



VIII

今只

*Skeleton Knight,  
going out to  
the parallel universes*

異世界へ

お出掛け

骸骨騎士団様

秤猿鬼  
illus. K e G

OVERLAP

# Skeleton Knight

## vol.08: Decisive Battle

by Hakari Enki

[Novel Updates](#)

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「私のこの顔が何より、  
現実でない事の証左だ！」

「この世界はゲームでも、  
ましてや幻の類でもない！」

アーキ





ゴエモン

「今日より、この地には  
新たな時代が到来する事となった」

ファンガス

セクト

# ルーティオス山脈

アルサス中央大聖堂

聖都フェールビオ・アルサス

王都リオーネ

ヒルク教国

デルフレント王国

イグロワ川

# ソビル山脈

王都ソウリア

王都ラリサ

モルバ川

ウイール川

イルドバの森

ブラニエ

クライド湾

ルアンの森

城砦ヒル

ドラントの里

領都キーン

## 世界地図

アスバニア  
王国

レブラン大帝国

神聖レブラン  
帝国

デルフレント王国

サルマ王国

カナダ  
大森林

ローデン  
王国

ヒルク教国

ノーザン  
王国

リンブルト大公爵

サルマ王国

Map

# Chapter 01: After the Competition

I unintentionally squinted as daylight shone down on my prolonged figure.

The ground on which I laid upon trembled in response to cheers that an unpredicted euphoria brought about within the surrounding crowd.

In the depths of the Great Canadian Forest..... sat Maple, the elven capital humans were forbidden from entering.

A great many of people had flocked to the large stadium in the city to watch the most recent bout of entertainment.

The stadium was reminiscent of the famous Roman Coliseum, trees were spaced in regular intervals along the wall like pillars, and were fused into the stone walls themselves.

The seats were raised two or three stories above the arena and were filled with the figures of countless elves.

It was a natural location to view the proceedings inside the arena.

I averted my gaze from the shining sun and focused on the existence standing nearby with a giant smile on their face.

She was a large woman standing over two meters tall. However, her peculiar appearance made it easy to see that she wasn't a human.

Two long horns protruded from the top her head, her gleeful purple eyes were reptilian in nature and her long, flowing hair was a deep shade of violet.

There was a small set of wings attached to the back of her curvaceous body. While her chest and abdomen were provocatively exposed, her arms and lower body were covered with armor-like, black scales.

She also had a black tail, longer than her own height, attached to her waist which ended in a sword-shaped crystal.

This was the female Dragon King, Ferufivisurotte.

As her named implied, she belonged to the most powerful race of this world. Her true form was that of a huge dragon which wielded enough power to warp

human logic.

Even in the physical form of a person, her power was on a completely different level compared to a human.

Her extraordinary power would be a huge contributor in the upcoming war with the Hiruku Theocracy.

She had called this entire spectacle ‘entertainment’..... but her true intention seemed to be to show her power to the elves.

It was obvious when you took a glance at Ferufivisurotte standing victorious while I laid prostrate on the ground in my silver armor.

However, she seemed satisfied with my performance in this bout of ours, so I felt some degree of pride.

I rose to my feet while rubbing my aching nose, then picked up my helmet, which had been blown off during the fight, and worked my long brown ears into it as I put it back on.

That I drank the spring water from the hot springs near the Dragon King’s Tree before the fight and took part in the battle without succumbing to my emotions was significant to me.

Unlike my emotionally suppressed skeletal body, my flesh-and-blood body wasn’t accustomed to fighting and easily fell victim to negative emotions like fear.

I’d been training in order to better manage them in this form and I even managed to leap at her head on, but for better or worse, the ways of this world hadn’t fully taken root yet and the shock of the last blow had been too great.

As I thought such things over, Ferufivisurotte and I shared a look.

She approached me with a knowing smile on her face.

Her gaze traveled along my figure and stopped on the 『Holy Thunder Sword』I held over my shoulder.

“That last blow was pretty impressive, you were serious about it, weren’t you?”

Her eyes narrowed as if she were staring down her prey.

I simply shrugged and shook my head.

“Wasn’t it the same for you, Ferufivisurotte-dono? Was it my imagination, or were you holding back until that last blow?”

She flipped her hair back and showed me a mischievous smile in response to my question.

“If I had been serious from the start, this building wouldn’t still be standing..... It’s the same for you as well, isn’t it? Those gathered here should’ve realized it as well. This competition has safely introduced them to the man named Arch-an.”

Before, Ferufivisurotte spoke of using this arena as a means of amusing herself.

But that had been her goal..... although she did seem to enjoy the act fighting on its own.

Rather, it was one one of the things she’d been after when we met with the great elders of Maple.

I was a part of the elven village Raratoia for the time being, but I was still considered a newcomer by the general populace, so it was unlikely that the soldiers would be willing to follow such a person into battle.

Though it was a bit forceful, fighting a dragon king should help avoid any contempt raising amongst the rank and file.

At the thought, I caught sight of someone descending from the bleachers and entering the arena where Ferufivisurotte and I were standing.

The voluptuous approaching woman was dressed in elven clothing, that had traditional patterns sew into them. She had lilac skin, snow white hair and golden eyes.

Even among this gathering of elves, very few women had the racial characteristic of a dark elf.

After I came to this world, she became a companion with whom I’d traveled to various locations, and who was currently a member of the same village I was

part of..... Ariana cast a worried glance at Ferufivisurotte's exposed abdomen.

“Are you alright Ferufivisurotte-sama?”

Her question stemmed from when I had impaled Ferufivisurotte with the 『Holy Thunder Sword 』, the way Ariane's eyes darted between her abdomen and face was proof of her worry.

For Ariane's sake, Ferufivisurotte thinly smiled as she rubbed her abdomen with a scaled hand.

“Don't worry, my insides are fine. I already told him, my body is special. See, it didn't even leave a scratch.”

“I-Is that so.....”

Ariane breathed a relieved sigh with a hand over her heart when she heard Ferufivisurotte was alright, then she placed a hand on my shoulder and started whispering to me.

“Hey, Arc. What happened? That looked like a fatal blow from where I was sitting.”

I shook my head at Ariane's question.

“I don't know, there was a firm response, so it wasn't an illusion..... I don't know what type of trick she used. Maybe it's a special ability dragon kings have in their human forms.”

I looked back at Ferufivisurotte after I said that, but she was currently busy waving to the crowd.

Then, I caught the familiar sight of a small green animal flying towards me.

It was sixty centimeters long. Her big white fluffy tail took up half of her body and there were also patches of skin that were reminiscent of a flying squirrel, connecting her fore-and hind legs.

“Kyun! Kyun!”

The animal who let out a small cry before she landed on my helmet belong to a group of creatures the elves referred to as spirit beast.

“Oh, Ponta. Is something wrong?”

“Kyun!”

When I stroked Ponta’s head and asked her what was going on, Ponta tapped on my helmet and gestured at someone in the audience.

I gazed in the direction she was pointing towards, and I saw that someone was beckoning us.

“Ariane-dono, someone seems to be calling for us.”

Ariane turned toward the audience when she heard my comment and nodded in agreement before addressing Ferufivisurotte.

” Ferufivisurotte.-sama, we shall take our leave now.”

“Oya, I’ve had enough entertainment for today. As I said before, I shall keep my promises. .... Arc-han let’s play on our own some other time.”

Ferufivisurotte turned away from the adoring audience and answered Ariane with a slight smile on her face.

I felt a chill run down my spine when I saw Ariane’s expression.

“Well, if the opportunity presents itself.....”

With that, I turned around and began to leave the arena with Ariane and Ponta, but I stopped in my tracks when she spoke up again.

“Oh yeah, Arc-han. There a little story that I would like to share with you.....”

Ferufivisurotte looked to the sky as her voice trailed off.

I looked back at her and asked her what she meant.

“What story would that be?”

When she spoke of a story, she didn’t mean in this place, and it seems rather personal to her..... that the words had slipped out unintentionally as if she mistook me for an acquaintance.

However, after remaining quiet for a while, a gentle smile settled on her face and she brushed off her previous statement with a wave of the hand.

“Yes, yes, the time for us to talk is quickly approaching. Arc-han.”

After saying that, she spread her small wings and began, as she’d done when

she first arrived, to quickly flew away.

Dragon King Ferufivisurotte left on an ominous note..... in truth, I rather not cross blades with her if I could help it.

Judging by her pleasant expression though, that wish would fall on deaf ears so long as I remained part of an elven village.

The condition for her participation in the war..... came at an extremely high personal cost.

“Kyun?”

“I’m alright, Ponta.”

I tickled Ponta under her chin as I let out a sigh as we left the arena and made our way to the seats.

Every member of the great elder council had witnessed my match with Ferufivisurotte and some of them seemed uncertain of how to act when they saw me.

Even amongst the elves, there probably wasn’t anyone who could contend with a Dragon King.

Surprise and caution blurred their faces.

However, a few of them had other expressions.

Those people had looks of intrigue and admiration..... someone among those was the first to speak up. He was the third generation chieftain of the entire Canada Forest, Brian Boyd Evangeline Maple.

His green-tinged, blonde hair was rather long and braided into a complex style and he wore tasteful jewelry around his neck and other locations on his body.

Chief Brian spoke in an excited tone when he looked me straight in the eyes when he addressed me.

“I can’t believe what I just saw. I heard about you from elder Dylan, but to think that someone was capable of fighting Ferufivisurotte so well..... Any dissatisfaction the soldiers might have from you leading them is sure to have

vanished after that display.”

Chief Brian had a faint smile on his face as he spoke and the dark elven great elder, Fangas Furan Maple, chimed in as well.

He was about the same size as me. His large body, sharply trimmed grey hair and beard, and the severe scar across his face added to his intimidating presence.

He seemed to be Ariane’s maternal grandfather, but he seemed more like a great warrior than an elder, and he seemed to be in a cheerful mood right now.

“It has been quite some time since I’ve seen such a fight. By all means, I’d enjoy a bout with you myself.”

He patted my shoulders, releasing an intimidating chuckle as he spoke.

“Kyun! Kyun!”

Ponta protested the vibrations his actions sent through my armor.

Even though the fight had come to an end, it seemed I was destined to suffer many hardships going forward.

Speaking of my personal image of elves, while I initially imagined them to be quiet intellectuals with a mastery over magic, I’d started to realize that calling them muscle heads would be more accurate.

However, it was understandable given their circumstances.

It was evident that constant persecution from humans and having to contend with powerful monsters had made strength a necessity.

While somewhat troubled by Fangas’ praise, I turned towards two people who seemed more embarrassed by his behavior than anything.

One of them was Ariane’s father and the elder of Raratoia, Dylan Targ Raratoia, and the other was her sister, Ivana Glenys Maple.

Unlike Ariane, Dylan was a regular elf with long ears and greenish-blond hair, he was also dressed in traditional elven clothes.

Dylan could be seen as the embodiment of the stereotypical elf, he was the polar opposite of elder Fargus and Ferufivisurotte. If they were the sword which

elven society deployed in battle, he was the extending hand of compromise.

He lowered his head towards me and showed his appreciation.

“Thank you, Arc-kun. We don’t have a lot of time, but it will take an entire day to make preparations and gather the warriors. Your transfer magic will be necessary tomorrow, you can use the remainder of the day to rest.”

When I looked at Ariane, she gave me a confused glance in response.

“Then would it be alright if I explore the city for a bit?”

There were few things I could do to help the soldiers prepare for war, so I would like to take in all Maple had to offer.

Taking a single step in Maple was all I need to revisit it with my transfer magic **【Gate】**, but since I was already here, it was only natural that I wanted to explore a little.

Dylan looked towards Chief Brian, who nodded his head before he replied to me with a smile on his face.

“We don’t mind such a thing. Ariane shall act as your guide. However, its necessary to relay our decision to our human allies, so I’d be grateful if you could handle that.”

Ariane shrugged her shoulders and breathed a sigh when he said so.

“Don’t look around for too long, Arc. Did you forget that Chiome-chan and Lille-chan are waiting?”

I nodded as I accepted their suggestion.

Although I wanted to explore the city, princess Lille must have been worried by now.

However, someone interrupted our conversation.

“Yes, Yes! I’ll go where Ari-chan does!”

Ariane’s older sister linked arms with her and raised her hand as she insisted to be taken along.

She was a dark elf like Ariane, her characteristic snow-white hair was cut to a semi-short length, her liveliness made her seem more like a Ariane’s younger

sister.

Her younger sister Ariane was the most surprised by her behavior.

“Ivana-neesan is coming along!?”

Ivana puffed out her cheeks when she heard that, and Ariane frantically waved her hands and attempted to smooth over what she said.

“D-Does Onee-chan have to come? What about preparations for tomorrow?”

Ariane was embarrassed to the point of trembling when she called Ivana「Onee-chan」. Probably because she usually didn't call her that in public.

While I observed their interesting behavior, Ivana tightened her hold on Ariane's arm and gave me a piercing gaze filled with hostility

She seemed wary of me being around her younger sister.

“My equipment is fine for this little outing, and it will work for my usual patrol. So long as this doesn't take too long, it should be fine. Can't wait to see your sister in action, can you? Ari-chan?”

Ivana looked away from me and enthusiastically questioned Ariane, but Dylan reluctantly stepped forward and interrupted her.

“I'm sorry, Ivana, but, it has been decided that you won't take part in this expedition.”

“Eeh!? What!? This is an important war for Canada, isn't it? Wouldn't it be better to have more people with my abilities on hand? So why!?”

When Ivana protested her father's decision Dylan quietly looked away as her grandfather Fargas that explained things to her.

“That's correct, Ivana. Many warriors will be dispatched, but we cannot allow the capital to be deserted. You will act as the commanding officer of Maple's guards. Don't worry though, I will be taking part in this war in your place! Kuhaha!”

“Eh, what!? But, grandfather! How can a great elder like you appear on the battlefield?! Isn't this an abuse of authority!?”

“Kuhaha, the more vexing it is for, you the better it is for me, Ivana.”

Fargas laughed off at his granddaughter's biting comments, his large smile made it clear he wasn't partially worried about it.

Elders were supposed to be the leaders of the villages within Canada, normally they would not be tasked with warrior duties. However, Fargas' dominating aura and large stature made it clear that he was quite skilled in his own right.

Based on Ivana's remark, it seemed that Fargas would occasionally use his position to join the frontlines.

While they watched the grandfather and granddaughter argue, Dylan and Brian shared glances with one another as they fought back their laughter. I guess this was a common occurrence.

However, this.....

".....Do we have to wait for this conversation's conclusion?"

"Kyun?"

As I watched those two, I voiced my thoughts, which caused Ponta to look questioningly and Ariane to sigh.

## Chapter 02: Moment of Rest

The majority of elves on the Northern Continent lived in the Great Canada Forest.

Even though monsters bordered the immense forest, it acted as a natural barrier that divided elven territory from the human territory.

I was a bit surprised when I learned that the vast Canada Forest had been created artificially by the first elven chieftain.

Maple was built in the center of the forest, far from human civilization, yet the city had more of an urban atmosphere than any of the human cities I've visited.

Mysterious, natural trees and artificial, fused high-rises lined the cities streets, with aerial walkways connecting some of the larger buildings, and I could even see a lot of people making use of them.

The city's streets were well-maintained, with streetlamps set at equal intervals along both sides, multiple craftsmen and other people were already out and going about their business.

The landscape of the city which I lived in flashed through my mind as I took in the bustling valley of high-rises.

It hadn't been that long since I set foot in this world, perhaps a few months had passed at best.

However, the vague feeling that I would never be able to return home made my heart ache.

The first generation Chieftain who built this large city, the first Hanzo who brought together the cat beastmen, fighting the Empire's persecution of beastmen, and the first King who built the Beastmen Kingdom on the Southern Continent..... there was no doubt that they had come from the same world as me.

I wonder if they left behind any regrets in the former world..... it's not like I knew any of them, but to the best of my knowledge, their bones were all buried

here.

What is the purpose of all this..... it wasn't something I thought about often.

It could be considered a blessing that being in my skeletal form prevented me from feeling negative emotions, allowing me to maintain a positive outlook.

Although it was a bit inconvenient, the form allowed me to get by with few problems..... However, the Dragon King's spring water broke the curse and allowed my emotions to return.

Once this war was over, I needed to think about my future and acclimate myself to my body and emotions.

..... I had to prepare myself to live in this world.

As I pondered such things, Ariane, who'd been guiding me through the crowded streets, turned around with a confused look on her face.

"Hey, what's the matter, Arc? You said that you wanted to see Maple, Arc, so where would you like to go, what do you want to see? The city is rather large, so you can't see everything in a day or two.

"Kyun! Kyun!"

Ariane gave me a doubtful look and reproved my absentmindedness, even Ponta chimed in from atop my head.

I pushed those unnecessary thoughts from my head and focused on why I was here.

"Oh, sorry Ariane-dono. I was taking in the big city with what little time I had, and I was reminded of a place I visited some time ago. Do you know of any good shops where I can buy elven magical tools?"

"A magic tool shop? There are a few of them, but where were they?"

She seemed a little confused by my question..... when Ivana, who'd been silent till now, noticed, she opened her mouth.

"Then, Ari-chan why don't we go to the shop we used to visit?"

The same time Ivana voiced her proposal, Ariane clapped her hands once and made the same suggestion with a smile.

“Oh, yeah. There’s the shop I visited with Ivana-neesan. That’s it.”

She ventured into the crowd with Ivana and I following behind her.

My armor gathered a lot of attention from the pedestrians as I passed the people on the street.

I was moving at a quick pace as to not lose sight of Ariane’s back, but an unexpected intense stare drew my attention.

I turned towards its source..... only to find Ivana sending a sharp glance in my direction.

“Kyun?”

Ponta picked up on the atmospheric shift and confusedly looked at her.

“Is something wrong, Ivana-dono?”

She averted her gaze at my straightforward question.

I tried to clear the uncomfortable air between the two of us, but Ivana opened her mouth and spoke in a serious tone before I could.

“..... I confirmed you have a suitable sword arm. However, if you do anything to hurt Ari-chan I will never forgive you.”

She pointed her finger at me as she made that declaration and released an aura of pressure that urged me to reply.



I got caught up in her momentum, nodded my head along as I replied.

“Yeah, understood. Ivana-dono. I’ll protect Ariane-dono even if I lose my life.”

The upcoming battle would be the most dangerous one, but she was feeling anxious about not being able to be there to protect Ariane.

While I said that, Ariane was a highly-skilled warrior in her own right, and I was well aware that declaring 「I’ll protect her.」based solely on my physical abilities was extremely presumptuous.

However, it would probably a bit silly to discuss those things here.

It was her elder sister’s job to protect Ariane..... since it had been demonstrated that I had enough power to take on important roles, she was in entrusting that duty to me.

It was a situation where I had to put spirit behind making that promise.

In response to my answer, Ivana raised an eyebrow as she made a complex expression and let out a small sigh.

“Don’t forget that promise.”

Ivana gave that last piece of advance before she stopped poking me and chased after Ariane.

.....I need to raise my fighting spirit further for the upcoming war.

With my determination renewed, I followed after the two sisters.

The shop that Ariane recommended was off the main streets, located in the entryway of a quiet alleyway.

The signboard didn’t stand out all that much, and you couldn’t tell it was a shop at first glance.

Ariane opened the creaky door in a practiced manner and entered with Ivana, Ponta and myself following her.

It was slightly dim inside, the room was filled with shelves lined with various items. Even though it was a bit tight, this place wasn’t dirty in the slightest.

The shelves reached the ceiling and the way the items were arranged on them made the place seem like a museum for mysterious tools.

I recognized several of the items as magic tools, so all of them were probably magic tools.

A number of tools displayed on a waist-high counter in the center of the room caught my interest.

A bit of admiration leaked out as I looked around the store, in the back I noticed a slightly elevated workshop.

After a while, an old man came out of the workshop..... a man who was the exact opposite of slender and tall.

He was no taller than a hundred and forty centimeters, but his muscular limbs were as thick as logs and his upper body was hidden behind a full, grey beard.

Deep wrinkles were set above his eyebrows, yet a craftsman spirit continued to shine in his eyes.

“Dwarf.”

The old dwarf raised his head when that word slipped from my lips.

Though they used to live all across the Northern Continent, their metallurgy knowledge made them the targets of humanity, the persecution they faced forced them to flee into Canada with the elves.

Humans believed that they went extinct long ago, but they lived together with the elves in Maple.

I often saw them in the city, and there was even a dwarven representative among the great elders.

“Well, it’s been a long time, Jō-chan. So, who’s the fella in the flashy armor?”

The old man, who seemed to be the shopkeeper and craftsman of this place, raised a thick white eyebrow and gave me a stern look.

“My name is Arc Raratoia. I recently became the newest member of our village.”

“Kyun! Kyun!”

When I took a step forward and introduced myself, Ponta cried out from atop my head and vigorously shook her tail.

“Well, a fluffy fox is riding atop a pretentious bugger’s head..... He an elf?”

“For the time being.....”

When the dwarf asked about the strange man with an animal on his head, Ariane lowered her head and replied with a vague answer.

Well, it was true that I was considered an elf of some kind when I wasn’t a skeleton, so she was correct in that regard. However, since I wasn’t exactly a dark elf as well, the dwarf was left confused by her non-answer.

However, he quickly pushed the matter aside and asked what business had brought us to his shop.

“So what brings you here today?”

Ivana glanced back at me and Ariane turned towards me at his question.

“What are you planning to buy here anyway?”

Under Ariane gaze, I picked up one of the nearby magic tools and brought it up to eye level.

“Once this affair is settled I’m planning to fix up the compound..... there seem to be many useful items in this city. I thought I’d examine a few things before I buy them later.”

