck Goltron.

Hekkeran's team was comprised of two men and two women. This was why Hekkeran's team was called strange.

Worker as well as adventurer parties would be comprised of one single gender.

As adventurers, one would live under the same roof and experience danger together, so falling in love was common.

There was a high chance of a team where such relationships occurred seperating. One of the reasons was that one could not be trusted to make calm decisions.

For example, a warrior and thief fall in love. A monster appears and the thief and magician at the back are attacked. At that time, would the warrior be able to calmly ignored the thief and save the magician if the situation called for it.

Adventurers had to trust each other. It was natural. This was as they fought

monsters stronger than themselves. If there was unease, and one of the weapons of the adventurers, teamwork, was unusable, those adventurers would lose their lives on the next adventure.

So teams were either gender based or love was forbidden. There were many cases of a couple causing the team to separate.

Hekkeran's team also held that bomb.

"Ooh, welcome back!"

Could this be described as good timing or bad timing? Hekkeran thought while turning around to greet the two with a hard voice

"What's wrong? Did something happen to the two of you?"

Roberdyck used a tone that did not display any seniority to the two of them. One of the reasons was due to personal choice, the other was because of the mutual equality between workers.

"Th-there's no problem."

"Yup yup."

Arche and Roberdyck both watched as the two of them waved their hands in denial.

"Umm, speaking of which, this isn't a good place to talk, how about we go over there?"

What Hekkeran pointed at was a round table in the centre of the shop. Without any objections, the remaining three nodded. While moving there, Hekkeran sent gazes to Arche and Roberdyck.

The two of them probably spent quite a bit of time walking around. Especially in Roberdyck's outfit. The least he could do was to prepare drinks.

Hekkeran thought of that, then noticed something.

"Before that, err. About the drinks—Oi, Imina. Where did the owner go?"

"...Out shopping. I'm watching over the place for him."

"Is that so? Then what should we do? Is it fine for me to casually take out a bottle or two?"

“—I’m fine with not drinking.”

“Ah, I’m also fine, thanks.”

“...Is that so?”

While the two said they were fine, at Hekkeran’s tone hinting at them to accept, Arche and Roberdyck nodded. While saying yes, they reached the table and sat down.

“In that case... then let’s start the meeting of [Foresight].”

The relaxed expression on every member’s face vanished. At the same time, they leaned their weight onto the table, bringing everyone closer together. Although there weren’t any other guests at the moment, this sort of behavior had become an old habit that was hard to break.

“First, I would like to confirm the content of the commission.”

Once he made sure that he had everyone’s attention, Hekkeran continued. His tone and expression were completely different from before. As the leader of the team, it was necessary for him to act serious and maintain dignity when the situation called for it. That was only expected of a leader.

“The client this time is Earl Femel. The contents are to investigate the ruins in the

Kingdom, the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

Downpayment is 1000 gold pieces, after is 800. The reward increases based on the investigation results. However, do not expect much. It is predicted that other workers will be joining us on this request. The maximum number of days for investigation is three. The contents of investigation are the general points of this ruin. The most important is that there will be monsters, but their type is not known. Well, it is a normal ruin investigation.”

The occasions of abandoned cities or ruins attracting monsters was extremely high. So there were some who called Worker investigations forced reconnaissance.

“20% of found items worth in gold is the Earl’s, the remainder is the Worker teams’. However, the Earl has priority. This is normal. Our trip there and back

along with food is the Earl's responsibility. That's all. Now, Arche, Roberdyck. What did you find out."

"—Firstly myself. The situation of Earl Femel in the court is not good. There was rumors of him being demoted by the Blood Emperor. However, he himself is not useless, and neither are his children. I believe it to be impossible that he would do anything illegal at this juncture. He is also not strapped for cash."

"While it is called an investigation of a ruin in the Kingdom, Arche-san and myself have been unable to confirm any rumours or history that there would be a ruin there. It is to the point that while the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick is called a tomb, we are unable to find out if there is a tomb there are all. Geographically there is only a small village there. If we get information from that village we may be able to understand something."

"Impossible. We were requested to keep everything as secret as possible. Witnesses can be ignored, and it is the request of the client to not do anything."

"—By the way, that area is under direct control of the Kingdom. Any poor actions taken will turn the Kingdom and Vaiself Royal Family against us."

"Basically a dirty job as always?"

"Yes. However, there is a strange problem."

"Well. Workers in the Empire causing trouble in the Kingdom will be a pain, even the Earl might be implicated."

"—However, we can bring back the stuff that we find."

All of them felt troubled.

This was a job that would never be done by adventurers. This job investigating another country's ruin was close to a crime.

"Even so, how did this information of the ruin get into the Earl's hands? Even though it is a tomb that we did not learn much about even through our checks...."

"—It's close to the Tob Forest right? What if they found it while cutting down trees?"

"—That is strange. It is such a small village, I cannot believe that it can cut

through such a forest.”

“While the chance of this being a result of the Kingdom doing military matters is not zero, having such a small village there does not bring any advantages.”

The four were troubled. Was it fine for them to accept this job.

Since the Adventurer’s Guild could not act as their shield, investigating the specifics of the job fell to themselves. First was to thoroughly investigate the client’s background, then the location of the job. After checking the request contents, then they would finally accept the job. There were many cases of dangerous situations despite these checks though.

They risked their lives in these jobs. If they did not feel satisfied with their checks, Workers would not do their jobs. If there was even a whiff of danger they could not overcome, they would not accept no matter the terms.

“...I have confirmed the payment, and the downpayment was given—”

Hekkeran placed a metal plate on the table. On it were carved various symbols.

“I’ve already checked it with the Imperial Bank. The sum has already been credited to my account, it can be converted into cash any time.”

Metal plates were a cheque that the Empire’s banks used.

The reason for the fine details was to make forging difficult.

There were demerits of taking time for the paperwork and materials cost, but the advantages were countless.

For example, a gold coin was ten grams. 1000 would be 10kg. Since it would be bulky, using this made deals proceed more smoothly. Especially for existences of nobles, merchants, and adventurers who made profitable deals.

In other countries, this line of work were taken up by adventurers. The adventurers guild on the Empire received national protection.

“I don’t think this is a trap....Mah, at least I think they are being serious after receiving the gold deposit plates.”

Imina stretched out a hand and took one of the gold deposit plates that was

placed on the table. She examined it using the light that filtered in from the outside. The gold deposit plates were imprinted with fine letters.

If this is a trap, they would not be paying such a large sum in advance.

In recent memories there's no one who held the Earl any grudges. From Imina, she never heard of anyone trapping others with a 1000 gold pieces lure.

"Personally—"

"Wait a moment, Imina. I am not finished yet. Keep your brain awake for this one."

"Yeah yeah, then enlighten me. Why do you think that this job was requested in a hurry?"

"—No clue. I do not now why does the job have to be rushed. I didn't hear emergency situation from those close to the Count. There seems to be no major events or parties within this few days. It does not look like a job that requires us to bring something out of the ruins."

"On the Kingdom's side, there seems to be no big development. Only some outdated information."

For this round of work, they only heard the contents of the request this morning. They will depart tomorrow morning. In such a situation, they would be assumed to reject the request if they do not return with answer in between.

Emergency request was not something surprising. Workers were used to this type of request. The problem lay with more than one team was hired.

"—How about the other teams?"

"Three of the teams accepted. One declined."

"Did we received any special information from them?"

"Likely they kept it to themselves or it could be they don't know anything much as well."

Hekkeran shrugged as he was idealess.

"Likely we have competitors."

“It seems likely. Then it could explained why several Workers team were hired at such a short period.”

“Working on that assumption....hiring three Worker teams that were comparable to ours and operating within the territory of the Kingdom... Would we be competing with the Kingdom’s adventuring team? If it’s like this, it would be pointless to gather information in the Empire.”

“Other things that we should be careful of would be ambushes, set up by rivaling teams. I do not want to lose my life just before reaching our destination.”

“A trap by adventurers. It would be better if it’s the adventurers. At least we could negotiate with them. The terms would not be over the top.”

“If it is Workers, it might end up with us killing one another.”

“What do you think, leader?”

Everyone’s opinion was collected. The only things left were the assumption and hypothesis.

“Before we make the decision, ... let’s talk about it since there’s a need for it.”

Hekkeran sighed loudly while Imina held her breath.

“Arche, there was a strange man asking for you.”

Arche responded with a hastily constructed emotionless look. Her eyebrows however started to twitch. Seeing this, Hekkeran realise that this man was someone she knew.

“That fella said something at the end.... What was it again?”

Hekkeran directed the last question towards Imina. The response he received was an incredulous stare, as if she was asking what was he thinking. But after realising that Hekkeran forgotten about it, Imina responded tiredly.

“ ‘Remind the little lady from the Furt Family that her time is almost up’ ”

“Mah, it was something like this.”

Everyone was looking at Arche.

After taking a deep breath. Arche started to speak with a heavy expression.

“I am in debt.”

“Debt?!”

Hekkeran unconsciously shouted in amazement. Needless to say, even Roberdyk an Imina were showing expressions of shock. That was because that a Worker’s reward, was split evenly as everyone was considered an equal. After thinking about the sum that went into their pockets, it would be impossible for them to be in debt.

“How much was it?”

“400 gold pieces.”

After hearing Arche’s answer, they looked at each other again.

It was not a small sum. The amount of gold was not something that someone ordinary person could earn in their lifetime. The wage of an ordinary wage earner would be three gold pieces. In other words, the sum was equal to 133 months worth of salary.

Although they were quite the Workers team, it would be impossible for them to earn that amount in a single run.

Among the Workers, their team was considered among the upper-tier. Using the adventurer’s ranking, their ability was comparable to an A-rank adventurers team. Still it would be impossible for them to earn such amount of gold in one short. How did the debt came about?

With those suspicious gazes directed towards her, Arche’s face darkened.

On a personal level, she did not want to say anything. But, she cannot keep it as a secret anymore. If she were to forcefully end matters here, it would not be surprising if she was kicked out of the team.

The resolute Arche opened her mouth.

“—Because it was an embarrassing matter, my family was one of those nobles houses that had their nobility taken away by the Blood Emperor.”

Blood Emperor, Jircniv Rune Farlord El Nix.

As implied, he was an Emperor that dyed in his hand in blood.

He took the throne after his father, the previous emperor passed away from reasons unknown. After that, he ended one of the five greatest noble family-his mother's for the suspicion of conducting regicide. He send his brothers to the grave one by one. Even the mothers who were involved with those events perished.

Of course, they were those who opposed him. But since before the Blood Emperor took the throne, he had already took control of the knights and they were not able to pose as a threat towards him. With an overwhelming military advantage, and just like cutting wheat, he took down all the influential noble families. The ones that remained, regardless of whether it was in their hearts, were those who swore their loyalties to the Blood Emperor, completing the centralisation of all power.

But the Blood Emperor did not stop here. He did not need incompetent fools, and stripped off the titles of many nobilities.

Instead, he decreed that plebeians who were talented should be given considerable political power and administrative authority. After all this, there were two things that surprised many. The nation wide nobility purges were done so skillfully that the national power of the Empire were barely affected. The emperor back then was a boy at his early teens.

Because of this person, it was uncommon for fallen nobles to appear. But,....

“Both of my parents were still living as if they are still nobles. Of course, we don't have that amount of money. Hence, we borrowed money from unsavory people and got caught up with such a problem.”

The three looked at one another.

Although they stopped their emotions from showing, still they could still sense the feeling of frustration, anger and disbelief between them.

Arche's initial words of introduction when she first met them was “... I am quite confident with my magical abilities, I would like to join your team.”. A slender child, grasping onto a staff that was taller than her with both her hands. Speaking about it, they remembered the time when they looked at each other wordlessly. They were that shocked. After that, when they had a good grasp of Arche's ability, their expression was that of amazement.

That was more than two years ago, after going through numerous adventures, where one false step could result in death, they obtained a considerable sum of gold. Yet, Arche's equipment were mostly unchanged.

Now, at least they knew the reason for it.

"You sure? Do you want us to have a good 'chat' with them?"

"It's time they listened to the words of God. Nono, probably it's time that God's fist to manifest in front of them"

"It seems that their earholes were close. Why don't we reopen it for them?"

Facing her teammates, Arche started to speak after listening to their comments.

"—Please wait a moment. Since the matter had come to this, let me have the say on this. According to the situation, I would moved out together with my sisters."

"You have sisters?"

Seeing Arche's nodding head, the others looked at each other. Although they did not say it out, their hearts told them that it might be better to look over this job.

A Worker's job was more profitable when compared to an Adventurer's. On the other hand, the danger level was higher. Although it was originally their intention to investigate any potential safety issues in this job, however it was not uncommon to have unforeseeable problems arising while in the middle of it.

If things go sour, she might die, leaving her two sisters. If he continued talking, he would be intruding into private matters. It was common sense.

"Is it... Then, we'll end the discussion about Arche's problem here. We'll leave you to deal with that issue.....Now the problem lies in whether we should accept this job."

As the conversation moved towards this point, Hekkeran looked at Arche coldly.

"Arche. Although I feel bad about this, but you have no say on this matter."

“—No need to feel bad about it. No problem. Since I am the one with financial issues, I understand I may not make the right call.”

Still, one’s judgement could be clouded by money.

“—I am being honest here. It was lucky that I was not kicked out of the team.”

“What are you saying? It was lucky for us that a magic caster of your calibre joined our group.

These were not words of flattery but the truth.

Especially her Talent. Being blessed with that miraculous eye, it saved Hekkeran and the rest of the team several times.

Arcane magic casters seemed to be enveloped in a layers of invisible aura. The aura intensified according to the magic tier that the magic caster was able to invoke. It would be hard to investigate the aura and the methods of investigation were rather precious.

Among the many children who were blessed with Talent, occasionally, they would be one who would possessed the ability to detect magic among them.

Arche Eeb Liliya Furt was someone who possessed such talent. As far as Hekkeran knew, Arche was the only one in the Empire who possessed such a rare talent.

“How could the magical academy let go of such an outstanding student?”

“Really. For someone who could activate spells that were similar in tier to mine. Who knows, you might reach Tier-6 one day.”

“—I think that would be unlikely. But it would be great if there is a chance for it.”

The depressive atmosphere was slightly lifted. Hekkeran clapped his hands, bringing the others attention onto him.

“Then, the decision for this job, do we take it?... Roberdyk.”

“I see no problems with it.”

“Imina?”

“It seems not bad? It’s been awhile since our last job.”

Request for workers were not that frequent especially high paying ones.

They have to take low paying jobs. They even experienced a time where they did not receive any request for a period of two months. This month alone, they were no proper request. But there were those unlawful request that Foresight did not take.

“Then,...”

“—If you are worried about me, don’t bother. I have other ways of settling it.”

The three exchanged glances, before Imina laughingly said.

“Then again, if you think about it carefully, this job is not so bad right?”

“It the truth, we are not doing it for the sake of you.”

“It is as they said.”

“—Thank you all.”

Towards Arche who bowed her head, the three laughed before speaking.

“Then, Arche and I shall convert gold deposit into cash. The remaining two would head out to purchase the adventuring essentials.”

The adventuring essentials include things like rope, and oil. Once also could not neglect to be on the lookout for magical items. The task was well suited for the meticulous Roberdyk and Imina who possessed the thief job class. No, it could be said that Hekkeran was the only one unsuited for this task.

“Then, let us begin our operation....Arche.”

Arche who did not understand question bend her head sideways. Hekkeran who thought of the problem started to ask.

“The total reward for this job would be 1800 gold pieces. Would it be sufficient to repay the loan?”

The amount when divided equally among the four of them would be 450 gold pieces per person, an amount sufficient to settle all the debts. However, the rule within Foresight was that the amount would be divided into five portions instead. The remaining portion would be used as management fee for the team. The money would be used for the purchase of potions, magical

scrolls, lodging fees and other miscellaneous expenses.

In other words, the individual rewards was 360 pieces of gold.

“—No problem, with the amount exchanged. I could buy some more time.”

“I could lend you the remaining 40 pieces of gold.”

“Well, I guess you can return it on the next reward.”

It was natural that none in the party outrank others. They were all treated as equal partners.

“—I understood the well intentions. It’s about time I return to my parents. At least, I should show them some more moments of filial piety.”

“That is of course.”

The four of them looked at each other, laughing as they went about their own business.



At one of the areas within Imperial capital, existed many impressive looking mansion, a street for the affluent. The street was completely lined with luxurious mansions. Within the Imperial Capital, the place had the best civil order.

Looking at these mansions one could feel its luxury and history behind it. With a history of tens of years, the owners were not changed at all and were passed down.

But due to the present Blood Emperor, the occupants underwent changes. With many of the houses started to empty out.

Nobles-their mansions were their status symbol. Although it was a waste of money, if they do not decorate their mansions, they would become the joke of the day of the other nobles. Artworks, jewelry, clothing, mansions and gardens, all these were the tools of war for nobles to use in their own battlefield.

Between a poor mansion and luxurious mansion, once invited inside, one would subtly feel the difference in power.

Even those who possessed wealth but did not decorate their mansion would

not be viewed favorably.

For that reason it was the right choice to invest on decorating their mansion, but that was in those cases where they have the power to maintain it.

At one of the mansions within the area.

Inside the living room.

Receiving the stoic faced Arche were both her parents. Both having the beautiful faces of nobles and wore well-made clothing that befit their status.

“Hoho, welcome back.”

“Welcome back.”

Quicker than the twos reply, Arche’s gaze was focused on a delicate looking glass-made art piece that was on the table. The glass was molded into an intricate looking cup, giving out the air of a luxurious item.

Arched started to frown as she noticed something that was not in the house before.

“—That is?”

“Oh oh, that is Artisan John’s—”

“—I’m not asking about that. We didn’t have that in the house before.

“Simple, we only bought it this morning.”

His casual tone, one that would be used to talk about the weather, shook Arche’s body.

“... How much?”

“Erm... it should be around 25 gold pieces? Very cheap right?”

Arche’s shoulder sagged weakly. Originally she could have paid off a portion of her debt using the deposit. But now, the debt had risen.

“—Why did you buy it?”

“As nobles, we would be the laughing stock if we could not afford something like this.”

Facing her father who was giving out a self-satisfying smile, even Arche

could not stop herself by looking at him with animosity.

“—We, are not nobles anymore.”

Her father’s expression froze, then reddened.

“Lies!” Her father hammered the table. As the table in the living room was thick, it was lucky that the glass cup did not tumble. “As long as that shit-for-brains fool dies, our house would be able to rise again as nobles! The origins of our nobility stemmed generations back within the Empire’s history. How could we be forgiven if we let our noble legacy end here?”

“This is an investment for that future. If we use this to display our power, we could show that fool that our house have not bow down.”

Utter foolishness. This was Arche’s thought as she looked at her father who was breathing heavily with excitement. That fool he was referring to was likely the Blood Emperor. It would be unlikely he paid any attention towards those nobility at Arche’s level. Furthermore, if her father insisted on his own agenda, he should not be doing something like this as they were other better alternatives.

Stucked in his own world, unable to see the truth, Arche could only shake her head weakly.

“The both of you, please do not argue anymore.”

The mother talked with a leisurely tone. Both Arche and her father glanced at each other for a moment and decided to call it a truce.

Her mother stood up and passed a small bottle to Arche.

“Arche, I bought a bottle of perfume for you.”

“... How much?”

“Five pieces of gold.”

“Is it?... Thank you.”

As Arche thanked her mother, she took that rather small bottle and kept it in her pockets.

From the situation, it was hard for Arche to look at her mother coldly.

Because if one looked at it differently, perfume and makeup were considered to be a smarter purchase.

If she improved on her appearance, she could attend the nobles party, fishing out those rich and powerful nobles. If one considered that a woman's happiness derived from marriage, getting pregnant and giving birth, from the point of view of a noble, the choice was rather astute.

It was not wrong to buy makeup as a form of investment. However, she should have the idea that one should not spend on perfume considering the financial situation of the house.

“—I've already said it many times. We should cut down on non-essential spending and maintain a minimal lifestyle.”

“That's why, didn't I explain earlier! These were all essential spending!”

Arche was tired of looking at her father whose face swelled red with anger. Incessantly repeating the same old issue that should have been solved long ago. Arche blamed herself as she was part of the reason for it. Furthermore, she gave everyone at Foresight trouble.

“I would not give the household anymore money. I will take my sisters and live outside.”

The father simmered towards that quiet rebuke. That man could only think to the point that it would be troublesome if no one were able to earn the necessary money to support the family. Arche mused to herself coldly.

“Who do you think you owe this to for being able to live to this day!”

“... I have already cleared off all my debts to you.”

Arche's words were rather cold. Till now, she had earned a considerable sum of money and most of these money came from her adventuring. Originally, the money should have been used to strengthen herself along with her teammates. Although the usage of the reward that was split evenly among them would go for different purposes. But as a silent rule, some of it should have been used to strengthen herself.

Looking at Arche who did not upgrade her equipment, what would her other

teammates thought about it?

If the equipment was not upgraded, it would result in one person within the team to be extremely weak.

But, everyone at Foresight did not say anything towards Arche. It was too much for Arche to bare.

Arche did not let down her gaze. Receiving such a willful look, her father could not help himself but look away. Obviously, for someone like Arche who had gone through life and death situations, would not lose to a stupid noble father.

After a swift look at her wordless father, Arche left the room.

“Milady.”

A familiar face anxiously greeted Arche who walked out from the living room.

“What is it, James?”

The elderly butler who served the family for years. The wrinkled face was displaying a rather anxious look. Arche immediately understood the reason for it. It was a look that came out quite often since the days that her father stopped being a noble.

“I feel ashamed for having to bring this matter up with milady...”

Due to Arche’s raised hand, the man’s sentence was interrupted. Judging that this was not a topic that should be discussed in the living room, the both of them moved a distance.

Arche took out a small pouch and opened it. The contents shined in different tones, with the majority shining in a silver radiant, followed by copper. The lowest intensity were golden radiant.

“—You should be able to work out something with this?”

Receiving the leather pouch, James’ face relaxed slightly after checking the contents.

“Wages, and we can pay the merchant....I believe we can make do, Ojou-

sama.”

“...That’s good.”

Arche released a sigh of relief. Although the situation was like trying to put out a burning cart with a cup of water. At least she could still manage the situation for now.

“—You could not stop father from buying it?”

“There’s no helping it. The seller came with a noble acquaintance. Although I did remind the master several times but...”

“...Is it?”

Both sighed together.

“...I would like to know. If I were to let off everyone who works here. What’s the minimal amount of money I need to prepare?”

James’ eye dilated slightly, and gave a lonely smile. His expression did not change much as he had already resolved himself for this moment.

“Understood, once I calculated the cost, I will deliver the information to you.”

“...I’ll leave it to you then.”

The sound of light footsteps with a quick pace could be heard. And it was heading towards Arche. Evading was simple, but doing so was unacceptable.

A shadow ran towards Arche. And it rammed into Arche without slowing. It had a weight even less than the light Arche. She could hold her ground, but that was impossible. As it hit her, she moved back, absorbing the impact.

The one that rushed over was a little girl with a height of less than 1 meter. Her age was around five years old. Her eyes were similar to Arche’s. As if dissatisfied about something, the little girl puffed out her little pink cheeks.

“So...hard.”

The girl was not pointing out Arche’s chest was too flat.

Her adventuring outfit were mostly made from leather, increasing its defensive properties, especially at the areas around the chest and stomach were protected by hardened leather. Still it did not stopped the little girl from

flying towards her as if she wanted to dent the leather armor

“Are you all right?”

Arche caressed the little girl’s face and rubbed her head.

“Erm, no problem, onee-sama!”

The little girl responded happily. Seeing her sister’s expression, Arche could not help herself but to smile.

“...Let’s end the discussion here.”

The butler gave her a look of gratitude as he did want to intrude in their private moments anymore. Arche rubbed her sister’s head.

“Urey...the thing at the corridor....”

Arche stopped her sentence. It was common sense that it was unsightly for noble ladies to run around the corridor. However, as she had told her father earlier, they were not nobles anymore. Running like that should not be an issue anymore.

During those moments, Arche’s hand never stopped. The little girl with the messed up hair laughed and did not show any inkling that she wanted the treatment to stop. Arche looked around, noticing that one person was missing.

“—Kuuder?”

“In the room!”

“Like this... there’s something I want to talk about. Let’s go together.”

“Erm.”

Her sisters laughed merrily. She would be the one protecting them. As she realised this, Arche took their little hands with her own.

The hands were so small until Arche’s considerably slender arms could encompass it easily. Yet, she could still feel the warmth being transmitted to her.

“Onee-sama’s hands are very tough.”

Arche looked at her other hand. During her adventuring days, it was cut

many times, those tough hands were no longer the hands of a noble girl. But, she did have any lingering regrets towards it, because the arms were the testament towards her existence along with her friends and companions in Foresight.

“But I love it the most.”

Enveloped the both her sisters' hands, Arche smiled gently.

“Thank you.”

Chapter 54: Invaders | Part 2

Early morning.

While the sun still had not rose, there were countless people gathered on the Earl's land. Warriors, magic casters, priests and theives. Almost everyone were specialists in their own field.

After the last team, [Foresight] arrived, that number was 18.

The ones here were the ones gathered by the Earl for work, the Workers in the Empire that had confidence in their strength.

The worker teams maintained a distance between each other as they sized each other up. When the four members of 'Foresight' finally arrived, they were welcomed by the collective stares of the other worker teams. This scene could almost be considered spectacular in its own way.

In the area between the separated teams, three people had gathered in the center, exchanging information. The three were the representative for each team.

As it was early morning and the area was still dark, Hekkeran and his company squinted their eyes as they tried to determine who those three were. They have already investigated all their competitors within the Empire's capital. There could roughly guess which were the teams from the looks of it.

"Cheh, that guy is here too."

Three Workers.

Imina spat as if she saw something disgusting after confirming the identity of one of the three men. Although she expressed it with a soft voice, it was sufficient to drive Hekkeran and the others to check their surroundings for signs of hostility.

"Imina-san"

"Got it, Robert. He would be a colleague for this round of work...Still, I do not

want to see his face.”

“— — I don’t like it myself.”

“Well, if I had to pick between like and hate, I also dislike him.”

“...Oi, oi, you still have to greet him afterwards, so don’t think about unpleasant thoughts, or they’ll show on your face, okay?”

“Do your best, leader.”

Hekkeran frowned in response to Roberdyck’s encouragement, as though saying “don’t poke into other people’s businesses”, and then walked towards the group of three.

The first person that greeted Hekkeran was a worker who wore a suit black full plate armor. The design of the armor was oddly rounded, almost spherical. Due to the especially large pauldrons, the man wearing the armor appeared more like an upright beetle than a human. On his waist was a two handed battle axe.

A man’s low deep voice came out from the slits of the metal helmet that completely hid the face.

“Just as I had foreseen, thou also came, Hekkeran.”

“Yo, Greenham. I thought the request wasn’t too bad so we came.”

Hekkeran raised his hand as a gesture at the remaining two leaders in a casual manner.

“About your side...” Hekkeran said, after glancing over to Greenham’s team and quickly counting them. “There’s five of you. What happened to the rest?”

“Resting, recovering from fatigue. Due to our previous work being of similar nature, some of our members had to stay behind to help with the transportation and repair of damaged goods.”

This man, Greenham, was the leader of ‘Heavy Masher’, a worker team comprising of nine members. Having more members definitely had its advantages, such as having more options available in choosing how to handle each request. In particular, it provided the flexibility of being able to select the best suited members for each different request. On the other hand, it takes a

longer period for them to determine their approach, slowing down their overall movement.

Those were the pros and cons of a large team, it wouldn't be unusual at all for a team to just suddenly split into two. Being able to maintain full control over such a large team of workers demonstrated just how strong Greenham's management and leadership skills were.

"Fuuhn, how tiring. How about supporting us so you can earn enough not to disappoint the comrades you left behind?"

"Thy suggestion is foolish. After we finish this job, bonuses will be given based on the leader's performance. As unfortunate as it is, the best performance will naturally belong to me."

"Oi oi, spare me already."

Greenham simply grinned. Sensing that he had no intention of stopping, Hekkeran shrugged and turned towards the other man.

"I think it's the first time we've met face-to-face."

Hekkeran stretched his hand out. The other man grasped it and shook back.

He had

a set of beautiful eyebrows. That word was suited to describe the youth. His face was symmetrical, and his mouth curved into a smile. He equipped himself with a breastplate armor, and on his waist was a sword that originated from the southern city.

He moved his eyes and stared directly at Hekkeran.

"—'Foresight', I've heard a lot about you."

It was a voice that sounded as clear as a bell, which matched very well with his appearance.

"Likewise, 'Tenmu'."

The genius swordsman that was undefeated in the arena, there wasn't a single worker who wouldn't recognize who he was.

This man's 'Tenmu', was in a sense a team composed purely of himself.

“The sword genius who’s said to be a match for the Kingdom’s strongest, Gazef Stronoff. It’s reassuring to have your squad with us.”

“Thank you. However, I think it’s about time for it to be said the other way around. That man should only be referred to as being able to match up to this Eruya Uzruth. “

“Oh, you have your way with your words.”

Eruya smiled faintly, fully displaying his arrogance. Seeing this smile, the unpleasant feelings concealed inside Hekkeran almost surfaced again.

“Well then, we’ll be relying on you inside the ruins.”

“Of course. Leave it to me. It’ll be great if there are monsters that can put up a decent fight inside the ruins.”

“...It’s completely unknown what kind of monsters might exist inside. Perhaps we’ll even run into dragons?”

“That would be quite scary. Monsters such as dragons would definitely put up a hell-of-a fight.”

Hekkeran was laughing forcefully while having to suppress his other emotions.

Taking only the skills with a sword into account, there were rumors that Eruya could even win against A+ ranked adventurers. Considering this point, there was some basis behind his boasting. Having confidence was a good thing, since it was also important for workers to showcase their abilities.

However, there should be a limit to just how much one can boast.

The world’s strongest race, Dragons.

Masters of the sky, capable of producing powerful breaths, with scales that were near impenetrable, and possessing a physical prowess that was superior by far. As they age, they even became able to use magic. Having a life span that humans simply couldn’t compare with, the wisdoms that they accumulate would humble even sages.

Just like in the tales of the Thirteen Heroes, the last opponent in their adventures was a dragon known as the ‘Dragon God’.

Even though these existences were only used as an example during conversations, but to still be able to act this arrogantly was rather surprising. No matter how one interpreted it, Eruya's words seemed like a joke. However he could tell that Eruya was completely serious just from the looks in his eyes. Just how self-conceited could he be?

It was still uncertain what kind of monsters would be in the ruins. Eruya's sense of judgement would definitely be a hindrance to the overall operation of things.

It's probably best to stay away from him.

It would be convenient if he was to perish by himself, but it would still be troublesome if the overall formation became broken. A faint smile appeared on Hekkeran's face as he reached his conclusion, and adjusted his attitude towards Eruya, towards the direction of 'discard after use'.

"Over there must be the members of 'Foresight'. Oya—"

The look of his eyes when he saw Imina was filled with prejudice and disdain. There were rumors that Eruya hailed from Slane Theocracy, where humans were considered the most superior race. As an alleged citizen of the Theocracy, he had the tendency to treat those with mixed blood as lower-class humans. His eyes did not hide his disdain for such a woman to stand as his equal.

"...Oi, oi, don't be so hostile to my comrade, okay?"

"Of course. We'll be comrades for the same work this time. I'll definitely be cooperative."

Perhaps the powerful wild child Eruya matured, but Hekkeran was still afraid that he would run amok. In short, he could feel the mental instability of Eruya. Hekkeran couldn't relax even after giving the warning, that's how unpleasant the atmosphere was.

Hekkeran decided to be careful of him.

"Ay, trust me. Anyway, returning to the previous topic, I don't mind letting someone else take leadership during this trip. As long as there are no special cases, I'll follow the orders given. If we encounter battle, I don't mind taking the

frontlines. I'll let you guys witness my blade skills."

"Understood."

"...Well then, I'll be returning to my team then. If there are any problems just call me."

Eruya bowed, and walked off.

Hekkeran's face slightly twitched after seeing a number of women following Eruya. However, showing one's emotions here was simply unacceptable. It was not uncommon for situations to suddenly turn unfavorable after one's emotions were exposed. As the leader of a team, this kind of behavior would be unacceptable.

Hekkeran suppressed his emotions, and removed all facial expressions. Looking away from what he considered as trash, he greeted the final person.

"Yo, Palpatra."

"Yo, Hekkeran."

Golden hair, blue eyes. His fair skin denoted a healthy complexion under the sun. He possessed the common features of a person from the Empire like Hekkeran. His features were ordinary with nothing distinguishing.

His age was around the mid-twenties.

Palpatra was wearing full plate mail. On his back was a spear and a large shield. His equipment were more focused on defence than attack. Hence, he was called the 'Iron Wall'.

"Fumuu. However, that guy seems a bit dangerous."

Towards the Parupatra who spoke in a hushed voice. Hekkeran nodded in agreement.

"—That's right. It doesn't matter if he ends up killing himself, but it'll be bad if we end up getting dragged down with him."

"Indeed, it's true that guy is really strong, but his overconfidence could endanger the rest of us. He's like a walking hazard."

Greenham also chipped in with a whispered "So troublesome to deal with".

After seeing Eruya's attitude, almost none of the workers would think otherwise.

"Also, just how strong is that guy anyways? I haven't been to the arena recently."

"Ah, Hekkeran does not know as well? I did not see it personally. I didn't visit the arena nor have I work with him before. Greenham?"

Greenham's helmet moved left and right.

"I've only heard about it but never witnessed in person. I might be able to find out more if I ask my comrades. In the end, how do we define the threshold for strong? If we use Gazef Stronoff as the reference point, from what this old man currently know of... for example, ah that's right... where would we place the Four Knights of the Empire?"

"The knights titled 'Heavy Explosion', 'Unmovable', 'Lightning', and 'Violent Wind'. What about the Agrand Republic's Dragon Lords?"

"C'mon, Let's limit it to just the swordsmen among humans for now."

"Then the most of the Agrand Council is out. They are full of demi-humans after all. There are strong ones among them....Like Dragon Knights....Umm, then the 'Devil Lord' of the Coliseum is out....The Holy Knight of the Roble Kingdom?"

"Ho, indeed there was. The maiden who carries the Holy Sword? Her skill with the sword was rather terrifying.

The conversation became more energised. While it was natural for Workers to gather information on strong enemies, this was something they extremely enjoyed as warriors.

"The average capability for those from Slaine Theocracy is rather high. But none of them seemed exceptional. Mah, even there is, it would be their magic casters who utilizes holy magic."

"How about the Kingdom's A+ ranked female adventurer?"

"Mah, the one known as 'Not Breast but Pecks'. She is indeed strong."

"....They are some A Class adventurers that will kill you if you casually call them by their nicknames...."

“If only on skill....It’s a bit difficult. From adventurers and workers, then the [Hero-sama] or [Dark Lord]. [Crystal]’s Serabreit, [Flaming Red Lotus]’ Optics, and Brain Unglaus?”

The conversation halted for the first time.

“Who’s that?”

Parupatra asked Greenham.

“You don’t know? He is quite famous in the Kingdom though.”

Hekkeran was asked if he knew, but he also shook his head.

“You really don’t....”

Greenham was slightly surprised, and dug up his past memories to talk about the man Brain.

“When I participated in the Fighting Competition in the Kingdom, he beat me in an instant. He was ridiculously strong.”

“Was that the competition where Gazef Stronoff won?”

“Yes. Well, Brain lost to Gazef in the end. But, it was an amazing fight. I feel blessed to have been able to see it....How did he deflect that and how did he attack from there....It was amazing.”

Greenham spoke of that man. If he could fight with the strongest warrior in the surrounding kingdoms, Gazef Stronoff on even terms, then his strength was top class.

Hearing that there were strong people he did not know, Hekkeran felt admiration.

“Now....Brain and Eruya, who’s stronger?”

“Brain.” Greenham instantly replied. “I do not know how he currently is, but he is a genius of the sword. I was defeated in two swings. Of course, I am stronger than before, but I do not feel confident.... Well, he’s better than Eruya.”

The sound of flesh hitting something and the screams of a woman could be heard.

All of the workers' gazes gathered at one spot. Several dropped their centre of gravity, ready to dive into battle at any time.

There, one of Eruya's comrades (Doubtful) had fallen in front of him. As to whether she was hit, imagining it was not difficult.

Hekkeran felt displeased, but then panickly faced one of his comrades, Imina. From her face, she was still maintaining her fighting stance. And her blade was at the ready. She gave off the feeling that if anything more were to occur, she would act.

Panicking, Hekkeran gestured at her to hold it in.

Personally Hekkeran felt the same as Imina. However, they could not butt into the affairs of other teams. Of course, if they decided to they could do it. However, there was a need to bear all the consequences. In fact, several other members of the teams made the same faces, but they were not moving.

After making a rude gesture at Eruya's back, she clicked her tongue.

"...Now, we should end this talk here."

Hekkeran spoke to the other two to change the conversation.

"...Yes, Hekkeran has arrived, and the most important things have been decided."

"Eruya has left, but who should hold command over all the teams?"

Silence accompanied Greenham's words.

There were four worker teams. While it was a considerable fighting force, if there was no one to command then it would be impossible to work well. Even having multiple arms, one could do nothing if not controlled.

And to communicate well with teams with such strong personalities was quite the task. Especially if complaints could not be voiced.

If one did not try to take leadership, when done badly the other three teams would dislike them.

"Honestly, wouldn't it be fine to not choose an overall leader?"

"That is just postponing the problem. It will be dangerous during a battle."

“...What about rotating it once a day?”

“Ah,”

“True.”

“Then, shall we give the right to lead in order of our arrival?”

“What about Eruya’s [Tenbu]?”

“Eruya abandoned his choice, so he shouldn’t mind.”

“Then, first would be our [Heavy Masher]’s turn.”

“Please do, Greenham.”

“Got it. Well, within the Empire we should not encounter dangerous monsters, so there is no problem. The trouble will start when we enter the Kingdom, we will be quite close to a forest as well.”

“Ah, we should have started from the back.”

As Hekkeran hugged his head, the two silently smiled. Afterwards, their expressions immediately hardened and they faced the finally brightened hall. Most of the surrounding Workers were headed there.

At that moment, a butler walked in. He had a ramrod straight posture. It was an attitude that suited one that worked for an Earl.

As the butler walked to the front of the workers, he bowed. While no one responded, he politely spoke.

“It is time. We are grateful to those who have accepted the request of our Earl family.”

“The ones accompanying you from our house are these two. The destination is the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick within the Kingdom. The period to investigate for is three days. The following payment will depend on the information brought back. So, it will be discussed at a later date. If there are no problems, please follow me. I shall guide you to the prepared location.”

Why do you have information on that tomb? What information should be prioritised?

There were various questions, but the Workers knew from experience what

would be answered. If they would be informed, then it would already have been given to them.

For that reason, all of them silently followed behind.

The ones at the back, was Hekkeran and the rest's Foresight.

Imina, who was next to Hekkeran, whispered.

"It would be nice if that piece of shit died."

Imina spat out the hateful words she could not contain about Eruya. It was quite a suppressed voice, one could not be sure if it was due to her anger or restraint. Hekkeran could not read her, and could only pray it was the latter.

"I have heard from the rumours, but he is a terrible man."

"—The worst."

Everyone from Foresight expressed their unhappiness. It was natural. On top of having Imina as their comrade, Eruya's actions were difficult to forgive.

Apart from Eruya, everyone on Eruya's team were women. And elves. If it was just that then Imina and the other members would not be displeased. However, there was a reason for Eruya's attitude earlier.

All of the female elves were provided the bare minimum wear, but there were parts that were torn and not patched well. And the ears that should have poked out from their short hair was gone from the middle.

That was the proof of a slave.

They, all of Eruya's team members, were elf slaves from the Slane Theocracy.

The Slane Theocracy allowed for slavery of other races. And in the case of elves, their proof of slavery was not a brand, but to have half of their ears cut off.

It was true that the Empire did not allow slavery.

However, there were occasions where this was given a silent nod such as demi-humans fighting in the Coliseum. Eruya's elf slaves had that type of relationship with the Empire.

The percentage of humans in the Baharuth Empire, Re-Estize Kingdom and the Slane Theocracy was about 100%, with a mindset that was more isolationist than the surrounding countries. So demi-humans—Even Imina—found it difficult to live in these countries.

However, only Dwarfs were different.

The Azelisia Mountain Range that ran along the border of the Baharuth Empire and the Re-Estize Kingdom. There was a Dwarf Kingdom located within, and since the Empire had trading relationships with them, the rights of the Dwarves was secured.

“I can understand that the Elves are pitiful. However, what we cannot do is save them.”

Imina did not reply and heaved a sigh.

She could internalise it, but she had to bear it. Accepting the 100% displeased signal, Roberdyck and Arche both stiffened their dissatisfaction. Since the one who should be the angriest was keeping herself in check, they themselves should not show it.

The workers headed towards two large carriages. The horses pulling them were different from the usual. One of the workers who saw them whispered.

“—Slepnir.”

Yes.

The horse pulling the carriage had eight legs. The race of this horse, was known as Sleipnir.

They were larger than normal horses, and they were stronger, had more endurance and maneuverability. So they were the best tamable beast that could run on land. Of course, their price was quite high. With a price equal to that of ten war horses, even nobles had trouble keeping them.

Two carriages with two horses each for a total of four. Even if one was lost during the adventure, they could only say that this was nice.

No, that's not it—Hekkeran thought, the ones who could see it thought the same thing. That it was that needed of a job.

“Please use this carriage. Food supplies are inside.”

“—Roberdyke.”

“Understood.”

At least one person from each team went as a representative, checked the interior and confirmed what the butler said.

The carriages had a large amount of food and a magic item that could dispense water. Considering the time it would take to arrive, it was more than enough. Since they were undergoing a secret mission, this was all the provisions they would receive. However, even taking that into account, this would be fine.

The representatives handling the provisions talked among themselves, checking if anything was amiss.

Hekkeran walked over to Greenham. This was as they had something they needed to talk about.

“Sorry Greenham.”

“What is it?”

“About the sharing of carriages, can we separate from [Tenbu]?”

Greenham moved his helmet to check on Imina. He then nodded.

“Got it. Then we will share a carriage with Tenbu.”

“Sorry about that. My thanks.”

“Do not fret. In this round of request, we are all comrades. It would be troublesome if anything happens before we even start investigation and infiltration work.—Then, let’s go.”

Seeing that the handler conveyed his understanding, Greenham shouted out his orders.



Within four fifths of their journey to the Great Tomb Nazarick, no major issues arised due to the Empire’s superb security measures.

Within the Empire’s territory, bands of knights would frequently patrol the

area. It would be rare to have groups of monsters loitering around. Even bandit attacks were uncommon. Hence, the problem lay with the final one fifth of their journey, which was after entering the Kingdom's territory.

Due to the nature of their job within the Kingdom's land, they decided not to use the major roadways but chose to travel on the empty plains. Traveling within no man's land would undoubtedly raised the chances of encountering monsters.

With the current team of Workers, they could easily overcome most monsters. Nonetheless, they could not rest their laurels. Monsters like

Basilisk and Cockatrice with their petrifying gaze. There was also the fatally poisonous Dove, where a simple scratch from it will easily result in fatality.

Luckily, they never encountered any such monsters when they entered the Kingdom. Soon, they reached their destination—The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. This was likely the blessing of Lady Luck towards Hekkeran and the other Workers.

The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

The grounds was surrounded by thick stone walls, six meters in height. There were only two entrance leading inside. One front and one at the back. A newly build wooden house was seen beside the front entrance.

On one hand, the grass growing within the grounds were neatly trimmed, giving the impression that the place was neat and tidy. On the other hand, there were many large trees as well, creating a rather eerie atmosphere.

The tombstones were arranged randomly, like the croquet teeths of an ugly witch. This contrasted with the tidy landscape of the tomb. Outside observers would feel uneasy by it. Numerous artistically detailed sculptures of angels and goddesses dotted the place. The sculptures would be evaluated highly for their aesthetics values.

Located at the North, South, East, and West sides of the Tomb were four small scale mausoleums.

The center of the grounds was occupied by a large luxurious mausoleum. The central mausoleum was surrounded by eight sculptures of armored knights,

measuring more than ten meters in height.

There were no movements within the grounds.

A magic caster who used the flight spell observed layout for the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick from the air.

The 18 workers who were involved with this round of request were observing the Great Tomb of Nazarick, 300 metres away from the backdoor. As they observed the place, their brows could not help but frown at the information they received.

Those who frown the deepest, was the magic casters. Among the Workers, they could be considered as the most knowledgeable. All of them huddled together, discussing the information.

Their question was, why a tomb existed here at such a place?

They already found it weird after investigating by books.

However, it would be understandable if they wanted to hide the place. But there were no signs of any logging. Nothing exist here other than empty plains. The place was not a convenient spot to build a tomb.

Considering the practical purpose for a tomb, it was weird to build such a luxurious tomb, so far from civilization. Needless to say, it was highly inconvenient.

If the purpose for the mausoleum was not to serve as the resting spot for the dead but as a monument of someone that had great achievements from the past, it would be understandable. As this had been done before. Yet, they could not find any matching history nor legends linked to Nazarick. Furthermore, they could not understand why there were many tombstones occupying the place.

Every team combined the information they collected, but found nothing usable. Or it could also mean that none successfully entered the place. No information about such a remarkable tomb leaked out.

The presence of a log house indicates that someone was managing the place. So. the information they obtained was not entirely useless. Considering that the royal demesnes was nearby, it would seemed that the place was

guarded by the Kingdom's soldiers. But the place does not seemed to be on alert.

In the end, everything seemed very unnatural.

Their sense of uneasiness was like something that was stuck in the throat, causing them to narrow their brows.

In truth, the unnatural landscape made it looked like a trap. If it was a trap however, there was quite a number of unanswered question. What was the reason for sending Workers into the territory of the Kingdom instead of the Empires.

The Workers burned their brains thinking about everything. But they could not think of any leads.

"Now, what do we do?"

Hekkeran asked the tired looking Arche who just return.

"—In short, when it's night, three teams of Workers would act covertly. The remaining team will pretend to be adventurers. They will try to have perform friendly negotiations with those whom were within the wooden house."

"So it seems. We could be easily detected if we tried to infiltrate during daytime."

"—As so."

Although the walls of Nazarick were tall, they could not see any sentries. It gave the feeling that they would be no problems if they try to sneak in now. Still, its best avoid unexpected situation, plus it would be safer to operate under the cover of darkness.

Besides there was still time until nightfall, if they keep up their observation on the tomb, they might gain some new information.

Although there was a limited timeframe for them to fulfill the request. The time would be considered well spent for the intelligent.

"Wouldn't it be safer to use 《Invisibility》 to investigate the place?"

"—We've considered it. But there was the possibility of brewing trouble.

Hence, it would be better to check out the place in one go. At least, we could glean something, no matter how trivial it may be,”

Although invisibility magic exist, there were many ways of countering it. The spell was not foolproof. If the Workers decided to approach the place while the effects of that spell and was detected by the tombs’ sentries or someone related, the alert level for the place would be increased. If they were unlucky, it may reached a level where it would be impossible for them to infiltrate the place.

To avoid such a circumstance from developing, they decided it was better for them to act together.

“Then, I really wished that they give us some resting time.”

“—Yes, each team would take turns to be on alert. We’ll stick to the arrangements made since departing from the Earl’s place.”

“In other words, our team would be the last.”

“—That’s right. We’ll switch after every two hours. It will be quite a while before we reach our turn.”

As the conversation reached here, Arche turned her head and dropped her shoulders.

“Thanks for the hard work.”

Roberdyk nodded towards Arche.

“—This is really tiring. We spend so long because that terrible man tried to forcefully push his agenda. We used quite some effort to refute him. That man does not know the meaning of accommodating others.”

“...Oh, Eruya was it?”

“Just call him Mr. Lowest Piece of Shit.”

Towards Imina who was filled with murderous rage, Hekkeran smiled and tried to change the topic.

“Then, until it is our turn. Let’s go back and set up camp.”

“Agreed. Although it might not rain now, it would be unfortunate for us if we

are not prepared. Imina, when it's your turn to head out. Don't show such a scary face."

"—Ok then, I am really bursting with anger. Let's set up camp somewhere further away at least."

"If it's the preassigned spot, it should be ok?"

In truth, the spot was not that suitable. If they were too close, it may result in an argument.

"Let's go. Hey Greeham, we are heading back first."

"Oh!"

The four of them started walking away. They waved towards Greenham from Heavy Mashers, the first team to start sentry duties.

"...The more I think about it, the more puzzling it is, the Earl's request."

Everyone turned their heads towards that voice. They noticed that Arche stopped moving and was looking at the tomb.

The remaining three, including Hekkeran stopped moving as well as they gazed upon the walls of Nazarick. Those thickset walls were not made from stacked stones. It looked more like it was carved out from a stone basin. It would be impossible to transport a 300 meter long stone. They could have annealed the stones together. But this was not a technique known to man.

Likely it belonged to the stone race, the dwarven craftsmanship. It could also be that of dragons whose intellect surpassed that of humans. There was also the possibility that it belonged to an unknown race.

Just by looking at the outer wall, they could think of many possibilities.

Hekkeran in the end could not help himself but laughed, trying to suppress his excitement.

"...It might be that a powerful undead was sealed within."

"...uh-wa. So scary."

"...that's really fake, Hekkeran. It's nothing like me at all. Personally, I find it disgusting."

“Yeah, sorry.”

“But why this place though? If it’s to say that the tomb magically appear here, then it would make sense.”

Three pairs of flipped eyes were directed towards Roberdyk who mumbled to himself.

“Don’t be ridiculous.”

“...Boring.”

“Totally unbelievable.”

“I am not saying like that happened. It was just a sudden thought.”

Roberdyk bemoaned with a hurt look.

“Still, it is kinda exciting.”

“Yep. For what reason this tomb was built. What sort of person was buried here. This really stimulated my intellectual curiosity.”

“Agree. Turning the unknown into the known is a little exciting.”



Under the night sky, the thirteen workers started their operation.

Their first objective was the walls surrounding Nazarick.

As many of them were wearing armor, their movements would be slowed and the occasional voice would appear making it hard for them to appear stealthy. However, these were only common conjectures. To people who could use magical abilities, it was not impossible to solve such a minor issue.

Firstly, they would use 《Silence》with a magic that could eliminate the noise at a certain radius, whether it was noise from the armor or their footsteps would not be transmitted.

Next would be 《Invisibility》, once they became invisible, it would be extremely difficult to be detected visually.

As a precaution, a rogue that was enchanted with the spells, 《Invisibility》, 《Fly》and Eagle Eye》was covering them from the sky. He was observing the

groups surrounding, to enable them to arrive at the walls safely. His hands was holding onto an arrow that was laced with paralyzing poison in preparation for any immediate response.

Everyone of them arrived at walls safely just as they predicted.

In the midst of their inspection, the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick did not employ any night time surveillance network. Not only were the sentries missing, not even a grave keeper could be found. Furthermore, there was not even a shadow that came out from the wooden house.

They were overdoing it by using so much magic for a defenceless tomb. Their action was in fact a request from their employer.

It would be troublesome to become a wanted criminal within the Kingdom.

But, there would be more problems after that. Overcoming the wall, inspecting the insides and infiltrating the tomb.

While still under the effects of 《Invisibility》, the workers began their next move.

The next step would be infiltrating the tomb.

There were two ways to approach it. Scaling the wall or entering it via the main gate.

There were gaps on the gate like that of a lattice door. Although there were gaps, the width was too narrow for a person to pass through. The gate was nearly 4 meters in height. It would be difficult to forcibly push it open. Furthermore, the walls were slippery as if it was carved out from a single stone. Scaling it would be very difficult. It would take some time even with climbing tools.

But the experienced Workers already had a plan for it.

A strange rod about 30 cm in length suddenly floated in the air before it felled to the ground. It floated in the air as if an invisible person lifted it, and the rod suddenly emitted a faint light after it was bend. This special rod – a fluorescent rod, once bend, the alchemical liquid inside would be mixed, causing it to be fluorescent. Once invoked, the magic

《Invisibility》

would affect all things possessed at the time of activation. In order to make it visible, the item had to be withdrawn from one's body.

A few of those lights moved left to right. Once it was spend, the rods were disposed off. The alchemical solution was sprinkled on the ground, seeping into the soil. All traces of it was gone.

After a while, three pieces of rope dropped from the top of the wall. Knots were formed at fixed intervals along the rope. It was the work of the rogue who was in the sky, he landed on top of the wall that surrounded the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick,

The rope shook easily.

If a person was looking at the place closely, he or she would notice the climbing figures of invisible people.

Even magic casters like Arche who rely more on their magic than muscles could easily climb it with the strength of their arms. They do not require further training to strengthen their muscles.

The first to arrived at the top began to chant a magic.

Then, another three pieces of rope dropped down from the wall. The end of the rope was not secured but it looked as if it was glue to the air. The setup looked fragile at a glance. But none of them were worried about it and slipped down the rope.

As the magic effect was lost on the rope, it flopped down towards the ground. Those responsible for it retrieved the ropes. Although it was weird to see coils of rope floating in midair, there was no helping it.

With this, 13 Workers successfully infiltrated the grounds of Nazarick. Their series of actions was the proof of them being veteran of many battles. All of them acted under the unfavorable condition where they could not see nor hear each other.

A detailed plan, each team trusting each other, grasping the opposites action. Without these factors, they would not be successful. Of course for a

team to work well, they need to have a good relationship between those who lead and those who were lead.

And, they split up.

Their first targets would be the small mausoleums at all four corners. There were three teams that successfully infiltrated Nazarick. They decided to each investigate a different target.

As the effects of 《Invisibility》 had expired, they all reappeared. Then, each team moved towards the mausoleum they were tasked with.

Shrinking their bodies, using the tombstone, trees or statues as cover, they moved quietly through the grave. 《Silence》was still in effect. Hence, they did not make any noise.



As Heavy Masher's leader, Greenham approached the mausoleum, his eyes widened.

Because the temple was more luxurious than what he expected initially.

The mausoleum was humongous, build by stones layered on top of each other. The surface of the white stone wall was smooth. Although the building looked like it had quite the history behind it, there were no signs of staining from rains nor any weathering effect from wind and snow.

A thick iron grilled door sat above three layers of marbled stairs. The doors were so-well polished that there were no signs of any rust. The black tinged iron grills were practically shining.

The casual observer would understand how well the building was cared for.

—In other words, one could deduce that someone was taking care of the tomb.

As Greenham thought about this, he looked at the log house.

His teammate, the thief, headed towards the front, closely examining the first layer of steps. Greenham received the hand signal to fall back due to the effects of the magic, 《Silence》, and he slowly retreated, to avoid any potential area-of-effect traps.

The thief was focused intently on his examination. But he could not help but feel anxious himself.

The fleshy human body was nothing but a vessel to hold the soul. As the vessel began to decay, the soul will be recalled by God. Henceforth, the dead should be immediately buried in their graves, basically within the earth. But those with privilege like the nobles do things differently.

In the event of an immediate burial, they have no choice but to dig up the grave again in order to confirm that the dead body was decaying. For this, to obtain the proof that the body was decaying, they would leave the dead for a period. Of course, they would not have chosen a spot like their homes.

For such a purpose, they would utilize the cemetery's mausoleum. They would place the body there for a period. The cleric would then made a decision after observing for signs of decay and whether the soul within had return to God's side.

The area where they placed such bodies would be the communal space within the mausoleum. Several stone platforms would be erected within the vast hall and the bodies would be placed there. It would be a common sight to see rotting bodies neatly lined into a row. Anyone seeing such a scene would have been creeped out. Since, this was just a commonsense in this world. The scene would have been treated as something natural.

But for nobles who possessed both power and money, things would be different for them. They would not be using communal mausoleums but those which were passed down by their ancestors. The bodies of these influential people would be placed here until summoned back by God. It was not surprising that a mausoleum would be a symbol of power.

It would be quite common to find furniture and treasures decorating the interiors of the mausoleum.

In other words, to the grave diggers, the mausoleum was like a treasure vault to them. Hence, it would not be surprising that traps were set up in such a place to deter robbers. Hence, the more luxurious the mausoleum, the more dangerous it was.

Therefore, the thief was investigating the place more carefully than usual.

After finishing his investigation on the stairs, the thief moved towards the iron doors. At that moment, the sound of their surrounding returned.

The effect of 《Silence》 had reached its end. The timing was perfect. The thief stealthily approached the main door. He placed something like a listening device to the door, checking for sounds inside the door.

After a few seconds, the thief turned towards Greenham and the others, shaking his head.

The meaning was ‘There’s nothing here.’.

Every member of Heavy Masher was showing a suspicious expression. The thief was shaking his head from left to right. The thief himself tilted his head in puzzlement as if the situation itself was strange.

It was extremely weird that such a luxurious mausoleum had ‘hardly anything’.

It was also a mystery as to why the place was not locked up as well. If the thief could not detect anything else, next would be the vanguards turn.

Greenham proceeded to the front while the thief started to oil the door. The other warrior with his shield stood forward.

In a single breath, Greenham pressed down on the door knob and the door opened slowly. As the door was oiled beforehand, or possibility due to the place being well maintained. The thickset doors swung open easily. The warrior who was on the sides earlier now stood between the entrance and Greenham. His shield was raised to counter any possible traps or sudden attacks.

There was nothing like traps shooting arrows at them as the iron doors fully opened. Only complete darkness appeared in front of Heavy Mashers.

“《Continuous Light》”

The arcane magic caster used a spell to light up the ends of the warrior’s mace. The magical illumination could be adjusted to a certain degree. The insides of the mausoleum began to brighten up. With the invocation of the spell, the warriors weapon began to glow as well.

From both source of light, one could easily mistaken that the room

belonged to that of royalty.

In the middle of the room was a white stone coffin, similar to those placed in the temple altar. The coffin was 2.5 meters tall decorated with detailed but conserve figures. At all four corners of the room were white statues of knights carrying both sword and shield.

“Does anyone here recognise the emblem?”

“Ah, no idea on that.”

On the wall was a flag with a strange emblem threaded with golden threads. Although they were at a foreign country, the magic caster and the thief who committed the details of many noble families into their memories did not recognise it. It would be safer to assume that it did not originate from the Kingdom.

“Could it be a noble predating the foundation of the Kingdom?”

“You mean 200 years ago?”

200 years ago, the Demon Gods laid waste to many countries. Around here, there were few countries with a history of more than 200 years. The Kingdom, Holy Kingdom, Theocracy and the Empire was established within the 200 years history.

“Saying that, to be so-well maintained without a trace damage over time. What sort of material was used to build this place?”

“Probably due to the effects of preservation magic?”

Everyone had their own questions. The thief entered the room carefully, searching every inch of the place.

The remaining people placed a thick metal rod between the doors. Even with the trapping mechanism, the door will not close off entirely. To prevent the lights from spilling outside, they only closed one side of the door. As the thief examined the interior, Greenham and the others kept their vigilance towards their surroundings. As they have no choice but to rely on magical light, although it may expose them to any observers.

As there were no sign of movement outside, the thief moved directly below

the flag, examining it. Bracing himself, he reached out a hand towards the flag.

After touching it, he quickly withdrew his hand.

“...This probably worth something. It was weaved with metal threads.”

“Haaahh?!”

“Okay, what?”

“Could such a flag exist?!”

Astonishment voices leaked from many people. And in a hurry every one of them approached the flag and touched it. The cold texture was exactly that of metal.

“Hey hey hey. You never heard of this?”

“Me too....”

“What’s with this mausoleum?”

Which high nobility does it belonged to? No, probably not high nobility. Maybe it belonged to the royal family.”

What sort of delicate alloy was used to make this flag? What would be the price of such a flag? Unable to imagine it, everyone in Heavy Masher could not say a word.

“Should we take it back?”

After hearing the question from the thief, it was Greenham who was first to recover from shocked.

“The thing looks rather bulky. No doubt it is heavy too. Let’s recover it later. Any suggestions?”

“Understood.”

After confirming that there were no other opinions, the thief nodded.

“This is the result of the search. They are no traps nor hidden doors.”

“...Then, I’ll be troubling you.”

Greenham nodded towards the magic caster. His teammate evoked a spell as if understanding his intentions.

“《Detect Magic》. I don't sense the presence of any magical items.”

Along with the words from the magic caster whom used a spell to detect the flow of magic earlier, a sense of disappointment started to spread around the confines of the mausoleum. That was obvious because the most valuable type of treasure was not present.

The price of magical items were astronomical. Just a simple enchanted sword would fetch a decent price. Even a full plate armor enchanted with a simple weight reducing spell would be considered as a precious treasure.

‘Then, the next would be that fella over there.’

Their attention was focused on the stone coffin located in the middle of the room.

The thief took some time examining it before confirming that there were no traps.

Greenham and the warrior nodded at each other before working on the lid of the stone coffin. As the coffin was rather huge, they thought the cover would be quite heavy. However, it was surprisingly light to them. The two almost lost their balance as they put in an excess amount of force.

The cover for the stone coffin was removed. The contents reflected the light, causing a dazzling radiance spilled out.

Gold and silver, mixed with a myriad of precious stones with different colors. They were also various decorative pieces that were radiating brightly mixed within the haphazardly piled gold coins.

As he had an epiphany after looking at the flag, Greenham's face underneath the armor began to smile. He silently looked at the thief who had something on his hands, a dazzling golden necklace.

Needless to say, it was also a remarkable work of art. Not because that it was a golden necklace, but the golden chain itself contained intricately carved figurines.

“... The price is estimated to be around 100 gold pieces. Considering the location, it could go as high as 150 gold pieces.”

Various expressions were formed after hearing the thief's appraisal. Some started to whistle while others began to grin. But, they share one common feature, every pair of eyes were reflecting their inner joy and the flames of their desires.

"This really is....This tomb might be a hidden mountain of treasure."

"This is really great. I am so happy that I feel like I am soaring through the sky."

"Really, it would be a waste just to leave the treasure here. Then let us spend it wisely."

As he said this, the magic caster took out a large ruby ring from the pile and he placed a kiss on the stone.

"So big..."

The cleric stuck out a hand and grabbed a handful of coins. Some of the coins slipped through his fingers, dropping back into the pile.

The crisp sound of metal as the coins rubbed on each other was heard.

"Never saw this type of gold coin before. Which age and country does it belong to?"

The thief who used a knife to scratch the surface of the coin sounded amazed.

"This really is quite the gold coin. Its weight alone was twice of those coins we use. Coupled with its artistic values, the price will bound to go up."

"Really, this is...Hohoho..."

It started with a chuckle. Then, everyone started to laugh as if they could not help themselves. Although they had this amount to be shared amongst them, each person would still attain a considerable sum of money.

Everyone was thinking of the ways to best utilize the money.

Of course, there were the matters regarding proper ownership and also the part where the treasure was discovered within the territory of the Kingdom. However, a worker was different from an adventurer. They would not question

the act of stealing treasures.

“You lot can thank god later. Just take whatever we can grab. We have to meet up with the others. Our share will decrease if we are late.”

“...OOOHHH!”

A loud cheer sounded out in response to Greenhams’ word, filled with excitement and heated passion towards the newly discovered treasure.

Chapter 55: Invaders | Part 3

The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. In the centre was a large mausoleum. Surrounding it were eight ten-metre tall armoured warrior sculptures. At the feet of those warriors that seemed to be able to move at any moment. Hekkeran was hiding there and focusing on monitoring one of the corners of the mausoleum.

After a while, he noticed the figures of five people running while hiding their bodies from the mausoleum. He confirmed that there was nothing strange with their running, and did not see anything in the surroundings. Since there were no problems, he breathed a sigh of relief as those figures reached him.

As Heavy Masher approached, Hekkeran's surroundings suddenly silenced, this was as they had entered the range of the spell <Silence>.

Greenham, who was at the front, ran towards Hekkeran whose body was peeking out from the statue's feet. And since <Silence> was erased, sound returned to the surroundings.

"Oh, Greenham. You're late."

"My bad. It seems we are the last."

At Hekkeran's words, Greenham made an apologetic gesture.

"Well, you seem fine, so there's no problem. We're not there yet, but how shall we proceed inside the mausoleum?"

Hekkeran bent his body as if leading Greenham and started walking. Since they were the first to arrive, a certain level of investigation had been done.

"How was your side?"

Greenham spoke from behind. There was an obvious excitement. Basically it was the same as Hekkeran's situation.

Hekkeran smiled, and recalled the mountain of treasure in his possession. He then turned around and showed the same excitement as Greenham.

“There was quite a bit. How exciting.”

“You too. It was a good choice coming here.”

“Agreed. How many mountains of treasure are there. I have to thank the great one that was buried here.”

“If we found this much, there might not be much inside.”

“No, I believe that there is much more inside.”

“Ho ho. Then how much do you think we can find this time, wanna bet?”

“It’ll be great. On top of finding more treasure, I’ll getting more from you. Great.”

The two spoke in low voices, however, they showed wide grins to each other.

Stealing treasures from someone’s grave. Naturally this was a crime, but while adventurers would mind, Workers had neither a horn nor claw of guilt. If they did, then they would not be a Worker.

“...What is that?”

At the foot of one of the giant statues, something like a stone monument was placed. Since it was dark, it could not be seen clearly, but one could make out faint symbols engraved on it.

“That is?”

“That?”

Hekkeran strained his eyes, and grasped what Greenham was asking about. It was the same thing he himself had questions about.

Hekkeran, without slowing down, informed Greenham of the results of the inspection as they headed towards the entrance of the mausoleum. Originally, they wondered if it was fine to easily give away information that they even had to use magic to gather, but this time they had a large team—Comrades to work with. There was the chance of hiding information leading to a non-profitable situation. And the contents of the symbols was something even Hekkeran and Eruya’s teams were unable to grasp. The hope that Greenham might know

appeared in his head.

“That stone monument thing has symbols written on it.”

“What does it say?”

“An unknown language, and Arche had to use magic to understand it. It was [Taros Ver 2.10].”

“...What is that? Words that relate to this tomb?”

Everyone in Heavy Masher could hear Hekkeran’s voice. However, since no one said anything, the chance of no one knowing anything was high. Erasing his faint hope with a

Well, this is how it is, Hekkeran replied to Greenham’s question.

“This is Arche’s speculation. The numbers might have some meaning. It might be a riddle inside the tomb....Well, it would be best to keep it in mind.”

“True. I shall do that.”

Leaving the front of the stature, they climbed ten flights of stairs, made from a white stone, and the entrance to the masoleum spread out before them. A chilly atmosphere flowed out from inside.

“It smells of death.”

“Ah. True.”

Hekkeran agreed with Greenham’s whisper. The smell of tombs was mixed with a frost. It was a smell that workers often met. It was also similar to the smell of undead.

Inside was a large hall. On the left and right were countless stone platforms, and beyond that were stairs heading down. The door in front was currently wide open.

“This way.”

Hekkeran lead Greenham’s group down the stairs.

Right after the stairs was a large hall. It was made as if to trap intruders, and in the middle of it were Hekkeran’s comrades [Foresight], and [Tenbu]. However, one team was missing.

“Now, what to do? It seems they are not coming....”

“The rendezvous time is past....”

The team that was to inspect the log house did not arrive. That was proof that something happened. At least there was someone in the log house.

If they were to take safety measures, then retreating would be best. There was still enough time given to them. There was no need to forcefully advance.

However, one thought stole their attention.

That was the sparkling of the treasure they obtained on their way here. That countless shimmers could not leave their heads.

They did not think that a battle had occurred at the log house.

They were only having tea and talking with humans. They were simply late.

And so, Hekkeran agreed with his baseless thoughts.

“Even if we wait, nothing will come about, so let us enter and split up. However, if we find stairs, we are not to descend today. How about it?”

“No problem.”

“Same here.”

“I have investigated a bit inside, and as we open the door, there will be a cross-shaped intersection twenty metres in. Shall we split up and investigate?”

“No problem.”

“Understood.”

“Then shall we go?”

Hekkeran’s suggestion was immediately accepted. This was as everyone had the same thoughts, and were taken in by the same greed. And so they took their first step. The first step into the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

The first step into despair.



Let us rewind time just a bit.

The group of workers led by Parupatra, [Iron Wall] was moving along the outer walls of Nazarick, heading towards the log cabin. As the group approached the cabin, they noticed other than its size, the design of the cabin was rather normal.

Now that they were standing in front of the building, they could finally appreciate its size. It would rather troublesome to transport so much timber just to construct it. The craftsmanship was detailed. As there was no light filtering out of the building, the group was unsure how many occupants there were.

The front gate and the back gate had the same design. However, both gates were wide open, raising the question as to its intended purpose.

Palpatra withdraw a magical item from his back, the Chameleon Mask, a mask that allowed him to disguise his face. After putting it on, his looks changed.

Although he wanted to act friendly, he had no intentions of revealing his face to those people from the Kingdom. Moreover, once the others teams started a ruckus, he did not want to be the sole scapegoat.

“I’m going.”

Waving towards his teammates, Palpatra started his approach towards the cabin. All this while, he did not drop his level of alertness, but sniffing for traps along the way would raise suspicion.

He managed to arrive safely at the front of the cabin. Not using a lot of strength, he knocked on the door several times clearly before speaking.

“Excuse me. We are lost, is anyone here?”

His spoke in a mild friendly tone that he had worked hard to create.

He waited a while, still there was no answer. He decided to try and shout one more time. As he prepared to knock, the door swung open.

“Welcome, guests’s”

Palpatra and his group dropped their mouths wide open.

This was as, at the open doorway, was standing a beautiful woman in maid

clothes.

There were various types of beauty, but the words that suited her was a beauty like the sun. She had healthy brown skin, and a bright expression that constantly changed. She would be in her twenties.

If he had met her in the estate of a great noble then there would be nothing strange, but he expected either a brawny or melancholic man to come out so he was surprised.

However, the woman in front of him, her clothes and appearance, did not match the log house within the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

“What is the matter’s”

“N, no, I did not expect to meet such a beauty....”

“Wow. You are good at praising’s”

Palpatra’s caution slightly dropped due to the laughing woman.

“Now now, please come in.”

“Well pardon me.”

“All your comrades as well’s”

Should someone been inside, he had the role of stalling the inhabitants to prevent them from finding out about the investigation of the other teams. Palpatra had no qualms about entering.

However, everyone could not enter. It was natural. Only Palpatra had a magic item that could change his face. He could not let her memorise the face of his comrades.

It would be simple to kill her though....

It was a dangerous thought, but it cruelly flashed for an instant in his head, but Palpatra immediately dismissed it. This was as the client had asked to not make a commotion.

Well, if it comes down to it then I have no choice but to kill her.

“No, they are quite boorish people. I will not be here for long, and so it will be fine if only I am present.”

“Is that so’s”

“Eeh. And I would like to monopolise a beauty such as yourself.”

“...You have a good mouth’s”

“No no it is the truth.”

They both laughed.

“Then, please’s”

The room was a log house as expected. However, the ceiling and the room was made quite large, and it betrayed the expectation that there would be many rooms inside. Since it was quite large, it felt as if he had become a dwarf —Or perhaps it was due to him trying to shrink away from the restless feeling he had.

“Now please take a seat’s”

“Ah, my apologies for imposing.”

Palpatra sat down on the chair that was pointed to. Since he was wearing full plate mail, he had quite the weight, causing the chair to squeak under the stress. The maid sat in front of Palpatra.

“Do you want anything to drink?”

“Ah, no thank you.”

While one might think that there was nothing to worry about, he rejected due to the chance of something being inside. This was something of a bad habit caused by doing dangerous jobs as a worker.

“Now, I did not expect to meet such a beauty as yourself in such a place.”

“Well, I am currently alone, but not always you know’s?”

“Is that so?...You do seem to be wearing maid’s clothes, may I please be able to meet your master?”

“...My master’s.”

Seeing the maid suddenly cut herself off, Palpatra wondered if he had done something bad. He should be doing nothing suspicious so far.

“...I believe it to be impossible. My master is a busy person after all.”

The maid's sudden change of tone caused Palpatra's sense of caution to strengthen. However, he had come here with minimal information. If he had to stop here, then it could not be helped.

“...Is that so. Then is your master a noble of the Kingdom? It seems he is in charge of this place.”

“A noble? No he is not.”

The maid's eyes narrowed slowly. Palpatra felt chills for an instant. The one sitting in front of him was a simple maid. Her arms were thin, so was her neck. They were weak to the point that Palpatra could easily steal her life should he choose to attack.

However, why. Palpatra felt that there was a giant beast sitting in front of him.

“...Then what is he doing?”

“He is the ruler of this tomb.”

“Ruler....?”

Palpatra froze as he could not immediately understand the meaning of what was said.

“Yes. The ruler. The ruler of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, Ainz Ooal Gown-sama. That is the name of my master.”

The woman's laughing figure was extremely beautiful. However, below that—That layer of skin had thorns underneath.

The maid smiled at the dumbfounded Palpatra.

“...I have said that he is busy, but I believe that he is busy wondering how the current intruders are faring.”

The sound of a falling chair was heard. This was as Palpatra suddenly stood up.

Palpatra then ran to the door. He then opened it vigorously.

His comrades raised voices of surprise at the figure of Palpatra stumbling

out of the door.

“This is bad! It’s a trap!” Someone was about to cut in, but Palpatra shouted. “Immediately send a message. Tell them to retreat.”

Palpatra shouted while moving away from the log house. His eyes faced the door and he intended to immediately react should the maid leave.

“...It’s impossible. It’s being blocked.”

Palpatra’s eyes widened from his comrade magic caster’s words, and he immediately fell into deep thought.

He had only one thought.

To throw them to their deaths, or try to do the minimum.

The other teams would have entered the centre of the mausoleum by now. Should they head towards their lodging away from the gate, or should they pass by the large tomb. If they cut through, then it should be fine to put in some effort at the mausoleum in their path.

He had no intention on risking their lives for the other teams, but the minimum should at least be done.

Workers were not like adventurers and would become shields for or support others. There were cases where Nobles would become patrons for dirty jobs, but they could not fully trust them even for work.

What workers trusted the most, were other rival workers. They did steal each other’s jobs, and sometimes killed each other. However, repaying debts of gratitude was something workers placed great importance on. So, workers who repaid their debts with revenge were hated, and it could not be helped if they were killed in their sleep.

Palpatra glared at the log house. It was possible to tie that woman up and get her to spit out information. However, the time it would take to do so was extremely wasteful.

“Head to the mausoleum! Run!”

Thinking for a bit, Palpatra came to a conclusion and ran to the main gate. The other members followed behind him. They were probably thinking a lot of

things, but immediately obeying the leader's orders was the hallmark of a good team.

Running across the tomb, they raced up the steps of the large mausoleum in the centre.

After checking no one was around, he peeked out from the open door. He did not feel any presences from the dim steps that lead underground.

"Retreat! We've be found out!"

He shouted in a loud voice.

Palpatra voice echoed, and became a strange sound. Palpatra cleared his ears, but there was no reply.

"Palpatra! There are several woman coming from behind?"

His comrade at the entrance shouted to them.

The earlier maid appeared in Palpatra's head. He felt fear like he was facing a giant beast. However, he had the confidence to run away.

"A battle will occur. Cast protective magic. Then let's go."

He did what needed to be done.

Palpatra slowly readied his weapons.

Palpatra and company descended the mausoleum steps, where there were women wearing maid clothes. They numbered four.

All were extremely beautiful, causing the strange atmosphere to thicken.

"We meet again's"

".....Commencing Disposal."

"Stop. Shizu. Our orders from Ainz-sama are to capture several alive. Although he added if possible at the end."

".....Understood."

"...Meat Dango."

"...Entoma, you as well."

“We cannot eat these ready and delicious meat dango. Lupu is the same right?”

“I am fine with deep fried potato’s. I like meat’s, but the same as En-chan is....”

“.....Mixing liquids.” (I assume blending them together)

“No, that is bad’s. I thought that it would taste the same as milk since the colour was the same, give me back my expectations’s. Well, since I touched it I beared with it and finished all though’s?”

“.....Actually that had very high calories. About 15 meals worth.”

“Serious’s!”

Hitting her gauntlets together, one of the maids rang out her inner thoughts.

“—Shall we stop there? We have not greeted our guests yet.”

[Yes!]

The voices of three people beautifully harmonised. The maid wearing gauntlets, probably their representative, was satisfied with the other three and faced Palpatra.

“....Now, welcome. I (Boku)....My apologies....I (Watashi) am the representative of the maids working directly under the Land Steward Sebas, who works for Ainz-sama, Yuri Alpha. I believe this will be a short meeting, but my introductions.”

The woman—Yuri smiled kindly. It was a smile that would entrance you, and make you fall in love. He was raptured by her for an instant, but he immediately focused himself and steadied his eyes.

“Ainz-sama has said the following. [I shall give you who have not dirtied Nazarick a chance to return alive. If you can leave here, we shall not attack you any further.]”

The brand of the strong.

A tone of a superior looking down on the,.

The superiority that filled every crevice of the words.

This made Palpatra and the rest extremely unhappy. To the point that they wanted to let them undergo a painful experience.. However, the appearances and their insides all screamed at the workers that the maids were strong. So, Palpatra and the rest only glared.

“Everyone’s opponents will be—”

Yuri hit her gauntlets together. A shaking followed the high pitched clanging sound.

“—Nazarick Older Guards, come out.”

The ground slowly cracked, and the figures of eight skeletons appeared.

Skeletons themselves were not much of an enemy. Palpatra’s group could take on several at a time. Even if several hundred attacked, they would not feel fear and destroy them.

From that thought, the eight skeletons that appeared from the ground, would not be considered enemies.

However, the skeletons in front of them were different.

Palpatra’s comrades all gulped, and unconsciously took one step back.

They were equipped in a sturdy breastplate that some country would use, a kite shield that had a pattern on it, and various other types of weapons in the other hand. Their back was holding a composite longbow.

The weapons and shield they held, and the armour they wore. All had the glimmer of magic.

“They all have magic items....”

“Impossible. Really.”

“So we cannot underestimate them.”

His comrades whispered.

There was no way skeletons equipped with magic items would definitely not be normal skeletons. Especially since magic weapons with special effects would be expensive.

Even Palpatra's group had barely one per person. And eight of them. This was something ordinary wealth could not accomplish. Or did the master of the tomb create them.

"I believe this much is enough for your numbers. Please feel relieved that we shall not personally move. If you can defeat these undead and leave, it shall be your victory."

"It is an honour having such undead as our opponents. However—"

Palpatra thought.

Not matter how many, it would not be easy to make countless numbers of such undead. From this much, and the announcement that they would not be attacked if they left, there was only one answer.

"—Is this is strongest Nazarick has to offer. Even if this amount is enough to stop us?"

Palpatra's question caused Yuri's eyes to swim slightly.

Bull's eye.

Looking at Yuri, Palpatra decided so.

Telling invaders that they would not be attacked if they left was extremely weird. However, it would be understandable if they had no way to attack should the skeletons be broken. Since they were also attacking the teams inside, they should barely have enough. It was unclear how many seemingly strong maids there were, but since the head maid was here, and only this many was brought, there should not be many in total.

Four maids, and eight skeletons with magic equipment. It was about there.

Assembling your military power at the exit. It was an extremely smart move. It was one of the necessities.

"On top of defeating all of these skeletons, we can destroy them right?"

For the teams behind them, they should defeat what was probably Nazarick's strongest forces, the Nazarick Older Guards. It was such a thought.

Even if the other teams came out, it would be up to fate if they could defeat

the current foes in their tired state. Then it would be best if the non-exhausted Palpatra group destroyed them.

Of course, it was the first time they had met such undead as the Nazarick Older Guards, so it was unclear how strong they were. However, they should not be that strong as to be absolutely undefeatable.

And these numbers.

If they were too strong then eight would be unneeded. If there were more, would it be possible for Nazarick to have the financial capacity to equip them all with magic items?

“—How foolish.”

If this was all, no, at least even more than half, then this was understandable.

“Everyone, do you think this is all?”

“Well, it is difficult to think that there are more undead with such equipment.”

“Well, it would not be weird for more to be inside Nazarick.”

“Shall we defeat them and open a path?”

Yuri was surprised by Palpatra and the rest since they had made their resolutions. That response was probably not expected.

“Well, there is that method of breaking through. We shall cheer you on, so please do your best.”



Yuri and the other maids was expressing looks of pity as they repeatedly cheered them on.

They could not help themselves but to feel unease as the situation headed towards an unexpected direction.

How could this have happened... those were their thoughts.

“No, this isn’t right’s.”

“.....I never thought that something like this could occur.”

“Cocytus-sama was shocked as well.”

“If things proceed as it as....We won’t get the chance to display some positive results.”

Yuri and the others were looking at the fight as a warhammer was swung downwards.

“Oh no, this is bad. The warrior is gonna die’s.”

As Lupusregina uttered those words, the warriors receive a crushing blow towards his chest and fell. The sound of metal being dented and something heavy falling was heard. In this midst of the fierce fight, it was still clearly audible.

“Cleric-san, if you do not use your healing magic, the warrior will die.”

“.....No point. Their battle formation has already crumbled.”

Towards Yuri who looked worried, Shizu could only shake her head as she answered.

The two Nazarick Old Guarders that was held back by the warrior earlier were free. One headed towards the cleric while the other was going towards the rear guard, who was facing two himself, but now another one just joined the fight. The cleric had no time to cast his magic. He expanded all his efforts to fend off attacks coming from three different directions.

“The thief does not have sufficient attacking power. Doesn’t he have anything up his sleeve?”

The thief who was covering the arcane magic caster had to deal with another enemy joining in the fight, increasing the number of his opponents to two. Equipped with hardened armor, preventing any easy targeting of its critical points, the Nazarick Old Guarder was facing off with the thief who was only armed with light weaponry. As such the thief lacked any ability to turn his situation around and had to rely on his nimble movements to dodge all the incoming attacks. However, a big difference existed between a human who could grow tired and an undead who could not grow tire during a fight.

“He looks as if he is going to cry.”

“Should I wave to him’s?”

“Wouldn’t that be fine?”

“OK’s.”

Lupusregina smiled mischievously as she waved towards Palpatra.

“.....Direct hit.”

“Isn’t this because of Lupu’s distraction?”

“Muuu, are you trying to blame me’s?”

“.....Hang in there.”

“Well, I want them to give it their all.”

Towards Yuri’s opinion, all the maids nodded in agreement.

Since the beginning of the fight with Parupatra’s Workers, it was a massacre for the Nazarick Old Guarders. The Workers could only put up a futile resistance. Yuri and the others who were watching from the sides felt they were pitiful.

Before the fight started, where did that confidence came from? The maids initially laughed at their bravado. But the fight was too one sided to the point that the maids started cheering the Workers on.

“Ah, what can I say after the fight reach such a stage’s?”

“....Does the Spellcaster have any trump cards?”

“Wasn’t he trying to chant a summoning magic?”

“3rd-tier?”

“Ah, if that was their trump card, it would be very weak. But using the summons as a meatshield is not a bad move.”

“True’s. If we loosen up on the attack, they may have a chance to reform their formation’s.”

“But, using flight magic was a stinky move.

“I don’t know whether he is gonna run away or cast his magic from the air...”

“...He would be the ideal target for ranged attackers.”

The Arcane magic caster received a fatal blow and fell to the ground. If his remaining ally was free, he could at least be treated with healing magic or a healing potion before going back into the fray. The actual situation did not allow such a luxury.

In the end, the thief could only do his best to stop the magic caster from being dealt the final blow.

“Still why would they thought that the amount of guards would be just this?”

Somehow, Yuri was able to figure out their line of thinking.

Although the following example was not appropriate for the situation but it was the best to describe it.

A close friend was telling you that he would be bringing a member of the opposite sex that you were interested in. You happily prepared the refreshments. But when they arrived, the number of guests was actually eight. How would you feel about it?

Would you think of the additional 5992 members waiting for you or would you be shocked by such a revelation? Could they still think in the presence of beauties that stood at the pinnacle?

Most likely, they were shocked to the point that their minds became blank.

No, it might be that their way of reasoning was towards a direction that was beneficial to them. This was not that there were stupid, but was aimed to give them courage and dispel thoughts of despair that befell them. This may be the result of a mental trigger during a human’s fight for survival.

“Regardless, it’s all hopeless’s.”

“Yes, their chances were insignificant.”

“As a measure, let’s stand guard here until the other thieves return.”

Everyone else was looking at Entoma with a stupefied expression.

“How is it possible that they could return’s?”

“.....Brought it on themselves.”

“Impossible.”

A painful wail and the sound of something dropping. The four maids turned towards its source and spoke with a sense of disappointment.

“Ah, the thief is down.”

“Looks like victory was decided’s.”

“So it seems. Probably we should have made them beg for mercy earlier...”

“What was with their level of self-confidence? I thought they had something up their sleeve? Typical.”

The pungent smell from the thief’s spray of blood drifted towards the maids.

“It looks tasty...”

The words were uttered without a trace of movement from the facial muscles. Instead a strange sound was emitted from the lower chin.

“Hold that thought.”

It was Yuri who noticed it.

They received a direct order from Ainz to recover all the corpses. There was no need to ask for the reason for such an action. Furthermore, it was inappropriate to deliver a partially eaten corpse.

“Fresh meat....”

“We can ask Ainz-sama afterwards, bear with it for now.”

“Wasn’t the experiment designed to test whether we could handle those who seek to escape?”

“It seems so’s.”

“Cocytus-sama originally intended to pursue them to their ends...”

“...A frontal assault...”

“They lacked the capability to discern the strength of their opponents. Now, let’s send those who still had a breath to the interrogation room. As for the deceased... Let’s report to Ainz-sama.”

In this night, the Workers of [Iron Wall], led by Palpatra disappeared.

Chapter 56: Invaders | Part 4

While the teams each chose a route at the crossroads, Eruya Uzruth chose what he thought to be the most direct path to the interior.

There were multiple stone doors and countless turns, but he was walking the most suitable route. There was nothing and it was extremely boring. There were no traps or monsters.

Was this path a miss. Thinking that, Eruya clicked his tongue.

“Idiot. Hurry up.”

Eruya fiercely ordered the elf slave who stopped ten metres in front. The elf slave shivered for a second and slowly walked forward. Since she entered this tomb, she was not allowed to stop and only could walk forward.

This was of course, an extremely dangerous action.

She was fortunately continuing without harm, but if she encountered a trap, the chance of losing her life was high.

Having that elf slave investigate and walk, was something like bringing a canary into a coal mine. It was not like she did not have the ability. Eruya's team was comprised of Eruya himself and three elf slaves. They were elves with Ranger, Priest and Druid abilities.

Even with the ranger skill, using the investigation skill like this was an extremely wasteful order.

However, he had a reason for this.

He was simply tired of the elf walking in front.

Those who would hear it would be surprised. This was not due to moral reasons, but a financial one.

Deals with the slave shops in the Slane Theocracy were not cheap. The price jumped up depending on the elf's appearance and skills they had. In most cases, female elves had prices that would cause one's eyes to pop out of their

head, and was something that a normal person could never reach.

Even an elf without skills would have the same price as a magic item with a special effect. Even Eruya could not easily spend such money.

However [Tenbu]'s rewards were monopolised by Eruya, and so if things went well, he earned quite a bit. That was why he felt that it was fine if one of the ones he was bored of died.

--I should get one with a better chest next time.

Eruya thought as he walked the elf trembling and walking in front.

-

--It will be fun to get her to scream when I squeeze her chest hard.

Since this request was working with other teams, he was not able to sleep with the elves at all for several days. While sleeping with them would not cause any complaints, it would create some unhappiness. Eruya had at least a grasp of the common sense of workers and knew how that would be non-beneficial.

So his stored up lust dominated his thoughts.

"Next, should I hope for a woman like that?"

Who Eruya imagined was someone from [Foresight]. The half elf that was glaring at him unhappily.

She was an extremely unpleasant woman. There was a woman that could be called a girl who was next to her, but Eruya felt that it could not be helped that she viewed him with unhappy eyes. However, it could not be permitted that an animal that was below humans could look at them with such eyes.

Just remembering it caused Eruya's face to show flames of rage. Following it, the two elves walking next to him trembled in fear.

They feared that anger would be directed at them. This was as Eruya was the type of man to beat them in this dungeon with no qualms whatsoever.

In addition they felt sad that another existence like them would increase. By increase, it meant that one of them might die.

"I want to hit her unhappy face until she stops resisting...."

It was an impossible request. Before elf slaves reached their owners, their hearts were completely broken by various methods. There was no way that elf slaves could resist.

Due to him imagining himself hitting Imina's face several times, he momentarily did not notice that the elf walking in front had stopped.

"Why, are you stopping? Walk."

"Hii....I, I can hear a sound."

"A sound?"

As the elf mustered the courage and then shrank away, Eruya focused all of his senses on his ears. The surroundings were silent, and he could only hear nothing.

"...I can't hear it."

However, the hearing of elves was much better than humans. Even if Eruya could not hear, the possibility of elves hearing it was high. He asked the two next to him to confirm.

"What about you guys?"

"Y, yes, I can hear something."

"It is the sound of metal hitting metal."

"Hou....I see."

There was no way metallic sounds could be naturally made.

Then someone was making it. Basically it might be the first fight he could get into ever since he entered this tomb. As he thought that, he felt excited at the prospects.

"Let's go to the origin of the sound."

"Y, yes."

He made the elf go in front, towards the sound. Following after her, Eruya could slowly hear it.

It was truly the sound of metal.

The sound of something hard smashing fiercely into another hard object. And the sounds of something slicing through something. It was the sound of a fight.

“A different team?”

Eruya sighed as if his previous sense of enjoyment had water poured over it.

“Well, it’s fine. If they are then I’ll fight and say it was reinforcements.”

Gradually approaching the destination, Eruya felt a sense of discomfort. This was weird for a fight. It was as if—

Eruya’s doubts were cleared after he turned the corner.

It was quite a large room. The height to the ceiling was more than six metres. The width was enough such that several tens of people could run around with no problem. Inside were ten lizardmen with sturdy armour. There was one with a large tower shield, with armour that seemed to have blood vessels inscribed on it, and one more person—

Eruya found something about that man that interested him.

He was probably a warrior. He had a medium build and did not leave a strong impression.

On top of his well made clothes, was a chain shirt that reflected a dull light.

Since his hair was cut roughly, its length was not consistent. So it spread out in all directions. His red eyes were sharp. However, since he was surprised they were rounded slightly.

His appearance did not make a strong impression. At most it was young and with rare red eyes.

However, what attracted Eruya was the sword on his waist, and the balance of his body.

The lizardmen fought the black knight, stopped, and while panting looked at Eruya’s group with a strange expression. The man was watching their fight from a distance.

The answer to Eruya’s question.

It was a mock battle. The lizardmen were fighting the black knight, and the man standing a distance away was their instructor. Then it was not strange to mistake this for a battle.

“Invaders....Even up to here?”

The man suspiciously stared at Eruya’s group and folded his arms. It was a posture as if he had entered a temple. Among this group the strongest would be the black knight and this man.

Eruya looked away from the lizardmen. The lizardmen were weaker than Eruya, and he did not like any races apart from humans.

Receiving the man’s dead on gaze, Eruya placed his sword on his shoulder.

“Here? Since no one came out to welcome me, I came all this way in.”

“I did not hear about anyone coming though?” The man thought and then made a deep sigh. “....While this is the first floor, there is no way that you could come here unharmed. You, you were led here. Anyway, my current orders are to train the lizardmen here. Even if you leave now I won’t mind you you know?”

“Please don’t say something so sad. I haven’t fought anyone since I came and it’s boring. It took a while. I’m Eruya Uzruth. You are.”

“Ah, Brain Unglaus.”

The man’s serene attitude did not contain any feelings of shock at the mention of one of the Empire’s most renowned swordsman, Eruya.

The response was as if the man had never heard of him. For this, Eruya scowled in anger. Then again, for someone that dwelled in such a place, it would be unsurprising that he had never heard of him. Eruya decided to forgive the man—Brain for his ignorance. But—

“....Brain?”

— Eruya felt like he heard of the name before. He tried to pulled the particulars from the shelves of his memory.

Then, he remembered immediately.

That tasteless man—Greenham mentioned the name of someone alledgely

stronger than him.

Eruya eavesdropped on that particular conversation, using the magic of his elven slave. He could only seethe in anger after hearing an unfamiliar name that received better praise than he did. He then release his anger on the elven slave that used the magic earlier.

“Ah, I know. You lost to that Gazef.”

“Hmm? You know....That was a long time ago.”

Brain seemed to be gazing somewhere far off, his expression neutral.

In other words, he realised that he could not win no matter what he did?

Eruya made such a conclusion after looking at Brain's expression. A dog that retreated with its tail tucked between its legs, Eruya mocked. In the end, his expression reflected his thoughts.

“You are the clueless one.”

As he told Eruya, the emotion that was reflected in Brain's eye was that of pity.

“I was like you once, a person drowning in his talent. After I experienced the bitter taste of defeat, I pursued strength. I longed for strength, strength that would not lose to anyone. The one goal in front of me was the defeat of Gazef.” At this point, Brain let out a heavy sigh. “Only thing is....people like you and me could only reach the peak of humanity. The pinnacle of power is on a totally different peak. True strength was unlike that at all.”

Brain shook his head left and right tiredly.

“I cannot even touch my master, Shalltear-sama. Cocytus-sama could only feel shock after looking at the martial-art that I created, my quick-flash. To him, it was so-slow that he thought I was not serious. I've heard that Aura-sama's fighting strength was more powerful than that of Shalltear-sama. Furthermore, the master of the Great Tomb of Nazarick, was a figure that is revered by all the Floor Guardians. Ainz-sama has the power to freeze an entire lake.”

The Lizardman who was standing to the back could only make sounds of agreement.

“That is the strength of the truly powerful, a realm where us as humans could not even touch. The ones I mentioned are the embodiment of the pinnacle of power. As for you,...power? The strongest? Laughable. We are just like kids brandishing sticks. Genius? Talent? Those were just human words. In front of Ainz-sama and all the Floor Guardians, we could not even make them pause in their tracks. Ah, just end things here....It’s better to end your life here now. At least you can die with the thoughts that you remain the strongest, die without knowing the true meaning of despair.”

“—Hu, HuHaHa, HaHaHaHaha!”

Eruya’s laughter exploded. Initially, he thought that Brain with a serious look had something to say. In the end, all he heard was just a joke.

“Hahahaha, huha, huha.” Eruya was out of breath after laughing for so long. He spoke as he recovered his breath. “Don’t make me laugh. You lost because you were talentless. I’m different from you. As proof, I shall defeat the master of this tomb, this Ainz-fella, with this sword.”

Eruya drew out his sword slowly.

It was not an ordinary sword. It is a top-grade weapon known as ‘God’s Blade’. Eruya decided to use the reward for this round of request to enchant his blade, even without the effects of magic, the blade was exceptionally sharp, boosting Eruya’s confidence.

The weapon itself originated from a city to the South. Using this, he could even defeat that Ainz whom Brain mentioned. Eruya strongly believed that.

“Freezing an entirely lake and what not, by common sense it is something impossible. Maybe it was just a small pond.”

“Your words were unnecessary. I can understand why you refuse to believe such a thing. But, Ainz-sama can freeze an entire lake within his sight. It is a fact. All of them possess the power to distort the balance of this world.”

“I would say the level of their strength is like that of the Gods?”

The voice came from the lizardmen behind Brain. The ones talking were the lizardmen with a large eye-catching arm and one with black scales. In response Eruya angrily retorted.

“Silence, lizards. I have nothing to hear from your brainless fools.”

As the lizardmen watched silently in shock, Eruya laughed.

Lizard trash should not talk to humans. Such a strong feeling from born in him.

“Really, a god....Aren’t they idiots?”

“...The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick is an existence that if they catch a monster that then asked them to destroy a country, they would easily do so. And Ainz-sama is the one who stands at the top of this place. That is why it is not strange for him to be a god. And you who want to defeat him....Are you serious?”

“Of course. If you had my sword talent it would be something I could do.”

Really, a god—He would laugh even if it was so.

If he had to face a dragon, he would think that it was very strong, but still—

“There are no gods. Gods.”

Eruya started laughing. In response, Brain deeply sighed.

“What is with that baseless confidence....A fool....Was I this foolish when I challenged Shalltear-sama....It is like a tasteless mirror....”

When he was about to continue, and opened his mouth, his crimson eyes suddenly opened wide. It was the surprise of a person being spoken to by his superiors.

“—Cocytus-sama!”

Brain bowed to the air. Eruya laughed at his somewhat ridiculous posture, while the lizardmen straightened their backs in panic.

Receiving the order from Cocytus’ , Brain finally looked at Eruya with the eyes of someone who recognised his enemy.

“I shall now cut down your arrogance. Or so I have been ordered.”

“I see, feel free to do so if you can. Now, as a handicap everyone can come at once you know?”

Brain was quite strong. The black knight was about his level. Quite a bit weaker would be the black lizardman with a scimitar made of ice. Then the lizardman with a single large arm.

It would be difficult, but Eruya had no intention of losing.

He was the owner of Tenrin (Imperial Cold, not sure what this means), not losing even once.

“...You guys stay behind and watch. Currently, you guys can’t beat him, and Cocytus-sama ordered me to show him how I fight. Death Knight please protect the lizardmen. If anything happens to them, it will be terrible.”

Ordering the lizardmen, and making a request of the Death Knight, Brain then unsheathed the sword by his waist.

The moment Eruya saw that sword, he felt as if his soul was about to be drawn in.

It was beautifully made. The crests on the sword were glistening, and the other parts were a deep black.

Eruya compared it secretly to his sword, and felt extremely jealous. He felt that it was a much better weapon than what he had.

How much would it be worth? How strong was the magic—The special abilities it had, and how much were those in cash? About several tens of thousands he thought.

“It’s a good sword. I will take it after I kill you.”

“Feel free to do so if you can....Was it?”

Eruya clicked his tongue after hearing Brain imitate his earlier words.

“Then, I shall do so!”

Eruya and Brain dashed out. The blow that contained their body weights caused sparks to scatter.

One would attack and the other would defend. And then the attacker would defend, and the defender would attack. There was no way such a game-like fighting style would happen in reality.

Attack and attack and attack. It was a fight for victory.

The two swords collided.

As the sound of metal rang, they would read the other's moves and aims, and then responded to gain an advantage. The sword that followed the blade would run, and then be immediately pulled back and thrust out again and again.

As a result, chances to deal effective damage were created.

The fight of Eruya and Brain was such a thing.

At the same time as the swords hit, they would exchange feints, and move to try to pierce the cracks in the other's defence. Then the swords would clash again.

The sounds of clashing swords continued without pause. No since they were so fierce, it was like one long drawn out metallic ringing.

The advantageous one was Eruya. It was true that Brain made some good movements. However, his moves were one step behind, and he took time to make decisions. Such things were fatal to a fight of this level.

From the several tens of crossing of swords, Eruya slashed at Brain's body.

However, his blows were repelled by the chain shirt and he could not wound Brain. He could only hurt Brain with blunt blows without much damage.

So Eruya aimed for Brain's face and hands or where ever skin showed, but the guard there was tough, so he had to focus on his chest and arms.

Several times.

When Brain was hit by Eruya's sword, he retreated with fast steps. While it was a good chance Eruya did not chase after him. This was as he felt the difference in strength between him and Brain.

"This is nothing much!"

Eruya spoke with vigour.

It was a short round, but since they crossed swords, he had a firm grasp of the strength of the man named Brain. He was quite strong, but his level was behind quite a few people. He understood it as such.

“You really can do it.”

Brain honestly praised him. However, despite receiving such praise, Eruya did not feel happy. This was as he was praised by weaklings to the point that he was tired of it. What he preferred was feeling the envy and admiration of the weak instead.

“...Calling you stronger than me....The eyes of that man really are rotting.”

Eruya laughed at the fact that Greenham, who was not there, lacked eyes.

“...My sword skills have dropped quite a bit. Since I got this body, I suddenly lost it. Compared to last time, about half.”

Eruya made a strange face. This was as he could not understand the meaning of Brain’s words. The strange words of got this body. However, he was immediately made to understand it.

“So....Shall I fight you with something humans lack?”

Brain slightly shifted, and then stepped in.

“What!”

A violent wind. Such words befitted Brain’s advance. His movements were far superior to earlier. It was a speed like he was freed from the yoke of humanity.

Eruya then somehow brought his sword up to defend against Brain’s flash-like swing which followed his advance,

Sword met sword, and a high pitch sound could be heard—The sword was screaming. From the force of the impact, the blade was cut into as sparks flew.

“Guu!”

Eruya gritted his teeth, and matched his timing with Brain’s slash and swung.

Once again, sparks scattered, accompanied by a ringing metallic sound.

Once again, Brain retreated with fast footsteps.

Eruya also did not chase after him. However, the reason for this was completely different from earlier.

His hand was shivering to the point that he could barely grip his sword. If he got hit once more, it would drop from his hand.

Eruya was shocked. In front of such an oppressive strength, he could only think that Brain had overcame humanity.

If the one he were facing had a figure like a giant with huge protruding muscles, he could understand the speed and strength. However, Brain had a medium build. It clearly defied common sense no matter how much he trained.

Brain made a cynical smile at Eruya's shocked face.

"I lost my skill, but gained bodily strength. Just so."

"D, dirty! What did you do!"

"Dirty....I simply fought seriously though?"

"Don't lie! Does such a body exist! You used magic didn't you!"

There would be no problem if magic was used. On the contrary, not using something you had would be the problem. Brain tilted his head in wonder at Eruya's complete change.

To Eruya, Brain's improvement in strength was cheating. All warriors existed to lose to Eruya, but now, Brain had surpassed Eruya. That could not be forgiven.

"You guys! What are you doing! Use magic! There is no way one person has that strength! Someone definitely cast magic on you!"

"...Oi oi. Wasn't it one on one." Brain then recalled something.

"Well, power I gained from Shalltear-sama is still power...."

"W, what. So you are cheating! You cheating bastard! Hurry up you slaves and use magic!"

Panicking at the commands of Eruya—Their master, the elves began to cast magic.

Raise in strength, temporary increase in the magic in the sword, the hardening of skin, sharpened senses....While countless enhancements were being cast, Brain looked on in silence.

After the several enhancements were cast on him, Eruya's face once again burst out in a smile.

"Are you an idiot! You really are overconfident! Even though you have been doing nothing but making pathetic attacks!"

Enormous power coursed through Eruya's body.

Once he had become stronger from magic, he had never experienced defeat until now. No matter how strong the enemy.

Eruya brought down another slash, a strike faster than previous attack. With this, he was confident that he could fight against Brain... No, he was more than a match for Brain.

"...Shall tear you said. Your master."

"Yes. She is the most beautiful person in the world."

"I see. Then I shall meet her with you head. Then I will rape her."

"—Fufu Hahahahaha!"

He exploded into laughter.

Brain laughed as if it were from the bottom of his heart. Behind him, the lizardmen made smirks and sad smiles.

"W, what is wronggg!!!!"

Towards Eruya who only laughed at others but was never laughed at, Brain's mocking laugh could not be tolerated. Eruya was puzzled by Brain's laughter after hearing him say that he would violate his master.

"No, it really is....Fuhahahahaha!"

"You piece of shit!"

Brain's laughter continued for a while. Eruya stared at him angrily without any intention of attacking. If he attacked now and killed Brain in a single blow, it would not leave any room for regrets. Only by killing Brain after putting him through a gruelling defence would erase Eruya's sense of unhappiness.

Not long after, Brain stopped laughing as if he stopped breathing.

“No, you are one really top class jester. Ho, even I was not as pathetic as that?... Still, to my beloved master, the radiant black rose, Shalltear-sama’s insult. I will not allow it.” Brain’s eyes began to glow with a red tinge that was darker than blood. He opened his mouth, revealing sharp canines.

The change in appearance, a terrifying non-human look.

Eruya during his adventures, had seen this before.

“Vampire!”

“Correct.”

Brain replied crisply and returned the sword to its sheath. Ching, a sound was heard.

Vampire.

Eruya finally understood the source of Brain’s power that transcended humanity. He tried to suppressed the rising sense of doubt.

Vampires were strong monsters. Eruya could defeat them in a one on one fight. But that was against an undead that had no knowledge of the sword. Against an opponent that had the physical advantages and abilities of a vampire along with martial arts techniques plus magical equipment, what would be the outcome?

No, he could not lose.

Eruya shook his head lightly, dispelling the sense of unease.

“Yes! I can’t lose.”

“—How foolish. Do you think any doubts will disappear if you shout? You truly are like the past me.”

Brain made a smile like that of beast hungry for blood.

“Don’t look down on meee! Boost!”

“Boost 2!”

Normally in the event of magic enhancement, only the strongest effects would remain. But martial arts had different effects and could stack. The strengthening by two martial arts raised Eruya’s physical abilities to its limits.

The current Eruya now had the strength equivalent to a mini-giant.

If it were normal martial arts, Brain could identify it.

“A martial art that strengthens the body for a limited time. Then you are ready. Then, I shall meet you with my strongest power.”

Brain slowly dropped his waist.

It was the preparation to draw his sword.

Eruya laughed as he saw that. Of course that was a fight that all warriors who were confident with their swords would seek. The best strategy was to wait for their opponents to enter their range of their sword and hit them with a quick slash.

But—To Eruya, it was a senseless move.

Eruya activated his martial art.

“Fang!”

Along the path where the blade was swung, a razor wind was released.

It flew at breakneck speed towards Brain, leaving a bright hot trail, slashing into Brain’s chest, as he did not move to avoid—

The slashing power from the razor wind created by the the martial art, Fang. It had the ability to destroy the flesh of its target. Normally the martial art did not have such a property. But the current Eruya was unimaginable. Even the sharpness from a weak strike would easily break the chainmail in two.

But the one who had his eyes widened and was in shock was actually Eruya.

“What!”

The chainmail that was thought to be broken in half was unscathed. Although it was possible for the chainmail to entirely block the strike, it should not be able to completely negate the impact from the blow. Yet, Brain’s stance did not change and was still smiling lightly.

He should have thought of the Vampire’s special ability which was weapon resistance.

God’s Blade should have been able to pierce Brain but the razor wind that

was released by Fang penetrating power was not there. The damage done by wind properties of the attack would be healed within seconds.

In the end, his Fang was far from causing any fatal wounds.

“Shit!”

It was a move that was his killing attack. Eruya was frustrated that his killer move was not able to finish his opponent in a single blow.

“Sorry. But I have no need to avoid this.”

Eruya’s fiery rage surged forth in response to Brain’s provoking words. On the opposite spectrum, his own brain was calmly formulating a counter. Even a vampire could not resist the strike from God’s Blade. It would be over if he could plunged the blade through the heart. But Brains was in a defensive stance. It would allow Brain to strike first if Eruya entered his range.

What should I do?

Eruya released another Fang.

He aimed for one thing.

The attack scored a direct hit on Brains’ eyes. Eruya then dashed towards Brain who was blinded.

Even vampires with their superhuman level of perception relied on sight the most. If their sight was crippled, it would be hard for them to dodge.

Even so, who knew?

The man known as Brain Unglaus developed this martial art in order to win against Gazef Stronoff whom he lost to previously.

The martial arts was known as [Realm]. After becoming a vampire, with the boost on his physical stats, his martial art strengthened into [God’s Realm].

It could perceive every single movement within a 6-metre radius. During the activation of the martial art where 1,000 arrows were shot towards the user, it would be possible to deflect any arrows that was about to score a hit and allow him to survive through the situation. The martial art would easily allow him to cleave a far away grain of wheat in half easily.

In short, it was the epitome of the sensory realm.

“Slash!”

Brain, who was blinded, was aimed at by Eruya’s with his martial art.

The martial art increased the speed of the flash beyond the realm of what humans could achieve. Still—

“—Slow.”

Brain’s cold words. Before those words reached Eruya’s ears, Brain already activated one of his martial arts.

That was—

“—God Speed Level 2”

Twice as fast than Eruya’s martial arts—No, by several times, the blade was unsheathed from the hip. What Eruya saw was a flash of light, as for the Lizardmen, they did not comprehend what happened at all.

With a speed beyond mere common sense, the slash passed through Eruya’s body twice.

A flash of white—

Slightly afterwards, Eruya’s sword hand moved. And the sound of something heavy hitting the floor was caused by his cut off hand. The sword he held broke at the guard due to the impact of the drop.

No, it was different.

No, it did not break—It was cut off by Brain’s martial art.

“—Did you see it. This is my fastest sword.” Brain then sadly whispered. “....By the way this is the normal speed of Cocytus-sama when he is not serious.”

Pasha Pasha, a large amount of liquid dropped on the floor. Eruya was looking at his missing right hand, that was spilling out blood with every single beat of his heart, with a stunned look.

“Hya, hya, hya....”

As if finally comprehended his current condition, Eruya let out sounds as if

he was convulsing. The pain that was oozing out from the stumps of his hand brought out a sense of utter confusion from Eruya.

“My, my aaaaaarrrrrrmmmm! H, heal, heal me!! Hurry up!”

Eruya screamed at the Elves with the tone that would shatter a bell. But the Elves did not budge at all, instead their pupils were displaying a look of utmost delight. It was a dark happiness formed from that scene of torture.

“Hah, look at your eyes.”

Brain grabbed Eruya, who had lost his desire to fight, by his hair and stared straight into him with his crimson eyes.

He then grabbed Eruya by the neck who was like a puppet with its strings cut, and applied pressure to his throat. After confirming that Eruya lost consciousness within seconds, Brain ordered the Lizardmen to bring out the healing potion that was sitting at a corner of the room.

These items were originally intended to heal the Lizardmen, but he should not let Eruya die here as that was part of Cocytus’s order.

“Now.”

Brain faced the elves who were silently staring at Eruya.

The elves did not move. However, inside their tired and dirty eyes was the colour of happiness.

“Ah, you guys, you might die after this?”

Capture the intruders, no matter dead or alive. However, capture them alive if possible. That was the orders he received from Cocytus. The elves were also intruders. Whether they would have hope was known only by god—Ainz.

The elves said nothing in response to Brain.

Brain peered into the eyes of the elves, and then spat out a sigh.

Those were the eyes of those who had accepted. While Brain had worked with bandits, it was something he saw in the captured women after several days.

“Boring eyes.”

His orders did not specify that he had to kill the elves. And Cocytus should be watching the current scene. Then Brain did not have to do anything about these elves.

Sheathing the katana, he faced the lizardmen.

“Now, you guys had a long enough rest. Shall we begin the training?”

Chapter 57: Invaders | Part 5

“Push them back!”

Greenham’s voice reverberated inside the room which was filled with the smell of mold and death.

The square room was about 25 metres in length. The ceiling was 5 metres from the ground. The room was lit by magical lights made by a magic caster and the torch that fell on the ground, and formed the shadows of people.

They were the members of Greenham’s [Heavy Masher] and were pushed to the corner of the room. And they were surrounded by low ranked undead like Zombies and Skeletons that looked as if they had just climbed out of the grave.

Their numbers were too large to count.

The stream of death was blocked by Greenham and two shield-wielding warriors directly, and prevented them from reaching the rearguard.

Greenham’s full plate mail was hit against the flailing arms of the zombies. While they could bring out more power than normal humans as corpses, they could not leave a mark on steel armour. Their rotten and weak arms broke, and the filth that was sprayed onto the full plate mail gave off a retching stench.

The skeletons were the same. The rusted weapons could not pierce the full plate mail.

Of course, coincidences did exist. Depending on the situation, an attack could land. The reason why that was ignored was due to the help of protective magic.

Greenham swung the axe in his hand, but the hole from the single body lost was immediately filled. And so they were pressed to such a distance that they seemed to be crushed.

“Shit! There are too many!”

The warrior with the shield next to Greenham let out a cry of exhaustion. Since he had a shield that covered his whole body, he was not harmed, but the shield was covered in dirty liquid.

He destroyed the heads of Zombies and Skeletons, but they lost to the pressure and slowly moved back.

“Really, where did this many enemies come from!”

The warrior’s question was natural.

Greenham’s team had searched several rooms after splitting off from the other teams at the crossroads. Unfortunately, there wasn’t as much treasure as the mausoleum, but after finding a sizeable chunk of valuables lying around, they slowly searched further. When they entered this room to have a look, the door suddenly opened and the undead started to pour in.

A zombie or a skeleton by itself wasn’t a difficult opponent, but their numbers were the real problem.

Even if they fell or got trampled, they wouldn’t die, but the undead would reach the rear flank.

Of course, the rear flank wouldn’t be taken out that easily either, but against this many, it was difficult to say.

With a little bit of bad luck, the front would collapse immediately. Greenham thought this, and decided to use the force he had been conserving.

“We’ll finish this in an instant! I leave it to you!”

The rear guard, which had only been slinging stones so far, started to move.

For Greenham’s “Heavy Masher”, undead like these were not really a threat. But because they weren’t a real threat, he tried to conserve their strength by keeping the rearguard in reserve.

If the rear guard attacked as well, the undead wouldn’t be a problem.

“My lord, the god of earth! Please repel the evil ones!”

The cleric holding a holy symbol shouted while exuding divine power. The air filled with negative aura was cleared away and filled with freshness as if a

cool breeze had just passed by. A wave of divine power, stronger than usual, swept out from the cleric. The cleric's Undead Purification skill activated.

As soon as the ability activated, the undead around the cleric turned to ashes.

Exorcising the undead usually just made them flee, but if there was an absolute difference in strength, it obliterated the undead instead. However, it was extremely difficult to obliterate large numbers of undead because it required a matching amount of strength.

About 40 Undead were purified going to show how excellent Greenham's cleric was.

"Fly! <Fireball>"

A fireball flew from the arcane magic caster and exploded amidst the undead horde. A pillar of flame sprouted for a moment and burned away the undead's false life within the effect radius.

"Not over yet! <Fireball>"

"My lord, the god of earth. Please repel the evil ones!"

The area of effect attacks struck again and the number of undead fell drastically.

"Let's go!"

"Alright!"

The warrior abandoned his shield, grabbed two maces and jumped into the undead horde along with Greenham. It would have been easy to leave everything to the magic casters, but the reason Greenham rushed in was so that they would conserve as much mana as possible. Especially for the cleric, who could only repel the undead a certain number of times per day. Because it was a job that was especially potent against undead, he would be their hidden card while they were in the tomb.

Greenham swung his axe at the group of zombies. Rather than blood, thick liquid came out from the cut,—it would have spurted if they had hearts—oozing weakly. From the cuts came a disgusting stench, but it was nothing they

couldn't handle.

Rather, their noses were already numb. Therefore, the smell did not pose a problem to them.

Along with the warriors, they attacked, attacked and attacked. They did not think of defense even for a moment.

It was the kind of a charge they could do thanks to their sturdy armour supported by magic, not to mention that the undead were weak.

At times, an undead managed to strike Greenham's head, but the armour absorbed all the shock and there was no strain on his neck. Even when he was struck on his chest or stomach, he barely felt it.

Greenham and the warrior swung their weapons around, destroying the undead non-stop. The undead that attempted to attack from the rear were repelled by the thief and cleric.

The floor of the room were covered with corpses and brain fragments. There were no signs of movement from them.

"Huh."

Following Greenham, the other members gave out a breath of relief. The thought of losing never crossed their mind. The rear guard were mostly observing from the back. Facing off with such a number of undead caused them to develop mental fatigue.

"Good, close the door and get some rest."

"Wouldn't it be better we use another room? It stinks here."

"That's right. We don't even know how they infiltrated this room."

"Really, we didn't even see any undead on the way in. Not even a trace of them. Where did they spill out from?"

True enough. Greenham agreed that they had a point.

There were three exits leading to this room. The one that Greenham and his group passed through and another two. The undead poured in from all three doors. That's right, even through the door that Greenham passed through.

Furthermore, there was no way that they could relax in this deplorable room. He would at least like to wipe away the viscous fluid that contaminated his armor. He could at least take some rest as he wiped it.

“Now, let’s move—”

Greenham closed his mouth in middle of a sentence. The rogue who had been talking so much just now raised a finger to his lips and was focusing on listening.

When Greenham listened, he could hear an irregular clacking sound, like something tapping the floor.

All the members directed their attention towards the source of the sound. It came from one of the doors.

“Probably an enemy... right?”

“Yea, and there’s only one.”

Everyone slowly raised their weapon. The warrior standing in the front received his shield and hid half his body behind it. The magic caster readied his glowing staff to launch an attack at any moment towards the direction sound was coming from. The cleric readied his holy icon and the rogue aimed his bow.

Clack, clack. The sound gradually became louder and the opponent showed itself.

Old, but luxurious robes covered the limbs, which were as thin as if they were just skin and bone, and it held a staff in one hand. This was the source of the sound.

With only a thin layer of decomposing skin, the face had a look of fiendish wisdom and negative aura surrounded the body like a fog.

It was an undead magic caster. Its name was—

“—Lich!”

The magic caster who identified the monster first shouted.

That was right. The name of the monster that appeared—Lich.

A monster that spawns when the corpse of an evil magic caster gained

unholy life. Unlike the undead they faced so far, the Lich retained their intelligence.

Greenham's comrades immediately changed formation when they heard "Lich". No one stood in a single file and they kept their distance from each other in case of an area of effect magic.

A Lich was considered a strong enemy. Even A-class adventurers would have to put in quite the effort. If it were A+ class adventurers, they stood a better chance of winning. As for Greenham's group, if they ignored their fatigue, it was an opponent that they could defeat. Luckily for them, the group consisted of members that were strong against the Undead.

Plus if the opponent was extremely far away, it would have been dangerous, but the distance between them was advantageous.

"You must be the master of this tomb!"

Greenham had come to that conclusion. Liches were rulers. Sometimes they ruled over an undead horde and occasionally traded with living beings.

There was a famous lich that ruled over an abandoned castle.

If it was an Lich, then it wasn't strange to think it would be the master of the tomb.

"We've got the right address! Lucky!"

"Although killing the owner of this tomb wasn't the request."

"Let's show him the power of 'Heavy Masher'."

"Kneel before the blessing of god!"

All his comrades shouted together. It was to shake off the fear of facing against a strong opponent like a Lich.

"Defense magic—"

Greenham tried to shout orders to his comrades filled with resolve, but was surrounded with a feeling of dread. The source of this dread was the powerful opponent standing before them, the Lich.

".....What's he doing?"

“Is he planning....for a sneak attack?”

The Lich showed no sign of movement against Greenham’s team. It did not raise its staff, nor did it chant any spell, but simply watched them.

Greenham’s companions could not hide their surprise at this. Their expectations of an immediate battle had been shattered. But they also hesitated to strike first.

The undead harboured hatred for all living beings. But certain sentient undead were capable of suppressing their hatred to negotiate. If the living were to offer negotiation, it would usually end up as a bad trade, but if the undead made the first offer, there had been instances of people obtaining ancient items that had been made with now-forgotten knowledge.

Considering that the lich was a strong enemy, it would be a better outcome if they could cease any hostility through negotiation even if the group had to come out on the losing end.

Considering all these factors, it would have been foolish to attack first since it would destroy any chance of negotiation. A hard battle without an established escape route carried huge risks.

Greenham’s companions looked at each other as if they had all arrived at the same conclusion.

It was the leader’s job to talk as the representative.

“Umm, we would like to negotiate....”

The Lich turned its grotesque face to Greenham and raised its bony finger to its lips.

Meaning: be quiet.

It was not an action fitting a Lich, but nobody was brave enough, no, nobody was stupid enough to say something like that to such a strong opponent.

Greenham closed his mouth obediently. In the hallway filled with silence, he doubted his ears when he heard a sound again.

Greenham doubted his ears.

The clacking noise he heard not too long ago. The noise of something knocking on the floor. And several of them—

Greenham's team looked at each other. They could not believe their ears.

And—

“Buuuuuu!!”

—Everybody descended into panic.

“Who was it! Who said that Elder Lich was the master of this tomb?”

“What the hell is this? How does this make any sense?”

“Oiiiiiii, how are we supposed to win against this!”

“Even god's blessing has its limits!”

Liches slowly entered the room. Six of them. Including the one in the room from the beginning, there were seven. There were that many of the Lich, an undead spellcaster of the strongest class. They had enough firepower to wipe out even a small city.

As long as they were of the same type of monster, they had similar methods of attack. In other word, if one had a way of neutralizing their attacks, it was theoretically possible to defeat all of them.

However, none of them possessed the method to do so, nor was it possible to possess such methods. Then they would have to fight with existences that could topple a small city directly.

In this hopeless situation, Greenham and his comrades lost all will to fight.

[Then, let's begin.]

Following the voice of the Lich that did not show even a hint of wanting to negotiate, seven staves rose slowly. At the same time, Greenham's shout echoed.

“Retreat!”

As if waiting for that command, all of them ran with all their strength in the opposite direction from the Liches. Of course they had no time to think about what would be beyond the tunnel. They only sought to improve their chances of

survival against the onslaught of Liches.

They ran through an open corridor.

The rogue ran at the front, then Greenham, then the magic caster, then the cleric and finally the warrior. This was not a result of planning. It was pure coincidence.

They ran straight. The door led to a path. They ran without hesitation.

A corner. Normally they would be wary of a monster around the corner, but considering the footsteps that came from behind them, there was no time to carefully look around before going. They left everything up to luck and just ran.

They were doors of stone along the sides of the path, but they did not have the courage to plunge in.

Due to someone with metal armour running, a clanging metallic sound rang through the path.

They could cast <Silence>, but then they would need to pause. Since there were Liches chasing after them from behind, they did not have enough breathing room to do so.

They ran and ran and ran. To the point that they had no idea where they were running to.

Fortunately they had not encountered a single monster, and were saved by the fact that there were no traps along their path.

“—Are they still chasing us?”

Greenham asked while still running. The reply came from the warrior at the back.

“Yea! They’re running, too!”

“Damn it!”

“Stop running after us! Just use flight magic!”

“If they use flying magic, then they can just attack while following us, you idiot!”

“Let’s lock ourselves in some room and negotiate—”

The magic caster shouted while gasping for air. He was the least physically fit out of all the members and looked as if he was about to collapse. Greenham decided this was not the way to go. They couldn't last any longer.

Undead monsters like Liches felt no such thing as fatigue. At this rate, they would eventually catch up and slaughter the exhausted workers.

"How are there so many Liches...."

It was something that defied common sense. Could strong undead such as Liches coexist with undead of similar strength.

"Is the master of this tomb something even stronger than an Elder Lich?!"

That was the only explanation he could think of. But did such undead exist? Greenham had no answer.

"Damn it! This god damn tomb!"

The warrior at the rear shouted while breathing hard.

As if waiting for that moment, the floor began to glow in shapes. It was big enough to surround all of Greenham's group.

"Argh!"

Someone's voice rang out with what sounded like a scream—

—He felt as if he were floating for an instant. Greenham's vision was nothing but pitch darkness. There was something crunching underneath his boots and he felt a slowly sinking sensation, as though he was being sucked into a swamp.

A black world where only silence ruled.

Greenham, as if swallowed by it, asked in a small voice.

"...Is there someone here?"

"—Over here, Greenham."

The voice of one of the comrades, the rogue, rang out. He didn't sound too far away. Probably about the same distance they were keeping when they were running.

“...Is there anybody else?”

There was no reply. It was the expected answer. Since there was no light, they could imagine that the magic caster was not there. And so the cleric and warrior behind him had a high chance of being separated as well.

He should consider it lucky that at least the rogue was with him.

“...It seems there’s only us.”

“So it seems.”

He looked around with taking a step forward. The deep darkness was everywhere and invoked the fear that he wouldn’t be able to tell where he himself ended and where the darkness started.

There was no sign of movement anywhere—

“Should we turn on the light?”

“Sure thing.”

He wondered if their movement would break this silence, or activate a trap, and other negative thoughts crept in. However, human eyes could not see in the dark and they needed some kind of light source.

“Hold on a moment.”

With the rogue’s voice, some kind of moving noise came from the darkness and there was a light.

The sight of the rogue holding a glowing stick was the first thing in view. And countless shining objects which reflected the light. It reminded him of the treasures in the mausoleum.

But that wasn’t the case.

Greenham barely suppressed his screams and the rogue looked as if he was about to have a seizure.

The light brought up countless reflections. Insects filled the entire room and the identity of the reflections were cockroaches. The room was filled with cockroaches of various size ranging from ones the size of pinky finger to ones which were over a meter long. Furthermore, they were stacked on top of each

other in countless layers.

The crushing sensation and noise by his feet had been the cockroaches. Considering they came up to his waist, he didn't want to imagine how many there were.

The room was so wide, the light did not reach to the walls. Considering the effective area of the glowing stick was fifteen meters wide, he could roughly comprehend how wide the interior was. When he looked up towards the ceiling, he could see a humongous swarm of cockroaches reflecting the light back at him.

"What... is this place?"

The rogue murmured in groaning tone. Greenham could understand what he felt like. He felt if he spoke, they would all start moving at once.

"Just what is going on?"

"...Was it a floor trap?"

While looking around in fear, Greenham remembered the last moment before they were teleported into the pitch darkness. He thought about the glowing magic circle and asked the rogue.

"It's probably not the case. Wasn't it something else?"

"A teleportation type magic trap..."

Impossible....No, Teleportation magic was possible. Such as the 3rd Rank <Dimension Move>. There were others, like—

"—There is 5th or 6th

tier magic that could teleport a group of people at once, right?"

"Yea... I think so."

"To think they could use that kind of magic..."

A being that could use 5th

tier magic at the very least. It was unheard of. But Greenham could make sense of it. If there was someone as strong as that, then it made sense he would be able to rule over multiple Elder Liches at once. Even able to give them the

command of fighting Greenham and company.

Greenham realized the true extent of danger lurking within this tomb and a chilling sensation filled his body. At the same time, hatred for the Earl who had made this request started boiling deep inside him. Of course, the people who had taken on this work were Greenham and the other workers, and they had put their lives as a betting chip despite all the risks. They couldn't say anything about it.

But the Earl must have had some information about the tomb. Otherwise, he wouldn't have offered such significant sum of money to gather the workers. What sort of power that the owner of the tomb holds, to be able to rule over such monsters.

"Let's escape from here quickly from this... hell."

"Ah."

Greenham had a horrible feel about this room. Thankfully, the thief did not notice it.

The roaches remained dormant. From the twitching of their antennae, they were not dead, only stationary. The unknown reason for this phenomenon caused Greenham's heart to beat faster.

"—No, you cannot escape."

The voice of a third person sounded.

"Who's there!"

Greenham and the rogue looked around everywhere, but there was no sign of movement anywhere.

"Ah, I apologize. This one is Kyouhukou, the one entrusted with this territory from Ainz-sama. Pleased to meet your acquaintance."

In the direction where the voice was coming from, they witnessed a strange scene. Pushing away the swarm of cockroaches, something was trying to climb up.

It was not at a range that could be reached with a close combat weapon. The rogue quietly readied his bow and Greenham tried to take out his sling and

stones, but decided otherwise. He would rush across the swarm of cockroaches coming up to his waist and cut the opponent immediately.

The one that appeared after pushing through all the cockroaches was another cockroach.

This cockroach was about thirty centimeters tall and stood on two legs.

It wore a bright red cape decorated with luxurious golden threads around the edge and a cute little golden crown on its head. Grasped in its front leg was a scepter with a pure white gem embedded at the end.

The strangest thing of them all was despite the fact it stood on two legs, its head was facing Greenham and the rogue. If an ordinary insect stood upright, its head would point towards the sky. But the strange being in front of them wasn't like that at all.

Other than this, there was not much difference when comparing with the other cockroaches. No, it would be more accurate to say that it was already strange enough.

Greenham and the rogue exchanged a glance and decided that Greenham would be in charge of the negotiation. After confirming that the rogue had knocked an arrow and had it pointing downwards, he talked to Kyouhukou.

"Who... are you?"

"Hmm... It seems you did not hear me the first time. Would you like me to introduce myself once more?"

"No, that's not the problem..." Greenham realized this was not the kind of thing to talk nor ask about. "...I'll be honest. Do you want to trade?"

"Oh-ho, you want a trade. Since I am feeling very grateful towards the both of you, there is no reason why I can't listen to your proposal."

The mysterious words, "feeling grateful", made him uneasy about what exactly made it feel grateful, but it wasn't something they could afford to ask under such disadvantageous circumstance.

"...What we want... is for you to let us go unharmed from this place."

"Of course, that would be something you wish for. But even if you do leave

this room, you are currently on the 2nd Floor of the Great Tomb of Nazarick. I must advise you that it would be extremely difficult to return above ground.”

2nd floor—

Hearing those words, Greenham’s eyes widened.

“So the door underneath the mausoleum on the surface leads to the 1st Floor?”

“Is that unusual?”

“No, I just wanted to confirm it.”

“Haha, since you were teleported from the 1st Floor, I can understand your confusion.”

Looking at Kyouhukou who was nodding at the structure layout, Greenham felt a chill running down his spine, as if an icicle was stabbing him in the back.

It was fear arising from realizing his earlier theory was correct.

In other word, something had somehow used teleportation magic as a trap. What kind of magic would it be and what kind of magical abilities would it require? He was not a magic caster, but he fully realized the implications.

“...Of course, if you could tell us the way out of the tomb as well... Hmmm, no we won’t ask that much. Just let us leave this room.”

“Hmm hmm.”

“We’ll... give you whatever you want.”

“Is that so...”

Kyouhukou nodded and appeared as if he was concentrated on thinking.

Some time passed in absolute silence. Then Kyouhukou nodded as if he understood and started talking.

“This one already has everything one could wish for in its hand. I doubt you would be able to provide what I desire.”

Kyouhukou stopped Greenham, who was about to talk, by raising its front leg and continued.

“But you seem to be confused as to why I was thanking you earlier, so I wish to provide you with an explanation. You see, my subjects are getting tired of cannibalism. To you, who will be the food that will serve as the solution, I give my thanks once again.”

“What!”

The moment the rogue understood what was being said he shot the arrow.

The arrow cut across the air but was wrapped around by Kyouhukou’s red cape and fell on the ground.

The room started to tremble.

Countless sounds started coming from every direction and crescendoed.

A tidal wave erupted.

It was a swell of a black sea.

“It is unfortunate that there are only two of you, but now it is time to have you for dinner.”

The gigantic tidal wave swallowed Greenham and the rogue. It was truly as if they were being swept away by currents.

While being rolled around in the black whirlpool, Greenham slapped at the cockroaches that had managed to crawl into the openings in his armour.

There was no weapon that would work well against a horde of such small insects. It was faster to use hands than anything else. Because of that, they had already abandoned their weapons which had long since disappeared.

He tried his best to struggle and wave around wildly, but due to countless cockroaches holding onto him, he could barely move. It was a movement that resembling someone drowning. The only sound Greenham could hear was that of countless cockroaches crawling about.

The rogue had already been swept away and his voice was nowhere to be heard.

No, it was only natural that Greenham could not hear his voice. The rogue couldn’t speak with all the cockroaches that had crawled into his mouth, throat

and stomach.

Greenham felt painful stinging sensations from everywhere on the body. It was the pain from cockroaches that had slipped inside his armour slowly eating away at him.

“Sto—”

Greenham tried to shout but was immediately choked by the countless cockroaches flooding his mouth and clogging his throat. He tried to throw up with all his might, but cockroaches kept crawling in from the tiny opening of his mouth. Then they scrabbled around in the mouth.

As if one had crawled inside his ear, the rustling sound was persistent and loud enough to give him chills.

Countless cockroaches crawled and ate away at his face. He felt pain on his eyelids, but he didn't dare to open his eyes. It was obvious what would happen if he ever opened his eyes.

Greenham understood what would happen to him. At this rate, he would be eaten alive by these ravenous cockroaches.

“I don't want this!”

He screamed in desperation and the cockroaches poured into his mouth once again. They crawled, trying to move into his throat. Then something mushy, a sensation of something tumbling down into the stomach. Then the disgusting sensation of cockroaches squirming inside his stomach made him want to throw up.

Greenham resisted with all his strength.

It would have been better if he died in the hands of the Lich. Dying in such a manner was pitiful.

In the end, even his thoughts were swallowed in a black vortex—



His eyes opened.

What came into his vision was a strange ceiling. It was made with stone and

had white glowing objects embedded in it. He tried to look around to understand how he got there, but realized his head wouldn't move at all. No, it was not just his head, but he couldn't move his entire body. It was as if something was tied around his wrists, ankles, waist, and chest.

This incomprehensible situation filled him with fear and he wanted to scream, but something was stuck in his mouth, so he could not speak nor close his mouth fully.

When he desperately tried to look around by straining his eyes, a voice spoke.

“Oh my, you're awake now?”

It was a guttural voice. It was difficult to tell whether the voice belonged to a man or a woman.

The one that appeared in his unmoving sight was a disgusting monster.

It had the body of a human, but the head of a deformed octopus. The six long, squirming tentacles attached to its head extended all the way down to its thighs.

The skin colour was milky white, like the waxy flesh of someone who had drowned. On the bloated, corpse-like body was clothing made with black leather which barely covered anything. The cloth wrapped tightly around its body, like butcher's twine tying up a piece of meat, and it could be described as nothing but grotesque. If a beauty had worn it, it would have been attractive, but on a monster like this was nauseating.