Ariane nodded several times in understanding and began to scan through commodities that lined the store.

“Certainly, there isn’t anything but a hot spring over there.....”

“Let’s start with some the magic cooking tools that Glenys-dono uses in the kitchen.”

I conveyed my wishes to Ariane as I picked up and examined several interesting magic tools.

The compound had traces of a ceramic grill. There were many difficulties involved with cooking with firewood, and people would naturally gravitate towards a more convenient tool.

“Since there aren’t any lights there, you should think about buying large crystal lights as well, right? It’ll be pitch black at night otherwise.....”

Ariane placed her finger on her chin and began glancing over light-emitting crystals of various shapes and sizes after making her proposal.

I agreed with here.

There were no streetlights in an uninhabited area, there was only moonlight to rely on at night, but with the huge Dragon King's tree and it also would block most of the sun.

The dwarven shopkeeper could only scratch his head as he watched the exchange between Ariane and me.

".....Choosing new household items for a new home. I guess Jō-chan is at that age as well....."

Ariane ears pricked up and turned a bright shade of red when she heard that.

"W-Wait, it's not like that!! I'm just accompanying the buyer, Ivana-oneesan was the one that recommended this place!!"

"Aw, Ari-chan properly called me oneesan~"

Although Ariane refuted the shop owner's assessment with a shriek, Ivana fixated on the way she had been called..... Ariane tried to push her off with an annoyed expression.

The play-fighting of the two sisters was rather heartwarming to watch.

I suddenly locked eyes with the shopkeeper and while we didn't say anything, the fact that we were of the same mind was transmitted.

I silently shrugged my shoulders and left the two sisters alone as I asked the shopkeeper about an unknown magic tool.

I didn't have much time to spare after all.....

"Shopkeeper, what does this thing do?"

You wouldn't have expected it from him, but he answered in an official, customer-service-like manner as he stroked his impressive beard.

It was gonna be quite fun to redecorate the compound in the future..... I started planning ahead while listening to the lively discussion in the background.

## Chapter 03: The Soldiers Arrive At The Kingdom

Early the next day.

In contrast to Maple's quiet mist covered streets, numerous people were gathering in the stadium.

The arena was swamped with the figures of the warriors who had been summoned from all of Canada Forest.

Most people wore leather armor, with metal armor being a rarity among them.

There was a variety of weapons on display and the way the warriors from different villages spoke with one another made it seem like a gathering of human mercenaries more than anything else.

Some of the warriors had distinctive lilac skin, which meant they were dark elves like Ariane.

Speaking of which, if one were to talk about soldiers, one would normally assume them to be male. However, about one third of the elven warriors gathered in this place were female, which was a huge difference compared to human soldiers.

Ariane and her mother Glenys, perhaps even her sister Ivana as well, were easily capable of besting any man in combat. Only a fool would hang on to the outdated prejudice against female soldiers in the face of overwhelming evidence.

Rather, the large proportion of female warriors showed that the women's abilities among elves was high.

"I guess, Ariane-dono and Glenys-dono aren't an exception....."

"Kyun....."

When that unintentional mutter left my lips as I took in what was occurring in the arena, Ponta leaned forward on my head and cried out in agreement.

However, Ariane, who'd been discussing today's schedule with Dylan nearby,

had wrinkles form on her face when she heard me.

“What? Did you say something rude about me?”

When I saw Ariane sharp gaze, I vigorously shook my head.

“It’s a misunderstanding, Ariane-dono. I was only saying that there were a lot of excellent women among the elves.”

“Ky-Kyun.”

Ariane glared at me for awhile before she let out a sigh when after she saw Ponta climbing back up to her original spot after my head shaking knocked her off.

“Since every elven warrior hones their favored weapon and their magic, the qualities of a warrior aren’t limited to brute strength like humans. In that regard, your aptitude in both magic and weaponry means that you’re an exemplary elf, Arc.”

My gaze dropped to my hands as I repeatedly opened and closed them.

Although it’d been a while, I still felt different from the elves of this world. Still, when she said it like that, the heavenly knight class was similar to the magic swordsmen style of the elven warrior, given that the physical-based knight class acted as a base and utilized the magic system of the priest class.

Ariane’s words brought about a strange sense of elation within me.

After all, the only common denominator we shared were the long ears, and the alienations were on the forefront of my consciousness. Dylan and Fargas appeared while I considered such things.

“Arc-kun, today I ask of you to transfer the warriors gathered here to Nozan Kingdom using your transfer magic.

After having said his piece, Dylan smiled as Fargas took over the conversation.

“You’re gonna be responsible for transporting the soldiers with your magic, but can you really move them all in one day? I don’t doubt Ariane, but there’s still some time left. It wouldn’t make sense to overextend yourself before the war, right?”

Elder Fagas' concern was a good one.

Even though 【Transfer Gate】used less mana than most offensive magic, the mana consumption would increase for a mass transfer, and the mana consumption for repeat trips would limit the number of times I could do this.

However, I was equipped with the 『Overcoat of the Night Sky』, which restored my mana over time when I stopped moving. Therefore, as long as I took things in moderation, it shouldn't take more than a half day.

Yesterday, after I went to Rhoden and told Princess Lillie that Canada decided to participate in the war, I informed King Carlen that Rhoden's forces would be taken to Nozan within a day.

The problem may lie with Rhoden organizing its forces in time.

The armies of human nations acted as a collective, but there were various necessary personnel and supplies that were indispensable when dispatching them. Even with a standing army, it would be difficult to mobilize them in such a short period of time.

In that regard, the way in which the elves mobilized their forces was unpredictable. From food to weapons, each individual platoon prepared all of it themselves, allowing for rapid deployment and individualized decision making.

This was due to the routine duties elven warriors regularly performed.

Small platoons would normally gather the food, weapons and tools they would need before diving into the massive forest to subjugate monsters or to push back encroaching humans.

For these soldiers, there wasn't any great difference apart from the fact that the destination was a human city.

"There's no need to worry, Fagas-dono. Besides that, I don't see Ferufivisurotte-dono anywhere, where is she? Wouldn't it be better for us to introduce her to the humans first?"

As of yesterday, a substantial force had gathered in responses to Nozan Kingdom's request. At the time, I'd informed King Asparuf that a dragon king had joined the war, but something like that was difficult to explain to her

majesty with mere words.

Though I thought so, both Fargus and Dylan smiled wryly at my question.

Ariane and I were both confused by their reaction.

“Ferufivisurotte-sama said that she would reach Nozan Kingdom with her own wings, and left earlier this morning. Apparently, she has to make a little stop along the way.....”

Dylan’s brow drooped as he shook his head after informing us of what happened.

She was traveling to Nozan with her own wings, but would she arrive at the capital in her dragon form, or her human form?

I was amazed by her grasp of the geography outside of Canada

There was another problem..... everyone was gathered here so we didn’t have to worry about her running from the fight, but she might cause an uproar if she appeared in the sky above the capital in her dragon form.

“Even though I doubt Ferufivisurotte-dono will be able to beat my transfer magic, it’s probably for the best that we get an elven representative to the capital as soon as possible.”

The figure of dragon king Williahsfim, in his dragon form, deciding upon a city crossed my mind and I groaned as Fargas nodded along with my statement.

“Well, in order to avoid unnecessary confusion, we’ll have you take Dylan to Nozan so he can act as our representative, Arc-dono. Can the advance party be sent at the same time?”

“Of course, once the vanguard is put together I can take both of you at the same time if you wish, Fargas-dono.”

Dylan nodded in agreement before calling out to a couple of nearby people and telling them to get ready.

In that way, more than a hundred soldiers were crammed together around Fargus, Dylan and me in the center of the arena.

In an effort to efficiently use my transfer magic and conserve my mana, the

selected warriors were holding the luggage they would be using.

The purpose was to increase the amount of the occupied space within the magic formation, and I was placed in the center as it was the most optimal position for the magic caster.

“Mm, I will use a hundred and eighty percent then.....”

“Kyun!”

Ponta let out an encouraging call from atop my head.

She was in quite the enviable safe zone.

I couldn't feel anything because of my full-body armor, but there was something nostalgic about being so tightly packed in.

Ariane and Chiome were standing outside the range of my transfer magic, saying “bye-bye.” as they waved me off.

They'd made the wise decision to wait until I was finished with everyone else before coming over.

“There's no helping it, let's get this done before I'm crushed. Let's go, Ponta. 【Transfer Gate】!”

“Kyun! Kyun!”

As always when I invoked my transfer magic, a huge magic formation appeared at my feet.

I ignored the shouts of surprise and admiration of the surrounding warriors as I brought up our destination in my mind.

King Asparuf had cleared a plot of land around Nozan's royal palace for the elves to arrive.

The world went dark and in the next moment the surrounding people let out a shocked gasp when they realized we were in a new location.

They had been standing in Maple's arena, far from any human nation, until just a second ago..... and now stood in Nozan's royal garden.

I looked up and saw the sparsely decorated, yet firmly built royal palace.

The packed crowd of elves gradually dispersed as admiration slipped from their lips and the warriors' feet dragged them toward the new surrounding.

Looking around, I could see the guardsmen that had been waiting for our arrival. Even though they'd been informed of our arrival beforehand, they could not hide their shock of suddenly seeing elves appear.

Under such circumstances, it was elder Fargas who managed to reign the warriors in.

"I understand that the human realm is interesting, but we have no time to relax! Everyone leave the area with your gear. Let's go!"

At his command, everyone gathered their things and followed after elder Fargas.

I still needed to bring the second, third and following groups of warriors here, so this area needed to be cleared out.

Great elder Fargas was representative of the elven forces, and on the Kingdom's side..... I saw the face of King Asparuf, along with the guards he'd brought with him.

However, the massive maul that was strapped to his waist, the leather armor that emphasized the bulk of his body, his scarred face and the atmosphere of an experienced warrior he exuded made it clear that Fargas didn't need them.

Many of the dark elves had good physiques, and if seen by themselves people would doubt that they were part of the elven forces.

The only one to step forward in the presence of this battle-hardened veteran was King Asparuf Nozan Soulia, wearing a suit of armor similar to his guards'.

The two of them shared a look as their respective guards stood at the ready.

"I would like to thank you on behalf of my countrymen for reaching across the racial divide and offering a helping hand in our time of need. Unfortunately, the previous undead attack has left the capital in shambles and we can only provide you with cramped accommodations."

King Asparuf nodded as he quietly extended his hand to Fargas, who accepted it with a large smile on his face.

“A chance to bring down the Hiruku Theocracy is reason enough for us to take part in this affair. While this will be bad for the believers of their doctrine, as long as the agreed-upon terms are upheld, we shall stand by your side.”

Fargas was referring to the conditions Canada had set in order to send Nozan relief.

In this case, Canada intended to assault the heart of the Hiruku church under the guise of the kingdom accepting their aid, and Fargas had just declared our intentions for all to hear.

Although the influence of the Hiruku would be diminished once the heart of its operations was gone, the church was deeply rooted in nearly every human nation and wouldn't disappear overnight.

It was unclear what form it would take after the war, but if the remaining church leaders condemned Nozan for colluding with elves, Nozan would forever opposed to the Hiruku Theocracy.

The other human nation who would be taking part in this war, Rhoden Kingdom at the southern tip of the Northern Continent, has remained outside of the Hiruku's influence. They were a major power that could content with the church by joining hands with their neighboring countries.

As for Canada, as long as Nozan Kingdom continued to oppose the church after the war, Canada would help them with the postwar reconstruction.

“Currently, there aren't that many choices available to us, but we believe that this decision will greatly shape our future. Let's stand united here so that our pact can remain strong later on.”

Asparuf didn't break eye contact with Fargas, even after being placed under the elder's intimidating gaze, and put more strength in his grip.

The king decided to hold hands with elves and beastmen..... that choice will eventually spread through this nation's territories, but the people indoctrinated by the Hiruku religion would definitely resist it.

While those voices were relatively quiet in the capital since it'd been attacked, that wouldn't be the case for the territories to the east of the capital..... the territories which hadn't been exposed to Hiruku's invasion.

People were adverse to change and rarely recognized major threats until they faced them..... it was this bluntness that allowed them to strive in harsh environments, but the delayed problem recognition was a fatal flaw.

However, King Asparuf declared that he would use all of the royal family's authority to control the opposition and change the society to one that would accept Canada's ideas.

After the human and elven representatives shook hands, the king started a conversation with me.

"Arc-dono. I would like to thank you personally for arranging things with Rhoden and Canada. If it weren't for you, it wouldn't be possible to create such a hopeful future. Thank you."

When the people around the king heard his words, a small commotion began to spread through their formation.

"We simply exchanged our wishes with one another and passed them on to others. I can not take credit for both parties deciding to compromise with one another. Additionally, you should praise Lille-dono's wisdom for requesting our help in subjugating the enemy in the first place."

King Asparuf's eyes popped open and his lip formed into a slight smile when he heard my reply.

"That's right, I can not deny my daughter's major achievement. So, where is Lille now?"

"Lille-dono is currently staying in Rhoden, she'll return along with Rhoden's forces. Apparently, she and Rhoden's princess seem to get along....."

The king breathed a relieved sigh and made a small nod when he heard of Lille's wellbeing.

"Well, it's a rarity for the people of this house to find a friend, so that's good. I'll ask Lille about it later. And, do take care in the upcoming battle, Arc-dono."

He offered me a slight bow before he left with his guards in tow.

He had a variety of duties to take care of, on top of greeting ten thousand guests.

I saw him off before returning to the spot I'd originally arrived at.

"We have work to do as well."

"Kyun!"

Atop my head, Ponta gave a spirited reply.

With her encouragement, I informed Dylan that I was returning to Maple before invoking **【Transfer Gate】**.

It was an easy trip since it was just Ponta and me.

Our surrounding instantly shifted and when we arrived at the arena the soldier making the next trip suddenly flocked towards me.

It seems the other great elders were staying behind to direct them.

I took a breath and invoked my magic at a hundred and eighty percent again, and by the time I exhaled, we were already in Nozan again.

This might be harder than I thought... I realized the harshness of the transport industry as the constant shifts began to blur in my mind.

As a result of my efforts, the entirety of the elven forces were transported to Nozan's capital by the time the sun stood high in the sky.

Though it was difficult to make fifty-plus round-trips with transfer magic, it wasn't feeling magically or physically fatigued.

The great elders and chieftain Brain couldn't hide their surprise at this feat.

"Are you tired, Arc? We can eat lunch now, and head to Rhoden in the afternoon."

Ariane, who'd stayed behind till the end, was the one who spoke with me.

Chiome had gone to Nozan Kingdom with the last group.

It seems that Goemon's unit, who'd taken a different path than us, had yet to reach Nozan or contact the others.

While I wasn't aware of their circumstances, I wasn't that worried that they'd gotten into any trouble..... My mind wandered back to Goemon's muscular figure.

“Well, let’s eat lunch and replenish our spirits.”

“Kyun! Kyun!”

Ponta wagged her fluffy tail on my head when I said that, while I popped my stiff shoulders after all the trips.

“Ariane-dono, is there any place in Maple where we can find a good meal?”

As we left the arena and stepped on to the streets of Maple, Ariane suddenly raised an eyebrow and her lips formed into a sharp smile.

“If that’s... There’s this place I always used to go, and I highly recomm.....”

“Ari-chan, let’s go and get some lunch!”

When Ariane was in the middle of speaking, Ivane suddenly leaped onto her back and inserted herself into the conversation.

“Huh!? Ivana-nee-chan!?”

“Hey, you don’t have much time today, right? Let’s go to lunch, just the two of us.”

While she spoke to Ariane in a sweet tone, Ivana bitterly glared at me.

Ivana was acting like a stereotypical siscon for some reason, and she considered me a nuisance.

“Wait a minute, neechan! Aren’t you on guard duty today..... A-Arc!”

Ariane was at a loss for what to do with her sister, and her eyes were pleading with me.

Ariane’s relationship with her sister was gonna be a problem in the future.

## Chapter 04: Everyone's Kingdom

After finishing a rather loud lunch, Ivana looked back at Ariane one last time before she returned to her patrol.

Ariane looked somewhat tired, but as she watched her sister leave, she released a sigh of relief and gave my armor a light tap.

“Lunch is over, let's head over to Rhoden immediately. Lille-chan is waiting.”

“That's right.”

“Ky~uh.....”

Ponta, who'd eaten her fill during lunch, let out a small cry and raised one of her paws when I replied to Ariane.

Post-meal tiredness had overtaken her and Ariane had to start carrying her when she nearly rolled off my head.

Ponta let out a large yawn as I brought the pair with me to Rhoden using 【Transfer Gate】.

It seems that their forces were ready to go when we arrived. Lille Nozan Soulia, the first princess of Nozan and the creator of this alliance, stood before a line of soldiers with her bodyguards Zahara and Nina at her side.

“You're late, Arc-dono! I was worried that something had happened over there!”

We had arrived in Rhoden's royal palace's large courtyard, and Lille ran over to us when she noticed Ariane and me.

She was about a hundred and forty centimeters tall and retained her childish features.

I'd also heard that she was only eleven years old.

Her bright, slightly curly hair was bounced along the top of her shoulders and reflected the liveliness of someone of her age.

Her large grey eyes were wide open as they wondered about my form as if

she was examining me.

Despite her young age, she had traveled to far off lands for the sake of obtaining Canada's and Rhoden's aid, all the while carrying the fate of her country on her shoulders.

In spite of her appearance..... very little was childish about her.

She was so sensitive to the progress of things because she was fully aware of the current situation.

"Sorry to worry you, Lille-dono. The transfer of the Canadian warriors went off without a hitch, and they are currently waiting in Nozan. There's no problem on that end."

I kneeled and bowed my head as I was reporting to her, all in an attempt to ease her worries.

"I-Is that so? That is a relief."

"With his ability, a small delay isn't an issue. Rather than rushing things, it's better that preparations are completed over here, Princess Lille."

When Lille breathed a sigh of relief, Rhoden's first prince spoke up as he slowly approached us from behind.

Sect Rondaro Carunon Rhoden.

He was tall, had regal facial features and light brown hair..... despite the suit of light armor he was wearing, his almost fairytale-like, princely charm still managed to shine through.

Even though he was young, the dignity of the royal family already dwelled within his eyes, and even as he bowed his head and greeted me with a thin smile, it didn't inspire the image of a gentle prince.

He was a man with many secrets..... that was my opinion of him.

Beside him stood a young girl of equal standing.

Her wavy hair boarded on yellowish blonde and she wore a modest dress despite being Sect's younger sister and the second princess of Rhoden. Her name was Juliana Marill Melissa Rhoden Olav.

Although she had big and lovely brown eyes, if you looked a little closer you'd see a strength within them befitting of her status as a princess.

“Isn't that a little bit insensitive, Sect-oniisan? Lille-cha— Princess Lille is just worried about her country. It is a gentleman's duty to put someone at ease, isn't it? Right, Arc-sama?”

Juliana glanced at Sect for a moment before she asked for my agreement with a cool expression.

The relationship between the two siblings wasn't that good.

Even though she'd only asked me a question, it would put me into a difficult situation no matter how I answered. I glanced to my side, but Ariane was avoiding my eyes.

Ponta was peacefully sleeping in Ariane's arms.

I avoided the topic by bringing up another, more important one.

“I was hoping to speak with King Calron before taking the reinforcements to Nozan. Is there a reason he isn't here?”

I wasn't expecting the king to greet us and see us off, but one of this country's princes would be acting as the leader of their forces, so it seemed rather incongruent that the king didn't show up.

Both prince Sect and princess Juliana physically reacted to my comment.

“.....There was a bit of a commotion in the capital this morning. Father went into the city to bring things under control.”

When princess Juliana spoke of the king's whereabouts her tone wasn't as clear as it usually was. Her eyes seemed to twitch as she looked at me.

Next to her, Sect shrugged his shoulders and shook his head with a sarcastic smile on his face as he listened to Juliana.

“I know that there's no shortage of our countrymen who have committed crimes against the elves, so I understand why you wouldn't give us a warning in advance.”

Both Ariane and I shared a confused look at their behavior.

A small body hopped up between us and interrupted the conversation.

“I was still asleep when the uproar happened, but it seems that two huge dragons visited the capital! Zahar went outside to see them, but they had already flown away by the time he made it. The king spoke a few words with them, but I really wanted to see them myself.”

Lille looked dejected as she said so, but one on her guard, Nina, knelt before the princess with a complex expression.

“You cannot, Lille-sama. No matter how intelligent a dragon is, it’s dangerous to approach them. Think of what would happen if something happened to you, the king would grieve.”

While Nina tried her best to persuade the princess. I whisper into Ariane’s ear.

“Ariane-dono, that huge dragon that appeared in Rhoden wouldn’t happen to have been Ferufivisurotte-dono by any chance?”

I don’t know why Ariane shock her head in response.

Those huge dragons that Lille was talking about..... I didn’t know every type of dragon in this world, but only those of the king-variety seemed to be able to speak. Ariane seemed to agree with me on that point.

However, the numbers were obviously not matching.

She left Maple early this morning..... and Ferufivisurotte definitely was alone then.

Maybe she’d met up with one of the other three dragon kings within Canada, but another question arose as I thought about who could be accompanying her.

She was supposed to be heading to Nozan, not Rhoden.

Even if there was another dragon king, it made no sense for the highly intelligent dragon kings to sweep down and bother people. Based on Lille reaction, it was rare for dragons to appear in human territories.

Moreover, there didn’t seem to be any damage done to the capital and the dragons had left after a short talk with the king.

According to Sect, the dragons that landed were seen as acting on Canada's behalf, so it would be a bit difficult to ask the context of the king's conversation with them.

Since the great elders hadn't informed us about anything, Ariane and I decided to change the topic after a silent glance.

"How about we start transferring everyone over to Nozan. Can we get the people going to gather around me?"

Prince Sect was the first to move at my prompting.

"As our representative, I'll be heading to Nozan first to exchange greeting with our allies. There are a few guards accompanying me, but that's to be expected."

Ten or so nearby knight escorts quickly joined his side.

When I looked around, I noticed that, in addition to the waiting soldiers, the palace garden was filled with fully loaded horse-drawn carts and mounted cavalry. It was obvious that the human soldiers had gathered an amount of supplies that was several magnitudes larger than those of the elves'.

I did the math in my head and calculated that it should take half a day to transfer everything to Nozan.

Then Lille announced her inclusion.

"I'll be going too! I have to report to my father, and I'm worried about the capital."

After saying her goodbyes to Princess Juliana, Lille and her two guards joined my side.

"We're in your care, Arc-dono."

"Yes."

It seems that my chest wouldn't be crushed this first time around. Then I let out a mental sigh as I remembered that the place I took Fargus and Dylan to was already overcrowded with troops.

The two of them didn't seem concerned so it shouldn't be a problem.

“Those who are not going to Nozan right now, stay outside the magic formation.”

After I declared my intention to use the transfer magic and moved to the center of the group, some of the knights were starting to back away.

Unlike the with the elves, who were familiar with transfer magic, several people let out surprised shouts when I invoked 【Transfer Gate】.

I released another sigh as I looked at the supplies and people that would need to be moved to Nozan’s capital.

“I guess I’ll be finished by this evening.....”

The surroundings had already changed when that utterance left my lips.

After witnessing the exchange between Sect and Asparuf, my monotonous round trips began anew.....

## Chapter 05: The Dragon Kings Arrive

The sky was dyed a rusty red shade by the time I finished moving the last of the supplies over from Rhoden. I rolled my shoulders a few times after I entrusted them to the waiting soldiers.

“Hmm, the repetition of the work was more challenging than the constant use of transfer magic.”

My eyes wandered over the scenery as I voiced my complaints.

The almost idyllic royal courtyard from this morning was now overrun with soldiers and supplies, with tents being set up all around me.

Normally it would be considered a major problem for foreign soldiers to be stationed in the royal palace, but priority was given to the emergency at hand.

Rhoden would surely be destroyed if they didn't join this alliance, even if they changed the location they confronted the enemy, the situation would not.

And Rhoden's forces weren't the only ones here.

The elven soldiers were setting up their own camp in another section of the courtyard, and the palace was starting to take the form of a base camp.

The soldiers' morale seemed considerably high, I could feel the pre-battle excitement all around me.

Everyone bowed or nodded in my direction as I passed them by.

Though I had become quite the celebrity, I didn't particularly regret it.

A world where humans, elves, beastmen and dwarves could live together was still an idealistic dream..... yet I still wanted to see such a thing, so if using my abilities could one day bring it about, I was happy to do so.

.....That's all it was.

When I first came to this world, the unique nature of my body had formed a desire to remain inconspicuous, but I was unable to ignore the wronged and those in need.

Living like a hermit in a remote place, blocking out everything else..... the people who were capable of that were a rarity.

When you live in a world, it was surprisingly difficult to separate yourself from it.

When I heard a familiar girl's voice, I turned in the direction of its origin.

"You seem tired, Arc-dono."

When I turned around I found Chiome, who'd been here since before noon.

She proudly exposed her cat ears and tail, which were the characteristics of a beastman, even as human soldiers walked by, her tail swaying in a long arc behind her.

"Chiome-dono. Were you able to meet up with Goemon-dono?"

She slightly shook her head in response.

Seeing her answer, my eyes wandered upwards to look how dusk was slowly but surely approaching.

A large amount of time had passed but, but they had yet to arrive.....

While I was wondering about Goemon's well-being, Chiome's ears stood straight up and clear blue eyes looked straight ahead.

"If he does not get in touch tomorrow, I will go search Delfuento. Arc-dono, I—"

While she was in the middle of speaking the surroundings suddenly changed. Chiome felt it too and immediately began scanning the surrounding area.

"What the hell is that!?"

Everyone's eyes were focused on the same spot in the sky..... when I turned my eyes skyward to have a look myself, I saw an irregular dark spot within the dusk dyed sky.

Two large shadows had appeared east of Soulia.

And those shadows were heading straight for the capital.

Their figures grew as they approached at considerable speed, and when it

became possible to identify them the entire palace was thrown into chaos.

The two shadows were dragons.

Both of the dragons were rather huge, but the one leading the pair was twice the size of the other dragon.

The lead dragon had two horns sprouting from its head and it was covered from head to tail in black scales, with a violet pattern rippling through its wings. The tip of its tail seemed to reflect sunlight or emit light itself.

Even though this was the first time I saw that dragon, I couldn't shake the feeling I'd seen it somewhere before.

However, the smaller dragon I definitely remembered.

Two sets of wings sprung from the bluish dragon's body and four horns grew on its head. I'd crossed blades with this dragon several times before.

Dragon King Williahsfim.

The dragon king who presided over the forest beyond the Wind Dragon Mountain Range, the place where his massive tree was rooted..... he and the other dragon, probably another dragon king, were lowering their altitude as they flew in this direction.

"In that case, that massive dragon must be Ferufivisurotte-dono, right?"

I hadn't seen her dragon form until now, but I was getting the same feeling from the huge dragon I got from her humanoid form.

Perhaps Ferufivisurotte had convinced Williahsfim to join the war effort.

Dragon King Williahsfim was very infatuated with Dragon King Ferufivisurotte and she must have been aware of it.

Perhaps she used that to her advantage.

"A reassuring ally is joining."

Chiome looked to the east and voiced an impression similar to my own as she wagged her tail.

I had to nod along with her statement since this made defeating the great undead army easier, although the surrounding soldiers lacked my leisurely

reaction to two dragon kings appearing in the sky above.

Some had drawn the weapons, while others collected their belongings to flee, while others still shouted orders in an attempt to restore order.

Unlike elves, humans didn't see dragon kings all too often.

When I began to consider methods to quell the commotion, trumpets were blown several times throughout the palace before being repeated again and again.

The soldiers who heard the trumpets looked at each other in utter confusion, but those who had raised their weapons reluctantly sheathed them.

Like that, the spreading confusion had started to slowly subside.

The trumpets must have been some kind of signal to the soldiers.

Eventually, the two dragon kings lowered their speed and descended upon the royal courtyard, although they still managed to kick up strong gusts of wind.

The dragon kings had landed in the elven camp.

Ariane and Furgas should be meeting with them right now, so I called for Chiome so that we could go there as well.

"Shall we go?"

However, Chiome looked in the opposite direction, the ears atop her head standing higher than I've ever seen them.

"Arc-dono, please go on ahead."

After she said that, Chiome ran off into the crowd of still dazed and confused soldiers.

Based on her behavior Goemon must have gotten in contact somehow.

While my ears and eyes were pretty good, they still paled in comparison to those of the beastmen.

For a few moments, I kept looking in the direction she'd disappeared in, but when I realized she wouldn't be back anytime soon I began making my way over to the elven camp.

The elven camp was a bit smaller than Rhoden's camp.

It wasn't that Nozan was neglecting the elves, it was just that Rhoden needed the extra space for all the supplies they'd brought with them.

Though now the center of the camp had been cleared to make room for the dragons, and the two dragon kings were now tightly packed into that area.

Ferufivisurotte's full length was probably around eighty meters, and the pressure she exuded seemed to increase as I took in the full scope of her size.

As I approached the two dragon kings, they gradually shrank and completely changed shape, all within five minutes.

Two figures stood in the middle of the elven warriors.

Ferufivisurotte had returned to the form she'd taken when we fought in Maple's arena and proceed to stab her crystal sword-tipped tail into the ground.

Her violet, vertically-slitted eyes, which matched the color of her hair, slowly scanned the area until they landed on me.

Beside her stood Dragon King Williahsfim in his four-meter tall humanoid form.

However, with his height and figure it was easy to tell, even from afar, that he was far from human.

In the first place, his head was still that of a dragon and his body was completely covered in blue scales.

In contrast to their dragon forms, Williahsfim was twice the size of Ferufivisurotte and the differences between their human forms were easily identifiable when they stood next to each other.

"Arc-han, sorry for being so late. Thanks for waiting."

Ferufivisurotte smiled as I finally made my way through the crowd of elven warriors, I arrived just as Ariane and five other people appeared from the opposite direction.

Behind her were the leaders of the elven forces, Dylan and Fargas, Prince Sect

of Rhoden's forces and Nozan's representatives, King Asparuf and princess Lille.

Ariane, who was still embracing Ponta, offered me a small nod before addressing the two dragon kings.

"Good evening, Ferufivisurotte-sama. Williahsfim-sama."

When Ariane greeted the pair, Ferufivisurotte gave her a small smile as she replied with a wave.

"You're Ivana's younger sister, Ariane, right? I thought it was better to have more fighting power, so I bought this guy without permission, is that okay?"

At Ferufivisurotte comment, Williahsfim immediately bowed as if he was trying to make his large frame as small as possible.

Since the dragon king, the apex of the world, was gonna take part in a human war, it would have been fine to have a more pompous attitude, but Williahsfim's current conduct seemed a bit different.

Contrary to his proud appearance, he was giving off the impression of a new recruit before their first campaign.

"I, Williahsfim, will be participating in this war as well. I am the cause of our tardiness due to having to cross the Wind Dragon Mountain Range. Thou would have been quicker if thou hast traveled directly from Maple....."

Williahsfim was showing a rarely seen side of himself, claiming responsibility for the lateness Ferufivisurotte had brought up.

While I didn't know the exact distance they flew, it must have been a considerable amount since they flew from Maple through Canada, and then from the Wind Mountain Range all the way to Nozan.

Given that they managed to make that trip in half a day there was no doubt that they had the fastest movement speed in the world, if you excluded my transfer magic.

The royalty was listening to their story with surprised expressions.

"We made a mistake and wound up in a completely different human country. When you think about it, we don't really know the layout of the human countries."

She accompanied her comment with an indifferent chuckle.

The reason they'd arrived when they had was because they'd gotten lost, otherwise they probably would have gotten here sooner.

The country they had accidentally ended up in, was probably Rhoden Kingdom.

Then Rhoden's King met with them earlier..... but could they really have gotten lost?

In response to her comment, elder Fargus bowed before her and spoke in a polite manner, as he greeted the larger Williahsfim.

"It seems you had quite the journey Ferufivisurotte-sama. And, Williahsfim-sama, I've heard of you from my granddaughter Ariane. I would like to thank you personally for supporting us alongside Ferufivisurotte-sama."

Great Elder Fargas' face was covered with a big smile as he said so.

"Y-Yes. Since it was a request from Ferufivisurotte-dono, this one is happy to lend his power to you all. Hahaha."

Williahsfim's usual haughty manner returned, but it seemed that he couldn't decide how to act with Ferufivisurotte, the object of his desire, standing next to him.

Bits of clumsiness remained, even as dry laughter escaped his dignified draconic face which indicated that he wasn't used to this type of thing.

Under my helmet, I moved my eyes from him and focused on Ferufivisurotte as she and Fargus spoke with one another.

However, I couldn't do much but speculate based on their expressions.

Behind Ariane, prince Sect was listening to their conversation with a troubled look on his face.

Apparently, King Asparuf had been waiting for the two Dragon Kings to finish their introductions before suggesting to move the discussion to another place, because once they were done he stepped forward to greet them

"On behalf of my country, I would like to thank you for helping with our

plight. I've set up a place to discuss our future plans inside the palace, let's continue this there."

"I'm tired after flying for so long. I could use a place to sit and rest."

Ferufivisurotte enthusiastically agreed with Asparuf's suggestion and began walking toward him, but then she suddenly stopped as if she had remembered something

"Willi-han, you're too big to go in there, so could you stay here and keep an eye on things?"

Ferufivisurotte turned to Williahsfim and told him what to do before giving me a flirtatious glance and heading towards the palace.

Williahsfim, who had basically been turned into her signpost, openly hung his head from his long neck.

While he could enter the castle in his present form, it would be difficult for him to use furniture meant for humans. Signpost was an accurate description.

King Asparuf led everyone into the palace, with elder Fargus and prince Sect following directly behind him. Ariane, who was still holding Ponta, fell behind them and looked all around shortly after matching my pace.

"Arc, where's Chiome-chan? She was going to see you last time I checked?"

She'd been looking for Chiome, with whom I'd split up a while ago.

"Ah, I did meet Chiome-dono, but she said she had to meet someone and vanished. Perhaps, she sensed that one of her companions had been nearby. It may have even been Goemon-dono."

Despite being well-behaved till now, Ponta suddenly leaped from Ariana's embrace and landed atop my head with a cry.

"Kyun! Kyun!"

"What's wrong, Ponta? Did you find something....."

A familiar person entered the edge of my vision as I asked Ponta what was going on.

Even in these crowded base camp, a man over two meter and fifty

centimeters tall stood out..... his muscular body was wrapped from head to toe in black cloth.

The cat ears atop his head showed that he of the same race as Chiome and his black and silver hair reminded me of a mackerel tabby.

One of the Blade Heart clan's six great ninja..... Goemon.

Chiome walked next to him.

"Chiome-dono, Goemon-dono. You've arrived safely."

"Mm....."

Goemon replied with a small nod when I called out to him.

As usual, he was a man of few words.

In such a manner, Chiome informed us of what he discovered in the neighboring country.

"Goemon has informed me of the situation in Delfuento Kingdom. It seems that Delfuento's capital has already fallen, and things are deteriorating rapidly from there."

Goemon nodded in affirmation of her report.

This confirmed that Nozan's two neighboring countries, Delfuento and Salma, had already collapsed and that this country was being set up for a pincer attack.

"There doesn't seem to be a whole lot of time left... Goemon, would you accompany us to the meeting with the king?"

Everyone nodded at my suggestion and we resumed our march into the palace.

## Chapter 06: Dragon King's Proposal

“In addition to Salma's Larisa, Delfuento's Rione has fallen as well! Only Soulia managed to repel the invasion..... damn it!”

The fall of the two capitals was being discussed in a palace conference room..... the one most surprised by the news was the feudal lord of Salma, Wendelin de Branier.

Margrave Branier, with his barely contained physique, sharp eyes and thinning white hair had more of a warrior's feel to him than a nobleman.

In response to his shout, everyone glanced down at the large map covering the table.

The opened map was centered around Nozan's capital. In addition to the rough topographical layout, it featured the position and names of its neighbors' capital cities, over which two black squares had been placed.

A third black square had been placed on Nozan's border with the Hiruku Theocracy.

“The likelihood of being attacked from three sides increases the more time passes.”

Fargus was stroking his white beard as he voiced his concerns, before crossing his arms.

King Asparf sighed and and shook his head when he heard that, and it was impossible not to notice the anxiousness reflected on Lille's face.

“It was truly fortunate that Arc-kun was here to cut down the invasion when he did. Otherwise, this kingdom would have fallen as well and Hiruku's invasion wouldn't have come to light until much later.”

Ariane's father, Dylan, made that point with a raised eyebrow.

To my left, prince Sect of Rhoden voiced his agreement with Dylan.

“We've all gathered here because of that. However, beings straight out of myths and legends, capable of surpassing thousands of soldiers... the world is

truly large.”

As he voiced his opinion, prince Sect’s eyes wandered over the sitting Ferufivisurotte and me, with Ponta sitting on my head.

Ferufivisurotte seemed to have been ignoring the conversation around her with closed eyes until now, but a smile appeared on her lips and her long, crystal-tipped tail began to sway.

“In my opinion, the place where humans reside is but one part of the world.....”

She slightly opened her eyes and a sharp change in the surroundings accompanied her threatening smile. On the receiving end of that, prince Sect audibly swallowed as he stared at her.

The pressure behind her words shattered the illusion that humans were the center of the world..... it was clear what she was intending to say.

“Kyun!”

In response to said pressure, Ponta immediately descended from the top my head and coiled herself around my neck like a scarf.

Ferufivisurotte responded to Ponta’s reaction with a mischievous laugh before pointing out the three black squares on the map.

“Ara, ara... how persistent. Why don’t we clear out the guys occupying these places first? Between me, Willi-han and armored Arc-han, we should be able to take care of them and deal with the others later, no?”

Although those of the human camps were visibly shocked by her rough outline of a strategy, the elves dropped their gazes to the map as if it’d been something close to a good plan.

With beings like the dragon kings, there was no need for complex stratagems. Rather, the focus should be on how everyone else should be moved to accommodate them.

If there was a person who was incredibly good at widespread destruction, like Ferufivisurotte and me, the most effective strategy would be to wipe the enemy out and hunt down the remnants afterwards.

However, the enemy's current placement proved to be problematic.

All eyes gathered on me when I raised my hand and pointed out the problem.

“The enemy is undead, as time passes more of the population of those cities will be turned into new undead, so it's a good idea to deal with them as soon as possible. However, if Ferufivisurotte and I use our powers inside the occupied cities, it would mean the death of any survivors still within them.”

As the previous use of my heavenly knight skill showed, it was neither pride or an exaggeration to say that I could destroy an undead army. Personally, I didn't want to use those skills too much, but our numerical disadvantage meant that I had no choice in the matter.

However, the power output was so vast that fine control over it was impossible and I needed the surroundings to be vacated before using them.

It was probably the same for the two dragon kings.

Dylan nodded at my point and placed a white piece on the side of the table.

“That's true. Both are large capitals of a country similar to this one. The hiding survivors cannot be saved if Arc-kun and Ferufivisurotte-sama level the cities.”

Elder Fargus spoke up once Dylan said his piece.

“Hmm, if you wanted to wipe the neighboring counties off the map, it wouldn't be a problem once the undead are cleared out.”

An upset king Asparuf joined the conversation as Fargus began chuckling.

“S-Such an act would lead to later ruination, I would never consent to that! Even if this affair is settled, what's the point if distrust and antipathy toward the elves spread throughout humanity!?”

Fargus revealed a hunting smile at the king's opinion.

However, Dylan, who set beside the great elder, spoke up again.

“Great Elder Fargus, please rein in your jokes. This is an exercise to build good relationships for the future.”

After that, he gave Lille, who'd been anxiously watching the pair, a reassuring smile.

“Returning to the subject at hand, to prevent the number of undead from growing and leaving the cities standing, we must lure the enemy out into the open. After we lure them out, we can unleash our most powerful war assets.”

As Dylan laid out his plan he placed two white squares on the map, one in front of Salma’s capital and another in front of Delfuento’s capital.

However, prince Sect voiced his doubts to Dylan.

“If the enemies are undead, there’ll be no need to siege them. They should instinctively chase the living. However, these undead are receiving instructions from the Hiruku Theocracy, will they really move within our expectations?”

Dylan frowned in response to the prince’s comment and placed another black piece on the map.

“The art of creating and manipulating undead is a considerable threat to the living. However, after conversing with others on the matter, I’ve concluded that the enemy doesn’t have complete control over the undead.”

Dylan paused for a moment to gauge everyone’s reactions.

With everyone’s eyes focused on him Dylan continued.

“The corrupted spirits controlling the undead are more powerful during the night and are weakened during the day.”

The elves reacted as if that was a fact to be taken for granted, and the beastmen Goemon and Chiome shared a small nod with one another.

However, the humans were uniformly surprised.

I had the same reaction as they did, fortunately, my helmet hid that fact from everyone.

Dylan waited for things to settle down before continuing his explanation.

“However, I heard that the undead which attacked this city only did so during the day, when they were at their weakest, and simply wandered about during the night. Based on this strange behavior, I believe it is impossible for them to be completely controlled at night. Perhaps its related to the sheer number of them, but the results are the same either way.”

Prince Sect nodded slightly as he added to the conversation.

“I see, if you lose control of your vast army every half a day, even if you can direct them towards a specific direction, enacting stratagems are impossible..... It’s best to lure them out in their weakened state and then wipe them out.”

Prince Sect then pointed at the two white pieces Dylan had placed on the map.

“When you consider that the enemy is growing in number, we should move a quickly as possible. Dividing our forces and simultaneously striking at Salma and Delfuento.”

There was an uneasy expression on King Asparuf’s face as he silently listened.

“If we divide our forces, then how will we defend my kingdom?”

From the king’s point of view, overthrowing Hiruku was important, but it would all be for naught if his own capital collapsed under a second invasion.

Dylan gazed at the map once more and slowly nodded his head after thinking about the matter for a bit.

“Things should be alright with the forces we have. Even if they invade again, they can’t arrive immediately. Besides, Prince Teruva should be returning with the amassed forces of the surrounding lords. That should be sufficient to hold during a siege, if need be.”

He assumed that Soulia could survive a second invasion and looked for consent in splitting the vast majority of our forces between Salma and Delfuento.

“I don’t mind it.”

“There aren’t any particular objections.”

“.....Hm.”

The representative of the three factions agreed with Dylan, who then directed a smile towards me.

“Arc-kun, I’ll have to ask you to use your transfer magic tomorrow.”

It wasn’t surprising to hear that.

I'd already decided to do the round-trip work, but there was a slight problem which I informed everyone of.

"I don't mind transporting the troops with my magic..... but the problem is that I don't have a transfer target for either Delfuento or Salma. As you know, my transfer magic can't be used unless I know the location."

Dylan's eyes popped open when his oversight was pointed out.

"Moving our forces to each of the capitals can only be accomplished one way. It will take a day or two to reach each capital, so it'll take at least four days of preparation for the transfer of the soldiers."

I looked at the map and traced the route from Soulia to Larisa in Salma, and then did the same for Rione in Delfuento.