On each hand were four webbed fingers. It had long fingernails, with strange and bizarre nail art on them.

This strange heteromorphic being turned its pupil-less milky blue eyes on him.

“Fufufu, did you sleep well?”

“Hff, hff, hff hff.”

Fear and panic. Gripped by those two emotions, he could only let out a harsh breathing noise. The monster touched his cheek softly like a mother

trying to calm a scared child.

But the cold and mushy feelings of the hand sent chills all over his body.

It would have made perfect sense if the pungent smell of blood or rotten flesh had wafted over, but the creature smelled like aromatic flowers. This only amplified his fear.

“My, to think it’d shrink this much. There’s no need to be scared.”

The monster’s gaze was towards his lower body. From the sensation of air on his skin, he realized that he was naked.

“Hmm, mind if I ask your name?”

It tapped its slender finger on its cheek and tilted its head while asking. The pose would have looked good if it was a beauty, but a monster that looked like a drowned corpse with an octopus for a head only evoked disgust and fear.

“.....”

The monster smiled at him, who could only move his eyes. The tentacles covered its mouth and its expression barely changed. Despite that, he knew it was smiling because its bead like eyes had narrowed.

“Ufufu, you don’t want to speak right? How cute. Don’t be so shy.”

The monster’s fingertip slid across his chest as if it was writing something, but all he could feel was fear that felt as if his heart was being ripped out.

“Onee-san will tell you her name F.I.R.S.T.” It was a seductive and sweet tone of voice that sounded as if heart marks would pop out of them. “I’m the Great Tomb of Nazarick’s Special Information Gatherer, Neuronist. Hehe, they also call me the ‘Interrogator’.”

The long tentacles squirmed apart and revealed a circular mouth at their base of the tentacle. Amidst rows of razor sharp teeth, a tube that resembled a tongue came out. It truly looked like a red straw.

“I’ll suck you dry with this in a bit.”

What did it mean by “suck dry”? He tried to move his panic-stricken body, but it was tightly clamped down.

“Now, now. You were captured by us.”

That was right. His last memory was of Greenham and the rogue disappearing from right in front of him. Then he blacked out and woke up to his current predicament.

“You should know where you are, right?” Neuronist laughed before continuing. “This is the Great Tomb of Nazarick. The place where the last of the 41 Supreme Beings, Momon— I mean Ainz-sama, resides. It is the most holy of places.”

“Heinhu sawa?”

“Yes, Ainz-sama.”

Neuronist understood him perfectly despite his inability to speak properly and slid her hand across his skin.

“One of the 41 Supreme Beings. He ruled over the other Supreme Beings in the past, and he is very, very cool. If you look at him once, you’ll want to swear loyalty with all your heart, too. If Ainz-sama ever calls me over to his bed, I don’t mind offering my first time to him.”

She fidgeted, no, jiggled as if she was embarrassed.

“Hey, do you want to hear something?” Like a timid girl playing with her finger, she traced letters across his naked body. “There was this one time Ainz-sama was staring at my body. It was the stare of a male selecting a target for his hunt. Then he turned his face away as if he was embarrassed. It made my chest tighten and sent chills down my back.”

It stopped suddenly and brought its face closer as if trying to look deep into his eyes. He tried with all his might to get away from the grotesque face, but he couldn’t move his body at all.

“Even though that brat Shalltear is aiming for Ainz-sama’s attention, I, who has more experience, am still more attractive. Don’t you think so?”

“Wevs E fink mahs hoo” (Yes, I think so, too.)

What would happen if he dared to disagree? That fear forced him to grunt

his muffled agreement.

Neuronist clasped her hands and looked up happily into the air. It looked like a zealot praying up into the sky.

“Fufufu, you’re a good boy. Or are you telling the facts as they are? But why isn’t Ainz-sama calling for me... Ah~ Ainz-sama... Even your abstinence is amazing...”

The way her body twitched in delight called to mind the writhing movements of a giant, squirming maggot.

“...Ha, it makes my body feel electrified. Ara, I’m sorry. I’ve been talking only about myself.”

Don’t mind me. Neuronist ignored his thoughts and continued.

“Now, should I tell you about your fate? Do you know what a choir is?”

He blinked at the unexpected question. Looking at his surprised expression, Neuronist assumed he did not know what a choir was and explained.

“A choir is a group of people that sings hymns praising god’s love and glory. I want you to become one of them, along with all your little friends.”

If that was all, then it wasn’t much. He wasn’t very confident in his singing, but he was not tone deaf either. But was this monster really talking about something like singing? He could not hide his unease that rose like the tide and eyed Neuronist.

“That’s right, a choir. Even fools like you that haven’t sworn loyalty to Ainz-sama can dedicate their voices to sing his praises. The goal is a chorus. Ah, how electrifying! It’s Neuronist’s gospel music dedicated to Ainz-sama.”

A cloudy colour spread in its revolting eyes. Was that because it was excited by its thoughts? Its fingers wiggled like worms.

“Fufufufu, now I’ll introduce you to the ones who will support you in your chorus.”

As if they had been waiting in a corner, several figures came into view.

He stopped breathing the moment he saw them. It was obvious that they

were evil creatures.

Black leather aprons that clung tightly to their figures. Their skin was ghastly pale, almost transparent, and purple veins were visible as if their blood was purple.

They wore tight black leather masks with no visible openings, which made him curious how they could see or breathe. Their arms were long as well. They were about two meters in height, but their arms were long enough to reach their knees.

Each of them had a belt on their waist, with numerous tools hanging off them.

There were four of them in total.

“—They’re ‘Torturers’. They’re going to help me help you sing a beautiful song.”

A dangerous premonition. He finally realized what it meant by singing and struggled to escape. However, he still could not move.

“It’s no use~. It’s not going to break from someone of your strength. They’ll cast healing magic over and over, so you can get plenty of opportunity to practice.”

Neuronist said this as though she were extending the hand of mercy to him, but she did so in the most evil of tones.

“Thnd du mus!” (Don’t do this!)

“Mmm? Why do you say that? Do you want us to stop?”

Neuronist asked softly to the man who had tears rolling down from his eyes. Then the six tentacles squirmed.

“Listen well. Because he remained, we, who were created by the 41 Supreme Beings, were allowed to exist. Our very existence is to serve him. Do you think we’ll show even a shred of mercy to some filthy thieves that tracked mud into the holy place where such an exalted being lives? Do you really think that?”

“Auf lrru gwpph!” (I’m really sorry!)”

“Hehehe, that’s right. Regret is a valuable thing.”

Neuronist picked up a thin rod from somewhere. At the end of the rod were spikes that were roughly five millimeters long.

“Let’s start with this.”

Neuronist kindly explained every little detail to the man who didn’t understand anything about the tool.

“My creator used to suffer from a little problem called ‘kidney stones’. To pay respects to that, we’ll start with this. Since it became so small, I don’t think we’ll have much problem putting it in.”

“Thnd du mus!”

Neuronist took its face closer to the man who was screaming out in realization of what would happen to him.

“We’re going to spend a long, long time together. You shouldn’t start crying, because this is only the beginning.”

Chapter 58: Invaders | Part 6

At the feet of [Foresight] which had just repelled four ghouls. There was a magic circle. The next moment, they were swallowed by an unavoidable pale white light and the scene around them changed.

“What?”

Hekkeran let out a gasp of surprise, and frantically looked at the surroundings. While understanding the current situation was important, the safety of his comrades was of far greater importance. Looking around, he confirmed the presence of his comrades.

Imina, Arche Roberdyck.

While preserving the formation then stepped on the magic circle, the members of [Foresight] were gathered without a single person missing. Confirming each other’s safety, faster than they heaved sighs of relief, the four looked around at the surroundings immediately.

This place was a wide corridor, dimly lit and with a high ceiling. Even a giant could walk freely through here. The flickering flames of faraway torches provided unsteady illumination and in their light the long shadows seemed to dance. Ahead of them was some kind of crosshatched portcullis, and from the square gaps in its surface, rays of white, magical light shone through. Behind them, the path stretched into darkness, and along the way, several doors opening into the corridor could be seen, lit up by torches.

With everyone remaining quiet, only the crackling of the torches could be heard.

It did not seem like they were in any danger of being attacked immediately. Even if it was such, his gaze looked at the surroundings with caution.

“Although I don’t know where this place is, it has a completely different atmosphere to what we have seen up until now.”

The style of this place was completely different to the tomb they had just

left. In fact, signs of civilisation could be seen here. The members of 'Foresight' surveyed their surroundings, and whilst they were trying to grasp where this place was, only Arche's attitude was different from the rest.

"—This place is..."

Keenly perceiving the meaning behind the words, Hekkeran asked Arche.

"Do you know?"

"—I know of a similar place. The Empire's Grand Arena."

"Ah... indeed, you are right."

Roberdyck grunted in agreement. Although Hekkeran and Imina did not say anything, they also shared Roberdyck's opinion.

Monsters or beasts fought in the Coliseum. If one was a worker it was not a rare job. In order to entertain those who were not satisfied with normal bouts, it was common to hire workers. Yes, at times workers fought fellow workers.

Long ago, the members of Foresight had fought monsters in the Coliseum. The scene from that time—The route from the waiting room to the arena, the road in between, certainly suited their current location.

"Then behind that should be the arena."

Roberdyck pointed towards the portcullis.

"That should be the case... then being teleported to this place means that... is that what it is?"

"Give me a fight to watch" was probably the intention here. Although, they had no idea who or what might be waiting for them.

"—It's dangerous. I have not heard of teleportation traps. Either an existence that can use unknown magic is here or one that knows advanced magical skills. No matter which, having any as our enemy in this tomb is dangerous."

Even those that did not have much knowledge of magic skills, the high level of the magic of teleportation was well known. Using one as a trap, made one imagine the caster having extreme proficiency in magic. If not, teleporting them with magic that even Arche did not know, they would have no idea of the

caster's true strength.

Basically having either an enemy was an extremely dangerous thing.

However to those people who dragged mud in, people who would treat them warmly was extremely few. No, it would not be strange to say there were none. The moment they stepped into the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, the lives of Hekkeran and the rest were half decided. At best, the traps in the tomb were not placed by those currently living here. If those traps were placed long ago, there was a chance of leaving alive.

“—It might be a relic from 500 years ago.”

“Ah, there were more advanced magic techniques in the past.”

“Are you referring to the beings that dominated the continent and whose country shattered almost immediately, of which only the capital remains today?”

“—The Eight Greed Kings. They are considered to be the ones who spread the existence of magic further through this world. If this is a relic of that era, then perhaps...”

The members of Foresight looked at each other and sighed. Staying here would bring no good. They had to get a result.

“...Shall we investigate?”

“We have no other choice. I think we are blocked in thought.”

“There is only one path. Shall we pray that the owner gives freedom to the victors.”

Hekkeran's words decided their objective.

Hekkeran was at the front, followed by Roberdyck, Imina and Arche.

When they got close to the portcullis, it rose upward with impressive speed, as though it had been waiting for them all this time. The first thing they saw as they entered the arena were rows upon rows of audience seats around the arena.

It was a coliseum.

A length of 188 metres, breadth of 156 metres and a height of 48 metres. It was not inferior to the Empire's Coliseum. No this place might have been better constructed. Various locations had <Continual Light> cast, and the white light lit up the surroundings.

And so they looked at the surroundings as if it were noon.

Seeing the seats, the members of Foresight were suprised and were at a loss for words.

This was because sitting there were innumerable clay figures, the dolls known as golems.

Golems were inorganic creatures created through magical means, who would obediently carry out their master's commands once they received them. Without the need for food or sleep, and never suffering from fatigue or even the ravages of time, they were treasured as guardians and labourers. Furthermore, because their production took considerable time, effort and cost, even the weakest ones would cost a considerable amount of gold coins.

Even Hekkeran and the others, who were paid well, would find it hard to purchase a golem. Such was their price.

And standing there in the coliseum, were countless of them. To Hekkeran, it spoke of how wealthy the person who owned this arena was, as well as how lonely he felt.

They looked briefly at each other's faces before silently walking towards the centre of the arena.

"Outside?"

Reacting to Imina's voice, all that could be seen when looking at the sky was darkness. Because the light from the surroundings was too strong, it outshone the light from the stars, but even so, there was no doubt that above the arena was a vast expanse of open night sky.

"Were we transported outside?"

"—Then, we could use flight magic to escape—"

"TOOOOOH!"

A figure jumped from the balcony of the VIP box.

The figure somersaulted in mid-air as it descended from a height that seemed roughly equivalent to a six story building, making people wonder if it might have wings as it gracefully landed upon the ground. There was no magic at work here, only pure physical ability. Even the rogue Imina had her breath taken away by the perfection of the movement.

The figure who had absorbed the impact with a mere flexing of its knees smiled brightly.

Before them stood a young dark elf girl.

The long ears which emerged from amongst the golden strands of his hair twitched slightly, giving rise to a glorious impression like that of the sun.

She was fully dressed in a suit of tight-fitting, light leather armour, made from jet black and deep crimson dragon scales, over which she wore a white vest embroidered with golden threads. A coat of arms was sewn onto the breast of the jacket.

Seeing her heterochromic eyes, Imina let out a gasp of surprise.

“Ah—”

“—The challengers have arrived!”

The arena trembled and shuddered in time with the girl’s bright and cheerful voice.

Looking around, it seemed that the golems which had remained motionless so far were stomping on the ground to make noise.

“The challengers are four reckless fools who have invaded the Great Tomb of Nazarick! And, facing them is the master of the Great Tomb of Nazarick, the Supreme King of Death, Ainz! Ooal! Gown-sama!”

The portcullis on the opposite side of the arena rose upwards at the same time as the dark elf’s voice rang out. From the darkness of the path beyond, a being stepped into the light. In a word, it would be skeletal.

A crimson radiance flickered within the eye sockets of the white skull.

It wore a shining black expensive full plate mail, with gold and purple symbols. A drawn sword was held in its right hand.

The stomps gradually turned into claps.

It was a reception befitting the arrival of a king.

Amidst the thunderous continuous applause of the golems, the skeleton slowly walked in. The weapons in its hands and its armour was enough to tell what would happen.

“—I’m so sorry.”

Arche muttered.

“—We ended up like this because of me.”

What would follow was probably going to be the most grueling battle Foresight would ever have faced. In all likelihood, one or more of them might die. Arche probably felt that they had been plunged into such a dire circumstance was because of herself. Without her debt, perhaps they might not have accepted this task to go investigate a tomb they so obviously did not know enough about.

Basically everyone might die due to Arche.

“Don’t mind it.”

“Yes. Taking on this work was a group decision. This isn’t your fault.”

“That’s how it is.”

Hekkeran and Roberdyck smiled as they spoke, and Imina patted Arche’s head.

“Now, I think it’s impossible, but let’s talk.”

The skeleton in question, Ainz, waved his hand before them. The movement looked as if he was wiping something.

The sounds disappeared. In an instant, the golems’ movements stopped, and once more they were subjected to the almost deafening silence. Hekkeran faced Ainz and spoke in a serious tone.

“Firstly I would like to apologise—”

“...Ainz Ooal Gown.”

“—Ainz Ooal Gown-dono.”

Ainz stopped, hoisted his sword onto his shoulder, and moved his chin as if to order him to continue.

“We wish to apologize for entering your tomb without permission. If you can find it in your heart to forgive us, we will gladly offer the appropriate compensation to atone for our transgressions.”

Time passed in silence. Then Ainz sighed. Of course, as one of the undead, Ainz had no need to breathe. But he did so in order to get his message across.

“To those who step foot into Nazarick without permission, there has never been a case where we allowed them to return without harm. Even if you had misunderstood, or did not know, it does not matter. Pay for your foolishness with your life.”

With that, Ainz brought down his sword, and made a fighting stance.

“What if we had permission?”

Ainz froze. Apparently, that had gotten through to him. Hekkeran was surprised that a single sentence could have had such a great effect, but of course he did not let it show on his face. Just when all seemed lost, a ray of hope had shone through the darkness. Clearly, he had to seize it.

“...Nonsense.”

It was a still, small voice, almost on the verge of fading away.

“What if we had permission?”

“...How stupid....No....The possibility exists? Then why....Here....”

Was he shaking? Ainz shook his head continuously as his flew into his sea of thoughts.

Hekkeran thought furiously as well. What would have the highest possibility of coming out of this alive.

“...Who gave you this permission?”

“Don’t you know him?”

“Him...?”

“He didn’t leave his name, but he was a pretty big monster.”

“Big? That is....”

Hekkeran desperately thought on where the safety lines to evade danger were hiding.

It was a question that only a person paralyzed by indecision would ask, because only by asking could a person know what was true or false.

“Tell me what you saw.”

“...He was very very very big...”

“Very very...”

As Ainz descended into another round of introspection, Hekkeran reflected that they had avoided danger yet again, and breathed an internal sigh of relief.

“Did he say anything?”

“He said to give his regards to Ainz in the Great Tomb of Nazarick.”

“...Ainz?”

His fidgeting suddenly stopped. Hekkeran noticed, and an “oh crap” expression spread across his face.

“...He said, to give his regards to Ainz?”

“...Yes.”

“Kuhahahahaha!”

Ainz laughed when he heard Hekkeran’s answer. This was not a happy laugh. It was a laugh that could be best described as volcanic.

“...Fool. I am a fool. Being tricked by these idiots, I am the biggest one!”

Ainz’s movements stopped, and he turned to look at Hekkeran. The crimson fires blazing in his eye sockets turned dark, consumed by the black which surrounded them and reducing his pupils to points of red light. Hekkeran and the others took a step back, as though Ainz’s mere line of sight was exerting physical pressure on them.

Within that glare was the purest rage.

The earlier absolute being, the one who placed himself above others, came down to the same level as Hekkeran after being enraged.

There was the phrase “Pouring water on an Ignonick (Igunonikku).”

Ignonick was a magic beast that lived on dry savannahs, and was a quadruped with long and fluffy fur. It had horns on its head, and it was about the same length as a cow. It was known that its meat was delicious.

While it was a magic beast, it had a warm personality and did not like fighting, and so it was often hunted for its meat. However, there was a reason why such a magic beast was not domesticated.

That was as it mentally exploded when exposed to water.

It was to the point that it would ferociously attack a magic beast many times its size.

In addition, the wet hair would harden to become harder than iron. And with a will of steel, it would charge with its horns and try to impale its enemy. Such was its fighting method.

Pouring water on an Ignonick. It meant to infuriate an originally calm person, basically an example of a foolish action.

There were no words that were more suitable for Hekkeran’s situation.

“YOU TRAAAAAAAASSHHHH! YOU DARE! YOU DARE TO TREAD YOUR FILTHYYYYYY! YOUR FILTHY BOOTS INTO THE NAZARICK THAT I, THAT WE, MY FRIENDS AND I, CREATED!”

So intense was his fury that Ainz was struck speechless. His shoulder blades moved as though he were breathing, and he continued.

“AND YOU! YOU DARE USE THE NAME OF ME, OF MY FRIENDS! YOU DARE USE IT TO TRICK ME! YOU SHITS! DO YOU THINK THAT CAN EVER, EVER BE FORGIVEN?!”

Ainz was shouting in a furious tone. It would not have been a surprise if his anger had gone on forever.

However, his rancor suddenly vanished, and he returned to his usual calm.

It was a sudden change, as though the emotion had simply been switched off. The abrupt change was enough to make Hekkeran and his team, who were facing off against Ainz, think that something was amiss.

“...So strong emotions are still suppressed.”

Ainz spoke as if it were of another person. To Hekkeran’s group who could not understand the content of his words, Ainz spoke to them in a tone as if he had a light smile on.

“Since I gained this body, pain and emotion have been suppressed if it surpasses a certain threshold. For example, can you fight if you lose your right hand? Being attacked by an intense pain, there is the possibility of being unable to take any action to fight. However I am different. Even if I lose my right hand I can fight with no problem. Since I feel no pain below a certain level. The pain of losing an arm, or even being hit is suppressed. Even emotion. When swallowed by intense anger, I immediately regain my calm. But....As a result a weak anger is maintained.”

Ainz had a behaviour that suggested that the talk was over. Then he strongly gripped the sword he held, and spread his feet—A battle stance.

“Aura.”

“Yes, Ainz-sama.”

The girl who was watching quietly until now opened her mouth. In her gaze of Hekkeran was hostility. Basically the girl would attack as well, and so Hekkeran prepared himself to face her as well.

“Now retreat as agreed. Only handle the cleanup.”

“Understood.”

Aura moved behind him, with only Ainz facing them.

“Let’s get started.”

As Hekkeran stared down the sword-and-shield-equipped Ainz, Hekkeran’s first thought was that his opponent was not a warrior or a swordsman. If pressed, he would say that he was like a monster, the kind who would use their

excellent physical abilities to overwhelm their opponent.

Both his posture and stance looked like those of an amateur. But he radiated a heavy pressure, appearing larger than life.

For a being like this, the deadliest move they could make might be to simply attack.

“Not coming? Then, allow me.”

Ainz rushed over as he replied. He followed it up with a grand slash downwards from above.

The attack had openings all over it, but it had great destructive power. In the hands of a mighty being with incredible physical ability, it was a sword strike that could kill anything it hit.

—Taking it would be very dangerous.

Hekkeran came to this conclusion in an instant, as he sensed the high-speed blade descending on him. A hard block would turn this into a contest of power, and he knew that he would be overwhelmed if he pitted his strength against Ainz.

That being the case, there was only one option—

Ainz’s sword struck down into the ground, the lingering echo and vibration of steel against steel fading into the air.

—Parry the blow and guide it away from his body.

No matter how much power it had, if the blow was guided away it would not be a problem. And after doing so, the posture of the body crumbled. The armour he wore was probably of an amazing quality. It was possible that Hekkeran’s sword could not penetrate it. Then he would aim for the head. He released a martial art—

“Double—Slash!”

The two swords inscribed gleaming arcs in the air as they scissored toward Ainz’s head.

Hekkeran’s weapons were short. So it had to be thrust into his opponent’s

chest. However, that was if his opponent's chest could swing a sword.

On the contrary, if an opponent with weapons of normal length fought in Hekkeran's range, the difficulty to block it skyrocketed.

The twin swords sped toward his opponent's head.

An average person would have taken it full-on.

A first-rate opponent might have only been scratched. Then—What about an elite opponent?

“Hnh!”

As Ainz made a strange cry he made a large jump. He raised his left hand to the sword that aimed for his head and shielded it. With a metallic sound, Ainz clicked his tongue but was unharmed.

This showed that his gauntlet and thus his full plate mail, were of the highest quality.

“—<Magic Arrow>!”

“<Lesser Dexterity>!”

As the shield blocked the two strikes, Arche's spell sent a white bolt streaking towards Ainz. At the same time, while the sound of clashing metal still rang in the air, Roberdyck cast a spell to augment agility.

“Child's play.”

Ainz did not look at it. Completely ignoring the ball of light, he charged towards Hekkeran.

While the ball of light seemed to be stopped by a wall before it hit Ainz, and while Arche made a shocked expression, Ainz attacked. The aim of his sword was Hekkeran's chest.

He thrust his sword out in a flash, and where it would have hit, Hekkeran moved his body. A ripping sound could be heard from his chest and the chains from his chain shirt danced in the air.

An instant of carelessness.

No since Ainz's attack was too fast, his dodge was late, and became careless

for an instant. If he did not have the support of Roberdyck's magic, it might have been impossible or a coincidence.

Hekkeran endured having his armour ripped off, preserved his posture, and activated his martial art again.

"Double Slash!"

"Ohh!"

Ainz bent his body in a undignified manner, and tried to move back to take some distance.

"As if I would let you escape!"

As Ainz moved to escape, Hekkeran stepped in. And from right next to Hekkeran's face, something flew towards Ainz.

That was an arrow.

The arrow Imina released flew towards Ainz.

"Chi!"

A high-speed arrow came from behind Hekkeran's back, hidden by his body. Naturally, a normal person would not have been able to avoid it. However, against Ainz with his superhuman reflexes, it was still not enough.

"<Flash>!"

"<Lesser Strength>!"

A brilliant flare of light burst in front of Ainz. Whether he resisted it or not, the spell would blind him for a moment, but it seemed pointless against Ainz. All it did was annoy him.

"Interfering busybodies!"

Ainz clicked his nonexistent tongue at Hekkeran, who had closed the gap thanks to his augmented strength and dexterity.

"—<Reinforce Armor>!"

"<Anti-Evil Protection>!"

Arche and Roberdyck's support spells had solidified Hekkeran's defense.

Having evaded Hekkeran's attack and deflected his swords, Ainz was about to riposte once more when another arrow flew into his face.

"Shit! Another bother!"

He blocked the arrow with his gauntlet, but when he stopped his movements, Hekkeran ran in to attack again. Arche and Roberdyck cast magic to gradually make Hekkeran stronger.

Ainz was strong.

His physical abilities were completely untouchable by human beings. Combined with his resistance to magic and the enchanted sword and shield he bore; he was everything a warrior wanted to be.

However, he had weaknesses. That was while he had an amazing physique, he had no skill. Basically a wild beast. All attacks were wide swings, and did not think of his next attack. In addition he did not use feints and only attacked head on like a fool.

It was true that all of his attacks were one-hit-kills that all warriors would admire, and was of a another level compared to humans.

To be fair, he had been hard-pressed to hold his ground. If he had misread the angle of the falling sword and missed his parry, his swords would have been ruined and he would probably have suffered a fatal wound. A small mistake in estimating the speed of the black sword would have resulted in him being sliced neatly in half. The fact that all his coin tosses had come up heads was nothing short of luck. Yet, there was an even more important reason beyond this. That reason was teamwork. It was precisely because they were all working together, and were intimately aware of what each of the others was thinking, that they could move and act like a single organism.

Basically as long as the existence known as Foresight existed, it would never face defeat.

A faint smile lifted the corner of Hekkeran's mouth.

His sword had begun to reach him. Currently Ainz was without harm. However, on that top class armour, his swords had scratched it. In this manner, if he did not panic, it would be possible to give Ainz a fatal blow.

With this conviction in his heart, he swung his twin swords.

“——!”

Ainz moved to avoid the flash of light, and deflected the sword straight towards his head with his gauntlet. The arrow flying in was interdicted by the black sword. Arche and Roberdyck made use of this opening to enhance Hekkeran even further.

“Shit!”

With a roar, Ainz swung his sword in a large arc. Of course, with a speed that humans could never reach. Hekkeran avoided it but his attacks stopped for an instant, and he ran back to take distance.

After considering whether or not to press the attack, Hekkeran decided to back down and calm his frenzied breathing. The undead Ainz would not get tired no matter how long or how hard he fought, but a human like Hekkeran and the others would become exhausted. Dragging the battle out was a bad idea. He had to rest whenever he got the chance.

“What is wrong?”

Ainz took distance and whispered.

“Why, won’t these guys die?”

“Hah?”

Ainz’s words made it seem as if their death was certain. It was true that Ainz’s fighting abilities were high. However, having it being said as if it were natural would make anyone angry.

“Cocytus!”

The VIP seats responded to his words. There, like Aura—but with a completely different shape, dropped down.

It was a mass of platinum. It reflected the countless number of lights from the surroundings, and sparkled.

It’s 2.5 metre tall gigantic body made one think of a bipedal bug. It was like if a demon had mixed a praying mantis and ant. The hard platinum exoskeleton

released a frost into the air, and seemed like diamond dust that sparkled in the air.

Cocytus tried to kneel, but was stopped by Ainz.

An existence that seemed to be much stronger than Ainz. At its appearance, the members of Foresight shuddered. Ainz alone was this strong, and when the numbers increased, they could not win.

“...Answer me, Cocytus. Why are these people still alive?”

However, ignoring Foresight, Ainz spoke to the strange being that appeared—Cocytus.

“I should have the strength to rival a level 33 warrior. From that, it should be reasonable that I should be able to easily kill all of them, Cocytus. But I have not. Not even one. Why, Cocytus. Was your estimation of their level wrong? Even though since we are confirming my pure physical abilities, I am not wearing most of my equipment, why is this so?”

“Their abilities have not left the realm of my predictions.”

“Then why. Why can I not kill them.”

“That is the difference in experience. Ainz-sama’s abilities should be easily able to kill them. However, that is if you can use all of it. Since you cannot utilise all of it, you are unable to easily kill them.”

“Because I cannot use all of my strength?”

“Correct.”

“I see....Since there is no skill called experience. Hmm....I see, then there are no contradictions in my plan for growth. While the data exists there is no experience. Another way to put it is that I can pile up experience. I see....Experience huh.”

He nodded several times, and seemed satisfied. Ainz then once again faced Foresight.

Feeling the change in atmosphere, Hekkeran had a bad feeling.

His senses that traversed the line between life and death were panicking.

That it was dangerous.

“I shall remove my armour.”

Ainz seemed to be speaking to himself.

In response, Foresight went “What is this guy saying”, but just that.

Full plate mail was something that took a lot of time to remove. Even if someone helped him, it would take three minutes. If he did it alone, even more. But was there a merit for a warrior to remove the armour that protected their bodies?

Not able to believe that someone would remove their armour while their opponent’s had their swords drawn, the members of Foresight looked at Ainz in surprise. No, it would be fine to say that they were being made a fool of. The reason why they did not attack was as the instant Hekkeran made even the tiniest movement with his arms, Cocytus would replicate it.

That was a restraint.

If you move, I move.

Being shown such an intention, they could not move.

So Ainz began to remove his armour. While silently watching such a foolish scene, the objective of their actions was decided in silence. If you can laugh when an enemy in front of you removes his armour, then do so. However, the scene that happened in front of them overturned this motion.

Ainz casually waved his hand.—At that moment, a black vapour rose from the armour.

Faster than Hekkeran was surprised, Ainz’s armour completely disappeared. Yes, it was as if his armour was made of solidified vapour.

His whole body was exposed.

His black long pants were well made, and silver thread was used to sew symbols on his waist. His top half was naked.

His head and arms were pure bone. His ribs had some fallen flesh, but it was hanging thinly on. Below that, his spine was visible from his stomach. Where his

ribs ended, inside—Far below his heart, was a pulsating reddish black ball.

Everytime he moved, the golden symbol on his necklace swung in the air.

“...W, what is going on?”

“Lies. It was made of magic?”

“That isn’t a magic armour with special properties?”

Ignoring Hekkeran and the rest who were making noise, Ainz discarded his sword. The discarded sword fell to the ground and let out a dim glow.

Seeing that, once again, Hekkeran and the rest had their mouths agape.

Discarding one’s arms was the universal sign of giving up the fight. However, Ainz’s attitude did not betray even the slightest hint of capitulation.

And so Hekkeran did not understand what Ainz did and was confused. However, they could not be left simply wondering about his actions. So, he braced himself and asked.

“...What are you going to do?”

He slowly spread his arms. It was an action that resembled an angel reaching out to the faithful, or a mother welcoming her child into her embrace; a loving acceptance of what lay before him.

“You don’t get it? Then let me put it in terms you might be able to understand.”

Ainz laughed.

“I’ll play with you, so give me your best shot, humans—”

The mood had changed—

He had forsaken his weapon and his shield. That should have meant he had been weakened. But Hekkeran had the feeling that the Ainz before him now was more powerful than before. Indeed, it seemed as though his body had physically grown in size before their eyes, so oppressive was his presence.

A being that grew stronger when abandoning the sword.

When you thought about it, only two answers remained. One would be that

he was one of those warrior monks who honed their bodies into living weapons. But if that were the case, his fighting style from earlier—the way he evaded attacks—didn't seem polished enough for him to be one of their number.

Then, the alternative—

“—A spellcaster?!”

That was it. This was the question at hand. The being before them, Ainz Ooal Gown—was he a magic caster?

It was understandable that they had not considered that earlier. Who could have imagined that any magic caster could have fought on even terms with Hekkeran, the party's strongest and most skilled fighter? Magic casters—especially arcane magic casters—had weaker bodies than warriors. After all, if one had time to train one's body, one could easily spend that time on learning magic. As such, magic casters who could fight on par with warriors were nonexistent.

That was simple common sense.

A being who could turn that wisdom on its head—who could have imagined such a being would be standing in front of them?

As such, Arche's voice carried the hope that it was untrue, and the desire that her hypothesis would be rejected. Because if it were true, that would mean that Ainz was far more confident in his skills as a magic caster than he was as a warrior.

What that meant, nobody needed to say out loud.

Even casting a few spells could greatly improve battle performance. As Hekkeran had been demonstrating, several enhancement spells made a dramatic difference.

However, Ainz's confidence was not that thin. He was far far better than Arche—He had an absolute confidence.

However Arche had a reason to refute it.

“Did you finally realize it? How foolish you lot are. Well, it's only natural to expect this level of intelligence from you miserable vermin, who track your filth

into my—no, our Nazarick.”

“—That’s impossible! I can’t sense any magical power from your body!”

Ainz tilted his head and wondered. And stumbling on something, he shrugged his shoulders.

“You can measure a magic caster’s magic power huh?”

“—Yes! And from you, I can—”

Then, Arche’s face changed colour. Hekkeran and the rest did not understand why Arche stopped, and made strange expressions. At that moment, the only one to understand was the enemy, Ainz.

“Feel—Nothing right? Despite myself saying that I am a magic caster?”

Yes.

It was so. Arche could not feel the slightest bit of magic power from Ainz. However, if Ainz could use priest type spells, then it was not wrong. But, if that was the case, Ainz’s spellcaster abilities would be completely unknown.

“That is so.”

Ainz, raised both hands to Arche, then Hekkeran and the rest. The hand that was previously covered by a gauntlet, was one that fitted an undead of only bone. On each of his ten fingers was a ring. From one look, one could tell that magic was imbued inside.

“Once I remove this ring, you will understand. I also lent it to my subordinates.”

Saying that, Ainz removed a ring on his right hand. And then—

“—Uuuuoooggh!”

It was the sound of vomiting. Sticky fluid spilled onto the floor of the arena, and a sour, rancid stench wafted up around ‘Foresight’.

“What did you do?!”

Imina glared at Ainz, from where she had rushed over to assist Arche. Ainz seemed a little uncomfortable, but still answered in a displeased tone.

“What do you mean, what did I do to that girl? There’s a limit to how rude you can be, throwing up when you see someone’s face.”

“—E-everyone, run!”

Arche was shouting, and tears were leaking from the corner of her eyes.

“This guy is a mon—uuuurrrrrggghhh!”

Unable to endure it, Arche threw up again. In that moment, Hekkeran understood why she had vomited.

Ainz had done nothing to her. Rather, she had been unable to withstand the combination of terror and stress caused by seeing the enormous magical power surrounding Ainz, and so she had thrown up.

And that meant—

“—We can’t beat him! His strength is on a totally different level! Even the word monster can’t describe him!”

Arche began wailing as the tears rolled down her cheeks.

“You finally realised.” Ainz laughed. “But, you can’t run.”

“—No way no way no way!”

Imina tightly hugged Arche to her chest. The girl was violently shaking her head as though she had gone mad.

“Calm down! Roberdyck!”

“Got it! <Lion’s Heart>!”

Under the influence of Roberdyck’s magic, Arche managed to recover from the panic which had gripped her. Like a newborn deer, she rose unsteadily on shaky legs, using her staff as a crutch.

“—Everyone, we have to flee now. That’s not a being humans can beat.”

“...Understood, Arche!”

“Yeah, I get it.”

“Yes. That is truly a monster.”

The alertness level of the three of them had gone through the roof.

The stared at Ainz with nerves wound even tighter than before. Theirs was an expression that understood that even an instant's loss of watchfulness would spell their deaths.

"It looks like they won't let us run."

"The moment we show them our backs, we die."

"We need to buy time or we won't make it."

"...Not coming?"

Of course, Hekkeran wouldn't be baited by Ainz. The enemy's fighting power vastly exceeded that of any being which had ever existed. It was not a movement for victory, but was one to buy time for escape.

That meant they could only count on one thing.

When Ainz began casting a spell—a magic caster was most vulnerable when reciting an incantation.

Ainz's strength as a warrior was undeniable, but that was why they had to bet on that. If he used a silent spell, then the game was up, but even so, that was a tiny possibility which existed for them.

As though drawing a bow taut, Hekkeran gathered his strength within himself.

"Then I will go."

Ainz slowly moved his hands—

—*Now!*

The arrow called Hekkeran launched from its bow. His current dash was probably the fastest he had ever done. All his steps seemed to cause the ground to shout beneath him.

In an instant.

Ignoring the sword that seemed to teleport straight in front of his eyes, Ainz cast one spell.

<—/—>

The sword that was several centimetres in front of Ainz, cut thin air. And Hekkeran exploded from the inside.

His flesh and blood splattered on the ground of the Colliseum.

What happened.

Roberdyck, Imina and Arche could not understand. They could not understand that after he lost his target Ainz, he did not kill his momentum and instead flew to the ground and tumbled.

Even the fact that he was not moving. Even the pink flesh that dropped to the ground soon after. Even the fact that his body had rotated from the impact and his headless body was visible.

Yes, they could not understand how, without a sound, the team leader that they depended on, Hekkeran, had died.

“H, Hekkeran?”

Imina whispered. Roberdyck finally calmed down. Ainz should have been in front of Hekkeran. And where did he disappear to. He turned his head in a panic to capture Ainz’s figure. And became speechless—

Ainz was behind everyone. Right behind Arche. He slowly raised his hand— And in it was a metallic glint.

“A—!”

Faster than Roberdyck could shout, the knife in Ainz’s hand plunged into Arche’s shoulder—

“—Giiiiii”

A sudden burst of pain. Arche screamed. Why happened, why am I in pain. Arche could not comprehend this, panicked, and her body bent. She ran. Towards the frozen Roberdyck.

A new pain was born when she ran, but Arche endured.

“....As expected I don’t feel a shred of guilt....Is this a result of me losing any sense of familiarity with humans? Or is my humanity disappearing?....However, that girl ran for help after facing despair. So this either means that she has the

ability to be able to ignore me or that I am treated as a third wheel, that I am looking down on her and creating this painful situation she has to endure?”

Ainz did not chase after Arche, but instead ran his finger across the knife, and mumbled to himself.

He did not understand his own words, and it was not anything Ainz thought was important.

Ainz moved his gaze from the knife. He looked at Roberdyck who was using healing magic to heal Arche.

“Well, fine. Anyway exterminating you people takes priority.”

Ainz let the knife go and it dispersed into fog, like the armour from earlier.

“What, did you do?”

Roberdyck asked with a trembling voice.

Using teleportation magic, he moved behind Arche. While Roberdyck and the rest were confused, he prepared a knife. Roberdyck understood that much.

Since he understood that Ainz was a monster that could use even 6th Rank Magic.

Then how did he kill Hekkeran. Did he kill Hekkeran at the same time as he used teleportation magic. There was not enough time for that.

“Is it strange? It is not anything worth mentioning though?”

Ainz made the method clear. With a reply that crushed the hearts of those still alive.

“I first used the 10th Rank Magic <Time Stop>. Then I used the 8th Rank Magic <Explode> on that man.” Ainz pointed at the fallen Hekkeran. “Then I used the 3rd Rank Magic <Dimensional Move> to get behind then used the 7th Rank Magic <Create Greater Item> to make the knife.”

It's nothing much. Ainz continued.

A silence froze the air. That was as a physical fear assuited Roberdyck and the rest. In their midst, frantically—Frantically, Imina gathered her courage to ask.

“...You stopped time? U, using 10th Rank Magic....?”

“Yes. One needs anti-time measures you know? When you reach level 70 you have to have them.”

The chattering of teeth could be heard. It was not just Imina, but Arche and Roberdyck as well.

Lies. They would feel bliss if they could yell that. It might feel better to refute the words of this monster—No this existence that stood in the realm of gods, cover their ears and kneel.

They understood that he was strong. Especially Arche. However, they did not comprehend to what extent.

10th Rank Magic. A rank even gods could not reach. It's existence was nothing more than an empty theory. It was said that the 8 Greed Kings used it, but since their existences was not confirmed, it was nothing more, until now.

And that was used to stop time. The world was a joke.

An existence that could stop time. The flow of time that people could neither rule nor control. What should one do when their opponent could command it? It would be simpler to cut down a large forest with a single sword.

Ainz Ooal Gown.

That was an existence that humans could never defeat.

“Arche! Run!”

The reason why Roberdyck turned, was to tell his comrades, who were still intending to fight.

“Look at the sky! This is probably outside. There is a chance you can escape if you fly away! Even if it's just you, run! I will buy you one min....No ten seconds!”

His gripped his mace with both hands—

—When his shoulder was tapped.

“Ah....”

Roberdyck's body stopped moving. This was as he knew who tapped his shoulder even without looking. The existence that should have been in front of

him—Ainz Ooal Gown. The existence that was like a god who could control time. He had disappeared from his sight.

A frost flowed out from the hand on his shoulder and Roberdyck became an ice sculpture. His body did not even have the freedom to feel that.

“—Although it’s impossible?”

Roberdyck heard a kind voice—One without any hostility. The mace dropped powerlessly from his grip, and onto the ground—.

“You want to ask what I did right?” While everyone had froze and did not move, Ainz heartily revealed the answer. “I simply chantlessly cast <Time Stop>. It’s nothing much right? However, I think it is impossible to buy ten seconds?”

Now,

Ainz whispered. He looked at the three who were losing fighting spirit.

“....Yes. I have thought of something good. I should give someone a chance to escape. If you are running, just run. However, there will be something chasing after them. If they cannot lose it....Well, it will be quite pitiful. —Aura, raise the exit.”

“Understood.”

Ainz pointed in the direction where Roberdyck and the rest entered from. Aura jumped up, activated a light on her shoes, and disappeared.

“Now, Aura teleported and opened the door. Feel free to go. Feel free to abandon your comrades. Now who’s running?”

Ainz’s hand faced them. The expression on his face was an evil one. It was a face that held extreme interest in who would run away. He probably wanted to see them fall out.

It was true that different from adventurers, Worker teams were tied together for monetary reasons.

However, Foresight was different.

“....Arche go.”

“Yes, go.” Imina smiled. “While we only have each other, you have sisters

right? Then abandon us. That is what you have to do.”

“—That! This is my fault!”

Seeing that Ainz had no intention to immediately attack, Roberdyck walked over to Arche. He then took out a small leather sack from his bosom.

“It will be fine. We will chase after you after defeating this monster called Ainz.”

“I agree. Then you treat us.”

Imina also took out a small sack and passed it to Arche.

What meaning does this have? Ainz who was standing by the side did not understand, but Arche did. Roberdyck walked over to Hekkeran’s corpse, took out a similar sack, and threw it to Arche.

“If you let me say something, but I promise to first kill that piece of dirt.”

While it was being decided that Arche would escape, Ainz pouted in dissatisfaction. It was an unhappiness at it being decided without arguing, and beautifully. In contrast to Ainz, the three cast fleeting glances at him. No, only Arche was staring at him.

Imina smiled at Arche. That clear smile caused Cocytus, who was watching from the side, to shake his head several times.

“...Now, go. Use the money in the inn in any way you’d like.”

“Mine as well.”

“...Ghot it. I’ll ve going ahead” (Crying)

Of course, the three of them did not believe it.

Defeating an existence they could not fathom, like Ainz, there was not even a sliver of such thoughts. Knowing that this was the final farewell, Arche could no longer form words, but was instead making noises. She began to cast magic.

“There are monsters in the air so you will be caught even if you fly.”

“—<Fly>.”

Ignoring Ainz’s warning, Arche activated her magic. After looking at her

comrades one last time, she silently fly away.

“...Ah, I see. It’s faster than running, and one won’t tire.” Ainz seemed to have forgotten this. “However, it was decided without any discord. I thought that you would have showed me disgusting actions suitable for dirt like you.”

“She has the highest chance of escaping after all.”

“Yes. Since we are outside and she can use flight magic, she can run the fastest.”

“...Outside huh.”

Ainz looked at the sky of floating stars, and sneered. The two felt a sense of foreboding at it.

“Shall I tell you something g—”

“—Ainz-sama.”

“What is it, Cocytus?”

Ainz felt some displeasure at the interrupting Cocytus, but he asked politely.

“If you kill them now, I believe their screams can reach her.”

“Oh! Cocytus, you think of some terrifying things sometimes. However, the manoeuvrability of flight magic is quite high. So unfortunately it will be difficult. But I thank you for the good idea, Cocytus.”

“Thank you.”

“...Well, she might hear it if they cry loudly. Now, shall I kill you pieces of dirt. Have you prepared yourself for leaving this world?”

Roberdyck raised his mace and moved closer to Ainz. Ainz smiled lightly at the man charging towards him.

Imina took in a long breath—

“—Ahhhhhh!!”

—While releasing a shout like a weight had been lifted, Imina pulled back her bow. And—Released. While Roberdyck was right next to him, she would not endanger his life. At this distance, she would hit a hundred out of a hundred

times.

However—The arrow bounced off the front of Ainz, as if there was a wall.

“Useless actions. However....Shall I play for a bit. <Triplet Magic Greater Magic Accumulation>”

Three magic circles floated in front of Ainz.

“Uoooooooo!”

With a loud manly cry that did not suit him, Roberdyck slammed his mace down onto Ainz’s face. It was a hit with all of his power that ignored everything else. It was a hit based on his belief that Ainz would not evade.

However, that was easily repelled. Feeling an intense pain in his wrist, Roberdyck dropped his mace. Ainz did not even look at him. It was an attitude that said that he had no such worth.

“<Triplet Maximise Magic Magic Arrow>”

Ainz filled one of the magic circles in the air with magic.

“<Middle Cure Wounds>!”

Roberdyck cast healing magic on Ainz. This was as undead received the opposite effect of healing magic and would be instead wounded. However, like the magic Arche used, it seemed to hit a wall and did not have an effect.

“<Triplet Maximise Magic Magic Arrow>”

Ignoring the attacks of the two, Ainz filled another magic circle with magic.

When arrows were about to hit Ainz’s face, it was repelled as expected. Seeing that, Imina threw away her bow. She decided that projectiles would have no effect.

“<Triplet Maximise Magic Magic Arrow>”

“<Magic Weapon>”

Pulling out the short sword from her waist, Imina had magic cast on her by Roberdyck. It was at this time where Ainz finally filled in the last magic circle.

And—He simply released it.

While she was surprised, she knew it somewhere deep down. Imina made a lonely face as Ainz pointed his finger at her. Roberdyck tried to get in between them, but Ainz's magic was far faster.

“Good work— <Triplet Maximise Magic Magic Arrow> And <Release>”

“Ah....An angel.”

90 from the magic circles, and 30 from Ainz. 120 bullets of light.

The rush of the bullets drew a pair of angel wings. However, it was not such a merciful thing.

Hitting. Hitting. Hitting. Hitting—

Her head, chest, stomach, arms, legs, face, nether region—

120 bullets of light. That was the amount of magic hitting Imina. Like fishing chasing after food, the bullets slammed into Imina's body. It was not even at the level of her losing consciousness.

While in the midst of pain like being hit by sticks, she did not make a sound. Even when her bones broke or her innards imploded, she did not raise even a moan of pain.

It was just an instant.

There was no one where Imina was. Behind it was a thin but widely spread layer of meat. Her armour was bent, and the things she wore was mixed in with her blood and flesh.

“Imina....!”

“Dirtying the place my comrades and I built, it is an extravagant death for filthy thieves”.

Roberdyck stared at Ainz, who spoke in a bored manner, with a glare full of anger. They were 70 centimetres away and Roberdyck glared into Ainz's empty eye sockets with hatred.

While receiving a gaze that would make most humans want to leave, Ainz did not feel such emotions. No, it would be better to say that he had no emotional constructs.

Roberdyck curled his hand into a fist, and punched. He had one aim. The pulsating orb located at the end of Ainz's spine.

He believe that was his weak point.

His fist hit in a way that it seemed to be pulled in—When a loud metallic cracking sound could be heard.

Receiving a powerful impact, Roberdyck's fist was repelled. The recoil was astounding, and from it, Roberdyck's gauntlet was completely broken and fell to the ground.

He stumbled backwards from Ainz, and Roberdyck made a surprised face and looked at his fist. While his gauntlet completely shattered, his hand beneath did not have a scratch. It was a strange situation. However, if he thought about the existence known as Ainz, Roberdyck felt that such a result was fitting.

“Be grateful. You just touched the highest class of magic item. The world item that becomes stronger when I wield it, the world item that has my name engraved on it. In the last war, half of the players died to this. —Shalltear!”

Ainz calmly turned away from Roberdyck, and spoke to the VIP room. His attitude was as if it was telling Roberdyck that he could not harm him.

Well, it was true. No matter how they attacked it was futile. Ainz understood that and acted as such. Roberdyck had no methods of harming the monster Ainz. And so, he had to think calmly. In the worst case he had to buy time for Arche to escape.

While retreating, Roberdyck's brain was working furiously, but a girl jumped down from the VIP lounge in the same fashion as Aura and Cocytus.

It was a human girl with a shimmering silver beauty. Even though Roberdyck was controlled by anger, she had a beauty capable of stealing his eyes.

With a sigh, Shalltear moved her gaze and looked straight on at Roberdyck. She had beautiful crimson eyes. It felt that they had gripped Roberdyck's heart. Moving, even breathing, felt difficult underneath her pressure.

Underneath the girl's gaze, Roberdyck could not move.

“Shalltear. Capture the woman from earlier.”

“Understood, Ainz-sama.”

The girl—Shalltear smiled. However, seeing that shining smile from the side, Roberdyck sent cold shivers down his spine. He directly felt that she was a monster wearing a beauty’s skin.

“Why are you not looking here directly?”

“Eh, because.....”

Shalltear was displaying a rather shy expression. Ainz looked upon his own body and shook his head.

“It’s just bones?”

“Ainz-sama is special! Really, please don’t make me say those things again. It is rather embarrassing...”

With both her hands holding her face, Shalltear was fidgeting around with a kyakya expression.

“Shalltear You really do not change at all... ... Do behave a bit more seriously Oh well ... go and catch it, but since she could still be of use, you are strictly prohibited from breaking your prey.”

“Understood. I will catch her without damaging her.”

“Do enjoy the hunt.”

“Yes, I intend to do that.”

Shalltear bowed deeply towards Ainz before strolling away. Every single step she took seem was akin to shortening of Arche’s life, Roberdyck understood this yet he did not made a move.

Shalltear walked pass without taking a single look towards them. Although the distance separating her and her prey could be covered just by running, it still looked rather far off.

After Shalltear’s footsteps faded into the distance, Ainz began to speak with Roberdyck.

“Now then, why don’t we make a deal.”

“What sort of deal?”

“If you cooperate with me, I promise that I will not kill this girl, Arche.”

“How do I..... cooperate?”

The suggestion itself may not be an actual cooperation. But Roberdyck understood that it was a good chance for him to preserve the life of his comrade.

“Now, my subordinate who is currently in pursuit belongs to the cleric class. However, the god that she believes in is completely different from yours. In short, I am not familiar with the four gods whom you worship. Hence, I would like to find out from the users of cleric magic, whether they attain their power from their gods.”

“...What are you trying to say?”

“...Have you met the existence that you call god personally?”

“God is by our side!”

“Such an answer. This means that you have never met him in person?”

“No! When I used my magic, I could feel the presence of an immeasurable existence. That is god.”

“....Then again who were the ones that decide who god is? God himself? Or was it the people that used such power themselves?”

Roberdyck recalled the contents of discussion from the various debates on the subject of the divine. To Ainz’s question, there were no clear conclusion from it. That was why till now, the priests continued to debate about the matter. If it was really like that, then part of the divine debate had their conclusion drawn out for them.

Ainz continued to speak as if trying to stop Roberdyck who opened his mouth.

“...Mah, treating those beings that dwell within a higher existence, let’s assume they are the gods you speak of. Are they something that is totally colorless? Or do they exist like a concentrated mass of power. The droplets of power dripping from them cause the changes? Well, this is a world where

magical laws exist. It would not be a joking matter should god exist.”

“....”

“My apologies. I am not talking about any of those things. The power of the gods that you believe in. I don’t think we could simply learn something like that....How about some human experimentation?”

The words coming out from Ainz’s mouth were very dangerous.

“...Human experimentation?”

“That’s right. What happens if I change a part of your memory? Substituting one of the gods that your worshipped with another. What would the outcome be like?”

Utter madness. That was the honest thought that came into Roberdyck’s mind.

No, his opponent was an undead. His level of thinking had reached a different realm of possibility.

Ainz moved one step backwards, looking at Roberdyck with a bemused air. His gaze was akin to a researcher observing his test subject. Roberdyck wanted to vomit at the thought of it.

“If you are willing to cooperate with me, as a reward, I shall guarantee the safety of that girl, Arche.”

“Is there any evidence that I could trust your words...”

“That would be impossible isn’t it? Looks like you are not the trusting type. Mah, since you are unwilling to cooperate, I could force you into participating my experiment. Even that girl would be a useful experiment subject.”

“...Don’t you have a single shred of mercy inside you?”

“Your joke ends here, do you think I would be merciful to those who dirtied Nazarick with their filthy mud prints?”

Roberdyck looked towards the sky, the glistening star filled sky.

Then towards the ground, where the bodies of his friends lay upon the grounds of the arena.

Roberdyck let out a deep sigh. Numerous considerations came into his mind. He considered each and everyone of them before making a final decision.

“One more condition. Please let me bury my dead friend’s body.”

“...No choice. Be thankful then, lesser beings that dared to thread their filthy mud stained shoes into Nazarick and besmirched the names of my friends, to receive an act of mercy from me..... I shall not use their bodies.”

Death itself was an absolute existence. Resurrecting the dead was something in the realm of the impossible. At least let the souls of my comrades rest in piece, and let Arche be spared from death, the cleric, Roberdyc prayed.

Chapter 59: Invaders | Part 7

Arche panted heavily.

Every time the grass swayed from the wind, her whole body would tremble. Like a small animal, she fearfully looked in every direction.

The surroundings were a forest, and there were many places without light. The spreading canopies of the nearby trees blocked out the light from the sky, and there was almost none on the surface.

Although this environment would normally be difficult for a human being to navigate, in lieu of illumination, Arche used the <Darkvision> spell, which made her surroundings seem as bright as day.

However even if she looked around, her surroundings were filled with undergrowth that could fit a man. Behind that was a giant tree with a width one could easily hide behind. Along with the waving branches, there were countless places she needed to pay attention to.

As an arcane magic caster, if Arche were confronted by a monster which attacked her, she could not get rid of it by herself. Normally, she would have her colleagues to help her, but the ones who would help her, who would provide cover for her, or heal her, were all absent.

Which meant that all she could do was watch out for signs that an enemy was approaching, keep her distance, and flee. She was on edge because she was keenly aware of this fact, and it sapped her mental strength even more than normal.

Her original plan was to make it to the outside, which meant she would escape by flying. But once she flew above the trees, she saw a gigantic flying creature in the sky which seemed to be searching for something, so she abandoned that plan.

After she confirmed the presence of the giant bat, she could not find it in herself to try and turn it into a contest of speed. That was because even though

<Invisibility> could fool visual senses, it could not deceive the special sensory organs of a bat.

After confirming her surroundings were safe, Arche once more flew up at a snail's pace.

She was proceeding as slowly as possible with <Fly> because she wanted to observe her surroundings. If she went at full speed, she would not be able to react quickly enough even if she were on alert and spotted a threat, and that would mean she would be leaping into the mouth of any monsters which pursued her. In order to avoid this, she deliberately lowered her speed.

Finally, Arche felt the layer of magic energy surrounding her growing thin. Her flight spell was about to run out.

She slowly descended to the ground.

The question now was what should she do. Casting 'Flight' again would not be a problem. She could feel that she had enough mana for it. However, 'Darkvision' was also a crucial spell, if she meet monsters then she needed <Invisibility>. She also had to reserve enough mana for defensive spells in case of combat.

The 3rd

tier spell 'Flight' was one of the highest-ranked spells Arche knew how to use. Which also meant that it was one of the most draining spells she had. If possible, she wanted to avoid using it.

Since entering the tomb and being teleported here, she had used quite a bit of magic power. She could not use <Fly> multiple times with what she had left.

However, using magic to directly pass through this forest was a waste. And losing <Fly> would mean losing her sense of direction.

Since it was a forest, even if she tried to move straight ahead, she would lose her destination. This was as she had to avoid trees and cross fallen logs. In addition of not having an obvious goal, it was extremely difficult to be aware of where she was walking.

She climbed to the tree tops while the fly magic was still active, and got a

grasp of her current location. It was fortunate that there was a large tree next to the coliseum. She oriented herself based on that. However now that her magic was gone, the difficulty skyrocketed. She did not have the time to climb a tree to grasp the situation.

“—Where can I rest.”

Arche mumbled to herself.

If she restored her mana through sleep, she could use <Fly> more often, and movement under the sun would be safer. This was particularly true for the forest, where the monsters tended to come up at night.

It might be better for her to curl up somewhere and wait for day to break, rather than force herself to carry on in the dark forest.

But Arche had no idea where the safe places were.

If Imina were here, she would probably know. However, her reliable companions were not with her.

“Imina, Roberdyck.”

Arche curled up beside a huge tree, and thought of her comrades.

“...Liars.”

Even though this much time had passed, the two did not show signs of following her. There was no sign of something happening at the coliseum. There was no sign of the two trying to contact her. She was led to only one answer.

Their death.

No, that was something she had known from the beginning. There was no way they could beat the ridiculous entity known as Ainz. Even so, was she a fool for holding on to the faint hope of seeing them again—

Arche sat on the ground and leaned her back on the great tree.

Arche closed her eyes. She knew it was dangerous, but she still wanted to close her eyes.

As the memory of the three of them came to mind, she squeezed her eyelids shut.

The icy-cool sensation of the wood against her head was very comfortable. It was only after she had rested for awhile that she realized just how tired she had been. Her stress turned into emotional exhaustion, and it rose without stopping.

“—Haaaaa”

She let her head rest against the tree.

And then she opened her eyes wide.

<Darkvision> painted the world of night in fresh, bright colors, but she had no explanation for what she saw in her field of vision.

Someone was watching Arche.

It was like nothing Arche had ever seen before, and her eyes seemed transfixed on the sight of the beautiful girl.

She was dressed in a velvet-soft ball gown dyed in the darkest shade of black, a garment that seemed thoroughly unsuited for her present environment. Her skin was as pale as wax. A single hand stroked her long, platinum hair, which seemed about to brush across Arche's face.

Though she was a noble daughter, Arche had never seen a girl this beautiful before. If she were to show up at a formal dance, men would flock to her like moths to a flame, purely on the virtue of her beauty.

Her crimson pupils radiated an irresistible charm that seemed to draw Arche's soul into them.

But Arche immediately returned to her senses. There was no way someone like that would be in a place like this. Especially not someone with both feet on the tree trunk, standing parallel to the ground in utter defiance of gravity.

It was obvious that this was a pursuer sent by Ainz. Still, it was not completely impossible that she might have been a resident in the forest for a long time.

“Are you done playing tag?”

Her fleeting hopes had been utterly dashed.

“—A pursuer.”

Arche leapt away to open up a gap, targeting the girl with her staff. The girl seemed disinterested in Arche, and neatly walked down the tree trunk and onto the floor.

“It won’t be fun if you don’t run.”

“—if I defeat you here, I can flee more safely.”

Even as she said this, Arche smiled bitterly in her heart. There was no way she could beat any pursuer sent by Ainz, a being who existed outside the bounds of common sense.

Knowing this, the reason why she said so was to gauge the other party’s reaction.

“Then, by all means, although I can only play with you for a while.”

Her attitude said that she completely understood the difference in power between the two of them. Basically to her, a fight with Arche was in the realm of a game.

“—<Fly>!”

Arche cast her spell and began to flee. There was none of the leisurely, slow flight she had demonstrated on the ground. In one swift movement she was aloft, covering her face with her arms as she broke through the forest canopy and soared into the air.

Under the night sky, Arche looked around once more. She was on guard for the bat-like monster she had seen earlier. However, it seemed that it was nowhere around. And so, all that was left was to escape.

“Yes, yes, keep it up, keep it up,”

The beautiful voice called out to Arche, who was desperate to flee. Her heart lurched. Casting desperate glances around, Arche tried to see where it was coming from. It was from in front and above her.

When had she—the girl from just now was there.

“—<Lightning>!”

Bluish-white lightning leapt from her staff's head and cleaved through the night. This was Arche's strongest attack spell. Even though it pierced the girl, the smile did not vanish from her face.

Arche was sure of it. This was a being on par with Ainz, which meant that there was no way Arche could defeat her. The girl cheerfully spoke to Arche, who was eager to flee.

"Familiars."

An enormous pair of wings extended from behind the girl's back. They were like a bat's in shape, but far, far larger. An enormous bat flew out from behind her, like it had detached from her body. And of course, no bat with glowing crimson eyes like that could be a mere beast.

The girl smiled from beside the giant bat, whose wings beat steadily through the air. It was a smile that froze Arche's body like ice, a smile that did not seem to belong on someone her age at all.

"Well then, do continue to flee—"

Arche fled.

She took flight with all her strength.

She flew into the forest to lose her pursuer, and the branches scratched her body as she fled.

Since she had discarded her companions to escape, that meant she had to make it out of here no matter what. In her mind, she would do anything to make that happen.

Just how much had she flew. She casted <Fly> multiple times, and when her magic was about to run out, Arche met despair.

It was a wall.

An invisible wall stood in front of her.

The world went on beyond it, but Arche's body was blocked by that wall. Arche was now two hundred meters above ground level and the invisible wall had reached this high.

“—This is”

Arche muttered to herself as despair seeped into her heart. She flew and felt around with her hands. But... wall, wall, wall, still a wall.

No matter where she flew, her hands told her there was something hard in her way.

“What is this?!”

“A wall, of course.”

Her muttered words that should not have an answer was replied to. Guessing her identity, Arche made an exhausted face.

The one who stood there was the one she expected. The earlier girl. And three giant bats that were flying around her.

“Though it seems you’ve gotten the wrong impression. This is the 6th

floor of the Great Tomb of Nazarick. That is to say, you’re underground.”

“...This?”

Arche pointed at the world. The heavens had a starry night sky, the wind blew, and the ground had a forest spread upon it. Thinking that such things were impossible to have underground, she was hit by the thought that if it was them, it was possible.

“The 41 Supreme Beings. Long ago they ruled this land, and they created us. It is a system that even their creations, us, cannot understand.”

“—They made a world? That is the work of gods....”

“Yes. They are our gods. The existences that Ainz-sama stands at the head of.”

Arche looked around.

She already accepted it. As expected, if one was shown this much then they would understand.

That she would not return alive.

“Now, are you not running?”

“—I can?”

“Of course not. We had no intention of letting you go anyway.”

“—I see.”

Arche grabbed her staff with both hands, and flew towards the girl. She had no more magic power and so could not use magic. However, she would try her best to escape. It was what she, as the last member of Foresight, had to do.”

“Yes yes, good work.”

In response to the frenzied Arche, the girl spoke in a casual manner.

“Then, this is the end of your escape. It was a waste that you did not break down and cry in the end.”

Easily stopping the staff Arche swung, the girl pulled her towards herself. The postures of Arche and the girl crumbled. The two embraced in midair.

The girl then moved her face to Arche’s neck. Arche tried to break free, but the girl’s body was like glue and she could not separate. With a warm breath on her neck, Arche’s body trembled.

“...Hmm, the smell of sweat.”

As a worker in the middle of work, Arche was unable to take a bath. This was a natural thing for workers, adventurers and travellers. It was a matter of fact for those who went on journeys, and so if they were told that they were dirty, they would simply laugh as say “So?”.

However, being told that from a younger and an extremely gorgeous girl, it could not be helped that she felt ashamed.

The girl moved her face away from Arche’s neck. The moment she saw those crimson eyes, Arche was attacked by a bad feeling. The girl was in heat, and she gaze of the feeling of a man doused in lust.

“When we return shall we first use the bath?”

“——!”

Arche was shocked when she was about to respond. She could not move her body. It was like she was sucked in by those crimson eyes. It was then that

Arche realised the girl's true form.

She was not human—But a vampire.

“...Then.” The girl moved her face close to Arche's, opened her lips and licked Arche's cheek. “....Salty.”

The girl laughed, but Arche's heart was screaming in fear.

The girl's laugh deepened.

The girl's lips were like a crack and reached her ears. Her eyes changed from rainbow to crimson.

It would be suitable to say that while her mouth opened, it made a cracking sound. Her beautiful set of white teeth now formed rows of canines like a shark. Her pink lips glistened, and her clear drool dripped from the corner of her mouth.

A fear from the bottom of her heart surrounded Arche.

“Ahahhahaha. Yessss, until your head goes crazy with pleasure, I'll do a lot for youuuuu. Until you admit it yourselffff, how much time will it takeeeee!”

In front of the laughing monster that gave off the smell of blood, Arche felt her heart leave her body.

While the image of her two sisters waiting at home flashed in her head.

“Hmmm? Ddddiidd yyyooouuuu ffaaaaiinnnttt? Ttthhheennnnn, llloookkkk ffffoorrrwwaaarrdd tttoo wwhheennn yyyooouuu wwaakkkee uuuuppp.”



“This is the information Neuronist collected.”

While in his private chambers, Ainz looked at the documents passed to him by Shalltear. On it was recorded the information by the invaders from three days ago. The name of the requester. The true forms of the invaders. It was a document that held such information.

Apart from those, Shalltear was handling the items the invaders held, managing it on the 2nd Floor. Dead things that Ainz would use for experiments

later were also recorded.

Scanning through the document, Ainz tilted his head. He had no doubts of Neuronist's skill, but what he needed was reliable information.

"I see....However, while pain is a good method, all of this was ascertained by torture right. Just how reliable is this information?"

"Eh?"

"—Eh?"

In response to Shalltear's surprised reaction, Ainz made a strange sound.

"I believe that this was collected through the magic <Dominate> though?"

The two looked at each other.

<Dominate> was a stronger magic than <Charm Person>, and could manipulate a person according to the caster's will. With this, any information could be easily coughed up.

What did he not realise it. It was a magic Ainz could use.

Thinking of an excuse to escape Shalltear's gaze, Ainz racked his brain.

"No. Shalltear." In a heartbeat, Ainz came to an answer. "Does this paper have the method of how the information was gained written on it?"

"It is not but...."

"It is so. How was this knowledge gained. And how reliable is it? If that much is not written, misunderstandings can come about."

Here, Shalltear made a face as if she had just noticed something.

"My apologies. I did not pay attention to that!"

It was a forced excuse, and a pretty much one sided conversation, but he managed to get pass it. Filled with a guilty feeling for the apologising Shalltear, Ainz calmly nodded.

"I do not mind but pay attention to this from now on."

"Yes, understood....By the way, what happened to the priest in the end?"

Ainz immediately understood that she was speaking of Roberdyck and

answered.

“He is being experimented on in the place Aura made.”

“What sort of experiment?”

“Proof of God’s existence....No, it is not a philosophical or religious problem, but to see if such an existence is possible.”

“Meaning?”

“No, magic exists. It is not strange for there to be a god. Should a god exist due to humans, how would it react to an existence that kills its believers? If the balance of the world it is managing should crumble, what would it do? If it were me I would directly attack.”

What problems would a god bring? Ainz made a wry smile at Shalltear’s reaction.

“If god exists, then it would be good to investigate how to kill it.”

“I see....If we do not remove it completely it will be troublesome.”

In the game Yggdrasil, gods were fine to defeat, and he had defeated them before in events. However, is it possible in this world. Ainz was far stronger than humans. Then if existences know as gods did exist, how strong were they compared to him.

“Well, our goal was to change his memory, but he could still use magic. Basically the Four Great Gods do not exist, and I assume that it is a large existence of power. Depending on how the existence is directed, it changes into the various powers of gods.”

After explaining that much, Ainz once again made a wry smile.

“Well, anymore and it would dangerous and so we stopped. It is dangerous to play with an unknown energy. Well, if I say that then magic might be a problem but....It would be the best for our nerves to understand it is useless to dwell on it. And if gods are the physical expression of the direction of that power, if we can control that direction....We can control gods.”

Shalltear sent a gaze of respect to Ainz who said that they could control even gods. She was an NPC that recognised her master, the 41 Supreme Beings,

were gods. She felt a happiness as if that was being recognised.

“As expected of Ainz-sama.”

“Well, that method will be improbable though.”

Ainz threw his hands in the air. However, Shalltear was not the least bit disappointed. It did not come to him now but she believed in him. In the not far future, she believed that her master could control even gods.

“Oh yes, I shall ask Demiurge about that. Now, how is that woman doing? I made a promise to not hurt her if possible.”

“That woman....Arche-chan right. I have made it such that she has a tail now.”

“A tail? Did you turn her into a lycanthrope?”

There were methods that allowed one to change into a lycanthrope, a beast man. Ainz believed it was something along that line and asked Shalltear.

“No, it is ana....”

“It’s fine.”

Ainz interrupted Shalltear’s words.

“But, Ainz-sama. May I ask something?”

“What?”

He had a bad feeling but he had to ask. Listening to a subordinate is the mark of a good master.

“Ainz-sama has ordered me to not harm her. But....Can I steal her virginity?”

“—Peroronchino!!”

Ainz shouted out the name of a past comrade. Shalltear panicked as her creator’s name was called out. Ainz’s irritation was then retrieved, and he cooled down.

“....Sorry. I got a bit agitated....Oh yes. He passed it down. I’m sorry....Well, I’ll stop.”

“What should I do when she begs me to take it? Or will Ainz-sama take it?”

He thought of that, or perhaps that it was the fault of the invaders into

Nazarick, and lots of other things popped up in his mind. In the end, he believed that it was fine as long as the two agreed.

“...If you did not use magic or force, and she wants you to....It’s fine?”

“Understood. Then when she is as such, I shall take my time to enjoy her.”

“I see....I am happy that you will have fun.”

Waving his hand, Ainz thought to end the talk. He recalled the leather bag, but Shalltear did not say anything, so he decided that it was not important, and closed his mouth.

Silence ruled the wide room. The maids that were originally standing behind him had left.

Shalltear opened her mouth to end the silence.

“...However, what made you think of investigating gods?”

“...It was one of my original goals.” Ainz heaved a sigh of relief at the fact that it was now a serious conversation. “My plan is split into two parts. One is to make the story of the hero Ainz Ooal Gown. And when I do, the next thing is to turn into a god.”

This was the general situation. If one read human history, the chance of that happening was high.

“However, should gods truly exist in this world, turning into one is difficult. This is why I wanted to confirm what sort of existences were gods. Well, we still do not understand everything about gods though.”

If gods did exist, the path to become a god was probably nonexistent. However, recognising the existence of gods and spreading the seeds to godhood was the intent of the experiment.

Ainz felt embarrassed seeing the gaping Shalltear, and spoke quickly as if making an excuse.

“It will be difficult. Surpassing the realm of heroes and reaching the rank of god. But the Lizardman Village was a lucky find.”

Ainz was a god to the lizardmen, or the head of the gods. Basically he turned

himself into a god in that small world. And so he gained confidence, and took the experiment one step further.

“I see. Shall I talk of the next one?”

Ainz hesitated.

“If there is something you cannot say.”

“There is no such thing but....Don’t laugh? I did not say this to anyone.”

Ainz kept silent, and Shalltear was filled with happiness when Ainz said that he did not say it to anyone.

Ainz hesitated for a while. In a way it was a dream. It was something a normal person would never think of, the ravings of a madman. Even Ainz never seriously thought of it. However, ruling the Lizardmen village let him believe that it was not impossible.

That was why he asked Shalltear. He was trying to motivate himself.

“It is like a dream.”

Ainz made his final excuse. His final goal was impossible, the aims of a madman. It was—

“—World Domination.”

A silence filled the room again.

“Ainz Ooal Gown ruled the top ten guilds with just 41 people. It is an existence that should become a legend. Taking that step is repaying my past comrades. However, I myself am wishing for it.”

Ainz cut his words, and stared into space. All the while, Shalltear listened to him without moving a step.

“—My past comrades made it up to here, so I want to do this out of pride. Shalltear—Is there anything better than world domination?”

“There is none, Ainz-sama.”

Shalltear slowly lowered her head. Her face was red, and filled with happiness.

Shalltear's body was embraced by the feeling that suited a subordinate given a royal command.

After Shalltear left, Ainz who was looking at the information hugged his head.

"However, if this is the approach of the Empire's side, then is the Kingdom not coming?"

Ainz thought that his expectations had been wrong. Ignoring the short amount of time that passed, the fact that there was no reaction, was it because they decided that Ainz was not important. However based on the information he collected up to now, Ainz's ability was absolute. The Kingdom will definitely not think lightly of it but....

"I will be troubled if they move in ways I cannot imagine."

He evaluated himself to not be all knowing. There were a lot of holes in the plan, and information could leak.

On the point that the people of the Kingdom and Empire had a plan, and so the possibility of them going behind his back was high. They could not loosen their guard.

Ainz slowly leaned back on his chair, and looked at the ceiling. He tried his best to ignore the Eight Edge Assassins that entered his vision. But he thought that he became better at doing it by now.

"I said it to Shalltear."

World Domination.

Ainz did not seriously believe it was possible. There were many things he did not know, and there was the possibility of other Yggdrasil Players existing. With that, it was nothing but a dream, the aims of a madman.

Just how should he take over the world? It could not be accomplished with pure violence.

However, the reason why he took over the Lizardman village was for this purpose. To see if other methods apart from violence were viable.

In the Lizardman village, Ainz was already recognised as the absolute ruler.

Basically there were tribes where strength was everything. It was not as if humans had the highest population, and so he had to rule them. If the lizardmen had the highest it would be great.

“But we do not know much.”

If he told the guardians to act to take over the world, everyone apart from Demiurge would start a war. And if Yggdrasil Players exist or if anyone could rival Ainz and the others, this would be an extremely dangerous action.

And so, it is necessary for a loyal person with wisdom to exist by his side to take action without using this method. And after it was taken over, unifying the government would be impossible given the current state.

However having Shalltear suck their blood and turn into her servant was not a good method as their loyalty to Ainz was low.

“I want a loyal advisor-type person....”

He tried to change the memories of the captured adventures—Workers to pledge loyalty to him, but it ended in failure.

Ainz was not a psychologist and so could not test to what level should it be adjusted. Since he could not save and load, in the end it ended when they successfully had one person’s memories mostly turned into lies.

“Shall I think of other things....”

Ainz whispered and leaned back on his chair.

Since none of the invaders could return, they would approach him. It would be fine to act in response to that.

“However....World Domination....Thinking of it seriously is embarrassing....”

“Well then, here are the one hundred gold coins as promised. And this is the contract.”

After taking a quick peek at the contents of the bag, Arche’s father nodded his head in satisfaction. Without any hesitation, he quickly signed his name on the parchment and then stamped it with their family seal. His fluid actions revealed that this wasn’t the first time that he had done this.

“Now there shouldn’t be any problems, right?”

Eyeing the parchment that was handed to him, the man nodded. If Hekkeran and Imina were here, they would definitely reveal their displeasure. This man was the same man that had visited them previously at the inn.

The man glanced at the parchment a few more times while he waited. After verifying that the ink had finished drying, the man carefully rolled up the parchment, and stored it.

“Yes, most certainly.” Pointing towards the bag of coins in front of Arche’s father, the man asked, “By the way, are you not going to check?”

“Heh, I’m fine with it even if it’s one or two coins short.”

“Is that so?”

Towards the generous yet foolish response made by Arche’s father, the man nodded once more.

The amount of coins had already been verified before, so there shouldn’t be any problems. But it was definitely not a good sign seeing a family that was nearly at the end of their rope to still be acting this way. No, perhaps their house was fated to end the moment that man became its master.

However, it was exactly people like these that made the best customers.

“Well then, you’re fine with the usual interest rate and loan term, I presume?”

It was written on the document but he asked for formality’s sake. He did not want to bring in the knights over some problem. There were those among the nobles, who had high levels of authority, that wanted everything to go their way. Most were eradicated by the Blood Emperor, but there was still a group of troublemakers.

The man himself was not that clean. Any problems, even when solved would have a fee. And so he asked.

In response to the question of the details, as expected, the father, without hesitation, and with a naturally pompous behaviour, nodded.

The man nodded in understanding.

“Now that it is complete, I shall hope that you repay it promptly...By the way, is your daughter still well and healthy?”

“Hm?”

The man suddenly remembered that there were three daughters in the family.

“I’m talking about Arche-san.”

“Ah, Arche huh? Right now she’s out making money.”

“...Is that so?”

While your daughter is out and about earning money, what are you doing instead?

As the man thought as such, he hid the disgust in his eyes well. Humans with high levels of authority like nobles were sensitive to other’s faces and atmosphere. Even the worst were better than merchants. Of course it was fine even if it was noticed but the man did not want things to become troublesome. Especially when the other man was very well versed in it.

He started to pity the girl with this kind of a father.

The man wasn’t without emotions.

However, it was more important for him to recover the amount of coins that had been lent previously including the interest on top, and to ensure this cycle of loan and repayment continued. He couldn’t care less about meddling in other family’s businesses.

“Just because she was able to make a bit of money, she started to act arrogantly.”

The man frowned when he heard the unpleasant mumblings made by Arche’s father. After all, if a troublesome situation was to happen, it might cause a delay in the interest payment. If possible, the man would like the current situation to continue as long as possible. For that, he couldn’t help but ask.

“Did something happen?”

“No, nothing big. It’s just that my foolish daughter seemed to have forgotten about her obligations to her parents for raising her from birth and is starting to become disrespectful.”

“If it’s just that then...”

“Honestly! It’s about time to let her understand her insolence! I need to teach her what being an aristocrat is all about!”

The man swallowed the rest of what he wanted to say. However, he couldn’t help but let out a final remark.

“It must have been really troublesome.”

“Of course. Such a foolish daughter...”

The man had purposely omitted who it was that he was talking about and allowed Arche’s father to mistakenly believe that it was said for him, which resulted in more and more muttering.

One hundred gold coins was an incredible sum. However, at the rate that Arche’s father was spending, he would soon be out of money again. If that happened, he would most likely come back to borrow more. The man had already decided not to lend any more until the money previously lent had been repaid.

The man glanced around the room.

What he saw was a room filled with luxurious furniture and decorations. Should the worst happen, he should still be able to recover what was originally lent, even if he had to sell them.

The man lowered his head in order to hide his thoughts.

“In the end, isn’t it weird for the daughter of the Furt family to be doing that kind of dirty work? The friends that she associates with all seemed to be of common birth too, they probably share the same vulgar character.”

“...Is that so?”

The man recalled the two person whom he met at the inn and started to open his mouth to retort. Sensing the man’s opinion on this matter, the father quickly strung up a set of excuse.

“Erm, I am not directing my words at those commoners, but those group of people known as adventurers.”

“Is that so?”

“So it seems, they could be the reason for my daughter being so rebellious. I must teach her a well deserved lesson. As a daughter, it is natural for her to obey her father. It is one decade too early for her to speak her mind.”

After taking a last look at the displeased father, the man stood up from his chair.

“...I shall be taking my leave now, for my next household appointment. I’ll be leaving it to you to return the borrowed money when the time comes.”

“Onee-sama, when will she return?”

“Do we have to wait a little longer?”

In the room, there were two little girls. Both of them were sitting on their bed side by side. Their facial features were almost identical.

Patches of rosy red adorned their white faces, causing anyone to think they had the faces of little angels. Their looks resembled that of their elder sister. One could imagine how beautiful those two will grow up to be in the future.

The two of them were wearing a pair of identical spotless, pure white dresses. One could hear the sounds patapata as the girls kicked their alabaster legs about.

“Is it true?”

“It is true—”

“Is that right?”

“That’s right.”

“Once Onee-sama comes back, we will be moving out?”

“Yes—”

The two laughed happily. They did not understand what it meant to move away from home nor did they gave the matter further thought. All they knew was their favourite sister will not be going out on trips anymore. That alone was

enough to make them happy.

On many occasions, their sister, Arche had to go out. Although they did not know what exactly was their big sister doing, the two knew that it was something important. Hence, they decided not to behave selfishly, yet they could not suppress their desire to play with their sister.

That's right, the two loved Arche the most.

The most gentle, intelligent, warm sister.

"Onee-sama, she had not returned yet?"

"Not yet?"

"I'm looking forward to it, Kuudelika."

"Erm, I'm looking forward to it, Ureilika."

"I want to read together—"

"I want to sleep together—"

"Kuudelika is being mischievous."

"Ureilika is being mischievous too."

Then, the two of them looked at each other and smiled. Their laughter was as charming as a gentle ring of a bell.

"Then, Kuudelika will be together, with Onee-sama."

"Erm, Ureilika will be together as well, with Onee-sama."

The twins smiled happily as they imagined the happy moments that would visit them in their dreams—

Chapter 60: | Settings

Setting

The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick: The homebase of the infamous Yggdrasil guild Ainz Ooal Gown. It's impregnability was to the level where a mere 41 people repelled a mass of 1500 people. It has ten floors, but attackers had at most made it only to the eighth.

Ainz Ooal Gown (Momonga) : The Protagonist (Should Be) (TL: Maruyama used "no hazu")

(Peroronchino, Bukubuku Chagama, Luci★fer, Herohero, Blue Planet, Nishikienrai, Touch Me, Ulbert Alain Odle, Yamaiko, Tabula Smaragdina, Ankoro Mocchi Mochi): Past comrades of Ainz Ooal Gown.

Sebas Tian: The Land Steward of Nazarick

Shalltear Bloodfallen: True Vampire, the Guardian of the first to third floors.

Gargantua: Tactical Siege Golem. The Guardian of the fourth floor. He is not a Guardian but is so.

Cocytus: Bug-type (Appearance-wise) monster. The Guardian of the fifth floor.

Aura Debay Fiora: Dark elf, the Guardian of the sixth floor.

Demiurge: Demon-type monster, Guardian of the seventh floor.

Pandora's Actor: The Guardian of the Treasury. Technically not a Guardian.

Kyouhukou: A mysterious existence. He is not a Guardian but protects an area. He has the ability to infinitely summon his kin, and has a villainous fighting method. However, his level is not high, around level 30.

Neuronist Painkill: Special Information Officer of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick (Torturer). Favourite food is brain miso (brain paste). The owner of a well-rounded body, she will immediately go to Ainz's bed if called. Ainz Harem Plan Number One. (TL: HAHAAHAHA vomit)

Master Musician? (楽師): SECRET (TL: Capitalised in raw)

Pestonya Wanko: Head Maid. Dog. Priest with a level second to the Guardians. One of the two leaders of kindness in Nazarick.

Titus Annaeus Secundus: Head Librarian. Skeleton Mage.

Yuri Alpha: Dullahan, Monk, Battlemaid (French Roll) 1. An Onee-san character, tomboy.

Lupusregina Beta: SECRET, Priest, Battlemaid (Braids) 2. Tanned skin and a character who gives into her desires.

Narberal Gamma: Doppelganger, Magic Caster, working as an adventurer named Momon. Battlemaid (Sidetail) 3.

CZ21128 (CZ) Delta: Automaton, Gunner, Battlemaid (Ponytail) 4.

Solution Epsilon: Predatory Slime, Assassin. Battlemaid (Chignon) 5.

Entoma Vasilissa Zeta: SECRET, Magic Warrior, Battlemaid (Side-up) 6.

Normal Maids: Homunculi. They have no battle power.

Pinison Pol Perlia: Dryad (Spirit of Trees) Lives in the sixth floor after she was scouted by Aura in the Great Forest of Tob. She is together with several of her friends.

Baharuth Empire (Imperial Capital Arwintar): Used to be a country that practised feudalism, but since the Blood Emperor rooted out the influential nobles and took their authority, it has become a dictatorship. Behind the scenes of these actions is a plan to maintain and strengthen the direct army of the Emperor (The current knights) in the place of the Blood Emperor's grandfather.

Jircniv Rune Farlord El Nix: The Blood Emperor. The owner of the highest specks in this world. Charisma MAX.

Fluder Paradyne: The Chairman Magic Caster of the Empire. Age is 268. He can use quite a high level of magic, and has power at the class of the 13 Heros.

[Lightning] Baziwood Peshmel: The head of the four strongest knights of the Empire ([Heavy Explosion] [Immovable] [Lighting] [Fierce Gale]). By the way, the name Lightning comes from his weapon. He has a mithril full body armour that

was lightened, and adamantium weapons.

The Four Knights all have the basic equipment shown below. Gauntlet of Strength (Increase of muscle strength), Amulet of Health (A bonus to resistance to poisons and illness), Belt of Constitution (Increase to endurance), Ring of Resistance (Bonus to magical resistance), Ring of Protection (Increase to defense), Greaves of Quickness (Increase of movement speed), Mantle of Elemental Protection (Lowering of elemental damage), Shirt of Cure Wounds (Low ranked healing magic that can be used once per day), Helm of Mindguard (Bonus to resistance to spiritual attacks). And they have at least 1000 gold pieces worth of potion.

Workers are known as people who do dirty work, and the drop outs of adventurers.

[Foresight]

Hekkeran Termite: The warrior team leader who uses two sword style (Nitouryuu).

Roberdyck Goltron: Priest

Arche Eeb Rile Furt: A young magic caster. Owner of a special ability.

Imina: Half-elf thief

Greenham: The team leader of the worker team [Heavy Masher].

Palpatora: A warrior known as the [Iron Wall]

Erya Uzruth: The team leader of the worker team [Tenbu]. A genius of the sword.

Re-Estize Kingdom: A feudal country where the king holds 30% of the country's territory. The major nobles hold another 30% of the country. While the remaining 40% are held by the lesser nobles. The country is currently split into two factions, the Royal Faction and the Nobility Faction. Both factions are currently locked in a power struggle. Many hold the opinion that the country would have crumbled if not for the annual war against the Empire. Due to this, the current king choose not to abdicate the throne.

Ranpossa III: The king of Re-Estize Kingdom

[The Golden] Renner Theiere Chardelon Ryle Vaiself: POLITICS Cheat.
Extremely beautiful

Climb: A soldier under Renner. An extreme hard worker. Virgin.

Gazef Stronoff: The strongest warrior of the kingdom. Of low birth, but climbed up only by virtue of his sword.

Tuare: Quite the common character (Bubbly and sweet). She is a bit above 20....Real name is Tsare. The older sister of Ninya, she was taken by a noble when she was 13 for 6 years, the noble then grew bored of her and sold her, causing her to experience hell for four months. Or so it should be.

[Blue Rose] The strongest female adventurer group of the Kingdom. Currently the A+ adventurer party in the Kingdom.

Lakyus Alvein Fia Aindra: A beautiful priest warrior with blonde drill hair. She has one of the weapons used by the 13 Heros and is wicked.

Evileye: A mystery magic caster whose face is hidden by a mask. Wicked in a lot of ways. ※ Author's Annotation: Originally in this world's setting, the name Evileye is weird but I could not come up with anything better, and so I ignored it. There is not much of a meaning to it so please do not pay attention to it.

Gagaran: A warrior famous for various reasons. She like a wicked bad (TL: What is 出落ち的) (Commenter Kurufinve: 出落ち Apparently is a feeling of shame after a bad joke.)

Tina: Past Ijaniya. One of triplets. She is wickedly lesbian.

Tia: Past Ijaniya. One of triplets. She is wickedly shotacon.

The Eight Fingers. An Underground Organisation

Zero: Second in Command of the Eight Fingers. He is second, but his battle ability is high to the point that no one can command him, and is the strongest man in the Eight Fingers. He looks like a bald giant with tattoos all over his body.

The name Zero came about as he believed no one surpassed him, and in fact, in a battle of fists only he would be the strongest in the kingdom. He can fight evenly with Gazef. If it is a monk that we have encountered, Zenberu, Zero

can crush him.

He has a monk-type class called Shamanic Adept, and the tattoos on his body are due to that class' ability and a Spell Tattoo (Cursed Rune) from a special magic item.

The spirits of animals live in his tattoos, and he can summon their bodies to strengthen his own as a Shamanic Adept.

He has the ability to activate three of his tattoos at the same time: The Legs of the Panther, the Back of the Falcon, and the Arms of the Rhinoceros, to create the move [Single Strike Kill] that has an amazing destructive power.

I plan for his heroic appearance to appear in the Kingdom. Keep your eyes peeled!

Lubelina: The third in command of the Eight Fingers. The person with the next highest battle strength after Zero.

She is a person with an androgynous beauty. However she wears men's clothing. She always has a kind smile on her face, but she is broken inside. She has a fetish for watching the suffering faces of people. For that reason she is in charge of clean up in the brothel, and Lubelina has the highest kill count within the Eight Fingers. By the way she is female, but there is no one that talks about this within the Eight Fingers. There were in the past but ever since Lubelina killed one in a terrible way with a bright smile on her face, those people have since disappeared.

Lubelina possessed a magical Rapier that was known as [Heart Penetrate]. Since she possesses the Duelist-class, her fighting ability will be fully demonstrated when her opponent is alone. Lubelina received training that enhanced her evasion and striking capabilities, further improving her lethality.

As a trump card, she can use the 1st Rank of Magic.

Heart Penetrate is a powerful magic sword that rapidly increases the piercing power and the amount of damage on strike. Most armor can be easily cut through like paper by this sword.

I plan for her heroic appearance to appear in the Kingdom. Keep your eyes peeled!

Fortress City E-Rantel: A city under the direct control of the monarchy of Ri-Estize. A fortress city that sits at the border of the Empire and the Theocracy and is protected by its walls. This city has never been attacked, but since the war with the Empire occurs nearby, it is used as a supply depot.

And so there are many mercenaries, and the atmosphere that they are going to war is strong.

Panasolei Gruze Day Rettenmaier: Mayor of E-Rantel.

Pluton Ainzack: Adventurer's Guildmaster. Early 40s.

Theo Rakheshir: Magician's Guildmaster. Late 30s.

Signal Elshy: High Priest of the Earth God. In terms of an adventurer he would be A Class. Late 30s.

Lizzie Bareare: A magic caster that works in E-Rantel as a pharmacist. An old woman.

Fei Bareare: Lizzie's granddaughter. She herself is a pharmacist.

Bardo Roflure: A great merchant who works in the food industry. Has quite the authority in E-Rantel.

Baniara: A low ranked adventurer. Fighter

Ishpen Ronble: A receptionist of the Guild. Views Momon as her rival.

Wina Harshia: A receptionist of the Guild. A person with normal sensitivity. Her bottom is on the large side (big).

[Axe of Cyclone] E Class Adventurers

Peter Mork: Warrior.

Lukrut Volve: Ranger.

Nina [The Spellcaster]: Wizard.

Dyne Woodwonder: Druid.

Bandits

Zack: A simple bandit. Solution ate him, and found him delicious (?) Literally.

Brain Unglaus: A man who fought Gazef in the deciding battle in the past. A

katana user who has a heavenly talent.

Carne Village

Enri Emmot: A simple village girl. 16 years old. Older sister.

Nemu Emmot: A simple village girl. Younger sister.

Goblin Troop: 19 subordinates loyal to Enri. Comprised of 12 Level 8 Goblins, 2 Level 10 Goblin Archers, 1 Level 10 Goblin Mage, 1 Level 10 Goblin Cleric, 2 Level 10 Goblin Riders and Wolves, and 1 Level 12 Goblin Leader

Lizardman Tribes.

Zaryusu Shasha: A lizardman traveller. Wields one of the four treasures, Frost Pain.

Crusch Lulu: Representative chief of the Red Eye tribe, an albino lizardman skilled in druid's magic

Zenberu Gugu: Dragon Tusk Tribe Chief, monk. One arm is huge.

Shasuryu Shasha: Green Claw Tribe Chief. Zaryusu's older brother.

Rororo: A four-headed hydra

Argland Council State: A city state that is located Northwest of Re-Estize Kingdom and surrounded by mountains. The city was made by multiple races of demi-humans and currently they live together harmoniously. The management is handled by a few select members from each race to form a council, and the ones to pay attention to are the five permanent dragons of the Council. The adventurers are mostly demi-human. Their relationship with the Slane Theocracy is bad, and both hate each other. Humans are low in number.

The surrounding marine races like the Sea Lizardmen and Mermen are also part of Argland Council State.

Tswaindruks Vaishion (Tsua) (Tsaindorukusu Vaishion): [Platinum Dragon Lord]. The strongest dragon amongst the five permanent members of the Council. User of [Wild Magic]

Svelia Myronshik (Suveriaa Maironshiruku): [Bluesky Dragon Lord], of course he/she will not appear.

Omnadsense Ikrubluc (Omunaadosensu Ikuruburusu): [Diamond Dragon Lord], of course he/she will not appear.

Kessenblute Eukrililith (Kessenburuto Yuukuriiririsu): [Obsidian Dragon], of course he/she will not appear.

Zarajilkalia Naheiunt (Zarajirukaria Naaheiunto): [Wyrms Dragon], of course he/she will not appear.

Roble Kingdom: Located towards the southwest of the Kingdom and west of the Slane Theocracy. Boys that reach the age where they are allowed to carry weapons would be conscripted by the country. The border of the Holy Kingdom is protected a line of fortification.

Abelion Hill: A large hill in between Roble Kingdom and the Slane Theocracy. There used to be a kingdom of the small hill people, but it was destroyed by heteromorphs like Goblins, Ogres and Orcs. It is currently a lawless area contested day and night by countless groups of heteromorphs. Others include Dark Dwarves, and in exchange for Goblin, Ogre and Orc slaves, they provide metal arms for the war. The Slane Theocracy has sent forces out several times, but they only ended in temporary success.

The Great Forest of Eivasha: The forest south of Abelion Hill. SECRET

The Slane Theocracy: A nation centered on the teachings of the Six Great Gods. The neighboring countries do not enjoy a good working relation with them as they are mostly centered on the teachings of Four Major Gods. Amongst the human nations, the theocracy possesses the strongest national power due to its strong military. Their religious ideology was mainly that of humans are the race chosen by god. They conducted military operations within the nations surrounding the theocracy with the intention of the suppression of demi-humans and other races. However, it seems their actions serve a bigger agenda.

The Six High Priests: SECRET

Highest Priest (TL: Let's call him the pontiff): SECRET

The Three Department Heads: SECRET

The Six Princess Mikos: Princess Miko of Water, Princess Miko of Fire,

Princess Miko of Wind, Princess Miko of Earth, Princess Miko of Light and Princess Miko of Darkness. All of them are users of Priest-type Rank 5 Magic, but this is a secret.

Others

The 13 Heroes: A group of mythological heroes. They consisted of people that existed 200 years ago? The members consisted of Necromancer Rigris Bers Caurau, The Dark Cultist, The Magic Swordsman, The Great Priest, The Holy Magician, The Magic Smith (Dwarf), One of The Royal Family of The High-Elves? , Air Giant Warrior Chief, The Dark Knight, Platinum..... etcetc.

Demon Gods: Beings that were sealed by the 13 Heroes. Existence that could be known as the Demon Kings? The deities that once served the Six Great God fell and became the Demon Gods?

Country Destroyer: A Vampire Lord (?) destroyed by the 13 Heroes. She is called as such as she made a country her capital, and filled it with the dead. She can use up to the 5th Rank of Magic.

Eight Greed Kings: TOP SECRET

God Dragon: The existence that was the last fight of the 13 Heros. Their battle marked the end of the 13 Hero's adventurers. It is said that they were defeated. After returning the 13 kept silent, and the truth remains in darkness.

Below is a weird section of hidden setting. One might enjoy Overlord better if they did not read this? I made this to feel satisfied. The number of magic items that adventurers have, a pricing guide, and others....

World Item:

Only one of each can exist at a time and are the best items in Yggdrasil with special abilities.

Totalling 200 (taken from the developers). The ones recorded on the wiki number 50. This is as attempts to steal will occur and so owners of such items will desperately conceal the fact. Even the information of the 50 was gained by dishonourable means, such as spies, information-type magic, leaks from Players who left guilds. The guild who used such various methods to collect information to make the wiki [Burning Three Eyes] was destroyed by a coalition of top

guilds.

A famous World Item would be the Ouroboros Ring. This is a strengthened version of the Overrank magic [Wish Upon A Star]. Its effect would be to have the Yggdrasil developers and company fulfill one wish.

The first time this was used was to block off one of the nine world for a month, preventing anyone but those from the guild that used it from entering. This was as a certain DQN Guild had monopolised a vein of rare metals and this was used for the purpose of stealing it.

After a month of investigation, the vein was found. And since it was mined, rare metals had finally made its way into the market for the first time.

After a month, a war broke out between the DQN guild who wanted it back and the guild that was using it. The guild that had used it gained the support of other guilds and repelled (killed) most of the members of the DQN guild, and won. And due to this, a small amount of rare metals always found its way into the market.

On the homepage of 2ch were the frustrated words of the DQN Guildmaster. "It is frustrating that it was stolen, but we had extra so it is not too bad. We were using the extra to make golems. But 72 of them....Can we do it?" The meaning of his words are still unknown. (TL: So it was their fault the golems are half done!!)

There are others.

[Spear that Kills the Holy (TL: Let's call this Longinus)]. A dangerous World Item. In exchange for the user's character data being deleted, it activates its ability. The developers went mad.

[Holy Grail]: Healing?-type.

[Grye Eye (Guraiai)]: Owned by World Searchers.

[Yggdrasil Leaf]: Protection-type

[Gjallarhorn (Gyararuhorun)]: A higher level version the overrank magic <(Written: Summoning of an Avatar of God) Call Avatar>?

[Founder (Faundaa)]: The management went mad.

[A Dove Brings An Olive Branch]: What is this? (TL: nani kore)

[Avarice and Generous]: Owned by Ainz Ooal Gown. Planned for Ainz to use it in the last chapter of the First Half.

World Champion:

A class that one needs to clear special conditions to use. The strongest warrior class in Yggdrasil, an official cheat. There are nine World Champions, one for each world (Asgard, Alfheim, Vanaheim, Nioavellir, Midgard, Jotunheim, Niflheim, Helheim and Muspelheim)

They could defend themselves absolutely with Dimensional Gap, and could deal massive damage with Dimensional Slash. (TL: Points to those who get this meme. Hint: Genji and Spidercrabs) It was a class that also had the feature to be slightly stronger when in their world.

This class has extremely high fighting ability, against the upper high players they can take on three, the upper middle players, four, upper low, five....And so on. However it is unclear who would win if they are up against someone with a trump card or a World Item.

By the way, the special condition (TL: may be the only one or one of the many; unclear.) was to win in an official tournament.

In a battle between the World Champions, the champion of the overall tournament was the Jotunheim Champion, second was Alfheim and third was Helheim, but in the battle between the second and third, the third won. (TL: Logic)

An opinion formed where there should be a guild of only World Champions, but three refused and so it was at an impasse.

I'm digressing, I never thought about this but the upper high players should have at least 500 people right?

The difficulty is high, but it is not an impassable wall. Everyone has the possibility.

It is a wall one can pass by doing a Full Nerd Mode (TL: A wrong translation but what is フル重度課金)(Commenter Kurufinve: フル重度 isn't it Full Nerd

Mode? When you pay for character leveling with your own life after 60+ hours of EXP grinding...), developing a character with detailed planning (finding the one that suits you amongst the enormous amount of data), recycling, having a heart for the exploration of the unknown, and having good guild members.

And the warriors need to have a good body in real life.

Addicts are existences that can do all that. If they are useless then RMT (Real Money Trade)

Since it is a game where a huge number play, it is impossible for anyone to be unparalleled (absolute strongest). However a World Champion with a World Item that turned into a boss via a curse would be in an unparalleled state. Actually the World Champion Muspelheim who turned into one of the Seven Deadly Sins fought evenly against 30 players, then chased until destruction, then failed. (TL: So much chuuni)

After this, the Muspelheim festival began, and the character was deleted by the developers. A new tournament began, and the second Muspelheim was the first female (appearance wise) World Champion.

Dragon Lord:

Dragon Lords are strong dragons, but they are called that when other Dragons treat them with respect. (Or they just call themselves that), and the names change depending on their development.

Names when they are growing include Ancient Dragon, Old Dragon, Young Dragon.

Would it be easy to understand if you think about if as the recognised names of the 5 dragons who are Permanent Members of the Council are nicknames?

By the way, dragons that are in the last stage of development have a strength that cannot be defeated by the race of humans. As expected of the race who ruled (?) this world in the past.

Level:

The game Yggdrasil has two types of levels, and in total 100 can be gained.

The two types are the Racial and Class levels.

Ainz is a Skeleton Mage (Race) 15lv, Lich (Race) 10lv, Demilich (Race) 5lv, Overlord (Race) 10lv, True Necromancer (Class) 10lv, Chosen of Undead (Class) 10lv, *etc.*

Shalltear is a Vampire (Race) 10lv, True Vampire (Race) 10lv, Priestess (Class) 10lv, Cursed Caster (Class) 10lv, *etc.*

Country Destroyer (TL: I think this is Landfall, but not sure if the translation changed) is a Vampire (Race) 10 Levels, True Vampire....A Vampire Princess which is not in Yggdrasil (Race) ? Levels, Magic Caster ? Levels. So the total levels may be higher.

Monsters are different.

Monsters are not counted with Racial and Class levels, instead Monster Levels are used. This is added to Class Levels (If they have).

In the case of Brain Unglaus.

He was turned into a vampire by Shalltear. However would a Vampire's levels (Same as Shalltear) be added to his warrior levels, no. He is a monster with Vampire (Monster ? Levels) added to his warrior ? levels. This is what happened after Shalltear sucked his blood and turned into a monster.

And so there is a difference when a Dragon Lord reaches Hero class and a human reaches Hero class, the difference in monster level opens a gap between them. (Normal humans do not have a racial level, their first level is their class level.)

However for a Dragon to reach a Level 1 Warrior Class and a human reaching a Level 1 Warrior Class, in game terms, the experience needed is vastly different. I believe you can roughly understand.

Skill Points:

Skill Points increase with the racial and class levels. The growth rate is in this order: Heteromorphs> Demi-humans> Humans.

For a random skill point, a human (Human Race) would be one, a goblin (Demi-human) would be two, and a Skeleton Mage (Heteromorph) would be

three. This is only in the case of comparing their best stats, but it should be fine to think of this as the general case.

For the first level, a human has no racial level and so it would go to his class. A fighter's skill point would raise by two. For a first level of human, his skill point would be three (2+1: Class Level and Race), a goblin four (2+2: Racial Level and Race), a Skeleton Mage six (3+3: Racial Level and Race).

In relation to the raising of racial skill points, a human and Skeleton Mage would have a ratio of 1:3. At Level 100 it would be 100 to 300 (This is a rough estimate). Basically in this way, heteromorphs are strong. However, after taking a new racial class, the rate of skill point increase would favour the one with more, and so the skill points would also increase.

However Heteromorphs have penalties.

They cannot have certain classes, cannot enter certain cities, is fine to PK, penalties depending on race, and cannot equip certain equipment. Even if they take only one level, the penalty activates. Jobs that have difficult requirements would have a higher rate of skill point increase. And there is the case of only humans being able to have that class.

And rather than increasing Racial Class, characters that take various classes would be stronger. This is as skills are better than skill points. There is a theory that if one wants to make a strong character, they should not raise their Racial level. And that is why humans and not heteromorphs are popular in Yggdrasil.

However, the final Racial Class of the Heteromorphs have very high skill points. Due to the raw high skill points, strong skills will be even stronger. Crazy stronger.

.....Shall I increase the number of Classes? I feel that it was not enough as I thought it was.

Ranks of Magic:

1st Rank of Magic (Adventurers of E, F Class): The basics of being a magic caster, the first steps. However there are many who stay at this rank for life. Popular ones include magic to improve the milk of livestock in villages, magic to make delicious stew, magic to make spices like salt.

2nd Rank of Magic (Adventurers of C, D Class): The realm where hard working magic casters reach. If a talentless person works hard, this is his limit.

3rd Rank of Magic (Adventurers of A, B Class) If one can reach here, he is celebrated as a great magic caster. This is the realm where those hardworking of average talent reach the end of their line.

4th Rank of Magic (Adventurers of A+): The realm where humans with talent work extremely hard can reach. Basically those who live side by side with danger, like adventurers. Top level in a country, five are sufficient.

5th Rank of Magic (Adventurers of Hero Class): This and further levels are Hero Class. It is the realm where even those with talent cannot reach. At a level of one in a country. It is not strange for bards to sing of them. Famous ones include [Bluesky Dragonlord], [Pontiff of the Slane Theocracy], and she may be dead but [Country Destroyer].

6th Rank of Magic (Adventurers of....There are none):At a level where there is only one in the surrounding countries. At a level where one would be engraved in the annals of history, and it would be strange for even those not in the same field to not know of him. Known ones are [Fluder Paradyne] and [The Thirteen Heros]. There are several in the shadows.

The demon gods seemed to use the 7th Rank.

10th Rank of Magic? Rumors of it exist....But there is no way someone who can actually use it exists right?

No, it seems that the legendary Eight Greed Kings used it but....It is nothing more than a rumor. A children's story. Above that? Stupid. There is no way that exists right?

※ There is a way to use the 8th Rank of Magic with a large ritual, but in the centre of it is a human who can use the 5th Rank of Magic and can improve it. It is also necessary for a large number of those who can use the 3rd Rank of Magic. Even with this, it can only be improved up to two ranks, and it is believed that there is some form of device. Normally a country is needed to support this.

As Fluder does not have a skill to amplify magic, he cannot conduct a large ritual.

Guilds:

The maximum number of people in guild in Yggdrasil is 100.

Amongst them are the high ranked guilds, and there is a top ten ranking based on points. These points include the average level of the members, world exploration points, number of World Items, production points, home base points, shifting of points during PK, unlimited accumulation of points during Guild Wars. According to rumour, the amount of money one spends is also a factor.

First Place [Trinity]: Aimed to attack the 2ch Alliance (TL: OMG I love this name HAHAHA, *rofl*), it is an alliance of three guilds. Its includes the guilds of first [The Father], second [The Son], and third [The Holy Spirit]. The guild that lead the battle against the 2ch Alliance

Second Place [World Searchers]: An adventure guild that aims solely for new discoveries. It's base is very poor, and does not own many World Items, but there is no guild that comes close to rivaling them in world exploration. It is said that it is the guild that best expresses how the company wanted people to enjoy the game.

Third Place [The 2ch Alliance (Actual name is different)]: A giant guild that, if you included associated guilds, it would have over 1000 people. In its golden age it had 3000. Since it is huge, problems easily occur and it faced hostility from more than half of the top guilds. Its base was destroyed in the past war (Since they had large numbers they could not decide their direction, and they were weak as this was the first time this occurred), and they had the experience of all their World Items being taken. From then on, their numbers dropped, weakening them. However, as expected of them that they maintained the honour of the highest number of members.

Ninth Place [Ainz Ooal Gown]: The guild with the base of The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick that is known for being impregnable. They left a legend where only 41 members exterminated a task force (The top guilds did not participate at all) of 1500 people (Actual number of Players were less). By the way, all humans that saw the movie of what happened at the Eighth Floor screamed that it was impossible, and the official mail was burst with questions

of whether it was an illegal construction.

Others

Overseas Guild: A pro japanese guild that is made of people who can read or speak Japanese. They mostly just enjoy the game, but ever since the 2ch Alliance stole the World Item they finally got their hands on, they changed. ✖ They are mostly from Korea, China and Taiwan, but not necessarily.

Seiyuu Guild: A guild comprised solely of seiyuu. Their numbers are low, and so are their abilities, but they have countless vanguard guilds (Though they don't admit it), and their ability to move people is number one in Yggdrasil.

Mercenary Magicians Guild: A guild that has 100 Level 100 Magic Casters with over 50 World Disaster players. This destructive power is absurd and it is said that victory favours the side with them on it.

However, this guild is extremely weak in close quarters, and so the movie of them being divided and decimated by a dream team of six World Champions is still a legend up to now.

Others like these exist.

By the way, Guild Weapons are a necessary simple when making a Guild, and it can store a huge amount of data. And so if done badly, it will still be an unparalleled weapon, but if broken, it means the guild is broken. When broken, all members of the guild will have the title [Symbol of Failure] floating over their heads. It does not have any special effects, but it is the proof of shame.

To remove this Symbol of Failure, the same members must once again remake their guild.

Of course, there are class that cannot have the Symbol of Failure, and there are also classes that can be nothing except to be the one that breaks the Guild Weapon.

Chapter 61: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 1

Re-Estize Kingdom. The capital, Re-Estize.

There was only one sentence to describe the city that was home to nine million souls. It was an ancient city. That was the most accurate way of describing it. The sentence not only described the city's long history but also hinted that the daily lives of its citizen was utterly simple or the ancient city was unlively at all, forever unchanging.

If one wandered through the streets on foot, they would understanding the meaning behind those words.

Lining the sides of the road were many ancient households. Those houses lacked in both glamour and freshness. However, it depended on how one looked at things.

There were those that appreciate the long history behind those houses.

The royal capital was such a city, with many unpaved roads. Once it rained, the road will be muddied. It could not be said that the Kingdom was a backwater country. But compared to the Empire and the Theocracy, there were many aspects that the Kingdom was lacking in.

The streets could not be considered wide.

Still there were no people that walked in the middle of the street, directly in the path of horse-drawn carriages. Yet the pedestrian traffic was rather haphazard as people went about their business.

On such major roads, the people living in the capital had been long used to such chaotic road conditions. It was normal was pedestrian to meet others front to front. But they instinctively avoided colliding with each other.

Sebas was walking in a corner of the city.

The road he was walking on was one those rare paved roads within the capital.

Furthermore, the road was rather wide. On his left and right were rows of large and elegant mansions. This area was an important part of the capital. Hence, there were plenty of people here and the area seemed lively.

Within the crowd, there were several people who turned their heads and took another look. But Sebas paid them no heed. With a ramrod straight posture, he continued along the road. One step at a time.

He had already determined his destination. He moved forward unhesitantly. Since his arrival at the capital, Sebas visited this place several times.

Soon his destination was within sight.

There was a long wall in front of him with an approximate height of six meters. It was estimated that the wall stretched up to 150 meters to his left and right. Just behind those walls, one might be able to see the pointed roof of a tower. The tower was not considered tall as it reached up to five stories. Yet, the building gave off a feel that it was rather tall as there were no other building within its vicinity that had a similar height.

There were several buildings that surrounded the tower.

The buildings belonged to an organisation where a majority of the magicians within the Kingdom were a member of, an organisation that specialised in developing new magic, an institute that specialised in educating potential magic casters. The headquarters of the Kingdom' Magician Guild.

Sebas walked along the wall. Soon, he stood in front of the main gate. As the steel gates opened, he noticed the existence of sentries that stood to the left and right sides of the gate.

Sebas was not halted by the warriors but was glanced upon as he walked inside the compound.

A set of white slanting stairs lay before an ancient chalk white building. The structure was approximately three stories tall with a set of large doors. Of course, the doors were opened, welcoming its daily visitors.

Sebas walked through the door.

The entrance hall spread out from there. A breeze seemed to come from

above the three story high ceiling, where several magical chandeliers were hanging down.

To his right were several sofas, where the visitors could use it for their discussion.

To his left was a bulletin board, several magicians and adventurers were carefully examining the contents of the papers placed there.

Deeper inside was a counter, where several young men and women were seated. Every single one of them were wearing the same uniform, a set of long robes with the insignia of the building sewed on the breast.

On either side of the counter stood a pair of skinny wooden dolls, of the kind used for sketching. They were the size of actual humans and they had no facial features — Wood Golems, in other words. Apparently, they were being used as sentries. The fact that they had not posted any human sentries inside must have been pride on the part of the Magician's Guild.

Sebas paid no mind to them as his shoes pounded out a steady beat as he approached the counter.

The young man at the counter noticed Sebas and greeted him with a look. Sebas nodded in return. He was a frequent customer here, so both of them were familiar with each other.

Smiling gently at Sebas, the man made his usual greetings.

"Welcome to the Magician's Guild, Sebas-sama." After a few breaths, he continued. "How may I help you today?"

"Yes, I'd like to buy a spell scroll."

"Do you have one in mind?"

"No, may I consult the usual list?"

"Certainly."

Ending the slightly long greetings, the young man placed a large book on the counter.

The pages of the book were made of high-quality paper that was thin and

white as snow, while its cover was made of leather. The overall article was of exquisite construction. The letters upon the cover were imprinted in gold, and the cost of this book alone probably beggared belief.

Sebas brought the book over to himself and paged through it.

Regretfully, Sebas did not understand the words written upon it. Or rather, it might be better to say that beings from YGGDRASIL were unable to comprehend them. Despite the bizarre principle which translated spoken language in this world, written text was not translated.

However, Ainz had given him a magic item that could solve this problem.

Sebas produced a spectacle case from his breast pocket and opened it.

A pair of eyeglasses sat within. Its bridge was made of a platinum-like metal, and at a closer look, it seemed to have been inscribed with tiny characters, or some kind of textured pattern. The lenses themselves had been ground out of a crystal that resembled blue ice.

He brought them to his eyes.

And in his blue-tinted field of vision, the previously illegible text was translated.

“Hmm....”

He turned the page quickly, but yet with grace.

Sebas’ hands made one believe that they would continue forever, but they suddenly stopped. He then moved his gaze slightly.

“Is something the matter?”

Sebas looked at the girl by the counter and asked in a gentle manner.

“Ah, it’s nothing...”

The girl blushed and lowered her face.

“I just thought... you looked very handsome.”

“Is that so.”

Sebas smiled, and the girl’s face flushed even redder.

Sebas, the white-haired gentleman, was a person who could mesmerize others on sight. He was good-looking, but the way he carried himself was even more striking. When he walked on the streets, nine out of ten women — regardless of age — would turn to take a second look at him. It was no wonder that the counter girls found themselves entranced by him, and it was also a common occurrence.

Sebas found that understandable, and then turned his eyes back to the tome.

After some time, Sebas raised his head.

“Could you tell me about this spell... [Floating Board], I believe it is called?”

“Certainly.” The young man began his spiel. “[Floating Board] is a 1st-tier spell which creates a translucent floating platform. The size and carrying capacity of the platform varies with the caster’s magical power. However, when cast from a scroll, it is limited to a surface of one square meter and can carry a maximum of 50 kilograms. The created board moves behind the caster, and can be a maximum of five meters away from him. Since the [Floating Board] can only follow behind the caster, it cannot be made to move in front of the the caster. Should the caster turn around, the board will slowly move to his back. It is primarily a transportation spell and can commonly be seen during earthworks.”

“I see,” Sebas nodded. “Then I’ll take a scroll of this spell.”

“Of course.”

The young man was not surprised by the fact that Sebas had selected a low-demand spell like this. After all, just about all the scrolls Sebas had purchased were for unpopular spells like this. Besides, being able to empty surplus stocks was a godsend for the Magician’s Guild.

“Will one scroll be enough?”

“Yes, please. Thank you.”

The youth gestured to a man sitting nearby.

The man — who had been listening on their conversation — immediately rose to his feet and opened a door leading into a room behind the counter,

which he entered. Scrolls were expensive items, and even with guards posted, it would not do to pile them up on the sales area.

“We shall prepare it immediately, and we would request for your patience.”

“Eeeh.” (TL: I know that this is not noble sounding, but I could not think of anything else.)

Sebas made a nod of understanding, left the counter and stood aside. This was as he the number of people working at the counter was fixed, and he did not want to impose on them.

The man returned after five minutes. In his hands was a roll of scroll.

“Sebas-sama.”

Sebas took out a small bag from his pocket and returned to the counter.

“Here it is.”

Sebas looked at the parchment on the counter. The rolled parchment was sturdy, and its appearance was different from paper that was easily acquired. The name of the magic was written in black ink, and Sebas checked that it was the one he wanted. Then he removed his glasses.

“This is the one. I’ll be taking it then.”

“Thank you very much.” The man politely lowered his head. “This scroll is a 1st Tier Magic Scroll and it will cost 10 gold coins.”

Compared to potions it was cheap, but this was as scrolls could only be used by someone who could use the same type of magic. Basically the price of potions would be higher as anyone could use them.

Of course, it was extremely expensive itself. However to Sebas, no to his master, it was not a large sum.

Sebas took out a pouch from his breast pocket. Loosening the mouth, he took out a single coin.

A platinum coin.

A value of ten gold coins was placed on the man’s hands.

“I have received the payment.”

The young man did not test the money's authenticity in front of Sebas. Their transactions thus far had earned Sebas that much trust.

"That old man's really handsome!"

"Mm!"

Debate broke out among the counter staff once Sebas had left the Magician's Guild.

They were no longer wise women, but lovestruck girls who had just met their Prince Charming. One of the men seated at the counter frowned and his face turned sour, but he kept quiet.

On the contrary, one of the other men agreed with the woman's statement.

"He must have had experience serving some great noble."

"Every little thing he does is elegant, from the way he stands to the way he moves."

Everyone seated at the counter could not help but nod.

Sebas' posture, face, clothes and his bearing were full of regality. It was at the level where they would agree if someone said that he was a great noble.

"If he asked me out for tea, I'd definitely accept."

"Mm! Me too! Me too! I'd definitely go too!"

"He looks really learned. You think he's a magic caster too?"

"Beats me, but he might be."

The spells Sebas bought had all been recently developed. That implied a broad familiarity with magic. If he had been ordered to buy a scroll, he could have simply asked the counter staff directly, with no need to browse through the catalogue. The fact that Sebas had paged through the tome was a sign that he was making the decisions on what spells to buy.

This was not something any ordinary old man could do. In other words, they could surmise that he had received a specialist education in magic — that he was a magic caster.

"And then there's his spectacles... they look expensive."

“Are they a magic item?”

“I doubt it, they should just be masterwork glasses, right? Made by the Dwarves, I think.”

“Hmm, that’s amazing, owning a pair of glasses like that.”

“I’d like to see the beautiful girl he came with once.”

A voice of objection was raised to the man who muttered his thoughts.

“Eh, that person was too annoying.”

“Yes, Sebas-san was quite pitiful.”

“Well, she is a peerless beauty, but for her to be that brash....”

“Alright, enough chitchat.”

The young man’s words cut through their chatter as an adventurer approached the counter.



Leaving the magician’s guild, Sebas looked up at the sky and pondered about his next destination.

The first order he received from his master was to collect information about a country’s defenses. Of course, it was extremely difficult to obtain such information. To someone who was not an information-type person like Sebas, it was too difficult to gather information about national secrets.

Thus he collected information that probably existed. Examples of such included the equipment of soldiers and information of adventurers gained from bar owners.

It was to investigate the war potential of the country as a whole.

The next was to discover to what level had science and magic been developed to. What was possible and impossible, and especially to what level information gathering type magic was developed.

In a world with the existence of magic, science was not well developed. Of course, there was definitely research about something that everyone could use, rather than a small group of magic users, but it was currently at the point where

no information could be found outside a small circle.

And so even he could easily understand Ainz's order of gaining magical technology as well.

What Sebas was doing was preparation for that. He first had to make acquaintances.

The last was to check for the presence of the strong, but this was something that was fine even if left alone. This was as he could not certainly confirm strong existences. In short, he saw the strongest adventurers in the kingdom from afar, but he did not think much of them.

"No, she alone was different...."

Sebas recalled one person, who could be called strong. Compared to Sebas she was far weaker, but compared to a maid under him, she could possibly defeat one.

A person of interest.

Sebas recalled her face, not her figure, and shook his head.

His master had ordered him to investigate her. This was as she could be problematic in future.

And thus, Sebas had nothing necessary to do.

"Now, what to do."

Sebas sighed, stroked his beard and began walking.

He did not have any fixed destination.

Strolling and viewing the city was Sebas' current hobby. He thought of doing such. The sight of him spinning the scroll in his hand and walking was akin to a child in a good mood.

His legs moved him further away from the centre of the capital where the public safety was good.

As he turned more corners, the roads became dirtier and stank of something. It was the smell of living trash and dirty mischief. Sebas walked through the thick atmosphere that seemed like it would dirty his clothes.

Then he suddenly stopped, and looked around. He had entered a small and thin road that seemed to be an alleyway.

“Hmm....”

He had mindlessly walked here, but even in an alley without any landmarks, he had a rough sensing of where he was. And so he immediately understood he had walked for a while.

To someone of Sebas' physique it was not a large distance, but if he walked normally it would take quite some time. It would be rude to the person waiting at home to come back late.

“...Should I go back?”

In all honesty, he wanted to continue walking, but wasting time on an activity which was half-leisure would not be permitted.

Sebas turned on his heels, and walked through the alleyway.

As Sebas forged silently ahead in the darkness, he saw a heavy steel door in front of him — about 20 meters away — suddenly creak to life as it opened, and light leaked out from within. Sebas stopped and watched silently.

The heavy door was opened, and a large bag was left outside. The thing inside was soft and it changed shape upon impact.

The door opened on Sebas' side, and he could not see the person hidden by the shadow of the door. However, the person who threw it out and opened the door returned inside immediately and nothing else happened.

Sebas raised his eyebrows for an instant, and wondered if he should continue walking or continue in a different direction. After a short hesitation, he continued into the once again silent alleyway.

The distance between himself and the bag closed. The mouth was open, but Sebas kept his gaze away from it. And he paid no mind to the bad smell coming from it. He did the same thing for the slightly ajar door.

Curiosity killed the cat.

It bade him no good to hold interest in the bag or the door that reeked of danger. Sebas decided as such.

Sebas stuck to the wall on the opposite side, as if avoiding the bag.

And—His correctly pounding footsteps stopped.

Sebas felt that his pants had caught on something. Sebas wondered if he should look down, faced forward and stopped moving. Sebas wavered and was confused.

This was an extremely rare sight. If anyone from Nazarick was here, they would have an expression of extreme surprise. That was the situation Sebas was in.

Sebas prepared himself and looked down. He saw what he expected.

A small hand grasped Sebas' pants.

It came from the half naked woman sticking out from the bag—

The mouth of the bag was fully open, and the top half of the woman was left in the open.

The originally healthy blue eyes were dirty and muddled. Her strewn and not long hair was extremely messy, possibly due to a nutrition-poor diet. Her face could not have been said to be beautiful or ugly. It was natural. It was hit and swollen to the point of a ball.

In addition, her extremely thin body did not have a drop of life left in it. So he could not determine her age. She could have been an old hag or a young girl.

Her skin was like dried wood, and pale red welts were dotted across her skin.

She was like a corpse. No, she was not dead. The fact that she was grasping Sebas' pants was enough proof of that. However, that was if you considered one to be alive if it was breathing.

Such was her existence.

“...Could you please release your hand?”

There was no reply to Sebas' words. It was obvious that she was not ignoring him. This was as her swollen eyes were opened to a crack, and nothing was reflected in her dirty gaze.

“Could you please release your hand?”

Sebas repeated himself.

If Sebas moved his leg, the fingers that were thinner than branches would fall. This was as those fingers had no more power to them and it was only due to luck that they were still holding on.

Yes, fortune would never visit twice.

“...Do you have something you want to say to me?”

When Sebas tried to move—

“Oi.”

A threatening low-pitched voice could be heard.

The figure of a man appeared from the door. His thick arms were akimbo. The man had a face full of scars, and he had the atmosphere of someone who worked in violence.

“—Oi, old man. Where the fuck did you come from?”

The man narrowed his eyes and glared at Sebas. He then made an obvious click with his tongue, and pointed with his chin.

“Get lost old man. You can leave safely if you go now.”

Seeing that Sebas did not move, the man took a step forward. The sound of the door closing could be heard from behind the man.

“Oi. You deaf, old man?”

He worked his shoulders and cracked his neck. Then he slowly raised his right hand and clenched it into a fist. He was clearly not afraid to use violence.

“Hm...”

Sebas smiled. Coming from an aged gentleman like Sebas, that dignified smile clearly displayed a matchless calm and compassion. Yet, for some reason, the man stepped back as though a ferocious carnivore had appeared before him.

“Uh... uh, uh, what’re you—”

Shaken by Sebas' smile, the man could not finish the words he was trying to form. He staggered back, without realizing how heavily he was panting.

Sebas tucked the scroll—marked with the sigil of the Magician's Guild—that he had been holding into his belt. Then he took a single step forward, closing the gap to the man, and extended a hand. The man could not even react to that movement. With a silent whisper, the hand holding on to Sebas' pants fell to the floor of the alley.

That seemed to be the signal for Sebas to seize the man by the lapels—and then he easily lifted his body off the ground.

Anybody seeing this would surely wonder if this was some kind of joke.

Just going by appearances, there was no chance Sebas could take this man in a fight. Be it in terms of age, musculature, his thick arms, height, mass and the aura of violence around him, the younger man had the advantage.

And yet, this distinguished old gentleman was lifting up this heavyweight with one hand. It was a scene that one would believe only if it was the opposite.

—No, that was not the case. Perhaps an eyewitness would be able to sense the difference between the two of them. While humans had poor instincts, they could still sense a sufficiently great difference between two parties.

The difference between Sebas and this man was—

It was—

—The difference between an absolute superior and an utter inferior.

The other man — who had been lifted completely off the ground — flailed his legs and twisted his body. Then, when he thought to take Sebas' hand in both of his own, his eyes filled with fear as he realised something.

He finally realised that the man before him was nothing like what his appearance suggested. He also realised that pointless resistance would only serve to anger the monster before him.

“What is she?”

As the man began stiffening in fear, that cold voice bored its way into his ears.

That voice was as clear and quiet as a softly-flowing brook, The sheer contrast with the hand that was easily lifting him up only heightened the man's fear.

"She, she's a worker in our place."

Sebas' grip was loosened, allowing the man to speak. The man raised his voice in fear and panic. At his response, Sebas immediately replied.

"I asked you *what*

she was. And your answer is that she is a worker?"

The man wondered if he had said the wrong thing. However, it was the most correct answer he could have given under the present circumstances. The man's eyes were wide in fear, trembling like those of a frightened little animal.

"It's nothing. It's just that some of my colleagues view humans as objects, so I believed that you too viewed people as objects. If you held that point of view, then you would not consider yourself to have done something wrong. However, you answered that she was a worker. In other words, you considered her a human being. Am I correct? Then, allow me another question. What were you going to do with her?"

The man thought for a moment. However—

One could almost hear the squeezing.

Sebas' grip intensified, and the man was briefly breathless.

"—Uggghhh!"

Sebas tightened his grip on the man, making it harder for him to breathe, and the man gave off a queer wail. Sebas was sending a message:

"I won't give you time to think — answer now."

"She, she was sick, so I was taking her to a temple—"

"—I do not like being lied to."

"Aiiieee!"

Sebas' grip grew even stronger, and the man's face flushed red as a cry leaked out of his throat. However generous he might have been by discounting

the fact that he had put someone into a sack for transport, the man's actions of dumping said sack into an alley did not feel like he was taking a sick person to the temple for treatment.

It was just like disposing of rubbish.

"Please... stop..."

The man was having trouble breathing. He thrashed wildly as he realised the mortal danger he was in. Sebas casually blocked the fist headed at his face with one hand. The flailing legs hit Sebas body and dirtied his clothes, but Sebas was as stoic as the mountains.

—But of course.

There was no way that a human's legs could move a mass of steel of several hundred kilos. Even when hit with large legs, Sebas continued calmly and as if he felt no pain.

"I advise you to tell the truth."

"Gahhhh—"

The man was unable to breathe, and Sebas narrowed his eyes at the man's crimson face. He let go of the man just before he had passed out.

With a great *thump*, the man fell to the alley floor.

"G-guwaaargh!"

The man expelled the last dregs of air within himself as a gasped cry, and then greedily drank in the fresh air in big gulps. Sebas continued looking down on him in silence. Then he reached out for his throat again.

"W-wait... p-please, wait!"

While bearing with the fear of understanding what Sebas' outstretched hands meant, the man fell away from them.

"The tem— that's right! I was taking her to the temple!"

He was surprisingly strong willed. Or was he fearful of something else.

Sebas thought as such and changed his method of attack. This was the enemy base. The reason why he did not seek help from behind the door was as

reinforcements would arrive, or it would be bad if Sebas was delayed.

“If you’re taking her to the temple, then allow me to do so. I will guarantee her safety.”

The man gulped and his eyes quivered. Then he frantically tried to cobble an excuse together.

“...There’s no guarantee you’ll really take her there.”

“Then you can come with me.”

“I’m busy now, so I can’t go. I’ll take her later.” The man seemed to have sensed something from Sebas’ expression, and he hurriedly continued. “She belongs to us by law! If you step in, you’ll be breaking the country’s laws! And if you dare take her away, that’ll be kidnapping!”

Sebas froze, and frowned for the first time.

The man had played on his greatest weakness.

While his master had said that he could take overt action when the situation called for it, that was only when he was playing the role of a butler caring for his mistress. He should not make a ruckus, and quietly gain information. That was his master’s wish.

If he broke the law, his undercover investigations could possibly be blown.

Basically it was a question of whether this would lead to a large commotion.

That said, was it right to just abandon this woman?

The man gave off no impression that he had studied the law. However, his words were full of confidence. This meant that he had gained the knowledge from someone who did. Then this was not something he was making up, and the probability that he was prepared for this was high.

It would be easy for Sebas to push this through with his strength. However such acts would tighten a noose around his neck.

Of course, he could go tell the law to go eat shit. However, that was the last resort, and only if it infringed on his master’s orders. He could not do it for the sake of an unknown woman.

The man laughed evilly, and poked fun at the hesitating Sebas.

“Is it okay to drag your master into something terrible in secret?”

Sebas raised his eyebrow for the first time. This was as the man felt that he had grasped Sebas’ weakness.

“I don’t know which noble you serve, but won’t you cause trouble for your master if things get blown up?”

“...Do you really think my master could not resolve a matter of this magnitude? Rules exist to be broken by the strong, no?”

That seemed to have gotten through to the man, and fear flashed across his face for a moment. However, he recovered his confidence almost immediately.

“...Why don’t you give it a try, then?”

“...Hmph.”

The man made no sign of giving in to Sebas’ bluff. So this man—And the shield protecting him had strong connections, or that he had confidence the judiciary would not move.

Judging that this approach was not effective, Sebas decided to change tack.

“...However, when she herself seeks for help, no matter their business, do you not believe that we should respect her wishes?”

“Er... No... this...”

The man muttered to himself as he racked his brains.

His mask had fallen.

Sebas felt relieved at the lack of the man’s acting skills, and his slow head. Should the man make any attempts to make more lies about the law, Sebas, who had little knowledge of the law would feel lost. In the end, he had no actual knowledge of the law but tried to act smart, so he ended up like this. This was fortunate for Sebas.

Sebas looked away from the man and carried the woman’s head.

“Do you want me to rescue you?”

Sebas asked her. He then brought his ears to the woman's cracked lips.

What he heard was a soft breathing sound. No, it was a sound that could have been the echos of the wind.

She did not reply. Sebas gently shook his head, and asked again.

“Do you want me to rescue you?”

Fortune does not visit twice.

Of course. Fortune was good luck. Something that happens occasionally. It would be weird for it to occur repeatedly. A broken woman without most of her will grabbed Sebas' pants. She would not get any more of such luck.

Sebas' question went unanswered.

The man believed so, and continued to smile evilly.

The environment the woman was in, and the hell-like situation. If one knew then this was natural. If it was not, she would not be rotting away and instead try to leave.

Yes, her grabbing Sebas' pants was nothing more than luck—

—In her case, her sole piece of good fortune was the fact that Sebas had stepped into this alley, and it was now over. Everything else all rested on how much she wanted to survive.

That was not luck.

—Faintly.

—Yes.

The woman's lips moved only slightly. But it's movements were not natural like breathing. It made one believe that there was intent behind it.

“———”

Sebas' only response to hearing those words was a big nod.

“...I have no intention of helping those who wish for help like a plant wishing for rain to fall from the sky. However....If you wish to flounder to live....” Sebas's hands slowly moved to cover the woman's eyes. “Forget your fear, and good

night. You shall enter under my wings.”

With such a warm sensation, the woman closed her dirty eyes.

The man could not believe it. That was why he tried to speak.

“It can’t be—”

I didn’t hear anything,

the man wanted to say, but he was frozen in place.

“Are you calling me... a liar?”

He did not know when Sebas had stood up, but now his razor-sharp gaze transfixed the man.

Those were fearsome eyes.

Those vicious eyes stopped the man’s breathing, as though they possessed the ability to physically crush his heart within his chest.

“Are you saying I would tell a lie for the likes of
you?”

“Ah, no, ah...”

The man’s throat croaked, and then he gulped. His eyes moved, fixating on Sebas’ arms. He must have remembered the consequences of getting carried away.

“Then, I’ll be taking her with me.”

“W, wait!”

Sebas faced the man who raised his voice.

“What is it now? Trying to buy more time?”

“N, no. I just need proof....To believe you.”

“Believe me? Proof?”

“M, money. I....I can’t believe that you will bring her to the temple. You might just abduct her.”

“I cannot think of any reason to take and disappear with her though? Does

she have such a worth?”

“N, not that. But why are you attached to that woman. You can choose any woman you want.”

Sebas slightly narrowed his eyes. Where was the desire to save this woman born from. He could not understand it. If it was another person from Nazarick, they would avoid trouble and ignore it. They would clap their hands and continue walking.

Sebas himself could not explain the workings of his heart, but he decided that now was not the time, and replied to the man.

“...Well it does not matter. How about you follow me to the temple. Doing so would lay any worries to rest.”