The distance from Soulia was basically the same, it may have been possible to make the trip in one day if I contently transferred and visibility remained good.

"Is it possible to do three days of preparation in the span of a single day? I don't want to give the enemy that much time."

Dylan followed my finger as I traced the path over the map before he furrowed his brow and tried to recalculate the date as he stared at the black piece.

Ferufivisurotte, who'd been watching in amusement, suddenly stood up with a smile on her face and crossed her arm in a manner that emphasized her voluptuous chest.

"With this one here, there is a way to do it, no?"

She tilted her head to the side and asked so with a gentle smile.

## Chapter 07: Arc In the Sky

The sky was perfectly clear.

An eighty meter-long, huge dragon was lying on the ground in front of me, only its head was raised so that its reptilian could look directly on me.

“Are you sure about this?”

I stared up at the intimidating dragon..... at Dragon King Ferufivisurotte when I made that inquiry.

Ferufivisurotte regarded me with her violet eyes as she answered my question, making a “let’s go” gesture with her chin.

《Didn’t you say it yourself? To use your transfer magic you need to visit the intended destinations at least once. If you fly on my back we can reach them in no time.》

She urged me to climb on her back as she spoke.

Yesterday, it was decided that the best way to face the undead horde would be to divide our forces and face them on two fronts. When I explained the familiarity requirement of the spell, she insisted that the fastest way to reach those locations was by flight.

Certainly..... Flying straight to our destination would be quicker than traversing the topography with my secondary transfer magic.

Time was of the essence, now that Hiruku’s undead army had been unleashed, and it was without saying that her proposal was the most efficient option.

However. I was somewhat reluctant to do as she said and climb on her back.

I had no issue with riding my dragon mount Shiden, but even in her massive draconic form that was still able to speak I couldn’t see it as anything but straddling a woman.

“Ariane-dono, Chiome-dono would you care to tag along?”

I tried to remove the option of riding alone as I called out to Ariane and

Chiome behind me, in an attempt to erect a barrier by having other women accompany me.

“I-I’ll have to decline. Such a dreadful task.....”

“Flying through the air..... just imagining it is frightening.”

Ariane vigorously shook her head and refused to join the ride, while Chiome’s ears were flat against her head and her tail was hanging low to the ground as she hid behind Ariane.

Somehow, the two of them were not very keen about the idea of flying on a dragon king’s back.

You shouldn’t force a woman to take part in something she didn’t want to... As I gathered my resolve, Ponta cried out from her usual spot.

“Kyun! Kyun!”

“Oh, you what to come along Ponta.....”

After hearing Ponta’s cry, Ferufivisurotte urged me to get on her back even more forcefully than before.

《Arc-han, stop being stupid and climb on my back. Besides, you already have the fluffy fox on your head. If too many people come, I’ll have to fly slower to avoid having any of them fall off.》

She used the crystalline sword on her long tail to push me towards her back after saying so.

What she was saying was true..... or rather, her point was absolutely correct.

In order to use transfer magic, I had to be able to visualize the location and taking me alone would be sufficient to memorize it.

It wasn’t necessary to bring multiple people.

The only issue was my reluctance to climb upon her back..... I thought it over again as I stared at the black scales that covered her back.

There was no proper way to go about this.

I used a saddle whenever I rode Shiden, but there was no such padding or anything similar on her back.

Naturally, there wasn't a saddle large enough to fit a dragon king because no one would ever think of doing something as foolish as riding one. Not even a reckless person would do something so obviously detrimental to their health.

If I had to ride on her back as we flew in the sky then the answer was simple.

Just as Ponta always clung to my helmet, I had to hold onto her and try not to be thrown off.

For the time being, I wrapped my knapsack, which contained my drawing implements for sketching the location of the transfer point, around my shoulders.

I may have looked like an old-timey burglar, but it was the only way I could hold on to her with both hands.

After receiving further prompting from her, I placed Ponta on her large back.

The glossy black scales had a mysterious feel to them. Despite the hard texture, they had an elastic feel to it, I was so fascinated by the scales that I received a scolding from Ferufivisurotte.

《Arc-han, don't stroke a woman's back without permission!》

“Oh, sorry. It was unintentional, the feeling of your scales was.....”

I immediately stopped my hand and apologized to her.

Ariane, who was now watching from a distance, was directing unspoken pressure at my back, preventing me from carelessly turning around.



Although I'd hesitated to ride on the back of a woman, I immediately began

rubbing said woman's back as soon as I climbed aboard..... while I was reflecting on my actions, Ferufivisurotte slowly rose to her feet and unraveled her wings, which caused the surrounding elves to back away from her.

《Well then, let's go! Don't fall off, 'kay?》

“Understo—!?”

After her warning, she began to flap her gorgeous, large wings at a rapid pace, resulting in such a rapid increase in wind pressure that my body was pinned to her back.

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh ~~~~~ !!?”

A scream leaked from my mouth as a torrent of wind that accompanied our rapid ascent pushed me backward before a strange sensation washed over me.

There was no time to look at the surroundings and only the sensation of being launched skyward was clear, which made me wonder if this was what astronauts experienced aboard a rocket.

“Ky—un!”

Ponta, who'd been pushed against my chest, let out an excited shout.

Even though I was envious of Ponta, I desperately clung on and fought against the wind pressure, until it suddenly stopped and my body became light.

I was finally able to take in our surroundings, and it was clear that we were a considerable distance in the sky. Soulia looked like a small speck in between Ferufivisurotte's flapping wings.

I had no idea what the exact altitude was, but based on the size of the capital below I'd say we were between a thousand and two thousand meters in the sky.

“I-it would be instant death if you fell from this height.....”

“Kyun! Kyun!”

At this height, I couldn't even locate the elves who had gathered to send us off. Honestly, I would be cowering if I weren't in my skeleton form right now.

However, at the same time, the feeling of taking in the otherworldly beauty of

the scenery I was currently seeing, all the while being caressed by the wind, was utterly enthralling.

Eventually, Soulia faded into the background as Ferufivisurotte flew westward, in the opposite direction of the rising sun.

Now, the landscape that spread below was that of the Sobiru mountain range, which acted as a natural border between Nozan and Salma, and the forest at the foot of the mountains.

The height of the mountain range wasn't low by any means, since some of its highest peaks were snowed over, which only occurred at three thousand meters. However, Ferufivisurotte easily increased her altitude once more and leisurely flew westwards over the mountains.

"It seems that we will arrive at Salma's capital earlier than anticipated."

"Kyun! Kyun!"

As I was looking down at the landscape slowly wandering past us, Ponta finally popped out from under my chest, spread out her fluffy tail and let out a pleased cry.

Ferufivisurotte briefly looked back at me before puffing out her chest and boasting about her own prowess.

«Naturally, it is because of my wings. This time we checked the maps, so you can just relax on my back and enjoy the ride, Arc-han.»

Certainly, in regards to travel speed, nothing except my long-distance transfer magic matched a dragon king, but that wasn't something everyone could use.

I guess that the act of a dragon king placing someone on their back was dependent on Ferufivisurotte, Williahsfim, and the other kings' attitudes.

However..... Things like altitude, the chilling wind and the effect of rapid acceleration and ascension on the body, in addition to maintaining one's grip, had to be considered as well. In hindsight, it was probably for the best that Ariane and Chiome hadn't come along.

She must have understood all of this from the beginning, which is why she refused to let anyone but me ride her, as I had proven myself capable of

withstanding it..... let's not think about whether or not that had been a thought-out conviction, or just an optimistic guess on her behalf.

.....Well, in terms of viability, it wasn't all that different from my transfer magic.

Still, neither the cold, altitude or speed prevented Ponta from cheerfully wagging her tail.

While I was thinking over such things, Ferufivisurotte's violet eyes focused on me again as she spoke in an irritated tone.

《Arc-han, you've been quiet for a long time, say something.》

She thrust her long tail up as she made her demand to me.

It was enough for me to silently take in the scenery, but that didn't seem to be the case for her, so she asked her passenger to speak with her.

I didn't have anything to add anything to the abrupt conversation, but after scratching my head for a while I remembered something from our first encounter.

“Well, Ferufivisurotte-dono, if you would allow me there is one question I'd like to ask.”

《Huh, what is it?》

When I first met her..... the most surprising thing about her wasn't her appearance or aura around her, it was the peculiar accent.

The first dragon king I had met was Williahsfim and I'd just assumed that all of them would speak in his formal manner, so it'd been a bit off-putting when I'd met her.

However, since nobody had commented on it, I gradually started to accept it.

“Ferufivisurotte-dono, your manner of speaking is a little peculiar, did you always talk like that? Or do you normally speak in a similar fashion to Williahsfim?”

She rapidly blinked her reptilian eyes at my question for a few moments before replying with a hearty chuckle.

《Ahahhah, that's right. You also came from the other side...》

She paused for a moment before she settled her gaze on me again.

《It's something that Eva-han taught me. It's an elegant manner of speaking on the other side, isn't it?》

Ferufivisurotte seemed a bit confused when I nearly choked on my words as I turned to reply to her.

“Umm, that's the case, in a certain sense.....”

Her dialect certainly resembled a Kyoto dialect..... it wasn't dishonest to say that, but frankly speaking, it was obviously fake.

What on earth did the first chieftain teach her?

Given everything I know I'd thought that Evangeline, the one who'd created Great Canada Forest, had been Canadian, but perhaps she'd been Japanese like me..... no, it was just a possibility, not a fact.

While I pondered Evangeline's nationality, Ponta looked towards the ground and wagged her tail more vigorously.

“Kyun! Kyun!”

When I heard that cry, I looked down and saw that the mountain range was giving way to plains.

“Oh, we've already crossed the border. That was indeed fast.”

The plains beyond the Sobiru mountains rested within Salma.

《If I'm not mistaken the capital of this country, Larissa, should be a coastal city.》

Ferufivisurotte had grasped the surrounding geography on a map before we left Soulia and seemed to know the route by heart, or was comparing the surroundings to her memory of the map.

Vast plains spread out beneath my gaze and the horizon stretched out in the distance.

Perhaps that was the southern sea. It hadn't taken half a day to get here, and I let out a relieved sigh as things seemed to be going ahead of schedule.

Eventually the massive walls of a sprawling port-city spread out in front of us, next to the southern sea.

## Chapter 08: Capital Larissa

A port city lied in the distance..... based on the description Branier had provided beforehand, and the magnificent fort built along the nearby hill, it was safe to assume that this city was Larissa.

After she spotted the city, Ferufivisurotte gradually lowered her flight speed and began to hover in the air.

Even from the sky, it was clear that the city was far from the state it would be in during peace times.

In the harbor, several ships were anchored, but all of them were heavily damaged or had pillars of black smoke rising from them.

Only a few boats had managed to drift out to sea, but their sails had been shredded or their masts had been snapped off.

The city was also heavily damaged, with multiple breaches in the city wall. Pillars of black smoke were rising throughout the city and destroyed buildings were visible even from up here.

Just as Branier had predicted after hearing from the messenger dispatched by the capital, Larissa had fallen victim to the undead ambush.

From this height and distance, it was impossible to tell if there were any survivors.

Ferufivisurotte seemed a bit puzzled as she observed the city below.

«Ara, there are a bunch of undead in that city, have you ever seen so many of them? There's one large signature in a sea of smaller ones, ten thousand of them, perhaps?»

“What.....”

To grasp the situation on the ground from this distance, as expected of an exceptional being.

Although my current body had good eyesight, it was still within the realm of common sense. Even I was incapable of observing the ground with satellite-like

clarity from two thousand meters in the air.

However, her ludicrous sensory capabilities weren't the problem. The problem was the number of undead she said were in the city.

Branier had said that Larissa had been attacked by two-hundred-thousand undead. If the vast majority of them weren't here, it meant that they were already on the move.

The undead in the city were probably left behind to guard the occupied territory.

The messenger from Larissa had arrived in margrave Branier's remote territory seeking aid shortly after the attack had begun. Considering the time it took the margrave to reach Nozan, a considerable number of days had passed since the ambush.

It was possible that the undead army had already reached Branier's territory, but from what Goemon had witnessed in Delfuento's capital, it was unlikely they could move immediately after capturing Larissa.

Though the spider-chimera could match a horse in regards to running speed, the undead soldiers which made up the majority of the army's soldiers were no different from humans.

Since that was the case, there was still a bit of time left.

"Ferufivisurotte-dono, we still need to establish a transfer location, can you land us in a suitable location?"

For future actions, it was necessary to draw the scenery of the location that would act as the Larissa transfer location.

《Ho, a suitable location—》

Ferufivisurotte shifted the angle of her wings when she said that.

"OW NOOOOOOO!?" "Kyun!"

We suddenly began dropping out of the sky, the rapid updraft nearly throwing me off with the same force that had pinned me to Ferufivisurotte during our ascension.

I clung to her back in an attempt to fight against the weightlessness, then a thundering boom preceded a shock that ran through her massive body.

Two spider chimera had been patrolling the area, and Ferufivisurotte had crushed them beneath her feet, cutting down the remaining undead around her with the crystalline tip of her tail.

It was a leisurely swipe of her tail, but it cut across the ground like the grim reaper's sickle, and all the undead within her tail's range were bisected.

《Uh, the stench is making my nose weep.》

Ferufivisurotte show of overwhelming power was somewhat marred by her complaint about the stench of the undead.

The place we'd landed..... appeared to be a field next to Larissa.

It was no longer possible to harvest the now trampled wheat.

Not all of the fields had been trampled, but considering just how many people could survive on what little remained..... My gaze wandered over the city overflowing with the dead and undead.

Because we couldn't afford to be leisurely about this, I unwrapped the furoshiki, took out my drawing implements and began sketching the area.

However, just as I was about to begin my work, I caught sight of several spider chimeras and a host of undead soldiers approaching our location.

It would take too much time to annihilate all the undead loitering outside the city, and Ferufivisurotte just seemed annoyed by them as she watched their approach.

“Ferufivisurotte-dono, I'm apologise, but would you mind dealing with the surrounding undead while I finish the task at hand?”

She proudly puffed out her chest when she replied to my question.

《I'll play around with them for a while, give me a shout when you're done.》

With that she kicked the ground as she flapped her wings, basically gliding towards the undead as she unleashed her reaper's sickle upon them.

The sound of a whiplash rang out as she began to reap the surroundings.

The undead vanished in an instant and the wheat stalks were thrown into the air and fell to the ground like confetti.

“Kyun! Kyun!”

Ponta’s cry drew my attention away from her colossal back, and I resumed my drawing in a hurry.

If I didn’t hurry, she might actually clear out the surrounding undead and turn her attention towards the city.

I decided on the space directly in front of Larissa’s city wall as the transfer location and began recreating the scene on the parchment. Since there wasn’t much time, I only drew a rough sketch and planned to fill in the details later.

“It would be nice if I could immediately envision landscapes when I invoke transfer magic.”

That utterance left my lips as I compared the drawing to the actual location.

Although it’d been a rushed job, I’d say I managed to capture the general image.

After finishing my work and putting away my implements, I shouted Ferufivisurotte’s name while she crushed some undead beneath her feet.

“Ferufivisurotte-dono!!”

Her hearing was quite impressive, as soon as I called her, she stopped cutting down undead and leisurely flew back to me.

《That was unexpectedly quick.》

Ferufivisurotte sighed and looked back at the capital as she said that.

Her purple reptilian eye blinked once as her sharp gaze poured over the city.

“Is something wrong?”

“Kyun?”

When Ponta and I voiced our concerns, Ferufivisurotte slightly shook her head and glanced back at me.

《The one large presence that had been in the city suddenly vanished.....》

At her comment, I turned my attention to the destroyed town.

Because I lacked Ariane's and Chiome's high-level sensory capabilities I couldn't understand what Ferufivisurotte meant with she talked about presences.

However, that big presence she spoke of probably wasn't a spider chimera or an undead soldier.

Perhaps it was a cardinal, or even the pope.

The fact that they suddenly vanished could mean that they had access to transfer magic like mine.

If that were the case, it would be impossible to follow them, and it meant another problem for us.

"Ferufivisurotte-dono, the main body of the undead forces have probably begun heading for Margrave Branier's territory. I would like to pinpoint their current location, so may I borrow your wings?"

We were supposed to return to Soulia once we set the transfer location, but if the undead host was already marching towards Branier's territory, then we needed to keep track of its present position.

Depending on their estimated time of arrival we might have to alter our plans.

However, her reply to appeal was a rather plain one.

«Arc-han, didn't I already say I would lend you my power? Stop wasting time and climb on my back. Get a good grip, because I'm gonna fly a little recklessly.»

"No even a second of hesitatioooooonnnnnn!?"

After I tied my bag to my shoulders again and sat on her back with Ponta, Ferufivisurotte took that as the signal to ascend into the sky.

"Ky~~uh!!"

Ponta let out a happy cry, even as the wind forced her against my chest.

Eventually, the intense wind pressure subsided and Ferufivisurotte began flying in a circle before asking me a question.

«The Branier territory is east of here, right?»

“That’s right. I want a grasp of our enemy’s current location.”

When I answered her question, she nodded and immediately turned to the east.

“Come on, let’s go!”

Ferufivisurotte spread her wings wide open in response to my comment, their purple patterns rippling as she flew faster and faster eastward bound.

“Kyun! Kyun!”

An intense headwind bombarded me, but Ponta just looked immensely pleased.

There was a strange air bubble surrounding Ponta that seemed to lessen the wind force she experienced, it was quite a skillful use of magic. I’d heard that riding the wind currents was a fluffy fox’s primary means of transportation, so it was probably a racial skill.

It was an enviable ability to have for someone at risk at being knocked off by the wind.

However, I didn’t have to endure the wind for long.

Ferufivisurotte lowered her speed and urged me to look down.

《Arc-han, down below.》

“That, what.....”

I held my breath as I took in the spectacle on the ground below.

Scattered across the plains were these small, black spots..... those spots being a countless numbers of undead all heading toward the east.

Their movement wasn’t like what I’d seen from the forces of the Holy Leburan Empire, but they were still slowly but surely marching towards the Branier territory and the elven populated Rouen Forest.

“Given the distance from here to Larissa, it will still take them some time to reach the territory’s border, but that isn’t anything to be optimistic about.....”

“Kyun!”

An utterance escaped my lips as Ponta intensely stared at the ground.

《Once they gather in one place, one of us can blow them away with magic. It'll be messy with them scattered about that.》

Ferufivisurotte didn't even try to hide the disgusted sound she emitted before looking back at me.

《How about it, Arc-han?》

“That is.....”

It was as she said, we could annihilate the hundreds of thousands of marching undead, but the manner in which they were spread out meant that there was no guarantee that an area of effect spell would destroy all of them.

While it was possible for Ferufivisurotte and me to kill them all, we didn't have the time to spare.

Since we could no longer hope to deploy troops at Larissa, the next transfer site candidate would have to be on the border of the margrave's territory.

However, it was possible that the army would split in two to attack the elven village Doranto in the south once they breach the territory.

If we wanted to destroy a significant portion of the enemy's war potential we needed to find a location that would hinder their movement.....

I considered that while trying to remember the map layout of the area.

《The Uiru river should flow along the border. How about we prepare a greeting for them there?》

As if she'd read my mind, Ferufivisurotte spoke the idea I'd just thought of.

“Yes, we should set the new location near the fort that sits on the edge of the territory.”

According to margrave Branier, a few forts remained on the eastern bank of the Uiru river from back when the territory had belonged to Nozan, and he'd restored them back to working order.

While the official statement was that they were meant to protect important highways, their real purpose was to fend off harassment from other Salman

nobles and the neighboring territories.

Villages in the Branier territory had fallen victim to bandit raids until the margrave restored the forts.

Ariane didn't seem to understand the connection between those things, but King Asparuf accepted it as if it were a common occurrence.

It seems that the Branier territory was under constant threat of invasion from both outside and within.

Regardless, our first step will be to visit the Uiru river fort.

“Ferufivisurotte-dono, can you overlook them for now and take us to down near the Uiru river? We'll set the new location there and return to Soulia immediately afterward.”

Ferufivisurotte accepted the new timetable I suggested with a nod.

《Okay, I'm setting off again!》

After she made that declaration, she flapped her wings and resumed her eastern flight.

The undead didn't seem to notice us flying above them, and in almost no time we'd left them far behind.

Against such a strong headwind, I squinted my eyes and focused on what was straight ahead.

Ferufivisurotte flight speed was the same as it'd been before, so it should be possible to estimate how long it would take to the undead army to reach the river.

## Chapter 09: Strategy Meeting

In front of me, a mighty river meandered from the north to the south.

There was no doubt that the Uiru river started at the Sobiru mountains.

We'd overtaken the undead army by a wide margin, so it was possible they had just left Larissa.

On our way here, we crossed another mountainous area, separated from the Sobiru mountain range by a vast plain, which narrowed the closer we came to the river.

My eyes wandered over to the fort sitting on the opposite bank. If the mountains slowed the undead down, it should take them two days, no... three days to cross the river.

I confirmed the existence of two forts from here.

Sturdy stone walls surrounded both of them.

Those forts initially acted as Nozan's first line of defense when it still owned these lands..... it was rather pompous to re-purpose those military strongholds as highway patrol stations, but it would undoubtedly be difficult for bandits to cross over from neighboring territories.

There was a massive stone bridge that spanned across the river banks, and it seemed to be impossible to reach the Branier territory from Larussa without crossing it first.

"Hmm, if that is another anti-harassment measure, it should suffice as a base of operation in the case of a large-scale raid. I don't understand the inner-workings of high society."

"Kyun!"

Ponta gave me a confused glance as I muttered an utterance both amazement and disgust.

Ponta's large eyes didn't reveal if she understood me or not, so I stroked her head and asked Ferufivisurotte to take us down a little bit away from the forts.