“I, I’m a bit busy now....”

Silence descended. Sebas had no intention of wasting any more time.

“So basically I should give you money as insurance? Understood. How much?”

“...100 gold coins.”

Sebas understood. That this was the man’s last hand.

If it was a large amount like 100 gold coins, most people would pull out. Sebas could not understand if it was to buy time or is it was something else. However, if he was asking for money, there was definitely a reason for it. 100 gold coins was a kilogram. And would be quite large. No one would walk around carrying that much.

So the man suggested so as he thought Sebas did not have it and was an impossible request.

So Sebas responded immediately.

“Understood.”

Sebas took out a bag. The man grew suspicious. It was natural. There was no way 100 gold coins could fit inside such a small bag.

“I can believe it if they are gems....”

The gaze of the man then fell on the coins that scattered on the floor. The

sparkle of something silver. It was platinum. Ten of something that had ten times the worth of a gold coin, fell on the floor.

“Yes yes, although I believe ten platinum coins are a bit too much for this situation. However about both of us forget about this now?”

“A, aah...”

“And should there be a next time, please ask for money for her treatment. Of course, this is when you come to pick her up....I intend for her to undergo a complete treatment, and I promise it will be expensive. And since it is a deposit, I expect it back when you pick her up.”

Sebas just said that, raised the body of the woman to his chest, and started walking since there was nothing else to do.

Chapter 62: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 2

The house Sebas was living in was a large mansion rented from the construction guild. The surrounding mansions were mostly quite expensive, and it was located in a section of the capital with good public safety.

While the mansion Sebas and Solution lived in was far too large for them, since they were undercover as the family of a great merchant, they could not live in a dilapidated house.

Arriving at the mansion, Sebas opened the door, and there was someone that welcomed him. There was only one other person in the mansion apart from Sebas, so the person welcoming him would of course, only be one person—Solution Epsilon who was a battle maid directly under Sebas.

“Welcome b—”

Solution cut her words off mid-speech, and she had even frozen mid-bow. She glared at the object Sebas was carrying with eyes that were colder than usual.

“...Sebas-sama, what is that?”

“I picked her up.”

Solution did not reply to that terse answer. However, the air seemed to get heavier around them.

“...I see. I do not believe it is a present for me, so may I ask how you intend to dispose of that?”

“Well now. Could you start by healing her wounds?”

“Healing...” Solution looked at the girl Sebas was holding. Once she understood, she shook her head and stared at Sebas. “If that were the case, would it not suffice to bring her to the temple?”

Sebas began to widen his eyes.

“...Indeed. Silly me, I completely forgot about that...”

Seeing that Sebas was completely unmoved, Solution fixed her cold gaze on him. Their eyes met for a second, and in the end it was Solution who blinked first.

“Shall I throw it away, then?”

“No. I’ve brought her back. We should think about how best to handle her.”

“...I understand.”

Solution was the type who lacked expressions of their own, but her face now could have been used as a mask. Even Sebas could not read the emotions dwelling within her eyes.

All he could tell was that Solution was thoroughly displeased with the present circumstances.

“Could you please perform a health examination on her?”

“I understand. Then, I shall immediately...”

“Isn’t that too...” The girl meant nothing to Solution, but even so, giving her a checkup at the front door was hardly a good thing. “There ought to be a spare room inside. Could you perform the examination there?”

“...Understood.”

Neither of them spoke as they brought the girl to the guest room. Granted, Sebas and Solution had never been the type for conversation, but that did not explain the awkwardness between them.

Solution opened the door for Sebas, who was holding the girl in both hands. The heavy curtains were closed and so the room was dark, but it did not feel stuffy in the least. The door had been opened many times before, so the air inside was fresh, and the interior was spotlessly clean.

The room itself was lit by thin ribbons of moonlight streaming in between the gap in the curtains. After entering, Sebas gingerly laid the girl down upon the clean sheets of the bed within.

“Then...”

Solution carelessly stripped the girl of the cloth which covered her, revealing

a bruised and battered body. That ghastly sight should have made for difficult viewing, but Solution's expression was unchanged, and she had a dull, disinterested look in her eyes.

"...Solution, I'll leave the rest to you."

With that, Sebas left the room. Solution did not look like she wanted to call him back as she began her diagnosis.

Now that he was in the corridor, he should not have heard Solution as she quietly spoke.

"How foolish."

Her mumblings vanished into the corridor, and naturally nobody replied to them.

Sebas stroked his beard without thinking about it. Why had he saved that girl? Even he could not explain why. If he had to explain it, then it would be that a hunter would not kill a cornered bird that flew into his pocket.

No, that was not it.

Why had he saved her?

That was because—She was weak.

Sebas was the Land Steward of Nazarick, and offered his loyalty to the 41 Supreme Beings. The name of Ainz Ooal Gown now lay in its Guildmaster. He was an existence that Sebas offered his everything to. His loyalty was genuine. He could confidently say that he would gladly throw his life away in service to the Supreme One.

However... if, hypothetically speaking, he had to choose only one of the 41 Supreme Beings to obey, Sebas would pick one without hesitation.

[Touch Me]

He was the mightiest being in Ainz Ooal Gown, and the one who had made Sebas. He was one of the nine World Champions and an incomparable figure of fame.

The guild had primarily flourished by PKing. Who would dare believe that

Touch Me, of the Original Nine, had founded the group which predated the guild in order to protect the weak? Yet, that was the truth.

When Momonga had been repeatedly PKed and nearly quit the game in anger, it was Touch Me who had saved him. When Bukubukuchagama could not find anyone to adventure with her due to her looks, it was Touch Me who had reached out to her.

Yes.

—Sebas shared some similarities with his creator.

“Could this be considered a curse...”

Those words were terribly rude. If any of the other beings who served Ainz Ooal Gown — who had been created by the 41 Supreme Beings — were present and heard these words, they might have well attacked him on the spot for his lack of respect.

However—

“It is wrong to show pity and offer aid to those who do not belong to Ainz Ooal Gown.”

Sebas muttered grimly.

That was only to be expected.

There were exceptions—Excluding people like Pestonya, existences created by the 41 Supreme Beings would act for the benefit of Ainz Ooal Gown. For example, one of the village girls was close to the maid, Lupusregina. But, depending on the situation, Lupusregina would immediately throw her to the side.

This was not cruelty. If there was someone who said that such an action was cruel, they would simply reply in a puzzled manner,

why?

Loyalty towards their creators, the 41 Supreme Beings. It was different from those simple humans—Humans who make decisions based off of their emotions.

Just as Sebas was about to bite through his lip, Solution stepped out of the room.

“How did it go?”

“... She is suffering from syphilis and two other sexually-transmitted diseases. Several of her ribs and fingers are broken. The tendons on her right arm and left leg have been severed. Her upper and lower incisors have been pulled out. Her organ function is diminished and she has a fissured anus. There are signs of drug addiction. In addition, there are countless traces of contusions and lacerations. This concludes the basic summary of her condition. Do you require a more detailed explanation?”

“No, I think not. The important thing is—can she be healed?”

“Easily.”

Sebas had also expected that unhesitating reply. However, he confirmed to ease himself.

“...Including the amputation of her leg?”

“Of course.”

“Then please.”

Solution’s eyes narrowed slightly, but immediately bowed downwards.

“...I understand. I am to restore that female to a pristine condition — in other words, I will revert her body to the state it was before she engaged in those activities. Am I correct?” After receiving Sebas’ approval, Solution bowed again. “I shall do so at once.”

“Then, could I trouble you to boil some water and wipe her down after the treatment? I shall purchase something to eat.”

“...Sebas-sama. Healing the body is a simple task, but... I do not possess the ability to heal mental traumas.” Solution paused here and then looked straight at Sebas before continuing. “If there is a need to heal such traumas, I feel it would be better to ask Ainz-sama to lend his aid. Will you not ask him to do so?”

“...There is no need to trouble Ainz-sama. We will leave the mental symptoms

for later.”

Solution bowed deeply again. Then she opened the door and entered the room. As Sebas watched her leave, he slowly leaned against a nearby wall.

Leave her to the temple. Solution had said so. In response, Sebas said that he had forgotten, but that was a lie. Of course, Sebas had naturally noticed it. No, in fact Sebas did bring her to the temple. That was where he had gotten the cloth that covered her.

When Sebas had entered the temple, he was met with the priest’s shocked and disdainful eyes. He believed that Sebas had done that to the woman.

He managed to fix the misunderstanding, and asked for her to be healed, but a problem arose. He had her checked, and while they could heal her sexually transmitted diseases, and the bruises. However, they could do nothing for her amputated leg and her pulled out teeth. This was as there was no high ranked magic caster that could use such healing magic.

Sebas hesitated. The protection he promised her.

Just how far did it go, he did not know.

Her stamina would recover after her wounds were healed and when she was in a good environment. However, if she could not move her right hand and left leg, and that she could not eat solid food, how far did Sebas’ promised protection extend to.

While it was true that for a normal human this was enough, for Sebas it was not.

He wanted to help her to a much better state.

Since Solution has the special class of an Assassin, she could use more powerful healing magic than a priest. That was why he brought her. And as a result, she mostly recovered. Even the worst wounds could be healed with various types of healing magic in a short period of time.

The problem was afterwards.

What should he do with her—

Sebas heaved a big sigh.

If he could release all the emotions trapped inside, he would feel much better. However, nothing changed. His heart was confused, and noise jammed his thoughts.

“How foolish I was. To think that I, Sebas, would do all that for a woman...”

Sebas said his fake conclusion.

He had no answer. Then he should push it back. Sebas’ best answer was a procrastination.

Sebas’ footsteps rang through the corridor—

Solution changed the shape of her finger. The slender digit lengthened, becoming a syringe-like structure that was several millimeters thick. As a Slime, Solution had always been able to make great alterations to her shape, so altering the thickness of her fingers was child’s play.

She glanced at the door, and once she sensed he was no longer outside, she quietly approached the woman on the bed.

“Since Sebas-sama has approved it, I might as well take care of this unpleasant business quickly. You would probably hope for something like that. Besides, it is not as though you will feel it.”

Solution reached inside her body with her untransformed hand and withdrew a scroll stored within herself.

Solution did not only have this scroll hidden away. Beginning from disposable magic items like scrolls, she even had weapons and armour. She had a few humans as well, but there was nothing strange about that.

“...Should I eat her before Sebas-sama returns?”

Solution broke the seal and unfurled the scroll. The spell contained within was called <Heal>. It was a high-end healing magic of the 6th-tier, and it could restore a great deal of health in addition to healing various diseases and other abnormal status conditions.

Under normal circumstances, using the magic of the scroll would require levels in the appropriate job class. In other words, one would need cleric-type class levels to use clerical spells, which were divine magic. However, certain

thief-type classes had the ability to emulate a class and use magical devices by “deceiving” them, such as with a scroll.

As an assassin, Solution had levels in several thief-type classes. Thus, she was able to use this scroll of <Heal>, which he would not be able to use otherwise.

“Just in case, I should probably put her to sleep. After that...”

Solution used a skill to synthesize a sleeping poison cum muscle relaxant, which she injected into the girl.

Sebas returned from buying food just as Solution stepped out of the room. She had a steaming bucket in each hand, each of which had several washcloths inside.

The cloths were filthy and the hot water was black, indicating the unsanitary conditions that girl had been in.

“Thank you for your efforts. I trust there were no problems with the healing process...?”

“Yes. It has all been taken care of, and there were no hiccups. However, there were no clothes for her to wear, so I selected an outfit for her at random. Do you approve?”

“Of course. That will do.”

“I see... The sleeping agent should have worn off by now... but if you have no further directives, I will be taking my leave.”

“...Nothing in particular. Thank you very much, Solution.”

Solution nodded by way of response, and slipped past Sebas.

Sebas knocked, and silently opened the door.

“I’m entering.”

Opening the thick curtains, sunlight filtered into the room. The girl sleeping on the bed had just regained consciousness. She sat up, still drowsy.

She was completely different from how she had been before.

Her filthy blonde hair now glowed with a beautiful luster. Her emaciated

features had regained their fullness. Her cracked lips were now a healthy pink.

On the whole, she was beautiful, although her looks might be better described as a soft-spoken prettiness rather than being drop-dead sexy.

Her age was now plain to see. She looked like she was in her late teens, between 15 to 19, although the shadow on her face from her years in her man-made hell made her seem older than she actually was.

Solution had given her a white negligee to wear, but it was plain and unadorned, lacking frills or lace or other such attractive decorations.

“How is your body? I believe that it healed, but do you feel uncomfortable in any way?”

There was no answer. Her hollow eyes did not seem strong enough to look at Sebas. However, he did not mind, but continued speaking. No, the truth was, he had not expected her to answer him.

That was because he could tell that her blank expression belonged to someone who was distracted and crestfallen.

“Are you hungry? I have brought something to eat.”

Since Sebas and Solution could not cook, he bought something that could be consumed immediately. Since it was unknown if her stomach was healed, he bought a porridge made of 14 different ingredients.

The porridge in the wooden bowl was made with colored soup stock. It had some sesame oil in it to taste, and on the whole it radiated a mouthwatering aroma.

The girl's face twitched in response to the fragrance.

“Come, help yourself.”

Seeing that the girl had not yet completely withdrawn into her own world, Sebas placed the wooden bowl and its spoon before the girl.

She did not move, but Sebas did not urge her to eat. The two did not move, and time began to tick away.

A third party would probably have started to get frustrated at this point.

After a long time had passed, the girl's hands moved slowly. They were the movements of one afraid of being brutally beaten. The wounds on the outside had been completely healed, but the pain which had been branded into her memories still remained.

She picked up the wooden spoon and dipped it into the porridge.

She then brought it to her mouth and wolfed it down. Normal porridge could be very rich and thick. Sebas had asked the storekeeper to finely slice the 14 different ingredients and then cook them over a slow fire to make something that could be swallowed without chewing.

Her throat worked, and the porridge slid into her belly.

The girl's eyes trembled slightly. It was a small movement, but it was sufficient to convert her from an intricately-made doll into a real human being.

Her other hand trembled as it moved to take the bowl from Sebas. Sebas supported the bowl, shifting it to a place which was easier for her to reach. The girl grabbed the bowl to herself, then took scoop after forceful scoop of the porridge as she devoured it.

If the porridge had not been cooled until it was just right, her frantic feeding frenzy would probably have scalded her tongue. The porridge that dripped from her mouth dirtied her negligee.

She was eating much faster than what seemed possible for her earlier.

She was more drinking than eating it.

The bowl was emptied.

The girl held onto the bowl and exhaled deeply. With her humanity restored, her eyelids closed slowly and ponderously. The combination of a full belly, fresh clothes and a clean body combined to soothe her spirit, and she began to feel fatigue kicking in.

However, just as her eyes narrowed into a line, they snapped open and she curled up into a frightened ball.

Was she afraid to close her eyes, or was she afraid that what she was experiencing would vanish like a popped bubble? Or was it something else?

Sebas was watching her from the side, but he did not know.

Perhaps even she did not know.

In order to comfort her, Sebas gently spoke.

“Your body must need sleep. Don’t push yourself and have a good rest. You will not come to any harm as long as you stay here. I guarantee this — when you wake up, you will still be in that bed.”

The girl’s eyes moved for the first time and looked directly at Sebas.

Her blue pupils were dull and lacked vitality. However, those were not the eyes of a corpse, but a living person.

Her small mouth opened — and closed. Then it opened — and closed again. This repeated itself several times. Sebas watched her tenderly. He did not urge her to do anything; he simply watched in silence.

“Ah...”

At last, her mouth opened, and several nearly inaudible noises emerged. Then, she quickly added.

“Thank... thank you.”

The first words she spoke were not to ask about her present circumstances, but to thank him. Having grasped part of her character from that, Sebas gave her a genuine smile; not the usual fake one he typically wore.

“It’s fine. Since I have rescued you, I will do my best to guarantee your safety. Excluding the 41 Supreme Beings, I will not lose to anyone who comes.”

The girl’s eyes widened a bit more, and her mouth began to tremble.

Her blue eyes moistened, and then overflowed. The girl opened her mouth and then wept piteously. Those were the words to describe her crying.

Soon, he could hear the sound of cursing through the crying.

She cursed her fate. She resented the fact that it had ever existed. She was filled with hatred that nobody had helped her until now. Her wrath was directed at Sebas as well.

If only you had saved me earlier. That sort of thing.

After receiving Sebas' kindness — after being humanely treated, it was as though part of her had broken down under the strain of everything she had endured until now. No, perhaps it might be better to say that after having her humanity restored, she could no longer bear her painful memories.

She tore at her hair, and the strands snapped quietly as she pulled. Countless golden fibers were tangled around her slender fingers.

Sebas watched silently as she went mad. The porridge bowl and the spoon rolled to the bed. He watched her without attempting to take it. Sebas understood that her spiteful words were not true, and was only an impulse.

Some people would be angered by her words, and lash out. However, there was no anger on his face. His wrinkles were filled with kindness.

Sebas leaned forward and hugged her.

He was not embracing her, instead it was like a father embracing his child. There was no malice there, only an unending kindness.

Her body stiffened for a moment. Then, as she realised how different this embrace was from the men who sought only to violate her flesh, her body slowly relaxed.

"It's fine."

Sebas repeated those words like a mantra, gently patting her on the back, like he was comforting a crying child.

The girl moaned—and then, as she slowly came to understand what Sebas was saying, she buried her face into Sebas' chest and cried all the louder. However, the context of her tears was slightly different from just now.

She finally managed to stop crying after some time had passed and the front of Sebas' clothes had been soaked by her tears. She slowly extricated herself from Sebas' arms and lowered her head to hide her blushing face.

"Ah... I'm... sorry..."

"Please, do not worry about it. Being able to offer one's chest to a lady for support is a mark of pride for a man."

Sebas extracted a clean handkerchief from his breast pocket and handed it to her.

However, the cleanly and beautifully sowed handkerchief caused her to hesitate. It was as if she wondered if it was fine to use such an expensive thing.

“Please use this.”

“But... lending... me... this... clean...”

Sebas reached out to cup her chin, then gently raised her face. She had no idea what had happened, but just as she was freezing up with fear, the handkerchief gently grazed over her eyes — and the trails of her tears.

“Ah...”

“Come, please use this,” Sebas said as he stuffed the somewhat damp handkerchief into her hands. “It is quite sad when a handkerchief goes unused. Especially when it cannot even dry tears.”

Sebas smiled, and then stepped away from her.

“Alright. Have a good rest. We will discuss the future and other things when you wake up.”

There was nothing that magic could not do. Her body had been restored through Solution’s magical healing, and her mental fatigue had been wiped away. Thus, she could function normally right away. However, she had still been in hell up until a few hours ago. Her emotional wounds might well burst open again after a long conversation.

The truth was that her mind was not completely stable, hence her agonized weeping just now. Magic could briefly salve that spiritual suffering, but it could only treat the symptoms and not its cause. Unlike the physical body, the invisible wounds of the spirit could not be so easily healed.

As far as Sebas knew, the only people who could completely remove her mental damage were his master or possibly Pestonya S. Wanko.

Sebas wanted to let the girl rest, but she hurriedly replied.

“The future...?”

“Ehh” Sebas wondered if he should continue, but decided that her spirit had recovered. “It will not be safe for you to continue staying in the Royal Capital. Have you no friends or relatives to turn to?”

The girl looked downwards. Her reaction allowed Sebas to know the answer.

“Is that so...”

That was troublesome,

Sebas thought. However, there was no need to be hasty. There would be nothing wrong with putting this off till tomorrow.

“Alright, then. Can you tell me your name?”

“Ah... I... Tsuare...”

“Tsuare, is it? I have not told you my name yet. I am Sebas Tian, but Sebas will do. I am the servant of Solution-sama, the Young mistress of this house.”

“So...tion...san...”

“Yes, Solution Epsilon-sama. Although, I doubt you will have much of a chance to meet her.”

“...?”

“The Young Mistress can be... hard to deal with at times.”

Sebas closed his mouth, as if to indicate that was all he would say on the matter. After a brief silence, he spoke once more.

“Alright. Have a good rest today. We’ll discuss the future tomorrow.”

“All... right...”

After verifying that Tsuare was back on the bed, Sebas took the bowl of porridge and left the room.

When he left the room, he found Solution who had hidden her presence. Sebas had expected that since as an Assassin, Solution could hide herself to the point that even Sebas would find it difficult to notice her, and was not surprised.

“What’s the matter?”

Solution was eavesdropping, but Sebas had no intention of scolding her.

And Solution showed no sign of being expected to be scolded. That was why she blatantly stood there.

“Sebas-sama. May I ask how you intend to dispose of her?”

Sebas’s attention went to the door behind him. It was thick enough, but not completely soundproofed. If they spoke here, she would probably be able to pick up on a bit of their conversation.

Sebas moved from the front of the door, and Solution silently followed behind him.

Once they had reached a place where he was sure they would not be overheard, he stopped.

“...You’re referring to Tsuare, I take it. I intend to wait until tomorrow before deciding what to do.”

“...Perhaps I have overstepped myself, but I feel that thing has a high chance of impeding our activities. We ought to deal with it as soon as possible.”

Now what exactly could the words “deal with” mean?

After listening to Solution’s cold words, Sebas thought:

as I expected

. This was the opinion which a right-thinking, loyal servant of Nazarick — of the 41 Supreme Beings — would have about a non-Nazarick entity. It was Sebas’ attitude towards Tsuare which was abnormal.

“You’re right. If she interferes with the orders Ainz-sama has given us, then I shall deal with her without delay.”

Solution looked surprised, as if to say: “If you knew that, then why did you do it?”

“She might have her uses. And since we’ve picked her up, it would be a shame to just discard her. We need to think of a way to properly utilize her.”

“...Sebas-sama. I do not know where or why you picked it up, but the injuries

it has taken indicate that it comes from a certain background. And do you not think the person who inflicted those injuries on that human would be unhappy to know that it was still alive?”

“There should be no problems on that front.”

Solution made a suspicious face when Sebas cut her off. It seemed as if he was hiding something.

“...So you mean to say you have already disposed of those people, then?”

Solution would not have been surprised if Sebas had killed them, but Sebas made a wry smile. It was the opposite.

“No. That’s not it. If any problems arise, I will take action. Therefore, I hope you will be able to watch quietly until then. Do you understand, Solution?”

“...I understand.”

Now that her immediate superior, Sebas had said all that to her, she could not say anything even if she was deeply dissatisfied with his handling of the situation. In addition, she really could just sit there and watch if nothing cropped up.

Chapter 63: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 3

Around six days later, Sebas opened the main door. He had just returned from the Magician's Guild after purchasing another scroll and recorded all the requests at the Adventurer's Guild, a day of information collection.

He passed through the door and entered the house. Several days ago, Solution would have come to greet him. However—

“Welcome... back... Sebas...ma.”

This task was now handed to the soft-spoken girl in the maid outfit whose long skirt covered her legs.

The day after he had picked up Tsuare, there had been a discussion, and it had been decided that she would work in this house.

They could have treated her as a guest, but Tsuare refused. She said that she felt uneasy about being treated as a guest on top of being rescued by Sebas. While it did not properly qualify as repaying his kindness, she hoped that she could do something to help around the house.

After seeing what her true intentions were, he began to feel uneasy as well.

In other words, she understood that her position here was precarious—that she was a source of trouble for this home—and so she wanted to work as hard

as she could to avoid being discarded.

Of course, Sebas had told Tsuare that he would not abandon her. If he was the sort who could discard someone with nobody else to turn to, he would never have rescued her in the first place.

However, he lacked the persuasive power to heal the wounds in Tsuare's heart.

"I'm back, Tsuare. Did work go well?"

Tsuare nodded.

Her hair was neatly trimmed and she wore a little white headdress which shook with her nod.

"It went... well."

"Is that so. That's good to hear."

She seemed as gloomy as always and her expression hardly changed, but being able to live as a human being had gradually eased the fear which gripped her, and she could speak much more clearly now.

Sebas walked, and Tsuare walked with him.

Technically speaking, it would be a violation of maidservant etiquette for her to walk beside Sebas, her superior. However, Tsuare had never been trained as a maid and did not understand those formalities, and Sebas did not wish to educate her in such matters.

“What are we having today?”

“Po... potato... stew...”

“I see. I look forward to that, then. Your food is delicious, Tsuare.”

She blushed and lowered her face as Sebas praised her with a smile. Her hands nervously grasped at her maid uniform's apron.

“You, you are too... kind...”

“No, no, I meant that. I know nothing about cooking, so you've done me a great favor.”

“That is not tr....”

Tsuare felt embarrassed and mumbled her words. However, Sebas indeed felt grateful to Tsuare.

Since they had a certain magic item, Sebas nor Solution had a need to eat, and only did so for appearances. However, Sebas nor Solution could cook, and they had to purchase food from outside.

Not having to bring back such prepared food erased one troublesome thing from the list and was a good thing.

“Do you have enough ingredients? Tell me if there's anything you'd like me to

buy.”

“Yes. I... will ask you... when I do.”

Tsquare could move around normally within the house and in front of Sebas, but she still had an aversion to the outside world. Since she could not work outdoors, Sebas had taken on the task of shopping for ingredients and so on.

Tsquare’s cooking was hardly a gourmet spread. She made simple, everyday dishes. Since these dishes did not require expensive ingredients, they were easily obtained at the markets. Sebas had also learned about said ingredients in the market and the food and beverage of this world, which he considered to be killing two birds with one stone.

A flash of inspiration suddenly struck Sebas.

“...We’ll go shopping together afterwards.”

A look of shock appeared on Tsquare’s face. She shook her head timidly.

“I, I think... I’ll pass...”

Sebas thought, *As I expected*, but he did not voice it.

In the past few days, she seemed to have recovered her spirit. However, it was far too fast. The worry of being abandoned by Sebas caused him to predict that she would overwork herself, but he had to adjust his predictions when faced with reality.

Tsquare had refused to do anything which might involve going outside ever since she had started working.

She had taken this house to be an absolute defense of sorts, in order to suppress the fear within her. In other words, she had drawn a line to tell herself that this place was different from the outside world, which had hurt her. That was the only way she could function normally.

However, if that kept up, Tsuare would never be able to leave the house.

Sebas understood that it was very cruel to expect Tsuare to walk amongst the masses given her mental condition. He should have spent more time to help her get used to being around others again, but that naturally required time.

Sebas did not intend to hide here or spend the rest of his life in this place. He was an outsider who had only infiltrated this city in order to gather information.

If Ainz issued the order to withdraw—

It was not clear what would happen to Tsuare at that time, but he should do his best to give her several options.

Sebas stopped moving and looked directly at Tsuare. She blushed and lowered her head shyly, but Sebas took his cheeks in both his hands and raised her face.

“Tsuare, I understand your fears. However, I hope you will relax. I, Sebas, will protect you. I will crush any and all dangers which draw near and ensure you will not be harmed.”

“.....”

“Tsuare, please step outside with me. If you’re afraid, you can close your eyes.”

“.....”

As Tsuare hesitated, Sebas held her hands tightly. What he said next was terribly unfair to her.

“Are you willing to trust me, Tsuare?”

Silence filled the corridor, and time slowly passed them by. In the end, Tsuare’s eyes grew moist, and her tender, pink lips parted to reveal her pearly white teeth.

“...Sebas-sama... you are too cunning... When you... put it like that... how could I refuse?”

She then threw herself into his bosom. Sebas gently hugged her quivering shoulders.

“Please be at ease. In all the world there are only 41 people stronger than me.”

“Is... that... a lot?”

The figure he had chosen made Tsuare think that Sebas was merely cracking a joke to reassure her, and so she smiled. Sebas saw this, and smiled back without saying anything.

Sebas released his hand that was hugging her and began walking.

Tsuare made a lonely face and rubbed the shoulder Sebas was touching, but he acted as if he did not see it.

Sebas knew Tsuare had some faint semblance of attraction to him. However, Sebas felt that it was more like gratitude to him for saving her from her torment. It was similar to brainwashing, or the trust she placed in someone who was reliable.

In addition, Sebas was an old man, and perhaps Tsuare had confused her sense of familial kinship with romantic love.

Even if Tsuare did feel genuine love for Sebas, he did not feel that he could adequately return it.

After all, he had been hiding so many things from her.

“Then I shall come to get you after discussing a few things with the Young Mistress.”

“Solu...san...”

Tsuare's mood turned gloomy. Sebas knew why, but he kept quiet about it.

Solution had hardly met with Tsuare before. At the very most she had glanced at her in passing and left without saying a word. Anyone would feel uneasy about being ignored like that, and in Tsuare's case she would probably be terrified.

"It's fine. The Young Mistress is like that to everyone. It isn't as though she has it out for you.... But Ojou-sama has quite the bad personality, but I did not tell you this."

Sebas smiled, and after finishing his half-joking words, the unease on Tsuare's face lightened somewhat.

"She often throws tantrums when she sees cute girls."

"...I... How could I... I'm nothing like... the Mistress..."

Tsuare frantically waved her hands.

Compared to Solution who had a beauty that would enrapture those of even the same gender, she thought that she could not even be compared. Tsuare indeed had a pretty face, but it was not much when faced with Solution's.

However, beauty was in the eye of the beholder.

“In terms of looks, I would prefer you compared to the Young Mistress.”

“What! How could...”

Tsuare’s face was burning red as she lowered it. Sebas looked kindly upon her, and then he saw her expression change and her brows furrow.

“And I... I’m... filthy...”

Tsuare’s attitude made a complete turn, and her face turned dark. Sebas sighed. He looked straight ahead and spoke. As the volume of the footsteps had been lowered, the words of Sebas reached Tsuare very clearly.

“Indeed, that is the case with gems. Unmarked ones are worth more, and they are considered purer.” Tsuare’s face fell even further as she heard those words. “However—people are not gemstones.”

Tsuare’s face lifted and looked at Sebas’ face. His serious face.

“Tsuare, you seem to consider yourself dirty. But who can judge the purity of a human being? There are clearly defined standards for precious stones... but who will set the standards for a human being’s virtue? Is there some common value to surpass? Some public opinion that must be adhered to? Does that mean everyone else’s thoughts and opinions can be discarded?” Sebas paused here, and then he continued. “Every person has a different definition of beauty. If beauty cannot be determined by one’s appearance, then in my opinion, we cannot determine beauty by what people have experienced, but by how they are inside.. I do not know what you have been through and I have only spent a

few days with you, but what I know is that the person inside you is the furthest thing from being filthy that I can imagine.”

Sebas closed his mouth, and the footsteps echoing along the corridor filled the world. Tsuare seemed to have made up her mind, and she spoke.

“...If... you feel I am pure... then embr—”

Sebas’ footsteps stopped. In front of him was the most beautiful and extravagant door in the entire mansion. Tsuare cut off her words, and recalled who was inside.

“Tsuare. I will see you later.”

Leaving Tsuare who bowed with a lonely face, Sebas knocked on the door. He opened the door without waiting for an answer. As he slowly closed the door, Sebas thought about Tsuare’s last words.

If he was right, her next words would be [embrace] or something along that line. (TL Note: She used the word “Daku” which can mean hug or to have sex.)

“How troubling.”

“What is?”

This house was rented, so it did not have much furniture despite its many rooms. However, this room was filled with stylish furniture, enough to impress any guest who came. However, anyone who knew anything would realize that

none of the furniture here was a venerable antique, and that the entire room was all style and no substance.

“Forgive my soliloquy. Ojou-sama, I have returned.”

“...Thank you, Sebas.”

Solution, the false mistress of the manor, had a airheaded expression on her face as she lounged on the sofa in the center of the room. However, that was merely an act. That was because Tsuare the outsider was also in the house, so she had to put on the mask of a haughty heiress.

Solution’s eyes left Sebas and went to the door.

“...She has left, I take it?”

“So it would seem.”

The two of them looked at each others’ faces, and Solution spoke in a normal tone.

“When are you going to get rid of her?”

Solution always asked the same question whenever they met, and Sebas always gave her the same answer.

“When the time comes.”

Under normal circumstances, that would be the end of it. Solution would

sigh deliberately, and then drop the matter. However, Solution did not seem inclined to let it go today, and she continued asking:

“...Could you give me a clear indication on when ‘the time’ will be? For all we know, hiding that human might bring trouble upon us. Does that not violate Ainz-sama’s orders?”

“There have been no problems until now... Fearing a human and the problems they might make is hardly the attitude which a servant of Ainz-sama ought to have.”

Silence fell between Sebas and Solution.
Sebas quietly exhaled.

The situation was very bad.

Solution had no expression on her face, but Sebas could tell she was boiling mad at him. And it was slowly getting stronger.

Solution had not made any move to harm Tsuare until now due to being forcibly restrained by Sebas. However, if things remained as they were, it might not endure for long.

Sebas was keenly aware that time was running out. Sebas gritted his teeth.

“...Sebas-sama. Once that human violates the orders Ainz-sama has set forth
—”

“—She will be dealt with.”

Sebas ended the sentence himself without giving Solution a chance to continue speaking. She turned an emotionless look on him, and then nodded to indicate that she understood.

“Then I will say no more. Sebas-sama, please do not forget the words you have just said.”

“Of course not, Solution.”

“...Still.”

Solution’s hushed tone hid emotions so powerful that they made Sebas stop in his tracks.

“...Still, Sebas-sama. Should we not report Tsuare (that) to Ainz-sama?”

“...” Sebas fell silent. After a few seconds, he answered. “I think it will be fine. I am uneasy about wasting Ainz-sama’s time on an insignificant human.”

“...Entoma and the others regularly contact you with [Message] spells every day. Why not bring it up while you are in contact with them?”

“.....”

“Is there something you wish to hide?”

“How could that be? I harbor no such thoughts. I would never dream of—”

“Then....” Solution realised her words would elicit the same response, and chose different ones—Ones that would blow him away. “....So due to a selfish decision, you are not reporting to Ainz-sama?”

The air between them grew tense.

Sebas knew that Solution was deliberately picking at this topic, and he was keenly aware that he was in danger himself.

All the existences in Nazarick gave their absolute loyalty to [Ainz Ooal Gown], the 41 Supreme Beings. At the forefront would be Shalltear and Demiurge who could be said to think of nothing else. Naturally, Sebas was one of them.

That said, he still felt that it was wrong to abandon a pitiful being just because he was afraid of danger.

However, he also understood that most of those in Nazarick would not approve of that course of action.

No, he only *thought*

he understood. Solution’s attitude from a few seconds ago had clearly informed him of the full extent of his naivete.

Depending on the situation, she would not even hesitate to erase the problem caused by Sebas, who was the highest ranking official involved in Nazarick’s internal affairs, a position given to him by the 41 Supreme Beings.

—Sebas smiled.

As she saw that smile, Solution's eyes filled with surprise.

“...Of course. It was not for personal gain that I did not report this to Ainz-sama.”

“Is there anything to support that?”

“It is not all but, I highly praise her ability to cook.”

“You mean to say... her cooking?”

It was as though there was a question mark atop Solution's head.

“Yes. In addition, would it not be suspicious if only two people lived in such a large home?”

“...Perhaps.”

Solution had no choice but to agree with that point. Anyone would find it strange that such a large house was hardly occupied, for all the money spent on it.

“I feel that we need a few people around. Besides, would it not be bad if we could not serve a single dish if guests arrived?”

“...That is to say, you are using that human as camouflage?”

“Indeed.”

“But why did you have to use that particular human...”

“Tsuare is grateful to me. Even if there are strange occurrences, she would not leak the. If we hire a loose-lipped person, would they not speak of the strangeness of this mansion’s occupants.”

“.....” Solution thought briefly on the matter and then nodded. “Indeed.”

“Just so. This is merely a deception, so there is no need to specially seek Ainz-sama’s permission to do so. For all we know, he might chastise us and say, ‘Figure these small things out yourself’.”

“.....”

“Can you accept that?”

“...I understand.”

There were lots of things she could not accept, but Solution adopted the stance that it would be fine and nodded.

“Now, is this all?” Sebas confirmed Solution had nodded before continuing. “After eating I am thinking of bringing Tsuare out. I leave the house sitting to you.”

“Understood, Sebas-sama.”

Sebas left the room. He did not look back at the sharp gaze Solution sent at him, and left as if escaping from it all.

Chapter 64: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 4

The next day.

Someone had knocked on the door, and Sebas walked towards it. He lifted the cover of the door's peephole.

He could see a plump man outside, and Royal Army soldiers waiting for orders behind him on either side.

The plump man was neatly attired, and he wore well-tailored clothing. He had a weighty badge on his chest which reflected a coppery light. His sweaty red face was also packed with fat and had an oily sheen to it, probably from too many rich meals.

At the back of the procession was a strange-looking man.

His pale, sallow skin looked like it had never seen the sun before. His eyes were keen and his scrawny face looked like some predator — a corpse-feeding scavenger, in fact. His dark clothes hung loosely about him, and he must certainly have weapons about his person.

He radiated a scent of blood and malice, which prickled on Sebas' sixth sense.

—An assassin?

Sebas believed so, but he could not make a decision with just this. So he asked the natural question.

“...May I know who is calling?”

“I am a government official, Bloom Havish] (Burumu)

The fat man at the head of the group spoke in a whiny high pitched voice and introduced himself—As Bloom.

Why an official? Is he not an assassin? While Sebas was confused, Bloom continued.

“I trust you know that the Kingdom’s laws prohibit the trafficking of slaves... That law was proposed by Princess Renner herself and put into effect after being reviewed by Parliament. The report I received indicates that the inhabitants of this domicile have violated that law. Thus, I wish to investigate the matter.”

Could you let me in. Bloom ended the conversation with those words. Sebas was confused, but at the same time he was strongly aware that something dangerous was about to happen.

Several excuses such as ‘his master was not home’ floated around in his head, but it had a high chance of being found out.

There was no guarantee that Bloom was actually who he said he was either.

The Kingdom’s public servants all had to wear badges like Bloom did, but there was no telling if he was a legitimate state employee. For all he knew, it might be counterfeit — though the penalty for doing so was very severe.

There would be no problem should several people enter the mansion. Sebas could easily take care of them.

There was no telling what Bloom thought of Sebas’ pensive silence, but he opened his mouth to speak.

“If I may, could I have an audience with the master of the house? While it cannot be helped if the master is not in, we are here to conduct an investigation. Things will go poorly if we return empty-handed.”

Bloom smiled. There was no sign of humility in that smile. It concealed undertones of intimidation through the abuse of power.

“Who is that man behind you?”

“Hm? His name is Succulent. He represents the establishment which reported this incident to me.”

“I’m Succulent. Pleased to meet you.”

Succulent thinly laughed like an assassin.

After seeing that cold smile, Sebas’ felt a sense of defeat creeping up on him. His cold smile was like that of a cruel hunter mocking his prey as it stepped

into his trap. He must surely have made all the proper arrangements with all the appropriate parties before strutting up to him, bold as brass. That being the case, Bloom was most likely a proper official. This was as they would avoid bringing over a fake official which could expedite the problem.

They would surely be prepared for any refusals on his part. That being the case, he ought to see what they had in store for him.

Sebas decided as such.

“...I understand. I shall inform the Young Mistress forthwith. I hope you will be so kind as to wait here for a moment.”

“Very well, we’ll wait, we’ll wait.”

“However, please be swift about it. We do not have all day.”

Succulent sneered at him, while Bloom shrugged.

“Understood. Then, please excuse me.”

Sebas lowered the cover of the peephole and turned towards Solution’s room. Before that, however, he had to tell Tsuare to hide inside the house—

The two that were guided in showed faces of extreme surprise when they saw Solution. Since the soldiers were waiting outside, only the two of them had entered the room.

Their faces said that they had not expected to see such a beautiful woman. Bloom’s expression slowly turned lewd, his eyes roving between her face and her ample bosom. There was a dark look of lust in his eyes and he swallowed multiple times.

In contrast, Succulent’s face gradually tightened up, unwilling to relax. It was clear which of them was more worthy of caution. Sebas bade them take a seat on the sofa opposite Solution.

Solution, who was already seated, exchanged names with Bloom and Succulent, who were just settling in.

“Then, what is the matter?”

Bloom coughed annoyingly.

“A certain establishment reported that someone had taken away one of their workers. At the same time, I heard that the person responsible had paid a great deal of dirty money to another worker. Our country prohibits the trafficking of slaves... doesn't that sound like breaking the law to you?”

“Oh, really?”

Her tone nearly made the two of them surprised. They were clearly trying to intimidate her, but they had not expected a response like that from her.

“Sebas will handle all the troublesome bits. Sebas, I'll leave the rest to you.”

“Is, is that alright? If things go poorly, you might become a criminal.”

“Ooooh, I'm soooo scared. Inform me when I'm about to become a criminal, Sebas.”

Solution showed a full faced smile as if greeting them, and stood up. Nobody could stop her as she left. In that instant, they realised exactly how powerful a beautiful woman's smile could be.

Before the door's latch could slide home, they could hear gasps of surprise as the soldiers outside were startled by Solution's good looks.

“—Then I shall hear you two gentlemen out on the Young Mistress' behalf.”

Sebas took a seat before them with a smile. Bloom shrank back as he saw his smile, but Succulent decided to speak up on his behalf to help retain control of the situation.

“Just as well. I'll tell you then, Sebas-san. As Havish-san told you at the door, one of the people at our... establishment has gone missing. We questioned a man, and he said that he had handed her over for money. I thought; was this not slave trafficking, which is forbidden in the Kingdom? I was unwilling to believe that one of our employees could actually do such a thing, but I had no choice but to report it.”

“Just so. The crime of human trafficking is not forgivable, just as Renner-sama says. And so, I am unable to say anything but that Succulent-kun who reported someone who worked for him is extremely commendable!”

“Thank you, Havish-sama.”

What kind of farce is this,

Sebas thought. Meanwhile, his mind worked. The two of them were clearly in cahoots. That being the case, it was almost certain that they had taken ample precautions before launching their campaign. That being the case, his defeat was certain.

What was Sebas' victory conditions.

Sebas had to suppress his brows from twitching.

As the Land Steward of Nazarick, Sebas' win condition was eliminating the problem and not letting things pile up. Protecting Tsuare was definitely not part of that.

However—

"I believe the man who claims to have taken the money may have borne false witness. Where is he now?"

"He was arrested on suspicion of slave-trading and is in custody now. After questioning him, we managed to learn—"

"—The identity of the person who bought our employee, who would be you, Sebas-san."

Sebas pondered whether he should act dumb, lie, or deliver a stern and upright rebuttal.

What if he said she was not in the house? What if he said she were dead? Numerous lines popped into his head, but none of them sounded like they would work, and the opposition would probably not give up easily.

"Still, what led the two of you to me? What proof do you have?"

That was what baffled Sebas. He had not left any trace of his name or identity. They should not have been able to find any evidence pointing to him. However, the two of them were here. How had they found him? He was always very careful during his excursions and wary of being followed. He did not think anyone in this city could follow him without being spotted.

"It was the scroll."

Hearing Succulent's answer, Sebas' immediate response in his head was a question. But he then understood.

—The scroll he had bought in the Magician's Guild.

The workmanship of that scroll was exquisite, and it was certainly no ordinary scrap of parchment. Anyone who could recognize a scroll like that would be able to tell that it was purchased from the Magician's Guild. From there it was a simple matter to investigate what sort of man he was.

Especially for someone who stood out like Sebas, who wore a butler's outfit.

Still, that alone would not prove that Tsuare was here. He could also insist that there was someone else who happened to look like him.

However, he would be in trouble if they said they were going to search the house. Indeed, they would discover that only three people lived in this home, including Tsuare.

That being the case all he could do was come clean. Sebas decided as such.

"...I did take her away. That is a fact. However, she was heavily wounded at that time, and I was forced to do so because I feared her life would be in danger."

"In other words, you admit to buying her."

"May I speak to that man you mentioned?"

"Unfortunately, we cannot allow that. Things would be bad if you were allowed to match up your stories."

"You could always—"

—*Listen in while we were talking.* Sebas wanted to say that, but he shut his mouth.

In the end, they had planned the whole thing out. Even if he did find that man, it was not likely that the situation could be made to favor him. Continuing with this approach was only a waste of time.

"...Before we go into that, do you not think that allowing her to sustain such severe injuries while working is more problematic in the eyes of the

nation? Are there not laws against that too?"

"Conditions in our establishment are harsher than most. Injury is unavoidable. Consider that working in mines and the like also includes the risk of occupational hazards. It's the same thing."

"...I doubt they are the same thing."

"Hahaha. We're in the service industry. You meet all sorts of clients there. We do pay attention, you know. Alright, I get your point. We'll be more careful next time— Yes, a little more careful."

"Just a little?"

"Ah, yes. Worrying too much about details costs money, you know. Causes problems too."

Succulent sneered at Sebas' question. In turn, Sebas smiled.

"—Alright, that's enough." Bloom interrupted Sebas' rebuttal with a sigh. It was like he was handling a fool. He then explained his thoughts to Sebas. "My duty is to verify that slave trafficking was going on. Employee welfare is another matter entirely. All I can say is that it has no bearing on the case."

"...Then, can you tell me who are the people who specialize in problems like these?"

"...Hm, I'd like to tell you, but there are some difficulties in doing so. Regretfully, sticking one's nose into others' business will only earn you resentment."

"...Then, please wait until I find the relevant people first."

Bloom grinned evilly, as though to say, "I was waiting for you to say that."

Succulent had the same sort of look as him.

"...Ah, I would like to wait for that, but the business has already filed a case, so I must arrest you and begin investigations. It's out of my hands."

In other words, he was out of time.

"Given the situation and the circumstantial evidence, you're clearly guilty, but the plaintiff has said that they're willing to go easy on you. Compensation will

be needed to smooth things over, of course, and destroying the documentation related to the slave-trading offense will also require a bit of money.”

“What exactly do you mean by smoothing things over?”

“Well now. We’d like you to return our employee.”

Sebas expected the answer and nodded in his heart. And as if that was not all, he shook his head.

“In addition please make up for the loss of income incurred while you were holding on to her.”

“I see. And how much is that?”

“In gold coins....Yes.” Succulent looked around at the room, “300 of them.”

“...That is an extremely high price, but how did you determine it. How much does she earn a day?”

“Hang, hang on a bit,” Bloom interrupted. “That’s not all, Succulent-kun.”

“Ah, I almost forgot. Since I’ve already made a report, you’ll need to pay to destroy that as well, even if you settle the matter with us under the table.”

“That’s right. How could you have forgotten, Succulent-kun?”

Bloom smiled wickedly once more.

“...yet?”

“Hm?”

“No, it’s nothing.”

Sebas quietly said as he smiled.

“Hm, forgive me, Havish-sama.” Succulent bowed to Bloom. “Destroying the documents costs a third of the compensation fees, so that’ll be 100 gold coins. That’s a total of 400 gold coins, I believe.”

“Does the money I paid when bringing her here count against that?”

“How could that be? Listen, mister. When you reach an accord with the other side, that means you didn’t buy a slave. In other words, the expenses of buying that slave are written off. Just imagine that you lost the money somewhere.”

To think they would actually expect Sebas to assume he had lost 100 gold coins. In all likelihood, most of it had already found its way into their pockets. Sebas thought so, and in actuality it was true, but he did not know this.

“...However, her body has not fully healed. If you take her back, her wounds might act up again. And the treatment in future might not be enough and still kill her. Can I pay for her in coin?”

Succulent’s eyes gleamed in a bizarre way.

When he noticed this, Sebas realised the depths of his mistake. He had allowed them to realise how much Tsuare meant to him.

“...It would be difficult to handle it with money. This is as we would like to take her back after all.”

Hearing that Bloom made a strange face at Succulent. This was as they had wanted money, but this was a sudden change.

“I see, I see. You do have a point. Her death notwithstanding, we’ll need you to pay for the money which would have been spent on her. While she’s recovering, how about letting us have some fun with the lady of the house?”

“Ohhh! That makes a lot of sense. If you make a hole, you have to fill it!”

The smile faded off Sebas’ face, and it turned impassive.

Succulent was probably not serious, but he would probably press the attack if he showed any weakness. Thanks to his exposing his attachment to Tsuare, the possibility still existed that the situation might deteriorate further.

“...Aren’t you afraid of your desires getting you in trouble?”

“How dare you talk to me like that?!”

Bloom’s face was bright red as he shouted.

Sounds like slaughtering a pig,

Sebas thought. He stared at Bloom without a single word.

“What do you mean by my desires? All this is to uphold the law passed by the glorious will of Princess Renner! How dare you call it base desire! Show some respect!”

“Yes, yes, don’t get worked up, Havish-sama.”

Once Succulent cut in, Bloom calmed down immediately. His anger had faded too soon, a sign that this was merely a scare tactic and not genuine anger.

What terrible acting, Sebas mused.

“But I say, Succulent-kun...”

“Havish-sama, we’ve said everything we came here to say. I was thinking about coming back the day after to see what he thinks. Is that alright with you, Sebas-san?”

“Very well.”

With that, Sebas brought the four of them to the main door. As he sent them off, Succulent, who had stayed until the end, smiled at Sebas, and left him with these words.

“Still, I have to thank that slut. To think a piece of trash could actually turn out to be a goose that lays golden eggs.”

With that, the door closed with a *thud*.

Sebas quietly stared at the door. There was no particular expression on Sebas’ face. He looked as calm as always. However, there was a distinct emotion in his eyes.

That emotion was anger.

—No, the word “anger” was far too mild to describe how he felt. “Furious” and “wrathful”; those words would be more suitable.

“Solution, you can come out now, no?”

Solution oozed out of the shadows in response to Sebas’ voice. She had melded into the shadows with abilities from the assassin-type classes she had taken.

“Did you hear all that?”

Sebas had only asked as a formality. Naturally, Solution nodded to say, “of course.”

“What do you plan to do now, Sebas-sama?”

Sebas could not answer that question immediately. As she saw that, Solution glared coldly at him.

“...What about handing that human over to them?”

“.....”

“If I expose a weakness, they will seek to capitalize on it until they suck us dry. That’s the kind of people they are. I do not think handing Tsuare to them will solve the problem.”

“Then, what do you intend to do?”

“I do not know. I wish to take a walk outside and think.”

Sebas pushed open the front door. He then disappeared into the middle of the bright sunlight.

Solution stared at the receding back of Sebas. She then raised her left hand and opened it.

Something protruded from it, like it was floating on water. It was a scroll which she had stored inside her body. It had originally been given to her for communication in an emergency — although, thanks to Demiurge’s hard work, there was now a way to manufacture low-level spell scrolls. . Still, Solution did not know of this before she set out, and so she believed that this scroll was only to be used in a dire situation — and Solution believed that this qualified.

She opened the scroll and activated the spell bound within. Once used, the scroll crumbled and fell to the ground as dust, and then even the dust vanished.

As the spell took effect, Solution was connected to the other party. She asked.

“Is that you, Ainz-sama?”

[Solution — hm? What happened? Since you’re contacting me, does that mean there’s been an emergency?]

“Yes.”

Solution paused at this point. She had stopped because of her loyalty to

Sebas and because she had considered the possibility that she might have been wrong.

However, her loyalty to Ainz overrode all that.

In addition, they should have considered the greatest benefits for the 41 Supreme Beings in every move they made. However, everything Sebas had done until now could have been said to have violated that precept.

Therefore, she decided to commend the decision into her master's hands.

"Sebas-sama may have betrayed us."

[Wha! ...Ah? ... No, how could that be... mhm... Do not joke with me, Solution. I forbid you to accuse others without evidence... do you have proof?]

"Yes. Although, it might not quite count as proof—"



Sebas walked. He had no destination. His legs just moved.

On one of the roads was a huge crowd.

The sound coming from them was either vicious cursing or mocking laughter, accompanied by the sound of something striking something else. Cries along the lines of "Someone's going to die" and "Better get the guards" rose up from them.

The crowd blocked his line of sight, but he was certain that some kind of violence was in progress.

Sebas thought that perhaps he should change his path and take another path.

He hesitated for a moment — and then he continued straight onwards.

His path took him into the center of the crowd.

"Excuse me."

Sebas wove through the onlookers with those words and reached the center of the crowd. The sight of an old man moving with a bizarre, fluid grace shocked and unnerved the onlookers, and the people who saw Sebas passing before them were stunned with surprise. There seemed to be someone else trying to

get to the heart of the crowd other than Sebas. Said person went, “Excuse me”, but he could not advance through the throng of humanity and was stuck, unable to advance or retreat.

Sebas stepped into the center of the congregation with no difficulty.

And there he saw what was going on with his own eyes.

Several unkempt-looking men were kicking and stomping on something.

Sebas moved on without a single sound, stopping only when he was within arms reach of the men.

“Fuck you doing, old man?!”

One of the five men had noticed Sebas approaching and snarled at him.

“This place seemed a little noisy so, I came to take a look.”

“You want a piece of this?!”

The men ran over to surround Sebas. As they left their original positions, they revealed the object they had been kicking around all this time. It looked like a boy. He was curled up on the ground and bleeding from his face. It was unclear if the blood came from his mouth or his nose.

Apparently the boy had passed out after being brutalized for so long, but he still looked like he was breathing.

Sebas looked at the men. The smell of alcohol hung about their mouths and bodies. Their faces were flushed red, but not from the exertion of physical activity.

Had they lost control of their violent impulses because they were drunk?

Sebas had a blank expression on his face as he asked.

“I don’t know why you’re doing this, but don’t you think it’s time to stop?”

“Hah?! This punk got his food all over my shirt! How could I let that slide?”

One of the man pointed to a spot on his shirt. It did look like a stain. However, the men’s clothes were filthy to begin with. That being the case, the stain was hardly obvious.

Sebas looked at the one who seemed to be the boss of the five young men. The difference might have been too subtle for an ordinary human being to detect, but Sebas was able to pick him out.

“Still... public safety in this city is quite bad.”

“Ah?!”

Sebas spoke as though he had just confirmed something he had observed from afar. The men thought he had trivialized them and made noises of displeasure.

“...Begone.”

“Ah?”

“I’ll say it again – *begone*.”

“Damn geezer!”

The boss-like man flushed red and clenched his fist — and then he collapsed limply to the ground.

Sounds of shock came from all around them, including the four remaining men.

What Sebas had done was simple enough. He had simply formed his hand into a fist and struck a blow at the man’s chin. That had given the man a high-speed brain concussion. He could also have sent the man flying with imperceptible speed, but that would not have served to frighten the others. Thus, he had held back in his strike.

“Do you still wish to fight?”

Sebas quietly said.

His calm and strength cut through the men’s intoxication. One of their friends, the strongest, was easily defeated. There was fear as well. And there were many people around and they did not have any room to maneuver.

“A, ah. W, we were. S, sorry.”

They backed several steps off and chorused an apology. Sebas thought, *you’re apologizing to the wrong person*, but he did not actually say it.

The men grabbed their unconscious colleague and fled. Sebas did not bother watching them and instead went over to the fallen boy. However, he stopped in his tracks halfway.

What was he doing? A calm part of head spoke. What he had to do was handle Tsuare's situation. He could not handle other dangerous things. In fact he was in this trouble because he had stuck his nose in where it did not belong.

Sebas shook his head, looked away from the boy, and began walking. He pointed to someone who happened to meet his eyes.

"...Please take this boy to the temple. His ribs might be broken, so please take care when loading him onto a board for transport, and don't shake him too much."

With just that, Sebas walked away. There was no need to make his way through the crowd. This was as they separated where Sebas was.

Sebas began walking again, and he noticed.

There was someone tailing him. Of course, it may just be someone walking in the same direction as him. However, after turning several corners, Sebas was wondering what to think of that person.

"Now...."

Sebas was lost. Just what was the person tailing him.

It was neither Tsuare nor Solution. The footsteps and the stride lengths belonged to an adult man. There was one person.

Sebas tried to recall but he could not place the man anywhere. It might be one of the unhappy men from earlier, or it might be someone related to Bloom or Succulent.

"Should I capture him?"

Sebas turned a corner into a dimly-lit region. His followers remained on his trail.

"...Still, are they really hiding themselves?"

They had not concealed the sounds of their footsteps. Did they lack the

ability to do so, or was there some other reason? He decided not to think overmuch on the matter. Just when the presence of people was thinning out, and just when Sebas was about to begin, a hoarse—But young voice could be heard from behind him.

“—Excuse me.”

Chapter 65: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 5

The rain fell.

It was not a gentle rain. It was a noisy squall that buzzed in one's ear.

The rain fell to the ground and created puddles. The streets of the Royal Capital had not been designed with drainage in mind, particularly the small alleys. In the end, the entire alley became a miniature lake. Splashes of water flew up as raindrops fell upon the water's surface.

—A world painted grey by the rain. The water sprays kicked up by the wind filled the air with the scent of water.

It was as if the entire capital had been submerged underwater.

Inside that gray world, lived a person.

He lived in a run-down hovel. No, using the word hovel would be giving the location underserved praise.

That building was supported by narrow beams as wide around as a man's forearm. A tatty piece of cloth substituted for a roof, and the edges which draped down served as walls.

The occupant of the miserable shack, was a then young boy.

He was about six years of age. Such a child, lived in a shelter that could not be called a shelter. His limbs were thin, a look could tell you he did not have enough nutrients. The boy lay on a sheet that was thrown away as trash.

If one thought about it, the wooden planks that made the supporting pillar, and the shelter made from rags seemed like something a child would make.

However, the shelter was made by a child. Since the ideas of repelling water and insulation were not considered, it's environment was the same as the outside.

The temperature dropped due to the rain, and it was a matter of fact that one would shiver in the cold.

The boy had been soaked by the frigid rain and was rapidly losing body heat.

The boy's breath proved his existence for an instant, but it immediately disappeared in the cold air.

The boy's body was shivering, but he had no way to prevent it.

The rags he called cloths could not block out the cold. And his shelter made of rags and was full of holes could not do it either.

Water dripped in from the ceiling, and water puddled up on the floor. Surrounded by the two, there was no meaning for clothes.

However, the cold air seeping into his body felt refreshing to the boy's bruised body. If one looked for the silver lining, that would be it.

In a alley no one traversed, the boy lay down and stared.

Everyone else was naturally in their homes. The only things he could hear were the sound of the rain and his own breathing. There was nothing else in the absence of those sounds, which made him think he was the only person left in the world.

The boy was young, but he understood that he was going to die.

He was not afraid of it because he was young, and did not fully understand the concept of death. In addition, he did not feel that there was any particular reason to continue living.

Those who were rich or had authority strongly feared death. It was natural. There were chances for them to enjoy them. No one would enjoy losing them. Thus they tried to avoid death as much as possible. They used magic and medicine, searched for the knowledge of dragons and made deals with the devil.

However, he had none of those things. His way of life was something similar to avoiding pain.

If he could die, right then and there, without feeling any pain — only the chill of the wind — then death was hardly a bad thing.

He slowly lost the feeling in his rain-soaked body, and his mind began to fade into a blur. He should have found a place to hide from the rain before it

fell, but he had run afoul of several thugs and received a vicious beating. It was good enough that he had managed to return here.

What was misfortune?

It was quite common for him to go two days without eating, so that was hardly misfortune. He had neither parents nor anyone to take care of him, and that was how it had always been, so that did not qualify as misery. His tattered clothes and their repulsive stench were a fact of life for him, so that was not a hardship for him. Eating rotten food and drinking dirty water to fill his belly was the only way of life he knew, so it did not count as suffering.

But then, his hovel was sometimes taken by others, or destroyed by those who took pleasure in wrecking it, and he was also beaten up by drunken men so his entire body ached. Was that suffering, then?

But, it was the end.

The misfortune ended here.

Death came without distinction to the fortunate and the unfortunate alike.

—Yes, Death was absolute.

He closed his eyes.

His body had long since stopped feeling the cold, and now he lacked even the strength to open his eyes.

At that time, there was a strange sound.

The sound of the rain being blocked. In his flickering consciousness, his interest was pulled, and he put energy in her eyelids.

“It” entered the narrow field of his vision.

The boy’s rapidly-closing eyes widened.

It was beautiful.

For a moment, he had no idea what it was.

The best description for it would be “gem-like”, or “glittering like gold”. However, those were the words of those who had seen or had knowledge of such things.

Of course, someone like him who ate discarded, half-rotten food to survive the days could not think of such things.

Yes.

There was only one thing in his mind.

—*Like the sun.*

That was the most distant, unattainable thing he could imagine. That word appeared in his mind.

The rain had dyed the world grey. The sky was filled with thick, black clouds. Perhaps the sun felt that nobody would notice, and so it had taken a walk and appeared before him.

A thought like that ran through his mind.

“It” reached out a hand to stroke his face. And so—

The boy was originally not a human being.

Nobody had treated the boy as a human being.

But on this day, he became a human being.



The capital of the Re-Estize Kingdom. In its centre was the Ro-Lante Castle, which was surrounded by 20 giant 800m in circumference, protective towers.

This room was located within one of those 20 towers.

The lanterns were out in this none-too-spacious room, and there was a bed in there. A young man, somewhere between boyhood and adolescence, lay on the bed.

His blond hair was cropped very short and his skin was tanned and appeared healthy.

Climb.

He possessed only a name, but no surname, and he was a soldier who had been permitted to defend the lady with the title of “Golden”

Climb always woke up early.

He woke up before the sun rose.

When he realised his consciousness had emerged from a faraway world of darkness, his mind cleared up immediately, and his body was almost fully operational. Climb was proud of his ability to sleep and rise quickly.

His eyes opened wide, and an iron will burned within them.

In the pitch black world without light, Climb squirmed his way out of bed. Reacting to his movements, the wood beneath him squeaked.

“Fua” After yawning, Climb spoke in a hoarse voice. “Lights on.”

The lamp on the ceiling shed white illumination in response to Climb’s command word, lighting up the room’s interior. This was a magic item enchanted with the <Continual Light> spell.

This was Climb’s room, but it was not special.

One might think that it is natural that light would be created from torches or lamps, but in this place made of stone and with poor ventilation, it was not good to use light that needed combustion. So the initial cost was high, but all the rooms had magical lighting in them.

The room was awash with sunlight, and since the floor and walls were stone, the thin carpet placed upon the stone was almost pitiful. In addition, there was a crudely made wooden bed, and a slightly larger clothes cabinet that seemed big enough to store his wargear. There was a desk with drawers, and then a wooden chair with a thin cushion on its seat. In a corner of the room was a white full plate mail.

That was the level of furniture in his room.

An outsider might consider this austere, but it was more than he deserved, in his opinion.

Regular soldiers would not be allocated individual rooms. They would share double bunks and live in groups. The only other furniture they were assigned besides their beds was a locked wooden chest for storing personal items. One could understand how much Climb was favoured.

The thick blanket on his body—His surroundings were stone and so the

temperature of the room was quite low—was pulled off, and Climb rose out of bed.

He opened the dressing cabinet, and took clothes from within.

He looked at the figure in the mirror and adjusted his clothes.

Wearing clothes with the smell of metal, he lastly wore a chain shirt. Normally, he would have donned his armor on top of that, but there was no need to be so formal right now. In its place, he wore a many-pocketed vest and a pair of pants, and then he was dressed. He held a bucket with a cloth in it.

After that, he studied the mirror once more, inspecting himself for anything out of place or any oddities in his personal bearing.

Any mistakes Climb made would be fodder for attacks launched against the “Golden” Princess whom he served. He could not let others see any embarrassing things.

He looked at himself for a bit, nodded in satisfaction, Climb left the room.

His destination was a large hall.

His destination was a hall which occupied an entire floor of the tower.

Usually, this place would be abuzz with heat and activity from the soldiers here. However, it was early, so there was nobody here. The empty room was silent.

The magical lamps lit the training hall brightly.

Within the hall, there were pieces of armor tied to wooden pillars and dummies made of straw, to serve as archery targets. All manner of blunted weapons hung on the wall.

The use of this hall was obvious, it was the training hall for the soldiers.

The Valencia Palace lay within Ro-Lante Keep. So the training area was not outside, and was instead inside. Since there was training that could only be done outside, in such cases, it would be performed in a corner or done outside the palace.

Climb quietly entered the hall, as though wading through the cold air, and

began warming up in a corner.

After about half an hour of stretching, Climb's face was an uncommon shade of red. Sweat beaded on his forehead and he exhaled puffs of smoke from his exertions.

Climb wiped his sweat away and then approached the arms racks. He picked up a heavy, blunted practice sword with a freshly blistered and callused hand.

After that, he loaded his pockets with metal slabs.

After being weighed down by several metal slabs, his clothes now weighed as much as a suit of full plate armor. Unenchanted full plate was sturdy, but very heavy, and the joints also restricted one's range of movement. Therefore, Climb should have worn a set of full plate to practice, for realism's sake.

However, Climb did not want to wear a suit of full plate armor just for regular practice. In addition, he knew that the white armor he had been awarded was not suitable for training.

He tightly gripped his sword, which was larger than a greatsword, and adopted a high stance. Then Climb began to swing down, expelling his breath as he did. In the moment before the practice weapon struck the ground, he held it still, keeping it from actually striking the ground, and then brought it back up again as he inhaled. He slowly increased the speed of his swings, his eyes fixed on the air in front of him, his mind focused on his practice.

He repeated these movements more than 200 times.

Climb's face looked as though it could not possibly get any redder, and droplets of sweat flowed down his cheeks. His exhaled breath was hot, as though to vent the accumulated heat inside him.

Climb had been through harsh training as a soldier, but the weight of a greatsword was still quite heavy to him. Controlling the sword's speed to keep it from striking the ground after swinging it down required considerable arm strength.

His breathing got rough, but Climb showed no signs of stopping his swings.

After the 500th repetition, Climb's arms began to cramp up and they felt like

they were crying out in pain. The sweat flooded down his face in a deluge. Even so, he did not stop.

Climb realised that he was at his limit. Even so, he did not intend to stop here.

And then—

“—Don’t you think it’s time to take a break?”

—A third party called out to him. Climb hurriedly turned around to see a male figure enter his field of vision.

There was no better word to describe him than “mighty”. Indeed, he was a man who looked like a slab of forged steel. His stony face wrinkled, and the lines thus produced made him look older than his actual age.

His hair was cut short, and rather than refreshing, it gave off more of a dangerous feel.

There was no soldier in the Kingdom who could not recognize him.

“—Gazef-sama.”

He was the Kingdom’s Warrior-Captain, Gazef Stronoff. He was hailed as the mightiest man in the Kingdom, and a warrior which nobody in the nearby nations could rival.

He wore clothes that seemed easy to move in and looked at Climb.

“You’ll be overtraining if you keep it up. There’s no point forcing yourself.”

Climb lowered his sword, and looked at his arms as they trembled uncontrollably.

“You’re right. I might have been overdoing it.”

Gazef rounded his shoulders at Climb’s expressionless thanks.

“If you really understand, then don’t make me keep nagging you about the same old thing.”

Climb did not reply.

Gazef shrugged again as Climb bowed in apology. This back and forth had

repeated itself between them countless times. While Climb underwent extremely intensive training, Gazef would disapprove.

Under normal circumstances, the two of them would leave things at that and focus on their own training.

However, today was different.

“How about it, Climb. Shall we go a round or two?”

Climb’s typically blank expression was thrown into disarray. It was an expression of surprise that asked why. They had met here in the past, but they had never crossed blades. That was an unspoken rule between them.

It was impossible for Gazef to lose, but if it was a tough fight, nobles would turn it into material to attack Gazef. Gazef was a commoner, and had only rose up due to his sword skills, and this upset the nobles.

And if Climb lost, various nobles would push for their relatives to get closer to Renner. Renner was an absolute beauty, and was a princess without a fiancé, but highly prized Climb who was not a noble and left her security to him. Many nobles were unhappy with this.

Due to the abovementioned circumstances, they had never sparred with each other.

That being the case, why had Gazef decided to break this unspoken rule?

Climb had no idea if it was because of a good or a bad reason. He was confused and shocked, but he did not express it on his face.

However, the person before Climb was the mightiest warrior in the Kingdom. Though Climb’s momentary consternation might have gone unnoticed by an average person, the person before him picked up on it, and replied.

“Recently, I met a really strong warrior—No a knight? I fought him. It was quite a difficult battle and I wanted to train.”

A really strong warrior?”

A person who made the Strongest of the Kingdom, Gazef admit as strong. Climb wondered what sort of person that would be.

The Four Knights of the Empire [Heavy Explosion], [Unmoving], [Lightning] and [Fierce Gale]. He thought of them, but if Gazef fought with them it would be a war so he rejected it. Next was a “Certain” person who was like stone, but if it was her then Gazef would say her name.

Gazef understood Climb’s confusion. Gazef made a wry smile, and asked Climb.

“Well, don’t mind it. I feel like I can’t explain it....More importantly how about it?”

Climb glanced at the weapons rack, checked to make sure no one was there, and nodded.

He felt nothing about his question being evaded, and it was extremely difficult to ignore a chance to train with the Strongest in the Kingdom.

“Then, I pray you will exchange a few blows with me.”

“Ah.”

The two of them went for the weapons cabinet and picked out weapons suited for themselves. Gazef selected a bastard sword, while Climb selected a small shield and a broadsword.

After that, Climb removed the metal slabs from his pockets. It would be terribly disrespectful to wear them while fighting someone stronger than himself. Even if he cannot win, he still should try his best.

After Climb was ready, Gazef asked.

“Are your arms alright? Are they still stiff?”

“Yes, they’re fine.”

Climb waved his arms. Gazef saw his movements and nodded, knowing that he was not lying.

“Personally I would like you to use a tower shield but....”

“A tower shield? That is a bit....I am sorry.”

He deducted that the knight Gazef mentioned earlier most likely used a tower shield. However, Climb did not have the confidence to use such a large

shield.

“No, don’t mind me. More importantly, if you are done, shall we begin?”

“Eh, please treat me well.”

Climb slowly brought his sword down to a low stance, obliquing his body so his left side faced Gazef from behind his shield. The look in Climb’s eyes was razor-keen, indicating that he no longer treated this as a training bout. Similarly, Gazef’s stance spoke of battle-readiness.

Even if the blade was removed, it was a metal rod. If the location where it hit was bad, one might lose their lives. Training with that could be called a real battle.

The two of them locked eyes, but Climb could not bring himself to make the first move.

It was much easier to move now that he had removed the metal slabs, but still, he did not think he could beat Gazef. The other man was far superior to him in terms of physical ability and experience. If he simply stepped in he would eat a hit.

Then what should he do?

He could only fight with something Gazef did not have.

Climb was his inferior in physical parameters, experience and spirit; all the qualities a warrior required. If there was any way to address this disparity, it would be through their respective armament.

Gazef used a bastard sword. In comparison, Climb was using a broadsword and a small shield. Perhaps if his equipment was enchanted, he might be able to compensate, but these were practice arms, so their weapons were fundamentally the same.

However, Gazef only had one weapon, while Climb had two. While it split his power, there was the merit of the number of attack methods increasing.

—He would deflect a blow with his shield and then strike with his sword. Either that, or use his sword to make an opening and then bash with his shield.

Climb decided on his strategy, which was to take advantage of opportunities

to riposte. Then, he carefully studied Gazef's movements.

After several seconds. Gazef chuckled.

"Not coming? Then, maybe I should go to you—Are you ready?"

Gazef raised his sword in a casual manner. He lowered his stance, gathering strength like a coiling spring. Climb too began suffusing his body with might. Then, Gazef stepped forward, swinging his sword at the shield.

—So fast!

Climb immediately abandoned the idea of deflecting that blow. He turned all his energies to defense, in order to endure that hit.

And in the next moment — A startling impact exploded on his shield.

So mighty was the blow that Climb wondered if the shield had splintered. It had been so strong that Climb's shield hand had gone numb. He could not receive it. Climb grunted at his naivete, and then another impact blossomed on his gut.

"Guwaargh!"

Climb's body flew through the air. His back thumped heavily on the stone floor.

Gazef's legs strongly hit Climb's stomach.

"...You focused on my hands because I was only holding a sword. That's not good. You might end up taking a kick like just now. While I aimed for your belly just now, even with a cup, being kicked in the groin with a metal boot might break something if you're unlucky, no? You need to keep an eye on your opponent's entire body and study his every move."

"...Yes."

Climb slowly rose to his feet, gritting his teeth against the throbbing pain coming from his belly. If Gazef had been serious, he could have easily broken Climb's ribs through his chain shirt or otherwise left him unable to fight. However, the reason that did not happen was as he was not kicked with full force, and the force used was just enough to send him flying.

Climb raised his sword again, his heart brimming with gratitude.

Just how precious was the time to train with the Strongest in the Kingdom.

Climb covered himself up with his shield again. He inched towards Gazef, who studied Climb in silence. If this kept up, he would only be make the same old mistakes again. As Climb closed in, he was forced to reconsider his tactics.

The Strongest Warrior of the Kingdom, Gazef Stronoff. He knew their physical abilities were different, but Gazef's overshot his imagination. He was very naive to believe that he could land a hit with a shield.

Gazef placidly awaited his oncoming foe, a look of fearsome calm on his face. It would seem Climb could not force Gazef to use the full measure of his abilities.

However, that was—frustrating.

Was this frustration a feeling born from arrogance?

It was true that facing a strong man like Gazef, Climb's thoughts were absurd. Compared to the soldiers in the Kingdom, Climb was one of the strong. But he was only at the level where he was slightly better than a warrior Gazef led, or an adventurer that could not reach B Rank.

Climb was nearing his limit. Though he woke early to practice every day, he had not progressed. It was at that level.

It would be terribly rude for someone like Climb to grumble about not being able to force a gifted individual to use his true abilities. Rather, he should blame his own lack of talent for not being able to make his opponent go all-out.

However—Climb nashed his teeth together.

The belief in his chest. There was only one reason for it.

"Hoh," Gazef exhaled, and the expression on his face changed somewhat.

That was because the young man before him had a different look on his own face. Until just now, he looked like a starstruck lad, eager and nervous. But with a simple kick, that annoying mood was gone, and now he looked like a proper warrior.

Gazef raised his alertness level by a notch.

Even so—

“—Even if your spirit changed, the gap between our abilities is quite clear. Now, what will you do?”

To be honest, Climb had no talent. No matter how hard he tried—No matter how much he pushed his body, if he had no talent he could not reach the top. Gazef and the strongest opponent he faced, Brain Unglaus. Climb could not become one of them.

Even if he wanted to be stronger than anyone, it was outside the realm of possibility.

“Will is more important than the body. That is a lie.”

Gazef had not seen such a person. Someone who could have a will stronger than their body. He had seen cases of extreme strength in fires, and the release of limiters, but not will surpassing the flesh.

So he had to do something.

Why did he train with Climb.

The answer was simple enough; Gazef could not overlook Climb’s unwavering diligence, however useless it was. If every man had their own personal limits, then one could say that Gazef pitied the fact that Climb hurled himself bodily against the wall of his own limits.

Therefore, he wanted to teach Climb something else.

He felt that there was a limit to one’s abilities, but not limit to one’s experience.

“—Come at me, Climb.”

He received a strident answer to his self-directed mumbling.

“Yes!”

Climb dashed forward.

Unlike just now, Gazef’s expression was stern as he raised his sword into a high stance.

He would hack down from above.

If Climb blocked with his shield, he would be stopped in his tracks. If he blocked it with his sword, his weapon would be knocked away. That attack essentially made his defense meaningless. Blocking it was a poor move, but Climb was using a broadsword, which was shorter compared to Gazef's bastard sword.

All he could do was rush into Gazef's reach. Gazef knew this and squared himself to meet the charge.

It was like running into a tiger's maw — but Climb only hesitated for a moment.

He plunged into the attack range of Gazef's sword.

Gazef was waiting for him, and when he swung down, Climb blocked it with his shield. The awesome impact was greater than the one he had felt just now. Climb grimaced as pain worked its way down his arm.

"What a shame. To think history would repeat itself."

There was some disappointment on Gazef's face as he aimed his foot at Climb's belly, and then—

[Fortress!]

The look on Gazef's face changed to one of shock as he heard Climb shout.

The martial art Fortress did not require a shield or sword to be used. If desired, one could activate it with one's armor or even bare hands. Of course, most people would use it when blocking with one's weapon or shield because the timing had to be exact. When using it with armor, a miscalculation would result in one being left defenseless before the foes. Therefore, most people would rather use it with a shield or weapon. It was common sense.

But Fortress was not an unparalleled skill. It could kill the impact, but the damage was transferred to the weapon or shield. If done poorly, the shield or weapon could break.

However, Climb knew that Gazef would go for a kick, so he did not have to worry about that.

“Were you aiming for this?!”

“Yes, sir!”

Gazef’s kick was sucked in, like he kicked something soft. Normally that damage would be transferred to the armour, and the durability would decrease. However, even if it was by Gazef, his goal was to send Climb flying. It was not that strong.

His leg extended, Gazef could not put any power in his leg and gave up, and tried to return his foot to the floor. Climb cut in.

[Slash!]

He brought his sword up after initiating the maneuver, and then swung it down in an overhand chop.

You need to develop a technique that you can deploy with confidence.

After heeding the advice of a certain warrior, the untalented Climb had worked body and soul to produce this move, a strike that came from above.

Climb’s body was not sheathed in muscles. He had been born with an average physique, and building muscle was difficult. Neither was he gifted with dexterity, allowing him to move as he willed even with a musclebound body.

Because of that, he had honed a specialized muscle structure in himself after high-endless training.

The fruit of that was this downwards stroke.

It was a high-speed slashing attack that had been refined to extraordinary levels, a flash of steel followed by a mighty wind. That strike bore down on Gazef’s head.

It would be fatal if it connected, but Climb was not thinking about that. His trust in Gazef was absolute. He had only used this move because he was certain that the mighty Gazef would not be done in by an attack of that level.

There was a crisp ringing of metal, and the broadsword collided with the raised bastard sword.

All this was still within his expectations.

Climb focused the full extent of his strength in an attempt to throw Gazef off balance.

However, Gazef remained as motionless as a mountain.

It was difficult to maintain one's balance on one foot, yet Gazef had easily blocked that strike made with Climb's full strength. It was as though he were rooted into the very earth itself.

Climb had struck his mightiest blow with all the strength he could muster. Yet even the combination of these two factors could not shake Gazef standing on one foot. This fact shocked Climb to the core, and his eyes went to his belly.

He had to close in to strike with his broadsword. That meant Gazef might be able to kick his gut once more.

As Climb leapt away, said kick struck Climb's body.

There was a faint, throbbing pain. After that, both of them staggered several paces apart.

Gazef lowered his eyes and the corners of his mouth turned up slightly.

It was a smile, but not one that caused displeasure. It clearly displayed his good humor. Climb was a little uncomfortable in the face of that smile, which was like a father watching his son grow.

Very well done. Therefore, I shall get a little serious now."

Gazef's face changed.

A thrill of terror ran through Climb's body. That was because his instincts told him that the Kingdom's strongest fighter now stood before him.

"Actually, I've got a potion with me. It should be able to mend broken bones, so don't worry."

"...Thank you very much."

Climb's heart lurched as he heard his opponent imply that he would be taking a fracture. While he was used to being hurt, it did not mean that he enjoyed it.

Gazef took a step forward, twice as fast as Climb stepping in.

The tip of the bastard sword pointed to the ground, tracing a low path that came at Climb's legs. The sheer speed of the attack panicked Climb, and he planted his sword on the ground, preparing to protect his legs.

There was a fierce clash. Just as Climb realized it, Gazef's sword bounced up. The bastard sword travelled along the body of the broadsword in an upwards slash.

"Oog!"

Climb threw his face — and the rest of his body — backward, and the bastard sword zipped past his body. Several strands of severed hair fell in the wake of the swing.

Filled with fear at how Gazef had overwhelmed him in an instant, Climb cast his eyes toward the tip of the sword. Then, to his horror, he saw the bastard sword suddenly halt, and then turn.

His body was moving before his mind could think.

As though driven by a basic survival instinct, he stuck out his small shield, which collided with the bastard sword and produced a ringing sound of metal.

And then—

"—Ah!"

There was a surge of pain, and then Climb was sent flying across the room. He struck the ground rolling, and the impact jarred his sword loose from his grip.

It would seem the bastard sword had immediately changed direction into a horizontal sweep after bouncing off the shield, and it had savagely struck Climb's side, which he had left exposed.

"Flow from move to move. Do not think of attack and defense as separate things. Every movement must be made in order to launch the next attack. Think of your defense as a way of setting up an attack."

Climb picked up his fallen sword and grabbed at his waist as he struggled to his feet.

"I didn't use too much force to spare you a fracture, so you should be able to

fight, right? How do you feel?"

Climb's breathing was ragged from tension and pain, in contrast to Gazef's even, regular breaths.

He was only wasting Gazef's time if he could not even take a few hits. That said, Climb still wanted to become as strong as possible. He nodded to Gazef, and raised his sword.

"Alright. Then let's continue."

"Yes!"

With that hoarse cry, Climb broke into a run.

He was struck, he was knocked back, he was even bodily beaten. Climb crumpled to the stone floor over and over again. The cool slabs drained the heat from his body through his clothes and chain shirt, and it felt very comfortable.

"Huuu... huu... huu..."

He did not wipe his sweat away. More precisely, he lacked the strength to do so.

As pain flooded into his mind from all over his body, his whole body was gripped in a sudden surge of fatigue, and his eyes closed lightly.

"You did well. I tried to avoid breaking or splintering your bones while swinging. How do you feel?"

"..." Still on the ground, Climb moved his hands to feel up the places which hurt, then he opened his eyes. "No problems here. It hurts, but those are just bumps and bruises."

A bruise would still be quite painful, but it was not necessary to say that.

"Is that so... then we won't need to use the potion."

"Mm. Besides, using it carelessly will remove the effects of muscle training."

"Well, it's meant to provide rapid healing, but the effect of the magic also reverts the muscle to its original state. Just as well. You'll be going to bodyguard the Princess after this, am I right?"

“Yes.”

“Take it, then. Just in case. Use it if anything comes up.”

The medicine bottle clinked as Gazef set it down by Climb’s side.

“Thank you very much.”

He sat up, looking at Gazef.

He looked upon the man whose swordplay he could not hope to match.

The uninjured man different from Climb asked him.

“What’s wrong?”

“It’s nothing... I just thought you’re really amazing.”

Gazef’s forehead was devoid of sweat. His breathing was calm and regular. Was this the difference between Climb, sprawled on the ground, and the strongest man in the Kingdom? Climb sighed, but he was satisfied with this outcome. Gazef, on the other hand, seemed to be grinning.

“...Really now. Well...”

“Why—”

“—If you want to ask why I’m so strong, I can’t rightfully give you an answer. Basically, I was talented. Incidentally, I learned how to fight as a mercenary. The nobles call my habit of kicking people crude, but I learned it during that time too.”

There was no way to be strong. Gazef said so, and Climb felt dejected. His hope that if he did the same training as Gazef, he could become slightly stronger was dashed.

“In that sense, you’re quite suited for my style of fighting with fists and feet, Climb.”

“Is... that so?”

“Oh yes. You haven’t been trained as a swordsman or a soldier, but that has its good points too. Once one picks up a sword, it’s only natural to focus on using it... but I don’t think that’s a good thing. I feel that the sword should only be an attack method, alongside punching and kicking and so on. That’s a

practical fighting style; or a dirty... an adventurer's fighting style."

Climb's face was no longer its usual blank slate. There was a smile there now. To think the mightiest man in the Kingdom would actually praise his haphazard, slapdash sword skills.

Climb was not taught by anyone. To be more precise, there was no one in the Kingdom who would teach Climb swordsmanship. So he would watch the movements of the soldiers in the training hall. So everything was irregular, and did not stick to any style.

His unsightly swordsmanship was made fun of by the nobles, and he did not think that he would be praised.

"Alright, we'll stop training here. I should go. I need to meet the king in time to for his breakfast. Don't you need to hurry to the Princess' side?"

"No, because the Princess has a guest today."

"A guest? Which noble is that?"

To think that Princess would have a caller. Gazef was quite surprised, and then Climb answered.

"Yes, Aindra-sama."

"Oh, one of the two crazy heads of the Aindra family."

Climb returned to his expressionless face, and did not reply. He could not speak badly of his master's best friend. From the perspective of the nobles she might be weird, but if one looked at the world, she was someone who could not be rivaled. A human like Gazef—or someone who was a good friend of that oddball and had their names known everywhere could say it, someone like Climb could not.

"I see... so that was it... so if a friend's come, that means..."

Gazef nodded, and Climb felt that his thoughts had changed.

Climb felt that Gazef thought that since a friend had come, Renner could not eat with Climb, but Climb was invited. However, even Climb felt that he had to refuse.

Climb had met Aindra through Renner, and Aindra thought well of him. Surely she would not reject Climb like the other nobles if he were to join them at a dinner party.

He predicted that if he were sandwiched between the two of them and ate, his mind would not hold up. Thus he refused.

“Then are you going after breakfast?”

“Yes, that is my intention.”

“I see....Then I’m sorry for taking so much of your time. Breakfast just started, and now should be a good time.”

This room would become noisy after the meal.

“Thank you very much for today, Gazef-sama.”

“Please, don’t stand on ceremony. I had a good time too.”

“...If it pleases you, could I ask for your guidance again, like today?”

Gazef could not answer for a moment. Climb saw his reaction and began to apologize, but Gazef spoke first.

“That’s fine. As long as there’s nobody else around, of course.”

Climb keenly understood Gazef’s reluctance, and so he did not say much. He forced his sore aching body to his feet and spoke his heartfelt feelings.

“Thank you very much!”

Gazef waved back grandly, and strode forth.

“Then please tidy up here. It would be terrible if I could not meet the King for his morning meal... oh yes, that downward slash of yours was pretty good. However, you need to think about what comes after that. Consider what you’d do if your strike was dodged or blocked.”

“Yes!”

Chapter 66: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 6

After bidding farewell to Gazef, Climb wiped off his sweat with a damp towel and headed to a place that was drastically different from the training hall of just now.

The sound of hustle and bustle could be heard from a distance.

It was filled with many long tables and benches, packed with people chatting happily away. A delicious fragrance filled the warm air of the room.

This was the dining hall.

After entering the room, Climb passed through the hubbub of humanity and joined the back of the line.

Much like the people in front of him, Climb had several stacked containers in front of him. A wooden tray, on which stood a wooden stew bowl. Along with a wooden cup.

He collected his meal in the appropriate order.

A large steamed potato and two hard black pieces of bread, and a white stew.

The dishes smelled fragrant on his tray. Climb looked around the dining hall as the smell prickled at his gut.

The noisy soldiers were currently eating. They sat with their friends and as they ate, they talked about what they would do on their next leave, the food, their families, and other light topics. This was standard fare.

Climb spotted an empty seat and wound through the din as he headed for it.

He stepped over the bench and took a seat. There were soldiers on either side of him, chatting heartily with their friends. As Climb sat down, they turned to look at him, but then they immediately lost interest and turned their eyes elsewhere.

An onlooker might think this was quite creepy.

It was as though Climb sat in the eye of the storm.

Though there was cheery conversation all around him, nobody sought out Climb to speak to him. While it was true that nobody would chat up a stranger, they were all soldiers, serving in the same location, and they might need to depend on each other in times of mortal danger. From that point of view, their attitude was quite strange.

It was as though Climb did not exist to them. On his part, Climb did not plan to speak to anyone else, because he clearly understood his position.

The guards in Ro-Lante Keep were not mere soldiers.

The guards of the Kingdom were normally taken from the commoners. However having simple commoners protect the places near royalty and important information was not a good choice.

So the guards protecting Ro-Lante Castle had the recommendations of nobles, and so could be chosen from among the commoners.

If the guard did anything here, the noble who made the recommendation would take responsibility; this was to discourage those from doing harm.

However, this practice led to a certain phenomenon.

That was “factionalization”.

Factionalization would occur naturally when multiple people were here, so of course there would be among the guards. One probably should be able to recognise it without a second thought as a natural matter of course

All the sponsoring nobles belonged to one faction or another. The troops they recommended would naturally join their masters’ factions. Since anybody who opposed the nobles had no chance of being picked at all, it was hardly a leap to say that all the soldiers here were affiliated with one faction or another.

While it was true that the sponsoring nobles might not belong to a faction, under the current circumstances, the Kingdom was split into the Noble and the Royal Faction. There was no noble who was skilled enough to float between these two sides like a bat.

And so as mentioned earlier, there are almost no exceptions. Yes—Almost.

—There is an existence beyond such factions.

That individual was Climb.

If one thought of Climb's position, it might be natural to think that he would be part of the Royal Faction. However an act where a guard, no a personal guard of Princess Renner were to be inducted was not allowed.

An existence without strong influence but close to the Crown. In addition without a known background, was frowned at by nobles.

An existence that could not be taken into the Royal Faction, but if left alone would still work with them. The opposing Noble Faction could take him in, but it had huge risks associated with it.

From the Royal Faction's perspective, there might be a strange feeling.

However, even though it was a faction, it was a gathering of countless nobles. So of course not all had the same idea. A faction was a gathering of those who had the same thoughts and merits. So if the Royal Faction had people who refused to accept Climb—A commoner with an unknown background—There would be people in the Noble Faction who would want to take him in.

They could say to work together, but would there be idiots who would go against their faction for the sake of Climb?

So they did not want their opponents to have him, and they themselves did not want them. Climb had such an evaluation from both sides.

Climb ignored their reaction and started eating.

He split the steamed potato in two with a knife. The broken parts had steam rise out from them, and Climb pierced it with a fork and brought it to his mouth.

“Ffffuff, Fffffuff.”

It was just hot enough to be good. While cooling in his mouth, Climb chewed the potato. The added salt might have been too much for some, to Climb who had just sweated a lot, it was perfect.

Filling the spoon with dirty white stew, he picked it up together with the bowl. The thin meat, carrots and cabbage were delicious and was quickly

finished. However it was normal for a guard to not drink all the soup.

Breaking the break, he dabbed it in the soup. The hard bread was now softened enough to eat.

Climb placed the softened bread in his mouth as if swallowing it.

His meal ended within 10 minutes.

Since the potato was large, he felt quite filled.

“Alright, let’s go.”

Just as he was about to stand up, he bumped into a passing soldier.

Climb’s face was impassive as an elbow struck the place where he had been hurt while sparring with Gazef, but he froze from the pain.

The soldier who had hit him said nothing, just carried on. The soldiers around him kept silent too.

Several people furrowed their brows as they saw this, but nobody said anything.

The pain passed, Climb heaved a sigh as he left holding his utensils.

His face had no expression on it. It was as if he thought nothing of the earlier surprise. No, he was probably not thinking much about it.

This much was par for the course. He was simply glad that there was no hot stew in the bowl at that time.

Nearly being tripped by an extended foot. People running into him under the pretense of an accident.

—So what?

Climb continued forward. They could not do anything more to him — not in a public place like the dining hall.

Climb kept his chin up throughout. His eyes were fixed forward and he would not waver.

If he showed any sign of unseemly behavior, it would cause problems for his mistress Renner. After all, every move Climb made reflected directly on the

reputation of Renner, the woman to whom he owed his loyalty.

Dressed in his white full plate armor, his sword by his side, a fully-equipped Climb stepped into the Valencia Palace.

The Valencia Palace was roughly divided into three wings, and he had just entered one of them. This was the largest of the three, where the Royal Family resided.

Different from where Climb was earlier, the brightly designed palace was reflected in Climb's eyes.

Inside the wide and clean hallways were the figures of the knights in full plate mail. They were the knights of the Palace guard.

The Knights of the Empire were commoners recruited and trained into professional soldiers. In comparison the knights of the kingdom were those that had noble ranks, and had responsibilities as guards. So most had the responsibility for being the leader of the guards.

Incidentally, Gazef's position as Warrior-Captain was because many people opposed his knighthood, and so the King created a new appointment for him. Since then, the group of elite soldiers that he had picked and trained personally were known as Warriors.

Climb nodded slightly to them. Almost all of them returned the gesture. Only a few of them did so reluctantly; the vast majority were sincere in their courtesy.

Climb walked along a hallway that was cleaned to a level that one would think that trash nor dust existed. The white full plate rang like a bell with his footsteps, this was as mithril was mixed in during its construction.

He passed by the maids working there, and they cringed every time they saw Climb's face.

It was not because there was a person making loud sounds within the quiet palace. This was as their gaze had the feeling of having something dirty enter their sights.

Despite having such an attitude directed at by the maids, Climb's expression

did not change.

Unlike regular maids, the maidservants of the Royal Palace were all noblewomen who had come here to raise their own standing. Thus, to some extent, they were of higher status than Climb.

So Climb believed that it was natural for the maids to have that attitude. However when in Renner's presence, they would still bow to Climb, so when Renner was not around, he believed that it should be fine for them to show some unhappiness.

Therefore Climb completely did not notice that the maids believed him to be snubbing them and becoming even more angry causing a vicious cycle to occur.

Well if Climb could notice, he would have found a better method to handle it.

Rather than focused, Climb could be called simple-minded instead. So if a small handful of the maids performed a perfunctory bow to him, it would be troubling him instead.

This was as to a person of low birth like Climb, returning the greeting to a noble lady would cause him to panic.

Climb position was extremely difficult.

Originally Climb could not work for Renner. This was due to his standing. It was normal that for a person of low birth to find it impossible to be guarding royalty. Those guarding royalty would be at least those with a noble title.

However, the strongest warrior in the Kingdom, Gazef Stronoff, the most elite guard was an exception. Adding on to that, if the Princess Renner strongly insists, those who could publicly oppose were few.

Those of the ranks of prince or king could say their piece, but since the King himself recognised it, there was no merit to sticking their necks out. There was no point for those who were cherished as much as Renner by the King to do so.

The fact that Climb had a private room was part of this.

This was as it was not clear where the existence known as Climb should be located within the palace.

Normal guards could not have their own room. They would be in large rooms in their groups. However Climb was different from them, in that his focus was Renner's safety and would often receive many orders from her.

And they had to respect the honour of the noble rank, so it was a terrible position to be in, where it was not known where he should be.

This was the reason why most of the maids and knights had irregular reactions to his presence.

Climb arrived at his most frequently-visited room in the palace.

Having a man like him arrive at the rooms of female royalty was an exception among exceptions. If done poorly, even the King would be stopped, and in a sense was the place that was the most difficult to enter within the Kingdom.

Climb casually turned the knob.

Entering without knocking was an exceedingly impolite course of action. However, the owner of this room had asked him to do so. His mistress had refused to listen to his protests, no matter what he said.

In the end, Climb had given in. There was no way he could win when women's tears flowed.

That said, entering without knocking was very stressful on Climb.

People who do that ought to be punished.

It was only natural for him to feel stressed out when he thought about that as he opened the door.

Just as Climb was about to push it open, he heard the sounds of a heated discussion through the half-opened door.

There were two voices. Both were women, and he knew the two well.

One of them belonged to his mistress. Climb was still standing outside the door but she had not noticed him. That was probably because she was too excited about the discussion. That being the case, Climb did not wish to dampen her ardor. Climb stood still, listening to the discussion within the room. He felt guilty about eavesdropping, but he would feel worse if he interrupted their

conversation.

“—I told you, didn’t I? People have always focused on immediate gains.”

“Hm...”

“...The crop rotation plan you were talking about, Theiere... I have no idea how that will increase yields... but how long will it take to show results?”

“About six years or so.”

“And how much money will be lost in planting other crops during these six years?”

“That would depend on the crops in question. However, assuming a normal yield is 1, I think the yield would go down to 0.8... in other words, it’s a 20% loss of revenue. However, after the sixth year, the yield will go up by 0.3 forever. I’m sure the figure will be higher if we add pastures for livestock into the mix.”

“...That does sound quite tempting, but can farmers really take a loss of 20% of their income for six whole years?”

“...I think we could have the country extend interest-free loans to compensate for the 20% loss and then ask for repayment after the yields return to normal... If the yields don’t go up, then it won’t have to be repaid, or there could be some other way. The important thing is that once the yields go up, the loans can be paid off in four years.”

“That might be hard.”

“Why is that?”

“I told you, didn’t I? People prefer to focus on immediate gains, and many people want stability. A lot of people will hesitate even if you tell them they’ll be able to get 130% of their original crops in six years.”

“I... don’t get it. It worked really well on the test field...”

“Maybe the experiment went well, but you still can’t guarantee that it’ll succeed.”

“...Well, it’s true that we didn’t foresee every possible condition while conducting the experiment, so we can’t be absolutely certain of the results. If

we had to consider soil quality and the weather as well, the experiment would have become too big...:"

"That's troubling. I don't know if that 30% increase is a minimum figure or an average amount. Either way, it's not very convincing. You need to guarantee profits, and that they won't lose out in the short term."

"How about subsidizing the 20% shortfall for the six-year period?"

"The Noble Faction would love that, because it would weaken the King's power."

"But, if we can guarantee a big return after six years, the Kingdom will grow stronger too, right?"

"That also means that the opposing Noble Faction will become stronger as well, while the King's side will have 20% lower yields. The nobles of the Royal Faction won't stand for it."

"Then how about asking the merchants..."

"Those big traders? They have their own politics among them. If they help the Royals too readily, it might ruin their relationship with the Nobles."

"There sure are a lot of problems... Alvein."

"...And they all come up because you're not good at forward planning. Well... I do understand it's hard to get a proposal passed when there are two huge blocs within the country... What about just implementing it under Crown territory?"

"My brothers won't approve."

"Ah, you mean those ret... those gentlemen who left their wisdom in their mothers' bellies for your sake."

".....But we don't have the same mother."

"Ahhhh, then they left it in the King! Still, it's pretty bad when even the Royal Family isn't united..."

The room returned to silence, and the tiny sound of porcelain hitting each other could be heard by Climb.

"—Ah, you can come in."

“Hm?”

Climb’s heart lurched as he heard those words. He was surprised that she had sensed his presence, but at the same time, he had been somewhat expecting that.

“—Pardon me.”

After bowing his head, the scene that entered Climb’s vision was a familiar one.

Apart from its owner, the one who knew the most about the room of Princess Renner was Climb. Some parts were extravagant, but not over the top. In that room, was a table near the window where there were two women.

Sitting there were two blonde ladies. Both of them were beautiful young ladies in complementary dresses.

One was the owner of this room, Renner.

Sitting opposite her, was a woman with blonde hair that was bound up in a weird fashion, as if she were using a wig. Her purple eyes made one think of amethysts, and her healthy pink lips glistened in the light.

While her looks fell short of Renner, she exuded a charm of her own. If Renner sparkled like a gemstone, then she glowed with vitality.

Her name was Lakyus Alvein Dale Aindra.

It was hard to tell given the sheer pink dress she wore, but this woman was the leader of one of the two adamantite-ranked adventurer teams in the Kingdom, and Lakyus’ closest friend.

She was 19. Despite her young age, she had accomplished many great exploits, and the reason why she could reach the realm of A+ was due to her overwhelming talent.

Climb felt the stirring of jealousy in the depths of his soul. However he immediately suppressed that disgusting emotion.

“Good morning, Renner-sama, Aindra-sama.”

“Good morning, Climb.”

“Morning.”

After greeting them, Climb made to move to his designated location — Behind and to the right of Renner. But he was stopped.

“Climb, not there. Here.”

Renner indicated the chair to her right.

Climb found this very strange. There were five chairs arranged around the circular table. That much was normal. However, three cups of tea had been poured.

One was in front of Renner, another was before Lakys, and one more was in front of the seat beside Lakys — not the one Renner had indicated.

Since steam was still rising from it, it was just poured. Was that for Climb? Then the reason it was placed there was to tell him to sit next to Lakys. Or was it just there due to chance.

He heard that his guests only included Lakys, so had the King visited? Various possible answers appeared in his head, and Climb had a rough guess.

“But...”

“Ah, I don;t mind. I would prefer for Theiere to return to her old way of speaking.”

“Aindra-sama....”

“I told you before, didn’t I? Call me Lakys.” Lakys looked to Renner.
“Climb’s special.”

“...Meanie.”

Lakys appended what sounded like a heart to the end of her sentence in sickly-sweet tones, to which Renner replied with a note of mock complaint and a smile. Of course, that was if a curl of the lips which was not matched by her eyes counted as a smile.

“...Aindra-sama, please don’t tease me.”

“Yes yes.”

“Eh? Teasing?”

Faced with Renner's look of surprise, Lakyus froze in an incredibly fake way before exhaling with exaggerated intensity.

"Of course. Well, Climb *is* special, but that's because he's yours."

"Mine? Ufufufu"

Climb moved his uncomfortable gaze away from the chuckling Renner and then widened his eyes.

That was because there was someone seated in the shadows in the corner of the room, hugging their knees to themselves. Her black hair hid half of her face, and her tight fitting clothes were black as well.

A woman's whose appearance did not match that of the room.

"Wha-!"

Shocked, Climb grabbed at the sword at his waist.

He was confused at the fact that while someone like Lakyus was here, her presence was undetected, but he thought of the possibility that she was an assassin, and he shifted into a battle stance.

Dropping his waist, Climb moved to protect Renner just as his gaze met the sighing Lakyus.

"Now you've gone and scared Climb by taking on that appearance."

There was no caution or awareness of danger in Lakyus's cool voice. Climb realized what that meant and let the strength drain from his shoulders.

"Understood, boss."

Replying with an unexpectedly low voice, the woman crouching in the darkness jumped up from her position with an unnatural body strength.

"Ah, you probably don't know her, Climb. She's a member of my team—"

"—It's Tina-san."

Following after Lakyus' words was Renner's.

Among the members of the adventurer party Blue Rose, he had not met the women Tia and Tina. He had heard that they had rogue-type skills, and so after

seeing that appearance, he understood.

Given her long limbs and her tight-fitting clothes, she looked the part of someone versed in thief-type techniques.

...Forgive me.”

Climb bowed deeply to Tina. She was an acquaintance of Lakys, and on top of knowing Renner, she was a guest. He had shown a battle stance to her, and this might cause a problem that a bow could not solve.

“Huh? Don’t worry about it.”

She waved casually to Climb, and then she silently stalked towards the table with the fluid grace of a savage beast. Then, she took a seat on the chair beside Lakys. It would seem the tea from just now was hers.

Climb carefully surveyed his surroundings to check for another unseen female. There were only three cups of tea on the table, so it seemed unlikely, but he did so anyway.

Lakys sensed the reason behind Climb’s gawking and said.

“Tia’s not here.”

“—That girl should be gathering intelligence today. It’s all our Oni leader’s fault.”

A frightening smile came over Lakys’ face as she heard the words “Oni”. Climb tore his eyes away and said.

“I see... I hope I’ll be able to see her sometime.”

“Climb, Tina-san and Tia-san are twins. Even their hairstyles are almost identical.”

“So once you’ve seen one, you’ve seen the other.”

“I see.”

Climb understood it. Still, Tina stared unabashedly at Climb, making him feel uncomfortable. His original plan was just to bear with it, but then he realised that she might have noticed something about him, and so he made up his mind to ask her.

“Is something the matter?”

“You’re too big.”

“...Huh?”

He heard, but he did not understand. After seeing the question marks popping up over Climb’s head, Lakys cut in and apologized.

“Its nothing; just an in-joke. Don’t take it to heart, okay, CLimb? No, don’t worry about it. Really.”

“Yes...”

“...What’s the matter, Alvein?”

Climb told himself not to be a busybody, but Renner could not seem to accept that and interjected. Lakys had a sour look on her face as she looked at Renner.

“Really, whenever we start talking about Climb...”

“Ah, I—”

“—Quiet. I didn’t bring Tia along because she’d fill Theiere’s head with nonsense. So could you please understand that and not blabber on so much?”

“Yes, Oni Boss.”

“...Alvein. What’s all this about?”

Lakys’ face began to twitch once Renner began asking, and her expression turned depressed.

She shifted her line of sight to Climb just as he was about to butt in.

“Hm... Climb, it looks like you really favor this suit of armor.”

“Yes. This armor is exquisite. Thank you very much.”

This was about an awkward of a topic change as there could be, but Climb did not want to embarrass a guest.

After going with it, he idly stroked the suit of snow-white full plate armor which his mistress had gifted him. A quarter was mithril, and the armour had body enhancement magic in it, which made it light, hard and easy to move in.

[Blue Rose] had supplied the mithril for its construction at no charge. Climb could not thank them enough for that, however low he bowed.

Lakyus stopped Climb who was about to bow.

“Don’t worry about it. We simply gave you the leftover materials from making our mithril armor.”

While she called them leftovers, the fact was that mithril was an extremely expensive material. Those who could become A Class had that cash, and B Classes might have had weapons made of mithril. Those who could give it out for free would only be those of A+ strength.

“Besides, Theiere asked me. How could I refuse?”

“—You refused to take my money. I had some pocket money saved up...”

“...It’s not right for a princess to spend her allowance, don’t you think?”

“That’s separate from my domain’s income. I just wanted to use my own money to make Climb’s armor.”

“I figured you wanted to use your own money to make a shiny new set of full plate for Climb—”

“...If you knew, then why did you give it to me for free? Alvein, you dummy.”

“Given the circumstances, should you really be calling me a dummy...”

Thus did the fuming Renner and the giggling Lakyus go back and forth, in an argument that hardly qualified as an argument.

As he saw this Climb’s face stiffened into an emotionless mask.

The fact that he could witness a heartwarming scene like this was all thanks to being rescued by his mistress. However, he could not allow himself to express his feelings.

Showing his gratitude was one thing, but behind that gratitude was a powerful emotion that could never be displayed.

That was his love for her.

Climb forcibly crushed that feeling and hid it away within himself. In its place, he repeated the lines he had repeated several times now.

“Thank you very much, Renner-sama.”

For just a bit— Such that only someone who saw her everyday like Climb could notice, Renner smile had a hint of loneliness in it.

“It’s fine. Let’s get back to the previous discussion.”

“—Since Climb is here that would be boring! Shall we do something different?”

“Eh? I think that he should hear it together with him?”

“...You should focus. I’m not always free you know.”

“You are quite busy.”

“Eh. A+ jobs are quite rare, but I have various other things to do.”

Climb recalled his job of protecting Renner, and frowned slightly, but was still mostly expressionless nevertheless.

However together with two A+ adventurers, his protecting was simply a bother. And it would be rude to interrupt the time between friends. Female friends of Renner were restricted to only her after all.

“I agree. Interrupting the precious time between friends is....”

“I don’t mind at a—”

“—Thank you. Speaking of which do you have anything to do?”

“No, if Renner-sama has nothing, neither to I.”

“I would....With Climb....”

“I see. Then can I ask it of you?”

“If it can please Renner-sama”

“So, how about it? Can I borrow Climb?”

Looking at Lakys and Climb, Renner was having her head being rubbed by Tina.

“The two of you are ignoring me....”

“It’s ok, it’s ok. Pitiful, pitiful.”

“...What are you doing?”

Lakyus was looking at Renner with cold and half closed eyes, as she had expanded her cheeks like a squirrel.

“The two of you are ignoring me.”

“...Really, when it comes to Climb you turn into a child. Well it’s fine, I’ll borrow Climb for a bit.”

“Eh? ...Eeeh.”

“It’s fine. I want to have a proper discussion with you today. So I want him to send a message to my comrades.”

Chapter 67: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 7

Climb walked along the main street of the Royal Capital. Climb blended perfectly into the mass of humanity, given that he had few distinguishing features about him.

Walking around the town in white full plate would draw attention, so he removed it. While he could use certain alchemical items to change its color, he was not that attached to it. Besides, there was no need to go around in full plate armor while walking on the streets.

Instead, Climb was lightly equipped. His most noticeable points were the chain shirt below his clothes and the long sword hanging from his waist.

People with such outfits could occasionally be seen in the crowd. It wasn't the heavy type of armor that causes crowd to part

While Climb's outfit should be correct, it was incorrect as well.

As a soldier he should be wearing soldier-like clothes, and he should be wearing the pure white full plate armour that was given to him by Renner. Of course, Climb did have an excuse. He was not working as a soldier now, and he didn't want to use his cherished Full Plate Mail received from Princess Renner for any duty except but protecting her. In addition, it was embarrassing to stand out too much.

However, Climb was thinking this way, because he was a soldier, not an adventurer

Dressing in an eye-catching way was not a strange thing for adventurers. Of course, this was excluding cases where secrecy was necessary. The reason why adventurers had eye-catching outfits was related to their publicity. Giving off a strange impression left a strong impact, and increased the rumours about them.

Adventurers who thought that this was embarrassing, were in fact thought of as fools. However, there were exceptions; [Blue Rose] who Climb was meeting, was at such a level where such tactics were unnecessary.

At their level, they would make conversation just by walking along the street.

Soon, he saw an adventurer's inn along the road. Not all of the plot of land was used for the inn, there was the main building, a stable and a large field that was probably used for training.

Its beautiful exterior promised an equally exquisite interior, and the guest windows were fitted with pieces of clear glass.

This was the Royal Capital's most expensive inn and was a gathering place for adventurers who were confident of their skills and able to pay the onerous bills.

Climb opened the inn's door.

The drinks bar cum dining hall occupied the entire first floor, but it was sparsely populated with adventurers, considering its size. This clearly showed the rarity of high-paid adventurers.

The clamor within the inn quieted for a moment as several curious gazes were thrown in Climb's direction. He did not mind, and looked around the interior.

The place was full of strong adventurers, and most could probably defeat Climb. Among them were people who could instantly defeat him.

However, the people he was looking for were not at that level.

His gaze instantly stopped in a corner of the bar. It was natural. There was no way he could overlook such existences.

In front of him — in the innermost depths of the inn — was a round table. It was located outside the area that was in the bright light of the chandelier. He looked at the two people seated around it.

One of them was tiny, dressed in a long black robe which covered their entire body.

Their face could not be seen. It was not because the light was insufficient, but because they wore a strange, full-face mask set with a bloodstone. There was a narrow crack running along eye level, but that did not even reveal the

color of the eyes underneath it.

Then, there was the other person.

If the first person was a midget, then this one would be a giant. Seeing this person brought the word “boulder” to mind. Indeed, that person had a stout and massive body, but that girth was not born of obesity.

That person’s arms reminded observers of logs, while the neck which held the head up seemed as wide around as a pair of a woman’s thighs. The head which sat upon that neck was squarish in shape. The heavysset chin — currently clenched closed — and the way that person’s eyes surveyed its surroundings reminded one of a carnivorous beast. The blonde hair upon that head was trimmed short for the sake of practicality.

That person’s chest bulged mightily under their clothes, as though on proud display. Said chest resembled nothing so much as thoroughly-honed pectoral muscles. Put more clearly, this was no longer a tender feminine bosom.

This was the A+ adventurer team— Blue Rose.

They were two members of the famous adventurer party comprised of only women.

The magic caster: Evileye, and the warrior: Gagaran.

Climb headed towards them. They had probably noticed him the moment he walked in, but since he walked towards them, they probably confirmed that it was him. One of them nodded and spoke in a loud husky voice.

“Yo, cherry boy!”

The gazes that had been slowly drifting away all focused on Climb once more, but nobody mocked him. Instead, they turned away once more, as though in sympathy for him.

They did this because they knew that showing the slightest bit of disrespect to Gagaran’s guest was not so much bravery, but foolhardiness. Yes. Even A and B Class adventurers.

While being called in an embarrassing manner, Climb maintained a calm face and continued walking.

No matter how many times he pleaded with her, Gagaran refused to address Climb by his proper name. That being the case, the best course of action he could take was to give up and pretend he did not care.

“Good to see you again, Gagaran-sa—san. And Evileye-sama.”

He arrived before the two of them and bowed.

“Oh, it’s been a while. What, come to sleep with me, have you?”

Gagaran jerked her chin, indicating that he should take a seat. There was an evil, savage grin upon that square face of hers. Climb simply shook his head blankly.

Gagaran said the same thing every time, to the point where it had become something like a form of greeting. However, she was not joking in the slightest. If Climb answered “yes”, even in jest, she would immediately drag him into a singles’ room on the second floor.

Gagaran, who prided herself as a “cherry picker”, was such a person.

In contrast to Gagaran, Evileye faced stoically forward, her face unmoving. Perhaps she was eyeing Climb under her mask, but he could not be sure of that.

“No, that’s not it. Aindra-sama bade me come.”

“Hm? Leader did?”

“Yes. A message. She will stay with Renner today.”

“Ok. Is that it?”

“Yes, that is all.”

“Hmm, you’ve troubled yourself over a small matter.”

Gagaran’s face lit up with a broad smile, and Climb remembered that he had something else to tell her.

“Today I had the good fortune of sparring with Stronoff-sama. The move you taught me then — the big downward chop — met with Stronoff-sama’s approval.”

“Oh, that move!” Gagaran had taught him that blow in the practice yard behind this inn. Her face split with a grin. “Hehe, not bad, kid. Still...”

“Yes. I won’t be satisfied with just that. I will continue to practice and seek perfection.”

“You’ve got to keep training, of course. But you should also think about what to do if someone counters that move. Think of a move to continue from it.”

Climb did not reply but instead seriously considered her words. Gaganan smiled at him. She implied that he did not need to think that hard.

“Originally you should have a countless repertoire of moves and respond accordingly. But you can’t do that.” She indirectly said that Climb had no talent, and continued. “And so become confident enough to attack thrice consecutively. A series that your opponent cannot handle.”

“Yes.”

“Of course, that won’t work when fighting monsters. But against humans, that ought to be enough.”

“Yes.”

“While you’ll be in trouble once your opponent sees through your attack patterns, it ought to be effective the first time you face any foe. Hammer them, hammer them and keep hammering them.”

“Understood.”

Climb nodded heavily.

This morning, he had only managed to get one hit in on Gazef. On every other occasion, Gazef had seen through him immediately and he had been counterattacked in turn.

Then, could he lose confidence because of that? Of course not.

Could he allow himself to fall into despair because of that? Of course not.

It was the opposite.

It was precisely the opposite.

A mere commoner like himself had been able to come that close to the strongest warrior in the Kingdom — no, the surrounding countries. Climb knew that Gazef had not begun to show his true power, but to Climb — who had

been walking a pitch-black path with no light in sight — it was a tremendous dose of encouragement.

It was like telling him: *Your efforts were not in vain.*

As he thought about that, he fully understood what Gaganan was trying to say.

He was not confident that he could develop a good combination attack, but he was willing to try. A flame had been lit in the depths of his heart. He was determined to become stronger, so that he could draw out more of Gazef's strength the next time he sparred with the Warrior Captain.

"...Right, I think you asked Evileye about something before, didn't you? Something about learning magic?"

"Yes."

Climb glanced at Evileye. At that time, she had merely laughed at him from under her mask and the matter had been forgotten. Asking her the same thing now, when nothing had changed, would only yield the same answer.

However—

"Kid."

A muffled voice reached his ears.

For a voice that was simply passing through a mask, it was eminently mysterious. Even if she was wearing a mask, considering it wasn't much thick, at least voice traits should be clear to some extent. However, except that it probably belonged to a female, Evileye's voice didn't give away neither her age nor emotions. It was that of an elderly person, but at the same time that of a young girl. And this voice sounded completely flat, devoid of any feeling to it.

That was probably because Evileye's mask was magical. But why did she have to conceal her voice? Climb did not know.

"You have no talent. Work hard somewhere else."

She did not allow him any room to respond, as though there was nothing else to be said.

Climb knew her meaning very well.

He was not talented in magic. No, that was not all.

No matter how hard he practiced his swordplay, how many times he bled and blistered and callused his hands, he could not reach the level he longed for. Low walls which a talented individual might soar over were like insurmountable barriers to Climb.

However, he could not give up on working hard to surpass that unbreachable limit. Since he had no talent, he had to hope that his unrelenting effort would help him improve in some way.

“However, in the legends of the 13 Heros....”

The leader of the Thirteen Heroes. According to legend, he was just an ordinary person, weaker than anyone else. However, he continued swinging his sword even when injured, and he eventually became a hero who was stronger than anyone else.

Evileye was at a loss for words. As if that legend were true.

However, she squeezed out words of denial.

“Talent being created later in life is a lie. Those who have it have it from the start....Talent is like a flower just before blooming, and is something everyone has....To me, that is nothing more than a false hope. Those are the words of the weak comforting themselves. The leader of the 13 Heros was the same. He had talent, it just bloomed late. He is different from you. Hard work is useless....Yes. Talent is something that exists or not. Therefore... I won't tell you to give up, but you ought to know your limits.”

Evileye's stern lecture was followed by a brief silence. In the end, Evileye broke it.

“Gazef Stronoff... he's a good example. People like him would be considered talented. Climb... do you think you can make up the difference between the two of you with effort?”

He could not answer. His training today had made him realize that he was nowhere near that league.

“Alright, maybe he’s not such a good example... still, the only person I can think of whose swordsmanship approaches his was among the Thirteen Heroes. Gagaran here is good, but she can’t beat Gazef.”

“...Hey don’t compare him to me. Gazef’s a man with a foot into the realm of heroes, y’know?”

“Hmph. You’re a heroic woman too... although the woman part is in doubt.”

As soon as Evileye’s voice trailed off, Gagaran laughed and answered.

“Oi oi, Evileye. These heroes in question are monsters with unique abilities that have surpassed the realm of humanity, right?”

“...I do not deny that.”

“Then I’m still human. Just an ordinary person who can’t reach the realm of heroes.”

“Even so, you’re still talented. You’re not an untalented person like Climb. Climb, you shouldn’t be fixated on trying to grasp the stars.”

Climb knew — better than anyone else — that he lacked talent. Even so, hearing her repeat

you have no talent, you have no talent

was very depressing. That said, Climb had no intention of changing his life’s goal.

—This body exists for the Princess. For her, I will—

Perhaps she sensed a martyr’s resolve from Climb, but in the end, Evileye scoffed from behind her mask.

“...So you’re not giving up, even after I’ve said all that.”

“Yes.”

“Foolishness. Utter foolishness.” She shook her head forcefully, unable to understand him. “Moving forward while clinging to an unreachable dream will set you on the way to destruction. You know that, right? I’ll tell you again — you need to know your limits.”

“...I understand.”

“You may understand, but you don’t care at all, do you? The word foolish does not even begin to describe men like you.”

“What’s this, Evileye? You’re bullying Climb because you care about him?”

Evileye rounded her shoulders as she heard Gagaran speak. Then, she turned to Gagaran and grabbed her by the lapels while shouting.

“Will you *shut up*, you beefcake bimbo!”

“Hey, you know I’m right, right?”

Gagaran was content to let Evileye hang on to her while she replied nonchalantly. Evileye was speechless for a moment, and then she sank back into her chair. She then tried to change the conversation.

“Start by learning about magic. Once you know more, you’ll be able to understand how magic-using enemies think. You’ll be able to pick a more correct course of action that way.”

“Won’t learning all those spells be a bit much for him?”

“Of course not. The fact is, there aren’t that many spells which magic casters use. Just focus on the commonly-used ones.”

If you can’t do that, give up. Evileye spat those words out.

“Besides, he’ll only need to study up to the 3rd tier. That shouldn’t be a problem.”

“I think there is. They say that the Head Magic Caster of the Empire can use up to the 6th tier, but you know quite a bit about the 10th. Why?”

“Hm...”

Evileye had a schoolmarmish look on her face as she fiddled around under her robe. Climb suddenly realised that the sounds around them seemed further away now. It was hard to describe, but it felt as though there was a thin film surrounding them.

“Don’t panic. I just used a pointless little magic.”

Climb did not know that the activation of that item was a sign of how worried she was about being overheard. All he knew was that Evileye intended

to answer Gagaran's question in strict seriousness. Now that she had gone to that extent, he sat up straight in his chair.

"In ancient myths — little more than legends — there was mention of beings known as the Eight Greed Kings. They were known as gods, and the tales speak of how they once ruled this world with that absolute power."

Climb had heard the story of the Eight Greed Kings. While they were not too popular, given that they were only children's tales, anyone with a little bit of knowledge would know of them.

In summary, the beings known as the Eight Greed Kings appeared 500 years ago. Some said that they stood as tall as the heavens, some said they looked like Dragons, but in any case, the Eight Greed Kings devastated the nations in an instant, dominating the world with their power which could move mountains and part the seas. However, their desires ran deep, and they fought each other for their possessions, resulting in their mutual extinction.

This story was not popular for obvious reasons, but debate raged over whether or not it was merely a children's fairytale. Climb personally felt that it had been greatly embellished. However, a small group of people among the adventurers believed that the Eight Greed Kings existed — and that they commanded powers beyond those of any in this modern age.

The proof of that was a city within the deserts far to the south. Rumors said that it was the capital built when the Eight Greed Kings conquered the continent.

As Climb lost himself in his thoughts, Evileye continued speaking.

"Apparently, the Eight Greed Kings possessed numberless powerful magic items, and the mightiest of them was called the [Nameless Spellbook]... at least, that's what people call it. That's the answer to everything."

"Ah? So those spells are recorded in that book?"

"Indeed. They say that the Eight Greed Kings of legend left that unimaginable powerful magic item behind, a book which records all the world's spells. Also, they say that due to some kind of magic, even newly-developed spells appear within its pages as well."

Climb knew of the Eight Greed Kings, but not of this tome. He had a rough idea of how valuable this item truly was, but he remained silent and listened.

“It is as Gagan predicted, including me, there are no people who can use higher than the 6th Tier, yet I know the higher tiers. Of course, there are not many people who know about the Nameless Spellbook.”

“Ah....I didn’t either.”

Evileye nodded and continued.

“In that book there are records up to the 10th tier....but in fact everything until the 11th tier is recorded. It seems that there is only one of the 11th tiers recorded. I only heard about this, and so I am not sure if there is only one. There might be other 11th tiers that were not found.”

Climb gulped.

This talk was probably at the level of classified information. If leaked, an unprecedented event would occur. Was it fine for adventurers who knew the value of information to give it away for free. Such a worry was born in Climb.

And glossing over the emotion similar to unease, Climb asked Evileye.

“Will, will you be searching for that [Nameless Spellbook]?”

That was a question born from his belief that since they understood how precious it was, and that they were the highest class of adventurers and could reach it.

Evileye snorted, as though to say, *Don’t be ridiculous.*

“Hmph. They say that the book is defended by powerful magic and nobody can touch it but its rightful owner. I know my limits, so I don’t desire it. I’d rather not die in a stupid way like the Eight Greed Kings.”

“Your leader is said to wield one of the weapons belonging to a member of the Thirteen Heroes... does she feel the same way?”

“...The scale is different. This one is something that can rival all the past and present magic items put together.”

Well, from what I heard from it, I don’t really know myself.

Evileye ended her words there.

“So, properly learn about magic.”

“Understood.”

Hearing Climb’s reply, Evileye showed one of her rare moments of hesitation, and spoke.

“If you want power, you can choose methods to stop being human.”

“Forsaking humanity... you mean like the demons in stories?”

“Stuff like that, or turning into an undead or magical beast. The undeadification is the most famous.”

“Normal humans cannot do that.”

“True....When one turns into an undead, they may lose sight of themselves. Burnt by their ideals, this was a method to achieve them but....When the body changes, the heart follows with it.”

The voice beneath the mask was tinged with a certain emotion. It was pity.

Gagaran noticed how Evileye was staring into the distance and deliberately spoke up in a bright voice.

“Well, the Princess would probably faint if she woke up and saw that Climb had become an Ogre.”

Evileye had probably sensed the good intentions behind Gagaran’s words. Her voice returned to its usual emotionless pitch.

“...Indeed, that’s a way too. Transmutation-type spells can briefly allow you to change into another species. I’ll be frank, they’re valid options for improving your physical attributes.”

“I think I’ll pass on that.”

“If you simply desire strength, then changing into another species is quite effective. After all, the human body is hardly exceptional, and the same abilities are more effective when one’s basic physical attributes are improved.”

That much was obvious. Between two evenly-skilled opponents, the one with the better physical attributes would have the advantage.

“The fact is that many of the Thirteen Heroes were nonhumans. The Warrior-Captain of the Air Giants and his Axe of Cyclones, the Elf Royal Family who bore the special characteristics of the ancestral Elves, and the Black Knight who wielded the Four Swords of Darkness — the original owner of our leader’s Kilineyram — was also a human with demon’s blood.”

“The Four Swords of Darkness, huh...”

When children roleplayed the 13 Heroes, the 2nd or 3rd most popular was the Black Knight who wielded four swords. The Evil Sword Hyumilis, the Demon Blade Kilineyram, the Sword of Decay Crocdabal, and the Deathsword Sfeiz. While the 13 Heroes were in the realm of fairy tales, the Black Knight was the most realistic of them, as the owner of one of the four swords was the leader of the Kingdom’s most powerful adventurer teams.

Gagaran reacted to those words.

“The Demon Blade Kilineyram, created by condensing infinite darkness, is said to be the mightiest of the four... I have a question, is it true that if it unleashes its full power, it could project enough dark energy to swallow a country whole?”

“What are you talking about?”

Evileye asked in a confused tone.

“Our leader said something about it when alone. That suppressing such power could only be done by a woman that served god like her.”

“I’ve never heard of anything like that before...” Evileye tilted her head in surprise. “Still, if the owner says that, it might be true.”

“Then is there really a Dark Lakys, born from the dark side of her spirit?”

“What?”

“Nah, I just happened to hear her muttering to herself again. Don’t think she noticed me, so I decided to take a listen, and in the end she ended up saying, ‘If you get careless, this being of blackness born of the source of all darkness shall take over your body and release the Demon Blade’s power’ or something. Sounded pretty bad.”

“This... well, we can’t rule that out. Some cursed items can control their

owners' minds... things would be pretty dire if something like that happened to Lakyus. So....Did you ask her what she was talking about?"

"Ah. I did. She blushed red and told us not to worry."

"Hm. It must be pretty embarrassing for a priest — who should be the one removing curses — to end up falling victim to a curse herself."

Climb could no longer pretend to be unmoved, and he frowned.

From what he had seen and heard, Lakyus might well be under the control of an evil magic item. He became even more worried as he thought about where he had just been..

"...Will Renner-sama be in danger?"

Evileye stopped Climb before he could rush out.

"Don't worry. I doubt the situation will deteriorate. She won't be taken over unawares, even if the power of darkness threatens to take her over. We'll have to take the fact that she didn't tell us as a sign that she's confident of controlling it herself. I'm certain she has the mental strength for it. Still... I didn't expect the sword to have that kind of power. Even I've never heard of that before."

Evileye felt slightly frustrated about her lack of knowledge. And that she should search for more knowledge not just for satisfaction.

"Should we talk to Azuth for safety's sake?"

"I'm not too happy about asking a rival for help, but... well, she is his niece, so we should let him know, at least."

"Hm, then shouldn't we do that right away?"

"Mm. We should just prepare ourselves to back Lakyus up at any time."

Gagaran and Evileye rose, and so did Climb.

"Sorry, Climb. I really wanted to have some fun with you, but I don't have the time."

"Please, don't worry about it, Gagaran-sama."

Gagaran carefully studied Climb, and then laughed tiredly.

“Mm, alright, then. You should be going back right away, so we’ll leave our leader to you. Good seeing you around, cherry boy.”

Chapter 68: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 8

Climb was thinking on his way back to the Royal Palace. What he thought about was the unease he felt about having Lakyus near Renner. Lakyus was the leader of the highest ranking adventurer party. If such a person were cursed, what would be the result? A normal soldier like Climb could not predict what would happen, but according to stories, she would crave for blood and rampage.

Should Lakyus rampage, Climb could not stop her. The only one who could stop her in the castle would be Gazef. Renner would definitely be a casualty.

It was good that Evileye determined that she would not easily fall prey to the curse, but there was the possibility that Tia might follow suit and be controlled.

Climb broke his expressionless face and frowned.

From what Renner said, she should be having a conversation with Lakyus.

Currently, the two were having a discussion about various things, and were deciding the direction of important plans, but to Climb, Renner's safety was far more important.

However, if the questions were untactful, Lakyus' face might give it away. Even though she could control the curse, if a complete idiot were to open his mouth, she would be separated from her friend the Princess, and her face would disappear

Climb hesitated. And reached a conclusion.

He should trust Evileye who had the most knowledge.

Climb made his decision and quickened his footsteps. While his direction was fixed, unease and angst drove his speed up.

However, Climb discovered something that was able to stop him. It was a crowd of people, and two guards were looking at them with a troubled look.

There was the clamor of voices from the centre. And they were not honest ones.

What he heard were slurred angry shouts and jeers, along with the sound of kicked. He heard voices saying that someone would die, or to call the guards. Due to the crowd, he could not see, but from the sounds it seemed to be an act of violence.

Climb's expression turned cold, and he walked up beside the guards.

"What are you doing?"

The guard jumped in fright, given that someone had called out to him from behind, and he turned to look at Climb.

The man wore a chain shirt and a helm and carried a spear. He wore a surcoat emblazoned with the Kingdom's crest on top of the chain shirt. This was the standard uniform of the average guard in the Kingdom, but Climb could sense that neither of the people in front of him was well-trained.

To begin with, neither of them had honed physiques. For that matter, they were also unshaven and their chain shirts had not been polished. A faint air of grime hung about them and they seemed quite slovenly in overall appearance.

"You are..."

Climb was younger than himself, so the guard responded to him with a tone that was a mix of bafflement and annoyance.

"I'm off-duty at the moment."

Confusion spread across the guard's face as he heard Climb's staunchly insistent voice. Perhaps it was because he radiated an aura of superiority despite being younger than them.

The guards seemed to have concluded that they could not go wrong by taking a submissive posture, and they straightened up.

"Seems to be a civilian disturbance."

Climb resisted the urge to castigate them by saying

I knew that already

. Unlike the Palace guards, the guards who patrolled the city were drawn from the civilian populace and were not well-trained. In truth, they were merely civilians who knew how to use weapons.

Climb turned his eyes from the nervous guards to the crowd. It would be quicker to settle the matter in person than wait for them to do anything.

“You wait here.”

“Yes.”

Climb steeled himself, and left the guards’ panicked voices behind him as he entered the crowd.

“Let me pass.”

While saying that, he forced his body through. While there were some gaps, Climb could not take the time to enter them. No, someone who could do that was the strange one.

As he struggled to shove his way forward, he heard a voice from the center of the crowd.

“...Begone.”

“Ah?”

“I’ll say it again – *begone*.”

“Damn geezer!”

This was bad.

The violence he could not see was about to occur again.

When Climb got through the crowd, he saw the figure of an old man before him. He was surrounded by a group of younger men. At their feet was a boy who had been beaten so badly he looked like a crumpled rag.

The old man was elegantly dressed, and gave off the feeling of being nobility or the servant of nobility. The men surrounding him were muscular and looked drunk. The villainous side was apparent at a glance.

One of the men — the one who looked the most muscular — clenched his fist. Compared to him, the old man seemed far inferior, be it in the sturdiness of

their bodies, the bulging of their muscles, or their bloodthirsty brutality. Surely the younger man could easily send the old man flying with but a swing of his fist. The people around them realized this, and gasped in horror at the tragedy which was about to befall the old man.

Amidst all this, only Climb felt that something was strange.

Indeed, the younger man looked stronger. Yet, Climb could sense an aura of absolute power coming from the old man.

He froze for a moment, and lost his chance to curb the younger man's violence. The man raised his fist—

—And then he collapsed limply to the ground

The people around Climb exclaimed in shock. Everyone believed that the old man could not win. However, when put to the test, the result was the opposite. It would be a lie to say that one was not surprised.

It would seem that the old man had made a fist and struck the other man square on his chin, at incredible speed. Even Climb's honed vision could barely keep up with the swiftness of that blow.

"Do you still wish to fight?"

The old man directed this calm and grave question at the remaining men.

The combination of his inscrutable exterior and his calm tone broke through the men's drunkenness. No, even the people around them had been frightened by his presence. The men had lost all will to fight.

"Er, um. We, we're sorry."

The men backed up and chorused an apology, and then they grabbed their colleague — who had been disgracefully laid out on the ground — and fled with their tails between their legs. Climb did not have the desire to chase after them. Normally he would, but his heart was stolen by that figure of the old man.

He looked like a masterwork blade. It was a sight that would fill any warrior who saw it with reverence.

The old man took a step towards the child, then shook his head. He then turned on his heels, and walked away. When he did so, he pointed to one of the

humans nearby.

“...Take this child to the temple. He has broken a few ribs. Take care when moving him, and do not shake him too much on the stretcher.”

When he finished speaking, the old man silently walked away. The crowd cleared a path for the old man to walk. Everyone’s eyes were fixed on his back, such was the allure of the old man’s presence.

Climb hurried over to the fallen boy and then took out the potion Gazef had given him after their training session.

“Can you drink this?”

There was no answer. He had fainted dead away.

Cimb opened the bottle and poured the liquid on the boy’s body. Many people believed that potions had to be drunk, but the fact was that it would work even when splashed on the flesh. Magic was truly great.

The boy’s skin seemed to absorb the liquid as it disappeared into his body, and the color returned to the boy’s face.

Climb nodded in relief.

The boy ought to be alright now that Climb had given him the potion, but it would be best for him to go to the temple just to be safe. He looked to the guards standing by and noticed that the pair had become a trio.

The annoyed gazes of the surrounding people focused on the guards as they thought,

they finally arrived.

But this could not be helped. From what they saw, they thought that they had arrived because it was safe.

Climb addressed a very uncomfortable-looking guard.

“Take this boy to the temple.”

“What happened to him...?”

“Someone assaulted him. I’ve already used a healing potion on him so he should be alright, but I hope you’ll take him to the temple for a checkup, for

safety's sake."

"Yes. Understood!"