“Ferufivisurotte-dono, can you land us a good distance away from the forts?”

Margrave Branier had yet to return from his trip to Nozan..... that meant that news of the current operation hadn't reached here yet.

Naturally, none of the soldiers tasked with patrolling the border would know who I was. Someone riding an 80-meter tall dragon king would cause an uproar.

Despite landing a reasonable distance away from the fort, my objective was to draw the new transfer coordination, and there would be no point if we were too far away from the forts.

Although it would be risky to approach the fort, as long as the giant dragon king didn't cause a problem, I should be able to jot down the new location and return to Soulia.

《Don't fall off.》

After saying that, she landed on the eastern bank of the Uiru river and laid down.

When we landed, there was almost nothing blocking the view of the forts, and I saw a soldier at the top of one of the tower panicking before he disappeared.

His extreme reaction was only natural.

Although we'd landed a reasonable distance away, there was no way a human could ignore a massive dragon appearing out of nowhere.

Luckily, the stone bridge sandwiched between the pair of forts was a distinctive enough feature, a rough sketch should be enough to recall this place from memory.

“Ferufivisurotte-dono, once I'm finished, we'll be returning to Soulia, so you can return to your human form if you like,”

She nodded at my suggestion.

It was possible to move her large figure with transfer magic, but increasing the size of the magic formation also increased the mana consumption, and I wanted to leave a surplus for what was to come.

I'd probably have to return here with five thousand troops to bolster the defenses of this place after returning to Soulia.

I hopped off her back and immediately pulled out my drawing implements.

"Kyun!"

"Wait a bit longer Ponta. We'll be returning to Soulia soon."

I tried to soothe Ponta, who'd started jumping on my head, and did my best to take in the scenery.

The Uriu, which could be seen from the sky, was a rather large river that was well over a hundred meters across.

However, it was a broad, but shallow river, with the small boulders resting along the riverbed causing breaks in the current. The spider chimeras should be able to easily cross it.

I copied down the scenery while taking all of the environmental details into account.

In the midst of my work, Ferufivisurotte-dono had begun her transformation into a humanoid, by the time she'd finished the panicked man from before had returned with several other people.

While the other soldiers seemed annoyed as they scanned the surrounding area, the original watchman pointed and gestured as they tried to explain themselves.

I couldn't help but feel bad for them as they tried to figure out how the massive dragon suddenly vanished.

"Kyun! Kyun!"

Ponta's cries and swats at my helmet cleared away the unnecessary thoughts from my head, and my hands resumed their work.

"You're quite skilled at that."

The rough outline and secondary overlay had been completed when Ferufivisurotte commented on the drawing as I compared the picture against the scenery it was based on.

“Sorry to keep you waiting. Once I’m finished, we can return to Soulia.”

“Yes, it’s been a while since I traveled by transfer magic.”

After placing the drawing into my bag, I faced Ferufivisurotte as her mind traveled to the days of old with a smile on her face.

I’m sure that the first chieftain Evangeline had been able to use transfer magic, so traveling with me must have brought up memories.

“【Transfer Gate】.”

When I invoked the spell, Ferufivisurotte took an interest in the magic formation that appeared at my feet.

I pictured the palace courtyard in Soulia in my mind before everything went dark and our surroundings wholly changed.

“Transfer magic is truly convenient.”

Ferufivisurotte was the first to speak up after we returned.

“No even half a day has passed since we left. It’s thanks to your wings Ferufivisurotte-dono. I appreciate everything you did.”

Because she usually didn’t allow people to ride on her back, I thanked her for putting up with everything.

“Such a stiff fellow, you’re different from Eva-han.”

She had a thin smile on her face as she gave me a funny look.

“Arc-han, didn’t I already tell you this before? I already said that I would help. Ah, I’ll still accept your personal thanks of course. You see?”

Her lips formed into a half-smile and she raised the crystalline sword at the end of her tail over her head after saying that.

“Then, shall we give our report to the others?”

“Kyun! Kyun!”

With that hurried change of topic, I turned on my heels and rushed to the palace with Ponta in hand.

In a specific room inside the palace.

The representatives of each faction in opposition of Hiruku had gathered here.

Ariane, Chiome and Goemon, as well as each of the representatives, were all focused on Ferufivisurotte and me.

The white and black pieces from yesterday had been reset on the opened map on the main table.

I picked up the black piece that had been set near Larissa and moved it to a new eastern position.

“What!? They’ve already captured Larissa and are heading eastward!?”

Margrave Branier let out a surprised shout as he watched the rearrangement of the pieces, as the movements of the black pieces..... showed the actions of the undead army.

“Yes, only the bare minimum of troops had been left behind to occupy Larissa, and the rest of their forces have begun their march to the Branier territory. While it isn’t a normal march, all of the undead are steadily heading eastward.....”

As I explained the situation to everyone, Ferufivisurotte began playing with one of the black pieces, a thin smile covering her face.

“If they walked in formation like humans, I could’ve blown them away with a single breath.”

The human representatives, Prince Sect, King Asparuf and Margrave Branier all became distraught by her comment. Only Princess Lille looked puzzled by their reactions.

“If Ferufivisurotte-sama is so strong, then the people attacked by the undead can be at ease. Why are you making such a difficult expression father?”

Under Lille’s serious look, King Asparuf cleared his throat and began contemplating his next course of action.

Margrave Branier returned to his senses thanks to that and took another look at the map.

“Arc-dono, do you have any idea how long it will take them to reach my

territory? It doesn't need to be accurate, but an estimation would be of great help."

Margrave Branier clung to his territory..... I looked him in his praying eyes and told him how many days remained until the army reached his home.

"Based on what I saw, two or three days."

".....That's remarkably fast."

Deep wrinkles formed above Margrave Branier's eyebrows as he began mumbling to himself. Dylan's gaze rose from the map before he made a few observations about the enemy's movement.

"The undead do not need to sleep or eat like regular people. A vast amount of distance can be covered since they don't need to rest. Given the topography, it should only take them four days at most."

As Dylan had said, undead didn't have to waste time eating or sleeping while they relocated.

They didn't have to cart around luggage or food..... without enough food, or water for the horses at the very least, it would be impossible for humans to match their marching speed.

Soldiers able to fight 24/7 without tiring could be considered the ultimate soldiers

Also, since they were already dead, they would never die naturally.

There was a vast difference between them and my undead appearance; I could still eat, sleep in a bed and take pleasure in bathing.

While I contemplated the differences between me and legitimate undead, Ferufivisurotte tapped the white piece placed near the Uiru river.

"For the time being, the forts along the Uiru river shall act as our defensive line. If you can reduce their numbers a little and halt their movements we can handle the rest."

While King Asparuf and Margrave Branier seemed confused by her statement, both Dylan and great elder Furgas nodded along with it.

“I never thought I’d live long enough to see one of Ferufivisurotte-sama’s serious attacks.”

The King and the Margrave shared a look and nodded after listening to elder Fargus’s remark and his chuckle.

The dragon king had just conveyed a plan to fight the two-hundred-thousand undead that could hardly be considered a strategy, and the experienced dark elf commander didn’t seem the slightest bit anxious about it. They seemed to realize that this war was no longer in human hands.

Elder Fargus and Dylan already understood that they would, for the most part, be relegated to clean up after Ferufivisurotte unleashed her attack.

I would’ve liked to see her in action myself, but she’d been placed in charge of Salma, while I would handle Delfuento.

“Then, the two forts on our side of the frontlines with Salma should be composed of troops from Rhoden and the Branier territory, with roughly one thousand carefully selected Canadian warriors acting as the rearguard. Any objections?”

Dylan sought the consensuses of everyone present after outlining his plans for the Salman front.

The silence seemed to reflect their agreement with the idea.

“Because there’s a limited amount of time remaining, the forces from Rhoden and Canada will be led by prince Sect and elder Fargus respectively. Arc-kun, we will be relying on your magic once more.”

Dylan placed two white pieces along the edge of the Uiru river before putting two more in the forested area nearby.

“After the troops have been transported, there should be enough time for margrave Branier to return to his base and lead his troops to the designated area. I hope that the warriors of Doranto will participate, but I will summarize the situation to elder Fargus and the other Canadian warriors later.”

Dylan paused once more and locked gazes with everyone.

“Once the deployment to the Salman front is completed, we’ll need to check

the status of things on the front lines in Delfuento. The forces over there will be composed of Canadian warriors and the members of the Blade Heart Clan, and shall be centered around Arc-kun and Williahsfim-sama.”

Dylan turned to me for confirmation after saying that.

“While I approve of your plan Dylan-dono, I’m gonna have to request postponing the deployment of Ferufivisurotte-dono, as I still need to set a location for Delfuento’s capital.....”

Given the concerning speed of the undead, it was necessary to get ahold of the situation in Delfuento before things changed.

According to Goemon’s report, they seemed to be staying in the capital, but they could already be on the move.

In a world where information rarely traveled at the speed of my near instantaneous transfer magic, or the flight speed of a dragon king, the movement of an undead horde was a more significant threat than I first thought.

The Kingdoms of Salma and Delfuento had already fallen to these undead hordes.

I, who’d been raised in a modern society, had underestimated the importance of superior mobility.

To reliably stay ahead of the undead, we couldn’t afford to lose the dragon king’s ability to soar above the topography. While I intended to rely on Ferufivisurotte’s wings once more, the person in question nominated someone else.

“Well, isn’t there another dragon king here? There shouldn’t be an issue if you ask him, right?”

Her mouth formed into a crescent moon as she calmly chuckled.

It seems I would be riding on Williahsfim’s back instead of Ferufivisurotte’s this time..... a dry laugh left my lips as I remembered the time I unknowing walked across his back.

## Chapter 10: The Defense of Uiru River | Part 1

The Uiru River, which flows south from the Sobiru mountains in the west, acted as the dividing line of Salma's fringe territories.

The river intersected the highway that connected the Brainer territory to Larissa with a solid stone bridge. The former Nozan forts had been converted into guard stations for the soldiers that patrolled the highway.

Usually, the sheer size of the minimally staffed and renovated forts left them with a deserted atmosphere, but now the air was fraught with pre-war elation and irritation of the soldiers that filled the forts to the rafters.

It wasn't just the soldiers originally assigned to the forts here, but also the reinforcements from Rhoden, the remainder of Brainer's military and even a few elven soldiers. All were gathered here.

As for the elves, it wasn't only the Canadian who were present: the elven warriors from Doranto, lead by elder Sergei and elder Iwaldo, were also here.

Since it was a rare occurrence actually to see an elven warrior, the humans were casting sideways glances at them. However, it wasn't just the ears that caught their attention.

The beautiful female warriors amongst the elves certainly caught the attention of those accustomed to a male-dominated society, and that was partially responsible for the lack of tension one would expect before a battle against the undead that would determine humanity's faith.

This unprecedented crisis caused by the undead army had caused the long disparate parties of this world, even the elves and beastman, to band together in a bid for survival.

Actions that may cause discord between mutual allies were strictly prohibited.

However, though no one dared to say it, most of the soldiers were aware of the difference in power between them and the elves.

Some were capable of unitizing transfer magic powerful enough to move

supplies and troops in the blink of an eye, and others singlehandedly hunted monsters which required an entire unit to subdue. Although they'd heard rumors, this was the first time many of them were exposed to the difference between the elves and themselves.

One thing was for sure, those present at this battle would turn the other way if ordered to fight the elves.

While the governing bodies of humanity never imagined that the elves exceeded the might of both empires, it was clear that their attitude towards elvenkind would be changed from this point on.

You could see it in the way some of their superiors humbled themselves before the elves, despite their numbers not exceeding even one thousand people.

However, nobody publicly voiced any dissatisfaction.

The primary contributing factor to this atmosphere was stretching her wings in the courtyard in-between the two forts.

Dragon King Ferufivisurotte..... one of the most powerful creatures in the world, whose legend was passed along through poem, plays and songs, opened her wings and flew into the sky.

Her majestic figure reached a length of eighty meters. No matter your status, no matter how brilliant you were, and no matter how brave you claimed to be... no one could remain calm in front of such an existence.

It was a symbol of the kind of power that disregarded all reason.....

The elves had requested the dragon king's cooperation in the coming battle..... only the truly brave or idiotic would maintain a haughty attitude in front of someone like that.

With the awe-inspiring dragon king here, even the ordinary soldiers understood that they wouldn't be contributing much to the coming battle.

However, the soldiers here knew that they were here only to prevent the spirit of "cooperation" from collapsing if the general public felt that humanity's dignity had been trampled.

The reality of the situation was undeniable, but cooperation equally important...

In that regard, the officials understood that the soldiers needed to return with a sense of pride after fighting for their home and country and had arranged for that to happen. The troops were well aware of that fact after hearing the speech given before deployment.

Still, many of the soldiers were happy to have such a reliable ally on their side.

No, what made the soldiers worry was the fact that the vast army of undead invaders originated from the Hiruku Theocracy.

It was just too outrageous to believe that Hiruku had been taken over by monsters, and there were already rumblings questioning if it was even possible to control such evil.

Moreover, the majority of the soldiers had been raised under Hiruku's human-centric doctrine since they were children.

The validity of the story was still unknown, but the undeniable fact, which seemed to support the story, was that the various races of the world had gathered to face a common threat.

The situation's rapid development hadn't given the soldiers enough time to rein in their emotions.

The dragon king that had flown to Larissa on a scouting mission had to turn back after being spotted over the city.

After the same dragon king landed on an open plain nearby the forts, a messenger ran out telling everyone that the enemy had arrived.

At the time, the announcement hiked up the soldiers' tension and those interested to learn what form the enemy took patrolled the outer walls and climbed the watchtower to get a look at them only to find nothing.

Now everyone was examining the opposite bank of the Uiru river.

The thin layer of grey clouds that had blanketed the sky since this morning had created a sense of foreboding amongst the soldiers.

Many soldiers breathlessly stared ahead as they waited for the enemy to

appear.

Nothing was obstructing the view on the opposite bank..... and then black blotches began to appear on the gentle hills on the opposite side of the river.

They lacked the intimidating presence of a coordinated army.

However, the sight of the aimless mass of monsters making headway towards the Brainer territory produced a somewhat eerie atmosphere.

At a glance, the mass seemed to be composed of infantrymen in dull armor..... they moved in small groups with the gait of the undead.

They appeared to be a large group of infantrymen, and it would've been impossible to tell they were undead without having been told beforehand.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, there were one or two inhuman figures scattered among the groups appearing next. The soldiers who caught sight of those figures unconsciously released shouts of surprise.

“.....The world is full of monsters.”

One of the soldiers muttered that to no one in particular..... the soldiers atop the watchtowers had similar impressions.

The creatures' lower body was that of a giant spider, their upper body was composed of two fused-together human torsos, and they carried a weapon in each of their four arms.

These creatures were neither humans nor monsters..... they seemed to be leading the groups of undead across the river..... They were heading straight towards the Branier territory.

The army of the dead had arrived..... warning bells began to ring, and the activity started to pick up inside the forts.

Margrave Brainier, the lord of this territory, and Elder Fangas, a great elder of Canada forest and overseer of the elven warriors, watched the situation unfold from the top of a watchtower.

“Even though we were informed of this and were expecting something to this extent, its a greater spectacle to bear witness to this in person..... it's hard to believe that this is real.”

The wrinkles on the margrave's brow deepened as he uttered that statement.

As he had said, they'd been expecting this after hearing the report brought from the capital, and it was something he'd been prepared to face ever since he went to Nozan for assistance.

The unexpected support from the elves, beastmen and Rhoden Kingdom had allowed them to amass more war potential than had initially been thought possible.

It was impossible to gather any more forces beyond what they had.....

The margrave unintentionally glared at the undead army gathering at the opposite bank of Uiru river.

If they failed here, then the lives of the people living in his territory would be lost.

The massive figure who stood beside him with his arms crossed and seemed to radiate strength, elder Fargas... smacked margrave Brainer on the shoulder and smiled intimidatingly.

“Your face has become rather stiff, Wendelin-dono. There's no need to make such a face with Ferufivisurotte-sama here. As long as we follow the plan, we shall be victorious this day.”

Elder Fargas lightly swung his heavy-looking war mallet, which let out a dull ring when it slammed against the stone floor.

“Canadian Warriors! Archers, keep the enemy pinned to the riverbank! Ferufivisurotte-sama will take care of things after that! Show them our might!”

The elves on the fort raised their weapons to the sky and let out a battle cry in response to Fargas' orders from above.

At the same time, a multicolored flag was raised towards the fort across the courtyard.

The breeze of the river fanned the multicolored flag, as the other fort's tower hoisted their own flag.

When the signal went up the elven archers that had been packed on the roofs of the two forts readied an arrow towards the river.

Since the Uiru river was shallow enough to walk across, the vanguard of the undead army simply continued their trek as they reached the riverbank.

However, even though the infantrymen were undead, they were still at risk of being carried away by the current, so they had to choose a shallow place to cross.

As the undead soldiers began crossing the river one after another, the spider-monstrosities that acted as their leaders suddenly had their heads blown off after crossing the river halfway.

The other undead reaching the middle of the river began dropping as well.

“What is this.....”

The question slipped from the margrave’s lips.

The human soldiers couldn’t believe what they were seeing.

The elven archers atop the forts were killing the undead soldiers one after another.

Even if you said that the forts had been built close to the river, there were still over five hundred meters between them and the center of the river. Accurately shooting the enemy despite the breeze coming off the river was something beyond the skill of human archers.

The arrows that the elves released accelerated as if they had a mind of their own and sometimes curved to hit enemies that tried to avoid them.

Whether it was the humanoid undead or the monsters with healthy bodies and protective armor, they all suffered the same fate.

When the arrows pierced the bodies of the spider monsters they dug themselves deep into their flesh before violently exploding. The second and third volley of arrows had utterly stopped the irregular march.

Upon observing the archers, margrave Brainer noticed that they always spoke a strange chant before firing the arrow and concluded that they must have been using some kind of magic.

However, not even the elves and their unmatched marksmanship would have been capable of decimating an army of two-hundred- thousand.

The elves were packed on top of two forts across the river..... there was a little more than a thousand of them between both forts, while the enemy consisted of hundreds of thousands of undead.

Fortunately, they managed to make the enemy cautious of crossing the river, as several spider monsters halted their march, causing their forces to gather around the opposite bank.

Since crossing in small numbers had proven to be futile, they must have been preparing to cross in one massive burst.

The ability to make sound decisions without prompting was well beyond normal undead, who mindlessly pursued the living..... the fact that they were beings with obvious intelligence was engraved into the minds of the soldiers.

“Nothing to say, Wendelin-dono? There’s a big difference between hearing about something and witnessing it with your own eyes. Even my eyes can’t believe that undead capable of rational thought are standing in front of me.”

The margrave could only nod along with the elder’s words.

However, the enemy’s behavior had already been predicted, and the plan was moving along smoothly.

The two of them calmly watched the enemy’s movements from atop the roof, and immediately noticed when they started making slight advances towards the river. It was almost time.

“That’s.....”

Elder Fargas looked toward the cloudy sky and caught sight of something unbelievable.

## Chapter 11: The Defense of Uiru River | Part 2

The Dragon King Ferufivisurotte seemed small as she soared high amongst the clouds.

As she moved her majestic wings, her massive body collected the surrounding mana, mixing it with her own magic, and gathered the resulting concoction above her head.

The dazzling white sun gradually expanded as Ferufivisurotte poured more and more of her power into the orb.

Down below, the undead began crossing the Uiru river in unison, prompting the elves to prey upon them with their arrows.

However, the overwhelming number of undead meant that those who fell were reduced to stepping stones for the others.

Despite the threat of the elven archers, the humans could only watch as the two hundred thousand undead advanced without fear, while the elves could just wrinkle their brows and continue to fire their arrows.

However, everything came to an abrupt halt—

The Dragon King was primed to unleash her little sun upon the undead in the middle of crossing the river.

When elder Fargus confirmed that, he gave the signal to those who had been waiting nearby.

“Drop your weapons and get down!! Don’t get caught outside the wall!!”

With the signal given, the unit leaders began instructing their subordinates..... the shouted orders breaking everyone from their shock-induced trance and spurring them to act.

Margrave Branier and the others quickly took a crouching posture with their backs against the wall, leaving only elder Fargas standing on the roof, laughing with teeth bared and a vicious gleam in his eyes.

The moment Branier called out Fargas to see what was going on..... the entire

area was blanketed by a white light so intense, everyone unintentionally shielded their eyes.



Dooooooooooooooooooooon!!!

An intense gust accompanied the ear-splitting explosion, the entire fort shaking as the ground rumbled, and a few soldiers screamed in abject terror.

The resulting upheaval sent wet dirt and pebbles shooting into the sky, covering the soldiers from head to toe in filth and grime.

What in the world happened..... the soldiers tried to confirm that they were still alive, the ringing in their ears resulting in some rather loud exchanges.

They'd been informed beforehand that powerful magic would be used, and that they would have to brace themselves.

Still, what they had experienced just now was beyond anything any of them could've imagined.

While the humans inside the forts were thrown into a state of confusion, the elven warriors raised their fists to the sky and let out bellowing battle cries.

Elder Fargas didn't even bother to hide his excitement as he stood on the roof of the watchtower, pounding away at his chest.

The soldiers eventually regained their composure after seeing the elves' behavior and checked their weapons before staring out into the massive dust cloud.

The downpour of river water gradually cleared away the obscuring smoke and dust..... the collective attention of the soldiers focused in the direction of the Uiru river.

The expressions on everyone's face reflected utter astonishment.

The Uiru river had been completely severed, a vast bowl-shaped crater had been blown into the earth, with the river now flowing directly into said bowl.