The reason why he listened to Climb as a superior, was probably because the other guards had informed him. In fact Climb was the same rank as them, but he did not need to explain to them that.

"Please do so."

"What shall we do about the aggressors?"

Climb looked in the direction where the men escaped. As they had to carry an unconscious man, their speed was low. He found them immediately.

"It's them. Take them to a guardhouse."

"Understood."

Two of the guards walked away. Confirming it, Climb decided that he had done all he should do. A palace guard should not overstep his boundaries into the jobs of others.

"Can I trouble you to question any eyewitnesses about the details of what happened here?"

"Understood."

"Then I'll leave the rest to you."

Climb noted that the guards seemed to have gained confidence and moved more quickly upon receiving their orders. He ran ahead without another word.

"Where are you going..." one of the guards called, but Climb ignored him.

He only slowed down when he reached the corner which the old man had taken.

He then followed the old man. Why was he doing so? It was for a really terrible reason.

Soon, he saw the old man walking along the street.

He wanted to call out to him, but he could not work up the courage to do so. That was because he sensed an invisible wall between them; a sense of awesome power that seemed to crush him.

The old man turned a corner and headed into a darker region. Climb followed. He was walking behind the old man, yet he did not dare speak up and address him.

Was Climb not stalking him?

Climb began to feel annoyed by what he was doing. Even if he did not know how to approach the old man, he could not keep following him like this. In an effort to change the situation, Climb continued following in silence.

As he walked into an alley without any human presence, Climb finally found the courage to speak.

“—Excuse me.”

The old man turned around after hearing someone call out to him.

His hair was white, as was his beard. However, his back was straight, like a fine blade forged of steel. His handsome face was wrinkled, giving a kindly cast to his features, but his eyes were keen and as focused on their prey as those of an eagle's.

He even had an air of nobility about him.

Even the nobles Climb had seen were not at that level.

“Is something the matter?”

The old man's voice sounded somewhat aged, but it overflowed with an undeniable vitality. Climb felt an invisible pressure rolling out towards him and he gulped.

“Ah, ah.”

Climb could not speak, overwhelmed as he was by the man's presence. As he saw this, the old man appeared to relax and let the tension escape from his body.

“And who might you be?”

His tone was gentle. Released from the immense, crushing strain, Climb's throat regained its ability to function.

“...My name is Climb, and I am a humble soldier of this nation. Thank you for

your courageous action in completing a task that should have been rightfully mine.”

Climb bowed deeply in thanks. The old man fell into thought, then narrowed his eyes. After that, he quietly went “Ah...” as he realised what Climb meant.

“...It’s fine. Then, I’ll be going.”

The old man broke off the conversation and made to leave, but Climb then raised his head and asked.

“You may laugh at me for making such an presumptuous request, but if possible could you please teach me that technique?”

“...What do you mean by that?”

“Ah. I have been studying the martial arts for a long time and I would like to improve my skills further. After I saw that impeccable movement of yours just now, I was hoping that you could teach me a little of your technique, if it pleases you.”

“Are there any merits for....No, you said you were a soldier, am I correct? Well, several days ago, I rescued a girl—”

After listening to the the old man’s, Sebas’, story, he was livid with rage.

He could not hide his displeasure at the fact that Renner’s slave manumission laws had been misused in such a way, and that things had not changed until now.

No, that’s not right. Climb shook his head.

The Kingdom’s laws forbade trading in slaves. That said, it was a common sight for people to be forced to work in poor conditions in order to pay their debts. Loopholes like those were everywhere. In fact, it was because of them that the law against slavery had been passed.

Renner’s laws were useless.

That chilling thought swept through his mind for a moment, However. he soon chased that thought away. Right now, he had to think about Sebas’ situation.

Climb furrowed his brow. Sebas was in a very bad position.

He wanted to be of assistance to the captured woman, but now he had to think of how to handle it.

Let us take the case of a strong coal miner. He had been working in the terrible conditions of a coal mine and had contracted a bronchial disease. As a result, he was on the verge of death. Then Sebas came and healed him. Then appeared the coal mine owner. He then said to return the man. This was as the contract stated that the man had to work.

Now, was it acceptable for Sebas not to return the man to the mine owner?

As a human, saving the weak was the correct action. However, from the point of the laws, it might be illegal due to the contents of the contract, and Sebas might be imprisoned.

There was no law in the Kingdom stipulating the quality of the workplace. So it was natural and acceptable for the miner to have a lung disease, and the owner did not attack him. In this case, the guilty party was the miner and Sebas.

And therefore in the girl's case, Sebas was in an extremely disadvantageous position. It was possible to retaliate by looking at the contents of the contract, those that would do so would be labeled as criminals, and the other side would never let him read it.

According to law, Sebas' defeat was imminent.

If he did not file a lawsuit, he would be exploited far more.

"Does your side have a large amount of authority?"

He was asking if it was possible to silence them with authority. If asked if it was possible or not...the answer was no.

The Kingdom was currently split into two. If it were the opposing faction, should the Princess use her authority, it would be thought of as a power grab. Even if not, they would ask for gains and conditions. If the woman was alone, it was impossible.

Using authority was not a simple matter. Especially when the Kingdom was split into two.

Then, was saving that woman worth making deals with nobles?

Definitely not. There was no merit to saving her. There were other methods to gain information about that place, and they could not expect much information from her.

Climb suppressed the feeling of disgust.

He felt extreme anger about himself, having to think about the pros and cons of saving a person's life.

However, Climb was Renner's soldier. If it was for Renner, any sacrifice was worth it. It was natural for him to cast aside a woman he had never seen or heard about.

However, if they could not pressure the opponents into leaving her alone, then instead of using the law as a shield, they could use it as a weapon to save her.

"...I have to ask my liege, but how about having that woman escape to my liege's territory?"

"...Would escaping there solve the problem?"

"I believe not. While slavery is illegal, your side broke the law, so you would have to settle that by yourself."

"...But doing so would trouble my master?"

Climb kept silent. Sebas' master was a merchant. There would be rumours, and it would definitely cause problems. And on top of losing the woman, there was a chance they would have to be taught a lesson.

"Are there other methods?"

"This is difficult."

Climb replied immediately. Even if there were, it would implicate Renner.

"...According to her, there are others there. Both men and women."

"....."

"Can you save them with your authority?"

Sebas' tone was not forceful, but it was also empty of emotion. It was quite a quiet but kind one. However, each one of his words pierce Climb's heart like a knife.

It was impossible.

The people doing such things had quite the number of methods and authority. The nobles supporting them also had a large amount of authority as well. If they made surprise inspections or saved them, there was a high chance of the factions going to war with each other. While the groundwork was being prepared, bursting in would only lead to losses.

If Renner used her strong authority, the opposing faction would worry about it being used again. The Kingdom would then break down into civil war

That must not be caused by Renner's hand.

So Climb said nothing. No, he could not say anything.

"My apologies...."

Sebas silently watched the bowing Climb.

"I understand. However, can we let her escape?"

"I cannot confirm this without asking my liege, but I believe it is possible."

"I understand."

Silence flowed between them.

Climb did not say anything. In the end, he could not do a single thing that Sebas had requested of him. How could any human ask for a favour from Sebas?

In the heavy cover of silence, the instant Climb felt that he could not bear it any longer and was about to speak, Sebas asked Climb a question.

"Then, another question, if you please. Why do you want to become stronger?"

"Eh?"

"You just said that you wanted me to train you. I trust you, but I would also like to know why you wish to become stronger."

Climb narrowed his eyes at Sebas' question.

Why *did* he want to become stronger?

Climb had been an abandoned child. He had not even seen the faces of his parents. That was not an unusual occurrence in the Kingdom. Orphans dying in the mud was hardly big news.

Climb had originally been fated to die in such a way on that rainy day.

And then — on that day, Climb had seen the sun. He — a being who could only crawl amidst the muck and filth — had been deeply entranced by that incandescence.

As a child, he had only felt admiration. But as he grew older, that feeling inside him grew ever more unshakeable.

—It was love.

He had to quash that emotion. It was a miracle, of the kinds which the bards sang in the heroic sagas. It could not possibly take place in real life. Just as no man could touch the sun, Climb's feeling would not be able to reach her. No, he could not do so.

The woman whom Climb loved so deeply was destined to be someone else's bride. As a princess, she could not belong to someone like Climb, whose origins were unclear, and who was even lower than a commoner.

In fact, it was strange that Renner was of marriageable age but was yet to have a fiancée.

If the King passed away, the First Prince would inherit the throne, and Renner would be married off to one of the Great Nobles. In all likelihood, the Prince had already arranged something like this with one of them. She might even be sent to another country as part of a political marriage.

This was a golden time, now, this instant, that he wanted to freeze forever.

If by training—If he used time to become stronger, this golden period could last a bit longer.

Climb had no talent. He was a mere man. He was at the limit of what his current training could give him. He was 15—Since he was an orphan, he did not

actually know—, so any more strenuous training would not have any further meaning. In terms of raising his physical strength.

As a normal soldier, Climb was quite strong. Then, should he not be content with that? Should he not stop training, stay by Renner's side and not waste their brief time together?

Yes, it should be fine to use the remaining amount of golden time as he wished.

But — would that really be a good thing?

Climb admired that sun-like brilliance. It was not a lie, and neither was he mistaken. It was Climb's sincere wish.

However—

"It's because I'm a man."

Climb smiled.

Indeed. Climb wanted to stand by Renner's side. The sun shone brilliantly in the sky, and a mere man could not hope to reach it. Even so, Climb wanted to climb the highest peaks in order to get as close to it as he could.

He did not want to merely admire and praise the sun from afar.

This was a young man's feeble wish, but at the same time it was a wish that perfectly fitted a young man.

He wanted to become a man worthy of being joined to the woman he admired.

He could endure his friendless life, his harsh training, and his labors which took away from his sleep because of his wish.

Let others laugh at him for his foolishness.

This was as this was a thought that one could only understand if they loved someone, and wanted to be together with them.

Sebas narrowed his eyes as he studied Climb. There was a stern look on his face, as though he were trying to decipher the compressed subtleties of Climb's simple reply.

Then, he nodded.

“After hearing your answer, I have decided how to train you.”

Just as Climb was about to offer his thanks, Sebas’ outstretched hand stopped him.

“However, and I pray you will forgive my bluntness, you have no talent. Proper training will take a very long time. However, I do not have that time. I wish to train you in a way that will show results quickly, but it will be an... arduous process.”

Climb gulped again.

The look in Sebas’ eyes sent a chill down Climb’s spine. Those eyes were filled with unbelievable power, exceeding the spiritual pressure which Gazef exerted when serious. Thus, he could not respond right away.

“Frankly speaking, you might die.”

He was not joking.

Climb’s instincts told him that much. Climb did not fear death, but he wanted to die for Renner. He did not want to throw his life away for a selfish reason.

He was not a coward... no, perhaps he might be very craven.

Climb gulped once more, and froze. Silence filled the surroundings for a while, and he could even hear the clamor from the distance.

Climb then asked Sebas.

“What is the probability that I will die?”

“...Now. I do not now. It depends on you....If there is something important to you, something which makes you want to live, even if it is only to scramble along the ground, then it ought to be fine.”

Was he not going to teach him martial arts?

That question surfaced in Climb’s mind, but that was not the question now. He pondered the meaning of Sebas’ words, made sure he understood it, and then gave his response.

“Then, I leave the rest to you.”

“Do you believe you will die?”

Survive even if you have to crawl on the ground. This described Climb. Sebas looked into Climb’s eyes, as though divining his intentions through them. Then he nodded heavily.

“I understand. Then, we shall begin here.”

“Right here?”

“Yes. It will be quick. A few minutes will do. Please draw your sword.”

What’s he going to do?

Unease and hesitation about the unknown, and a slight amount of expectation and curiosity. He drew his sword. The sound of the sword scraping against the scabbard rang within the narrow alley.

Climb braced his weapon in a middle stance, and Sebas’ eyes were fixed on him.

“Here I come. Please try and remain conscious.”

And in the next moment—

—It felt as though icy razors had exploded forth in all directions from Sebas.

“Ah....”

Climb could no longer speak. Sebas now stood at the heart of a vortex of murderous intent. No, this might be in the realm of killing intent. Climb felt that his heart was gripped and crushed by fear, and he felt waves of colour pushing against him.

His instincts told him.

This was not a shoddy one like one from an animal beneath humans. This was at the level of an existence far above.

Swallowed by the black waves of killing intent, Climb’s consciousness blanked out. His was being blown away by the excessive killing intent.

“...It is just this level. Are you a man?”

Sebas' disappointed voice seemed abnormally loud through the depths of Climb's fading consciousness.

The meaning of those words pierced Climb deeper than any blade. It even made him forget the fear before him for a moment.

His heart pounded heavily in his chest.

"Huuuuuuuuuhhhhh!"

Climb gasped.

He was terrified. He wanted to run. But he fought the urge to do so, even as the tears streamed down his cheeks. His hands trembled as they gripped his sword, and the point of his sword danced around like a demented bumblebee. His chain shirt made rustling noises from his full-body tremors.

Even so, Climb clenched his chattering teeth and tried to bear up against the mortal terror which came from Sebas.

Sebas laughed at the pathetic sight before him. Then he brought his right hand before his eyes and slowly clenched it into a fist. In the blink of an eye, the fist in front of him was as round as a ball.

He then pulled that fist back, like he was drawing a bow.

Climb understood what was going to happen, and shook his head. Of course, Sebas paid his response no heed.

"Now then... prepare to die."

Sebas spoke in a cold tone as if he were informing Climb of destined information. Like an arrow notched on a bow at full draw, and with a burst of wind, Sebas' fist moved.

In the dimension of slowed down time, Sebas' fist punched towards Climb's face.

This would be an instant death.

Climb's instinct screamed. The image of his certain death dominated his mind, like a massive wrecking ball that was far larger than himself, approaching at incredible speeds. Even if he raised his sword to block, that fist would surely

smash it easily.

His body refused to move. His body was frozen from the tension.

Did he intend to kill him from the start?

Climb's fractured brain frantically worked, and spat out those words.

—He could not escape the death before him

Climb's resignation to his fate filled him with anger.

If he could not die for Renner, why did he not die there.

The admiration from then. And the admiration from then on. He was not permitted to throw it away. Everything was for Renner.

His irritation turned to a fierce rage, and with tears in his eyes, Climb broke the chains of fear binding his body.

It might have been too late.

There might not have been anytime to dodge Sebas' fist.

But he had to move.

Climb moved in a panic, twisting his body. It was a blunter movement than normal, but it was a movement that had all of Climb's heart and soul. The reason he did not raise his sword was because his instinct said that he could not stop Sebas' fist with it.

And then—

With a gust of wind, Sebas' fist passed by Climb's head. A calm voice filtered into his ears.

“Congratulations. How does it feel to conquer the fear of death?”

———

—Climb stood there dumbly, unable to understand his meaning.

“How was it like to face death? How was it like to surpass it?”

Climb breathed heavily, looking at Sebas like his soul had been stolen away. There was no hostility around Sebas, as though it had been nothing more than a lie. He relaxed as he began to realize Sebas' intent.

Climb collapsed like a puppet whose strings had been cut, as though he had been supported by the murderous intent from just now.

He fell on all fours in the alley, hungrily gasping fresh air into his lungs.

“...Fortunately you did not die from shock. These things happen when one is so certain of one’s death that one gives up the will to live.”

There was a bitter taste in the depths of Climb’s throat. He was certain that it was the taste of death.

“If you repeat this a few more times, I am sure you will be able to overcome ordinary fear. However, one thing you must know is that fear triggers the survival instinct. If you are numbed to that sense, then you will be unable to feel even clear and present danger. You must be able to clearly tell when a true threat approaches.”

“...For-forgive me for prying, but what kind of man are you?”

Climb groaned from his place on the ground.

“What do you mean?”

“That, that killing intent was not normal. What exactly... I think that you are someone famous....”

“Ah, I am not anyone famous. I am simply an old man who has some confidence in his skills. For now.”

Climb could not tear his eyes away from Sebas’ face. What seemed to be a congenial smile also looked like a savage grin from one of absolute power; one who might far surpass Gazef. No, that might be true.

An existence that might be stronger than the strongest warrior in the surrounding countries, Gazef. There might have been no such things until now. Someone stronger than the Kingdom’s Strongest.—

—Climb willed his curiosity to be satisfied. He felt it would be best not to continue prying into that mystery.

The question what what Sebas was remained strongly in his heart. Was he one of the 13 Heros.

Sebas ignored Climb's surprised look and asked.

"Then, let us try again."



Separating from Climb, Sebas took the route home. He had done other things as well, which took up some time.

In any case, he had a method to contact Climb, and after that was to pass Tsuare to him. Apart from that was to respond to any expedient actions.

As Sebas agonized over the matter, his feet brought him back home.

Just as he was about to open the door, his hand froze. Someone was behind the door. He sensed that it was Solution, but Sebas had no idea why she was standing behind it.

Was there an emergency of some sort?

Sebas had a bad feeling about this, but he still opened the door. What he saw next defied his expectations and left him frozen in place.

"Welcome back, Sebas-sama."

Solution was standing there in her maid's uniform.

A chill ran down Sebas' spine.

Solution, who played the role of a merchant heiress, was wearing her maid uniform in the presence of Tsuare, a human who knew nothing about the truth. Was it because she did not need to act any longer, or was there some reason which required her to wear her uniform?

If it was the former, that would mean something had happened to Tsuare. If it was the latter—

"—Sebas-sama. Ainz-sama is waiting for you inside the house."

Solution's calm, even voice made Sebas' heart lurch in his chest. Sebas, who could remain calm in the face of a mighty foe or a being on the level of the Floor Guardians, was actually anxious and tense when he heard his own master had come to visit.

"Why, why is he..."

Sebas stammered. Solution merely watched him in silence.

“Sebas-sama. Ainz-sama is waiting for you.”

There was nothing else to be said. All Sebas could do was follow Solution into the house. His steps were heavy, like a condemned criminal walking to the chopping block.

Chapter 69: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 9

Separating from Sebas, Climb reported to Renner about what happened. What happened in the alley, Sebas' story and the woman he wants to help.

When Climb asked if it was possible to shelter the woman, she did not hesitate. At a speed that could only be described as instantaneously, Renner's reply was a positive one.

"No, I don't mind."

"Thank you."

Climb bowed and felt a deep gratitude for the kindly smiling Renner.

As princess, Renner's territory was quite wide, and it would be simple to shelter a single woman. If she entered a village from outside the territory, there would not be a lot of information leaked. Basically, her safety was guaranteed.

Ignoring the fact that he suddenly appeared, he could reply his debt to Sebas for training him. And since Renner agreed, the chance that this would cause a problem was low, and Climb patted his chest in relief.

"Was Climb....worried? That I would refuse?"

Renner's words were slightly tinged with sadness, and Climb raised his head as if shot.

"T, that is not true! I believed that the kind Renner-sama would never refuse. However, as your follower, I cannot allow for you to be troubled! And thus I was worried that this would trouble Renner-sama!"

Since the day Climb was picked up, he believed that Renner was the world's most kind woman.

Seeing the panicking Climb, Renner's lips loosened into a small smile. This showed that her earlier attitude was a joke, and Climb sighed a breath in relief.

The woman known as Renner should never be saddened. Climb's feelings could only be understood by a man whose lover was shining brightly.

“....I would like to meet that old man.”

“Yup yup, but since he’s an old man, it’s too bad.”

“....Haa.”

Lakyus listened in from the side and spoke as he interest was peaked. And Tia shook her head in agreement.

These were the words that had the will of the Kingdom’s strongest A+ Adventurers.

A person that Climb viewed as Gazef-class, Sebas. If such a person existed, they should have knowledge about it, but the two of them had none. He was an existence that they should pay attention to.

“He might have disguised his appearance.”

“Yup, he might have.”

“There are no old male A+ or A Class adventurers after all.”

“From his appearance, he does not seem to be a hermit.”

“Then shall we promise to meet once about the woman. We shall ask him then. Would it be possible to arrange a meeting with him.”

“Eeh, please do so, Climb.”

“Understood.”

Climb lowered his head to Lakyus, and signaled the end of the conversation. However, Renner easily changed it.

“By the way, Climb. Do you have something you want to say?”

Suitable for the position of princess, her calm yet regal voice reverberated through the room. Lakyus and Climb looked at each other, and had a discussion with their eyes. Tia lazily looked at them, but that air of hers formed a wall that said, don’t look at me.

“....I’m sorry?”

Swallowing with a gulp, Climb asked Renner. What met him were Renner’s questioning eyes.

“Climb would like to say something else right? You want to ask me for something different right?”

Despite Renner’s smiling face, Climb felt cold sweat trickle down his back.

Lakyus was sitting at the same table and her face was one of slight suspicion, then she predicted what would happen, and then scowled.

Climb wanted to ask one thing.

Can you save them?

It was just that.

There were other people kept prisoner, could they not be saved as well. However, Climb should not speak those words.

If he closed his eyes and acted dumb, everything would end without a problem. A small amount of guilt was left, but it was much better than having losses.

“There is no such thing, simply Renner-sama’s misconception.”

“Really? I mostly understand Climb well though?”

“T, then this will be your first mistake. I, I do not really have anything to wish for.”

“Truly?”

Renner looked at Climb, as if peering into him.

“Y, yes....It is as you say.”

While feeling the sweat down his cheek, Climb made his words ambiguously. From here on out was a realm filled with disadvantages. If he thought about his master, Renner, he should throw away his idea.

The reason why Lakyus was frowning, was because she understood what Climb wanted to say.

“Hey, Alvein. Could you investigate the area where this Sebas-san found the girl?”

Her answer to that was a sigh.

“...This is not something you should stick your head into though?”

“Why?”

“Why you ask....”

Renner tilted her head innocently, and Lakyus collapsed into her chair and explained.

“It would be best to avoid sticking your head into the Kingdom’s underworld. Well, nothing will happen to you, but you should not see it.”

There were victims, and one could give them the hand of salvation. This was a wonderful act. However, the problem was not that simple. Even if they had the absolute authority as royalty. This was as saving them, would put them at loggerheads with their oppressors.

The underworld was born of desire, and was the rotten part of society. Of course, in terms of interests, there would be criminals with relations to the royal family. In a certain meaning, it was a necessary evil. Opposing them might create a giant pitfall for the weakening royal family.

That was why Climb did not say anything about saving them.

Lakyus was lost.

Was it okay to let the most beautiful person in the Kingdom to see this trash. If she learnt about them, would the woman known as Renner make any strange moves.

—She could not come up with an answer.

“Could you please, investigate it?”

Lakyus stared at her friend’s face. This friend was dense about the feelings of others. However, she was strangely sensitive to Climb’s emotions.

It was to the point whether she questioned whether or not she was simply acting that she was dense and could not read the air.

No—

Lakyus shook her head. Even she would not act detrimentally against herself or her family.

“Impossible.”

“Then who can I ask—”

“—Stop there. This is a warning from a friend.”

“Then I should ignore those in pain?”

“...That is....”

“It can’t be helped? One should give up because their luck was bad?”

Originally, Tia was a member of Ijaniya and her words had no mercy.

“The people are in pain, so the royalty should ignore them?”

“.....”

“...Mu.”

Neither Climb nor Lakys could speak.

It was true that this was an act fitting of the woman known as Renner.

This woman was called golden, and thought of the people, of the weak and reached out to save them.

She was such a woman.

Climb suppressed the feeling of love and respect that appeared in his heart. Climb himself was extremely happy, despite it not being a good thing for Renner.

Renner and Lakys looked at each other, and Lakys folded.

“Hah, I got it. I’ll go investigate so go wait for a bit. Tia come with me. We’ll buy information from the thief’s guild using your connections.”



“We’ve finished.”

These were the first words coming from Lakys, who returned after three hours.

She was wearing a dress earlier, the current Lakys had changed, and was wearing clothes that were easy to move in. They were clothes that adventurers

wore under their armour. However, since she was in front of the princess, she had chosen ones that looked good. There was no mud, stains or blood on it.

With every move she made, a small scent of flowers could be smelled. There was no way adventurers would use perfume as it would give away their position, but she was paying attention to the situation.

“Welcome back. Take a seat.”

Renner directed Lakyus and Tia to their seats from three hours ago. The figures of them relaxing in their chairs showed how much trouble they went through to collect information.

“T, that was fast.”

While preparing drinks for Lakyus and Tia who had sat down, Climb asked.

Pouring water into something like a decanter, the smell of citrus permeated throughout the room. Grabbing the glass, Lakyus emptied it in one gulp. As her beautiful, healthy and without a trace of imperfection, throat moved, the juice immediately collected in her stomach.

“Haa—”

Having the glass placed down with a thud, Climb poured in juice again. His gaze moved to Tia sitting next to Lakyus. She was grabbing the glass with both hands, and in a fashion reminiscent of a hamster, she was sipping it, and her glass had enough juice in it.

Confirming that, Climb sat down in his allotted seat.

“Thank you, Climb.”

This time, Lakyus wetted her lips with the juice, and sighed.

“Umm, originally, even the thief’s guild believe they are dangerous. Since they had investigated them, we easily got the info. Shall I begin?”

“Eeh, please.”

“...Hey, Theiere. I don’t know how to tell you this. I believe that you have to know this world exists, but I wonder if that is right.”

“...Tell me Alvein. It is something I should know.”

“...Then I won't hide anything. And I won't pick my words. Do you mind?”

Renner smiled at Lakyus who was staring at her. It was as if she had no thoughts, but yet had a strong will. Lakyus stared at her again, and slightly tilted her head. She could not read her.

“Firstly they have three shops....” Lakyus' expression hardened. “One is where they use children or young people. Another is with middle-aged people. The last is....where the people who have been damaged in the two shops are sent, and are intended to be disposed of. A place that attracts the lowest of the low.”

Hesitating, Lakyus finally spoke.

“There, the Eight Fingers of Divanack do lots of business there.”

“Divanack? The Demon God of Corruption and Pleasure?”

Climb asked from the side.

Divanack was different from the Demon Gods the 13 Heroes defeated, but was a Demon God, and ruled rotten desires. He was burned by the Fire God, and locked in the Demon Realm.

The eight fingers he had, contained the meaning of the eight desires that humans had.

“Then, do they have a cult behind them?”

“It would be great if that were true. They are simply using that name. According to the guild.”

If there was a cult, then eradicating them would be a great justice. Even if there was a noble supporting them, this was a grave sin. Those who made enemies of even the temple would not be supported by the nobles of the same faction.

“Umm, five out of the eight are good at fighting. The other three handle the finances, legal and the connections with the nobles. We were informed about any physical characteristics and skills they have.”

Lakyus took out multiple sheets of thick paper and placed them on the table.

“Excuse me.”

Climb reached out his hands and read the words on the paper. The handwriting was female, and thus either Lakys or Tia wrote this.

Their name, appearance, main fighting style, and their choice of weapon was written in detail.

Renner who was looking at the same page returned it as she lost interest. It was natural as Renner was a princess and this would not interest her.

“Umm, are they strong?”

“...From whose point of view. To us they are nothing much. But to Climb, they are beyond strong.”

Probably three of them. Maybe one more.

Climb read the whole stack of paper and determined so.

“Umm, it seems that that shop was originally a place for selling woman for cheap and have them work there. On top of selling them, they would be disposed of. They were probably used for the most vile fetishes. They seem to be many corpses from that last one especially. They were probably killed. Separated hands and legs could also be found.”

As if a cloud covered the sun, a small shadow covered Renner’s beauty. Seeing her expression, two contradictory emotions were born in Climb: That she should not know about this world. But yet she should know.

“The most dangerous thing is that behind them is Earl Iselk.”

Hearing Lakys’ words, Climb frowned more than Renner did earlier.

Any political war within the Palace was a large flame that could easily reach Renner. So he had worked hard to understand the political world of nobles. Of course, since he was rejected from both factions he did not have much information, but from looking at the interactions of the soldiers in the canteen and training hall he had a rough grasp.

Places covered in darkness were still unknown, but what from Climb knew, Earl Iselk was—

“—One of the backbones of the Royal Faction.”

So it seems, Lakyus said as she shrugged.

While she was a noblewoman, as a famous adventurer, her knowledge of noble society was less than Climb's. But she easily answered Climb's question.

“I asked at the guild. Of course the thief's guild investigated their backer. Apart from what I mentioned earlier, it seems to be used for the strengthening of the faction and betrayals. He fulfills his bestial lust but there are no further complications.”

Lakyus practically spewed out her words.

“Now, so this was the gist of it. How was it?”

“Perfect.”

“Yes, thank you, Tia. Now, what should we do?”

Silence filled the room. The person who cut it apart was Renner.

“Mobilise the troops, and smash them.”

“Impossible.”

Lakyus refuted her. With such a strong reply, Renner did not say anything further, and thought of other possibilities.

Because she was a princess, mobilising troops was extremely difficult.

If the princess had soldiers directly under her it would be fine, but the only one she had was Climb. So to mobilise them there would need to be orders. Then the soldiers of the Royal Faction would move.

However, the one behind them was Earl Iselk of the Royal Faction. It was not clear what connections they had, but the chance that the soldiers would be deployed late was extremely high.

But what if the soldiers of the Noble Faction moved?

This was a chance for them to deal a blow to their opposing faction, and it was given to them by Renner. They would fulfill their orders, and save the trapped people. However, as a result the authority of the Royal Faction would drop, and cause rifts in the faction.

Basically mobilising the troops using Renner's authority would bring no merits. Then the next thing was—

“The problem would be solved if we activated adventurers right?”

“.....Probably.”

Lakyus mumbled a reply, but there was hesitation in her eyes. Tia explained for her.

“Adventurers can solve the problem. However, it does not solve the problem with Earl Iselk.”

Should they destroy Earl Iselk's business in the dark, the source of evil would definitely remain. Even if it were the princess' orders. No, because it was her orders. This was an act that damaged one of the hearts of the faction, so it would cause waves in the faction.

If they put Earl Iselk on trial, it would be a worse problem.

Basically any move they made would damage the Royal Faction. Thus Lakyus was against it. As both were detrimental to Renner.

“Why? If we imprison Earl Iselk would the problem not be solved?”

“It's not that simple. The Factions would be shaken.”

“...Is there a need for such a terrible person in the faction?”

“...Factions are not that simple. In a way, Earl Iselk is a necessary evil.”

“Can't we hide the identity of the requester?”

“The guild will investigate that, and it will be difficult to completely hide that Renner requested it. You could hire workers....but their reliability is doubtful.”

“Then what about hiring Alvein?”

“Spare me. I am a noble girl. If things go badly, it will cause trouble to the family.”

“Really? But it is the right thing to do....”

“Haah....Fine? I will somehow handle Earl Iselk's shop, but one must negotiate with him. One has to silence him with pressure.”

“As a princess can I not do it?”

Right? Renner said as she looked at Climb and Lakys.

I don't know,

Lakys implied in her glances at Climb. The meaning in her gaze was easily understood.

“...Renner-sama. Honestly, pressuring them will be difficult. Everyone will understand Renner-sama's kindness since she has thought this much for them. However, this is an extremely sensitive problem. It is a good plan to grit our teeth and keep our head down.”

Climb did not believe so, but Renner did not understand the importance of laying groundwork, and was the headstrong type. If there was a sensitive problem like the one they were facing, the chance of large problems occurring if they charged in was high. It could not be ignored.

There was no man who wished for the woman he loved to get hurt and go down a road of pain. Climb was the type to hurt himself and open up a safe path for her instead.

Imprisoned, treated like slaves and sent to die. Such people were pitiful, and he felt disgusted by the people who put them there. However, he thought that it could not be helped that the woman most important to him had to avert her eyes to them.

“You should have a personal guard apart from Climb.”

“Maybe.”

“Even if you have one it does not solve the problem with the nobles.”

“The Princess is a beautiful decoration after all.”

“Tia!”

“It's the truth.”

Silence fell. Lakys sent a sharp gaze at Tia, but she had no changed in expression.

“Alvein, Climb. I really am a decoration.”

“T, that is not true!”

Climb shouted. It was an attempt to gloss it over, but Renner was not fooled.

“...Really?”

“ Umuuuu....”

As if being swallowed by Renner’s pure eyes, Climb could not continue. Because he thought Tia spoke the truth.

Renner closed her eyes, and faced upwards.

A few seconds passed. Climb was thinking to console her, but not words came to mind. Lakyus was also silent, and kept a scowl on her face.

“...We have no choice. Call for Marquis Raeven. He has had meetings here for various reasons, and should still be in the capital.”

“The Marquis?”

According to Climb’s memories, he was one of the Six Great Nobles, and was part of the Royal Faction. However, he was a strange one, and the soldiers of Marquis Raeven did not mix well with other soldiers of the faction.

Why such a person?

Climb wondered, but Renner’s orders took first priority in his head. However, he still voiced one of his thoughts.

“...Will it be fine despite being quite late though?”

Climb glanced out the window to check the outside. The sky was filled with stars, and was ruled by the darkness of dusk. However, it was not yet dinnertime, and calling someone without an appointment was not a good thing now.

Of course, there was no way a Great Noble would refuse an invitation by Princess Renner.

“I don’t mind. If I say that I have an urgent message for him, I believe he will come.”

“Understood. Then I will be calling for Marquis Raeven.”

Climb slowly stood up from the chair.

“Aindra-sama, please excuse me.”

“Eeeh.... Hey, Theiere. What are you thinking of, calling for the bat?” (TL Note: I am aware this contradicts the earlier chapter. Author’s problem not mine. I checked.)

While hearing Lakyus’ question from behind him, Climb left the room.

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A man appeared before Renner. Following behind him was Climb.

His blonde hair was pulled back and fixed, and his thin blue eyes glistened in the life. His skin was an unhealthy white, characteristic of those who got no sunlight. He was a man whose figure was like a snake.

He had unhealthy skin that would cause one to ask if he were in his forties.

His appearance was, in a word, impeccable. His tight-fitting clothes were made of some sort of rare animal hide — possibly some sort of magical beast — and stitched with goldwork. The embroidery around his collar and his front buttons was of exquisite workmanship, and the front buttons probably had tiny gemstones worked into them, given the way they caught and reflected the light.

His stand-up collar completely concealed his narrow neck. This was top-class apparel, which was undeniably suited to him. He was the very picture of a member of the Kingdom's Six Great Nobles.

The man entered the room and gracefully bowed.

"I have come in response to Renner-denka's summons."

"Yes. Thank you for coming all his way, Marquis Raeven. Please raise your head."

Renner replied while remaining seated.

Marquis Raeven had a cold smile on his face as he straightened up. His smile was very sinister, and it made people think he was quite creepy. Yet for some reason, it seemed perfectly suited to him. It did not displease others who looked upon him.

"Please, over here."

"Yes."

Marquis Raeven entered the room and moved closer to Renner.

“However, what would you need from me at this late hour? Although I feel happy to speak with Your Majesty at anytime you call.”

“Thank you. There is nothing more reassuring than having the smartest person in the Kingdom, Marquis Raeven, say that.”

“Thank you. However the smartest person in the Kingdom is not myself, but the person in front of me.”

The two shared a deep smile. Then Renner shifted her gaze.

“Climb. You will be in the next room.”

“Understood. Renner-sama.”

Climb who was standing unmoving next to the door, he bowed and left the room. He moved to the next empty room.

“Now, Marquis Raeven. Please take a seat.”

“If you would excuse me.”

Marquis Raeven sat down on the chair Renner indicated. Renner poured a cup of water and placed it before Marquis Raeven.

“May I?”

“Please help yourself.”

Marquis Raeven took it and brought it to his mouth.

“This is the juice of the Kutz (Kuttsu) fruit. Extremely delicious.”

“Thank goodness. I had thought that you would prefer the juice of the Tsil (Tsiru) fruit.”

“No no. At this age, the juice of the Tsil fruit is too sweet, and the taste stays in one’s mouth. The Kutz fruit juice’s tartness is just perfect.”

“Is that so. Then I shall prepare the juice of the Kutz fruit for the next time.”

“Thank you. However, allow me to prepare next time.”

“That would be unfair for you. I have called you after all.”

“No no. Having a gift received by a woman as beautiful as Your Majesty makes me happy as a man.”

Then there was a period of nothingness. Marquis Raeven evaluated Renner with narrow eyes, and Renner was wondering where to start.

And the one who lit the fuse, was of course Renner.

“...I wish to borrow your intellect.”

She wasted no time getting to the meat of the subject. Marquis Raeven’s narrow eyes parted slightly, full of surprise. However, he recovered almost instantly and hid his consternation.

“My intellect, hm. Since it is Your Highness that asks... your servant fears he will not be able to live up to your expectations.”

“I think you will do fine. After all, I doubt anyone is your equal in affairs of the court, Marquis Raeven.”

“...Hou.”

Marquis Raeven raised a voice of slight surprise.

Marquis Raeven knew that Renner was bad at human relations and deals. Thus she distanced herself from political battles.

Then what did the phrase “Affairs of the Court” refer to?

If it was about the secret political wars, where did she get such information from?

It was not from Climb. This was as the best among his soldiers monitored him. He had heard nothing of him meeting with nobles.

Then was this the work of Blue Rose. Probably not as well. While she was familiar with the leader Lakys, but she was not the type to relate to nobles. She could not know the deep parts.

Was this my she had called the one known as the bat, who jumps between the two factions? Because he was a bat he might fly to her?

Marquis Raeven smiled leisurely. He knew too little, and thinking too hard on the matter would only lead to a strange conclusion. That much was obvious. He decided to hold off on his decision until he learned more.

“And what would you have your servant tell you?”

“This is about the ruler of the shadows of the Royal Faction, or the Earl Iselk who is skulking around the shadows. Could you do something about him?”

“...What?”

Given the look on Marquis Raeven’s face, one might be forgiven for thinking a bomb had suddenly gone off in front of his face. Just about anyone who saw this would have been shocked, because Marquis Raeven was not normally an expressive man.

Renner seemed to think further explanation was in order. She ignored Marquis Raeven’s shocked expression and calmly continued.

“...No, perhaps I should have asked one of the two members of the Royal Faction, but Marquis Blumrush has been secretly passing on information to the Empire, no? That would mean...”

“Please wait!”

Eyes widening, Marquis Raeven spoke in a hoarse voice.

“Marquis Blumrush...”

“You knew, right? After all, is that not why you tried to keep the good Marquis from learning too much?”

“.....!”

Marquis Raeven was at a loss for words, and looked at Renner.

Renner still kept her earlier peaceful expression, but wondered if she were wrong under her breath.

“You...”

Marquis Raeven was so overcome that he forgot to address her as “Your Highness”

Renner had been right about everything. Only Marquis Raeven knew that Marquis Blumrush, one of the six Great Nobles, a Great Noble of the Royal Faction, had betrayed the kingdom. They had kept quiet about his treason to keep the balance between the factions from breaking down.

Marquis Raeven had been desperately trying to keep this from the Noble

Faction and had come up with all manner of schemes to keep the Empire from learning this. His efforts should have been flawless, until now.

Then how did Renner who remained cooped up here learn of that information. Were the locks on his information not strong enough?

“How did you find out...”

“Oh, I just listened to what everyone was saying. And I do talk with the maids from time to time.”

How reliable were the maids’ words? It was true that the maids that worked here were the daughters of nobles. And that they knew what was going on in their houses. However, how much of the information that Renner heard was true? But that meant....

An unbelievable idea filled Marquis Raeven’s mind.

However, what Renner was saying, talking from the maids from time to time, was the truth, and Marquis Raeven’s exemplary brain understood.

The girl before him had sifted through a mountain of dross and picked out the diamonds in the rough, which she had fashioned into a jewelled necklace.

Therefore—

“—A monster.”

He quietly intoned the word that most suited the woman known as Renner.

Renner should have heard that loud and clear, but all she did was smile, without rebuking Marquis Raeven for his rudeness. He abandoned the line of thought he had been following until just now.

She deserved his honesty. And his recollections of the past were correct.

“—Understood. I shall open myself up. However, I would like to speak to the real Renner-denka before that.”

“What do you mean?”

Renner asked in a questioning, almost teasing manner.

“A long time ago, your servant once saw a girl. With incredible insight, that girl spoke words of invaluable wisdom. However, your servant took a long time

before he understood the meaning and value of those words.” Marquis Raeven’s voice echoed through the silent room. “....However, when I saw that girl’s eyes, my impressions were that to her, nothing had worth.”

“Nothing had....worth?”

Renner quietly asked.

“Yes. She thought nothing of the world. She had empty eyes that scorned everything.”

The mood in the room was vastly different from before, and a chill seemed to spread through the air. Marquis Raeven hunched his shoulders as if to protect himself.

“However, when I met her again, the girl’s eyes had completely changed. I would like to, Your Majesty. I want to ask, was I completely fooled, or had things changed?”

Their eyes met. It looked as though a pair of serpents were writhing and struggling against each other.

And then, Renner’s eyes lost their shine.

Marquis Raeven smiled coldly, as though he had seen something nostalgic.

“As I expected, Renner-denka. Your Highness’ eyes are just like the ones I recall from my memory. Were you merely pretending ever since then?”

“No, Marquis Raeven. I was not acting. I was satisfied.”

“...Does Your Highness perhaps refer to your soldier, the man Climb...?”

“Oh yes. All this is thanks to my Climb.”

“Oh. To think that that boy could actually change Your Highness... your servant thought of him as nothing but a — a child... what does he mean to Your Highness, if I might ask?”

“You mean Climb...?”

Renner’s gaze trailed off, staring into the air. She was thinking about what words she could use to describe his value to her.

Renner Theiere Chardelon Ryle Vaiself.

If there was only one word to summarize her entire being, that would be “Golden”. That word derived from her blinding beauty. However, very few people knew that she possessed a talent that far outstripped even her good looks.

The level of talent she had was enough to call her a genius of internal affairs.

Her talent could only be described as a gift from the heavens. Her deductions might seem to have come from flashes of inspiration, but the truth was that they were pieced together from countless scattered fragments of information, gathered by her extraordinary powers of observation.

In all likelihood, nobody on the continent could match up against her mental abilities.

If one were pressed to find an equal for her, then one would have to look beyond the human race. However, very few entities were on her level, even among these superhuman beings.

In Nazarick, only Demiurge, who possessed a fiendish intellect and was hypercompetent in every aspect of national administration, be it military, domestic and foreign affairs, could be considered on par with her.

Human beings often considered matters from their own perspectives. From that point of view, one could say that “strange” or “wondrous” people were merely labels applied by plebeians.

Basically Renner was a genius of that level.

However, she had one quirk. That was she could not understand the thoughts of people.

Why could people not immediately understand things that she could easily get. Without any people that could rival her, no one could grasp the intentions of her words. As a result, no one could understand her.

Perhaps it might be easier to describe this phenomenon as “the loneliness of genius”.

Perhaps someone on her level might have been able to appreciate how

gifted she truly was. If that were the case, the outcome would probably have been different.

However, there was nobody like that around.

In the end, when a little girl spoke of things that baffled those who heard them, the reaction to her was fear. Renner was very cute as a child and so she was not hated. Instead, she was cherished, to a certain extent. However, the fact that nobody could understand what she said had an extreme effect on her mental development. The girl's heart began to warp as time went by.

No, she was made to warp.

If not for that puppy of hers.

That was really a mess. On a certain rainy day, the girl picked up a puppy at death's door. Without that day, a demon lord might have been born. One that could not understand human emotions, and only saw numbers and worked to satisfy the majority.

The dying puppy looked at her, its master, with a strange expression in its eyes.

What a weighty gaze, she had thought.

The expression in its eyes was one of innocent reverence.

To her that could not understand human emotions, even she felt that it was heavy, and evoked emotions that everyone could understand—They were eyes that held a heart.

To her who could not understand human emotions, those eyes had disgust, surprise, joy, passion, and a human being.

Indeed, in those eyes, she saw a human being like herself. Of course, not in the meaning of intelligence. It was like a teacher passionately teaching idiots, it was like she was looking at a puppy.

The puppy which the girl had picked up became a boy, and then a man.

Whether he was a puppy, a boy or a man, those eyes peered through her with the same blinding purity.

However, it no longer bothered her.

Thanks to those eyes, she could speak to others like a normal person. She could coexist with the vulgar, inferior lifeforms around her.

“Climb... hm. If I could join with him... hm — and if I could chain Climb up and take care of him like a pet, and make sure he couldn’t go anywhere, perhaps that might be better.”

The air in the room froze. Even Marquis Raeven was shocked.

He had thought the most beautiful woman in the Kingdom would spout some childish fantasy. No, he should not have expected any such saccharine-sweet simpering from the true Princess Renner, but he had not expected her to go that far.

The words that Marquis Raeven heard were so far from what he thought. Thus he froze. However he immediately restarted. This was as he was sure she was not joking.

“Take care of him if you will. Nobody will object to Your Highness’... no, it might still be difficult. Unless you had help.”

“Indeed. It’ll be quite hard to fulfil that dream while maintaining the facade of a proper princess... and there’s no point in forcing him to look at me. I want to chain him down and take care of him like a dog, while he looks at me with those eyes of his...”

Few people enjoyed hearing about the sexual fetishes of others. Marquis Raeven could not help but want to stagger a few steps back after making contact with the soul of the woman called Renner.

“Like a dog... does that mean you do not love him, Your Highness?”

Renner turned an incredulous, scornful gaze on the Marquis.

“Of course I love him. I like the way he looks at me. And I love how he clings to me like a puppy. And now his way of asking for things has gotten strangely better....How boring.”

“...A thousand apologies, but I find this topic very hard to follow.”

“I do not need you to understand me. All you need to know is that I like him,

and that I love him.”

She’s weird.

Marquis Raeven wanted to shake his head.

They had heard that the Princess had fallen in love with a common soldier, and had expected that it might blow up into a matter of national importance. Yet, what they had heard was far more ridiculous than they had expected.

“Well then, the problem of fetishes...”

“It is not a fetish. It is simply love.”

Renner sounded like she was reproachfully interrupting Raeven’s words, and he resisted the urge to shoot back.

A normal person would unconsciously rebut. However it was expected that a great noble who fought in secret conflicts could suppress that.

“Very well, love it is, then... right. Although under the present circumstances, the union of Your Highness with Climb... is a little—”

“Difficult. I fully understand that. It is almost impossible due to the situation. If all the influence were concentrated around myself, everything would be fine, but given the current situation, all methods are impossible.”

Renner’s muddy eyes chided herself. It was also an expression she would not show in front of Climb.

“If it is Your Majesty you could take the Kingdom.”

“Impossible. I cannot understand the thoughts of humans other than Climb. Basically I cannot understand human emotions.”

I see, Marquis Raeven said.

Basically to work together with Renner, he would have to tie himself together with Climb. Doing so would create an extremely strong ally.

Marquis Raeven felt gratitude for being called.

“Anyhow, how about an arranged marriage with my child?”

Marquis Raeven raised his hand as if to stop Renner.

“Arranging a marriage with my child, Your Majesty can have a child with Climb. The rights of my inheritance can go to child born between my son and the woman he loves. And, apologies but, Your Majesty can disguise herself as his or her parent.”

“I see. You can gain blood with this fake marriage.”

“Yes. This way Your Majesty can have a child with the man you love, and my house can gain royal blood even if fake. Both sides stand to gain here I believe.”

“How wonderful. If the pedestal of the Royal Faction, you, asks, even father cannot dismiss it easily.”

Was it?

Marquis Raeven released the tension from his body.

How should it put it, should he raise the evaluation of Renner or lower it. What he could sat was that her figure as a normal girl was a complete farce.

It was known that women faked themselves in front of men. It was on the same level as if a person good at makeup disguised themselves.

“How old is your son?”

“He has turned five.”

“Then he should be cute—”

“Just so!”

His narrow eyes opening wide, Marquis Raeven raised a loud voice. Renner’s body shook at the sudden noise.

“Ah....*cough*. Excuse me.”

“Ah, no....”

Renner and Marquis Raeven looked at each other, and then looked away.

“It seems we’ve gotten off topic.”

“Yes, but it was quite a rewarding digression.”

Both of them thought this. They had both gained from it. Marquis Raeven gained Royal Blood, and Renner could marry the man she loved.

“True. However, there is a reason why I called you.”

“I believe it was, to deal with Earl Iselk....right?”

“Yes. Just so.”

Renner began to talk about Earl Iselk’s shops. Marquis Raeven who was quietly listening nodded. When Renner passed him the papers, he nodded again.

I understand. It is not a rare story....but you want to destroy that brothel and save those trapped inside.”

There was not much meaning to destroying the brothel, and this was nothing more than applying pressure. Despite doing this another brothel like this would pop up somewhere. Did she intend to destroy them one by one?

After Marquis Raeven thought that, he decided to work to fulfill Renner’s wish.

Because he felt happy about the arranged marriage with his son, he wanted to fully pull her in as an ally.

“The problem is that the Earl is of the Royal Faction. This is not an act of loyalty to the King but for profits though.”

“Then if father orders it, can we not solve this problem with his authority?”

“It is the opposite. The Earl does not have much authority, but his does have quite a number of soldiers. Adding on several connections, in total he has quite the say. Ostracising such a man will cause cracks in the faction. Thus it would be best to avoid crushing it from the front with authority.”

“Basically?”

Renner curiously asked. To her who could not understand human emotions, she could not understand why the other nobles would not pull away from a liability like Earl Iselk who had no merits.

She was making a face as if saying *there are only demerits*.

Seeing that, Marquis Raeven felt something cold run down his back.

Renner did not understand human emotions. Even if one thought they had a

friendly relationship, she herself did not think that. Basically, no matter how much one deepened their friendship, they could be thrown away after considering merits and demerits.

Loyalty, gratitude, friendship, love, debts. She could not understand such things.

Then there was only one way to tie down the woman known as Renner.

It was to secure Climb.

However, there was a problem. Attempts to pull in Climb would definitely be known by Renner, and if done poorly, one would make a dangerous enemy.

Marquis Raeven laughed.

However, because it was such a dangerous bomb, that it had worth being secured.

Anyway it would better to sell favours to Climb rather than Renner.

“...You are making quite the evil smile.”

“Really. I am thinking of Earl Iselk’s power after we dull it.”

“Really?”

Renner smiled chidishlu. She fitted the word golden. It was a smile that made one think that.

However, from the current Marquis Raeven, it made him question what she was thinking.

“Now, instead of using authority to forcibly cut down that shop, it would be better to lead the Earl to cutting it himself.”

“Is that possible?”

“Of course. He has borrowed from many, and there is some friendship in that. The Noble Faction, knowing this, would plan to steal the information. Also such a brothel is right on the boundaries of the law. Knowing that there is a relation, even if it fails, we will not be connected. If I say some things, the Earl will instead be grateful for its destruction.”

“Then after cutting their relation, what will happen to the store?”

“We can destroy it. With the cover of destroying it before the information reaches those of the Noble Faction.”

“With what methods? Will you be mobilising your troops?”

“No, we will use adventurers. We can gather and use troops, but we need some numbers for that. And using troops within the capital stands out. This would cause the information to leak. And it will be dangerous to use the cover that we are inspecting a person of the Noble Faction.”

“Using adventurers that can face a thousand men each, the leaked information would decrease.”

“Yes. Your Majesty does have good relationships with such adventurers after all.”

Renner nodded.

“On top of them, I shall activate the adventurer party under myself.”

“Shall they destroy it in turns?”

“No, it is dangerous if not destroyed quickly. Those from the Noble Faction might activate their soldiers and steal the info. Also this might destroy the public safety of the city.”

Should there be weird information in the shop, it would become a dangerous problem. So they would attack immediately and steal the necessary information.

“The problem is that there is little time, but four shops.”

“If Blue Rose splits and handles two, my subordinates can handle one. It seems we have one missing.”

“It cannot be helped, shall we give up? Or hire other adventurers?”

“Hiring adventurers will be troublesome. I want to hire Workers who care for only money, but this is a job of utmost secrecy. I want to do this with Your Majesty’s Blue Rose and my subordinates....If we had to ignore one, we should ignore the last and most evil one. I cannot think that there is important information there.”

Renner pondered to herself for a few seconds.

“What is wrong?”

“Climb....does not wish for that....but it’s dangerous....”

With that short whisper, one could easily understand what Renner was thinking.

“Climb-kun wants to save everyone? He is a child still.”

Marquis Raeven made a wry smile.

In actuality, the chance of saving the people in that shop was low. First was the cost of using healing magic, and there would be people who did not heal despite that. And after saving them, the problem of what to do with them popped up.

Not understanding that, and simply wanting to save them, he could only be called a child.

“However that is what makes him Climb.”

Renner smiled brightly. This was the first time Marquis Raeven recognised Renner as a beautiful woman. Currently, Renner’s expression had no negative emotions. She was a woman that was simply proud of her man.

“Then is cannot be helped. I shall have Climb-kun stationed nearby to infiltrate the shop with whoever has finished.”

“How about having him attack the shop with the other members?”

“That is not bad, but there is the possibility of wounds—”

“—That is fine. We shall let Climb be the lookout, and attack the last shop with whoever finished their attacks.”

“However....Honestly, why do you want to destroy that shop? I believe you understand that there are not many merits to this?”

Marquis Raeven curiously asked Renner, but was responded to with laughter.

“Climb wishes for that.”

“And so?”

“I shall act as the woman Climb believes is Renner.”

“...If you are caught it will be bad you know? I do not believe he is that sort of person but....”

There was weight in Marquis Raeven’s words since he had a wife and child. However, Renner did not understand that. She only took it at face value.

“Is that so? Well, I am controlling myself to the point that I feel locked up, but it is not all an act. I simply want to help Climb do whatever he wants.”

“That would be fine but....”

Is it? While wondering about that, he did not fully understand it, Marquis Raeven forced himself to believe that love came in all shapes and forms.

“There is no time, so we should begin quickly. The information that I have come here should have spread. If we let this chance pass the security will become stricter.”

“I have troubled you.”

“Nonsense. For the fake wife of my child, this level of cooperation is nothing. While my adventurers move, I shall visit the Earl.”

“How about we begin in one hour’s time?”

“My adventurers are free, and have no problem. How about Your Majesty’s side?”

“I have no problems here either. I have heard the plans of Blue Rose earlier.”

“Shall we move?”

“We should. Climb and the leader of Blue Rose, Lakys are next door. Can you explain to them?”

“Understood, Your Majesty.”

Chapter 71: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 11

Climb was holding a black lump. It was wriggling in his hands and was extremely soft, so it was flattening in his hands due to its weight.

Climb hit that strange ball full of liquid and splattered it on his armour.

The ball spread out with a splash, and made a black mark on Climb's white armour. What Climb held was a ball with black dyes. This explained this scene.

However, that was not the end. He did not simply destroy that ball.

The black dye on his armour moved, and spread out across the armour's surface. After a few seconds, there was not a place left unstained, and the sparkling white turned into a deep black.

The ball Climb destroyed was an item known as a <Magic Dye>. High level ones could give resistances to acid, heat and cold, but the one that Climb used simply changed colour.

The reason he was using this was of course, because Climb's pure white armour was too eye-catching. However, changing colour like this had the merit of not being associated with Climb since his normal image was strong.

"Climb."

Confirming that he had finished changing colour, Lakyus had believed that he had finished preparations and came over. She began to give the final briefing.

This job this time was to attack the four brothels, save the people inside, and retrieve any secret documents. They would prioritise the removal of the staff, and if they were customers, they would knock them unconscious. The reason why they were saving the guests was as they could be used as weapons for Marquis Raeven.

The attack on the four brothels was split into four. Two would be handled by Blue Rose. One would be handled by another adventurer party. Climb would

observe the last brothel.

After that, a party that finished their attack would attack the last brothel with Climb.

The secrecy of this job was extremely high, and the Noble Faction could not know of this. Thus, they would prevent it from escalating into a large commotion. They would also prevent information from being leaked.

Climb listened to Lakys' explanation and nodded.

"Understood."

"Then, take care."

"Oh, is the conversation over?"

"Gagaran-sama."

Just a bit away from them were the members of Blue Rose—Evileye, Tia and Tina. Gagaran separated from them and came over.

Her outfit was different from when they were in the inn, and she were covered in first-class magic items.

Her blackish red full plate mails chestpiece had spikes and a rune that looked like an eye. This was the famous armour [Gaze Pain].

Her gauntlet was changed slightly, and a pair of entwined snakes was engraved in. Those who touched the gauntlets would be healed, and it was known as [The Gauntlets of Caduceus].

The large warpick that one could only use with both hands was [Fell Iron (Feruaian)]. The large crimson cape that a member of nobility would wear was the [Crimson Guardian]. Hidden under her armour was the [Vest of Resistance], the [Amulet of Dragontooth] the [Belt of Greater Power], the [Wing Boots] and the [Circlet of Twister]. Her rings also had large amounts of power imbued in it.

This was the full loadout of one of the members of The Kingdom's Strongest A+ Adventurer Party, the strongest warrior, Gagaran.

"What are you here for?"

Lakys spoke back in cold words, and her body was also covered in items no

inferior to Gagan's.

First was the magic sword whose name knew no bounds, the Demon Sword Kirineiram. It was a bastard sword, and since it was in its sheath he could not see its blade, which was said to look like a pitch black night sky. However, he could tell that the grip alone was of amazing make. Especially the giant black sapphire embedded in its hilt, and shines as if it were a magical fire.

Her full plate armour had a shine that could only be explained by it being a mix of platinum and gold, and multiple unicorns were engraved on it. Since it could only be worn by women and could not be dirtied, it was known as the [Virgin Snow].

Opposing such a shiny armour, the cloak on her back was a mouse-coloured cotton cloth. This was the [Cloak of Rat Speed] that could grant higher movement speed, sensitivity and evasion, that one could not tell based on its appearance.

It was not only that. She had magic items that rivalled Gagan's.

Even one would cause one's eyes to pop from the price, having this many was precisely because they were A+ adventurers.

"Oi oi, Leader is strict. She is thinking about teaching Clim about fighting."

"What! Haaa. Well it's fine, that's to that girl this is quite a rushed job. We don't have enough time to relax you know? End this quickly."

"Yes yes. But, Lakyus. Can we use that?"

"That is....Kirineiram? It's fine though...."

"Really? Well, don't push yourself. If it gets bad tell us anytime."

"Eh? I don't really get it, but fine."

Lakyus returned to the other members of Blue Rose and Gagan watched her go. Gagan then took something out from her breast pocket. She then thrust it out to Clim.

"Bring this along."

Gagan passed him handbells. Three of them. In appearance, they were

very similar, but the design on them was different. Climb had heard of what they were and when to use them.

“This is....”

“I don’t think you’ll use it, but this is just in case.”

“But....”

The reason why Climb was hesitating was as it was not an item that an attacker like him would use. Gagaran then laughed away Climb’s worries.

“Ha. We will leave this to Tia and Tina. There is no chance for any detection items to be used. So, it is better for you to use this.” Gagaran lowered her voice. “However, because of that, don’t try to use it. Properly evaluate the situation and you it.”

Climb was about to ask, but at that moment, Evileye spoke up with an annoyed voice.

“Are you not ready yet, Gagaran!”

“Ouu. I’m coming!”

Looking back at him, Gagaran gave Climb some advice.

“If we get there first there will be no problem. But if the other party get here, the chance that they will find you a bother will be high. Well, if a weird person joined your party, it might not function well. So try not to be a bother.”

“Yes. I understand.”

“Then fine. Well, don’t hesitate.”

After those words, Gagaran walked towards her comrades. Seeing that large retreating figure, Climb then turned his gaze to the bells he was given.

It was normal for one to sleep when the sun set in this world. This was as lights cost money. For poor families, they wanted to save on lamp oil. Thus, the lives of villagers were healthy ones.

However, cities were not like that. Firstly magic items that could provide <Continual Light> were often used. Also some work could only start after the sun set. The extravagant pleasure district was such a place.

However, Climb was heading to a place where the words narrow alley could not even describe.

Climb remained silent on the quiet road, and walked without light. The reason why he could walk in a pitch dark lane was due to his helm, the <Helm of Dark Vision>.

15 metres ahead of him was the limit, but the scene he could see from the narrow slit was as bright as day.

Since an armour made of mithril was not as noisy as a normal full plate armour, it did not destroy the quiet atmosphere. The sound of the crossbow at his waist hitting his armour was not loud either.

Without a person with exceptional observational skills or a great rogue, Climb's footsteps could not be heard from within the building.

He had already passed the area where Sebas had picked up Tsuare, and he went a few blocks further and placed his hand on a nearby door.

He used some force, and slowly, as if to not make sound, pushed the door open. As if knowing that it should open, the door opened as if it had no hesitation.

As the door opened, the stench of stale air leaked out.

It was completely black, but Climb could see without any problems, and entered silently.

Closing the door with the back of his hand, Climb first checked with his ears. Confirming that he could not hear anything, Climb took the next step.

He began slowly walking.

While the floor underneath Climb creaked due to his weight, Climb moved one with caution. There was the possibility that the wooden floor was rotten. If there was a basement, this would be a natural pitfall trap.

In the completely black room, every step Climb took kicked up dust and the smell of mold. The fortunate thing was that there were no smells other than that.

There were monsters within cities. For example, the one metre long Giant

Ant or Giant Cockroach. Such monsters have particular smells. If there was no smell, there was no monster.

Confirming his safety, Climb returned to the door, and made a slight gap. He then peeked out. Unfortunately due to the angle, Climb could not see his goal of the brothel.

Climb was observing a different building.

Why was he observing a different building?

The reason was simple.

The building that Climb was observing was a part of the brothel.

The brothel was a two storey building, but the first nor second floor were used. It was the underground that was truly used. Yes, the store spread out under the ground.

The building that Climb was observing was another entrance to the shop— This was an extremely hidden exit that they learnt of because the thief's guild had investigated it.

Originally it might have been better to observe the normal door. However, Tia who was excellent as a thief, had scouted the area and found that this house was the safest.

If it was a person with Tia's amazing thief skills, they could observe the building with the entrance as well. However, a novice like Climb could not. Thus he was peeking out from this house.

The building Climb was observing had the same appearance as the surrounding houses, and had a dilapidated look. However, there was no light leaking from it. If it was an emergency exit, there would be people there.

Climb stared at the location without moving. Then—

“Kushun.”

—He made a cute sneeze.

He looked at his surroundings, he confirmed that there was no one there to hear him. He then pulled a thin cloth and a handkerchief from the pouch at his

waist.

He then removed his helm. The effect of night vision was granted by the helm, thus was cut when he removed it, and was shrouded in darkness. He was unable to see his surroundings for an instant.

However this was predicted. Climb continued his actions without panicking.

Climb covered his nose with a handkerchief. The dust in this house would stick to his mucus. After repeatedly blowing his nose, and confirming that he removed any itchiness, Climb folded his handkerchief. He then tied a cloth around his mouth and nose. After covering the bottom half of his face, he put on his helm.

Breathing was painful to a certain extent, but it was better than inhaling dust.

If Climb's inner state was turned into words, it would be something along those lines.

He then silenced himself and stared at the scene.

In the midst of things, he reminiscenced about a certain old man.

He was extremely strong, and had the same goals. However, it would cause problems to his master, and thus he could not be involved. And more importantly he could not pull in an unknown third party.

Climb believed that Sebas could be trusted, but this problem could extend to Renner, and so he could not borrow his power.

Looking at the situation silently, how did he pass this boring time? Suddenly, Climb heard a strange sound.

It was the sound of something large and heavy being moved.

The sound was metallic. It was like a full plate wearing warrior was being thrown aside, and Climb peeked out in a panic. However he could not see anything from his position.

Should he open the door to peek? Climb hesitated.

This might have been Lady Luck shining down upon him.

The door Climb was observing. It was open. While bathed in the light from inside, a man poked his head out. He was a man that did not have a good appearance. In one of his hands was a metallic shine. It was a drawn shortsword.

“Oi! The door is broken!”

The man looking checking the outside was probably speaking to someone on the inside.

What broken door? One did not even need to think about it, it was probably the entrance. It seems that the steel door was broken by a third unknown party.

Did one of the groups from the other shops come? If that was the case, why did they not inform Climb? Did they not tell him because he would be a bother. Or was it—

“Did the people of the Noble Faction move?”

There was a chance that a person made his move without knowing that Climb was here. Those that would do that were probably of the Noble Faction.

This was bad.

Climb panicked.

If it were a person from the Noble Faction, the plan to keep this all under wraps would go up in smoke.

Despite being troubled, Climb had to make his choice.

It was what it do. If information leaked to the Noble Faction, the Earl would take action. Then the Royal Faction would have their power chipped away. Personally, Climb did not think anything about the rotten nobles who were affiliated to the brothels. However, he did not wish for the weakening of the Royal Faction.

The weakening of the Royal Faction would be detrimental to Renner. He could not allow that.

Climb decided so.

His heart quieted down. His heart could not waver to erase Renner’s

enemies. The debt that was born when he was a child. And the gratitude that was raised in him thereafter. And his love. If it was for Renner, he would throw his life away.

Climb drew his sword, and moved from the door. His aim was the man.

While it was a metal armour of mithril, there was no way that it would make no sound. Hearing a metallic sound from behind him, the man turned back in a panic.

However everything was too late.

What he saw was the flash of a blade, and the shadowy figure appearing from the darkness.

As Climb swung down his sword, the man had his neck cut, and his head rolled to the floor. His short sword dropped to the floor in a clatter.

Climb entered the building without looking at the fate of the man. Even though he just entered a room full of light, Climb had his vision magically improved and thus there would have no problems.

The man there was already alone.

His shortsword and leather armour caused him to have the same figure as the man earlier. Confirming that he was not one of the people that Lakys had showed him, Climb closed the gap in an instant.

“What! Who are you!”

The man thrust his shortsword out to Climb in a panic, but Climb in black armour easily repelled it.

He swung down his sword.

He tried to stop it with his short sword, but it was not enough not stop a blow with Climb’s full body weight in it. Blowing away his short sword, Climb’s sword embedded itself into the man’s shoulder and into his chest.

“GyaAa!”

The man’s screams reverberated, and he fell to the ground, twitching.

Climb believed that it was a fatal wound, and immediately ventured further

into the room. After confirming that there was no one, he climbed to the second floor.

One minute later.

Confirming that there were no enemies, he returned to the door. Seeing that the collapsed man was not moving, he fled outside. Steadying his breath, he pulled the corpse outside back in. Closing the door, he took out a bag of liquid and poured its contents on the bloodstains.

The special smell of the liquid in his bag mixed with the thick stench of blood, and caused the smell of blood to lessen. If one came closer it would not fool them, but if they were a distance away, they would not notice.

And thus the clamorous cleanup ended, and Climb faced the entrance of the building with determination.

A thick metal door had fallen onto the road. The door was wooden with metal plates nailed into it, and its center had a different metal hammered into it.

The door was forced open with great strength. And the knob was twisted into a weird shape.

There was no way that a human could do this with physical strength. A tool was possible. No, even with a tool, no human could do this in a short period of time.

Then the next thing would be magic.

There was magic that could destroy items. Using that, one could destroy hinges or the lock of the door, even a heavy one.

Climb peeked inside. The path continued on straight from the open entrance, and led to a closed door.

He could not feel the presence of anyone. Even if he strained his ears, he could not hear anything. However it was certain that there was an intruder.

Confirming this, Climb frantically returned to the building that was attacked.

The door was opened in a rough manner, as if kicked in and had fallen inwards. The room was filled with the smell of blood. He had looked around in

the building before, but he did not find any door or path leading underground. Basically it was hidden.

Since Climb did not have any thief-type skills, he could not find it by looking around the room. If there was a fine powder like flour in the room, he could blow it around and see where it led.

It was a method that worked by having the powder entering the cracks of the hidden door. However, he neither had the flour nor the time. While Climb was like this, the mystery invader was making his way in as well.

Thus Climb took out a magic item from his pocket. It was the group of handbells that Gagan gave him. Comparing it to the drawings he was given, he picked one of the three.

The name of the magic item he selected was the <Bell of Detect Secret Doors>.

He waved it once. A refreshing sound that could only be heard by its owner spread into the air.

Reacting to the sound, a light shone from a corner of the room. It began to flicker, and showed Climb that there was a hidden door.

Climb memorised that location, and turned back to the first floor. After confirming that there were no other reactions in other locations, he returned to his original location.

After this would be to open it and infiltrate, but Climb narrowed his eyes and stared at the hidden door. He then sighed, and picked another handbell.

The one he picked was different from the earlier one. He then swung it.

It was similar to the earlier one, but the sound of this bell was different.

<Bell of Remove Trap>.

It might be a waste to use it since he was not sure if there was one or not, but a warrior like Climb could not detect traps. There was also the possibility that he could not handle it alone. And while there was the limit of using it once per day, it could not be helped that he waste it here.

There were other problems such as this magic item could not deactivate

large or magic-based traps. However, he guess that there were no traps of this magnitude here.

And, it seems that this time, Climb was right.

A heavy sound rang from behind the hidden door.

Climb inserted his sword into the gap of the hidden door, and forced it open.

A portion of the wooden floor rose up, and fell to the other side. Along with it was the crossbow that was set into the other side of the hidden door. The arrowhead of the bolt reflected light in a strange way, different from metal.

Climb changed his location, and stared at the crossbow.

Slathered onto the tip was a viscous fluid. In 9 out of 10 cases, this would be poison.

If he just opened the door, a poisoned bolt would be released.

Heaving a slight sigh of relief, Climb did not remove the crossbow, but investigated it. Unfortunately it was bolted to the ground and he could not remove it without tools.

Without a choice, he removed the arrow.

One of the mistakes that novices make was that despite getting it, they would injure themselves with it first. To avoid that, Climb set it in his crossbow first.

Many humans would avoid using poison. Most adventurers did. This was as poison was associated with villainy.

However, Climb was not one to be afraid of such things. Especially since he was a human who recognised his weakness, he was willing to use anything. The reason why he did not usually use poison was as it was not suitable for a soldier of Renner.

However not using it in such a dangerous situation was a fool's act.

Finishing his preparations, Climb peered into the hidden room.

It suddenly dropped into a staircase, and he could not see beyond due to his

angle. The stairs and its surroundings were made of hard stone.

Climb placed one foot on the steps. Out of care, he prodded each step with his sword before moving.

This was an extremely dangerous act.

A lone warrior trying to infiltrate a location was a crazy act.

However, he had no choice.

There was the option of entering from the main entrance, but the results would depend on whether the person who entered first was an ally or an enemy. Either way, he was at loggerheads with them, and people would escape from this door.

There was also the method of surrounding the door and capture those escaping, but important information might be stolen by the other party. While passive, the smartest choice was to keep silent and watch, and inform the others about any occurrences.

However doing that would be detrimental to Renner.

Thus he took the most dangerous option.

The merits of having the man from the entrance face the enemies while he sneaked in to steal information and capture noble-like people were huge. The problem was how much a warrior like Climb could act like a thief.

A few metres from the bottom of the stairs was a door.

Climb pressed forward with great caution. He did not think that there would be a larger trap than a crossbow in an emergency exit, but it was common for a warrior in armour to be made powerless due to a pitfall. He had to avoid that.

He proceeded at a speed that caused him to take a long time to cover short distances, but he reached the door. Climb readied his shield in front of him, and pierced the door with his sword, multiple times.

Confirming that the trap did not activate on touch, he placed his ear to the wooden door, and tried to listen in.

But as expected Climb could not hear anything.

He hesitated over using the magic item again, but he found his courage and grabbed the knob—and turned.

However....It did not move.

“A lock....”

As Climb whispered disappointingly, he shook the last handbell among the three.

<Bell of Open Lock>.

The lock opened with the power of magic, and with the sound of a click, the knob turned.

Climb opened the door slightly, and peeked inside.

It was an open hall.

In the corners of the room were cages that could fit people and wooden boxes. It was probably a storage room. But he felt that it was too big for that.

Opposite was an opening without a door. Climb cleared his ears, and could hear a slight clamour.

Confirming that there was no one, Climb entered the room and tried to lower his presence. When he reached the centre—

“Hmm. I thought that was the diversion, and this would be the main force.”

A sudden voice. A bald man showed himself from the shadow of the boxes. He did not teleport, nor become invisible, he simply was not picked up by Climb’s senses.

The man’s upper half was bare, and his muscular body was covered in countless tattoos, to the point where you could not see his bare skin.

Seeing that figure, Climb felt electricity shoot down his spine.

A certain piece of information he got from Lakys flashed in his head. It was about the people in the Eight Fingers.

Climb immediately readied his crossbow, and fired without question.

The poison tipped bolt flew towards the man.

His aim was the man's large torso. Would he dodge, or hide behind a wooden box? Even though there were only those two choices, the man picked the third one.

"—Hmm."

The man easily grasped the bolt. He then laughed and casually threw it aside.

The bolt clattered to the floor.

"It's fine."

Reacting to that voice, another man hiding in the shadows from across the room showed himself.

He held a rapier in one hand, and had an androgynous beauty. He had a kind smile on his face as if welcoming a friend.

In addition, the hard leather armour he was wearing did not have the chest portion for ladies, but had the one for men.

Climb felt his throat dry.

There were three people in the Eight Fingers that Climb could not defeat. Two of them were here.

He lowered his head at his misfortune.

There were four shops, so why were two of them here? Or was this the most important shop? If that was the case then he had to do something before the other intruder takes away the information....

Climb worked his brain. But, there was no other option.

"Why, here?"

While the two closed in on Climb, he moved to keep the two in his sights, and asked. There was no way they were always here. Or did they foresee that he had come here due to the other intruder?

"<Alarm>. You understand riiigggghht?"

The rapier-holding-man, at least in appearance, laughed. While clicking his tongue, Climb readied his sword and shield.

“He’s motivated isn’t he, Zero.”

“...Hmm. He came all this way. Of course he would. Right, intruder?”

Climb did not reply. He then ran his hand across his scabbard, and spoke a word. Reacting to it was his sword. As if the power of magic dwelt in it, the blade began to shine a pale light.

“Heh. <Magic Weapon> and <Bless Weapon>? That’s quite the magic item you have there to cast two spells simultaneously.”

“Hmm. That means that we can get stronger after we kill him.”

“Zero is quite carefree. Do you not think that he is strong since he has such an amazing magic item? Hey, you. Where did you get that item? If you hand it over, we might spare your life you know?”

Climb did not reply. He could easily tell that they were lying.

“I see. Well, it’s fine. What should we do? All of us at once? Or should one of us go in at a time?”

“Lubelina.”

“Yeess, what?”

With a extremely lighthearted voice, the man—Lubelina replied to the man called Zero.

“Hurry up and clean this up, I’ll handle the other side.”

“So true. We are troubling our guest. Understood.”

“...I have been ordered to make a blockade, and to buy time.”

A new voice cut in.

Climb looked at him in a panic, as if asking if there were more. He had felt it strange that Lubelina used the word “all”, but now he understood. A man showed himself from behind the wooden boxes.

He of course existed in Climb’s memory. He was a man who just able to defeat Climb, and his name should be Succulent.

If he were alone, there would be a chance of victory. However, under these

circumstances, such a thing was impossible.

However, having a slightly weaker existence join the fight was not a bad thing for Climb. This was as he was a weakness.

However, Climb's naive hopes were immediately dashed.

"You will be on guard duty. We can't have anyone interfere after all."

"Understood, Lubelina-san."

Receiving Lubelina's orders, Succulent headed to the walls. He had no intention of joining.

"And so, you. You will only have the two of us as your opponents, but you won't be lonely right?"

"Hmm. What are you talking about." Seeing that Climb was not speaking, Zero spoke as if chiding Lubelina. "It's obvious he will not talk. Hurry up and clean up."

"Well well. Just wait a bit, Zero. I'm getting to that."

—A loud clicking sound echoed in the room.

Climb did not have the freedom to look behind him. However, he could guess what it was.

"...Surprised? It's an automatic lock. After a certain amount of time has passed, it will lock automatically. One of the works of dwarf craftsmen. It's amazing isn't it."

Lubelina's voice was very excited.

Basically she was talking to buy time.

Having his escape route sealed off, he had to defeat two strong people to escape. No, there was one more.

Climb searched for a chance to take out his handbell. If he put in hand in his pocket he would be discovered. Basically he had one chance. He could not let it go.

"By the way, you. You look like a warrior. How did you open the door?"

“...Who knows.”

Lubelina's face warped.

“Hahhahaha.” She burst into laughter. “—Reacting here, you, are an idiot. Despite the fact that saying nothing was the answer, you reacted and I hit the bullseye....Zero, he has some sort of item. It can open locks.”

“Hmm. Then we will not let him have that chance.”

Zero stepped forward. His gait was very forceful, as if he were a king welcoming a challenger.

On the other hand, Climb kept his sword and shield ready and slowly retreated. His aim was the wall. It could not be helped that the two were attacking, but he could at least narrow their range.

However, Climb's action was read by the two. They closed in from the side, so he was forced to keep his eyes on the entrance.

Running back to the entrance was a foolish move.

He would be attacked from behind. So Climb decided to attack Lubelina first, and moved.

“Heeehh, me first? Good choice.”

His chances of victory between Lubelina and Zero were higher facing Lubelina. However, to Lubelina, Climb's decision was a dissatisfying one.

Lubelina closed in with a thud, and an annoying screeching sound could be heard from Climb's helm.

“Heh, nice armour.”

Ignoring the vibrations, Climb swung his sword. However, he did not reach Lubelina. She had moved to a place his sword could not reach. Her speed was at another level. No, while Climb thought that, to Gazef or Gagaran, this was not much. However, it was Climb that was fighting.

It was like trying to catch a feather that was floating in the air.

Climb thought that and glared at Lubelina.

“What a pity. I was trying to pierce your cheek.”

The attack to his cheek was not a miss nor a result of Climb trying to dodge, but was aimed for. It was based on the idea that an attack to the cheek would not be fatal, and was a good indicator of Lubelina's personality.

"Oi oi, if you pay too much attention here, you'll be in danger you know?"

"—Hmm!:

"Gok!"

Climb who was paying attention to Lubelina felt at impact on his shoulder, and stumbled sideways. He raised his shield and glared out from behind it. In his limited vision from the slit in his helm, he saw Zero.

"!"

Matching the timing when Zero stepped in, Climb swung his sword down.

Zero hit Climb's sword, causing it to change direction, and he plunged his fist into Climb's stomach.

There was a loud sound. It was the sound of metal hitting metal.

"Gahaa!"

"Yes yes, now here!"

Climb staggered backwards and heard the sound of someone running near his legs. He swung his sword in that direction.

However there was no sensation of hitting anything.

There was no way he could hit anything by blindly waving his sword. The calm warrior in him screamed that, but there was the chance that if he did not swing, he would eat another attack. Uselessly waving his sword wasted energy, but he had to do it.

Climb's face warped underneath his helm, and just as he tried to locate his enemies, he saw something move in the corner of his eyes. He tried to raise his shield in a panic—

—The sound of metal rang at the same time as he received a strong impact on his chest.

While staggering backwards, he covered himself with his shield and strained

his gaze. As predicted, the one standing there was Zero.

The impact on his chest affected his breathing. Blunt hits easily passed into his body, dealing damage. He could deal with it as his full plate armour was enchanted, but he had accumulated a lot of injuries.

“Hmm. Lubelina, you are playing too much. There are others we have to kill.”

“Eh? Ah, yes. There are invaders. I forgot.”

Lubelina’s speech had some hostility in it. Basically she was getting serious.

Climb frantically readied his breathing. He could feel the sweat under his clothes. He had been in real fights multiple times, but a fight like this where he could easily die was a first.

Climb felt his spirit being doused with great force. And his unnecessary actions and the damage he received stole his strength.

“I tire of this. Even you can kill this guy safely when he’s tired. Join in, Succulent.”

“Yes, Zero-san.”

The man who was watching until now left the wall, and moved to surround him. He drew his short sword, and its blade had a slimy glisten.

Climb’s left hand hand down at his side. He strongly felt the weight of his shield. The heat from his shoulder told him that it was not broken, and he had pins and needles. He felt the same pain at his chest and stomach.

He was surrounded, and they were closing in. When they were close enough, the three would definitely steal his life.

Climb had a bitter taste in his mouth.

Was this the taste of death?

Climb felt his body shaking.

Was his heart crying because he could not return to Renner’s side?

In front of death, humans would have the heart of martyrs. It was a similar feeling to surrender in a battle. Such people would lose their lives in the next attack. This was a fact. People stole the lives of people, and there was no way a

person who surrendered can take the lives of others.

However—Climb did not loosen his grip on his sword.

He had received this sword from Renner. He could not let go of it.

The figure of the woman he loved appeared in his head.

Climb suddenly removed his helm, and dropped it to the floor. The helm clattered to the floor. He then whispered an apology to his master.

“—Hmm.”

“—Ara, well.”

“—Who are you?”

The three from the Eight Fingers carefully looked at Climb’s actions, wondering what meaning they held. It seemed to be the actions of someone who gave up, but the fire in Climb’s eyes was not of someone who accepted death.

Climb removed the cloth covering his nose and move, and spat out the taste of death that accumulated in his mouth.

“Why do I feel as if I have already lost?”

Climb mockingly laughed. It was directed at his fate that brought him to this impossible situation.

Climb put more energy into himself, and raised his shield to his shoulder. He could bear with something like pain.

Yes, Climb was always under pressure. He beared with pain, underwent strict training, ignored the mocking laughs, and stared at the future where he would lose the woman he loved.

He beared with it and moved forward one step at a time. While talented people could fly up the steps, Climb went up one by one, and this took time.

Then he should take this as a staircase for him to climb.

He should win as always, and continue to stand behind Renner.

Climb’s immature face had a bold smile on it.

Zero and Lubelina felt a slight, just a slight amount of hesitation. Until now they had a sure case of victory. They felt that it would be an absolute victory.

“Spell Tattoo activate.”

Zero chanted his keywords, and his tattoos began to leak light.

“Hmm. Activating the second spell tattoo....You are serious aren’t you? Succulent fall back. He has become a little dangerous.”

“...Nothing seems to have changed though.”

“Hmm. That’s why you are beneath us.”

With a roar, Zero exploded with heat. His body turned red, and one could see he had gotten much more powerful.

“I’ll go first, Zero.”

Lubelina stepped in with vigour, her rapier heading towards Climb’s exposed face. A serious Lubelina who was not playing could easily pierce armour. While Climb’s armour was very hard, she was confident of piercing it.

However, there was uncertainty in Lubelina’s head.

It was the thought that she could not pierce both the shield and his armour.

If her thrust was stopped, she would be at an overwhelming disadvantage.

That was why she aimed from Climb’s defenseless head.

If he stopped it with his shield, then she would pierce it harder. If he hit it with his sword, she would slip past and pierce.

In front of the rapier known as [Heart Penetrate], Climb took action to evade.

Lubelina’s face warped into a cold smile. She would aim upwards and pierce his head.

An instant later—She felt that her sword had pierced flesh. However, there was less blood than she expected.

“What!”

Lubelina raised a gasp of surprise.

Heart Penetrate had pierced Climb's cheek. At the same time, Climb moved his head, forcing the blade deeper. After the blade reached his other cheek, he moved his jaw, and bit down.

The feeling of the harsh grating of teeth reverberated through Heart Penetrate and reached Lubelina.

"I fon't yet yoo recofer."

With blood spitting out from his mouth, Climb went over to Lubelina's body, and swung his sword with full force.

"This is bad!"

When she tried to retrieve Heart Penetrate, the jaw strength of a man biting down and ignoring the pain was stronger. Giving up, Lubelina tried to let go of her rapier, but it was too late. Climb's sword headed to Lubelina, and—

—If she was his only opponent, he could have won—.

Climb's body was blown away with a loud sound.

The man wearing armour floated into the air, and was blown back several metres. That was testament to how powerful that blow was.

"You lost focus."

Still in the position where he punched Climb with his fist, Zero spoke to Lubelina.

"Ah, you saved me, Zero."

Lubelina picked up Heart Penetrate off the floor. If had fallen from Climb's cheek due to the impact of Zero's attack.

Blood, saliva, and some bite marks. Being able to leave marks on a magical sword, just what sort of jaw strength did he have?

Lubelina looked at the fallen Climb, and was faced with a surprising scene.

Climb was slowly standing up. While he received Zero's attack, he could still stand. Such humans were extremely rare.

"Zero! Aren't you the one fooling around!"

“No, I am surprised. Due to the armour or some other reason, he’s not dead.”

With a cough, Climb stood up and spat out blood. He was half dead, but half alive. Those were the best words to describe him. His eyes were empty, and his hands hung by his sides. His face was pierced, and he looked terrible.

However, he still had the will to fight.

“I’ll kill you. You! Succulent, what are you looking at! Join in!”

“Y, yes!”

As Lubelina screamed with a voice that showed that the gap had narrowed, the three closed in.

He could hear a voice through his buzzing ears. As if reacting to that, Climb raised his sword as if welcoming them. He had almost no chance of victory, but he could not lose.

He had to win and return to Renner’s side.

In his shaking vision, Climb frantically locked onto his enemies. His sword was wavering, but he could still fight.

Climb glared at them, and—

“—One vs many is not something I can commend you for.”

It was a quiet voice.

Even though they were in a battle of life and death, everyone stopped moving. And though this would be impossible, their eyes left their opponents and looked towards that voice. Despite showing such a defenseless posture, they did not attack.

And everyone felt an overwhelming pressure from that voice, and confirming his presence took precedent over anything. Even if it meant looking away from their enemies.

At the point where their gazes met, was an old man.

There was not a single speck of dust on the tailcoat wearing butler. His figure made one think that he was in his master’s mansion, and he felt extremely natural. However, he had the thick scent of blood, and one could

almost see a red fog surrounding him.

While bathed in the gazes of everyone, the old man took a step. They heard the sound of leather hitting the floor. He did not do anything. He simply stepped into the room.

They could not feel killing intent nor hostility from him.

However, Zero, Lubelina and Succulent felt suppressed by an invisible force, and unconsciously took a step back. Just by him stepping in, the room felt smaller.

Climb did not understand why that man would be here. So, he spoke.

“Se—-Mashtar.”

About to say the old man, Sebas’ name, Climb shouted to correct himself. Since Succulent was here, Sebas was already exposed. But since Climb did not know that, he tried to hide his identity.

At that thoughtful shout, Sebas made a wry smile.

“...Now. It seems you have helped my—disciple quite a bit.” Sebas stretched out his arm and beckoned them. “I shall be your opponent.—Now, come.”

Chapter 72: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 12

The door to the drawing room slowly opened. Its hinges were regularly oiled and it should have swung open smoothly, but for some reason, the motion of the doors seemed unusually sluggish and ponderous, as though the door was fighting a pressure differential between the air on the inside and the outside of the room. It was as though their speed was matching the way Sebas felt..

If the door had truly read his heart, then Sebas would have much rather it had not opened at all. However, it did open, revealing the unchanged interior of the drawing room to Sebas' eyes.

However, unlike most times, there were three powerful existences inside the room.

One was a light blue warrior. One was a demon. And finally—

“Please forgive my lateness. I am deeply sorry to keep you waiting.”

At the entrance, Sebas bowed deeply, almost to the point of reverence, to the existence sitting behind the desk. In the high ranking position as the Land Steward of Nazarick, there was only one person who could be said to be above him.

The person sitting there, was of course Sebas' master.

He was one of the absolute 41 Supreme Beings.

—Ainz Ooal Gown.

This almighty fighting force was also the ruler of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

Dim red pinpoints of light played lazily within the hollow orbits of his eye sockets. Even from his bowed position, Sebas could sense those lights sizing him up from head to toe.

The movements of the air told him that Ainz had waved expansively, in a leisurely manner.

“...It is fine. Think nothing of it, Sebas. The fault lies with me, being that I did not communicate my arrival in a timely manner. But let us dispense with these pleasantries. How can you speak from over there with your head bowed? I bid you enter.”

“Yes.”

Sebas's head was still lowered as he responded to the solemn voice. He looked up, and then slowly stepped forward.

A trail of frost ran down his spine.

That was because his keen senses told him of carefully concealed hostility and killing intent.

He slowly shifted his gaze.

Cocytus and Demiurge were not holding any weapons, and were not paying attention to Sebas. However, that was from a normal person's point of view.

Sebas was abundantly aware of it.

Firstly, Cocytus maintained a distance such that when he drew his weapons, he could blow away Sebas in a heartbeat. He was also matching Sebas' every movement.

In addition, Demiurge was standing next to Ainz, and held the perfect distance to become Ainz's shield in case of emergency. Both of them held the greatest caution towards Sebas.

Their vigilance was not the reaction one would have to an ally.

Sebas could understand why they felt that way. He felt a weighty pressure upon him and he was afraid that everyone would hear the thunderous beating of his heart.

“I think you should stop there.”

Demiurge's relaxed voice rang through the air and halted Sebas in his tracks.

Sebas was some distance away from his master. It did not make speaking difficult. However, under normal circumstances, Ainz would consider Sebas to be too far away and ask him to approach. This time, Ainz had not said so. This

sense of separation crushed Sebas until he could no longer breathe.

Incidentally, Solution had entered the room with Sebas, but she was standing by the door, awaiting orders.

“Then—” Ainz snapped his bony fingers, though how he had done so was not apparent. “A question for you, Sebas. Need I explain why I am here?”

Sebas felt a jolt down his spine.

While feeling the sweat wet his back, he looked down slightly and solemnly opened his mouth.

“...No, there is no need for that.”

“Then, I have a question which I would like you to answer in your own words, Sebas. While I did not receive a report from you concerning this matter, is it true that you picked up an adorable little pet recently?”

“Yes!”

“Then, could you explain why you did not report the matter to me?”

“Yes...”

Sebas’ shoulders shuddered and he stared at the ground. What could he say to avoid the situation developing in the worst possible way? His head was full of such thoughts.

Ainz leaned back into his throne as he watched the silent Sebas. The creaking of the chair as he did so sounded exceptionally loud in the confines of the room.

“What’s the matter, Sebas? You seem to be sweating heavily. Shall I lend you a handkerchief?”

With a grand flourish, Ainz produced a pure white handkerchief from nowhere. He grasped it between his index and middle fingers and tossed it towards Sebas. The handkerchief unfolded and spread in mid-air, landing gently upon the ground.

Ainz pointed at it.

“You are permitted to use it.”

“Yes!”

Sebas took a step towards Ainz and picked up the handkerchief. Then, he froze.

“...That handkerchief is not stained with your pet’s blood. I simply felt that it was unsightly to have you covered in sweat.”

“Yes... Please forgive my shameful display, Ainz-sama.”

Sebas spread the handkerchief and wiped at the cold sweat which beaded his brow.

“Now, let me ask. Why did you not submit a report on that matter? ...I wish to ask why you disregarded an order from me. Is the word of Ainz Ooal Gown not enough to bind your actions?”

Those words shook the air in the room.

Sebas hurriedly answered.

“Certainly not! I simply believed that there was no need to trouble you with a report concerning such a small matter, Ainz-sama.”

“.....”

Silence filled the air. Sebas was bathed in murderous intent from three sources. They came from Cocytus, Demiurge and Solution. All three of them would immediately fall on Sebas if their master so ordered.

Sebas did not fear death. It would be his utmost joy to die for Nazarick. Yet, the thought of being executed as a traitor terrified even the stoic Sebas.

That was because there was no greater shame for those created by the 41 Supreme Beings than to be counted as a turncoat and subsequently eliminated.

After some time, and after much sweat had beaded on Sebas’ forehead, Ainz spoke.

“...In other words, all this was an exercise of your foolish judgement... Is that correct?”

“Yes. It is as you say, Ainz-sama. Please forgive my foolish mistake!”

“...Hm. I see... I believe I understand now.”

As Sebas lowered his head in apology, Ainz's emotionless voice filtered into his ears. The fact that Ainz had not ordered a summary execution slightly eased the tension in the room.

If there were levels to hostility, it seemed to have gone down several levels.

However, Sebas could not relax. Before he could do so, Ainz said something that made Sebas' heart lurch within his chest.

"Solution. Fetch Sebas' pet."

"Understood."

The door quietly closed behind Solution as she moved to carry out her orders. Sebas' keen senses informed him that Solution was heading away from the door.

There was an audible gurgle as Sebas gulped.

Here were the three people, Ainz, Cocytus and Demiurge. There were anthropomorphic beings. They did not even bother casting an illusion to hide themselves. Basically, they wanted to show Tsuare their true forms.

Did they not mind being seen, or would they do something when seen?

Soon, Sebas sensed two people approaching. They were approaching this room from the distance.

—*What should I do?*

Sebas' eyes shifted and he focused on the air.

Once she arrived here, Sebas would have to make a choice. And there could only be one answer he could give. Sebas' gaze moved to Demiurge, who was observing him. Then to Ainz.

And then, he looked powerlessly at the ground.

There was knocking, and then the door opened. As expected., there were two women there.

They were Solution and Tsuare.

"I have brought her."

Sebas had his back to Tsuare, but he could hear her gasp from the entrance. Was she shocked to see Demiurge, a demon in the flesh? Was she shaken by seeing Cocytus, the gigantic blue insectoid? Was she terrified by Ainz, the avatar of Death itself? Or was it all of the above?

The Guardians' displeasure intensified as Tsuare made her appearance. That was because to some extent, Tsuare was the physical incarnation of Sebas' sins. It would seem she was trembling from the hostility directed at her.

The hostility of the Guardians, who were easily the most powerful beings in this world, could instil a primal terror in the hearts of the weak. It was surprising that Tsuare had not broken down in tears by now.

Sebas did not look back, but he could clearly feel Tsuare's gaze boring into him from behind. Her reservoirs of courage were derived from Sebas himself.

"Demiurge, Cocytus. Stop."

As Ainz's quiet voice echoed through the room, there was a change in the room's mood. No, it would be better to say that the hostility directed at Tsuare had vanished. After reprimanding the two Guardians, Ainz slowly extended his left hand to Tsuare. Then he turned his palm to the ceiling, and beckoned her over.

"Enter, oh pet human that Sebas has picked up —Tsuare."

As though controlled by those words, Tsuare took step after step forward on trembling legs.

"That you did not choose to flee shows courage. Or did Solution tell you something? Did she say that Sebas' fate lay within your hands?"

Tsuare was shuddering all over and did not answer. Sebas felt the gaze directed at his back grow stronger. Said gaze made Tsuare's will abundantly clear, more than any number of words could explain.

After entering the room, Tsuare walked up to Sebas' side with no hesitation whatsoever. Cocytus shifted position to stand behind Tsuare, awaiting orders.

Tsuare grabbed the corner of Sebas' coat. Sebas suddenly recalled how she had clung to his clothing in that alley. At the same time, he was filled with

regret. If he had handled things better, the situation would not have come to this.

Demiurge glared coldly at Tsuare—

[Kne-

—And the sound of snapping fingers rang forth. Demiurge understood the meaning behind his master's gesture, and said no more.

“—It is fine. Pay it no heed, Demiurge. As praise for the courage to face me without fleeing, I will forgive the rudeness she has shown to myself, the ruler of Nazarick.”

“My sincerest apologies.”

Ainz nodded magnanimously at Demiurge's apology.

“Ah, yes.” Ainz leaned back into the chair, making it creak. “Allow me to introduce myself. I am Ainz Ooal Gown, the master of Sebas over there.”

Indeed.

Ainz Ooal Gown, one of the 41 Supreme Beings who ruled Sebas.

Being addressed by the master to whom he owed absolute loyalty was his greatest delight.

Yet, for some reason, Sebas' joy was less than he had imagined. It merely made his spine tingle.

As Sebas was pondering this matter, both sides were still conversing.

“Ah... I, I am...”

“It is fine, Tsuare. I know a little about you, and I have no interest in learning more. Stand there and remain silent. Soon you will know why you have been summoned.”

“Ah... yes.”

“Now then...” The points of red light in Ainz's eye sockets shifted. “...Sebas, I have a question for you. I told you not to attract attention with your actions, did I not?”

“Yes.”

“And despite my clear instructions to you, you got yourself into trouble because of this meaningless little woman—am I wrong?”

“No, you are not.”

The word “meaningless” made Tsuare shudder, but Sebas only answered the question and made no other response.

“At that time... did you not think you were ignoring the orders I had given?”

“Yes. My thoughtlessness has displeased you, Ainz-sama. I shall reflect upon my sins, be more careful in the future, and I shall not make the same mistake again.”

“—It is fine.”

“Huh?”

“I said, it is fine.” Ainz shifted, and the chair creaked once more. “People are not perfect, and mistakes are to be expected. Sebas. I shall forgive this trifling mistake of yours.”

“—Thank you, Ainz-sama.”

“However, mistakes must be rectified—by death.”

The air in the room suddenly grew tense, and the temperature felt as though it had fallen by several degrees. No, that was not it. Only Sebas felt that way. The two other Guardians, Solution, and Ainz were still calm.

Sebas gulped. What did his master mean by “death”? No, that went without saying.

The thoughts “As I expected” and “I hope not” weighed heavily on Sebas, but still, he asked:

“...What... do you mean...”

“Hm... what I mean is that I expect you to eliminate the source of your mistake in order to wipe the slate clean. How can you be the representative of everyone else when you leave the origin of your error untouched? You are the Land Steward of Nazarick, and one who stands at the head of the manservants.

If you do not handle the matter appropriately...”

Sebas exhaled. Then he took in another breath.

Even when faced with a mighty foe, Sebas’ breathing remained calm and regular. Yet, it was now frantic, like a small animal that had run into a predator.

“Sebas. Are you a loyal hound who obeys the orders of my exalted self—of the 41 Supreme Beings? Or are you a man who believes that your will alone is righteous?”

“This—”

“—I do not need your answer. Show me your conclusion.”

Sebas closed his eyes, and then opened them again.

He hesitated for only a moment. No, it would be better to say that he had spent an entire moment hesitating. It was enough time for Cocytus, Demiurge and Solution to show hostility. After that long, interminable moment, Sebas finally made his decision.

Sebas was the Land Steward of Nazarick.

He was nothing else beyond that.

His foolish hesitation had brought about these consequences. If he had pleaded with his master earlier, the outcome might have been different.

All this was his fault.

A hard lustre filled Sebas’ eyes. They gleamed like polished steel. Then, he turned to Tsuare. The hand clinging to him let go. Tsuare looked at Sebas’ face. She had probably guessed his decision by now.

She smiled, and closed her eyes.

That was not a look of despair, or fear. She had accepted what would happen next, had accepted her impending fate with all the grace of a martyr.

Sebas’ movements did not waver. His heart had long since descended into the abyss. In his place stood a steely servant who had pledged his utmost fealty to Nazarick.

That being the case, there was no reason not to obey the absolute order

handed down by his master.

Sebas' hand formed into a fist, and then he struck at Tsuare's head, seeking to grant her the mercy of an instant death.

And then—

—Something hard intercepted his fist.

“—What are you doing?”

“—!”

“.....”

Sebas' unhappy voice was directed at the one who stopped his fist, Cocytus. Cocytus had reached out a hand from behind Tsuare and stopped Sebas' fist.

Was Cocytus a traitor, given that he had blocked a strike which the Supreme One had ordered?

And then, the doubts in Sebas' heart were immediately answered.

“Stand down, Sebas.”

Sebas was anxious and doubtful, but he was still halfway through another punch when he heard Ainz's order. The strength he had channelled into his hand dissipated in an instant. His master had not censured Cocytus, but had instead told Sebas to stop. That indicated that he had also arranged for Cocytus' interdiction of Sebas' strike.

Indeed, all this had had been planned ahead of time. The fact was that his master wished to verify Sebas' intentions.

Now that her life was no longer in danger, her wound-up emotions snapped inside her. Tsuare's body convulsed with shudders as the tears streamed from her eyes. She very nearly collapsed from the shaking of her legs, but Sebas did not reach out to support her

What else could he do, now that things had come to this?

Ainz paid no heed to Tsuare's fear and began addressing Cocytus.

“Cocytus. Was that blow intended to take that woman's life?”

“There is no doubt that it would have been instantly fatal.”

“Then I declare that Sebas’ loyalty is no longer in question. Thank you, Sebas.”

“Yes!”

Sebas bowed, his face stiff.

“—Demiurge.”

“Yes.”

“Any objections?”

“I have none.”

“Cocytus?”

“None.”

“Very well. Then, let us move on to the next item.”

Ainz snapped his fingers and rose to his feet. He swept his hand grandly through the air, causing his cape to flutter.

“Thanks to the efforts of Sebas and the others, I feel we have gathered sufficient information. There is no reason to linger in this place. We shall vacate this property immediately and return to Nazarick. Sebas, I will leave the disposal of this woman to you. Since I have already verified your loyalty, I will not object to whatever you wish to do—or at least, I would like to say that, but some considerations must be made before releasing her. Allowing her to go free and speak of Nazarick would be troublesome, do you not agree, Demiurge?”

“It is as you say.”

“Then, what should we do?”

“...Should we not make sure of things first?”

“Indeed... Sebas, we will decide Tsuare’s fate later. I would prefer not to kill her, but I cannot guarantee that.”

While saying that, Ainz tilted his head in perplexity. It was an attitude that said that he did not know how to handle Tsuare.

Sebas could not hide his surprise at the fact that the highest authority in

Nazarick, Ainz, could not immediately make a decision.

“Ainz-sama. Are we retreating from this house, from the Royal Capital, because of my mistake?

“...Perhaps. Perhaps not. Like I said just now, I feel we have learned everything we can from this area. There would be no gain in continuing to stay here. This is a safer course of action, according to my calculations.”

Sebas audibly gulped. This action was absurd, but even if he were to pull out, he had to do one thing.

“I have an absurd request but—”

Ainz raised his hand, and cut off Sebas' words.

“—I cannot hear it. Even if I hear it I cannot answer immediately. The time has exceeded its limits. I am worried about Aura and Shalltear who have been left alone in Nazarick, should they act on their own. Firstly, I shall return to Nazarick and then listen to a detailed explanation. Your request will be after that.”

“—Understood.”

“<Greater Teleportation>.”

Ainz almost immediately activated magic and disappeared. He had probably returned to Nazarick using teleportation magic. Demiurge had seen him off, and turned to Solution.

“Bring that human to a different room.”

“Yes, Demiurge-sama.”

“No, I shall bring her. There is no problem. Right, Demiurge?”

“...Indeed. You have the right of it, Sebas.” A thin, fiendish smile appeared on Demiurge's face, and he gracefully gestured to the door. “Please, carry on.”

“Please come with me.”

“...Yes.”

Tsquare replied hoarsely as she followed shakily behind Sebas.

After leaving the room, the hallway echoed with their footsteps. The two of

them walked in silence, and soon they reached the door to Tsuare's room. It was nearby, but the journey there seemed to have taken a very long time.

When they reached the door, Sebas finally made up his mind and quietly spoke.

"I will not apologize."

Sebas sensed Tsuare tremble from where she was following behind him.

"However, the fact that my master ordered me to dispose of you was my fault. If I had dealt with the matter in a better way, it would not have come to this."

"...Sebas-sama."

"I believe that such things will not happen again, but I cannot say that it will not. I am a loyal servant of Ainz-sama—of the 41 Supreme Beings. Even if the same thing happens again, I will respond in the same way... so I hope you will stay in the human world and find happiness there. I will try to seek Ainz-sama's approval... given that Ainz-sama can modify memories. Let Ainz-sama erase your unpleasant memories and then live well."

"...How about my memories of you, Sebas-sama?"

"...I will ask Ainz-sama to erase your memories of me as well. After all, remembering me will do you no good."

"And what is good for me?"

Sebas sensed a fierce determination in Tsuare's voice, and turned around.

The woman before Sebas stared defiantly at him, and although her eyes were brimming with tears, they had an unshakeable look in them. Sebas felt his heart waver, and he thought about how to persuade her.

It was true that Nazarick was a wonderful place, and one could say it was a land blessed by the gods. But the only ones who thought that way were Sebas and the other people who had been created by the 41 Supreme Beings, as well as the vassals of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

Sebas did not think that human beings, who lacked talent and power, could find happiness in that land. There, the value of Tsuare's life would not be worth

much. Could the strange existences known as weak humans bear that?

The happiness of humans lied in the land of humans. Sebas believed that.

“...In Nazarick, your life will not be viewed as much. Are you still asking what differences there will be? Become happy in the human world.”

“I have already found happiness.”

Sebas felt that Tsuare was quite pitiable as he heard her ironclad statement.

“...If you can do something in hell, you can feel slightly satisfied, but you will be in hell. The happiness in hell cannot compare to the happiness in the human world.”

She had seen the worst the world could offer, so she had taken joy in even a slightly less wretched environment. That was all.

However, Tsuare laughed at his observation.

“...I do not feel that this place is hell. I can eat my fill here and I have a decent job... I grew up in a small village, and life was hard there.”

For a moment, Tsuare glanced into the distance. Then she recovered, and looked straight at Sebas.

“Our stomachs cried out in hunger, and no matter how hard we worked the fields, our lord took almost everything and left us with precious little to eat. In addition, we were nothing more than toys to our lord. No matter how much I cried and screamed, he kept laughing as he raped me. He laughed at me. He—”

“—I understand.”

Tsuare’s smile was twitching as Sebas pulled her over, enfolding her within his embrace before gently putting an arm over her trembling shoulders. Just like before, Sebas could feel Tsuare’s tears soak his clothes as she broke down.

What she had seen and lived through was not all of the world. Yet, to Tsuare, that was the sum total of the human experience.

Sebas fell into thought.

What was the best course of action? He confirmed that there was only one.

“...I have heard that the lizardmen have become one of Cocytus’

subordinates. You might be able to become mine in a similar manner.”

“Then—”

Still in Sebas’ embrace, Tsuare raised her head.

“I understand, Tsuare. I will plead with Ainz-sama to let me take you to Nazarick.”

“Thank you very much. If Sebas-sama had reported about me when you picked me up, I might have been removed while still in that terrible state.”

“Ainz-sama is a generous master. I do not believe that he would do such a thing.”

“However, that is not absolute.”

Sebas said nothing. The master whom he gave his loyalty to and a pitiful woman. It was true he tried to avoid having to make a choice between them.

Sebas let the strength fade from the arm on his shoulder, but Tsuare refused to leave. She clung tightly to Sebas’ clothes, looking up to him with dewy eyes.

There seemed to be a look of expectation in those eyes. That was what Sebas’ instincts told him, but he did not know what she was hoping for.

Still, he remembered that he had to confirm one thing first.

“Allow me to make sure this. You have no attachment to the human world? Do you not wish to return to your home?”

Even being taken to Nazarick did not entail being completely separated from human society. That was because he was not taking Tsuare there to be a prisoner. However that possibility could not be entirely ruled out.

“...I... I would like to see my little brother again. But more than that, I don’t want to remember all the things in the past...”

“I understand. Then, go to your room. I will go and meet Ainz-sama once more.”

“Yes—”

Tsuare let go of Sebas’ clothes, and then she wrapped her arms around Sebas’ neck. Sebas was taken by surprise. Even from the viewpoint of an

outlandishly powerful monk, they were perfect movements. No, he thought that because his heart wavered.

Tsquare paid no attention to the outwardly expressionless, yet inwardly conflicted Sebas, and stood on the tips of her toes.

And then, Tsquare's lips met those of Sebas.

The moment of intimacy was exceedingly brief. Tsquare's lips soon left his.

"It was a little prickly," Tsquare said as she stepped back, touching her lips with the fingers of both hands. "It was the first time I was so happy to be kissed."

Sebas had nothing to say. However, Tsquare looked intently at Sebas, and then smiled sweetly.

"Then, I shall wait here. Thank you for your concern, Sebas-sama."

"Er, oh... I, I understand. Please wait here for a while."

"Is something the matter? It would appear your face is red, no?"

"It is nothing, Demiurge."

That was the first thing Sebas heard when he returned to the room. Upon hearing someone comment on the redness of his face, Sebas calmed his breathing back to a deep and even rhythm. If he allowed his consternation from just now to show on his face, what right would he have to receive his master as his servant? Sebas resisted the impulse to touch his lips, instead putting on the expression of the perfect servant.

About two minutes later, space distorted.

By the time the distortion had faded, someone stood in its place. Naturally, that person was Ainz.

Sebas, Cocytus, Demiurge and Solution knelt as one and bowed to him.

"Thank you for the warm welcome."

Ainz waved the Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown, which the blackness of it could elicit pain from those who viewed it. He then moved behind the desk and sat down on the chair.

"You may rise."

The four of them straightened up at once, all looking at Ainz. He seemed to be in a very good mood.

“Let’s get down to business. Demiurge, this just goes to show you were worrying too much. I didn’t believe for a moment that Sebas had betrayed us. You are all too cautious.”

“My deepest apologies. And I am grateful that you would accept my pointless suggestion, which contradicted your own judgement.”

“That’s fine. I also make mistakes from time to time. However, I can relax when I know you are paying attention and checking, Demiurge. Besides, you made that suggestion because you were worried about me. I am not so petty as to censure you for that.” Ainz moved his gaze from the deeply bowing Demiurge. “So what is your wish, Sebas?”

“Before that, I would like to ask Ainz-sama something.” Pausing, Sebas glanced at Ainz’s expression before continuing. “How shall we we deal with Tsuare?”

Ainz thought for a bit, wondered why Sebas’ asked of such a thing, and nodded when he came to an answer.

“Hm. I recall that letting that girl go would result in news about Nazarick getting out, am I correct?”

Demiurge nodded under Ainz’s gaze.

“Indeed, that is so. Ainz-sama, how shall we handle this matter?”

“Then we should take the time to edit her memories. Thanks to a certain priest, brainwashing might be impossible, but I have become quite skillful at manipulating memories.”

“Ainz-sama, I feel that killing her outright would be more convenient.”

Solution nodded at Demiurge’s suggestion. After seeing their reactions, Ainz sank into contemplation. Since the two of them felt the same way, he should probably do it... perhaps.

Sebas began to panic.

Once his master made a decision, asking him to change it would not be easy.

While Ainz had forgiven Sebas, Demiurge, Cocytus and Solution would surely think very poorly of him now. Carelessly voicing his opposition would definitely incur their ire.

However, he had to make his proposal right now.

Sebas opened his mouth, preparing to speak in opposition to Demiurge's opinion. However, he ended up not doing so, because Ainz spoke first.

"...That's enough, Demiurge. I am not fond of killing when it doesn't benefit me. Or rather, once you kill the weak, you cannot use them any longer. You must consider that they might still be of use as long as they still live."

Sebas swallowed a sigh of relief. Tsuare had not yet been condemned to death. That said, it was still a possibility.

"I understand... Then how about having her work at the ranch managed by my subordinates?"

"Ah, to handle the livestock."

Ainz laughed, thinking that it did not suit Demiurge. In response, Demiurge returned a mirthful smile. Sebas silently watched the two.

While his master was enjoying the conversation, it would be foolish to interrupt.

If handled poorly, he would earn Ainz's displeasure, and Tsuare would be done for.

"Thanks to your ranch, we have become able to use scrolls without worrying about the remaining stock. An extremely noteworthy achievement. I will continue to rely on you."

"Thank you very much."

"That's right, have you considered mincing them and using them as rations? We need to improve the quality of Nazarick's provisions."

Ainz's gaze left Demiurge and he began to stare off into the distance. It then returned.

"...Unfortunately, the quality of their meat is poor, and they are not up to

standard. Using them in glorious Nazarick would be a little..." Demiurge smiled, indicating that he did not approve. "Still, we can chop up the dead beasts and feed them to the others. Of course, they will not eat the meat if you feed it to them directly, so we have to mince it up first."

"I see... Is it a type of Taur (Taaru)? Then Taurs should be goats? Do goats eat meat?"

"It seems they are omnivorous."

"Hmm. Is that so. Well, I do not know a lot about goats, and they might be unique to this world."

Ainz nodded in understanding.

"However, I do not believe that the Commander of Nazarick is suited for farm work. Should it be a bother, you can assign it to someone else instead you know? There are other jobs that you must do."

"No, this is a job I would like to do, and it is my pride to allow Ainz-sama to have plenty of materials for scrolls."

"I see."

Ainz smiled happily.

On the other hand, Sebas was frowning inside. Sebas and Demiurge were both servants of the Supreme Beings, and Sebas knew Demiurge's personality well. Someone like Demiurge would never run an ordinary ranch. Then what was the ranch that was raising goats that could eat meat?

A brilliant flash of light raced through Sebas' mind.

This was because he had guessed what sort of creatures Demiurge was raising.

Could he send Tsuare to such a place? Indeed, Demiurge would probably guarantee the safety of her life. However, the same could not be said of her mental state.

"While the goats are pitiful, they are working for Nazarick. There is no greater happiness than this. Isn't that right, Demiurge?"

For just an instant, Demiurge sent an inquisitive gaze towards Ainz, and nodded.

“It is just as you say, Ainz-sama.”

“Then I shall continue to leave Demiurge in charge of the goats. Compared to myself who knows nothing about them, you can utilize them far better than I can.”

“Yes, Ainz-sama.... So Ainz-sama knows nothing about them?”

Ainz’s face twitched slightly in reponse to Demiurge’s strange question, but he nodded in agreement.

“.... Well, that is how it is.”

“Understood. I shall handle the management of the goats perfectly.”

Demiurge had a full smile. It was the face of a subordinate who had received tacit agreement from his master.

He took a breath.

If he was to speak, he had to do it now. Sebas opened his mouth.

“—Ainz-sama.”

“Hm? What is it, Sebas?”

“I would like to have Tsuare work for us in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.”

“What....?”

“Tsuare can cook. In all of Nazarick, only the head chef and the sous-chef can prepare food, excepting Yuri and the others. After considering the future needs of Nazarick, I feel that it would be better if we had more people who could cook. I also feel that it would be very beneficial to test the ability of humans to work in Nazarick. It would set an excellent precedent to show that even inferior lifeforms like humans can render service unto Nazarick. In addition—”

“—I get it. I understand, Sebas.”

Ainz raised his hand to interrupt Sebas’ non-stop rambling about the many uses of Tsuare.

“I know, Sebas. I am fully aware of what you’re trying to say. Indeed, I have thought in the past that we have too few people who are able to cook. It is a problem worth pondering.”

“But Ainz-sama, can she really prepare food which is worthy of Nazarick?”

Sebas glared resentfully at Demiurge for a moment. In response, Demiurge merely smiled.

You bastard.

Sebas swallowed the curse before he could speak it.

Even if Ainz had forgiven Sebas, Demiurge had not. Therefore, he was striving to be as contrary as possible to Sebas’ wishes while they decided the disposition of Tsuare. That must be it.

In fact, that thought was completely correct. Cocytus was surprised and his brain was working harder than even Sebas. Solution believed that Sebas should be punished, and by Demiurge no less.

“He does have a point. What do you think, Sebas?”

“...Tsuare mainly prepares basic dishes. As for whether they are suitable for Nazarick... that is a little difficult to answer.”

“Basic dishes. I doubt Nazarick will require steamed potatoes or the like.”

Demiurge spoke with the hint of a mocking smile.

“Since she can make simple dishes, should she ask the Head Chef she can master others. I believe that we should focus on the future.”

“Then I would love to have her help prepare food in my ranch. Making mincemeat is hardly a trivial task.”

“I—”

The two of them bickered back and forth. Ainz watched their conversation.

At the same time, he looked beyond them—



“So, where are we going today?”

“The Fire Giants—”

“The Ice Dragons—”

“...Hm. Ulbert-san, I believe we agreed to farm the Fire Giant boss Surtr for his rare drops. Did you forget?”

“I’d like to ask if you forgot, Touch-san. There are people who need to hunt Ice Dragons in order to meet their job change prerequisites, aren’t there?”

“...Indeed, that is so. But Yamaiko-san needs the drops to get stronger.”

“Ah, I’m okay with....”

“Are you referring to the Primordial Fire? Then the Primordial Ice is just as essential, no? That being the case, we should hunt the Dragons—”

“...We can raise drop rates with a cash item. Surtr has a lower drop rate than the Dragons, so don’t you think we ought to beat him first?”

“So you’re telling me to shell out for a cash item, then?”

“...Well, about, about, about that...”

“...How about fighting lewd monsters like Succubi in the Abyss?”

“Shut up, little bro.”

“Well, if we’re going after demon-types, we ought to fight the Seven Lords of Sin. Granted, we might need to make a lot of preparations.”

“...Touch-san, I don’t think you should be so selfish. Don’t you think we’d be more efficient fighting the Ice Dragons, given the members who showed up?”

“You’re the selfish one, Ulbert-san. Besides, games aren’t all about efficiency.”

“Would the strongest mage and the strongest warrior please stop fighting...”

“They’ve always been like that. Ever since they recruited me.”

“Touch-san must have been a really great guy to chat up a pink penis.”

“...Chagama-san, Peroroncino-san, could you please put your weapons down? I’m invoking my Guildmaster’s privileges.”

“Didn’t some other guild beat the Seven Lords of Sin already?”

“Someone took out Pride. There was a post online.”

“Apparently you’re guaranteed a World-Class Item once you beat all the Seven Sins, after all, they are World-Class Enemies.”

“Speaking of World-Class Items, let’s use the [Caloric Stone] to make a super-powerful golem.”

“Nuubou-san. I feel it would be better to socket it into a weapon instead of making a golem.”

“I think a suit of armor would be pretty good too.”

“Well, we have a lot to consider for that”

“That’s right, Momonga-san.”

“We already know how to farm Caloric Stones, but that method depletes a lot of the metal from the seven hidden prismatic ore mines.”

“Yeah. As long as it’s divided up among other guilds, we can’t replace it once it’s used up. Why not just take turns using it... how about selling the information to [Trinity]?”

“So we sell it to the [2ch Alliance] and let them kill each other? As expected of Bellriver (Beruribaa), our strategist.”

“About the [2ch Alliance], it seems they are planning to ally with other guilds.”

“Eh? Why’s that?”

“I heard they obtained some kind of World-Class Item, so they changed their stance towards other guilds.”

“Achya—still, it’ll be hard for them to form a high-tier coalition like last time.”

“—How about letting Momonga-san decide?”

“Sounds good to me. Guildmaster, what do you think we should do?”

“...Eh? Wha? I wasn’t paying attention at all... eh? Oh, are you asking me now? ...Honestly... We’ll go with majority vote as usual. That way nobody will have any complaints.”

“Fine with me.”

“Same here.”

“Alright, then, the new coin will represent Ulbert-san while the old one represents Touch-san. Good—everyone, take your coins. We’re going to listen to the two of them speak now—”



“—Are you done with this squabbling? You stand before Ainz-sama!”

Cocytus’ words were like a bucket of cold water dumped onto the ever-escalating quarrel between Sebas and Demiurge. Both of them turned to look at Ainz, who was staring at them, and their faces blanched in unison. There was no way to tell what expression lurked within the dancing points of light within Ainz’s empty eye sockets, but there was no doubt that there was great power in his gaze.

“Forgive your servant’s rudeness in your presence, Ainz-sama!”

“Your servant deeply regrets forcing you to witness his foolish behavior!”

The two of them bowed in apology, but neither of them could understand Ainz’s reaction.

“—Ahahaha!”

The room suddenly rang with loud and relaxed laughter. Its origin was Ainz.

They did not recall Ainz ever laughing with such mirth. Cocytus, Demiurge, Sebas and Solution stared dumbly at this unbelievable sight.

“It’s fine. I permit this! I permit you to argue! Yes! That’s how it should be, going back and forth without end. Ahahaha.”

They had no idea what had moved Ainz’s heart, but Sebas heaved a sigh of relief in his heart.

“Ahaha.... tsk, even happiness is suppressed eh....”

Suddenly their master’s mood calmed down, as though something had snapped inside him. Still, Sebas was sure that he seemed to be in good spirits. Running a finger across the staff, the symbol of a Guildmaster, the

representative of the 41 Supreme Beings, Ainz jovially spoke to Sebas.

“Now about Tsuare, isn’t it fine. Home cooking. I thought that we needed a chef. I had intended from the beginning to leave Tsuare to you. If you thought that it was fine, then it was nothing that could bring harm to Nazarick. And while I did not suspect you personally.” Ainz heavily emphasized the word suspect. “It is true that you were suspected. Forgive me for this.”

When Ainz finished speaking, his head scraped the table as he bowed.

“Please! Please raise your head! Everything was due to my mistakes!”

“It is just as he said. Suspecting him was out mistake! There is no need for Ainz-sama to apologise!”

“That is so! I am the first person to suspect Sebas-sama! Instead of Ainz-sama apologizing, please punish myself!”

Ainz raised a hand to silence his panicking subordinates. He then continued to express his thoughts.

“I will leave Tsuare to Sebas. Now, Demiurge. As I said earlier, if it brings no harm to Nazarick, use your head to find a way to guarantee Tsuare’s safety.”

“Understood. After we return, I will immediately inform Nazarick about Tsuare. To the point where even if she is on her own, no harm will befall her.”

“Excellent. This is what will happen. Is this fine, Sebas?”

“Yes!”

Sebas bowed more than 90 degrees. Rather than his loyalty it was to express his gratitude.

“Now. I believed that Sebas had a request for me?”

Sebas clammed up for an instant. Asking for any more than this would be extremely rude.

Sebas began to wonder if Ainz’s apology to him was intentional rather than being a stroke of good fortune for Tsuare.

Tsuare was something like a present from Ainz, as a sign of his apology. Should anything happen to her, it would be disrespectful to Ainz. Thus, Tsuare’s

safety would be protected.

Asking for any more to such a generous master would be to step all over his kindness.

Ainz grasped Sebas' confused thoughts and jovially asked.

"I do not mind Sebas. Speaking is free. Speak."

His master's words gave Sebas courage, and he opened his mouth.

"Yes. When I saved that woman, it seems that there were others captured. If possible, I would like to save them."

"Sebas. That is a request fit for insects. Such thoughts had brought you trouble in the first place, did it not? Do you not think that you should never speak of such things again?"

Demiurge frowned. However—

"—Hm? Isn't it fine? Is there a problem?"

Hearing such lighthearted words from Ainz, Demiurge's eyes widened slightly.

".... No, if Ainz-sama is fine, I have no reason to object."

"No, I asked not about reasons to object, but if there were any problems with that....It is not like they made fun of Nazarick or disrespected myself right? Their suffering brings us no benefits. Then isn't it fine to save them?"

".... However, there might be a strong person there. Sebas may have investigated, but I do not believe that he has investigated about someone in the shadows."

Ainz understood, and raised a small voice.

".... I see. While his or her existence is unknown, should we still proceed? Since we are on the side of justice, I believe that there was no problem but.... That was a miscalculation eh."

The basis of Ainz's actions were firstly for the preservation of Nazarick. Next was about the expansion of Nazarick and avoiding confrontations with other Players. While they had roughly the same priority, Nazarick's expansion was

slightly more important.

He did not want to get involved in problems not related to Nazarick's expansion.

Such were Ainz's thoughts, and he debated whether to refuse Sebas' request. When his gaze fell on Sebas, and when Sebas and Demiurge came into view, his decision changed.

“—I shall allow you to rescue them.”

The air in the room shook. Ainz's earlier words were something he spoke of half-heartedly, but his current ones were ones that he had thought through. The two were overwhelmingly different.

Why did Ainz make that decision? The answer to that question was not known by Sebas, Demiurge, Cocytus and Solution.

Why did the master make such a decision? Being able to answer that question without asking was the hallmark of being excellent subordinates. The air shook because they could not do that.

They felt disappointed that they failed to understand their master, and felt shame as they were useless.

In front of his deflated subordinates, Ainz gave them his answer.

“Because— It is natural to save people in need.”

Ainz's words seemed to be lifted straight from someone else, but it caused all those present to widen their eyes. This was as they did not believe that such words suited their master.

They were words that refuted all his actions until now.

What was the existence known as Ainz?

All their individual answers differed slightly, but what was common in all of them, was that he was an absolute being.

He was one of the 41 Supreme Beings that created Nazarick, and represented them. He stayed with them until the end, and was the one that all beings in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick offered their undying loyalty

to.

He was filled with wisdom, endless foresight, the generosity to forgive his subordinate's failings, and was willing to grant generous rewards to those who worked for him. To those outside of Nazarick, he was coldly calculating and acted based on benefits. He was such an existence.

Such an existence just said that it was natural to save those in need— It was like they were hit in the face.

The most surprised was Demiurge.

In the earlier conversation, on top of Ainz knowing what animal he was talking about, he had given Demiurge tacit agreement. Or so he had thought.

The strange atmosphere reached Ainz.

This was bad. He made a mistake.

Seeing the Guardians' and Solution's shocked reactions, Ainz realized his own failing.

They were words from the past, something someone said. He had spoken them, but it was the truth that he had made a mistake. Ainz panicked due to this lowering his charisma, his ability to rule.

Ainz was strong. In a one vs one, he could take on any of the Guardians without tasting defeat.

However, that was in the game. Actual fights do not go as planned. It was the answer he came to when the invaders came and fought him without magic. With his body, and even in terms of levels, Ainz was overwhelmingly superior. Yet he was pushed back by four weak adventurers. Ainz severely lacked the experience of fighting true battles, where people aimed to take each other's lives. In such a battle, the possibility of Ainz losing to a weaker person than him existed.

Thus, he had the powerful armour known as the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. Having his ability to rule it lowered would cause Ainz to fall into a great panic.

Of course, Ainz himself knew well that as a normal person, he had no

charisma. However, he felt that it had gone well for him until now. Losing it would be a pity.

Ainz frantically used his brain to come up with a line that someone important would say.

—This was it!

Ainz spoke in an important manner, to not panic.

“Do you not think that there is nothing more foolish than for Ainz Ooal Gown to fear someone who may not even exist? Us who claim that Nazarick is undefeated.”

He suppressed his desire to look at the expression of the Guardians, and continued his act. If he had a heart, it would be beating fiercely due to his tension.

Demiurge, Sebas, Cocytus and Solution had their eyes widen slightly. Compared to his earlier words, his current ones were far easier to understand.

And they had much persuasive power.

Ainz Ooal Gown. For the strongest existence created by the 41 Supreme Beings to fear an existence that may not even exist was at the height of foolishness. There might be someone powerful. However, there was only one time when the Guardians tasted defeat. That was when 1500 people at their level came at them in overwhelming numbers. And at that time, they were repelled by the Supreme Beings. Basically, the Guardians may have been defeated, but the Nazarick created the 41 Supreme Beings was undefeated.

Ainz Ooal Gown was strong.

Caution was necessary, but there was no need to fear shadows. Even if there were, they did not need to run.

“As I said a long time ago there is no need to find hostility, but with the cover of saving those in need, justice is on our side. If they say something, we just have to show it to them, our power.”

“Basically if there is a powerful enemy, we shall show them our power using saving the weak as our alibi.”

“N? That.... Is true?”

“Understood.”

Demiurge spoke as their representative, and all of them bowed to Ainz simultaneously.

“Then we should take this city and show them our power—”

“No!” Ainz stopped Demiurge in a panic. “There is no need to give them information. If there is a powerful enemy, we will investigate. Doing what you just said would cause information to fall into their hands. We shall perform our actions quietly.”

“It is just as you said. I am taken aback at Ainz-sama’s deep foresight. As expected of our ruler. I cannot match up with such wisdom.”

Demiurge smiled and agreed with Ainz.

It was difficult to find fish in the depths with one’s eyes, but baiting it to surface made detection simple.

“As expected of Ainz-sama.”

“It is natural to save those in need.... I did not think that those words had such a deep meaning.”

“Agreed.”

“Eh? R, really? Y, yes, that is how it is. I, it seems you have understood? Then I shall leave that to Sebas, and we shall retreat. Anyway clean up this manor and do not leave any information behind. Right, Demiurge?”

“Of course.”

“That is how it is, Sebas.”

“Understood.” Sebas bowed towards the frantic Ainz. To his master who was willing to grant his wish, his bow was filled with gratitude. “.... By the way, should I kill all the humans I meet?”

“N? Hm.... There is no need. There is no need to leak information about us, but if none leaks out there will be no meaning. It would be better for some to live. It depends on the situation. However, do not bring anyone to Nazarick

unless they wish to be there.”

It was not coercion but an act of free will. He wanted to make such a cover.

Sebas understood and immediately replied.

“Understood.”

“...However, they are all women right?”

“I believe so.”

“...Women. Is it worth it to increase their numbers? Personally I would prefer men as they are better for physical labour.... I do not feel that there is a need to increase the number of women....”

Sebas had no response. Of course, if Ainz wanted to hear his opinion, Sebas would speak. Ainz immediately came up with an answer and shrugged his shoulders.

“Well, it’s fine. Begin the operation.”

Chapter 73: The Capital City of the Kingdom | Part 13

“Now.”

Sebas faced the heavy steel door near where he picked up Tsuare. It was made of wood sheathed in metal plates, making it both thick and heavy. It was immediately apparent that an ordinary human being would have a lot of trouble breaking this door down without tools.

Sebas grabbed the doorknob and turned.

It stopped halfway through its turn. Naturally, the door to an underground enterprise like this would be locked.

“I am not adept at opening locks. However... It can't be helped. I'll do it my way.”

Sebas muttered to himself in frustration, and turned the knob again. If there was an observer, they would think that he simply turned the knob. That was how gentle he was. There was no way he used an unnatural level of force.

However, the power in the turn.

How much would it be if measured? It would probably be outside the realm of human possibility.

The sound of metal being twisted rang in the room, the knob could not bear the pressure, deformed, and broke. Sebas then opened the door. He was not finished with the door, and put more force into it.

The hinges shrieked as they were torn from the wall.

A thick metal door with a large weight— A door made with the intention of protection, was pulled apart with nonsensical strength.

“What... the hell...?”

Behind the door was a straight path, and a bearded and muscular man who poked his head out of the inner door was at a loss for words.

That was natural.

If there was an old man holding a thick metal door with a single hand, everyone would make that expression. Especially those who knew how much it weighed.

“The door was rusty, so I had to use a bit of force to open it. For the customers, you should probably oil the hinges.”

As Sebas spoke to the man, he threw the door behind him. The door that seemed like paper in Sebas’ hands returned to its original weight in midair and created a large clamour as it hit the floor.

The man was completely frozen in shock.

Sebas used that time to continue to proceed inside the room.

“—Oi, what was that?”

“—The hell was that noise?!”

More male voices came from behind the first one.

However, the man facing Sebas did not bother about them. Instead, he addressed Sebas.

“...Er... W-welcome?”

Completely baffled, the man stood stock still as Sebas walked up to him. The people working here were used to violence. However, the scene before him far exceeded what he had encountered in his accumulated experiences.

The man smiled to Sebas in an ingratiating manner, ignoring the shouted queries of his colleagues from behind him. His survival instinct told him that the best choice here was to get into Sebas’ good graces.

Or no, perhaps he had reacted like this because he had deceived himself into thinking Sebas was the butler of one of the customers here.

The sight of a big, bearded man trying to keep a twitching smile on his face was quite hard to bear.

That was true even for Sebas.

Sebas smiled.

That smile was gentle and compassionate.

Yet, there was no trace of goodwill in his eyes.

“Could I trouble you to let me pass?”

Thump.

Or rather, it was more of a *splat*.

A human flew, and the sound made on top of that.

He was a muscular man in armor. He weighed 85 kilograms at the very least.

He now spun through the air like some kind of joke, flying to the side at speeds invisible to the naked eye. His body savagely impacted the nearby wall with a wet splattering sound.

The entire building shook violently, as though a giant’s fist had struck it.

Since the obstructing man was gone, Sebas entered from the open door. Closing the door behind him, he looked across the room in a graceful manner.

It felt more like he was walking through an empty house than invading an enemy base.

There were two men within.

Their attentions were stolen by the crimson flower splattered across the wall. The smell of blood told of what it was.

The smell of cheap alcohol hung in the air, a scent which one would never find in Nazarick.

Sebas went over the information he had obtained from Tsuare and the assassin, then tried to figure out the building’s structure. Her memories were spotty and she had not recalled anything important, but she had told Sebas that the actual establishment was located underground.

He looked to the ground. However, the trapdoor leading underground was cunningly concealed, and Sebas could not find it.

Still, if he could not find it, then all he had to do was ask someone who knew where it was.

Sebas did such a natural thing.

“Excuse me. I’d like to ask you a question?”

“Aiiiiieeee!”

The man he addressed immediately responded with a hoarse scream. It would seem that he had no intention of putting up a fight.

One man entered. Basically the strongest man amongst the three of them was killed by this old man.

If they normally met him, they would not be in fear. However, facing a monster that could easily blow away a man and make mincemeat of him using a wall, a 60 centimetre weapon could not give them the courage to face him. No, that would not be courage but stupidity.

The fact that Sebas was a simple old man with a great bearing only increased their fear. If he were a monster even in appearance, they would think *ah that’s how it is*

, so the fact that he seemed human only served to increase the strangeness.

As the men trembled, they stuck to the wall, doing their utmost best to move away from Sebas.

“I have business downstairs, so could you please tell me how to get there?”

“...That, that’s...”

This would be betrayal. It would not be strange for them to turn into targets themselves.

The man was still hesitating over whether or not to speak when Sebas cut through his reluctance with his next words.

“There are two of you.”

The man’s forehead broke out in oily sweat, and his back shuddered.

Since there were two, one was unnecessary. The monster in front of him made its decision.

“Ah, ah.”

“There! There is a hidden door!”

Due to fear, one of the men could not speak, and in that time, the other man shouted in a large voice. The man who could not speak began glaring daggers at the other man. They were eyes of a man who knew that he lost the chance to survive to another person.