The river flowing from the mountains would eventually fill in the crater, and a new lake would be born here.

Countless undead had vanished along with a chunk of the earth as a result of Dragon King Ferufivisurotte's attack, and now less than half of the undead remained.

Margrave Brainier was left speechless by the display of such immense power..... only a groan escaped his lips as he took in the vastly changed

landscape.

The stone bridge that previously led to the capital had collapsed as a result of the shockwave.

Only the remnants of the stone foundation remained standing.

“Hahaha, as expected from Ferufivisurotte-sama! This is it! Although it can not be fired repeatedly, all we have to do is take care of the stragglers!”

Only one person, elder Fargus, looked upon this spectacle with glee as he hosted his war maul over his shoulder.

The undead could not feel fear in the face of the great magic that had been unleashed, and mindless advanced into the crater.

They lacked the imposing presence their numbers previous offered them and appeared to be nothing more than shambling undead.

“To desecrate the dead..... the body should be returned to the earth and the soul to the heavens, yet the dead have become the tools of the living.”

Elder Fargas raised his mallet and pointed towards the remnants of the undead army before loudly shouting orders to the soldiers.

“With that single blow, our victory is certain!! However, don’t relax now! The promised peace of this land can only be obtained after every last undead is slain!! Canadian warriors, slay the spider monsters! The others will scatter like leaves!”

The stunned human soldiers, motivated by the Fargas’ speech, raised their weapons towards the sky and joined in on the elves’ war cry.

Although more than half of the undead had been exterminated, they couldn’t become careless with the remaining ten thousand monsters.

After creating a new lake, Dragon King Ferufivisurotte wasn’t in a state where she could unleash another powerful attack anytime soon.

However, the difference between the soldiers’ morale when they had no hope of winning and when the victory was within reach was the same as the difference between the heaven and earth.

As the elven archers worked to eliminate the few remaining spider monsters, the elven warriors proficient in melee combat formed small squads and made a sortie.

The elven warriors were used to working in small units and act on the behest of their captain's judgment, but the same could not be said of the human soldiers.

Seeing the elven warriors bravely exiting the forts and seeing his troops standing there awaiting their orders spurred the margrave into action.

“The cavalry is to be deployed first, sweep away the armored soldiers around the fort! Though they are few in numbers, it would be suicidal to oppose the spider monsters directly, leave them to the elves and only offer assistance when necessary! Drop stones on any enemy that attempts to scale the walls!”

The Brainier soldiers were in high spirits as they complied to the margrave's orders.

However, Rhoden's forces under the command of prince Sect, who had been stationed in the second fort, mobilized before they could act.

A thousand cavalymen sprung from the forts the moment the main entrance was opened. They crushed the enemies they came in contact with, using large spears to deal with the spider monsters, trampling over the enemies like a giant snake.

To maintain the soldier's moral, prince Sect, dressed as a dignified knight, lead the charge himself.

Margrave Brainier observed the dazzling scene from atop the watchtower, before letting out a sigh and soothing his wrinkles above his eyes.

“Such is the strength of the youth..... I can't foolishly fight on the front lines anymore.....”

The faces of his family and the secretary he'd placed in charge of his formal affairs flashed through the margrave's mind as he muttered that statement.

The lack of common sense on display had made him senile for a few moments..... unlike him, the prince would recover quickly and leading from the

front would inspire the soldier who would've been in a state of panic otherwise.

A bit of nostalgia for the times when he'd been the young leader brandishing his sword swelled up in the seasoned lord..... and a self-deprecating smile appeared on his face.

However, he gave his head a shake before looking for elder Fargus, the dark elf elder that had reached the same level of seniority as himself.

However, the figure of the massive man was nowhere in sight, and when his gaze returned to the battlefield he caught sight of a strange old man blocking the path of the prince's cavalry.

## Chapter 12: The Defense of Uiru River | Part 3

At the head of the Calvary, prince Sect noticed the old man's figure immediately, his appearance on the undead-ridden battlefield sparking a strong sense of incongruity within him.

While the man wore the clothes of a clergyman, his sizeable muscular figure wouldn't loose when compared to elder Fargas'. Deep wrinkles rest underneath his eyes and his beard was a deep shade of grey.

The most eye-catching feature about the man, however, was the sword-like mass of iron, larger than himself, that he carried.

The old man seemed calm and relaxed at first glance and unfathomable rage could be seen reflected in his eyes. A cold sweat trailed down the prince's neck as he stared into those eyes.

『Well..... Well done! While being lower creatures, they'd been the precious subordinates entrusted to me..... You deserve to die!!』

Despite the stamping of the cavalry's hooves, the old man's voice echoed throughout the area, the sound of his voice reverberating through prince Sect's body.

The moment the old man's voice died down, his muscles began to swell, and his clothes flew off his body in tatters..... misshapen faces appeared all over the man's body and another set of glowing red eyes appeared on his head.

At the same time, the giant sword on his back gradually began to rise, and prince Sect instinctively ordered his troops to part before they collided with the old man.

However, the bizarre old man leaped forward and swung his massive sword at prince Sect.

A chill traveled down prince Sect's back, who'd been a caught off guard because he'd been giving out instructions, before he released the stirrups and jumped off his horse.

“Kyaw!?! Gyhaa!!”

The air escaped the prince's lungs as he landed hard and rolled away from his galloping horse.

While a dull pain wracked his entire body, the prince managed to drag himself to his feet just in time to see the mysterious old man bisect his horse with a single slash.

If he'd been a second slower, he would have shared the horse's fate.

However, the old man ignored the parted waves of cavalymen and turned his attention towards Sect. The prince realized that he hadn't escaped the danger yet.

"Of course..... my swordsmanship isn't the best it could be."

Prince Sect begrudgingly wiped the blood off his lips after his self-deprecating remark and tried to draw his decorative sword from its sheath.

Unfortunately, while he only received a mild shock from his fall and could still walk, a sharp pain racked Sect's chest, and it became difficult to breath when the sword was halfway out.

Given the old man's previous showings, there was no way the prince could win against this monster. However, a sarcastic smile remained plastered on his face.

Looking at his strange behavior, a deafening roar, which reverberated through the area, was torn from the old man's lips as he brandished his sword once more.

『For an insect to point a sword at me, it is extremely unpleasant.....』

After the monstrous old man's spirited shout, he raised his massive sword and set his sights on the prince.

However, in defiance of the prince's orders, two soldiers with long spears broke away from the cavalry and placed themselves between Sect and the monster.

"Your Highness, please withdraw!"

"We'll be your opponents!"

After making that declaration, the two soldiers raised their spears and charged the old man.

However, the man simply swung his massive sword towards the mounted soldiers, and blood and viscera flew everywhere as one of the men and his horse were bisected in the blink of an eye.

Prince Sect glared at the gruesome display in utter silence, but the four red eyes on the old man's face narrowed as he detected something rapidly approaching from the rear.

However, he remained focused on the prince in front of him— when a figure leaped above his head and violently slammed a war hammer on the ground as it landed.

“You seem to be the leader of these monsters, aren't ya?”

The massive, lilac-skinned dark elf suddenly descended upon the battlefield..... elder Fargas' golden eyes carefully evaluated the strange being in front of him.

The enemy wrinkled his brow at Fargas' intrusion.

『Those monsters are the great army entrusted to me..... You are the leader of the long ears and that accursed lizard. However, you're merely the usurper's vanguard.』

The air itself trembled as the monstrous man spoke, and for the first time since he appeared, he grasped his sword with both hands and glared at Fargas.”

『I, one of seven cardinals, August Ira Paciencia, shall purify you with my own hands..... accept the Pope's gracious mercy.』

Having said so, cardinal August slashed at Fargas with his blindingly fast speed. However, elder Fargas used his mighty war hammer to deflect the cardinal's sword before slipping into his opponent's range and attempted to strike at his stomach.



A dull sound rang out as the momentum of the attack sent Fargas flying back, while the angered cardinal August was left unscratched.

Even though he seemed calm on the surface, Fargas stole several quick glances at his war hammer. Although there had been some positive feedback, the attack didn't have any effect on the enemy.

“Cardinal..... apparently Hiruku is ruled by monsters.”

The old man's muscles swelled as he lightly swung the lump of iron about, the same four-eyed, old man with misshapen faces across his body who had declared himself a cardinal of the Hiruku Theocracy.

As a great elder, Fargas had lived for a long time, but this was the first time he'd ever come across an undead as corrupted as the one currently in front of him.

However, it was evident that the existence before him wasn't a hallucination.

It would be detrimental to both elves and humans if this twisted creature continued to exist.

..... It had to die here!

With firm determination, Fargas lowered his stance and targeted the enemy's abdomen again, but the enemy was also a skilled warrior..... although his sword was deflected again, Fargas' posture had collapsed in the aftermath of the bout.

The air itself trembled, and dust clouds were kicked up each time the two weapons collided with one another.

While the two of them clashed, prince Sect, whose body continued to be wracked by pain, was carried away from their battle by a couple of his subordinates.

『Despicable lesser being! I will tear you limb from limb!!!』

Cardinal August anger only grew as the battle dragged on.

Following the cardinal explosive shout, just as Fargas deflected another of the cardinal's attacks, the elder was forced to retreat as four black tendrils sprung from the cardinal's back and attacked him.

The surprise attack forced Fargas to break his stance, and Cardinal August immediately capitalizing on the opening.

“I see, he only excels at close-quarters melee combat..... Is that what you’re thinking? 『— Penetrate, Earth Fang—』”

However, Fargas wasn’t upset in the slightest, his mouth forming into a crooked grin as he performed a rapid incantation that unleashed the power of the earth spirits.

{Zuntsu! !}

Upon the spells activation..... the earth itself formed a spear and impaled August through his back.

For a moment, all of August’s four eyes were completely focused on the dull-colored foreign object protruding from his stomach.

However, the cardinal returned Fargas’ smile with a grin of his own as he glared at the elder.

『I see, so you’re proficient in magic as well..... but it amounts only to this much—』

Instead of worrying about the impalement, Fargas immediately invoked his spirit magic again when the cardinal began to move.

『— Sacred Earth, consume my enemies —』

In response to Fargas’ chants, the same type of earthen spears that had impaled August began penetrating the cardinal in an ascending pattern. Skewered from all sides, the cardinal was crucified on the spot.

『Uooooonoooooreeeeeee!!』

But, in a fit of rage, August strained against his bonds, the flexing of his engorged muscles alone sending cracks through the spears that restrained him.

With the cardinal immobilized, Fargas gathered his strength and slammed his hammer into August’s jaw with enough force to twist his neck.

『Th.....is.....lesser.....beinggggg!』

Despite suffering enough damage to kill an ordinary man, the cardinal’s four eyes remained locked on Fargas.

But, Fargas remained undeterred by August’s eerie appearance, his brows

furrowing as he grumbled about the circumstances.

“You are quite the robust undead..... However, it’s over.”

Once those words left his lips, he shut his eyes and concentrated on his war hammer.

『—Everlasting peace to the corrupted, eternal silence to the dead, earth become his tomb—』

Wrinkles continued to gather on his forehead as Fargas continued to amass mana with his chant. August instinctively recognized the danger and redoubled his efforts to escape.

However, his body had been severely damaged and struggled to repair itself, the souls embedded within him refusing to follow his commands.

Fargas was unimpeded as the ground and sand floated into the air and coalesced into a single mass.

The massive rock emitted a strange light, which, upon contact, caused the souls within August to run amok, his four red eyes reflecting the agony he felt as he stared at Fargas.

August attempted to speak when the pair locked eyes, but the massive floating stone suddenly fell under its own weight, the ground and the air trembling as the cardinal was crushed beneath the boulder.

Elder Fargas looked up at the monolith that had pierced the earth and smiled.

“Please accept this gracious gravestone.”

After speaking to no one in particular, Fargas glanced around to check the war situation.

The dragon king Ferufivisurotte, who’d been waiting in the sky above, was now standing on the battlefield..... using the crystalline sword at the tip of her long tail, she mowed down the remnants of the undead army.

After viewing the progress of Sect’s cavalry, the human infantry and the elven warriors, it was clear that the battle was reaching its conclusion.

“My, my... this battlefield is no longer a place to unleash your power..... That’s

understandable, I suppose.”

Fargus muttered that to himself as he glanced at the war hammer in his hands.

After a quick shake of his head, the elder combed the battlefield, with sharp eyes, for signs of other potential threats.

“None? Everything is going according to the plan. I wonder how things are going on their end? ”

Elder Fargas let out a sigh as he worried about Arc and Ariane, who’d gone to Delfuento’s Rione..... his eyes wandering over to the Sobiru mountains.

## Chapter 13: Liberating Rione | Part 1

Under the somewhat cloudy sky, the capital of Delfuento Kingdom was visible on the distant horizon.

The city seemed grayed out and removed from the rest of its surroundings.

Chiome's cat ears were flicking restlessly on her head as she scanned the seemingly abandoned city.

"Even at this distance, the city's foul stench can still reach us....."

Behind Chiome stood a group of cat-eared people dressed in similar ninja clothes as she was..... all of them had the same grim expression as they glared at the former capital in the distance.

"It's doubtful that any survivors remain in that city. I've never seen a city so completely engulfed by death's impurities....."

Ariane, who stood with crossed arms, seemed to be in agreement with Chiome.

Occasionally, a warm breeze would blow her long, white locks into her eyes causing her to brush them aside.

"Preparations are complete, we're ready to strike at any time."

Elder Dylan, the commander of this operation, commented while standing next to Ariane.

They were currently positioned on a steep hill southwest of Rione. Their base camp, which housed the forces that had been transferred over, was hidden behind a small woodland area.

A location so close to the Hiruku Theocracy and Delfuento's border was perfect for launching a pincer attack. Therefore, it had been chosen as the base of operations for the coming battle and as an observation hub.

Based on the information Goemon gathered from his previous scouting expedition, they managed to calculate the range of the enemy's sensory capabilities. Moreover, they could easily abandon this base and flee into the

forest should the need arise.

The fighting force that had been gathered here ,the elven warriors and the Blade Heart Clan, were skilled in forest combat. Even though they numbered less than five thousand, they could easily best a force of over one hundred thousand through guerilla warfare.

The elves had used their earth spirit magic to entrench their makeshift base and surround it with a sturdy wall, with other defenses strategically placed along the tree line in preparation for a defensive battle.

While retreating into the forest wouldn't do much against the mobility and strength of the spider monsters, but it would slow down the undead soldiers that made up the majority of the enemy's forces.

To build such a base in the limited amount of time they had was a tribute to the elves' and beastmens' considerable skill.

“Is it finally this one's turn?”

As elder Dylan began issuing orders to various people throughout the base, a booming voice spoke up from within the forest. The origin of the voice stood at a height of nearly four meters and had a dragon's head... it was Dragon King Williahsfim in his human form.

While not as large as Ferufivisurotte, he was thirty meters long in his dragon form and had been asked to wait in the forest until it was time for him to act.

Though he was initially reluctant to comply with their request, Ferufivisurotte was a significant existence in his eyes, so he smiled and vaguely nodded along when he was assigned to the Delfuento team.

“Our assault on Rione should be starting soon.”

I traded the axe I'd been using till now for the 『Holy Thunder Sword』and headed towards Ariane and Chiome.

Williahsfim and the three of us were in charge of drawing the undead out of Rione.

“Kyun!”

“.....You want to come along, Ponta? It's gonna be dangerous, you know?”

“Kyun!”

She seems set in her conviction..... so we'd be bringing along a plus one.

In addition to the 『Holy Thunder Sword』, I was bringing the 『Holy Shield of Teutates 』and the emergency canteen of spring water I carried everywhere nowadays.

I'd already received permission to go all out this time.

As Ariane and Chiome finished checking their equipment, Williahsfim turned into his dragon form nearby the base.

Nearly thirty meters and length. his body was covered in bluish-scales, four horns rested atop his head, and, unlike Ferufivisurotte, he had four massive wings on his back.

Our strategy would make use of his abilities of mass destruction.

Regarding abilities of mass destruction, I still had the Heavenly Knight's skills in reserve, but I wanted to avoid using them if possible.

《Are you ready? Then let's go.》

A massive gust of wind erupted on the spot as Williahsfim flapped his enormous wings and began ascending into the air.

The spectacle of watching a Dragon King take flight would never diminish.

Since Williahsfim hovered low to the ground, his tail dragged along the ground..... Ponta wrapped around my neck like a scarf as I hopped up and grabbed ahold of one of his legs, with Ariane timidly following suit.

When Chiome lightly grabbed hold of another of his legs, Williahsfim flapped his wings once more and slowly began flying towards Rione at a low altitude.

The ground beneath us flew by at blazing speeds, this gentle sensation across my body making this method of travel far more thrilling than tearing through the sky at high altitudes.

If felt like I was on an extreme thrill ride attraction, but Ariane's pale face made it clear that this wasn't an enjoyable experience for everybody.

“Ittt'ss too fassssssssssssssssttttttttt!!”

The frightened screams and complaints about our speed that managed to escape her lips, were mostly lost in the air current.

When I faced Chiome, her expression remained deadpan as usual, but her tail stood up straight like a pin, and she seemed a bit tense.

“Kyun! Kyun!”

Pota seemed to be enjoying it just as much as she enjoyed the ride on Ferufivisurotte’s back.

The reason we were using this thrilling mode of transportation was that Williahsfim said he’d have difficulties flying with multiple people on his back and this was the best we could come up with in the short amount of time we had.

I’d have to use short-range transfer magic dozen of times to cover the distance that holding onto his leg covered in seconds.

As we neared Rione, the city came into focus.

Similar to what had unfolded in Tajiento, multiple breaches ran along the city’s defensive wall, and towering pillars of smoke rose from within the city.

It’s clear that the black spot scattered around the collapsed walls weren’t escaping citizens.

《This town is almost entirely occupied by the tainted. I’ve never witnessed such a disastrous situation.》

Williahsfim uttered that while lowering his speed and altitude. The spider chimera didn’t even have time to recognize the threat before Williahsfim cut them down with the claws on his hind legs.

While the spiders were a threat to humans, they were nothing more than undead rabble to a Dragon King.

As we approached Rione, the spider chimeras and the undead soldiers which were out on patrol were all single-handedly cut apart and scattered by Williahsfim’s long tail.

Williahsfim rose higher into the air, over the city-walls themselves, and gave us a view of Delfuento’s former capital.

We intended to gather the attention of the undead and lead them back to where Goemon and Dylan were waiting.

However, if we led all of the tens of thousands of undead back to that simple base, it wouldn't last more than an hour under their siege.

First of all, we had to get the undead out of the city..... once they were out in the open plains, we'd unleash our area of effect attacks, then funnel the survivors towards the base.

Our job was to eliminate the undead outside the city and ensure that the enemy couldn't ignore us even if they wanted to.

Thus our current formation..... I looked over to Ariane, and she had the eyes of someone who made a big mistake.

She should return to normal once we landed, when we reached a suitable location... I lightly swatted Williahsfim leg and gave him the signal.

“Williahsfim-dono, we'll be descending here. Please, follow through with the plan.”

《This one understands and asks you to entrust everything to him..》

After flying around for a bit we came across a plain, roughly to the northeast of the city. The moment Williahsfim's tail touched the ground again, I jumped off his leg.

Due to Williahsfim flight speed, I glided towards the ground in a gradual arc, and the two undead soldiers patrolling the area turned around when I landed in a kneeling crouch.

I unsheathed the 『Holy Thunder Sword』 and cut them down immediately.

“Hmm, we've made a pretty cool landing if I say so myself. Don't you think so, Ponta.”

“Kyun?”

Ponta uncurled herself enough to give me a confused look.

It seems that Ponta couldn't perceive the romance of a bipedal weapon leaping off a means of transport.

Landing in the way I did wasn't possible with a flesh and blood body..... it was only possible with an unrealistically tough body.

As for the other two, Chiome leap off only after Williahsfim slowed down even further, and even then she barely landed after doing several somersaults to slow her descent.

It was a landing befitting of a ninja, but it was impossible for the current me to replicate it successfully.

Ariane, on the other hand, was basically freefalling when she finally released hold of Williahsfim's leg..... the ground itself rose up to catch her.

From the distance, it looked as if she was twitching and having small convulsions, but she should be fine, right?

Since there weren't any undead in Ariane's general area, I had to worry about those gathering around me before I worried about her.

“【Sacred Lightning Sword】!”

Upon invoking the weapon skill, a blue current of energy enveloped my sword, doubling the blade's length in the process.

A unique sound could be heard as I lightly swung my sword through the air.

Heteromorphic monsters descended upon me from all directions..... however, I was familiar with these seemingly slow-moving spider chimeras and wanted to test my fighting skills.

“【Flying Dragon Slash】!!”

There was still a considerable distance between the targeted spider chimera and the usual range of my skills..... but the fired energy wave, which had grown in proportion to the elongated blade, not only reached them but disintegrated the chimera and their underlings upon contact.

It was impossible to combine the effects of combat skills in the game, but Ponta's grass cutting attack gave me the idea to test the limitations here.◦

The result was a useful crowd-control skill.

“Ky~un! Kyun!”

Ponta realized what I'd done and excitedly began wagging her tail while remaining wrapped around my neck, occasionally shooting a wind blade of her own.

Although the distance seems to have increased since we last practiced, there weren't any enemies around.....

Chiome also dealt with a few undead without issue.

Ariane had recovered enough to separate a human upper-body from its spider-half, with the flames created from her spirit magic reducing the chimera to a pile of dust.

Her shoulders fell with a sigh, and she seemed a bit irritated as she scanned the area for other threats.

Williahsfim circled Rione like a bird of prey, occasionally swooping down to hunt the undead.

Unfortunately, their numbers were just too great and our individual efforts weren't gonna accomplish anything.