On the other hand, the man who spoke had eyes of superiority.

“So it’s there.”

If one knew about it and looked, they could indeed see the seams in the floor.

“I see, you have my gratitude.”

Sebas had a happy smile on his face, giving the man he spoke to hope.

He would run away with all his might, and when dawn broke he would leave the capital. He would clean up his act so as to not meet with another man like him. He had some savings. While surviving on that he would look for a job.

He regretted his life until now, and made a promise to a god he did not believe in until now that he would live a new life. If one made of ranking of belief of those in the capital, this man would be quite high in the rankings.

However, in the end, his life until now was filled with dirt.

“Your usefulness to me is now at an end.”

Sebas smiled, and the man realised would happen to him after those words. His face turned gray and he trembled uncontrollably. Still, he clung to a faint hope and cried.

“Please, please don’t, don’t kill me!”

“No.”

The room froze. The men’s eyes opened wide. As if they heard words they could not believe.

Sebas turned his head. The joints of his neck grinded together.

“But I told you, didn’t I? Please, I’ll do anything, just spare me!”

“Indeed you did. However...” Sebas sighed deeply and shook his head. “I cannot.”

“Are... are you kidding me?”

“You can take it as a jest if you wish. However, the outcome will still be the same, no?”

“...Oh... god...”

Sebas recalled the tragic state of Tsuare when he had rescued her, and he narrowed his eyes.

What right did villains have to beg the gods for aid? More to the point, Sebas’ gods were the 41 Supreme Beings. The man’s plea was like an insult to them.

“You reap what you sow.”

Those words, as cold and hard as steel, slashed through all hope and made the man painfully aware of his own demise.

Would he choose to fight, or would he choose flight? Given only an instant to decide, the man chose immediately—

He chose flight.

They could see the result of fighting such a monster. In that case, they might as well flee. Doing so would grant them a faint possibility of survival. They was correct to think that way.

Several seconds, no, for one second, they extended their lives.

The men ran towards the door. Sebas caught up with them in an instant, and their body whirled. A swift wind blew across the men’s head, and their bodies collapsed like a puppet whose strings had been cut. Two balls hit the wall and slid to the ground, trailing blood in its wake.

A moment later, the men’s headless bodies spewed a geyser of blood from its neck, covering the ground in gore.

“....If you thought about the things you did until now, it should be obvious what happens to you right?” Sebas gazed into midair. “I pray that you do not

turn into that....Now.”

Sebas slowly walked, avoiding the blood splatter. The feat of decapitating someone with a roundhouse kick would have required incredible strength and speed, but the most impressive thing was that Sebas’ shoes had not been stained at all.

Sebas kicked in the hidden door in the floor.

First, there was the sound of metal components breaking. Then, there was a large hole in the ground. The smashed door slid down the stairs below with a resonant crash.



It was a small room.

The only furniture in this almost-empty room was a cabinet and a bed.

The mattress was not a simple mass of straw bedding, but an actual cotton-stuffed mattress. It was well made, of the sort that noble homes might use. However, this mattress was designed for functionality and so it looked plain, without any decorating and would not be used by nobles.

A naked man sat on the mattress.

He was well into his middle years, and gluttony had made his frame flabby.

His looks had originally been average at best, but putting on the pounds had made him that much uglier. He looked like a pig from every angle. Even though he was a pig, he did not have a shard of a pig’s intelligence, and was one in the sense of an insult.

His name was Bloom Havish.

He raised his fist— and punched down onto the mattress.

The sound of flesh striking flesh rang forth.

A look of delight blossomed on Bloom’s face. The sensation of smashing flesh travelled up his arm, and his body shivered even as goosebumps of pleasure sprouted on him.

Bloom was pressing down a naked woman.

Her face was swollen and bruised, and the skin was flecked with spots of blood. Her nose was broken and the blood leaking from it had clotted on her skin. Her lips and eyelids were similarly swollen, completely distorting her originally beautiful face. There were bruises on the rest of her body, but the damage was worst on her face.

She had been trying to protect her face with her hands until just now, but now her arms lay limp on the bed. Her hair spread out messily on the mattress, like it was floating in water.

The woman seemed to be unconscious.

The sheets around them were stained with old, dried blood.

“Oi, what’s with you? Tired already? Huh?!”

Bloom raised his fist and punched downwards.

With a *thud*

, his fist connected with her cheekbone, and pain surged up Bloom’s hand.

His face twisted.

“Cheh. That *hurt*, you bitch!”

He angrily punched her again.

The mattress creaked in time with the thud of flesh striking flesh. Her swollen skin split, staining his knuckles with blood. Said blood splattered stickily onto the mattress, dying it with carmine spots.

“.....Uuuu.”

The woman no longer struggled despite the beating. Non-stop bludgeoning like this could end up killing someone. However, the woman had survived, but not because Bloom had been merciful. Rather, it was because the woman’s death did not concern him. All that was needed was to pay to dispose of the problem.

The woman clung to life because the mattress had dissipated the force of the blows. Had she been beaten while lying on a harder bed, she might well be dead by now.

In truth, Bloom had beaten several women to death in this place.

However, he had to pay for the cleanup every time he killed someone, which strained his wallet. Thus, he unconsciously went easy on them.

As he looked down at the woman's unmoving face, Bloom licked his lips.

This brothel was perfect for satisfying unique sexual fetishes. Normal bordellos would not permit their customers to do such things. No, they might, but it would be expensive. If it were a noble with territory, they could use a reason and take a commoner to do it.

However, he could not do that.

Bloom used to be a commoner.

He was simply picked by his noble master, and was chosen. Thus even if he were given money, he could not gain territory.

Life was good when slavery had been permitted.

Slaves were a form of property, and people who manhandled them had been scorned. It was just like how others would roll their eyes at people who threw their money around.

However, slaves had been the only way for someone like Bloom, with his special sexual preferences, to satisfy his desires.

On top of that being stolen, to Bloom, he had no other place to release. If he did not know about this place, what would he do?

It was correct for him to agree to work with his noble master.

Normally, Bloom did not have the status to enter this shop, and entered due to his authority and faked an identity.

"Thank you— my master."

A look of calm came over Bloom's eyes. It was hard to imagine that he could be so grateful to his liege given his personality and his sexual proclivities.

However—

The embers of a flame blazed up in the depths of his belly— the flames of wrath.

This emotion was directed at the woman who had deprived him of slaves with which to satisfy his lusts.

“—That bitch!”

His face turned red with anger, and his eyes were bloodshot.

He imagined the face of the Royal whom he should have been serving, the Princess, on the body of the woman beneath him. Bloom gathered the anger within himself into his fist, and laid into the helpless woman.

Fresh blood flew with every blow he struck.

“If only, if only I could smash that face of hers! How good would *that* feel!”

He rained punch after punch into the woman’s face.

His fist struck her cheek, and a surprising quantity of blood spurted from between the woman’s swollen lips. Perhaps she had cut the inside of her mouth on her teeth.

The woman’s sole response to this beating was to tremble slightly.

“—Huu... huu...”

After a few more strikes, Bloom was panting as his shoulders rose and fell. His body and forehead were slick with sweat.

Bloom looked at the woman he had pinned underneath him. Her condition could only be described as “tragic”, and she was close to death at this point. What lay there was a puppet whose strings had been cut.

Bloom swallowed audibly.

Nothing pleased him more than to rape a battered and bloody woman. The prettier she had originally been, the better. There was no better way to satisfy his sadistic desires than to destroy something beautiful.

“If only I could fuck that woman like this...”

Bloom thought of the haughty features which belonged to the young lady of the house which he had just visited. She was as beautiful as the Princess, who was herself known as the most beautiful woman in the Kingdom.

Of course, Bloom was very clear that he would not have the chance to abuse such a high-class lady. The only people Bloom could indulge his fetishes with were the dregs of humanity who had been dumped into this brothel, to be used and then discarded.

Such a beautiful woman would surely be bought up by a wealthy and powerful noble for a huge sum. Of course, Bloom had to move so that that will happen.

“How I wish I could beat up a woman like that, beat her to death.”

How happy and satisfied would he be if he could do that?

Of course, that was nothing more than a madman’s ravings.

Bloom looked down at the woman crushed beneath him. Her bare bosom was moving slightly. He smiled lewdly as he confirmed that fact.

Bloom reached down to grab the woman’s breasts, deforming the soft flesh between his fingers. There was no kindness, and only had force. There was only pain.

The woman did not react at all. She was on the verge of death and could not respond to such trivial pain. The woman Bloom was squeezing differed from a doll only in the softness of her body.

However, Bloom was somewhat dissatisfied by her lack of resistance.

Save me.

Spare me.

I’m sorry.

Please stop.

The woman’s cries echoed in Bloom’s mind.

Should he have fucked her while she still had the strength left to scream?

Bloom continued squeezing her breasts, a vague sense of regret in his heart.

Most of the women who had been sent to this brothel were no longer in a right state of mind. They had chosen to run away from reality. When one took that into consideration, the woman chosen to serve Bloom today had been

better off than most.

“Was that woman like this too?”

The woman who escaped appeared in Bloom’s mind. There were several problems, but as an external member he did not know much. He had no interest in what happened to the brothel employee who had let her go.

However, when he thought of the butler he had encountered during his visit, Bloom could not suppress the mocking laughter in his heart.

That thing had coupled with countless men, and even with female or nonhuman partners. There was no point in protecting her at all. And yet that old butler had said he was willing to pay hundreds of gold coins for her. It was a miracle he had not laughed out loud on the spot.

Did she have such a worth?

“Ah, the woman who ran away screamed very well too.”

He searched through his memories and recalled her wails. She had been fairly normal by the standards of the girl sent to this brothel.

Bloom smiled lewdly, and began to slake his bestial lust. He seized one of the pinned woman’s bare legs and spread it wide. Her emaciated, slender leg was thin enough that he could encircle it with one hand.

Bloom pressed himself between the woman’s legs.

As he grasped his tool, now turgid from the burning desire that consumed his body—

—The door behind him clicked, and slowly opened.

“Ah!”

Bloom hurriedly turned back, and a vaguely familiar old man appeared within his field of view. Then, he remembered who that old man was.

It was the butler he had met at that mansion.

The soles of the old man’s, Sebas’ shoes clicked neatly as he walked into the room. Bloom was speechless in the face of his casual, natural movements.

What was that house’s butler doing here? Why had he come to this room?

Bloom's mind went blank in the face of this inexplicable situation.

Sebas walked up to Bloom. Then, he saw the woman crushed beneath Bloom's bulk and directed an incomparably frigid glare at him.

"You like to beat people, do you?"

"Ah!"

The strange mood in the air drove Bloom to rise as he went for his clothes.

However, Sebas moved faster than him.

A thwap

resounded in Bloom's ears, and then his vision shook wildly.

A beat later, Bloom's right cheek caught fire as burning, stinging heat radiated out from it.

He had been struck— no, in this case it would be more appropriate to say he had been slapped. It took a while for Bloom to realize that.

"What!"

Faster than he could say anything, his cheek rang out with a *slap*. It did not stop there.

Left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right—

"Stahp!"

Bloom had always been the one who hit others. Nobody had ever hit him. These few blows left him in tears.

He raised his hand to protect his face as he stumbled back in retreat.

His cheeks throbbed with pain, as though they had been scalded.

"Dah, dahh hyu! Howh dahhe hyu do hiss hoo meeeh!"

His swollen, reddened cheeks hurt whenever he spoke.

"Is there a problem?"

"Orhhh courrhh herr ihh! Ihiot! Hoo oo hyuu hink hai ahhm?!"

"Just another moron."

Sebas closed in on the retreating Bloom and with a *thwap!* he dealt out yet another resounding slap.

“Staph!”

Bloom covered his face like a child being struck by his parents.

He liked using violence, but he had always used it on those weaker than him. Bloom could not do anything do those who would resist and hit back.

Even if Sebas appeared to be just another old man, Bloom would not dare raise his hand to him. He had no guarantee that he would not resist.

Perhaps he had sensed Bloom’s craven nature, but Sebas lost interest in him and looked back to the girl.

“How tragic...”

Bloom ran past Sebas as he stood over the girl.

“Youh ihiot!”

Bloom fumed. What a foolish old man.

He was going to gather everyone in this place to teach this old man a painful lesson. How dare he strike someone like himself! He would not go easy on the old man. Bloom would make sure he had his fill of pain and fear.

The image of the butler’s mistress, the angelic-seeming girl, appeared in Bloom’s mind.

The mistress would have to take responsibility for her servant’s mistakes. He would have her bear the burden of the pain that the old man had caused him. Bloom would teach that old man exactly who he had hit.

As those dark thoughts went through his mind, Bloom charged out the door as his beer belly jiggled violently.

“Homeone! Homeone help meehh!”

He shouted.

Surely an employee would come to check on him if he called for help.

However, his hopes were dashed the moment he stepped into the hallway.

The passage was silent.

It was as though nobody was around.

Bloom looked around nervously, still naked.

The bizarre silence of the hallway filled him with fear.

At a glance, there were several doors on both sides of him. It was only natural that nobody would answer him. This place catered to clients with exotic tastes, dangerous ones, in fact. Thus the rooms were all soundproofed.

However, there was no way the employees would not have heard.

He had seen several of them when he had been brought to his room just now. Each of them was a burly man with bulging muscles. How could an old man like Sebas compare?

“Why’ h hobody h homingh?! ”

“—They are all dead.”

He replied to Bloom’s cries in a soft voice.

When he turned around in a panic, he saw Sebas.

“There are some inside.... But most are dead.”

“Thah.. thah impohhible! Howh mahy peoperh do hyu hink arhe herhe ahywahy?! ”

“...There were three who looked like employees on top and ten more down below. There were seven others like you.”

“.....”

What nonsense are you babbling?! Sebas looked incredulously at Sebas.

“Of course, some are alive. However they will not come to help you. I have broken their limbs after all.”

“I”

“Alright, I do not think there is a need to spare your life. That being the case, please die here.”

Sebas did not draw a sword or ready any sort of weapon. He simply walked

up to Bloom in silence, like it was the most natural thing in the world. That nonchalance only served to frighten Bloom, because he knew Sebas truly wanted him dead.

“Wahe! Wahe!! Aih khi gihe hyu... uh... Aih khi gihe hyuu ha hot ohhh muhnehh!”

It was a lie. He did not have such things. He just wanted to buy himself time. However Sebas paid him no mind.

“I have no interest.”

“Than fhy phare you woing phis!”

There was no reason to do this. Why did he have to kill him. Bloom’s thoughts finally reached Sebas.

“...Do you not know, even after searching your heart?”

“?”

Bloom tried to recall. What did he do wrong?

Seeing the emotions on Bloom’s face, that nothing resembling guilt came up, Sebas sighed.

“...Really now?”

As he said that, Sebas savagely kicked Bloom in the gut and sent him flying.

“So that is what they mean when they say that something is not worth keeping alive.”

Several of Bloom’s organs broke, and Sebas spat out those words to him who had died from the pain. Sebas then proceeded inside, towards where there were still people.

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“Oh dear, shouldn’t he stop and think for a bit? While some service is excellent bait for those hiding in the shadows, destroying the door is a bit too eye-catching isn’t it.”

Demiurge’s whispered words were blown away by the wind and disappeared.

If one looked down, they would see the figure of the door Sebas broke. The place where Demiurge was currently standing on the roof of the opposite building.

Demiurge was standing on top of the building and his appearance could not be said to be good.

He wore a cloak with a hood, and his face was covered by a mask borrowed from Ainz. It was a plain mask, but was a magic item that had <Dark Vision> activated passively. However, Demiurge had the ability himself, and thus it had no more meaning than hiding his face.

Why was Demiurge alone in such a place? This was not due to Demiurge’s will. This was as he was ordered to work together with Sebas by the smiling Ainz.

[Because you are friends, you should work together.]

Holding the Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown, Ainz spoke in a leader-like manner that he could not say before.

“I’m troubled, but it’s Ainz-sama’s intention for me to overcome it.”

Demiurge thought about his own abilities and wished for sufficient backup. This was as secret missions were not Demiurge’s expertise. Just having the assassin Solution join him would have been enough.

However, Demiurge’s internal state was never vocalised to his master.

Demiurge’s mouth crumbled into a smile.

[Because of the support of a Guardian like yourself, there will be no

problems.]

This was as Demiurge's master felt that he was deeply reliable. Having that said to him made it difficult to request for backup.

"Ainz-sama is a terrifying person."

Causing Demiurge to prioritise his emotions over logic was—

"Oh, I shouldn't."

Demiurge resisted making a slovenly face. Just recalling his master's words caused sparks to run down his spine to a level that would cause most people to feel pain from it.

However, while it was a waste to kill the greatest feelings he felt, he had things to do.

More importantly, he could not do this again.

Just this once, just this once he would put his emotions first. Next time, no matter what, he would put the mission first.

Demiurge decided so and thought about the next thing.

"Oh dear. I don't have enough options."

Demiurge thought about using his ability for an instant to summon a demon. Succubi had mind control abilities and magic. It could be said to be useful in such a situation. However, he understood that humans had a strong aversion to demons thanks to his ranch.

In addition, they came here with the "aim" of saving people. Using demons would be a bit ill fitting.

In most cases, those that summoned demons would have the label of "Evil" attached to themselves.

The dissatisfaction from not having enough options appeared in Demiurge's heart, directed at someone not present.

"—You went ahead too far, you fool."

There were no people in the building with the destroyed door, of course, Sebas' figure could not be seen.

Originally, it would have been proper to proceed together with Sebas. However, their relationship was bad. They did not hate each other, but they felt that the other was a bother, and they did not mesh well.

That was why the job was split into two parts.

Sebas would enter the interior and save people. Demiurge would teleport the saved humans into Nazarick.

Of course, Demiurge's responsibilities were not only that. In order to prevent too much information from leaking, he was observing the surroundings.

"However.... Due to that naivety, do you understand how much trouble you dragged in?"

Thinking of Sebas, Demiurge's face under the mask crumbled.

"Using Ainz-sama's kindness for us subordinates for your own gains, how frustrating."

It was a rare sight to see Demiurge grumble. If any of his fellow Guardians saw this, they would be shocked.

That was how bad Demiurge and Sebas worked together. It was to the point that he felt that he could work better with Pestonya who had the complete opposite personality.

He had confirmed that he could not work well with Sebas.

Sebas chose to save them in a hurry, causing Demiurge to prioritise readying Nazarick to receive the slaves and to make preparations to retreat from the building.

Demiurge had just managed to fly to the nearby roof when all he saw was a broken door.

"It is not clear who is watching, and the higher ups of the Kingdom might move. As an invader, stimulating their curiosity so much is nothing but a fool's errand."

Sighing, Demiurge pondered over his next actions.

It might have been natural to repair the door, but Demiurge had no repair

magic. Nor illusion magic. If he had to do it, then he could force it back in. Or he could hide the door and make people think that it was originally open.

Which way was better?

While in thought, Demiurge was spoken to.

Demiurge had used plenty of caution while coming to this place.

It would be fine for some information about his master to leak. He had such thoughts but if Demiurge walked along the town with his true face, with his demonic appearance, it would be too eye catching.

That was why he had activated <Invisibility> with a scroll and acted invisibly.

He could use up to the 10th Tier, but the types that he could use were extremely limited. It was easy to just count the number. He could not use <Perfect Unknowable>, and thus activated it with the scroll he received.

Next was the black clothes that covered his body. Next was that he flew quite high to get there. Due to this caution, discovering Demiurge was almost impossible.

Would anyone be using <See Through Invisibility> and <Dark Vision> at the same time and be paying attention to the sky? The chance of that occurring was extremely low.

However, on that day, there was such a person.

“So, can I ask what you are doing here?”

The voice from behind Demiurge was such a strange and muffled one that he did not understand from what species it came from.

How careless.

Having this occur on top of Sebas' mistakes caused Demiurge's face to frown even further.

Demiurge's ability stats was high. This was as his level was 100. Also, an anthropomorphic being gained more stats per level than humanoids and demi-humans. However, he was not skilled in thief or ranger skills that helped his detection.

Ainz, Aura and Shalltear could use magic to do this, and Sebas and Cocytus could use their warrior senses as a replacement. However, Demiurge had none of this. Thus, he allowed this person to draw near.

“Trusting one’s basic abilities too much will lead to pitfalls, eh?”

Demiurge sighed. Thinking about what a failure this was, he hung his head and immediately began to think of a method to rectify it.

“What are you talking about? Turn here slowly. If you make any strange movements, you will lose your life. You might be an ally, but you don’t want to lose your life over a mistake right?”

Her intention to attack was not fake, and feeling that strain, Demiurge slowly considered.

There was a small existence. She was wearing the same black robes as Demiurge and her long black hair shook in the wind. Her face was hidden by a mask.

Evileye.

Demiurge did not know, but she was a member of the strongest adventuring party in the Kingdom, [Blue Rose].

Demiurge began to speak to the mysterious person. He wanted to gain the initiative in the conversation, no matter how little.

“I came here to save people? Why are you here?”

“Why you ask....”

Having the initiative taken from from, Evileye’s voice wavered. Demiurge laughed and continued his words.

“If you get in my way, I have to kill you.”

“.... I see, we have the same goal. Why do you have such a suspicious appearance?”

“.... I did not think that you would tell me that but.... This is a secret mission.”

“Hmm....”

They tried to sniff out each other’s intentions, and the next one to speak

was Evileye.

“Is that so, I got it. Then we will handle the rest. You, leave.”

“.....”

Evileye’s words caused the sense of righteousness to move over to her, causing Demiurge to be troubled. He felt that he had she had the arrogance and strong will that showed she had the protection of the law.

“.....I cannot believe those words. Could I see some proof?”

“... If I show you will you follow? Before that, could you remove your mask? If you live in this city, you know who I am right?”

“.....”

Demiurge understood that he was in an extremely dangerous situation. He had considered the possibility of running into a person connected with the upper brass but....

“... Even if I know, I do not know if you are that person. Could you please remove your mask?”

There would be no famous person who would normally wear a mask. They were probably hiding their faces using a mask like Demiurge. His words were a result of such thinking. However, here, that was a big miss.

“What? Remove my mask....?”

“If you do th—”

As if cutting him off, Evileye slowly readied a stance.

“— I’ll tell you honestly.... I have no idea which noble hired you, so I did not intend to let you escape. However, not knowing the least about me has peaked my interest. As a resident of this world, how do you not know about Evileye of [Blue Rose].”

The meaning in those words.

Demiurge sensed that she would not negotiate.

“...This was to buy time right?”

“That’s one reason.”

The two masked figures looked at each other.

As a wind blew across the rooftop where they stood.

Evileye shivered. This was not due to the wind but she felt it directly from the one in front of her. The feeling of hate and impatience blew towards her, along with the sense of pressure.

She felt the pressure that came with facing a monster stronger than A Class. And this seemed to be much more powerful.

The experience of someone that exceeded her experiences in her long life was a first. The reason why she could still try to move while being rooted to the spot was due to her unnatural body.

However, Evileye tried to move, but her slight hesitation was a large gap to a powerful existence like Demiurge.

[Inflict Self-harm]

Demiurge released his curses of commandment at Evileye—

“What!”

“What?”

The surprised voices numbered two. The former was Evileye’s and the latter’s was Demiurge.

Evileye flew away. She had cast flight magic and thus could easily fly over the uneven surface of the rooftops.

Demiurge did not attack the retreating Evileye but merely shook his head.

Evileye and Demiurge, glared at each other as they tried to read the other’s moves.

There was only one reason why the superior Demiurge did not immediately attack her.

“... Oh dear.”

Demiurge understood that since his method of attacking, his curse, had no

effect, he was in greater danger.

If his curse of command worked, it was an overwhelming ability. However, it was not all powerful nor the strongest. It was a mind related ability that worked on sound. If one knew about it, there were multiple methods to block it.

For example, if that person were over level 40. Or that they had perfect resistance to mind control or control-type skills. Or that she was invulnerable to sound-based skills. There were countless other methods to block it such as being too dumb or not knowing the language.

The problem was how did the enemy in front of him protect herself.

If she had blocked it due to her high level, this would be troublesome.

“That bastard, doing a half-hearted job.”

Demiurge was unhappy with Sebas.

Since Demiurge had not heard about any person who could block his curse of command, he blamed the person in charge of collecting information: Sebas.

In actuality it was different.

Sebas had collected information on the person known as Evileye. Not delivering it to Demiurge was a failure on Ainz’s part.

Ainz was originally a normal person, and had no experience at the top. Thus, while he understood the importance of information, he was not good at understanding what information to give to his subordinates and when.

It could not be helped that despite the failings of Shalltear, repeating it again could be said to be foolish. However Ainz did have an excuse in this case. Demiurge was backing up Sebas. Also he did not expect to encounter Evileye, and he had no time to explain only the information that he deemed necessary amongst the large amount of information that Sebas brought back.

Demiurge did not know any of that and was thus unhappy with Sebas.

Thus, Demiurge was thrust into a situation without information, as if forced into the darkness without a light, restricting much of his actions.

And Evileye. She was in the same position as Demiurge where she could not

move.

It was not clear how strong her opponent was. Well, she could feel that he was an overwhelmingly strong person. However, what was her chance of victory, or the chance of escape? Since he was too high level, she could not tell.

How powerful was the enemy in front of her.

What led her to this thought was the earlier attack.

She could not see the attack with her eyes, but she felt that the mysterious existence released something strange. Evileye had compiled a large amount of knowledge, but this was a strange move even to her.

[Famed adventurers of history win battles before they are fought.]

Those were words that stressed the importance of information. Basically it was that the analysis of information before the battle would decide the victor. She had done this in past battles. Thus it was natural that she hated random encounters.

Basically, Evileye was in a similar situation to Demiurge where she was in the dark without a light.

After some time, reading each other's movements, the first one who moved was the disadvantaged one— Demiurge.

This was a result of them realising that the longer this dragged out, the better it would be for Evileye.

Stepping in with a thud, Demiurge charged in towards Evileye. Out of the countless attack methods he had, Demiurge chose his fist.

In the middle of his charge, he had changed his magic to flight magic, and thus recieved no penalties from the uneven ground beneath him.

Demiurge's physical ability was the weakest amongst the Guardians. While he would not lose to Ainz, but he had no chance of victory with any others. He was about as strong as the Battlemaids, perhaps even stronger. He chose a melee battle was out of caution.

It was to avoid showing his hand.

Evileye knew over 100 magic spells, and had countless she could release at close range. However, the experienced her realised something. That she could not beat him with her magic here.

The image of an attacking giant dragon. The feeling of something far more powerful than that stabbed into her.

“<Translocation Damage>”

Since Demiurge was put on guard by an unknown magic, he killed some of his force and whacked her with the intention of seeing what would happen.

The shield he was expecting failed to materialise, and his fist pierced into Evileye’s small stomach.

“... Oh?”

Demiurge felt his fist hit something soft, like a thick futon.

As a counterattack, Evileye punched Demiurge with her fist, but she could not penetrate Demiurge’s magical defenses. Demiurge’s body had the property of reducing damage as long as it was not holy.

“Shit!”

While holding his fist, Demiurge chose not to attack Evileye as he had felt caution about the unknown magic.

The two made some distance. It was what Evileye hoped for.

“Regret the fact that you did not chase after me!” Evileye fed her magic power into the lightning dragon in her hand. “Eat this! <Maximise Magic Dragon Lightning>!”

The lightning attack was more powerful than normal, and the dragon rammed into Demiurge. His black robes were painted white by the lightning.

She had no confidence of defeating him, but she should be able to cause quite some damage.

Evileye released her most powerful magic for that reason.

Demiurge slightly tilted his head at the approaching lightning. He made no attempt to block. And the moment that the lightning swallowed him— It

dispersed into the surroundings.

Silence and darkness returned to the surroundings, making it seem like the earlier white light was a lie.

—Unharmmed.

There was not even a speck of ash on his suit.

Seeing that, Evileye's face under her mask crumbled.

"What are you!"

She shouted. Various emotions were contained inside her voice.

"I have not met anyone who can be unharmmed from my magic! Even high-ranked dragons.... And the Demon Gods! What are you!"

"That's a nice voice."

His quiet voice rode on the wind. In that voice was an emotion that one did not show to an enemy.

"... What?"

"Just what expression do you have on your face? Just imagining it makes me excited."

Evileye had chills run down her spine. She knew several strange people. However, all of them were weaker than her. She never felt panicked.

Just that the existence in front of her was really bad.

There were monsters that lightning damage was not effective on— those with lightning resistance— but this was a different reaction.

The next thing she thought was an ability to invalidate all magic. However, that was difficult without an overwhelming difference in power between the two sides. If it were magic invalidation, it meant that the one in front of her was far far more powerful than she was.

"However, it is a pity that I cannot play with you."

Demiurge's change caused shivers to run down Evileye's spine.

If he were to be serious—

She stood at the pinnacle of this world. The seriousness of someone who could outclass her. That meant— Evileye frantically searched for a method to survive. All while quivering in fear that she had never felt in her 100 years.

However, before Evileye could do anything, Demiurge's magic activated.

"<Eat Untidy> (litoandaidi)"

However before Demiurge could release his magic, his target disappeared.

"What?"

Demiurge's face moved and he gazed at the rotting roof of a house ten metres away.

There was Evileye. Along with another person.

It was a woman bundled in black. She was hugging Evileye from behind.

"Sniff sniff, nice smell." (TL Note: If anyone has a better translation, please tell. くんかくんか、よいにほい)

"This is not the time to play, you idiot!"

Evileye screamed at Tina who had no panic in her voice and was instead rubbing her face on her comrade.

Tina sharply felt the meaning in those words, and while she had no change in expression, the colour in her eyes became stronger.

"A strong enemy?"

"The scale is different! My magic is useless on him, and his physical abilities outshine mine by a huge margin! He is at least more powerful than A+ Adventurers, and is probably Hero Class!"

"That's ba...."

In simple metrics, Evileye's physical abilities outclassed those of the warrior of [Blue Rose], Gagaran. It was true that in a battle, Gagaran would be the victor due to her experience, skills and weapons. However, Evileye was a magic caster. Thinking of that, her battle ability was on another level.

And this was someone who caused her to say that he was out of her league. Just how powerful was he?

Those words were enough to change Tina's focus.

"Run! We can't win without everyone!"

"Understood. Dickhead."

One of Tina's bad habits, her jeering, leaked out.

He did not specifically react to her jeering, but Demiurge's eyes rumbled and changed into a cracked gold.

Demiurge had a class called [Gazer].

It was a class that only those with a special gaze ability could gain. While this class could learn multiple sight-based abilities, its innate ability was only one—Petrification.

Sight attacks could cause various effects even without meeting their eyes. The cons were that its range was short, but the pros were that they could target multiple people in view. In the game of Yggdrasil, there would be terrible looking effects occurring within the effect range, but nothing like that occurred in this world.

If they failed to resist, they would be turned to stone. Such a powerful gaze was turned towards them.

However, before that—

"Daibakufu no Jutsu (Great Waterfall Jutsu)!"

With the sound of her voice, a wall of water rose up from beneath Tina and Evileye, covering them. It occurred on a roof. It was not natural.

The water drew a dome and surrounded the two of them.

It blew upwards, like a waterfall. The froth created hid the figures of the two inside, blurring them.

Now the effect of his gaze would weaken.

"—Ninjutsu? Then she is a Shinobi?"

Shinobi was a class that required one to have many assassin related skills, and that they had to be over level 60. There were Kashin Koji (TL: Look up Narutopedia trivia section) who gained more ninjutsu in exchange for losing

close combat abilities, and their counterparts the Hanzou who were proficient in hand to hand combat.

They were weaker than warriors of the same level. But they were not people who Demiurge could fight with ease in close range.

“... She does not seem that strong though....”

Her body was covered in weapons and defensive gear. Demiurge thought that they were magic items, but he felt no sense of danger from them.

However, underestimation was a problem. He should at least increase his physical abilities.

Demiurge's body protruded from beneath his clothes.

[Demonic Essence] was a tool in a devil's belt. It greatly increased one's physical abilities. It was a method to temporarily increase one's muscle strength. He intended to break through the Daibakufu no Jutsu (Great Waterfall Jutsu)

Shalltear was a priest-type, Aura was a Beast Tamer-type based on a druid and Cocytus was a warrior-type. Demiurge also had a certain type of his.

It would be fine to call it the monster-type.

A gaze attack, a blaze, monster summoning, curses, an ability to give bad statuses like poison or illness. He was made of classes that could provide such abilities.

The earlier Gazer and Demonic Essence was a part of that.

Demiurge had strengthened his body and jumped. However, as if waiting for that, the voice of a woman on the other side of the waterfall could be heard.

“—Fudou Kongou no Jutsu (Unmoving Varja Jutsu)”

The shine of the waterfall, the reflecting light from the dispersing water, changed. It became the glisten of metal. The flow of the waterfall stopped, and changed into a large lump of hard precious stones.

“!”

Demiurge stopped his fist and looked at the two blur figures he could barely

see inside the giant lump.

The types of ninjutsu was limited, and in place of Tiers, the effects changed depending on the amount of MP used. Another way to say this was a Tier 1 Fudou Kongou no Jutsu, a Tier 2 Fudou Kongou no Jutsu, a Tier 3 Fudou Kongou no Jutsu.... And high level ninjutsu that had consumed a lot of MP was quite powerful. Their effects were more powerful than Tier 10 magic.

The dangerous thing was what level of magic this rivaled. The outside was the same so he could not tell.

Fudou Kongou no Jutsu (Unmoving Varja Jutsu) would create a shield that could defend well against physical attacks. It was weak to magic attacks. However, Demiurge did not have many magic spells and could not break it, and he could not give the opponents time.

Should he fight flashily? Demiurge pondered.

For an example of Demiurge's strong attack options, he had a lot of AoE attacks. [Organ Incinerator (Lit: An incinerator fed by internal organs)] [Dawn of the Morning Star], [The Fire and Sulphur of Sodom] would be his main choices.

However, that was too flashy. If a pillar of light fell from the sky, it would be too eye-catching. Yes. Far more than a certain broken door.

Now, what to do?

While thinking that, Demiurge lightly hit the shield of diamond. He clicked his tongue. This was as he realised that he was tricked.

He hit it lightly— At that moment, everything crumbled.

The countless fragments of crystals danced into the air, but they did not remain on the ground. Inside the broken shield were two humans. No, two human-like things.

They were clothes stuffed with something. And they were standing in a human fashion.

“...Shunjutsu (Escape Jutsu)”

It was a ninjutsu that, for the price of losing their armour, allowed one to teleport to a substitute. Since there were many people who would prefer dying

over losing their armour, in Yggdrasil, it was a dead ninjutsu.

However, it was effective in this case.

“So they escaped.”

He could summon a demon to chase after them. He could apologise to his master and sent for reinforcements. Several ideas appeared in Demiurge’s head, but he threw away all of them.

It would not be a problem for them to escape. It would be dangerous if Demiurge’s true form were revealed, but it was only a problem in that a battle occurred on the rooftops. He did not recall leaking any sensitive information.

Then this was far from being a life threatening problem.

And—

Demiurge opened the scroll he was given. The magic written on it was <Message>.

“I have to apologise to Sebas. We should retreat immediately. Even if there are others we should save.”

Below Demiurge’s mask, was a small smile.

“Evileye, are you okay?”

“Ah.... I showed you something unsightly.”

Reacting to her leader’s, Lakyus’, words, Evileye began to slowly stand up, wobbly.

Since Tina brought her here, she had collapsed like a puppet with its strings cut. The reason was mental fatigue. It was impossible for Evileye to feel mental fatigue, but she had parts similar to humans. That was why it was significant.

“No, I don’t mind. Anyone would have crumbled in fear.”

“Rather, it would be bad to not go right?”

The place where they were going should have one man. However, Evileye stopped them.

“We should stop. If we go we die.”

“We can’t win with everyone?”

Evileye froze and looked at Tina.

“Impossible. He is stronger than me.”

“Stronger than you.... That’s....”

Everyone in [Blue Rose] was at a loss for words. They had not heard of an existence that could defeat Evileye.

Evileye alone could wipe out the current members of [Blue Rose]. This was the natural reaction of hearing of someone that was more powerful than her.

“Even if all the members who fought me were here and I joined, it would be difficult to defeat him.”

“Even with Baa-chan?”

Gagaran immediately stood up and scratched her head.

She was not here currently, but she was the strongest person in [Blue Rose] excluding Evileye. Even if she joined they may not win. Such a nuance was created.

“...What do you think he is?”

“The guy’s true form? He is far stronger than a high ranked dragon in human form. Anything else, I don’t know.”

“Why is such an existence here?”

“Would I know?”

“That’s bad, if he died, Climb.... Still a virgin.”

“...He said he came to save people so he might be alive.”

“His objective is unclear.... But it does not fit his image....”

All the members of [Blue Rose] shook their heads. Why was this ridiculous existence inside a human city? The image did not match, and was extremely irregular.

“Sorry. I removed the possibility for dialogue.”

“Well, that’s a big miss.”

Pierced by Tia's response, Evileye raised a groan.

Evileye's actions were due to her arrogance as the strongest. She should have acted smartly and passed the baton to either Tina or Tia to find out who he was.

"Well it can't be helped. We don't know how the dialogue would go, so if you lower your head we will forgive you. If we had the money we could have gotten that girl out. The problem is—"

"I have not heard of anyone stronger than Evileye."

"People at the level of a legend might exist."

"If he is not a legend but was hiding in the world, I want to know the reason he moved."

They could not believe that an existence stronger than Evileye really came to save humans. They could understand if there was a deeper reason.

"Is he a Demon God?"

"...If he's a Demon God, we can still win."

The 13 Heroes had fought the Demon Gods. And they could win. Lakys made a wry smile as she realised that mysterious existence was far more powerful than such a Demon God.

A person who was stronger than one that could destroy countries and caused suffering to many. Such an existence was moving about in the dark.

If he did not have any hostility then it would be fine. But if he did?

"...Isn't he a danger to the world?"

"That's bad."

Tina reached the same conclusion and whispered. Everyone else also reached it and sighed with disheartened faces.

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Everyone's eyes focused on Sebas who had suddenly appeared.

The caution in their eyes was strong, but there was also hints of mocking. While they believed that he was not no one since he had reached this point, but they saw him as a simple old man and thus could not be on their guard.

This was especially true for the two strong ones Zero and Lubelina.

"Ojii-san, did you come to the wrong place?"

"I apologise for this. Everyone has gathered here and thus I had wondered what was going on."

"You can't find any woman to sleep with here, so could you return to your room?"

Lubelina spoke in a teasing manner, but Zero interrupted her.

"Lubelina stop talking. He's an intruder."

"Yes. I think so too."

"How foolish. Your luck is bad, just like the kid. You chose a time when I'm here."

Sebas made a wry smile.

That smile made Zero unhappy. It was a smile that made him seem that he was carefree.

That was not a good smile to make in front of a man like Zero.

That was why Zero chose to finish it in one blow.

"Hmm. Die, Jijii."

Zero's three tattoos released a light.

The class that Zero had, the Shamanic Adept, allowed one to channel animals into their bodies. In Zero's case, he had the legs of the panther, the

back of a falcon and the arms of a rhinoceros. The number of times he could use this per day was limited, and thus he usually chose to activate one at a time. But he did not do this.

He used them at once.

Zero used the abilities of all three animals at once to create a powerful single attack.

“—Ah!”

Climb had prior information of this, and tried to cry out in a panic.

This was Zero’s trump card.

This was a simple punch, but the speed and special power of it gave it a destructive ability that was off the charts. It was a blow like if a several ton rhinoceros running at 80 kilometers an hour tapping you lightly. If one took it they would die.

Zero closed in on Sebas in an instant.

On the other hand, possibly due to the speed, Sebas did not move. His defense was too slow.

Zero’s fist was thrust out.

The fist connected with Sebas’ vulnerable belly. It was a perfect, immaculate strike.

Sebas was blown back.

It was natural. If he used Fortress he would not have been blown back, but there was no sign that he used it.

Basically this was a fatal blow.

At least, that was how it should have been.

Yes—

That was what everyone expected— And he went against it.

Sebas— Did not move an inch.

He blocked the punch which Zero had thrown with all his might head-on,

using nothing but his belly— His own muscles.

Nobody who saw it dared to believe it. One could say the scene before them was unreal.

The difference between their bodies was obvious at a glance. However, the outcome had been completely the opposite of what was expected.

The person who could least believe it was naturally Zero himself. This was the most powerful blow he could make. He could not believe any living being could take it and remain unharmed. That was how it had always been until now. That was what he had always thought until now, but then this scene had unfolded before his eyes. Thus, he did not react even as a black object flashed before his eyes.

Sebas raised his leg to the air. The foot raced past the tip of Zero's nose — like the motion of a flying swallow.

His leg went higher and higher, until it fell.

An axe kick.

That was the typical name for a move like this. However, its speed and power were anything but typical.

“...Who are you?”

Zero muttered, and the corner of Sebas' mouth curled up slightly.

A gruesome sound of cracking filled the air. Zero fell to the ground, his skull pulverized and his neck and spine shattered, as though he had been crushed by a several-hundred kilogram weight.

The room was silent.

In a word, everyone in this room was transfixed. Sebas shifted away from where Zero's smashed skull was gushing fresh blood and patted at the place where Zero's fist had struck.

“Whew, that was close. If not for your timely warning, I would probably be dead.”

Are you kidding me? What warning are you talking about?!

The three people present did not speak, but they shouted the same thing inside their hearts.

“You have saved me. My disciple.”

“Wha... ah. Er... yes.”

Climb was speechless. It was natural. What could he say? In front of such a nonsensical scene.

“What? What? What happened?”

Lubelina could not believe the scene in front of her, and switched her gaze between the kneeling Zero and the unharmed Sebas.

“Just what happened!”

She could not believe what she saw. Lubelina knew Zero’s strength the best and this was a natural reaction.

“It was nothing much. It seems I was just a little bit stronger than him.”

Not just a little bit.

Everyone there was thinking more or less the same thing.

“Now, the two of you.”

Sebas looked at Lubelina and Succulent. Succulent fell back in fear, but Lubelina stepped forward. Their different reactions showed their differing confidence in their skills. Lubelina was the strongest excluding Zero but Succulent knew that he was far from Zero’s level.

Her opponent was here to kill her. Then she had to attack first. Lubelina believed so. She ignored the fact that something unbelievable had occurred in front of her eyes.

It was a fluke. A coincidence. She could only believe that.

Gazef Stronoff was the strongest warrior in the surrounding countries. Compared to him, Lubelina and Zero would lose. However, it would be a tough battle. Even if they could not win, they had to confidence to wound him. There was no way that she could lose to an unknown old man.

Thinking about it, he could have used a trick. Such as using a magic item that

invalidated blunt attacks.

It was not that he did not avoid Zero's attack, rather that he could not avoid it.

That was why Lubelina stepped in. She putting everything in her skill.

"Ha!"

Heart Penetrate in Lubelina's hand left a platinum afterglow and aimed for Sebas. There was no trace of her relaxed attitude like she had with Climb. This was the fastest blow she could make. Her target was his throat.

To Climb and Succulent on the outside, it was an unstoppable flash of light.

And the sound of metal bending rang out.

Not only that. There was one more. The sound of bones breaking.

"...Now one left."

A bent Heart Penetrate fell from Sebas' finger onto the floor. Then, Lubelina, whose neck was bent 270 degrees also fell.

"What...."

Succulent whispered. Climb turned his shocked face to Sebas. In just a few minutes, no, not even that, the situation changed. No, one could say it changed too much.

"Oi, no, you."

Succulent unconsciously backed away. He did not expect that man he met at the mansion be such a person. No, he could not make such a prediction that they had stepped into the world of fantasy.

With every step Sebas took forward, Succulent took one back.

"Please wait! I surrender! I'll give you everything you want. I have quite the position in our organisation. If it will make you happy I will give it to you! Please wait!"

"I have no interest."

Succulent continued backwards until his back hit the wall with a thud.

Realising that he could not retreat further, Succulent became as pale as a sheet.

“—Please wait!”

At the distance where his fist could reach Succulent, Sebas’ legs stopped, and his face turned to Climb. Returning his now empty potion bottle into his bag, Climb again spoke to Sebas.

“Could you leave his punishment to us?”

“...”

“If he tells us everything, we can cut off everything from the roots. We can make a system to prevent such a thing from occurring ever again.”

“...”

Seeing Sebas’ slight change in air, Succulent saw a path to survival and frantically begged. He did not try to attack the seemingly defenseless Sebas. No, it was even scarier that he seemed defenseless.

“Y, yes. I will. I’ll spill everything. I promise. I won’t lie.”

“Hmm....”

Sebas moved his hand. No, the two did not have the kinetic vision to see Sebas’ movements. Thus they did not understand what happened. Succulent simply lost consciousness, and only by confirming his chest was still moving, Climb understood that Succulent had lost consciousness.

“...Understood. I’m weak to you saying that this will never happen again.”

“Thank you very much.”

Climb bowed his head while his wounded body quivered from the pain.

“Pay it no mind. Since you can bring him back alive, I can spread better information.”

“?”

“Just my musings. However, you have such terrible wounds.”

Sebas moved closer to Climb and stretched out his hand.

It seemed like a normal hand but the scary thing was the strength behind it.

He froze for a second, but then Climb realised that running would be extremely rude, and stopped himself. Sebas smiled, as if understanding Climb's thoughts.

"I just healed your wounds."

Sebas' hand touched his armour. That instant, he felt something warm flow into his body.

"It is healing using ki. It cannot heal old wounds, but I believe that it can heal the wounds you recieved."

He felt his wounds warm, and instantly cool. At that moment, all the pain in Climb's body beautifully fell away.

"Thank you very much!"

Sebas shook his hand at the deeply bowing Climb.

"More importantly, you....Hmm? What is it?" Sebas placed his hand on his forehead as if he had been talked too. "...Is that so. Understood, I shall retreat immediately.... However some are unconscious and I cannot confirm if they want to come.... Of course, our master is.... Understood. The conscious people number eight. Eeh, Eeh. Understood." Sebas sighed. "I apologise. I originally intended to take everyone someplace, but some are unconscious and I cannot confirm their desires and have to leave them here."

"What to you mean confirming their desires?"

"Just my musings. Please don't mind me. By the way, did you come here to save someone specific?"

"No. Not anyone specific, but I am here to saving those in pain."

"Hou."

Sebas raised a voice of admiration.

"So there are people like that. The people I have met are terrible people. Then I shall leave the remaining people with you. I shall take the rest."

Climb hesitated for just a moment, but considering Sebas' personality, that was the best option. It was true that he was a mysterious person, but he was kind and would definitely not let people suffer. Having them follow Sebas was

probably better than leaving them with him.

“Understood. Then I shall leave it to you. I am very sorry that I am unable to save them now.”

“No no. If I recalled what you said when we met, I understand that you have made quite the determination to come here. I will not do anything that would criticise you.”

“Thank you very much. Then will you be going together with the people you saved?”

“I intend to.”

Did Sebas intend to leave together with the saved? That was the gain from coming here. Climb understood.

“Can we meet again?”

“I’m afraid not.”

“Is that so.... I would have liked to train together again.... But.... That’s too bad.”

Sebas smiled.

“Should we have the chance to meet again, I shall train you again.... Now I shall return. You have many things you should do here, do you not?”



“Good work Climb.” Climb had reported to Renner and she smiled in return. “I am happy that you have returned safely.”

“Thank you very much.”

Climb deeply bowed his head.

He stifled a yawn that tried to make its way out.

Returning to Renner, he had reported various things to the point that the sun was about to rise. Climb was trained as a soldier and could function a day without sleep. However, he had fought a battle where he faced death, and his mental fatigue was huge. He was so tired that if he lost focus, he would fall asleep.

Renner had felt it. She smiled kindly at Climb.

“You should be tired. Go back and rest.”

“Ha!”

Climb’s gaze moved from her to Marquis Raeven. Renner instantly understood what he thought. This was because it was Climb.

“I intend to talk for a bit more with the Marquis.”

“Then shall I remain here?”

The two thoughts of even though Renner was not sleeping, how could he sleep and if he did not get enough sleep he could not help Renner fought inside Climb. There was another reason for that.

It was his master’s intention to put an end to that fight.

“No. You cannot. Climb should get some sleep. Since it is later than usual I shall allow you to use the guest room. Make sure you do not have any fatigue tomorrow.”

“Understood.”

He had to obey his master.

Climb deeply bowed and left the room. Hearing the door close, Renner’s face rose slightly as she smiled at Marquis Raeven.

“That is jealousy isn’t it.”

“...I believe so.”

“...Thank you for going along with it.”

Renner spoke in a lonely manner. Climb worried that Renner spending the night with Marquis Raeven would spread weird rumours and felt that he should remain. It was an unnecessary worry, but she felt happy about Climb’s feelings.

She had learnt countless things this night. She had to grit her teeth and unifying their opinions.

Especially since the appearance of an unknown figure was an large part of it.

“Now, what do you think?”

“There is too little information but.... Sebas and the man on the roof—an unconfirmed existence. The two of them definitely have a relationship.”

“Their objective is the same. However, I cannot say that they have an amicable relationship.”

The mysterious existence that Evileye met— an unconfirmed existence. And the old man known as Sebas that Climb met. Both seemed to have come to [save] people, but the problem was to what point they should believe them.

It was true that the actions of Sebas did match his words. However the unconfirmed existence was merely paying lip service, and there was no proof that his words were true.

“If they are hostile.... The option of observation disappears. From what I can tell from Evileye’s conversation, he does not have such skills. And even if we assume that he came to attack Sebas, we did not discover any traces of a large-scale battle.”

“There is a possibility that the meeting with Evileye-dono changed his plans.”

“Anyway, should they be in a hostile relationship, since Sebas and the unconfirmed existence did not battle, they should have the same level of strength.”

“Isn’t that a leap in logic? It is true that Evileye-dono and Climb-kun have vouched for their strength, but Evileye-dono and Climb-kun have different levels of strength, and so it is difficult to say they are equally strong.”

The strongest adventuring group in the Kingdom, [Blue Rose]. The magic caster who was part of that and a simple soldier had vastly different qualifications.

“The reason why Sebas did not fight the unconfirmed existence is unknown. Sebas brought out several people. If they are not of the same level, he could have attacked him there.”

“Hmm.”

If they were not equals, the only other option why the unconfirmed existence did not attack was that Sebas was stronger. But if so, why did he

come? Only questions were left.

“Personally I believe the unconfirmed existence was working together to transport the people Sebas brought out.”

“If that is the case then I do understand. Then do the two have a amicable relationship?”

“Maybe not. Well, it is not unimaginable.”

“Then their relationship is?”

“They should be subordinates of someone.”

Sebas, who Climb ran into, was working for a merchant, but that was probably a lie. However, his figure and his attitude showed that he was an excellent butler. There was no way that Climb would mistake this since he had worked for Renner for so long and had seen the world.

“What about the possibility that Sebas is working for the unconfirmed existence?”

“I cannot say there is none, but it is low. They are probably working for someone who did not come here.”

The reaction of the unconfirmed person to Evileye. The reaction of Sebas to Climb. It was completely different. It was true that Evileye and Climb’s first meeting was different. However, it was too different. If Sebas worked for the unconfirmed person, Climb might have been killed.

Rather than that, it was more likely that they were working for the same master but had different orders. And since the two did not work closely together, their master did not come.

“What do you think their master is like?”

“He probably does not hold hostility for the Kingdom. However, that is for now. The master’s thoughts are within the range of common sense and so it can go either way.”

Saving people required one to properly recognise others and to have mercy and other emotions. For example, if it was a dragon that was far above humans, even if humans suffered, it would continue on with no interest.

It was the same thing as how one would not even see a bug at the end of the road. However, one would help it if were a dog or cat. This was as they stimulated the sense of pity.

Basically Renner deduced that the person behind Sebas and the mysterious existence felt pity for humans. Since he or she had emotions like humans, he or she could become an ally or enemy.

However Renner saw that there was a hole in these thoughts.

That was if Sebas was lying.

However, having the confidence that one was not wrong, on top of having a person of a different level work for them, they themselves must be of another level.

Marquis Raeven changed his expression as if he had recalled something.

“By the way, Your Highness. Do you know about Ainz Ooal Gown?”

“No, I do not.”

It was a lie. She had heard some rumours about that name. However, Renner wanted to hear the pure thoughts of Marquis Raeven and acted dumb.

“Is that so.... There have been rumours that an extremely powerful magic caster has appeared near E-Rantel, and that is the name of his master. The powerful people in this matter, and the powerful man in E-Rantel. I believe there is some relationship.”

“The possibility is very high.”

An unknown powerful figured appeared in the Kingdom once. Then it would not be strange for them to have a relationship. Were they friendly, or hostile to each other. That was unknown.

“If he can use Tier 6 magic, he has the same ability as the Head Magic Caster of the Empire—”

“—1. Ainz Ooal Gown is more powerful than that.... 2. Ainz Ooal Gown, Sebas, and the unconfirmed existence have no relation. Which is more likely?”

Renner spoke to interrupt Marquis Raeven’s words.

Marquis Raeven tilted his head in puzzlement. Ignoring the second, the problem was the former— The first.

The Head Magic Caster of the Empire, Fluder was the strongest magic caster in the surrounding countries, and only the 13 Heroes were superior. There was no reason to place anyone above him. However, Renner seemed confident enough to not be randomly saying this.

Then was it a lie that she did not know? But, what was the reason for lying?

“Why do you view this person called Ainz so highly?”

“It’s simple. Sebas and the unconfirmed existence. I worked on the assumption that they have a relationship.”

Marquis Raeven was confused. He did not understand how one could connect the two simply by virtue of strength.

If one thought about it simply, it would seem that Renner was saying that Sebas and the unconfirmed existence were stronger than Fluder. He could not understand how one could say that they were stronger than Fluder because they are stronger than Evileye.

As if reading that Marquis Raeven was confused, Renner continued.

“Do you know.... Evileye’s true identity?”

The strongest magic caster in the Kingdom. She had an identity that was above that.

Was she one of the 13 Heroes? However, Marquis Raeven’s expectations were dashed.

“She is [Landfall].”

The bomb quietly exploded.

Marquis Raeven opened his eyes in shock. He then unconsciously stuck his fingers in his ears and twisted. This was as he distrusted his ears. However, he found nothing wrong.

Opening his mouth wide, he tried to form words but closed his mouth. When he finally decided to open his mouth, an unbelievable amount of time for

someone like Marquis Raeven to be dumbfounded passed.

“What!”

Landfall.

She was the evil Vampire Lord who destroyed a country. She was a monster destroyed by the 13 Heroes and left her name in the continent’s history as a monster amongst monsters. According to the original legend, she was someone who a country might barely equal if they pulled all the stops. It was said that she destroyed a country and filled a city with undead, and was a monster stronger than the Demon Gods.

It was impossible to hear her name outside of fairy tales and legends. But to hear that she still existed, and was in the Kingdom.

One should praise Marquis Raeven for being able to remain seated.

“What.... She is still alive?”

“Yes.”

Marquis Raven became angry for an instant at the calm Renner.

He believe that it was not such simple information. If Landfall was true to legends, she was someone who could destroy the Kingdom. However Marquis Raeven recalled a certain information that cooled down his head instantly.

“Wait.... Just a bit....” Marquis Raeven audibly gulped. Then he recalled something unbelievable. “....Land.... Landfall....said there was.... No chance of victory? About the person on the roof?”

“Yes.”

“How can you stay so calm!!!!”

Evileye. The legendary monster said that even with all the members of [Blue Rose], she could not defeat the existence on the roof. Basically—

“Someone that can destroy a country....No someone who can destroy the surrounding countries is right here!!”

“So it seems. Well, it is unknown if they are hostile.”

“How are you so calm!! Are you an idiot!! We have to do something!!”

“How?”

That quiet voice brought Marquis Raeven back to his senses. It was true, they could do nothing. Doing random stuff was more dangerous. Breathing several times, he calmed down his rough breathing.

“...Your Highness. Please forgive my foolish words.”

“I do not mind. That is the usual thing to do.”

“Then.... What should we do?”

“About the unconfirmed existence?”

“Yes. Shall we report to the King?”

“...We should not. It does not help after all.”

Renner quickly waved her hand.

“However....”

“Should the King move, he will attract the eyes of the nobles. If he even tries, people will ask for an explanation. It will not end well.”

“That is....”

Marquis Raeven could not disagree.

Even if they only told the King, if he moved, there would definitely be people who would raise complaints about it. Then the King would be asked for an explanation. If the Kingdom was not split into two, the King could use his absolute authority and there would be no problem. However, that was not the current situation. One of the most powerful nobles would leak this information to the Empire.

If the King did not complain, the court would fall apart due to distrust.

If he explained, it would be pandemonium.

“We cannot leak Evileye’s identity leak out to anyone. She is my friend of a friend. I do not want to destroy that relationship. It would be foolish to betray our largest fighting strength right? And excluding that, information about such a person would freely flow in the Kingdom. How would the nobles act?”

“...The largest commotion in history would occur. The Kingdom would tear itself apart.”

“So it does not help.”

“What about requesting help from other countries?”

“Do you believe it? Marquis Raeven.”

“...I can't.” Marquis Raeven hung his head. “... I should not have come here today.... It seems my sleepless nights will continue.”

There was nothing they could do. At most they could leak information to the adventurers and have them search. However that might turn an existence that was not an enemy into one.

In the end, there was too little information.

Since they could not read the other party's stance, they could not step in. The main problem was that they had no analysis of their fighting strength. Basically they could do nothing but to hang their heads.

In contrast to the frantic Marquis Raeven, Renner was still calm.

Marquis Raeven felt anger in his head. Of course, this was an outburst of anger. While he thought about using sarcasm on her, he recalled something.

“By the way.... Returning to Ainz Ooal Gown, does Evileye have a disciple known as Camila?”

“No, I don't know that much.”

Renner asked why, allowing Marquis Raeven to explain.

“A person known as Momon came to E-Rantel and called himself the disciple of Ainz Ooal Gown, and he was chasing a vampire known as Camila, who was Landfall's disciple—”

Renner had heard most of the recent happenings at E-Rantel and nodded her head.

“...I will not know if I don't ask, but isn't that a lie?”

“Why is that a lie?”

“Didn’t they simply aim to infiltrate the Kingdom? If it is known that he is opposing someone dangerous, should his opponent appear, he will become more reliable. That vampire was probably working together with him. What a charade.... Then are Sebas and the unconfirmed existence part of a different group? This is quite irregular.”

If Sebas had matched his actions with theirs, then he should have some connection with them. If not then he had a different aim. Or did the occurrences in E-Rantel completely deviate from Renner’s realm of possibility.

“While unclear, I shall pray that Ainz Ooal Gown, Sebas and the unconfirmed existence are not in a cooperative relationship. If they are different groups there is the chance of them fighting each other.”

If they were working together, then the Kingdom could not do anything. Marquis Raeven nodded in agreement.

“Agreed. However then the possibility of negotiating with this Gown is—”

“Anyway I seriously desire information. Marquis Raeven, can I ask for all the information you have?”

Renner narrowed her eyes. She had saw someone who could put the happy life she had planned with Climb at risk. She only then noticed Marquis Raeven hard expression.

“...Allow me to say something bad first.”

“...What is it?”

Today has been nothing but bad news. Such a feeling welled up in the two of them.

“We already have someone on their way to the home of Ainz Ooal Gown.”

“...Can we do something about it?”

With the information they gained, the other side was an existence they had to get into the good books of. More importantly he was a person who might have a relation to Sebas and the unconfirmed person. They should not have sent a simple messenger but should have directly sent one of the royal family to such a person.

“It is impossible with my abilities. I have taken all the possible late measures. Thus anything more is impossible. I had hoped for a friendly relation at least.... That might have been naive.”

“Then how about having them attacked by bandits and killing everyone?”

Renner spoke those harsh cold words with her normal kind face. However, there was no child here to say that such methods were cruel.

“...That is not a bad idea, but I do not have anyone that can do that.”

“I can ask [Blue Rose]....” Renner then shook her head. There was no way that they could accept such a dirty job. “What about using workers?”

“That will be difficult. Attacking a carriage with the King’s symbol, it will be treason. Even if we trick them, should they see the emblem on it, they will retreat immediately.”

“What about searching for clueless people?”

“That will take time.”

“Should I go myself?”

“...That is not a bad idea, but it’s impossible. Should the person known as [Golden] show her face there will be many problems. Just by thinking about it I can come up with four.”

“...Then we shall pray that our messenger does not do anything strange.”

“We can do nothing else.”

Marquis stared at the wall. On the other side was the location of the person known as Ainz Ooal Gown. How will the situation progress? Depending on that, it might be a problem that affects the Kingdom.

Marquis Raeven felt unease run through his body.

Chapter 76: Gaiden - The Past Nazarick [The Relationship of a Brother and Sister]

“Then Momonga-san. I will bring Yama-chan and An-chan, to Aura’s place.”

“Yes. Got it.”

“I will definitely return at the promised 8 pm.”

“Understood. However, I shall call you if the we assemble the members of the Fire Giants hunting party earlier, so please come as fast as you can.”

“Got iiiitttt.”

In front of Momonga was a meat-like pink blob.

Amongst the Slime-types, this colour was rare. This was as seeing a shiny and sparkly slime pulsate and twitch was not a nice thing to see.

While the figure that looked like innards made surprisingly sharp movements and was about to move away from Momonga—

“Bukubuku-nee.”

—The voice of a third party could be heard, causing the slime to freeze. It then flabbily moved. Slimes had an appearance where you could not tell where was its face, but Momonga felt that it was facing the direction of the voice.

“Oi. Calling me by that name, I look forward to the next time I return to our parents’ house.”

That quiet but heavy voice seemed to crawl up from the depths of hell, causing its recipient to stop like he was being pressed down on.

“...If you don’t like it then don’t use that name!”

“Huuh? My online contacts can use it. So can the members of Ainz Ooal Gown. But you can’t, younger brother.”

The one who was frantically rebutting was a warrior-like man who was

wearing a beautifully decorated full body armour. The imbued magic released a pair of wings of light.

The man wore that armour and also a mask, and the really why one could tell he was a man from his voice. Of course, the Guildmaster Momonga knew that person.

“Ah, hello. Peroronchino-san.”

“Good evening. Momonga-san.”

They were fellow members of society who lightly bowed to each other. The quivering meat blob went up to Peroronchino, stretched a hand out from her blob, and touched the armour.

“Really, this armour, seems like a holy outfit from somewhere.”

“Nee-chan, Cross-something right?” (TL: Macross Series I think. Specifically 7. I support Sheryl)

“Around 15 years ago the anime was remade. Does Momonga-san know of it?”

“No. I do not watch much anime.”

“Me too....”

“You don’t see anything but Eroge original works.”

“That is.... Not true.... But seriously. Nee-chan, don’t lower Momonga-san’s evaluation of me....”

Should he say something to the disheartened Peroronchino? Momonga was at a loss for words, and the meat blob did not stop her attack.

“...The truth is the truth, what’s wrong with it.”

“There is no way I can watch an anime adaptation where my sister goes “Eiick” and “Noo” in the original work!”

“...But you know it?”

Peroronchino grunted like he was hit. Momonga felt like the situation was going downhill.

“...Hey, you are already appearing in the normal works so you can you retire from the erotic stuff. Stop changing your name to five or six things and appearing in Eroge?”

“In terms of finances and time it’s great you know.”

“But then....”

“I’m not even doing the main—”

“Stop it! I don’t want to hear our family’s dirty laundry! To top it off Momonga-san is here!”

And could you not appeal to that person, Momonga mumbled under his breath.

“Really, stop being a Seiyuu!”

Momonga felt that the atmosphere had changed. It was probably the most appropriate for the Guildmaster to intervene her, but he had no desire to stand in front of an angry woman.

He deliberately ignored Peroronchino’s gaze for help.

“Hou, you can really talk. Even though you were so happy when I got Mizuno’s signature for you. What did you say? Stay as a Seiyuu, you said while giving me a dogeza right.”

Peroronchino grunted like he was hit. And as if recalling something, the meat blob shook.

“And, she’s quite the good friend, and likes shock comedy a lot you know?”
(TL: Filthy Frank-esque)

“Shut up! My Mizucchi is a refined lady who drinks red tea! She is different from those who appear in Eroge like Nee-chan!”

Momonga was confused while wondering who Mizuno was, but then he recalled her being a Seiyuu that Peroronchino often talked about.

It was when he was explaining about the music and voices of a recent game.

“...Even she changed her name and appeared in Eroge. The same as me, she started in Eroge you know? Look at reality.”

“No! That Mizuno is different from my Mizucchi!”

Peroronchino spewed out his heart with insane over the top gestures.

The meat blob was about to reply, but her body then moved backwards. As her body moved, she had an air of exhaustion and faced Momonga.

“I see. Boys are terrible.... Ah, Momonga-san. The two are waiting for me so I shall take my leave.”

“Ah.... Eh, then see you later....”

Momonga did not want to left alone with the shocked Peroronchino here, but he could not say it. He stared at the retreating meat blob and the lifeless Peroronchino and sighed.

And then grumbled.

“Really....”

Chapter 77: Gaiden - Come Everyone to [Demiurge's Ranch]

Roble Kingdom.

It was a kingdom to the south west of Re-Estize Kingdom and its territory was only half of it. Geographically it was close to the Slane Theocracy, but it had almost no trade with the Theocracy. There was a giant hilly area between the Slane Theocracy and the Roble Kingdom— The Abelion Hills and a large forest— The Great Forest of Eivasha.

What especially obstructed that was the many demihuman tribes like goblins and orcs in the Abelion hills that constantly fought each other.

The wall of fortresses that surrounded the Roble Kingdom was created to prevent the invasion of demihuman groups. However since there was no existence that could rally the goblins or orcs, the wall was never used.

There were countless tribes in the wide Abelion Hills. Where those demihumans stayed were in tents. This proved that the orcs did not live a life staying in one place.

There was a tent where the Crooked Tusk tribe stayed.

None of the tribes had something this large. The pillar that supported the ten metre tall structure itself seemed that it would difficult to carry.

The same Crooked Tusk tribe did not have tents this extravagant. They had extremely dilapidated ones.

This tent was brought in by someone. It's workmanship was at the level where one would immediately understand this.

In the centre of that tent was a chair.

It was a lump of countless bones forced into the shape of a chair. However, its use was obvious. It was so large that it was not obvious what it was— Including the back it was about six metres tall. In addition, the empty eye

sockets of the countless skulls that decorated it peered into one's soul.

It was— A throne.

Despite it being a fearsome creation, it made one wonder which artist made it. It made the viewer feel a sense of beauty. If one stood from afar, the pure white decorated throne would immediately catch their eye.

There was no one sitting on that throne. It was like there was someone supposed to be sitting there, but they had left, leaving it empty.

However, there was someone standing next to that throne.

The word handsome, would be the most suitable word to describe his face.

His slightly angled eyes might cause him to lose some points but, his sharp nose bridge, his pale and thin lips, and his light hearted but gentle smile brought a sense of trust to those who saw him.

He was extremely similar to a human, but he had definite inhuman qualities.

His height was two metres, and his skin was a shiny red. Two sharp goat-like horns protruded from his temples, and giant black wings were attached to his back, proving that he was not human.

Several shadows kneeled before them. They were not orcs.

They were demons.

That was the most accurate word to describe the existences there.

“Now, shall we begin our regular meeting.”

They were extremely gentle words. His words soaked deep into the hearts of everyone, and let them feel comfortable.

He bowed to the throne, as if someone was sitting there. Following him, the kneeling figures also respectfully bowed. It was so respectful that if there was not enough space beneath their heads, something terrible would have happened.

“First is Torturer.”

“Yes Demiurge-sama.”

The one who reacted to his, Demiurge's, voice was one of the shadows. He was a demon with a black leather face that perfectly suited him. His skin was white, milk white. His blood vessels were completely visible due to his skin colour, and made one believe that purple blood was running through it.

On his black head was a mask that covered all parts of his face, which made one wonder if they could see his eyes, if he was breathing, or where his voice was coming from. His arms were extremely long. His height was about two metres, but his arms would reach below his knees.

At his waist hung countless bloodstained work tools.

This demon was a Torturer.

"The collection of the skin parchment is proceeding smoothly."

"Excellent."

Demiurge kindly opened his hand.

"The parchment that Torturer has collected is in excellent condition. Ainz-sama would be overjoyed."

"Thank you very much."

"Are the sheep healthy?"

"Yes. After the flaying, we immediately cast magic, so we can harvest it again the next day."

By the nature of his duties, Torturer was a demon that could use simple healing magic. Yes, to not let people die in peace.

"I see. Since their cries are melodious, it should be fine to listen to them for a bit longer."

"Then shall I leave them for a bit before applying healing magic?"

"No, it would be better not to. We get the best parchment from the young ones, and they die immediately without magic."

"Understood."

"Yes, magnanimity is important. We have to take care of the sheep."

“Ha!”

Demiurge moved his gaze from the bowing Torturer. When it reached the next demon he wanted to ask, one of the demons raised her head, and had an expression that said she wanted to ask something.

In response, Demiurge nodded, giving her permission.

“...About the parchment, is it fine to not inform Ainz-sama about them?”

That demon was the female demon who informed Ainz that the species of sheep was known as the [Abelion Taur].

Of course, it was by Demiurge’s orders to use that name, but she opened her mouth due to fear of being made a scapegoat later.

“Don’t mind it. Ainz-sama has said that the goods made using the parchment is extremely important. In actuality, the research and development of consumable goods is a huge problem.”

Demiurge sent a warm gaze at the parchment placed in a corner of the tent. He had worked together with the sheep’s parents to skin it. When he recalled their expressions he was about to leak a smile.

“Ainz-sama unexpectedly has the generosity to hold mercy for such boring animals, but he understands the importance of this. He must have kept silent about this. Thus I have decided that we should give them a different name so as to not upset him. There is no need for you to worry.”

Demiurge looked down upon the kneeling figures in front of him and declared as such.

“The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, or Ainz Ooal Gown-sama is our holy existence. Such a person lacks scrolls. If he had to have such a dull worry, it would be a sad thing as his subordinates.”

“—Yes. If we find another species of animal that can rival the quality of the current ones, shall we end this ranch? Well, complete disposal would be appropriate. Yes. What does our master truly want? The smartest subordinates will always have that in mind and act. Understood?”

“Understood.”

The female demon acted as their representative and expressed their loyalty. Demiurge nodded gently as if satisfied.

“Now, next is Succubus. You. I look forward to your good report.”

“—Yes.”

The one who spoke was a human-like woman.

Her body was covered by the giant black wings which protruded from her back, and she was mostly naked with only a thin metal plate covering her important parts. Her seductive beauty permeated the air from her face and body, turning the atmosphere a lewd pink.

However her extremely beautiful features were frozen with worry.

“The interspecies breeding experiments are proceeding smoothly. Unfortunately, since this experiment requires time to see the results, may I request for more time?”

“Of course. As much as you need. The birth of new life is a joyous moment. Actions to achieve that are righteous.”

Demiurge’s expression seemed to be filled with mercy and magamity, as if he were a priest spreading the words of his lord.

Succubus sighed in relief but was then spoken to again.

“However— I have heard rumours that it is not going well?”

“—!”

Succubus’ shoulders stiffened, and her body shivered as if she had a fever. The demons next to her moved away apprehensively. They feared what would happen next.

“How about it, Succubus. Are they proceeding smoothly?”

“Ha! I cannot use the word smoothly though....”

“Hmm, what a bad child. Ah yes, how about offering your love to my image?”

Demiurge smiled. It was a truly gentle smile. He took one step towards her. The current distance between them was quite large. However Succubus felt that Demiurge would appear in front of her with just one more step.

Succubus knew where her predecessor had went to and she hurriedly formed words.

“T, the orcs refuse to cooperate! However, I am forcing them to do it using charm magic! I shall produce the results that Demiurge-sama desires!”

“The sense of beauty is different between races after all.”

The sense of beauty of orcs and goblins was completely different. To orcs, human beauties were the pinnacle of ugliness. That was why interspecies breeding would produce low quality products.

That was why Demiurge enjoyed it.

Demiurge loved to hear the screams of pain. Rather than screams from mental damage, he preferred it to be from physical pain. However he did not hate screams from mental damage.

“Then would it be better to cast it on the humans?”

“Y, yes, currently, I have casted it on the males.”

“Hearing that tells me that it’s going smoothly though?”

“...The human spirit is weak. There have been many problems such as self-harm....”

They could not allow for any form of self harm like suicide. Unfortunately there were no demons that could use resurrection magic. Thus the numbers dropped.

To avoid that, they had to cooperate with Nazarick, but that would be difficult.

“So would it not be better to constantly cast magic to lower their intelligence?”

“...I like the screams they make when they wake up from the charm though?”

“Understood.”

Then there was a need to strengthen the nighttime surveillance. Succubus decided as such. However no matter how much she thought, with the subordinates she was given there would be a hole created somewhere.

Succubus braced herself and asked.

“With the current manpower, it is a bit difficult. Would it be possible to increase the number of subordinates?”

The air froze and Demiurge’s smile only deepened. Succubus shivered but stared at his face.

It was the normal smile Demiurge always had. That smile would deepen when he heard something distasteful.

“...I see. Well, if it’s interesting I don’t mind. Got it, Succubus. I shall increase your subordinates.”

Demiurge smiled.

That was why it was terrifying.

Succubus felt that she was in the clear and wiped away her cold sweat.

“Yes. The Minotaurs we caught earlier should be good.”

“Yes! What an excellent suggestion. I have thought about trying to fit them into the plan.”

Demiurge smiled in satisfaction.

“I have to be grateful to Ainz-sama. I cannot do such a fun thing in Nazarick. I look forward to going on a picnic in Roble Kingdom. We need more replacements for the dead sheep.” Demiurge smiled. “I am really happy to be able to expand my ranch.”

He bowed as if there was someone sitting on the throne. It was a graceful gesture, as if he were a noble working for his king.

Chapter 78: Gaiden - Introduction [Pandora's Actor]

The maid, Yuri Alpha, unconsciously heaved a sigh of admiration.

The scene that greeted her after the teleportation was a shine that seemed to have all the stars in the night sky.

In the center of the giant room was a heaping pile of gold coins and gems, so immense that it resembled a mountain. Several of these ten metre tall mountains formed a mountain range. There would be several trillions of coins here. Or maybe more.

In addition, there were masterfully made works of art buried in the mountain of gold.

A quick glance revealed a golden mug, a scepter encrusted with all manner of gemstones, a crystal pitcher, an animal pelt which emitted a platinum radiance, an exquisitely woven tapestry made with thread-of-gold, a pearl-colored ocarina, a fan made of rainbow-colored feathers, a crystal jug, an extremely elaborate ring that released a pale light, and a mask made of an animal hide that had black and white jewels embedded inside.

Needless to say, they were but the tip of the iceberg.

There were hundreds, no thousands more of such articles buried within that gigantic heap of riches.

It was a good thing that the easily damaged artwork had protection magic cast on it. While Yuri did think that it would be better to hang it somewhere else, when she looked around her, she found the reason why that was impossible.

It was that the surrounding walls were full of treasure equal to or more valuable than those.

There were shelves everywhere and the treasures inside were more eye-catching than the mountains of gold.

There was a wand socketed with bloodstones, a pair of adamantine gauntlets inlaid with garnets, a small silver ring adorned with black diamonds, an obsidian statuette carved in the shape of a dog, a purple amethyst dagger, a miniature altar with countless small white pearls embedded all over it, a peony made from some glass-like material which scattered light in all the colors of the rainbow, a rose blossom which had been masterfully carved from a star ruby, a tapestry which depicted a soaring black dragon, a crown of platinum which held an enormous diamond, golden censers that were encrusted in gemstones, a mated pair of a male and female lion statuettes, carved from ruby and sapphire respectively, cufflinks which looked like flames and which had fire opals set into them, an intricately-carved cigar case made of rosewood, a jacket made of some golden beast's pelt, a dozen plates made of mithril, anklets decorated with gemstones of four colors, a grimoire whose cover was made of adamantite, a human-sized statue of a woman which had been carved from gold, a belt with imperial topazes sewn into its material, a chess set whose pieces were all topped in different gemstones, a statuette of a fairy carved from a single piece of emerald, a black cloak that was decorated with countless small gemstones, a drinking horn made from a unicorn's horn, a golden dais that held a crystal ball, and so on.

This was but a fraction of the wonders therein.

Others included a gilded statue using plenty of emeralds, red crystals that were the size of a man, a gigantic platinum statue of a warrior, a pillar covered in mysterious characters, as well as a gigantic sapphire which one would need both arms to fully embrace.

Yuri was surprised by the treasure when a calm voice reached her ears.

"Let's go."

"Yes."

"....."

Yuri nodded her head and expressed her agreement.

Ainz paid no attention to the mountain of treasure, and activated a mass fly spell, causing the three of them to float upwards.

When they flew upwards, they could see that the air was tinted a slight purple. Yuri thought that there was something reflecting purple light but could not find anything.

While she looked around, she was spoken to in a quiet voice.

“...Yuri-nee. Powerful magic toxin in the air.”

“Eh?”

“Nn?”

“...Blood of Jormungandr?”

Yuri's gaze fell on another maid who was floating due to Ainz's magic.

The other maid was CZ2128 Delta. AKA Shizu, and she did not speak much at all.

Yuri's questioning gaze was met with a freezing stare. The source were the black eyes. There was no enmity in those eyes. To be more accurate, there were no emotions in those eyes. Shizu's face was extremely prim and proper, but it could also be described as an emotionless mask.

Automatons like Shizu could not express emotions.

Shizu had a Japanese face, as if she were a Yamato Nadeshiko that had a high class lineage and would be called a princess. Her beautiful hair was pulled upwards and then dropped, and was in the shape known as a ponytail.

The maid uniform she was wearing was the same combat maid outfit as Yuri.

—She wore black arm guards with golden hems and purple runes that went up to her elbows and seemed to be a mixture of gauntlets, couters, vambraces and rerebraces. Her leg armour which seemed to be a mixture of high heels, sollerets, grieves and poleyns were made in the same manner as her arm guards.

Even the skirt part of the maid outfit had a magic black metal board over it, increasing its defensive properties. The board was an alloy of three metals: Magically enhanced steel, adamask metal comprised of mithril and beliat and a magic metal known as Galvoln. Her chest piece used the same metal.

Of course, the imbued magic was first class. It used data crystals that were rare even amongst the crystals that only level 90 and above Yggdrasil players could acquire.

Considering its defensive properties, rather than battlemaid clothes, they were more like full platemail.

The choker that sparkled of gems, the rings beneath her grieves, the ribbon holding her ponytail, and her underwear were all first class magic items.

Hanging at her waist like a sword was a strange gun that seemed to be a rounded white Styer AUG with two magazines. On another note, this gun, automatons and Shizu's class of gunner were all added in the giant update of [Fall of Valkyria].

Shizu spoke the name of the most potent of poisons.

"Mm, that's correct. I didn't tell you, but the air in the Treasury is toxic. Anyone without poison immunity or items granting it will die within three steps."

"Would that be why you chose me— us to accompany you?"

The undead dullahan Yuri and the automaton Shizu both had immunity to poisons.

Ainz smiled and nodded his head in agreement. He then continued to speak.

"However, I brought Shizu for more than just that; she is also here for verification."

Ainz and his entourage crossed the mountain range of gold with the flightspell, and then they came to the door on the other side. No, was it right to call it a door? It was more of a bottomless black shadow in the shape of a door, affixed to a wall.

"This is the armory, so what is the password..."

"Ainz-sama, if there is an armory, does this mean that there are other treasures stored in other locations?"

"Ah, we do. I had a friend who was really into organisation. Everything should be categorised according to use. They should be split into defensive items,

staves, wearables, others and crafting materials. Ah, and we have a room for data crystals as well.”

In the direction Ainz pointed, Yuri saw that there were similar black things stuck to the walls.

“However, they’re all located in the same place inside, and it doesn’t really matter which direction you enter from.”

Ainz simply said that, and faced the door of darkness.

This was a door which required a certain password to open. Perhaps one could force it open with magic or rogue skills, but Ainz did not know spells like that, not did he have such skills. Thus, he had to speak the password—

“I forgot.”

That was only to be expected. There were so many such gimmicks in Nazarick that he would probably only be able to remember a password if it was one he used frequently. However, given that he did not come to the Treasury often, he did not remember the password to this door.

Since he could not remember the password, Ainz spoke a master password:

“[Ainz Ooal Gown]”

In response, the jet-black door displayed a series of words:

“Ascendit a terra in coelum, iterumque descendit in terram, et recipit vim superiorum et inferiorum.”

(Skythwood Note: This is an excerpt from the Emerald Tablet, AKA the Tabula Smaragdina.)

“...Tabula-san really was a perfectionist.”

Ainz recalled the serious person who designed the gimmick of [Ainz Ooal Gown].

He had a hand in designing about forty percent of the smaller mechanisms throughout the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. His abnormally intricate designs consumed much of Nazarick’s free data capacity, which caused the other members to complain about being unable to indulge themselves. Thus, he

took responsibility for his actions and paid for many cash items to expand said data capacity.

Ainz studied the words which appeared. This must be a hint for the password, but what could it mean?

He racked his brains, taking his time to plumb the depths of his mind for the answer.

Soon, Ainz finally found the password, which slumbered within his memories.

“It should be —

By this means you shall acquire the glory of the whole world, / And so you shall drive away all shadows and blindness

— am I correct?”

As Ainz said this, he looked to Shizu with questioning eyes. Shizu nodded in response to him.

She had been made by one of his friends who had worked on different mechanisms from Tabula Smaragdina. Shizu’s backstory had been written so that she would be familiar with the bypassing of Nazarick’s mechanisms. This was why she could easily solve that password hint. However, Ainz had not asked her for help because he wanted to indulge the selfish desire to open the door through his own efforts.

As though in response to Ainz’s wishes, the shadow door collapsed into a single point. Soon, the shadow was gone, leaving a fist-sized sphere of blackness floating in the air.

Now that the shadow had vanished, one could see into the tunnel that had been left behind. This was an orderly place, completely unlike the previous area.

The best way to describe it would be something like a display from a museum.

The dimly-lit room was very long and stretched ever inward. The ceiling was about five meters above the ground, a height which was clearly not designed

with humans in mind, while it was about ten meters from one wall to the other.

The ground was made of tightly-fit, shiny black stone blocks, and it looked like a single gigantic stone slab. The dim light from the ceiling reflected off of it, causing one to truly feel the silence and solemnity of the place.

Neat rows of countless weapons were arrayed on the walls to Ainz's left and right, making an impressive display.

"I'm going in."

Ainz entered the Armory without waiting for his two followers to respond.

It was truly an armoury.

—Broadswords, greatswords, estocs, flamberges, scimitars, patas, shotels, kukris, claymores, short swords, sword breakers, etc, etc.

Of course, swords were not the only weapons here.

There were one-handed axes, two-handed axes, one-handed bludgeons, javelins, bows, crossbows, etc, etc.

Just the types alone were almost uncountable.

In addition, there were many unrealistic weapons here that stretched the definition of actually being called weapons. Those were the kind that could not possibly be sheathed, or which were more decorative than useful, and so on. No, these weapons were in the majority.

Almost none of them were made of anything as ordinary as mere steel.

There was a sword with a blade of blue crystal, a pure-white sword with gold inlays and engravings, a black sword with purple runes along its body, and even a bow that seemed to have been strung with pure light. There were countless of them.

Then there were other weapons that looked dangerous even at a glance.

There was a two-handed axe whose blade constantly dripped fresh blood. Tormented faces appeared and vanished on the black metal of a gigantic mace. There was a lance that resembled human hands clasping each other. And then there were many more weapons like these, in amounts which defied easy

counting.

One could guess that most of them were magic weapons, but the exact effect each of them had was a mystery.

One might be able to guess at the purpose of a sword whose blade flickered like a flame, but it was impossible to know the abilities of a sword whose blade looked like a whip and which wriggled like a centipede.

The sound of Ainz's departing footsteps brought her back to reality and Yuri hurried towards him.

Slightly behind Yuri was, Shizu. She was looking at the surroundings while walking. Her noh mask-like face was a slight red.

Before long in the silence— about two hundred meters and thousands of weapons later — they reached their destination, which was a rectangular room. There was nothing inside. There were other passages visible to the left and right which looked similar to the one through which Ainz and company had entered.

The atmosphere of that way was also dramatically different.

If the previous room had been like a museum, then the next one was like a tomb. A large and dark space that the light could not reach spread out before them. The height of the room was about the same as the previous one, but the dim interior extended further in. It was hard to tell due to the angles, but it looked like there was a large niche set into the wall, with something placed within it.

What was this place?

Yuri narrowed her eyes in wonder, and Ainz spoke with good timing.

“Within lies the Mausoleum.”

Looking at the puzzled Yuri and the still expressionless Shizu, Ainz looked around.

“He should be around here....”

Who?

When Yuri made a puzzled face— There was no way that it had responded to

Ainz's voice, but from a different path, there was a figure that showed itself to them.

That being had a bizarre appearance.

While it had a man's body, its head was that of a distorted squid. The right side of its head was half-covered in a twisted, tattooed letters, which resembled the ones that had floated up on the door just now.

Its skin was like that of a corpse, with purple blotches amidst a ghastly white color, and it was covered in some sort of sticky slime that gave off a bizarre sheen. Webs of skin grew between the long digits of its four-fingered hands.

It was the very picture of a heteromorphic character. The six twitching tentacles which sprouted from its mouth dangled down to its thighs, and it turned its cloudy blue pupil-less eyes to survey the group.

Its body was covered in a shiny, form-fitting black leather outfit studded with silver jewelry. Several belts wrapped around it. Its black cape was closed in front of it, as if to conceal its body.

Yuri knew that person.

A shout of shock shot out of her mouth.

"Tabula Smaragdina-sama!"

This was one of the Forty One Supreme Beings. As a magic caster, he was superior to Ainz in terms of attack power.

".....No."

Shizu drew her gun and braced its stock against her shoulder, levelling her muzzle at the person before her.

This was an explosive statement, rebellion of one's creator. In addition, pointing a weapon at them was a great sin. If Yuri kept silent about it, she would be considered an accomplice. But—

"Understood. I'll believe Shizu."

Yuri whispered, clenched her fists in front of her chest, and punched her gauntlets together, which made a sound like a ringing gong.

Yuri's gauntlets were thicker compared to Shizu's. Shizu used a gun and thus her finger sections were thinner, and Yuri used her gauntlets as weapons.

Then, Yuri slid in front of Ainz and Shizu. Ainz was a magic caster while Shizu was a gunner, neither of whom did well in close combat. Then it was Yuri's role to act as their shield and engage in close combat.

"Who are you!"

The mysterious being who looked like Tabula Smaragdina merely inclined its head at Yuri's question, but did not make any reply. The thin smile that barely existed made Yuri unhappy.

However, Ainz revealed his true form.

"—Pandora's Actor. Return to normal."

Hearing Ainz's unhappy voice, the figure of Tabula Smaragdina melted. The way it changed reminded Yuri and Shizu of a certain person. Both of them thought of their colleague Narberal Gamma.

A male's deep and calm voice could be heard.

"It has been a long time, Momonga-sama."

Another heteromorphic being stood where the impostor Tabula Smaragdina had been

His shape was something else entirely.

His clothes were tidy. A two button dark suit hugged his thin body. He had a single cuffed plain white shirt, a silver grey striped necktie and black leather shoes. He also had white gloves that covered his strangely long four fingers.

Its face was flat, with no nose or other facial features. Its mouth and eyes were replaced by three empty holes. There were no eyeballs, teeth, or a tongue; just three black holes which looked like they had been drawn on by a child with a black marker.

The pink, egg-like head was smooth and shiny, without a single hair to mar its surface.

His appearance was strange, but there was something unfitting on his face.

They were glasses. Although he had no nose nor ears, it was somehow secured to his face.

This strange character— and Narberal— were both Doppelgangers.

His name was Pandora's Actor, and he was a level one hundred NPC personally designed by Ainz and placed in charge of the Treasury. His talents lay in disguise, and he could copy forty five separate forms and even their abilities — though only at seventy five percent of the original's potency.

"...You seem quite lively."

"Yes. I am quite healthy. And may I please ask for what reason have you come here Momonga-sama? Even bringing the maid ladies over here."

Pandora's Actor spoke in a much more approachable manner than Narberal. Being called ladies, the the pride of being a battlemaid flared up in Yuri's heart, but she could not show that to someone close to Ainz.

Yuri tried her best to try to find out just what he was from their conversation.

Shizu's noh mask-like face had small signs of anger on it due to him impersonating her creator. To those who knew her, her anger was at its peak. But if one considered that it was a similar Supreme Being who gave that ability to Pandora's Actor, they could not be angry even if they wanted to.

Ignoring the feelings of Yuri and Shizu, Ainz continued his conversation with Pandora's Actor.

"I was thinking of using some magic items for activation experiments."

"Hou. Has the time come to finally use those?"

Pandora's Actor turned to the Mausoleum. Nonchalantly pushed up his glasses with his finger. It was ridiculous to think that it was secured even without a nose or ears that it could even droop.

"...We will not use any World Items, and we will not touch my friends' equipment. We shall leave those alone."

"Then at most it would be the Artifacts I presume. That is a pity. I personally wanted to see the power of World Items which are said to be able to tear apart

worlds. No, if anything goes then I would like to see Touch Me-sama's weapon, the World Champion of Alfheim. Ah, then the Cup of Hygieia...."

As Pandora's Actor mumbled, he placed his finger on the bridge of his glasses and smiled deviously. The way that the lenses caught light and glinted was quite unnerving.

Pandora's Actor had a setting of being a Magic Item Fetch, and that could sustain him. Having that be this disgusting was surprising.

Ainz recalled the settings he made, and his body twitched slightly in revulsion. Honestly when they were making everyone, they had gone too far. However, examining it calmly, it was like having the spellbook that one wrote as a kid being read out.

This was his black history.

If there were other guild members currently in Nazarick, they would be collapsing on the floor and laughing. Ainz felt that. He would not say who but....

"Then I'll just take them."

"I have to reason to refuse. Everything here belongs to Momonga-sama and the other Supreme Beings after all."

His actions and tone suggested that he were in a play, and he pointed at the surroundings.

"Although, it is with a heavy heart that I confess that I was hoping you intended to make use of my abilities, Momonga-sama."

Ainz stopped moving, and gave the heteromorph who was pushing up his glasses an evaluating gaze.

At one point Ainz had indeed intended to make use of him. Pandora's Actor possessed wit and cunning that ranked among the pinnacle of Nazarick's denizens. While he usually applied said intelligence toward strange purposes, it was very difficult to cast aside his wisdom during times of great need.

In addition, Pandora's Actor possessed very flexible abilities, to the point where he could replace all the other Guardians.

However, Ainz had not made him for combat or administrative duties, but to

preserve the forms of [Ainz Ooal Gown] and the memories of his comrades.

“...You are my final ace in the hole, so I do not intend to use you for petty tasks.”

“...I am truly grateful for that.” With a look on his face which suggested that he was hesitant to speak, Pandora’s Actor once more took a deep bow.

“Understood. Then, I shall continue to manage the Treasury from now on.”

“Mm, make me proud. Also, from now onwards, call me Ainz, Ainz Ooal Gown.”

“Ohhhh! I hear and obey, my creator, Ainz-sama!”

With an attitude of ending the conversation, Ainz turned away but heard Pandora’s Actor’s voice.

“However, Ainz-sama. If you are performing experiments with magic items, would it not be best to use my abilities?”

“.....”

“In addition, if I take on your figure, I can act without sleep. This will lead to a reduction in the time needed.... How about it?”

Pandora’s Actor placed a hand on his chest, as if to recommend himself. Shizu who was standing behind him made a Uwaa~ which was heard by Ainz.

It’s.... A bit of an overreaction isn’t it. It was a bit over the top.

Every nook and cranny of his actions and posture screamed, I am cool.

Perhaps such actions would fit him if he was a handsome man, but instead he was an egghead, which made them terribly unfitting. It even made Ainz feel uneasy when he saw him.

Ainz silently looked at Pandora’s Actor for a short time. He had decided on something. Ainz pulled out a ring from his pocket and threw it at Pandora’s Actor. The ring traced an arc through the air, landing neatly in the hand of Pandora’s Actor.

“This... is the Ring of Ainz Ooal Gown, and it possesses the ability to...”

Ainz held up a hand, as though to tell Pandora’s Actor not to go on.

Although he seemed quite disappointed, Ainz decided to pay him no heed.

“It’s a spare. I shall inform Cocytus and his subordinates about you within a few days. Afterwards, come.”

“Understood.”

Pandora’s Actor made a such a straight bow that even his fingers had stiffened. It was extremely polite, or in other words, it could be taken as an act. Ainz looked at Pandora’s Actor’s egghead and nodded.

He was not a bad person. His abilities and personality were not bad. However—

“Uwah....”

Why did I design him with such a personality? I used to think this sort of thing was so cool.

If Ainz could have blushed, his face would be bright red.

Chapter 79: Gaiden - Nazarick's [Guardian Aura-chan]

The 6th Floor of Nazarick, the floor that Aura ruled, boasted of the widest area in Nazarick.

It was a square four kilometres wide, and the centre held a large lake. Most of the area was not a forest but a jungle, and plains only took up a twentieth of the area.

Standing alone in the centre was a Coliseum, and next to that was building that held the steps to the 7th Floor.

If one looked for any other man-made constructions, it would be the loghouse that Aura had built for holding prisoners.

Then where did the ruler Aura sleep?

In the jungle?

In the Coliseum?

In the building that was the entrance to the 7th Floor?

All were wrong.

Inside the jungle was an area that could be called Aura's residence.

There was an wide area that dominated the primeval forest. In that was a large eye catching tree. It was over forty metres as if it were piercing the skies. The trunk, even with its height, was far too thick and disproportionate.

Inside that strangely large tree. That was where Aura stayed.

The inside of the hollowed out tree had two underground floors and eight above— For a total of ten. If one stepped in, they would be greeted by a simplicity like in the loghouse, but a warm scene spread out before them.

In the past, when Aura's creator Bukubuku Chagama was around, there were several guests who visited. They were the female members of [Ainz Ooal

Gown] such as Yamaiko and Ankoro Mocchi Mochi. Along with the subordinates they created.

Seeing them have their warm conversations was a scene that Aura was used to. Aura often sat on Bukubuku Chagama's lap.

However, currently.

Aura basically stayed here alone. Most of Aura's immediate subordinates were monster-types, and none of them were humanoid or could help her with the house.

Aura had never thought of such a life as lonely. Appearance-wise Aura was certainly a child. However, as a Guardian, there was no reason to feel lonely.

The reason for that was that while the gods that created her existed, there was no one like her parents. There was no reason for her to feel that her life was lonely.

However she thought that many aspects of her daily life was a chore. Of course, this was the place that was given to her by the Supreme Beings and thus she would not complain. However Aura loved the outside and thus cleaning was mentally tiring.

That was the reason for a dark part of the room to be a bit messy.

Aura's day to day life was without a schedule. She had plenty of chances for sleep and free time, but would often be active without sleep. She was not someone like Demiurge or Shalltear who did not need sleep, but she could act without sleep by using fatigue relieving magic. She also had items that eradicated those needs.

Thus her true personality was that she indulged in sleep, ignoring all housework, being quite slack.

However, it was true that she had received an item from Ainz that was working to remove that laziness.

Aura's room had less furniture than one expected. It would not be an overstatement to say that it was empty. The thin carpet on the floor was a plain brown. This room would cause one to question whether or not its occupant was

a girl.

However, one could at least tell that this was a girl's room.

This was due to the items placed around the room.

They were the large plushies in the room. There were two or three bears, rabbits, deers bathing in the sunlight.... Some were even chibi versions. Due to those, people that would decide that this was not a girl's room were few.

....Well it was true that apart from the plushies there was almost nothing else that could be used to tell that this was a girl's room.

In that room was a high hanging hammock, and Aura was sleeping inside with a defenseless face. She made the occasional happy face that made one wonder what sort of dreams she was having. It was a really childish face.

She was wearing a pair of pink and white patterned cotton pajamas, and a pink towelette was lightly covering her body.

One wondered until when this gentle time would continue, but it was true that there was something made to break this atmosphere.

[— It's Eight O'Clock.]

A female's voice that was not Aura's rang out in the room.

Her long black ears twitched and Aura opened her eyes wide. She then adjusted the band wrapped around her wrist. Then from on top of the hammock, Aura sluggishly gazed at the ceiling.

"Uuuu."

Yawning, Aura looked at the ceiling for a bit and then closed her eyes again.

This was the moment that her desire for sleep defeated her will to wake up. And Aura then again made her angel-like smile.— However there was something that had to break that atmosphere.

The door was knocked on with a 'kon kon'.

Aura's eyes opened again as she yawned.

"Aura-sama, it is time."

The voice from behind the door was a female's. Aura frowned unhappily.

"Uuu"

"May I enter the room?"

"Uu, nope."

Aura replied half-heartedly and removed the towelette covering her body.

"Woah."

She tumbled from the hammock. Of course, she moved her body in midair and landed on her feet. Aura scratched her head with her messy hair and wore her slippers. With a 'peta peta', she walked towards the bear doll next to the wall and petted it.

The bear plushie was sitting in a manner that caused its short legs to be spread out, and shook slightly due to the hand pressing on it.

Its large chibi head had round black eyes and a mouth that was sewn into a smile. It had short and misfitting claws that sparkled in the light. As it moved beneath her hand, it seemed to be bowing to her.

Yamaiko's Forest Friends. The door next to those plushies was opened by Aura.

Standing there was a female elf in maid clothes.

Her ears were originally cut off as proof of slavery but they were completely healed now.

Aura could only use simple healing magic and thus could not heal her, so she asked Pestonya to use powerful healing magic.

The exuberated figure of the elf at that time caused Aura to be slightly taken aback. How happy could a person be by having her ears healed?

The maids clothes she wore were given by the Head Maid Pestonya and was the same as the clothes the regular maids wore. It was made of first-class cloth, but the defense ability compared to Sebas' battlemails was lacking. It was at best enchanted to be around mithril full plate mail.

"Good morning, Aura-sama."

“Aww, good morning.”

While replying to the bowing elf with a yawn, Aura walked past her. The elf followed.

“Now, I’m just changing my clothes so you don’t have to accompany me.”

“No, I shall help.”

“...I’m not a child you know?”

Aura frowned in dissatisfaction. This was a conversation she had many times. Even Aura would have her mood dampened.

She did not know why but the elves were looking after her to a strange extent. To the point that she felt that they were going too far.

Whether she was brushing her teeth or eating her food, they would always try to help her. And they would always grumble when she did not enter the bath for a while. If she did they would offer to wash all the way to her ears and would try to enter with her.

It was a bit annoying.

That was Aura’s evaluation of the elves. However she recognised that this was an expression of loyalty— No matter how excessive, and thus did not kill them.

However where did this strange loyalty come from? Aura did not understand.

This elf was one of the survivors from the invasion a few days ago. Ainz did not mind if they lived or died and left all of them to their nearest kin— The dark elf Aura.

Aura did not mind if they were killed or not, and there were no elves in Nazarick. And there was another reason why they were saved. They had believed that the elves would offer their loyalty due to their gratitude, but it seemed that it was different.

While tilting her head, she had no intention to ask further. She thought it was troublesome.

“However the coordination of western clothes....”

“I’ll wear what I always wear.”

“However....”

“N? What? Are you looking down on.... The clothes that Bukubuku Chagama-sama selected?”

Without moving her head, Aura gazed up at the elf. The fear in the elf’s expression became stronger. If nothing else was said, then Aura would win. However the elf had a painful counter.

“However, was it not Bukubuku Chagama-sama who placed other clothes in this room?”

“Guu!”

“Is it fine to not wear other clothes?”

Aura’s expression visibly hardened.

What the elf was speaking of was the countless number of clothes in the dresser. Aura basically preferred battle ready clothes and weapons. She did not like dresses like Shalltear did.

However that dresser was filled with extravagant dresses and feminine clothes. This was not collected by Aura but instead by Bukubuku Chagama, and was the remnants of the time that she used Aura as a dress-up doll. Some were even for plushies.

If one thought about wearing clothes like that, it was certainly something Aura should do.

Aura hesitated, and spoke depressingly.

“I have a lot of things to do so not today.... But other times.... I’ll wear them.”

“Yes. Understood. Now about today’s breakfast.”

“—It’s fine, food. If I have fruits I can be full.”

“That must not be done, Aura-sama. If you do not eat well you will not grow.”

“Growth eh....”

Aura's gaze fell on the elf's chest.

"I feel like I won't...."

"Elves do not gain much meat after all.... However species like wild elves are different, and so are dark elves as well right?"

"...Do I have a future?"

"Probably."

Aura thought about various things, and lastly about Shalltear.

An evil smile appeared on Aura's face.

"...Well then it can't be helped. Prepare breakfast. I'll come after I change."



After breakfast, Aura went outside while holding her slightly bulging stomach. Aura was a light eater and there was an enormous amount of food. It was too the point that one wondered where it all came from. The answer was Pestonya.

The weather today was clear, with a slight wind from the southeast.

As if invited by the weather, Aura's sleepiness returned, but she suppressed it.

"Pu."

Aura made a painful sigh as she had to move. She was currently in an open space in front of the giant tree. Outside of the open space was the overwhelming figure of the jungle.

Aura looked around. As if this were a signal, a black giant beast slowly appeared from behind the tree.

It looked like a black wolf but its tail was that of a snake. Its body length was about 20 metres. Its collar caught the sunlight and sparkled.

Fenrir. The strongest and highest level beast amongst Aura's subordinates. It was based off of the Fenrir of Norse mythology, and had special abilities for specialise in close combat, and had quite the firepower.

That majestic Fenrir had on the expression of a puppy and danced towards Aura.

Its giant face moved close to Aura. While its giant body had a massive amount of power, Aura did not move. This was not because Fenrir was controlling his power, but that Aura's physical ability was higher.

"I said I'm ticklish."

Rather than petting she was hitting him, Aura rubbed Fenrir's large head. Fenrir growled in pleasantness. Aura felt like she was handling a large child, recalled something and stopped her hand.

"Wait for a bit, I have to feed that child."

Fenrir made an astonished expression. He cried. It was like a puppy that wanted to be spoiled, and like a child sulking. However Aura showed no sign of engaging with him, causing him to draw away and fall to the ground like a puppy.

Aura made a wry smile, and called for the animal that she had to feed.

"Rororo! Come here!"

As if drawn by her voice, a snake appeared from the trees. When it saw Aura it was extremely happy, but stopped its movements halfway. It then moved back slowly.

"?"

Aura looked strangely at Rororo. She wondered if anything happened.

"What's wrong?"

She spoke again. While hiding behind a tree, Rororo stared at Aura. No, it was probably not looking at Aura. Noticing that, Aura turned back to Fenrir behind her.

Fenrir was looking back with a blank stare. It seemed to have no interest whatsoever. However there was no way that Aura with her supreme vision would let that slip by.

"Fenrir! You can't look at Rororo like that!"

Fenrir jumped in surprise after hearing Aura's shout. It then growled like a puppy. Yes, as if it were a puppy whose master saw it sending a hostile gaze to Rororo.

"Come here, Rororo."

Once again, Rororo showed itself while quivering in fear.

Aura suddenly took out a giant fish out of mid air. However that fish was far too large. Rather than an animal, it was like a giant fish from out of a manga.

She then moved it towards the approaching Rororo.

Rororo began to eat that fish— A strange fish without bones or innards— with his four heads. Aura smiled happily but Fenrir looked dissatisfied.

Aura's direct subordinates like Fenrir all had items that prevented them from needing to eat food, and thus did not have to be provided food. However Rororo had no such equipment and thus it needed sustenance. Even though Aura liked to slack, she was not so lazy that she would forget to feed the animals that she demanded to be brought over.

This strange fish did not swim in the water. Using one gold coin, some would be created from the pot.

In Yggdrasil, there was the idea of self-sufficiency. Monsters and NPCs that were not could not be placed. However, there was a method to ignore that. This was the pot that Aura bought fish from— The Pot of Daguza.

If one used it for long term, they would lose money, but they could deploy monsters that were not self-sufficient.

On the other hand, the majority of monsters in Nazarick were undead that needed no food, and thus the situation could be maintained indefinitely. There was another reason apart from that though.

Thus currently, for the new recruits— Like the lizardmen or elves and those who would arrive in the future— they had to search for a method to give them food.

Aura rubbed one of Rororo's eating head. Fenrir frantically suppressed its low growl. In that strange scene, Aura began to talk excitedly with Rororo.

“Rororo. Today your owner will be coming here.”

Did it understand her words? One of Rororo’s heads stopped eating and stretched out towards Aura. If it tightly wound around her, the contents of her stomach would be in trouble, but there was no problem with touching her. Aura smiled.

“I said we can’t play.... It’s cold. Rororo. This smoothness.... Something about it.... A Tsuveck type might be good....”

While Fenrir waved its tail to appeal to Aura, she stroked Rororo’s long neck.

“Now, you have to eat. We can play afterwards.”

“Ooon!”

In front of Rororo and Aura, Fenrir suddenly ran off and disappeared into the trees.

“Ah, is he angry? But he’s mean to Rororo so it can’t be helped.”

Aura made a devilish smile and looked at the back of Fenrir.



The open space in front of the tree that Aura lived in, had the figures of several people sitting within and monsters sitting behind them. However the wideness of the space made them seem extremely small.

Ten were lizardmen. There was Brain the vampire swordsman, three elves in maids clothes and Pinison and several other dryads. And three treants with wood for limbs.

In front of that, Aura stood behind the desk like a teacher, and spoke with pride.

“Now, we am thinking of explaining the greatness of Nazarick to you.”

Everyone applauded at once.

The timing of it was without flaw, as if well practised. Aura nodded once at the applause, and raised her hand, stopping the applause.

“First I shall begin with how Nazarick was founded.”

After the silence returned, Aura spoke again.

“Umm a long long time ago. There were 41 people who were equal to gods— They were the 41 Supreme Beings. Remember this. They appeared.”

“Nazarick was originally not such a deep dungeon like this. It was created by them who had great power. It’s natural. They created it to make it such a suitable place. Thus the current Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick with ten floors was born.”

“Next the Supreme Beings created those that would reside there. Even though they had created such a large place, it was filled with mere low class undead, and thus they decided to created beings that would rule in their place. Of course, the Supreme Beings could easily do it themselves you know? But they cannot be doing such menial tasks. They had more important things to do.”

“And thus—” Aura cut off her words here. She then puffed up her chest with pride. “We, the Guardians were born.”

She looked at her audience.

Silence returned and no one tried to speak. Aura raised an eyebrow. It was true that they had to be serious. While she was talking about the most important subject, if they took a lackadaisical attitude, Aura would not hesitate to take care of them.

However, this silence was not what Aura was hoping for.

“We the Guardians were thus born.”

Then once again, she puffed up her chest.

The lizardmen, elves and Brain faced at each other. They were trying to understand what Aura was waiting for.

“Oohh....”

“Amazing....”

Several people growled out in amazement and several others spoke words of praise.

“Hohoo.” Aura’s excitement could easily be seen in her eyes. “Yes. The Guardians are myself, Demiurge, Cocytus, and.... Shalltear. Well and one more? It exists, but it is not a Guardian created by the Supreme Beings so we’ll exclude it for now.”

“Now, the Supreme Beings who created the Guardians decided to create those who would work for them. There is no way that simple subordinates or monsters could possibly help the Supreme Beings. Thus those that could serve the Supreme Beings were chosen.”

“Thus Sebas and Pestonya were born, along with the Head Librarian, Interrogation Officer, Musician, Blacksmith, and Administrator, completing Nazarick.”

Aura stopped here. This was as the part from here on out was the most important.

Feeling parched, she took a swig of the water placed on the desk.

“Now after creating Nazarick, the Supreme Beings often went on journeys. Every time they returned, they filled the treasury with valuables. You might be thinking, why did they do that, but the things the Supreme Beings seek are impossible to understand by normal people. Those were World Items. The Supreme Beings were searching for such powerful items of that name.... That even they could not easily create.”

“However, there were fools who dare to envy the Supreme Beings.”

Aura’s voice deepened slightly.

“There were countless times people tried to invade Nazarick. They often aimed for the Treasury, but they had never reached there.... Until that day.”

Aura made a childlike face full of anger and disgust. This change shocked everyone.

Even if Aura changed her expressions, she would never make a face full of anger. The ones who knew this best were the elves. Thus her making such a face was an abnormal situation. This caused them to be scared.

“Those that envied the Supreme Beings, those that wielded equal power to

them, 1500 of them joined forces and attacked Nazarick.”

“It was a fierce battle.... Shalltear was torn apart, Cocytus was sliced to pieces, and I myself....”

Silence fell.

However, despite the silence, the air was shaking. This was due to the shock that the lizardmen and Brain, who knew the strength of the Guardians, felt.

Aura, Shalltear, Cocytus, Demiurge.

While weaker than Ainz, the strength of the four Guardians were outside of common sense. While Aura seemed to be a cute young girl, a wave of her hand can easily kill Brain and destroy several lizardman villages. They understood this at a basic level.

An existence that could defeat a Guardian. How could 1500 such people exist?

They could not keep up with the destruction of the power balance in their heads.

Ignoring the confusion of several people, no she did not even think of it, Aura spoke again.

“Demiurge was of course destroyed.... However.” Aura smiled. However, it was a cruel smile that did not suit Aura. “The 8th Floor. An unknown floor that even we Guardians do not know. There, all 41 of the Supreme Beings waited there for their challengers.”

“1000 or 1200 beings reached there, but they were all torn apart at the hands of the Supreme Beings.”

Aura again puffed up her chest.

“After saying that we fought well, the Guardians were revived and Nazarick returned to being a Supreme ground. This is the history of Nazarick where you now work.”

Aura finished talking and silence fell. Would the lecture end here or continue? There was a strange atmosphere. Suddenly, someone clapped and pierced through the silence. All those present faced that person and they all

gasped in shock.

“Amazing....”

A person who would clap while saying that. When was such a person here? That person was one of the Guardians, and was the supreme commander in Nazarick, Demiurge.

Demiurge’s eyes were filled with unknown tears and they spread to his cheeks.

Next to him was the platinum sparkling Cocytus. And Shalltear who was wearing a black dress.

Cocytus shook his head in deep emotion. Shalltear wiped her eyes with her handkerchief.

“Amazing.... Truly amazing....”

They clapped in unison. A fear like an animal being chased was also included in their action.

The lizardmen and Brain had fear on their faces, the elves panicked, and the treants and the dryads did not fully understand the situation, but they all clapped together.

“Sorry, Aura. Can I handle the rest?”

“N? Sure. My part is over.”

Demiurge did not wipe away the tears on his face and stood next to Aura. He then raised his hand. All applause stopped.

“Everyone, I believe that you understand just how amazing Ainz Ooal Gown is.”

It was difficult to understand his weeping voice, but all those excluding the Guardians did their best to listen. If they let a single word slip through, it might be bad for them. Thus they were uneasy.

“Now. It is extremely fortunate to yourselves that you belong to such an amazing place. So show the gratitude of receiving such fortune by offering everything to Nazarick.” Demiurge looked around the room and continued.

“Any questions?”

The students looked at each other, and as if representing the lizardmen, Zaryusu raised his hand.

“Yes, Zaryusu.”

Aura pointed to him like a teacher.

“Yes.” Zaryusu stood up. He then spoke. “There are 41 Supreme Beings, however I have yet to meet anyone but Ainz-sama, would it be possible to meet them?”

The Guardians paused for an instant and looked at each other. Sensing that strangeness, Zaryusu felt like he was in danger. However Aura began talking as if to remove that fear.

“Currently Ainz-sama is the only Supreme Being here in Nazarick. We do not know where or why the others have went. We believe that it is for a reason that even we Guardians fail to understand.”

“However the fact that Ainz-sama remained means that the others will definitely return. Ainz-sama aims to spread the name of this land to make it much easier for the others to find.”

“Now, anymore questions?”

Confirming that no one else raised their hands, Aura nodded.

“Okay. Then dismissed!”



After Aura told the story of Nazarick, the remaining Guardians stayed behind to grasp each other’s situation and sat at a table.

Four cups were placed on top of the round table. Steam rose from them and one could smell the scent of red tea. Of course even Shalltear had a cup. There was no meaning for her to drink anything but blood, and she did not like it, but the word accompaniment was in her vocabulary.

Demiurge raised the cup of red tea and narrowed his eyes in enjoyment of the smell.

“This is a nice smell. Matching this would be....”

Demiurge stopped talking. His handsome face had traces of remorse on it. Cocytus understood what Demiurge wanted to say and allowed him to do so.

“I do not mind Demiurge.”

“Apologies, Cocytus.”

The words that Demiurge were about to say would upset Cocytus. There was no need to hide his hobbies, but he did not intend to upset the other Guardians. Thus Demiurge apologised.

“Elves can surprisingly do it as well.”

“Hmm.... True.”

Cocytus drank the red tea from the cup by pouring it down his throat.

Aura tasted it, and was not satisfied with the taste. She dropped two sugar cubes from the pot into the cup.

“By the way Aura?”

While looking at Aura who was focusing on stirring her cup, Shalltear asked.

“What?”

“What is that?”

Aura looked in the direction Shalltear pointed at, and nodded. There was a doll placed in the corner of the room. It was a long eared human, probably an elf, with her sword drawn, riding a chibi lion. Of course, this was as large as a human.

“—Akemi-chan.”

Shalltear’s eyes widened in surprise at Aura’s response. It was natural. Those that could understand just from this were not normal people.

“Umm, it is the the image of Yamaiko-sama’s younger sister. It should be the strongest amongst Yamaiko’s Forest Friends?”

“She had a younger sister?!”

“Yup. Seems so. But she was an elf and could not be one of Ainz-sama’s

companions.”

That was one of the reasons that elf was saved. Because of the existence of Akemi-chan, she felt pity for her.

“It seems this is a sad story.”

“True. Because their figures were different, she could not become part of Nazarick— No Ainz Ooal Gown. A tragic story.

“Indeed.”

In contrast to the pondering Guardians, Aura recalled the period when Yamaiko was around and could not remember any sad atmosphere.

“Now.... I wonder what is in the 8th Floor.”

Shalltear changed the conversation as if to avoid any sad conversation. She did not expect to gain an answer. But—

“I know.”

“Eh? —Then tell me, Cocytus.”

Surprised, Shalltear pressed the conversation, but Cocytus thrust his hand out at Shalltear.

“However if Ainz-sama did not say, that is something that we are fine not knowing.”

“Muu.... But.... Guu.”

Shalltear had nothing to say since Ainz’s name had come up.

“Ainz-sama’s trump card is probably in there.”

“...It’s true that we lost in that battle....”

“Not just that. It is also probably to destroy us should we decide to become turncoats.”

All the Guardians excluding Demiurge all felt the air shake.

“What!”

“Us turning our backs on Ainz-sama, one of the Supreme Beings.”

“...Ainz-sama is an extremely intelligent person. I believe it is one of the reasons why he had me work with Sebas when we went out on the expedition.”

“What does that mean?”

“It’s simple. He was checking on myself and Sebas. What would we do out of his sight.”

Cocytus, Shalltear and Aura looked at each other. In response, Demiurge made a wry smile.

“...Could we please stop this. I am not thinking of betraying Ainz-sama or the Supreme Beings.”

“That is natural.”

“Of course. Could we betray the Supreme Beings who created us?”

“Of course. Betrayal is not even a joke.... However, the fact that Ainz-sama is thinking like this, he must have some proof right? Such as Demiurge or Sebas betraying him.”

An air of panic started to raise from the table.

To those who were created by [Ainz Ooal Gown], betrayal was impossible. All of them had believed in this.

It was natural. Would it be forgiven for them to spit upon the gods that created them. Their raison d’etre was to work for their Supreme Beings.

However they felt shock at their comrades who might plan to betray the Supreme Beings. This shock was not from their loyalty to Ainz being questioned, but was instead aimed at those who caused Ainz to think so, like Sebas and Demiurge.

It is your fault that our loyalty is being questioned

, or something along those lines.

“It is not clear why Ainz-sama thinks that way.... Cocytus. I shall go to the capital.”

“What? What do you mean?”

“To protect Ainz-sama.”

Silence fell upon them. They understood the meaning in Demiurge's words.

"Sebas is strong."

"If he dragonifies he is the strongest close combatant in Nazarick."

"Shouldn't we all go?"

Demiurge shook his head.

"If we do not all go, Ainz-sama will be at a loss."

"He is kind."

"Yup, right."

"True."

From the perspective of the Guardians, if something was suspicious then it should be destroyed.

It was difficult for them to accept the continued existence of a person whose loyalty to Ainz was in question. At the same time, they were touched by the kindness that Ainz did not immediately execute that person, causing them to raise cries of joy.

"Basically it is to confirm it?"

"True. But how...."

"Hmm.... A true fight with Sebas is enticing.... But it cannot be forgiven."

"Cocytus, it's different. Even though Ainz-sama is at a loss, we cannot simply decide this by ourselves."

"Ah, true. Apologies, everyone."

The Guardians quickly accepted Cocytus' apology.

"Demiurge, then, is there anything we can do?"

"True. If there is anything Aura and I can do, please tell us."

"No, nothing in particular. If Sebas actually betrayed us we might need all of the Guardians, but I believe this is all a misunderstanding."

"...It would be nice.... He is too kind. If that falls in a strange direction.... That

would not be impossible.”

Cocytus slowly stood up. There was nothing left in his cup.

“Where to?”

“I think it would be best to ready my weapons.”

“Understood. Preparation is important.”

While looking at the leaving Cocytus, Shalltear spoke to Demiurge.

“Take care. If Ainz-sama is harmed despite the Guardians being there, that will be the greatest sin.”

“Of course, I understand. Cocytus and I shall never let that happen.”

While enjoying the smell of the red tear, Demiurge narrowed his eyes. It was the face of someone not enjoying the tea, but instead thinking of something else.

Chapter 80: Gaiden - Do Your Best Enri-san! | Part 1

Enri wiped away the sweat on her brow with the only part of her hand that was not dirty, and collected the plucked herbs.

The feeling of her clothes that had absorbed the sweat of a whole day's worth of field work was quite disgusting.

Enri paused, leaned back and stretched.

A section of the field came into view.

It was filled with stalks of rill. Since the harvesting season began, the grains had slowly turned golden. Seeing the entire field become a golden colour was a great feeling, but it always caused a tinge of annoyance, since harvesting it would be extremely troublesome.

She had worked hard for it to get to this point.

Stretching allowed her tensed up body to relax, causing her body to become soft. It felt very cooling with the wind blowing.

The blowing wind brought the noise from the bustling village to Enri.

The sound of

things hitting one another, the shouts of people working together, and other sounds that were usually inaudible.

The village was currently in the midst of several projects.

The most prominent amongst them was the large wall they were building around the village. Along with watchtowers. Basically the village was turning into a fortress.

This was the plan that the goblin leader and goblin mage proposed.

In the current state, the village had no way of responding to attacks.

The village was built on a flat plain with an open area in the centre. There were no fences of any sort, allowing anyone to enter easily. While it was close

to the forest, no monsters had appeared nearby. However, after that tragedy occurred, no one had thought that this would be good.

However no one could answer the question of whether they would be safe even after building such fences.

Then the goblins appeared. The plan that the goblins proposed of turning the village into a fortress was immediately approved. They simply could not forget the nightmare.

They began to take apart several houses to make the village smaller. The village right now was too large and thus it would take a large wall to surround the village, and it would be difficult to build it with the current number of villagers. Thus they removed houses to shorten the circumference.

The main reason for this was that a large number of villagers were killed, and many houses were empty.

First they took apart the extra houses and used the extra wood to build the wall. Of course that was not enough, thus they looked to the forest for wood. There was the possibility of being attacked by monsters, but the patrols of the goblin troop easily solved that problem.

However, it would be a huge challenge to not only cut wood, but also dig holes for support and to transport the wood.

How would they do this?

The answer to this was a deal with the ruler of Nazarick, Ainz. It seemed that Ainz wanted to collect gold coins, and would thus provide labour for coins. Of course, this was something Enri also hoped for.

Despite being a simple village girl, Enri did not understand which such a powerful person such as Ainz would pay attention to her.

At best she would guess that when she and her sister were invited for a meal, she had left an excellent impression. However, she did not understand how Ainz felt like that despite the few conversations they had then.

Thus they had worked out the details with Ainz, but when he was asked why he wanted to collect coins—

“Having you own coins that are not used in the surrounding countries would only bring yourselves trouble.”

—That was his answer. It was to avoid drawing the attention of those who sought rare coins. It was an understandable answer. If that possibility existed then it would be best to let it go. And the only one to come up with that idea was Ainz.

Thus Ainz proposed to exchange coins for labour.

The labour that Ainz offered was three giant statues known as Stone Golems.

They were about three metres in height. They were humanoid, but just barely. Their arms were long, and their legs short. It was as if a child had tried to draw a gorilla.

They believed that they were lent strange dolls.

There were several villagers who raised complaints. They felt that they were given nothing for their coin. However most of the villagers believed that such a powerful magic caster would definitely have given them an equal exchange for their coins. Even the goblins were amazed at the golems that Ainz provided.

When the golems were activated, the villagers that complained turned red, and felt ashamed of their short-sightedness. In addition the opinion of Ainz the village savior went up.

The golems did not tire, and silently followed orders. In addition they had power that no human had. They lacked finesse and could not handle delicate work, but the amount of time they cut down was unbelievable.

Some of those that saw this, felt a strong hatred due to their jealousy.

Due to the golems' unceasing work, the construction of the wall continued at a fast pace. Work that would have taken several months were finished in several days. In addition they could construct a longer wall for a wider village.

Not only the wall, the watchtowers were being built quickly as well. The east and west watchtowers would be completed soon.

With the construction, the villager's vigilance towards the goblins nearly

disappeared. Especially when one of the reasons being that most of the villagers were killed by knights of their same species. Their lives were lost to the same species. In comparison the goblins, who were of a different race, worked as Enri's subordinates. They were thus thought to be more reliable than humans.

And more importantly they were strong. Even if wounded there was a priest to heal them. The goblins were thought of as warriors.

Like this, in a few days, the goblins became an irreplaceable existence to the village. One could understand this just by looking at where they lived. Disregarding the fact that they were not human, they were living in a specially constructed house, near Enri's.

When Enri thought about returning to the village after hearing that noise—
“Enri-no-Ane-san, I finished up my part.”

—The goblin that was picking herbs with Enri told her that he was finished.
“T, thank you very much.”

“No, this is nothing much.”

He was a goblin that was waving his herb-stained hand, but Enri felt that no matter how much she thanked them, it would never be enough.

To Enri who had lost her father and mother, working the fields was hard for her. Originally she would have asked for help from the other villagers, but their number had fallen, and all the farmers had their hands full. However, having the goblins help her solved that problem.

In addition, the goblins offered their help to those who were short of it.

Could they continue to shun the goblins after this?

Would it not be better to have goblins as their neighbours rather than humans, the villagers in Carne village though. Their opinion of the goblins was so high that

the thought became commonplace.

Enri stretched her back once more and looked to the sky. Although the lunch bell had not rung yet, it seemed like it was about time. They had worked

enough of the field to take a break as well.

“Then, shall we have lunch?”

Despite his smashed-looking face, the goblin managed what was instantly recognizable as a smile.

“That would be great, your meals are always delicious, Enri-no-Ane-san.”

“Oh, they’re not that great.”

Enri replied, slightly embarrassed.

“No, no, I’m serious. Helping you in the fields is one of the most hotly contested positions among ourselves. That’s because we get to eat your delicious lunches, Ane-san.”

“Then, should I make it for everyone?”

Making food for three people was the same as making it for over twenty.... Not. The time needed to stoke the fire, the time to cook the food and the effort needed was easily seven times larger. However, the goblins had been doing their best for her, so this was not a large problem for her.

“Oh, no, we couldn’t impose on you like that. Enjoying your handmade lunch is something like a bonus for the one who wins the right to help you, Ane-san.”

Enri made a wry smile at the small demihuman who was giving off an air of superiority.

She knew that the goblins were deciding who to help Enri using scissors-paper-stone, but she raised an eyebrow to hear that her food was so highly evaluated.

“Then, shall we go back and eat?”

“Sounds great...”

The goblin’s words cut off halfway as he looked to the distance with his keen eyes. With a deep breath, the formerly relaxed and cheerful little demihuman became a veteran warrior in an instant. Enri followed his eyesight into the distance.

They saw a goblin riding a black wolf. They seemed to glide across the plain

as they approached the village at high speed.

“It’s Rider-san.”

Among the Goblin Troop that Enri had summoned, there were 12 level 8 Goblins, two level 10 Goblin Archers, one level 10 Goblin Mage, one level 10 Goblin Cleric, two level 10 Goblin Riders and one level 12 Goblin Leader, for a total of 19 Goblins.

The one in front of Enri was a level 8 goblin, while the one heading here, mounted on a black Wolf, wearing leather armor and carrying a lance, was a level 10 Goblin Rider.

The Goblin Riders’ job was to patrol the plains and act as scouts. The riders periodically returning to the village to deliver reports were a common sight.

“...Looks like it.”

However, the goblin’s tone was very somber. It made her think that something bad had happened.

“What’s wrong?”

“...He’s back a little early. He should have been patrolling the forest today... did something happen?”

Hearing the goblin’s explanation, Enri felt unease well up in her. It was the unease that another bloody battle would occur.

While the two were silent, the goblin riding the giant wolf ran towards them. The wolf was breathing heavily, and made it clear how much of a rush they were in to get back.

“What’s the matter?”

Hearing the goblin’s question, the rider bowed to Enri from on top of his wolf while replying,

“Something’s happened in the forest.”

“...What?”

“I’m not too sure..... A whole bunch of unknown guys are moving towards the north.”

“Are they knights?”

Enri unwittingly interrupted the two of them. Even though she was powerless to change anything, she still could not ignore the conversation. She still could not forget her fear when the village had been attacked.

“Enri-no-Ane-san, I apologize for not coming down.... I am not confident of this but I believe that it is incorrect. They made a road by cutting down trees, but I saw traces of them walking barefoot, and do not think that they are human.”

“Is that so.”

There was no human that would walk in the wild barefoot. It was natural, a human's soles are not that hard.

Hearing that answer, Enri candidly heaved a sigh of relief.

“...Then, I'd better go report to Leader.”

“All right. Good job.”

“Thank you for your hard work.”

After waving to the two of them, the rider spurred his wolf on and departed. Enri and the goblin watched him enter the slowly-opening village doors.

“Then, shall we go back, too?”

“Yes, let's.”

After washing their hands beside the well, Enri and the goblin had just reached home when they heard a young girl's voice.

“Welcome back, Onee-chan.”

The voice was accompanied by the sound of rock grinding against rock. Following the sound to its source, Enri saw a 12 year old girl turning a millstone behind the house.

She was Enri's younger sister Nemu.

A pungent smell came from the millstone. Although it was similar to the smell that had clung to Enri's hands just before, it was several times more intense, enough that one could smell it from some distance away.

Nemu was used to the smell, which was all well and good, but Enri's eyes almost teared up as the odor assaulted her. The goblin, standing behind her, seemed unaffected in comparison. It remained to be seen whether that was because the smell only had an effect on certain species, or because it would be terribly rude to make a face like that to his mistress' little sister.

"I'm home. How's things? Have you ground them all up yet?"

"Mm, I did. Have a look." Enri looked along Nemu's line of sight, and saw that the herbs that she had piled up before leaving the house had been reduced to a small handful. "But Onee-chan, there's not much more left."

Nemu's job was to turn the herbs into a paste and pour it into a jar. That was because some herbs had to be dried to be preserved, but others needed to be shredded to be preserved.

"Is that so? Then we have to get more...."

Herbs made up a major portion of Carne Village's income. No, apart from that, they had almost nothing.

It was true that for food, they could make do with what they grew, but making a profit from other things like clothes was impossible.

However the herbs could only be acquired in the forest, where the chance of encountering monsters was high. It was not a place that a simple village girl like Enri could go.

"Can I ask it of you?"

That was why she spoke to the goblin who bowing towards Nemu.

The Great Forest was a place that was filled with danger, but there were also places inside that granted blessings of resources to the villagers of Carne Village. Such as kindling, as well as food such as fruits, plants and animals, and various herbs.

In a way, it was a mountain of treasure, but due to the existence of monsters, there was the chance of attracting monsters to the village and was not a place that they could enter lightheartedly.

Thus it was basic for those who were confident like hunters, and specialists

with experience, to head inside occasionally. However, currently the goblins were doing that.

The goblins' work was excellent, and they could now easily get fresh meat and had fresh fruits and vegetables on the table. The quality of their dining had improved considerably.

"It should be all right, but it might be a little difficult for you to come with us, Ane-san."

"Hm? Why's that?"

Enri made an inquisitive face at the goblin making a wry smile.

"Eeee, these were the words of the rider from before, but it seems that a large number of them are heading north."

"Ah, yes."

"If that is the case, it will turn into pandemonium. The forest will."

"?"

Enri once again made an curious face, and the goblin then explained.

"Even the cautious ones are going to want to expand their territory. If that's the case, then for a while, their territory is going to overlap with the others, and that's going to cause all sorts of confusion. Simply put, the chances of meeting a monster's going to increase, and so will the danger. And if you're unlucky, you might even run into something outside the forest. We know you're brave and cool, but there's no need to walk into danger, Ane-san."

"Is that so..."

I'm not too sure about the brave and cool part, but that's probably just the Goblins being polite,

Enri thought. "However this is bad. We cannot harvest the herbs anytime but now. Thus despite the danger I would like to...."

She smiled at the worried Nemu. She wanted to avoid any actions that would sadden her last family member. However she did not want to let any chance of profit slip by. It might be true that her priorities were skewed.

However she had to pay back the debt of gratitude she had towards her subordinates for risking their lives for the village.

Enri made her firm decision, but the goblin thrust his hand out.

“Erm... although this is just my personal opinion, how about discussing the matter with Leader? You don’t need to make the decision so early, Ane-san. I don’t want to be scolded by the boss because I opened my mouth without thinking”

“Is that so? Hmmm....”

The two, Enri and the goblin, talked as if Enri accompanying them into the great forest was decided, but that was usually strange. All she needed to do was to ask the Goblins, who could take care of themselves, to go into the dangerous Great Forest on her behalf. However, the Goblins she had summoned had a strange weakness.

That was to say, they had no aptitude at all for herb-picking, butchering animals, and that sort of work.

even if one handed Goblins a sample of a herb, they would not be able to match it up with identical herb in front of them. The surprising thing was, it was as though they were born unable to do that sort of thing, or even learn it.

It was as if someone had removed the capacity to do so from them.

Therefore, if they were assigned to pick herbs, the Goblins needed to have a non-Goblin with them. Enri was the one to accompany them. This was natural as the goblins were Enri’s subordinates. It was true that if Enri ordered it, they would bring other villagers to the great forest. They had done this before with the woodcutters. However there was the perfect villager who the goblins would protect at all costs.

It was not that they were making her a scapegoat. Should there be danger, they believed that the goblins would protect Enri with their lives.

When Enri was thinking about what to do, she heard a cute “Kuu” sound. That sound stopped her train of thought. When she looked, she saw Nemu’s unhappy gaze directed towards her.

“Onee-chan, I’m hungry. Can we eat yet?”.

“Mm, sorry. Then, wash your hands after we pack up. I’ll go get things ready.”

“Kay~”

Nemu’s response was full of energy. After taking apart the millstone, she scraped the accumulated green paste into a small urn. Enri returned to the house, wondering what she should make for lunch.

What she had was the black bread that was a few days old. The usual lunch was a soup that had some dried meats in it, but with the goblins, their food situation would change drastically.

Thus she decided to make a soup with fresh vegetables and meat.

Tasting it in her mind, her cheeks slackened as she opened the house door.

Chapter 81: Gaiden - Do Your Best Enri-san! | Part 2

When one enters the outskirts of the Great Forest of Tob, it is not dark nor with bad footing. This was as the villagers had cut down trees when necessary. Thus the forest outskirts' atmosphere was a friendly one to humans. One could even have a picnic here.

However, when one goes herb-picking, they have to head deeper inside.

If one proceeded past the 150 metre mark, the surroundings would change instantly. The footing was bad, and the canopy of trees above one's head blocks sunlight even at high noon, causing darkness to fall. One's vision is blocked by the trees, making it extremely difficult to see far. One would be lucky to see even 15 metres ahead. The term primordial forest suited this terrain perfectly.

From here on out, the chance of encountering a monster rose dramatically. Basically, the danger rating shot up.

Enri stood in front of this forest. Naturally, she was not alone. Surrounding her were all the members of her loyal Goblin Troop.

The goblins were equipped with a chain shirt and a round shield, thick machetes hung from their waists. Below their chain shirts were brown shorts. They also had shoes made of pelts. Pouches hung at their waists. They were not missing a single piece of equipment.

The fully equipped goblins were doing their final checks of the luggage that they were carrying on their backs. It was mostly water skins and machete sharpeners. In addition, rain gear in case of wet weather.