Even the impressive number of undead outside the city couldn't compare the numbers I imagined were behind those walls.

While cutting down any undead that approached me, my eyes constantly scanned the surrounding area and the top of the wall.

We were kicking up an impressive rampage out here, but there were no signs of the strange boy Goemon had mentioned.

Considering how Goemon described the boy, it was possible that he was one of Hiruku's leaders..... its true form had yet to be seen.

Even when the majority of undead outside the city had been cleared out, Rione remained eerily quiet.

"Strange..... the impurities shows no sign of weakening, yet they aren't coming after us..... Did the strategy fail?"

Ariane voiced her doubts as she took a position at my side and looked towards the city.

“The stench still remains, I thought our actions are doing nothing. But.....”

After stabbing the final undead, Chiome took up a spot at Ariane’s side, her little nose and cat ears twitched as she stared at the city.

Chiome raised an eyebrow and looked like she was about to say something, but a fierce wind on our backside interrupted her, and cause us to look towards its origins.

The earth trembled as Williahsfim landed behind us, his wings folded straight against his back and an intense expression on his face.

《The orchestrator of this farce is moving within the city. They’re come out.....》

At Williahsfim’s remark, my gaze immediately returned to Rione.

## Chapter 14: Liberating Rione | Part 2

Rione's crumbling walls were no longer capable of serving their function.

Suddenly, a horde of undead was spewed from one of the massive holes in the wall, paying the mountain of rubble in their path no heed as they advanced.

Although they weren't marching like a human army, they weren't mindlessly charging ahead as they'd been doing.

Two figures were leading the pack of undead..... the pair distinctly different from those following in their wake.

One was a small boy, probably the boy Goemon had mentioned.

Innocence remained in the boy's delicate features, his cold eyes and straight hair drawing attention to his face.

It was possible he was apart of the priesthood, given the white robes he wore. Dressed in those decorative robes, the boy wouldn't be out of place in a local choir.

The person beside the boy was wearing luxurious canonical robes.

Even though I couldn't see his face, given the elaborately designed staff the man carried, it was clear as day that he was a high ranking member of the church.

The white veil attached to his headpiece completely hid the man's face. The act of concealing his face give the man an eerie atmosphere.

The pair leading the undead both wore a necklaces engraved with the Hiruku's "Holy Seal", marking them as the church's administrators.

Clearly, they were high ranking individuals of the Hiruku Theocracy.

The distance between the pair and us steadily decreased, yet neither their horde or any of us did anything rash, as open hostility would destroy any chance for negotiations. Only when we could hear each other did they halt their advance.

For a while, only the sound of rustling grass could be heard.

As we evaluated our enemies, our enemies evaluated us.

After a few moments of silence, the veiled man was the first to speak up.

“.....I never imagined you’d try to capture the city with such a small force.”

Although his voice was flat, and without any intonations, his genuine surprise was clearly transmitted.

I stared back at him when I felt his gaze from behind his veil.

“So, you’re the knight who defeated our Palermo? I must admit, battling another player without using soldiers seems like it’ll be fun. Shall we introduce ourselves?”

After one-sidedly dominating the conversation, the veiled man raised his staff into the sky and invoked a powerful spell.

“Come forth denizen of the underworld, **【Skeletal Balaam】!**”

A massive, ink-black cloud instantaneously formed in response to the man’s chant, and from the blood-red magical aura churning within the clouds emerged a fifteen-meter tall, demonic creature.

Though I’ve never actually seen a demon, there was no other way to describe the beast in front of me.

A human skull mask sat comfortably between the creature’s ram horns and murderous intent emanated from his four blood red pupils.

Even though it had the appearance of a hominid, its body was covered in thick black hair, its limbs were skeletal, and both gray wings and a serpentine tail sprung from its back.

The skeletal demon raised the large swords it carried in both hands and unleashed an eerie war cry before leaping at Williahsfim behind us.

Williahsfim lept into the air in response and caught the skeletal demon’s swords with his forelegs, simultaneously using his long tail like a whip to deliver a blow to the demon’s torso.

Although the dragon king’s mass and power should’ve sent the demon flying, it managed to open its wing and regain its posture in a matter of seconds.

As the kaiju battle took place above, the boy standing next to the veiled priest stepped forward.

“My name is Tismo Gala. I’m one of the seven cardinals of Hiruku..... bestowed the name Temperantia. Here I come, nee-sans!”

The young boy named Tismo revealed himself as a cardinal to Ariane and Chiome, wearing a creepy smile on his face, right before his head became engorged and split open like a sea anemone.

Then his body swelled and changed as well, both if his arms transforming into long, flesh-colored tentacles, with his now massive body being supported by six legs.

The creature wasn’t a young boy anymore, it now resembled a carnivorous plant more than anything.

The earth trembled as the monster changed forward and stretched its tentacles towards Ariane and Chiome, but the pair managed to dodge the attack.

From what I could see, the tentacles were rather fast, but it’s lower body dragged behind, so the monster had a lousy affinity with quick and evasive opposites.

The veiled man raised his staff and invoked another spell.

“I’ll teach you how necromancers fight against warriors. 【Necro Resonance】!”

When the veiled man cast the spell, a black aura engulfed the thousands of undead behind him. The up-to-this-point silent undead unleashed a cacophony of animalistic shouts as they absorbed the aura into themselves.

The threat they now posed was palpable, as every undead soldier and chimera roared and their eyes started shining a bright crimson color.

The veiled man’s magic had merely buffed the stats of the undead.

However, it was a devastating spell when tallied to over a hundred thousand soldiers.

A spell such as that would’ve had a limited effect in the game, but that wasn’t the feeling I got seeing the change brought about in the undead.

“Reflect upon your naivety for trying to capture an enemy base without bringing along any soldier units.”

The man spoke in a pleased tone, and, as if had been a signal, the undead surged towards our position like a tidal wave.

“Kaa! 【Flying Dragon Slash】!”

I cut down a couple dozen undead soldiers and a few chimeras before leaping back to put some distance between them and me, but the swarm persisted.

Another 【Flying Dragon Slash】 cut down the enemies to my left, as I fended off those to my left with my shield and continued to fall back.

The tsunami of undead prevented me from unleashing any flashy moves, it was all I could do to fend them off with my 【Sacred Lightning Sword】and 【Flying Dragon Slash】 combination.

While I was leaping back whenever I created an opening, the distance was immediately filled covered again before I had a chance to capitalize on the opportunity.

Even though my arms didn't stop moving, I focused my attention on the veiled man.

I could've left this place with transfer magic, but the undead would undoubtedly interfere with Ariane and Chiome battle.

..... Taking out the enemy's head first was the best option.

The only reason I was keeping up this slash and retreat play was that I needed to put enough distance between the horde and Ariane and Chiome.

The veiled man seemed to enjoy watching my desperate struggle.

However, he couldn't afford to be so careless—

“【Dimensional Step】!”

Just before the undead horde overwhelmed me, I invoked my short range transfer magic and appeared at the veiled man's side.

“Uh!?”

The genuine shock transmitted from behind his vail indicated that my surprise

attack worked.

I couldn't help but chuckle as the undead stumbled over each other, now that their target disappeared, but I swung my 『Holy Thunder Sword』 at the veiled man's head.

Gyin!!

Sparks flew as the man blocked my slash with his staff. However, the veiled man clicked his tongue because, even though he'd blocked my attack, I still managed to push him back.

The 『Holy Thunder Sword』 was a mythical grade weapon, so that staff must've been well-made to block it without being damaged.

I acknowledged the man as a tricky opponent, but he seemed more upset than anything.

“You can use magic even though you're a warrior!? Fuck, did they implement the magic warrior class without me knowing it?!”

The veiled man paused for a moment to let out a stream of curses before invoking a new spell.

“【Evil Thorne】!”

After the spell was cast, three semi-transparent, rotten heads appeared on the tip of the veiled man's staff before launching themselves at me.

I unintentionally stopped moving and was left dumbfounded when I felt no resistance at all when the heads vanished after I cut them down.

It didn't seem like a spell I needed to worry about, yet even after he regained his footing, my opponent continued to cast the same spell.

However, I ignored the heads and charged forward with my shield in front of me, using my lightning blade's long reach to strike at the veiled man.

“!?”

When the tip of my sword managed to cut through his veil, the man reflexively pulled back until he was just outside my range.

In spite of myself, my legs froze up when I caught a glimpse of the man's face.

That brief moment of hesitation allowed a black sphere to swallow the formerly veiled man, only for him to emerge from another sphere a vast distance away from where he'd just been.

He was also capable of using short-range transfer magic.

In my attempt to catch up to him using 【Dimensional Step】, we wound up ping-ponging in and out of existence all across the battlefield. However, the man used several spider chimeras as an obstacle to aid in his escape.

After dealing with the nuisances, I scanned the area for the man, but he had skillfully hidden among his undead.

“I can't weed the guy out without a bird's eye view of the battlefield.....”

I cursed the undead blocking my line of sight and even unleashed a few 【Flying Dragon Slash】 in my frustration.

I pushed my spatial awareness to its limits as I retreated from the undead, but developments in Williahsfim's battle drew my attention towards the sky.

## Chapter 15: Liberating Rione | Part 3

Although the battle seemed to be in constant flux between attacker and defender, Williahsfim took the skeletal monster's attacks without much issue.

The devil occasionally unleashed a massive fireball from his mouth, but Williahsfim easily dispelled them by creating tornadoes with his magic. The unfortunate undead caught in the crossfire were burnt to a crisp or blown away by a violent gust of wind.

Those two... those two didn't care about the undead they wiped out with the magic they unleashed upon each other. In fact, it appeared Williahsfim intentionally provoked these destructive attacks out of the monster.

Williahsfim knocked one of the demon's swords out of its hands with his tail, an act which had the unfortunate effect of reducing the surrounding chimeras to ash when it landed.

While the demon was busy looking towards its fallen sword, Williahsfim channeled magic into his tail and unleashed a wind blade powerful enough to sever one of the demon's wings, sending it spiraling out of the air.

«Humph, I guess you aren't a worthy enemy after all.....»

Williahsfim gripped the demon's head with his hind legs and accelerated the monster's descent before slamming it into the ground.

The undead in the crash zone simply vanished after the earth-shaking impact.

The demon tried to fly away several times, but without both wings its attempts were in vain. By the time Williahsfim descended, the dragon king's victory was all but assured.

Glancing over to Ariane and Chiome revealed that the battle had already swung in their favor.

Cardinal Tismo's enlarge body didn't seem capable of superhuman speed, but that didn't stop him from leaping into the air and trying to crush his enemy with his weight, his sea anemone-like head spewing corrosive juices all over the place.

However, Ariane and Chiome had already grasped his movement pattern and had managed to injure the cardinal through their combined efforts.

Despite already having lost one of his arm tentacles, the cardinal tried to strike Ariane with his remaining arm, but Chiome managed to halt his attack by impaling him through the chest with a water spear.

There was no way Ariane would overlook such an opening.

She switched from retreating from the tentacle to severing the appendage with her flaming sword in one graceful motion.

Suddenly, Tismo began convulsing uncontrollably as a stream of incomprehensible screaming originated from his sea anemone head.

Ariane and Chiome remained vigilant and observed their opponent from a safe distance. All of a sudden, the stumps of his tentacles regenerated as if they'd never been severed.

The wounds on his body remained. Were the tentacles the only parts of his body capable of such regeneration?

While I was pondering such things, the two ladies immediately resumed their attack on the cardinal.

However, as opposed to their previous attack formation, Chiome changed in from the front, making herself the prime target of the cardinal's tentacles, while Ariane flanked him.

Tismo attempted to halt Ariane's assault by spewing more of his corrosive juices, but the number of wounds on his body increased, while the fluids showed no sign of connecting.

Dividing his attention between the pair proved to be a costly mistake as Chiome managed to skewer both of his tentacles and pin them to the ground with her water spears, inserting a second and third spear for good measure.

At the same time, Ariane stabbed her flaming sword deep into Tismo's body.

The scream that exploded from Timso's orifices was indescribable.

I doubted that she had dealt a fatal blow, but it was clear that Timso couldn't beat those two.

It was apparent that my companions had the upper hand in their battle.

A spider chimera's attack drew me back to the present and I used **【Dimensional Step】** several times to retreat to a safe location.

Williahsfim, Ariane, and Chiome were now a considerable distance away from the undead army, which allowed me to be at ease as I resumed my search for the veiled man.

When we first met, the veiled had said — “Weren't you the silver-clad knight who defeated our Palermo?” — This meant Palermo had been that guy's subordinate.

If that was the case, then the veiled man was the Pope of the Hiruku religion.

I hadn't expected to encounter him outside his stronghold, but his presence here made sense if he was the only one who had the means to mass produce the undead.

Not only that, the pope's comment brought numerous possibilities to mind.

When I caught a glimpse of his face, I attacked in the heat of the moment, but now that I had time to cool my head, the right course of action has become unclear.

Could I bring myself to kill the pope?

The pope's real face behind the veil..... it was a skull similar to mine, with red lights shining in the empty sockets.

He might have similar circumstances to my own.

Why was he wrapped up in Hiruku's machinations?

If given a chance, I'd like to have a conversation with the pope, but I had a feeling that his actions here already answered my questions.

Still, that was only a guess on my part.

The furious undead horde chasing after me would be a hindrance to any conversation I tried to start up. If he was someone like me, then he shouldn't die from the kind of attack required to eliminate the horde from the equation.

“I know I'd eventually have to use this again..... Ponta, why don't you go wait

in the sky? Things are about to get a little hectic.”

Ponta uncoiled herself from around my neck and flew into the sky with her magic as she replied:

“Ky~un!”

I looked as Ponta’s fluffy tail disappeared before returning my gaze to the battlefield.

I took a deep breath and evoked the spell.

“Come! 【Steadfast Seraphim of Judgement: Guardian Uriel】!”

At that moment, I felt a massive amount of mana leave my body as a giant magic circle appeared at my feet, with a multitude of stone pillars rising from the ground at its edges, creating a protective wall around me in the process.

The barrier sealed in the fastest of the undead horde with me, the magic formation instantly converting them to light particles which proceeded to drift skyward.

The center of the formation suddenly unleashed a golden pillar of light towards the sky as a hymn began to play from some unknown source. From that pillar emerged a humanoid figure.

Just like Michael, the figure was five meters tall.

The Seraphim’s whole body was wrapped in beautiful golden armor, which appeared to be a more elegant version of the heavenly knight armor set.

However, there were six large, beautiful wings on its back. Releasing golden feathers with each stroke, it was obvious what kind of being this was.

It carried a massive war hammer over its shoulder and wore a helmet that completely covered its face.

One of the four heavenly knight skills, 【Steadfast Seraphim of Judgement: Guardian Uriel】.

The seraphim angel, with his overwhelming presence and sanctity, calmly raised its head toward the sky.

『~~~~~ ! ! ! 』

At that moment, an angelic voice that could only be described as heaven's roar emerged from within the helmet, reducing the undead within its range to light particles which were blown away with the wind.

The stone blockade at the formation's edge was similarly reduced to light particles which allowed everyone to see what was happening.

At the same time, the seraphim gradually shrunk until it was two meters tall and safely hovered behind my back.

“AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!”

A scream escaped my lips as the overwhelming power of the higher being forced itself into the ill-fitting container that was my body.

Every fiber of my being rejected experiencing this sensation more than once, but using this was necessary, so I clenched my teeth and held onto my consciousness.

When I saw Ponta anxiously looking on out of the corner of my eye, I slammed my fist into my trembling legs and stood up straight.

The seraphim's divine aura had already vanished, and the undead had resumed their fearless charge.

It was convenient that the undead horde was targeting me instead of being scattered around Soulia's outer wall like last time.

This made it easier to kill a lot of undead with a single blow.

I can release the heavenly knight skill early thanks to that.

I stared straight ahead, took a deep breath and concentrated on unleashing one of the seraphim's authorities.

The seraphim flapped its wings as it hovered behind me and mimicked my movements.

As if he could detect what I was about to unleash, Williahsfim cut down what remained of the skeletal demon, ran as fast as I'd ever seen him move before, scooped up Ariane and Chiome before escaping into the sky.

“Kyun!”

Even Ponta noticed the change in the flow of this battle and landed on her usual spot atop my helmet with a relieved cry.

Although I considered the range of the heavenly knight's annihilation skills beforehand, this was the first time I actually used the authority in reality, so I was a bit relieved that my companions had moved well outside the danger zone.

The authority I was about to use was considered to be a spell of mass destruction.

『【Meteor Ray Distortion: Meteorum Perditio】』

A massive and complex magic formation appeared in the sky when the seraphim raised its enormous war hammer above its head. A multitude of glowing meteors suddenly erupted from the formation and slammed into the ground the undead stood upon.

Once their light blinked out, the meteors exploded with a deafening roar and shook the earth itself.

For a brief moment it seemed as if the meteor shower had stopped, but then a giant lump of blazing hot rock appeared in the sky and gradually fell to the planet's surface..... When it made contact with the ground, a cacophony of explosions was ignited, and I was left blinded throughout the entire event.

The extremely high temperature scorched the earth and liquefied the sand, with the resulting airborne particles reducing visibility to zero in the immediate area.

“Cugh Cugh! ..... The range far exceeds what Michael is capable of, I'd better

seal this one away.”

Uriel was still floating behind me while I endured my coughing fit and attempted to blow away the dust to survey the area.

“*Ki yushi! Ki yushi!*”

Ponta used her tail to clear away the dust, but she still sneezed several times and had to use her paws to block it from entering her nose.

After a while, the dust was blown away by the wind and the field of vision gradually improved. There was no sign of the undead horde, only an enormous crater remained in their place.

“!?! As expected, this.....”

That much power..... no, there were no words for the devastation I’d just unleashed.

If the authority of the seraphim Michael was capable of changing the topography, then Uriel’s was capable of utterly destroying the topography.

A few undead remained on the fringes of the scarred battlefield.

Only a handful of spider chimeras had managed to survive 【Meteor Ray Distortion: Meteorum Perditio】, whereas all the undead soldiers had been annihilated.

There was no point in leading them back to the rear base.

Although it was an impressive outcome, I couldn’t see the veiled man anywhere.

Could he have vanished along with the rest of the undead horde..... that couldn’t be, right?

Since he could use transfer magic just like me, he could’ve escaped at any point between the authority’s activation and execution.

If the Pope indeed had escaped with transfer magic..... then we’d next encounter each other in his stronghold, the holy city of Arthus.

As the thought crossed my mind, I looked west, towards Hiruku’s capital city.

However, the steep peaks of the Roteos Mountain Range blocked my view

and made it impossible to see the holy city.

## Chapter 16: Pope Thanatos Shirubiwes Hiruku

The sanctuary of the Hiruku religion had been built halfway up Mt. Arthus.

At some point in history, a section of the mountain had been flattened into an open plateau.

In the center of said plateau plain sat a massive cathedral.....

Arthus Central Cathedral.

It was the place Pope Thanatos had made his home as he ruled over Hiruku.

The white marble floors were polished to a mirror shine, the arched ceiling was covered entirely in religious murals, and a luxurious chandelier hung in the main room.

All of the furnishings were gorgeous works of art that reflected the prosperity and long history of the Hiruku Theocracy.

Somewhere in the back of the cathedral.

In a place where the average believer never set foot..... the shadow of a clergyman suddenly blinked into existence.

The figure was adorned in luxurious robes, the church's holy seal hung from his neck, and he held an extravagant staff in his hand..... The lord of this place and Hiruku's current leader, pope Thanatos let out a relieved sigh as he clung to his staff.

However, there was no haggard expression to accompany his panting.

There was no skin or flesh on his body, only a skeleton could be found underneath his clothing.

Under the veil..... two shining red lights eerily floated in the pope's empty eye sockets.

“What the fuck was that!?”

Despite looking like one of the undead which roamed the world, a string of curses were vomited from his mouth.

The pope's rough voice resonated throughout the empty cathedral.

Earlier that day, Pope Thanatos had been in a newly conquered city..... he'd been busy converting the residents of Delfuento's capital city into undead soldiers.

The task of binding spirits to magic stones to create the undead nucleus had been monotonous as usual.

Even though it was troublesome to create the ordinary soldiers one by one, he still felt a sense of fulfillment at the end of the day when he looked upon his undead army.

Because of that, even though the work was simple, it was substantial enough to keep Thanatos going.

Moreover, the pope had begun to incorporate a quota into his routine as a means of further alleviating his boredom.

It was something he'd grow accustomed to doing after falling into this inescapable virtual world..... in the early days it'd been difficult to adjust, but after acquiring a certain level of status and realizing that there weren't any enemies that could challenge him, the days began blurring together.

All of that changed when one of the seven cardinals, his direct subordinates, was slain in one of his territories.

A being strong enough to kill one of his cardinals..... Thanatos rejoiced at that revelation because it meant that he'd finally made contact with another player.

However, the player proceeded to crush another one of his subordinates and halted a strategic advance, so he decided to welcome the challenger that encroached on his territory.

Up till now, he'd attributed the fact that no enemy players had come in decades to being trapped within the game, so when a player presented themselves before him, he decided to play the game as intended.

Compared to the repetitive work of building up his forces, the pope felt genuine excitement after the long combat hiatus.

Everything began when that dragon suddenly appeared in Rione and

interrupted his undead conversion efforts.

It'd been a long time since he last saw a dragon, but during the beta there had been players that made dragons their pets.

Dragons weren't cheap monsters like the undead he created: their firepower wasn't anything to scoff at, and they were quite popular within the community even though there was a considerable cost to maintain them.

Seeing the people holding onto the dragon's legs made it clear that it wasn't a wild monster.