The reason for them being fully equipped but carrying little on their backs was cater for possibility of fighting. Plus, there were no plans to stay for too long in the forest.

While the goblins were doing their checks, the largest goblin walked up to Enri.

It was not an overstatement to say that he was a warrior. He had a large

muscular body that made one wonder if he was just a goblin. He wore a practical plain breastplate and was carrying a well used greatsword on his back.

He was the goblin leader, the head of the goblins.

“Then, Enri-no-Ane-san. As I said earlier, we will be scouting out the surrounding forest.... Will you be fine?”

The goblin leader’s rough face frowned in worry as he stared at Enri. In response, she smiled.

“I’m fine. We are not going that deep, and they will be protecting me.”

“Then it’s fine....” The goblin leader glared at the three goblins that Enri was looking at. He then raised his voice. “Oi, you guys, you know this but don’t you dare let Ane-san get even a single wound!”

“Yes!”

The three goblins simultaneously replied with gusto. Somewhat satisfied, the goblin leader nodded his head several times.

“However, honestly, doing such a dangerous thing....”

The goblin leader once again turned to Enri and made a grim face. They have had this conversation multiple times since leaving the village and Enri was getting tired of hearing it over and over, but she could not say anything because he was doing it out of worry for her.

“However, if we cannot collect herbs we cannot earn money....”

“Can we not do it with the pelts of beasts? If it is that then even we can help out.”

“It’s not bad, but herb gathering is still the most profitable.”

The quantity of money that one could earn with herbs and the pelts of beasts were completely different. It was like the difference between heaven and earth. It was true that if it were a rare beast then its pelt would earn quite a bit, but such an occasion was rare.

“Hmm. There really is nothing that Ane-san should worry about, you know? We are all fine, really. We have are not faced with any trouble right now. ”

“But if something happens then it is too late.... Isn’t the strengthening of your weapons important?”

“That is, certainly.... It’s true.... However.... You just won’t stop, huh?....”

Even with the knowledge that it was unlikely for Enri to turn back, the goblin leader tried again and again to convince her otherwise on their way to the forest.

There was a reason why Enri wanted money.

To explain it simply, Enri was trying to earn money to equip the goblins with better equipment.

Thus they were having their precious master be exposed to danger for their sakes. The goblin leader thought that it should be the other way around. No, this was what all the goblins thought.

However, it was naturally so, that they should support Enri when she wanted to prepare better weapons for them. Not giving something to the person that they would offer their lives to, would be their greatest shame as her protectors.

Of course, since the goblins were protecting the village, they could always tax the villagers. However Enri did not want to do that. Thus she had to earn the money for the weapons the goblins wanted herself. And the most efficient method to achieve that was to collect herbs.

“It would be fine for Enri-no-Ane-san to join us once we have confirmed the forest’s safety....”

The goblin mage spoke up from behind her.

It was the spellcaster goblin with a humanoid skull on her head.

In her hand she held a shabby, twisted wooden which length exceeded even her height. Her body was draped in some tribe’s strange designs, and her chest was larger than the other goblins. If one looked closely, they would see that her face did have some cuteness to it. It was to the point that one would wonder why the males and females had this much of a difference.

“However, you cannot confirm it, is that right?”

“Yup, yes. Unfortunately, no one knows. We should at least check for whether the forest is calm or not, but that will take time.”

But by then the season for those herbs would end. This would cause the time until the equipment upgrade to be extended.

“It will be fine. We will not be going in that deep.”

The goblin leader understood that he could no longer convince Enri and looked at the three goblins protecting her. He repeated the same things that he had earlier said.

“We cannot protect her. That is why you pussies will need to represent us, and protect Enri-no-Ane-san with your lives.”

“Yes!”

“If we work together, that will be the safest though.”

“But then we will be one step behind.”

“Yes. There is a need to discover if anyone has gotten close to the edge of the forest. So we have to hurry.”

This was their hypothesis based on the information that the rider brought back— The existence of monsters near the edge of the forest. For now, the first step would be to confirm whether they really were there or not.

Should monsters come near the edge of the forest, they may appear near the village. The village had walls, but there were monsters that could climb over the wall. Even herbivores, they could attack the fields.

Thus a regular patrol for the forest was necessary.

Tonight would be the first patrol. The first time for something would always have the highest risk. That was why they could only spare three goblins to protect Enri.

“That is why even if we do not head for the depths of the forest it is still dangerous, Ane-san.”

Enri nodded.

“However the herbs gathered at this period will earn the most money. In

addition the season will not last for long....”

“...It would have been best for everyone to work together to protect Ane-san and search.”

“But we need to make the patrol tonight.”

“The watchtowers are completed, so it should be fine if we pay attention....We also have the stone golems.”

“I apologise for making you wrack your brains for me, but please patrol the forest.”

Enri firmly rejected their suggestion, causing the goblin leader to understand that any more than this would be rude.

“...Dividing one’s soldiers is a foolish act but....Hah. Understood. Please be really cautious though?. Don’t give your sister a reason to cry.”

After saying that, the goblin leader ordered everyone to leave. Afterwards, Enri and the three goblins entered the forest.



The depths of the forest.

The temperature dropped after 150 metres from the edge of the forest. This was as sunlight could not reach there. However it was not completely dark and even Enri could continue on without problems.

Enri’s group of four proceeded into the forest, moving through the damp atmosphere.

The forest was quiet, almost completely silent with the exception of the occasional cries of birds. If anything apart from that could be heard, it was the sound of shaking branches . Amidst that silence, one could hear the footsteps of Enri’s group.

Their formation was that of an isosceles triangle with Enri taking the centre.

It would be difficult to maintain such a wide formation in the forest, and thus they were supposed to move in a straight line, but to protect Enri, they forcefully held this formation, sacrificing their speed as a result.

After about 200 metres in, Enri looked at their surroundings. She was looking for a place that the herbs would grow. It was fortunate that she was able to immediately find some. The herbs were growing in between the gaps of the trees.

Without the proper knowledge, finding the area where certain plants grew was extremely difficult.

In addition she was neither proficient in searching skills nor had received training for it. She could do no better than the a villager who has lived near the edge of the great forest for most of their lives.

A goblin went ahead scouting the area, and then silently beckoned Enri forward.

Enri and the two goblins kept their bodies low and ran towards the place where herbs grew.

In her eyes, the large quantity of herbs appeared as a mountain of coins. Enri frantically suppressed the greed that was growing in her. The location was dangerous, and there was a need for her to work quickly. She could not afford to be lost in her desire.

Enri sat down and began to pluck herbs from their roots. Should she pluck it haphazardly, its medicinal effect would weaken. It is especially so for this herb since this plant's medicinal effects were concentrated in the root. She should pluck it as close to the roots as possible.

Once she got used to the smell hitting her nostrils, she felt no reason to stop. The herbs were carefully placed one by one into the bag hanging at at her waist.

As time slowly passed, the her bag grew heavier and heavier.

If she asked the goblins to help then work would proceed faster, but they were keeping watch on the surroundings. Enri was not that foolish to ask them for help.

They silently plucked herbs for quite a while.

Suddenly the goblins sunk to the ground, sitting around Enri.

They made a gesture to the surprised Enri. It was an emergency situation. For the first time, Enri stopped working and listened intently. She could slightly hear something large approaching.

“This is....”

“Something is heading here. We should move away.”

Enri and the goblins stood up and hid behind the nearby trees as if running away from the sound. The trees were not large so they could not hide themselves completely, but one should not be able to see them from afar.

The four of them made themselves smaller, held their breaths and prayed that what was making the sound would head off in another direction. However, luck was not on their side.

It's height was around two to three metres.

The protruding jaw made it look like an idiot.

It had arms thick as tree trunks, and a hunched-back that almost reached the ground. A branch that was torn off a tree and a very rough pelt hang from its waist. They could smell the stench wafting off of it from all the way over.

It's brown skin had warts growing on it, and it had a thick chest and protruding stomach. From its appearance, one can understand that it probably had quite a bit of strength.

It was a giant monster that looked like a naked chimpanzee.

It was known as an ogre.

Its nose twitched and it looked around. It seemed like it had not noticed Enri's group hiding behind the trees. The goblins were quietly discussing if they should attack first.

That ogre's eyes focused on one spot. It was the herb gathering area.

It had noticed Enri.

Whose hands were stained with herb juices.

Yes, it was the stench that Nemu had when she was crushing herbs. Enri and the goblins were used to it and did not notice, but there was a huge stench

coming from where Enri was.

As if feeling Enri's panic, the ogre's eyes moved and captured Enri and the goblins in its sights.

"Looks delicious."

It was looking at Enri. Feeling the gaze of a hungry beast, Enri felt her body shiver. Should she be alone upon encountering it, her fate would be decided there and here.

However, in this situation, that was impossible.

"Oi oi, what are you saying, bastard."

One goblin stood in front of Enri. Of course, he could not cover Enri with the height difference, but it caused the ogre to cast an annoyed gaze at the small thing between it and Enri.

"Small one, I, that, eat."

"Shaddup."

The goblin's response to the ogre's roar was exceedingly simple. He stuck his thumb up from his fist and pointed behind him.

That action fully expressed the goblin's intent.

"I, that, eat!"

"I said! Shaddup!"

With extremely practised movements, the goblin drew the machete hanging from his waist. A beat later, so did the other goblins.

"Guu!"

"Hah, come at me sexy boy."

The ogre growled and glared at the goblins.

The shining edge of the three machetes caused some of the ogre's reasoning to return.

However the difference in size between ogres and goblins was overwhelming, akin to a grown-up man facing children. The ogre felt that and

was about to take a step forward—

The goblin shook his matchete.

—The ogre stopped. The flicker of the machete caused the ogre to feel cautious.

However, while the ogre did hesitate out of caution, seeing the length of the sword, it felt that it was useless. If it were a foolish ogre, it would immediately attack.

“—That guy will hold him here. We will go.”

The goblin was whispering to avoid drawing the ogre’s attention. Enri was surprised by what he said, causing her to look at the two goblins. She thought that if there were three of them, even an ogre would fall. However the two goblins had the expression of warriors and made cold decisions.

“Protecting Enri-no-Ane-san is what we should do.”

“Ane-san. You cannot get this wrong. Ane-san staying alive will be our victory. For that, any number of our lives can be used.”

“Also, the situation may get worse.”

It was unclear if he could defeat the ogre. They would be about equal in strength. So attacking with the three of them was not a bad decision. However should a third party appear, it would be an even more dangerous situation. If there were a group of ogres, leaving would be the best option.

It was natural to get the person that they were protecting out of danger faster.

While Enri could understand their reasoning, she was still reluctant to accept the proposal. but the goblin made a manly smile and said.

“Enri-no-Ane-san. Believe in us. Do you think that he will lose?”

The goblin drew his sword and glared at the ogre. Without turning around he pointed over his shoulder. His intentions were clearly expressed to Enri.

“Take care.”

Enri just said that and let herself be pulled away by the goblin.



Leaving the forest, the two goblins left Enri's protection to the riders stationed outside and disappeared back into the forest.

Enri watched over them as if praying for them. She was exposing them to danger. She wanted them to come back alive— Unharmd if possible. That was her wish.

The sole rider then surprisingly spoke to Enri in a lighthearted tone.

“Are you that worried? If that is the case then can Enri-no-Ane-san be our shield?”

As their superior, she knew that the goblins had no wish for her to do such a thing, causing her to look down.

The reason for this was as she felt that she simply could not do that. The image that the rider was creating was too difficult for a simple village girl to live up to.

The one who spoke to her in this state was the same rider. She felt panicked, owing to the criticising gaze he was giving her.

“Oh, it's not like I want Enri-no-Ane-san to do that you know? I prefer for Enri-no-Ane-san to have a calm and quiet air about you, and I think that everyone else prefers that as well. Even if you suddenly act like a ruler.... We will be troubled.”

Another rider nodded. The first one scratched his head, thought about his next words and opened his mouth.

“Ah, I'm not used to comforting people.... I have no confidence in what I'm saying, but why is Enri-no-Ane-san this worried?”

“...The goblins are over there for my sake, so is it not natural to worry?”

“That's the part I don't get. The reason why Enri-no-Ane-san to head into the forest to collect herbs despite the danger is because you want us to improve out weapons. Then is it not our duty to protect Enri-no-Ane-san with our lives? The reason why Enri-no-Ane-san is exposing yourself to danger is because of us.”

“But....”

To stop Enri who was about to continue arguing, the goblin made a stop sign with his hands.

“To earn a large amount of money, it is normal to be exposed to some danger. Even if the result is death, we will still accept it.”

Enri could not even reply.

If one thought about it in a certain way, such reasoning was natural.

“Well, these are our thoughts as warriors, and we know that it is greatly different from Ane-san.”

A warrior and a village girl. Should these two people share the same thought patterns, it would be scary in a certain way.

“....It is because you are such a kind Ane-san that worries about us that we feel that we have to protect you at all costs.”

Enri blushed at the goblin’s words.

Goblins were quite ugly in the terms of the human sense of beauty, but the rider had the air of a strong warrior about him. Being praised by someone like that, it could not be helped that a simple village girl like Enri would blush.

“And.... We are not that weak to lose to an ogre.”

Still riding the wolf, the goblins smiled and pointed at the forest. Enri looked at that direction and saw three goblins.

“Right, we are Enri-no-Ane-san’s bodyguards. If we cannot get through even this, we have no right to call ourselves that.”

All the goblins heading back had no anomalies in their footsteps. This meant that they were completed unharmed.

Enri waved her hand in joy. As if responding, the centre goblin, the one left behind, waved his hand.

The distance between them shortened and both sides let out cries of joy. The happiest one was, of course, Enri.

“Are you okay!”

“Yeah, Ane-san. We somehow got through it.”

“Great!”

There was not a wound on any part of their body. There were black stains near their sleeves, but that was probably ogre blood.

The rider calmly examined their figure and asked.

“...So did you kill the ogre?”

Goblins used short weapons. If they inflicted a fatal wound, there would be a lot of blood, and they would likely be stained with it. However the goblins' clothes were too clean.

“...No, we didn't.”

“Why.”

The rider's face changed into one of astonishment, but the goblin answered immediately.

“It escaped. If it were in a group, it would be better for it to lead us to its comrades.”

“...Ah, true. We should get them all at once.”

“Then let's guard Enri-no-Ane-san till the village, and wait for leader's return.”

“Is that fine? Ane-san?”

With the conversation changing suddenly, Enri was confused for a moment, but this was something the goblins decided and thus was a better course of action than anything she could think of.

“Alright, then, after today's patrol is over we'll be subjugating ogres.”



—Late at night.

Something woke Enri up from her deep sleep. Opening her eyes, nothing in her surroundings seems to have changed, but she looked around nonetheless, taking inventory. Spread out before her was a mostly dark world. The only source of light was from the moonlight filtering in from the crack in the window.

She could not see anything wrong with the scene that was illuminated by the dim moonlight.

However since she was not completely awake, the only thing keeping her from falling asleep again was a certain sound.

She felt that her sister next to her was sleeping well, but she also heard a rhythmical thumping.

She wondered what it was and immediately understood. Someone was knocking lightly at the door.

Enri raised an eyebrow, moved the thin sheet covering her and her sister's body, and slowly got up. Wondering what was going on at such a late hour, she moved silently to prevent her sister from waking up.

Wondering if the squeaks of the floor would wake Nemu up, her heartbeat quickened.

Ever since that incident, Nemu would always sleep with Enri. The incident had left a huge wound in her heart. That was why she slept with Enri.

Enri had no intention to remonstrate her. She too found comfort in sleeping together with her sister.

Enri knew that even if they slept together, should her sister have a nightmare, she would fling herself into Enri. That was why if she was sleeping soundly, Enri wanted her to stay that way.

The entire time it took for Enri to walk to her front door, the knocking did not stop.

Looking outside through the peephole, she saw the figure of the goblin leader. Enri felt her unease turn into relief.

Sighing, Enri spoke to the ones outside. Of course, it was in a quiet manner so as to not wake up her sister.

"Goblin leader-san, are you okay?"

"Ah, Enri-no-Ane-san. We made it through. Oh, sorry for waking you."

Enri opened the door slightly and slipped out from the small crack. This was

to prevent excessive moonlight from shining into the room and waking Nemu up.

“There is something I need you for.”

“Now?”

“Yes, really sorry.”

Those were words that would make one frown, considering that it was late at night.

The eyes of humans were not suited for nighttime. However there were many monsters with night vision. Thus night belonged to beings that were not human. At such an hour, the goblin leader felt that there was a reason that he had to wake her up.

This had to be done now, she believed that there was a reason for that.

Enri gave it a bit of thought, and immediately understood.

It was regarding the ogre subjugation.

They had met up with the goblin leader and explained the situation. He had then decided to have all the goblins search for the ogre’s tracks. The goblin leader found multiple ogres. If the ogre that attacked Enri’s group was amongst them then great, but if not, there may then be quite a number of ogre hordes.

They had departed before nightfall.

So they had probably just returned. So it was reasonable for them to call for her immediately.

Thus this was extremely important. However apart from that, Enri knew nothing else.

“Got it. Where should I go? Can you lead me?”

She was guided to the gate. Enri walked through the quiet village, illuminated by the moonlight.

On the other side of the door was a sight that caused Enri to stand rooted to the spot.

There were five ogres lying prostrate. Surrounding them were all the

members of the goblin troop. The joy of seeing all of them unharmed was pushed aside by the surprise of the ogres.

“Eh! What is this?”

She asked the goblin leader next to her in a panic.

“Well, when we attacked the group of ogres, there were seven. When we killed two they stood down. So we wanted Ane-san to decide what to do with them.”

“Eh....”

“Oi, you guys! Our Ane-san is here! Your fates will be decided by her words!”

Reacting to those words, the gaze of the five ogres instantly became heavier. This surprised Enri and he had to stop herself from taking a step back.

Panic lasted for only an instant, but it felt like an eternity for Enri. The ogres then spoke, interrupting her thoughts.

“Scary, small master. We sorry.”

“The one, attacked you, dead.”

“They bad so died.”

“Symbol of apologise, have.”

“Present give. So forgive us.”

It was an apology of not just words, but also with gestures. To Enri, it seemed that they were like children that were just scolded. However, hearing the last part, Enri quizzically tilted her head.

“Umm?”

One of the ogres in front of Enri thrust out a wild beast that was hidden behind their giant bodies.

“This delicious. This give. Forgive us.”

“Difficult to get. You eat. We sorry.”

With that a beast was placed in front of Enri with a thud. The waft of fresh blood hit her in an instant.

Basically the ogres gave her this beast as an apology and wanted to be forgiven.

“Umm, so what do we do?”

“Eh.... What do you mean....?”

Enri asked the goblin leader. What was she to do?

Enri finally understood why she was brought here. She had to decide how to deal with the ogres.

Let them live, or die.

Enri thought.

Stealing the lives of others was a natural part of being alive. However she could not let the human-attacking ogres go so easily. They might attack another villager. Then the problem might be solved if she order them to go far away.

But that may only be postponing the problem. They might return and attack those entering the forest.

It is a predictable outcome, and furthermore the possibility of it happening was not low. Then the safest thing to do would be to kill them.

The goblin leader gave Enri some advice.

“...Enri-no-Ane-san. It is said that ogres are man eaters, but they are nothing more than carnivorous monsters. It is just easier to capture humans rather than wild beasts so they choose to attack humans.”

It was true that it was much easier to capture humans rather than wild beasts. One could understand this just by looking at the difference in agility between humans and beasts. Also there was no way a simple villager could defeat an ogre.

Then it was completely natural for ogres, rather, all living creatures to hunt weak and easy prey.

“Well, so, if we prepare food for them, they will not attack the human villagers. They attack humans for food after all. In addition we are much better at hunting than ogres. The ogres will rarely be hungry.”

She knew that the goblin archer was extremely skilled at hunting animals. He was much better than the village hunter that was killed by the knights. Thus the villagers could often eat fresh meat.

In addition, Enri heard from the goblin archer that he was still not at his limit. He could probably easily get five ogres worth of food.

Enri sent a questioning gaze at the goblin archer. He immediately opened his mouth to respond.

“I can easily get food for the ogres. Leave it to me.”

An affirmative answer was given to her thoughts. Enri nodded and expressed her thanks.

“But, what will do after we feed them?”

“Ah, this is codependency. We cannot be borrowing the golems forever. So it would be best to have some people with strength. In exchange for food I was thinking that they could be used as labour.”

“Eh? Will the villagers accept them?!”

“Well, that I don’t know. But, we can have them live near the village and work for us.”

The goblin leader grinned.

Recalling the hungry eyes of the ogre, Enri did not want to agree. However if the goblin felt as warriors that that was best, then it was better than what Enri would think of.

Despite knowing that, Enri voiced her unavoidable worry.

“Will it be fine?”

“It will be fine.”

The goblin leader’s confident reply struck down her unease.

“We have disciplined them. They have no intention of rebelling against us. They can even get food. No matter how stupid they are they will not make any suspicious movements.”

Enri then understood.

If one thought about it calmly, the goblin leader's words made perfect sense.

As said earlier, ogres attacked humans for food. If food was prepared for them, there would be no reason to attack humans. In addition, it would be unusual for them to willingly face those stronger than them.

"...Got it. There is no need to take the ogres' lives."

"Understood. Then we shall let them live."

"Ah, I will return this animal, so please give it to the ogres."

"Really?"

"I don't mind." Enri lowered her voice and whispered the goblin leader. "Is that bad?"

"No, not at all."

"Then please do."

The goblin leader nodded and faced the ogres. He then shouted in a loud voice.

"Great! Enri-no-Ane-san will spare your lives."

The tensed up ogres relaxed. There was the chance that they would be killed; this was the natural reaction. One of the ogres looked firmly at Enri and spoke.

"Small ones strong. You ruler of strong ones, stronger."

"Eh."

"We. Captured by small ones. You, chief of chief."

"...Eh?"

One of the ogres ignored Enri's surprise and bowed to her. Following him the others also lowered their heads.

"We, will work, for you."

"...Eh!"

"Say, isn't Enri-no-Ane-san like a sister to ya'll?"

“No, we don’t call her Enri-no-Ane-san anymore. From now on its Enri-no-Nee-san!”

“Enri-no-Nee-san!”

“Sounds good!”

“Do yer all swear loyalty to Enri-no-Nee-san?”

“Understood. We obey the strong. ”

“Ane-san, we obey”

“Ane-san. Ane-san. We obey”

“Great! This means that we have new members for Enri’s bodyguard unit.”

“Oh, oh, isn’t it great! As expected of Enri-no-Ane... Nee-san. If we can continue at this rate, it will become really amazing!”

Enri blinked her eyes in surprise, following which—

“Eeeeeeeeeeh!”

—Her voice, somewhat between a scream and a cry of astonishment, resonated through the darkness of the night.

Chapter 82: Gaiden - Do Your Best Enri-san! | Part 3

The Fortress City E-Rantel had three layers of walls, fitting for its name. The gate attached to the outermost wall was the most gigantic, and anyone who stood in front of it would be filled with severe apprehension.

It was not rare to see travellers with their mouths open in shock in front of the gate. It was known as the gate that could repel even the Empire.

At the side of the gate was a holding station where several guards stood in the shade, boredom showing on their faces.

For a city that may be at the front lines, the guards seem to be considerably lax, but those stationed at the station were only checking people. Since their job was to check for the smuggling of illegal goods or spies, if there was no one entering, they had no work to do.

It was true that the guards working here had a special sense and could be called elites amongst the guards. It was questionable letting such elite guards waste their time here. However, documentation is an important job, one that the regular guards could not do. Having them here would be an even greater waste.

And if there was no one entering the city, it was natural that they had nothing to do.

There was the question of the security of the surrounding areas, but that is handled by sentries at the top of the wall. This was to allow the inspecting guards to focus on their jobs.

Thus general guards like them with no work to do— Well they could not play card games, they did not try to hide their whistling.

Of course, they were free now but when it got busy it got very busy. Especially in early mornings when the gate open, they were so busy that they destroyed several writing brushes.

Around the time that the sun was almost at its zenith and it was getting

hotter.

One of the guards placed his elbows on the desk, stared out the window in a bored manner, and thus noticed a carriage heading towards E-Rantel with a rhythmical “clip clop”. There was one girl at the rider’s seat. The carriage had no covering but no other figures could be seen inside.

The woman was wearing no armaments. Thus the logical answer was—

Which village is she from?

—As the guard thought this, he cocked his head to the side.

It was not rare for humans from nearby villagers to visit. However it was different when that person was a sole female. Even the surroundings of E-Rantel had bandits and monsters. So no one could come alone.

Holding on to this question in his head, he looked at the horse. And then he was confused all over again.

The horse was a fine one. There was no way a simple village girl could have one. It’s grooming and physique made one think that it was a warhorse.

Even if one could find a warhorse, it would be extremely expensive. And any normal person who tried to buy one would find it impossible. Excluding special cavalry units like wyverns and griffons, this was the pinnacle of mounts and was extremely difficult to get.

Someone who could own such a carriage would at least be someone who had connections.

One might think of stealing it, but retributions would definitely occur if something of that magnitude was stolen. It was to the point that even bandits would refrain from touching someone riding a warhorse.

There was no way that a village girl could own a war horse with that much value. Thus she simply had the appearance of a village girl, her true stature being completely different.

A hint at this was that she was travelling alone. It shows that she has confidence in her own strength, and had no need to depend greatly on equipments.

One profession fit the bill. Magic casters.

That was a logical possibility. Magic casters were a very coveted profession. As adventurers they would have connections and money, and could probably get warhorses.

“Is she some kind of magic caster?”

His colleague next to him came to the same conclusion and voiced it.

“Maybe.”

The guard raised an eyebrow and replied.

To Spellcasters, magic was their weapon, and they could be more dangerous than a fully equipped warrior. And they were difficult to investigate.

Firstly, although magic is a weapon, they cannot check for it. As such, one can never be sure exactly how dangerous they are.

Secondly, it is extremely difficult to discover their possessions if they hide it with magic.

Thirdly is that there are many speciality magic items that will cause a lot of troublesome paperwork.

Honestly, they are the most painful people to inspect and check for goods. Thus they work together with personnel from the Magician’s Guild but....

“Do we have to call him? I don’t want to.”

“It can’t be helped. If a problem occurs after we label her as a non-magic caster, it will be dangerous.”

“It would be nice if magic casters dressed up as such.”

“Such as holding a mysterious staff and wearing a mysterious robe?”

“Yup. That would definitely be a magic caster.”

Both of them laughed as the sitting guard stood up. They had to get ready to welcome the girl who may be a magic caster.

As the guards watched, the carriage approached the gate and stopped.

The girl got off from the rider’s seat. Sweat trickled down her face, making it

obvious that she had travelled beneath the sun's rays. She wore long sleeves and long pants, probably to avoid a tan. They were not of good quality. She seemed to be a simple village girl.

But there was the possibility that she has another identity or is trying to hide something.

The guard walked towards the girl without hesitation.

"Firstly there are various things I would like to ask, could we do it over there?"

"Yes. I do not mind."

The guards brought the girl to the station.

On guard from mental magic like charm, another guard followed the two from several metres away. The other guards were watching the girl, making sure she was not making any suspicious moves.

As if feeling the strong sense of caution, the girl tilted her head.

"...Is something wrong?"

"Eh? Ah, nothing at all."

Being able to feel this strange atmosphere meant that she was not a nobody. While thinking that, the guard entered the station.

The station was not in direct sunlight and was much cooler than the outside.

Feeling the cool but not chilly air, the girl let out a sigh.

"Then please take a seat."

"Yes."

The girl sat on one of the chairs in the room.

"First, let's hear your name and where you came from."

"Yes. Enri Emmot. I have come from Carne Village that is near the Forest of Tom." (TL: I know it's the Forest of Tob but the author....)

The guards exchanged looks and one walked out of the room. He was going to check if she was in the register.

In the Kingdom, there was a register that was used to manage the citizens.

In short it was a mess; information regarding the life or death of a person often arrived late or was overlooked. It was thus a common occurrence for a dead person to be thought alive. And if they were from a distant city, the information was even later, and even more overlooked.

They were managing the population of the Kingdom with that register, but there were several tens of thousands of individuals.

Thus it would be bad if they relied on it too much, but it did help to a certain extent.

Even though the register was not awfully reliable, it had quite the volume. Thus it took some time to flip through it. The guard knew that well and decided to move on to something else first.

“For now, please pay the admission fee into the city. It’s two coppers for a human and four for a horse.”

“Yes.”

The girl took out a dirty looking pouch bag from her waist and loosened the mouth. She took out six coins. She then passed the shimmering coins to the guard.

Confirming the coins placed upon his leather gloves, the guard nodded and placed the coins next to him.

“It is the proper amount. Next is the reason for why you came to E-Rantel.”

“Yes. I have come to sell herbs.”

The guard looked outside at the carriage. Some of the guards were in the midst of moving pots.

“Could you please tell me the name of the herb and the number of pots?”

“Yes. Four pots of Nyukuri, and six pots of Erierish.”

“Six pots of Erierish?”

“Yes.”

Pride was written all over her face. Seeing that, the guard nodded in understanding.

Since he was posted to this station, it was natural for the guard to have some knowledge of herbs. He naturally knew of the Erierish that Enri mentioned.

Erierish was a herb that could only be collected for a short period of time, and was necessary for all healing potions. Thus it had an extremely high price.

Having six pots, considering the volume of those pots, could easily fetch 100 gold pieces.

“So, where do you plan to go?”

“There is someone I always sell to to.”

“Is that so....”

The guard decided that nothing further was necessary. His job was to prevent dangerous items from entering, and chasing items already inside was out of his job scope. The herbs this time were not the case, but if it were possible ingredients for pleasurable drugs, it would take a lot more questioning to get through.

The guard nodded and looked away from Enri.

The herbs she mentioned were all for daily use and were not dangerous.

There was nothing suspicious about her words. Enri’s expression also showed no signs of lying.

After checking that there was nothing hidden in the pots and that they really were the herbs she mentioned, their job had finished. The next thing to do was predetermined.

At that moment, the other guard came back and shook his head once.

This meant that there was a record of the woman named Enri.

The guard nodded in response.

However, the only thing recorded in the ledger was that a girl called Enri was born in Carne Village. There was no proof that the girl in front of him was Enri, and there was nothing about how Enri had lived.

She might be someone who was using the name of Enri. Or maybe as a

result of being thrust into a world of killing, the person known as Enri might have become someone drenched in blood.

That was why a final check was necessary.

“Understood. Then could you please call in that person?”

The guard nodded and left the room again.

“We will be checking your luggage now, is that fine?”

“Eh?”

Enri frowned in surprise. The guard panickedly tried to explain himself.

“Umm, it’s not like there is a problem. Unfortunately this is part of the law. It’s not anything important so please calm down.”

“...If that is the case, then I understand.”

Seeing that Enri understood, the guard secretly sighed in relief. It was not wise to anger someone who may be a magic caster.

Enri and the guard. As the two stopped speaking, silence fell. When the two could bear the silence no longer and wanted to talk about something, the guard from earlier, as well as another man, entered.

He was a magic caster.

He had a sharp nose, and sweat beaded down his pale face. His chicken-like fingers clutched a staff. He had a strange triangular hat on his head and a hot black robe draped over his body.

The guard personally thought that it would be fine to take it off if it were hot, but the magic caster might have an attachment to it, and he did not try to remove any of it. Thus, immediately after the magic caster entered, the temperature of the room increased a few degrees.

“Is it that girl?”

The magic caster’s quiet voice made one feel extreme incongruity.

He seemed to be in his late twenties, but his extremely hoarse voice made it difficult to tell. Was his appearance misleading, or was his voice that dry?

“Umm....”

Enri looked between the magic caster and the guard in surprise. The guard felt that it was normal for her to be and nodded to himself. Even the guard was surprised the first time he heard the magic caster’s voice.

“He is a magic caster that has come from the Magician’s Guild. He is doing a simple check, so please wait a bit.” The guard sent a signal to the magic caster and bowed to him. “If you please.”

“Of course.”

The magic caster took a step forward and faced Enri. He then chanted magic.

“<Detect Magic>”

The magic caster’s eyes narrowed. It was as if he were a beast that found its prey. Even though the guard wanted to get into a battle stance, but Enri showed no surprise.

The guard saw this and felt that his guess was on the mark.

There was no way that a simple village girl could remain calm after being faced with such a gaze. If she did not at least fight monsters, there was no way she could bear this gaze.

Basically this girl called Enri has experienced battles of life and death. From that, the chance that she was a magic caster got higher.

“You cannot hide it from my eyes. You are secretly carrying a piece of magic equipment. Around your waist.”

Enri was surprised and looked at her waist.

The guard readied himself. The guard knew the range of a weapon like a sword, but nothing about magic weapons. Like how humans feared the unknown, so did the guard.

“Is it this?”

What Enri took out from under her clothes was a small horn that could be hidden with her two hands. It looked shabby, and if the guard saw it he would

think nothing of it.

“...Is this a magic item?”

“Correct. Do not be fooled by its appearance. This has quite the magic power imbued inside.”

The guard gazed at it in wonder. This magic caster said that this was quite the item. How much power did it possess?

The guard, thinking that the shabby appearance was an intentional disguise, felt a chill like he was stabbed.

“Ah, that is —”

“There is no point. My magic sees through everything.”

The magic caster interrupted Enri and activated another magic.

“<Appraisal Magic Item>”

Silence fell over the room.

The magic caster was silent, the guard who was waiting for an answer was silent, and even Enri was silent.

It took about 30 seconds. It felt longer than that, but the magic caster finally opened his mouth.

“Is this a magic item that can summon a horde of goblins?”

“Yes.”

Enri spoke in surprise.

“I see.... So you intend to use this in the city....”

“I do not!”

“Hmm.... Guard.”

“What is it?”

“This is a magic item that can summon and command goblins. It is unclear how many it can summon, but it is not that dangerous of an item. But should there suddenly be goblins rampaging through the city, this person should be taken in for questioning.”

“Is that so?”

“Anyway she does not have anything that would be immediately dangerous, and does not seem to be smuggling in anything. I believe that there are no problems.”

The magic caster had far more knowledge about magic items. If such a person said it was fine, there was no need to raise an opposing opinion, and accepting it would be the best.

“Understood. Thank you for your cooperation, Enri-san. This is it.”

“However....”

The guard asked the magic caster who was about to say something.

“What is it?”

“No, it’s fine. It’s nothing important. The rest is your job.”

“...Is that so?”

The guard was not satisfied, but he could think of no reason to keep her any longer. If he looked outside, he would find that the luggage checks have been completed with no problem.

“Then Enri-san. Welcome to E-Rantel.”

As Enri passed through the gate and looked at the city, the guard asked the magic caster.

“...Was it an amazing item?”

“Hmm....It’s evaluation depends on the number of goblins.... But it is nothing weak.”

A girl who had a carriage and owned what might be an amazing magic item.

The guard felt that his interest piqued and asked the magic caster.

“What exactly is she?”

The magic caster took out a handkerchief from under his robes and wiped the sweat on his face. As the handkerchief darkened from the sweat, the magic caster finally spoke.

“Two options.”

“Ha?”

As if he were a teacher explaining something to a dumb student, the magic caster continued.

“Since she came here alone, this is the first option. She has confidence in her own strength— Well, as a magic caster. Thus the lack of companions. That is one possibility”

“And the second. She is travelling alone because she has a magic item. If it is the former it is simple. We can understand if she is a simple magic caster.”

“Isn’t she too young?”

The guard had heard that since magic casters had to learn many things, it often took years for them to master the basics. Thus Enri was too young to be a magic caster.

“...I do not think she is that powerful, but remember this. In the case of a magic caster, it is possible for their appearance and age to not match. For example a powerful magic caster, the Head Magic Caster of the Empire. The strongest magic caster of humanity is over 200 years old, but he looks like he’s in his forties.”

“Basically she is—!”

“Do not panic.”

In response to the agitated guard, the magic caster shook his head in annoyance.

“I said it earlier. It do not think she is that strong. It is not the case that young but promising magic casters do not exist. Especially if they have studied in the Empire’s institutions. It is often the case that there are many young magic casters in the Empire with magic items.”

“Is that so....”

The guard decided to engrave this in his memory. It was necessary to consider the possibility of a young person being a magic caster.

“It is simple if she is just a magic caster. However, in the second case. If she were indeed just a village girl with a magic item, it will be troublesome.”

“Why? I believe it is easier to accept if she is a simple village girl though? And that she travelled alone with the help of the magic item.”

Listening to the guard’s question, the magic caster sighed. Feeling the magic caster’s gaze like he was dealing with an idiot, the guard quashed the feeling of rage that boiled up in him. Understanding that, to him, he probably was an idiot, and that his personality was like this in the first place.

“On the contrary, if she is a village girl, there is someone behind her who can easily give her such a magic item.”

“...Isn’t that jumping to conclusions? It might be passed down through her family or something....”

“How did she get such an item? That is a one use item. It would be better to reserve it rather than to walk around with it.”

“True.... Considering that, there might be someone supporting her from behind.”

Then everything made sense. However if that was the case, were the magic caster’s words of it being troublesome refer to the one behind her?

“If there is someone behind her.... That girl is not just anyone.”

“...Why?”

“...Could a simple village girl borrow a magic item that costs at least several thousand gold coins?”

“Several thousand?!”

A shout of shock left the guard’s mouth.

The guard of course knew that magic items were expensive. However the most expensive potions in the station were at most 150 gold. Comparing the two was a foolish endeavor.

Adventurers could possibly carry such an item. However they had to be high ranked, blessed by fortune and had a patron behind them.

“Basically that person does not think much about handing over such an item, or that that person wants that girl to be protected.”

“.....”

The guard silently looked for Enri’s figure in the city. Of course, she was nowhere to be found.

“Should we follow her?”

“That is.... Something you should not be asking me. You should decide that. However it would be better not to anger her.”

“I see....”

Hearing that, the guard looked again at Enri’s back. Of course, the conclusion was the same.

The guard recalled Enri’s face and engraved it in his heart. There would probably be no problem when she leaves, but should she come again, he felt that something would happen.



Enri continued on the road as the carriage shook.

E-Rantel was split into three sections. The centremost was where the majority of people stayed. The image that one imagined of a town would be best reflected here.

She was looking for a certain shop— One that was told to her by the village chief.

Her destination. It was the home of the most famous herbalist in E-Rantel, Lizzie Bareare.

It was normal for craftsmen to have a union guild. This was to avoid stealing business, and to regulate the prices for goods and services. However, the number of herbalists is usually too low and thus a guild is impossible.

However E-Rantel was a fortress city, and the number of herbalists was high. There hence existed something like a herbalist’s guild.

The reason Enri was going to Lizzie Bareare’s house was that she was like

the guildmaster of the small herbalist's guild, and managed the flow of potions and herbs.

If she had connections with a herbalist, she would not need to go to Lizzie Bareare's house, but unfortunately Carne Village had no such connections. Thus it was basic to sell the herbs at her house.

There was a strange smell wafting along this road.

The warhorse showed some signs of not liking where it was going, but with Enri at the reigns, it plowed onwards.

The smell in the air was of medicine and crushed herbs. This was the proof that this area had many herbalists.

As Enri looked around, she moved forward. She then stopped the carriage at the largest house in the area.

In contrast to the other houses where there were production areas behind the shophouses, this building was a production house next to a production house next to a production house.

"Here?"

Enri was a bit uncertain as she stopped the carriage in front and came down from the rider's seat.

There were words next to the door, but Enri could not read. Despite her uncertainty, she knocked several times.

There was no reply.

She knocked again.

There was still no reply.

If there was no response the next time she tried, she would have to come back another time. Enri thought that and knocked again.

She heard a thumping noise from the other side of the door. And with force, the door was opened.

"—Aaan?"

A woman in unkempt work clothes appeared, stained with the juices of

herbs. She spoke with an aggressive voice.

Her red hair was in a mess and covered half of her face. A pair of muddled eyes could be seen between the gaps. There were large eyebags underneath.

Her half open eyes moved to look at Enri.

Her face was good. However her eyes were very grim, causing her to feel more scary than beautiful. It was as if she were a beast hungry for blood.

In addition, her appearance gives an illusion of age. She might have been the same age or a bit older than Enri.

That woman spoke. There was no hint of friendliness in her words. It was full of hostility.

“Who’re you?”

“Umm—”

“We are currently veerrry busy right now. Come later.”

“Excu—”

“Aaan? Did you not hear me? Ah?”

“Ah, no—”

“Hurry up, I’m tired! Do you want to ask me what time I woke up? Huh! Ah?”

“Umm—”

This was bad. She did not intend to listen.

Enri deduced that and began to wonder where she could kill time.

“Could you stop it there?”

A different came from inside. It was a man’s.

Hearing that, the girl’s attitude did a 180. Enri was looking right at her, eyes wide in shock. It was like seeing a girl before and after she put on countless amounts of makeup.

Firstly, her eyes opened. Her dead eyes from earlier began to sparkle with light. Her corpse-like skin began to blush red.

Standing before Enri was a girl younger than her. And a beautiful one at that.

“Ah!”

Frantically combing her disarrayed hair, the girl looked back.

“So you were here.”

Her tone of voice was completely different. It was as if the person from earlier was an illusion. For a moment it looked as if there was a flower blossoming behind her.

“Yes. I understand that you are tired but she seems to be a customer.”

“That’s true. I went a bit too far.”

Clumsily placing her hand on her cheek, she smiled at the man. Behind her, Enri was shocked at this change.

“Please enter. Now, come in.”

Pulled in by the now extremely friendly girl, Enri entered the house. However, she could not yet enter. Enri frantically tried to resist the girl pulling her.

“—The luggage in the carriage.”

“Luggage?”

Releasing Enri, the girl looked at the luggage in Enri’s carriage.

“They are pots, are there herbs in the pots?”

“Eh. Yes.”

“Then it’s fine. Even if you bring it, we do not have anyone who can buy it from you. You should know some merchants right.”

The problem was not solved at all.

Enri thought that, but she had no intention of resisting the force pulling her in and she entered the house.

The room was dim and Enri’s eyes could not make anything out until they adjusted. Blinking several times, she made out a room that did not feel like a

store.

The room itself was not large.

At best it was a reception room to talk with customers. There were two long benches in the centre facing each other, and shelves full of parchment lined the walls. A potted plant was placed in the corner of the room.

Inside the room. There was a man. He was a normal man that had no special attractive features.

Since there was no other man inside, the reason for her change was definitely him. Even though he was inside, he wore rough gauntlets. Enri felt that she had seen those somewhere, but she had little knowledge about such things.

“Fey. I’ll bring in the luggage.”

“Eh? Is that fine?”

“I don’t mind. It will help Lizzie.”

“Then please do.”

He nodded at the smiling girl— Fey, slipped past the two of them and left the room. Fey’s sparkling eyes seemed to chase his figure.

Enri felt a strangeness from the man’s tone. It was as if his age or gender did not match. However she had no reason to act against the man. In addition should that be his original voice or should he mind it, it would be extremely bad. Since Enri came to sell items, she should not place herself in an unfavourable position.

Enri thought that and began to start the business negotiations.

“Umm—”

“Nn? What?”

Fey asked without looking away from the man’s back.

“I came to sell herbs but....”

“Hmm? Ah, herbs. Yes. Ahh.”

For the first time, Fey looked at Enri and began thinking. The reason why her gaze moved probably had something to do with the man that left.

“Herbs.... This may be difficult.”

Enri frowned. She wondered if there was a large purchase from somewhere, causing them to have a large stock of herbs.

“Actually....”

“Isn’t it fine?”

One wondered when did he return. He carried a pot easily with his two hands as he spoke.

“Why don’t you buy it? We will use this much.”

Saying that, he placed a pot down and left again. Fey looked inside for an instant and nodded.

“True. Yup, yes. We can’t reach that place. Yup, umm who are you?”

“I am Enri of Carne Village.”

“Ah, someone from Carne Village!”

Fey smiled and pointed at a long bench in the middle of the room. The two of them sat down facing each other.

“Umm how many how you brought?”

“Four pots of Nyukuri, four pots of Ajiina and six pots of Erierish.”

“Six pots of Erierish!” Fey raised her voice in surprise. “That’s amazing.... Good job. Since you’re from Carne Village the quality is there.... Are all the pots of that size?”

Fey pointed to the pot that the man had brought. There were already six there.

“Yes. That is true.”

“Then.... You are someone from Carne Village.... How about 126 gold and 7 silver pieces?”

“Eh! Please do!”

This was an amount of money Enri had never even heard of. Well if she excluded the amount offered by Ainz the great magic caster.

“Then that’s fine.”

“Yes.... By the way is that person your lover?”

“Eh?”

Enri felt uher curiosity well up after feeling the relief of completing a deal. She asked Fey a question, causing Fey to be at a loss for words, wonder who she was talking about, and then blush.

“Eh? Ehehehehe. You saw it that way? Ehehehehe. Even if you tell me this I won’t give you anymore. Ehehehehe.”

Rather than flattery it was more of a question.

However she did not say this. Even she knew how to read the atmosphere. No, there would be no human that was able to do such a thing in front of the self-absorbed Fey.

Enri was secretly relieved. That she did not have to ask if she was an employee.

Fey’s face moved close to Enri’s as she lowered her voice.

“We have not gone that far. But I’m going for it.”

“Is that so....”

“Well his face is not that good. But he’s very strong. I was saved.... Ehehehehe.”

“Is that so....”

Enri had an interest in the love stories of other girls. However even she pulled away after seeing Fey’s drooling face. In addition, even though her expression had changed considerably after they first met, the circles beneath her eyes were still present. Now she looked like a mentally ill.

“...We are doing business now, sorry about that.”

“Eh? Ah, yes!”

Suddenly spoken to, a strange cry came from Fey. The man and Enri both widened their eyes. However, he ignored this and continued talking.

“...Umm I carried in all the pots.”

“T, thank you very much!”

Fey flushed with shame as she replied.

“I don’t mind what you said earlier, Fey.”

“Ah, emm you are really strong. I really admire you.”

“...Really?”

Hearing Fey’s words, the man glanced at his hands covered by gauntlets. He then shrugged.

“Well now. Lizzie is working non-stop, and the two should take a break now right?”

“Thanks for worrying. Once this deal is over I’ll tell Obaa-chan.”

“...If we are buying the pots, bring them to the herbs section.”

“Can I ask that of you?”

“Well.”

In contrast to the sparkling eyes and expression of Fey, the man reacted mildly.

How should she put it, there seemed to be no hope.

Enri struggled to prevent her thought of them being complete opposites from showing on her face.

As the man left, Fey’s gaze fell back on Enri.

“Anyway, can I pay in common gold coins?”

“Ah, I do not mind.”

Being paid in gold coins would be extremely heavy, but it could not be helped. Since she knew what she was going to do with the money, she thought it would also be fine to be paid in gems, but being paid in coins was basic.

“Then I’ll go bring it in.”

Fey said this and stood up. It was not just Enri’s imagination that she shot out like a bullet. She flew through the door as if to chase after the man. However—

—Suddenly, the door to the outside was opened. Two women entered.

“Hello.”

It was a languid voice, that was full of arrogance.

Enri’s gaze fell on the woman who spoke, or rather, a certain part of her.

She was thrusting out her chest in front of her. In addition, she wore thin clothes showing her whole body line, causing further attention to be drawn to her chest. She had a curvaceous body.

Her brown hair went below her shoulders and was done in a sauvage. Her drooping eyes along with her face gave her a feeling of warmth. She was in her mid-twenties, and a smell of perfume wafted off of the woman who did her makeup well.

“...What do you want, whore.”

The freezing cold voice rang in the room.

“Uwa that’s mean, Fey-chan. Umm I came to see him.”

A heart mark was attached to the end of her words. No, Enri was just imagining it. Fey waved her hands as if hitting something in the air.

She then sent a sharp gaze in her direction.

“He is busy with work. Don’t be a bother and go home. I’ll give you a medicine that works on STDs.”

“...That’s mean, Fey-chan.”

While the woman’s tone did not change, Enri sensed a strange emotion welling up in her eyes.

“Eh, what? This is....”

“Umm—”

While they had come in together, the woman who had not spoken until now opened her mouth.

She was completely different from the other woman.

In short, she was a warrior.

She was in her twenties, her red hair cut to a length easy to move in. However favourably one looked at it, it was not cut well; it looked like a bird's nest.

Her face was not bad, but her eyes were sharp and she wore no makeup. Her skin was tanned a healthy brown.

That woman waved at Enri to come over.

"Umm, it would be best not to get involved."

"Ah, yes."

Scurrying towards the female warrior and looking back, she saw that the distance between Fey and the woman had shrunk tremendously.

"Is the master inside?"

"Ah, yes."

Enri was confused who she was referring to, but realising that it was the man, she replied.

"Is that so, we're in trouble."

"Is that bad?"

"This is very bad. The two of them will not end with just slaps." The female warrior looked at Enri and whispered. "They'll beat each other."

"Eh.... P, please stop them!"

"No way.... The two of them have powerful connections. If it's the two of them, they will stop after they beat each other."

As Enri and the female warrior watched in worry, Fey and the woman closed in on each other, and the two's forehead met.

"Want to go at it."

“I don’t mind.”

The instant the two of them formed fists—

—The bell rang as the man entered.

“Darling!”

“Wai....”

With a heart mark, the woman skipped towards the man, and Fey stumbled forward in that moment.

Since the woman was jumping and pushing on it with her body at the same time, her ample bosom was smushed considerably.

However his expression had no change.

“Amazing....”

Enri had some knowledge of men. The men that Enri knew would not be able to remain calm after receiving such an attack.

It was as if he were handling a troubling coworker.

“Well I like that c-o-o-l part of you.”

She placed her finger on the man’s chest and seemed to write something on it.

“Why are you—”

“—Wait, get away from him!”

With a scream of anger, Fei ran towards the woman. Seeing this, Enri and the female warrior sighed.

“What is this?”

“This is their daily life.”

“This seems like a pain.”

“Yup, very.”

The two of them sighed again.

Chapter 83: Gaiden - Do Your Best Enri-san! | Part 4

After two days, the wall of Carne Village where Enri was born came into sight. Seeing its large and thick shadow made one think that it was a strong iron wall, but Enri could not help but to think that it was inferior to E-Rantel's.

"Yes we can finally see it."

Someone spoke to Enri. It was the goblin riding the carriage.

The reason for the goblin who should not be there being there was simple.

Enri was not the only one who went to E-Rantel. She made the trip while being protected by the goblins. Of course, the goblins got off before she entered E-Rantel.

Of course, not all the goblins were present.

There were five goblins who went along, including the goblin cleric and one goblin rider.

The reason why not all of them went was because of the ogres who just became Enri's subordinates. Since not much time had passed since, their loyalty was questionable. The village could not be left to them alone. Thus more than half of the goblins stayed behind.

"That's true. Just a bit more."

Even though they could see the wall of Carne Village, this was grassland with a clear line of sight. There was still quite some distance.

The carriage continued slowly along the path overgrown with grass.

How far had they gone? The goblin's apprehensive voice reached Enri's ears.

"Enri-no-Nee-san. Look there."

"Eh?"

The goblin next to her pointed outwards. Looking there, Enri saw a covered carriage in the corner of her vision. The carriage dashing through the grasslands

was pulled by two black horses. Enri did not know anything about such a carriage. And protecting it were four knights. No, were they knights?

There were four horses of different colours, red, white, blue and black. Those that rode on top of them hid their faces with hoods, preventing any features from being seen. If one looked at them, they seemed to exude a strange air, but they had a lack of presence.

“What is that....”

“...Have you seen the girl riding it before?”

Enri squinted and tried to see who was driving the carriage. However there were quite some distance, she could not tell at all.

“...I don't know.”

“Is that so.... We'll hide for a bit.”

“Ah, yes, please do.”

Of course, even though they were hiding, there were no hiding spots except inside the carriage. The most they could do was move the stuff the villagers used, like new cloths, and other luggage that had piled up. The rider on his wolf separated from the carriage, stopped running, and crouched down in the grass.

As they were doing this, that unfamiliar carriage seemed to have noticed Enri, changed directions and headed for them.

Unease welled up in Enri's chest. However that unease immediately disappeared. The person driving the carriage was a woman. She had recognised that face.

“Lupusregina-san!”

“Cheeze. Enri-san.”

The woman who was controlling the carriage that came up to them was a maid of Ainz, and a shining beauty at that. Enri greeted Lupusregina. In contrast to the dirt path that Enri was travelling on, Lupusregina's carriage was running through the grass.

The difference between the two was overwhelming.

That difference was due to the different in the number, and quality of the horses.

“...That is an amazing horse.”

“? That certainly may be so. It is an Iron Horse Golem of Ainz-sama’s.”

Iron Horse Golems.

The giant horses covered in full plate barding were the same nonliving creatures as the stone golems in Enri’s village. Since they had a strong body and armour, such horses could charge straight into the enemy ranks, but they did not have much firepower.

Hearing that they were golems, Enri recalled the strength of the stone golems. If one had two of such horses, they could easily dash through the grasslands. Even if it would cause the blown away grass to stick to the carriage wheels.

Enri looked between the horse and the covered carriage. By then, the goblin felt that there was no need to hide and returned to Enri’s side.

“It has been a while, Lupusregina-san.”

“Oh! Isn’t it goblin-san, cheeze.”

“I will ask in place of Enri-no-Nee-san, but what happened today?”

“Nee-san....?” Lupusregina’s gaze fluttered. “Ah, I came to deliver stuff Enri-san asked for.”

“Already?”

Enri was surprised. She then sighed in relief. She felt that it was right to go sell the herbs.

“Eh, I thought faster was better. Also Ainz-sama said to give it to you quickly.”

Enri squinted as if Lupusregina’s smiling face was blinding. She even thought to herself that she should stop making that smile that was as bright as the sun.

Ever since Ainz brought the stone golems, most of the villagers treated Lupusregina as a friend. Thus Enri had some interactions with her. Enri felt that she could be called a friend.

“Then, will you be going to the village?”

“Yup.”

“Then, are you coming with them?”

At the end of Enri’s gaze, were four knights mounting four different coloured horses a distance away.

“Ah, I intend to have them wait here.”

“Eh? Are they not Lupusregina-san’s acquaintances? I do not mind if they come with you.”

“No, rather than acquaintances.... They are guards, guards. They are my immediate guards created by Ainz-sama. They are stronger than me.”

Enri did not know how strong Lupusregina was, but she knew that the goblins could not touch her. Thus how strong were the four knights on the hill. And how strong was the great magic caster Ainz who could create them.

“Are they about as strong as the Death Knight?”

For just an instant, Lupusregina made a shocked face and then smiled broadly.

“That’s true. They’re about there.”

“Hmm, is that so.”

Excluding Ainz, the strongest thing Enri knew was the Death Knight, so it was natural to bring it up. Enri also did not know how strong Lupusregina was either.

“But, the earlier thing, we can’t do that. If we bring them near the village everyone will be scared.”

“That may be true.”

While thinking about what would happen, Enri agreed.

Due to the fact that the villagers were used to seeing monsters like goblins and ogres, she felt that they would be fine. However it would be true that they would panic. She did not want to cause pandemonium. They even came from the other side (of the main gate).

“Umm then, I want to pass you some things, can you tell me if there is a place that is spacious but not easily visible?”

“How about inside my house?”

“Ah.” Lupusregina pointed at the covered carriage. “Magic weapons and armour will change shape based on the wearer, but normal armour needs some adjustments. There are blacksmiths inside. I don’t want them to be seen by the villagers.”

“Is that so....”

As they were hidden inside the covered carriage, Enri made an audible gulp as she wondered who was inside.

“Then I think you can use our house.”

“Ah, that’s true. Goblin-san’s house is quite large.”

“Is that so? Then please lead me there.”

“Of course. Then shall I head there first?”

“Ah, are you flying over there?”

“...Please spare me that. I cannot go that fast, and if I fall I will get hurt.”

“Well that’s true. Then we’ll head there first, Enri-san.”

“Yes. Understood.”

Handing over the things the villagers asked for, Enri arrived at the building the goblins were staying in, about thirty minutes after Lupusregina.

Since the ogres were their subordinates, the goblins had enlarged their quarters, thus becoming the largest building in the village. Since they designed it so that the ogres could rampage with no consequences, rather than a house it felt like a rectangular box.

As Enri moved closer, the goblins sitting next to the door so large that even an ogre could pass through frantically stood up.

“Enri-no-Nee-san! Welcome back!”

“Welcome back!”

At the loud greeting, Enri silently bowed her head.

Enri felt herself blush. It was honestly very embarrassing and she wanted to do something about it, but neither the goblins nor ogres agreed. The goblin leader said that this was necessary for morale, causing Enri to give up.

“Umm, can I come in?”

“Of course, Nee-san!”

The goblins leaned in to open the door. Since it was at a size that the ogres could pass through, it was quite heavy. Enri could open it, but it would have required quite a bit of effort.

She entered through the open door.

The inside was dim. Since the windows were covered, no light could make it in. Goblins and ogres had night vision and thus were not affected by this, but Enri found it difficult to walk.

“Umm....”

Enri groped around for the small stick. Finding it, Enri chanted the keyword.

“Shine.”

A white light cleaved open the darkness. It was a magic item that had <Continual Light> cast on it.

The ones running towards Enri were caught by the light, saw Enri’s face and bowed deeply.

“Welcome back! Nee-san.”

“Welcome back!”

“Well come back, Ane-san.”

Hearing the goblins and the ogres’ voices, Enri bobbed her head and asked.

“Where did Lupusregina-san go?”

“Yes, I’ll lead you.”

Guided by the goblin, she walked through the wide room.

The goblins’ house was split into three— The centre and the wings. One side

was the goblins' quarters and the other was the ogres'. She was brought to the centre part. Inside there. As she approached it, she felt a stifling heat in the normally cool environment.

"This is?"

"Yes. This is the heat from the working blacksmith that Lupusregina-san brought."

If she focused she could hear the faint sound of hammering. As Enri put away the magic item, the goblin opened the door. As he did, the intensity of the heat multiplied and slammed into Enri's face.

Light shone in.

This was the courtyard of the house, and was where the goblins and ogres swung their swords. There was no problem doing so in the village, but that was not a good thing, and it was dangerous if children were around. Thus they did it here.

Since it was used for this purpose, most of the goblins and ogres had assembled in this widest area of the house.

"Oi everyone! Nee-san returned! All at once!"

Matching the goblin leader's voice—

[Welcome back!]

Countless deep voices mixed together, forming a noise that reached Enri's ears.

"Yes, I'm back."

When Enri bowed her head, a beautiful voice reached her ears.

"Made you wait, Enri-no-Nee-san."

"Please stop that, Lupusregina-san...."

"Ahahaha. No, it suits you, Enri-no-Nee-san."

Being said that it suited her, Enri felt ambivalent, but she decided that it was Lupusregina's joke and puffed up her cheeks in dissatisfaction.

Then Enri's dissatisfaction was blown away by the sound of metal clashing. She looked in the direction of the heat source in surprise.

Standing there were two flaming creatures wielding hammers. Their bodies were covered in crimson scales, with licks of flame seeping out from the gaps. Their lower halves were that of snakes, and their upper bodies were like lizards.

The two of them were hammering a breastplate. The place where they touched it would slowly turn red, and they would hit it while it was in that state.

Enri was enamoured by the sight as she listened to Lupusregina's explanation.

"They are Salamander Blacksmiths."

They were the blacksmiths that Lupusregina had mentioned earlier, and Enri looked at the monsters in awe.

"...Anyway, we promised five steel breastplates and five greatswords for the ogres. Six high quality steel machetes for the goblins and thirteen high quality steel chain shirts. All ready."

"Thank you very much."

Enri bowed her head, and handed the bag with large amounts of gold coins — Over five kilograms of it, over to Lupusregina.

"I have enough money to pay back the money I received from Ainz-sama. I believe I have collected the proper amount, so please check it."

"Wow, certainly." Without checking the contents, Lupusregina swung it over her shoulder. And in response to the Enri's gaze full of emotion, she smiled. "The amount of coin inside.... It's fine to not care. As long as you returned the money Ainz-sama lent you, it's fine."

In actuality, if she tried to buy the equipment Lupusregina had brought, the amount Enri had was not enough. It would not have been remotely possible. Enri could only get such equipment due to Ainz's grace.

When Enri did her job, Ainz might have been fine with giving her 200 gold coins. However, Ainz was not that generous. He wanted to know if she would get the money herself, or plead with him for it. In that aspect, it was a test.

“Ainz-sama said that as long as you collected 100 gold coins, it would be enough to pass you the equipment. Enri-san. You have passed Ainz-sama’s test.”

Taken back by Lupusregina’s sudden change in tone, Enri somehow nodded. Smiling at the small animal-like Enri, Lupusregina’s atmosphere returned to her usual.

“Umm then I shall leave this carriage here.”

Lupusregina left the courtyard—

“—Enri-no-Nee-san.”

The goblin leader stood in front of Enri with an obedient face. Behind him stood the goblins and ogres.

“Thank you very much for working hard for us!”

[Thank you very much!]

Words of gratitude were simultaneously thrown at Enri. They then bowed their head together.

“You don’t have thank me that much.”

In a frantic, Enri waved her hands in front of her. But then the goblin leader spoke to her with deep gratitude.

“What are you talking about? Having you use the money you risked your life for to equip us.... No matter how much we thank you, it will not be enough.”

“Really, this is too much. It is normal to prepare equipment for those who fight.”

Several of the goblins were about to cry.

Enri thought that they did not need to feel that grateful. It was natural to support those who fought to the best of one’s abilities. It should be that way as it is thanks to them that the village could be defended.

The fact that they were that moved made her want to apologise even more.

“We have certainly felt Nee-san’s heart. We shall show you better results with these new weapons!”

[We will show you!]

“Ah.... Hahaha, umm.... Yes, I’ll look forward to it.”

“Thus, to everyone, I have brought a present.”

“Lu, Lupusregina-san?!”

When did she return? Behind Enri was a brightly smiling Lupusregina.

Next to her was a bare greatsword. The blade shone with a pale white light. It was not reflecting any light, and was in fact radiating it.

Enri then heard such swords through stories.

“....Could this be a magic sword?”

“It seems so. It’s not particularly strong, but it is a magic sword.”

In response to Enri’s worry, Lupusregina’s response was clear. This conversation proved that their perceptions of the sword’s value were completely different.

Enri heard that answer and mumbled.

“We do not have the money to pay for this....”

Even the lowest level of magic weapons were several times more costly than regular weapons. They are not easily bought.

“Ah you don’t have to mind that. Earlier.... Quite a bit earlier, we had the chance to collect a lot of magic items.... Well we adjusted it’s appearance so it’s fine.”

She did not understand Lupusregina’s last few words, but basically it was free.

Enri was confused. There was really no reason for her to not accept it free, except that she could not understand Lupusregina’s goal. There were no such things as free lunches after all.

However....

“Thank you very much. Please tell this to Ainz-sama.”

“Yes. Understood.... However, I don’t mean this in a bad way, but are you

rejecting it?”

It was true that Enri thought about refusing at first. However—

“I heard that there are monsters that can only be defeated with magic weapons. I shall remember this debt and pay it back.”

“Hmm. Your situational analysis is good.... And you know where to be cautious....”

“T, that is not true. It really is just by chance!”

Lupusregina looked seriously at the blushing Enri, and spoke in a voice that no one could hear.

“As expected of Ainz-sama. His evaluation of people is perfect.... She is not just a simple girl, I should raise my evaluation of her.”

Chapter 84: Gaiden - Do Your Best Enri-san! | Part 5

The E-Rantel adventuring party the [Axe of Cyclone] walked silently in a line across the road concealed by the grass.

The reason why they were walking in formation despite being in a location in which they had a clear view of their surroundings was probably a bad habit of their occupation. Other such bad habits included walking around in town in full plate armour and being equipped with their weapons even in inns.

While it was not exactly for defence, not letting their guard down even in an open space was the correct thing to do for adventurers. However, walking down a safe road without any obstructions in total silence as if it were natural was very mentally grating. They were not compelled to hold a conversation. However proceeding onwards while constantly being in such a state of caution somehow seemed wrong.

And the ranger of the Axe of Cyclone who was walking in front, Lukrut, was also thinking the same thing. Lukrut turned around and talked to his companions.

“Hey, why are we walking in a straight line?”

“...I wonder why?”

“...It’s strange.”

“...Because we might be attacked.”

Lukrut’s eyebrow twitched. However he maintained his composure—

“No, that’s impossible.”

—Saying that lightheartedly, Lukrut looked around. Spread out before him was grassland. Not even the shadow of a monster could be seen.

“I think this every time but is it not strange that we walk through the town in formation?”

“...Because we might be attacked.”

“No way in hell! By whom! If we were high ranked that might be true. But we

are nothing!”

“Caution should be taken at all times....”

As the druid Dyne replied, his face had an expression of [No way] written all over it.

“There are times we should, and times we should not! Now is not the time to do it right?”

“No, a dragon might suddenly appear from afar and attack us.”

Ninya, who replied to Lukrut, was a spellcaster and was not physically strong. It was clear how she did not want to use any unnecessary effort.

“What sort of shit story is that. That’s normally impossible Ninya!”

“Impossible. I have not heard of any dragons near E-Rantel.”

“Right?”

“But.... What should we do while walking?”

The team leader, the fighter, Peter’s words caused Lukrut to fall silent. As he was simply not happy with silently walking, he did not consider any possible answer to his words.

“We should....”

“We should?”

“We should?”

“We should?”

While their timing was off, they all asked the same question.

“Talk about the surroundings would be nice....”

“Like how it’s sunny today?”

“Walking underneath the warm sun makes me feel sleepy. Something like that.”

“....Are you all teasing me?”

“That’s not true, Lukrut. You were a good friend.”

“Why past tense! Anyway, what did I do!”

Silence returned. Lukrut groaned as if pressurised by it.

“This guy....”

“...I personally do not think that it is a bad job.”

“The reward is quite low.”

At that Lukrut understood that his comrades were unhappy and he scrunched up his face.

“You accepted this job right?”

“Well, it’s not a bad job right? It’s just going over to Carne Village for a look....”

As Lukrut’s voice trailed off, his comrades sent cold gazes towards him.

“The reward is almost nothing.”

“Why did you accept this job?”

“There seems to be a beautiful busty woman amongst the priests of the Water God.”

Silence fell once again, and the gazes on Lukrut extended past the realm of “cold” and had reached “freezing”.

“But! While the reward is little, we can earn their gratitude so it is not bad right!”

“True.”

“Yes. But if we want to earn someone’s gratitude then a higher ranking priest would be better.”

“...Well, it is not bad to hear about Carne Village’s situation.”

“As expected of our leader!”

Ignoring Lukrut’s cries of joy, Ninya and Dyne nodded at Peter’s words.

The knights of the Empire attacked the villages near E-Rantel. Anyone living near E-Rantel with a bit of situational awareness would know this information.

However as adventurers they would act to gain even more information. There was a rumour that the ones who attacked were not actually knights of the Empire and another that someone killed all the knights who attacked.

And those fake knights of the Empire were said to have been killed in Carne Village. This information was credible enough to have the label of truth stuck onto it.

“It’s our first job in a while, but it’s nothing much.”

“Right?”

“Oh, don’t forget. We also need to check on the recruitment that the village head is doing.”

Looking at Lukrut with cold gazes, Ninya and Dyen solemnly nodded.

The request that the priest made of Lukrut this time round was to see if the recruitment of new villagers in Carne Village was taking place properly.

When they were attacked by the fake knights of the Empire, some of the villagers made it out alive. More than half of those fortunate souls escaped to E-Rantel.

Villages are analogous to humans. It would be appropriate to say that a human had organs like a village was comprised of certain groups of villagers. Should important organs be lost, humans would die, and in the case of villages it would result in the dispersal of the village.

If those villagers had relatives in the surrounding villages they would go there. If not they would rely on E-Rantel.

The priests were the ones to help. Children without relatives or villagers who had their livelihoods stolen from them. Those that were originally supposed to be taken in by the government were instead helped by the priests. Of course the priests could not prepare residences nor new jobs. They could only be taken in for a short period of time and help with the priests as the priests worked with the government to find new jobs for them.

The reason E-Rantel did this was because it was a city with an excellent mayor. Depending on the noble governing the city, some would not provide any

sort of aid.

It was normal for villages that had lost a lot of people but still maintained the form of a village to recruit other villagers to repopulate it.

This was natural.

When the number of people decreased, several problems would pop up. Villages were a world of role allocation and mutual assistance. As the number of people decreased the ability of the whole village decreased as a whole, causing a hole to open up in the system.

Thus there was a need to rapidly increase their population. Marriage and having children took too long.

It was true that the fastest method was the merger of villages. However this would bring about many problems.

The largest problem would be factional disputes. Villages were a world onto themselves. Should they merge the chance that they would mix together peacefully was low. Normally, until they could trust each other, friction would occur. At worst the merged village would have two powers governing it.

In addition villages that had lower numbers had the possibility of being absorbed.

Thus recruitment. One would recruit families one by one.

The jobs of the members of the Axe of Cyclone was to check that such recruitment did not infringe on the law. While it was a job that was important to the lives of villagers, the reward was low as it was a secret job of intel collection.

However it was at most looking at the village and talking to the village chief. To put it simply, they were messengers. It was natural for his other comrades to sulk when heard that he had accepted a job suited for the lowest rank F-Class adventurers.

However adventurers were not that free to bear that dissatisfaction forever.

As they voiced their dissatisfaction, most of it was dispersed after teasing Lukrut. After their mood had improved, they walked towards Carne Village in a

line.

“Hah....”

Despite that, Ninya made a tired sigh. Dyne was walking directly behind him and asked in worry.

“Shall we rest?”

“No, I am fine.”

“The less cautious we are, the faster we are. Lukrut. How far is it to Carne Village?”

“In terms of distance just a bit more. We should be able to see it after we get over that hill.”

Lukrut pointed at a small hill that was 100 metres in front of them. Being able to see his goal made him pull out an unbelievable amount of energy.

Ninya put energy into her footsteps now that they had purpose.

They climbed the hill. And then they stopped moving.

“What is that?”

Ninya gasped in surprise. No, even the other three showed expressions of surprised as they saw this scene.

“Is that....”

“A fortress....”

It was a wall firmly planted into the grasslands. This was an extremely unusual scene.

It was true that they had often seen villages surrounded by walls. However none had been as large or sturdy as this. It was a strong one made of stone.

“Oi oi, what now?”

Lukrut saw this extremely unusual situation and asked the others.

“They said it was a simple village.... Carne Village.”

“It is well known for its herbs but.... I heard nothing of them being able to make such a wall.”

What was this?

Everyone's faces expressed these words.

It was a completely impossible feat for normal villages to build such a wall. However in front of their eyes was a sturdy wall. They looked at each other, praying that someone had a reasonable answer to the strange situation playing out before them. However after tens of seconds passed, no one spoke.

Thus Peter made his decision.

"We should hide and watch. When you have an idea say something."

Following Peter's orders, the members of the Axe of Cyclone returned to halfway up the hill to hide themselves. They were not that foolish to openly talk in a wide area like a grassland.

They looked at each other and spoke their thoughts.

"1! Carne Village is protected by a strong wall!"

"...2. Some military force came and built it."

"3.... 3.... I got nothing."

"...4. The villagers worked hard.... And there is only a wall on the side facing us."

Everyone stopped moving and focused on Peter.

"That's it!"

"That has the highest probability. If the village is completely covered then it will be difficult to recruit any new villagers."

"True. It's strength can be called into question."

"Then, what."

They all fell into deep thought.

Their surroundings were grassland. There was nowhere to hide. It was easy for them to be found, but also easy for them to search around. Thus there was the possibility that they could check if the wall was sturdy if they looked around it.

Seeing everyone's hope-filled gazes, Ninya spoke.

"...I have no confidence in my knowledge in architecture you know?"

"If only we could fly over invisibly...."

"We could buy a scroll? It costs quite a lot."

"Quite out of our budget...."

"We can't ask for something we don't have. Lukrut. How about sneakily scouting the surroundings?"

"Mostly impossible. Most of us can't tell if the wall is weak or not you know?"

"With all of us?"

"...Maybe not. If 2 was the right answer then this place is dangerous."

All of them fell into thought and looked at their leader Peter. Their eyes showed hope that he could lead them to a conclusion.

Peter thought seriously for about one minute and came up with an idea.

"...We should check if there are any villagers."

All of them excluding Peter all raised cries of agreement. While this was passive, this was the safest option they had.

"So we check around?"

"Ah, Lukrut, take a look around. It's not clear what type of situation this is."

"Got it."

The four members of the Axe of Cyclone moved around the surroundings of Carne Village to observe it.

Since the village stood completely above the grasslands there were few places to hide and while they could not completely hide themselves, they moved in a manner so as to not attract attention.

This was extremely nerve wracking but it could not be helped. This was an action born from the possibility that a hostile armed group was inside the village.

They went to the other side and confirmed the existence of several large

fields.

They saw the figures of several working villagers.

The Axe of Cyclone all sighed in relief.

Anyhow they had confirmed the presence of the villagers.

They observed the village meticulously to confirm that the village was not controlled by parties like the Empire's soldiers.

Through their examination of the area, they did not feel that the villagers were mistreated or tired. They saw them slowly doing fieldwork while singing farmwork songs.

"There is no problem...."

"True. There seems to be nothing going on.... However, this wall seems to be sturdy. It's not weak."

"Then, since it's close to the Great Forest, wasn't this here due to caution."

"That seems proper, Ninya?"

"Hmm, this seems new but.... At this distance I can only tell so much."

"What should we do, Peter?"

"...Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Let's go." (ED Note: a Japanese/Chinese proverb was used here, which literally translates to if one does not enter the tiger's den, one cannot get the tiger cub.)

"Got it. How cautious should we be?"

Peter thought about Dyne's words and made a wry smile.

"It would be awkward to be so on guard. Let's relax."

"True. That seems good."

Hearing Ninya's agreement, Lukrut and Dyne nodded. They did have some worries, but it would be bad if the other party thought they were hostile.

The members of the Axe of Cyclone did not come for a fight, and wanted to do their job properly.

With Peter at the head, they made a formation and headed towards the

village on a mostly unused road.

The wheat fields on the sides of the road were a lush green and shook as the wind blew by. They walked through in a line. If one looked from afar it would look as if they were walking through the sea.

“Hn?”

Lukrut was the second in line raised a strange sound and looked in the fields. The wheat was not ready to be harvested but was over seventy centimetres in length. Of course, it was impossible to see through the sea-like field.

“What’s wrong?”

Ninya was walking at the back and asked in a worried voice.

“Hn? No, might have been my imagination?”

Lukrut tilted his head slightly and rushed forward to close the gap with Peter. Ninya looked in the direction Lukrut looked in, checked that nothing moved, and rushed forward as well.

Peter was silent, but he made a friendly smile and moved closer to the village.

As he did so, he made eye contact with a girl who looked curiously at him. She was standing alone in a field that was the closest to Peter— The field furthest from the village.

The girl was cute but was just outside the region of being extremely beautiful. She looked bright, and by the standards of a village, she was quite the looker.

The dirty apron clad on her figure made it clear that she was in the midst of farmwork.

“Hello.”

Peter gently raised his hands and raised a warm voice. As he did so his grip left his weapons. This was to appeal that they had no hostility to them.

In response, the girl curiously turned her head and cupped a hand around

her ear.

Peter frowned slightly and again— In a louder voice than earlier, shouted.

“Hello!”

The girl did not reply. Her face without makeup was strained as she kept her hand cupped around her ear.

“She probably is unable to hear us.”

“...Could it be that she is deaf?”

“It seems that she is doing fieldwork in the furthest and least convenient place. It might be that.”

“Life in a village is tough.... Tyranny over the weak....”

“I don’t want to go through that.”

Several of his friends spoke in lowered voices from behind him.

“Then would it be best to pass through?”

“Maybe.”

As they spoke, the girl gestured to Peter to come closer. The speed at which she beckoned him was like a dog wagging its tail.

“What should we do?”

“It would be bad to refuse. Hey, look.”

Pointed out by Dyne, Peter cautiously looked at the surroundings and saw that the villagers had stopped working at were gazing at Peter’s group. It was not rare for ostracism to occur in the frontiers, and Peter heard of such cases before.

That could be what is happening, they decided.

“I do not think that we should take any hostile actions towards them.”

“Agreed. Our side should be stronger but, why must we care so much about this stuff.”

“It can’t be helped. This is a chance to spread the name of the Axe of Cyclone. If we consider the consequences, we should be friendly to them.”

“True. It can’t be helped. I’ll go to the field.”

Leaving the three, Peter stepped foot in the field.

As he cut through the wheat field and moved closer to the girl, his foot felt a strange weight on it. Then a low voice spoke to him.

“Uh-uh, stop there, Nii-san.”

In a panic, Peter looked in the direction of the voice and saw a small creature completely wrapped in wheat as camouflage in the wheat field. Since it was hidden by wheat, he could not see its face but it was not human.

The blade that creature held was pierced through the joint in his leg armour. This caused his leg to freeze up.

“Wha-!”

Surprised, Peter raised a warning cry. Or at least he tried to—

“Sorry bout this, but could you please remove your weapons?”

A small voice came from a different location. As he looked there, there was another one at the foot of the worried girl. No, not just there. Peter also felt a presence from behind him.

“Using a girl as bait.... Ah.”

“...You’re wrong. Nee-san became bait for us.”

Peter did not understand what was said and wanted to clarify when the creature spoke to him.

“Hey, remove your weapons. Could you tell this to the others behind you? I don’t want to fill them with arrows. It’s not clear who you guys are.”

Peter hesitated, and felt that he could negotiate with this creature.

It was painful to surrender without resisting to a demihuman, but doing so without understanding the situation would be a foolish action.

“Will you spare us?”

“Of course. If you surrender.”

While he did hesitate, Peter knew that he did not have time and made an

immediate decision. Should they engage like this, Peter's Axe of Cyclone would be in an extremely disadvantageous situation. Thus he needed to tell this to the other members.

"Everyone! Sorry. Surrender and take off your weapons!"

After Peter said that he raised his hands above his head. Seeing that, the members of the Axe of Cyclone were confused. They did not understand what happened for them to suddenly receive such instructions. However while their comrade told them to remove their weapons, there was no way they would immediately agree.

They probably felt confused. With a shuffling sound, two demihumans stood up from the field.

"—Goblins."

Ninya whispered.

The demihumans stood up. They were goblins that they had often seen. They carried drawn bows and were gazing at them with sharp eyes.

Should they fight?

Ninya, Lukrut and Dyne looked at each other. Goblins as a race were shorter, lighter and less bulky than humans. While they did have night vision and attacking at night was dangerous, under the sunlight they were not opponents that the Axe of Cyclone could not handle.

With such opponents, they had the confidence to help even if Peter was taken hostage.

However there was a reason why they could not immediately decide.

These goblins felt different from the one the Axe of Cyclone always faced. If they had to put into words, the goblins before them felt trained.

It was not rare for goblins to use ambushes by hiding in the surroundings. However the figure of the goblins readying their bows were extremely orderly. They were completely different from the time when they adventured with the now famous Momon.

If those were children with sticks, these were warriors used to their bows.

Like how humans could train to get stronger, so could monsters. Even for demihumans like goblins, this was natural.

The goblins in front of them were far stronger than goblins the members of the Axe of Cyclone had faced before.

Their hesitation had brought them luck. Hearing a sound different from the wind rushing past the field, Lukrut frantically looked behind him.

“...Hehe, so we were found.”

A goblin showed its face from the field and stuck out its tongue. He was trying to close in on them from behind, but he was not stealthy enough to fool the ranger Lukrut.

If they looked around they would see some other things hiding in the wheat field.

“...We’re surrounded.”

“We’ll surrender. It is dangerous to do anything without knowing their numbers.”

“...How about forcing our way through.”

Because they could trust each other— The three could then together could not make a decision. This was as they would immediately follow their leader’s orders.

However what finally ended their hesitation was the opening of the gates and seeing what lay behind.

“That is.... What....?”

“Ogres!”

“Hey, what is that....!”

What they saw were the figures of ogres that they knew well. However they were wearing metal armour. In their hands were giant greatswords. The shine on their blades showed that they were well sharpened.

There were five ogres wearing first rate items. After the gate opened, they ran towards the three of them. Each of their steps was wide, and their fast

speed felt abnormal.

Including the goblins, their chance of victory was low. Perhaps even non-existent. Panic created unrest, unrest becomes confusion. However, they could not always be confused.

The three of them completely understood this and raised their hands above their heads.

“—We’ll surrender.”



“We are really sorry!”

[—Sorry!]

Those were the first words of the girl called Enri. What followed were the words of apology by the goblins.

Seeing their uniformly bowed heads made one feel a sense of discipline from them.

Since demihumans like goblins and ogres often faced humans, they were often hunted by adventurers. Since they had often killed without hesitation, taking this attitude from these demihumans now made them feel unpleasant.

It was a truth that Peter could not avoid.

Peter looked at the goblins in front of him.

A goblin that looked like a spellcaster and a buff goblin that held a magic greatsword. And the rest that were equipped with high quality equipment.

The image of goblins they had had up to now crumbled in their minds. Perhaps they should call the goblins the ones that pierced through their ignorance and made them widen their view of the world.

While Peter did not speak, all of them were thinking the same thing.

If they fought they would die. How could such strong goblins exist.

“...Ah it’s fine so please raise your heads.”

“How could I, I treated the ones who came to check on the village like this.”

“Well, it can’t be helped. Yes, lots of things happened, and it’s natural to be cautious.”

Peter laughed. However his face had some darkness in them. This was as they had lost. And they did so without being able to lift a finger in resistance.

Adventurers risked their lives to chase their dreams. Basically their journey was always dangerous.

Thus defeat always led to death. They had surrendered in this meeting with the goblins as they had felt that they could survive, but if they fought they would have won only in their dreams.

Yes. Peter felt his confidence in his strength shake.

To adventurers, the number one reason to retreat was the [Fear of Death]. While he had heard of this, he still did not understand their rationale, but at this instant, he felt it.

However he did not lose all his will that he would give up on this job. Peter forced a smile and asked Enri.

“Anyway what should we do?”

They were in the wheat field from earlier. After the questions and distrust had ended, there was no reason to stay here.

“Yes. So I shall inform the village chief.”

“Yes, please do.”

Seeing the retreating figure of Enri, Peter changed his tone and asked the boss-like goblin with a magic sword.

“Are you all usually this cautious?”

Knowing that he was referring to the goblins hiding in the field, the goblin made a thin smile.

“How could we. We saw you all checking around suspiciously, so we had the villagers assemble and wait. Should you choose to do anything, you would approach them right? Thus we made a trap.”

“So you turned the villagers into bait.”

It was true that if came to get hostages, they had to get close to the villagers. If they were not the type to do so, they would not move in the surroundings like that.

At Peter's words, the goblins made uncomfortable faces.

"Thus you turned that girl into bait. You're good. Inviting us closer using the excuse of her hearing. And the field. You knew that we would not send everyone."

Lukrut spat out those words. Hearing this, the goblin leader bared his teeth and made a dissatisfied face.

"Hey hey, it seems you are misunderstanding something. We would never let Enri-no-Nee-san meet danger."

Nee-san.

As those words made the members of the Axe of Cyclone feel some dissonance, the goblin leader continued.

"Please don't misunderstand. Even if Nee-san wanted to become bait, we only did it out of necessity."

"True, if it is that girl then we would lower our guard...."

"Oi oi, you don't believe it? It's natural if you think about it. Who could use their master as bait."

"Ha?"

"...What did you say? Just now...."

"Master?"

"Why are you so surprised? That person, Enri-sama, is the master of us goblins and ogres."

An extremely small cry of surprise came from the members of the Axe of Cyclone.

"Impossible! That simple village girl?"

Her footsteps and body looked completely like a regular person. That girl who could not defeat the Axe of Cyclone commanded the goblin troop.

It was natural to think that it was impossible. There was no way they could accept this.

“Understood! She is the one in charge of negotiations due to her face right?”

At Ninya’s words, the goblin leader made a broad grin.

“No way right. If Nee-san seriously wished for us to die, we would. We all believe that you know?”

They felt no lies in the goblin leader’s words. They were different from his earlier words, with a certain gravity to them.

The members of the Axe of Cyclone were at a loss for words. The goblin leader continued further.

“Nee-san even strengthened our weapons. Look at the ogre’s armour and weapons. And our weapons. There is no way one can get it with their face right.”

The armour the goblins and ogres wore were all better than what the members of the Axe of Cyclone had. Then the girl Enri who was able to collect such items must have something to her.

The goblin leader gave them a further push.

“This magic greatsword was given to Enri-no-Nee-san by a person who saw her as important.”

“Impossible....”

“It does not have a lot of magic.... But a present....”

This was strange.

The Axe of Cyclone all thought this, but did not say it.

Magic swords were expensive. For the cheapest ones, low ranked adventurers like them could try to pawn all their items and use all their rewards but still be unable to purchase one.

Basically she had the worth that made it simple to give her such items or had connections. Who was that girl called Enri? As such thoughts filled their heads—

“I have made you all wait!”

“Hii!”

“Uo!”

“Uwa!”

“Oo!”

“...Is something wrong?”

Seeing Peter and the rest who looked like their hearts flew out of their mouths, Enri asked. All of them looked at her breathlessly.

“...Did something happen?”

“No, nothing of the sort!”

“Yes. So let’s go.”

“Yes. There is no reason to speak more than this.”

“That is the case.”

The tone of the four of them changed. The one who changed the most would be Lukrut.

The four of them gazed strangely at Enri and decided that it was impossible for them to find out who she was and recalled there was a job they had to do. The four of them were guided to the village.



The guard in the station looked out of the window in a daze.

Today at this time the number of people leaving and entering were low. Thus he had plenty of free time.

As he made small talk with the other guards, one of them recalled something and spoke.

“Yes yes, this is the recent hot topic.... Did you hear? There seems to be a mercenary group staying in Carne Village.”

“Carne Village?”

The guard heard this name and immediately recalled.

There was no way he could forget the name of the girl who left such a deep impression. Seeing him make a small sigh, the other guard interpreted it as him lacking interest and continued talking.

“Some adventurers went to Carne Village and said that there was a mercenary group made of demihumans run by a young girl.”

“Demihumans?”

“Ah, it seems that she commands the ogre and goblin mercenaries.”

“Ogres and goblins?”

The guard was shocked and looked at his comrade.

“You’re surprised too? Turning such things with low intelligence into subordinates.”

At his friend who did not take it seriously, another guard who was listening by the side spoke.

“How naive.”

“About what?”

“Goblins and ogres certainly are stupid. The basis of their decisions are if something is strong or weak. But they themselves are strong you know?”

“True?”

Ogres were existences that towered over humans. Their basic abilities were far different from humans. If one did not train extensively in the sword, a one on one victory would be ridiculous.

“Oi oi.” Hearing his comrade’s simple answer, the guard made a wry smile and explained further. “If we ourselves were that strong, we would become amazing guards. Even one ogre requires several of us to defeat.”

The guard who spoke first made a look of surprise.

“I see. Then that’s true. Ogres are stronger than regular humans. But for goblins it’s....”

“Naive....” Another guard shook his head. “The strengths are goblins have a large range. Some have the ability to use magic.... And did you hear? About the legend of the Goblin King?”

“Ah!”

As the guard recalled a ridiculous but popular story, he raised a voice of understanding.

In the story, the goblin king fought a dragon and easily earned victory everywhere it went. It challenged more powerful existences riding on the dragon, and made a child with a human princess.

As it was a story, his weapon was also fitting for one. It was a branch cut off from a giant japanese ash.

“...But isn’t it a story?”

“No, well yes. I heard this a long time ago. There are strong goblins. But they are nothing compared to the king. If you look down upon them you will regret it. Aren’t there also existences like hobgoblins?”

“I see. True. Not judging based on one’s appearance is part of our job.” The guard nodded and frowned. “Then if that woman is not an idiot, and being able to rule over goblins and ogres of unknown power.... She should be quite powerful.”

“Yes. Even thinking of it simply, she can control several ogres. It would be best to think that she is strong.”

From what was originally a foolish woman, she became someone who had the strength to command ogres and goblins, causing one of the guards to cry out in alarm.

“What is that woman. How strong is she?”

“Since she can control ogres and goblins, in terms of adventurers.... She should be A? Could a B do it? I’m not clear.”

Turning away from what his comrades were talking about, the guard retreated into his mind. What he recalled was the girl he met back then.

Enri.

She was probably the woman who commanded the ogres and goblins. No, there were others who could, but it was not wrong to think that the possibility was extremely low.

She had enough raw strength to command. Especially when controlling those with low intelligence, power was necessary.

There was also the proof that Enri had the raw power needed to command ogres and goblins.

“BloodStained Enri....”

Of course, this was nothing more than his imagination.

He simply recalled his delusion when he imagined her living a life drenched in blood.

Yes, this was nothing more than a silver of his imagination.

—Until now.

If there was not anyone to hear his words.

If there were not those who felt that his words held actual meaning and truth.

Then the following would not have happened.

—There was a mercenary group in Carne Village.

—Their boss was called BloodStained Enri.

She employed ogres and goblins.

E-Rantel was a city that is a fortress at the frontline. Thus their topic of conversations were completely different from what other cities would have. Especially when the authorities did not censor information of strong people or mercenary groups, it was easy for such information to flow around.

The topic of the mysterious mercenary leader appearing in Carne Village burned through like wildfire.

When this information reached certain ears—

“...Did you know? There seems to be a mercenary leader in Carne Village

called [BloodStained] Enri.”

Making a loud forceful whistle with a “puhii”, the Mayor of E-Rantel Panasolei Gruze Vauner Rettermaier asked the Guildmaster Pluton who was sitting in front of him.

“Eeh, I did.”

[BloodStained] Enri.

She was the commander of a goblin and ogre mercenary troop and was currently staying in Carne Village. It was written that she was born in Carne Village, but there was no confirmation that they were the same person.

No, there was the record of a person called Enri, but nothing about someone like [BloodStained] Enri.

“So? Did we find her backstory?”

“No.”

Pluton shook his head. Ordered by Panasolei, he had ordered an investigation but nothing came up.

“Is that possible? If she commands mercenaries, she should be known by other mercenaries right?”

Panasolei made a high pitched whistle with his nose.

Yes. What Pluton order was the search of records of the person called [BloodStained] Enri. If there was a mercenary group that was comprised not of humans but of demihumans like ogres and goblins with a human commanding was an extremely eye catching thing. Thus they had believed that gaining such information was easy, but the reality was the opposite.

It was as if [BloodStained] Enri and the mercenary troop she commanded had appeared from thin air. Since it was such an eye catching group, it was almost impossible for there to be no records of it.

“I do not know.... If she had hid, there should be an extremely powerful backer supporting her.”

“....Does the Empire and [BloodStained] have a relationship? No, rather than

the Empire the Agrand Council? The Theocracy should have none, neither should Roble Kingdom.”

If it was a demihuman nation like the Council, Panasolei had heard about goblins and ogres in their ranks.

“...Lastly would be the possibility that they just formed. At this time, for unknown reasons, monsters are leaving the Great Forest. There has to be a relationship between this and her subordinate goblins and ogres.”

Panasolei silently listened to Pluton’s explanation and asked one question solemnly.

“Pluton.... Is it rare for magic casters to rule demihumans?”

“I do not fully understand what you mean, so I have no confidence in my answer.... But evil magic casters would have subordinates to protect them. Also goblins and ogres do have a tendency to obey the strong.”

Panasolei made another whistle with his nose and nodded in understanding.

“Then this will be fast. Recall when the Empire.... No the Theocracy caused pandemonium in the villages.”

Reading between the lines of that short conversation, understanding dawned on Pluton.

The great magic caster, Ainz Ooal Gown. He was probably equal to the Head Magic Caster of the Empire. The reason why such a powerful magic caster had went to save Carne Village was unknown.

Panasolei and Pluton were not such naive humans to believe that the great magic caster Ainz would act due to his generosity. Thus they had investigated why he had did so. However Panasolei was saying that there might be a connection here.

“...Did the powerful magic caster give [BloodStained] ogres and goblins as subordinates?”

“The possibility is high. We know that he used knight-like monsters.”

“Gazef-sama’s testimony....”

Pluton nodded. He thought this was the most likely.

“Basically when the great magic caster saved Carne Village it was to save [BloodStained].... No did he want to avoid activating [BloodStained]?”

“If she acted, he would bring her to E-Rantel for some reason. Then Ainz passed [BloodStained] the subordinate ogres and goblins.”

“...There is no contradiction. But then is [BloodStained] simply related to Ainz or does she have some special meaning to him.... Basically, it comes down to what she is....”

“...I had enough of this with Camila, but with [BloodStained] I get too many headaches.”

At Panasolei's wrung out voice, Pluton keenly agreed

“Agreed. There is too little information.”

“This is really....Dangerous.”

With another whistle from his nose, he made a tired sigh.

“Shall we use adventurers to collect information?”

Panasolei's eyes reflected Pluton as he shook his head. After some time passed, Panasolei spoke.

“...No let's not. Anyway the possibility that the monster magic caster Ainz Ooal Gown is behind her is high. There is no need to bait a dragon.”

“Then should we leave her alone?”

“But then....”

Panasolei hugged his head.

It was natural. She had a relationship with Ainz Ooal Gown. They did not even know if that was his real name nor his goals. There was far too little information.

As the person in charge of a place like E-Rantel that could become a battlefield, it was not strange for him to have information of powerhouses. Since there was a relationship with the person called Ainz, it was reasonable to think that she had some level of ability.

“However.... [BloodStained] Enri.... It’s too sudden.”

“Yes.” Pluton nodded. “.....If we search for information, we will deploy a lot of people, so we should stop, and it seems that the other cities have not heard of this name.”

“Stopping the investigation is correct. However....Why is her name only known in E-Rantel? No matter how much I think of this I don’t understand. What is her goal? Is there a reason to spread the name of [BloodStained]? I believe she is not hostile.... But I cannot predict anything.”

Panasolei sighed.

Since this much information was lacking, they could not read the actions of any party.

“Shall we move Momon?”

“...That.... Might be good.”

What appeared in their minds was an adventurer whose power was equally unknown as [BloodStained]. No well compared to the completely unknown [BloodStained], they had some knowledge about it. That completely unbelievable power.

Destroying a Skeletal Dragon with Complete Magical Immunity with sword, and being able to use the 3rd Tier of magic, a magic swordsman. He was an adventurer that was more powerful than anyone in E-Rantel.

He also had Artifact-level items and could fight with the amazingly powerful vampire—Camila. Lowest estimates would put him at the level of the 13 Heros, and was the owner of extreme power.

He was someone they were trying to gain the support of, but it was not going well.

If one imagined that the powerful magic caster Ainz Ooal Gown was behind him, this was much better than acting rudely to such a person. Especially by requesting Momon, they could check on the movements on the one behind him.

“However how will we move him?”

“How about normally making a request?”

“True....”

Seeing Panasolei’s growing hesitation, Pluton nodded helplessly.

He was a man with no interest in money or women. They were considering how to not make him angry. Should there be a relationship between [BloodStained] and Momon via Ainz— This much was confirmed— It was unknown what an act of sniffing around would do.

Momon, and Ainz supporting him.

It was ridiculous that someone with authority and power like the Mayor Panasolei had to pay such close attention to just two humans, but they had that ability.

Now there was [BloodStained] added to the mix.

“Really, will they let me rest....”

Panasolei whispered.

If another person knew about the situation she was in, a certain girl in Carne Village would probably be screaming the same thing.

Chapter 85: Various Countries | Part 3

Gazef Stronoff silently gazed at the scene outside the premium glass window of the palace.

There were three carriages leaving the palace.

The slowly moving carriage leading the cavalcade was of excellent make and was well designed. There were four well-groomed horses at the harness. The crest of the royal family was engraved together with fine designs on its side.

It was a well crafted item made to show-off the power of the royal family.

Gazef's dissatisfied gaze was fixated on the carriage behind it.

The carriage following it could only be described as inferior. While equally excellent horses were pulling it, there were only two. They were probably there only because they could not fit on the first one. There was no symbol engraved on the side of the carriage. The carriage itself was smaller than the earlier one and when moving next to the other, its inferiority was obvious.

One could not think of any other purpose for why it was even there; except that it was to accompany the carriage in front.

The carriage at the back was of the same make as the second.

However, the luggage piled inside the carriage was visible. Unlike the first two, this carriage was for carrying baggage. Thus Gazef's dissatisfied gaze was not on it.

“—They have left.”

“So it seems.”

Gazef was not surprised at the voice that suddenly came from behind him. He had already felt the presence of the man approaching. However, it was the truth that Gazef wished that he did not have to speak to him.

Thinking that it would be rude to continue talking without turning, Gazef turned. In comparison to Gazef who was born a commoner, this man was born a noble and numbered amongst the Kingdom's Six Great Nobles. Hence Gazef

had to turn around despite his unwillingness to do so.

The man standing there was best described as snake-like. The brushed back blond hair made his forehead stand out. His skin was a pale white, the lack of a tan suggesting little to no exposure to sunlight.

This person was known as Marquis Raeven.

He was the existence with the most power in the noble faction. To someone like Gazef who served the king directly, he was not a noble that could be snubbed.

However Gazef did not like his attitude; he acted like a bat, fluttering between both sides seeking profit.

“The centre carriage carries the one meeting Ainz Ooal Gown.”

“So it seems.”

“...Did Gazef-dono wish to go as well?”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Because he is someone I have met before.”

“I see....”

Gazef sighed mentally, feeling annoyed that the conversation was continuing. He did not like him, and only gave simple replies; how was there still more to talk about?

Gazef sent an angry gaze at the departing carriage.

The delay of the carriage was due to this very person standing in front of him. If he did not interfere, it would have left the capital earlier.

In fact, this man could be part of the reason why such a shabby carriage was being sent in the first place. Gazef thought as he maintained a poker face.

“Gazef-dono. I would like to ask you, should you do battle with this Gown person, could you win?”

“...This is a difficult question, since magic casters would fight from a far

range. If he does so then I definitely cannot win. Rather than myself, I believe [Blue Rose] or [Red Drop] have a better chance at victory?”

“The strongest adventuring groups in the Kingdom? Hmm.”

“They have various methods to do so. They would fight differently from myself who only knows how to swing a weapon. However.... This may be rude Marquis Raeven, but before asking if we could win, I believe that we should have him be an ally first.”

Marquis Raeven showed a wry smile.

“Agreed, it is just as Gazef-dono says. However, I have to consider the worst case scenario.”

The cases where preparations for the worst caused it to actually happen were far too many.

Gazef suppressed the desire to put that thought into words. Those were not words that could be said to someone of the (supposedly) same faction.

“Could we not at least prepare a better carriage for the one visiting Ainz-dono?”

“...Impossible. The status of magic casters is not high. Unlike the Empire, our country does not fully back them nor provide any support. We cannot send carriages inappropriate for one’s standing.”

“Then, could we switch them out in a town along the way?”

“That’s an interesting thought, but that would be difficult. The carriage was sent out by order of the king. Switching them would mean disobeying him. And the ones inside.”

“Why?”

“The Noble Faction influenced this.”

This was the worst.

Gazef did not say anything, and instead groaned.

He knew full well the foolishness of the nobles at that time. The fools who thought that Ainz was nothing more than a simple magic caster.

“Could others have been chosen?”

“...That’s impossible. I would like Gazef-dono to recall the noble that opposed you at that time, as he seems to be a relative of the person that was sent. I tried to sent in others with him but it was difficult.”

Gazef was surprised.

He felt that Marquis Raeven’s evaluation of the magic caster Ainz Ooal Gown was unexpectedly high. Or was it simply gratitude towards him saving the lives of the Kingdom’s citizens?

“In the end.... We can only hope that Gown-dono is a good-hearted person, and that the representative can read the mood.”

“Ainz-dono seems to be a rational person. So long as nothing too extreme occurs, I believe there will be no problems.”

“...Is that so? Then I shall believe it as well.” Marquis Raeven’s expression contradicted his words. “Well then, Gazef-dono. Farewell.”

“Leaving?”

“Yes. I was thinking of returning to my manor. After finishing my work in the capital, I intend to return back to my territory.”

“Is that so. It will soon be the harvest season, and there is probably a mountain of work left.”

“Agreed. It’s the beginning of the busy season. Not only the harvest, but it is around the time that the Empire proclaims war. Thus I have to ready several things.”

Gazef made a wry smile at those cynical words. A smile that had no hostility.

Around this time, the Empire would wage a small war. While the nobles understood this, many such idiots felt it troublesome to prepare. They felt that it would be solved if they squeezed the commoners.

On that point, Marquis Raeven’s factions properly prepared. While he did not like him, he felt satisfied that he could stand next to such an excellent ally.

“Then, Marquis Raeven. Until we meet again.”

“Gazef-dono. Until we meet again.”



If you had imagined Marquis Raeven’s office as some expansive area, you would have been sorely mistaken.

Even for one of the Six Great Nobles, Marquis Raeven stays in one of the most extravagant manors in the capitol and this room was nothing but tiny. Many would be surprised if they knew the exact number of decisions affecting the future of the Kingdom that had been drafted in such a humble, cramped place.

The room was filled with bookshelves; the books and labelled scrolls arranged neatly in a way that hinted at the owner’s personality. However, it was not because of these things that the room was so small, although they were part of the reason.

The greatest reason could not be seen by the naked eye.

Raeven’s manor was built from bricks coated in stucco. This was customary when it came to the construction of a noble’s home. Even his office was no different from the other rooms inside his manor.

But inside those walls.

Copper sheets shielded the entire room.

This was done to interfere with spells used to eavesdrop, observe or detect his location.

Since incorporating copper sheets into walls was expensive, he could not turn a large room into his office.

Raeven made a beeline for this magic-proof office. He crossed over to the other side of his sturdy work desk before flopping down onto his chair, in a way that suggested that he had completely run out of energy.

Then, he covered his face with his hands.

An image one would associate with a middle-aged man worn down by the weight of stress and responsibility, nothing close to a great noble commanding unrivalled power and privilege in the Kingdom.

He mindlessly brushed back a loosely hanging lock of blonde hair.

He then leaned back into his chair, his face contorted. And roared.

“Idiots, each and every one of them!”

Nobody understood the current situation. No, if someone had understood and was taking advantage of the situation, they would be masterful schemers indeed.

Right now, the Kingdom is in great peril.

The Empire’s frequent sabre-rattling led to severe problems such as food shortages, and other issues that were starting to precipitate. Everything seemed fine on the surface; ignoring the villages, that is.

The Empire employed professional warriors known as knights, but the Kingdom had no equivalent soldiers among their ranks. To resist the Imperial invasions, they needed to conscript peasants into their levies. This resulted in villages running short on manpower for a period of time.

The Empire was naturally aiming for the harvest season.

During the busiest season for a farm village, the impact of having the adult males, the most important source of labor, go missing for one month could not be overstated. Of course, it was not as if they had never thought of reducing the number of conscripts, but in the face of the Empire’s military, who were far better trained and armed, the Kingdom would be powerless without the weight of numbers on their side.

There had been one occasion when a lack of conscripts had resulted in tremendous casualty rates for the Kingdom. They had somehow recovered, but Marquis Raeven fully understood that that was just on the surface.

And even during these circumstances—

“That traitorous filth! This foolish power struggle! Those idiots, fighting over a stupid seat!”

Marquis Brumerush, one of the Six Great Nobles, had betrayed the Kingdom by selling information to the Empire. The nobles had split into two factions and were struggling for dominance. Both princes were eying the succession like

dogs feuding over a bone.

“And as for the magic caster Ainz Ooal Gown.... They should treat him with respect! This is a man who can do battle with Camila, the disciple of Landfall!”

Marquis Raeven pounded on his desk repeatedly, venting his anger.

The reason why Marquis Raeven delayed the messenger’s meeting with Ainz Ooal Gown was due to a certain piece of intelligence from E-Rantel.

Legends told of a monster known as Landfall, which fell at the hands of the 13 Heroes.

It was a monster of monsters with power capable of easily destroy whole countries. If the disciple of such a being existed, it would be on another level altogether. Internal investigations conducted by E-Rantel adventurer’s guild have in fact pointed towards a very high possibility that the vampire Camila is terrifyingly strong.

Which begs the question: how powerful was the magic caster Ainz who could hunt down Camila?

From the information provided by his operatives, Marquis Raeven now had a rather good grasp of Ainz Ooal Gown.

Not a person to be taken lightly.

Hence he tried to buy time, at least until the messenger from E-Rantel arrives, and until he could convince the king of the current situation.

In order to invite Ainz Ooal Gown with as much respect as possible.

It did not go well.

Firstly the messenger from E-Rantel had arrived too late. Marquis Raeven guessed that the messenger, a man working for a Mayor of the Royal Faction, had been held up when he passed through cities controlled by the Noble Faction.

All those bastards doing stupid things.

Marquis Raeven’s distorted expression reflected his mood.

“Is there no one thinking about what is important, or at least someone with a

brain!”

Strictly speaking, there were. Unfortunately most of them were in Raeven’s camp. It would have been normal for the other Great Nobles to have astute people but—

“Idiots, each and every one of them!”

Marquis Raeven shouted.

It was directed at the nobles whose heads were filled with nothing but stupid thoughts.

“—Even so, what should I do? Think, Raeven, think!”

Raeven’s frustration grew as his breathing calmed.

He had to think of how to keep the Kingdom alive, even in the face of the dangers ahead.

He had to think of a way to handle the mysterious magic caster.

While it would have been fine to indirectly leak such information, the king was surrounded by the Noble Faction and even a Marquis like himself could not do as he pleased.

While Marquis Raeven was part of the Royal Faction, there were rumours of him working with the Noble Faction. This was true in a sense.

Since the Kingdom was currently split into two, a noble that could mediate between the two and allow for cooperation was necessary to prevent them from truly falling apart. In addition, should the king constantly flaunt his authority, many nobles would be upset and this would separate the Kingdom further.

To avoid this, Marquis Raeven worked behind the scenes. People trusted those similar to them, and were cautious of their opposites. To make nobles drowning in greed trust him, he had to act not as a saint but as a person with greed so strong it shows visibly on his face.

That was why Marquis Raeven had to seem greedy.

There was none more suited as a mediator than him. Nobles viewed the

history of one's family and their bloodline as something of great importance. Thus as one of the Six Great Nobles, there were many of the Noble Faction that would force themselves to have conversations with him.

Marquis Raeven acted like a profiteer and interacted with those of the Noble Faction.

That is why he gave off an image of a bat looking for blood to satisfy its greed.

Marquis Raeven did not want to act in such an unbridled manner.

Especially when foolish nobles saw him as one of them and looped him into their disgusting conversations.

However, each side hated each other precisely because they were of the opposing faction. He could not say anything logical to these nobles with the mental age of children. If only they knew about the Kingdom's situation.

Thus Marquis Raeven had to grit his teeth and act like a bat.

While he was part of the Royal Faction, he could not fully cooperate with the king. If he acted for reasons other than for his own gain, there was the chance that the Royal Faction would not trust him. And should the mediator disappear the Kingdom may split completely.

Why did the Empire or Theocracy have to have this plot?

"We can do nothing but invite him to the capital and welcome him best as we can. I should ask the king.... Then I have to prepare a mansion for his stay in the capital...."

This was an extremely passive move, but the current Marquis Raeven could do little.

Marquis Raeven heaved a deep sigh.

Why did he have to do such troublesome things? Marquis Raeven was a Great Noble who was not in charge of domestic affairs. Despite that....

There were times where Marquis Raeven wanted to throw everything away. Why was the whole bunch of them situation-blind? It was like trying to build a sandcastle while being surrounded by little brats trying to kick it down.

It could not be helped that he would develop destructive tendencies in such a situation.

Still, he had a reason for ignoring those impulses and carrying on like he did.

There was knocking on the door.

The sound seemed to come from a lower position than usual. For a moment, Raeven displayed an expression unlike his normal self. Marquis Raeven immediately righted himself and spoke.

“Come in.”

The speed with which the heavy door opened indicated how much the other party had been looking forward to it.

On the other side of the door was a child.

He was still a young boy.

The boy’s innocent, adorable face was colored with a rosy blush over the pale skin of his cheeks.

He looked to be around five years old, and he padded across the floor, stopping at Raeven’s knee.

“Now now, you know you shouldn’t be running indoors, it’s hardly refined.”

A female voice followed the boy over to Raeven. Behind the boy stood a woman.

Her pretty face was shadowed by gloominess. She did not seem very happy. Her clothes were of exquisite make, but their colors were muted.

The woman bowed primly to Raeven, and then she smiled.

With a hint of embarrassment, Raeven returned the smile.

When had his wife started smiling? Suddenly, the memories of those days came unbidden to Marquis Raeven.

When Marquis Raeven had been a younger man, his heart brimmed with the ambition and drive that was the hallmark of youth. And the target of his ambition was the throne.

Aspiring for the throne was a treasonous dream.

The young Marquis Raeven, filled with confidence in his abilities, probably felt that he had no other goal that was worthy of being his lifelong objective. Towards that end, he had worked quietly, expanding his influence, accumulating wealth, spreading his connections, crushing his political enemies —

Taking a wife was nothing more than a part of his plan. As long as he could sell off the position of marchioness at a high price, he did not care what kind of woman he ended up with. As it turned out, she was a beautiful, yet moody woman, but Raeven did not mind. After all, the important thing was the connections he made with his wife's family.

Their home life was ordinary.

No, that was just how Raeven felt it was. He cared for the woman he married as a tool, but there was no love between them.

As fate would have it, it was a tiny thing indeed that changed Raeven.

He turned his eyes to the boy in front of him.

His first thought when he learned he had a son was that he had another tool to use. However, as the newborn clutched at his finger with its tiny hands, something inside Marquis Raeven broke.

This was his son. Plumb, he seemed as much a monkey as a human being. He certainly did not think that it was adorable. Yet, when he felt the warmth that radiated from his finger, everything else suddenly seemed silly.

The throne felt like garbage to him.

The man driven by ambition had passed away at some point.

Then, when Raeven smiled in thanks to his wife that had just given birth to his son, he vividly remembered the expression on her face. It was a funny one, even if he would never say that out loud. It silently asked, "Who is this person?"

Of course, his wife had thought that this was just a temporary change caused by learning that he had an heir. However, Raeven stayed this way, and it made his wife wonder if there was something wrong with him.

In the end, when his wife compared her husband before and after his change, she came to the conclusion that she preferred the new Raeven. Even though she was troubled at times by his behaviour.

Raeven reached down and lifted up his son, who was trying to scale his kneecap.

The boy gurgled in delight as he was placed on Raeven's thigh. He could feel the heat of his body through his clothes.

Now, Raeven had only one objective.

[I want to leave a well-kept domain to my son.] It was a goal that any respectable father would have.

Raeven looked warmly to the boy on his leg, and spoke to him.

"What's the matter-chu? Rii-tan? Chuchu~"

A Great Noble puckered his lips and went "~chu".

Seeing this, the boy, gurgled in delight.

"—Darling, baby-talking to him will spoil his grammar."

"Hmph! Nonsense, that's nothing more than a baseless rumor."

That said, Raeven knew that it would be bad if he raised his son poorly.

Being his son, the boy should have some measure of talent. Or rather, it was fine even if he was not talented, but as parents, they had an obligation to discover or cultivate their child's abilities. As such, it would be bad if they negatively influenced him.

Even so, he refused to give up the loving nicknames for the boy.

"Isn't that right, Rii-tan? What's the matter?"

Raeven ignored his wife's perturbed expression and asked again.

"Ehehehe, well~"

He looked like he wanted to share a secret of some sort, judging from the way he covered his mouth with his little hands. As he saw that movement, the corners of Raeven's eyes drooped.

Then he said something one could never imagine one of the Kingdom's Six Great Nobles would say.

"Well, what is it? Can you tell Papa~n? Uwah~ what is it?"

"Tonight's dinner~"

"Mm, mm!"

"It's Papa's favorite!"

"Uwah! Papa~n will be very happy! What's for dinner tonight?"

"It's Gabra fish à la meuniere."

"Is that so— What's wrong!? Rii-tan?"

Raeven saw the unhappy expression on his son's face and frantically followed up with a question.

"I wanted to say it!"

Lightning seemed to flash behind Raeven's back. He made an expression of shock.

"Is that *chu er*, I mean, is that true? Well, then it's Papan's fault. Please forgive me. Rii-tan, do you want to tell me anything?"

As Raeven looked at her with furrowed brows, his wife, not knowing what to do, covered her face.

"Rii-tan, why don't you tell Papa~n?"

With a *hmph*

of annoyance, the boy jerked his head aside. Raeven looked like he had just experienced a tremendous shock, so despondent that he wanted to die.

"I'm really sorry, Rii-tan, Papa~n is a moron and forgot everything~ Therefore, could you tell me?"

His son glanced at him from the corner of his eye. It would seem he was almost there.

"Not telling Papa~n? Papa~n's going to cry~"

"That — well, it's Papa's favorite fish~"

“Really now! Papa is so happy to hear that!”

Raeven could not help kissing his son’s pink cheeks over and over. It tickled, and so the boy laughed innocently.

“All right, then let’s go have dinner!”

“—I don’t think it’s ready yet.”

“...Really now.”

It felt like a basin of cold water had been dumped over his head, and an annoyed expression spread over Raeven’s face,. It would have been an easy matter to order the chefs to hurry up, but they still needed to follow the appropriate steps to do their work, and those steps had to be executed with specific timing. If he selfishly disrupted their routine, the food would not be as good as it could be.

This was why Raeven did not give those orders, even if he was not happy about the wait. It was also because he wanted his son to have the best meal possible.

“All right, your father is in the middle of work. Let’s go.”

“Kay~”

Raeven could not hide his loneliness he felt as he heard his son’s lively reply.

“Ahem! Wait, actually, I’m done with work.”

“Really?”

“Umu. I really am done with work.”

“...Is that so? Are you just planning to put it off until tomorrow?”

“.....”

Even if his wife was rolling her eyes at him, Raeven would not let his son down from his knee. In fact, he hugged him tighter.

“...Well, I was already at a dead end anyway, not like I could finish it in a day.”

This was not an excuse.

Due to Ainz Ooal Gown, he had a few days free, and had to talk to the king.

While Marquis Raeven had to act as soon as possible, he had no pressing issues.

His wife seemed to realize this and nodded several times.

“I understand, but still... it seems really troublesome.”

“That’s what I said. I don’t need more arms or legs to do my work, just good heads.”

“How about my brother?”

“Given that running your family’s estate is taxing enough as it is, I don’t think I could throw more work at him. Do you know anyone else who can be trusted?”

Raeven had already asked this question several times, and his wife had given him the same answer;

there’s no noble who can work on the same level as you

.

The child on his knee opened his mouth as he had a good idea.

“Papa~n, I want to help you to work too~”

“Uwah~ Rii-tan, thank you very much! I love ~chu most of all!”

Raeven did not stop kissing his son as he continued his baby talk.

Even in such a blissful time, he could not stop thinking about that question: Was there really no one else?

Several days later, he would be in a deep collaborative relationship with Renner, but that is a story for later.

Chapter 86: Various Countries | Part 4

Jircniv Rune Farlord El Nix. Inside the office of the Empire's young Emperor, the man feared as the Blood Emperor, several people lined up and performed their work in silence.

As they normally would.

"Kuhahahaha!"

That day, a hearty laughter reverberated through the room. Only one person could laugh like that in this room. The master of the room.

Hearing Jircniv's laughter, several people looked at each other.

They wondered who was going to ask.

They could roughly guess why Jircniv had burst into laughter. It was not unusual for Jircniv's emotions to undergo sudden changes. But there was always a [reason] for it.

However, no one dared to ask for that reason.

All the people in this room were excellent, crème de la crème in the Empire. However waves had shook the Empire and all were too timid to question the Blood Emperor. If this was related to governance they would. But should this be Jircniv's personal situation, it might invite his displeasure.

The last person he looked at was an old man in robes— The Head Imperial Magic Caster, Fluder Paradyne.

Receiving his gaze, Fluder made a face as to say that it could not be helped and asked the convivial Jircniv.

"Did something happen? My Emperor."

"Ooh, Jiji." Jircniv wiped away the tears at the corner of his eyes. "I just received a <Message>. It seems that not a single worker has returned."

While everyone presented thought that it was nothing to laugh about, Jircniv clearly begged to differ.

“Well well, as expected, the magic caster Ainz Ooal Gown inside the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick is on another level. There is much reason to believe that he is more powerful than Jii. Oh, but we need to confirm that. Oi. I ordered to send in the highest level adventurers, but were workers sent in instead so they could be easily abandoned?”

In response one of the members from the Ministry of Central Intelligence stepped forward.

“Yes. Workers are different from adventurers, and have—”

“—That much is fine.”

As it seemed that it would be a long talk, Jircniv raised a hand to stop him.

“Then my next question. Were the hired workers strong?”

“Yes. According to your orders, we have assembled workers that are noteworthy even in the capital. If they were adventurers they would be equivalent to A-Class.”

“Basically they were all destroyed— Ah, maybe welcomed. Is this situation dangerous?”

“Indeed. The destruction of A-Class equivalent workers would affect the public safety of the Empire in the long run.”

The Empire was patrolled by knights, and they hunted monsters to the extent that human life was not affected, but dangerous monsters were left to adventurers and workers. Thus the loss of well known workers was a headache inducing problem.

“Then think of methods to deal with that.”

“Yes.”

Several people related to the public safety of the Empire bowed their heads.

“Now, the next thing is that we have to handle Ainz Ooal Gown. Jii, how was the divination?”

“It seems that he has some defensive measures. Not a single scrap of information could be gained.”

“Hou. Did he cover it in metal? Or did he use magical defenses?”

“This is unknown.”

“Hmm.... I just want to ask but did you hold back because of your cute disciples? No way right?”

The sitting Jircniv asked the standing Fluder. While his face was laughing, his eyes were not. There was only coldness and blackness. Those that saw his face felt a pressure that almost made them squeak.

However, those weighty eyes had no effect on Fluder.

“Absolutely not. Even I understand what is important. Information regarding an unknown magic caster. It is vital information that can seize advantages for the Empire. Considering that, I would easily use a few of my disciples lives for it.”

Jircniv’s expression brightened and became one of familiarity.

“Right. There is no way that Jii can’t do such a simple calculation. So how can we gain information?”

“Magically it is impossible. 3rd Tier magic is useless.”

“How about higher tiered magic?”

“No one can use it. Even I could not learn anything with divination magic.”

“Yes yes. Then we should send spies inside.... Or not.”

While their methods were different, he could not send them to a place where workers with battle experience all failed to return from.

“Then what should we do?”

Jircniv then laughed from the heart. Almost everyone who saw this felt a chill and began to get stomach aches. The last time Jircniv made this face was after the end of the houses of several resisting nobles. After he had conjured up some crimes which turned them guilty.

“Let’s go.”

All of them blanked out for a moment. They could not understand what Jircniv said. Then, in dissatisfaction, Jircniv made himself clearer.

“I can do nothing else but go myself to Nazarick and meet Ainz Ooal Gown.”

“This is dangerous! There is nothing more I can say about a place where the workers did not return from!”

Their immediate refusal was natural. There was no way that they could send the most important Emperor into a dangerous place where not a single worker returned. Jircniv’s response to this was to laugh.

“A mysterious existence is there. Isn’t that itself the problem? And time is needed for them to learn that I was the one who sent in the workers.”

“As there are multiple dead ends placed, such things should be normally impossible.”

“Jii. Can magic discover this?”

“One might think magic is all powerful, but it is limited to a certain extent, and it cannot do everything. However using control or charm magic or divination, they might be able to find out.”

“I do not intend to be rude to Fluder-dono, but we have taken precautions of such measures.”

The man from the Ministry of Central Intelligence immediately rejected this. The Empire viewed magic as an important method of attack and invested heavily in this. Thus they fully understood magic’s importance. Thus their caution against magic never slackened.

However, the most powerful magic caster in the Empire— The highest level magic caster amongst the humans, Fluder still had questions.

“Those are precautions for information-type magic of the third tier right? I do not believe that you are protected against higher tiers....? There is also the possibility that other spells have been developed.”

The number of people who could use magic above the 3rd Tier were few, and the number of spells also fell. Those that knew what magic lay at the 5th or 6th Tier were almost non-existent.

Most of the magic in this world was spread by the Eight Greed Kings, and were from a certain city. Many types of magic were developed with that as a

base.

There was no way that they could protect against unknown magic. Fluder believed this.

However Fluder's thoughts were based on his imagination. To someone performing intellectual warfare against other countries, this was hilarious. If one feared air they could do nothing.

"There are no such things. We have properly thought this through."

"...Then they have to struggle to get to me?"

"Probably."

"Isn't that extremely convenient? He is valuable enough for us to risk danger. And they have sent us a parchment you know? Of course, doesn't this show they knew it would reach me? And afterwards workers invaded, and they would think that was the Empire's reply. Thus we have to say that this was not the case. We can say that we have a hot-headed subordinate."

"However such thoughts only apply to a person with normal common sense right?"

The only ones who would accept what Jircniv said would be those of a certain intelligence and could calculate. To someone who could not, such a thing would be pointless.

"Who knows. Anyhow, our first hand was blocked. Thus we have to play our second."

"However...."

Listening to his arguing subordinates, Jircniv bared his teeth.

"Is this dangerous?"

"Ye.....s, No.....o."

The expression on Jircniv's face was far from a smile. Irritation and agitation. There were multiple emotions. The most prominent on it was an expression one would make at a rival, one like a hungry beast.

"I have never faced a non-dangerous situation in my life. Even when I killed

my uncle, and when I killed my brothers. A single misstep would have destroyed me. However, I beat the odds. Even now. I will not lose.”

Jircniv looked at everyone in the room. His upright and noble figure resembled one of an emperor.

“I understood this when our first hand was blocked. It is dangerous if this Gown magic caster becomes an enemy. Then.... What about turning him into an ally? We can make an exchange right? Land, the opposite sex, authority, position, money. We can give him whatever he wants. If he rivals Jii any amount is fine. We just cannot let him fall to the Kingdom right?”

“U, understood.”

“Now, make three routes to Nazarick, and secretly send forces on all three.”

“Are they bait?”

“Yes. Check which routes we will be attacked on. Send orders to those even in my personal bodyguards. And Jii.”

“Yes.”

“Jii, select several representatives among your disciples to head to Nazarick. Jii, you yourself are also coming.”

“Understood, my Emperor.”

“Just to confirm, if I bring *that* I will be immune to mental manipulation right?”

What Jircniv was speaking of was instantly understood to be the magic item that was the most precious heirloom in the Empire.

“Of course. That is an item that protects one from all mental effects. Magic cannot break through it.”

“What if I was affected by magic and then equip that item?”

“It will break the mental effect and you will return to normal.”

“I see. Then you understand right? Should I return without that item.”

“I shall inform the disciples remaining behind.”

“Good. Then begin preparations. We should get to Nazarick as soon as possible.”



There was an area that was protected by tall walls. The place patrolled by multiple guards was the most secretive location in the Empire.

The Ministry of Magic.

They were in charge of the production of magical equipment for the knights, the development of new spells, research into raising the standard of living through magical experiments and so on. Headed by the Head Magic Caster Fluder Paradyne, it was the centre of all magic in the Empire.

Several buildings were lined up and each individual one was separated by walls.

When one looked to the sky, one could even see members of the Emperor's own bodyguard, the [Royal Air Guard], mounted on flying beasts, as well as high-tier magic casters using flight magic as they stood on watch.

There was the innermost tower at the Imperial Ministry of Magic.

Comparing the number of people here to the number of those in the Ministry, there were extremely few magic casters entering and leaving the tower.

It was a tower where one had to be able to use the 3rd Tier of magic or had some important reason to be able to enter.

Fluder brought along several of his direct disciples and entered.

The magic casters that noticed Fluder bowed and moved out of his way.

He occasionally saw the figures of knights on their guard.

They were sheathed in enchanted full plate armor, carrying magic shields, and with magic weapons at their waists. Their crimson capes — embroidered with the emblem of the Empire — were also magic items, of course.

While the gears were only mildly enchanted, ordinary knights were not entitled to wear it — not even in the Empire. They simply would never be

assigned to such a vital state institution.

Yes.

These ultra-elite knights were part of the Emperor's bodyguard, the [Royal Earth Guard].

Passing by them, there was a cone shaped area. Fluder passed through its tip.

Seeing Fluder's arrival, the most important person amongst all the busily working magic casters moved forward in a panic.

Fluder wondered for an instant who the man was, but from his great knowledge he found his answer. He was one of the thirty disciples he had, and was the vice-head of this location.

"Any problems?"

"Not at all, Master."

Understanding the other meaning hidden in his bowing disciple's words, Fluder made a strange face.

"Is that so. You still haven't been able to induce a natural genesis, then?"

"Indeed. Not even a Skeleton, the least of all undead, has appeared so far. Currently, we are placing corpses beside it in the hope of inducing the creation of Zombies."

"Mhm."

Fluder stroked his long beard, and then cast his gaze to the landscape beneath him: .

Ten-odd Skeletons were tilling a field. Each Skeleton raised their hoe, then swung them down, in an identical manner to the one on either side of it. They were so perfectly synchronised that, if one were to look at them from the side, their overlapping forms would seem like just a single Skeleton.

That scene of perfect harmony was similar to something in a command game. (TL: What sort of game is Clash of Clans)

This was the true identity of the large-scale project which the Empire had

been running.

It was [The Usage of Undead to Solve the Labour Problem].

The undead did not need to eat, drink or sleep, and they did not tire. In other words, they were the perfect workers. Granted, the undead were unintelligent: they could only listen to orders and could not perform complex tasks. However, with the mere supervision of a few managers this had ceased to be a problem.

The merits of using the undead as field labour had exceeded their expectations. Since they worked efficiently and for free, the prices of crops had since been reduced, the farms and fields expanded, and the risk of human-related damages eliminated. It was truly a dream plan.

However, there still was one thing keeping this seemingly-perfect plan from growing wider in practice .

It was the fact that people opposed it. The factions led by the priests opposed it in particular.

They believed that creating the undead, creatures of death which hated life, was an act which stained the soul.

There were also problems from a religious perspective. It is believed that a criminal's sin was paid off with the execution of their sentence, and that going any further would be a form of blasphemy. Thus, from the religious point of view, many could not condone using corpses of criminals to make the undead, and convincing them otherwise was a very difficult task.

Perhaps they might be convinced if the nation was facing a desperate food shortage and many people were starving to death. However, the Empire's food stocks were ample, and they were in no dire need for manpower.

In the end, the unofficial reason for this project was related to the military. For these reasons, the clergy opposed this plan.

In addition, some were worried that once undead labour became a common practice, human laborers would be made redundant. What's more, the undead might not submit to humanity forever, and overwhelming numbers of undead might upset the balance of life and death and lead to the spontaneous genesis

of more powerful undead.

This location was investigating a solution the last point. They were performing experiments to see if collating a certain number of Skeletons in an area would cause the natural formation of more undeads.

“You haven’t found the underlying reason yet?”

“No. My deepest apologies, Master.”

Why did the undead rise by themselves? Discovering the fundamental reason would have a decisive influence on future plans.

There exists a place known as the Katze Plains.

It was the spawning location of one of the strongest undeads—immune to all magic, the Skeletal Dragons. Serving as the main battlefield of the Empire and Kingdom, the appearance rate of undeads there was high.

Even if the Empire wanted to conquer the region around E-Rantel in the future, they did not want to have undead-spawning land in their domain. Thus, discovering the process by which the undead rose would definitely aid rulership. Perhaps they might even find a way to keep the undead from spawning ever again.

“Is that so? I understand.”

The assistant supervisor bowed, grateful to have been spared a rebuke.

Fluder walked past him, going in one big circle around the crucible-shaped room before finally stopping in front of the door. The guard knights pushed the door open, and Fluder walked through.

It led to a passage similar to before, but there was nobody around. Close inspection revealed its dirtiness.

Fluder brought his disciples down that passage. At the end of it was a staircase heading downwards.

The spiral staircase downwards was long.

For an extended period they listened to the sound of their own footsteps going ‘click, clack’ down the steps. It was not that long, at most about seven

floors worth. However the atmosphere slowly became heavier and heavier.

This was certainly not because they were underground.

The best proof of that was that everyone, Fluder included, had a stiff expression on their faces.

At the lowest floor.

It opened up into a small hall, with only a large metal door.

Everyone was visibly tense, the heavy atmosphere indicating their readiness for battle.

Fluder issued a warning to his disciple, his voice strained:

“You must not be careless.”

In response to the usual warning, the accompanying magic casters nodded simultaneously.

Fluder’s warning was spoken to them everytime they came here. Thus to all the magic casters here it was already ingrained in their brains. But for those that knew what was inside, their expressions did not slacken.

That was because the ultimate undead was behind that door. It was an existence far stronger than Skeletal Dragons.

Several people began casting protective spells, some of which did not just defend against physical threats but also protected against mental ones. After giving them ample time to prepare, Fluder looked around at his disciples’ faces.

He nodded, and then uttered the keyword which would undo the seal.

The heavy doors went *thoom*, and then slowly opened.

Cold air spilled out of the darkened room, and several of his disciples shivered, as though they were chilled to the bone

One among them gulped; all around them it resonated in the vast, empty dark. The fear and silence in that place was palpable.

“Let’s go.”

Hearing Fluder’s words, his disciples created several magical lights to

disperse the darkness in the room. Yet, for some reason, it felt like it only made the darkness beyond the light thicker and heavier.

Led by Fluder, the group entered the room.

There stood a gigantic pillar which reached the ceiling. This tombstone-like pillar certainly attracted attention. But what truly held the eye was the entity that was crucified to it with thick and heavy chains.

Each link of the chains which bound it was much thicker than a grown man's thumb, rendering the entity completely immobile. In addition, its arms and legs were hobbled with gigantic iron balls. No entity could move even a finger under these conditions.

However, whenever the group looked at the thick chains, they still felt uneasy. They feared that this creature would snap the chains and regain its freedom easily.

From the outside, it looked like a knight in full black-coloured plate armor. However, there was a huge difference between this entity and a fully armored man. The most noticeable was its massive frame. Minimal estimates of its height would be at above two meters.

After that, there was its full black-coloured plate armor. The armor was covered in tracery mimicking blood vessels, and studded with brutal-looking spikes.

A pair of demonic-looking horns sprouted from its helmet, the exposed face was like a rotten human visage. Two crimson dots of light shone from within the empty orbits of its eye sockets, formed from hatred for the living and a longing for massacre.

This hatred permeated the air.

It was a legendary class existence amongst naturally created undead.

As a being of legends, it was not particularly well known even by sages. This existence called a Death Knight.

The red dots of light within the Death Knight's eyes moved, sizing up all the magic casters as if it were licking them. No, they could not possibly see any

movement from within those dancing masses of light. However, the spine-chilling terror made them feel that the death knight was looking right at them.

The people who came here were all powerful in their own right and were disciples of Fluder, each capable of casting at least third-tier spells. Yet, even they could not stop the chattering of their teeth.

“—Be strong. The weak-willed will perish.”

Fluder spoke words of warning.

Despite their spells to protect their minds, they could not stop the fear welling up from within them. Yet, these magical protections may well be the only reason why they could pull themselves together and not flee for their lives.

Fluder slowly approached the Death Knight. The Death Knight reacted to him; radiating its killing intent and flexing its limbs. It was trying to kill the fools who dared stand before it.

The chains groaned as the Death Knight struggled, its body quivering as its bonds pulled taut. The number of chains on the Death Knight gave indication towards the extent of their wariness towards it.

Fluder extended his hand towards the Death Knight.

His incantation reverberated through the darkened room lit by the magical light. This was a modified version of [Summon Undead 6th], an original spell penned by Fluder.

“—Obey me.”

Fluder’s voice. But the Death Knight’s eyes still bore its hatred for the living.

“...So I still can’t control it, even now?”

There was a hint of disappointment within Fluder’s voice. For the past five years, he had tried continuously to control this undead creature without success.

They had discovered this monster in that place known for being haunted by the undead, the Katze Plains. While Skeletons and Zombies were low class undead, they hated the living and were enemies of both countries, thus both the Kingdom and the Empire sent soldiers— The Kingdom sent adventurers— to

subjugate monsters in the Katze Plains.

There, a company of the Empire's knights discovered a legendary class undead.

Tens of seconds after the battle began.

The faces of those Imperial knights were filled with fear and despair. At that absolute power. After several tens of knights were killed, it was determined that they could not defeat it. An immediate retreat was made. Of course they could not leave such a monster alone. After much deliberation, the Empire decided to call upon Fluder and his best disciples.

The only reason why Fluder and company could defeat the Death knight was simply because it could not fly. They had attacked from above until the Death Knight's movements had dulled. Then Fluder bound the Death Knight with absolute force.

Currently, Fluder had imprisoned it here and had gone through countless spells, countless magic items and countless means, attempting every method to control an undead being in order to control the Death Knight.

"What a shame... if only I could control this monster, I'd be able to surpass that magic caster and become the greatest magic caster."

If he succeeded, he would be far superior to the necromancer of the Thirteen Heroes, Rigris Bers Carau.

"Master, you've long since exceeded that hero."

"Exactly. The Thirteen Heroes are beings from the past; there's no way they can beat our Master, who stands at the pinnacle of modern magic."

"I also feel that Master has long since surpassed the Thirteen Heroes. However, if Master could take control of the Death Knight, the Empire would gain access to a source of incredible power."

"It's often said that an individual can't defeat a group, but that's just because the individual's too weak. That Death Knight is the most powerful individual around."

"Still, if even Master cannot take control of it... then how powerful

is that Death Knight, anyway?”

His disciples tried to comfort him, but they were not really doing so. There was much truth in there.

Firstly, Fluder could command an undead equal in strength to Gazef. Of course, one was his limit. However he could not command this Death Knight. Then the simple answer was that this undead was stronger than Gazef.

However that was just a simple approximation, actually controlling an undead being with magic involved more complex mechanisms.

Fundamentally speaking, controlling or destroying the undead was the domain of the priests, who borrowed the power of the gods. Magic casters used arcane power to emulate divine might, so various discrepancies were only to be expected.

In fact, if their simple theory was correct, Fluder should have been able to command this Death Knight.

“Yes.... But strength is like a game of rock-paper-scissors. We magic casters can defeat the Death Knight, but not a weaker Skeletal Dragon. Considering that, how do we evaluate the strength of one Death Knight?”

“It would be easier if we had data.”

“Adventurer ranks right? Even for those, the basic numerical values are sketchy.”

“But.... Excluding unknown monsters, those numbers are helpful.”

“They do not help in the case of legendary existences like Death Knights though.”

“There are countless secret documents mentioning the Death Knight. Is nothing inside?”

“Now.” Fluder stroked his beard. “There might be a complete version inside Eryuentiu, but the released version is incomplete.”

One of his disciples seemed to have a question, which he addressed to the disciple next to him. While he whispered, the room was the very embodiment of silence, and so his words seemed surprisingly loud.

“What’s the Eryuentiu?”

“Isn’t it the name of a city?”

“I know that, but it sounds really weird.”

“Hm... I looked it up once. I think it’s a word from an ancient language which means [At the heart of the world].

Fluder rapped the floor with his staff, as a warning to his chatting disciples. This was a dangerous place incarcerating a legendary-class monster. Carelessness was strictly forbidden.

His disciples heeded the warning, and silence ruled the once more, aside from the sounds of the Death Knight struggling against its chains in an attempt to break them.

“Let’s go.”

“Yes.”

Even Fluder could not maintain the same pace leaving the room as he had when entering it. His steps quickened as he felt the Death Knight’s vicious glare burning into his back. In that respect, his disciples were the same as him.

As Fluder walked through the darkness, he recalled the word his disciples had mentioned just now.

[Eryuentiu].

It was the capital of the kingdom founded by the Eight Greed Kings, and its sole surviving city. At the same time, it was a city defended by 30 city guardians equipped with magical arms and armor that surpassed conventional reason.

It was said that the Eight Greed Kings had left behind magical items there, with which he would surely be able to vastly improve his own magical skills, Fluder thought. These incredible items had never fallen into anyone’s hands, and only the Thirteen Heroes had been allowed to take several pieces away.

The Thirteen Heroes; heroes of the past. Fluder’s might ought to be the equivalent of theirs, but only they had been granted that permission, while he had not. In what way did he not measure up to them?

A black flame flickered in Fluder's heart.

Fluder tried to put out that wavering fire by thinking of other things to reassure himself. His present position and all the contributions he had made were no less than that of the Thirteen Heroes. No, among the Empire's magic casters, Fluder's status was even higher than the Thirteen Heroes.

However, the black flame, his envy, did not subside.

What he envied was not their power, their knowledge, or their abilities, but rather, the fact that they had obtained a chance to peer into the abyss of magic.

Fluder was a magic caster of the highest order; nobody would dispute that. The only people who could match up to him were the Thirteen Heroes of the past. However, he could not control the Death Knight, and of the ten tiers of magic that were said to exist he could only cast spells of up to the sixth tier.

This fact was a stark reminder that he was far from the abyss of magic.

Fluder was old. He controlled time with one of the 6th Tier spells to slow down his ageing, but he is slowly approaching death.

Indeed.

Fluder would die before he could gaze into the abyss of magic.

Perhaps if a skilled predecessor had guided him, he might have been able to reach his current position sooner. However, there had been no one before him, so all he could do was blaze his own trail.

Fluder looked nonchalantly at the disciples around him.

He looked around at the people who walked along the trail Fluder had blazed.

He felt envy well up inside of him.

He... the most knowledgeable person present, how old had he been when he had been at his disciples' level? No, there was no need to think about it; he would surely have been older than his disciples were. That was how great the difference was without anybody to guide him, without anybody to show him the way.

Why did he not have a Master of his own?

Fluder tried to think in a different direction to mask the complaints he often had.

It was fine, right? He would go down in history as a forerunner. Every single magic caster would give thanks to Fluder for the results he had left behind, which were derived from the trail he had blazed.

These pupils are my treasure. So long as any of them reaches a greater height than myself, it will be a part of my accomplishments too.

Fluder thought of one of his disciples while consoling himself. That disciple had long since departed his side.

What tier could that girl have reached?

“—Arche Eeb Ryle Furt.”

She was an excellent girl. She had mastered the second tier of magic at a young age, and even begun her first steps upon the third. So long as she continued training, she might well have been able to reach Fluder’s domain. But regretfully, at the end, she had abandoned her studies for some reason...

Fluder had been utterly disappointed back then. All she could think of was that she had been terribly foolish.

“What a shame.”

Perhaps she had been the one that got away.

Where was that girl now? Fluder wondered,

perhaps I could try and find her. If she can use magic of the third tier, perhaps I could give her a good position.

That said, there were still things which had to be done.

Fluder incanted the command word, and opened the heavy door.

After that, he exited the room, and took several deep breaths with his disciples. That was because the air in the Death Knight’s room was heavy with the stench of its presence, and it felt like the air would not enter their lungs.

Hearing the door close behind him, Fluder faced his surrounding disciples.

“Tomorrow, I shall be going to the land of Nazarick.” Fluder turned to face his disciples. “It is unknown who it contains and what waits for us. It is probably dangerous. However thus I shall select a few volunteers.”

“Please allow me.”

“No. Me!”

Several people immediately spoke.

Hmm—

Fluder looked at them. Inside the eyes of those people, a bright flame of ambition burned.

Despite having multiple disciples, Fluder had no clear successor. Since the position of Head Magic Caster was given by the Emperor, many tried to win his favour by doing notable jobs. However what his disciples truly wanted was Fluder’s spellbook and equipment. Those would earn them the title of the best magic caster.

Thus they stood next to Fluder and tried to steal everything they could.

—It felt good.

Fluder laughed in his mind. That magic casters should be like this. One who shrinks back due to fear could never reach the depth of the ravine known as magic.

Magic was a mass of knowledge, and was extremely dangerous. They were skills that surpassed the limits of human strength, and their possessors are feared as perilous beings.

“Inside Nazarick, there is someone who can control an undead equal to or stronger than Gazef. If that is the truth, it would be nice to exchange knowledge.”

Commanding a Death Knight.

If the master of Nazarick utilised undead, then he would be attracted by this proposal, Fluder thought.

And if—only if— he was truly a stronger magic caster than Fluder, like the

Emperor implied in their conversation, Fluder's heart would beat so fast in such a discussion. He might know a spell that could control a Death Knight. If that was the case, Fluder would give anything to learn it.

Anticipation, unease and excitement. With all those emotions, Fluder felt a childish excitement which caused his face to turn red.

"...It is difficult to imagine a person with knowledge that rivals master still walks this earth."

"Agreed. Even though several people fell unconscious during the divination.... We cannot be sure that it was the magic caster who caused the result."

"...Wouldn't it be great if the person inside Nazarick exceeds me."

The disciples said nothing about their master who was gazing into the distance. There was no one who could stand next to him— Except in legends— and thus no one could understand his feelings.

And several days later, Fluder's wish was granted.

Chapter 87: Various Countries | Part 5

There was a giant surface of water in the room.

No, it would not be accurate to call it a room. Surrounded by white circular alabaster pillars supporting entablature with finely detailed friezes, such a mysterious and solemn place was worthy to be called a temple.

The floor was polished marble, its continuity broken by a set of steps heading down into the water located near the centre of the room. You could call it a pool inside the temple, even though it was just a square area ten metres in length.

Moonlight shone right through the ceilingless construction, reflecting in the water and making it glow palely. Not only the water, the walls and floor were illuminated by the gentle radiance as well, making the whole place shine. Thus while there were no torches, everything was blindingly bright.

A slight wind flowed between the round pillars in this mysterious room.

Despite it being a mysterious and solemn place, certain inelegant people were destroying the atmosphere.

Between the round stone pillars were people wearing full body armour, swords hanging from their waists. However, while the armour and swords were completely functional, there were features which seemed purely aesthetic in nature.

While it was boorish, the design of the armour negated its effect on the mysteriousness of the place. Rather, it added to it.

And the surprising thing is, that while there were three times as many people as there were pillars, all were women.

Since men were usually physically stronger than women, women were rarely employed as guards. But the reason for their being here at this location, clearly of great importance just from its appearance? There was only one.

They were the honour guards assigned to this mysterious place.

This place—

The Slane Theocracy. The sacred city that was their capitol contains six Great Temples. Amongst them, the Temple of the Water God was one of their largest sacred grounds.

[Tinu Al Rianes]. It was a location with the title of [The Eye of the Water God].

There was deathly silence.

The guards standing in the surroundings— They were called Temple Guards in the Slane Theocracy— were so still one might think they were immobile. It was likely to mistake them for statues. Even their armour made no sounds; each piece did not shift and rub against one another. This extreme lack of movement was something that was praiseworthy.

Time passed.

It was not just silent, it was *tranquil*. And then a sound broke that tranquility.

It was the sound of bare feet on stone.

Petari petari.

Petari petari.

Petari petari.

The guards' helms turned slightly, facing the people that entered the area.

At the lead was an old woman. White hair sprouted from above an extremely wrinkled face. However it was obvious that she was no ordinary old woman, for her eyes glimmered with wisdom, affection and power.

Her pure white priest's outfit was engraved with symbols, and on each hand she wore rings that gave her magical protection. A plain but powerful magical headband decorated her forehead. A mysterious holy accessory hung from her neck.

Right behind that old woman.

Walking there was a young girl. She was extremely young, and did not seem to have gone through puberty yet. Wearing a blindfold, she was led by two

young women.

The cloth covering her eyes hid most of her facial features as well. Even so, it was possible to tell that she had a sharp face. However, as if nervous, her expression was a frozen mask. Her long hair fluttered in the wind, and shone with a soft glow in the moonlight.

On her forehead she wore a large circlet that covered her head with threads like a spider's web. Decorating the string-like metal were countless gems, and a large blue crystal was embedded in the centre.

She wore a cloth that was slightly open in the front.

The cloth was thin, and with the moonlight shining brightly on her, her body underneath could be clearly seen. In addition, since the cloth was loosely fixed around her waist by a string, one could almost see her naked body each time the wind blew.

That girl walked barefooted. No, not only the girl. Several women dressed similarly followed her closely.

The main difference that their eyes were not covered, and that some were older. No, perhaps the first girl was the youngest.

This was a scene that would leave most men drooling. For that reason, all the people here were women.

The old woman reached the edge of the pool. The entire procession came to a synchronised stop.

“We shall now begin the ritual.... Water Miko-Hime, please enter.”

A woman pulled on the blindfolded girl and led her to the centre of the pool.

The girl silently entered the water, showing no expression of surprise at the difference in temperature. Perhaps she knew that it was going to happen. Or perhaps it was for another reason altogether.

As the Water Miko-Hime reached the centre with water up to her waist, the others behind her began to enter as well.

With the Miko-Hime at the centre, a circle was formed around her.

Absorbing the water, her clothes stuck to her skin. There was practically no difference from her being naked. However, all of them stayed silent. The Water Miko-Hime's expressionless face, and their own, all hid a tinge of nervousness.

"Now focus your power on the Water Miko-Hime."

Responding to the instruction of the old woman outside the pool, the people around the Water Miko-Hime began chanting simultaneously. These chants were part of their sacred book; prayers to the Water God.

Waves formed in the water. These were not due to the wind. It was like the waves were conscious and formed waves. To be more precise, it seemed like they were caused by the Water Miko-Hime.

No— it was not *like*

she was causing it. The Water Miko-Hime was indeed causing it.

Fatigue started showing on faces of the surrounding women as their magic was drained.

The old woman, sensing the flow of magic, decided that it was enough. She gave her next order.

"Now, activate. 8th Tier Magic [Planar Eye]."

A large ritual.

It was a method to temporarily increase one's magic power by concentrating the magic power of a group into one person.

A large volume of magic power was sent to her by the surrounding high priests.

A drop of blood dripped from the Water Miko's nose. She was trying to contain the large volume of magic power provided by the surrounding priests. This was an act that harmed her body.

However the Water Miko-Hime showed no anguish.

And then the Water Miko-Hime activated the magic that was far beyond her limits.

"<Overmagic Planar Eye>"

A divination magic of the 8th Tier.

The divination target was in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. Their goal was an investigation of the god-like being who resided there.

The Water Miko-Hime activated the magic.

Nothing happened. The moonlight filtered down in the unchanged silence.

Then a metallic sound was heard. Each sound was small, but a large number of it mixed together into a louder sound. It came from the movement of the surrounding guards.

The old woman directed an unhappy gaze at them. However she could not hide her unease at the fact that nothing was happening.

Supposedly, an image should have been formed.

A projected image should have formed in front of the Water Miko-Hime. That was the effect of the magic.

But nothing happened.

In all of the countless rituals, such a thing had never happened before. It was true that if they were blocked by magic, nothing but darkness would be shown. However this was the first time nothing had occurred.

Why is it that this time?...

As that question reached a climax in their heads, words appeared in the air. No one present could read it. Japanese was not a common language in this world. But there was something more pressing.

The priests in the water slowly began to fall.

Losing consciousness due to lack of magic power was possible. However, large rituals did not cause such a loss of magic. This was as the members assembled were calculated to have ample magic power. And at worst, they were people that understood the point where they should stop. It was impossible for so many of them to lose consciousness.

“Lend me your strength! We are pulling out!”

Reacting to the old woman’s voice, several guards moved forward. They all

simultaneously entered the water. Most of the guards stayed behind, drew their swords and looked around in caution.

“You three, call the priests from outside!”

“Yes!”

The selected three guards ran out. At that period the guards parted the water to try and save the Water Miko whose body was spread out like a flower in the water.

After the old woman gave her orders, she gazed at the words in the air. If she were a magic caster of another school she could cast a magic that allowed them to read the unknown words. However, the old woman was a priest and could not read it.

However she could tell when the words changed.

The old woman’s eyes narrowed.

The words that first appeared were [—Confirming an attack to the 2nd Defensive Layer. Resulting from the effects of divination, this location has been confirmed as the one to have activated a divination spell targeting Nazarick. From this point forth the people of this location are taken to be hostile to Nazarick, and Ainz Ooal Gown shall begin the counterattack.]

The words had changed to [Initiating the 1st Attack. Summoning a group of low-ranked demons. Activate [Runesmith] skill. Activating <Summon Abyssal Lesser Army> from Rune creation skill.]

Suddenly— Something unfathomable appeared in the sky.

A black hole that seemed to suck in everything. While it looked like a circle, it was actually a sphere.

Sensing the empty hole, the guards aimed their swords at it. This was not a normal occurrence, but until all the priests were recovered retreat was impossible.

Shielding the priests that were slowly being recovered from the water, they surrounded the hole and prepared for anything that would happen.

“Vice-Head Priest of the Water God, please step back.”

“I’m fine. More importantly, get the unconscious priests to safety.”

“Yes.”

One of the guards picked up a Water Miko and ran outside as quickly as she could. In her peripheral vision, she saw the old woman, the Vice-Head Priest of Water, sigh in relief. Even if the worst case scenario occurred, the Crown of Wisdom was still protected.

As if waiting for this moment, the sphere began to change.

As if born from the sphere, several objects fell to the marble floor. Some fell into the water, making splashes.

“What!”

Someone made a sound that was a mix between a scream and a shout of surprise. Reacting to it, the ‘marbles’ also made some sounds.

“Gyagyagyagya!”

The strange voices belonged to demons that were slightly larger than children.

They had large heads of varying size, crimson eyes without eyelids, and a mouth baring a row of sharp teeth. Their bodies were also had varying narrowness. Their two long arms almost reached the floor and had sharp claws growing out of them.

Their skin was pale like corpses, and under the moonlight, they did look like corpses that died of disease.

They were monsters known as Light Fingered Demons

“The intrusion of evil into this sacred place cannot be forgiven.”

“Attack!”

The guards ran and swung their swords at the Light Fingered Demons. The demons skillfully dodged and made their counterattack.

“What!”

“No way!”

The guards facing the demons simultaneously became rowdy. It was not from pain, but due to some confusion.

“My armour!”

The armour she was wearing had disappeared.

“—My sword’s gone!”

“No way! My holy symbol’s gone!”

The shouts of the guards losing their possessions could be heard. Under these circumstances, it was obvious what had happened. The demons in front of them had taken it. Thinking about it, the demons should have retaliated, but none of the guards were injured. Then these demons had to be *that class* of monsters.

Light Fingered Demon. Their name meant [Bad demons with sticky fingers].

They had the setting of being able to steal any item in Yggdrasil, and could even steal World Items. However since the development company had received many complaints, they patched them such that they could only steal equivalent level items.

But given they could steal potions, there were still many unhappy low level players.

“Shit! Give it back!”

“My ring! My fiance gave me that!”

“They are really stealing everything!”

The guards attacked the demons with swords— The ones that were not stolen.

They were the lowest level demons in Yggdrasil and were monsters that did not have powerful abilities, but to the guards, these were strong enemies.

Not to look down on the guards. They had all undergone strict training, and were stronger than the guards of Roble Kingdom. All of them had well-defined six-packs, (ED: puts me to shame) that was how much they had trained.

However, their swords did not reach the demons.

While making their high-pitched strange noises, the demons dodged the swords. However they stayed within the reach of the swords. The guards then immediately noticed something.

They were being made fun of.

“Shit!”

“Damn it!”

“Please give it back! What good will it do to take it!”

Even if their swords hit the demons, no major damage was dealt. Fortunately, the demons did not try to kill the guards. Understanding that, the Vice-Head Priest of Water heaved a sigh of relief. Now even if she could not protect the priests, their lives would not be in danger.

The Vice-Head Priest of Water, protected by guards, began to attack.

“<Holy Aura>!”

As the Vice-Head Priest of Water activated the magic, waves of virtue were released into the surroundings. It was a 4th Tier magic that had an effect against beings of evil. As the waves of virtue wrapped around the bodies of the demons, their movements slowed.

“We can do this!”

“Eat this!”

“Seriously, give it back!”

Their swords hit, and the air slowly filled with the smell of blood. However, while they were the lowest ranked demons, they were part of a strong race of monsters, and were not that easily defeated.

In the end, the demons turned and ran.

“Wait!”

“Shit!”

“Please! Wait! Seriously, wait!”

The demons showed surprising adroitness and jumped into the sphere of

emptiness. The moment they did, their figures disappeared like they were disintegrated. While the guards chased them as close as possible, none of them had the courage to jump into that ball.

The guards' gazes fell on the Vice-Head Priest of Water. The old woman shook her head.

"It's fine. We should be happy that no one was killed."

The Vice-Head Priest of Water looked at the words floating in the air. They were indeed different from the ones in her memories.

Written there was, [Confirming that the amount of time has elapsed. Shifting to the 2nd Attack. Summoning of a group of middle ranked demons. Activate [Blood Magus] skill. From the skill Sacrifice Blood—- Failure. Unable to detect the necessary number of dead allies.]

While ordering a withdrawal, the Vice-Head Priest of Water was troubled.

"...Did they not attack seriously? Or could they only do that much?"

She then refuted herself immediately. It was definitely not the latter.

It was a being that could block a spell of the 8th Tier, that was the highest rank humans could cast, and there was no way that this was the best counter they could give. Then it was best that they interpret this as a warning.

"Basically the master of Nazarick has the ability to block an 8th Tier spell and send demons as a counter."

The Vice-Head Priest of Water said that and laughed from her heart.

This wasn't a joke. How did something like that possibly exist? However, the truth in front of her eyes could not be glossed over.

Looking at the guards retreating in a panic, and confirming that there was no one that could hear her, she spoke her thoughts.

"...Could it be that he is a god?"

When she first heard it she thought it was a joke.

That the master of Nazarick looked similar to the God of Death [Surshana].

"This will be trouble. At worst it could cause a theological split."

The Slane Theocracy believed in the Six Great Gods, worked together as an organisation, and built a country. Thus while they had different gods, they had the same goal could work together on them. Then what would happen if only one of the gods descended?

At worst, there was the possibility that the power balance within the temples would crumble. However she could not erase what had happened. It was not because sealing everyone's lips was difficult, but because of the worry of what would happen in the future should she hide this.

No, her heart might only be filled with fear.

Should a god truly appear, she would fall on her knees. In front of a being that she should obey.

However what was scary was that the being looked like [Surshana]. The god that granted eternal peace to those with life, and the god that granted eternal despair. And the god that was stronger than the other five.

If it was true—

The Vice-Head Priest of the Water God's body shook. She then prayed. Not to her god, but to the God of Death [Surshana]. As if saying, *please do not punish us.*



The white sparkling mass slowly got up.

It was a huge being.

It was a dragon.

This race was once known as the strongest in the world, and were the previous rulers of it.

One may think of a dragon bearing traits of a reptilian animal. However, that was a mistake. Dragons had characteristics that were extremely similar to that of felines.

Their muscular system, the movement of their eyes, the similarities were countless.

Most important was the fact that the combination of several thousand muscles allowed its giant body to move in perpetual silence. If one did not train, one would not be able to detect a dragon's motion.

The scales that completely covered their bodies were harder than steel, and could break any normal metal blade. Even if their scales were pierced, their muscles could prevent the blade from going in too deeply. It was the same for blunt weapons. They would bounce off the thick layer of muscles.

Any being would turn to ash in front of their blaze and their wisdom was far beyond any great sage.

To top it off, dragons were extremely beautiful. Their body gave off a silver glow and had an air of elegance about it. It was to the point where one could call it a work of art as much as the strongest species.

The dragon looked into the distance.

It had a bad feeling. Like the world was being shaken.

"Did something happen? Platinum Dragonlord-sama?"

The one who spoke was the dragon's knight. The dragon knew from its dragon sense that he was there, but turned to look nonetheless, feeling that a lack of eye contact during a conversation would be rude.

This was a knight that the dragon had chose.

A silver scale mail armour similar to dragon scales covered his body and he held a platinum spear. The armour's dragon motif made it look like an upright dragon.

And who would know, that this armour was worn by the person known as one of the 13 Heros nicknamed [Platinum].

"No, it's nothing."

The dragon looked once again, eyes glazed with emptiness.

The knight looked in the same direction, but could not see anything. No, even the dragon was not looking at anything either. In response to the knight's confusion, the dragon explained.

“I just felt that the world was screaming.”

“Screaming you say?”

The senses of a dragon was on a different scale. The knight knew that he could not feel anything and did not enquire further.

The dragon said nothing. However, his senses told him that he had felt this feeling long ago.

It was simple to recall that feeling.

It was because it was impossible to pour those memories into the drain of oblivion.

—The Eight Greed Kings. The beings who had fought with his race in the past. And the beings that had hunted and killed most of the dragons. The magic released felt similar to its past dangerous enemies.

The dragon recalled the history of the world.

By those beings, the dragons that were harkened as the strongest were hunted down. The current beings called Dragonlords, were in the past— More than 500 years ago, nothing more than children to the past Dragonlords.

And Wild Magic.

No one but the dragons knew the primordial magics, the secrets of the world.

If they had banded together earlier to fight they would have won. This dragon had thought the same thing over the past five hundred years.

In the end they won. This was because the past dragon lords defeated the Eight Greed Kings.

They attacked one King with many dragons. Even against just 1 King, the dragons had multiple casualties. And the Eight Greed Kings had magic that allowed them to revive after death.

However, the Eight Greed Kings grew weaker every time they revived. If they banded together they might have won. But that did not happen.

In the end the world was violated and defiled.

Wild Magic was lost and the world was filled with the magic the Eight Greed Kings had spread.

The dragon twisted its long neck and looked at the weapon behind it. At the weapon that ever since placed here, was never touched. It was a resplendent sword, with a blade of crystal. It was the weapon that the Eight Greed Kings swung to kill his brethren. And the sword that the leader of the 13 Heroes wielded.

In the base of the Eight Greed Kings, he had lent out the item as a symbol of his blessings.

Its name was—

The dragon then blinked its eyes.

“What did he call it?” Thinking for some time, the dragon forced out some words. “....A Guilti Weapon?” (TL: Two options: Guild Weapon or Guilty Weapon.)

Of course, there was no way to check if that answer was right or wrong. The dragon made an annoyed sigh, and again, looked in a certain direction. There—far beyond the range of a dragon’s senses.

The Southern End of the Azerlisia Mountain Range, at a certain giant lake.

Chapter 88: Negotiations | Part 1

The 9th Floor of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

This floor was unlike the others, the extravagance of the passageway alone surpassing that of any palace, lending a dreamy air to the surroundings. Such a place was being traversed by two people with unsuitably frantic footsteps.

Anyone rushing in this place would be gazed upon with disdain and be chided, for this place is the private quarters of the rulers of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, the 41 Supreme Beings. There was no way that such an disrespectful act would be permitted in such an important location. If it were not an NPC but a simple subordinate, they might be sentenced to death.

But this time, no one stopped the two people.

On the contrary, on seeing the figures, Cocytus' guards on patrol— the bodyguards that looked like stag beetles, the s, stood to the sides. Without moving a muscle, they waited for the two intruders to pass.

The NPC maids were the same.

Their heads were bowed, themselves not moving even a single inch from their location.

Everyone maintained the highest etiquette and expressed their loyalty.

This was natural.

To be honest, no one in Nazarick is able to scold these two. One of them, perhaps: if it were the Head Maid Pestonya Wanko, she might have the authority to chide one of them. However, it was completely impossible to take such a tone with the other person.

In Nazarick, if that person pointed at black and said it was white, then black would be white. If that person was scurrying, scurrying would become the proper method of movement on the 9th Floor.

That person is the master of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick and the leader of the 41 Supreme Beings, Ainz Ooal Gown. Together with the butler

Sebas following him, there was no one capable of chiding them.

Ainz and Sebas continued their heated discussion.

“I do not believe that there is a need for Ainz-sama to meet them directly though?”

Ainz continued walking straight ahead and made no indication that he was going to answer to Sebas’ repeated questioning. Keeping to his right, Sebas tried to read Ainz’s expressionless face.

As they passed by another door— Sebas recalled it to be the room of one of the 41 Supreme Beings, Nishikienrai— Ainz slowly replied.

“...I believe there is.”

The reason why the two of them were hurrying was extremely simple.

A few minutes ago, Ainz had received a from Yuri Alpha who was in the loghouse.

It stated that the messenger of the Kingdom had arrived and wished to meet with Ainz.

Upon news of contact from the Kingdom they had been waiting for, Ainz ceased all his previous activities and moved out in a panic. If this went badly, all his calculations might be thrown off.

However, it was true that he was not adequately prepared.

There was no way he could meet them in his actual appearance, and his clothes were untidy as well. He had no clothes in his item box either.

For that reason he was hurrying with Sebas to his private quarters for a change of attire.

Originally— he could have used the Ring of Ainz Ooal Gown to teleport, but unfortunately Ainz’s own room was not tagged and he could not teleport directly inside. Left without options, he hurried along.

Sebas knew this but could not understand the need for Ainz to meet directly with the messenger.

Of course, Sebas was not looking down on the messenger.

Since the symbol of the Kingdom hung from the messenger's carriage, he fully understood that he should treat the messenger as if he were the Vaiself Royal Family of the Kingdom.

However, what displeased Sebas was the messenger's unannounced arrival.

Had they been polite enough to send another carriage earlier to inform them beforehand, then they would have gladly welcomed them with their best. However, the act of abruptly arriving prior to any notice was just extremely disrespectful .

In addition, Sebas believed that such a sudden arrival was only due to their belief that Nazarick was incapable of adequately welcoming them even if notified.

Since they were looking down on Nazarick, there was even less reason for Ainz to meet them.

"For what purpose?"

Sebas asked again, and Ainz replied without looking at him.

"...Before I reply.... This is from when Demiurge was sent as your backup.... There seemed to be a Shinobi."

"I have heard."

"Right."

Hearing Sebas' reply, Ainz shook his head several times.

He suddenly recalled that Sebas was there right next to him, after the problems in the Kingdom had ended and he was asking Demiurge if something had happened.

"Before this Shinobi appeared, Demiurge battled with a masked magic caster. Her name was—Evileye."

Sebas said nothing but nodded his head.

"Sebas, I have received your report. Evileye is the person who might be able to defeat one of your subordinate maids right?"

"Yes."

Sebas had reported as such to Ainz.

The repost also contained the appearance and related information of the person known as Evileye— and the adventurers related to her. And this Evileye was judged to be an existence who could possibly defeat one of the battlemaids, who were each above level 50.

However, that judgement was now doubtful.

Ainz did not notice that Sebas seemed to have lost confidence and continued talking.

“It was my mistake for forgetting to inform Demiurge despite hearing your report. Forgive me.”

“Not at all. Despite having the opportunity to speak to Demiurge, I forgot to inform him as well....”

“Well, let’s talk about this later. We have troubled Demiurge.”

Returning to Nazarick, the first thing Demiurge did was to express his displeasure at Sebas’ failure to inform him of Evileye. When this issue was raised, his master, Ainz, had lowered his head to him.

The face that Demiurge made in the instant that he learned his displeasure was directed towards his master— and his following reaction— everyone present at that moment would not be able to forget that scene for a while.

“About the earlier conversation—” Ainz looked over his shoulder at Sebas. “— Could you answer my question? Sebas, your senses cannot tell what level your opponents are at right?”

“Yes. I can only roughly estimate it.”

“I see.... Then it’s still a mystery.”

“What is?”

“It’s simple, Sebas. How accurate your senses are.”

Sebas’ had a slight expression of confusion on his face. He could not grasp what his master was saying.

“Unless levels can be expressed numerically, if it is only a rough estimate, it is

not accurate. There is ample possibility that your estimate is incorrect right?”

“True.... I cannot say that it is absolute.”

Sebas had one uncertainty, which stemmed from when he heard the details of Demiurge’s battle.

“However the chance of your senses being accurate also exists. Regarding the being known as Evileye, that is.”

“...However Evileye had no reservations releasing . She might be beyond the range of understanding of my senses.”

Sebas looked down slightly, and answered.

This was Sebas’ unease.

For example, one of the maids, Narberal, was a spellcaster, but she could use up to the 8th Tier of magic. Then with that as a reference, what level was Evileye who used a 5th Tier spell with confidence?

Purely by calculations she would not be far from the battlemajors. However Sebas believed that she could rival one of them. This was a large gap.

“No, that is a hasty assumption, Sebas.... Since she defended against Demiurge’s curse of commandment, she might have had an item that nullified mental attacks, used some defensive magic, or is a being above level 40. Thus you might not be wrong.”

Items that could completely nullify mental attacks were of a high level. However, items that responded only to either mind control or charming were not. But, without knowing of Demiurge’s existence, it was difficult to assume that she had predicted with pinpoint accuracy and prepared countermeasures against mental attacks.

If she was above level 40, what was the reason that she could use the 5th Tier with confidence?

“Meaning?”

“It was true that when she used magic, she used the 5th Tier— A pathetic attack magic, but when she fought with Demiurge in close combat, she had used her fists.”

“This means?”

“Ah. Evileye does not use weapons, for example a dagger, but her fists. She definitely is confident in them.”

Sebas nodded.

That was just the case. The act of fighting unarmed instead of a bladed weapon was something one could not do without plenty of confidence.

“I believe that is possible.”

“Therefore I believe that Evileye is both a spellcaster and a monk.”

“Oh!”

Sebas let out a cry of surprise.

He felt that it was reasonable. Embedded in his cry was a feeling of amazement— of how his master could deduce so much from such little information.

That voice raised Ainz’s spirits, and his speech quickened.

“...And she is probably above level 40. If your belief is correct, given that there is no way that the maids can lose to a level 40 being, she should be at least be around level 50.”

“I see!”

“I also believe that Evileye may be around level 60.”

Sebas waited for his master to explain the leap in logic.

“May I ask for your reasoning?”

“I do not mind.” Ainz made a small chuckle and spoke with confidence. “The Shinobi Demiurge met. One usually becomes a Shinobi when they are thieves above level 60. The Shinobi, together with Evileye who is impervious to the curse of commandment, makes me believe that A+ Adventuring party Blue Rose is comprised of level 60 beings.”

From the information Narberal gathered, it was normal for adventurers to form teams with members of similar ability. It was the same in Yggdrasil.

Then rather than the Shinobi being the only one with a high level, the probability of all the members of Blue Rose being of the same strength was higher.

However, Sebas felt that there was something off about Ainz's declaration.

"...These are just my thoughts, Ainz-sama." Sebas felt that Ainz's silence indicated that he should continue, and he spoke. "I have observed Blue Rose from afar and I did not feel that they had such strength.... Of course, if my senses were accurate."

Sebas had felt that only Evileye was strong. He felt next to nothing from the other members of Blue Rose.

Ainz's pace slowed slightly.

"That." Ainz thought to himself and spoke. "That is where the question of the accuracy of your senses comes out. Is it possible for Evileye's to not be wrong, but instead the other members?"

"...I am not sure."

"Right. However, a Shinobi might have methods that can obstruct your senses right?"

"I.... cannot say that it is wrong."

While there was none in Yggdrasil, it would not be strange for such a skill to exist in this world. As a new secrecy-type skill.

Ainz sighed in his heart. He had asked Shalltear's subordinate, Brain, about it, but he did not have much information on Shinobis. He had thought of asking Arche, but he had no desire to open up that can of worms.

"I had believed that we had collected enough information.... But it seems to be full of holes."

The knowledge gained from the game Yggdrasil. The knowledge from this world. The problem was that they had not reconciled with each other and there were many loose ends.

"Then do the humans of this world have their power levels raised when in battle, like a certain manga? No, Narberal mentioned nothing of the sort so A+

Adventurers might be of that level.” It was scary how he could not say that it was not impossible. “Well, that’s fine. Anyway, I believe that Blue Rose is comprised of level 60s.”

“...Including the other members?”

“Yes. The possibility of them simply not giving their 100% right now still exists right?”

“...Perhaps.”

Sebas did not understand, but he nodded.

“Well, that’s how it is. About your first question, whether or not there is a need to meet them, they might be from a country that has level 60 adventurers. If we make enemies of them it might become troublesome, no?”

“That is.... Perhaps....”

Even if Ainz’s speculations were correct, and Blue Rose did consist of five level 60 adventurers, they still would honestly be no match of Nazarick’s. They would not be able to defeat even one Guardian.

In addition, the Kingdom only had two A+ Adventuring parties. Taking all that into account, Ainz could be thought of as too cautious.

While Sebas thought that, Ainz took another step and fell into deep thought.

Shinobi was a class one had to be over level 60 to use. That was the lowest possible, but her actual level was probably higher, and it would not be strange for the Kingdom to have a trump card stronger than her.

He had reason to believe that they could not be level 100 since they could not defeat Demiurge.

But since it was unclear what was happening, it would be best to be as friendly as possible.

“Well, about the information about Camila. We have spread information that can become our hidden ace. They will probably not accept any direct information we give them.”

Ainz had heard from the Shadow Demon that had infiltrated the Mayor’s

office that he had sent a messenger to the Capital in a panic. Considering the amount of time that had passed, he should have delivered the information about the magic caster known as Ainz.

The mayor understood that the imaginary vampire called Camila was a strong enemy. Then Ainz's position would naturally rise.

Ainz believed that.

However, Sebas still had doubts.

It was the question from earlier: *Why did they not inform us earlier?*

Was it because the Kingdom had no such customs? Or was it because of a trump card above level 60 that they did not feel that the existence of Camila was a problem?

As Sebas thought about that, the door to Ainz's quarters came into view.

The two insect-like monsters standing beside the door bowed deeply at Ainz and Sebas. Mildly relieved from finally arriving, Ainz raised his hand slightly in reply.

Ainz naturally opened the door without knocking, and hastily stepped inside.

Sebas made a deep bow and followed him.

The first thing Ainz looked at was his clothes closet.

He casually opened the closet door.

Countless clothes were arranged before him. If a person of this world saw them he would be shocked, as they were all well-tailored and made of excellent materials. They were not luxurious materials like silk, but rather others— Like the hair of beast-type monsters or rare metals.

Adventurers would also be shocked, since all these clothes were enchanted with magic. Depending on the type of magic, the prices would soar. Even the lowest rank magic would raise the value of a piece of clothing by 50 times. Considering that, the worth of the clothes in front of them was simply beyond estimate.

Ainz stretched out his hands and took out a piece of clothing in each. It was a random selection, but both had the appearance the long robe that Ainz wore daily. The single difference was the type of magic woven into them.

Comparing them, Ainz shook his head.

“Really, I don’t know which is good.”

If it was a suit for formal occasions Ainz could prepare it immediately, but speaking of clothes that would be suitable for meeting a person knowledgeable of the aristocratic society, he had no clue.

Ainz thought that it would be nice if he could wear something that would not cause him embarrassment.

What clothes would not embarrass him? Ainz was a normal person and this was entirely out of the realm of what he could predict.

This was not because Ainz was a fool. It is simply that such knowledge was not needed by a regular person. Would anyone bother to learn proper etiquette just because the chance that he gets transferred to another world exists?

Ainz’s gaze flickered towards the kimono with a crest and hakama.

“Traditional clothes of this land or outfits matching this time period. No it might be best to wear the clothes of a magic caster....”

He then shook his head. Making a decision was usually impossible for him.

Thus he had brought Sebas with him.

“Sebas, which is good?”

Ainz placed the clothes in front of him and asked Sebas.

The clothes that Ainz normally wore were made in Yggdrasil, pragmatically designed to boost defense. Of course, it was of excellent make, but it was unclear if it was suitable for meeting a messenger. As said earlier, he had no idea what was good.

Thus Sebas.

He gambled everything on Sebas’ setting as a butler, and believed that if it was him, he could make good suggestions.

He won the gamble.

Sebas gazed at those clothes and—

“I personally feel that this one is better.”

—Sebas took out a mantle that used white as its base. Ainz normally wore black robes so this was quite eye-catching.

“Isn’t this.... A bit eye catching?”

Ainz was thinking about this as if he were a member of a company about to cinch a deal. To a normal person like Ainz, this was the closest imagery he could get.

Thinking of clothes, what appeared in Ainz’s mind was a calm and comfortable suit. The colour of such a suit needed not be specified. But even in reality, while he had worn black and navy blue suits, a white one was new. His heart wavered.

This was simply far too different from his own image.

“I do not believe so. In front of a messenger, showing off some extravagance is better than being discreet.”

“Is that so....”

Ainz nodded without much confidence. This was so far from his usual image that he was simply unable to judge how appropriate it was.

“...Then Sebas. I shall leave the coordination of the clothes to you.”

“Understood. I believe it will be best to choose items that will complement this?”

“U....mmm, please do.”

He, a butler, was left to handle the coordination of his master’s clothing.

Countless stars danced around in Sebas’ overjoyed eyes.

Shifting to avoid contact with Sebas’ sparkling eyes, Ainz’s gaze wandered aimlessly. He still found such an outfit extremely embarrassing. However he had no intention to shoot down the suggestion.

“Haa.”

He sighed quietly, trying to keep himself from being heard by Sebas.

There was no time to waste here. Regardless of what clothes Sebas chose, he had the resolution to wear them. Ainz then recalled something, which helped withdraw him from the uncomfortable reality.

“Ah, yes. Destroy their eyes.”

Sebas understood, immediately stopped picking the clothes, and nodded deeply to Ainz.

“Understood. Who shall I inform?”

Ainz looked upwards. Sebas did the same, but saw nothing but the ceiling. Sebas’ eyes could not see past the invisibility.

However, he could feel them. The multiple presences stuck to the ceiling.

“Eight Edged Assassin. Can you capture them unharmed?”

As Ainz’s words reached them, a human-sized spider wearing ninja clothes appeared. Considering how the other Eight Edged Assassins did not show themselves, this was probably the leader.

“It depends on the target, Ainz-sama. While we are skilled at assassination, whether they are unharmed will depend on their strength.”

Ainz frowned even if his face was made of bone.

Eight Edged Assassins were monsters that could turn invisible freely and fought with the sharp blades attached to their eight legs. The most terrifying thing was that they could decapitate someone in one hit. They were useful as assassins, but the condition of having them not harm someone would make it difficult for them to operate.

How powerful was the other party?

Eight Edged Assassins were level 49 monsters. Normally it would be fine to use them, but in this case the existences of Blue Rose plagued Ainz’s mind. He was worried that the other party was quite strong.

Considering the few other thief-type monsters in Nazarick, there seemed to

be none more suitable for this job than the Eight Edge Assassins.

“Hmm”

If the Eight Edged Assassins die, he could use money to summon them from books, but he found this a waste. The finance in Nazarick was finite. He did not want to waste them, considering future plans.

“Backup.... Is required. Contact Aura. Destroy their eyes. Have the Eight Edge Assassins obey Aura.”

“Understood. What about the defenses of this room?”

“There is no need. I will be leaving.... Has Demiurge still not returned?”

“I have not heard anything suggesting he has.”

“Right....”

When the messenger from the Kingdom arrived, a was sent to Demiurge but a reply would take time to return.

Ainz’s face fell.

In actuality, Ainz did not want to greet the messenger himself. Firstly he had no idea what to expect or what to say. In addition, he had no confidence to not offend the messenger.

Thus he had originally wanted to leave this to Demiurge. If that was not possible he wanted to hide his body with illusions, stand at the back and have a puppet follow his orders.

Ainz made a small sigh.

The pressure, similar to making it to the final interview before entering a company, beared down on him, even though he could not feel most emotions. Why did he want to escape this so much?

Since Demiurge was not here, he had first thought of leaving it to Sebas. He also thought of leaving it to Pandora’s Actor like when he was in the capitol.

However, depending on who the messenger was, there was the possibility that important decisions relating to Nazarick’s future had to be made. Thus he could not leave it to Sebas.

What he needed was not a butler or an actor, but a being that was full of wisdom who could be trusted to decide the direction that should be taken.

—Then I definitely shouldn't be the one there.

Ainz did not let such words out of his mouth.

Weakness could not be seen in the ruler of Nazarick, Ainz, as any words of hesitation spoken from the master's mouth would shake the confidence of the subordinates.

However, there were times when he wanted to say that.

The negotiations with the messenger could determine whether the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick would gain a new ally.

—I hate this. This pressure. I want to run away.

But there was no one here he could rely on.

He grasped the staff with his hand. The proof of his identity as a Guildmaster. Because of this identity, he had to work hard to bring about the best results.

Even though Ainz had no eyes, he closed them. The red light floating in his empty sockets disappeared.

And then they lit up again.

“...Have you finished the preparations?”

He spoke to Sebas-quiet, yet determined.

Chapter 89: Negotiations | Part 2

The surface of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

What in the past was a poison swamp, had changed to a grassy plain. The wind blew across the plains, causing the grass to dance along. But a white alabaster wall suddenly broke up the scenery as it grew out from the grass.

If one peeked through the gate, they would see a tomb that had several large statues of warriors scattered around.

Considering that this was in grassland, it was a very strange scene. One would want to keep away from it for no reason, and it felt extremely discomforting.

That location would make most people want to avoid it, but despite this, three carriages had been parked there. There were coachmen, along with servants who listened to the whims of the people inside.

However, it was not only them.

There were a total of six mounted warriors around the carriages. They wore full plate armour with the same crest engraved on it. They were most likely the personal soldiers of some noble.

The ones on the receiving end of the heated gazes of the warriors were a maid, a warrior, and a nobleman.

“He’s late.”

The maid was spoken to in a harsh voice, the speaker clearly not hiding his anger.

The one speaking was the noble-like old man.

His skin was covered in wrinkles, and he was so thin that he looked mere skin and bone. His hair was white, and on top of most of it being missing, it looked like he was bald.

On the whole, he was a man where the word lich would not be a far stretch from describing him.

“He is far too late. How long does he intend to make us wait for?”

Where can one find a person who dares to make a messenger dispatched by the King wait?

Embedding such a thought into his words, the old man glared in dissatisfaction.

“My sincerest apologies. Ainz-sama is currently rushing to prepare. Thus would it be possible for you to wait a little longer?”

The maid—Yuri Alpha, bowed her head. Her prim and proper face had an apologetic expression on it. If one was a man, they would immediately accept her apology, but this was repeated several times, no, several tens of times. The effect weakened and the old man’s dissatisfaction came bubbling forth again.

“Rather than frantic preparations, what could be more important than coming here?”

They were words of disdain. Yuri bowed deeply. However it was not clear what sort of expression she was making.

As the old man was about to continue to berate Yuri, the warrior standing at the side spoke.

While he was a warriors, removing his helm revealed a clean and respectable face. One could call it the air of a noble that it was impossible for one to gain without living that lifestyle.

He indeed was a noble of the Kingdom that held territory. And it seemed for reasonable for the soldiers accompanying him to be protecting him instead.

In fact, he, like Archel, was a member of the Noble Faction.

“Archel-dono. There is no need to be angry. He is someone who lives in the countryside like this. It is natural that he does not understand manners.”

The old man known as Archel had a doubtful expression on his face.

“Even if that is the case.”

While his position was higher, in terms of authority a warrior would be off more importance. Archel’s attitude was certainly not something he would say

to someone his grandchildren's age.

"While it is true that making a messenger from the Royal Family wait here would be extremely rude, that is from the point of view from a person that knows manners. If it were an insect or demihuman doing this, would Archel-dono say the same thing?"

"...That is true."

"Archel-dono. How about waiting inside the carriage?"

"...That is not a bad suggestion." Archel stared at the blue sky. "However, in this weather, the inside would heat up."

"Ah, yes. Without wind, it would be hot. My apologies."

The warrior apologised and lowered his head.

"...If that is the case, as I suggested earlier, we do have a drawing room, so how about waiting there?"

Yuri had made a suggestion earlier.

And again, Archel refused her instantly.

"Are you telling me to wait inside that tomb over there?"

Archel spoke without hiding his disdain at her words. Why did he had to rest inside a depressing tomb? While it was probably better than out here, he could not rest in a location that had the stench of death.

"...No that is not the case."

Yuri muddled her words as she shifted her gaze. Knowing that she was looking at the log house, Archel's face turned into one of scorn.

"Then I have to wait inside that tiny log house?"

"No.... There is a path leading to Nazarick inside."

"A path leading in to the tomb?"

"Thus, the lower floors of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick is Ainz-sama's mansion. We shall transfer to that floor—"

"Ainz.... Ainz Ooal Gown lives inside that tomb?"

“Sorry? Yes. That is correct?”

And is there a problem?

Seeing Yuri’s expression, Archel glared at her like he had seen something disgusting.

Using common sense, one would not need to be told what sort of person would live in a cemetery. That person would be one who had to perform a filthy occupation. Such a person would probably not have the social standing to even meet with a noble like Archel. Despite this, he was dispatched to meet with such a person. This made him extremely aggrieved.

In contrast to the silently dissatisfied Archel, Yuri felt like she had made a mistake and kept silent. Silence fell between the two of them for different reasons.

The warrior gazed upon the two with deep interest and spoke to Yuri.

“By the way, how is this lady related to Gown.... This magic caster?”

“Myself? I am one of the maids serving Ainz-sama.”

“One of the maids? Then Gown is surrounded by many maids?”

“Yes. That is correct—” Yuri recalled the name of the person she was introduced to. “—Claude-sama.”

“Hmm. By the way are they beauties like you?”

“...I do not know. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.”

As Claude replied with strange enthusiasm, his gaze moved around Yuri like he was tasting her.

Yuri’s gaze fell slightly. She could understand the emotion in Claude’s gaze. Lust.

Satisfied, Claude’s gaze locked onto Yuri’s chest.

“Can I ask something?”

“Yes, what is it?”

“You did not refute that you were a beauty.”

Yuri made a confused face.

“...Because I am one.”

Yuri's tone made it clear that she believed it to be obvious.

She was created by the 41 Supreme Beings to be beautiful. There was no way she would not be. To refute this would be to reject the aesthetic sense of the 41 Supreme Beings.

However, the other existences created by the 41 Supreme Beings were created with the same level of beauty as Yuri. Thus saying that she was more beautiful would be the same as insulting the the 41 Supreme Beings who created the others. Thus she had replied with her earlier words. The only exception would be if it was said by one of the 41 Supreme Beings directly. She would refuse it in such a case, in order to be humble.

Claude could not understand Yuri's thoughts and his eyes went wide. Yuri was beautiful. The women that Claude had embraced before could not match up to her, to the point that he wondered how he was satisfied before.

To the limits of Claude's knowledge, there was only one woman who could rival Yuri's beauty.

She was the woman known as [Golden].

Claude judged Yuri to be as beautiful as her.

Such a woman said that she could not say that she was more beautiful than others. Was this due to her reservation, or did the others truly equal her?

Claude swallowed.

He had thought that this job to come out to the countryside was the worst. However, if things go well, he might get something delicious.

Getting impatient once again, Archel spoke in anger.

“And when will your master arrive?”

“In a moment.”

Despite her saying this, Yuri had no knowledge of when Ainz would arrive. However, only an idiot would say such a thing directly as there were only

demerits in doing so. Thus, she simply spoke as if she were apologising.

However, inside she was telling them to shut up.

Hurrying the leader of the 41 Supreme Beings and the sole remaining one, caused the normally calm Yuri to feel anger. Of course, she would not make this visible.

“I heard those words earlier. On top of making me wait in such a place, you are unable to give me a definite time. Are you making fun of me, a messenger from the Royal Family?”

The level of disdain in Archel’s words had increased to the point of clear hostility. In fact, he had never been made to wait before. No, he had but he had only done so while receiving the best treatment.

He had to wait in the middle of a grassy plain, without anything to shade him from the sun, or anything to drink. This experience was a first, and it made him unhappy. Even the slight sweat on his brow and the feeling of his clothes sticking to his skin.

“...No, that is not the case.”

As Yuri was about to open her mouth to offer another excuse, the door to the log house opened. For an instant, Archel’s vision shook and a sense of vertigo attacked him. However, since it passed quickly, Archel thought that it was just him and paid no further heed to it.

This was as there was a more important thing to pay attention to.

“—Apologies for the wait.” The person who came from the log house spoke. “I am Ainz Ooal Gown.”

Archel and Claude looked at him and were at a loss for words. Even Archel’s desire to vent his frustrations on him had disappeared.

Ainz Ooal Gown walked out of the loghouse and towards Archel’s group at a normal pace.

The first thing they noticed was the pure white mantle draped over Ainz. This was of a quality that made Archel and Claude’s eyes widened. The clothes below were mostly golden and were made with fine craftsmanship.

Archel had been a messenger several times, and he had represented the Kingdom to other countries. Despite recalling all the times he had done so, he had never seen a person who wore such eye catching clothes as the man before him did.

The strange thing was that his face was covered by a mask. And he wore gloves and prevented a single piece of skin from showing.

However to Archel, such things did not matter.

He had more important things to do.

He had no choice but to accept it. Archel had judged himself to be able to not waver in the face of anything, but his spirit broke in front of Ainz.

If one became a noble like Archel, clothes held more meaning than simply covering one's skin. They were a simple method to determine what position a person held in society. One could tell the position one had, the level of authority, and the level of wealth based on their clothes.

A king should wear clothes fit for a king, and a commoner should wear clothings befitting of a commoner.

Then Ainz Ooal Gown appeared wearing clothes that could shock Archel.

How much power did he wield?

Archel had heard that Ainz was a magic caster, but he had no idea how to treat him.

The position of a magic caster in the Kingdom was not high. If this were the Empire, it would be much higher due to the legend known as Fluder. However there were none in the Kingdom (well there were Palace Magicians but such individuals also held territory as nobles) and thus their position were equated with craftsmen.

Thus he could talk down to Yuri, the maid of a magic caster. This was because her social standing was low.

However the clothes Ainz wore clearly stated that his position was not low. Thus he was not a simple magic caster, but was also something else, so their treatment of him should naturally change.

Archel immediately rectified his shaken heart. Considering that Claude was still taken aback, this was a quick recovery.

This was due to their difference in experience.

“Hmm, you are Ainz Ooal Gown.”

“Yes.... That is the case.”

Ainz replied curtly and the two fell into silence.

Ainz forced down his unease and merely gazed at the silent Archel.

Any human who had been interviewed would feel a strong awkward silence had they been here.

Archel looked at Ainz again. This was to determine how he should act.

Archel's job to inform Ainz Ooal Gown of the King's words was the most important. The next was to determine if such a person could be brought in the Noble faction which he was a part of.

It was necessary to gain some information about Ainz Ooal Gown.

Thus his first hand would be to pressure him. He would toss a stone into the water and examine the waves.

“...If you were there while did you not come out?”

Ainz could not understand what Archel was saying.

This was a simple difference in knowledge. In Ainz's head, the log house was a path to Nazarick. He was not waiting there in particular. Thus he did not understand what was being said, so he had a confused air about him.

In front of the absent minded Ainz, Archel felt that words were not enough and aimed to create guilt by pointing out that fact.

Repeating the same thing would weaken the effect. Archel thus forcefully threw the words out of his throat.

“Even though you were in the log house, why did you not come out?”

“Ah! No no, there is a path in the log house that leads to Nazarick where I live. I have arrived from there.”

“The path that the maid talked about.... I am the messenger dispatched by His Majesty. Archel Nizun Fondoll. And he is—” Archel pointed at the warrior. “—the man who has protected me on the way here Claude Raunales Lokia Culbelk-dono.”

“Nice to meet you. Gown-dono.”

“I hope to get along with you.”

Ainz lightly bowed his head. Seeing that, Archel was secretly confused.

Ainz’s response showed no traces of loyalty. Archel was a part of the Noble Faction and thus held no loyalty for the king. However if he was told that something was the order of the King, he would at least fake it and expect his sincerity.

He could not feel any such emotion from Ainz. Even a commoner would abase themselves. Even those of other countries.

His figure spoke that throughout his life he had no exposure to authority.

As if arriving at the same conclusion, Claude moved next to Archel and whispered.

“He’s like an adventurer.”

Ah, and Archel understood.

Strength was all that mattered, they had no standing nor blue blood, and they would turn their noses at the hierarchical society. They were painfully similar to the type of people that Archel hated the most. He could then understand the clothes that Ainz wore.

The amount of wealth an excellent adventurer earned was on another level. It was to the point that a noble like Archel could not even begin to compare.

If Ainz Ooal Gown was an adventure of that level, it was possible for him to own such high quality clothes.

As Archel thought in silence, Ainz spoke to Yuri.

“Yuri. Return first.”

“B, but.... Is that fine?”

“Ah. Prepare to welcome them.”

“Understood.”

Yuri bowed and walked towards the log house. Looking at her shrinking figure, Claude made a small sigh. Although, his gaze was focused around her buttocks.

“Then....I would like to confirm something before I inform you of His Majesty’s words, but what is that mask?”

“It is a magical item.”

“Remove it.”

Ainz stopped moving. Should he remove it, his undead face would be revealed. He could not show such a thing. Thus he thought it was time for the Death Knight located inside the log house to make its appearance. He believed that he could use the same excuse as the time he spoke to Gazef.

“....Apologies, but I cannot remove it.”

“You intend to receive His Majesty’s words with that mask? Do you not believe that that is rude? Do you not even have that level of manners?”

“No, that is not the case. I am fully aware of how rude it is. However, it is due to magical reasons. Should I remove my mask, many people may get hurt.”

Hearing the word hurt, Archel’s brows furrowed.

He had heard from the king that Ainz was a masked magic caster. There was a possibility that the man underneath was a different person, but checking that was not Archel’s job.

Commanding him to remove his mask was an attempt to one up Ainz. Should injuries occur, he had no confidence to take responsibility. It would also be dangerous if Claude were to be injured.

Thus, Archel took back his words.

“....Then it cannot be helped.”

“Thank you very much.”

“....Then I shall inform you of His Majesty’s words.”

He did not want to do such a thing in a plain, and even more next to a tomb, but work was work. He had to do it.

Archel pulled out a rolled up parchment. He presented it to Ainz with both hands to allow him to confirm that the Royal Crest was imprinted on the seal.

In response, Ainz reached out his hands. He thought that Archel intended to hand it to him. Considering how he was holding it with two hands, Ainz reached out with both. Ainz referenced the act of swapping name cards.

This was not wrong. If Archel was not here it would be the proper course of action. However if there was an official messenger doing it, this was extremely rude.

“What!”

Archel rolled up the scroll in panic. He was in shock due to Ainz’s actions.

If one was of a higher position this would be normal, but if one was not of the same rank, there would be a messenger in between. This was to allow both parties to be equals. Thus the messenger.

There was no such thing in the Kingdom or Empire but depending on the country the king would not speak directly to his subjects and instead there would be several intermediaries. This was to preserve the image of the king as a holy symbol.

“Did something happen?”

Ainz voice was full of doubt.

Hearing this, Archel made a sour look. Claude had an amused expression. From this short conversation, they could tell that Ainz Ooal Gown had no manners, and no knowledge of high society.

Proper etiquette would natural change depending on the country. However there was some level of some level of commonality. Not knowing even this would mean that one was completely clueless of the surrounding countries.

In the end, Archels’ evaluation of Ainz Ooal Gown fell to the point where he was nothing more than a rude demihuman. As if he were something who would eat a full course, not with knife and fork, but with bare hands.

The fact that the clothes he wore could not be bought by Archel only served to aggravate him.

—Why does such a person have such clothes....

Archel did not notice it, but jealousy took up most of his heart. A demihuman like person who had no manners was wearing clothes that he could only dream of. He was extremely disgruntled.

If a person who was much worse off than you, brought a partner that was much more superior than yours, you would feel envy. This was how Archel's heart reacted.

Archel's gaze burned with arrogance.

Ainz could not hide his surprise at the fact that Archel remained silent.

Why did he not say anything?

It seemed like he had made a mistake, but he had no clue to as what it was.

—*So I should have brought Sebas.*

Since he had done various things in the Kingdom, he thought that he could gloss pass everything until he grasped the situation, but this has failed. It would not be too late for him to call for Sebas.

Feeling like he had made a mistake on the level of forgetting to swap name cards, Ainz gazed at Archel.

"I shall inform you of His Majesty's words."

Archel spoke with a more forceful tone than before, and spread the parchment.

Ainz took a breath. He felt relief that the conversation would continue. But Ainz's hopes were dashed.

"....Why are you not kneeling?"

For an instant, Ainz could not understand what was being said.

"Did you not hear me? I am informing you of His Majesty's words, kneel."

Ainz remained standing, at a loss for what to do.

Ainz imagined a scene from manga and anime. In the scene was a person on one knee in front of his king. Then it would be proper for him to do the same right.

Kneeling also had the meaning of defeat, but in this case Ainz believed it to be proper etiquette. Ainz Ooal Gown acted evilly, but he did understand basic courtesy. If it was proper manners to kneel, then he should do so. If he were treated as the trump card against the powerful existence known as Camila, then he should not be asked the impossible.

Ainz believed that was the case.

Then what was he considering?

He was simply wondering if he should go down on one knee, or both like when the lizardmen surrendered to him. He had no clue what etiquette demanded of him.

“...Is something wrong?”

Archel voice had anger inside.

Why was he that angry? As Ainz felt bothered by this, his two knees touched the ground. He was doing a dogeza.

Archel desperately tried to control himself. By his side, Claude was chuckling. While they had thought that he had no education, a fool like this was rare.

In front of the prostrating Ainz, Archel wanted to complain, but he thought that if he did so, the situation would not continue. He did not want to waste his precious time on such an idiotic person.

Archel opened the parchment. He read out the words that the King himself wrote. One could tell that he had placed much importance on the person known as Ainz since he did not use a proxy to write it.

Ainz honestly could not understand what was being spoken. There was a large volume of decorative language, to the point where he wondered which narcissist wrote this.

Due to your generous heart and the fortune of god, the trampled village was

saved by you. For this I am grateful and on and on.

Why did they not get to the point?

Ainz stifled his desire to voice his thoughts. It was not more than a minute long, but an exhaustion like the entire thing was in english overwhelmed him.

Reading off the King's name at the end, Archel rolled up the parchment.

As he did so, Ainz went over the contents.

Thank you for saving the village. As we would like to express our thanks, come to the Capital.

Just that.

Ainz felt fatigued as he stood up. As he brushed off the dirt on his knees, his gaze met the frowning face of Archel.

"Is something wrong?"

"No.... It's nothing."

Despite Archel's face clearly saying that it was not nothing, he handed the parchment to Ainz.

"....."

"....."

Ainz wondered if it was fine to take the parchment and reached out his hand. Confirming that Arche did not take it back, he received it with both hands.

"So.... Is that it?"

Archel narrowed his eyes. He looked at Ainz as if to say 'what are you talking about?'

He seemed to have something more to ask about the King's letter. However Ainz was a brutish human. Then it was not strange for him to have questions. Thus he asked.

"...Is there something else?"

"...Do you know about the existence of Camila?"

Even Ainz could feel the tense atmosphere.

It was true that he lacked information of this world's normal education and noble society. However, he was a proper working adult in the past, so he was not a complete idiot.

That was why he wondered why they were treated him so lightly.

Is this how they treated me despite knowing my importance? Or do they not know? Do they know the extent of my—Ainz's abilities? Does the Kingdom have a trump card?

Ainz thought that it was better to continue the conversation in a friendly manner. Ainz and thus Nazarick had saved citizens of the Kingdom. But why did they have to treat him in such a hostile manner?

A black flame rose in his heart.

Everything was a pain. Should he just use force to press the conversation forward?

His desire was to allow Nazarick to become safer than it was previously, and for the sake of his preposterous goal in the far future. Thus Ainz controlled himself. However he still desired to know if they acted this way to him despite his knowledge of Camila.

“Ask that to the king directly.”

Archel could not answer questions that he did not know the answer to. However he had no desire to say that he had no clue to a person that lacked upbringing. Thus he replied with a strange answer.

If he was a person who he desired a better relationship with, he would not have given this answer.

From what he heard from Gazef via the King, and from what he could tell from their earlier conversation, Archel had a certain image of Ainz. A powerful demihuman.

No upbringing nor knowledge. Although dull, he could be used as a pawn.

In a certain way, it was the worst evaluation.

“...It is written on the parchment that he wishes me to come to the Capitol, but how will we get there. With magic?”

Is this guy an idiot?

The thoughts hidden in Archel's eyes were those words. He believed that Ainz did not have the slightest common sense.

“...We are riding carriages. There is a carriage there right?”

“Inside that carriage with the crest?”

Ainz's gaze fell on the extravagant carriage that had the crest of the Royal Family.

The fact that Archel had to come here and the mental ability of Ainz had caused Archel to become disgruntled. If he had common sense then he would not say such things. Did he have to say even that much?

“...You are riding the one behind.”

“That one....”

It was a poor and rickety carriage. On top of there only being two horses pulling it, one could easily feel the gap in their treatment.

No matter how favourable one looked at the situation, a magic caster who saved a village was worthy of being treated like an ambassador. An ambassador would naturally ride in a carriage with the royal crest. Thus Ainz had asked the earlier question. However the answer he received was different from his expectations. Therefore the royal family who prepared the carriage simply viewed Ainz to be worth that much.

“...I also have a carriage, thus can I ride that?”

“You do not intend to ride in the carriage that His Majesty prepared with his good will?”

“...Good will you say.”

Is this seriously good will? The thought flashed through Ainz's mind, but he bared with it.

“...Then it cannot be helped.”

Even though he was an undead his head hurt. However he could gain a good relationship with the Kingdom. If he had patience here, he could gain a great opportunity. Since he had taken the first step, it could not be helped that he should bare with this.

If he was leaving then he needed to bring a few people from Nazarick. Some people were needed to take care of him.

He should bring Sebas, and several maids.

“...Before we depart I need to make preparations. Could I have some time?”

“You intend to make me wait more in this filthy place?”

“.....” Ainz’s expression underneath the mask frowned slightly. “....I shall ask once more. May I please have some time?”

“You intend to—”

Make a messenger of the king wait in such a filthy place as a tomb alike this?

As he was about to say those words, Claude spoke to him.

He had watched the two in silence up till now, but he felt that a certain goal of his could be fulfilled and thus spoke.

“—Now now. It is true that Gown-dono may need to prepare. My subordinates would also like to rest. However, I would first like to make a request.”

“What is it?”

“Could it at least be in a better location?”

“I see.”

Ainz looked around.

If one compared the current surroundings to the poison swamp of the past, they would think that this was much better, but it was true that one could not relax in comfort here.

“Then there is an extremely beautiful location in Nazarick. I believe you will be able to rest there.”

So it was in the tomb.

Seeing the frown on Archel's face, Claude lightheartedly spoke to him.

"Even if we leave now it will take some time to reach E-Rantel. And so, Gown-dono. May we stay the night?"

"...Well I do not mind. I will be busy with preparations and unfortunately be unable to accompany you."

"Hmm."

"Well isn't it fine. Please look at Gown-dono's clothes."

At Claude's words, Archel gazed at Ainz's clothes. It was true that his clothes were excellent. Well, only the clothes though.

The desire to know what sort of place such a person would live in welled up in Archel. If that too was poor, then it would only make for a funny story.

"Haa, fine. Then Gown-dono, please guide us to this place where we can rest."

"Understood. Then please tie your horses near the log house, and I shall send someone to care for them later."

Ainz brought Archel, Claude and their servants and subordinates to the loghouse. It was a large group, but Ainz did not seem to mind. The strange ease at which he did so caused Archel to become disgruntled.

There was a type of human that where if they disliked one part of a person, then they would disapprove of anything and everything they did. Archel was that type of person.

As his dissatisfied gaze fell on Ainz's back, he entered the loghouse. And without hesitation, he opened the door to a room.

Inside was a giant mirror. The outer frame was made of a metal with a golden sheen was finely engraved with strange symbols which looked like runes. The mirror was completely unblemished, appearing to be water frozen solid.

This was a magic item known as the <Mirror of Gate>. The mirror did not

reflect the room, but a different scene.

“W! What is this....”

Seeing the surprised Archel, Ainz secretly felt the irritation within him diminish slightly. However it would still be bad to make his sense of superiority obvious.

“Just, what is this?”

“A magic item. It has the power to connect two points. Basically we can use this to teleport. Now, let’s enter.”

In contrast to the two that were hesitating, Ainz stepped in first. And then Ainz appeared in the mirror.

Archel and Claude looked at each other. Making their decision, Claude and Archel then entered the mirror.

Their view instantly changed. When they thought they had touched a thin membrane, they had changed locations.

Spread out before them was a scene that could only be described beautiful.

It was a beauty that far outstripped the palace, no, anything that Archel had ever seen before.

Archel gasped in amazement, preventing any words from leaving.

“It is this way. Please wet your throats in the drawing room.”

Ainz pointed to a door along the passage. Standing on both sides of the door were two extremely beautiful maids. One of Yuri, and one was someone they had seen for the first time.

Ainz tried but failed to hide his sense of superiority. This upset Archel. He was shown this much by the man who he had deemed to be far inferior to him. This greatly stimulated his sense of inferiority to unprecedented heights.

“How did you make this much money?”

Archel spoke in a harsh voice.

“...With my friends.”

Ainz's words were filled with pride. Archel then narrowed his eyes.

Riches were not created from nothing. It moved from one place to the next. Then the fortune of Ainz Ooal Gown should have originally gone to another human.

"It seems you have amassed quite a fortune, but have you paid taxes?"

"Haa?"

Ainz's reply had a slight anger to it. Claude made a troubled face, but Archel ignored him.

"I am asking if you have paid your taxes. This is the Kingdom's territory, and the place where the laws of the Kingdom hold. If you live here then there is a need to pay taxes in accordance to one's earnings. And I have not heard of anyone living around here that has paid taxes suitable for such an amazing building as this?"

"....."

"While you have said you built this with your friends, it is not wrong to say that you have unjustly monopolised the resources of the Kingdom? If this place is a tomb, then the belongings of this tomb should be returned to the Kingdom, or to god."

Cemeteries like tombs were mostly public facilities, and personal ones were rare. Of course, it was normal to own a section of a tomb for personal use.

If one thought about it normally, Ainz's story became more and more suspicious.

Was it possible to build such a beautiful place by oneself? —No. It was impossible.

Then could one collect such furnishings without others knowing? This was also a no. It was impossible.

The number of workers to build this tomb and the large flow of money that was needed to build this tomb. It was impossible to use up all of them in the construction without any left over.

Then there was only one answer.

Archel believed that the lavish part of the tomb was concealed, and thus the person called Ainz illegally monopolised it.

Basically he had illegally monopolised the Kingdom's wealth with shady methods.

Basically if one thought even deeper, the treasure that would fall into Archel's hand was taken by Ainz before he had noticed.

"If you have unjustly monopolised this, then—"

"—Now now, Archel-dono. I think that's enough."

"....."

Claude stepped in from the side.

"Well, Gown-dono. What Archel-dono has said is the truth. It is a situation where it cannot be helped to be thought of as unjust monopolisation. However, well, for us to keep this in our hearts, well, you don't mind right?"

Different from Claude who would be satisfied with a gift, Archel was currently filled with dissatisfaction. Even if he were given an amazing item, he would definitely make Ainz fall into a disadvantageous position.

Archel had such thoughts.

Ainz's shoulders shook. They rose, and then they fell helplessly to his sides.

Would he not even say anything. Archel thought that. However, the emotion born inside of Ainz was not what he was expecting.

"—If it was just me, I would not care."

It was a quiet voice. It was a monotone voice, one without any emotion.

"I do not think of myself to be very important. Thus I accepted everything and bared with the humiliation. —However, you dared to touch the things my friends created.... The things I created with my treasured friends, you are drooling on them! You pieces of filth!"

Visible rage blew outwards from Ainz.

Feeling the rush of pure anger rush past him, Archel and Claude gulped. However there was no sign of worry on their faces. This was due to the reason

why they came here. And due to the obedient act Ainz put on for them.

Due to the influence of the Royal Family, even if he did not learn any etiquette he was not able to do anything to them. Thus, on the contrary, Ainz actions should allow them to give him a further penalty.

However, Archel and Claude, and the ones behind Claude, noticed that their bodies were quivering.

They felt the wide passageway suddenly drop dramatically in temperature. It was a deep chill like winter had arrived. However, their breaths were not white. They only had enough time to think that this was nothing more than a feeling.

Ainz halted his steps. He then reached into his pocket, and pulled out a scroll. Faster than Archel's group could wonder how such an object fit in such a tiny space, Ainz spread it open.

"...Even death is too merciful. I do not know if there is a hell in this world, but be on your way. <Summon Monster 10th>"

As the parchment burned away, a magic circle appeared on the floor beneath. As the burnt ash filled the air, the previously empty hallway was now occupied by a large creature.

Despite the fact that it had lowered itself, it was a giant being that one had to look up to as it cast its shadow on Archel's group.

It was a giant dog whose long tail reminded one of a dragon. It had three heads, and its three pairs of fiery eyes looked down upon Archel's group. This was a monster known as a Cerberus.

Archel and company felt their bodies freeze.

It felt as if frost and cold were rushing into them.

A monster.

No, even such words were not enough to describe this apparition, that was what their animalistic intuition was telling them. Even the warriors forgot to draw their weapons.

Ainz had a reason for summoning the monster.

There was no way he could not understand why, but the feeling of not wanting to believe it welled up in Archel's heart.

This was an act of aggression against the Kingdom. Ainz would say that calling it a foolish act was a convenient thought on their part.

Standing next to Cerberus, Ainz gave Archel a mere glance. Losing interest, he turned on his heel. Seeing that Ainz was leaving, Archel spoke out, but his voice cracked from the fear.

"I, I am a messenger of the King! Do you think that he would allow such an act!"

Archel believed those words would protect himself, and shouted them out. He thought that they could bind Ainz.

Ainz sighed. Looking over his shoulder at Archel, he deflected those words in a quiet voice.

"...Does that concern me?"

Cerberus read between the lines of Ainz's words and began to slowly move forward.

Inside that deep and twisted voice was a very clear and distinct emotion: Hostility.

"...It seems you mistook friendly intentions and respect for subservience. Then pay the price for that mistake. And blame your misfortune on working for such a foolish master."

Having his trump card easily tossed aside, Archel's mind went blank. Claude finally managed to draw his sword. However, no one was standing in front of Archel despite their original orders to protect him.

The confidence that they previously held was smashed to pieces by this monster.

"Please wait! Ainz-dono, would you accept our apology? I only said such things to test your ability! You pass! We shall inform His Majesty!"

If nothing changed, they would lose their lives. That panicked thought forced Claude's mouth open. However, it was not enough to move Ainz's heart.

“...Throw the corpses somewhere in between here and E-Rantel. The messenger was attacked by monsters along the way and died.... That is what occurred. Feast, Cerberus.”

“Wait— No, please wait! Gown-sama! We are really sorry. We did not want to do it, but it was an order of the King! Right, Archel-dono!”

“...A, ah.”

Although he should praise Claude’s quick thinking, Archel had no desire to lower his head to the person who he had appraised as a demihuman.

However Claude wanted to send Archel flying for even hesitating. At this moment, it was clear who controlled their lives and everything. And Claude had no desire to die.

“Archel! Apologise to Gown-dono!”

The frantic shouts finally caused Archel to make his decision. His excessively large ego was brought to heel by his fear.

“M....My apologies, G, Gown-dono. It seems I said too much.”

It was an apology of an unrepentant child. Claude’s face tensed. No matter how one took it to be, it was not a sincere one.

However, the apology seemed to have a slight effect.

“...Cerberus.”

By that point, Cerberus had moved close enough that it could instantly bite off Archel’s head, but it stopped after hearing its master’s command.

All of the ones that did not belong to Nazarick had the light of hope reignited inside them.

However, Ainz easily snuffed it out.

“—Apart from screams and curses, I don’t want to hear anything else.”

As a terrible scene spread out behind him, screams of despair reverberated in the hallway. Despite the sounds of armour and flesh being consumed, Ainz did not turn back.

It was because he was unhappy.

While he was unhappy, it was not because of the corpses nor because the way they were killed went against his gentle nature.

Ever since Ainz had gained this body, he felt no repulsion to acts of genocide. He did not enjoy it, but it was simply that he felt no sense of empathy with them. It was like killing off bothersome insects. It was the same as not feeling any guilt killing off an insect when its bite woke you up from a deep sleep.

Then why did he have the occasional act of kindness.

It was similar to how a human's heart would be moved when they saw a puppy wet by the rain. If they had the capability to, they might give the puppy food, or raise it. However, some would give it a passing glance and leave. That was how it was.

On the other hand, when that village girl had seen the 9th Floor, she had said this.

[Being able to make such an amazing place, your friends must be amazing people.]

They were honest words without any shred of hidden intent. They had shot through Ainz's heart.

To Ainz, having his past comrades praised was an extremely happy occasion. Thus he liked her. Even though he himself laughed at the fact that he was an easy person.

"Yuri. As I said earlier, I will leave the collection of the remains to you. If you need assistance, it's fine to ask anyone."

"Understood."

Yuri bowed deeply. Lupusregina, who was next to her, did the same.

Then their faces said that they noticed something. The slight movement of their eyes caught someone other than Ainz. He turned back to look.

What he first saw was the lack of living humans in the bloodstained hallway — but there were the remains of them. Next to them was the bloody Cerberus.

What entered Ainz's vision next was the person that he had waited and

hoped for.

“Such a nice fragrance.”

When did he arrive?

Demiurge stood on top of the masses of flesh in the sea of blood. No, his feet were barely touching the ground. His body was floating.

“Apologies for being late.”

He bowed. Raising his head, Demiurge gaze fell on Ainz’s clothes. He smiled.

“Abi ala Fransesce? It suits you perfectly.”

While Demiurge had probably meant this from the bottom of his heart, his words only served to upset Ainz further.

“It does not matter. More importantly, there is something I have to discuss with you. Let’s go to my room.”

“Before that. As I came here, it seems that Aura had gone to the surface, is that fine?”

“Ah. She left due to a request I made of her. There’s no problem.”

“Understood.”

“Then, I’ll leave the cleaning to you.”

Yuri and Lupusregina nodded. Seeing this, Ainz turned his back on the bloody scene and walked silently with Demiurge.

Chapter 90: Negotiations | Part 3

More than one kilometre away from the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

There was a small tent in the middle of the plains. Small, but large enough to fit three humans.

The entrance to the tent was slightly ajar. A man peered through the gap at Nazarick with a pair of binoculars. His unmoving figure was almost like a doll. If his shoulders were not shifting up and down, it would not be strange for someone to actually think that.

While taking long but shallow breathes, the man gazed intently at Nazarick. A voice spoke from within the tent.

“How is it?”

At those words, the man seemed to stirr alive. Rotating his stiff shoulders several times, the man spoke to the ones inside.

“...After that there’s been no movement.”

Only the walls of Nazarick could be seen from the man’s position, and there was no visible movement around that area. Hearing the man’s reply, a third man spoke.

“So we don’t need to report.”

“Yep. Not right now.”

“...That’s the job of the team watching the main gate. We just need to pray that they don’t miss anything.”

Just who were the three people inside the tent?

To put it simply, they were secret agents sent by the Empire.

They were magic casters that could use the 2nd Tier of magic and also rangers that had infiltration skills. They were extremely outstanding secret agents even in the Empire to have mastered both skills. To put it simply, they had the ability to instantly kill a weak knight.

The three of them were sent to observe this location, the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

—No, not just them.

If one could sense everything, he or she would notice that there were several teams like this surrounding Nazarick. There were four such teams, making a total of twelve people.

One might think that this was a mere twelve people, but this was actually up to $\frac{3}{5}$ of the total number of experts of their level.

The Empire boasted a population of over eight million, and to have this many experts come to observe Nazarick made it clear just how important the Empire viewed it to be.

In actuality, this level of caution was normally unthinkable, and was probably the highest level of caution possible ever since the Blood Emperor unified the government.

One might wonder why such people would do such an eye-catching act of pitching a tent in wide open grasslands. However, would people with ranger skills ever do such a foolish act?

The reason was precisely to be inconspicuous.

This was a result of magic.

This tent was a magic item called [Camouflage Tent], and seemed to blend into the grasslands.

After answering, and rubbing his tired eyes with his fingers, the man once again placed the binoculars against his face.

As he did so—

“There’s movement.”

The man lowered his voice. There was a hint of warning in his words.

Inside the small field of vision of the binoculars, the man saw a shadow fly up from the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. Since there was a large distance between them, the shadow seemed small, but it was very large in

actuality.

The man could make out the flapping movement of wings and the whiplike movement of a tail. In contrast to the speed of its elevation, the frequency of its wings flaps was low. It was probably due to a magical ability of its race.

“Is it the usual wyvern?”

“No.... It feels different.”

He compared the flying shadow with the wyverns in his memory. As they observed Nazarick they had seen the figures of wyverns fly up from Nazarick multiple times. However, this shadow was different from the wyverns.

No, it was true that the wyverns that flew out of Nazarick several times were slightly different from those in the man’s memories. However, this time it was completely different and looked nothing like a wyvern.

The first time the man had seen a wyvern, was when he was dispatched to a country south of the Empire which had a lot of mountain ranges.

That country had a flying knight troop, and they raised wyverns for that purpose. When he was sent to that country to observe, he had seen wyverns.

Those wyverns had long scorpion-like tails, and winged forelegs. He had remembered those dragon-like figures.

However the flying creature looked like a winged snake.

Then what sort of creature was that?

The man flipped through the book of his memories, but could not come out with an answer. The snake had quickly risen up to a height of three kilometres. Then it began to fly parallel to the ground.

“Let’s be silent for now.”

“Ah. Let’s do that. We also should send a <Message> to warn them.”

They believed that it was impossible for them to be discovered from that height, but it was an unknown monster. The word absolute did not apply.

The man closed the entrance and held his breath along with the others. As he did so—

Ribbit Ribbit ribbit~♪

The man widened his eyes and he looked around. Being inside the tent, he naturally saw his two compatriots.

Considering how the two were also making surprised expressions, it was not one of them making a joke.

The man heard the wind rustling the grass outside the tent. No matter how much he focused, that was all he could hear. Inside the silent tent, he spoke out in a suppressed voice.

“...Do you hear the sound of frogs?”

“...A, ah.”

A similarly quiet reply came back. As they listened to the surroundings, they focused all their attention on their hearing.

If this was a swamp then they would not think that it was strange. However this was grassland, and was not a place for frogs. Well, no, some frogs did exist here, but they were all monsters.

The Camouflage Tent had an excellent power against detection via sight, but none against audio or nasal cues, and thus had a limited effect against animalistic monsters. There were monsters with special sensory skills, such as Dragon Sense or life detection.

Because they were worried that the snake from earlier had a special sensory skill, they had decided to hide in the tent.

The ribbits sounded at the same time as the snake appeared.

Was this a coincidence or an unfortunate encounter? Either way, this was an abnormal situation.

The men felt that monsters were approaching, and slowly moved their hands towards their weapons. However since they had no knowledge of the monsters' true bodies, it was difficult to decide if they should retreat or fight.

The three preferred to avoid a fight, but even if they did, they had to prepare to retreat.

“<Quick March>”

They cast a 1st Tier Magic. This instantly increased their movement speed by about 20%.

They then cast <Camouflage> of the same rank. This made it more difficult for them to be detected. One might think that <Invisibility> might be more effective, but considering that this was a grassland, this method was better.

“Contact them with <Message>.”

“Got it— What?”

“What?”

“<Message> is not activating....?”

There were several reasons why <Message> did not connect. Such as if the recipient was in a metallic room, blocking themselves off with magic or if they were dead.

However, either case was abnormal. This was as there was no way the recipient would ever hide in a place where <Message> could not reach.

The three men looked at each other with grim expressions.

There was only one answer.

“This is bad! Retreat now!”

Faster than they could react—

Ribbit ribbit ribbit croak croak♪

—The sound of frogs could once again be heard.

In an instant, an unbelievable sleepiness descended on the men’s bodies.

The fact that the men that could use 2nd Tier magic felt this tired made it instantly clear that this drowsiness was magical. This desire for sleep was similar to the one caused by the 1st Tier magic <Sleep>. However, even after knowing that it was far too late.

They did not even have the awareness left to try to support themselves with their weapons.

The three men fell to the floor of the tent. Their breathing became slow and even.

The moment the men fell prey to sleep, the entrance to the tent shook. However, there was no one there. On the other side of the entrance was the scene of unchanged grasslands. It was probably a trick of the wind. It would be normal to think that— If the floor did not sink slightly due to someone's weight.

The snake-like monster that flew up from Nazarick was called Quetzalcoatl. There were two figures riding on it.

One was the master of Quetzalcoatl, Aura Debay Fiora. Despite receiving the rushing wind with her body, her shining golden hair was not ruffled by it. No, perhaps her body did not even feel the wind.

Since this was a magically created saddle, it was stable no matter how the snake moved, and felt no wind pressure.

There was another figure.

Behind Aura— there was a frog monster who, similarly, was riding on a saddle.

Tsuveck Priest Lord.

The bipedal pink frog held an extravagantly decorated staff, and was clad in beautiful priest clothes. Described like that, he might be off an image of weakness, but he was terrifyingly strong. Breaking the motif of a thin frog, he had an appearance that was sprinkled with toppings of evil traits. While he could only use a mere six spells, he was a powerful monster that was above level 70 and could cast spells of up to the 10th Tier.

“Aura-sama. All of them have fallen asleep.”

What left his frog-like mouth was a clear and austere voice. One would make a wry smile at the gap between his voice and appearance. However, Aura was used to this.

“Hmm.”

—She nodded slightly. The Tsuveck Priest Lord continued.

“The Eight Edged Assassins have begun their apprehension. Do you have new

orders for the Tsuveck Singer Songwriters?”

“How long is the effect of their curse of sleep?”

“At least 30 seconds but it changes depending on their resistances and ability, but there seems to be no one notably strong so it should last for several minutes. Ah, or until they are attacked.”

“Is that so—”

Aura nodded. With this the Eight Edged Assassins could apprehend them easily. Either way she had fulfilled her master’s orders.

“Then order the bards to retreat. There are only the five of them so they should return and stay in a safe lake. The Eight Edged Assassins should round them up and head to Nazarick.... Are there many of them?”

“Yes. There were twelve observers. However I believe the Eight Edged Assassins can carry them by themselves. Shall I ask them?”

“Yup. Please.”

“Yes.”

The Tsuveck Priest Lord raised a deep cry. The frog-like Tsuveck tribe had a special method of communication and this ability allowed them to communicate over several kilometres much like <Message>. In Yggdrasil, one had to be prepared to face the whole tribe when sneaking into their territory.

The Tsuveck Priest Lord had contacted the Tsuveck Singer Songwriters with this ability and nodded in satisfaction.

“There are no problems.”

“So it seems.”

Aura’s visual ability had locked onto the positions of several tiny dots far beneath her. They were the Eight Edged Assassins rolling something towards Nazarick.

She saw that their multiple hands could easily transport three bodies simultaneously.

“Now, let’s go back. Let’s go, Quetzalcoatl.”

The snake tilted its long neck, looked at Aura, and began descending according to its master's will. This was quite a rapid descent, but Aura and the Tsuveck Priest Lord did not lose their balance. On the contrary, Aura seemed to enjoy the change in scenery that accompanied it.

“Are we not collecting the tents?”

“According to Ainz-sama. It would be scarier to leave them and have others wonder what happened. However I believe that we have hidden them quite well?”

The Tsuveck Priest Lord heard his master's words and looked in the direction of the tent. He did not have detection skills, but with his high ability stats he could roughly tell that there was something strange on the plains.

“...There is some distance so I think it is fine.”

“Well, is that so. I don't think they are watching using <Mirror of Remote Viewing>.”

Cocytus' subordinates usually observed the surroundings of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. It was mainly the <Intelligent Swarm> who did this with the occasional help from Kyouhukou. Apart from this they used divination magic. The <Mirror of Remote Viewing> was one of them.

Originally, Cocytus' subordinates detected their existence the moment they came and watched them pitch their tent. They had ignored them until it came time to collect them.

All in order to laugh at their serious observing figures.

The ground approached, and Aura ordered Quetzalcoatl to head to the log house. The winged snake cut through the wind.

They finally reached the log house. Around the horses and carriage that Ainz had ordered to be collected, Quetzalcoatl touched the ground as light as a feather.

It would not be strange for the horses to quiver in fear should a giant snake appear. However, the horses were calm, as if Quetzalcoatl was their friend.

“Umm, depending on when Quetzalcoatl returns to Nazarick, the

confidentiality order is cancelled.”

“Understood, I shall immediately contact them.”

“And the movement of the carriage—”

Aura stopped her words. This was as the door opened with one of the battlemajids, Entoma leaving the log house. Behind her were Nazarick Old Guards.

If there were gaps in the door, Aura could peek into Nazarick’s surface department. However she could not due to Entoma and the Nazarick Old Guards blocking them. It was as if they had suddenly sprung up from the ground.

“Aura-sama.”

“Hmm? Will you help me collect the carriages?”

“Yes.”

Entoma agreed without a single change in her expression. No, it was impossible for Entoma to move her face.

However, it was not just Aura feeling that she had a faint desire to run away from her.

“There is no effect on you right?”

“...I hate smells that force me to be friendly.”

“Sorry. I think I can handle horses with my skill, but I’ve no confidence.”

There was no way Aura, whose strength lay in Beast Taming, actually felt that she lacked confidence. She was saying this because she felt it was troublesome to tame them.

Entoma’s had a disbelieving air about her, and Aura, sensing it, made a wry smile.

“Umm, then, let’s quickly collect them!”

Aura ordered her subordinates in a hearty voice. Behind her, Entoma gave chase while thinking [Ah, she ran away].

Chapter 91: Negotiations | Part 4

After listening to the story, Demiurge closed his eyes. Ainz was panicking in his heart, but he spoke calmly and took care to prevent his worry from showing.

“So it was bad?”

“Yes.”

Hearing Demiurge’s immediate reply, Ainz nodded in his head.

“...Ainz-sama’s kindness had backfired. If you had acted like their superior, there was a chance that it would not have turned out like this.”

“Is that so....”

He expected it, but having it said to him was painful nonetheless.

He made the mistake of killing them in anger. If he left them alive they could have been used. And even though he acted with such an intent, he had completely neglected them at the most important moment.

If a fight against the Kingdom were inevitable then such would have been an acceptable course of action. However, in the current situation where many things were unclear, he had no intention to be hostile. If this results in a result that threatened the continued existence of Nazarick, he had no idea how to apologise to his friends.

“However.... It is true that the Kingdom was crude.”

Ainz gestured with his chin for Demiurge to continue.

“The preparation of the carriage and the sending of the messenger. It basically means that they do not view Nazarick to be of any importance.”

“Sebas.”

“Ha. I have the same opinion as Demiurge.”

“Is that so. Then what should we do. If they do not view us with importance, this will only repeat. No, they will be better next time. However, I want to do something about low evaluations. And about Blue Rose.”

“...If that is the case, Ainz-sama. The method I recommend is to send a monster into the capital.”

“What? To destroy Blue Rose?”

“Exactly. If a level 70 monster is sent, it shall rampage within the capital. If Blue Rose can defeat it, it shall prove that they are indeed powerful. If they are destroyed, it means that they are not an enemy of Nazarick. Ainz-sama can also spread your fame by killing it.”

What Ainz was truly cautious of were Yggdrasil Players.

At the point where it was not clear how many existed, it would be foolish to make enemies by causing a massacre. He did not want to battle Yggdrasil Players who were on the side of justice.

However, even after collecting all this information, it was true that he felt dissatisfied due to the current leaks and unease.

Ainz considered for a bit, and nodded.

“Let’s do that.”

At those words, Demiurge made a cruel smile. He was probably imagining the horrible scene in his mind.

“Shall I decide on what to send?”

“Yes.... Could I ask that of you?”

“Of course.”

How many humans would taste despair at the monster he sent in? Just thinking that caused Demiurge to become excited.

Even though Demiurge would probably not fail, it would be best to have a direction for this, and those Ainz gave him a warning.

“...Demiurge. I believe you already understand, but you must prevent the fact that we were the ones to send it to be realised.”

“Yes, I shall send it in with caution.”

“.....”

If Demiurge, who was much better than Ainz, said so, then there would be no problems. The moment Ainz thought that, a spell was activated and something connected.

It was the activation of the familiar <Message>.

Despite not wanting to, Ainz heard Yuri's voice echo in his ear.

As he listened, he noticed Demiurge and Sebas' gaze on him. They probably noticed that he was sent a <Message>.

"...Haaa." Ainz sighed. He then looked at Demiurge. "A <Message> came. The front runners from the Empire have arrived, and informed us that the Emperor is arriving soon."

"Ho."

Demiurge raised a cry of admiration. Sebas' eyes widened slightly.

It was an expression of surprise that a non-friendly neighbouring country would send its number one person. Basically it meant that the Emperor well understood Nazarick's importance. Considering that it was a noble of the Empire who sent the workers, it might be related.

Demiurge ran countless simulations in his head.

"However, what is their goal in coming?"

Demiurge's face froze for an instant. Without time to think, he had but one answer.

Ainz caught that change in expression.

"Demiurge, answer."

"I believe they have come to meet Ainz—"

"—Fool."

Demiurge's body froze after hearing Ainz's scolding.

"I want to know why. Why has the Emperor himself come? What is their goal in coming?"

"That is...."

Demiurge could not answer. It was natural. With such little information, he could not answer. He could come up with a few possibilities, but he did not wish to tell his master such baseless claims.

Unable to understand his master's actions, and as a result performing a rude action, Demiurge's shame caused him to want to hide in a hole.

Thus he did not see Ainz make a sigh of relief.

"It's fine. It's fine Demiurge. That was a mean question. I was unhappy due to my terrible failure. Please forgive me."

Seeing Ainz lowering his head, Demiurge and Sebas started to panic.

"What are you saying! It was merely that those fools that dragged Ainz-sama's kindness through the dirt!"

"Exactly. Thanks to my stint in the capital, I fully understand the value of kindness if it can prevent waves from forming."

Ainz looked at Sebas in surprise, and then faced downwards.

"So you realised."

"Originally...."

Demiurge looked between Sebas and Ainz, and he felt like he grasped the meaning behind why Ainz acted as if he were beneath the messenger.

What Sebas did was not wrong. However that was only if one looked at it from the sidelines.

It was not clear what conditions the shop was operating under, but since it could continue functioning it definitely had some connections. Attacking it and abducting the people inside would definitely be picking a fight with its backer.

If Ainz was introduced as the savior of the Kingdom, it would be a simple discussion, but if not it could be dangerous. If the backer were a noble, it would even more dangerous to wait in the Kingdom with a strong power.

Of course, this was only a problem if the person known as Sebas became public, but it was questionable if this could be kept secret.

On top of considering the case of a leaked secret, they also had to make a

plan.

Considering the person that came, the idea that he was the Kingdom's savior disappeared. Then since he had the card known as Sebas, it would not be dangerous. Should he randomly anger them and have to throw away his cards, he would be troubled. For example, if he had to hand over the criminal Sebas.

If Ainz had to act, and without using force, he would use himself as a sacrifice to protect his subordinates.

Thinking the same thing, Sebas started shivering with Demiurge.

Because they fully understood how Ainz treasured his subordinates—

As his subordinate's loyalty scores broke through the max level and continued climbing, Ainz felt an illusion of cold sweat running down his undead body.

This was walking a tightrope.

Ainz felt that he would make more mistakes if he continued talking, and so wanted to end everything quickly. However, he needed to apologise to Sebas.

Sebas was not a bad person, but it felt like he was the villain here.

"My bad, Sebas."

Ainz lowered his head. This was more than enough to shock the two. Why was their great master lowering his head?

"If I did not make you, Sebas take such eye-catching actions, you would not be troubled in the first place. I can only say that I was naive. Thus there is no need for you to mind."

A light shone in the corners of Demiurge's and Sebas' eyes.

Ainz was such a kind and generous master.

—This is why he stayed until the end.

The Supreme Beings that created them had disappeared. However, there was a person who remained behind—A person who would not abandon them.

At that, Demiurge and Sebas' loyalty rose further and reached the realm of fanaticism.

As the two burned with passion, Ainz believed they had forgiven him and spoke.

“Now.... Why has the Emperor.... His reasons are unclear.... Demiurge!”

Demiurge bowed. He understood Ainz’s intentions even without him mentioning.

“Shall I take care of the preparations?”

“Ah. I leave it to you, Demiurge.”

“Understood! I shall work hard to meet your expectations!”

Demiurge’s reply was filled with vigour.

Ainz gave him a standing ovation in his heart.

Thank you for doing this.

If he were not acting, he would shake Demiurge’s hand.

Without letting that thought leak out, Ainz nodded.

“I give you my full authority. Do what you wish. I permit the usage of half of Nazarick.”

“Thank you very much, Ainz-sama. Then could Ainz-sama please change your clothes.”

“Hmm?”

Ainz looked at the white and gold clothes he came in.

“Ainz-sama is a person who is best suited to exist as one with the darkness. These clothes are excellent but....”

“....Sebas. Arrange my clothes according to Demiurge’s words. However, excessive accessories are a bit....”

“Understood.”

The two spoke in unison. Ainz was relived and spoke to Demiurge.

In Ainz’s mind, he believed that Demiurge would handle everything and so this conversation was over.

“Now, Demiurge. What should I do?”

“Yes. I do not mind if Ainz-sama simply sits on the throne and becomes the absolute ruler of Nazarick to the guests. We shall handle the rest.”

“.....?” Ainz widened his eyes. “So I still have to address them.”

“Oh, Ainz-sama. As expected, you do not like to address such weak humans. However, the other party has gone all out for this, thus we should reciprocate it. Even if they were the lowest of insects.”

No, it was not that.

Ainz suppressed the desire to say that. If he could shout not to bring a new recruit to an important meeting he would feel so much better. However he could not do that. He was the person sitting at the top of Nazarick.

Thanks to the failure of the kingdom, the resolution Ainz felt earlier was blown away somewhere.

Ainz strongly felt his uselessness and spoke to himself to get motivated.

—Do your best, me.

—Don’t lose, me.

He felt that he was being an idiot, but he needed it to welcome the Emperor.

“I see. When I am ready I shall wait there.”



Six well decorated carriages dashed through the plains.

Despite the fact that this was grasslands, the carriage did not bob up and down. This was as a large amount of money was spent on things other than its appearance.

First were the wheels. They were magic items known as <Comfortable Wheels>. And the carriage itself had <Lightweight Cargo> cast on it.

And were the expensive horses pulling the carriages, of which one of their prices would cause one’s eyes to pop out of their sockets. They were magic beasts known as Sleipnir which had eight legs. And with six of them, the costs

became extremely ridiculous.

Surrounding the carriage that one could not own just by being wealthy, there were many people riding excellent horses.

In total there were over 20 people.

All of them wore chain shirts with swords hanging at their waist, and their backs carried a quiver and a longbow.

Their equipment looked like ones belonging to mercenaries, but their uniform movements were impossible for such a bunch. Their eyes were sharp, scanning the surroundings.

It might seem ridiculous to be so cautious on such a wide open plain but reality was different. When monsters attacked, the result was often fatal. Would anyone want to be close to a monster with petrification vision? Or a monster that could spit acid?

To detect such dangerous monsters from afar, one had to pay attention to all movement not caused by the wind.

And in the sky, there were guards as well.

There were the figures of people riding monsters known as Hippogriffs.

Needless to say, mounts that was capable of flight, although they were monsters, were extremely expensive. Their goal was the same as their earthbound counterparts: the protection of the carriage.

The person inside the carriage with this amount of security definitely had an important position.

This was natural.

The man inside one of the carriages was the ruler of the neighbouring country, the Empire. The Blood Emperor, Jircniv Rune Farlord El Nix.

Jircniv's carriage was like a room in a first class hotel. The floor and walls were covered in soft carpet, and the seats were designed so as to prevent the sitter from feeling cramped from sitting for so long.

In fact, if one ignored the lack of space, the number of people who would

want to live here would be unimaginable.

Inside were four men. While most carriages would cause them to feel cramped together, that only applied to those who never rode in luxury.

The four men were completely relaxed.

One of those men was naturally the owner of the carriage, the Emperor Jircniv. On his face was a wry smile as he enjoyed listening to a report.

And one more person. He was a man that reported directly to the Emperor.

He was an old man with a long white beard, with a name that was known throughout the surrounding countries, the living legend. Fluder Paradyne.

And the secretary next to the Emperor holding a binder. Loune Vermillion.

And lastly was a man covered in armour. Since he was in a carriage, he had removed his helmet, revealing the bearded face of a wild man.

He was one of the Empire's Four Knights, [Lightning] Baziwood Peshmel.

"Since that time, there have been no reports from the ones observing the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick."

"I see, so they were all killed."

The Emperor's tone was lighthearted, but next to him, Loune was frowning. They were the few elite that the Empire threw large sums of money at in the country. Such simple words were not enough to cover the cost.

Jircniv sensed Loune's change in mood without looking, and with a hopeless smile, he asked Fluder.

"Jii. Are there any other possibilities why they did not contact us?"

"It's possible. If all four teams were caught in a gigantic magic spell."

"The possibility of that?"

"...The same as the sun dropping from the sky."

"I see. So rather than the sky turning dark, they were killed, but still I would prefer to think that they were merely captured."

"That would be nice."

A stern voice like an abacus was being used rang out. Jircniv blew away Loune's thoughts.

"Buying them back would be extremely expensive right? Would it not be cheaper to abandon them?"

"True.... However if we did so their morale would drop."

Jircniv stopped smiling for the first time.

"It's such a waste. But they have steeled themselves for this. Right?"

"It is as you say."

"However, it is painful since they hold the cards."

This was the second card they played since the workers.

However, Jircniv felt a small sense of fun from this.

Even if the other side held the cards there was no problem. Even in card games, there was no human that was cautious of unused cards. The important thing was how the opponent would use them. That was the key.

What Jircniv was looking forward to was the moment he could peer at his unknown opponent's hand.

"...More importantly, Your Majesty. Is this not dangerous? Shall I go ahead to scout? It is dangerous if something is different."

As words directed to the Emperor, they were extremely rude.

Baziwood was like the Strongest Warrior of the Kingdom, Gazef Stronoff, in that he was born a commoner. Thus he was taught and corrected, but the status of his birth was occasionally evident in his speech. However no one here minded.

Baziwood was not here to let the Emperor enjoy his speech. He was bought for his high fighting ability. Thus his words were not important. Yes, Baziwood simply had to protect Jircniv.

And while his speech held no eloquence, Baziwood was not a fool. As the only commoner of the Four Knights, being their commander was not for show.

"A fast carriage has been sent right?"

“Yes. We have already sent the [Royal Air Guard].”

“My disciples have gone as well. Considering that they have yet to <Message> me, it seems that they have not arrived.”

“How long will it take for us to reach Nazarick at the current speed?”

“Yes.” Loune took out a pocket watch from his clothes and looked at the time. “In about one hour.”

“Well, sending the four knights would not have any meaning.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“If they intended to harm us, we have no way to react. Well, it depends on fate.”

Excluding Jircniv who was waving his hand, the others looked at each other.

Their Emperor, Jircniv had a strange habit.

It was not in a bad way, but he viewed his life with little importance. If there was little chance of his life being taken then he would tighten the noose around his neck.

This did not mean that he made foolish demands. If he had to do something, he would bet his life if he had to. The problem was that what he thinks he has to do often appears strange in the eyes of most.

The most recent was when he tried to invite Gazef Stronoff; while he was protected by knights, he entered the battlefield to speak to him.

“Anyway, thanks to the arrival of the Kingdom’s messenger, we might not be able to meet.”

“...You said it depends on fate, but what is the chance of that?”

“Hmm? Ah, how will that monster of a woman move?”

There was only one woman in the surrounding kingdoms that caused Jircniv to be cautious and call her a monster.

“...Princess Renner?”

“Ah. If she moves it will be dangerous. As much as she lacks empathy, she can

easily grasp the merits of all the situations. She probably prepared things to pull in Ainz Ooal Gown.... No, since she can use a person's emotions, she probably understands it? That disgusting woman, won't anyone assassinate her?"

"If those are your orders, shall we call Ijaniya?"

Fluder made a wry smile as he listened to Loune's words.

"It's fine. I will be troubled if she stopped providing us new methods. It is better to leave her alive.... That woman probably understands this too?"

"It's possible."

The timing of Renner's suggestions seemed strangely to match the Empire's, like she was reading them. Especially when they were obviously in need of help that this was felt strongly. If that was the case then the woman called Renner, without eyes or ears, could sense the movements of the Empire.

The depth of her mystery caused Jircniv, who was trying to recruit even Gazef, to not want her.

"If Princess Renner acts, will your Majesty be safe?"

"There is no problem, Jii. She probably thinks that it's better to use me than to kill me. If it's that woman."

The three men, maybe two, thought, *'I'm not too sure about that.'*

Currently, underneath the noses of the people who feared the Blood Emperor, the Empire was slowly becoming a dictatorship. Losing the person at the top would cause all of that to crumble.

And currently, his inheritor was still young.

How large would the Empire become in future? If there was a person that could determine the answer to that, they would try to eliminate the Emperor at all costs. Especially the neighbouring countries like the Kingdom and Theocracy.

"Well if something happens, come to me."

"Hm? Jii's teleportation magic?"

"Yes. Then Your Majesty can safely return."

"Then allow us to be your shield."

“I shall stay in the corner, out of the way.”

They smiled at Loune, who said that with a straight face. At that moment, the carriage door was knocked on with a ‘Kon Kon’. The slight vibrations in the carriage stated that they were still moving.

In defense of divination and for protection, the carriage was covered in metal. Thus there were no windows to look out of. Baziwood moved and placed his hand on the door. There was no problem per say, but he still needed to be wary.

The door opened. The fresh air of the plains blew in, tickling the hair of those inside.

Outside was a magic caster using <Fly>, one of Fluder’s best disciples.

“Excuse me.”

Seeing a flying man bow his head was a strange scene. Jircniv smiled as he spoke.

“Do you intend to speak from there, enter.”

“Haha. Excuse me.”

Slipping into the carriage, the magic caster closed the door. As if fearful of wasting time, Jircniv immediately asked.

“Did it reach?”

“Ye, Yes. A <Message> just—”

“—What?”

“Yes. A maid is waiting outside the log house of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick for His Majesty.”

“The Kingdom’s carriage?”

“Yes. We are currently unable to locate it.”

“Hmm.”

Jircniv placed a finger on his lips as he thought. Did they hide it and was there a need to hide it? Both were possible.

“....Any other reports?”

“That is it.”

“Your Majesty, will you not look for the observers?”

“Stop stop Baziwood. They sent their subordinates on their own. If I searched for them, they will know it was me.”

Jircniv sat down deeply in his chair.

“Well, everything will happen in an hour. Let’s look forward to it.”

Chapter 92: Negotiations | Part 5

The six carriages and the twenty knights arrived at the centre of the plains where the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick was.

The knights and servants' gazes were all on the person standing at the front of the log house, a beauty— Yuri Alpha. Three of the knights, three of the Four Knights got off the carriage. They all carried large shields, wielded halberds and were adorned in strong armour. Also Fluder's disciples also disembarked.

As everyone hurried about, the door that was supposed to be opened last was opened.

Despite the step chair not being readied, the one who appeared was the person who was supposed to appear at the very end, the Emperor, Jircniv. Stopping the ones who were panicking to prepare the step chair with a wave, he jumped off.

With a kind smile, he walked towards Yuri. Behind Jircniv was Fluder who also jumped off. If even the Emperor jumped off like that, he could not wait for the step chair.

Seeing the reactions— Yuri understood who was walking towards her and courteously bowed.

“Greetings and welcome.” Raising her head again, she introduced herself. “My name is Yuri Alpha and I am tasked with welcoming you.”

“Thank you very much. I am the Emperor of the Baharuth Empire. Jircniv Rune Farlord El Nix. Well over here in this neighbouring country it means little so I will be glad if you treat me as an ordinary individual and called me Jir.”

Jircniv smiled brightly to Yuri.

It was a smile that befitted a nice young man rather than an Emperor. There was no one in existence more suitable than the current Jircniv to be called a handsome young man. Despite receiving a smile that would move a woman's heart, Yuri's expression failed to change.

Jircniv could also tell from peering at her eyes that her heart was similarly

unmoved.

Was he not to her taste, or was she the type that did not mix business with pleasure? Or was she filled with loyalty to the person she served?

I can't read her.

That whisper stayed in Jircniv's heart.

"That is a good joke. My master— Ainz Ooal Gown has ordered me to welcome your highness the Emperor."

"Is that so? Well, that's a shame."

Jircniv shrugged in an exaggerated manner.

"How about Gown-dono?"

"Understood. Our master is still making his preparations, and he will need a bit more time. I pray you will be patient and wait for him."

"I see. Then, where shall we wait? Inside that loghouse?"

"No. It would be a waste since we have such nice weather. We hope you will wait here."

"Is that so?" Jircniv narrowed his eyes. "Then, we shall return to our carriages and await him therein."

Jircniv could feel the anger boiling out of his numerous royal guards as he said those words. They might be in a neighboring country —and one which might end up being an enemy to them— but even so, letting the Emperor of a great nation wait in a place like this was far too rude. However, no one said that. If even their lord was doing so, then as subordinates, they could not say it.

"I pray you to wait." Yuri's quiet voice cut through the air. "Since the delay originated from our side, we would be poor hosts and in defiance of Ainz-sama's commands if we did not extend every courtesy to you in compensation."

Jircniv was surprised hearing her call her master Ainz-sama, but then he nodded in expectation. Taking that gesture as a sign of permission, Yuri turned to the loghouse.

"Now then. Come here."

In response to Yuri's orders, the doors of the log house opened, and something huge stepped out.

"Gehhhh!"

A lone cry rang out. It was a strange sound that one might expect of a strangled chicken.

When they realized who had cried out, terror filled the hearts of everyone present, not just Jircniv.

The one who had made that uncharacteristic sound was the Head Magician of the Empire, Fluder Paradyne. He was a man who was said to be able to rival the Thirteen Heroes. A man like that now stood with eyes wide with terror, his gaze fixed on the things emerging from the log house.

As if pulled by him, everyone's gazes fell on one thing.

What came out from the log house was a thing wearing black armour and reeking of violence. Its large body carried a marble table.

There was a sound of something falling to the ground.

One of Fluder's disciples had collapsed to his knees upon the ground, his face pale and his body devoid of strength. Or rather, almost all of the four acolytes he had brought along had ended up that way. Their pale faces were frozen in shock as they began hyperventilating.

"Impossible. How could this... no, no, it can't be. Are those Death Knights....?"

Fluder sputtered out his words as if he had forgotten who he was. This scene was extremely strange for anyone who saw. The knights determined that it was dangerous and began to view the black armour with caution.

Fluder could not believe it.

The scene in front of him.

The undead that he failed to control was bringing a table to place on the grass and seemed to be the maid's subordinate. He had not left reality to the point that he failed to understand what it meant.

Similar to how a small boat would be rocked by the waves during a storm,

Fluder's heart was shaken by this shocking development.

However Fluder regained his will of steel.

This possibility existed. When they learned that he could use undead that rivaled Gazef.

Meeting a better magic caster than him was Fluder's dearest wish.

Isn't it now granted

. He calmed himself down with that thought. His disciples were unable to do so and were still breathing heavily from the stress.

"What's wrong? Jii?"

Jircniv's voice was dyed in worry. While he seemed to be uneasy from a close person acting so strangely, Jircniv actually wanted Fluder to explain. Normally Fluder would do so immediately.

However, now that was a pain. Explaining to him would be a waste of time. With such a blatant attitude, he ignored Jircniv. The surroundings were shocked.

Because he did such a thing to their lord.

"I have a question! Is that a Death Knight?!"

"Yes. That is correct."

In contrast to Fluder's strained voice, Yuri's was unwaveringly calm.

"Does it belong to, Gown-dono?"

"Yes. It is a subordinate of Ainz-sama."

"What! Gown-dono is commanding it!"

Everyone nearby understood the meaning of what was said. Basically commanding that Death Knight was a great exploit even Fluder could not do.

Then— Then.

What should they do?

From the log house, once again, another Death Knight carrying a table appeared.

It then passed it to the earlier Death Knight. It was similar to a bucket relay. Of course, it did not end with two. In total, five appeared.

Fluder's body shivered.

His expression was one frozen in shock, as if he had seen something unbelievable.

"Ah.... Ah...."

Fluder's knees gave way. On his face was an agape mouth and shocked expression.

"Fluder-do, dono?"

One knight struggled to form the question. Only one had asked, but all the other knights had the same tense expression. Even the four strongest knights of the Empire.

Fluder was the man said to rival or even surpass the 13 Heros. To the knights, he was respected as someone who could use many overwhelming spells and was the greatest protector of the Empire. That man was now quivering on the ground. This lead to great confusion.

Power blazed up in Fluder's eyes. However, the panic in the surroundings failed to enter. This was natural. There was something far more important to confirm.

Fluder asked Yuri.

"I would like to ask. T, that too?"

"Yes. It is Ainz-sama's subordinate?"

"I, Impossible....What magic....No, the gap in skill. I have a question, what tier of magic can Gown-dono use up to?"

"Please ask Ainz-sama directly."

Fluder's expression froze as he heard Yuri's cold words.

Silence fell.

The knights could not believe that those were the words of a maid, Jircniv's interest in her deepened, and—

“Fu, fuhahahahaha!”

—A laugh could be heard that broke everything. A laugh that came from the bottom of his heart, a laugh that, here, did not fit the image of Fluder.

Baziwood’s brows furrowed in disgust. Was this the time to laugh. They should be cautious, and laughter did not suit the mood. Or did he not understand the meaning in Yuri’s words.

Sending a signal to the other knights to be cautious, he moved closer to Fluder and asked.

“Fluder-dono. Is this place dangerous? For his Majesty’s protection—”

“—Are you an idiot?”

Fluder cut off Baziwood instantly. Despite being called a fool, Baziwood did not reply. He was pressured by the dangerous light blazing in Fluder’s eyes.

“You do not even understand what place this is.... The level is different. That Death Knight is a monster that would require countless knights to subdue. And there are five. Even if the four knights attack one it will be over. Unable to tell even that, what protecting can you do? You want to protect him under these conditions? Even though the Death Knights are not wielding their weapons, do you know they still have special abilities?”

He had the aura of a hero.

The air that pressed down on them from Fluder was at that level. However, it did not give them a warm feeling.

He possessed immense magical might, enough to take on all the Four Knights at once. And his voice took on a demented tone as he appeared to be going insane.

It was only natural that the nearby royal guards would break out in goosebumps.

Amidst all this, only the people from Nazarick and Jircniv kept their cool.

“...He controls Death Knights, and in such numbers! Marvellous! Marvellous!! Marvellous!!! For such an amazing person to be here! Marvellous! Fuhahahahaha!”

A single tear oozed from the corner of his eye, and he smiled like a madman.

—No, that was not it.

This was the true nature of a man who had abandoned his position as a wizard of the Imperial court to glimpse the deepest mysteries of the abyss called “magic.” Until now, it had been hidden under the mask of a hero, but it had surfaced in the presence of a powerful magic caster.

“Well then, Your Majesty. What shall we do now? Should we flee with teleportation magic? I think if we teleported now, we should be able to make it, no? Assuming the terrain allows for it...”

Seeing Fluder’s mocking smile, Jircniv laughed.

“I like that face of yours, Gramps. Then, let me ask a question in turn. Do you think I will run?”

Cracks spread rapidly throughout Fluder’s face. That was the smile of a madman, which instilled terror in all who saw it.

“As expected of his Majesty. The same as me. I want to see, meet him. The great magic caster that can command the Death Knight, Ainz Ooal Gown-dono.”

“That much?”

In contrast to Fluder who could not command even one, Ainz Ooal Gown could command five. Thinking simply, Ainz Ooal Gown was at least five times stronger than Fluder.

“Hahaha, of course, your Majesty. He is probably on another level than me. I am very excited to meet such a powerful magic caster while still alive.”

The faces of Fluder’s disciples were all pale, and the knights were scared that they were in the yard of such an existence. The only ones calm were Jircniv and Fluder.

“Your Majesty, what should we do?”

Baziwood asked Fluder in bafflement. Jircniv then looked at everyone.

Even excluding Fluder and his disciples, the knights were slowly getting demoralised. It was to the point that it was not strange for one to break. This

was due to Fluder's strange state and the strength of the Death Knights. They were uneasy because they had to methods to deal with one.

Jircniv was strange for being able to remain calm despite being told that they were approaching death. On the other hand Fluder's thirst for the knowledge of magic triumphed over his fear.

"We can do nothing though?"

"Ha? Is that fine?"

"...Baziwood, look at Jii. He's the most familiar of all of us with magic and he's like that now. All we can do is leave everything to our hosts."

"How about escaping?"

"Do you really think we can escape?"

Baziwood glanced at the maids. They had clearly overheard them talking about fleeing, but calmly continued their preparations anyway.

"What if we took a hostage?"

"Can we?"

"...Seems to be impossible."

They felt that they could not. Baziwood felt that the maid was more mysterious than the Death Knights. The other 3 knights had the same impression. It was to the point that they imagined that even fighting at full strength, they could only hold for several tens of seconds.

"...Are we ready, then? In that case, everyone, I hope you will relax over here."

There were many tables and chairs in place on the grass. The tables were covered in pure white tablecloths and large parasols gave shade. The Death Knights who had been moving the furniture into place were standing by beside the log house in order not to get in the way.

"We have also prepared refreshments for you."

Decanters beaded with moisture were arrayed on the tables, filled with an orange liquid. Beside them were high-stemmed wine glasses made of clear

crystal. Each of them was intricately carved with elaborate designs.

Even Jircniv, an Emperor who enjoyed the best things in life, could not help but stare with eyes agape at the display before him.

“Please let us know if you need anything else. Then, everyone—”

The log house’s door opened once more, and more maids filed out from within. Their incredible beauty was enough to wipe away all the fear and unease they had experienced until now.

Jircniv naturally did not know them, but they were the other five Battlemaids, Lupusregina Beta, Narberal Gamma, CZ Delta, Solution Epsilon, Entoma Vasillissa Zeta.

“Gubuu!”

His voice leaking once again, everyone’s gazes fell on Fluder. Fluder hobbled towards Narberal.

“...I, I would like to ask a question, is that permitted?”

Fluder’s tone was one of extreme reverence and respect. It was more respectful than the tone he used to speak to Jircniv.

“Yes, what is it?”

“Ah, aaa. Ainz Ooal Gown-dono— No.” Fluder shook his head. “Does Ainz Ooal Gown-sama use magic of a higher tier than you?”

“...Yes. Naturally.”

Narberal’s eyes moved towards her relaxed fingers. Looking closely, one could see the faint outline of a ring that was recently removed.

“Oh..... This may be rude.... but can you.... Use the 8th Tier of Magic?”

“...That is correct.”

Hearing those words, Fluder hobbled back to the table and collapsed on the chair. Originally it was meant for the Emperor, and someone would chide him for his act. But no one did.

As Fluder’s shoulders shook, he was trying to hide his tears of joy with his hands. The maid had said that she could use the 8th Tier. Fools that failed to

grasp what that meant were not invited on this trip.

The knights looked at each other.

The hero Fluder had reached the 6th Tier. The 8th Tier was far beyond it. While they did not understand the specifics, they could guess how much they were outclassed..

The simple maid before them was far stronger than Fluder. And the insane fact that someone had used her as a maid.

This was such a strange situation that someone would get a headache from it.

“Hahahahahahha! Amazing! It’s amazing! The 8th Tier which I thought I could never reach is right in front of me! Did you hear that, you lot!”

The crazed gaze of Fluder’s was directed at his disciples.

“She’s a maid! Not a dragon with a lifespan close to infinity, not a race far stronger than humans, just a simple human maid! And Ainz Ooal Gown has a power that exceeds even that!”

Fluder stood up from the chair with enough force to cause it to shake, ran to Narberal, fell to his knees and begged.

“Ohh! Hurry, hurry please, I would like to meet Ainz Ooal Gown-sama. Even a little is fine, but could he please teach this foolish person a sliver of magic!”

Fluder’s gaze once again fell on his disciples.

“We are currently stepping into the realm of legends! Can you hear me! From here onwards, do not even blink! Everything is a treasure! This land is the land of legends!”

“Fluder, could you calm down!”

Unable to look at this mess any longer, Jircniv raised his voice. Instantly, Fluder’s eyes finally showed reason as he realised he was spoken to.

“Have you missed something, Fluder? We’re here as representatives of the Empire, not to satisfy your thirst for magical knowledge.”

“...Forgive me, Your Majesty. I was overcome by excitement. I beg the

forgiveness of everyone else present as well.”

Fluder stood up and lowered his head at the maids.

“That’s right, Jii. Have a drink, calm yourself down. Then, shall we?”

“Understood.”

Yuri slowly filled the glasses on the table before Jircniv with that same orange fluid. A fragrant citrus scent wafted through the air.

Jircniv took a mouthful of the fruit juice, and the taste was such that he could not help but smile. It was a smile that seemed to say,

what have I been drinking all my life

. Looks of surprise appeared on the faces of the surrounding royal guards. If even Jircniv, who lived a life of decadence, could be surprised like this, how much more so these common men? As if to illustrate that point, there were many who had forgotten their manners and gulped the juice down as fast as possible.

Shortly after, shocked exclamations rang out from the gathered men.

“It’s delicious!”

“What kind of drink is this, it’s a perfect blend of sweet and sour!”

“It glides down your throat, and there’s no cloying aftertaste!”

Jircniv took another drink as he heard the praise from all around him.

Even the drinks of Nazarick were the best. Jircniv smiled bitterly. To think, even a simple drink could defeat him so thoroughly.

How long had they stayed out of the sun and heard the wind blow through the grass? Eventually, Yuri said the words which Jircniv longed to hear.

“I apologize for the delay. Ainz-sama is ready to see you now, so please follow me.”

Chapter 93: Negotiations | Part 6

Jircniv arrived at a hemispherical room. He stood before a pair of vast double doors. Intricate carvings decorated both sides of the doors; a beautiful goddess on the right and a cruel-looking demon on the left. Countless ominous-looking statues were arrayed around them.

If one had to give it a name, it would probably be “The Gates of Judgement.” Jircniv pondered those doors as he looked over them.

The huge room was quiet, so quiet that he imagined he could hear the metaphorical sound of silence.

Indeed, nobody from the Imperial contingent had uttered a single word ever since they had been brought here. The only sounds were the metallic noises of armor scraping against armor.

They were not silent out of politeness, but rather, they had passed all manner of wondrous sights before coming here, which had stolen their souls away.

It was like a world of legends, the realm of the gods.

It would have been too much to expect them to not be entranced by the high-mythical scenes they had seen. In truth, even Jircniv found it hard to control the impulse to gawk openly at his surroundings as he walked.

Such a world spread out before them.

He glanced over his shoulder to look at his subordinates who had followed

him here.

The Four Knights, and their ten elite knights. Fluder and his four disciples. The secretary Rounel and his two subordinates. A total of 22 people.

Everyone following him had drawn in their shoulders.

This was the result of walking through this passage which even the Empire's finest artisans would not be able to replicate, which filled them with a sense of being tiny and insignificant.

The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, and the one called Ainz Ooal Gown were too powerful and extremely difficult to describe.

This could not be helped.

The smile on Jircniv's face was filled with self-mockery. Humans would naturally bow their heads to those who exceeded them. Anyone that was unimpressed by these architectural and artistic marvels must surely lack the capacity to feel.

"This is troubling."

Jircniv whispered.

Ainz Ooal Gown waited beyond that door.

He was a magic caster that far exceeded Fluder and was someone impossible to compare to whether in the past or present. If the beauty of his residence already surpassed the limits of human imagination, he must have a power to match.

He was a being who possessed every possible advantage.

Before he gets pulled to the Kingdom, I want him in my circle.

Jircniv wanted to kick the him of that time.

Attracting him with money would be useless.

Same with strength.

As for members of the opposite sex— Jircniv thought of Yuri and the maids — they would be useless. Well, assuming he was a man.

Offers of rank and authority meant nothing to someone who lived in a place like this.

Then what might he want?

Jircniv could not imagine it. The desires that motivated people may not move Ainz Ooal Gown. Could anything Jircniv own move his heart.

“....It would be very difficult, huh.”

Jircniv’s mind ran through countless stratagems and ploys to use against Ainz Ooal Gown. The conclusion was that he could do nothing. He came to the answer that the wisest thing he could do was hope Ainz did not regard him as an enemy.

As he gave voice to these thoughts, Jircniv found that they were louder than he imagined.

However, nobody around him reacted. They were too mesmerized by their surroundings.

“The Throne Room lies beyond. Ainz-sama waits for you within.”

After that, Yuri announced that her part was over, and bowed deeply to Jircniv.

As though waiting for those words, the vast double doors swung open slowly, without being touched.

Several sudden intakes of breath reached Jircniv’s ears. It was not just one or two instances, but over ten of them, probably well over half the people who had come to this place. Many among them had not been able to fully muster their resolve against the fear that gripped them and allowed their desire to flee to show on their faces. In other words, many of the Imperial contingent had been hoping that those double doors would not open.

It was precisely because of that reason that Jircniv was grateful that the doors had opened automatically. Who knew how long they would have to wait if they needed to work up the courage to pass through those doors first?

A vast room came into view, with a ceiling that was very high and very broad. The walls were predominantly white, with extensive gold decorations and highlights.

Luxurious, multicolored chandeliers made of precious stones from all the colors of the rainbow hung from the ceiling, radiating a fantastic light. Huge flags hung from poles set into the walls.

This room was the epitome of a “throne room”. There was no better word to describe a place like this.

Jircniv and the others blanched pale as an oppressive air swept over them from inside the room.

A crimson carpet ran down the center of the room, and flanking it were a series of immeasurably powerful beings.

There were Demons, Dragons, bizarre humanoids, armored knights, bipedal insects and Elves. Each was different from the other in size and appearance, but the one thing they had in common was the overwhelming might each of them possessed. A countless number of such beings lined the sides. They probably numbered over 100.

They watched Jircniv and company in silence. Although it was said that one could sense a certain kind of strength in the eyes of those with power or status, this was the first time Jircniv had ever felt a physical pressure.

The sound of low moans and the shuddering of metal armor plates came from behind Jircniv.

It was proof that his subjects were scared out of their wits.

However, he could be honest about this.

Jircniv did not intend to reproach his subordinates for showing their fear. Rather, he wanted to praise them, because every single one of them had conquered that fear and stayed behind him. The fact that they had remained steadfast in the face of these terrifying beings was to be lauded.

Jircniv's threat evaluation of Ainz Ooal Gown rose by several dozen levels at once. His wariness had been revised ever upward since he arrived here. But even that had been far too naïve. He had determined that Ainz Ooal Gown was not simply a threat to the Empire, but to the continued survival of the entire species, to humans and demihumans both.

Jircniv's eyes followed the carpet forward.

Far ahead of them was a set of stairs, and around it were assembled people that Jircniv surmised were Ainz' aides. A dark elf, a silver haired beauty, a silver bipedal insect, and a demon.

And lastly—

“That is...”

Upon a crystal throne sat the physical incarnation of Death. It held a strange-looking staff in hand.

It was a monster with a bare skull for a head.

It was like a being that had been formed from concentrating and condensing the darkness into a single point.

—It was Ainz Ooal Gown.

A magnificent crown sat upon his head, and his body was cloaked in a luxurious sable robe. Rings glittered brightly on his fingers. Even from such a distance, Jircniv could clearly tell that the exquisite accessories which Ainz wore cost more than the Empire made in a year.

Blood-red points of light glowed within the empty eye sockets of Ainz Ooal Gown's skull. As they swept over Jircniv' and his contingent, it felt as if they were tasting him.

He did not seem shocked by the fact that Ainz was not human. Instead, he was relieved that he was not human.

It was because Ainz was not human that Jircniv could honestly accept that Ainz was a superior being that was far out of his league.

“Hu...”

Jircniv exhaled quietly. It was a sign of his resolve.

The door had been opened, but it had not been opened for long. It was certainly not long enough for anyone to comment on their inactivity. Still, they could not wait out here forever. And so— Jircniv stepped forward.

“Let’s go.”

Jircniv’s words were quiet enough that only those behind him could hear them. Anyone who saw him would be surprised by how he could speak without opening his mouth. This was not magic, but pure skill. It was a skill that was particularly useful in this sort of setting.

However, Jircniv could not sense anyone moving in response to his words.

It could not be helped.

Advancing to stand before Ainz Ooal Gown meant that they would have to pass between the flanking lines of monsters. Though he knew that they would probably not attack them, walking in front of these creatures still required a great deal of courage.

His judgement that they would not be attacked was not simple optimism.

The reasons for using a throne room like this were for ceremonial purposes, as well as displaying the power of one’s nation. These were facts that anyone would know. Were that not the case, one would use a smaller room. In other words, the reasons for choosing this place were to display the power of Nazarick, and to show that he had no intent of killing Jircniv and his followers.

And there were many grotesque figures in front. All of them had power that was on another level.

And upon the throne was Ainz Ooal Gown himself.

At great length, Jircniv realised something in the depths of his soul.

He realised that they were standing in the presence of what men would call a god. Jircniv possessed a magic item that defended against mental attacks, but the pressure he was facing was outside the scope of the item's protection. If he lost his focus but once, even the man known as the Bloody Emperor would be able to do nothing but kneel before Ainz.

Still, it was precisely because of that reason that he had to go.

Just as Jircniv was observing Ainz Ooal Gown, Ainz Ooal Gown was also observing Jircniv. If he disapproved of what he saw, what would happen to the Empire in future? At the very least, he had to let Ainz recognize the value of Jircniv, and by extension, the continued existence of the Empire.

The pessimistic man who thought he could turn his life into a bargaining chip would laugh at this sight.

Jircniv laughed at himself. On top of not knowing about such an overwhelmingly strong person, he had acted like he was still above him. It told him that he was still a child.

“Let's go!”

Jircniv moved forward. He could sense his men following him.

It was a very soft carpet, but to Jircniv right now, it seemed far too light and ephemeral.

He firmly shunted aside the innumerable glares directed at him and moved forward, keeping his eyes fixed on the person that lay before him — Ainz Ooal Gown. He had a hunch that if he turned his eyes from his objective, his feet would no longer be able to move.

Jircniv was not an excellent warrior or anything like that, but the reason why he could move forward, leading his men where his royal guard feared to tread was because of the mental fortitude that had been bred into him as an Emperor.

At last, he reached the base of the steps.

Originally a person from his side would announce his presence but—.

“Ainz-sama, this is the ruler of the Baharuth Empire, Emperor Jircniv Rune Farlord El-Nix, who seeks an audience with you.”

The demon that was closest to the throne, and a person whom the gods made in the image of death, spoke.

“I am glad you have come, Emperor of the Baharuth Empire. I am the master of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, Ainz Ooal Gown.”

A faint pang of relief ran through Jircniv. His voice was more normal than he expected— like that of a human being.

For example, if he spoke in an insect like voice, it would be difficult to read his tone. While there were emotionless voices among humans, it was possible to understand them by the fact that they were humans.

“I humbly thank you for your most generous welcome, Ainz Ooal Gown-dono.”

One could not read facial expressions from a skull. What sort of opening would best fit the current situation? Jircniv carefully pondered that question. However, the one who spoke first was neither Jircniv, nor Ainz.

“Ainz-sama. It is disrespectful for inferior species such as humans to address you as an equal,” the demon said. “「Kneel」”.

Jircniv heard the sound of metal plates clanking, but he did not need to turn around to know what was going on. His subjects must have knelt in response to the demon’s voice. At the same time he could hear the desperate grunting that came from those who wanted to rise, but could not.

It must have been some sort of powerful mental domination effect.

Had Jircniv not worn the necklace he never took off, he would be kneeling like his men.

Countless gazes affixed themselves on Jircniv, the only one to remain standing. They were cold, clinical stares, as though Jircniv were nothing more than a guinea pig.

“—That’s enough, Demiurge.”

“Understood!”

The demon called Demiurge lowered his head.

“...Jircniv Rune Farlord El-Nix, my subordinate has done something rude to a noble guest who has come from far away to visit my domain. The sins of the vassal are those of the liege, and as such I beg your forgiveness. I hope this is a matter which can be resolved with a bowing of the head.”

Jircniv’s heart was filled with caution and relief. He was cautious, because he realized that Ainz was not the type who handled matters solely with brute force. Similarly, he was relieved, because Ainz was not the type who handled matters solely with brute force.

“Of course. It is not rare for subordinates to misunderstand their master’s will and run amok. Should that occur, I— A person of the Empire may do the same thing. At that time, I seek Ainz Ooal Gown-dono’s forgiveness.”

“Ooh. Understood. I swear on my name that I will do so.”

“My gratitude.”

First was to discard the card of the workers invading this place. Even this monster would be troubled by that. However, everything would be decided from here on out.

Jircniv hardened his resolve. This was the beginning of what would probably be the most dangerous but fun negotiation he ever had. He cannot win with strength. However, he would let him know of human wisdom.

That determination turned into power to be able to look at Ainz Ooal Gown in the eye.

Was Ainz Ooal Gown surprised as he learned of human bravery? Jircniv thought that.

Their gazes met.

And Jircniv erased his hard expression he had until now, and made a bright and friendly smile.

“Ainz Ooal Gown-dono. Being able to meet you.... Can I thank God for it?”

Ainz Ooal Gown breathed. As if he was awakening for the main battle.

“...Do as you wish. I personally do not believe in a god, thus I shall not stop you from doing so.”

“...You do not believe in a god?”

Does he have no relation to the gods of the Slane Theocracy?

“...Then allow me to thank you. Now, before we speak, my name is quite long, and so.... How about calling me Jircniv?”

“...Is that so? Then allow me to do so. I do not mind being called Ainz.”

“My gratitude. Ainz.”

In contrast to the friendly Jircniv, Ainz spoke to him as if he were a third party.

“Being able to meet an absolute ruler like Ainz is something I am extremely grateful for. As an Emperor, I feel various pressures as someone who stands at the top. How about you?”

“It is true that I do.”

“...I see. Then you are the same.... Naturally you are above me, but shall we deepen our friendship as people who feel the same stress?”

“...Meaning?”

“Shall we be friends?”

Those somewhat prideful words caused the atmosphere in the Throne

Room to become heavy. However Jircniv's expression did not change, and simply gazed at Ainz.

Receiving it, Ainz shifted his posture on the throne. He placed his bony finger on his cheek and returned the gaze.

He threw his curveball. Next was to see how Ainz would react.

"....A friend?"

Ainz's voice and a hint of a smile on it. Seeing it, the ones standing at his side made wry expressions. They were not words the weak should say to the strong after all.