The enemy dragon circled the Rione several times, perhaps scouting the area in the process, and eventually landed near on the western side of the city.

The enemy must have advanced on this place without realizing that this was Delfuento Kingdom.

Thanatos quietly smiled at the thought.

He quickly gathered the scattered forces within the city, only leaving the bare minimum line of defense in the area the enemy landed.

Even if the opponent brought out a powerful dragon unit, hundreds of thousand undead soldiers and spirit knights could deal with it without issue.

Moreover, he had one of the Cardinals, Tismo, with him.

Fighting the dragon would undoubtedly result in some losses, but with the options at his disposal, there shouldn't have been any chance of them failing.

Even if he had to resort to a demon summoning to fend off the dragon, the knights should be able to finish it off after it exhausted itself.

The war would have some exciting developments if he stripped them of a valuable war asset.

Thanatos thought up plans even as he and Tismo walked on top of the rubble of Rione's collapsed wall.

Since the opponent had gone out of their way to summon a dragon, it was common courtesy to meet them in kind.

A few undead soldiers and knights had been left outside to keep watch, but

they'd already been wiped out.

That was to be expected, but Thanatos hadn't expected to see the unit near the dragon.

There were three of them, the two females were a beastman and an elf, both races from outside Hiruku, respectively..... the gender of the one wearing luxurious armor was unknown.

His subordinates had reported that "a knight clad in shimmering silver" had defeated his cardinal, so perhaps the opponent had come to the frontlines.

With their exquisite armor covered in blue and white inlays, beautifully crafted mantle, and pristine sword and shield, they looked like a knight from legends.

Even without a face, Thanatos felt as if his expression had relaxed a little at the knowledge that it wasn't a mere unit of subordinates who confronted with.

He hadn't expected to encounter a player so early in the engagement.

Thanatos became slightly excited when the opponents looked towards him.

Since the other party didn't start attacking immediately, he decided to start a conversation at a safe distance.

".....I never imagined you'd try to capture the city with such a small force."

Thanatos beamed beneath his veil when he felt the surprised gaze of the unknown knight landing on him.

After one-sidedly carrying on the conversation for a few minutes, he set out to remove the most significant obstacle.

"Come forth denizen of the underworld, **【Skeletal Balaam】!**"

The opponent was a warrior, and he was a mage..... there was no way to defeat him in direct combat, but his two subordinates were no match for his numbers.

It was fortunate that he had been near a base at the start of things.

The upper hand depended on one factor..... who would fall first, the dragon or the undead cardinal?

That was the reason he made the preemptive strike.

Things had gone well at first: the summoned demon and dragon engaged each other in combat, while his undead cardinal was ordered to eliminate the enemy's subordinates.

Only the silver knight player remained, but the thousands of undead soldiers and knights assured his victory.

He even used **【Necro Resonance】** to give the undead a good boost.

Instead of directly controlling your forces, the support magic drastically increased their attack power, and given their numbers, no matter what level the player was, he had no chance of winning.

Defeating the enemy player would've prevented him from continuing the conversation, but a skilled player would use a transference stone to retreat back to their stronghold.

The board had been tilted in the Pope's favor, the opponent's only hope was to turn things around with a home-field advantage.

A regular player would've checked the battle interface, accept their losses, and pull back after grasping the situation.

If Thanatos could access that screen, he would've been able to contact the game masters and inform them of his situation.

With that thought in mind, Thanatos had closed in to deliver the finishing blow. He'd been sure of his victory as he watched the knight futilely attempt to fight off thousands of undead.

However, a transfer magic formation suddenly appeared under the knight's feet and the next thing Thanatos knew, the knight was suddenly bearing down on him.

Although he didn't know what was happening, Thanatos' body reflexively tried to block the attack, but there was no way a mage could block a warrior's attack, and he was blown back for his efforts.

Before Thanatos had been trapped in this world, all the classes had been split into magical and physical archetypes, the magic warrior classes had been

implemented yet.

The fact that a new class archetype had been implemented caused him to let out a surprised shout.

Afterward, he used the 【Evil Thorne】 curse to search out any weak point in the opponent's defenses and resistances.

He planned to change his strategy depending on the reaction the 【Evil Thorne】 produced. The knight turned his massive light sword on the thorns and swept them away with a single slash.

It would've been miraculous to dodge the attack by a hair's breadth.

After that single blow, the knight paused for a moment and gave Thanatos a chance to retreat with transfer magic.

He managed to avoid the knight's gaze by hiding among his undead.

Realizing that he was dealing with a tricky opponent, Thanatos took advantage of the ensuing confusion and fled back to Rione.

The best way to defeat a large army with few numbers was to dismantle the enemy's chain of command, and that was what the knight intended to do.

Thanatos was impressed by their boldness and outside the box thinking.

Using transfer magic to catch the commander off guard and unleash a flurry of physical attacks... the knight was also specced out as a magic warrior... it must've been an effective anti-mage build.

Unless he wanted to get caught in the knight's pace, he needed to stay out of sight.

Short range transfer magic was limited by one's field of vision, and a large number of the undead should've prevented the knight from grasping his location.

The enemy would either give up or be overwhelmed by the undead..... he just needed to wait it out.

.....He'd been overly optimistic.

The battle hadn't unfolded the way Thanatos had predicted it would.

The demon he'd expended a large amount of mana to summon struggled considerably against the dragon. The dragon gradually gained the upper hand before soundly defeating the demon with ease.

Of the seven cardinals Thanatos had created, Tismo Gala Temperantia was the strongest, but the two demi-humans warriors had him on his back foot with their combined skill and coordination.

He'd assumed that the two women would have comparable strength to a spirit knight, yet not even Thanatos' direct subordinates could match them.

And the knight, the other player character was the most remarkable one of the bunch.

At first, it seemed as if he were fleeing from the hundreds of thousand undead pursuing him, but after he put enough distance between them and himself, he created a massive magic formation.

Magic-based builds were known for specializing in area of effect spells at the cost of physical power, there was no way that a half-baked magic swordsmen should've been able to summon the spectacularly flashy angel the knight brought out.

And that wasn't all.

After it was summoned, the angel proceeded to unleash a meteor shower upon his undead army. Then it unleashed an terrain altering meteorite that wiped out the hundreds of thousands undead he'd painstakingly created in a single blow.

Thanatos had speechlessly watched the chaos unfold from the safety of Rione's city walls.

"What the fuck..."

No one was there to answer his question.

There was no way such a powerful unit or player character could exist.

A unit that gave a player the power to destroy an army didn't just break the game balance, it killed the foundation of strategy games.

Player..... if you could destroy an army on your own what was the point

building one for yourself.

Furthermore, all of their subordinate units were highly capable, and it was strange that they could overcome his pieces with such ease.

If things were happening as intended, the administrators were incompetent.

However, assuming that things weren't operating as they should... The heel of Thanatos' staff struck the ground in anger at the thought of the knight player hacking the game.

Incorporating the magic swordsman into the game wasn't something an illegal mod could do..... Most likely the other player had hacked into the code and raised the skill values beyond their proper limits.

As Thanatos watched his army crumble before his eyes, he took out a transfer stone from his breast pocket.

The beautiful stone looked like a palm-sized purple crystal which shined with a faint magical light.

Transfer stones..... they were magical tools that enabled instantaneous teleportation to the coordinate inscribed in them, they allowed for super long distance travel that was impossible for the visual-based transfer magic.

However, such a valuable consumable item required rare materials to create.

Thanatos tossed the item to his feet and was adsorbed by the swirl of magic that it released upon shattering.

The transfer stone allowed Thanatos to escape the chaotic wreckage of Rione and return to the silent Arthus Central Cathedral. Even as his skeletal face peeked out from behind his vale, Thanatos quickly ran towards his private chambers.

Once he reached a specific cabinet, he took out another transfer stone, only stopping to take note of how few of them remained.

“This invasion has cost me a lot of these, I'm gonna have to craft more of them soon.”

Thanatos flung the stone to the ground as he muttered to himself.

The extravagance and glamor of the cathedral were replaced with old and dim surroundings..... the workshop he was in carried some history within its walls.

Ceiling-high bookshelves were packed to the brim with books, towers of tomes lined the floor of the room.

In the middle of the room sat a sturdy-looking man in his twenties who had deep bags under eyes.

Despite his stubbly beard and unkempt hair, he wore robes belonging to a high ranking church member.

The man tossed aside the book he'd been reading when Thanatos suddenly appeared in the room.

“Is something wrong, your holiness!?”

The master of this office, cardinal Marcos Invidia Humanitas, was puzzled by the pope's unusual visit.

They were currently within Ferbio Arthurs, the holy city and capital of the Hiruku Theocracy that had been built south of Mt. Arthurs..... specifically, they were in a back room of the city's central church.

The pope never wasted a transfer stone to come here on his visits, a fact which led Marcos to ask Thanatos the previous question.

When he noticed that the pope's veil had been sliced in half Marco graciously offered him one of the spare veils he had on hand.

While he was attaching the new veil, Thanatos gave the cardinal his instructions.

“We'll unleash Aamon and Mammon. Prepare every undead soldier and spirit knight we have on hand.”

Marcos was left dumbstruck by Thanatos' orders.

Aamon and Mammon were two undead Pope Thanatos created as their last line of defense, their power was said to dwarf even the seven cardinals.

Such powerful beings required special handling and were sealed beneath the

city, a great deal of time and preparations were needed to unleash them.

Once they were released, there was no turning back.

If the pope was calling for the use of their final weapons, it meant that the Hiruku Theocracy faced an unprecedented crisis.

From what the other cardinals have been telling him, their invasion of the neighboring nations had been going well while Marcos, who'd been charged with protecting the holy city, was itching for a chance to show his power.

Before he could explain anything, Thanatos suddenly stopped in his tracks and unintentionally groaned.

After a moment, Thanatos raised his head and spoke forebodingly.

“August’s signal was lost..... did the invasion of Salma fail? No, Erin’s signal remains..... what does this mean?”

Although Thanatos was speaking to himself, Cardinal Marcus was utterly shocked at the news of his colleagues’ defeat.

Thanatos extended his spiritual connection throughout the world, but there was no response from Cardinal August. For some strange reason, Cardinal Erin was still alive despite being dispatched to Salma with him.

He couldn’t pinpoint Erin’s exact location, and the situation in the Salma Kingdom was unknown.

The knight was capable of overwhelming his cardinals, and Thanatos ground his molars at the thought of that guy killing his subordinates in Salma.

Since the enemy had altered the stat values there was little chance of him winning, but the years trapped in this game did give him an edge, and bringing the full brunt of his might against the knight would be rewarding in its own right.

“I’d like to gather the remaining cardinals ahead of time, but there’s no guarantee they won’t attack while I summon them..... With their dragon and small numbers, the enemy could show up tomorrow. Marcus, how confident are you in your strength?”

Marcus respectfully bowed his head when the pope shifted his veil enough to

make the reds of his eyes visible.

Up till now, the cardinal had been chomping at the bit to demonstrate his combat prowess, but with the entirety of Hiruku at stake, the cardinal was conflicted as the pope glared at him.

After a few moments of contemplation Marcus offered a prayer of gratitude to god.

There'd be no escape once the two inhabitants were awakened.

He offered Thanatos another bow and set about completing the task he'd been given, summoning the undead to scattered throughout the city to this location.

After watching Marcus work for a while, Thanatos opened a window in the back of the room and took in the cityscape before his eyes.

The city was pristine and functional, with smiling faces as far as the eye could see.

A considerable amount of effort had gone into creating this precious atmosphere, and he felt an iota of regret for unleashing death gods designed to topple empires here.

However, it was an act bound to happen; eventually, the only thing that changed was the timing.

“Even if this is game over, there's no way they can oppose the stronghold I've spent all these years building. Increasing the number of inhabitants of this city was worth the trouble. Allow me to give you a warm welcome my enemy..... Kahahaha.”

After saying that with a slight chuckle, Thanatos turned away from the window and began his trek towards Aamon and Mammon's resting place.

## Chapter 17: Marching On Hiruku

Princess Lily was the first person to greet me when Dylan and I returned to the Nozan Kingdom.

She and her two escorts went bug-eyed and raised joyous shouts when I informed them of what happened in Delfuento.

“Amazing! In such a short amount of time! As expected of Arc-dono!”

For some reason princess Lily proudly puffed out her chest as she spoke. Being praised for cutting loose was nice every once in a while.

After informing her that I'd be going to Salma next and seeing Dylan off, I used **【Transfer Gate】** to travel to the forts on the Branier side of the Uriu river.

The landscape had already been irreversibly changed since I was last here.

Countless pieces of broken armor and weaponry were scattered throughout the new landscape, and the undead were all but exterminated.

A strange rock formation, which seemed to have risen from the earth itself, sat in a nearby field.

An intense battle had taken place here..... it was a scene worthy of being called a battlefield.

The most noticeable change was the Uiru river: A massive crater had been blasted into the middle of the river and the water was now flowing into the recently made hole.

“This..... this should be expected, shouldn't it?”

The water showed no sign of stopping, and I could already make out a small lake forming at the bottom of the crater.

There was only one person here that could produce such a drastic change in topography.

Ferufivisurotte..... based on the sheer size of the crater, she had power equivalent to or greater than the attack I unleashed with the **【Steadfast Seraphim of Judgement: Guardian Uriel】**.

The fact that her strength rivaled that of the four archangels was a testament to the absurdity of Ferufivisurotte's existence.

A closer inspection revealed that her attack hadn't just wiped out the undead, part of the forts' outer walls had also collapsed and of the bridge that had once spanned the river only the stone foundations remained.

The culprit..... No, Ponta caught sight of the dragon king slowly flying around in her human form and called out to her, leading to Ferufivisurotte leading in front of me.

"Kyun! Kyun!"

"Aya, Arc-hon. If you're showing your face here, does that mean things are wrapped up on your end?"

Her long violet hair fluttered in the wind as she spoke in a unique tone, so I slightly lowered my head and answered her.

"Ferufivisurotte-dono. Things went smoothly on our end, I want to review everything back in Nozan and discuss our next course of action. Do you know where I can find Margrave Branier, Elder Fangas, or Prince Sect?"

After giving her my brief explanation, I asked her about the representatives' whereabouts.

Her gaze traveled to the closest of the two forts.

"Fargas and the margrave are handling post-battle affairs in that fort. Sect boy got injured and is resting in the other one."

She smiled as she spoke.

Based on the placement of the scattered armor sets, the battle here wasn't a one-shot farce like what had occurred in Delfuento.

A moderate number of injured people must've cropped up.

The fact that the commander of Rhoden's forces had been injured in battle would have a significant impact on our strategies.

"I'll visit Sect first and then work on healing the others afterward."

Once Sect was back on his feet, a liberal use **【Major Heal】** on the seriously

injured should cut our losses for this excursion.

Since healing everyone would be a hands-on task, it'd take some time to complete.

“I'll inform the others of your arrival Arc-hon.”

She made that unilateral decision before flying off towards the fort.

The thought of using a dragon king as a messenger was a bit much, but let's just accept her good will.



Though was impossible to see the full scope of Sect's injuries, it was clear that some of his ribs were broken.

He was completely healed after I used 【Major Heal】on him.

The prince's eyes bulged when he saw my healing magic, he even struck his own body a few times to see if he was healed. I felt like I was seeing another side of Sect, but he stopped once he realized his subordinates were still in the room.

After that farce, I went about healing a few dozens of his subordinates. By the time I was finished, Fargas and Branier had come to greet me.

“Arc-dono, Ferufivisurotte-sama told use we could find you here. It seems that you've managed to liberate Delfuento's capital, that's wonderful news.”

Branier entered the room with that statement.

“You're heading back to Nozan to report on the war effort, right? Are Ariane and the others safe?”

Fargas was shouldering a massive war hammer as he entered the room and immediately asked about his granddaughter's well-being.

What would happen if I told them I eradicated the enemy with a single blow? ..... I imagine it'd send a shiver down their spine, so I decided to keep that detail to myself.

“Ariane-dono, Chiome-dono, and the others are clearing out the undead and searching for survivors in Rione.”

Fargas stared at me for a moment before nodding his head and continuing the conversation.

“Give us a moment to speak with our subordinates and Wendelin, and I can accompany you back to Nozan, Arc-dono...”

Prince Sect had a troubled expression on his face when Fargas said that.

“Please wait, Fargas-dono. As Rhoden’s representative or shouldn’t I attend the meeting?”

The prince’s usual tone and gentle smile had returned. Fargas raised an eyebrow and exchanged a look with him before agreeing with the proposal.

“Well. I don’t see a problem with that. Arc-dono, if you would...”

“Understood.”

Although I’d healed his wounds he would need rest to fully recover, the look on the prince’s face made it clear that trying to talk him out of the trip would be a waste of time.



A short time later, we were back in Soulia.

The people gathered in the war room were in high spirits and Lille, who was now credited as the originator of the cross-racial alliance, practically beamed in her seat.

“Rione has been liberated in such a short amount of time!?”

King Asparuf nearly fell over when he heard my report.

“Well, our strategy was more efficient than anticipated.....”

Dylan struggled to articulate his reply to the King’s outburst.

Although his gaze wondered in my direction, he didn’t dare to look directly at me, instead opting to focus on the map spread out on the table.

The elder wryly smiled, but his eyes remained locked to the table.

Margrave Branier spoke up next.

After offering Dylan and Fargas a deep bow, he went on to give his report.

“The invading forces were annihilated at the territory’s border, and for the time being, Hiruku’s invasion has been halted. Ferufivisurotte-sama’s power is beyond comprehension.....”

A storm of emotions ran across the margrave’s face as he patted down his receding gray hair.

I could understand that emotional storm.

How powerless must a person feel in the presence of being that could casually turn a river into a vast lake?

There were many irrational existences in this world that humans would call monsters, but she was a degree beyond even them..... a being within the realm of gods and devils.

If Ariane were here, I’m pretty sure she would say “Couldn’t the same be said about you?”, or something along those lines..... Yes, as a heavenly knight, I had strength comparable to Ferufivisurotte’s might, but I needed to borrow the power of a celestial (angel) to reach that level.

While my swordsmanship and magic have improved thanks to training and a deeper understanding of my abilities, the power of the heavenly knight skills were a completely different matter.

In fact, the sensation of merging with the seraph was getting stronger.

Perhaps it is something only I could comprehend.

“—then there shouldn’t be an issue with advancing on Hiruku with the use of transfer magic, our assault will be centered on the Holy City, Arthus.

I emerged from the torrent of my own thoughts to find Dylan pointing out our next targets on the map..... a target that triggered a surprised gasp from the humans.

“Please wait, Dylan-dono. Since the beginning, we’ve been prepared to march on the Theocracy, but to attack the holy city without capturing any other cities is...”

Asparuf was the first to speak.

Their worries were obvious..... when you invaded a neighboring country, you

had to capture the cities and strongholds to secure a supply route and ensure that your forces weren't surrounded and annihilated.

However, that was only an issue for conventional armies.

“Asparuf-dono, your concerns are reasonable, but this is different from the average human military operations. We'll be using transfer magic to launch a decisive strike on the holy city. There would be no need for a supply route, and even if the enemy tried to use a pincer attack we wouldn't need to retreat. We can immediately return here. Our goal is to kill the current pope, that is all.”

Dylan said so as he marked the capital, the pope's seat of power, on the map.

King Asparuf, margrave Branier, and Prince Sect silently looked at the black piece sitting on the table.

The raised groaning was because of the strategy itself.

Their fear of the elves' frightening mobility, which allowed them to carry out operations and withdraw before human armies could react, was reflected in their eyes.

It was the equivalent surrounding the enemy king on the first turn in shogi.

Moreover, if the humans managed to capture a pawn, an invincible dragon king was waiting in the wings..... there was no way to win for them. What would you do in the face of such terror?

The prince managed to look away from the map and speak.

“Calling it a short, decisive battle isn't the best way to describe it. Won't Ferufivisurotte-dono and Williahsfim-dono be participating?”

Prince Sect smiled in his usual manner when Dylan nodded in response to the question.

“Then, it should be fine, right? A short expedition is better for the soldiers and us.”

Asparuf reluctantly agreed with the prince's statement, but the margrave pointed at the map..... he was focused on Larissa, the capital of Salma.

“I have no objections to attacking the holy city, but I ask for your help in

reclaiming Larissa. According to Arc-dono's report, the undead still occupy the city. In light of recent events, I would like to save as many people as possible."

As a citizen of Salma, his request was to be expected.

Delfuento's capital was in the midst of being liberated, but the aftermath of the Uriu river battle made it impossible to reach Larissa from the margrave's territory on foot.

However, since I've already drawn the location, I could take our forces the moment the decision to go was made.

It was better to reclaiming Salma's capital now rather than later.

Dylan contemplated the request before offering the margrave a small nod.

"Expelling undead from the city will be a difficult task. Let's send half of the elves and Blade Clan members in Delfuento to Larissa. We'll have two days to prepare and allow the soldiers and warriors a day to rest."

The elven warriors and the members of the Blade Heart Clan would be able to seek out the undead once they were moved to Salma.

Given the size of the capital city, it would take the purely human forces a month at best get the job done.

Dylan looked around to gauge everyone's opinion on the matter.

"Margrave Branier shall spearhead the Larissa operations, with the troops stationed at the fortresses acting as the majority of his forces. It will be convenient for a representative of each nation to accompany him."

When he saw that there were no objections, he scheduled the operation on the same day as the assault on the holy city.

Afterward, everybody left the chamber to begin preparations.

Three days later, on the day of the decisive battle, I glanced up at the clear blue sky and smiled.

The sky's blue hue was the same as usual, there was no sign of the massive battle that was to come, nor of the misery infected upon the distant royal capitals.

It was the same sky that was always there.