"Are you not mistaking this for subservience?"

The sound of something metal falling could be heard, along with the sounds of clothes ruffling. The silver-haired girl was grimacing, and the dark elf girl next to her was making an aspirated expression. Jircniv did not see what had happened with his kinetic vision, but it seemed that the dark elf had kicked the silver-haired girl.

Despite such a thing being in his field of vision, Ainz decided to ignore it, and spoke.

"A friend.... Isn't that fine? Let us become friends."

Jircniv felt the murmurs through his skin. They were from the denizens of Nazarick, and his subordinates. It was born from the fact that Ainz just accepted an inferior being as a friend.

At the same time, Jircniv felt a bottomless terror from the existence called Ainz. Ainz's reply was completely out of his expectations.

Why did he become a friend?

Why did he not request subservience?

Why did an absolute ruler, a person in an overwhelming position, accept his request?

If he had asked for subservience, Jircniv had countless plans. The answer that he would become a friend was outside of Jircniv's predictions.

Why was he willing to become a friend? It was impossible for him to be serious about this. So what was he aiming for?

Jircniv could not read Ainz.

When fighting the strong, the weak would think of methods to trip them up. One could call it using the pride of the strong against them. However, if the strong were not arrogant, that method could not be used.

The one method the weak could use to battle lost its meaning.

Ainz was just that. He did not act to have the pride of the strong.

Thinking about that, Jircniv thought of the possibility that Ainz was planning to restrict his movements with this.

He was not all muscle.

What Jircniv feared about Ainz was not only his power, but his wisdom as well.

“My gratitude, my new friend Ainz.”

“This is good. My new friend Jircniv. Shall we now move to the main topic? My lifespan is long, but you humans live as long as bubbles right? There is no need to waste time on pointless topics. Now, what did you come here for?”

This was the main event.

Jircniv picked the finest plan he could think of from the numberless plots and stratagems he had come up with in the short time until now.

“You are a person that wields a wondrous power, I originally came to ask you to become my subordinate, but allow me to discard that idea. In return.... Would you build a country here?”

“....Hou?”

“To build a nation here and to rule it as king — I think that is a great idea. It is a position that best suits you, Gown-dono. Our Empire will gladly supply all the aid and resources you need to found this nation. How about that?”

Excluding Cocytus, the ones standing next to Ainz all had expressions of admiration plastered on their faces. They had felt that this was a fitting idea for their master.

Seeing them, Jircniv felt there was nothing to worry about. As expected, he only needed to be wary of Ainz.

After not replying to Jircniv and instead silently staring at him, Ainz finally opened his mouth.

“...Jircniv-dono, I do not believe that plan holds any merits for you.”

He expected this answer. Thus, Jircniv acted out the play in his heart.

“The Empire shall support you to build a country here. You would be grateful for that right? I want you— The country you rule and my Empire shall become allies. This is also a consideration for the future.”

It was a reasonable answer. His response should be too.

Jircniv prayed that Ainz fell for his trap.
And—

“No there is no need. Rather than that, Jircniv— I will defer to you.”

A shockwave spread outwards from the two of them. The denizens of Nazarick were shocked and enraged that their master would subordinate himself to someone. Some of Jircniv's subordinates thought that he was manipulated by magic.

Even Demiurge had his eyes wide open in shock as he stared at Ainz.

Present, there was only one person who had a reaction which was different from shock— No, it had become two.

One was Jircniv. And slightly later, was Demiurge.

The two were expressionless. The only signs were the slight changes in their eyes. However, the two had completely different emotions.

Jircniv had rage in his eyes due to his plan being seen through.

And after his shock, Demiurge's were filled with respect and admiration.

"...What are you saying, Ainz. You are not a man who would become anyone's retainer. You are one who stands above others."

"...Thank you for saying that, Jircniv. Then would you please accept me. We are friends so this should be fine."

".....!"

Jircniv clicked his tongue as Ainz was using their relationship as friends to this point.

In this conversation, Ainz had said that they were closer than friends. Of course, with this disparity of power, if Ainz said that they were equals as friends, he could not be disagreed with.

However, this was different from the first part of the conversation, he could not use his higher position to gain anything. After all, the one to suggest becoming friends first was Jircniv.

This monster.

Beneath Jircniv's warm smile, he was constantly cursing Ainz.

The denizens of Nazarick finally calmed down. They did this as they could read Jircniv's slight change in expression.

“—B, but.”

“— I, Jircniv. I do not believe there is any worth in a country built solely from your assistance. And it brings nothing to you. Borrowing as much as possible from the Empire, there are no merits for you. You said you are my friend. If you give me a territory, in return I shall kneel to you. I would also be very happy if you prepare me a suitable position. Since I am going to be within the Empire's umbrella.”

Jircniv fell silent. Ignoring the fact that he had heard such a convincing argument, he could say nothing under this situation. This strangeness could be

felt by everyone present.

Just, what happened?

What meaning did Ainz's words have?

If you give me territory I will become your subordinate. It was an extremely natural thing, and nothing was wrong. But Ainz was an extremely powerful existence, and it felt very strange for him to bow to anyone.

How did Ainz take Jircniv's silence? He spoke again in impatience.

"Are there any problems with me becoming your subordinate? My friend."

At those words, Jircniv found his determination, and agreed.

In front of those mocking words, Jircniv had no means to resist.

"...No, there are no problems. There are few things that can make me happier than you becoming part of the Empire, my friend. Then for your position, how about becoming a Margrave?"

Blood related relatives of the Emperor would be Dukes, and below them were Marquesses, Earls, Viscounts and Barons. A Margrave was equivalent to a Marquis in the Empire. It was the highest rank that a non-blood related noble could reach, excluding marriage.

Such a noble had a large private army, a wide and vast territory and could make their own laws to a limited extent. Considering that, it was a suitable position for Ainz.

“....How many Margrave are there in the Empire?”

“Currently two.”

During the reign of the Blood Emperor, Margraves were the nobles that were removed due to their level of authority. When Jircniv just became Emperor, there were five. Despite the fact that they were meant to protect the borders of the Empire.

“Then I shall become the third? There are that many huh....”

“....And so?”

Why did he say that. It was obvious, and did not need to be said.

Jircniv now saw Ainz’s goal. He wanted him to make it clear that they were [Equals].

“....It is true that there are other Margrave. Giving you that position is not enough. As my new friend.... I shall make a new position known as a (Frontier Marquis) and present it to you. How about it?”

A Margrave was seen as a Marquis, and was nothing more than a change in

title. However, that change had a huge importance. Basically, this had the two meanings that Ainz was special enough for Jircniv to create a new position for him, and that he was highly valued.

If a Margrave was equivalent to a Marquis, then a (Frontier Marquis) would be equivalent to a Duke, or so the nobles would think

Ainz would be equal to a blood-related Duke. And his war potential was beyond imagination. Basically he was be someone who was infinitely close to the position of Emperor.

Jircniv believed that this position would be suitable to meet Ainz's silent demands.

Ainz fell silent.

Just as Jircniv thought that he was not satisfied with the created position, Ainz spoke.

"I see.... A new position.... Just how should I act?"

Wondering what a person with a ruler's presence was saying, Jircniv noticed the undertones in that statement and made a wry smile.

"Hahaha. Such a joke. You can act like a normal Margrave. You would be equal to me."

"...Ah.... Understood. I intended to express the minimum amount of loyalty as your subordinate to the surroundings, but if you are willing to do that then I will

not be dragged into anything bad.... I have never bowed my head before, so I have no confidence in expressing my loyalty to you.”

“Understood. I shall send people to support you for that.”

“...I would be happy if you did so. Now this is a change in topic, but the Margraves I know.... Are the (Frontier Marquises) of the Empire the same as other Margraves? I believe that there is a need to check, how about it?”

“Exactly. You have to know about the Empire’s laws such as the tax from gaining territory. A detailed explanation is necessary.”

Other countries did have Margraves, but they were in a grey area. In some cases, they were treated as a individual country on their own. If he was to make the position of (Frontier Marquises), he needed to refine the details of such a position to allow Ainz to integrate with the Imperial Nobles.

“I see. Then I shall dispatch my cloe aid— Demiurge.”

“Understood. Him right.” As Jircniv looked at him, Demiurge responded with a bright smile. “We shall go into detail about this later. I shall return to the Empire immediately to announce the birth of you as a new noble and a declaration of war to gain this territory. And since you are the (Frontier Marquis) Ainz Ooal Gown this will be known as the Gown (Frontier Territory). I have to prepare for that as well.”

“No, please put it as Ainz Ooal Gown (Frontier Territory) .”

Jircniv had a strange expression on his face.

“Is Gown Frontier Territory not possible?”

“No. I would like its proper name to be the Ainz Ooal Gown (Frontier Territory).”

It was a strange name. Who the heck attaches their full name to a territory? However, considering that he was strangely insisted on that, Jircniv felt that he would not let this go.

“...Well it’s not like it has not been done before, let’s go with that.”

Some mad men would do such strange things. To prevent Ainz from being misunderstood, Jircniv would need to secretly inform the nobles.

If a bad rumour— One that was making fun of Ainz entered his ears, it would be a disaster.

“I’m happy for your understanding. Please do. If you require my assistance for anything, just say.”

“...Nothing immediately comes to mind. However, I would like to establish a point of immediate contact and a place where my people can stay.”

“....Understood. I shall search for that.”

“Then I shall leave my secretary here, so can I leave those details to you?”

“Ah. I do not mind.”

“Then.... Roune Vermillion!”

“—Yes!”

Roune, who was still stuck to the floor due to Demiurge’s curse, spoke up.

“Please teach my new friend, the new (Frontier Marquis) all of the laws he needs to know. Stay here from now on.”

“.....Aa.”

“What’s wrong? Roune.”

“N, no, I just thought that it does not require me. I shall send my—”

“Roune. This is your job.”

Hearing Jircniv’s reply that did not allow refusal, Roune made a devastated face, and spoke without energy.

“....Understood.”

“Ainz. He should inform you.”

“Is that so? Then as I said so it would be Demiurge. Please teach him. Demiurge?”

“Yes. [Be free].”

Following the release of the command curse, even Jircniv could hear the sighs of relief from being released from that constant pressure.

“Now my friend. I know that you will return to the Empire, but if possible do you mind if I— No if my subordinates escort you back?”

Jircniv felt a bit of curiosity at Ainz’s suggestion. However he ignored it. That was not all he meant.

“I am deeply appreciative of your most generous offer and I thank you for it. However, I feel that since I came on a carriage, I should return the same way.”

“An undead headless horse would not require rest....”

“—Please forgive me, but I must respectfully decline.”

“Must you? I see.”

He could sense that there was some disappointment in those words. Was it an act, or was it the truth? Jircniv could not tell, although he suspected it might be an act. Ainz aimed to broadcast to the whole Empire that he was close to the Emperor.

“Then I shall return home.”

“Since you are here why not stay a night? I shall warmly welcome you.”

“No, I’m afraid I cannot. After all, we must return to make preparations.”

“Is that so? Such a pity. Demiurge.... Escort our guests outside.”

Ainz ordered Demiurge in a lighthearted tone. Like he was telling him to see out a friend. However, the two could easily see through to his true intentions.

Demiurge made a sincere smile that came from his heart. It was unimaginably evil.

Jircniv could not stop his goosebumps.

Even if it did not affect him, Demiurge’s words had a restraining effect. He would probably use it on the people that would come here. Offering residence was probably a part of that plan.

Ainz had becoming a friend, gaining the position of (Frontier Marquis), and making it clear that immediately after becoming part of the Empire he would then squirm about in the dark.

Of course, this was nothing more than a front.

“No, it’s fine. I have to start work immediately.”

Ainz tilted his head in confusion.

—*What an irritating act.*

Beneath Jircniv’s warm smile, he was forcibly crushing his anger.

“Is that so? Then it’s fine. If you need anything, just speak to the maid outside.”

“Thank you, my friend.”

“Do not mind it, my friend.”

The moment Jircniv turned his back on Ainz, one man who was kneeling until now suddenly stood up.

“Ainz Ooal Gown-sama! I, I have a request!”

The one who shouted out in such a serious manner was Fluder. As everyone was shocked by the development, he spoke again.

“Please I beg of you! Please make me your disciple!”

The Throne Room fell silent.

Ainz looked at Jircniv, perplexed.

Even he had not expected this development. Jircniv relaxed slightly.

“Sorry, but who is he?”

“Ah, he is the Head Magician of the Empire, Fluder.”

“I am Fluder Paradyne. Ainz Ooal Gown-sama.”

Fluder bowed deeply. It was a bow that he did not show even Jircniv, a serious one that was filled with loyalty.

“I have been stupified by Gown-sama’s supreme magical power and desire even a scrap of it. I shall devote my everything, so please teach me! Please I beg of you! Please make me your disciple.”

And with that, Fluder knelt and placed his head on the floor. The red carpet sunk underneath his forehead.

Ainz stroked his staff several times in confusion and asked Jircniv.

“...What should I do, Jircniv. I have no problem with it, but he is very important to your country right? I cannot just make him my disciple.”

Jircniv made his decision immediately after seeing the kneeling Fluder.

Losing Fluder was painful. If used properly, he could rival an army, and he was one of the wisest in the Empire. However, if he refused here, he would gain Fluder’s ire.

If done poorly, he would make a potential enemy, and it was possible that he would sell out the Empire to become Ainz’s disciple.

If possible, he wanted to tell Fluder to wait until his equal, a successor was born, it was unclear when or if that would happen. Making an immediate

decision allow Fluder to see his magaminity and could be seen as a favour.

“No, I don’t mind. Fluder. You are relieved of your position. Basically you are not a subordinate of the Empire.”

“Oh, your majesty. My gratitude.”

“Eh? Is that fine?” Ainz whisper failed to enter anyone’s ears and disappeared. “....Demiurge.”

Demiurge bowed.

“....What do you think?”

“....What do you mean?”

“Hm.... How should I put this....”

Ainz muddled his words. This made Jircniv relieved. The earlier figure of the strategist was gone, and he only looked like a confused human being.

“Yes.... Do you think a mere human can handle my knowledge?”

“There is no problem!” Fluder shouted out. “Certainly, I do not believe that I can contain all of Gown-sama’s deep knowledge. However, if I can gain even a fraction of it, there is nothing better!”

“....If you are to become my disciple, swear on my na—”

“Yes! I shall give my everything to Gown-sama, so please teach me.”

“Hm....”

Ainz looked for any contrary opinions in the surroundings.

For some reason, Shalltear's face was plastered in superiority.

Aura was making a face that said "This is natural."

Cocytus was— Insects were difficult to read.

Demiurge was expressionless, and considering his earlier answer, he was leaving this to Ainz.

He could not find any contrary opinion. So Ainz nodded.

"Fine. You may become my disciple."

"Thank you very much!"

His voice filled with excitement could only come from those who have reached the high point of their lives. No, Fluder's would begin from this instant onwards.

"Now." Ainz took a book out from nowhere. "Demiurge. Pass this to him."

Demiurge accepted the black book with great care, descended down the stairs, and placed the book in Fluder's open hands. Fluder looked like he had been given a grace by god but was awakened by Ainz's voice.

“Open it, my disciple.”

“Yes!”

Feeling strong joy from being called a disciple, still kneeling, Fluder bowed his head further.

Fluder then cautiously spread open the pages. A old musty smell rose forth from it, as well as small waves of magic power. The temperature of the surroundings fell slightly. Fluder got goosebumps.

Such a deep magic power— Fluder stole a glance at his master. He recalled the shock he felt when he saw Ainz for the first time. His magic power that seemed to rush out of him.

Fluder then remembered that now was not the time to think of those things. If his own disciples did so he would reprimand them immediately.

Fluder’s gaze fell on the open pages. On the thin pages were finely written words.

“Can you read it?”

Fluder cast translation magic. And his eyes opened in shock.

This was a mass of knowledge. Countless amounts of information regarding death and magic rituals were recorded inside. It was a book of magic more amazing than anything Fluder had seen before.

His hand shook from nervousness.

It was impossible to measure the worth of such a book. This was a book more important than any other in the surrounding countries. A book that any magic caster would kill for. And Fluder was holding such a book.

“Can you understand it?”

He slowly and carefully turned the page.

His two eyes were bloodshot as he tried to understand the abyss of magic. However, the knowledge was too great, and he failed to do so. Even using his memorisation ability that he spent his whole life refining, he only understood a small portion.

“Can you understand it?”

His master’s voice could be heard again.

“I.... cannot. No, I can understand a portion of it, but not the general....”

“Then it seems that you are currently unable to handle my knowledge.”

“....My apologies.”

Fluder apologised for disappointing his master.

His earlier sense of ecstasy left immediately and a dark despair crashed into him like waves. While Ainz did cause that change, he also gave him a helping hand.

“Fine. Fluder.”

Hearing the kind voice of his respectable master, Fluder raised his head and gazed at Ainz.

“My disciple there is no need to rush. Study it slowly. Spend your life to understand this book. Then learn another book. After that you can gain my knowledge. It is dangerous to let those without preparation to touch the abyss of magic. Anyway, I shall open my library. If you need to research, do so. Demiurge is busy so.... Shalltear.”

“Yes.”

“Afterwards, introduce Fluder to Titus. And inform Nazarick that Fluder has become my disciple. And talk to Pestonya and other related people for Fluder’s room.”

“Understood.”

“My disciple. You may call me Ainz.”

“Understood, my master— Ainz-sama.”

Fluder hugged the book and bowed deeply. Ecstasy was evident on his face.

“Now Jircniv. I’ve shown you something boring.”

“No, it was quite interesting.”

Jircniv kept silent as he watched Ainz’s reactions but broke it while he watched Fluder.

Fluder had offered his everything to Ainz. As long as Ainz ordered it, he would do anything without hesitation. Even if it meant harming the Empire.

The Head Magician of the Empire died, and a fervent disciple of Ainz Ooal Gown was born.

Seeing in person that Ainz was excellent at handling people, Jircniv's level of caution of Ainz was raised another level.

"Anyway allow me to take my leave friend. I intend to contact you as soon as possible, my friend."

"Yes, Nazarick will do our best to open our doors as soon as possible."

"That is very heartening, my (Frontier Marquis)."

"Ah. My Emperor, let us meet again."

Chapter 94: Negotiations | Part 7

After the talks were concluded, Ainz gathered the Guardians in his room, along with Sebas.

Including Ainz, there were six people.

Since Nazarick had obtained its backing, Ainz had assembled everyone here to confirm the details of the important period that was approaching.

They needed to affirm their direction.

Faster than Ainz could begin speaking, Aura started off with a question.

“Why did Ainz-sama reject the offer to build a kingdom and instead chose to subordinate yourself to a human?”

It was the question in the mind of everyone present. They had no intention to go against their master’s decision, but even if it was the proper one, they still had questions. They believed that if they knew his reasoning, they could better serve him.

If they could not, they might perform actions that went against his will. They all worried, especially Shalltear and Sebas who had done such things. The two were making their best attempt to catch the slightest undertone in his words.

Despite being pressurised by everyone’s gazes, he managed to convey the thoughts he had.

“There is the question of being able to govern such a kingdom. Ruling over a ruined country would bring shame to the name of Ainz Ooal Gown.”

This was a reasonable answer.

However, the eyes of the Guardians flicked over to Demiurge who was smiling. If the smartest person in Nazarick who commanded the Guardians was doing so, it probably meant that there was a problem.

Did it mean that Demiurge had doubts about Ainz’s actions?

Demiurge’s tiny act was equivalent to confusion in the eyes of the other Guardians.

“—Kukukuku.”

Demiurge’s laugh echoed through the room. Yes— Demiurge was laughing. Even though everyone was doubting him. However, the next moment, they all raised cries of surprise.

“...Did you really think that was the extent of Ainz-sama’s plan?”

“Ehh?”

“What?”

“What did you say?”

“Oh.”

“...Hm?”

“Everyone, you need to think harder. Ainz-sama is our master, who assembled all the 41 Supreme Beings. Do you think that was the extent of his planning?”

Ainz swallowed, as though he had been punched in the face. Meanwhile, the Guardians were nodding and murmuring “Indeed”. When he recalled Jircniv’s reaction, there did seem to be something else.

The Guardians did not understand it, and the frustration could be seen on their faces.

They were unsure that they could help Ainz with their heads of theirs.

“Really.... Ainz-sama. Should you not inform us of your true objective now. After all, it will inform our future direction.”

Everyone’s attention went to Ainz. Their earnest, pleading expressions seemed to say, “Please enlighten this foolish one”.

After looking over everyone, Ainz took a deep breath. No, he took several deep breaths.

Then, he slowly rose from his chair, and turned his back to the Guardians. From this position, he offered praise to Demiurge over his shoulder.

“...As expected of Demiurge. To think you had discerned my true aims...”

“...No. Your schemes are elaborate and farsighted, Ainz-sama. I cannot hope to compare. And I believe what I understand is only a portion of your plans.”

Demiurge bowed respectfully in response to Ainz’ praise.

Shalltear’s question carried a hint of jealousy, probably because she could not tread the same ground which Demiurge shared with their beloved master.

“What does this all mean?”

Aura puffed up her cheeks in displeasure as she saw Demiurge’s faint smile.

“Ainz-sama, tell us too.”

“To begin with we should not need to have it spelled out for us. Please forgive this foolish one.”

Since Ainz was still facing away from them, his subordinates believed that he was dissatisfied with them since they could not understand him.

If they were unable to assist Ainz, the kind remaining master, the last of the 41 Supreme Beings, there was no meaning for their existence.

Ainz would answer their pleas.

As he turned around, forcefully thrusting the Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown toward Demiurge.

“Demiurge. I permit you to explain what you understand to the others.”

“Understood.”

After Demiurge nodded, he began speaking to his comrades.



The structure of the carriage had not changed between the journey to and from Nazarick, but for some reason, every slight bump and jostle along the way seemed magnified. Perhaps it was because of the gloomy atmosphere in the carriage’s interior. Or perhaps it was because the people occupying the carriage had changed.

The troops escorting them to Nazarick were composed of men from the 1st Legion. The ones escorting them from Nazarick were from the 2nd Legion.

In place of Fluder was one of his disciples. In place of Roune was one of his scribes. The two original occupants of the carriage who remained were Jircniv and Baziwood.

There, the three people saw Jircniv's rare expression and silently tensed themselves in their seats. They occasionally glanced in his direction.

Their Emperor Jircniv was scrunching his brows in thought. Jircniv was widely known as a man with a smug smile. However, it seemed that Baziwood, who knew Jircniv the best among these three people, had never seen this look on Jircniv's face.

Jircniv was like this ever since they had left Nazarick. Occasionally he would make a face like he was eating insects, but never one of relief.

The reason for that was abundantly clear.

The Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. It was due to the events that happened there.

Those frightening beings, and beyond them on the throne was [Death] himself.

And it was not just fear they felt.

They had seen myriad luxuries, glittering architecture, and all manner of decorations. Nobody could remain unawed by that.

Even Baziwood, who was unskilled in politics, could easily predict the difficulties his country would have, in the face of that being which possessed superlative military and economic power, among other things. The Empire was acting to reduce the power and influence of the nobles and centralise it under the Emperor. However, this had come undone.

For example, this carriage might be watched using various spells, and despite being protected by the surrounding knights, just remembering the incident caused fear to well up in all of them.

As if trying to chase away the fear of Nazarick, Jircniv flashed his usual cynical smile.

“Don't stare so hard. Aren't you losing your focus here?”

“Your Majesty!”

The three voices overlapped. There were hints of joy within them, joy that their Emperor had come back to them. As Jircniv realised what he should be doing, he nodded vigorously.

“...We have an incredible amount of work to do. First, let us decide who Fluder’s successor will be. Are there any suitable candidates?”

The flames of desire burned bright in the acolyte’s eyes as he heard those words. The position of being Fluder’s successor as the Imperial Court Wizard was a mouth-watering temptation. After all, it was a position that gave one the right to administer and manage arcane magic casters throughout the Empire.

Because the position had always been filled by that great hero, nobody else could claim it. Even if one had the ambition for it, their opponent was far too strong to overcome by wicked means. And now, this hitherto sealed-off position had been offered to him.

The acolyte was extremely grateful for being called to this carriage, for being presented with this chance.

However, Jircniv’s next words trampled that desire.

“However, one must bear in mind that as the Imperial Court Wizard, one may be called upon to do battle with Ainz.”

The flames of the acolyte’s ambition went out in that instant. He could not even bring himself to be excited about it. The position he had longed for became one he wished to avoid more than anything else in the world. He would have a better chance of surviving a jump off a five hundred meter tall cliff into a shoal of rocks than he would in a spell battle against Ainz Ooal Gown.

No, he might be better off dying on the spot.

That was why he immediately thought of pushing this to someone else.

“Yes! In that case, I know some people who can use the 4th tier of magic; how about selecting one of them? Granted, I do know some spells of that tier, but I am not very versed with them.”

“Are there any among the ones with us?”

“No. They are tasked with important experiments in the Capital. So they were not chosen.”

How pitiful

, the acolyte whispered in his heart. If they came, they would understand how dangerous the position had become. Since they did not, they would probably lust after the position just like he did.

Without knowing that it was the executioner’s chair.

“...I see. Then, gather information on them and then conduct interviews. However, why did Fluder immediately ask to become Ainz’s disciple? It is true that he is powerful, but it is unknown if he has high magical abilities right? Do the Death Knights answer everything?”

“I believe it is something else. Actually, master has a special skill to see the level of magic a person can use.”

“Oh.”

“I think that the Margrave’s.... No. The (Frontier Marquis’) abilities were seen through.”

“I see.”

Jircniv nodded. He knew that such people did exist.

There were people born with various types of special abilities.

The most powerful one Jircniv knew was the princess of a certain small country. That princess had the lost ability that was said to be the secret of dragons.

“Basically, it is confirmed that Ainz is a powerful magic caster.”

Silence fell within the carriage.

The secretary felt the lull in the conversation and asked his own question.

“...By the way, what about Roune-sama?”

The Emperor’s answer was clear.

“We cannot rely on him. Even if he returns, put him in a non-important post.

He might be brainwashed by Nazarick.”

An apple that may be rotten cannot be mixed with other apples. Such was the decision.

They could probably detect any lasting magic using detection spells, but the acolyte said nothing. He had no confidence to detect the magic of that monster Ainz. No, he felt that no one of humanity could do it.

The greatest master who had no equal had now found someone above him.

“However, your majesty. This Gown person.... Or whatever we call him. How do you view the (Frontier Marquis)? Though I know he is a powerful monster.”

Baziwood’s question was related to his position as one of the Four Knights. In response, Jircniv made a cold smile.

“What is scary about that monster is not his power. It is his wisdom. That was made clear by the fact that he subordinated himself to me.”

“....Does he intend to work at us from inside?”

“Definitely.”

Please do not confirm it that easily.

The three of them thought this at the same time. Thinking of entering that monster’s stomach was extremely fear-inducing.

That was why they asked. They wanted to hear something that would allay their fears.

“What should we do? Restrain him with the law?”

The secretary’s question was natural, as he felt that he found a trump card against Ainz.

Even currently in the Empire, the nobles were being restricted, but were also being slowly confined by the law. If Ainz became a noble, they could probably do so too.

“...Really? You would attach a bell to his neck?”

“.....”

“Well it’s not a bad move, but it would be foolish to anger Ainz right? However I want to send several people inside Nazarick to collect information. We need to tiptoe on the fine line between using the law and not angering him.”

“Then, how shall the Empire treat the (Frontier Marquis)?”

“Hm? Ah, I already decided. That monster Ainz has snuck into the Empire. At this rate the Empire will be picked clean by him. So I shall feed him.”

“Feed him?”

“Even a man-eating beast will not attack as long as its belly is full. I shall make him know that coexistence is the best option. I shall teach him that it is foolish to kill the goose that lays golden eggs. Using feed that will satisfy that monster.”

What was the food that Jircniv referred to? No one understood. However, none of them were confident to ask. How would they feel if told that it was them?

“...Why did he reject the offer to build a country? Did he think it was simple to ride off the Empire?”

“No, he saw through my plan.” Jircniv quickly answered their doubts. “This land is where three countries, the Empire, Kingdom and Theocracy meet. What would happen if he built a country here? The monster would be noticed and be regarded as a potential enemy. Then three countries would unite against him in secret. However Ainz is now part of the Empire. Basically, now the surrounding countries would be scared of the Empire who now wields that monster as a weapon.”

Jircniv had a mocking smile on his face.

“Would you believe a person holding a dangerous weapon if he asked to form an alliance against that weapon? The other countries would pay attention to Ainz, but more on the Empire.”

“Shouldn’t we have rejected him?”

Jircniv looked at Baziwood like he was a fool.

“You.... Do you want him to throw his lot in with the Kingdom? If so, would

you take responsibility and defeat him for me?”

Baziwood hung his head in shame.

It was an obvious face. Jircniv just chose the lesser of two evils.

“...Basically he aimed to destroy the alliance from the start?”

“That’s it.”

Jircniv pointed at the secretary.

“That is the thing. If he had absolute power, he could have ignored us and just destroyed the alliance. I believe it is fine to think that there is a reason for that. Maybe, the terrifying reason is that he just likes to kill people slowly. What we have to do is to collect information while he is occupied. Along with info about those that can defeat him.”

“Do people like that really exist?”

Given the casual tone with which it was said, nobody would have believed those words came from the acolyte. Gown was an unimaginably powerful opponent, who might be unbeatable even by the mightiest Dragons. He was an opponent that made people think that way.

And to that, Jircniv issued a confident reply.

“Indeed, they do.”

“People like that really exist?!”

“Don’t they? Look within that throne room.”

When he put it that way, it seemed obvious enough.

The four monsters standing next to Ainz. The dark elf, the silver haired beauty, the silver insect and the demon.

“...Do you plan to induce a revolt?”

“I don’t think it’s possible, but we still need to try. They might do it for money, position or the opposite sex.”

“Won’t it be dangerous?”

“Definitely. But we might be misreading Ainz’s abilities by orders of

magnitude. At worst, this will not be about the surrounding countries, but a battle for humanity's existence. Nothing matters to me after I die, but it will be troublesome for a war to break out before I do. That is why I am doing this."



"—And that is how it is."

"What Demiurge! That Emperor believes that we will betray Ainz-sama. Is that what you are saying?"

"Hmm, he is surprisingly an idiot."

"It seems that the Emperor does not know the meaning of loyalty."

Mocking laughter filled the room.

Did he really think they would betray Ainz, one of the 41 Supreme Beings who made them?

Although this was nothing more than Demiurge's hypothesis, it was enough to thoroughly displease the Guardians.

"Shall we kill them all?"

Shalltear laughed at Aura when she said such menacing words.

"I'll turn him into a Vampire. After all, if he's good enough, there's no reason he can't serve in Nazarick."

While her tone was calm, one could see a burning fury hidden underneath. Although Cocytus had remained silent, his large mandibles made a clacking sound of warning.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you do remember that we are in the presence of Ainz-sama?"

As they heard Sebas' cold, clear voice, Aura, Shalltear's and Cocytus' anger instantly vanished. Afterwards, Demiurge continued speaking.

"...Now, regarding the information that Ainz-sama seeks about the strong. The Empire will do this for us from now on. Even if they do not give us their informants, all we have to do is pay attention to the Emperor."

Hearing Demiurge's explanation, the Guardians and Sebas then understood.

Not only that. Their respect for Ainz who was able to instantly understand that in such a short time broke through the max.

“I see!”

“As expected of Ainz-sama.”

“I am amazed. To be able to think that far ahead.”

“Amazing....”

“Even I am shocked. Being able to do such calculations in such little time. This Demiurge offers you his respect.”

Ainz then turned around. He was somewhat embarrassed. That was natural. All the eyes Ainz saw was filled with respect and admiration after all.

“Is that so. However, Demiurge, you were able to see through everything.”

“No. If Ainz-sama had not reacted in such a way, I would not have been able to do so.”

Everyone nodded and agreed with Demiurge.

“However, as expected of Ainz-sama. To be smarter than Demiurge, the best in Nazarick.”

“It’s true! Ainz-sama is the best!”

“I knew that Ainz-sama was amazing, but for there to be this much of a disparity.... As expected of the leader of the Supreme Beings.”

“Agreed. Generous and wise. There is no better master than Ainz-sama.”

While being showered in praises, he ended it with a somewhat embarrassed wave of his hand.

“That’s enough of that. Anyway, we have to decide what to do from now on. Can I leave the negotiations with the Empire with you Demiurge?”

“Yes. Please leave it to me.”

“Ok. Sorry for pushing such important things on you. Anyway, listen to secretary Roun and write his words down. And have the liches in the library memorise them. No, use the liches I made.”

“Understood.”

“Shalltear, please handle Fluder’s and the secretary’s room. And Cocytus, take charge of Nazarick’s forces and be cautious. Aura should hasten the construction of the hidden base in the forest. Sebas can continue to keep the 9th and 10th floors of Nazarick clean and handle guests.”

All of them bowed in unison.

“Excellent! When the Empire and Kingdom battles, it will be our time to shine! Take care with the preparations.”

“Yes!”

A cry of unison echoed in Ainz’s room.



Several days later.

The Empire announced that the magic caster Ainz Ooal Gown had subordinated himself to the Empire. They also announced that Ainz Ooal Gown had become a (Frontier Marquis).

And the territory given to him was extremely near the Kingdom’s city of E-Rantel.

In regards to the fact that they were granted the Kingdom’s territory, the Empire said [Ainz Ooal Gown was originally controlling this area, and the Kingdom was unjustly occupying it. It must be returned].

Should this not be obeyed, the Empire would even go to war.

Of course, the Kingdom could not accept such a thing. They immediately replied with [There is no history of Ainz Ooal Gown ruling the the Kingdom’s land, and has no legitimacy]. [Should the Empire go to war, the Kingdom would respond with force].

Most of the Kingdom’s nobles assumed that this was part of the yearly war with the Empire. Thus they did not think deeply and assumed that Ainz Ooal Gown was a sad magic caster used as a pawn, and laughed at the Empire’s attempt to justify their war.

Especially when they gave a high position to an unknown magic caster. This was an act that was often used to justify war where royalty vied for power.

By this time, the information of the vampire Camilla and Ainz Ooal Gown's abilities were known by the nobles, but few paid attention to it.

The first reason was that there was no magic caster with a high position in the Kingdom. The second was that a magic caster could not affect a war with the Empire greatly. The third was the magic caster had not done anything in the Kingdom, basically he had no achievements.

Even if they were told that he was extremely powerful, he was still taken lightly.

But, several people had differing opinions.

The reason for that was the number of troops the Empire was sending.

Out of the eight companies of the Empire, seven would be utilised. Considering that the Empire only used up to four in previous wars, this was a broken number.

Next was the declaration from the Slane Theocracy.

E-Rantel was an area vied over by three countries, and so when the Empire and Kingdom warred, the Theocracy needed to make a statement. Although to the two parties, they were just sticking their nose in.

Most of their declarations were that part of E-Rantel's area was the Theocracy's.

However, this time it was very different.

[The Theocracy have no records so it is unknown, but if Ainz Ooal Gown ruled that land, they would accept his legitimacy].

To the Kingdom's nobles this was an idiotically infuriating statement. They had come out from the woodwork to speak nonsense. However, some people understood their true meaning. Such as the woman called Golden, one of the Six Great Nobles, and the Warrior Captain.

They fully understood.

Their country's decision of [We have no intention to face Ainz Ooal Gown]. The fact that the strongest country in the surroundings were reluctant to face one magic caster.

This war between the Empire and the Kingdom.

The meaning in it had changed completely. Those who understood— Only a small portion of humans— began to move the troops.

(Keep scrolling down)

And a tragedy occurred.

—The sound of laughter melded together in the room.

It was filled with it. It was like the sound of a beast being released from its chains.

Fluder looked happily at his laughing master.

A master's happiness was his disciple's happiness.

“Wonderful, wonderful. Fluder, you are the best.”

“Thank you very much. Allowing my master to be happy makes me happy as well.”

“This is enough about the strength of the “strong” in the surrounding countries. Next tell me about the strength of adventurers. First the A+ adventures. And the estimated strength of the members of Blue Rose.”

“Understood.”

Fluder began telling him the information the Empire collected. Everytime Ainz heard the strength of a member, he smiled.

Ainz was smiling gleefully.

Yes— Extremely gleefully.

Chapter 95: Massacre | Part 1

Exactly one month after the Empire's proclamation.

The fields were ripe with the fruits of autumn, and welcomed the shining golden colour. A light breeze blew and the blue skies were clear. The white clouds were few and floated in the sky.

The months after this would only get colder, but this season was the busiest of the year. If one took in deep breaths, the clear air would enter their lungs. The warm air that was present a few weeks ago was nowhere to be found.

This was the season where one would not want to leave bed, but those who could do so belonged to a special class in the Kingdom. In fact, this season was the busiest of the year.

To the farming villages this was the time to harvest the results of one year of hard work, and when tax would be collected. Also, merchants would be rushing over to villages and cities.

Everyone was rushing about in a hurry.

Even in the Fortress City E-Rantel.

However, the hustle and bustle of E-Rantel was a bit different from those in other cities. It was not lively, but the heat being released from a different form of emotion was spreading across the city.

The source of that heat was within the outermost ring of E-Rantel's three walls.

There were countless men there. Most were wearing a jumbled set of clothes. Most were commoners. However, their numbers were astounding. Probably 200,000.

There was no way that this number of humans stayed in E-Rantel. Since E-Rantel was in the territory contested over by three countries, its transportation network was often used. There were goods, people, money and various other things. And this city naturally became large.

However there was no way that 200,000 humans would live in this area.

Then why were they all here?

The ones who explained this was a group of young men.

There were many men who were making wooden and straw figures, refitting bent metal shields and armour and practising with spears without blades. It was obvious what they were doing. Battle training.

Yes— The 200,000 residents of the Kingdom assembled here were assembled to war against the Empire.

Vigorous shouts could be heard. Of course, the number of enthusiastic shouts were few. Most were filled with fear of being forced onto the battlefield. The vigour came from them wanting to learn this to avoid dying. That was why they trained.

However, not everyone was training seriously.

The war between the Empire and kingdom occurred annually. Thus there were many that were broken. There were many without motivation that were hiding in a corner lying down. Some were spilling their guts out on their neighbour. Some were hugging their knees while crouching.

The more years went on, the stronger this trend.

Their desire to fight was mostly terrible and they merely wished to return home alive.

This was the morale of the Kingdom's troops. This could not be helped. They were forced here to do unrewarded work and their busy schedules cleared. Even if they returned alive, the loss of that time would tighten the noose around their neck.

And this did nothing to change the fact that a slow death was closing in on them.

Next to those soldiers were several carriages running past. On top of them were countless amounts of provisions.

It was extremely difficult to imagine that over 2% of the Kingdom's population would stay in one city. However E-Rantel was the frontline of the

war with the Empire and was the place where the Kingdom's military power gathered.

As the wars with the Empire waged, the preparations for 200,000 people were being done. Their food stores were huge, and were probably the largest buildings in the city.

Then why were those carriages being shuttled back and forth?

There was but one answer. The fact that this amount of food was needed pointed to it.

Those men who were lethargically working viewed those carriages with fear. As if they were looking at the reaper.

Most of those that understood what was about to happen stared at the carriages.

The large scale transportation of food.

This meant that the war with the Empire was encroaching.

Within the innermost section of the three walls of the fortress.

There was the residence of the mayor of E-Rantel, Panasolei Gruze Vauna Rettenmaier. It was a residence that fitted his position as mayor, but compared to the building next to it, it fell down a few notches.

This mansion was the most extravagant in the city. Then if one wondered who lived in this place, there would only be one answer. This building was meant to house those who had a higher position than the mayor.

This was the Noble Guest Residence.

It was a mansion that was only opened if a king or someone of equal status had arrived.

And inside a room of that mansion, there were the figures of several men.

Sitting on the simple throne was of course, the King of Re-Estize Kingdom, Rampossa III.

Standing diagonally behind him was the strongest warrior of the Kingdom—Gazef Stronoff.

In front of the two was a table, and six men were sitting in chairs placed around it. All of them wore excellent clothes, and their faces had grace. It was impossible to gain that look in a single generation and so only those from large families with long histories could obtain it.

The table in front of them had countless papers strewn about, and half of these were parchments. Several empty pitchers were left around, and the cups in front of them were mostly empty.

One could tell that a fierce discussion had occurred here, one that had gone on for a long time.

And in fact, many of those men's faces were plastered with fatigue.

And the man whose fatigue was not yet visible was the first to speak.

"We have received the Empire's yearly proclamation of war and where it is held." He was a snake-like man, Marquis Raeven, one of the Six Great Nobles of the Kingdom. "It is at—"

"—Hmm. It's at the same place right. Katze Plains right?"

The man who stole Marquis Raeven's words was a man in his forties. When he was young he probably had a muscular figure. One could see the effect of the passage of time on his body. Even so, his voice was full of vigour.

He was Marquis Boullope, the head of the Noble Faction, and the one who prepared one fifth of the soldiers participating in this war.

"It is as you say. It is the same location as previous years."

"...Since the location is the same, shouldn't it mean that the Empire's attack will be the same?"

A thin and heartened noble spoke. His voice was somewhat tinged with relief. That was never a good emotion to have before going to war. In front of the fact that the Kingdom's territory was being breached.

That was probably why he was relieved. Several nobles looked at him for an instant with cold eyes.

"Unfortunately Marquis Blumrush, that is not the case. This time, the Empire has moved quite the number of troops. I believe that there is some kind of aim.

If you are careless you might lose your life you know?”

“True, Marquis Raeven. Isn’t this just granting honour to some strange noble? They did proclaim that ‘I will give him territory’. So he will at least move a sufficiently large force right? The strange noble.... What was his name—”

While playing with his sharpened goatee, the extremely thin noble spoke.

“—(Frontier Marquis) Ainz Ooal Gown. Marquis Pespea.”

“Yes! He was a magic caster noble right?”

“According to the Mayor of this city and Gazef-dono, he is a magic caster that needs to be kept an eye on right?”

The youngest person present spoke. His face was clean and young, but the cold smile on it did not make others feel welcome.

“Exactly. Count Lytton.” Gazef, who was standing next to the King’s side spoke. “Ainz Ooal Gown is a magic caster to be cautious of. He probably rivals.... No, exceeds the Head Magic Caster of the Empire, Fluder.”

“As an individual, a magic caster is dangerous. But what can one person do?”

Making a mocking smile, Count Lytton laughed at Gazef’s caution.

As a magic caster, Fluder was widely known in the surrounding countries. However, his true strength was not clearly known. Fluder had not faced the Kingdom in war before, and thus the Kingdom’s troops were never destroyed by magic.

Thus many of the Kingdom’s nobles did not find Fluder important. Basically they thought he was mere propaganda. Those who thought this were high ranking nobles who had no connections with adventurers or those with occupations related to magic.

Count Lytton was one of them.

To his knowledge, magic casters were a type of tricksters. Of course, priests alone were different.

“....That is not the case. A magic caster that can fly and used large scale attacks is extremely dangerous. It would also be painful to be hit from range.

But unless it's a special case, magic casters would not do such things. However, the Empire's reception of Ainz Ooal Gown is too strange. If he were a simple magic caster, they would not do this much. Thus I believe we should be cautious."

The remaining man of the Six Great Nobles, Margrave Urovana spoke heavily. His pure white beard and his wrinkled face had a pressure that came from being an experienced man. In contrast to Count Lytton, he was the oldest, and had the most conviction in his words. Even Count Lytton nodded at his words. However, one man had a different opinion.

"Hmm. What Ainz Ooal Gown. As Ritton said, what can one person do? If he flies in the sky we can simply shoot him down with arrows. The same if he stands at range. What can one simple magic caster do alone! Can one magic caster change the outcome of a war! Does Earl Urovana know of such a case!"

"...I have not."

In actuality, he had not heard of such cases. Well, stories were an exception.

"Isn't that the answer. No matter how powerful, one person cannot affect the battlefield."

"...What about a dragon?"

"Marquis Blumrush...." He sent a fierce gaze as if he were looking at a fool. "That magic caster is human, why did the idea of a dragon come out?"

"N, no. He might rival an army by himself...."

"When talking of humans, there is no meaning in talking about dragons. The premise is different! What are you thinking. Being cautious of one magic caster —" Marquis Boullope glared at Gazef. "—Do you not think it is shameful for nobles of the Kingdom to be scared of shadows?!"

Marquis Boullope's words rang true.

Several of the Six Great Nobles nodded in agreement. What could one magic caster do.

However, several people did not. Even if a normal magic caster could not, they were unsure that this magic caster could overturn their past

preconceptions.

“Firstly, the envoy we sent to the magic caster has yet to return, so he probably was hostile then. The envoy has probably been killed.”

“I believe so.”

Marquis Raeven nodded. While it was publicly stated that the envoy went missing, his corpse was already recovered.

“No matter what happened, do we intend to fear a boorish man who killed an envoy of the Kingdom?”

“...What is that not the case?”

“What do you mean?”

His pitch dropped as Marquis Boullope spoke to Marquis Raeven. There was a large difference between his polite past reactions and his current.

This was because Marquis Boullope viewed Marquis Raeven as his equal.

“There is a possibility that the Empire had killed the envoy. To pull him to their side.”

Despite Marquis Raeven saying this, the possibility was low. Renner agreed.

The envoy was obviously bitten to death by a beast, but Evileye had said that there was no summoned beast nor monster that was large enough. Thus the possibility of this being the work of the Empire was low.

The more probable answer, was that they had incurred his wrath.

“Hmm. That may be the case, but I do not think it is possible to change the fact that the magic caster was brought to the Empire and is being used as a pawn?”

“If we invite that magic caster into the Kingdom—”

“Stronoff! Despite receiving such a high position in the Empire, he would betray them? If he has honour he would not do such a thing. Only the lowest dreg of humanity would betray anyone!”

Without moving his gaze, Marquis Raeven focused on one of the nobles in the corner of his eye.

While thinking that if he said that ‘One of them is here you know’, it would feel great, he thought, filled with a certain dark emotion.

“If one is a part of the Kingdom, yet audaciously betrays it, I would want to make that person meet a bad end.”

“Agreed.”

“Well let’s ignore that. More importantly we have to think about the current war with the Empire. Let’s get this conversation back on track.” Marquis Boullope raised his voice. “For example, what is the Empire planning and how the war on the plains will go?”

“I believe that it will go as usual—”

The silent Rampossa III received Marquis Raeven’s gaze and spoke.

“I intend to do that. I believe that everyone understands why.”

The Six Great Nobles nodded. Well, one did not seem to get it.

The Empire’s knights were heavily armoured, and fought on horseback. Facing such a enemy, it would be foolish to battle on flat land like the Katze Plains. It would be better to barricade themselves in E-Rantel, where the casualties would be fewer, and the chances of victory were higher.

However, that was unacceptable to the Kingdom.

First was the problem of using a large number of commoners. Even though it was an important harvest period, they were forced to deploy to the battlefield. If they were not returned quickly to their work, the Kingdom’s economic power would deteriorate.

Next was that feeding 200,000 men for extended periods was difficult even for E-Rantel.

If they boarded themselves within the fortress, the Empire which had plenty of magic casters would use a different strategy. Since it was not clear what they would do, the results would be unpredictable.

One might think that this was because 200,000 troops were used, but the Empire’s knights were strong, and their trainings far surpassed the Kingdom’s. It would be dangerous to not activate 200,000 troops.

That was why the Kingdom had no choice. While they did the same as always and will accept the charge head on and it was the best choice for the Kingdom.

“Understood. By the way, Your Majesty, the Empire’s troops have been deployed.”

“I see....”

“It seems about time to let start to let the peasants start working for their food.”

“It is just as Count Lytton says. Let us ready our troops. How are your preparations, Marquis Boullope?”

“There are no issues, Marquis Pespea. Mine can move immediately. Your Majesty.”

“...Then please move your troops.”

“Now Your Majesty. Who will have overall command? I do not mind if it is myself?”

While it was phrased as a question, it was different. In his words were a pressure telling Rampossa III to hand over the right to command.

Rampossa III and Marquis Boullope. If asked who was better at command, many nobles would reply the later. And Marquis Boullope’s troops comprised of one fifth of the army, forty thousand men.

If the King were not present, the overall commander would be Marquis Boullope.

However the King was present. While it was natural for Rampossa III to have overall command, the nobles of the Noble Faction would not accept this so easily.

At Marquis Boullope’s pressuring question, Gazef’s eyebrow twitched. Despite seeing that Marquis Boullope did nothing. To him Gazef was a commoner who knew how to swing a sword. He would originally not even permit him to be present in this room with the King and Six Great Nobles.

“...Marquis Raeven.”

“Yes.”

“I shall leave it to the Marquis. Advance the troops to Katze Plains and return them back safely. And I shall leave their deployment up to you.”

“Understood.”

Marquis Raeven received the order of Rampossa III and bowed. To Marquis Boullope it was like his desired position was stolen from him, but he could not complain about Marquis Raeven. He knew his excellence, and it was difficult to disagree. And more importantly, Marquis Raeven belonged to both factions. Several of Marquis Boullope’s aids also owed Marquis Raeven.

Speaking up strongly in front of them would implant doubt in their minds.

That was why Marquis Boullope agreed.

“Marquis Raeven. I shall leave my troops to you. If you need anything just say.”

“Thank you very much, Marquis Boullope. I shall rely on you then.”

It was a meaningless exchange, but it was necessary for nobles.

“Then we shall end this here. Marquis Raeven. I’m counting on you.”

“Understood, Your Majesty.”

As the Six Great Nobles left the room, the only ones remaining were Rampossa III and Gazef.

Rampossa III slowly rotated his neck. Gazef heard creaking sounds. As he had released tension, the king had a relieved face.

“Good work, Your Majesty.”

“Ah. I really am tired.”

Gazef made a wry smile. A small scale war between the Noble and Royal Factions had just occurred. This would make anyone tired. However Rampossa III was a person more tired than most.

“Has he arrived yet?”

“It would probably be difficult for him right?”

“True—”

When Rampossa III said this, the door was knocked on. The door was opened and the person they were talking about arrived.

The one who entered the room was a disgustingly obese man. His hair was thin enough to reflect light, and the remaining strands were all white.

His body was round enough to be called obese. His stomach was slaughtered in fat, and slabs of flesh hung beneath his chin.

He was a disgusting man, but his eyes had the spark of wisdom. He was a man with a large disparity between his personality and appearance. Rampossa III gave that man a kind smile.

“Thank you for coming, Panasolei.”

“Your Majesty.” The mayor of E-Rantel, Panasolei, lowered his head. And then he shifted his gaze. “It has been a while, Gazef-dono.”

“Mayor. Thank you very much for that time.”

“No no. I should be the one to thank you. I am very grateful for your patrols of the nearby areas.”

“You’re not wheezing through your nose today?”

“Your Majesty....” Panasolei made a wry smile. “There is no point if I do that to someone I’m close to. And Your Majesty already knows.”

“Sorry sorry. Forgive me Panasolei. Now, I wanted to use some time to catch up, but we have none. So, sorry but can we get to the point.”

“Understood, Your Majesty. Before that, one question.”

Rampossa III gestured with his chin to continue.

“There is a young knight in white armour standing outside the door, but is it fine to not ask him to leave?”

While there was soundproofing, it was difficult to make it absolute. If he pressed his ear to the door, he might be able to pick something up from this important conversation.

Hearing that, Rampossa III and Gazef immediately understood who he was

talking about. The young man named Climb.

“It is fine. He guards my daughter from danger, and can be trusted.”

Panasolei’s gaze flicked to Gazef, and seeing him nodded, Panasolei agreed.

“I see. Understood. Then.... Shall we begin?”

“No....” The King hesitated but replied. “No, one more person is coming. Can we wait until he arrives?”

“Is that so. Then shall we first talk about the expenses of the provisions within the city? And I have papers about the projected national strength of the Kingdom in one year based on the materials the Marquis provided.”

“Yes. I want to get past the headache inducing stuff first.”

And Panasolei’s words caused even the domestic affairs ignorant Gazef to frown.

The amount of expenses would cause one to wonder if the Kingdom was going to be alright. The effects of collecting a large number of provisions on the Kingdom. And the largest problem was the deterioration of the national strength of the Kingdom after the commoners returned home.

Panasolei’s predictions, even his optimistic ones, were situations that would make one want to hide in a hole.

Ramposa III understood this better than Gazef, and his face was strained.

“How did this....”

“If.... The Empire attacks again next year, the Kingdom will move closer to fracturing. The number of peasants starving to death due to tax will rise rapidly, and if not taken seriously, the treasury will empty.”

“.....”

Ramposa III placed his hand on his chin and hid his face.

It was the result of several years of them responding to the Empire however they liked. By the time they understood the Empire’s aim, it was far too late.

“Your Majesty....”

“This is troubling. If I had acted sooner.... If I had acted before the Factions completely divided and those standing by me still had power.... What foolishness.”

It was not that easy. Even if he had cleaned up then, the Kingdom would probably have fallen into civil war, and when weakened, it would be swallowed up by the Empire.

This was the result of inaction of several generations of royalty. It was impossible to clean all that up in one.

Silence fell in the dark room. And cutting it apart, were several knocks on the door.

And Marquis Raeven entered.

“I have made everyone wait.”

“Marquis Raeven, sorry for taking up your time.”

“No no, pay it no mind. It was the correct decision to throw it to me then. However, my apologies, I cannot stay here for long, so shall we solve the problems quickly.”

His snake-like face was cold as always, but Gazef felt human emotion in the man. He also confirmed that he liked the man.

—I was a fool for not being able to see this man’s true personality.

As Gazef regretted that fact, he recalled the conversation he had in the royal chambers before they left the capital. The four people that were assembled there— Rampossa III, Gazef, Renner and Marquis Raeven. The conversation he had with those two completely blew away all his preconceptions he had of the royal court.

The shock of the fact that the man that Gazef hated the most was working the hardest for the King could not be described in one word.

“I have troubled both you and my daughter.”

While making a sincere expression and the sitting Marquis Raeven, Rampossa III made a deep bow.

“Y, Your Majesty. Please stop this. I am someone who acted without Your Majesty’s knowledge. I feel deep regret that I did not use different methods earlier.”

“Marquis Raeven. Allow me to apologise as well.” Gazef bowed deeply. “Without knowing Marquis Raeven’s true intent, I was deceived by your haughty demeanor, and I have nurtured disrespect for you. Please forgive this fool.”

“Gazef-dono, paid it no mind.”

“...Even if you say that.”

Marquis Raeven detected a deep sense of regret hidden inside Gazef’s words. Then only giving Gazef some form of punishment would give him relief.

Marquis Raeven nodded in head several times in understanding. And he gave Gazef his punishment.

“Understood.... I have called you Gazef-dono for a long time. Not Stronoff-dono. Now allow me to call you Gazef-dono as friends. I deeply respect you after all.”

A punishment that was not a punishment.

His eyes were nothing more than decorative holes in his head if he could not see this man’s true worth. While thinking that, Gazef spoke words of gratitude that came from his heart.

“Thank you very much, Marquis Raeven.”

Discerning that Gazef’s words had the utmost respect inside, Marquis Raeven said nothing. Anything more would be Gazef’s problem.

“Now shall we hurry up and begin, Your Majesty?”

Confirming that Rampossa III nodded, Marquis Raeven began to speak again.

“First is.... About the adventurer called Momon who is Ainz Ooal Gown’s disciple. The chance that Ainz Ooal Gown sent him to contact the Kingdom is high, just as Renner-denka says.”

“About that, we have contacted Momon, but he said that he is not related to whatever his master does.”

“I see. Then contact is impossible.”

“Is it possible that by apologising to Momon, we will be indirectly apologising to Ainz Ooal Gown?”

“It’s probably impossible, Your Majesty. According to what the mayor says, his attempts at catching the Kingdom’s eye.... Probably failed. He now completely belongs to the Empire.”

Saying that, Rampossa collapsed into his chair.

One cannot think of Ainz Ooal Gown as a mere magic caster. He is probably a magic caster that commands great power. It would be best to think of him as someone who rivals Landfall.

“Peace and alliance, and by granting territory to Ainz Ooal Gown we can make him an obvious enemy. That was Renner-sama’s plan right?”

“Yes. While he has become part of the Empire, he has been granted such a high position so they probably understand his danger. Thus if we make an encirclement he should not be able to escape.”

Amongst the forms of power, influence was unique in that the stronger one’s influence became, the stronger the opposition’s influence became. If Ainz Ooal Gown gained territory and used his great power, his danger level would increase and more would become his enemy.

“So will this city be ceded over?”

Panasolei asked this in an unreadable voice. As mayor, his emotions were complicated.

“I hope we do not have to do that. I hope that this war goes well, and as peace agreements we can grant him the territory between the Empire and E-Rantel.”

“...The problem is what will the nobles say.”

“If we are defeated to a certain extent they will probably accept it. If not they will believe that Your Majesty desired to run away from it all.”

“Basically Marquis Raeven. There will be a need to be defeated to a certain extent in this war.”

“Exactly. Gazef-dono. It would be nice if we can reduce the Noble Faction’s power.”

The room once again fell into silence. Everyone could understand Marquis Raeven’s words rationally. It was very important. However it was difficult to emotionally accept it.

Defeat would mean the deaths of the many citizens drafted from the Kingdom.

The deaths of several hundred, thousands, tens of thousands of people. While on paper, it was not a large number, but as long as one had the slightest imagination, they would be able to hear the cries of their countless relatives.

“Since a certain amount of deaths are already unavoidable, it cannot be helped. Then we shall collaborate with the Empire, and from there, sow discord between Ainz Ooal Gown and the Empire. That will be the best way to protect the Kingdom’s future.”

The Kingdom had no other choice. While the other countries were in turmoil, the Kingdom would recover its strength. And if one of the two became an enemy, the other would become an ally. If possible, they would like to ally with the Empire.

While this was based on the premise that they would have friendly relations after the war, this was not strange.

Wars were a method of negotiation between countries. It was like how the weaker person would listen to the stronger one after a fight.

Of course, that might not be the case in a world with only humans. Differences in race, religion or language might cause them to war till extinction.

However, this world did not have only humans. They had the existences known as monsters and countries made by demihumans. There were even undead that hated the living and several beings that towered over humans.

In such a world, it would be foolish to destroy the races that had the most

similar sense of values to oneself.

If one thought of race as a class, it would be best to coexist. However even the same race would find differences and war would break out even between those with the same values.

That was why they wanted to make an alliance with the Empire.

To those who talked with Renner, Ainz Ooal Gown was someone stronger than Landfall and could destroy a country by himself. There was no way that such a person was human. No, he might be human, but someone who exceeded humanity was no longer human.

If they were to form an alliance, it would be best to form one with a race with the same values. Forming an alliance with another species would be last resort.

When everyone forced themselves to accept this, Marquis Raeven recalled something.

“And another thing. I wanted to talk about someone related to Ainz Ooal Gown, someone known as BloodStained.”

“Ooh. I wanted to talk about this to His Majesty as well.”

“What is he?”

“Yes. She is [BloodStained] Enri, a mercenary troop leader in Carne Village.”

“Carne Village?”

Gazef recalled the time when he had met Ainz in that village for the first time. It was a village that was attacked, and there did not seem to be anyone who would be called BloodStained.

“Yes. BloodStained Enri is a person who commands monsters such as goblins and ogres.”

Hearing about her relation to demihumans, Gazef immediately understood that there was some connection between BloodStained Enri and Ainz.

“I see. This Enri and Ainz Ooal Gown are related.”

“That is the question. Some nobles have received information that

BloodStained Enri is related to Ainz Ooal Gown. And some of them have said to capture her.”

“That is dangerous. We do not want to anger him any further.... Shall I make up a reason?”

“No. Send out the order to capture.”

The gazes of three people fell on Marquis Raeven.

Should they anger Ainz Ooal Gown any further, it would be questionable if they could have friendly relations after the war. If the Empire does not agree to an anti-Ainz coalition, they would make an alliance with Ainz to usurp the Empire.

Even though they wanted to form an alliance with him, angering Ainz any further would be extremely dangerous.

“On top of releasing information that Momon was the one who leaked it.”

“I see. If we do not give the order, the Noble Faction will be annoyed. It would be troublesome if enmity was left with the (Frontier Marquis). So we release that information as a form of apology.”

“Yes. Exactly. If possible, we should tell Marquis Boullope this so that they send out an idiot of the Noble Faction.”

Chapter 96: Massacre | Part 2

There was an encampment right in the middle of the plains.

Making a simple fence with felled trees, the tents formed a circle within. And built with other trees were three unstable looking watchtowers leaning lazily within the camp.

The well made tents were set up in the centre, and the dilapidated ones were hung on the outside. However, the number of tents seemed large enough to contain 1000 men, and the encampment was quite large.

The moon was climbing up into the sky, and many men were tired from the long march and fell into deep sleep.

Inside such a quiet encampment, one person's voice could be heard in the centre area.

There, a large fire was burning.

The crimson fire stretched to the sky, and countless sparks fell away into the darkness like stars falling to the ground. The surrounding darkness could not move close to its light.

As the fire burned, there were men waiting for the next watch.

It was not a few men, but a hundred of them. Considering the scale of the camp, this was a small number but their presence was strongly felt amongst the looming darkness. Those men talked amongst themselves as they waited for time to pass. Even if whispering, combined, they made quite the ruckus.

The sound of the camp was created by the conversation of the night watch.

Far on the outskirts the encampment where even that sound could just barely be carried by the wind. In the area between the fence and tents, three soldiers were patrolling.

The three walked with similar lanterns attached to their waist and spears in hand. Their patrol was without caution, and was extremely lackadaisical. However, that, in a way, could not be helped.

On top of this being open grasslands, and it being under the bright moonlight, there was no way that any large number of people could approach. Since there were no shadows of people or beasts, there was no reason to be on guard.

And if it were only the three of them on patrol, they might be more cautious. But they were not the only ones. If they looked around, they could immediately see the lantern light of the other groups.

Basically their night patrol was to patrol the outer rim with a team of three. It was a simple job. They were not even nervous.

They were patrolling along the fence, but they would occasionally stare at their lanterns like they were looking at a troublemaker.

The light from the moon was stronger, and the lantern light was instead creating more shadows. They would like to turn it off and walk, but should they do that, it would signal to the men in the watchtowers that there was an unusual situation. Considering that, they could not turn it off.

One of the soldiers held his spear with his knees as he adjusted his clothes, he then looked up at the starry sky.

“...Isn’t it a bit cold?”

His breath did not turn white, but he felt the night steal away his warmth. The man next to him laughed.

“This is quite warm for me though.”

In the place that the two were born, this would still be warm. It was a bit envious. The other man smiled at them and spoke.

“Our clothes are bad. It would be nice if we had something thicker.”

“Yeah. Thicker ones would be nice.”

As simple farmers, there was no way they could have armour if they were not distributed it. The best they could do for protection was thick clothing. Of course, it was questionable if there would be an effect when facing weapons, but it was better than nothing.

“I don’t have thick clothing....”

At that downhearted voice, a question was asked.

“What do you do in winter. If you go out in midwinter wearing that, you’re gonna die you know?”

Yes. Their village was located in the far north of the Kingdom.

Winter there would cut into one’s skin. The man who said that it was cold would probably freeze to death.

“You, you had one earlier right? The patchwork one.”

“...I gave that to my brother. In preparation for the harvest.”

All of them fell silent and faced downwards. They could not laugh at that. It was something they could not do as farmers. They were in the same situation.

Their voices quietened, and they talked about sensitive subjects.

“...It’s slowly getting harder.”

“...Ah. The harvest is getting fewer and fewer. I wonder if everyone will end the harvest fine.”

“That would be nice. But it’s difficult. Having rotten fruits be the first thing you see after returning is the worst. I wanted to avoid that this time.”

“Well, we can do nothing except say that we are dead and hide several people. If even a few men can remaining, the harvest will be much better.”

“Yeah, nothing but that.... That is dangerous though....”

“Yeah it’s dangerous. There’s a fine. I heard such a thing happened at the village over.”

“But, our current life is dangerous too. Even if we survive the war, we will starve in the village.... Do you want to die like that?”

“Really sorry. If this continues, I can’t feed my family....”

“...I don’t want this. I don’t want war, really.”

“...War can’t be helped. The problem is the lack of intelligence of those pieces of shit.”

“They are only thinking of squeezing us farmers and telling us to spit out

taxes. Those great nobles.”

As he spat on the ground, the man spoke in a hushed but forceful voice. It was smothered in hatred.

This was natural of the oppressed.

While they were unhappy that they were gathered here was war, it was for the sake of protecting their country and to quell the fires of war before it reached their village and so they could bear with it. But then tax reductions and rewards would be nice. Without those, and taking the normal amount of tax, it was natural for them to wonder why they suffered.

The three sighed in unison.

Why did they have such a life?

“Well, but, our luck might be good?”

“Why?”

“We are not heading to the warzone.”

“We just need to capture a woman called Enri right? But why do we need this many people? It’s just one woman right?”

“It’s because they are the troops of nobles and so all of them have come right? Most aren’t from any nearby villages.”

“Ah yeah. I felt a few familiar faces.”

“And so our luck is—”

—A sudden wind blew past. The tent flaps caught it and fluttered. The torches raised cries of anger at gust of wind that almost extinguished them.

“....What a strong wind.”

Unconsciously, they looked in the direction the wind came from. Of course, wind had to form or shape. It was on reflex. Laughing at himself, the man adjusted his blown hair and spoke to his friend.

However, there was no response.

Why were they looking seriously at the other side of the fence?

On the other side of the fence was grasslands. They had looked as they walked, but there was nothing there. If there was, they would not be chatting. Then what?

As the question welled up, he looked at the end of his friends gazes. And he froze.

She probably knew that she was noticed. She raised and offered a greeting. "Cheeze."

A woman's voice.

When did she appear in the middle of the grassland?

One village girl. She was standing not far from the wooden barricade.

Beneath the moonlight, her figure was clear.

She was certainly cute, but not a beauty. Her face would be amongst the best in a village. Her clothes were nothing special. Taken as a whole, she was a simple village girl.

If not for the place she were.

"Oi oi...."

To the farmers conscripted as soldiers, this was an impossible scene. Why would a village girl be this far from a village?

It was impossible for a village girl to be standing alone in a place where adventurers patrolled and where encounters with beasts and monsters were common.

If she were armed or had a hundred men with them, they would be worried. But she had no weapons or armour. Only simple hemp clothes, and not even a knife.

A monster?

They had such a thought. Was this not a monster in a village girl's clothing. And their question disappeared.

"Hellos. I'm BloodStained Enris."

A strange girl raised her hand in a wave. The words that girl—Enri said, sunk in.

The name Enri, wasn't that the name of the person they— No the nobles said to capture? Why was such a person here?

Their question changed into a sense of dread. And Enri's next words confirmed it.

"Well. Since you wanted to capture me, I came here firsts. And I don't want to be captured, so I'll smash you all to pieces."

She made a bright smile.

Due to the contrast of the bright moonlight and dark night, that smile was extremely creepy.

However, she was alone. They had one thousand men. They could win. As if making fun of those thoughts, Enri spoke.

"By the way—"

Where did they come from? Behind Enri, several hideous goblins appeared.

There were thirty of them. They wore bright red caps and iron shoes. In their hands were axes. Bathed in the moonlight, they shined a light blue.

"—I'm not alones. These are the Red Caps I asked Ainz-sama to summons."

"Enemy attack!! It's BloodStained Enri!!"

His friend yelled. So did the man.

"Over here!! BloodStained Enri and some monsteeeeeers!!"

"Now, let's start with a bangs. <Blow Up Flame>."

With the sound of hitting a water balloon, the encampment brightened in an instant.

One of the watchtowers burst into flames like a giant torch. Several men fell from the top as burnt corpses.

"Over hereeeeeeee!!"

As the men yelled in fear, they ran away from Enri.

On top of their desire for war being thin, being shown such a scene made them lose their remaining morale. To them, magic casters were people that wielded unfathomable power and were existences that weapons held no effect against.

How was their luck good?

Swearing at themselves, the men ran as they repeatedly cried out. All the while thinking, as long as someone came, he would be used as a shield to protect themselves.

“BloodStained Enri used magiiiic!!”

“Over hereeeeeeee!”

As she looked at the men with a smile, but also a cold glint in her eyes, she rubbed her face a few times. Confirming that her mask was not off, she apathetically ordered the Red Caps.

“Go. Kill most of them. But leave the bodies as intact as possible. Ainz-sama wants to recover them for experiments.”

“Understood.”

Once the Red Caps responded in unison, they slowly walked towards the encampment.

“...Most of them you know? We have to let some of them live so that they never attack BloodStained Enri again you knows?”

The Red Caps nodded and dashed out. Their voices were filled with bloodlust.

“...Hmm, will they really not kill everyone?”

Hearing the constant stream of screams and wails, she was worried. However, that ended a mere seven minutes later.

By that time, the encampment was soaked in blood, and ten shadows managed to limp out.

Over one thousand humans, were killed by a mere thirty monsters.

In just seven minutes.

Killing humans that were not all charging at them, but also the ones running away and trying to hide, it was like a joke. One that showed the sheer difference in ability.

“This is suitable for BloodStained Enris.”

As she looked at the Red Caps in front of her, she whispered to herself.

The caps on their head reeked of blood. She narrowed her eyes in satisfaction.

“Um nows, you will keep an eye on this place. It would be a waste if they were carried off by wild animals. I’ll head back and get some people to collect this.”

Seeing that the Red Caps bowed in response, the woman dashed away. Her destination was of course, the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

The woman was running on two legs at first, but beneath the moonlight, her figure slowly changed to a beast with four.

After a few seconds, a wolf dashed through the plains.



Three days later— Early morning.

About the time when the morning sun shone upon the ground.

Even in the place called the Katze Plains, the sun gave them its mercy. The Katze Plains had the scent of freshly turned earth despite having little to no plants growing.

It was also known for being a dangerous place where undead monsters came out at sundown.

In such a flat place, there was a massive eye catching building.

Surrounding it was a large and sturdy wall made of thick logs. On the other side of the wall flew countless flags. Of these, the most numerous were the flags bearing the insignia of the Baharuth Empire.

There were countless of them set up. It was natural. This was the garrison that could hold even 60,000 knights.

The Empire had mobilized 60,000 knights for this operation. The garrison could house all of them, which itself spoke volumes about the base's size.

It was not an overstatement to call it a solid castrum.

Large amounts of earth was piled together to form a strong defense that was difficult to destroy. While similar hills did exist in the plains, they were not as effective as this one. This pile of earth was the result of magic.

Even the Baharuth Empire, which had adopted a national strategy of increasing the number of their magic casters, could not complete work like this in a short time.

This pile of earth was the result of several years of the Empire's war. The result of making encampments in the same place and using magic to make earthen defenses.

The Kingdom had no answer to the creation of this castrum, simply because they had no spare manpower or resources to attack the garrison. Without using magic, it would be a large project to return the earth to normal, and attention would have to be paid to the undead that appeared.

Basically, ignoring it would be financially easier.

Three Hippogriffs flew in the skies above that massive castrum. They began with a wide aerial orbit, followed by a slow descent. Any knight would know that this was the ceremonial descent of the Royal Air Guard, troops under the Emperor's direct command.

An emissary of the Empire was about to land.

The three Hippogriffs and the ones on their backs landed in a corner of the castrum.

There, ten knights were already waiting. It was a suitable number of people considering that they were welcoming a messenger or emissary of the Empire.

One fully armoured man jumped from the back of the Hippogriff and landed as the other knights felt shock run through them.

Once he removed his helmet and revealed his handsome features, everyone immediately knew who he was. No, they would know even if he kept it on. Just

by looking at his special armour.

The wind lightly tossed his blond hair, and his eyes were as blue as the sea. His mouth, which suggested an iron will, was tightly shut. He was the picture of the perfect knight.

There was no knight who did not know who this man was. More importantly, there was nobody who did not know about the full plate armor he wore. It was made of the rare metal adamantite, and further enchanted with powerful magic. There were only a few suits of armor like this in the Empire.

The wearer of this armor was one of the highest-ranking knights in the Empire.

He was one of the Empire's Four Knights, "Violent Gale" Nimble Ark Dale Anock.

"I seek your supreme commander. Do you know where he is?"

Nimble asked the arriving knight in a sharp yet refreshing tone.

"Yes. As he is busy with the preparations for today's war, I have representing General Kabein who is heading here now."

"I see. Then... has the Archduke arrived here as well?"

"Sir! No sir! The Archduke has not been sighted here."

"Understood."

Nimble sighed in relief. Then, another man arrived.

He was an old man whose hair was pure white, and he had a dignified air about him.

Although he was armored like all the other knights, he gave off a completely different impression from them. One could say that he looked like a noble, rather than a soldier.

One could feel that the man surrounded by several bodyguards had a certain authority to him.

"Welcome, Nimble."

The broad smile on his face made him seem even more like a noble than a

knight. His voice was calm, far too out of place on a grim place like the battlefield.

“General Kabein.”

Nimble responded in the approved ceremonial fashion.

Natel Inyem Sua Kabein.

He was a noble who had been overshadowed by others, but the previous Emperor had recognized him for his talents and placed him in command of the Second Legion. Although he was not possessed of martial valor as a person, he was famed for his ability to command, with rumors saying that he had never lost a battle. With him in command, the Second Legion enjoyed very high morale.

In fact, the knights accompanying Kabein were unable to hide their respect for him in every move they made.

“I am very grateful the the highest ranked commander of this expedition, the general, is willing to meet me.”

The Imperial Army was divided into eight legions, and every legion’s commanding officer was bestowed the title of “general”. The general of the First Legion was known as the Field Marshal, and he was the commander-in-chief of the entire Imperial Army.

If the First Legion — if the Field Marshal was not present, the general of the next legion would assume his position as the overall commanding officer. That was to say, General Kabein of the Second Legion was in command of the entire Imperial Army.

“No, no, Nimble. Dispense with the formalities. You’re here on his Imperial Majesty’s orders, right? You’re not under my command. You need only speak to me as an equal.”

Even as he said that, Nimble smiled bitterly.

The Imperial Army was loyal first to the Emperor, and then the Field Marshal. Kabein was beneath, third in line.

Then what position were the Empire’s strongest Four Knights?

Considering that they were under the direct command of the Emperor, they were equivalent to a general. However, in terms of age, experience and prestige, none of them were equal to Kabein. It was very difficult for him to treat Kabein as merely an equal unless an outsider were present.

Seeing Nimble's troubled face, Kabein smiled.

"Well, did I say the impossible? Well even I would be angry if one did not take a mission seriously. Now, let's end the small talk. Nimble, why are you here today?"

"Yes, it is not an important reason. My mission is to meet with the Archduke to hand him a letter, and burn his fighting prowess into my mind."

"Ooh, the Archduke. I have a question, when will he arrive? The Kingdom has begun to arrange their troops. The battle will begin soon."

The Archduke will begin the war.

That was the mission Jircniv had given him before his expedition.

There was one difficult problem.

Depending on the situation, he might have to obey the Archduke's orders.

"Well Nimble. Just who is the Archduke?"

Kabein asked the question he had on his mind.

It was not just Kabein, anyone who had some level of authority in the Empire wondered this as well.

Who was Archduke Ainz Ooal Gown?

The Empire was currently using various methods to cut away the power of the Nobles. The large portion of the finance of the current expedition was ordered to be paid by them. This was to tighten the noose around their necks.

And as if time was flowing backwards, the new and greatest position of Archduke was created for a man.

According to rumours, he was a powerful magic caster and had extreme firepower. And that even Fluder was so attracted by it that he had thrown away his position to become his disciple.

Of course, Kabein was not clear whether this was truth or lies. The only certain thing was that Fluder had left his position. And it seems that he had indeed become that man's disciple.

“.....”

Nimble made no response. The knights saw that and thought that it was a state secret. However, Kabein, who had an excellent eye, saw that the silence was caused by confusion and fear.

A person who could make the Four Knights quiver in fear.

Kabein could not imagine what sort of person that would be. No, it would be easier to understand if his observations and guesses were incorrect. That the Four Knights were afraid of that man.

As Kabein was thinking such thoughts, one knight ran over.

The emblem engraved on his breastplate showed that he was of a high position within the knights. And he was running over here alone.

“General!”

“What's going on? Is it an emergency?”

“Sir! A carriage flying the flag of the Archduke has arrived at the main gate. What should we do?”

The knight's eyes turned to Nimble. Kabein looked at him as well. On his part, Nimble nodded.

“Understood, let them through.”

“Sir! Then... do we need to inspect the carriage?”

Nobody could enter the castrum without being cleared by the sentries. The normal procedure was to use magic to check the personnel in question, to ensure they were not intruders disguised by illusions. This was the standard procedure in the country where magic casters had become a pillar of the country.

Thus it was natural for even the Archduke to be investigated, normally. Why did this knight purposely come over to ask?

Kabein glanced to Nimble again. His reply was what he expected.

“General. The Archduke is an important person. I believe you know this, but please, let him pass without trouble, please.”

“...There is no need to ask. Let the Archduke pass immediately.”

“Yes!”

The knight replied immediately. And Kabein felt relief emanate off of him. Did a carriage that could cause the knight to waver appear? Kabein could not stop his curiosity to see such a terrifying thing.

And his curiosity of the Archduke that demanded such treatment only grew.

An amazing carriage slowly moved towards Kabein as if being guided. And without looking away, Nimble spoke.

“Everyone, please present arms.”

What, Kabein’s expression said. According to the law, the Archduke may be of a higher position. And depending on the situation, he may have to listen to the Archduke’s orders.

And that was why if he was included in the army with his current position, the chain of command would be disrupted. That was why it was rare to present arms on the battlefield. Should they see their commander present arms, they would be under the impression that that person was higher in rank.

That was the tacit understanding in war.

And besides that, he was ordered to present arms, a right that was reserved only for the Emperor.

It was an unreasonable request, but looking at Nimble’s expression and attitude, he was not doing this because he wanted to. Basically the Archduke was a man who should be treated as such. And this was probably related to the right to command the army that only the Emperor could give.

“Gentlemen, please present your arms.”

Hearing Kabein’s order, the conflicted knights heaved sighs of relief. If it was an order, they just had to follow it. There was no need to think. Seeing Nimble

become relieved as well, Kabein removed his helm and prepared to present arms.

As everyone removed their helms, the carriage came slowly to a stop.

Kabein had only one word for the carriage in front of them, stupendous.

There was probably no other carriage like it in the Empire. It's intricate decorations stuck out in various places. It was a bit over the top, but that was the viewpoint of an ex-commoner, Kabein who had lived a plain life. If it were a noble, they would probably have different thoughts.

He could tell that the Archduke's treasury was on another level at a glance.

The coachman was indeed strange. Kabein nodded as he saw how the knight was worried.

The coachman was completely covered in a crimson hood. His face was hidden in shadow, and while he did not even glance towards them, he gave off a strange air.

His few movements made him feel more like a golem than human.

And under the gazes of everyone, the carriage door opened and one man came out. Seeing that man, Kabein and the knights were shocked.

It was an old man.

His previous white robe was changed to a black one and several sparkling crystals hung from his neck. The waves of magic emanating from his staff splashed against Kabein and the knights' skin. His two hands each had a ring with a large gem embedded into it and his gloves shined golden.

It was impossible to mistake this man. He was the magic caster that the Empire was proud of. And yet he abdicated his position as the Head Magic Caster to become the Archduke's disciple.

Fluder Paradyne.

The strongest magic caster that could leave his name in history.

It was true that Kabein, and some of the knights, heard about Fluder becoming the Archduke's disciple. However, they did not think that they would

meet here.

The magic caster of magic casters in the Empire that had been working for it since they were children. After he had thrown aside his job to become the Archduke's disciple, even in the battlefield, it still felt that he out ranked all of them.

Fluder ignored the shocked Kabein and spoke towards the carriage

"Master, we have arrived."

"Ah, yes, my disciple."

A reply came from inside as a man slowly appeared.

He wore similar clothes as Fluder.

He wore a black robe, clutched a staff that was well crafted yet not gaudy, and a silver necklace. However, his face was covered in a strange mask.

The most eye catching parts were his hands.

The left gauntlet was an evil-looking thing that resembled the hand of some demonic lifeform. It seemed to be made out of some sort of ominous black metal which was covered in twisted thorns. Its fingertips were sharpened into points, and the dirty radiance surrounding it seemed vaguely metallic, but resembled some sort of strange secretion. Just a single look filled all who saw it with a distasteful feeling, like their very souls were rejecting it.

In contrast, the right gauntlet looked like the pure, immaculate hand of a maiden. It was white in color and its slender proportions were covered in elaborate gold embroidery, which further emphasized its exquisite beauty. It drew the eye like bees to honey, and just like seeing a world-class beauty, the onlookers felt like they might lose their souls to it.

Kabein immediately understood. Not with his heart, but with his soul.

That this was the magic caster the Emperor was wary of.

That this man required the utmost respect.

The knights near him shivered as if being pierced by ice. The ones looking at him from afar made audible gulps.

The heat that accompanied the beginning of war, and its accompanying hustle and bustle all disappeared.

With just one person.

Just by one mask-wearing noble appearing, their skin felt like it would freeze over.

No matter how many wars, how many monsters or how many strong opponents one faced, they would all feel a fear like that of a child being scolded by a parent.

As everything fell silent, the sound of a ramp being placed blasted in the air. No, it was their instincts as animals that forced them to focus on every detail that made it such a loud sound.

“Is he human....”

The whispers echoed loudly in the silence.

However, all the humans present agreed with that voice that disappeared into the wind. There was no way that a human would strongly activate their primal instincts to this level.

Ainz slowly stepped onto the earth as he pushed aside his mantle. His black mantle fluttered, as if it were a pair of black wings.

“W, wel, welcome, Archduke.”

Nimble kneeled and bowed his head. His voice wavered, clearly in fear.

Yes. One of the Empire’s strongest, the Four Knights, was quivering in fear. However, no one thought it was strange. They were doing the same thing after all.

The Archduke.

The man sitting the position that did not exist until now.

A great magic caster whose power made even Fluder submit.

Everyone here understood this from the bottom of their hearts and souls.

“...Everyone, present arms.”

As if pulled by the downward facing Nimble's voice, everyone quickly kneeled. Every those who were not present, and those who happened to see this, all felt a sense of panic.

As silence fell, a muffled voice rang.

"...Thank you, raise your heads."

However, no one did so.

As silence fell again, the same voice could be heard.

"Raise your heads. Or rather, I don't mind if you stand."

Everyone raised their heads and stood up at his voice. Or rather they shot up.

"I am Archduke Ainz Ooal Gown. I shall be imposing on you from now on."

Rather than an asking tone, his voice was imposing. However, everyone thought that it was natural.

As they did so, Nimble spoke.

"...Welcome to the castrum, Archduke Gown."

Ainz gazed curiously at Nimble, and asked Fluder.

"...Fluder. He is?"

"Yes. One of the Empire's strongest, the Four Knights. [Fierce Gale], Nimble Ark Dale Anock."

"Strongest?"

"Of course, in the Empire."

A dry laugh echoed out.

"Fluder. We of Nazarick are also part of the Empire."

"Oh, my apologies. Can I evaluate him based on that.... Then. He is a simple knight."

It was pitiful. However, Nimble remained silent. He did not even feel vexed.

It was natural.

After seeing the power of Nazarick and the true face of the man beneath the mask, he could not say anything. However, this was not because the heart of Fierce Gale had broken.

Would a human become frustrated if they lost to an elephant in tug of war? Would anyone be angry if they lost to a dolphin in a swimming contest?

Defeat was natural.

Nimble was silent because he accepted this.

The race called humans, could not defeat Ainz Ooal Gown.”

The strongest human hero that Nimble knew, Fluder Paradyne, had thrown himself to the feet of Ainz. It was impossible for humans to defeat such an existence.

“...It would have been better if I told Jircniv. He could have put on something nicer—”

“—Master.”

“What is it Fluder?”

“That person’s armour is the best in the Empire, and there is nothing better.”

“...Does Jircniv not put enough money into magic?”

“—Archduke. Shall we end it there?”

The tension raised several levels.

Excluding Ainz and Fluder, everyone’s brows dampened with sweat.

I’m dead.

Kabein believed that.

He would die. But still, due to his loyalty for Jircniv, he had to make a correction.

“I understand your position, but do you not think that these words are suitable for comrades who will soon be fighting together? And His Excellency does provide enough funds. If you still think so, do you not believe that it is the fault of the one in charge until now?”

Kabein sent Fluder a gaze that transmitted his thoughts.

It was ironic. Isn't your disciple useless. If he said that much, the Archduke's anger was guaranteed. However, as long as he did something, the Archduke would become the weapon of the Emperor.

That loyalty quashed Kabein's fear.

"...Fight together?"

At Ainz's troubled words, Kabein frowned slightly.

Why was that the point he was complaining about? Why did he not say anything about Kabein's sarcasm?

"Why, do I have to fight together with you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Firstly, do you know that I have permission to start off the war?"

"...I have heard that from the Emperor?"

"Then there is no need to fight together."

They did not understand each other's words.

When the two were filled with questions, Fluder spoke out.

"My master is saying this. He shall end this war with his own troops, the Empire's are not needed."

Silence fell.

Such audacious words.

The Kingdom was sending out two hundred thousand troops. How many troops would one need to face that many?

Ignoring the shocked Kabein, Nimble politely took out a letter from his breast pocket. The seal on top of the wax was that of the Emperor.

"Archduke. I have a letter from the Emperor."

Hearing that, Ainz fell to one knee.

It was an extremely natural act, and was a sight to behold.

The one shocked by the show of loyalty was Nimble. He honestly did not believe that he would see such a sight.

It was natural. Could such a powerful existence, with such powerful subordinates, truly submit himself to the Emperor? Nimble could only imagine him casually taking the letter from his hands with a tinge of disdain.

They could not believe that such a high ranking person would make such a loyal gesture so naturally.

He had heard from Baziwood that Ainz was an extremely wise person. It appeared that his etiquette was perfect as well.

Ainz asked the shaken Nimble.

“Will you not read it out?”

Nimble realised that he was stuck in his own thoughts.”

“Apologies. This is a personal letter from the Emperor to the Archduke, and so I have no authority to read it.”

“I would have liked you to say that earlier.”

“M, my apologies!”

After Ainz had muttered his dissatisfaction, Nimble apologised.

This was indeed Nimble’s fault. If one heard that the Emperor had a letter for them on the battlefield, it would not be strange for it to be taken as an important order. Then apart from extreme situations, it was expected to show one’s loyalty for the Emperor.

Ainz’s expression of loyalty strengthened Kabein and the knights’ good impression of him. While their fear was strong, and he felt arrogant, he could show respect at appropriate times. The image of him being a splendid person was burnt into their minds.

It was the same thing as a person who normally did bad things suddenly acting nice which caused others to think that he was actually a nice person.

Ainz stood up, took the letter from Nimble and casually pocketed it without opening it. This caused Nimble to raise a cry of surprise.

“If I don’t read it now?”

Ainz gazed at Nimble.

“W, what?”

“...Hmm, well, this. It’s a letter from a friend, and so I shall read it slowly when I have time.”

“I see. That makes sense.”

Kabein added in from the side.

It was understandable as he had not come to war as a friend, but as the Archduke.

“It seems you are quite the reasonable person. Fluder? It seems I said too much earlier. I have just become a noble of the Empire. I have yet to learn about the details of the magic system within the Empire.”

“N, no. I sincerely apologise for my rude words earlier.”

“Hmm? Did you say anything rude?”

“....!”

Such a generous person.

Kabein felt pure admiration. It meant that he had not forgotten his disciple’s previous position and apologised for going overboard.

“Fluder, did he say something rude earlier?”

Fluder answered with a smile. He understood his master’s intention and thus responded according to his will.

“No. Nothing at all.”

“—My gratitude, Archduke.”

In response, Ainz waved his hand. It was nothing. That was what he was saying.

“Hm? Hmm, well, now if you want to do that, they let’s do it. Then as I want to begin preparations for war, will you mind if I call my troops over?”

“Of course, Archduke.” Kabein’s voice was filled with visible approval.

“However, when will they be able to arrive? If more time is needed, I have to talk with the other generals after all.”

Ainz tilted his head.

“...Before that, how will the war proceed?”

“It is a prearranged war with the Kingdom, and thus we have taken formation like that of a battle. This time, the generals will meet on the battlefield and make the final proclamations. Afterwards, the battle will start.”

“I see.... So the final proclamations will have nothing to do with me right?”

“Yes, but if you wish for it, there will be no problems if you announce it.”

“...No, that’s fine. I have one role. Release the first attack on the Kingdom. Now, that is enough of my questions. In response to yours, allow me to answer, General. They will arrive now.”

“What do you mean, Archduke?”

Ignoring the questioning gazes, Ainz chanted magic. It was <Message>.

“—Shalltear. Open <Gate> and call the troops over.” Ainz’s eyes within the mask gazed at Kabein. “Now, General. Apologies for the suddenness, but could you let my troops enter?”

Kabein made a dubious face as he felt something connect and heard a voice. This was an emergency <Message> from the magic caster located at the watchtower.

“General Kabein! Troops have been seen at the rear!”

Hearing that, Kabein looked at Ainz. He knew the answer, but he had to confirm.

“Whose troops?”

“The flag is.... The Archduke’s! It was suddenly stuck out from a dark hole!”

A dark hole? A question formed in his head. However, since the Archduke’s troops were here, they could not be kept waiting outside. And the person in question had asked for permission to call for his troops, and keeping them waiting could be taken as a show of contempt.

“I see.... Then open the gates and invite them.” Kabein’s gaze flickered to the gate. “How many are there?”

“Ab, about three hundred.”

Few. Kabein thought that. The Empire had sixty thousand, the Kingdom, two hundred thousand. This was too few.

Kabein glanced at Ainz out of the corner of his eye.

There was probably a reason why he had called for only three hundred men.

As the door was slowly opened, that thought flashed through Kabein’s mind.

The door opened—

—And everything fell silent.

The excitement of war was blown out of water. A silent heavy atmosphere ruled the land. As if silence had exploded.

The only things that could be heard was the voice of something unknown and deafening silence.

The eyes of the knights that peeked out through the slits were all staring at one thing.

That was the new noble that was often in rumours.

The troops of Ainz Ooal Gown. Their numbers were small. About three hundred. However, no one was foolish enough to laugh at them.

The troops were a strange sight.

Probably due to the contrast between black and white.

The white was a three metre long collection of human bones. Countless bones were interconnected to form the shape of a quadruped with a long neck, a dragon. And it slowly moved forward.

The black was a two metre tall knight riding on top. Their left hands held a giant tower shield that hid three quarters of their body, and their right hands held a flamberge. The black armour that covered their giant bodies were engraved in crimson patterns that resembled blood vessels.

They moved in unison without reigns, as if the knight and the dragon beneath were of one mind.

The knights knew the name of the undead that was shaped like a dragon.

This was as the knights were tasked with monster extermination within their borders.

It was important to tell the difference between an enemy that could be defeated and one that could not be, and thus knowledge of monsters was highly prized. The knights had attended lectures. Amongst the knowledge that was hammered into them, one of them was the name of this undead.

It cannot be defeated so do not engage. If this monster is seen, immediately hire the best adventurers.

That was the evaluation of the monster known as the Skeletal Dragon.

Then what were the fearful creatures riding them?

If there was one of them, the surroundings would not be this silent.

The number of the troops of the dead numbered— three hundred.

While their numbers were small, each could match a thousand men.

“This is my army, general.”

Seeing the speechless figures of the knights and Kabein, Ainz enthusiastically introduced them.

Chapter 97: Massacre | Part 3

The two armies formed their battle lines along the gentle slopes of the Kazte plains, staring each other down.

The Kingdom had 200,000 and the Empire had 60,000.

There was a huge difference between their troops. The Kingdom had too many, and the Empire had too few. Yet neither showed any sign of apprehension.

The Kingdom did indeed have an overwhelming number of troops. However in terms of individual strength, the Empire had the advantage.

The soldiers conscripted had only been to this battlefield and had not learnt how to use weapons. Most had no armour and went only with weapon in hand. There were few that were not scared of the battlefield.

In contrast, the knights were equipped in full armour and were forged by training after training and battlefield after battlefield. In a war, most had come here prepared.

If there was such a stark difference in physical abilities and morale, overwhelming troop numbers were not enough to secure an advantage.

Even so, it was a simple fact that there was a vast disparity in the military power of both sides. Although it would not be a problem if they could fight forever without fatigue, they were only human. Once they got tired, even the difference in their individual abilities would eventually be caught up to.

And the Empire did not wish to lose any knights. One could understand this just by considering the amount of time needed to train a knight. A conscript and a knight. The loss was of a different scale.

Moving this many soldiers during the harvest period would result in the national power being lowered. The cost of having such a large war and to learn of the nobles that he should be wary of, Jircniv had acted . And so even if the Empire retreated, they would still maintain an advantage.

That was why most of the wars have ended with them glaring at each other.

This would be the same. Or some half of the Kingdom's nobles naively believed.

Usually after some light skirmishes, the Empire would charge once and then retreat.

However, after the knights had deployed from the castrum, they had not moved.

"They're not moving."

Marquis Raeven stood beside Gazef, speaking quietly as he surveyed the Empire's formation.

This place was the safest place in the formation since it was surrounded by Gazef's elite warriors and Marquis Raeven's personal soldiers.

That was why Marquis Raeven could calmly look at the Empire's knights.

While he had said that they were not moving, Gazef understood that he meant that they had yet to begin the attack.

The Empire showed no intentions of moving.

As Marquis Raeven said, the Empire did not seem to move after being deployed from the castrum. Despite the fact that the final negotiations were over and it was time to settle things with swords.

That was why the Kingdom could not do anything.

It would be dangerous if the Kingdom were to charge first. And the Empire usually attacked with their knights and the Kingdom would attack with their spear formations. There were nobles who had attacked the Empire first, but they were defeated instantly and brought great losses to the Kingdom.

Thus, the Kingdom would construct a spear wall and focus on defense. And sometimes it would break, and the men would be trampled.

"It is normal for the Empire's heavy cavalry to take some time. It seems that there's movement in the castrum so just a bit longer."

Gazef looked far away, and got a strange feeling from the movement within the Empire's formation.

There was quite the distance, but to an excellent warrior like Gazef, he could feel the slight changes in the air.

“While it is the usual pattern, I am not good with this tense atmosphere. It feels better to say things that I don’t like out loud, it’s quite relieving.”

“True. The left wing is moving strangely.”

“Ah, Marquis Boullope.”

The two wings of the Kingdom had the soldiers of the Noble Faction, and the centre was of the Royal Faction. The wings had fifty thousand each and the centre had one hundred thousand.

“Rather than panicking, it seems he is angry. The thousand troops sent to capture Enri have yet to return. I believe Marquis Boullope is very unhappy.”

Gazef recalled the face of the noble he had seen before the war. Of course, it was not intentional.

“Well, he might think that they’ll simply return late, but they are probably all dead.”

“...Even if he did lose them, isn’t a thousand a large number?”

“The loss of a thousand is not much.”

While those of the Noble Faction might write off a thousand deaths, Gazef could not stomach the loss of a thousand commoners and made a worried expression.

Gazef was originally a commoner. Yet he had to see men like him die. Marquis Raeven noticed this and apologised.

“Apologies. I said too much.”

“No. I understand Marquis Raeven’s perspective. Pay me no heed.”

Marquis Raeven was looking at things at a level higher than Gazef. While Gazef believed that it was a waste to lose a thousand lives, Marquis Raeven was looking at the Kingdom’s future where a thousand lives were a small price to pay. They could not be said to be right or wrong.

“Oh. It seems they’re making their move.”

The Imperial army slowly parted in two, to make a path. A group of soldiers slowly proceeded down it. They beared a strange flag that neither Gazef nor Marquis Raeven had ever seen before.

However, the two were fixated.

And Gazef was at a loss for words. He recalled a certain battle.

Those were Death Knights. The undead soldier that served Ainz Ooal Gown. An existence that Gazef would have to go all out on if he were to fight one.

There was—

“—This many? Impossible.”

Gazef felt sweat run down his forehead.

There were 300 Death Knights. The Kingdom had 200,000.

300 vs 200,000. It was a winnable battle. However, that was if they were facing humans that could tire. They could be defeated once drained, and so the violence of numbers was useful.

However, when facing creatures that could not tire like the undead, that threat would not decrease over time.

Basically the chance of victory was low even with two hundred thousand. No, even if Gazef could not tire, with those three hundred, they could kill all those present.

“This is bad....”

Seeing Gazef’s frowning face, Marquis Raeven spoke in a grim voice.

“Those are Skeletal Dragons. A terrifying undead. And looking at Gazef-dono’s reaction, the ones riding them seem to be quite the strong enemy.”

“Yes. They are the warriors of Ainz Ooal Gown who I fought to a standstill.”

“...Those.”

Marquis Raeven was shocked, but he soon nodded.

The undead troops slowly spread out and stood in front of the Imperial troops. Since there were three hundred creatures in front of sixty thousand

men, there was a large gap in between them and did not seem threatening. However, Marquis Raeven saw Gazef's reaction and felt that no level of caution was enough.

"Understood. If we fight them head on, we will face tremendous casualties. For the plan....Let's send out the soldiers of the Noble Faction to grind them down. I shall ask the King for permission for the Noble Faction to face the Archduke."

Marquis Raeven and Gazef, who had been looking at the Empire's troops, both made a blank face.

Suddenly, a black wall appeared in front of the Archduke's troops. It was not large. About three metres high and two metres wide. Two people then appeared from it.

A man wearing a mask, and the ex-Head Magician of the Empire, Fluder.

"That is Ainz Ooal Gown."

"Him."

Hearing Gazef's unconscious mummur, Marquis Raeven took a good look at Ainz.

The person who had become a major topic in the Kingdom who might control a magic power that was out of this world.

Ainz waved his arm. In response, a magic circle sprang into existence, roughly ten meters in radius and shaped like a dome. It was centered on him. Seeing how Fluder was within its boundaries, it did not seem harmful, yet it was a dreamlike scene.

The magic circle glowed bluish-white, and translucent symbols appeared across its length and breadth. The sigils changed with kaleidoscopic speed, shifting between runes and letters that nobody had ever seen before.

The Kingdom's troops gasped out in surprise. There was no fear or tension in their voices, like they were watching a beautiful show.

However, to those two, they felt a strong unease from that giant magic formation.

“I’m returning to my unit. Gazef-dono, please protect His Majesty.”

“Got it. I shall protect His Majesty.”

As Gazef said that, he turned back towards the centre formation, where countless flags were being hung.

“Then, let’s begin.”

The two men hurriedly flew into action. However it was all too late.



Nobody’s there.

After Ainz deployed his magic circle, that was what he had thought.

There are no players in the Kingdom.

Yggdrasil’s super-tier magic was incredibly powerful. Thus, it had a penalty until it was casted. It was a system where it was stronger the longer it was casted for. And if one’s allies used more of them, there was an additional time penalty. This was implemented by the developers to prevent super-tier magic from ending guild wars.

Basically, it also meant that the longer it was held, the stronger it got.

Because of that, during a large-scale battle, bringing down a person who could cast super-tier spells first was a basic tactic. One could hamper one’s opponents in many ways. Teleportation assaults, for instance. Bombardment from atop a magic carpet. Pinpoint shooting from extreme range. There were countless methods to accomplish that aim.

However, no attacks like these came toward Ainz. In turn, that proved that there were no Yggdrasil players present.

Under his mask, Ainz smiled, a fact which went unseen by anyone. Of course, his skeletal face could not form a smile.

“So I don’t need to serve as bait, then?”

Whispering that, Ainz opened his gloved hand. In it was a tiny hourglass.

“Cash Item”

Ainz spoke in the tone of a certain popular blue cat robot. And without hesitation, he crushed it. And Ainz's, no, Suzuki Satoru's two lunches worth of cash flew away.

If he used a cash item, he could immediately cast the super-tier spell. The reason why he had not done this was because he was serving as bait to verify the existence of any possible players from Yggdrasil. However, if there were none, then there was no need to wait out the long casting time for the spell.

The particles of sand leaking from the shattered hourglass moved against the wind and flowed into the magic circle surrounding Ainz.

And then— the super-tier spell activated instantly.

"<Tribute to the Black Bounty (Ia Shub-Niggurath)>!"

A black wind blew, racing past the Kingdom's army.

No, there was no physical wind blowing. Neither the scattered weeds growing on the plains or the hairs on the heads of the Kingdom's soldiers had been touched.

There were fifty thousand men in the left wing of the Kingdom's army.

Every single one of them was slain in an instant.



What on earth happened?

Nobody could answer immediately. Every living creature that comprised the left wing of the Kingdom's army had suddenly collapsed to the ground. The ones who realized the answer first were the Imperial troops.

It took a while for the human mind to properly parse the events that had just transpired before their eyes. So after a short delay, shouts of panic rose into the air, becoming a great wave that engulfed the entire Imperial Army.

Certainly, they knew Ainz Ooal Gown was going to cast a spell after he had deployed his magic circle. However, who could have possibly anticipated such a horrifying spell?

It was a terrifying magic that stole the lives of fifty thousand people in an

instant.

However, there was one person who let out a cry of joy.

“Magnificent....”

It was the man standing next to Ainz, Fluder.

In front of such a powerful spell, a cry of joy leaked out of him. He knew that Ainz was a powerful magic caster without equal. But tasting that power directly let Fluder feel something that could not be put into words.

Excitement sparked down his back.

Seeing him, Ainz happily told him something else.

“Why do you look so satisfied? My spell is not yet finished.”

When one makes an offering to the Black Goddess of the Bountiful Harvest, she will reciprocate with a gift of her offspring.

And just as ripened fruit would fall to the earth in the fullness of time—

Who was the first ones to notice it? No one knew. However, it was probably the Empire’s knights.

It was expected that the knights, watching from afar, from a safe distance, would see it first. Because they felt safe, they dared to peer outside from the narrow slits in their helmets.

After the black mass stole the lives of the Kingdom’s soldiers— And after it disappeared in the sky.

In the sky— was a repulsive black sphere which seemed to pollute the world with its very presence.

Seeing their neighbour looking up, they would too. And thus, all of the Empire’s knights silently gazed at the floating sphere.

Their eyes could not leave it. That sphere that seemed to be rejected by the world.

It was not only the Empire that could not look away. Many of the Kingdom’s soldiers were silently staring at the expanding floating sphere.

Be it fighting or fleeing, no human could engage in any meaningful thought or activity. All they could do was stare dumbly.

And eventually— the ripened fruit fell.

The falling sphere broke apart when it touched the earth.

It burst like a water balloon striking the ground, or perhaps like an overripe fruit doing the same.

It was full of something that spread out from the point of impact. It was something like coal tar. It absorbed the light, like a wave of infinitely-expanding black stickiness, and it swallowed the corpses of the dead Kingdom soldiers.

Informed by a strange instinct, nobody thought it would end there. They had a premonition, that this was only the beginning.

Suddenly, a vast tree grew from the black tar that covered the earth.

No, that was nothing as pleasant as a tree.

At first, there was only one of them, but then it multiplied. Two, three, five, ten... these objects waved in the absence of the wind. What was grew there... were tentacles.

[MEEEEEEHHHH!!]

Suddenly, they heard the adorable bleating of a goat. It was not just one goat. It was as though a herd of goats had appeared out of nowhere.

As though drawn by the sound, the coal tar writhed up, and it seemed to vomit forth something.

It was something that was far too strange, too unnatural.

It was five meters in height. If one added the length of the tentacles, that figure became unclear.

At a glance, it resembled some sort of turnip. In place of leaves, it had numberless black tentacles, and its thick root portion was a slab of meat covered in frightening lumps. Below that were five legs, like those of a goat's, tipped with black hooves.

Fissures appeared on the root-like portion of its anatomy, a thick slab of

meat covered in lumps, as it peeled and split open in multiple places at once. And then—

[MEEEEEEHHHH!!]

The adorable bleating of goats rang forth from those fissures. They were gaping maws that oozed sticky drool.

There were five of them.

They displayed their hideous bodies to everyone on the Katze Plains.

The Dark Young of the Black Goat.

These monsters appeared in proportion to the number of deaths caused by the super-tier spell <Sacrifice to the Black Bounty (Ia Shub Niggurath)>. Although they did not possess any powerful special abilities, they were outstandingly resilient.

Moreover, they were all over level 90.

The world was silent.

There was no other sound besides the bleating of sheep. However, unable to believe the scene before them, and unable to confirm it, no one spoke. Despite there being two hundred and sixty thousand men present, no one spoke a word.

Ainz gleefully smiled.

“Look, Fluder. It’s a new record. Even I have never summoned five before. It seems I have to be grateful that so many people have assembled here.”

The Dark Young were summoned based on the total levels of the dead killed by <Sacrifice to the Black Bounty (Ia Shub Niggurath)>. Under normal circumstances, being able to call forth one of the Dark Young was not bad. Being able to bring out two was a rarity.

And now, there were five.

Just like a player who was celebrating over beating his own high score, Ainz was overjoyed by the fact that he had set this new record. In Ainz’s mind, they were not humans, but points to be collected.

“Congratulations, Master.”

Bowing towards the ecstatic Ainz, Fluder’s respect for that powerful magic deepened another level.

He thought, to this person, that was still just child’s play. And in fact, one of the world’s strongest spells was cast before him. A spell that he thought he could never reach. But, as long as he stuck to this man, hope rose within him.

“It truly is amazing, Master.”

The bright voice that came from the mysterious noble rode on the wind to reach the ears of the knights.

The clattering of metal could be heard from the Empire’s formation.

It was the sound of armor clattering against itself.

The bodies of those wearing them were shivering. No one could laugh. There was no one who did not get goosebumps by hearing the joyful cry of a magic caster who had released such a terrifying summoning spell.

Every knight present was thinking the same thing.

Please let Archduke Ainz Ooal Gown was a reasonable person. Please let him be our ally.

It looked more like a prayer to the gods.

As if praying to an evil god or a god of misfortune, they hoped that he would not turn on them.

As the soldiers pleaded sincerely behind his back, Ainz began the next phase. He felt that he had already done enough, but he was in high spirits, and felt that it might be better to kill a little more to be sure.

He felt that this was a chance to become a hero in the Empire by showing further overwhelming pressure.

“Now, let’s begin. You may begin trampling.”

As they received the command of their summoner Ainz, the Dark Young began to move slowly.

Their five goat legs moved in a bizarre gait as they segued into swift motion.

It was not so much graceful as energetic, and perhaps one might smile to see it.

As long as they did not come for you.

Their vast bodies moved lightly, and the five Dark Young broke into a run as they hurtled towards the Kingdom's army.



"Is this a dream?"

A soldier from the Royal Army muttered to himself, far from the inhuman monsters. Of course, he received no answer. Everyone's eyes were fixed on the scene unfolding before them, and they had lost the power of speech.

"Hey, this is a dream, right? I must be dreaming, right?"

"Ahh. This is a fucking nightmare."

The second time the question was asked, someone managed to answer. But their voices sounded like they wanted to run away from reality.

Impossible.

I don't want to believe this.

Thoughts like these spread through the infantry. Even as the lumbering shapes grew steadily larger— even as the inhuman beings approached them, they still did not want to accept that this was reality.

If they were simple monsters, perhaps they might have been able to gather up the courage to raise their weapons. However, the monsters which had appeared after an entire wing of the army had been slaughtered in an instant could not possibly be simple monsters. It was like watching an advancing hurricane, and nobody could muster up the courage to brave the storm.

One could call the figure of an anomalously large figure running on its stumpy legs to be cute. But that was only if one was in a safe place.

"Get your spears up!"

A voice rang out.

One of the nobles was shouting.

“Spears up! Get your spears up!! *Get your spears up if you want to live!!!*”

Acting on reflex, the soldiers raised and set their spears, forming a braced spear line.

The reason left in their heads recalled what the spears in their hands were for. However, they also realised that they could do nothing else.

Given the speed at which those bizarre creatures approached, escape would probably be impossible. Even if they ran with all their strength, they would still be squashed flat from behind.

They prayed that the monsters would not come for them, even as they braced for their charge.

And the shockwave hit them.

It was like a dumptruck smashing into a swarm of rats.

The soldiers of the Kingdom raised countless spears in trembling hands. But what use were they against the massive, solid bodies of the Dark Young? The spears snapped like toothpicks without so much as scratching the Dark Young.

Even the soldiers wielding their spears lost their lives in an instant. It was perfectly natural.

Without magic weapons, how were those monsters going to be hurt.

Within the ranks of the Kingdom’s troops, the giant bodies of the Dark Young rampaged.

They screamed and they screamed and they screamed.

Gobbets of meat flew through the air. They had not come from just one or two people, but tens, hundreds of victims. They were stamped flat by the enormous hooves, and thrown— no, flung away by the waving tentacles.

Be they patricians or plebeians, now they were all the same chunks of bloody flesh. Everyone was the same in the face of death.

Surely they must have been satisfied after crushing countless humans underfoot, but they showed no signs of stopping.

The Dark Young began to run.

They ran on. They did not stop while in the midst of the Kingdom’s forces, simply running on.

“Gyaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!”

“Abbaaaaaahhhhhh!!”

“Stoooooooooooooooooop!”

“Save meeeeeeeeeeee!”

“Noooooooooooooooooooo!”

“Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaahh!”

The screams rose up every time those gigantic hooves came down. It blended with the sound of humans pulping under the Dark Young’s mighty legs, and the sound as they playfully batted humans away with their tentacles. It continued.

Trampled.

What better word was there to describe this scene?

Several people desperately thrust their pikes forward. The Dark Young, whose bodies were massive and who had no intention to evade the attacks, were hit solidly by the points. However, the pikes could not pierce deeply enough to cause harm to their slab-like bodies.

In the time it took for them to realise that panicked attacks had no meaning, the Dark Young had trampled into the middle of the centre troops.

“Run away!! Run away!!”

They heard the shouts from the distance. In response, all the soldiers began to flee. It was exactly like a swarm of spiders scattering in all directions. But of course, the Dark Young were much faster than human beings.

*Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat—
Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat—
Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat—
Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat—*

Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat. Splat—

The sounds of humans being crushed to death and turned into chunks of meat went on and on.

“Retreat!! Retreat!!”

The way Raeven shouted these orders was closer to a wail.

Nothing could be done to such creatures. Humans could not touch them.

As they heard Raeven’s words, the surrounding soldiers threw down their arms and fled in a panic.

“Ainz Ooal Gown. So he’s this powerful of a magic caster.”

He regretted it. That he had not imagined something of this scale.

As Marquis Raeven looked at the rampaging monsters, he continued to shout at the surrounding soldiers.

“This isn’t a battlefield any more, it’s a killing floor! Just run!”

“My lord!” a knight said as he removed his helmet. “The King! What about the King?”

“You idiot! There’s no time for that! My lord! It’s coming right for us!”

The Dark Young figure was larger than before. It was steadily heading towards them. Rather than saying that it was aiming for Marquis Raeven, it was probably just running in a random direction. In truth, the other Dark Young were far away from where Raeven was.

“Where’s the King?!”

“He’s there!”

He saw the royal flag in the direction where the soldier was pointing, but a Dark Young was already bearing down on it.

Raeven hesitated. What could he do if he went to help? However, if King Ranpossa III was lost here, the entire country might come apart.

However—

“My lord! Please run! Humans cannot defeat such monsters! Hurry!”

Yes. That was the case. Even if the Kingdom's Strongest, Gazef wielded his sword, he could not defeat it.

"Matching two hundred thousand troops with just one man. Impossible! How does that even work! Isn't he stronger than Landfall!"

"My lord!"

It was closer to a scream than human speech. Hearing the soldier's warning, the Marquis replied with a shout.

"I got it! I'm running!"

The sound of hooves was close. He could not turn around due to fear. That was why Marquis Raeven smacked his horse.

In the confusion, a group of horses were running away. Most men had given up on controlling the horses, or rather the horses were escaping in sheer confusion and the men felt that it was better to leave everything to the horses.

The horse could bear this fear due to its training of a warhorse. If it were a regular horse, it would not be able to move from fear.

"That magic caster's a monster! How can someone like him be allowed to exist in the world?!"

Raeven cursed Ainz as his horse jerked up and down in its top-speed gallop.

"Dammit! We have to do something! I need to think of some way to protect our world — our future!"

While feeling the horse pulsating beneath him, Marquis Raeven dashed off while protected by soldiers. When he returned, he would converse with Renner and come up with plans to face that ridiculous magic caster. If this went on, all of humanity would be conquered.

But Marquis Raeven had one misconception.

Marquis Raeven looked at the Dark Young's rampage and believed that they were not sentient. However, he thought that having them rampage with their large bodies was the best way to fight. It was the best method to kill the most weaklings.

Marquis Raeven saw it coming his way and thought that it was a mere coincidence. But was that the case? Or could it tell from the soldiers final yells that he was the overall commander?

In reality, the Dark Young's intelligence was impossibly high compared to its appearance. It was about the same as a human.

[MEEEEEEHHHH!!]

The Dark Young cry out from close behind.

The sweat poured off Marquis Raeven's head like a waterfall. He was so afraid that he did not dare turn around, but he could sense the air behind him getting warmer and warmer.

And then, he heard it again—

[MEEEEEEHHHH!!]

Hmm. He believed that he was protected by the soldiers on horseback.

Then what happened to the sound of hoofbeats?

He heard one giant hoof. And as if erased, the other hoofbeats stopped.

His heart lurched in his chest.

He realized there was a massive shadow beneath his feet – his body carried by the speeding horse – and that a long and thick tentacle was reaching out for him.

“No...”

The horse ran like it had gone mad. It was faster than Raeven had ever ridden it. It might have been the fastest it had ever gone. Even so, the mighty shadow still stretched out across the earth.

“I don't want this!”

Marquis Raeven's eyes widened and forced his horse onwards without looking back.

He could not die yet. It did not matter what happened to the country. If it was to fall, then let it fall. If taking up arms against Ainz Ooal Gown meant death, then he was willing to abandon this country and flee.

He had been an idiot.

Truly, he had been an idiot.

He was a fool for trying to manage the Noble and Royal Factions by coming to this battlefield. Since he knew how powerful Ainz Ooal Gown was, he should have stayed in the Royal Capital no matter the cost.

He would not think of the Kingdom's future any more.

"I don't want this!"

He could not die yet.

He could not die while his son was still so young. And... he could not leave his beloved wife alone by dying.

"I don—"

Raeven imagined the form of his son before him.

My lovely boy.

A tiny little life had been born. It slowly grew up. It got sick. Back then, he had made a huge fuss because of that. The image of himself running around half-mad, bellowing orders, while his wife sat there in silence was deeply embarrassing.

His hands were soft and his cheeks were rosy. When he grew into a youth, he would be the talk of the Kingdom.

He believed his son's abilities would surpass his own. He could already see traces of that from time to time.

His wife said that it was the delusions of a parent but that was definitely not the case.

Raeven was deeply grateful to his wife, who had bore his beloved son. However, he rarely said so because it embarrassed him.

It was time for a second child.

If he had not come to this battlefield, he might have been able to hold their hands—

He lost consciousness in an instant.

The last thing he heard was the sound of meat being crushed, and Marquis Raeven's consciousness disappeared.

In the midst of the fleeing soldiers, Gazef slowly looked forward.

Gazef drew his sword in response to the charging Dark Young. There were no soldiers near Gazef.

"If I let it past me, the King's main camp is next."

As he felt the earth trembling under his feet, Gazef exhaled forcefully. He gripped the sword in his hands tightly, and raised it.

Seeing the giant bodies crushing humans in its wake, how did he feel?

If it were a runaway horse cart, he could easily get control of it. Even if a ferocious tiger pounced him, he could evade its first blow and strike off its head. Even he could not imagine what would happen in front of the Dark Young.

Of course, his chances of survival seemed very low indeed.

"Please take care of the King."

Despite knowing that it would not reach his subordinates, he still spoke.

He had not sent them away to hide, but to protect the King.

Compared to the monsters approaching, even if the soldiers put their lives on the line, all they could do was serve as meatshields that would crumble after one hit.

"Huuuuu!"

As Gazef breathed out, a dramatic change appeared in the flow of people around him. Until now they had gone in all directions, but now it seemed like they were moving to avoid Gazef. It looked as though they were creating a clear path between Gazef and the Dark Young.

The Dark Young continued splattering humans under its feet as it closed in.

Gazef wielded his sword and look at it. Where would be the best place to strike. He activated a martial art called Weak Point. But—

“—It has no weaknesses.”

Gazef did not know if that was because it truly had no weaknesses, or because it was so much more powerful than him that he could not read them. Still, he did not despair. He had expected that much, after all.

He activated another martial art.

The ability that could be called a sixth sense, Future Sight.

“Come, monster.”

The Dark Young seemed to have heard the challenge, and set a course straight for Gazef. The distance between the two shrank dramatically.

To be honest.

Gazef was afraid. If it was at all possible, he would have liked to flee with the surrounding soldiers. Since his senses were strengthened by Future Sight, he could tell several things. Judging by the way its hooves remained undamaged, it was likely that normal swords would not be able to deal any harm to it. From the deep prints it left in the ground where it stepped, its weight would instantly kill anyone it was applied to.

The more he learned about it, the more his fear of it grow.

Right now, Gazef was exposed to a terror far more intense than those of the soldiers fleeing willy-nilly around him. But he could not turn back. The Kingdom’s strongest warrior could not run.

—The Dark Young closed in.

It was close enough that the clods of dirt kicked up by its hooves could reach Gazef.

It ignored the soldiers around it, like they were nothing but crawling worms, and headed straight for Gazef.

“I should have come with everything equipped.”

He should have come in full armour. He should have ignored the worries of being looked at with strange eyes by the nobles.

Gazef regretted it, but it was too late. This was the result of being

overconfident in his sword. No, even if he had come in full armour, nothing would have changed.

The Dark Young closed in. With a force that shook the earth.

Gazef slipped past the fleeing soldiers and ran towards the Dark Young.

Rushing past the crowd, he stomped forward one foot at a time. Should he be attacked from the front, he could not avoid it as it was far too wide.

With a foot of almost fifty centimetres, the Dark Young charged forward. And with that—

“—Yeeart!”

Gazef swung his sword. At this speed, the enemy’s own velocity would become a weapon that would tear itself apart on the edge of his blade.

In the instant the hoof touched the sword, a massive impact travelled up the weapon and into Gazef’s arms. It made him feel as though his arms had been torn off.

His feet, planted firmly in the ground, left two trenches in the dirt as he was dragged backward.

“Gwaaargh!”

Somehow, he had kept his grip on his sword, but pain spread through his entire body. Be it his muscles or his tendons, every part of him hurt from the stress it had to bear.

Gazef panted heavily, and stared at the giant body that passed him.

Not far from Gazef, one of the Dark Young had finally stood still as opposed to running madly.

One of its tentacles became a blur.

Fear shot through his body. Gazef hurriedly raised his sword. In that instant, an extraordinary impact struck him, and his body floated into the sky.

Gazef could not see anything, but he guessed that he must have been slapped away by the tentacle.

His body flew through the sky.

After hanging in the air for a surprisingly long time, Gazef's body finally struck the earth. He rolled several times. This rolling was not the tumbling of a flung corpse, but the deliberate action of a human that was trying to bleed off the energy of his rotation.

The Dark Young, for one second, hesitated.

It was wondering if it should pursue the creature that did not lose its life after one of its attacks. However, it realised that it should not. It had several targets, and it had no time to chase after one just to kill it.

Looking around— It had no eyes but it could sense them— It saw a group of prey running away. It had no time to chase after the creature it had hit out of its range.

The Strongest Warrior of the Kingdom, Gazef Stronoff.

To the Dark Young, that man was no different from a normal soldier, it was weak and did not need to be paid attention to.

The Dark Young charged again. It would follow its summoners' orders to smash everything.

Gazef slowly stood up, spurring his ungainly body into motion. He stared at the distant Dark Young.

It had been just one hit.

The arm that took the strike had broken. It was probably sheer good luck that his sword had not snapped as well.

All emotion vanished from Gazef's face

Why had he been spared?

Even with a monster that could not understand speech, he understood it as a warrior.

This was not a defeat. He had not even come anywhere close to the arena.

Fresh blood flowed from his bitten lip. Following that, Gazef suppressed the intense pain which filled him and ran forth with all his might. Even if he could not beat his opponent, even if his limit was one more hit, even so, he still had to

protect his King.

The headquarters of King Ranpossa III was located in the center of the Royal army. It was surrounded by countless banners belonging to numerous nobles of the Kingdom of Re-Estize.

Although there had been many nobles gathered here before, only a few remained here. Most of them had already fled, and only a scant few remained in this camp. No, to be honest, there were two people here.

The surprising thing was that one of them was Rampossa III. And the other was a man in commoner's clothing.

That man in commoner's clothing was tearing off Rampossa III's equipment. It seemed that he was being stolen from, but Rampossa III showed no sign of resistance. In fact, he seemed to be resigned.

That person wearing commoner's clothes was Climb.

His white armour was thrown aside, and he looked just like the other commoners in the area.

His full armour was usually difficult to remove, but Climb used his magic sword to tear it apart.

The armour of Rampossa III was also of excellent make, but that could also be destroyed by Climb's sword.

"However, what do you think are our chances if we were to run?"

It was closing in with an earth shaking rumble. In such an extreme situation, Rampossa III's tone was calm. It was nothing like the panicked nobles that were here until now.

The problem was his tone, which was the one of a human who had given up on life.

The lack of his desire to remain in this world appeared in his tone.

"It's probably impossible. Those who escape on horses will definitely be chased. As you can see, they prioritise those who are running away. That is why we can do nothing but this."

Rampossa III realised the intentions of Gazef's warriors who had left as a group on horseback. And the reason for the smiles on their faces as they left. And the recommendation for them to escape on the horses the nobles left behind.

"Climb. Why can you?"

Do this? Rampossa III continued.

In such an extreme situation, only a certain group of humans could retain their mental faculties. One could only do it if they were mentally tough.

"I have seen a person more terrifying than those monsters. Thus I can act faster than any of them."

The killing intent that he faced at the capital. Due to that, Climb returned to his senses faster than anyone.

Climb began to rub mud onto Rampossa III who was now without armour, sword and helmet.

"Your Majesty. Even now, our flight is still a matter of luck. If the worst happens... I pray you will forgive us."

"That's fine. It was my decision to use your idea. If it fails due to misfortune, then I will have no complaints."

The Dark Young blew away the flags with its tentacles, and looked around in satisfaction.

This place was probably the centre formation, but there was no one to be seen.

There were two humans laid on top of one another on the ground. The two were alive, but they were the same as the countless other humans it had killed, without armour and in dirty rags. Considering the other humans it had massacred, they were not particularly enticing.

As it was moving to crush them, it noticed a group leaving slowly. It was a group in full armour riding horses, showing that they were not mere soldiers.

Looking at its comrades, there was no one chasing them.

Its summoner wished for it to trample many humans. And to kill those of high positions who would ride on horses. Rather than wasting time killing the humans here, it should head towards those who were escaping.

The summoning time of the Dark Young was not infinite after all.

The Dark Young lost interest in the sprawled humans, and immediately ran off.

Chapter 98: Massacre | Part 4

Ainz nodded several times.

He could let it eat aplenty.

“Now, your turn.”

Ainz pointed his black gauntlet towards the hellish crumbling landscape of the Kingdom’s army.

“Awaken, Avarice. You may feast.”

As if answering to Ainz’s action, countless blue lights were pulled out of the Kingdom and flew upwards. Those tiny lights, smaller than a fist, were sucked into Ainz’s black gauntlet.

A hundred and thirty thousand balls of light was swallowed up, like everything was a dream.

The gauntlets on Ainz’s hands was one of only two hundred World Items in Yggdrasil, called [Avarice and Generosity].

The gauntlet called Avarice had the ability to store the experience that the user was usually about to gain. And the gauntlet called Generosity could be used in place of the experience lost under certain conditions, up to the amount that Avarice had taken.

The blue light was nothing more than a special effect during the absorption of the experience.

Ainz was already at the max experience cap for a level 100, and thus could not absorb any more. Thus any experience gained would be lost. However, that was a waste.

The super-tier magic [Wish Upon a Star] and other spells or skills often used experience and were stronger than most. And one of Ainz’s World Items used enough experience to fall down five levels.

While the amount was few, wasting experience was something a player could not forgive. Thus he had considered the possibility that a player was

around and used a World Item to absorb the experience.

Well, to those like Ainz who have lived in the game world, they would at most be surprised that Ainz was collecting experience.

However, to a third party, how would they see it?

They could only see Ainz collecting something, something that was not experience.

What were those?

They were— Souls.

In front of them, the souls of the Kingdom's soldiers were being taken. That was the only way they could see it. If it were the beautiful gauntlet absorbing it, they might still be saved. But it was the black, demon-like gauntlet that was absorbing it.

Then, there was only one title that suited Ainz.

“—Demon Lord.”

One of the knights whispered.

Those words slipped into his neighbour's hearts. There was no better word to describe the mysterious noble who trampled on two hundred thousand men and collected their souls.

This scene of hell. And the screams of the dying.

And to desecrate it further, there was only one title for a man who could.

“—Demon Lord.”

“—Demon Lord.”

The noise spread as more mouths whispered the title.

Archduke Ainz Ooal Gown. This was the moment that he gained another title of Demon Lord, when he let all of the army taste a great fear.

Of course, Ainz could hear the words, Demon Lord.

At first, he thought that an actual Demon Lord had appeared. However, realising that it was directed at him, Ainz's expression beneath the mask fell.

Ainz's plan was to show off in this war and get a high evaluation. And afterwards, he would act nice and become the hero of the Empire, and battle with Demiurge who would play the Demon Lord.

Basically Ainz wanted to be known as a hero.

—Then why?

As Ainz let [Avarice] feast on the experience, he shook his head.

Demiurge and Fluder had both assured him that this war would turn him into a hero. Then why was he being called a Demon Lord?

Demon Lord did not seem to be an abbreviation of Magic King. (TL Note: Character for Demon and Magic is the same)

Basically his plan had went awry. Ainz could not understand. However he had to fix his mistake. That was why he could only think of how to shift the direction of his plan.

“...A surprising amount was collected. Despite the experience being few due to the level gap, the numbers add up. This might be surprisingly useful.”

Ainz was satisfied with the experience stored in [Avarice], and shifted his arm to look at his gauntlet. He was like a housewife who was wondering what she should exchange her points for. However, he had yet to notice the looks of fear the knights were giving him.

“Now—”

It was a boorish thing, but Demiurge said that it was better to do it.

The Guardians should be looking here through the mirror. They were prepared to jump in at any moment. That was why he had to act cool until the last moment. While, he was personally against it, he had to grasp the hearts of many to debut as a hero.

Ainz made his decision and acted.

However, before that, Ainz looked up at the sky. Even though the sun was shining brightly, there was a thin fog like clouds were covering the sky.

“—Return to the Eighth Floor.”

Ainz ordered the largest force that he had brought out of Nazarick to return. Probably no one noticed. That there was another giant ball of light that covered the sun.

After giving his order, Ainz sighed and turned to the Empire's formation.

He felt tens of thousands of gazes falling on him. It was an overwhelming pressure. Ainz personally felt the phenomenon of many gazes combining to form a physical pressure.

If he were not undead, without any immunity to emotional attacks, he would be pressured and not be able to do anything. However, Ainz acted with more ease as compared to earlier.

He slowly spread open his hands.

As if to hug a friend— Or like the opening of a devil's wings.

In the silence, as the screams of the Kingdom's soldiers could be heard, Ainz spoke in a quiet voice.

“—Applause.”

Basked in the gaze of everything, Ainz spoke again.

“Applause for my formidable power and supreme might.”

The first one to clap was Fluder. His face showed understanding and joy. And as if shaken by that, spurts of claps could be heard, as it all changed to a thunderous applause.

Of course, they were not sincerely applauding for him. Even if they were the enemy, that would not want to clap for a person who massacred most of them. This was not a war, but genocide.

However, could anyone say that?

Could anyone upset a monster that was in front of them?

There was no one who could.

The thunderous applause was a show of how fearful the knights were. We will give you your applause, so please do not get upset. That was how they felt.

Ainz's face changed underneath his mask. He had the satisfied expression of

a man whose plan was proceeding as he'd like.

“Now, I shall take my steps one at a time. In this world—”

The casualty count of the Kingdom was a hundred and thirty thousand, and the Empire's was zero. This overwhelming result shook the surrounding countries.

And afterwards, the name of Archduke Ainz Oown Gown spread far and wide.

Feeling the slight change in the air the Strongest dragon, Tsaindolk Vaishion, also known as the [Platinum Dragonlord] woke up from his light sleep.

Most of his consciousness was filled with shock.

Shock from something slipping past its senses and into its surroundings.

It was normally impossible to escape a dragon's sharp senses. A dragon could immediately detect whether there was a presence nearby even if it were invisible or the dragon was sleeping. But there were a few creatures that could escape a dragon's magical senses.

Even Tsua who had lived a long life, only knew a few. Such as one of the Thirteen Heroes who had left this world, the assassin Ijaniya. That old man could probably have done it. Apart from him—

Tsua felt that it was a familiar presence, and slowly opened his eyes.

Dragon eyes could peer through darkness.

Seeing like it was noon, there was a familiar person there, one of the few that could make it there undetected.

There was a wide smile on her face, one of a human that was able to pull off a large prank.

“It's been a while.”

That person was an old woman with a finely crafted sword hanging from her waist.

Her head of white hair showed how long she had lived. However, her face overflowed with a childish vibrance on her face which did not match her years.

A person whose identity was different from her appearance.

Comparing her with the woman in his memories, the old woman's eye brows sharpened into a dangerous angle.

"What? My friend, have you forgotten how to say hi? Oh dear, even dragons can grow dull."

Tsua let out a deep toothy laugh. He remembered that her friend was like this.

"Sorry. I'm happy to meet an old friend."

The old woman's reply was what Tsua expected.

"A friend? My friend was that empty bucket of armour over there.... Well, something's inside now right?"

"Yes. My knight is inside."

In the past, Tsua had travelled with the old lady and her group by controlling an empty suit of armor as a substitute for himself. Therefore, when his true identity had come out, his companions had been furious about being tricked. He wanted them to forgive him for the time when he had surprised them by removing his helmet.

The resentment from back then still had not died out, and she was still making digs at him until now.

Tsua smiled and then looked at the woman's finger.

"...What happened to the ring? It's a treasure beyond humanity you know?"

"Trying to change the topic, are we? Still, your eyes are sharp; is that the Draconic treasure sense at work... oh well, that's fine. I gave it to a young man. Don't worry about it."

That item was not something that could be simply given away. That was made from [Primal Magic] and it was extremely difficult to recreate. However, the old woman would not pass it to someone weird. He trusted her.

"Really now. Well, since you decided to give it away, I doubt you'd have gone wrong... right, I heard that you were an adventurer once, am I correct? Are you

here on business?”

“Of course not. I came to look up a friend to have fun. I’ve already retired, and I’m no longer an adventurer. Don’t ask a little old lady like me to work so hard; I’ve turned my duties over to that crybaby.”

“That crybaby?” Tsua thought for a while and then a flash of inspiration struck. “...You mean her?”

Hearing Tsua’s subtle tone, the old woman knew that he had got it.

“Yes, little Miss Inberun.”

“Ah~” Tsua sounded dumbfounded. “You’re probably the only one who can call her little.”

“Oh, really? You’re even more qualified to call her little. I’m about the same age as that girl, but you ought to be older, right?”

“That is true... still, I can’t believe that girl would be willing to be an adventurer. What kind of scheme did you use?”

“Hmph. That crybaby went on and on and wouldn’t stop, so I said, ‘If I can beat you, then you’ll have to listen to me’, and then I smacked the crap out of her!”

The old lady went “kakaka”. Her laughter seemed to come from the bottom of her heart.

“...I think you’re the only human who could beat that girl.”

“Well, I had friends helping me out. Besides, if you know the undead, you know how to beat the undead. If you can’t defeat the power of the Earth, you can still exploit elemental affinities and compatibilities to turn the tables in your favor. Crybaby is very strong, but others are stronger than her. For instance, you could easily beat that girl. If you didn’t limit yourself, you would be the most powerful being in this world.”

“...Maybe. Well, I still feel admiration for the strongest magic caster of humanity.... Can I ask you a question?”

“What? As long as I can answer I don’t mind?”

“That weapon, was it a Guilty Weapon?”

Seeing the weapon Tsua was talking about, the old woman shook her head.

“Guilty Weapon? No. That’s a Guild Weapon.”

“Ah!” Tsua felt the fog clear from his mind. “That’s right! Yes. That’s what he said. The strongest weapon the Eight Greed Kings wielded! I see, I see. A Guild Weapon.”

Tsua felt a sense of relief fill his body. As he did so, waves of memories washed over him. As he fondly recollected, he asked the old woman.

“Now, Rigit. Why did you come here?”

The old woman nodded, and made a serious face.

“Hmm. Tsua. About three weeks ago. Have you heard about a magic caster called Ainz Ooal Gown?”

Author’s Note:

Thank you for reading until now.

This will be continued in Overlord Second Half.

Thank you very much.